

## Applying the Ethical Framework of Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ Seerah to Modern Business and Corporate Responsibility

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### Abstract

In an era of deepening institutional distrust and persistent corporate malfeasance, as evidenced by ongoing greenwashing scandals involving brands like Shein (fined in 2025 for misleading sustainability claims), Tesla (sued over alleged forced labor and deceptive eco-promises in cobalt supply chains), and luxury firms linked to labor exploitation, the limitations of conventional business ethics frameworks rooted in voluntary CSR, ESG metrics, and stakeholder theory have become starkly apparent. These extrinsic, compliance-driven approaches frequently result in performative actions that fail to curb inequality, environmental harm, or ethical lapses, exacerbating societal grievance and insularity as highlighted in the 2026 Edelman Trust Barometer, where global trust in business remains fragile amid economic anxiety and retreat into narrow circles of confidence. This article proposes a robust, character-driven alternative by extracting and applying the ethical principles embedded in the Seerah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ such as amanah (trust and accountability), sidq (truthfulness and transparency), 'adl (justice and equity), and ihsan (excellence and beneficence) to modern corporate governance and responsibility. Drawing from the Prophet's ﷺ pre-prophethood reputation as Al-Ameen, his consultative shura leadership, prohibitions against gharar and riba, and the pluralistic model of the Constitution of Medina, the framework reimagines internal operations (governance as servant-leadership, HR as equitable brotherhood) and external responsibilities (CSR as tazkiyah purification, marketing free of deception, stewardship rooted in khalifah). By operationalizing these timeless principles, the model transcends performative ethics to foster intrinsic moral alignment, sustainable value creation, authentic stakeholder trust, and societal harmony in pluralistic, secular contexts. Ultimately, it positions prophetic integrity as a practical North Star for 21st-century business, enabling organizations to achieve enduring success grounded in justice, transparency, and genuine service rather than short-term profit maximization.

**Keywords:** Seerah Ethics, Corporate Governance, Amanah Trust, Islamic Business Principles, Tazkiyah CSR, Stakeholder Justice

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## Introduction

In an era marked by deepening institutional distrust, global business faces a crisis of confidence that exposes the profound limitations of frameworks reliant on mere regulatory compliance and profit maximization. The 2025 Edelman Trust Barometer reveals that 61% of respondents worldwide harbor a moderate or high sense of grievance toward business, government, and the wealthy, driven by perceptions that these entities prioritize narrow interests over public welfare. Among those with high grievance, business is viewed as 81 points less ethical and 37 points less competent compared to low-grievance counterparts, while employer trust has declined to 73% globally a stark drop from 78% in 2018. This erosion manifests in relentless corporate malfeasance: German prosecutors levied a €25 million (\$27 million) fine on Deutsche Bank-owned asset manager DWS in April 2025 for greenwashing ESG claims between mid-2020 and January 2023, where promotional statements “did not correspond to reality.” Similarly, 2025 class-action lawsuits against Starbucks accused the company of misleading consumers with “100% Ethical Coffee Sourcing” claims despite documented human rights and labor abuses in supply chains. Echoing the Enron scandal and 2008 financial crisis, alongside pervasive greenwashing in fast fashion and consumer goods, these episodes demonstrate that voluntary CSR initiatives, ESG reporting, and Triple Bottom Line rhetoric frequently devolve into performative exercises lacking intrinsic moral depth. The result is not merely reputational damage but systemic wealth inequality and societal backlash, underscoring the urgent need for an ethical paradigm that embeds accountability at the organizational core rather than appending it as an afterthought.

The Seerah—the life, conduct, and leadership of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ offers precisely such a paradigm, transcending its religious biography to function as a historically attested, comprehensive model of ethical commerce and governance. Before prophethood, the Prophet ﷺ built his reputation as Al-Ameen (the Trustworthy) through transparent merchant practices in Meccan trade caravans, later extending these principles into Medinan statecraft via equitable contracts and the Constitution of Medina, which fostered pluralistic stakeholder harmony. Recent scholarship illuminates this practical applicability: Nasreen et al. (2024) distill a robust entrepreneurship framework from Seerah and Hadith literature encompassing principles, values, leadership skills, stakeholder-centric practices, and ethics, positioning the Prophet ﷺ as an enduring role model for integrity-driven enterprise amid modern complexities. Complementing this, Yasin et al. (2024) rigorously compare the Prophet’s strategies honesty in disclosure, servant leadership, risk wisdom, and efficiency with contemporary management theories such as stakeholder theory and transformational leadership, revealing direct correspondences that elevate ethical conduct to a strategic imperative rather than a constraint. Far from abstract theology, the Seerah thus provides a lived blueprint: prohibitions against gharar (deception) and riba (exploitation), coupled with mandates for amanah (trust), sidq (truthfulness), and ‘adl (justice), were operationalized in daily transactions and treaties, yielding sustainable prosperity and social cohesion.

While business ethics scholarship has long drawn upon Aristotelian virtue ethics for character development or Kantian deontology for rule-based duties, the Seerah’s ethically implemented framework anchored in Tawheed (divine accountability) and Ihsan (excellence beyond minimum justice) remains strikingly underexplored in mainstream corporate discourse. Contemporary models, from Friedman’s shareholder primacy to Freeman’s stakeholder theory and Conscious Capitalism, often falter precisely because they remain extrinsically motivated by legal risk or reputational optics, lacking the intrinsic character transformation that defined the Prophet ﷺ’s success as both merchant and leader. This gap

persists despite proliferating CSR reports, as evidenced by persistent grievances in the 2025 Edelman data and recurring scandals that reveal performative ethics. By extracting and operationalizing core Seerah principles reimagining corporate governance through shura (consultation), HR through equitable brotherhood, and CSR as tazkiyah (purification) this framework addresses these shortcomings, offering a character-driven “North Star” that integrates ethics into strategy, stakeholder relations, and daily operations. It promises not only to mitigate malfeasance but to cultivate authentic, sustainable value creation in pluralistic, secular contexts, filling a critical void in 21st-century business thought.

## Literature Review

The evolution of modern business ethics and corporate social responsibility (CSR) marks a decisive departure from Milton Friedman’s (1970) shareholder primacy thesis, which confined corporate duty to profit maximization for owners within legal constraints, toward R. Edward Freeman’s (1984) stakeholder theory that redefines the firm as a nexus of value creation for all affected parties employees, customers, suppliers, communities, and shareholders alike. This intellectual shift crystallized institutionally with the 2019 Business Roundtable “Statement on the Purpose of a Corporation,” signed by 181 CEOs, explicitly embracing stakeholder capitalism, a momentum confirmed by the Conference Board’s (2021) global survey in which nearly 90 % of C-suite executives acknowledged the transition was underway and 80 % reported active implementation within their firms (Darden Report, 2024). Parallel conceptual innovations reinforced the movement: John Elkington’s (1997) Triple Bottom Line integrated people, planet, and profit into performance measurement; ESG frameworks formalized environmental, social, and governance metrics for investors; and Conscious Capitalism (Mackey & Sisodia, 2013) elevated purpose, stakeholder orientation, and conscious leadership as strategic imperatives. Yet these paradigms remain structurally vulnerable: predominantly voluntary, they invite performative “purpose-washing” and greenwashing, while empirical research suffers a persistent “lock-in effect” wherein ESG is operationalized through outdated CSR proxies, yielding inconclusive links to financial performance and perpetuating superficial compliance rather than genuine transformation (Mendonça et al., 2025). The absence of an intrinsic moral foundation relying instead on reputational optics or regulatory pressure explains why CSR and ESG proliferation has coincided with sustained inequality and recurrent scandals, exposing the urgent need for a deeper, character-embedded ethical anchor.

Scholarly inquiry into the Seerah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ uncovers a lived, comprehensive ethical architecture for commerce and leadership that predates and surpasses contemporary constructs. Before prophethood, the Prophet ﷺ earned the title Al-Ameen (the Trustworthy) through transparent merchant practices full disclosure of defects, fair weights and measures, and unwavering honesty in Meccan caravans establishing trust as the bedrock of commercial relationships (Yasin et al., 2024). This personal integrity scaled into statecraft with the Constitution of Medina (622 CE), a pioneering pluralistic covenant that forged legal equality, mutual defense obligations, religious liberty, and unified judicial mechanisms among Muslims, Jews, and pagan tribes, creating a cohesive “Ummah” while preserving communal identities and serving as an enduring model for inclusive stakeholder governance (Ali, 2025). Foundational prohibitions against gharar (excessive uncertainty and deception), riba (exploitative usury), and haram sectors safeguarded transactional integrity, while Tawheed the absolute oneness of God positioned human accountability before the Divine as the ultimate regulator of economic conduct, demanding justice (‘adl), beneficence (ihsan), and stewardship (khalifah) over resources for present and future generations (Abbasi et al., 2025). These principles were not abstract ideals but daily practices embedded in contracts, treaties, and

leadership, yielding social cohesion and sustainable prosperity that secular frameworks, reliant on extrinsic incentives, have yet to replicate at comparable depth.

Literature attempting to bridge Islamic economics with modern finance and CSR has expanded rapidly, demonstrating compelling alignments between Shariah principles and sustainable development goals through instruments such as green sukuk, risk-sharing finance, zakat-based social impact vehicles, and ESG-integrated Islamic banking, all oriented toward justice, environmental stewardship, and inclusive growth (World Bank & Islamic Development Bank, 2025). Recent special issues further illuminate how Islamic finance's ethical architecture prohibiting exploitation while mandating social welfare can operationalize SDGs more holistically than conventional CSR (special issue on Islamic finance and SDGs, 2025). Nonetheless, a salient gap persists: while these contributions map broad macro-level convergences between Islamic economic theory and contemporary sustainability metrics, they rarely disaggregate the Prophet ﷺ's specific personality traits (Al-Ameen trustworthiness, consultative shura leadership) and micro-practices (servant-oriented HR, amanah in supply chains, sidq in marketing) into a cohesive, actionable framework that can be transplanted into the internal governance, human-resource culture, and external stakeholder ecosystems of secular or pluralistic corporations. This article fills that precise lacuna by thematically distilling the Seerah's lived ethical model and translating its character-driven imperatives directly into operational corporate responsibilities, thereby furnishing a North Star that transcends voluntary CSR's performative tendencies with an intrinsic, historically proven moral compass.

## **Problem Statement**

With the rapid proliferation of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, environmental, social, and governance (ESG) frameworks, and voluntary sustainability reporting, persistent corporate malfeasance continues to erode public trust and exacerbate societal challenges. Recent high-profile cases illustrate this ongoing crisis: luxury brands like Loro Piana and Giorgio Armani faced judicial scrutiny and fines in 2025 for labor exploitation in supply chains, while fast-fashion giants such as Shein drew criticism for child labor allegations and poor working conditions, highlighting how profit-driven practices often override ethical commitments. Greenwashing remains rampant, with companies exaggerating environmental claims to mask inadequate efforts, as evidenced by ongoing complaints against major consumer brands and empirical studies showing that ESG disclosures frequently prioritize symbolic gestures over substantive environmental investment, leading to undermined credibility and short-term financial gains at the expense of long-term sustainability. These extrinsic, compliance-oriented approaches rooted in reputational management rather than intrinsic moral accountability fail to address root causes, allowing wealth inequality to widen dramatically; the top 1% now hold unprecedented shares of global assets, fueling social fragmentation, grievance, and instability as documented in global trust surveys where business faces declining perceptions of ethics and competence. Consequently, contemporary frameworks prove insufficient in fostering genuine ethical transformation within organizations, perpetuating cycles of distrust, inequality, and ethical lapses in an increasingly scrutinized global marketplace.

## **Research Objectives**

1. To extract the core ethical principles from the Seerah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ relevant to business conduct.
2. To analyze how these principles address the shortcomings of contemporary corporate governance and responsibility models.

3. To develop a conceptual "Seerah-based Ethical Framework" applicable to modern business operations.
4. To propose practical applications of this framework in areas such as stakeholder relations, marketing, finance, and supply chain management.

### Research Questions

1. What are the primary ethical principles governing commerce and leadership that can be derived from the Seerah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ?
2. How do these Seerah-based principles compare and contrast with the foundational assumptions of modern Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)?
3. In what specific ways can the principles of *Amanah* (trust), *Sidq* (truth), and *'Adl* (justice) be operationalized in a 21st-century corporate context?
4. What would be the impact of applying this framework on a company's relationship with its primary stakeholders (employees, customers, community, and environment)?

### Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, conceptual analysis methodology to derive and apply an ethical framework from the Seerah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to contemporary corporate governance and responsibility. The research is interpretivist in orientation, seeking to extract meaning, practical wisdom, and transferable principles from historical-religious texts rather than testing hypotheses through empirical measurement. Primary data sources comprise classical Seerah literature, including Ibn Hisham's *Sirat Rasul Allah*, Ibn Kathir's biographical works, and authentic Hadith collections such as *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*, with focused attention on the Prophet's ﷺ pre-prophethood merchant life in Mecca and his governance in Medina. These texts provide rich, narrative accounts of commercial transactions, contracts, treaties (notably the Constitution of Medina), leadership practices, and ethical rulings in trade and societal interactions. The analytical method employs thematic analysis to systematically identify recurring ethical themes such as *amanah* (trust), *sidq* (truthfulness), *'adl* (justice), *ihsan* (excellence), *shura* (consultation), and prohibitions against *gharar* and *riba* through iterative coding and pattern recognition across selected episodes. Themes are then interpreted and bridged to modern business theory, including stakeholder theory, corporate governance models, and CSR/ESG paradigms, to highlight convergences, contrasts, and novel applications. This hermeneutic approach ensures rigorous textual fidelity while enabling conceptual translation into operational recommendations for internal functions (e.g., leadership, HR) and external responsibilities (e.g., marketing, supply chains, environmental stewardship). By grounding the framework in historically attested prophetic conduct, the methodology offers a character-driven, intrinsically motivated alternative to extrinsic CSR models, advancing understanding of faith-inspired ethics in pluralistic corporate contexts.

### The Core Ethical Framework from the Seerah

At the heart of the Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ ethical architecture lies *Amanah* the profound recognition that all resources, authority, and relationships constitute a sacred trust from God, demanding unwavering stewardship rather than possessive ownership. The Qur'an emphasizes this divine trusteeship in Surah Al-Ahzab (33:72):

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا-

(Indeed, We offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they declined to bear it and feared it; but man undertook to bear it. Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant). Before prophethood, the Prophet ﷺ embodied this as *Al-Ameen* (the Trustworthy), safeguarding deposits and honoring commitments in Meccan trade, earning universal confidence even from adversaries. This elevates modern corporate stewardship beyond ESG

metrics; *Amanah* positions leaders as accountable to the Creator first, transforming fiduciary duty into a moral covenant where corporate identity must authentically reflect trustworthiness not as a slogan, but as governance DNA. Internalizing *Al-Ameen* ensures profit flows from faithful stewardship, mitigates risks through transparent custody of stakeholder interests, and fosters resilient, long-term value in an era of eroded institutional trust.

Complementing *Amanah*, the imperative of *Sidq* (truthfulness and transparency) stands as the Prophet's ﷺ standard for commercial integrity, requiring full disclosure even at personal cost. A key Hadith underscores this: from Sunan al-Tirmidhi 1209, narrated by Abu Sa'id:

التَّاجِرُ الصَّدُوقُ الْأَمِينُ مَعَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ-

(The truthful and trustworthy merchant will be with the prophets, the truthful, and the martyrs). The Prophet ﷺ openly revealed product defects in transactions, refusing concealment, as his conduct exemplified radical honesty in trade. This contrasts sharply with modern malpractices misleading advertising, hidden fees, opaque supply chains, and deceptive claims that erode consumer confidence and invite backlash. *Sidq* rebuilds brand equity on transparency: unambiguous product representations, clear pricing, and visible supply chains become strategic strengths. When embedded as core strategy, *Sidq* cultivates enduring customer loyalty, organic reputational growth, and ethical differentiation, turning transparency from compliance burden into a driver of sustainable competitive advantage amid skeptical stakeholders.

The demand for *Adl* (justice and equity) completes this triad, mandating scrupulous fairness while *Ihsan* (excellence and beneficence) elevates conduct beyond minimums into proactive benevolence. The Qur'an commands this balance in Surah An-Nahl (16:90):

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ -

(Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression). The Prophet ﷺ enforced fair wages and measures, decreeing prompt payment as in Sunan Ibn Majah 2443:

أَعْطُوا الْأَجِيرَ أَجْرَهُ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَجِفَّ عَرْفُهُ

(Give the worker his wages before his sweat dries), and ensured equitable treatment in contracts regardless of status. These translate to modern imperatives: living wages as true partnership, anti-discrimination rooted in dignity, and fair-trade rejecting exploitation. *Adl* dismantles inequities perpetuated by profit primacy, while *Ihsan* urges exceeding compliance offering employees dignity, communities uplift, and environments restoration. Together, these principles render CSR the natural outflow of character-aligned operations, providing an intrinsic moral compass absent in voluntary frameworks, enabling authentic legitimacy, resilient performance, and societal harmony in pluralistic markets.

## Application to Modern Business Operations

Reimagining corporate governance and leadership through the Seerah necessitates a decisive shift from hierarchical, command-and-control structures to consultative *Shura* models that prioritize collective wisdom, inclusivity, and accountability. The Qur'an mandates consultation in Surah Ash-Shura (42:38):

وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَىٰ بَيْنَهُمْ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ

(And those who have responded to their lord and established prayer and whose affair is [determined by] consultation among themselves, and from what We have provided them, they spend). The Prophet ﷺ exemplified this through regular consultation with companions on matters of state and community, fostering participation without diluting authority. In contemporary organizations, *Shura* translates to empowered boards, cross-functional

decision-making forums, and employee input mechanisms that democratize strategy while aligning with ethical objectives. Leaders embody the servant-guardian role as *Ameen*, safeguarding the company's mission and employees' welfare as a divine trust rather than exercising dominion. Recent scholarship highlights this alignment: Arodha (2025) argues that Islamic ethical corporate governance integrates *amanah*, *adl*, and *shura* to prioritize divine accountability over shareholder primacy, promoting transparency, fairness, and social responsibility in modern structures. This servant-leadership paradigm, rooted in the Prophet's ﷺ humility and service, redefines fiduciary duty to encompass ethical and societal obligations, ensuring governance serves holistic stakeholder value and prevents exploitative practices prevalent in conventional models.

Within human resource management and employee relations, the principle of *Adl* (justice) demands equitable application across hiring, promotion, and compensation, eradicating bias and ensuring merit-based decisions grounded in human dignity. The Qur'an reinforces this in Surah An-Nisa (4:135):

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ

(O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives). The Prophet ﷺ modeled impartiality in appointments and rewards, treating all with equity irrespective of background. Modern Islamic HRM scholarship extends this: Ayyat (2025) outlines core principles including justice (*adl*), trust, and competence in recruitment and compensation to create fair, value-aligned workplaces. Complementing *Adl*, a culture of *Sidq* fosters psychological safety, encouraging open communication, honest feedback, and truthfulness in performance dialogues countering fear-driven environments that stifle innovation. Employers bear profound responsibility for employee well-being, directly inspired by the Hadith in Sahih al-Bukhari and Muslim:

أَطْعِمُوهُمْ مِمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ وَائْسُوهُمْ مِمَّا تَلْبَسُونَ

(Feed them from what you eat and clothe them from what you wear), underscoring brotherhood and shared dignity. This prophetic directive urges provision of living wages, health support, work-life balance, and holistic care, transforming HR from transactional to relational, where employees are viewed as partners in mutual flourishing rather than mere resources. Integrating these Seerah-derived practices internally cultivates resilient, ethical cultures while externally projecting authenticity to stakeholders. By operationalizing *Shura* in governance, servant-leadership in executive roles, *Adl* in HR processes, and *Sidq* in communication, organizations move beyond compliance toward intrinsic moral alignment. This framework addresses contemporary critiques of shareholder-centric models by embedding social responsibility as core duty, enhancing employee engagement, reducing turnover, and building trust with communities and investors. In pluralistic settings, it offers a universalizable ethic of justice, consultation, and stewardship that promotes sustainable performance and societal harmony, demonstrating that prophetic leadership principles remain profoundly relevant for 21st-century corporate excellence.

## Application to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Stakeholders

Reconstructing CSR through the lens of the Seerah transforms it from a peripheral, risk-mitigation function often relegated to separate departments or annual reports into a core organizational process of *tazkiyah* (purification and spiritual growth). In Islamic thought, *tazkiyah* entails purifying earnings and operations by ensuring they align with ethical imperatives, benefiting society and the environment as integral to legitimate prosperity rather than optional philanthropy. This approach counters the performative nature of conventional CSR, where initiatives frequently serve reputational optics without altering core business

models. By embedding *tazkiyah*, companies internalize purification as ongoing self-accountability: profits are cleansed through equitable distribution, community investment, and environmental care, fostering genuine growth that harmonizes economic success with moral integrity. Recent analyses highlight how Islamic ethics integrate moral self-improvement into governance and CSR, promoting transparency, justice, and holistic well-being over superficial compliance (Arodha, 2025). This Seerah-inspired reframing positions CSR as the natural expression of organizational character, driving sustainable value creation while addressing stakeholder grievances and inequality in an era of heightened scrutiny.

Ethical marketing and consumer relations under this framework are governed by the strict prohibition of *gharar* (excessive uncertainty or deception), establishing the highest standard for advertising, product representation, and transactional clarity. The Prophet ﷺ's emphasis on full disclosure and honesty in trade demands that companies avoid misleading claims, exaggerated promises, hidden conditions, or manipulative tactics that exploit consumer vulnerability. Instead, marketing builds long-term relationships rooted in *amanah* (trust), where the firm positions itself as a reliable advisor providing accurate information, fair value, and genuine support to empower informed decisions. This cultivates enduring loyalty based on mutual respect rather than short-term persuasion. Contemporary studies on Islamic marketing ethics underscore how prohibiting *gharar* and upholding *amanah* enhance consumer trust in digital and traditional channels, aligning promotional strategies with transparency and relational care to differentiate brands ethically in competitive markets (various 2025 analyses on Shariah-compliant marketing). Operationalizing these principles turns consumer interactions into opportunities for ethical engagement, strengthening brand equity through authenticity and reducing risks associated with deceptive practices.

Environmental stewardship and community engagement draw profoundly from the concept of *khalifah* (vicegerency), viewing the earth as a divine trust requiring responsible custodianship that exceeds standard ESG compliance toward deep, proactive sustainability. Humanity's role as stewards mandates preserving resources, minimizing harm, and promoting regeneration for future generations translating to corporate commitments that prioritize ecological restoration, circular economies, and biodiversity protection as moral duties rather than regulatory checkboxes. Complementing this, the Constitution of Medina serves as a timeless model for ethical stakeholder engagement in pluralistic contexts: its covenant forged mutual obligations, justice, and cooperation among diverse groups including competitors establishing inclusive governance that balanced rights, responsibilities, and peaceful coexistence. Applied today, this inspires companies to engage communities transparently, collaborate with rivals on shared societal challenges, and treat all stakeholders equitably, fostering resilient ecosystems of trust. Islamic environmental ethics grounded in *khalifah* promote sustainable practices that integrate justice and collective welfare, enabling businesses to surpass compliance and contribute meaningfully to planetary and social harmony (recent 2025 scholarship on Islamic stewardship in corporate contexts). Together, these elements render CSR a comprehensive, character-driven imperative that aligns modern operations with prophetic wisdom for authentic, enduring impact.

## Conclusion

The ethical framework distilled from the Seerah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ offers a transformative alternative to the prevailing paradigms of business ethics and corporate responsibility. By centering the core principles of *amanah* (trust and accountability), *sidq* (truthfulness and transparency), and *'adl* (justice and equity) elevated further by *ihsan* (excellence and beneficence) this model addresses the fundamental shortcomings of

contemporary approaches that remain predominantly extrinsic, voluntary, and performative. Where shareholder primacy reduces fiduciary duty to profit maximization, and even stakeholder-oriented CSR and ESG frameworks often devolve into Compliance Theater or reputational management, the Seerah provides an intrinsically motivated, character-driven compass. The Prophet's ﷺ lived example as Al-Ameen in commerce, his consultative shura in leadership, his uncompromising prohibition of gharar and riba, and his insistence on treating workers as brothers demonstrate that ethical excellence is not a constraint on success but its very foundation. Reimagining corporate governance through servant-leadership and shura, human resources through justice and psychological safety, marketing through radical transparency, and CSR as an ongoing process of tazkiyah purification, this framework integrates moral integrity into the DNA of organizational strategy and daily operations. It moves ethics from the periphery to the center, transforming potential liabilities scandals, distrust, and inequality into sources of authentic legitimacy, employee loyalty, customer trust, and long-term resilience. In doing so, it promises not merely risk mitigation but the creation of sustainable, shared prosperity that aligns economic value with human and environmental dignity.

This Seerah-based approach holds profound implications for business leaders navigating an increasingly fragmented, skeptical, and pluralistic world. It supplies a universalizable North Star that transcends cultural and religious boundaries while remaining deeply rooted in historically proven conduct: trust as the currency of commerce, truth as the bedrock of relationships, justice as the safeguard against exploitation, and stewardship as the path to intergenerational flourishing. While implementation in secular or diverse corporate environments presents legitimate challenges requiring careful, context-sensitive adaptation to avoid imposition or oversimplification the framework's emphasis on intrinsic character rather than external enforcement makes it adaptable and aspirational rather than prescriptive. Leaders who embrace these principles can cultivate organizations that are not only profitable but genuinely virtuous, capable of earning and retaining the trust of employees, customers, communities, and regulators alike. Ultimately, the Seerah reminds us that business is never merely transactional; it is a human endeavor with moral weight and eternal accountability. By anchoring corporate purpose in the prophetic model of integrity, excellence, and service, modern enterprises can rise above cycles of scandal and short-termism, contributing instead to a more just, cohesive, and sustainable global economy. In an age desperate for authentic leadership, the life and practices of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ continue to illuminate the path toward ethical, enduring success.

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