

Who is Muhammad?

Brief about prophet Muhammad peace be upon him

His Life

Muhammad (peace be upon him) was born about 570 AD into a noble Arabian tribe in Mecca. He was orphaned at a young age and was raised by his grandfather. He worked as a shepherd for a time and after his grandfathers' death, he was raised by his uncle, accompanying him on the caravans which used to travel between Mecca and Syria for trade. He was well respected and noted for his honesty and integrity, and was called "Al-Ameen" (The Trustworthy One) by the people of Mecca.

The People of Mecca used to worship idols but Muhammad did not participate in the polytheistic practices of his people. Rather he used to spend long hours meditating in a nearby cave. It was here, at the age of 40, that Angel Gabriel came to him with the first revelation from Almighty God. He immediately began calling his people to direct their lives and worship to God alone, to abandon the worship of anything other than Him.

Muhammad and the fledgling Muslim community, made up of all types of people from nobles to slaves, were persecuted for their beliefs and abandoning the religion of their forefathers. But even with this, the numbers of Muslims continued to increase. Eventually the persecution became more severe, and God instructed his Messenger to emigrate along with his companions to the city of Madina.

The people of Medina accepted the message of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and pledged to worship none other than God and to obey Him, to establish the five daily prayers, and to obey His Messenger. From here, he was able to invite people to Islam openly, and it spread far and wide.

The enemies of Muhammad sent huge armies to wipe out the small Muslim community. Although they were significantly outnumbered, they overcame their aggressors and within a few years, Prophet Muhammad returned to Mecca and conquered it peacefully.

The people of Mecca were astounded by the Prophet's mercy and pardon towards a community that had persecuted him and had driven him from his home, thus causing many, including some of the leaders of the city, to embrace Islam. By his death at the age of 63, Muhammad (Peace be upon him) had spread Islam to most of the Arabian Peninsula and within 100 years, it spread to most of the world.

Prior to Muhammad (Peace be upon him), the Arabs had been insignificant in history. Muhammad united them, raised them from paganism and idolatry to the worship of the one true God, from tribal wars to unity and brotherhood, from drunkenness and debauchery to sobriety and piety. He changed them into a nation that would take their religion to most of the world within 100 years of his death. History has not seen such a startling change or the speed by which a new religion would spread. Muhammad (Peace be upon him) was and continues to be the supreme example for humanity in behavior, manners, belief and

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worship, as a husband, father, military leader, teacher, neighbor and friend. God said about him in the Quran:

{Indeed in the Messenger of God you have a good example to follow for he who hopes in (the meeting with) God and the last Day and remembers God much.} [Al-Ahzab 33:21]

﴿لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا﴾ الأَحْزَاب: 21

Transliteration: Laqad kana lakum fee rasooli Allahi oswatun hasanatun liman kana yarjoo Allaha waalyawma alakhira wathakara Allaha katheeran

A prophet Foretold in the Bible

The coming of Muhammad is prophesized in Deuteronomy, 18:18, when God tells Moses, “will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren; I will tell them everything I command him.” Muhammad was like Moses in many ways: both had a father and mother, both married and had children, both were accepted by their nations and were sent by God with new, comprehensive codes of law for their people. Both began their prophetic missions at the age of forty and both Moses and Muhammad (peace be upon them) died and were buried in the earth. So we can see the many similarities between them.

Jesus also prophesized Muhammad's coming in John 16:12-14: “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear, but when he, the spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.” Jesus' mission is related in detail in the Quran. It is also interesting to note many of the early Muslims were previously learned Christians and Jews who were expecting a prophet in Arabia as foretold in their own scriptures. When Muhammad began calling to what God had revealed to him, these people recognized that indeed, he was the Prophet that they had been waiting for.

The Final Messenger to Humanity

Muhammad is the last of God's Messengers, the unlettered Prophet (unable to read and write), sent as a mercy for the world and a bringer of glad tidings and a warner, just as those before him were. God said in the Quran:

{(We Sent) messengers as bringers of good tidings and warners so that mankind will have no argument against God after the messengers. And ever is God Exalted in Might and wise.} [An-Nisaa' 4:165]

﴿رُسُلًا مُّبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا﴾ النساء: 165

Transliteration: Rusulan mubashshireena wamunthireena lialla yakoona lilnnasi AAala Allahihujjatun baAAda alrrusuli wakana Allahu AAazeezan hakeeman

{And verily, We have sent among every nation a Messenger proclaiming: worship God (alone) and avoid all false objects of worship.} [An-Nahl 16:36]

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﴿وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ...﴾ النحل: 36

Transliteration: Walaqad baAAathna fee kulli ommatin rasoolan ani oAAabudoo Allaha waijtaniboo alttaghoota

Muhammad (peace be upon him) was sent with the final revelation, the Quran, which was revealed to him in the Arabic language over a span of 23 years, memorized verbatim and recorded and collected by his companions. The Quran has been preserved in its pristine, unchanged state up until today, word for word, letter for letter. This revelation is an affirmation of the divinely-revealed books before it, since it confirms, corrects and completes them.

{And We (God) have revealed to you the Quran in truth, affirming that which preceded it from the Heavenly books, and a witness and judge over them.} [Al-Ma'ida 5:48]

﴿وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيِّمًا عَلَيْهِ﴾ المائدة: 48

Transliteration: Waanzalna ilayka alkitaba bialhaqqi musaddiqan lima bayna yadayhi mina alkitabi wamuhayminan AAalayhi

Throughout the Quran, God invites mankind to worship Him and abandon the worship of all others. Also, God mentions scientific facts and prophesizes events which were impossible for someone who could neither read nor write to know about. Though the Arabs at the time had an amazing power and eloquence in Arabic poetry and language, not one of them could produce anything like one verse of the Quran.

Muslims also follow the practice and sayings of the Prophet, known as the "Sunnah", as a source of guidance and a means of understanding the meanings of the Quran. The devout Muslim tries to imitate the Prophet Muhammad in his beliefs, worship, relations with people, and daily habits. God said:

{Say (O Muhammad): If you truly love God then follow me, God will love you and forgive you your sins.} [Al-'Imran 3:31]

﴿قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ...﴾ آل عمران: 31

Transliteration: Qul in kuntum tuhibboona Allaha faittabiAAoonee yuhbibkumu Allahu wayaghfir lakum thunoobakum

What Historians have to say about Muhammad?

Although Prophet Muhammad was one of the world's greatest personalities, very little is known about him in the West. However, many historians have studied and written about him.

"If greatness of purpose, smallness of means and astounding results are the three criteria of human genius, who could dare to compare any great man in modern history with Muhammad?"

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.. IS THERE ANY MAN GREATER THAN HE”

[Lamartine in “ Historie de la Turquie”]

“I have studied him-this wonderful man-and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the savior of humanity.”

[George Bernard Shaw in “The Genuine Islam”]

Gandhi said in “Young India”: “I became more than ever convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the prophet, the scrupulous regards for his pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his mission. These and not the sword carried before them surmounted every trouble.”

'It is impossible for anyone who studies the life and character of the great prophet of Arabia, who knows how he taught and how he lived, to feel anything but reverence for that mighty prophet; one of the great messengers of the Supreme.”

[Annie Besant in “The Life and Teachings of Muhammad”]

My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world's most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular levels.'

[Michael Hart, “The 100:A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History”].

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