

Who is Muhammad (Pbuh) ?



One in every five persons on this earth firmly believes that the Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) is the last Messenger of God. He was a Muslim and there are more than 1.3 billion such Muslims today.

Not only individuals but entire countries take pride in declaring their allegiance to him. There are 54 such Muslim states today, ranging from those as large as Indonesia and Bangladesh, with populations of 200 and 125 million respectively, to those as tiny as the Maldives or Brunei with populations of 230,000 and 260,000. Even in non-Muslim countries, large Muslim populations constitute significant minorities; as much as 120 million in India and 20 million in China. Indeed, within the last half century, Islam, the religion brought by the Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh), has become the second largest religion in most European countries, as also in America and Canada.

Black and white, red and yellow, followers of the Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) come from all human races. Whether in Asia or Europe, Africa or America, in every nook and cranny of this globe, you are sure to find Muslims. They live in the most advanced, sprawling megalopolis as well as in the most primitive nomadic tent, village, hamlet, and even in the bush.

As now so always, down the centuries, across the planet, from end to end, billions and billions of men and women have lived all their lives, loving the Prophet (Pbuh) and trying to follow in his footsteps, as no one else has been so loved and followed. They have lived and died, believed and acted, married and raised families, worshipped and ruled, made war and peace, even eaten and dressed, walked and slept, just as he did or taught them to do.

Indeed, never in history has a man influenced mankind, even beyond his death, so deeply and so pervasively as he has. He brings light and peace to countless hearts and lives. Muslims love him more dearly than their own selves. In him they find their greatest source of inspiration and guidance. He is the ultimate norm and the perfect example for them. Faith in Allah and His Messenger is their mainstay and Allah is their chief source of support and comfort in all personal vicissitudes and tribulations. To him they also look to lead them through social and political turmoil. He has always inspired them to greater and greater heights of spiritual and moral upliftment and civilizational achievements. And still does.

In short, Muslims believe that through him, a human like themselves, God has spoken to them, and guided him to live amongst them, setting an example and a model for all times to come. Even today he motivates and induces whole populations to yearn and strive to shape their private lives, politics and policies according to Allah's teachings.

Pearls from His Sayings

- [Righteousness and Sin \(part 1 of 2\): Righteousness is Good Character](#)
- [Righteousness and Sin \(part 2 of 2\): Sin and Human Conscience](#)
- [Cheating and Deception](#)
- [Actions and Intentions \(part 1 of 2\): Purity of Intention in the Religious Realm](#)
- [Actions and Intentions \(part 2 of 2\): Purity of Intention in the Religious Realm](#)
- [Prophet Muhammad's Last Sermon: A Final Admonition](#)

Righteousness and Sin (part 1 of 2): Righteousness is Good Character



Description: Clinging to righteousness and avoiding sin is not just about worshipping One God without partner through conventional rituals. It goes far beyond that to one's moral and mannerly behavior, taking heed of one's conscience, and seeking with one's heart. Part 1: Righteousness defined by revelation and reason.

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An-Nawwas bin Sam'aan reported that Prophet Muhammad said:

“Righteousness is good character, and sin is whatever bothers you and you do not want people to know.” (*Saheeh Muslim*)

An-Nawwas bin Sam'aan is a famous companion of Prophet Muhammad. He belonged to the Arab tribe of Kallaab and settled in Syria after the death of the Prophet.

His report is collected by a scholar of hadeeth named Muslim bin Hajjaj, who was born in 817 CE in the city of Naishapur, in north-eastern Iran, and died there at the age of 58, in 875 CE. Muslim began studying the science of Prophetic hadeeth at the age of 15 and traveled to Iraq, Hijaz (Western



Saudi Arabia), Syria, and Egypt to study under great hadeeth masters like al-Bukhari, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, and others. He compiled a book containing some 9,200 hadeeths which is known as Saheeh Muslim. Muslim scholars consider it to be the most authentic compilation of Prophetic hadeeths after Saheeh al-Bukhari.

This narration is important in that it sheds light on some of the more subtle aspects of righteousness and sin, helping to define them both. Since Islam gives so much importance to the belief in and worship of One God, one may incorrectly think that this alone is enough to be righteous. This hadeeth, however, shows that one of the main consequences of correct and true belief is good character, and that it is an intrinsic aspect of the meaning of righteousness. It emphasizes some of the meanings found in the saying of God which mentions that righteousness, as well as a being a combination of correct belief and prescribed worship, is also proper conduct in human relations:

“Righteousness is not that you turn your faces to the east and the west [in prayer]. But righteous is the one who believes in God, the Last Day, the Angels, the Scripture and the Prophets; who gives his wealth in spite of love for it to kinsfolk, orphans, the poor, the wayfarer, to those who ask and to set slaves free. And (righteous are) those who pray, pay alms, honor their agreements, and are patient in (times of) poverty, ailment and during conflict. Such are the people of truth. And they are the God-Fearing.” (Quran 2:177)

Rather than being an end in itself, one of the main purposes of worship is to bring about traits beneficial to the self and society. God says about the salah (prayer):

“Surely, the salah prevents lewd acts and bad deeds...” (Quran 29:45)

Hence one can say without any qualms that Islam as a whole came to perfect good manners, as did the Prophet himself:

“Indeed I was only sent to complete the most noble character traits.” (*Saheeh Muslim*)

As Islam is not a mere religion but a complete way of life, incorporating all of its various facets and aspects, good manners is actually regarded as a means of worship by which one may achieve the same reward of doing other more obvious voluntary acts of worship. The Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, stated:

“Through his manners and good conduct, the believer can attain the status of a person who frequently fasts and prays at night.” (*Abu Dawud*)

Rather, the Prophet even stated it to be one of the best forms of worship, second to none but the obligatory mandates of Islam:

“On the Day of Resurrection, nothing will be heavier in the scale (of good deeds) of the believer than good conduct. God hates the one who swears and hurls obscenities.”

(Abu Dawud, Al-Tirmidhi)

Through maintaining good conduct, one becomes one of the beloved servants of God. The Prophet said:

“The most beloved slaves of God to God are those who have the best manners.” *(Al-Hakim)*

When one realizes the importance of good character and its essentiality in defining righteousness, an aspect which is the goal of Islam, this exhorts Muslims to fulfill this aspect of faith as well, since one can not become “righteous” through mere belief and devotion to God in themselves without good character.

But what is regarded as good character? We find that the Quran and Sunnah in various texts define it to be any trait that is beneficial to humans, both to oneself as well as to others, at the same time not being generally or specifically prohibited by Islam. For example, God says:

“Those who suppress their anger, and forgive other people – assuredly, God loves those who do good.” (Quran 3:134)

Righteousness is dealing fairly, justly and politely with one’s family. The Prophet said:

“The believers with the most perfect faith are those with the most perfect conduct and manners. And the best ones amongst you are those who are best to their families.” *(Al-Tirmidhi)*

Truthfulness is an essential aspect of good character which leads to Paradise. The Prophet said:

“Indeed truthfulness is righteousness, and indeed righteousness leads to Paradise.” *(Saheeh Muslim)*

These are but a few examples of the numerous texts which define and exhort Muslims to excel in their character and manner. Although righteousness is those deeds which are naturally pleasing to the conscience of humans, religion plays a vital role in defining what it is. For example, anything of which its harm is greater than its good cannot be defined as righteousness, even if it may be otherwise regarded as goodness and righteousness. The Prophet said:

“It is not righteousness that you fast during travel.” *(Saheeh Al-Bukhari)*

Although fasting is one of the most meritorious of deeds, here it is not considered righteousness due to the harm it may incur to the individual and his comrades during a journey. Also, to steal from the rich in order to give to the poor may not be regarded as righteousness, as stealing has been specifically prohibited in the religion.

At the same time, a deed which may sometimes be seen as harsh may also be considered good character at times, such as striking a child at certain age as a means of education. The Prophet said:

“Command your children to pray when they are seven, and strike them [if they do not] when they are ten...” (*Abu Dawud*)

For this reason, we look to divine guidance in order to define for us good manners and character, exemplified by the Prophet, as God said:

“Surely, you (O Muhammad) are upon a high standard of moral character.” (Quran 68:4)

God also said:

“Indeed in the Messenger of God you have a beautiful example of conduct to follow...” (Quran 33:21)

Aisha, the wife of the noble Prophet, was asked about his character. She replied:

“His character was that of the Quran.” (*Saheeh Muslim, Abu Dawud*)

In the second part of this narration, the Prophet mentioned another subtle aspect of sin, which is that sin is anything which bothers a righteous person’s conscience and which a person seeks to hide from others. An array of actions comes into a person’s mind once they hear these words.

God has inspired within each soul the ability, although limited, to recognize truth from falsehood.

“He inspired it (the soul) to know its sin and its piety.” (Quran 91:8)

As long as a person seeks righteousness, they will know when they have done something wrong through their conscience, even though they might find numerous ways to excuse themselves for what they are doing. They would never like anyone to come to know of that thing, for they are ashamed of it; their religion is enriched with shyness, shame and bashfulness. The Prophet said:

“Shame and bashfulness is from the perfection of faith.” (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari*)

Shame is something which can prevent a person from committing evil. The Prophet said:

“If you have no shame, then do as you please.” (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari*)

Shame, the highest level being shameful in front of God from committing sins, is a key factor in avoiding sin, and this standard may also be used to judge whether or not an

act is a sin.

These sentiments of conscience and shame are a natural consequence to true belief and faith, and this is what the religion of Islam seeks to create within an individual, an Islamic conscience which guides humans through their lives.

This inner conscience is what tells the state of the heart of the individual, whether it is alive seeking the truth, or dead, filled with the desires of this worldly life. Lack of religiosity and indulging in sin caused a person to lose one's conscience, and it can no longer be used as a source of guidance.

“...why then did they not believe with humility? But their hearts became hardened, and Satan made fair seeming to them that which they used to do.” (Quran 6:43)

“Have they not traversed through the land, and have they heart with which they perceive, or ears with which they hear? Indeed it is not the sight which is blinded, but rather what is blinded is the hearts which are in the breasts.” (Quran 22:46)

The heart can be used as a guide, in conjunction with the intellect and revelation, in order to ease the search for the truth. The heart of one who is searching for the truth is indeed one which is alive, for it is this life and yearning which causes them to search for it. This type of person will never find peace at heart in any other religion except the religion which God ordained for humanity, and as long as their yearning for the truth exists, their conscience will continue to bother them until they find the true religion of God. Indeed if the person is sincere, God will guide them to the truth:

“And those who desire Guidance, He (God) will increase them in Guidance, and inspire them with [the way to] piety.” (Quran 47:17)

Righteousness and Sin (part 2 of 2): Sin and Human Conscience



Description: Clinging to righteousness and avoiding sin is not just about worshipping One God without partner through conventional rituals. It goes far beyond that to one's moral and mannerly behavior, taking heed of one's conscience, and seeking with one's heart. Part 2: Sin is what bothers the conscience and is shameful to the righteous heart.

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[Previous: Righteousness and Sin \(part 1 of 2\): Righteousness is Good Character](#)

Cheating and Deception



Description: Islam absolutely forbids cheating and deception whether Muslims or non-Muslims are involved. The stern warnings of the Prophet of Mercy to those who cheat others.

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Cheating and deception are despicable characteristics that are beneath a decent person. Intentionally distorting the truth in order to mislead others contradicts the values of honesty, which requires an attitude of sincerity, straightforwardness, and fairness that leaves no room for cheating, lying, trickery, or deceit. There are many texts from the Quran and the Sunnah conveying the meaning that cheating, whether the target be Muslims or non-Muslims, is forbidden.



Accepting the guidance of Islam leads a person to truthfulness, which means a person completely avoids cheating, cheating, and back-stabbing. The Prophet of Islam said:

“Whoever bears arms against us is not one of us, and whoever cheats us is not one of us.” (*Saheeh Muslim*)

According to another report, the Prophet passed by a pile of food in the market. He put his hand inside it and felt dampness, although the surface was dry. He said:

“O owner of the food, what is this?”

The man said, ‘It was damaged by rain, O Messenger of God.’

He said, ‘Why did you not put the rain-damaged food on top so that people could see

it! Whoever cheats us is not one of us.” (*Saheeh Muslim*)

Muslim society is based on purity of feeling, love, sincerity towards every Muslim, and fulfillment of promises to every member of society. Its members are endowed with piety, truthfulness, and faithfulness. Cheating and deception are alien characters in contrast to the noble character of a true Muslim. There is no room in it for swindlers, double crossers, tricksters, or traitors.

Islam views cheating and deception as heinous sins, a source of shame to the one guilty of committing them, both in this world and the next. The Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, did not merely denounce them by excluding them from the Muslim community in this world, he also announced that on the Day of Judgment every traitor would be raised carrying the flag of his betrayal. A caller will cry out from the vast arena of judgment, pointing to him, drawing attention to him:

“Every traitor will have a banner on the Day of Resurrection and it will be said: This is the betrayer of so-and-so.” (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari*)

The shame of traitors – men and women - will be immense. Those who thought that their betrayal had been forgotten will find it right there, exposed for the whole world to see on banners raised high held by their own hands!

Their shame will increase even more when they meet with the Prophet of Mercy, the advocate of the sinners on that terrifying and horrible Day. Their crime is of such enormity that it will deprive them of divine mercy and the Prophet’s intercession. The Prophet of Islam said:

“God said: There are three whom I will oppose on the Day of Resurrection: a man who gave his word and then betrayed it; a man who sold a free man into slavery and kept the money; and a man who hired someone, benefited from his labor, then did not pay his wages.” (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari*)

One should steer clear of all the various forms of deceit and deception present in today’s society. Cheating is common in examinations, business transactions, and even between spouses and loved ones. Placing a label on domestically-made products to make it seem that it is imported is a kind of fraud. Some people give wrong advice when their council is sought and thus deceive the person who believes he is getting good advice. An employee should do the job for what he is paid for without any deception or cheating. Rulers rig the ballot to win elections and cheat the whole nation. Cheating between spouses and having extra-marital affairs is widespread in modern society. A Muslim should value himself too highly to be among those who cheat or deceive perchance one might fall in the category of hypocrites about whom the Prophet said:

“There are four characteristics, whoever has all of them is a true hypocrite, and whoever has one of them has one of the qualities of a hypocrite until he gives it up: when he is trusted, he betrays; when he speaks, he lies; when he makes a promise, he

breaks it; and when he disputes, he resorts to slander.” (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim*)

Therefore, a Muslim who has true Islamic sensitivities avoids deceit, cheating, treachery, and lying no matter what benefits or profits such activities might bring him, because Islam considers those guilty of such deeds to be hypocrites.

Actions and Intentions (part 1 of 2): Purity of Intention in the Religious Realm



Description: The role of intention in the acceptability of religion worship by God.

By [M. Abdulsalam](#) (© 2006 IslamReligion.com)

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It is narrated on the authority of Umar ibn al-Khattab who said: I heard the Messenger of God say:

“All actions are judged by motives, and each person will be rewarded according to their intention. Thus, he whose migration was to God and His Messenger, his migration is to God and His Messenger; but he whose migration was for some worldly thing he might gain, or for a wife he might marry, his migration is to that for which he migrated.” (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim*)

Background

This hadeeth is indeed one of the greatest and most important of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, as it sets one of the most important principles in the religion of Islam, specifically in regards to the acceptance one’s religion and deeds by God, and generally to all other normal every day activity in which a person involves himself. This principle is that in order for any action to be accepted and thus rewarded by God, it must be done purely for his sake. This concept is often called “sincerity to God”, but the most exact meaning would be “purity of intention”.



At one of the stages of the life of the Prophet, God ordered all the Muslims to migrate from Mecca to the newborn Islamic state of Medina. In this hadeeth, the Prophet gave an example of two types of people in regards to this religious service of migration:

- The first example was that of the person who migrated to Medina purely for the sake of God, seeking His Pleasure and seeking to fulfill His command. The Prophet stated that the deed of this type of person will be accepted by God and he will be rewarded in the fullest.
- The second example was of a person who fulfilled this religious service outwardly, but his intention was not the pleasure of God nor fulfilling His Command, and so this type of person, although he may achieve what he was intending in this life, will not receive reward for it from God, and the deed is not one which is considered acceptable.

In Islam, there are two realms to a person's life, the religious and the mundane. Although there is a clear separation between the two in regards to religious jurisprudence, they are in fact inseparable, as Islam is a religion which legislates in matter family, society and politics as well as the belief and worship of God. Thus, although this saying of the Prophet appears to apply to the religious aspect of a persons' life, it actually applies to both.

Purity of Intention in the Religious Realm

As mentioned earlier, this hadeeth sets the first principle for one's deeds to be accepted by God, which is that they should be done purely for God. In regards to those deeds which have been commanded as a form of religious devotion, known as worship, one must do them for God Alone, for it is God who commanded the service or deed to be done and loves it. These deeds include the likes of prayer, (Salah), Fasting, the offering of the Compulsory Charity (Zakah), the performance of the Lesser or Grater Pilgrimage to Mecca (Umrah and Hajj), and all other service which have been ordained in the religion. Even though the deeds may appear outwardly, as in this hadeeth, to be one accepted, of pivotal importance is the intention which the person has when performing them.

A person who directs any of these or other religious service to other deities other than or alongside God will never be accepted, and one who commits this heresy is deemed as committing the greatest sin against God, polytheism: to associate others with God in those things which are specific to Him. Islam is a religion which believes and practices true and strict monotheism. This monotheism not only entails that that there is only One Sole God and Creator, but also that this God has the right that all worship and acts of deed be done solely for His sake and none else. This concept is once which God ordered all His Prophets to preach, as He says in the Quran:

“And they were not commanded except that they should worship God, keeping the religion pure for Him, and worship none but Him Alone, and establish the Prayer and

offer the Compulsory Charity, and that is the upright religion.” (Quran 98:5)

Here we see that even though a person may seem to be performing acts of devotion and worship to God outwardly, if they associate any other being in this worship, whether they be angels, prophets, or righteous people, then this deed is not accepted by God. Moreover, they fall in to the great sin of polytheism.

Another aspect of this purity of intention is that a person should never seek any worldly gains through religious service and acts of worship, even if that worldly gain be something permissible. In the hadeeth mentioned above, the second person did not perform this religious obligation of migration for other deities besides or alongside God, nor did he intend something intrinsically evil. Rather his intention was something deemed permissible in the religion. Still, however, the act was not accepted by God, and the person may or may not have received what he intended from this worldly life. Thus, if a person seeks any permissible worldly gain through an action, the reward of the deed diminishes.

If a person desires something deemed as impermissible by Islam from religious service and worship, this is considered as a sin. Islam is a religion which encourages humbleness and selflessness, reprimanding those who seek praise of others and status in this worldly life. Thus, if one seeks the praise of others through religious service and worship, not only is it not accepted by God, but the person is deemed liable for punishment in the afterlife. The Prophet mentioned the first people to be sentenced to the Hellfire in the afterlife, and from them is the following:

“A person learned [religious] knowledge and taught it [to others], as well as reciting the Quran. He will be brought [to the presence of God], and God will mention to him all the favors he granted him, and he recognized them. God will ask him, ‘What did you do with them?’

He will answer, ‘I learned [religious] knowledge and taught it [to others], and I recited the Quran purely for Your sake.’

God will say, ‘You have lied! Rather you learned [religious] knowledge to be called a scholar, and you recited the Quran to be called a recitor, and it was said of you!’ Then it was commanded [to punish] him. So he was dragged on his face and he was thrown into the Fire.” (*an-Nasa’i*)

[Next: Actions and Intentions \(part 2 of 2\)](#)

Actions and Intentions (part 2 of 2): Purity of Intention in the Religious Realm



Description: Everyday actions become acts of worship which are rewarded by God if the proper intention is kept.

By [M. Abdulsalam](#) (© 2006 IslamReligion.com)

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Purity of Intention in the Mundane Realm

Since the wording of the *hadeeth* discussed in Part One is general, it is understood that a person may even be rewarded for their everyday normal activity which they perform, as long as their intention is correct and that act is not prohibited by the religion. The religion of Islam has encouraged and sometimes even placed the obligation upon humans of specific manners and mores in regards to life outside worship. It has legislated various methods in performing every day activities, from sleeping to eating. If a person performs the various activities in conformity to its legislation, they will be rewarded for it.

This aspect of intention allows one's entire life to become an act of worship, as long as the objective of that life is the pleasure of God, Whose pleasure is achieved by doing good and refraining from evil. A person can turn everyday activities into acts of worship by purifying his or her intention and sincerely seeking God's pleasure through these activities. God's Messenger, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, said:

“Helping a person or his belongings onto his mount is an act of charity. A good word is charity. Every step taken on the way to performing prayers is charity. Removing an obstacle from the road is charity.” (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari*)

Earning a living can be rewarded as well. The Companions saw a man and were astonished by his hard work and industry. They lamented: “If he were only doing this much work for the sake of God...”

God's Messenger replied:

“If he is working to support his small children, then it is for the sake of God. If he is working to support his elderly parents, then it is for the sake of God. If he is working to occupy himself and keep his desires in check, then it is for the sake of God. If, on the other hand, he is doing so to show off and earn fame, then he is working for the sake of Satan.” (*al-Mundhiri, as-Suyuti*)

One may gain reward even for the most natural acts, if of course they are accompanied by the proper intention: God's Messenger said:

“When one of you sleeps with his wife, it is an act of charity.” (*Saheeh Muslim*)

The same can be said for eating, sleeping, and working as well as traits of good character, such as truthfulness, honesty, generosity, courage, and humbleness. These can become worship through sincere intention and deliberate obedience to God.

In order for these otherwise mundane actions to be deserving of divine reward, the following conditions must be met:

A. The action must be lawful in and of itself. If the action is something prohibited, its perpetrator deserves punishment. God's Messenger said:

“God is pure and good, and He accepts only what is pure and good.” (*Saheeh Muslim*)

B. The dictates of Islamic Law must be completely observed. Deception, oppression, and iniquity must be avoided. God's Messenger said:

“He who deceives us is not one of us.” (*Saheeh Muslim*)

C. The activity should not keep the person from performing his or her religious obligations. God says:

“O you who believe, do not let your wealth and children distract you from the remembrance of God...” (Quran 63:9)

From this discussion, we can see the greatness of this *hadeeth* and how important it is in forming the concept of the acceptability of deeds and reward from God. We also see from this *hadeeth* that the concept of worship and service in Islam is not limited to performing certain legislated ritual acts, but rather encompasses the whole life of the Muslim, making him a true slave to God.

[Previous: Actions and Intentions \(part 1 of 2\): P](#)

Prophet Muhammad's Last Sermon: A Final Admonition



Description: The last sermon of Prophet Muhammad which he delivered at Hajj, the annual pilgrimage made to Mecca by Muslims all over.

By Amatullah Abdullah (edited by IslamReligion.com)

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Beloved Prophet Muhammad, may God send His praises upon him, was born in Mecca, Saudi Arabia circa 570 C.E. He is an example for all of humanity. He was a remarkable man at all times. He excelled in all walks of life by being a prophet, ruler, orator, soldier, husband, friend, father, uncle, nephew, and a grandfather. He was a man of love, patience, courage, wisdom, generosity, intelligence and magnitude who inspired millions of lives throughout the world.



God says in the Quran that he was sent as a mercy for the people of the world.

“We sent thee not save as a mercy for the peoples.” (Quran 21:107)

His Prophetic Mission began at the age of forty, circa 610 C.E., and continued until 632 C.E. From the path of ignorance, mankind was lead to the straight path and was blessed with the guidance of God.

Shortly before his death, Prophet Muhammad delivered a sermon during the *Hajj*, which came to be known as his “Final Sermon”. This final sermon was not only a reminder to his followers, but also an important admonition. The final sermon confirms the end of his Prophetic Mission.

Year 10 A.H. of the Islamic Calendar is considered to be one of the most significant years for three reasons. Firstly, this was the year when the Prophet delivered his Last Sermon during his farewell pilgrimage to Mecca. Secondly, this was the year where number of deputations came to the Prophet to announce their Islam as well as their tribes. Thirdly, it was the golden period of Islam when multitudes of people embraced the faith by accepting the message of the Prophet.

Prophet Muhammad undertook his farewell pilgrimage in the year 10 A.H. His farewell pilgrimage to Mecca is one of the most significant historical events in the minds of Muslims, for it was the first and last pilgrimage made by Prophet Muhammad, as well as being the model for performing the fifth pillar of Islam, the *Hajj*.

Prophet Muhammad’s final sermon was delivered during the *Hajj* of the year 632 C.E., the ninth day of Dhul Hijjah, the 12th month of the lunar year, at Arafat, the most blessed day of the year. There were countless Muslims present with the Prophet during his last pilgrimage when he delivered his last Sermon.

The Final Sermon:

After praising, and thanking God, the Prophet, may God send His praises upon him said:

“O People, lend me an attentive ear, for I know not whether after this year, I shall ever be amongst you again. Therefore, listen to what I am saying to you very carefully and take these words to those who could not be present here today.

O People, just as you regard this month, this day, this city as Sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you. Remember that you will indeed meet your Lord, and that He will indeed reckon your deeds. God has forbidden you to take usury (interest), therefore all interest obligation shall henceforth be waived. Your capital, however, is yours to keep. You will neither inflict nor suffer any inequity. God has Judged that there shall be no interest, and that all the interest due to Abbas ibn Abd’al Muttalib shall henceforth be waived...

Beware of Satan, for the safety of your religion. He has lost all hope that he will ever be able to lead you astray in big things, so beware of following him in small things.

O People, it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women, but they also have rights over you. Remember that you have taken them as your wives only under a trust from God and with His permission. If they abide by your right then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with any one of whom you do not approve, as well as never to be unchaste.

O People, listen to me in earnest, worship God, perform your five daily prayers, fast during the month of Ramadan, and offer Zakat. Perform Hajj if you have the means.

All mankind is from Adam and Eve. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab have any superiority over an Arab; white has no superiority over black, nor does a black have any superiority over white; [none have superiority over another] except by piety and good action. Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood. Nothing shall be legitimate to a Muslim which belongs to a fellow Muslim unless it was given freely and willingly. Do not, therefore, do injustice to yourselves.

Remember, one day you will appear before God and answer for your deeds. So beware, do not stray from the path of righteousness after I am gone.

O People, no prophet or apostle will come after me, and no new faith will be born. Reason well, therefore, O people, and understand words which I convey to you. I leave behind me two things, the Quran and my example, the Sunnah, and if you follow these you will never go astray.

All those who listen to me shall pass on my words to others and those to others again; and it may be that the last ones understand my words better than those who listen to me directly. Be my witness, O God, that I have conveyed your message to your people.”

Thus the beloved Prophet completed his Final Sermon, and upon it, near the summit of Arafat, the revelation came down:

“...This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My Grace upon you, and have chosen Islam for you as your religion...” (Quran 5:3)

Even today the Last Sermon of Prophet Muhammad is passed to every Muslim in every corner of the world through all possible means of communication. Muslims are reminded about it in mosques and in lectures. Indeed the meanings found in this sermon are indeed astounding, touching upon some of the most important rights God has over humanity, and humanity has over each other. Though the Prophet’s soul has left this world, his words are still living in our hearts.

His Characteristics

- [The Tolerance of the Prophet towards Other Religions \(part 1 of 2\): To Each Their Own Religion](#)
- [The Tolerance of the Prophet towards Other Religions \(part 2 of 2\): Religious Autonomy and Politics](#)
- [The Forgiveness of Muhammad Shown to Non-Muslims \(part 1 of 2\)](#)
- [The Forgiveness of Muhammad Shown to Non-Muslims \(part 2 of 2\)](#)
- [An Enemy becomes a Friend](#)
- [What They Said about Muhammad \(part 1 of 3\)](#)
- [What They Said about Muhammad \(part 2 of 3\)](#)
- [What They Said about Muhammad \(part 3 of 3\)](#)
- [The Prophet and Children](#)
- ["Who Will Save You from Me Now?"](#)

The Tolerance of the Prophet towards Other Religions (part 1 of 2): To Each Their Own Religion



Description: Many mistakenly believe that Islam does not tolerate the existence of other religions

present in the world. This article discusses some of the foundations the Prophet Muhammad himself laid in dealing with people of other faiths, with a practical examples from his lifetime. Part 1: Examples of religious tolerance for people of other faiths found in the constitution which the Prophet laid in Medina.

By [M. Abdulsalam](#) (© 2006 IslamReligion.com)

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Category: [Articles](#) > [Comparative Religion](#) > [Tolerance in Islam](#)

Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [His Characteristics](#)

The dealings of the Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, with other religions can best be described in the verse of the Quran:

“To you be your religion, to me be mine.”

The Arabian Peninsula during the time of the Prophet was a region in which various faiths were present. There were Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, polytheists, and others not affiliated with any religion. When one looks into the life of the Prophet, one may draw on many examples to portray the high level of tolerance shown to people of other faiths.



In order to understand and judge this tolerance, one must look into the period in which Islam was a formal state, with the specific laws laid down by the Prophet in accordance with the tenets of religion. Even though one can observe many examples of tolerance shown by the Prophet in the thirteen years of his stay in Mecca, one may incorrectly think that it was only due to seeking to raise the profile of the Muslims and the social status of Islam and in general. For this reason, the discussion will be limited to the period which commenced with the migration of the Prophet to Medina, and specifically once the constitution was set.

The Saheefah

The best example of the tolerance shown by the Prophet to other religions may be the constitution itself, called the ‘Saheefah’ by early historians.^[1] When the Prophet migrated to Medina, his role as a mere religious leader ended; he was now the political leader of a state, governed by the precepts of Islam, which demanded that clear laws of governance be laid out to ensure harmony and stability in a society which once had been distraught by decades of war, one which must ensure the peaceful coexistence of Muslims, Jews, Christians and polytheists. Due to this, the Prophet laid down a ‘constitution’ which detailed the responsibilities of all parties which resided in

Medina, their obligations towards each other, and certain restrictions which were placed on each. All parties were to obey what was mentioned therein, and any breach of its articles was regarded as an act of treachery.

One Nation

The first article of the constitution was that all the inhabitants of Medina, the Muslims as well as those who had entered the pact from the Jews, Christian, and idolaters, were **“one nation to the exclusion of all others.”** All were considered members and citizens of Medina society regardless of religion, race, or ancestry. People of other faiths were protected from harm as much as the Muslims, as is stated in another article, **“To the Jews who follow us belong help and equity. He shall not be harmed nor his enemies be aided.”** Previously, each tribe had their alliances and enemies within and without Medina. The Prophet gathered these different tribes under one system of governance which upheld pacts of alliances previously in existence between those individual tribes. All tribes had to act as a whole with disregard to individual alliances. Any attack on other religion or tribe was considered an attack on the state and upon the Muslims as well.

The lives of the practitioners of other religions in the Muslim society was also given protective status. The Prophet said:

“Whoever kills a person who has a truce with the Muslims will never smell the fragrance of Paradise.” (*Saheeh Muslim*)

Since the upper hand was with the Muslims, the Prophet strictly warned against any maltreatment of people of other faiths. He said:

“Beware! Whoever is cruel and hard on a non-Muslim minority, or curtails their rights, or burdens them with more than they can bear, or takes anything from them against their free will; I (Prophet Muhammad) will complain against the person on the Day of Judgment.” (*Abu Dawud*)

To Each Their Own Religion

In another article, it states, **“the Jews have their religion and the Muslims have theirs.”** In this, it is clear that anything other than tolerance would not be tolerated, and that, although all were members of a society, each had their separate religion which could not be violated. Each was allowed to practice their beliefs freely without any hindrances, and no acts of provocation would be tolerated.

There are many other articles of this constitution which may be discussed, but emphasis will be placed on an article which states, **“If any dispute or controversy likely to cause trouble should arise, it must be referred to God and His Messenger.”** This clause maintained that all inhabitants of the state must recognize a higher level of authority, and in those matters which involved various tribes and

religions, justice could not be meted out by individual leaders; rather it must be adjudicated by the leader of the state himself or his designated representatives. It was allowed, however, for individual tribes who were not Muslims, to refer to their own religious scriptures and their learned men in regards to their own personal affairs. They could though, if they opted, ask the Prophet to judge between them in their matters. God says in the Quran:

“...If they do come to you, either judge between them or decline to interfere...” (Quran 5:42)

Here we see that Prophet allowed each religion to judge in their own matters according to their own scriptures, as long as it did not stand in opposition to articles of the constitution, a pact which took into account the greater benefit of the peaceful co-existence of the society.

Footnotes:

[1] *Madinan Society at the Time of the Prophet*, Akram Diya al-Umari, International Islamic Publishing House, 1995.

The Tolerance of the Prophet towards Other Religions (part 2 of 2): Religious Autonomy and Politics



Description: Many mistakenly believe that Islam does not tolerate the existence of other religions present in the world. This article discusses some of the foundations the Prophet Muhammad himself laid in dealing with people of other faiths, with a practical examples from his lifetime. Part 2: More examples from the Prophet’s life which portray his tolerance of other religions.

By [M. Abdulsalam](#) (© 2006 IslamReligion.com)

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Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [His Characteristics](#)

There are many other examples during the lifetime of the Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, in addition to the Saheefah that practically portray the tolerance Islam shows for other religions.

Freedom of Religious Assembly and Religious Autonomy

Given consent by the constitution, the Jews had the complete freedom to practice their religion. The Jews in Medina at the time of the Prophet had their own school of learning, named **Bait-ul-Midras**, where they would recite the Torah, worship and educate themselves.

The Prophet emphasized in many letters to his emissaries that religious institutions should not be harmed. Here in a letter addressed to his emissary to the religious leaders of Saint Catherine in Mount Sinai who has sought the protection of the Muslims:

“This is a message from Muhammad ibn Abdullah, as a covenant to those who adopt Christianity, near and far, we are with them. Verily I, the servants, the helpers, and my followers defend them, because Christians are my citizens; and by God! I hold out against anything that displeases them. No compulsion is to be on them. Neither are their judges to be removed from their jobs nor their monks from their monasteries. No one is to destroy a house of their religion, to damage it, or to carry anything from it to the Muslims’ houses. Should anyone take any of these, he would spoil God’s covenant and disobey His Prophet. Verily, they are my allies and have my secure charter against all that they hate. No one is to force them to travel or to oblige them to fight. The Muslims are to fight for them. If a female Christian is married to a Muslim, it is not to take place without her approval. She is not to be prevented from visiting her church to pray. Their churches are declared to be protected. They are neither to be prevented from repairing them nor the sacredness of their covenants. No one of the nation (Muslims) is to disobey the covenant till the Last Day (end of the world).”[\[1\]](#)

As one can see, this Charter consisted of several clauses covering all important aspects of human rights, including such topics as the protection of minorities living under Islamic rule, freedom of worship and movement, freedom to appoint their own judges and to own and maintain their property, exemption from military service, and the right to protection in war.

On another occasion, the Prophet received a delegation of sixty Christians from the region of Najran, then a part of Yemen, at his mosque. When the time for their prayer came, they faced the direction of east and prayed. The Prophet ordered that they be left in their state and not harmed.

Politics

There are also examples in the life of the Prophet in which he cooperated between with people of other faiths in the political arena as well. He selected a non-Muslim, Amr-ibn Umaiya-ad-Damri, as an ambassador to be sent to Negus, the King of Ethiopia.

These are only some of the examples of the Prophet’s tolerance of other faiths. Islam

recognizes that there are a plurality of religions on this earth, and gives the right to individuals to choose the path which they believe to be true. Religion is not to be, and was never, forced upon an individual against their own will, and these examples from the life of the Prophet are an epitome of the verse of the Quran which promotes religious tolerance and sets the guideline for the Muslims' interaction with people of other faiths. God says:

“...There is no compulsion in religion...” (Quran 2:256)

Footnotes:

[1] “*Muslim and Non-Muslims, Face-to-Face*”, Ahmad Sakr. Foundation for Islamic Knowledge, Lombard IL.

[Previous: The Tolerance of the Prophet towards Other Religions \(part 1 of 2\): To Each Their Own Religion](#)

Parts of This Article

[The Tolerance of the Prophet towards Other Religions \(part 1 of 2\)](#)

The Forgiveness of Muhammad Shown to Non-Muslims (part 1 of 2)



Description: The forgiveness of the Prophet towards non-Muslims, even those who sought to kill him and opposed his mission throughout his life. Part 1.

By [M. Abdulsalam](#) (© 2006 IslamReligion.com)

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Category: [Articles](#) > [Current Issues](#) > [Islam and Non-Muslims](#)

The Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, was described as a “Mercy for all the Worlds”, as God said in the Quran:

“We have sent you as a mercy for all the worlds.” (Quran 21:107)

The recipients of this quality were not limited to just the Muslim nation, but it also extended to non-Muslims, some of who spent all their effort trying to harm the Prophet and his mission. This mercy and forgiveness is clearly demonstrated in the fact that the Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, never took revenge on anyone for personal reasons and always forgave even his staunch enemies. Aisha said that the Prophet never took revenge on his own behalf on anyone. She also said that he never returned evil for evil, but he would forgive and pardon. This will, God willing, become clear after a deep analysis of the following accounts of his life.



In the earlier portion of his mission, the Prophet traveled to the city of Taif, a city located in the mountains nearby to Mecca, in order to invite them to accept Islam. The leaders of Taif, however, were rude and discourteous in their treatment of the Prophet. Not being content with their insolent attitude towards him, they even stirred up some gangs of the town to harass him. This riff-raff followed the Prophet shouting at and abusing him, and throwing stones at him, until he was compelled to take refuge in an orchard. Thus the Prophet had to endure even more obstacles in Taif than he had had to face in Mecca. These ruffians, stationed either side of the path, threw stones at him until his feet were injured and smeared with blood. These oppressions so grievously dejected the Prophet and plunged him into in such a state of depression that a prayer, citing his helplessness and pitiable condition and seeking the aid of God, spontaneously came from his lips:

“O God, to You I complain of my weakness, lack of resources and humiliation before these people. You are the Most Merciful, the Lord of the weak and my Master. To whom will You consign me? To one estranged, bearing ill will, or an enemy given power over me? If You do not assign me any worth, I care not, for Your favor is abundant upon me. I seek refuge in the light of Your countenance by which all darkness is dispelled and every affair of this world and the next is set right, lest Thy anger should descend upon me or Your displeasure light upon me. I need only Your pleasure and satisfaction for only You enable me to do good and evade the evil. There is no power and no might but You.”

The Lord then sent the angel of mountains, seeking the permission of the Prophet to join together the two hills and crush the city of Taif, between which it was located. Out of his great tolerance and mercy, the Messenger of God replied,

“No! For, I hope that God will bring forth from their loins people who will worship God alone, associating nothing with Him.” (*Saheeh Muslim*)

His mercy and compassion was so great that on more than one occasion, God, Himself, reprimanded him for it. One of the greatest opponents of Islam and a personal enemy, was Abdullah bin Ubayy, the leader of the hypocrites of Medina. Outwardly proclaiming Islam, he surreptitiously inflicted great harm to the Muslims and the mission of the Prophet. Knowing his state of affairs, the Prophet Muhammad still offered the funeral prayer for him and prayed to God for his forgiveness. The Quran mentions this incident in these words:

“And never (O Muhammad) pray for one of them who dies, nor stand by his grave. Lo! They disbelieve in God and His Messenger, and they died while they were evil doers.” (Quran 9:84)

Abdullah bin Ubayy worked all his life against Muhammad and Islam and left no stone unturned so as to bring him into disrepute and try to defeat his mission. He withdrew his three hundred supporters in the battle of Uhud and thus almost broke the backbone of the Muslims at one stroke. He engaged in intrigues and acts of hostility against the Prophet of Islam and the Muslims. It was he who tried to bring shame to the Prophet by inciting his allies to falsely accuse the Prophet's wife, Aisha, of adultery in order to discredit him and his message.

The Forgiveness of Muhammad Shown to Non-Muslims (part 2 of 2)



Description: The forgiveness of the Prophet towards non-Muslims, even those who sought to kill him and opposed his mission throughout his life. Part 2: More examples.

By [M. Abdulsalam](#) (© 2006 IslamReligion.com)

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Category: [Articles](#) > [Current Issues](#) > [Islam and Non-Muslims](#)

The mercy of the Prophet even extended to those who brutally killed and then mutilated the body of his uncle Hamzah, one of the most beloved of people to the Prophet. Hamzah was one of the earliest to accept Islam and, through his power and position in the Quraishite hierarchy, diverted much harm from the Muslims. An Abyssinian slave of the wife of Abu Sufyan, Hind, sought out and killed Hamzah in the battle of Uhud. The night before the victory of Mecca, Abu Sufyan accepted Islam, fearing the vengeance of the Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him. The latter forgave him and sought no retribution for his years of enmity.

After Hind had killed Hamzah she mutilated his body by cutting his chest and tearing his liver and heart into pieces. When she quietly came to the Prophet and accepted Islam, he recognized her but did not say anything. She was so impressed by his

magnanimity and stature that she said, **“O Messenger of God, no tent was more deserted in my eyes than yours; but today no tent is more lovely in my eyes than yours.”**

Ikrama, son of Abu Jahl, was a great enemy of the Prophet and Islam. He ran away after the victory of Mecca and went to Yemen. After his wife embraced Islam, she brought him to the Prophet Muhammad under her protection. He was so pleased to see him that he greeted him with the words:

“O emigrant rider, welcome.”

Safwan bin Umayya, one of the chiefs of Mecca, was also a great enemy of Muhammad and Islam. He promised a reward to Umair ibn Wahab if he managed to kill Muhammad. When Mecca was conquered, Safwan ran away to Jeddah in the hope of finding a berth that would take him to Yemen by sea. Umair ibn Wahab came to Muhammad and said, “O Messenger of God! Safwan ibn Umayya, a chief of his tribe, has run away from fear of what you might do to him and threatens to cast himself into the sea.” The Prophet sent him a guarantee of protection and, when he returned, he requested Muhammad to give him two months to come to a decision.. He was given four months, after which he became a Muslim by his own will.

Habir ibn al-Aswad was another vicious enemy of Muhammad and Islam. He inflicted a serious injury to Zainab, daughter of the Noble Prophet when she decided to migrate to Medina. She was pregnant when she started her migration, and the polytheists of Mecca tried to stop her from leaving. This particular man, Habbar bin al-Aswad, physically assaulted her and intentionally caused her to fall down from her camel. Her fall had caused her to miscarry her baby, and she herself, was badly hurt. He had committed many other crimes against Muslims as well. He wanted flee to Persia but, when he decided to come to Muhammad instead, the Prophet magnanimously forgave him.

The tribe of Quraish the were archenemies of Islam and, for a period of thirteen years while he was still in Mecca, they would rebuke the Prophet, taunt and mock him, beat him and abuse him, both physically and mentally. They placed the afterbirth of a camel on his back while he prayed, and they boycotted him and his tribe until the social sanctions became unbearable. They plotted and attempted to kill him on more than one occasion, and when the Prophet escaped to Medina, they rallied the majority of the Arab tribes and waged many wars against him. Yet, when he entered Mecca victorious with an army of 10,000, he did not take revenge on anyone. The Prophet said to the Quraish:

“O people of Quraish! What do you think I will do to you?”

Hoping for a good response, they said: “You will do good. You are a noble brother, son of a noble brother.”

The Prophet then said:

“Then I say to you what Joseph said to his brothers: ‘There is no blame upon you.’ Go! For you all free!”^[1]

Rarely in the annals of history can we read such an instance of forgiveness. Even his deadliest enemy Abu Sufyan, who led so many battles against Islam, was forgiven, as was any person who stayed in his house and did not come to fight him.

The Prophet was all for forgiveness and no amount of crime or aggression against him was too great to be forgiven by him. He was the complete example of forgiveness and kindness, as mentioned in the following verse of the Quran:

“Keep to forgiveness (O Muhammad), and enjoin kindness, and turn away from the ignorant.” (Quran 7:199)

He always repelled evil with the good of forgiveness and kind behavior for, in his view, an antidote was better than poison. He believed and practiced the precept that love could foil hatred, and aggression could be won over by forgiveness. He overcame the ignorance of the people with the knowledge of Islam, and the folly and evil of the people with his kind and forgiving treatment. With his forgiveness, he freed people from the bondage of sin and crime, and also made them great friends of Islam. He was an epitome of the verse of the Quran:

“Good and evil are not alike. Repel evil with what is better. Then he, between whom and you there was hatred, will become as though he was a bosom friend.” (Quran 41:34)

Footnotes:

^[1] “*Mukhtasar Seeratur Rasool*”, Muhammad ibn Sulayman at-Tameemi.

An Enemy becomes a Friend



Description: A staunch enemy of the Prophet becomes one who loves him dearly, due to the compassion shown to him as a prisoner.

By Abdul-Wahid Hamid

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In the sixth year after the hijrah (the migration to Medina), the Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, decided to expand the scope of his mission. He sent eight letters to rulers in the Arabian Peninsula and surrounding areas inviting them to Islam. One of these rulers was Thumamah ibn Uthal.

Thumamah ibn Uthal al-Haneefi was one of the most powerful Arab rulers in the pre-Islamic era. This is not surprising since he was a chieftain of the Banu Hanifah and one of the rulers of al-Yamamah whose word no one dared to challenge or disobey.

When Thumamah received the Prophet's letter, he was consumed by anger and rejected it. He refused to listen to the invitation of Truth and goodness. More than that, he felt a strong desire to go and kill the Prophet and bury his mission with him.

Thumamah waited and waited for a convenient time to carry out his design against the Prophet until eventually forgetfulness caused him to lose interest. One of his uncles, however, reminded him of his plan, praising what he intended to do.

In the pursuit of his evil design against the Prophet, Thumamah met and killed a group of the Prophet's companions. The Prophet thereupon declared him a wanted man who could lawfully be killed on sight.

Not long afterwards, Thumamah decided to perform umrah (the lesser pilgrimage). He wanted to perform Tawaf (circumambulation) around the Kaabah and sacrifice to the idols there (The people of Mecca, before becoming Muslims, placed hundreds of idols in the Kaaba). So he left al-Yamamah for Mecca. As he was passing near Medina, an incident took place which he had not anticipated.

Groups of Muslims were patrolling the districts of Medina and outlying areas on the lookout for any strangers or anyone intent on causing trouble. One of these groups came upon Thumamah and apprehended him, but they did not know who he was. They took him to Medina and tied him to one of the columns in the mosque. They waited for the Prophet himself to question the man and decide what should be done with him.



Just as he was about to enter the mosque, the Prophet saw Thumamah, so he asked his companions,

“Do you know whom you have taken?”

“No, messenger of God,” they replied.

“This is Thumamah ibn Uthal al-Haneefi,” he said. “You have done well in capturing him.”

The Prophet then returned home to his family and said,

“Get what food you can and send it to Thumamah ibn Uthal.”

He then ordered his camel to be milked in order to provide him with milk. All this was done before he met Thumamah or had spoken to him.”

The Prophet then approached Thumamah hoping to encourage him to become a Muslim.

“What do you have to say for yourself?” he asked.

“If you want to kill in reprisal,” Thumamah replied, “you can have someone of noble blood to kill. If, out of your bounty, you want to forgive, I shall be grateful. If you want money as ransom, I shall give you whatever amount you ask.”

The Prophet then left him for two days, but still personally sent him food and drink and milk from his camel. The Prophet then went back to him and asked,

“What do you have to say for yourself?”

Thumamah repeated what he had said a couple of days beforehand. The Prophet then left and came back to him the following day.

“What do you have to say for yourself?”

He asked again, and Thumamah repeated what he had said the previous day once more. Then the Prophet turned to his companions and said,

“Set him free.”

Thumamah left the mosque of the Prophet and rode out on the trail to Mecca until he came to a palm grove on the outskirts of Medina near al-Baqee (a place of luxuriant vegetation which later became a cemetery for many of the Prophet’s companions). He watered his camel and took a complete bath there. Then he made his way back to the Prophet’s mosque. There, he stood before a congregation of Muslims and said:

“I bear witness that there is no true god but Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and His messenger.”

He then went to the Prophet and said:

“O Muhammad, by God, there was never on this earth a face more detestable than yours. Now, yours is the dearest face of all to me. I have killed some of your men,” he continued, “I am at your mercy. What will you have done to me?”

“There is now no blame on you, Thumamah,” replied the Prophet. “Becoming a Muslim obliterates past actions and marks a new beginning.”

What They Said about Muhammad (part 1 of 3)



Description: The statements of western scholars who have studied Islam about the Prophet. Part 1: Introduction.

By iie.net (edited by IslamReligion.com)

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Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [His Characteristics](#)

During the centuries of the Crusades, all sorts of slanders were invented against the Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him. With the birth of the modern age, however, marked with religious tolerance and freedom of thought, there has been a great change in the approach of Western authors in their delineation of his life and character. The views of some non-Muslim scholars regarding Prophet Muhammad, given at the end, justify this opinion.

The West has still to go a step forward to discover the greatest reality about Muhammad, and that is his being the true and last Prophet of God for all of humanity. In spite of all its objectivity and enlightenment here has been no sincere and objective attempt by the West to understand the Prophethood of Muhammad. It is so strange that very glowing tributes are paid to him for his integrity and achievement, but his claim of being the Prophet of God has been rejected explicitly and implicitly. It is



here that a searching of the heart is required, and a review if the so-called objectivity is needed. The following glaring facts from the life of Muhammad have been furnished to facilitate an unbiased, logical and objective decision regarding his Prophethood.

Up to the age of forty, Muhammad was not known as a statesman, a preacher or an orator. He was never seen discussing the principles of metaphysics, ethics, law, politics, economics or sociology. No doubt he possessed an excellent character, charming manners and was highly cultured. Yet there was nothing so deeply striking and so radically extraordinary in him that would make men expect something great and revolutionary from him in the future. But when he came out from the Cave of Hira with a new message, he was completely transformed. Is it possible for such a person of the above qualities to turn all of a sudden into 'an imposter' and claim to be the Prophet of God and thus invite the rage of his people? One might ask, for what reason did he suffer all the hardships imposed on him? His people offered to accept him as their king and to lay all the riches of the land at his feet if only he would leave the preaching of his religion. But he chose to refuse their tempting offers and go on preaching his religion single-handedly in the face of all kinds of insults, social boycott and even physical assault by his own people. Was it not only God's support and his firm will to disseminate the message of God and his deep-rooted belief that ultimately Islam would emerge as the only way of life for humanity, that he stood like a mountain in the face of all opposition and conspiracies to eliminate him? Furthermore, had he come with a design of rivalry with the Christians and the Jews, why should he have made belief in Jesus and Moses and other Prophets of God, may God praise them all, a basic requirement of faith without which no one could be a Muslim?

Is it not an incontrovertible proof of his Prophethood that in spite of being unlettered and having led a very normal and quiet life for forty years, when he began preaching his message, all of Arabia stood in awe and wonder at his wonderful eloquence and oratory? It was so matchless that the whole legion of Arab poets, preachers and orators of the highest caliber failed to bring forth its equivalent. And above all, how could he then pronounce truths of a scientific nature contained in the Quran that no human being could possibly have developed at that time?

Last but not least, why did he lead a hard life, even after gaining power and authority? Just ponder over the words he uttered while dying:

“We, the community of the Prophets, are not inherited. Whatever we leave behind is for charity.”

As a matter of fact, Muhammad is the last link of the chain of Prophets sent in different lands and times since the beginning of human life on this planet. The following are writings of some western authors regarding Muhammad.

Lamartine, *Histoire de la Turquie*, Paris 1854, Vol II, pp. 276-77:

“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? The most famous men created arms, laws and empires only. They founded, if anything at all, no more than material powers which often crumbled away before their eyes. This man moved not only armies, legislations, empires, peoples and dynasties, but millions of men in one-third of the then inhabited world; and more than that, he moved the altars, the gods, the religions, the ideas, the beliefs and souls... the forbearance in victory, his ambition, which was entirely devoted to one idea and in no manner striving for an empire; his endless prayers, his mystic conversations with God, his death and his triumph after death; all these attest not to an imposture but to a firm conviction which gave him the power to restore a dogma. This dogma was twofold, the unit of God and the immateriality of God; the former telling what God is, the latter telling what God is not; the one overthrowing false gods with the sword, the other starting an idea with words.

“Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, of a cult without images; the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than he?”

Edward Gibbon and Simon Ockley, *History of the Saracen Empire*, London, 1870, p. 54:

“It is not the propagation but the permanency of his religion that deserves our wonder, the same pure and perfect impression which he engraved at Mecca and Medina is preserved, after the revolutions of twelve centuries by the Indian, the African and the Turkish proselytes of the Quran...The Mahometans^[1] have uniformly withstood the temptation of reducing the object of their faith and devotion to a level with the senses and imagination of man. ‘I believe in One God and Mahomet the Apostle of God’, is the simple and invariable profession of Islam. The intellectual image of the Deity has never been degraded by any visible idol; the honors of the prophet have never transgressed the measure of human virtue, and his living precepts have restrained the gratitude of his disciples within the bounds of reason and religion.”

Bosworth Smith, *Mohammed and Mohammadanism*, London 1874, p. 92:

“He was Caesar and Pope in one; but he was Pope without Pope’s pretensions, Caesar without the legions of Caesar: without a standing army, without a bodyguard, without a palace, without a fixed revenue; if ever any man had the right to say that he ruled by the right divine, it was Mohammed, for he had all the power without its instruments and without its supports.”

Annie Besant, *The Life and Teachings of Muhammad*, Madras 1932, p. 4:

“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. And although in what I put to you I shall say many things which may be familiar to many, yet I myself

feel whenever I re-read them, a new way of admiration, a new sense of reverence for that mighty Arabian teacher.”

W. Montgomery, *Mohammad at Mecca*, Oxford 1953, p. 52:

“His readiness to undergo persecutions for his beliefs, the high moral character of the men who believed in him and looked up to him as leader, and the greatness of his ultimate achievement – all argue his fundamental integrity. To suppose Muhammad an impostor raises more problems than it solves. Moreover, none of the great figures of history is so poorly appreciated in the West as Muhammad.”

James A. Michener, ‘Islam: The Misunderstood Religion’ in *Reader’s Digest* (American Edition), May 1955, pp. 68-70:

“Muhammad, the inspired man who founded Islam, was born about A.D. 570 into an Arabian tribe that worshipped idols. Orphaned at birth, he was always particularly solicitous of the poor and needy, the widow and the orphan, the slave and the downtrodden. At twenty he was already a successful businessman, and soon became director of camel caravans for a wealthy widow. When he reached twenty-five, his employer, recognizing his merit, proposed marriage. Even though she was fifteen years older, he married her, and as long as she lived, remained a devoted husband.

“Like almost every major prophet before him, Muhammad fought shy of serving as the transmitter of God’s word, sensing his own inadequacy. But the angel commanded ‘Read’. So far as we know, Muhammad was unable to read or write, but he began to dictate those inspired words which would soon revolutionize a large segment of the earth: “There is one God.”

“In all things Muhammad was profoundly practical. When his beloved son Ibrahim died, an eclipse occurred, and rumors of God’s personal condolence quickly arose. Whereupon Muhammad is said to have announced, ‘An eclipse is a phenomenon of nature. It is foolish to attribute such things to the death or birth of a human-being.’

“At Muhammad’s own death an attempt was made to deify him, but the man who was to become his administrative successor killed the hysteria with one of the noblest speeches in religious history: ‘If there are any among you who worshipped Muhammad, he is dead. But if it is God you worshipped, He lives forever.’”

Michael H. Hart, *The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History*, New York: Hart Publishing Company, Inc. 1978, p. 33:

“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 level.”

Footnotes:

[1] The term Mahometans and Mohammadanism is a misnomer introduced by orientalist certain due to their lack of understanding of Islam, in analogy to Christ and Christianity.

What They Said about Muhammad (part 2 of 3)



Description: The statements of western scholars who have studied Islam about the Prophet. Part 2: Their statements.

By iie.net (edited by IslamReligion.com)

Published on 20 Feb 2006 - Last modified on 15 Dec 2007

Viewed: 36833 (daily average: 14) - Rating: 3.7 out of 5 - Rated by: 6

Printed: 1359 - Emailed: 14 - Commented on: 0

Category: [Articles](#) > [The Benefits of Islam](#) > [What Others Say about Islam, Muhammad, and the Quran](#)

Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [His Characteristics](#)

Lamartine, *Histoire de la Turquie*, Paris 1854, Vol II, pp. 276-77:

“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? The most famous men created arms, laws and empires only. They founded, if anything at all, no more than material powers which often crumbled away before their eyes. This man moved not only armies, legislations, empires, peoples and dynasties, but millions of men in one-third of the then inhabited world; and more than that, he moved the altars, the gods, the religions, the ideas, the beliefs and souls... the forbearance in victory, his ambition, which was entirely devoted to one idea and in no manner striving for an empire; his endless prayers, his mystic conversations with God, his death and his triumph after death; all these attest not to an imposture but to a firm conviction which gave him the power to restore a dogma. This dogma was twofold, the unit of God and the immateriality of God; the former telling what God is, the latter telling what God is not; the one overthrowing false gods with the sword, the other starting an idea with words.

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years older, he married her, and as long as she lived, remained a devoted husband.

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Footnotes:

The Prophet and Children



Description: An all round role model, he was respected by leaders, emulated by his followers, and surprisingly, loved and cherished by children.

By F.G. (edited by IslamReligion.com)

Published on 30 Apr 2007 - Last modified on 04 Oct 2009

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Printed: 767 - Emailed: 19 - Commented on: 0

Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [His Characteristics](#)

Prophet Muhammad, may God send His praises upon him, was an extraordinary husband, a perfect father, and a unique grandfather. He was unique in every way. He treated his children and grandchildren with great compassion and never neglected to direct them to the straight path and to good deeds. He loved them and treated them tenderly, but did not allow them to neglect matters related to the afterlife. He showed them how to lead a humane life and never allowed them to neglect their religious duties or to become spoiled.



His ultimate goal was to prepare them for the Hereafter. His perfect balance in such matters is another dimension of his divinely-inspired intellect. Anas Ibn Malik, the Messenger's helper for 10 years, says:

“I have never seen a man who was more compassionate to his family members than Muhammad.”[\[1\]](#)

Muhammad was a human like us, but God inspired in him such an intimate affection for every living thing that he could establish a connection with all of them. As a result, he was full of extraordinary affection toward his family members and others.

All of the Prophet's sons died. Ibrahim, his last son, died in infancy. The Prophet often visited his son before the latter's death, although he was very busy. Ibrahim was looked after by a nurse. The Prophet would kiss and play with him before returning home.[\[2\]](#)

When Ibrahim took his last breaths, the eyes of the Prophet started shedding tears. Abdur-Rahman Ibn Awf said:

“O God's Messenger, even you (weep)!” The Prophet said, “O Ibn Auf, this is mercy.”

Then he wept more and said:

“The eyes shed tears and the heart grieves, and we will not say except what pleases our Lord, O Ibrahim! Indeed we are grieved by your separation.”

The Messenger was completely balanced in the way he brought up his children. He loved his children and grandchildren very much, and instilled love in them. However, he never let his love for them be abused. None of them deliberately dared to do anything wrong. If they made an unintentional mistake, the Messenger's protection prevented them from going even slightly astray. He did this by wrapping them in love and an aura of dignity. For example, once Hasan or Hussain wanted to eat a date meant for distribution among the poor as alms. The Messenger immediately took it

from his hand, and said:

“Anything given as alms is forbidden to us.”[\[3\]](#)

In teaching them while they were young to be sensitive to forbidden acts, the Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, established an important principle of education.

Whenever he returned to Medina, he would carry children on his mount. On such occasions, the Messenger embraced not only his grandchildren but also those in his house and those nearby. He conquered their hearts through his compassion. He loved all children.

He loved his granddaughter Umamah. He often went out with her on his shoulders, and even placed her on his shoulders while praying. When he prostrated, he put her down; when he had finished praying, he placed her on his back again.[\[4\]](#)

The Prophet showed this degree of love to Umamah to teach his male followers how to treat girls. This was a vital necessity; only a decade earlier, it had been the social norm to bury infant or young girls alive. Such public paternal affection for a granddaughter had never been seen before in Arabia.

The Messenger proclaimed that Islam allows no discrimination between son and daughter. How could there be? One is Muhammad, the other is Khadijah; one is Adam, the other is Eve; one is Ali, the other is Fatima. For every great man there is a great woman.

As soon as Fatimah, the daughter of the Messenger, entered the room where the Messenger was, he would stand, take her hands, and make her sit where he was sitting. He would ask about her health and family, show his paternal love for her and compliment her.

Fatimah, knowing how fond he was of her, loved him more than her own self. She always watched her father and how he called people to Islam. She wept profusely when the Messenger told her that he would die soon, but her tears of sorrow turned to tears of joy when he informed her that she would be the first of his family to follow him.[\[5\]](#)

This is the Prophet and his relation to children, A man respected by leaders, cherished and loved by children.

Footnotes:

[1] *Saheeh Muslim*

[2] *Saheeh Muslim*

[3] *Saheeh Muslim*

[4] *Saheeh Muslim*

[5] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim*

Article Tools

“Who Will Save You from Me Now?”



Description: An example of how a great leader dealt with those who showed him enmity.

By Abdul-Rahman A. al-Iyadah

Published on 24 Dec 2007 - Last modified on 02 Mar 2008

Viewed: 11731 (daily average: 6) - Rating: 4.5 out of 5 - Rated by: 31

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Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [His Characteristics](#)

Category: [Articles](#) > [Current Issues](#) > [Islam and Non-Muslims](#)

There was a small community in an isolated area. Weak and defenseless, the people of this community lived in fear and anxiety, because they were being relentlessly attacked by a gang of bandits.

We can scarcely imagine their fear. It is the fear of a helpless person in the face of a strong and merciless abuser. These bandits knew only the law of the jungle. Like lions, they recognized no code of ethics besides their own hunger and lust. Anyone they could subdue was fair game.

Though the community lived in the desert, before the arrival of the gang, they enjoyed peace and security and managed to prosper. Now they were being stripped of their lives, their liberty, and their honor. In desperation, they appealed to the authorities to come save them.

The head of state decided to take it upon himself to lead his forces into the area and punish the ones who were spreading terror and violating the lives and security of his



people. News of this mobilization spread quickly and soon the bandits knew that the authorities were coming after them in force. They were compelled to flee the area and seek refuge in the surrounding mountains. They hid among the highest peaks they could find, hoping to save themselves. They knew that they could very well meet their fate in the very place they were fleeing to, but they hoped to at least be able to scope out the forces that were being sent against them.

The forces arrived under the command of the head of state to find that the bandits had abandoned the area and taken up positions on a nearby mountain to survey the situation from a safe vantage point.

As soon as the forces arrived, a thunderstorm struck, flooding the valleys near the mountain. The head of state was soaked through. After the storm passed, he went off to find a place to remove his clothes and allow them to air out. He found a tree, took off his outer garments, and hung them on a branch to dry. He sat beneath the tree to rest from the tiring journey. Fatigue defeated him and he soon drifted off to sleep.

One of the bandits was watching this with interest, and said to himself: "This is an excellent opportunity to subdue the leader while he is sleeping. Then no one will stand in our way."

Exercising the utmost stealth, he climbed down from the mountain and snuck across to where the leader was sleeping.

As he approached the tree, he noticed the leader's sword beside him. He looked left and right to make sure that no one else was around. Then, with his skill as a thief, he quickly snatched up the sword and then pointed it in the leader's face.

The bandit sneered and exclaimed: "Who will save you from me now?"

The leader woke up at these words to see the bandit standing, threateningly above his head, sword in hand. He realized immediately that the glowering bandit had disarmed him and was threatening to kill him. Imagine what you would do in such a situation.

The leader kept his composure, straightened himself up where he was sitting, and regarded his assailant calmly. After listening patiently to the bandit's threats, he answered his assailant's question, and said: "**God will save me.**"

The bandit felt a shudder go through his body and down his arm. He dropped the sword. As swiftly as it fell, the leader snatched it up and came upon the bandit with it, repeating the same question that the bandit had asked him moments before: "**Who will save you from me now?**"

Imagine that you found yourself in this leader's position. What would you do with the bandit? Would your state of mind give you any chance to think before acting? Would anyone blame you if you struck the thief down in self defense?

However, this leader had a strong, magnanimous heart, a heart that knew neither rancor nor vengefulness. He regarded vindictiveness to be a sign of weakness. Imagine that the leader not only pardoned the bandit, but offered him the opportunity to join with his forces in their campaign. Moreover, he promised him that if he took the offer, he would receive all of the entitlements and rewards that the other soldiers would get.

We would suspect the bandit to eagerly take up this offer, at least as an act of deception. However, the bandit did the unthinkable. He refused, and the ruffian did so with all the coarseness and impertinence that he could muster.

The leader said to him: **“Then go. You know the way.”**

The bandit began to hasten away, but then stopped and said: “I will not fight against you, nor will I ever join with any group who fights you.” This, in and of itself, was an acceptable enough outcome.

When the bandit returned to the rest of his gang, they could see that he was elated to have survived the encounter. He said to them: “I have come to you from a leader like no other.” He then related to them everything that had happened and how fortunate he was to still be alive.”

It remains for us to reveal the identity of this leader. He was the same person who is often maligned and depicted in a most ignoble light.

Yes, he was none other than Muhammad, the Prophet of God.

His Biography

- [Meet the Prophet Muhammad](#)
- [Muhammad's Biography \(part 1 of 12\): The Conditions of Arabia Prior to Prophecy](#)
- [Muhammad's Biography \(part 2 of 12\): From Birth to Adulthood](#)
- [Muhammad's Biography \(part 3 of 12\): The First Revelations](#)
- [Muhammad's Biography \(part 4 of 12\): Persecution in Mecca](#)
- [Muhammad's Biography \(part 5 of 12\): Setting the Stage for Migration](#)
- [Muhammad's Biography \(part 6 of 12\): The Hijrah of the Prophet](#)
- [Muhammad's Biography \(part 7 of 12\): A New Stage in Medina](#)
- [Muhammad's Biography \(part 8 of 12\): The Campaign of Badr](#)
- [Muhammad's Biography \(part 9 of 12\): The Treason of Former Allies](#)
- [Muhammad's Biography \(part 10 of 12\): The Treaty of Hudaibiyyah](#)
- [Muhammad's Biography \(part 11 of 12\): The Return to Mecca](#)
- [Muhammad's Biography \(part 12 of 12\): Bidding Farewell](#)

- [The Marriages of Prophet Muhammad \(part 1 of 2\): Stages of Life](#)
- [The Marriages of Prophet Muhammad \(part 2 of 2\): A Humble Life](#)
- [A Short Biography of the "Mothers of the Faithful" \(part 1 of 2\)](#)
- [A Short Biography of the "Mothers of the Faithful" \(part 2 of 2\)](#)
- [The Prophet and Polygamy \(part 1 of 2\)](#)
- [The Prophet and Polygamy \(part 2 of 2\)](#)

Meet the Prophet Muhammad



Description: A look at the physical and moral characteristics of the Prophet of God, Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him.

By IslamReligion.com

Published on 23 Jan 2006 - Last modified on 16 Oct 2011

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Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [His Biography](#)

“I began to look at him and at the moon, he was wearing a red mantle, and he appeared to be more beautiful than the moon to me.”
(*Al-Tirmidhi*)

This is how **Jabir ibn Samura** described the Last of the Prophets, the Chief of the Pious, the Prince of the Believers, the Chosen One of the Most Merciful – Muhammad, the Messenger of God.



He had a pleasant face that was round, white, and fair. His hair fell to his ear lobes. His beard was thick and black. When he was pleased, his face would light up. His laugh was no more than smiling. His eyes were blackish, and his eyelashes were long. His long eyebrows were curved. When the eyes of Abdullah ibn Salam, the chief rabbi of Medina, fell on his face, he declared that such a noble face could not be the face of a liar!

He was of medium height, neither tall nor short. He walked inclining forward. He wore tanned leather sandals. His pants would reach to the middle of his shin or sometimes just above his ankles.

On his back, towards the left shoulder was the ‘Seal of Prophethood’. It was the size of a pigeon’s egg with spots like moles on it. His palms were described to be softer than

the brocade of silk.

He was recognized by his fragrance when he approached from a distance. Drops of his perspiration were described to be like pearls. His companions collected his sweat to mix with their perfumes which made them even more fragrant!

Islamic doctrine holds if someone has been blessed with the vision of the Prophet in a dream as described, then indeed they have seen him.

He would keep silent for long periods of time and was the most dignified when silent.

When he spoke, he uttered nothing but the truth in a voice pleasing to the ears. He did not speak rapidly as many people do today; rather he spoke in a clear speech so that those who sat with him could remember it. His speech was described to be such that anyone who wished to count his words could have done so easily. His companions described him to be neither vulgar nor indecent. He neither cursed people, nor abused them. He merely reprimanded by saying:

“What is the matter with such and such people” (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari*)

The most hateful conduct to him was lying. Sometimes he used to repeat himself twice or even thrice to enable the listeners to understand him well. He would give short sermons. While delivering the sermons his eyes would become red, his voice would rise, and his emotions become visible as if he were warning of an imminent assault from an enemy.

He led a simple life without any extravagance or lavishness. He put the worldly life behind his back and turned away from it. He considered it to be a prison, not Paradise! Had he wished, he could have had anything he desired, for the keys of its treasures were presented to him, but he refused to accept them. He did not exchange his share of the life to come with the worldly life. He knew that it is a corridor, not a permanent residence. He understood fully well that it is a transit station, not a leisure park. He took it for its real worth - a summer cloud that would soon disperse.

Yet God says He enriched him from poverty:

“Did He not find you poor and enrich you?” (Quran 93:8)

Aisha, his wife, said:

“A month would pass while the family of Muhammad would not light fire in their homes. They subsisted on two things - dates and water. Some residents of Medina who were his neighbors would send milk from their sheep, which he would drink and then give to his family.” (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim*)

She said the family of Muhammad never ate wheat bread to their satisfaction for three consecutive days from the time of his arrival at Medina until he passed away, about 10

years!

With all this, he would stand up in the middle of the night to offer his gratitude to his Lord in prayer. He would pray for so long that his feet would swell! When his wives would ask why he worshipped God so much, his only response would be:

“Shall I not be a thankful servant of God?” (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim*)

Omar, one of his companions, remembering the days he passed in hunger said that sometimes the Prophet did not even have rotten dates to satisfy his hunger!

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, another companion and eye-witness, says that once, when Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, awoke from sleep, the marks of the mat made out of date palm leaves on which he used to sleep were etched on his body. Abdullah complained:

“My father and mother be ransomed for you! Why did you not let us prepare something (softer) for you from which you could protect yourself?”

He replied:

“I have nothing to do with this world. I am in this world like a rider who stops under the shade of the tree for a short time and, after taking rest, he resumes his journey again, leaving the tree behind.” (*Al-Tirmidhi*)

Various conquerors in the annals of history are known for spilling rivers of blood and erecting pyramids of skulls. Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, is known for his forgiveness. He never took revenge from anyone who wronged him to the point that he never struck anybody with his hand, neither a woman nor a servant, unless he was fighting in battle. His forgiveness could be seen on the day he entered Mecca as a conqueror after eight years of exile.

He forgave those who persecuted him, and forced him and his family in exile for three years in rugged mountains, who had accused him of being a lunatic, a poet, or one possessed. He pardoned Abu Sufyan, one of the most evil of people who plotted to persecute him day and night, along with his wife, Hind, who mutilated the dead body of the Prophet's Muslim uncle and ate the raw liver after ordering Wahshi, a fierce slave known for his fighting skills, to kill Him, which later led them to accept Islam. Who else could be on such an exalted standard of character but the noblest and most truthful Messenger of God?

Wahshi, who used to live in Mecca, won his freedom from Hind for the service of killing the uncle of the Prophet. When Islam gained dominance in Mecca, Wahshi ran away from Mecca to Taif. Eventually Taif also succumbed to the Muslims. He was told Muhammad would forgive anyone who accepted Islam. Even though the crime was so great, Wahshi gathered his courage and came to the Prophet of Mercy and announced his Islam, and Muhammad forgave him.

His forgiveness even extended to Habbar ibn Aswad. When Zaynab, the Prophet's daughter, was migrating from Mecca to Medina, the Meccans tried to stop her, Habbar was one of them. He made the Prophet's pregnant daughter fall from her camel. As a result, she lost her baby. Running away from the guilt of his crime, Habbar fled to Iran, but God turned his heart towards the Prophet. So he came to the Prophet's court, acknowledged his guilt, bore the testimony of faith, and was forgiven by the Prophet!

Muhammad performed physical miracles with God's permission. He split the moon into two halves by merely pointing his finger at it. In a mystical journey known as *Mi'raaj*, he traveled in one night from Mecca to Jerusalem on a heavenly mount, *al-Buraq*, led all the Prophets in prayer, and then ascended beyond the seven heavens to meet his Lord. He cured the sick and the blind; demons would leave the possessed by his command, water flowed from his fingers, and his food would glorify God.

Yet he was the most humble of men. He sat on the ground, ate on the ground, and slept on the ground. A companion narrated that if a stranger were to enter a gathering where he was present, he would not be able to differentiate the Prophet from his companions due to his humbleness. Anas, his servant, swore that in his nine years of service, the noble Prophet never chastised him or blamed him for anything. Those around him described Muhammad to be so humble that even a little girl could hold his hand and take him wherever she wished. He used to come to the weak among the Muslims in order to visit the sick and attend their funeral processions. He used to stay at the back of the caravan to aid the weak and pray for them. He would not hesitate to walk with a widow or a poor person until he had accomplished for them what they needed. He responded to the invitation of even slaves, eating nothing more than barley bread with them.

He was the best of men to his wives. Aisha, his wife, described how humble he was:

“He used to remain busy serving and helping his household, and when the time for prayer came he would perform ablution and go for prayer. He would patch his own sandals and sew his own garments. He was an ordinary human being, searching his clothes for lice, milking his sheep, and doing his own chores.” (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari*)

Indeed he was the best of all people to his family. His personality was such that people were not driven away from him!

Such was the noble Prophet of God who we must love more than our own selves and whom God has described as:

“Indeed in the Messenger of God you have a good example to follow...” (Quran 33:21)

Muhammad's Biography (part 1 of 12): The Conditions of Arabia Prior to Prophecy



Description: A brief look at the social and political state of the Arabian Peninsula prior to the birth of Prophet Muhammad.

By IslamReligion.com

Published on 13 Feb 2006 - Last modified on 16 Oct 2011

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Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [His Biography](#)

Arabia in that period was divided into three areas of influence. The north lived under the shadow of two great empires, the Christian Byzantium and the Zoroastrian Persia, empires in perpetual war so evenly matched that neither could achieve definitive victory over the other. In the shadows of these powers lived the Arabs of the northern region with divided and shifting allegiances.



The south was the land of the Arabian perfumes, called by the Romans 'Arabia Felix.' (present day Yemen and Southern Saudi Arabia) It was desirable property. The conversion of the Ethiopian ruler, the Negus, to Christianity had brought his country into alliance with Byzantium, and it was with Byzantine approval that the Ethiopians took possession of this fertile territory early in the sixth century. Before their ruin at the hands of a ruthless conqueror, however, the southerners had opened up the deserts of central Arabia to trade, introducing a measure of organization into the life of the Bedouin who served as guides for their caravans and establishing trading-posts in the oases.

If the symbol of these sedentary people was the frankincense tree, that of the arid zone was the date-palm; on one hand the luxury of perfume, on the other necessary food. No one could have regarded the Hejaz - '*where no bird sings and no grass grows*' - according to a southern poet - as desirable property. The tribes of the Hejaz had never experienced either conquest or oppression; they had never been obliged to say 'Sir' to any man.

Poverty was their protection, but it is doubtful whether they felt poor. To feel poor one must envy the rich, and they envied no one. Their wealth was in their freedom, in their honor, in their noble ancestry, and in the pliant instrument of the only art they knew, the art of poetry. All that we would now call 'culture' was concentrated in this one medium. Their poetry would glorify courage and freedom, praise the friend and mock the adversary, extol the bravery of the fellow tribesmen and the beauty of women, in poems chanted at the fireside or in the infiniteness of the desert under the vast blue sky, bearing witness to the grandeur of this little human creature forever

traveling across the barren spaces of the earth.

For the Bedouin the word was as powerful as the sword. When hostile tribes met for trial in battle it was usual for each side to put up its finest poet to praise the courage and nobility of his own people and heap contempt upon the ignoble foe. Such battles, in which combat between rival champions was a major feature, were more a sport of honor than warfare as we now understand the term; affairs of tumult, boasting and display, with much fewer casualties than those produced by modern warfare. They served a clear economic purpose through the distribution of booty, and for the victor to press his advantage too far would have been contrary to the concept of honor. When one side or the other acknowledged defeat the dead on both sides were counted and the victors would pay blood-money - in effect reparations - to the vanquished, so that the relative strength of the tribes was maintained in healthy balance. The contrast between this and the practices of civilized warfare is striking.

However, Mecca was, and remains, important for an altogether different reason. For here lies the Kaaba, the first House' ever set up for humanity to worship their only God. The ancient Kaaba had long been the center of this little world. More than 1,000 years before Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem, his ancestor, Abraham, aided by Ishmael, his elder son, raised its walls on ancient foundations. A certain Qusayy, chieftain of the powerful tribe of Quraysh, had established a permanent settlement there. This was the city of Mecca (or 'Bakka'). Close by the Kaaba ran the well of Zam Zam. Its origin, too, goes back to Abraham's time. It was this well which saved the life of the infant Ishmael. As the Bible says:

“And God heard the voice of the boy; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her: ‘What ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. Arise, lift up the boy, and hold him in your hand; for I will make him a great nation. And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the boy a drink. And God was with the boy; and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer.’”
(Genesis 21:17-20)

Or, as the Psalmist sings:

“As they pass through the dry Valley of Baca, it becomes a place of springs; the early rain fills it with pools.” (Psalms 84:6)

The circumstances of the time favored the development of Mecca as a major commercial center. The wars between Persia and Byzantium had closed the more northerly trading routes between east and west, while the influence and prosperity of southern Arabia had been destroyed by the Ethiopians. Moreover, the city's prestige was enhanced by its role as a centre of pilgrimage, as was that of Quraysh as custodians of the Kaaba, enjoying the best of both worlds. The combination of nobility – the Arab descent from Abraham through Ishmael - with wealth and spiritual authority gave them grounds for believing that their splendor, compared with that of

any other people on earth, was as the splendor of the sun compared with the twinkling of the stars.

But the distance of time from the great patriarchs and prophets as well as their isolation in the arid deserts of the peninsula had given rise to idolatry. Having faith in the intercession of lesser gods with the Supreme Being in their rites of worship, they held the belief that their deities possessed the power to carry their prayers to the Supreme God. Every region and clan, indeed every house, had a separate little 'god' of its own. Three hundred and sixty idols had been installed within the Kaaba and its courtyard - the house built by Abraham for the worship of the One and only God. The Arabs actually paid divine honors not merely to sculptured idols but venerated everything supernatural. They believed that the angels were daughters of God. Drunkenness and gambling were rife. Female infanticide was common where newborn girls were buried alive.

[Next: Muhammad's Biography \(part 2 of 12\): From Birth to](#)

Muhammad's Biography (part 2 of 12): From Birth to Adulthood



Description: A glimpse at the life of the Prophet prior to revelation.

By IslamReligion.com

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Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [His Biography](#)

The Prophet's Birth

It was in the year 570 of the Christian Era that Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, was born in Mecca, a city in present day Saudi Arabia. His father, Abdullah, was a great-great-grandson of Qusayy, the founder of Mecca, and belonged to the Hashimite family of Quraish. His mother, Aameena, was descended from Qusay's brother. Returning with a caravan from Syria and Palestine, Abdullah stopped to visit relatives in an oasis to the north of Mecca, fell ill there and died several months before his son's birth.

It was customary to send the sons of Quraysh into the desert to be suckled by a wet-nurse and spend their early childhood with a Bedouin tribe. Apart from considerations of health, this represented a return to their roots, an opportunity to experience the freedom that accompanies the vastness of the desert. Prophet Muhammad was taken by Halima, and spent four or five years with this Bedouin family, tending the sheep as soon as he was old enough to walk, learning the ways of the desert.

When he was six, not long after he had rejoined his mother, she took him on a visit to Yathrib, where his father had died, and she herself fell ill with one of the fevers prevalent in the oasis, dying on the journey home. Muhammad now came under the guardianship of his grandfather, Abdul-Muttalib, chief of the Hashimite clan. When the boy was eight years old, Abdul-Muttalib died, and thus he entered the care of the new Hashimite chieftain, his uncle Abu Talib. Prophet Muhammad tended sheep, and when he reached the age of nine, he was taken by his uncle on the caravan journey to Syria so that he could learn the art of trade.

He continued working as a merchant, and soon he made a reputation for himself. Among the substantial fortunes of Mecca was that of the twice widowed Khadeeja. Impressed by what she heard of Muhammad, who was now commonly known as al-Ameen, 'the trustworthy', she employed him to take her merchandise to Syria. Even more impressed by his competence, when this task was completed, than by his personal charm, she sent a proposal for marriage. By this time Prophet Muhammad was twenty-five, and Khadeeja was the age of forty. Khadeeja presented her husband with a young slave, Zayd, who was then freed by Muhammad. When Zaid's relatives came to ransom him, his affection ran so deep for his benefactor that he chose to remain with Prophet Muhammad. Khadeeja bore Muhammad six children, including one boy, Qasim, who died before his second birthday.

Prophet Muhammad was by now a man of substance, respected in the community, admired both for his generosity and his good sense. His future seemed assured. In due course, having re-established the prosperity of his clan, he would become one of the more influential elders of the city and end his life, perhaps, as his grandfather had done, reclining in the shade of the Kaaba and recollecting long years well spent in worldly terms. Yet his spirit was uneasy and became increasingly so as he approached middle age.

The Hunafa

The Meccans claimed descent from Abraham through Ishmael, and their temple, the Kaaba, had been built by Abraham for the worship of the One God. It was still called the House of God, but the chief objects of worship came to be a number of idols placed inside, sculptural depictions of deities they believed to be the daughters of God which acted as intercessors. The few who felt disgust at this idolatry which had prevailed for centuries longed for the religion of Abraham. Such seekers of the truth were known as Hunafaa, a word originally meaning "those who turn away" from idol-worship. These Hunafaa did not form a community, but rather each sought the truth by the light of their own inner consciousness. Muhammad son of Abdullah was one of these.

Muhammad's Biography (part 3 of 12): The First Revelations



Description: A detailed account of how the Prophet, God praise him, received his first revelations

from God.

By IslamReligion.com

Published on 13 Feb 2006 - Last modified on 19 Feb 2008

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Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [His Biography](#)

It was during this time when the Prophet began to see pleasant dreams which in turn proved true. He also felt an increasing need for solitude, and this led him to seek seclusion and meditation in the rocky hills which surrounded Mecca. There he would retreat for days, taking provisions along with him, and would return to his family for more provisions. In the blaze of day and during the clear desert nights, when the stars seem sharp enough to penetrate the eye, his very substance was becoming saturated with the 'signs' in the heavens, so that he might serve as an entirely adequate instrument for a revelation already inherent in these 'signs.' It was then that he was undergoing a preparation for the enormous task which would be placed upon his shoulders, the task of prophethood and conveying the true religion of God to his people and the rest of humanity.

It came on a night late in the sacred month of Ramadan, the night known to Muslims as Laylat-ul-Qadr, the 'Night of Decree.'



Cave of Hira (aerial view). Prophet Muhammad used to meditate in this cave frequently. The first revelations of the Quran came to him here.

Prophet Muhammad was in solitude in the cave on Mount Hira. He was startled by the Angel of Revelation, Gabriel, the same who had come to Mary, the mother of Jesus, who seized him in a close embrace. A single word of command burst upon him: '*Iqra*' - 'Read!^[1]' He said: 'I am not able to read!' but the command was issued twice more, each with the same response from the Prophet. Finally, he was grasped with overwhelming force by the angel. Gabriel released him, and the first 'recitation' of the Quran was revealed to him:

"Read in the name of your Lord who created -created man from a clot. Read: for your Lord is Most Bountiful, who teaches by the pen, teaches man that which he knew not." (Quran 96:1-5)

Thus began the magnificent story of God's final revelation to humanity until the end of times. The encounter of an Arab, fourteen centuries ago, with a being from the realm of the Unseen was an event of such momentous significance that it would move whole peoples across the earth and affect the lives of hundreds of millions of men and women, building great cities and great civilizations, provoking the clash of mighty armies and raising from the dust beauty and splendor unknown previously. It would also bring teeming multitudes to the Gates of Paradise and, beyond, to the beatific vision. The word '*Iqra*', echoing around the valleys of the Hejaz, broke the mould in which the known world was cast; and this man, alone among the rocks, took upon his shoulders a burden which would have crushed the mountains had it descended upon them.

Prophet Muhammad was forty years old and he had reached an age of maturity. The impact of this tremendous encounter may be said to have melted his substance. The person he had been was like a skin scorched by light and burnt away, and the man who descended from the mountain and sought refuge in the arms of his wife Khadeeja was not the same man who had ascended it.

For the moment, however, he was as if a man pursued. As he descended, he heard a great voice crying: 'Muhammad, thou art the Messenger of God and I am Gabriel.' He looked upwards, and the angel filled the horizon. Wherever he turned, the figure was there, inescapably present. He hastened home and cried to Khadija: 'Cover me! Cover me!' She laid him down, placing a cloak over him, and as soon as he had recovered himself a little he told her what had happened. The Prophet was in fear for himself. She held him close and solaced him:

"Never! By God, God will never disgrace you. You keep good relations with your relatives, help the poor, serve your guests generously, and assist those hit with

calamities.” (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari*)

She saw in her husband a man God would not humiliate because of his virtues of honesty, justice, and helping the poor. The first person on the face of earth to believe in him was his own wife, Khadija. At once, she went to see her uncle Waraqa, a biblical scholar. After listening to the account of her husband’s experience, Waraqa recognized him from the prophecies of the Bible to be the awaited prophet, and he confirmed that what had appeared to him in the cave was the indeed the angel Gabriel, the Angel of Revelation:

“This is the Keeper of Secrets (Gabriel) who came to Moses.” (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari*)

The Prophet continued to receive revelations for the remainder of his life, memorized and written down by his companions on pieces of sheepskin and whatever else was at hand.

The Quran or “Recitation”

The words brought to him from Gabriel are held sacred by the Muslims and are never confused with those which he uttered himself. The former are the Sacred Book, the Quran; the latter the Hadith or Sunna of the Prophet. Because the angel Gabriel would recite the Quran orally to the Prophet, the Sacred Book is known as Al-Quran, “The Recitation,” the recitation of the man who knew not how to read.

Footnotes:

[1] The word ‘read’ in Arabic has connotations of both reading and reciting.

Muhammad’s Biography (part 4 of 12): Persecution in Mecca



Description: The early days of the Prophet of Islam’s mission and persecution of the adherents of Islam.

By IslamReligion.com

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Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [His Biography](#)

First Converts

For the first few years of his Mission, the Prophet preached to his family and his intimate friends. The first women to convert was his wife Khadija, the first child his first cousin Ali, whom he had taken under his care, and the first bondsman was his servant Zayd, a former slave. His old friend Abu Bakr was the first adult free male to convert. Many years later the Prophet said of him: 'I have never called anyone to Islam who was not at first hesitant, with the exception of Abu Bakr.'



Later, the command came to him to preach openly and to speak out against idolatry. At first, the elders of Quraysh had been able to ignore this strange little group, treating Muhammad as a sad case of self-deception, but now they began to realize that his preaching, which was attracting adherents among the poor and the dispossessed (and could therefore be seen as subversive), presented a threat both to the religion and the prosperity of Mecca. Open conflict, however, would have been against their interests. Their power depended upon their unity, and with the example of Yathrib - torn asunder by tribal conflict - as a grim warning of what could happen in their own city, they were obliged to bide their time. Moreover, the clan Hashim, whatever it might think privately of its rogue member, was bound by custom to defend him if he was attacked. They confined themselves for the time to mockery, perhaps the most effective weapon in the common man's defense against the in break of truth, since it does not involve the degree of commitment inherent in violence. His former guardian Abu Talib give up his call so not as to jeopardize his safety and the safety of the clan. 'O my uncle,' he said, 'even if they set against me the sun on my right and the moon on my left, I will not abandon my purpose until God grants me success or until I die.' Abu Talib answered with a sigh: 'O my brother's son, I will not forsake you.'

Tension in the city increased gradually, month by month, as Muhammad's spiritual influence spread, undermining the hegemony of the elders of Quraysh and bringing division into their families. This influence became even more dangerous to the established order when the content of the successive revelations was broadened to include denunciation of the callousness of the Meccan plutocracy, their greed for 'more and more' and their avarice. The opposition was now led by a certain Abu Jahl, together with Abu Lahab and the latter's brother-in-law, a younger man who was more subtle and more talented than either of them, Abu Sufyan. Returning one day from the hunt, Muhammad's uncle Hamza, who had so far remained neutral, was so angered on being told of the insults heaped upon his nephew that he sought out Abu Jahl, struck him on the head with his bow and announced then and there his conversion to Islam.

Beginning of Persecution

At the end of the third year, the Prophet received the command to “arise and warn,” whereupon he began to preach in public, pointing out the wretched folly of idolatry in face of the marvelous laws of day and night, of life and death, of growth and decay, which manifest the power of God and attest to His Oneness. It was then, when he began to speak against their gods, that Qureysh became actively hostile, persecuting his poorer disciples, mocking and insulting him. The one consideration which prevented them from killing him was fear of the blood-vengeance of the clan to which his family belonged. Strong in his inspiration, the Prophet went on warning, pleading, and threatening, while Quraish did all they could to ridicule his teaching and deject his followers.

The Flight to Abyssinia

The converts of the first four years were mostly humble folk unable to defend themselves against oppression. So cruel was the persecution they endured that the Prophet advised all who could possibly contrive to do so to emigrate, at least temporarily, to Abyssinia (now Ethiopia), where they would be well received by the Christian Negus, ‘an upright King.’ About eighty converts fled there in 614 CE to the Christian country.

This apparent alliance with a foreign power further infuriated the Meccans, and they sent envoys to the Negus demanding the Muslims’ extradition. A great debate was held at Court and the Muslims won the day, first by demonstrating that they worshipped the same God as the Christians, and then by reciting one of the Quranic passages concerning the Virgin Mary, whereupon the Negus wept and said: ‘Truly this has come from the same source as that which Jesus brought.’

Still in spite of persecution and emigration, the little company of Muslims grew in number. The Quraish were seriously alarmed. Idol worship at the Kaaba, the holy place to which all Arabia made pilgrimage, ranked for them as its guardians, as first among their vested interests. At the season of the pilgrimage, they posted men on all the roads to warn the tribes against the madman who was preaching in their midst. They tried to bring the Prophet to a compromise, offering to accept his religion if he would so modify it as to make room for their gods as intercessors with God. In return, they offered to make him their king if he would give up attacking idolatry. Prophet Muhammad’s constant refusal frustrated their efforts at negotiation.

Conversion of Umar

More important still was the conversion of one of the most formidable young men in the city, Umar ibn al-Khattab. Infuriated by the increasing success of the new religion - so contrary to all that he had been brought up to believe - he swore to kill Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, regardless of the consequences. He was instructed that, before doing so, he had better look into the

affairs of his own family, for his sister and her husband had become Muslims. Bursting into their home he found them reading a Chapter called 'Ta-Ha', and when his sister acknowledged that they had indeed embraced Islam, he struck her a harsh blow. More than a little ashamed of himself, he then asked to see what they had been reading. She handed him the text after insisting he made ablution before handling it, and as he read these verses of the Quran, he underwent a sudden and total transformation. The sweet potency of the words of Quran changed him forever! He went directly to Muhammad and accepted Islam.

Men such as these were too important in the social hierarchy to be attacked, but most of the new Muslims were either poor or in slavery. The poor were beaten and the slaves tortured to make them renounce their faith, and there was little Muhammad could do to protect them.

A black slave named Bilal was pegged down naked under the scorching sun with a heavy stone on his chest and left to die of thirst. He was taunted by the pagans to renounce his religion in return for remission of torture, but his only reply was '*Ahad! Ahad!*' ('God is One! God is One!'). It was in this state, on the point of death, that Abu Bakr found him and ransomed him for an exorbitant fee. He was nursed back to health in Muhammad's home and became one of the closest and best-loved of the companions. When, much later, the question arose as to how the faithful should be summoned to prayer, Bilal became the first *mu'ezzin* (the call to prayer announced with a loud voice from the Muslim place of worship, called *masjid*) of Islam: a tall, thin black man with a powerful voice and, so it is said, the face of a crow under a thatch of grey hair; a man from whom the sun had burned out, during his torment, everything but love of the One and of the messenger of the One.

Destruction of the Saheefah

Frustrated on every side, the Meccan oligarchy, under the leadership of Abu Jahl, now drew up a formal document declaring a ban or boycott against the Hashim clan as a whole; there were to be no commercial dealings with them until they outlawed Muhammad, and no one was to marry a woman of Hashim or give their daughter to a man of the clan. Then, for three years, the Prophet was constrained with all his kinsfolk in their stronghold, which was situated in one of the gorges which ran down to Mecca.

At length some kinder hearts among Qureysh grew weary of the boycott of old friends and neighbors. They managed to have the document, which had been placed in the Kaaba, brought out for reconsideration. When it was found that all the writing had been destroyed by white ants, except the words *Bismika Allahumma* ("In thy name, O God"). When the elders saw that marvel, the ban was removed, and the Prophet was again free to go about the city. Meanwhile, the opposition to his preaching had grown rigid. He had little success among the Meccans, and an attempt which he had once made to preach in the city of Taif was a failure. His mission was not proceeding how he expected, when, at the season of the yearly pilgrimage, he came upon a little

group of men who heard him gladly.

Muhammad's Biography (part 5 of 12): Setting the Stage for Migration



Description: The major events which led to the emigration of the Muslims to Medina.

By IslamReligion.com

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Men from Yathrib

They came performing the pilgrimage (Hajj) from Yathrib, a city more than two hundred miles away, which has since become world-famous as al-Medina, “the City” par excellence. Yathrib was fortunate in its location in a pleasant oasis, famous even to this day for the excellence of its dates, but unfortunate in every other way. The oasis had been the scene of almost unceasing tribal strife. Jews fought Jews and Arabs fought Arabs; Arabs allied themselves with Jews and fought other Arabs allied with a different Jewish community. While Mecca prospered, Yathrib lived in wretchedness. It was in need of a leader capable of uniting its people.

At Yathrib, there were Jewish tribes with learned rabbis who had often spoken to the pagans of a Prophet soon to come among the Jews, with whom, when he came, the Jews would destroy the Arabs as the tribes of ‘Aad and Thamud had been destroyed of old for their idolatry.

The Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, at that stage in his call was secretly visiting different tribes in the outskirts of Mecca to convey them the message of Islam. Once, he overheard a group of men at Aqaba, a place outside Mecca, and he asked to sit with them to which they gladly welcomed.

When the men from the tribe of Khazraj from Yathrib heard what Muhammad had to say, they recognized him as the Prophet whom the Jews had described to them, and all six men accepted Islam. They also hoped that Muhammad, through this new religion, could be the man who would unite them with their brother tribe, the Aws, a tribe in Yathrib with whom they shared common ancestry, but distraught with years of war and animosity. They determined to return to Yathrib and spread the religion of Muhammad. As a result, not a house existed in Yathrib except that it heard the message Islam, and the next season of pilgrimage, in the year 621, a deputation came from Yathrib purposely to meet the Prophet.

First Pact of Aqaba

This deputation was composed of twelve men, five of those present the previous year, and two members of the Aws. They met the Prophet again at Aqaba and pledged in their own names and in those of their wives, to associate no other creation with God (to become Muslim), neither to steal nor to commit adultery nor to kill their infants, even in dire poverty; and they undertook to obey this man in all things just. This is known as the First Pledge of Aqaba. When they returned to Yathrib, the Prophet sent with them his first ambassador, Mus'ab ibn 'Umair, to teach the new converts the rudiments of the faith and further spread the religion to those who had not yet embraced Islam.

Mus'ab preached the message of Islam until almost every family in Yathrib had a Muslim in their midst, and before the Hajj of the following year, 622, Mus'ab returned to the Prophet and told him the good news of his mission, and of the goodness and strength of Yathrib and its people.

Second Pact of Aqaba

In 622, pilgrims from Yathrib, seventy-five of them Muslims, from them two women, came to perform the Hajj. During the latter part of one night, while all were asleep, the Muslims from amongst the Yathribite pilgrims secretly crept into the place whether they had previously arranged to meet the Prophet, at the rocks at Aqaba, to vow allegiance to the Prophet and invite him to their city. At Aqaba, they met the Prophet, and with him was his uncle, then still a pagan but one who defended his nephew due to familial bonds. He spoke and warned the Muslims about the dangers of their task, and against proving untrue to their commitment if they undertook it. Another person from the pilgrims who was present the previous two years also stood and warned against the danger of their commitment and their preparedness to uphold it. In their staunch determination and love of the Prophet, they swore to defend him as they would defend their own selves, their wives and children. It was then that the Hijrah, the emigration to Yathrib, was decided.

This is known as the Pledge of War, because it involved protecting the person of the Prophet, by arms if necessary; and soon after the emigration to Yathrib, the Quranic verses permitting war in defense of the religion were revealed. These verses are crucial in the history of Islam:

“Permission is given unto those who fight because they have been wronged, and God is indeed able to give them victory; those who have been driven from their homes unjustly only because they said -- Our Lord is God! For were it not that God repels some people by means of others, monasteries and churches and synagogues and mosques in which the name of God is extolled would surely have been destroyed...”
(Quran 22:39-40)

A turning-point had come for Prophet Muhammad, for the Muslims, and for the world. It was Prophet Muhammad's destiny, and an aspect of his prophetic function, that he should demonstrate the alternatives open to the persecuted and the oppressed;

on the one hand, forbearance; on the other, what is called by Christians the ‘just war’, but for which, in the words of a later Quranic revelation – “corruption would surely overwhelm the earth” (Quran 2:251). For almost thirteen years, he and his followers had suffered persecution, threats and insults without raising a hand in self-defense. They had proved that this was humanly possible. Circumstances were now changing and called for a very different response if the religion of Islam was to survive in the world. Peace has its seasons, but so has war, and the Muslim never forgets that every man born is born to struggle in one form or another, at one level or another; if not physically, then spiritually. Those who try to ignore this fact are, sooner or later, enslaved.

Plot to Murder the Prophet

In small groups, the Muslims slipped out of Mecca and took the road to Yathrib. The Hijrah (‘emigration’) had begun.

For Quraish the limits of what was bearable had been passed. Enemies within the city were bad enough, but now these enemies were setting up a rival centre to the north. The death of Abu Talib had removed Muhammad’s chief protector. Restrained hitherto by principles inherited from their bedouin forefathers and by the fear of causing a troublesome blood feud, the leaders finally decided that Muhammad must die. Abu Jahl proposed a simple plan. Young men should be chosen from different clans, each one to strike a mortal blow, so that Muhammad’s blood would be upon all of them. Hashim could not seek retribution from all the other clans.

Muhammad’s Biography (part 6 of 12): The Hijrah of the Prophet



Description: A detailed account of the migration of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina.

By IslamReligion.com

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The Hijrah (23 September, 622 C.E.)

Meanwhile, the Prophet, with a few intimates, had been awaiting the divine command to join the other Muslims in Yathrib. He was not free to emigrate until this command came to him. At last the command came. He gave his cloak to Ali, bidding him lie down on the bed so that anyone looking in might think Muhammad lay there. The slayers were to strike him as he came out of the house, whether in the night or early morning. He knew they would not injure Ali. The assassins were already surrounding his house when Prophet Muhammad slipped out unseen. He went to Abu Bakr’s

house and called to him, and they both went together to a cavern in a desert hill, hiding there until the hue and cry was past. Abu Bakr's son and daughter and his herdsman brought them food and tidings after nightfall. Once, a search party came so near to them in their hiding-place that they could hear their words. Abu Bakr was afraid and said, "O Messenger of God, Were one of them to look down towards his feet, he would see us!" The Prophet replied:

"What do you think of two people with whom God is the Third? Do not be sad, for indeed God is with us." (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari*)

When the search party had departed their presence, , Abu Bakr had the riding-camels and the guide brought to the cave at night, and they set out on the long ride to Yathrib.

After traveling for many days on unfrequented paths, the fugitives reached a suburb of Yathrib called Qubaa, where, for weeks past, the people of the city heard that the Prophet had left Mecca, and hence they been setting out to the local hills every morning, watching for the Prophet until heat drove them to shelter. The travelers arrived in the heat of the day, after the watchers had retired. A Jew who was out and about saw him approaching and called out to the Muslims that he whom they expected had at last arrived, and the Muslims set out to the hills before Qubaa to greet him.

The Prophet stayed in Qubaa for some days, and there he built the first mosque of Islam. By that time, Ali, who had left Mecca by foot three days after the Prophet, has also arrived. The Prophet, his companions from Mecca, and the "Helpers" of Qubaa led him to Medina, where they had been eagerly anticipating his arrival.

The inhabitants of Medina never saw a brighter day in their history. Anas, a close companion of the Prophet, said:

I was present the day he entered Medina and I have never seen a better or brighter day than the day on which he came to us in Medina, and I was present on the day he died, and I have never seen a day worse or darker than the day on which he died" (Ahmed)

Every house in Medina wished that the Prophet would stay with them, and some tried to lead his camel to their home. The Prophet stopped them and said:

"Leave her, for she is under (Divine) Command."

It passed many houses until it came to a halt and knelt at the land of Banu Najjaar. The Prophet did not descend until the camel had risen and gone on a little, then it turned and went back to its original place and knelt again. Upon that, the Prophet descended from it. He was pleased with its choice, for Banu Najjaar were his maternal uncles, and he also desired to honor them. When individuals from the family had been soliciting him to enter their houses, a certain Abu Ayyoub stepped forward to his saddle and took it into his house. The Prophet said:

“A man goes with his saddle.” (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim*)

The first task he undertook in Medina was to build a Mosque. The Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, sent for the two boys who owned the date-store and asked them to name the price of the yard. They answered, “Nay, but we shall make thee a gift of it, O Prophet of God!” The Prophet however, refused their offer, paid them its price and built a mosque from there, he himself taking part in its erection. While working, he was heard saying:

“O God! There is no goodness except that of the Hereafter, so please forgive the Helpers and the Emigrants.” (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari*)

The mosque served as a place of worship for Muslims. The prayer which was previously an individual act performed in secret now became a public affair, one which epitomizes a Muslim society. The period in which Muslims and Islam was subordinate and oppressed was over, now the adthaaan, the call to prayer, would be called aloud, booming and penetrating the walls of every house, calling and reminding Muslims to fulfill their obligation to their Creator. The mosque was a symbol of the Islamic society. It was a place of worship, a school where Muslims would enlighten themselves about the truths of the religion, a meeting place where the differences of various warring parties would be resolved, and an administration building from which all matters concerning the society would emanate, a true example of how Islam incorporates all aspects of life into the religion. All these tasks were undertaken in a place built upon the trunks of date-palm trunks roofed with its leaves.

When the first and most important task was complete, he also made houses on both sides of the mosque for his family, also from the same materials. The Prophet’s Mosque and house in Medina stands today in that very place.

The Hijrah had been completed. It was 23 September 622, and the Islamic era, the Muslim calendar, begins the day on which this event took place.. And from this day on Yathrib had a new name, a name of glory: Madinat-un-Nabi, the City of the Prophet, in brief, Medina.

Such was the Hijrah, the emigration from Mecca to Yathrib. The thirteen years of humiliation, of persecution, of limited success, and of prophecy still unfulfilled were over.

The ten years of success, the fullest that has ever crowned one man’s endeavor, had begun. The Hijrah makes a clear division in the story of the Prophet’s Mission, which is evident from the Quran. Till then he had only been a preacher. Thenceforth he was the ruler of a State, at first a very small one, but which grew in ten years to become the empire of Arabia. The kind of guidance which he and his people needed after the Hijrah was not the same as that which they had needed before. The Medina chapters differ, therefore, from the Meccan chapters. The latter give guidance to the individual soul and to the Prophet as Warner: the former give guidance to a growing social and political community and to the Prophet as example, lawgiver, and reformer.

Muhammad's Biography (part 7 of 12): A New Stage in Medina



Description: The challenges of establishment a new city state in Medina.

By IslamReligion.com

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Prophet Muhammad's main meal was usually a boiled gruel, with dates and milk, his only other meal of the day being dates and water; but he frequently went hungry, sometimes even binding a flat stone against his belly to alleviate his discomfort. One day a woman gave him a cloak - something he badly needed - but the same evening someone asked for it to make a shroud, and he promptly gave it as charity. He was brought food by those who had a small surplus, but he never seemed to keep it long enough to taste it, as there was always someone in greater need. With diminished physical strength - now fifty-two years old - he struggled to build a nation based upon the true religion of Islam out of the varied assortment of people God had given him as his raw material.

By force of character combined with extraordinary diplomatic skill, Prophet Muhammad began to reconcile the warring factions of Medina. With his other companions also emigrating, a support system for the newcomers was of essential importance. To unite the 'emigrants' (*Muhājirūn*) with the local Muslims, the 'helpers' (*Ansār*), he established a system of personal relationships: each 'helper' took an 'emigrant' as his brother, to be treated as such under all circumstances and to stand in order of inheritance along with members of the natural family. With a few exceptions, the 'emigrants' had lost everything they possessed and were completely dependent upon their new brothers. The Helpers sometimes went so far as to give their Emigrant brothers half of whatever they possessed in the form of houses, assets, lands and groves. Such was the enthusiasm of the Helpers to share everything with their brothers-in-faith that they divided everything into two parts to draw lots for allocating their share. In most cases, they tried to give the Emigrants the fairer portion of their property.

One is tempted to describe as a 'miracle' the fact that this situation seems to have caused no resentment whatever among those who were so suddenly obliged to take complete strangers into their families. This bond of brotherhood broke all ties of ancestry, color, nationality and other factors previously regarded as a standard of honor. The only ties which now mattered were religious. Seldom has the power of religious faith to change men been more clearly demonstrated.

The Meccan Muslims, however, had not forgotten their old skills. An 'emigrant' who when his new brother said to him, 'O poorest of the poor, how can I help you? My house and my funds are at your disposal!' replied: 'O kindest of kind friends, just show me the way to the local market. The rest will take care of itself.' This man, it is said, started by selling cheese and clarified butter, and soon became rich enough to pay the dower of a local girl and, in due course, was able to equip a caravan of 700 camels.

Such enterprise was encouraged, but there were also those who had neither the ability to do so nor did they have family or property. They would spend the day in the Mosque and at night, the Prophet would place them with various individuals of the Helpers. They came to be known as '*Ahl us-Suffa*.' Some were fed at the Prophet's own table, when there was any to spare, and with roasted barley from the community chest.

In the first year of his reign at Yathrib, the Prophet made a solemn covenant of mutual obligation between his people and the Jews tribes of Medina and its surrounding areas, in which it was agreed that they would have equal status as citizens of a state and full religious liberty, and that each would defend the other if attacked.

But their idea of a Prophet was one who would give them dominion, and a Jewish prophet, not an Arabian one. The Jews had also profited greatly from the infighting between Arab tribes, as it was through this instability of the region that they had gained the upper hand in trade and commodities. Peace among the tribes of Medina and its surrounding areas was a threat to the Jews.

Also, from among the inhabitants of Medina were those who resented the newcomers, but held their peace for the time being. The most powerful of them, Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salool, was extremely resentful of the arrival of the Prophet, as it was he who was the de facto the leader of Yathrib prior to the Prophet. He accepted Islam as a matter of formality, though he would later betray the Muslims as the leader of the 'hypocrites.'

Due to this common hatred of the Prophet, the Muslims, and the new state of affairs of Yathrib, the alliance between the Jews and the 'hypocrites' of Medina was almost inevitable. Throughout the history of Muslims in Medina, they tried to seduce the followers of the new religion, constantly plotting and planning against them. Due to this, there is frequent mention of the Jews and hypocrites in the Medina chapters of the Quran.

The Qiblah

The Qiblah (the direction toward which the Muslims pray) until this point had been Jerusalem. The Jews imagined that the choice implied a leaning toward Judaism and that the Prophet stood in need of their instruction. The Prophet longed for the Qiblah to be changed to the Kaaba. The first place on earth built for the worship of God, and rebuilt by Abraham. In the second year after the migration, The Prophet received

command to change the Qiblah from Jerusalem to the Kaaba at Mecca. A whole portion of Surah al-Baqara relates to this Jewish controversy.

The First Expeditions

The Prophet's first concern as ruler was to establish public worship and lay down the constitution of the State: but he did not forget that the Quraish had sworn to make an end of his religion. Enraged that the Prophet had succeeded in migrating to Medina, they increased their torture and persecution of the Muslims who stayed behind in Mecca. Their evil plots did not stop there. They also tried to make secret alliances with some polytheists of Medina, such as Abdullah ibn Ubayy previously mentioned, ordering him to kill or expel the Prophet. The Quraish often sent threatening messages to Muslims of Medina warning of their annihilation, and so much news of the plots and plans of the polytheists reached the Prophet himself that he requested the positioning of security guards around his house. It was at this time that God had given the Muslims permission to take arms against the disbelievers.

For thirteen years they had been strict pacifists. Now, however, several small expeditions were sent, led either by the Prophet himself or some other of the emigrants from Mecca for the purpose of reconnoitering the routes which led to Mecca, as well as forming alliances with other tribes. Other expeditions were led in order to intercept some caravans returning from Syria en route to Mecca, a way that Muslims could place economic pressure on the Quraish in order to quit their harassment of the Muslims, both in Mecca and Medina. Few of these expeditions ever saw actual battle, but through them, the Muslims established their new position in the Arabian Peninsula, that they were no longer an oppressed and weak people, but rather their strength had grown and were now a formidable force not easily reckoned with.

Muhammad's Biography (part 8 of 12): The Campaign of Badr



Description: One of the most decisive battles in human history changed the political balance of the Arabian Peninsula.

By IslamReligion.com

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The Campaign of Badr

On one expedition, the Quraishite caravan on route to Syria had escaped the Muslims. The Muslims were in wait for its return. Some scouts of the Muslims saw the caravan, led by Abu Sufyan himself, pass by them, and hurriedly informed the Prophet of it and

its size. If this caravan were intercepted, it would have an economic impact of great measure, one which would shake the entire society of the Meccans. The Muslim scouts reported that the caravan would be halting at the wells of Badr, and the Muslims now prepared themselves to intercept it.

News of these preparations reached Abu Sufyan on his southward journey, and he sent an urgent message to Mecca that an army should be dispatched to deal with the Muslims. Grasping the catastrophic consequences if the caravan were intercepted, they immediately rounded up as much power as possible and departed to encounter the Muslims. On way to Badr, the army received news that Abu Sufyan managed to escape the Muslims by driving the caravan to an alternative route along the seashore. The Meccan army, numbering about a thousand men, persisted to Badr in order to teach a lesson to the Muslims, dissuading them from attacking any caravans in the future.

When the Muslims came to know of the advance of the Meccan army, they knew that a daring step must be taken in the matter. If the Muslims did not encounter them at Badr, the Meccans would continue undermine the cause of Islam with all their ability, possibly even proceeding to Medina desecrating lives property and wealth there. The Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, held an advisory meeting to determine the course of action. The Prophet did not want to lead the Muslims, especially the Helpers who were the far majority of the army and were not even bound by the Pledge of Aqaba to fight beyond their territories, into something they did not agree to.

A man from the Helpers, Sa'd ibn Mu'aadh stood reaffirmed their devotion to the Prophet and the cause of Islam. From his words were the following:

“O Prophet of God! We believe in you and we bear witness to what you have vouchsafed to us, and we declare in unequivocal terms that what you have brought is the Truth. We give you our firm pledge of obedience and sacrifice. We obey you most willingly in whatever you command us, and by God Who has sent you with the Truth, if you were to ask us to plunge into the sea, we will do that most readily, and not a man of us will stay behind. We do not grudge the idea of encounter with the enemy. We are experienced in war and we are trustworthy in combat. We hope that God will show you through our hands those deeds of valor which will please your eyes. Kindly lead us to the battlefield in the Name of God.

After this show of extreme support and love for the Prophet and Islam by both the Emigrants and the Helpers, the Muslims, numbering a little over 300, made their way as best they could to Badr. They had only seventy camels and three horses between them, so the men rode by turns. They went forward to what is known in history as *al-Yawm al-Furqan*, the Day of Discrimination; discrimination between light and darkness, good and evil, right and wrong.

Preceding the Day of the battle, the Prophet spent the whole night in prayer and supplication. The battle was fought on 17 Ramadan in the second year of the Hijra;

624 C.E. It was customary for the Arabs to start the battles with individual duels. The Muslims gained an advantage in the duels, and some notaries of the Quraish had been killed. The Quraish enraged, they fell upon the Muslims in order to exterminate them once and for all. The Muslims kept a strategic defensive position, which in turn produced heavy losses for the Meccans. The Prophet was beseeching His Lord with all his might by this time, extending his hands so high that his cloak fell off his shoulders. At that point, he received a revelation promising of the help of God:

“...I will help you with a thousand of the angels one behind another in succession.”
(Quran 8:9)

Upon hearing the good news, the Prophet ordered the Muslims to take an offensive. The great army of Quraish was overwhelmed by the zeal, valor and faith of the Muslims, and after facing heavy losses, they could do nothing but flee. The Muslims were left alone on the field with a few doomed Meccans, amongst them the arch-enemy of Islam, Abu Jahl. The Quraish were defeated and Abu Jahl was killed. The promise of God came true:

“Their multitude will be defeated, and they will turn their backs (in flee).” (Quran 54:45)

In this, one of the most decisive battles in human history, the total casualties were between only between seventy and eighty.

Mecca reeled under the shock, where Abu Sufyan was left as the dominant figure in the city, and he knew better than anyone that the matter could not be allowed to rest there. Success breeds success, and the bedouin tribes, never slow to assess the balance of power, were increasingly inclined towards alliance with the Muslims, and Islam gained many new converts in Medina.

Muhammad's Biography (part 9 of 12): The Treason of Former Allies



Description: Mistakes at Uhud lead to heavy losses of life, and a new tactic reveals victory for the Muslims.

By IslamReligion.com

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The Battle on Mt. Uhud

In fact, in the following year, an army of three thousand men came from Mecca to

destroy Yathrib. The Prophet's first idea was merely to defend the city, a plan of which Ibn Ubayy, the leader of "the Hypocrites", strongly approved. But the men who had fought at Badr, believing that God would help them against any odds, thought it a shame that they should linger behind walls.

The Prophet, approving of their faith and zeal, gave way to them, and set out with an army of one thousand men toward Mt. Uhud, where the enemy were encamped. Ibn Ubayy withdrew with his men, who were a third of the army, in retaliation. Despite the heavy odds, the battle on Mt. Uhud would have been an even greater victory than that at Badr for the Muslims, but for the disobedience of a band of fifty archers whom the Prophet had set to guard a pass against the enemy cavalry. Seeing their comrades victorious, these men left their post, fearing to lose their share of the spoils. The cavalry of Quraish rode through the gap and fell on the exultant Muslims. The Prophet himself was wounded and the cry arose that he was slain, until someone recognized him and shouted that he was still living: a shout to which the Muslims rallied. Gathering round the Prophet, they retreated, leaving many dead on the hillside. The field belonged to the Meccans, and now the women of Quraish moved among the corpses, lamenting the slain from amongst their own people and mutilating the Muslim dead. Hamzah, the Prophet's young uncle and childhood friend, was among the latter, and the abominable Hind, Abu Sufyan's wife, who bore Hamzah a particular grudge and had offered a reward to the man who killed him, ate his liver, plucked from the still warm body. On the following day, the Prophet again sallied forth with what remained of the army, that Quraish might hear that he was in the field and so might perhaps be deterred from attacking the city. The stratagem succeeded, thanks to the behavior of a friendly bedouin who met the Muslims, conversed with them and afterwards met the army of Quraish. Questioned by Abu Sufyan, he said that Muhammad was in the field, stronger than ever, and thirsting for revenge for yesterday's affair. On that information, Abu Sufyan decided to return to Mecca.

Massacre of Muslims

The reverse which they had suffered on Mt. Uhud lowered the prestige of the Muslims with the Arab tribes and also with the Jews of Yathrib. Tribes which had inclined toward the Muslims now inclined toward the Quraish. The Prophet's followers were attacked and murdered when they went abroad in little companies. Khubaib, one of his envoys, was captured by a desert tribe and sold to the Quraish, who tortured him to death in Mecca publicly.

Expulsion of Bani Nadhir

The Jews, despite their treaty with the Muslims, now hardly concealed their hostility. They began negotiating alliances with Quraish and the 'hypocrites,' and even attempted to assassinate the Prophet. The Prophet was obliged to take punitive action against some of them. The tribe of Bani Nadheer were besieged in their strong towers, subdued and forced to emigrate.

The War of the Trench

Abu Sufyan must have understood very well that the old game of tit for tat was no longer valid. Either the Muslims must be destroyed or the game was lost for ever. With great diplomatic skill he set about forming a confederacy of bedouin tribes, some, no doubt, opposed to the Muslims, but others merely eager for plunder, and at the same time he began quietly to sound out the Jews in Medina regarding a possible alliance. In the fifth year of the Hijrah (early in 627 C.E.) he set out with 10,000 men, the greatest army ever seen in the Hijaz (the western region of the Arabian Peninsula). Medina could raise at most 3,000 to oppose him.

The Prophet presided over a council of war, and this time no one suggested going out to meet the enemy. The only question was how the town could best be defended. At this point Salman the Persian, a former slave who had become one of the closest of the companions, suggested the digging of a deep ditch to join the defensive strong points formed by the lava fields and by fortified buildings. This was something unheard of in Arab warfare, but the Prophet immediately appreciated the merits of the plan and work began at once, he himself carrying rubble from the diggings on his back.

The work was barely finished when the confederate army appeared on the horizon. While the Muslims were awaiting the assault, news came that Bani Quraidhah, a Jewish tribe of Yathrib which had, until then, been loyal, had defected to the enemy. The case seemed desperate. The Prophet brought every available man to the ditch, leaving the town itself under the command of a blind companion, and the enemy was met with a hail of arrows as they came up to the unexpected obstacle. They never crossed it, but remained in position for three or four weeks, exchanging arrows and insults with the defenders. The weather turned severe, with icy winds and a tremendous downpour, and this proved too much for the bedouin confederates. They had come in the expectation of easy plunder and saw nothing to be gained from squatting beside a muddy ditch in appalling weather and watching their beasts die for lack of fodder. They faded away without so much as a farewell to Abu Sufyan. The army disintegrated and he himself was forced to withdraw. The game was over. He had lost.

Muhammad's Biography (part 10 of 12): The Treaty of Hudaibiyah



Description: The hidden victory of a non-aggression treaty between the Muslims and the Meccans.

By IslamReligion.com

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Punishment of Bani Quraidhah

Nothing is worse, in Arab eyes, than the betrayal of trust and the breaking of a solemn pledge. It was time now to deal with Bani Quraidhah. On the day of the return from the trench the Prophet ordered war on the treacherous Bani Quraidhah, who, conscious of their guilt, had already taken to their towers of refuge. After a siege of nearly a month they had to surrender unconditionally. They only begged that they might be judged by a member of the Arab tribe of which they were adherents. They chose the head of the clan with which they had long been in alliance, Sa'd ibn Mu'adh of Aws, who was dying from wounds received at Uhud and had to be propped up to give judgment. Without hesitation, he condemned the men of the tribe to death.

Hudaibiyah

In the same year the Prophet had a vision in which he found himself entering Mecca unopposed, therefore he determined to attempt the pilgrimage. Besides a number of Muslims from Medina, he called upon the friendly Arabs to accompany him, whose numbers had increased since the miraculous discomfiture of the clans at the Battle of the Ditch, but most of them did not respond. Attired as pilgrims, and taking with them the customary offerings, a company of fourteen hundred men journeyed to Mecca. As they drew near the valley they were met by a friend from the city, who warned the Prophet that the Quraish had had sworn to prevent his entering the sanctuary; their cavalry was on the road before him. On that, the Prophet ordered a detour through mountain gorges, so the Muslims were tired out when they came down at last into the valley of Mecca and encamped at a spot called Hudaibiyah; from thence he tried to open negotiations with the Quraish, to explain that he came only as a pilgrim. The first messenger he sent towards the city was maltreated and his camel hamstrung. He returned without delivering his message. The Quraish, on their side, sent an envoy who was threatening in tone, and very arrogant. Another of their envoys was too familiar in the way he spoke to the Prophet, and had to be reminded sternly of the respect due to him. It was he who consequently said, on his return to the city of Mecca: "I have seen Caesar and Chosroes in their pomp, but never have I seen a man honored as Muhammad is honored by his comrades."

The Prophet sought to send some messenger who would impose respect. Uthman was finally chosen because of his kinship with the powerful Umayyad family. While the Muslims were awaiting his return the news came that he had been murdered. It was then that the Prophet, sitting under a tree in Hudaibiyah, took an oath from all his comrades that they would stand or fall together. After a while, however, it became known that Uthman had not been murdered. Then a troop that came out from the city to molest the Muslims in their camp was captured before they could do any hurt and brought before the Prophet, who forgave them on their promise to renounce hostility.

Truce of Hudaibiyyah

Eventually proper envoys came from the Quraish. After some negotiation, the truce of Hudaibiyyah was signed. It stipulated that for ten years there were to be no hostilities between the parties. The Prophet was to return to Medina without visiting the Kaaba, but he would be able to perform the pilgrimage with his comrades in the following year. The Quraish promised they would evacuate Mecca to allow him to do so. Deserters from the Quraish to the Muslims during the period of the truce were to be returned; not so deserters from the Muslims to the Quraish. Any tribe or clan who wished to share in the treaty as allies of the Prophet might do so, and any tribe or clan who wished to share in the treaty as allies of the Quraish might do so. There was dismay among the Muslims at these terms. They asked one another: "Where is the victory that we were promised?"

It was during the return journey from Hudaibiyyah that the surah entitled "Victory" was revealed. This truce proved, in fact, to be the greatest victory that the Muslims had till then achieved. War had been a barrier between them and the idolaters, but now both parties met and talked together, and the new religion spread more rapidly. In the two years which elapsed between the signing of the truce and the fall of Mecca the number of converts was greater than the total number of all previous converts. The Prophet traveled to Hudaibiyyah with 1400 men. Two years later, when the Meccans broke the truce, he marched against them with an army of 10,000.

Muhammad's Biography (part 11 of 12): The Return to Mecca



Description: Events which led to the conquest of Mecca, and eventually to the end of idolatry in Arabia.

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Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [His Biography](#)

The Campaign of Khyber

In the seventh year or the Hijrah the Prophet, may God praise to him, led a campaign against Khyber, the stronghold of the Jewish tribes in North Arabia, which had become a hornets' nest of his enemies. The Jews of Khyber thenceforth became tenants of the Muslims. It was at Khyber that a Jewish woman prepared poisoned meat for the Prophet, of which he only tasted a morsel. Hardly had the morsel touched his lips than he became aware that it was poisoned. Without swallowing it, he warned his companions of the poison, but one Muslim, who had already swallowed a

mouthful, died later. The woman who had cooked the meat was put to death.

Pilgrimage to Mecca

In the same year the Prophet's vision was fulfilled: he visited Mecca unopposed. In accordance with the terms of the truce the idolaters evacuated the city, and from the surrounding heights watched the procedure of the Muslims.

Truce broken by the Quraish

A little later, a tribe allied to the Quraish broke the truce by attacking a tribe that was in alliance with the Prophet and massacring them even in the sanctuary at Mecca. Afterwards they were afraid because of what they had done. They sent Abu Sufyan to Medina to ask for the existing treaty to be renewed and, its term prolonged. They hoped that he would arrive before the tidings of the massacre. But a messenger from the injured tribe had been before him and Abu Sufyan failed again.

Conquest of Mecca

Then the Prophet summoned all the Muslims capable of bearing arms and marched to Mecca. The Quraish were overawed. Their cavalry put up a show of defense before the town, but were routed without bloodshed; and the Prophet entered his native city as conqueror.

The inhabitants expected vengeance for their past misdeeds, but the Prophet proclaimed a general amnesty. In their relief and surprise, the whole population of Mecca hastened to swear allegiance. The Prophet ordered all the idols which were in the sanctuary to be destroyed, saying: "Truth hath come; darkness hath vanished away;" and the Muslim call to prayer was heard in Mecca.

Battle of Hunain

In the same year there was an angry gathering of pagan tribes eager to regain the Kaaba. The Prophet led twelve thousand men against them. At Hunain, in a deep ravine, his troops were ambushed by the enemy and almost put to flight. It was with difficulty that they were rallied to the Prophet and his bodyguard of faithful comrades who alone stood firm. But the victory, when it came, was complete and the booty enormous, for many of the hostile tribes had brought out with them everything that they possessed.

Conquest of Taif

The tribe of Thaqeef were among the enemy at Hunain. After that victory their city of Taif was besieged by the Muslims, and finally reduced. Then the Prophet appointed a governor of Mecca, and himself returned to Medina to the boundless joy of the Ansar, who had feared lest, now that he had regained his native city, he might forsake them

and make Mecca the capital.

The Tabook Expedition

In the ninth year of the Hijrah, hearing that an army was again being mustered in Syria, the Prophet called on all the Muslims to support him in a great campaign. In spite of infirmity, the Prophet led an army against the Syrian frontier in midsummer. The far distance, the hot season, and the fact that it was harvest time and the prestige of the enemy caused many to excuse themselves and many more to stay behind without excuse. They camped that night without food or drink, sheltering behind their camels; and so they reached the oasis of Tabuk, finally returning to Mecca after converting several tribes. But the campaign ended peacefully. The army advanced to Tabuk, on the border of Syria, but there they learnt that the enemy had not yet gathered.

Declaration of Immunity

Although Mecca had been conquered and its people were now Muslims, the official order of the pilgrimage had not been changed; the pagan Arabs performing it in their manner, and the Muslims in their manner. It was only after the pilgrims' caravan had left Medina in the ninth year of the Hijrah, when Islam was dominant in North Arabia, that the Declaration of Immunity, as it is called, was revealed. Its purport was that after that year Muslims only were to make the pilgrimage, exception being made for such of the idolaters as had an ongoing treaty with the Muslims and had never broken their treaties nor supported anyone against those they had treaties with. Such, then, were to enjoy the privileges of their treaty for the term thereof, but when their treaty had expired they would be as other idolaters. This proclamation marked the end of idol-worship in Arabia.

Muhammad's Biography (part 12 of 12): Bidding Farewell



Description: The Pilgrimage of the Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, and his death.

By IslamReligion.com

Published on 13 Feb 2006 - Last modified on 04 Oct 2009

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The Farewell Pilgrimage

The end, however, was drawing closer, and in the tenth year of the Hijra he set off from Medina with some 90,000 Muslims from every part of Arabia to perform Hajj,

the pilgrimage. This triumphal journey of the aging man, worn by years of persecution and then by unceasing struggle, is surrounded by a kind of twilight splendor, as though a great ring of light had finally closed, encompassing the mortal world in its calm radiance.

In the tenth year of the Hijrah he went to Mecca as a pilgrim for the last time, referred to as his “pilgrimage of farewell” when from the plain of Arafat he preached to an enormous throng of pilgrims. He reminded them of all the duties Islam enjoined upon them, and that they would one day have to meet their Lord, who would judge each one of them according to his work. At the end of the discourse, he asked: “Have I not conveyed the Message?” And from that great multitude of men who a few months or years before had all been conscienceless idolaters the shout went up: “O God! Yes!” The Prophet said: “O God! You be witness!” Islam had been established and would grow into a great tree sheltering far greater multitudes. His work was done and he was ready, to lay down his burden and depart.

Illness and Death of the Prophet

The Prophet returned to Medina. There was still work to be done; but one day he was seized by a painful illness. He came to the mosque wrapped in a blanket and there were those who saw the signs of death in his face.

“If there is anyone among you,” he said, “whom I have caused to be flogged unjustly, here is my back. Strike in your turn. If I have damaged the reputation of any among you, may he do likewise to mine.”

He had said once:

“What have I to do with this world? I and this world are as a rider and a tree beneath which he shelters. Then he goes on his way and leaves it behind him.”

And now he said:

“There is a slave among the slaves of God who has been offered the choice between this world and that which is with Him, and the slave has chosen that which is with God.”

On 12 Rabī’ul-Awwal in the eleventh year of the Hijrah, which in the Christian calendar is 8 June 632, he entered the mosque for the last time. Abu Bakr was leading the prayer, and he motioned to him to continue. As he watched the people, his face became radiant. ‘I never saw the Prophet’s face more beautiful than it was at that hour,’ said his companion Anas. Returning to Aisha’s apartment he laid his head on her lap. He opened his eyes and she heard him murmur: ‘With the highest companion in Paradise . . .’ These were his last words. When, later in the day, the rumor grew that he was dead. Umar threatened those who spread the rumor with dire punishment, declaring it a crime to think that the Messenger of God could die. He was storming at the people in that strain when Abu Bakr came into the mosque and overheard him.

Abu Bakr went to the chamber of his daughter Aisha, where the Prophet lay. Having ascertained the fact, and kissed the dead-man's forehead, he went back into the mosque. The people were still listening to Umar, who was saying that the rumor was a wicked lie, that the Prophet, who was their life blood, could not be dead. Abu Bakr went up to Umar and tried to stop him by a whispered word. Then, finding he would pay no heed, Abu Bakr called to the people, who, recognizing his voice, left Umar and came crowding round him. He first gave praise to God, and then said those words which epitomize the creed of Islam: "O people! Lo! As for him who used to worship Muhammad, Muhammad is dead. But as for him who used to worship God, God is alive and dies not." He then recited the verse of the Quran:

"And Muhammad is but a messenger; messengers the like of whom have passed away before him. Will it be that, when he dies or is slain, you will turn back on your heels? He who turneth back doth no hurt to God, and God will reward the thankful."

[Previous: Muhammad's Biography \(part 11 of 12\): The](#)

The Marriages of Prophet Muhammad (part 1 of 2): Stages of Life



Description: The marriages that Prophet Muhammad contracted in the various stages of his life. Part 1: His life before prophethood and upon the death of his wife Khadeejah.

By IslamReligion.com

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The prophet Muhammad was a religious and political figure whose mission was to unite the various tribes of the Arabian peninsula specifically, and the whole world generally, under one religion. As an example for the world to follow, the life and decisions of the Prophet Muhammad are those from which much benefit and wisdom may be drawn. From the time of revelation, the Prophet lived a life under the direct supervision of the Creator. Thus he was under protection of God from committing any error in portraying the religion and correct way of life. His each and every action is one which ought to be emulated, as God himself said about him:



"Indeed you are upon a high moral standard of character."

The Prophet was a man bent upon a mission, and his concerns were not those of other ordinary humans. For these reasons, one must look into the reasoning why the Prophet took certain decisions during the course of his life. Though some of them may seem easily applicable, others may be unfamiliar to this day and age. Consequently, taking things from his life at face value may lead one to draw false conclusions without any basis or evidence.

One of those facets of the life of the Prophet which is often misunderstood, or quite frankly misconstrued, is the fact that he had contracted a number of marriages in the course of his lifetime. In order to understand the wisdom in this, one must do a case study of the various factors which surrounded this decision. Only then can a proper conclusion be made based upon them.

The domestic life of the Prophet can be divided into four stages.

The First Stage

The first twenty five years of his life were a period of celibacy. Youth is normally the stage of life when people get reckless, when the passions stirred in adolescence run wild because self-control is not yet learnt. Moreover, at the period of time he lived in, Arab society did not restrict sexual relations. Yet, he led a chaste, pure life earning him the title of ‘Ameen,’ ‘the trustworthy.’ A man who can control himself as a young adult is much more likely to keep self control in old age.

The Second Stage

When he eventually married, it was not to a young virgin, junior to him. Instead, after spending 25 celibate years, his first wife, Khadeejah, was 40 years of age and married twice before. They stayed happily married for twenty five years until she died, and he did not marry anyone else during that period. After he received the first revelation, she was the first person to believe in him as a Prophet of God. Can there be a greater testimony than a wife fifteen years older than her husband being the first one to believe in his calling?

He also had every reason to marry another wife while he was married to her:

First, although she gave him three daughters, Khadeejah did not bear him any male children who survived infancy. In a society that practiced female infanticide due to their preference for male infants, this was indeed a hard trial. His adversaries even jeered at him after the death of his second son. God, however, repudiated them,

“Surely he that insults you will himself remain childless.” (Quran 108:3)

Second, he was an extraordinarily handsome man. One of his companions described him,

‘I began to look at him and at the moon, he was wearing a red mantle, and he appeared

to be more beautiful than the moon to me.’ [1]

Third, polygamy was widespread and socially acceptable to women at the time. There were no social barriers preventing him from taking another wife. He could have easily married a younger, more beautiful, woman had he so chosen, but he did not.

Furthermore, when pressured to remarry after Khadeejah's death, he chose another widow.

Fourth, the pagans of Mecca offered him wealth, trappings of gold and silver, leadership, and even marriage to their most beautiful women only if he would stop preaching; but he refused. He said,

“Even if they set against me the sun on my right and the moon on my left, I will not abandon my purpose until God grants me success or until I die.” [2]

Could this be the reply of a man given to the call of his flesh, or one given to the call of God?

The Third Stage

After passing the prime of his life (physically), he contracted marriages to more than one wife from the period 2 A.H. - 7 A.H. (623-628 CE). This happened between the ages of 55 and 60, and all of the marriages were contracted for unselfish reasons.

These were years of wars for the nascent Muslim nation, when Muslims had to fight in self-defense to protect their lives and the religion. Consequently, hundreds of his companions were killed, leaving behind widows and orphans without anyone left to care for them. Prophet Muhammad set an example for the surviving companions to remarry the widows in order to support them, so most of his wives were widows. If sheer lust was the motive, the choice would not have been widows or divorcees.

The Prophet Muhammad did marry one virgin, Aisha, who was very young. This marriage is the one that causes the most controversy among critics who impute immorality in the character of the Prophet due to this. He married her on the request of her father, Abu Bakr, who was his closest and earliest follower outside the family. Abu Bakr was the first among the companions in the Prophet's esteem, and his most trusted ally. With him he shared the dangerous flight to Medina. Why would he gratuitously offend such an ally by refusing his request? Aisha is also the source of much of what we know of the Prophet's Sunnah, without which the legacy left by him would be so much poorer. Also, the Prophet was fulfilling a commandment of God, which is to marry those who are ready to marry as soon as they are ready. The consummation, or full wedding (nikah), was three years after the contractual arrangement (engagement), when she was fully mature. As a child, she lived in her father's house, where Muhammad would visit, often joining in with her play with dolls.

Another reason behind his marriages was to cement alliances. By marrying into the

families of key allies and vanquished enemies, he laid the ground work for cooperation between Muslims of different tribes. None of the wives the Prophet married after Aisha compared with her in youth, intelligence or desire to learn, but all of them contributed in other ways to the stability of the Muslim nation. Such a man was a master, not slave, of his passions. His marriages point to farsighted planning and compassionate interest. If it was not for this compassion, he would have definitely have chosen, besides Aisha, others similar to her rather than widows or divorcees to be his wives!

Footnotes:

[1] *Al-Tirmidhi*

[2] *Al-Serah Al-Nabaweyyah*, Ibn Hesham, vol. 1, pp. 265-266

The Marriages of Prophet Muhammad (part 2 of 2): A Humble Life



Description: The marriages that Prophet Muhammad contracted in the various stages of his life. Part 2: A look into some aspects of the humble life of the Prophet and how it relates to the reasons he contracted his marriages.

By IslamReligion.com

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The Fourth Stage

Upon the conquest of Mecca in 8 A.H., warfare came to an end for the most part.

After this time, the Prophet did not remarry. This shows that he added wives to his family only in the time of instability and warfare, both to protect them and their children, and to expand and stabilize the Muslim nation.

The fact that Prophet Muhammad led a morally upright life was acknowledged by his adversaries, and this is referred to in the Quran where God challenges his detractors by asking them, rhetorically, if they can find any moral defect in his life. He told Prophet Muhammad to

“...(Say), I have lived among you a lifetime before this. Do you not then use your reason?” (Quran 10:16)

No one was able to find any fault in his character that they could make stick.

Assuming, against all evidence, that he was an imposter and the personal author of the Quran; would he have presented his morally upright life as proof for his claim to be God's prophet?

His Humble Standard of Living

Those few years in Medina in which most of his marriages took place was not one spent in luxury and comfort. Rather, his was a harsh life, marred with the death struggle against the pagans. Huge armies were at the gates of Medina ready to crush the Muslims, and most of Arabia had united against him. Battles had to be fought in quick succession, no time for resting on the laurels of victory or ashes of defeat between them. For a responsible leader, it was no time for indulging the passions; not even the ordinary man who was so inclined would find much to indulge his passions in such times.

Once an orphan, he then became the ruler of a unified Arabia; but that did not change his simple way of living. He ate the same humble food and wore the same manner of dress he had worn from his early manhood, perhaps even more simple and humble than then. The furniture of his sleeping room consisted of a bed made of date palm leaves which left marks on his body, one about which even one of the closest companions remarked:

“O Messenger of God, the leaders of the Persians drink from vessels of gold silver, and you do as such?” (Ahmed)

He would often go without eating for nights on end, and for days no fire would be lit in his house to prepare food. When this happened, the whole family would survive on dates and water, despite the fact that the public treasury was at his disposal. The Prophet could have lived in comfort if he wanted to, as his followers, some of them quite wealthy, were ready to sacrifice anything for him. However, due to God's command concerning the behavior of Prophets, he would accept no charity for himself or his family. Moreover, whether in times of poverty or plenty, he was not a man devoted to the pleasures of this worldly life.

His Nights

Prophet Muhammad had many wives, but he did not spend most of his night in conjugal enjoyment with them. The Prophet was commanded by God to

“Stand (praying) all night, except a little; half of it or a little less than that, or a little more. And recite the Quran (aloud) in a slow, (pleasant tone and) style.” (Quran 73:2-

4)

His wives described how his feet would swell from standing in prayer. This habitual and constant occupation clearly does not belong to the life of a man given to sensual pleasures.

The Simple Life of His Wives

After migration to Medina, prosperous trade changed the condition of Muslims.

Conquests brought the comforts of life, and the wives of the Prophet naturally desired to share the legitimate comforts of life. However, God revealed:

“O Prophet, say to your wives, if you desire the life of this world and its charms, come, I will give you a provision and set you free with kindness. But if you desire God and His Messenger and the life of the Hereafter, then, truly, God has prepared for those of you who are virtuous, a great reward.” (Quran 33:28-29)

All the wives were offered alternatives, but not a single one of them left him for a more comfortable life. Had they suspected him of being an imposter, or had found the least fault in his character, or even truly desired the comfortable life offered as an alternative to being married to him, they could have simply left. Instead, every single one of them chose the honor of being his wife. Surely if he was a sensual man, he would not deny the wishes of his wives like this and be willing to divorce all of them if they had inclined, even if briefly, towards the worldly pleasures that had become available.

A Short Biography of the “Mothers of the Faithful” (part 1 of 2)



Description: A brief biography of the “Mothers of the Believers”, or the wives of Prophet Muhammad.

By IslamReligion.com

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Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [His Biography](#)

The wives of Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, hold a special place in Islamic piety. The Quran calls them “**Mothers of the Faithful**” (Quran 33:6). They were his wives in this life and shall be in the life to come. They were young and old, widows and virgins, poor and wealthy, aristocrats and freed slaves. Each one played their specific role in forming the history of Islam.

Khadeejah

Prophet Muhammad married her when he was twenty-five, while she had reached the age of forty. She was a widow, twice married. He was at the peak of his youth. Impressed by Muhammad's honesty and moral character, she sent a relative to propose marriage. They were married for twenty-five years until her death. Through every persecution, Khadeejah was his sole companion and helper. Khadeejah, along with Aisha, played a major contribution in the establishment and spread of the Islamic civilization. Khadeejah bore four daughters with the Prophet: Zainab, Umm Kulthoom, Ruqayya, and Fatima. All four grew to maturity and accepted Islam. They all died in the lifetime of their father, except Fatima who died six months after the Prophet. Khadeejah also bore two sons, Qasim and Abdullah, both of whom died at an early age.

Sawdah

Months after the death of Khadeejah, the Prophet had returned from an unsuccessful mission in Taif, helpless and persecuted. At this time he married Sawdah, another widow, who possessed neither beauty, nor social status, nor wealth. She had been forced to escape to Abyssinia with her husband from the persecution of pagan Meccans to find some security. Her husband died in exile, giving his life for the sake of his faith. He had migrated with his wife from his home for the cause of his religion, and he left her in utter poverty. Driven by a sense of generosity, the Prophet of Mercy married her, raising her to the spiritual level of "Mother of the Faithful." The Prophet did not marry another woman for the first three years of his Marriage to Sawdah. She died a few years after the death of Prophet Muhammad.

Aishah

Aishah was the daughter of one of the closest companions of Prophet Muhammad, Abu Bakr. An old friend of the Prophet, Abu Bakr was one of the earliest converts to the faith and was considered to be the most sincere, earnest, and devoted in faith. Seeing the loss of the Prophet, one of the woman companions proposed Abu Bakr's daughter to him and approached Abu Bakr on behalf of the Prophet. But there were two problems. One, Aishah was already betrothed to Jubair bin Mut'im, a pagan Meccan. Jubair, it turned out, had lost interest because of the wide gulf between paganism and Islam. In addition, Aishah had not yet reached puberty, and this also contributed to Jubair's disinterest in pursuing the betrothal. Thus, she was betrothed to the Prophet while still in Mecca, and three years later, when both were in Medina and she had reached puberty, he consummated his marriage. She was the only virgin he married, though they did not have any children. Aishah was a leading scholar of Islam and played a pivotal role in the establishment of the Islamic civilization. She taught for forty years after the death of the Prophet until her death at the age of sixty-seven.

Hafsah

Hafsah was the daughter of Umar, the man closest to Prophet Muhammad after Abu Bakr. She migrated with her husband to Medina, but was left a widow after the Battle of Badr. With a fiery temper like her father, she had remained without a husband ever since. Umar first asked Abu Bakr, and then Uthman, to marry her, but each refused in turn, much to his ire. This shows the unavailability of marriageable males at the time. At last, Umar approached Prophet Muhammad. The marriage took place in the third year after migration. The Prophet divorced her once, but was commanded by God to take her back. She was charged with keeping the official copy of the Quran during the caliphate of Abu Bakr and Umar. She passed away four years after the Prophet.

Zainab

In the same year, the third year after migration, the Prophet married Zainab, made a widow after the Battle of Uhud. Her kindness to the poor had earned her the nickname of “mother of the destitute.” She was past the prime of her life and when she was wed by him, and she died a few months after their marriage. She is the only wife beside Khadeejah who passed away in the Prophet’s lifetime.

Umm Salama

A year later, the Prophet married another widow who had suffered persecution, at one time losing the custody of her children to her pagan in-laws. After the Battle of Uhud, she was left a widow with four children. Abu Bakr first proposed to her, but she refused because she did not think anyone could be patient with her children. Finally, the Prophet proposed, assuring her the children would be taken care of; Prophet Muhammad married Umm Salama because of this noble motivation. The faithful loved their Prophet all the more and honored him as the Prophet of God. They saw in him a father to the destitute, the deprived, the weak, and the poor as well as to everyone who had lost his father in the cause of God. Umm Salama was the last wife of the Prophet to die. She passed away forty nine years after his death at the age of eighty-four.

A Short Biography of the “Mothers of the Faithful’ (part 2 of 2)



Description: A brief biography of the “Mothers of the Believers,” or “the wives of Prophet Muhammad.”

By IslamReligion.com

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Umm Habeebah

Umm Habeebah was the Muslim daughter of Islam's archenemy, Abu Sufyan. Umm Habeebah was one of the early converts to Islam in Mecca. She had migrated with her husband to Abyssinia who converted to Christianity over there. On his death, the Prophet sent a proposal to her while she was still in Abyssinia. She returned to Medina three years before the death of the Prophet. She passed away thirty four years after the Prophet.

Zainab, the Divorced Wife of Zaid

Zainab was the cousin of the Prophet, who was married to Zaid, an orphan slave whom the Prophet liberated and then adopted. The Prophet proposed the marriage of Zainab with Zaid to her brother, but he refused to let his sister, a noble girl of Hashimite and Quraishite ancestry and the first cousin of the Prophet, become the wife of a former slave. Such a union was regarded by the Arabs as a thing of great shame. For the daughters of the aristocracy to marry their slaves, even freed slaves, was unthinkable. The Prophet sought to wipe out racial and class distinctions between men. He was to educate the world that no Arab is superior to any non-Arab unless it be in virtue and piety, as God had said,

“...Indeed, the most honorable among you in the sight of God is the most god-fearing...” (Quran 49:13)

The Prophet did not choose to force this principle on a woman outside his own tribe. It was his cousin Zainab who, in complying with the Prophet's wishes for Zaid, willingly opposed the Arabian custom. And Zaid, a freed slave, was the person of too low a lineage for marriage into Meccan aristocracy in her family's eyes. Thus, the Prophet encouraged Zainab to agree to marry Zaid, and, when Zainab agreed, insisted that her brother accept the adopted orphan as a brother-in-law.

However, after the marriage, Zaid found it hard to live with her. Zaid consulted the Prophet who advised him not to divorce her. Never-the less, once all attempts to work out the marriage had failed, divorce was the only alternative left. After the divorce, she and her relatives insisted that the Prophet marry her. Feeling bound to meet their wishes after a failed marriage that he had arranged, the Prophet was hesitant. The pagan custom allowed marrying step-mothers and mothers-in-law, but looked upon the marriage of the divorced wife of an adopted son as unacceptable. To undo the custom and to set an example, God commanded the hesitant Prophet to marry Zainab. Their marriage took place in 5 A.H. She died ten years after the Prophet.

Juwairiyah

In the same year, a large number of prisoners fell into the hands of Muslims at the Battle of Bani Mustaliq. Among them was Juwairiyah, the daughter of an Arab chief, who approached the Prophet with a ransom for herself to which her captor readily

agreed. The Prophet then proposed marrying her, and she, in turn, accepted. As soon as the Muslims heard the news of the marriage, they released their prisoners from the tribe of Banu Mustaliq. They felt they could not keep a tribe honored by the Prophet in captivity, so some one hundred families from the tribe of Banu Mustaliq were freed as a blessing of her marriage with the Prophet. Juwairiyah was one devoted to worship. Once, the Prophet passed by her after the dawn prayer and found her busy in worship in her place of prayer. The Prophet passed by her again during late morning and found her still in her place, whereupon he commented,

“You are still in your state (of worship)?”

She responded, “Yes.”

“Should I not teach you some words greater in reward! Say, ‘How perfect is God, I praise Him by the number of His creation and His pleasure, and by the weight of His Throne, and the ink of His Words.’”[\[1\]](#)

She died some forty years after the Prophet.

Safiyyah

Safiyyah, daughter of a Jewish chief of Banu Nadheer, was taken as a prisoner in the Battle of Khaibar in the year 7 A.H. The Prophet liberated and then married her. Upon marriage, the Prophet found marks of abuse on her cheek about which he was curious.

She explained, “I saw a dream in which the full moon rose over Medina and fell in my lap. I told the dream to my cousin who slapped me and said, ‘You want to marry the king of Medina!’ This mark is from his slap.”

When the Prophet was on his deathbed, she wept and said, ‘I wish I could be in your place, O Messenger of God,’ to which he replied, **“By God, she is telling the truth.”**

Maimoonah

Maimoomah, another widow, requested marriage to Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, in Mecca in 7 A.H. She was from his tribe and was already over fifty. Prophet Muhammad married her in order to support her, a poor relative of his. Her nephew, Ibn Abbas, who later became the greatest scholar of the Quran, learned much from her knowledge.

Footnotes:

[1] *Musnad, Abu Daud*

[Previous: A Short Biography of the "Mothers of the Faith"](#)

The Prophet and Polygamy (part 1 of 2)



Description: An analysis of the major reasons Prophet Muhammad had multiple wives. Part 1: A model for humanity and the preservation of knowledge.

By IslamReligion.com

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Introduction

Most Westerners regard polygamy as intrinsically evil and its practice as immoral. In contradiction, they realize and purport that every age and society has its own standards, but then themselves judge this by the standards of their particular society and time.

For a Muslim, the standards of morality are set by divine revelation, the Quran and the Sunnah, and not by prevalent modern perspective. Furthermore, the great Hebrew patriarchs equally revered by Judaism, Christianity, and Islam - Abraham, Moses, Jacob, David, and Solomon, to name a few - were undisputedly polygamous.[1] The example of Jesus, who never-the-less overlooked polygamy, is irrelevant, as he did not marry at all during his earthly ministry. It is unclear why the Hebrew prophets took multiple wives, for their life stories are mostly unknown. However, a careful study of the Prophet Muhammad's biography - preserved in minute detail - reveals the reasons for his plural marriages.



1. A Perfect Model

Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, is the last prophet, a mercy to all humanity, and a perfect model for all times. He gave the world an ideal example of a chaste life up to the age of twenty-five, then a monogamous life with a noble widow, and a polygamous life after the age of fifty. He married the young and the old, the widow and the divorcee, the pleasant and the emotional, the daughters of

tribal chiefs and freed slaves. He was an example of perfection in all the diversity life had to offer.

2. Religious Education and Preservation of the Prophet's Private Life

The 'Mothers of the Faithful', a title given to honor the wives of the Prophet, were scholars of the religion and spiritual mentors who guided the faithful, especially women, during and after the Prophet's lifetime. Islam has many special regulations unique to women regarding cleanliness, menses, bathing, prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, breastfeeding, and testimony to name a few. The laws specific to women had to be conveyed. Naturally, women felt more comfortable talking to the wives of the Prophet regarding these matters. In addition, the household of the Prophet instructed women in the etiquette of marital life, raising families, and issues of women's spirituality. After the death of the Prophet, men and women resorted to his wives to find out the prophetic ideal of family life.

By marrying from different tribes, the Prophet opened the door to the spread of Islamic knowledge among them. The wives of the Prophet spread the knowledge of Islam within their tribes. For example, the knowledge of Aisha was absorbed by her sister, Umm Kulthum, her foster brother, Auf bin Harith, her nephews, Qasim and Abdullah, and her nieces, Hafsa and Asma, among others. The knowledge of Hafsa was transmitted by her brother Abdullah ibn Umar, his son Hamza and his wife Safiyah. Maimoonah's students included her nephews, the most famous of whom is Abdullah ibn Abbas, an authority in the interpretation of the Quran. Umm Habeeba taught her knowledge to her brothers, Mu'awiyah and Utbah, and her nephews and nieces. Therefore, we see that the 'Mothers of the Faithful' became conduits of knowledge to their tribes.

Footnotes:

[\[1\]](#) According to the Bible:

Abraham had three wives according to the Bible (Genesis 16:1, 16:3, 25:1)

Moses had two wives (Exodus 2:21, 18:1-6; Numbers 12:1)

Jacob had four wives (Genesis 29:23, 29:28, 30:4, 30:9)

David had at least 18 wives (1 Samuel 18:27, 25:39-44; 2 Samuel 3:3, 3:4-5, 5:13, 12:7-8, 12:24, 16:21-23)

Solomon had 700 wives (1 Kings 11:3).

The Prophet and Polygamy (part 2 of 2)



Description: An analysis of the major reasons Prophet Muhammad had multiple wives. Part 2: A rejection of false traditions and tribal alliances.

By IslamReligion.com

Published on 05 Jun 2006 - Last modified on 19 Feb 2008

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Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [His Biography](#)

3. Preservation of Sunnah

The ‘Mothers of the Faithful’ played an important role in conveying the Sunnah of the Prophet – the second source of Islamic Law along with the Quran. Nothing of the Prophet’s life was hidden from them, and they had permission to convey anything they knew about his personal life. Between themselves, they preserved more than three thousand hadeeths^[1] of the Prophet. Aisha narrated 2,210 hadeeths, while Umm Salama reported 380. The remaining wives reported between five and sixty hadeeths. Umm Habeeba and Hafsa reported 60 each, Maimoonah reported 46, and Zainab reported 11.^[2]

4. Breaking Pagan Traditions & Putting the Law into Practice

One of the Prophet’s marriages was contracted to reject the pagan practice of adopting children and passing onto them the adopting parent’s genealogy and name, investing them with all the rights of biological children. The Quran says:

“God did not make your adopted son as your own sons. That is your own saying, the words of your mouths; but God speaks the truth and shows the right way.”(Quran 33:4)

This tradition was so deeply rooted that the Prophet was hesitant to marry Zainab, the wife of his adopted son, Zaid, until God revealed:

“Would you hide, O Muhammad, within yourself that which God was going to bring to light anyway? Would you fear the gossip of the people, while it is God who is more worthy of being feared?” (Quran 33:37)

Thus, Prophet Muhammad married Zainab to reject this pagan custom. In this regard, God said:

“So when Zaid dissolved her marriage-tie, We gave her to you as a wife, so that there

should be no difficulty for the believers about the wives of their adopted sons, when they have dissolved their marriage-tie. And God's command is ever performed.” (Quran 33:37)

5. Binding Tribes by Marriage to Avoid Violence & Bloodshed

His marriage to Juwairiyah and Safiyah were to bind warring tribes to avoid future violence and bloodshed. The Arabian Peninsula was one distraught by decades of war. Tribes fought and sought revenge for petty instances for years, and it was extremely difficult to strike truces between them. Through the acceptance and spread of Islam, peace was struck between warring tribes, but many might have still harbored ill feelings, especially those who had not yet accepted Islam. Through marriage, tribes had to honor their truces, and many of these ill feelings were resolved due to pride in the marriage of a member of the tribe to the Prophet. By marrying into the families of key allies and vanquished enemies, he laid the ground work for cooperation between different tribes.

6. Protection of Widows and Orphans

As discussed previously, most of the wives of the Prophet were widows whom he married during times of war to protect them. The latter life of the Prophet consisted of years of wars for the nascent Muslim nation, when Muslims had to fight in self-defense to protect their lives and the religion. Consequently, hundreds of his companions were killed, leaving behind widows and orphans without anyone left to care for them. Prophet Muhammad set the example for the surviving companions to remarry the widows in order to support them, so most of his wives were widows.

Conclusion

Ethics and morals should never be judged on the premises of parochial societal norms; rather, they should be assessed according to clear undisputed precedential standards.

Throughout the history of humanity, polygamy had been a norm of society. Even today, there are many cultures other than Islam in which it is encouraged. But even if one does not understand the nature of polygamy due to various environmental and cultural influences, a deliberately objective view should be sought. When anyone scrutinizes the life of the Prophet impartially, the honest researcher will surely conclude that his reasons for marriage were ones clearly meant to strengthen the Muslim community, whether by the spread of knowledge, the care of widows, or cementing alliances with different tribes of Arabia.

Footnotes:

[1] *Hadeeth*: a narration of the sayings, deeds, tacit approvals, or descriptions of the Prophet.

[2] *Muqaddima Ibn Salah*, edited by Dr. Bint Shati'

Evidence of His Prophethood

- [The Seven Earths](#)
- [Bible Prophecies of Muhammad \(part 1 of 4\): Witnesses of Scholars](#)
- [Bible Prophecies of Muhammad \(part 2 of 4\): Old Testament Prophecies of Muhammad](#)
- [Bible Prophecies of Muhammad \(part 3 of 4\): New Testament Prophecies of Muhammad](#)
- [Bible Prophecies of Muhammad \(part 4 of 4\): More New Testament Prophecies of Muhammad](#)
- [Muhammad's Claim to Prophethood \(part 1 of 3\): Proofs of His Prophethood](#)
- [Muhammad's Claim to Prophethood \(part 2 of 3\): Was He a Liar?](#)
- [Muhammad's Claim to Prophethood \(part 3 of 3\): Was He Insane, a Poet, or a Sorcerer?](#)
- [The Miracles of Muhammad \(part 1 of 3\)](#)
- [The Miracles of Muhammad \(part 2 of 3\)](#)
- [The Miracles of Muhammad \(part 3 of 3\)](#)
- [What is the Criteria for a True Prophet?](#)
- [The Prophecies of Muhammad](#)
- [Prophecies of the Quran Addressed to Muhammad](#)
- [The Letter of the Prophet to the Emperor of Byzantium \(part 1 of 3\): An Introduction](#)
- [The Letter of the Prophet to the Emperor of Byzantium \(part 2 of 3\): The Reception](#)
- [The Letter of the Prophet to the Emperor of Byzantium \(part 3 of 3\): Heraclius Invites His Subjects](#)
- [News of the Past](#)
- [What is the Sunnah? \(part 1 of 2\): A Revelation like the Quran](#)
- [What is the Sunnah? \(part 2 of 2\): The Sunnah in Islamic Law](#)
- [The Night Journey and the Ascension \(part 1 of 6\): The Night Journey](#)
- [The Night Journey and the Ascension \(part 2 of 6\): Masjid Al-Aqsa](#)
- [The Night Journey and the Ascension \(part 3 of 6\): The Ascension](#)
- [The Night Journey and the Ascension \(part 4 of 6\): The Seventh Heaven](#)
- [The Night Journey and the Ascension \(part 5 of 6\): In the Presence of God](#)
- [The Night Journey and the Ascension \(part 6 of 6\): The Return](#)

The Seven Earths



Editor's Pick

Description: The seven layers of the earth which scientists have recently discovered was eluded to by Prophet Muhammad 1400 years ago.

By IslamReligion.com

Published on 04 Apr 2006 - Last modified on 03 Oct 2011

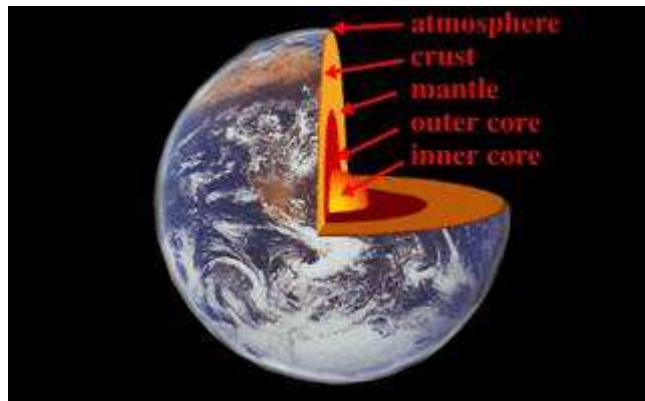
Viewed: 81525 (daily average: 31) - Rating: 4.7 out of 5 - Rated by: 180

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Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [Evidence of His Prophethood](#)

Category: [Articles](#) > [Evidence Islam is Truth](#) > [Evidence of Muhammad's Prophethood](#)



A simple image of Earth and the interior layers. *Windows to the Universe*, at (<http://www.windows.ucar.edu>) at the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR). ©1995-1999, 2000 The Regents of the University of Michigan; ©2000-05 University Corporation for Atmospheric Research.

The Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad is the second revealed source of Islam. Like the Quran, it contains scientific information unavailable 1400 years ago. From these miracles is the “seven” earths, mentioned by the Prophet in several of his sayings. From them are the following two:

Hadith 1

It was narrated on the authority of Abu Salamah that a dispute arose between him and some other people (about a piece of land). When he told Aisha (the Prophet's wife) about it, she said, ‘O Abu Salamah! Avoid taking the land unjustly, for the Prophet said:

“Whoever usurps even one span of land of somebody, its depth through the seven earths will be collared to his neck.” (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari, 'Book of Oppression.'*)

Hadith 2

Salim narrated on the authority of his father that the Prophet said:

“Whoever takes a piece of land of others unjustly, he will sink down the seven earths on the Day of Resurrection.” (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari, 'Book of Oppression.'*)

The aforementioned hadith prohibits oppression in general, especially the taking of a piece of land belonging to others unjustly. What might the seven earths refer to?

Studies in geology have proven that the earth is composed of seven zones, identified from the inner to the outer layers as follows:

(1) The Solid Inner Core of Earth: 1.7% of the Earth's mass; depth of 5,150 - 6,370 kilometers (3,219 - 3,981 miles)

The inner core is solid and unattached to the mantle, suspended in the molten outer core. It is believed to have solidified as a result of pressure-freezing which occurs to most liquids when temperature decreases or pressure increases.

(2) The Liquid Outer core: 30.8% of Earth's mass; depth of 2,890 - 5,150 kilometers (1,806 - 3,219 miles)

The outer core is a hot, electrically conducting liquid within which convective motion occurs. This conductive layer combines with Earth's rotation to create a dynamo effect that maintains a system of electrical currents known as the Earth's magnetic field. It is also responsible for the subtle jerking of Earth's rotation. This layer is not as dense as pure molten iron, which indicates the presence of lighter elements. Scientists suspect that about 10% of the layer is composed of sulfur and/or oxygen because these elements are abundant in the cosmos and dissolve readily in molten iron.

(3) The “D” Layer: 3% of Earth's mass; depth of 2,700 - 2,890 kilometers (1,688 - 1,806 miles)

This layer is 200 to 300 kilometers (125 to 188 miles) thick and represents about 4% of the mantle-crust mass. Although it is often identified as part of the lower mantle, seismic discontinuities suggest the “D” layer might differ chemically from the lower mantle lying above it. Scientists theorize that the material either dissolved in the core, or was able to sink through the mantle but not into the core because of its density.

(4) Lower Mantle: 49.2% of Earth's mass; depth of 650 - 2,890 kilometers (406 - 1,806 miles)

The lower mantle contains 72.9% of the mantle-crust mass and is probably composed mainly of silicon, magnesium, and oxygen. It probably also contains some iron, calcium, and aluminum. Scientists make these deductions by assuming the Earth has a similar abundance and proportion of cosmic elements as found in the Sun and

primitive meteorites.

(5) Middle Mantle (Transition region): 7.5% of Earth's mass; depth of 400 - 650 kilometers (250-406 miles)

The transition region or mesosphere (for middle mantle), sometimes called the fertile layer, contains 11.1% of the mantle-crust mass and is the source of basaltic magmas. It also contains calcium, aluminum, and garnet, which is a complex aluminum-bearing silicate mineral. This layer is dense when cold because of the garnet. It is buoyant when hot because these minerals melt easily to form basalt which can then rise through the upper layers as magma.

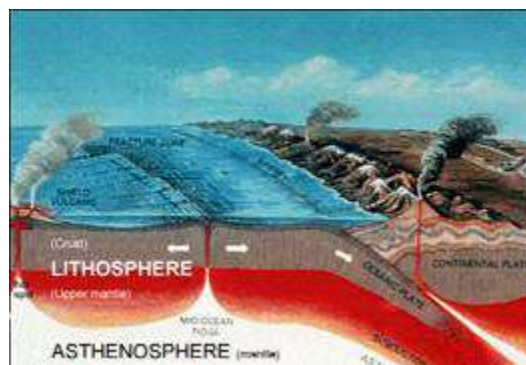
(6) Upper Mantle: 10.3% of Earth's mass; depth of 10 - 400 kilometers (6 - 250 miles)

The upper mantle contains 15.3% of the mantle-crust mass. Fragments have been excavated for our observation by eroded mountain belts and volcanic eruptions. Olivine $(\text{Mg,Fe})_2\text{SiO}_4$ and pyroxene $(\text{Mg,Fe})\text{SiO}_3$ have been the primary minerals found in this way. These and other minerals are refractory and crystalline at high temperatures; therefore, most settle out of rising magma, either forming new material or never leaving the mantle. Part of the upper mantle called the asthenosphere might be partially molten.

(7) Lithosphere

Oceanic crust: 0.099% of Earth's mass; depth of 0-10 kilometers (0 - 6 miles)

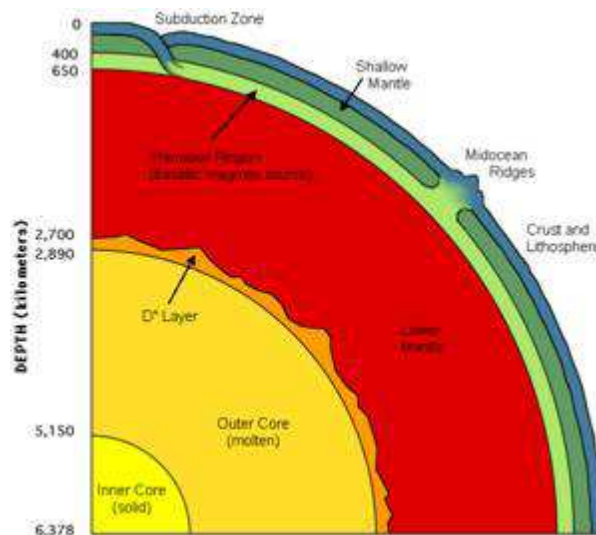
The rigid, outermost layer of the Earth comprising the crust and upper mantle is called the lithosphere. The oceanic crust contains 0.147% of the mantle-crust mass. The majority of the Earth's crust was made through volcanic activity. The oceanic ridge system, a 40,000-kilometer (25,000 mile) network of volcanoes, generates new oceanic crust at the rate of 17 km³ per year, covering the ocean floor with basalt. Hawaii and Iceland are two examples of the accumulation of basalt piles.



This image shows a cross section through the earth's crust and upper mantle showing lithosphere plates (made of the crust layer and the top part of the mantle) moving over the asthenosphere (upper mantle). *Windows to the Universe*, at (<http://www.windows.ucar.edu>) at the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR). ©1995-1999, 2000 The

Regents of the University of Michigan; ©2000-05 University Corporation for Atmospheric Research. Continental crust: 0.374% of Earth's mass; depth of 0-50 kilometers (0 - 31 miles)

The continental crust contains 0.554% of the mantle-crust mass. This is the outer part of the Earth composed essentially of crystalline rocks. These are low-density buoyant minerals dominated mostly by quartz (SiO₂) and feldspars (metal-poor silicates). The crust (both oceanic and continental) is the surface of the Earth; as such, it is the coldest part of our planet. Because cold rocks deform slowly, we refer to this rigid outer shell as the lithosphere (the rocky or strong layer).



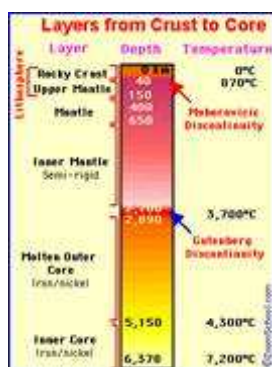
This image shows the divisions of the Earth's interior into 7 layers. (Adapted from Beatty, 1990).

Conclusion

The layers of the earth coincide with the above mentioned hadith of the Prophet. The miracle is in two matters:

- (1) The expression of the hadith, '*He will sink down the seven earths on the Day of Resurrection,*' indicates the stratification of these "earths" around one center.
- (2) The accuracy with which the Prophet of Islam referred to the seven inner layers of earth.

The only way for a desert dweller to have known these facts 1400 years ago is through revelation from God.



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Bible Prophecies of Muhammad (part 1 of 4): Witnesses of Scholars



Description: The Biblical evidence that Muhammad is not a false prophet. Part 1: The difficulties faced in discussing biblical prophecies, and accounts of some scholars who attested that Muhammad has been alluded to in the Bible.

By IslamReligion.com

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Category: [Articles](#) > [Evidence Islam is Truth](#) > [Muhammad in the Bible and Other Scriptures](#)

Category: [Articles](#) > [Comparative Religion](#) > [The Bible](#)

Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [Evidence of His Prophethood](#)

Category: [Articles](#) > [Evidence Islam is Truth](#) > [Evidence of Muhammad's Prophethood](#)

Preliminary Issues

The Bible is the sacred scripture of Judaism and Christianity. The Christian Bible consists of the Old Testament and the New Testament, with the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox versions of the Old Testament being slightly larger because of their acceptance of certain books not accepted as scripture by Protestants. The Jewish Bible includes only the books known to Christians as the Old Testament. Furthermore, the arrangements of the Jewish and Christian canons differ considerably.^[1] Prophet Muhammad has been prophesized in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.



Jesus and the Apostles are believed to have spoken Aramaic. Aramaic continued in wide use until about AD 650, when it was supplanted by Arabic.^[2] The present day Bible is not, however, based on the Aramaic manuscripts, but on Greek and Latin versions.

Quoting the Bible prophecies does not entail that Muslims accept the present day Bible in its entirety as God's revelation. For the Islamic belief on previous scriptures, please click [here](#).

It is not a pre-condition of acceptance that a prophet be foretold by an earlier prophet. Moses was a prophet to Pharaoh even though he was not prophesized by anyone before him. Abraham was God's prophet to Nimrod, yet no one prophesized his coming. Noah, Lot, and others were true prophets of God, yet they were not foretold. The evidence of a prophet's truth is not limited to old prophecies, but it includes the actual message brought by him, miracles and more.

Discussing prophecies is a delicate matter. It requires sifting through Bible versions and translations, recently discovered manuscripts and searching out Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic words and investigating them. The task becomes especially difficult when: "prior to the printing press (15th century), all copies of Bibles show textual variations."^[3] This is not an easy subject for lay people. For this reason, the best testimony comes from ancient and modern experts in the area who acknowledged the prophecies.

We have records of early Jews and Christians, both monks and rabbis, who witnessed that Muhammad was the fulfillment of specific Bible prophecies. The following are some examples of these people.

The Awaited Prophet

Pre-Islam Jews and Christians of Arabia were awaiting a prophet. Before the appearance of Muhammad, Arabia was home to Jews, Christians, and pagan Arabs who, on occasion, went to war with each other. The Jews and Christians would say: “The time has come for the unlettered prophet to appear who will revive the religion of Abraham. We will join his ranks and wage fierce war against you.” When Muhammad actually appeared, some of them believed in him, and some refused. This is why God revealed:

“And when there came to them a Book [Quran] from God confirming that which was with them – although before they used to pray for victory against those who disbelieved – but [then] when there came to them that which they recognized, they disbelieved in it; so the curse of God will be upon the disbelievers.” (Quran 2:89)

The first witness was Buhaira, the Christian monk, who recognized Muhammad’s prophethood when he was still young and told his uncle:

“...a great fortune lies before your nephew, so take him home quickly.”[\[4\]](#)



The second witness was Waraqah bin Nawfal, a Christian scholar who died soon after a solitary meeting with Muhammad. Waraqah attested Muhammad was the Prophet of his time and received revelation exactly like Moses and Jesus.[\[5\]](#)

The Jews of Medina were anxiously awaiting the arrival of a prophet. The third and fourth witnesses were their two famous Jewish rabbis, Abdullah bin Salam and Mukhayriq.[\[6\]](#)

The sixth and seventh witnesses were also Yemeni Jewish rabbis, Wahb ibn Munabbih, and Ka'b al-Ahbar (d. 656 CE). Ka'b found long passages of praise and the description of the Prophet prophesized by Moses in the Bible.[\[7\]](#)

The Quran states:

“Is it not a sign to them that the learned men of the Children of Israel knew it (as true)?” (Quran 26:197)

Footnotes:

[1] "Bible." Encyclopædia Britannica from Encyclopædia Britannica Premium Service. (<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9079096>)

[2] "Aramaic language." Encyclopædia Britannica from Encyclopædia Britannica Premium Service. (<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9009190>)

[3] "biblical literature." Encyclopædia Britannica from Encyclopædia Britannica Premium Service. (<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-73396>)

[4] 'Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources' by Martin Lings, p. 29. 'Sirat Rasul Allah' by Ibn Ishaq translated by A. Guillame, p. 79-81. 'The Quran And The Gospels: A Comparative Study,' p. 46 by Dr. Muhammad Abu Laylah of Azhar University.

[5] 'Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources' by Martin Lings, p. 35.

[6] 'The Quran And The Gospels: A Comparative Study,' p. 47 by Dr. Muhammad Abu Laylah of Azhar University.

[7] 'The Quran And The Gospels: A Comparative Study,' p. 47-48 by Dr. Muhammad Abu Laylah of Azhar University.

[Next: Bible Prophecies of Muh](#)

Bible Prophecies of Muhammad (part 2 of 4): Old Testament Prophecies of Muhammad



Description: The Biblical evidence that Muhammad is not a false prophet. Part 2: A discussion on the prophecy mentioned in Deuteronomy 18:18, and how Muhammad fits this prophecy more than others.

By IslamReligion.com

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Category: [Articles](#) > [Comparative Religion](#) > [The Bible](#)

Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [Evidence of His Prophethood](#)

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Deuteronomy 18:18 “I (God) will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee (Moses), and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.”

Many Christians believe this prophecy foretold by Moses to be in regards to Jesus. Indeed Jesus was foretold in the Old Testament, but as will be clear, this prophecy does not befit him, but rather is more deserving of Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him. Moses foretold the following:

1. The Prophet Will Be Like Moses

Areas of Comparison	Moses	Jesus	Muhammad
Birth	normal birth	miraculous, virgin birth	normal birth
Mission	prophet only	said to be Son of God	prophet only
Parents	father & mother	mother only	father & mother
Family Life	married with children	never married	married with children
Acceptance by own people	Jews accepted him	Jews rejected him[1]	Arabs accepted him
Political Authority	Moses had it (Num 15:36)	Jesus refused it[2]	Muhammad had it
Victory Over Opponents	Pharaoh drowned	said to be crucified	Meccans defeated
Death	natural death	claimed to be crucified	natural death
Burial	buried in grave	empty tomb	buried in grave
Divinity	not divine	divine to Christians	not divine
Began Mission at age	40	30	40
Resurrection on Earth	not resurrected	resurrection claimed	not resurrected

2. The Awaited Prophet will be from the Brethren of the Jews

The verse in discussion is explicit in saying that the prophet will come amongst the

Brethren of the Jews. Abraham had two sons: Ishmael and Isaac. The Jews are the descendants of Isaac's son, Jacob. The Arabs are the children of Ishmael. Thus, the Arabs are the brethren of the Jewish nation.^[3] The Bible affirms:

'And he (Ishmael) shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.' (Genesis 16:12)

'And he (Ishmael) died in the presence of all his brethren.' (Genesis 25:18)

The children of Isaac are the brethren of the Ishmaelites. Likewise, Muhammad is from among the brethren of the Israelites, because he was a descendant of Ishmael the son of Abraham.

3. God Will Put His Words in the Mouth of the Awaited Prophet

The Quran says of Muhammad:

"Neither does he speak out of his own desire: that [which he conveys to you] is but [a divine] inspiration with which he is being inspired." (Quran 53:3-4)

This is quite similar to the verse in Deuteronomy 18:15:

"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, *and will put my words in his mouth*; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him" (Deuteronomy 18:18)

The Prophet Muhammad came with a message to the whole world, and from them, the Jews. All, including the Jews, must accept his prophethood, and this is supported by the following words:

"The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." (Deuteronomy 18:15)

4. A Warning to Rejecters

The prophecy continues:

Deuteronomy 18:19 "And it shall come to pass, [that] whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require [it] of him." (in some translations: "I will be the Revenger").

Interestingly, Muslims begin every chapter of the Quran in the name of God by saying:

Bismillah ir-Rahman ir-Raheem

“In the Name of God, the Most-Merciful, the Dispenser of Grace.”

The following is the account of some scholars who believed this prophecy to fit Muhammad.

The First Witness

Abdul-Ahad Dawud, the former Rev. David Benjamin Keldani, BD, a Roman Catholic priest of the Uniate-Chaldean sect (read his biography [here](#)). After accepting Islam, he wrote the book, ‘Muhammad in the Bible.’ He writes about this prophecy:

“If these words do not apply to Muhammad, they still remain unfulfilled. Jesus himself never claimed to be the prophet alluded to. Even his disciples were of the same opinion: they looked to the second coming of Jesus for the fulfillment of the prophecy (Acts 3: 17-24). So far it is undisputed that the first coming of Jesus was not the advent of the Prophet like unto thee and his second advent can hardly fulfill the words. Jesus, as is believed by his Church, will appear as a Judge and not as a law-giver; but the promised one has to come with a “fiery law” in his right hand.”^[4]

The Second Witness

Muhammad Asad was born Leopold Weiss in July 1900 in the city of Lvov (German Lemberg), now in Poland, then part of the Austrian Empire. He was the descendant of a long line of rabbis, a line broken by his father, who became a barrister. Asad himself received a thorough religious education that would qualify him to keep alive the family’s rabbinical tradition. He had become proficient in Hebrew at an early age and was also familiar with Aramaic. He had studied the Old Testament in the original as well as the text and commentaries of the Talmud, the Mishna and Gemara, and he had delved into the intricacies of Biblical exegesis, the Targum.^[5]

Commenting on the verse of the Quran:

“and do not overlay the truth with falsehood, and do not knowingly suppress the truth” (Quran 2:42)

Muhammad Asad writes:

“By ‘*overlaying the truth with falsehood*’ is meant the corrupting of the biblical text, of which the Quran frequently accuses the Jews (and which has since been established by objective textual criticism), while the ‘*suppression of the truth*’ refers to their disregard or deliberately false interpretation of the words of Moses in the biblical passage, ‘The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken’ (Deuteronomy 18:15), and the words attributed to God himself, ‘I will raise them up a prophet from among thy brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth’ (Deuteronomy 18:18).

The ‘brethren’ of the children of Israel are obviously the Arabs, and particularly the musta’ribah (‘Arabianized’) group among them, which traces its descent to Ishmael and Abraham: and since it is this group that the Arabian Prophet’s own tribe, the Quraish, belonged, the above biblical passages must be taken as referring to his advent.”[\[6\]](#)

Footnotes:

[\[1\]](#) “He (Jesus) came unto his own, but his own received him not” (John 1:11)

[\[2\]](#) John 18:36.

[\[3\]](#) ‘Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources’ by Martin Lings, p. 1-7.

[\[4\]](#) Ibid, p. 156

[\[5\]](#) ‘Berlin to Makkah: Muhammad Asad’s Journey into Islam’ by Ismail Ibrahim Nawwab in the January/February 2002 issue of Saudi Aramco Magazine.

[\[6\]](#) Muhammad Asad, ‘The Message of The Quran’ (Gibraltar: Dar al-Andalus, 1984), p. 10-11.

[Previous: Bible Prophecies of Muhammad \(part 1 of 4\): Witnesses of Scholars](#)

[Next: Bible Prophecies of Muhammad \(part 3 of 4\): New Testament Prophecies of Muhammad](#)

Parts of This Article

[Bible Prophecies of Muhammad \(part 1 of 4\): Witnesses of Scholars](#)

[Bible Prophecies of Muhammad \(part 2 of 4\): Old Testament Prophecies of Muhammad](#)

[Bible Prophecies of Muhammad \(part 3 of 4\): New Testament Prophecies of Muhammad](#)

[Bible Prophecies of Muhammad \(part 4 of 4\): More New Testament Prophecies of Muhammad](#)

[View all parts together](#)

Bible Prophecies of Muhammad (part 3 of 4): New Testament Prophecies of Muhammad



Description: The Biblical evidence that Muhammad is not a false prophet. Part 3: A discussion on the prophecy mentioned in John 14:16 of the Paraclete, or “Comforter”, and how Muhammad fits this

prophecy more than others.

By IslamReligion.com

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John 14:16 “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.” (*American Standard Version*)

In this verse, Jesus promises that another “Comforter” will appear, and thus, we must discuss some issues concerning this “Comforter.”

The Greek word *paravklhtoß*, *ho parakletos*, has been translated as ‘Comforter.’

Parakletos more precisely means ‘one who pleads another’s cause, an intercessor.’^[1] The *ho parakletos* is a person in the Greek language, not an incorporeal entity. In the Greek language, every noun possesses gender; that is, it is masculine, feminine or neutral. In the Gospel of John, Chapters 14, 15 and 16 the *ho parakletos* is actually a person. All pronouns in Greek must agree in gender with the word to which they refer and the pronoun “he” is used when referring to the *parakletos*. The NT uses the word *pneuma*, which means “breath” or “spirit,” the Greek equivalent of *ruah*, the Hebrew word for “spirit” used in the OT. *Pneuma* is a grammatically neutral word and is always represented by the pronoun “it.”

All present day Bibles are compiled from “ancient manuscripts,” the oldest dating back the fourth century C.E. No two ancient manuscripts are identical.^[2] All Bibles today are produced by combining manuscripts with no single definitive reference. The Bible translators attempt to “choose” the correct version. In other words, since they do not know which “ancient manuscript” is the correct one, they decide for us which “version” for a given verse to accept. Take John 14:26 as an example. John 14:26 is the only verse of the Bible which associates the *Parakletos* with the Holy Spirit. But the “ancient manuscripts” are not in agreement that the “*Parakletos*” is the ‘Holy Spirit.’ For instance, the famous Codex Syriacus, written around the fifth century C.E., and discovered in 1812 on Mount Sinai, the text of 14:26 reads; “Paraclete, the Spirit”; and not “Paraclete, the *Holy Spirit*.”

Why is it important? It is significant because in biblical language a “spirit,” simply means “a prophet.”

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”^[3]

It is instructive to know that several biblical scholars considered *parakletos* to be an 'independent salvific (having the power to save) figure,' not the Holy Ghost.[\[4\]](#)

The question, then, is: was Jesus' *parakletos*, Comforter, a 'Holy Ghost' or a person - a prophet - to come after him? To answer the question, we must understand the description of *ho parakletos* and see if it fits a ghost or a human being.

When we continue reading beyond chapter 14:16 and chapter 16:7, we find that Jesus predicts the specific details of the arrival and identity of the *parakletos*. Therefore, according to the context of John 14 & 16 we discover the following facts.

1. Jesus said the parakletos is a human being:

John 16:13 "He will speak."

John 16:7 "...for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you."

It is impossible that the Comforter be the "Holy Ghost" because the Holy Ghost was present long before Jesus and during his ministry.[\[5\]](#)

John 16:13 Jesus referred to the paraclete as 'he' and not 'it' seven times, no other verse in the Bible contains seven masculine pronouns. Therefore, *paraclete* is a person, not a ghost.

2. Jesus is called a parakletos:

"And if any man sin, we have an advocate (parakletos) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John 2:1)

Here we see that parakletos is a physical and human intercessor.

3. The Divinity of Jesus a later innovation

Jesus was not accepted as divine until the Council of Nicea, 325 CE, but everyone, except Jews, agree he was a prophet of God, as indicated by the Bible:

Matthew 21:11 "...This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee."

Luke 24:19 "...Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people."

4. Jesus prayed to God for another parakletos:

John 14:16 "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another parakletos."

Footnotes:

[1] Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words.

[2] "Besides the larger discrepancies, such as these, there is scarcely a verse in which there is not some variation of phrase in some copies [of the ancient manuscripts from which the Bible has been collected]. No one can say that these additions or omissions or alterations are matters of mere indifference." 'Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts,' by Dr. Frederic Kenyon, Eyre and Spottiswoode, p. 3.

[3] 1 John 4: 1-3

[4] '...Christian tradition has identified this figure (Paraclete) as the Holy Spirit, but scholars like Spitta, Delafosse, Windisch, Sasse, Bultmann, and Betz have doubted whether this identification is true to the original picture and have suggested that the Paraclete was once an independent salvific figure, later confused with the Holy Spirit.' 'the Anchor Bible, Doubleday & Company, Inc, Garden City, N.Y. 1970, Volume 29A, p. 1135.

[5] Genesis 1: 2, 1 Samuel 10: 10, 1 Samuel 11: 6, Isaiah 63: 11, Luke 1: 15, Luke 1: 35, Luke 1: 41, Luke 1: 67, Luke 2: 25, Luke 2: 26, Luke 3:22, John 20: 21-22.

Bible Prophecies of Muhammad (part 4 of 4): More New Testament Prophecies of Muhammad



Description: The Biblical evidence that Muhammad is not a false prophet. Part 4: A further discussion on the prophecy mentioned in John 14:16 of the Paraclete, or "Comforter", and how Muhammad fits this prophecy more than others.

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5. Jesus describes the function of the other Parakletos:

John 16:13 "He will guide you into all the truth."

God says in the Quran of Muhammad:

“O mankind! The Messenger has now come unto you with the truth from your Lord: believe, then, for your own good!...” (Quran 4:170)

John 16:14 “He will glorify Me.”

The Quran brought by Muhammad glorifies Jesus:

“...who shall become known as the Christ Jesus, son of Mary, of great honor in this world and in the life to come, and [shall be] of those who are drawn near unto God.” (Quran 3:45)

Muhammad also glorified Jesus:

“Whoever testifies that none deserves worship except God, who has no partner, and that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger, and that Jesus is the servant of God, His Messenger, and His Word which He bestowed in Mary, and a spirit created from Him, and that Paradise is true, and that Hell is true, God will admit him into Paradise, according to his deeds.” (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim*)

John 16:8 “he will convince the world of its sin, and of God’s righteousness, and of the coming judgment.”

The Quran announces:

“Indeed, they have disbelieved who say, ‘God is the Christ, son of Mary’ - seeing that the Christ [himself] said, ‘O Children of Israel! Worship God [alone], who is my Lord as well as your Lord.’ ‘Indeed, whoever ascribes divinity to any being beside God, unto him will God deny paradise, and his goal shall be the fire: and there are not for the wrongdoers any helpers!’” (Quran 5:72)

John 16:13 “he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, [that] shall he speak.”

The Quran says of Muhammad:

“Neither does he speak out of his own desire: that [which he conveys to you] is but [a divine] inspiration with which he is being inspired.” (Quran 53:3-4)

John 14:26 “and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

The words of the Quran:

“...while the Messiah had said, ‘O Children of Israel, worship God, my Lord and your

Lord.’” (Quran 5:72)

...reminds people of the first and greatest command of Jesus they have forgotten:

“The first of all the commandments is, ‘Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord.’” (Mark 12:29)

John 16:13 “and He will disclose to you what is to come.”

The Quran states:

“That is from the news of the unseen which We reveal, [O Muhammad], to you...”
(Quran 12:102)

Hudhaifa, a disciple of Prophet Muhammad, tells us:

“The Prophet once delivered a speech in front of us wherein he left nothing but mentioned everything that would happen till the Hour (of Judgment).” (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari*)

John 14:16 “that he may abide with you for ever.”

...meaning his original teachings will remain forever. Muhammad was God’s last prophet to humanity.[\[1\]](#) His teachings are perfectly preserved. He lives in the hearts and minds of his adoring followers who worship God in his exact imitation. No man, including Jesus or Muhammad, has an eternal life on earth. *Parakletos* is not an exception either. This cannot be an allusion to the Holy Ghost, for present day creed of the Holy Ghost did not exist until the Council of Chalcedon, in 451 CE, four and half centuries after Jesus.

John 14:17 “he will be the spirit of truth”

...meaning he will a true prophet, see 1 John 4: 1-3.

John 14:17 “the world neither sees him...”

Many people in the world today do not know Muhammad.

John 14:17 “...nor knows him”

Fewer people recognize the real Muhammad, God’s Prophet of Mercy.

John 14:26 “the Advocate (parakletos)”

Muhammad will be the advocate of humanity at large and of sinful believers on Judgment Day:

People will look for those who can intercede on their behalf to God to reduce the distress and suffering on Day of Judgment. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus will excuse themselves.

Then they will come to our Prophet and he will say, "I am the one who is able." So he will intercede for the people in the Great Plain of Gathering, so judgment may be passed. This is the 'Station of Praise' God promises Him in the Quran:

"...It may be that your Lord will raise you to Station of Praise (the honor of intercession on the Day of Resurrection)" (Quran 17:79)[\[2\]](#)

Prophet Muhammad said:

"My intercession will be for those of my nation who committed major sins." (*Al-Tirmidhi*)

"I shall be the first intercessor in Paradise." (*Saheeh Muslim*)

Some Muslim scholars suggest what Jesus actually said in Aramaic represents more closely the Greek word *periklytos* which means the 'admired one.' In Arabic the word 'Muhammad' means the 'praiseworthy, admired one.' In other words, *periklytos* is "Muhammad" in Greek. We have two strong reasons in its support. First, due to several documented cases of similar word substitution in the Bible, it is quite possible that both words were contained in the original text but were dropped by a copyist because of the ancient custom of writing words closely packed, with no spaces in between. In such a case the original reading would have been, "and He will give you another comforter (*parakletos*), the admirable one (*periklytos*)." Second, we have the reliable testimony of at least four Muslim authorities from different eras who ascribed 'admired, praised one' as a possible meaning of the Greek or Syriac word to Christians scholars.[\[3\]](#)

The following are some who attest that the Paraclete is indeed an allusion to Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him:

The First Witness

Anselm Turmeda (1352/55-1425 CE), a priest and Christian scholar, was a witness to the prophecy. After accepting Islam he wrote a book, "*Tuhfat al-arib fi al-radd 'ala Ahl al-Salib.*"

The Second Witness

Abdul-Ahad Dawud, the former Rev. David Abdu Benjamin Keldani, BD, a Roman Catholic priest of the Uniate-Chaldean sect.[\[4\]](#) After accepting Islam, he wrote the book, 'Muhammad in the Bible.' He writes in this book:

"There is not the slightest doubt that by "Periqlyte," Prophet Muhammad, i.e. Ahmad,

is intended.”

The Third Witness

A synopsis of the life of Muhammad Asad has already been given above.
Commenting on the verse:

“...an apostle who shall come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad” (Quran 61:6)

...where Jesus predicts the coming of Muhammad, Asad explains that the word Parakletos:

“...is almost certainly a corruption of Periklytos (‘the Much-Praised’), an exact Greek translation of the Aramaic term or name Mawhamana. (It is to be borne in mind that Aramaic was the language used in Palestine at the time of, and for some centuries after, Jesus and was thus undoubtedly the language in which the original - now lost - texts of the Gospels were composed.) In view of the phonetic closeness of Periklytos and Parakletos it is easy to understand how the translator - or, more probably, a later scribe - confused these two expressions. It is significant that both the Aramaic Mawhamana and the Greek Periklytos have the same meaning as the two names of the Last Prophet, Muhammad and Ahmad, both of which are derived from the Hebrew verb hamida (‘he praised’) and the Hebrew noun hamd (‘praise’).”

Footnotes:

[1] Quran 33:40.

[2] See also *Saheeh Al-Bukhari*

[3] ‘Sirat Rasul Allah,’ by Ibn Ishaq (85-151 CE)p, 103. ‘Bayn al-Islam wal-Masihyya: Kitab ‘Abi Ubaida al-Khazraji ,’ p. 220-221 by Abu Ubaida al-Khazraji (1146-1187 CE) p. 220-221. ‘Hidaya tul-Hayara,’ by Ibn ul-Qayyim, p. 119. ‘al-Riyadh al-Aniqa,’ by al-Suyuti, p. 129.

[4] Read his biography here: (http://www.muhammad.net/biblelp/bio_keldani.html.)

Muhammad’s Claim to Prophethood (part 1 of 3): Proofs of His Prophethood



Description: Evidence for the claim that Muhammad was a true prophet and not an imposter. Part 1: Some proofs that led various companions to believe in his prophethood.

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Divine facilitation is proportionate to human need. God makes acquisition easier as the need of humans increase. Air, water, and sunlight are necessary for human survival, and thus God has granted their acquisition to all without hardship. The greatest human need is to know the Creator, and thus, God has made it easy to know Him. The evidence for God, however, differs in its nature. In its own way, everything in creation is evidence of its Creator. Some evidence is so obvious that any lay person can immediately 'see' the Creator, for instance, the cycle of life and death. Others 'see' the handiwork of the Creator in the elegance of mathematical theorems, universal constants of physics, and the development of the embryo:



“Behold! in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day,- there are indeed signs for men of understanding.” (Quran 3:190)

Like the existence of God, human beings need evidence to establish the truth of prophets who spoke in His name. Muhammad, like the prophets before him, claimed to be God's final prophet to humanity. Naturally, the evidence for his veracity is diverse and numerous. Some are obvious, while others are apparent only after deep reflection.

God says in the Quran:

“...Is it not enough (for them to know) that your Lord is witness unto everything?” (Quran 41:53)

Divine witness by itself is sufficient without any other evidence. God's witness for Muhammad lies in:

- (a) God's past revelations to earlier prophets which prophesize Muhammad's appearance.
- (b) God's Acts: the miracles and 'signs' He gave to support Muhammad's claim.

How did it all begin in the early days of Islam? How were the first believers convinced he was God's prophet?

The first person to believe in the prophethood of Muhammad was his own wife, Khadija. When he returned home trembling out of fear after receiving divine revelation, she was his solace:

“Never! By God, God will never disgrace you. You keep good relations with your relatives, help the poor, serve your guests generously, and assist those hit with calamities.” (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari*)

She saw in her husband a man God would not humiliate, because of his virtues of honesty, justice, and helping the poor.

His closest friend, Abu Bakr who had known him all his life and was almost the same age, believed the moment he heard the words, ‘*I am God's Messenger*’ without any additional confirmation other than the open book of his friend's life.

Another person who accepted his call on merely listening to it, was ‘Amr’^[1] He says:

“I used to think before Islam that people were in error and they were on nothing. They worshipped idols. In the meantime, I heard of a man preaching in Mecca; so I went to him...I asked him: ‘Who are you?’ He said: ‘I am a Prophet.’ I again said: ‘Who is a Prophet?’ He said: ‘God sent me.’ I said: ‘What did He send you with?’ He said: ‘I have been sent to join ties of relationship, to break the idols, and to proclaim the unity of God so nothing is associated with Him (in worship).’ I said: ‘Who is with you in this?’ He said: ‘A free man and a slave (referring to Abu Bakr and Bilal, a slave, who had embraced Islam by that time).’ I said: ‘I intend to follow you.’” (*Saheeh Muslim*)

Dimad was a desert healer who specialized in mental illnesses. On his visit to Mecca he heard the Meccans say that Muhammad (may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him) was insane! Confident of his skills, he said to himself, ‘If I were to come across this man, God might cure him at my hand.’ Dimad met the Prophet and said: ‘Muhammad, I can protect (one) who suffers from mental illness or under sorcery, and God cures one whom He so desires at my hand. Do you desire to be cured?’ The Prophet of God responded, starting with his usual introduction to his sermons:

“Indeed, praise and gratitude is for God. We praise Him and ask for His help. He who God guides, none can lead astray, and he who is led astray cannot be guided. I bear witness no one deserves worship but God, He is One, has no partners, and Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger.”

Dimad, stuck by the beauty of the words, asked him to repeat them, and said, ‘I have heard the words of diviners, sorcerers, and poets, but I have never heard such words, they reach the depth of the oceans. Give me your hand so I may pledge my allegiance to you on Islam.’^[2]

After Gabriel brought the first revelation to Prophet Muhammad, Khadija, his wife, took him to visit her old cousin, Waraqa bin Nawfal, a biblical scholar, to discuss the event. Waraqa recognized Muhammad from the prophecies of the Bible and confirmed:

“This is the Keeper of Secrets (Angel Gabriel) who came to Moses.” (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari*)

The face can be a window to the soul. Abdullah bin Salam, the chief rabbi of Medina at the time, looked at the face of the Prophet when he arrived in Medina, and exclaimed:

“The moment I looked at his face, I knew it was not the face of a liar!” (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari*)

Many of those around the Prophet who did not accept Islam did not doubt in his veracity, but refused to do so for other reasons. His uncle, Abu Talib, aided him throughout his life, confessed to the truthfulness of Muhammad, but refused to break off from the religion of his ancestors out of shame and social status.

Footnotes:

[1] Amr b. Abasa Sulami.

[2] *Saheeh Muslim*.

[Next: Muhammad's Claim to Prophethood \(part 2 of](#)

Muhammad's Claim to Prophethood (part 2 of 3): Was He a Liar?



Description: Evidence for the claim that Muhammad was a true prophet and not an imposter. Part 2: A look into the claim that Muhammad was a liar.

By IslamReligion.com

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A Logical Analysis of His Claim

As discussed earlier, Muhammad made the claim, *'I am God's Messenger.'* Either he was true in his claim or he was not. We will begin by assuming the latter and investigate all possibilities raised by skeptics of past and present, discussing some of their misconceptions. Only if all other possibilities are exhausted can one reasonably claim that the only possibility left is that he was true in what he claimed. We will also look at what the Quran has to say on the matter.

Was He a Liar?

Is it possible for a liar to claim for a period of 23 years with unwavering certitude that he is a prophet like Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, that there will be no more prophets after him, and that the scripture he has been sent with will remain his lasting miracle till the end of time?

A liar will falter sometimes, perhaps with a friend, maybe with his family members, somewhere he will make a mistake. His message, delivered over two decades, will contradict itself sometimes. But what we see in reality is that the scripture he brought declares freedom from internal inconsistencies, his message remained consistent throughout his mission, and even in the midst of a battle, he proclaimed his prophethood![\[1\]](#)

His life story is preserved book open for everyone to read. Before Islam, he was well-known to his own people to be trustworthy and reliable, an honest man, a person of integrity, who did not lie.[\[2\]](#) It was due to this reason they named him "Al-Ameen", or "The Trustworthy" He was strongly opposed to lying and warned against it. Is it possible for him to tell a consistent lie for 23 years, a lie so monstrous that it would make him a social outcast, when he was never known to have lied even once about anything? It's simply against the psychology of liars.

If one was to ask why a person would make claim to prophethood and lie, their answer might be one of two:

- 1) Fame, Glory, wealth and status.
- 2) Moral progress.

If we were to say that the Muhammad claimed prophethood for fame glory and status, we would see that what actually occurred was the exact opposite. Muhammad, before his claim to Prophethood, enjoyed a high status in all aspects" He was of the most noble of tribes, of the most noble of families, and was known for his truthfulness.

After his claim, he became a social outcast. For 13 years in Makkah, he and his followers faced excruciating torture, which led to the death of some of his followers, ridicule, sanctioning, and excommunication from society.

There were many other ways which a person could gain fame in the society of that time, mainly from valor, and poetry. If Muhammad had made the claim that he himself authored the Quran, as will be explained later, that would have been enough for his name and poetry to be engraved in gold and hung inside the Ka'bah for eternity, people from all over the world hallowing him. Rather, he proclaimed that he was not the author of his revelation, and that it was from the One high above, causing him to be ridiculed in his time until ours.

The Prophet was the husband of a wealthy tradeswoman, and he enjoyed the comforts of life available to him at his time. But after his claim of prophethood, he became of the poorest of people. Days passed without stove fire being lit in his house, and at one time, hunger drove him to the mosque in hope of some provision. The leaders of Makkah in his time offered him the riches of the world in order for him to leave his message. As a response to their offer, he recited the verses of the Quran 41:1-38.11. The Following are some of these verses:

“(As for) those who say: ‘Our Lord is God,’ and, further, stand straight and steadfast, the angels descend upon them, saying: ‘Fear not, nor be grieved, and receive good news of the garden which you were promised. We are your guardians in this world's life and in the hereafter, and you shall have therein what your souls desire and you shall have therein what you ask for. A hospitable gift from one Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful!’ And who is better in speech than one who calls to God, works righteousness, and says, ‘I am of those who has submitted in Islam?’ Nor can goodness and evil be equal. Repel (evil) with what is better: Then will he between whom and thee was hatred become as it were thy friend and intimate. And no one will be granted such goodness except those who exercise patience and self-restraint,- none but persons of the greatest good fortune.” (Quran 41:30-35)

If one were to say that Muhammad lied and claimed prophethood in order to bring moral and religious reform to a society ridden with ills, this argument is futile in itself, for how can one bring moral reform through a lie. If Muhammad was so keen to uphold and preach upright morals and worship of One God, then could he have lied himself in doing so? If we say that this is not possible, the only answer is that he was speaking the truth. The only other possibility is that he was insane.

Footnotes:

[1] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari*

[2] ‘Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources’ by Martin Lings, p. 34.

[Previous: Muhammad's Claim to Prophethood \(part 1 of 3\): Proofs of His](#)

[Next: Muhammad's](#)

Muhammad's Claim to Prophethood (part 3 of 3): Was He Insane, a Poet, or a Sorcerer?



Description: Evidence for the claim that Muhammad was a true prophet and not an imposter. Part3: A look into some other false claims made by critics.

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Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [Evidence of His Prophethood](#)

Was He Insane?

Someone who has dealt with mentally ill knows people can be identified by their symptoms. Muhammad displayed no symptom of insanity at any time in his life. No friend, wife, or family member suspected or abandoned him due to insanity. As for the effects of revelations on the Prophet, such as perspiration and the likes, it was due to the intensity of the Message which he had to bear and not due to any epileptic fit or instance of insanity...

Quite to the contrary, Muhammad preached for a long time and brought a Law unknown in its completeness and sophistication to ancient Arabs. If the prophet was insane, it would have been obvious to those around him at one point in a period of twenty three years. When in history did an insane man preach his message to worship One God for ten years, three of which he and his followers spent in exile, and eventually became the ruler of his lands? Which insane man has ever won the hearts and minds of people who met him and earned the respect of his adversaries?

More so, his closest companions, Abu Bakr and Umar were recognized for their abilities, nobility, skills, and finesse. They were willing to sacrifice anything for the religion he brought. On one occasion, Abu Bakr, brought all his material possessions to Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, and when asked what he left for his family, responded, *'I left for them God and His Messenger!'*

Abu Bakr, a merchant by profession, after being elected the ruler of all of Arabs after Muhammad, spent a mere two dirham on himself and his family!

Umar became the ruler of Arabia after Abu Bakr and conquered Syria, Egypt, and subdued the Persian and Roman Empires. He was a man known for his scrupulous

justice. How can someone suggest these people were following a mentally deranged individual?

God suggests: stand before God without bias or pre-conceived beliefs, and discuss it with another person or think about it yourself, this prophet has no madness, he is as stable today as you had known him for forty years.

“Say: ‘I counsel you one thing only: Be (ever conscious of) standing before God, whether you are in the company of others or alone; and then bethink yourselves (that) there is no madness in (this prophet,) your fellow-man: he is only a warner to you of suffering severe to come.’” (Quran 34:46)

The Meccans of old rejected his call out of tribal partisanship, and they were not truthful in their accusations of his insanity. Even today, many people refuse to accept Muhammad as a prophet simply because he was an Arab and self-gratify themselves by saying he must have been insane or worked for the devil. Their hatred for Arabs translates into their rejection of Muhammad, even though God says:

“Nay, but he (whom you call a mad poet) has brought the truth; and he confirms the truth of (what the earlier of God’s) message-bearers (have taught).” (Quran 37:37)

Although the pagan Arabs knew Muhammad all too well, but they still through accusations of insanity at him, for they considered his religion a sacrilege against the tradition of their forefathers.

“And when our verses are recited to them as clear evidences, they say, ‘This is not but a man who wishes to avert you from that which your fathers were worshipping.’ And they say, ‘This is not except a lie invented.’ And those who disbelieve say of the truth when it has come to them, ‘This is not but obvious magic.’ And We had not given them any scriptures which they could study, and We had not sent to them before you, (O Muhammad), any warner. And those before them denied, and they (the people of Mecca) have not attained a tenth of what We had given them. But they (i.e., the former peoples) denied My messengers, so how (terrible) was My reproach.” (Quran 34:43-45)

Was He A Poet?

God mentions their accusation in the Quran and responds to it:

“Or do they say (of you), ‘A poet for whom we await a misfortune of time?’ Say, ‘Wait, for indeed I am, with you, among the waiters.’ Or do their minds command them to (say) this, or are they a transgressing people? Or do they say, ‘He has made it up?’ Rather, they do not believe.” (Quran 52:30-32)

God describes the poets of that time so the Prophet can be compared with them:

“And as for the poets - (they, too, are prone to deceive themselves: and so, only) those

who are lost in grievous error would follow them. Art thou not aware that they roam confusedly through all the valleys (of words and thoughts)[\[1\]](#), and that they (so often) say what they do not do (or feel)? (Most of them are of this kind -) save those who have attained to faith, and do righteous deeds, and remember God unceasingly, and defend themselves (only) after having been wronged, and (trust in God's promise that) those who are bent on wrongdoing will in time come to know how evil a turn their destinies are bound to take!" (Quran 26:224-227)

Arabian poets were the furthest from the truth, speaking of wine, womanizing, war, and leisure, unlike the Prophet who invites to good manners, serving God, and helping the poor. Muhammad followed his own teachings before anyone else unlike the poets of old or philosophers of today.

The Quran which the Prophet recited was unlike any poetry in its style. The Arabs of the time has strict rules in regards to rhythm, rhyme, syllables and endings to each verse of poetry. The Quran did not conform to any of the rules which were known in the time, but at the same time, it surpasses any type of text which the Arabs had ever heard. Some of them actually became Muslims after hearing only a few verses of the Quran, due to their certain knowledge that the source of something so beautiful as it could not be any created being.

Muhammad was never known to have composed a poem before Islam or after prophethood. Rather, the Prophet had a sever dislike for it. Compilations of his statements, called Sunna, have been diligently preserved and are completely different in its literary content than the Quran. The store-house of Arabic poetry do not contain any couplets by Muhammad.

Was He A Sorcerer?

Prophet Muhammad never learned or practiced sorcery. On the contrary, he condemned the practice of sorcery and taught his followers how to seek protection against it.

Sorcerers have a strong relationship with the devil. Their partnership allows them to deceive people. Devils propagate lies, sins, obscenities, immorality, evil, and they destroy familys. The Quran clarifies those upon whom the devils descend:

“Shall I inform you upon whom the devils descend? They descend upon every sinful liar. They pass on what is heard, and most of them are liars.” (Quran 26:221-223)

Prophet Muhammad was known and recognized to be a man of integrity true to his word who was not known to have ever lied. He commanded good morals and fine manners. No sorcerer in world history has brought a scripture like the Quran or a Law like his.

Footnotes:

[1] The idiomatic phrase is used, as most of the commentators point out, to describe a confused or aimless - and often self-contradictory - play with words and thoughts. In this context it is meant to stress the difference between the precision of the Quran, which is free from all inner contradictions, and the vagueness often inherent in poetry.

The Miracles of Muhammad (part 1 of 3)



Description: The nature of the miracles performed at the hands of prophets.

By IslamReligion.com

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Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [Evidence of His Prophethood](#)

Apart from the greatest miracle given to him, the Quran, Prophet Muhammad performed many physical miracles witnessed by his contemporaries numbering in hundreds, and in some cases thousands.[1] The miracle reports have reached us by a reliable and strong methods of transmission unmatched in world history. It is as if the miracles were performed in front of our eyes. The meticulous method of transmission is what convinces us that Muhammad indeed performed these great miracles with divine aid and, thus, we can believe him when he said, *'I am God's Messenger.'*

Muhammad's great miracles were witnessed by thousands of believers and skeptics, following which verses of the Quran were revealed mentioning the supernatural events. The Quran made some miracles eternal by etching them in the conscious of the believers. The ancient detractors would simply remain silent when these verses were recited. Had these miracles not taken place, they would have seized the moment to scandalize it and belie Muhammad. But rather, the opposite took place. The believers grew more certain of the truth of Muhammad and the Quran. The fact that the faithful grew stronger in their faith and the silence of the unbelievers and not denying their occurrence is acknowledgment from both that the miracles took place exactly as the Quran describes.

In this section we will discuss some of the physical miracles performed by Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him.

Miracles are from Divine Power

A miracle one of the factors which further strengthens the claim of a prophet of God. Miracles should not be the soul essence of belief, as supernatural events can also take place by the use of magic and devils. The truth of prophethood is clear and evident in the actual message brought, as God has instilled a capability, although limited, in humans to recognize the truth as it is, specifically in the matter of monotheism. But in order to further strengthen the argument of Prophethood, God performed miracles at the hands of His Prophets from Moses, Jesus to Muhammad. For this reason, God did not produce miracles upon the demand of the Meccans, but the Wise God gave Muhammad the miracles He desired at the time He chose:

“And they say, ‘We will not believe you until you break open for us from the ground a spring, or [until] you have a garden of date-palms and grapes and make rivers gush forth within them in force [and abundance] or you make the heaven fall upon us in fragments as you have claimed or you bring God and the angels before [us] or you have a house of ornament [gold] or you ascend into the sky. And [even then], we will not believe in your ascension until you bring down to us a book we may read.’ ‘Say, Exalted is my Lord! Was I ever but a human messenger?’” (Quran 17:90-93)

The answer was:

“And nothing has prevented Us from sending [this message, like the earlier ones,] with miraculous signs [in its wake], save [Our knowledge] that the people of olden times [only too often] gave the lie to them: thus, We provided for [the tribe of] Thamud the she-camel as a visible sign, but they wronged her. And never did We send those signs for any other purpose than to convey a warning.” (Quran 17:59)

When demanded ostensibly, God in His wisdom knew they would not believe, so He refused to show them miracles:

“Now they swear by God with their most solemn oaths that if a miracle were shown to them, they would indeed believe in this [divine writ]. Say: ‘Miracles are in the power of God alone.’ ‘And for all you know, even if one should be shown to them, they would not believe so long as We keep their hearts and their eyes turned [away from the truth], even as they did not believe in it in the first instance: and [so] We shall leave them in their overweening arrogance, blindly stumbling to and fro.’” (Quran 6:109-110)

We gather here some of the major physical miracles performed by Prophet Muhammad.

Footnotes:

[1] The miracles add up to over a thousand. See ‘*Muqaddima Sharh Saheeh Muslim*’ by *al-Nawawi* and ‘*al-Madkhal*’ by *al-Baihaqi*.

The Miracles of Muhammad (part 2 of 3)



Description: The splitting of the moon, and the Prophet’s journey to Jerusalem and ascension to Heaven.

By IslamReligion.com

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Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [Evidence of His Prophethood](#)

Splitting of the Moon

One of the times when God performed miracles at the hand of the Prophet was when the Meccans demanded to see a miracle from Muhammad to show his truthfulness. God split the moon in two separate halves and then re-joined them. The Quran recorded the event:

“The Last Hour draws near, and the moon is split asunder!” (Quran 54:1)

Prophet Muhammad would recite these verses of the Quran in large congregations of the weekly Friday prayer and the bi-annual Eed prayers.[1] Had the event never occurred, Muslims themselves would have doubted their religion and many would have left it! The Meccans would have said, ‘Hey, your prophet is a liar, the moon never split, and we never saw it split!’ Instead, the believers grew stronger in their faith and the only explanation the Meccans could come up with was, ‘passing magic!’

“The Last Hour draws near, and the moon is split asunder! And if they see a sign (miracle), they turn away and say, ‘Passing magic!’ - for they are bent on giving it the lie, being always wont to follow their own desires.” (Quran 54:1-3)

The splitting of the moon is confirmed through eye-witness testimony transmitted through an unbroken chain of reliable scholars so many that is it impossible that it could be false (*hadith mutawatir*).[2]

A skeptic might ask, do we have any independent historical evidence to suggest the moon was ever split? After all, people around the world should have seen this

marvelous event and recorded it.

The answer to this question is twofold.

First, people around the world could not have seen it as it would have been daytime, late night, or early morning many parts of the world. The following table will give the reader some idea of corresponding world times to 9:00 pm Mecca time:

Country	Time
Mecca	9:00 pm
India	11:30 pm
Perth	2:00 am
Reykjavik	6:00 pm
Washington D.C.	2:00 pm
Rio de Janeiro	3:00 pm
Tokyo	3:00 am
Beijing	2:00 am

Also, it is not likely that a large number of people in lands close by would be observing the moon at the exact same time. They had no reason to. Even if some one did, it does not necessarily mean people believed him and kept a written record of it, especially when many civilizations at that time did not preserve their own history in writing.

Second, we actually have an independent, and quite amazing, historical corroboration of the event from an Indian king of that time.

Kerala is a state of India. The state stretches for 360 miles (580 kilometers) along the Malabar Coast on the southwestern side of the Indian peninsula.^[3] King Chakrawati Farmas of Malabar was a Chera king, Cheraman perumal of Kodungallure. He is recorded to have seen the moon split. The incident is documented in a manuscript kept at the India Office Library, London, reference number: Arabic, 2807, 152-173.^[4] A group of Muslim merchant's passing by Malabar on their way to China spoke to the king about how God had supported the Arabian prophet with the miracle of splitting of the moon. The shocked king said he had seen it with his own eyes as well, deputized his son, and left for Arabia to meet the Prophet in person. The Malabari king met the Prophet, bore the two testimonies of faith, learned the basics of faith, but passed away on his way back and was buried in the port city of Zafar, Yemen.^[5]

It is said that the contingent was led by a Muslim, Malik bin Dinar, and continued to Kodungallure, the Chera capital, and built the first, and India's oldest, mosque in the area in 629 CE which exists today.



A pre-renovation picture of the Cheraman Juma Masjid, India's oldest mosque dating back to 629 CE. Image courtesy of www.islamicvoice.com.

The news of his accepting Islam reached Kerala where people accepted Islam. The people of Lakshadweep and the Moplas (Mapillais) from the Calicut province of Kerala are converts from those days.



Cheraman Juma Masjid, named after India's first Muslim convert, Cheraman perumal Chakrawati Farmas, after renovation. Image courtesy of www.indianholiday.com.

The Indian sighting and the meeting of the Indian king with Prophet Muhammad is also reported by Muslim sources. The famous Muslim historian, Ibn Kahtir, mentions the splitting of the moon was reported in parts of India.^[6] Also, the books of hadith have documented the arrival of the Indian king and his meeting the Prophet. Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, a companion of Prophet Muhammad, states:

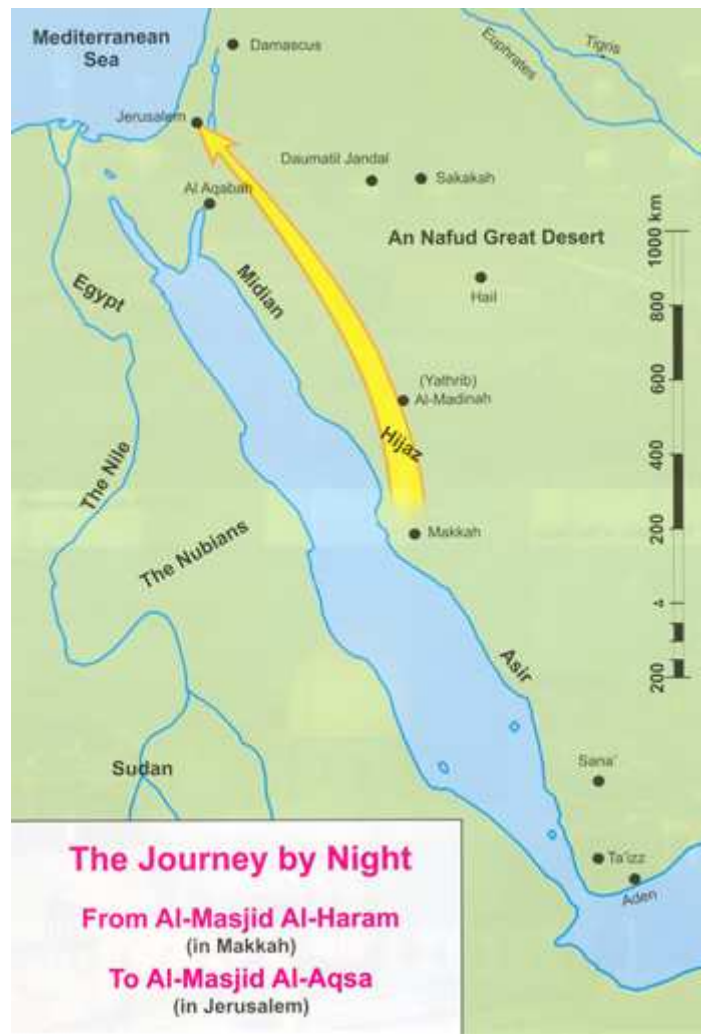
“The Indian king gifted the Prophet with a jar of ginger. The companions ate it piece by piece. I took a bite as well.”^[7]

The king was thus considered a ‘companion’ – a term used for a person who met the Prophet and died as a Muslim – his name registered in the mega-compendiums chronicling the Prophet's companions.^[8]

Night Journey and Ascent to Heaven

A few months before the migration from Mecca to Medina, God took Muhammad in

one night from the Grand Mosque in Mecca to al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, a month's journey of 1230 Km for a caravan. From Jerusalem, he ascended to the heavens, passing the boundaries of the physical universe to be in divine presence, meet God, and witness the Great Signs (*al-Ayat ul-Kubra*). His truth became apparent in two ways. First, 'the Prophet described the caravans he had overtaken on the way home and said where they were and about when they might be expected to arrive in Mecca; and each arrived as predicted, and the details were as he had described.'^[9] Second, he was never known to have been to Jerusalem, yet he described al-Aqsa Mosque to skeptics like an eye-witness.



The mystical journey is mentioned in the Quran:

“Exalted is He who took His Servant [Prophet Muhammad] by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of

Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing.” (Quran 17:1)

“So will you dispute with him over what he saw? And he certainly saw him in another descent at the Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary – near it is the Garden of Refuge (Paradise) – when there covered the Lote Tree that which covered (it). The sight (of the Prophet) did not swerve, nor did it transgress (its limit). He certainly saw of the greatest signs of his Lord.” (Quran 53:12-18)

The event is also confirmed through eye-witness testimony transmitted through the ages with an unbroken chain of reliable scholars (*hadith mutawatir*).[\[10\]](#)



Entrance of Al-Aqsa Mosque from where Muhammad ascended the heavens. Picture courtesy of Thekra A. Sabri.

Footnotes:

[\[1\]](#) *Saheeh Muslim*.

[\[2\]](#) See ‘*Nadhm al-Mutanathira min al-Hadith al-Mutawatir*,’ by al-Kattani p. 215.

[\[3\]](#) “Kerala.” Encyclopædia Britannica from Encyclopædia Britannica Premium Service. (<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9111226>)

[4] It is quoted in the book “Muhammad Rasulullah,” by Muhammad Hamidullah: “There is a very old tradition in Malabar, South-West Coast of India, that Chakrawati Farms, one of their kings, had observed the splitting of the moon, the celebrated miracle of the Holy Prophet at Mecca, and learning on inquiry that there was a prediction of the coming of a Messenger of God from Arabia, he appointed his son as regent and set out to meet him. He embraced Islam at the hand of the Prophet, and when returning home, at the direction of the Prophet, died at the port of Zafar, Yemen, where the tomb of the “Indian king” was piously visited for many centuries.”

[5] ‘Zafar: biblical Sephar, classical Sapphar, or Saphar ancient Arabian site located southwest of Yarim in southern Yemen. It was the capital of the Himyarites, a tribe that ruled much of southern Arabia from about 115 BC to about AD 525. Up until the Persian conquest (c. AD 575), Zafar was one of the most important and celebrated towns in southern Arabia—a fact attested to not only by Arab geographers and historians but also by Greek and Roman authors. After the extinction of the Himyar kingdom and the rise of Islam, Zafar gradually fell into decay.’ “Zafar.” Encyclopædia Britannica from Encyclopædia Britannica Premium Service. (<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9078191>)

[6] ‘*Al-Bidaya wal-Nihaya*,’ by Ibn Kathir, vol 3, p. 130.

[7] Reported by Hakim in ‘*Mustadrik*’ vol 4, p. 150. *Hakim* comments, ‘I have not memorized any other report stating the Prophet ate ginger.’

[8] ‘*Al-Isaba*’ by Ibn Hajr, vol 3. p. 279 and ‘*Lisan ul-Mizan*’ by Imam al-Dhahabi, vol. 3 p. 10 under the name ‘Sarbanak,’ the name with which the Arabs knew him.

[9] ‘Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources’ by Martin Lings, p. 103.

[10] Forty five companions of the Prophet transmitted the reports on his Night Journey and the Heavenly Ascent. See the works of hadith masters: ‘*Azhar al-Mutanathira fi al-Ahadith al-Mutawatira*’ by al-Suyuti p. 263 and ‘*Nadhm al-Mutanathira min al-Hadith al-Mutawatir*,’ by al-Kattani p. 207.

The Miracles of Muhammad (part 3 of 3)



Description: A mention of other various miracles of the Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him.

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Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [Evidence of His Prophethood](#)

There are many other miracles which the Prophet performed related in the Sunnah, or conglomeration of the sayings, deeds, approvals, and descriptions of the Prophet.

The Tree Trunk

In Medina Muhammad used to deliver sermons leaning on a tree stump. When the number of worshippers increased, someone suggested a pulpit be built so he can use it to deliver the sermon. When the pulpit was built, he abandoned the tree trunk. Abdullah ibn Umar, one of the companions, gave an eye-witness testimony of what happened. The trunk was heard weeping, the Prophet of Mercy went towards it and comforted it with his hand.[\[1\]](#)

The event is also confirmed through eye-witness testimony transmitted through the ages with an unbroken chain of reliable scholars (*hadith mutawatir*).[\[2\]](#)

The Flowing of Water

On more than one occasion when people were in dire need of water, the blessing of the Muhammad saved them. In the sixth year after the he migrated from Mecca to Medina, Muhammad went to Mecca for pilgrimage. In the long journey through the desert, people ran out of all water, only the Prophet was left with a vessel with which he performed ablution for prayers. He put his hand in vessel, water began flowing from between his fingers. Jabir bin Abdullah, who witnessed the miracle, says of the fifteen hundred men, 'We drank it and made ablution.'[\[3\]](#) This miracle has been transmitted with an unbroken chain of reliable scholars (*hadith mutawatir*).[\[4\]](#)

The sprouting of water from human fingers is similar to the Moses' miracle of producing water from a rock.

Blessing of Food

On more than one occasion, the Prophet blessed food by either praying or touching it so all present could get their fill. This happened at times when food and water shortage afflicted Muslims.[\[5\]](#) These miracles took place in the presence of a large number of people and is, thus, not possible to deny.

Healing the Sick

Abdullah ibn Ateek broke his leg and Muhammad healed it by wiping his hand over it. Abdullah said it was as if nothing had happened to it! The person who witnessed the miracle was another companion, Bara' ibn Azib (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari*)

During the expedition of Khyber, Muhammad healed the painful eyes of Ali ibn Abi Talib in front of a whole army. Ali, many years later, became the fourth caliph of Muslims.[\[6\]](#)

Exorcising Devils

Muhammad exorcised the devil out of a boy brought by his mother for healing to him

by saying, ‘*Come out! I am Muhammad, the Messenger of God!*’ The woman said, ‘By the One who sent you with the truth, we have never seen anything wrong with him since.’[\[7\]](#)

Prayers Answered

(1) The mother of Abu Hurayra, a close companion of Muhammad, used to speak ill of Islam and its prophet. One day, Abu Hurayra came weeping to Muhammad and asked him to pray for his mother to be saved. Muhammad prayed and when Abu Hurayra returned home he found his mother ready to accept Islam. She bore the testimony of faith in front of her son and entered Islam.[\[8\]](#)

(2) Jarir ibn Abdullah was commissioned by the Prophet to rid the land of an idol worshipped besides God, but he complained he was could not ride a horse well! The Prophet prayed for him, ‘O God, make him a strong horseman and make him one is guides and is guided.’ Jarir testifies he never fell off his horse after the Prophet prayed for him.[\[9\]](#)

(3) The people were struck with famine during the time of Muhammad. A man stood up when Muhammad was delivering the weekly sermon on Friday, and said, ‘O Messenger of God, our wealth has been destroyed and our children are starving. Pray to God for us.’ Muhammad raised his hands in prayer.

Those in attendance testify that that the moment he lowered his hands after praying, clouds began to build like mountains!

By the time he stepped down of his pulpit, rain was dripping from his beard!

It rained the whole week till next Friday!

The same man stood up again, complained this time, ‘O Messenger of God, our buildings are destroyed, and our property is drowned, pray to God for us!’

Muhammad raised his hands and prayed, ‘O God, (let it rain) around us, but not on us.’

Those in attendance testify that the clouds withdrew in the direction he pointed, the city of Medina was surrounded by clouds, but there were no clouds over it![\[10\]](#)

(4) Here is the beautiful story of Jabir. He testifies that on one time, the camel he was riding was exhausted because it was used for carrying water. The camel could hardly walk. Muhammad asked him, ‘What’s the matter with your camel?’ On finding out how tired the poor camel was, Muhammad prayed for the poor animal and from that time, Jabir tells us, the camel was always ahead of others! Muhammad asked Jabir, ‘How do you find your camel?’ Jabir responded, ‘It is well, your blessing has reached it!’ Muhammad bought the camel from Jabir on the spot for a piece of gold, with the condition that Jabir ride it back to the city! On reaching Medina, Jabir says he brought the camel to Muhammad the next morning. Muhammad gave him the

piece of gold and told him to keep his camel![\[11\]](#)

It is no wonder why those around him who witnessed these great miracles performed in front of crowds were certain of his truthfulness.

Footnotes:

[\[1\]](#) *Saheeh Al-Bukhari*.

[\[2\]](#) More than ten companions of the Prophet transmitted the reports on their hearing the weeping of the tree trunk. See the works of hadith masters: 'Azhar al-Mutanathira fi al-Ahadith al-Mutawatira' by al-Suyuti p. 267, 'Nadhm al-Mutanathira min al-Hadith al-Mutawatir,' by al-Kattani p. 209 and 'Shamail' of Ibn Kathir p. 239.

[\[3\]](#) *Saheeh Al-Bukhari*.

[\[4\]](#) More than ten companions of the Prophet transmitted the reports on their hearing the weeping of the tree trunk. See 'Nadhm al-Mutanathira min al-Hadith al-Mutawatir,' by al-Kattani p. 212, 'al-Shifa' by Qadhi Iyyad, vol 1, p. 405, and 'al-'Ilaam' by al-Qurtubi, p. 352.

[\[5\]](#) *Saheeh Al-Bukhari*. See 'Nadhm al-Mutanathira min al-Hadith al-Mutawatir,' by al-Kattani p. 213 and 'al-Shifa' by Qadhi Iyyad, vol 1, p. 419.

[\[6\]](#) *Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim*

[\[7\]](#) *Musnad of Imam Ahmad, and Sharh' al-Sunnah*

[\[8\]](#) *Saheeh Muslim*

[\[9\]](#) *Saheeh Muslim*

[\[10\]](#) *Saheeh Al-Bukhar, Saheeh Muslim*

[\[11\]](#) *Saheeh Al-Bukhar, Saheeh Muslim*

What is the Criteria for a True Prophet?



Description: A look into the biblical verses which set the criteria for the truthfulness of the claim to Prophethood.

By IslamReligion.com

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Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [Evidence of His Prophethood](#)

Rays from the Same Lamp

A natural question to ask someone who believes in any prophet is: 'What are the criteria for your belief in him?' Reasonable criteria would be:

- (i) **evidence** for his claim.
- (ii) **consistency** in his teachings (about God, afterlife, and similar issues of belief)
- (iii) **similarity** to the teachings of earlier prophets.
- (iv) **integrity**: he must be a man of high morals.

The Bible lends support to our criteria. The Old Testament says of a false prophet:

1. Pretends to be sent by God.[\[1\]](#)
2. Described as covetous,[\[2\]](#) drunken,[\[3\]](#) immoral and profane,[\[4\]](#) influenced by evil spirits.[\[5\]](#)
3. Prophesizes falsely,[\[6\]](#) lies in the name of the Lord,[\[7\]](#) out of his own heart,[\[8\]](#) in the name of false gods.[\[9\]](#)
4. Often practices divination and witchcraft.[\[10\]](#)
5. Leads people into error,[\[11\]](#) makes to forget God's name,[\[12\]](#) teaches profaneness and sin,[\[13\]](#) and oppresses.[\[14\]](#)

The New Testament says of Jesus' criteria to identify false prophets:

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit."[\[15\]](#)

We learn the following:

- (i) prophecy will continue after Jesus.
- (ii) beware of false prophets.

(iii) the criteria to identify a false prophet is his fruits, that is his works or deeds.[\[16\]](#)

As stated earlier, Muhammad claimed unequivocally, 'I am God's Messenger.' If a person evaluates his claim on the above criteria, he will find it meets the criteria completely.

In Islamic doctrine, all prophets constitute a spiritual fraternity of brothers with a single 'father,' but different 'mothers.' The 'father' is prophethood and unity of God, the 'mothers' are the different Laws they brought. Emphasizing the spiritual fraternity of all prophets, Prophet Muhammad said:

"I am the closest of all people to the son of Mary (Jesus). The prophets are paternal brothers, their mothers are different, but their religion is one." (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim*)

All prophets are 'rays' from the same 'Lamp': the central message of all prophets throughout ages was to dedicate worship to God only. That's why Islam views denying a single prophet as equivalent to denying them all. The Quran states:

"Indeed, those who deny God and His messengers, and wish to separate God from His messengers, saying: 'We believe in some but reject others' and want to pursue a path in-between - it is they, they who are truly denying the truth: and for those who deny the truth We have readied shameful suffering. But as for those who believe in God and His messengers and make no distinction between any of them - unto them, in time, will He grant their rewards [in full]. And God is indeed much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace." (Quran 4:150-152)

Denying the prophethood of Muhammad is tantamount to denying all prophets. The prophethood of Muhammad is known just like the prophethood of Moses and Jesus is known: the numerous reports of their miracles that have reached us. The Book brought by Muhammad (the Quran) is fully preserved, and His Law is complete and applicable to today's world. Moses brought the Law and justice, Jesus brought grace and flexibility. Muhammad combined between the Law of Moses and the grace of Jesus.

If someone were to say, 'he was an imposter,' others are more fit to be charged with this accusation. Hence, denying Muhammad is denying one's own prophets. If a reasonable person looks at two bright stars, he must acknowledge both are stars, he cannot say to one, 'Yes, this one is a bright star,' but deny the other! Doing so would be denying reality and a lie.

Make a table of all the prophets you believe in. Start from the first one to the last one you believe in. Answer the following questions:

What is the evidence I believe he was a true prophet?

What was the mission of the prophet in his own words?

Did he bring a Law? Is his Law applicable today?

What scripture did he bring? How is its content and meaning?

Is the scripture preserved in the original language it was revealed in? Is it considered a literary authority, free of internal inconsistencies?

What do you know of his morals and integrity?

Compare all the prophets you have listed and then answer the same questions about Muhammad. Then ask yourself, 'Can I honestly take Muhammad out of my list because he does not meet the criteria as other prophets?' It will not take too much effort to discover that the evidence for Muhammad's prophethood is stronger and more convincing.

A skeptic need consider what is so unusual about Muhammad's claim to be a prophet? When did God declare an end to prophecy before him? Who decided that there would not be any more divine communication with human beings? With no evidence to block divine revelation, it is natural to accept a continuity of revelation:

"Indeed, We have sent you with the truth, as a bearer of glad tidings and a Warner: for there never was any community but a Warner has [lived and] passed away in its midst." (Quran 35:24)

"And We sent forth Our messengers, one after another: [and] every time their messenger came to a community, they gave him the lie: and so We caused them to follow one another [into the grave], and let them become [mere] tales: and so - away with the folk who would not believe!" (Quran 23:44)

This is true especially when the truth was perverted by Jews and Christians, the Christians claiming Jesus was the son of God and Jews calling him an illegitimate son of Joseph the Carpenter. Muhammad brought the truth: Jesus was God's noble prophet born of a miraculous virgin birth. As a result, Muslims believe in Jesus and love him, neither going to the extreme like the Christians, nor disparaging him like the Jews.

Footnotes:

[\[1\]](#) Jer 23:17,18,31

[2] Mic 3:11

[3] Isa 28:7

[4] Jer 23:11,14

[5] 1Ki 22:21,22

[6] Jer 5:31

[7] Jer 14:14

[8] Jer 23:16,26; Eze 13:2

[9] Jer 2:8

[10] Jer 14:14; Eze 22:28; Act 13:6

[11] Jer 23:13; Mic 3:5

[12] Jer 23:27

[13] Jer 23:14,15

[14] Eze 22:25

[15] Matthew 7:15-17 (King James Version)

[16] According to 'Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words.'

The Prophecies of Muhammad



Description: Prophecies of the Prophet Muhammad which were fulfilled in his lifetime and after his death. These prophecies are clear proofs of Muhammad's prophethood may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him.

By IslamReligion.com

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Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [Evidence of His Prophethood](#)

One of the ways in which a person proves his prophethood is honesty, whether it be in regards to incidents in the past, in their everyday life, or things to come in the future. In addition to the Quran, there are many sayings of Prophet Muhammad which contain prophecies he made in his lifetime dealing with near and distant future. Some of them have come true, others await fulfillment. Hudhaifah, a disciple of Prophet Muhammad, tells us:



“The Prophet once delivered a speech in front of us wherein he mentioned everything [all the signs] that would happen till the Final Hour without leaving anything. Some of us remembered it and some forgot it. After that speech, I used to see events taking place which were referred to in that speech, but I had forgotten them before their occurrence. Then I would recognize such events as a man recognizes another man who has been absent and then sees and recognizes him.” (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari*)

There are at least 160 known and confirmed prophecies of Prophet Muhammad which were fulfilled in his lifetime and the first generation after him.[\[1\]](#) We will mention some here.

(1) Preceding the Battle of Badr, the first and decisive confrontation with pagan Meccans in the second year of migration from Mecca in 623 CE, Prophet Muhammad foretold the precise spot every pagan Meccan soldier would fall. Those who witnessed the battle saw the prophecy come true with their own eyes.[\[2\]](#)

(2) Prophet Muhammad prophesized the Battle of the Confederates (*al-Ahzab*) would be the last invasion the tribe of Quraish (the pagan Meccans) would launch against the Muslims. It was fought in the fifth year of migration, 626 CE and was the last military conflict between the two sides. All Meccans embraced Islam after a few years.[\[3\]](#)

(3) The Prophet informed his daughter, Fatima, that she would be the first member of his family to die after him. There are two prophecies in one: Fatima will outlive her father; Fatima will be the first member of his household to die after him. Both were fulfilled.[\[4\]](#)

(4) The Prophet Muhammad prophesized Jerusalem would be conquered after his death.[\[5\]](#) The prophecy was fulfilled when, according to Encyclopedia Britannica: “In 638 the Muslim Caliph, Umar I, entered Jerusalem.”[\[6\]](#)

(5) The Prophet Muhammad prophesized the conquest of Persia.[\[7\]](#) It was conquered by Umar’s commander, Sa’ad bin Abi Waqqas. In the words of Encyclopedia Britannica:

“...raids into Sasanian territory were quickly taken up by Muhammad’s Caliphs, or

deputies, at Medina - Abu Bakr and Umar ibn al-Khattab... an Arab victory at Al-Qadisiyyah in 636/637 was followed by the sack of the Sasanian winter capital at Ctesiphon on the Tigris. The Battle of Nahavand in 642 completed the Sasanids' vanquishment."[\[8\]](#)

(6) The Prophet Muhammad prophesized the conquest of Egypt.[\[9\]](#) In the words of Encyclopedia Britannica:

“Amr... undertook the invasion in 639 with a small army of some 4,000 men (later reinforced). With what seems astonishing speed the Byzantine forces were routed and had withdrawn from Egypt by 642... Various explanations have been given for the speed with which the conquest was achieved.”[\[10\]](#)

(7) The Prophet foretold confrontation with the Turks.[\[11\]](#) The first conflict took place in the caliphate of Umar in 22 AH.[\[12\]](#)

(8) The Prophet foretold the first maritime battle to be undertaken by Muslims would be witnessed by Umm Haram, the first woman to participate in a naval expedition. He also prophesied the first assault on Constantinople.[\[13\]](#)

The first maritime battle in Muslim history was in 28 AH in the rule of Mu'awiya. It was witnessed by Umm Haram as foretold by Prophet Muhammad, and Yazid ibn Mu'awiya led the first attack on Constantinople in 52 AH.[\[14\]](#)

(9) The prophecy that Rome, Persia, and Yemen will be conquered was made during the Battle of Confederates in 626 CE,[\[15\]](#) under extreme circumstances, as is described by the Quran:

“[Remember] when they came at you from above you and from below you, and when eyes shifted [in fear], and hearts reached the throats and you assumed about God [various] assumptions. There, the believers were tested and shaken with a severe shaking. And [remember] when the hypocrites and those in whose hearts is disease said, ‘God and His Messenger did not promise us except delusion.’” (Quran 33:10-12)

(10) Prophet Muhammad prophesized an imposter claiming to speak in the name of God would be killed at the hands of a righteous man in Muhammad's lifetime.[\[16\]](#) Al-Aswad al-Ansi, an imposter prophet in Yemen, was killed in the Prophet's lifetime by Fayruz al-Daylami.[\[17\]](#)

There are at least an additional 28 prophecies pertaining to the end times which are awaiting fulfillment.

Indeed these well-documented prophecies are clear proofs of the Prophethood of Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him. There is no possible way that the Prophet could have knowledge of these incidents except if it were inspired by God Himself, all in order to further prove the authenticity of the Muhammad, that he was not an imposter, but rather a Prophet raised by God to deliver

humanity from Hellfire.

Footnotes:

[1] They are collected by Dr. Muhammad Wali-ullah al-Nadavi in his Master's thesis entitled, 'Nubuwwat al-Rasul,' from al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt.

[2] *Saheeh Muslim*, Abu Ya'la.

[3] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Bazzar, and Haithami*.

[4] 'Sharh' *Saheeh Muslim*, by Imam al-Nawawi.

[5] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari*.

[6] "Jerusalem." Encyclopædia Britannica from Encyclopædia Britannica Premium Service. (<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-61909>)

[7] *Saheeh Muslim*.

[8] "Iran." Encyclopædia Britannica from Encyclopædia Britannica Premium Service. (<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-32160>)

[9] *Saheeh Muslim*.

[10] "Egypt." Encyclopædia Britannica from Encyclopædia Britannica Premium Service. (<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-22358>)

[11] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim*.

[12] *Ibn Kathir's 'al-Bidaya wal-Nihaya.'*

[13] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim*.

[14] *Ibn Kathir's 'al-Bidaya wal-Nihaya.'*

[15] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari*.

[16] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari*.

[17] Encyclopedia of Islam.

Prophecies of the Quran Addressed to Muhammad



Description: There are various prophecies mentioned in the Quran which specifically addressed Prophet Muhammad. The fulfillment of these prophecies has been well documented in the books of *seerah*, or the biography of the Prophet as recorded by his disciples.

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Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [Evidence of His Prophethood](#)

Entering Mecca's Grand Mosque (*al-Masjid al-Haram*)

In the sixth year after the Prophet was forced to migrate from Mecca to Medina, he saw himself visiting Mecca and performing pilgrimage in a vision mentioned in the Quran:



“Certainly has God showed to His Messenger the vision (i.e. dream) in truth.

You will surely enter *al-Haram* mosque, if God wills, in safety, with your heads shaved and [hair] shortened^[1], not fearing [anyone]. He knew what you did not know and has arranged before that a conquest near [at hand].” (Quran 48:27)

God made three promises:

- (a) Muhammad would enter into Mecca's Grand Mosque.
- (b) Muhammad would enter in a state of security.
- (c) Muhammad and his companions would get to perform pilgrimage and fulfill its rituals.

Ignoring the hostility of Meccans, Prophet Muhammad gathered his companions and embarked on a peaceful journey to Mecca. But the Meccans continued to be hostile and he was forced to return to Medina. The vision remained unfulfilled; however, an important treaty was signed between the Prophet and the Meccans, which would prove of great significance. It is due to this treaty that Muhammad performed a peaceful pilgrimage with his companions the very next year. The vision had found its fulfillment.^[2]

The Quranic Prophecy; ‘The Unbelievers Will Lose’

Muslims were subject to severe persecution in Mecca at the hand of pagans. At one time they were boycotted for three years, and the perpetual shortage of food sometimes bordered on famine.^[3] Any talk of victory was unimaginable. Despite all odds, God prophesized in Mecca:

“[The pagans’] assembly will be defeated, and they shall turn their backs [in flight]!.” (Quran 54:45)

The Arabic verb *yuhzamu* is preceded by *sa* (an Arabic prefix denoting the future tense), making it a distinct prophecy awaiting fulfillment in future. And so it was in the holy month of Ramadan, two years after the Prophet’s migration from Mecca to Medina that the Meccans were defeated in the Battle of Badr and forced to retreat.^[4] Umar, the second caliph of the Muslims after the Prophet, used to say that they did not know how the Quranic prophecy would be fulfilled until they themselves witnessed it coming true at the famous battle of Badr! (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari*)

The Quranic Prophecy; ‘Believers Will Get Political Authority’

Despite severe oppression at the hands of Meccans, Muslims were given good news from God:

“God has promised those who have believed among you and done righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession [to authority] upon the earth just as He granted it to those before them and that He will surely establish [therein] their religion which He has preferred for them and that He will surely substitute for them, after their fear, security, [for] they worship Me, not associating anything with Me. But whoever disbelieves after that - then those are the defiantly disobedient.” (Quran 24:55)

How such a promise from Almighty God would be fulfilled to the oppressed, brutalized Muslims in Mecca was impossible to imagine at the time it was made. It was fulfilled, nevertheless. Indeed, God made Muslims secure and gave them political sway in a matter of years.

“And Our word [decree] has already preceded for Our slaves, the messengers, [that] indeed, they would be those given victory.” (Quran 37:171-172)

At first, the Muslims established their own state, by the invitation of the people of Medina, when God commanded they migrate there from Mecca. Then, within the lifetime of the Prophet, that state expanded to hold sway over the whole of the Arabian Peninsula, from the Gulf of Aqaba and the Arabian Gulf to the Arabian Sea in the south, including the place from whence the Muslims had been driven out (Mecca itself). This decree was ongoing, for the expansion of the Muslim political and religious dominion did not stop at the Arabian Peninsula. History gives a living testimony that the Muslims addressed by these verses ruled the lands of the former Persian and Roman empires, an expansion that amazed and won admiration of world historians. In the words of Encyclopedia Britannica:

“Within 12 years after Muhammad’s death, the armies of Islam took possession of

Syria, Iraq, Persia, Armenia, Egypt, and Cyrenaica (in modern Libya).”[\[5\]](#)

The Quran’s Prophecy Regarding the Hypocrites and the Tribe of Banu Nadhir

God says in the Quran:

“Surely, if they are expelled, never will they (hypocrites) go out with them, and if they are attacked, they will never help them. And if they do help them, they (hypocrites) will turn their backs, so they will not be victorious.” (Quran 59:12)

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(For) indeed if they are driven out they go not out with them, and indeed if they are attacked they help them not, and indeed if they had helped them they would have turned and fled, and then they would not have been victorious.

“Have you not observed how those who are hypocrites, tell their brothers (i.e. associates) among the People of the Scripture who disbelieved, ‘If you are expelled, we will surely also leave with you, and we will never anyone against you; and if you are attacked (i.e. by the Muslim militia), we will surely aid you.’ But God bears witness that they are liars. If they (i.e. the Jews) are expelled, they (i.e. the hypocrites) will not leave with them, and if they are fought, they will not aid them. And [even] if they were to aid them, they will surely turn their backs; then they will not be aided.” (Quran 59:11-12)

The prophecy was fulfilled when the Banu Nadhir were expelled in August 625 CE from Medina; the hypocrites did not accompany them or come to their aid.[\[6\]](#)

The Quranic Prophecies concerning Future Confrontations

“They will not harm you except for [some] annoyance. And if they fight you, they will show you their backs (i.e., flee); then they will not be aided.” (Quran 3:111)

“And if those (Meccans) who disbelieve were to fight you, they would certainly turn their backs (i.e., flee). Then they would not find a protector or a helper.” (Quran 48:22)

Historically, after these verses were revealed, the unbelievers in the Arabian Peninsula were never able to withstand the Muslims again.[\[7\]](#)

We see from the prophecies discussed in these articles that the claim many detractors of Muhammad’s Prophethood are utterly unfounded. They have based their criticism on the challenge to show that what Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, foretold, if anything, and what came true of his foretelling.[\[8\]](#)

Demonstrably, he did prophesize, with God’s guidance, and demonstrably, what he

was directed to tell us did actually occur. Therefore, by the criterion of the detractors, Muhammad was the Messenger of God, and the last of the prophets to be sent, by both his statements in the Sunnah (narrations from his life) and the word of the Quran.

Footnotes:

[1] Some of the rites of Hajj.

[2] See 'Mercy For the Worlds,' by Qazi Suliman Mansoorpuri, vol.1, p. 212 and 'Madinan Society At The Time Of The Prophet,' by Dr. Akram Diya al Umari, vol. 2, p. 139.

[3] 'Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources' by Martin Lings, p. 89.

[4] 'Mercy For the Worlds,' by Qazi Suliman Mansoorpuri, vol. 3 p. 299 'Madinan Society At The Time Of The Prophet,' by Dr. Akram Diya al Umari, vol. 2, p. 37.

[5] "arts, Islamic." Encyclopædia Britannica from Encyclopædia Britannica Premium Service. (<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-13813>)

[6] 'Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources' by Martin Lings, p. 204. 'Mercy For the Worlds,' by Qazi Suliman Mansoorpuri, vol. 3 p. 302.

[7] '*Risala Khatim al-Nabiyeen Muhammad*,' by Dr. Thamir Ghisyan.

[8] You may say in your heart, 'How will we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?' When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him. (The Bible, New American Standard Version, Deuteronomy 18:21-22)

The Letter of the Prophet to the Emperor of Byzantium (part 1 of 3): An Introduction



Description: The background and context in which the letter was written, the message it contained and how it was received.

By [Jeremy Boulter](#) (© 2006 IslamReligion.com)

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Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [Evidence of His Prophethood](#)

Organization of the Article

This article consists of a first part which is the background and context of the two stories that are told in the second and third part. The main story is the narration of Abu Sufyan ibn Harb to Abdullah ibn Abbas concerning his meeting with Heraclius in Jerusalem, recorded in the collection of *Saheeh al-Bukhari*. Appended to this narration is another, whose source was the Governor of Jerusalem, ibn al-Natur. From the events recorded in each story, it seems obvious that the invitation to Islam by Heraclius to his people in Homs happened at a later date than the meeting of Abu Sufyan with him in Jerusalem. However, it also seems clear that Heraclius must have called for Abu Sufyan after he had heard news of the Prophet in Arabia. Moreover, it is without doubt that when Abu Sufyan met Heraclius, the latter was in possession of the letter from the Prophet. Thus I have split the narration of ibn al-Natur into two episodes which coincidentally occurred in two different locations. The first episode took place in Jerusalem, before the meeting of Abu Sufyan with Heraclius there, while the second in Homs, after Heraclius left Jerusalem. I have also placed the split narration before and after Abu Sufyan's story. Both stories were narrated by ibn Abbas.



Abu Sufyan ibn Harb

Although Abu Sufyan was to eventually embrace Islam, for most of his career during the life of the Prophet, he was bitterly opposed to it. He was the leader of the Umayyad clan of the Quraish tribe and was the chieftain of the entire Quraish tribe, making him one of the most powerful men in Mecca during the lifetime of Muhammad. His great-grand father was Abdul Shams ibn Abd al-Manaf, whose brother was Hashim, the great-grandfather of Muhammad, so there was a distant cousin relationship between them. It was Abu Sufyan's position that made him an enemy of Muhammad, whom he viewed as a threat to his power and a blasphemer of the Quraish gods. The enmity between the Quraish, of whom Abu Sufyan was a prominent leader, and the early Muslims reached such heights that many battles were fought between the two parties after the Muslims settled in Medina in which he participated, and it was he who led the army of Quraish in the Battle of Uhud in 625CE. After the Treaty of Hudaibiyya in 628CE, he took a trading caravan to Greater Syria, and was called to Caesar in Jerusalem. Meanwhile, the treaty with Muhammad was broken by allies of the Quraish while Abu Sufyan was on the way

back to Mecca. Knowing the Muslims were now free from the treaty made a year and a half earlier, he personally went to Medina to try and patch it up, but came away empty handed. The Muslims subsequently attacked Mecca in 630CE. Seeing the writing on the wall, Abu Sufyan fled the city, but later returned in order to embrace Islam.

The Prophet and the Emperor

The Prophet Muhammad and the Emperor Heraclius were contemporaries. Born only 5 years apart, they both lived into their sixties. The reign of Heraclius was marked by ups and downs in military success. In 609CE, when he was 40, Muhammad received the first revelations that marked the beginning of his prophetic mission. In 610CE Heraclius deposed Proclus as Emperor and took his place, but the beginning of his reign was marked by the defeat of his armies in Palestine and Turkey between 614 and 619CE.^[1] These defeats, and the subsequent victory the Romans would enjoy, were mentioned in the Quran at the time:

“The Romans have been defeated in the nearer land; and they, after their defeat, will be victorious. Within three to nine years.” (Quran 30:2-4)

The reconquest by the Romans of the lands ceded to Khosrau started in 625 and ended in triumph in 627CE. The following year, Muhammad, may Allah praise him, sent the following letter to Heraclius by the hand of Dihya al-Kalbi, by way of the governor of Bostra al-Sham, in Syria.

The Letter

The letter Muhammad sent is incorporated in the narration of Abu Sufyan, and I reproduce it below word for word as Heraclius read it out before all his Grandees.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

This letter is from Muhammad the slave of God and His Messenger to Heraclius, the ruler of the Byzantines.

Peace be upon him who follows the right path.

I am writing this invitation to call you to Islam.^[2] If you become a Muslim you will be safe - and God will double your reward, but if you reject this invitation of Islam you will bear the sin of having misguided your subjects^[3]. Thus do I urge you to heed the following:

“O People of the Scriptures! Come to a word common to you and us that we worship none but Allah and that we associate nothing in worship with Him, and that none of us shall take others as Lords beside Allah. Then if they turn away, say: Bear witness that we are Muslims.”

Muhammad, the Messenger of God^[4]

In contrast to Khosrau II, who had been sent a similar letter earlier, the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius kept the letter and sought to find confirmation concerning what it contained. This is quite different to the treatment accorded to his letter to Khosrau II of the Sassanid Empire. According to Abdullah ibn Abbas, the latter was sent with Abdullah ibn Hudhafa al-Sahmi by way of the Governor of Bahrain.

“So, when Khosrau read the letter he tore it up. Saeed ibn al-Musaiyab said, ‘The Prophet then invoked God to destroy and disperse Khosrau and his followers fully and with severity’. (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari*)

The Sassanid Empire was to utterly dissolve almost immediately, first through the defeat by the Romans, and then by the onslaught of the new Muslim nation. The Byzantine Empire, too, while still under Heraclius, dissolved in Egypt, Palestine and Syria. However, unlike the Sassanid Empire, the Byzantine Empire continued on in various forms for another 800 years until Constantinople finally fell, and this may be because of the contrast in the way each of the letters was received.

Footnotes:

^[1] **Heraclius**. (2006). In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Retrieved August 22, 2006, from Encyclopædia Britannica Premium Service.

^[2] That none has right to worship but God, and Muhammad is His Messenger.

^[3] As well as his own sin of rejecting it.

^[4] This letter is preserved in some history books, and a plate of the original letter was included in *Khan, Dr. Majid Ali (1998). Muhammad The Final Messenger. Islamic Book Service, New Delhi, 110002 (India)*. One of his letters to Christian rulers is preserved in Topkapi Museum, Istanbul.

The Letter of the Prophet to the Emperor of Byzantium (part 2 of 3): The Reception



Description: The portents and news of the Prophet of Islam that came to Heraclius and his checking of the author of the letter’s credentials.

By [Jeremy Boulter](#) (© 2006 IslamReligion.com)

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Heraclius Receives News of Muhammad

Ibn al-Natur was the Governor of Jerusalem for Heraclius, who was the head of the Christians of Greater Syria. Ibn al-Natur narrates that once, while he was in Jerusalem:

Heraclius got up in the morning in a sad mood. Some of the priests asked him why.

Being one who practiced astrology, Heraclius had been attempting to map out the future.



In reply to the enquiry, he said, “Last night I was looking at the stars, and I saw that a leader of those who practice circumcision had appeared (and would conquer all before him). Who are they who practice circumcision?”

The priests replied, “Except the Jews nobody practices circumcision, and you needn't be afraid of them; just issue orders to kill every Jew present in the country.”

While they were discussing it, a messenger sent by the King of Ghassan^[1] to convey the news of the Messenger of God to Heraclius was brought in.

(This news may have been the actual letter from the Prophet)

Having heard the news, Heraclius ordered the priest check whether the messenger from Ghassan was circumcised. After having him physically examined, they reported that the man was circumcised. Heraclius then asked the messenger about the custom of the Arabs. The messenger replied, “Arabs also practice circumcision.”

When he heard this, Heraclius said, “The reign of the Arabs has began and their kingdom is about to become manifest.”^[2]

The following story is taken from the narratives by the companions of the Prophet. The story was told by Abu Sufyan to Abdullah Ibn Abbas, who related it to others.^[3] Ibn Abbas was a very devoted student to Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, and a well respected scholar of the Quran.

Abu Sufyan's Meeting with Heraclius Caesar

In 629CE, three years before the death of the Messenger of God, Heraclius reconquered Jerusalem triumphantly bearing what was said to be the original cross venerated by the Christians, and which the Khosrau II had taken as booty 15 years previously.^[4] While resident there, the letter Muhammad had sent, perhaps a year earlier, came to his hand. When he read it, he enquired about the presence of someone from the author's people in the territory he controlled, and was told of Abu Sufyan's trade caravan from Mecca, which was trading nearby. He, with his companions, was summoned to the Emperor's court in Jerusalem, appearing before Heraclius who had his Byzantine Grandees around him.

The Questions Posed by Heraclius and Their Answers

Heraclius called for his interpreter so as to question them, commanding him to ask who amongst them was the closest in kinship to the man who claimed to be a prophet.

Abu Sufyan replied, "I am the nearest relative to him (in this group)."

Heraclius asked, "And what is the relationship between you and him?"

Abu Sufyan said, "He is my (distant) cousin on the spear side."^[5]

Heraclius said, "Bring him closer!" and had Abu Sufyan's companions placed behind him, at his shoulders. Then he ordered his interpreter, "Tell his companions that I am going to question him about the man who claims to be a prophet, so if he tells a lie, immediately repudiate it as a lie."

"How is the lineage of this man among you?" the Roman Emperor continued.

"He is of noble descent." Abu Sufyan replied.

Heraclius further enquired, "Has anybody amongst you ever previously claimed the same as he does?" "Was he prone to lying before he claimed what he has claimed?" "Was anybody among his ancestors a king?"

To each question Abu Sufyan could only answer, "No."

"Do the highborn or the humble among his people listen to him?"

Abu Sufyan replied, "The powerless, rather than the highborn, follow him."

He said, "Are they increasing or decreasing in number?"

"They are increasing," was the reply.

He then asked, "Does anybody amongst those who embrace his religion turn away discontent and renounce it after a while?"

“No.”

Heraclius said, “Does he break his covenants?”

The caravan leader replied, “No. We have a truce with him now, but we fear he may betray us.”

The questioning relentlessly continued: “Have you ever fought each other?”

“Yes.”

“How do the battles turn out?”

“Sometimes he wins the battles and sometimes we win them.”

“What does he order you to do (when he preaches)?

“He tells us to worship God alone and not to worship anything along with Him, and to renounce the all the idols that our ancestors have taught us to worship. He orders us to pray, give charity, be chaste, fulfill promises and discharge our trusts to kith and kin.”

Abu Sufyan was to later admit that he would have lied about the Prophet if he hadn't been afraid of the shame of having his colleagues (listening behind him) spread reports that he was a liar. So he answered as truthfully as he could. He also mentioned the part that he had feared betrayal from Muhammad and those he led because it presented the best opportunity he had to slip in a negative statement against him.

The Emperor Assesses the Interrogation

After he had finished interrogating Abu Sufyan about the Prophet, Heraclius decided to tell him what he had learned from the interview. His interpreter conveyed his analysis.

He said: “I asked you about his lineage among you, and you stated that he was of sound lineage. Indeed, all the Messengers of God come from sound lineages among their respective peoples.

“Then I asked if anybody had claimed what he claims before him among your tribe, and your reply was that none had. If you had said others had made such a claim, I would have assumed he was following that which had been said before him.

“I further asked if you had found him a liar before he said what he said, and you said that you had not. I know that a person who does not lie about other men would never lie about God.

“And I asked you if any of his ancestors had been a king. If your reply had been an affirmative, I would have thought that the man was seeking to restore his ancestral

kingdom.

“Then I enquired whether the highborn or the humble followed him, and you told me his followers were mainly humble people. Indeed, they are invariably the followers of Messengers.

“Then I asked you whether his followers were increasing or decreasing, and you informed me that they were increasing. And so it is with true faith until it is complete.

“I further asked you whether there was anybody who embraces the religion he teaches who turns away discontent and renounces it after a while. Your reply was in the negative, which is how true faith is, when the delight of it mixes completely with their hearts.

“And I asked you whether you fought one another, to which you replied affirmatively, adding that the fortunes of war were sometimes in his favor and sometimes in yours. So it is with all Messengers, but the final victory will be with him.

“I asked you whether he is ever treacherous, and you said he is not. So it is with all the Messengers; they never act treacherously.

“Then I asked you what he enjoins upon you in the religion he preaches. You stated that he orders you to worship God alone, and not associate any thing with Him, and not worship the idols of your ancestors. And that he enjoins you to pray and give charity, to be chaste, fulfill covenants and discharge trusts. And this is the description of what a prophet does.”

Thus did The Byzantine Caesar acknowledge the prophethood of the Messenger of God.

Footnotes:

[1] Ghassan was vassal state of the Roman Empire in Greater Syria administered by an Arab king loyal to Byzantium.

[2] This aspect of the story will be continued in the next article.

[3] The stories in this article are as related by Abdullah ibn Abbas in Saheeh Bukhari

[4] Khosrau II, a Wikipedia article incorporating information from Heraclius and Khosrow II in the online Encyclopædia Britannica (2006).

[5] “the son of my paternal great uncle.”

The Letter of the Prophet to the Emperor of Byzantium (part 3 of 3): Heraclius Invites His Subjects



Description: The acknowledgement that Muhammad was a prophet, the invitation made by Heraclius to his subjects, and their reaction to it. A discussion of some legends concerning how the letter was handed down as an heirloom.

By [Jeremy Boulter](#) (© 2006 IslamReligion.com)

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Category: [Articles](#) > [Evidence Islam is Truth](#) > [Evidence of Muhammad's Prophethood](#)

Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [Evidence of His Prophethood](#)

The Public Reading of the Letter

After Heraclius had confirmed that he believed Muhammad to be a prophet, he said:

“I knew that he was going to appear, but I did not know that he would be from among you. If what you have said is true, he will rule the very the ground beneath my feet; if I knew I would definitely see him in person, I would undertake the journey to meet him; and if I were with him, I would wash his feet.”

This is in keeping with the placement of this story after the ibn al-Natur's report of the attempt by Heraclius to foretell the future astrologically. It is apparent that he 'knew', or at least suspected, that a powerful prophet had arisen among the Arab people. It was at this stage that he asked for the letter he had received from the Messenger of God so as to read it aloud to the assembly.

“When Heraclius had finished his speech and had read the letter, there was a great hue and cry in the Royal Court, so the Meccans were ejected. Abu Sufyan wondered aloud to his companions, “The affairs of ibn abi-Kabsha^[1] have become so prominent that even the King of the Bani-Asfar (the fair skinned ones) fears him.”

Abu Sufyan later told the narrator^[2] “I lay low, by God, and reserved, certain that the affairs of Muhammad would emerge triumphant, until God brought my heart to the



point of embracing Islam.”

Heraclius in Homs

Meanwhile, according to ibn al-Natur’s narration, Heraclius had written a letter to a friend in Rome concerning the letter he had received^[3] whose knowledge he trusted as comparable to his own. Then he left Jerusalem^[4] for Homs (*Emesa* in Roman times) in Syria, where he awaited the reply.

“When he received the reply from his friend, he saw that the man agreed that the signs portended the appearance of a new leader, and that the leader was the expected prophet. On that, Heraclius invited all the Grandees of Byzantium to assemble in his palace at Homs.

“When his Grandees had assembled, he ordered that all the doors of his palace be closed. Then he came out and said, “O Byzantines! If success is your desire and if you seek right guidance and want your Empire to remain, then give a pledge of allegiance to the emerging Prophet!

“On hearing this invitation, the Grandees of the Church ran towards the gates of the palace like a herd of wild asses, but found the doors closed. Heraclius, realizing their hatred towards Islam, lost hope that they would ever embrace Islam, and he ordered that they should be brought back to the audience room. After they returned, he said, “What I have just said was simply to test the strength of your conviction, and I have seen it.

“The people prostrated before him and became pleased with him, and Heraclius turned away from faith.”

A legend has grown up around the events at Homs. It is said that Heraclius first suggested that his bishops embrace Islam, but when they refused, he suggested that the Empire pay tribute to the Prophet of Islam. When they refused this in turn, he suggested making peace with the Muslims and agreeing to a pact of non-belligerence. When this too was refused, he left Syria for Byzantium, and gave up all interest in preserving the Empire south and east of Antioch – never taking the field against the Muslim advance in person, and sending incompetent generals as the defenders of his Middle Eastern lands. What is certain is that he treated the letter and the claim to prophethood therein seriously, and he made every effort to sway his people before turning back.

The Heirloom

The historian, al-Suhayli was the source of two more stories associated with the letter to Heraclius, both of which ibn Hajar included in the commentary on the stories above.^[5] He commented that al-Suhayli recalled hearing of a letter that was kept in a jeweled diamond case, which showed the high status of its owner, that had been left as

an heirloom even until that day, and had reached the hands of the King of Franja.^[6] His descendants thought that it had come into his possession at the time of the conquest of Toledo,^[7] and the Commander of the Muslim Army, Abdul Malik bin Saad came to know of it through one of these descendants^[8] in the 12th Century. Some of Abdul Malik's companions related that the Commander of the Muslim Army sat with the King of Franja^[9], who took out the letter in its jeweled case. When Abdul Malik saw the treasured scroll he realized it was very ancient, and asked if he could kiss the venerable antiquity. However, the King of Franja refused to let him.

Al Suhayli further said that he had been told by more than one source that the jurist, Nuraddin ibn Saygh al-Dimashqi said that he had heard that Sayfuddin Flih al-Mansuri was sent with a gift by King al-Mansur Qalaun^[10] to the King of Morocco,^[11] who then sent the gift to the King of Franja^[12] in exchange for an unmentioned favor, which was granted. The King of Franja invited the messenger to stay in his Kingdom for a while, but he turned the offer down. Before he left, however, the King asked Sayfuddin if he would like to see a valuable object which may have been of interest to him (as a Muslim). Then he had a chest brought out full of compartments, each compartment filled with treasures.

From one of the compartments he took out a long, thin diamond encrusted box (rather like a pencil case). He opened it and took out a scroll. The ancient paper of the scroll was damaged and the writing on it somewhat faded, but most of the body had been preserved by dint of sandwiching it between two silk cloths when rolling it for storage. The King of Franja said: "This is the letter that my ancestor, Caesar, received from your Prophet, which has been handed down to me as an heirloom. Our ancestor left behind a will that his descendents should keep this heirloom if they wished their rule of the Kingdom to last. With it we are strongly protected as long as we respect the letter and keep it hidden. So has the Kingdom come down to us."^[13]

Exactly how valid the claim that the Kingdom of Heraclius (who had officially been Caesar of the entire Roman Empire) had descended to him is questionable, as the Byzantine Empire still existed in the east, and would continue for a further 150 years. However, Heraclius could have sent the letter to Rome, as mentioned earlier, and the letter could have been kept there and passed down into the Visigoth line of Emperors when Charlemagne was crowned Emperor in Rome by Pope Leo III in 800CE.

We cannot categorically say that the letter actually did survive the centuries, though these stories point to that possibility. One of the Prophet's letters still exists on its original parchment in Topkapi museum.

Conclusion

Many may think that Heraclius secretly became Muslim, for he sought to establish whether Muhammad's prophetic claim was true by considering his background, motivations, and effects on his people; his character, accomplishments and message. Judging from his reply to Abu Sufyan and the invitation to his pillars of society in

Homs, he seems to have been convinced that Muhammad was genuine. Perhaps his heart was swayed towards the monotheism expressed by Muhammad in his letter, and he certainly tried to follow his advice to avoid the sin of misguiding those he ruled. His subjects, however, proved too strong in their rejection, and he capitulated to their pressure, unable to submit to this new faith because he feared the rebellion of the people. For this reason, like the uncle of the Prophet, Abu Talib, who believed that Muhammad was a prophet and guarded him throughout his latter life until death but still did not submit to Islam due to the shame brought on by his peers, Heraclius died as a disbeliever in Islam and the Prophet of God..

Footnotes:

[1] The Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him.

[2] Ibn Abbas.

[3] It is possible he sent the actual letter from the Prophet with his request to assess it, though this is not made explicit in the narration.

[4] It is historically recorded that he in March 630CE restored the cross the Nestorians had removed from the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, which was several months after his meeting with Abu Sufyan. He would have left for Homs soon after that.

[5] *Fat-hal-Bari* by Ibn Hajar al-Askalani.

[6] 'Franja' is the Spanish word used for the coastal kingdom(s) of the Iberian Peninsula. In this story the Kings of Franja are from the Jimenez and Burgundy dynasties of Asturias, Galicia, Leon and Castile (which split off from Leon). Leon came into existence when the Kingdom of Asturias was split three ways in 910.

See (<http://www.tacitus.nu/historical-atlas/regents/iberian/leon.htm>).

[7] By Alfonso VI 1085CE, or 478H.

[8] The Kings of Leon from the House of Burgundy

[9] Though not named, this would probably have been Alfonso VII 'The Emperor' or Ferdinand II of Castile and Leon.

[10] Possibly the Egyptian King from the Mamluk Dynasty, who ruled Egypt from 1278-90CE.

[11] Very probably Abu Yusuf Yaqub from the Merinid Dynasty, who reigned from 1259-86CE.

[12] Most likely, Alfonso X, King of Castile and Leon (1252-84CE). He had the title Rex Romanorum (the King of Rome – See: <http://www.masterliness.com/s/Rex.Romanorum.htm>), to which he was elected, as his family was one who could claim descent from Charlemagne. See:

<http://www.masterliness.com/a/Alfonso.X.of.Castile.htm>).

[13] Alfonso VII, his forefather, had been known as ‘The Emperor’ because traditionally the Kings of Leon and Asturias, being descendents of the Visigoth Holy Roman Empire, were known as pretenders to the Empire of Iberia.

News of the Past



Description: The stories told by Prophet Muhammad of the peoples of the past an evidence for his Prophethood.

By IslamReligion.com

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Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [Evidence of His Prophethood](#)

One of the strongest evidences of Prophet Muhammad’s truth is his knowledge of the Unseen world: his accurate knowledge of previous nations and future prophecies. No matter how intelligent, a man cannot authoritatively speak of the past based upon mere intelligence. The information has to be learned. Muhammad was a human being, who did not live in the midst of the nations he spoke of, did not inherit any knowledge of their civilization, or learn it from a teacher. God says:



“That is from the news of the unseen which We reveal to you, [O Muhammad]. And you were not with them when they cast their pens as to which of them should be responsible for Mary. Nor were you with them when they disputed.” (Quran 3:44)

“That is from the news of the unseen which We reveal, [O Muhammad], to you. And you were not with them when they put together their plan while they conspired.” (Quran 12:102)

Consider the verses:

“And We gave Moses the Scripture, after We had destroyed the former generations, as enlightenment for the people and guidance and mercy that they might be reminded. And you, [O Muhammad], were not on the western side [of the mount] when We revealed to Moses the command, and you were not among the witnesses [to that] but We produced [many] generations [after Moses], and prolonged was their duration.

And you were not a resident among the people of Madyan, reciting to them Our verses, but We were senders [of this message]. And you were not at the side of the mount when We called [Moses] but [were sent] as a mercy from your Lord to warn a people to whom no Warner had come before you that they might be reminded. And if not that a disaster should strike them for what their hands put forth [of sins] and they would say, ‘Our Lord, why did You not send us a messenger so we could have followed Your verses and been among the believers?’” (Quran 28:43-47)

These events in the story of Moses were related by Muhammad. Either he witnessed them and was present there, or learned it from those who knew. In either case, he would not be God’s prophet. The only other possibility, rather an inescapable conclusion, is that Muhammad was taught by God Himself.

A few facts must be considered to recognize the full strength of the argument. Muhammad did not learn from any religious scholar, there were no Jewish or Christian scholars in Mecca at the time, and he did not know any language other than Arabic. In addition to the previous, he could neither read nor write. No Meccan, Jew, or Christian ever claimed to be Muhammad’s teacher. Had Muhammad learned from any source, his own companions who believed in him would have exposed him.

“Say, ‘If God had willed, I would not have recited it to you, nor would He have made it known to you, for I had remained among you a lifetime before it. Then will you not reason?’” (Quran 10:16)

Despite their strong opposition, the unbelievers could not attribute his knowledge of the past and present to any source. The failure of his contemporaries is sufficient proof against all later skeptics.

The Correction of Jewish and Christian Misunderstandings

Below are two examples of the Quran correcting what had undergone change in Jewish and Christian beliefs:

(1) The Jews claim Abraham to be a Jew, the father of the Jewish nation, whereas the Christians consider him to be their father as well, as the Roman Catholic Church calls Abraham “our father in Faith” in the Eucharistic prayer called Roman Canon recited during Mass. God responds to them in the Quran:

“O People of the Scripture, why do you argue about Abraham while the Torah and the Gospel were not revealed until after him? Then will you not reason?” (Quran 3:65)

(2) The Quran forcefully denies the crucifixion of Jesus, an event of immense proportions to both religions:

“And [We cursed them] for their breaking of the covenant and their disbelief in the signs of God and their killing of the prophets without right and their saying, ‘Our hearts are wrapped’ [i.e., sealed against reception]. Rather, God has sealed them

because of their disbelief, so they believe not, except for a few. And [We cursed them] for their disbelief and their saying against Mary a great slander, And [for] their saying, ‘Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, the messenger of God.’ And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them. And indeed, those who differ over it are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it except the following of assumption. And they did not kill him, for certain.” (Quran 4:155-157)

This Quranic denial raises some fundamental questions.

First, if Islamic doctrine were borrowed from Judaism and Christianity, why did it deny crucifixion? After all, both religions agree it took place! For the Jews, it was Jesus the imposter who was crucified, but for Christians, it was the Son of God. The Prophet Muhammad could have easily agreed to the crucifixion of Jesus, this giving more credit to his message. If Islam were a false religion, an imitation of Judaism or Christianity, or if Muhammad was not true in his claim, Islam would not take an uncompromising stand on this issue and declare both religions to be outright wrong in this matter, as there is nothing as such to gain by its denial.

Second, if Islam had borrowed the myth of crucifixion from these two religions, it would have eliminated a point of major contention with them, but Islam brought the truth and could not vindicate a myth just to appease them. It is quite possible the Jews were responsible for crucifying Jesus, for their historical transgressions against the prophets of God has been documented in the bible and the Quran alike. But in regards to Jesus, the Quran states forcefully:

“And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him.”

How is it possible, then, to say that the Muhammad produced the Quran by information learnt from Jewish or Christian scholars when he brought ideologies uprooting their doctrine?

Third, the denial of crucifixion by itself negates other Christian beliefs:

- (i) Jesus’ atonement for sin’s of man.
- (ii) Burden of original sin carried by all men.
- (iii) Deconstructs the myth of the cross and its veneration.
- (iv) The last supper and the Eucharist.

Thus we see that the stories the Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, told of nations of past were not mere folklore, nor were they learnt from Jewish or Christian learned men. Rather, they were revealed to him from above the seven heavens by the God of creation.

What is the Sunnah? (part 1 of 2): A Revelation like the Quran



Description: A brief article outlining what constitutes the Sunnah, and its role in Islamic Law. Part One: The definition of Sunnah, what it constitutes, and the types of revelation.

By [The Editorial Team of Dr. Abdurrahman al-Muala](#) (translated by islamtoday.com)

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The Sunnah, according to the scholars of hadeeth, is everything that has been related from the Messenger, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, of his statements, actions, tacit approvals, personality, physical description, or biography. It does not matter whether the information being related refers to something before the beginning of his prophetic mission, or after it.



Explanation of this definition:

The statements of the Prophet include everything the Prophet said for various reasons on different occasions. For example, he said:

“Verily deeds are but by intentions, and every person will have only what he intended.”

The actions of the Prophet include everything that the Prophet did that was related to us by his Companions. This includes how he made ablutions, how he performed his prayers, and how he made the Hajj pilgrimage.

The tacit approvals of the Prophet includes everything that his Companions said or did that he either showed his favor towards or at least did not object to. Anything that had the tacit approval of the Prophet is as valid as anything that he said or did himself.

An example of this is the approval that was given to the Companions when they used their discretion in deciding when to pray during the Battle of Bani Quraydhah. God's Messenger had said to them:

“None of you should perform your afternoon prayers until you arrive at Bani Quraydhah.”

The Companions did not arrive at Bani Quraydhah until after sunset. Some of them took the Prophet’s words literally and postponed the afternoon prayer, saying: “We will not pray until we get there.” Others understood that the Prophet was only indicating to them that they should hurry on their journey, so they stopped and prayed the afternoon prayer on time.

The Prophet learned about what the two groups had decided, but did not criticize either of them.

As for the Prophet’s personality, this would include the following statement of Aishah (may God be pleased with her):

“God’s Messenger was never indecent or vulgar, nor was he loud at the marketplace. He would never respond to the abuse of others with abuses of his own. Instead, he would be tolerant and forgiving.”

The physical description of the Prophet is found in statements like the one related by Anas (may God be pleased with him):

“God’s Messenger was neither overly tall nor was he short. He was neither exceedingly white nor black. His hair was neither excessively curly nor lank.”

The Relationship between the Sunnah and Revelation

The Sunnah is revelation from God to His Prophet. God says in the Quran:

“...We have sent down to him the Book and the Wisdom...” (Quran 2:231)

The Wisdom refers to the Sunnah. The great jurist al-Shafi’i said: “God mentions the Book, which is the Quran. I have heard from people who I consider authorities on the Quran that the Wisdom is the Sunnah of God’s Messenger.” God says:

Indeed, God conferred a great favor on the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from among themselves, reciting to them His signs and purifying them and instructing them in the Book and the Wisdom.

It is clear from the preceding verses that God revealed to His Prophet both the Quran and the Sunnah, and that He commanded him to convey both to the people. The Prophetic hadeeth also attest to the fact that the Sunnah is revelation. It is related from Mak’hool that God’s Messenger said:

“God gave me the Quran and what is like it from the Wisdom.”

Al-Miqdam b. Ma’dee Karab relates that God’s Messenger said:

“I have been given the Book and with it something like it.”

Hisan b. Atiyyah relates that Gabriel used to come the Prophet with the Sunnah just like he would come to him with the Quran.

An opinion from the Prophet was not merely his own thoughts or deliberations on a matter; it was what God revealed to him. In this way, the Prophet was different from other people. He was supported by revelation. When he exercised his own reasoning and was correct, God would confirm it, and if he ever made a mistake in his thinking, God would correct it and guide him to the truth.

For this reason, it is related that the Caliph Umar said from the pulpit: “O people! The opinions of God’s Messenger were correct only because God would reveal them to him. As for our opinions, they are nothing but thoughts and conjecture.”

The revelation that the Prophet received was of two types:

A. Informative revelation: God would inform him of something by means of revelation in one form or another as mentioned in the following Quranic verse:

“It is not for a human being that God should speak to him except as revelation or from behind a barrier, or by sending a Messenger who reveals by His leave whatever He wishes. Verily, He is Exalted, All-Wise.” (Quran 42:51)

Aishah related that al-Harith b. Hisham asked the Prophet how revelation came to him, and the Prophet answered:

“Sometimes, the angel comes to me like the clanging of a bell, and this is the most difficult for me. It weighs upon me and I commit to memory what he says. And sometimes the angel comes to me in the form of a man and speaks to me and I commit to memory what he says.”

Aishah said:

“I had seen him when the revelation came to him on an extremely cold day. When it was over, his brow was full of perspiration.”

Sometimes, he would be asked about something, but he would remain silent until revelation came to him. For example, the Meccan pagans asked him about the soul, but the Prophet remained silent until God revealed:

They ask you concerning the soul. Say: ‘The soul is from the affairs of my Lord, and of knowledge you have but little’. (Quran 17:85)

He had also been asked about how inheritance was to be divided, but he did not answer until God revealed:

“God commands you regarding your children...” (Quran 4:11)

B. Affirmative revelation: This is where the Prophet exercised his own judgment in a matter. If his opinion was correct, revelation would come to him affirming it, and if it was incorrect, revelation would come to correct him, making it just like any other informative revelation. The only difference here is that the revelation came as a result of an action that the Prophet first did on his own.

In such instances, the Prophet was left to use his own discretion in a matter. If he chose what was right, then God would confirm his choice through revelation. If he chose wrong, God would correct him to protect the integrity of the faith. God would never allow His Messenger to convey an error to other people, because this would cause his followers to fall into error as well. This would contravene the wisdom behind sending Messengers, which was that the people henceforth would have no argument against God. In this way, the Messenger was protected from falling into error, for if he ever erred, revelation would come to correct him.

The Prophet’s Companions knew that the tacit approval of the Prophet was actually the approval of God, because if they ever did something contrary to Islam during the Prophet’s lifetime, revelation would come down condemning what they did.

Jabir said: “We used to practice coitus interruptus^[1] back when God’s Messenger was alive.” Sufyan, one of the narrators of this hadeeth, commented: “If something like this was forbidden, the Quran would have prohibited it.”

Footnotes:

[1] Coitus Interruptus: Withdrawal of the penis before emission of sperm during sex. – *IslamReligion.com*

What is the Sunnah? (part 2 of 2): The Sunnah in Islamic Law



Description: A brief article outlining what constitutes the Sunnah, and its role in Islamic Law. Part Two: How the Sunnah differs from the Quran, and the position of the Sunnah in Islamic Law.

By [The Editorial Team of Dr. Abdurrahman al-Muala](#) (translated by islamtoday.com)

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Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [Evidence of His Prophethood](#)

The Difference between the Sunnah and the Quran

The Quran is the foundation of Islamic Law. It is the miraculous speech of God that was revealed to the Messenger, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, by way of the angel Gabriel. It has been transmitted to us with so many chains of authority that its historical authenticity is unquestionable. It is written down in its own volume, and its recitation is a form of worship.

As for the Sunnah, it is everything besides the Quran that came from God's Messenger. It explains and provides details for the laws found in the Quran. It also provides examples of the practical application of these laws. It is also either direct revelation from God, or decisions of the Messenger that were then confirmed by revelation. Therefore, the source of all the Sunnah is revelation.

The Quran is the revelation that is formally recited as an act of worship, and the Sunnah is revelation that is not formally recited. The Sunnah, though, is just like the Quran in that it is revelation that must be followed and adhered to.

The Quran takes precedence over the Sunnah in two ways. For one thing, the Quran consists of the exact words of God, miraculous in nature, down to the last verse. The Sunnah, however, is not necessarily the exact words of God, but rather their meanings as explained by the Prophet.

The Position of the Sunnah in Islamic Law

During the Messenger's lifetime the Quran and Sunnah were the only sources of Islamic Law.

The Quran provides the general injunctions that formed the basis of the Law, without going into all the details and secondary legislation, with the exception of a few injunctions that are established along with the general principles. These injunctions are not subject to change over time or with the changing circumstances of the people. The Quran, likewise, comes with the tenets of belief, sets down acts of worship, mentions the stories of the nations of old, and provides moral guidelines.

The Sunnah comes in agreement with the Quran. It explains the meanings of what is unclear in the text, provides details for what is depicted in general terms, specifies what is general, and explains its injunctions and objectives. The Sunnah also comes with injunctions that are not provided by the Quran, but these are always in harmony with its principles, and they always advance the objectives that are outlined in the Quran.

The Sunnah is a practical expression of what is in the Quran. This expression takes many forms. Sometimes, it comes as an action performed by the Messenger. At other

times, it is a statement that he made in response to something. Sometimes, it takes the form of a statement or action of one of the Companions that he neither prevented nor objected to. On the contrary, he remained silent about it or expressed his approval for it.

The Sunnah explains and clarifies the Quran in many ways. It explains how to perform the acts of worship and carry out the laws that are mentioned in the Quran. God commands the believers to pray without mentioning the times that the prayers had to be performed or the manner of performing them. The Messenger clarified this through his own prayers and by teaching the Muslims how to pray. He said: “Pray as you have seen me praying.”

God makes the Hajj pilgrimage obligatory without explaining its rites. God’s Messenger explains this by saying:

“Take the rites of Hajj from me.”

God makes the Zakah tax obligatory without mentioning what types of wealth and produce it is to be levied against. God also does not mention the minimum amount of wealth that makes the tax obligatory. The Sunnah, though, makes all this clear.

The Sunnah specifies general statements found in the Quran. God says:

“God commands you regarding your children: to the male, a portion equal to that of two females...” (Quran 4:11)

This wording is general, applying to every family and making every child an inheritor of his or her parents. The Sunnah makes this ruling more specific by excluding the children of Prophets. God’s Messenger said:

“We Prophets leave behind no inheritance. Whatever we leave behind is charity.”

The Sunnah qualifies unqualified statements in the Quran. God says:

“...and you find no water, then perform *tayammum* (dry ablution) with clean earth and rub therewith your faces and hands... (Quran 5:6)

The verse does not mention the extent of the hand, leaving the question of whether one should rub the hands up to the wrist or the forearm. The Sunnah makes this clear by showing that it is to the wrist, because this is what God’s Messenger did when he performed dry ablution.

The Sunnah also comes emphasizing what is in the Quran or providing secondary legislation for a law stated therein. This includes all the hadeeth that indicate that Prayer, the Zakah tax, fasting, and the Hajj pilgrimage are obligatory.

An example of where the Sunnah provides subsidiary legislation for an injunction

found in the Quran is the ruling found in the Sunnah that it is forbidden to sell fruit before it begins to ripen. The basis for this law is the statement of the Quran:

Do not consume your property amongst you unjustly, except it be a trade among you by mutual consent.

The Sunnah contains rulings that are not mentioned in the Quran and that do not come as clarifications for something mentioned in the Quran. An example of this is the prohibition of eating donkey flesh and the flesh of predatory beasts. Another example of this is the prohibition of marrying a woman and her aunt at the same time. These and other rulings provided by the Sunnah must be adhered to.

The Obligation of Adhering to the Sunnah

A requirement of believing in prophethood is to accept as true everything that God's Messenger said. God chose His Messengers from among His worshippers to convey His Law to humanity. God says:

“...God knows best with whom to place His Message...” (Quran 6:124)

God also says:

“...Are the Messengers charged with anything but to convey the clear Message?” (Quran 16:35)

The Messenger is protected from error in all of his actions. God has protected his tongue from uttering anything but the truth. God has protected his limbs from doing anything but what is right.

God has safeguarded him from showing approval for anything contrary to Islamic Law. He is the most beautifully complete of God's Creations. This is clear from how God describes him in the Quran:

“By the star when it sets. Your companion has neither gone astray nor has he erred. Nor does he speak of his own desire. It is only revelation that has been revealed.” (Quran 53:1-4)

We see in the hadeeth that no circumstances, no matter how trying, could prevent the Prophet from speaking the truth. Being angry never affected his speech. He never spoke falsehood even when he was jesting. His own interests never swayed him from speaking the truth. The only goal that he sought was the pleasure of God Almighty.

Abdullah b. Amr b. al-Aas related that he used to write down everything that God's Messenger said. Then the tribe of Quraish forbade him from doing so, saying: “Do you write down everything that God's Messenger says, and he is but a man who speaks in contentment and in anger?”

Abdullah b. Amr stopped writing and mentioned this to God's Messenger who told him:

“Write, for by Him in Whose hand is my soul, only truth comes forth from this.”
...and pointed to his mouth.

The Quran, the Sunnah, and the consensus of the jurists all point to the fact that obeying God's Messenger is obligatory. God says in the Quran:

“O you who believe, obey God and obey His Messenger and those in authority among you. If you fall into dispute about a matter, refer it back to God and His Messenger if you believe in God and the Last Day...” (Quran 4:59)

The Night Journey and the Ascension (part 1 of 6): The Night Journey



Description: The setting of the start of the journey, and some details about the Prophet Muhammad's early life, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him.

By [Aisha Stacey](#) (© 2008 IslamReligion.com)

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Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [Evidence of His Prophethood](#)

Prologue

The journey of the Prophet and Messenger, Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, by night from the Holy Mosque in Mecca to the farthest mosque in Jerusalem was a miracle granted to Him by God. It is the first part of a night of wonder and amazement, culminating in Prophet Muhammad's ascension through the heavens and into the presence of God.



“Glorified be He Who took His slave on a journey by night from *Al-Masjid-al-Haram*^[1] to the *Masjid-al-Aqsa*^[2], the neighborhood whereof We have blessed, in order that We might show him of Our signs^[3]. Verily, He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer.” (Quran 17:1)

It was a physical journey and all the events about to be described took place in one

night.

This series of articles will use the word *masjid* instead of its English translation, mosque. The reason for this is that the word *masjid* implies much more than the recognisable building where Muslims pray. The word *masjid* comes from the root “*sa-ja-da*” meaning to *prostrate*, therefore a *masjid* is any place of prostration. The Prophet Muhammad told us “this earth was made a *Masjid* for me.”^[4] This gift from God was given only to the nation of Muhammad.

A Muslim can pray in any place that is not impure (with a few exceptions). There are buildings specifically for prayer, but any place a Muslim prays is a *masjid*, in the literal sense – a place of prostration. The act of prostration is the most honourable part of the prayer. When a Muslim’s forehead touches the ground, he or she is very close to God. Prayer establishes the connection between the believer and his Lord, and it was on **this** miraculous night that the five daily prayers were instated.

In the story to follow you will learn some more about this man called Muhammad and come to understand a little about why Muslims love him. You will also discover why *Masjid al-Aqsa* in Jerusalem is one of the three Holy *Masjids* in Islam. God refers to Jerusalem in the Quran as “**the neighbourhood we have blessed**”. The Dome of the Rock, part of the precinct of *Masjid al-Aqsa*, is the most recognizable symbol of Jerusalem and holds a special place in the hearts of every Muslim. On this journey we are about to undertake you will learn why. So let us travel back through time, to 7th century Arabia, to the city of Mecca and accompany Prophet Muhammad on his night journey and ascension.

The Journey Commences

Approximately ten years after Prophet Muhammad received the first revelations of the Quran, he suffered two grave losses. One was the death of his uncle Abu Talib, the man who had supported and loved him from the time he was a young orphan, and then only two months later, Muhammad’s beloved wife, Khadijah, died. This year became known as the Year of Sorrow.

In the years leading up to these sad events, the new Muslims, especially Prophet Muhammad, were persecuted, ridiculed and abused. The strength and loyalty of his uncle combined with the love and compassion shown to him by Khadijah helped him to remain strong and continue spreading the message in the face of grave adversity. However, he now felt alone and extremely overwhelmed by his sadness.

When one has truly surrendered to God, the pains and sorrows of this life form part of a test of faith, and these tests are always followed by relief. In chapter 94 of the Quran, called *Solace*, God assures Prophet Muhammad that with every hardship comes relief, and He repeats it a second time with emphasis - with every hardship comes relief. After this extremely difficult year, Prophet Muhammad felt his relief in the form of a major blessing, the Night Journey and Ascension.

“So verily, with hardship, there is relief. Verily, with hardship, there is relief.” (Quran 94:4-6)

Even though it was dangerous and he risked attack by the Pagans of Mecca, Prophet Muhammad often spent the night in prayer at the Holy Masjid in Mecca. On this particular night, he was lying close to the *Ka'ba* (the black cube in the middle of the Masjid) in a state between wakefulness and sleep. An angel came and cut open his chest from the throat to the below the stomach. The angel removed Prophet Muhammad's heart and placed it in a golden bowl filled with faith, the heart was purified, filled and returned to its place.[\[5\]](#)

This was not the first time that an angel had come down and extracted Muhammad's heart. As a small child, Muhammad lived in the deserts of Arabia with a foster family according to custom, for the desert environment was known to be much healthier and more suitable for proper cultivation than the cities. When he was four or five years old and playing in this wilderness with his young friends, the Angel Gabriel appeared, removed Muhammad's heart and extracted from it a portion, referring to it as “a part of Satan”. The Angel Gabriel washed the heart with the water of *zamzam* (the well of Mecca which sprung to quench the thirst of Ishmael) and returned it to its place. The other children ran away screaming, thinking Muhammad was being murdered, but by the time they returned with help, he was alone, scared and white, but with only a small mark from the ordeal.[\[6\]](#)

Prophet Muhammad's mission was to guide all of humanity to the worship of the One True God, thus every aspect of his life formed part of God's plan to prepare him for this great responsibility. As a child, the part of *Satan* was removed from his heart, and as an adult, about to undertake the building of the Muslim nation, his heart was purified and filled with pure faith. The next part of this miraculous night then commenced.

Prophet Muhammad was presented with a white animal he described as being smaller than a horse but larger than a donkey, it was known as *al-Buraq*. This animal, he said, could take a stride as far as it could see. With one leap, *al Buraq* could cover an incredibly vast distance.[\[7\]](#) The Angel Gabriel told Prophet Muhammad to mount the animal, and together they travelled more than 1200 km. to the furthest masjid – Masjid al-Aqsa.

Prophet Muhammad was on the back of *al-Buraq* while the animal's stride reached towards the horizon, and the stars glittered in the night sky over the deserts of Arabia and beyond. He must have felt the wind on his face and been aware of his newly filled heart thumping in his chest. Imagine what signs and wonders of God Prophet Muhammad must have seen on that miraculous journey by night!

Footnotes:

[1] The holy mosque in the sanctuary of Mecca

[2] The furthest mosque in Jerusalem

[3] *Ayaat*, the word in Arabic, has multiple connotations: proofs, evidences, verses & lessons.

[4] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari*

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Saheeh Muslim*

[7] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari*

The Night Journey and the Ascension (part 2 of 6): Masjid Al-Aqsa



Description: Prophet Muhammad reaches the Masjid al-Aqsa and meets some of the previous Prophets of God.

By [Aisha Stacey](#) (© 2008 IslamReligion.com)

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This was a difficult time in the life of Prophet Muhammad, and this journey was a great compliment to him. The deliverance of the message was entering a new phase, and the establishment of the Muslim nation was about to begin. Prophet Muhammad was feeling overwhelmed and alone. The vast majority of Meccans had refused to heed his call or accept his message. Both his beloved uncle and cherished wife had died, and this gift of God offered him support and opened his eyes to the signs and wonders of the universe. After travelling the enormous distance to Jerusalem on the back of al-Buraq, Prophet Muhammad reached the area known as Masjid al-Aqsa. He dismounted and tethered al-Buraq to a ring in the gate.



Another Miracle Occurs

Prophet Muhammad walked into the Masjid – the place of prostration - to be met by a group of the previous Prophets; he then had the great honour of leading them in prayer. God rewarded His Messenger and caused him to understand that the Prophets before him also went through difficult times preaching to their people. They stood behind Prophet Muhammad and acknowledged him as their leader. This was another indication of his importance and excellence as well as the nature of his message.

Before the advent of Prophet Muhammad, all the Prophets delivered their message of submission to One God to their own people; Muhammad, however, had come for all of mankind. God refers to him as a mercy. God says in Quran:

“He listens to what is best for you; he believes in God; has faith in the believers; and is a mercy to those of you who believe.” (Quran 9:61)

The message was international, and this communication distributed worldwide was Islam. The Prophets of God stood behind the newest and final Messenger of God and supported him when his need was greatest. Prophet Muhammad mentions in his sayings that all of the Prophets are brothers.^[1] This congregation standing behind Prophet Muhammad was a sign of real and everlasting brotherhood.

The Significance of Al-Aqsa

The fact that this momentous occasion took place in Jerusalem is also of significance. This is the land of the Prophets of God; this is the land of Abraham, Isaac, Moses and Jesus. God was forging a link between his Holy House in Mecca and Masjid Al-Aqsa in Jerusalem. God was also linking the so-called *cradle of religion*, the Holy Land around Jerusalem, with the land of Arabia, the birthplace of the religion designed by the Creator, for all of humanity - Islam.

God established Al-Aqsa as one of the three Holy Masjids in Islam. The Holy Masjid in Mecca, the Prophet Muhammad’s Masjid, yet to be established in Medina, and this Masjid in this blessed neighbourhood of Jerusalem. It is only to these three Masjids to which Muslims can travel for the purpose of worship.^[2] One prayer in Masjid Al-Aqsa is worth 250 prayers elsewhere, excluding the Prophet’s Masjid where one prayer is the equivalent of 1,000 prayers and the Holy Masjid in Mecca where one prayer contains the reward of 100,000 prayers.^[3] God emphasized the significance and sacredness of Masjid Al-Aqsa, and for this reason it plays an important role in a Muslim’s life. Therefore it is guarded and protected zealously.

Al-Aqsa was the first *qiblah* (the direction in which a Muslim turns to pray) in Islam, but this direction was later changed to Holy Masjid in Mecca. Establishing the exact date for this change is difficult, but from the evidence, we can discover approximately when this occurred because the mission of Prophet Muhammad is divided into two distinct periods. The Meccan period, defined by calling the people to the religion of

Islam, and the Medinan period, defined by the establishment of the Muslim state. Prophet Muhammad and the majority of his followers migrated to the city of Medina in the 14th year of Prophethood.

The Night Journey and Ascension took place late in the Meccan period, while the *qiblah* changed to Mecca around 15 months after the Prophet's migration to Medina. From this, we can infer that the Muslims faced Al-Aqsa when praying for approximately three years before God changed the direction to Mecca. This by no means diminished the significance of Jerusalem or Masjid Al-Aqsa, it merely represented another step in the establishment of the message for all of humanity. The Holy Masjid in Mecca was fixed as the central point in Islam.

The Journey and Miracle Continues

While still in the sacred precincts of Masjid Al-Aqsa, the Angel Gabriel presented Prophet Muhammad with two cups. One was filled with milk, the other with wine, and both offered to the Prophet. Prophet Muhammad chose and drank the milk. Angel Gabriel then said to him “Thanks be to God, who guided you to the *fitrah*; if you had taken the wine, your followers would have gone astray”.^[4] It is difficult to translate the Arabic word *fitrah* into English; it denotes the natural and pure state in which one is born, an innate feeling that guides one to do the “right” thing. Prophet Muhammad instinctively chose right over wrong, good over evil, and the Straight Path rather than the crooked path to Hell.

It was from the Holy city of Jerusalem, in the sacred precincts of Masjid Al-Aqsa^[5] that Prophet Muhammad commenced the next stage of his miraculous Night Journey. Prophet Muhammad ascended to the lowest heaven from a rock. This rock can be found inside the Dome of the Rock, the most famous symbol of Jerusalem. It should not be confused with the actual Masjid building, which is on the other side of the Al-Aqsa compound. The entire precinct is the masjid, but many separate buildings exist there. It is important to remember that although the Dome of the Rock is inside the Masjid compound, it is not Masjid Al-Aqsa and it is not the place of prostration where Prophet Muhammad led the previous Prophets in prayer. From the rock, now covered by the familiar golden dome, Prophet Muhammad ascended to the lowest heaven in the company of Angel Gabriel.

Footnotes:

^[1] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari*

^[2] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari and Muslim*

[3] *Saheeh al-Hakim*

[4] *Saheeh Bukhari*

[5] The compound is also known as “Temple Mount” in the West, after the temple that Solomon built there.

The Night Journey and the Ascension (part 3 of 6): The Ascension



Description: The Prophet Muhammad’s journey through the heavens.

By [Aisha Stacey](#) (© 2008 IslamReligion.com)

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The Night Journey and the Ascension was a great blessing bestowed upon Muhammad, the Prophet of God. It was a journey beginning at the Holy Masjid in Mecca, then moving overland to Masjid al-Aqsa in Jerusalem and finally continuing up through the seven heavens into the presence of God, the Almighty. As we travel up through the seven heavens with Prophet Muhammad, it is important to remember that the places he visits are not part of Paradise.



In the English language, we generally use the word *heaven* to mean the spiritual plane of eternal happiness, the reward for a righteous life and the opposite of hell, the place of eternal punishment. However, this was not always the case; the word heaven comes from the Old English word *heofon*, [1] used to denote the sky, which is the area above the earth where the celestial bodies are. Eventually, *heaven* lost its original meaning and came to imply Paradise. In Arabic, however, there have always been two separate words used, *sama* and *jannah*. The word *sama* is used for the skies above us, and they are part of the temporary world which will be destroyed on the Day of Judgement. The word *jannah*, however, denotes Paradise, the land of eternal bliss, the permanent home of the righteous believers, and the opposite of Hell.

“Then He completed and finished from their creation as seven heavens in two Days and He made in each heaven its affair. And We adorned the nearest heaven with light sources to be an adornment, as well as to guard. Such is the Decree of Him the All-Mighty, the All-Knower.” (Quran 41:12)

“Their Lord gives them glad tidings of a Mercy from Him, and that He is pleased, and of Gardens (*jannah*) for them wherein are everlasting delights. They will dwell therein forever. Verily, with God is a great reward.” (Quran 9:21-22)

The Wonders of God

Prophet Muhammad ascended into the heavens from the rock now housed in the familiar golden dome that has become the symbol for Jerusalem. This is a journey that no other human had ever made or has made since. It demonstrates God’s ability to bring the seemingly impossible into being. Here, the concepts of time and space as we know them do not apply, and it is beyond our human capabilities to understand the true omnipotence of God. In his sayings and traditions, Prophet Muhammad described the size of the heavens; the first heaven, as compared to the second, is similar to a small ring in the desert, and he continued this narrative until he described the sixth heaven as being the size of a ring in the desert compared to the seventh heaven. The magnitude of this is unimaginable. Our earth, and what we call the universe, is contained within the first heaven. Even with the scientific knowledge of the 21st century, we have no idea how big this is, how far the universe extends, or what wonders it contains.

Prophet Muhammad travelled with the Angel Gabriel up into the heights of the heavens. Together they came to the gate of the first heaven, where Angel Gabriel sought permission to enter. The gatekeepers asked, “Who is it?” to which Gabriel replied, “It is I, Gabriel”. The gatekeepers then asked who was accompanying him; when they were told it was Muhammad, they asked if he had been given his mission to guide all of mankind to the worship of One God. Angel Gabriel answered in the affirmative, so the angels welcomed Prophet Muhammad, called his arrival a pleasure, and opened the gate.

Greeting the Prophets

Prophet Muhammad tells us that he saw his father Adam, the father of all of mankind. He greeted him with the greeting of all Muslims, - *Assalamu alaikum* (may peace be upon you). Adam returned the greeting and expressed his faith in Muhammad’s prophethood. He called him his pure son, the pure prophet. Imagine the pleasure that this meeting must have given to both men. After thousands of years, Adam was able to see his son Muhammad, the greatest of his descendents. Muhammad was able to look into the eyes of the father of mankind. The wonders however were only just beginning. Angel Gabriel and Prophet Muhammad then ascended to the second heaven.

At the gate, Angel Gabriel again sought permission to enter. When the gatekeepers learned Prophet Muhammad had been given his mission and was trying to enter, they welcomed him and opened the gate. There Prophet Muhammad saw the two cousins, Prophet John (known in Christian traditions as *the Baptist*) and the Messenger of God, Prophet Jesus; Prophet Muhammad exchanged greetings with them.

Prophet Muhammad and Angel Gabriel ascended once more to the gates of the third heaven. At each gate, the same exchange took place. When the gatekeepers had established that it was Angel Gabriel in the company of Prophet Muhammad, who had indeed been given his mission, they gave permission to enter. Here, in the third heaven, Prophet Muhammad met Joseph and described him as an embodiment of half of all beauty.

As Prophet Muhammad met the Prophets in each heaven, he exchanged greetings with them, and this was always *Assalamu alaikum*, the greeting of peace used by all those in submission to the One True God. In the fourth heaven, Prophet Muhammad met Prophet Idris, whom God described in Quran (19:57) as being elevated to a very high level. In the fifth heaven, he met Prophet Aaron, the brother of Moses. At each meeting, the Prophets expressed their faith in Muhammad's prophethood. In the sixth heaven, Prophet Muhammad met Moses.

Whenever Prophet Moses is mentioned in the Quran or in the narrations of Prophet Muhammad, we know that something important is about to be described. After the two Prophets had exchanged greetings and Prophet Moses had expressed his faith in Muhammad's prophethood, Moses started to weep. When he was asked why, he replied: "A young man has come after me, and more of his followers will enter paradise than my followers".

Until the advent of Islam, Prophet Moses had had the largest following of any Prophet. Moses cried, and from this, we can understand that there was a type of rivalry between the Prophets; but it was not a competition filled with jealousy or envy. Rather, it was filled with compassion. As we move further into the journey, we will see the love and compassion Prophet Moses had for Muhammad and his followers. Prophet Muhammad and Angel Gabriel then ascended into the seventh heaven.

Footnotes:

[1] Webster's Online dictionary.

The Night Journey and the Ascension (part 4 of 6): The Seventh Heaven



Description: Prophet Muhammad meets Prophet Abraham, and witnesses the realm wherein the angels are most densely arrayed in worship

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The Angel Gabriel and Prophet Muhammad continued their miraculous ascension through the heavens. This journey was far beyond the wildest imagining of any human being. It began in the deserts of Arabia and spanned the reaches of the known universe and beyond. At the gate of the seventh heaven, they exchanged the same questions and answers as in the previous heavens, and the angels declared their pleasure at meeting Prophet Muhammad. Permission to enter was given and the Prophet of God, accompanied by Gabriel, the angel trusted with the revelations of God, moved into the final heaven.

The seventh heaven is an expression used by Christians to denote extreme happiness or bliss, as in "I am in the seventh heaven". In Islam, the seventh heaven is where Prophet Mohammad met Prophet Abraham; and indeed, he (Muhammad) must have been extremely happy and in a state of bliss, having been honoured with this journey of wonders. Both Prophets exchanged greetings by saying *Assalamu alaikum* (may peace be upon you) and, as every other prophet had done, Prophet Abraham expressed his belief and faith in Prophet Muhammad's mission.

Through his son, Ishmael, Abraham is the father of the Arabs and the ancestor of Prophet Muhammad; he is an ancestor of the people who became the Children of Israel (followers of Prophet Moses) through his son Isaac. In Jewish traditions, Abraham is called the father of the Jews. However, Islam rejects this idea, for the Quran clearly states that he was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but a believer in pure monotheism (belief in One God).

"Why do you dispute about Abraham, while the Torah and the Gospel were not revealed until after him? Have you then no sense? Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was a true *Muslim Hanifa*." [\[1\]](#) (Quran 3:65 & 67)

Muslims are required to believe in all of the Prophets of God; Abraham, however, holds a special place as one of the important messengers of God and has the unique honour of being called, in both Islamic and Christian [\[2\]](#) traditions, the beloved servant of God. Together, Abraham and his son Ishmael built the Kaaba (the black cubical building in the middle of the Holy Masjid in Mecca).

"And remember when Abraham and Ishmael were raising the foundations of the House, saying, Our Lord! Accept this from us. Verily! You are the All-Hearer, the All-Knower." (Quran 2:127)

Muslims turn their faces towards the Kaba many times every day whilst performing

their prayers, and in every prayer, they ask God to bless Abraham and his family.

The World of Angels

While in the seventh heaven, Prophet Muhammad was shown the building known as the much-frequented house, or *al Bayt al-Mamoor* in Arabic. It is fitting that Prophet Abraham was here with this house, as it is the heavenly equivalent of the Kaaba in Mecca. Each year at the time of pilgrimage (Hajj), more than 2 million Muslims from all over the world flock to Mecca to follow in the footsteps of Prophet Abraham and perform certain rites including circling the Kaaba. Every day 70,000 angels visit this much-frequented house in the seventh heaven to worship God. Prophet Muhammad informed us that, once the angels have visited *Bayt al-Mamoor*, they never return. God swears by this house in the Quran.

“And by the *Bayt al-Mamoor*.” (Quran 52:4)

Seventy thousand angels every day! What are the implications of this? Think about it and wonder for how many thousands or even millions of years has this been happening? How many of these beings, created by God from light, are there? This was another wonder that Prophet Muhammad was privileged to see and made able to describe to us. In his traditions, he also informs us that the heavens above us are moaning, every space as big as the width of four fingers is occupied by an angel worshipping God.

The Uppermost Boundary

Prophet Muhammad then moved through the seventh heaven to the uppermost boundary, to *Sidrat al-Muntaha*, a lote tree.

“Near *Sidrat al-Muntaha* (lote-tree of the utmost boundary. Near it is the Paradise of Abode.” (Quran 53:14-15)

He described its fruits like jugs and its leaves as big as elephant ears. Four rivers originated from the lote tree’s roots. When he asked about them, Prophet Muhammad was told that two of the rivers originated in Paradise. Nothing has reached us about the names or significance of these two rivers from the narrative of the ascension. However, he was told that the other two rivers were replicas of the Nile and the Euphrates, two rivers that are especially blessed in this world of mankind.

Sidrat al-Muntaha is called the uttermost boundary because everything that comes up from the earth or the heavens stops there, and everything that comes down stops there,^[3] and because the knowledge of the angels stops at that point. No one has gone beyond it except Prophet Muhammad.^[4] Beyond this point, we leave the heavens and move into the realm of the hereafter, the realm that contains Paradise and the Throne of God. As Prophet Muhammad continues his miraculous journey, he

moves into this realm and stands in the presence of God Almighty.

Footnotes:

[1] The word *Muslim* denotes a man who submits to God alone, whilst *Hanifa* connotes purity, truth and sincerity. The Arabic dictionary assigns the word *orthodox* as one of the denotations of *Hanifa*, but it is more than orthodoxy. It is n untaught orthodoxy; a sense of the true nature of things that is instinctual and natural.

[2] Isaiah 41:8 & 2.

[3] Saheeh Muslim

[4] Imam Al-Nawawi

The Night Journey and the Ascension (part 5 of 6): In the Presence of God



Description: In the presence of His Lord, Muhammad receives the commandment of establishing the five daily prayers.

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Beyond the lote tree, the upmost boundary is a place where, apart from one exception, no human has ever been. The night journey and ascension through the heavens culminated in Prophet Muhammad moving past the upmost boundary and standing in the presence of Almighty God. Beyond the lote tree is the realm of the hereafter, Paradise, and the throne of God and God himself.



The word miraculous does not go far enough in describing what a wonder this must have been for Prophet Muhammad. It is beyond description and beyond imagining. However, the Prophet Muhammad did not see God with his eyes, as God tells us in the Quran

“No vision can grasp Him.” (Quran 6:103)

One of the companions asked Prophet Muhammad directly if he saw God, to which he answered,

“He is veiled by light, how could I see him.” (*Saheeh Muslim*)

The fact remains however, that Muhammad Prophet of God, stood in the presence of God.

The Importance of Prayer

God spoke to Prophet Muhammad and we have no details of the exchange except that God enjoined the daily prayers upon Prophet Muhammad and his followers. From this, we immediately understand the importance of prayer. It is the only command which God ordained in the heavens; all other decrees originated on earth. Prayer is a gift from God to those who truly believe in His Oneness. God bestowed this gift upon Prophet Muhammad who in turn gave it to the followers of Islam. It is a gift full of great blessings and bounties. It establishes and maintains our connection to God. God has no need of our prayers but we, as helpless human beings, are in great need of feeling connected to Him. In fact, the Arabic word for the five daily prayers is *salah*, which come from the root word meaning “connection”.

“Guard strictly five obligatory prayers especially the middle prayer . And stand before God with obedience.” (Quran 2:238)

God enjoined 50 prayers on Prophet Muhammad and his followers. As Prophet Muhammad was descending he passed by Prophet Moses who requested to know what had been enjoined. When Prophet Muhammad explained that he had been ordered to prayer 50 times per day, Moses felt astonished and immediately said, “Go back to your

Lord and ask for a reduction”. When God prescribed 50 prayers, Prophet Muhammad accepted it, Moses, having had been a great prophet himself, knew what from his followers what people could and could not handle in regards to religious obligations. He was sure that the followers of Muhammad would not be able to perform that many prayers. Prophet Muhammad had knowledge. but Prophet Moses at this time had more experience.

Prophet Muhammad accepted the advice of his older brother/prophet, went back into the presence of God, and asked for a reduction. God reduced them by ten to forty prayers. Prophet Muhammad descended again; Prophet Moses asked him what happened. When he heard that the reduction was only ten, Prophet Moses sent him back to ask again for a further reduction.

This exchange continued until the number of obligatory prayers became five. Prophet Moses suggested a further reduction saying, **“O Muhammad, I know people, your nation will not be able to handle it, go back and ask for the burden on your people to be relieved.”** Prophet Muhammad answered “No.” He felt ashamed to ask for another reduction and said he was satisfied with five daily prayers. A voice rang out, saying, “The prayers have been reduced to five but they will be rewarded as though they were fifty.” God makes it clear to us that even praying these five prayers can be difficult for some people, but that those who establish the connection and trust that they will one day meet their Lord will find it easy.

“And seek help in patience and the prayer: and truly it is extremely heavy and hard except for the true believers in God. Those who obey God with full submission, fear much from His Punishment, and believe in His Promise (Paradise, etc.) and in His Warnings (Hell, etc.). (They are those) who are certain that they are going to meet their Lord, and that unto Him they are going to return.” (Quran 2:45–46)

Mercy, Love and Compassion

This miraculous night concluded with this sign of the mercy of God. Imagine how hard it would be to pray 50 times a day. Although we learned during this journey that Moses cried when he realised Prophet Muhammad would have more followers than he on the Day of Judgement, we also learn how eager Prophet Moses was to give advice to Prophet Muhammad, and how keen he was to make the practice of Islam easy upon the believers. The competition between the Prophets was one of love and compassion, and from this we should learn how to treat each other. Although God tells us to compete with one another in doing deeds of righteousness, we should encourage and enable one another to do this easily.

“...so strive as in a race in good deeds. The return of you (all) is to God; then He will inform you about that in which you used to differ.” (Quran 5:48)

Prophet Muhammad then descended back to the Holy Mosque in Mecca. The companions of the Prophet were now about to face the biggest test to their faith so far.

Muhammad, the Prophet of God, was about to reveal that he had returned from an overnight journey to the farthest Masjid in Jerusalem, a journey that normally took more than one month. He was also about to say he had travelled where no man had gone before, through the heavens and into the presence of God. This was a miraculous journey by night, but would his companions believe him and how would his enemies react?

The Night Journey and the Ascension (part 6 of 6): The Return



Description: This great miracle and honour becomes a chance for the disbelievers to attack Islam as well as a test of faith for the Muslims.

By [Aisha Stacey](#) (© 2008 IslamReligion.com)

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Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [Evidence of His Prophethood](#)

Prophet Muhammad travelled on the back of Al-Buraq all the way to the farthest Mosque in Jerusalem. He ascended through the seven heavens and marvelled at wonders unimaginable. He looked into the faces and exchanged greetings with many of his fellow Prophets, and the final slave and Messenger of God, Muhammad, stood in the presence of God Himself. On the same night, only several hours after he had commenced his journey, Prophet Muhammad returned to Mecca.

This miraculous journey was about to become a weapon against Prophet Muhammad and his followers by his enemies, and equally it would be an extreme test of faith for the believers. Upon his homecoming, Prophet Muhammad made his way to Umm Ayman and told her of his miraculous journey. She responded, "O Messenger of God, do not tell anyone about this." Umm Ayman had perfect faith in Prophet Muhammad and believed his account of the journey, but she was afraid of how others would respond.

Prophet Muhammad described Umm Ayman as "my mother after my own mother". She was the faithful servant of his mother Aminah and remained with Prophet Muhammad through the deaths of his mother and grandfather. Prophet Muhammad and Umm Ayman had always been very close, and at the completion of this wondrous journey, he went to Umm Ayman's home, perhaps for comfort and ease while he contemplated this miracle, and decided his next move.

Prophet Muhammad responded by saying that he would tell the people about the wondrous night. He considered it his responsibility before God to convey the message, no matter the response or consequences; God was responsible for the

outcome. He left the house quietly with sombre contemplation, and made his way to the Holy Mosque. He met people along the way, and slowly the news of the night journey spread amongst the people.

The Response

While Prophet Mohammad was sitting silently in the Mosque, Abu Jahl approached him and asked casually, "O Muhammad is there anything new?" Known as one of the greatest enemies of Islam Abu Jahl was responsible for the torture, punishment, murder and harassment of the new Muslims throughout the early days of Islam. Even though he was aware of the animosity and hatred Abu Jahl felt towards him, Prophet Muhammad answered truthfully and said, "This past night I have travelled to Jerusalem and back."

Abu Jahl, being unable to contain his amusement, responded by requesting Muhammad to repeat these words in front of the people of Mecca. Prophet Muhammad responded in the affirmative, and Abu Jahl left the Mosque running, calling out to the people as he ran through the streets. When sufficient people had gathered in the Mosque, at Abu Jahl's request Prophet Muhammad said, for all to hear, "I have been to Jerusalem and back."

The crowd of people started to laugh, whistle, and clap. They treated it as a big joke and fell against one another laughing. This was the response expected by Abu Jahl and he was thrilled. The disbelievers in the crowd saw a chance to put an end to Islam. They ridiculed and belittled Prophet Muhammad's claim. Among the crowd were people who had travelled to Jerusalem and they asked Prophet Muhammad to describe what he had seen.

The Prophet of God began to describe his journey but he became irritated. He spent only a brief amount of time in Jerusalem, and the miraculous nature of this travels had meant that he did not remember small details and descriptions. However, Prophet Muhammad tells us that God showed him the details "right in front of his eyes" and he described what he had seen "stone by stone, brick by brick". The travellers confirmed his descriptions. ***(Saheeh Bukhari)***

There is another narration^[1] that says that whilst travelling back to Mecca, Prophet Muhammad passed over a caravan. He was able to describe clearly. The caravan had lost a camel, and Prophet Muhammad called from the sky telling them the whereabouts of the camel. He also drank from their water supply.

The people of Mecca immediately dispatched some one to meet the caravan before it entered the city to ask questions about the previous night. They confirmed that a strange voice called out the location of the lost camel and that part of their water supply had disappeared. Still these confirmations were not enough. The people jeered and laughed and disbelieved the words of the Prophet of God. This miraculous event was such a test of faith that even some of the new Muslims disbelieved and turned away from the faith of Islam.

The Sweetness of Faith

To those whose faith was strong and true, the Power of God was obvious. Some of those who found the whole story difficult to believe went to see Abu Bakr, the best friend and loyal supporter of Prophet Mohammad. They asked him if he believed Prophet Muhammad travelled overnight to Jerusalem, and back to Mecca. Without hesitation Abu Bakr replied, “If the messenger of God said so, then it is true”. It was because of this occasion that Abu Bakr earned the title As-Siddeeq (the foremost believer). This was a turning point for many Muslims; after already facing the physical torture and abuse of the disbelievers, they now had to grapple with a concept beyond their wildest imaginings. Some failed, but many soared to new heights and were able to taste the sweetness of true submission to the One God.

The journey by night, from the Holy Mosque in Mecca to the farthest Mosque in Jerusalem, and the ascension through the heavens and into the presence of Almighty God was a miracle granted by God to His final slave and Prophet, Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, and one of the greatest of honours bestowed upon any human.

Footnotes:

[1] [The Biography of Prophet Muhammad by ibn Hisham.](#)

About His Sayings

- [God's Preservation of the Sunnah \(part 1 of 7\): The Companions' Understanding of Their Heavy Responsibility](#)
- [God's Preservation of the Sunnah \(part 2 of 7\): The Recording of Hadeeth](#)
- [God's Preservation of the Sunnah \(part 3 of 7\): The Importance and History of the Isnad](#)
- [God's Preservation of the Sunnah \(part 4 of 7\): The Preservation of Isnad](#)
- [God's Preservation of the Sunnah \(part 5 of 7\): Early Hadeeth Criticism and Evaluation of Narrators](#)

- [God's Preservation of the Sunnah \(part 6 of 7\): Traveling for the Purpose of Seeking Hadeeth](#)
- [God's Preservation of the Sunnah \(part 7 of 7\): Summary](#)
- [Modern Historical Methodology vs. Hadeeth Methodology \(part 1 of 5\): Western Historical Methodology](#)
- [Modern Historical Methodology vs. Hadeeth Methodology \(part 2 of 5\): Internal Criticism](#)
- [Modern Historical Methodology vs. Hadeeth Methodology \(part 3 of 5\): Hadeeth Methodology](#)
- [Modern Historical Methodology vs. Hadeeth Methodology \(part 4 of 5\): The Classification of Hadeeth I](#)
- [Modern Historical Methodology vs. Hadeeth Methodology \(part 5 of 5\): The Classification of Hadeeth II](#)

God's Preservation of the Sunnah (part 1 of 7): The Companions' Understanding of Their Heavy Responsibility



Description: The following series of articles discusses the means used throughout history to ensure that the Sunnah, or teachings of Prophet Muhammad, remained authentically preserved and free from alteration and interpolation. Part One: The warning given by the Prophet to those who say things about him which are untrue, and the companions understanding of this warning.

By [Jamaal al-Din Zaraboza](#) (© 2007 IslamReligion.com)

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Introduction: The Sunnah and Its Place in Islam

The Sunnah refers to the actions, statements and way of life of the Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him. It is an essential aspect of the entire system of Islam. God Himself in the Quran has ordered Muslims to take the Prophet as their role model and to listen and obey his words. The Sunnah is the ultimate normative practical expression of Islam. It is also the definitive explanation of the Quran



itself. Without it there can be no true understanding of how to implement Islam.[\[1\]](#)

The Prophet's Sunnah was preserved in what is known as the hadeeth literature. The question of the preservation of the Sunnah and the hadeeth is actually an issue concerning the preservation and purity of the religion of Islam itself. This issue becomes even more important given the fact that, unfortunately, many have a false conception of how the hadeeth were preserved and, therefore, they do not possess full confidence in the authenticity of the hadeeth of the Prophet.

Some of the Means by Which God Preserved the Sunnah

God, through humans, used many means by which He preserved the Sunnah. Some of these aspects are unique to the Muslim nation. Most importantly, these means of preservation were followed from the earliest times, without any interval available for the original material and sayings to be lost.

Some of the factors and means that contributed to the preserving of the Sunnah include the following:

The Companions' Understanding of Their Heavy Responsibilities

It is clear in the Quran that the earlier peoples had distorted, tampered and generally failed to minutely preserve the message that they received.[\[2\]](#) The Companions of the Prophet understood that the Prophet Muhammad was the final messenger sent for humankind and that the task of preserving his teachings would fall upon their shoulders. It was up to them to make sure that what happened to the previous prophets' teachings would not happen to the Prophet Muhammad's message. Additionally, the Prophet himself impressed upon them the fact that they had the responsibility of taking from the Prophet and conveying to others. For example, the Prophet told them, in front of the throngs of the people at the time of pilgrimage:

“Let the one who is present inform the one who is absent. Perhaps the one who is present may convey it to one who can grasp it more than he can.” (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim*)

This instruction from the Prophet can be seen in a number of his statements, some of which have been narrated from numerous Companions. For example, the Prophet said:

“May God make radiant the man who has heard what I said and has preserved it in his memory until he conveys it to another. Perhaps the one he conveyed it to has a better understanding than him.”[\[3\]](#)

The Prophet also warned them in a very stern fashion about conveying anything from him which may not be correct. Using the Arabic word *kadhab*, which in the dialect of the Prophet did not mean “to lie” but meant to convey something which is not correct,

the Prophet stated:

“Convey from me, even if it is just a verse. And narrate [stories] from the Tribes of Israel and there is no harm. And whoever falsely attributes something to my authority shall take his own seat in the Hell-fire.” (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari*)

It seems that the Prophet stated that warning on a number of occasions, as those words have been recorded from the Prophet by over fifty Companions.[\[4\]](#)

Thus, the Companions realized that they had to be very careful in their narratives. They understood the warning stated above concerning one who falsely attributes something to the Prophet as applying to one who does so intentionally as well as unintentionally. In a report recorded in *Sahih al-Bukhari*, the Companion al-Zubair was asked why he did not narrate as many hadeeth as some of the others did. He replied, “As for me, I never parted from him [that is, the Prophet]. However, I heard him say, **‘Whoever falsely attributes something to me shall take his own seat in the Hell-fire.’**” Commenting on this statement, ibn Hajar[\[5\]](#) noted that al-Zubair was obviously not speaking about himself forging something in the Prophet’s name. Instead, he feared that if he narrated a lot, he would make mistakes. And those mistakes would put him under the warning mentioned in that hadeeth.[\[6\]](#)

Anas ibn Maalik also said, “If I did not fear that I may make a mistake, I would narrate to you some of the things I heard from the Messenger of God. However, I heard him say, **‘Whoever falsely attributes something to my authority shall take his own seat in the Hell-fire.’**”[\[7\]](#) This, once again, implies that Anas, a Companion, understood that the threat stated in that hadeeth also applies to the one who makes unintentional mistakes while narrating hadeeth.

In reality, some of the Companions, like Abu Hurairah, continued to study and memorize the hadeeth they learned from the Prophet. Therefore, they did not have as much to fear with respect to making mistakes. On the other hand, those who were not dedicated to such study had more to fear because their memories may fail them when they narrated from the Messenger of God.

Footnotes:

[\[1\]](#) This author has discussed in great detail the position and role of the Sunnah in Islam in his *The Authority and Importance of the Sunnah* (Denver, CO: Al-Basheer Company, 2000).

[\[2\]](#) The Quran itself refers to the distortion of the earlier books by the previous peoples as well as their attempts to conceal some of the revelation. See, for example, Quran 5:14-15 and 4:46.

[\[3\]](#) See Abdul Muhsin al-Abbaad, *Diraasat Hadeeth Nadhara Godu imraan Sama Muqaalati...*:

Riwaayah wa Diraayah (no publication information given), *passim*.

[4] Cf., Sulaimaan al-Tabaraani, *Turuq Hadeeth Man Kadhaba Alayya Mutamadan* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islaami, 1990), *passim*.

[5] One of the most noteworthy commentators of *Saheeh Al-Bukhari* – [IslamReligion.com](#)

[6] Ahmad ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari Sharh Saheeh al-Bukhaari* (Makkah: Maktabah Daar al-Baaz, 1989), vol. 1, p. 201.

[7] This narration was recorded by al-Daarimi. According to Abdul Rahman al-Birr, its chain is *sahih*. Cf., Abdul Rahman al-Birr, *Manaahij wa Adaab al-Sahaabah fi al-Taallum wa al-Taleem* (Al-Mansoorah, Egypt: Daar al-Yaqeen, 1999), p. 183.

God's Preservation of the Sunnah (part 2 of 7): The Recording of Hadeeth



Description: The following series of articles discusses the means used throughout history to ensure that the Sunnah, or teachings of Prophet Muhammad, remained authentically preserved and free from alteration and interpolation. Part Two: Were the sayings of the Prophet (hadeeth) written during his life and immediately after his death?

By [Jamaal al-Din Zarabozo](#) (© 2007 IslamReligion.com)

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Before discussing this topic, it should be noted that, in order for something to be preserved, it is not a necessary condition that it be recorded or written down. That is, simply because something was not written down, it does not mean that it was not accurately and correctly preserved.

Furthermore, the writing of something down itself is not sufficient for the preservation of something. It is possible that something is recorded incorrectly. Both of these points were duly noted by the scholars of hadeeth. They did not require hadeeth to be written down for them to be accepted although they did recognize the importance of such a physical recording and many times, depending on the personality involved, preferred the written record over the verbal record. These scholars also realized that the mere recording of something is not sufficient. It must also be ascertained that it was recorded properly. Hence, scholars of hadeeth would accept or prefer written reports



of scholars over memorized reports only if it was known that those scholars were proficient and correct in their writing.

It has been one of the favorite practices of many of the Orientalists to constantly state the “fact” that hadeeth were not recorded at first but were, instead, passed on only orally for the first two centuries after the Hijrah (Arabic calendar). Therefore, hadeeth are not much more than folklore and legend that was passed on orally and in a haphazard fashion for many years. Unfortunately, this is a misconception that has become quite widespread amongst many who have sufficed with a mere shallow research of the subject. In reality, this false claim and incorrect view has, by the grace of God, been refuted by numerous Muslim scholars in various doctoral dissertations in the Muslim world as well as at Western Universities, such as the dissertations of Muhammad Mustafa Azami (1967), published as *Studies in Early Hadeeth*, and Imitiyaz Ahmad’s *The Significance of Sunna and Hadeeth and their Early Documentation* from Edinburgh in 1974.

The recording of the hadeeth of the Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, began during the time of the Prophet himself. Al-Baghdaadi records a number of hadeeth that show that the Prophet explicitly allowed the recording of his hadeeth. Here are some examples:

1. Al-Daarimi and Abu Dawood in their *Sunans* (books) recorded that Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-As stated that they used to record everything they heard from the Prophet. They were warned against doing so as, it was argued, the Prophet was a human being who may be angry at times and pleased at others. Abdullah stopped writing his hadeeth until they could ask the Prophet about this issue. The Messenger of God told him:

“Write [my hadeeth], by the One in whose hand is my soul, nothing comes out [the Prophet’s mouth] except the truth.”^[1]

That is, whether he was angry or pleased what he spoke was always the truth.

2. Al-Bukhari, in his *Sahih* (book), recorded that Abu Hurairah said, “One can find none of the Companions of the Messenger of God relating more hadeeth than I, except Abdullah ibn Amr because he used to record the hadeeth while I did not do so.”^[2]

3. Al-Bukhari recorded that a person from Yemen came to the Prophet on the day of the Conquest of Mecca and asked him if he could get the Prophet’s speech recorded, and the Prophet approved and told someone:

“Write it for the father of so and so.”

4. Anas narrated the statement, “Secure knowledge by writing it.” This hadeeth has been related by a number of authorities but mostly with weak chains. There is a dispute concerning whether or not it is actually a statement of the Prophet or of some Companion. However, according to al-Albani, the hadeeth, as recorded by al-Haakim

and others, is authentic.[3]

There is no question, therefore, that the recording of hadeeth began during the lifetime of the Messenger of God himself. This practice of writing hadeeth continued after the death of the Messenger of God. Al-Azami, in his work *Studies in Early Hadeeth Literature*, has listed and discussed some fifty Companions of the Prophet who had recorded hadeeth.[4] Note the following:

Abdullah B. Abbas (3 B.H.-68 A.H.)... He was so eager for knowledge that he would ask as many as 30 Companions about a single incident... It seems he wrote what he heard and sometimes even employed his slaves for this purpose... The following derived hadeeth from him in written form: Ali b. Abdullah ibn Abbas, Amr b. Dinar, Al-Hakam b. Miqdam, Ibn Abu Mulaikah, Ikrimah... Kuraib, Mujahid, Najdah... Said b. Jubair.[5]

Abdullah B. Umar B. al-Khattab (10 B.H.-74 A.H.). He transmitted a large number of *ahadeeth*, and was so strict in relating them that he did not allow the order of a word to be changed even though it would not have altered the meaning... He had books. One *Kitab* [book] which belonged to Umar, and was in his possession, was read to him by Nafi several times... The following derived hadeeth from him in written form: Jamil b. Zaid al-Tai... Nafi client of ibn Umar, Said b. Jubair, Abd al-Aziz b. Marwan, Abd al-Malik b. Marwan, Ubaidullah b. Umar, Umar b. Ubaidullah ...[6]

Al-Azami also compiled a list, discussing each personality individually, of forty-nine people of “the first century successors” who recorded hadeeth.[7] Al-Azami goes on to list eighty-seven of “the scholars covering the late first and early second centuries” who recorded hadeeth.[8] Then he lists “from the early second century scholars” 251 people who collected and recorded hadeeth.[9] Thus al-Azami has produced a list of 437 scholars who had recorded hadeeth and all of them lived and died before the year 250 A. H. Many of them are from before the time of Umar ibn Abdul Azeez, who has been wrongly credited with having been the first person to ask for the collection of hadeeth. The story of Umar ibn Abdul Azeez has actually been misunderstood and it does not mean that no one collected hadeeth before him.[10]

To quote al-Azami, “Recent research has proved that almost all of the hadeeth of the Prophet was [*sic*] written down in the life of the companions, which stretched to the end of the first century.”[11] This last statement is partially based on al-Azami’s own research in which he has mentioned many Companions and Followers who possessed written hadeeth. Elsewhere, he himself writes,

I have established in my doctoral thesis *Studies in Early Hadeeth Literature* that even in the first century of the Hijra many hundreds of booklets of hadeeth were in circulation. If we add another hundred years, it would be difficult to enumerate the quantity of booklets and books which were in circulation. Even by the most conservative estimate they were many thousands.[12]

Footnotes:

[1] According to al-Albaani, this hadeeth is *sahih*. See Muhammad Naasir al-Deen al-Albaani, *Saheeh Sunan Abi Dawood* (Riyadh: Maktab al-Tarbiyyah al-Arabi li-Duwal al-Khaleej, 1989), vol. 2, p. 695.

[2] Ibn Hajar, commenting on this hadeeth, explained how Abu Huraira could have narrated so many more hadeeth than Abdullah ibn Amr. See Ibn Hajar, *Fath*, vol. 1, pp. 206-8. One aspect that he neglected to mention is Abu Hurairah' dying some sixteen years after Abdullah ibn Amr.

[3] Al-Albani, *Saheeh al-Jaami al-Sagheer*, vol. 2, p. 816.

[4] Muhammad Mustafa al-Azami, *Studies in Early Hadeeth Literature* (Indianapolis, IN: American Trust Publications, 1978), pp. 34-60.

[5] Azami, *Studies in Early Hadeeth*, pp. 40-42. In Azami's work, "b." stands for ibn or "son of."

[6] Azami, *Studies in Early Hadeeth*, pp. 45-46.

[7] Azami, *Early Hadeeth*, pp. 60-74.

[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 74-106.

[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 106-182.

[10] The story, as recorded by al-Bukhari, is that Umar (61-101) wrote to Abu Bakr ibn Muhammad (d. 100) saying, "Look for the knowledge of hadith and get it written, as I am afraid that religious knowledge will vanish and the religious learned men will pass away. Do not accept anything save the hadith of the Prophet." He also sent letters to Saad ibn Ibraaheem and al-Zuhri asking them to do the same. It has been incorrectly stated by some, for example, M. Z. Siddiqi, that it was this request of Umar' that led to the beginning of the collections of hadith.

[11] Al-Azami, *Methodology*, p. 30.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 64.

God's Preservation of the Sunnah (part 3 of 7): The Importance and History of the Isnad



Description: The following series of articles discusses the means used throughout history to ensure that the Sunnah, or teachings of Prophet Muhammad, remained authentically preserved and free from alteration and interpolation. Part Three: The importance and history of the *Isnad* from the earliest years.

By Jamaal al-Din Zarabozo (© 2007 IslamReligion.com)

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Another important tool used in the preservation of hadeeth was the *Isnad* system that was developed uniquely by the Muslim nation. The *Isnad* system is where one states his sources of information, in turn tracing that narrative all the way back to the Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him may God bless him.

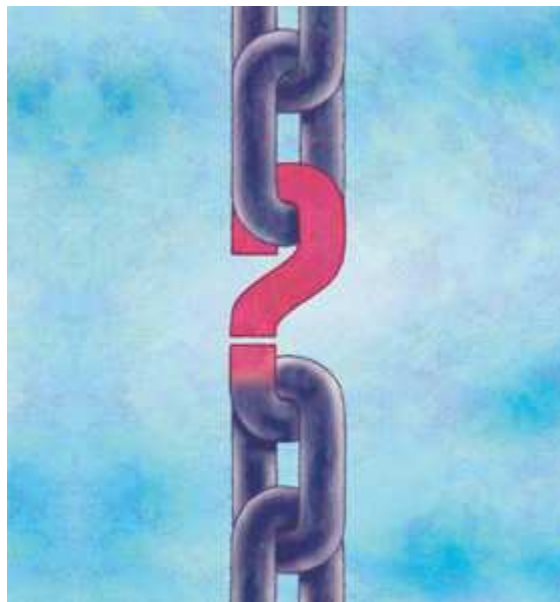
The importance of the *Isnad* has been eloquently stated by Abdullah ibn al-Mubaarak who said, “The *Isnad* is part of the religion. If it were not for the *Isnad* anyone would say whatever he wishes to say.”^[1]

Indeed, the *Isnad* has been essential in separating the authentic from the weak hadeeth and in identifying the fabricated hadeeth. Even today, no one can dare narrate a hadeeth without possibly being asked to provide the source of that hadeeth. Ibn al-Mubaarak continued and said, “If you ask the person where he got the hadeeth from he will [be forced to] become silent.” The *Isnad* acted and acts as a type of guarantee or safeguard for the authenticity of the hadeeth. The early scholars of hadeeth would not even consider a hadeeth if it had no known *Isnad* to it.

Concerning the importance of the *Isnad*, Sufyaan al-Thauri (d. 161) said, “The *Isnad* is the sword of the believer. Without his sword with him with what will he fight?” By the use of the *Isnad*, the Muslim scholars were able to eradicate (or “fight”) the innovations that some people tried to bring into Islam. Muhammad ibn Seereen (d. 110), Anas ibn Seereen, Al-Dhahaak and Uqba ibn Naafi have all been reported to have said, “This knowledge [of hadeeth] is the religion, therefore, look to see from whom you are taking your religion.”^[2] Since the Sunnah forms an essential part of Islam, accepting hadeeth from a certain person is similar to taking one’s religion from him. Hence, one must be careful only to take his religion from people who are trustworthy and who can trace what they have said back to the Prophet and this can only be done through the use of the *Isnad*.

This system was even more of a safeguard than today’s system of publication and copyrighting. Hamidullah wrote:

“Modern scholars quote, in learned works, the sources of important statements of facts. But even in the most carefully documented works, there are two



drawbacks:

- (a) In case of published works, there is little or no possibility of verifying whether there are any misprints or other inaccuracies^{3/4} this would not happen if one were to depend on a work only after hearing [it] from the author himself, or obtaining a copy certified by the author, or^{3/4} in case of old works^{3/4} by those who have had the opportunity of hearing it from the author, or his authorized transmitter.
- (b) One is contented now-a-days with one's immediate source, without much caring to trace the preceding sources of that source, and mounting in seriatim up to the eye-witness of the event. In Hadeeth works the case has been different..."[3]

In conclusion, one may state that the *Isnad* is an essential component of every hadeeth as without it there is no way for anyone to verify the authenticity of the narration. Abdullah ibn al-Mubaarak certainly spoke the truth when he said that without the *Isnad* anyone is free to say whatever he wishes to say and claim that it is part of the religion of Islam.[4] The importance of the *Isnad* is, in fact, very obvious and very few have ever questioned its importance. More important, therefore, is a discussion of when the *Isnad* began to be used for if it were not until a long time after the death of the Prophet, it would, in fact, be useless.

In his Ph.D. dissertation, Umar Fullaatah has discussed the history of the *Isnad* in great detail. Due to space limitations, it is not possible to present his discussion in detail. However, he has made the following important conclusions:

Concerning when the *Isnad* was first used with respect to the transmitting of hadeeth, he states that, by default, the Companions used to use *Isnads* but since there was usually no intermediary between them and the Messenger of God it was not obvious that they were relating through the *Isnad*. The Companions would either narrate the hadeeth in a manner that made it clear that they heard it directly from the Prophet, or in a manner that made it clear that they may not have heard that particular hadeeth directly from the Prophet. Fullaatah states that the vast majority of the hadeeth of the Companions were those hadeeth that they had heard directly from the Messenger of God. Therefore, the *Isnad* was first used during the time of the Companions although, it may be said, that it was hardly noticeable.

Footnotes:

[1] Quoted by Imam Muslim in the introduction to his *Sahih* in the chapter entitled, "Expounding on the point that the *Isnad* is part of the religion."

[2] Quoted in Umar ibn Hasan Uthmaan al-Fullaatah, *al-Widha fi al-Hadeeth* (Damascus: Maktabah al-Ghazzaali, 1981), vol. 2, p. 10.

[3] Muhammad Hamidullah, *Sahifah Hammam ibn Munabbih* (Paris: Centre Culturel Islamique, 1979), p. 83.

[4] One is reminded of the case of Paul and the origins of many Christian beliefs. Paul, of course, never met Jesus (peace be upon him). He could not trace his teachings back to Jesus (peace be upon him) and, in fact, he met opposition from many of Jesus' own companions who knew what Jesus (peace be upon him) had said. Unfortunately, the historical authenticity and tracing of claims back to the original teacher, Jesus, is something that did not truly develop in Christian thought. Hence, their religion became very distorted and distant from the true teachings of Jesus (peace be upon him).

God's Preservation of the Sunnah (part 4 of 7): The Preservation of Isnad

Description: The following series of articles discusses the means used throughout history to ensure that the Sunnah, or teachings of Prophet Muhammad, remained authentically preserved and free from alteration and interpolation. Part Four: The practice of mentioning the Isnad and its preservation since the early years.

By [Jamaal al-Din Zaraboza](#) (© 2007 IslamReligion.com)

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Concerning when the narrators were forced by the listeners to mention their *Isnads*, Fullaatah states that Abu Bakr, the first caliph who died only two years after the Prophet, was the first to make the narrator prove the authenticity of his narration as he sometimes would not accept a hadeeth unless the person presented a witness for his hadeeth. Umar also followed the same pattern. By doing so they made it clear if the person heard the hadeeth directly from the Messenger of God or through some intermediary source. Their goal was to confirm the correctness of the narration although they were, at the same time, inadvertently making the narrator state the *Isnad* for his hadeeth. Therefore, it was during their time (right after the death of the Prophet) that narrators were first being forced to state their *Isnads*. Ali, the fourth caliph and the caliph during the *fitnah* (*affliction*), would sometimes take an oath from the person in which the person would swear that he heard the hadeeth directly from the Prophet. Obviously, then, after the *fitnah*, the same process of requiring the narrator to



state his sources continued.[\[1\]](#)

Concerning when the narrator himself began to insist on mentioning the *Isnad* of each hadeeth, Fullaatah states that the need for the *Isnad* really became apparent after weak narrators and immoral people began to relate hadeeth. During that time, the narrator himself made sure that he would mention the *Isnad* of the hadeeth he narrated. Al-Amash used to narrate hadeeth and then say, “Here is the head of the matter,” and then he would mention the *Isnad*. Al-Waleed ibn Muslim of al-Shaam stated, “One day al-Zuhri said, ‘What is wrong [with you people] that I see you narrating hadeeth without the critical or important part?’ After that day our companions [that is, the people of al-Sham (Northern Arabia)] made sure to mention the *Isnad*.”[\[2\]](#) The scholars would blame their students for listening to hadeeth from teachers who would mention the hadeeth without the *Isnad*.[\[3\]](#) In fact they would reject any hadeeth which did not have an *Isnad* with it. Bahz ibn Asad said, “Do not accept a hadeeth from someone who does not say, ‘He narrated to us..,’ that is, without an *Isnad*. The Muslims even began to insist on the use of the *Isnad* for people of disciplines other than hadeeth, for example, history, *tafseer* (explanation of the Quran), poetry and so on.

Therefore, after discussing the question in detail, Fullaatah could soundly conclude the following:

1. The *Isnad* was first used during the time of the Companions.
2. Abu Bakr was the first to force narrators to mention the source for their hadeeth.
3. The narrator himself insisted on mentioning the *Isnad* of each hadeeth on the heels of (1) and (2) above.[\[4\]](#)

In conclusion, there was never any time that hadeeth narrations were completely void of mentioning the *Isnad*. During the time of the Companions the use of the *Isnad* was not so obvious as there was (usually) no intermediate narrator between the person mentioning the hadeeth and the Prophet. (The period of the Companions “officially” ended in 110 A. H. with the death of the last Companion.) Abu Bakr and Umar were scrupulous in checking the authenticity of hadeeth. Later scholars like al-Shabi and al-Zuhri appeared and they made the Muslims realize the importance of mentioning the *Isnad* with the hadeeth. This was especially manifest after major confrontations (such as the death of Uthmaan) which made the people realize that the hadeeth narrations were their religion and, therefore, they should look carefully at whom they were taking their religion from. After the early years, the *Isnad* and its proper use became standardized and its knowledge became an independent branch of hadeeth. This continued until the major collections of hadeeth were compiled in the third century.[\[5\]](#)

In reality, God blessed the nation of Muhammad with a unique way of preserving its original teachings: the *Isnad*. Muhammad ibn Haatim ibn al-Mudhaffar wrote:

“Verily God has honored and distinguished this nation and raised it above

others by the use of the *Isnad*. None of the earlier or present nations have unbroken *Isnads*. They have [ancient] pages in their possession but their books have been mixed with their historical reports and they are not able to distinguish between what was originally revealed as the Torah or the Gospel and what has been added later of reports that have been taken from untrustworthy [or, most likely, unknown] narrators.”[\[6\]](#)

Footnotes:

[\[1\]](#) Fullaatah, vol. 2, pp. 20-22.

[\[2\]](#) Quoted by Fullaatah, vol. 2, p. 28.

[\[3\]](#) Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 28-29. See the stories of al-Zuhri, Abdullah ibn al-Mubaarak and Sufyaan al-Thauri on those pages.

[\[4\]](#) Fullaatah, vol. 2, p. 30.

[\[5\]](#) In fact, the tradition of relating hadeeth by their *Isnads* continued until the fifth century. After that time books were passed on, mostly by *ijaaza* (permission given to others to narrate one's books or hadeeth), although there are still some scholars today who can narrate hadeeth with a complete chain from themselves back to the Prophet. Cf., Khaldoon al-Ahdab, *Asbaab Ikhtilaaf al-Muhadeetheen* (Jeddah: al-Dar al-Saudiya, 1985), vol. 2, p. 707.

[\[6\]](#) Quoted in Abdul Wahaab Abdul Lateef, *Al-Mukhtasar fi Ilm Rijaal al-Athar* (Dar al-Kutub al-Hadeethiya, no date), p. 18.

God's Preservation of the Sunnah (part 5 of 7): Early Hadeeth Criticism and Evaluation of Narrators



Description: The following series of articles discusses the means used throughout history to ensure that the Sunnah, or teachings of Prophet Muhammad, remained authentically preserved and free from alteration and interpolation. Part Five: Early Hadeeth Criticism and Evaluation of Narrators.

By [Jamaal al-Din Zarabozo](#) (© 2007 IslamReligion.com)

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Another important aspect in the preservation of hadeeths was the early development of hadeeth criticism and evaluation of narrators. Even during the lifetime of the Messenger of God, the Companions would often go to him to confirm some report that they had heard related on his authority. Professor Azami, referring to examples in the hadeeth collections of Ahmad, al-Bukhari, Muslim and al-Nasaai, writes:



“If criticism is the effort to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong, then we can say that it began in the life of the Prophet. But at this stage, it meant no more than going to the Prophet and verifying something he was reported to have said...

“We find this sort of investigation or verification was carried [*sic*] out by Ali, Ubai ibn Kaab, Abdullah ibn Amr, Umar, Zainab wife of ibn Masud, and others. In the light of these events, it can be claimed that the investigation of hadeeth or, in other words, criticism of hadeeth began in a rudimentary form during the life of the Prophet.”[\[1\]](#)

Obviously this practice of confirming reports directly with the Messenger of God had to cease with the death of the Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him. At that time the Companions, led by notables such as Abu Bakr, Umar, Ali, ibn Umar and others, used to confirm hadeeth with each other. Umar, for example, was strict in safeguarding the proper dissemination of hadeeth. In *Sahih Muslim* one can find the example of Abu Moosa al-Ashari. Umar threatened to have him punished if he did not present a witness for a hadeeth that he had narrated to Umar. Commenting on this hadeeth, Abdul Hamid Siddiqi stated that Umar did not doubt Abu Moosa but he only meant to keep a strict supervision over the transmission of hadeeth.[\[2\]](#)

Many examples of this kind may be given. Abu Hurairah, Aishah, Umar and ibn Umar would verify hadeeth. Sometimes they would verify the hadeeth by “cross-reference” (like Umar and Abu Moosa above) and at other times they used what could be termed “time-series” checking. Imam Muslim records that Aishah heard a certain hadeeth narrated from Abdullah ibn Amr. A year later she had her servant go to Abdullah ibn Amr to hear the hadeeth again from him to make sure that he had narrated it exactly as he had heard it from the Prophet and that he had not made any mistakes or additions in its narration.[\[3\]](#)

This investigation of narrators led to the development of the most fascinating and unique science of *al-jarh wa al-tadeel*, wherein the lives, academic qualities and moral qualities of literally thousands of narrators are discussed in detail. Every narrator must meet both moral and academic qualifications for his hadeeth to be accepted. One,

without the other, is simply not sufficient. An individual may have a great memory or be able to record material very accurately but if he is not considered a completely honest and trustworthy person, his narrations of hadeeth, the most important information an individual can pass on, will not be accepted. Similarly, a person may be a very pious and honest individual but if he does not possess the literary or academic qualities to be able to pass on information accurately and correctly, his narrations also cannot be relied on.

Thus, the scholars developed many means by which to test the proficiency and accuracy of the narrators of hadeeth. Azami states that there are four basic ways to check the proficiency of a narrator. He has given examples of each type.[\[4\]](#) The four are:

(1) Comparison between the hadeeth of different students of the same scholar. An example is that of Yahya ibn Maeen who read the books of Hammad ibn Salama to seventeen of Hammad's students. He said that by doing so he would be able to spot the mistakes that Hammad made (by comparing them to what other scholars had narrated) and the mistakes that each individual student made (by comparing them with the other students of Hammad).

(2) Comparison between the statements of a single scholar at different times. Mention was made earlier of the Hadeeth of Aisha in which she had Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-As asked about a hadeeth that he had narrated a year earlier. When she found that he had not made any change in the hadeeth she knew that he had memorized it exactly as he heard it from the Prophet.

(3) Comparison between oral recitation and written documents. Azami gave the following example:

Abdur Rahman b. Umar transmitted a hadeeth through Abu Huraira concerning Dhuhr prayer [the noon prayer], which may be delayed in summer [*sic*] from its early time. Abu Zurah said that it is incorrect. This hadeeth was transmitted on the authority of Abu Said. Abdur Rahman b. Umar took it very seriously and did not forget it. When he returned to his town, he checked in his book and found himself mistaken. Then he wrote to Abu Zurah, acknowledging his mistake, asking him to take trouble [*sic*] and inform such and such person and other people who had asked about it from his students, and to tell them about his mistake, and, he said God would give him the reward, for shame is much better than Hell.[\[5\]](#)

(4) Comparison between the hadeeth and the text of the Quran. This practice started with the Companions. The Quran was the first test that the hadeeth would have to pass. The Companions would not accept any hadeeth that contradicted the Quran; instead they would conclude that the Companion must have been mistaken or had misunderstood what the Prophet had narrated. They knew that the Quran and Sunnah were essentially one revelation and it was not possible for one to contradict the other.

Azami only mentions the above four methods of checking the proficiency of a narrator but there were others. The following were quite common: comparing what one narrator related to what others narrated (that is, not students of the same teacher), comparing one Sunnah with another and comparing the text of the hadeeth with well-known historical events.

Footnotes:

[1] Mustafa Muhammad Azami, *Studies in Hadeeth Methodology and Literature* (Indianapolis, IN: American Trust Publications, 1977), p. 48.

[2] Abdul Hamid Siddiqui, trans. and commentator, *Sahih Muslim* (Lahore, Pakistan: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1972), vol. 3, pp. 1175-6.

[3] Ibid., vol. 4, p. 1405.

[4] Azami, *Methodology*, pp. 52-58.

[5] Azami, *Methodology*, p. 56.

God's Preservation of the Sunnah (part 6 of 7): Traveling for the Purpose of Seeking Hadeeth



Description: The importance given to attaining knowledge in Islam leads many Muslims to undertake long journeys in order to collect and confirm the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad.

By [Jamaal al-Din Zarabozo](#) (© 2007 IslamReligion.com)

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Another unique phenomenon that appeared and assisted in the preservation of the Sunnah was the traveling in search of hadeeth, in order to check the sources and gather more hadeeth together. Among all of the different religious communities of the world it has been only the Islamic nation that has been blessed with two particular characteristics that have saved it from losing its original and pure teachings. These two unique characteristics are the use of the *Isnad*, which has just been discussed, and the



journeys undertaken in search of hadeeth, that shall presently be discussed. The great desire for religious knowledge among the Muslims led individuals to travel, on their own, for months at a time simply to collect or confirm just one saying of the Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him. It was this devotion to hadeeth and willingness to sacrifice any aspect of this worldly life that greatly helped in the complete preservation of the hadeeth of the Prophet. M. Zubayr Siddiqi has written:

All these various generations of “Traditionists” displayed marvelous activity in the pursuit of hadeeth. Their love for the subject had been profound. Their enthusiasm for it knew no bounds. Their capacity to suffer for the sake of it had no limit. The rich among them sacrificed riches at its alter; and the poor among them devoted their lives to it in spite of their poverty.[\[1\]](#)

Why was this desire for knowledge so great among these early Muslims? No one can answer this question completely but there must have been many reasons for this strong desire. These reasons must have included the following:

(a) The knowledge of hadeeth was known by these pious souls to lead them to the practice of the Prophet and, furthermore, they knew that by following his footsteps they would become closer to God.

(b) The Quran and the Prophet both stressed the virtues and importance of attaining knowledge. God says:

“...Say: Are those who are knowledgeable equal to those who are not knowledgeable?...” (Quran 39:9)

Also:

“...The knowledgeable among His bondsmen fear God alone...” (Quran 35:28)

Among the Prophet’s many statements on this topic are:

“Whoever goes out along a path in search of knowledge, God makes a path to Paradise easy for him...”[\[2\]](#) (*Saheeh Muslim*)

The Prophet also said,

“When the son of Adam dies all of his good deeds come to an end except three: a perpetual charity, beneficial knowledge [he left behind from which people gain some benefit] and a pious child who supplicates for him.”[\[3\]](#) (*Saheeh Muslim*)

The early scholars recognized the importance of attaining knowledge and they also recognized that no knowledge is better than knowledge about the Creator. Therefore, they did their best to learn the teachings of His Prophet.

Examples from the early years will give a clearer picture of these journeys in search of hadeeth. In reality, however, traveling in search of hadeeth can be said to have begun during the time of the Prophet himself. That is, even at that time, people would come from outside of Madinah to ask the Prophet about specific matters. In some cases, they would come to the Prophet to verify what has been reported by the Prophet’s representatives. In *al-Bukhari* and *Muslim* it can be seen that the other Companions looked forward to such an event. This was because, as Anas stated, they were prohibited from asking the Prophet too many questions, so they would look forward to the coming of an intelligent Bedouin who traveled to come to the Prophet to ask him specific questions.

The following examples are of Companions who traveled in order to verify hadeeth that they themselves heard from the Prophet.[\[4\]](#)

Imam al-Bukhari recorded in his *Sahih* that Jaabir ibn Abdullah traveled for one month to get a single hadeeth from Abdullah ibn Unais. In a version recorded by al-Tabaraani, it states that Jabir said, “I used to hear a hadeeth on the authority of the Prophet about retribution and the one who narrated that hadeeth [directly from the Prophet] was in Egypt, so I bought a camel and traveled to Egypt...”[\[5\]](#)

The Companion Abu Ayyoob traveled all the way to Egypt to ask Uqba ibn Amr about one hadeeth. He told Uqba that only he and Uqba were left who had heard that particular hadeeth directly from the Prophet. After hearing the hadeeth his business was completed in Egypt and he returned to Madinah.

One of the Companions traveled to visit Fadhala ibn Ubaid and told him that he came not to visit him but only to ask him about a hadeeth that they had both heard from the Prophet and the Companion was hoping that Fadhala had the complete wording of the hadeeth.[\[6\]](#)

From the stories of the Companions one can conclude that they traveled in search of hadeeth for basically two reasons:

(a) To hear a hadeeth from a fellow Companion concerning which they did not have the honor of hearing it themselves directly from the Prophet, thereby adding to their knowledge of hadeeth.

(b) To confirm the wording and/or meaning of a hadeeth that they and other Companions had heard directly from the Messenger of God. Thus even the Companions were constantly checking, rechecking and safeguarding the purity of the hadeeth that they narrated.

In the era of the students of the Companions (termed ‘Followers’), the desire and willingness to travel in order only to hear or confirm a hadeeth of the Prophet did not diminish. Madinah, having been the home of the Prophet for many years, the home of the Sunnah and the city where many of the Companions resided after the Prophet’s death, was probably the main center of attraction, but, in fact, any place where it was known a particular hadeeth could be heard would attract “travelers.”

Many examples could be given. Al-Khateeb al-Baghdadi has written an entire work on the subject of traveling in search of hadeeth. His work is entitled *Al-Rihla fi Talab al-Hadeeth* (“Travels in Search of Hadeeth”). What makes this work even more interesting is that it is not simply concerned with scholars traveling to learn hadeeth. This was done by almost every scholar in the history of Islam. Indeed, if a scholar did not travel that was usually pointed out as something strange, as the norm was to travel. However, this book, as pointed out by the editor of the work Noor al-Deen Itr, is about travels in search of just one hadeeth and not hadeeth in general..![\[7\]](#)

Footnotes:

[\[1\]](#) M. Z. Siddiqi, *Hadeeth Literature: Its Origin, Development, Special Features and Criticism* (Calcutta: Calcutta University Press, 1961), p. 48.

[\[2\]](#) *Saheeh Muslim*.

[\[3\]](#) *Saheeh Muslim*.

[\[4\]](#) For more examples see Akram Dhiyaa Al-Umari, *Buhooth fi Tareekh al-Sunnah al-Musharrifah* (Beirut: Muassasah al-Risaalah, 1975), pp. 203f.

[\[5\]](#) Ibn Hajar says that this version has a good chain. Cf., ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 1, p. 174.

[\[6\]](#) This incident was recorded by *Abu Dawood*.

[\[7\]](#) See Noor al-Deen It’s introduction to al-Khateeb al-Baghdadi, *al-Rihlah fi Talab al-Hadeeth* (Beirut: Daar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1975), p. 10.

God’s Preservation of the Sunnah (part 7 of 7): Summary



Description: The safeguarding and time sequence relating to preservation of the Sunnah and it's comparison with the preservation of other religious scriptures, noticeably the Torah and the Gospels.

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The above has been a very brief description of some of the important means by which Allah has preserved the ever-important Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him. One of the important aspects to note is that these safeguards started going into effect virtually during the time of the Prophet himself. There was no time lag, leaving the door open to a massive loss of information or to distortion.

In the following statement, M. Z. Siddiqi has done an excellent job of summing up the protection of the sunnah in the early years:

The Hadeeth in the sense of the reports of the sayings and doings of Muhammad has been a subject of keen pursuit and constant study by the Muslims throughout the Muslim world since the very beginning of the history of Islam up to the present times. During the life-time of Muhammad many of the companions tried to learn by heart whatever he said, and observed keenly whatever he did; and they reported these things to one another. Some of them wrote down what he said in *Saheefahs* (scrolls) which were later on read by them to their students, and which were preserved in their families and also by the Followers. After the death of Muhammad, when his companions spread in various countries, some of them as well as their followers undertook long arduous journeys, courted poverty and penury in order to collect them together... Their remarkable activity with regard to the preservation and propagation of hadeeth is unique in the literary history of the world... [And the excellence of their sciences remains] unparalleled in the literary history of the world even to-day.[\[1\]](#)

It was these processes that ultimately culminated in the fine-tuned sciences of hadeeth and the detail grading of the reports traced back to the Prophet. In general, the scholars would not accept a report as an authentic hadeeth unless that report can be verified with a complete chain made up of only sound and trustworthy narrators all the way back to the Prophet. Anything short of that would be rejected as a weak hadeeth.

The more one goes on to study the sciences of hadeeth, the more he/she will feel comfortable with the feeling that the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad has been minutely preserved, just as Allah had promised in the Quran. When the scholars of hadeeth—who are the specialists in that field and who have spent their lifetime in

mastering that discipline—agree upon the authenticity of a hadeeth, there should be no need for debate or question. The only thing left to do is to believe in it and do one's best to apply the meaning of that hadeeth in one's life.

Comparison with Other Scriptures

When referring to the hadeeth of the Prophet, it is commonplace for some Westerners to use the word “tradition.” This immediately brings forth the impression of a very haphazard and unscholarly report. The reality, as alluded to above, is completely different. The use, therefore, of this word “tradition” may be nothing more than a smokescreen to give the impression that the hadeeth were not preserved. Another common description that appears is a reference to the preservation of the hadeeth as being similar to that of the Gospels.

This is also a rather clever phrase that definitely has negative connotations to it for many. In fact, many converts have studied the Gospels and know how unreliable they are—this being one of the reasons why they began to search for a religion other than Christianity. Therefore, such a statement will quickly shake their faith in hadeeth.

The stark reality is that no honest comparison can be made between the minute and scientific preservation of the hadeeth of the Prophet and the preservation of the earlier scriptures. A few brief descriptions of the preservation—or lack thereof—of the earlier scriptures should suffice to contrast them with the preservation of the hadeeth.

After a lengthy discussion of the history of the Torah, Dirks concludes:

The received Torah is not a single, unitary document. It is a cut-and-paste compilation... with additional layering... While Moses, the person who received the original revelation, which the Torah is supposed to represent, lived no later than the 13th century BCE, and probably lived in the 15th century BCE, the received Torah dates to a much later epoch. The oldest identifiable substrata of the received Torah, i.e., J, can be dated no earlier than the 10th century BCE... Further, these different substrata were not combined into a received Torah until approximately 400 BCE, which would be approximately 1,000 years after the life of Moses. Still further, the received Torah was never totally standardized, with at least four different texts existing in the first century CE, which was approximately 1,500 years after the life of Moses. Additionally, if one adopts the Masoretic text as the most “official” text of the received Torah, then the oldest existing manuscript dates to circa 895 CE, which is about 2,300 years after the life of Moses. In short, although the received Torah may well contain some portions of the original Torah, the provenance of the received Torah is broken, largely unknown, and can in no way be traced to Moses.[\[2\]](#)

Although Jesus came many centuries after Moses, the revelation that he received did not fare much better. A group of Christians scholars known as the Fellows of the

Jesus Seminar tried to determine which of the sayings attributed to Jesus can actually be considered authentic. They stated, “Eighty-two percent of the words ascribed to Jesus in the gospels were not actually spoken by him.”^[3] In describing the history of the gospels, they wrote, “The stark truth is that the history of the Greek gospels, from their creation in the first century until the discovery of the first copies of them at the beginning of the third, remains largely unknown and therefore unmapped territory.”^[4] Bart Ehrman’s work *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture* has identified how the scripture has been changed over time. He states his thesis, which he proves in detail, at the outset, “My thesis can be stated simply: scribes occasionally altered the words of their sacred texts to make them more patently orthodox and to prevent their misuse by Christians who espoused aberrant views.”^[5] That is something like putting the cart before the horse: The beliefs should be based on the transmitted texts; not that the texts should be altered to fit the beliefs.

A Final Note about the Quran

The nature of the Quran is very different from that of the statements and actions of the Prophet. Obviously, the statements and actions are very large in number while the Quran is very limited in size. The Quran, which is not a large book at all, was preserved in memory as well as written form from the time of the Prophet Muhammad himself. Many of the Companions of the Prophet had memorized the entire Quran and, fearing what had happened to earlier religious communities, they took the necessary steps to protect it from any form of adulteration. Soon after the death of the Prophet, the Quran was all compiled together and shortly afterwards official copies were sent to the distant lands to ensure that the text was pure. To this day, one can travel to any part of the world and pick up a copy Quran and find that it is the same throughout the world. The task of preserving the Quran cannot actually compare to the task of preserving the bulk of the Sunnah. Hence, it is no surprise, given the attitude of the Muslims of that time, that the Quran was minutely preserved.

Footnotes:

^[1] M. Z. Siddiqi, pp. 4-5.

^[2] Jerald F. Dirks, *The Cross & the Crescent* (Beltsville, MD: Amana Publications, 2001), p. 53. Other important discussions of the authenticity of the Old Testament may also be found in Maurice Bucaille, *The Bible, the Quran and Science* (Indianapolis, IN: American Trust Publications, 1978), pp. 1-43; M. M. Al-Azami, pp. 211-263.

^[3] Robert W. Funk, Roy W. Hoover and the Jesus Seminar, *The Five Gospels: What did Jesus Really Say?* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1993), p. 5.

[4] Funk, et al., p. 9.

[5] Bart D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. xi.

Modern Historical Methodology vs. Hadeeth Methodology (part 1 of 5): Western Historical Methodology



Description: A comparison between modern methods of recording history and that used in hadeeth. Part One: Modern, Western Historical Methodology and external criticism.

By Reem Azzam

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The study of hadeeth is one that goes back centuries and has been the subject of much discussion among both Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Some scholars deem the collections of hadeeth as unauthentic and something to be disregarded, while others claim the opposite. Where exactly does the truth lie? As a starting point, it is helpful to examine criticism according to hadeeth methodology compared to criticism according to modern, western historical methodology. Therefore the purpose of this paper shall be to first explain the general guidelines for authenticating and verifying historical sources, then to explain the general guidelines used in authenticating and verifying hadeeth, and finally to compare the two processes.



Modern, Western Historical Methodology

When events occur, they can be known by contemporaries who then pass on their knowledge and understanding (Lucey 20)[1]. In daily life, people accept that knowledge of events can be passed on from the witnesses of those events, and that they can be transmitted exactly. Indeed, in a court of law, through the testimonies of witnesses to a particular event, facts are established beyond a reasonable doubt (Lucey 22). According to one historian, “Testimony, sufficient, reliable testimony, is a source of unimpeachable, indisputable knowledge of historical events” (Lucey 20). It is from the reliable testimony of contemporaries of events that historical knowledge is derived

(Lucey 18). Therefore, the aim of historical methodology is to determine if the various testimonies that reach us today can be accepted as sound evidence.

Once a historian has collected his sources anything that directly or indirectly provides information about a particular event (e.g. a book, a scroll, a broken piece of pottery, a picture, a radio clip, an oral tradition) he must then evaluate them using the techniques of criticism. These historical sources or “witnesses” provide information or testimony. It is the role of external criticism to establish the authenticity of a source (the fact of testimony) and its integrity (the freedom from corruption during transmission). In comparison, internal criticism is concerned with establishing the true meaning of a testimony and the credibility of a witness (Lucey 23). Ultimately, the basic principles of source criticism are what lead to the establishment of facts, or to the debunking of previously established ones (Marwick 196)[2].

External Criticism

External criticism involves investigating the origin of a particular source – as opposed to its content, which is the concern of internal criticism. The historian needs to seek out all possible information regarding the sources origin, as well as possibly restore the source to its original form (Lucey 23). This is in order to establish the authenticity of the source. Determining the authenticity of a source means establishing that the testimony is indeed that of the person to whom it is attributed, or that it belongs to the period to which it claims to belong, and that it is what it claims itself to be. Seeking out all possible information regarding the sources origin is also necessary for establishing the integrity of the source; i.e., that it has not been corrupted during its transmission to the present time, and if it has, that the changes are identified.

There are many different kinds of questions that need to be answered in order to establish the fact of testimony, the first step of external criticism. One needs to determine the origin of the source as well as where it was originally found (Marwick 222). For example, if one finds Egyptian pottery in excavations in Yemen, then where it was found would be of great significance in that it would hint at trade between the two countries. Additionally, one needs to know the date of the source and determine how close its date is to the dates pertaining to the topic under investigation (Marwick 222). Another important matter to determine is how it relates to other important dates. All this information pertaining to the origin of the source will also prove useful in determining its credibility by way of internal criticism later on.

It is worth noting here that historians distinguish between authorship and authenticity, even though “identifying the author is the first step in establishing authenticity” (Lucey 47). It is possible for an anonymous document to be authentic, such as the early writings that appeared under pseudonyms, as long as it is known to what year or period and place the document belongs. However, in certain cases the author of a document must be established in order to determine the authenticity of a source.

The second and last step in external criticism consists of an examination of the sources

integrity. In other words, it must be ascertained that the source or testimony has reached the historian uncorrupted. Only then is the fact of testimony absolutely established (Lucey 62). If changes have been made in the testimony, he must be able to distinguish the original from the changes in order for the source to remain authentic. Although there may be unintentional or intentional additions and deletions made to the original source or its copies, it must be established that the source or testimony is at least substantially integral. It is worth noting here that corruption resulting from careless copying is quite a common occurrence and can potentially lead to great misunderstanding (Lucey 62). With this much being established, the historian can now move on to evaluate the testimony.

Footnotes:

[1] Lucey, William. *History: Methods and Interpretation*. Chicago: Loyola UP, 1958.

[2] Marwick, Arthur. *The Nature of History*. 3rd ed. London: Macmillan, 1989

Modern Historical Methodology vs. Hadeeth Methodology (part 2 of 5): Internal Criticism



Description: A comparison between modern methods of recording history and that used in hadeeth.
Part two: Modern, Western Historical Methodology and internal criticism.

By Reem Azzam

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Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [About His Sayings](#)

Internal Criticism

Internal criticism is concerned with the content of the source and naturally follows its external criticism (Lucey 24). The goal in this step is to establish the credibility of the testimony. To start with, the historian must be sure to understand what the witness meant by his testimony. Only then can the historian be able to properly determine the credibility of the witness under question. Establishing the credibility of the witness means establishing both his competence (that he speaks out of knowledge) and veracity (that he is truthful). In practice, some testimonies are rejected on the basis of the aforementioned tests, though a considerable amount of testimonies are established as reliable (Lucey 24).



Given that language is constantly in a state of change, determining the true meaning of a testimony is not an easy task. Oftentimes words are not used literally and new meanings become attached to them. The historian needs to figure out the meaning which the author or witness attaches to particular words in order to properly understand the testimony. He also needs to be familiar with the idioms used at the time of the source's origin. Obviously the historian must be fluent in the language used in the source and trained in philology to undertake this task.

In order to properly understand a source or testimony, it is also necessary to know what kind of person or people created the source; in other words, what their attitudes and interests were (Marwick 223). One should inquire into their education, position in life, political views, and character (Lucey 73). Also important is their age and temperament (Lucey 78). This knowledge will also prove useful in determining the credibility of the witness. Furthermore, it is important to know how and why the particular source came about as well as for whom it was intended. After the historian has correctly understood the content of the testimony and what the witness intended to say, he can move on to examine the credibility of the witness.

The next step is to establish if the person or people behind the source were indeed in a position to know first-hand about the matter under investigation and whether they were honest. It is said that the proper attitude at this juncture is to be neither gullible nor skeptical in order to do justice to the source in question (Lucey 73). A witness's testimony should not be discounted unless he has been completely discredited. It is acceptable for a witness to make some mistakes so long as his testimony remains substantially true. In the words of one historian,

“The credibility of testimony, then, derives from the competence and veracity of

the witness, and these two qualifications must not be taken for granted. His ability to observe must be established, the opportunity to observe verified, his honesty ascertained, his testimony compared with that of other witnesses to discount the errors any one witness may make” (Lucey 73-4).

Also among the items that help establish the credibility of a source is knowledge of the type of source, including its nature and purpose (Lucey 77). Each type of source will have its own criteria of evaluation. For example, a political platform would not be looked at in the same way as an editorial (Lucey 77). In addition, certain witness’ veracity, moral character, and competence are already well established, particularly those in public life (Lucey 78). Therefore, the testimonies of such witnesses need not be challenged unless proven otherwise.

There are a few matters that the historian must be careful of at this step. He should be careful not to assume that a witness’s opportunity to observe means that he is competent. Not only does it need to be established that the opportunity was real, but it also must be established that a competent witness took advantage of it. Another matter to note is the common sources of error. At the top of the list are faulty memory and prejudices, though weaknesses such as a defective sense of observation also pose a serious challenge (Lucey 75). Such weaknesses on the part of the witness or author of a source can easily lead to misunderstandings on the part of the historian.

Although historians are reluctant to accept the testimony of one witness, they are justified in doing so as long as the witness is qualified. Naturally more than one witness is preferred, and the more the better. Of course the witnesses should be competent and honest, and should have been near the reported event or at least took their knowledge from those who were (Lucey 79). The more qualified witnesses there are, the easier the task of the historian. He can then compare testimonies and eliminate errors in them, as well as use his reliable sources in determining the reliability of any new witnesses.

In comparing one source with others to determine credibility, there are three possibilities. They can agree with the source in question, they can disagree, or they can be silent. Agreement between the sources is not enough to establish the credibility of a source in question. It needs to be determined if the sources are independent, as otherwise one can suspect a conspiracy or dependence on one original source (Lucey 80). Especially if an event was public, then there should be many independent accounts of it. However, if the sources disagree or contradict, then one needs to examine the degree of the difference and the nature of the sources. Differences on minor points and details are not enough to discredit the source in question, and in fact they are common and expected (Lucey 81). One should be careful not to confuse between flat or apparent contradictions and real ones, and realize that carefully and patiently sticking to the rules of criticism will probably resolve an apparent contradiction (Lucey 83). However if there is a real contradiction, then none of the sources can be used until one of them gains credibility on some other grounds. If the subject happens to be a controversial problem, then the testimonies of interested

parties and extremists must be handled with great care.

The third possible scenario is that of the sources being silent on the testimony in question. The attitude towards such a testimony is negative, though it is not immediately rejected. In order to reject the testimony, it must be established that the silent witnesses were capable of knowing about the event and were in a position where they needed to report it (Lucey 84). However, these are hard to establish matters.

After the historian has sifted through his sources and rigorously applied the rules of external and internal criticism, he is ready to write. The ordering and synthesizing of all the materials into the correct reconstruction of an event is a challenging task that involves interpretation on the part of the historian. The manner in which he interprets his reliable sources shapes his reconstruction of a particular event.

Modern Historical Methodology vs. Hadeeth Methodology (part 3 of 5): Hadeeth Methodology



Description: A comparison between modern methods of recording history and that used in hadeeth. Part Three: The methodology of hadeeth.

By Reem Azzam

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Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [About His Sayings](#)

A Prophetic hadeeth is a narration from or about the Prophet Muhammad (may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him), and it is through the ahadeeth (plural of hadeeth) that Muslims know about the Prophet's way of life, the Sunnah. Such knowledge is a necessary prerequisite for fulfilling the Muslim's most basic religious requirements, and the Prophet naturally made it a point to spread this knowledge about himself during his lifetime.



The Prophet sought to teach his Companions through different ways such as repetition, questioning, dictation, and practical demonstration. After teaching them he would listen to what they had learnt. Along with his Companions, deputations from outside were educated in both the Quran and the Sunnah. The Prophet would question them as well to see what they had learnt (Azami 9)[1]. Furthermore, the letters sent by the Prophet, some of which were quite lengthy and dealt with a wide range of legal

matters, also constituted a means of teaching his Sunnah. Apparently there must have been a great deal of writing in general as it is said that he had at least forty-five scribes at one time or another (Azami 10). He also would dictate to different companions such as Ali b. Abu Talib, and he is known to have sent copies of his sermons to certain people. Last but not least was the practical example he lay for his followers with his clear instructions to do as he does (i.e., “Pray as you see me praying” [Bukhari, Vol. 1, Book 11, No. 604] and “Learn from me the rituals of pilgrimage” [Sahih Muslim, Book on Hajj, No. 310]). He was known to advise a questioner to stay with him and learn by observing him (Azami 10).

Other measures were taken by the Prophet to spread knowledge of his Sunnah, such as the establishment of what may be regarded as schools. It is known that these were established in Madinah soon after his arrival, and that he would send teachers to various places outside of the city. He emphasized to his Companions to pass on knowledge about him, and among his sayings are “Pass on knowledge from me even if it is only one verse” (Azami 10). In his famous farewell sermon he is reported to have said, “Those who are present (here) should convey the message to those who are absent.” [Bukhari, Vol. 2, Book 26, No. 795] Consequently it was a common practice among his Companions to inform those who were absent about the Prophet’s sayings and actions. Additionally, the Prophet would specifically instruct delegations to teach their people what they had learnt upon their return. He encouraged all this activity by informing on the great rewards for teaching and learning, as well as the possible punishment for refusing to do so (Azami 12).

On the part of the Prophet’s Companions, it should be remembered how people take care to watch and imitate the actions and sayings of one they love and admire. It is well known the extent of love the Prophet’s Companions had for him and that many would unhesitatingly die to protect him. Given this and their excellent memories, as well as the various methods the Prophet himself employed to teach his Sunnah, it would seem safe to assume that they did indeed know his Sunnah. In fact, reports show that they not only tried to learn it, but they tried to preserve it through various means such as memorization and recording. There are various examples of the Companions of the Prophet memorizing together and cultivating what they had just learned from the Prophet (Azami 13). Many of them are known to have recorded the hadeeth, and following the Prophets instruction, they would emulate him based on what they had learned. After the Prophets death, there are several reports showing that they continued in their efforts to memorize, practice, and preserve what they had learned from him. Furthermore, there are reports showing Companions such as Ali b. Abu Talib, Ibn Masud, and Abu Sa’id al-Khudri advising the people who came after them (the Successors) to memorize the hadeeth, which they would do either individually or collectively in groups (Azami 15).

After the Prophets death, Islam spread beyond Arabia to distant lands. As the Companions of the Prophet were the ones who pioneered the expansion, it follows that the knowledge of hadeeth that they had went with them, and that not all of it remained in Madinah. Therefore, it is possible that a certain Sunnah was known to particular

Companions who had left to settle in some distant land. As was previously mentioned, the Companions saw to it that those who came after them, the Successors, continued in the learning and preservation of hadeeth so that the knowledge would not be lost. However, now that the knowledge of the Sunnah was not concentrated in one place but had spread to different parts of the Muslim world, the likelihood of making errors arose, and consequently techniques for criticism had to be developed, especially after the first fitnah (Azami 49). Additionally, with the spread of the Sunnah, new techniques had to be developed for learning hadeeth.

Though all the techniques were important in preserving the hadeeth, the practice of a teacher reading to their students was a particularly significant technique that was developed very early. This included reading by the teacher from the students book, which was either a complete or partial copy of the teachers book (Azami 17). Students and scholars would test their teachers knowledge by inserting hadeeth throughout the book before giving it to their teacher for reading. Teachers who didnt recognize the additions were “denounced and declared untrustworthy” (Azami 17). Additionally, it is said that from the beginning of the second century, the technique of reading by the students to their teachers became the most common practice (Azami 19). This was done in the presence of other students who would then compare with what they had in their books or listen carefully. In copying, it is said that they would usually make a circular mark after every hadeeth, and that once the hadeeth had been read to the teacher a mark would be made in the circle or elsewhere to indicate so. Also, every additional time a hadeeth was read to the teacher another mark would be made indicating so, and at times scholars would read the same book many times. The reason probably was to counter-act the challenges presented by the Arabic script the reporter had to hear a particular hadeeth from the person from whom he is transmitting, and transmit exactly what he heard (thus the grading of reporters became necessary to know who did this best) (Burton 110-111)[\[2\]](#). Furthermore, from a very early time, the necessity of reviewing copies became evident, and it is reported that teachers would help their students in this task to eliminate copying mistakes. It is important to know that one who did not follow the proper methods in teaching or compiling his own book could be accused of stealing hadeeth, even if the material was authentic. Hence it was critical that the hadeeth were obtained properly. There are several other techniques, but for the purpose of this paper it is important to know that the scholars of hadeeth used special terms in the transmission of a hadeeth, depending upon the technique employed in teaching it. Also worth pointing out is that these special terms such as “haddathana,” “akhbarana,” and “an,” are often mistaken to mean that the transmission was strictly oral, although it has been shown that this was not the case.

Footnotes:

[\[1\]](#) Azami, Muhammad. *Studies in hadeeth Methodology and Literature*. Indiana: American Trust,

1977.

[2] Burton, John. *An Introduction to the hadeeth. Edinburgh*: Edinburgh UP, 1994.

Modern Historical Methodology vs. Hadeeth Methodology (part 4 of 5): The Classification of Hadeeth I



Description: The various categories of hadeeth based upon the strength of the chain of narrators.

By Reem Azzam

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Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [About His Sayings](#)

The people involved in the transmission of a hadeeth constitute its *isnad*. The *isnad* informs us about the hadeeth's source, and this information later became an essential part of the hadeeth (Azami 31). Abdullah b. Al-Mubarak, one of the teachers of al-Bukhari, is reported to have said, "The *isnad* is part of the religion: had it not been for the *isnad*, whoever wished to would have said whatever he liked" (Hasan 11)[1]. There is some indication that the *isnad* was used before the first tribulation, though it was not until the end of the first century of the Hijrah that it was fully developed (Azami 33). (However, John Burton in his *An Introduction to the Hadith* says that the *isnad* did not yet exist in the first century) The other part of the hadeeth that actually contains the specific saying or action of the Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, is its *matn* or text.

For the classification of hadeeth, there are several broad categories, of which only seven will be very briefly discussed here. The seven categories are classifications according to 1) the reference to a particular authority, 2) the links in the *isnad*, 3) the number of reporters involved in each stage of the *isnad*, 4) the technique used in reporting the hadeeth, 5) the nature of the *isnad* and *matn*, 6) a hidden defect found in the hadeeth's *isnad* or *matn*, and 7) the reliability and memory of the reporters (Hasan 14-16).

The first category, classification according to the reference to a particular authority, pertains to whether it goes back to the Prophet, a Companion, or a Successor. A *marfu'* or "elevated" narration is one that back to the Prophet, and this is regarded as the best grade (Burton 112). A *mawqoof* or "stopped" narration is one that goes back to a Companion, while a *maqtu'* or "severed" narration is one that goes back to a Successor. This classification is significant in that it differentiates between the Prophet's sayings and actions and that of a Companion or Successor.

The second category, classification according to the links in the *isnad*, makes several

different distinctions. The *musnad* or “supported” hadeeth is the best out of the group as it contains no break in the chain of authorities reporting the hadeeth back to the Prophet (Burton 111). The *mursal* or “unattached” hadeeth is one that contains a gap of one generation (according to both Azami and Hasan it is a hadeeth reported by a Successor who drops the Companion from whom he learned it in the *isnad*). The *munqati*’ or “broken” hadeeth is one which is missing a link closer to the traditionalist reporting it (i.e., before the Successor). This applies even if there appears to be no break in the chain, if it is known that one of the reporters could not have heard hadeeth from the immediate authority given in the *isnad*, even if they are contemporaries. The term *munqati*’ also is used by some scholars to refer to a hadeeth in which a reporter does not name his authority and instead says, “a man narrated to me” (Hasan 22). A hadeeth is *mu’dal* or “perplexing” if more than one consecutive reporter is missing in the *isnad*. If the *isnad* is dropped altogether and the reporter directly quotes the Prophet, then the hadeeth is considered *mu’allaq* or “hanging” (Hasan 22).

Within the third category, hadeeth are classified according to how many reporters are in each stage of the *isnad*, i.e. in each generation of reporters. The two main classifications are *mutawatir* (“consecutive”) and *ahad* (“single”), though *ahad* is further divided into many subdivisions, among them *ghareeb* (“scarce” or “strange”), ‘*azeez* (“rare” or “strong”), and *mash’hoor* (“famous”). A *mutawatir* hadeeth is one that is reported by a large number of people whose agreement upon a lie is not reasonably possible and in which the possibility of coincidence is negligible. The minimum number of required reporters differs among the scholars of hadeeth, and ranges from four to several hundred (Azami 43). The hadeeth may be *mutawatir* in either meaning or words, the former being the more common one. Al-Ghazali stipulated that the hadeeth must be *mutawatir* in the beginning, middle, and last stages of its *isnad* (Hasan 30). A hadeeth that is *ahad* is one whose number of reporters does not come near to that required for a *mutawatir* hadeeth. A hadeeth is classified as *ghareeb* if at any stage (or every stage) in the *isnad* there is only one person reporting it. A hadeeth is classified as ‘*azeez* if at every stage in the *isnad* there are at least two people reporting it. If at least three people report a hadeeth in every stage of its *isnad*, then it is classified as *mash’hoor*, although the term is also applied to those hadeeth which start out as *ghareeb* or ‘*azeez* but then end up with a larger number of reporters (Hasan 32).

In the fourth category, hadeeth are classified according to manner in which they are reported. As was mentioned earlier, there is a corresponding special term to denote a particular mode of learning or transmission when a student or scholar learned a hadeeth. “*Haddathana*,” “*akhbarana*,” and “*sami’tu*” all indicate that the reporter personally heard the hadeeth from his own sheikh. “*An*” and “*qaala*” are more vague and can signify either hearing from the sheikh in person or through someone else. Actually, “*an*” is very inferior and can signify learning the hadeeth through any one of various modes of transmission (Azami 22). A hadeeth can be labeled as weak due to the uncertainty caused by using the latter two terms, which respectively translate into “on the authority of” and “he said” (Hasan 33). One who practices *tadlees*, “concealing”, reports from his sheikh that which he did not hear from him, or reports

from a contemporary whom he never met. This violates the principle that a hadeeth must be heard first-hand in order to be transmitted (Burton 112). Another type of *tadlees*, which is considered the worst among them, is when a reliable scholar reports from a weak authority who is in turn reporting from a reliable scholar. The person who is reporting this *isnad* may show that he heard it from his sheikh, but then omits the weak authority and simply uses the term “‘an” to link his sheikh with the next trustworthy one in the *isnad* (Hasan 34).

If throughout the *isnad* all the reporters (including the Prophet) use the same mode of transmission, repeat an additional statement or remark, or act in a particular way while narrating the hadeeth, then it is called *musalsal* (“uniformly-linked”). This type of knowledge is useful for discounting the possibility of *tadlees* in a particular hadeeth (Hassan 35).

Footnotes:

[1] Hasan, Suhaib. *An Introduction to the Science of hadeeth*. Riyadh: Darussalam, 1996.

Modern Historical Methodology vs. Hadeeth Methodology (part 5 of 5): The Classification of Hadeeth II

Description: The various categories of hadeeth based upon the strength of the chain of narrators.

Part 2.

By Reem Azzam

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Category: [Articles](#) > [The Prophet Muhammad](#) > [About His Sayings](#)

According to the fifth category, a hadeeth can also be classified with respect to the nature of its text and *isnad*. According to Al-Shafi'i, if a hadeeth reported by a trustworthy person goes against the narration of someone more reliable than him, then the hadeeth is *shadh* or “irregular”. According to Ibn Hajar, if a narration by a weak reporter contradicts an authentic hadeeth, then that hadeeth is classified as *munkar* (“denounced”), although some scholars would classify any hadeeth of a weak reporter as *munkar*. A hadeeth could also be classified as *munkar* if its text contradicts general sayings of the Prophet. If a hadeeth reported by a reliable person contains some additional information not narrated by other authentic sources, the addition is accepted

so long as it doesn't contradict them, and the addition is known as *ziyadatu thiqah* ("an addition by one trustworthy"). However, if a reporter adds something to the hadeeth being narrated, then the hadeeth is classified as *mudraj* or "interpolated". If this occurs in a hadeeth, then it is usually in its text and often for the purpose of explaining a difficult word. In a few examples this occurs in the *isnad* - a reporter takes a part of one *isnad* and adds it to another *isnad*. A reporter found in the habit of intentional *idraj* or interpolation is generally considered a liar, although scholars are more lenient with those reporters who may do it to explain a difficult word (Hasan 37-39).

In the sixth category, hadeeth that contain hidden defects in their *isnad* or text are classified as *ma'lool* or *mu'allal* ("defective"). This could be due to such things as classifying a hadeeth as *musnad* when it is actually *mursal* or attributing a hadeeth to a particular Companion when it really comes from another one. In order to detect such defects, all the *isnads* of a hadeeth have to be collected and examined. For example,

"Some scholars wrote works on which Successors heard hadeeth from which Companions. From this information it is known that Al-Hasan Al-Basri did not meet Ali, although there is a slight chance that he may have seen him during his childhood in Madinah. This is significant as many Sufi traditions are said to go back to Al-Hasan Al-Basri who is said to have reported directly from Ali." (Hasan 42-43)

There can also be uncertainty about the *isnad* or text, in which case the hadeeth is classified as *mudtarib* ("shaky"). This occurs if reporters disagree about some points in the *isnad* or text in such a way that no opinion prevails. A hadeeth may be classified as *maqloob* ("changed" or "reversed") if in the *isnad* a name was reversed (i.e., Ka'b b. Murra versus Murra b. Ka'b) or if the order of a sentence in the text is reversed (Azami 66). This also applies to those hadeeth whose text has been given a different *isnad* or vice versa, or those in which a reporter's name was replaced with another (Hasan 41-42).

The seventh and last category to be discussed here is classification according to the quality of the reporters, upon which the final verdict on a hadeeth critically depends. Hadeeth reported by those known to be *adil*, *hafiz*, *thabit*, and *thiqa* are the highest ranked hadeeth and are classified as *saheeh* or "sound." For someone to be considered *adil*, he had to be a very pious Muslim, honest and truthful in all of his dealings. Through careful comparison, verbal agreement found in the text of a hadeeth among various transmitters indicated who was the most accurate (*thabit*), the most reliable (*thiqa*), and who had the best memory (*hafiz*). If any scholar falls less than this ideal in one or more categories, but he is not criticized, then the hadeeth reported by him are judged to be less sound, or *hasan* ("fair"). If a reporter was known to have a weak memory or make mistakes due to carelessness, then his hadeeth are judged as *da'eef* ("weak") (Burton 110-111).

Of course, there are other factors which play into the final verdict on a hadeeth, and in the words of Ibn Al-Salah, "A saheeh hadeeth is the one which has a continuous *isnad*,

made up of reporters of trustworthy memory from similar authorities, and which is found to be free from any irregularities (i.e. in the text) or defects (i.e., in the *isnad*).”

According to Al-Tirmidhi a hasan hadeeth is “A hadeeth which is not *shadhdh*, nor contains a disparaged reporter in its *isnad*, and which is reported through more than one route of narration” (Hasan 44-46). A hadeeth that doesn’t reach the requirements for a hasan hadeeth is classified as *da’eef*, and often this is due to discontinuity in the *isnad*. It can also be classified as *da’eef* if one of the reporters does not have a good reputation for whatever reason, be it because of his making many mistakes or being dishonest. If the defects are many and severe, then the hadeeth is closer to being classified as *mawdu’* or fabricated. According to Al-Dhahabi the *mawdu’* hadeeth is the one whose text goes against established norms of the Prophet’s sayings or whose *isnad* contains a liar. A hadeeth can also be established as *mawdu’* due to “external evidence related to a discrepancy found in the dates or times of a particular incident” (Hasan 49).

In conclusion, the aforementioned classifications constitute only a fraction of the total number of classifications that exist. The studies in hadeeth are very complex, and it seems that the scholars thought of every imaginable angle from which to analyze hadeeth. All this was for the purpose of distinguishing between different types of narrations, especially for distinguishing the authentic from the inauthentic.

Prophet Muhammad - Legacy of a Prophet - Full Documentary

**"And We have sent you (Muhammad) not, except as a
mercy for all the worlds" (21:107)**