

SIGNS OF PROPHETHOOD IN THE NOBLE LIFE OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PART 1 OF 2): PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S EARLY LIFE

Rating: 4.5

Description: Prophet Muhammad's life was guided by God and this was demonstrated even from a very young age.

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“Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is the Messenger of God and last of the prophets. And God has knowledge of all things.” (Quran 33: 40)

When a person accepts Islam, reconfirms his or her faith or prays any of the five daily prayers, they also affirm their belief in Muhammad as a prophet of God; the final prophet. In addition to this over 1.5 billion people the world over believe that Prophet Muhammad's life is worthy of being emulated and aspired to. However many people embrace Islam without really knowing Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him. Perhaps all they know is that he was born and lived in the Arabian Peninsula and received the literal word of God in the form of the Quran. In the following two articles we will look at the noble life of Prophet Muhammad, learn to know and love him just a little bit more. We will achieve this by looking at the signs of Prophethood in his noble life.



In Arabic the word prophet (nabi) is derived from the word naba which means news. Thus we deduce that a prophet spreads the news of God and His message, they are in a sense God's ambassadors on earth. Their mission is to convey the message to worship One God. This includes, calling the people to God, explaining the message, bringing glad tidings or warnings and directing the affairs of the nation. All the prophets were anxious to convey God's message sincerely and completely and this included the last prophet, Muhammad. During his final sermon Prophet Muhammad asked the congregation three times whether he had delivered the message, and called on God to witness their answer, which was a resounding "yes!".

As well as the essence of their call to One God, another accepted sign of the truth of the prophets is how they live their lives. The accounts of Prophet Muhammad's life that we have inherited from our righteous predecessors illustrate that Muhammad's Prophethood was guided by God from the very beginning. Long before, Prophethood Muhammad was being prepared to guide humankind to the straight path and his life experiences stood him in good stead for such a weighty mission. Then at the age of 40 when Prophethood was bestowed upon him, God continued to support and affirm his mission. Any account of Muhammad's life is filled with examples of his exemplary character; he was merciful, compassionate, truthful, brave, and generous, while striving solely for the rewards of the Hereafter. The way Prophet Muhammad dealt with his companions, acquaintances, enemies, animals and even inanimate objects left no doubt that he was ever mindful of God.

Muhammad's birth was accompanied by many so called miraculous events and the talk of the extraordinary events no doubt functioned as signs of Prophethood, however we must be cautious about believing unreservedly in those extraordinary events. Not all of the events are accepted by all of the biographers and historians of Islamic history thus although they indicate an extraordinary beginning and a life destined to be guided by God, they may be embellished or exaggerated.

Special but not unique circumstances surrounded childhood of Prophet Muhammad and these undoubtedly had a bearing on his character. By the time he was eight years old he had suffered through the death of both his parents and his beloved grandfather Abdul Muttalib. He was left in the care of his uncle and great supporter Abu Talib. Thus even as a young boy he had already suffered great emotional and physical upheaval. Both the many chroniclers of Muhammad's life and the Quran acknowledge his disrupted life.

Did He not find you (O Muhammad) an orphan and gave you a refuge? (Quran 93:6)

Muhammad's uncle Abu Talib was poor and struggled to keep his family fed, thus during his adolescence Muhammad worked as a shepherd. From this occupation he learned to embrace solitude and developed characteristics such as patience, cautiousness, care, leadership and an ability to sense danger. Shepherding was an occupation that all the prophets of God we know of had in common. '...The companions asked, "Were you a shepherd?" He replied, "There was no prophet who was not a shepherd."^[1]

In his teens Muhammad sometimes travelled with Abu Talib, accompanying caravans to trade centres. On at least one occasion, he is said to have travelled as far north as Syria. Older merchants recognized his character and nicknamed him Al-Amin, the one you can trust. Even in his youth he was known as truthful and trustworthy. One story that is accepted by most Islamic scholars and historians is the account of one of Prophet Muhammad's trips to Syria.

The story goes that the monk Bahira foretold the coming Prophethood and counselled Abu Talib to "guard his nephew carefully". According to biographer Ibn Ishaq, as the

caravan in which Prophet Muhammad was travelling approached the edge of town, Bahira could see a cloud that appeared to be shading and following a young man. When the caravan halted under the shadow of some trees, Bahira “looked at the cloud when it over-shadowed the tree, and its branches were bending and drooping over the apostle of God until he was in the shadow beneath it.” After Bahira witnessed this he observed Muhammad closely and asked him many questions concerning a number of Christian prophecies he had read and heard about.

The young Muhammad was distinguished among his people for his modesty, virtuous behaviour and graceful manners, thus it was no surprise for his companions to see him, even as a youth many years before Prophethood, shun superstitious practices and keep away from drinking alcohol, eating meat slaughtered on stone altars or attending idolatrous festivals. By the time he reached adulthood Muhammad was thought of as the most reliable and trustworthy member of the Meccan community. Even those who concerned themselves with petty tribal squabbles acknowledged Muhammad’s honesty and integrity.

Muhammad’s virtues and good moral character was established from a young age, and God continued to support and guide him. When he was 40 years old Muhammad was given the means to change the world, the means to benefit the whole of humanity.

In the following article we will look at how Muhammad’s life changed after Prophethood and conclude that it is unreasonable to give credence to those who claim that Muhammad was a false Prophet. He did not claim Prophethood to attain comfort, wealth, greatness, glory or power.

Footnotes:

[1]

Saheeh Al-Bukhari

The web address of this article:

<https://webcache001.islamreligion.com/articles/10302/signs-of-prophethood-in-noble-life-of-prophet-muhammad-part-1>

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