

Life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH/SAW)

Third Session (3/3)

NOVA Life-Long Learning (NOVA-LLI)

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Life of Prophet Muhammad (in 3 sessions)

- Session 1: His life before becoming a prophet and the initial years of his prophethood in Makkah
- Session 2: His later years in Makkah and his migration to Madinah for establishing Islamic government
- Session 3: His traditions and legacy, his marriages, his confrontations, and views about him

Prophet's Life and Example

- All details of his life and his sayings are recorded
- An example for all because his life was utterly humane
- It was superbly noble, but yet simple
- No mysteries surround his life
- *“You have indeed in the Messenger of Allah a beautiful model (of conduct) for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day, and who engages much in the Praise of Allah.” 33:21*

Reports about the Prophet

- Seerah: His life account or biography
- Hadith: Report of his sayings, actions, approvals, and traditions
- Sunnah: His traditions, his methods, his way of doing things
 - Meaning of “Sunnah” in Islamic Law is different from this (it will be clarified later under Islamic Law)

Recording and Collection of Prophet's Hadith / Sunnah

- Some Hadith was written during prophet's life by some selected companions
- Most was written much later, but they were carried through oral and practical life of Muslims
- Careful memorization, practicing, and word-by-word transmission of Hadith were considered part of the companions' faith, not just a tradition
- Due to political strife later, some forged Hadith appeared that led to
 - A full and thorough exam of all Hadith transmission and authentication
 - A very historical scrutiny and unparalleled scholarly research

Recording and Collection of Prophet's Hadith / Sunnah

- After a very profound research and filtering, Hadith was generally classified in 4 categories as:
 1. Very authentic (Saheeh)
 2. Fairly authentic (Hasan)
 3. Weak (Da'eef)
 4. Forged (Mowdoo'/Ja'lee)

Battles in Prophet's Life

- All for self-defense and removing oppression
- With very detailed and strict rules of confrontation
 - Avoid fighting, and use it as the last resort
 - Shall not harm non-combatants, women, elderly, and the religious figures
 - Shall not destroy the trees, buildings, etc.
 - Very humane treatment of POWs

Battles in Prophet's Life

- In 10 years of military activities in Madinah period, total loss of life incurred was 255 Muslims as against 759 of opposition
- Total number of prisoners of war taken in all battles were only 6,564 out of whom
 - Only two were executed for definite crimes committed by them, while
 - 6,347 were released.
 - The remaining 215 prisoners accepted Islam

Marriages of Prophet

- First marriage with Khadijah for 25 years (his only wife until prophet became 50)
- Second marriage after that (Sawdah, only wife for another 2 years)
- Monogamous for majority of his life and during the most virile part of his life – clarifying myth of lust
- Third and all later marriages (Aishah, Hafsa, ...) in polygamy because
 - It was very common in those days and culture
 - All of his marriages were based on divine inspirations
 - Almost all wives were widows and distressed
 - It was a way for spread of Islam and building relations with other communities
 - It was the best way for the prophet to train some leaders among women directly and closely

Marriage of Prophet with 'Aishah

Marriage with Aishah at a younger age due to special reasons and wisdom

- Her age reported between 9 -18 (but, most likely she was 17-18)
- But even if 9 is correct (worst case), following points to be noted:
 1. The marriage was after the age of puberty/maturity
 2. It was very common for girls to get married at very young ages among Arabs and other societies. That is why no one objected it until 20th century.
 3. She had special maturity and talent as a young girl
 4. Prophet saw her in dreams (divine vision) two times marrying her
 5. She lived for 48 years after Prophet's death to teach women and men as a great scholar of Islam
 6. She shared the most private aspects of Prophet's life
- *“The Prophet is closer to the believers than their selves, and his wives are (as) their mothers.” (33:6)*

Various Views about Prophet Muhammad

- During his time
- All along the history of Islam
- In this age, all kinds of positive and negative publicity about him
- Need for objective study of his life and message
- Those who have studied objectively, acknowledged who he was

Some non-Muslim Views

- “My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world's most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular levels.”
 - The 100, a Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History, MUHAMMAD, No. 1, by Michael H. Hart
- “I have studied him - the wonderful man - and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the savior of humanity.” “If a man like Muhamed were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness.”
 - George Bernard Shaw "The Genuine Islam“
- Head of the State as well as the Church, he was Caesar and Pope in one; but, he was Pope without the Pope's pretensions, and Caesar without the legions of Caesar, without a standing army, without a bodyguard, without a police force, without a fixed revenue. If ever a man had the right to say that he ruled by a right divine, it was Muhammad, for he had all the powers without their supports. He cared not for the dressings of power. The simplicity of his private life was in keeping with his public life.
 - Rev. R. Bosworth-Smith "MUHAMMAD AND MUHAMMADANISM 1946"

Some non-Muslim Views

Lamartine, a renowned historian speaking on the essentials of human greatness writes:

- "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, legislation, 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...
- Philosopher, Orator, Apostle, Legislator, Warrior, Conqueror of ideas, Restorer of rational beliefs, 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?
 - Lamartine, *Historie de la Turquie*, Paris 1854, Vol. II pp. 276-2727

John Austin, a British jurist in the 1840s said:

“The sayings of Muhammad are a treasure of wisdom not only for Muslims, but for all of mankind”

Prophet Muhammad honored by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1935 as one of the Greatest Lawgivers Of The World, and still mentioned in the court wall.

Some verses of Qur'an about Prophet Muhammad

Description of his behavior:

- *“And you stand on an exalted standard of character.”* **68:4**

Described as a mercy:

- *“We sent you not, but as a Mercy for all creatures.”*
21:107

Description of his finality:

- *“Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Messenger of Allah, and the Seal of the Prophets: and Allah has full knowledge of all things.”* **33:40**

Some verses of Qur'an about Prophet Muhammad

- *“We have sent you as a messenger to mankind. And enough is Allah for a witness.” 4:79*
- *“Blessed is He (Allah) who sent down the criterion (the Qur'an) to His servant, that he may be a Warner to all creatures.” 25:1*
- *“We have not sent you but to all human beings, giving them glad tidings, and warning them (against disbelief and sin), but most human beings understand not.” 34:28*
- *"O human beings! I am sent unto you all, as the Messenger of Allah, to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth: there is no god but He: it is He That gives both life and death. So believe in Allah and His Messenger, the Unlettered Prophet, who believes in Allah and His words: follow him that (so) you may be guided." 7:158*
- *“O Mankind! The Messenger has come to you in truth from Allah. Believe in him: It is best for you. But if you reject it, to Allah belong all things in the heavens and on earth: And Allah is All-knowing, All-wise.” 4:170*

Prophet Muhammad

- Declaring belief in Prophet Muhammad is the second part of the testimony of faith:
- Testimony of Faith (Creed of Faith) has two parts:
 1. I bear witness that there is no ILAAH (other god) except Allah
 2. **And I bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah**
 - In the first part, the belief in oneness of God is declared. In the second part, the belief in Muhammad as the (final) messenger of God is declared
- In this testimony: After accepting Allah as the only God, a person is referred to the prophet for getting answers to all kinds of questions about God, life, this world, next world, etc.
- Believing in Prophet Muhammad leads to:
 - Believing in the book given to Muhammad (the Qur'an)
 - Believing in all other prophets and all other books of God
 - Following the example of the prophet in all aspects of life

Prophet Muhammad - Summary

- A descendent of Abraham
- One of the most influential men of history
- The recipient of Qur'an
- Being the final prophet of God
- Revived the essence of teachings of all other prophets
- He accomplished the most profound revolution. Within 23 years, he made the scattered, illiterate, ignorant, plundering and warring factions of the Arabian Peninsula change their beliefs, outlook, manners, morals, ethics, lifestyle, and their social, political and economic systems; he united them under law and order and made them the leaders of the civilized world and champions of goodness.
- He was alone when he received first revelation, but He has over 1.7 billion followers now
- All details of his life and his sayings are available
- No mysteries surround his life
- A life full of sacrifices and hardships
- A role model and example for all
- His life and message need to be studied objectively

Readings

- Muhammad (Critical Lives), Yahiya Emerick
- Muhammad: His Life Based on Earliest Sources, Martin Lings
- About Prophet Muhammad, Ahmad H. Sakr