

Core Curriculum

4 Prophethood in Islam

4.4 **The Prophet Muhammad (s) as Messenger and Teacher**

INTRODUCTION

Bismillāhir Rahmānir Rahīm, As-salāmu ‘Alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh. Peace be upon you brothers and sisters.

Welcome back to the Muslim Converts Channel! No discussion or book can ever possibly exhaust the greatness or the vastness of the Prophet Muhammad’s (s) virtues. Given the short nature of these lessons, we will obviously need to be selective in how we approach this great topic. Even in the virtues we select, we still have to be brief!

So some of the major themes or virtues we want to cover regarding the Messenger of Allah (s) are the following: his status as a messenger, teacher, and what it means to be the “last of all prophets.” Now you may ask yourself, why these? Why not something else?

We’ve chosen these themes given the time we are living in, that is, the modern 21st century. The Prophet Muhammad (s) was a Prophet for all times. By selecting these themes, we want to be able to demonstrate this statement and not abstract sloganeering! So here we go!

BODY OF TEXT

There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent example for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often. (Chapter 33, verse 21 of the Holy Qur’an)

The Prophet Muhammad (s) was called by many names. Let's take a look at a few of these names and what these names mean:

1. The Prophet Muhammad (s) was a Messenger of Allah (s) which is the most popular of his titles. Being a messenger (rasūl) of God is the next level beyond being a prophet, for it means that the person in question is high enough to receive a new system of laws and even a divine scripture. A regular Prophet doesn't get these, but a messenger does!

But the Prophet Muhammad (s) was not just any messenger, he was a messenger of the highest degree. This is because his knowledge was perfect and he was at the highest level of infallibility.

The Prophet was also known as the "Seal of all the Prophets." This means that he was the last of all prophets. Since the message of Islam was perfect and was for all times, places and peoples, there was no longer a need for a new message from God. All that was needed were people to explain this message, which is the role that the Ahl al-Bayt (as) of the Prophet (s) took up.

1. Even before the Prophet revealed his prophethood to the public, he was given the epithet of al-Amīn, which means "the truthful." Lying comes naturally for many people. It is either there to protect one's interests, or protect a person from danger. Sometimes lying may be justified, at other times it may not. One thing that the Messenger of Allah (s) was known for was his truthfulness.

Even when he was in danger, or things went against his interests, the Prophet Muhammad (s) always remained truthful. Perhaps a good example was his life as a merchant. The Prophet (s) never short changed anyone. There were times where he could reap great profits by selling goods at a greater price, but the Prophet (s) never sought to take advantage of anyone.

In business, he was always honest. For this reason, people trusted him as a businessman which is why he ended up becoming so successful.

This trait of his was so noticeable that it even got the attention of the rich and prominent lady Khadija. Lady Khadija had rejected every suitor that came to her up until she met the Prophet. The Prophet Muhammad's character as a truthful and honest man compelled her to ask him for marriage instead of the other way around!

1. The Prophet (s) was also known as al-Mu'allim and al-Tabīb. They mean "the teacher" and "the doctor" respectively. The Qur'an says that there is no compulsion in religion. One of the main reasons why the Qur'an says this is because there is no way you can force people to believe in things. In fact, if you try to do it, more often than not, you'll just alienate them.

In order to guide people and save people from sin and spiritual heedlessness, one needs to be a teacher. A teacher is compassionate, a teacher shows a person the right way and explains the consequences of wrong decisions. The right and experienced teacher doesn't force his or her way on a person but manages a way to change a person's heart and mind. This is how you bring a person on the right track when it comes to his or her relationship with Allah.

The Prophet (s) was also a "doctor" as in a doctor for people's souls and hearts. The #1 reason why the Prophet (s) was sent to humankind was to transform them by healing them of their diseases. The disease here is separation from God, which causes many spiritual illnesses, such as heedlessness, greed, anger, egoism, and so on and so forth.

The Messenger of Allah (s) was there to show people the way to God and thereby open the door to spiritual healing. Spiritual healing involved closeness to God as well as opening the heart to compassion and humility. The way to God involved teaching people that they were equal before God and not superior to anyone on earth except in piety.

By studying the life and teachings of the Prophet (s), one begins the journey to inner healing. Please make sure to pick up copies of the Prophet Muhammad's biography which are available on Islamiclibrary.com. Please see the further reading list of this lesson.