



Core Curriculum

4 Prophethood in Islam

4.2 **Bio: The Prophet Muhammad as a Prophet of God (PART II of III)**

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

Welcome back to the Muslim Converts Channel!

PART II: The Prophet Muhammad (s) as a Prophet of God

At the age of 25, the Prophet (s) began working for a wealthy lady of high status called Khadījah. Khadījah was older than the Prophet Muhammad (s) yet she was not married at the time. Many men over the years had proposed marriage to her, but Khadījah had rejected them all as she was not satisfied with them.

As an employee of Khadījah, the Prophet Muhammad (s) had shown a lot of valor, honor and honesty in his position as Khadījah’s trade representative to Syria. Remember that single women could not simply travel for trade at the time and as such, they needed to hire male delegates to do the trade for them.

Impressed by Muhammad’s character, Khadījah, through a third party, proposed marriage with Muhammad. As Muhammad had seen a pure heart in Khadījah as well, he immediately accepted the proposal.

The Prophet Muhammad (s) and Khadijah were to remain married for twenty-five years. In these twenty-five years, the Prophet remained in a completely monogamous relationship even though polygamy was very common at the time, especially for men of the Prophet Muhammad’s

high social status. Remember that the Prophet Muhammad came from the Banu Hashim, the most honored family in Mecca.

A favorite practice of the Prophet Muhammad was prayer and meditation. As a monotheist Hanīf, he worshipped God in his daily prayers. Hanīf usually referred to an Arab who followed the monotheistic message of Abraham (as).

Although the Prophet worked in the world, he had a strong inclination for spiritual solitude by taking refuge in a mountain cave called Hira.

For the Prophet (s), the cave was a place of absolute silence where he could immerse himself in meditative prayer. This environment helped strengthen the Prophet's interior silence.

Remember that many of us distance ourselves from God as there is too much noise in our minds. This noise blocks out God's voice. We can live in a quiet place, and although this may be helpful, it is more important to achieve interior silence. You may, for example, get yourself out of New York, but what is primary is to take New York out of your mind.

The Prophet's meditative prayer in the cave of Hira was part of the Prophet's ascetic practice of partaking in God's eternity. In a particularly high state of union with God, the Archangel Gabriel (as) revealed himself to the Prophet and revealed the entirety of the Qur'an to him. There the Messenger of Allah officially became God's emissary to the world. That year was 610 A.D and he was 40 years of age which marked the beginning of his proselytizing mission to humanity.

Although the Qur'an was revealed in complete form to the Prophet (s), he revealed it to Muslims incrementally in a space of over two decades until shortly before his death in 632 A.D.

For the first few years of his Prophetic mission, the Prophet (s) shared the message of the Qur'an to individuals. As he did this, he gained many enemies but still, he responded in kindness, compassion and patience even to those who had mistreated him. At the time, since Abū Ṭālib was alive, few people could hurt him directly given the heavy protection he was under.

The majority of the people who converted to Islam were of the lowest oppressed classes of society, many of whom were slaves. Although the Prophet was afforded protection from Abū Tālib and the Banu Hāshim, others did not fare well as this protection did not extend to them. Although the Prophet would have preferred this protection to extend to them, tribal rules as well as limitations in the Banu Hāshim's power did not allow this to happen.

In 614 A.D, those Muslims without protection fled to Abyssinia and sought refuge with the Christian king who ruled the land there. Members of the Quraysh tribe opposed to Islam sent a delegation to the king to have the new converts returned to Mecca. Although they tried to bribe the king, he refused. The king showed his true honor at the time and his respect for Islam and the Prophet Muhammad.

Not long after this incident, the Quraysh imposed economic sanctions and social restrictions on the Prophet, the Banu Hāshim and the new Muslims. The Muslims suffered a lot under these sanctions but the sanctions eventually collapsed in less than four years. However, these sanctions had taken their toll on Khadija and Abu Talib who passed away soon afterwards.

This was the most difficult time of the Prophet's life. He lost the people whom he had loved the most. With the loss of much of his former protection, the Prophet's enemies attempted to kill him.

As a result, the Prophet migrated to the city of Medina in 622 A.D. This migration was called the Hijrah, meaning "migration" in Arabic. Some of the tribal chiefs of Medina had already converted to Islam when they had met him in Mecca, so Medina ended up being a safe haven for him.

With the Prophet (s) in Medina, many Muslims started migrating to Medina for safety. Sensing the growing power and danger of Islam, the Quraysh tried to assassinate him in Medina, which fortunately did not work.

They also opted for war which ended in the Prophet's victory after almost a decade of fighting. In the year 630 A.D, the Prophet

Muhammad (s) conquered Mecca.

It is noteworthy here that the Prophet never started a single war. Every war he partook in was defensive in nature. Even the conquest of Mecca was the result of the Prophet defending himself.

The Meccan elite had caused the Prophet many years of agony. They had killed and mutilated many of his friends and loved ones. They were responsible for the hardships that contributed to the deaths of his wife Khadijah and Abū Tālib. They had also mutilated his uncle Hamza and ate his liver.

Despite this, the Prophet (s) showed no inclination for revenge. He forgave the Meccans for the injustices they had done to him.

Instead, the Prophet (s) entered the city with his head bowed down in humility. All he asked the people around him was if he had fulfilled his duty to God. The Muslims in response answered in the affirmative.

The Prophet Muhammad (s) died in the year 632 A.D. In the same year, before he died, he made sure to appoint a successor. This successor was to take on the Prophet's religious mission on earth. For this to happen, this successor had to inherit the primordial light of the Prophet Muhammad (s) and receive unmediated divine knowledge from God.

Since the message was complete and perfect, no new revelation was needed. As such, this successor did not have to be a Prophet. But by virtue of his divine appointment and as a manifestation of the primordial Muhammadan light in this world, he was to be called an Imām, that is, a divinely appointed leader for the guidance of humankind.

The new Imām, like the Prophet Muhammad (s) and Prophet Jesus (as) before him, was also to be the qutb of the world, that is, that perfect human being who was to be the cosmic and universal leader for all of God's saints and the mediator between the divine and human realms.

The presence of the qutb or divine pole as God's primordial light in the world was necessary for the continued existence of the earth for he was the channel through which God's providence and mercy unto the world

was made possible.

This new Imām and Qutb of the world was no other than ‘Ali, the son of Abū Tālib. His was the beginning of the divine institution of Imāmate that was to last twelve generations until the Day of Judgment.

Please make sure to tune in the third part of this lesson. Until Next Time, Thank you for watching. As-salāmu ‘Alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh