

Core Curriculum

4 Prophethood in Islam

4.1 **A Brief Biography of the Prophet Muhammad (s): The Prophet's Childhood (PART I of III)**

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!

The history of Islam is a long one. Islam means to serve and submit to God. God has sent a 124 000 Prophets on earth and they have all taught the same singular message: submit your heart to God and serve Him even if it be against your carnal desires. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and the Prophet Muhammad were all part of this chain of prophetic guidance to the world.

It is only in the metaphysical heart's submission to God do humans return to their natural state of primordial bliss. By synching the soul with eternity, freedom from carnal delusion and union with God are made possible.

In the chain of Prophetic guidance to the world, the Prophet Muhammad (s) was its last part. It is under him that the message of submission found its final completion and perfection thus preparing humankind for the final phase of the world before the Day of Judgment.

In this lesson, we will introduce the Prophet Muhammad (s) as the final Prophet and Messenger of God. We will begin with his early life, recount his role as a Prophet and the qualities and achievements that were

peculiar to him.

BODY OF TEXT

PART I: The Prophet's Childhood

The Prophet Muhammad (s) was born in the year 570 A.D in the city of Mecca in the Arabian Peninsula. The Arabian Peninsula is known as the Hijaz in Arabic. The city of Mecca is located in modern day Saudi Arabia.

The Prophet Muhammad (s) was a direct descendent of Ishmael, or otherwise known as Ismā'īl in Arabic. Ismā'īl was the son of the Prophet Abraham (as). However, the Prophet Muhammad's existence precedes his physical birth on this earth.

It an authentic ḥadīth reported by the Prophet Muhammad's (s) close companion Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh, he asked the Messenger of Allah the following question:

"O Messenger of Allāh, may my father and mother be sacrificed for you, tell me of the first thing Allāh created before all things." He said: O Jābir, the first thing Allāh created was the light of your Prophet from His light, and that light remained in the midst of His Power for as long as He wished, and there was not, at that time, a Tablet or a Pen or a Paradise or a Fire or an angel or a heaven or an earth. And when Allāh wished to create creation, he divided that Light into four parts and from the first made the Pen, from the second the Tablet, from the third the Throne, then He divided the fourth into four parts [and from them created everything else].

The tradition then continues to state:

Then He divided it into portions, and He created the understanding from one portion, and the knowledge and forbearance from another portion, and the (divine) protection and help from yet other portion, and He placed the fourth portion in the station of modesty as long as Allah wished. Then He looked at it with awe-inspiring eye, and that Light started perspiring, and one hundred and twenty-four thousand drops dropped from it; and Allah created from each drop the soul of a prophet

and apostle. Then the souls of the prophets began breathing, and Allah created from their breasts the souls of (His) friends and the martyrs and the good ones."

The first thing Allah ever created was a conscious light. Through this light, God created knowledge, the destiny of the world and all life therein. Through his light, the souls of human beings and the souls of the prophets were brought about.

Each Prophet that came down unto this earth was a manifestation of this primordial and creative light of God. In Christianity, this light is known as the Word except that in Islam, the Light or Word is a creation of God and not God Himself.

It is in the year 570 A.D that this primordial light became fully manifest in the body of the Prophet Muhammad (s). As said earlier, the Prophet Muhammad was a descendent of the Prophet Ismā'īl, the son of the Prophet Abraham (as). As such, the Prophet's forefather Hāshim, his grandfather 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, and his own father 'Abd Allāh and uncle Abū Ṭālib were direct descendants of Abraham (as).

The Abrahamic tribe of the Prophet was part of what was called Quraysh. His clan was known as Banu Hāshim, as in the sons of Hāshim, the forefather of the Prophet (s).

As a descendent of the Prophet Abraham (as), 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib was the leader of Mecca and the caretaker of the Ka'ba, the holy structure built by Abraham to serve God. The Ka'ba was the economic vein of Mecca as it was a site for pilgrimages from all over the Peninsula and sometimes beyond. However, over the years the Ka'ba became a center point for idol worship, the very thing Abraham had fought against. The Prophet Muhammad's (s) later mission was therefore to restore the Ka'ba as a focal point of monotheism.

The Prophet's father 'Abd Allāh had died before he was born. For the initial few years of his life, his mother Amina had taken care of him. At the age of 6, the Prophet's mother passed away. For two years, the Prophet's grandfather 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib took custody of him, but at the

age of 8 years old, he also lost him and became an orphan for the third time.

It is at this point that he was adopted by his paternal uncle Abū Ṭālib. In young age, Abū Ṭālib had treated Muḥammad just like his own son. Some reports even indicate that he treated him even better than his own children due to the special love he had for him. As the Prophet (s) grew, Abū Ṭālib became the one constant and reliable source of support against his enemies.

Even when Abū Ṭālib faced financial bankruptcy, illness, political and social humiliation, and threats to his own life and that of his family as a result of supporting the Prophet Muhammad's truthful claim to prophethood, he never once wavered in his support.

In this sense, despite the tragedies that had befallen the Prophet, Allah had designed the tragedies in order to give the Prophet a father figure like no other in the Arabian Peninsula or even the world at the time.

As a token of Abū Ṭālib's trust and love to Muhammad, he let him raise his own son Ali who was later to become the Prophet's successor and first Imam of the Muslim community.

According to Imām Jā'far al-Ṣādiq (as), Abū Ṭālib was in his own right one of God's selected vicegerents on earth and a perfect role model for others. As a role model, Abū Ṭālib was humble, selfless, altruistic and compassionate to all his surroundings, the necessary ingredients needed for God's apostleship which were to be transmitted to the Prophet (s) as well as the divinely appointed Imāms that were to succeed him afterwards.

Abū Ṭālib was a Muslim from the get-go and accepted the Prophet Muhammad as a true Messenger of Allah. But in order to preserve his power so that he may protect the Prophet (s), he hid his beliefs from people.

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