

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 promordial 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 Tālib's trust and love to Muhammad, he let him raised 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

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.

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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

4.3 A Brief Biography of the Prophet Muhammad (s): The Prophet’s Character (PART III of III)

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

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PART III: The Prophet’s Character

Here we will list a number of qualities of the Prophet Muhammad in order to get to know his personality better.

1. The Prophet had the best of manners. He never swore at anyone, nor was he rude. Whenever he reprimanded someone, he did it with the utmost respect.
2. The Prophet Muhammad (s) also had a lot of humor. Once a woman came asking the Prophet (s) where her husband was. The Prophet replied: “Oh you mean the man with the white on his eye?” The lady replied that God forbid, her husband was healthy and did not have “white” on his eye! The Prophet replied that he was just teasing for everyone has white on their eyes.
3. The Prophet always sought peace instead of war. Whenever there was tension, the Prophet always resorted to making treaties to prevent war. The wars he did partake in were all defensive in nature.
4. The Prophet was very kind to children. He would come down on his knees when speaking to them, never looking down at them. He would play games with them all the time and gave them sweets before parting.
5. The Prophet was very kind and generous to the poor. He barely owned anything, he would give away all his wealth to the poor even if it meant starvation for him. The Prophet was hungry most of his days.
6. The Prophet was very kind to women. He instructed Muslims in saying that the best of believers were those who were the best to women. The Prophet always preferred monogamy to polygamy. He spent most of his life being married to one woman. It is only at the height of battles did he marry extra women for the sake of tribal alliances. When the Prophet conquered Mecca, he was at the height of his power but he did not take an extra wife.
7. The Prophet gave the utmost importance to orphans. In a famous tradition by the Prophet, he is reported to have said that “The best house among the Muslims is one where an orphan is

- well treated, and the worst house among the Muslims is one where an orphan is badly treated.”
8. The Prophet hated cruelty against animals. He always insisted that people should be gentle and compassionate to their animals. In one incident, while the Prophet was preaching in the Mosque, a cat came and sat on his clothes while he was sitting. The cat soon fell asleep. When the Prophet wanted to leave, not wanting to disturb the cat, ripped part of his clothes so that he didn't have to move the cat and wake it up.
 9. The Prophet was a strong proponent of protecting the environment. He disliked wasting of water very much. He taught his followers that they should not waste water even through splashing when they ran passed a river.
 10. The Prophet always paid great attention to his appearance. He always combed his hair, brushed his teeth, wore clean clothes and always put on perfume. His favorite perfume was musk.
 11. The Prophet was very respectful of people of other religions. In a visit by a delegation of Christians, he let them sleep and pray in his own Mosque in Medina.
 12. The Prophet did not attach himself to worldly pleasures. Even at the height of power, he lived in a mud house and slept on the floor on a straw mat that would leave red marks on his face.
 13. The Prophet was kind to all people, even those who were at the lowest in terms of social status. Whenever he would shake their hands, he would always be the last to take his hand away. Whenever he talked to someone, he would make him or her feel as if he or she was the most important person in the world.
 14. The Prophet always smiled. This was indeed a distinguishing characteristic of his.

Until Next Time, Thank you for watching. As-salāmu ‘Alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh

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-Tabib. 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.

4.5 The Prophet and his Relationships

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! Our current section is about the Prophet Muhammad (s). In each lesson that we cover in this section, we want to deal with a particular aspect of the Messenger of Allah (s). In this lesson, we want to look at the various kinds of relationships that the Messenger of Allah (swt) had.

First we will begin with his relationship with God. Second, we will look into his relationship with the Qur'an, then his family, companions and finally his Islamic community.

So let's begin!

BODY OF TEXT

Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you, [O Muhammad] - they are actually pledging allegiance to Allah. The hand of Allah is over their hands. So he who breaks his word only breaks it to the detriment of himself. And he who fulfills that which he has promised Allah - He will give him a great reward. (Chapter 45, verse 10 of the Holy Qur'an)

The Prophet (s) and Allah

The Prophet Muhammad's (s) relationship with Allah was founded on absolute trust, obedience, sincerity and love to Him. The relationship was that of total servitude. In short, the best word we can find for this is Islam, which means to submit and serve God alone.

Every action the Prophet took, or every word that he spoke, was founded on his love and

dedication of Allah. The Prophet actually slept very little. He spent his nights worshipping Allah in his night prayers.

Perhaps a good example from his life that shows his dedication to Allah is the conquest of Mecca. When the Prophet (s) conquered Mecca, he could have, like other leaders, come in arrogantly and boasted about his virtues. But no, instead, he entered the city with his head humbly bowed down not looking at anyone. This is because the Prophet knew that Allah does not like arrogant and boastful people. He like those who are humble and meek at heart.

A telling part of one of his spiritual moral character was when he asked Muslims whether or not he had fulfilled his duty to Allah after his victory over the Meccan Arabs. His companions replied "yes." He went ahead and asked the question two more times, and they replied "yes" to both. This event shows that the Prophet (s) was not concerned with worldly fame, or power, or reputation. All he was concerned with was his standing and reputation before Allah.

The Prophet and the Holy Qur'an

Islam is a way of life. This means that our religious beliefs and practices cannot remain abstract. They must be materialized. The Qur'an was sent by God as a manual on how to lead the proper religious life. However, the Qur'an, as wonderful as it was, was still a book and was made up of words only. Perhaps the Prophet's greatest relationship with the Qur'an, aside from having been the vessel for its revelation, was that he was the Qur'an in action.

We have plenty of companions at the time of the Prophet (s) who described him as the "walking and talking Qur'an." This meant that he was a total embodiment of the Qur'an's message. This is why it is very important to study the Sunnah of the Prophet for it is one of the main ways of truly understanding the Qur'an.

The Prophet and his Progeny

No man lives forever. But the message of Islam had to continue. Furthermore, Islam had to have continuing role models, at least during the time of the first few generations of Muslims for those times were the formative years of Islam. Allah chose the Prophet's (s) progeny or Ahl al-Bayt (as) as his religious successors in guiding humankind to salvation in there Hereafter.

The Prophet (s), knowing the role they were to play, spent his life training them so that they would be prepared when he would have to depart this world. For example, the Prophet (s) took Imām Ali (as) under his care when he was just a baby and trained him so that he would take the mantle of Imāmah after him. The Prophet (s) did so similarly with Fātima (as) as well as Imam al-Hasan (as) and Imam al-Husain (as).

In short, the Ahl al-Bayt (as) were primed and prepped for inheriting the knowledge and the character of the Prophet (s). Obviously this was not the only means through which they gained knowledge as Allah also revealed knowledge to them through inspiration. But nevertheless, direct learning from the Prophet (s) still played a major role in the training of the early members of the Ahl al-Bayt (as).

The Prophet and the Muslim Ummah

The purpose of the Prophet being sent to humankind was to save their souls and spirits. He was sent to heal people's hearts from various spiritual diseases, all of which stemmed from separation from God. In the Middle East, and eventually to the world, the Prophet Muhammad (s) preached monotheism.

The Prophet (s) thus taught them, prayed for them and showed them compassion. No matter who they were, the Prophet always helped widows, orphans and the poor. By showing compassion, the Messenger of Allah (s) not only expressed to them the love that was in his heart, but by doing so he also opened their hearts to him and Allah. This is quite the good point to remember. If we are to guide people to Islam, the best and only way is through compassion and love, not hatred and force. This was the example of the Prophet and the example which we as Muslims should follow.

The intention of creating a Ummah or Islamic community was to break down tribal, geographic and racial barriers. These identities that people have, whether they are racial or tribal, are all mental creations and beget hatred of others. The worst part of these attitudes is that they lead to alienation from God. By breaking these illusions, the Prophet wanted to bring everyone together as equal creations before Allah where the only merit of superiority was piety and fear of Allah.

The Prophet and his Companions

The Prophet (s) had good and bad companions. Some were good in his lifetime and continued to be good afterwards, like Salman and Abu Dharr. Others, however, may have been good in his life time, but deviated after his death. The Prophet obviously knew what would happen, but did not want to take away their chance of guidance. If he disowned them, then maybe that would ruin their chances of repentance sometime towards the end of their lives.

Until Next Time, Thank you for watching. As-salāmu ‘Alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh

4.6 The Prophet’s Sunnah and Hadith

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! So far we’ve talked a bit about the Prophet Muhammad (s) himself. We’ve talked about his life, virtues and relationships. Now we want to look into the sources that tell us about his life.

Where are these sources? What are they? The place to look at is his Sunnah and the means through which we know the Sunnah, namely the hadiths. This lesson will therefore be an introduction to hadith!

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 Sunnah is the sum of the actions, sayings and moral character of the Prophet Muhammad (s). The Sunnah is the way we learn about his manners, ethics and religious life. But how do we know what the Sunnah is? The way the Sunnah gets transmitted to us is through the hadiths. If you recall, hadiths are a system of oral transmission that go back to people who were present during the time of the Prophet. These people orally transmitted what they saw or heard from the Prophet unto others. These oral transmissions were eventually written down.

The same thing goes for the rest of the members of the Ahl al-Bayt (as). When people heard or observed their Sunnah, they related it to others in the form of hadiths.

For a short period of time, the hadiths remained as an oral tradition. However, they were quickly written down in order to preserve them in a centralized and codified way. In the Islamic community, the Imāms of the Ahl al-Bayt (as) for example urged their followers and companions to write down their teachings in order to preserve them for future generations. The Imams taught that writing things down was much more effective for accuracy.

Reference to hadiths are very important. Remember that the Qur'an contains the foundational elements of our religion. It is the prime source of our guidance. However, for practical reasons, the Qur'an cannot contain every single detail of Islam.

If that were the case, the Qur'an would have had to be thousands of volumes and we all know that that would not have been practical. For this reason, the Sunnah and hadith were an essential tool in expanding the themes of the Qur'an, or in providing us with details that are not present in the text.

Take for example the issue of prayer or the Hajj pilgrimage. The Qur'an tells us to pray (salāt) and to perform the Hajj pilgrimage. However, the Qur'an does not tell us how many daily units or rakats that we need to pray. Furthermore, the Qur'an does not tell us how we're supposed to perform the Hajj. Or take another example. The Qur'an tells us to marry but never tells us how we're supposed to get married!

So in this sense, the hadiths open many doors for us. They help us understand Islamic law and beliefs better. They also help us understand the Qur'an better for they provide us with the explanations of the Prophet and his Ahl al-Bayt (as) as to what specific verses really mean.

But not all hadiths are equal. We have hadiths that are considered reliable and we also have hadiths that are not so reliable. And then there are others that are outright fabrications. Remember that hadiths come through oral transmissions. Most hadith books, when narrating a hadith, also have chains of transmissions in them. This means that within a chain of transmission, we can see who related what to whom. In Islamic terms, a chain of transmission is known as a sanad.

So let's take the first line of transmitters into perspective. The Prophet's hadiths were narrated by two groups of people who were present during his time. On the one hand there were his companions, and the other his Ahl al-Bayt (as). We saw in our previous lesson that there were good and bad companions.

If we see that a hadith is being related by a bad companion - for example, a companion who fought against Imam Ali (as) - then this hadith would be automatically suspicious for us. However, if the hadith is narrated by a good companion whom we trust, then the hadith would have a pass and would be considered reliable.

Obviously there is much more than this in making a hadith reliable, such as the assessment of middle transmitters, but this is a discussion for another time.

With that said, when the Ahl al-Bayt (as) narrate a hadith, we know that this hadith is extremely reliable (that is, once it has been established that the Ahl al-Bayt (as) did actually narrated it!). Why? Because the Ahl al-Bayt were infallible from mistakes and sins.

So referring to the Ahl al-Bayt (as) and what they related is a good way to solve some conflicts and confusions regarding the Prophet's Sunnah. It happens quite often where we read hadiths and we see contradicting sayings from the Prophet. Again, this is where the Ahl al-Bayt become useful.

As Abān bin Taghlib, one of the famous companions of the Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as) once said, "whenever we see different and contradicting versions of what the Prophet (s) said, we take the version of Ali (as)" ... so this means that the Ahl al-Bayt are a good way to ensure that what comes to our hands isn't fabricated or changed in meaning.

Again, remember, there is a whole science behind it that studies every single transmitter in a hadith's chain of transmission as well as the content of the hadith. The general name of this science is called 'ilm al-hadīth or the "science of hadīth." In a future lesson, we will, insha'Allah, go deeper into the science of hadiths.

Some of the major sources of hadiths from the Ahl al-Bayt (as) can be found in some books we have today. Of these books, some of the more popular ones include Kitāb al-Kāfī by Shaykh al-Kulaynī, Man Lā Yahduruhu al-Faqīh, 'Uyūn Akhbār al-Ridā and al-Tawhīd by Shaykh al-Sadūq.

There are also other books from our Sunni brothers and sisters where the hadiths of the Prophet are related mostly through the companions. Among the more popular of these books, they include Sahīh al-Bukhāri and Sahīh Muslim.

Until Next Time, Thank you for watching. As-salāmu ‘Alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh

4.7 **Ghadīr and Arafah: The Two Last Sermons of the Prophet**

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! So you’ve been introduced to the subject of hadiths. Now is the time to take a look at some examples of hadiths. In this lesson, we’re going to take a look at two of the most important hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (s). These two hadiths are the hadith of Ghadīr and the other the sermon at Arafah.

BODY OF TEXT

O Messenger, announce that which has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message. And Allah will protect you from the people. Indeed, Allah does not guide the disbelieving people. (Chapter 5, verse 67 of the Holy Qur’an)

The two most important sermons that the Prophet Muhammad (s) delivered to the Muslim Ummah or Islamic community are the sermons at Ghadīr and Arafah. These sermons were given at the end of his life. The sermon of Ghadīr was the last. These two sermons were significant as they dealt with the two major elements of human life, 1) human salvation and guidance (which is what Ghadīr was about) and 2) the crisis of human relationships.

Let us begin with the sermon at Arafah. The sermon of Arafah took place in the last year of the Prophet’s life in 10 AH or 632 CE. The Prophet (s) knew he was departing and he foresaw the crisis that humanity was to face in the future. The sermon is long so we won’t burden you with the whole passage. But here are some key points from it:

“I enjoin good treatment of women, for they are prisoners with you, and you have no right to treat them otherwise, unless they commit clear adultery”

In another passage from the sermon, he said: “O people! Indeed, your Lord is one and your father is one. Indeed, there is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab, nor of a non-Arab over an Arab, nor of a white over a black, nor a black over a white, except by taqwa.”

As you can see, with these two passages, the Prophet foresaw two major crises that humanity was to face until the Day of Judgment. First, it was the abuse and ill-treatment of women. He severely discouraged and banned Muslims from mistreating women for that was a sin and a great injustice. Mistreating women of course is not just in the form of physical abuse.

The majority of the poor in the world are actually women. Furthermore, in most work spaces, women are paid less for the same kind of work than men are. This itself is also a form of injustice and ill treatment of women. A good and God fearing Muslim is one who treats women with dignity and fairness.

The second crisis in humanity that the Prophet foresaw was that of racism. Much of the injustices that have taken place have been done on the basis of racism. Think of the extermination of Native Americans in the Americas, or the Holocaust during World War II, or centuries of black slavery. But it hasn't ended yet. Today we have people who are jailed, profiled and discriminated against based on their race and skin color in many countries around the world.

The Prophet Muhammad on the other hand was teaching us that everyone is equal and that race does not matter. The only thing that established the superiority of a person was his or her taqwa or piety, consciousness and fear of God.

The sermon of Ghadīr took place in the same year. Ghadīr was a pond (the name of the pond was Khumm, and hence Ghadīr Khumm or the Pond of Khumm). At this pond, the Prophet delivered his last sermon at his farewell pilgrimage of Hajj. Preceding this sermon was the last verse delivered to the Messenger of Allah (s). In that verse, God said: O Messenger, announce that which has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message. And Allah will protect you from the people. Indeed, Allah does not guide the disbelieving people. (Chapter 5, verse 67 of the Holy Qur'an)

The sermon of Ghadīr was the greatest sermon the Prophet ever offered for it was delivered in front of an audience that was over 100 000 in number. This shows the significance of the sermon for the Ummah.

Here are key parts of the sermon:

"It seems the time approached when I shall be called away (by Allah) and I shall answer that call. I am leaving for you two precious things and if you adhere to them both, you will never go astray after me. They are the Book of Allah and my Progeny, that is my Ahlul Bayt. The two shall never separate from each other until they come to me by the Pool (of Paradise)."

Then the Messenger of Allah continued:

"Do I not have more right over the believers than what they have over themselves?" People cried and answered: "Yes, O' Messenger of God."

Then followed the key passage where the Prophet appointed Imam Ali as his successor and leader of the Muslim ummah.

The Prophet (s) held up the hand of 'Ali and said: "For whoever I am his Leader (mawla), 'Ali is his Leader (mawla)."

The Prophet (s) continued: "O' God, love those who love him, and be hostile to those who are hostile to him."

Immediately after the Prophet (s) finished his speech, the following verse of the Qur'an was revealed:

"Today I have perfected your religion and completed my favour upon you, and I was satisfied that Islam be your religion." (Chapter 5, verse 3 of the Holy Qur'an)

The sermon of Ghadīr was a pivotal part of history. What it did was guarantee a line of divine leadership and guidance after the death of the Prophet (s). The sermon clearly established that guidance and authority in Islam comes from two sources, namely the Qur'an and the Ahl al-

Bayt (as). The first among the Ahl al-Bayt (as) to guide and take up the mantle of religious leadership was Imām Alī (as) who was to be the mawla or master of Muslims.

If one were to follow Imam Ali (as) and the rest of the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt, who were to number 12 in total, both sincerely, obediently and whole-heartedly, one would find oneself in the Prophet's pond in the Hereafter.

Until Next Time, Thank you for watching. As-salāmu ‘Alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh

4.8 **Jesus and Mary in Islam**

INTRODUCTION

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

Welcome back to our channel! If one were to think about the two most famous men in history, few would contest that they are the Prophets Muhammad (s) and Jesus (as). They are the most famous as they were the most influential figures in human history. Just by doing a google search, you will see that in the English language searches, Jesus has 29.5 million searches a month along side the Prophet Muhammad (s) who is searched 13.6 million times a month.

If we speak about women, no one can doubt that Mary (as) is the most famous and influential woman in the history of the Western world.

But much of the perception that exists concerning Jesus, especially in the Christian world, is that of his divinity. In other words, Jesus is not only the son of God, but he is also God in so far as he is the second person of the divine trinity, namely the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This thus makes Mary “the mother of God” according to this understanding.

Islam, which is the world's second largest religion, does not believe in any of this. For Islam, Jesus is neither the son of God nor is he God. Islam does not believe God has sons and it does not believe in the trinity. God is absolutely One and Jesus is simply a Prophet of God who was created by the the Almighty. In this lesson, we will look into the place of Jesus in Islam as well as his mother, Mary.

BODY OF TEXT

O People of the Scripture, do not commit excess in your religion or say about Allah except the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, was but a messenger of Allah and His word which He directed to Mary and a soul [created at a command] from Him. So believe in Allah and His messengers. And do not say, "Three" [Trinity]; desist - it is better for you. Indeed, Allah is but one God. Exalted is He above having a son. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. And sufficient is Allah as Disposer of affairs. (Chapter 4, verse 171 of the Holy Qur'an)

The Arabic rendering of Jesus is 'Īsā and the Arabic rendering of Mary is Maryam. According to Islam, Jesus is not God, which means that Mary is not the mother of God either. Furthermore, Islam also denies the concept of the Trinity. The Trinity is the belief that God has three persons, the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Islam believes that God is wholly One, in other words, He is undivided and has only One Person.

If Jesus is not God, then what is he? According to Islam, Jesus is a Prophet and Messenger of God. He is not only a Prophet, but he is one of the greatest Prophets of the religion of Islam.

If Jesus was not God, it naturally follows that Mary was not the mother of God. Even though Islam does not consider either of them as divine, it still has the highest respect for them. About Jesus, the Qur'an says the following:

And We sent, following in their footsteps, Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming that which came before him in the Torah; and We gave him the Gospel, in which was guidance and light and confirming that which preceded it of the Torah as guidance and instruction for the righteous. (Qur'an chapter 5, verse 46)

As a Prophet and a Muslim (a Muslim is someone who submits himself or herself to God), Jesus guided people on to the Straight Path to Allah. The straight path to Allah means worshiping God in His Oneness and Unity, avoiding sins, having good moral character (akhlaq) with people and holding firmly to the unity of the Muslim community.

Jesus taught people through the Injil or Gospel which was revealed to him by Allah. As Muslims (and here we mean by those who follow the shahāda), we believe the Injil to have been a divinely revealed Book, however, we do not believe it remained unchanged but its message

was, over time, changed. Belief in Jesus and Mary, as well as in the original Injīl, is part of Islamic doctrine and without belief in them, one cannot be a Muslim.

Similarly, the Qur'an holds Mary in very high status:

And [mention] when the angels said, "O Mary, indeed Allah has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of the worlds. O Mary, be devoutly obedient to your Lord and prostrate and bow with those who bow [in prayer]." (Qur'an, 3:42-43)

Mary was not like other women. Like an exalted Prophet of God, the Angel Gabriel had revealed himself to her communicating the message of Allah to her directly. Although most Muslims do not consider her a prophetess, due to her high status with God, a minority of Muslims historically believed that she was indeed a prophetess.

Islam and Christianity, the Qur'an and the Bible agree on many things when it comes to Jesus. However, despite this, there are still some major differences. They include the following:

1. The divinity of Jesus insofar as God being Jesus or Jesus being part of a Divine Trinity. Islam rejects this belief.
2. The crucifixion and resurrection of the Christ. The majority of Muslims interpret Chapter 4, verse 157 of the Quran as meaning that Jesus was never crucified. The Qur'an says:

And [for] their saying, "Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, the messenger of Allah ." And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them. And indeed, those who differ over it are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it except the following of assumption. And they did not kill him, for certain.

1. Islam believes that Jesus did not abolish Judaic law or its ritual practices. He merely fulfilled it by reviving the spiritual and moral implications of the law. For example, Jesus explained that it was not enough for adultery to be banned, lustful looking at another person was also adultery, although in the heart. According to Islam, Jesus taught that outer practice had to be accompanied by inner sincerity, and not that outer practice was to be abolished.

Until Next Time, Thank you for watching. As-salāmu 'Alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh