

# THE LIFE OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PBUH) <sup>1</sup>

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## I. INTRODUCTION.

Narrating the life story of the final Prophet - Muhammad PBUH - in only few pages is like trying in few days to repaint the master piece of popular Mona-Lisa which took Leonardo Da Vinci 4 whole years to complete. The task is truly difficult. Volumes and volumes were written by qualified scholars – Muslims and Non Muslims – to depict the life story of this great man who has shaped a new phase in the history of mankind and was later followed by millions upon millions who took him in their daily lives as their only guide.

What we are presenting in these few pages is only the tip of an iceberg about the life of the last Prophet. Our task is not ‘only’ to relate his story in order to amuse you, but rather to draw your attention to someone who is described by his oppositions (i.e. Non Muslims) as “...on of the most remarkable human beings who ever lived <sup>2</sup>”

## II. SHORT BIOGRAPHY.

In a country without government and laws, in a time of tribal wars and conflicts, where black people were sold like the cheapest product ever and women were considered a second class creature, when the infant girls were buried alive for no crimes other than being females, when drunkenness and gambling were widespread, when woods and stones were worshipped as deities and gods, in the time of ignorance and illiteracy, in that very corrupt environment Muhammad PBUH the son of Abdullah was born in the City of Mecca in Arabia in the year 570 after Christ PBUH.

Muhammad’s PBUH father died before he could even see his child. According to the Arab traditions, when Muhammad PBUH was 8 days, he was handed to a Bedouin nurse named Halima to bring him up in the healthy atmosphere of the desert. At the age of 5 Muhammad PBUH returned home, and one year later his mother too passed away. Abdul Muttalib, Muhammad’s PBUH grandfather and the chief of Bani Hashim and the leader of the people of Mecca looked after him until he reached 8 years then he too died. Finally Abu Talib, Muhammad’s PBUH uncle would be the one to bring him up, teach him trade business and also protect him from angry pagans when he started to call people to Islam.

In his early twenties, Muhammad PBUH was known for his absolute honesty and truthfulness. His people had given him the titles ‘As-Sadiq, Al Amin’ or the truthful, the trustworthy. He was known for his cheerful face, kindness and caring. At the age of 25 he

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<sup>1</sup> Abbreviation for (Peace Be Upon Him). We Muslims do not mention the name of any prophet without adding this respectful phrase.

<sup>2</sup> Karen Armstrong in her book ‘*Muhammad, a biography of the prophet*’ P.11&12

took his first wife named Khadija RA <sup>3</sup> who was a widow of 40 years and they both lived happily and were blessed with 6 children, 2 boys and 4 daughters. The boys died in their infancy and the daughters also died before Muhammad's PBUH demise except one; that is Fatimah.

In 610 AC <sup>4</sup>, At the age of 40 Muhammad PBUH had experienced something totally new, it was new to him, new to the Arabs in general and new even to the Jews and Christians who were expecting a prophet to come after Jesus PBUH but could not digest the fact that he is going to be an Arab. It was during the month of Ramadan when Muhammad PBUH was taking seclusion from the people to worship God (whom he never knew before) in a cave nearby Mecca. It was there where he was visited by God's Angel, Gabriel who commanded him to "*read, recite, proclaim / IQRA*". Muhammad PBUH being illiterate could not read or recite anything of course; the Angel repeated the command thrice until Muhammad PBUH was able to repeat after the Angel the first revelation of the Qur'an which will be known later as "The Qur'an", meaning '*the recitation*'.

*"Read (recite, proclaim) in the name of your Lord who created, created man out of (mere) clot, read and your Lord is Most bountiful, He who taught (the use of) the pen, taught man what he knows not..."* Qur'an 96:1-5

The revelation descended upon Muhammad PBUH over a period of 23 whole years till the message was completed. The nature of the call was to restore the concept of God which was forgotten, to bring the people back to the path of Monotheism which was preached by all previous Prophets and Messengers. He was commanded to free the people from the darkness of ignorance and bring them to the light of knowledge and learning, he was instructed to forbid ruthlessness and substitute it with kindness and love, he was asked to protect women from misuse and grant them full rights, he was commanded to establish justice on earth and spread peace, and he was also instructed to abolish slavery and declare equality among all human beings. The message of Muhammad PBUH has amazingly covered all aspects of life, political, social, economical, spiritual, religious rituals, manners and behaviors, hygiene, human rights, animal rights, etc...

As we can see, the call seems very appealing to everyone, however his people have rejected it. Though the instructions were so easy to follow, but human beings by nature inclined towards rejection and complication. They gave Muhammad PBUH and those who followed him (who were called Muslims) a very hard time. Early Muslims were killed, tortured and banned from the society. For three whole years they have suffered hunger and thirst in an open desert. And as a result, in 619 AC his beloved wife Khadijah and his beloved uncle and protector Abu Talib have passed away, this year was called *the year of grief*.

Muhammad PBUH now was forced to leave Mecca and migrate to Medina (Madenah) where Islam found its future. Now hundreds and thousands of Arabs have accepted the new faith and the disbelievers of Mecca could not end the mass conversions through many battles and wars. And after gaining power, it was the time for Muhammad PBUH to return home with his followers. 10 years he had to stay away from his beloved City because of the

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<sup>3</sup> RA is abbreviations of the Arabic phrase 'Radya Allahu 'Anha' or May Allah be pleased with her. This is another respectful phrase we pronounce whenever we mention the names of those figures who have sacrificed everything they could to spread the message of Islam.

<sup>4</sup> AC abbreviation of the words After Christ; Muslims normally do not use the abbreviation AD (after death) because we believe that Jesus PBUH was not killed nor crucified, but rather he was saved by God and he is the only prophet who is still alive today.

brutal treatment of his people, but now he is coming back with over 10,000 Muslims who are entering the City from every gate while shouting 'God is the greatest'. People thought that Muhammad PBUH would revenge and usurp their belonging and properties as they did to him before, or take them as slaves, or force them to convert to Islam etc. but rather he simply forgave them and let them go free. It was through his excellent character that many people have embraced the faith.

Muhammad PBUH died in the City of Madeenah at the age of 63 (in the year 633 AC) and was also buried there. Before he dies Islam has spread to the Roman Empire, Persia, Abyssinia/Ethiopia, and Yemen. And today Islam is to be practiced in every country in the globe; there is 1.5 billion Muslims in the world today who are striving hard to follow the teaching and example of this noble Prophet Muhammad PBUH.

The amazing part in Muhammad's PBUH story is that he is not recognized by his followers as God. Most of the great men who were striving in the past to deliver God's message to mankind were worshipped as deities themselves (though they instruct no one to do so), but this is not the case for Muhammad PBUH. Throughout his life and even before his death, Muhammad PBUH had made it very clear that he is not a divine being but rather a God's inspired human being. It was the first time in human history that the followers of such a great man would not take him as God.

### III. HIS MANNERS

Anas RA, one of the companions of the Prophet PBUH said: "*he was the best of all people in morals and the most generous of all...*" even God Almighty in the Qur'an has testified to this fact, He says: "*And you (stand) on an exalted standard of character*" Qur'an 68:4

The prophet PBUH was well-mannered with Allah as well as with the people. Well-mannered with Allah by following His commands in total submission and with contented heart, and with the people by not hurting them and by becoming patient if they have harmed him. The Prophet PBUH never leaves a person without a smile and a good word. And although his manners were so great as described by God and also by his companions, he used to supplicate to Allah and ask Him to perfect his manners and to protect him against ill-manners.

*With his household...*

He PBUH said: "*The best of you is he who is best to his family members, and I am the best of you in treating my family*". Despite his busy schedule being the Prophet of God, he used to play with his wives and create an amusing atmosphere when he is around. He used to call his beloved wife A'isha RA respectfully as '*O daughter of the truthful one*' referring to her father and best companion Abu Bakr As-Siddiq RA. He also used to nick name her as '*A'esh*' and '*Uwaish*' to make her feel happy and close to him.

The prophet PBUH used to help his family in buying their needs, milk the goats, and clean the house. He used to fix his own shoe and stitch his garments. He used to kneel down before his wife Safiya RA in order for her to put her leg on his knee to mount her horse. He remains faithful and loyal to his wife Khadijah RA. For years after her demise he used to slaughter Sheep and send them to her friends and relative in order to honor her.

*With children...*

The prophet Muhammad PBUH used to greet children whenever he sees them. He even sometimes used to play with them and laugh with them. And if he heard the cry of any child, he would hasten in his prayer to check on him. His grandson used to climb over his back while prostrating in prayer, the prophet PBUH would never rise or move unless the boy is finished with his game.

*With servants and maids...*

His servant said about him: *“I have served the prophet PBUH for 10 years, during this time by God he never say UFF (a word of dissatisfaction) to me, or why did you do this or why didn't you do that”* he ordered us to feed our maids and servants from that which we ourselves eat and to help them in case the task given to them was beyond their capacity, not only that but he called them *“our brothers and sisters”*.

*With the people...*

He was so humble to such an extent that he has ordered the Muslims not to exaggerate in his praise like how the Christians did to Jesus PBUH, instead, he said: *“...refer to me as the slave of Allah and His messenger.”* When someone met him for the first time and was nervous (to meet the messenger of God), he calmed him down and said: *“relax my brother, I am only a man whose mother used to eat dried meat”*.

This was yet a fraction of a glimpse concerning the manners of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH in which a whole session will be dedicated during our course insh a Allah <sup>5</sup>

#### IV. WHAT NON MUSLIMS SAID ABOUT HIM

Speaking about Muhammad PBUH from a Muslim perspective may not carry any weight especially when addressing Non Muslims. However, when the tribute to Muhammad PBUH is paid from his opposition, then it really means something valuable and worth reflecting.

Among the Non Muslim sources that spoke of Muhammad PBUH in a very respectful manner, is the Encyclopedia Britannica which was written by a staff of about 100 full-time editors and over 4,000 expert contributors. It is widely regarded as the most scholarly of all encyclopedias<sup>6</sup>. This is what they said about him:

*“...a mass of detail in the early sources shows that he was an honest and upright man who had gained the respect and loyalty of others who were likewise honest and upright men.”* <sup>7</sup>

Centuries before the Encyclopedia Britannica was written, the enemies of Muhammad PBUH have regarded him, as we have mentioned earlier as As-Sadiq, Al Amin

<sup>5</sup> Insh a Allah = God willing. We Muslims always say insh a Allah in reference to something that might happen in the future.

<sup>6</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Encyclop%C3%A6dia\\_Britannica](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Encyclop%C3%A6dia_Britannica)

<sup>7</sup> Vol no 12

Another tribute is paid to this great man Muhammad PBUH in a book written by an American author named Michael H. Hart titled “The 100: A ranking of the most influential persons in history.” The author of “THE 100” after years of research he came up with 100 candidates which he considered to be the most influential people in the history of mankind. And he started to rank them in sequence; No 1 the greatest of all and he gave his reasons, then comes No 2, No 10, No 80, No 100 and so on... And according to his own standards he concluded that the most influential person in history and no 1 on his list was Muhammad PBUH. He said:

*“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.”<sup>8</sup>*

Famous poet like Lamartine has even dared his readers to recommend any great man other than Muhammad PBUH, he said:

*“If greatness of purpose, smallness of means and outstanding results are the three criteria of human genius, who could dare to compare any great man in modern history with Muhammad?”<sup>9</sup>*

Lamartine did not leave us in the air, he stated his reason why Muhammad PBUH is the greatest of all men; he said that Muhammad PBUH was:

*“Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, 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?”*

Another famous writer by the name of George Bernard Shaw, who was a Non Muslim as well, said about Muhammad PBUH that:

*“He must be called the savior of humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it much needed peace and happiness.”<sup>10</sup>*

Why should these great thinkers declare openly that Muhammad PBUH is the greatest of all? Were they bribed by Muslims to say few good words about Muhammad PBUH? Let us rationally think about it.

Even a Hindu professor of Philosophy, Ramakrishna Rao, in his booklet “Muhammad the Prophet of Islam” he states that Muhammad PBUH is “perfect model for human life.” Prof. Ramakrishna Rao unknowingly was repeating what Allah said in the Qur’an about His prophet 1400 years ago, Allah said:

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<sup>8</sup> ‘The 100: A ranking of the most influential persons in history’ P.3 Michael H. Hart (revised edition)

<sup>9</sup> History of De la torque Vol II pages 276-277

<sup>10</sup> The genuine Islam

*“You have indeed in the Messenger of Allah a beautiful pattern (of conduct) for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day...” Qur’an 33:21*

Ramakrishna Rao goes on explaining why Muhammad PBUH is a perfect example for human life he said:

*“The personality of Muhammad, it is most difficult to get into the whole truth of it. Only a glimpse of it I can catch. What a dramatic succession of picturesque scenes. There is Muhammad the Prophet. There is Muhammad the General, Muhammad the businessman; Muhammad the statesman; Muhammad the orator; Muhammad the reformer; Muhammad the refuge of orphans; Muhammad the protector of slaves; Muhammad the emancipator of women; Muhammad the judge; Muhammad the Saint. All in all these magnificent roles, in all these departments of human activities, he is alike a hero.”<sup>11</sup>*

*A perfect model for human life indeed*

Another very influential person whom I really admire is Mahatma Gandhi, he said about Muhammad PBUH the following:

*“I wanted to know the best of one who holds today undisputed sway over the hearts of millions of mankind...I became more than convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet, the scrupulous regard for his pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle. When I close the 2<sup>nd</sup> volume (of the Prophet’s biography), I was sorry there was not more for me to read of the great life.”<sup>12</sup>*

Among the greatest of all poets in European history is Wolfgang Goethe, he said that Muhammad PBUH:

*“He is a prophet and not a poet and therefore his Koran is to be seen as Divine Law and not as a book of human being, made for education or entertainment.”*

These people are actually Muslims at hearts; they are repeating what Allah has said 1400 years ago without realizing, listen to what Allah says: *“It is not the word of a poet: little it is you believe!”* Qur’an 69:41

The List of what Non Muslims have said about Muhammad PBUH could go like forever, but our aim is not to flood the pages with quotes and good words about Muhammad PBUH but rather to urge you to investigate the life and teaching of this great man for your own benefits, even if you do not intend to become a Muslim, you really need to learn about him.

**THIS WAS AN INVITATION TO GET TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE MOST SUCCESSFUL AND THE GREATEST OF ALL HUMAN BEINGS WHO EVER LIVED. MUHAMMAD PBUH.**

<sup>11</sup> ‘Muhammad; The prophet of Islam’ P.16 Prof. K.S. Ramakrishna Rao

<sup>12</sup> Young India

## V. RESOURCES

It is highly recommended to read the following books which have dealt with the topic of Muhammad's PBUH biography in great details. We have also included some links that might serve the same purpose:

- a) The sealed Nectar – By Saifur Rahman al-Mubarakpuri –
- b) Muhammad, A biography of the Prophet – By Karen Armstrong –
- c) This is Muhammad PBUH – An online biography of the Prophet –  
<http://mohammad.islamway.com/?lang=eng>
- d) Why Muhammad PBUH?  
<http://www.whymuhammad.com/en/contents.aspx?aid=347>
- e) Muhammad PBUH A TO Z  
<http://prophetofislam.com/>
- f) Muhammad PBUH No. 1 (*chapter No. 1 of Michael H. Hart on Muhammad PBUH being the most influential person in the world*) in his book THE 100  
<http://www.jamaat.net/hart/thetop100.html>
- g) Muhammad PBUH the greatest – By Sheikh Ahmed Deedat –  
<http://www.sabr.com/downloads/category/4-seerah?download=10%3A...>

Br. Wael Ibrahim  
[www.servingislamteam.com](http://www.servingislamteam.com)  
[info@servingislamteam.com](mailto:info@servingislamteam.com)  
Cell no. +852 96187953