

BIOGRAPHY OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (pbuh)

Dr. A. Zahoor and Dr. Z. Haq
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Prophet Muhammad (s) was born in 570 CE in Makkah ([Bakka, Baca](#), Mecca). His father, Abdullah, died several weeks before his birth in Yathrib (Medinah) where he went to visit his father's maternal relatives. His mother died while on the return journey from Medinah at a place called 'Abwa' when he was six years old. He was raised by his paternal grandfather 'Abd al Muttalib (Shaybah) until the age of eight, and after his grandfather's death by Abu Talib, his paternal uncle. 'Abd al Muttalib's mother, Salma, was a native of Medinah and he was born and raised as a young boy in Medinah before his uncle Muttalib brought him to Makkah to succeed him. Many years before Muhammad's birth, 'Abd al Muttalib had established himself as an influential leader of the Arab tribe 'Quraish' in Makkah and took care of the Holy sanctuary '**Ka'bah**'. Makkah was a city state well connected to the caravan routes to Syria and Egypt in the north and northwest and Yemen in the south. Muhammad was a **descendant** of Prophet Ismail through the lineage of his second son [Kedar](#).

Ka'bah is the first house of worship built on earth for the worship of [Allah](#), the One True God. It was re-built (raised from the existing foundation) by Prophets Ibrahim (Abraham) and Ismail (Ishmael). **Allah** is the proper name of the One True God, creator and sustainer of the universe, who does not have a partner or associate, and He did not beget nor was He begotten. Unlike the word god, the word Allah does not have a plural or gender.

Under the guardianship of Abu Talib, Muhammad (s) began to earn a living as a businessman and a trader. At the age of twelve, he accompanied Abu Talib with a merchant caravan as far as Bostra in Syria. Muhammad was popularly known as '**al-Ameen**' for his unimpeachable character by the Makkans and visitors alike. The title Al-Ameen means the Honest, the Reliable and the Trustworthy, and it signified the highest standard of moral and public life.

Upon hearing of Muhammad's impressive credentials, Khadijah, a rich merchant widow, asked Muhammad (s) to take some merchandise for trade to Syria. Soon after this trip when he was twenty-five, Khadijah proposed **marriage** to Muhammad through a relative. Muhammad accepted the proposal. At that time, Khadijah was twice widowed and forty years old. Khadijah (ra) and Muhammad (s) were the parents of **six children** - four daughters and two sons. His first son Qasim died at the age of two. He was nicknamed Abul Qasim, meaning the father of Qasim. His second son Abdullah died in infancy. Abdullah was also called affectionately as 'Tayyab' and 'Tahir' because he was born after Muhammad's prophethood. The four daughters were: Zainab, Ruqayyah, Umm Kulthum, and Fatimah (ra).

The Holy sanctuary **Ka'bah** was now filled with three hundred sixty idols. The original, pristine message of Prophet Ibrahim was lost, and it was mixed with superstitions and traditions of pilgrims and visitors from distant places, who were used to idol worship and myths. In every generation, a small group of men and women detested the pollution of Ka'bah and kept pure their practice of the religion taught by Prophets Ibrahim and Ismail.

They used to spend some of their time away from this polluted environment in retreats to nearby hills.

Muhammad (s) was forty when, during his one of many retreats to Mount Hira for meditation during the month of Ramadan, he received the **first revelation** from the Archangel Jibril (Gabriel). On this first appearance, Gabriel (as) said to Muhammad: "Iqraa," meaning Read or Recite. Muhammad replied, "[I cannot read](#)," as he had not received any formal education and did not know how to read or write. The Angel Gabriel then embraced him until he reached the limit of his endurance and after releasing said: "Iqraa." Muhammad's answer was the same as before. Gabriel repeated the embrace for the third time, asked him to repeat after him and said:

"Recite in the name of your Lord who created! He created man from that which clings. Recite; and thy Lord is most Bountiful, He who has taught by the pen, taught man what he knew not."

These revelations are the first five verses of Surah (chapter) 96 of the Qur'an. Thus it was in the year 610 CE the revelation began.

Muhammad (s) was terrified by the whole **experience of the revelation** and fled the cave of Mt. Hira [Qur'an 81:19-29]. When he reached his home, tired and frightened, he asked his wife: 'cover me, cover me,' in a blanket. After his awe had somewhat abated, his wife Khadijah asked him about the reason of his great anxiety and fear. She then assured him by saying: "Allah (The One God) will not let you down because you are kind to relatives, you speak only the truth, you help the poor, the orphan and the needy, and you are an honest man. Khadijah then consulted with her cousin Waraqa who was an old, saintly man possessing knowledge of previous revelations and scriptures. Waraqa confirmed to her that the visitor was none other than the Angel Gabriel who had come to Moses. He then added that [Muhammad is the expected Prophet](#). Khadijah accepted the revelation as truth and was the first person to accept Islam. She supported her husband in every hardship, most notably during the three-year 'boycott' of the Prophet's clan by the pagan Quraish. She died at the age of sixty-five in the month of Ramadan soon after the lifting of the boycott in 620 CE.

Gabriel (as) visited the Prophet as commanded by Allah revealing Ayat (meaning signs, loosely referred to as verses) in Arabic over a period of twenty-three years. The revelations that he received were sometimes a few verses, a part of a chapter or the whole chapter. Some revelations came down in response to an inquiry by the nonbelievers. The revealed verses were recorded on a variety of available materials (leather, palm leaves, bark, shoulder bones of animals), memorized as soon as they were revealed, and were recited in daily prayers by Muslims [Qur'an 80:13-16]. Angel Gabriel taught the order and arrangement of verses, and the Prophet instructed his several scribes to record verses in that order [Qur'an 75:16-19 and 41:41-42]. Once a year, the Prophet used to recite all the verses revealed to him up to that time to Gabriel to authenticate the accuracy of recitation and the order of verses [Qur'an 17:106]. All the revealed verses ([over a period of 23 years](#) and ending in 632 CE) were compiled in the book known as Qur'an. The name Qur'an appears in the revealed verses. The [Qur'an](#) does not contain even a word from the Prophet. The Qur'an speaks in the first

person, i.e., Allah's commandments to His creation. Gabriel also visited the Prophet throughout his mission informing and teaching him of events and strategy as needed to help in the completion of the prophetic mission. The Prophet's sayings, actions, and approvals are recorded separately in collections known as Hadith.

The **mission** of Prophet Muhammad (s) was to restore the worship of the One True God, the creator and sustainer of the universe, as taught by Prophet Ibrahim and all [Prophets of God](#), and to demonstrate and complete the laws of moral, ethical, legal, and social conduct and all other matters of significance for the humanity at large.

The first few people who followed this message were: his cousin Ali, his servant Zayd ibn Harithah, his friend Abu Bakr and his wife and daughters. They **accepted Islam by testifying** that:

"There is no Deity (worthy of worship) except Allah (The One True God) and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."

Islam means peace by submission and obedience to the Will and Commandments of God and those who accept Islam are called Muslims, meaning those who have accepted the message of peace by submission to God.

In the **first three years of his mission** forty people (men and women) accepted Islam. This small group comprised of youth as well as older people from a wide range of economic and social background. The Prophet was directed by a recent revelation to start preaching Islam to everyone. He then began to recite revelations to people in public and invite them to Islam. The Quraish, leaders of Makkah, took his preaching with hostility. The most hostile and closest to the prophet was his uncle Abu Lahab and his wife. Initially, they and other leaders of Quraish tried to bribe him with money and power including [an offer to make him king](#) if he were to abandon his message. When this did not work, they tried to convince his uncle Abu Talib to accept the best young man of Makkah in place of Muhammad and to allow them to kill Muhammad. His uncle tried to persuade the Prophet to stop preaching but the Prophet said: "O uncle, if they were to put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand to stop me from preaching Islam, I would never stop. I will keep preaching until Allah makes Islam prevail or I die."

The Quraish began to persecute Muslims by beating, **torture** and boycott of their businesses. Those who were weak, poor or slaves were publicly tortured. The first person to die by this means was a Muslim women by the name Umm Ammar (the mother of Ammar Ibn Yasir). The Muslims from well-to-do families were physically restrained in their homes with the condition that if they recant they will be allowed freedom of movement. The Prophet was publicly ridiculed and humiliated including frequent throwing of filth on him in the street and while he prayed in the Ka'bah. In spite of great hardships and no apparent support, the message of Islam kept all Muslims firm in their belief. The Prophet was asked by God to be patient and to preach the message of Qur'an. He advised Muslims to remain patient because he did not receive any revelation yet to retaliate against their persecutors. [[Persecution](#)]

When the **persecution** became unbearable for most Muslims, the Prophet advised them in the fifth year of his mission (615 CE) to **emigrate to Abyssinia** (modern Ethiopia) where Ashabah (Negus, a Christian) was the ruler. Eighty people, not counting the small children, emigrated in small groups to avoid detection. No sooner had they left the Arabian coastline, the leaders of Quraish discovered their flight. They decided to not leave these Muslims in peace, and immediately sent two of their envoys to Negus to bring all of them back. However, Negus allowed them to stay under his protection after [he investigated Muslim belief](#) and heard the revelations about [Jesus and Mary](#) (peace be upon them both), which appears in Chapter 19, entitled Mary, of the Qur'an. The emigrants were allowed freedom of worship in Abyssinia.

The Quraish then made life even more difficult for the Prophet by implementing **total ban** on contact with the Prophet's family (Bani Hashim and Muttalib). The ban lasted for three years without the desired effect. Just before the ban was lifted, the Prophet was contacted by the leaders of Quraish to agree to a compromise under which they should all practice both religions (i.e., Islam and Idolatry). Upon hearing this, the Prophet recited a revelation (Chapter 109) he had just received and which ends with the words: "... For you your religion and for me mine." The ban was lifted when leaders of Quraish discovered that their secret document on the terms of ban, which they had stored in Ka'bah, was eaten by worms and all that was left were the opening words 'In Your name, O Allah.' The effects of the three-year boycott left the Prophet with more personal sorrow when he lost his beloved wife Khadijah (ra) and uncle Abu Talib soon after the ban was lifted.

After Khadijah's death in 620 CE, the Prophet married a widowed Muslim woman, Sawdah (ra) who was fifty years old. She and her husband had emigrated to Abyssinia in the early years of persecution. After her husband died, she came back to Makkah and sought Prophet's shelter. The Prophet, recognizing her sacrifices for Islam, extended his shelter by marrying her. Later in the same year, the Prophet upon receiving the divine command in a dream, after approval of Sawdah, contracted marriage to A'ishah, the daughter of his dear companion [Abu Bakr](#). She joined the Prophet in Medinah, completing the marriage contract. Sawdah and A'ishah (ra) were the only wives until he was fifty-six years old.

After the death of his uncle Abu Talib, the Prophet went to **Taif** (about 50 miles east, southeast of Makkah) to seek their protection. They flatly refused and mocked at him, and severely injured him by inciting their children to throw stones at him. Gabriel (as) visited the Prophet here suggesting that the angels were ready to destroy the town if he were to ask Allah for the punishment. Nevertheless, [the Prophet declined](#) and prayed for future generations of Taif to accept Islam [[Taif](#)]. It was on the return journey from Taif that the verses from Surah Al Jinn (Chapter 72) were revealed. It indicated that the Qur'an is a book of guidance to both the [Jinns](#) and Humankind.

Soon after the terrible disappointment at Ta'if, the prophet experienced the events of **al-Israa and al-Miraj** (621 CE). In the Al-Israa, Gabriel (as) took the Prophet from the sacred Mosque near [Ka'bah](#) to the furthest (al-Aqsa) mosque in **Jerusalem** in a very short time in the latter part of a night. Here, Prophet Muhammad met with previous Prophets (Abraham, Moses, Jesus and others) and he led them in prayer. After this, in Al-Miraj, the Prophet was taken up to heavens to show the signs of God [More... [The Dome of the](#)

[Rock](#)]. It was on this journey that five daily prayers were prescribed. He was then taken back to Ka'bah, the whole experience lasting a few hours of a night. Upon hearing this, the people of Makkah mocked at him. However, when his specific description of Jerusalem, other things on the way, and the caravan that he saw on this journey including its expected arrival in Makkah turned out to be true, the ridicule of the nonbelievers stopped. The event of Israa and Miraaj is mentioned in the Qur'an - the first verse of Chapter 17 entitled 'The Children of Israel.'

In 622 CE, the leaders of the Quraish decided to **kill the Prophet** and they developed a plan in which one man was chosen from each of the Quraish tribes and they were to attack the Prophet simultaneously. Gabriel informed the Prophet of the plan and instructed him to leave Makkah immediately. The Prophet, after making arrangements to return the properties entrusted to him by several nonbelievers, left with Abu Bakr in the night he was to be assassinated. They went south of Makkah to a mountain cave of Thawr [see Qur'an 9:40], and after staying three nights they traveled north to Yathrib (Medinah) about two hundred fifty miles from Makkah. Upon discovery of his escape, the leaders of Quraish put up a reward of one hundred camels on him, dead or alive. In spite of all their best scouts and search parties, Allah protected the Prophet and [he arrived safely in Quba](#), a suburb of Medinah [Qur'an 28:85]. This event is known as the '**Hijra**' (migration) and the Islamic calendar begins with this event. The people of Aws and Khazraj in Medinah greeted him with great enthusiasm in accordance with their [pledge](#) made at **Aqaba** less than a year ago during the annual pilgrimage. One by one those Muslims (men and women) of Makkah who were not physically restrained, and who could make a secret exit, left for Medinah leaving behind their properties and homes.

To insure the peace and tranquility, the Prophet proposed a [treaty](#) defining terms of conduct for all inhabitants of Medinah. It was ratified by all - Muslims, non-Muslim Arabs and Jews. After his emigration to Medinah, the enemies of Islam increased their assault from all sides. The Battles of Badr, Uhud and Allies (Trench) were fought near or around Medinah. In these battles until the year 627 CE, the nonbelievers with encouragement from Jews and other Arabian tribes attacked the Prophet and Muslim community. The Muslims while defending their city and religion lost many men, which resulted in **many widowed Muslim women and numerous orphaned children**. In these circumstances, Prophet Muhammad (s) married several women during fifty-sixth year up to the sixtieth year of his life. He did not contract any marriage in the last three years of his life, following the revelation limiting the number of wives up to a maximum of four. This is the first time in the history of revealed scriptures that a limit on the number of wives was imposed and the terms of conduct were specified. The Prophet was instructed not to divorce any of his wives after this revelation [Qur'an 33:52]. All of the ladies he took as wives were either widowed or divorced, except A'ishah.

The Prophet married Umm Salamah (ra) in 626 CE. Her husband had died of wounds inflicted in the Battle of Uhud (625 CE). When the Prophet asked her for marriage, she replied: "O Messenger of God, I suffer from three shortcomings. I am a very jealous woman, and I am afraid this might cause me to do things that you dislike. Secondly, I am an old woman. Finally, I have many children." The Prophet answered: "Regarding your jealousy, I pray to God to remove it from you. As for your age, we are similar in age. As for

the children, your children are mine." Thus it was that she agreed to marry the Prophet. The Prophet's marriage contract with [Umm Habibah](#) (ra) was solemnized, by proxy, by Negus, King of Abyssinia, in 628 CE.

Two of his wives, Juwayriah and Safiyah, were prisoners of war. Both belonged to the family of the chief of their tribes and were set free by the Prophet; they then gladly accepted Islam and were pleased to become the Prophet's wives. The Prophet's marriages provided security to women who would have otherwise remained unmarried, unprotected, or felt humiliated. His marriages were also a means of transmitting important teachings of Islam. The Prophet's wives, called the "Mothers of the Believers," [Qur'an Surah 33, Verse 6 and the last part of Verse 53] showed themselves as examples of proper Muslim womanhood. All his wives, especially 'Aishah, transmitted many ahadith (sayings, deeds, and actions) from Prophet Muhammad (s).

A year after the Battle of Allies (Trench), the Prophet and fifteen hundred of his companions left for Makkah to perform the annual pilgrimage (628 CE). They were barred from approaching the city at **Hudaybiyah**, where after some negotiations a [treaty](#) was signed allowing for them to come next year. This treaty facilitated exchange of ideas among the people of the whole region without interference. Many delegations from all regions of Arabia came to the Prophet to investigate the teachings of Islam, and a large number of people accepted Islam within a couple of years. The Prophet sent many of his companions (who memorized the Qur'an by heart) to new communities to instruct them about the practice of Islam. More than fifty of them were murdered by non-believers.

A few weeks after Hudaybiyah the Prophet sent [letters to several kings and rulers \(including the two superpowers - Byzantines and Persians\)](#) inviting them to Islam. [Negus, the king of Abyssinia, and the Ruler of Bahrain accepted Islam](#), and [Emperor Heraclius acknowledged Muhammad's Prophethood](#). Among rulers who accepted Islam but without any initiative from the Prophet was [Chakrawati Farnas, a Hindu King of Malabar](#) (located on the southwest coast of India).

About two years later at the end of 629 CE, **the Quraish violated the terms of the Treaty of Hudaybiyah** by helping Banu Bakr in the surprise attack on Bani Khuza'ah who were allied with the Prophet. Some of Bani Khuzah's men escaped and took shelter in Makkah and they sought redress. However, the leaders of Quraish did nothing. They then sent a message to the Prophet for help.

The Prophet, after confirming all the reports of the attack and subsequent events, **marched to Makkah** with an army consisting of three thousand Muslims of Medinah and Muslims from other Arab communities that joined him on the way totaling [ten thousand Muslims](#). Before entering the city he sent word to citizens of Makkah that anyone who remained in his home, or in Abu Sufyan's home, or in the Ka'bah would be safe. The army entered Makkah without fighting and the Prophet went directly to the Ka'bah. He magnified Allah for the triumphant entry in the Holy city. The Prophet pointed at each idol with a stick he had in his hand and said, "Truth has come and Falsehood will neither start nor will it reappear" [Qur'an 17:81]. And one by one the idols fell down. The Ka'bah was then cleansed by the removal of

all three hundred sixty idols, and it was restored to its pristine status for the worship of One True God (as built by Prophets Ibrahim and Ismail).

The people of the city expected general slaughter in view of their persecution and torture of Muslims for the past twenty years. While standing by the Ka'bah, the Prophet (s) promised clemency for the Makkans, stating: "O Quraish, what do you think that I am about to do with you?" They replied, "Good. You are a noble brother, son of a noble brother." **The Prophet forgave them** all saying:

"I will treat you as Prophet Yousuf (Joseph) treated his brothers. There is no reproach against you. Go to your homes, and you are all free."

The Prophet also declared:

Allah made Makkah holy the day He created heavens and earth, and it is the holy of holies until the Resurrection Day. It is not lawful for anyone who believes in Allah and the last day to shed blood therein, nor to cut down trees therein. It was not lawful to anyone before me and it will not be lawful to anyone after me.

The people of Makkah then accepted Islam including the staunch enemies of the Prophet. A few of the staunchest enemies and military commanders had fled Makkah after his entry. However, when they received the Prophet's assurance of no retaliation and no compulsion in religion, they came back and gradually the message of Islam won their hearts. Within a year (630 CE), almost all Arabia accepted Islam. Among the Prophet's close companions were Muslims from such diverse background as [Persia](#), Abyssinia, Syria and Rome. Several prominent Jewish Rabbis, Christian bishop and clergymen accepted Islam after discussions with the Prophet.

One night in March 630 CE, Angel Gabriel visited the Prophet and addressed him as: "O father of Ibrahim." A few hours later, the Prophet received the news of the birth of his **son** from his wife [Mariah](#), and the Prophet named him Ibrahim. He was the only child born after the six children from Prophet's first wife Khadijah. Ibrahim died when he was ten months old. On the day of Ibrahim's death, there was an eclipse of the sun. When some people began to attribute it to the Prophet's bereavement, he said: "The sun and the moon are two signs of the signs of God. Their light is not dimmed for any man's death. If you see them eclipsed, you should pray until they be clear."

The great change in Arabia alarmed the **two superpowers**, Byzantines and Persians. Their Governors, particularly the Byzantines, reacted with threats to attack Medinah. Instead of waiting, the prophet sent a small army to defend the northmost border of Arabia. In the remaining life of the Prophet, all of the major battles were fought on the northern front. The Prophet did not have a standing army. Whenever he received a threat, he called the Muslims and discussed with them the situation and gathered volunteers to fight any aggression.

The Prophet performed his first and [last pilgrimage](#) in 632 CE. One hundred twenty-thousand men and women performed pilgrimage that year with him. The Prophet received the **last revelation** during this pilgrimage. Two months later, Prophet Muhammad (s) fell ill

and after several days [died](#) on Monday, 12 Rabi al-Awwal, the eleventh year after Hijra (June 8, 632 CE) in Medinah. He is buried in the same place where he died.

Prophet Muhammad lived a most simple, austere and modest life. He and his family used to go without cooked meal several days at a time, relying only on dates, dried bread and water. During the day he was the busiest man, as he performed his duties in many roles all at once as head of state, chief justice, commander-in-chief, arbitrator, instructor and family man. He was the most devoted man at night. He used to spend one- to two-thirds of every night in prayer and meditation. The Prophet's possession consisted of mats, blankets, jugs and other simple things even when he was the virtual ruler of Arabia. He left nothing to be inherited except a white mule (a gift from [Muqawqis](#)), few ammunition and a piece of land that he had made a gift during his life time. Among his last words were: "We the community of Prophets are not inherited. Whatever we leave is for charity."

[Muhammad \(s\)](#) was a man and a messenger of Allah (The One God). He is the **last of the prophets** [Qur'an 33:40] sent by Allah to guide man to the right path; Adam was the first Prophet. The [Qur'an mentions twenty-five Prophets by name](#) and provides a great insight of their mission, struggle and their communities. The Qur'an exonerates prophets from charges leveled against them in previous Scriptures. The Qur'an also mentions four previously **revealed Scriptures**: Suhoof (Pages) of Ibrahim (Abraham), Taurat ('Torah') as revealed to Prophet Moses, Zuboor ('Psalms') as revealed to Prophet David, and Injeel ('Evangel') as revealed to Prophet Jesus (pbuh). Islam requires belief in all prophets and revealed scriptures (original, non-corrupted) as part of the Articles of Faith. Muhammad (s) is greatly respected as the model of Qur'anic behavior. Muslims mention his name by adding "peace be upon him," a phrase used with the name of all prophets [e.g., Qur'an Surah 37: verses 79, 109, 120 and 130; also 33:56]. All sincere Muslims try to follow the Qur'an and the Prophet's example to minute details. The account of every aspect of his life has been preserved (numerous daily accounts including his family life). Prophet Muhammad (s) has served as an example for all Muslims in all periods to modern times. He will remain a model example for all of humanity.

At the end of his mission, the Prophet was blessed with several hundred thousand followers (men and women) of Islam. Thousands prayed with him at the mosque and listened to his sermon. Hundreds of sincere Muslims would find every opportunity to be with him following five daily prayers and at other times. They used to seek his advice for their everyday problems, and listened attentively to the interpretation and application of revealed verses to their situation. They followed the message of the Qur'an and the Messenger of Allah with utmost sincerity, and supported him with every thing they had. The most excellent among them are Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman, Ali, Talha, Zubair, 'Abdur Rahman ibn Auf, S'ad bin Abi Waqqas, S'ad bin Zaid, Abu 'Ubeidah, Hasan, Hussain, and several dozen others. They faithfully carried the message of Islam after the Prophet, and within ninety years the light of Islam reached Spain, North Africa, the Caucasus, northwest China and India.

Allah: Allah is the proper name in Arabic for 'The One and Only God, 'The Creator and Sustainer of the universe. It is used by the Arab Christians and Jews for the God (Eloh-im in Hebrew; 'Allaha' in Aramaic, the mother tongue of Jesus, pbuh). The word [Allah](#) does not have a plural or gender. Allah does not have any associate or partner, and He does not beget nor was He begotten. SWT is an abbreviation of Arabic words that mean 'Glory Be To Him.'

s or pbuh: Peace Be Upon Him. 'This expression is used for all [Prophets of Allah](#).

ra: Radiallahu Anha (May Allah be pleased with her).

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