

Lesson 16: The First Infallible Figure, The Great Prophet

Muhammad was born on Rabi'al-Awwal 17, in the year when the story of the elephants and the destruction of the army of Abrahah¹ took place.

His father passed away prior to his birth and his grandfather 'Abd al-Muttallib adopted him. At the age of six, his mother Aminah died and two years later, he lost his grandfather, 'Abd al-Muttallib, and then his uncle Abutalib adopted him. He married Khadijah when he was twenty five years old.

He lived among people with so much honesty, trustworthiness, and magnanimity that everyone called him *the trustworthy Muhammad* and they had so much confidence in him that on great social occasions and whenever a dispute took place, they sought his judgment, during these forty years (prior to his appointment), he had no preoccupation except worshiping God and serving people. Every year, he spent some time in a cave called *Hira'* and there he worshipped God with reflection upon His signs.

The Commander of the Faithful in his book *Nahj al-Balaghah* observes, "God had commanded one of His greatest angels to wait on the great Prophet who kept him company day and night and guided him in the virtues and good deeds."

At the age of forty, he was appointed to the prophetic mission. The first man to accept his invitation was 'Ali and the first woman to do so was his wife Khadijah and for a long time only these two individuals said prayers along with the Prophet.

Saudi Arabia, at that time, was bereft of science, culture, and civilization and bloodshed, indecency, atrocity, and pillage were ubiquitous. The great Prophet set out to guide and lead people toward God in such a bleak environment and suffered so much in this cause that we could never imagine.

For example, we read in history that following the demise of the revered Abutalib, the great Prophet set out on a journey to Ta'if to guide the dwellers of that city. There, the respected citizens did not accept his

invitation and besides that, they abused him and the thugs of the city, having realized that he was not respected by the senior members of the city, lined up on both sides of his path and pelted so many stones at his legs that they were covered with blood and were severely injured.

The great Prophet spent thirteen years in Mecca after his appointment and then immigrated to Medina where he laid the foundations of the global Islamic rule and spent the rest of his life, that is, ten years, there. He was solely preoccupied with the advancement of the community and familiarizing people with God and spirituality and eventually passed away ten years after immigration at the age of sixty three and was buried in Medina.

The Great Prophet's Conduct

The Prophet was the wisest, most knowledgeable, most patient and kindest of all people. He always sat on the ground and ate his meals there and helped in household chores, for example, he occasionally answered the door himself. He drew milk from the sheep himself and helped his servant when he got tired of spinning the manual mill (which was kept at home then).

He never lost his temper due to mundane affairs and his fury and anger were aroused only because of God. He consorted with the poor and working classes and shared meals with them and he honored the learned and the righteous.

He never exercised discrimination between himself and his servants in food and clothing. He never abused anyone. He greeted everyone he saw and he remembered God wherever he was. He mostly sat facing Ka'bah. If anyone needed his help, he swiftly went to help out. He honored guests and at times he spread his cloak on the ground so that the guest could sit on it.

One day, a person talking with the Prophet was trembling and shuddering out of his greatness and nobility, the Prophet said, "why are you afraid of me, I am not a despot (I am a God's servant like you)."

The people of Hijaz attached no importance to women and they even buried their female babies but the great Prophet offered much advice concerning women and saved them from captivity and misfortunes.

Drinking liquor, adultery, indecency, gambling and a variety of other sins were widespread among people but thanks to the sacrifices of the great Prophet, they were eradicated and a population which was deprived of everything attained a power that could save the two powerful kingdoms of the time (Iranian and Roman) from the yoke of oppression and make them acquainted with Islamic teachings.

In whatever he did, he solely relied on God and his faith and he always urged people to take steps in the cause of God and for His satisfaction.

In one of the conflicts, the great Prophet was separated from his companions by a long distance. He was noticed by one of the foes sitting at one corner. He picked up his sword and rushed toward him and said,

“O Muhammad! Who can save you from me now?”

The great Prophet said confidently, “God.” As the Prophet uttered this word, that man’s hands began trembling and his sword fell. Then the great Prophet took his sword and said, “Who will save you from me now?” The man said, “No one, because I don’t believe in your God to seek help from Him, ” and subsequently he professed his belief in God and testified to the prophetic mission of him.² Indeed, anyone who has faith in God, He will help him under all circumstances and will save him.

¹. Abrahah, the emperor of Yemen with a large army and a number of fighting elephants arrived in Mecca to destroy Ka’bah but thanks to a divine miracle and by means of birds which dropped stones on them, they were defeated and could not demolish Ka’bah. This story has been cited in chronicles and surah Elephant of the Qur’an alludes to this story.

². Abu’l-Futuh exegesis, vol. 4, Islamiyah, p. 138.

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