

DETAILED BIOGRAPHY OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD - MECCAN PERIOD (PART 2 OF 3)

Rating:

Description: A three-part lesson detailing the life of Prophet Muhammad before prophethood and the years to follow after prophethood until the Muslims were forced to leave Mecca. Part 2: His adulthood, the first revelation and the secret call.

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Objectives

- To learn about the marriage and family of the Prophet.
- To learn about the seclusion of the Prophet before receiving revelation and how revelation began.
- To learn about the secret calling to Islam in the earliest stages.

Marriage & Family

A wealthy lady named Khadijah hired him to trade her merchandise in Syria for her. He was to receive a percentage of commission from the deals. He performed the task with such precision and honesty that she later proposed to marry him by sending one of her friends to ask him if he was interested. She had received many proposals after her second husband had died, but she refused all of them. However, she saw something special in Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon him, and was taken by him.



Muhammad had to raise the needed money to pay for her dowry which was about 500 dirhams. He was twenty-five years old while Khadijah was not only quite older than him but she had been married twice before.

This did not deter him though since she had all the qualities he could ask for: a righteous character, noble lineage, beauty, and wealth. Muhammad and Khadijah were married and eventually had six children: two boys and four girls. Both boys died in their

infancy while only one daughter outlived their father. Yet, the two boys were destined to be substituted by two others. A young boy named Zayd ibn Harithah was separated from his family and ended up in Mecca. Muhammad and Khadijah decided to adopt him and he became known as Zayd ibn Muhammad.

A few years later, there was a famine in Mecca and this proved to be very difficult, especially for Abu Talib who had to support a large family. In order to ease the burden on him, Muhammad and Khadijah took one of his sons, Ali, into their household and raised him as their own child. Thus, they became a happy family of eight.

His Aversion to Polytheism

Muhammad continued his profession as a merchant for many years and lived a simple life with his wife and children. He was disturbed by the immorality present in his society. But the most despicable of all the vices of his people was their idol worship. They paid lip service to Allah while they worshipped statues and pictures made with their own hands. He could see right through the façade of the dry rituals that the Arabs engaged in, even during the pilgrimage.

In fact, he was not alone in his aversion to idol worship. There was Waraqah ibn Nawfal who had abandoned idolatry and become a Christian. He was able to read the scriptures of the Jews and Christians in Hebrew and decided to follow this path. It is unknown what form of Christianity he followed, but since he was a scholar, he probably had his own idea about what Prophet Jesus really taught.

Revelation

One night, near the end of the month of Ramadan, Muhammad was praying and meditating when he felt another presence in the cave. "Read!", commanded a voice. "I cannot read," Muhammad responded honestly, for he was unlettered like most Arabs. Something grabbed him and squeezed him so hard until he couldn't endure the pain anymore, then released him. "Read!", the voice demanded again. "I cannot read," responded Muhammad once more.

It grabbed him a second time and clenched him. This was no dream. A mere pinch would have been sufficient to wake him up if it was.

When he couldn't stand the pain anymore, he was let go. "Read!", the voice demanded the third time. Muhammad was frightened. What is this? What was happening? There were so many questions but no time to think. He had to respond quickly, "I cannot read." Again he was grasped with an overwhelming force, then let go. The voice recited the following words: **"Read in the name of your Lord who created. He created man from a clinging form. Read! Your Lord is Most Generous. He taught by means of the pen. He taught man what he did not know."** (Quran 96:1-5)

This was the Angel of Revelation, Gabriel (Jibreel). It was clear that he was being told to repeat what he had heard, and he complied fully. Those words were entirely etched in his memory. Then the presence left, and he was alone again.

What just happened? What were those verses? Muhammad, being an Arab, was familiar with poetry, but this was neither poetry nor prose. There was no time to reflect. He was frightened and ran down the mountain. He went straight home to his wife, who could comfort him the most. "Cover me! Cover me!" Khadijah placed a blanket over him until he calmed down. Then he told her about his experience and admitted that he was scared. He recalled the verses to her, letter by letter. She immediately consoled him saying, "Allah will not disgrace you. You are kind to your family, you aid the weak, you help people in need, you are generous with your guests, and struggle for the truth." She firmly believed that Allah would not allow anything bad to happen to a righteous man.

Secret Call

The Prophet continued to receive revelations for the remainder of his life. He initially only confided in those people he knew could be trusted. Mecca was the heart of idolatry and it would not be easy to change things overnight. The mission required long-term planning and thus began with a secret call to only those who would likely be interested. The Prophet began with his own household. After the meeting with Waraqah, Khadijah was already convinced that her husband was indeed a prophet. She knew her husband in and out for the last fifteen years and it was crystal clear to her that he was neither a liar nor possessed. She was thus considered the first believer. Then his cousin Ali and his adopted son Zayd followed suit. They were both young adults and could tell the difference between an imposter and a truthful man. Young people sometimes have the ability to see things that even experienced elders are unable to perceive.

The first man outside the family to accept the message was Abu Bakr. He had been the Prophet's best friend for many years. He was a merchant of noble lineage and was respected throughout Mecca for being both a philanthropist as well as an expert genealogist. Abu Bakr immediately began to tell his close associates about the Prophet. Quite a few responded such as Uthman, al-Zubayr, Abd al-Rahman, Sa'd and Talha. The message was beginning to spread in Mecca, albeit covertly.

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