

A Mercy to Mankind

Issue 3 | Free magazine

FEATURING:

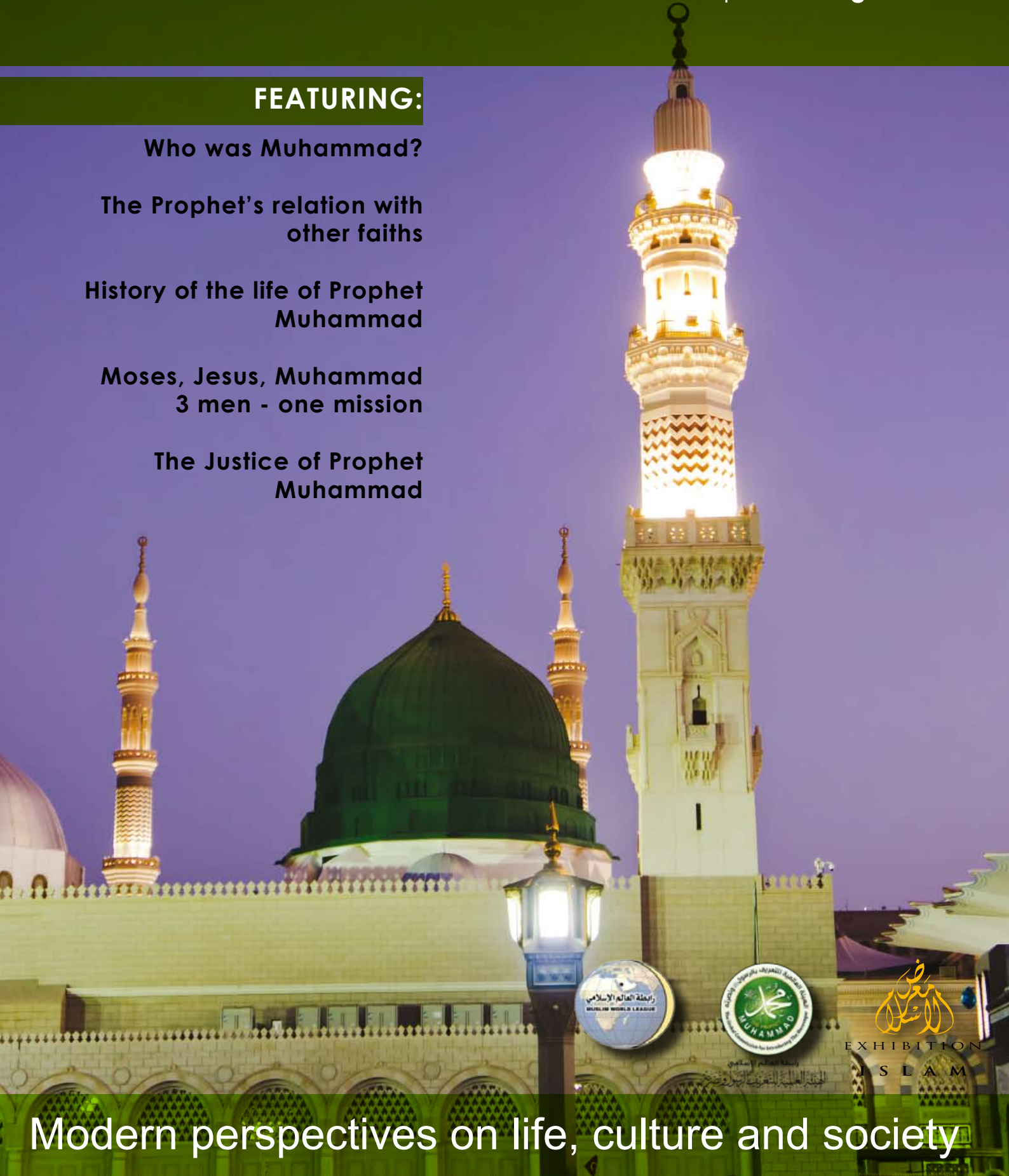
Who was Muhammad?

The Prophet's relation with
other faiths

History of the life of Prophet
Muhammad

Moses, Jesus, Muhammad
3 men - one mission

The Justice of Prophet
Muhammad



Modern perspectives on life, culture and society

Editorial

Exhibition Islam

Exhibition Islam is an independent, UK registered charity that specialises in promoting a greater understanding of Islam in the international arena.

Exhibition Islam utilises alternative educational resources and rare Islamic artefacts to deliver highly professional "museum style" exhibitions that allow visitors to discover the richness and intensity of the Islamic faith in a friendly environment.

Exhibition Islam has exhibited at over 1300 venues, including major exhibition centres in the United Kingdom, Denmark, Norway, UAE, Qatar and South Africa. Having attracted in excess of 1 million visitors over the past 15 years, Exhibition Islam has established its name as one of the leading Islamic exhibition providers in the World.

The Global Commission for Introducing the Messenger

The Global Commission for Introducing the Messenger specialises in introducing the Messenger Muhammad (peace be upon him) to the non-Muslim population. The aim of this organisation is to clear misconceptions about the character and message of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

This magazine has been commissioned by H.E Dr. Abdullah Bin AbdelMohsen Al Turki Chairman (General Secretary of Muslim World League) and HE Prof. Adel Bin Ali Al Shlddy (Secretary General of the Muslim World League).

We would like to bid you a warm welcome to the third edition of **A Mercy to Mankind**, a new quarterly magazine which aims to cover a broad spectrum of contemporary issues as well as highlighting the life and true message of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who is revered by Muslims as the final Messenger sent to mankind. It is strange that despite being voted the most influential person in history (The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History by Michael H. Hart), and with Islam being the fastest growing religion in the world, many misconceptions still continue to circulate about the Islamic faith and its most prestigious and most famous personality.

A Mercy to Mankind aims to provide an insight into various aspects of the life and teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). In this third edition, we touch upon various aspects of Prophet Muhammad's life and teachings including his mercy, justice and tolerance towards others.

Yours Sincerely,

Umar Ansari & Hamza Alam
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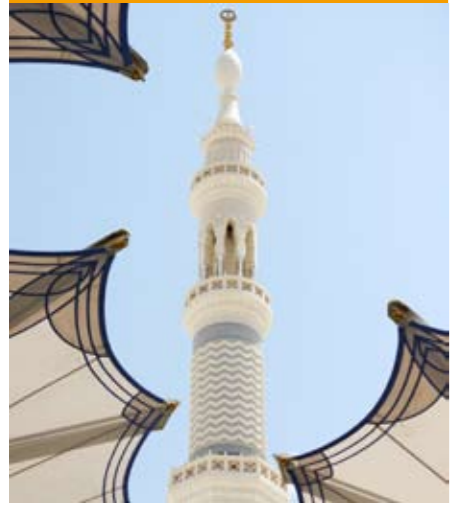
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Who was Muhammad? (peace be upon him)



Muslims regard Muhammad (peace be upon him) as the Last and Final Prophet of Allah and that he came with the same message given by Allah to all the Prophets. This was to believe in Allah and to worship him purely – to attain peace in this life and in the afterlife.

He was born in Mecca in the year 570 CE, and was a descendant of Prophet Ishmael, the eldest son of Prophet Abraham.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was orphaned by the age of 6, and grew up in the desert during his early life, learning patience and perseverance in the harsh climate, as all noble tribes sent their young

through this education system. He was renowned for his generosity, high morals and truthfulness and gained the title, Al-Amin (the Trustworthy one).

At the age of forty, he received the revelation from Allah. He then spent the remaining portion of his life explaining, and living the teachings of Islam that Allah revealed to him. Prophet Muhammad was sent as the final Messenger to all of humanity.

Although many religions during his time promoted many Gods, Prophet Muhammad conveyed the message of the Oneness of Allah and emphasized that he was only a human being with the mission of preaching and obeying

Allah's message. He taught Muslims to refer to him as "the Messenger of Allah and His Slave"

Through his life and teachings, Allah made Prophet Muhammad the best example for all people. He was the exemplary prophet, statesman, leader, ruler, teacher, neighbour, husband, father and friend. He continues to be loved and highly revered by over 1.8 billion Muslims around the globe to this day.

History testifies that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) accomplished his mission to convey Allah's prescribed way of life to the people during and after his lifetime. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) taught the concept of the Unity of Allah and the rejection of all false deities. He showed how the worship of Allah opened the way for the existence of a good and just system where everyone's rights were protected. This brought a complete change in society which, in his time was rife with killing and tribal wars.

The new faith demanded absolute equality of all members in the sight of Allah, without distinction of colour, race, tribe or sex. The rule of Islamic law was established and everyone was equal before the law. Women were raised in status and given honourable rights and slaves were given equal status with other people.

In Madinah, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) created a society that was truly united. It included people of different countries, nations, natures, and characters. This example is still applicable today and Muslims believe that it provides

a foundation for a world community living in harmony, unity and peace.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also showed that by observing the physical world one can see the signs of Allah's presence in everything. Discovering the secrets of nature makes it possible to exert some control over the physical world for the benefit of all. In fact this particular teaching of Prophet Muhammad has inspired generations of Muslim scientists over the centuries.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also led men and women to a path of knowledge in place of ignorance, to reason in place of superstition and tradition, and to freedom of thought and research in place of blind acceptance of the opinions of ancestors and political leaders. Historical documentation shows that it was Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who brought people out of slavery, with an ingenious solution, both

to other men and to their own egos and offered them the true mastery of their own lives in obedience to the laws of Allah.

The life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is a great example that all humanity can learn and benefit from. His social, political, religious and economic success was not because of extraordinary miracles that made his life easy, on the contrary he experienced fear, hunger and oppression at various times in his life. He achieved genuine success based on hard work, struggle, commitment, love and sincere faith in Allah.

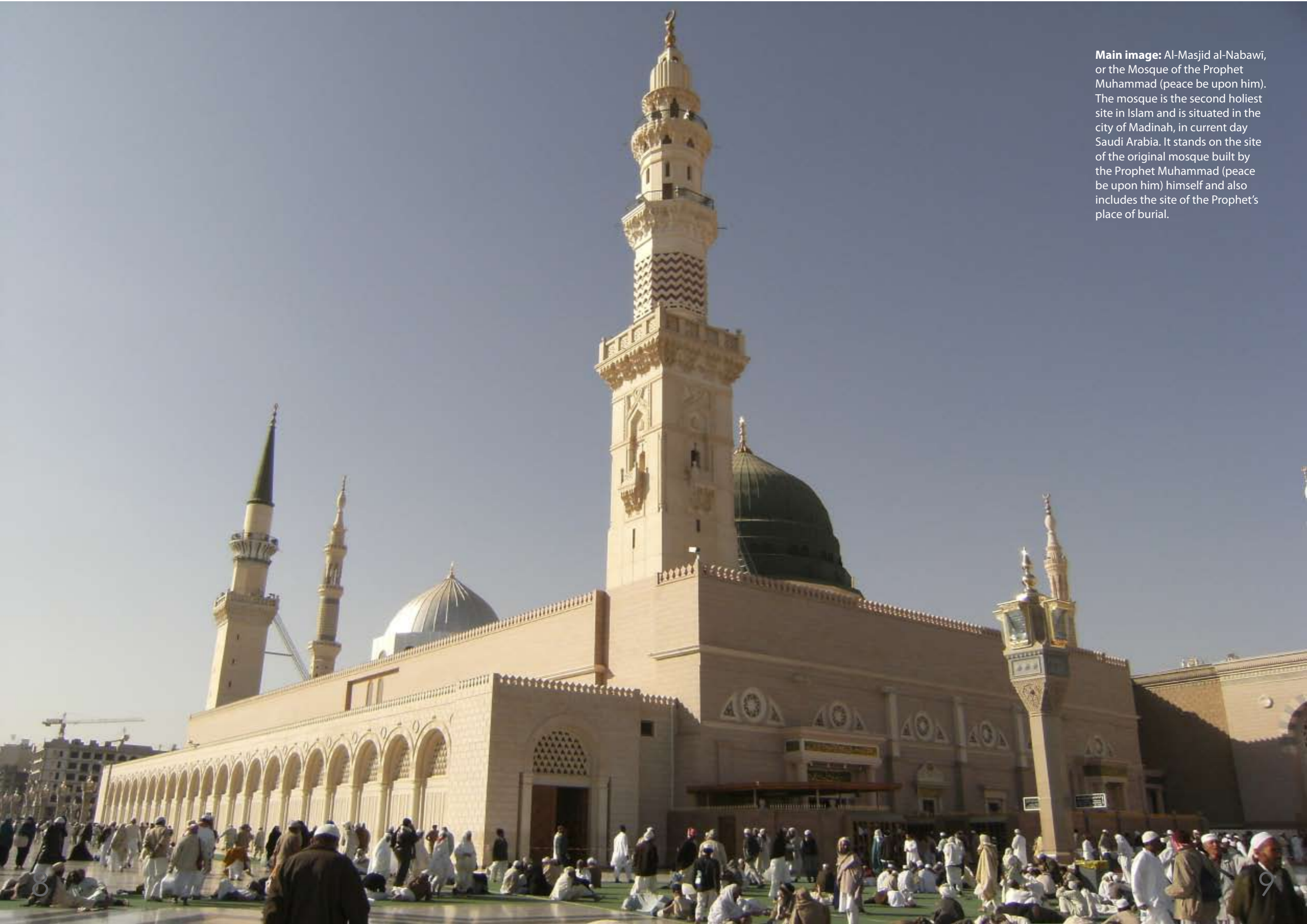
Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) always encouraged people to meet each other warmly with a smile and exchange greetings of peace. He emphasised good conduct and the kind treatment of parents, neighbours and friends. He was a great upholder of the rights of women, orphans and the poor. He abolished bad social manners, and condemned lying, cheating,

backbiting and spying.

He promoted sport, healthy living and hygiene, and was against extremism and hardship. He stressed the importance of literacy and gaining knowledge through learning, and throughout his life he encouraged his companions to be warm and friendly and respect people of other faiths.

Prophet Muhammad did not just call for faith in One God but he brought a message for every individual to add value to his or her life, for every family to be united and happy, for every society to reinforce unity, for every nation to emphasize solidarity and development and for humanity to strengthen knowledge, love and mutual collaboration.





Main image: Al-Masjid al-Nabawī, or the Mosque of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The mosque is the second holiest site in Islam and is situated in the city of Madinah, in current day Saudi Arabia. It stands on the site of the original mosque built by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself and also includes the site of the Prophet's place of burial.

The Tolerance of Prophet Muhammad towards Other Religions

There is a common confusion amongst many, that Islam does not tolerate the existence of other religions present in the world. This article discusses some of the foundations that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself laid down in dealing with people of other faiths, with practical examples from his lifetime.

The dealings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) with other religions can best be described in the verse of the Quran: **“To you be your religion, to me be mine.”** (Quran Chapter 109)

The Arabian Peninsula during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was a region in which various faiths were present. There were Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, polytheists, and others not affiliated with any religion. When one looks into the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him), one may draw on many examples to portray the high level of tolerance shown to people of other faiths.

In order to understand and judge this tolerance, one must look into the period in which Islam was a formal state, with the specific laws laid down by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in accordance with the tenets of religion.

Even though one can observe many examples of tolerance shown by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the thirteen years of his stay in Mecca, one may incorrectly think that it was only due to seeking to raise the profile of the Muslims and the social status of Islam and in general. For this reason, the discussion will be limited to the period which commenced with the migration of the Prophet to Madinah, and specifically once the constitution was set.

The Saheefah

The best example of the tolerance shown by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to other religions may be the constitution itself, called the **‘Saheefah’** by early historians.

When the Prophet migrated to Madinah, his role as a mere religious leader ended; he was now the political leader of a state, governed by the precepts of Islam, which demanded that clear laws of governance be laid out to ensure harmony and stability in a society which once had been distraught by decades of war, one which had to ensure the peaceful coexistence of Muslims, Jews, Christians and polytheists.

Due to this, the Prophet laid down a ‘constitution’ which detailed the responsibilities of all parties which resided in Madinah, their obligations towards each other, and certain restrictions that were placed on each. All parties were to obey what was mentioned therein, and any breach of its articles was regarded as an act of treachery.

One Nation

The first article of the constitution was that all the inhabitants of Madinah, the Muslims as well as those who had entered the pact from the Jews, Christian, and idolaters, were “one nation to the exclusion of all others.” All were considered members and citizens of Medinian society regardless of religion, race, or ancestry.

People of other faiths were protected from harm as much as the Muslims, as is stated in another article, **“To the Jewish people who follow us belong help and equity. They shall not be harmed nor their enemies be aided.”** Previously, each tribe had their alliances and enemies within and outside of the city of Madinah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) gathered these different tribes under one system

of governance which upheld pacts of alliances previously in existence between those individual tribes. All tribes had to act as a whole with disregard to individual alliances. Any attack on other religion or tribe was considered an attack on the state and upon the Muslims as well.

The lives of the practitioners of other religions in the Muslim society was also given protective status. The Prophet said: **“Whoever kills a person who has a truce with the Muslims will never smell the fragrance of Paradise.”** (Saheeh Muslim).

Since the upper hand was with the Muslims, the Prophet strictly warned against any maltreatment of people of other faiths. He said: **“Beware! Whoever is cruel and hard on a non-Muslim minority, or curtails their rights, or burdens them with more than they can bear, or takes anything from them against their free will; I (Prophet Muhammad) will complain against the person on the Day of**

Judgment.” (Abu Dawud)

To Each Their Own Religion

In another article, it states, **“the Jews have their religion and the Muslims have theirs.”** In this, it is clear that anything other than tolerance would not be tolerated, and that, although all were members of a society, each had their separate religion which could not be violated. Each was allowed to practice their beliefs freely without any hindrances, and no acts of provocation would be tolerated.

There are many other articles of this constitution which may be discussed, but emphasis will be placed on an article which states, **“If any dispute or controversy likely to cause trouble should arise, it must be referred to God and His Messenger.”** This clause maintained that all inhabitants of the state must recognize a higher level of authority, and in those matters which involved various tribes and religions, justice could not be meted out by individual leaders; rather it must

be adjudicated by the leader of the state himself or his designated representatives. It was allowed, however, for individual tribes who were not Muslims, to refer to their own religious scriptures and their learned men in regards to their own personal affairs. They could though, if they opted, ask the Prophet to judge between them in their matters. Allah states **“...If they do come to you, either judge between them or decline to interfere...”** (Quran 5:42)

Here we see that Prophet allowed each religion to judge in their own matters according to their own scriptures, as long as it did not stand in opposition to articles of the constitution, a pact which took into account the greater benefit of the peaceful co-existence of the society.

Freedom of Religious Assembly and Religious Autonomy

Given consent by the constitution, the Jews had the complete freedom to practice their religion.

“This is a message from Muhammad ibn Abdullah, as a covenant to those who adopt Christianity, near and far, we are with them. Verily I, the servants, the helpers, and my followers defend them, because Christians are my citizens; and by God! I hold out against anything that displeases them. No compulsion is to be on them. Neither are their judges to be removed from their jobs nor their monks from their monasteries. No one is to destroy a house of their religion, to damage it, or to carry anything from it to the Muslims’ houses. Should anyone take any of these, he would spoil God’s covenant and disobey His Prophet.”
Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)

The Jews in Madinah at the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) had their own school of learning, named Bait-ul-Midras, where they would recite the Torah, worship and educate themselves. The Prophet emphasized in many letters to his emissaries that religious institutions should not be harmed. In a letter addressed to his emissary to the religious leaders of Saint Catherine in Mount Sinai who has sought the protection of the Muslims:

“This is a message from Muhammad ibn Abdullah, as a covenant to those who adopt Christianity, near and far, we are with them. Verily I, the servants, the helpers, and my followers defend them, because Christians are my citizens; and by God! I hold out against anything that displeases them. No compulsion is to be on them. Neither are their judges to be removed from their jobs nor their monks from their monasteries. No one is to destroy a house of their religion, to damage it, or to carry anything from it to the Muslims’ houses. Should anyone take any of these, he would spoil God’s covenant and disobey His Prophet. Verily, they are my allies and have my secure charter against all that they hate. No one is to force them to travel or to oblige them to fight. The Muslims are to fight for them. If a female Christian is married to a Muslim, it is not to take place without her approval. She is not to be prevented from visiting her church to pray. Their churches are declared to be protected. They are neither to be prevented from repairing them nor the sacredness of their

covenants. No one of the nation (Muslims) is to disobey the covenant till the Last Day (end of the world).”^[1]

As one can see, this Charter consisted of several clauses covering all important aspects of human rights, including such topics as the protection of minorities living under Islamic rule, freedom of worship and movement, freedom to appoint their own judges and to own and maintain their property, exemption from military service, and the right to protection in war.

On another occasion, the Prophet (peace be upon him) received a delegation of sixty Christians from the region of Najran, then a part of Yemen, at his mosque. When the time for their prayer came, they faced the direction of east and prayed. The Prophet ordered that they be left in their state and not harmed.

These are only some of the examples of the Prophet’s tolerance of other faiths. Islam recognizes that there are a plurality of religions on this earth, and gives the right to individuals to choose the path which they believe to be true. Religion is not to be, and was never, forced upon an individual against their own will, and these examples from the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) are an epitome of the verse of the Quran which promotes religious tolerance and sets the guideline for the Muslims’ interaction with people of other faiths. God says:

“There is no compulsion in religion. Verily, the Right Path has become distinct from the wrong path. Whoever disbelieves in Taghut and believes in Allah, then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that will never break. And Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower.” (Quran 2:256)

Footnotes:

[1]“Muslim and Non-Muslims, Face-to-Face”, Ahmad Sakr. Foundation for Islamic Knowledge, Lombard IL.

Main image: The most universally recognized symbol of Jerusalem is the Dome of the Rock. Muslims believe the location of the Dome of the Rock to be the site of the Islamic miracle of the Isra and Miraj, where Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) ascended to the heavens. The Umayyad Caliph, ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan commissioned the building of the Qubbat al-Sakhrah (Dome of the Rock) in 691-692 CE.

Moses, Jesus, Muhammad Three Men, One Mission

History is shaped by people, and inevitably some leave more of a mark than others. Amongst those standing out, the central figures of major world religions have had an impact far beyond their own followers. The three Abrahamic faiths, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, continue to influence world events millennia after Moses, Jesus and Muhammad walked upon the earth.

The purpose of this article is to provide a better insight into the monotheistic world-view these three men subscribed to and which has not lost any of its relevance in the world of today. The impact of those prophets was both religious and political. They called for belief and moral conduct, and by doing so often conflicted with the established order based on corrupt practices and oppression.

Moses (peace be upon him) lived at the time of a mighty tyrant ruler, the pharaoh, and rose from a member of the oppressed classes to a formidable antagonist, ultimately bringing down the whole edifice of arrogant power. He was ideally placed to play this role by having been brought up in the household of the pharaoh himself.

Just as a prophet's work continues to leave an impact long after his departure from this world, his arrival is usually preceded by a period of high anticipation. Moses was no different in this respect: Tales of a saviour of the oppressed Israelites were making the rounds in Egypt and grew so strong that the ruling class felt the need to take precautionary measures. To prevent the birth of this champion of the people they had enslaved, the pharaoh ordered that every newborn male child would be put to death during the year his arrival was foretold, leaving only the female babies alive.

Moses is usually seen as the liberator as well as the law-giver for the Israelites. However, like all lives, his life is complex and not done justice by over-simplifying. In the Quran, after God relays the story of appointing Moses as a caller towards monotheism, we learn about the discourse between Moses and Pharaoh, with the former challenging the claim of Pharaoh to Divinity.

After his conversation with God, and frightening as this encounter was, it set him up for his mission in life: to go and confront pharaoh with the demand to release the Israelites from bondage. It helped him overcome the

fear to face up to the tyrant who would surely have him killed, and it provided him with the miracles needed to make the pharaoh's magicians take notice. Pharaoh, who considered himself a god to be worshipped, was anything but delighted to have Moses come back and challenge him with a higher authority, demanding the release of the Israelites on whose slave labour the Egyptian economy depended.

In order to humiliate Moses, Pharaoh arranged for a magnificent public event, and the magicians who had been honing their skills in preparation were given further prizes and incentives should they win the contest.

Nobody doubted the outcome, yet when Moses' staff devoured all the magic they conjured and rendered it void, the magicians realised that a greater power was involved and submitted to Moses and his religion, much to the dismay of pharaoh.

"Then the wizards were (all) flung down prostrate, crying: We believe in the Lord of Aaron and Moses. (Pharaoh) said: You put faith in him before I give you permission. He is your chief who taught you magic. Now surely I shall cut off your hands and your feet alternately, and I shall crucify you on the trunks of palm trees, and you shall know for certain which of us has sterner and more lasting punishment. They said: We choose you not above the clear proofs that have come to us, and above Him Who created us. So decree what you will decree. You will end for us only this life of the world. We believe in our Lord, that He may forgive us

our sins and the magic to which you did force us. Allah is better and more lasting." (Qur'an 20:70-73). Hence Moses had successfully called to monotheism, the belief and worship of the single Deity.

Moses was a strong and determined man, devoted to the worship of the only one God, facing up to the greatest tyrant in human history, yet in need of guidance himself and unable to fully rally his own people behind him and make them see the truth for what it was.

The story of the next major prophet to whom we now turn our attention, Jesus, is not all too different in this respect.

Jesus (peace be upon him) Due to his unusual entry and exit from our world, having been born, like Adam, without a father, **"The likeness of Jesus is as the likeness of Adam, He created him from dust, then He said to him: Be! and he is."** (Qur'an: 3:59) and having been spared death by being raised to heaven prior to his return or second coming, Jesus (Isa) is so unusual amongst the prophets that some have mistakenly elevated him to divine status. As they focus on his spiritual activities and miracles, it is often forgotten that he also played a political role in confronting the Jewish Pharisees.

Since being born to a virgin is not something people take for granted, Jesus' mother Mary was faced with accusations of infidelity when she returned from a secluded place after having given birth to him. **"Then she brought him to her own people, carrying him. They said: O Mary! You have come with an amazing thing. O sister of Aaron! Your father was not a wicked man nor was your mother a harlot."** (Qur'an 19:17-28)

Amongst the gifts Jesus was given was to be able to talk already as a baby in the cradle, and speaking in defence of his mother.

As he grew up he displayed both knowledge and wisdom and exerted the powers of a healer ensuring his popularity. Yet he never sought fame or following for himself, always instead pointing to the one who sent him: God.

"When Allah says: O Jesus, son of Mary! Did you say to mankind: Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah? he says: Be glorified! It was not for me to utter that to which I had no right." (Qur'an 5:116).

The Israelites, who as we have seen already found it difficult to keep to Moses' instructions without deviation, had established an elaborate Rabbinical system by the time Jesus was born, which replaced the simplicity of the Laws of Moses with a complicated set of interpretations. Naturally, they saw Jesus' call to return to the spirit of the law and the essence of the belief in God as a challenge to their authority. Ultimately, they plotted to have him removed or killed. Whilst not all Christians ascribe divinity to Jesus, most believe that the Jews succeeded in having him crucified by the Romans.

The Qur'an contradicts this account by declaring that they had no certainty about the matter and it only appeared to them as if, **"... they killed him not nor crucified him, but it appeared so to them; and those who disagree concerning it are in doubt of it; they have no knowledge of it except pursuit of conjecture; they killed him not for certain."** (Qur'an 4:157).

In other words, they crucified someone else in his stead whilst God raised Jesus to Himself, saving him from the intended crucifixion, a death described in the Bible as a curse. Trinitarian Christianity later tried to explain that it was necessary for God to curse and sacrifice his only son in order to save the rest of humanity from original sin.

Yet, the Bible does not support the idea of a cruel and punishing God who kills the innocent for the sins of others.

Muhammad (peace be upon him), too, was both a spiritual leader and a reformer, but because unlike other prophets before him he succeeded in establishing an organised social structure following the rules he brought, many biographers focus more on his political career than his spiritual teachings. His miracles, too, receive little attention since they are dwarfed by that ongoing miracle, the Qur'an, preserved unchanged since the days of its revelation.

Muhammad was born into a noble family in Mecca, and was respected in society, and it was only after he had been called to prophethood by the archangel Gabriel, that the very same society turned against him. They did not resent him as a person, but feared his message of equality before God.

Initially his call to reject idolatry and submit to the only true God was only directed at his family and friends. When it became a public invitation, however, the upholders of the established order, who benefited from the influx of pilgrims and wealth connected to their existing religion, became increasingly intolerant of this new move-

ment and responded with slander and vilification as well as physical persecution.

Many years later, when Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) liberated Mecca from polytheism and inequality, he delivered the following address: ***“There is no God but Allah. He has no associate. He has made good His promise that He held to His bondman and helped him and defeated all his confederates. O people of Quraish, surely God has abolished from you all pride of the time of ignorance and all pride in your ancestry, because all men are descended from Adam, and Adam was made of clay.”***

When Muhammad returned to Madinah he was the undisputed ruler of a united Arabia, and Islam began to spread in all directions across the world. Within just over two decades Muhammad had transformed a remote desert community with superstitious practices into an enlightened world power with a written constitution and a refined code of law, establishing universities and cultural centres across the then known world.

Belief and good works

All the prophets of God, including the three examples selected above, shared a common goal: to re-orientate people's minds towards their Creator and thereby encourage them to act piously and responsibly.

They preached that only the one true God deserved to be worshipped and neither loyalty to, or fear of, a despotic ruler, nor subservience to the trappings of wealth and influence – as represented in the golden calf or the idols once

housed in the Kaabah – should interfere with such true belief.

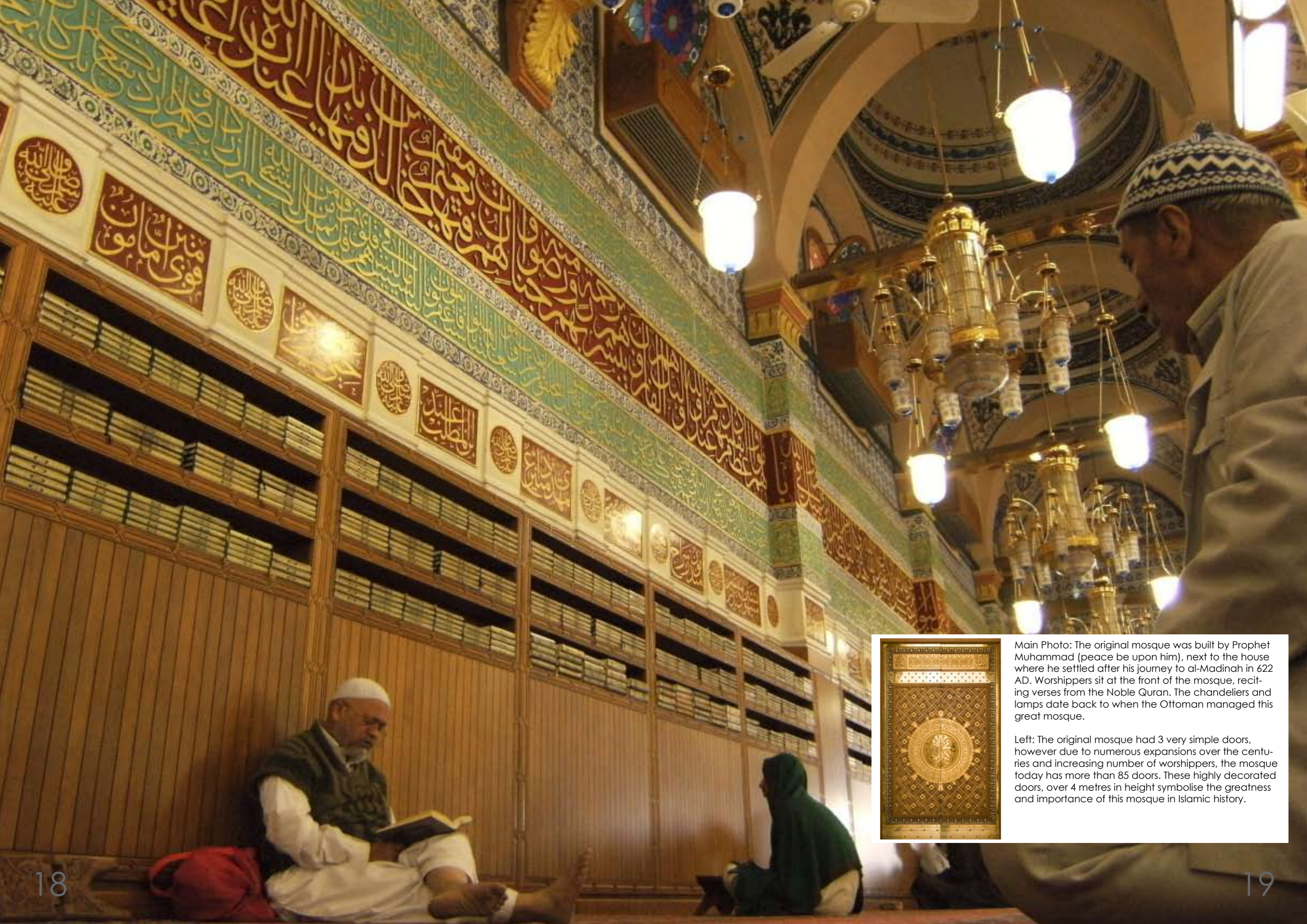
Their faith, therefore, demanded to be expressed publicly through a change in behaviour and society. They preached justice, compassion and equality before God. They demanded an end to usury, exploitation and oppression.

Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad (peace be upon them all), essentially brought the same message around which humanity can unite and build a prosperous future without false divisions.



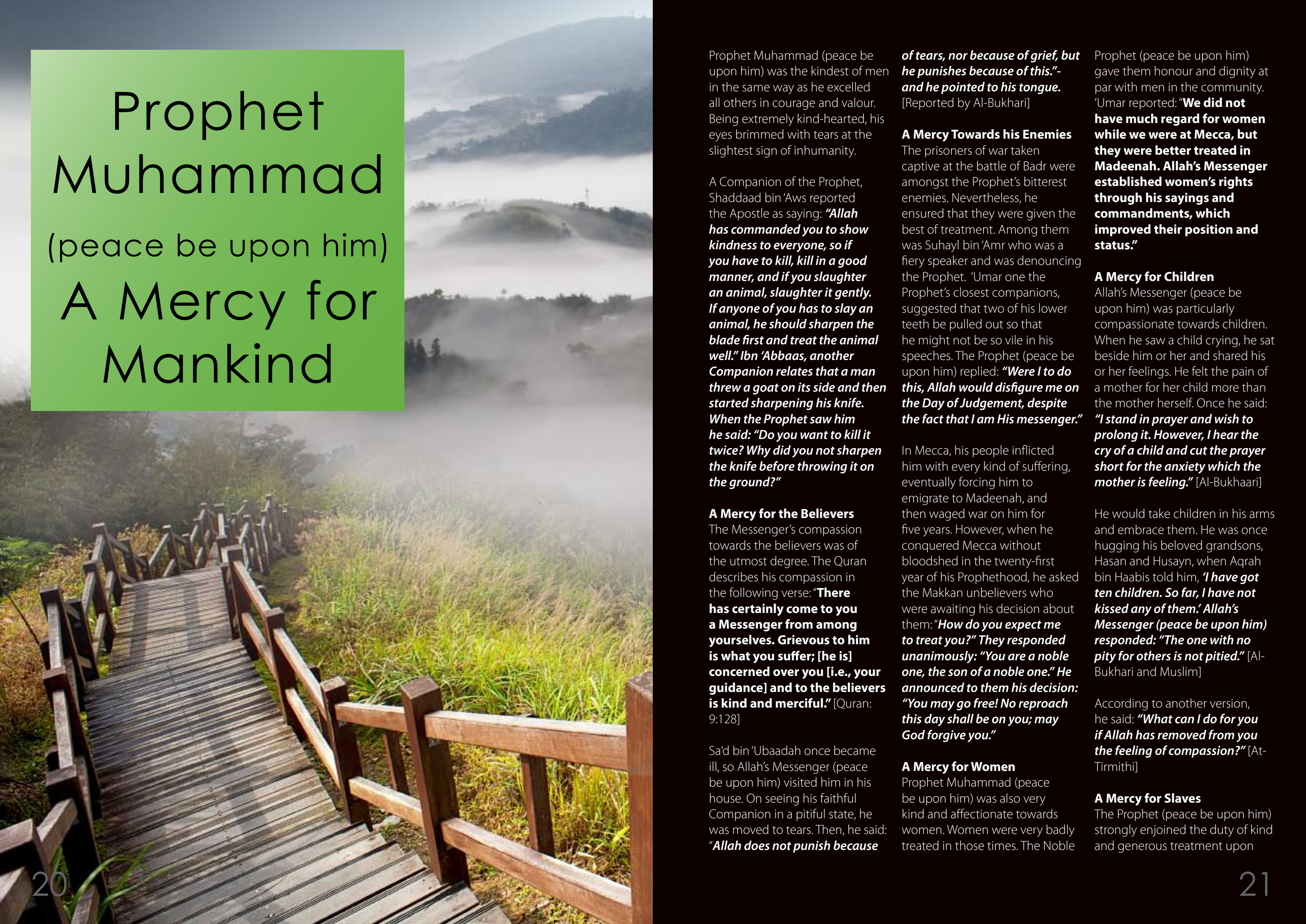
“Say: we believe in God and in what has been revealed to us, and what was revealed to Abraham, Isma’il: Isaac, Jacob and The Tribes, and in (the Books) given to Moses, Jesus and the Prophets, from their Lord: We make no distinction between one and another, among them, and to God do we bow our will (in Islam).”

(Qur'an, Al-Imran 3:84)



Main Photo: The original mosque was built by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), next to the house where he settled after his journey to al-Madinah in 622 AD. Worshippers sit at the front of the mosque, reciting verses from the Noble Quran. The chandeliers and lamps date back to when the Ottoman managed this great mosque.

Left: The original mosque had 3 very simple doors, however due to numerous expansions over the centuries and increasing number of worshippers, the mosque today has more than 85 doors. These highly decorated doors, over 4 metres in height symbolise the greatness and importance of this mosque in Islamic history.



Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) A Mercy for Mankind

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the kindest of men in the same way as he excelled all others in courage and valour. Being extremely kind-hearted, his eyes brimmed with tears at the slightest sign of inhumanity.

A Companion of the Prophet, Shaddaad bin 'Aws reported the Apostle as saying: **"Allah has commanded you to show kindness to everyone, so if you have to kill, kill in a good manner, and if you slaughter an animal, slaughter it gently. If anyone of you has to slay an animal, he should sharpen the blade first and treat the animal well."** Ibn 'Abbaas, another Companion relates that a man threw a goat on its side and then started sharpening his knife. When the Prophet saw him he said: **"Do you want to kill it twice? Why did you not sharpen the knife before throwing it on the ground?"**

A Mercy for the Believers
The Messenger's compassion towards the believers was of the utmost degree. The Quran describes his compassion in the following verse: **"There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you [i.e., your guidance] and to the believers is kind and merciful."** [Quran: 9:128]

Sa'd bin 'Ubaadah once became ill, so Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) visited him in his house. On seeing his faithful Companion in a pitiful state, he was moved to tears. Then, he said: **"Allah does not punish because**

of tears, nor because of grief, but he punishes because of this."- and he pointed to his tongue. [Reported by Al-Bukhari]

A Mercy Towards his Enemies
The prisoners of war taken captive at the battle of Badr were amongst the Prophet's bitterest enemies. Nevertheless, he ensured that they were given the best of treatment. Among them was Suhayl bin 'Amr who was a fiery speaker and was denouncing the Prophet. 'Umar one the Prophet's closest companions, suggested that two of his lower teeth be pulled out so that he might not be so vile in his speeches. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: **"Were I to do this, Allah would disfigure me on the Day of Judgement, despite the fact that I am His messenger."**

In Mecca, his people inflicted him with every kind of suffering, eventually forcing him to emigrate to Madeenah, and then waged war on him for five years. However, when he conquered Mecca without bloodshed in the twenty-first year of his Prophethood, he asked the Makkan unbelievers who were awaiting his decision about them: **"How do you expect me to treat you?" They responded unanimously: "You are a noble one, the son of a noble one." He announced to them his decision: "You may go free! No reproach this day shall be on you; may God forgive you."**

A Mercy for Women
Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was also very kind and affectionate towards women. Women were very badly treated in those times. The Noble

Prophet (peace be upon him) gave them honour and dignity at par with men in the community. 'Umar reported: **"We did not have much regard for women while we were at Mecca, but they were better treated in Madeenah. Allah's Messenger established women's rights through his sayings and commandments, which improved their position and status."**

A Mercy for Children
Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) was particularly compassionate towards children. When he saw a child crying, he sat beside him or her and shared his or her feelings. He felt the pain of a mother for her child more than the mother herself. Once he said: **"I stand in prayer and wish to prolong it. However, I hear the cry of a child and cut the prayer short for the anxiety which the mother is feeling."** [Al-Bukhaari]

He would take children in his arms and embrace them. He was once hugging his beloved grandsons, Hasan and Husayn, when Aqrah bin Haabis told him, **"I have got ten children. So far, I have not kissed any of them." Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) responded: "The one with no pity for others is not pitied."** [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

According to another version, he said: **"What can I do for you if Allah has removed from you the feeling of compassion?"** [At-Tirmithi]

A Mercy for Slaves
The Prophet (peace be upon him) strongly enjoined the duty of kind and generous treatment upon

slaves, servants and labourers engaged in manual work. Jaabir related the Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) as saying: **"Feed them with the food which you eat, clothe them with such clothing as you wear, and do not cause trouble to Allah's creatures."** The Apostle (peace be upon him) is further stated to have said: **"Those whom Allah has made your dependents are your brothers, servants and helpmates. Anybody whose brother has been made subservient to him ought to feed him with the food he eats and clothe him with the clothes he wears; command him not to do that which he is unable to do and if it becomes necessary to do so then he should help him in doing the job."**

A Mercy for Animals

His compassion encompassed not only human beings, but also animals. The Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade his companions to keep the unintelligent creatures hungry or thirsty, to disturb or to overburden them. He commended that kindness and putting them at ease were meritorious acts tending to bring man nearer to Allah. Abu Hurayrah reports the Prophet (peace be upon him) as saying: **"A traveller who was thirsty saw a well in the way. He got inside the well and when he came out he saw a dog licking mud due to thirst. The man realised that the dog was as thirsty as him, so he got into the well again, filled his leather sock with water and carried it out holding it with his teeth. Thus, he quenched the thirst of the dog. Allah was pleased with this act of kindness and pardoned his sins."** The Companions asked:

"O Messenger of Allah, is there recompense in the matter of beasts and wild animals also?" The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: **"There is recompense in regard to every creature that has a living heart."**

'Abdullah bin 'Umar related that the Prophet said: **"A woman was cast away to hell only because she had withheld food and water from her cat and refused to set it free so that the cat might satisfy its hunger by eating worms and insects."**

Once on return from a military campaign, a few Companions took away the chicks of a bird from their nest to stroke them. The mother bird came back and when it could not find its chicks in the nest, it began to fly around screeching. When informed of the matter, Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) became angry and ordered the chicks to be put back in the nest. [Abu Daawood]

Conclusion

The love and compassion of Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) for all kinds of creatures was not of the kind claimed by today's 'humanists'. He was sincere and balanced in his love and compassion. He was more compassionate than any other person. He was a Prophet raised by Allah, the Creator and Sustainer of all beings, for the guidance and happiness of conscious beings.

Therefore, he lived not for himself but for others; he is a mercy for all the worlds.

"And We have not sent you forth but as a mercy to mankind".

Al-Anbiyaa': 107

Life of Prophet Muhammad

(peace be upon him)

Prophet Muhammad was born of noble lineage, in Mecca in the year 570 into the most powerful Arabian tribe, the Quraysh. He was a direct descendent of Prophet Abraham through his son Prophet Ishmael. Prophet Muhammad's father, Abdullah, passed away before his birth and he was brought up by his mother Aaminah bint Wahab until she passed away in 576 CE. He was then cared for by his grandfather until he too passed away two years later. His kind uncle, Abu Talib, then took over his care.

As a young man Prophet Muhammad displayed outstanding wisdom, intelligence and exceptional virtues as a very trustworthy individual. Members of various tribes would invite him to act as an arbitrator in their disputes. His reputation for being truthful, honest, trustworthy, generous and sincere became so well known that people named him Al-Amin (The Trustworthy).

Prophet Muhammad never partook in the customs of the Quraysh at that time. He would withdraw to the mountains for days at a time to remove himself from the drunken rampages of the people. He never worshiped the idols placed in the Kabah and never engaged in the immoral practices of the people. At the age of 25, he married Lady Khadijah a noble widow 15 years his senior. They remained married for the next 25 years until her death.

During one of the spiritual retreats which he made habitually to a cave on top of a mountain outside Mecca, Prophet Muhammad had an amazing encounter with Angel Gabriel. The angel started

to reveal Allah's Word to him, the Quran in an extraordinary account of events. The angel also announced that "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah".

It was the year 610 CE and Prophet Muhammad was forty years old when he received his first revelation. He was appointed as the Messenger of Allah to convey God's Words to humanity.

A mission that required strong belief, dedication, and honesty. For the next thirteen years he conveyed the Word of Allah to the Makkans, inviting them to abandon idolatry and accept the religion of the One God. A few accepted his call but most opposed him violently, seeing the message of equality, social justice and women's rights taught by the new religion as a danger to their domination of Mecca and the Ka'ba.

612CE **First Muslims formed**

Prophet Muhammad invited his immediate family, inner circle of friends and a few selected quality people to accept Islam. In the first three years, the 130 people who accepted Islam became a strong nucleus that was able to spread Islam publicly. These core Muslims were a mix of rich and poor individuals.

613 CE - 615 CE **Initial resistance**

Prophet Muhammad continued to call the people to Islam and gradually a number of men and women began to accept the faith and submit themselves to its teachings of the Oneness of Allah, justice and equality. Prophet Muhammad and his followers now

started to talk to people openly about Islam. Although Prophet Muhammad was known as a trustworthy and an honest man, Makkans leaders did not accept his invitation to embrace Islam and resisted him. They described him as a poet, a magician and a crazy man. The Makkans also started a campaign of persecution of the Muslims.

Temptation & threats

The leaders of Mecca tried to dissuade Prophet Muhammad from his call to Islam by first tempting him with all worldly desires, when this did not work he was threatened with death to which he replied "if you were to put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand to stop conveying the message I will not stop conveying the messages until it has been conveyed or I die doing it". At the same time they tried to prevent people from listening to him.

They showed increased hostility by persecuting and torturing the weaker Muslims, especially the ones that lacked any support. Prophet Muhammad had things thrown at him and was constantly harassed and insulted.

Migration to Abyssinia

Prophet Muhammad used to meet his followers at Al-Arqam House which was like a small college. He taught them values and morals and instilled feelings of responsibility and commitment to the community at large.

Prophet Muhammad also saw the suffering and tribulation some of his followers endured even death and advised them to seek refuge in Abyssinia (Ethiopia), describ-

ing it as a land of virtue ruled by a fair Christian King, Negus, under whom no one was treated unjustly.

Hamza & Omar accept Islam

Two strong and well respected Makkan men accepted Islam, Omar Bin Al- Khattab and Hamza Bin Abdul-Muttalib (Prophet Muhammad's uncle). This was an important turning point as they both became strong supporters and protectors for Prophet Muhammad. Hamza was martyred in the battle of Uhud in 625 CE. Three years after the passing away of Prophet Muhammad, Omar became the second caliph and ruled the Islamic state for 11 years.

616 CE - 618 CE

The pagan Makkan leaders boycotted Prophet Muhammad and his followers and imposed a social and economic blockade on them which lasted for 3 years. During this time, Prophet Muhammad and his followers suffered great tribulation. This period was a tough test of their patience, belief and commitment to their Islamic beliefs.

619 CE - 620 CE

The Makkans cancelled the boycott as it was proving to be counterproductive for them. In the same year, Prophet Muhammad's wife Khadijah and his uncle Abu-Talib passed away. Prophet Muhammad lost hope in Mecca and decided to convey the Message of Allah outside of the city. He went to the city of Ta'if but was met with hostility. In addition, he spoke to more than 20 Arab tribes about Islam without any positive response.

A new hope

Prophet Muhammad met six people from Yathrib (a city located 450 km north of Mecca) during the pilgrimage season and talked to them about Islam. They accepted Islam and returned to their city with the intention of inviting more people from their own tribe and other tribes in Yathrib. They agreed to return to Mecca the next year at the time of pilgrimage to meet again with Prophet Muhammad.

621 CE

The same group returned the following year with six more people. They pledged their allegiance to Prophet Muhammad and accepted him as the Messenger of Allah. They promised: (1) not to worship anyone except (Allah) The One God, (2) not to steal, (3) not to commit adultery, (4) not to kill, (5) not to slander neighbours and (6) not to disobey the Messenger of Allah. The group went back to Yathrib and invited their tribal leaders and other people to Islam.

They returned again in the following year at the time of pilgrimage with more than 70 men and two women. A similar pledge of allegiance was given again to Prophet Muhammad. The leaders of the two main tribes in Yathrib (Aws & Khazraj) embraced Islam and subsequently their people became Muslims. Prophet Muhammad was then invited to come to Yathrib and become its ruler and leader.

622 CE

Things were becoming much worse in Mecca so Prophet Muhammad asked the Makkan Muslims to migrate to Yathrib. Following their migration, Prophet

Muhammad also migrated to Yathrib in September 622 CE.

His migration represents the most important turning point in the Islamic history. From Yathrib, Islam grew, an Islamic state was established and a just social order was born.

623 CE - 624 CE

The people of Yathrib were a mix of Arabs and Jews. Although there were two main Arab tribes and three smaller Jewish tribes, the Arab community was larger than the Jewish one and had the ruling power. Prophet Muhammad was chosen as the ruler of Yathrib willingly and peacefully with the agreement of the majority of people. Prophet Muhammad changed the name of the multicultural society "Madinah" was the new name Prophet Muhammad gave to the city of Yathrib. After the migration of the Makkan Muslims, Yathrib no longer belonged to a certain group of Arabs, instead, it became the homeland of Islam. Since there were Jewish tribes in Yathrib and other Arab people who didn't embrace Islam, Prophet Muhammad did not call it the city of Islam. Instead, it was named "Al-Madinah" which means "The City"; in which all inhabitants had similar citizenship rights.

Prophet Muhammad called for peace and unity in Madinah. In his first public address to the people of Madinah, Prophet Muhammad delivered a very concise speech which promoted harmony and social cohesion. He said: "O People, seek and spread peace and offer food to each other, look after your kinship and pray to Allah at night while others are sleeping so you gain Allah's pleasure and enter His paradise."

Prophet Muhammad linked these acts to Allah's pleasure in order to motivate people to love each other and live in peace and harmony. Prophet Muham-

mad formed the first constitution and charter of human rights and liberties

Most of the Jews in the city hoped that the last Prophet would come from a Jewish background. Although the majority of Jews did not accept Prophet Muhammad as a Messenger of Allah, Prophet Muhammad (as the ruler of the state) formed the first "Constitution and Charter of Human Rights and Liberties" to which all Arab and Jewish tribes agreed upon and signed. The constitution guaranteed the freedom of conscience and worship for Muslims and Jews as well as Arabs who did not accept Islam. In addition, the constitution protected the safety and security of all citizens in Madinah and required all parties who signed the covenant for the constitution to be part of the national defence should Madinah be attacked by enemies.

The constitution stated justice, human rights, liberties and prohibition of crime and immoral practices.

628 CE - 629 CE

Prophet Muhammad conveys Allah's Message inside & outside of Arabia

The truce presented an ideal opportunity for Prophet Muhammad to convey the Message of Allah and freely tell people about Islam without being hindered. So he sent delegations to other Arab tribes in Arabia and also wrote letters to the rulers and kings of neighbouring countries and superpowers such as Persia, Byzantine and Egypt inviting them and preaching to them about Islam as "the Message of Allah". Many people now started to accept Islam as the truth.

630 CE

Peaceful take-over of Mecca

Within two years the truce was broken by the Makkans when their allies killed 20 Muslims. In response to this shocking act, Prophet Muhammad marched with 10,000 Muslims to conquer Mecca but asked his soldiers not to fight anyone unless they were

fought. The Makkan chiefs were embarrassed and were not prepared to fight the Muslims.

Prophet Muhammad passes away

Prophet Muhammad passed away in his home in Madinah in the year 632 CE leaving only a few possessions. He did not leave any money or wealth but a legacy of faith that is still illuminating with Allah's light, the hearts of billions of people around the globe.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and justice

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) encouraged people to be just and kind. As the supreme judge and arbiter, as the leader of Muslims, as *generalissimo* of a rising power, as a reformer and apostle, he (peace be upon him) had always to deal with people and their affairs. He had often to deal with mutually inimical and warring tribes when showing justice to one carried the danger of antagonizing the other, and yet he never deviated from the path of justice. In administering justice, he made no distinction between believers and non-believers, friends and foes, high and low.

From numerous instances reported in the traditions, a few are can be noted. Sakhr, a chief of a tribe, had helped the Prophet (peace be upon him) greatly in the siege of Taif, for which he was naturally obliged to him. Soon after, two charges were brought against Sakhr: one by Mugheerah of illegal confinement of his (Mugheerah's) aunt and the other by Banu Salim of forcible occupation of his spring by Sakhr. In both cases, the Prophet (peace be upon him) decided against Sakhr and made

him undo the wrong. [Reported by Abu Dawud]

Abdullah Ibn Sahl was deputed to collect rent from Jewish community of the town of Khaybar. His cousin Mahisah accompanied him but, on reaching Khaybar, they separated. Abdullah was ambushed by some people and killed. Mahisah reported this tragedy to the Prophet (peace be upon him) but as there were no eye-witnesses to identify the guilty, the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not punish anyone and instead paid the blood-money out of the state revenues. [Al-Bukhari]

A woman of the Makhzoom family with good connections was found guilty of theft. For the prestige of the Quraysh, some prominent people including Usaamah Ibn Zayd interceded to save her from punishment. The Prophet (peace be upon him) refused to condone the crime and expressed displeasure saying: **"Many a community ruined itself in the past as they only punished the poor and ignored the offences of the exalted. By Allah, if Muhammad's (My) daughter Fatimah**

would have committed theft, her hand would have been severed." [Al-Bukhari]

During the life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) the Jews, in spite of their hostility to the Prophet were so impressed by his impartiality and sense of justice that they used to bring their cases to him and he decided them according to Jewish law. [Abu Dawood]

Once, while he was distributing the spoils of war, people flocked around him and one man almost fell upon him. He pushed the man with a stick causing a slight abrasion. He was so sorry about this that he told the man that he could have his revenge, but the man said: **"O messenger of Allah, I forgive you."** (Abu Dawood)

In his fatal illness, the Prophet (peace be upon him) proclaimed in a concourse assembled at his house that if he owed anything to anyone, the person concerned could claim it; if he had ever hurt anyone's person, honour or property, he could have his price while he was yet in this world. A hush fell on the crowd. One man came forward to claim a few Dirhams which were paid at once. [Ibn Hishaam]

Equality

Muhammad (peace be upon him) asked people to shun notions of racial, family or any other form of superiority based on mundane things and said that righteousness alone was the criterion of one's superiority over another. It has already been shown how he mixed with everyone on equal terms, how he (peace be upon him) ate with slaves, servants and

the poorest on the same sheet (a practice that is still followed in Arabia), how he (peace be upon him) refused all privileges and worked like any ordinary labourer.

Once the Prophet (peace be upon him) visited Sa'd Ibn 'Ubaadah. While returning, Sa'd sent his son Qays with him. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked Qays to mount his camel with him. Qays hesitated out of respect but the Prophet (peace be upon him) insisted: **"Either mount the camel or go back."** Qays decided to go back. [Abu Dawood]

On another occasion he (peace be upon him) was travelling on his camel over hilly terrain with a companion, Uqbah Ibn 'Aamir. After going some distance, he asked 'Uqbah to ride the camel, but Uqbah thought this would be showing disrespect to the Prophet. But the Prophet insisted and he had to comply.

foot as he did not want to put too much load on the animal. [An-Nasa'i]

On another occasion, the prisoners of war of Badr included Al-'Abbaas, the uncle of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Some people were prepared to forgo their shares and remit the Prophet's ransom but he declined saying that he could not make any distinctions. [Al-Bukhari]

In another incident, during a halt on a journey, the companions apportioned work among themselves for preparing food. The Prophet (peace be upon him) took upon himself the task of collecting firewood. His companions (peace be upon him) pleaded that they would do it and that he need not take the trouble, but he (peace be upon him) replied: **"It is true, but I do not like to attribute any distinction to myself. Allah does not like the man who considers himself superior to his companions."** [Az-Zarqaani]

The Prophet himself walked on



The final sermon of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is an example for all of humanity. He was a remarkable man at all times. He excelled in all walks of life and was a man of love, patience, courage, wisdom, generosity, intelligence and magnitude who inspired millions of lives throughout the world.

Allah Almighty says in the Quran that he was sent as a mercy for the people of the world. **"We sent thee not save as a mercy for the peoples."** (Quran 21:107)

His Prophetic Mission began at the age of forty, circa 610 C.E., and continued until 632 C.E. From the path of ignorance, mankind was lead to the straight path and was blessed with the guidance of Allah.

Shortly before his death, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) delivered a sermon during the Hajj, which came to be known as his **"Final Sermon"**. This final sermon was not only a reminder to his followers, but also an important admonition. The final sermon confirms the end of his Prophetic Mission.

Year 10 A.H. of the Islamic Calendar is considered to be one of the most significant years for three reasons. Firstly, this was the year when the Prophet delivered his Last Sermon during his farewell pilgrimage to Mecca. Secondly, this was the year where number of deputations came to the Prophet to announce their Islam as well as their tribes. Thirdly, it was the golden period of Islam when multitudes of people embraced the faith by accepting the message of the Prophet.

Prophet Muhammad's final sermon was delivered during the Hajj of the year 632 C.E., the ninth day of Dhul Hijjah, the 12th month of the lunar year, at Arafat, the most blessed day of the year.



O People, it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women, but they also have rights over you...If they abide by your right then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with any one of whom you do not approve, as well as never to be unchaste.

There were countless Muslims present with the Prophet during his last pilgrimage when he delivered his last Sermon.

The Final Sermon:

After praising, and thanking God, the Prophet, may God send His praises upon him said:

"O People, lend me an attentive ear, for I know not whether after this year, I shall ever be amongst you again. Therefore, listen to what I am saying to you very carefully and take these words to those who could not be present here today.

O People, just as you regard this month, this day, this city as Sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you. Remember that you will indeed meet your Lord, and that He will indeed reckon your deeds. God has forbidden you to take usury (interest), therefore all interest obligation shall henceforth be waived. Your capital, however, is yours to keep. You will neither inflict nor suffer any inequity. God has Judged that there shall be no interest, and that all the interest due to Abbas ibn Abd'al Muttalib shall henceforth be waived...

Beware of Satan, for the safety of your religion. He has lost all hope that he will ever be able to lead you astray in big things, so beware of following him in small things.

O People, it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women, but they also have rights over you. Remember that you

have taken them as your wives only under a trust from God and with His permission. If they abide by your right then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with any one of whom you do not approve, as well as never to be unchaste.

O People, listen to me in earnest, worship God, perform your five daily prayers, fast during the month of Ramadan, and offer Zakat. Perform Hajj if you have the means.

All mankind is from Adam and Eve. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab have any superiority over an Arab; white has no superiority over black, nor does a black have any superiority over white; [none have superiority over another] except by piety and good action. Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood. Nothing shall be legitimate to a Muslim which belongs to a fellow Muslim unless it was given freely and willingly. Do not, therefore, do injustice to yourselves.

Remember, one day you will appear before God and answer for your deeds. So beware, do not stray from the path of righteousness after I am gone.

O People, no prophet or apostle will come after me, and no new faith will be born. Reason well, therefore, O people, and understand words which I convey

to you. I leave behind me two things, the Quran and my example, the Sunnah, and if you follow these you will never go astray.

All those who listen to me shall pass on my words to others and those to others again; and it may be that the last ones understand my words better than those who listen to me directly. Be my witness, O God, that I have conveyed your message to your people."

Thus the beloved Prophet completed his Final Sermon, and upon it, near the summit of Arafat, the revelation came down:

"...This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My Grace upon you, and have chosen Islam for you as your religion..."

(Quran 5:3)

Even today the Last Sermon of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is passed to every Muslim in every corner of the world through all possible means of communication. Muslims are reminded about it in mosques and in lectures. Indeed the meanings found in this sermon are indeed astounding, touching upon some of the most important rights God has over humanity, and humanity has over each other. Though the Prophet's soul has left this world, his words are still living in our hearts.

Muhammad's (peace be upon him)

Claim to Prophethood

Divine facilitation is proportionate to human need. Air, water, and sunlight are necessary for human survival, and thus God has granted their acquisition to all without hardship. The greatest human need is to know the Creator, and thus, God has made it easy to know Him. The evidence for God, however, differs in its nature. In its own way, everything in creation is evidence of its Creator. Some evidence is so obvious that any lay person can immediately 'see' the Creator, for instance, the cycle of life and death. Others 'see' the handiwork of the Creator in the elegance of mathematical theorems, universal constants of physics, and the development of the embryo.

"Behold! in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, - there are indeed signs for men of understanding." (Quran 3:190)

Like the existence of God, human beings need evidence to establish the truth of prophets who spoke in His name. Muhammad, like the prophets before him, claimed to be God's final prophet to humanity. Naturally, the evidence for his veracity is diverse and numerous. Some are obvious, while others are apparent only after deep reflection.

Allah says in the Quran: **"...Is it not enough (for them to know) that your Lord is witness unto everything?"** (Quran 41:53) Divine testimony by itself is sufficient without any other evidence. God's witness for Muhammad lies in:

(a) God's past revelations to earlier prophets which prophesize Muhammad's appearance.

(b) God's Acts: the miracles and 'signs' He gave to support Muhammad's claim. How did it all begin in the early days of Islam? How were the first believers convinced he was God's prophet?

The first person to believe in the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) was his own wife, Khadija. When he returned home trembling out of fear after receiving divine revelation, she was his solace: "Never! By God, God will never disgrace you. You keep good relations with your relatives, help the poor, serve your guests generously, and assist those hit with calamities." (Saheeh Al-Bukhari)

Another person who accepted his call on merely listening to it, was 'Amr who related: "I used to think before Islam that people were in error and they were on nothing. They worshipped idols. In the meantime, I heard of a man preaching in Mecca; so I went to him... I asked him: 'Who are you?' He said: 'I am a Prophet.' I again said: 'Who is a Prophet?' He said: 'God sent me.' I said: 'What did He send you with?' He said: 'I have been sent to join ties of relationship, to break the idols, and to proclaim the unity of God so nothing is associated with Him (in worship).' I said: 'Who is with you in this?' He said: 'A free man and a slave (referring to Abu Bakr and Bilal, a slave, who had embraced Islam by that time).' I said: 'I intend to follow you.'" (Saheeh Muslim)

Dimad was a desert healer who specialized in mental illnesses. On his visit to Mecca he heard the Meccans say that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was insane! Confident of his skills, he said to himself, 'If I were to come across this man, God might cure him at my hand.' Dimad met the Prophet and said: 'Muhammad, I can protect (one) who suffers from mental illness or under sorcery, and God cures one whom He so desires at my hand. Do you desire to be cured?' The Prophet of God responded, starting with his usual introduction to his sermons: "Indeed, praise and gratitude is for God. We praise Him and ask for His help. He who God guides, none can lead astray, and he who is led astray cannot be guided. I bear witness no one deserves worship but God, He is One, has no partners, and Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger." Dimad, struck by the beauty of

the words, asked him to repeat them, and said, 'I have heard the words of diviners, sorcerers, and poets, but I have never heard such words, they reach the depth of the oceans. Give me your hand so I may pledge my allegiance to you on Islam.' (Saheeh Muslimi)

After Gabriel brought the first revelation to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), Khadija, his wife, took him to visit her old cousin, Waraqa bin Nawfal, a biblical scholar, to discuss the event. Waraqa recognized Muhammad from the prophecies of the Bible and confirmed: "This is the Keeper of Secrets (Angel Gabriel) who came to Moses." (Saheeh Al-Bukhari)

Muhammad (peace be upon him) made the claim, 'I am God's Messenger.' Either he was true in his claim or he was not. Is it possible for a liar to claim for a period of 23 years with unwavering certitude that he is a prophet like Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, that there will be no more prophets after him, and that the scripture he has been sent with will remain his lasting miracle till the end of time?

A liar will falter sometimes, perhaps with a friend, maybe with his family members, somewhere he will make a mistake. His message, delivered over two decades, will contradict itself sometimes. But what we see in reality is that the scripture he brought is free from internal inconsistencies and his message remained consistent throughout his mission.

Before Islam, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was well-known to his own people to be trustworthy and reliable, an hon-

est man, a person of integrity, who did not lie. It was due to this reason they named him "Al-Ameen", or "The Trustworthy". Is it possible for him to tell a consistent lie for 23 years, a lie so monstrous that it would make him a social outcast, when he was never known to have lied even once about anything? It's simply against the psychology of liars.

If one was to ask why a person would make claim to prophethood and lie, their answer might be one of two, either fame or wealth and status. If we were to say that the Muhammad claimed prophethood for fame, glory and status, we would see that what actually occurred was the exact opposite. Muhammad (peace be upon him), before his claim to Prophethood, enjoyed a high status in all aspects. He was of the most noble of tribes, of the most noble of families, and was known for his truthfulness. After his claim, he became a social outcast. For 13 years in Mecca, he and his followers faced excruciating torture, which led to the death of some of his followers, ridicule, sanctioning, and excommunication from society.

The Prophet was the husband of a wealthy tradeswoman, and he enjoyed the comforts of life available to him at his time. But after his claim to prophethood, he became of the poorest of people. The leaders of Mecca in his time offered him the riches of the world in order for him to leave his message.

Was He Insane?

Someone who has dealt with the mentally ill knows people can be identified by their symptoms. Muhammad (peace be upon him) displayed no symptom of insanity at any time in his life. No friend, wife, or family member suspected or aban-

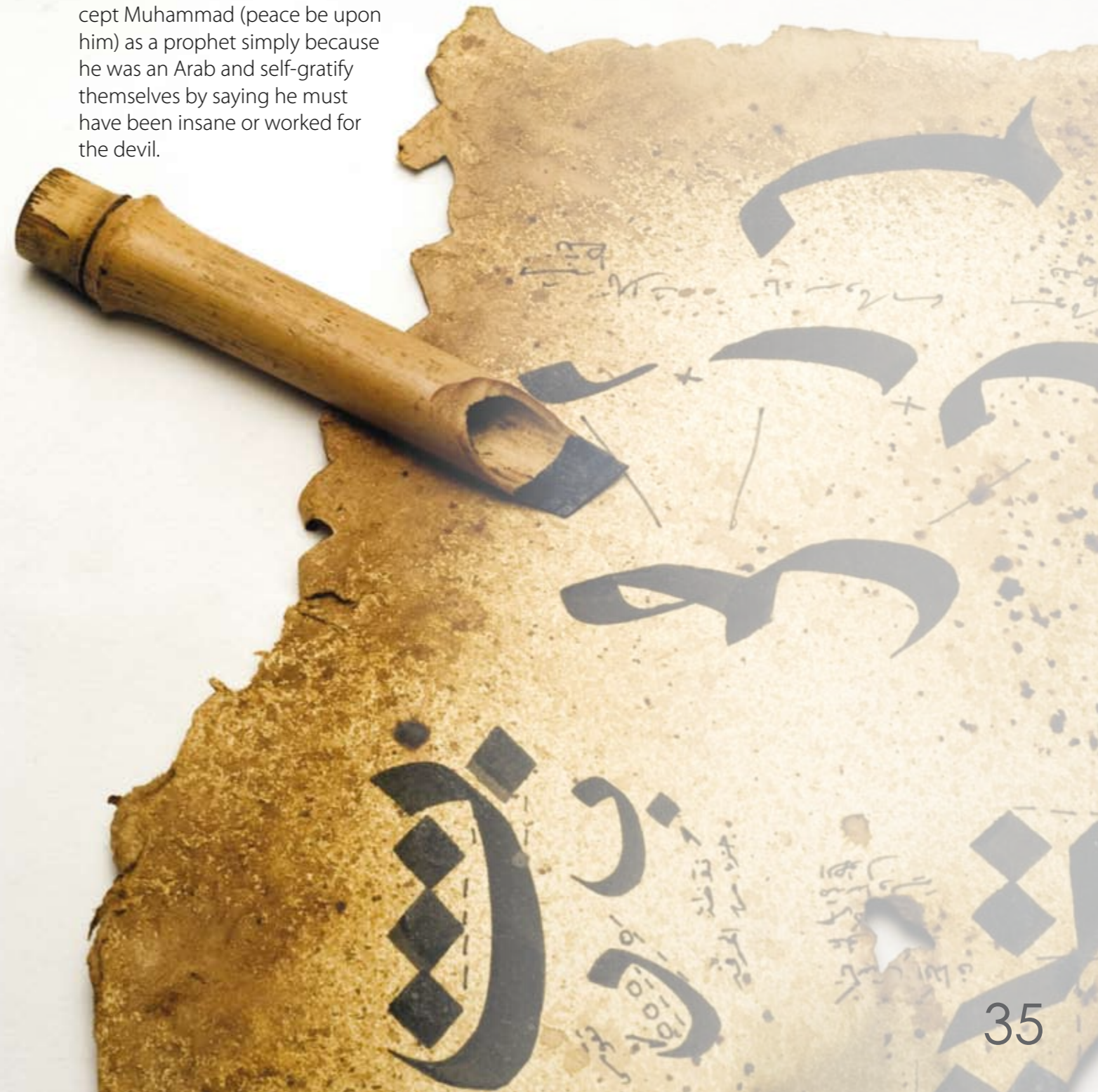
doned him due to insanity. Quite to the contrary, Muhammad (peace be upon him) preached for a long time and brought a Law unknown in its completeness and sophistication to ancient Arabs. If the prophet was insane, it would have been obvious to those around him at one point."

The Meccans of old rejected his call out of tribal partisanship, and they were not truthful in their accusations of his insanity. Even today, many people refuse to accept Muhammad (peace be upon him) as a prophet simply because he was an Arab and self-gratify themselves by saying he must have been insane or worked for the devil.

Their hatred for Arabs translates into their rejection of Muhammad, even though God says: "**Nay, but he (whom you call a mad poet) has brought the truth; and he confirms the truth of (what the earlier of God's) message-bearers (have taught).**" (Quran 37:37)

Arabian poets were the furthest from the truth, speaking of wine, womanizing, war, and leisure, unlike the Prophet who invites to good manners, serving God, and helping the poor. Muhammad (peace be upon him) followed his own teachings before anyone else unlike the poets of old or philosophers of today.

In conclusion, claims that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is a false prophet have been refuted for over 1000 years.



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