

Muhammed – the Solitaire

Essay by Badr Hashemi

hashemibadr@gmail.com

We do not possess in the Qur'an a narrative of the Solitaire's life such as we have for Abraham^(P), Joseph^(P) and even Jesus^(P). There are no stories of his birth, youth or mission. However, we can locate his birth in 570 CE in the middle of Europe's Dark Ages – in the endless, bleak, arid land that produced Moses^(P) and Jesus^(P).

He grew up in a fiercely tribal society. He was orphaned two times - father died before his birth, and mother at 6, had no siblings, but several cousins and other males of the Hashemi clan surrounding him as his extended family.

He saw himself as an ordinary person. There was no mark of divinity on him. His relatives and neighbours did not part and make way when he walked down the parched streets of Makkah.

The Qur'an shows him as an utterly human personality, a man who repeatedly emphasizes his human limitations:

Q, 07:188

قُلْ لَا أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِي نَفْعًا وَلَا ضَرًّا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ ۚ
وَلَوْ كُنْتُ أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبِ لَاسْتَكْنَزْتُ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ وَمَا مَسَّنِيَ السُّوءُ ۚ

Tell *them O The Prophet*: 'I have no power to *cause* myself neither *any* benefit or *any* harm except as Allah Wills. If I *ever* had the knowledge of what is beyond human perception, I would *always* have *enjoyed* abundance of the good, and the adversity would have never touched me.

Q. 10:49

قُلْ لَا أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِي ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ ۚ

Say *to them*: 'I have no power to *cause* myself neither *any* benefit or *any* harm except as Allah Wills.

Q. 18:110 & 41:06

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ

Say *O The Prophet*: 'I am *just* a human being like you. But with an exclusive dimension of being the recipient of Wa'hy.

He grew up to be a merchant and travelled on caravans to the Levant one season, and to Arabia Felix in the next. Merchants of his class routinely made journeys across the desert that lasted several months at a time. Makkah had its prosperity on the caravan trade beside being a pilgrimage centre.

The Solitaire was married to Sayeda Khadija ^(ra). They had four daughters and two sons, the latter two died in their infancy. He could neither read nor write, but that was common though even among the well-to-do.

Allah ^(swt) did not make life easier for the Solitaire. He made it far more difficult, and the wonder of his story is how He brought out of darkness with all the fallibility “a man among men”.

The most remarkable fact about the Solitaire is that he was so much like us until destiny provided one of the greatest shocks in history.

In year 610 CE, the Solitaire, 40-year old businessman, known as “Al-Ameen” and “Al-Sadiq” marched down the mountain cave on Jabal Al-Noor, as a Crowned Prophet - the final and supreme Prophet in a long series of prophets that stretches all the way to the beginning of human creation.

It follows, of course, that what he brings from Allah^(swt) is the final and most authoritative revelation of all. It supersedes all former revelations. And the impact of this Speech of Allah^(swt) is like an earthquake that would have reduced the mountain to rubble had it been descended upon it; Q. 59:21:

لَوْ أَنزَلْنَاهُ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلَىٰ جَبَلٍ لَّرَأَيْنَاهُ خَاشِعًا مُّتَصَدِّعًا مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ ۚ

Had We made this, The Qur'an, to descend onto a mountain *endowed with intellect and comprehension granted to human being*, you would have certainly seen it humbled and splitting in its awe of Allah?

Then we have an intensely vivid and revealing moments, a series of revelations, unfolding in constant dialogues with the community, who listens to them, moments that in their totality illuminate one man's struggle with the immensity of prophetic burden. But the sense of divine victory is very strong in him.

He brought Islam. Monotheism to replace Polytheism. The Arabs got One and Only God – Allah – in place of so many. But the message was more universal. Allah was not Yahweh dressed in a caftan. He was the One, an All-Pervasive Presence – to symbolise power and stature – that upheld the universe, the entire existence.

In addition to The Qur'an sketching out his middle-age time as Q. 93.06-08, it gives us some images of the Prophet's personality, moral conduct and manners:

Q. 93.06-08

أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَى ۖ وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَى ۖ وَوَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنَى ۝

Did He not find you an orphan, then took care of you! And He found you unaware of the Right Way, and He guided you to it. And He found you in need, and He enriched you.

Q. 68:04

إِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ ۝

Indeed, you are of an exalted status of moral excellence.

Q. 03:159

وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ ۚ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ

For if you had been stern and hard-hearted, they would have broken away from you. So pardon them and seek Allah's forgiveness for them, and consult them on relevant matters.

Together these two Qur'anic images establish that Prophet a clear moral ascendancy on the one hand, coupled with a sweetness and leniency of character on his role as a leader and preacher among people. He is a figure who inspires affection rather than fear and so was he titled in Divine Words رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ (Q. 21:107)

We also have touching stories about his silent preaching when he demonstrates personal example, humility, who admitted his mistakes, and far from being the only one to give orders in times of crisis, he sat in council with his colleagues, and listened to their voices.

One aspect of every prophet was common. Their story is the story of a lonely voice against injustice, suffering and inequality without seeking any benefit, remuneration or reward. They all encountered ridicule and disbelief, arrogance, physical harm and even death – but ultimately being vindicated or saved or also avenged by Allah^(swt); Q. 40:05:

كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَالْأَحْزَابُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ ۚ وَهَمَّتْ كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ بِرَسُولِهِمْ لِيَأْخُذُوهُ ۚ وَجَادَلُوا بِالبَاطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُوا بِهِ الْحَقَّ فَأَخَذْتُهُمْ ۚ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عِقَابِ ۝

The people who came before them also belied the truth - like from the People of Noah and after them from other groups and communities, and every community plotted to seize its Messenger and render him dysfunctional, and endeavored to

refute the Truth with falsehood. But *it was I Who* seized them - and *see how awful* was My Punishment!

The most frequent charges levelled against him, as against all the former prophets, which the Qur'an records, and strenuously denies are that he is a *sahir* – a sorcerer; *majnun* – bewitched; *muallamun* - tutored by someone; *sha'ir* - a poet; *kahin* – a soothsayer; *asatirul awwalin iktatbaha* - a spinner of fables, etc.

Earlier prophets have names and addressed as *Ya Ibrahim*, *Ya Musa*, *Ya Isa* and *Ya Zakariya*.

The Solitaire has a title which gives him a special status. He cannot be called “father of so-n-so” such as Abul Qasim, which his adversaries used in order to stress his ordinariness rather than his Prophethood, but only The Messenger of Allah, The Seal of Prophets, Ya' Seen, Ya Muzammal and Ya Mudassir, etc.

Remarkably, Allah^(swt) ties Himself to the Solitaire 29 times in the Qur'an, Q. 08:17:

فَلَمْ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ قَتَلَهُمْ ۖ وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَىٰ ۚ

So it were not you who slew them – *the enemy forces at Badr - 624 CE - by yourselves* – but *it was Allah Who* slew them by assigning the angelic forces to your assistance. And it was not you, *O The Prophet*, who threw when you threw onto the enemy forces a handful of gravel, saying: *Shahat-al-Wujuh*, but it was Allah Who threw it by making that throw effectively reach them and blind them,

Q. 48:10

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ ۚ

Those who pledge allegiance/loyalty to you *O The Prophet* are, in fact, pledging allegiance to Allah. Allah's Hand is over their hands!

Q. 04:80

مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ ۚ

Whoever obeys the Messenger *Muhammad* thereby obeys Allah,

The Qur'an asserts that believing in the Mission and Message of the Prophet leads one to the entitlement for seeking Allah's forgiveness, mercy and salvation.

Q. 47:02

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَآمَنُوا بِمَا نُزِّلَ عَلَىٰ مُحَمَّدٍ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ ۚ

كَفَّرَ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَأَصْلَحَ بَالَهُمْ ﴿٢﴾

While He will erase *impieties and sinful trespasses* of those who: believe, and practice righteousness, and believe in what has been sent on to Muhammad *The Prophet - The Qur'an*, and that it is the Truth from their Rabb - *The Lord Supreme*, and He will absolve them of their evil deeds and *also set aright their hearts and improve their spiritual situation*.

Q. 57:28

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَآمِنُوا بِرَسُولِهِ يُؤْتِكُمْ كِفْلَيْنِ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ
وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ نُورًا تَمْشُونَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ۖ

O The Faithful! Be mindful of Allah's *Presence and Power*, and believe in His Messenger! He will, then, grant you double the reward from His Mercy, and made for you a light - *the Qur'an* - by which you will walk *straight on the Path of Righteousness*, and He will forgive you.

Besides giving us the “miracle of the miracles” - The Qur'an – he set for us to follow a multi-dimensional model of state craft, security, politics, foreign relations, and interfaith harmony. Flagship of his social model is “*Ikhwa*” - demonstrating generosity, equality and selflessness.

The Prophet is approaching mid-sixties as seems to be his mission. He attends the first and the last Hajj with some one-and-a-half lacs diehard followers in attendance. Q. 05:03 was revealed upon him;

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتِمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا

This day of the Hajj I have perfected your religion for you, and I have completed My *Favors and Blessings* upon you, and I have approved Islam for you as a religion.

About 10 weeks later, he starts preparing to meet his رَفِيقُ الْأَعْلَى, the best friend. It is the month of Rabi al-Awwal, tenth month of the Islamic Lunar Calendar. It is the month when his soul descended from the higher realm to the earthly planet and it ascends to where it descended from, after sixty three years, in 632 CE.

إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

And whenever a smiting smites them, they say *in all humility*: ‘Truly, to Allah we belong, and truly to Him we *are to turn*.’

The community was devastated with grief at the thought of the Prophet's leaving this world, but they were comforted by the Divine Words (Q. 03:114 and (Q.28:88):

قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ أَفَإِنْ مَاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ انْقَلَبْتُمْ عَلَى أَعْقَابِكُمْ

Many Messengers have *already* passed away before *the Prophet*^(P). So what if he were to die or assassinated, would you then turn back on your heels *and leave his mission and the message?*

كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ

Everything *and everyone* is bound to perish except His Face/*Presence*.

The community was heavenly advised to follow the Prophet^(P) in Q. 33:21:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ

Certainly in the person of Allah's Messenger *Muhammad* you have a beautiful example *of steadfastness to follow*,

Let's endeavour to cultivate. أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ in ourselves, and become an image of the Prophet^(P).

عن قتادة قُلْتُ لِعَائِشَةَ يَا أُمَّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْبِئِي عَنِ خُلُقِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَتْ أَلَسْتُ تَقْرَأُ الْقُرْآنَ قُلْتُ بَلَى قَالَتْ فَإِنَّ خُلُقَ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ الْقُرْآنَ

Sayeda Aysha^(ra), Prophet's wife was once asked about his "*kuhluq*" to which she responded "His *khuluq* was the Qur'an" - meaning he was a living Qur'an. Let's follow our beloved Prophet, and live by the Qur'an.

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ
اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ
