

Mohammed

Biography / Overview

Mohammed, also known as Muhammad, was an Arab religious and political leader and the founder of Islam. He is considered the last prophet in the Islamic religion. He was born in Mecca, in present-day Saudi Arabia, in the year 570 CE. As a member of the Quraysh tribe, Mohammed grew up in a society that practiced polytheism. In his early life, he worked as a merchant and gained a reputation for his honesty and integrity. At the age of 40, Mohammed began to receive the first revelation from God/Allah through the angel Gabriel, which formed the basis of the Islamic holy book, the Quran. These revelations continued over a period of 23 years and formed the foundation of the Islamic faith.

During his time, Mohammed faced strong opposition from the ruling leaders of Mecca, which forced his followers to migrate to Medina in an event known as the Hijra. In Medina, Mohammed established the first Islamic community and continued to spread the message of Islam. He eventually conquered Mecca and consolidated the Arabian Peninsula under Islam. Mohammed passed away in 632 CE, leaving behind a rapidly growing community of followers or believers who would spread Islam across the globe.

Bibliography / Primary Sources

Mohammed left behind a rich legacy of writings that continue to be studied by scholars and practitioners. Some of his primary works include:

“The Quran”: It is considered the holy book of Islam and contains the revelations received by Mohammed from Allah.

“The Hadith”: It includes a collection of sayings and actions of Mohammed, which are important sources for understanding his life and teachings. Some of the key Hadith collections include Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, which are widely regarded as the most authentic compilations of Mohammed's teachings.

In addition to these primary sources, biographical works known as Sira literature provide further details about Mohammed's life and teachings. Works such as Ibn Ishaq's *Sirat Rasul Allah* and Ibn Kathir's *Al-Sira al-Nabawiyya* are important sources for understanding Mohammed's biography and the early history of Islam.

Sources

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Birth Date / Death Date

Birth Date: 570 CE in Mecca, Hejaz, Arabia (present day: Saudi Arabia)

Death Date: 8 June 632 CE in Medina, Saudi Arabia (at the age of 61–62)

Notable / Best-Known For

Mohammed is best known for being the founder of Islam and the final prophet in Islamic belief, receiving revelations from Allah that formed the Quran.

Mohammed's leadership and guidance led to the establishment of the first Islamic state in Medina and the spread of Islam throughout the Arabian Peninsula.

His teachings in the Quran and his sayings and actions (Hadith) form the foundation of Islamic law, ethics, and spiritual practice for Muslims worldwide.

Muhammad transformed Mecca and Medina into centers of monotheistic worship, replacing the polytheistic traditions of pre-Islamic Arabia.

Muslims honor him with the phrase "Peace Be Upon Him" after his name, and his life example (Sunnah) guides daily Muslim practice.

His emphasis on monotheism and the importance of charity and community has had a lasting impact on Islamic societies and cultures around the world.

Famous Quotes

"A person's true wealth is the good he does in this world." – Sahih Muslim, Mohammed

"God does not look at your forms and possessions, but He looks at your hearts and deeds." – Sahih Muslim, Mohammed

"None of you truly believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself." – Sahih al-Bukhari, Mohammed

"The strong man is not the one who overcomes others by his strength, but the one who controls himself while in anger." – Sahih al-Bukhari, Mohammed

Major Works / Textual Contents

The major work associated with Mohammed is the Quran itself, which is considered the central religious text of Islam and contains the revelations he received from Allah. In addition to the Quran, Mohammed's sayings and actions were recorded by his followers in collections called the Hadith, which are important texts for Muslims seeking guidance on how to live according to Islamic principles.

Mohammed's teachings and sermons, as recorded in the Hadith collections, provide insight into his views on a wide range of topics, including ethics, morality, social justice, and spirituality. These texts continue to be studied and revered by Muslims around the world as sources of religious guidance and inspiration.

Influences / Intellectual Context

Mohammed's teachings and beliefs were influenced by a variety of factors, including his upbringing in the polytheistic society of Mecca and his interactions with various religious traditions in the region. His encounters with Jewish and Christian communities in Arabia also played a role in shaping his understanding of monotheism and prophethood. His encounters with Christian monks and merchants while traveling also influenced him.

Additionally, Mohammed's experiences as a merchant and his role in the social and political life of Mecca provided him with a unique perspective on the challenges facing his society. His exposure to international commerce through caravan trade shaped his understanding of different cultural and religious practices. His teachings on social justice, compassion, and equality were influenced by his observations of the inequalities and injustices present in Arabian society at the time.

Legacy and Modern Significance

Mohammed's legacy as the founder of Islam and the final prophet in the Islamic religion continues to have a lasting influence on nearly 2 billion Muslims around the world. His teachings on monotheism (i.e., worshipping one God), social justice, and compassion have shaped the ethical and moral frameworks of Islamic societies for over 1,400 years. His teachings form the basis of Sharia (Islamic law), which influences legal systems in many Muslim-majority countries. Mohammed's emphasis on community, charity, and equality remains central to the practice of Islam today.

Besides his role as a religious leader, Mohammed's legacy as a political and social leader has inspired movements for justice, equality, and human rights in diverse contexts. His example of leadership, humility, and dedication to the welfare of others continues to guide individuals and communities seeking to create a fair, righteous, and compassionate world. In the 21st century, Muhammad's legacy shapes geopolitics, interfaith relations, and cultural identity.

Modern Moments / Impact on 21st-Century Society

In 2014, UNESCO launched the Mohammed VI Museum in Morocco, showcasing Islamic artistic heritage (though named after Morocco's king, not the Prophet).

The 2019 publication of *Muhammad: Prophet of Peace Amid the Clash of Empires* by Juan Cole explores Mohammed's leadership in promoting peace and justice in a time of conflict.

In 2002, *Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet*, a documentary about the Prophet's life that reached 10 million U.S. viewers and was broadcast worldwide in multiple languages by 2003, left a lasting impact on audiences worldwide.

Digital resources such as the Muhammad Legacy Project aim to preserve and promote the teachings and legacy of Mohammed through online platforms and educational initiatives.

Suggested Readings and Scholarly Resources

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