

In the Name of Allah the Beneficent the Merciful

To understand Islaam, it is vital to know about the last and final messenger, Muhammad bin 'Abdullah bin 'Abdul-Muttalib bin Hashim (peace be upon him). The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) came from the tribe of Hashim. He (peace be upon him) said,

"Allah selected Ishmael from the sons of Abraham, Kinana from the sons of Ishmael, Quraish from the sons of Kinana, Hashim from the sons of Quraish and He selected me from the sons of Hashim."

Both of his parents died when he was young and he was left in the care of his uncle, Abu Talib. Muhammad (peace be upon him) had a unique character, even before the message of Islam was revealed to him. Amongst the Arabs he was known to be honest, truthful, and one with astounding character. At a time when many people let go of monotheism and began worshipping idols, Muhammad (peace be upon him) was known to have believed in one God alone, without the association of partners. It is not surprising to see why so many people chose to revert after hearing the message of Islam from him. His reputation as an honest businessman and human being helped in the spread of Islam. People were quick to believe in something that was revealed to someone they knew and trusted.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) spent much of his time meditating in the cave of Hira. This is the very place where the first revelation was brought down to him at the age of forty. Allah sent Angel Jibreel (peace be upon him) to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) with the first ayaat (verses) of the Quraan. The Prophet (peace be upon him) later explained:

"Then he (Jibreel) took me and squeezed me vehemently and then let me go and repeated the order 'Recite.' 'I cannot recite' said I, and once again he squeezed me until I was exhausted. Then he said: 'Recite.' I said 'I cannot recite.' He squeezed me for a third time and then let me go and said: 'Read! In the Name of your Lord, Who has created (all that exists), Has created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood). Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous, Who has taught (the writing) by the pen [the first person to write was Prophet Idrees (Enoch)], Has taught man that which he knew not. Nay! Verily, man does transgress all bounds (in disbelief and evil deeds, etc.)" (Surah Al-'Alaq, 96:1-6).

We can see from the incident that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was illiterate. Historically, at that time in Arabia, poetry was at its peak. Poets used to compete all the time with the eloquence of the Arabic language. Many accused the Prophet (peace be upon him) of writing the Quraan himself, but it is evident that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was illiterate.

"Nay," they say, "(These are) medleys of dreams! Nay, he forged it! Nay, he is (but) a poet! Let him then bring us a Sign like the ones that were sent to (Prophets) of old!" (Surah Al Anbiyah 21:5)

It is impossible for any man, let alone an illiterate man, to bring forth something like the Quraan. The beauty of the ayaat in the Arabic language are so profound that many people accepted Islam, and still accept Islam because of the verses. And if one were to think rationally, it is apparent that such eloquent words can not be created by a human. At that time of great poetry in Arabia nothing rivaled the Quraan and now over 1400 years later, nothing in literature rivals the Arabic text of

the Quraan. The rhythm, the movement, the depth, and meaning of the verses are indescribable.

We know that every Prophet has a miracle; the miracle of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is indeed the Quraan. Narrated Abu Hurairah: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ***"Every Prophet was given miracles because of which people believed but what I have been given is the Divine inspiration which has been revealed to me. So, I hope that my followers will out-number the followers of the other Prophets on the Day of Resurrection."*** Muhammad (peace be upon him) is a Messenger just like Abraham, Noah, Moses, and Jesus (peace be upon them all).

After these Prophets died people of different nations forgot their teachings and began to engage in idol worship. It therefore became necessary to send another Prophet. Muhammad (peace be upon him) was sent as a Messenger for all people. Allah says in Surah An-Nahl, ***"And verily, We have sent among every Ummah (community, nation) a Messenger (proclaiming): 'Worship Allah (Alone), and avoid (or keep away from) Taghut (all false deities, etc. i.e. do not worship Taghut besides Allah).' Then of them were some whom Allah guided and of them were some upon whom the straying was justified. So travel through the land and see what was the end of those who denied (the truth)"*** (Surah An Nahl 16:36).

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) came as a Messenger to the whole of mankind, not just the Arabs. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ***"And the Prophets were formerly sent to their people only, whereas I have been sent to all mankind"*** (Bukhari and Muslim).

Unlike many of the other Prophets and Messengers, Muhammad (peace be upon him) is

to be followed in every aspect of life. He held many roles and positions; he was a businessman, a father, a companion, a husband, and a leader. He is the ideal person to be followed and the ideal slave of Allah. Allah commanded that if at any time something were to happen, people should refer back to the Quraan and Muhammad. Allah states in Surah An-Nisa, **"But know, by your Lord, they can have no Faith, until they make you (Oh Muhammad) judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept (them) with full submission"** (4:65). With the Prophet's divine inspiration, as was revealed to him, he was quick to give the proper solution to problems that people had. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was full of humility, modesty, and nobility. Allah states in Surah Al-Anbiya, **"And We have sent you (Muhammad) not but as a mercy for the 'Alamin (mankind, jinns and all that exists)"** (21:107).

Believing that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the last and final messenger is a part of a Muslim's faith. No other Messenger or Prophet will come after him and he is the seal of all the Messengers. In his final sermon, he said **"O People, no prophet or apostle will come after me and no new faith will be born. Reason well, therefore, O People, and understand my words which I convey to you. I leave behind me two things, the Qur'an and my example, the Sunnah (Prophet's example), and if you follow these you will never go astray ..."**. Allah says in Surah Al-Ahzab, **"Muhammad (peace be upon him) is not the father of any man among you, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last (end) of the Prophets. And Allah is Ever All Aware of everything"** (33:40). Allah commanded the Muslims to follow him because the Prophet

Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the best example amongst mankind. In Surah Al-Ahzab Allah states, **"Indeed in the Messenger of Allah (Muhammad) you have a good example to follow for him who hopes in (the meeting with) Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah much"** (33:21).

In Surah Al-Imran it further states, **"Say (O Muhammad to mankind): 'If you (really) love Allah then follow me, Allah will love you and forgive you of your sins. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. 'Say (O Muhammad): 'Obey Allah and the Messenger, but if they turn away, then Allah does not like the disbelievers'"** (3:31-32).

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"And We have sent you (Muhammad) not but as a mercy for the 'Alamin (mankind, jinns and all that exists)" [Qur'an 21:107]

"Our Lord! we believe in what Thou hast revealed, and we follow the Messenger; then write us down among those who bear witness." [Qur'an 3:53]