



NEW MUSLIM
ACADEMY

The Lived Example of the
**MESSENGER
MUHAMMAD**

The statement of faith in Islam is a covenant with God which comprises of two parts. The first is the testimony and promise to worship and serve the One True God alone without any partner in His exclusive rights, and the second is to do so only on God's terms and conditions by following the lived example of Muhammad, God's final Messenger to humanity. Living up to this statement of faith and applying it in life is the only way to Salvation.

Let us take a brief look at this topic...

In Islam we believe that God created humans with the purpose of getting to know Him properly and having a relationship with Him based on ultimate Love and Reverence. The result of this relationship is devotion, service, worship and Thanksgiving. In order for humans to know about God, He sent them human messengers to teach the same message throughout the ages. That message is 'Worship and obey God and follow His messenger'. That message is Islam and the messengers were the ideal Muslims throughout the ages. They produced Muslim communities during their respective ministries.



The Purpose of Divinely Sent Messengers

The One True God sent human Messengers throughout history to introduce Himself properly to people. The messengers were tasked with showing people the correct way to God and to exemplify how to live their lives according to their purpose in a manner which is pleasing to God. “God always sent messengers speaking the language of their own people to make things clear for them.” 14:4 These great men all taught who God truly is and what His exclusive rights are and what He deserves. They made clear that we should know God properly, love Him and revere Him, give thanks to Him and serve Him devotedly alone on His terms and conditions. “We sent a messenger to every community saying, ‘serve and obey the One True God and shun false gods.’” 16:36 The messengers of God are role models after whom we try to emulate our lives.



Scripture and the Messengers

God also sent scriptures with these messengers and tasked the messengers with the responsibility to apply the scripture and explain it through their actions and statements. God sent several scriptures throughout human history. The Quran is the final scripture. It is important to realize that God never sent a scripture without sending a messenger first. The messengers had the best reputation among their people before ever receiving revelation from their Lord. After being appointed to carry the message, they were also tasked with explaining the scripture and interpreting it through their words and deeds. That is the lived example of the messengers.



The Example of the Messenger Muhammad

The Messenger Muhammad was the last of God's Chosen Messengers. In a number of passages in the Quran, God commands us to obey Muhammad as a Divinely appointed authority figure. "Say, 'Obey God and the Messenger'." 3:32 "You who believe, obey God and the messenger." 4:59 God further commands us to take Muhammad as an ultimate role model and example, "The Messenger of God is an excellent model for those of you who put your hope in God and the Last Day and mention and remember God often." 33:21



Muhammad is Not Divine Only God is Divine and Holy

Some may think that Muslims worship Muhammad the way Christians worship Jesus. That is simply not true.

Christians believe in the divinity of Jesus and some of them believe in the divinity of his mother Mary, the Virgin. Muslims do not believe in the divinity of Jesus, Mary or Muhammad. In Islam only God is Divine.

Muslims don't worship Muhammad. We don't end our prayers in his name. We don't have an equivalent of "Hail Mary" dedicated to the mother of Muhammad. We pray directly to God and end prayer in the name of God only. We simply try to follow Muhammad's model and way as he followed the model and way of the messengers before him Abraham, Moses and Jesus.



How do we take the Messenger Muhammad as a model?

The Messenger explained and exemplified God's commandments. God commands us to perform worship in the Quran, but the method, timings, pre-conditions and other aspects of the prescribed ritual devotions were explained and shown by the Messenger through his sayings and actions. The same can be said for fasting, the pilgrimage and other aspects of worship and devotion. As such, the Quran and the example of the Messenger Muhammad go hand in hand and they complement each other. This example of the Messenger Muhammad is generally called the 'Sunnah' in Arabic.



The Sunnah

The Sunnah refers to all the teachings of the Messenger Muhammad. These can be his sayings such as when he said, “Offer your prescribed ritual devotions as you have seen me doing,” or, “Take from me the rites of your ritual pilgrimage.” Sayings such as these give us clear instructions as to what to do or not do. The Sunnah also includes the Messenger's actions as described by his disciples. They describe for us how he performed his ritual washing and cleansing and how he offered his prescribed ritual devotions. They also describe how he treated his family, children, community, enemies and friends. Therefore we learn that we should perform these actions and live our lives in a similar manner.

The third aspect that the Sunnah includes are the tacit approvals of the Messenger Muhammad. If an action or statement was made in the presence of the Messenger and he did not object it, it becomes a part of his tradition. In this instance, he does not say or do anything himself, rather he observes others in action and does not object. His silence shows that the action he observed is permissible because the Messenger did not have the luxury of seeing wrong and not speaking out against it. His silence is approval.

The Sunnah also includes the physical and character descriptions of the Messenger Muhammad. This includes how he dressed, how he ate, how he slept, how he spoke, how he taught, how he engaged others, how he looked, his complexion, his hair, his beard, his attire, his hygiene, his diet, his generosity, his patience, his mercy and so on.



The Reward of Following the Example of the Messenger Muhammad

Our love for God which is an integral part of our faith and its main foundation requires us and gives us the drive to do what God commands. To truly love God also requires loving what God loves. One of the greatest commandments of God is to follow the example of God's final messenger. The most beloved person to God is His final messenger and devoted servant Muhammad. One of the greatest rewards we gain by following the example of Muhammad is attaining God's love and His forgiveness. "Say, 'If you love God, follow me, and God will love you and forgive you your sins.'" 3:31 By following the example of Muhammad we ensure that we are always on the path most pleasing to God. The Messenger informed us that we should follow his example as it would help us in times of hardship and confusion.

The Messenger Muhammad's example does not only include the obligations we have as Muslims, but also the voluntary and recommended actions. An example of this is that Muhammad encouraged us to offer twelve units of the voluntary ritual devotions a day along with the five daily rituals. By doing so we will have a house built for us in Paradise.

Muhammad lead a life dedicated to the service of God and sharing the message with people. His life was very simple and humble. He was an upright man that was loved and respected by his friends and enemies. Every detail of his life is preserved as he is the role model to follow for those who wish to attain salvation and gain favor with God.

As muslims we should develop and cultivate a healthy relationship with the Messenger of God. There is so much to say about this topic but suffice it to say that the best way to follow the example of the messenger Muhammad is to get to know him closely and to study his life and traditions. This will ensure that we have an intimate relationship with him based on certain knowledge and awareness.

May God's protection be with you.