

On the Path of the Beloved ﷺ

The Divine Preparation of the Prophet ﷺ

In The Name of Allah, The All-Merciful, The Ever-Merciful. Peace and blessings be upon our Prophet ﷺ.

We will continue with the Seerah of our beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. But first let us rekindle our gratitude for Allah who granted us Ramadan; the month of forgiveness and salvation from hellfire. We should also be grateful that he made us live long enough to see this Ramadan and be blessed with Laylat Al-Qadr while others have passed away before it even started. These blessings should be met with the deepest gratitude, sincere thankfulness and with a complete submission to Allah.

Let us now start today's lecture, which will cover the youth of the Prophet ﷺ, his marriage and the final divine preparations that were essential for making the Prophet eligible to receive the message of Islam. In other words, we will stop at the incident of The Cave of Mount. Hira'.

First, Here's a quick review of the main facts concerning the Prophet's background:

- ❑ Social background: He was an orphan, whose mother and his father died before he was born. Furthermore, he was their only child. This taught the Prophet ﷺ that this worldly life is a short and transitory one.
- ❑ Upbringing: The Prophet ﷺ moved houses five times in his early years, his mother at birth; his first wet-nurse Halima Al-Sa'dia, in the desert, from birth up until the age of two; his mother again from two to the age of six; his grandfather Abdul-Muttalib from six up until the age of eight, after the death of his mother; and finally his uncle Abu-Taleb when he was eight years of age, after the death of his grandfather. This continuous moving from one place to another taught him seriousness, responsibility, flexibility and the ability to adapt to various situations.
- ❑ Work: He worked as a shepherd between the ages of 8 and 15. During these seven years, he learned patience and the ability to unite people. Then, he worked in trade between the age of 15 and 35, during which time he learned to be a good judge of character.
- ❑ Financial Status: The fact that he was a descendent of one of the greatest Arab families yet he was poor, enabled him to mingle easily with both the poor and the rich.

- ▣ Social Activities: He was an active participant in social and political activities. At the age of 15 he saw the war of Fajar with Quraysh which lasted four years. This was his first encounter with the art of war. At the age of 18, he participated in the tribal federation of Fudul, which taught him the art of peace and negotiation.
- ▣ Educational background: He was illiterate, which is a miracle in itself since he was still able to become the best teacher of humanity. Nevertheless, he acquired a great deal of experience from his dealings and interaction with all the people around him. This should teach the youth of today to socialize and never isolate themselves. Social interaction is essential in polishing one's character. The Prophet ﷺ did not acquire his experience miraculously overnight; but rather acquired it through persistent hard work over several years.
- ▣ Thus, I advise all youth to participate in different social and political activities. We don't need irresponsible youth nor do we need youth who use religion as an excuse to keep themselves isolated from society. We need youth who are able to build and develop our societies in order to avoid the mistake of the previous generation who did not add to the development of their communities. Helping an orphan or any other social work will produce the mature youth we need.

Let us return to the Seerah of our Prophet ﷺ. At the age of 25, he still needed another type of experience to enable him to become The final Prophet for the whole world. He needed to travel and have contact with other nations to learn how to deal with all types of people as he was only familiar with people from Quraysh. This brings me to the importance of travel. The experience that one gains in one year of travel equals that of 20 years of living in one place.

The Prophet ﷺ then started working for Khadijah Bint-Khowayled leading her caravan to Al-Sham and Yemen. This introduced him to the greatest two empires at that time, the Romans and the Persians. It should be obvious for you now how his long preparation was planned?

Consequently, when his uncle Abu-Taleb approached him to suggest that he worked for Khadijah, he accepted since his view of women had always been one of respect. Hence, no feeling of embarrassment stood between him and working for a woman or dealing with her as necessity demanded. This teaches our youth not to shy from dealing with girls or women as long as there is a proper reason for it and as long as they maintain mutual respect. However, some youth today come up with feeble reasons to mix with the opposite sex, this is not acceptable.

Khadijah was not an ordinary woman; she was a very successful businesswoman who had been widowed twice and was nearly 40 years of age at that time. Thus, when Abu-Taleb approached her to suggest that Muhammad could work for her, she accepted but had to test him. She gave him a small caravan and sent her young

servant Maysara with him, whom she trusted to report to her news concerning Muhammad's skills and honesty. Having joined Muhammad on three trips to Yemen, Maysara returned to Khadijah and told her that he had never seen anyone as honest, trustworthy or hard working as Muhammad. This teaches our youth the value of hard work. Sometimes, I feel disappointed when I see young people who want to achieve many things in life but are not prepared to work hard. In fact, it is shameful for any young person to work only for two or three hours a day and claim that he loves Muhammad who used to spend long hours at work everyday.

Maysara informed Khadijah how successful Muhammad was in making profit in an honest manner and how he never bowed to any idols –just like herself—since he heard him telling a client that he never worshipped Al-Lat and Al-Uzza. This made her curious to learn more about him and decided to trust him with her caravan's major trip to Al-Sham.

Instead of taking the usual five to six weeks that most merchants took to sell their merchandise in Al-Sham, Muhammad managed to sell all his merchandise before he even arrived there and he returned with the profit. This teaches us that religious people who carry the responsibility of da'wa should never confine themselves to the mosque but rather they should work hard. Our Prophet was more skillful in trade than the great merchant Abu-Sufyan, who used to spend two to three weeks selling his merchandise in Al-Sham.

This gradual success in all aspects of life was necessary to polish Muhammad's character. It was not miraculous but rather achievable for anyone who is prepared to commit oneself to learning and working hard. Even if we take into consideration the miracles that Allah bestowed on Muhammad ﷺ, we should keep in mind that these miracles did not interfere with the sequence of events. Muhammad gradually proved himself, first as a successful shepherd, then as a young honest and skillful merchant who passed several tests over a full year period and finally as a very successful and well-established merchant.

The idea of acquiring success gradually over time is one of the main principles in Islam and in Sunnah. It should teach the youth today to be patient and to work hard to accomplish their goals.

As Muhammad reached this level of success in his practical life and after dealing with different people from different nations, he became ready for the final stage of his preparation: starting a family. He needed to get married and lead a successful family life in order to be able to teach others how to do the same.

How did the marriage issue start? Muhammad had maintained a cheerful face and flexibility in all his dealings, even during times of disagreement. This cheerfulness is one major requirement for success in business, as the West later on came to understand through research. Having been deeply impressed by Muhammad's incomparable kindness, honesty, and cheerfulness, Khadijah decided to take the first step.

Khadijah had rejected several marriage proposals from the elite of Quraysh who were attracted by either her beauty or her wealth. Khadijah then spoke to one of her friends, Nafisah Bint Al-Munabbih, and admitted her admiration for Muhammad, and gave permission to Nafisah to talk to him concerning the marriage.

Here, we need to analyze this situation and ask whether it is appropriate for a woman to initiate a marriage proposal. According to this exemplary marriage of Khadijah and Muhammad, yes! A woman can raise this issue; however, the manner of approaching such a proposal is of great importance. In our present time, to get married is not easy and our girls have to keep in mind to never choose a manner that might dishonor them or make them feel that they are taken for granted in the eyes of potential husbands. Let us learn from Khadijah and the person she chose to perform the task of proposing.

Being mature and eloquent, Nafisah went to Muhammad.

Nafisah: Muhammad, are you married?

Muhammad: No

Nafisah: Why?

Muhammad: With this poverty, who would marry me?

Nafisah: Khadijah.

Muhammad: Would she accept me?

Nafisah: I will talk to her about it.

Two days later, she went back to him to inform him of Khadijah's approval and how highly she thought of him.

I appeal to our girls never to approach marriage in a manner that might render them easy or cheap in the eyes of men, who as soon as they lose their respect for a woman, would never marry her.

This is not related to religion as much as it is related to the nature of human beings, who always cherish that which is obtained with difficulty. Thus, Islam established laws concerning dowry and considered the approval of a girl's guardian to be essential condition of marriage. The difficulty a man faces in obtaining his wife makes him treat her as a jewel afterwards. By contrast, the girls who accept orfi marriage (customary and unregistered marriage) are always abandoned in the end. See how the Seerah touches on sensitive issues in our present life!

Back to Muhammad ﷺ and Khadijah, whose marriage lasted 25 years against all the odds

- It is true that Khadijah was 15 years older than Muhammad. Nevertheless, the level of maturity of both, which is a main factor in determining whether a marriage can be successful or not, was extraordinary. Muhammad's exemplary maturity was quite difficult to come by. Khadijah was mature enough never to make him feel inferior to her. We need to keep in mind the actual maturity of the characters involved when it comes to such matters,

especially since psychologists affirm that a woman matures faster than a man, which can create problems for the married couple if they are of the same age or if the woman is much older than the man. Thus, it is preferable that the man is a bit older than the woman.

- ▣ Financially, Khadijah was wealthier than Muhammad ﷺ but this was not a problem since their social level was close. In fact, Muhammad is the descendent of the most honorable family in Quraysh.

- ▣ Islam does not only emphasize the significance of the necessity of the similarity of the couple's religious level in marriage; but also emphasizes similarity in their social status. In any case, the husband is the one who should carry the financial responsibility. Thus, the successful merchant Muhammad , who had even secured a partnership with another merchant named Al-Said Ibn Abi Al-Said, was the one who took care of his family's expenses. This not only refutes a claim made by some orientalists that claim that he married Khadijah for her money, but also teaches our girls and their guardians to test their potential husbands prior to marriage to be certain of their honesty just as Khadijah herself did.

Omar Ibn Al-Khattab asked a man once whether he knew a particular person.

The man: Yes, I know him.

Omar: Have you dealt with him financially?

The man: No

Omar: Perhaps you saw him praying and nodding his head?

The man: Yes.

Omar: Then, you do not know him.

These are the reasons behind the success of Muhammad's marriage to Khadijah. The marriage lasted 25 years: 15 years prior to the prophecy and 10 years after the prophecy. They had six children together: four girls (Zeinab, Roqayya, Om-Kulthom, Fatimah) and two boys (Al-Qasem and Abdullah). Unlike Romeo and Juliet, who never got to consummate their love and put it to the real test of marriage, Muhammad and Khadijah's love was tested through marriage that lasted for a long time. Let me give you some proof of its success:

Twenty years after Khadijah's death, during the conquest of Makkah, and while the Prophet was very busy dealing many issues, he saw an elderly lady coming towards him. He immediately made room for her and asked everyone not to disturb them for an hour. The people saw him spread his cloak for her to sit on, then talked and laughed with her.

This aroused everyone's curiosity to the extent that, when he returned, Aisha asked him who the lady was.

Muhammad: Khadijah's friend.

Aisha: What were you talking about?

Muhammad: We were remembering the good old days of Khadijah.

One day, after Khadijah's death and during Muhammad's marriage to Aisha, the Prophet heard a knock at his door similar to that of Khadijah, he immediately said that he wished the visitor was Khadijah's sister Hala and so it was.

This great love and loyalty lasted 25 years and was interrupted by the sad death of the two sons of the Prophet. It is as if the Prophet was reminded again and again that life is transitory and short. Through these events, Allah taught the Prophet that he should live for his goal, and should not get distracted by life. One son died at the age of three and the other at the age of four; the age when parents are most attached to their children. During his 35 years, the Prophet saw the death of a lot of very close people to him, his father, mother, grandfather and two sons. This made the Prophet realize that life is short, and that it isn't worth sacrificing the hereafter for.

One doesn't have to go through all these hardships to come to realize this fact; one doesn't have to lose a loved one to realize how little life is worth in comparison to the hereafter. **"Indeed you have already had a fair example, in the Messenger of Allah, for whoever hopes for Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah much." (33:21).**

Live for your goals, live for Allah's cause. Don't live to raise your kids, you will die, or they will die. This lesson we learn from the death of the Prophet's children is for those who have lost a child. Sometimes, Allah takes one thing from you to give you something better. Sometimes, a person is destined to go to hell, but when he/she dies young, his/her parents start doing good deeds and dedicate the ajer for the dead person that he/she is rewarded by going to paradise because of such deeds.

Now, the next stage in preparing the Prophet ﷺ for his mission was to show his humanity to all mankind and not only Muslims. This is a lesson Muslims should learn from. They should look at how merciful the Prophet was to non-Muslims before Islam. Was the Prophet sent for Muslims only, or was he sent to all mankind? Of course he was sent to all mankind. Thus, the Prophet had to go through experiences to show everyone his mercy to all mankind. Some Muslims limit their mercy to Muslims, which is not how the Prophet was.

Let's look at the story of Zaid Ibn Haretha. This happened before the Prophethood. There was a woman called Sa'da Bent Ta'laba, who had a son called Zaid. This woman went out with Zaid, who was eight then, to another village. The boy was kidnapped on the way and sold later in the market place of Akadh as a slave. A man called Hakim Ibn Hossam Ibn Khwayled, Khadijah's nephew, bought him. Zaid was

given as a gift to Khadijah, who in turn gave him to Prophet Muhammad . The boy lived with the Prophet. Then one day, the father was told that his son lived in Prophet Muhammad's house.

He started collecting money to buy his son back. The father then met with Prophet Muhammad and asked him to accept the money in return for his son. Prophet Muhammad told him that he had a better solution; to let the boy choose for himself whom he wanted to be with. If the boy chose the father, then he could have him back and he wouldn't have to pay anything to the Prophet, but if the boy chose the Prophet, he should be left to stay with him. Can you see how merciful he was? The Prophet was not Muslim at that time; he was caring and kind towards everyone. The Prophet did not just tell them to take Zaid back because he saw how Zaid was attached to him and was caring of his feelings. He wanted Zaid to do the choosing. Zaid chose to be with the Prophet. His father amazed, asked Zaid how he could choose being a slave over being with his parents. Zaid replied by saying that he had seen from the Prophet an unprecedented mercy, and that he would never choose to leave him, no matter what he was offered. The Prophet was merciful even though he was not a Muslim then. We should all learn from his mercy.

The last stage in preparing the Prophet for his mission was to test his leadership abilities. He had to be able to solve disputes between people and unify them. Also, it is crucial that before the onset of the prophecy that he was recognized as an honored trusted person among his people, so that it is clear later on that those who did not follow his call did so because of their own interests and not because he was dishonest or not trustworthy.

The Prophet was now 35 years of age. Quraysh decided to rebuild the Ka'ba. People were scared of tearing the Ka'ba down in preparation for the rebuilding, because of what happened to Abrahah and his army who died trying to tear it down. So, Al-Waleed Ibn Al-Moghera, who was known for being brave, said he would do it. He said that since they were doing it for a good cause, Allah wouldn't harm them. This is an important point; Allah accepts good intentions even if you are not a Muslim. So, Al-Waleed started tearing down the Ka'ba, and all the rest waited to see what would become of him. When they were sure that nothing happened, they all joined in the building of the Ka'ba.

Quraysh made sure that all the money used for rebuilding the Ka'ba came from honest and ethical sources, not from immoral ones. This is another important point. Even Non-Muslims knew that Allah would not accept money coming from unethical sources. This truth we know through our fitra (the original knowledge a human is born with), so why do we Muslims sometimes ignore it? How can some Muslims feed their children from money obtained through haram sources? What grows out of haram money is destined to hellfire. How could you do this to your kids? An important issue nowadays is the copyright issue. A lot of people allow themselves free access to the work of others. This is very harmful to the country as a whole, and it ruins our chances of development.

Now, back to the Ka'ba. Every tribe built a portion of the Ka'ba, as it was considered an honor to do so. After the building was done, it was time to place al-hajar al-aswad (the black stone in the holy mosque, which is a stone from paradise) back into its place. Every tribe wanted to perform that task, and they couldn't reach an agreement. The issue got so complicated that one tribe said they would start a war if they were not the ones to move al-hajar.

Three days passed, and no decision was made. Al-Waleed then suggested that they should allow the first person to come through the door of the place they were sitting in to judge who would carry al-hajar, no matter who that person was. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ came through the door. Notice how Allah arranged for the Prophet to be the one to settle this dispute. Miracles did not happen to the Prophet, but Allah planned for him. You too, if you work and put effort into your work, Allah will make things work out for you.

As soon as the Prophet came in, all were happy and agreed to take him as judge because of his honesty. This assertion was made before his Prophethood, which shows how respected and trustworthy he was. Thus, Allah says **“Yet surely they do not cry lies to you, but the unjust (people) repudiate the signs of Allah.” (6:33).**

The Prophet ﷺ came up with a quick intelligent answer, like the leader that he is. He asked them to spread a cloak on the ground. He then picked up al-hajar and placed it on the cloak. Next, he asked a representative from each tribe to hold on to one end of the cloak and they all moved it simultaneously towards the Ka'ba, where the Prophet placed it in its position. He allowed them all to join in, which made them feel they each had accomplished something.

The Prophet was merciful to the non-Muslims on that day when he carried al-hajar to prevent the war. He was also merciful to Muslims afterwards when, during hajj, he wouldn't touch al-hajar, and instead he only pointed to it without touching it, so that people wouldn't fight to touch it during hajj. I really feel great love in my heart for Prophet Muhammad .

Anas Ibn Malek said that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ entered Madinah on a Monday and it was lighted by his presence and he died in Madinah on a Monday, when everything darkened. People then asked him what he wished for? He said, **“I don't want anything from this world. I wish to meet him on the Day of Judgment and tell him; your servant Onayes is here (young Anas), and he would accompany me to paradise.**

After all this preparation, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was ready to start receiving the message from Allah. He was fully prepared for it in all aspects and the world was waiting for him to start his mission of restoring peace and justice to the world. That's what the world needs now too; someone to restore peace and justice.

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Seerah: Ibn Ishaq, Ibn Hisam, Ibn Kathir and Diya al-Nabi were used in the compilation of these lecture notes as well as various books of Hadith.

The selective topics and format is from Amr Khaled's Arabic lecture on Seerah of the Prophet ﷺ with renditions from the "dar al tarjma" convoy.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3oDLD8B-has>

I have included modifications for the sake of readability and clarity.