


ALI 255: Spiritual Lessons from the Life of the Holy Prophet (s)

Session One – The Search for Truth

Questions

- 1) What motivates a person to search for a truth deeper than what is around him?
- 2) What is the relationship between spirituality, the individual, and society?



O you who have wrapped up in your
garments!

Rise to pray in the night except a little,
Half of it, or lessen it a little,
Or add to it, and recite the Quran
as it ought to be recited.


Surely We will make to light upon you
a weighty Word.

Sura Muzammil, 1-5

Hadith from the Prophet (s)

My Lord has recommended **nine** things to me:

- 1) Sincerity in private and public.
- 2) Fairness in pleasure and anger.
- 3) Moderation in poverty and richness.
- 4) Forgive one who has wronged me.
- 5) Give to one who has deprived me.
- 6) Keep relations with one who has cut off from me.
- 7) Silence should be thoughtful.
- 8) Speech should be remembrance [of Allah]
- 9) Sight should be insightful.



The Holy Prophet (s) distanced himself from the norms of his society. He disagreed with many of the traditions and customs of his people.

Although he was trusted and respected by his people, that did not prevent him from disagreeing with their ways.

He spent a lot of time in solitude, thinking about the evils of his society. He retreated to the cave of Hira to reflect and introspect.

Qualities of a seeker of truth

- 1) Dissatisfaction with present norms
- 2) Reflection and Introspection
- 3) Breaks of Solitude for meditation
- 4) Inner revolution
- 5) Outer application
- 6) Transmission

The Prophet (s)'s dissatisfaction with social norms

- Forms of worship where One God was not the focus
- Superstitions and traditions
- Racism and prejudice
- Social and familial oppression
- Greed and materialism

Inner Revolution

A true revolution is an affair of the heart . . .
The Muhammadi Revolution cannot be understood apart from the internal matter of changing hearts and souls. If the word 'revolution' initially referred to the orbit of heavenly bodies around a center and the return of an epoch, the Muhammadi revolution was ultimately a reminder to humanity to return to orbiting around the Center.

Memories of Muhammad, Omid Safi

The Cave


In the Greek tradition, the parable of the cave is well known as one of Plato's teachings on the need to look beyond the shadowy realm and see things as they are.

The cave is connected to the heart – an inward opening where one can contemplate realities and seek illumination.

Rumi says:

Consider this heart as a cave

The spiritual retreat of the friend.




Away from other people, facing Nature, Muhammad was searching for peace and meaning. He had never taken part in idol worship, had not shared the beliefs and rites of the region's tribes, and had remained aloof from superstition and prejudice . . .

It was indeed a quest for truth: dissatisfied with the answers offered by those around him, driven by the intimate conviction that he must search further, he decided to isolate himself in contemplation . . .

Alone with himself., in the cave of Hira, he meditated on the meaning of life, his presence on earth, and the signs that had accompanied him all his life.

In the Footsteps of the Prophet, Tariq Ramadan



Ever since man appeared on earth he has been anxious to penetrate the universe and discover its laws and secrets. The more he came to know, the more he wondered at its greatness, the weaker he appeared to himself, and the less reason he saw for vanity.

The Prophet of Islam – may God’s peace be upon him – is very much like the universe. From the very beginning, scholars worked hard to uncover various aspects of his great humanity, to grasp the realization of the divine attributes in his mind, character and wisdom. Certainly they achieved a fair measure of knowledge. Much however has escaped them; and there still lies ahead a long and indeed infinite road.

Foreword, *The Life of Muhammad*, Muhammad Husayn Haykal.

- **The only purpose of life is spiritual progress, which is accomplished by seeking truth, finding it, living it and sharing it, and thereby eventually earning a place in the highest spiritual level, which is called Heaven."**
- **"You must have a spiritual mentality in order to seek truth, find it, live it and share it. For many of you this means you must change the way you think about your life through a spiritual education."**
- **"Individuals who are living their lives with a materialistic mentality, thinking that acquiring money and spending it are the most important parts of life, and only being concerned with worldly affairs, are wasting a lifetime and will bring severe punishment upon themselves for this."**
- **"To learn the truth concerning the great spiritual questions of life and the Hereafter there is only one way; direct communication with God's spirit messengers, who are the source of all spiritual truths."**