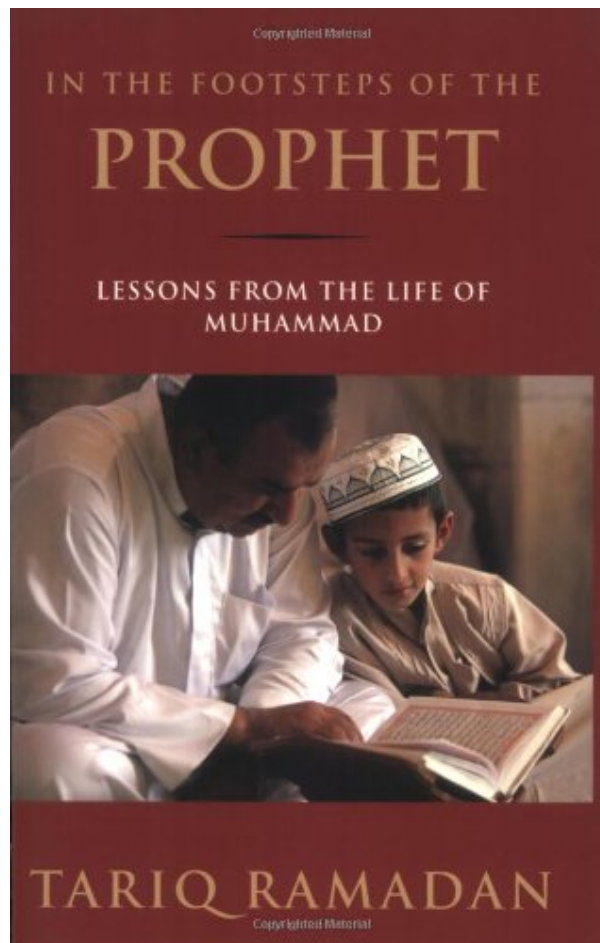


**IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE PROPHET:
LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF MUHAMMAD
BY TARIQ RAMADAN**



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Named by Time magazine as one of the 100 most important innovators of the century, Tariq Ramadan is a leading Muslim scholar, with a large following especially among young European and American Muslims. Now, in his first book written for a wide audience, he offers a marvelous biography of the Prophet Muhammad, one that highlights the spiritual and ethical teachings of one of the most influential figures in human history.

In the Footsteps of the Prophet is a fresh and perceptive look at Muhammad, capturing a life that was often eventful, gripping, and highly charged. Ramadan provides both an intimate portrait of a man who was shy, kind, but determined, as well as a dramatic chronicle of a leader who launched a great religion and inspired a vast empire. More important, Ramadan presents the main events of the Prophet's life in a way that highlights his spiritual and ethical teachings. The book underscores the significance of the Prophet's example for some of today's most controversial issues, such as the treatment of the poor, the role of women, Islamic criminal punishments, war, racism, and relations with other religions. Selecting those facts and stories from which we can draw a profound and vivid spiritual picture, the author asks how can the Prophet's life remain -- or become again -- an example, a model, and an inspiration? And how can Muslims move from formalism -- a fixation on ritual -- toward a committed spiritual and social presence?

In this thoughtful and engaging biography, Ramadan offers Muslims a new understanding of Muhammad's life and he introduces non-Muslims not just to the story of the Prophet, but to the spiritual and ethical riches of Islam.

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163 of 177 people found the following review helpful.

Great Read, whatever your personal belief

By L. F Sherman

This biography of Prophet Muhammad can be called a "spiritual biography" that tells the story of a life but emphasizes decisions, revelations, and the spiritual and emotional lessons therein. Emerick's biography of the Prophet and that by Karen Armstrong are good, this is better. Incidentally, it hints at the paranoia of those in government who cancelled the author's visa while he was en route to teach at Notre Dame University. (I

taught there briefly and can assure you that it is not a hot bed of radicalism.)

The position of women, place of jihad, role of law, and relations with non-Muslims are totally different than the media caricatures and also different from some Fundamentalist politicization and corruptions.

Under duress and attack we see un-Islamic practices claiming to be Fundamental (the Western media is more than happy to second that claim). One needs to know that the Shari'a is partly a product, close to two centuries later, that evolved to empower scholarly elite promoting its own interests by which time patriarchal elements had also degraded practice regarding women some - although women had right of inheritance not much available in the West until the 19th and 20th centuries except for royalty.. Also, the most infamous practices predated Islam in much of the Mediterranean - the stoning of adulterers was now much harder to prove than before.

It is reading for those who have an open mind and would learn more, for those who aren't quite sure what to believe after the pervasive toxic climate of criticism. Christians and Jews are very much at a disadvantage in that Muslims know far more about their faiths naturally from reading the Qur'an than they would know without significant effort. Moses, Noah, Jesus and Mary are Prophets of Islam (Mary appears in the Qur'an more times than the Bible).

It should be reading for the many shamefully ignorant critics like Robertson, Graham, Hagee, Falwell who do not have the least basis for their declarations. Their ignorance is itself a measure of disrespect and narrowness that spreads widely among their followers. Equally it could begin to educate those who should know better and who make decisions based on fear and hate - including those who seem superficially have some knowledge when talking about "abrogation" of versus in the Qu'ran etc. Bashing Islam is a profitable cottage industry and so much easier than a small measure of understanding or empathy.

Prophet Muhammad lived ihsan (beauty appreciated and demonstrated) with charisma even before the first revelation. His role is not like that of Jesus in important ways: neither he nor his followers claimed Divinity: he had immense practical worldly family and political responsibilities that Jesus never had; he provided no redemption or way of evading personal responsibility.

39 of 46 people found the following review helpful.

Insightful, devout and learned

By L. B. Lloyd

Ramadan's scholarship, appreciation for pluralism, personal faith and passion for his Muslim heritage infuse this wonderful book. He takes us on a brief journey through the life of the prophet Muhammad and pauses to reflect on the way the Prophet used specific events to teach his contemporaries and on how those events and teachings have formed the Muslim community over the centuries.

As an American, I appreciated how the book responds to Western mis-understandings of Islam (for example, the greater jihad is the personal struggle to follow Allah; the lesser jihad is armed struggle) without being defensive. As a Christian, I appreciated "going along" with Ramadan as he reflects on his faith and makes it accessible because it comes from the heart.

24 of 28 people found the following review helpful.

Interesting theology on Muhammad and Islam

By T. S. C.

Having studied Islam at university, I bought a number of books about Islam and Islamic thought and culture, and this is one of the books I bought. Some of the books have been negative in nature, often by Muslim and Arab writers, but this book by Mr Ramadan is a positive book about Muhammad and what he means to

Islam, and perhaps to the wider world.

It isn't so much the history of Muhammad but more the understanding of Muhammad's life and teachings and the theology and meanings that come from Muhammad's life, teachings and experience. However, I enjoyed reading it and I think it would be valuable for non-Muslims like myself as well as Muslims. I do get a little tired of the constant stream of bad press Islam gets and feel that even if there are negative aspects to Islamic culture and society, we need someone to look at it positively, for balance. Not every Muslim is a terrorist anymore than any Christian or Buddhist or Orthodox Jew.

As a Christian, I don't have to believe in Islam or Judaism or Buddhism, or anything other than Christianity; I am a Christian after all. However, I think I can respect another person's belief and their right to be whatever they want to be and whatever they want to believe in; if I respect a Muslim, he or she might respect me as a Christian. If we want to live in a world of tolerance, we have to learn to be tolerant. Religion should be summed up in four letters: L O V E!

If I have one criticism of the book, it is that it is often uncritical of certain things that are purported to have happened in the development of Islam, and Islamic theology and Islamic culture. No culture is perfect, West or East, Islamic or Christian; there are warmongers and extremists on all sides. Perhaps the moderates, the true believers in a merciful and compassionate and loving God, who truly wants the best for all of us, can claim back some of the territory we so often cede to the haters? I pray for it.

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