

THE LAST MESSENGER

LIAR, DELUDED OR TRUTHFUL?

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CONVEYING THE CALL

THE LAST MESSENGER

“Sorry I’m busy, I don’t have time!”
This is one of the most common
replies we hear today and it is
certainly true.

Time is a limited resource and we have every right to be cautious where we spend it as it is non-refundable! We only value time when we know it is running out. The last five hours before a deadline is often more productive than the previous five weeks! Since time is precious, you need to know why you should even bother reading through this booklet.

So here is the crux of the matter. Throughout human history, God has sent messengers to guide us. But now, that has ended. There are no more messengers. The last has come and there will be none after him. The end is truly near. So you need to decide whether you want to take this message seriously because that will decide where you spend eternity.

This not about blind faith. In fact, this messenger came with clear evidences to support his claim. In the next few minutes, you will learn something important about a man called Muhammad.

He claimed that he was the last messenger from God. Yes, that is a grand claim, but there is a formula we can use to see if this claim is true. If we cast aside prejudice and look at his life objectively, we can only see three possibilities about his claim:

- He was a liar
- He was deluded
- He was speaking the truth

Actually, this can be applied to anyone who makes a claim about anything! We will examine the claim of Muhammad using this formula.

Was he a liar?

A brief dip into the rigorously-recorded history of Muhammad's life reveals considerable information that shows the integrity of his character. He was born in the city of Mecca into a respected tribe, Bani Hashim, who were guardians to the sacred house, the Kaaba. Partly because of this, Muhammad was well known. Pagan Arabian society was extremely tribal.

Despite this the Meccans universally trusted Muhammad. They even bestowed upon him the title "Al Ameen", meaning "The Trustworthy". He was widely known for his complete honesty in business and his general dealings with people and also for helping the poor, the orphans, widows, elderly and the downtrodden.

Not only was Arabia tribalistic, but the original Abrahamic monotheism had become heavily corrupted with idolatry and superstitions. Idol-worship underpinned their economic, sociological and political structure. Around the age of forty, Muhammad started teaching that these idols, and the accompanying superstitious practices, were false, and that those who believed in them would be condemned to eternal punishment for their transgressions against the oneness of the only true God.

He was very forthright in his criticism of their false religion. Now think about it. Why would he do this if he was a liar? People who lie do so to either avoid some pain or gain some benefit. How do the actions of Muhammad fit that? The pagans actually took their religion very seriously, since they connected it to their ancestors and were proud to follow them. Yet, Muhammad told them that they and their ancestors (including his own) were misguided and ignorant.

In a short time, Muhammad went from being a respectable figure to being hated and strongly opposed by the Meccan ruling elite. First, they tried bribing him. They offered him money, women, even kingship, just for him to compromise his message. When this failed, they attacked, insulted and beat him, and even plotted to kill him. But instead of watering down his message, he became more vocal and he condemned them even more.

His followers were few, but they also suffered persecution and had to flee to another country. Eventually, he himself had to flee his home and seek shelter in another city. If he was a liar and a deceiver who wanted to gain something from people, then, as every politician knows, he should have played into the whims and appetites of the people rather than challenge them head on.

Why didn't he accept their proposal of compromise and take the power and riches offered to him? Maybe it could be argued that Muhammad's motivation for lying was not for the 'here and now' but because he wanted to create a legacy and to be recognised well past his death instead! An extended vanity project, if you will! One could only make such an accusation in hindsight though. At the time, from a purely material perspective, Muhammad had little to no chance of success.

The fact that he did succeed is in fact nothing short of miraculous. Furthermore, Muhammad was extremely modest about himself. He always attributed his success to God. He dressed and lived among people as one of them, and despite his ability to acquire great riches, he and his family lived the simplest of lives. If fame was Muhammad's objective, he could have claimed he was a messenger from God and at the same time, allowed the people to worship their idols.

The pagans did in fact believe in a supreme unseen Creator God, and actually considered their idols intercessors to God. Calling for strict monotheism was unnecessary as a path to fame and power. Actually, Muhammad warned people against revering him excessively.

“Do not exaggerate in praising me as the Christians praised the son of Mary [Jesus], for I am only a Slave. So, call me the Slave of God and His Messenger.” ^[1]

and he used to pray

“Oh God! Do not make my grave an idol that is worshipped...” ^[2]

The late Emeritus Professor in Arabic and Islamic Studies, Montgomery Watt, explains in his book, Muhammad in Mecca:

“His readiness to undergo persecution for his beliefs, the high moral character of the men who believed in him and looked up to him as a leader, and the greatness of his ultimate achievement—all argue his fundamental integrity. To suppose Muhammad an impostor raises more problems than it solves”. ^[3]

Rather than desiring worldly increase during his lifetime or self-worship in the future, Muhammad had nothing to gain from staying firm on his message - something which he had to suffer greatly for. There is of course then, another possible explanation. He was deluded, or mad. He really believed, or made himself believe, that he was getting a message from God.

Perhaps this would explain his total and sincere devotion to preaching his message, despite consistent and persistent opposition. The problem here is that the facts on the ground do not readily support this assumption either.

Was he deluded?

Insane and delusional people generally have difficulty in distinguishing between what is real from what is false. They are willing to use any evidence that seems to support their claims. One life-changing incident, which keenly demonstrates that the Prophet kept a rational and honest head at all times, was in the aftermath of the tragic death of his infant son, Ibrahim.

Ibrahim died following a short illness and after he was buried, there was a solar eclipse. Some Muslims claimed this phenomenon was a 'miracle' and began spreading this idea.

The word went out saying that the Sun was eclipsed in sadness over the death of Ibrahim. Upon hearing this, Muhammad responded:

“The Sun and the Moon are signs of God. They are eclipsed neither for the death nor birth of any man. On beholding an eclipse, therefore, remember God and turn to Him in prayer.” ^[4]

An insane or deluded person would have agreed with the people, especially since such a thing was a very common belief at the time:

“See! This is proof I’m a Prophet, even the Sun and Moon respond to my grief!”

Even today with scientific astronomical knowledge, many people would be convinced by this! This would have also been the case if he was a liar trying to deceive people. Yet, far from being delusional and stoking his own ego, Muhammad’s focus at all times was on drawing people’s hearts back to God.

Madness is also characterized by people speaking and behaving irrationally and inconsistently. They may claim one thing one day, and then take a completely different attitude the next. What was clear from the very beginning of his Prophethood was the coherency of Muhammad’s message for over 20 years.

It began and continued with a clear and open call to single out for worship the One Creator alone, and he also drew people's attention to their own illogical position in worshipping the idols they created with their very own hands, which could neither help nor harm them. The fact that Muhammad was able to affect such massive and long-lasting change to very deep seated practices amongst his people shows that claims of him being delusional or mad are very hard to sustain.

In fact, Islam continues until today to massively improve and affect peoples lives. Interestingly, even non-Muslim historians consider Muhammad to be one of the most influential people of all time. This is because the impact of his teachings is not limited only to a personal spiritual sphere, but can be applied to a broad spectrum of human existence, including economics, family life, legal systems, dietary rules and hygiene.

How and from where did an illiterate man living in the desert get such knowledge and insight? In fact, one might go as far as to say that if Muhammad's teachings were a product of delusion, on what basis could we call anyone sane? Take for example, how he managed to successfully affect a total ban on alcohol. This is a truly formidable task. The Arabs of the time were heavy drinkers and even wrote epic poems in praise of wine.

Compare the complete failure of a modern, well informed and technologically sophisticated society like the USA to enforce the prohibition of alcohol! The approach of Muhammad was deliberate and careful. It took into account human nature and attachments to addictive habits. He gradually moved them away from it, by developing in them a sense of the great evils and harms that it leads to, and then weaning them off it in stages, eventually ending in an outright prohibition.

When the verses of the Quran were pronounced prohibiting it, the people who were drinking threw away their wine, spat it from their mouths and spilt it out on the streets, turning them briefly into rivers of discarded alcohol. In addition, this was all done voluntarily without any law enforcement!

Another indication of Muhammad's levelheadedness was the approach he adopted in negotiations with his enemies. Perhaps one of the most poignant examples was the treaty of Hudaibiyah. His followers were on the way to make pilgrimage to Mecca. The pagans wanted to stop them. The Muslims could easily have marched into Mecca and conquered it, but instead, Muhammad chose to negotiate a treaty! The Quran called it a great victory. Many of his followers could not understand this.

One of his closest companions even openly questioned and challenged the decision. The reason for this was because the terms of the treaty seemed very unfavorable to the Muslims. At one point in the negotiations, while the treaty was being drafted, the pagans mocked his request to have his title listed as “Muhammad, Prophet of God” saying “if we believed that, then there would be no dispute.”

Muhammad asked for his scribe to remove it in line with their wishes and replace it with “Muhammad - son of Abdullah”. When his companion and close friend couldn’t bring himself to remove the words himself, Muhammad took the pen and scratched it out with his own hand. To behave in such a calm and pragmatic way is not consistent with the approach of a lunatic or deluded person.

Again, all of this begs the question: From where did Muhammad get such deep and profound insight, wisdom and understanding of human nature? How was he able to bring about such long lasting and profound changes to not only his people, but indeed the world? If he was not a liar or deluded, then what? One final possibility remains. It is the only one that really can explain the extraordinary phenomenon that was Muhammad.

He was truthful

If he really was a Messenger of God who received inspiration and guidance from the Creator, that explains both his complete honesty, truthfulness and uncompromising dedication to conveying the message of monotheism, as well as his deep insight into human nature and the ability to positively guide and direct his people, and indeed people from all races and cultures until today. It explains the depth of social, psychological, theological, legal, historical and epistemological insights within his teachings.

The Prophet Muhammad was sent to fix the relationship between mankind and their Creator. He called people to believe in God alone. The One God who is nothing like the creation and is perfect, unseen, all-powerful, loving, merciful and forgiving. There is one final evidence that we would like to present to you in this booklet in support of his claim to be a Prophet of God, and that is the accuracy of his predictions about matters of the future.

There are in fact numerous authentic foretellings of the Prophet Muhammad and more of them are explored in the book *The Forbidden Prophecies*. Here, we would like to just offer one, partly because this particular prophecy has so obviously come true in recent times.

Bedouin Arabs Prophecy

From millennium past, there are two types of Arabs: city dwellers and “Bedouins”. The former make up the majority and live in ancient cities like Damascus, Cairo, Mecca, Sana’a and Baghdad. Bedouins, on the other hand, are nomads. They travel through the vast deserts and are constantly on the move. Even during the Golden Age of Islam, when the Arabs were the richest and most learned people on Earth, Bedouins remained in virtually the same state they had been for thousands of years: poor, uneducated and cut off from rest of the world.

As recently as the 1940s, the English explorer, Sir Wilfred Thesiger, was travelling through these Bedouin areas and documented their condition:

“As I listened I thought once again how precarious was the existence of the Bedu. Their way of life naturally made them fatalists; so much was beyond their control. It was impossible for them to provide for a morrow when everything depended on a chance fall of rain or when raiders, sickness, or any one of a hundred chance happenings might at any time leave them destitute, or end their lives. They did what they could, and no people were more self-reliant, but if things went wrong they accepted their fate without bitterness, and with dignity as the will of God”. [5]

Yet Muhammad foretold that these Arab Bedouins of his region would one day compete in the construction of tall buildings:

“Now, tell me of the Last Hour,” asked the man. The Prophet replied, “The one asked knows no more of it than the one asking.”

“Then tell me about its signs,” said the man. The Prophet replied, “That you see barefoot, unclothed Bedouins competing in the construction of tall buildings.” [6]

This is one of the most famous and rigorously authenticated sayings of the Prophet Muhammad.

When Muhammad was asked about the “Last Hour”, meaning the approach of the Day of Judgement, notice the detailed response he gives: a specific people, the poor Arab Bedouins of the region, were identified.

Muhammad could have easily played it safe by using more general language, such as, “you see competition in the construction of tall buildings...” which of course would be flexible enough to be applied to anyone in the world.

In the Arabian Peninsula today, we find that a particular group of Arabs, who used to be impoverished herders of camels and sheep until the mid-twentieth century, are now competing to build the tallest buildings. How did this change happen seemingly overnight? How did one of the poorest people on Earth, who literally wore rags with some not even able to afford shoes, become the wealthiest nations on Earth?

In fact, a chain of events allowed this to happen: the fall of the Ottoman Empire (which used to rule over the Arabian Peninsula), the rise of a puritanical form of Islam supported by the Bedouin chieftains, and the removal of the ancient city-based Hashemite guardians of the sacred mosques of Mecca and Medina.

One other thing made this rapid change possible. Something upon which the modern world would revolve around perhaps more than any other; Oil! The seemingly empty deserts of the Bedouins had it in abundance. The Bedouin went from camels to Cadillacs in a generation! Today, the highest concentration of tall buildings anywhere in the world is in the Arabian Peninsula, specifically the areas in which Bedouin Arabs lived. The Burj Khalifa in Dubai is the world's tallest man-made structure at 828 metres.

A short time after it was completed, a rival family in Saudi Arabia announced that they would build a taller one (1,000 metres) – the Kingdom Tower – they are literally competing with each other over who can build the world’s tallest building. What would motivate Muhammad to even make such a prediction?

If he was going to make up such a prophecy, it would make more sense to relate this prophecy to the superpowers of his time: Rome, Persia or even China who (unlike the Arabs) already had a tendency to construct extravagant buildings and palaces. The Prophet Muhammad himself did not like Muslims to be involved in trying to unnecessarily increase in wealth. Indeed, he often warned of its dangers and how it would corrupt his nation.

What is even more interesting is that he did not like or promote the construction of buildings! He was a simple man who lived in a simple house and wanted other Muslims to maintain that simplicity. That is what he taught and how he lived. If he wanted to “will” this prophecy to become true, he should have encouraged the Arabs to build tall buildings and perhaps start off trying to do that himself! Clearly this prophecy is not some fluke.

Muhammad, peace be upon him, knew parts of the future from God. He was warning mankind about the coming of the last days. We are in those days.

None of us will live forever! For all of us, our end is near. Time really is running out.

Preparation

A man asked the Prophet about the Day of Judgment,

***“When will the Hour be established
O God’s Messenger?”***

The Prophet said,

“What have you prepared for it?”

The man said,

***“I haven’t prepared for it much of prayers
or fast or charity, but I love God and
His Messenger.”***

The Prophet said,

“You will be with those whom you love.” [7]

What we learn from this is that if we love God and his last Messenger, we will be saved. True love of course doesn’t just entail belief, but also action. We must also try to follow the last Messenger to attain salvation.

Indeed, in the Messenger of God you have an excellent example for whoever has hope in God and the Last Day, and remembers God often.

The Qur'an Chapter 33, Verse 21

This booklet is not intended as a mere intellectual exercise. If you believe Muhammad (peace be upon him) was truthful, then the message he came with is also true, and you should embrace it with all your heart and find true purpose in this life and success in the next.

Say [O Muhammad], 'If you love God, follow me, and God will love you and forgive you your sins; God is most forgiving, most merciful.' Say, 'Obey God and the Messenger,' but if they turn away, [know that] God does not love those who ignore [His commands].

The Qur'an Chapter 3, Verses 31-32

References

[1] Narrated in Bukhari.

[2] Tahdheer al-Saajid min Ittikhaadh al-Quboor Masaajid, p. 24-26.

[3] Watt, W. M. (1953) Muhammad at Mecca. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 52.

[4] Narrated in Bukhari.

[5] Thesiger, Wilfred (2007), Arabian Sand, Penguin, Kindle Edition, Loc 3572.

[6] Narrated in Muslim.

[7] Narrated in Bukhari.



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