

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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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. London-based Ramadan, the Oxford research fellow who authored *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam*, is probably best known for being denied entry into the United States, based on alleged violations of the Patriot Act. This excellent, engaging book ought to turn public attention back toward Ramadan as a writer and a skilled interpreter of Islamic history. In deliberately brief chapters, Ramadan brings Muhammad to life. He highlights Muhammad's resolute faith in spite of setbacks like orphanhood and poverty, and upholds the prophet as a spiritual hero—bravely compassionate and unusually tolerant of others, including non-Muslims. Ramadan notes his extraordinary kindness, even to those he battled. For example, a slave who had been given to Muhammad turned down emancipation, saying he preferred service to Muhammad over freedom with anyone else. (Muhammad immediately freed the slave and adopted him as his own son.) Similar tales of mercy lace through Muhammad's life: in the midst of a battle march, Muhammad advised his troops to be careful not to hurt a litter of puppies on the roadside; on another occasion, Muhammad released prisoners of war because they had taught community children how to read and write. Ramadan ably demonstrates why Muhammad is a spiritual paragon to the followers of Islam. (Feb.)

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Review

"This excellent, engaging book ought to turn public attention back toward Ramadan as a writer and a skilled interpreter of Islamic history."--Publishers Weekly STARRED REVIEW

"Ramadan's book provides Muslims with a new understanding of the Prophets life. For non-Muslims, it is not just a story of the Prophet, but rather an introduction to Islam's spiritual and ethical riches."--Islamic Horizons

"For those interested in the life and times of Muhammad, Ramadan's readable *In the Footsteps of the Prophet* is a good beginning."--Vali Nasr, Washington Post

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About the Author

Tariq Ramadan is Professor of Islamic Studies in the Faculty of Theology at Oxford University.

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