

An Exposition of the Prophetic Ministry and Veracity of Muhammad in the Line of Prophets

John Musa Aikoye PhD

Department of Religious Studies, Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba, Dekina Local Government Area, Kogi State, Nigeria

Abstract: Against the backdrop of differing contestations on the nature of Islam due to the actions of some extremist sects, what can be said of prophets and prophesy today? This is an important aspect of religion especially of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Religion has certain positions and roles considered to be exclusively from God. One of such is the office and position of a prophet. Many persons claim to be prophets in today's contemporary world. This article is set to examine Muhammad as a Prophet of Islamic religion. Many persons especially non-Muslims know Muhammad to be the founder of Islamic religion but fall short of examining his prophetic role. Is he really a prophet and if he is, did he work like other prophets? The two major contentions in this work therefore are: (1) to discover how he is a prophet like those of revealed religions before him and (2) if he worked like them. Prophets as seen in Judaism and Christianity which has same roots with Islamic religion are people chosen by God to convey messages to the people, rebuke evil activities, and direct the people towards authentic moral and spiritual life. Indeed, they are God's mouth piece. In this article, the concept "prophet" will be examined as well as the qualities of a prophet. The life and teachings of Muhammad as a historical figure will be presented and how he is a true prophet of God like prophets before him shall be analysed. The article will end with an evaluation and conclusion.

KEY WORDS: Prophet, Muhammad, Islam, Muslim, Religion

1. Introduction

Islam as a religion originated from the revelations to Muhammad (salla allahu allaihi wa sallam) through an angelic being he identified as Jibreel (Gabriel). Muhammad became a messenger and a prophet to this religion. *La illaha il'Allah, Muhammadun rasul Allah* meaning, "there is no god but God and Muhammad is the messenger of God" is an essential message of the religion. Belief in him as the final Prophet of God is an imperative and a defining feature of Islam.¹

It is a truth of history that Islam is the fast growing religion of the world. However, the growth and actions of sects such as Islamic State (ISIL) and other violent extremist group have brought Islam and Muslims to the forefront of political and peace debate. While Islamic extremism is not synonymous with the true faith of Islam, owing to the violent actions of many Islamic extremist groups (*al-Qaeda, ISIL/ISIS/IS/Daesh, Boko Haram, Al-Mourabitoun, al shabaab*), many scholars from different schools of thought tend to accuse Islam that it is not a religion of peace, and by logic of procession, questions the 'Sallama' preached by the "greatest and last prophet of Islam." The logic of such argumentation is questionable. However, before proceeding to

¹ Ron Geaves, *Aspects of Islam* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, 2005), 143-47.

interrogate some of the fallacies in the arguments purporting to question the integrity of the religion, suffice to expose the basic lines of accusation. It must be stated at the onset that by average, from a research conducted in 2017, it indicated how poorly people know about Islam.²

According to Mark Durie, a linguistic and theological scholar, he states that the etymological foundation of the word "Islam" is "Salama" which connotes safety. He declared that "the word Islam is based upon a military metaphor. Derived from *aslama* (surrender) its primary meaning is to make oneself safe (*salama*) through surrender. In its original meaning, a *Muslim* was someone who surrendered in warfare." Muhammad himself use to tell non-Muslims "*aslim taslam*" implying "surrender (i.e. submit to Islam) and you will be safe". Therefore, in Durie's view, Islam implied submitting in order to be spared, so to have peace is consequent upon subjugation.³ The prophets of Judaism and Christianity are believed to be the predecessors of Muhammad according to Islamic teaching, to this effect, this work will examine Muhammad in the line of the prophets of Judaism and Christianity.

Prophets are essential figures in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. These revealed religions are all identified as religions of the book. They all share a common history of prophets and prophecies except for some slight differences. They have their root in the patriarch Abraham, who descended from Adam. Adam is regarded in Islam as the first prophet in the chain of prophets sent to humanity. Muhammad is recognised as the last prophet in the circle of prophets. In the Qur'an, prophets are referred to by two terms, the first is *rasul* and the second is *nabi*.⁴ Who then is a Prophet?

2. DEFINITIONS AND QUALITIES OF A PROPHET

A society that believes in the supernatural is bound to have prophets. This is because they serve as the medium for God's self-communication to that society. Their presence does not rule out other means of divine communication, rather, it informs one about how the divine will was once communicated. In a contemporary understanding, prophets are those who foretell the future. But within the context of religion, this understanding describes an aspect of the roles of the prophet.

The Hebrew word for prophet is '*Nabi*', which has both passive and active meaning. In the passive, it means, 'one who has been called' while in the active, it means, 'one who calls'. The passive meaning patterns to the personal experience of the prophet and active meaning concentrates on the role of the prophet within the society.⁵

Prophet as an English word originated from the Greek *pro-phetes* meaning 'speaking for, on behalf of, another'. In its biblical usage, it has the same connotation. It stands for one who speaks to people for God, or on behalf of God. A prophet is therefore regarded as God's messenger or mouthpiece. This suffices for why Abraham, Moses, Samuel and some other figures of the Old Testament are regarded as prophets, and in the New Testament, the apostles in their response to the question of Jesus declared that some people say he is one of the prophets.⁶

Islam is an Arabic word for 'submission to the will of Allah' and it is used to recognise the followers of Muhammad. Adherents are called Muslims which comes from Arabic to mean a follower of the religion of Islam.

Islam uses *nabi* and *rasul* in reference to a prophet and these are distinguished from each other in the sense that, *nabi* is a prophet sent to reinforce earlier books of other prophets but he himself is not given a particular

² Michael Lipka, "Muslims and Islam: Key Findings in the U.S and around the World" <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/08/09/muslims-and-islam-key-findings-in-the-u-s-and-around-the-world/> [accessed 28/09/2022].

³ Mark Durie, "Is Islam a Religion of Peace" <https://www.meforum.org/5715/islam-religion-of-peace> [accessed 28/09/2022]

⁴ C.T.R. Hewer, *Understanding Islam* (London: SMC Press, 2006), 14-18.

⁵ Dianne Bergant, "Prophecy," in *The New Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Joseph A.Komonchak, Marry Collins, and Dermot A. Lane (Delaware: Michael Glazier, Inc, 1987).

⁶ John Power, *History of Salvation: Introducing Old Testament* (Dublin: Gills and Macmillan Ltd, 1967), 113.

book of his own. *Rasul* on the other hand is a prophet who has been given a revealed book or scripture from God. Such a prophet is regarded as messenger. So the difference between the uses of both terms is that *nabi* is only a prophet, he cannot be a messenger. Despite this dichotomy both are equal and divinely inspired.

There are twenty-five recognised prophets of Islam beginning with Adam. The Muslims believe God sent many prophets to the world but five are accorded the highest reverence because of their perseverance and commitment to God in the face of suffering. These are Nuh (Noah), Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses), Isa (Jesus) and Muhammad. These were historical persons, who taught and transmitted God's messages to people.

The Jewish tradition distinguishes two classes of prophets namely, former and latter prophets. Former prophets proclaimed the message of Yahweh but their oracles were not put down in writing. Latter prophets proclaimed God's messages and wrote them down themselves or were put down into writing by their disciples bearing their names as such they are considered as writing prophets. The time of these prophets dates from the period of Amos in the middle of the eight-century B.C. Their oracles were introduced in simple statements such as 'thus says the lord' or in another formula 'the word of the lord came to me'. So, the significance of these writings is that the contributions of these prophets to faith are available for people to examine and study.

Muhammad can be grouped among the latter prophets. He is known and called the *rasul Allah*, that is, messenger of *Allah* but when they say the Prophet, they mean Muhammad. So, the words *nabi* and *rasul* are used interchangeably in connection to him. Like the writing prophets, Muhammad *rasul Allah* received his revelations verse-by-verse, surah-by-surah beginning from when he was about forty years of age in 610 ce. His companions wrote this down on different materials, which was later collected and compiled by Othman. This final compilation is referred to, as the Qur'an meaning, 'Recitation', and it is the holy book that contains the word of Allah in Islamic religion.

There are many schools of thought that have detailed and described the characteristics of prophets across various religions. This work will adopt the characteristics of prophets as adduced by Ed Grubb.⁷ Some of the common traits among prophets include:

Prophets are intermediaries. Prophets are middle persons between the spiritual world and the human-physical world. They are mediators.

They speak on behalf of God: prophets do not carry their own personal messages or agenda, they speak and minister on behalf of God. For the prophet Muhammad, the angel commands him to recite.

Knows the word of God, and therefore knows the way of God: because they are intermediaries, prophets do not only speak on behalf of God, they speak to God, and they listen to God and thus know the mind of God.

Prophets are fearless and have a strong resolve. Prophets down the line of history display a great fearlessness and boldness with faith in their God.

Prophets fight for others but hardly defend themselves, God defends them: True prophets are enliven with a holy anger. They can hardly stand idle while the name of God and the things of God are trampled upon.

Prophets are confident in God: the boldness and fearlessness found among Prophets come from their faith in God.

Their ways and views may be unpopular. Prophets do not play to whims and caprices of people, they are enlivened and emboldened by a higher idea, therefore, they are unpopular before the people and their call to a different way of life seems always strange to people

Prophets are people of integrity. They are not corrupted by the systems of men. They seem to be empowered by their caller to walk the ways of integrity.

Have no agenda but God's agenda.

The question that guides this paper therefore, is does the prophet Muhammad have these qualities of prophets or does he differ from them? How well do we see these traits in the life of the Prophet Muhammad?

⁷ Ed, Grubb, *The True Prophet*, <https://www.sogmi.org/articles/the-characteristics-of-a-true-prophet/> [accessed 20/09/2022]

3. MUHAMMAD'S BIRTH AND LIFE

Muhammad's which is spelled in different forms such as Muhammed, Muhamad, Mohamed, is an Arabic name for males only and simply means "Praiseworthy". Muhammad's life can be understood in two epochs. The first epoch is from the time of his birth to the time of revelations. The second period is from the period of revelation to death. He was born in Mecca about 570 AD to the family of Abd-Allah, his father and Amina his mother. His father died before his birth and the mother died when he was just six years old (Sura 93: 6-8). He became an orphan and was brought up after the death of his parent by his grandfather Abd-Al-muttalib, a prominent leader in Mecca who also died while Muhammad was still very young and so his uncle Abu-Talib took over his guardianship. He loved and cared for him all through his life.⁸ Muhammad's future as a great prophet and leader was recognised from his childhood. While under the care of his grand father, his uncles tried to take him away, but his grandfather would object and say to them "let him be, my child will be leader of his people."⁹

His future prophetic leadership was also recognised by Bahira a Christian monk. Muhammad usually travelled for trading with his uncle Abu-Talib as a youth. On one such trip to Syria, Bahira who lived along their route in the desert of Damascus saw their Carmel-train approaching and with inspiration he approached them and dialogued with Muhammad. He questioned him, after which he told his uncle that he had seen a sign of prophecy in Muhammad. He then instructed that Muhammad should be well taken care of because he is destined for greatness.¹⁰

So many persons admired Muhammad as a youth because of his noble character, great kindness and honesty. This earned him the name *Al-Amin* meaning, trustworthy.¹¹ These qualities endeared him to Khadija, a rich widow, who invited him to take care of her caravan and business. She was about forty years of age and eventually proposed marriage to Muhammad who was then about twenty-five years of age. They lived together in prosperity and happiness and were blessed with four daughters and two sons. His marital life proved him a worthy and an ideal husband; devoted and loving father as well as kind to children. His life before he became a prophet is summarised in the words of Khadija who said to Muhammad, you are kind and patient, you give to the needy, you are generous to guests, and you never fail to relieve people from distress".¹²

The second stage of his life begins from the period of the revelations on mount Hira in 610 AD, which marks his prophetic vocation and journey. Muhammad used to retreat regularly to a cave on mount Hira, a few miles North of Mecca to reflect on his life and his society. It was on one of such retreats that he had a spiritual encounter with a messenger of God (Surah 2:181), whom he said commanded him to "Recite". He resisted however claiming he had nothing to recite. The Angel repeated the command but he pleaded in fear and trembling that he did not know what to recite. The words came to him however and he recited the message of the Angel.¹³

Muhammad was so frightened by this event that he narrated the incidence to Khadija his wife who then assured him that he was neither mad nor possessed, but that it was a messenger of God and not a demon that he encountered. Khadija consulted with her Christian cousin Waraqa Ibn Qurayy over the incident and he like Khadija assured Muhammad that the Angel Gabriel visited him and he will be a prophet to the people. Esposito affirmed therefore, that "with this revelation, Muhammad joined that group of individuals whom Semitic faiths acknowledge as divinely inspired messengers or prophets of God".¹⁴

Muhammad having been assured of the authenticity of the revelation, began preaching Allah's message but not without oppositions from the people. The opposition made him flee to Yathrib in 622, which later became

⁸ Abd-al-Rahman 'Azzam, *The Eternal Message of Muhammad* (New York: Mentor Book, 1965).

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Hewer, *Understanding Islam*, 27.

¹¹ 'Azzam, *The Eternal Message of Muhammad*, 29.

¹² Ibid., 29-30.

¹³ John Esposito, *The Straight Path* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 6.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Medina, that is, 'city of the prophet'. It was at this place he inaugurated the Islamic community or *Ummah*. This immigration in Islamic tradition is known as *Hijrah*.¹⁵ *Hijrah* affirms what Jesus said that "a prophet is not honoured in his own country" (Luke 4: 24).

Despite the *Hijra*, Muhammad's place of birth, Mecca, which was the traditional Arabian centre for trade, commerce and religion is recognised as the holiest and most significant city for Islam. As a centre for religion, Mecca hosted the central shrine of the pagan gods in the Arabian Peninsula. Pagan worship was very much pronounced. At the centre of the city, there was a cube-like structure called the Ka'bah and Allah was the Lord of this central shrine. The Ka'bah housed the representations of more than three hundred gods. A lot of people went to Mecca for the purpose of worship and pilgrimage. The guardians of this shrine were drawn highly from Muhammad's own Quraysh tribe.¹⁶ After the *Hijrah*, Muhammad made series of attempt through dialogue, persuasions and appeals to the people of Mecca to allow him and followers to enter Mecca for pilgrimage but he was refused. The only option was to raid the city and get rid of the pagans. The Ka'abah which was a pagan shrine became Islam's holiest shrine and the Great Mosque (Masjid al-Haram) was built around the Ka'abah. The significance of all this in the life of Muhammad is that he succeeded in abolishing paganism or polytheism and established monotheism in Mecca. This was a great achievement in the line of prophets.

The ways of the Prophet Muhammad are known through the *Hadith* and the *Sunnah*. *Hadith* refers to the sayings of the prophet, which he left for his followers, while his daily life and practice is known as *Sunnah*. Through these two traditions Muslims are able to practise and keep to their faith as handed down to them. These complement the Qur'an especially the prophet's sayings, which concerns every domain from pure metaphysics to table manners. They form the source for some socio-moral lives that are not contained in their holy book. So after the Qur'an, the *Hadith* and the *Sunnah* are the most precious sources of guidance, which the Islamic society possesses. It is through these that Muslims get to know both the Prophet and Allah's message in the Qur'an.¹⁷

Muhammad preached strict and uncompromising monotheism in Mecca. He passed on the verses of the Qur'an to his audiences as he received from the Angel. He purged all elements of polytheism that was practised in Arabia and among his companions and replaced them with Allah.¹⁸ Monotheism which is from the Greek *mono* 'single' and *theos* 'God', coined to mean belief in the one supreme God is key to Muhammad's message of submission to Allah's will. The term places emphasis on the worship of God as, perfect, immutable, creator of the world from nothing, distinct from the world, all powerfully involved in the world, personal and worthy of being worshiped by all creatures. Muhammad's monotheistic teaching was like the Mosaic monotheism which was revealed and promulgated for Israel in Judaism. Israelite monotheism is expressed in the *Torah* and *schema* thus: "I am and there is no other God but *Yahweh* in Israel." Not to adhere or recognise the One God meant punishment and captivity. Jesus Christ also taught the doctrine of One God, who is the creator. Islam has her mode of the unity (tawhid) of God and the central confession is 'there is no god but Allah'. This is the core of Muhammad's way to the new faith.¹⁹ Madigan upholds, that without doubt the Qur'an's most insistent assertion is that God is one, to the exclusion of all others, which has become the heart of the Muslim profession of faith.²⁰

Muhammad as a Prophet was also a political leader to the Islamic community. He was therefore, a reformer, a ruler, military commander, chief judge and lawgiver. His traditions provided guidance for personal hygiene, mode of dressing, eating etiquette, marriage, care of wives and so many other social life styles. He directed the people to the right path. He believed the people were ignorant of the will of Allah as revealed to the prophets Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus. He believed as well that Jewish and Christian communities distorted

¹⁵ David Waines, *An Introduction to Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 18.

¹⁶ Waines, *An Introduction to Islam*, 9.

¹⁷ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Ideals and Realities of Islam* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1966), 78-85.

¹⁸ Karen Armstrong, *Islam a Short History* (London: The Orion Group Ltd, 2002), 4.

¹⁹ Theodore M. Ludwig, "Monotheism," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade (New York: Macmillian, 1987).

²⁰ Daniel A. Madigan, "Themes and Topics," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur'an*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 80.

the original revelations of God to Moses and later to Jesus. His task therefore was to return the people back to the knowledge and true worship of the One God.²¹ The prophet was concerned with issues of social justice and this was institutionalised by Qur'anic decree, which required care of widows, poor, orphans and slaves.²² Many of the issues of social justice became part and parcel of his teaching and which eventually became part of the Sharia Law.

Sharia is derived etymologically from a root that means road. It is the way that leads to Allah, so it is a divine law. Prophet Muhammad as the interpreter of the Qur'an "par excellence" and of the revelations took part in the formation of the shariah law. His lifetime marked the first and most important period of the codification of the shariah.²³ The ways of the prophet, his sayings, the Qur'an, Sharia, form the basis for his treading the way of other prophets.

In spite of all that Muhammad did, it is not all who admit that he is a prophet. Esposito says that the Jewish tribes that lived in Medina with the Qurayse tribe resisted religious and political cooperation with the Muslim community. They also denied the prophethood and messages of Muhammad and cooperated with his enemies.²⁴ No wonder Muhammad was attacked and he had to flee Mecca. He had to use force to convert pagans. Nasr proposes that to understand the significance of the prophet Muhammad, he should be viewed from the Muslim point of view. The position he occupies in the Islamic consciousness must not be neglected. His name has become synonymous with the prophet.²⁵ Hewer drawing from the different understanding presented on the meaning of prophet concludes that despite the distinction between *nabi* and *rasul*, all prophets are equal.²⁶ Without any iota of doubt, we can attest that Muhammad is a true prophet of Allah. His revelations and the testimonies from his grandfather, Khadija the wife, Waraqa the wife's cousin and Bahirah the monk, are enough for one to affirm that Muhammad is a prophet. If he is a Prophet can it be concluded that he walked in the ways of the other Prophets?

It is generally agreed that he is the last prophet of God. Upon this assertion his mission is not different from that of other Prophets. His ways are quite the same in the sense that they all have monotheism as their focal point of mission. They all preached the same message. Donner purports that the basic doctrines, which Muhammad taught, were that God was one, the creator of humankind and the natural world. He also taught that the world would come to an end followed by judgment.²⁷ The main teaching of the prophet is summed up in the first and second pillar of Islam. In the *Shahada*, totality of faith is expressed, it states, "I bear witness that there is no god except God, and Muhammad is the Messenger. This is repeated several times daily. The call to prayer that is, the *adhan*, given before the *Salat* five times daily, expresses the oneness of God. It proclaims that "God is Great". I bear witness that there is no god but God. I bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of God. Hurry to prayer. Hurry to success. God is most great. There is no god but God."²⁸ Muhammad is really a prophet who walked in the ways of other prophets. He established the reign of Allah on earth and above all transmitted Gods truth to the people. Conclusively, Huda acknowledges thus, "The Prophet's life fits into a history of previous prophets and with the history of God. His experiences provide Muslims a self identity that is not fixed in time but eternal in time and space".²⁹

The contention that he is the last prophet of God is not something we can agree or disagree to in the sense that God is the one that chooses his messengers whom we call prophets. After the prophet Muhammad, many

²¹ Esposito, *The Straight Path*, 11-2.

²² *Ibid.*, 30.

²³ Nasr, *Ideals and Realities of Islam*, 93-101.

²⁴ Esposito, *The Straight Path*, 15.

²⁵ Nasr, *Ideals and Realities of Islam*, 67.

²⁶ Hewer, *Understanding Islam*, 17-8.

²⁷ Fred M. Donner, "The Historical Context," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur'an*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 25.

²⁸ Hewer, *Understanding Islam*, 89, 99.

²⁹ Qamar-ul Huda, "Knowledge of Allah and the Islamic View of Other Religions," *Theological studies* 64, no. 2 (2003).

have claimed to be prophets in other religions and we cannot verify. Let us take their messages and abandon what are not of God by human reckoning,

Prophet Muhammad's use of force against the people of Mecca in evangelising and expanding the new religion is not different from what some prophets before him did. The prophet Elijah (Ilyās) applied force in order to promote monotheism against the worshippers of Baal (1Kings 18:20-40). It is on record that Jesus (Isah) indeed made use of force when he made a whip and chased the people who were buying and selling out of the temple (Matthew 21:12; John 2:14-17). Irrespective of that, he condemned Peter for using his sword on the high priest servant (John 18:10-11). Zeal for the work of God, made prophets apply force and in the extreme violence but it is not part of their office. Islamic adherents are therefore towing the forceful and violent ways of Muhammad in a world that human rights to freedom of worship is paramount should know that Muhammad's use of force especially in his eight years of conflict with Mecca was to rid it of paganism and moreover he had passion for his birth place.

4. ACTION AND REACTION TO ISLAM

Muslims have continued to spread Islam in an uncompromising way hence their use of force and extreme violence in the world is reported in almost all newspapers, magazines, radio or television and various means of social media as terrorism thereby making people not to see Islam as a religion of peace but religion of violence. The stories that are reported are often accompanied with gory images of the dead from Iraq, Pakistan, Bosnia, Palestine, Sudan, Nigeria and many other parts of the world. Islam is becoming as one reads and hears from the media, a hard uncompromising faith whose adherents will resort to violence in defence of their principles, in order to impose the religion on others.

What must have been responsible for much of the violence that is experienced in the world today in the name of Islam; a "religion that likens the unjust murder of a single soul to killing all of humanity (Surah al-Maidah Ch.5: V.33); the religion that teaches tolerance, harmony, forbearance, freedom of speech and religion (Surah al-Baqarah, Ch.2: V.257)."³⁰ Blasphemy is mostly the reason. It is considered in a simple way as an ungodly utterance against God. It is the mockery of God and by extension his messengers. Muslims do not tolerate any form of blasphemy towards Islam and so they react violently even to the point of killing. How did Muhammad react to Blasphemy towards him and God. Many lack proper knowledge of the teachings of Muhammad and therefore act with sentiments and ignorance. Muhammad faced different forms of blasphemy and persecution. However, he showed the highest standards of patience, forbearance, sympathy and forgiveness and left punishment to Almighty Allah who responded in the Holy Quran: "Verily, those who malign Allah and His Messenger — Allah has cursed them in this world and in the Hereafter, and has prepared for them an abasing punishment." (Surah al-Ahzab, Ch.33: V.58). Thus, there is no worldly or human punishment of blasphemy as Prophet Muhammad through his practices made it absolutely clear.³¹ There is no doubt that the prophets of God were ridiculed however vengeance should be left for God. In today's world politics, fanatical leaders use religion as camouflage thus they choose and pick from the teachings and traditions of Muhammad and create enmity among nations. Muhammad remains a messenger of peace.

Besides the issue of blasphemy, there is a sense of superiority of Islamic religion by some adherents or followers of Muhammad who are blind to his prophetic teaching thereby causing violence around the world. Hafiz Muzaffar Ahmad remarks that:

In the world, superiority of status is shown through display of strength, rule, wealth, knowledge and status. The Holy Prophet Muhammad had all these blessings yet he never showed arrogance. He always considered righteousness and fear of Allah as the real criterion for superiority.³²

³⁰ Prophet Muhammad's Response to Blasphemy, <https://www.alhakam.org/prophet-muhammads-response-to-blasphemy/> [accessed 12/10/2022]

³¹ Ibid.

³² Hafiz Muzaffar Ahmad, Muhammad: The Perfect Man. <https://www.alislam.org/library/books/Muhammad-The-Perfect-Man.pdf> [accessed 12/10/2022]. 850

In another practical example from the life of Muhammad when he responded to a disagreement between a Jew and a Muslim clearly show that he does not support any form of superiority. A Jew said to a Muslim “By the Lord, who gave superiority to Moses over all other Prophets.” and The Muslim replied him with the question: “Over the Holy Prophet Muhammad as well?” The Jew answered in the affirmative and the Muslim slapped him. The Jew took his case to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, who in order to dissolve the dangerous situation and keeping peace, with utmost humbleness said, “Do not give me superiority over Moses.”³³ This indeed is an indication that Muhammad did not consider himself superior to the prophets before him, thus, he was a tolerant Messenger of peace who did not hesitate to sacrifice his own self for peace and created order. Religion as far it is the worship of God cannot be superior to each other likewise the messengers sent by God to propagate the messages of God are not superior to themselves.

5. EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

The life of Muhammad came to an end on the 8th of June 632 AD but the new Islamic religion continued to spread very fast. It is certain that Muhammad like all prophets before him spread the message of belief and submission to God. He was a noble *rasul allah* which he demonstrated with deep profession of faith. God revealed himself through different prophets in history and made them proclaim monotheism. As a prophet, followers of Muhammad demonstrate strong faith in God as he did. He held the Quran and its commandments in deep respect.³⁴ Likewise, he was a man of prayer and was faithful to *Salat*. Gabriel showed him how to perform ablution and the manner of *Salat* five times daily.³⁵ Muhammad in turn taught his people how to pray. Prayer is an essential aspect of every religion because it is the means of communicating with the Almighty. Ahmad remarks that *Salat* was Muhammad’s last enjoyment in this world. He notes that “On Monday, the day he passed away, at dawn he lifted the curtain of the window and saw his companions busy in worship. Seeing this, his heart was filled with joy and his face lit up with a smile. He had a great zeal for *Salat*” in fact, Ahmad quotes Muhammad as saying: “*Salat* is the delight of my heart.”³⁶ Hence, in Islam, the call to prayer is vital, Friday is set aside for congregational prayer. In fact, prayer is next most important Islamic pillar after the profession of faith (*shahada*) among the five pillars of Islam. Besides these two pillars expounded, almsgiving, fasting and pilgrimage to mecca are other pillars which Muhammad himself practiced.

It is worthy to conclude that the life of Muhammad as prophet was not just to proclaim monotheism but enhance unity and peace in the world. Muslims should unite and embrace the true teachings of the prophets of Islam and create a better world where Islamic religion would not be seen as a terrorist religion.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Ahmad, Hafiz Muzaffar. *Muhammad: The Perfect Man*. <https://www.alislam.org/library/books/Muhammad-The-Perfect-Man.pdf> [Accessed 12/10/2022].
2. Armstrong, Karen. *Islam a Short History*. London: The Orion Group Ltd. 2002.
3. ‘Azzam, Abd-al-Rahman. *The Eternal Message of Muhammad*. New York: Mentor Book. 1965.
4. Bergant, Dianne. “Prophecy.” In *The New Dictionary of Theology*. Edited by Joseph A. Komonchak, Marry Collins and Dermot A. Lane. Delaware: Michael Glazier, Inc. 1987.
5. Boadt, Lawrence. *Reading the Old Testament: An Introduction*. New York: Pauline Press. 1984.
6. Brown, Daniel. *A New Introduction to Islam*. Oxford: Blackwell. 2004.
7. Donner, Fred M. “The Historical Context.” In *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur’an*. Edited by Jane Dammen McAuliffe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2006.

³³ Ibid., 854-855

³⁴ Ibid., 59.

³⁵ Ibid., 67.

³⁶ Ibid., 73.

8. Durie, Mark. "Is Islam a Religion of Peace?" In *Independence Journal Review* (2015).<http://www.meforum.org/5715/islam-religion-of-peace>.
9. Esposito, John. *The Straight Path*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1991.
10. Geaves, Ron. *Aspects of Islam*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd. 2005.
11. Hewer, C.T.R. *Understanding Islam*. London: SMC Press. 2006.
12. Huda, Qamar-ul. "Knowledge of Allah and the Islamic view of other Religions." *Theological Studies* 64. No. 2. 2003.
13. Jomier, Jacques. *How to Understand Islam*. Translated by John Bowden. London: SCM Press Ltd. 1989.
14. Ludwig, Theodore M. "Monotheism." In *Encyclopedia of Religion*. Edited by Mircea Eliade. New York: Macmillan. 1987.
15. Madigan, Daniel A. "Themes and Topics." In *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur'an*. Edited by Jane Dammen McAuliffe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2005.
16. Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. *Ideals and Realities of Islam*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1966.
17. Power, John. *History of Salvation: Introduction to Old Testament*. Dublin: Gills and Macmillan Ltd. 1967.
18. Prophet Muhammad's Response to Blasphemy.
19. <https://www.alhakam.org/prophet-muhammads-response-to-blasphemy/> [Accessed 12/10/2022].
20. Waines, David. *An Introduction to Islam*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1995.

INFO

Corresponding Author: John Musa Aikoye PhD, Department of Religious Studies, Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba, Dekina Local Government Area, Kogi State, Nigeria

How to cite this article: John Musa Aikoye PhD, "An Exposition of the Prophetic Ministry and Veracity of Muhammad in the Line of Prophets", Asian. Jour. Social. Scie. Mgmt. Tech.2023; 5(3): 129-137.