

The PROPHET Muhammed – A Biography by Barnaby Rogerson.  
Little Brown, 2003.

At a time when Islam and issues relating to it figure so highly in the national and international news, it behoves all of us to be as well informed about the third Abrahamic faith as possible. No one can truly begin to understand Islam without first reading about and appreciating the life of Muhammed, Islam's seminal figure. As can be imagined, there are already many books about the life of this extraordinary individual, who lived in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, and further texts will undoubtedly be written in the future.

Barnaby Rogerson's biography is a truly excellent, beautifully written and meticulously researched work, and one of the best introductions possible to Islam and its Prophet that one could wish to read. He writes with an obvious appreciation of his subject and a sensitivity that is almost lyrical.

The issue of Muhammed's difficult and at times violent relationship with the contemporary Jewish tribes of Arabia is described in detail, as well as the fact that one of the Prophet's wives was a Jew, and is set in the context of the challenging and bloody struggle to establish Islam as a faith in an Arabian peninsular that had hitherto been dominated by paganism.

Rogerson also describes the origins of some of the key practises of Islam, especially those associated with the hajj (pilgrimage) to Mecca.

This eminently readable work is warmly recommended to all seekers after knowledge, and particularly to those engaged in inter-faith work who wish to deepen their sensitivity towards and knowledge of Islam.

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