

Tariq Ramadan
The Messenger
The Meanings of the Life of Muhammad
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If discovering another faith is best done through hearing the words of a representative of that faith, what better way to begin to understand the prophet Muhammad than to pick up a book by a devout Muslim scholar. Tariq Ramadan has studied in Cairo and Geneva, and is at present a professor in Switzerland. He is extensively involved in peace, social justice and dialogue issues, but has become something of a hate-figure among right-wing conservative Americans, which is perhaps as good a recommendation as anyone should need. This book paints a picture of Muhammad not often heard in the West: a leader who is tolerant, kind, gentle, scrupulously honest, and keenly aware of the needs of orphans and the poor. He concludes: 'Muhammad's life journey offered at every stage an existence devoted to the worship of God. The heart cannot but commune with such a being as he follows the path to freedom... The Prophet carried a universal message, both in the experience of love present throughout his life and in his reminders to people of the need to adhere to a universal ethic that transcends divisions, affiliations, and rigid identities...' This may not be the last word on Muhammad, but it is an important word to hear in these troubled times.

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