

(WWMD)

## What Would Muhammad Do?

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لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا

*Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example for whoever has hope in Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah often. (Surah al-Ahzab, 21)*

Navigating life's various challenges often requires a unique combination of resilience, profound wisdom, and fortitude. It requires you to have the strength to face challenges head-on, the wisdom to recognize them coming, and the courage to take a risk. This delicate balance of perseverance and knowledge is needed to overcome obstacles and find meaningful solutions, especially when faced with adversity that tests our mental and emotional limits.

However, the question that often arises is, “Where can we find a paragon who embodies and practices these qualities?” For Muslims, the answer lies in the life of Muhammad ﷺ, who stands as a timeless example of patience and perseverance. This article offers a reflective examination of how Muhammad ﷺ confronted and overcame adversity and aims to provide a guiding framework for us to refer to during challenging periods in our own lives. By asking ourselves, “What Would Muhammad ﷺ Do?” we can draw on his example for inspiration and direction.

Our beloved Prophet ﷺ endured numerous trials and tribulations that tested his mental and emotional limits. Our focus will be on examining how he responded to these challenges and applying the same strategies to our own lives when faced with trials. Although there are numerous examples to pick from, a few have been selected that particularly resonate and parallel the times we live in today.

Consider, for instance, the three-year boycott imposed by the Quraysh, which sought to isolate Muhammad ﷺ and his followers from trading and other resources in addition to social rules that were imposed, like not being able to marry into the boycotted tribe. Despite the severe deprivation, Muhammad ﷺ exemplified exceptional perseverance and steadfastness. Can we truly believe that he did not experience extreme sorrow seeing his followers in such dire conditions? The one who was the most merciful and kindest of all men, would surely not remain unaffected while his people survived on acacia leaves and the cries of children echoed all around him. However, “the Apostle ﷺ never ceased preaching the message he had brought to his own people, and even to others, whenever he found the opportunity” (Ali Nadwi, 124). So, what would Muhammad ﷺ do when faced with harsh economic measures, boycotts in the form of loss of job opportunities or targeted defamation? He ﷺ would remain steadfast, as should we.

In the tenth year of prophethood, Muhammad ﷺ faced a period known as the Year of Sorrow. Imagine enduring the loss of your most beloved confidante and your staunchest protector. This was Muhammad’s ﷺ reality when his wife Khadijah رضي الله عنها and his uncle Abu Talib passed away in the same year. These personal tragedies came right after the end of the gruelling three-year boycott by the Quraysh. The cumulative stress of these events likely contributed to the decline in the health of both Khadijah and Abu Talib. It was a great loss for our beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, who was yet to face many difficulties in succession soon thereafter (Ali Nadwi, 124). Despite these profound losses, Muhammad ﷺ did not waver in his mission. What did Muhammad ﷺ do? He responded with resilience and reliance on Allah.

Even in his grief, he continued to preach and lead with unwavering dedication. His perseverance during the Year of Sorrow highlights his deep emotional strength and unshakeable faith, serving as a powerful testament to his character and a valuable source of guidance for us when seeking wisdom and resilience.

Within the same year, long after these personal losses, the infamous incident of Ta'if took place—another great trial for our beloved Nabi. Muhammad ﷺ sought to spread his message to the nearby town of Ta'if, hoping for support. Picture this: a man, weary from grief, reaching out for assistance, only to be met with hostility and violence. The leaders of Ta'if not only rejected his message but incited the townspeople to pelt him with stones, causing him physical harm. Yet, in the face of such brutality, what did Muhammad ﷺ do? His response was one of unparalleled patience and forgiveness. He made the famous du'a (Al-Mubarakpuri, 189) and turning to Allah—with blood clotting on his sandals—he prayed for the people of Ta'if, expressing hope that their descendants would one day embrace Islam. His prayer, filled with compassion and a lack of complaint about his own suffering, highlights his selflessness and deep faith. Even amidst severe emotional and mental distress, he exemplified the power of perseverance and the wisdom to rely on Allah ﷻ.

These episodes from Muhammad's ﷺ life—the three year boycott, and the Year of Sorrow which included the Ta'if incident—paint a vivid picture of his extraordinary resilience. His ability to maintain his mission's integrity and commitment to his principles, in the face of profound grief and physical suffering, speaks volumes about his character. More importantly, these experiences leave us with a legacy that we can aspire to emulate, striving to live by the ideals he embodied. Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ patience, forgiveness, and unwavering faith during these trying times offer timeless lessons for all of us. Reflecting on how he handled such adversity, we can draw inspiration and guidance for our own lives, learning to face our challenges with similar grace, resilience, and most importantly *taqwa*.

So, next time you encounter an incident that shakes you or tests your faith, when the world seems to have turned upside down and things appear to be at their worst, or when feelings of hopelessness begin to creep in, ask yourself: What Would Muhammad ﷺ Do? Insha Allah, you will find guidance and strength in his many examples.

**References:**

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