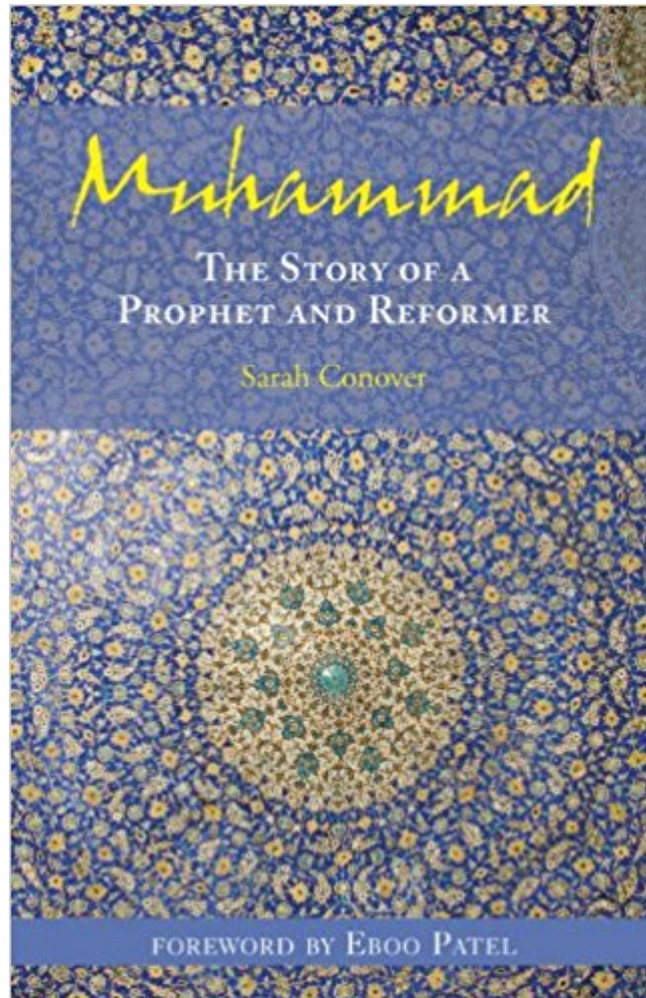




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# Muhammad: The Story Of A Prophet And Reformer



## Synopsis

In the pages of *Muhammad: The Story of a Prophet and Reformer*, young readers will encounter a man very different from the figure often presented in Western popular culture. Drawing from biographies, the Quran, and hadith, Sarah Conover, co-author of *Ayat Jamilah: Beautiful Signs: A Treasury of Islamic Wisdom for Children and Parents*, relates the story of a radical prophet who challenged the rich and powerful, guided his community of followers through a dangerous time of persecution and exile, formed alliances with people of different beliefs, and preached "love for humanity what you love for yourself." Before he became one of the most venerated, and most misunderstood, religious leaders in history, Muhammad was an orphaned child and a shepherd. Written for readers 12 and up, and with a foreword by Eboo Patel (founder of Interfaith Youth Core and a member of the President's Council on Faith-Based Neighborhood Partnerships), *Muhammad: The Story of a Prophet and Reformer* will educate and inspire young adults and adults of all faiths.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

There aren't many books about Muhammad's life written for youth. Conover (*Ayat Jamilah*, 2004) has taken on the task, beginning with the prophet's childhood adoption by Bedouins and ending with his arrival in Medina. Along the way, the author details Muhammad's education, his first marriage, the revelation of the Quran, and the anger he faced from his community. Throughout, Conover cultivates a strong sense of place with

colorful descriptions of the desert setting, and she draws the events, characters, and some dialogue from established biographies of Muhammad, hadith, and the Qur'an. Because of the strong ties to ancient texts, the language is best suited to strong readers and will probably have more resonance for students already familiar with Muhammad's origin. Conover's sensitive, respectful approach is carefully researched, though, and her emphasis on Muhammad's peaceful, wise nature adds nuance to the all-too-common myopic perceptions of Islam in contemporary culture. Though students will likely need a lot of help with this one, it opens the door to a more nuanced understanding of Muhammad and Islam. Grades 8-11.

--Sarah Hunter

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"This book is uniquely precious and timely. Filled with grace and beauty, this highly engaging story will stimulate minds and open hearts." -Imam Jamal Rahman, author of *Spiritual Gems of Islam- Insights and Practices from the Qur'an, Hadith, Rumi and Muslim Teaching: Stories to Enlighten the Heart and Mind*

"I recommend this book to all those who are honestly struggling against bigotry and ignorance. This is a useful tool in the hands of truth seekers and peace makers." --Dr. Sayyid M. Syeed, National Director Office for Interfaith & Community Alliances Islamic Society of North America

"We highly recommend this portrait of Muhammad, written for young people but equally good reading for adults. It both humanizes him and shows him as a Divinely led person." -Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat, *Spirituality & Practice*

"Conover, author of multiple religion books including the prize-winning *Ayat Jamilah: Beautiful Signs: A Treasury of Islamic Wisdom for Children and Parents*, adds herself to the growing list of biographers of the Prophet Muhammad. Her approach has a twist, though:

aiming at teen readers, she adds imaginative, descriptive details and writes narratively--a departure from straightforward exposition. . . . Carefully separating the facts from the liberties in an appendix, which also includes a time line and glossary, Conover ends her tale with the arrival of Muhammad in Medina, marking the beginning of the Islamic calendar. In her talented hands, Muhammad's story stays rooted in tradition, but takes on new dimensions that all readers, even seasoned ones, will appreciate and enjoy." -Publisher's Weekly

I am a very poor reader -- I could not put this book down. Well written and easy for me to read. Keep a pencil handy. You will want to make notes in the margins to keep everything straight in your head when you refer back. This book certainly opened my eyes to Muslim people and the Islamic faith. There is much of this book that can and should be used as a measuring stick for the United States of America today.

Easy reading Told in the form of a novel making it enjoyable and accessible for the curious reader. While aimed at the younger generation it is suitable for adults

book did not live up to the author's stated purpose.

Did you know that the life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was saved by a spider and a dove? This is just one of the details of his life that are brought to light in Sarah Conover's lovely book, *Muhammad: the story of a prophet and reformer*. It's a book that can be enjoyed by both children and adults, and one that is especially needed in post-9/11 America as an accessible introduction to the life of the founder of one of the three great monotheistic faiths. In popular (mis)conception, Islam is a religion of violent extremists and its founder is, perhaps, the greatest terrorist of them all. This is not to say that there are not branches on the Muslim tree that are not violent and extreme, but the trunk and the roots are something else entirely. In his day Muhammad was known as a particularly just man, a peaceful man, a man of extraordinary trustworthiness. And Sarah Conover, who is a gifted storyteller, helps us to see the man behind the myths and more modern misrepresentations. In the early 1990s the Venerable Tich Nhat Hanh wrote a biography of the Buddha *Old Path, White Cloud* in which he combines the gentle simplicity of a children's story with a commitment to ensuring that every incident reported is grounded in the oldest and most venerated traditions. Ms. Conover

has now done the same thing. She relates the events in Muhammad's life from the his early days as a Bedouin herder, to his first encounter with an angel in a cave, to his flight from Mecca to Yathrib (renamed Mecca) because of the backlash from those who were challenged by his teachings. At the end of the book Conover has placed notes on each of chapter to help the reader know what was her own invention and what is accepted within Islam. The spider and the dove, for instance, are well known and well beloved parts of the Prophet's story. A scene in which Muhammad plays with his children comes from Conover's imagination, yet it is in keeping with what the traditions say about him. And she promises that the only words she put into Muhammad's mouth are words that traditions ascribe to him as well. (A panel of experts reviewed the manuscript to ensure the stories told are as accurate as possible according to accepted tradition.) Recent years have given several reminders of how seriously the prohibition against visual representations of the Prophet is taken (at least in some branches of the Muslim family), yet Conover has painted a portrait with words in which we can see the devoted husband, loving father, and man of deep faith who responded to his understanding of the voice of the sacred and called for a reform of the religion of his day. Whatever your tradition, or lack thereof, this is a man worth meeting. I can think of no better introduction than Sarah Conover's new book. Rev. Erik Walker Wikstrom, Charlottesville, Virginia (I am a Unitarian Universalist minister and the author of Teacher, Guide, and Companion: rediscovering Jesus in a secular age, and, Simply Pray: a modern spiritual practice to deepen your life.)

I have always been a fan of Ms. Conover's work. I own three of her story collections written for children. This book is a compassionate and clear presentation of the Prophet Mohamed's life. I highly recommend this book for anyone wanting to understand the Prophet Mohamed's life and gain insight into the Muslim faith.

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