

FOREWORD

God sent his messengers for guidance, and to create love and brotherhood among the people but unfortunately the history of religion is full of bigotry and hatred. The messengers were always the victims of violence. From Adam to this time, all the prophets without any exception, passed through the same channel of hatred and persecution. How nicely the Holy Quran has described this fact in the following verse: Alas for my servants! There comes not a Messenger to them but they mock at him. (Quran, 36:31)

Torah, Gospels and all other scriptures support the reality of the verse of the Holy Quran. Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus Christ, they were all victims of violence, due to false charges leveled against them, and same was the fate of their followers. It is undeniable truth that in every age a great number of people labeled the true prophets as imposters and incited the general public against those innocent prophets. How great was the Messiah, Jesus son of Marry, but he suffered more than many other prophets by the hands of his own people. What was his sin? Nothing but the message of love. But how his message was distorted and misapprehended and finally due to false charges he was hanged on the cross. It is a shame for those who did that, and they would never be forgiven the crime they committed against a blameless person. Some one can say that they were uncivilized people. They were ignorant about the moral and ethical values, but that is not so, they were the most civilized people of their age, but still they committed the heinous crimes. That was not the first mistake committed, rather that was the crime committed in every age and against every prophet. Similar is the situation created by those who could not understand the message of the Prophet of Islam. Unfortunately his teachings are totally misunderstood due to prejudice and narrow-mindedness. A wonderful prophet who brought a fantastic message for mankind, and produced astounding result. His life is like an open book; nothing is hidden from birth to his burial. He appeared before the people as child, young and old, as son, father and husband, as subject and as ruler, as judge, king, general and prophet. He was really a wonderful man in every walk of his life. The prophet who is really the savior of mankind, is regrettably painted as terrorist in this age by some of the religious fanatics. I fear that the people should not be led astray by these religious extremist as it happened in the time of the other prophets, this is why this humble effort is being made to present the facts about the life of the Holy Prophet of Islam.

THE HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD (Peace and blessing of Allah be upon him)

By Maulana M. A. Cheema

HIS EARLY DAYS

At the time of the birth of the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) the Arabs were sunk to a very low state. They were fond of intoxicants, gambling, and idol worship. Girls became such a shameful commodity among them that they would bury their infant girls alive for fear of disgrace.

Women among them were considered as a commodity that was to be inherited by her husband just as they would take over his money or livestock. Slavery was rampant throughout the land. Instead of worshiping one God, the Creator of the universe, they had gods of wood and stones, molded with their own hands. There were 360 idols in the Holy Kaaba which prophet Abraham and his son Ishmael had built in Mecca. The house which was the symbol of the unity of God was taken over by the idols and pagan customs. The system of pilgrimage which was established by prophet Abraham was totally distorted by the pagan rituals. Their pilgrimage was nothing but drinking, gambling and running naked around the idols clapping and whistling. Not only the Arabs were lost in the evils and immoralities, rather the whole world was deeply sunk in

the transgressions, crimes and sins. The Holy Quran has drawn the picture of that era in the following words:

Corruption has spread on the land and the sea because of what men's hands has wrought, that He may make them taste the fruit of some of their doings, so that they may turn back from evil. (Holy Quran, 30:42)

That was the time when the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was born in Mecca in AD 570. He was born an orphan, as his father died a few months before his birth. The name Muhammad (the praised one) was given by his grandfather, Abdul Muttalib. It was a long-established practice for the people of Mecca to leave their babies in the care of desert's wet-nurses so that they were brought up brave, eloquent and in touch with the realities of desert life. So, for that purpose, the little baby was handed over to Halima, the wet nurse, and he spent five years with her.

His mother died when he was about six years old, and his grandfather, who was his loving and devoted guardian, died when he was eight years old. He then passed into the care of his uncle, Abu Talib, the father of *Hadrat* Ali.

This is confirmed beyond any doubt that his childhood and youth remained very pure and clean in the corrupt and debased society of Mecca. He lived in Mecca, among the idol worshipers, but he never paid homage to an idol, never ate of anything presented as offering to an idol. He never touched liquor, neither gambled, nor took part in any of the frivolous activities of his fellow youths. It is beyond the shadow of doubt that Almighty Allah fully safeguarded him against every kind of lapse. He arrived at his full maturity without the slightest stain on his character.

HIS LOVE FOR GOD

Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had great love for the Almighty God, and since his early age he was trying to establish his relation with him. This is why he used to spend lot of his time in praying and supplicating to God. He was not after material world; rather he was in search of his Creator. When he was about forty years old, it was his routine to take a very small quantity of food and water to a cave named Hira, near Mecca, and spend days in prayers and fasting, just to seek the pleasure of the Almighty God. And finally in such a situation he received the first revelation from God, through angel Gabriel. That was the first appearance of the angel to the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The angel said, "Read" and the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "I cannot read." Again the angel said, "Read" and the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) gave the same reply. Then for the third time the angel said:

Read in the name of thy Lord who created. Created man from a clot of blood. (Holy Quran, 96:2-3)

And the Prophet started reading. The Holy Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was not a super being; he was a human chosen by God for the guidance of human beings. Almighty God has always sent the messengers from the people for their guidance, as the Holy Quran says:

Say, "Had there been in the earth angels walking about in peace and quiet, We would have certainly sent down to them from heaven an angel as a Messenger." (Holy Quran, 17: 96)

All the messengers are like other men but it is their relation with God and the revelation they receive from Him which makes the difference as God revealed to the Holy Prophet of Islam:

Say, I am but a man like yourselves; but it is revealed to me that your God is One God. So let him who hopes to meet his Lord, do good deeds, and let him join no one in the worship of his Lord. (Holy Quran, 18:111)

So the best possible guidance from God comes to the people through the messengers in the form of revelations. And the relation of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with God was the best relation ever established by any human being with Him. The love of God was oozing every moment from every word of his speech. And his every action was a witness that he had reached the highest point in the love of God.

The love of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that he had for his Creator is described in the Holy Quran in the following words:

And He found thee wandering in search for Him and guided thee unto Himself.
(Holy Quran, 93:8)

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had so much love for the Almighty God that even his opponents said that He was intoxicated in the love of his God. He loved God so much so that he became the beloved of God. Every moment of his life was a witness that he wanted to glorify and exalt the name of God. History is unable to produce a single example like him of any person who had so great a love for God. God loved him even more than that, and made him a victor in every field of his life. It was God who guided him and helped him at every step of his life.

He was the Prophet of God; during his lifetime he was a businessman, a preacher, a philosopher, a statesman, an orator, a reformer, a lawgiver, a fugitive, a king. In every position he was close to God and God was close to him.

Commendable Love of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for God

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) loved so much Almighty God that God commanded him to make it known to the believers, to follow his footsteps in this regard, if they needed the remission of their sins and wanted to be the beloved of God. As it is mentioned in the Holy Quran:

Say, If you love Allah, follow me; then will Allah love you and forgive you your sins, And Allah is Most Forgiving and Merciful.(Holy Quran, 3:32)

In this regard *Hadrat* Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) writes:

Is it not a matter for wonder that a poor, powerless, helpless, and unlearned orphan who was alone at a time when every people possessed a plenitude of financial, military and intellectual means, brought such a bright teaching that he silenced everyone with his conclusive arguments and clear proofs? He pointed out the mistakes of those who were claimed as great philosophers. He exhibited such power that he pulled down rulers from their thrones and put poor people on them in their place. If this was not Divine support, then what was it? Can anyone overcome the whole world in reason, knowledge, strength and force without Divine support?

Who was with the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) when he first announced to the people that he was a prophet? Did he possess the treasury of any king relying on which he took on the whole world as his opponents, or had he at his disposal a force relying on which he had become secure against the attacks of kings? Our opponents know that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was at that time alone and helpless and without any means. It was only God, Who had created him for a great purpose, Who was with him and was his sure support.

(Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya, Vol. 1, pp. 119-120)

Again the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) says:

On five occasions, the life of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was in serious danger and had he not been a true prophet of God, he would certainly have been destroyed. One was the occasion when the disbelieving Quraish had surrounded his house and had sworn that they would kill him that night. The second occasion was when pursuers had arrived with a large body of men at the entrance to the cave in which he had taken shelter along with *Hadrat* Abu Bakr. The third occasion was when he had been left alone in the battle of Uhud and the Quraish had surrounded him and attacked him in a body but were foiled of their purpose. The fourth occasion was when a Jewish woman gave him meat to eat which had been saturated with a fatal poison. The fifth occasion was when Khusro Pervaiz, Emperor of Persia, had made up his mind to destroy him and had sent his emissaries to arrest him. His delivery on all these dangerous occasions and his ultimate triumph over all his enemies is a conclusive proof that he was righteous and God was with him. (Chashma Ma'rifat, Ruhani Khazain, Vol. 23, pp. 263-264, footnote)

Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had a great jealousy for the name and honor of God. He never liked that some one should laugh at or make fun of God or dishonor His name. Any negative remark of the enemy about himself did not bother him at all; but he was always worried about any humiliation to the name of God.

Such a situation appeared on one occasion during the battle of Uhud, which is recorded in Hadith. It shows how much the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was dedicated to the love of God. *Hadrat* Al Bara narrates:

We faced the pagans on that day (of the battle of Uhud) and the Prophet placed a batch of archers (at a special place) and appointed 'Abdullah bin Jubair as their commander and said, "Do not leave this place; and if you should see us conquering the enemy, do not leave this place, and if you should see them conquering us, do not come even to help us." So, when we faced the enemy, they took to their heel till I saw their women running towards the mountain. Abdullah bin Jubair said, "The Prophet had taken a firm promise from me not to leave this place." But his companions refused to stay. So when they refused to stay there, Allah confused them so that they could not know where to go, and they suffered seventy casualties. Abu Sufyan ascended a high place and said, "Is Muhammad present amongst the people?" The Prophet said, "Do not answer him." Abu Sufyan said, "Is the son of Abu Quhafa (Abu Bakr) present among the people?" The Prophet said, "Do not answer him." Abu Sufyan said, "Is the son of Al-Khattab ('Umar) amongst the people?" He then added, "All these people have been killed, for, were they alive, they would have replied." On that, 'Umar could not help saying, "You are a liar, O enemy of Allah! Allah has kept what will make you unhappy."

Abu Safyan said, "Superior may be Hubal!" On that the Prophet said to his companions, "Why do you not reply him?" They asked, "What may we say?" He said, "Say: Allah is More Elevated and More Majestic!" Abu Sufyan said, "We have the idol, Al-'Uzza, whereas you have no 'Uzza!" The Prophet said to his companions, "Reply to him." They said, "What may we say?" The Prophet said, "Say: Allah is our Helper and you have no helper." Abu Sufyan said, "This day compensates for our loss at Badr and in the battle the victory is always undecided."

(Sahih Bukhari)

The Prophet of Islam always trusted in God and never became dependant upon any one. God the Almighty was his refuge, in every moment of relieve or danger. When he started his mission as a prophet, he had great support from his uncle Abu Talib. But he never depended solely upon him, and never left God's help aside. The unbelievers were frequently reporting to Abu Talib about the activities of the Prophet of Islam. And they asked him to advise his nephew to stop

preaching the name of God. One day Abu Talib spoke to the Prophet very softly and begged him to abandon his affair. To that suggestion the Prophet firmly replied;

“O my uncle, if they placed the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand to cause me to renounce my task, verily I would not desist there from until Allah made manifest His cause or I perished in the attempt.”

The Prophet, overcome by the thought that his uncle and protector was willing to desert him, turned to depart. But Abu Talib called him loudly to come back, and he came. Abu Talib said, “Say whatever you please; for by the Lord I shall not desert you ever.”

PATIENCE

He was always very patient in hardship and suffering. He was never discouraged by adverse circumstances nor did he permit any personal desire to get a hold over him. His father had died before his birth and his mother died while he was still a little child. Up to the age of eight, he was in the supervision of his grandfather and then at his death he was taken care of by his uncle, Abu Talib. That was a very hard time for him but he always behaved in a dignified manner.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), throughout his life, had to encounter a succession of bitter experiences. After marriage, he had to bear the loss of several children one after the other, and then his beloved and devoted wife Khadija died. Some of the wives he married after Khadija's death, died during his lifetime. Towards the close of his life he had to bear the loss of his son Abraham. He bore all these losses and calamities calmly, and none of them affected him in the least degree.

On one occasion he observed a woman who had lost a child occupied in loud mourning over her child's grave. He admonished her to be patient and to accept God's will as supreme. The woman did not know that she was being addressed by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and she said to the Prophet, “If you had ever suffered the loss of a child as I have, you would have realized how difficult it is to be patient under such an affliction.” The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, “I have suffered the loss not of one but of seven children,” and passed on.

The Day of Ta'if and the Patience of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

In the tenth year of the mission, the uncle of Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), Abu-Talib and his wife Khadeejah both died. With their death the abuse of the Quraish increased manifold. Of those few people who were allowed to hear the Qur'an many became Muslims. However, due to continuous torture given by the Quraish, Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) decided to preach the word of God to the people of Al-Ta'if. So he traveled to Al-Ta'if to convey the message of God to people. When the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) reached there, the elders incited the youth against him. The fanatic youth started throwing stones upon the Prophet of Islam, so much so that the Prophet was severely wounded; he was bleeding from top to tow. His shoes were filled with blood, and it became hard for him even to walk. That moment the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prayed to God the Almighty saying,

“O, my Lord, unto you I bewail my weakness, inability, and disregard of mankind towards me. O Most Merciful of the merciful, you are the Lord of the weak and my Lord. Unto whom shall you deliver me? Unto one who is distant and shall glower at me, or unto an enemy whom You have given authority over me? If You are not angry against me then I do not care what befalls me, as Your gifts of well-being are more commodious for me. I seek refuge in the light of Your face that has overcome all darkness, and through which all matters of this life and the hereafter have been established in justice, that Your retribution should fall upon me, or your

disdain should befall me. Unto You is all appeasement until You are appeased, and no one has power or ability except in You.”

At that time the Angel Gabriel appeared and addressed him saying: “Allah has heard what your people said to you, and how they have replied to you. Allah has sent the angel of the Mountains to you so that you may order him to do whatever you wish to these people.”

The Angel of the Mountains then appeared and said, “O Muhammad! Order what you wish. If you like, I shall cause mountains surrounding Al-Ta’if, to fall upon them, and crush them into pieces.”

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) replied, “No, for I hope that there shall be among their children those who will worship Allah alone, and will worship none besides Him.” And he prayed, “O my Lord guide these people because they know not.”

He then returned to Mecca.

Shi’b Abi Talib

The tenth year of the Prophethood was a year of intense persecution and suffering in the life of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The Quraish and the other tribes had continued their boycott of the Bani Hashim and the Muslims for about three years and the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the people of his family and Companions lay besieged in Shi’b Abi Talib. The Quraish had blocked up this vicinity from every side so that no supplies of any kind could reach the besieged people. This boycott continued uninterrupted for about three years and had broken the back of the Muslims and the Bani Hashim; so much so that at times they were even forced to eat grass and the leaves of trees. At last, when the siege was lifted, Abu Talib, uncle of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), who had been shielding him for ten long years, died, and hardly a month later his wife, *Hadrat* Khadijah, who had been a source of peace and consolation for him ever since the beginning of the call, also passed away. Because of these tragic incidents, which closely followed each other, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to refer to this year as the Year of Sorrow and Grief.

But all this period of suffering was spent with patience and with great tolerance.

Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi (peace be upon him) of the age, says about the Holy founder of Islam:

The calamities and hardships that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had to endure during the thirteen years of his Meccan life cannot be imagined. Our heart trembles when we think of them. They demonstrate his high resolve, generous heartedness, perseverance and steadfastness. What a mountain of steadfastness he was that no difficulty could shake him in the least. He did not slacken for a moment in the discharge of his duty, nor was he sorrowful. No difficulty could weaken his resolve. Some people out of misunderstanding enquire: why did he have to encounter all these misfortunes and difficulties when he was the loved one of God and His chosen one? I would say to them that water is not discovered till one digs into the earth and splits it through several feet. It is only then that agreeable water is found which is the basis of life. In the same way, delight in the cause of God Almighty can be procured only by steadfastness and firmness under difficulties and misfortunes. How can those who have no experience of these ways imagine and feel that delight? How can they be aware that when the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had to endure trouble a spring of delight and comfort welled up in his heart, and his trust in God, love of God, and faith in Divine help were strengthened? (Malfuzat, Vol. II, pp. 307-305)

Again *Hadrat* Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi (peace be upon him) of the age wrote about the Holy founder of Islam regarding his patience and steadfastness:

Prophets and saints are raised so that people should follow them in all their moral qualities and that all seekers after truth should tread the path along which God has made them steadfast. It is obvious that high moral qualities are proved by their exercise on the proper occasion and it is only then that they are most effective. For instance, forgiveness is praiseworthy when the wronged one has the power to take revenge, and piety is trustworthy when it is exercised at a time when means of self-indulgence are at hand. God's design with regard to Prophets and saints is that every type of high moral quality should be manifested by them and should be clearly established.

To fulfill this design God Almighty divides their lives into two parts. One part is passed in hardships and under calamities, in which they are tormented and persecuted so that those of their high moral qualities might be manifested which can only be manifested during great hardship. If they are not subjected to great hardship, it cannot be affirmed that they were faithful to their Lord in the face of all calamities and pressed further forward in the face of hardships. They are grateful to God Almighty that He chose them for His favors and considered them worthy that they should be persecuted in His cause. God Almighty afflicts them with misfortunes so that their endurance and steadfastness and fidelity might be manifested and they might illustrate the proverb that, "Steadfastness is higher than a miracle."

Perfect steadfastness is not manifested in the absence of great hardships, and is appreciated when a person is greatly shaken. These calamities are spiritual bounties in the case of Prophets and saints, through which their high qualities, in which they are matchless and peerless, are manifested and their ranks are promoted in the Hereafter. If they were not subjected to severe trials, they would not be awarded these bounties, nor would their sterling qualities be demonstrated to the common people. Their high resolve, fidelity and bravery would not be universally acknowledged. They became matchless, peerless, unique, unreachable, and so perfect and brave as if each of them were a thousand lions in one body and a thousand leopards in one frame. Thus, their power and strength held high in everyone's estimation and they arrived at high ranks of nearness to God.

The second part of the lives of prophets and saints is perfected in victory, prestige and riches, so that such of their high qualities might be demonstrated for which it is necessary to be victorious, to possess prestige, riches, authority and power. To forgive one's tormentors, and to forbear from one's persecutors, and to love one's enemies, and to wish well to one's ill-wishers, not to love riches nor to be proud of them, and not to be miserly and to open wide the gates of beneficence and generosity, and not to make riches the means of self-indulgence, and not to make power an instrument of tyranny and transgression, are all qualities for the demonstration of which it is necessary to possess riches and power. These qualities are demonstrated when a person possesses both wealth and authority.

As without passing through a time of trial and misfortune, and also a time of prosperity and authority, these two types of high qualities cannot be manifested, the Perfect Wisdom of the Divine demanded that prophets and saints should be provided with both these types of opportunities, which comprise thousands of bounties. But the sequence of both these conditions is not the same for everyone. Divine Wisdom ordains in the case of some that the period of peace and comfort should precede the time of troubles, and in the case of others, troubles precede Divine help. In some these conditions are not apparent and in others they are manifested to a perfect

degree. In this respect the foremost was the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for both these conditions were imposed upon him in their perfection in such order that his high qualities were illumined like the sun. (Braheeni-Ahmadiyya, Ruhani Khazain, Vol. 1, pp. 276-292, footnote 11)

KIND TREATMENT OF WOMEN

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was very serious in improving the condition of women in society and on securing for them a position of dignity and fair and equitable treatment. Islam was the first religion, which conferred upon women the right of inheritance. The Quran makes daughters along with the sons heirs to the property left by their parents. In the same way a mother is made an heir to her son's or daughter's property, and a wife is made an heir to her husband's property, when a brother becomes an heir of his deceased brother's property, a sister is also an heir to that property. No religion before Islam had so clearly and firmly established a woman's right of inheritance and her right to possess property. In Islam a woman is the absolute owner of her own property and her husband cannot obtain any control over it by virtue merely of their relationship. A woman is at full liberty to deal with her property as she chooses.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was so careful with regard to the kind treatment of women that those around him who had not previously been accustomed to looking upon women in the light of helpmates and partners found it difficult to accommodate themselves to the standards that the Prophet was anxious to see set up and maintained. *Hadrat* 'Umar relates, "My wife occasionally sought to intervene in my affairs with her counsel and I would admonish her, saying that the Arabs had never permitted their women to intervene in their affairs." She would retort: "That is all past. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) lets his wives counsel him in his affairs and he does not stop them. Why don't you follow his example?"

Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was so careful concerning the sentiments of women that on one occasion when he was leading the Prayers he heard the cry of a child and concluded the service quickly, explaining thereafter that as he had heard the cry of the child he imagined that the child's mother would be distressed at its cry and he had therefore concluded the service quickly so that the mother could go to the child and look after it.

When during any of his journeys women were also among the party he always gave directions that the caravan should move slowly and by easy stages. On one such occasion when the men were eager to push forward, he said: "Take care of the glass! Take care of the glass!" meaning thereby that women were of the party and that if camels and horses were put to the gallop they would suffer from the jolting of the animals. (Sahih Bukhari)

During a battle confusion arose among the ranks of the mounted soldiers and the animals became unmanageable. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) fell from his horse and some of the women also fell from their mounts. One of his Companions, who was riding a camel immediately behind the Prophet jumped down and ran towards him crying, "May I be your sacrifice, O Messenger of Allah." The Prophet's foot was still in the stirrup. He released it hastily and said to his Companion, "Don't worry about me, go and help the women."

Just before his death, one of the injunctions he addressed to Muslims and laid stress upon was that they should always treat women with kindness and consideration.

Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "If a man has daughters and he makes arrangement to have them educated and takes pains with their upbringing, God would save him from the torment of Hell." (Tirmidhi)

It was a common practice with the Arabs to inflict physical chastisement upon women for every little fault. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) taught that

women were equal to men as the creatures of God, and were not the slaves of men and should not be beaten. The Prophet admonished men and told them that those who treated women with unkindness could never win the favor of God. Thereafter, the rights of women were established, and for the first time women began to be treated as free individuals in their own right.

Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was so careful of the feelings and sentiments of women that he always exhorted those who had to go upon a journey to finish their errands quickly and return home as soon as possible so that their wives and children should not suffer separation longer than was necessary. Whenever he returned from a journey he always came home during the daytime. If he found night approaching towards the end of his journey, he would camp outside Medina for the night and enter in the morning. He also told his companions that when they returned from a journey they should not come home suddenly without giving a notice of their return.

It is misunderstood that Islam neglects the women and does not give any right to them, or women are considered inferior to men. It is a lack of Islamic knowledge. If the Holy Quran and the sayings of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) be studied, it becomes very clear that it is Islam that has really elevated the status of women. Before Islam, women were sold as personal commodities. Female children were buried alive because they were considered as curse for family. It is Islam that gave every respect and honor to women, and brought them at the level of men; otherwise women were mistreated in every sphere of life. Islam always provides equal rights and equal opportunities for men and women, as the Holy Quran says:

Surely, men who submit themselves to God and women who submit themselves to Him, and believing men and believing women, and obedient men and obedient women, and truthful men and truthful women, and men steadfast in their faith and steadfast women, and men who are humble and women who are humble, and men who give alms and women who give alms, and men who fast and women who fast, and men who guard their chastity and women who guard their chastity and men who remember Allah much and women who remember Him—Allah has prepared for all of them forgiveness and a great reward. (Holy Quran, 33:36)

It is misunderstood that Islam does not permit equal opportunities to women to seek knowledge with men. It is entirely a wrong notion; such concept is never presented by Islam. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) says in this regard, “It is the duty of every Muslim man and Muslim woman to seek knowledge”.

The Holy Quran says:

He it is who created you from a single soul and made there from its mate, that he might find comfort in her. And when he knows her, she bears a light burden and goes about with it. And when she grows heavy, they both pray to Allah, their Lord, saying, ‘If thou gives us a good child, we will surely be of the thankful.’ (Holy Quran, 7:190)

Woman has different roles in the society. Some time she appears as mother, some time as wife and some time as daughter, all these roles are respected and dignified in Islam.

Woman as a mother

In connection with the respect, honor and status of woman as a mother, the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has a great regard. Once a Companion consulted him to seek advice to participate in a war, when he said, “Do you have a mother?” He said, “Yes.” Then Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, “Be with her, because paradise is under her feet.” (Nasa’i)

“Paradise lies under the feet of your mothers.” This indicates the outstanding status of woman in Islam far superior than granted by any other religion of the world. No other religion comes close to the prominence given to women by the Holy Prophet of Islam.

To strive for caring for one’s parents is considered an honor and a blessing, and an opportunity for great spiritual growth. God asks that not only we pray for our parents, but also act with limitless compassion, remembering that when we were helpless children they preferred us over themselves. Mothers are particularly honored. In Islam, serving one’s parents is one of the greatest duties. It is considered despicable to express any irritation when, through no fault of their own, the old age becomes difficult for them. The Quran says:

Thy Lord has commanded that ye worship none but Him, and that ye show kindness to parents. If one or both of them attain old age with thee, never say to them as much as ugh nor reproach them, but always address them with kindly speech. And lower them the wing of humility out of tenderness. And say, ‘My Lord, have mercy on them even as they nourished me when I was a little child.’

(Holy Quran, 17:24-25)

Once a Companion of the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked, “O Apostle of Allah! To whom should I show kindness?” He replied, “Your mother, next your mother, next your mother, and then comes your father, and then your relatives in order of relationship.” (Abu Dawud)

Woman as a wife

Woman as a wife has also a very special status in Islam as it is described in the teachings of the Holy Quran and sayings of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) of Islam.

Holy Quran says:

And of His Signs is that He has created wives for you from among yourselves that you may find peace of mind in them, and He has put love and tenderness between you. In that, surely, are Signs for a people who reflect. (Holy Quran, 30:22)

Holy Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, “Best of you is one who is best in his treatment of his wife and I am the best of you in this treatment.” (Tirmidhi)

In his farewell address, after the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had glorified and praised Allah, he drew special attention of men towards their wives in the following words:

“Be ever mindful of the duty you owe to Allah in respect of your wives. You have married them with the guarantee of Allah’s name, and you have made them lawful for yourselves in accordance with Allah’s word. So be mindful of your covenant. They owe you fidelity; for any default on their part you may correct them gently. You owe them suitable maintenance.” (Tirmidhi)

Woman as a daughter

To take care of a daughter tenderly is much emphasized in the sayings of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) of Islam. For example, *Hadrat* ‘Aisha, the wife of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), said: A woman came with her two daughters, asking charity but she did not find with me anything except a date. I gave it to her and she divided it between her two daughters, and did not eat it herself. Then she got up and went out, and the Prophet of Islam entered on us, and I informed him about it. So the Prophet said: Whoever is thrown into trial on account of these daughters, they (the daughters) are a screen for him from Hell fire.

LOVE FOR THE POOR

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enjoined upon Muslims to treat the poor kindly and to help them with alms, *zakat*, and in other ways. Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) says as it is narrated by Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri, one of his the Companion:

“The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: If any Muslim clothes a Muslim when he is naked, Allah will clothe him with some green garments of Paradise; if any Muslim feeds a Muslim when he is hungry, Allah will feed him with some of the fruits of Paradise; and if any Muslim gives a Muslim drink when he is thirsty, Allah will give him some of the pure wine which is sealed to drink.”
(Abu Dawud)

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) says, “Do you love your Creator? Then love your fellow beings first.”

Again the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) says, “It is difficult for a man laden with riches to climb the steep path that leads to bliss.”

He did not prohibit or discourage the acquisition of wealth but insisted that it be lawfully acquired by honest means and that a portion of it should go to the poor. He advised his followers, as it is narrated by Abdullah ibn Umar:

Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, ‘Give the laborer his wages before his perspiration dries.’ (Tirmidhi)

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) always encouraged his followers to work instead of begging from others, as it is mentioned in the hadith:

Allah is gracious to him who earns his living by his own labor, and that if a man begs to increase his property, Allah will diminish it and whoever has food for the day, it is prohibited for him to beg. To his wife he said, ‘O Aisha, love the poor and let them come to you and Allah will draw you near to Himself.’ (Sahih Bukhari)

Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was much worried about the people who were underprivileged in the society. Once Ibad Bin Sharjil, a man from Medina was starving. He entered an orchard and picked some fruit. The owner of the orchard gave him a sound beating and stripped off his clothes. The poor man appealed to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who remonstrated the owner in the following words: “This man was ignorant, you should have dispelled his ignorance; he was hungry, you should have fed him.” His clothes were restored to the Medinan and, in addition, some grain was given to him. (Abu Dawud)

A debtor, Jabir Bin Abdullah, was being harassed by his creditor as he could not clear his debt owing to the failure of his date crop. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) went with Jabir to the house of the creditor and pleaded with him to give Jabir some more time, but the creditor was not prepared to oblige. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then went to the oasis and having seen for himself that the crop was really poor, he again approached the creditor with no better result. He then rested for some time and approached the creditor for a third time but the latter was adamant. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) went again to the orchard and asked Jabir to pluck the dates. As Allah would have it, the collection not only sufficed to clear the dues but also left something to spare. (Sahih Bukhari)

His love for the poor was so deep that he used to pray for himself in these words:

“O Allah, keep me poor in my life and at my death, and raise me at resurrection among those who are poor.” (Nasa'i)

CHARITY

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) throughout his life encouraged the people to have independent and noble living. He always pushed his followers to be hard working, make an honest living and discouraged them from seeking charity. He did not condemn wealth and the wealthy; however, he was concerned for his followers that they may not get obsessed by wealth and wealth may not corrupt them.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself could have been the wealthiest man in the history of Arabia, however, he preferred to live simply and use his wealth to please God. As the leader of the Islamic nation, he received great wealth; however, he hated for that wealth to remain in his home for more than a day without having distributed it in charity. At times he would distribute tens or hundreds of thousands of *dinars* at a time as soon as he received them. He lived according to his supplication:

O my Lord, indeed, true life is only the afterlife, and what have I to do with this life? The similitude of this life and me is as a traveler who stopped to take shelter in the shade of a tree and then arose and left it.

Urwah narrated that 'Aisha, the wife of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), said to me: O my nephew! We used to see the crescent, and then the crescent, and then the crescent, in this way we saw three crescents in two months and no fire (for cooking) used to be lit in the houses of Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). I said, "O my aunt! Then what used to sustain you?" Aisha said, "Two dates and water." (Sahih Bukhari)

Abu Dharr narrated that Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

If I had gold equal to the mountain of Uhud, it would not please me that any of it should remain with me after three nights, except what I would keep for repaying debts.
(Sahih Bukhari)

MARRIED LIFE OF THE PROPHET OF ISLAM

At the age of twenty-five he was employed by Khadijah, a noble lady of Mecca, as her agent in a caravan that was about to set out for Syria on a mercantile mission. And Muhammad acquitted himself so well in the discharge of his duties that she was deeply impressed by his honesty, integrity, business acumen and his pleasing and attractive personality.

Khadijah was a widow, after married twice, and had children from both marriages. Now she sent the proposal of marriage to Muhammad through one of her maids. Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was surprised and took counsel with his uncle, who favored the proposal and the match was arranged. At that time Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was twenty-five years of age and Khadijah was forty. That was the first marriage of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The marriage, despite the disparity in age and prosperity, proved to be a very happy one. This marriage lasted for 25 years.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was 50 years old when *Hadrat* Khadijah died at the age of 65 years. After the death of *Hadrat* Khadijah, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) married to an old lady named Sowda Binte Zamah. She was the widow of Sakran Bin Amar, who was one of the servants of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

Up to the age of 50 years the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had only one wife. After the death of *Hadrat* Khadijah, he married more wives. Polygamy was a common practice of the society. There was not any limit to the number of wives one could have. Abraham had three wives, David one hundred, and Solomon over seven hundred. But the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), according to God's command limited polygamy to marry up to four wives. All his wives when he married were widows or divorced, except *Hadrat* 'Aisha, the daughter of his beloved companion, Abu Bakr *Siddique*, who became

the first successor after the demise of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). She was about nine years old when her parents requested to perform her Nikah, and that was according to the Arab customs. But she was married to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) when she was 12 years of age and well matured. That was the time when people used to arrange marriages for their girls at a very young age. Because of the hot environment of that land the girls reach to the age of puberty in a very young age. As in America a good percentage of girls reaches to the age of puberty just at nine. And that is the natural phenomenon of maturity of age, or the age of marriage by nature. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had a very successful and happy married life. It was a personal sacrifice on the part of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to have contracted the marriage, and especially with the women older in age to him. The ladies who married the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did so of their own preference. None of them was forced into marriage.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was extremely kind and fair towards his wives. He established an excellent example in respect of dealing with wives of different age groups having different temperaments and social status.

Hadrat Khadija was his first wife, and she had made great sacrifices in his cause. She was much older than the Prophet. After her death he married younger women but he always remembered her. Whenever any of *Hadrat* Khadija's friends visited him he would stand up to receive her.

If he chanced to see any article that had belonged to or had been connected with *Hadrat* Khadija, he was always overcome by emotion. He often praised *Hadrat* Khadija to his other wives and stressed her virtues and admired the sacrifices that she had made in the cause of Islam. On one such occasion, *Hadrat* 'Aisha was irritated and said, "O Messenger of Allah, why go on talking of the old lady? God has bestowed better, younger and more attractive wives upon you." The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was overcome by emotion at hearing this and said: "O no, Aisha! You have no idea how good Khadija was to me." The similar love and affection he had for the other wives.

He was very cooperative to his wives in his day-to-day life. He not only helped them in their household activities, but also he always tried to do his personal works with his own hands. In this regard *Hadrat* 'Aisha says: 'He would patch his garments and sole his sandals.' She was once asked, 'How was he with his family?' She responded, 'He was in the service of his family until it was time for Prayer, at which time he would go and pray.' The Messenger of Allah never denigrated any type of food, if he liked it he ate it, and if he disliked it he left it alone. (Bukhari and Muslim)

There is another similar statement of *Hadrat* 'Aisha, the wife of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him):

Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to patch his sandals, sew his garment and conduct himself at home as anyone of you does in his house. He was a human being, milking his sheep, and doing his own household tasks. (Tirmidhi).

Polygamy and the Prophet of Islam

Long before the appearance of the prophet of Islam polygamy was being practiced by the Biblical prophets. Abraham had three wives, David one hundred, and Solomon over seven hundred. That was a very common practice of the society to marry more than one wife, and there was not any limit for that. And polygamy was not only in Arabia rather it was being practiced in the entire world.

So according to the custom of the time prophet of Islam also practiced polygamy, and it was when he was over fifty years old. But later it was revealed to the prophet, as God's command that the Muslims can practice polygamy, under certain restrictions as the Holy Quran says:

And if you fear that you will not be just in dealing with the orphans, then marry of other women as may be agreeable to you, two, or three, or four; and if you fear you will not be able to do justice, then marry only one or marry what your right hand possess. Thus it is more likely that you will not do injustice. And give the women their dowries willingly. But if they, of their own pleasure, remit to you a part thereof, then enjoy it as something pleasant and wholesome.(Holy Quran, 4:4-5)

So Islam permitted polygamy, and the limit of wives was narrowed down to four, while there was not any such limit before. And that permission was under certain conditions, like to take care of the wives properly and to deal with them justly. Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) married more than one wife according to the Arab culture, but of course he had some other privileges also.

1. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was required to present to humanity an ideal and perfect model for all stages of human experience. As a husband he was kind, he lived with one wife and with more than one, with the old and the young, with the widow and the divorced, with the pleasing and the moody, with the overconfident and the humble; but in all cases he was the symbol of benevolence and comfort.

2. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed the Quranic commands and regulations and solved difficult problems concerning Muslims, in social and political life. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) encouraged Muslims to convey the knowledge they had gained to other Muslims. To educate the female population he needed female helpers, and for that purpose the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) required fully trained ladies. The ideal way to solve this problem was to personally train some ladies, and no one can be better in this field, than the wives.

3. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) eliminated racial, ethnic, cultural, tribal and national distinctions and prejudices through these marriages, and encouraged piousness as criterion of reliability and superiority. He married some of the humblest and poorest women, a Coptic girl from Egypt and a Jewess. That was the time when divorced women were looked down upon as inferior in status and were usually not allowed to remarry. By marrying a divorced lady the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) taught that such a marriage is not only lawful but also desirable to grant a divorced woman an honorable status in the society.

4. Islam spread rapidly as compared to any other religion, and because a number of commandments and regulations concerning women could be propagated only through wives, so the wives of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) from different places and clans having diverse tastes, habits and temperaments, became helpful to educate the women folks properly.

5. Some of the Holy Prophet's marriages were in order to wipe out certain prevailing evil customs and practices. For example, there was a common practice that an adopted son was considered as a real son, and he was entitled to all civil liberties like a real son, while the other close relatives were ignored and their rights were neglected. So Islam drew the line between blood relations and the adopted children, and gave them proper rights what they deserved. Practically to make the difference between the real children and the adopted ones, Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) married *Hadrat* Zainab, the divorced wife of *Hadrat* Zaid, a freed slave and the adopted son of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). This way he established correct status of an adopted child. Before that it was not allowed to marry the widow or the divorced wife of the adopted son.

6. Widows and the orphans were totally neglected in the Arab society, so the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) tried his best to elevate their status, to help solve the problem of providing care and protection to widows and their children in peace as well as in war when due to death of large number of male members, women were left without any support. He made his followers realize that they should take care of them with respect, dignity and honor. And one of the best possible ways to establish the relation with them was through marriages. So Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) set up his own example for his followers by marrying with widows.

7. In the time of the prophet of Islam the prisoners of war were taken as slaves. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) set up an example by freeing them on ransom and on several occasions without charging any thing. They were also encouraged to settle down by working, educating people or through legal marriages. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) not only set the slaves free, but also married two of the captive women, to set up a personal example for the believers.

8. Some of the marriages of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) were to unite his followers with different clans and tribes in mutual love and affection, and that was the object in marrying Juwairiyah (may Allah be pleased with her), daughter of Harith, the Chief of Bani al-Mustaliq. Similar was the reason of marrying Safiyah (may Allah be pleased with her) who belonged to a Jewish tribe. And by marrying Maria the Copt, (may Allah be pleased with her) the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) established close relations with an Egyptian ruler.

MERCY FOR MANKIND

Holy Prophet of Islam was a great benefactor of mankind, and throughout his life he helped the poor and the needy to his utmost ability, and showed mercy to them. He was the most kind and compassionate person ever appeared in the history. Almighty God says in the Holy Quran:

And We sent thee not but as a mercy for all mankind. (Holy Quran, 21:108)

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) becomes an active member of the league, “Hilful-Fuḥṣul.”

When he was about 25 years old he became the member of an association, which was formed to help the victims of aggressive and unjust treatment. It was a league for the relief of the distressed. This association was known by the name of Hilful-Fuḥṣul, which was named after the common name, “Fuḥṣul” of all the participants, and “Hilf” means treaty. So Hilful-Fuḥṣul means a pact, which was made between men having part of their name “Fuḥṣul”.

The members of this association took a responsibility under oath in the following terms:

“They will help those who were oppressed and will restore them their rights, as long as the last drop of water remained in the sea. And if they do not do so, they will compensate the victims out of their own belongings.”

Dispute among the Quraish and a wonderful solution by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was always anxious to solve the problems in the society and to establish peace and harmony among the people through his God gifted wisdom and intelligence. Once it so happened, when he was in his thirties, that the tribes of Quraish found it necessary to rebuild the Kaaba in order to prevent it from collapse. When they got to the point in the construction to fix the Black Stone, the tribes began to argue with one another for the honor of placing the stone in its place. This continued for a number of days until the situation became extremely unstable. Blood pacts were consummated between the various tribes to fight to the death. The war was on the verge of breaking out between them over

this matter. At this point someone suggested that any one who would be the first person to enter the door of the Holy Kaaba the next morning, should be the one to receive this honor of placing the stone in its place and they should all abide by his judgment. So in this way they came to a peaceful compromise. So it so happened that the first person to enter the Holy Kaaba was Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Upon seeing him all the tribes were overjoyed and proclaimed, "It is Al-Amīn (the trustworthy), we accept him! It is Muhammad!"

Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) called for a sheet of cloth, laid it upon the ground, and then placed the stone in the middle of it. He then asked all of the tribes to select a single representative from the each of the tribe who was then asked to grasp an edge of the cloth. All of the chosen representatives then carried the stone together to the Kaaba. When they reached to the proper place, Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) placed it in the wall.

When he was assigned the duty of prophethood, every moment of his life was dedicated for calling the people towards Islam. He took every risk to convey the message of God to the people, to bring them closer to God and to save them from His anger and Hellfire. He had an overwhelming pain for the people, for not recognizing their Creator, that Almighty Allah has mentioned it in the Holy Quran, the agony and pain he felt for the others:

Haply thou wilt grieve thyself to death because they believe not. (Holy Quran, 26:4)

If we know the meaning of the Arabic word "Bākhi'un" mentioned in the above verse of the Holy Quran, then it is possible to have the idea of the pain and suffering of the Holy Prophet, for his people.

"Bākhi'un" means the suffering, which someone feels by cutting the jugular vein, when the knife reaches the back tissues of the neck.

Mercy for those who besieged him, and his companions in Shi'b Abi Talib

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) remained under intense persecution and suffering for about three years in Shi'b Abi Talib, when he was boycotted by his opponents. When the Quraish had blocked the locality from every side so that no supplies of any kind could reach the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). During this period Abu Talib, the uncle of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and the wife of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), *Hadrat Khadijah*, who had been a source of peace and consolation for him ever since the beginning of the call, passed away. During that extreme persecution, when the Muslims were dying with hunger, it so happened that hunger spread in Mecca due to draught, and people started dying there. But Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was so merciful that when he received this news, he offered fervent supplications to God, "O my Lord have mercy upon them, and save them from the punishment of hunger." Just imagine that Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself was suffering with hunger, due to the boycott of the same people, but he was praying for them, that God should help them, to save them from hunger. So Almighty God heard the prayers of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and there were heavy rains, and draught was over.

Kind treatment of the opponents after the fall of Ta'if

The battle of Ta'if was with those people who severely persecuted the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). And after the opponents were defeated many of them fled away but a large number of them were arrested. These people were from the tribe of Tay, and they fought under the leadership of the son of Hatim. When they were defeated, the son of Hatim ran away but Afshanah, the daughter of Hatim, was arrested. When the prisoners of war were

brought to the court of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), the daughter of Hatim came before the Prophet, she addressed him in the following words:

“Messenger of Allah, my father is dead; my brother, my only relation, fled away into the mountains on the approach of the Muslims. I count on your generosity for my deliverance. My father was an illustrious man, the prince of his tribe, a man who ransomed prisoners, protected the honor of women, fed the poor, consoled the afflicted.”

The Prophet replied, “Your father had the virtues of a true Muslim.” Then, addressing the Muslims around him, he said, “The daughter of Hatim is free. Her father was a generous, kind and compassionate person. Allah loves the kindhearted people.” At this Afshana addressed to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said, “The generosity of my father was not limited to any individual or any group of people rather that was for all without discrimination of any people or tribe. So your mercy should also not be limited to me only. I cannot leave my people as prisoners, and enjoy liberty.” At this the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) made an open announcement for the people of Tay that they were all free along with the daughter of Hatim. Not only that, he ordered a troop of army to make arrangement for the safe journey of Afshana and her people to go back to their town, named Joshiah. In a procession Afshana was taken to her home. When this procession reached near Joshiah, the people of the town were surprised to see it, because the only news they had was about their awful defeat from the Muslims. In such situation they could not even think about a procession and jubilation of the people. Adi, the son of Hatim, was also surprised, because he knew well the situation of war that they were defeated and he had run from the field, even leaving his sister there in the hands of the Muslims as prisoner. When he got near to the procession, he saw that his sister was among the people. She came down from the camel, and addressed her brother, “Shame on you, you are coward, you ran from the battle and left me there in the hands of the enemy; but Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is generous and so merciful that he not only forgave us but also arranged for our journey to reach our home safely.” When Adi heard about the generosity, kindness, and mercy of the Prophet of Islam, he was really shaken and touched by the gratitude of the Prophet. He hastened to the city of Medina, where he was kindly received by the Prophet. He professed Islam and returned to his people and persuaded them to abandon idolatry. They all submitted and became devoted Muslims. This is how the Prophet of Islam won the hearts of the people, not by sword, rather through mercy and forgiveness.

MERCY FOR THE ANIMALS

Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was very kindhearted and merciful. He not only preached to the people to show kindness to each other but also to all living souls. He always treated animals with great care and love. He forbade the practice of cutting tails and manes of horses, of branding animals at any soft spot, and of keeping horses saddled unnecessarily.

If he saw any animal over-loaded or ill-fed he would call the owner and say, Fear Allah in your treatment of animals. (Abu Dawud)

Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, “Verily, there is heavenly reward for every act of kindness done to a living animal.”

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also used to command mercy for all animals such as that they were fed well, watered well, not forced to carry too heavy a burden, and not tortured or maimed for one’s enjoyment.

At one occasion the Prophet observed a donkey being branded on the face. He inquired the reason for this and was told that the Romans had recourse to this practice for the purpose of identifying highbred animals. The Prophet said: As the face is a very sensitive part of the body,

an animal should not be branded on the face, and that if it had to be done, the branding should be done on its haunches. (Abu Dawud and Tirmidhi).

There is another Hadith which throws flood of light upon kindness and mercy of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that he had for the animals. It is narrated by Sahl ibn Amr, He says: The Messenger of Allah passed by a camel whose stomach almost touched its back (from lack of food). Upon seeing this he said: 'Fear God in treating these unspeaking animals! Ride them while they are in good health, and eat them while they are in good health.' (Abu Dawud)

Compassion for the birds

Hadrat Abdullah ibn Mas'ud Narrates: We were with the Apostle of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) during a journey. He went to ease himself. We saw a bird with her two young ones and we captured her young ones. The bird came and began to spread its wings. The Apostle of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came and said: Who grieved this for its young ones? Return its young ones to it. He also saw an ant village that we had burnt. He asked: Who has burnt this? We replied: We. He said: It is not proper for any to punish with fire except the Lord of fire. (Abu Dawud)

There is another similar Hadith in Bukhari where the Companions disturbed the birds by picking their eggs and the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) disliked that:

Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was on a journey with his companions, while somebody picked up some bird's eggs. When the painful voice and fluttering of the bird attracted the attention of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), immediately he asked the man to replace the eggs back in the nest. (Sahih Bukhari)

Kindness at the time of slaughtering animals

A man had laid down his sheep, in preparation to slaughter it, and then he went about sharpening his knife. Upon seeing this, the Messenger of Allah rebuked him saying:

Do you want to kill it twice? Wouldn't it have been better for you to sharpen your knife before laying it down? (Al-Tabarani and Al-Hakim)

Shaddad ibn Aus, one of the companion of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), narrates a similar Hadith about slaughtering animals:

Two are the things, which I remember, Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) having said: 'Verily Allah has enjoined goodness to everything; so when you slaughter, slaughter in a good way. Every one of you should sharpen his knife, and let the slaughtered animal die comfortably.' (Sahih Muslim)

Heavenly reward for being compassionate to animals

It is narrated by Abu Huraira, the companion of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), about the treatment given by a man to a thirsty dog, and its reward, in the following words:

Allah's Apostle said, "While a man was walking he felt thirsty and went down a well and drank water from it. On coming out of it, he saw a dog panting and eating mud because of excessive thirst. The man said, 'This dog is suffering from the same problem as that of mine.' So he went down the well, filled his shoe with water, caught hold of it with his teeth and climbed up and made the dog drink the water. Allah thanked him for his good deed and forgave him." People asked, "O Allah's Apostle! Is there a reward for us in serving the animals?" He replied, "Yes, there is a reward for serving any animate." (Sahih Bukhari)

Divine punishment for punishing animals

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) saw a woman in a vision that was tortured in hell due to punishing a cat to death. *Hadrat* Abu Hurayrah narrates the Hadith in the following words:

Allah's Apostle said: A woman was tortured and was put in Hell because of a cat that she had kept locked till it died of hunger. Allah's Apostle further said: Allah knows better, Allah said to the woman, 'You neither fed it nor watered when you locked it up, nor did you set it free to eat the insects of the earth.' (Sahih Bukhari).

KIND TREATMENT OF THE SLAVES

Regarding slaves, when Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) became the messenger of Allah, the people of his land had become accustomed to having countless slaves and usually treated them quite harshly. During the period of his prophethood he worked diligently to do what he could to cut down on their numbers. Islam closed most of the doors leading to slavery and encouraged the freeing of slaves in many ways. He constantly exhorted those who owned slaves to treat them kindly and well. He insisted that they must treat the slaves fairly and with mercy. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) says:

If the owner of a slave beat his slave or abused him, the only compensation that he could make was to set the slave free. (Sahih Muslim)

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) always devised and encouraged his followers for freeing of slaves on every pretext. He said:

If a person owning a slave sets him free, God will in recompense save every part of his body corresponding to every part of the slave's body from the torment of Hell. (Sahih Muslim)

Again, he laid down that a slave should be asked to perform only such tasks as he could easily accomplish and that when he was set to do a task, his master should help him in performing it so that the slave should experience no feeling of humiliation or degradation.

If a master went on a journey accompanied by a slave, it was his duty to share his mount with the slave either by both riding together or each riding in turn.

Abu Huraira after becoming a Muslim spent the whole of his time in the company of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and he had repeatedly heard the Prophet's injunctions regarding the treatment of slaves, has said:

I call God to witness in Whose hands is my life that were it not for the opportunities that I get of joining in holy war and of performing the Pilgrimage and were it not that I have opportunities of serving my old mother, I would have desired to die a slave, for the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) constantly insisted upon slaves being well and kindly treated. (Sahih Muslim)

Abu Dharr, a companion of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), narrated about the advices given by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) regarding the slaves in the following words:

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'Feed those of your slaves who please you from what you yourselves eat and clothe them with what you clothe yourselves, but sell those who do not please you and do not punish Allah's creatures. (Abu Dawud)

The Holy Prophet's love was greater than the love of the parents

It was not just a lip service on the part of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He himself was an excellent exemplar for his followers in the kind treatment of the slaves. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) set a good example of

kindness, which created a constructive effect upon his people. His wife Khadijah had made him a present of a young slave named Zaid Ibn Harith, who had been brought as a captive to Mecca and sold to Khadijah. When Zaid's father heard that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) possessed Zaid, he came to Mecca and offered a large sum for his ransom. Whereupon Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Let Zaid come here, and if he chooses to go with you, take him without ransom; but if it be his choice to stay with me, why should I not keep him?" Harith agreed to this proposal of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He had no doubt that his son would not make a decision other than to go with him. The father did not know that Prophet of Islam had given him love more than the parents, and that his son would give preference to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) over his parents. Zaid, being brought into the presence of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), declared that he would stay with his master, who treated him as if he were his only son. Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) no sooner heard this than he took Zaid by the hand and led him to the black stone of Kaaba, where he publicly adopted him as his son, to which the father acquiesced and returned home well satisfied. Henceforward Zaid was called the son of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

Marur bin Suwaid relates: "I saw Abu Dharr Ghaffari, the Companion of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), wearing clothes exactly similar to those worn by his slave. I inquired of him the reason for this and he said:

During the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) I once taunted a man with his mother having been a slave. Upon this the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) rebuked me and said: "You still seem to entertain pre-Islamic notions. What are slaves? They are your brethren and a source of your power. God in His wisdom confers temporary authority upon you over them. He who has such authority over his brother should feed him with the kind of food he himself eats; clothe him with the kind of clothes he himself wears and should not set him a task beyond his strength and should himself help him in whatever he is asked to do." On another occasion the Prophet said: "When your servant cooks food for you and sets it out before you, you should ask him to sit down with you to eat or at least to partake of a portion of it in your company, for he has established a right in it by working on it." (Sahih Muslim)

Abu Masud Al-Ansari was a companion of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), he once beat his slave, and Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) admonished him in the following words, which are narrated by Abu Masud himself. He said: I was beating my slave with a whip when I heard a voice behind me, "Understand Abu Masud," but I did not recognize the voice due to intense anger. He (Abu Masud) reported: As he came near me, I found that he was the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and he was saying, "Bear in mind, Abu Masud. Bear in mind, Abu Masud." He (Abu Masud) said, I threw the whip from my hand. Thereupon he (the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Bear in mind, Abu Masud, verily Allah has more dominance upon you than you have upon your slave. I then said, I would never beat my servant in future. (Sahih Muslim)

Abdullah ibn 'Umar talks about forgiveness of the slaves as he heard from the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) of Islam:

An A'rabi (desert Arab) came to the Prophet of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said, O Messenger of Allah, how many times should I forgive my slave every day? The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) replied: Seventy times. (Tirmidhi and Abu Dawud)

TRUTHFULNESS

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was very strict in his standards of truthfulness, that is why, even before his prophethood, he was popularly known among the people as “The Truthful and Trust Worthy.” In the same way he was equally anxious that Muslims should adopt the same standards of truth as were observed by him. He regarded truth as the basis of all virtue, goodness and right conduct. He taught that a truthful person is the one who is so confirmed in truth that he is counted truthful by God.

On one occasion a prisoner was brought to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who had been guilty of the murder of many Muslims. ‘Umar, who was also present, thought that the man deserved the death penalty and he looked repeatedly at the Prophet expecting that the Prophet would at any moment indicate that the man should be put to death. After the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had dismissed the man, ‘Umar said that he should have been put to death as that was the only appropriate penalty. The Prophet replied, “If that is so, why did you not kill him?”

‘Umar replied, “O Messenger of Allah! If you had but given me an indication even by a flicker of your eye, I would have done so.” To this the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: A Prophet does not act equivocally. How could I have employed my eye to indicate the imposition of a death penalty upon the man while my tongue was employed in talking kindly to him? (Hisham)

JUSTICE

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was unique in enforcing uniform standards of justice and fair dealing. On one occasion a woman belonging to a highly respectable and well-connected Makhzoom family was found guilty of theft. For the prestige of the family, this caused great worry as, if the normal penalty were to be imposed upon the young woman, a leading family would be humiliated and disgraced. Many were anxious to plead with the Prophet on behalf of the offender but were afraid to do so. Eventually some prominent people including Usama Bin Zaid, a very beloved companion of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) undertook that mission to save her from punishment. When he put this matter before the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), he refused to disregard the crime and expressed displeasure saying:

Many a community ruined itself in the past as they only punished the poor and ignored the offences of the exalted. By Allah, if Muhammad’s own daughter Fatima would have committed theft, her hand would have been severed. (Sahih Bukhari)

The Jews of Medina were so impressed by his impartiality and sense of justice that they used to bring their cases to him, and he decided them according to Jewish law.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was very strict in implementing justice, even if it was against him. Once, while he was distributing the spoils of war, people flocked around him and one man almost fell upon him. He pushed the man with a stick causing a slight scratch. He was so sorry about this that he asked the man that he could have his retribution, but the man said, “O Messenger of Allah, I forgive you.”

A miserable condition of Abu Jandal and the helplessness of the prophet to help him

When the treaty of Hudaibiya was written down and accepted by both of the parties, Abu-Jandal, the son of Suhail the Meccan spokesperson, appeared before the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), bound, wounded and exhausted. He fell at the prophet’s feet and said, “O Prophet of God, I am a Muslim at heart, and because of my faith I have to suffer these troubles at the hands of my father. My father was here with you. So I escaped and managed to come to you. The Prophet had not spoken yet that Suhail intervened and said that the agreement had been signed so Abu-Jandal must go with him. On this occasion the Muslims were not ready

to hand over Abu-Jandal to his father, for more tortures. Abu-Jandal was begging again and again not to hand him over to the enemies of Islam. He said, “O Prophet of God would you send me back to the tyrants from whose clutches I have managed to escape?” In that critical situation the prophet of Islam said, “I cannot violate the condition of the treaty that we have just signed. Trust in God and exercise patience God will certainly open the door of freedom for you and for others like you.”

A follower on the camel, and the prophet on foot holding the rope of the camel

The practice of observing justice was very common in the day-to-day life of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). On another occasion he was traveling on his camel over hilly terrain with a disciple, ‘Uqba Bin Aamir. After going some distance, he asked ‘Uqba to ride the camel, but ‘Uqba thought this would be showing disrespect to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). But the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) insisted and he had to comply. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself walked on foot, as he did not want to put too much load on the animal. (Nasa’i)

BRAVERY AND STEADFASTNESS

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had not any one equal to him in bravery and perseverance. He passed through very hard and complicated situation in his life. He started his life as an orphan, which is considered to be very difficult stage in someone’s life. He faced severe hatred and persecution from his adversaries. He became fugitive and migrated in a very helpless condition. He had a great responsibility being a prophet and head of the state, but he handled all the situations with great courage and bravery. He remained at forefront in all the circumstances, guiding his followers. The Prophet of Islam was the best and the bravest amongst his people.

At one time Medina was full of rumors that the Romans were preparing a large army for its invasion. During that time, one night sounds of an uproar came from the desert. The Muslims hurried out of their homes and some of them gathered in the mosque and waited for the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to appear and to give them directions to meet the emergency. Meanwhile they saw the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) on a horse coming back from the direction of the sounds. It is recorded in Hadith, narrated by *Hadrat* Anas, in the following words:

Once the people of Medina got terrified at night, so they went in the direction of the noise (that terrified them). The Prophet met them (on his way back) after he had found out the truth. He was riding an unsaddled horse belonging to Abu Talha and a sword was hanging by his neck, and he was saying, “Don’t be afraid! Don’t be afraid!” He further said, “I found it (the horse) very fast,” or said, “This horse is very fast.” (Sahih Bukhari)

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), whether be alone or in the heat of the battle in the company of his companions, he never ever showed any cowardness. Even in the life threatening situations he remained firm, bold and courageous.

Hadrat Jabir bin Abdullah narrates an incident which throws flood of light upon the bravery of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) of Islam:

“That I proceeded in the company of Allah’s Apostle towards Najd to participate in a ghazwa (battle). When Allah’s Apostle returned, I too returned with him. Midday came upon us while we were in a valley having many thorny trees. Allah’s Apostle and others dismounted and dispersed to rest in the shade of the trees. Allah’s Apostle rested under a tree and hung his sword on it. We all took a nap and suddenly we heard Allah’s Apostle calling us. We woke up to see a Bedouin with him. The

Prophet said, "This Bedouin took out my sword while I was sleeping and when I woke up, I found the unsheathed sword in his hand and he challenged me saying, "Who will save you from me?" I said thrice, "Allah!" The Prophet did not punish him but sat down." (Sahih Bukhari)

What a boldness?

During the battle of Hunain, the Muslims passed through a very critical situation. There was a time during that battle that there were only fifteen companions left in the battlefield with the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and there were over five thousand soldiers of the enemies surrounding him. In that dangerous situation, Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) challenged his opponents and defeated them. History is unable to produce such a single incident in the human life. Abu Ishaq narrates the boldness of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) during the battle of Hunain, in the following words:

A man asked Al-Bara, "O Abu Umara! Did you all flee on the day of the battle of Hunain?" He replied, "No, by Allah! Allah's Apostle did not flee, but his young unarmed companions ran away. It happened because the archers of the tribe of Hawazin and Bani Nasr, whose arrows hardly missed a target, attacked so rapidly and unexpectedly, that the Muslims could not resist that. But later when they were called by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), they all returned to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) while he was riding his white mule. The Prophet dismounted and invoked Allah for victory; then he said, 'I am the Prophet, without a lie; I am the son of Abdul-Muttalib,' and then he arranged his companions in rows. (Sahih Bukhari)

Shield for the believers

Regarding his bravery, Ali ibn Abi Talib, one of the bravest young men in the Islamic nation said:

In the heat of battle, when the passions burned strongest, we would seek shelter behind the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), for there was none closer to the enemy than him, and you had seen me on the day of the battle of Uhud, taking shelter behind the Prophet of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and he was the closest among us to the enemy. (Abu Dawud)

Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, the Messiah and the Mahdi (peace be upon him) of the age has praised the Holy Prophet in the following words:

That Prophet is superior to all other Prophets who is the great instructor of the world, that is to say, he at whose hands the great corruption of the world was reformed and who re-established on the earth the Unity of God which had been lost and had disappeared. He overcame all false religions by proof and argument and removed the doubts of every misguided one. He provided the true means of salvation by teaching the right principles for which it was not necessary to crucify an innocent person, or to remove God from His true and eternal station and to put Him in the womb of a woman. Thus, his beneficence and his grace exceed those of everyone else and his rank is higher than all. History points out, and the heavenly Book is a witness, and those who have eyes are able to observe, that the Prophet who is thus established as superior to all other Prophets is Muhammad, the chosen one (peace and blessings of Allah be on him). (Braheen-i-

Ahmadiyya, Vol. 1, p. 97, footnote 6)

Then again The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) says:

It is worthy of note how steadfastly the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) adhered to his claim of Prophethood right till the end, despite thousands of dangers and hundreds of thousands of opponents and obstructers and threateners. For years, he endured misfortunes and hardships, which increased daily and rendered success apparently hopeless, and by enduring which patiently he had not in mind the achievement of any worldly purpose. On the contrary, by putting forward his claim of Prophethood, he lost what he had and purchased a hundred thousand contentions and invited a thousand calamities to overtake him. He was expelled from his home, was pursued by slayers, lost his home and all it contained and was poisoned several times. Those who were his well-wishers began to wish him ill and those who were his friends turned into enemies. For a long period, he had to bear hardships, to be steadfast under which was not possible for a cunning impostor.

When after a long time Islam became supreme, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) collected no wealth for himself, nor did he raise any structure, nor did he seek any means of comfort or luxury, nor did he derive any personal benefit from anything. Whatever came to hand was spent in taking care of the poor, the orphans, the widows and those burdened with debt. He never ate his fill. He was so straightforward that by his plain speaking and his preaching of the Unity of God, he made enemies of all the peoples of the world who were sunk in paganism. He converted his own people into enemies first of all, by forbidding them idol worship. He upset the Jews for he stopped them from indulging in diverse types of creature worship and exaltation of their divines and from misconduct. He stopped them from denying and insulting Jesus, which caused them great heart burning, and they became his bitter enemies, and began to cast about for means of destroying him. In the same way, he annoyed the Christians for he denied the godhead of Jesus and his being the son of God, and denied his being the crucified savior. The fire worshippers and the star worshippers were also annoyed with him for they were also forbidden to worship their deities. The Unity of God was proclaimed as the sole means of attaining salvation. Were these the ways of winning the world?

(Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya, Vol. 1, pp. 108-109)

Then the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) describes the bravery and steadfastness of the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the following words:

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was straightforward and was ready to lay down his life for God, and turned wholly away from any hope or fear of people, and put his trust wholly in God, and being devoted to the will and pleasure of God, he cared not what calamities he would have to endure through preaching the Unity of God and what hardships might be inflicted upon him by the pagans. He endured every hardship and carried out the commandments of his Lord, and fulfilled all the conditions called for by his preaching and admonition, and attached no importance to any threat that was held out to him. I say truly that of all the Prophets there was none who put his full trust in God on all occasions of danger and went on preaching against paganism and creature worship despite all his enemies and was so steadfast and persevering as the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). (Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya, Vol. 1, pp. 111-112)

SELF-CONTROL

The Holy Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was a symbol of patience. He always held himself under complete control. Even when he became a sovereign he

always listened to everybody with patience, and if a person treated him with disrespect, he never attempted any retaliation.

Sometimes people stopped him in the way and engaged him in conversation, explaining their needs and preferring their requests to him. He always stood patiently and let them go on and proceeded only after they were done. On occasion people while shaking hands with him kept holding his hand for some time and, though he found this inconvenient and waist of time, but he never withdrew his hand. People used to visit him freely to discuss their problems and difficulties to seek help from him. He always entertained the people with love and affection. If he was able to help them, he never declined to do so. Sometimes he was bothered with unfairly pressed requests but he went on complying with them as far as he could. On one occasion a devout Muslim asked him several times for money and each time he complied with his request but in the end he said, "It is best for a man to put his trust in God and to avoid making requests."

MUTUAL COOPERATION

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) laid great stress upon mutual co-operation. He not only educated his followers on these lines but he also was the leading figure in this field. People sometimes came and stayed near the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), devoting their time to the service of Islam in various ways. He always counseled their relatives to assume the responsibility of providing for their modest requirements. It is reported by Anas that during the time of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) two brothers accepted Islam and one of them stayed on with the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) while the other continued with his normal occupation. The latter, later on, complained to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that his brother was spending his time in idleness. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: God provides for you also on account of your brother and it behooves you therefore to make provision for him and leave him free to serve the Faith. (Tirmidhi)

Prophet collected firewood

Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) never ever liked to relax while his other colleagues were busy in work. During the course of a journey, when the Prophet's party arrived at their camping place, his Companions immediately involved themselves with their respective tasks in setting up camp for the night. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "You have allotted no task to me. I shall go and collect the wood for cooking." His Companions protested and said; "O Messenger of Allah, why should you occupy yourself in that way when all of us are here to do whatever may be necessary?" He said: "No, No. It is my duty to do my share of whatever may have to be done," and he collected firewood from the jungle for cooking the food. (Zurqani)

Starving but still the strongest

He was always at the vanguard even in the most difficult situation, and he worked shoulder to shoulder with his companions. It is mentioned in Hadith that during the battle of ditch, when the digging was going on, the Muslims came across a rock, which was hard to break. When it was reported to the Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), he came and taking a pickaxe in his hands gave a heavy blow to the rock. A spark appeared and the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) chanted, "Allahu Akbar." He struck the rock again, another spark appeared, and again he said, "Allahu Akbar." Third time he struck the rock, the rock tore into peaces and a spark appeared, and he chanted third time, "Allahu Akbar." When the Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was asked the reason for chanting "Allahu Akbar," he answered:

In the first spark I saw the Syrian palaces of the Roman Empire, and the keys of the Roman Empires were given to me. The second time I saw the illuminated

palaces of Persia, and the keys of the Persian Empires were given to me. The third time I saw in the light the gates of Sana, and the keys of Yemen were given to me. (Zurqani)

These were the scenes of the glory of Islam shown to the Prophet of Islam in vision, which proved to be true later on.

During the time when they were digging the ditch, one of the companions of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) complained agonizing hunger, and lifted up his shirt from his belly, and showed one stone tied at the belly to relieve the pain. Seeing that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) lifted up his shirt and there were two stones tied at his belly. This was the situation of his starvation.

TOLERANCE IN RELIGIOUS MATTERS

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) not only emphasized the desirability of tolerance in religious matters but set a very high standard in this respect. A deputation from the Christian tribe of Najran visited him in Medina to exchange views on religious matters. It included several Church dignitaries. The conversation was held in the mosque and it extended over several hours. At one stage the leader of the deputation asked permission to depart from the mosque and to hold their religious service at some convenient spot. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

There is no need for you to go out of the mosque, because the mosque is the place to worship one God, if you want to do so, you have every freedom of worship, and holding the services in it. (Zurqani)

Though he was the greatest, yet he never liked to be preferred over others

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was not after any worldly respect or honor. He was very sensitive about the respect of others more than his own. He always tried to educate his followers on the same lines. He was the most broadminded, and liberal person, and he tried his best to infuse this spirit in his followers:

It is narrated by Abu Said Al Khudri, that once it so happened that a Jew came to the Prophet and said, "O Muhammad! A man from your Ansari companions slapped me." The Prophet said, "Call him." They called him and the Prophet asked him, "Why did you slap his face?" He said, "O Allah's Apostle! While I was passing by the Jews, I heard him saying, "By Him Who chose Moses above all the human beings." I said (protesting), "Even above Muhammad?" He said, "Yes." So I became furious and slapped him." The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was very much disturbed to hear that and said, "Do not give me preference over other prophets." (Sahih Bukhari)

Loved the living and honored the dead

Once a funeral procession was passing in a street of Medina, when it reached near the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), he stood up in respect to the funeral. Another Muslim who was watching this, drew the attention of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), that the funeral was that of a Jew. When the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) heard that he replied, "Was Jew not a human being?" After that the Muslims had great respect for the funerals of the other faiths.

It is mentioned in Bukhari, narrated by Abdur Rahman bin Abi Laila:

"Sahl bin Hunaif and Qais bin Sa'd were sitting in the city of Al-Qadisiya. A funeral procession passed in front of them and they stood up. They were told that the funeral procession was of one of the inhabitants of the land, that is, of a non-believer, under the protection of Muslims. They said, "A funeral procession passed in front of

the Prophet and he stood up. When he was told that it was the coffin of a Jew, he said, “Was Jew not a human being?” (Sahih Bukhari)

Victory of Mecca

On the day of the victory of Mecca ten thousand soldiers of the Muslim army marched into the city but with great care that nobody should be disturbed. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself was controlling the situation with great concern for the safety and welfare of the people. That was the day when the enemies of Mecca fully surrendered themselves before the Muslim army. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had full control not only upon his opponents but also upon his own army. As the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his army marched through the heart of Mecca, he did so in all peace, humbleness, and justice. That was a very great achievement and victory of Islam. That was the day when the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) returned to Mecca, the city from where he was expelled along with his helpless companions. He had not yet forgotten his helpless position the day he left Mecca. Every scene was fresh in his memory. When he was leaving the city, he had a last glance at it, while tears rolled down from his eyes and he could not control his emotions and said, “O city of Mecca, I don’t like to leave you but the people of Mecca don’t permit me to live in.” It was the same city where he was severely tortured and humiliated. It was the city where his loved ones were tormented and killed mercilessly. Now he was entering the same city as a victor. He was the champion, he was the conqueror, but very different from the worldly kings. He was a wonderful man, that the history is not able to produce single one parallel to him. He entered in Mecca while the people of Mecca were at his mercy, but there was not any sign of pride on his face. He was riding on camel and his head was bowing down so much so that it was touching the back of the camel. A man spoke to him on that day, trembling with fear. As he did so, Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) consoled him saying, “Calm yourself, for I am not a king. I am but the son of a humble and poor woman from Quraish.”

Bilal, a slave, honored

It was a day of great victory of Islam; it was a day of happiness and joy for every one. But during these moments of pleasure the Holy Prophet remembered well the sufferings of his companions. It was a day of understanding their sentiments and emotions. That was the day when Bilal, an Ethiopian slave, was honored. It was announced that whoever would be under the banner of Bilal would be in peace. What a great tribute was paid to the sacrifices of Bilal?

Holy Prophet took away the Flag from the hands of a Muslim General, who used derogatory remarks.

As Sa’d ibn Obadah, one of the generals of the Islamic army, passed by Abu-Sufyan, he murmured, “Today is the day of revenge. Today that which is unlawful is made lawful. Today Allah has dishonored Quraish.”

When the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) passed by Abu-Sufyan, he complained to him of what Sa’d had said to him. Muhammad disliked what he heard and responded, “Today is the day of mercy. Today Allah shall honor Quraish, and shall honor the Kaaba.”

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then commanded that the banner be taken from Sa’d and given to his son Kais.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then stood in the door of the Kaaba. The people had gathered below him, waiting for him to issue his decree regarding the fate of his enemies. Finally he spoke and said, “There is non worthy of worship except Allah, He has no partner. He has fulfilled His promise, given victory to His servant, and defeated the confederates by His own Self. I declare that every glory, money, or blood has been placed under

these, my two feet, except for the “sidanah,” custodianship of the Kaaba, and “siqaya,” watering of the pilgrims... O people of Quraish, I relieve you of the false pride of the age of ignorance. Mankind is from Adam, and Adam was from dust.”

He then recited:

“O mankind, we have created you from a male and a female; And We have made you tribes and sub-tribes that you may know one another. Verily, the most honorable among you, in the sight of Allah, is he who is the most righteous among you. Surely, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.” (Holy Quran, 49: 14)

An open declaration of forgiveness

Standing among the people of Mecca, while each one of them was bowing his head with shame, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked them in great humility and humbleness, “O people of Quraish, what do you expect from me?”

The people reflected on their past history and their treatment of the Prophet of Islam and of his followers, how they had abused and fought against Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the Muslims. However, they were completely and utterly at his mercy now and could only respond, “You are a noble brother, the son of a noble brother. We expect the treatment of Joseph that he gave to his brothers.” At this the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) replied to them, “Go, you are all free There is no reproach against you this day!”

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then commanded Bilal the Ethiopian to call Adhan (call to Prayer). From that day forward, the inhabitants of Arabia began to enter into Islam in flocks.

Ikrima, the Enemy of Islam, forgiven

One of those who were forgiven on the day Mecca fell, was Ikrima the son of Abu Jahl, the greatest enemy of Islam. Wife of Ikrima was a Muslim at heart, she requested the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to forgive him. The Prophet forgave Ikrima. At that time Ikrima was trying to escape to Abyssinia. His wife pursued him and got him on the way while he was about to embark a ship. She said; “Are you running away from a person who is a mercy for mankind, and who has forgiven every one in Mecca?”

Ikrima said, “What about me?” She replied, “You are also forgiven.” Ikrima was really astonished to hear that an enemy like Ikrima was pardoned by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). So Ikrima and his wife planned to go back to Mecca, but when they reached the city of Mecca, what they witnessed was never witnessed by any one in the history of mankind. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) of Islam, the king, the victor, himself was standing at the door of the city to receive Ikrima, the bitterest enemy of Islam. When the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) saw Ikrima approaching him, riding on a camel, he chanted in a loud voice, “You are welcome. You are welcome, O rider of the camel.”

TREATY WITH THE JEWS

The First Written Constitution of a State ever Promulgated

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) always tried to cooperate to establish peace, brotherhood and harmony in the society. He migrated from Mecca to Medina, but when he reached Medina the first important mission he had was to have treaties with the other tribes of Medina for mutual cooperation and help. The first treaty he had in Medina was between Muslims, non-Muslim Arabs and the Jews of Medina. This treaty was properly put into writing and ratified by all parties. This important treaty has been preserved by historians. The document referred Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as the Prophet and Messenger of God, but it was understood that the Jews did not have to recognize him as such for their own

religious reasons. It is the first written constitution of a state ever promulgated by a sovereign in history. It was endorsed from the first year of Hijrah (622 CE). The treaty stipulated a city-state in Medina, allowing independence to communities under the following terms:

1. In the name of Allah (The One God), the Compassionate, the Merciful. This is a document from Muhammad, the Prophet, governing the relation between the Believers from among the Qurayshites (that is, Emigrants from Mecca) and Yathribites (that is, the residents of Medina) and those who followed them and joined them and strived with them. They form one and the same community as against the rest of men.

2. No Believer shall oppose the client of another Believer. Whosoever is rebellious, or seeks to spread injustice, enmity or sedition among the Believers, the hand of every man shall be against him, even if he be a son of one of them. A Believer shall not kill a Believer in retaliation of an unbeliever, nor an unbeliever shall kill an unbeliever in retaliation of a Believer.

3. Whosoever among the Jews follows us shall have help and equality; they shall not be injured nor shall any enemy be aided against them... No separate peace will be made when the Believers are fighting in the way of Allah... The Believers shall avenge the blood of one another shed in the way of Allah... Whosoever kills a Believer wrongfully shall be liable to retaliation; all the Believers shall be against him as one man and they are bound to take action against him.

4. The Jews shall contribute (to the cost of war) with the Believers so long as they are at war with a common enemy. The Jews of Banu Najjar, Banu al-Harith, Banu Saidah, Banu Jusham, Banu al-Aus, Banu Thalabah, Jafnah, and Banu al-Shutaybah enjoy the same rights and privileges as the Jews of Banu Aus.

5. The Jews shall maintain their own religion and the Muslims theirs. Loyalty is a protection against treachery. The close friends of Jews are as themselves. None of them shall go out on a military expedition except with the permission of Muhammad, but he shall not be prevented from taking revenge for a wound.

6. The Jews shall be responsible for their expenses and the Believers for theirs. Each, if attacked, shall come to the assistance of the other.

7. The valley of Yathrib (Medina) shall be sacred and inviolable for all that join this Treaty. Strangers, under protection, shall be treated on the same ground as their protectors; but no stranger shall be taken under protection except with consent of his tribe... No woman shall be taken under protection without the consent of her family.

8. Whatever difference or dispute between the parties to this covenant remains unsolved shall be referred to Allah (The One God) and to Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah. Allah is the Guarantor of the piety and goodness that is embodied in this covenant. Neither the Quraysh nor their allies shall be given any protection.

9. The contracting parties are bound to help one another against any attack on Yathrib. If they are called to cease hostilities and to enter into peace, they shall be bound to do so in the interest of peace; and if they make a similar demand on Muslims it must be carried out except when the war is against their religion.

10. Allah (The One God) approves the truth and goodwill of this covenant. This treaty shall not protect the unjust or the criminal. Whoever goes out to fight as well as whoever stays at home shall be safe and secure in this city unless he has perpetrated an injustice or committed a crime... Allah is the protector of the good and God-fearing people.

KIND TREATMENT OF THE NON-MUSLIM MINORITIES

A Charter of Privileges

Non-Muslim minorities enjoyed every freedom in the Islamic state under the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) of Islam, like any other Muslim living in the same

state. There was no discrimination in the Muslim state established by the Prophet of Islam. According to the Islamic law there is no difference between a Muslim and a Non-Muslim, being a citizen of a country. Non-Muslim minorities have every freedom to practice their religion in an Islamic state.

In 628 C.E. the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) granted a Charter of Privileges to the monks of St. Catherine Monastery in Mt. Sinai. It consisted of several clauses covering all aspects of human rights including such topics as the protection of Christians, freedom of worship and movement, freedom to appoint their own judges and to own and maintain their property, exemption from military service, and the right to protection in war. This document is excellent guidance for all the Muslim states for dealing with the Non Muslim minorities. The following is the text of the Charter:

This is the document which Muhammad, son of Abdullah, God's Prophet, Warner and Bearer of glad-tidings, has caused to be written so that there should remain no excuse for those coming after. I have caused this document to be written for Christians of the East and the West, for those who live near, and for those of the distant lands, for the Christians living at present and for those who will come after, for those Christians who are known to us and for those as well whom we do not know.

1. Any Muslim violating and abusing what is therein ordered would be regarded as violator of God's testament and would be the breaker of His promise and would make himself deserving of God's curse, be he a king or a subject.

2. I promise that any monk or way-farer, etc., who will seek my help on the mountains, in forests, deserts or habitations, or in places of worship, I will repel his enemies with all my friends and helpers, with all my relatives and with all those who profess to follow me and will defend him, because they are my covenanted. And I will defend the covenanted against the persecution, injury and embarrassment by their enemies in lieu of the poll-tax they have promised to pay.

3. If they will prefer themselves to defend their properties and persons, they will be allowed to do so and will not be put to any inconvenience on that account.

4. No bishop will be expelled from his bishopric, no monk from his monastery, no priest from his place of worship, and no pilgrim will be detained in his pilgrimage.

5. None of their churches and other places of worship will be desolated or destroyed or demolished. No material of their churches will be used for building mosques or houses for the Muslims, any Muslim so doing will be regarded as recalcitrant to God and His Prophet.

6. Monks and bishops will be subject to no tax or indemnity whether they live in forests or on the rivers, or in the East or West, North or South. I give them my word of honor. They are on my promise and covenant and will enjoy perfect immunity from all sorts of inconveniences.

7. Every help shall be given them in the repair of their churches. They shall be absolved from wearing arms. They shall be protected by the Muslims. Let this document be not disobeyed till the Judgment Day.

(Al-Wasaiq-ul-

Siyasiyya, pp. 187-190)

**THE FAREWELL ADDRESS OF THE HOLY PROPHET
(peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)**

A Wonderful Charter for the Modern World

The farewell address of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), which he delivered in Mecca during his last pilgrimage, teaches human equality without discrimination of any race or color. This address can serve the best human charter of peace, harmony and brotherhood, in which he said:

O men, lend me an attentive ear for I know not whether I will stand before you again in this valley and address you as I address you now. Your lives and your possessions have been made immune by God to attacks by one another until the Day of Judgment. God has appointed for everyone a share in the inheritance. No testament shall now be admitted which is prejudicial to the interests of a rightful heir. A child born in any house will be regarded as the child of the father of that house. Whoever contests the parentage of such a child shall be liable to punishment under the Law of Islam. Anyone who attributes his birth to someone else's father, or falsely claims someone to be his master, God, His angels and the whole of mankind will curse him.

O men, you have some rights against your wives, but your wives also have some rights against you. Your right against them is that they should live chaste lives, and not adopt ways, which may bring disgrace to the husband in the sight of his people. But if the behavior of your wives is not such as would bring disgrace to their husbands, then your duty is to provide for them food and clothing and shelter, according to your own standard of living. Remember, you must always treat your wives well. God has charged you with the duty of looking after them. Woman is weak and cannot protect her own rights. When you married, God appointed you trustees of those rights. You brought your wives to your homes under the law of God. You must not, therefore, abuse the trust, which God has placed in your hands.

O men, you still have in your possession some prisoners of war. I advise you, therefore, to feed them and to clothe them in the same way and style as you feed and clothe yourselves. If they do anything wrong which you are unable to forgive, then pass them on to someone else. They are part of God's creation. To give them pain or cause them suffering can never be right. O men, what I say to you, you must hear and remember.

All Muslims are as brethren to one another. All of you are equal. All men, whatever nation or tribe they may belong to, and whatever station in life they may hold are equal. (Raising his hands, and joining the fingers of the one hand with those of the other, he added,) Even as the fingers of the two hands are equal, so are human beings equal to one another. No one has any right, any superiority to claim over another. You are as brothers. O men, your God is One and your ancestor is one. An Arab possesses no superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab over an Arab. A white man is in no way superior to a black nor for that matter, is a black man better than a white, but only to the extent to which he discharges his duty to God and man. The most honored among you in the sight of God is the most righteous among you.

Even as this month is sacred, this land inviolate, and this day holy, so has God made the lives, property and honor of every man sacred. To take any man's life or his property, or attack his honor, is as unjust and wrong as to violate the sacredness of this day, this month, and this territory. What I command you today is not meant only for today. It is meant for all time. You are expected to remember it and to act upon it until you leave this world and go to the next to meet your Maker. What I have said to you, you should communicate to the ends of the earth. Maybe those who have not heard me may benefit by it more than those who have heard. (Sihah Sitta, Tabari, Hisham, Khamis, and Baihaqi)

**CHARACTER OF THE HOLY PROPHET
(peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)
IN THE EYE OF NON-MUSLIM SCHOLARS**

(1)

CAESER AND POPE IN ONE

He was Caesar and Pope in one; but he was Pope without Pope's pretensions, Caesar without the legions of Caesar: without a standing army, without a bodyguard, without a palace, without fixed revenue. If ever any man had the right to say that he ruled by the right divine, it was Mohammad, for he had all the power without its instruments and without its supports. (Mohammad and Mohammadanism, By Bosworth Smith, London, 1874, p. 92)

(2)

ONE OF THE GREATEST MESSENGERS OF THE SUPREME

It is impossible for anyone who studies the life and character of the great Prophet of Arabia, who knows how he taught and how he lived, to feel anything but reverence for that mighty Prophet, one of the great messengers of the Supreme. And although in what I put to you I shall say many things which may be familiar to many, yet I myself feel whenever I re-read them, a new way of admiration, a new sense of reverence for that mighty Arabian teacher. (The Life and Teachings of Muhammad, By Annie Besant, Madras, 1932, p. 4)

(3)

GREATNESS OF HIS ULTIMATE ACHIEVEMENT

His readiness to undergo persecution for his beliefs, the high moral character of the men who believed in him and looked up to him as leader, and the greatness of his ultimate achievement, all argue his fundamental integrity. To suppose Muhammad an impostor raises more problems than it solves. Moreover, none of the great figures of history is so poorly appreciated in the West as Muhammad. (Mohammad At Mecca, By W. Montgomery Watt, Oxford, 1953, p. 52)

(4)

MUHAMMAD WAS PROFOUNDLY PRACTICAL

“Muhammad, the inspired man who founded Islam, was born about AD 570 into an Arabian tribe that worshipped idols. Orphaned at birth, he was always particularly solicitous of the poor and needy, the widow and the orphan, the slave and the downtrodden. At twenty he was already a successful businessman, and soon became director of camel caravans for a wealthy widow. When he reached twenty-five his employer, recognizing his merit, proposed marriage. Even though she was fifteen years older, he married her, and as long as she lived, remained a devoted husband. Like almost every major prophet before him, Muhammad fought shy of serving as the transmitter of God's word, sensing his own inadequacy. But the angel commanded ‘Read.’ So far as we know, Muhammad was unable to read or write, but he began to dictate those inspired words which would soon revolutionize a large segment of the earth: “There is one God.” In all things Muhammad was profoundly practical. When his beloved son Ibrahim died, an eclipse occurred, and rumors of God's personal condolence quickly arose. Whereupon Muhammad is said to have announced, “An eclipse is a phenomenon of nature. It is foolish to attribute such things to the death or birth of a human-being.” At Muhammad's own death an attempt was made to deify him, but the man who was to become his administrative successor killed the hysteria with one of the noblest speeches in religious history: ‘If there are any among you who worshipped Muhammad, he is dead. But if it is God you worshipped, He lives forever.’ (“Islam: The Misunderstood Religion,” By James A. Michener, Reader's Digest (American), May 1955, pp. 68-70)

(5)

**SUPREMELY SUCCESSFUL
ON BOTH THE RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR LEVEL**

“My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world's most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular level.” (The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History, By Michael H. Hart, New York: Hart Publishing Company Inc., 1978, p. 33)

