



THE LAST PROPHET MUHAMMAD

(Peace be upon him)

By Aftab Khan
Peace Forum Network
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*In the name of Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful
There is no one worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad is messenger of Allah*

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FOREWARD

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), was the last prophet for the entire humanity born in the progeny of great Prophet and Patriarch Abraham (peace be upon him) by the end of 6th century C.E in Makkah (Arabia). Volumes have been written on his life, achievements and legacy during last fourteen centuries. No human in the history of mankind has left lasting influence like him. He is highly revered by Muslims and many learned non Muslims alike. His well recorded life has been a role model; he preached what he practiced and was supremely successful in his mission to convey the divine message to the humanity. At the time of his death (632 C.E) whole Arabia was purged of paganism blooming to expand the message of Islam [*Tawheed*, monotheism] to the entire world. It is not possible to describe a person like him having immense qualities and achievements, completely in a short book or article. An endeavour has been made to introduce The Last

Prophet (peace be upon him) with a glimpse in his life through following four revealing articles.

1. Coup D'oeil : By;Aftab Khan
2. Unique Person: By; Sheikh Ali Al Tantawi
3. Prophet of Peace: By; Waheed Dudin Khan
4. Views of Non Muslims; By Dr. A. Zahoor and Dr. Z. Haq

It is hoped that this brief introduction will form the basis for further study of the life of greatest man of history.

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PROPHET MUHAMMAD

(Peace Be Upon Him)

COUP D'OEIL

Introduction:

God has created the mankind, to live in this world for a trial, which people undergo by either attaining ethical and spiritual peace through leading their lives in accordance with the commands of God hence becoming His obedient servant by totally surrendering to the will of God (in Arabic known as Muslim) or follow the footsteps of Satan by disobeying his Creator. Qur'an says: *"God has created the heavens and the earth to manifest the truth, and to reward each human being according to its deeds, and none of them shall be wronged."*(Qur'an;45:22); *"He who created death and life, that He may try which of you is best In deed: and He is the Exalted In Might, Oft-Forgiving;"*(Qur'an;67:2). He has not left

the humanity in lurch; He has provided the guidance and freedom of choice resulting in individual responsibility and accountability. God has provided the guidance essentially through three ways: Firstly; the natural Guidance (instinctive cognition). Secondly; through grant of intellect and providing Signs (*ayah*). Man is endowed with forms and faculties exactly suited to what is expected of him, and to the environment in which his life will be cast, giving due order and proportion to everything. He has ordained laws and decrees, by which human can develop themselves and fit into His whole scheme of progression for all His Creation. Thirdly; direct guidance through His Messengers and scriptures: *“It is not the way of Allah to confound people after He has guided them, until He makes clear to them what they should guard against; surely Allah has the knowledge of everything.”* (Qur’an;9:115); *“..God draws*

unto Himself every one who is willing, and guides unto Himself everyone who turns unto Him”(Qur’an;42:13).

The Messengers:

The guidance has been provided in the form of Revelations through especially chosen men, the Messengers (*Rasool* or *Nabi*). The Hebrew word for prophet is *navi`*, usually considered to be a loan word from Akkadian *nabu*, *naba`um*, means; "to proclaim, mention, call, summon": The title has a general application to all selected people who received messages from God to guide their community. Some scholars describe that, a *Rasool* (Messenger) is the *Nabi* who has delivered the written revelations (scripture). Every *Rasool* (Messenger) is also *Nabi*, where as every *Nabi* is not necessarily *Rasool*. Muhammad (peace be upon him) has been addressed as *Rasool* (Qur’an;3:144) as well as *Rasool* and *Nabi* (Qur’an;7:157,33:40). The English words;

‘Messenger’ and ‘Prophet’ has been used here for both i.e. *Rasool* and *Nabi*. The messengers and prophets were sent throughout the history for the guidance of mankind. Allah says: “*For We assuredly sent amongst every People a Messenger (with the Command) "Serve Allah and eschew Evil".."*”(Qur’an;16:36);“*To every people (was sent) a Messenger: when their Messenger comes (before them) the matter will be judged between them with justice and they will not be wronged.*”(Qur’an;10:47). Allah says: “*And there never was a people, without a Warner having lived among them (in the past)*”(Qur’an;35:24). Beginning with the first human and Prophet Adam (peace be upon him), there has been many messengers and prophets from Noah (peace be upon him) through Abraham (peace be upon him) for their respective nations. According to Muslim traditions there has been more than 1,24,000

prophets sent to different nations at different times, it includes 315 *Rasool* (Messenger) granted scriptures (law). Allah says: "*We did aforetime send Messengers before thee (O' Muhammad) : of them there are some whose story We have related to thee and some whose story We have not related to thee*" (*Qur'an;40:78*). Some of the well known Messengers mentioned in Bible and Qur'an are: Adam, Salih (Methuselah), Noah, Idris (Enoch), Hud (Heber), Lut, Abraham (early 2nd Millennium BC), Isma'il (Ishmael), Ishaq (Isaac), Ya'qub (Jacob), Yusuf (Joseph), Musa (Moses, 14-13th Century B.C), Harun (Aaron), Shu'aib (Jethro), Shammil (Samuel, 11th Century B.C), Dawud (David, died 962 B.C), Sulaiman (Solomon, 10th Century B.C), Al-Yas'a (Elisha, 9th Century B.C), (Elijah, 9th Century B.C), Shia (Isaiah, 8th Century B.C), Yunus (Jonah, flourished around 785 B.C at Nineveh), Aramaya (Jeremiah, 7-6th

Century B.C), Ayyub (Job, the Book of Job, 6-4th Century B.C), Elias, Dhul Kifl, Hizqeel (Ezekiel, 6th Century B.C), Daniel (6th Century B.C), 'Uzair (Ezra, 5th Century B.C, also considered a saint), Zechariah, Yahya (John the Baptist, 1st Century C.E), 'Isa (Jesus, 4 B.C-28-30 C.E) and Muhammad (571-632 C.E) (peace be upon all of them).

All the Messengers preached monotheism [*Tawheed*]. They conveyed good news to mankind and admonished them so that, after conveying the message through the Messengers, people should have no excuse to plead against Allah.(Qur'an;4:165). The Muslims do not discriminate against anyone of His Messengers (Qur'an;2:285) and follow the eternal guidance provided to all of them being the same. Allah says: "*(O Muhammad) those were the (prophets) who received Allah's guidance: Follow then their guidance;..*" (Qur'an;6:90). The Revelations were

protected from the tempering of Satan in transmission (Qur'an;22:52). The Revelations were given in different ways: inspiration, from behind a veil or by the sending of a Messenger (Qur'an;42:51). It is through these forms that God revealed His scriptures to the messengers and prophets, who remained available for the guidance even after the messengers, had left this world. Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) after successful trial of his faith, was rewarded with the honour to be the spiritual leadership of the nations and later his pious decedents (not the disobedient ones). (Genesis;17:7-10, Qur'an;2:124, 4:54). Initially the children of Isaac through Jacob (Israel) were entrusted with this responsibility and honor. (Genesis;17:19-22, Deuteronomy;8:19-20, Leviticus;26:15, Qur'an;21:71-73). Children of Israel, which was despised, became a great and glorious nation under King and Prophet David and his son Solomon (peace be upon them), who had goodly

territory, and was doubly blest. And thus promise of God with the Children of Israel was fulfilled (Qur'an;7:137). Many prophets were sent to them, with revelations, some available in distorted form in the Bible.

Bible is the sacred book of Christianity, which includes the Old Testament [also called Hebrew Bible] and the New Testament. The Hebrew Scriptures is also the sacred book of Judaism containing remnants of Torah, (Law of Moses). As distinguished in Christianity, the New Testament forms the record of the new dispensation belonging to the Church. The gospels are claimed to contain the revealed scripture to Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him). These books are not in their original revealed form, even the Biblical traditions accept the doubtful authenticity of these books.

Previously the messengers were sent for the particular nation or community for particular time. Once a new messenger or

prophet came it was obligatory to follow him, denying one messenger means denying all the messengers. Once Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) came, he showed the way to the God, when Jesus (peace be upon him) came, he provided the way. However this system of messengers came to end with the last Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Muslims while believing in all the previous messengers of God and scriptures, adhere to the message preached by the last Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and The Qur'an as the final uncorrupted holy scripture not restricted to any particular race but for the guidance of whole humanity, while superceding all the previous scriptures.

Belief in the Messengers of Allah and His revelations in the form of scriptures is appreciation of Allah's mercy and care for His people for sending those great messengers to guide them to the straight

path. The prophets, peace and blessings be upon them, are free of all sins, major and minor, of unbelief, and of all that is repugnant. It may be, however, that they apparently commit insignificant lapses and errors in secular matters but not in spiritual matters or faith (*din*). It is reflection of love and respect of the prophets and their praise what they deserve, because they are Allah's messengers and His choice among His people. They worshipped Allah according to the best of their abilities, conveyed His message to mankind, gave sincere advice to the people, and bore patiently whatever hurt they received.

The Israelites repeatedly disobeyed the commandments of God, altered the scriptures and even killed some prophets. They did not believe in Prophet Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) and even tried to kill him, but Allah raised him to Himself. His followers deviated from the

monotheism of Abraham, Jacob and Moses (peace be upon them all), invented a different religion known as Christianity based on the concepts of Original sin and Trinity, disregarding the Law [Shari'a of Moses]. Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) had settled his eldest son Ishmael at Makka, a deserted place which developed as town on the main trade route. Prophet Ishmael (peace be upon him) became the ancestor of Arabs, promised to be a great nation in Bible (Genesis:21:18). His descendents also corrupted the original teachings of Abraham and Ishmael (peace be upon them) to become polytheists and Idolaters. For a very long period no messenger was sent to them (Arabs). Due to the persistent disobedience and rebelliousness of the Children of Israel, and corruption of original message of God; the leadership role was taken away by God from the Children of Israel and granted to the Children of Ishmael (peace be upon

them), by appointing Muhammad, peace be upon him (an Arab, from the progeny of Ishmael) as His last messenger in 610 C.E. This was continuation of initial covenant of God with Prophet Abraham (peace be upon them), mentioned at Genesis;17:7-10, 21:18 and Qur'an;2:124, 4:54. Many volumes may not suffice to touch upon the life and achievements of the greatest human being and last Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), here efforts have been made to present just coup d'oeil [glimpse] of his life.

A GLIMPSE AT THE LIFE OF THE LAST PROPHET [pbuh]:

Prevalent Environments:

During end of 6th century after Prophet Jesus Christ (peace be upon him), Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), was born at Makka in 571 C.E (according to a research by Dr.Hamidullah, the corresponding date according to Gregorian calendar was 17 June 569 C.E). He was

chosen to be the last messenger of God for the guidance of humanity till eternity. He was not from the progeny of Israel (Jacob) but from the progeny of Ishmael, the eldest son of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). Ishmael has been mentioned in Bible to be leader of a nation being the seed of Abraham (Genesis;13:18, 16:12, 17:20). Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), was chosen by God to revive the original faith of Abraham(peace be upon him) in its true form, for the humanity, which over the time had been distorted and corrupted by the decedents of Prophet Israel (Jacob) and followers of Prophet Jesus (peace be upon them). Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was sent as the fulfillment of prayer, of Prophet Abraham and Ishmael, who while raising the foundations of House of Lord (Kabah) around 1800 B.C, had prayed: *"Our Lord! send amongst them a Messenger of their own, who shall*

rehearse Thy Signs to them and instruct them In Scripture and Wisdom, and sanctify them: for Thou art the Exalted In Might, the Wise." (Qur'an;2:129).

Propheesied Earlier:

The advent of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) had been foretold to the previous messengers. Allah says: "Behold! Allah took the Covenant of the prophets, saying: "I give you a Book and Wisdom; then comes to you a messenger, confirming what is with you; do ye believe In Him and render Him help." Allah said: "Do ye agree, and take This My Covenant As binding on you?" They said: "We agree." He said: "Then bear witness, and I am with you among the witnesses."(Qur'an;3:81). The Old Testament as well as New Testament still contains these prophesies. Allah says: "Those who follow the messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom They find mentioned In their own (scriptures). In

the law and the Gospel;- for He commands them what is just and forbids them what is evil; He allows them As lawful what is good (and pure) and prohibits them from what is bad (and impure); He releases them from their heavy burdens and from the yokes that are upon them. so it is those who believe In him, honor him, help him, and follow the light which is sent down with him,- it is They who will prosper."(Qur'an;7:157).

Prophecies in Bible:

According to Old Testament, Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was told by God: "*I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and I will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him*"(Deuteronomy;18:18,19). Christians

relate this prophecy with Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) which is not correct as the critical analysis reveal that this prophecy is about Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him): Among the prophets which followed Prophet Moses, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is most like Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) where as Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) had nothing common with Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) except being a Jew and prophet, [Though among the Christians, Jesus Christ is believed to be Son of God, one of the three persons of the Trinity, hence acceptance of Jesus as prophet contradicts their own doctrine] Prophet Muhammad and Moses (peace be upon them) had a normal birth through father and a mother, while Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) was miraculously born without any male intervention.(Mathew; 1:18 and Luke; 1:35 and also Qur'an;3:42-47). Prophet Moses Muhammad (peace be upon him) were both married, had children and died

natural deaths. Muhammad (peace be upon him) is from among the brethren of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) being descendent of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) through his son Ishmael (peace be upon him), whereas Moses was descendent of Isaac (through his son Jacob) the younger brother of Ishmael. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was unlettered, hence in verbatim repeated the revelations conforming phrase; "*Words in the mouth*". Prophet Moses & Muhammad (peace be upon them) brought new laws and new regulations for their people, besides, both were accepted as messengers of God by their people in their lifetime. They ruled over their communities (as kings), they could inflict capital punishment. Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) said, "*My kingdom is not of this world.*" (*John; 18:36*). Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) was not accepted by most of his people in his life time: "*He*

came unto his own, but his own received him not."(*Gospel of John;1:11*) and he (Jesus) did not bring any new law, Jesus said; "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them. . . ;"(*Mathew;5:17-18*).

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is mentioned by name in the Old Testament: "*His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely(Muhammadim). This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.*"(*Song of Solomon;5:16*): "Hikko Mamittakim we kullo Muhammadim Zehdoodeh wa Zehraee Bayna Jerusalem." In the Hebrew language 'im' is added for respect. Similarly 'im' is added after the name of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to make it *Muhammadim*. [According to Strong's Hebrew Dictionary of Bible: Hebrew word; *makh-mawd'*; means delightful; hence, a delight, i.e. object of affection or desire: beloved, desire, goodly, lovely, pleasant (thing)]. In

English translation they have even translated the name of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as "altogether lovely", but in the Old Testament in Hebrew, the name of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is present till now.

While prophesizing, about Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) said: *"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth (referring to Muhammad) is come, he will guide you unto all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me"(John; 16:12-14); "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever."(John;14:16);"But when the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to*

you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me;”(John;15:26); “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.”(John;16:7).

Ahmed" or "Muhammad" meaning "the one who praises" or "the praised one" is almost the translation of the Greek word 'Periclytos'. In the Gospel of John;14:16, 15:26, and 16:7, Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) actually prophesized "Ahmed" by name, word 'Comforter' in Greek 'Paracletos' or 'Periclytos' refers to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Allah says in Qur'an: *“Those to whom We have given the Scripture (their scholars) recognize this (Muhammad) as they know their own sons. Those who have lost their own souls refuse therefore to believe.”(Qur'an;6:20); "And remember,*

Jesus, the son of Mary, said, 'O Children of Israel! I am the messenger of Allah (sent) to you, confirming the Law (which came) before me and giving glad tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmed.' But when he came to them with clear signs, they said, 'This is evident sorcery!'"(Qur'an;61:6); "Ye People of the Book! Why do ye clothe truth with falsehood and conceal the truth while ye have knowledge?"(Qur'an;3:71).

Prophecies in Other Scriptures:

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has also been prophesized in the Zoroaster, Buddhist and Hindu Scriptures: 'Bhavishya Purana in the Prati Sarag Parv III Khand 3 Adhay 3 Shloka 5 to 8'; Bhavishya Purana in the Pratisarag Parv III Khand 3 Adhay 3 Shloka 10 to 27; Bhavishya Purana, Parv - III Khand 1 Adhay 3 Shloka 21-23; and Samveda Book II Hymn 6 verse 8.

The Birth, Early Life and Prophethood:

Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him (571-632 C.E) was born as orphan in the ruling tribe (Quraish), descendent of Prophet Ishmael (peace be upon him) at Makka Arabia. This tribe was the custodian of Kabah, the house of worship of Allah, originally rebuilt by Abraham and his son Ishmael but, during 7th century C.E, it was packed with idols. He was initially brought up by his grandfather and later by his uncle Abu Talib. He was illiterate but extremely honest and trustworthy. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was one of few among pagan Arabs known as *hanafi* who, did not worship idols and believed in only one God. At the age of forty he started meditation in cave Hira where in 610 C.E he was visited by the angel Gabriel, to deliver the first revelation from God. He continued to receive the Revelations during next 23 yeas (till his death) which

were promptly and accurately recorded by scribes, which is known as Qur'an, the basis of Islam.

The mission of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was remarkable, Allah says: *"It is He who hath sent His Messenger with guidance and the way of life (Din) of truth, to proclaim it over all (false) way of life (Din), however much the idolaters may be averse. They desire to extinguish the light of God with their mouths but God will not allow it to happen, for He seeks to perfect His light even though the disbelievers may dislike it. (Qur'an;9:32-33, similarly at 61:8-9 & 48:28).* Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) began to preach publicly in 613 C.E, urging the rich to give to the poor and calling to worship and obey Allah (one God, the God of their ancestors Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and all) instead of idols. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) did not introduce a new religion but was sent to revive Islam (surrender to the will of One God) the original faith of

Adam, Noah, Abraham (the common ancestor of Israelites, Christians and Arabs) Moses and all other messengers up to Prophet Jesus Christ (peace be upon them all). The restrictions imposed upon Children of Israel due to their hardness of heart and rebelliousness were to be relaxed, as Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the last messenger of God for all the humanity till eternity. Allah says: *“We have not sent you (O’ Muhammad) but as a universal (Messenger) to the entire mankind giving them glad tidings and warning them (against sin) but most men understand not.”* (Qur’an;37:28). *“O mankind! There hath come to you a direction from your Lord and a healing for the (diseases) in your hearts and for those who believe Guidance and a Mercy.”*(Qur’an;10:57). Hence being a messenger of God for the mankind, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) preached to all without discriminating to any race, group or clan. Among his first

'companions' and converts, beside the Arabs can be counted Bilal the Abyssinian, Salman the Persian and Abdullah Bin-Salaam the Jew.

The new Muslim converts and the Prophet had to suffer worst oppression, from Quraish, his kinsmen for initial 13 years at Makkah, but they bore the torture and humiliation with patience. The Prophet (peace be upon him) along with his family and guardian uncle Abu Talib were isolated and confined in a valley for two years. The social and economic boycott failed to dent their resolve and faith. They were not permitted to fight even in self defence, patience and peaceful preaching was the only way. They were commanded to make Mighty Jihad (*Jihad Kabira*) against unbelief with the Qur'an (Al-Furqan-25:52). Hence scholars opine that warfare (Jihad with sword) by stateless elements is not permissible.

Having filed to confront the message of Islam through wisdom, logic or argument, unbelievers planed to kill him. By this time many people at Median had accepted Islam, consequently he had to migrate from Mecca to the distant city of Yathrab [Medina] in 622 C.E, where a warm welcome awaited. This migration is known as the Hijrah, which marks the beginning of the Islamic era. He established the first ever Islamic State at Medina, having first ever written constitution, conceding equal rights to all the people including Jews and Christians. It was only when Islam gained strength at Medina; Jihad by sword was permitted to defend the frail expanding Muslim community. Qur'an says; "To those against whom war is made permission is given (to fight) because they are wronged and verily God is Most powerful for their aid. (They are) those who have been expelled from their homes in defiance of right (for no cause) except that they say "Our Lord is God." Did not Allah check one set of people by means of another

there would surely have been pulled down monasteries churches synagogues and mosques in which the name of God is commemorated in abundant measure. God will certainly aid those who aid His (cause); for verily Allah is Full of Strength Exalted in Might.(Qur'an; 22:39-40).”

The offensive by army of polytheists and idolaters of Mecca was thwart in 624 C.E at Badar; Muslims suffered partial reverses in 625 C.E at Uhad but repelled a Meccan siege of Medina in 627 C.E in the Battle of Trench. The ‘Truce of Hudabia’ in 628 C.E, with polytheists of Makka provided peace and opportunity for expansion of Islam among many Arabian tribes.

Conquest of Mecca and Spread of Islam:

Ultimately Mecca peacefully fell to Muslims in 630 C.E and by 631 C.E Muslims were in control of almost all of Arabia (estimated total area of about three million square kilometers) at the total loss of 240 enemies, the Muslim losses were

even lesser. People started embracing Islam in large numbers. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) continued to stay at Yathrab [now called *Medina-tu-nabi*, The city of Prophet] he made his last journey to Mecca in 632 C.E, establishing the rites of the Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca as tradition of Abraham) and purged it of pagan rituals. The Messenger (peace be upon him) completed his mission; he was commanded to deliver the complete message of guidance, in unambiguous terms. Allah says: *“O Messenger! Deliver the message which has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do not, you are not doing justice to your mission. Allah will protect you from the mischief of the people. Rest assured that Allah will not let the unbelievers succeed against you”*(*Qur’an*;5:67). Any laxity in conveyance of message by hiding or concealing result in curse of God: *“Those*

*who conceal the clear proofs and the guidance, after We have made it clear in the Book for mankind, will have Allah's curse and that of those who are entitled to curse;”(Qur'an;2:159). The Messenger (peace be upon him) did not conceal any thing and completed his mission, which is further confirmed, Allah says: “..This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favor unto you, and have chosen for you as religion AL-ISLAM..”(Qur'an;5:3). He died later that year, and buried at the Prophet's Mosque at Medina; the second holiest site along with Al-Aqsa Mosque (1st Temple at Jerusalem) after Ka'ba at Makka. He left Qur'an the living miracle full of wisdom (*hikmah*) and his Traditions (*Sunnah*) for the guidance of humanity for ever.*

The Achievements and Legacy:

Within few years after Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), his devout followers brought major parts of neighboring

empires under their influence as far as up to southern France, through Spain, central Asia, India to the Atlantic Ocean. Islamic rule and political influence continued to expand, in the intervening centuries, far beyond the borders of the original Muslim conquests. Renowned scholar Michael Hart, in his famous book, placed Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) at the top of the list of 100 most influential men in history of mankind. According to him, Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular levels. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) preached and promulgated one of the world's great religion, and became an immensely effective political leader. Even fourteen centuries after his death, his influence is still powerful and pervasive; there are around 1.5 Billion Muslims in the world. The majority of influential men of history had the

advantage of getting born and raised in centers of civilization, highly cultured or politically pivotal nations, while Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was born and raised at Mecca, the most remote and isolated corner of the world. He single-handedly accomplished the great mission with almost no means and resources. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was also an ideal leader who lead from front and left the land marks for the Muslims in all secular and spiritual spheres. He is the legislator-jurist who defined ritual observance and Islamic law in the light of Qur'an i.e. Allah repeatedly ask the believers to offer prayers (*salah*), but how to offer the prayers? The jurists find in the traditions (*Sunnah*) of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). He is the ideal seeker of spiritual perfection for the mystics. Philosophers and statesman find a role model of both as conqueror of hearts and just ruler in him. The ordinary

Muslims can find a model of reflection of God's grace and salvation in him. He was an effective administrator, legislator, judge and military commander as well as teacher, preacher and prayer leader of the Muslim community.

At the end of his last sermon during last Hajj (632 C.E) the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: *“Remember, one day you will appear before Allah and answer for your deeds. So beware, do not astray from the path of righteousness after I am gone. O’ People, no messengers or prophet will come after me and no new faith will be born. Reason well, therefore, O’ People, and understand my words which I convey to you. I leave behind me two things, the Qur’an and my example, the Sunnah and if you follow these you will never go astray. All those who listen to me shall pass on my words to others and those to others again; and may the last ones understand my words better than those*

who listen to me directly. Be my witness oh Allah that I have conveyed your message to your people.” History is witness to the fact that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) did convey the Message very effectively and successfully. Before his demise Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) being universal messenger of God for the humanity, extended the invitation of Islam to the neighboring Kings and rulers through epistles and emissaries. The most prominent are, Hercules the Eastern Roman Emperor (610-641 C.E), Khusro Parvaiz of Persia, Najashi, the King of Habsha (Abyssinia), rulers of Bahrain and Oman. He died in 632 C.E at Medina and was buried at the Prophet’s Mosque (*Masjad-I-Nabwi*).

All previous messengers and scriptures were meant for the guidance of specific nations and that period, where as Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and

Qur'an is the guide for the humanity for ever. Hence it is now mandatory for all the humanity, including the Jews and Christians to believe and follow the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and Qur'an, to attain salvation. Allah says: *“As for those who are bent on denying the truth and on barring (others) from the path of God - all their (good) deeds will He let go to waste; whereas those who have attained to faith and do righteous deeds, and have come to believe in what has been bestowed from on high on Muhammad - for it is the truth from their Sustainer – (shall attain to God's grace) He will efface their (past) bad deeds, and will set their hearts at rest”*.(Qur'an;47;2-3); *“If instead of this rebellious attitude the People of the Book (Jews and Christians) had believed and become God fearing, We would certainly have removed their iniquities and admitted them to the gardens of*

Bliss”(Qur’an;5:65). The custodians of the Qur’an after the holy Prophet are the People of Islam. They are chosen for the Book, not in any narrow sense, but in the sense that the Book is given for their age and they are charged to believe, read, understand, obey, preserve and propagate it, so that all mankind should receive the Message. In this present era of high-tech communications and media, with the efforts of believers this guidance is available to the ever increasing numbers of people, who are embracing Islam in great numbers. There is no doubt that this Message will remain available to the humanity till the Day of Judgment. The legacy of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon them) continues at universal level through the legacy of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them).

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PROPHET MUHAMMAD

(PEACE BE UPON HIM)

THE UNIQUE CHARACTER AND AMAZING EXEMPLARY LIFE

By Sheikh Ali Al-Tantawi

The unique character & amazing exemplary life of Prophet (peace be upon him) is in itself testimony of his prophethood. The two miracles granted to the last Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) are: firstly; the Holy Qur'an and secondly; the unique qualities which made him pre-eminently deserving of prophethood (*Though he did perform many other miracles, but they are not being referred here*). His life history was a miracle in itself! He was a human being, like all other human beings and God commanded him to declare this fact and make it clear to everyone, in case people made a god of, or ascribed Divine

attributes to him: Say (O Prophet): "I am but a mortal man like all of you. It has been revealed unto me that our God is the One and Only God"(Qur'an;18:110). However, it has been proved that no other human being is similar to him in his greatness, even though he had all the physical and mental characteristics of a human being. God Almighty has not created any unique human being from among the children of Adam, save Muhammad (peace be upon him), his father Abraham, Moses, Jesus - and on all the other prophets.

EXEMPLARY LIFE & EXCEPTIONAL QUALITIES:

Incomparable to any other Human in History:

It would be both untrue and grossly unfair to Muhammad (peace be upon him) if we were to compare him with all the thousands of great men throughout history. Every great man has been known

only for a certain aspect of greatness: some have been known for their wisdom, but notorious for their lack of sensitivity and difficulty in expressing themselves; others were noted for their eloquence of speech and their power of imagination, but the ideas they expressed were banal. Still others were most able administrators and distinguished leaders, but corrupt in their personal lives.

Epitome of Greatness Among Human:

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the only great man who can be described as the epitome of greatness. All the others had a blind spot, maybe a guarded secret regarding their moral behaviour - some sort of perversity or weakness. Only Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), has a life history which is an open book, for everyone to read and scrutinize.

Record of Life - An Open Book of History:

He is the only one who permitted his companions to tell the public everything

about him. They therefore described every detail of his behaviour both during his hours of tranquility, as well as times when he was open to human weakness; when he showed signs of anger, desire or was prey to emotional reactions. We can also read all about his private and domestic life, as told by his wives. With his permission, Aysha narrated every detail regarding his family life. Nothing has been left out as all his actions were carried out according to the Divine path and guidance. I would have quoted details about his personal life, were it not for the fact that it might be embarrassing for some readers. Nonetheless, all such aspects can be read about both in the books about his life and in those on Islamic jurisprudence. You can read about strictly personal aspects of his life: his habits with regard to personal hygiene, the way he ate, dressed, slept, etc.

Is there any other great man who has dared to say to the public, "Look - here is my life history, -everything I have done. You can read it and tell others about it - friends and enemies! "And I am open to criticism from anyone!". Has anyone else's life history been recorded and kept intact for so many centuries? A man may be great for his intrinsic qualities, noble disposition and personal charm, and he can also be revered for his intellectual brilliance, which he leaves behind as a heritage for his own country and the world.

Comprehensive Greatness in All Aspects:

Every great man has only one such dimension of greatness in him. But Muhammad's greatness represents every aspect. We should also consider the fact that most great men are great only among their own people. They may do good for them, while harming others who do not belong to this category. The life histories

of statesmen, warriors and conquerors all show this. Or a man may be well known and respected all over the world, but his fame may be due to a limited area: discovery of one of the many laws of nature which God laid down for our universe, or a certain medicine for a particular disease. He may have come up with a new theory of philosophy, or written a masterpiece or the life story of a literary genius.

However Muhammad's (peace be upon him), greatness was comprehensive in both range and scope, and he practiced what he preached. He was unlike the many missionary zealots of the past and the present, who fail to practice what they preach at the top of their voices! Those whose true colours were exposed during moments of weakness: desire, fear, anger, need and hunger. At moments like this they might completely forget what they teach. Maybe I can hold myself up as an

example. Sometimes I rise to sublime heights when I am writing an article, or delivering a lecture encouraging people to abide by truth, goodness, and righteousness. But as soon as I reach these heights, my ego interferes! I start to long for some sort of glory. In fact, man's inner self does try to lead him away from God. So, within a few minutes I come down to earth again, to an ordinary existence. Because people notice this very same attitude among preachers and religious men, they do not take much notice of what they say.

Practiced Whatever He Preached:

As for our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), he practiced whatever he taught. He exhorted people to do good, and shun temptation; what's more, he translated his words into actions, using the Holy Qur'an as his guiding force. He was tireless in his effort to reform people by his words and deeds. He was not

invited to give lectures and seminars at universities and such places. He carried out his mission wherever he was: at home, in the mosque or in a public place. He really demonstrated everything that the Holy Qur'an pleads for and exhorts people to do, in his everyday life. He used to offer night prayers for such a long time that his feet became swollen. He always sought God's forgiveness. Someone once asked him "Hasn't God forgiven you for all your sins (then why do pray such long hours)?" to which he replied, "Shouldn't I be a thankful servant of God?" Every single action was like a prayer, because he always sought to do good and banish evil, and he unceasingly sought to serve the common good.

I would like to quote just one incident to show how he practiced what he believed and adhered strongly to the principles he held high, and kept above all other considerations. But before I relate the

incident, let me preset the following prelude. If a girl from a distinguished family was caught stealing, would she get the same sort of punishment as a girl from a working class background, accused of a similar crime? Probably not! In most cases, many secret efforts would be made to see that the whole matter was hushed up, or the legal punishment was not severe. A similar incident happened during the Prophet's lifetime. A young woman coming from one of the most distinguished and noblest Muslim families committed a theft. She was found to be guilty and this verdict was announced. Immediately some people tried to intervene, hoping that the Prophet, well-known for his magnanimity and love of forgiveness, would grant pardon in this case. Not at all! In fact he was angry that he had been approached in this way, and reminded people of how earlier generations had been ruined because

crimes committed by people of influence and position went unpunished, while the weak and humble were punished. He then made a remarkable statement which came to be accepted as a firm principle of Islam. "Indeed - by God, if Fatima, daughter of Muhammad, were to steal, her hand would be amputated." This statement put an end to interference in legal verdicts. The above attitude was natural for the Prophet, because his whole life was a life of *dawah* (spreading the message of Islam).

Lived Simple Life but not as a Hermit:

His personal likes and dislikes, and his friendships with people were governed by the Divine Message. And he did not hesitate to break any bonds which conflicted with his mission. The Prophet (peace be upon him) had elevated himself above all desire for the good things of life which human beings usually crave for. However, he did not live like a hermit and

deprive himself of food or become mystic wearing strange clothes.

Food: He ate whatever good food was served to him, provided it came within the confines of Divine Law. He was never seen to look down on any kind of food. He had tremendous willpower which enabled him to be patient at all times, and stay without food for days on end. If hunger pangs overwhelmed him, he would tie a stone over his stomach to suppress his hunger.

Clothing: As regards his clothes, he did not stick to one particular way of dressing himself. He sometimes wore both a cap and a turban at the same time, or at times one or the other. He usually wore an under-garment, with a robe and an outer garment over it. The *jubba* (long outer garment) he sometimes wore sometimes had narrow sleeves, not the wide sleeves we see today. His turban consisted of a length of cloth tied round his head, which he would drape over his shoulder when it

was not being worn. This type of turban can be used for other purposes during times of peace, or for tying up prisoners in times of war. At times he made a tuft for it. It is necessary to wear turbans in the Arabic peninsula due to climatic reasons and to protect oneself from the intense heat. This has given rise to the saying, "Turbans are the Arabs' crowns."

Regarding colour, the Prophet did not stick to any particular one, but wore a black turban on the day of his victorious re-entry into Mecca. Only clothes which show parts of the body which should be covered are forbidden in Islam, or styles which are not in harmony with decency and modesty. Muslim women should only expose their faces and the palms of their hands, and Muslim men should not wear anything made of silk. No Muslim - male or female - should wear any type of clothing associated with other religions, such as a monk's robe or the clothing of a

priest. Clothes should not reflect extravagance or be ostentatious. Apart from these rulings, Islam permits any type of clothing.

Adornments not Forbidden but Himself Avoided:

While the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not forbid people to enjoy the beautiful and good things of life that God has bestowed on mankind, he did not indulge in them himself. He had risen above the desire to have lust or wealth. It is a well-known fact that the tribe of Quraysh offered him wealth, power and the position of leader, and tried to tempt him with many other offers in order to persuade him to give up his mission. But he firmly refused all these offers, and felt pity and concern for the people who had made them.

Above Temptations of Sexual Desires:

The Prophet was also above the temptations of sexual desire. However,

the, subject of women is one which is exaggerated by orientalists who have researched his life and sought to tarnish his image and mislead the public. They use the fact that he married nine wives as a case for him being "a man of lust". But they have judged him in the same way as they judge other great men eminent writers or brave warriors. For example: Napoleon was a notorious womanizer and made the whole nation of Poland act as pimps in order for him to gain the hand of Mary Valvdka, with whom he was madly in love. He forced her father to offer her to him as a price to be paid for the independence of Poland. The life histories of many great men, such as Alexander Dumas, Byron, Goethe and Bodlieare - and many others, abound with scandals of sexual pursuit. And these orientalists have judged our Prophet by the same standards, drawing the conclusion that he, like the others, was sensuous and a man of lust.

These people (orientalists) did not study Muhammad's (peace be upon him) life in great depth, nor did they take certain psychological factors into consideration. Furthermore, their judgments were partial and showed no respect for moral behaviour. The sexual urge manifests itself in people from the age of puberty until the age of twenty five. A person is considered to be most vulnerable at this age, and sex can become an obsession which leads to all sorts of pitfalls and deviation. This is why free mixing of girls and boys at this age, even for academic purposes, is discouraged.

Non-Indulgence in Immorality Even in Early Life:

Now let us consider the Prophet's life at this stage of his life. Did he get misled and enjoy the pleasures his contemporaries indulged in? After all, he was a free man living in a free country and in a society which, at that time, was not governed by

any religion or law. He was therefore absolutely free to do as he wished. As we said before, our Prophet's life history is an open book, which anyone can read. Can anyone prove, therefore, that he was, in the full flush of youth, a man who indulged in sensual and immoral pleasures? It is narrated that he was almost led into temptation by his contemporaries, but luckily God saved him. He made him fall asleep, and when he woke up he had forgotten what he had wanted to do. Had he indulged in any such acts of pleasure, his enemies, the polytheists, would not have hesitated to publicise the fact and blackmail him.

Marriages:

When our Prophet (peace be upon him) got married at the age of twenty-five, did he marry a beautiful virgin? Not at all. He married a widow who was his mother's age. Most of his other wives were also widows, and he only married them for

tactical reasons. God had granted him permission to marry more than four wives - and this right was not granted to other Muslims. However, God did not give him the right to divorce them, a right which is given to Muslims. Of course, the sexual drive is not a human flaw. How could a characteristic of man become a fault of mankind? But it can be harmful when a man becomes sexually obsessive, making it his sole occupation, and seeking to satisfy himself in ways which are not permitted.

Marriage with Zaynab:

The story of Zaynab is a favorite among the critics of Islam. They try to find fault with it, through distortion and misinterpretation, and their views do not, therefore, deserve any attention. Zaynab was a good-looking girl and closely related to the Prophet (peace be upon him). If he had so wished, he could have married her - an act which would have been the greatest honour her family could have wished for.

But the Divine Will had ordained that her marriage would be the cause of two important social reforms which were to come about in Islam. Firstly, she was the subject of a test case, and secondly the Prophet was made to set an example to others. In the first instance God Almighty sought to put an end to aristocratic pride and class consciousness. So Zaynab, a girl belonging to the noblest Arab stock, was married to Zayd, a man from a humble background, a fugitive and an adopted son of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Society at that time considered him totally unworthy of her. But she married him all the same, against the wish of her family. Subsequently it was difficult for her to adjust to her new life, and she and her husband were constantly bickering. Both partners were ill at ease with each other and wanted to separate. But our Prophet (peace be upon him) continued to advise Zayd: "Retain your wife and fear God." But

the couple had reached the end of their tether and divorce became inevitable.

What happened next involved the Prophet (peace be upon him). He was put to the most difficult test. He had to marry Zaynab in order to put an end to the practice of adoption and show the world that it is lawful for a person to marry the wife of his adopted son. This was extremely hard for the Prophet (peace be upon him) who did not want to bear the stigma of society as one who had married his son's wife. However, he carried out this duty with patience and in obedience to the Divine Will. However, the above incident should be seen in perspective, and not in the way in which it is presented by critics of Islam. The conclusions they draw are nonsense and do not deserve any attention.

Moral Strength, Patience & Forgiveness:

Physical strength builds up our physical resistance, whereas moral strength - the

courage of conviction of the heart - brings us victory over our enemies. Yet the most powerful strength of all, more powerful than the might of our enemies or of any material force, is the strength of the willpower to overcome the self and its cravings impulses, desires and inclinations. Our Prophet (peace be upon him) has, on different occasions, exhorted us to cultivate such strength: "Strong is not the one who is good at wrestling. Indeed strong is the one who controls himself at the time of anger." And we all know that controlling our anger is the most difficult of all tasks!

The amount of energy needed to keep our temper is far greater than that required to knock down our opponent in the boxing ring. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the ratio is 1:100. You can try this theory out in everyday life by asking someone who is at the peak of his fury to abide by the principles of good behaviour.

You may not even find one in a thousand men who would respond to your suggestion. Say you are a religious person engaged in the task of spreading our religion and someone murders a very dear relative of yours and then comes to you to confess his crime and respond to your call to religion. How would you react? Our Prophet (peace be upon him) pardoned the man who had brutally murdered his uncle when that man accepted Islam. But even then our Prophet found it hard to suppress his human instinct in such a way so as not to violate the principles of Islam. He therefore said to the man, "Don't let me see you!" So this person never appeared before the Prophet.

The story of Hind is also worth mentioning in this context. Hind was the wife of Abu Sufyan, the arch enemy of the Prophet and his mission. She committed a horrible crime which no human being or wild beast would commit. She cut open the

Prophet's uncle's chest, took out his liver and chewed it But the Prophet forgave her, in spite of all her sinful acts, and accepted her into the fold of Islam. The inhabitants of the city of Taif carried out many wicked deeds against the Prophet, yet when they embraced Islam he pardoned them.

Then we have the most magnanimous act of all-and a most important event in the history of Islam. That was the general pardon the Prophet (peace be upon him) granted the people of Mecca, they who had caused him the greatest possible distress and suffering, both personally and to his mission in general. They spared no effort whatsoever in their attempts to pull him down. They boycotted him, abused him, imprisoned him, threw camel's filth at him while he was praying and placed thorns on the streets through which he passed. And all these events did not take place over a few days - but over a period of thirteen years. They also fought pitched battles

against him and massacred his relatives and companions.

Then came the hour of retaliation - although this word does not truly reflect this situation. It was time to impose lawful punishment in answer to that long chain of aggressive and humiliating actions. It was at this point that the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked the people of Mecca, "What do you think I'm going to do with you all?" The record of what they had done was always at the back of their minds which meant they were aware of the punishment they deserved, but they did not forget what a noble character Muhammad was. So they answered, "You are a noble brother and the son of a noble brother." Then they stood in silence, waiting for his verdict. If it had been a death sentence to them all, no one would have objected in the least - and no historian in later years, whether a friend or a critic of Islam, would have been able

to find fault with his decision. But Muhammad gave a different verdict; it was one that took them by surprise, and continues to surprise every generation. "Freedom is granted to you all!" he declared.

Miraculous Aspect of His Personality:

It is a pity that I have only been able to give such a brief account of this incident. I would have preferred to devote a whole chapter to it in order to present the facts and the Prophet's magnanimity in its true perspective. Indeed his attitude would have needed the energy of ten thousand wrestlers! I wonder why the later day biographers of our Prophet (peace be upon him) were so concerned with the miracles he performed. In fact, they sometimes gave exaggerated versions and filled in details on their own. This was sheer fabrication - why did they need to do this? Wasn't every stand our Prophet (peace be upon him) took and every aspect of his

personality a miracle in itself? Which brings us to the definition of the word miracle. Does it mean achieving something that others have been unable to achieve? The Prophet's honesty and trustworthiness were miracles in themselves.

One Example out of many Miraculous Aspects:

Alas, it is impossible to give many examples because of the limitations of space, but I would like to mention just one incident from his life. I have read about it hundreds of times and have always regarded it as rather an ordinary story, until suddenly one day, I realized it was a miracle. When the Prophet migrated to Medina he left one of his companions, Ali, behind to take care of the money which the Quraysh tribe had entrusted him with. These were the cash assets of the tribe, and Muhammad was the only person they trusted enough to leave them with, even though he and they were not on good

terms. He returned them to the Quraysh tribe and not to the Muslims, because all Muslims had migrated, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) was the last to leave Mecca. He stayed there till the last moment, like the captain of an abandoned ship; he did not leave until all the passengers had disembarked and got into life boats. This is another great quality of our Prophet (peace be upon him) which I have only mentioned briefly.

Can you imagine two different parties, who have -been engaged in fierce battles, both verbal and on the battlefield for the sake of faith and the Divine Message, entrusting the opposing party with their assets and valuables? Have you ever heard such a story? How could they trust their opponent unless his personal character, integrity and honesty were, beyond any doubt, a miracle? To doubt him in any way was impossible. This was what the personality of Muhammad was like.

Strength of Character & Fairness:

Another incidence which shows yet one more aspect of his character. On the day of the battle of Badr, our Prophet was inspecting the infantry. He was carrying a shaft of wood in his hand, and thrust it gently into the abdomen of a soldier named Sawad ibn Ghizya, who was standing apart from the troop formation. The Prophet (peace be upon him), wanted to alert him and make him take his place, but as the prod of the shaft of wood had hurt him, he said to the Prophet, "Oh Prophet of God, you have hurt me. Indeed, God has sent you in order to spread the message of truth and justice!" How do you think the Prophet (peace be upon him) reacted to such an affront from an ordinary soldier? Did he take any disciplinary action; - did he ignore him or forgive him? Or did he apologize to the soldier in the usual way by saying, "I'm sorry." He did none of these things. The

Prophet did what no one else would do, and something that may not even occur to anyone to do. He uncovered his own abdomen and said, "Thrust the shaft and inflict pain on me as I inflicted it on you!" This was what he was like. He caused retaliation to himself, in spite of his exalted position among all mankind.

Achievements Unparalleled in the History:

Muhammad's (peace be upon him) life history consists of a series of actions and achievements unparalleled in the history of mankind. No other eminent person has left such a record of greatness and glory in every aspect of his life, behind him. This greatness included personal courage and valour, magnanimity, patience at times of defeat and self restraint at times of anger.

Fearless Warrior: He was a firm and fearless warrior in the battlefield, to such an extent that his companions always rushed to him at critical moments to seek

comfort and solace. Even the bravest of men were no challenge for him.

Man of Extreme Compassion: He was also a man of extreme compassion. He gave a helping hand to the poor and the needy, and stood by the widows and the aged. The Prophet (peace be upon him) always upheld truth, faithfully conveying every verse of the Divine Revelation, including the verses that mentioned his mistakes and reprimanded him.

Honourable and Trustworthy: He honoured the treaties he made and kept his word, despite the difficulties and hardships he had to face on that count. He honoured his commitments, whether they concerned personal dealings or matters of the state. Exemplary Personal Conduct and Behaviour:

Our Prophet (peace be upon him) was meticulous in his personal conduct and behaviour. It was he who laid down rules for table manners and personal hygiene. He educated his companions with regard

to these matters, setting himself up as an example for them to follow. His standard of living was in no way different from theirs. He was never aloof from them, always consulting them and listening to their views. He was self effacing and whenever he met his companions he took his seat wherever there was an empty place, even if it meant sitting in a corner, away from everyone else. In fact, visitors had sometimes to strain their eyes in order to spot him. It is said that at one such gathering, a visitor found that everyone who was seated looked identical, and therefore asked, "Who among you is Muhammad?" Our Prophet never distinguished himself from others. He was one of them: he dressed like them and resembled them in every way.

Courteous Behavior and Love:

His attitude to women was very courteous, and his conduct with the members of his family and at home was remarkable for the

unrestrained love and affection he showed. He was close to everyone, because he never let people feel that he was superior to them, like a king. He never allowed his companions to stand up in reverence to him when he called on them. He used to attend personally to the requirements of his household and even mended his shoes himself. Our Prophet preferred to lead a frugal life, though he could, if he had wanted, have lived in grand style in a fabulous palace with all the ensuing display of ostentatious living. But he shunned all forms of show because his thoughts were always engaged in the afterlife.

The house where he lived with his wives was only twenty five meters long. Aisha's house consisted of one room made of clay and mud, and it was so narrow that there was not enough room for her to stretch out while the Prophet prayed, so that whenever he prostrated he had to push her

feet to one side. As for his eating habits, Aysha tells us that he had a very light appetite and that, "a month or two may pass without a fire being lit in the kitchen in order to make bread." When she was asked, "Then what did you all eat?" she replied, "Dates and water." This was the staple diet of the Prophet and his family.

Eloquence and Clarity of Speech:

Regarding his eloquence and clarity of speech, he was always known for expressing himself clearly and simply. All the qualities we have discussed prove that our Prophet (peace be upon him) was an extraordinary man and that God Almighty chose him for the tremendous task, only after preparing him fully for that responsibility.

CONCLUSION:

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the last prophet was granted two living miracles; The Holy Qur'an and the unique qualities of a perfect human being. It has

been proved that no other human being is similar to him in his greatness in qualities. Indeed God knows best upon whom to bestow His Message.

[Extract from book: "Islam: A General Introduction"; "Ta'rif-e-Aam bi-Din il-Islam" By: Shaikh Ali Al-Tantawi]

THE PROPHET OF PEACE

By: Maulan Waheed-uddin Khan

Introduction:

The teachings of the Prophet of Islam and his exemplary way of living show that he not only projected the 'concept of peace', but that he was also able to develop a complete methodology of 'Peaceful Activism'. The revolution he brought about was a practical one based on his 'ideology of peace'. In view of the contribution made to human history by the Prophet of Islam, he can be most appropriately called the Prophet of peace. In the Qur'an the Prophet of Islam is called the Prophet of Mercy (Qur'an;21:107). The Prophet of Peace is only another name for the Prophet of Mercy. Both express the same reality in different words. But this aspect of the Prophet was overshadowed by the political history of Islam. Now, if there is

to be a rediscovery of the Prophet of Islam as he actually was, this veil of politics needs to be removed, writes the renowned subcontinent scholar Maulan Waheed-uddin Khan, in his most enlightening article; 'The Prophet of Peace' [published in the Monthly 'Tazkeer', Lahore English Edition, December 2008, www.dar-ut-tazkeer.com]. With the courtesy, it is being reproduced here with minor adjustments and as short note on Jihad.

Historians have generally acknowledged that the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn Abdul Muttalib, was supremely successful during his lifetime. For instance, the British historian Edward Gibbon (1735-94) pays tribute to the Prophet of Islam in his book:-"The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" when he observes that "the rise and expansion of Islam was one of the most memorable revolutions, which has impressed a new and lasting character on

the nations of the globe." M.N. Roy, an Indian leader (1887-1954) "writes in his book, "The Historical Role of Islam" (Delhi,1939) that Muhammad must be recognized as by far the greatest of all the prophets and that the expansion of Islam was " the most miraculous of all miracles". In his book titled "The 100"(New York, 1978) Dr. Michael Hart has made a list --- choosing from the entire span of human history -- of the one hundred individuals whose achievements are the most outstanding. At the head of this list of these high achievers, he puts the name of the Prophet of Islam. He writes: "He is the only man in history)", who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular levels." The question arises as to what the secret was of this great success achieved by the Prophet. The secret lies in one word PEACE. It would not be overstating the case to say that the Prophet of Islam was the greatest pacifist

in history. He exploited peace as an unconquerable force. The Qur'an says in this connection: "Reconciliation is the best." (4:128). That is, in controversial matters, a peaceful course of action is far more effective than having recourse to violence. The Prophet of Islam once said, "God grants to peace, what he does not grant to violence." (Sahih Muslim).

Peace- A Complete Ideology & Methodology:

A study of the life of the Prophet of Islam tells us that the Prophet discovered peace both as a complete ideology and as a methodology, which were productive of the most effective strategy in all matters. An eminent thinker once wrote: "All the revolutions in history were nothing but a change of the rulers. They were not revolutions in the real sense." In this case, if this is true, the name of the Prophet of Islam will be regarded as a remarkable exception. For, it is a historical fact that

the changes he brought about ushered in all kinds of individual, social and political improvements, the combination of which adds up to revolution. For students of history, there is always the possibility of different conclusions being arrived at. However, the writer feels that this is mostly the result of inadequate study, and that when research is undertaken on a vaster and more comprehensive scale, any diversity of opinion automatically narrows down.

Here is an example to illustrate this point. Some defensive battles took place, during the lifetime of the Prophet, one of which was fought at Badr. The traditions tell us that when this battle was taking place, the Prophet of Islam was seated some distance from the battlefield in a makeshift camp; and he was seen drawing some lines in the sand by hand or with some twig. An orientalist, making the assumption that his actions must relate to

the current battle, recorded the following opinion: "The leader of Islam was making his next war plan." This orientalist wrote only on the basis of conjecture, without making any reference to the facts. But when we look at other traditions, it becomes clear what the Prophet was doing at that time. He was, in fact, making a plan to establish peace in the future.

As we find in another tradition, exactly at the time when this defensive war was taking place, God's angel came to him and said: "God has sent you a message of peace." On hearing this, the Prophet of Islam said: "God is peace, peace is from Him and peace returns to Him." (Al-Bidayah wan Nihayah, vol. 3, page 267). According to this second tradition, we can rightly say that on the occasion of the Battle of Badr, the leader of Islam was making his next peace plan. The mission of the Prophet of Islam was not of a political nature. More correctly, it was a

spiritual mission. The Qur'an calls it the purification of the soul (2:129); that is, making man a perfect human being. The same reality has been expressed elsewhere in the Qur'an as the making of a complex-free soul. Such an aim can be achieved only through counseling and persuasion. It is an aim which demands re-engineering of the mind. This can be done only by awakening man's ability to think. The means of achieving it is not a political revolution, but rather an intellectual revolution. That is why all the teachings of the Prophet are entirely based on the concept of peace. The Qur'an, as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, has about 6500 verses. There are hardly 40 verses in it, which are about *qital* or war that is, less than one percent, whereas ninety nine percent of the verses are such as are designed to awaken man's intellectual faculties. We can say, moreover, that the Qur'an is a book on the 'art of thinking.' It

is in no way a treatise on the art of fighting.

Prevalent Environments of 7th Century

Arabia:

Early circumstances Arabia, a peninsula situated in the south western part of Asia, is a desert country which has been inhabited since ancient times. Various tribes lived here in different regions, ruled by their respective chiefs. It was in this country, at Makkah, that four thousand years ago, the Prophet Abraham settled his family. His decedents settled there believed in and worshiped the one God. But gradually, with the passage of time and the effect of external influences, they began worshiping idols. In the 6th century A.D. the whole of Arabia had become an idolatrous country. This was the environment into which the Prophet of Islam was born.

Early Life & Prophethood:

The Prophet Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn Abdul Muttalib was born in Makkah in Arabia in 570 C.E. He declared his prophethood in 610 C.E in Makkah. In 622 C.E, he went to another Arabian city, Medina. He died there in 632 C.E at the age of 63. His prophetic period spanned 23 years. When he was born, his father Abdullah had already died And when he was six years old, his mother Amina, the daughter of Wahb, also passed away. Afterwards, he lived under the guardianship of his grandfather, Abdul Muttalib, and his uncle, Abu Talib. The Qur'an tells us about his early life : "Did He not find you an orphan and give you shelter? Did He not find you wandering and guide you?" (Qur'an;93:6-7) In this verse, the Qur'an refers to the reality that when the Prophet of Islam experienced orphanhood in his early life, he suffered from the feeling that

something was lost to him. This feeling of loss finally took the form of the search for truth. He so wandered in search of the truth that he often went outside Makkah and would engross himself in thinking about the Truth; and continued to pray to God in solitude in the cave of Hera in a nearby mountain. God, finding him thus in quest of the truth, sent him an angel one night in the year 610 C.E. The angel told him that he had been selected by God as His messenger. Later, the Qur'an began to be revealed to him at intervals. It took a period of 23 years for the revelations to be completed.

The Mission:

The mission the Prophet was given by God was to convey to people the message of monotheism (*Tawheed*). The message, explaining God's oneness, exhorted man to lead a life which was in every respect God-oriented. This, for man, was the way to salvation. The Prophet of Islam, in his

early years, was a trader. The image formed of his personality as a trader was one that earned him the title, "The Truthful One, The Honest One." He was thus regarded as an honourable person in Makkah, so that when he climbed up on Mount Safa and called upon his people, they all gathered there to listen to him.

This was his first address as a prophet to his people. In this sermon, he told his hearers that after death everyone would be sent either to heaven as a reward, or to hell as a punishment. Therefore, the life before death should be utilized for preparation for the life after death. At that time, idolatry, to which people had become conditioned, was prevalent in Makkah. For that reason his speech did not impress them. People simply left without trying to understand his message. The Prophet's uncle, Abdul Uzza (Abu Lahab), reacted negatively, saying in disgust: "Woe to you, did you call us to say

only this?"! Makkah was the most important town in Arabia. And the existence of the Kabah within its confines gave it the status of the great religious centre of the whole of Arabia. The Quraysh tribe, who had settled there, were the custodians of the Kabah and thus enjoyed the position of leadership in the entire country.

The Tribal Parliament (Darul Nadwa):

In Makkah, the Quraysh had established Darul Nadwa. i.e. the tribal parliament, of which the senior most tribesmen of the Quraysh were members. Here, after consultation, all important decisions were taken. The Prophet's grandfather, Abdul Muttalib was one of the distinguished members of Darul Nadwa, As was the order of the day, an ambitious leader's first objective was to try to become a member of Darul Nadwa, which ranked as the centre of power in Arabia at that time. Apparently, without its bidding, no great

task could be achieved in Makkah, or for that matter, in Arabia. But the Prophet of Islam did not make any attempt to become a member of Darul Nadwa. He did not even demand that the vacant seat of his grandfather, Abdul Muttalib, should be given to him. On the question of Darul Nadwa, the Prophet of Islam adopted a peaceful course of action, for which I should like to coin the expression "status quoism". That is, avoiding a confrontation with the status quo and rather accepting things as they are. This way the Prophet had of dealing with things, was not status quoism in the passive sense, but rather a positive line of conduct. Adopting such a course -- positive status quoism -- means not coming into conflict with the system of the time; but rather discovering the opportunities already existing in it, and then turning them to full advantage. The slogan: "Ignore the problems, avail of the opportunities" expresses the spirit of this

approach -- an extremely wise way of proceeding. The Prophet of Islam was guided to the adoption of this method in the very early verses of the Qur'an: "Every problem is followed by ease. Every problem is followed by ease." (Qur'an;94:5-6). In-this way, the Prophet of Islam was counseled that no problem is such in the complete sense, but rather every problem is accompanied by opportunities. Therefore, man should opt for the wisdom of avoiding problems and availing of opportunities. This method followed by the 'Prophet was a very sound course. It follows that in any; course of action we choose to adopt, we should begin with what is possible today.

The mission of the Prophet of Islam was to establish he oneness of God (*tawhid*). The greatest problem of the time was that Makkah's most sacred religious centre housed 360 idols, all belonging to different Arab tribes. These idols had been

placed in the Kabah by the Makkan leaders so as to make Makkah the hub of the entire Arabian Peninsula. The Kabah, having 360 idols within its precincts was a problem; but there was an opportunity hidden in this. Because of these idols, not only the Makkans, but people from different parts of Arabia all used to gather there. The Kabah had become a natural meeting ground for people. The Prophet of Islam, choosing to ignore the presence of the idols in the Kabah, exploited this coming together of the people as an opportunity. The course he adopted was to visit the Kabah daily, meet people and recite to them verses from the Qur'an. In this way, he continued to call upon people to accept the concept of monotheism. He would address people en masse as well as convey the message at an individual level. Gradually, one by one, people began to enter the fold of Islam -- for instance, Khadija, Abu Bakr, Umar, Usman, etc.

Ideological Differences:

Experience shows that people are very sensitive as regards their religious beliefs. That is why the Prophet had to face stiff opposition in Makkah. The Quraysh in particular employed all kinds of strategies to put an end to this mission of *tawhid*. The reason for their opposition was not political, to any degree, but was only because of ideological sensitivity. That is to say, the reason for this opposition was their differing ideology and was not in reality a response to any perceived political danger. In this initial stage, the Prophet's wife Khadija and his uncle Abu Talib gave him staunch support. Unfortunately, they both died after ten years of his prophethood. Now the Prophet found himself in the unenviable position of having to find someone to give him refuge, according to the ancient tribal tradition, so that he might continue to carry out his mission.

Journey to Taif:

First, he tried to find refuge in Makkah. Then the Prophet met those tribal chiefs who had come to Makkah on a visit to the Kabah. None of them was ready to help him. Finally, he decided to go to Taif, a town situated at a distance of 75 kilometers from Makkah and seek refuge from the chiefs of the town. According to Arab custom, this was nothing new. But the leaders, who themselves were idol-worshippers were not ready to give refuge to a prophet who believed in the One God. Instead of giving him refuge, they incited the urchins to chase him away from the town by pelting stones at him. The Prophet took refuge in an orchard on the outskirts of Taif where he spent the night. According to the tradition, on that occasion God sent the angel of the Mount to him. The Angel said to him: "God has seen the treatment meted out to you by 'the people of Taif. Now, if you give me

permission, I can join the two mounts in order that all these people should be crushed to death." The Prophet replied: "No, although the present generation of Taif has refused to listen to me, I still hope that the next generation of Taif will listen to me and will follow the path of God."

Persecution and Conspiracy to Kill:

When the Prophet returned to Makkah from Taif, the Quraysh intensified their persecution. They gathered at Darul Nadwa and jointly arrived at a decision to kill him. At that time, there were about 200 people in Makkah who had believed in the Prophet and become his supporters. But this number was inadequate to give him support against the onslaught of the Quraysh. So the Prophet decided to leave Makkah and migrate to Medina, another city in Arabia about 300 miles away from Makkah, thus putting an end to the possibility of any violent confrontation

between him and the Quraysh. The Entry of Islam into Medina Before his migration to Medina, the Prophet of Islam sent two of his companions to the city to convey his message to the Madinan people. Their language being Arabic, like that of the Makkans, the Prophet's messengers began to recite portions of the Qur'an to them. That is why they came to be known as *muqris*, meaning 'the reciters'¹. Events show that, unlike the Makkan situation, the message of Islam started spreading rapidly in Medina. In almost every home in Medina, one or more members abandoned idolatry in favour of the religion brought by the Prophet of Islam.

Makkah- A Tourist City & Business Hub:

Why had there been these two opposite responses in Makkah and Medina? There was a reason for this; Makkah was situated in the desert, where agriculture was - impossible. Their economy was therefore largely dependant on the cult of idolatry

and, at that time,, the Kabah having become the centre of idolatry in Arabia, people belonging to all tribes used to come there. In this way, commercial value was attached to the idolatry of the Makkans. We might say, in modern jargon, that the Makkah of those f times had acquired the status of a tourist city. Owing to this the Makkans feared that if idolatry were to be wiped out from, Arabia, the 'tourist' industry would die a natural death. The issue for the Madinans was different, for Medina, being situated in an area where there was no dearth of water, agriculture and horticulture flourished. The Madinans had no fear that with the wiping out of idolatry, their source of income would dry up, for none of their income derived from idol worship. Owing to this difference in the respective situations of the Makkans and Madinans, the Makkans were unable to find the religion of monotheism acceptable in the first phase. But, the

Madinans were free from this constraint. To them, the end of idolatry meant only the disappearance of a religious culture, rather than their being deprived of their source of income. That is why the message of the Prophet of Islam spread rapidly in Medina.

Migration to Medina:

The migration of the Prophet of Islam from Makkah to Medina was a judicious move; it was to adopt the way of peace rather than the way confrontation. This principle followed by the Prophet of Islam, was later explained by the mother of believers Hazrat Aysha: "Whenever the Prophet had to opt for one of two ways, he would always opt for the easier one." One clear example of this is his 13-year stay in Makkah, in his final days he had the option of either engaging in armed resistance against the Quraysh, or peacefully leaving Makkah for Medina. That being so, the first course was the

harder one, and the other the easier of the two, i.e. leaving Makkah quietly. That is why the Prophet of Islam, according to this principle, abandoned the harder option in favour of the easier one. Madinah was 300 miles away from Makkah. The journey was undertaken on camelback, but since the Prophet knew that the Makkans were pursuing him, he took various measures to save himself from his enemies. For instance, leaving Makkah quietly at midnight and, instead of going straight on to Medina, hiding himself in a cave on the way for 3 days. Then, instead of taking the usual route, he took an unfamiliar path. During this journey of emigration, many such incidents took place which are indicative of the Prophet's thinking. For instance, he met on his way two persons, who were brothers. The Prophet asked them their names. They told him that their tribe had given them both the same name *Muhanaan*

meaning, two disgraceful or dishonourable persons. The Prophet replied that they were two honourable (*Mukremaan*) persons, rather than two dishonourable ones.

This showed the kind of principle on which his training methods were based. He wanted to build the human personality on positive lines. In changing the names of these two men, he gave them the necessary psychological encouragement to develop themselves according to the lofty ideals of humanity. In a similar way, when in later times, during his stay in Medina, a son was born to his daughter, Fatima, who was married to Ali ibn Abi Talib, the Prophet asked Ali what name he had given the child, Ali told him that Harb was the name given to the baby. (*Harb* in Arabic means war). The Prophet said this was not an appropriate name. He suggested instead the name of Hasan, meaning beautiful. These incidents tell us that the Prophet

was a totally peace-loving person, rather than a war-monger.

Period at Medina, 622-632 C.E:

The Prophet's life at Medina begins in 622 A.D. His emigration to Medina was a matter of extreme gravity. Prior to this, in his 13 year prophetic life in Makkah, he had to undergo extremely bitter experiences. He was continuously persecuted, his companions were beaten up and he and his family were boycotted. When this persecution intensified to the point of becoming unbearable, the Prophet and his companions, more than 100 in number, left their hometown and their properties and went to Medina. Here, they had to build their lives anew away from their homes, relatives and friends. In such a situation, the Prophet's heart should have been filled with lamentation and he might have been expected to protest loud and long against the Makkans and immediately on reaching Medina, if he had

started negative campaigns against his persecutors, it would have been no great surprise. But he did quite the opposite, as is borne out by the text of the first speech - still preserved in the books of *Seerah* (Prophet's biography) ~ which he made on reaching Medina. The gist of "The First Sermon of the Prophet", as recorded in *Seerah* ibn Hisham, is as follows: "O people, save yourselves from the fire of hell, even if it be with a piece of date." This was no simple matter. In the then circumstances, it was indeed a difficult task to convert one's negative feelings into positive ones. Yet, this is the price that had to be paid if the principle of peaceful activism had to be adhered to.

Peaceful Activism:

The study of human psychology shows that both peace and violence are expressions of internal feelings. If man's mind is filled with hatred, it will find expression in a violent form of action. But if his mind is

filled with love, it will always find expression in a peaceful form of action. Embarking upon a course of peaceful activism is not a simple matter, but rather entails making sacrifices. That is, man refrains from hating his opponents, despite having good cause for hatred; and he contrives to direct his mind away from such activities as would engender hatred. This means that anyone who wants to follow the peaceful method shall first of all have to keep his mind in a state of equilibrium. He shall have to refrain from allowing himself to be provoked, in spite of all kinds of provocation from the other party. It is by paying this price that the principle of the peaceful method can be adopted. For the first time in human history, the Prophet of Islam provided a perfect and complete model of 'peaceful activism'. This was possible only because he paid the price of unilateral moderation and adjustment. All kinds of injustice were

done to him by his opponents, but he was able to rise above them. By ignoring them, he was able to plan the course of his actions along positive lines. This speech of the Prophet of Islam shows that he was a peace-loving person in the complete sense of the word. No event, however unpleasant, could disturb his peace of mind. With this sublime mentality, he had found something of such supreme value that all other things were of no consequence in comparison. He engaged in positive thinking in the perfect sense. His mind was a workshop which could convert even negative trains of thought into positive ones. Any negative experience could be defused, by his mind, there and then, to produce positive thinking. As a result, by the time any experience reached the storehouse of his memory, it had already been converted into positive ideas. His personality was a positive one in the full sense. He had a

great capacity for converting experiences of violence into experiences of peace. On the contrary, some people (inclined to violence & terrorism due to ignorance) have manifested their propensity for converting positive experience into all that is negative.

Medina City State - Model of Peaceful Coexistence:

In 622 C.E, the Prophet reached Medina. At that time in Medina, idolaters and Jews existed side by side with the Muslims. The Medina of that time thus had the status of a multi-religious society. In such a situation, how were people to lead their lives peacefully? The Prophets discovered a successful formula. This formula was based on; the principle: Follow one and respect all. In Medina in those days, Muslims were in the majority. Hence the newly formed state was presided over by the Prophet of Islam. In his capacity as head of state, he issued a declaration,

known in history as the declaration of Medina. It was mentioned in this declaration that Muslims, idolaters and Jews would all enjoy the right to settle their personal matters according to their own religion and culture. So far as social controversies were concerned, those would be settled in a accordance with the Shari'a as laid down by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This is the only practical principle on the basis of which peace may be established in a multi-religious or multi-cultural society. This principle allows people the freedom to follow the traditions of their own culture and religion, but so far as social matters are concerned, where opinions differ from one another, the dictates of the central administration should be followed. That is, individuals should have total freedom within the framework of the social system. In other words, this method may be called 'peaceful difference management'. It is a

fact that in every society differences do exist, whether the society be uni-religious or multi-religious. These differences can be accepted, but they cannot be obliterated. In such a situation, in a society, establishing peace can be done only on the principle existence.

Congregational Prayers:

On reaching Median the first task Prophet (peace be upon him) performed was to build a mosque and establish the system of saying prayers five times a day. One important aspect of the obligatory prayers was the organized manner in which God had to be worshipped, and another was the development of the desired character in human beings, by which they might lead their lives peacefully in society. The method laid down for the prayer concluded with words to this effect: At the end of the prayer those saying prayers have to turn their heads both to the left side and the right side, uttering these

words: *Assalam-o-Alaykum wa rahmatullah, Assahm-o-Alaikum wa rahmatullah.* This is the equivalent of addressing all those inhabiting the earth and saying to them: "o people, peace be upon you." In this way, the congregational prayer served as a source of training to enable people to live in their society as peaceful citizens. They had to have positive feelings in their hearts for their fellow men. In that way, they would never create problems for others. Their attitude would always be humanitarian and amicable towards others. When the Prophet of Islam came to Makkah after emigration, this did not put an end to conflict (with Makkan): it proved rather to be the; beginning of an era of confrontation (with Makkan). This came about in spite of the fact that the Prophet of Islam himself had made the sacrifice of abandoning his homeland Makkah for Medina in order to avoid war,

Nevertheless, Medina did turn out to be a very fertile area for his mission. Here, people rapidly entered the fold of his religion, until the majority of the Madinans became his followers.

Hostilities of Polytheists & Battles for Survival:

After the emigration of the Prophet of Islam, the Muslims of Makkah and the surrounding area also came to Medina and started settling there. Medina thus became a very strong centre for the mission of the Prophet of Islam. This was a kind of warning to the Makkans. It was but natural for them to imagine that the Prophet of Islam was gathering a big force in Medina with the intention of attacking Makkah to recover the city. The Makkans, therefore, planned to put an end to the power of the Prophet of Islam in Medina forever.

Planning a full-scale attack on Medina, the Makkans collected 50,000 Dinars by

public donation and started preparations for war. They finally set off for Medina with a one thousand strong fully equipped army, in order to wipe out the newborn Muslim state. In consequence, a number of battles took place in the Madinan period. In the books of *Seerah*, 85 battles have been listed. But all of the battles were planned by the Makkans, the opponents of Islam, while the Prophet of Islam merely took steps to avoid engaging in combat.

JIHAD:

Misconceptions:

There are many misconceptions about Jihad, which needs to be clarified [*hence this brief on Jihad has been added in the original article*]. Briefly, Jihad does not necessarily mean warfare. Since Islam provides a complete code of life, it addresses the possibility of war and provides the code of conduct of warfare; which is more civilized than any in the whole history of humanity. Once all peaceful efforts fail, the Muslims

have to defend themselves and warfare becomes inevitable. The word 'Jihad', is wrongly translated as 'Holy War', Jihad is striving against various forms of resistance, internal (against selfish desires and evil temptations) or external, for the cause of God. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The best fighting (Jihad) in the path of God is (to speak) a word of justice to an oppressive ruler. The first and foremost form of Jihad is to; 'Strive against selfish desires' (*Nafs ammarah*), to purify the heart, so that the faith (*Eman*) of Islam is deeply rooted in the heart, to become fully subservient to the commands of God and His Messenger. Secondly, making strenuous efforts (Jihad) by peacefully conveying the message of God (Islam) to the humanity (*Dawah*), i.e. '*Jihad Kabira*'; the peaceful struggle with the Qur'an (Qur'an;25:52). Thirdly to fight in self defence or against

oppression for the cause and pleasure of God.

Warfare in Self Defence Permitted after Establishment of State at Medina:

It was only after the first two stages which lasted for over thirteen years that after migration to Medina and establishment of government there that, the third stage to defend Muslims against oppression was permitted. God says: "Permission to fight back is hereby granted to the believers against whom war is waged and because they are oppressed; certainly God has power to grant them victory."(Qur'an;22:39); "Fight for the cause of God those who fight against you, but do not commit aggression. God does not love aggressors" (Qur'an;2:190); "And what reason do you (Muslims) have not to fight in the cause of God, to rescue the helpless oppressed old men, women, and children who are crying: "Our Lord! Deliver us from this town whose people

are oppressors; send us a protector by Your Grace and send us a helper from Your presence?”(Qur’an;4:75). However the Muslims are urged to accept peace offer (Qur’an;4:90) by the opponents. Islam laid down ethics and strict rules for conduct of warfare once peace efforts fail. Narrated Thabit bin Ad Dahhak, the Prophet said; “whoever commits suicide with something, will be punished with the same thing in the (Hell) fire”.(Sahih Al Bukhari Hadith Numbr:8.126). Narrated Jabir ibn Samurah: (The dead body) of a person who had killed himself with a broad-headed arrow was brought before the Messenger of God (peace be upon him), but he did not offer prayers for him.(Sahih Muslim Hadith. Number.486). Messenger of God (peace be upon him) prohibited to mutilate the dead bodies. (Sahih Muslim Hadith.804). Killing by burning is not allowed, it is none but God Who punishes with fire (Sahih Al Bukhari, Hadith,

Number.4.259). Conversion by force and killing of innocent people whether Muslim or non Muslim is strictly forbidden in Islam.

Jihad for Political Power:

The concept of Jihad was nevertheless used by some medieval Muslim rulers to justify wars motivated by purely political ambitions, keeping in line with the practice in vogue in the world by other powers of the time. Gradually, however, Jihad came to be interpreted more in defensive than in offensive terms. In the 20th century the concept of jihad inspired Muslims in their struggle against Western colonialism. Recently in eighties USA exploited Jihad in Afghanistan to defeat USSR, now reaping the aftermath itself. Presently there are oppressed Muslims groups who are retaliating against injustice and tyranny. There is a need to remove the root causes and make peaceful efforts through dialogue to end the armed

resistance. The killing of innocent people, through suicide bombing (burning) and other means of terror by stateless elements on the name of jihad is totally against the spirit of Islam which reflect their total ignorance in understanding of Islam and its values.

Jihad Against All Socio-Economic & Cultural Evils:

Jihad is a life-long mission for the Muslim as a community to struggle against all evils, socio-economic, cultural, educational and political dogmas; superstitious and mythological concepts; and directing the Muslims towards obedience to God, enlightenment, refinement, scientific progress, dignified character and honest actions. Its top and most noble form is to fight the enemies of Islam in battle in order to foil their attempts to suppress the Muslims and the invitation to Islam. Although retaliation is permissible but to remit the retaliation by

way of charity is appreciated as an act of atonement (Qur'an;5:45), the best reward indeed is for those who endure with patience. (Qur'an;16:126).]

STRATEGY FOR PEACE:

The policy of Prophet (peace be upon him) was always to counter enemy war initiatives with peaceful measures. For this peaceful strategy to be effective, a trained team of peace-loving people was required. The companions of the Prophet proved to be competent for this task and the strategy of countering violence with peace proved so successful that, within a short period of 20 years, the whole of Arabia had entered the fold of Islam. This peaceful strategy owed its success largely to the Prophet having been able to establish peace treaties with all the tribes of Arabia. Thus it was made binding upon all the tribes to follow the peaceful method of their own accord. This was a new method -- in effect, treaty diplomacy.

It was as a result of these strategies that a country populated by such militant people could be revolutionized within such a short period of time. The miracle was that it was a (almost) bloodless revolution.

The Philosophy of Patience:

Patience, as a virtue, was given the utmost importance in the teachings of the Prophet of Islam. In the Qur'an, there are about 110 verses which contain the word *sabr* (patience). The Qur'an, in fact, goes to the extent of saying that success depends upon patience alone. The Qur'an states, "O people, be patient and steadfast, so that you may prosper (Qur'an;3:200). At another place, the Qur'an states that even the leadership of nations is given to those who persevere with patience (Qur'an;32:24). It is this truth which is thus expressed in the text of a long Hadith: "Learn that success goes with patience." (Musnad Ahmad, vol. I, p. 307) That is to say that success is linked with

patience. No patience, no success. The tree of success always grows on the land of patience. History tells us that the majority of the world's pacifists, or peaceful activists, have failed to achieve their aims the commonest reason being that while they recognized the value of peace, they ignored the value of patience. Without exercising patience, it is impossible to launch a peace movement with any hope of success.

Principle of Peace Activism:

Generally, what happens is that first they hold someone or some group to be their enemy, and then launch a movement against that enemy. For instance, Nelson Mandela's course of action in South Africa was first to spread hatred for the white settlers there, and then declare that he was going to launch a peaceful movement to oust them from political power. The atmosphere of hostility thus created was the reason for Nelson Mandela's

movement taking so long to achieve the desired result. According to the 'principle of peace activism', when directed against some group, it is vital that there be no negative feelings against its members. It is essential to have a positive mind set when dealing with them. This must be the sole basis for launching any action, based on 'Peaceful Activism'. For if we do not have positive feelings for the other party, we can never succeed in our peaceful mission. Practically, what happens is that one group launches a peaceful movement against another group, on the basis of the peaceful method, yet harbours feelings of injustice, supposed or otherwise, against their opponents. This feeling engenders hatred for the other party. This hatred gradually takes the form of violence, and if the desired success is not achieved through violence, this storm of hatred, boiling within their hearts, leads them to engage in all kinds of destructive

activities. Ultimately, to wipe out the enemy, they may even take such extreme measures as suicide bombing.

Did Not use Hate Language against Atrocities:

As regards ‘Peaceful Activism’, we find that the Prophet, like other reformers down the ages, also had to face all kinds of atrocities from his opponents, yet he never used the language of hatred against them. He even did his best to save his companions from this feeling of hatred. We find abundant examples of this nature throughout his life. For instance, in Makkah the family of Yasir, a companion of the Prophet, were poor and weak, so the powerful opponents of the Prophet started beating them to compel them to leave the Prophet. On seeing this persecution, the Prophet of Islam did not utter anything against the opponents. He only exhorted Yasir and his family to exercise patience,

because for doing so, they were promised paradise.

Telling them that the reward for patience was paradise, he tried to bring this point home to them that, of their own free will, they ought to refuse to allow themselves to be provoked, irrespective of the kind of provocation. In no circumstances were they to harbour negative feelings against their opponents. This was an extremely important aspect of the policy of the Prophet of Islam, which he himself followed, with God's guidance; that is, remaining patient in the face of all acts of injustice committed by his opponents. The Qur'an gives clear guidelines on this subject. It records the words of the Prophet Abraham: "We shall certainly bear steadfastly whatever harm you do to us."(Qur'an;14:12) By expressing its approval of Abraham's attitude, it endorses the virtue of patience.

Patience Against Negative Thoughts:

Such patience is not a simple matter. It means adhering to positive thinking, despite acts of oppression by the other party; and saving oneself from allowing negative thoughts of the other party to enter one's mind. For if a negative picture is formed of one's opponents, and then the oppressed person can never adhere to the principle of the peaceful method while dealing with the oppressor. If the principle of patience is adhered to, it maintains a certain normalcy between the former and the latter and saves the relationship from becoming totally warped. Peaceful activism in fact reflects peaceful minds. Abnormal or negative minds can never successfully proceed with the peaceful method. The principle of patience is in fact a certain guarantee of the perpetuation of normal, positive thinking, whereas hatred and negativity disturbs our mental balance.

Quiet, Peaceful Propagation:

The study of the life of the Prophet shows that he continued to face injustices from the addressee group, but the Prophet always adhered strictly to the principle of patience and exhorted his companions to do likewise. Never in his meetings were the oppressive acts of the enemy discussed or even mentioned. Never did he heap verbal abuse on his oppressors. On the contrary, he had only good words for them. Never did he call his oppressors *Kafirs* or enemies. Rather, he always used the word *insaan* (human being) for them. One extreme example worth noting is that once when his opponents had seriously injured him by stoning him, he simply uttered these words: "O God, guide my people for they do not know." The way of unilateral patience and well-wishing adopted by the Prophet in Arabia was only intended to prevent feelings of hatred and grievance finding a place in his and his

companion's hearts. For a mind harbouring hatred and grievance is not competent to carry out the task of reform. The study of the life of the Prophet of Islam shows that for several years after starting his mission in 610 C.E, he would communicate his message quietly through private individual meetings. At that time, idols were worshipped in Makkah as well as in the whole of Arabia. The culture of idolatry dominated everywhere. Idolatrous practices had taken root in the lives of the Arabs, right from the moment of their birth till the day they died. In such a situation, introducing the message of monotheism into the environment of idolatry was simply to invite clash and confrontation. Given this situation, the Prophet of Islam had either of two options. One, to invite people publicly to respond to the call of monotheism and openly condemn polytheism (*shirk*). The second option was to start his mission

quietly through individual meetings and take further steps only after gauging the circumstances.

If he adopted the first method, there would be chances of violent confrontation. That is why he gave up that idea. Instead, he adopted another method, clearly a peaceful method, by which it was possible to continue his mission without it leading to conflict. This was the first example of 'peaceful activism' in the life of the Prophet. In like manner, he launched his entire movement on the principle of peace. This reality has been expressed thus in a Hadith: "If you face an enemy, do not allow yourselves to be influenced by the psychology of reaction and start retaliating; instead, solve the problem of enmity by following the peaceful method." In this way, he continued to work peacefully until a time came when 83 people had joined his mission. At that time, one of his senior companions, Abu

Bakr, said to him that thenceforward, they should work publicly. The Prophet of Islam said; No, Abu Bakr, we are still only a very few. (*Seerah* ibn Kathir, vol., p. 441). But Abu Bakr in his zeal went to the Kabah and announced in public that he had become Muhammad's follower. On hearing these words, a group of the Prophet's opponents started beating him up so severely that he fell down seriously injured. His assailants desisted only when they thought he had succumbed to his injuries. Umar ibn Khattab was one of the most powerful followers of the Prophet. He too asked the Prophet why they should keep quiet when they were on the right path, and insisted that they should work openly and publicly. On hearing this, the Prophet again said, "Umar we are but a few. You have seen what treatment was meted out to Abu Bakr." (*Seerah* ibn Kathir, Vol.1, p.439)

Result-Oriented Actions:

Gradually, the mission of the Prophet of Islam started spreading and the number of his followers increased. Then the time came when 73 people came from Medina to meet him and confide in him that they had joined his mission. They said to him that he should no longer tolerate the oppression of the Makkans. And that they should be allowed to engage in jihad against the Makkans. The Prophet of Islam had this to say to them: "Go back to your city, for I have not been commanded to wage war." This course of action on the part of the Prophet shows that he always behaved with a view to what the consequences would be. He believed that our initiatives should always be aimed at yielding positive results the initiative which proves counterproductive is no initiative at all. He supported result-oriented action.

No Place for Suicide Bombing:

The life of the Prophet of Islam shows that in his scheme of things there was no room for what is now called 'suicide bombing'. What is suicide bombing? In reality, it signals the final stage of frustration. That is, when the extremist feels that his opponents are invincible, he goes to the extent of killing himself, in the hopes that that will at least inflict some harm upon the enemy. He seeks justification for taking this step by saying that he had opted for that path so that he might receive martyrdom. Resorting to suicide bombing to deal with the enemy is an indication that although the option of peaceful action is open to one, intense feelings of hatred and revenge act as a blinder; and in this veil of darkness, the bomber ultimately kills himself. In any such situation where a man opts for suicide bombing, the peaceful method is certainly open to him, but he fails to see

this. The truth is that to make a reasoned choice of the peaceful method, it is vital that man's mind should be free of feelings of hatred and revenge: he should be able to analyze events dispassionately. In the words of the Prophet of Islam, he should be able to see things as they are. Peaceful action is positive act on, and its importance can be understood only by a positive mind which plans its course of action in consonance with peaceful objectives.

Peaceful Thinking:

Peaceful activism is ostensibly an external action, but it is the result, in the full sense, of an internal awareness. It is peaceful minds alone that can appreciate the benefits of peaceful activism and can properly bring it into play. The Prophet of Islam realized this truth. That is why, first and foremost, he worked towards building peace-loving minds. Only after such a mentality had been developed were he and

his followers able to launch their movements, abiding by the principle of peaceful activism. The same reality has been expressed in religious terms. When man's heart is rectified, then all his actions are rectified.

The Qur'an calls this action of mind-building 'purification' (*Tazkia*). It states that one important task of the Prophet was to work for the purification of the people, or in other words, purification of the soul (Qur'an;2:129). What was the method of this purification? We learn this from a tradition of the Prophet of Islam. According to one tradition, the Prophet said that when a believer committed some sin his heart came to have a black spot, but that when he repented and sought forgiveness from God, his heart was purified of it. But if he did not refrain from committing sins, then the spots went on increasing, until they enveloped the whole heart. (Musnad Ahmad, vol. 2, p,

297). In this Hadith, the Prophet of Islam tells us of a very important reality which is borne out by the study of psychology: this study tells us that when some thought comes to the human mind, it becomes a part and parcel of the memory's storehouse, and is never expunged from it. The study further shows that the human mind has two big departments, one the conscious mind, the other the unconscious mind. When any thought enters the human mind, it first goes to the conscious mind, and then gradually it shifts to the unconscious mind. This shifting process takes place mostly at night during sleep. In this way, although something active in the memory today apparently becomes forgotten, having moved to the back of the mind, in reality, it is not lost, but becomes an integral part of the human personality. The truth is that the human personality is directly dependent upon human thinking. It is one's thoughts that make the

personality. If we study the above saying of the Prophet Islam, in the light of modern psychological research; we find that it conveys the actual secret of peaceful thinking and peaceful activism. Only that person can be a peaceful activist, in the real sense, who follows this saying of the Prophet to the letter and spirit. In the jargon of today, this process may be described as 'de-conditioning'.

CONCLUSION:

All human beings and all human groups live in society. Within its framework, one can be faced with all kinds of unpleasant events, which may produce negative feelings towards others. In this way, everyone's mind is likely to entertain thoughts and feelings of a negative nature. If man at the outset fails to convert such thoughts and feelings into positive ones, they will become entrenched in his unconscious mind as negative ideas. If this process continues unhampered, his

unconscious mind or memory will ultimately be filled with negativity. Consequently, his entire personality will be vitiated. It is the possessors of such negative personalities who become involved in war and violence against others. Violence, in fact, is simply an external manifestation of this negative personality. When any negative thought enters one's mind, one should immediately convert it into a positive feeling. One who acts promptly to set in motion this process of mental conversion will build up a veritable storehouse of positive ideas in the unconscious mind. The benefit accruing to him will be the freeing of his personality of all kinds of negative feelings. Such a person will be the possessor of a positive personality, in the fullest sense. Such are the people who live in positivity, who are truly capable of launching a movement in accordance with the principle of peaceful activism. The

Prophet of Islam understood this psychological reality, and through purification, or in other words, by setting in motion the process of de-conditioning in each individual, formed a team of followers numbering more than 100,000, who were staunchly committed to the principle of peaceful activism. Apart from some conflicts due to misunderstanding and conspiracies by the enemies of Islam, they were ultimately able to achieve peace, by dominating the negativities through positive way of thinking, to usher in a far-reaching and beneficent revolution.

*[Main Article by Maulan Waheed-uddin Khan, courtesy the Monthly 'Tazkeer', Lahore English Edition, December 2008. *A note on Jihad has been added in the original article]*

Universally Respected Prophet

Views of Non Muslims

By Dr. A. Zahoor and Dr. Z. Haq

Notwithstanding the palpable bias, many non Muslim scholars, historians, thinkers and statesmen had to acknowledge, the superiority of virtues of the Prophet of Islam. In the quotations below, Western writers have used the word Mohammedanism for Islam. The word Mohammedanism connotes worship of Muhammad, an absolutely unworthy statement for any learned man to use. Prophet Muhammad's mission was to propagate the worship of the One and Only God (in Arabic Allah), the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe. His mission was essentially the same as that of earlier Prophets of God. In the historical context, many such terminologies about Muhammad, Islam, and Muslims were borrowed from earlier European writings of the Eleventh to the Nineteenth century, a time when ignorance and prejudice prevailed.

The quotations below attest to the facts, which may be disregarded.

Thomas Carlyle in 'Heroes and Hero Worship and the Heroic in History,' 1840: "The lies (Western slander) which well-meaning zeal has heaped round this man (Muhammad) are disgraceful to ourselves only." "A silent great soul, one of that who cannot but be earnest. He was to kindle the world, the world's Maker had ordered so."

Gibbon in 'The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire' 1823: "The good sense of Muhammad despised the pomp of royalty. The Apostle of God submitted to the menial offices of the family; he kindled the fire; swept the floor; milked the ewes; and mended with his own hands his shoes and garments. Disdaining the penance and merit of a hermit, he observed without effort of vanity the abstemious diet of an Arab.

Edward Gibbon and Simon Oakley in 'History of the Saracen Empire,' London, 1870: "The greatest success of Mohammad's life was effected by sheer moral force." "It is not the propagation but the

permanency of his religion that deserves our wonder, the same pure and perfect impression which he engraved at Mecca and Medina is preserved after the revolutions of twelve centuries by the Indian, the African and the Turkish proselytes of the Koran....The Mahometans have uniformly withstood the temptation of reducing the object of their faith and devotion to a level with the senses and imagination of man. 'I believe in One God and Mahomet the Apostle of God' is the simple and invariable profession of Islam. The intellectual image of the Deity has never been degraded by any visible idol; the honors of the prophet have never transgressed the measure of human virtue, and his living precepts have restrained the gratitude of his disciples within the bounds of reason and religion."

Reverend Bosworth Smith in 'Muhammad and Mohammedanism,' London, 1874: "Head of the State as well as the Church, he was Caesar and Pope in one; but he was Pope without the Pope's pretensions, and Caesar without the legions of Caesar, without a standing army, without a

bodyguard, without a police force, without a fixed revenue. If ever a man ruled by a right divine, it was Muhammad, for he had all the powers without their supports. He cared not for the dressings of power. The simplicity of his private life was in keeping with his public life." "In Mohammedanism every thing is different here. Instead of the shadowy and the mysterious, we have history....We know of the external history of Muhammad....while for his internal history after his mission had been proclaimed, we have a book absolutely unique in its origin, in its preservation....on the Substantial authority of which no one has ever been able to cast a serious doubt."

Edward Montet, 'La Propagande Chretienne et ses Adversaries Musulmans,' Paris 1890. (Also in T.W. Arnold in 'The Preaching of Islam,' London 1913): "Islam is a religion that is essentially rationalistic in the widest sense of this term considered etymologically and historically....the teachings of the Prophet, the Qur'an has invariably kept its place as the fundamental starting point, and the

dogma of unity of God has always been proclaimed therein with a grandeur a majesty, an invariable purity and with a note of sure conviction, which it is hard to find surpassed outside the pale of Islam....A creed so precise, so stripped of all theological complexities and consequently so accessible to the ordinary understanding might be expected to possess and does indeed possess a marvelous power of winning its way into the consciences of men."

Alphonse de LaMartaine in 'Histoire de la Turquie,' Paris, 1854: "Never has a man set for himself, voluntarily or involuntarily, a more sublime aim, since this aim was superhuman; to subvert superstitions which had been imposed between man and his Creator, to render God unto man and man unto God; to restore the rational and sacred idea of divinity amidst the chaos of the material and disfigured gods of idolatry, then existing. Never has a man undertaken a work so far beyond human power with so feeble means, for he (Muhammad) had in the conception as well as in the execution of such a great design, no other

instrument than himself and no other aid except a handful of men living in a corner of the desert. Finally, never has a man accomplished such a huge and lasting revolution in the world, because in less than two centuries after its appearance, Islam, in faith and in arms, reigned over the whole of Arabia, and conquered, in God's name, Persia Khorasan, Transoxania, Western India, Syria, Egypt, Abyssinia, all the known continent of Northern Africa, numerous islands of the Mediterranean Sea, Spain, and part of Gaul”.

"If greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and astonishing results are the three criteria of a human genius, who could dare compare any great man in history with Muhammad? The most famous men created arms, laws, and empires only. They founded, if anything at all, no more than material powers which often crumbled away before their eyes. This man moved not only armies, legislations, empires, peoples, dynasties, but millions of men in one-third of the then inhabited world; and more than that, he moved the altars, the gods, the religions, the ideas, the

beliefs and the souls". ... "On the basis of a Book, every letter which has become law, he created a spiritual nationality which blend together peoples of every tongue and race. He has left the indelible characteristic of this Muslim nationality the hatred of false gods and the passion for the One and Immaterial God. This avenging patriotism against the profanation of Heaven formed the virtue of the followers of Muhammad; the conquest of one-third the earth to the dogma was his miracle; or rather it was not the miracle of man but that of reason".

"The idea of the unity of God, proclaimed amidst the exhaustion of the fabulous theologies, was in itself such a miracle that upon it's utterance from his lips it destroyed all the ancient temples of idols and set on fire one-third of the world. His life, his meditations, his heroic revelings against the superstitions of his country, and his boldness in defying the furies of idolatry, his firmness in enduring them for fifteen years in Mecca, his acceptance of the role of public scorn and almost of being a victim of his fellow countrymen... This

dogma was twofold the unity of God and the immateriality of God: the former telling what God is, the latter telling what God is not; the one overthrowing false gods with the sword, the other starting an idea with words".... "Philosopher, Orator, Apostle, Legislator, Conqueror of Ideas, Restorer of Rational beliefs.... The founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than he?"

Mahatma Gandhi, statement published in 'Young India,'1924: I wanted to know the best of the life of one who holds today an undisputed sway over the hearts of millions of mankind.... I became more than ever convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet the scrupulous regard for pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission.

These and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle. When I closed the second volume (of the Prophet's biography), I was sorry there was not more for me to read of that great life.

Sir George Bernard Shaw in 'The Genuine Islam,' Vol. 1, No. 8, 1936: "If any religion had the chance of ruling over England, nay Europe within the next hundred years, it could be Islam." "I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me to possess that assimilating capacity to the changing phase of existence which can make itself appeal to every age. I have studied him - the wonderful man and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Savior of Humanity."..."I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness: I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the

Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today.”

Dr. William Draper in 'History of Intellectual Development of Europe': “Four years after the death of Justinian, A.D. 569, was born in Mecca, in Arabia, the man who, of all men, has exercised the greatest influence upon the human race... To be the religious head of many empires, to guide the daily life of one-third of the human race, may perhaps justify the title of a Messenger of God”.

Arthur Glyn Leonard in 'Islam, Her Moral and Spiritual Values': It was the genius of Muhammad, the spirit that he breathed into the Arabs through the soul of Islam that exalted them. That raised them out of the lethargy and low level of tribal stagnation up to the high watermark of national unity and empire. It was in the sublimity of Muhammad's deism, the simplicity, the sobriety and purity it inculcated the fidelity of its founder to his own tenets, that acted on their moral and intellectual fiber with all the magnetism of true inspiration.

Philip K. Hitti in 'History of the Arabs': Within a brief span of mortal life, Muhammad called forth of unpromising material, a nation, never welded before; in a country that was hitherto but a geographical expression he established a religion which in vast areas suppressed Christianity and Judaism, and laid the basis of an empire that was soon to embrace within its far flung boundaries the fairest provinces the then civilized world.

Rodwell in the Preface to his translation of the Holy Qur'an: "Mohammad's career is a wonderful instance of the force and life that resides in him who possesses an intense faith in God and in the unseen world. He will always be regarded as one of those who have had that influence over the faith, morals and whole earthly life of their fellow men, which none but a really great man ever did, or can exercise; and whose efforts to propagate a great verity will prosper".

W. Montgomery Watt in 'Muhammad at Mecca,' Oxford, 1953: "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 a leader, and the greatness of his ultimate achievement - all argue his fundamental integrity. To suppose Muhammad an impostor raises more problems that it solves. Moreover, none of the great figures of history is so poorly appreciated in the West as Muhammad.... Thus, not merely must we credit Muhammad with essential honesty and integrity of purpose, if we are to understand him at all; if we are to correct the errors we have inherited from the past, we must not forget the conclusive proof is a much stricter requirement than a show of plausibility, and in a matter such as this only to be attained with difficulty”.

D. G. Hogarth in 'Arabia': “Serious or trivial, his daily behavior has instituted a canon which millions observe this day with conscious memory. No one regarded by any section of the human race as Perfect Man has ever been imitated so minutely. The conduct of the founder of Christianity has not governed the ordinary life of his followers. Moreover, no founder of a religion has left on so solitary an eminence as the Muslim apostle”.

Washington Irving 'Mahomet and His Successors':
“He was sober and abstemious in his diet and a rigorous observer of fasts. He indulged in no magnificence of apparel, the ostentation of a petty mind; neither was his simplicity in dress affected but a result of real disregard for distinction from so trivial a source. ... In his private dealings he was just. He treated friends and strangers, the rich and poor, the powerful and weak, with equity, and was beloved by the common people for the affability with which he received them, and listened to their complaints.....His military triumphs awakened no pride nor vain glory, as they would have done had they been effected for selfish purposes. In the time of his greatest power he maintained the same simplicity of manners and appearance as in the days of his adversity. So far from affecting a regal state, he was displeased if, on entering a room, any unusual testimonials of respect were shown to him. If he aimed at a universal dominion, it was the dominion of faith; as to the temporal rule which grew up in his hands, as he used it without

ostentation, so he took no step to perpetuate it in his family”.

James Michener in ‘Islam: The Misunderstood Religion,’ Reader’s Digest, May 1955, pp. 68-70: “No other religion in history spread so rapidly as Islam. The West has widely believed that this surge of religion was made possible by the sword. But no modern scholar accepts this idea, and the Qur’an is explicit in the support of the freedom of conscience.” “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 worshiped Muhammad, he is dead. But if it is God you Worshiped, He lives for ever'."

[By Dr. A. Zahoor and Dr. Z. Haq, Courtesy:
<http://cyberistan.org/islamic/quote1.html>]

CRITICISM:

While learned non Muslims respect him, the ignorant bigots after failing in logical arguments against Islam, indulge in personnel criticism of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This criticism is based upon twisted historic narratives, half truths devoid of scriptural support. The analysis and response is available at following:

- <http://lnkd.in/Cz4uyq>
- <http://wp.me/PCgrB-Wq>
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The Creator:

The idea of a Supreme Power who is the First Cause of all things, the Creator and Ruler of heaven and earth has always been part of human nature from the beginning. The belief on God was followed by His worship in different cultures. The relation of a group of human beings to God or the gods or to whatever they consider sacred or, in some cases, merely supernatural is known as religion. The beliefs supporting the existence of God or against it, including the middle positions have resulted in an array of doctrines, the most prominent among them are; Theism, Monotheism, Theodicy, Deism, Agnosticism and Atheism. The main issue which have remained the center of attention of believers of the God has been; How to prove the existence of God rationally? This has been dilated upon in this book. The Abrahamic religions e.g., Judaism, Christianity, and Islam attempt to satisfy human quest through the Revealed knowledge received by the prophets and messengers of God. While exploring the historic development in theosophical and scientific aspects about 'The God' and 'The Creation' specifically in the three religions linked to Abraham. Islam emerges as true legacy of Abraham contrary to the common perception that it was a new religion founded by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This

book is first of four in the series, the other being; The Creation, The Guidance and Islam: The Legacy of Abraham.

The Creation:

Man has always been inquisitive about the origin and creation of universe to which earth is just a small part. The whole cosmic system of matter and energy is called universe. Its main constituents are the galaxies, within which are stars and stellar groupings and nebulae. Earth's Sun is one star among the billions of stars in the Milky Way Galaxy. In this book the traditional narratives and myths of Creation, Scientific & theosophical theories have been explained, The Grand Design of creation include, Qur'anic and Biblical narrative of creation and their comparative analysis. Synthesis of Islamic & scientific narrative of creation is revealing. Other subjects include human creation; Origin of life, Theory of Evolution and Refutation by Christians; the Islamic perspective include in favor and opposing views, which may appear to be new to some readers. Further corollary is my latest work "Universe, Science & God".

The Guidance: Does human need to be guided? If so, how? It is said that human is a thinking, rational animal. He knows what is right and what is wrong, so does he/she need some additional source of Guidance? Some say 'No', while others say 'Yes' and still there are who say 'I Don't know'. The Book "Guidance" includes, natural guidance, miracles &

signs; The brief on the messengers of God; from Adam – Noah – Abraham – Ishmael – Isaac – Jacob -Moses – David, Solomon - John The Baptist (peace be upon them all), Prophet Jesus Christ, The Son of Mary (peace be upon him) and The Last Messenger; Muhammad (peace be upon him). The Sacred Scriptures. i.e. The Bible and Qur'an have been briefly introduced.

Islam: The Legacy of Abraham:

Humanity has been blessed with the instincts and intellect to rationally identify and believe in the existence of a Supreme Creator and Sustainer through the signs within and all around. The man endeavors to live the life within the desired parameters to achieve His pleasure, the objective of his creation. This original religion was revived: Islam, in its unique spirit of monotheism, fourteen hundred years ago in concordance with the light of reason; exclusive of mysterious doctrines to cast a shade of sentimental ignorance round the original truths rooted in the human intellect, representing the latest development of the religious faculties. The Book "Islam: The Broader Perspective"; includes the Islam of Prophet Abraham, refutation of Prophet Jesus Christ by Jews, evolution of Christianity, revival of Legacy of Abraham (pbuh) by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Its doctrines, practices and the concept of Predestination has been debated. The other subjects include; Jihad, Shari'a , Priesthood, Human Rights and role of Islamic civilization in the development of humanity and the modern challenges.

Universe Science & God:

“Soon shall We show them OUR SIGNS in the UNIVERSE and in their OWN SELVES, until it becomes clear to them that this QUR’AN IS INDEED THE TRUTH. Is it not enough that your Lord is a witness over everything?”(Qur’an;41:53); “We did not create heaven and earth and everything between them to no purpose. That is the opinion of those who disbelieve...” (Qur’an; 38: 27), “Verily in the heavens and the earth are Signs for those who believe. (Qur’an; 45:3). “To God belongs the Mystery of the heavens and the earth. And the Decision of the Hour (of Judgment) is as the twinkling of an eye, or even quicker: for God hath power over all things.” (Qur’an; 16:77). “Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error: whoever rejects evil and believes in God hath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks. And God hears and knows all things.” (Qur’an; 2:255).

Science is beginning to see the entire universe as an interlinked network of energy and information. Our capacity for fulfillment can come only through faith and feelings. But our capacity for survival must come from reason and knowledge." The follower of 3 great monotheistic faiths believe that God created the universe and governs it as per His laid down rules. The atheists reject such a set of beliefs. In philosophy there are many rational, metaphysical, logical, empirical, or subjective arguments for the existence of God.

Interestingly the conclusions reached by science recently were mentioned 1400 years ago in the last Testament; The Quran which provides theological, philosophical and scientific evidence of existence of God. To derive maximum benefit it is suggested that the book may be read with an open mind keeping aside the existing ideas.

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