

MUHAMMAD

PROPHET OF REVOLUTION (Peace be upon him)

By: Safdar Hasan Siddiqi; September 17, 1992

Ever since the human being came into existence, he has been subjected to certain disciplines of internal impulses and extraneous order, which go together to determine human behaviour. However, the internal impulses can be tamed by the application of moral and spiritual discipline while the extraneous order is subject to the exercise of ever developing human capabilities, which result in the creation of better living conditions. As social relations grow, and rules of social conduct are improved upon the extraneous order becomes more and more conducive to human development.

Another basic factor that needs to be remembered is that both positive and negative traits are imbedded in the human being and that they have a pivotal role to play in shaping the human personality. But these two traits too are controlled by human consciousness. The more it develops the more responsive are the positive qualities in dominating the negative aspects; the less it is developed the more the negative aspects tend to dominate the positive qualities.

These three essential features of human life – man's internal impulses, extraneous order and the negative and positive traits - are a person's constant companions, and the success or failure of a person in life depends upon their successful or unsuccessful utilization.

In such a situation, the individuals who are left alone in the maze of life with no system of guidance and relief are likely to falter or get frustrated. As a result they contribute to unbalancing the society and leading it to social disruption. In these circumstances persons who do not consider themselves answerable to the society for their actions, form themselves into exploitative classes by monopolizing the means of production and become unbearable in

their oppression upon the weaker and poorer sections of society, which in themselves too are their own creation.

At this stage the conscientious and daring among the people rise to the occasion and initiate a class struggle to free the lower classes from the shackles of the upper classes. Such people are [present in every society and they have been making their presence felt to a smaller or greater extent. When. However, in spite of these efforts by conscientious people deterioration exceeds certain limits, and the social structure itself becomes rotten beyond redress, prophets are sent to restructure society on a more modern, forward-looking and enlightened pattern.

This process of re-educating humanity had been going on at various stages of history throughout the world till finally a stage arrived when, after a long process, the human intellect had developed appropriately and had shed its false notions and idiosyncrasies to quite an extent. At this stage in the pre-industrial era Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) came ion to the stage of history. The last of the prophets was thus sent by God to perfect the system of divine guidance.

The role played by Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) needs to be correctly defined if we are to understand the true nature of his greatness, and if we wish to follow in the right spirit and with devotion to his august person his teachings and the directions set by him.

In the past many centuries not much has been done in this regard by the Muslims in general and the religious elite in particular except to eulogize his person and pay lip service to his achievements. The true intent and bearing of his teachings have not been spelt out by the religious guides and Muslim rulers because they were not true to their faith and had their own vested interests to serve, which they had deceitfully created. These interests required that the people be kept ignorant about the revolutionary character of these teachings. These related to first changing yourself and then changing your environment and the world at large.

Thus they tailored Islam to their own requirements and to their mutual benefit. They formed it into a protective barrier to safeguard the interests of the few *jagirdars* and moneyed barons as against the many poor people who are being suppressed by them. They created

an upper class that seized the means of production, their share in state power and their right to administer their own affairs. Our present social structure stands at this very level.

The greatness of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), and for that matter all the prophets, lies in that they stood for the oppressed and the exploited as against the oppressors, for the exploited as against the exploited, for the interests of the masses as against those of the vested interests, for collective benefit as against individual advantage.

Having gone through this basis premise and the introductory study above, I will now venture to elucidate some of the important features of the Prophet's call to Islam, which stands as part of his personality, and which should be emulated by all human beings, Muslims as well as others.

The foremost feature of Prophet hood is truthfulness and consistency between words and actions. The other features are: simple living as against pompous life style; making full use of one's intellectual capabilities and sense of understanding in day-to-day affairs and not being led away by emotions and slogans; developing collective wisdom among the people and acquiring as well as spreading knowledge to the utmost; standing up against all kinds of tyranny and siding with the oppressed poor; doing justice to everybody in all circumstances; doing good to as many people as one can by helping them to stand on their own feet and helping those in distress with no desire for any appreciation or benefit in return; freeing oneself from the influence of those forefathers who were wrongdoers and instead finding fresh solutions to modern requirements.; not following the evil path of immodesty, injustice and violence. Prophet Muhammad's objective was clearly to evolve a system of life by which the human race could live in peace, harmony and freedom, and that social equality and universal fraternity could become a reality.

The solutions to modern problems have thus to be framed in the light of the Holy Qur'an, the Prophet's Sunnah, other holy scriptures and the scientific literature produced in the later periods of history.

We must, however, understand that that the exemplary qualities of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), given above,

cannot be imbibed unless we first of all demolish the existing social structure of our country which is based on economic, social and political exploitation of the mass of the people by initiating a thorough struggle at the grassroots level; and not merely reforming the individual. This is necessary because otherwise the existing socio-economic set up based on injustice will not allow any room for the suppressed people to work for the amelioration of their lot and to develop their personalities through their moral and spiritual advancement.

That is why Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) concentrated on doing three things. First and foremost, he called all towards God and put forth the true message that God Almighty is the Creator of the universe and all that is contained therein,, that H is the absolute ruler and law-giver as well as the Sustainer of the whole living world and that He should be accepted as such by the human beings. They should strive willfully to come near Him and earn His love and help, by assimilating consciously in themselves, to some extent, a few of His attributes such as love, forgiveness, assisting the needy, alleviate their suffering and disease and improve things around them, in order to serve their fellow-beings.

His second message was that the purpose of creation of humankind is to evolve a system of life that will be instrumental in establishing a just social order in which each person will be a source of succour, enlightenment and peace of mind for the other. Such a productive and orderly life could only be fostered by shedding selfishness, lust for power and wealth and the urge to dominate over others and usurp their rights.

The third message which was translated into action by him was to change the existing social order based upon exploitation of the labour of the numerous downtrodden by the few who had appropriated the means of production of the country which legitimately is the common property of the people. Such a social structure had curtailed the opportunities of economic development from reaching the hands of the majority of the people and denied their basic human rights. This third message, in fact, the programme for realizing the first two objectives.

In view of what has been explained above it can be said authoritatively that Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) was a

“prophet of Revolution” and that Islam is in reality a revolutionary movement, not just a movement of moral and religious reform. The salient features of this revolution are”

1. Breaking up the grip of exploitative landed and moneyed classes, and their accomplices the religious elite, over the mass conscience of the oppressed poor.
2. Eradicating poverty and ignorance.
3. State guarantee of basic human rights and freedoms.
4. Doing away with religious intolerance and inculcating instead the spirit of co-operation, fraternity and mutual understanding at the human level.
5. Organizing the society on Progressive lines while keeping in view the principle that exploitation of the weak, and oppression against them in any form whatsoever, was not to be allowed.
6. Carrying out all human affairs, be they family or state affairs, on the basis of mutual consultation and consensus.
7. Granting equal rights and social status to everyone while considering no one inferior to the other on account of wealth or position in society. The sole criteria for determining a higher status in society is to be better morals and contribution towards betterment of society.
8. Developing the individual into a beacon of excellence, both morally and spiritually, so that a man or a woman is able to contribute in a committed manner to building the society.
9. Spreading this message of Islam to the four corners of the world and working for a revolution in the realm of intellect and learning.

It is thus imperative on we human beings, whether in Pakistan or the world over, to follow this path set for humanity by Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) and other prophets (Peace be upon them), and the holy books. This is the only way we can make our earthly abode into an abode of peace and

plenty and, in the long run, convert it into a heaven of bliss and serenity.

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