

GLEANINGS FROM PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S LIFE

(Extracts from Muhammad Amin, Bar at Law's book "Wisdom of Prophet Muhammad")

Our whole strength lies in submission to God. It is the inspiration of the Almighty that gives us understanding.

A man is right, invincible and victorious precisely when he joins himself to the great deep Law of the World.

Great Nature's own gift, which she bestows on all, is sincerity of vision: the test of a sincere heart.

The world, the work of Allah, is beautiful and wonderful.

A tenth part of a man's annual income is the property of the poor.

The highest joy in paradise shall be spiritual; the pure Presence of the Highest, this shall infinitely transcend all other joys.

Heaven is to be earned by "faith and well doing".

The most civilized state will be that with greatest number of happy, healthy, wise and gentle citizens.

Substitute health and happiness for wealth as a world ideal.

Prophet Muhammad enjoined great respect and tenderness for women. "Paradise is at the feet of the mother" he said.

The greatness of a nation depends upon the greatness of its women.

If a society has to be prosperous, progressive and happy it must have a reasonable amount of free mixing of both the sexes.

We are foolish in speaking of the superiority of one sex to the other. Each has what the other has not and each completes the other and is completed by the other.

Women at Medina were of an independent spirit and freely mixed with men.

Married men and women are partners in life.

In England it was only in 1871 or thereabout that women were granted rights of property, whereas Islam gave them these rights thirteen centuries ago.

If we are to be a really great people, we must strive in good faith to play a great part in the world. We cannot avoid meeting great issues.

Of all men, Muhammad has exercised the greatest influence upon the human race. He was not only the greatest but the truest man humanity has ever produced. Scarcely any man has more profoundly influenced the destinies of the world.

Learning from the Muslims, Europe became the leader of modern civilization.

Islam is a great political power, whose effects the world will feel more and more in proportion as the ends of the world are brought closer and closer together. Islam is the only solution for all the ills of the world.

Islam is the most momentous contribution of Arab civilization to the modern world. Manifold influences from the civilization of Islam communicated its first glow to European life.

Muhammad's administration of worldly affairs and the enduring success of his earthly mission were linked up with his insight into the invisible.

Muhammad had spiritual power within him. He was all love for mankind; in him the sacred passions of love and mercy were at work all the time. The righteous thoughts guided him.

Islam spread because it taught that all persons are equal.

Those capable of the most absolute belief in God, and Muhammad the Prophet of God, were the best Muslims.

The Qur'an has created in men new phases of human thought, a fresh type of character.

Muhammad was a guide to mankind in all walks of life. He was the only man who removed the distinction between the high and the low and taught them lessons of true equality to mankind. Among the humble flocks he was the humblest of the humble.

The soul of Islam is its declaration of the unity of God; its heart is the inculcation of obedience to His laws.

Islam teaches the inherent sinlessness of man, and the universal brotherhood of man.

Islam is the establishment of certain principles, the enforcement of certain dispositions, the cultivation of certain temper

of mind, which the conscience is to apply to the ever-varying exigencies of time and place.

No religion is more tolerant than Islam to the followers of other creeds

Muhammad's career is a wonderful instance of the force and life resides in him who possesses an intense faith in God and the unseen word.

Man is a free agent; free to refuse or accept the Divine message, responsible for his acts. The future, in fact, is in his own hands.

Prophet Muhammad, by teaching humankind to worship the one true God, has given a bond of union stronger than any tie of blood oration. He states how desirable it is for the true believer to love God, to pray to him, and to walk humbly in His sight.

To surrender oneself to the will of God – the Supreme God – is the duty of every man.

All the Prophets before had taught the same faith.

Prophet Muhammad was taciturn in speech; silent when there was nothing to be said; but pertinent, wise sincere, when he did speak, always throwing light on the matter. He was an altogether solid, brotherly, genuine man. A serious, sincere character; yet amiable, cordial, companionable, jocose even. A spontaneous, yet just, true-meaning man.

The character of this teacher is a precious heritage for Humanism. We can learn from his inspiring example. He was always very abstemious in his habits and contended himself with simple food, cloths and lodging. He was entirely free from avarice. He risked his life for his faith and had to flee from his native town. His greatness may be judged by the heroism and enthusiasm of his immediate disciples and the unquenchable vitality of his Movement after so many centuries.

Islam keeps alive the spark of human dignity in the souls of millions of the downtrodden and the exploited. Islam teaches a noble ethical ideal based on self-control, unselfishness, patience and fraternity.

The discipline of fasting, learning to defy and challenge hunger and thirst occasionally, gives one a reward of self-discipline and a strong will

The passion of Islam for science for nine centuries, and its prodigious influence on intellectual progress, are nor accidental; they come in the natural development of the Prophet's faith in the unity and order of the universe and the uses of this present world. These are foundations of science.

God is the source of all knowledge, of all truth and goodness, wherever found.

War is allowed by Islam only in self-defense and in defense of their weak and oppressed.

According to the Qur'an Prophet Muhammad completed the work commenced by the previous prophets.

The teachings of Islam are suitable for all times, as they are based upon the fundamental laws of nature and conduce to the highest good of all humanity.

The Qur'an declares the fundamental laws, which govern both the majorities and the minorities. There is only one law for all. The rulers can only effect these laws and have no right to legislate to the detriment of any member of society.

'Zakat is collected from the rich for the benefit of the poor. Thus no destitute are left in a Muslim society.

Islam's law of inheritance does away with capitalism.

We must search for knowledge and discover the laws of nature.

The Qur'an says that the most honourable among you near God is he who is the most faithful to his duty.

Islam is 'faith in action'; it is not merely theory but practice.

Those who merely do lip service to the teachings of the Qur'an are styled *munafiqin* (hypocrites).

Those who are most faithful to their duty (live most perfectly in accord with the Divine Will as shown in the workings of nature) are the most perfect in His sight, and therefore survive in the struggle for existence. Again and again our attention is drawn in the Qur'an to the many races that have become extinct by their neglect of divine laws.

A *momin* (true believer) is one who lives in accordance with the universal laws, and to the extent he does so.

We are told in the Qur'an that if we obey God's laws there will be no occasion for God to punish us; punishment is the natural concomitant of the breach of divine laws.

Tauhid or unity of God means to live in strict obedience to divine laws as found working in nature.

Prophet Muhammad said: one hour's serious contemplation of the divine laws (working in nature) is worth a year of adoration.

Tauba or repentance means turning back from disobedience to divine laws and obedience to the same. Repentance is no mere lip service of apologizing, but actual turning back from disobedience of God to obedience to His Will as seen in the workings of His Mind in natural laws. And this is in accordance with science. That is why the Qur'an styles Islam *din-e-fitrat* (faith of reason). Qur'an says: If you do something evil – do something good in return, for good deeds wipe out the evil ones".

Islam is the faith of nature. It appeals to those who deliberate seriously. As long as Muslims followed it with understanding, they were great. Their degradation began when they reduced its principles to lifeless ceremonies and rituals.

Man's soul (*ruh*) is a 'directive energy' (*amr*). It claims 'intellect' and 'courage' as its main forces. The development of man is entrusted to intellect and courage. Intellect implies the awakening of the soul that looks deeper into things, assigns them their true values and employs them for its own good. A clear intellect presupposes independent and balanced thought. And when it is marshaled by courage it unfold the mysteries of universe – the visible as well as the invisible – makes brilliant conquests - extensive and intensive – and claims a closer affinity to God.. Imagine man's possibilities.

God is the Spirit of the universe, the rational energy of the universe, the Great soul behind the universe. His rationality is manifest in the scheme of the creation, in the balance of the firmament, in the wonderful construction of man's spirit. He is the life of the universe. He is the light of the universe. Yet the universe cannot contain Him. The universe and him do not coincide geometrically. The universe is extensive. He is intensive, and therefore infinite.

The Creator helps man on his march towards his ideal. He has taken upon Himself the responsibility of developing And His intention of developing extends to everything. God becomes the co-worker of man in this work. The very existence of His attributes presupposes their manifestation. But as a rule, man must take the initiative.

So man must work for himself, work on the lines of his constitution, and work in the direction of his idea. His constitution speaks of the intentions of his Maker. Working according to the intentions of his maker means surrendering to the Will of God. Working according to the intentions of his Master again means *ibadat* (i.e., service). Islam is not confined to worship, and verbal devotion. It demands solid work on one's soul striving on the path laid out for him by God.

Prayer is two-fold – prayer (*salat* and *zikr*) and progressive action (*amal-i-saleh*). Prayer is the first step. It is an effort to intensify one's yearning for his ideal – God, as much as craving for His assistance in the work of his development. The greater the intensity of his yearning for his ideal, the stronger its influence over his conduct in daily life. If he keeps his ideal always in view, or craves for it several times a day, he can miss few opportunities of progressing towards his goal.

The world took nearly six thousand years to build up a system for the development of man.

When the ideal is perfect and the course is explained, man's task is made simple. When the ideal is also the Maker, the Protector and the Developer, success is sure, provided man takes an active initiative.

Service to God (*Ibadat*) mainly consists in progressive actions (*A'amal-i-Saleh*). Human soul is impression less when it is ushered into this life. It comes only with capacities. Conscious actions make it or mar it. Every soul carries the effects of its actions.

The creation of God is neither good nor bad. Good and evil accrue from everything under different conditions. Man is warned against the evil of everything. This is the general law to guide man on the path of progress. Sin is not inherent in man. It is foreign to the soul. The soul is constitutionally inclined to progress, and not to retrogress. So it can turn back any moment it realizes its mistake.

Spiritual progress being intensive, it is free from the limitations of time. It mainly depends on the amount of sincerity in one's behaviour.

The progressive action is the pious act. Every progressive action develops man's spirit, as every physical exercise strengthens his body.

The Qur'an lays down the rules for the peace, prosperity and progress of all peoples irrespective of colour, creed or country. The Qur'an teaches that no nation should transgress against another, but that nations and states and individuals should covenant with each other to restrain each other from aggression, and co-operate with each other in advancing those that are backward.

The Qur'an directs the governments to afford facilities for the poor sections of the community for such advancement, and not to permit all wealth and power to be concentrated in a few hands.

In order to discover His will we must resort to the Qur'an in which He revealed the path that leads to success and happiness. Good who loves all has given us laws which ensure justice to all, and therefore lead to co-operation and goodwill instead of envy and hatred and mutual destruction.

We must live in the presence of God who is the source of all light and truth and happiness.

Nothing mightier than love can be devised for the development of our moral energy.

Islam teaches us to develop all our faculties – spiritual, intellectual and physical – to their highest pitch. It also teaches to develop all the natural resources of the earth by means of science. We must then share the blessings of God with all mankind and help each other to develop ourselves and be happy. Injustice is prohibited. Charity, sympathy and service of humanity are the keynotes of Islam. All human faculties should be employed for the good of humanity.

Sayings of Prophet Muhammad:

Wish not for death for the increase of a Muslim's life increases his good works.

Speak to people according to the level of their intellectual capacity.

No father has given his children any better gift than good manners.

Islam is "abstinence and obedience". Faith is "purity of speech and thought".

The love of the world is the mother of all evils.

The faithful never die; they are transferred from this perishable world to that of eternal existence. Assist any that be oppressed, whether Muslim or non-Muslim.

Guard yourself from six things, and I am your security for paradise: When you speak, speak the truth; perform when you promise; discharge your trust; be chaste in thought and action; and withhold your hand from striking, from taking that which unlawful and bad.

He does not die who takes to learning.

Deal gently with people, and be not rash; cheer them, and condemn not. The key to heaven is "To testify to the truth of God and to do good work".

What is Paradise? "It is such a bliss as the eye has not seen, nor the ear heard, nor flashed across the mind of man".

The first thing created was reason.

The abode of the taker and giver of a bribe will be hell. To take a bribe is to dissociate oneself from Islam.

It is not possible to administer a country, and that too with a reformist agenda and in turbulent times, without an organized political party and a neutral bureaucracy.

The mainstream parties should seek an alliance not with each other but with nationalist and ethnic groups that have a following but which are confined to urban pockets or thinly scattered in rural Sindh and Balochistan.... Nationalist and ethnic parties could become a force enough to stem the rising tide of religious extremism as well as to check federal incursions into provincial spheres.

There is nothing wrong in raising external and internal loans. What matters is the political cost of the external loans, the financial terms year on which they were secured, the purpose for which the loans were used and how well they were actually used.

The clergy, the army, the civilian bureaucracy and the feudal aristocracy have collectively conspired to ensure that the illiterate masses remain virtually disenfranchised.

Punjab can save the federation by raising the voice of the smaller provinces.

There is a proposal to increase the defense budget by 26 billion. This will raise the total allocation for the year to Rs. 300 billion.

Within the system the problems we face are ethnic prejudice, favoritism, nepotism, patronage and sycophancy.

Power needs massive, concentrated, one-horizon, national and nationwide investment, restore the confidence of public in democracy and facilitate the rise of new parties and leaders who are seen as 'trust-restorers'

All of the country's canals and watercourses could be lined at the cost of one dam and could save more water than a new dam could produce.

The Delhi administration in recent years has converted its entire fleet of 13,000 buses, 20,000 taxis and 60,000 rickshaws to CNG.

The government has shown complete inability to provide basic amenities and facilities to the people. It is, therefore, time for the government to re-prioritize and think long-term, as national interest is always the right path to take.

The role of the *awam* (people) had been marginal as they do not have a developed civil society, or the middle class, to play its role.

Not resolutions but a countrywide movement as an expression of the political will of the people was required to change the regime.

80,000 troops deployed on the Afghan border had failed to accomplish a job that could be done by just 5,000.

In order to confront the West or any other adversary, the Muslim world must first set its own house in order, better its economic performance, acquire the latest technology and forge unity in its ranks.

The influence of the religious extremists has to be countered through the spread of modern education, by improving living standards and by establishing more linkage with the rest of the world through collateral exchanges and easier travel.

Any alliance with the extremists e.g. to secure the ouster of the present regime would only work to the advantage of the extremists.

One constant feature of the polity has been the collaboration of the feudal elite with the powers that be to safeguard their vested interests. Others in the fray vying for control over the people's minds are the religious, ethnocentric and nationalist parties and

groupings. These take turns in siding with or opposing the government as and when it suits their exigencies.

At no point has the need been felt to engage the people and voice their problems and concerns. The disdain shown towards the electorate by the so-called mainstream parties is incriminating.

A new leadership will have to take root in this stifled environment for it to effectively take stock of matters past, and steer the polity in the right direction. This is one hope we all must live in.

The necessity of institutional limitations on the power of an elected leader is always there.

The greatest disservice that our leaders over the years, be they civilian or military, have done is the systematic destruction of the institutions of the state. Executive powers have been freely exercised in the matter of high-level appointments of governors, judges, the Public Service Commission, vice-chancellors etc. without any regard to institutional norms or merit.

The main cause of the failure of the Muslim world was the absence of democracy in most of its countries and there was a great difference in the thinking and views of their rulers and the people.