

A Must read for all—regardless of race or religion.

MUHAMMAD (ﷺ): **A Role Model for World Peace**

Dr Mohammed A. Lais

MUHAMMAD (SAW):
A Role Model for World Peace

April, 2018

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“A Perfect Muslim is he from whose tongue and hands mankind is safe...”

Prophet Muhammad (SAW)

*"I believe that if a man
like Muhammad 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 & happiness"*

George Bernard Shaw
(Nobel Laureate, 1925)

*To my
Beloved wife
'Montaz Lais'*

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Author's page

This book is written in compliance with requests from numerous readers of my first interfaith book- (*Muhammad SAW*):1001 Universal Appreciations and Interfaith Understanding and Peace, published in 2014); targeting Muslim and non-Muslim youth from all over the world. As the first book was long (448 pages), the readers requested a more condensed volume summarising the many qualities that the prophet Muhammad (SAW) demonstrated in his life and commanded his followers to utilise to bring peace, tranquillity, success and harmony in their daily life.

The extreme tensions between Muslims and others also motivated the author to write the book highlighting the teaching and qualities of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) which could help to reduce the tensed situation. The widespread misinformation about him could also have greatly misled many Muslim youths. A proper reading of his teachings could work very effectively to guide young people in building brotherhood amongst interfaith communities far and wide.

The author has tried to compile the opinions of many international personalities towards Muhammad (SAW) regarding his role as a peace maker; and the author has added peace related sayings of the prophet (SAW) for the humanity at the bottom of each page.

The author has added some new data in the concluding chapter received from certain academics in the field.

This book is intended to be available free of charge everywhere, but its payment will be endless if anyone receives even the slightest benefit from it.

Notes to the Reader

1.(SAW)-This sign is an Arabic abbreviation of ‘Sallallahu Alayhi Was Sallam’ meaning “Peace be upon him.” This is uttered by Muslims after mentioning the name of Prophet Muhammad.

2. RA- This sign is an Arabic abbreviation of Radhiallahu Anhu. This is used after the names of Companion’s of the prophet are an Arabic phrase meaning, "May God Be Pleased with Him."

3. Hadith” in Islam refers to the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), or the reports of his companions may Allah be pleased with them that related his actions. The sayings and conduct of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) constitute the Sunnah.

4. Ahadith is the plural of hadith which were collected by a group of Islamic scholars and collections were named after their names. These include: Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, Tirmidhi, Ibn Maajeh, Nisaa'i, Baihaqui, Al Hibbani etc.

5.Hadith compiled at the bottom of each page are randomly chosen and may or may not have any link with the contents of that page.

6. The literature on the Qur'an, Islam or the life of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) dates back to two centuries after the death of the Prophet (SAW). It was then the Muslim scholars started their scholarly work about the Qur'an, Islam and the Prophet (SAW). These works were consulted by other Muslim and non-Muslim scholars in history and have been passed on from generation to generation. At the present time, there are a significant number of non- Muslim scholars all over the world who have produced works on these subjects and the information they provide is mainly based on the original works compiled by Muslim scholars of that period.

Similarly, the appreciations by non-Muslims in this book are based on the materials written by Muslims. In some other cases, some non-Muslims have recorded their praise for Islam, based on their direct knowledge gained from studying the Qur'an and its translation and or their Muslim friends' circle.

7. The spelling of the name of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) has appeared differently across history, e.g. Muhammed, Muhammad,

Mohamed, Mohammed and Mohammad. In the medieval West he was known as Mehond and Mehomet. Earlier his followers were referred to as 'Muhammadans'.

7 Limitations: One of the limitations of the present study, owing to financial constraints, is that it does not cover 'Jihad' and its theology. Both of these are specialist areas. The author of this book feels that separate studies could be conducted to explore these two areas.

Declaration: Wherever appropriate, the authors were contacted to get their copyright permission to use their quotations. The participants of interviews have provided their written consent to use their quotes. The identification of authors being non-Muslim were made through several steps, including asking the person, consulting personal profiles, findings, networking with other possible sources and by the names themselves. However, the methodology used has the limitation of identifying by name and in some cases of conversion to Islam only the original non-Muslim names are retained.

Preface

This book aims to tackle the extreme tensions between Muslims and others through highlighting the teachings and qualities of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) which could lead to happiness, peace and harmony in the world.

One of the main reasons of the tension is a lot of misinformation about Muhammad (SAW), saying that, his teachings have link with terrorism; Islam was spread at the point of sword; he was a womaniser; Muslims are terrorists etc. The truth about him has been concealed. This has generated a thirst among Muslims to challenge and uncover the truth. Furthermore, the widespread misinformation about him could have potentially misled some Muslim youth due to lack of proper guidance-particularly from their prophet.

The Prophet's outstanding respect for women, tremendous care for the orphans, significant support for the poor, amicable teachings for the neighbours, cooperative understanding and mutual relation with interfaith communities, having patience and reliance on God in distress and calamity, being humble, encouraging simplicity and honesty as a main ingredient in life etc. can lead to a peaceful life, which has been identified, accepted and acknowledged by many of those –contemporary international personalities and across history-who do not follow the religion of Islam.

The Prophet's personality was of someone who was courteous, good natured and understanding of the shortcomings of others. All of the positive characteristics and qualities that can be found in human beings, which help forge better relations with others, could be found in Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The author has also added peace related sayings of the prophet (SAW) for the humanity at the bottom of each page.

A proper reading of his teachings could work very effectively to guide young people and adults irrespective of religious background in building brotherhood amongst interfaith communities far and wide to restore happiness, harmony and peace in life.

“A Perfect Muslim is he from whose tongue and hands mankind is safe...”

Prophet Muhammad (SAW)

Foreword

This is an interfaith book written with the aim to tackle tension amongst diverse communities. The book highlights appreciations for Muhammad (SAW) by prominent personalities across history and the contemporary period for his teachings on unity and peace. Furthermore, the bottom of each page features a saying from Muhammad (SAW) regarding peace and unity for the interfaith communities. This makes the book very useful for those from diverse backgrounds and faiths in relation to peace making and forming a cohesive society here and in other parts of the world. In these turbulent times, I feel this book is essential reading in establishing a harmonious society.



Abdul Qayum

The Chief Imam and Khateeb

East London Mosque

April, 2018

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Role model – who are your role models?

My role model is the talented footballer Messi; mine is the intelligent Ronaldo; with me it is the famous Beckham; but for me the all-time legend Pelé. Skilled Andy Murray is the best to me in the Tennis world; but my favourite player is the accomplished Serena Williams; with me it's the world-renowned cricket star Sachin Tendulkar, for me the world record-breaker Bryan Lara; but mine is the expert Imran Khan. My role model is the music-king Michael Jackson, but mine is the boxer Amir Khan. I am proud of my role model the great politician Abraham Lincoln, but mine is the well-known Teacher Albert Einstein; Allama Iqbal is mine; but I believe MK Gandhi is the best role model and mine is the dedicated Mother Teresa.

BUT, while having respect for all the above, my role model is not a film or sports star, even though he directed and captained numerous teams to win from the east to the west. With no education he became a beloved teacher, leader, preacher, statesperson, the wisest person on the earth and the most influential, truthful, kind-hearted and welcoming to all – regardless of whether they were Muslims or non-Muslims and whether they were friends or foes. He was extremely generous to the helpless and the poor, guardian to the orphan, humbled, well-mannered and also the greatest emancipator of woman and slaves. A pioneer in interfaith advocacy, intelligent in thought and judgement and very justified law-giving, he was not only a successful statesman, but the most loving neighbour, relative, husband, father, uncle and grand-dad. The most articulate in speaking, dedicated and zealous in meeting goals, easy to approach, brave to face and endure danger and pain, who made others smile in difficulties. He was courteous in showing respect to all whether poor or rich, young or old. His charming behaviour, splendid qualities of having patience in danger and his simplicities worked like a weapon to win others' minds. He became known as the living Qur'an and the mouth-piece of God as He guided the mankind through the Qur'an and him. Whatever he said towards the mankind was nothing from his own but ordained by God. This is a brief description of my role model, Prophet Muhammad (SAW)!

The above-mentioned qualities are only a few of the characteristics of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), as if a sip of water from an ocean! Muhammad (SAW) had immaculate and intrinsic qualities. Gentle in mannerism, kind-hearted and amicable to all, noble in nature, tolerant of others' faults and courteous in

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

God does not show mercy to those who are not merciful to people.

Source: ﷺ

Bukhari - 7376

dealings with others, he always remained firm in action and uncompromising in the face of injustice and oppression. He was always trustworthy, pious and devoted to God. He not only just possessed these qualities but left no stone unturned to preach to others, regardless of race and religion, encouraging them to adopt a nature and character which is acceptable to God and beneficial to His creatures.

The Prophet's personality was of someone who was courteous, good natured and understanding of the shortcomings of others. All of the positive characteristics and qualities that can be found in human beings, which help forge better relations with others, could be found in Prophet Muhammad (SAW). When it came to establishing and standing up for any person's rights and for justice, the Prophet (SAW) would be fair but firm. When dispensing justice, he had a very balanced outlook. His engaging manner attracted people towards him. Despite the high position he reached, he always kept his feet on the ground.

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) combined exemplary personal ethics with a great command of wisdom, knowledge and erudition – a rare combination which is hardly found in any person. These qualities led his followers to refer to him as an authoritative and advisory voice on many issues, ranging from social and economic organisation, to human relations and the worship of God, etc. What is most amazing is that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) possessed wisdom of the highest level without any formal education and without his learning from the books of previous religions or of any subjects, as he was unlettered. His kind-hearted manner extended to all, including children. There were many moments in his life when his loving and caring nature towards the young was noticeably demonstrated.

The wife of the prophet Muhammad (SAW), A'isha (RA) was asked about her husband's morals; she replied that his morals are the Qur'an. This meant that the highest morals which were described in the Qur'an were owned by him. Simplicity, honesty and care for others are the main components of his character. He carried out the day-to-day tasks of family life with his own hands. For example, he milked his goats, sewed his own clothes and repaired his shoes. He liked to do house cleaning and look after his camels. His lifestyle was the same as that of the ordinary people. He did not regard any work as low ranking. He worked like other labourers while the mosque was being constructed and a ditch was dug around Madinah. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) did the shopping for his household and always asked the neighbours, helpless families or widows if they needed any services from the market and happily complied with their requests. In any level of work, he did not show himself as a king or as the prophet. Thus, through his personal life he established the example that the profession of a man

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

Be easy with the people, and do not be difficult; give them glad tidings and do not drive them away

Source: ﷺ

Bukhāri - 69

does not indicate his dignity or level of generosity. Homely simplicity characterised his behaviour, actions and movements. On his arrival to any meeting or group, he did not like his associates to stand up in order to show respect to him. Rather, he outlawed it and said that people were not to stand up for him as the non-Arabs did. He further added that he was a humble creature of God, who eats and sits like others and is in no way different. He did not like anyone to kiss his hand, reminding them that this was the tradition of non-Arabs towards their kings. He always demonstrated a high degree of humility in every aspect of daily life. He never turned down any invitation, whether from a slave or a person of high social status, and took meals in the company of all classes of people including slaves. Another interesting point to note is that there were no distinctions in the seating arrangements at these gatherings.

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had profound respect and love for his friends and associates. He was the first to exchange greetings and he never withdrew his hand first when shaking hands with people. He presented a smiling face towards everybody. An associate, Jarir Ibn Abdullah (RA), highlighted that he (Jarir) never saw the prophet without a smiling face. He used to talk openly without reservation to anyone. He was fond of children; he nursed them when required. Speaking about someone in his or her absence is a great sin, and he warned everybody to refrain from this. The generosity of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) became known far and wide. This was extended not only to his friends and acquaintances but also his dead enemies! Some brilliant examples are given here:

Abdullah Ibn Ubayy was the head of an enemy group who spent all of his time planning and plotting problems for the prophet. It is therefore a great surprise to hear that, despite nights and days spent by Abdullah Ibn Ubayy trying to destroy Islam and creating trouble for the prophet, the humble and generous prophet prayed to God when Abdullah died, to forgive his sins! Not only that, but the kind-hearted prophet offered his shirt to cover the body of Abdullah. Another surprise is that the citizens of Makkah who had subjected the prophet and his friends and their families to inhumane suffering, received a general amnesty and were never held to account for their wrongdoings! The generous prophet completely forgave and forgot the 20 years of hostility, ill-treatment and oppression by his enemies.

The prophet was second to none in offering charity; he never turned down any requests from beggars or the helpless. Although he never saved much money for the family, his helping hand for others was always outstretched. Keeping himself hungry, he offered food to needy people. There was a bench known as the bench of the people placed outside his house for the people who needed his help. Before entering the house the prophet would look at the bench to

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

There is no one who has three daughters, or three sisters, and he treats them well, except that he enters paradise."

Source: ﷺ

Tirmidhi 1912

see if anyone required his support. Before his death he distributed whatever he had in his house amongst the poor.

He was a carer not only for human beings but for animals as well. The creatures who cannot speak occupied a large place in his heart. He narrated a story about how a woman was granted paradise just by quenching thirst of a dog, and also how another woman was to be punished in the grave due to cruelty to her cat through keeping it hungry.

His profound compassion for the helpless, the poor, widows and the orphans can be traced back to his early life – even before the prophethood. He was the first person in history who stood by the oppressed, provided equality to women, justified the rights of women to men, of slaves to their employers, of subjects to their kings. Negro slaves were given the same status as the leaders of the Quraish. All these activities and open-hearted support led him to become the champion of oppressed and ill-treated people. To enquire about the welfare of the people, he visited his neighbours, friends and especially those who were ill.

He was a man of charismatic character. On one hand, he achieved the highest level of humbleness and self-effacement; on the other hand he was very courageous, spirited, brave and fearless. Threats to his life from his brutal enemies at Makkah never discouraged him from establishing what is right. When the torment from his enemies in Makkah reached its highest level, he advised his companions to emigrate from Makkah but he stayed there almost alone among the exasperated enemies. Later on, he migrated to Madinah leaving his family members behind.

On the field of war he encouraged the companions by telling them that God was with them and the victory would be theirs, and on many occasions he advanced alone to face the enemy. Once, on a journey, the prophet was alone and taking rest under a tree when an enemy appeared, and, pointing his sword towards the prophet demanded to know who could save him from the sword; the prophet calmly replied that God would save him. As the moments were passed in argument, the sword appeared in the prophet's hand, and he asked in turn who would save him (the enemy). However, having observed his helplessness, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) let him go.

News of his trustworthiness and genuineness spread far and wide, earning him the title of Al-Ameen (the trustworthy) amongst the Arabians, including his enemies. Even his worst enemy knew him as a trustworthy person and many people, although they did not accept Islam, kept their capital with the prophet! Having a very strong dependency on God, he was never found to be

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

A man from the People of the Book (Jews, Christians) who believes in his Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him) and (also) believes in Muhammad will get double reward

Source: ﷺ

Bukhari 97

hopeless in any matter. Despite heavy opposition, despondency did not descend on him even for a moment.

Not only for Muslims but for the whole of mankind, he is the role model to follow in affairs of life. It is mentioned in the Qur'an that the precondition of loving God is to follow the prophet first. That was the position of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to God. The Muslims should love him more dearly than the members of their family.

The born orphan, having gone through huge turmoil in life, achieved the highest glory. Riches were in abundance but were not meant for him. He never lived like his contemporary kings; for example the Emperor Heraclius, who lived a life of luxury in great palaces. But despite his high fame and great name, he did not make any changes in his life. As before, he continued living the simplest life. Although he became a ruler of a state, the furniture of his house was no better than that of any ordinary man. A mattress made of palm leaves and an earthen jug for water was kept near his bed on the floor. Sometimes days went by without a fire being lit in his house, and the entire family would sometimes live simply on dates. The public money was under his control, but he did not spend any at all for his comfort.

He publicly announced while on his deathbed that if he had offended anyone they should either make a claim or take revenge from him.

It is impossible to give a full description of the wide range of his characteristics; however, the following chapters attempt to provide a small account of his universal and evidence-based personal attributes from history and the contemporary period.

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

“A funeral passed the Messenger of God and he stood up, and it was said to him: It is a Jew. He said: 'Is it not a human being?'”

Source: ﷺ

An-Nasā'ī -
1921

CHAPTER 2: TRUTHFULNESS

The award-winning British author Karen Armstrong notes that that Prophet Muhammad (SAW), even before the prophethood was commissioned, was known as Al-Ameen [Al-Amin], ‘the trustworthy’, among the people of Makkah. He had the skill to inspire confidence in others, and had an influential and whole-hearted personality. He never looked over his shoulder and if he needed to speak to someone, he turned completely to face them. When shaking another person’s hand, he did not take out his hand first.¹

Reginald Bosworth Smith notes the achievements of Prophet Muhammad’s early life. The Prophet was so highly trusted in society that he became known as Al-Amin. The wise monk prophesised him as a Prophet and he became well-known as honest to his employer, Khadijah (RA), with whom he had a happy marriage. In his opinion:

*He was a man of few words, and he had few friends: notable chiefly for his truthfulness and good faith, they called him Al Ameen, the Trusty. His tending his employer’s flocks; his journeys to Syria; possibly his short-lived friendship there with Sergius or Bahira, a Nestorian monk; his famous vow to succour the oppressed; his employment by Khadijah in a trade venture, and his subsequent happy marriage with her, are about the only note-worthy external incidents in his early life.*²

The first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, admired Muhammad (SAW) in his book, *Glimpses of World History*. He wrote in depth about the prophet, Islam and its teachings. He claimed that the prophet was a great person who preached the religion by dint of simplicity and utmost honesty. He became the most trustful (Al-Ameen) person far and wide. His trustworthiness was acknowledged not only by his friends but also his foes too.³

Abu Sufyan (RA), once the bitterest enemy of the prophet before accepting Islam, declared to the Byzantine emperor Heraclius that Muhammad¹ never told a lie and always kept his word, and that he considered him to be the best man among them. This is supported by an authentic Hadith as below:

“He [Heraclius] said, ‘Had you ever blamed him for telling lies before he claimed what he claimed?’ I replied, ‘No.’ ... He said, ‘Does he break his promises?’ I replied, ‘No, but we are now at truce with him and we are afraid that he may betray us.’ ... ‘When I asked you whether he was ever blamed for telling lies, your reply was in the negative, so I took it for granted that a person who did

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

My Lord, forgive my people for they do not know.

Source: ﷺ

Bukhāri - 3477

not tell a lie about (others) the people could never tell a lie about Allah. I asked you whether he had ever broken his promise. You replied in the negative. And such are the apostles; they never break their promises...’’ Sahih al-Bukhari, Volume 4, Book 52, Number 191⁴

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was widely known as a trustworthy person. He was very honest in the manner he went about conveying the message of the Qur'an to his people. His description of what happened to him and his presentation as a Prophet of God was communicated with the utmost sincerity. The late Michael Meacher, Labour Party politician and academic, said in an interview that:

When Muhammad had that vision in the cave, he very honestly became the channel through which the Qur'an [was received] – it is said that the Qur'an has immensely powerful language, very evocative, very rich and very meaningful ... and he honestly portrayed that. He was honest to his principles and I think he was a very honourable man.⁵

The title of Al-Ameen drew the attention of Thomas Carlyle, a Scottish philosopher, satirical writer, essayist, historian and teacher who highlighted that the Prophet (SAW) was a very trustworthy, considerate, and liberal person; whatever he spoke was meaningful and he used to remain silent when there was nothing to say. He possessed beautiful physical attributes, personal qualities, and an excellent approach which delighted people. Carlyle said:

But, from an early age, he had been remarked as a thoughtful man. His companions named him “Al Amin, the Faithful.” A man of truth and fidelity; true in what he did, in what he spoke and thought. They noted that he always meant something. A man rather 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. This is the only sort of speech worth speaking.⁶

British author Ruth Cranston voices something similar about Prophet Muhammad (SAW). She highlights that the Prophet, having been orphaned in childhood, was raised by his uncle. From his early life he showed evidence of being very honest, kind, calm and trustworthy to all around him. She claims that the Prophet gained the confidence of the people of Makkah by dint of his sincerity, truthfulness, and sound judgement. He was sensitive, polite, thoughtful

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

"The one who looks after and works for a widow or a poor person, [will have the reward] to that of a warrior fighting for God's cause or [the reward of a person] who fasts during the day and prays all the night."

Source: ﷺ

Bukhāri-
6006

and diplomatic. At a later stage he was given the title of *Al-Ameen* or 'the trustworthy' by the people of Makkah.⁷

Leo Tolstoy, a Russian philosopher and one of the greatest writers of the world observed that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was an exceptional person with many charming characteristics which earned him huge admiration from his enemies and² led many of them to accept Islam. Even though the enemies knew him as Al-Ameen – trustworthy – they did not express their respect.⁸

According to the British author Magsie Hamilton Little, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) achieved the reputation for his character by dint of being trustworthy and honest. Many studies reveal that he was gentle and polite to all creatures, human or animal. It is a measure of his personality. The Prophet's manners were consistently kind towards children and animals.⁹

The prophet was also admired by a British author and journalist M.H. Hyndman. He claimed that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had a very high level of personal integrity. His extraordinary qualities, including honesty, sincerity, trustworthiness, honour, reliability, uprightness, humbleness, etc. worked like a touch stone, so that whoever came into contact with him was influenced by him. His self-confidence never abated, even when he was losing or suffering at the hands of enemies:

[For those] who have studied the whole extraordinary story of the noble Arabian, it is no easy matter to comprehend the character, or to account for the marvellous success of Mohammed in the early part of the seventh century. Never claiming divine powers at any period of his mission, without a single miracle to his name, this very human prophet of God made his first converts in his own family, was able, after almost hopeless failure, to obtain control in his own aristocratic gens, and had such remarkable personal influence over all with whom he was brought into contact that, neither when a poverty-stricken and hunted fugitive, nor at the height of his prosperity, did he ever have to complain of treachery from those who had once embraced his faith.¹⁰

Reverend Rupert Hoare, a former Dean of Liverpool, UK Cathedral and Chair of the Council of Faiths in Liverpool, UK, noted (in April 2012) that Muhammad advised his followers to be fair and trustworthy when dealing with others:

I know him to be a man of faith and trustworthy and who preached the necessity of faith in a merciful God who would reward

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

"Luxury does not mean having a great amount of possessions, but luxury is having self-contentment.

Source: ﷺ

Bukhāri - 6446

*faithfulness and who required honesty and justice in people's dealings.*¹¹

R.V.C. Bodley also noted that Muhammad (SAW) had achieved the title Al-Ameen during his early life. The nature of trade and what was going on in the environment did not have any effect on Prophet Muhammad's characteristic virtue, piousness, integrity, honesty and truthfulness.¹²

His characteristics are reflected in the life of many Muslims who have followed his teachings and demonstrated similar qualities in their life. A link is often made between the positive attributes of Muslims and their personalities and that of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The British MP the Right Honourable Stephen Timms feels that British society needs more of these qualities to be successful in life and asserts that:

*What I would comment on is what I've seen reflected in Muslims, in the followers of Muhammad whose behaviour I've seen for myself. I see amongst Muslims very good and important qualities which in my view we need more of in our society. I'm thinking of things like truthfulness, that you've mentioned and also having a sense of responsibility, a sense of solidarity of mutual support, patience, compassion. All of those are things I observe amongst Muslims and which I take it to be reflecting the character of the Prophet himself.*¹³

Barrister Pringle Kennedy, a distinguished British author, declares that opinions abound throughout history regarding the legacy which Prophet Muhammad (SAW) left behind and the overall effects of his preaching and message. Superlatives and pejoratives have been deployed endlessly to capture the personality and character of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). But what is undeniable is that his legacy was groundbreaking. If there was ever an instance of the peak of human feats, it would be Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and his ministry.¹⁴

Kennedy goes on to say that whatever and whoever thinks about Prophet Muhammad (SAW), undoubtedly he is a brilliant example of what could be done by a single man.¹⁵

Honesty is embedded within the heart of the prophet. David Blunkett, the former British Home Secretary, highlighted that honesty lay at the heart of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)'s prophetic mission and served as a model for communicating Islamic injunctions to others:

He made it an absolute article of his faith that honesty and openness should be the hallmark of anyone following him and obviously people have interpretations. I believe he saw his label of Al-Ameen in a

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

"Indeed, from the exaltedness of God is to honor an old man."

Source: ﷺ

Abū Dāwūd - 4843

symbolic light on these who wish to follow him. He was laying down a path which was about his way of demonstrating his way of living and beliefs.¹⁶

Father Allen Green, Tower Hamlets Interfaith Forum, London, claimed that Prophet Muhammad (SAW)'s honesty was one of the best factors in his life. According to Green:

From what I've read, Muhammad was a very honest man with integrity.¹⁷

A famous Indian leader, Lala Hardayal, admires the greatness of the Prophet of Islam, noting that his higher degree of honesty worked as a foundation to earn him the social title 'Al-Ameen':

Hazrat Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam was a very great man. His honesty and probity as a poor young man earned him the social title of the Just: Al-Amin. His immense contribution to civilization remains an outstanding and astounding fact of history.¹⁸

Through all performances he was known as a man of simplicity and ease. He was very sociable and would often engage in light-hearted banter with his companions. As a man of integrity, he would never deceive others. Sir William Muir, although he was hostile to Prophet Muhammad (SAW), reveals:

His humility was shown by his riding upon asses accepting the invitation even of slaves, and when mounted, by his taking another behind him. He would say, "I sit at meals as a servant doeth, and I eat like a servant: for I really am a servant;" and he would sit as one that was always ready to rise. He discouraged (supererogatory) fasting, and works of mortification. When seated with his followers, he would remain long silent at a time. In the Mosque at Madinah, they used to repeat pieces of poetry, and tell stories regarding the incidents that occurred in the days of ignorance, and laugh; and Mahomet, listening to them, would smile at what they said. Mahomet hated nothing more than lying, and whenever he knew that any of his followers had erred in this respect, he would hold himself aloof from them until he was assured of their repentance.¹⁹

This was echoed by a famous Buddhist monk, Sangthong Phesrisai (Dhamacaro) who admires Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and says that he was truthful to everybody in the community.

I am sure as a Prophet he was very truthful to himself and to other people around him.²⁰

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

"I command you to treat women kindly..."

Source: ﷺ

Bukhāri- 5185

Geoffrey Rowell, formerly Bishop of Gibraltar, assessed Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as was an honest person; according to him it is necessary to look into the circumstances prevailing at his time. There were people from various faiths living in his locality with whom he would have interacted, and exploring his relations with them can help understand to what extent Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was an upright and trustworthy person. Rowell says:

*I have to ask was Muhammad honest in the context of his time? What did he know? Where did he gain knowledge of, for instance, Christianity? Where and who were the people that he drew that knowledge from? In the context of his time, certainly as far as I know, he was an honest person and not, as Christians have sometimes said in the past, 'the great deceiver'.*²¹

The honesty of the prophet was known to the members of all cultures. Like the Buddhist monk Sangthong Phesrisai, a spokesman from a Sikh Temple based in East London affirms that the Prophet was a very religious and honest person. In his words:

*I think the prophet was very religious, honest and dedicated believer of God or messenger of God. He was like other prophets. He was very trustworthy, that's why he had so many followers; no trust no followers.*²²

Although dishonest dealings between people were widespread during this period, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) never surrendered to such practices and instead maintained a high level of honour in his exchanges with others. This is reflected by Mehri Niknam MBE, Executive Director of the Joseph Interfaith Foundation, Camden, London, who says that the integrity with which Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was characterised according to many, came from his honest dealings as a merchant and someone very heavily linked with the economic trade of his time.

*[T]he Prophet of Islam was known as Muhammad Al-Ameen, (Muhammad the trustworthy one) and why was he called that? Because for many years he was the leader of major merchandise caravans and in his financial dealings with people of other nations and also other faiths he was honest. Therefore, he came to be known as Muhammad Al-Ameen and that reputation remained with him. Therefore, I have always thought of him as an honest man.*²³

The honesty and integrity of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is noted by many, who suggest that his teachings presented a challenge to the prevailing thoughts and beliefs of his time. Right Honourable Jeremy Corbyn, who became Leader of

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

"No person has truly believed in me if he eats to his full and his neighbor is hungry."

Source: ﷺ

Tabarāni-751

the Labour Party in 2015, notes that at a time when the Christian faith was gaining common currency in the European world, Prophet Muhammad's honest and sincere nature helped him to remain firm in his belief. Corbyn says:

*I think he had a high level of integrity and was an honest person who was in some senses challenging the received wisdom at the time because Christianity was beginning to take hold in most of Europe at the time Muhammad was alive and they were themselves the derivation of Judaism up until Christ's time, beginning of the millennia and I think he was an honest person standing up for his beliefs.*²⁴

Richard Bell, a British author, wrote in his book *Introduction to the Qur'an* that Prophet Muhammad (SAW), a human being, worked as God's spokesman for the divine will delivered to him by the angel Gabriel. The Prophet, standing on the border between the divine and the earthly, passed the message to all including himself. Sometimes God sent messages to him to pass on to the people, sometimes he sent commands for the people; at other times he sent directions and guidance for all including the Prophet himself, and all the while he was working as the honest and true representative of God on the earth.²⁵

The Chairperson of Camden Interfaith Forum, Mike Stygal, claimed that the Prophet established good relations with the peoples by dint of his 'trustworthiness' which was a key factor when advocated peace during a period which was filled with hostilities. He states:

*He was a man of incredible integrity in a difficult time and was trying to promote a message of peace in a world that was full of violence. Trustworthiness would have been key for him to prove that his message was true. If you can't show that you are trustworthy, you can't be trusted.*²⁶

An American educator and historian, John Henry Haaren, in his *Famous Men of the Middle Ages*, insists that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was an honest man. He never broke promises which he made to anybody. In Haaren's words:

*Mohammed was very faithful and honest in all his works. He always spoke the truth and never broke a promise. "I have given my promise," he would say, "and I must keep it." He became so well known in Makkah for being truthful and trustworthy that people gave him the name of El Amin, which means "the truthful".*²⁷

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

There are three signs of a hypocrite: When he speaks, he lies; when he makes a promise, he breaks it; and when he is trusted, he betrays his trust."

Source: ﷺ

Bukhāri - 6095
Muslim - 58

The Prophet's honesty and trustworthiness were noted by *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. They corroborate that these qualities were frequently mentioned by earlier researchers. According to the *Encyclopaedia*,

*[A] mass of detail in the early sources shows that he was an honest and upright man who had gained the respect and loyalty of others who were like-wise honest and upright men.*²⁸

The Islamic influence worldwide was due to the great characteristics of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The Scottish author Samuel Pearson Scott repeated the views of many when he said that:

*The glories which invest the history of Islam may be entirely derived from the valor, the virtue, the intelligence, the genius, of one man. If this be conceded, the largest measure of credit is due to him who conceived its plan, promoted its impulse, and formulated the rules which insured its success. In any event, if the object of religion be the inculcation of morals, the diminution of evil, the promotion of human happiness, the expansion of the human intellect, if the performance of good works will avail in the great day when mankind shall be summoned to its final reckoning it is neither irreverent nor unreasonable to admit that Muhammad was indeed an Apostle of God.*²⁹

George Bernard Shaw, Irish playwright and co-founder of the London School of Economics, affirmed that the strength of Islam lies in its dynamism. Unlike other belief systems, the religion propagated by Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is very versatile and can adapt itself to any context, time and period in history. As a result, it appeals to all, irrespective of where and when it is being taught and implemented. According to Shaw, the age-old myths about Prophet Muhammad (SAW) are far from the truth. He went as far as to view Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as a salvation to mankind. He continued by suggesting that any of the dictatorships prevailing in the world would be corrected and led to a just and peaceful path, if a man like Prophet Muhammad (SAW) were to lead it from the front. Shaw believed that there was nothing to prevent a warm reception and adoption of Islam in the modern age:

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

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

“Do you know what is better than charity, fasting or prayer? It is keeping peace and good relations between people because bad relations between people is a destroyer.”

Source: ﷺ

Abū Dāwūd - 4919

*from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Saviour of Humanity.*³⁰

Dr. Henry Stubbe (1632–1676), an extraordinary English scholar, claimed that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was the ‘living Qur’an’. His characteristics were composed of the Qur’anic teachings.³¹

The above statement is consisted with the view of the prophet’s wife A’isha (RA). According to her, the best qualities of human being as described by God were exhibited in the prophet’s character.³²

Pierce De Lacy Henry Johnstone, an Irish Protestant nationalist politician and philanthropist, marvelled that even 1300 years after the death of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) the followers of the religion far and wide were still very devoted to it. The main strength behind this was the power of the character of Prophet Muhammad (SAW):

*It is nearly thirteen hundred years since the Prophet of Arabia died, but the religion which he founded still rules the hearts and lives of nearly one-sixth of the human race. To outward appearance Islam is one, though inwardly it is torn into many sects and schools. The magnetism of its founder's personality has endured through all generations, and the short symbol of his faith has lost none of its power.*³³

Major Arthur Glyn Leonard highly appreciated Prophet Muhammad (SAW) for his extreme devotion and submission to God. He claimed that the Prophet was the greatest and the most truthful person on earth:

*If ever a man on this earth found Allah, if ever a man devoted his life to Allah's service with a good and great motive, it is certain that the Prophet of Arabia (Muhammad) is the man. Muhammad was not only the greatest but truest man that humanity has ever produced.*³⁴

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

“The strong person is not the one who can wrestle someone else down. The strong person is the one who can control himself when he is angry.”

Source: ﷺ

Bukhāri – 6114
& Muslim –
2609

CHAPTER 3: SIMPLICITY

Simple

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, also known as Mahatma Gandhi, the great Indian politician, was so inspired and enamoured by Prophet Muhammad (SAW) that he even kept a black blanket and simple attire as a tribute to the simple living which Prophet Muhammad (SAW) preferred. According to Gandhi, it would have been impossible to know that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was a man of tremendous power and influence, because of his simplicity. This characteristic was also reflected in Prophet Muhammad's companion, the second Caliph of Islam, Umar al-Khattab, whom Gandhi used as an example for the Indian Congress as a good model of behaviour and conduct. He remarked:

*I am only surprised when some Muslim asks me as to why I always use black blankets; I tell them that I do as a token of my personal homage to Prophet Muhammad who was the greatest man the world has ever produced. He was so simple in his day to day life that one could hardly imagine that he was the man who was ruling over the hearts of the millions all over the world. I instructed Congress Governments, immediately after they assumed power after the elections of 1936 that they should follow the footsteps of Hazrat Umar who thoroughly implemented every preaching of Prophet Muhammad and thus bettered the lot of the common man.*³⁵

Alfred Martin, an American philosopher and historian, stated that the debt which we owe to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and his followers can never be truly realised. Prophet Muhammad's frugal lifestyle is most worthy of praise, especially when we consider the temptations and material riches that were offered to him. Instead of indulging in the pomp of this world, he would maintain simplicity and an everyday casual demeanour, attending to household chores. Alfred Martin acknowledges these traits of character of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). He declares:

*To-day we decorate our walls and floors with fabrics that Mohammedans taught us to weave. We regale our senses with perfumes they taught us to make, we teach our children the algebra and higher mathematics which they taught the fathers. His was the simple life, lived at times to the point of severe austerity. For we read that he would sometimes go for months without eating a single hearty meal, lighting his own fire, cooking his own food, mending his clothes and shoes in order that his slaves might enjoy a larger share of freedom.*³⁶

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

“The angel Gabriel was so adamant in reminding me to be charitable with my neighbour that I thought he might make him my heir.

Source: ﷺ

Bukhāri -
6014

The prophet was beloved by friends and foes because of his simplicity. Davenport affirms that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) won the hearts and minds of the people – enemies as well as friends – by the simplicity of his behaviour, dealings, speech, etc. His lifestyle was like that of an ordinary person. Although he became the supreme power of Arabia, he did all his own housework. Davenport explains:

His politeness to the great, his affability to the humble, and his dignified bearing to the presumptuous, procured him respect, admiration and applause. His talents were equally fitted for persuasion or command. His simple eloquence, rendered impressive by the expression of a countenance wherein awfulness of majesty was tempered by an amiable sweetness, excited emotions of veneration and love; and he was gifted with that authoritative air of genius which alike influences the learned and commands the illiterate.

As a friend and a parent, he exhibited the softest feelings of our nature; but, while in possession of the kind and generous emotions of the heart, and engaged in the discharge of most of the social and domestic duties, he disgraced not his assumed title of an apostle of God. With all that simplicity which is so natural to a great mind, he performed the humbler offices whose homeliness it would be idle to conceal with pompous diction; even while Lord of Arabia, he mended his own shoes and coarse woollen garments, milked the ewes, swept the hearth, and kindled the fire.³⁷

The prolific Indian Professor K.S. Ramkrishna Rao revealed that Muhammad could have assumed control over vast amounts of territory and become hell-bent purely on cementing and consolidating his power. But he preferred the simple, austere life, despite the success which came his way. He was living in a part of Arabia which was commercially thriving and all the pleasures of this world were easily accessible to him. Yet he had the moral strength and discipline to resist these temptations. This could have been due to his belief and the belief of prophets before him that too much luxury was the enemy of genuine spirituality. Until his very last moments on this earth, Muhammad (SAW) preferred the frugal life and never strayed from it. In the words of Rao:

“After the fall of Makkah, more than one million square miles of land lay at his feet. Lord of Arabia, he mended his own

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

Your slaves are your brothers and God has put them under your command. So whoever has a brother under his command should feed him of what he eats and dress him of what he wears. Do not ask them (slaves) to do things beyond their capacity (power) and if you do so, then help them."

Source: ﷺ

Bukhāri - 30

*shoes and coarse woolen garments, milked the goats, swept the earth, kindled the fire and attended the other menial offices of the family. The entire town of Madinah where he lived grew in wealth in the later days of his life. Everywhere there was gold and silver in plenty and yet in those days of prosperity many weeks would elapse without a fire being kindled in the hearth of the king of Arabia; his food being dates and water. His family would go hungry many nights successively because they could not get anything to eat in the evening. He slept on no soft bed but on a palm mat, after a long busy day to spend most of his night in prayer, often bursting into tears before his Creator to grant him strength to discharge his duties. As the reports go, his voice would get choked with weeping and it would appear as if a cooking pot was on fire and boiling had commenced. On the very day of his death his only assets were a few coins, a part of which went to satisfy a debt and the rest was given to a needy person who came to his house for charity. The clothes in which he breathed his last breath had many patches. The house from where light had spread to the world was in darkness because there was no oil in the lamp. Circumstance changed, but the Prophet of God did not. In victory or in defeat, in power or in adversity, in affluence or in indigence, he is the same man, disclosed the same character. Like all the ways and laws of God, Prophets of God are unchangeable”.*³⁸

Edward Gibbon describes the simplicity of the character of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). He lived the life of a very simple man, doing his chores with his own hands. He never showed any pride; he ate the sparse diet of a simple Arab or a soldier:

*The good sense of Mahomet 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 his woolen garment. Disdaining the penance and merit of a hermit, he observed, without effort or vanity, the abstemious diet of an Arab and a soldier. The greatest success of Mohammad's life was affected by sheer moral force without the stroke of a sword.*³⁹

Carlyle said that a man like Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was a man of true character; such a man is *what we call an original man*.⁴⁰

Carlyle further said that

*Prophet Muhammad mended his own clothes, milked his own goats and waited upon himself. He shared his food, even in times of scarcity, with others. Dates and water were frequently his only food, even when he was the ruler of Arabia. He gave away his money to the poor or for public purposes.*⁴¹

According to author Washington Irving, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) lived a very simple life. Being a Prophet, a leader and a governor, he could lead the life of an aristocrat, but he was the opposite of all of these. Irving notes:

*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 the result of a real disregard to distinction from so trivial a source. His garments were sometimes of wool; sometimes of the striped cotton of Yemen, and were often patched.*⁴²

Pierce De Lacy Johnstone noted that this simplicity was a great attribute of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) which helped him solve huge problems. His way of dealing with people was the same, whether they were a socially well positioned man, a child or a slave. According to Johnstone:

*He visited the sick, followed every bier he met, accepted even a slave's invitation to dinner, mended his own clothes, waited on himself. Never was he first to withdraw his hand from another's, nor to turn away ere the other had turned. His hand was the most generous, his heart the most courageous, his tongue the most truthful; staunchest was he of protectors, and sweetest in conversation; and he inspired all men with awe and reverence. He was taciturn of habit, yet playful with children but not given to jesting.*⁴³

Dr Samuel Johnson praised the prophet highly, claiming that the simplicity was key to Prophet Muhammad (SAW)'s life, his popularity and success with others. He never distanced himself from the rest of the society. Johnson maintains:

*His purely historical character, his simple humanity, claiming to be a man among men, his intense realism avoiding all mystical remoteness; the thoroughly democratic and universal form under which his idea of divine monarchy led him to conceive the relation of man, the force of ethical appeal all affiliate Muhammad with the modern world.*⁴⁴

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

"Jannah (Heaven) is nearer to you than your shoelace, and so is the (Hell) Fire"

Source: ﷺ

Bukhāri - 6488

According to an English archaeologist, author and the keeper of the Ashmolean Museum David George Hogarth, the characteristics of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) were very charismatic which made him unique and second to none:

*Serious or trivial, his daily behaviour has instituted a canon which millions observe this day with conscious mimicry. No one regarded by any section of the human race as Perfect Man has been imitated so minutely. Moreover, no Founder of a religion has been left on so solitary an eminence as the Muslim Apostle.*⁴⁵

Annemarie Schimmel, a German author, Orientalist and former professor at Harvard University, describes the tremendous qualities of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The most laudable of his qualities was his humility, simpleness and kindness. He was very friendly with his followers and always smiled, filling them with great delight.⁴⁶

The British author John Adair brings out the simplicity of the Prophet (ﷺ) who helped build his own mud-brick home, which looked no better than any nomad's:

*In Madinah, Muhammad lived in the long, low, mud-brick house with open windows with a palm-leaf roof that he had helped to build with his own hands. It was more of a Bedouin tent than a town house.*⁴⁷

Adair explained that the Prophet (SAW) never liked to have a seat reserved for him when he attended a meeting. He also told his people that standing to show respect should be done only to honour humankind as a whole, and not an individual:

*Muhammad would never allow a seat to be reserved for him when attending a meeting but would sit wherever there was an empty place. When men rose to their feet as he walked by, he would ask them to remain standing only if that was a way of showing their respect for humankind. If they were standing up to honour him, however, he always asked them to sit down.*⁴⁸

Muhammad was not the type of person who would have others attending to his duties. He was a principled, disciplined character who would never place an undue burden on others and always dealt with his personal matters with the highest integrity. Not only could this be seen in his everyday routine, but also in his attire. Simplicity was something he would cling on to throughout his life and he never insisted on pompous living. Sir William Muir elaborates:

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

“Protect yourself from Hell-fire even by giving a bit of a date as charity”

Source: ﷺ

Bukhāri -
6540

*A patriarchal simplicity pervaded his life. Custom was to do everything for himself. If he gave alms he would place it with his own hand in that of the petitioner. He aided his wives in their household duties; he mended his own clothes; he tied up the goats; he even cobbled his sandals. His ordinary dress consisted of plain white cotton stuff; but on high and festive occasions, he wore garments of fine linen, striped or dyed in red. He never reclined at meals. He ate with his fingers; and when he had finished, he would lick them before he wiped his hands... Mahomet, with his wives, lived in a row of low and homely cottages built of unbaked bricks; the apartments were separated by walls of palm branches rudely daubed with mud; curtains of leather, or of black hair-cloth, supplied the place of doors and windows. His abode was to all easy of access.*⁴⁹

Compassion

The central part of the personality and ministry of Prophet Muhammad was a humanity and love for all, be they rich or poor, healthy or sick. Maintaining healthy and warm social relations was something he gave priority to, and underlying this was compassion and mercy for others. David De Santillan pays tribute to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) thus:

*The prophet of Islam was a man with deepest human feelings and his heart always beat in unison with the suffered and the affected. Apart from all those things which he preached to his followers he said some golden and charming words with regard to neighborly relations. 'Be kind to your neighbor. Draw the veil over him. Avoid injury to him, look to him with kindness. If you see him doing evil, forgive him. If you see him doing good to you, proclaim your thankfulness'. These are words to be treasured and the Man who said them should be weighed in gold.*⁵⁰

Schimmel narrates a story regarding an Arab Bedouin who happened to visit the Prophet (SAW) and stayed as a guest overnight. Owing to eating too much, he had an upset stomach and he made the linen wet. He was ashamed of himself but left secretly before the dawn. However, he came back to collect his amulet which he had forgotten and found the Prophet (SAW) cleaning the room with his own hands. The Bedouin, who was till then a disbelieving idolater, was overwhelmed and embraced Islam.⁵¹

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

“God does not look at your figures or at your wealth but he looks at your hearts and your deeds.”

Source: ﷺ

Muslim - 2564

Dr Leitner claimed that the hostile Orientalist Sir William Muir, without having the knowledge of Arabic or any “sympathy”, had made serious misjudgments about Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and his religion. He claimed that to know about Prophet Muhammad and his religion it is important to have some knowledge of the Arabic language, and sympathy is a vital element of knowledge. Dr Leitner observes:

My special knowledge of Muhammadanism began in a mosque school at Constantinople in 1854, where I learnt considerable portions of the Qur'an by heart. I have associated with Muhammadans of different sects in Turkey, India and elsewhere, and have studied Arabic, the language in which their sacred literature is written. I may at once point out that without a knowledge of Arabic it is impossible to exercise any influence on the Muhammadan mind, but I would add that there is something better than mere knowledge, and that is sympathy: sympathy is the key to the meaning of knowledge – that which breathes life into what otherwise would be dead bones. There are instances of eminent scholars who, for want of sympathy, have greatly misjudged Muhammadanism. Sir William Muir, for example, has been led into very serious mistakes in dealing with this religion.⁵²

Although Muir was hostile to and critical of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), in his book *Life of Mahomet*, he admired him for his character and praised the way he dealt with others. Muir states:

For few and simple were the precepts of Muhammad. His teaching had wrought a marvellous and mighty work. Muhammad brought an end to idol worship. He preached Monotheism and infinite Mercy of God, human brotherhood, care of the orphan, emancipation of slaves, forbidding of wine. No religion achieved as much success as Islam did.⁵³

R.V.C. Bodley wrote in his book *The Messenger* that Prophet Muhammad’s tremendous persona, simplicity and kindness were at the heart of his very being. He was wise and inspirational and showed a great degree of compassion for the less fortunate. In Bodley’s words,

My attempt, has been to present Mohammed as he really was – an Arab like many I knew in the desert; a man of simple tastes, but of great personality, with the good of his people at heart; a man who was inspired, but thought out all he did logically; who

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

It is enough of a sin for a person who neglects his dependents

Source: ﷺ

Abū Dāwūd -
1692

*had tolerance for the weakness of men and women, because he was often weak himself. Not a God by any means.*⁵⁴

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) lived the life of a very simple man. The world has countless examples of kings, queens, other rulers and generals who lived lives of great opulence. But although Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had many responsibilities, and great position and honour in the nation, he was just the opposite. He did not have a palace; he lived in a cottage with his wives. He did not have support for his domestic needs; he maintained everything on his own. His food and lifestyle were just like those of an ordinary man. Whatever little food his family owned was shared with others. His simplicity bears a great example in the history, as Bosworth Smith illustrates:

*His ordinary dress was plain, even to coarseness; yet he was fastidious in arranging it to the best advantage. His life was simple in all its details. He lived with his wives in a row of humble cottages, separated from one another by palm branches, cemented together with mud. He would kindle the fire, sweep the floor, and milk the goats himself. Ayesha (prophet's wife) tells us that he slept upon a leathern mat, and that he mended his clothes, and even clouted his shoes, with his own hand. For months together, Ayesha is also our authority for saying that he did not get a sufficient meal. The little food that he had was always shared with those who dropped in to partake of it. Indeed, outside the Prophet's house was a bench or gallery, on which were always to be found a number of the poor who lived entirely on the Prophet's generosity, and were hence called the people of the bench. His ordinary food was dates and water, or barley bread; milk and honey were luxuries of which he was fond, but which he rarely allowed himself.*⁵⁵

Like Bosworth Smith the historian Edward Gibbon recalls that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) did all his housekeeping himself and spent his days like an ordinary person. Many a time he did not have anything to eat or drink. Gibbon notes:

The good sense of Mahomet 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 his woolen garment. Disdaining the penance and merit of a hermit, he observed, without effort or vanity, the abstemious diet of an Arab and a soldier. On solemn occasions he feasted his companions with rustic and hospitable plenty; but in

*his domestic life, many weeks would elapse without a fire being kindled on the hearth of the prophet.*⁵⁶

Although Muhammad (SAW) had quickly won many military victories, this did not instil in him any feelings of pride or vanity. This was proof that his military endeavours were not motivated by any egotistical reasons. Even at the height of his power, Muhammad (SAW) maintained a very frugal inward and outward manner, and this remained with him from the time of his persecution all the way up to the point where he and his followers came to power. Washington Irving wrote in his book *The Life of Muhammad*:

*His military triumphs awakened neither pride nor vainglory as they would have done had they been effected by selfish purposes. In the time of his greatest power he maintained the same simplicity of manner and appearance as in the days of his adversity. So far from affecting regal state, he was displeased if, on entering a room, any unusual testimonial of respect was shown to him.*⁵⁷

Harvard University Professor Annemarie Schimmel included in her book *And Muhammad is His Messenger: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety* a chapter titled 'Prophet Muhammad (SAW) the Beautiful Model'. In it she notes that the Prophet was an ideal model in every sphere of life, be it at home, abroad, in work or during war. He was an example of moral perfection.⁵⁸

The celebrated author John Alden Williams argues that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was the founder of the religion, a governor of state and also a role model:

*The Prophet is not only the founder and legislator of the community: he is the model for Muslims.*⁵⁹

Manners

Edward Gibbon, the English historian, writer and Member of Parliament described how the good moral character, the manners and the greatness of the religion he preached made Prophet Muhammad (SAW) victorious in large parts of the globe throughout his life and beyond, leading even to the fall of the Eastern Roman Empire:

*The genius of the Arabian prophet, the manners of his nation, and the spirit of his religion, involve the causes of the decline and fall of the Eastern empire; and our eyes are curiously intent on one of the most memorable revolutions, which have impressed a new and lasting character on the nations of the globe.*⁶⁰

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

“God has revealed to me that you should humble yourselves to one another. One should neither hold himself above another nor transgress against another.”

Source: ﷺ

Muslim - 2865

Owing to his lofty status, there has hardly been a person in history whose time on this earth has been recounted in such comprehensive detail as Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The eminent scholar John Davenport said:

*It may be truly affirmed that of all known legislators and conquerors, not one can be named, the history of whose life has been written with greater authenticity and fuller detail, than that of Mohammed.*⁶¹

Davenport further says that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in his youth had beautiful physical attributes. His behaviour, way of talking, moving, looking, etc., pleased others. In Davenport's words,

*At this time Mohammed was in the pride of manhood his figure was commanding, his aspect majestic, his features regular and most expressive, his eyes black and piercing, his nose slightly aquiline, his mouth well formed and furnished with pearly teeth, while his cheeks were ruddy with robust health. Art had imparted to his naturally black flowing hair and beard a lighter chestnut hue. His captivating smile, his rich and sonorous voice, the graceful dignity of his gestures, the apparent frankness and heartiness of his manner, gained him the favourable attention of all whom he addressed.*⁶²

The prolific author Washington Irving wrote in his book *The Life of Muhammad* that Prophet Muhammad's manners were peaceful and he was always level-headed. He had a sense of humour but was serious and distinguished and always wore a sweet smile.

*His deportment, in general, was calm and equable; he sometimes indulged in pleasantry, but more commonly was grave and dignified, though he is said to have possessed a smile of captivating sweetness.*⁶³

Respect

Edward Gibbon highlighted that the great personality of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was a divine gift. Members of the public were amazed even before he started speaking. They took his side. People respected his command, the topics he spoke about and the way he delivered his speeches. His body language was expressive. His physical attributes made people show regard to him

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

“Shall I not inform you about the inmates of Hell? It is every violent, impertinent and arrogant person

Source: ﷺ

Bukhāri- 440 &
Muslim - 2853

and accept what he said. He was brave and always clear about what he should do and when. In Gibbon's words:

*Before he spoke, the orator engaged on his side the affections of a public or private audience. They applauded his commanding presence, his majestic aspect, his piercing eye, his gracious smile, his flowing beard, his countenance that painted every sensation of the soul, and his gestures that enforced each expression of the tongue. In the familiar offices of life he scrupulously adhered to the grave and ceremonious politeness of his country: his respectful attention to the rich and powerful was dignified by his condescension and affability to the poorest citizens of Makkah: the frankness of his manner concealed the artifice of his views; and the habits of courtesy were imputed to personal friendship or universal benevolence. His memory was capacious and retentive; his wit easy and social; his imagination sublime; his judgment clear, rapid, and decisive. He possessed the courage both of thought and action; and, although his designs might gradually expand with his success, the first idea which he entertained of his divine mission bears the stamp of an original and superior genius...*⁶⁴

Qualities

William Montgomery Watt reports that Islam spread by leaps and bounds even beyond the Arabian lands. However, that spread was possible only because of the amazing qualities that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) possessed. Otherwise, such expansion could have never taken place.⁶⁵

A British civil engineer, Rowland George Allanson-Winn, 5th Baron Headley, said that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had very good qualities which were never seen in any other single individual in history:

No one can claim the quality of mercy who has never had anyone at his mercy, and there is no character in history which can be so safely held up for inspection and illustration of this particular quality as the Holy Prophet Mahomet.⁶⁶

The prolific Chinese author Liu Chai-Lien admired the Prophet of Islam and claimed that God would not have created the universe or any creatures if he had not created him. According to Lin:

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ	Source: ﷺ
Faith (Belief) consists of more than sixty branches and modesty (Al-Hayā') is a branch of Faith."	Bukhāri - 9

*The Prophet was the most cherished person of the whole creation, wherefore the Lord God said to Jesus: "Had it not been for Mohammed, I would not have created heaven, earth, men and spirits." So there can be no doubt that his was a special life.*⁶⁷

Liu maintains that the Prophet was the most praiseworthy amongst all of God's creatures. His characteristics, action and sayings, etc., were of the highest quality:

*In creation, the Prophet was the most honourable; his natural endowments and gifts, and his aspirations, were of the highest; his family and his dwelling-places were most noble and distinguished. There was not a single thing connected with him which was not most honourable, hence he is called the Most Holy Prophet.*⁶⁸

Anita Rai, a British author, praises the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) for the great personality he showed by marrying Khadijah (RA), who was 15 years older than him and twice married before. Rai does not feel that such a marriage is disgraceful, offensive or abhorrent; rather she admires the Prophet for his great personality⁶⁹

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

Whoever purposely throws himself from a mountain and kills himself, will be in the (Hell) Fire falling down into it and abiding therein perpetually forever; and whoever drinks poison and kills himself with it, he will be carrying his poison in his hand and drinking it in the (Hell) Fire wherein he will abide eternally forever; and whoever kills himself with an iron weapon, will be carrying that weapon in his hand and stabbing his 'Abdomen with it in the (Hell) Fire wherein he will abide eternally forever."

Source: ﷺ

Bukhari 5778

CHAPTER 4: MOST INFLUENTIAL

The prolific authors Kerry Brown and Martin Palmer wrote in their book *The Essential Teachings of Islam* that Prophet Muhammad (SAW), the central person of Islam, is a human being and not divine who is nevertheless given the highest tribute:

*The key figure of Islam is of course Muhammad. While Muhammad is considered to be only a human being and in no way divine, he is accorded great respect.*⁷⁰

The Prime Minister of Fiji, Commodore Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, paid tribute to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in a speech on the occasion of the Prophet's birthday, declaring him as one of the most influential spiritual leaders of the world. The Prime Minister said in his speech:

*My Fellow Fijians, Today we join hundreds of millions around the world in celebrating the birth and life of one of the world's most influential spiritual leaders – the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. For Muslims everywhere, the Prophet Muhammad's life and message are the very core of Islam, and guide their faith....*⁷¹

A British soldier, scholar and author, Sir John Glubb, claimed that he was not doubtful about Prophet Muhammad's success, which was due to his great personality and certainly not to military actions. In the present time we think of him as a strong man who was a leader, but the truth is that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was naturally a soft person. We have no example of him giving tyrannical commands or punishing those who did not comply with his instructions.⁷²

Ernest Renan, a French scholar, wrote in 1851 that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was alive through the whole of history, "in the full light of history".⁷³

The celebrated author Isaac Mason, a British missionary with the Friends Foreign Mission Association in China, narrated an interesting story about how Islam was first spread in China. The story goes that the emperor of China sent his astronomer to the West to find out about a new star which had appeared in the sky. After a year-long journey, the astronomer reached the Prophet and asked him to travel to China. The Prophet, instead, sent his messenger Saad ibn Waqqas. Having heard the astonishing tales of the Prophet, the emperor ordered a mosque to be built in Canton, China. Mason states:

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

You will not enter paradise until you have faith; and you will not complete your faith, till you love one another.

Source: ﷺ

Muslim: 54

The account given of the first entry of Moslems into China says that in the sixth year of K'ai Huang of the Sui dynasty, (A.D. 586) there was seen in the sky a strange star; the Emperor commanded the Chief Astronomer to divine its meaning, and he said that an extraordinary person was appearing in the West. The Emperor sent an envoy to investigate, and he arrived in Mecca after about a year's travelling. The envoy desired Mohammed to proceed to the East, but he declined; he sent, however, his maternal uncle Saad Wakkas, and three others, to accompany the envoy to China. The envoy secretly had a portrait of the Prophet made to take back with him; this was given to the Emperor who proceeded to worship it, and when he arose, the scroll was there but the picture had vanished. Saad Wakkas explained that this was due to the influence of the Prophet who had forbidden to men the worship of images and the "kowitz." The Emperor was so impressed that he gave directions for the building of the "Prophet Remembrance", a mosque at Canton.⁷⁴

Another Chinese Emperor, Hong-Wu (also known as Zhū Yuánzhāng, 1368–1398) had high regard for Prophet Muhammad (SAW). He expressed his admiration in a poem of 100 words which was displayed in many mosques in China. The poem, translated into English, is as follows:

*Since Creation of Universe Heaven has already appointed,
Faith Preaching Giant Saint, ...To guide all creations, King of all
Kings, Leader of Holy Ones ...Away from all wrongdoings, Mercy to
the World, Walking ancient Crowned Path, Evil vanquished to One,
Religion Pure and True, Muhammad, The Noble High One ...⁷⁵*

The Orientalist myths regarding Prophet Muhammad (SAW) must be set aside in view of their falsity. The fabrication surrounding Prophet Muhammad's personality has been a huge disservice to those generally interested in the truth. The hundreds of millions of people claiming adherence to Islam can be seen as a product of Prophet Muhammad's efforts and the examples that he set. Given the huge number of people who have adopted Islam as a faith and chosen to live by its guidelines, we cannot dismiss Islam and its messenger Prophet Muhammad (SAW), summarily. Thomas Carlyle, the Scottish writer, essayist, historian and teacher, said that the myths regarding Prophet Muhammad (SAW) must be cast aside due to their implausibility.

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

Anyone of you who sees wrong, let him remove it with his hand; and if he cannot, then let him speak against it with his tongue, and if he cannot do this either, then (let him abhor it) with his heart, and this is the least of a person's faith.

Source: ﷺ

Muslim: 49

The attribute of sincerity is essential when determining a person's heroism. However, a person insisting he is sincere defeats the object. One who is sincere need not tell others that he is sincere. For those claiming sincerity are full of insincerity and pretence. Rather, sincerity should be reflected in their actions. The sign of a genuinely sincere person is one who keeps his noble deeds to himself and never makes a public act drawing attention to himself. In fact, one may argue that a sincere person is someone who does not consciously acknowledge his acts of sincerity, but rather someone who fears that he may succumb to insincere intentions, given his awareness that, as a fallible individual, he like anyone else is prone to inconsistency and error. Being unconscious of one's sincerity, then, is a prerequisite of a sincere person. Vanity, pomp, and smug self-congratulation are not in a sincere person's vernacular and a sincere person is never afflicted with these malaises. Carlyle says:

*But of a Great Man especially, of him I will venture to assert that it is incredible he should have been other than true. It seems to me the primary foundation of him, and of all that can lie in him, this. No Mirabeau, Napoleon, Burns, Cromwell, no man adequate to do anything, but is first of all in right earnest about it; what I call a sincere man. I should say sincerity, a deep, great, genuine sincerity, is the first characteristic of all men in any way heroic. Not the sincerity that calls itself sincere; ah no, that is a very poor matter indeed; a shallow braggart conscious sincerity; oftenest self-conceit mainly. The great man's sincerity is of the kind he cannot speak of, is not conscious of; nay, I suppose, he is conscious rather of insincerity; for what man can walk accurately by the law of truth for one day? No, the great man does not boast himself sincere, far from that; perhaps does not ask himself if he is so; I would say rather, his sincerity does not depend upon himself; he cannot help being sincere! The great fact of existence is great to him.*⁷⁶

An American author, Major Arthur Glyn Leonard, reported that on one occasion Martin Luther sat at a table with a few friends, and when describing to them his view of the world, he used the analogy of kings, princes, aces, etc., in a pack of cards. According to Luther, the Pope reigned supreme over these lofty men until an "ace" was revealed by God, who overcame the temporal powers. In Luther's opinion, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was this ace, since from him alone emanated a social, political and cultural revolution of unprecedented proportions.

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

Someone said to the Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him), 'Pray to God against the idolaters and curse them.' He replied, 'I have been sent to show mercy and have not been sent to curse.'

Source: ﷺ

Muslim: 2599

*In a conversation that Luther had one day with some friends at table, he spoke of the world as a vast and magnificent pack of cards composed of emperors, kings, princes and so forth. For several ages these had been vanquished by the Pope. Then God had come upon the scene, and chosen the "ace," the very smallest card in the pack – himself, in a word – and overthrown this conqueror of worldly powers and principalities. Mohammed, as much as Luther, was one of "God's Aces." Seldom, indeed, in the history of the world, has so great a human river flowed from a source so puny. Never did the divine manifest itself in a single pip, so seemingly small and insignificant as a cause, yet so pre-eminently and consistently great as an effect!*⁷⁷

Leonard went on to say that Prophet Muhammad (SAW)'s activities were for all and forever. He explained that God's creation was for worldly and religious purposes. An in-depth study of the Qur'an reveals that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) exerted all of his energy and thoughts on the completion of his great mission. Leonard added:

*Mohammed was a thinker and a worker not only for his own, but for all time. He recognized that man was equally a political and religious product of God's creation. He understood that as a counterpoise to man's materialism and to the destructive in his nature, is that indefinable essence which we call the spiritual and the constructive. The more one looks into and understands the Koran, the more obvious is it that Mohammed concentrated all the active and vigorous energies of his vivid and powerful imagination, also his virile mentality, on the accomplishment of his great design.*⁷⁸

Barnaby Rogerson, the celebrated author, states that according to Islam, whatever merits all mankind could have, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) possessed alone himself. Rogerson also quotes the mystic poet Rumi, who described the Prophet as proof of the existence of God. But the Prophet himself said that he was an ordinary human being.⁷⁹

The Orientalist and historian Edward Sell admired Prophet Muhammad (SAW) for his strength of personality in influencing the local people in Madinah at a time when there was no law and order in society. Quarrels and fights were the order of the day and it was difficult for the local politicians to resolve these situations. However, after the advent of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), the situation started to change. The great personality of the Prophet influenced not only the ordinary people but also the leaders. Edward Sell asserts:

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

Whoever is deprived of kindness is deprived of all good.

Source: ﷺ

Muslim 2592

*There were plenty of quarrels in Madinah. Muhammad by his claims, and also by the force of his own personality, soon acquired even a greater influence than the ancient kahins (local politicians) ever possessed, for his authority was becoming political as well as religious.*⁸⁰

Deepak Chopra, an Indian author, wrote in the ‘author’s Note’ of his book *Prophet Muhammad: A Story of the Last Prophet* about the spiritual side of the Prophet. He admits that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) appealed to him most because the Prophet reformed humankind by reaching into the inner level of the divine. Such an achievement was only possible with divine guidance. Chopra further says that the Prophet’s achievements through this divine guidance guided him to become a leader in daily life.⁸¹

According to John William Draper, the American scientist, philosopher and historian, the influence which Prophet Muhammad (SAW) exercised over mankind is not surpassed by anybody. His leadership over vast peoples and his role as spiritual mentor for over a billion people could explain and do justice to his prophethood. His influence can be felt all across the earth. Draper highlighted that:

*Four years after the death of Justinian, A.D. 569, was born in Makkah, in Arabia, the man Muhammad, 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... The towering personality of Muhammad has left bright and indelible imprints on all mankind.*⁸²

Carlyle observed that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) earned the title of *Al-Ameen* (the trustworthy). He was a very faithful, caring, and generous person; whatever he spoke was meaningful and he used to remain silent when there was nothing to say. He had beautiful physical attributes, personal qualities, and an excellent approach which pleased all people. Carlyle added:

But, from an early age, he had been remarked as a thoughtful man. His companions named him “Al Amin, the Faithful.” A man of truth and fidelity; true in what he did, in what he spoke and thought. They noted that he always meant something. A man rather 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. This is the only sort of speech worth speaking! Through life we find him to have been regarded as an

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

Treat your children fairly, treat your children fairly

Source: ﷺ

An-Nasā'ī
3687

*altogether solid, brotherly, genuine man. A serious, sincere character; yet amiable, cordial, companionable, jocular even; - a good laugh in him withal: there are men whose laugh is as untrue as anything about them; who cannot laugh.*⁸³

Professor Tor Julius Efraim Andrae (Tor Andrae), a Swedish scholar, stated that the scholars in history compared Prophet Muhammad (SAW) with Numa, the second king of Rome and Theseus, the founder-king of Athens. The scholars admired Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as a wise and informed lawgiver. Andrae also mentioned that scholars considered Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to be a genuinely sincere, unusual personality, a great man, an original man, etc.⁸⁴

The prolific author Arthur Naylor Wollaston declared that prophet of Islam was undoubtedly a genius person who had influenced the whole of mankind. According to the author:

*The Prophet of Islam – a genius who, whatever may be the verdict of posterity in regard to his “mission”, has had a more potent influence on the destinies of mankind than has been vouchsafed to any son of Adam who has left footprints on the sands of time.*⁸⁵

Dr Henry Stubbe, a British writer and scholar, wrote in his book *An Account of the Rise and Progress of Mahometanism* that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is perhaps the only figure in the history of mankind of whom opinions are split right down the middle, be they positive or negative. With much of the world revering him and many others condemning him, there is hardly anyone who has left a similar legacy. What cannot be denied is how instrumental Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was and still is for a huge part of the earth's population. The irony, however, is that Prophet Muhammad (SAW), despite his adulation of Jesus (pbuh) and his command to his followers to respect Jesus, is nonetheless scolded and described in the most irreverent and derisory terms.

Leonard uses a farming analogy to explain that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) worked as an instrument of God to establish the religion despite facing huge difficulties, and suffering at the hands of his enemies. His good manners helped him endure misfortunes and led him to eventual victory.

His hand was to the plough – the plough God. God was the goal, the end, the summit of human existence and ambition. Humanity was the soil, and to get there he must furrow his way through its enmities and affections. Firm and exceptional natures

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

'Indeed (each) one of you is the mirror of his brother. So if he sees something harmful in him, then let him remove it from him.'

Source: ﷺ

Tirmidhi 1929

*are thus moulded out of miseries, misfortunes and afflictions. As a result of his work history shows us more and more that Mohammed was firm and exceptional to the very highest degree.*⁸⁶

Diwan Chand Sharma, a Member of Parliament, Indian Congress Party, admires the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) for his compassion and control over the situation of his time. If Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was renowned for anything, it was his natural kindness. He had a very amicable nature that left a positive impression upon many:

*Muhammad was the soul of kindness and his influence was felt and never forgotten by those around him.*⁸⁷

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was a highly talented person whose tremendous achievements entitle him to the high regard of all. The quickness with which Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) assumed the seat of power and the reverence with which he was regarded in his community was extraordinary. This was to have a tremendous impact on the rest of the world. John Austin, a British philosopher and writer, echoes the same idea:

*In little more than a year he was actually the spiritual, nominal and temporal rule of Madinah, with his hands on the lever that was to shake the world.*⁸⁸

W. Montgomery Watt, Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Edinburgh, acknowledges that Prophet Muhammad's conviction in his message and fortitude to suffer and bear the brunt of whatever came his way for the sake that his message prevailed, is testimony to his resilience. The good character and integrity of his followers and those who were attracted by his character are further evidence of his uprightness, and the fact that he never deliberately compromised or jeopardised the security and well-being of his people. Given his stature, it is a travesty that misinformation about Prophet Muhammad (SAW) runs rife in the Western world.⁸⁹

The drastic overhaul which could be seen in the character and nature of the Arab population is owing to the genius of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). His propagation of Islam and promises of victory resonated strongly with the Arabs, who were desperate to escape from their shackles and self-inflicted wounds. Prophet Muhammad's message helped inculcate revolutionary zeal among the Arabs, and the swiftness with which this occurred is difficult for the modern man to digest. More often than not, revolutions and mass social upheavals are spearheaded by personalities oozing intellect and charisma, and Prophet Muhammad (SAW) certainly possessed those traits. His unflinching support for the

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

Indeed a Muslim who mixes with the people and is patient with [possible] harm that may befall him, is better than the Muslim who does not mix with the people and is not patient with their harm.

Source: ﷺ

Tirmidhi 2507

Islamic cause meant that both he and his followers were undaunted and undeterred by any of the practical obstacles and possible harm that may ensue, when delivering the message. Prior to Prophet Muhammad (SAW), the Arabs were sad spectacles of savagery, yet Prophet Muhammad (SAW) managed to successfully instil in them a unity of purpose for the greater good. He was known to have granted security to those requesting it and would always come across as the most amicable of persons in discussions.

Lane-Poole observes that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) taught the people whatever he received through the revelation. The Arabs were involved in barbaric activities which he brought to an end. The Prophet was their most faithful protector. According to Lane-Poole,

*Mohammed was so far true, that he taught honestly and strenuously what he believed to be the only right faith, and there was enough of sublimity in the creed and of enthusiasm in the Prophet and his hearers to produce that wave of overmastering popular feeling which people call fanaticism. The Arabs before the time of Mohammed had been a collection of rival tribes or clans, excelling in the savage virtues of bravery, hospitality, and even chivalry, and devoted to the pursuit of booty. The Prophet turned the Arab tribes, for the nonce, into the Moslem people, filled them with the fervour of martyrs, and added to the greed of plunder the nobler ambition of bringing all mankind to the knowledge of the truth...He was the most faithful protector of those he protected, the sweetest and most agreeable in conversation. Those who saw him were suddenly filled with reverence; those who came near him loved him; they who described him would say, "I have never seen his like either before or after." He was of great taciturnity, but when he spoke it was with emphasis and deliberation, and no one could forget what he said...*⁹⁰

John Eade, a Professor of Sociology and Anthropology and former Executive Director of CRONEM (Centre for Research on Nationalism, Ethnicity and Multiculturalism which links Roehampton and the University of Surrey), considers that there is something more 'normal' in Prophet Muhammad's character compared to other historical figures. This aspect of his personality may lead others easily to follow him on a practical level.

According to Professor Eade,

Unlike Jesus, Muhammad was in many respects an everyday person. He was a merchant. What's interesting about him is that he

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

"Worship God as though you see Him; if you cannot see Him then know He can see you."

Source: ﷺ

Bukhārī 4777

*had an everyday life but was chosen to be the spokesperson for Allah. Unlike Jesus who never married and never had children, Muhammad is clearly different. He appears to be a kind of normal person.*⁹¹

Geoffrey Parrinder goes on to say that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was required to work in many environments at various times, but it did not affect him much. From his beginnings as a shepherd through the caravan trade to solitary meditation on the mount he moved on to preaching a religion, exile to Madinah and then achieving victory! American author R.B. Smith was very doubtful if any other person could retain the humbleness all throughout his life as Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had. Parrinder echoed this opinion:

*On the whole, the wonder is not how much but how little, under different circumstances, Muhammad differed from himself. In the shepherd of the desert, in the Syrian trader, in the solitary of Mount Hira, in the reformer in the minority of one, in the exile of Madinah, in the acknowledged conqueror, in the equal of the Persian Chosroes [a famous and powerful king of ancient Persia] and the Greek Heraclius, we can still trace a substantial unity. I doubt whether any other man, whose external conditions changed so much, ever himself changed less to meet them. The accidents are changed; the essence seems to me to be the same in all.*⁹²

Prophet Muhammad's cerebral nature and logical attributes were central to his character. He possessed the ability to recollect information and think creatively at a very high level. Everything from his mental capacity to his diet was afforded the greatest degree of care, and his dress never suggested he was someone full of pomp and pride. Washington Irving, the American author, biographer and historian, admired Prophet Muhammad (SAW) for his amazing qualities, bright thoughtful mind and creative nature. He commented:

*His intellectual qualities were undoubtedly of an extraordinary kind. He had a quick apprehension, a retentive memory, a vivid imagination and an inventive genius...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.*⁹³

The celebrated historian Edward Montet studied the lives of the prophets of different times. He compares other prophets with Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

"I am leaving two things among you, and if you cling to them firmly you will never go astray; one is the Book of God and the other is my Sunnah (way of life)."

Source: ﷺ

Muwatta Mālik
1628

claims that there had been no Prophet who was as credible as he was. Montet declares that: “No Prophet has ever been as completely vindicated as he was.”⁹⁴

Roche Forlong, a Major General of the Indian Army who was trained as an engineer in Scotland and England, paid tribute to Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Having done thorough research for over forty years on the character, virtues, behaviour and dealings of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) Forlong came to the conclusion that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is among the greatest of persons who have ever lived on earth and he justly received deep respect from all – whether in public or in private. In Forlong’s words:

*After long, very full and candid study of the great Arabian and his faith, his public and private character, virtues and defects; his times and circumstances, a study extending over forty years and in close connection with Muhammadans of all sets and nations, we must confess that the Prophet stands high in the list of the greatest of the earth's rulers and the makers of history. Alike, in camp and council, as a governor of men, administrator and organiser of brave and turbulent tribes or settled nations, Muhammad commanded the respect of statesmen, friends and foes; and was loved, honoured and esteemed by all privileged to know him privately or publicly.*⁹⁵

The writer G. Lindsay Johnson highlights that throughout history, there has been a lot of misinformation about Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and little appreciation of the fact that he led a very noble and honourable life. His time on this earth was spent in devotion to God and encouraging others towards righteousness and piety. Extremism was something he spoke out against, and a reading of his life would vindicate this. The calumnies uttered against him and his messages are unfounded. Lindsay Johnson wrote in his book *The Two Worlds*:

*The ignorance displayed by most Christians regarding the Muslim religion is appalling... Mohammad alone, among the nations at that time, believed in one God to the exclusion of all others. He insisted on righteousness as the source of conduct, of filial duty, and on frequent prayers to, the Ever-living God, and of respect to all other peoples, and of justice and mercy to and moderation in all things, and to hold in great respect learning of every kind... Most of the absurdities which Christians would have us believe to exist in the Qur'an were never uttered by Mohammad himself, nor are they to be found in a correct translation of the work.*⁹⁶

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

"Mercy does not descend on a people when there is someone among them who severs ties of kinship."

Source: ﷺ

Al-Adab Al-Mufrad 63

Like so many other celebrated world scholars, Gustave Le Bon, a French historian and sociologist, asserts Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to be the greatest man that history ever knew. Le Bon further claimed that, if it were not for prejudice, Western writers would acknowledge his great works. In Le Bon's words:

*If the value of men was to be measured by the great acts they did, Muhammad (peace be upon him) was one of the greatest figures throughout history. Western scholars started to be fair with Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), though religious bigotry made several other historians blind to acknowledge his virtue.*⁹⁷

Owing to his lofty status, there has hardly been a person in history whose time on this earth has been recounted in such comprehensive detail as Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The eminent scholar John Davenport said:

*It may be truly affirmed that of all known legislators and conquerors, not one can be named, the history of whose life has been written with greater authenticity and fuller detail, than that of Mohammed.*⁹⁸

Annie Besant was a prominent British Theosophist, women's rights activist, writer and orator and supporter of Irish and Indian self-rule. She regarded Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as the great messenger of the Supreme. According to her, anyone who studied about the Prophet, how he preached and the simple lifestyle he maintained, would certainly develop respect for the great Prophet. Besant seems overwhelmed with admiration for Prophet Muhammad (SAW). She concedes that repeated reading about the Prophet makes her more humble and respectful to him, the powerful teacher of the Arabian Peninsula. In her words:

*It is impossible for anyone who studies the life and character of the great Prophet of Arabia, who knows how he taught and how he lived, to feel anything but reverence for that mighty Prophet, one of the great messengers of the Supreme. And although in what I put to you I shall say many things which may be familiar to many, yet I myself feel whenever I re-read them, a new way of admiration, a new sense of reverence for that mighty Arabian teacher.*⁹⁹

The British poet Edwin Arnold had a very high regard for Prophet Muhammad (SAW), a talented teacher who had established a huge kingdom with a

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

If a judge gives a verdict [according to the best of his knowledge] and his verdict is correct he will receive a double reward, and if he gives a verdict [according to the best of his knowledge] and his verdict is wrong, he will get one reward

Source: ﷺ

Bukhāri 7352

new faith and civilisation. The spread of Islam should not be rejected, but rather accepted. Arnold wrote:

*That marvellous and gifted teacher created a vast empire of new belief and new civilisation, and prepared a sixth part of humanity for the developments and reconciliations which later times will bring. For Islam must be conciliated; it cannot be thrust scornfully inside or rooted out. It shares the task of the education of the world with its sister religions.*¹⁰⁰

Washington Irving noted that Prophet Muhammad's facial appearance was ruddy and when a divine revelation descended on him, his face became very bright; his followers took it as the mystical light of prophecy. Irving claims that the Prophet was a man of tremendous wisdom and talent. In his words:

*His complexion was ruddier than is usual with Arabs, and in his excited and enthusiastic moments there was a glow and radiance in his countenance, which his disciples magnified into the supernatural light of prophecy. His intellectual qualities were undoubtedly of an extraordinary kind. He had a quick apprehension, a retentive memory, a vivid imagination, and an inventive genius.*¹⁰¹

William James Durant, a prolific American writer, historian and philosopher, admired Prophet Muhammad (SAW), saying that he was a great Prophet who established monotheism. He was selected by God to serve mankind:

*Muhammad was a great Prophet and a unique supreme monotheist who was chosen to reclaim the [sic] humankind.*¹⁰²

In another account, Durant claimed Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to be the greatest figure in history in terms of exerting effective influence on people.

*If we rated the greatness by the influence of the great on people we will say –Muhammad is the greatest of the great in history.*¹⁰³

With reference to the great personality of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), American author Elsa Marston also points out that his articulate speech and strong personality and character drew the attention of his people. Marston further claims that Prophet Muhammad (SAW), due to his great personality and having no lust for any worldly benefits, rejected offers from the Makkan rich and the merchants who tried to deviate him from preaching the new religion:

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

The Prophet (peace and blessings of God be upon him) was not indecent, nor was he obscene, he would not shout in the markets, and he would not reciprocate an evil deed with an evil deed, but rather he would pardon and overlook.

Source: ﷺ

Tirmidhi -
2016

*At first the rich merchants ignored the Prophet. As his criticisms grew sharper, merchants assumed he was seeking wealth and power. They tried to buy him off with promises of riches, power, and prestige. He rejected every offer, saying his mission had nothing to do with these things.*¹⁰⁴

The Reverend Stephens, North London Church, pays high tribute to Prophet Muhammad (SAW), saying that he was a great patron of his people, who did not have a rational religion, organised political structure or good morals.

However, the Prophet (SAW) established all of those essential elements of the society. Revd Stephens highlights:

*First of all, it must be freely granted that to his own people Muhammad was a great benefactor. He was born in a country where political organizations, and rational faith, and pure morals were unknown. He introduced all three. By a single stroke of masterly genius he simultaneously reformed the political condition, the religious creed, and the moral practice of his countrymen. In the place of many independent tribes he left a nation: for a superstitious belief in gods many and lords many he established a reasonable belief in one Almighty yet Beneficent Being; taught men to live under an abiding sense of this Being's superintending care, to look to Him as the Rewarder, and to fear him as the Punisher of evil-doers.*¹⁰⁵

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was a very reflective and contemplative individual. He would pay great attention to his heart and the nature of mankind in general. As a deep thinker, he would always keep himself tuned in with the current state and condition of his people. An essential trait and characteristic of his prophethood was sincerity. Some have suggested that Prophet Muhammad's purity as a human being was symbolic of a divine involvement, or at least a divine element in his life. His message was in accordance with the natural disposition of man and could not be compared with the teachings of others. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) questioned the very purpose of life and existence and was very eager to unearth the nature of man, and probe into matters like death.

Alphonse Marie Louis de Prat de Lamartine, a French writer, poet and politician, states that the objectives which Prophet Muhammad (SAW) set for himself would be considered by many to be beyond human capability. The crux of his message and his teaching was to bring human beings into an affinity with their creator. When we consider the deeply entrenched polytheism that prevailed during his time, his active promotion of monotheism would have been considered

daring by anyone's standards. The limitations of his environment and insufficient resources would have prompted many to pack in their mission, yet Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) did not even consider the possibility that his message would not be successful. It can be argued that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) bequeathed perhaps the most radical and enduring legacy of anyone in history, judging by the phenomenal spread of Islam. De Lamartine notes:

*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.*¹⁰⁶

He went on to say that when we reflect on how Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had to overcome numerous obstacles and limitations, and then ponder how he achieved what he did despite these weaknesses, it makes him as a person even more remarkable. History is a testimony to the creation of empires and armies which after periods of existence met their demise. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was not only successful in these fields, but his real success lay in the ability to penetrate the hearts of men. According to De Lamartine:

*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.*¹⁰⁷

George Sale, a British Orientalist and solicitor, best known for his translation of the Qur'an into English (1734) reported that, having heard the incident in Mount Hera from Prophet Muhammad (SAW), his wife Khadijah (RA) realised that he would be the next Prophet and she consulted her Christian cousin,

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

The one who suppresses his anger and has the power to give act [on his anger], will be called out by God, the Exalted, to the forefront of his creation on the Day of Resurrection and will be asked to choose any of the virgins (Hūr) of his liking.

Source: ﷺ

Abū Dāwūd-
4777

Waraqa, a learned man of the time. Waraqa assured her that the same angel appeared before Moses and now came to Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Sale notes that

*Khadijah (RA) received the news with great joy, swearing by him in whose hands her soul was, that she trusted he would be the prophet of his nation, and immediately communicated what she had heard to her cousin, Waraqa Ibn Nawfal, who, being a Christian, could write in the Hebrew character, and was tolerably well versed in the scriptures; and he as readily came into her opinion, assuring her that the same angel who had formerly appeared unto Moses was now sent to Mohammed. This first overture the prophet made in the month of Ramadan, in the fortieth year of his age, which is, therefore, usually called the year of his mission.*¹⁰⁸

British writer H.G. Wells wrote that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) gave a sermon during the last pilgrimage. It is treated as a great sermon by Muslims through which the Prophet commanded several key roles for mankind to follow in their lives on the earth. These commandments are still followed in the daily lives of a huge number of the world's population.¹⁰⁹

Sadhu T.L. Vaswani, an Indian philosopher and educationist who set up Sadhu Vaswani Mission in Hyderabad, Sindh, India had deep respect for Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and regarded him as the mighty hero of the world. Leading a life always threatened by his foes, he preached the religion and brought the Arabs out of darkness:

A Hero Prophet. I salute Muhammad as one of the world's mighty heroes; Muhammad has been a world force, a mighty power for the uplift of many peoples. Read the old records, and you will glimpse the grace and beauty of his life. A king and a spiritual leader, he yet mends his clothes. He hearkens to the call of the Unseen. "O thou enwrapped in thy mantle! Arise and preach". They persecute him; his very life is in danger; but he is loyal to the Call; he moves about preaching the way of peace. I have often meditated on the last words whispered by Muhammad him before he passed away: "Lord; grant me pardon, and join me to the fellowship on high!" Who will not say that such a man was beautiful in death? And consider for a moment what the faith he preached has achieved. Islam has given the world a religion without priests. Islam abolished infanticide in Arabia; Islam enjoined on the faithful total abstinence

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

"The people who have mercy will be shown mercy by Ar-Rahmān (The Most Merciful). So be merciful on the earth, and you will be shown mercy from Who is above the heavens"

Source: ﷺ

Tirmidhi-1924

*from drink, Islam emphasised the great qualities of faith, courage, endurance and self-sacrifice.*¹¹⁰

Through the magnetic teachings of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had brought the people from their tribal lives to an ordered society. His honest desire had worked very favourably. 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 fibre with all the magnetism of true inspiration.

Lala Lajpat Rai, an Indian author, politician and leader also known as 'The Lion of Punjab' paid tribute to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) by ranking the Prophet in the highest position amongst religious preachers:

*I have not the least hesitation in declaring that I entertain highest respect for the Prophet of Islam. In my opinion he holds the highest rank amongst Religious Teachers and Reformers.*¹¹¹

The celebrated British author John Davenport praises Prophet Muhammad (SAW) for his keenness for education, although he was unlettered. He placed knowledge before wealth and encouraged people to travel far to acquire education:

*Through its brightest periods, nay, even from its origin, Mohammedanism was, comparatively, favourable to literature. Mohammed himself said that "a mind without erudition was like a body without a soul; that glory consists not in wealth, but in knowledge;" and he charged his followers to seek for learning in the remotest parts of the globe.*¹¹²

Tor Andrae felt that the Prophet spoke in a way that was not like the way other people spoke. The words he spoke had in-depth meaning and reality. This was because he lived in regular fellowship with reality.¹¹³

Prophet Muhammad's outstanding wisdom, personality and virtue have been studied over the centuries by a wide range of philosophers, historians, authors, etc., and they have praised him. George Sale, in 1734, compared the greatness of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to that of Numa and Theseus. George Sale holds that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was a man of great intelligence. Many historians had praised him for his balanced methods of ruling and keen memory, which developed significantly over his years of experience. His amicable characteristics and personal attributes made him popular with all:

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

"The best of you are those who are best to the women."

Source: ﷺ

Tirmidhi 3895

*He had indisputably a very piercing and sagacious wit, and was thoroughly versed in all the arts of insinuation. The eastern historians describe him to have been a man of an excellent judgment, and a happy memory; and these natural parts were improved by a great experience and knowledge of men, and the observations he had made in his travels. They say he was a person of few words, of an equal cheerful temper, pleasant and familiar in conversation, of inoffensive behaviour towards his friends, and of great condescension towards his inferiors.*¹¹⁴

One of the most remarkable things about Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was that his attributes related to virtually every important human function and need. Whether in the aspect of trade, governance or law, he straddled all aspects of human and social organisation. K.S. Ramkrishna Rao, an Indian Professor of Philosophy, applauds him in his work *Muhammad The Prophet of Islam*. Rao regards the Prophet as the perfect model for human life:

*The personality of Muhammad, it is most difficult to get into the whole truth of it. Only a glimpse of it I can catch. What a dramatic succession of picturesque scenes! There is Muhammad, the Prophet. There is Muhammad, the Warrior; Muhammad, the Businessman; Muhammad, the Statesman; Muhammad, the Orator; Muhammad, the Reformer; Muhammad, the Refuge of Orphans; Muhammad, the Protector of Slaves; Muhammad, the Emancipator of Women; Muhammad, the Judge; Muhammad, the Saint. In all these magnificent roles, in all these departments of human activities, he is alike a hero.*¹¹⁵

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) grew up an orphan and in this sense did not have the tender love and care from parents, which is so important for a person's emotional well-being. The fact that his fortunes changed and he assumed power and status did not change the fact that he knew that as humans, all were equally accountable before God. He had gone through much during his prophethood, and endured the highs and lows with his companions. None of this deterred him from his ultimate mission, which was to spread the word of God. K.S. Ramkrishna Rao adds:

Orphanhood is an extreme form of helplessness and his life upon this earth began with it; Kingship is the height of material power and it ended with it! From an orphan boy to a persecuted refugee and then to an overlord, spiritual as well as temporal, of a whole nation and arbiter of its destinies, with all its trials and temptations, with all its vicissitudes and changes, its lights and

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

"He is not one of us who does not have mercy on our young and does not respect our elders."

Source: ﷺ

Tirmidhi 1919

*shades, its ups and downs, its terror and splendour, he has withstood the fire of the world and came out unscathed to serve as a model in every phase of life. His achievements are not limited to one aspect of life, but cover the whole field of human conditions.*¹¹⁶

A British politician (requested to be anonymous) has paid high tribute to Prophet Muhammad (SAW), saying

*Muhammad had a very edifying and educating effect on humanity. After describing Islam as 'beautiful', he said Muhammad was 'an enormously civilizing force'.*¹¹⁷

It was Prophet Muhammad's conviction in the most High which saw him exercise a tremendous influence over his people. John Medows Rodwell (1808–1900), a friend of Charles Darwin and an English clergyman of the Church of England, writes in the preface of the translation of the Qur'an:

*Muhammad'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.*¹¹⁸

It is a privilege for Muslims that they are the followers of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), as his teachings have enlightened people. Pandit Sunder Lal Sharma was so enamoured by Prophet Muhammad's personality that he claimed that hardly anyone of his stature had ever been seen in human history. The Pandit says that the Muslims are very lucky as they have a Prophet like Prophet Muhammad (SAW). However, they would be unlucky if they do not obey his teachings; his teachings are like a light in the darkness. He studied Islam in university and was very influenced by the Prophet (SAW), as he remarks:

*Muslims are fortunate in having Muhammad as their prophet; they are more than unfortunate if they violate his teachings – so nice and so illuminating indeed. These teachings, in my opinion, have proved to be beacon light to mankind. As a student of the history of Islam which has been my subject since my university days I have been deeply impressed by the personality of the Prophet of Islam, the like of whom is seldom born in history.*¹¹⁹

Dr John Clark Archer, Professor of Comparative Religion at Yale University, New Haven, USA, in an article entitled "Our Debt to the Muslim World", observes:

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

"Women are the twin halves of men."

Source: ﷺ

Abū Dāwūd 236

*This tremendous movement came out of Arabia borne by Arabs. The Caliphate and its sole dominion was established by the Arabs, ruled by them and regulated on Arabic principles. The Arabic book of Religion, the Qur'an and its tongue provided articulation for all Muslim lands. The very spirit which infused the Muslim world was Arabic and it was the basis, the driving force of culture.*¹²⁰

As far as history's greatest and most prominent figures are concerned, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is right up there in many people's estimation, mainly owing to his ability to elevate the deadened spirits of men. Sadhu T.L. Vaswani, an Indian educationist, remarks:

*I salute Muhammad as one of the world's mighty heroes. Muhammad has been a world force, a mighty power for the uplift of many peoples.*¹²¹

Samuel Marinus Zwemer was Professor of mission and religions at Princeton Theological Seminary. He says:

*Muhammad was an able reformer, eloquent and well spoken, courageous and daring, a great thinker. We cannot attribute to him anything that contradicts these qualities. The Qur'an that he brought and his history bear witness to the truth of these claims.*¹²²

Guru Nanak, the great founder of the Sikh religion, a world-renowned saint and sage, had profound respect for Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Accordingly, he performed pilgrimage to Makkah twice and visited the tomb of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in Madinah. He used to study the Qur'an in search of the divine message. His love for the Prophet and Islam was reflected in his lifestyle. The great Guru Nanak's teachings included many Islamic aspects, recorded in the Granth Sahib. Some of them are mentioned below:

*God is one. He is the Truth and the Truthful. He has created heavens and earth out of nothing. He is infinite, fearless and harmless. He is immortal. He is not born, nor is any one born of him. He is above resemblance to any one, nor is He capable of incarnation into any human form. He is Rahman (Beneficent) Rahim (Merciful) and Everlasting." ... "The age for the Vedas and Puranas is gone: now the Qur'an is the only book to guide the world." "The saints, reformers, martyrs, Firs, Sheikhs and Qutubs will reap untold benefit if they will send Daruds (God's blessings) on the Holy Prophet."... "The only reason as to why man is constantly restless and goes to hell is that he has no regard for the Prophet.*¹²³

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

"The best of your provision is what you earn, and your children are part of what you earn

Source: ﷺ

Ibn Mājah 2290

Although Prophet Muhammad (SAW) did not have any formal education, he was a genius with God-given potentials, possessing talents and skills enabling him to face obstacles, dilemmas, and the perils of life, and helping him take decisions in the many difficult situations of life and in the field of war, wisely and successfully. Major General Forlong observes:

*Without culture or training, Mahamad bravely and with strong self-reliance entered upon many of the most difficult questions of state craft – economic and international laws – slavery and relations of the sexes in all their complications, as well as on many grievous burdens which no other rulers of Arabia or Western Asia had ventured to tackle. Where he found laws and customs too formidable to arrest, he mitigated them and made it difficult and dangerous for the oppressor to oppress.*¹²⁴

Alphonse de Lamartine showers Prophet Muhammad (SAW) with a number of praiseworthy titles. He believes that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) certainly enriched many aspects of human life and none could be compared with him. Lamartine highlights:

*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?*¹²⁵

The famous historian William Muir, in spite of his markedly hostile attitude towards Prophet Muhammad (SAW), acknowledged the greatness of the Prophet in his book *Life of Mahomet*:

I have thus, as proposed, endeavoured to sketch the original sources for the biography of Mahomet. I have examined the Coran, and have admitted its authority as an authentic and contemporary record. I have enquired into the origin and history of Mahometan tradition, and shown that it contains the elements of truth; and I have endeavoured to indicate some canons, by which fact may be distinguished from the legend and fiction so closely commingled with it. I have enumerated those early biographical compilations which can alone be regarded as worthy of attention, and have shown that no later authors are possessed of an original and independent authority. The principles thus laid down, if followed with sagacity, perseverance, and impartiality, will enable the enquirer to arrive at a fair approximation to historical fact. Many Gordian

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

“Whoever usurps unlawfully even a hand span of land, a collar measuring seven times (this) land will be placed around his neck on the Day of Resurrection”.

Source: ﷺ

Riyad-us-Saliheen-206

*knots regarding the Prophet of Arabia will remain unsolved, many paradoxes still vainly excite curiosity and baffle explanation; but the groundwork of his life will be laid down with confidence; the details will be substantially filled in with all reasonable amplitude; and the student will be able to determine with certainty the leading features of his character.*¹²⁶

Dr Samuel Johnson pays high tribute to Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Highlighting his wonderful character, Dr Johnson says:

*His purely historical character, his simple humanity claiming to be a man among men, his intense realism avoiding all mystical remoteness, the thoroughly democratic and universal form under which his idea of divine monarchy led him to conceive the relations of man the force of ethical appeal all affiliate Muhammad with the modern world.*¹²⁷

General Forlong reports that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) established relations with other countries who sent their ambassadors to Arabia. These foreign diplomats had opportunities to observe very closely the lifestyle, dealings and the preaching of Islam by Prophet Muhammad (SAW). One of them claimed that he did not find any comparison to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) who could rule someone with the same status as Prophet Muhammad (SAW) did. Although he was the head of state, he lived the life of the simplest of persons who required no bodyguards as the leader. He was the real hero in true sense:

*"I have seen," said one of his royal ambassadors, "Khosru, Emperor of Persia, and the Christian Monarch Heraklius, but I have never seen a man ruling his equals as does Mahamad. ... Though head of Church and State, he was a Pope without his pretensions, and a Caesar without his legions, bodyguards, palaces and great revenues. If ever a man had a right to say he ruled by Divine right, it was Mahamad; for he had all the power without the instruments and supports." He was indeed "one of the greatest heroes the world has ever seen – alike as a warrior, legislator, poet and man of genius." Though scarcely able to read and write, he is the author of a book, at once a code of laws, of prayers, and a Bible all in one, which is revered to-day by probably one-sixth of the whole human race, and which is a miracle in purity of style, wisdom and truth.*¹²⁸

Unlettered but Talented

R.V.C. Bodley states that, having started a career as a shepherd and although with no opportunity for schooling, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was more advanced in clear thinking and expressing ideas than any average child of his time. After switching his career from shepherd to the caravan trade, the unlettered Prophet Muhammad (SAW) gradually developed considerable skills and

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

"What do I have to do with the world? I am not in the world except as a rider seeking shade under a tree to rest and then departs"

Source: ﷺ

Tirmidhi 2377

experience as a substantial businessman over the time. This made him popular amongst many merchants, including his uncle. Even before reaching the age of twenty-five, his reputation and honesty spread to different parts of the Arabian world. Bodley notes that Prophet Muhammad's dealing with people from other countries provided him with opportunities to widen his thoughts. He never confined himself only to the divine world like his predecessors; rather he learnt about the world and its problems in a practical way and worked on what he was ordered by God to complete.

Bodley narrates an interesting story about the wisdom of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in connection with the black stone, placed at one corner of the Kaabah, which the Muslims believe to have been sent down from the heavens by God to Prophet Adam (pbuh) and Eve (pbuh) as a token indicating the place where an altar should be built for prayer. The original Kaabah was built where this stone was dropped. While rebuilding the Kabaah, which was destroyed in the great deluge at the time of the Prophet Noah (pbuh), Prophets Abraham (pbuh) and his son Prophet Ismail (pbuh) placed this sacred stone at the south eastern corner of Kaabah. Owing to another flooding of Makkah, five years before Prophet (SAW) received his first revelation from God, the Kaabah was required to be rebuilt. Although the removal of the sacred stone was unchallenged, its replacement, after the rebuilding of the Kaabah, caused huge disagreement amongst the senior personalities as to who would receive the great honour of replacing the stone back in its niche. While no solution was reached and chaos ensued, someone suggested seeking advice from the person who would first enter the courtyard of Kaabah in the morning. And all agreed on that. Next morning, by some coincidence, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) arrived there, ahead of all. Being given the task of solving the problem, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) took off his wrapper and spread it on the ground and he himself placed the stone on the wrapper. He then asked the chiefs and the leaders of the clans to hold the corners and take it to the Kaabah. As they followed his instructions, the Prophet (SAW) lifted the sacred stone and placed it at the designated place at the corner of the Kaabah. The solution was straightforward and it stopped a conflict which could have bloody consequences.¹²⁹

Geoffrey Rowell states that being unlettered does not prevent a person from exerting a great influence on others. Sometimes, other aspects of their personality compensate for this and help leave behind an indelible impression on others. History is replete with examples of unlettered yet enigmatic personalities who have gone on to establish prolific legacies. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was one of them:

He was clearly a powerful and charismatic person. There are quite a lot of instances in history where powerful and

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

“The arrogant person will not enter paradise or the one who is violent.”

Source: ﷺ

Abū Dāwūd : 4801

*charismatic leaders have the quality of inspiring people, even when they were illiterate.*¹³⁰

John Henry Haaren was an American educator and historian. He wrote in his *Famous Men of the Middle Ages* that although Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was unlettered, he was not ignorant. He was a wise person. Haaren notes:

*Mohammed had no school education. He could neither read nor write. But he was not ignorant. He knew well how to do the work entrusted to him, and was a first-rate man of business... He spent much of his time in thinking about religion. He learned all that he could about Judaism and Christianity; but he was not satisfied with either of them.*¹³¹

Author Pierce De Lacy Johnstone argues that being unlettered is not a bar to acquiring knowledge. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was unlettered but his wisdom was of great importance. According to Johnstone,

*The question whether he could or could not read is not of great importance, and is at this date insoluble. He always called himself the "Unlettered Prophet," and appealed to the perfect harmony and eloquence of his Qur'an as being therefore a miracle, sufficient to prove his prophetic mission. Inability to read would not have been a bar to acquisition of knowledge, and a retentive memory (such as was common in Arabia) would secure it.*¹³²

The American author Washington Irving asserts that although Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was not lettered, he was intelligent and brilliant. Lack of formal education did not put him behind in any aspect of his dealings. Irving, points out:

*His intellectual qualities were undoubtedly of an extraordinary kind. He had a quick apprehension, a retentive memory, a vivid imagination, and an inventive genius. Owing but little to education, he had quickened and informed his mind by close observation, and stored it with a great variety of knowledge concerning the systems of religion current in his day, or handed down by tradition from antiquity.*¹³³

Samuel Parsons Scott, a lawyer and writer from Hillsboro, Ohio, in his *History of the Moorish Empire in Europe* (Vol I), attributes all the success of Europe to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). He writes that the reform which Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had to undertake at social and political levels cannot be appreciated enough. It was truly a formidable task and the achievements of Muslims throughout history in many ways owe their genius to Prophet Muhammad (SAW).¹³⁴

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

Verily, the most deserving of people to God are those who begin with the greetings of peace.

Source: ﷺ

Abū Dāwūd 5197,

According to R.V.C Bodley, although many themes of the Qur'an appeared in the earlier divine books, no one can ever undermine the position of Muhammad, the person who reformed religion and brought an energetic force which has been inspiring mankind over the centuries.¹³⁵

Thomas Patrick Hughes, a famous British author, notes that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) did not claim to be the founder of a new religion but was the reformer of the one religion prophesied by the Prophets of God before him. He is the last and the greatest amongst all Prophets of God. He deserves respect for having all-round skills, qualities and the experience of all. He is no doubt the greatest hero, Hughes claims:

*In forming an estimate of Muhammad's prophetic pretensions, it must be remembered that he did not claim to be the founder of a new religion, but merely of a new covenant. He is the last and greatest of all God's prophets. He is sent to convert the world to the one true religion which God had before revealed to the five great lawgivers – Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus! We give Muhammad credit as a warrior, as a legislator, as a poet, as a man of uncommon genius, raising himself amidst great opposition to a pinnacle of renown; we admit that he is, without doubt, one of the greatest heroes the world has ever seen.*¹³⁶

Claude-Etienne Savary, a French Orientalist, pioneer of Egyptology and translator of the Qur'an, had a similar view to Henri de Boulainvilliers (see below). He believed that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was a genius, second to none. Savary said that having been born amongst the idolaters, Prophet Muhammad (SAW), preached and worshipped the religion of one

God. Savary declared the Prophet (SAW) to be one of the greatest men who ever lived.¹³⁷

When Europe was wallowing in misery, Muslims were making the fullest potential of the wisdom which Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had imparted to them, by advancing intellectually and materially. Much of this progressive inheritance is owing to Prophet Muhammad's efforts and sacrifice. Bertrand Russell affirms:

*The supremacy of the East was not only military. Science, philosophy, poetry, and the arts, all flourished in the Muhammadan world at a time when Europe was sunk in barbarism. Europeans, with unpardonable insularity, call this period 'the Dark Ages': but it was only in Europe that it was dark – indeed only in Christian Europe, but for Spain, which was Muhammadan, had a brilliant culture.*¹³⁸

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

Do not harbour grudges against one another, nor jealousy, nor enmity”

Source: ﷺ

Bukhāri 6076

Prophet Muhammad's mission and triumphs were motivated simply out of religious and the highest moral concerns. He never gave in to the primitive and brutal temptations of those before and after him. Arthur Gilman said:

*Muhammad's victory was in very truth one of religion and not of politics; he rejected every token of personal homage, and declined all regal authority; and when the haughty chiefs of the Koreishites appeared before him he asked: "What can you expect at my hands?" "Mercy, O generous brother"; "Be it so; you are free"! he exclaimed.*¹³⁹

Maximilian Karl Emil 'Max' Weber, the German sociologist, philosopher, and political economist, offers a definition of a prophet. According to his definition, it means an individual who possesses certain qualities and characteristics by dint of which he is distinguished from ordinary people. He is known as having supernatural or exceptional powers or qualities which ordinary people do not possess. This definition fits Muhammad (SAW) very well.¹⁴⁰

The views of David Noel Freedman, an American biblical scholar, author, editor, archaeologist and ordained Presbyterian minister, are consistent with the above definition of prophet and he says these characteristics match with those of Muhammad (SAW).¹⁴¹

The uniqueness of Prophet Muhammad's Prophethood is that unlike the previous Prophets before him, he did not resort to physical miracles as a way of legitimising his Prophethood in the eyes of the masses. If anything can be considered miraculous about Islam and Prophet Muhammad (SAW), it is the tremendous spread of Islam, beyond its initial frontiers.

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

"Beware! Whoever oppresses a non-Muslim citizen, curtails their rights, or burdens them with more than they can bear, or takes anything from them against their free will; I (Prophet Muhammad, Peace and blessings be upon him) will complain against the person on the Day of Judgment."

Source: ﷺ

Abū Dāwūd
3052

CHAPTER 5: CARING

One of the main factors which led Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to victory was his teaching to his army and the companions. He always advised people not to deceive others, to have pity for children, the sick, women, orphans, the helpless and the disabled, and when fighting a war not to damage any houses, property or agricultural products. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) also advised his people to honour the clauses of any treaty, and behave well towards worshippers and their churches. His successors also guided their followers with the teachings of the Prophet. Prophet Muhammad's humble nature was shown in the fact that the power he assumed did not prompt him to revel in the material excesses of the world. Furthermore, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was never an extrovert. He was not one for boisterous play and could never be remotely seen as behaving and talking like a braggart. His compassion extended to those of any age. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) would always take time to show how much he loved and valued children. Also, he was not the type to condemn and invoke bad wishes and omens on others.

Charles Mills, a British historian, extolled Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in his book, *History of Mohammadanism*, saying:

*Deeply read in the volume of nature, though extremely ignorant of letters, his mind could expand into controversy with the wisest of his enemies or contract itself to the apprehension of meanest of his disciples. His simple eloquence was rendered impressive by a manner of mixed dignity and elegance, by the expression of a countenance where the awfulness of his majesty was so well tempered by an amiable sweetness, that it exerted emotions of veneration and love. He was gifted with that authoritative air or genius which alike influences the learned and commands the illiterate.*¹⁴²

The American author Elsa Marston states that people remembered Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as an understanding, kind, soft-hearted man who had a lot of respect and love for his companions, children and animals too:

*Muhammad was remembered more for his sympathetic, kind, and gentle nature. He treated his followers with courtesy and respect. Children, too, were drawn to him, and he loved playing with them.*¹⁴³

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

Every religion has a distinctive virtue, and the distinctive virtue of Islam is modesty.

Source: ﷺ

Muwatta Malik
1644

Animals

R.V.C. Bodley points out that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had certain qualities which pleased all. His smile was very charming and he never removed his hand first when shaking hands with anybody. He maintained good relations with his friends. He loved children very much, and they flocked around him when he was walking. He loved animals and taught the followers to treat them well.¹⁴⁴

The American author Elsa Marston states that people remembered Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as an understanding, kind, soft-hearted man who had a lot of respect and love for his companions, children and animals too:

*Muhammad was remembered more, however, for his sympathetic, kind, and gentle nature. He treated his followers with courtesy and respect. Children, too, were drawn to him, and he loved playing with them.*¹⁴⁵

The British author Magsie Hamilton Little acknowledges that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) achieved the reputation for his character by dint of being trustworthy and honest. Many studies reveal that he was gentle and polite to all creatures, human or animal. It is a measure of his personality. The Prophet's manners were consistently kind towards children and animals.¹⁴⁶

David Samuel Margoliouth, an Orientalist, minister of the Church of England and Professor of Arabic at Oxford University, points out that the compassion of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) encompassed not only the mankind but also all sorts of creatures small or large. He did away with many Arabian superstitions associated with animals:

*His humanity extended itself to the lower creation. He forbade the employment of living birds as targets for marksmen and remonstrated with those who ill-treated their camels... Foolish acts of cruelty which were connected with old superstitions were swept away by him... No more was a dead man's camel to be tied to his tomb to perish of thirst and hunger. No more was the evil eye to be propitiated by the bleeding of a certain proportion of the herd. No more was the rain to be conjured by tying burning torches to the tails of oxen; ... The manes and tails of horses were not to be cut, nor were asses to be branded.*¹⁴⁷

Reverend Canon Isaac Taylor, a philologist and Anglican canon of York, in a speech delivered at the Church Congress of England, admired the teachings of Islam:

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

"Those who are just will be seated upon pulpits of light on the Day of Judgement."

Source: ﷺ

Muslim 1827

*When Muhammadanism is embraced by a Negro tribe, paganism, devil worship, fetishism, cannibalism, human sacrifice, Infanticide, witchcraft disappears. The natives begin to dress, filth is replaced by cleanliness and they acquire personal dignity and self-respect. Hospitality becomes a religious duty, drunkenness becomes rare, gambling is forbidden, Immodest dances and promiscuous Intercourse of the sexes cease, female chastity is rewarded as a virtue. Industry replaces Idleness, license gives place to law, order and sobriety prevail, blood-feuds, cruelty to animals and slaves are forbidden. A freeing of humanity, benevolence and brotherhood is inculcated. Polygamy and slavery is regulated and all their evils are restrained. Islam above all is the most powerful total abstinence Association in the world.... Islam is cosmopolitan and not like Judaism confined to one race but extended to the world ...Islam swept away corruptions and superstitions...*¹⁴⁸

The helpless

Sir William Muir observes that Prophet was so kind-hearted to the helpless that he was easily moved by the sufferings of any people and always stood beside them:

*He was a good friend, "kind and tender," says Sir William Muir, "weeping with those who wept, and thus bound to his person the hearts and lives of all around him ... as well as those who heard of his self-denying offices of love and friendship."*¹⁴⁹

Regardless of faith, anyone who needed help received his attention. Annemarie Schimmel claimed that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had a well-balanced form of kindness towards all. If anyone asked for any help, he never sent the person off without providing some support, or at least a pleasant word.¹⁵⁰

A famous Hindu poet, Rana Bahgwan Das, paid high compliments to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) for giving direction to the misguided and providing care to the needy. He paid tribute to the Prophet who would be a leader here and in the hereafter. He expressed this in a poem:

(Urdu)

"As-Salam ay Hadi-e- gumgashtagan

As-Salam ay shafa-e-Bechargan

As-Salam ay Malik-e-har do Man

As-Salam ay Wajha-e-Takhliq-e- Zaman "

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

Whoever kills a fellow citizen with no justification, God will forbid Paradise to him and he will not even smell its fragrance."

Source: ﷺ

An-Nasā'ī 4748

(English)

(I salute the guide of the misguided

I salute the helper of the helpless

I salute the master of the two worlds

*I salute him who is responsible for the creation of the universe).*¹⁵¹

Dr Daniel Peterson claims that in all respects Muhammad (SAW) even today can be regarded as a man with extraordinary personality who always made everyone feel that all his attention and care were reserved for that individual. He had deep respect for others.¹⁵²

Many scholars have admired the Prophet (SAW) because of his care and kindness for the helpless and weak. The Prophet (SAW) is said to have never beaten or ill-treated his servants or any of his wives.¹⁵³

He would often help his wife prepare the meal. Washington Irving highlights that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) behaved the same way towards those who were known, unknown, friends, and relatives, rich or poor. He paid attention to all. A servant who had worked for him since he was eight testified that he always kept his temper under great control. According to Irving,

*In his private dealings he was just. He treated friends and strangers, the rich and poor, the powerful and the weak, with equity, and was beloved by the common people for the affability with which he received them, and listened to their complaints. He was naturally brought his temper under great control, so that even in the self-indulgent intercourse of domestic life he was kind and tolerant. "I served him from the time I was eight years old," said his servant Anas, "and he never scolded me for anything, though things were spoiled by me".*¹⁵⁴

Magsie Hamilton Little affirms that the aura of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and the influence he exerted on his contemporaries and followers was astounding. The charisma and appeal which he generated while alive was so great that long centuries after his death it is as if his presence and influence has never escaped from the Muslim conscience. Despite Prophet Muhammad's status as the leader and spiritual instructor of Muslims, he did not exploit his power and was never seen in domineering and bossy terms. The obedience which he commanded was not because people feared his punishment but out of love and affinity for the way he was.¹⁵⁵

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

He who believes in God and the Last Day should either utter good words or better keep silence and he who believes in God and the Last Day should treat his neighbour with kindness and he who believes in God and the Last Day should show hospitality to his guest.

Source: ﷺ

Muslim 47

The poor

Raymond Le Rouge, a French author, reiterates the above statement, saying that Prophet Muhammad was a man of peace and he preached peace to his followers. He taught them to have pity for the poor, women, children, the oppressed, the helpless etc:

*“Do not use frauds nor deceptions”, said Muhammad to his soldiers. “Do not kill children. When you fight against the army of an enemy in his own territory, do not oppress the peaceful inhabitants of the country. Spare weak women. Have pity on suckling infants and the sick. Do not destroy the houses, do not overrun the fields. Do not devastate the orchards; do not cut down the date palm trees.” And after him, his successor Abu Bakr guided his chiefs advising, “Do not oppress the populace, do not provoke them unnecessarily. Be good and just: success will be your recompense. When you encounter the enemy, attack him valorously. If you come out victorious from the battle, do not kill the women nor the children, spare the fields and houses. If you conclude a treaty, keep its clauses. In Christian countries you will encounter on the route holy men who serve God in the churches and monasteries. Do not molest them; do not destroy their churches nor their monasteries” ... Such are the words, never heard before, words which resounded in the 7th century, from the courtyard of the Mosque of Madinah.*¹⁵⁶

William Cooke Taylor, a writer, journalist, historian and anti-Corn Law propagandist paid high tribute to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in the book: *The History of Mohammedanism and its sects*. He declares the Prophet to be a friend of the poor:

*So great was his liberality to the poor that he often left his household unprovided, nor did he content himself with relieving their wants, he entered into conversation with them, and expressed a warm sympathy for their sufferings. He was a firm friend and a faithful ally.*¹⁵⁷

Author Ruth Cranston notices that Muhammad (SAW) says there is but one religion: Islam. But what does it mean – and how does he use the word? Islam means bowing to or surrendering to, i.e. religiously submitting to the will of God. All men of all faiths who surrender themselves to the will of God and who are the seekers of righteousness are truly children of Islam in the sense of which the Prophet of Islam spoke.¹⁵⁸

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

Do not consider anything ‘good’ insignificant even if it is that you meet your brother with a happy face

Source: ﷺ

Muslim 2626

Cranston felt that the creed of Islam is rather simple:

There is no God but one and Mohammed is His Messenger. This declaration takes on new significance when we understand this in relation to the idolatry and the many gods of the time – the then prevalent way of life that subjugated humans to others besides the true God. In Islam the giving of alms to the needy and the poor is a virtue as this evokes in men fellow feeling. One's relation to one's fellow man is second in importance only to one's relation to God. From your provisions, a portion of these be given to the wayfarers, the orphans, the destitute and the poor, the seekers of help and for freeing humans from bondage – enjoins the Qur'an and ordered the Prophet.¹⁵⁹

For women

Besant was concerned about the unjustifiable claims of some people who raised questions about Prophet Muhammad's multiple marriages, which some argue were motivated by sheer lust. She points to the fact that he married a woman who was forty when he himself was only twenty-five years of age. He continued to lead a loving married life with her until he was 50, when she died. By no means and standards can it be assumed that lust and sexual passion had been behind his marrying. The other marriages he contracted were for social or political reasons, either to protect a widow from an evil society or to resolve the conflict between tribes. This is not a way to judge the life of a man of his calibre. Besant highlights that:

But do you mean to tell me that the man who in the full flush of youthful vigour, a young man of four and twenty, married a woman much his senior, and remained faithful to her for six and twenty years, at fifty years of age when the passions are dying, married for lust and sexual passion? Not thus are men's lives to be judged. And you look at the women whom he married, you will find that by every one of them an alliance was made for his people, or something was gained for his followers, or the woman was in sore need of protection.¹⁶⁰

Pandit Gopal Krishna, editor of the daily *Bharat Samachar*, has paid the highest tributes to the Prophet. Gifted with a high moral character, he had been sent to transform the world. He showed light to the Arabs who were sunk in darkness. The benevolent Prophet never took revenge against anyone. He was a carer of the poor, the helpless and women:

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

O Uqbah (An associate of prophet , Peace and blessings be upon him), reconcile whoever cuts you off, give to whoever deprives you, and pardon whoever wrongs you.

Source: ﷺ

Musnad Ahmad
17334,

*God had sent him to reform the world. He had been endowed with the strength of character and moral qualities of a great reformer and of a great man. He transformed the downtrodden evil society of Arabia into a very refined, virile and virtuous society. The Prophet of Islam was very kind-hearted and never took revenge on personal grounds, nor turned away any supplicant from his door. He was responsible for the emancipation of women and he made no distinction between a rich and a poor person.*¹⁶¹

Neighbours

Sangthong Pheerisai (Dhamacaro), a Buddhist monk from Wimbledon Buddhist Temple, London, says that much of what Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said and did has unfortunately been misrepresented and perversely interpreted. This may be due to the personal agenda of people in high positions:

*I think no... maybe some people have taken his teaching on the wrong side or in the wrong way... this is my understanding...because what he taught people you know ... love your neighbour, live together in peace and harmony, but at the present time people might take the teaching in the wrong way... maybe they have some power and when they have power they just use the power in the wrong way. They misunderstand the teaching and take it the wrong way. This is what I understand.*¹⁶²

Prophet Muhammad's emphasis on interfaith dialogue and enjoining compassionate relations is clear. There are incidents in his life which indicate that he had a high level of respect for non-Muslims. Danny Richmond maintains:

*Yes. I know there is a famous story – and you'll have to help me out on it – I believe one of his Jewish neighbours who had a funeral and the Prophet attended his funeral. (the coffin was going in front of him and he stood up to respect and told the others). Yes, that's it. The sign of respect when many others wouldn't have thought to respect or were condemning other groups, I think the Prophet multiple times showed that respect above all is an essential trait of an Islamic person. I know that teaching of respect to others came heavily in a lot of his life.*¹⁶³

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

Be merciful to others and you will receive mercy. Forgive others and God will forgive you

Source: ﷺ

Al-Adab Al-Mufrad 380

According to Mike Stagal, Prophet Muhammad (SAW)'s neighbourliness could be seen in the way he respected the differences of others:

*When dealing with neighbours, he was always very respectful, observing that they were different but respecting those differences. As long as they were not attacking Islam in the way they behaved then there was always to be a respectful relationship between each other. That's my understanding of what Muhammad had to say about neighbours.*¹⁶⁴

There are aphorisms of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) which point to the Muslims' duty to treat neighbours with care and cordiality. There is sometimes a misunderstanding that the Muslim obligation to his fellow man included only co-religionists. However, Prophet Muhammad (SAW)'s instruction for neighbourliness and peaceful coexistence and relations with the local community encompassed everybody, including non-Muslims. There was no element of discrimination in his advice for Muslims to be dutiful to their peers and neighbours. Niknam Mehri notes:

One of the sayings of the prophet according to hadith is that he said 'be kind to your neighbours, up to 40 households on one side and 40 households on the other side'. When we question this, we try to analyse what the Prophet meant. He was a wise man. If he had said, be kind to your Muslim neighbours up to 40 houses on this side and up to 40 houses on that side that would have meant discard anybody who is not a Muslim, he is not your neighbour. But his statement is inclusive, he meant whoever lives within your vicinity, regardless of race, religion or background, they are your neighbours, be kind to them. Also, I have explained this further by saying, in those days if you said be kind to your neighbours ten houses further, or be kind to your neighbours two houses further, it would have a numerical value in people's mind. The number 40 always has the connotation of infinite. If you have 40 of something, it means you have a great number of something. So I always teach why did he say 40, why did he not say 30, or 20 or 10? Does it mean that the streets in Madinah were so long that they had 40 neighbours on one side and 40 neighbours on the other side? No, rather, what he meant was extend your kindness to your neighbours throughout the world. It is infinite. It is not just your next door neighbour but all the world is one neighbourhood. It seems to me that this is the

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

O people, spread peace, feed the hungry, and pray at night when people are sleeping and you will enter Paradise in peace.

Source: ﷺ

Tirmidhi 2485

*message that should be communicated more than anything else about this teaching of the Prophet.*¹⁶⁵

British politician David Amess believes that the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) has been grossly misrepresented. His being portrayed as being bent on taking over the world through violence is not consistent with what he preached and practised about neighbourliness and living in peace with others:

*Well as I understand it, I think Muhammad has been misrepresented. The idea that just because you're non-Muslim you can't have anything to do with them – I don't think it was like that at all. He has been misrepresented as if Muslims are trying to take over the world by violence and to me this is totally against his teachings and he is peace loving. The teaching is to help your neighbour.*¹⁶⁶

Prophet Muhammad(SAW)'s brotherly relations and peaceful co-existence with neighbours is recognised by Former British Home Secretary David Blunkett, who says:

*He believed my neighbour is my brother, we help each other when in need. He said we should behave with non-Muslims as you would behave with your brother.*¹⁶⁷

Prophet Muhammad(SAW)'s teachings on neighbourliness encompass the toleration of non-Islamic religions, and he did not show an adversarial attitude to the adherents of other faiths but rather exhibited tolerance at all times. This characteristic of Prophet Muhammad's teachings is often suppressed and not properly practised by Muslims. According to Jeremy Corbyn:

*As I understand the teachings, he has a set of values and views, e.g. the food you eat, the way you treat people, the times you pray, the way you lead your life. His values were also respect for other faiths and other religions. There are a lot of disputes about his attitudes to Judaism; I prefer to take the view that he was developing a set of beliefs as a messenger from God, but he was not hostile to people who believed other things. It's that tolerance and respect which I think is a strong feature of the Muslim community in Britain and Europe and it is something which is often misunderstood, deliberately in some cases. Like any other faith, Islam has followers who claim to be followers of Islam who don't fully understand the faith and use their own version.*¹⁶⁸

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

Worship the Most Merciful and spread peace.

Source: ﷺ

Ibn Mājah 3694,

CHAPTER 6: EQUALITY

Equal to all

Dr Henry Stubbe noted that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) never forced anybody to embrace Islam and non-Muslims were well protected during his time. According to Dr Stubbe:

*I do not find that Mahomet proceeded any further in Arabia the desert then to exterminate Idolatry, but not to force men to the profession to Islamism. He himself gave Letters of security and protection to the Jews and Christians in Arabia, and never used any Violence to them upon the Account of religion.*¹⁶⁹

Dr Gustav Weil, a German Orientalist, wrote about Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) in his book *History of the Islamic Peoples* that the Prophet was a man with a very good moral character. Anybody from anywhere had access to him irrespective of social status, colour or race:

*Muhammad was a shining example to his people. His character was pure and stainless. His house, his dress, his food – they were characterized by a rare simplicity. So unpretentious was he that he would receive from his companions no special mark of reverence, nor would he accept any service from his slave which he could do for himself. He was accessible to all and at all times. He visited the sick and was full of sympathy for all. Unlimited was his benevolence and generosity as also was his anxious care for the welfare of the community.*¹⁷⁰

Reverend Thomas O'Brien, Our Lady of the Assumption Church, Tower Hamlets, London, stated that Muhammad was a true representative of honest living and an advocate of justice who never sought antagonistic relations:

*I believe Muhammad was trustworthy and wished to give God's will for people and saw the structure of faith as the best means of handing on God's will for the people. Muhammad would stand up for justice and speak out. His intent was never to provoke hostilities; rather, his intent was to speak truthfully and justly.*¹⁷¹

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

"Help your brother whether he is an oppressor(i.e. prevent him from oppressing) or an oppressed"

Source: ﷺ

Bukhāri 6952

HRH Prince Charles reminds us that it is worth noting that women were granted the rights of suffrage in Muslim majority states long before European countries. This is a fact that is often overlooked. Be it the right to own property, earn a living or receive inheritance, the Qur'an had stipulated these rights for women during a period when Europe was still in the dark ages. It is a fact that women in the West were not afforded the right to vote until the first quarter of the 20th century. Before Margaret Thatcher became the UK's first female Prime Minister, women were already elected to leadership in Muslim countries like Bangladesh and Pakistan. So it is unwise to suggest that all Muslim societies are misogynistic. Looking at the extreme practices of some Muslim states in regard to their treatment of women is not the best way of concluding what Islam has spelled out for them:

*Remember, if you will, that Islamic countries like Turkey, Egypt, and Syria gave women the vote as early as Europe did its women – and much earlier than in Switzerland! In those countries women have long enjoyed equal pay, and the opportunity to play a full working role in their societies. The rights of Muslim women to property and inheritance, to some protection if divorced, and to the conducting of business, were rights prescribed by the Qur'an fourteen hundred years ago, even if they were not everywhere translated into practice. In Britain at least, some of these rights were novel even to my grandmother's generation! Benazir Bhutto and Begum Khaleda Zia became prime ministers in their own traditional societies when Britain had for the first time ever in its history elected a female prime minister. That, I think, does not necessarily smack of a medieval society. Women are not automatically second-class citizens because they live in Islamic countries. We cannot judge the position of women in Islam aright if we take the most conservative Islamic states as representative of the whole.*¹⁷²

Mawde Royden was a British preacher and suffragist. She claimed that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) established the idea of one Glorious God. The equality of mankind in Islam is no fiction. Nobody on earth has ever established freedom as was accomplished by Prophet Muhammad (SAW).¹⁷³ ordain

An American author, lecturer, and biographer, Ruth Cranston, claims that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) never instigated any violence, fights or killings. He

God said: ﷻ	God ordained Muhammad(SAW) and his followers in the Qur'an:	Source: ﷻ Qur'ān 6:108
<p>“And abuse not those whom they worship beside God because they will commit rudeness in respect of God through their excessiveness and ignorance. Thus We have made fair the deeds of every nation in their eyes, then they have to return back towards their Lord and He will tell them what they used to do).</p>		

never initiated any conflict with anybody. The battles in which he was involved were fought to protect himself or his people. He always took the defensive role to guard himself. Whenever he was required to fight for his existence in self-defence, he followed the technique, methodology and the technology of the day.¹⁷⁴

Prophet Muhammad's actions and way of life demonstrated tolerance for those of other faiths. There are many incidents in his life which reflected fair treatment and respect for non-Muslims. Stephen Shashoua, Director, Three Faiths Foundation, Camden, London, notes:

*I understand from Muslim friends I have spoken with that he had respect for other faiths, e.g. when a funeral service was passing, he stepped off the road and he showed humility towards death and when told that the funeral was not for a Muslim but for a Jewish person, he said that death is death and we respect all beings. By that action he shows there are no divisions between people and we have to develop respect. Even in his comments regarding the people of the book, he speaks about respecting all. These things illustrate that he respects 'otherness', which involves acceptance of other types of people, with whom we can live cohesively. He was known for being just to his first wife Khadija and as a salesman. My Muslim friends say he was known for being just.*¹⁷⁵

Lord Norman Lamont, a former Chancellor of the Exchequer in the UK, is particularly sensitive to the cultural context of Prophet Muhammad's times, be it on matters such as women and war, and acknowledges his tolerant attitude to the members of different faith communities:

*I think what Muhammad said and did has to be judged and interpreted in the context of the times. e.g. Muhammad's attitude to women might appear very conservative by today's standards but by the standards of his century, they were attitudes that advanced women's position and gave them a stronger position in society. Equally Muhammad's teachings on warfare might appear to us as rather warlike but in the context of the times, I think he actually preached compassion and mercy towards people who were captured in warfare. I think Muhammad preached a more tolerant attitude in the context of his time towards Christians and Jews.*¹⁷⁶

A noted British author, Geoffrey Parrinder, says that one would be hard pushed to identify a single person in the history of mankind who is subject to the level of vilification and misconception as Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The

God said: ﷻ

God ordained Muhammad(SAW) in the Qur'an:

Source: ﷻ

Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair admonition, and argue with them in the kindest way.

Qur'an 16:125

pejoratives that have been assigned specifically for him cannot compare to any others, whether historically or in current times. It is unfair that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) has been dubbed a womaniser (God forbid), especially when his life merited no such slander. The fact that he lived happily and faithfully with Khadijah (RA), 15 years his senior and married again only after she passed away is a testimony to his uprightness. The wives he took after Khadijah (RA)'s death were at an old age and he married them for various reasons apart from the ones conventionally passed to us by biased and Islamophobic commentators. Prophet Muhammad's relationship with his wives and women in general compares far more favourably than that of many figures in history.¹⁷⁷

According to a teacher from a Church of England School (who requested anonymity) Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was essentially a 'people person' who was very enthusiastic and motivated to have healthy relationships with others in the hope of developing close bonds with people through the principle of equality. His Prophetic mission had a didactic objective which at all times took into consideration the wider society. She says:

*My understanding of Muhammad from studying his life and the information about him is that he was someone who cared deeply about people and built very good relationships and friendships with people, so the overarching theme I would take from my understanding of Muhammad is that he was someone who was there for the people, family, relationships and everything he was concerned with was building those relationships between each other through the equality of understanding each other in the eyes of Allah and also the understanding of God himself. The whole purpose of his life was to help people understand that key fact.*¹⁷⁸

The teacher continues saying that Prophet Muhammad's dedication to fostering an atmosphere of equality speaks volumes for his just persona:

*Again it's about people getting involved. This wasn't an elite – he lived in a situation where the elite ruled and they had ultimate power and he's bringing this new vision...it's all back to this concept of equality and equal rights to rule.*¹⁷⁹

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had established mutual trust and credibility with his people for a variety of reasons, after a period of uncertainty and scepticism on the part of many in society towards his message. His message of equality was troubling for the elite who wanted to maintain the *status quo* and monopolise economic advantages over the less fortunate, whereas those who were drawn to him were so because his message resonated with their aspirations

Teachings from Prophet (SAW):

The Prophet (SAW) passed by a mixed company of people which included Muslims, polytheists and Jews, and he greeted them

Source: ﴿

Al-Adab Al-Mufrad 1108

of equality and justice. The teacher from the Church of England school went on to say:

*There were two reasons why they trusted him. In the beginning not many people did trust him and that was difficult for him in terms of his furthering of Islam. They didn't trust him because he was preaching equality and for very rich people around the area they don't particularly want that, so it depends on your perspective. The majority who did trust him, they trusted him because he spoke something that was very clear and was very much about equality and being treated in a sense that they could have respect. The people who didn't trust him were people who were not very keen on that concept of equality and having respect for everybody, because they lived at a time where there were slaves, there were people you could treat differently and situations where you could make money out of it. They didn't trust him because they realised they would lose a lot out of the situation.*¹⁸⁰

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was the pioneer of providing impartial family law – equally for husband and wife. A woman, like her husband, has the right to divorce. He was very strict about the laws he implemented. Major General Forlong says:

*The great lawgiver saw in marriage only a civil contract which the testimony of two witnesses made complete, but which the woman, like her husband, could annul on grounds of immorality and general bad conduct; as by leaving each other without suitable subsistence, habitual cruelty, or if the husband threaten his wife with bodily injury, or force her to degrading labor. "If ye husbands have rights, so have your wives," said Mahamad, "therefore shall the wife plead her own cause against the unjust and rapacious husband. ... He shall maintain her and hers in a manner suitable to their condition"*¹⁸¹ ...

American philosopher Alfred Martin claimed that it was common during Prophet Muhammad's time for people to treat others favourably if they were rich and noble, and to discriminate against those of low rank and status. All of the Prophet Muhammad's personal characteristics and morals pointed to a kind-hearted person who gave everyone their due. His interpersonal skills and social relations were of the highest standard. He had a very personable and amicable manner with others and always showed compassion towards children. According to Martin:

A remarkable feature was the urbanity and consideration with which Mahomet treated even the most insignificant of his

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

A young Jewish boy used to serve the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and he became sick. So the Prophet (ﷺ) went to visit him

Source: ﷺ

Bukhārī
1356

*followers. Modesty and kindness, patience, self-denial, and generosity, pervaded his conduct, and rivetted the affections of all around him. He disliked to say No; if unable to reply to a petitioner in the affirmative, he preferred to remain silent... He possessed the rare faculty of making each individual in a company think that he was the most favoured guest. When he met any one rejoicing, he would seize him eagerly and cordially by the hand. With the bereaved and afflicted he sympathized tenderly. Gentle and unbending towards little children, he would not disdain to accost a group of them at play with the salutation of peace. He shared his food, even in times of scarcity, with others; and was sedulously solicitous for the personal comfort of every one about him. A kindly and benevolent disposition pervades all these illustrations of his character.*¹⁸²

Maintaining healthy social relations with any peer group was of great importance to Prophet Muhammad (SAW). This meant not discriminating when it came to race, gender or status. This was all part of Prophet Muhammad's public presentation and principles which he internalised as a human being. Lane-Poole adds:

*"He is more modest than a virgin behind her curtain", it was said of him. He was most indulgent to his inferiors, and would never allow his little page to be scolded whatever he did. "Ten years", said Anas, his servant, "I was about the Prophet, and he never said as much as 'uff' to me". He was very affectionate towards his family. One of his boys died on his breast in the smoky house of the nurse, a blacksmith's wife. He was very fond of children; he would stop them in the streets and pat their little heads. He was the most faithful protector of those he protected, the sweetest and most agreeable in his conversation.*¹⁸³

The great Indian politician Jawaharlal Nehru claimed that the religion of Islam was accepted in the neighbouring countries because of its simplicity, sincerity and equality.¹⁸⁴

Father Tom Quinn, Shadwell Catholic Church, East London, states:

*From personal experience and interactions with the Muslim community at mosques, meeting places etc., I respect the Prophet's values.*¹⁸⁵

Washington Irving declares that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) dealt equally with everyone irrespective of whether they were friends, known or unknown, poor or rich:

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

"When you are angry, be silent"

Source: ﷺ

Adab al Mufrad 1320

*In his private dealings he was just. He treated friends and strangers, the rich and poor, the powerful and the weak, with equity, and was beloved by the common people for the affability with which he received them, and listened to their complaints.*¹⁸⁶

William Draper maintains that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had numerous attributes which helped him excel as a leader and guide of others. He had qualities which were advantageous in many disciplines and aspects of life. As a soldier, he led from the front and as a spiritual instructor his words spoke volumes and touched the hearts of many people. His religious ethos was not abstract but simple – simple enough for those of other backgrounds to digest and practise. Unlike so many religious personalities and sages throughout history, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) never bogged his followers down in dry dogma and polemics.

Rather, he was devoted to bettering the prevailing social and economic climate of his time, by commanding his followers to pay Zakat – “the due from the income of the rich and affluent to the poor”. Draper says:

*Mohammed possessed that combination of qualities which more than once has decided the fate of empires. A preaching soldier, he was eloquent in the pulpit, valiant in the field. His theology was simple: “There is but one God.” The effeminate Syrian, lost in Monothelite and Monophysite mysteries; the Athanasian and Arian, destined to disappear before his breath, might readily anticipate what he meant. Asserting that ever-lasting truth, he did not engage in vain metaphysics, but applied himself to improving the social condition of his people by regulations respecting personal cleanliness, sobriety, fasting, prayer. Above all other works he esteemed almsgiving and charity.*¹⁸⁷

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was always impartial when he administered justice to people. Staying unbiased, he applied law and order to all Muslims, non-Muslims, friends or foes in settling disputes and conflicts. His qualities of honesty, truthfulness and impartiality were well-known far and wide even before the revelation. As a result he was easily appointed by diverse communities – Muslims, Jews, Christians, Idolaters etc. – as a judge to resolve disputes, quarrels, and disagreements. Despite cruel actions by some Jews, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), inspired by Qur’anic law, passed a judgment in favour of a Jew and against a Muslim who was wrong in a clash, regardless of the fact that the entire Muslim ummah could leave him! He always followed Qur’anic Law strictly, even to deal with his worst enemies. According to the Qur’an, “*Let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably; act equitably that is nearer to piety.*”[5:8]

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

What actions are most excellent? To gladden the heart of a human being; or to replenish his hunger, or to clothe him or to fulfil his needs.

Source: ﷺ

Tabarāni
5223

CHAPTER 7: LEADERSHIP

Michael Hart, an American author, regarded Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as the most influential person in history and heaped much praise for his impact on two levels. Prophet Muhammad

(SAW) successfully penetrated the realm of both the secular and the religious and contributed to political development during his time. Hart has ranked him as number one amongst the 100 most influential people in history. He says:

My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world's most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular levels.

*Of humble origins, Muhammad founded and promulgated one of the world's great religions, and became an immensely effective political leader. Today, thirteen centuries after his death, his influence is still powerful and pervasive.*¹⁸⁸

Hart reveals that within a short time the Arabians were influenced by Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and were able to establish a state from the boundary of India to the Atlantic Ocean – which was the largest territory under single control in history.¹⁸⁹

Professor Watt maintains that a historical appreciation of Prophet Muhammad's mission magnifies his achievements. That his predicament was unbearable by many standards, and he faced insurmountable odds, is undeniable, yet Prophet Muhammad (SAW) met the expectations that were placed on him. His administrative competence, leadership qualities and indefatigable conviction in a higher being and power were all essential ingredients for him to usher in an epic chapter in the history of mankind.¹⁹⁰

Maharaja Peshkar Sir Kishen Pershad Bahadur, *Yamin us-Sultanat*, GCIE was twice the Prime Minister of Hyderabad State. He paid rich tribute to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) who was selected as Prophet of God and was very keen to follow him as the leader. He has expressed his feelings in his poem:

My life I offer for Ahmad, the Chosen one

Behold, he is undoubtedly my Guide.

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ	God ordained Muhammad (SAW) in the Qur'an:	Source: ﷺ Sūra Al-Anfāl 8:61
If the enemy inclines to peace, then incline to it also and rely upon God. Verily, it is He who is the Hearing, the Knowing.		

My humble person,

He did uplift to eminence.

*Behold, the glory of the Glorious God.*¹⁹¹

U.S Army General James Gavin considers Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to have exercised the greatest impact on history of any leader. He claims that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) has the greatest contributions amongst all world leaders.¹⁹²

Gandhi, one of the greatest politicians of modern times, asserted that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is not only for the Muslims but for all humanity. Gandhi proclaimed:

*The sayings of Muhammad are a treasure of wisdom not only for Muslims but for all mankind.*¹⁹³

Alfred Martin, a Unitarian minister and writer on religion, states that there is considerable ignorance regarding Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and his message:

*Chronologically the latest of the great moral leaders whose life and work we are studying is Mohammed. Like Moses, the Prophets, Jesus and Paul, Mohammed belonged to the Semitic branch of the human family. He was the founder of the least appreciated and most misunderstood of the world's great religions.*¹⁹⁴

The prolific British author Pierce De Lacy Johnstone says that the noble character of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) made him popular among people from all walks of life. As Johnstone explains:

*Gradually his genius, earnestness, and high moral character gathered around him a little band of followers, men and women of all ranks, and all alike absolutely devoted to their leader.*¹⁹⁵

John Adair, in his book *The Leadership of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)*, notes that the Prophet (SAW) always advised against taking the extreme path in any walk of life and favoured a middle path in all activities:

This avoidance of extreme – an essentially moderate approach – was characteristic of Muhammad. The Qur'an reflects

God said: ﷻ

God ordained Muhammad(SAW) and his followers in the Qur'an:

Source: ﷻ
(Qur'an 60:8)

"God does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes – from dealing kindly and justly with them

*his own practical wisdom in religious practice as in living life generally.*¹⁹⁶

Sir H.A.R. Gibb warned that it would be a gross mistake if Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was considered to be interested in politics and war only. He was rather keen to educate and train his people so that they could reform society.¹⁹⁷

Anita Rai, the author of the book *Prophet Muhammad (SAW): Uncovering the Truth*, indicates that the Prophet wanted to teach the people to worship one God, the Almighty, the Creator of all, and establish a relationship with Him directly instead of other intermediaries.¹⁹⁸

Edward Sell asserts that the character of Muhammad (SAW) helped significantly to reform the Arabian tribes. His qualities made him not only a religious leader but also a statesman – a great man, whom history will remember forever:

*His perseverance against great odds at Makkah, and his patience under persecution there call forth sympathy for the patriot and the religious reformer. His quickness to realize the advantage of the exodus from Makkah to Madinah, his readiness to change his point of view when the Jews failed to help him, and his skill as an opportunist call for admiration, if we view him only as a successful Arab chief, who founded a kingdom on a religious basis, himself becoming Caesar and Pope. In these respects he was a great man, who will stand out conspicuous so long as history remains to tell his tale.*¹⁹⁹

Professor T.L. Vaswani paid tribute to Prophet Muhammad for bringing huge reforms to society. The Prophet, through preaching Islam, made significant changes including stopping infanticide and many other evils:

*And consider for a moment what the faith he preached has achieved. Islam has given the world a religion without priests; Islam abolished infanticide in Arabia; Islam enjoined on the faithful total abstinence from drink; Islam emphasised the great qualities of faith, courage, endurance and self-sacrifice.*²⁰⁰

He Served the Whole World

Something which has been acknowledged by non-Muslims, and for which Prophet Muhammad (SAW) always gets praise, is that he was a unique

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

"Make the greeting common practice among you and you will be safe."

Source: ﷺ

Adab Al
Mufrad
979

amalgam of a Prophet, a lawgiver and a chief of his people. Professor Rao further points out:

*In the person of the prophet of Islam we see the rarest phenomenon on earth walking in flesh and blood i.e. the union of the theorist, the organizer and the leader in one man.*²⁰¹

George Bernard Shaw, an Irish playwright and a co-founder of the London School of Economics (LSE), argued that the present world needs leaders like Prophet Muhammad (SAW) for the general peace and happiness. Shaw observed:

*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.*²⁰²

Mike Stygal, Chairman, Camden Interfaith Foundation, London, declares that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was a unifying force in a conflict-ridden Arabia and made a conscious effort to refrain from violence, despite this perception not being popularised in media circles. He says:

*I think Muhammad was a man of great integrity who found himself in a very difficult period, with lots of warring factions and people seeking power, and Muhammad was trying to form a strong, respectful community that would listen to the message of Allah. He was trying to do this when there were many different factions who were in combat and who wanted to gain territory, etc. Muhammad's people were being attacked and he had to find the right way of saying you have to defend yourself but not in a way that meant violence for the sake of violence. It was always measured, but this does not come across in the media too often because I think the media does not deal with any faith community fairly. There is a lot of message of peace and accepting people's difference, e.g. there are messages from Muhammad that speak about people who have different religions and it doesn't say go out and convert them, etc.*²⁰³

It is astonishing to discover how rooted Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was in his time and how he delivered his message in a manner that was conducive to the climate of the day. When other religions and belief systems had failed in their attempts to civilise primitive folk, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is

God said: ﷻ

God ordained Muhammad(SAW) and his followers in the Qur'an:

Source: ﷻ
(Qur'ān 2:256)

"There is no compulsion in religion..."

given a unique distinction in this regard for succeeding where they failed. Alfred Martin goes on to say:

*Nor is anything in religious history more remarkable than the way in which Muhammad fitted his transfiguring ideas into the existing social system of Arabia. To his everlasting credit, it must be said that in lifting to a higher place of life the communities of his day and place, he achieved that which neither the Judaism nor Christianity of Medieval Arabia could accomplish. Nay more, in the fulfillment of that civilising work Muhammad rendered valuable service, not only to Arabia, but also to the entire world.*²⁰⁴

However, Thomas Carlyle, in 1840, highlighted in his lecture “Heroes and Hero-worship” that those hostile views were just their own reflections whereas 180,000,000 people accepted Islam as a true religion and Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as a brilliant guide of their lives. He found it difficult to believe the opinions of a vast number of people could be so wrong! Carlyle claimed that the hypothesis that Muhammad was an imposter, fraud, and falsehood revealed the scepticism of the time and was an indicator of ill minds. According to Carlyle, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was sincere, honest and a great man. He was sincere in the truest sense. Others did not care for it and lived with false honour. But the life was real to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and seemed extremely magnificent. This type of man was a great man. He would be called an original man, a true messenger of God.²⁰⁵

Carlyle, in his speech, claimed that Prophet Muhammad (SAW), being born amongst the un-noticed Arabs of his times, guided people from various parts of the world, eventually. The great man had guided all by the heavenly light:

*The history of a Nation becomes fruitful, soul-elevating, great, so soon as it believes. These Arabs, the man Muhammad, and that one century, it is not as if a spark had fallen, one spark, on a world of what seemed black unnoticeable sand; but lo, the sand proves explosive powder, blazes heaven-high from Delhi to Granada! I said, the Great Man was always as lightning out of Heaven; the rest of men waited for him like fuel, and then they too would flame.*²⁰⁶

The Russian philosopher and author Leo Tolstoy was one of the greatest writers of the world. He reckons that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was unique in many aspects. Among these included achieving the respect of his enemies, which

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

Whoever does not show mercy will not receive mercy. Whoever does not forgive others will not be forgiven. Whoever does not pardon others will not be pardoned. Whoever does not protect others will not be protected.

Source: ﷺ

Al-Adab Al-Mufrad 371

resulted in many of them accepting Islam. Even though the enemies knew him as Al-Ameen – trustworthy – they did not express their respect. Tolstoy explains:

*There has been no prophet who gained the respect of his enemies save the prophet Muhammad. This is why a lot of them embraced Islam later on. It seems surprising that those who declared themselves enemies of him certainly knew that he was trustworthy and was calling them to the truth; they even respected him in the depth of their hearts, but they concealed this respect for they did not want to be accused of leaving their faiths.*²⁰⁷

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was the greatest of reformers who offered tremendous services to the human community: guiding his nation to believing in one true God instead of the many false deities, leading them to piety and peace instead of vengeful killings and war, inspiring them to lead a happy and simple life in place of being submerged in arrogance and hatred. His contributions put them on the road to progress and civilisation. Leo Tolstoy brings home the point:

*Undoubtedly, the Prophet Muhammad is one of the greatest reformers who rendered extensive service to the human community. As an indication of his greatness, it suffices to mention that he guided an entire nation to the light of truth and made it incline to serenity and peace and opted to live a life of asceticism. He forbade acts of bloodshed or human sacrifice. He opened up for his nation the way to progress and civilization. That was a great feat which nobody – no matter how powerful he may be – is able to achieve. Such a man, indeed, is highly respectable and estimable.*²⁰⁸

The editor of *Sat Updaish* (Newspaper) claimed that Islam was not preached by the sword. Rather it was the Prophet's demeanour which attracted people to Islam:

*Some people say that Islam was preached by the sword, but we cannot agree with this view. What is forced on people is soon rejected. Had Islam been imposed on people through oppression, there would have been no Islam today. Why? Because the Prophet of Islam had spiritual power, he loved humanity and he was guided by the ideal of ultimate good.*²⁰⁹

Dr Gokalchand, PhD, Barrister-at-Law, maintains that the Arabians, having been taught by Prophet Muhammad (SAW), in turn had taught the whole world:

When the teachings of the Arabian Prophet infused a new life into the uncivilized Arabs, they became the Teachers of the

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

There should be neither harming nor reciprocating harm

Source: ﷺ

Muwatta Malik 1435

*whole Western world and the banner of learning, conquest and divine help began to fly over Bengal on one side and Spain on the other side.*²¹⁰

The British Orientalist, author and practising solicitor, George Sale, is best known for his 1734 translation of the Qur'an into English, *The Koran: Commonly called the Al-Koran of Mohammed*. He wrote on the 'Readers page' that, whatever the enemies of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said about him, he could not afford to spare but highlighted the truth regarding the Prophet's charming behaviour, crystal like characteristics, free fair dealings with all, softness for the weak, strong for the injustice etc. Sale observes:

*The praises due to his real virtues ought not to be denied him; nor can I do otherwise than applaud the candour of the pious and learned Spanhemius [a Dutch theologian] who, though he owned him to have been a wicked impostor, yet acknowledged him to have been richly furnished with natural endowments, beautiful in his person, of a subtle wit, agreeable behaviour, showing liberality to the poor, courtesy to everyone, fortitude against his enemies, and above all a high reverence for the name of God ; severe against the perjured, adulterers, murderers, slanderers, prodigals, covetous, false witnesses, &c., a great preacher of patience, charity, mercy, beneficence, gratitude, honouring of parents and superiors, and a frequent celebrator of the divine praises.*²¹¹

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had succeeded where Judaism and Christianity had failed – in the domain of raising the civility of his people. Alfred Martin says:

*To his everlasting credit it must be said that in lifting to a higher plane of life the communities of his day and place, he achieved that which neither the Judaism nor the Christianity of mediaeval Arabia could accomplish. Nay more, in the fulfillment of that civilizing work Mohammed rendered invaluable service, not only to Arabia, but also to the entire world.*²¹²

Danny Richmond, Faith Act Manager, Tony Blair Faith Foundation, feels that there was altruism in Prophet Muhammad (SAW) which gave rise to a genuine concern for those outside his inner circle. Prophet Muhammad's prophethood was not restricted to his own people and religious community. The selflessness is characteristic of Prophet Muhammad (SAW):

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ	Source: ﷺ
"When three persons are together, then two of them should not secretly converse with each other whilst excluding the third person."	Bukhāri 6288

*From the stories I know of his life, he seems like someone who was deeply committed to the other, whether the other was someone outside his family or someone outside his faith or the most vulnerable in his community. Many of the teachings of his life were about showing compassion and concern for the other and I think that reflects deeply upon the type of person he was and his teachings about what it is to be a person in a society.*²¹³

The famous author Reynold A. Nicholson paid tribute to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in his *A literary History of the Arabs*:

*Possessed and inspired by the highest idea of which man is capable, fearlessly preaching the truth revealed to him, leading almost alone what long seemed to be a forlorn hope against impregnable stronghold of superstition, yet facing these tremendous odds with a calm resolution which yielded nothing to ridicule or danger, but defied his enemies to do their worst, Muhammad in the early part of his career presents a spectacle of grandeur which cannot fail to win our sympathy and admiration.*²¹⁴

The author J.H. Denison wrote in his book *Emotion as the Basis of Civilization* that the centuries before Prophet Muhammad (SAW) were marked by a sharp decline in moral standards, social relations and peaceful co-existence. There was virtually no hope that civilisation could restore a sense of normality and balance, as it was plummeting further into darkness and despair. It was at this critical juncture in human history that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was born and, subsequently, went on to gift his people and ultimately the world with a religion and social, economic and political system that gave it the much-needed moral restoration and order it craved.²¹⁵

Jules Masserman, an American psychoanalyst and Professor at Chicago University compares the leadership qualities of some great leaders of the world and claims that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was the greatest of all time. Many of the world's statesmen, rulers and thinkers can be grouped as leaders in a particular category. What distinguished Prophet Muhammad (SAW) from all these other personalities was that his leadership incorporated characteristics which cut across many dimensions:

People like Pasteur and Salk are leaders in the first sense. People like Gandhi and Confucius, on one hand, and Alexander, Caesar and Hitler on the other, are leaders in the second and perhaps the third sense. Jesus and Buddha belong in the third category alone. Perhaps the greatest leader of all times was

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

The reward of deeds depends upon the intentions and every person will get the reward according to what he has intended.

Source: ﷺ

Bukhāri 1

*Mohammed, who combined all three functions. To a lesser degree, Moses did the same.*²¹⁶

Dr Daniel C. Peterson, a Professor from Brigham Young University, USA, claims that, even after 1400 years Muhammad (SAW) remains a leader, as he was once with his immediate followers.²¹⁷

Phillip K. Hitti, a scholar of Islam, narrates that there is evidence in history of many people who have founded a religion, some a nation and others a state. But there is no evidence of a single person doing all three, except in the case of Prophet Muhammad (SAW).²¹⁸

British author James William Hampson Stobart extols Prophet Muhammad (SAW), saying that his activities were unparalleled:

*Judged by the smallness of the means at his disposal, and the extent and permanence of the work that he accomplished, no name in the world's story shines with a more spacious lustre than that of the Prophet of Mecca.*²¹⁹

Stobart adds that his teachings were followed in life by many generations throughout history:

*To the impulse which he gave, numberless dynasties have owed their existence, fair cities and stately palaces and temples have arisen, and wide provinces became obedient to the faith. And beyond all this, his words have governed the belief of generations, been accepted as their rule in life and their certain guide to the world to come.*²²⁰

Right Honourable Lord Neil Kinnock, the former leader of Labour Party, UK, testifies to Prophet Muhammad's significant role in imparting to his people more than simple religious edification. He positions Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as the most senior amongst the Prophets. He states:

These figures were responsible for providing a system of law, conduct and rewards and amongst these Muhammad would have been the most senior among the Prophets.

Lord Kinnock sheds some light on Prophet Muhammad(SAW)'s political sensibilities by stating he had a preference for a more consensual form of government as opposed to one-way rule:

From what I know, he was an advocate of shared decision making, which is slightly similar. But in terms of the society at that

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

O Messenger of God! Who is most deserving of my fine treatment?" He (SAW) said, "Your mother, then your mother, then your mother, then your father, then your nearest, then nearest".

Source: ﷺ

Muslim 2548

*time, it would have been extraordinary for anyone to have been a confident advocate of representative democracy. Teachers like Muhammad favoured democratic practice more than autocratic practice.*²²¹

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was honoured by the US Supreme Court as one of the greatest lawgivers of the world in 1935. A frieze of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was erected in the court, with an inscription reading:

*Muhammad (c. 570–632) The Prophet of Islam. He is depicted holding the Qur'an. The Qur'an provides the primary source of Islamic Law. Prophet Muhammad's teachings explain and implement Qur'anic principles.*²²²

The celebrated author George Rivorie praises the Prophet very highly, saying:

*He laid the foundation of a universal government. His law was one for all. Equal justice and love for everyone.*²²³

Henri de Boulainvilliers, a French writer and historian, insisted that Islam was an advanced religion and that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was a wise lawgiver who set up a reasonable religion on the earth.²²⁴

The American Professor Jules Masserman states that Prophet Muhammad's combination of religious and political functions puts him on a unique platform among the great rulers in history. By contrast with the pomp that surrounded the Pope, Prophet Muhammad's personality did not reflect self-importance. When we compare him with the likes of Caesar, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) could not boast of a huge entourage, army and security apparatus. If there was ever a rightful claim to rule by divine mandate, then Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is surely the most deserving of this accolade. His austerity and simplicity simply magnified his great standing in history:

*Head of State as well as Church, he was Caesar and Pope in One; but he was a Pope without the Pope's pretensions, and Caesar without the legions of Caesar, without a standing army, without a bodyguard, without police force, without a fixed revenue. If ever a man ruled by 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.*²²⁵

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

(a man sought advice of the prophet before he wanted to go to fight (in the cause of God) the prophet asked the man if he had a mother. He said: "Yes." The prophet advised him: "Then stay with her, for Paradise is beneath her feet."

Source: ﷺ

Bukhāri
5972

Prophet Muhammad's statesmanship and eye for governance was a hallmark of his prophethood. Taking care of the affairs of his people was important for him as a religious leader and also as a political leader.²²⁶

The distinguished scholar W. Montgomery Watt admires Prophet Muhammad's wisdom as a statesman. The Qur'an is a guideline to follow that also incorporates policies relating to the social context, which, however, required the talent and wisdom of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to interpret. His political and social far-sightedness helped in the rapid spread of Islam. Watt adds that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was a skilful and good administrator. His selection of people for office was precise and politically sound. The policies he established helped Islam tremendously to spread far and wide even after his death.²²⁷

American author Elsa Marston observes that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was gradually developing diverse skills encompassing religious, social, economic and political matters, and proved himself as a statesman:

*Meanwhile, the Prophet's role expanded from spiritual guide to leader in all aspects of life. He became the head of a community that relied on his authority in economic, social, and political affairs, as well as religious matters. He proved his statesmanship through his personal qualities of wisdom, good judgment, and patience. Before long, this role began to take on even larger dimensions.*²²⁸

Marston notes that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) not only became a statesman but was successful in many other roles as well:

*Muhammad filled many roles in his vigorous life of sixty two years – trader, merchant, visionary, prophet, leader, administrator, warrior, strategist, and statesman ...*²²⁹

Marston concludes that a great many of the world's people are guided by the Islamic spirit which was initiated and infused, 14 centuries ago, by the praiseworthy Prophet Muhammad (SAW):

*The Islamic belief in God has brought spiritual guidance to countless millions of people the world over and may be the fastest-growing of all religious faiths today. Although sometimes sadly misunderstood, and affected by the anxieties and discord of our times, Islam holds a high ideal for human beings' relationship with God and with other human beings. And it started with the vision and faith of one extraordinary man in an Arabian town, nearly 1,400 years ago – Muhammad, the Praised One.*²³⁰

As far as prisoners of war are concerned, the practice of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) provides a clear example of mercy and compassion that should be extended to them. A prisoner's basic needs of food, clothing and shelter must be met by the Muslims and it is forbidden to inflict any physical harm or torture upon such a prisoner. In this regard, an Indian author Dr N.K. Singh says:

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had noble attitude toward the prisoners. Out of the seventy two captives, only two were executed, viz., al- Nadr b. al-Harith and Uqbah b. Abi Miaqit who were notorious for their unrelenting hostility towards the Muslims. The rest of the captives were treated with utmost kindness and consideration. Said one of these in later days: "Blessing on the men of Madinah, they gave us wheaten bread to eat when there was little of it, contenting themselves with dates".²³¹

The celebrated author John Alden Williams points out that the Muslims scholars addressed Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as the Lawgiver:

Muhammad is often referred to by the Muslim philosophers as "The Lawgiver," since from his governing of the early community and the example of his life the Islamic Law has been systematized. The Law is usually seen as of Divine origin, but mediated by the Prophet.²³²

Edward Sell also acclaimed Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as a lawgiver who introduced law, order, policies and religious reforms which played a great role in establishing the commonwealth. According to Sell,

His work at this time was beneficial. In the place of lawlessness and disorder he introduced law and order. Religion played an important part in the creation of the commonwealth.²³³

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

"Your smiling in the face of your brother is charity, commanding good and forbidding evil is charity, and your giving directions to a man lost in the land is charity for you. You helping a man with bad sight is a charity for you, your removal of a rock, a thorn or a bone from the road is charity for you. Your pouring what remains from your bucket into the bucket of your brother is charity for you."

Source: ﷺ

Tirmidhi 1956

CHAPTER 8: LIVING WITH NON-MUSLIMS

It is commonly believed that Islam does not accept the presence of other religions in the world. This chapter discusses the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) regarding how to deal with non-Muslims and live in a cohesive society. Islam offers rights to the non-Muslims amidst them. These rights include freedom of religion, the right to work, housing, freedom of movement, education and security in times of war and hostility. Prophet Muhammad (SAW)'s teachings on the behaviour which Muslims should show towards members of other faiths can be neatly encapsulated by the Qur'anic verse: "To you is your religion, to me mine."

Constitutional Rights of non-Muslims

The society in which Prophet Muhammad (SAW) lived comprised a diverse religious base. Jews, Christians, polytheists and others who did not subscribe to any form of organised religion lived in close proximity. Prophet Muhammad (SAW)'s conduct during this time reflected his tolerant nature towards non-Muslims. A good starting point for us to properly understand the level of tolerance displayed by Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and Muslims is the period when Islamic laws were implemented on a state level in Madinah. This is not to say that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was not of a tolerant nature in Makkah. Indeed he was, but the principle of religious tolerance was really set in stone once the constitution of Madinah was drafted.

The Constitution of Medina was the first constitution of the world, formed about six centuries before the English Magna Carta (the Great Charter). The Constitution of Medina was implemented for about a decade from 622 to 632 AD and applied to a population of 10,000 composed mainly of Jews, non-Muslim Arabs and Muslims. During that time the Prophet (SAW) conducted a survey by himself. It is amazingly to notice that at the beginning of the constitution 45% of the population of Madinah was Jews, 40% non-Muslim Arabs and only 15% Muslims! It means the he formed the Charter of Medina as a minority government. His first and foremost aim was to rule a multi-religious society by providing for the religious freedom of all interfaith groups. With 47 clauses altogether, the Charter set forth the configuration of a self-governing state of a common nationality for all communities.²³⁴

Although the UNO founded the policy of Human Rights in 1948, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had declared Universal Human Rights 1400 years ago. The Charter protected the basic human rights for all of its citizens that entailed

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

The most despicable amongst persons in the eye of God is one who tries to fall into dispute with others (for nothing but only to display his knowledge and power of argumentation)

Source: ﷺ

Muslim 2668

equality, collaboration, freedom of ethics and freedom of religions. Clause 25 in particular explicitly declares that non-Muslims – Jews or Arabs – have the equal right to practise their religions without any restriction. In brief, history recorded that the Constitution of Medina was the first in the world to build religious freedom for interfaith communities as a principal constitutional right.²³⁵

The ‘constitution of Madinah’ is the clearest example of Prophet Muhammad(saw)’s commitment to religious tolerance. Following his migration to Madinah, Prophet Muhammad (saw) was no longer just a spiritual leader in the eyes of the people. Rather, he was vested with political power and assumed the executive authority of government. He was now tasked with ruling according to Islamic law and bringing understanding to a fragmented society. For Prophet Muhammad (saw), laying down a constitution was of paramount importance, as all religious groups needed to be reminded of their civil obligations towards one another and not to transgress the limits set by the legal framework, which could amount to treason.

The constitution stipulated that the residents of Madinah, Muslims and non-Muslims, and anyone, who had entered into a treaty with the state, were “one nation to the exclusion of all others”. Irrespective of race, creed or lineage, they were all part and parcel of Madinah society. The life, wealth and property of non-Muslims were to be protected according to the article in the constitution which read: “To the Jews who live there will be help and equity. They shall not be harmed nor their enemies be aided.” In the past, alliances between tribes were formed from inside and outside the Madinah territories but Prophet Muhammad (saw) sought to unite these tribes under one government which assimilated the alliances which already existed between tribes. If any tribe or faith group was attacked, the state would consider it an attack on itself. The life of non-Muslims who had a treaty with the Muslims was considered to have the utmost sanctity and was afforded protection. Prophet Muhammad (saw) said:

“Whoever kills a person who has a truce with the Muslims will never smell the fragrance of Paradise.” (*Sahih Muslim*). As Muslims were in a position of authority, Prophet Muhammad (saw) warned his followers not to abuse this authority and privilege. He said:

“Beware! Whoever is cruel and hard on a non-Muslim minority, or curtails their rights, or burdens them with more than they can bear, or takes anything from them against their free will; I (Prophet Muhammad (saw)) will complain against the person on the Day of Judgment.” (*Abu Dawud*)

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

Ruined are those who are extreme. The prophet (saw) repeated this thrice.

Source:

ﷺ

Muslim
2670

In another article, the Madinah constitution states: “The Jews have their religion and the Muslims have theirs.” This is one of the clearest indications of tolerance towards non-Muslims, and that their faiths could not be offended. Non-Muslims could go about their religion and way of life without any interference from the state and harassment by authorities. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) insisted that the disputes which occurred between the people of Madinah must be referred back to the law, which at that time was Islamic. This was fundamental requirement of being part of Madinah society and enjoying the protection of the state. The Qur’an states: “If any dispute or controversy likely to cause trouble should arise, it must be referred to God and His Messenger.” Prophet Muhammad (SAW) did not want justice to be dispensed arbitrarily by individual leaders. Although non-Muslims had the freedom of referring their specific religious disputes to their own scholars, the option was always available for them to ask for arbitration from Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and Islamic law if they wanted to. God says in the Qur’an:

“If they do come to you, either judge between them or decline to interfere...” (the Qur’an 5:42)

This was a clear demonstration that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was an advocate of religious freedom, providing the main tenets of the state constitution were not violated.

‘Justice’ is a right for all. Islam teaches Muslims to cooperate with non-Muslims, to protect them from injustice, provide the rights of the oppressed and to follow the path which promotes the benefits for the whole mankind. The Qur’an teaches:

Allah (God) does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes – from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly. (60:8)

The prophet has taught not to discriminate against anybody on racial terms or any other terms. According to the Qur’an all human beings are equal.

O mankind, We have created you from a male and a female and have made you into nations and tribes for you to know one another. Truly, the noblest of you with God is the most pious. Truly, God is All-Knowing, All-Aware. (49:13)

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

He who called (people) to righteousness, there would be reward (assured) for him like the rewards of those who adhered to it, without their rewards being diminished in any respect. And he who called (people) to error, he shall have to carry (the burden) of its sin, like those who committed it, without their sins being diminished in any respect.

Source: ﷺ

Muslim 2674

God said in the Qur'an to have created Muslims and non-Muslims; not to differentiate amongst any former prophets; and that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is sent as mercy not only to the Muslims but to the whole of mankind.

The Medina Constitution clearly reflects the element of mercy as mentioned in the above quotation by its legislation on how to deal with the people from other faiths. History has witnessed the tolerant attitude of Islam towards people from other faiths whether they live in a Muslim or non-Muslim country.

This fact is not only purported by Muslims, but many non-Muslim historians also accept it. Patriarch Ghaytho wrote:

*The Arabs, to whom the Lord has given control over the world, treat us as you know; they are not the enemies of Christians. Indeed, they praise our community, and treat our priests and saints with dignity, and offer aid to churches and monasteries.*²³⁶

The tolerant attitude of Muslims and their good dealing with non-Muslims are also supported by Will Durant, who wrote:

*At the time of the Umayyad caliphate, the people of the covenant, Christians, Zoroastrians, Jews, and Sabians, all enjoyed degree of tolerance that we do not find even today in Christian countries. They were free to practice the rituals of their religion and their churches and temples were preserved. They enjoyed autonomy in that they were subject to the religious laws of the scholars and judges.*²³⁷

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) taught not only the freedom of the practice of the religion of people from other faiths but also that they must be treated in a similar way to others. He warned against any mistreatment of non-Muslims in an Islamic society. He stated:

"Beware! Whoever is cruel and hard on a non-Muslim minority, curtails their rights, burdens them with more than they can bear, or takes anything from them against their free will; I (Prophet Muhammad) will complain against the person on the Day of Judgment." (Abu Dawud)

Bernard Lewis claims that the Constitution was not a treaty in the modern sense, but a unilateral proclamation by Prophet Muhammad (SAW). One of the constitution's more interesting aspects was the inclusion of Jewish tribes in the Ummah because, although the Jewish tribes were one community with the believers, they had their religion and the Muslims had theirs.

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

"I was sent to perfect good character."

Source: ﷺ

Al Adab Al Mufrad 273

CHAPTER 9: PATIENCE

Patience (Sabr)

The word for patience in Arabic is ‘sabr’, but it is a general meaning and does not indicate the depth of the multidimensional Qur’anic word ‘sabr’. The word ‘patience’ is derived from Latin and its original meaning comes close to the concept of ‘suffering’. However, ‘sabr’ provides an idea of binding or to tie down feelings of fear or weakness which are not controlled. There are a few equivalent words which could indicate perseverance during adversity, stamina against suffering, staying power with belated actions, dedication to face impediments, bravery against aggression, self-control against aggravation, strength of mind against enticement, and tranquillity of mind as regards the outcome of any work.

History finds reflections of the above expressions in life of the prophet, undoubtedly a brilliant example of a human being with an extremely high degree of tolerance. He lost his father before his birth, his mother when he was six years old and soon after that his guardian, his grandfather. His uncle, Abu Talib, was the only person left to look after him. Having received the prophethood, he was faced with the most vicious aggravation and antagonism not only from society as a whole but also from his own people. However, nothing could stop him or make him pessimistic; rather he did his best to follow God’s instructions and fulfil the mission given to him.

Patience bears a great significance in the life of Muslims and its huge practical implications were found in the life of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and many teachings from him. Patience is the fundamental value in the Qur’an, which had been demonstrated thoroughly and followed strictly by him. Patience cannot be separated from Islam. It is the inclusive virtue which includes determination, endurance, self-control, conscientiousness, and self-possession. It is a characteristic of enlightenment that develops in the heart of a Muslim. Patience leads to success; that is why the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) made it central to his life, which earned his enormous success. Patience and achieving are intertwined together according to the teachings of Islam. (“*Surely, Allah is with those who are As-Saabiroon (the patient)*”). There is a verse in the Qur’an saying that God is with those who are patient and that led the life of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). Sympathy and forgiveness are two of the fundamental criteria which form his global message. God has described him as having two major qualities, the “*Most Merciful and the Most Compassionate*”. But this is not only for the Muslims; it is for the whole of mankind. It has claimed in the Qur’an that Muhammad (ﷺ) was

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

"Giving charity to a poor person is charity, and (giving) to a relative is two things, charity and upholding the ties of kinship.

Source: ﷺ

Nasā'ī 2582

sent as mercy for all creatures (21:107). Preaching about patience, he informed the people that God has guaranteed to offer reward without measure to those who are patient, as victory is definitely for them.

The prophet's personal life was a direct reflection of Qur'anic guidance, which made him known as the living Qur'an. History witnessed him as being merciful and compassionate to all of God's creatures: humans and animals. There is no evidence of him having uttered a bad word towards anyone, and he was always found to have a smiling face not only with the member of his family but to all he came across. Anas ibn Malik, who served the prophet for more than 13, years claimed that, despite his mistakes, the prophet never told him off.

Major Arthur Leonard highlights the remarkable characteristics of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in acquiring knowledge and achieving something gradually while avoiding hastiness. The odd failure here and there did not stop him carrying on. Calmness and patience were among the great qualities he developed. Leonard brands the Prophet as a truly remarkable man:

*What appears to me as so remarkable and so significant, so truly characteristic of the man, is the way in which he never lets go his grip of the central idea and purpose, but follows it up step by step. And as he follows, he makes every point that he can, seizes every opportunity, takes every advantage of every ordinary event and occurrence that is going on around him, makes the best of every reverse, turns even his set-backs and reverses into moral victories; and accepts it all as inevitable with the calmness of a philosophy that emanated from his own wondrous egoism and that inexhaustible fund of patience and reserve of courage which so distinguishes his character. In this respect alone Mohammed truly was a remarkable man.*²³⁸

Forgiveness

Islam teaches that if you have a choice between revenge and forgiveness, choose forgiveness. The sweetness that follows cannot be replaced a thousand revenges. Forgiveness is a characteristic in Islam which has drawn much attention. The realisation of forgiveness is when a person is agreeing to forgive someone against whom the person is able to take revenge. It is a promise to the self not to cause any further harm to anyone and work towards establishing peace and harmony. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said:

The best deed before Allah is to pardon a person who has wronged you, to show affection for relatives who have broken tie with you, and to act generously towards a person who has deprived you.

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

The worst food is that of a wedding banquet to which only the rich are invited while the poor are not invited.

Source: ﷺ

Bukhāri 5177

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) directed the people to the Qur'anic teachings on forgiveness:

Turn to forgiveness and enjoin good and turn aside from ignorant (7:199)

And also: forgive them therefore and ask forgiveness for them, and take counsel with them in the affair (3:159)

In the present day, according to psychologists, forgiveness is awareness: an intentional decision to discharge feelings of bitterness or revenge toward a person or group who has caused destruction to someone, whether or not they justify pardon. It is often thought to be a high-minded act of offering leniency to someone who has caused harm. A recent prominent example of forgiveness was South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission at the end of the apartheid in their country. The Chairman of the Commission, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, highlighted that forgiveness is a route to durable peace.

This strongly links up with what Prophet Muhammad (SAW) preached to mankind 1400 years ago. Although the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had every opportunity to obtain revenge for all the sufferings, difficulties and pain he had received from the Makkan opponents, he remained calm. Not only did he refrain from taking revenge, but he also ensured security for them all. He took no pride in his position or his achievements in life. British writer the Reverend Bosworth Smith asks all to read the story of how Prophet Muhammad (SAW) conquered Makkah, if someone desires to know about the greatness of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). He notes:

Now would have been the moment to gratify his ambition, to satiate his lust, to glut his revenge. Is there anything of the kind? Read the account of the entry of Mohammed into Makkah, side by side with that of Marius or Sulla into Rome. Compare all the attendant circumstances, the outrages that preceded, and the use made by each of his recovered power, and we shall then be in a position better to appreciate the magnanimity and moderation of the Prophet of Arabia. There were no proscription lists, no plunder, no wanton revenge. The chief blots in his fame are not after his undisputed victory, but during his years of chequered warfare at Madinah, and, such as they are, are distributed very evenly over the whole of that time.²³⁹

There is a rational aspect of Islam which is a prerequisite for its adoption. As far as Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is concerned, his conduct is exemplary. He is

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

Whenever you prepare a broth, add water to it, and have in your mind the members of the household of your neighbours and then give them out of this with courtesy.

Source: ﷺ

Muslim 2625

especially known for his emotional resilience and discipline. Despite being the victim of persecution, he never resorted to senseless violence to accomplish his aims as he strove for his rights. With such broad concepts of religion, a Muslim cannot afford to be violent. Above all, Islam is a simple and scientific religion, which has to be understood before it is accepted. The life of the Prophet (may God's blessings be on him) is an illustrious model for all Muslims to emulate. He has shown the greatest restraint in the preaching and practice of Islam. His life in Makkah was full of examples where he suffered without a protest. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was subject to many hardships and personal injuries while he was preaching Islam in Makkah. His reaction to these was nothing short of the true exposition of non-violence.

Dr Marcus Dods, a Scottish biblical scholar and minister of the Free Church of Scotland, stresses that Muhammad was a prophet who had vital qualities, which a prophet should have. He explains:

But is Muhammad in no sense a Prophet? Certainly he had two of the most important characteristics of the prophetic order. He saw truth about God which his fellowmen did not see, and he had an irresistible inward impulse to publish the Truth. In respect of the latter qualification, Muhammad may stand comparison with the most courageous of the heroic prophets of Israel. For the truth's sake he risked his life, he suffered daily persecutions for years, and eventually banishment, the loss of property, of the good-will of his fellow-citizens, and the confidence of his friends; he suffered in short as much as any man can suffer short of death, which he only escaped by flight and yet he unflinchingly proclaimed his message. No bribe, treat or inducement could silence him. "Though they array against me the sun on the left, I cannot renounce my purpose." And it was this persistency, this belief in his call, to proclaim the Unity of God which was the making of Islam. Other men have been monotheists in the midst of idolaters but no other man has founded a strong and enduring monotheistic religion. The distinction in his case was his resolution that other men should believe.²⁴⁰

Sir John Glubb notes that the Messenger of God, Prophet Muhammad (SAW), had inborn skills in political affairs and international relations, besides whatever divine assignment he was entrusted with. There were many examples of how he had avoided fights and engaged enemies in discussion which at a later stage led to conversion. That was how he won over the Arabs.²⁴¹

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

"I and the one who looks after an orphan will be like this in Paradise," showing his middle and index fingers and separating them.

Source: ﷺ

Bukhāri 5304

Pandit Gopal Krishna, editor of the daily *Bharat Samachar*, has paid the highest tributes to the Prophet noting that he was gifted with a high moral character and had been sent to transform the world. He showed light to the Arabs who were sunk in darkness. The benevolent Prophet never took revenge against anyone. He was a carer of the poor, the helpless and women:

*God had sent him to reform the world. He had been endowed with the strength of character and moral qualities of a great reformer and of a great man. He transformed the downtrodden evil society of Arabia into a very refined, virile and virtuous society. The Prophet of Islam was very kind-hearted and never took revenge on personal grounds, nor turned away any supplicant from his door. He was responsible for the emancipation of women and he made no distinction between a rich and a poor person.*²⁴²

A noted Indian leader, Lala Har Dayal, testifies to the simplicity and patience of the Prophet of Islam:

*Howsoever we may Judge, the character of this Man is a precious heritage for humanism. We can learn from his inspiring example. He was always very abstemious in his habits and contented himself with simple food, clothes and lodging. He was entirely free from avarice. He risked his life for his faith and had to flee from his native town. Rightly do the Muslims date their history from that night when Muhammad and Abu Bakr hid in the cave on the way from Makkah to Madinah. The Prophet was exemplar of patience and forbearance to the proud, hot tempered Arabs. His sweet patience was indeed his great virtue. His boundless charity and generosity to all flowed from his unworldly heart like a fountain in the Arabian desert. 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.*²⁴³

Islam is not a barrier to ethical conduct or performing good deeds. In Islam, all deeds of goodness, mercy, forgiveness, perseverance and well-being are liable to be amply rewarded by God. These are strong incentives for noble deeds and pious actions for the sake of God. Professor Vaglieri explained:

Islam was not only not an obstacle to moral perfection; since it possessed in itself an efficient strength directed towards good deeds, it succeeded, earlier than other religions, in educating and raising

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

"O God, bear witness that I have issued a warning concerning (failure to fulfil) the rights of the two weak ones: Orphans and women."

Source:

ﷺ

Ibn Mājah
3678

*men towards God. Islam succeeded because it was not less concerned for the moral responsibility of its members than other monotheistic religions whose prophets Muhammad recognised as his teachers, but in certain respects it was even more concerned than they, because it counted on human weakness and exhorted its believers towards ideals within their reach. The same virtues which Judaism and Christianity present as the supreme end of the moral life of man, are not only set forth but are even prescribed as ideals in Islam. This is true of the ideals of mercy towards all creatures, understanding, forgiveness, simplicity, fitness in social contacts, acceptance of misfortunes, and so on.*²⁴⁴

Chopra says that the Qur'an, like the previous book of Jesus, informs about salvation and about doom; but in addition, the Qur'an offers hopes for mercy and forgiveness and the guidelines for all to follow in everyday life.²⁴⁵

It is unfortunate that historians have opted not to study and document the positive aspects of Prophet Muhammad(saw)'s teachings and how they contributed to the good of humanity. Instead, they focus on those parts of his teachings which can be spinned to look controversial and tarnish his reputation. In the words of Pandit Gyanandra Dev Sharma Shastri:

*They [Muhammad's critics] see fire instead of light, ugliness instead of good. They distort and present every good quality as a great vice. It reflects their own depravity...The critics are blind. They cannot see that the only 'sword' Muhammad wielded was the sword of mercy, compassion, friendship and forgiveness – the sword that conquers enemies and purifies their hearts. His sword was sharper than the sword of steel. But the biased critics of Islam are prejudicial and partisan; they are narrow minded and their eyes are covered by a veil of ignorance. They see fire instead of light, ugliness instead of beauty and evil instead of good. They distort and present every good quality as a great vice. It reflects their own depravity.*²⁴⁶

Venkata Ratnam pays glowing tribute to the Prophet of Islam, saying that Islam is a very liberal religion. However, many people resort to publishing fictions rather than the truth about this religion. Prophet Muhammad (saw) taught that there is no God but Him. He is the Creator of everything that is in the universe which He alone rules with mercy and affection. Mankind can seek forgiveness directly without an intermediary.²⁴⁷

Lane-Poole remarks that despite suffering untold oppression and torture at the hands of the Quraish and those who were hostile to his message, Prophet

Prophet (SAW) said: ﴿

"The real patience is at the first stroke of a calamity."

Source: ﴿

Bukhārī 1302

Muhammad (SAW) forgave all their transgressions, granting them clemency. This is nowhere better illustrated than in his conquest of Makkah, which occurred with no report or record of blood being spilled. Those under Prophet Muhammad's command followed suit and would not harass any member of the community and engage in any crime. Lane-Poole explains:

He freely forgave the Koraysh all the years of sorrow and cruel scorn in which they had afflicted him and gave an amnesty to the whole population of Mekka. Four criminals whom justice condemned made up Mohammad's proscription list when he entered as a conqueror to the city of his bitterest enemies. The army followed his example, and entered quietly and peacefully no house was robbed, no women insulted. One thing alone suffered destruction. Going to the Kaaba, Mohammad stood before each of the three hundred and sixty idols, and pointed to it with his staff, saying, 'Truth has come and falsehood has fled away' and at these words his attendants hewed them down, and all the idols and household gods of Mekka and roundabout were destroyed.²⁴⁸

Lane-Poole points out that the victory of Makkah was a bloodless triumph! The Prophet did not take any vengeance on those who once wanted to kill him and caused all sorts of pain and suffering for him and finally compelled him to be ousted from the city. But instead of taking any revenge he gave a general amnesty to all. As a result, everybody was safe both in their homes and outside. It was a unique example in history. In Lane-Poole's words:

But what is this? Is there no blood in the streets? Where are the bodies of the thousands that have been butchered? Facts are hard things; and it is a fact that the day of Prophet Muhammad's greatest triumph over his enemies was also the day of his grandest victory over himself. He freely forgave the Qureysh all the years of sorrow and cruel scorn they had inflicted on him; he gave an amnesty to the whole population of Makkah. Four criminals whom justice condemned, made up Prophet Muhammad's proscription list; no house was robbed, no woman insulted. It was thus that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) entered again his native city. Through all the annals of conquest, there is no triumphant entry like unto this one.²⁴⁹

Tolerance and patience, when combined together, can form a strong power which becomes very helpful to unite diverse communities together.

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was a man of great patience. The saying 'Patience is a virtue' was reflected in his character. In spreading Islam, the struggles and persecution he faced could not dissuade him from what he preached

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

"Being honourable is wealth and noble character is piety."

Source: ﷺ

Ibn Mājah- 4219

but made him more resolute. The lesson of 'No pain, no gain' is learnt through the degree of patience he had shown when preaching the message of Islam. When the Prophet went to the town of Taif and started preaching Islam, he was chased with stones by the people of Taif. He was badly hurt; bleeding, he fell down in a swoon. But he never scolded his abusers nor hated them. He calmly prayed that God lead them to the right path and pardon them as they did not know what they were doing. He felt that someday light would dawn – if not on them, then at least on their progeny – and they would accept the Truth. As such, he refused to curse these potential Muslims.

On many occasions Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had the opportunity to use military might to besiege a population, but he was above such ruthless ways of doing things and opted for peace at all times. His behaviour remains a shining example of how strength and numbers ought to be used without resorting to violence. Author Dr N.K. Singh notes:

*The conquest of Makkah is unique in history, and is a glowing example of non-violent war. With an army ten thousand strong, the Prophet marched on Makkah. There was no opposition, no resistance, practically no blood was shed, and only handfuls were taken prisoners. The mode of entrance of the conqueror into the city is a lesson of humility and grace.*²⁵⁰

Prophet Muhammad's tremendous persona, simplicity and kindness were at the heart of his very being. He was wise and inspirational and showed a great degree of tolerance and compassion for the less fortunate.

My attempt, has been to present Mohammed as he really was – an Arab like many I knew in the desert; a man of simple tastes, but of great personality, with the good of his people at heart; a man who was inspired, but thought out all he did logically; who had tolerance for the weakness of men and women, because he was often weak himself. Not a God by any means.

Taking revenge is not the teaching of Islam. One of the strong elements of the character of Muhammad (SAW) was to endure suffering and mistreatment from others without seeking revenge. He rather considered that the people were not aware of the wrong they were doing. However, he always cared and prayed for them. Dr N.K. Singh continues:

People threw rubbish on his body and showered abuses. One particular lady adopted a novel technique: as the Prophet passed in front of her house every day, she threw rubbish, collected in her house, right on his body. This became such a regular practice that one day when rubbish was not thrown on him; he wanted to

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

"The best of you in Islam is the best of you in character if they possess understanding (of the religion)."

Source: ﷺ

Al Adab Al Mufrad - 285

*know the reason for it. On enquiry, he learnt that the old lady was sick. He then went into the hollow, sat by the bedside of the lady, consoled her and prayed for her early recovery.*²⁵¹

Many other authors have narrated similar stories about Prophet Muhammad's wisdom and how a conflict which could have been bloody had been avoided.

Dr Daniel C. Peterson is consistent with the above statements.²⁵²

Tolerance

As far as tolerance is concerned, this is clearly enshrined in Islam and the character of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The Qur'an highlights this principle. The overwhelming number of Islamic traditions which support the principle of tolerance should suffice to prove that compulsion has never been endorsed in Islam. According to Dr N.K. Singh:

*The Islamic Philosophy of tolerance is derived from the Qur'an and the practice of the Prophet. The Qur'an teaches that "Religion is only for Allah": Ya kunuddinu lillahi. The basis of Islamic toleration is firmly laid in the teaching of the Qur'an; "toleration" means "the recognition of free thought and practice in religious matters" (Oxford Dictionary). Toleration is a law, not of Coercion but of Love, not one of violence but of peace.*²⁵³

Tolerance is a great virtue which is reflected in the practices of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and the caliphs after him. Dr Singh explains how tolerance was discernible in the behaviour of the Arabs. In his words:

The Islamic doctrine of tolerance found the fullest expression in the practice of the Prophet and the pious Caliphs. The Ummayyad and Abbasid Caliphs also practised tolerance in the vast regions which gradually became a part of the Islamic Commonwealth. The term "practice" should, however, be taken to mean "usual behaviour" rather than "invariable behaviour". The Prophet had brought about the political unification of the Arab tribes shortly before his death. This great achievement represented the combined victory of Arab nationalism over centrifugal tribalism, as also of Islam as the revised version of ancient Judaism and Christianity. The hitherto camel-drivers, petty traders and free-booters of the desert, emerged from the back-waters of history, on the world-stage

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

"The most complete of the believers in faith, is the one with the best character among them. And the best of you are those who are best to your women."

Source: ﷺ

Tirmidhi
1162

*of history. The almost unbroken chain of military victories against the then superpowers inevitably fostered a new self-image of the Arab emerging elite.*²⁵⁴

There is no evidence in history to prove that the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) forced someone to accept Islam. He never waged war against anybody. He just fought against those who fought him first. As regards those who came under a peace treaty with him, he never fought them or forced them to be converted.

Nelson Mandela acknowledged the debt that ought to be paid to African Muslims and their remarkable struggles in taking up noble causes. Muslims were working there very closely with other communities.

*Islam has become part of Africa in a process as complex as the history of the continent itself... In the face of European colonialism, Islamic communities took their place along the whole spectrum of resistance politics, including the struggle against apartheid.*²⁵⁵

The lives of many African Muslims were taken during the apartheid era, which should remind us how important the Muslims are in Africa's recent political and cultural narrative. According to Mandela:

*If I may, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to those South African Muslims who died while in detention because of their resistance to apartheid; Babla Saloojee; Imam Haroun; Ahmed Timol; and Dr Hussein Haffejjee. They represent the involvement of the Muslim community in the struggle for justice and freedom, as does the presence of Muslims as Cabinet Ministers and in the highest office of our judiciary, in the new democratic political dispensation of our country.*²⁵⁶

Karen Armstrong insists that the Muslims did not have any problems living in harmony with people from other faiths. The Christians and the Jews lived within the Islamic domain for many years but the West felt uncomfortable accepting Muslims within their territories.²⁵⁷

The original message of Islam, contained in the Qur'an and carried by Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), stressed the importance of equality and justice in all spheres of life. Although these principles may have been largely ignored, it is by no means a reflection of what Islam requires of Muslims.²⁵⁸

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

"Nothing is heavier on the believer's Scale on the Day of Judgment than good character. For indeed God, Most High is angered by a shameless obscene person."

Source: ﷺ

Tirmidhi
2002

The former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said that Prophet Muhammad (SAW)'s teachings will direct us towards the path of understanding, peace and co-existence. He said:

*The Prophet's life and work is an inspiration to lead a life of compassion and brotherhood. May the festival (Eid) spread peace, love and tolerance among all.*²⁵⁹

Prophet Muhammad's emphasis on interfaith dialogue and enjoining compassionate relations is clear. There are incidents in his life which indicate that he had a high level of respect for non-Muslims. Danny Richmond maintains:

*Yes. I know there is a famous story – and you'll have to help me out on it – I believe one of his Jewish neighbours had a funeral and the Prophet attended his funeral. (The coffin was going in front of him and he stood up to respect and told the others). Yes, that's it. The sign of respect when many others wouldn't have thought to respect or were condemning other groups, I think the Prophet multiple times showed that respect above all is an essential trait of an Islamic person. I know that teaching of respect to others came heavily in a lot of his life.*²⁶⁰

Dr Henry Stubbe noted that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) never forced anybody to embrace Islam and non-Muslims were well protected during his time. According to Dr Stubbe:

*I do not find that Mahomet proceeded any further in Arabia the desert then to exterminate Idolatry, but not to force men to the profession to Islamism. He himself gave Letters of security and protection to the Jews and Christians in Arabia, and never used any Violence to them upon the Account of religion.*²⁶¹

Jon Dal Din has studied Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and says that the Prophet (SAW) instructed Muslims to show friendliness and warmth to those belonging to other religions:

*The prophet taught his people to be respectful to people from other faiths...what I understand is that the prophet has taught Muslims to have respect for other people. I am not aware of anything that the prophet is saying that you should not have respect for the community.*²⁶²

An objective assessment of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)'s life would reveal that he was not aggressively seeking converts to Islam and promoted

peaceful living with those belonging to different faiths. According to Reverend Jennifer Potter, Minister, Wesley Chapel, London:

*I think Muhammad preached that we should live peacefully with others and in particular with those who acknowledged one God – monotheism, as fellow people and not as outcasts and enemies to aggressively evangelise, but to live with them in peace and harmony.*²⁶³

Prophet Muhammad (SAW)'s teachings on neighbourliness encompass the toleration of non-Islamic religions, and he did not show an adversarial attitude to the adherents of other faiths but rather exhibited tolerance at all times. This characteristic of Prophet Muhammad's teachings is often suppressed and not properly practised by Muslims. According to Jeremy Corbyn:

*As I understand the teachings, he has a set of values and views, e.g. the food you eat, the way you treat people, the times you pray, the way you lead your life. His values were also respect for other faiths and other religions. There are a lot of disputes about his attitudes to Judaism; I prefer to take the view that he was developing a set of beliefs as a messenger from God, but he was not hostile to people who believed other things. It's that tolerance and respect which I think is a strong feature of the Muslim community in Britain and Europe and it is something which is often misunderstood, deliberately in some cases. Like any other faith, Islam has followers who claim to be followers of Islam who don't fully understand the faith and use their own version.*²⁶⁴

According to Mike Stagal, Prophet Muhammad (SAW)'s neighbourliness could be seen in the way he respected the differences of others:

*When dealing with neighbours, he was always very respectful, observing that they were different but respecting those differences. As long as they were not attacking Islam in the way they behaved then there was always to be a respectful relationship between each other. That's my understanding of what Muhammad had to say about neighbours.*²⁶⁵

There are aphorisms of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) which point to the Muslims' duty to treat neighbours with care and cordiality. There is sometimes a misunderstanding that the Muslim obligation to his fellow man included only co-religionists. However, Prophet Muhammad (SAW)'s instruction

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

He will not enter Paradise whose neighbour is not secure from his wrongful conduct.

Source: ﷺ

Muslim 46

for neighbourliness and peaceful coexistence and relations with the local community encompassed everybody, including non-Muslims. There was no element of discrimination in his advice for Muslims to be dutiful to their peers and neighbours. Niknam Mehri notes:

One of the sayings of the prophet according to hadith is that he said 'be kind to your neighbours, up to 40 households on one side and 40 households on the other side'. When we question this, we try to analyse what the Prophet meant. He was a wise man. If he had said, be kind to your Muslim neighbours up to 40 houses on this side and up to 40 houses on that side that would have meant discard anybody who is not a Muslim, he is not your neighbour. But his statement is inclusive, he meant whoever lives within your vicinity, regardless of race, religion or background, they are your neighbours, be kind to them. Also, I have explained this further by saying, in those days if you said be kind to your neighbours ten houses further, or be kind to your neighbours two houses further, it would have a numerical value in people's mind. The number 40 always has the connotation of infinite. If you have 40 of something, it means you have a great number of something. So I always teach why did he say 40, why did he not say 30, or 20 or 10? Does it mean that the streets in Madinah were so long that they had 40 neighbours on one side and 40 neighbours on the other side? No, rather, what he meant was extend your kindness to your neighbours throughout the world. It is infinite. It is not just your next door neighbour but all the world is one neighbourhood. It seems to me that this is the message that should be communicated more than anything else about this teaching of the Prophet.²⁶⁶

Prophet Muhammad (SAW)'s teachings are conducive to fostering close relations between our peers and the wider society. This is achieved by applying the Islamic dictates of equitable wealth distribution, which is reflected in one of the major pillars of the Islamic faith: Zakat. Mehri comments:

The Qur'an commands the believers to look after the orphans, the needy, the poor, to share your wealth with your fellow citizens and so on. Zakat is a very important aspect of Islam, one of its five pillars. If every Muslim in the world, genuinely and truly gave two and a half per cent of his profit per annum as Zakat for the poor, for the needy, for the widow, for the uneducated, if they build with this

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

"The best of companions with God is the one who is best to his companions, and the best of neighbours to God is the one who is the best of them to his neighbour".

Source: ﷺ

Tirmidhi 311

*money schools, hospitals, universities, welfare houses, social institutions, there would not be a single poor Muslim in the world.*²⁶⁷

Many are of the view that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and Jesus shared similar visions on how neighbours and those who are different should be treated. There was a common denominator in their religious persuasions.

According to Reverend John Cowie, the English Reformed Church, Amsterdam:

*I think the teaching of Islam and the prophet is similar to the way Christians would preach dealing with your neighbour. Because they come from the same roots and there was a concern for people amongst whom you lived.*²⁶⁸

Both Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and Jesus emphasised the importance of maintaining a dutiful regard towards neighbours. They did not restrict the definition of neighbours to mean an exclusive group of people but rather taught that it was a general principle to be courteous with anyone. Reverend Cowie adds:

*My understanding of the Prophet's teachings of Islam is that we have a responsibility beyond just ourselves but also to the poor and Jesus taught that we have that responsibility to our neighbour. And our neighbour can be anybody – not just people we know but strangers in our midst; that we have a responsibility to them.*²⁶⁹

Intolerance in Islam is denounced. According to British Conservative politician David Amess, social cohesion is fully realisable when considering the wisdom and experience which Prophet Muhammad imparted to others:

*The idea that Muslims are trying to undermine other religions is ridiculous and is not the teachings of Muhammad. There are no barriers to Muhammad's teachings to achieve social cohesion. Rather, Muhammad's teachings are conducive to social cohesion.*²⁷⁰

A famous prayer taught to us by the Prophet regarding peace is: “O Allah, You are the peace, from You emanates the peace and to You shall the peace return.”

There is enormous evidence of the prophet's teachings on living in a multi-faith community. One of the significant examples can be drawn from the medieval history of Europe. There one can learn about a model of peaceful diverse culture and multi-faith communities in Spain during Muslim rule. That

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷻ

"None amongst you believes (truly) until he loves for his brother" - or he said "for his neighbour" - "that which he loves for himself."

Source: ﷻ

Muslim 45

was a society composed of Christians, Jews and Muslims who lived in peace and harmony.

Peace (world peace)

There exists an incorrect understanding that Islam is a religion of violence, but many people from different backgrounds and infrastructures have proved this to be wrong and they agreed with the meaning of Islam as ‘peace’. The very beginning verse of the Qur’an, which was repeated 114 times in the Qur’an reads ‘Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim’ meaning *In the name of (Allah) God, the Most Merciful, the most Compassionate*. This distinctly proves that the religion of Islam has come from the merciful and compassionate God and the book revealed for Islam is the book of mercy. Hence its followers must have the qualities of mercy and compassion.

The people of Islam must also possess the quality of mercy and compassion; otherwise they could not be true believers. The fortitude of peace is depicted throughout the book. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) implemented its teachings in his life and all of his teachings are conducive to peace.

The Qur’an reveals that the whole universe with all its astronomical bodies is in motion and is a symbol of peace – all circle in their own orbits without the slightest deviation. This peaceful orbiting and living is the religion for both the universe and for mankind. Prophet Muhammad teaches us that we should emulate this phenomenon of peace in our daily life when dealing with a diverse set of people in society.

He provided guidance to all to develop a positive attitude: ‘not to be angry’ in any situation when managing daily life. Rather, he strongly recommended that his followers maintain peace despite the aggravations they faced. He advised against wishing for a conflict with the enemy, rather than desiring for peace from God.

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) placed so much stress upon peace because, to build a happy life, people require productive deeds like development of spiritual strength, a good character, educational attainment, communal happiness, worship, etc. No progress or development can take place without peace. Peace is required not only for the religion but for the sake of the Creator. He warned all that no activities can be performed in the absence of peaceful environment. Bearing in mind the great importance of peace, he wanted to maintain peace

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

It is obligatory for you to tell the truth, for truth leads to virtue and virtue leads to Paradise, and the man who continues to speak the truth and endeavours to tell the truth is eventually recorded as truthful with God, and beware of telling of a lie for telling of a lie leads to obscenity

Source: ﷺ

Muslim 2607

always, even compromising with others to do so. The prophet reminded that on the day of judgement God will welcome into paradise only those souls who followed the path of peace in this world.

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) preached that God said in the Qur'an that he was sent by God as blessings for the whole world. So the prophet had a responsibility towards teaching and establishing peace globally.

Peace-making was one of the fundamental tasks which interested him hugely. He appreciated the aim and objectives of an organisation from pre-prophetic days, 'Hilful Fudul', which protected the interest of the poor and the oppressed, and he became a part of it. The objectives of his life included help making peace for all regardless of their religious beliefs and social positions. An example can be given when Jewish allies had very bad and bitter relations with one another; Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was able to eradicate the enmity amongst them. He united the immigrants, natives and Arabs together and formed a constitution which brought about the national and emotional integration of the diverse groups of Madinah. This principle was followed in international levels in many countries. Napoleon Bonaparte claimed that the world learnt unity from the prophet.

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) handled racial problems very effectively. He brought God at the centre point to all – irrespective of their religious faiths – by placing Him as someone that protects and lovingly cares for someone or something and is also the Custodian of the whole universe. He proclaimed that God is not for Muslims alone but for the whole of mankind, and He (God) sent guides (messengers) to every people to warn them. The prophet hated racial discrimination and declared that no one is superior to any other. He reminded all that the most honoured in the sight of Allah is the most righteous one.

His sermon at the last pilgrimage, which pronounced rights for all, is very powerful and persuasive. It is wrong to assume that the sermon was given only for the Muslims; it is for all and distinctly clarified about the oneness of God who is for the whole universe. He made it crystal clear that there is no place for supremacy of a white man over a non-white, of an Arab over a non-Arab, of a non-Arab over an Arab, etc. – all are equal to the Lord. He did not consider that any non-Muslim faith group should be ignored or insulted. Rather, he pointed out that the Qur'an has portrayed that there would be honourable and virtuous persons from other faiths, i.e. Jews, and Christian, and Muslims can marry their virtuous women. Dinners with other communities are also allowed (5:5).²⁷¹

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

"The one who maintains ties of kinship is not the one who reciprocates. The one who maintains ties of kinship is the one who, when his relatives cut him off, maintains ties of kinship."

Source: ﷺ

Al-Adab Al-Mufrad 68

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) also clarified the freedom of religions. There is no compulsion in religion; “To you, your religion; to me, mine” (109:6).²⁷² God has created people as Muslims and also non-Muslims. Superior qualities are necessary to establish peace and tranquillity so that people can form a community. This includes managing bad feelings including pride, superiority, egotism, antagonism, resentment, hostility, insincerity, bitterness etc. These superior qualities are essential for mankind to establish peace.

Amit Pal reveals in his book *Islam Means Peace* that the idea that Islam is a violent religion is dispelled once we reflect on the teachings and practice of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). In particular, the early stages of his Prophethood provide compelling proof of his and his followers’ pacifying nature and their aversion to violence and chaos. Amit Pal says:

*My journey of exploration starts with the founder of the religion, the Prophet Muhammad, and Islam’s holy book, the Qur’an. The prophet is a role model for devout Muslims. In support of the fact that Islam places an emphasis on nonviolence, scholars point to the conduct of the Prophet Muhammad in Makkah. For 12 long years, he endured persecution in that city without fighting back, emphasizing instead the virtues of forbearance (sabr) and patience.*²⁷³

Despite sufferings, untold oppression and torture at the hands of the Quraish and those who were hostile to his message, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) forgave all their transgressions, granting them clemency. This is nowhere better illustrated than in his conquest of Makkah, which occurred with no report or record of blood being spilled. Those under Prophet Muhammad’s command followed suit and would not harass any member of the community and engage in any crime. He freely forgave the Quraish all the years of sorrow and cruel scorn with which they had afflicted him and gave an amnesty to the whole population of Mekka. Four criminals whom justice condemned made up Mohammad’s proscription list when he entered as a conqueror to the city of his bitterest enemies. The army followed his example, and entered quietly and peacefully. No house was robbed, no women insulted. One thing alone suffered destruction. Going to the Kaaba, Mohammad stood before each of the three hundred and sixty idols, and pointed to it with his staff, saying, “Truth has come and falsehood has fled away” and at these words his attendants hewed them down, and all the idols and household gods of Mekka and roundabout were destroyed.²⁷⁴

Misbehaviour and insolence towards the prophet never bothered him. He never thought to take revenge or harboured any resentment. His strong

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

Help the oppressed (sorrowful) and guide those who have lost their way.

Source: ﷺ

Abu Dawud
4817

mannerisms, powerful spirits and softheartedness always overpowered the mood of taking revenge on anybody and the willpower for forgiveness was strong in him.

Whatever level of hardship was faced, it never went beyond upsetting the prophet. A striking example was that, despite the degree of cruelty and dishonour carried out on the dead body of Hamzah ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib, in the battle of Uhud, the prophet did not take revenge on the enemy! Even later on, when the prophet got the opportunity to fight against Hind, the wife of Abu Sufyan, he did not seek revenge. Not only that, but he stopped his followers from taking revenge against anyone.²⁷⁵

The writer Dr Singh notes that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) did not define victory in terms of material success and military conquest. Rather, his mission was dedicated to winning the hearts and minds of his people. Love and compassion were essential hallmarks of his prophethood. The real proof that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was not a war-hungry conqueror was that he insisted on the principle of non-compulsion in religion, and this teaching was practised by the many Muslim rulers and armies throughout history. As Singh notes:

*The Prophet Muhammad's ultimate 'Victory' was a great victory of love-force, heralded in Sura An-Nasr; and the memorable declaration contained in the Sura Al-Madinah verse is his supreme message of love and peace to mankind – the message of Islam: the Last Testament. Prophet's Message of Islam of non-violence and Truth and peace, soon reached the distant corners of the World – Spain, Africa, India, China, Russia and far beyond. No Army was ever dispatched for the propagation of Islam in these lands. What a miracle indeed! There is no compulsion (force) in religion, was the clarion call of Islam.*²⁷⁶

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

The best fighting (jihad) in the path of God is (to speak) a word of justice to an oppressive ruler.

Source: ﷺ

Abū Dāwūd
4344

CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSION

The history of mankind has not record an example of such high-minded and general amnesty towards staunch enemies as was extended by the prophet. These enemies had caused bloodshed to innocent people: the vulnerable, the elderly, women and children. They had tried their hardest to kill the prophet and destroy the Muslim community. And yet he released thousands of prisoners of war without any condition! When he conquered Makkah after having been exiled to Madinah for ten years by his enemies, not only did the prophet pardon them, but he ordered his companions not to claim back their old properties from the enemies who occupied them illegally! He was never known to have caused harm in return for harm. He rejected a suggestion from one of his companions that he curse his enemies, saying that he was sent to call the people towards light as they are submerged in the darkness:

“I have not been sent to curse but as an invited to good and mercy. O Lord! Guide my people, for they know not.”

The prophet always paid more than what was due to anyone. Although he was burdened with both spiritual and civil matters, he never hesitated to discharge his duties towards any allocated share of team work and working shoulder to shoulder with ordinary people. Anas, who spent 10 years in the service of the prophet in Madinah, claimed that he was never told off by the prophet, and that the prophet always fought for the freedom of slaves.

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) gave new significance to the word ‘fearless’. He received honour from friends and foes everywhere, whether protecting the human rights of orphans or safeguarding the honour of widows, or fighting for those who were suffering. There is no single incidence in his life where he was scared in facing his enemies, and he neglected his responsibilities to establish truth and freedom.

Numerous people from all levels across history, for instance world leaders, authors, professionals, politicians, religious leaders from diverse backgrounds including Heraclius, Hong-Wu (also known as Zhū Yuánzhāng), Napoleon Bonaparte, Gandhi, George Bernard Shaw, Bosworth Smith, Edward Gibbon, William Montgomery Watt, Michael Hart, Thomas Carlyle, Stanley Edward Lane-Poole, Sir William Muir, Karen Armstrong, etc., from east to west, whether hostile to the prophet or not, were abundant with praise and extended unprecedented respect towards him. They have highlighted a wide range of qualities which he demonstrated in his life – its vastness cannot be described in

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

The Prophet said " Once a man was walking on the road when he found a thorny branch and removed it. Allah appreciated his action by forgiving him.

Source:

ﷺ
Tirmidhi
1958

full in this book! However, a 13th-century Persian poet Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi said that:

“If you cannot drink (all) the ocean’s water, take a sip of it to quench your thirst.”

With respect to the poet, to quench the thirst with a sip of water, a few of the most important qualities that the prophet possessed are mentioned here. He received global appreciation and admiration for his extreme ‘honesty’, exhibited through all sorts of actions, ‘simplicity’ in his way of life, ‘humbleness’ in dealing with others, ‘kindness’ to all – rich, poor, strong or weak, men, women, children and even animals; ‘patience’, as he was most steadfast and patient in all of the trials and tests he went through; advising others not to take ‘revenge’, ‘altruism’ for the selfless concern he showed for the well-being of others, ‘empathy’ to have felt others’ pain intensely from the deepest part of his heart; ‘articulate’ in speaking clearly to all, ‘brave’ and ‘fearless’ in defending any rights, courteous in behaviour with all, ‘god fearing’ and showing ‘devotion’ and ‘submission’ to Almighty God, ‘dedication’ and ‘determination’ in discharging his responsibilities and completing his mission, ‘friendly’ with each and every one, intelligent in demonstrating the ability to retain knowledge, and using reasoning to solve problems with brain power although he himself was unlettered. Being ‘just’ in all affairs he was a loving father, husband and master; as a ‘messenger of mercy’ to the world he had taught that it is one of the greatest qualities of mankind; a noble person second to none on the earth; skilled in diplomacy and enthusiastic to provide equal rights to all.

Caring for the helpless, the poor, orphans and women and offering equality to all were important parts of his life. With patience at the central point of the religion he showed the whole world that it is a great virtue which brought success in life. History knows that extending forgiveness, promoting tolerance and not taking revenge were crucial qualities that contributed significantly in his life to uniting mankind, and these qualities arouse appreciation across people from diverse background across the entire world. These are the active ways of life preached by him. The world has learnt unity from him, and how Muslims can live with people from different faiths to create a platform of peace providing due respect and honour to them. Islam means peace and there is no chance of violence – Islam and peace cannot stay together. As is evident from the life of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), the religion endorses sympathy, respect and kindness and certainly not violence and hatred.

He was known as the living Qur’an who had demonstrated in his life and also taught others those vital qualities that human beings should possess. He

God said: ﴿﴾	God revealed in the Qur’an about Muhammad (ﷺ)	Source: ﴿﴾
Verily you have in the Prophet of God an excellent model, for him who fears God and the Last Day and who remembers God much		Chapter 33:22

taught the world that Allah (God), the prophet (himself) and the Qur'an are not only for the Muslims but for the whole of mankind; the religion of Islam is to look after all irrespective of any religions. One of his admirers, the legendary Indian politician MK Gandhi, declared that the prophet's sayings are an invaluable treasure not only for the Muslims but for the whole of mankind:

“the sayings of Muhammad are the treasure of wisdom not only for the Muslims but for the entire mankind.”

The prolific British Author Karen Armstrong, a recent scholar of Islam, expressed admiration for Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in her several books including *Muhammad: Prophet for our time*. She wrote that if the Prophet was viewed like any other significant person in history, she had no doubt that, in comparison with others, he is the greatest genius and role model of the world.²⁷⁷

The greatness of his characteristics compelled his hostile orientalist Muir (see chapter two) to admire him for his noble and humble decisions. Muir said:

“The magnanimity with which Muhammad treated a people who had so long hated and rejected him is worthy of all admiration...”

Prophet Muhammad's trustworthiness extended to all aspects of his teachings, including the code of conduct he imparted to others and the mutual tolerance and harmony he preached for dealing with non-Muslims. Jeremy Corbyn notes that:

*He was a person of high integrity and the teachings which include the question of honesty, lifestyle and living, respect for different faiths and people; but above all, it was a message of peace he was giving.*²⁷⁸

Michael Hart points out that Islam's spread must be attributed to the precedent set by Prophet Muhammad (SAW), in particular his combined emphasis on religious and worldly matters, and perceiving them as a harmonious whole. For such incomparable blending he should be judged as the most important person in history. Hart claims that:

*We see, then, that the Arab conquests of the seventh century have continued to play an important role in human history, down to the present day. It is this unparalleled blend of secular and religious influence which I feel entitles Muhammad to be considered the most influential single figure in human history.*²⁷⁹

Prophet (SAW) said: ﷺ

In relation to achieving salvation,” Control your tongue, keep to your house and weep for your sins”

Source: ﷺ

Riyad-us
Saliheen -
1520

The Qur'an teaches that 'Peace and reconciliation' is the basis of all social and worldwide relations. Indian Prime Minister Norendra Modi states that Islam is a religion of peace and mercy and there is no sign of violence in the 99 names of Allah (God) who is Rahman and Raheem. In the Prime Minister's:

*"When we think of the 99 names of Allah, none stand for force and violence, and that the first two names denote compassionate and merciful. Allah is Rahman and Raheem."*²⁸⁰

The President of India Mr. Pranab Mukherjee also paid tribute to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) praising him and his teachings of peace for the whole world:

*"May Holy Prophet's message inspire us to work towards universal brotherhood, compassion, tolerance and well-being of all," the President said in a series of tweets. "Let us on this day recall the life and ideals of Hazrat Mohammed Saheb and re-dedicate ourselves to the service of humanity..."*²⁸¹

One of the 99 names is Salaam, which mean peace, and Prophet Muhammad (SAW) demonstrated this throughout his entire life. He preached the followers to establish peace on the earth by having by general approach upholding peace, disseminating an atmosphere of tranquillity, calmness and trust, and work towards establishing love, empathy, mercy to share with other in peace. Undoubtedly, he was an example of a unique peace-loving role model on the earth.

The celebrated French conqueror Napoleon Bonaparte paid high tribute to Prophet Muhammad, saying that the Prophet was a great leader for humankind. Having united the conflicting Arabs, he reached out with his message of Islam to the wider world:

Mohammad, in reality, was a great leader of mankind. He preached UNITY among Arabs who were, till then, torn asunder due to internecine quarrels, sometime resulting in bloody warfare. He brought them out of the depth of degradation and taught them the way in which they should live as human beings. His followers conquered half of the world in a short time and the discipline which they maintained under his leadership was simply marvellous, and so was their bravery, courage and devotion to the cause which they loved and cherished. This, coupled with the contempt for death as taught by their leader, made them great soldiers and fighters like of whom history rarely produces. I simply marvel at the achievements

God said: ﷻ	God revealed in the Qur'an about Muhammad (SAW)	Source: ﷻ Chapter 33:46
O Prophet, truly We have sent thee as a Witness, and a Bearer of glad tidings, and a Warner,		

*of this Son of the Desert within a period of 15 years only – a thing which Moses and Christ could not do in fifteen hundred years. I salute this great-man; I salute his qualities of head and heart.*²⁸²

Harvard University Professor and Director Jocelyne Cesari was asked whether she thought that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) could be a role model for world peace. She answered as follows:

*Yes Prophet Muhammad can be a model for world peace. First, because the Revelation he received celebrates diversity as stated in the Qur'an: "O mankind, We created you from male and a female and made you into tribes and nations that you may get to know each other." Second, because it denies racial, cultural or religious privileges and gives priority to good actions.*²⁸³

The same question was asked to another prominent professor, Carol Costly, the Head of Research and Research Degrees, Middlesex University, UK. Professor Costly strongly feels that the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) do suggest he is a role model of peace for the whole world:

*Yes I do think the Prophet can be a model for world peace. He is a role model for this and there are many of his teachings that reflect this...*²⁸⁴

She also suggested that religious leaders should set up a model for peaceful resolution of problems for the whole world.

Professor Jenny Bimrose, Warwick University, expressed a similar opinion by paying respect to all other prophets as well. However, this is subject to the believers following their teachings properly. She highlights that:

*My humble view is that he (Prophet Muhammad), together with other religious leaders, are indeed role models for peace. Their doctrines provide visions of inspirational lifestyles for the rest of us mere mortals. It is only when religious doctrines are appropriated...*²⁸⁵

Professor Bimrose expresses her concern for how Prophet Muhammad's teachings are being misused: "What is being done in the name of the Prophet Muhammad is appalling – pure evil..."

God said: ﷻ	God revealed in the Qur'an about Muhammad (SAW)	Source: ﷻ Chapter 33:47
(O Prophet, truly We have sent thee) as a Summoner unto God by his command, and as a Lamp that gives <i>bright</i> light.		

Sardar Hira Singh, Chairman, Sikh Association, Karachi, Pakistan paid a great tribute to the Prophet by claiming that his teachings can have an uplifting effect on society:

I am really grateful to you to give me an opportunity to say some words regarding the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as role model for bringing peace and Harmony in the world .As I believe through the entire teaching of Holy Prophet of Islam if applied in the society and in individual lives of persons irrespective of their religion can bring instrumental change in this material society into spiritual society where every individual feel and enjoy the comfort of heaven as stated in most of the religions including Islam.²⁸⁶

Sardar Hira Singh also commented that the prophet's message can have a more beneficial impact for the sake of humanity than the weapons held by the powerful countries of the world:

I believe that the super power countries having nuclear, neutron, and super missiles are not capable to work for the betterment of Humanity in comparison with SEERAT NABVI if the message of Holy Prophet is sincerely spread door to door

Furthermore, Singh noted how Prophet Muhammad's teachings are instrumental for peace and cohesion among different faith groups:

No Doubt that Muslim religion is growing day by day in the world just because of Seerat of Holy Prophet of Islam and his Teachings. Still the Societies have opportunities to apply the teachings of Holy Prophet of Islam to make this world Paradise and it is need of the day for international peace and interfaith Harmony in the world.²⁸⁷

Like MK Gandhi, Singh also acknowledged the unifying potential of the Prophet's message, claiming it to be essential for global peace:

[T]hat what I have expressed for Holy prophet of Islam is a truth like shining Sun which gives its light and energy to every one without differentiation of caste, creed race and religion and likewise Muhammad Peace upon him is RAHMATUL AALMEEN beneficial for all nation and a symbol of international peace...strength to disclose the hidden truth SEERAT NABVI (prophet's biography) being the need of the day as alternative strategy to achieve international peace in the world.²⁸⁸

God said: ﷻ

God revealed in the Qur'an about Muhammad (SAW)

Source: ﷻ

Chapter
33:57

God and His angels send blessings on the Prophet. O ye who believe! you *also* should invoke blessings on him and salute *him* with the salutation of peace.

The 1925 Nobel laureate George Bernard Shaw claimed that a model like Prophet Muhammad can restore peace and happiness in this chaotic world.

*"I believe that if a man like Muhammad were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it... much needed peace & happiness."*²⁸⁹

These sentiments are echoed by another recent and famous Nobel Laureate, the Dalai Lama. To establish global peace, spiritual leader the Dalai Lama has paid high tribute to Prophet Muhammad (SAW), advising all that the world should follow the prophet to create peace and bring enmity to an end. His teachings will work like a peacemaking tool for the whole of mankind. In the Dalai Lama's words:

*"Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) life is the best example for the entire humanity. We should follow the path shown by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in order to establish global peace and to end terrorism and tyranny from the world. The Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) message of peace, love, justice and religious tolerance will always be a leading light for the whole humanity. The Holy Quran as a Sacred Book, which is a priceless Gift of God given to mankind for guidance and welfare of the entire humanity."*²⁹⁰

"God is not merciful to him who is not so to mankind"

Bukhari-7374

Prophet's family (SAW) said:: ﷺ

He never said 'no' to anyone who asked him for anything

Source: ﷺ
Bukhari and
Muslim

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"Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) life is the best example for the entire humanity. We should follow the path shown by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in order to establish global peace and to end terrorism and tyranny from the world. The Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) message of peace, love, justice and religious tolerance will always be a leading light for the whole humanity..."

The Nobel Laureate Dalai Lama (page 104).

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