

GLIMPSES OF THE SERAH OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PBUH) Ayaz Khan

EIGHT DIFFERENT ASPECTS of the life of the Holy Prophet are given in the following lines which provide sufficient and logical justification to rank the Serah [the life and character] of Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) as the most perfect and an ideal model of guidance for the entire human race for all times to come.

VICEGERENCY OF MAN

ACCORDING TO THE TEACHINGS OF THE QURAN, the sole purpose of the creation of man is to make him the vicegerent of God on the earth. The following verses of Quran, for instance, testify the fact that man is His vicegerency.

“Behold!” Allah said to the Angels, “I will create a vicegerent on earth.” (Quran, Al-Baqara, 30)

“It is He, Who has made you His vicegerent, inheritors of the earth.” (Quran, Al-Anam, 165)

“We have made you vicegerent on earth.” (Quran, Sad, 26)

Now as a vicegerent of God on earth, man is assigned heavy duties to spend his life in conformity to the will of the Creator of the universe. The prerequisite for the fulfillment of this basic obligation of man is that his personality and character must be perfect from all angles. The fulfillment of this condition will remain a mere fantasy in the absence of guidelines and roll model being presented by the personalities and practical lives of the Apostles. Thus, it becomes imperative for the Muslims in particular and rest of the nations of the world in general to study the lives of the prophets and drive an inference from them as to what extent these Messengers of God left indelible marks on the destiny of Man by demonstrating practical examples of piety, justice and righteousness. The following facts will depict the reality as to why the study of Serah of the prophets in general and that of Muhammad in particular is essential.

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THE HOLY LIVES OF THE PROPHET'S GRANT PERFECTION TO HUMANITY

THIS UNIVERSE EMBODIES different sorts of creatures. Each kind of the creatures is blessed with different qualities and characteristics. In this regard the Quran invites Man to see around the Universe and take a lesson from the varieties of His creations, Man himself being the most perfect among all creatures is loaded with heavy burden of responsibilities. Cross examination of the nature and kinds of different creatures, reveals the fact that God Himself has taken the responsibility to take care of His creatures that are deprived of the senses of feeling, judgment and will. It is an established fact that the burden of different kind of responsibilities placed on the shoulders of man is the natural corollary of the attributes of sense of feeling, freedom of will and freedom of judgment which enshrine his person. Here line of demarcation is drawn between him and rest of the creatures of God. Being vicegerent of God, man has been elevated to the position of "Honourable Creature".

God blessed him with such dignity that all the Angels were commanded to show reverence to him. In return man has been charged with the obligation to have firm faith in God and to display goodness in this mortal world. Now the question arises as to how we can expect goodness from man when he is unaware of the exact definition of goodness and evil? The answer to this question lies in the fact that he will remain caught in the cobwebs of differentiating between goodness and evil until he follows a Divine religion and following a Divine religion is unthinkable without the guidance of Apostles of God.

Aristotle was the first philosopher who presented the theory of ethics in his treaty "Nicomachean Ethics" (Bertrand Russell, p185) wherein he argued that there are two kinds of virtues, intellectual and moral corresponding to the two parts of the soul. Intellectual virtues stem from teaching and moral virtues result from habit. His theory of ethics is being taught and studied by millions of people across the world, but no one can deny the fact that Aristotle's theory

failed to guide a sizeable number of human being in bringing them to the right path.

This world resembles to a stage which crowned hundreds of prominent kings and rulers, who by dint of their power and prestige, usurped large areas of different countries by subjugating different nations, like Alexander the great, Julius Caesar, Hitler and the like. But all of them miserably failed to leave any positive sign on the human race apart from leaving behind the clumsy picture of uprooting and destroying different cultures and civilisations of their time. If we turn our eyes on the other side of the picture Pharaoh appears to us with all worldly splendour and riches became a symbol for the world to take lesson from, whereas the world at large still accept and admire the excellence of the character of Musa. After the lapse of thousands of years the teachings of Abraham are still alive while the name of Nimrod is a forgotten story. The Quran bears sufficient testimony to the fact that Abraham was given covenant by God to be granted the leadership of the entire human race. Thus we find from the study of Quran that different Apostles of Allah like Noh, Ishaq, Yaqub, Yahya, Younas, Zakaria, Ismail and Isa presented role models before their nations by exhibiting morality, justice and virtuous living and as such they succeeded in their missions to a greater extent by moulding the destiny of mankind. It is an established fact that no philosophy, education, theory or religion can prevail in the absence of a personality who should set a practical example of that philosophy, education, theory or religion. Therefore, appearance of Apostles of God on the world scene in different arenas became imperative for the guidance of people to the right path of God and to draw them out from the abyss of ignorance and darkness.

THE SERAH OF MUHAMMAD PORTRAYS UNIVERSAL ROLE MODEL

THE NEED FOR PERFECT GUIDANCE of human race to the right path necessitated the appearance of such a personality who should accomplish this task by setting practical example of his message. Quran tells us that certain Prophets were sent by God to their respective nations with specific characteristic to bear Witness to their nations like Yaqub, Ishaq and Ismail. Others carried the banner of being Bearers of Glad Tidings such as Abraham and Isa. Some others

were assigned the task of Warning their nations against the wrath of God on account of their evil deeds such as Noh, Musa, Hud and Shoaib. Yousaf and Yunas were distinguished as Messengers (*Daai*). Quran speaks that it was the personality of Muhammad alone in whom the attributes possessed by different Apostles in their individual capacities were combined together such as a Witness, Bearer of Glad Tidings, Warner, Messenger and the Lamp Spreading Light.

Since Muhammad was assigned the gigantic duty of completing the religion, that is why God blessed the character and personality of the Holy Prophet with such qualities which elevated him to the highest peak of perfection unparalleled in the whole history of mankind and thus qualified him to be the Prophet of whole mankind for all times to come. He is not merely a prophet but the Prophet par excellence who grants perfection to the process of prophet-hood. This implies that with the advent of Islam, humanity has come of age and there is in no need of further guidance from God, as the guidance received through Muhammad would suffice to meet human requirements till the Day of Resurrection.

The Quran says, "You have in the Apostle a beautiful pattern of Conduct." (*Quran, Al-Ahzab: 21*) It means that Muhammad touched upon the peak of moral virtues. The greatest achievement of the Holy Prophet is that he released Human Soul from its fetters and set man's intellectual faculties free from the bonds of subservience to false ideologies. The Holy Prophet emancipated Humanity from the heavy burdens and broke the yokes of slavery of all kinds to which human race was subjected. He is unique among men and unique among prophets. The Quran supplements this fact by declaring that: "Today We have perfected your religion for you and exhausted our blessings on you and have chosen Islam as religion for you." (*Quran, Al-Maidah:3*) It was logical that for the perfection of His message, Allah sent the last Prophet whose life was a symbol of perfection from all angles. The Quran says, "You have indeed in the Messenger of Allah an excellent example." (*Quran, Al-Ahzab, 21*)

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

FOR CLAIMING the personality of a man to be perfect, it is inevitable that every event of his life span must be historically authentic. It is human psychology that if someone comes to know that the life

events of a personality are mere whimsical or absurd, that personality loses its fascination for him and his message does not appeal to mind. That is why every single moment of the Holy Prophet's life is historically proved and will remain as a guiding model for the whole humanity till the day of resurrection. According to a tradition more or less, 124000 apostles appeared on the world scene since the dawn of humanity. But even the names of most of them are not known. Today the Christians claim that they constitute the largest community in the world, but the teachings of Jesus have gone into oblivion. The gospels have lost their originality due to several amendments. Jesus spent 33 years life on earth, but his life story is still a mystery. Those four persons who wrote the four books of Bible had not seen the Jesus, which left a question mark on the authenticity of those Gospels.

On the contrary, the Islamic history is enshrined with the art of "*Asma-ur-rijal*", the art through which the biographies of all the companions of the Holy Prophet and of their followers, who undertook the task of writing the Quran and Sunnah, have been preserved in the pages of history. Even those whose names got slightest association with Prophet's life in whatever context, their biographies have ornamented the pages of Islamic history. According to a German scholar Dr. Springer:

"There does not exist any nation in the whole world who have invented like the Muslims the great art of writing the biographies of narrators through which the life events of five hundred thousands men are know to the world."

The farewell pilgrimage was attended by 100,000 companions of the Holy Prophet, out of which the biographies of eleven thousands narrators have been saved in the pages of history. The total number of traditions compiled in six books of hadith (*Sihah Sittah*) is one hundred thousands. These are those traditions which have been found authentic and worth writing after judging them against all standard yardsticks of scrutiny and verification. Amongst the *Sihah Sittah*, the *Sahih of Bukhari* holds the first place while Muslim comes the second. Collectively these two are known as *Sahihain*.

It is that Imam Bukhari knew one hundred thousands genuine Hadiths by heart. In the compilation of his book, he selected 9000 Hadiths out of a collection of 60000 Hadiths. It is explicit that every

aspect of Holy Prophet's life has become an undeniable historical fact. Whether family life or social contacts, commercial activities or State affairs, battlefield or peacetime, every facet of the Holy Prophet's life from birth till his departure from this mundane world, has become a permanent part of history. Apart from Muslim treasure of Serah Books, thousands of books have been written on the life of Holy Prophet in Europe and other countries of the world, which provides ample proof of the Universality of his personality and his teachings. No personality other than that of Muhammad in the entire human history has been exalted to such a dignified and unique place.

PERFECTION

FOR ANY HUMAN character and personality to be ranked as perfect, it is imperative that every facet of his life should be explicit and exposed to everyone to be looked upon as a model for guidance. Judging against this parameter, it is revealed that among all the apostles and originators of different religions, the only personality, which stands shining like the sun, is that of Muhammad.

According to estimates based on various censuses, the followers of Buddha count one fourth of the world population. From historical perspective, the biography of Buddha is no more than a few stories giving an obscure glimpse about his life. We know that he was born in the vicinities of Nepal in a rich family bestowed with an inquisitive mind. In young age, he saw a few miserable people, which shocked him a lot and forced him to flee his home. He went to India and preached his religious doctrines from Benaras to Behar and then passed away from this world. Zeroaster had also claimed to be the forerunner of a religion, but his story is confined to a few absurd statements. The crux of his story is that he was born in Azerbaijan and preached his religious thoughts in Bulkh, Bukhara and King Hashtasip adopted his religion. He demonstrated a few miraculous performances, got married, borne a few children and then died in obscurity. Can such a character, be counted as a role model for the guidance of human race, whose own life story is a mystery?

Hazrat Musa occupies a very prominent and renowned position among ancient Apostles. According to the narrations of Torah, Musa soon after his birth was brought up in the palace of Pharaoh. On

coming of age, he helps the Israelites against the chieftains of Pharaoh on few occasions. Then he leaves Egypt for Madyan. There he gets married and spends some years. Then he repatriates to Egypt and on the way Prophethood is blessed on him. He routes to Pharaoh's palace and manifests a few miracles. Then he seeks Pharaoh's permission to take the Israelites along. On the refusal of Pharaoh, he takes his people along crossing the sea. Pharaoh, who along his entourage is drowned in the sea, while chasing him. Musa escapes and reaches Syria and Arabia where he encounters the infidel group and fights against them. Then in old age he passes away on the peak of a mountain. He was the greatest Apostle of Israelites, but ironically whereabouts of his last abode are yet to be discovered. Musa lived for 120 years, but very meager data is available to throw light on various facets of his long life.

The immediate predecessor of the Holy Prophet was Hazrat Isa whose followers outnumber the followers of rest of the world's religions and has spread in Europe, America and other parts of the world. Strangely very limited information is available covering the biography of Hazrat Isa. According to Biblical narration, Hazrat Isa lived for 33 years. Of 33 years life span, a few events pertaining to the last 03 years of his life are available but their sources are not authentic.

In contrast, the Holy Prophet lived for 63 years out of which the first 40 years relates to the non-prophetic period while the last 23 years relates to the prophetic period. Amazingly from his birth to his death every single moment of his life has enshrined the pages of history. His personal life, social relations, trade and commerce, his covenants with Quraish and the Jews, wars with enemies of Islam and rest of his life's dimensions are well known to the world and will remain intact like an open book for all times to come. Such intricate details like names of his utensils, his mantle, his sword, his camel, his shield, his clothing's and eating habits, his way of talking, walking and smiling, his liking and disliking, his body features, his complexion and hair colour, his manners and other amazing details regarding different aspects of his life are all on record. His political sagacity, military strategies, social relations, kindness with wives and slaves, merciful treatment with inveterate enemies, and his unrivalled personality makes Muhammad universally accepted perfect man and a unique Prophet in human history.

The Holy Prophet was a paragon of virtue. The perfection of His personality is vivid from the fact that even his mortal enemies from Quraish had honoured him with honorific title of “trustworthy” and “truthful”. Even the archenemy of Islam and of Muhammad, Abu-Jahal once remarked to the Holy Prophet that I do not doubt your truthfulness, but I do not accept what you preach. Abu Sufyan who was the hardbound enemy of Muhammad before his conversion to the fold of Islam, confessed the truthfulness and nobility of the Holy Prophet to Roman Emperor Qaisar, when he was asked for verification of the truthfulness or otherwise of the cause of the Prophet in response to a messenger along with a letter from Prophet arrived the court of Roman Emperor. Such remarks from the mouth of a foe at such a critical juncture further brightens the elevated position of the Muhammad and provides sufficient proof for declaring him as the perfect Prophet.

Another excellent evidence of the perfection of the Holy Prophet’s personality is the candid acknowledgement made by the Europeans about his greatness, in spite of their disbelief in his message. A German writer, Professor Noldeke writes:

“Circumstances changed him from a prophet to a Legislator and a Ruler, but for himself he sought nothing beyond the acknowledgement that he was Allah’s Apostle, since this includes the whole of Islam.”

Major A.G. Leonard writes, “Personal ambition and aggrandizement never for a moment entered his head or formed part of it.”

On the world scene, India, China, Egypt, Syria, Greece and Rome proved cradles of great civilisations. Colossal theories of morality were presented. Grand principles were made covering social, cultural and civilisational aspects of the respective nations. It took centuries to build these principles but those great civilisations could not withstand the vicissitudes of time and were perished once for all. On the contrary Islamic civilisation took only 23 years to establish, but even after the elapse of 14 centuries it is still flourishing in different parts of the world. The main reason for survival of the Islamic Civilisation is that it thrives and draws its lifeblood from the Serah of Muhammad. The greatness of Muhammad and the sublimity of his mission is evident from the fact that His companions spared no efforts to sacrifice their lives and riches at the call of their spiritual and religious leader.

Since the *Serah* of Muhammad emerges as the most perfect, unparalleled and unique in the entire human history, therefore, it presents an epitome of guidance for whole mankind till doomsday.

COMPREHENSIVENESS

TO JUDGE a biography for the rank of an ideal model, it is essential that it must be comprehensive. An ideal and comprehensive life model is one, which provides guidelines to the human race for execution of its obligations and fulfillment of its rights. Judged against this parameter no life in the whole human race other than that of Muhammad emerges eminently to fulfill the pre-requisites of comprehensiveness.

Religion is the embodiment of mutual human rights and the rights of Allah. The scrutiny of Buddhism, Judaism furnishes no clues to any teachings, which lay emphasis on the unity of God or His other attributes. In the Bible we find nothing other than arguments about "Trinity Doctrine" wherein God is proclaimed as Father of Jesus. It highlights one aspect that father used to love his son too much, but it is devoid of the fact to show how much the son was in love with his father. Thus Bible and other books failed to give a thorough account of Jesus life. One aspect of Hazrat Musa's life is quite eminent and that is his military engagements, which depicts that he remained pre occupied in skirmishes with Israelites, other dimensions of his life remaining concealed. No doubt he was a great prophet of his time, but his memoirs portray very insufficient account of his life.

Bible and Torah throw cursory light on the unity of God, his attributes, respect for human rights and the rights of God. The Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet emerge like shining sun, which does not allow darkness of night to resist it. All that can be said is that the *Serah* of Muhammad is comprehensive and all pervasive.

The life of Noh presents a view of his wrath and fury against infidelity. The life of Abraham manifests the scene of iconoclasm. Musa's life portray the picture of his continuous struggle against profane believes. He is the lawgiver. The life of Isa shows an example of forgiveness, and patience. Sulaiman's life depicts the scene of unprecedented leadership of grandeur demonstrating pomp

and show. Yunas's life is a model of repentance and confession. Yousaf's life is a symbol of piety. Daud's life is an embodiment of prayers' and submission before God. Yaqub's life presents a picture of hope, trust and confidence in God.

But the life of Muhammad shines like a beautiful necklace adorned with all sorts of pearls possessed by the rest of the apostles individually. This implies that individual attributes possessed by the preceding prophets combined together in the all-encompassing personality of the Holy Prophet. Another glaring evidence of the comprehensiveness of the Serah of Muhammad is contained in the fact that his message was not addressed to a particular human race nor was confined to a particular period of time. His universal message is meant to the whole mankind irrespective of their creed and cast. That was the reason why Quran declared Muhammad to be the seal on the series of Prophet hood and with the fulfillment of his prophetic mission; the blessings of God for the humanity touched the climax.

Before the advent of Islam Arabs were tightly fastened in the clutches of paganism. Muhammad broke the shackles of paganism and put an end to the age of Ignorance or *jahiliyya*. The group of his companions was composed of variety of persons blessed with all sorts of qualities of head and heart. It consisted great military commanders like Khalid bin Walid, Saad bin Abi Waqas, Abu Ubaida bin Jarrah and others. It consisted of great statesmen of high sagacity like Abu Bakar and Umar. It included the most kindhearted ruler like Usman. It ranked men of great learning and wisdom like Ali. He himself was a great Judge, a wise Commander, a foresighted Statesman, a loving father and a caring husband, a great physician, an exceptional Ambassador and above all the supreme well-wisher of mankind. So the society created by Muhammad was unmatched in the history of mankind.

Another great proof of the Holy Prophet's all embracing personality is the elevation of status of woman and the slaves in the society. Woman before Islam never enjoyed such privileged position and rights in society and the Last Sermon of the Holy Prophet is a landmark, which brought revolution in the lives of women and slaves. Benevolent treatment of Muhammad with his enemies depicts another aspect of his wide-ranging personality. The Charter

of Medina (Magna Charta of Islam) outlines the statesmanship of Holy Prophet and his policy of religious freedom.

PRACTICABILITY

THE MOST STRIKING and glaring aspect of the Serah of Muhammad is its practical aspect. Human history is replete with varieties of theories and philosophies. But the strange anomaly is that the expounders of those theories and philosophies failed to exhibit a practical example of their theories and philosophies through their action.

Therefore, those theories and philosophies failed to present an epitome for the guidance of humanity as morality of man demonstrates his practical character. Apart from Quran, no scripture has ever gifted its expounder such honorific title as has been given to the Holy Prophet. Quran ordains that indeed Muhammad has touched the peak of moral virtues. The Quran again testifies, "You have indeed in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar." (Quran, Al-Ahzab: 21) Someone asked Aisha about the character of the Holy Prophet, she replied that if you want to see practical Quran look at the life of Muhammad: "Quran is composed of words and the life of Muhammad replicates the Quranic words."

The Holy Prophet followed the policy of "action speaks louder than words", setting practical example of what ever he said to his followers. When it came to generosity, he gave away everything in the way of Allah. When the issue of forgiveness appeared, He proclaimed general amenity for the inveterate enemies of Islam. For instance, Wahshi who mutilated the corpse Hamza, the beloved uncle of the Prophet was pardoned and Hinda, who plotted the murder of Hamza, was also forgiven.

After the conquest of Makkah, Abu Sufyan, who was the chief enemy of Muhammad before his conversion to Islam, was shown not only extreme mercy but as a gesture of goodwill his house was declared as a safe-haven for those who would seek asylum in it. That was the practical demonstration of extreme mercy and kindness towards the enemies. Whether it was the question of praying, fasting or almsgiving, Muhammad presented practical example

before asking obedience from his companions. Muhammad was a living grace and mercy of Allah and his very nature exalted him above abuse and persecution. The Holy prophet was the head of entire Islamic State in Medina, but he exercised a very simple life.

Emile Dermenghem writes, "He (Muhammad) had acquired power, riches and glory, he possessed gold, horses, innumerable camels and vast pasture land. He had wives and children; he had all that formed the ornament of earthy existence. But he was not made haughty by these things. One sincere conversion to Islam brought him greater joy than the riches booty".

Bosworth Smith remarks, the wonder is to me not how much, but how little, under different circumstance, Muhammad differed from himself. In the shepherd of desert, in the Syrian trader, in the solitary of Mount Hira, in the reformer, in the minority of one, in the exile of Madina, in the acknowledged conqueror, in equal of the Persian Chosroes and the Greek Heraclius, we still trace a substantial unity. I doubt whether any 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.

Rodwell writes, "Muhammad's career is a wonderful instance of the force and life that reside in him who possesses an intense Faith in God." J.W.H. in his book *Islam and its Founder* rightly says, "Judged by the smallness of the means at his disposal and the extent and performance of the work he accomplished, no name in the world's history shines with a more spacious luster than that of the Prophet of Makkah."

Extermination of wrong traditions prevalent in the then Arab society portrays another glaring aspect of the Holy Prophet's life. It was not an easy undertaking as the pagan Arabs were emotionally attached to false traditions, departure from which was viewed as an explicit exodus from their polytheistic beliefs, which formed an integral part of their ego. Slavery was rampant in the Arab society and the slaves were treated worst than cattle. They were placed at the lowest ebb in the social order in the Arabian society. Muhammad abolished slavery, setting practical example by promoting the rank of his slave Zaid – who adopted as son. He gave his cousin Zainab's hand in marriage to Zaid, which was an unprecedented exodus from the then prevalent Arab Customs.

Moreover, marriage with divorcee of an adopted son was repugnant in the Arab traditions. The Holy Prophet uprooted that custom by marrying Zainab, the Zaid's divorcee. Muhammad proclaimed the equality of men:

“O people, you are all sons of Adam and Adam was created from clay. Neither black has got any preference over white nor has white got any preference over black. Neither Arab has got any preference over the non- Arab nor has Non-Arab got any preference over the Arab. The best amongst you in the Eyes of God is the one who is the most restrained of you.”

This universal declaration proved a milestone in changing the destiny of mankind by bringing a great revolution in the Arab Society. It laid the foundation of international relations that were hitherto governed by the driving force of racism, while the Holy Prophet underlined that the social status and dignity of man is to be determined by virtue of his morality and piety and not by reason of his belonging to a particular nation or region. Alas! By setting aside this universal principle of human relationship, Man has caused horrific imbalance in the world where different nations and communities are at loggerheads with one another and destroying each other's civilisations.

THE MESSAGE OF THE PROPHET OF ISLAM

THE ADVENT OF ISLAM was declared the perfection of religion and the birth of Muhammad was announced as a seal on the process of prophet hood. Now the question arises as to why Islam was declared as the last perfect Divine religion conveyed through the last prophet? What was the message of Muhammad, which placed him on the apex position of universal prophet of the whole mankind for all times to come?

The answer to this question is hidden in the fact that all previous religions and prophets were confined to a particular nation for a specific period of time. So with the departure of those Messengers, their teachings fell victims to the upheavals of time and as such the fate of their religions was sealed. If some of them have survived, like Bible, Torah, these are not in their original form and historically their validity and authenticity cannot be confirmed. Interestingly, Torah and Bible, both indicate the arrival of the last Messenger of God,

which in turn proves their limited scope and certifies the Universality of Quran and Muhammad.

Israelites claim to be the most preferential race of all human kind and God is said to be the God of Israelites alone in their conviction. That is the reason that they concealed the messages of their prophets from the rest of the nations of the world. Even today the teachings of Judaism and religion of Moses remained confined to the Israelites. In contrast, Quran makes the announcement that Muhammad is the Apostle of God for all peoples. Another reference goes to say that Prophet is the Bearer of Glad Tidings and Warner for all human beings.

Every religion embodies two parts. One is related to the human heart, which is called 'faith', while the other part pertains to rest of the human body and his belongings that is termed 'action'. Action again is subdivided into three parts. The first part is related to God, which is called worship (*Ibadah*). The second part concerns to mutual human business, which is named 'dealings', major chunk of which is consisted in the laws. Third part relates to mutual human relations and customs, named 'morality'. The message of Muhammad encompasses all the four segments of religion, which grants perfection to it.

The Torah and Gospels contain insignificant and an obscure reference to the segments of faiths. Similarly narration about Angels is unclear and incomplete in the Torah and the Bible as compared to the Quran, which contains crystal clear statements about the Angels. As for as explanation of worship is concerned, there are a few dim references to Sacrifice, prayers, fasting. But no description is given about the conduct, procedure and performance of these rituals in Torah and Bible. On the contrary, the message of Muhammad consisted in the Quran and Hadith covers minute details about different worships and the Angels. Thus, Islam goes into intricate details about beliefs and worships, dealings and morality aspects, which as a whole constitute religion.

So it can safely be stated that the message of the Holy Prophet provides a complete code of life for the salvation of human beings. The repositories of Islamic teachings contained in the Quran can be summed up in two words, that is, faith and righteous deeds. The wholesome emphasis of Islam is directed towards these two

fundamental dimensions and human amelioration has been linked to them.

The crux of the Message of Muhammad is the recognition of true position of man in the universe against a cluster of other creatures. Before the advent of Islam, man had lost his moorings and he would seek his salvation in exercising reverence to stones, mountains, trees, animals, clouds, the sun, the moon and self made images. The Holy Prophet made him realise his true place in the universe and reprimanded him from bowing down against such things, which were supposed to bow down before him.

Muhammad gave the message that all such things have been created for the well being of Man and not to worship them. This is the root of belief in the unity of God, which constitutes the corner stone of Islamic teachings. No one can enter the fold of Islam until he shuns all forms of polytheism.

MUHAMMAD'S MESSAGE:

ACTION

THE CENTRAL THEME and main focus of all previous religions concerns the question of unity of God. But due to three basic reasons misconceptions and misleading doctrines emerged about the Self of God. First reason was the resemblance of His personality with other things. Second reason was the segregation of His attributes from His personality and the third reason was the misconception about actions of God. The ultimate result of all these beliefs emerged in the form of polytheism and idol worship instead of belief in one God. The doctrine that God is 'the Father' and angels and humans are 'the children' took roots in Israelites.

In Christianity, the Doctrine of Trinity became the *summum bonum* of their belief about God, wherein God was declared father, Jesus as His son and the life of the Jesus as the spirit of the Holy Ghost. In the pagan society of Arabs, there were hundreds of gods and deities placed in Kabah. Muhammad's message exterminated polytheism in all its forms and manifestations by propounding Unity of God. Quran symbolises Polytheism with greatest injustice. *Surah Ikhlas* puts negation to the idea of polytheism by declaring that He is the One and Only God, the One to whom worship is due. The nature of God is so sublime, so far beyond our limited conceptions; the best way in which we can realize Him is to feel that He is a Personality.

He is eternal, without beginning or end, Absolute, not limited by time, space or Circumstance, the Reality. He begetteth not, nor is He begotten. The Quran warns man against anthropomorphism and clearly nullify the Jewish and Christian doctrine that God is having any son or a father.

The Zoroastrian had attributed all sort of good deeds to their god named "Yazdan" and all evil deeds were referred to other God "Aherman". So the central theme of their belief is that the existence of this world is owed to the scuffle between "Yazdan" and "Aherman." Similar false theories are abundant in all other religious philosophies where innumerable gods have been charged with execution of specific tasks. It was the outcome of polytheism that 33 million different gods appeared on the horizons of Hinduism. Islam freed man of the yoke of polytheism and broke his shackles, which constrained him to pay reverence to countless gods.

The worship of God constitutes the key element in all religions but its mode of performance and manifestation was very superficial, because agonising body was deemed to be the chief source of spiritual elevation. In Christianity, taking a bath was deemed as a sin, which polluted the man to unimaginable extent. In the fourth C.E, monasticism outburst in Europe, in such a worst form which was unequal in the moral history of mankind. For two centuries the fearful maceration of the body was considered to be the highest proof of moral excellence. St. Macarius of Alexandria is said to have slept for six months in a marsh exposing his body to the venomous stings of flies. Some of the monks preferred to live in the deserted dens of beasts. Some other preferred dried up wells and tombs. Cleanliness of the body was regarded as impurity of the soul.

The inroads made by monasticism on the social life were alarming. Social ties were rent apart and the whole edifice of social fabric was razed to the ground. The saints disregarded their mothers by showing ingratitude towards them and abandoned their wives and children uncared for and beggars on the tender mercies of the world. The main business of the saints was to save their souls. Muhammad replied to this mockery of worship in excellent words by proclaiming that monasticism is beyond the fold of Islam. Quran also repudiates monasticism in clear terms by saying, "But the monasticism which they invented for themselves We did not

prescribe for them". (*Al-Hadid*) In contrast to monasticism, Islam lays great emphasis on family life that generates social values.

Murdering one's children, especially girls, was not illegal in the Arab society. Muhammad brought an end to this evil practice and exalted the social status of woman by making announcement that "Paradise lies underneath the feet of your mothers". Muhammad elaborated such methods of worship, which never went against the natural dispositions of man.

The chief source of prevalent misguidance in the world, which put every aspect of human life in topsy-turvy order, is the conception of dichotomy between religion and worldly affairs. The word of God was divorced from practical aspect of life, thereby preventing it from playing its role in worldly affairs. Muhammad's message reversed the order by unraveling the fact that performance of worldly affairs in consonance with religious parameters constitutes the true shape of religion. In Islam, the way to amelioration and salvation leads to the fulfillment of two things, i.e. Faith (*Iman*) and righteous deeds. Faith means having unshakable belief in God, His Angels, His books, His prophets, and firm faith in the Day of Resurrection. Unflinching belief in these five pillars is the name of "faith" (*iman*), which provides the ground for "action." After faith (*iman*), the next key position in Islam is occupied by righteous deeds.

CONCLUSION

SO THE WHOLE ESSENCE of the Muhammad's message is to direct the man to the way of salvation that is the sum total of faith in God, His worships, dealings and action in consonance to faith. The Serah of Muhammad, which symbolises the *summum bonum* of virtue, conveys the universal message that Islam is the second name of righteous deeds. Quran has described this picture in *Surah Fatah* in exquisite terms," Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah and those who are with him are strong against disbelievers, (but) compassionate amongst each other. You will see them bow and prostrate themselves (in prayer), seeking grace from Allah and (His) good pleasures.

In a war between Romans and Muslims, a few spies were sent to the Muslim camp for reconnaissance. By looking at the Muslims, they could not remain unimpressed and reported back to their

commander that the Muslim Army is composed of such soldiers who are Monks of the nights and Riders of the day. This is the true picture of Islamic way of life and this is the essence of the message of Muhammad, which is replicated in his Serah.

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