

Muhammad the Best of Creation

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Introduction

Prophet Muhammad was able to establish the kingdom of Allah on earth within a brief span of twenty three years. This tremendous success would never have been achieved unless Allah, the Creator of the universe, provided the Prophet with divine support.

The book talks about the divine power Allah provided Muhammad with to establish the last of religions – Islam.

Muhammad was ornamented with peerless attributes of perfection. Allah's Messenger was the kindest of men just as he excelled all others in courage and valor. He was so kindhearted that his eyes brimmed with tears at the slightest sign of inhumanity. His position as a Messenger of Allah was not exaggerated. His insistence on being a mere mortal like others was firm. Prophet Muhammad combined both perfection of creation and perfection of manners.

The book talks about the docile manner of the Prophet and his outward appearance as narrated by his companions.

Muhammad is the seal of the prophets, the most generous and the bravest of all. Among all the prophets and messengers of Allah, Prophet Muhammad alone figures like a tower above all; and the grand and noble work he accomplished stands a permanent monument of his honor and greatness.

The book reports the greatness of Prophet Muhammad as admitted by the most intellectual people of the Christian West. The greatness of Prophet Muhammad is so convincing to them that many from all camps, religious, and secular acknowledge him as the undisputed champion of the human race.

Chapter 1

Muhammad – the Mighty Prophet

The chief characteristic of the teaching in the Gospel is humility and other worldliness. The first blessings in the Sermon of the Mount are on **"the poor in spirit," "they that mourn," and they that are "meek"** (Matt. v. 3-5).

Christ's disciples were enjoined to **"take no thought for the morrow,"** and told: **"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof"** (Matt. vi. 34). They were also commanded: **"ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."** (Matt.v.39).

These are fragmentary presentments of an imperfect philosophy as seen through monastic eyes. Insofar as they represent pity, sympathy with suffering, and deeds of mercy, they represent the spirit of Christ. But Allah's kingdom requires also courage, resistance to evil, the firmness of law, and discipline which will enforce justice among men. It requires mingling with men so that they can uphold the standard of Truth, against odds when necessary. These were lost in monasticism which was not prescribed by Allah. Allah certainly requires that men shall renounce the idle pleasure of this world, and turn to the path which leads to Allah's good pleasure. But that does not mean gloomy lives, ("**They that mourn**"), or perpetual and formal prayers in isolation. Allah's service is done in the turmoil of this world. This spirit was lost, or at least not fostered by monastic institutions. On the contrary, a great part of the struggle and striving for noble life was suppressed (1).

Despite the fact that Muslims make no difference between any of Allah's Messengers because their Message was originally one and emphasizing the Oneness of Allah - the One universal God; Allah has endowed His Messengers with privileges, some more than others. To Moses Allah spoke directly. Moses led his people for forty years through the wilderness, mainly fighting against the unbelief of his own people; he organized them to fight with the sword for Palestine, but was raised to Allah's mercy before his enterprise ripened, and it fell to Joshua to carry out his plan. David though a mere shepherd boy, was chosen by Allah. He overthrew the greatest warrior of his time; he became a king, and waged successful wars, being also a prophet, a poet and musician. Jesus was strengthened with the Holy Spirit (angel Gabriel). He was given no weapon to fight, and his mission was of a more limited character.

The Koran narrates:

And those Messengers, some We have preferred above others; some there are to whom Allah spoke, and some He raised in rank.

And We gave Jesus son of Mary clear signs, and confirmed him with the Holy Spirit (angel Gabriel) (Al-Baqarah, 253).

In Muhammad's mission the above characters of the prophets and several others, were combined. He organized on a vaster scale than Moses, and from Medina he ruled and gave laws. He was gifted the Koran, the unified Book that stood the test of time. A Book that has a vaster scope than the Pages of Abraham, the Torah of Moses, the

Psalms of David, and the Gospel of Jesus. Allah also honored him by being the seal of the prophets.

Islam came to exist and prevail. Islam came to live and flourish. This is why Muhammad was given the divine power to establish Islam, the only religion accepted by Allah. It was the will of Allah that the seal of the prophets comes to revive the religion of Abraham which calls for the Oneness of Allah and total submission to Him. Allah, Almighty, provided Muhammad with a divine power to conquer his enemies and extend Islam in a world burdened by impiety, ungodliness, atheism, polytheism and persecution.

In addition to the miracle of the Koran and the night journey to Jerusalem and the ascension of Muhammad to the seventh heaven to meet his Lord, Allah showered the Prophet in several occasions with numerous divine favors and miracles.

1- Divine support in the cave of thawr

Allah graced the Prophet with triumph over his enemies, the Arab pagans of Quraish. The Quraishites plotted for his life and decided to kill him. They selected strong youth representing the big families of Quraish so that they all together strike him dead with their swords the minute he leaves his house. By this the Prophet's blood will be dispersed between the several tribes of Quraish and Bani Hashem - the tribe of the Prophet - will not be able to take vengeance. They surrounded his house by night waiting for him to appear. Ali, the Prophet's cousin had volunteered to sleep in the Prophet's bed so as to make the Quraishites believe that the Prophet is still in bed plunging in deep sleep. At dawn the Prophet appeared at the door of his house, actuated by a divine influence the Prophet took a handful of dust and threw it in the face of his enemies. The minute he threw the dust at his enemies they fell into a deep sleep. He walked peacefully through them to the house of his companion Abu Bakr then both headed to the Cave of thawr; three miles from Makkah, and concealed themselves there for three nights. When the Quraishites regained their senses, they entered the Prophet's house by force to surprisingly see Ali sleeping in his bed. They got mad and started immediately a thorough search looking for the Prophet. They reached the Cave of Thawr and argued among themselves the possibility that the Prophet might be hiding there. The Quraishites were so close to the cave that the Prophet and his companion Abu Bakr could see their feet and clearly hear their voices. Abu Bakr said to the Prophet that if any one of them just looked down his feet might easily discover them. Abu Bakr was terrified and said to the Prophet, "We are but two." The Prophet said, "Nay, for Allah is with us."

The Prophet never approved reliance merely upon human strength, or human resources or numbers. In the hour of danger, and seeming disaster, he was perfectly calm, and with cool courage relied upon the help of Allah, Whose standard he carried.

Allah inspired tranquility to the heart of His Apostle, and supported him with an invisible array of angels. The angels that helped them were not seen, but their power was irresistible.

After a long argument the enemies of the Prophet decided not to enter the cave because by some sort of a divine miracle there was a pigeon lying on her eggs, thus

closing the entrance of the cave. This was an indication to the Quraishites that the cave had been deserted for quite a long time.

Allah gave the Apostle and his companion safety, and they reached Medina, and a glorious chapter opened for Islam. Allah says in the Koran:

If you do not help him, yet Allah has helped him already, when the unbelievers drove him forth the second of two, when the two were in the cave, when he said to his companion, 'Sorrow not; surely Allah is with us.' Then Allah sent down his peace upon him, and strengthened him with forces (angels) you did not see; and He made the word of the unbelievers the lowest; and Allah's word is the uppermost; Allah is All-Mighty, All-wise (At-Tawbah, 40).

2- The Battle of Badr

The Battle of Badr was extremely influential in the rise of the Prophet, who was transformed overnight from a Makkan outcast into a major leader.

The Muslims were unjustly ousted from their homes in Makkah for no reason other than believing in the One true God, Allah. After ten years of persecution of Muslims on the hand of the infidel Quraishites, Allah ordered them to fight back and promised them victory.

Leave is given to those (believers) who are fought against because they have been wronged – surely Allah is able to give them victory (Al-Hajj, 39).

The Battle of Badr started when the Prophet encouraged the Muslims to obstruct a Quraish caravan of about forty men returning from Syria to Makkah. The Muslims went out with three hundred believers not intending to fight but only to overpower the caravan. The leader of the caravan, Abu Sufyan knew through his scout the intention of the Muslims, so he managed to escape with his caravan after sending one of his men to Quraish in Makkah asking for help and protection.

The Quraish marched with an army of 1000 men, six hundred wearing shields, 100 horses, 700 camels, and luxurious provisions to last for several days. The disbelievers wanted to crush the Muslims once and for all and the odds were overwhelmingly in their favor. The Muslims went out with only 300 men ill-armed and only two horses.

The Battle of Badr took place on the seventeenth of Ramadan, two years after the emigration (Hijra) of the Prophet from Makkah to Medina. The Prophet spent the whole night preceding the battle in prayer and supplication even though he knew that Allah had promised him victory.

Both armies camped behind two hills leading into the valley where the battle would take place. The Muslims were nervous, tensed and unable to sleep. Allah showered them with divine favors to enable them to find peace for their shaking souls and to prepare them for the battle that would witness the rise or fall of Islam. The first divine favor was to cover the Muslims with a sort of slumber to calm them down and make their hearts firm.

The second divine favor was the rain that Allah sent upon the Muslims. The place where the Muslims were to encamp was made of sandy ground which was hard to walk on because one's feet could easily sink in it. Allah sent a mild rain to make the ground firm under the Muslim's feet, it however rained heavily on the side of the hill the Quraishites were supposed to climb to get to the battle, thus making it hard to climb. The heavy rain flooded and washed away sections of the trail on which the Makkan army marched, making it difficult for them to move swiftly.

Some Muslims were in a state of ritual uncleanness (janabah) and had no water to clean and purify their bodies. The rain purified them and removed the unease they felt due to ritual uncleanness. Allah says in the Koran:

When He was causing slumber to overcome you as a security from Him, and sending down on you water from heaven, to purify you thereby, and to put away from you the defilement of Satan, and to strengthen your hearts, and to confirm your feet (Al-Anfal, 11).

The Muslims were arranged in ranks, when the two parties approached closer and were visible to each other, the Prophet began supplicating:

"O Allah! The conceited and haughty Quraishites are already here and defying You and belying Your Messenger. O Allah! I am waiting for your victory which you have promised me. I beseech You Allah to defeat them."

The Prophet exhorted his men saying:

"By Him in whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, no man will be slain this day, fighting against them in steadfast hope of his reward, advancing not retreating, but Allah shall straightaway enter him to Paradise.

In his hut, the Prophet dozed off a little and then raised his head joyfully and said:

"Be of good cheer, Abu Bakr; the help of Allah has come to thee. Here is Gabriel and in his hand is the reign of a horse which he is leading, and he is armed for war."

The Prophet then came out of the hut and exclaimed:

"Their multitude will be put to flight, and they will show their backs."

Then the Prophet took a handful of dust and cast it at the enemy, conscious that he was hurling disaster, and said:

"Defaced be those faces."

As he flung the dust, a violent sandstorm blew like furnace blast into the eyes of the enemy. Here the Prophet was such a perfect servant that he had no motion of his own. He had stilled himself entirely and his will was in perfect submission to the will of Allah. He was like a pebble in the hand of Allah; any motion was only through the motion imparted by Allah. It was not Muhammad who aimed when he spattered, but it

was Allah who calculated the direction and effectiveness of the dust which he hurled at his enemy. It was not he who deprived them from power when he threw the handful of sand at their faces, but it was Allah who eclipsed their sight. So he threw, but he did not throw. This was the third divine favor. About this Allah says:

And you (Muhammad) threw not when you did throw, but Allah threw (Al-Anfal, 18).

The Prophet then gave the order to charge. The fighting intensified, and the Prophet continued to supplicate:

"O Allah should this group (of Muslims) be defeated today, You will no longer be worshipped."

Immediate was the response of Allah, who sent down angels from the heavens to help the Prophet and his companions. This was the fourth divine favor. The Koran marks this miraculous occurrence:

When you were calling upon your Lord for succor, and He answered you, ' I shall reinforce you with a thousand angels each behind the other in succession (Al-Anfal, 9).

When thy Lord was revealing to the angels, 'I am with you; so confirm the believers. I shall cast into the unbelievers' hearts terror; so smite above the necks, and smite every finger of them (Al-Anfal, 12).

The presence of the angels was felt by all, as strength by the faithful and as terror by the infidels, but that strength was only visible to a few, and in varying degrees.

Two men of a neighboring Arab tribe had gone to the top of a hill to watch the battle and to take part in looting – so they hoped. A cloud swept by them filled with the neighing of stallions, and one of the men dropped instantly dead. "His heart burst with fright," said the one who lived to tell it, judging from what his own heart had felt.

One of the believers was pursuing a man of the enemy, and the man's head flew from his body before he could reach him, struck off by an unseen hand. Others had brief glimpses of the angels riding on horses whose hooves never touched the ground, led by Gabriel wearing a yellow turban, whereas the turbans of the other angels were white, with one end left streaming behind them.

In addition to sending down angels, Allah also brought another miraculous occurrence to ensure Muslims victory. When the Muslim army met the army of the disbelievers, Allah showed the disbelievers in the eyes of Muslims as few and vice versa so that they jump at each other, and there and then Allah's purpose would be served as has been enacted. This was the fifth divine favor. Allah said about this in the Koran:

When Allah showed thee them in thy dream as few; and had he shown them as many you would have lost heart, and quarreled about the matter; but Allah saved; He knows the thoughts in the breasts.

When Allah showed you them in your eyes as few, when you encountered, and made you few in their eyes, that Allah might determine a matter that was done; and unto Allah all matters are returned (Al-Anfal 43, 44).

The Victorians were grateful to Allah and entertained His praise at the top of their voices in recognition of His favor and grace and the support He rendered them through which the forces of the truth overpowered those of evil.

Allah says in the Koran:

And remember when you were few and abased in the land, and were fearful that the people would snatch you away; but he gave you refuge, and confirmed you with his help, and provided you with the good things, that haply you might be thankful (Al-Anfâl, 26).

After the victory was achieved over the infidels of Quraish, Allah explained that it was not the believers who brought death upon the infidels but it was Allah who destroyed them. And so Allah defies the infidels, suspends their volition and renders their stratagem inefficient.

3- Hunain is a valley in the mountainous part between Makkah and Ta'if. After the conquest of Makkah, the pagan idolaters, who were chagrined at the wonderful reception which Islam was receiving, organized a great gathering near Ta'if to concert plans for attacking the Prophet. The Hawazin and Thaquif tribes took the lead and prepared a great expedition for Makkah boasting of their strength and military skill. The enemy forces numbered about 4,000 but the Muslim force reached a total of ten to twelve thousand.

For the first time the Muslims had at Hunain tremendous odds in their favor. But this constituted a danger. Many in their ranks had more enthusiasm than wisdom. They had a spirit of elation more than of faith and confidence in the righteousness of their cause.

The enemy concealed himself in the hills of the valley of Hunain. As soon as the Muslim vanguard entered the valley, the enemy fell upon them with fury and caused havoc with their arrows from their places of concealment. In such ground the number of the Muslims was a disadvantage, many were slain, and many turned back in confusion and retreat. But the Prophet, as ever, was calm in his wisdom and faith. He rallied his forces and inflicted the most crushing defeat on the enemy.

The Prophet never approved over-weaning confidence, or reliance merely upon human strength, or human resources or numbers. In the hour of danger and seeming disaster, he was perfectly calm, and with cool courage relied upon the help of Allah, whose standard he carried. Allah responded by sending down an invisible array of angels to assail the enemies and put them to rout, and inflicted them with punishment in requital of their infidelity. Allah says in His Koran about the Battle of Hunain:

Allah has already helped you in many fields, and on the day of Hunain, when your multitude was pleasing to you, but it availed you naught, and the land vast as it is was straitened for you, and you turned about retreating.

Then Allah sent down upon His Messenger His tranquility, and upon the believers, and He sent down forces (angels) you did not see, and He chastised the unbelievers. Such is the recompense of the disbelievers (At-Tawbah 25, 26).

Allah favored the Prophet with strength and power to spread the Message of Islam, the Prophet said:

"I have been given five (things) which were not given to anyone else before me:

- a) Allah made me victorious by awe (Allah frightening the Prophet's enemies) for a distance of one month's journey.**
- b) The earth has been made for me (and his followers) a place for praying and a thing to purify (perform Tayammum), therefore anyone of my followers can pray wherever he is, at the time of a prayer.**
- c) The booty has been made Halâl (lawful) to me yet it was not lawful to anyone before me.**
- d) I have been given the right to intercession (on the day of Resurrection).**
- e) Every Prophet used to be sent to his nation only, but I have been sent to all mankind." (Sahih Al-Bukhari Vol. 1, Hadith No. 331).**

The prophet of Islam was much more than one of the many prophets; he was the seal of the prophets and the final Messenger to all people. Prophet Hood not only ended with the advent of Muhammad, but it also achieved its final plenitude, consummation and culmination in him. This meant that Prophet Muhammad represented the completion and climax of all earlier prophetic missions as well as the fulfillment of all antecedent divine revelations. And this by itself conferred on him a distinct and special place in the galaxy of noble prophets.

All good social values are realized supremely and in the most balanced form in the system of life established by the Holy Prophet more than fourteen centuries ago. Muhammad proved that all the abstract values can indeed be put into practice. In the family system, it was shown that women can have a status of high respect and dignity and enjoy their rights even though an administrative authority was given to the husband. In the political setup, it was proved that the individual's complete freedom of speech and criticism co-exist side by side with strict political regimentation and discipline, as well as with all the demands of justice. On top of this, it was shown that, in the economic sphere, private ownership and personal initiative are perfectly compatible with smooth circulation and equitable distribution of wealth.

Dr. Israr Ahmad in his paper entitled "The Objective and Goal of Muhammad's Prophet Hood" that was given in the second annual Koran Conference held on March, 1975 at Lahore, talked about the Holy Prophet as the "Leader of Revolution". He stated that it is a fact that no man in the entire human history deserves this title more than the Prophet Muhammad. This is because all revolutions witnessed by mankind including the French and the Bolshevik Revolutions, were partial and imperfect, as they affected only some of the collective human existence. Thus, the French Revolution brought change in the political structure and the form of government while the Bolshevik Revolution mainly changed the economic setup of Russia. On the other hand, the Islamic

Revolution in the seventh century was a total and absolute transformation which affected all aspects of life. Everything has changed, right from the basic metaphysical beliefs to the ethical value-structure, from the eating and drinking habits to the dynamics of interpersonal relations, from the rites and rituals for worship to ceremonies and customs, and from the social setup and economic system to the political order and statecraft – all underwent radical changes.

The endeavor and struggle of Prophet Muhammad to bring about the Islamic Revolution was unique and unparalleled in the entire human history. All the stages of his revolution were completed in a very short time - his life span. This in fact is the most remarkable feat of the Prophet of Islam. He was able to establish the "kingdom of Heaven on Earth" within a brief span of twenty three years so that Islam was practiced in its totality, both in letter and in spirit throughout the length and breadth of the Arabian Peninsula. This tremendous success would never have been achieved unless Allah, the Creator of the universe, provided the Prophet with divine support.

Chapter 2

Manner and appearance of the Prophet

Allah has ninety-nine beautiful names in the Koran. The 'Light' is one of His beautiful names. In the Koran Allah says about Himself:

"Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth..." (Al-Nour, 35).

Light is that by which things become known. Things may exist in the dark, but they cannot be seen. Light may be physical like that of the sun or the moon, or intelligible, like the light of the intellect. The latter is that which illuminates the darkness of ignorance with the light of knowledge. Total darkness is non-existence, thus light is that which brings created beings out of non-existence into existence. Light is a creative act of Allah and this is one of the meanings of the verse stated above. The other meaning is that every light in the universe is but a reflection of Allah's mercy, and every knowledge is a reflection of His knowledge and so on.

The Prophet said:

Allah created His creation in darkness, then He sprayed them with His Light. Those whom this Light reached became rightly guided, while those it did not went astray (Tirmizi).

The Prophet also said:

"Allah, August and Majestic is He, wrote the destinies of creation fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and the earth. His throne was on the water. Among what He wrote in the Remembrance, which is the mother of the Book, was: 'Muhammad is the seal of the Prophets'".

The mother of the Book is the source of all knowledge, including the divine Scriptures. Allah conceived His creation in the darkness of non-existence, then with the light of His creative act brought them out into existence. Thus the first light was created, a being appearing against the dark background of non-existence.

The Prophet said, **"The first thing Allah created was the intellect."**(Tirmizi). He also said, **"The first thing Allah created was the pen,"** which amounts to the same thing, since the first intellect is the primordial light in its passive aspect as recipient of the knowledge of what is to be, while the pen is the primordial light in its active aspect of writing this knowledge on the Guarded Tablet at Allah's command (2).

The Prophet said, **"The first thing that Allah created was the Pen and He said to it: 'Write!' So it wrote what is to be forever."** (Tabarani and Abu Nu'aym).

This primordial light is what is called the Light of the Prophet, since he is the created being who received the major share of it.

The origin of the light of Muhammad in pre-eternity is depicted as a luminous mass of primordial adoration in the presence of Allah which takes the shape of a transparent column of divine light and constitutes Muhammad as the primal creation of Allah. When Allah willed to create Muhammad He made appear a light from His light, and when it reached the veil of the majesty it bowed in prostration before Allah. Allah created from its prostration a mighty column like crystal glass of light that is outwardly and inwardly translucent. When creation began, Allah created Adam from the light of Muhammad, the light of the prophets is from his, and the light of the heavenly kingdom is from his light, and the light of this world and of the world to come is from his light (Sahl at-Tustari – d. 283 A.H./896 C.E.).

When the emanation of the prophets and spiritual universe in pre-eternity was completed, Muhammad was shaped in the body, in his temporal and terrestrial form, from the clay of Adam, which however had been taken from the pre-eternal column of the light of Muhammad. Thus the pre-eternal creation of light was perfected; the primal man was molded from the crystallized light of Muhammad and took the corporate personality of Adam. The Prophet is then like the seed of the human race, and is prior to Adam in essence though outwardly his descendant.

The light of Muhammad's soul was the first creation from the Light of Allah, and all else was created from Muhammad's light.

The Prophet said, **"O Jabir (one of his companions), the first creation that Allah created is the soul of your Prophet."**

When he was asked when he became a Prophet, he answered, **"I was a prophet when Adam was between water and clay."**

The companion Maysarat al-Fajr narrated that he asked the Prophet: "O Messenger of Allah, when you became a Prophet?" The Prophet replied: **"When Allah created the earth, then turned He to the Heaven, and fashioned it as seven heavens, and created the Throne, He wrote on the leg of the Throne: 'Muhammad the Messenger of Allah is the Seal of the Prophets'. Then Allah created the Garden in which He made Adam and Hawwa' (Eve) dwell, and He wrote my name on the gates, its tree-leaves, its domes and tents, at a time when Adam was still between the spirit and the body. When Allah Most High instilled life into him he looked at the Throne and saw my name, whereupon Allah informed him that 'he (Muhammad) is the liege-lord of all your descendants.' When Satan deceived them both, they repented and sought intercession to Allah with my name (Abu Nu'aym, Dala'il al-Nubuwa).**

Allah says:

And We have sent you not but as a mercy for mankind (Al-Anbiya, 107).

The Prophet said, **"Whoever sees me sees the truth."**

Allah says:

And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, He will cause him to enter gardens wherein rivers flow (Al-Fath, 17).

The Prophet said, "As long as you do not love me more than anything else you have, your faith is not complete."

Allah says:

Now there has come to you a Messenger from among yourselves; grievous to him is your suffering; anxious is he over you, gentle to the believers, compassionate (Al-Tauba, 128).

Beyond the light of prophetic revelation there is no other light on the face of the earth from which illumination may be received.

The power of this light made the Prophet's radiation so powerful, once he appeared on earth, that Allah calls him in the Koran, "**an illuminating lamp.**"

Allah says:

O Prophet, We have sent thee as a witness, and good tidings to bear and warning, calling unto Allah by His leave, and as an illuminating lamp (Al-Ahzab, 45).

Some of the Prophet's companions saw his light as even brighter than that of the sun or the moon. When they walked with him they noticed that he cast no shadow on the ground (Tirmizi). Those who saw him in the full moon noticed that his blessed face was brighter than the moon (Tirmizi). Lady Rubayyi', when asked to describe him, said, "My son, had you seen him, you would have seen the sun shining." (Tirmizi). Ibn Abbas described how he saw the light shining from between his teeth (Tirmizi in Shama'il). Abu Qursafa, as a boy, went to swear allegiance to the Prophet, together with his mother and his sister. When they returned home they told him, "My son, we have never seen the like of this man, nor anyone better looking, cleaner dressed, or gentler in his speech; and we saw as if light came out of his mouth." (Tabarani).

The light of the Prophet manifested itself in his parents before and during his birth. His father's forehead shone with a light that a certain woman from Quraysh noticed. She knew that the appearance of the Prophet of the End of Time was eminent and felt that the radiating forehead of Abdullah signaled his being the father. She offered herself to him, but he refused. Soon Abdullah married Amena bint Wahab, and once she became pregnant with the Prophet, the light vanished from his forehead. He met the same woman again and, noticing she no longer wanted him, asked her why. She replied that he no longer carried that light on his forehead.

As for the mother of the prophet, Amena bint Wahab, when she became pregnant she saw in a dream-vision that a light came out of her that lit the land as far north as Syria. She was also told in her dream that she was pregnant with the master of this nation and the sign of that would be that when she gave birth to him she would see a light

coming out with him that would shine over Bosra in Syria. "When this happens", she was told, "Call him Muhammad!" I conceived him" she said, "and suffered no pain until delivery. When he came out of me, a light came out with him that illuminated everything from East to West." She also said, "I saw the night I gave birth to him a light that illuminated the palaces of Syria so that I saw them."

The Prophet later confirmed this, saying, "My mother saw, when she gave birth to me, a light that illuminated the palaces of Bosra."

When his wet-nurse, Halima al-Sa'dia, first saw him, she laid her hand on him and he smiled, "When he smiled," she said, "a light appeared from his mouth that rose to the sky."

Although the Prophet's light is the most powerful in the universe, since he is the nearest created being to Allah, it is not the only one. Angels are made of light, the Koran is light, the spirit of human beings is light, faith is light, and knowledge is light. The sun, the moon and the stars are lights. The light of each human being depends upon his faith, knowledge and virtue. The most powerful lights are those of divine Messengers, then those of Prophets, saints, virtuous believers, and finally those of sinful believers. This is the hierarchy of human beings. Both the first and the last are human, all have lights, and all are slaves of Allah, but the distance between the top of the pyramid and its bottom is so great that those at the bottom, in Paradise, will see those at the top as distant as, in this world, we see the stars at night (3).

One of the names by which Prophet Muhammad is known is the "Best of Creation". He is the one who is sent as a mercy to the universe. Allah honored him in several verses of the Koran:

Surely thou art upon a mighty morality (Al-Qalam, 4).

The Prophet's virtues, the magnanimity of his character, and love for mankind were fully recognized even in his lifetime, and his name stands highest among the heroic leaders of mankind.

Allah says in the Koran:

Did We not exalt thy fame (Al-Sharh, 4).

Allah has ordained that Muslims in the five daily prayers mention the name of Allah joined with the name of Muhammad, "I bare witness that no god is worth worshipping except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." What higher elevation than to have Muhammad's name joined with Allah's name in the two phrases included in the daily Muslim's prayers.

If people look upon Allah as the heart of their purpose, they should essentially follow the Prophet first, and there shall Allah confer on them His grace and blessings and forgive them their iniquities.

Say: "If you love Allah, follow me, and Allah will love you, and forgive you your sins; Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate."

Say: "Obey Allah, and the Messenger." But if they turn their backs, Allah loves not the disbelievers (Al-Imran 31, 32).

Allah and His angels honor and bless the Holy Prophet as the greatest of men because he took upon himself to suffer the sorrow and afflictions of this life in order to guide people to Allah's Mercy by following His right path. Muslims were ordered therefore to invoke Allah's Mercy and blessings on the Prophet and pray: "Peace be upon him and blessed be he with all divine favors."

Allah and His angels bless the Prophet, O believers, send your blessings on him too, and salute him with all respect (Al-Ahzab, 56).

Ibn Abbas said, "Allah has preferred Muhammad over all Prophets and over the dwellers of heavens (the angels)." They said: "O Ibn Abbas, how did he prefer him to the dwellers of the heavens?" He replied, "Allah Most High said: **'If any of them (angels or men) says, 'I am a god apart from Him', such a one We recompense with Hell; even so We recompense the evildoers'** (Al-Anbya, 29), but He said concerning Muhammad), **'Surely We have given thee (O Muhammad) a manifest victory, that Allah may forgive thee thy former and thy latter sins, and complete His blessings upon thee, and guide thee on a straight path, and that Allah may help thee with mighty help.'** (Al-Fath 1, 2). They said: "And how did He prefer him over the Prophets?" He replied: "Allah Most High says: **'And We have sent no Messenger save with the tongue of his people.'** (Abraham, 4), but He said (concerning Muhammad), **'And We have not sent thee (O Muhammad) save unto all mankind'** (Saba', 28)."

The outward appearance of Prophet Muhammad was described by several of his companions in the following terms:

The Prophet Muhammad had a handsome constitution and a beautiful appearance. He was innocently bright and had a broad countenance. He had the gentlest nature and the noblest lineage. Anyone suddenly seeing him would be consumed with love. The wise respect him in accordance with their degree. He greatly honored his relatives. He would not however, treat them better than those more worthy than them. He treated his servants well. Whatever he wore or ate, he would give to them to wear and eat. He was generous, beneficial, compassionate, forgiving, brave and mild. In speech, he kept to his word. In essence, his excellent morality, sharp powers of reasoning were greater than those of all other people and worthy of great praise.

His teeth were as white as pearls and bright, and the light gleamed from his front teeth as he spoke. When he laughed, it was as if his mouth gave off rays like soft lightning. His laugh was mostly a smile. Those who saw him stood suddenly in awe of him and those who shared his acquaintance loved him. Those who described him said they had never seen anyone like him before or since.

He was not excessively tall or short, but was a man of medium size. He had neither very curly nor flowing hair but a mixture of both. He was reddish-white. He had black attractive eyes. His eyes were wide with long eyelashes. The hairs of his eye-lashes were profuse. His eye-balls were black tinged with reddish hue. He had protruding joints and shoulder blades. Between his shoulders was the seal of prophecy. His head

was well formed and set on a slender neck. He had a finer chest and was truer in utterance than anyone else.

His forehead was wide and the place between his eyebrows was bright like pure silver. When he smiled or laughed his teeth shone like lightning. His beard was thick, his neck was most beautiful, neither long nor short. If the rays of the sun fell on his neck, it appeared like a cup of silver mixed with gold. His chest was broad. It was even like a mirror and white like the moon light. His shoulders were wide. His palms were softer than wool. His manners were fine. He wore long. His voice was very commanding. His expression was pensive and contemplative, serene and sublime. The stranger was fascinated from the distance, but no sooner he became intimate with him, then this fascination was changed into attachment and respect. His expression was also very sweet and distinct. His speech was well set and free from the use of superfluous words, as if it were rosary of beads. He was singularly bright and fresh. He was always surrounded by his companions. Whenever he uttered something, the listeners would hear him with rapt attention, and whenever he issued a commandment, they vied with each other in carrying it out. He was a master and a commander.

He had a body formed in perfection and uniqueness and blessed. His senses were exceedingly powerful. He could hear from a long way off and see further than anyone.

The Prophet attached a great importance to the cleanliness of his body, hair and beard. It is reported that he always carried with him a comb, mirror, miswak (a small natural toothbrush), tooth pick, scissors and a kohl bottle. The Prophet advised his companions to do the same, and said, "He who has hair should honor it."

The Prophet had a ring made of silver and its inlaid gem was also of silver. When he wanted to write to the leaders of foreign states, he ordered a seal-ring to be made. The inscription engraved on the ring was 'Muhammad the Messenger of Allah' of which in the first line was engraved 'Muhammad', in the second line 'Messenger', and in the third line 'Allah'.

When he walked, he pulled himself forward as though he was walking downhill, and others had difficulty in keeping up with him. When looked at something, he turned his whole body towards it. He always looked down; his glance was focused more to the ground than toward the sky. His noble habit was to look at something with a slight glance (3).

In company he is like a branch between two other branches, but he is the most flourishing of the three in appearance. He has friends surrounding him, who listen to his words. If he commands, they obey implicitly, with eagerness and haste, without frown or complaint.

He was given to sadness, and there were long periods of silence when he was deep in thought; yet he never rested but was always busy with something. He never spoke unnecessarily. What he said was always to the point and sufficient to make his point clear, but there was no padding. From the first to last he spoke rapidly. Over his feelings he had a firm control. When he was annoyed he would turn aside; when he was pleased, he lowered his eyes. His time was carefully apportioned according to the

various demands on him. In his dealings with people he was above all tactful. In the main he was not rough but gentle. His laugh was mostly a smile.

When Muhammad and his close companion Abu Bakr left Makkah heading to Medina they stopped by the tent of a Bedouin woman called Um Ma'bad, she wanted to offer them hospitality, but she told them that her goats were giving no milk because of drought. When the Prophet offered to milk one of her goats himself, she readily agreed, and to her amazement the goat produced abundant milk. After the departure of Muhammad and Abu Bakr, her husband arrived, and she related the story of her remarkable visitor, including a description of the prophet's appearance. She said:

"I saw a man, pure and clean, with a handsome face and a fine figure. He was not marred by a skinny body, nor was he overly small in the head and neck. He was graceful and elegant, with intensely black eyes and thick eyelashes. There was huskiness in his voice, and his neck was long. His beard was thick, and his eyebrows were finely arched and joined together. When silent, he was grave and dignified, and when he spoke, glory rose up and overcame him. He was from afar the most beautiful of men and the most glorious, and close up he was the sweetest and the loveliest. He was sweet of speech and articulate, but not petty or trifling. His speech was a string of cascading pearls, measured so that none despaired of its length."

Before Muhammad was sent as a Prophet to his people at the age of forty, he was popularly known by the appellation of al-Ameen" (the honest), and everyone accepted his arbitration without hesitation. Because of his exalted manner the Arabs used to trust him with their valuable deposits and possessions and consult him about their important affairs.

About the year 605 of the Christian era, the draperies on the outer wall of the ka'bah took fire. The building was affected and could not bear the brunt of the torrential rains that followed. The reconstruction of the Ka'bah was thereupon undertaken. Each citizen contributed according to his means, and only the gifts of honest gains were accepted. Everybody participated in the work of construction, and Muhammad's shoulders were injured in the course of transporting stones. To identify the place whence the ritual of circumambulation began, there had been set a black stone in the wall of the Ka'bah dating from the time of Abraham himself. There was rivalry among the citizens for obtaining the honor of transposing this stone in its place. When there was danger of blood being shed, somebody suggested leaving the matter to providence, and accepting the arbitration of him who should happen to arrive and enter the Ka'bah first. It happened that Muhammad was the first to enter the Ka'bah for work as usual. Because he was trustworthy and honest, everyone accepted his arbitration without hesitation. Muhammad placed a sheet of cloth on the ground, put the stone on it and asked the chiefs of all the tribes to lift together the cloth, and then he himself placed the stone in its proper place in one of the angles of the Ka'bah.

The Prophet of Islam forsook worldly pleasure for the blessedness of the Hereafter. Bliss of the Hereafter awaiting the true believers in Allah is much better than the enjoyment of the present life. The Prophet of Islam said:

By Allah, this life is to the Hereafter, the same as what your finger gathers if dipped into the sea.

His house was but a hut with walls of unbaked clay and a thatched roof of palm leaves covered by camel skin. His room contained a rope cot, a pillow stuffed with palm leaves, the skin of some animal spread on the floor and a water bag of leather and some weapons. These were all his earthly belongings, besides a camel, a horse, and an ass and some land, which he acquired, in the later part of his life. He was not fastidious about his bed; sometimes he slept on his cot, sometimes on a skin or ordinary mattress, and sometimes on the ground. Once dew disciples, noticing the imprint of his mattress on his body, wished to give him a softer bed but he politely declined the offer saying:

The worldly comforts are not for me. I am like a traveler, who takes a rest under a tree in the shade and then goes on his way.

Once Omar Ibn al-khattab (the second Calif) entered the house of the Prophet. Tears came into his eyes. Muhammad asked the reason for his tears. He replied, "O Allah's Messenger! Why don't I cry! The strings of the bed have left marks on your body. This is a small room with all your furniture; I can see what there is. The Byzantine Emperor and the Persian Emperor enjoy luxurious living while you, the Messenger of Allah and the Chosen One, live like this." The Prophet said,

"Ibn al-Khattab! Don't you like that they choose this world and we choose the Hereafter?"

The Prophet also said,

"Every religion has a character and the character of Islam is modesty."

The Prophet lived a simple and modest life, both in Makkah as a trader and the Messenger of Allah, and in Medina as the head of the state and Messenger of Allah. Omar Ibn al-Khattab reported the Prophet as saying:

"Do not exalt me as the Christians have exalted Jesus son of Mary. I am just His servant, so call me Allah's servant and Messenger."

When the Prophet died, he did not leave a cent, a slave man or woman, or any property except his white mule, his weapons, and a piece of land, which he had dedicated for the good of the community. He advised the people to live simple lives for he himself practiced great austerities. Even when he had become the virtual king of Arabia, he lived an austere life bordering on privation. There was hardly a day in his life when he had two square meals. When he died there was no food in his house except a few seeds of barley left from a mound of grain obtained from a Jew by pawning his armor.

About himself the Prophet said,

"Allah has sent me as an apostle so that I may demonstrate perfection of character, refinement of manners and loftiness of deportment."

By nature he was gentle and kind hearted, always inclined to be gracious and to overlook the faults of others. Politeness and courtesy, compassion and tenderness, simplicity and humility, sympathy and sincerity were some of the keynotes of his character. In the cause of right and justice he could be resolute and severe but more often than not, his severity was tempered with generosity. He had charming manners, which won him the affection of his followers and secured their devotion. Though virtual king of Arabia and an apostle of Allah, he never assumed an air of superiority. Sincere humility was ingrained in his heart. He used to say,

“I am a Prophet of Allah but I do not know what will be my end.”

Of his words of compassion, love and mercy he said:

"When Allah created His creatures He wrote above His throne: 'Verily, my Compassion overcomes my wrath.'"

"Allah Most High said: 'My mercy has preceded my anger.'"

"Wish for others what you wish for yourself."

"Utter good words, spread the greeting of peace, be kind to your blood relations and pray at night while others sleep then enter Paradise in peace."

"Allah Most High has chosen this religion and the only things fitting your religion are generosity and a good character. If such is true, then try to adorn your religion with these two."

"Allah loves that one should be kind and lenient in all matters."

"On the Day of Resurrection, Allah Most High says: 'Where are those who love each other for the sake of my Majesty, today I shall provide them with My Shade which the day when there is no shade but Mine.'"

"The Most Beneficent sends His Mercy on the merciful. The Most High and Exalted said: 'Have mercy on those who are on earth, and the One in heaven will have mercy on you.'"

"Nothing weighs more in the balance of accounts on the Day of Resurrection than having a good character."

Tenderness is that which is taken out from the heart of a wretched man."

"Kindness is a mark of faith, and whoever is not kind has no faith."

"Who is the most favored of Allah? He, from whom the greatest good comes to His creatures."

"A true Muslim is thankful to Allah in prosperity, and resigned to His will in adversity."

"A man who meets with others and shares their burdens is better than one who lives a life of seclusion and contemplation."

"Allah does not look at your appearance or your possessions; but He looks at your hearts and your deeds."

"Much silence and a good disposition, there are no two things better than these."

"Verily Allah is mild and is fond of mildness, and He gives to the mild what He does not give to the harsh."

"Whoever loves to meet Allah, Allah loves to meet him."

"Verily, it is one of the respects to Allah to honor an old man."

"He is not of us who is not affectionate to the little ones, and does not respect the old; and he is not of us, who does not order which is lawful, and prohibits that which is unlawful."

"The perfect Muslim is not a perfect Muslim, who eats till he is full and leaves his neighbors hungry."

"No man is a true believer unless he desires for his brother that, what he desires for himself."

"Do you know what is better than charity and fasting and prayer? It is keeping peace and good relations between people, as quarrels and bad feelings destroy mankind."

In one of his sermons destined to instill the fear of Allah and the day of reckoning in the hearts of men, he said,

"O people of Quraish (his tribe) be prepared for the hereafter, I cannot save you from the punishment of Allah; O Bani Abd Manaf (another tribe), I cannot save you from Allah; O Abbas, son of Abdul Mutalib (his uncle), I cannot protect you either; O Fatima, daughter of Muhammad, even you I cannot save."

He used to pray,

"O Allah! I am but a man. If I hurt any one in any manner, then forgive me and do not punish me."

"O Allah, I seek refuge in You for Your Pleasure and against your wrath, and in Your Forgiveness, and against Your Punishment and in You from You, I cannot praise You as You have Praised yourself."

"O Lord, grant me your love, grant me that I love those who love you, grants me that I might do the deeds that win your love. Make your love dearer to me than the love of myself, my family and wealth."

“I have surrendered myself to you, I have directed my face to you, I have entrusted my affairs to You, I have compelled my back to refuge in You, in want and in fright of You, there is no resort nor survival from You except (in turning) to You. I have faith in Your book (the Koran) which You brought down and in the Prophet Muhammad You have sent.”

He always received people with courtesy and showed respect to older people, he said,

“To honor an old man is to show respect to Allah.”

He was always the first to greet another and would not withdraw his handshake till the other man withdrew his. If one wanted to say something in his ears, he would not turn away till one had finished. He did not like people to get up for him and used to say,

"Let him, who likes people to stand up in his honor, he should seek a place in hell."

He would himself, however, stand up when any dignitary came to him. He had stood up to receive the wet nurse that had reared him in infancy and had spread his own sheet for her. His foster brother was given similar treatment. He avoided sitting at a prominent place in a gathering, so much so that people coming in had difficulty in spotting him and had to ask which the Prophet was. Quite frequently uncouth Bedouins accosted him in their own gruff and impolite manner but he never took offence.

He used to visit the poorest of ailing persons and exhorted all Muslims to do likewise. He would sit with the humblest of persons saying that righteousness alone was the criterion of one's superiority over another. He invariably invited people be they slaves, servants, or the poorest believers, to partake with him of his scanty meals.

He said:

"What actions are most excellent? To gladden the heart of human beings, to feed the hungry, to help the afflicted, to lighten the sorrow of the sorrowful, and to remove the suffering of the injured."

Whenever he visited a person he would first greet him and then take his permission to enter the house. He advised the people to follow this etiquette and not to get annoyed if anyone declined to give permission, for it was quite likely the person concerned was busy and did not mean any disrespect.

There was no type of household work too low or too undignified for him. He always joined in household work and would at times mend his clothes, repair his shoes and sweep the floor. He would milk, tether, and feed his animals and do the household shopping.

He would not hesitate to do the menial work of others, particularly of orphans and widows. Once when there was no male member in the house of the companion Kabab Bin Arat who had gone to the battlefield, he used to go to his house daily and milk his cattle for the inhabitants.

He was especially fond of children and used to get into the spirit of childish games in their company. He would have fun with the children who had come back from Abyssinia and tried to speak in Abyssinian with them. It was his practice to give lifts on his camel to children when he returned from journeys. He would pick up children in his arms, play with them, and kiss them. A companion, recalling his childhood, said:

“In my childhood I used to fell dates by throwing stones at palm trees. Somebody took me to the prophet who advised me to pick up the dates lying on the ground but not to fell them with stones. He then patted me and blessed me.”

His grandson Hussein, still a child, came to him tumbling while he was delivering a sermon. He got down from the pulpit and took him in his lap and then continued the sermon.

The Prophet was traveling on his camel over hilly terrain with a disciple, Uqba bin Amir. After going some distance, he asked Uqba to ride the camel, but Uqba thought this would be showing disrespect to the Prophet. But the prophet insisted and he had to comply. The prophet walked on foot, as he did not want to put too many loads on the animal (4).

During a halt on a journey, the companions apportioned work among themselves for preparing food. The prophet took upon himself the task of collecting firewood. His companions pleaded that they would do it and that he need not take the trouble, but he replied:

“It is true, but I do not like to attribute any distinction to myself. Allah does not like the man who considers himself superior to his companions.”

The Prophet not only preached to the people to show kindness to each other, but also to all living souls. He forbade the practice of cutting tails and manes of horses, of branding animals at any soft spot, and of keeping horses saddled unnecessarily. If he saw any animal overloaded or ill-fed he would pull up the owner and say,

“Fear Allah in your treatment of animals.”

As his army marched towards Makkah to conquer it, they passed a female dog with puppies. The Prophet not only gave orders that they should not be disturbed, but posted a man to see that this was done.

He stated,

“Verily, there is heavenly reward for every act of kindness done to a living animal.”

Monopoly is unlawful in Islam, the Prophet preached:

“Pay the wages of a laborer before his sweat dries up.”

He did not encourage beggary either and stated that:

“Allah is gracious to him who earns his living by his own labor, and if a man begs to increase his property, Allah will diminish it, and whoever has food for the day, it is prohibited for him to beg.”

To his wife he said:

“O Aisha, love the poor and let them come to you and Allah will draw you near to Himself.”

A Medinan, Ibad bin Sharjil, was once starving. He entered an orchard and picked some fruit. The owner of the orchard gave him a sound beating and stripped him off his clothes. The poor man appealed to the Prophet who remonstrated the owner thus:

“This man was ignorant, you have dispelled his ignorance; he was hungry, you should have fed him.”

The Medinan restored his clothes, and in addition, some grain was given to him.

A debtor, Jabber Bin Abdullah, was being harassed by his creditor, as he could not clear his debt owing to the failure of his date crop. The Prophet went with Jabber to the house of the creditor and pleaded with him to give jabber some more time but the creditor was not prepared to oblige. The Prophet then went to the oasis and having seen for himself that the crop was really poor, he again approached the creditor with no better result. He then rested for sometime and approached the creditor for a third time but the latter was adamant. The Prophet went again to the orchard and asked jabber to pluck the dates. The collection not only sufficed to clear the dues but also left something to spare (4).

His love for the poor was so deep that he used to pray:

“O Allah, keep me poor in my life and at my death and raise me at resurrection among those who are poor.”

In spite of his being a prophet Muhammad was a very pleasant light-hearted person. His company was full of pleasant and delightful humor. An old woman came to see the Prophet and asked him to pray for her that she might go to paradise. He replied,

“No old woman will enter paradise.”

The old woman was very grieved and began crying. The Prophet told his companions to tell her that the old woman would go to paradise but as a young girl.

The Prophet forbade his companions to keep the dumb creatures hungry or thirsty, or to disturb or overburden them. He commended kindness to animals and putting them at ease as meritorious acts tending to bring man nearer to Allah. The companion Abu Hurayrah reported the Prophet as saying:

“A traveler who was thirsty saw a well on the way. He got inside the well and when he came out he saw a dog licking mud because of thirst. The man realized that the dog should be as thirsty as he was and so he got into the well again, filled his leather sock with water and carried it out holding it with his teeth. And thus he quenched the dog’s thirst. Allah was pleased with the act of kindness and pardoned his sins.”

The companions asked, “O Messenger of Allah, is there recompense in the matter of beasts and wild animals also?”

The Prophet replied:

“There is recompense in regard to every creature that has a living heart.”

The Prophet also said,

“A woman was doomed to enter the Fire because of a cat. She imprisoned it and neither fed it nor set it free to eat the rodents of the earth.”

It was also narrated that once the Prophet entered the enclosure of a young man in Medina where there was a camel that started groaning on catching sight of the Prophet, tears running down its eyes. The Prophet approached it and patted its hump and face, which set it at ease. Then the Prophet asked who its owner was. The young man came and said: “O Messenger of Allah, it belongs to me.”

The Prophet said to him,

“Do you not fear Allah in the matter of this beast although He has made you his owner? It complained to me that you are hard upon it and always kept it at work.”

The Prophet strongly enjoined kindness towards the slaves, servants and labor engaged for manual work. He said:

“Feed them with the food that you eat, clothe them with such clothing as you wear and do not cause trouble to Allah’s creatures.”

The Prophet also said,

“Those whom Allah has made your dependents are your brothers, servants and helpmates. Anybody whose brother has been made subservient to him ought to feed him with the food he eats and clothe him with the clothes he wears. Command him not to do that which he is unable to do, and if it becomes necessary to do so, then he should help him in doing the job.”

Another great quality of Muhammad was that he never took revenge on anyone for personal reasons and always forgave even his firm enemies.

The people of his tribe Quraysh rebuked him, taunted and mocked him, beat him and abused him. They tried to kill him and when he immigrated to Medina, they waged

many wars against him. Yet when he entered Makkah victorious with an army of 10,000, he did not take revenge on anyone. He forgave all. Even his deadliest enemy, Abu Sufian, who had fought so many battles against him, was forgiven, as was anyone who stayed in his house. Muhammad also pardoned the leaders of Ta'if, who had engaged ruffians to pelt him with stones when he visited that town to invite them to Islam.

Abdullah ibn Ubay, the leader of the hypocrites of Medina, worked all his life against Muhammad and Islam. He withdrew his three hundred supporters in the battle of Uhud, which led to the defeat of Muslims in this battle. He engaged in intrigues and acts of hostilities against Muslims and the Prophet of Islam. He tried to discredit Allah's Messenger by spreading slander about his wife Aisha. About this slander Allah Almighty says,

Lo! They who spread the slander are a gang among you; nay, it is good for you. Unto every man of them will be paid that which he has earned of the sin; and as for him among them who had the greater share therein, his will be an awful doom (An-Nur, 11).

Yet Muhammad forgave him, and in Abdullah's funeral Muhammad prayed Allah to forgive him. But afterwards, Allah revealed,

And never (O Muhammad) pray for one of them who dies, nor stand by his grave. Lo! They disbelieve in Allah and His Messenger, and they died while they were evil doers (At-Tawbah, 84).

An Abyssinian slave who had killed Muhammad's beloved uncle Hamzah in the battle of Uhud was also forgiven when he embraced Islam after the victory of Makkah.

The wife of Abu Sufian, Hind bint Utbah who had cut open Hamzah's chest after his death and torn his liver and heart into pieces in the battle of Uhud, quietly came to the Prophet and accepted Islam. He recognized her but did not say anything. She was so impressed by his magnanimity and stature that she said, "O Allah's Messenger, no tent was more deserted in my eyes than yours; but today no tent is lovelier in my eyes than yours."

Habar ibn al-Aswad was another vicious enemy of Muhammad and of Islam. He had inflicted a grievous injury to Zaynab, daughter of the Prophet. She was pregnant when she immigrated from Makkah to Medina. The polytheists of Makkah obstructed her and Habar ibn al-Aswad intentionally threw her down from the camel. She was badly hurt and miscarried as a result. Habar committed many other crimes as well. He wanted to run away to Persia but then he came to Muhammad, who forgave him.

Muhammad was all for forgiveness and no amount of crime or aggression against him were too great to be forgiven by him. He overcame the ignorance of the people with the knowledge of Islam, and the folly and evil of the people with his kind and forgiving treatment. With his forgiveness, he freed people from the bondage of sin and crime, and made them friends of Islam. He was an exact image of the following verses of the Koran:

Keep forgiveness (O Muhammad), and enjoin kindness, and turn away from the ignorant. (Al-A'raf, 199).

Good and evil are not alike. Repel evil with what is better. Then he, between whom and you there was hatred, will become as though he was a bosom friend. (Fussilat, 34).

Muhammad always kept his promises and contracts at all costs, even with his enemies, and never broke his word.

One of the terms of the Treaty of Hdaybiyah was that if any Muslim came to Medina from Makkah, he would be returned on demand. While the treaty was being written, a Muslim called Abu Jandal escaped from the prison of the Makkans in chains. All the Muslims were shocked to see him in this condition, but the Prophet said to him, "O Abu Jandal! Be patient, we cannot break the promise. Allah will very soon find a way for you." Abu Jandal was returned to the people of Makkah.

Muhammad as the Messenger of Allah decided all cases on merit of justice and equity, irrespective of the color, creed, or race of the defendants. Once a woman from Quraysh was found guilty of stealing. Her people wanted to save her from punishment in order to protect the honor of the family. They wanted to hush up the whole affair. They asked Osama bin Zayd, who was very dear to the Prophet, to intercede on her behalf. He requested the Prophet to forgive her. The Prophet furiously said,

"The Children of Israel were ruined because of this. They applied the law to the poor and forgave the rich."

Abdullah ibn Sahl went to Khaybar for the division of dates, accompanied by his cousin Muhayyisah. There was no one else living in Khaybar except the Jews. While walking in the street, someone murdered Abdullah and his body was thrown in the ditch. Muhayyisah complained to the Prophet who asked him if he could swear that the Jews killed him. Muhayyisah replied that he had not seen with his own eyes. The Prophet said that the Jews should be asked to take an oath. Muhayyisah said, "How can we trust their oath? They will take false oaths a hundred times." But as there was no eye-witness, the Prophet did not ask anything of the Jews and paid one hundred camels as blood-money from the state treasury.

The Prophet was so well known for his justice that even the Jews, who were his deadly enemies, brought their suits to him and he decided cases in accordance with their law. Justice demands that it should be upheld in all circumstances, even if it goes against one's own self or one's family or relations.

Allah's Messenger proved by his own example that no one could be firmer for justice than he was, even if it was against his own interest or the interest of those who were near or dear to him. He decided every case brought to him by friend or foe with justice, favoring neither the rich nor the poor. The Prophet as head of the Muslim State of Medina always treated his enemies, including Jews and disbelievers, with justice and equity.

The Prophet was considerate and sympathetic in his attitude towards the non-Muslims. Some Jewish families lived in the neighborhood of the Prophet's house in Medina. If some of their children fell sick, he would visit the sick child. If a funeral passed through the streets of Medina and the Prophet was around, he would stand up as a mark of respect for the deceased.

Ta'ima ibn Ubayraq was nominally a Muslim but really a hypocrite, and given to all sorts of wicked deeds. He was suspected of having stolen a set of armor, and when the trail was hot, he planted the stolen property in the house of a Jew, where it was found. The Jew denied the charge and accused Ta'ima, but the sympathies of the Muslim community were with Ta'ima on account of his nominal profession of Islam. The case was brought to the Prophet, who acquitted the Jew according to the strict principle of justice as guided by Allah. Attempts were made to prejudice him and deceive him into using his authority to favor Ta'ima. When Ta'ima realized that his punishment was imminent he fled and turned apostate (5).

The Prophet very strictly followed the commands of Allah:

O you who believe! Stand up firmly for justice, as witnesses for Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your near of kin, whether it be against rich or poor, Allah can best protect them. So do not follow your lusts, lest you deviate, for if you twist or turn, then surely Allah is All-Aware of what you do (An-Nisa, 135).

O believers, be you securers of justice, witnesses for Allah. Let not detestation for a people move you not to be equitable – that is nearer to god-fearing. And fear Allah; surely Allah is aware of the things you do (Al-Maidah, 8)

“We have revealed to you the Book in truth, that you may judge between the people as Allah has shown you, so be not an advocate for the treacherous people (An- Nisa, 105).

The prophet always urged his followers to live in peace with their fellow men, saying, **"A true believer is one with whom others feel secure."**

Despite his position as a great leader, the Prophet never believed himself to be greater or better than other people. He never made others feel small, unwanted or embarrassed. He urged his followers to behave kindly and humbly, releasing slaves whenever possible, and giving in charity to poor people, orphans and prisoners without any thought of reward.

The Prophet of Islam was a high moral character, if he is badly treated by others; he went on returning good for evil. People harmed him, yet he would pray for them. He would remain patient in the face of oppression and, regardless of the provocation he would refrain from becoming incensed. His aim from setting these examples was to fashion souls that were Allah-oriented so that everything else paled into insignificance. He wanted everyone to have such boundless peace of mind that nothing could disturb him. Such balanced individuals would never then become prey to worldliness.

The essence of this philosophy is expressed in one of his sayings:

"Nine things the Lord has commanded me: Fear of Allah in private and in public; justness whether in anger or calmness; moderation in both poverty and affluence; that I should join hands with those who broke away from me, and give to those who deprive me, and forgive those who wrong me; and that my silence should be meditation; and my words be remembrance of Allah; and my vision be keen observation."

Ibn Abbas narrated that when the Prophet got up at night to offer the midnight prayer, he used to say:

"O Allah! All prayers are for you. You are the Holder of the heavens and the earth, and whatever is in them. All praises are for you. You have the possession of the heavens and the earth and whatever is in them. All praises are for you. You are the Light of the heavens and the earth and all the praises are for you. You are the King of the heavens and the earth and all the praises are for you. You are the Truth and Your Promise is the truth and to meet You is true. Your Word is the truth and Paradise is true, Hell is true, all the Prophets are true, Muhammad is true, and the Day of Resurrection is true. O Allah! I surrender (my will) to You. I believe in You and depend on You, repent to You, and with Your help I argue (with my opponents, the non-believers). And I take you as a Judge (to judge between the Prophet and the disbelievers). Please forgive me my past and future sins, and whatever I concealed or revealed. And You are the One Who makes (some people) forward and (some) backward. There is none to be worshipped but You." (Bukhari 2/221, 9/482 and 534).

After the fall of Makkah and the establishment of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula, more than one million square miles of land lay at Muhammad's feet and the Arabs considered him as the Lord of Arabia. But Muhammad did not change in victory or defeat, in power or adversity, in affluence or in indigence, he is the same man, disclosed the same character. He mended his own shoes and coarse woolen garments, milked the goats, swept the hearth, kindled the fire and attended the other menial offices of the family. The entire town of Medina where he lived grew wealthy in the later days of his life. Everywhere there were 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 date and water. His family would go hungry many nights because they could not get anything to eat. He slept on no soften bed, but on a palm mat, after a long busy day to spend most of his night in prayer, often bursting with tears before his creator to grant him strength to discharge his duties. On the very day of his death his only assets were 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 had many patches. The house from where light had spread to the world was in darkness because there was no oil in the lamp.

Allah favored the Prophet over all beings; He made him the seal of the prophets. No prophet would be sent after him, and the Koran would be the last revelation to guide people onto the true way. Allah maintained that unique feature of the Prophet with a mark (seal of prophet hood) on his body.

Muhammad is not the father of any one of your men, but the Messenger of Allah, and the Seal of the prophets; Allah has knowledge of everything (Al-Ahzab, 40).

Abu Hurairah narrated that the Prophet said:

"My similitude in comparison with the other prophets before me is that of a man who has built a house nicely and beautifully, except for a place of one brick in a corner. The people go round about it and wonder at its beauty, but say: 'Would that this brick is put in its place!' So I am that brick, and I am the last of the prophets." (Sahih Al-bukhari, Vol. 4, hadith no. 735).

With the leadership and conquest come fame but fame did not affect Muhammad whose only aim was to establish the religion of Allah on earth. His position as a Messenger of Allah was not exaggerated. His insistence on being a mere mortal like others was firm. And his desire to single out Allah alone for worship was stressed wholeheartedly. It is for this reason that he ordered his followers not to make any pictorial representations or statues of him. Before his death he condemned the Jews and Christians for taking the graves of their prophets and pious people as places of worship.

The last words the Prophet uttered while he was dying:

"We the community of the Prophets are not inherited. Whatever we leave is for charity."

Chapter 3

Muhammad – the best of creation

Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, is the last Prophet that Allah sent to humanity. The result of his mission has brought more people into the pure belief in One God than any other Prophet. Even though other religious communities claimed to believe in one God over time they had corrupted their beliefs by taking their Prophets and saints as intercessors with Allah.

Some religions believe their Prophets to be manifestations of Allah, "God incarnate" or the "Son of God". All these false ideas lead to the creature being worshipped instead of the Creator, which contributed to the idolatrous practice of believing that Allah can be approached through intermediaries. In order to guard against these falsehoods, the Prophet Muhammad always emphasized that he was only a human-being tasked with the preaching of Allah's Message. He taught Muslims to refer to him as "The slave of Allah and His Messenger".

Since all Allah's Messengers have preached the Message of Islam – i.e. submission to the will of Allah and the worship of Allah alone – Muhammad is actually the last Prophet of Islam, not the first.

Muhammad was invested with power to destroy polytheism and idolatry. He was authorized by Allah to establish His Kingdom on earth.

The birth of the Prophet of Islam was the rise of a new nation, the beginning of a new era and the genesis of a new world which is destined to last till the end of time? The influence of his prophet hood is visible in all spheres of human endeavor.

Among all the Prophets and Messengers of Allah, Prophet Muhammad alone figures like a tower above all; and the grand and noble work he accomplished stands a permanent monument of his honor and greatness.

Muhammad is by far the most remarkable man to ever set foot on the face of this earth. He preached a religion, founded a state, built a nation, laid down a moral code, initiated numberless social and political reforms, established a dynamic and powerful society to practice and represent his teachings, and completely revolutionized human thought and action for all times to come.

The Prophet of Islam was the mightiest of all Messengers of Allah, a commander in chief, a statesman, a legislator, a father, a husband, a judge, an internationalist, sent ambassadors and received them, smashed paganism, heathenism, cleaned up places of idols, reached out to the Jews and the Christians and all of humanity for accepting Islam. Many did, and still doing.

Muhammad was a social reformer, a moral guide, a political thinker, a military genius, an administrative colossus, a faithful friend, a wonderful companion, a devoted husband, a loving father all in one.

Allah praised His Prophet in the Koran:

Surely thou art upon a mighty morality (Al-Qalam, 5).

Did We not exalt your fame? (Ash-Sharh, 4).

When the Prophet died at the age of 63 the whole of the Arabian Peninsula had changed from paganism and idol worship to the worship of One God; from tribal quarrels and wars to national solidarity and cohesion; from drunkenness and debauchery to sobriety and piety; from lawlessness and anarchy to disciplined living; from utter moral bankruptcy to the highest standards of moral excellence. Human history has never known such a complete transformation of a people or a place before or since. Indeed no other human being ever accomplished so much, in such diverse fields of human thought and behavior, in so limited a space of time, as did Muhammad. The Prophet accomplished all these wonders in the unbelievably short span of twenty-three years.

Today, after the lapse of more than 1400 years, the life and teachings of Prophet Muhammad, have survived without the slightest loss, alteration or interpolation. Today they offer the same undying hope for treating mankind's many ills, which they did when the Prophet was alive. This is the inescapable conclusion forced upon humanity by a critical and unbiased study of history (6).

The Prophet guided humanity in crucial times of darkness, oppression and gender tyranny, eradicated vice after vice, released souls from the poison of racism, transformed humanity into one homogenous, healthy pluralism of races.

Arabia before Islam was a society bound by tradition and precedent. Whatever was customary was right and proper. Whatever the forefathers had done deserved to be imitated. Islam rejected this blind faith in tradition and challenged all the customs of the society. Islam introduced to the Arabs the standards of morality and the fundamentals of right and wrong. Islam taught them how to think critically of everything around them and how to reject the bad habits and keep the good ones. Islam showed them the proper way for peace and happiness in this life and felicity in the next.

It was Muhammad who transformed the fiercely independent-minded Arabs who knew no government, obeyed no authority, and recognized no state into a nation with a government, a capital, and a respected authority. The Prophet taught the Arabs how to elect a head of state from among themselves and how to run their government upon principles of mutual consultation. He taught the Arabs who never agreed on any form of law to build a nation based on the rule of one sacred, just, and merciful law. He taught them that they were all equal before the law and no one even his daughter Fatima was above the law. It was Muhammad that transformed the intensely militant Arabs from a group of tribes massacring each other all the time into one nation with united armies able to confront and defeat the armies of the surrounding superpowers: the Byzantines and the Sassanids. The Prophet of Islam abolished usury from Arabia and taught the Arabs how to make business transactions justly and fairly without exploitation or abuse. The religion he brought abolished the gruesome habit of female infanticide from Arabia. He taught the Arabs that women were full human beings, not mere chattel, and that

they were their sisters in humanity and in faith. It was Islam that guaranteed for Arabian women their right to inheritance, property, divorce, and independent legal personality. Islam eradicated alcohol with all its evils from Arabia. It was Islam that ended all forms of prostitution, gambling and intoxicants from the Arabian society. And it was Islam that opened doors for freeing slaves. It was Islam that uprooted racism from the Arab mind completely to the extent that the deeply racist and arrogant Arabs would accept to be soldiers in armies whose leaders were black Africans. And above all, it was Islam that transformed the idolatrous and superstitious Arabs into believers in the One and Only God, Allah. It was Islam that transformed them from idol worshippers into a people who stand together in one line in prayer and prostrate their heads to the Almighty. This was the essence of the revolution that Islam was (7).

The Prophet of Islam breathed pure monotheism. He preached it to all the creatures, with every ounce of energy in his breath. In order to save people from the mega-sin of polytheism, he busted all its shades and colors such as dualism and trinitarianism.

The Prophet carried his Message to the four corners of the land by the simplest of human beings, men of humblest beginnings. Following the Prophet's footsteps, They lived the plainest life, constantly prayed and fasted, wearing even the patched up clothings, yet were the mightiest driven by Allah's Will, simply wearing the armor of purest Monotheism. The spread of Islam was, quite unlike other religions which were spread by mighty emperors: Buddhism by Emperor Asoka, Zoroastrianism by Persian Emperor Cyrus, Christianity by the Roman Emperor Constantine, all living in glittering gorgeous mansions, in luxurious lifestyles, commanding sophisticated armies.

What simplicity of the Prophet and his followers! Only surrendering to Allah's Will was their ornament and armor, and before whom many mighty kings of Persia and Roman Emperors collapsed into rubble, giving way to Islam.

The Prophet is the one to whom was revealed the most miraculous Holy Book, the Glorious Koran. The sacred Book of Islam is still preserved by Allah's will, totally intact, sentence for sentence, word for word, in the original language of revelation, still free of all human touch or manipulation.

Muhammad is the one who brought in the mechanisms of unprecedented revolutionary dynamism; the hallmark of whose approach was establishing the laws of Allah on earth in totality, legislating all activities: spiritual, moral, ethical, societal development, scientific and educational excellence. Muhammad's teachings developed, guided, and strengthened governmental, economic, judicial and brotherhood structures and social institutions, like never before (8).

Muhammad not at all rejoiced in the conquest of empires or amassing treasures of gold and silver, rather exhilarated only in the submission of all men and women to the will of Allah, the Almighty. This was the only aim, the objective ambition and aspiration of his existence.

Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him is the best among all the creation of Allah. He has superiority over all human beings, including all the Messengers and the Prophets of Allah.

To Moses Allah spoke directly: he led his men for forty years through the wilderness, mainly fighting against the unbelief of his own people; he organized them to fight with the sword for Palestine, he was raised to Allah's mercy before his enterprise ripened, and it fell to Joshua to carry out his plan. David, though a mere shepherd boy was chosen by Allah. He overthrew the greatest warrior of his time, became a king, and waged successful wars, being also a Prophet, a poet, and musician. Jesus was strengthened by the Holy Spirit (angel Gabriel), he was given no weapons to fight, and his mission was of a more limited character. In Muhammad's mission these and other characters were combined. Gentler than Jesus, he organized on a vaster scale than Moses, and from Medina he ruled and gave laws, and the Koran has a vaster scope than the Psalms of David (1).

Allah says in the Koran:

And those Messengers, some We preferred above others; some there are to whom Allah spoke, and some He raised in rank (Al-Baqarah, 253).

The Prophet said:

"I am the leader of all the Children of Adam, but I do not boast about it."

All Prophets were sent to their own people for their own time:

And We have sent no Messenger save with the tongue of his people, that he might make all clear to them; then Allah leads astray whomsoever He will, and He guides whomsoever He will; and He is the Almighty, the All-Wise (Ibrahim, 4).

But Prophet Muhammad was sent to all people for all time to come:

We have sent thee not, except to mankind entire, good tidings to bear, and warning; but most men do not know it (Saba', 28).

Allah sent Prophet Muhammad as a mercy to all the worlds:

We have not sent thee, save as a mercy unto all beings (Al-Anbiya', 107).

No other Prophet or Messenger of Allah was given the honor to ascend to the seven heavens during his life on earth but the Prophet Muhammad.

In just one night the Prophet of Islam traveled to Jerusalem - the seat of earlier revelations - then ascended to heaven to meet his Lord after which he was returned back to earth to continue preaching his people. This important miracle in Islamic history is known as Al-Isrâ' (the night journey) and Ma'raaj (ascension to heaven). The purpose of this journey as Allah pointed out in the Koran is to show the Prophet some of His signs.

This incident of twin journeys has a great significance for Muslims and their religion. The Isrâ' part confirms the unity of origin and religion, and the Ma'raaj part confirms the existence of Heaven and Hell, the Final Judgment, reward and punishment, the importance of prayers, and a number of blessings from Allah showered on Muhammad and his community of Muslims.

Allah says in the Koran:

Glory be to Him, who carried His servant by night from the Holy Mosque to the farthest Mosque the precincts of which We have blessed, that We might show him some of Our signs. Verily, He is All-Hearing, the All-Seeing (Al-Isrâ', 1).

The night journey began when the Prophet was lying between two men in a state midway between sleep and wakefulness in the Kaaba at a place called Al-Hijr. The Prophet saw two angels coming to him with a golden tray full of wisdom and belief. They cut his body open from the throat to the lower part of the abdomen and washed it with Zamzam water and his heart was filled with wisdom and belief. Al-Burâq, a white winged steed smaller than a mule and bigger than a donkey was brought to him. He set out with the archangel Jibreel (Gabriel) to the farthest Mosque (Temple Mount in Jerusalem), the seat of the earlier prophets. The animal's step was so wide that it reached the farthest point within the reach of the animal's sight. As the journey continued, the Prophet and Gabriel first halted at Yathrib (later known as Medina) and prayed there. The Prophet was told that he would be migrating to this place. Then they further stopped at Madyan, the Mount of Sinai, the Bush of Moosa (Moses) and Bethlehem, the birth place of Isa (Jesus) and prayed at each place.

At the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, the Prophet alighted, and tethered Burâq.

In the Temple Mount in Jerusalem the Prophet was greeted by the angels and they called him by the names of Al-Awal (the first), Al-Akher (the last), Al-Hashir (the gatherer), because he would be the first to rise in the Day of Resurrection and the first intercessor; and he was the last of the Prophets, and he would be the gatherer of communities on the Day of Judgment.

All the earlier prophets from Adam until Jesus were raised from their tombs and stood in rows to greet the Prophet of Islam by the same names the angels greeted him before. The Prophet was then asked to lead the prayers. All the Prophets stood in rows behind him to perform the Islamic prayer and the Prophet led them in prayer. Muhammad leading the prayer was to indicate that he had brought no religion other than the one practiced and approved by the prophets before him and that he was to perfect their religion and be its final Messenger (9).

The Prophet mounting on Burâq with Gabriel accompanying him headed for the seven heavens. In the first heaven they met Adam who greeted the Prophet saying, "You are welcome O son and a Prophet." In the second heaven they met Îsâ (Jesus) and Yahyâ (John) who said, "You are welcome, O brother and Prophet." Then they ascended to the third heaven and there they met Yûsuf (Joseph), then they continued ascending to the fourth heaven where they met Idrîs (Enoch), then

to the fifth heaven where they met Hârûn (Aaron). All Prophets greeted Muhammad with the same salutation of Îsa and Yahyâ.

The Prophet and Gabriel further ascended to the sixth heaven where they met Mûsâ (Moses) who greeted the Prophet with the same salutation of the other prophets. When the Prophet left him heading to the seventh heaven, Moses wept, and on being asked why he was weeping, he said, "O Lord! Followers of this youth who was sent after me will enter paradise in greater numbers than my followers".

Moses was the only Prophet who spoke at length with Prophet Muhammad; he said that Muhammad was more highly regarded by Allah than himself and that Muhammad's followers outnumbered his own.

The Prophet and Gabriel then ascended to the seventh heaven where they met Îbrahîm (Abraham) who greeted the Prophet with the same salutation of the other prophets. The Prophet was then shown Al-Bait Al-Ma'mûr (Allah's House). The Prophet asked Gabriel about it, Gabriel replied, "This is Al-Bait Al-Ma'mûr where 70,000 angels perform prayers daily; and when they leave they never return to it (but always a fresh batch comes into it daily)."

The Prophet was then shown Sidratul Muntaha (the Lote-Tree of the utmost boundary over the seventh heaven) and he saw its Nabiq fruits which resembled the clay jugs of Hajar (a town in Arabia), and its leaves were like the ears of the elephants, and four rivers originated at its root: two of them were apparent and two were hidden. The Prophet asked Gabriel about these rivers and Gabriel said, "The two hidden rivers are in Paradise and the apparent ones are the Nile and the Euphrates."

It is said that the Lote-Tree was covered with the Light of Allah along with the angels and also with different kinds of colors (Tafsir ibn Kathir).

Then three cups were brought to the Prophet, one had honey in it, the other milk and the third wine. The Prophet chose the milk, and he was praised by Gabriel because milk indicates the basic quality of things and the natural disposition of man, and Islam is the natural religion of Allah. He was told that he and his people would remain firm on the natural ways of Islam.

At the Sidratul Muntaha (Lote-Tree) the archangel Gabriel refused to go further and instructed the Prophet to proceed alone because he cannot exceed his limits. The Prophet continued his walk until he reached the Throne of the Lord of the world. The Prophet greeted his Lord saying: "Salutations, prayers and all good things are only for Allah." The Lord of the world greeted the Prophet, saying, "Peace, blessing and Mercy be upon you O Prophet." Then Allah enjoined upon the Prophet and his followers fifty prayers each day.

The Prophet descended till he met Moses who asked him, "What have you been ordered to do?" The Prophet said, "Fifty prayers have been enjoined on me per day." Moses said, "I had the hardest experience to bring the Children of Israel to obedience. Your followers cannot put up with such obligation, so return to your Lord and request him to reduce the number of prayers." The Prophet returned and

requested Allah for reduction and Allah made it forty. The Prophet returned to Moses and had a similar discussion, so he returned to Allah again for reduction and Allah made it thirty, then twenty, then ten. The Prophet returned to Moses and told him about the last reduction but Moses said: 'Go back to your Lord and ask for reduction to lessen your followers' burden.' So the Prophet returned to Allah again and asked for further reduction, and Allah reduced the number of prayers to five only per day. The Prophet then returned to Moses who asked: "What have you done?" The Prophet said, "Allah has made it five only." Moses repeated the same advice but the Prophet said that he requested so much of his Lord that he felt ashamed and now he was satisfied and had surrendered to Allah's final order.

When the Messenger left he heard a voice saying: "I have passed My Order and have lessened the burden of My worshippers." (Extracted from Hadith No. 429, Sahih Al-bukhari, Vol. 4).

Ibn Abbas narrated:

The Prophet said, "On the night of my ascent to the Heaven, I saw Moses who was a tall brown curly-haired man as if he were one of the men of Shan'awa tribe, and I saw Jesus, a man of medium height and moderate complexion inclined to the red and white colors and of lank hair. I also saw Malik, the gate keeper of the Fire (Hell) and Ad-Dajal (anti-Christ) amongst the signs Allah showed me."

Prophet Muhammad is the best among all creation of Allah. Allah gave him superiority over all human beings including all the messengers and the prophets.

The Prophet saw his Lord with his eye. Ibn Abbas said Allah singled out Moses for direct speech, Abraham for close friendship, and Muhammad for the vision.

In the presence of Allah the Prophet was asked to speak. The Messenger glorified Allah and recounted the blessings Allah has bestowed upon His prophets before him. Then Allah addressed His Messenger and said:

"I have taken you as a close friend and a beloved. I have had it written in the Torah that 'Muhammad is the beloved of the Merciful.' I have sent you to all mankind and I have made your community such that none shall be permitted to speak until they have testified that you are My servant and My Messenger. I made you first of the prophets to be created and the last of them to be sent. I gave you the seven repeatedly recited verses (Surat Al-Fatiha – it is considered the opening of the Koran and the mother of the Book). I gave you the seals (the last three verses) of Surat Al-Baqarahh from a treasure under my throne, and I did not give them to any prophet before you. I made you an opener and a seal."

The Prophet was granted the power of intercession so that Allah may pardon and forgive the sinners of his community who did not associate anything in worship with Allah and performed the daily five prayers.

Then Muhammad was shown both the Heaven and Hell. Tortured in the Hell he saw the eaters of the properties of orphans and the eaters of usury, adulterous men

and women, killers of children, back-biters, slanderers, and many others. The Prophet was also shown the Heaven. He saw the places of his pious companions, Zaid bin Haritha, Omar ibn Al-Khattab, and heard the sound of Bilal's footsteps. The details are narrated in a number of traditions.

Allah made the vision which He showed His Prophet but as a trial for men. If they believe in the story of the night journey and the ascension to the seven heavens, they are believers, but if they belie it, they are then disbelievers.

After the Prophet returned to earth and told his story to the people, the unbelievers regarded it as absurd. Some went to Muhammad's companion Abu bakr and told him, "Look at what your companion is saying. He says he went to Jerusalem and came back in one night." Abu Bakr replied, 'If he said that, then he is truthful. I believe him concerning the news of the heavens that an angel descends to him from the heavens. How could I not believe that he went to Jerusalem and came back in a short period of time – when these are on earth?' It was for this that Abu Bakr is said to have received his famous title 'As-Siddiq', The Truthful.

The Spaniard Miguel Asin, Arabic Professor in the University of Madrid, has shown that the night journey literature had a great influence on the medieval literature of Europe, and especially on the great Italian poem, the *Divine Comedy* of Dante, which towers like a landmark in medieval European literature (1).

Muhammad peace be upon him, is the Imam (leader) of all the prophets. Preference is Allah's own prerogative; it is exclusive to some prophets and not to others. Preference has no relation with precedence or antecedence in time. Moses and Jesus are among the latter batch of prophets, still they are the best among all those who preceded them except Noah and Abraham peace be upon them. Prophet Muhammad's religion, in terms of creeds and morals, conforms to those preached by the previous prophets. As for the rules of these religions, the Prophet by commandments from Allah, nullified some, modified others; altered some, and augmented others, accordingly, his call has become more comprehensive, more perfect, hence has dominion over precedence. The one in charge of such a call deserves being a leader to those who preceded him. The prophets before Muhammad were made to pledge to be faithful to him and support him if they reach his time. Allah says in the Koran:

And when Allah took compact with the Prophets: "Take whatever I have given you of Book and Wisdom; then there shall come to you a Messenger confirming what is with you; you shall believe in him, and you shall help him; do you agree?" He said. "And do you take My load on you on that condition?" They said, " We do agree." Allah said, "Then bear witness; and I am with you among the witnesses." (Âl-Imran, 81).

It is up to Allah to establish hierarchy among His Messengers based on His divine wisdom. He made Prophet Muhammad special in certain respects. He is the seal of the prophets. His Message completes and abrogates all that came before him. Muhammad is also known as Allah's intimate. H was also sent to all of the creation.

The Prophet said:

"I have been favored above the prophets in six things: I have been endowed with consummate succinctness of speech, made triumphant through dread, war booty has been made lawful for me, the whole earth has been made a purified place of worship for me, I have been sent to all created beings, and the succession of prophets has been completed in me." (related by Tirmidhi and ibn Majah).

The Prophet of Islam was created from the Light of Allah. The Koran affirms it in the verse:

People of the Book (Jews and Christians), now there has come to you Our Messenger, making clear to you many things you have been concealing of the Book, and effacing many things. There has come to you from Allah a Light and a Book manifest, whereby Allah guides whosoever follows His good pleasure in the ways of peace, and brings them forth from the shadows into the light by His leave; and He guides them to a straight path (Al-Ma'idah, 15).

The Koran teaches that whosoever loves Muhammad, he has indeed loved Allah and whosoever obeys the Prophet has indeed obeyed Allah.

Says Allah the Exalted:

Say: 'If you love Allah, follow me, and Allah will love you, and forgive you your sins; Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate.' (Al-Imran, 31).

Say: 'Obey Allah, and the Messenger.' But if they turn their backs, Allah loves not the unbelievers. (Al-Imrân, 32).

Whosoever obeys the Messenger, thereby obeys Allah; and whosoever turns his back – We have not sent thee to be a watcher over them (An-Nisa, 80).

Whatever the Messenger gives you, take; whatever he forbids you, give over. And fear Allah; surely Allah is terrible in retribution (Al-Hashr, 7).

Those who swear fealty to thee swear fealty in truth to Allah; Allah's hand is over their hands. Then whosoever breaks his oath breaks it but to his own hurt; and whoso fulfils his covenant made with Allah, Allah will give him a mighty wage (Al-Fath, 10).

So it is those who believe in him, honor him, help him and follow the light which is sent down with him – it is they who will prosper (Al-A'araf, 157).

And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, He will cause him to enter gardens where rivers flow (Al-Fath, 17).

O believers, raise not your voices above the Prophet's voice, and be not loud in your speech to him, as you are loud one to another, lest your works fail while you are not aware. Those who lower their voice in the presence of

Allah's Apostle – their hearts has Allah tested for piety: for them is forgiveness and a great reward (Al-Hujurat 2,3).

The Prophet of Islam said:

"One of you does not believe until I become dearer to him than the soul that lies between his two sides."

"One of you does not believe until his desire follows what I have come with."

"As long as you do not love me more than anything else you have, your faith is not complete."

"Were Mûsâ (Moses) and Îsa (Jesus) alive, they cannot but follow me."

"Whoever sees me sees the truth."

"Whosoever obeys me, has indeed obeyed Allah and whosoever disobeys me has indeed disobeyed Allah."

"Who annoys me, annoys Allah and whosoever annoys Allah, He puts him into Hell."

Allah sent His Messenger Muhammad with guidance and the Religion of Truth to make it prevail over all religions:

It is He (Allah) who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of Truth that he may uplift it above every religion, though the unbelievers be averse (As-Saff, 9).

Allah and His angels honor and bless the Holy Prophet as the greatest of men. Muslims are asked to honor and bless their Prophet because he took upon himself to suffer the sorrow and afflictions of this life in order to guide them to the true religion.

Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet: O you who believe! Send blessings on him, and salute him with all respect (Al-Ahzâb, 56).

Whoever prays to Allah to bestow upon His Messenger His peace and blessings, receives Allah's blessings ten-fold, and may hope for the intercession of His Prophet on the Day of Judgment and to enter Paradise.

Allah will save from Hell some of the believers without the intercession of anyone, but by His grace and mercy. Allah, however, has granted Muhammad the right to intercession on the Day of Resurrection. He will plead with Allah to forgive His servants when they suffer from worries and troubles that they cannot bear. No other prophet will be given this right. Mediation has been also granted to the Prophet to take out from the Fire some believers who committed sins during their earthly life.

Allah has granted the Prophet a pool in Paradise, the water of which is whiter than milk and sweeter than honey and better in fragrance than musk. Each of its length

and width is a distance of a month's travel. Its vials are as stars in beauty and number. The believers among the Prophet's followers come to take from this great cistern a drink after which they never are thirsty.

Muhammad was the first of the prophets to be created. He said to one of his companions:

"O Jabir, the first creation that Allah created is the soul of your Prophet."

When he was asked when he became a Prophet he said:

"I was a Prophet when Adam was between water and clay."

Muhammad being was light, he had no shadow. His beautiful face shone like the sun and radiated light around him. At night people saw by his light. It is mentioned in the Holy Koran that in the darkness of the Day of Judgment the light of faith of the believers is going to illuminate the space around them, and the unbelievers, envious, will come close to them to profit from this light.

Jabbar bin Abdullah Al-Ansari narrated:

'I asked the Prophet what Allah created first.' The Prophet said, **"O Jabbar, at the beginning Allah created the Nûr (Light) of your Prophet out of His Nûr. There was no slate, no pen, no Hell, no Heaven, no angels, no sky, no earth, no sun, no moon, no jins, or humans."**

Allah took a handful of His Light and said to it 'Be Muhammad' and it was.

Allah addressed Muhammad, His beloved, whose name is written with His upon the firmament as 'There is no god worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger': **"If it were not for you, I would not have created the creation."** Therefore, the greatest gift bestowed by Allah upon the universe is Muhammad, His beloved.

No Arab before Muhammad was given the same name. His mother was told in a dream to call him 'Muhammad', the meaning of which is the most praised one. He is praised upon earth and in the heavens, from the beginning to the end, by men and jinn and angels, rocks and trees and animals, by Prophets before him since Adam, by saints until the Doomsday.

Apart of the Koran which is the major miracle of Prophet Muhammad, and the night journey from Makkah to Jerusalem followed by his ascension to the seventh heaven to meet his Lord, there are many other miracles which the Prophet performed during his 23 years of prophet hood.

Allah performed miracles at the hand of the Prophet when the Arab pagans demanded to see a miracle from Muhammad to prove his truthfulness. Allah split the moon in two separate halves and then re-joined them. Had the event never occurred, Muslims themselves would have doubted their religion and many would have left it. The believers grew stronger in their faith and the only explanation the Arab pagans could come up with was, 'passing magic!' The Koran recorded the event:

The hour has drawn nigh: the moon is split. Yet if they see a sign (miracle) they turn away, and they say: 'A continuous sorcery!' (Al-Qamar, 1-3).

Kerala is a state of India. Chakrawati Farmas of Malabar was the king. It is recorded that he has seen the moon split. A group of Muslim merchants passing by Malabar on their way to China spoke to the king about how Allah had supported the Arabian Prophet with the miracle of splitting the moon. The shocked king said that he has seen it with his own eyes as well. He deputized his son and left for Arabia to meet the Prophet in person. The Malabari king met the Prophet, bore the two testimonies of faith, but passed away on his way back and was buried in the port city of Zafar, Yemen.

The news of his accepting Islam reached Kerala where people accepted Islam. The people of Lashadweep and the Moplas from the Calicut province of Kerala are converts from those days. (10).

Abdullah narrated:

The moon was cleft asunder while we were in the company of the Prophet, and it became two parts. The Prophet said:

"Witness, witness (this miracle)."

In his modest mosque in Medina the Prophet used to deliver sermons leaning on a trunk of a date-palm tree. When the number of worshippers increased, someone suggested a pulpit be built so the Prophet can use it to deliver the sermon. When the pulpit was built, the Prophet abandoned the tree trunk. The trunk was heard weeping; the Prophet of mercy went towards it and comforted it with his hand to stop its crying. Abdullah ibn Omar, one of the Prophet's companions, gave an eye-witness testimony of what happened. (Sahih al-Bukhari).

On more than one occasion when people were in dire need of water, the blessing of the Prophet saved them. In the six year after the migration of Muhammad from Makkah to Medina, the Prophet went to Makkah for pilgrimage. In the long desert people ran out of all water, only the Prophet was left with a vessel with which he performed ablution for prayers. He put his hand in the vessel, and water began to flow from between his fingers. Fifteen hundred men drank from the water and made ablution.

In several occasions, the Prophet blessed food by either praying or touching it so all present could get their fill. This happened at times when food and water shortage afflicted Muslims.

Abdullah ibn Ateek broke his leg and the Prophet healed it by wiping his hand over it. During the expedition of Khyber, the Prophet healed the painful eyes of Ali, his cousin, in front of a whole army.

The Prophet exorcised the devil out of a boy brought by his mother to him for healing. The Prophet said, **"Come out! I am Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah!"** The woman said, "By the One who sent you by the truth, we have never seen anything wrong with him since.'

The people were struck with famine during the time of the Prophet. A man stood up when the Prophet was delivering the weekly sermon on Friday, and said, "O Messenger of Allah, our wealth has been destroyed, and our children are starving. Pray to Allah for us." Muhammad raised his hands in prayer. Those in attendance testify that the moment he lowered his hands after praying, clouds began to build like mountains. By the time he stepped down of his pulpit, rain was dripping from his beard! It rained the whole week till next Friday. The same man stood up again, complained this time, "O Messenger of Allah, our buildings are destroyed, and our property is drowned, pray to Allah for us!" The Prophet raised his hands and prayed, **"O Allah (let it rain) around us, but not on us."** Those in attendance testify that the clouds withdrew in the direction he pointed at. The city of Medina was surrounded by clouds, but there were no clouds over it.

Anas bin Malik narrated:

Two of the companions of the Prophet departed from him on a dark night, but the Prophet's blessing accompanied them. They were led by two lights like lamps illuminating the way in front of them. When they parted, each of them was accompanied by one of these lights till they reached their respective houses.

Abu Huraira related:

"Abu Jahl (staunch enemy of Islam and the Prophet) asked those near him, "By Lât and Uzza (idols of Arab pagans), 'Does Muhammad still rub his face against earth (i.e. make prostration)?' 'Yes he does', they answered. Abu Jahl said, 'By Lât and Uzza, if I see him doing that again, I will tread on his neck and bury his face in soil.'

A short while later Allah's Messenger came to the Ka'aba to pray. While in prostration, Abu Jahl approached him but suddenly turned back in fear and amazement trying to protect his face with his hands. When asked why he had done so, he answered, 'Truly, between him and me is a trench filled with fire, and something horrible and some wings.'

Allah's Messenger commented on the event: **"If he had approached me, the angels would have torn him to pieces."**

Allah promised to guard His noble Messenger against people:

O Messenger, deliver that which has been sent down to thee from thy Lord; for if thou dost not, thou wilt not have delivered His Message. Allah will protect thee from men. Allah guides not the people of the unbelievers (Al-Maidah, 67).

Chapter 4

Muhammad in the eyes of the renowned historians, philosophers and leaders of the West

Prophet Muhammad is not only the crown Jewel of the human race to the one billion and twenty five million Muslims around the globe, but he is also the most influential figure of all times as admitted by the most intellectual people of the Christian West. The greatness of Prophet Muhammad is so convincing to them that many from all camps, religious, and secular acknowledge him as the undisputed champion of the human race.

The Prophet of Islam brought together the scattered inhabitants of a desert of twelve hundred thousand square miles – a people who were warlike, ignorant, unruly, uncultured, and plunged in tribal warfare – under one banner, one law, one religion, one culture, one civilization, and one form of government. He changed people's modes of thought, their habits and their morals. He turned the uncouth into the cultured, the barbarous into the civilized, the evil-doers and bad characters into pious, god-fearing, and righteous persons. Their unruly and stiff-necked natures were transformed into models of obedience and submission to law and order.

A nation which had not produced a single great man worth the name for centuries gave birth, under his influence and guidance, to thousands of noble souls who went forth to far-off corners of the world to preach and teach the principles of religion, morals, and civilization.

In the cavalcade of world history, the sublime figure in the wonderful person towers high above all the great men of all times who are famous as heroes of nations, so that they appear to be dwarfs when compared with him. None of them possessed a genius capable of making any deep impression on more than one or two aspects of human life. One usually comes across heroes who are adepts and experts of one walk of life only. The Prophet of Islam is the only example where all the excellences have been blended into one personality. He is a man of wisdom, and a seer and also a living embodiment of his own teachings. He is a great statesman as well as a military genius. He is a legislator and also a teacher of morals. He is a spiritual luminary as well as a religious guide. His vision penetrates every aspect of life and there is nothing which he touches and does not adorn. His orders and commandments cover a vast field from the regulation of international relations down to the habits of everybody's life like eating, drinking, and cleanliness of the body. On the foundation of his teaching he established a civilization and a culture and produced such a fine equilibrium in the conflicting aspects of life that there is to be found not even the slightest trace of any flaw, deficiency or incompleteness. Can anyone point out any other example of such a perfect and all-round personality?

In spite of the fact that Muhammad became the ruler of his country, he was so selfless and modest that he remained very simple and sparing in his habits. He lived poorly, as before, in his humble thatched mud-cottage. He slept on a mattress, wore coarse clothes, ate the simplest food of the poor, and sometimes went without any food at all. He used to spend whole nights standing in prayers

before His Lord. He came to the rescue of the destitute and the penniless. He felt not the least insult in working like a laborer. Until his last moments there was not the slightest taint of royal pomp or show of the hauteur of the rich about him. Like an ordinary man he would sit and walk with people and share their joys and sorrows. He would so mingle and mix with the crowd that a stranger, or an outsider, would find it difficult to single out the leader of the people and the ruler of the nation from the rest of the company. Once a Bedouin came to them and asked them who Muhammad was, whilst he was serving his companions. His answer enshrines an eternal principle: "**The Lord of the people is he who serves them.**"

In spite of his greatness, his behavior with the humblest person was that of an ordinary being. In the struggles and endeavors of his whole life he did not seek any reward or profit for his own person, nor did he leave any property for his heirs. He dedicated his all to his nation. He did not ask his adherents to earmark anything for him or his descendants, so much so that he forbade his progeny from receiving the benefit of Zakat (alms giving), lest his followers at any future times may dole-out the whole share of Zakat to them.

Allah has honored him in the present life and in the Hereafter. Muslims all over the world pronounce his name in their prayers five times a day together with that of Allah (11).

Endless are the words which have been spoken to describe his noble life and personality. No one can fail to be moved or inspired by the magnificence of his radiant character. Even Muhammad's greatest enemies had to admit that no fault could be found in his behavior or integrity. Friends and foes alike paid unsolicited tributes to this mighty Messenger of Allah. The Western scholars and historical figures who were brave enough to look at his achievements with an honest heart had testified to this. They paid the Prophet of Islam much ardent and enthusiastic tribute, and defended him from the false charges and calumnies of his enemies.

In *Histoire De La Turquie*, Paris, 1854, Vol. II, PP. 276-277, the French historian Lamartine described Muhammad in the following words:

"If greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and astounding results are the three criteria of human genius, who could dare to compare any great man in modern 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, legislators, empires, peoples and dynasties, but millions of men in one third of the inhabited world; and more than that he moved the altars, the gods, the religions, the ideas, the beliefs, and the souls...his forbearance in victory, his ambition, which was entirely devoted to one idea and in no manner striving for an empire; his endless prayers, his mystic conversations with God, his death and his triumph after death; all these attest not to an imposter but to a firm conviction which gave him the power to restore a dogma. This dogma was two-fold, the unity of God and the immateriality of God; the former telling what God is, the latter telling what God is not; the one overthrowing false gods with the sword, the other starting an idea with words...On the basis of a Book (the Koran), every letter of which has become

law, he created a nationality which blended together people of every tongue and every race."

Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, of a cult without images; 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?"

Ranking the Prophet No. 1 in his list of the most influential of all heroes of history, the American researcher, astronomer, and mathematician Dr. Hart writes:

"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. It is this unparalleled combination of secular and religious influence which I feel entitles Muhammad to be the most influential single figure in human history."

Jules Masserman, a famous American psychoanalyst, writing under the heading, 'Who were History's Great Leaders', Time Magazine, July 1974, said about the Prophet of Islam:

"Leaders must fulfill three functions: 1) provide the well-being of the led, 2) provide a social organization in which people feel relatively secure, and 3) provide them with one set of beliefs. People like Pasteur and Salk are leaders in the first sense; People like Ghandi and Confucius, on the one hand, Alexander, Cesar and Hitler, on the other, are leaders in the second or perhaps the third sense. Jesus and Buddha belong to the third category alone. Perhaps the greatest leader of all times was Muhammad who combined all three functions. To a lesser degree Moses did the same."

Napoleon Bonaparte said:

"Muhammad was a prince who rallied his compatriots around him. In a few years the Muslims conquered half the world. They snatched away more souls from false gods, pulled down more idols, demolished more pagan temples in fifteen years than the followers of Moses and Jesus did in fifteen centuries. Muhammad indeed was a great man."

Napoleon further added:

"Arabia was idolatrous when, six centuries after Jesus, Muhammad introduced the worship of the God of Abraham, of Ishmael, of Moses, and Jesus. The Arians and some other sects had disturbed the tranquility of the East by agitating the question of the nature of the Father, the son, and the Holy Ghost. Muhammad declared that there was none but one God, who had no father, no son, and that the trinity imported the idea of idolatry...I hope the time is not far off when I shall be able to unite all the wise and educated men of all the countries and establish a uniform regime based on the principles of the Koran which alone are true and which alone

can lead men to happiness."

American scholar Rev. Bosworth Smith wrote:

"He (Muhammad) was Cesar and Pope in one; But he was Pope without Pope's pretensions, Cesar without the legions of Cesar, without standing army, without bodyguard, without a palace, without a fixed revenue; if ever any man had the right to say that he ruled by the right divine, it was Muhammad, for he had all the power without its instruments and without its supports.""

Godfrey H. Janson wrote:

"Even from smaller number (of recordings of Prophets Life), we gain an incomparably detailed picture of the doings, and the personality of Muhammad, such as is not available for Christ and Buddha...Muhammad was much more than a Prophet. He was a soldier...a general...he sent ambassadors and received them; laid down the laws and administered them. Buddha, though once a ruling prince, did not attempt anything like this, nor did Christ with his twelve disciples. Muhammad was also a family man."

Professor Floyd H. Ross, University of Southern California, and Church Educationist Tynette Hills rank him number one when they write:

"No other Prophet spoke with such authority. No other had such complete revelation from God."

MIT Professor Huston Smiths wrote:

"Muhammad's Islam unrolled before us one of the most remarkable panoramas in all of history...Looking at the differences between pre- and post-Islamic Arabia, we are forced to ask whether history has ever witnessed ethical advance among so many in so short a time."

In "The Genuine Islam", vol. 1, no. 81936, George Bernard Shaw wrote:

"If any religion had the chance of ruling over England, nay Europe within the next hundred years, it could be Islam. I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion which possesses that assimilating capacity to the changing phase of existence which can make itself appeal to every age. I have studied him – the wonderful man and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the savior of humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it much needed peace and happiness."

John Davenport wrote:

"The piety of Moses and Christ rejoiced in the assurances of a future Prophet more illustrious than themselves and the Evangelist's promise of a Paraclete or Holy Ghost, the comforter, was prefigured in the name and accomplished in the person of the greatest and last of god's Prophets – Muhammad."

Edward Gibbon said:

"...Muhammad banished from the Arabs within ten years their heart-heartedness, spirit of revenge, anarchy, female degradation, rivalry, lawlessness, usury, drunkenness, infanticide, murderous quarrel and human sacrifice as well as all stupid superstitions and fetishes. Through that religion he brought down upon this very earth the 'Kingdom of Heaven' so profoundly coveted by Jesus."

Edward Gibbon and Simon Ockley in 'History of the Saracen Empire' wrote:

"It is not the propagation but the permanency of his religion that deserves our wonder, the same and pure and perfect impression which he engraved in Makkah and Medina is preserved., after the revolution of twelve centuries by the Indian, the African, and the Turkish proselytes of the Koran...The Mahometans have uniformly withstood the temptation of reducing the object of their faith and devotion to a level with the senses and imagination of man.' I believe in One God and Mahomet the Apostle of God' is the simple and invariable profession of Islam. The intellectual image of the Deity has never been degraded by any visible idol; the honors of the Prophet have never transgressed the measure of human virtue, and his living precepts have restrained the gratitude of his disciples within the bounds of reason and religion."

Mahatma Gandhi, speaking on the character of Muhammad said in 'Young India':

"I wanted to know the best of one who holds today's undisputed sway over the hearts of millions of mankind...I became more than convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet, the scrupulous regard for his pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These and not the sword carried everything before them and surrounded every obstacle. When I closed the second volume (of the Prophet's biography) I was sorry there was not more for me to read of the great life."

Thomas Carlyle in his (Heroes and Hero worship) was simply amazed as to:

"How one man single-handedly, could weld warring tribes and wandering Bedouins into a most powerful and civilized nation in less than two decades...The lies which orient lists and haters of Islam had heaped upon this man are disgraceful to their own selves only."

Carlyle further added:

"A poor, hard-toiling, ill-provided man; careless of what vulgar men toil for. Not a bad man, I should say; something better in him than hunger of any sort, - or these wild Arab men, fighting and jostling three and twenty years at his hand, in close contact with him always, would not revered him so! They were wild men bursting ever into quarrel, into all kinds of fierce sincerity; without right worth and manhood, no man could have commanded them. They called him Prophet you say? Why he stood there face to face with them; bare, not enshrined in any mystery; visibly clouting his own cloak, cobbling his own shoes; fighting,

counseling, ordering in the midst of them: they must have seen what kind of man he was, let him be called what you like! No emperor was obeyed as this man in a cloak of his own clouting. During three and twenty years of rough actual trial, I find something of a veritable Hero necessary for that, of itself... These Arabs, the man Mahomet, and that one century, is it not as if a spark had fallen, one spark, on a world of what 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..."

K.S. Ramakrishna Rao, an Indian Professor of Philosophy in his booklet, 'Muhammad, The Prophet of Islam) calls him the 'Perfect model for human life.

"Professor Rao explained his point by saying:

"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. All in all these magnificent roles, in all these departments of human activities, he is like a hero."

Dr. Lura Vecci Vaglieri, the Italian orientalist in her book 'An interpretation of Islam' wrote:

"The Arabian Prophet with a voice which was inspired by a deep communion with his Maker preached the purest monotheism to the worshippers of fetish and followers of a corrupted Christianity and Judaism. He put himself in open conflict with those regressive tendencies of mankind which lead to the association of other beings with the Creator."

Dr. Vaglieri continues:

"In order to lead men to a belief in one God, he did not delude them with happenings which deviate from the normal course of nature, the so called miracles, nor did he compel them to keep quiet by using celestial threats which only undermine man's ability to think. Rather, he simply invited them, without asking them to leave the realm of reality, to consider the universe and its laws. Being confident of the resultant belief in the One and indispensable God, he simply let men read in the book of life... Muhammad was content to appeal to the intimate conscience of the individual and to the intuitive judgment of man. Thanks to Islam paganism in its various forms was defeated. The spirit of man was liberated from prejudice; man's will was set free from the ties which had kept it bound to the so called hidden powers. Priests, the false guardians of mysteries, brokers of salvation, all of those who pretended to be mediators between God and man and consequently believed that they had authority over other people's wills fell from pedestals. Man became the servant of God alone and towards other men he had only the obligation of one free man towards other free men. While previously men had suffered the injustices of social differences, Islam proclaimed equality among all human beings."

Stoddard, A.M.I. wrote in his 'Islam – The Religion of All Prophets':

"The rise of Islam is perhaps the most important event in human history. Springing from a land and a people like previously negligible, Islam spread within a century over half the earth, shattering great empires, overthrowing long established religions, remolding the souls of races, and building up a whole new world, a world of Islam. The closer we examine this development, the more extraordinary does it appear. The other great religions won their way slowly, by painful struggle and finally triumphed with the aid of powerful monarchs converted to the new faith. Christianity has its Constantine, Buddhism its Asoka, Zoroastrianism its Cyrus, each lending to his chosen cult the mighty force of secular authority. Not so with Islam. Arising in a desert land sparsely inhabited by a nomad race previously undistinguished in human annals, Islam sallied forth on its great adventure with the slenderest human backing and against the heaviest material odds. Yet Islam triumphed with seemingly miraculous ease, and a couple of generations saw the Fiery Crescent borne victorious from the Pyrenees to the Himalayas and from the desert of Central Asia to the deserts of Central Africa."

The eminent British writer Robert Briffault wrote:

The ideas of freedom for all human beings, of human brotherhood, the equality of all men before the law of democratic government, by consultation and universal suffrage, the ideas that inspired the French Revolution and the Declaration of Rights, that guided the framing of the American Constitution and inflamed the struggle for independence in the Latin American countries, were not invention of the West. They find their ultimate inspiration and source in the Holy Koran. They are the quintessence of what the intelligentsia of medieval Europe acquired from Islam over a period of centuries through the various societies that developed in Europe in the wake of the Crusades in imitation of the brother-hood association of Islam. It is highly probable that but for the Arabs (Muhammad and his followers), modern civilization would never have arisen at all, it is absolutely certain that but for them it would never have assumed that character which has enabled it to transcend all previous phases of evolution."

John William Drapper in his "A History of the intellectual Development of Europe", London 1875, wrote:

"Four years after the death of Justinian, A.A. 569 was born at Nakkah, in Arabia the man who, of all men exercised the greatest influence upon the human race."

Encyclopedia Britannica in its 11th edition mentioned that:

"Mohammad was the most successful of all religious personalities."

Annie Besant in "The Life and Teachings of Muhammad", Madras, 1932, PP. 4 wrote:

"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."

Besant further added:

"But do you mean to tell me that the man who in the full flush of youthful vigor, 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 passion 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."

Geoffrey Paririnder in "Mysticism in the World's Religions, New York; Oxford University Press, 1976 PP. 121, wrote:

"No great religious leader has been so maligned as Prophet Muhammad. Attacked in the past as a heretic, an impostor, or a sensualist, it is still possible to find him referred to as 'the false prophet.' A modern German writer accuses Prophet Muhammad of sensuality surrounding himself with young women. This man was married until he was twenty-five years of age, then he and his wife lived in happiness and fidelity for twenty-four years, until her death when he was forty-nine. Only between the age of fifty and his death at sixty-two did Prophet Muhammad take other wives, only one of whom was a virgin, and most of them were taken for dynastic and political reasons. Certainly the Prophet's record was better than the head of the Church of England, Henry VIII."

In "Islam the Misunderstood Religion", Reader's Digest, American edition, May 1955, PP. 68-70, James A. Michener wrote:

Michael Hames writes:

"The central fact of Islam is unity. God is One and Muhammad is His Prophet. Duality has been put away. No father, and no son, no division into sacred and secular, or east or west...it is for this reason racial discrimination cannot exist in such brotherhood...Islam attracts me because it offers a complete philosophy of life, because it is an authentic religion. I believe no one can afford to ignore Islam in this day and age."

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