

# **CONCEPT OF PROPHETHOOD IN DIFFERENT RELIGION**



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful!*

## POINTS TO PONDER

*Muhammad Iqbal Mulla*

Man needs guidance, values and principles to develop individual and collective life; in order to achieve happiness, peace and tranquillity. One needs to know the way to develop his life in such a fashion that there is no conflict and imbalance between material, spiritual and ethical aspects of his life.

When we ponder over the issue; the following questions invite our attention: Who is the Creator of man and this entire universe? What is the relationship between man and his Creator? What is the purpose of man's life; according to his Creator? What is the Will of the Creator of the world? Whether death is the end of life, or indeed there is life after death, and if yes, how to achieve success in the afterlife?

These questions are fundamental; intellectuals and the well-wishers of human beings have been trying to answer them since time immemorial. They have tried to find answers about God and the ultimate reality. With reason alone, they have not been successful in their efforts, because their ideas were based on their individual imagination and had no authentic basis. Moreover, man's knowledge and ideas are limited in nature. Even if it is possible to achieve development of human life with these ideas, such development would

benefit only a section of the society. On a larger scale, ethics and spirituality will be non-existent and only other material needs would be met. It is difficult to obtain peace and tranquillity in such a situation. The renowned historian, Arnold J. Toynbee, notes that:

*“Most of the world civilizations were destroyed on the rock of material progress.”*

Since the beginning of human history, answers to the aforesaid basic questions have been provided by the Creator Allah through His Prophets and His Message given to them. Finally, by sending His last Message through His Last Prophet, Allah has guided mankind. There is no need for baseless assumptions and speculation. The revealed Message is the “Religion.” Whoever follows this revealed Religion will be successful in both worlds.

Can one seriously maintain that the Creator, Who has taught birds to fly and fish to swim, has not provided guidance for human beings. Has Allah ill treated human beings that he left them to wander in search of proper guidance?

Indeed Allah declares that human beings are among the best of His creations. He loves them immensely. He is Great and Just; He knows the visible and invisible needs of man and fulfils them. He has created everything for their service. Among His gifts, are things visible to us, and many others which constantly serve us but we cannot see them.

It is a useful practice that an engineer or a manufacturer of any product also writes a manual of his product. If something goes wrong with the product, it can be set right according to the instructions given in the manual. In the same manner, Allah has also

formulated rules and regulations of life for all his creatures.

Allah has fulfilled all material needs of man in a very beautiful manner. Similarly, Allah has also fulfilled the greatest need of man. That need is to know the system of life which leads to success and peace. For this purpose, the Creator has selected the best among men as His Messengers (or Prophets). Through them, He has been sending His Message and instruction about life. The Prophets or Messengers were pious, truthful, selfless and the best of all human beings. They were not merely the conveyor of the Message or the Guidance, but also were the first to practically act upon it. They used to lead their lives according to the Will of Allah. They always made it clear that they got their knowledge from Allah through Divine Revelation. They did not utter anything on their own. There was no dichotomy between their words and deeds. Their message, guidance, instructions and directives (originating from Allah) were not meant for any one particular tribe, race or community, but were meant for the entire humanity. The Prophets never discriminated among people on the basis of birth, language, family or region. Accepting their guidance and following the path shown by them is the corollary of belief in Allah and His instructions and directions. Indeed, denial of the status of Prophets and in difference to the guidance brought by them, amounts to revolt against Allah. Narrations tell us that probably more than one lakh Prophets had been sent by Allah to different regions of the world in different periods. Names of only a few of them are found in the Quran and the Bible. We find the names of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Jesus,

and the last, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon all of them).

In answer to the questions posed above, the Prophets have all given identical answers. There has never been any contradiction in their answers, because the Prophets have not said anything on their own. They communicated whatever Allah had taught them. Finally, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) announced that the knowledge in response to the aforesaid questions, was not something new thing: What the previous Prophets had said he was confirming it. The answers given by Prophets to the aforesaid questions are the following:

1. Allah is the creator of all the creatures including human beings and the entire universe. He alone is the Master of all. One cannot deny the existence of Allah.
2. Man is among the best of His creations. Human life is a period of trial. Man is accountable before Allah. He is in need of guidance for success, prosperity and salvation. Hence, Allah has made arrangements for guidance of man from the beginning of his existence itself (through His Prophets).
3. Belief in the message of the Prophets and their instructions and belief in accountability for their deeds in the Hereafter, motivate individuals to live according to these beliefs. They may hope to be successful in this world and in the Hereafter and enjoy an eternal life in the Paradise. But those who do not believe will be doomed and will taste the punishment of Hell. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is the Final Prophet and the Quran is the Final Book of Guidance.



These two sources, i.e. the sacred life of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), his Sayings (Hadeeth) and the Quran, are secure, and hence Islam is the secure and authentic religion. Islam is the only religion which has this characteristic.

The meaning of belief in Allah's Final Prophet Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and the Final Divine Book, the Quran, should be clear. Believers also believe in all the previous Prophets, whether they know their names or not. They honour and respect them. One should also believe in all the previous Divine Books. However, for practical conduct, one needs follow the message and instructions of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), because the circumstances prevalent during the era of previous Prophets have changed now. The Books revealed on the previous Prophets have not remained secure. Moreover, they were meant for a particular period and particular type of society. The Qur'an has now encompassed all the teachings of the previous Prophets and the previous Divine Books. Belief in Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as the Final Prophet and the Quran as the Final Revelation implies firm belief in all the previous Prophets as well and the previous Books. If one were to deny this, it means disbelief in all Prophets and all Divine Books and even disbelief in Allah.

The question that arises is: what was the medium through which the message and instructions were conveyed to the previous Prophets and Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) by Allah? That medium is called *Wahi* or Divine Revelation.

## **What is Divine Revelation?**

It can be safely asserted that Divine Revelation is Allah's own way of communication. It means that Allah conveys His Message on his chosen servant through the Angel Gabriel. We can get proper knowledge about the aforesaid facts and realities from Allah alone, because Allah alone has created man and his mental faculties and He alone knows human psychology. Allah alone can specify what is good or bad, lawful or unlawful and beneficial or harmful for man's life; He alone can impart such information.

Indeed we human beings are endowed with intellect but it has got its own limitations which it cannot cross. Take for example usury (interest), gambling, and lottery. Some one's intellect says that they are not bad activities and we should take advantage of them. But the Divine Revelation says that they are harmful and therefore, we should avoid them. This is only an example. There can be many more such examples where it becomes essential for us to acquire proper knowledge. This knowledge can be gained only through Revelation; human intellect is not of much help in this regard. In principle, there is no conflict between Revelation and the intellect. The intellect actually helps in understanding the Revelation. Where the intellect fails to grasp the truth, the Revelation comes to its rescue.

We have not observed the Prophets in the process of receiving the Revelation. Then how can one believe that the Revelation to the Prophets is real? To answer this question, one has to study the lives of the Prophets, their message and their teachings. Also one should examine the truth and guidance that are found

in their teachings. The Final Prophet, Muhammad (pbuh) is no longer among us but his teachings, his guidance and his flawless life still exist. The manner in which he revolutionised the human life and brought changes in the human society is before the world. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) came in the full light of history and hence his entire teachings are secure and safe. One studying his life, one gets convinced that he was indeed speaking the truth. Hence we believe in his prophethood.

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## AUTHENTIC CONCEPT OF PROPHETHOOD

*Dr. Muhammad Ahmed*

Man is among the best of creations of Allah. When we look at the natural, geographical features and substances found on this earth, a reality emerges that all things have been created for the benefit of man. The presence of the sun, moon, and stars as well as air, water and plants, and many other natural things indicate Allah's generosity and supreme power.

For sustenance of man Allah has not only created innumerable things and natural resources, but has also made arrangements to fulfil his spiritual needs. In this situation, the Merciful Allah could not have left man wandering in ignorance. He had an important objective associated with creation of human life. Therefore, bestowing on man the power of choice, Allah has made man's life and the world a place of test and trial. Allah has given man the freedom of choice and action. By performing good deeds, man can achieve success both in this world and in the Hereafter. But by doing bad deeds he can be a failure both in this world and in the Hereafter.

It is Allah's great compassion that he has sent His Messengers and Prophets for the guidance of mankind. In this context, one may examine the Sanskrit word *Avtar*. In Hindi the related word is *Sandeshvahak* or *Sandeshta*. Now it has been confirmed from research

that there is no difference between the concept of Prophethood and that of *Avtarvad*. They are equivalent words. It is another matter that there has been tremendous confusion and negligence in India in understanding this concept. It is usually said by ignorant people that God takes an incarnation in human form. But the fact is that God never takes human incarnation. On the contrary, for the guidance of human beings and to protect them from misery and afflictions, Allah appoints selected men as His Prophets.

Whenever the Divine teachings and laws are forgotten or corrupted resulting in corruption in society, Allah sends his Prophets to restore his teachings to their pristine purity and thus guides the misguided humanity. For this purpose, Allah does not incarnate Himself into a human body; rather, He gets this task of guidance done through his Prophets. These individuals may be called Prophets, Messengers or Avtars (in the real sense).

Allah has sent his Prophets (*Avtars*) not only in India; but in every part of the world. It is the misfortune of the humanity that the followers of the Prophets deviated from truth. Because of extreme reverence for the Prophets, they began to regard them as God or associates of God. This was against the teachings of the Prophets themselves who had always condemned it. All the Prophets had called the people towards the worship of One Creator and service of One God and had guided them towards the path of truth by word and deed. But the irony is that the people, with the passage of time, began to regard them as God or associates of God; which is far from truth. Prophets were merely human beings commissioned by Allah as

His Prophets or Messengers and they had no attributes of divinity.

The Final Prophet of Allah is Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Tidings about him have been foretold in the Vedas, Upanishads and Puranas. The prophet has told us in many of his Sayings about his status and has made it clear that he had no attributes of God in him and that he was only a humanbeing and Messenger of Allah.

The wrong meaning of *Avtar* which is current is: Coming down of God on earth. In other words, God taking the shape of a worldly body is known as *Avtar*. Many Hindus believe that although God is all-pervading and has knowledge over everything, still when required He takes birth on earth (in a material form) by His creative power and remains on earth till the objective of such incarnation is achieved. The concept of incarnation is found in the Vedic literature. According to the supporters of the current meaning of *Avtarvad* (incarnation), in the books of Brahmanas, the Taittiriya Brahmana (1-1-6), Shatapatha Brahmana (7-5-1-5) and others, mention has been made of the incarnation of Brahma (Prajapati), while in the Puranas, particularly in the Srimadbhagvat Mahapurana and the Vishnu Mahapurana and in many other Hindu religious books, mention has been made about the incarnation of Vishnu (Narayana). Among the various incarnations, only the incarnation of Vishnu is very popular.

The important principles of the Bhagavat doctrine are as follows:

The creator of all creations is God; He has many names, among which the dominant names are Vishnu, Narayana, Vasudeva, Janardan, etc; He has created the

entire universe with his creative power; through Him Brahma, Shiva, Vishnu and others came into existence; the individual soul is part of Him which achieves totality by achieving proximity of God; when misfortune, misery, afflictions befall on the world, from time to time, God incarnates Himself and removes that misfortune; belief in such incarnations of God is popularly known as Avtarvad.

It is hard to believe, both intellectually and in reality, that God incarnates Himself in a worldly body. He is Almighty and Omnipotent; He does not need to incarnate Himself in the form of a lowly creature. The more intelligent and proper concept is that God sends His Prophets and Messengers to guide the mankind towards the Truth and establish it and annihilate the Untruth, and thus remove from human beings the misfortune that has befallen on them due to devotion to falsehood and untruth; this is what has happened in the entire human history.

### **The Real Meaning of *Avatar***

The clear use of the word *Avatar* is not found in the Vedic literature. However, the words *Avatari* and *Avatar* are used in *Samhitas* and *Brahmanas*. In Rigveda (6-25-2), we find the word *Avatari*, the meaning of which has given as "remover of obstacles and difficulties" by Sayana. After the word *Avatari*, another word *Avattar* is found in 18-3-5. According to Sayana, the entity which possesses supreme power, which is its essential part, is called an *Avattar*. While explaining this word in Atharva Veda, Sayana says that it also includes the meaning of protection. Protection has an important place in the uses of Avatarvad. Dr. Kapildev Pandey writes that the word



*Avatar* was used in Yajur Veda (17-6). In this mantra, *Avatar* has been used in the meaning of descent.<sup>1</sup> Griffith has also translated this word as descent. In the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, its meaning has been given as "coming down."

The word *Avatar* itself shows that its correct meaning is not God incarnating Himself or descending on earth. Rather the correct meaning is something coming from God. When we grammatically analyse the root of the word *Avatar*, the meaning that we get is not "descending" but the one which has been made to descend. Panini in his authoritative treatise on Sanskrit grammar, *Ashtadhiyai* (3-3-120), has given the meaning of this word as "the one which has been made to descend." Etymologically too, the meaning of the word *Avatar* is: "*That place or part through which a thing descends and that place or part from where a thing descends.*"<sup>2</sup> It means that God sends down something. Dr. Vedprakash Upadaya is also of the same opinion. Hence, it is clear that God does not incarnate in human or material form; rather, He sends His Prophets and Messengers to set right the wrongdoings and chaotic environment of the world. Unfortunately, the word *Avatar* is being used excessively in the wrong sense.

### Views of the Scholars

The prominent scholar of Gayatri Samaj, Shri Balram Parihar writes: "When because of increase in distress and disorder, the peace of the world is

<sup>1</sup> *Madhyakaleen Sahitiya me Avatarvad*, p.4, Chaukhamba Vighabhavan, Varanasi.

<sup>2</sup> Navbharat Times, New Delhi Edition, May 20, 1994, p. 7, *Vishnu ki Avatar Prtimayen*, Shirshak Aalekh.

endangered and the future of the mankind looks dark, God sends Prophets and great men to remove the imbalance, who design plans to turn the imbalance into balance and disorganisation into organisation, and bring them to a successful conclusion. ...The chain of the Prophets is very long. From time immemorial to till now, in different regions, innumerable Prophets have come, who in their individual spheres of work have tried to remove the disorder and distress in their own style and manner.”<sup>1</sup> Vivekanandji has also validated the concept of Prophethood.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. P.V. Kaane also accepts the theory of coming of pre-eminent and distinguished personalities to remove the distress and sufferings of the people. Describing the *Avatarvad*, he writes: “The Indian concept of *Avatar* is related with the doctrines, eras (Yug) and *Manvantras*<sup>3</sup> (the eras of doctrines of Manus). When the world is afflicted with severe sufferings, the people feel that by the Grace of God they will get relief, and their belief comes true when some distinguished person inspired by some high thoughts manifests himself in a particular era and in a particular place.”<sup>4</sup> Shri Ramkrishna Pramahans has

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<sup>1</sup> *Devdoot Aaya, Hum Pehchan na Sake*, p. 5, Yug Nirman Yojana, Mathura, 1972.

<sup>2</sup> *Mahapurshon ki Jeevangathayen*, presented by Rashtra Bandhu.

<sup>3</sup> In the Hindu belief, to measure the age of the universe, there are three primary scales: *Yug* (Era), *Manvantar* (Eras of Manus), and *Kalp* (aeon). Four *Yugs* (*satya*, *treta*, *dvapara*, and *kali*) make one *Mahayug* (comprising of 43,20,000 years), 71 *Mahayugs* make one *Manvantra*, and 14 *Manvantras* make one *Kalp*.

<sup>4</sup> *Dharmshastr ka Ittehas*, Vol. 4, p. 483, Uttar Pradesh Hindi Sansthan, 1984.

also accepted the doctrine of Prophethood and believes that Shri Krishnaji was a Prophet of Allah.<sup>1</sup>

The senior scholar, Dr. Surender "Ajniyat" writes: It is written in the Yajur Veda that God exists in each and everything of this world and is present at each and every place (Yajur Veda, 40:1). Now, when God already exists in every particle, how can He and why should he incarnate Himself? If that Omnipresent God is already present at every place and exists in everything, how can He move about from one place to another? Being Omnipresent, he is already present everywhere. Hence, we see that believing God to be Omnipresent not only stops Him from incarnating Himself, but also raises a question mark on His Omnipotence."

This entire discussion just proves that those who believe God to be Omnipresent cannot logically prove the wrong concept of *Avatarvad*. God incarnating Himself would evidently be irrational while the concept of God sending someone can be more convincing. Hence, the correct concept of *Avatarvad* becomes the concept of Prophethood. It is also clear that on the principle of justice too God incarnating Himself cannot be proved.<sup>2</sup>

Reacting to the book of the author *Avatarvad aur Risalat*, the well-known journalist Vighaprakashji writes that a wrong meaning and perception of *Avatarvad* is found in various faiths. They say that there are many religious books including the Holy Quran in which concept of Unity of God is found. The correct concept of *Avatarvad* should be accepted.

<sup>1</sup> *Vibhinn Dhamon me Ishwar ki Kalpana*, p. 51, Bihar Hindi Granth Academy, Patna, 1988.

<sup>2</sup> *Avatarvad aur Risalat*, p. 148-149, Kanti Prakashan, New Delhi.

Sant Shri Satya, the scholar from Sarangpur (MP) writes: "Wrong meaning of *Avatarvad* is challenge to God's power. It gives rise to idleness. People are being exploited since centuries in the name of *Avatarvad*."

Shri Dwarkaprasad Sahi writes: "We are not at all embarrassed to say that the concept of God incarnating Himself by taking birth in this world is a fabrication. The fact is that whenever man strayed away from the Truth, the Omnipotent God has sent His Prophets who used to teach mankind worship of One God. In the chain of Prophets, the Last and Final Prophet is Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). On his advent the chain of Prophethood was ended. Islam will remain the straight path for the world till its end."<sup>1</sup>

It is stated in the Holy Quran: "There never was a people, without a warner having lived among them (in the past)" [35:24]. In another place, it is written: "For We assuredly sent amongst every people a messenger (with the Command), 'Serve Allah and eschew Evil'" [16:36]

From the above discussion, it is clear that Allah has sent in every age and to every people His Prophets or *Avatar* (in its true meaning). He has done this because he loves his servants. In the Shandilya Bhakti (49), it is stated: "His Mercy alone is His primary cause." He sends His Prophets whenever He wishes to and ends its chain whenever He wills.

### **Incarnation (Avatarvad) and Gita**

The scholars of Shrimad Bhagavad Gita believe that Shri Krishnaji has clearly expounded the concept of incarnation in it. However, there are many other

<sup>1</sup> *Avatarvad aur Risalat*, p. 152, Kanti Prakashan, New Delhi.

authorities who do not accept it. In support of their stand, they present the Shloka of Gita (4:7) which has been translated in Hindi by Shankaranad (which has been retranslated into English) as follows:

*“Whenever the Vedic religion declines, for the dominance and salvation of the righteous of the Varnashram, at that time I incarnate Myself into a body suitable to protect religion and annihilate irreligion.”*<sup>1</sup>

In the aforesaid translation, truth has been ignored. Unnecessary mention of Vedic religion and the righteous of the Varnashram has been made. Including the first line of the next Shloka, Swami Manglanand Puri has translated the Shloka differently from the aforesaid translation. Puriji includes the line of the 21<sup>st</sup> Shloka of that “ancient Bhagavad Gita” which has only 70 Shlokas in it; he considers this Gita to be the original Gita and does not believe in the prevalent Gita which has 700 Shlokas in it. In the first instance, he states the compatibility of this Shloka as follows:

*“Now, we will show in which situations Shri Krishnaji and other great ascetics take birth in the world.”*<sup>2</sup>

He has translated this Shloka as follows:

*“O Bharata (Arjun)! Whenever the religion declines (in the world) and irreligion increases, at that time, I create myself to protect the Sadhus and to destroy the wicked.”*<sup>3</sup>

Similar words are also found in Mahabharata (272-71) and in Ashvamedha (54-13).

Explaining this Shloka of the Gita, Puriji writes: “The people who believe in *Avatarvad* (incarnation)

<sup>1</sup> *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita*, p. 224, Shankarnandi Vyakhiya Sahita.

<sup>2</sup> *Prachin Bhagavad Gita*, p. 24, Govind Ram Hasanand, Delhi, 1975.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, P.24.

present this Shloka in their support. However, here nothing has been said about God incarnating Himself.

The explanation of the aforesaid Shloka of Gita by Puriji clearly brings out the truth. The truth also clearly comes out from the translation rendered by Shri Balraj Singh Parihar, which is as follows: "*When aversion for religion increases and irreligion grows, I create (holy) souls to protect righteousness and ward off the evil.*"<sup>1</sup>

Explaining this Shloka, Smt. Lajja Aariya writes that God sends great men with inspiration to reform the society.<sup>2</sup> In this writing, nothing has been mentioned about God coming into this world taking the form of a body; rather it is mentioned that God creates holy souls and sends them on earth to establish the true religion and annihilate the evil. Sacred souls have come to different places of the world at different times and to different nations to guide the people; this is the correct meaning of *Avatarvad* (incarnation).

### **God does not take Birth or Incarnate**

God is unbegotten.<sup>3</sup> It is against His dignity and grandeur that He should assume a worldly body, and being the Master of the entire universe live like an ordinary creature. The Vedas also do not support this view of God Himself taking incarnation in this manner. It is clearly written in the Yajur Veda:

*He hath attained unto the Bright, Bodiless, Woundless,  
Sinewless, the Pure which evil hath not pierced.  
Far-sighted, wise, encompassing, he self-existent hath*

<sup>1</sup> *Devdoot Aaya, Hum Pehchan na Sake*, p. 5, 1972.

<sup>2</sup> *Vishva Jyothi*, p. 47, Bharatiya Punjagran Ank, April-May, 1988.

<sup>3</sup> It is stated in the Holy Quran: "*He begets not, nor is He begotten.*" (112:3)

*prescribed aims, as propriety demands, unto the everlasting Years. (40:8)<sup>1</sup>*

The founder of the Arya Samaj, Shri Dayanand Saraswati has explained this Shloka in detail; an excerpt from this is given below:

*“That Supreme Soul (Pramatma), like the sky, is pervasive everywhere; He brightens the entire world; He is Akayam (bodiless), and He never incarnates into a body, because He is indivisible, infinite, changeless, and hence never incarnates. There is nothing greater than Him and, therefore, God will never incarnate Himself in a body.”<sup>2</sup>*

It is also clear from the above that God never assumes the shape of a worldly body.

### **Concept of Prophethood in Buddhism and Jainism**

In understanding the concept of *Avatarvad* (incarnation), errors are found in the literature of other religions too. As far as Buddhism is concerned, a sequent definition of *Avatarvad* is not found in its ancient literature. The definition that is found in its subsequent literature is disputed by a majority of Buddhist scholars. The concept of Prophethood is present in this religion and the authority of Buddhist beliefs are based on it. Vijaytosh Bhattachariya writes: “Maitreya is said to be the future and the last Buddha. It is said about him that he resides in the heaven,<sup>3</sup> and will appear 1000 years after the death of Buddha. Pandit Vedprakash Upadhay, believes that this

<sup>1</sup> Griffith, Ralph T.H., *The Text of the White Yajurveda*, 1899.

<sup>2</sup> *Dayanand Granthmala*, p. 596-597, Shrimati Propakarini Sabha, Ajmer, 1983.

<sup>3</sup> Vijayatosh Bhattachariya, *Buddhist Iconography*, p. 13.

prediction has been fulfilled with the coming of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).<sup>1</sup>

Some of the Buddhist groups in India have strongly protested when the Vishva Hindu Parishad tried to declare Buddha to be the incarnate of Vishnu. Anand Prakash Buddh of Meerut says that there is no concept of incarnation (in the prevalent sense) in Buddhism. The Hindu writers have destroyed the fundamentals of Buddhism by their corrupt writings.<sup>2</sup>

In Jainism, we find the hypothesis of revered personages. However, their viewpoints, after getting influenced by Ramayana, Mahabharat and Harivanshpurana, are specially found in the Jain Puranas.

Dr. P.H. Chobe writes: "I believe Muhammad to be the *Avatar* (incarnation) Kalki. There is a description of this Avatar (Prophet) in the Puranas. It is said that Kalki Avatar will be after the Buddha Avatar, who will be born in the house of a priest in the city of Shambhal, whose mount will be the horse and his weapon will be the sword. He will gain victory for his true religion over the entire world." (For more details, see the Kalki Purana.)

The religious scholars of Jainism too have described the Kalki Avatar, and Mahaveer Swami has described the era of his coming one thousand years after his death. Mahaveer Swami died in 571 A.D. and hence, on this account, Kalki Avatar takes birth after one thousand years. The year of birth of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is the same as the year in which Kalki Avatar was supposed to come. Many of the

<sup>1</sup> *Nirashans aur Antim Rishi*, Allahabad.

<sup>2</sup> *Daynik Jagaran*, New Delhi, December 1997.



particularities and attributes of the Kalki Avatar are similar to those that are found in Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). One of the renowned Jain scholars says that it is written in the religious book *Harivansh Purana* that 605 years and 5 months after the death of Mahaveer, Shakraja was born; similarly, after the reign of 231 years of *Samvat*, Kalki Avatar was born. (*Jainism Harivansh Purana, Part 60*)

The second religious writer, Gunabhadra has written in *Uttar Purana* that one thousand years after the death of Mahaveer, Kalki Raja was born. (*Indian Antiquary, Vol. X, p. 143.*)

The third writer of the Jain religious book, Nemichandra has written in his religious book *Trilokasagar*: "Kalki Raja was born 605 years and 5 months after the death of Shakraja and 394 years and 7 months after the era of Shakakal (*Trilokasagar, p. 32*).

Hence, it seems that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was the same entity about whom the religious scholars had told.

Actually, as people follow and obey the laws of a ruler as long as he remains in power and after him begin to obey the commands of his successor, in the same way, as long as the era of a Prophet or Avatar remains, his instructions and laws are obeyed. However, when his teachings get corrupted, Allah sends another Prophet or Avatar whose era, teachings and laws would gain currency. Accordingly, we are in the era and rule of the last and final Prophet or Avatar, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), and his rule and era will last till the Day of Judgement, which is evidenced by the Puranas, the Quran and other religious books. Now, it is necessary for us, both spiritually and materially, to live in the era and rule of the last and

final Prophet (Prophet Muhammad) and obey his commands and teachings in order to achieve success in this world and salvation in the Hereafter.

In other words, following the last and final Prophet or Avatar, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) will be the true sign of faith, and would be the straight path to surrender before God.<sup>1</sup>

### Concept of Prophethood in Islam

Islam<sup>2</sup> opposes the wrong concept of *Avatarvad* that Allah incarnates Himself on earth. In its view, Allah never incarnates Himself in the shape of any of the creatures for any need, nor is He compelled to assume the body of any of His creatures for the purpose of accomplishing any task. When He has created such a vast universe with His Will Power, He does not need to incarnate into a body for accomplishing a task. Then again, how strange and absurd it looks that Allah should incarnate Himself in different forms and shapes to give relief to some particular people in some particular part of the world from their afflictions and sufferings and that this should continue for a long period of time. Islam does not support this concept.

### The Meaning of the Word "Allah"

Islam is a purely monotheist religion. That is, the concept of Islam about Allah is that He is the One and Only God who is worthy of worship and service. In the

<sup>1</sup> *Kanti Masik (Delhi)*, July 1997, p. 33-34.

<sup>2</sup> The literal meaning of Islam is: Obeying the commands, i.e. obeying the commands of Allah. The one who obeys the commands of Allah is called Muslim. The meaning of the root word of Islam, *Slim*, is peace; hence another meaning of Islam is peace.

Islamic terminology, this Being is known as "Allah." However, what is the literal meaning of "Allah." It would be better if we know its meaning.

Explaining the word *Allah*, Moulana Abu Muhammad Imamuddin Ramnagri writes:

*"Ilah means: 'one who is worshipped.' Therefore, every person, living or non-living thing can be called Ilah which is worshipped. Adding the letters alif and lam to this word Ilah and making it Allah means that only One God is worthy of worship. Other than Him none else is worthy of worship and service."*<sup>1</sup>

There is an inherent particularity in the word Allah that it can be used only for one God who is worthy of worship. According to the etymologists, it cannot be used except for Him. This word does not have any plural nor has it any gender. This word cannot be appropriately translated into Hindi as *Ishwar*, because the word *Ishwar* is commonly used to denote god, goddesses, distinctive personalities or souls, and other objects that are worshipped. However, for the purpose of explaining and understanding each other, Allah can be translated as *Ishwar*; anyhow, all good names are for Allah alone. In one of the Sayings, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) has described 99 names for Allah.

### **Need for the Prophethood**

Allah created this vast universe and in it he also created the exalted creature – man. He also arranged for all things that were necessary for man's life – air, water, food, fruits, etc. Allah has done all this with a purpose. It is against His Dignity and Glory to create a thing without any purpose. It is also beyond prudence

<sup>1</sup> *Islam ka Ekeshwarvad*, p. 1, Islami Sahitya Sadan, Ramnagar, Varanasi.

to think that Allah will not give mankind the required knowledge about Himself, or will not educate him about the proper way to lead his life; instead would leave him to wander about, in ignorance.

Allah has bestowed many favours on man. Allah bestowed on man the faculties of learning, thinking and understanding. Allah informed man about the purpose for which he has been created, gave knowledge about Himself and instructed him to serve and worship Him and Him alone. Along with these things, Allah also bestowed upon man the power to distinguish between good and bad, gave him limited freedom and made him His vicegerent on earth. Appointing him on this position, Allah had made clear to man that Allah alone is to be served and worshipped; that He alone is the Master and Sovereign Ruler of the universe; and that none partners Him in His Sovereignty nor can anyone interfere in His Rule.

Allah has also informed man that this worldly life is a trial for man, after which he has to return to Allah when Allah will reward or punish him according to his good or bad deeds. In other words, Allah has asked man to obey His commands i.e. to be a Muslim, and if he does so his worldly life will be prosperous and peaceful and when he returns to Allah, he will achieve success and salvation in the Hereafter and reside in the heaven forever. If man disobeys Allah, he will have a miserable life not only in this world but also in the Hereafter and his permanent abode will be that pit of misery called the Hell.

### **How Ungrateful Man Is?**

Allah initiated the human race on earth by creating Adam and Eve and sending them on to the earth.

While doing so, Allah had given them clear instructions according to which they and their offspring had to lead their lives on earth. Hence, the human race was initiated on earth with full knowledge. The system of life adopted by Adam and Eve was obedience of Allah (Islam) and they had instructed their offspring to obey Allah in all spheres of life, i.e. to be Muslims. From this discussion, it is clear that Islam exists from the very beginning of the human race and Muslims constituted the primary human race. However, afterwards people did not remain on the straight path and forgot and gave up many of the teachings of the true religion, Islam, and also corrupted it. Their wickedness reached such a stage that giving up worship and service of One Allah, they began to worship and serve others.

For the guidance of mankind and convey to them again the teachings of the true religion (Islam), Allah has arranged the agency of Prophethood. Faith in the Prophethood is one of the basic beliefs of Islam. The second part of the Doctrinal Formula (*Kalima*) comprises of declaring belief that *Muhammad is Allah's Prophet.*" Uttering this Doctrinal Formula is the basic requirement to become a Muslim. The entire Doctrinal Formula reads: *There is no one worthy of worship and total obedience but Allah and that Muhammad is Allah's Prophet.*"

Prophethood is the only agency through which man can find out the Will of his Creator and Sustainer (Allah), His commandments and guidance. The chain of Prophethood commences from Prophet Adam (pbuh) and ends with Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). When arrangements were made that the Islamic teachings will remain till eternity and when desired

progress and prosperity of mankind was assured, the need for continued Prophethood remained no more and, therefore, with the advent of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) the chain of Prophethood ended. It should be made clear here that all the Prophets, right from Prophet Adam to Prophet Muhammad, were human beings and every one of them taught mankind nothing but Islam. The Holy Quran declares:

*"The Religion before Allah is Islam (submission to Allah's Will)." (3:19)*

*"(O Prophet) say: 'We believe in Allah, and in what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham, Ismail; Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and in (the Books) given to Moses, Jesus, and the Prophets from their Lord; we make no distinction between one and another among them, and to Allah do we bow our will (in Islam).'" (3:84)*

### **Importance of Prophethood**

Success and prosperity both in this world and the Hereafter, depend on the servitude of Allah and obedience of His commands. It is clear that there can be no obedience without explicit commands. As soon as a person realises that he is servant of Allah and that he has to obey Allah's commands, he will certainly want to know these Divine commands. Which acts and deeds Allah approves and which He prohibits. What deeds man should undertake to become devotee of Allah. Which acts he should avoid so that he is not disobedient. Until we acquire the knowledge about all the aforesaid things, we cannot serve and worship Allah properly.

The question is how to acquire this knowledge. We do not have any medium to do this. Man cannot make use of his intellect and intelligence to acquire a

complete and fool-proof knowledge in this regard. He cannot go beyond his imagination and conjectures. It is not necessary that his imaginations and conjectures are valid. Moreover, every person's imagination would be different. As such, it is impossible for man to reach the reality even if he individually or collectively tries to do so. Allah has created man and He knows well about his singular nature. Allah did not let man remain ignorant in the world to wander about aimlessly. Rather, He has bestowed His Mercy on man and has shown him the straight path. He has given him the knowledge about His Will and teachings through His Prophets. The chain of Prophets commenced with the first man on earth, Prophet Adam (pbuh), and ended with the advent of the final and last Prophet, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). For the fulfilment of guidance, Allah selected the best and most eligible men to be His Prophets.

Allah has bestowed innumerable gifts and mercies on man. Allah bestowed on him the faculty of intellect and power of discernment, and gave him knowledge and guidance. Prophet Adam was not only the first man but was also the first Prophet. Allah had commanded Adam to impart to his offspring the teachings of Islam. He taught them that Allah alone is worthy of their adoration; that they should serve and worship Him alone. They should seek help and assistance from Him alone. They should lead their lives in piety. They would be richly rewarded and would become eligible to reside in the Paradise. If they disobey and misuse the freedom of choice given to them to lead mischievous and disobedient life, they would be punished and put into the Hell to remain there forever.

After the death of Prophet Adam (pbuh), his offspring followed and obeyed the teachings of Islam for some time. Later, with the passage of time, they began to stray away from these teachings. Slowly ethical and religious evils began to cultivate. In place of monotheism, polytheism became popular which had many shapes and shades. Along with idol worship, people began to worship other creatures such as trees, hills, mountains, sun, moon, air and water. The offspring of Prophet Adam (pbuh) spread out and settled in different parts of the earth and fell so low that the concept of right and wrong completely got changed and reversed. Right began to be considered wrong and wrong was thought to be right.

Due to this plight of mankind, Allah bestowed His Mercy and began sending His Prophets, whenever required, to guide the mankind. These Prophets used to impart to the people the same teachings that Prophet Adam (pbuh) imparted to his offspring. Allah sent His Prophets to different parts of the world and to different people in different periods. Prophets taught the people the method of following the Will of Allah, brought them from darkness to light and showed them the straight path. However, it is very strange that people often did not treat well these Prophets who had come to guide them. Some were exiled and some others were killed. Regardless of these, the mission of these Prophets continued and many people began to understand and appreciate the teachings of Prophets to follow them and obey the commands of Allah. In this manner, Islam spread all over the world. Every Prophet taught nothing but Islam. After their death, it often happened that followers of the Prophets (due to excessive veneration they had for the Prophets), turned



the Prophets either into God, or son of God or a partner of God and began to worship them. It is an irony that the people again began to cultivate and follow those evils which the Prophets had eradicated with great struggle and sacrifices. The teachings of the Prophets were changed and corrupted. In their place false, fabricated and unpropitious things were invented and put into practice.

Along with the progress of the human civilization, means of communication and transportation increased. Contact between different nations and communities living in different parts of the earth developed and increased. New naval routes were discovered and along with mutual trade, exchange of views and ideas also took place. Hence, the circumstances and time were right to send the Divine Guidance which suffices the entire world and humanity. The purpose was to tell them clearly what is the purpose of their creation, what is their religion. What is the Will of Allah, how can they achieve His good pleasure.

For this purpose, Allah sent His last Prophet Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), and ended the chain of Prophethood on him. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was born in Makkah Arabia. He commenced his prophetic mission from there. Arabia is centrally located, relative to Asia, Africa and Europe. The entire world can easily be addressed from here. Allah bestowed on Prophet Muhammad full and complete knowledge about Islam so that Islam could show the straight path and system of life for people of the entire world.

The world has seen many great rulers, reformers, founders of religions and revolutionaries, but often they had no requisite and long lasting effect and influence. On the other hand, when we look at the life

and activities of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), we find that the influence of his excellent personality put an end to wrong beliefs, concepts and practices. Human nature which had been corrupted was fully reformed and there was a complete revolution in the human society. This change could be seen in every activity of human life – from mosque to market, school to court, and from home to public life, and thus a foundation for all round development of ethical and virtuous human life was laid down.

When Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was appointed as Prophet, the entire world was engulfed in the darkness of ignorance and superstition. People had forgotten their real Creator – Allah – and had fabricated many other false gods in His place. Mankind was stuck in false beliefs and ideologies and was gasping for breath. Many had become inactive because of the existing lifestyle. The Europeans were engaged in collecting luxurious and comfortable things and were bent upon destroying themselves by adopting a licentious and luxurious life. The sun of civilization right from Egypt to India, Greece to China had set. The “great civilizations” of Rome and Iran used to treat their people with extreme cruelty and barbarity. Some rulers had declared themselves to be gods and to fulfil their carnal desires used to collect exorbitant taxes from their subjects and forced them to work for them without any wages. There was none who could relieve them of misery and curse.

Wars between Rome and Iran had greatly affected common people. They were deprived of basic necessities of life; moreover they could not even protest about it. Man was engulfed in darkness and there was no light to show him the right path. The

teachings of the Prophets were not available in their original form. False religious practices had become a profitable business for the religious leaders. They had the protection of the ruling class and they never hesitated to deceive and loot the people by creating newer and newer things in the religion. The Greek civilization had perished. Buddhism and the Vedic religion had lost its influence. Mankind was unable to find a way out of these difficulties. Times demanded advent of such a prominent personality who could teach the world the lesson of humanity and show the straight path. In these circumstances, Allah showed mercy on mankind and sent Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as His last and final Prophet for the guidance of the entire world and vested in his personality an exemplar model. This model is the true and real standard for emulation and elevation and refinement of the entire world and the human life. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) successfully completed the mission on which Allah had commissioned him. Because of his wonderful personality and great deeds, Michael H. Hart, in his book *The Hundred*, has placed Prophet Muhammad on top of the list of one hundred prominent and renowned personalities of the world. Not only Mr. Hart, any person who studies the sacred life of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) without any bias or prejudice will reach the same conclusion that his personality alone is exemplary and that he alone can be a model for the entire mankind.

One of the important aspects of the life of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is that he conveyed the message from Allah to the people without any addition or deletion. In his prophetic life of 23 years, he did not show any negligence in the obedience of Divine

commands that he received. Many a times it so happened that the Divine commands were not popular with people. However, he never bowed to any pressure of the prevalent situation. In spite of emotional reaction of the audience, he propagated Truth to excite the people. On the one hand the Arabian society was steeped in the worship of hundreds of idols, and on the other there was the Quranic belief of monotheism in which there was no place for others except for the One True God. It is the teaching of Islam that there is none worthy of worship except Allah. Hence, the people of Makkah, which had become the centre of polytheism, could not tolerate the call for monotheism. Declaring openly the monotheistic belief "*There is no god except Allah*" in Makkah and that too in front of Ka'ba was a very difficult and risky task. But the world knows that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) made this declaration in exactly the same words every place and every time so forcefully that people had no doubt about the Islamic concept of monotheism (Unity of God); he also explained to the people the other aspects of monotheism.

Another very important aspect of Prophet Muhammad's sacred life is that the beliefs, the principles and the commands towards which he invited the people, he himself first believed in those beliefs and principles and acted upon the commands. He complied with the Truth both by his words and also by his deeds. There was no religious command or aspect of worship which was not fully explained. He set an example by personally following it and performing good deeds because Allah had commanded him to do so:

*"(O Prophet) say: 'Verily I am commanded to serve Allah with sincere devotion; and I am commanded to be the first of those who bow to Allah in Islam.'" (39:11-12)*

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# WHY IS PROPHET MUHAMMAD (pbuh) THE FINAL PROPHET? AN INTELLECTUAL ANALYSIS

*Muhammad Zainul Abideen Mansoori*

Man gets most of the knowledge and information required to lead his life, through his five senses – taste, sight, touch, smell and hearing. Along with this, man has been given the intelligence and intellect with which he finds out qualities of goodness and badness, utility or otherwise of things, principles, and deeds. People who believe in religion, acknowledge that these faculties of the five senses and intellect have not been acquired by man by his own efforts. They have been bestowed by Allah and that they are part and parcel of the human nature. Even those who do not believe in religion, accept them to be the gifts of nature.

## **Necessity of Prophets**

Experience shows that human history made progress through the use of five senses and human intellect. However, in addition to the aforesaid sources, man needs another source too, a source which can give man knowledge and information beyond the reach of his five senses and intellect. The medium through which this source is acquired is known as the medium of prophets or messengers.

There are some fundamental questions which relate to man and the human society and whose

answers are beyond the sphere of the knowledge acquired through the five senses and the intellect. They are:

1. For what purpose man has been created? Is the purpose just to eat, drink and die? This cannot be total life of man who has been created as one among best of the creatures.
2. If man is among the best of the creatures, what are the reasons for this distinction?
3. Who is the Creator of Man and what are His attributes? What is the relationship of man with his Creator? What does the Creator demand from man?
4. What is the real nature of this transitory life? What happens after death? Does the body just perish? If it is so, then how man is to be rewarded or punished for his good or bad deeds? How could he justly compensated? Has the Most Merciful and the Most Benevolent Allah created this world without any purpose?

It is the prime need of man to get answers to the aforesaid questions and other related questions. Goodness or badness of man's character, views, conduct, and collective life depend on getting correct or wrong answers to these questions. A Prophet fulfils this need. Man and society cannot remain indifferent to it.

### **Chain of Prophets and its Last Link**

Because of the importance, necessity and inevitability of the Prophethood, the chain of Prophets started from the very beginning of the existence of man on earth. According to the Islamic source of

knowledge, during the entire history of mankind, nearly 125,000 Prophets were sent. According to the Quran, Prophets were sent to every nation of the world (13:7). According to needs, problems and issues of particular era, prophets were sent to guide the people. They taught them purest form of monotheism. Their task was to convey the Divine Commands of Allah, and teach them the correct way of life by following and obeying these commands. In doing so, the Prophets themselves were the first to act according to Divine commands. They presented themselves as role model for the people to emulate. Some of these Prophets were also given Divine Books. Every Prophet had very clearly declared that he was only a servant of Allah and that he was only a Messenger from Allah. All the Prophets left not even an iota of doubt in the minds of the people that they themselves were not God. Nor were they partner of God, or the incarnations of God, or offspring of God. They had no Divine attributes and powers in them.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was the last link of this long chain of Prophets. A wrong notion is common that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was the founder of the religion of Islam. The truth is that all the Prophets were the bearers and preachers of the Divine religion of Islam. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was the last and final bearer and preacher of the True Religion, Islam. The last and final Divine Book, the Quran, was revealed on Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) during his prophetic life of 23 years. This Book preserves the teachings contained in the previous Divine Books which had either been lost or corrupted by their followers. The beliefs of all the previous Divine Books such as the concept of monotheism, life

after death (Hereafter) and belief in all the Prophets, have been incorporated in the Holy Quran. It is the latest and final edition of the Divine Revelation. This Book was given to the last and final Prophet, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), with the instruction to convey it to all. It was also made clear that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) would be the last and final Prophet and the Quran would be the last and final revelation. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) fully discharged His delicate responsibility of conveying the message of Allah with perseverance and diligence.

### **The Final Prophet: Why and How?**

A question naturally arises in the mind that when man is always in need of Divine guidance or in other words in need of Prophets, why the chain of Prophets was broken and why Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was declared as the last and final Prophet. What is the logic behind the discontinuation of the chain of Prophets after him? To get the answer to this question, it would be better to first understand why Allah commenced the chain of Prophets in the first place.

### **Reasons behind the Continuation of the Chain of Prophets in the Past**

The circumstances in the past were quite different from the circumstances that prevailed in the era of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Society and the civilization were passing through the phase of evolution. The situation was as follows:

1. In the very beginning, there was no developed social order and civilization. Concept of citizenship was non-existent. The population was very limited. Men resided in only a few



regions of the earth, and human necessities and problems were also limited. Hence, along with the three basic concepts of monotheism, belief in the Hereafter and belief in the Prophethood, only limited laws were prescribed. They were enough to meet the requirements of the people. To cater to these situations and needs, Prophets were appointed.

2. With the passage of time, situations and circumstances changed. Population increased. Lifestyle changed and progressed. Slowly a social system and civilization began to develop. Necessities and problems also got increased. Need for the Divine guidance compatible with these needs arose and Allah began to send Prophets, one after the other, with detailed teachings, instructions and laws.
3. After the death of a Prophet, with the passage of time, people began to either forget, or corrupt or give up the Divine teachings and guidance conveyed to them through him. To bring in reformation in such a situation, new Prophets were sent.
4. Citizenship was established. Also, the increase in population forced people to migrate from one place to another to seek newer sources of livelihood. After sometime, human population spread to different regions of the earth. Human societies were formed. Social needs and problems too changed. At this juncture, simultaneously many different Prophets were sent to many different regions, communities, and nations with Divine guidance and laws

- suitable for particular people and for particular situations.
5. Development of knowledge and civilization began to reach maturity which resulted in the increase in the needs of the society and complexity of its problems. Divine guidance and laws suitable to such situation were sent through new Prophets.
  6. The dialects became languages and the languages acquired the art of writing. The Prophets who came at this juncture were given Divine guidance in the form of revealed Books which they conveyed to the people. However, keeping the revealed Books secure was not an easy task. People began to make additions and deletions to the Books by adding their own views and deleting what they did not like. In these circumstances, Prophets were sent who brought back the Divine guidance and teachings to its original form and reformed the people. Every Prophet accomplished this task in his own nation and this continued for centuries.

### **Situation under which the Chain of Prophets was ended**

The development and progress of human society and civilization reached a mature stage. This was quite different from the previous situation and also was more comprehensive. The human civilization was at the verge of reaching the stage of its maturity.

1. Human population spread to large parts of the earth. Science became part of the human knowledge. New means of transportation and communication were developed and progressed,

which facilitated exchange of thought and free trade. Consistency and parity became possible with regard to ideas. Mutual dependence and exchange of views between different nations was visible. Moreover, the level of intellect grew higher.

2. Use of paper, pen and ink increased. System of printing was developed. Newspapers and books began to be printed. Preservation and duplication of important writings and books became easy. Literature came into existence and began to develop further.
3. Such an era indicated the possibility that civilization will develop robustly and extensively. No region of the earth was isolated from other regions. Knowledge and intellect rose to higher levels, and after a few centuries a global society, seemed possible.
4. Human civilization was ready to enter an era of science and technology. Revolutionary and comprehensive changes were imminent in the systems of writing, printing, publication and broadcasting. Means of publicity and propaganda, exchange of thoughts and ideas, opportunities of education were expanding. In such an environment, the teachings of the Prophet and the Divine Book revealed on him could be preserved and protected. Propagation on worldwide scale was to become easy.

### **Demands of the Situation**

Such a situation demanded that the chain of Prophethood should end with the advent of the final Prophet. His message, call, ideals and the Divine Book

revealed on him, should be universal and everlasting. Means of communicating his teachings and preserving their purity and entirety should be available. Previously, there was a need to send different Prophets to different communities and nations living in unconnected regions; this was not necessary now. Previously, each Prophet used to address his own nation or community. Now one Prophet could address the entire mankind. All qualities favourable for the prosperity and well being of humanity had been incorporated in one Prophet alone. Entire humanity was in a position to be benefitted. The situation demanded that his message and ideals should be universal. The Divine Book revealed on him should be for the guidance of the entire humanity; it should be the last and the final Divine Book. It should contain complete, lasting and multidimensional guidance for the mankind. It should be relevant for every time and for different occasions. It contain principles guiding man's individual, family and societal life. It should have laws governing the economic, educational, judicial, political, ethical and spiritual aspects of man's life. It would neither get outdated nor become useless or impractical with the passage of time.

### **The Last Prophet, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)**

To fulfil the aforesaid demands of the situation, Allah chose Prophet Muhammad as His last Prophet (one of his titles is *Mustafa* meaning the chosen one). He was declared as *Khatamun Nabiyeen* i.e. the Seal of the Prophets (The Quran, 33:40).

1. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was born in the Arabian Peninsula. His mother tongue was Arabic, and the Quran revealed on him was also

in Arabic language. But his mission and that of the Quran is not confined only to Arab nation.

2. During the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) itself, his message had reached Ethiopia, Egypt, Rome, Persia (Iran), Yemen, and the Indian Subcontinent. In the later centuries, it reached the entire world and he was recognized as the universal Prophet. His followers are found in every part of the world. Based on the religion that he presented before the people, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) established the social, political and governmental systems under his own aegis from 625 to 632 AD. It continued for the next 14 centuries in different parts of the world and still continues in some. Wherever the Islamic system of governance was established, it heralded an era of peace, justice, brotherhood, equality and human rights. This proves that the Islamic principles and tenets, and the system of governance that it recommends hold good even for the most advanced civilization and there is no need to induct a new prophet.
3. The Holy Quran proclaims that Allah has not sent Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as a Prophet for only Arabs or Muslims, but “as a mercy for all creatures.” (21:107)
4. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) eradicated the ignorant perception of “high” and “low” based on colour, language, and nationality and established “Oneness of Mankind,” thus binding again the disjointed mankind under “Oneness of God.”

5. There was no ethical, social or spiritual issue which existed at the time of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and which is not found in the present age for which. He has not provided guidance on them. He eliminated and suppressed evils like immorality, falsehood, dishonesty, exploitation, theft, robbery, bribery, cheating, fraud, exploitation of women, killing of children during his era; his teachings can also eliminate these evils even today. Unbiased scholars acknowledge that the present-day International Human Rights Declaration and rules pertaining to the conduct of war and the prisoners of war have all been borrowed from the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

The above are a few proofs and arguments why Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is the Last and Final Prophet. In addition to these, we find many evidence in the Quran itself with regard to finality of the Prophethood of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

In the very first Verse of the very first Chapter of the Holy Quran, Allah has been described as the Lord of worlds (not of any particular tribe or community) In the first three Verses of the last Chapter of the Quran, Allah has been described as the Lord, Cherisher, Ruler and God of the mankind. In many Verses mankind has been addressed as "O man," "O offspring of Adam," and "O people." In this system of address all boundaries of time, era and place have been eliminated. Even after the lapse of 1500 years, the Holy Quran presents comprehensive ethical, social, political and governmental system. On

its principles, teachings and laws a good system of life can be established. Hence there is no need to have a Divine Book other than the Holy Quran. This would be true in future too. It confirms that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is the last and final Prophet and the Holy Quran is the last and final Divine Book.

6. History of many of the previous Prophets is hidden in the dust of time and the mist of ignorance and confusion. Their teachings, utterances, character and conduct, mission, ideals, are not available for the later generations in their pure, authenticated and reliable form. After the death of the Prophets, teachings were either not preserved. Human intervention polluted, distorted and changed them. Baseless stories, and myths were associated with them that are improper and inappropriate. The character of these previous Prophets was sometimes painted in questionable manner that it could never become a model for the humanity.

The aforesaid state of affair was distinctly different in the case of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Details of his birth, life, teachings, mission, struggles character and conduct, individual, and social life, are available. His manner of speech, the way he pardoned others are recorded. His conduct during war and peace; his way of sleeping, walking, his attire; his method of bath and ablution; are described. Everyday problems of people; were solved by him. He discharged his duties as religious leader, teacher, preacher and judge. He was ruler, administrator and commander during war. He was engaged in performing social service,

creating a new social order, himself worshipping Allah and also teaching his followers the method of worshipping Allah. He initiated social and political system – every saying and every action in all these aspects were performed in the full glare of history. From the very beginning of his prophetic mission, which covered a period of 23 years, his every action and saying was recorded and preserved meticulously by his followers. For this a new branch of knowledge was developed and a vast literature known as *Hadeeth* (sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad) came into existence. The books, the print media, the electronic media, the internet and the websites have globalised the universal and everlasting teachings of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

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# NEED OF PROPHETHOOD AND IMPORTANCE OF PROPHETS

*Dr. Syed Shahid Ali*

## Needs of Man

All knowledge that man possesses informs us what man is, but cannot say why he is. It is essential for man to know answers to some fundamental questions. Some of these questions are: Is there a Creator of man? If so, what demands He makes on man? From where man has come and why? What happens after death? What is the definition of life? Is man free or constrained? Can man himself find out answers to these questions?

To lead a successful life and avoid failure, man should know answers to the above questions. Also, one may ask How man is related to himself? What is the relationship between one man and another man? What is the guidance for relationship between man and woman? What is the relation of man with the universe? What is misery and happiness? What is significance of poverty and affluence? What is right and what is wrong for man and what is profitable and what is harmful for him?

Man individually or men collectively cannot find out answers to above questions because knowledge available to them is very limited. Man possesses only the following four sources of knowledge.

- ♦ 1. Intellect;
2. Senses;
3. Imagination;
4. Experience.

All the above sources are limited. No man individually or all the men collectively possess knowledge or experience about man's total past, present and future. By seeing he senses that a flower is beautiful. By hearing he understands that a voice is sweet. By tasting he comes to know that a fruit is sweet. By smelling he senses that the food must be good. By touching, he feels that the vessel is hot.

But man's power of senses is limited. All these senses can perform only some particular tasks. With the sense of vision, we can only see the visible. We can make use of the sense of hearing only in the world of sounds. The senses of taste, smell and touch can be used only in their particular spheres.

Man cannot sense each and everything of the world through his senses. Standing at the seashore, man cannot see the entire sea; he can see only that part of the sea which is within the range of his vision. Man cannot hear an ant walking. His range of hearing is commonly said to be between 20 Hz and 20,000 Hz. He cannot hear sounds below 20 Hz and a sound wave above 20,000 Hz. Man cannot smell sugar, but an ant and a fly can smell it from a distance.

We cannot infer the existence of waves of the TV unless and until we switch it on. We cannot hear or sense the radio waves, but radar can sense it. Elephants communicate with each other with the help of sound waves, which humans cannot hear. The human senses cannot feel each and everything present in the world.

There are many things which are beyond the reach of human senses.

Man has the power of imagination. With its help man gets to know about many things and believes in them. Away from home, he can imagine about it. But this sense of imagination is also limited. Man cannot usually imagine about things which he has not already seen or felt through his senses.

Whatever is invented or produced in the world cannot be called entirely new. It is produced by intermixing of things already created or available. Materials like water, air, iron, already exist in the world. By utilizing them in a particular manner, new things are invented and produced. The force of gravity of earth already existed, but was discovered by man only recently. It cannot be correct to say that man invented or created the gravity. He just made use of this natural phenomenon to his benefit and advantage.

The best gift that man possesses is intellect and intelligence. But its range is also limited and cannot work beyond a certain limit. Hence, it cannot understand everything with regard to past, present or future. The range of human intellect is so limited that it cannot even fully understand the real nature of spirit or soul.

### **Messenger and Message**

When man reaches maturity and his intellect gets developed, he begins to ponder about the fundamental questions pertaining to human life. When man looks at himself and the universe and ponders about them, he will have two options. Either he accepts that he has been created by a Creator Or he thinks that he has not been created by any Creator.

At this stage, human intellect begins to think as follows. We see that there is a manufacturer of ordinary things like pen, notebook, chair and table, then there should be a creator of such a wonderful creature like man. From time immemorial, the offspring of human beings are born. It leads to the conclusion that the creation of man was not a coincidence but was a planned event. Thus, the human intellect reaches this conclusion that there is a Creator of man.

The human intellect ponders even further when two more options stare at it: Either to believe that there is only One Creator or believe that there are many such Creators. Here the human intellect imagines that if there were to be two prime ministers of a country, three teachers simultaneously in a class, and four drivers of a car, the order and system would get destroyed. Similarly, if there were to be more than one Creator of man and the universe, the whole system would collapse. Hence, the human intellect reaches the conclusion that there should be only One Creator.

When the human intellect further ponders, it faces two more options: One, man should contact his Creator to know the purpose of his creation. Two, the Creator should contact man and tell him the purpose of his creation. Here, the human intellect comes to the conclusion that the first option is impractical as man does not have the resources to contact his Creator. The second option is more practical. Between man and his Creator, the Creator is the most powerful. Justice and fair play also say that the Creator should contact man and should let him know the purpose of creation. Hence, the human intellect reaches this third

conclusion that the Creator should Himself contact man.

Again the human intellect ponders and again faces two more options: One, the Creator should contact everyone individually and tell him that He is his Creator and also inform him about the purpose of his creation. Two, the Creator should select a few amongst his servants and inform them that He is the Creator of mankind and also tell them the purpose for which He has created mankind, and then order them to convey this message to the entire mankind. Here, the human intellect reaches the conclusion that if man's life in this world is a test and trial from the Creator, then He should not adopt the first option. Because in this manner the purpose of man's test and trial would be rendered meaningless. On the other hand, if the Creator adopts the second option, the world will remain a centre for man's test and trial. The Creator thus contacts His creatures and conveys His message to them. Also the freedom given to man either to believe or not to believe will remain, intact.

In this manner, the human intellect reaches the fourth conclusion that the Creator contacted a few men, gave them His message. It contained answers to man's fundamental questions. Messengers were instructed to convey this message to other people. This way, not only the world remained a place for test and trial of man but also his freedom of choice remained intact.

Thereafter, the human intellect reaches the fifth conclusion. One should search out for those men who had been contacted by Allah, the Creator. He gave them His Message. After reaching this stage, the human intellect commences its investigation, about

men who claim that they have been bestowed with the Message of the Creator and that they are His Messengers. The human intellect, then, critically assesses the claim of the Messengers and the Message they convey.

In this regard, the primary thing that the human intellect looks at is whether the life and message of the Prophets or Messengers still exist in their own language in its original form, or they have been corrupted and changed. In other words, the human intellect checks the historical authenticity of the life and message of the Prophets. The second thing that the human intellect does is that it checks whether the message (that is claimed to be from the Creator) is compatible with the nature of man. The Creator of man and the Bestower of the Message is Allah Himself, His message cannot be incompatible with human nature.

After recognizing the Messenger and the Message, the sixth conclusion that the human intellect reaches is that now one should obey and follow the Message of his Creator and should not have any doubts about it.

A Messenger is chosen person who is bestowed with the Message from Allah. He is made responsible to convey that Message to others. Messengers have always been human beings and they have been models for others. No person can acquire Prophethood by his efforts; rather, Allah bestows Prophethood on the person He chooses.

From the very beginning of the human history itself, Allah has sent His Messengers to all the regions of the world. The first man, Prophet Adam (pbuh), was also the first Prophet, and the last and final Prophet is Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

One of the conditions of Faith in Islam is that one should believe in all the Prophets, whether he knows their names or not, because all of them were the Prophets of Allah and had taught the people to obey Allah alone. However, a few names are mentioned in the Holy Quran. They are: Prophet Noah, Prophet Moses, Prophet Jesus, Prophet David, Prophet Solomon (peace be upon all of them), etc.

From the first Prophet Prophet Adam to the last Prophet Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), innumerable Prophets were sent to different nations and all of them addressed their respective nations in their own languages.

The question is why Prophets were sent so frequently. Because of less sophisticated means of transportation and communication, it was not easy to send messages from one place to another. Secondly, people used to change and corrupt the message of Allah, which necessitated the message to be sent anew.

All the Messengers gave the same Message that Allah is One, the world is a place for test and trial and that there is life after death. The mission of the earlier Prophets was often localised, whereas the mission of the last Prophet, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), is universal. The responsibility of protecting and securing the last Book, the Holy Quran, revealed on the last Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) has been taken over by Allah Himself. Even after more than fourteen hundred years the contents of the Quran have not changed. The Message of Allah contained in it has retained its originality. For this reason too, there is no need for any new Prophet or a new Message from Allah.

The subject of the Quran is man. The Quran describes Allah's scheme about man. Allah has given

man life which will continue. He has divided man's life into two divisions: One is the pre-death period which is temporary and is meant for his test and trial; the second is the post-death period which is meant for grant of reward or punishment in the form of paradise or hell based on the type of deeds performed in the world. Hence, man's life is perpetual and the death is the means of transfer from this world to the Hereafter.

### **The Revelation (*Wahi*)**

Allah sends his Message to His Messengers through the medium of revelation (*Wahi*). The meaning of the word *Wahi* is: conveying a message or information; putting something in the heart and mind; secretly conveying the message, etc. In the Islamic terminology, the meaning of *Wahi* is: "*That Message which is revealed by Allah to His Messenger for the guidance of mankind.*"

The Holy Quran is the last *Wahi* (Revelation) which was revealed on the last and final Prophet, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). *Wahi* is sent to Allah's Prophets. The revelation was sent to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in the following manners:

1. Through true dreams: Prophet Ayesha (may Allah be pleased with her) says that the commencement of *Wahi* (Revelation) on Prophet Muhammad was made in the manner that whatever he saw in his dream during the night used to come true in the day.
2. An angel, without being visible, used to put Allah's Message into the heart and mind of the Prophet.



3. In the manner of the sound of a bell: Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) says that sometimes I used to receive revelation in the manner of the sound of a bell and this used to be the most difficult.
4. Angel bringing the revelation in human form.
5. The angel bringing in the revelation in his original form. According to Prophet Ayesha, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) saw Prophet Gabriel twice in his original form.
6. Allah putting directly his revelation in the heart and mind of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).
7. Allah talking directly to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) without any medium.

### **Islam: the Only Religion**

Some people simplistically say that all religions are true and that they are all one and the same.

This idea results in two things. First, that Allah performs useless tasks; He first gave man his first religion, and then the second, the third, and so on. Second, Allah wants men to fight each other over religion. How can one imagine Allah to mislead mankind!

The reality is that all the religions are not one. They are not same; rather they are clearly different. However, the source of true Divine religion is One God. Therefore, in every religion as presently practiced, we find things which are familiar and similar. Every religion teaches: Do not lie; respect your elders; love your youngsters; be honest; be just; live peacefully, etc.

The religions that are prevalent now are different from one another. If all the religions were to be

similar, it would have been easy to follow them all. However, when they are different, it is impossible for man to act upon all of them.

The fact of the matter is that today all religions can be divided into two kinds: One, the preserved religions and the other, unpreserved religions. The preserved religion is that religion in which Allah's Message is found intact and is in the form in which it was revealed. The unpreserved religion is that religion in which Allah's Message has been either forgotten or has been corrupted. Today, Islam is the only religion which is the preserved religion, because Allah's Message has been preserved in its original language and in the original format in which it had been revealed on Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) nearly 1500 years ago.

### The Impediments

Man loves Truth and wants to adopt and follow it. But there are seven major impediments in the path of Truth that create obstructions for man to accept it. These impediments are as follows:

1. **Arrogance:** The Holy Quran declares: *"Those who behave arrogantly on the earth in defiance of right – them will I turn away from My Signs; even if they see all the Signs, they will not believe in them; and if they see the way of right conduct, they will not adopt it as the Way; but if they see the way of error, that is the Way they will adopt. For they have rejected our Signs, and failed to take warning from them."* (7:146)
2. **Indifference caused by Wealth:** The Holy Quran says: *Never did We send a Warner to a population, but the wealthy ones among them*

*said: "We believe not in the (Message) with which you have been sent." They said: "We have more in wealth and in sons, and we cannot be punished."*

*Say: "Verily, my Lord enlarges and restricts the Provision to whom He pleases, but most men understand not." It is not your wealth nor your sons, that will bring you nearer to Us in degree: but only those who believe and work righteousness – these are the ones for whom there is a multiplied Reward for their deeds, while secure they (reside) in the dwellings on high." (34: 34-37)*

3. **Considering Worldly Fortune as a Criterion of Virtue:** It is stated in the Holy Quran: *"Do they think that because we have granted them abundance of wealth and sons, We would hasten them on in every good? Nay, they do not understand."* (23:55-56)
4. **Reliance on Speculation:** It is mentioned in the Holy Quran: *"Were you to follow the common run of those on earth, they will lead you away from the Way of Allah. They follow nothing but conjecture; they do nothing but lie."* (6:116)  
*"But most of them follow nothing but fancy: truly fancy can be of no avail against Truth. Verily Allah is well aware of all that they do."* (10:36)
5. **Blind Following of Ancestors:** The Holy Quran states: *"Just in the same way, whenever We sent a Warner before thee to any people, the wealthy ones among them said: "We found our fathers following a certain religion, and we will certainly follow in their footsteps."* (43:23)

6. **Wrong Beliefs:** The Holy Quran declares: *“Is it not to Allah that sincere devotion is due? But those who take for protectors others than Allah (say): “We only serve them in order that they may bring us nearer to Allah.” Truly Allah will judge between them in that wherein they differ. But Allah guides not such as are false and ungrateful.”* (39:3)

*“They serve, besides Allah, things that hurt them not nor profit them, and they say: “These are our intercessors with Allah.” Say: “Do you indeed inform Allah of something He knows not, in the heavens or on earth? Glory to Him! And far is He above the partners they ascribe (to Him).”* (10:18)

7. **Misguided Leadership:** It is mentioned in the Quran: *“Verily Allah has cursed the Unbelievers and prepared for them a Blazing Fire – to dwell therein forever; no protector will they find, nor helper. The Day that their faces will be turned upside down in the Fire, they will say: “Woe to us! Would that we had obeyed Allah and obeyed the Messenger!” And they would say: “Our Lord! We obeyed our chiefs and our great ones, and they misled us as to the (right) path. Our Lord! Give them double Penalty and curse them with a very great Curse.”* (33:64-68)

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## Relevance of Muhammad (S.A.W.) In Contemporary Indian Society

### Connecting the ideals with the realities

Followers of almost every ideology, religion or great personality often try to project their own cherished beliefs as ideally suitable and beneficial at all times to one and all. This often appears to be only a pious attempt to justify or even glorify one's own faith and loyalties. On the contrary, the reasons behind my humble attempt to find solutions to certain problems of modern India, in the life and teachings of a man born 14 centuries ago, are totally different. At the outset, let me briefly explain those very reasons:

1. Muhammad (S.A.W.), born in the year 571 A.D. was not just another preacher or reformer. According to his own announcement, he was the last messenger of God, appointed by God to guide mankind. The message of God, meant to show mankind the path of success in this world and salvation in the eternal world, was revealed to him in its complete and final form. With him ended the long chain of messengers. No messenger or divine revelation would ever follow him. Thus, considering the fact that Muhammad (S.A.W.) remains the last messenger and mankind always has the need and natural right for guidance, it is crucial that this message remains competent and comprehensive enough to totally satisfy this basic

requisite of Mankind throughout all the ages. If his message loses its edge with the passage of time and becomes irrelevant or even less relevant during any age, then it would inevitably lead us to conclude that God has ceased to guide mankind after a particular age, leaving them to grope in the wilderness of ignorance for ever. But it would be very unreasonable to attribute such a cruel apathy to God who repeatedly describes Himself in his last message as the Most Merciful and the Most Beneficent. Even common sense would not permit us to believe that on the one hand, God declares every man as accountable for his actions and holds his actions to be one of the main criteria to decide his eternal abode, and on the other, He fails to enlighten man as to what actions are expected of him and what entitles him to success here and in the hereafter. Because, to leave one in darkness and later punish him for no crime of his, is something inconsistent with God's quality of mercy. Hence it is the dictate of reason, that the message and teachings of the last messenger of God do always possess the vigour and vitality to impart light and guidance to all the people and societies of all times.

2. Holy Qur'an, which is the most authentic source to identify what Muhammad (S.A.W.), the messenger of God stood for, projects him all through as the guide of the whole mankind and not of any particular region, group or age. Addressing him, it says; "*(O Prophet), we have not sent you forth but as a herald of good news and a Warner for all mankind. But most people do not know*". (34:28)

And “(O Muhammad), even before you we never sent any other than human beings as Messengers, and to them We sent revelation. (21:07) He addressed mankind as a whole and his message was meant to bring liberation and salvation to all sections of mankind irrespective of the regions or the times they live in.

3. The message presented by Muhammad (S.A.W.), the ideology promoted by him and the way of life introduced by him were neither his own nor did they emerge from his personal knowledge, research or experience. Obviously, the greatness of any man and any mortal's vision and outlook are always subject to certain limitations. He cannot resist his immediate environment and circumstances imposing certain influences, limitations and prejudices upon his outlook. Such influences naturally render one's message partly or fully irrelevant to the circumstances that are partly or fully different. But the message conveyed by Muhammad (S.A.W.) was the message of the Creator and the Lord of this universe, who is not a prisoner of time or space, who is free from and far above all limitations. It is the message of the Omniscient who, being the Creator of every human being, knows him to his core and hence He alone can fully comprehend all the problems of man and suggest proper remedies for them. Thus, a message that emanates from such a unique source must naturally be, equally applicable and beneficial to all the people and all the societies irrespective of the times and the regions they belong to.

4. Muhammad (S.A.W.) was not a mere visionary but a man of action. He did not confine himself to preaching but virtually proved the power of his message by practically establishing his vision as a system of life over millions of individuals and made it prevail as the recognized law over a remarkably large part of this earth. When he started preaching the divine truth and the way of life based on it, Arabia was a mere desert of evils with just a few exceptional and isolated remains of virtue. But in a matter of just a couple of decades it was totally transformed into a morally rich, economically abundant, militarily strong and culturally wealthy state, which went down in human history as an epitome of an ideal & welfare state for all times. All the evils which he promised to eradicate were truly eradicated. All the promised virtues were literally established. Complete peace and order was restored. And all this was achieved purely on the basis of truth and on the merit of his message and not by the force of swords or through myths or miracles.

5. Well, all this happened 14 centuries ago. But it is very significant that Man was the real addressee of Muhammad (S.A.W.), and Man has not changed during the course of time. In the words of Richard Livingston, "Man is the real problem in all the ages the old and the modern problem! For, the new world is not so new. Humanity changes its clothes but not its nature. Adam puts on a more elaborate and complicated dress but remains the same old Adam" (Some tasks for education). Withstanding all the onslaughts of material changes and social evolutions, the nature of Man, his basic character, behaviour, passions, instincts and



attitudes have remained unchanged down the millennia. They are the same as they were during the primitive ages. Any objective comparison of evils and virtues found in the contemporary human society with those that manifested in the various events of global human history would prove this. Hence it would be fully reasonable if one considers any man of the modern age, or even any modern day Indian as the direct addressee of the message of Muhammad (S.A.W.), which addressed 'Man'.

### **The Indian Scenario**

When one begins one's search for the solutions to the problems in the Indian society, the first difficulty encountered is that of priority. Today the Indian scenario is so disturbing and so complex that even the most realistic among the students of sociology would hesitate to have a full look at the ugly face of realities surrounding them. Caste wars, communal hatred, genocides, riots, terrorism, regional and linguistic chauvinism, untouchability, illiteracy, discrimination, injustice, corruption, superstitions, female infanticide, cruelty, immorality, ... so goes the long list of our maladies. Now which among these problems deserves our immediate attention? A nation as diverse as ours is never likely to reach a consensus in response to this question. In fact, what one considers as most serious of all problems depends upon one's world view, and approach to life. In our view, the most serious problem facing Indian society today is the absence of a plausible ideology and this is the root of most of our problems.

Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru once said; "Legislation cannot by itself normally solve deep rooted social problems. One has to approach them in other ways too." But what are those other ways? In a country like ours, the first way one can think of, to solve our social problems is obviously religion. Religion has always been an integral part of our society. During the olden days, this nation had itself given birth to a number of religions. Even today one cannot imagine India without her religions. But today an objective assessment of the prevailing facts would certainly lead us to conclude that by far the impact of religions on our society have been more negative than positive. In fact the origin of many of our current ills can be traced to religion. Though all the religions might have originally been founded with very pious intentions and lofty ideals, today most of them have either lost their original form or have failed to keep pace with the changing times and have thereby become insignificant or obsolete. Concept of God is the foundation of most of the religions. But today we see this concept at such a level of degeneration that nothing remains immune from being elevated to divinity. Places of worship have been demarcated as the only territory of God. Concept of God has ceased to wield any positive influence on the social, moral and other aspects of human life. God is reduced to mere object of worship and is invoked only occasionally for petty favours. Gods and religions are mere tools in the hands of a few vested interests who misuse the sacred name of God to justify, sanction and promote many evil and harmful practices and sometimes even to endorse totally inhuman rituals.

It is here that the teachings of Muhammad (S.A.W.), the Saviour of Humanity, come to our rescue.

### Concept of God

The term used by Muhammad (S.A.W.), to represent religion was 'Deen' which means a complete system of life and not a mere set of beliefs. The name of the religion he presented was 'Islam' meaning total submission to the Will of God. In the light of divine revelations, the messenger of God unveiled the true concept of God before mankind. According to this concept, God is not a prisoner in the temple, mosque or church but occupies a central and dominant position in this extensive universe and in every human life. Every perfection and absolute virtue belongs to God. Here is just one verse of the Holy Qur'an, to show the concept of God presented by him;

*“ He is Allah, there is no God but He, the Knower of the unseen and the manifest, He is the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate. He is Allah; there is no god but He, the King, the Holy, the All Peace, the Giver of Security. The overseer, the Most Mighty, the Overpowering, the All Great. Exalted be he from whatever they associate with Him. He is Allah, the planner, Executer and fashioner of Creation. His are the names most beautiful. Whatever is in the heavens and the earth extols His Glory. He is the Most Mighty, the Most Wise.” (59:22-24)*

According to the teachings of Muhammad (S.A.W.), God is not a mere object of worship but also the Law giver. Furthermore, regarding worship, he introduced a

very unique and comprehensive concept. The term he used for worship was 'Ibadah' which meant moulding one's entire life in accordance with the laws and the rules laid down by God. He saw any act, performed within the limits permitted by the divine law, as an act of worship. That is what the Messenger (s) of God meant when he said "The whole earth is a Mosque for me." Thus he envisaged transformation of the entire human life worship and all this was implied in the very belief in God. He looked at life as an indivisible whole, never allowing it to be fragmented into mutually exclusive compartments called religious and non religious or spiritual and material. His own life was the best illustration of this concept.

It was this all encompassing ideology and this comprehensive concept of God, religion and worship, that brought about a total revolution within a matter of two decades. It was ideology that transformed the Arabian peninsula from being the hub of ignorance, idolatry, debauchery, warmongering, tribal conflicts, racial discrimination, superstitions and moral bankruptcy to be the cradle of knowledge, enlightenment, uncompromising monotheism, discipline, brotherhood, equality, peace, harmony, solidarity, piety and highest standards of moral excellence. Even today, this ideology persists in its pure and original form. Its addressee, the Man also remains unchanged. Any person sensitive enough to learn from history has a great lesson in this successful experiment. If one's prejudices have not blinded him he should consider the possibility of inviting this ideology to occupy the huge ideological vacuum currently prevailing in our society.

### **The Challenge of developing fraternity**

Next to the relation between Man and God, the other arena where we have disastrously failed in the relation between Man and Man. Although many strong agents of division have been active in this country down the centuries, raising walls between human beings, it was hoped that at least independent India would be free from all such forces and Nationalism would help us to fuse the Indian population into one single, integrated unit. But today unfortunately all these dreams stand shattered. Differences of caste, language and region have outgrown all expectations, posing a serious threat to the very existence of our society. These differences have very often taken the form of wild battles in various parts of the country and almost every suggested remedy aimed at bridging the gulf between these warring factions, has in fact contributed to further polarization and disintegration of the society.

It is a well accepted fact that the most important factor of division in India is caste. The immutable concept of caste is an all India phenomenon, even today. In spite of all its destructive effects witnessed and experienced by our society, neither our series of laws nor the galaxies of our great reformers have succeeded at eradicating this evil. According to the figures provided by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) an official institute, over 35,500 cases of crimes against Dalits of the country were officially registered during the year 2007. (Significantly, regarding these officially provided figures, whether it is the one quoted above or those that will follow, let us not forget that they provide only a glimpse of the real scenario. Many keen observers of the situation in our

country believe that these figures hardly represent 5% of the facts.)

‘Untouchability in rural India’ a widely discussed book released in 2006 contains details of an extensive study conducted by a non government group covering 565 selected villages of 11 different states in India. The facts discovered by this study regarding the plight of Dalits in this country are really shameful. The study revealed that untouchability is being practiced extensively in India not only in private circles but in the government offices too. In 37.8% of the villages surveyed, Dalits were forced to sit separately in government run schools. In 27.6% of the villages, they were prevented from entering the Police Stations! In 35% of the villages Dalits were barred from selling any thing in the local market. In 47% of the villages, Milk Co operatives refused to buy milk from Dalits. In 25% of the villages, Dalits were not allowed to buy milk from such Co operatives. 64% of Dalits were not permitted to enter any temple. In almost 50% of the villages, they could not use the public cremation ground. In 73% of the surveyed villages, Dalits could not enter any non Dalit house. According to the figures released by the Government of India, during the period between 2001 and 2005, on an average, 3 Dalit women were raped everyday in our country.

### **Human Brotherhood**

This horrible bane of discrimination cannot be completely eradicated unless our society initially changes its outlook regarding the criterion to determine one’s status. Muhammad (S.A.W.) too had to encounter such a society, where, birth was the standard to determine the status of a person. The result of this

notion manifested itself in destructive conflagration between tribes and races. Blacks and foreigners were treated with contempt. One's colour, tribe, wealth and the glory of one's ancestors were a vital factor in determining one's status. But Muhammad (S.A.W.), succeeded in transforming those discriminating people and their furious tribes into one strong ideological family, with unbreakable bonds of mutual love and brotherhood.

Holy Qur'an says:

*"O Mankind, indeed we have created you of a male and female and have made you nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Lo Allah is Knower and Aware!" (49:13)*

Upholding this concept, the Messenger of God emphasized that all people are created by one God and originally all human beings are progeny of one man, Adam. Muhammad (S.A.W.), proclaimed *"O Mankind! Indeed your Lord is one and your father is one. No Arab is superior to a non Arab and no non Arab is superior to an Arab, no white is superior to a black and no black is superior to a white except in the matter of 'Taqwa' i.e. piety."* (Musnad Ahmad 5/411). On another occasion, denouncing every kind of discrimination he said; *"Verily your status should not be for putting some one to shame. All of you are the descendants of Adam ... None, except on the basis of righteousness has any superiority over the other ..."* (Musnad Ahmad 5/158).

His contribution to human equality is not confined only to his sayings or to the verses he quoted from Qur'an, the divine book revealed to him. He relied

more upon his practice than his sermons, to promote equality and universal brotherhood. He interacted with people and personally convinced and persuaded them to consider piety, righteous conduct and strong character as the yard stick to measure one's greatness. His teachings and actions were so effective that as people got closer to him, they not only happily gave up their long nourished pride and prejudices based on birth, colour etc., but also began to feel ashamed about entertaining such notions.

On the day of his victorious entry into Makkah, the holy city, when it was time for the prayer, the messenger of Allah invited Bilal (R) an African companion of his, to stand over the roof of Kaaba – that sanctum, sanctorum of the theist world and call people for prayer. When Bilal climbed over roof, some people who were yet to reconcile with the reality of equality and brotherhood, felt offended and expressed their discontent about an erstwhile slave, who was seen earlier as meaner than an animal, standing on the roof of Kaaba. Muhammad (S.A.W.), noticed this discomfiture and delivered an address, then and there, striking at the very root of this racist sentiment. He said:

*“People should give up taking pride in the deeds of their dead fathers and ancestors who have been reduced to ashes in the hell. People with such pride are more contemptible than a swine subsisting on garbage. God has forbidden you from taking pride in your ancestors. Men are only of two kinds, the faithful and the transgressors. All men are the progeny of Adam and Adam was born of clay.”*

(Tirmizi, Kitab-al Manaqib)



Once when Abuzar (R) a companion of the Messenger, addressed Bilal (R) as "Son of a black woman", the Messenger's reaction was immediate. He said; "Abuzar! You still smack of the evil traits of Jahiliyya (i.e. ignorance of the pre-Islamic era)." This brief remark of his was so penetrating in its spirit that Abuzar (R) fell on the ground and asked Bilal (R) to trample his face for the offensive words he had uttered. Such resolute stress on the equality and brotherhood of mankind eliminated all the prejudices that once dominated that society. In the new era, even the erstwhile slaves were chosen on the basis of merit not only to lead large congregational prayers but also to become rulers. Even today it is only this concept of equality before God and brotherhood of mankind that can liberate any society from the shackles of all discriminations.

### **Tolerance**

Another major problem facing the modern Indian society is communalism. This country has been witnessing violent clashes and organized bloodshed between various religious groups since almost a century. These clashes have often turned into massacres of huge scale. The number of such clashes and the damage caused by them in terms of loss of human lives and property have rapidly increased with the passage of time. Figures provided by National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reveal that India witnessed 59,915 incidents recognized as riots by the government, during one single year i.e. 2007, which means 164 riots per day!

Hatred between communities, which was a phenomenon exclusive to the urban India for long, has now penetrated deep into the innocent atmosphere of rural India too. More and more people seem to be shedding off the spirit of tolerance towards their fellowmen. Surprisingly, when the communal frenzy grips a region and the hysteria of hatred breaks out, not only the professional criminals but even persons who are otherwise considered as just and civilized, indulge in purely inhuman acts, ignoring all the dictates of justice, sanity and civility.

Solution to this crisis lies, neither in discarding religion nor in merging various religious identities into one single unit, but in promoting the spirit of tolerance and respect towards the rights and sentiments of the fellow beings and in motivating people belonging to different groups to come together on grounds, commonly agreed upon by them. This was exactly the solution prescribed by Muhammad (S.A.W.) in a similar scenario that prevailed during his times. Apart from propagating the idea of original brotherhood and exhorting people to consider every human being as their own brother, irrespective of what his faith is, he taught people to recognize the freedom of every individual to follow the religion of his choice.

Holy Qur'an says; "There is no compulsion in religion." (2:56) On another occasion, it asserts the same in the form of a Question: "If it had been your God's Will, all those who are on earth would have believed. Will you then compel people against their will to believe?" (10:99). Qur'an clearly forbids its followers from offending the beliefs and practices of people belonging to other religions. It says; "Do not

revile those other than Allah whom they invoke.”  
(6:108)

Madinah the city of the Messenger (S.A.W.) had a large population of Jews. One of his very first acts on entering this holy city was to negotiate a treaty between Jews and Muslims. According to this treaty, it was the responsibility of the state, not only to respect the beliefs of all but also to guarantee them, protection against any kind of harm. Through this treaty, he inculcated the principle of tolerance, in the conscience of the Islamic civilization from the very first day of its inception. When a Christian delegation from Najran came to Madinah, he invited them to stay in the mosque and even permitted them to conduct their prayer on one side of the mosque while he prayed with his companions on the other side.

Muhammad (S.A.W.) inspired a very strong sense of justice in people. He did not permit any kind of injustice even while dealing with the strongest of his opponents or even on the battle field. Holy Qur'an warns; "*O. believers, stand out firmly for Allah, as witness to fair deal and let not hatred of any community lead you to depart from justice. Be just. That is next to piety...*" (5:8). According to the teachings of the Messenger (S.A.W.), treating the neighbours fairly and caring for them, irrespective of their faith, is an essential requirement for one to be considered as a Muslim. He once said; "By God, he is not a believer." And he repeated it thrice. When people asked him "who?" he said; "He whose neighbour is not safe from his high handedness." On another occasion he said; "He is not a believer, who eats to his fill when his neighbour is starving." He proclaimed that life,

honour and rights of every citizen have equal sanctity and must be equally respected and protected.

He took steps to completely discourage the potential divisive elements that conspired and tried to breed animosity among the people. Holy Qur'an terms the act of dividing people as mischievous and villainous. It says; "*Truly Pharaoh elated himself in the land and divided people into sections. He was indeed a mischief mongerer.*" (28:4).

In our society the need for peace and harmony is very much felt and is also frequently talked about. But at the same time, the mischievous elements have been given a free hand to play havoc with the sentiments of the people. They can be seen everywhere working openly and also in an organized manner to pollute the innocent minds by spreading blatant lies, provocative misconceptions and hatred. Unless we bring to an end this contradiction in our attitudes and start a genuine struggle to promote the concept of brotherhood, spirit of tolerance, love for peace, strong sense of justice and at the same time, do all that is possible to contain the elements which sow the seeds of animosity, we have no way out of this grave crisis.

### **Chauvinism**

One more challenge currently threatening our national existence is linguistic and regional chauvinism. During the post-independent era, in spite of all the efforts made to strengthen the spirit of nationalism, it is regionalism that has rapidly grown in the country. It is regionalism that has led to the outcry of separatism and the resultant chaos, burning several parts of our country today. In fact, nationalism, which we so much rely upon, to integrate the citizens of the

country, has not only failed miserably in resolving the crisis of regionalism but on the contrary, it has proved to be the very mother of regionalism. In its essence, Nationalism is nothing but love and loyalty to a particular territory. Regionalism hence is only a shrunken form of Nationalism. Fortunately today at least a section of Indian intelligencia is realistic enough to admit, that apart from other factors, basically, it is our emphasis on nationalism, that has resulted in the escalation of regional extremism.

Muhammad (S.A.W.) was born in a society wherein people had very deep rooted and fervent regional feelings. Arabs used to call non-Arabs as 'Ajami' meaning, dumb people. Every city had its own stock of legends and folklore glorifying its past. Muhammad (S.A.W.) tackled this problem by spreading, not nationalism but universalism, which is one of the remarkable characteristics of his message. In his message, God is identified as 'Rabbul Aalameen' (God of the worlds). Prophet's 'Rahmatullil Aalamin' (Blessing for the whole mankind) and the holy book revealed to him is 'Hudallil Aalameen' (Guidance to whole mankind). He promoted the spirit of Universal brotherhood. Holy Qur'an says; *"And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your tongues and colours. Indeed there are signs in this for the wise."* (30 : 22). The Messenger of God, convinced people that any of these factors do not make any one greater than the other.

'Hijrah' or the migration of the messenger (S.A.W.) and his followers from Makah to Madinah stands in history as a monumental symbol of victory of truth and ideology over nationalism or regionalism.

The fact that Islamic calendar commences from the date of this migration shows how significant this event is in the history of Islam. By clearly stating that “No Arab has any superiority over a non Arab and No non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab...” he shattered the idol of Arab nationalism. His emphasis over the universality of Man, implied one common direction in worship without least hesitation. Besides, believers were motivated to accept one universally common pattern of life. The Messenger (S.A.W.) closed all doors of chauvinism by proclaiming that “whoever calls people towards ‘Asbiyyah’ (Chauvinism and prejudiced goals) is not among us. Whoever fights with a spirit of chauvinism is not among us and whoever dies for chauvinism is not among us.”

### **Strength of Character**

Another arena where the Indian society suffers miserably is that of character and morality. Moral bankruptcy and rampant loss of character are the order of the day. To quote just a few examples:

- 32,766 cases of murder and 21,467 cases of rape were registered in the country during the year 2008.
- Over 1096 lakh cases of various crimes against women were registered during the same year.

A report released by AFP, a reputed international news agency, on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2008 said (Excerpts);

“India needs a complete overhaul in the way it handles allegations of rape. Human rights campaigners say, a German woman dropped a sex attack claim citing pressure and intimidation. The woman alleged

that her 14-year-old daughter was raped by the son of a prominent minister in the resort state of Goa but withdrew the complaint later, saying she was made to feel like a criminal. Separately, a British woman who was raped in New Delhi said Indian authorities do not take sexual assaults seriously as her attacker was freed on bail after serving just three months of a 21-year jail sentence. The German woman said in a letter released to the media that since she filed the complaint, she and her daughter had endured a 'living hell', as police tried to get her to drop the allegation. 'We have learnt the bitter truth, that making genuine complaints against the rich and mighty is entirely counterproductive' the letter said. The woman's lawyer, Mr. Aires Rodrigues, added that the German woman and her daughter were verbally abused by a doctor who was tasked to conduct a medical examination. "Even the victim was treated like the accused by police", he added. According to the latest available statistics from India's National Crime Records Bureau, there were 19,348 rape cases in 2006 – a 678 per cent increase since 1971 when records began. The increase far outstrips rises in other violent crimes such as murder, robbery and kidnapping. India's first female President Pratibha Patil called for stricter punishments and for women to learn self defense!"

- According to official figures, India has an estimated 70 million drug addicts and the number is significantly on the rise, spreading at a rapid pace in semi-urban and backward areas.
- In 2007, the Ministry of Women and Child Development reported presence of 2.8 million sex workers in India, with 35.47 percent of

them entering the trade before the age of maturity i.e. 18 years (Indian Express, 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2007). The number of prostitutes has also doubled in the recent decade (BBC News, 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2006).

- But according to a report by Human Rights Watch, the number of sex workers in India is around 15 million, with Mumbai alone being home to over one lakh (100,000) sex workers. It is known as the largest sex industry centre in Asia.
- As per the National Survey on 'The Extent, Pattern and Trends of Drug abuse in India' conducted by the Government of India in collaboration with United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, The current prevalence rates within the age group of 12-18 years are, 21.4 percent for alcohols, 3 percent for cannabis, 0.7 percent for opiates and 3.6 percent for other illicit drugs. The survey also indicated a high concentration of drug addiction in certain social segments and high-risk groups, such as, commercial sex workers, transportation workers and street children.
- According to a recent report by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) up to 50 million girls and women are missing from India's population as a result of systematic gender discrimination. In India, there are less than 93 women for every 100 men. The accepted reason for such a disparity is the practice of female infanticide in India, prompted by the existence of oppressive traditions such as Dowry system which requires



the family of the bride to pay out a huge sum of money to the bride groom at the time of marriage. For a poor family, the birth of a girl child can signal the beginning of financial ruin and extreme hardship. In the backdrop of this scenario, *Diagnostic teams with ultrasound scanners which detect the sex of a child, advertise with catch lines; "spend 600 rupees now and save 50,000 rupees later!"* This implies that by avoiding the birth of a girl, a family could avoid paying a huge amount as dowry on the occasion of her marriage. According to UNICEF, the problem is worsening as the scientific methods of detecting the sex of an unborn baby and performing abortions are improving day-by-day and the availability of these facilities is increasing in rural India.

### **Remedy**

Now if anybody expects our rulers, political representatives, administrators or officers of our government to take effective measures to bring about any change, he just has to cast one look at their attitude and that will liberate him from all such illusions. He will realize that it would be foolish to rely upon the existing laws, the law makers or the law enforcing authorities to eradicate any of these evils. Both our bureaucracy and political class are totally rotten with rampant corruption and massive criminalization. They are known for their utter inefficiency. To cite a few examples:

- A report presented by Transparency International (TI) in 2005 claims that more than 50% of Indians have direct, first hand experience of paying bribe or peddling influence to get even a legitimate job done in a public office. This anti corruption body estimates that in India the bribe paid only by the truckers amounts to over 5 Billion Dollars per annum. The monetary value of petty corruption in 11 basic departments such as education, healthcare, judiciary, police etc. is approximately Rs. 21,068 crores!
- In the Loksabha formed after the national general elections of 2009, there are 150 newly elected MPs with criminal cases pending against them. The charges against 73 of these MPs are quite serious in nature, such as rape, murder abduction etc. A further disappointing fact that would upset even the extremely optimistic among us who hope for some improvement in the future is that, as compared to 2004, the number of such MPs with criminal records has gone up. There were 128 MPs with criminal cases in 2004 Loksabha, of them 55 had serious criminal records. This indicates an increase of about 17.2% in the number of MPs with criminal records and increase of 30.9% in the number of MPs with serious criminal records. (Statistics based on study by ADR i.e. Association for Democratic Reforms.)

Another frightening fact is that these law makers who have mastered the art of law breaking do not belong to any one particular region or party. No major political party can claim to be clean in this regard.

Obviously, the rot is universal! With the process of elections itself having lost its credibility, art of rigging having achieved its perfection, and with 'season of crimes' being the other name for the time of elections, there is no surprise that our system nourishes such criminals and paves way for them to get elected again and again with impressive margins.

Such being the state of affairs, there is nothing to wonder about, when our esteemed leaders advise our women to learn karate and such other martial arts to combat rape and see no other remedy to the problem. Nor is there any astonishment when a Chief Minister consoles the victims saying; "What is a rape after all? In America, a rape takes place every minute. It is as common as drinking tea. You drink a cup of tea, commit a rape." We have many state governments issuing licenses to prostitution and cabaret centres and earning a pretty share of their income through trade of liquor, and lottery – a form of social gambling. There are a number of other evils around us which we have learnt to peacefully co exist with. Today, an average Indian's apathy towards essential values has increased to such a level and his insensitivity towards moral issues has grown to such an extent that no crime shocks him, no rape moves him, no murder disturbs him and no evil pricks his conscience. Corruption, fornication, theft, robbery, hoarding, black marketing are all integral parts of today's India.

### **An Inspiring Story of Success**

Even the Arabia of Muhammad (S.A.W.) time was not unfamiliar to all these evils. Each evil cited above was rampant in that society too, though in varying proportions. The only significant difference being that,

there was absolute anarchy in that society and we have governments at all levels to witness these evils. The divinely guided strategy adopted by the Messenger of God (S.A.W.) to eliminate all these evils was multi dimensional.

For instance, female infanticide was rampant in Arabia during the time of the last Messenger of God (S.A.W.). Many buried alive their daughters, the moment they emerged from their mother's womb. Rarely did anybody feel sense of guilt about this crime. On the contrary they felt guilty about being identified as the father of a female child. Muhammad (S.A.W.) was successful in totally eliminating this inhuman practice within a matter of a few years throughout the vast area of land that was under the influence of his teachings. He achieved this great goal firstly, by inculcating deep love and fear of God and a strong sense of accountability before Him in every human being. Secondly, he developed in people, great respect for the life of each human being, irrespective of race, creed, religion, region or gender. Thirdly, he glorified the act of protecting and looking after female children to such an extent that people started feeling proud to be called as father of daughters. Even the social practices introduced by him as part of that comprehensive system of life called Islam were fully in support of the female child. To quote just one example, according to the system introduced by him, at the time of marriage, it is compulsory for the boy to pay dowry to the girl and not vice versa! Following are a couple of verses of Qur'an that had great impact on human civilization:

*“And when the girl child that was buried alive is asked, for what sin she was slain.” (81: 8,9)*

*"... Whoever kills a human being except (as punishment) for manslaughter or corruption on earth, it shall be as if he has killed all mankind and whoever saves the life of one, it shall be as if he had saved the life of all mankind..." (5:32)*

Belief in the accountability in the life after death or the Day of Judgment is one of the basic tenets of his teachings. He projected 'Taqwa' i.e. fear of Allah and total abstinence from all acts which caused god's displeasure as an essential character of a believer. According to him the desired degree of 'Taqwa' was such that even in the absence of any external hurdle and even in spite of being under pressure to commit a sin, a man was expected to abstain from sin, purely on the ground of his belief in the Omnipresent God, and his sense of accountability before Him.

Qur'an says; *"He (God) knows even the deception of the eyes and all that is concealed in the hearts"* (40:19)

About the Day of Judgment it states; *"Then shall any one who has done an atom's weight of good shall see it and any one who has done an atom's weight of evil shall see it."* (99:78)

This belief worked as a strong moral safe guard. When people embraced these concepts, it was sufficient merely to inform them, about the merit of virtue and vice of evil and they would voluntarily do the right and abstain from the wrong. Arabs were extremely fond of wine and even used to sing songs in praise of wine. But when the divine command forbidding wine was declared in Madinah, even those engaged in drinking wine at that very moment, threw

away all the wine they had with them, without the least resistance. And now it is part of history that on that particular day, the soil of entire Madinah was wet with disposed wine. So was the fate of other evils too.

Secondly, Muhammad (S.A.W.) himself stood before his society as the supreme example of highest character and morality. Holy Qur'an says; "*Verily in the messenger of Allah you have the best example.*" (30:12). He was an absolute ideal for the people in every aspect of life.

Thirdly, he not only explained the distinction between virtue and evil, but also made it obligatory on every believer to personally promote these virtues and struggle to eradicate evils in the society. As a consequence people accepted the establishment of virtue and eradication of evils as their personal and collective responsibility. He said; "*Whosoever of you see an evil action, shall remove it with the might of his arm. If he is unable to do so, he must orally denounce that evil and if he fails even in that, then he must at least have abhorrence for it, and that is the weakest state in faith.*" According to the teachings of Muhammad (S.A.W.) 'Amr bil Maarooif' and 'Nahi Anil Munkar' or, enjoining people towards virtue and forbidding people from doing the evil is a duty of both the individual and the society.

Fourthly, he introduced and implemented punitive laws to treat those who indulged in crimes in spite of all the preventive measures mentioned above.

Teachings of Muhammad (S.A.W.) and the prescriptions suggested by him in the light of divine guidance for the welfare of human society are incredibly practical, remarkable effective and are exceptionally in conformity with human nature. They

are fully capable of not only reforming individuals but also transforming societies and bring about a miraculous change in human life during any age, if accepted and implemented in totality. However, it is not mere knowledge of his sayings but the pure character that blossoms when his teachings are truly followed that is going to revolutionize any society. Let me conclude, with this verse of Holy Qur'an:

*"Verily, Allah will never change the condition of a nation until they change themselves." (13:11)*

