**The Unique Status of Holy Prophet (PBUH)**

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The Glorious Quran was descended on our Holy Prophet (PBUH) for the guidance of humanity. I take this time to free my mind from our present misery as a nation to savour the sublime thoughts of the Quran and the greatness of our Holy Prophet (PBUH), who was sent as a blessing for the entire universe. In our present plight, it would be a balm to the soul.

These days, Muslims everywhere sulk in misery when they think about their lot in the present-day world. Their ignorance, poverty, incompetence and lack of faith have sunk them in a bottomless dungeon, from where the is little chance of their return. Islam was the greatest religion and once held sway over a large part of the world. The followers of this great religion were regarded as the inventors and discoverers of knowledge during the golden period of its history in the 7th to 10th century AD. History shows that civilizations rise and fall by the ebb and flow of time. At one time, a civilization enjoys its heyday, but some decades and centuries later, degeneration sets in.

After a glorious period of enlightenment, the Muslim civilization had to suffer the first and the last shock with the invasion of Mongols, who sacked Baghdad and ransacked all remnants of civilizations and treasures of knowledge, including 600,000 books in Baghdad’s Dar ul Hikmat. But the real damage to Islamic society started to appear in the early 13th to 15 centuries for which Muslims themselves were responsible for their ignominy by causing violent disunity among the Ummah, imposing a ban on free thought, checking on the acquisition of new knowledge resulting in a decline in intellectual and scientific activity, and loss of dynamism in Islam. Later monarchs unleashed a campaign of persecution on all scientists and philosophers which deterred others to follow the path of freedom. The height of this insanity reached its zenith when Ottoman king Bayazid ii on discovering a few clerical errors in the printing of the Holy Qur’an, issued an edict in 1485 banning the printing of books in the Ottoman empire, which remained in operation for 350 years, during which Islamic age was virtually thrown in a dungeon of darkness. During those 350 years, the European countries progressed by leaps and bounds, and reached a new era of European Renaissance, while the same precious time was lost forever by Muslim forces due to their religious bigotry and intransigence.

The real damage to Islamic society started to appear in the early 13th to 15 centuries, for which Muslims were responsible themselves.

In this shockingly miserable situation, I have no other option but to go back to 1500 years in the wilderness of Arabia where the greatest human being on earth was born as our Holy Prophet (PBUH). Ironically the greatest human being was born in the darkest spot on this earth where there was ignorance poverty and a lack of civilization. Through the courageous and bold steps taken by our Holy Prophet (PBUH), the nation of the Arabian Bedouins was converted into one of the finest men of character in the world. It is tremendously important that the love of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) is the basic tenet of all Muslims and which is universally known. There is no surprise that we Muslims have an unflinching love for our Holy Prophet (PBUH), but the amazing thing is that most intellectual Non-Muslims who have the greater insight to know the truth have overwhelmingly regarded him as the greatest man ever born on this earth. There are scores of examples in this context of aliens who admired the Holy Prophet (PBUH) in superlative terms. Mentions of even some of them are not possible because of the dearth of this space. I have therefore picked up a comparatively new but controversial book, “The 100, A Ranking of the Most Influential Peoples in History” which had something new to offer. Over several centuries the non-Muslims have numerously mentioned Mohammad (PBUH) in fulsome praise and considered his message for humanity as the best course to lead their lives. In more recent times, one Michael H Hart went a step ahead and, in a bid, to choose 100 extraordinary personages who influenced humanity most, put our Holy Prophet at no 1.

Elucidating his thesis, he stated that his list does not necessarily include the greatest people, but those exceptional people who had the greatest impact on history, “and who have shaped our lives and formed our world.” He was also a real person of flesh and blood, unlike legendary figures like Chinese sage Lao Tzu or the poet Homer and so many other legendary figures whose existence is not proven by history. He added that in his selection of the most influential personages he concerned himself with only their individual and personal influence which mattered to him. In this context, he rated Mohammad (PBUH) as having a much greater personal influence on the formulation of the Muslim faith than Jesus Christ had on the formulation of the Christian religion which was elucidated and interpreted mainly by the contributions of his disciple St. Paul.

The chief reason why he put Mohammad (PBUH) on top of the list was that he was supremely successful on both the religious and secular levels. Today thirteen centuries after the Prophet’s death, his influence is powerful and pervasive. His other contenders had the advantage of being born into and raised in centres of civilization Mohammad (PBUH), on the other hand, was born in Mecca in the year 570 away from all centres of civilization. Orphaned at the age of six, he was brought up in modest surroundings.

Mostly from his Christian and Jewish companions, Mohammad (PBUH) became sure of an omnipotent god. For three years he preached at home and with his friends. In about 613, the news of his preaching reached the Meccan authorities who, based on his beliefs considered him their enemy, and then in 622, for the safety of his life, he migrated to Medina 200 miles away, where more people welcomed him. He occupied a considerable position of importance as their religious and political leader. A series of battles also ensued between him and the Meccan Sardars, but his valiant community of Muslims fought with him and defeated the infidels. In 630, Mohammad (PBUH) returned to Mecca victorious. During the remaining two-and-a-half years, Islam spread into the entire Southern Arabia. When the Prophet died in 632, he was the effective ruler of the whole of southern Arabia.

Then there occurred the most astounding conquest in history. The Islamic armies overran Neo-Persian and Byzantine Empires and conquered Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine. By 642, Egypt had been wrested while Persian armies had been crushed at the key battle of Qadisiya in 637. In a small span of a century, the Islamic empire had stretched from the borders of India to the Atlantic Ocean. Michael Hart says that such a large empire had never been seen in the world. Though gradually this huge empire fragmented into smaller units, Persia, ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt remained allied with Islam and Arabia. In Spain, however, after an internecine war of seven years, the Christians conquered it.

Mohammad (PBUH) played a far more important role in the development of Islam than Jesus did in the development of Christianity. Mohammad (PBUH) not only gave theology and ethical principles and played a key role in proselytizing the new faith. The Holy Prophet (PBUH), being the messenger of God, represented the guidelines for humanity through the Glorious Quran which he kept preaching all his life. The distinction of the Prophet of Islam, according to Michael H Hart, was that, unlike Jesus, he was both a religious and secular leader.

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