

Exemplary Life of the Messenger of Allah

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Arabia is a land of unparalleled charm and beauty, with its trackless deserts of sand dunes and mirages in the dazzling rays of a tropical sun. Its starry sky has excited the imagination of poets, travelers and mystics. It was in this land, that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.), on whom be peace, was born in the city of Mecca, which is about fifty miles from the Red Sea.

(Culled from Life of Muhammad (S.A.W.) by Sufi Mutiur Rahman Bengali M.A. p.70)

It was in the latter half of the sixth century, when the world was plunged in utter darkness that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.), was born. The then known world stood on the verge of destruction, with chaos as the order of the day and pre-Islamic Arabia was no exception to this, rather it was in the lowest depths of abysmal darkness; infanticide was rampant, debauchery was looked upon as chivalrous, drunkenness was a common sight and all forms of evil was glorified.

J.H. Denison in his Emotions as the basis of Civilization, wrote:

In the fifth and sixth centuries, the civilized world stood on the verge of chaos it seemed that the great civilization which had taken four thousand years to construct was on the verge of disintegration ... Civilization like a gigantic tree whose foliage had over-reached the world .. stood tottering .. rotted to the core It was among the Arabs that the man was born who was to unite the whole known world of the East and the South. (pp. 265-269)

The religious attachment of 6th century Arabia was idolatry, though there were a sprinkling of Atheists and worshippers of heavenly planets, who offered sacrifices to the sun, moon and other heavenly bodies. Christians and Jews were also to be found. The center of Christian activity was al-Najran, while the Jews were concentrated in Khaibar and Medina. In spite of these varied religious concepts, there was also a group who sought to follow the religion of their forefather Abraham.

The administration of their affairs, like their religious beliefs was also in a state of disarray. Sir William Muir had this to say:

The prospects of Arabia before the rise of Mohamet was as unfavorable to religious reform as they were to political union or national regeneration. (Life of Mohamet Intro. ch.2)

In spite of their religious and administrative divisions, the Arabs possessed a remarkable memory and were an eloquent people. Their eloquence and memory found expression in their poetry. Every year a fair was held for poetical competitions at Ukaz.

In his book The Literary History of the Arabs, R.A.Nicholson writing about the poetical ability of the Arabs, states:

It is related that Hammad said to Caliph Walid bin Yazid: 'I can recite to you, for each letter of the alphabet, one hundred long poems, without taking into account short pieces, and all of that composed exclusively by poets before the promulgation of Islam. (p. 1 32)

It is no small wonder, therefore, that Allah chose an Arab and the Arabic language for His final dispensation and the preservation of His Word.

The condition of the world in general and Arabia in particular is graphically put in the Holy Quran, when Allah says:

Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of what men's hands have wrought. (30:42)
This is the condition which is painted by all the historians, in so many words, about the sixth century.

Before the birth of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.), an Abyssinian army was on the verge of conquering Mecca. but were totally annihilated by small-pox, reference of which is in the Holy Quran chapter 105. This occurred fifty three days before the birth of our Holy Prophet, on whom be peace.

His father's name was Abdullah who died before his birth. His mother's name was Amina. A few days after his birth, as was the custom among the nobility of the Arabs, he was given to the care of a Bedouin wet nurse whose name was Haleema. For two years, he grew up under her care after which she took him back to his mother. but due to an epidemic in Mecca, he went back with Haleema for another three years.

When he returned to his mother, she took him for a visit to Medina, but on the return journey, she died. At the age of six, he was entrusted to the care of his grandfather Abdul Muttalib who expired two years later. At this stage he was placed under the care of his uncle Abu Talib. In his early youth, he used to tend his uncle's flocks.

During his youth, he joined a society whose aims were, to help the poor and the needy, safeguard the rights of the oppressed and support and uphold the cause of justice. He was also launched into commercial enterprises and undertook journeys with caravans to Yemen and Syria. His honesty and integrity earned him the title of Al-Amin - The Trustworthy. At the age of twenty-five, he was married to Khadija - a wealthy widow, whose caravans he commanded. She offered her hand to him in marriage, after she received very good reports about his conduct and honesty in the discharge of his duties as the leader of her caravans.

The Divine Call came to him in his fortieth year and depicting the state of mind of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, Thomas Carlyle in his book Heroes and Hero worship writes:

The great mystery of existence, .. glared in upon him, with its terrors, with its splendors; no hearsay could hide that unspeakable fact 'Here am I'. Such sincerity, as we named it has in very truth something divine. The word of such a man is a voice from nature's own heart. Men do and must listen to that and to nothing else - All else is wind in comparison. From of old a thousand thoughts, in his pilgrimings and wanderings, had been in this man: What am I? What is this unfathomable thing I live in, which men call Universe? The grim rocks of Mount Hira, of Mount Sinai, the stern solitudes answered not. The great heavens rolling silently overhead, with its blue glaring stars, answered not. There was no answer. The man's soul and what of God's inspiration dwelled there had to answer. (pp. 63-64)

The first persons to have accepted his call, were his wife Khadija, his cousin Ali, a freed slave Zaid and his close friend Abu Bakr. For three years after receiving the Divine Call, the preaching was conducted rather quietly with the number of his followers increasing rapidly. After this rather quiet start. the Holy Prophet , on whom be peace, was commanded to proclaim his message which he received from Allah, publicly. Accordingly he addressed his message about the Unity of God and of his being the Messenger of God from every available quarter. Since this belief was threatening their very existence. The pagan Arabs started to mount pressure on the Holy Prophet , and his followers to renounce their cause and take to idol-worshipping. On one occasion, they sent a delegation to the Holy Prophet's uncle that he should restrain the Holy Prophet, from preaching his message. They threatened Abu Talib with their combined opposition. Finding himself in this state, he sent for the Holy Prophet, and explained to him the situation. The Holy Prophet , answered with these memorable words: My dear uncle, if they should put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left, even then I shall not abandon the proclamation of the Unity of God. I shall set up the true faith upon the earth or perish in the attempt.

Impressed with his nephew's firm determination and high resolve. Abu Talib replied: Son of my brother, go thy way, none dare touch thee. I shall never forsake thee. Not being satisfied, they sent one of their chiefs to entice the Holy Prophet , and in the following words addressed the Holy Prophet : O Muhammad (S.A.W.), if you want to sit on the throne of Arabia we shall elect you our monarch; if you want money we shall give you no end to it and if you desire the hand of a beautiful woman, we are ready to present you the most beautiful lady in the land. The Holy Prophet , was far above any worldly temptations and in reply he recited some verses of the Holy Quran proclaiming the Unity of Allah and his claim of being a true Messenger of Allah.

The Meccans were alarmed at the prospects of trying to halt the progress of Islam, so they went to physical torment and boycott. Many influential personalities were being converted and a great mass of following were joining the religion of Islam. This in itself was a mortal threat to the existence of the Meccan chiefs, since their source of livelihood depended from the trade which came from the traffic of idol-worshippers.

Seeing that these could not be of any help, they decided to exert more pressure to the degree. That when the sufferings of the Muslims became unbearable, the Holy Prophet, decided to send some of his followers to Abyssinia to take refuge. The Meccans in their quest to put an end to the new religion, sent a deputation to the king, seeking the return of the refugees. The king summoned the refugees and questioned them about their beliefs. Being satisfied, that they were no threat to the state, he refused to hand them over and was convinced that the revelations of the Holy Prophet, and that of Jesus sprang from the same fountain.

The failure of the Abyssinian delegation, humiliated the Meccans. They pledged to completely boycott the family who defended the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace. Every kind of relationship was cut off, even food and water were denied them. The family who defended the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, were in a desperate situation and they along with the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, and his followers had to take refuge in the Vale of Abu Talib from where they could not escape for fear of their lives. They suffered starvation, personal indignities and humiliation of every kind. This siege continued for three years; in the meantime, the Declaration of Boycott which was hung on the walls of the Kaaba had been destroyed and the hearts of some of the enemies were appeased. These new-found friends were bold enough to rescue the innocent sufferers from their plight.

With the boycott ended, the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, and a companion went to Taif to invite the people there to Islam, but he faced the same fate of rejection. The chiefs of Taif sent some youths after them. They were stoned mercilessly, to the point of fainting and the body of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, was cut and he was bleeding profusely. The Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, and his companion Zaid, took shelter in a garden belonging to two Meccans, who, after seeing their plight, sent some grapes with a slave who was an inhabitant of Nineveh. The message of Islam was conveyed to the slave who readily accepted it.

Of this journey to Taif, Sir William Muir remarked: There is something lofty and heroic on this journey of Mohamet to Taif; a solitary man, despised and rejected by his own people, going boldly forth in the name of God, and summoning an idolatrous city to repent and support his mission. It sheds a strong light on the intensity of his belief in the divine origin of his calling. (Life of Mohamet p.109)

Returning to Mecca, the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, and his followers, faced mounting persecution, the intensity of which exceeded the limits bearable by any human. At this juncture, having had assurance from some of the chiefs and people of Medina, of his and his followers' safety, he emigrated to that city with his followers. The importance of this memorable event of migration, marks the reckoning of the Islamic calendar.

The Meccans did not leave the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, and his followers to live peacefully in Medina. They sent numerous expeditions against them and waged wars against the Muslims. Every advance of the Meccans against the Muslims was crushed and they suffered humiliating defeats in their wars with the Muslims. Having been totally humiliated in their desire to crush Islam, they fell before the banner of Islam and Mecca was conquered peacefully when the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, at the head of ten thousand of his followers entered the gates of Mecca and demolished the idols which infested the Holy Kaaba, thus fulfilling a prophecy mentioned in the Bible as follows:

He shined forth from Mount Paran, and he came with ten thousand saints; from his right hand went a fiery law for them. (Deut. 33:2)

The Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, did not let the achievement of victory un-nerve his equilibrium in acting in a manner which would have justifiably been done in these so-called modern and advanced times. Today, many a nation and party which when placed under the said circumstances as was the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, and his followers, would unleash a calculated and total annihilation of its enemies when it gains power and victory. Unlike these modern barbaric tendencies, when victory was the Holy Prophet's, he never sought to seek out all those who had committed the most heinous of crimes against him and his followers. With one stroke, he forgave them all. except those few who had committed the most barbaric and unspeakable crimes against humanity.

History bears testimony to the fact, that at every step, the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace. sought to achieve peace. He even accepted a treaty which appeared to be at a disadvantage to him and his followers, simply with the intention that peace may prevail and that all forms of strife may be eliminated.

His memorable words at the Fall of Mecca are worth to be inscribed in letters of gold, studded with the most precious of gems. He said:

By God, you will have no punishment today and no reproof. (Hisham)

The teachings which were vouchsafed to him, in the form of the Holy Quran, lay down the principles and mechanics for the attainment of peace and the elimination of war. It says that if two parties are fighting, then peace should be made between them and the dispute settled

amicably. If one or both of the parties, fail to yield to the award and all efforts of persuasion have failed, then force should be administered as a last resort, to bring the recalcitrant party or parties to submit to a peaceful settlement.

This system has laid the foundation of a powerful League of Nations, unlike the present U.N.O. whose resolutions are looked upon scornfully by defaulting nations. The U.N.O. is so structured and composed, that it is quite impotent to bring peace to the world. The two superpowers, for obvious reasons, side with one or the other of the disputing parties. If they can achieve their goal of pedaling their influence, then without any justification, they would side with any of the parties. world opinion means nothing in the present context, only might is right. The teachings of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, are, therefore, the only solution for the attainment of world peace and no Muslim or Muslim state which does not strive for the achievement of peace can rightfully claim a place in the body-politic of the Islamic nation and therefore cannot with any justification be among his true followers.

In the year 632 A.D. after fulfilling his mission which was entrusted to him by Allah, the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, passed away.

This in a nutshell is a brief sketch of the LIFE OF THE HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD (S.A.W.)

We will now turn our attention on the TEACHINGS OF THE HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD (S.A.W.) , and as time may permit, only a few salient features may be attempted.

In dealing with his teachings it may well be summarized in the historic answer which his wife Hazrat Ayesha gave in response to a question about the morals and character of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace. She said:

His morals and character are an embodiment of the Holy Quran

Thus in dealing with the teachings of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, we necessarily speak on the Teachings of the Holy Quran, since to him was revealed the Holy Quran by God Almighty. thus his teachings are contained in the very Word of God and not of his manufacture. If one were to discuss the teachings contained in the Holy Quran. Then it would require hours on end and still one would not be able to exhaust all the beautiful teachings which it holds out for humanity. It is therefore advised, that in order to be able to understand the teachings of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace. Then one should study the Holy Quran in order to be able to gain an insight into his teachings. We pray that the audience may explore the Holy Quran and thus derive the benefit of the knowledge of the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) and enshrine them in their lives.

The Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, received his first. divine revelation in the year 610 C.E.

and it continued up till a few days before his death. Thus the Holy Quran was revealed piecemeal to the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, during those years, sometimes after the interval of months and sometimes in great rapidity; sometimes in short sentences and sometimes in long chapters; sometimes with a new law and sometimes confirming an existing law; sometimes repealing an impractical custom and sometimes giving a new direction. This is in

conformity with a prophecy in the Bible which runs as follows:

Whom shall he teach knowledge? And whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line; here a little and there a little: for with stammering lips, and

another tongue will he speak to his people. (Isaiah 28:9-11)

It may be noted that in this prophecy it is mentioned that the people will be spoken to in another tongue and how true was this fulfilled with the revelation of the Holy Quran in the Arabic language, to an Arab in the land of Paran where the greatest manifestation of the Lord was scheduled to occur. (Deut. 33:2 & Habakkuk 3:3). It may here be pointed out that Ishmael, the son of Abraham, who is the forefather of our Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, dwelt in Paran vide Gen. 21:21 and the descendants of Ishmael lived in the Arabian Peninsula and the

neighboring territories as is evident from Gen. 25:12-18 and Isaiah 21 :1 3-1 7.

The Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, was a Law-giver and he was the object of the prophecy of Moses as mentioned in Deuteronomy 18:18. The greatest teaching which he gave forth to the world is that there is but one God Who has no partner, Who was no begotten and Who neither begets. A short chapter in the Holy Quran is devoted to this theme. It runs as follows:

In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful

Say, 'He is Allah, the One: Allah, the Independent and besought of all. He begets not, nor is He

begotten; and there is none like unto Him ' (Ch. 1 12)

It has been erroneously stated by others that the followers of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, are known as Mohamedans and their religion is Mohamedanism. This is a totally wrong statement. We, the followers of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, are Muslims and the name of our religion is Islam. These names were given by God Almighty vide the Holy Quran

22:79 and 5:4 in conformity with Isaiah 62:2 which says in part:

And thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name.

The declaration of faith of a Muslim is such, that it cannot lend itself to associate the Holy

Prophet on whom be Peace in partnership with God. The declaration runs as follows:

There is no God but Allah and Muhammad (S.A.W.) is His Messenger

The teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) , as contained in the Holy Quran, is a

treasure-house of unlimited knowledge and wisdom in every field of endeavor. By following the teachings contained in it and by applying them for the benefit and welfare of humanity tremendous progress is the virtual outcome.

By virtue of the teachings contained in the Holy Quran, the Muslims scaled the heights of scientific achievement and progress. A famous prayer taught in the Holy Quran is:

O my Lord increase me in knowledge. (20: 115)

The seeking of knowledge was enhanced by the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, who enjoined his followers to seek it. even if they have to travel to China in quest of it.

The Holy Quran has placed great emphasis on the acquisition of the mastery of nature, through scientific knowledge. as much as on the creation of knowledge. It says:

Allah it is Who has subjected the sea to you that ships may sail thereon by His command, and that you seek of His bounty, and that you may be grateful. And he has subjected to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth; all this is from Him, in that surely there are signs for a people who reflect. (45:1 3-14)

In respect to technology, the example of David is set forth as:

And We made iron soft for him, Saying. 'Make thou full-length coats of mail, and make the rings of a proper measure. (34:11-12)

Precision is here emphasized and it is a fact that the Muslims have developed many sciences with the utmost of precision.

Also emphasized in the Holy Quran are the harnessing of wind power (34:13), modern means of transportation to the degree of going beyond the confines of the heavens and the earth (55:34), astronomical discoveries of great magnitude (81:12), harnessing of water-power (55:20-21), etc. etc.

When scientists shall discover that there are worlds other than our own, then the truth of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, shall become more manifest. It was revealed to him by God

Almighty that Allah is: Lord of all the worlds (1:2)

The manifestation of this truth is slowly being unravelled by science and the day seems not far off when the world will be startled with the discovery and then mankind will fully realize the truth of the revelation which was granted to the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace.

There are so many aspects in which one can dilate about the teachings of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, but time being a determining factor, we shall look briefly into a few.

Great emphasis has been placed by him on the performance of prayers. In this regard, he was commanded by God to institute the five daily prayers which every good Muslim performs. Next to prayers comes a tax known as Zakaat which is levied for the uplift of the poorer members of

the society and for community affairs. After this is Fasting for a whole lunar month and then comes Pilgrimage to Mecca which may be performed at least once in a lifetime by the able-bodied. These four along with the Declaration of Faith forms the five pillars of the religion of Islam.

These apart, there are general teachings which regulate the conduct of a Muslim's behaviour in every walk of life. A complete social order is presented. Ways and means are entrenched for spiritual advancement. Dietary laws are instituted. In short, every conceivable aspect of human needs has been taken care of. Such is the comprehensiveness of the teachings which was meant for all times to come. None of the teachings which were given by the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, can ever be considered to be unsuitable for any age or time.

One of the greatest ills humanity is facing, is the scourge of consumption of intoxicants. Intoxicating liquors are responsible for many of the tragedies which we witness daily on our streets and highways. Many innocent lives were snuffed out due to reckless driving under the influence of alcohol. Millions of dollars are lost due to those accidents caused by impaired driving. Many homes have been shattered due to excessive use of alcohol and families are torn apart for the same reason. Only as recently as Dec. 31, 1987 there was an interesting article in The Toronto Star about the ill-effects of the aftermath of alcohol consumption based on a News-letter of the University of Toronto Faculty of Medicine.

The study shows that the hang over is a mini-version of alcohol withdrawal syndrome which results in raised blood pressure, headaches, tremors, sweating, fatigue, nausea, parched mouth, blood-shot eyes, jumpiness and difficulty in thinking clearly. It continues:

That throbbing headache occurs because blood vessels in the head are expanded - alcohol widens blood vessels - and each heart beat sends more blood pulsing through the brain and its covering membranes. Your eyes object to light and your ears flinch from noise because nerves are overactive, as they rebound from the dampening effect of alcohol. Your eyes can't fix on a target and twitch because alcohol has affected the muscles and nerves that control eye movements. The raging thirst is due to a disturbance of body fluid balance. To get rid of alcohol your body shifts some water out of the blood into the tissues and the kidneys. You didn't sleep restfully because alcohol alters the amount of the sleep stage called REM (rapid eye movement) during which you dream and wake up tired and irritable.

The article goes on to state that brain function may be diminished for up to a day after a drinking session and that researchers have found high contents of methanol, histamine and sulphites in alcoholic drinks. In the end of article gives a very sound advice. It says: And try to remember next time that an ounce of prevention is better than a pounding headache.

(The Toronto Star Thursday December 31, 1987, page 1)

There are many more studies being done about the evils of alcohol, yet in spite of all of these, the consumption of alcohol goes on unabated and is encouraged. Ask yourself this question and search your conscience for the answer - If the consumption of alcohol is right. then why is it that if one has alcohol reading at a certain level and is caught driving a motor vehicle a charge is laid against such a one by the police? And why is it that when one is under the influence of alcohol one behaves in a manner which would not ordinarily be done by that person?

The teaching of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, has with one stroke totally prohibited intoxicants. (Holy Quran 2:220; 5:91 & 92).

As with the Law of Moses (Leviticus 11:7 & 8, Deuteronomy 14:8) so too the Law which was granted to the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, has prohibited the consumption of the flesh of swine (Holy Quran 2:174; 5:4; 6:146; 16:116)

The effects produced by food have a profound impact on the minds of human beings as experience has shown. Food. therefore. plays an important role in the formation of our character. our physical state is closely connected to our moral and spiritual well-being. this being the case, it is equally important that we consume such food which will have a desirable influence in moulding our moral and spiritual conditions and which will have no ill-effects on our physical bodies.

It is rather curious that both the Bible and the Holy Quran prohibit the eating of the flesh of swine and this must be of very great significance. It is alarming to note that the flesh of swine has been responsible for the transmission of many diseases to human beings. In spite of the advances made in the fields of dehydration and preservation, there is evidence that suggests that a number of diseases are directly transmitted through the flesh of swine.

Apart from the flesh of swine, Muslims are prohibited to consume blood, any animal which dies of itself, is strangled, beaten fell or gored to death. Also in the list of prohibition is that on which the name of any other than Allah has been invoked and that which has been slaughtered on an altar. (Holy Quran 2: 174; 5 :4; 16: 116,146). On the other hand a Muslim is permitted to partake only of those legal meats on which the name of Allah has been invoked. (6:122). A Muslim is also allowed to eat those meats, lawful of course, which have been caught by animals and birds that have been specially trained for that purpose, but before eating those meats the name of Allah must be pronounced over it. (5:5)

Another teaching of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, we would like to deal with, though in a very brief manner, is the role and status of women in Islam. The Holy Prophet, on whom be

peace, and Islam have been the target of many an unfounded criticism in this respect. It was the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, who has raised the status of woman after she was abased in all the previous cultures. Today, all the rights which women in societies other than Islam enjoy, are a direct result of their struggle which were grudgingly allowed them. On the

contrary, all those rights were granted her more than fourteen hundred years ago by Islam. Islam places both men and women in spiritual equality (Holy Quran 3:196; 33:36; 57:13) and has granted her the right of inheritance (4:8, 12, 13 & 177). In marriage, the woman receives a dowry from the husband as her personal property (4:5 & 25) and she cannot be forced into or kept in marriage against her will. (4:20). A woman has the right to seek the annulment of her marriage (2:228). A woman has been invested the right of ownership of property by virtue of

her own initiative (4: 33), thus she can conduct any business for her welfare. A very beautiful aspect of a Muslim woman is that she, in spite of her wealth which she may acquire, is not expected to spend for the welfare and well-being of her family. This responsibility is vested in her husband (4:35), although she may condescend to help in sharing the responsibility (4:5; & 25).

Lastly in this brief exposition we will say that according to Islam, the relationship between a husband and wife is a bounty from Allah, through love, tenderness and comfort (7:190; 16:73; 30:32).

We will end this discussion with one last aspect of the teachings of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace. This aspect is the unique tolerance which is embedded in his message. We read in the Holy Quran:

There should be no compulsion in religion. Surely, right has become distinct from wrong; (2:25 7)

Ironically enough, the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, the Muslims and the teachings of Islam have been systematically accused, that the spread of the faith has been achieved through force with the sword. This accusation is totally false and without any foundation. The history of Islam belies such a charge. The verse quoted before from the Holy Quran does not give any right to anyone to force any belief on any other individual or group which may be resentful or distasteful to the other party. This law is of general application and concerns all religions. Every Muslim reveres every word of the Holy Quran and it is highly impossible that they would use force to promulgate their religion. However, I will not take up the gauntlet to argue the issue any further, since whatever I may say, could be deemed to be partial. I will assign this duty to a very well respected author who is not a Muslim but who is renowned as a most penetrating historian. This author has written two historical books of the Jewish people

and himself is a Jew. The books he has written are The indestructible Jews and Jews, God and History. His name is Max Dimont.

In opening the fifth chapter and entitling it Mohammed , Allah, and Jehovah of his epoch making book Jews, God and History, he states as an introduction the following: The improbable but true tale of a camel driver's establishment of a world empire in the name of Allah, wherein the Jews rose to their golden age of creativity, only to be plunged into a dark age with the eclipse of the crescent and the ascent of the cross.

He went on to assert in the same chapter.: The Span of the Jewish golden age in the Mohammedan civilization corresponded to the life span of the Islamic Empire. When the latter broke up, the Jewish golden age broke up .. We can only note in passing with a brevity that does great injustice to its quixotic complexity.

He ended that section with the following statement: By 1500 the world's most incredible empire - tolerant and enlightened, luxuriant and sybaritic, full of mathematicians and poets, warriors and sycophants - had come to an end.

Before ending the chapter, he observed: Thus the Jewish saga in the Islamic Empire ends. It was conceived by fate, supported in splendor, nourished by intellect, and buried by fate. By the fifteenth century, Jewish life in the East emptied into Western Europe at a juncture of Jewish history when the roads for the Jews led to the ghetto. But before we leave the Mohammedan stage of Jewish history .. it is only fitting that tribute be paid the magnificent Arabic people who wrought a dazzling and enlightened civilization out of the desert.

Though the Mohammedan Empire is dead, the human element which shaped its grandeur is still living. The Arabic culture was not built on the plunder of other countries and the brains of other men. It sprang from deep wells of creativity within the people themselves. For seven hundred years Arab and Jew lived side by side in peace and with mutual respect.

He ended the chapter by rightly summarizing the cause of strife and tension. He writes: Astute statesmanship can relax the present Israeli-Arab tensions, because they are not caused by deep-rooted racial and religious antagonisms but by temporary political expediencies.

History has shown that Jew and Arab can live together without strife and with mutual profit. This is the tolerance which Islam expounds and which was practiced in the expansion of the faith. No force was used and every citizen of the Islamic State enjoyed the same freedom of religion, irrespective of their religious attachment. This, therefore, in brief, is the answer to all the false accusations which were and are still being levelled by those whose sole intentions are to create mischief and willful distortion of the truth. Much more could have been said about the

unique tolerance of Islam. but consideration of time stand in the way. I will now end this discussion with this last note about the life of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace. Of all religious teachers and personalities, the life of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, is strikingly different, in that it is on record every minute details from before his birth right up to his death about his life. His life furnishes historians with an open book to delve upon and there are no gaps or room for speculation and mysterious evaluations. Whatever has been said in no way constitutes a complete and full appreciation of the very many sided LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF THE HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD (S.A.W.). One can go on and on citing many beautiful episodes in the life of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, and so could it be done in respect to his teachings, but again, time is a determining factor. Suffice it, therefore for this presentation. I wish to thank you all for giving me this opportunity to be of service and pray that may Allah .guide us all to His truth. Ameen

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It was in the latter half of the sixth century, when the world was plunged in utter darkness that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.), was born. The then known world stood on the verge of destruction, with chaos as the order of the day and pre-Islamic Arabia was no exception to this, rather it was in the lowest depths of abysmal darkness; infanticide was rampant, debauchery was looked upon as chivalrous, drunkenness was a common sight and all forms of evil was glorified.

J.H. Denison in his Emotions as the basis of Civilization, wrote:

In the fifth and sixth centuries, the civilized world stood on the verge of chaos it seemed that the great civilization which had taken four thousand years to construct was on the verge of disintegration ... Civilization like a gigantic tree whose foliage had over-reached the world .. stood tottering .. rotted to the core It was among the Arabs that the man was born who was to unite the whole known world of the East and the South. (pp. 265-269)

The religious attachment of 6th century Arabia was idolatry, though there were a sprinkling of Atheists and worshippers of heavenly planets, who offered sacrifices to the sun, moon and other heavenly bodies. Christians and Jews were also to be found. The center of Christian activity was al-Najran, while the Jews were concentrated in Khaibar and Medina. In spite of

these varied religious concepts, there was also a group who sought to follow the religion of their forefather Abraham.

The administration of their affairs, like their religious beliefs was also in a state of disarray. Sir William Muir had this to say:

The prospects of Arabia before the rise of Mohamet was as unfavorable to religious reform as they were to political union or national regeneration. (Life of Mohamet Intro. ch.2)

In spite of their religious and administrative divisions, the Arabs possessed a remarkable memory and were an eloquent people. Their eloquence and memory found expression in their poetry. Every year a fair was held for poetical competitions at Ukaz.

In his book The Literary History of the Arabs, R.A.Nicholson writing about the poetical ability of the Arabs, states:

It is related that Hammad said to Caliph Walid bin Yazid: 'I can recite to you, for each letter of the alphabet, one hundred long poems, without taking into account short pieces, and all of that composed exclusively by poets before the promulgation of Islam. (p. 1 32)

It is no small wonder, therefore, that Allah chose an Arab and the Arabic language for His final dispensation and the preservation of His Word.

The condition of the world in general and Arabia in particular is graphically put in the Holy Quran, when Allah says:

Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of what men's hands have wrought. (30:42)

This is the condition which is painted by all the historians, in so many words, about the sixth century.

Before the birth of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.), an Abyssinian army was on the verge of conquering Mecca. but were totally annihilated by small-pox, reference of which is in the Holy Quran chapter 105. This occurred fifty three days before the birth of our Holy Prophet, on whom be peace.

His father's name was Abdullah who died before his birth. His mother's name was Amina. A few days after his birth, as was the custom among the nobility of the Arabs, he was given to the care of a Bedouin wet nurse whose name was Haleema. For two years, he grew up under her care after which she took him back to his mother. but due to an epidemic in Mecca, he went back with Haleema for another three years.

When he returned to his mother, she took him for a visit to Medina, but on the return journey, she died. At the age of six, he was entrusted to the care of his grandfather Abdul Muttalib who expired two years later. At this stage he was placed under the care of his uncle Abu Talib. In his early youth, he used to tend his uncle's flocks.

During his youth, he joined a society whose aims were, to help the poor and the needy, safeguard the rights of the oppressed and support and uphold the cause of justice. He was also launched into commercial enterprises and undertook journeys with caravans to Yemen and Syria. His honesty and integrity earned him the title of Al-Amin - The Trustworthy. At the age of twenty-five, he was married to Khadija - a wealthy widow, whose caravans he commanded. She offered her hand to him in marriage, after she received very good reports about his conduct and honesty in the discharge of his duties as the leader of her caravans.

The Divine Call came to him in his fortieth year and depicting the state of mind of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, Thomas Carlyle in his book Heroes and Hero worship writes: The great mystery of existence, .. glared in upon him, with its terrors, with its splendors; no hearsay could hide that unspeakable fact 'Here am I'. Such sincerity, as we named it has in very truth something divine. The word of such a man is a voice from nature's own heart. Men do and must listen to that and to nothing else - All else is wind in comparison. From of old a thousand thoughts, in his pilgrimings and wanderings, had been in this man: What am I? What is this unfathomable thing I live in, which men call Universe? The grim rocks of Mount Hira, of Mount Sinai, the stern solitudes answered not. The great heavens rolling silently overhead, with its blue glaring stars, answered not. There was no answer. The man's soul and what of God's inspiration dwelled there had to answer. (pp. 63-64)

The first persons to have accepted his call, were his wife Khadija, his cousin Ali, a freed slave Zaid and his close friend Abu Bakr. For three years after receiving the Divine Call, the preaching was conducted rather quietly with the number of his followers increasing rapidly. After this rather quiet start. the Holy Prophet , on whom be peace, was commanded to proclaim his message which he received from Allah, publicly. Accordingly he addressed his message about the Unity of God and of his being the Messenger of God from every available quarter. Since this belief was threatening their very existence. The pagan Arabs started to mount pressure on the Holy Prophet , and his followers to renounce their cause and take to idol-worshipping. On one occasion, they sent a delegation to the Holy Prophet's uncle that he should restrain the Holy Prophet, from preaching his message. They threatened Abu Talib with their combined opposition. Finding himself in this state, he sent for the Holy Prophet, and explained to him the situation. The Holy Prophet , answered with these memorable words: My dear uncle, if they should put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left, even then I shall not abandon the proclamation of the Unity of God. I shall set up the true faith upon the earth or perish in the attempt.

Impressed with his nephew's firm determination and high resolve. Abu Talib replied:

Son of my brother, go thy way, none dare touch thee. I shall never forsake thee. Not being satisfied, they sent one of their chiefs to entice the Holy Prophet , and in the following words addressed the Holy Prophet : O Muhammad (S.A.W.), if you want to sit on the throne of Arabia we shall elect you our monarch; if you want money we shall give you no end to it and if you desire the hand of a beautiful woman, we are ready to present you the most beautiful lady in the land. The Holy Prophet , was far above any worldly temptations and in reply he recited some verses of the Holy Quran proclaiming the Unity of Allah and his claim of being a true Messenger of Allah.

The Meccans were alarmed at the prospects of trying to halt the progress of Islam, so they went to physical torment and boycott. Many influential personalities were being converted and a great mass of following were joining the religion of Islam. This in itself was a mortal threat to the existence of the Meccan chiefs, since their source of livelihood depended from the trade which came from the traffic of idol-worshippers.

Seeing that these could not be of any help. they decided to exert more pressure to the degree. that when the sufferings of the Muslims became unbearable, the Holy Prophet , decided to send some of his followers to Abyssinia to take refuge. The Meccans in their quest to put an end to the new religion, sent a deputation to the king, seeking the return of the refugees. The king summoned the refugees and questioned them about their beliefs. Being satisfied, that they were no threat to the state, he refused to hand them over and was convinced that the revelations of the Holy Prophet , and that of Jesus sprang from the same fountain.

The failure of the Abyssinian delegation, humiliated the Meccans. They pledged to completely boycott the family who defended the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace. Every kind of relationship was cut off, even food and water were denied them. The family who defended the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, were in a desperate situation and they along with the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, and his followers had to take refuge in the Vale of Abu Talib from where they could not escape for fear of their lives. They suffered starvation, personal indignities and humiliation of every kind. This siege continued for three years; in the meantime, the Declaration of Boycott which was hung on the walls of the Kaaba had been destroyed and the hearts of some of the enemies were appeased. These new-found friends were bold enough to rescue the innocent sufferers from their plight.

With the boycott ended, the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, and a companion went to Taif to invite the people there to Islam, but he faced the same fate of rejection. The chiefs of Taif sent some youths after them. They were stoned mercilessly, to the point of fainting and the body of

the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, was cut and he was bleeding profusely. The Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, and his companion Zaid, took shelter in a garden belonging to two Meccans, who, after seeing their plight, sent some grapes with a slave who was an inhabitant of Nineveh. The message of Islam was conveyed to the slave who readily accepted it.

Of this journey to Taif, Sir William Muir remarked:

There is something lofty and heroic on this journey of Mohamet to Taif; a solitary man, despised and rejected by his own people, going boldly forth in the name of God, and summoning an idolatrous city to repent and support his mission. It sheds a strong light on the intensity of his belief in the divine origin of his calling. (Life of Mohamet p.109)

Returning to Mecca, the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, and his followers, faced mounting persecution, the intensity of which exceeded the limits bearable by any human. At this juncture, having had assurance from some of the chiefs and people of Medina, of his and his followers' safety, he emigrated to that city with his followers. The importance of this memorable event of migration, marks the reckoning of the Islamic calendar.

The Meccans did not leave the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, and his followers to live peacefully in Medina. They sent numerous expeditions against them and waged wars against the Muslims. Every advance of the Meccans against the Muslims was crushed and they suffered humiliating defeats in their wars with the Muslims. Having been totally humiliated in their desire to crush Islam, they fell before the banner of Islam and Mecca was conquered peacefully when the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, at the head of ten thousand of his followers entered the gates of Mecca and demolished the idols which infested the Holy Kaaba, thus fulfilling a prophecy mentioned in the Bible as follows:

He shined forth from Mount Paran, and he came with ten thousand saints; from his right hand went a fiery law for them. (Deut. 33:2)

The Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, did not let the achievement of victory un-nerve his equilibrium in acting in a manner which would have justifiably been done in these so-called modern and advanced times. Today, many a nation and party which when placed under the said circumstances as was the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, and his followers, would unleash a calculated and total annihilation of its enemies when it gains power and victory. Unlike these modern barbaric tendencies, when victory was the Holy Prophet's, he never sought to seek out all those who had committed the most heinous of crimes against him and his followers. With one stroke, he forgave them all. except those few who had committed the most barbaric and unspeakable crimes against humanity.

History bears testimony to the fact, that at every step, the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace.

sought to achieve peace. He even accepted a treaty which appeared to be at a disadvantage to him and his followers, simply with the intention that peace may prevail and that all forms of strife may be eliminated.

His memorable words at the Fall of Mecca are worth to be inscribed in letters of gold, studded with the most precious of gems. He said:

By God, you will have no punishment today and no reproof. (Hisham)

The teachings which were vouchsafed to him, in the form of the Holy Quran, lay down the principles and mechanics for the attainment of peace and the elimination of war. It says that if two parties are fighting, then peace should be made between them and the dispute settled amicably. If one or both of the parties, fail to yield to the award and all efforts of persuasion have failed, then force should be administered as a last resort, to bring the recalcitrant party or parties to submit to a peaceful settlement.

This system has laid the foundation of a powerful League of Nations, unlike the present U.N.O. whose resolutions are looked upon scornfully by defaulting nations. The U.N.O. is so structured and composed, that it is quite impotent to bring peace to the world. The two superpowers, for obvious reasons, side with one or the other of the disputing parties. If they can achieve their goal of pedaling their influence, then without any justification, they would side with any of the parties. world opinion means nothing in the present context, only might is right. The teachings of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, are, therefore, the only solution for the attainment of world peace and no Muslim or Muslim state which does not strive for the achievement of peace can rightfully claim a place in the body-politic of the Islamic nation and therefore cannot with any justification be among his true followers.

In the year 632 A.D. after fulfilling his mission which was entrusted to him by Allah, the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, passed away.

This in a nutshell is a brief sketch of the LIFE OF THE HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD (S.A.W.)

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We will now turn our attention on the TEACHINGS OF THE HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD (S.A.W.) , and as time may permit, only a few salient features may be attempted.

In dealing with his teachings it may well be summarized in the historic answer which his wife Hazrat Ayesha gave in response to a question about the morals and character of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace. She said:

His morals and character are an embodiment of the Holy Quran

Thus in dealing with the teachings of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, we necessarily speak on the Teachings of the Holy Quran, since to him was revealed the Holy Quran by God

Almighty. thus his teachings are contained in the very Word of God and not of his manufacture. If one were to discuss the teachings contained in the Holy Quran. Then it would require hours on end and still one would not be able to exhaust all the beautiful teachings which it holds out for humanity. It is therefore advised, that in order to be able to understand the teachings of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace. Then one should study the Holy Quran in order to be able to gain an insight into his teachings. We pray that the audience may explore the Holy Quran and thus derive the benefit of the knowledge of the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) and enshrine them in their lives.

The Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, received his first. divine revelation in the year 610 C.E. and it continued up till a few days before his death. Thus the Holy Quran was revealed piece-meal to the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, during those years, sometimes after the interval of months and sometimes in great rapidity; sometimes in short sentences and sometimes in long chapters; sometimes with a new law and sometimes confirming an existing law; sometimes repealing an impractical custom and sometimes giving a new direction. This is in conformity with a prophecy in the Bible which runs as follows:

Whom shall he teach knowledge? And whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line; here a little and there a little: for with stammering lips, and another tongue will he speak to his people. (Isaiah 28:9-11)

It may be noted that in this prophecy it is mentioned that the people will be spoken to in another tongue and how true was this fulfilled with the revelation of the Holy Quran in the Arabic language, to an Arab in the land of Paran where the greatest manifestation of the Lord was scheduled to occur. (Deut. 33:2 & Habakkuk 3:3). It may here be pointed out that Ishmael, the son of Abraham, who is the forefather of our Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, dwelt in Paran vide Gen. 21:21 and the descendants of Ishmael lived in the Arabian Peninsula and the neighboring territories as is evident from Gen. 25:12-18 and Isaiah 21 :1 3-1 7.

The Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, was a Law-giver and he was the object of the prophecy of Moses as mentioned in Deuteronomy 18:18. The greatest teaching which he gave forth to the world is that there is but one God Who has no partner, Who was no begotten and Who neither begets. A short chapter in the Holy Quran is devoted to this theme. It runs as follows:

In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful
Say, 'He is Allah, the One: Allah, the Independent and besought of all. He begets not, nor is He begotten; and there is none like unto Him ' (Ch. 1 12)

It has been erroneously stated by others that the followers of the Holy Prophet, on whom be

peace, are known as Mohamedans and their religion is Mohamedanism. This is a totally wrong statement. We, the followers of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, are Muslims and the name of our religion is Islam. These names were given by God Almighty vide the Holy Quran

22:79 and 5:4 in conformity with Isaiah 62:2 which says in part:

And thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name.

The declaration of faith of a Muslim is such, that it cannot lend itself to associate the Holy Prophet on whom be Peace in partnership with God. The declaration runs as follows:

There is no God but Allah and Muhammad (S.A.W.) is His Messenger

The teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) , as contained in the Holy Quran, is a treasure-house of unlimited knowledge and wisdom in every field of endeavor. By following the teachings contained in it and by applying them for the benefit and welfare of humanity tremendous progress is the virtual outcome.

By virtue of the teachings contained in the Holy Quran, the Muslims scaled the heights of scientific achievement and progress. A famous prayer taught in the Holy Quran is:

O my Lord increase me in knowledge. (20: 115)

The seeking of knowledge was enhanced by the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, who enjoined his followers to seek it. even if they have to travel to China in quest of it.

The Holy Quran has placed great emphasis on the acquisition of the mastery of nature, through scientific knowledge. as much as on the creation of knowledge. It says:

Allah it is Who has subjected the sea to you that ships may sail thereon by His command, and that you seek of His bounty, and that you may be grateful. And he has subjected to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth; all this is from Him, in that surely there are signs for a people who reflect. (45:1 3-14)

In respect to technology, the example of David is set forth as:

And We made iron soft for him, Saying. 'Make thou full-length coats of mail, and make the rings of a proper measure. (34:11-12)

Precision is here emphasized and it is a fact that the Muslims have developed many sciences with the utmost of precision.

Also emphasized in the Holy Quran are the harnessing of wind power (34:13), modern means of transportation to the degree of going beyond the confines of the heavens and the earth (55:34), astronomical discoveries of great magnitude (81:12), harnessing of water-power (55:20-21), etc. etc.

When scientists shall discover that there are worlds other than our own, then the truth of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, shall become more manifest. It was revealed to him by God

Almighty that Allah is: Lord of all the worlds (1:2)

The manifestation of this truth is slowly being unravelled by science and the day seems not far off when the world will be startled with the discovery and then mankind will fully realize the truth of the revelation which was granted to the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace.

There are so many aspects in which one can dilate about the teachings of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, but time being a determining factor, we shall look briefly into a few. Great emphasis has been placed by him on the performance of prayers. In this regard, he was commanded by God to institute the five daily prayers which every good Muslim performs. Next to prayers comes a tax known as Zakaat which is levied for the uplift of the poorer members of the society and for community affairs. After this is Fasting for a whole lunar month and then comes Pilgrimage to Mecca which may be performed at least once in a lifetime by the able-bodied. These four along with the Declaration of Faith forms the five pillars of the religion of Islam.

These apart, there are general teachings which regulate the conduct of a Muslim's behaviour in every walk of life. A complete social order is presented. Ways and means are entrenched for spiritual advancement. Dietary laws are instituted. In short, every conceivable aspect of human needs has been taken care of. Such is the comprehensiveness of the teachings which was meant for all times to come. None of the teachings which were given by the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, can ever be considered to be unsuitable for any age or time.

One of the greatest ills humanity is facing, is the scourge of consumption of intoxicants. Intoxicating liquors are responsible for many of the tragedies which we witness daily on our streets and highways. Many innocent lives were snuffed out due to reckless driving under the influence of alcohol. Millions of dollars are lost due to those accidents caused by impaired driving. Many homes have been shattered due to excessive use of alcohol and families are torn apart for the same reason. Only as recently as Dec. 31, 1987 there was an interesting article in The Toronto Star about the ill-effects of the aftermath of alcohol consumption based on a News-letter of the University of Toronto Faculty of Medicine.

The study shows that the hang over is a mini-version of alcohol withdrawal syndrome which results in raised blood pressure, headaches, tremors, sweating, fatigue, nausea, parched mouth, blood-shot eyes, jumpiness and difficulty in thinking clearly. It continues: That throbbing headache occurs because blood vessels in the head are expanded - alcohol widens blood vessels - and each heart beat sends more blood pulsing through the brain and its covering membranes. Your eyes object to light and your ears flinch from noise because nerves are overactive, as they rebound from the dampening effect of alcohol. Your eyes can't fix on a

target and twitch because alcohol has affected the muscles and nerves that control eye movements. The raging thirst is due to a disturbance of body fluid balance. To get rid of alcohol your body shifts some water out of the blood into the tissues and the kidneys. You didn't sleep restfully because alcohol alters the amount of the sleep stage called REM (rapid eye movement) during which you dream and wake up tired and irritable.

The article goes on to state that brain function may be diminished for up to a day after a drinking session and that researchers have found high contents of methanol, histamine and sulphites in alcoholic drinks. In the end of article gives a very sound advice. It says:

And try to remember next time that an ounce of prevention is better than a pounding headache.

(The Toronto Star Thursday December 31, 1987, page 1)

There are many more studies being done about the evils of alcohol, yet in spite of all of these, the consumption of alcohol goes on unabated and is encouraged. Ask yourself this question and search your conscience for the answer - If the consumption of alcohol is right. then why is it that if one has alcohol reading at a certain level and is caught driving a motor vehicle a charge is laid against such a one by the police? And why is it that when one is under the influence of alcohol one behaves in a manner which would not ordinarily be done by that person?

The teaching of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, has with one stroke totally prohibited intoxicants. (Holy Quran 2:220; 5:91 & 92).

As with the Law of Moses (Leviticus 11:7 & 8, Deuteronomy 14:8) so too the Law which was granted to the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, has prohibited the consumption of the flesh of swine (Holy Quran 2:174; 5:4; 6:146; 16:116)

The effects produced by food have a profound impact on the minds of human beings as experience has shown. Food. therefore. plays an important role in the formation of our character. our physical state is closely connected to our moral and spiritual well-being. this being the case, it is equally important that we consume such food which will have a desirable influence in moulding our moral and spiritual conditions and which will have no ill-effects on our physical bodies.

It is rather curious that both the Bible and the Holy Quran prohibit the eating of the flesh of swine and this must be of very great significance. It is alarming to note that the flesh of swine has been responsible for the transmission of many diseases to human beings. In spite of the advances made in the fields of dehydration and preservation, there is evidence that suggests that a number of diseases are directly transmitted through the flesh of swine.

Apart from the flesh of swine, Muslims are prohibited to consume blood, any animal which dies

of itself, is strangled, beaten fell or gored to death. Also in the list of prohibition is that on which the name of any other than Allah has been invoked and that which has been slaughtered on an altar. (Holy Quran 2: 174; 5 :4; 16: 116,146). On the other hand a Muslim is permitted to partake only of those legal meats on which the name of Allah has been invoked. (6:122). A Muslim is also allowed to eat those meats, lawful of course, which have been caught by animals and birds that have been specially trained for that purpose, but before eating those meats the name of Allah must be pronounced over it. (5:5)

Another teaching of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, we would like to deal with, though in a very brief manner, is the role and status of women in Islam. The Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, and Islam have been the target of many an unfounded criticism in this respect. It was the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, who has raised the status of woman after she was abased in all the previous cultures. Today, all the rights which women in societies other than Islam enjoy, are a direct result of their struggle which were grudgingly allowed them. On the contrary, all those rights were granted her more than fourteen hundred years ago by Islam. Islam places both men and women in spiritual equality (Holy Quran 3:196; 33:36; 57:13) and has granted her the right of inheritance (4:8, 12, 13 & 177). In marriage, the woman receives a dowry from the husband as her personal property (4:5 & 25) and she cannot be forced into or kept in marriage against her will. (4:20). A woman has the right to seek the annulment of her marriage (2:228). A woman has been invested the right of ownership of property by virtue of her own initiative (4: 33), thus she can conduct any business for her welfare. A very beautiful aspect of a Muslim woman is that she, in spite of her wealth which she may acquire, is not expected to spend for the welfare and well-being of her family. This responsibility is vested in her husband (4:35), although she may condescend to help in sharing the responsibility (4:5; & 25).

Lastly in this brief exposition we will say that according to Islam, the relationship between a husband and wife is a bounty from Allah, through love, tenderness and comfort (7:190; 16:73; 30:32).

We will end this discussion with one last aspect of the teachings of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace. This aspect is the unique tolerance which is embedded in his message. We read in the Holy Quran:

There should be no compulsion in religion. Surely. right has become distinct from wrong; (2:25 7)

Ironically enough, the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, the Muslims and the teachings of Islam have been systematically accused, that the spread of the faith has been achieved

through force with the sword. This accusation is totally false and without any foundation. The history of Islam belies such a charge. The verse quoted before from the Holy Quran does not give any right to anyone to force any belief on any other individual or group which may be resentful or distasteful to the other party. This law is of general application and concerns all religions. Every Muslim reveres every word of the Holy Quran and it is highly impossible that they would use force to promulgate their religion. However, I will not take up the gauntlet to argue the issue any further, since whatever I may say, could be deemed to be partial. I will assign this duty to a very well respected author who is not a Muslim but who is renowned as a most penetrating historian. This author has written two historical books of the Jewish people and himself is a Jew. The books he has written are The indestructible Jews and Jews, God and History. His name is Max Dimont.

In opening the fifth chapter and entitling it Mohammed , Allah, and Jehovah of his epoch making book Jews, God and History, he states as an introduction the following: The improbable but true tale of a camel driver's establishment of a world empire in the name of Allah, wherein the Jews rose to their golden age of creativity, only to be plunged into a dark age with the eclipse of the crescent and the ascent of the cross.

He went on to assert in the same chapter.: The Span of the Jewish golden age in the Mohammedan civilization corresponded to the life span of the Islamic Empire. When the latter broke up, the Jewish golden age broke up .. We can only note in passing with a brevity that does great injustice to its quixotic complexity.

He ended that section with the following statement: By 1500 the world's most incredible empire - tolerant and enlightened, luxuriant and sybaritic, full of mathematicians and poets, warriors and sycophants - had come to an end.

Before ending the chapter, he observed: Thus the Jewish saga in the Islamic Empire ends. It was conceived by fate, supported in splendor, nourished by intellect, and buried by fate. By the fifteenth century, Jewish life in the East emptied into Western Europe at a juncture of Jewish history when the roads for the Jews led to the ghetto. But before we leave the Mohammedan stage of Jewish history .. it is only fitting that tribute be paid the magnificent Arabic people who wrought a dazzling and enlightened civilization out of the desert.

Though the Mohammedan Empire is dead, the human element which shaped its grandeur is still living. The Arabic culture was not built on the plunder of other countries and the brains of other men. It sprang from deep wells of creativity within the people themselves. For seven hundred years Arab and Jew lived side by side in peace and with mutual respect.

He ended the chapter by rightly summarizing the cause of strife and tension. He writes: Astute statesmanship can relax the present Israeli-Arab tensions, because they are not caused by deep-rooted racial and religious antagonisms but by temporary political expediencies.

History has shown that Jew and Arab can live together without strife and with mutual profit. This is the tolerance which Islam expounds and which was practiced in the expansion of the faith. No force was used and every citizen of the Islamic State enjoyed the same freedom of religion, irrespective of their religious attachment. This, therefore, in brief, is the answer to all the false accusations which were and are still being levelled by those whose sole intentions are to create mischief and willful distortion of the truth. Much more could have been said about the unique tolerance of Islam. but consideration of time stand in the way.

I will now end this discussion with this last note about the life of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace. Of all religious teachers and personalities, the life of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, is strikingly different, in that it is on record every minute details from before his birth right up to his death about his life. His life furnishes historians with an open book to delve upon and there are no gaps or room for speculation and mysterious evaluations.

Whatever has been said in no way constitutes a complete and full appreciation of the very many sided LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF THE HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD (S.A.W.). One can go on and on citing many beautiful episodes in the life of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, and so could it be done in respect to his teachings, but again, time is a determining factor.

Suffice it, therefore for this presentation.

I wish to thank you all for giving me this opportunity to be of service and pray that may Allah .guide us all to His truth. Ameen

Arabia is a land of unparalleled charm and beauty, with its trackless deserts of sand dunes and mirages in the dazzling rays of a tropical sun. Its starry sky has excited the imagination of poets, travelers and mystics. It was in this land, that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.), on whom be peace, was born in the city of Mecca, which is about fifty miles from the Red Sea.

(Culled from Life of Muhammad (S.A.W.) by Sufi Mutiur Rahman Bengali M.A. p.70)

It was in the latter half of the sixth century, when the world was plunged in utter darkness that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.), was born. The then known world stood on the verge of destruction, with chaos as the order of the day and pre-Islamic Arabia was no exception to this, rather it was in the lowest depths of abysmal darkness; infanticide was rampant, debauchery was looked upon as chivalrous, drunkenness was a common sight and all forms of evil was glorified.

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The religious attachment of 6th century Arabia was idolatry, though there were a sprinkling of Atheists and worshippers of heavenly planets, who offered sacrifices to the sun, moon and other heavenly bodies. Christians and Jews were also to be found. The center of Christian activity was al-Najran, while the Jews were concentrated in Khaibar and Medina. In spite of these varied religious concepts, there was also a group who sought to follow the religion of their forefather Abraham.

The administration of their affairs, like their religious beliefs was also in a state of disarray. Sir William Muir had this to say:

The prospects of Arabia before the rise of Mohamet was as unfavorable to religious reform as they were to political union or national regeneration. (Life of Mohamet Intro. ch.2)

In spite of their religious and administrative divisions, the Arabs possessed a remarkable memory and were an eloquent people. Their eloquence and memory found expression in their poetry. Every year a fair was held for poetical competitions at Ukaz.

In his book The Literary History of the Arabs, R.A.Nicholson writing about the poetical ability of the Arabs, states:

It is related that Hammad said to Caliph Walid bin Yazid: 'I can recite to you, for each letter of the alphabet, one hundred long poems, without taking into account short pieces, and all of that composed exclusively by poets before the promulgation of Islam. (p. 1 32)

It is no small wonder, therefore, that Allah chose an Arab and the Arabic language for His final dispensation and the preservation of His Word.

The condition of the world in general and Arabia in particular is graphically put in the Holy Quran, when Allah says:

Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of what men's hands have wrought. (30:42)
This is the condition which is painted by all the historians, in so many words, about the sixth century.

Before the birth of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.), an Abyssinian army was on the verge of conquering Mecca. but were totally annihilated by small-pox, reference of which is in the Holy Quran chapter 105. This occurred fifty three days before the birth of our Holy Prophet, on whom be peace.

His father's name was Abdullah who died before his birth. His mother's name was Amina. A few days after his birth, as was the custom among the nobility of the Arabs, he was given to the care of a Bedouin wet nurse whose name was Haleema. For two years, he grew up under her care after which she took him back to his mother. but due to an epidemic in Mecca, he went back with Haleema for another three years.

When he returned to his mother, she took him for a visit to Medina, but on the return journey, she died. At the age of six, he was entrusted to the care of his grandfather Abdul Muttalib who expired two years later. At this stage he was placed under the care of his uncle Abu Talib. In his early youth, he used to tend his uncle's flocks.

During his youth, he joined a society whose aims were, to help the poor and the needy, safeguard the rights of the oppressed and support and uphold the cause of justice. He was also launched into commercial enterprises and undertook journeys with caravans to Yemen and Syria. His honesty and integrity earned him the title of Al-Amin - The Trustworthy. At the age of twenty-five, he was married to Khadija - a wealthy widow, whose caravans he commanded. She offered her hand to him in marriage, after she received very good reports about his conduct and honesty in the discharge of his duties as the leader of her caravans.

The Divine Call came to him in his fortieth year and depicting the state of mind of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, Thomas Carlyle in his book Heroes and Hero worship writes: The great mystery of existence, .. glared in upon him, with its terrors, with its splendors; no hearsay could hide that unspeakable fact 'Here am I'. Such sincerity, as we named it has in very truth something divine. The word of such a man is a voice from nature's own heart. Men do and must listen to that and to nothing else - All else is wind in comparison. From of old a thousand thoughts, in his pilgrimings and wanderings, had been in this man: What am I? What is this unfathomable thing I live in, which men call Universe? The grim rocks of Mount Hira, of Mount Sinai, the stern solitudes answered not. The great heavens rolling silently overhead, with its blue glaring stars, answered not. There was no answer. The man's soul and what of God's inspiration dwelled there had to answer. (pp. 63-64)

The first persons to have accepted his call, were his wife Khadija, his cousin Ali, a freed slave Zaid and his close friend Abu Bakr. For three years after receiving the Divine Call, the preaching was conducted rather quietly with the number of his followers increasing rapidly. After this rather quiet start. the Holy Prophet , on whom be peace, was commanded to proclaim his message which he received from Allah, publicly. Accordingly he addressed his message about the Unity of God and of his being the Messenger of God from every available quarter. Since this belief was threatening their very existence. The pagan Arabs started to mount

pressure on the Holy Prophet , and his followers to renounce their cause and take to idol-worshipping. On one occasion, they sent a delegation to the Holy Prophet's uncle that he should restrain the Holy Prophet, from preaching his message. They threatened Abu Talib with their combined opposition. Finding himself in this state, he sent for the Holy Prophet, and explained to him the situation. The Holy Prophet , answered with these memorable words: My dear uncle, if they should put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left, even then I shall not abandon the proclamation of the Unity of God. I shall set up the true faith upon the earth or perish in the attempt.

Impressed with his nephew's firm determination and high resolve. Abu Talib replied: Son of my brother, go thy way, none dare touch thee. I shall never forsake thee. Not being satisfied, they sent one of their chiefs to entice the Holy Prophet , and in the following words addressed the Holy Prophet : O Muhammad (S.A.W.), if you want to sit on the throne of Arabia we shall elect you our monarch; if you want money we shall give you no end to it and if you desire the hand of a beautiful woman, we are ready to present you the most beautiful lady in the land. The Holy Prophet , was far above any worldly temptations and in reply he recited some verses of the Holy Quran proclaiming the Unity of Allah and his claim of being a true Messenger of Allah.

The Meccans were alarmed at the prospects of trying to halt the progress of Islam, so they went to physical torment and boycott. Many influential personalities were being converted and a great mass of following were joining the religion of Islam. This in itself was a mortal threat to the existence of the Meccan chiefs, since their source of livelihood depended from the trade which came from the traffic of idol-worshippers.

Seeing that these could not be of any help. they decided to exert more pressure to the degree. that when the sufferings of the Muslims became unbearable, the Holy Prophet , decided to send some of his followers to Abyssinia to take refuge. The Meccans in their quest to put an end to the new religion, sent a deputation to the king, seeking the return of the refugees. The king summoned the refugees and questioned them about their beliefs. Being satisfied, that they were no threat to the state, he refused to hand them over and was convinced that the revelations of the Holy Prophet , and that of Jesus sprang from the same fountain. The failure of the Abyssinian delegation, humiliated the Meccans. They pledged to completely boycott the family who defended the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace. Every kind of relationship was cut off, even food and water were denied them. The family who defended the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, were in a desperate situation and they along with the Holy

Prophet, on whom be peace, and his followers had to take refuge in the Vale of Abu Talib from where they could not escape for fear of their lives. They suffered starvation, personal indignities and humiliation of every kind. This siege continued for three years; in the meantime, the Declaration of Boycott which was hung on the walls of the Kaaba had been destroyed and the hearts of some of the enemies were appeased. These new-found friends were bold enough to rescue the innocent sufferers from their plight.

With the boycott ended, the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, and a companion went to Taif to invite the people there to Islam, but he faced the same fate of rejection. The chiefs of Taif sent some youths after them. They were stoned mercilessly, to the point of fainting and the body of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, was cut and he was bleeding profusely. The Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, and his companion Zaid, took shelter in a garden belonging to two Meccans, who, after seeing their plight, sent some grapes with a slave who was an inhabitant of Nineveh. The message of Islam was conveyed to the slave who readily accepted it.

Of this journey to Taif, Sir William Muir remarked: There is something lofty and heroic on this journey of Mohamet to Taif; a solitary man, despised and rejected by his own people, going boldly forth in the name of God, and summoning an idolatrous city to repent and support his mission. It sheds a strong light on the intensity of his belief in the divine origin of his calling. (Life of Mohamet p.109)

Returning to Mecca, the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, and his followers, faced mounting persecution, the intensity of which exceeded the limits bearable by any human. At this juncture, having had assurance from some of the chiefs and people of Medina, of his and his followers' safety, he emigrated to that city with his followers. The importance of this memorable event of migration, marks the reckoning of the Islamic calendar.

The Meccans did not leave the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, and his followers to live peacefully in Medina. They sent numerous expeditions against them and waged wars against the Muslims. Every advance of the Meccans against the Muslims was crushed and they suffered humiliating defeats in their wars with the Muslims. Having been totally humiliated in their desire to crush Islam, they fell before the banner of Islam and Mecca was conquered peacefully when the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, at the head of ten thousand of his followers entered the gates of Mecca and demolished the idols which infested the Holy Kaaba, thus fulfilling a prophecy mentioned in the Bible as follows:

He shined forth from Mount Paran, and he came with ten thousand saints; from his right hand went a fiery law for them. (Deut. 33:2)

The Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, did not let the achievement of victory un-nerve his

equilibrium in acting in a manner which would have justifiably been done in these so-called modern and advanced times. Today, many a nation and party which when placed under the said circumstances as was the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, and his followers, would unleash a calculated and total annihilation of its enemies when it gains power and victory. Unlike these modern barbaric tendencies, when victory was the Holy Prophet's, he never sought to seek out all those who had committed the most heinous of crimes against him and his followers. With one stroke, he forgave them all. except those few who had committed the most barbaric and unspeakable crimes against humanity.

History bears testimony to the fact, that at every step, the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace. sought to achieve peace. He even accepted a treaty which appeared to be at a disadvantage to him and his followers, simply with the intention that peace may prevail and that all forms of strife may be eliminated.

His memorable words at the Fall of Mecca are worth to be inscribed in letters of gold, studded with the most precious of gems. He said:

By God, you will have no punishment today and no reproof. (Hisham)

The teachings which were vouchsafed to him, in the form of the Holy Quran, lay down the principles and mechanics for the attainment of peace and the elimination of war. It says that if two parties are fighting, then peace should be made between them and the dispute settled amicably. If one or both of the parties, fail to yield to the award and all efforts of persuasion have failed, then force should be administered as a last resort, to bring the recalcitrant party or parties to submit to a peaceful settlement.

This system has laid the foundation of a powerful League of Nations, unlike the present U.N.O. whose resolutions are looked upon scornfully by defaulting nations. The U.N.O. is so structured and composed, that it is quite impotent to bring peace to the world. The two superpowers, for obvious reasons, side with one or the other of the disputing parties. If they can achieve their goal of pedaling their influence, then without any justification, they would side with any of the parties. world opinion means nothing in the present context, only might is right. The teachings of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, are, therefore, the only solution for the attainment of world peace and no Muslim or Muslim state which does not strive for the achievement of peace can rightfully claim a place in the body-politic of the Islamic nation and therefore cannot with any justification be among his true followers.

In the year 632 A.D. after fulfilling his mission which was entrusted to him by Allah, the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, passed away.

This in a nutshell is a brief sketch of the LIFE OF THE HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD (S.A.W.)

We will now turn our attention on the TEACHINGS OF THE HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD (S.A.W.) , and as time may permit, only a few salient features may be attempted.

In dealing with his teachings it may well be summarized in the historic answer which his wife Hazrat Ayesha gave in response to a question about the morals and character of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace. She said:

His morals and character are an embodiment of the Holy Quran

Thus in dealing with the teachings of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, we necessarily speak on the Teachings of the Holy Quran, since to him was revealed the Holy Quran by God Almighty. thus his teachings are contained in the very Word of God and not of his manufacture. If one were to discuss the teachings contained in the Holy Quran. Then it would require hours on end and still one would not be able to exhaust all the beautiful teachings which it holds out for humanity. It is therefore advised, that in order to be able to understand the teachings of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace. Then one should study the Holy Quran in order to be able to gain an insight into his teachings. We pray that the audience may explore the Holy Quran and thus derive the benefit of the knowledge of the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) and enshrine them in their lives.

The Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, received his first. divine revelation in the year 610 C.E. and it continued up till a few days before his death. Thus the Holy Quran was revealed piece-meal to the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, during those years, sometimes after the interval of months and sometimes in great rapidity; sometimes in short sentences and sometimes in long chapters; sometimes with a new law and sometimes confirming an existing law; sometimes repealing an impractical custom and sometimes giving a new direction. This is in conformity with a prophecy in the Bible which runs as follows:

Whom shall he teach knowledge? And whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line; here a little and there a little: for with stammering lips, and another tongue will he speak to his people. (Isaiah 28:9-11)

It may be noted that in this prophecy it is mentioned that the people will be spoken to in another tongue and how true was this fulfilled with the revelation of the Holy Quran in the Arabic language, to an Arab in the land of Paran where the greatest manifestation of the Lord was scheduled to occur. (Deut. 33:2 & Habakkuk 3:3). It may here be pointed out that Ishmael, the son of Abraham, who is the forefather of our Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, dwelt in Paran vide Gen. 21:21 and the descendants of Ishmael lived in the Arabian Peninsula and the

neighboring territories as is evident from Gen. 25:12-18 and Isaiah 21 :1 3-1 7. The Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, was a Law-giver and he was the object of the prophecy of Moses as mentioned in Deuteronomy 18:18. The greatest teaching which he gave forth to the world is that there is but one God Who has no partner, Who was not begotten and Who neither begets. A short chapter in the Holy Quran is devoted to this theme. It runs as follows:

In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful
Say, 'He is Allah, the One: Allah, the Independent and besought of all. He begets not, nor is He
begotten; and there is none like unto Him ' (Ch. 1 12)

It has been erroneously stated by others that the followers of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, are known as Mohamedans and their religion is Mohamedanism. This is a totally wrong statement. We, the followers of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, are Muslims and the name of our religion is Islam. These names were given by God Almighty vide the Holy Quran 22:79 and 5:4 in conformity with Isaiah 62:2 which says in part:

And thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name.
The declaration of faith of a Muslim is such, that it cannot lend itself to associate the Holy
Prophet on whom be Peace in partnership with God. The declaration runs as follows:

There is no God but Allah and Muhammad (S.A.W.) is His Messenger
The teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) , as contained in the Holy Quran, is a treasure-house of unlimited knowledge and wisdom in every field of endeavor. By following the teachings contained in it and by applying them for the benefit and welfare of humanity
tremendous progress is the virtual outcome.

By virtue of the teachings contained in the Holy Quran, the Muslims scaled the heights of scientific achievement and progress. A famous prayer taught in the Holy Quran is:

O my Lord increase me in knowledge. (20: 115)

The seeking of knowledge was enhanced by the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, who enjoined his followers to seek it. even if they have to travel to China in quest of it.

The Holy Quran has placed great emphasis on the acquisition of the mastery of nature, through scientific knowledge. as much as on the creation of knowledge. It says:

Allah it is Who has subjected the sea to you that ships may sail thereon by His command, and that you seek of His bounty, and that you may be grateful. And he has subjected to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth; all this is from Him, in that surely
there are signs for a people who reflect. (45:1 3-14)

In respect to technology, the example of David is set forth as:
And We made iron soft for him, Saying. 'Make thou full-length coats of mail, and make the

rings of a proper measure. (34:11-12)

Precision is here emphasized and it is a fact that the Muslims have developed many sciences with the utmost of precision.

Also emphasized in the Holy Quran are the harnessing of wind power (34:13), modern means of transportation to the degree of going beyond the confines of the heavens and the earth (55:34), astronomical discoveries of great magnitude (81:12), harnessing of water-power (55:20-21), etc. etc.

When scientists shall discover that there are worlds other than our own, then the truth of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, shall become more manifest. It was revealed to him by God Almighty that Allah is: Lord of all the worlds (1:2)

The manifestation of this truth is slowly being unravelled by science and the day seems not far off when the world will be startled with the discovery and then mankind will fully realize the truth of the revelation which was granted to the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace.

There are so many aspects in which one can dilate about the teachings of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, but time being a determining factor, we shall look briefly into a few.

Great emphasis has been placed by him on the performance of prayers. In this regard, he was commanded by God to institute the five daily prayers which every good Muslim performs. Next to prayers comes a tax known as Zakaat which is levied for the uplift of the poorer members of the society and for community affairs. After this is Fasting for a whole lunar month and then comes Pilgrimage to Mecca which may be performed at least once in a lifetime by the able-bodied. These four along with the Declaration of Faith forms the five pillars of the religion of Islam.

These apart, there are general teachings which regulate the conduct of a Muslim's behaviour in every walk of life. A complete social order is presented. Ways and means are entrenched for spiritual advancement. Dietary laws are instituted. In short, every conceivable aspect of human needs has been taken care of. Such is the comprehensiveness of the teachings which was meant for all times to come. None of the teachings which were given by the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, can ever be considered to be unsuitable for any age or time.

One of the greatest ills humanity is facing, is the scourge of consumption of intoxicants. Intoxicating liquors are responsible for many of the tragedies which we witness daily on our streets and highways. Many innocent lives were snuffed out due to reckless driving under the influence of alcohol. Millions of dollars are lost due to those accidents caused by impaired driving. Many homes have been shattered due to excessive use of alcohol and families are torn apart for the same reason. Only as recently as Dec. 31, 1987 there was an interesting article in

The Toronto Star about the ill-effects of the aftermath of alcohol consumption based on a News-letter of the University of Toronto Faculty of Medicine.

The study shows that the hang over is a mini-version of alcohol withdrawal syndrome which results in raised blood pressure, headaches, tremors, sweating, fatigue, nausea, parched mouth, blood-shot eyes, jumpiness and difficulty in thinking clearly. It continues:

That throbbing headache occurs because blood vessels in the head are expanded - alcohol widens blood vessels - and each heart beat sends more blood pulsing through the brain and its covering membranes. Your eyes object to light and your ears flinch from noise because nerves are overactive, as they rebound from the dampening effect of alcohol. Your eyes can't fix on a target and twitch because alcohol has affected the muscles and nerves that control eye movements. The raging thirst is due to a disturbance of body fluid balance. To get rid of alcohol your body shifts some water out of the blood into the tissues and the kidneys. You didn't sleep restfully because alcohol alters the amount of the sleep stage called REM (rapid eye movement) during which you dream and wake up tired and irritable.

The article goes on to state that brain function may be diminished for up to a day after a drinking session and that researchers have found high contents of methanol, histamine and sulphites in alcoholic drinks. In the end of article gives a very sound advice. It says: And try to remember next time that an ounce of prevention is better than a pounding headache.

(The Toronto Star Thursday December 31, 1987, page 1)

There are many more studies being done about the evils of alcohol, yet in spite of all of these, the consumption of alcohol goes on unabated and is encouraged. Ask yourself this question and search your conscience for the answer - If the consumption of alcohol is right. then why is it that if one has alcohol reading at a certain level and is caught driving a motor vehicle a charge is laid against such a one by the police? And why is it that when one is under the influence of alcohol one behaves in a manner which would not ordinarily be done by that person?

The teaching of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, has with one stroke totally prohibited intoxicants. (Holy Quran 2:220; 5:91 & 92).

As with the Law of Moses (Leviticus 11:7 & 8, Deuteronomy 14:8) so too the Law which was granted to the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, has prohibited the consumption of the flesh of swine (Holy Quran 2:174; 5:4; 6:146; 16:116)

The effects produced by food have a profound impact on the minds of human beings as experience has shown. Food. therefore. plays an important role in the formation of our character. our physical state is closely connected to our moral and spiritual well-being. this

being the case, it is equally important that we consume such food which will have a desirable influence in moulding our moral and spiritual conditions and which will have no ill-effects on our physical bodies.

It is rather curious that both the Bible and the Holy Quran prohibit the eating of the flesh of swine and this must be of very great significance. It is alarming to note that the flesh of swine has been responsible for the transmission of many diseases to human beings. In spite of the advances made in the fields of dehydration and preservation, there is evidence that suggests that a number of diseases are directly transmitted through the flesh of swine.

Apart from the flesh of swine, Muslims are prohibited to consume blood, any animal which dies of itself, is strangled, beaten fell or gored to death. Also in the list of prohibition is that on which the name of any other than Allah has been invoked and that which has been slaughtered on an altar. (Holy Quran 2: 174; 5 :4; 16: 116,146). On the other hand a Muslim is permitted to partake only of those legal meats on which the name of Allah has been invoked. (6:122). A Muslim is also allowed to eat those meats, lawful of course, which have been caught by animals and birds that have been specially trained for that purpose, but before eating those meats the name of Allah must be pronounced over it. (5:5)

Another teaching of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, we would like to deal with, though in a very brief manner, is the role and status of women in Islam. The Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, and Islam have been the target of many an unfounded criticism in this respect. It was the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, who has raised the status of woman after she was abased in all the previous cultures. Today, all the rights which women in societies other than Islam enjoy, are a direct result of their struggle which were grudgingly allowed them. On the contrary, all those rights were granted her more than fourteen hundred years ago by Islam. Islam places both men and women in spiritual equality (Holy Quran 3:196; 33:36; 57:13) and has granted her the right of inheritance (4:8, 12, 13 & 177). In marriage, the woman receives a dowry from the husband as her personal property (4:5 & 25) and she cannot be forced into or kept in marriage against her will. (4:20). A woman has the right to seek the annulment of her marriage (2:228). A woman has been invested the right of ownership of property by virtue of her own initiative (4: 33), thus she can conduct any business for her welfare.

A very beautiful aspect of a Muslim woman is that she, in spite of her wealth which she may acquire, is not expected to spend for the welfare and well-being of her family. This responsibility is vested in her husband (4:35), although she may condescend to help in sharing the responsibility (4:5; & 25).

Lastly in this brief exposition we will say that according to Islam, the relationship between a

husband and wife is a bounty from Allah, through love, tenderness and comfort (7:190; 16:73; 30:32).

We will end this discussion with one last aspect of the teachings of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace. This aspect is the unique tolerance which is embedded in his message. We read in the Holy Quran:

There should be no compulsion in religion. Surely, right has become distinct from wrong; (2:25 7)

Ironically enough, the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, the Muslims and the teachings of Islam have been systematically accused, that the spread of the faith has been achieved through force with the sword. This accusation is totally false and without any foundation. The history of Islam belies such a charge. The verse quoted before from the Holy Quran does not give any right to anyone to force any belief on any other individual or group which may be resentful or distasteful to the other party. This law is of general application and concerns all religions. Every Muslim reveres every word of the Holy Quran and it is highly impossible that they would use force to promulgate their religion. However, I will not take up the gauntlet to argue the issue any further, since whatever I may say, could be deemed to be partial. I will assign this duty to a very well respected author who is not a Muslim but who is renowned as a most penetrating historian. This author has written two historical books of the Jewish people and himself is a Jew. The books he has written are The indestructible Jews and Jews, God and History. His name is Max Dimont.

In opening the fifth chapter and entitling it Mohammed , Allah, and Jehovah of his epoch making book Jews, God and History, he states as an introduction the following: The improbable but true tale of a camel driver's establishment of a world empire in the name of Allah, wherein the Jews rose to their golden age of creativity, only to be plunged into a dark age with the eclipse of the crescent and the ascent of the cross.

He went on to assert in the same chapter.:

The Span of the Jewish golden age in the Mohammedan civilization corresponded to the life span of the Islamic Empire. When the latter broke up, the Jewish golden age broke up .. We can only note in passing with a brevity that does great injustice to its quixotic complexity.

He ended that section with the following statement:

By 1500 the world's most incredible empire - tolerant and enlightened, luxuriant and sybaritic, full of mathematicians and poets, warriors and sycophants - had come to an end.

Before ending the chapter, he observed:

Thus the Jewish saga in the Islamic Empire ends. It was conceived by fate, supported in

splendor, nourished by intellect, and buried by fate. By the fifteenth century, Jewish life in the East emptied into Western Europe at a juncture of Jewish history when the roads for the Jews led to the ghetto. But before we leave the Mohammedan stage of Jewish history .. it is only fitting that tribute be paid the magnificent Arabic people who wrought a dazzling and enlightened civilization out of the desert.

Though the Mohammedan Empire is dead, the human element which shaped its grandeur is still living. The Arabic culture was not built on the plunder of other countries and the brains of other men. It sprang from deep wells of creativity within the people themselves. For seven hundred years Arab and Jew lived side by side in peace and with mutual respect.

He ended the chapter by rightly summarizing the cause of strife and tension. He writes: Astute statesmanship can relax the present Israeli-Arab tensions, because they are not caused by deep-rooted racial and religious antagonisms but by temporary political expediencies.

History has shown that Jew and Arab can live together without strife and with mutual profit. This is the tolerance which Islam expounds and which was practiced in the expansion of the faith. No force was used and every citizen of the Islamic State enjoyed the same freedom of religion, irrespective of their religious attachment. This, therefore, in brief, is the answer to all the false accusations which were and are still being levelled by those whose sole intentions are to create mischief and willful distortion of the truth. Much more could have been said about the unique tolerance of Islam. but consideration of time stand in the way.

I will now end this discussion with this last note about the life of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace. Of all religious teachers and personalities, the life of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, is strikingly different, in that it is on record every minute details from before his birth right up to his death about his life. His life furnishes historians with an open book to delve upon and there are no gaps or room for speculation and mysterious evaluations.

Whatever has been said in no way constitutes a complete and full appreciation of the very many sided LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF THE HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD (S.A.W.). One can go on and on citing many beautiful episodes in the life of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, and so could it be done in respect to his teachings, but again, time is a determining factor.

Suffice it, therefore for this presentation.

I wish to thank you all for giving me this opportunity to be of service and pray that may Allah .guide us all to His truth. Ameen