

Achievements of Islam

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It is he who has sent among the unlettered an Apostle from among themselves, to recite to them His signs and verses, to purify them, Qur'an: and to instruct them in the scripture and wisdom" (Chapter 62; Verse 2).

This week Muslims all over the world, are celebrating the birthday of the Holy Prophet. This year has a special significance; it is the 1400th year of the declaration of the prophethood and the revelation of the Holy Book, i.e. the Qur'an.

The achievements of the Holy Prophet, in a short period of 23 years, are too numerous and far-reaching in their impact to be described here. To give a glimpse of some of the aspects of Islam, I would like to mention that it was Islam that re-established the belief in One and Universal God. It was Islam that recognized the prophets, who had appeared in other nations before Muhammad, as true Prophets. It was Islam which freed mankind from the supposed stigma of inherent evil and sin, and thus bestowed an everlasting dignity to humanity. It was Islam that said that "no bearer of burdens bears the burden of another" – that is the children of Adam cannot be condemned for Adam's supposed sin. It was Islam that laid no special rituals to accept a man in its fold, declaring that "every child is born a Muslim; it is his parents who take him away from Islam and convert him Judaism, Christianity or other religion" – that is, he does not need any permit to come back to his original home, Islam.

It was Islam that created a direct relationship between God and individual man. If he abstains from sins, or if, after committing a sin, repents sincerely, there would be no need of any intercessor. God Himself will forgive him. Muslim preachers have no privilege of forgiving sin on behalf of God, or of granting paradise quarters to their followers. Thus Islam has made each and every person responsible for his own actions.

Islam treated man as man, not as God; it recognized the shortcoming of human beings; and gave them a code of conduct which combines the lofty ideals of Love with the practical aspects of Justice. It has laid down clear rules for every aspect of life, which are based on justice and cannot be violated and after a man has achieved that minimum degree of piety, he is exhorted and encouraged to reach the higher and higher goal of moral and spiritual perfection. This combination of minimum requirements of justice with maximum aspiration of lofty morals is the most unique aspect of the religion of God which is Islam.

How Islam was spread?

“And the leaders among them (i.e. the unbelievers) go (saying) “Walk ye away and remain constant to your gods; for this (Islam) is truly a thing designed (against you)” (Qur’an 38:6) Islam, in its infancy, was a secret mission. After 3 years the Holy Prophet announced openly his message to the people of Mecca. The news of new religion traveled far and wide, and the hurling of open denunciation at the ancestral idols of Arabs by the Holy Prophet set all Arabia ablaze.

The resentment, at first, led them to approach his uncle and guardian, Abu Talib, to persuade him to silence his nephew. Abu Talib conveyed their message to Muhammad. Muhammad replied; “Uncle dear, even if they place the Sun in my right hand and the Moon in my left hand in order to turn me away from the work which I have been entrusted by Allah to do, I will not listen to them”. Saying this he burst into tears. Abu Talib said “Go in peace, my son! And do what thou wilt, for, by God! I will not abandon thee”. This decision of Abu-Talib infuriated the Meccans.

As a last attempt they approached Muhammad himself. They told him: “If your ambition is to acquire wealth, we will amass wealth for you as much as you may ever desire, and if you are aspiring for power and honor, we are prepared to accept you as our kind and overlord; and if you have any fancy for beauty, you shall have the hand of the fairest maiden in the land”. Muhammad’s reply was short and clear: “Neither I want wealth nor do I want power or beauty. I have been commissioned by Allah as a warner to the mankind, I am communicating His message to you. If you accept it, you shall have facility in this life and the life hereafter, and should you reject it, verily, God will decide between you and me”. And God decided in favor of his own religion. In spite of the bitterest persecution suffered by the Muslims at the hand of the Meccans, Islam made steady progress. And, in the end, even its erstwhile enemies were attracted to its fold.

Mercy for All Worlds

“And We did not send thee (Muhammad) but for the whole mankind”. (Qur’an, 34:28) Look at the major religions of the world minutely and you will find that it is only Islam which claimed from the beginning to be the religion for the whole mankind. God sent, before Muhammad, thousands of prophets and apostles to different places and nations to guide their people to the right path. It should be mentioned here that the word ‘Prophet’, when used by a Muslim, does not mean ‘one who foretells the events’. Foretelling the events is not a very important function of a ‘Prophet’. A prophet, according to Islam, is sent by

God to call people to His path. He is the link between Allah and His creatures, and by following his foot-prints the followers can be sure of receiving the glory of God. Anyhow, when as a result of the efforts of those Prophets mankind reached the stage of maturity, the Holy Prophet of Islam was sent by God for the whole mankind. He re-affirmed, revived, consolidated and perfected the teachings of the earlier prophets (which by passage of time had become distorted and disfigured). Muhammad came in the world, announcing that, "I have been sent to all people-red and black and yellow". Among his early followers were people from Ethiopia, Iran, Rome and India. According to the Qur'an, Allah is not a tribal god but the 'Lord of Universe'; and the Holy Prophet is 'The Mercy for the universe'. By sending his messengers to Asia Minor, Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, Syria, Yemen, Bahrain, Oman and many other places, calling those people to 'come within the fold of Islam, Muhammad left an undeniable proof that his was the universal religion, unfettered with the shackles of tribe, religion, color or race.