

Chapter 5: The Eve Of the Proclamation of Islam

Notwithstanding the fact that Arabia was a pit of iniquity and the bastion of idolatry and polytheism, Muhammad himself was free from all vice and sin, and he never bowed before any idol. Even before he formally declared that he came to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth, his own conduct and character were a reflection of Quran Majid – the Book of Allah and the Manifesto of Islam. Even his enemies have not been able to point out any divergence between his conduct and the precepts of Quran – at any time – after or before the Proclamation of his mission as the Messenger of Allah. After the Proclamation of his mission as Allah's messenger, he placed pagan practices and customs under proscription. But there is no evidence that before doing so, he himself ever committed a pagan act, or indeed any act repugnant to Quran.

It appears that Quran Majid was etched on the heart of Muhammad from beginning to end, and it also appears that he "preached" Islam even before the Proclamation but only through his deeds and not with his words. His deeds were just as eloquent as his speeches, and they proclaimed to the world what manner of man he was. After all, it were the pagans who called him Sadig (=Truthful) and Amin (=Trustworthy), and they were the same people who, in later years, persecuted him, hunted him, banished him, and set a price on his head.

Muhammad's demeanor preached a silent sermon!

Depraved and wanton as the pagan Arabs were, even they admired truthfulness, and they admired it even in an enemy. They admired Muhammad for his truthfulness yet their admiration did not inhibit them from conspiring to kill him when he denounced their idolatry and polytheism. They loved nothing more than to kill him ever since he invited them to Islam but they never questioned his integrity and trustworthiness. On this point there cannot be a testimony more unimpeachable than theirs.

The citizens of Makka admired not only Muhammad's integrity but also his judgment. At one time, the Quraysh were rebuilding the Kaaba, and in one of the walls they had to fit the Black Stone. Someone had to bring the Black Stone to the site of construction, lift it from the ground, and put it in its place in the wall. Who was going to do it?

Each clan claimed the honor for itself but other clans were not willing to defer to anyone in this matter. The disagreement led to violent speeches, and it was not long before the swords were drawn. The sword was going to decide who would place the Black Stone in the wall.

At that moment an old Arab intervened, and suggested that instead of fighting against, and killing each other, the chiefs of the clans ought to wait and see who would be the first man to enter the precincts of the Kaaba on the following morning, and then submit the case for adjudication to him.

It was a wise suggestion, and the chiefs wisely accepted it. Next morning when the gate of Kaaba was opened, they noticed that it was the man they called Sadiq and Amin who was entering through it. They were all glad that it was he, and they all agreed to refer their dispute to him, and to abide by his decision.

Muhammad ordered a sheet of cloth to be brought and to be spread on the ground. He then placed the Stone on it, and asked each chief to lift one of its corners, and to carry it to the foot of the wall of Kaaba. When it was done, he himself lifted the Stone and placed it in position.

Muhammad's decision satisfied everyone. By his wisdom, he had saved faces and he had obviated bloodshed. The incident also proved that in moments of crisis, the Arabs deferred to his opinion. They knew that he had all the virtues held high in their scale of values.

Muhammad was an inspired leader of men.

Sir William Muir

The circumstances which gave occasion for the decision of Mohammed (when Kaaba was being rebuilt and he put the Black Stone in place) strikingly illustrate the absence of any paramount authority in Mecca.

(The Life of Mohammed, London, 1877)

Muhammad at this time was 35 years old. His temples were faintly silvered. He was a man much devoted to his family, and had a great fondness for children. His sons, Qasim and Abdullah, had died in their infancy. After their death, he and Khadija adopted Ali as their son. Ali was the youngest son of Muhammad's uncle and guardian, Abu Talib. He was five years old when he came into their house, and filled a void in their life. They brought him up and educated him. He grew up surrounded with their love.

In the years to come, Ali showed himself a most splendid product of the upbringing and education that Muhammad and Khadija gave him. He was destined to be the most versatile young man in the entire entourage of Muhammad, the Messenger of God.

Sir William Muir

Shortly after the rebuilding of the Kaaba, Mohammed comforted himself for the loss of his infant son

Casim by adopting Ali, the child of his friend and former guardian, Abu Talib.

Ali, at this time not above five or six years of age, remained ever after with Mohammed, and they exhibited towards each other the mutual attachment of parent and child.

(The Life of Mohammed, London. 1877)

As noted before, Muhammad was endowed with a contemplative cast of mind. As the years passed, he became more and more absorbed in contemplation. He had discovered a cave called Hira, three miles in the hills to the north-east of Makka. To be free from extraneous distractions, and from any possible interference in his reflections, he left the city, went to the hills, and spent the long summer days in Hira.

Sometimes Muhammad Mustafa went to Hira alone, but quite often he took Khadija and the little boy, Ali, with him. The three of them spent the day together on top of the hill, and returned home in the evening.

From the cliffs of Hira, Muhammad could survey the immensity of heaven and the earth, and in silent wonder he contemplated the line where they met. How could one comprehend the greatness of the Creator Who created such vastness and Who regulates it all? What was so wonderful as the stars glittering in a tranquil sky or as intriguing as the Destiny of Man? And could anyone fathom the mystery of the two great abstractions which cradled the universe – Space (=Makan) and Time (=Zaman)? Muhammad sought answers to questions that embody perennial mysteries of human existence. For him, all creation was veiled in mystery. He spent hours reflecting on the awesome Intelligence and the constancy of Creation.

But as mysterious as the universe was, it was obvious to Muhammad that it was governed by immutable laws. He could almost "see" an organization and a system at work; without such organization and system there would only be chaos in both the celestial and the terrestrial spheres of creation.

(A few years later when Muhammad told the Arabs that God had sent him among them as His messenger, they challenged him to show them a "miracle." "A miracle?" asked Muhammad. To see a miracle, all that they had to do was to open their eyes and to look around. Wasn't the whole universe full of miracles? What miracles were more wonderful than the rising and setting of the sun, the full moon sailing across the sky, the stars in their revolutions, the incandescent heaven, the change of the seasons, the upheaving bosom of the ocean, and the love of a mother for her child?)

If the immensity and majesty of Creation filled Muhammad's mind with wonder, they also filled his heart with humility. It might have occurred to him that if intellect could not apprehend the Creator and His mighty works, perhaps love could. He, therefore, let intellect defer to love – the love of his Creator.

Muhammad also reflected on the state of the Arabs – their idolatry, their lust for blood and practice of infanticide, and the emptiness, meaninglessness, aimlessness and dreariness of their lives.

But for Muhammad, the long years of "spiritual apprenticeship" and his solitary explorations in the

domain of the soul, were coming to an end. He might have sensed that the time to turn his back upon a life of contemplation and meditation had come, and that he had soon to plunge into a life of action and conflict.

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