

## Publishers Note

Ever since the advent of despotic rulers on Earth, humanity has suffered a diversity of indignities, gyration disintegrations free will and confiscation of human freedoms. Humanity suffered greatly the tyrannies of the tyrants and oppression of inhuman rulers, sufferings both tragic and bloody, resulting in massacres of thousands, even millions of people, uprooting of many more, transgressing upon their honor demolishing their home and hearth usurping their lands. Killings, fire and pillaging was the tyrant's order of the day.

Humanity experienced no relief from its endless sufferings and forced subjugation except while under the protection of heavenly religions delivered by such great Prophets of Divinity as Abraham, Moses, Jesus (peace be upon them) and the Last and the most perfect of them, the holy Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (s.a.w).

The Final Prophet was ordained at a particularly difficult juncture of social development when human communities had turned their backs upon all the divine religions and even against Allah. A deeper study of that period, about six centuries after Jesus Christ (a.s), is essential to be able to comprehend the prevailing environment.

Describing the period in which the Prophet(s.a.w) was ordained, the Leader of the Faithful, Ali ibn Abi Talib(a.s.) said: "Allah sent him when there hadn't been a messenger for a long time, when the nations were in deep slumber, vilest evils raising their heads, men's affairs disrupted, bloody wars raging everywhere, world devoid of light dominated by arrogance, the tree of life dried up with its leaves turned yellow holding out no hope of any fruit, with its waters deep and inaccessible, the guiding signposts all ruined, the banners of annihilation raised aloft staring sternly at its subjects, frowning upon the seeker, its fruit being sedition and its food a rotting carcass, its dress fear and its head cover a hanging sword."

He further added: "Allah sent Muhammad (s.a.w) as it waiter to all the worlds and as it trustee of the Qur'an, while you, O' Arabs, were followers of the worst of creeds dwelling in the worst of abodes, kneeling down among rough stones and venomous serpents, drinking muddy water, eating disgusting food, shedding your own blood, severing your nearest relations; when idols were set up among you and

sins stuck with you.

He further said: "He, the Exalted, deputed Muhammad (s. a. w.) when the people of live Earth were divided into groups, their desires were diverse, and theft ways disunited...", and similar other discourses portraying the bitter conditions and painful sufferings with which human beings were afflicted. The Prophet of Islam with total devotion, unparalleled zeal and highest sacrifices spread Islam to the hounds of Arabian Peninsula in his blessed lifetime.

Later, the struggle was continued by Muslims under the leadership of the Imams (a.s) from his progeny against the tyrants of successive reigns, both within the Islamic community and outside of it. Many states perished, and the glorious procession of Islam marched on joined by millions of the oppressed of the Earth, the *mustaz'afin*, who sought deliverance from subjugation and darkness towards true freedom in Allah's servitude and eternal light.

Yet, a great many of them were prevented from the true path by harriers of darkness set up by the tyrants. Again and again forces of despotism overcame human progress throwing the world into dark abyss. In this century the powers of darkness rose again so that humanity witnessed two of the bitterest tragedies in human history: worst tragedies ever seen during the so-called civilized age such that it has been called – the age of knowledge, of civilization and technology – that is, the two world wars whose harvest was the lives of uncounted people.

As a result of those World Wars there rose a great cry for peace and the right of humanity to live in freedom, dignity and peace, which was expressed in a call for establishing a charter for peace and human rights. This outcry was a true expression of the humanity's long and bitter suffering experienced through innumerable centuries of torment, especially during the preceding two centuries. Thus, there was born the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights', on 10th of December 1948, following the end of the Second World War. It was signed by 48 member states, while communist countries (USSR, Belorussia, Ukraine, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Poland), South Africa, and Saudi Arabia abstained.

On the other hand Islam centuries earlier was the first to give man his civilized values and pioneer human rights. The stress on man's rights and duties is quite clearly embodied in the enduring constitution of Islam, the Glorious Qur'an and the noble Sunnah (traditions) of the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.).

The Fourth Imam of Able Bait (the Sacred Household), Ali ibn Hussain, Sajjad (a.s.), composed a thesis on human rights, which is still the focus of attention and analysis of serious researchers of social sciences.

But western historians of human rights and their development stepped wide over the Islamic period in a long stride to reach the eighteenth century, when the French Universal Declaration of Human Rights was proclaimed on 28th of August 1789 and later incorporated in the French constitution on the 3rd of

September 1791, neglecting, knowingly or unwittingly the fact that Islam had much earlier presented to the world the most elaborate bill on human rights.

Despite the fact that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights laid emphasis on the fundamental need for establishing and guaranteeing the essential and natural human rights, nevertheless it remained an experiment denoting an earthly attempt lacking full understanding and a true comprehension of the Purports of the rights and related considerations and objects which were to guide the precepts of the proposed bill of rights.

Consequently, the authors failed to see much of what should have been included as the fundamental rights of man. They confined their attention to peripheral matters, more concerned with their material requirements, regarding wrong as right, and right as wrong, unaware that Allah the Almighty,

**"Knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they do not comprehend anything out of His knowledge except what He wills".<sup>1</sup>**

He did not legislate religion except on the basis of confirming the right and condemning the wrong by whosoever it may be committed, at all times and at all places.

Here is a pioneer Islamic presentation whose fundamental articles were presented by the learned scholar, `Allama Shaikh Muhammad Ali Taskhiri, before the Organization of the Islamic conference (OIC).

An official recommendation to record this Declaration was made in 1979, when the 10th Conference of the Foreign Ministers decided to form a consulting committee of Islamic experts to prepare a bill regarding human rights in Islam. It was referred to the 11th Conference which, in turn referred it to a legal subcommittee. The amended recommendations were presented at the 3rd Islamic Summit Conference, which referred it to another committee. The 4th Conference of the Foreign Ministers in Dacca agreed upon the bill's introduction and Article 1, referring the other articles to a third committee; then followed a succession of conferences which emphasized it.

At last, at the Tehran meeting convened in December 1989 the final format was drafted, and finally approved by the 19th Conference of the Foreign Ministers at Cairo. Thus, the bill was circulated in ten conferences of the Foreign Ministers (held in Fez, Islamabad, Baghdad, Niami, Dacca, Sanaa, Amman, Riyadh, Tehran and Cairo) as well as summit conferences in Ta'if, Casablanca and Kuwait, as well as a number of experts committees the last of which was one convened at Tehran.

Human Rights is something that must be practiced rather than preached as many laws have been drafted and too many bills presented, but they remained merely "ink on paper", covered with dust, in the tellers of history and disused archives, like the code of Hammurabi engraved on a solid, silent obelisk of ancient times.

It needs sincere purpose and, a determined will to translate the word from its theoretical concept to its practical application in human existence so that man might regain his right and attain complete freedom in life as prescribed by Allah, and time which lie was created.

This present publication is an analytical study of human rights in Islam as a prescription of divine wisdom in a comparison with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights framed according to the unenlightened opinions of human beings. This survey of the two Declarations goes a long way in confirming the foresight of Islam in treating all aspects of human life at all times and places. The prolific and persuasive pen of the well-known Islamic jurisprudent and scholar, Shaikh Muhammad Ali Taskhiri, has fulfilled a compelling need of the moment in elucidating many of the complexities of this fundamentally important international issue.

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1. The Holy Qur'an, Surah 2 Al Baqara, Verse 255

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