

Moral Reforms in a Community: Modus Operandi in the Light of Sīrah

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Version of Record Online/Print: 27-Jun-19

Accepted: 27-May-19

Received: 31-Jan-19

Abstract

It's always the people who define the status of a society. If the people of a society are civilized, the society will be called an ideal society. Moral reforms and behavioural therapy of individuals of the society are basic factors to establish an ideal society. Such an ideal society was established by Prophet Muḥammad (P.B.U.H) in Madina where he laid the foundations of brotherhood and equality among citizens of that state. He showed tolerance towards people belonging to different religions by protecting all their human rights and by providing indiscriminate and quick justice. He not only made the social institutions strong but also developed a history of human civilization. We simply need to work on our moral values and behaviours. We should study the daily life of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H) and mould our lives according to that. Dire need of the modern world is the rectification of human behavior in the light of the ideal life of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H). It will give an opportunity to breathe the same spirit into the contemporary social attitudes so that our society may become peaceful.

Keywords: peaceful society, moral reforms, strategy, attitude, sirah,

The life of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) is a living example of practical application of Islamic teachings in this world after Allah's will. It is in accordance with all situations for all areas of the whole human world. Human life gets bright light from the life of Muhammad (PBUH) only which represents all the aspects of humanity. Hence every of its deed harmonises with high requirements of humanity. It means that the Holy life is the mirror looking into which man can rectify his character and adopt good channels and devices for his progress. Keeping these points in view, the devices which the Holy Prophet (PBUH) used to reform the unlettered people and to lead them to success and glory have been discussed in this article.

Society means the collection of individuals who lives together and has common links about needs of life. Basis of society is individual. Islam aims at its welfare and success through character-building. The word welfare after Divine will:

"قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ رَكَّاهَا"¹

"قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ"²

means scoring success and getting guidance. It means building up society having high morals which may achieve success. Islam talks of this world and the Hereafter for the character-building of the individuals as are Allah's words:

"رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً"³

"فَمَنْ رُخِّعَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ"⁴

The basis of human welfare and success is the pronouncement which the Holy Prophet (PBUH) made first of all as:

"يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قُولُوا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ تَفْلِحُوا"⁵

Realization of success is impossible without following this pronouncement.

Basic Regulations for Character-Building of Individuals:

The devices and regulations adopted by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) for the reformation of society are discussed below briefly but comprehensively.

1. Brotherhood/ Fraternity:

An important device to reform the society opted by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was fraternity and brotherhood because the society lacked in this trait. Islam makes all humanity brethren. Universal brotherhood established by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) under divine words:

"إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ"⁶

and His own words:

"الْمُسْلِمُ أَخُو الْمُسْلِمِ"⁷

surpassed blood relations. History bears witness that venerable Sahābah (R.A) waged Jihaad against their own fathers and sons because He (PBUH) had established so deep brotherhood between the Muhaajireen and Ansaar whose impacts are discernible to us in the shape of love and compassions between us. This multi-purpose fraternity encompassed in it the political, social, religious, moral and emotional aspects in it. The example of a Mu'min with regard to love, compassion and kindness according to his words is like a body that if any of its part feels pain, the whole body is affected and ill with fever.⁸ A Mu'min serves as a building for another Mu'min who's each part fortifies the other.⁹ This is such a device for the character-building of the individuals as breaks geographical limits and establishes such an ideal society in the global village which has no example in the world.

2. Equality:

Another foundation and device for character-building of society is equality which is based on Monotheism. It stresses that all people should be equal who have equal political, social, economic and religious rights.

According to a Divine dictate:

"وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا"¹⁰

*"The division into colour, race, territory, language, country, nation and tribes is just for the sake of introduction. The criterion of superiority is only piety."*¹¹

He pronounced to uproot all pride and arrogance of the time of ignorance, gave the lesson of equality giving it a practical shape.¹² The hands of a woman named Fatima of Bani Makhzum in Hadd of Sariqa was clipped as a common man had to undergo punishment.¹³ At this point, high breed, good lineage, social status, wealth and intercession could not modify the law and inequality.¹⁴ The rich and the poor, the high and the low, the mighty and the weak, the governor and the masses, the capitalist and the labourer, the landlord and the tenant all were present in the assemblage of the Final Address of Hajj wherein he gave out, "Allah has made your blood, your wealth and your honour so sacred to you as this day, this month and this city is sacred to you."¹⁵

3. Tolerance:

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) created tolerance among people putting up with people with antagonistic ideas in society and also giving the option to honour the emotions which one dislikes is called tolerance. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) has taught us that no violence of any kind is appreciable under the Holy Quran's verses:

"لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ"¹⁶

"لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ"¹⁷

His words in the universal character of Madinah under a clause were:

"لِلْيَهُودِ دِينُهُمْ، وَلِلْمُسْلِمِينَ دِينُهُمْ"¹⁸

In the same way, there was a clause in the treaty with the Christians of Najraan:

"أَنْ لَا تُحْدَمَ لَهُمْ بَيْعَةٌ، وَلَا يُخْرَجَ لَهُمْ قَسْرٌ، وَلَا يُفْتَنُوا عَنْ دِينِهِمْ"¹⁹

"None of their place of worship will be demolished nor will any priest be exiled nor will anyone be forced to change his religion."

Therefore, it is incumbent upon the members of society to follow the verses:

"ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ"²⁰

To understand the view point and put up with it instead of enforcing the truth. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) said:

"أَنَا زَعِيمٌ بِبَيْتٍ فِي رِضِّ الْجَنَّةِ لِمَنْ تَرَكَ الْمِرَاءَ وَإِنْ كَانَ مُجَاهِدًا"²¹

"I ensure house in the centre of the Paradise to the person who forgoes dispute despite being in the right"

The model of the Messenger (PBUH) persuades us to nourish constructive thinking instead of quarrelling with one another, promote unity, take up tolerance and to offer ideal concept of Islam before others.

4. Justice:

Justice encompasses all the fields of life. It is called collective justice. Islam stresses upon

"إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ"²²

for the character-building of the members of society. Every aspect of social affairs so much so number of wives under

"فَإِنْ جُفِيَ إِلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً"²³

have been conditioned with justice. A good example of social justice is Hazrat Umar's statement which he states about the Holy Prophet (PBUH)

"وَقَدْ رَأَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُقِيدُ مِنْ نَفْسِهِ"²⁴

"I have witnessed the Holy Prophet (PBUH) arranging on himself."

In the same way, there is a brief but comprehensive statement of the Holy Prophet (PBUH)

"الْمُلْكُ يَبْقَى مَعَ الْكُفْرِ وَلَا يَبْقَى مَعَ الظُّلْمِ"²⁵

"that a government can exist on infidelity but not on oppression."

In the same way, note his other famous words which he uttered while punishing a Quraish woman:

"وَأَمِ اللَّهُ لَوْ أَنَّ فَاطِمَةَ بِنْتَ مُحَمَّدٍ سَرَقَتْ لَقَطَعْتُ يَدَهَا"²⁶

All his life was embodiment of justice. He did justice in every field of life because justice is the quality which blesses the individuals, nations and society with the power of honesty and government.

5. Giving and Protecting Human Rights:

The UN passed the universal charter of human rights on December 10, 1948 which was accepted by almost all the countries. Besides freedom, justice, equality protection of life, property and sanctity, and giving political, social and cultural rights, that charter gives education, service, creed, religion, expression of thoughts family and non-interference in private life the status of basic human rights. It also draws attention to make realization of justice easy and to provide chances to gain prosperity but there is no enforcing power behind these rights. It has just the power of moral persuasion. But Islam trains and educates the individuals through giving the rights and duties and protecting them. A saying of the Holy Prophet(PBUH) in this regard is very important. He said:

"Do you know who is indigent?" Sahābah said, "The man without any Dirham and provision on him. He said, "Only that person in my Ummah is indigent who will bring Slaa, fasting and Zakat in a state that he will also have given words of abuse to someone, slandered someone, eaten someone's wealth unlawfully, shed someone's blood and killed someone. His virtues will be distributed among those people. If all his virtues finish before giving others

*due, their sins will be shifted to his scale and then he will be pushed into the hell.*²⁷

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) educated and trained the individuals who gave and protected human rights. He also framed a society who was bound to give the human rights besides Divine Rights.

6. Eradication of Poverty and Establishment of a New Economic System:

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) made his utmost efforts to eradicate poverty. Allah ordered the Muslims to pay Zakat²⁸ ordering Him (PBUH) to receive Zakat from them and purify their wealth.²⁹ While sending Hazrat Ma'az bin Jabr to Yeman, He (PBUH) gave him third dictate along with Monotheism and Salaat:

"تُؤْخَذُ مِنْ أَغْنِيَائِهِمْ فِتْرَةٌ فِي فَقَرَاءِهِمْ"³⁰

but gave the sad news of painful punishment for those who do not pay Zakat as:

"وَالَّذِينَ يَكْنُزُونَ الذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلَا يُنْفِقُوهَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ"³¹

A man went to the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and demanded money. He (PBUH) ordered him to bring some equipment from his house. He sold it, bought an axe and some grain, gave it to him advising him to cut wood from the jungle and sell them in the market. After a few days, he saved ten Dirham. Then the Holy Prophet (PBUH) said to him, "It is better for you that you may have marks of begging on your face on the Day of Judgement."³² He (PBUH) says: "I saw on the Night Mi'raaj written at the door of the Paradise that reward for giving charity will be ten times and that of giving debt will be eighteen times."³³ It means giving charity will lead the receiver to more begging but he will be constrained to work hard to pay back the debt which will enable him to stand on his own feet. This is an important device for character-building. In the same way, Mu'khāt in Madinah (establishment of brotherhood between the Muhājireen and the Ansār by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) is an important method of eradicating poverty and character-building of Sahābah.³⁴ Consequently, the Muhājireen succeeded in earning their bread in a very short time. So, He (PBUH) established such a stable society economically wherein there was no one to receive charity.

7. Provision of Necessities of Life:

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) made provision for necessities of life obligatory. For this purpose, he devised a few theoretical and practical policies and took a few practical steps. There were no hospitals before Islam. A female Sahābi Hazrat Rafidah (R.A) had pegged a tent near Masjid Nabvi. She would give bandages to the injured in war.³⁵ In the same way, attracting the attention of Sahābah to the discovery of medicines for the treatment of the sick, He (PBUH) said:

"Allah has not created any disease whose cure He may not have created."³⁶

Besides this, keeping the rules of hygiene in view, he called cleanliness

half the faith.³⁷

Moreover, He (PBUH) made efforts to ensure employment. When a Sahābi demanded financial aid, he deputed him to cut and sell fire wood. He became prosperous within a few days.³⁸

He (PBUH) drew attention of the people to the establishment educational institutions. He himself established the school named "Suffa". Pursuit of knowledge was made obligatory to every Muslim³⁹ saying, "Whoever sets forth to seek knowledge is in the way of Allah until he comes back."⁴⁰

Once, the people of a tribe came to the Holy Prophet (PBUH) bare-foot, bare-body and putting on lined shawls. Seeing their indigence, he was very upset. He recited the beginning verses of Surah An-Nisa and verse 18 of Surah Al-Hashr persuading the people to help them saying, "Everyone should give them charity though a Dinar, a Dirham, a piece of cloth, a little quantity of wheat or dates." All the people brought provisions from their houses according to their capacities and quite a pile of things and clothes was made within a very short time. The reporter Hazrat Jareer (R.A) reports:

حَتَّى رَأَيْتُ وَجْهَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَتَهَلَّلُ، كَأَنَّهُ مُذْهَبَةٌ⁴¹

"Until I saw that the Holy Prophet's (PBUH) face began glisten like a piece of glittering gold."

As bread and clothes are included in the necessities of life, he was pleased at the supply of these things to the poor. Note his another saying about the supply of necessities of life. Hazrat Āisha (R.A) reports him saying:

"وَمَنْ سَقَى مُسْلِمًا شَرْبَةً مِنْ مَاءٍ، حَيْثُ يُوجَدُ الْمَاءُ، فَكَأَنَّمَا أَعْتَقَ رَقَبَةً، وَمَنْ سَقَى مُسْلِمًا شَرْبَةً مِنْ مَاءٍ، حَيْثُ لَا يُوجَدُ الْمَاءُ، فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَاهَا"⁴²

"Supplying water to a Muslim at a place where water is available is like freeing a slave and supplying water to a Muslim where water is not available is like putting life in him."

The above discussion proves that he (PBUH) called education, health and food the necessities of life and made their supply essential for character-building of the individuals. Besides this, he made policies to eradicate poverty giving people its theoretical training.

8. Service and Welfare of the Masses:

Islam nourished good qualities like cooperation, well-wishing and sympathy among the people to establish the society on firm foundations persuading the Muslims to serve Allah's creature and to spend on their welfare. Allah says:

"وَأَتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَى وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ"⁴³

"Give money to the relatives, the orphan, the poor, the indigent, the wayfare and the bagger and to free the slaves."

When he recounted the incident of first revelation to Hazrat Khadijah and, she consoled him with so captivating words which have been serving as

a candle light in darkness, she said:

"كَأَنَّ وَاللَّهِ مَا يُخْرِيكُ اللَّهَ أَبَدًا، إِنَّكَ لَتَصِلُ الرَّحِمَ، وَتَحْمِلُ الْكَلَّ، وَتَكْسِبُ الْمَعْدُومَ، وَتَقْرِي الضَّيْفَ، وَتُعِينُ عَلَى نَوَائِبِ الْحَقِّ"⁴⁴

"By Allah! Allah will never disgrace you. You have the best morals. You bring up the tribesmen. You carry the load of the helpless on your shoulders and earn for the poor. You are unique in hospitality and you side with the truth at the difficult moment."

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) said:

"الْخَلْقُ عِيَالُ اللَّهِ فَأَحَبُّ الْخَلْقِ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَنْ أَحْسَنَ إِلَى عِيَالِهِ"⁴⁵

"The creature is Allah's tribe. The best is the one who does favour to Allah's tribe."

In the same way, He (PBUH) said:

"خير الناس من ينفع الناس"⁴⁶

"The best of the people is the one who benefits the people."

Allah's support always remains with such a person. It is said

"مَنْ كَانَ فِي حَاجَةٍ أَخِيهِ كَانَ اللَّهُ فِي حَاجَتِهِ"⁴⁷

"Allah helps the man who helps his brother."

It is said about welfare and good of the Muslims.

"وَمَنْ فَرَّجَ عَنْ مُسْلِمٍ كُرْبَةً، فَرَّجَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ بِهَا كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرْبِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ"⁴⁸

"Whoever removes worldly affliction from upon a Muslim, Allah removes from upon him afflictions on the Day of Judgement."

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) ordered for seven points. One of them was to help the oppressed.⁴⁹ He lifted his fore-finger and said:

*"The man who brings up the orphan and I will be together in the Paradise this way."*⁵⁰

About providing shady places on the paths and planting trees to protect the environment from pollution, he said:

*"If a Muslim plants trees or crops and birds, humans and animals feed from them; it becomes a regular charity for him."*⁵¹

One of his priorities was to make the poor, the indigent, the suffering and the afflicted people useful citizens of society and stabilize them financially. These tasks of social service and welfare prove that the society can be erected on firm foundations by taking up such devices and policies.

9. Moral and Social Contacts with the non-Muslims:

The society will have to live harmoniously without the distinction of religion and sect for the welfare and progress of the society. Allah has made humans honourable. They will have to behave towards others compassionately, well-wishingly and tolerantly. This same is the law of Islam. He (PBUH) kept the laws of justice, forbearance, tolerance and mutual survival in view for the character-building of the individuals. Exchange of

gifts is a source of creating social contacts. He (PBUH) said

"كَادُوا فَإِنَّ الْهَدِيَّةَ تُذْهِبُ وَخَرَّ الصَّدْرُ"⁵²

*"Give gifts to one another because gifts remove enmity and
jealously from the hearts."*

Both the Muslims and the non-Muslims are included in it. Hazrat Ali says that when a gift was sent to him by Caesar, He (PBUH) accepted it. Many other kings also sent him gifts and he accepted them.⁵³

When a delegation of the Christians of Abyssinai came to meet him, He (PBUH) seated them in Masjid nabvi saying:

*"They honoured my Sahābah. I myself want to serve
them."*⁵⁴

He (PBUH) ordered Hazrat Zaid (RA) to learn the Hebrew and Syrian languages because their letters were essential to be replied. Hazrat Zaid gained proficiency in it so much that he could read and write letters.⁵⁵ It means that he did character-building of people in a way so that they might develop good and lasting relations with all the other nations.

Once, when the funeral of a Jew was taken away, he stood up in honour. Sahābah said, "O Messenger of Allah (PBUH) this is funeral of a Jew." He said fered In the same way, a Jew of .(is he not a human?)⁵⁶ "أَلَيْسَتْ نَفْسًا" him milk; he supplicated for him thus, "May Allah keep you beautiful!" When a Jew sneezmed, he would supplicate for him thus:

"يَهْدِيكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيُصْلِحْ بِالْكُم"⁵⁷

In the year of famine in Makkah, He (PBUH) sent five hundred Dinar to Abu Sufiyan bin Harab and Safwan bin Umayyah for the people of Makkah.⁵⁸ A woman asked Hazrat 'Āisha, "Our near Zoroaster relatives send us gifts on the eve of their festivals." Hazrat 'Āisha said:

*"Do not eat their slaughtered animals however eat fruit
etc."*⁵⁹

He (PBUH) would give charity to a Jew family. That system of charity was maintained even after his demise.⁶⁰ Seeing a Jew indigent begging, Hazrat Umar fixed his daily allowance.⁶¹

All the above examples are the best methods of establishing good relations with the non-Muslims; the methods which he took up for character-training of the individuals but he made some difference while establishing links with the people of the scripture and Infidels. It is in a way that marriage with the women of the people of scripture is permissible on some terms and their slaughtering is also lawful but it is not fair with the Infidels.

Institutions For Character-Building Of People Of Society:

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) established a few institutions on permanent and durable basis. They are as under:

1. The State:

He (PBUH) deemed it essential to create a state for the character-building of the people wherein the necessities of life should be available and every member of society may strive to fulfil his need in an atmosphere of

peace and freedom and the government may protect the lives and property, honour, sanctity and rights of the masses. As a head of Islamic state, He (PBUH) said:

أَنَا أَوْلَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ، فَمَنْ تَوَلَّى مِنْ الْمُسْلِمِينَ فَتَرَكَ دَيْنًا عَلَيَّ قَضَاؤُهُ، وَمَنْ تَرَكَ مَالًا فَهُوَ لِوَرَثَتِهِ⁶²

"I am nearer to the Muslims than their lives. Whoever dies under debt, I shall make the payment and whoever leaves a legacy, it will go to his heirs."

Stating the responsibilities of the head of the state He (PBUH) said

السُّلْطَانُ وَلِيٌّ مَنْ لَا وَلِيَّ لَهُ⁶³

"The head of the state is guardian of the one who has no guardian."

He built the state on modern foundations making it a welfare state. Giving all kinds of rights to the masses, He (PBUH) won the title "Mercy for all the Worlds."

2. Family:

Character-building of the members of society depends upon an established family. The cause of deterioration of civilizations and cultures is shattering of family system. This is the institutions which gives social training and makes the individual realize his duties giving him perception about different positions. If solidarity of the family vanishes, human attitude, perception of social duties and distinction between the members end up. Lack in these values results in social crisis which can be called national deterioration.⁶⁴

Accordingly, he ordered family system on firm foundations. The existence of family is based on marriage through which not only two individuals but two families are also linked with each other. He determined the rights and duties of the relations springing from union of two families embellishing the family beauty even more with the help of kindness, mutual cooperation, sympathy and human compassion.

The societies wherein family system is founded without his teachings; this institution falls a prey to crisis. The number of Old Homes, Baby Day Care Centres, Shelter Houses, Orphan Houses and Mental Hospitals is increasing. Marriage is conducted between homosexuals and babies are born on rent. Despite the existence of open sex society, the incidents of fornication and raping of close relations are increasing. The solution to all this deterioration of family circle lies in the firm family system given by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) through which character-building is done.

Institutions of Education and Training:

Pursuit of knowledge was made obligatory to everyone to establish a welfare society.⁶⁵ Once, He (PBUH) said:

مَنْ خَرَجَ فِي طَلَبِ الْعِلْمِ فَهُوَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ حَتَّى يَرْجِعَ⁶⁶

"whoever sets forth to seek knowledge is in the way of Allah until he returns."

That's why; He (PBUH) paid special attention to the education, training and character-building of the individuals. He (PBUH) said:

"My Lord has given me the best knowledge and the best morals."

He made pursuit of knowledge and manner obligatory saying:

*"Seek knowledge and manners, respect those from whom you learn and do not become proud scholars."*⁶⁷

The people whom He (PBUH) had trained through education and training became leaders of the world, lit Arabia, Asia, Africa and a large part of Europe with the light of knowledge. The doors to progress opened wherever knowledge reached. Progress in knowledge promoted progress in materialism. The Muslims provided unlimited assets on Exegesis, Traditions, Jurisprudence, History and Holy life and initiated new types knowledge and arts.

Besides this, they made experiments on geography, astronomy, physics, maths, sociology, chemistry, medicine, botany and zoology and wrote books and hence set up universities and libraries. The students from France, Italy, England and Spain began to rush to Cordova and Gharnata to seek knowledge. The fathers of science Raja Beacon, Rousseu, Brumo, Cuppler, Lopronex and Newton were born from there who set up translation houses and established up universities. But a wave of nearness has again arisen in the Muslims and they are paying attention to education and training.

Bidding Virtue, Forbidding Vice and Communication:

Persuasion to virtue and forbidding vice is essential for the education and training of people. So, Islam has used the term "Bidding Virtue and Forbidding Vice." Conveying a point to the people is called communication.

Allah deputed him (PBUH) to convey His message to the people in the words

*"يَا أَيُّهَا الرُّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ"*⁶⁸

"O Messenger, convey what has been revealed to you. If you do not do so, you do not give the due of prophethood."

Allah ordered us to bid virtue and forbid vice in the words

*"وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ"*⁶⁹

"And there should be people among you who bid virtue and forbid vice. Such people are the successful."

All the people are deputed to bid virtue and forbid vice. Allah says

*"كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ"*⁷⁰

"You are the best Ummah who have been revealed for the people. You bid virtue and forbid vice."

A true Mu'min should bid virtue and forbid vice as much as He (PBUH) can. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) says:

*"مَنْ رَأَى مِنْكُمْ مُنْكَرًا فَلْيُغَيِّرْهُ يَدُهُ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِلِسَانِهِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِيَدِهِ، وَذَلِكَ أَضْعَفُ الْإِيمَانِ"*⁷¹

"Whoever witnesses a vice, he should stop it with his hand: if he does not have the power; deem it bad with the

heart and that is the poorest stage of faith."

If you do not do virtue and forbid vice, keep the following words of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) in mind.

"وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَتَأْمُرَنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ أَوْ لَيُوشِكَنَّ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَبْعَثَ عَلَيْكُمْ عِقَابًا مِنْهُ ثُمَّ تَدْعُونَهُ فَلَا يُسْتَجَابُ لَكُمْ"⁷²

"By Allah who is the master of my life, you will have to bid virtue and forbid voice otherwise Allah may send down punishment on you. Then you will call and He will not respond."

Therefore, it is essential at government level to set up institution under the title "Bidding Virtue of Forbidding Vice" which may persuade to virtues and crush vices and play an effective role in the character-building of the masses.

Removal of Hurdles in the way of Character-Building:

Removal of a few important hurdles in the way of character-building is essential. Those hurdles include social unrest, extremism, intolerance, moral and economic deterioration, ignorance, self-seeking, selfishness and social waywardness. Uprooting all the above vices, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) did character-building on solid foundations and tried to correct all the mutual affairs. He (PBUH) says:

"لَا تَبَاغَضُوا، وَلَا تَحَاسَدُوا، وَلَا تَدَابَرُوا، وَكُونُوا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِخْوَانًا"⁷³

"Do not nourish wrath against one another, nor be jealous, nor turn away and become brothers, O slaves of Allah."

Deterioration of character and morality is a big hurdle in the way of character-building. He stated the purpose of his revelation as perfection of good morals as:

"بُعِثْتُ لِأَمِّمٍ حَسَنٍ الْأَخْلَاقِ"⁷⁴

He also said:

"مَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ يُوضَعُ فِي الْمِيزَانِ أَثْقَلَ مِنْ حُسْنِ الْخُلُقِ"⁷⁵

"Nothing is weightier than good morals in the Scale."

Hazrat Jafar presented his morals in the court of the king of Abbyssinia thus:

"O king, we were in ignorance, worshipped idols. We were lost in filth, ate the dead and talked non-sense. We had no trace of humanity and hospitality in us. We did not spare our neighbours. There was no rule and law. In this situation, Allah revealed in us a saint whose lineage, truth, honesty, piety and purity were known to us well. He persuaded us to Monotheism and advised us not to join anyone with Allah. He forbade us to worship idols made of wood and stone telling us to speak the truth, abide by the promises, be kind, avoid sin and vices. He bade us to establish Salaat and observe fast. Our people got offended at these points."⁷⁶

Owing to these qualities, Allah said about him:

إِنَّ لَكَ لَأَجْرًا غَيْرَ مَمْنُونٍ إِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ⁷⁷

"O Muhammad, your reward is unending and surely, you have the best morals."

He chalked out plans to uproot poverty because it spoils faith, creed, thoughts and morals and leads man to infidelity.⁷⁸ Saing:

الْيَدُ الْعُلْيَا خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْيَدِ السُّفْلَىٰ⁷⁹

"The giver is better than receiver, he drew attention to give extra wealth to the needy."⁸⁰

He bade the young men to give up negligence, lethargy and begging and work hard saying:

مَا أَكَلَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ طَعَامًا أَحَبَّ إِلَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ مِنْ عَمَلٍ يَدَيْهِ⁸¹

"No food is better for a man than the wealth earned with his own hands."

He himself gave away all that came to him. He had no lack of wealth due to victories in battles but all that was for others not for himself.⁸²

He wiped out the caste system and division of the high and the low and gave the lesson of equality. He said on the eve of the Conquest of Makkah:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ أَذْهَبَ عَنْكُمْ مَخْرَجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ وَتَعَظَّمَهَا بِالْأَبَاءِ، النَّاسُ مِنْ آدَمَ، وَآدَمُ مِنْ تَرَابٍ⁸³

"O people of the Quraish, Allah has wiped out the pride of ignorance and lineage. All humans are children of Adam and Adam was created from clay."

His character-training wipes out the division of society through caste system of the Hindus considering all the others filthy and nasty and division into the black and the white into political and social groups in Europe. In that society, Hazrat Bilal, Hazrat Sohaib Rumi and Hazrat Salman Farsi (RA) enjoyed the same status with the common Arabs. All traditions of prejudice died away. He (PBUH) announced in his sermon on the Final Hajj:

"No Arab has superiority over the non-Arab, and no non-Arab over the Arab, no red over the black nor any black over the red. The criterion of superiority is God-fearing."⁸⁴

He made all stand behind one leader in one line. He uprooted all types of social, religious and political extremism in those ideal people. He called sanctity of life, property and honour greater than Ka'bah calling his killing⁸⁵ an infidelity saying:

لَا تَرْجِعُوا بَعْدِي كُفَّارًا، يَضْرِبُ بَعْضُكُمْ رِقَابَ بَعْضٍ⁸⁶

"Do not become Infidels after me that you may begin to kill one another."

He further said:

لَزَوَالِ الدُّنْيَا أَهْوَنُ عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنْ قَتْلِ مُؤْمِنٍ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ⁸⁷

"End of the world in the sight of Allah is easier than killing a Mu'min unlawfully."

Uprooting every type of terrorism and extremism from the

individuals, He (PBUH) taught them brotherhood, sympathy, equality, sacrifice, tolerance and taught them to follow his good examples wiping out inequality in society due to which the society became a welfare state.

Conclusion:

Only the best people make the best society. He laid maximum stress on character-building for success in the world and the Hereafter. His first address was, "O Ye people, admit that there is no Lord save Allah, you will succeed." He laid the foundations of a welfare state in Madinah wherein He (PBUH) established brotherhood among the people, created equality among them, showed tolerance to people of all religions, provided justice to all, ensured people's rights, eradicated up poverty with the help of Divine economic system, provided necessities of life, generated the passion to spend on welfare projects, created moral, political and social contacts with the non-Muslims who felt his kindness and felt at home in his company. He established the institutions of the state, family, education, training, bidding virtue and forbidding vice for the character-building of the people. He removed all the hurdles in the way of preparation of the best individuals for the establishment of a strong society. Owing to his devices for the character-building of the people, this small state became the most successful empire in the world in a very short period and so ideal a society was established that the world is unable to offer such an example.

The need of the hour is to scrutinize the concepts of character-building of people in the light of the Holy Prophet's (PBUH) teachings and achievements and instil the spirit of the devices which He (PBUH) took up for character-building of the society in the social trends of the present age so that the best individuals may again be produced and our society may become "a welfare society."



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