

Celebrating the Prophet's (pbuh) birthday

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WHEN the holy lunar month of Rabi-Al-Awal knocks at the door we remember of the birthday anniversary of the greatest of all men of all times, our dear holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (peace be upon him) for obvious reasons. Before dwelling on the subject referred to above I think it would be worthwhile to state a few words about the condition of the Arab society before the holy Prophet (pbuh) was entrusted with the difficult task of inviting the idolaters of Arabia to enter into the fold of Islam as desired by Almighty Allah more than 1400 years ago from now.

While constructing the greatest place of worship Al Ka'bah in the holy city of Makkah Prophet Hazrat Ibrahim 'Khalilullah' (Friend of Allah) called the people around him to visit Al Ka'bah and worship One and only One Allah as clearly indicated in Ayats (Verses) 26 and 27 of Sura (Chapter) Hajj or Pilgrimage of the Holy Qur-an. And the people around him responded to his clarion call. In the words of the Holy Qur-an, "They will come to thee on foot and (mounted) on every kind of camel lean on account of journey through deep and distant mountain highways." So, the Arabs were worshippers of One Allah and when the son of Hazrat Ibrahim Prophet Hazrat Ismail (A) continued his father's teaching the Arabs followed him also. But many centuries later they became idolaters.

And who was the person responsible for bringing such radical change in Arab society? History records he was a tribal chief Amr bin Luhai by name and he was "renowned for righteousness,

charity, reverence and care for religion, and was granted unreserved love and obedience by his tribesmen, came back from a trip to Syria where he saw people worship idols, a phenomenon he approved of and believed it to be righteous since Syria was the locus of the Messengers and Scriptures, he brought with him an idol (Hubal) which he placed in the middle of Al Ka'bah and summoned people to worship it. Readily enough

polytheism and introduction of monotheism. And the place he had chosen is the holy city of Makkah. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) was born in Bani Hashim Lane in Makkah on Monday morning, the 9th of Rabi-Al-Awal that is, 20th or 22nd of April 571 AD, according to the scholar Muhammad Sulaiman Al-Mansurpuri and the astrolager Muhammad Pasha. And he started preaching Almighty Allah's chosen religion when he was 40 years old

There are numerous instances which clearly indicate the kindness of the holy Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) for his followers. Here I would like to cite just one example. While in Medina during Hajj season a pilgrim is required to visit the holy grave (Rowza Mubarak) of the Prophet (SM) in order to pay respect and salute him. And according to true Hadith, as quoted by Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him), the Holy Prophet (pbuh) once said: "Whenever any one salutes me Allah will restore my soul so that I may return his salute." This is how the greatest of all Prophets (pbuh) reciprocates and returns the salute of his affectionate followers who visit his grave and stand by it modestly.

polytheism spread all over Makkah and thence to Hejaz, people of Makkah being custodians of not only the Sacred House but the whole Harem as well. A great many idols bearing different names were introduced into the area." People of other regions also became idol worshippers, for instance people of Taif started worshipping an idol and its name was "Al-Lat."

So Almighty Allah decided to send to this world Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (peace be upon him) as his Messenger for abolition of

in Makkah -- the religion which Allah Rabbul Alameen perfected as indicated in Ayat (Verse) 3 of Sura (Chapter) Al Maida of the Holy Qur-an.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was not only a matchless emancipator of mankind he was also an inimitable nation builder and social reformer. Before his advent slavery was in vogue in Arabia; this ruthless and abominable practice was also in vogue in various parts of the Roman empire. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) set an example by freeing his own slave Zaid-bin-Harith, and as regards his love for the downtrodden I would like to cite here a concrete example showing his kind feelings for them. While delivering his historic Farewell Pilgrimage Address at the vast field of Arafa, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) declared, among other things:

"(i) Behave nicely with your wives; as you have rights over your wives, they have the same rights over you. Remember one day you will have to appear before Almighty Allah.

(ii) Behave nicely with your slaves always. Give them the same food you eat yourself, and give them the same dress to put on as you put on yourself.

(iii) If your slaves commit any mistake and if the mistakes are inexcusable then release them, but don't be harsh on them, they are human beings like you."

Mentionable, when Muhammad (SM) finished his historic Farewell Pilgrimage Address, Almighty Allah revealed an Ayat declaring: "O Muhammad! To-day I have perfected your religion and completed my rewards on you."

As an inimitable and successful nation builder the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was very conscious about safeguarding the interests of all communities including the Jews and idolaters after establishment of the first Islamic Republic. And with this end in view a historic charter known as "Medina Charter" was executed. The salient features of this Charter are given below:

(i) All the Communities who have signed the Charter will form a nation;

(ii) If any one of them is attacked by an enemy from outside then others will put in their united efforts to repulse the attack;

(iii) No one will be able to execute a secret treaty with the Quraish, nor any one will be able to help the Quraish if they conspire against the inhabitants of Medina.

(iv) The Muslims, Jews and others will be able to follow their respective religions and no one will be able to interfere in this matter;

(v) From now on bloodshed, murder and rape are prohibited;

(vi) The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) will be the President of the Republic, and he will be the ex-officio supreme head of the Court of Appeal.

If democracy is a government of the people, by the people and for the people then the aforesaid Medina Charter clearly and unmistakably indicates that our Holy Prophet (pbuh) was a democrat and democracy was in existence in Medina more than fourteen centuries ago. And when the British got their democracy and sovereign parliament? They obviously got them after many centuries of establishment of Islamic democracy in Medina. King John was obliged to put his signature on the historic Magna Carta in England on June 15, 1215 AD, and it enabled the English people to gain some civil rights for the first time. It was Muawiah the 5th Caliph who did the greatest disservice to the cause of Islamic democracy by nominating his "unscrupulous and licentious" son Yazid during his life time to become the next Caliph after his death in flagrant violation of an agreement. Mentionable such unjust and illegal nomination of Muawiah paved the way for establishment of kingship and induction of kings without the consent of the people in various Muslim countries in future.

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World renowned persons

including MK Gandhi, George Bernard Shaw, Michael H Hart and Napoleon Bonaparte have greatly eulogised the commendable role played by Muhammad (SM). Muhammad (SM) who gave us the

Holy Qur-an was the saviour of humanity. The 9th day of the holy lunar month of Rabi-Al-Awal has come once again. Muslims all over the world will celebrate the birthday anniversary of the Holy Prophet

(pbuh) with due solemnity and fervour. Let us also observe this auspicious occasion in a befitting manner.

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