

THE INFLUENCE OF THE CHARACTER OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (S) ON THE SPREAD OF ISLAM DURING THE MECCAN PERIOD

DR. ASGHAR MUNTAZIR QA'IM
TRANSLATED BY JABIR CHANDOO

ABSTRACT: After Prophet Muhammad's first revelation, he managed to take major steps in spreading Islam. This article discusses the role and personality of the Holy Prophet (s) during the early days of his mission. The type of research methodology employed in this paper is descriptive-analytic, and the historical data presented has been collected from first-hand sources. Some of the key strategies employed by the Holy Prophet (s) were: reforming and training righteous people committed to the cause of Islam; to enhance the level of awareness and insight of the early converts to Islam; having good conduct and spiritual personality; patience, perseverance and resistance in the face of difficulties and obstacles; revealing the Holy Qur'an, the miracle of the Holy Prophet (s); communicating and dialogue with the opponents; conforming his actions with his speech; focusing on the aim and accuracy in planning; creating devoted manpower out of the youth in Mecca; and seeking assistance from Allah (s) to overcome the obstacles.

The thirteen-year period of the beginning of the Prophet's mission comprised three stages of the call to Islam: the secret call, the call to

the nearest kin, and the public call. This period was successfully accomplished and many people, particularly the youths in Mecca, believed in Islam.

Witnessing that their cultural, social, and political life has been endangered, the heads of Quraysh strongly stood against the Holy Prophet (s) out of tribal fanaticism, paganism, and following the trend of the past. They did not leave any stone unturned in their opposition to the Holy Prophet (s), starting with physical torment of the Muslims to accusing him (s) and his companions of being magicians, fortune-tellers, madmen and poets.

Amidst such difficulties and dangers, the future of the Islamic movement and the formation of a religious community could not have been possible without a well-thought-out strategy. Consequently, to reach his lofty goals and objectives, the Holy Prophet (s) took some steps and employed several tactics to surpass the physical torture of the enemy and other major difficulties.

The early period of the Prophetic mission lasted thirteen years. During this time, the Holy Prophet (s) directed those inclined to accept his call to the good word of “There is no god but Allah” and to light the love of Allah (s) in their hearts through his great character, endearing style of invitation, extreme kindness, and words full of wisdom.

This period in history has its own distinctive characteristics which shall be discussed in this paper.

Characteristics of the Early Period of the Prophetic Mission

a. Methods and Stages of the Call to Islam

The call to Islam during this period was accomplished through three different phases:

- I. The secret call to Islam and the individual effort by the Holy Prophet (s) to search for people who could be trained morally and spiritually. These efforts produced fifty firm and devoted supporters¹ which resulted in consolidating the foundations of the Islamic movement.
- II. With the revelation of the verse “*And warn the nearest of your kinsfolk*”² the second phase of the call to Islam - by inviting the near relatives - took place under the event known in history as ‘The Day of the House’ (*yawm al-dār*). This event exposed the issue of succession after the Prophet; in this gathering, the Prophet said regarding Imam Ali, “Indeed this is my brother, my successor, and my caliph amidst you; therefore, listen to him and obey.”³
- III. The phase of open and public call to Islam that began in the fourth year and continued until the migration to Medina. The outcome of this phase was the spread of Islam extending to the Medina and far beyond the Arabian Peninsula.

b. Opposition from the Leaders of Quraysh

The opposition of the affluent and influential figures of the city of Mecca to the Islamic movement has been mentioned in Chapter 111 of the Holy Qur’an. Out of traditionalism and the spirit of following the trend of their ancestors, the leaders of Quraysh rose against Islam and the Holy Prophet (s) and insisted on idol worshipping, attaching importance to Pagan behaviour and culture, and being obsessed with material possessions and amplitude of wealth and people. Referring to

¹ Ibn Hisham, *Al-Sirat al-Nabawiyyah*, part one, p. 250.

² Qur’an, 26:214.

³ Tabari, *Al-Tārikh*, vol.2, p.63.

this attitude, the Holy Qur'an says, "We did not send a warner to any town without its affluent ones saying, 'We indeed disbelieve in what you have been sent with. And they say, 'We have greater wealth and more children, and we will not be punished!'"⁴ Yet in another place, the Holy Qur'an says, "Rather they say, 'We found our fathers following a creed, and we are indeed guided in their footsteps.'"⁵

The opposition to the Holy Prophet (s) from the leaders of Quraysh like Abu Sufyan, Abu Lahab, Abu Jahl, Umayyah ibn Khalaf and Walid ibn Mughayrah stemmed from the fact that they considered the idols to be a symbol of the culture dominant over the Arabian society. They stood against the Holy Prophet (s) for the following reasons:

1. The backbone of the cultural survival of the affluent ones rested on the idols and places for their worship like the Ka'bah at that time.
2. The social and economic status gained by the affluent ones was endangered.
3. The call to believe in one God meant that all human beings are equal in their social status. The poor and the rich equally prostrate before the All-sufficient God. Belief in monotheism (*tawhid*) implied acknowledgement of equality among all human beings. Such a thing was unbearable for the leaders of Quraysh.

Accepting Islam meant the nullification of all kinds of unjustified economic and social privileges as well as the annulment of slave trade and all other forms of commercial proprietorship. Such economic and social vices had widely contributed to the eradication of justice and equality from the Meccan society and were rapidly driving the community towards moral decadence. Sensuality, merrymaking, lending women for sexual purpose, pride and selfishness, amassing

⁴ Qur'an, 34:34-35.

⁵ Qur'an, 43:22 and 5:104.

wealth, greediness, enslaving innocent people and Pagan fanaticism, were all among the distinctive characteristics of the Meccan aristocracy. Belief in the messengership of the Prophet Muhammad (s) would have put an end to all their political domination and social privileges, and for this very reason they continually opposed the Holy Prophet (a) and his call towards Islam.

c. Confrontation Methods of the leaders of Quraysh

Among the other distinguishing features of the Meccan period is the method of opposition employed by the heads of Quraysh in their confrontation against the Holy Prophet (s). After the commencement of the public call to Islam, the polytheists stood against the Holy Prophet (s) in different ways including:

1. Torturing his companions, and making the plot to assassinate him.
2. Bribing the Prophet (s) to the extent of telling him, “We will grant you a kingdom.”
3. Alleging him fortune-telling, madness, poetry⁶, magic, and being without heirs. As Rukanah ibn ‘Abd considered the Prophet (s) to be the greatest magician⁷, while ‘As ibn Wa’il gave him the title of ‘one who is without heirs and progeny (*abtar*) which resulted in the revelation of Surat al-Kawthar⁸.
4. Creating unnecessary disturbance and propaganda against the Holy Prophet (s) by people such as Abu Lahab, Abu Jahl and the chiefs of Thaqif.
5. Counter-attack and cultural assault against the Prophet (s) as Nadhr ibn Hārith accused him of narrating tales.⁹

⁶ Qur’an, 52:29-30.

⁷ Ibn Hisham, *Al-Sirat al-Nabawiyyah*, part one, p. 391.

⁸ Baladhuri, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, vol. 1, p. 157.

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 159.

6. Creating economic, political, and military constraints for the Holy Prophet (s), such as sending Amru ibn 'As to Abyssinia with the aim of returning the Muslims to Mecca, and the attacks of the chiefs of Quraysh on the Reef (*shi'b*) of Abu Talib.

d. The Stands of the Prophet Muhammad (s)

1. The endeavour to exterminate the culture of idol-worshipping and Pagan-like behaviour.
2. To bring reform to the Paganic norms and customs.
3. To purify the hearts and minds of the early Muslims through worshipping Allah and the recitation of the Qur'an.
4. Capacity-building and ideological preparation of the early Muslims.

During those difficult and unendurable times, the continuation of the Islamic movement and the formation of a religious community were not possible without a powerful and well-trained workforce. It was due to this very reason that the Holy Prophet (s) trained an efficient workforce from the youths of Mecca for the future of the Islamic movement.

5. Struggle against the polytheistic superstitions of Quraysh.
6. Initiation of a movement to bring a change in the decaying community of Mecca, as the Holy Qur'an asserts one of the duties of the prophets was to 'bring reform.'¹⁰

Reasons behind the Success of the Prophet Muhammad (s)

The following were some of the reasons behind the success and achievement of the Holy Prophet (s) in his mission:

1. Raising the Level of Awareness and Insight among the Muslims

¹⁰ Qur'an, 11:88.

The Holy Prophet (s) never resorted to cursing the polytheists or invoking Divine punishment on them, nor did he ever use bribery or deception. Like all other prophets in history, he started with a cultural struggle before achieving political power. The Prophet of Islam was the prophet of intellect and insight, nurturing human potential and advocating a civilised manner of argument with his opponents. In the initial verses of the Surat al-‘Alaq and al-Qalam, pen, reading, education, and insight were introduced as the principal slogan of Islam.

Such verses are a very strong response to people who attempted to portray Islam as devoid of any rationality, reflection, and love, whereas on the contrary, the importance given to education and learning in Islam is far greater than the importance given to it in other divine religions. There is no divine religion or human school of thought that has laid so much emphasis on learning and knowledge at its inception as has been done by Islam. The Holy Qur’an says, “Say, ‘This is my way. I summon to God with insight - I and he who follows me. Immaculate is God, and I am not one of the polytheists.’”¹¹

In the early period of the Prophetic mission, the Holy Prophet (s) was able to take major steps in elevating the level of scientific and culture awareness among his companions. By virtue of the light of knowledge, they developed a deeper understanding of the religious teachings as well as the ability to analyse the socio-cultural issues surrounding them. As per the teaching of the Holy Qur’an “Say, ‘Are those who know equal to those who do not know?’”¹², the Prophet of Allah (s) paved the way for the scientific development and prosperity of the Muslims in the ages to come.

¹¹ Qur’an, 12:108.

¹² Qur’an, 39:9.

2. The Character of the Holy Prophet (s)

The character of the Prophet (s) was based on the Qur'an and outstanding. His countenance was rosy; he had large dark eyes with thick and relatively straight hair and flat cheeks. He had robust arms and legs, a long thin nose, and his teeth were as shiny as silver. He had a balanced stature, he was neither very tall nor very short, and neither too plump nor very thin.

His attractive and good-looking appearance together with his gentle and kind character - contrary to the rough and rude manners of the affluent leaders of Quraysh - had a profound impact on the hearts of the Arabs who were already thirsty for love and respect.

His guidance and spiritual charisma compared to the violent and cruel nature of the Meccan tycoons had an incredible impact on attracting people towards Islam. This was exactly in line with how the Holy Qur'an has described the Holy Prophet (s): *"In the Apostle of God there is certainly for you a good exemplar, for those who look forward to God and the Last Day, and remember God greatly."*¹³

Throughout his mission, the Holy Prophet (s) had succeeded in bringing about a fundamental ideological change at the crux of the cultural life of a people who were deprived of a rich culture and civilization. He managed to demolish the foundations of polytheism and idol-worshipping, and to spread monotheism (*tawhid*) in its complete form. Through purifying the hearts of his companions by means of prayers (*salāt*), he trained believing and selfless men who were solely devoted to the lofty objectives of humanity.

He was a perfect manifestation of virtues. Due to his great personality, the Muslims were so much fascinated by him that they would revolve around him like flies around a candle and ardently

¹³ Qur'an, 33:21.

sacrifice their lives in the way of Allah (swt) in compliance with his order. The words of ‘Urwah ibn Mas‘ūd, the representative of Quraysh to the Holy Prophet (s), attest to this reality when he said, “I have never seen an emperor who commands so much love among his companions as Muhammad does. They do not raise their voices over his and they are quick in doing what he instructs them to do.”¹⁴

The Holy Qur’an considers the Prophet (s) as a radiant lamp sent to mankind¹⁵ and a manifestation of the divine mercy. It considers his affection, kindness and good character to be among the infinite grace of Allah (s) as it addresses him saying, “*It is by God’s mercy that you are gentle to them; and had you been harsh and hard-hearted, surely they would have scattered from around you. So excuse them, and plead for forgiveness for them, and consult them in the affairs ...*”¹⁶

Describing the Prophet of Allah (s), Ali (a) says, “[He was] like a roaming physician who has set ready his ointments and heated his instruments ... searching with his medicine the spots of negligence and places of perplexity.”¹⁷

His level of tolerance, love, care and sympathy for fellow human beings was so great that when his companions asked him to invoke the curse of Allah (s) on the tribe of Thaqif, he said, “O Allah! Guide the people of Thaqif and make them enter our company.”¹⁸ And in response to the request of Tufayl ibn Amru Dawsī to invoke the wrath of Allah (s) on his community, he said, “O Allah! Guide his community.” The next time he came to see the Prophet (s) in Madina, he came along with seventy families who had embraced Islam.¹⁹

¹⁴ Al-Waqidi, *Al-Maghāzi*, vol. 2, p. 598.

¹⁵ Qur’an, 33:46.

¹⁶ Qur’an, 3:159.

¹⁷ Ali (a), *Nahj al-Balāghah* of Faydh al-Islam, sermon 107, p.321.

¹⁸ Al-Waqidi, *Al-Maghāzi*, vol. 3, p. 937.

¹⁹ Ibn Sa’d, *Al-Tabaqāt*, vol. 4, p. 238.

He was so clement and kind that when he was requested by Safwan ibn Umayyah – one of the leaders of Quraysh who had assigned Umayr ibn Wahab with the task of assassinating the Prophet (s) - to be granted a period of two months to think about Islam, the Holy Prophet (s) gave him four months instead. He used to give this piece of advice to each and every propagator of his message, “Be lenient to the people in their affairs and do not be rigid; give hope to them and do not cause break up among them.”²⁰ “Islam is a balanced religion, so be moderate in acting on its commandments.”²¹

The Holy Prophet (s) used to always tell his companions that, “The dearest of you to me on the Day of Resurrection is the one with the best character.”²²

He advised the children of ‘Abd al-Muttalib saying, “Spread the word of peace (*salām*), maintain good relations with nearest kin, keep vigil at night, give food in charity, and be fair in your speech so that you may enter the heaven in peace.”²³

He has also been reported to have said, “The best among you is the best of you in character.”²⁴ He was more affectionate towards the children than anyone else and he would be the first to greet children whenever he passed by them.²⁵ He was extremely approachable and was warm and jovial in their company. As history records, he would seat Hasan and Husayn on his lap and carry them on his shoulders.

The Prophet of Islam was also the embodiment of the Divine benevolence. During the Battle of Hunayn, he had granted forgiveness to six thousand captives at once.

²⁰ Ibn Hisham, *Al-Sirat al-Nabawiyyah*, part two, p. 590.

²¹ Ibn al-Athir, *Uṣd al-Ghābah*, vol. 1, p. 148.

²² Al-Ya’qubi, *Al-Tarikh*, vol. 2, p.94.

²³ Ibid, p. 92.

²⁴ Ibn Sa’d, *Al-Tabaqāt*, vol. 1, p. 377.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 382.

During the conquest of Mecca, Faḍalah ibn ‘Umayr once resolved to assassinate the Holy Prophet (s) while he was in the state of circumambulation of the Ka‘bah. When the Prophet (s) saw him, he asked him, “Are you Faḍalah?” “Yes”, he replied. “What were you thinking of?” said the Prophet (s). “I was busy remembering Allah”, Fadhalah answered. The Prophet (s) smiled and told him, “Ask forgiveness from Allah” and then he placed his blessed hand on his heart and he calmed down. Faḍalah used to say after this incident, “By Allah, he had not yet taken off his hand that I started feeling that he is the most beloved of the creatures of Allah to me.”²⁶

In another similar incident, Mālik ibn ‘Awf al-Nasri – the commander in-chief of the polytheists in the battle of Hunayn - composed the following verses in praise of the Prophet of Islam after he was pardoned by him, “I have never seen or heard among the people of a person like Muhammad; if they were to ask generosity and remission from him, he would be the most generous and most forgiving.”²⁷

Jabir ibn ‘Abdillah al-Ansari reports, “The Messenger of Allah (s) was the most bountiful of the people; and he was even more generous during the month of Ramadan.”²⁸

The Holy Prophet (s) says, “A generous person is closer to Allah, to the people, and to heaven, and is distant from the hell-fire.”²⁹

Despite being so lenient and generous to the people, he was very firm with himself such that at times he would sleep on an empty stomach for consecutive nights and his family also remained without food. Moreover, they would generally consume bread prepared from

²⁶ Ibn Hisham, *Al-Sirat al-Nabawiyah*, part two, p. 417.

²⁷ Al-Waqidi, *Al-Maghāzi*, vol. 3, p. 954.

²⁸ Sa’id al-Din Muhammad bin Mas’ud Kazeruni, *Nihāyat al-Mas’ul fi Riwayat al-Rasul*, vol. 1, p. 342.

²⁹ Al-Ya’qubi, *Al-Tārikh*, vol. 2, p. 92.

barley³⁰ and his pillow was made of tanned skin filled with palm leaves.³¹ There was no form of luxury in his life as he was very economical.

Describing the lifestyle of the Holy Prophet (s), Ali (a) says: “He left this world on an empty stomach and he entered the life hereafter unblemished. He did not build for himself a considerable place of stay until he departed this world.”³² On his deathbed, he had only seven dinars of the fortune of this world which he ordered his wife ‘Aishah to hand over to Ali (a) to distribute among the destitute.³³

He was indeed a messenger of mercy. He would meet hatred and enmity with love and kindness. With such behaviour and attitude, he managed to endow human relations with magnificence through the fragrance of love and sincerity, as he had spread the wings of mercy for the believing men and women.³⁴

The hardships and difficulties faced by the people were very painful for him given his sympathetic spirit and extreme love for them. He was deeply concerned about their salvation and was kind and merciful to the believers.³⁵

He was a caring friend who through his guidance would warn his people against evil deeds and self-imposed customs which tied them as shackles of enslavement.³⁶ His presence was a great blessing and benevolence of God to mankind because he was the embodiment of noble traits of character as Allah (s) had embellished him with a great

³⁰ Ibn Sa’d, *Al-Tabaqāt*, vol. 1, p. 400.

³¹ Ibid, p. 465.

³² Ali (a), *Nahj al-Balāghah* of Faydh al-Islam, sermon 169, p. 512.

³³ Ibn Sa’d, *Al-Tabaqāt*, vol. 2, p. 237.

³⁴ Qur’an, 26:215.

³⁵ Qur’an, 9:128.

³⁶ Qur’an, 7:157.

character.³⁷ He himself used to say, “I have been sent to accomplish the excellent moral traits.”³⁸

Indeed he was the beloved who was a manifestation of insight, love, and immersion in the ocean of divine luminosity, in body and spirit, in thoughts and remembrance, in his outer appearance and his inner spirit.

3. Perseverance, Patience, and Resistance in the face of Difficulty

Forbearance against accusations and difficulties such as mockery, bribery, being accused of magic and poetry, infliction of calamities and torture, economic sanctions, physical injuries such as that which he went through in his journey to Tā'if could not have been possible without the spirit of resistance. The Holy Qur'an calls on the Prophet of Allah (s) to show resistance and says, “*So be patient, and you cannot be patient except with God's help. And do not grieve for them, nor be upset by their guile.*”³⁹ Yet in another place the Qur'an addresses the Prophet (s) saying, “*And be patient over what they say, and keep away from them in a graceful manner.*”⁴⁰

4. The Noble Qur'an, the Miracle, and the Scale Model of the Holy Prophet (s)

The Qur'an was the greatest miracle of the Holy Prophet (s) because it was in confrontation of this piercing armament. The enemies of Islam sanctioned the listening of the Qur'an as mentioned by the Holy Qur'an itself, “*The faithless say, 'Do not listen to this Qur'an and*

³⁷ Qur'an, 68:4.

³⁸ *Nahj al-Fasāhah*, p. 288, hadith no. 1372.

³⁹ Qur'an, 16:127.

⁴⁰ Qur'an, 73:10. In verse 34 of Surat An'am, Allah urges the Messenger of Allah (s) - like the previous prophets - to show perseverance.

*hoot it down so that you may prevail [over the Apostle].”*⁴¹ This verdict from the heads of Quraysh indicates the degree of effectiveness of this Noble Book, for the Qur’an is a book of wisdom, all-laudable, is the criterion, and the distinguisher between the truth and falsehood. It is a book in which falsehood cannot approach it nor can it be abrogated as it is the guidance for all times.⁴²

The Qur’an is a light that was sent down together with the Prophet (s)⁴³ with the aim of illuminating different aspects of human life. It is a book of guidance, a source of clarification of all things, a mercy, and good news.⁴⁴ It guides mankind to the truth and the straight path.⁴⁵ Had the Qur’an been from someone other than Allah (s), there would have been discrepancy in it.⁴⁶ No one shall ever be able to bring a chapter (*surah*) like that of the Qur’an⁴⁷ nor is anyone able to alter the words of Allah (s). The Prophet (s) conveyed all that was sent down onto him by Allah (s) in the same manner and in clear Arabic words⁴⁸ as it was revealed, without any alteration.

Ali (a) says in this regard, “[The Qur’an] is a light which shall never extinguish; it is a lantern whose brilliance will never die away. It is an ocean whose depth cannot be comprehended; it is the origin of faith (*imān*) and the cause of its prosperity; it contains springs of knowledge and its oceans; it is the spring of justice and its source; and it is the backing stone of Islam and its foundation.”⁴⁹

⁴¹ Qur’an, 41:26.

⁴² Qur’an, 41:42.

⁴³ Qur’an, 7:157.

⁴⁴ Qur’an, 16:89.

⁴⁵ Qur’an, 46:30.

⁴⁶ Qur’an, 4:82.

⁴⁷ Qur’an, 2:23; 10:38; 17:88 and 11:38.

⁴⁸ Qur’an, 18:27; 6:34 and 115.

⁴⁹ Ali (a), *Nahj al-Balāghah* of Faydh al-Islam, sermon 189, p. 641.

The clarity and sweetness of style of the Qur'an is such that "it astonishes those familiar with the Arabic language and makes them unable to speak when they attempt to describe it."⁵⁰

The Qur'an has illustrated the basic principles of Islam in three sections:

- a. The fundamental doctrines of Islam like monotheism, prophethood, the Day of Resurrection, and the creation of the heavens and the earth.
- b. Good character and manners.
- c. Practical edicts and scientific laws. The rulings pertaining to them have generally been mentioned in the Holy Qur'an while the detailed commentary upon them is given by the Holy Prophet (s).⁵¹

It is worth mentioning that, in general, the eighty-six Meccan chapters of the Qur'an talk about the Islamic doctrine and noble character in a concise manner, while the remaining twenty-eight Medinan chapters of the Qur'an focus on the Islamic practical laws in detail.

5. Dialogue and Upright Speech in Confrontation with the Opponents

Another factor behind the success of the Prophet of Islam (s) in guiding the people and propagating Islam was the employment of sound speech in his dialogue and conversation with the polytheists and the People of the Book. The Qur'an has also made it incumbent upon Muslims to use upright language in their conversation and interaction with the people of other faith. Addressing the Holy Prophet (s), the Holy Qur'an says, "Tell my servants to speak in the

⁵⁰ Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i, *Qur'an Dar Islam*, p. 118.

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 11.

manner which is the best.”⁵² Yet in another place it urges the Muslims saying, “... and speak kindly to people.”⁵³

In order to bring the hearts of the people closer, Allah (s) recommended His Prophet (s) to observe good manners in his speech, and to employ beautiful language in his discussions and arguments against his opponents. The Holy Qur’an says in this regard:

*Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good advice, and dispute with them in a manner that is best. Indeed your Lord knows best those who stray from His way, and He knows best those who are guided.*⁵⁴

The Holy Qur’an also reminds the Muslims of the important principle of observing pleasant conduct: “*Do not dispute with the people of the Book except in a manner which is best.*”⁵⁵

6. Conformity between the Speech and Character of the Prophet of Allah (s)

Among the ethical approaches employed by the Holy Prophet (s) in guiding the people was to practice what he preached. He had trained himself in such a manner that his actions would concur with his words so that he may not be among those reprimanded in the following verses of the Qur’an:

*O you who have faith! Why do you say what you do not do?”*⁵⁶ and “*Will you bid others to piety and forget*

⁵² Qur’an, 17:53.

⁵³ Qur’an, 2:83.

⁵⁴ Qur’an, 16:125.

⁵⁵ Qur’an, 9:46.

⁵⁶ Qur’an, 61:2.

*yourselves, while you recite the Book? Do you not apply reason?*⁵⁷

He himself used to say, “He who does not consider his words to be part of his actions, his misdeeds shall proliferate and he will meet his punishment.”⁵⁸

Thus, the actions of the Holy Prophet (s) used to correspond with his words. He would also advise the Muslims to be accountable for their words as he considered discrepancy between words and actions to be a source of multiplication of sins.

7. Focus on the Aim and Accuracy in Planning

Right from the early days of his mission, the Holy Prophet (s) had deliberated a program with a specific purpose and timeline aimed at training the people spiritually, creating a devoted manpower, terminating the Paganic culture and misguidance, and combating the conspiracies of the infidels.

The Holy Prophet (s) first demonstrated his goal to his followers. Thereafter in his public call to Islam, he made his ideals clear when he stood at Abtah and declared, “I am the Messenger of Allah; I am inviting you to worship Allah the One, and to stop worshipping idols who neither benefit nor harm, neither create nor provide, and neither give or take life.”⁵⁹

It is obvious that the identification of the aim by the Holy Prophet (s) contributed to the acceptance of his ideals among the people. This was similar to the message he was instructed by Allah (s) to convey to the people at the beginning of his mission: “*Say, ‘Indeed I have been*

⁵⁷ Qur’an, 2:44.

⁵⁸ Muhammadi Reyshahri, Muhammad, *Mizān al-Hikmah*, vol. 3, p. 2738.

⁵⁹ Al-Ya’qubi, *Al-Tārikh*, vol. 1, p. 379.

commanded to worship God and not to ascribe any partner to Him. To Him do I summon [all mankind] and to Him will be my return.’”⁶⁰

8. Training Manpower from among the Youths of Mecca

The Holy Prophet (s) was well aware that for an ideological and socio-cultural transformation of a Paganic society there was a need for sufficient manpower. Hence, he took up the challenge of training such manpower. Historical evidence shows that the Holy Prophet (s) would spend most of his energy in guiding the youths such that the average age of the early Muslims was 30 years. Personalities like Imam Ali (a) was 10 years old at the time,⁶¹ Mus‘ab ibn ‘Umayr – the propagator of the Prophet (s) in Yathrib - was 27 years old⁶², Ja‘far ibn Abi Talib – the leader of the Muslims who migrated to Abyssinia - was 23 years old⁶³, and Arqam ibn Abi al-Arqam – whose house was the centre of propagation of the Holy Prophet (s) - was 18 years old.⁶⁴

Apparently, the majority of the early Muslims were among the young people. This is attested by the words of the representatives of the Quraysh before Najjashi, the emperor of Abyssinia, “A group of foolish young men from our community have recently escaped from the religion of their fathers and have embraced a new faith.”⁶⁵ This statement clearly shows that the Holy Prophet (s) had initiated an extensive struggle to recruit devoted manpower from among the youth to guarantee the future of the Islamic movement.

This move came as a result of the fact that the youths were more prepared to accept the message of Islam compared to those people

⁶⁰ Qur’an, 13:36.

⁶¹ Ibn Hisham, *Al-Sirat al-Nabawiyyah*, part one, p. 245.

⁶² Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghābah*, vol. 4, p. 369.

⁶³ Ibid, vol. 1, p. 289.

⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 60.

⁶⁵ Ibn Hisham, *Al-Sirat al-Nabawiyyah*, part one, p. 325.

who were spiritually and mentally bred with the pagan customs and traditions and more capable of severing the cause of God.

9. Seeking Divine Assistance

Yet another factor behind the success of the Holy Prophet (s) during his Prophetic mission was seeking divine help from Allah (s) because of the severe pressure and torture the companions of the Prophet (s) were subjected to, as well as the accusations made against him like that of being a magician, fortune-teller, madman, and poet. These were among the major barriers in guiding the people towards Islam.

Thus, by his continuous reliance on Allah (s) and seeking His help, the Prophet (s) would bear these difficulties and hurdles one after another, and he would firmly continue with his mission as learned from the Holy Qur'an: "*Say, 'I have been instructed to worship Allah and not to associate any partner with Him; I call on Him and to Him is the return'*"⁶⁶ or "*Say, 'He is my Lord, there is no god except Him, in Him I have put my trust and to Him will be my return.'*"⁶⁷

During his journey to the city of Tā'if, when he was stoned by some of the ignoble men of the city on the instructions of their chiefs, he whispered to Allah (s) saying, "My Lord! I complain of my weakness and disability to You; You are the All-beneficent and the All-merciful Lord; You are my Lord and the Lord of the weak; in whose hands have you entrusted me?"⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Qur'an, Ra'd (13):36.

⁶⁷ Qur'an, Ra'd (13):30.

⁶⁸ Ibn Hisham, *Al-Sirat al-Nabawiyah*, section one, p. 419.

Conclusion

Based on what has been discussed, it becomes clear that after the Holy Prophet (s) declared himself a prophet, when the infidels and the leaders of Quraysh sensed their social and cultural life to be in danger, they did not leave any stone unturned in labelling the Holy Prophet (s) with different kinds of accusations and in torturing his companions, and they mobilised all their strength to stand against the call of Islam to liberate mankind. Although these difficulties and problems were a major obstruction in the way of the Holy Prophet (s) to attain his lofty goals, they could not stop him from reaching the heights of success. The factors that contributed to the success of the Holy Prophet (s) during the early days of his mission are studied above.

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