

SYED AHMED SHAHEED

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Summary

This article briefly outlines the life of Syed Ahmad Shaheed (born 1786 A.D. died 1831 A.D.).

His early life which was spent in preliminary school seems to have little influence on his later intellectual development. He spent his adolescent training in physical exercises and games which were of utmost importance on his warrior nature. His late interest in the religious education and the mastery of the great works of Qur'an and Hadith in Arabic and Persian was really astonishing.

The guidance received from Shah Abdul Aziz and subsequently getting other people in his Dairah and bayyat is really remarkable and this paved the way for his mustering of support from his disciples. The Hajj and the time spent in Makkah-al-Mukarramah and Madina-al-Munawarah lighted the torch of Islam and brought his mission to the very height which was necessary to invite muslims of India to rise up in Jihad against the atrocities committed by Sikhs and the British alike. The essay (article) also highlights the factors which led Syed Ahmad Shaheed to embark upon such tasks and try to purify the religion from the customs adopted from the non-Muslims of India. His Martial training of the early childhood was of great importance in the practical life. His inclination towards mysticism (Sufism) and adoption of Silsilah, Naqshbandia, Qadria is another side of his activities. His serving nawab of Tonk and the British gave him a good idea of the life Muslims were leading in these times and the performance of Religious and political duties at the same time was one of the achievements of Syed Ahmad Shaheed, he died giving his life for the cause he believed in.

Hadaiyat-ullah's assertion that Syed Ahmed Shaheed did not take part in the armed struggle against the British is refuted in

29. Ibid. P.42.
30. Al-Qur'an, 2:20.
31. Al-Qur'an. 7:32.
32. Al-Qur'an 7:31.
33. Al-Qur'an 7:158.
34. Shah, George Bernard. The Genuine Islam, Vol. I. Singapore, 1936.
35. Sunan Nasai, Beirut, Dar Ihay-al-Turas, Vol. VIII, P.296.
36. Ibid. Vol. VIII, P.298.
37. Sunan Ibn Maja, Vol. II, Riyadh. 1984, P.257.
38. Al-Qur'an 8:60.
39. Yaqoobi, Vol. II, P.123.
40. The Encyclopedia Britannica 11th Ed., 1911, of Cit. Vol. 28 P.782, 783.
41. Bible, I Corinthians 11-7.
42. Time Sep. 5, 1983.
43. Dawn/Observer news Service (c) London Observer, Karachi, Nov.11, 1997.

9. International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, new York. The Macmillan Company of the Free Press, Reprint Ed. 1972, P.458.
10. Ibid. P.458.
11. Nadvi, Abdul Hassan. What The World Has Lost by the Downfall of the Muslims. Qatar (Arabic Version) 1974.
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17. Ata-Ur-Rahman. Jesus, A Prophet of Islam. Karachi, Begum Aisha Bawany Waqf, 1980, 1980 P.11
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20. Nehru, Jawaharlal. The Discovery of India, London, 1960. PP.201, 202.
21. Al-Kalbi, Kitab-al-Asnam Cairo. Al-matbaha AlAmiria, 1914.
22. Sunan Tirmidhi. Beirut, Dar-Ihya-at-Turas-al-Arabi, Vol.IV chpt. V. P 36.
23. Ibid. P.42.
24. Ibn Hisham. Seerah Nabawiyya. Cairo. Mustafa Al-Babi Al-Halabi, 1936. Vol. II. P.279.
25. Ibid Vol Vol. III P.70.
26. Shibli, Nomani Serat al Nibi, Lahore, Al-Faisal, Vol.I, 1991 PP. 178, 179.
27. Hitti, Philip K. The History of Arabs, London, 1960. Macmillan & Co. P.42.
28. Ibid. P.253.

thousands of Algerians have been killed since the civil war started in 1992, have been carried out by regime's death squads. John Sweeney and Leonard Doyle write in their article 'Algeria's Secret Killing Machine', "the ruthless massacres in Algeria are the work of secret police and army death squads".⁴³

We live in an age where knowledge holds sway, where science and technology rule supreme, where media and press play their effective role and where intellect and mind have the largest share in shaping the destinies of the nations. Simple emotional approach and hasty steps will not serve the purpose in this context, rather they will deprive us of our goals. According to one estimate, during the last one hundred years 10 million Muslims laid down their lives for the cause of Islamic Revival but how far we have succeeded and achieved our targets. This is the question that has been haunting our minds time and again and that has to be answered. We have to evaluate, re-assess and revise all our thinking and methodologies in the light of the prophet's revolution and see whether we have not erred somewhere or deviated from the path that the prophet has chalked out for us.

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4. Ibid.
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6. Mahsoorpur, Salman, Rahamat-al-Alamin, Lahore, Shaikh Ghulam Ali and Sons, 1928. P.219 Vol.II.
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8. Ruthven, Malise Islam in the World, England, Published by Penguin Books, 1991. P.217.

young, why are human beings subjecting theirs to whippings and punches and seculal perversion?"⁴²

Present day values and ideals acknowledged and upheld by humanity today are: equality and dignity of man; value of universal and scientific education; dignity of labour; freedom from slavery and exploitation of all kinds; liberation of the woman and her spiritual equality with man; respect for private property; the right to life and liberty; practice of religious tolerance; integration of mankind in a feeling of oneness irrespective of their differences of race or colour; the downplay of arrogance and pride based on superiority of race, colour, wealth etc. and the founding of society on the principle of Justice. What is the origin of these values and ideals? Do they owe their origin to Pre-Islamic religious teachings?

We do not find these values and ideals in pre-Islamic religious teachings and we have come to the conclusion after a thorough detailed study that present day set of values and ideals were revealed for the first time by the Islamic Intellectual Movement. It proves that even after fourteen hundred years that message continues, at least in principle, to be followed still.

We are passing through the age of Islamic Resurgence and there is going on a great struggle for Islamic Revival in almost all Muslim and non-Muslim countries. Different groups and movements have been working for the revival of Islam. They have adopted and developed different ways and means to achieve their objectives. Some of them have tried to come to power through democratic process like in Algeria and Turkey but all their efforts to take over were thwarted by the secular army then in collusion with outside masters. Some of them are already frustrated and have resorted to violence and rather they have been forced to tread the path of violence. After the collapse of communism, Islam and Muslims all over the world have become the targets of the West and their allies. It is partly because of the enemies who harbour hatred and hostility against Islam and partly because of the behaviour and activities of the Muslims themselves in some part of the world. Recently a new phenomenon has emerged in some Islamic countries. It is a deliberate act of state policy in these countries to murder innocent civilians to put blame on the Muslim fundamentalists. An article appeared in London Observer that gives detail of the ~~Camague in Algeria~~ The massacres in which tens of

"أيها الناس إن ربكم واحد ، وإن أباكم واحد ، كلكم لآدم و آدم من تراب ، إن أكرمكم عند الله اتقاكم ، ليس لعربي على عجمي فضل إلا بالتقوى".⁽³⁹⁾

(O People! Your creator is one and your father is one. All of you (The whole mankind) from Adam and Adam is from dust. The noblest among you in the sight of God is one who is most God-fearing. No Arab has the superiority over the non-Arab except by God-consciousness}. The prophet asserted the equality, dignity and brotherhood of man. Long before this he declared liberation of the woman and her spiritual equality with man. He stood for the rights of the most oppressed souls of the society - the women and the slaves and put an end to slavery and all kind of exploitation.

Until the 1860 is a married English women did not exist as a legal person. Upon marriage she entered a condition called "Converture", effectively making her a possession of her husband. Her name was changed to indicate the new ownership, a practice that still continues. She could not own property, make a contract or will, or get custody rights for her own children. The 1632 English Law declared: "That which the husband hath is his own. That which the wife hath is the husband's. Worse still, she had no rights to get out of a miserable marriage until 1857., divorce required the passage of an Act of parliament."⁴⁰ According to Bible, "Woman's second class status was widely believed, '(man)' is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man."⁴¹

In as civilized a country as England not until 1922, was a married woman entitled to own property. In Ecclesiastical Law sanctioned by the church of Christ it is impossible for her to obtain a divorce even now. The modern secular legislation which recognizes divorce in Christian countries shows an indirect influence of Islam.

Even today in a highly developed and civilized country like America victimization of woman and child abuse still continue. The Time (Sep. 1983), in its articles, entitled 'Wife - beating: the Silent Crime' and 'child Abuse: Ultimate Betrayal' published an exhaustive report on the subject in which it related that millions of woman are beaten by their husbands every year and thousands of them are beaten to death. In the end the writer remark: "At stake is America's most precious capital. At stake, too, is simple human dignity. If wolves and bears and birds take meticulous care of their

"Every intoxicant is prohibited and every intoxicant is Khamr". There is another Hadith reported by Aisha (R.A) that the prophet said,

عن عائشة رضى الله عنها أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: " كل شراب أسكر فهو حرام " (36)

(Every liquor which intoxicates is prohibited).

عن جابر بن عبد الله رضى الله عنه أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: " ما أسكر كثيره فقليله حرام " (37)

Jabir Ibn Abdullah (R.A) relates that the Apostle of Allah said, (If a large amount of any thing causes intoxication, a small amount of it is prohibited). 'Al-khamr' originally meant alcoholic drink prepared from grapes but today a lot of drugs like hashish, heroin and marijuana have been added to the list that cause intoxication. So by means of ijtehad we can apply "Al-khamr" to these drugs and intoxicants. Another example to elucidate the point. Take the case of war. We do not insist in this age of science and advanced technology on using obsolete weapons like swords and sabres during the war with enemies. Because the Qur'an has given us a principle in this regard that applies to all times and at all places.

﴿واعدوا لهم ما استطعتم من قوة ومن رباط الخيل ترهبون به عدو الله و عدوكم﴾ (38)

"Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the hearts of) the enemies of God and your enemies". In the light of this principle, we can equip ourselves with the latest weapons that we can afford to defeat our enemies. Basic guidance is of a permanent nature but the method of application changes in accordance with the peculiar needs of every age. Too much emphasis and stress on permanence makes the system rigid and robs it of its flexibility and progress while lack of permanent values generate anarchy.

Over 500 years before Magna Carta, the prophet Muhammad (SAAW) gave an elaborate charter of human rights in his Farewell Pilgrimage (Khutba of Hajjatul-al-Wida). he brought about the first social revolution in the 7th century when he declared:

and happiness. I have prophesied about the Faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is acceptable to the Europe of today".³⁴

The fourth distinctive feature of this Intellectual Movement is its stability and change that coexist. This revolution presented an Ideology that satisfies the demands of stability as well as of change. It is a law of nature that elements of permanence and change must coexist. Take for example, the case of human body that has two dimensions, one is of permanent nature that does not undergo any change and the other undergoes changes with the passage of time. Man's organic body is made up of cells and tissues that undergo change as child grows up, reaches the peak of his youth and then declines and deteriorates. The other aspect is of permanent nature that does not undergo any change with the passage of time. If a person, for instance, is stubborn or greedy or short-tempered he will remain so till the end. Take another example of a tree. Some parts of the tree do not undergo any perceptible change i.e. the roots and the stem while others do change with the change of the season i.e. the leaves and the flowers. We find in nature, that permanence and change go side by side. Islam is (Deen-al-Fitra) compatible with the laws of nature. That is why in Islam certain things are of permanent nature while others change with time. This message was meant for all people and for all times to come that is why only fundamentals and broad outlines are laid down in the Qur'an. Its application is left to the scholars of the age to find out solutions and answers to the issues by means of Ijtihad because the society changes and develops with the passage of time and new issues arise to be answered and solved in the light of those basic principles.

-To explain this point further we take the example of prohibition of al-khamr (the wine), by the Qur'an and Sunnah. The word "al-khamr" that we find in the Qur'an is further defined by the traditions. It is related by Ibn Umar (R.A) That the Apostle of Allah said,

"عن ابن عمر رضي الله عنه عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: "كل مسكر حرام و كل مسكر خمرة" (35)

“Our lord, give us good in this world and the good in the Hereafter”.

Some have laid emphasis on the spiritual side of life and neglected its material aspect. They have looked upon the world as an illusion, a deception and a trap. On the other, the materialistic ideologies have totally ignored spiritual and moral dimensions of life. But this movement taught us that moral and material powers must be welded together to achieve spiritual salvation in the life to come. It strongly condemns those who refuse to benefit from his blessings:

﴿قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ﴾. (31)

“Say to them by whose order have you denied yourself those amenities which God has created for His people, and those good things to eat and use which he has made for you.”

﴿كُلُوا وَشَرِبُوا وَلَا تَسْرِفُوا﴾. (32)

(Eat and drink but do not exceed the limits of moderation and decency).

A third unique feature of this revolution is its Universality. It was a message for the entire human race and God of Islam is the God of all the world and the prophet is the messenger for the whole mankind.”

﴿قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا﴾. (33)

“O people! I am the messenger of God to you all”. The message stresses that all men are equal whatever be their colour, race, language or nationality. This Intellectual movement of Islam banished all false barriers of language and race and proclaimed the idea of the whole humanity being one family of God. It wants to unite the entire human race under one banner. Islam is international in its outlook and approach and to a world today torn by ethnic strife and national rivalries and feuds it presents a message of life and hope and of a glorious future. The message like this--- that is of universal nature--- can only be capable of solving the issues of a world that has become a global village. George Bernard Shaw in his book, ‘The Genuine Islam’, calls the prophet as Saviour of Humanity. he says, “I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace

sterile Arabia seems to have been converted as if by magic into a nursery of heroes the like of whom, both in number and quality, would be hard to find anywhere".²⁷ The nation had, writes the author, no match in human history and possessed the following unique characteristics: "courage, endurance in the time of trouble (sabr), observance of the rights and obligations of neighbourliness, (Jiwar) manliness (muruah), generosity and hospitality, regard for women and fulfillment of solemn promises".²⁸ The writer further says, "If someone in the first third of the seventh Christian century had had the audacity to prophesy that within a decade or so some unheralded, unforeseen power from the hitherto barbarous and little known land of Arabia was to make its appearance, hurl itself against the only two world powers of the age, fall heir to the one (the Sasanid) and strip the other (the Byzantine) of its fairest provinces, he would undoubtedly have been declared a lunatic yet that was exactly what happened".²⁹

Now we take up the salient features of this revolution and discuss some of the lasting effects that it has had on world cultures and civilizations. One of the unique features of this revolution is that it established a balance between individual and society. The world societies have been oscillating like pendulum between two extremes since times immemorial. At times, we notice monarchies, totalitarian states and fascist regimes where people are persecuted and repressed and are denied basic human rights. At others, we see individualism and capitalist systems where a man is allowed to do whatever he likes at the expense of the society. The Islamic intellectual Movement, on the one hand, guaranteed the fundamental rights of the individual and did not subscribe to the view that man must lose his individuality in Society or in the State. On the other hand, it also awakened a sense of social responsibility in man, organized human beings into a society and state and enjoined the individual to subscribe to the social good.

One of the greatest contributions of this Intellectual Movement is that it did not embrace any separation between material and spiritual life and enjoined man to devote all his efforts and energies to the reconstruction of life on healthy moral foundations. It did not divide life into water-tight compartments of matter and spirit. It taught us to pray:

It was the miracle of this faith and belief that we see a man presenting himself to the prophet to be punished for the sin he committed. He came to the prophet to confess his guilt to him. he says to the prophet, "prophet, I have committed fornication you punish me."²² On another occasion, a woman came to the prophet, and addressed him prophet I have committed a sin, you purify me."²³ During the war with the Persians, an ordinary soldier finds the crown of the Persian King which he secretly brings and deposits it with his commander without disclosing his name. The prophet distributes spoils of war among his soldiers and when he gives to an Arab villager his share, the latter responds quickly (pointing to his neck) that he had joined the battle against the infidels to lay down his life for the sake of God. On the eve of war of Badr, when the prophet persuades people to participate in the battle against the enemy, a man who was eating dates at the time asked the prophet if he joined the battle against the unbelievers and died would he be blessed with paradise. The prophet replied, 'surely, why not'. He stopped eating at once and threw them away with the remarks that why he should waste his time. So he left for the battle field and fought against the enemy and was martyred.²⁴ When the prohibition of wine was proclaimed, the cups raised to the lips were thrown away and casks of best of wine were emptied on the streets of Madina. Notice that the call for Jihad made the teenagers stood on their tiptoes to look taller so that they could qualify to join the battle against the infidels.²⁵

When asked to contribute for the war, usman Ibn Affan (R.A) presented a long line of camels laden with wealth. Abu Bakr (R.A) placed all he possessed at the feet of the prophet. A person offered the dates that he earned as his day's wages and kept back nothing for himself. When the Ansars (local citizens) were called upon to rehabilitate the Muhajireen (emigrants) they rushed to divide all their movable and immovable property to give half the share to Muhajireen.²⁶

These were the people who came into being as a result of this revolution. It is said that during ten years of prophet's life at Madina, few cases came up to the court. The conscience of the people was sufficient enough to keep vigil over them. The prophet before he brought about change in the external order changed the heart and mind of man and produced a new character of him. Phillip. K. Hitti has rightly said "After the death of the prophet,

If he commits a sin in a secluded corner in the darkness of night, He knows it. He even knows our thoughts and intentions, bad or good.

Belief in the prophethood means that the creator has not left His Creatures go astray. He has provided guidance through His messengers and apostles who were sent to every corner of the world to guide people. It started with Adam, the first prophet and culminated in prophet Muhammad (SAAW), the last messenger to humanity. Islam, therefore, enjoins man to believe in all the prophets sent by God from time to time for the guidance of man. The previous prophets came to a particular people at a particular time while Muhammad (SAAW) is the messenger for whole of mankind till Doomsday. The teachings of the earlier prophets have either disappeared altogether from the world or whatever remains is distorted and adulterated by their followers. That is why God sent Muhammad (SAAW) to purify God's religion. This is called belief in the prophethood.

Belief in the Hereafter means that life in this world is transitory. This world, according to the Qur'an, is a place of trial for man. he has been allotted a short fixed period of life during which he is being judged. This world will come to an end and a new world will be resurrected. Man is not an irresponsible being. he is accountable to God for his actions. He will be punished or rewarded accordingly on the Day of Judgement. it took prophet twenty three years to rais this community in the light of three basic concepts belief in the unity of God; belief in the prophethood and belief in the Hereafter. The great success of revolution lies in the fact that the prophet gave to humanity a new faith. It was the revolutionary force of this faith that changed every aspect of human life. The faith which comprises Tawheed is a revolutionary concept and constitutes the essence of the teachings of Islam. it is not merely a metaphysical concept or a philosophical truth. It is a dynamic belief and a revolutionary doctrine that is deeply linked with practical life, morality and ethics. There is a logical sequence between belief and practice and so what we believe must reflect in our thinking, attitude, behaviour and conduct. The greatest achievement of the prophet Muhammad (SAAW) in this context, which no other ideology or religion can claim to achieve, is that he forged a link between belief and practical life which worked miracles.

criticize centuries old convictions and habits. He carried out his mission to reform the society in three stages: the individual, the community; and the life-long struggle against evil. He started with the individual, for the individual has an important place in the scheme of things. he is the vice-gerent of God on this earth. He is the subject of the Qur'an and the central theme that runs throughout the Book is the man. He is accountable to God for all his actions. When the individuals responded to the call of the prophet and agreed to join the community and prepared to submit to the will of God, they were organized into a disciplined group. They were educated and groomed by the prophet. They were every mindful of their Creator, upholding, truth against falsehood. Then there is a life long struggle against evil. During this process the prophet Muhammad (SAAW), inculcated in his followers the belief in the unity of God (with all its dimensions); belief in the prophethood; and belief in the Hereafter.

Faith or Belief in the unity of God means that He is one and indivisible. He has no associates. Nobody shares His person, or attributes, His rights and powers. He is Omnipotent and Omniscient. he is the sole Creator, the Lord and the sustainer of the universe. He is the source of all knowledge and good. He alone claims our obedience. This is called Tawheed. Faith in the unity of God is most fundamental and the most important teaching of the Qur'an. it means that all men are created by one God and so they are all equal. This concept also defines the true position of man in the Universe. It says that God is the Creator, the sovereign and that man is his vice-gerent (Khalifa) on this earth. This exalts man to the noble and dignified position of being God's representative on this planet.

This belief gives birth to a sense of self respect and self esteem in man. He knows that God alone is the source of all power and that none except He can benefit or harm, or provide for his needs, or give and take away life. This belief makes him indifferent to, and independent of all powers except those of God. This attitude of mine cannot be produced by any other belief.

The most important impact of this belief on man's life is that it makes man obey and observe God's Law. This belief produces in him the consciousness that God knows everything hidden or open.

peninsula and blind adherence to the beliefs of their forefathers had undermined them morally and spiritually. The belief in God had grown very feeble among them. Each tribe and locality had its own god and in Makka every household had its own idol. Angels and jinni were adored as divine by the Arabs. Drinking, gambling, adultery and robbery were rampant in the society. The lot of woman was extremely miserable and there was no sanctity of matrimonial relations. The man married his step-mother after the death of his father and daughters were buried alive at birth.²¹

Such conditions prevailed in the world in general and Arabia in particular at the advent of the prophet Muhammad (SAAW). The whole world was in the grip of Jahiliyya. It is essential to point out that when we speak of Jahiliyya against Islam, it denotes all those world views and ways of life which were based on the rejection or disregard of the heavenly guidance and which is communicated to mankind through the prophets and messengers of God. All the segments of the society were in firm grip of Jahiliyya. False beliefs and ideas, superstitions, centuries old customs and practices were so deep-seated that it was extremely difficult task rather unimaginable to destroy and up-root them. That is why when the Prophet launched his mission and declared war against their false beliefs and practices; they charged him as lunatic and magician. The people of Makka did not spell out at random these charges against him but they did it consciously and deliberately. One cannot imagine how difficult it was for the prophet to convince those people to relinquish their age-old beliefs and customs. A simple example from common life may explain this situation in which the Prophet finds himself. For example, if a person standing by a riverside, all of a sudden, declares that he could make the current flow upstream how would you react. You would at once remark that he has gone mad but the person carries on his mission and at last people start gathering around him and join his camp. The next remark you would pass about him is that he is great magician and charmer who has cast spell on them to win them over to his side for you still believe that the task is too difficult to be achieved at any cost.

The age old beliefs and prejudices of the desert Arabs were too deep-rooted to be removed and destroyed. The task facing the prophet was colossal. He began his dawah work against overwhelming and unbelievable odds. He stood up to challenge and

the Divine Unity. The first of the twelve commandments which it contains begins: "first of all, believe that God is one and that He created all things and organized them and out of what did not exist made all things to be, and he contains all things but alone is Himself uncontained...."¹⁷ Social disruption and economic chaos had reached its peak in the Eastern Roman Empire. By the end of the 6th century Rome had reached the lowest period of her depression¹⁸. "---we again inquire into the fate of Rome, which had reached about the close of the sixth century, the lowest period of her depression"¹⁹.

The Jews were notorious all over the world for their excessive pride of blood and usuriess. Greed, hypocrisy, deceit, treachery, selfishness and cruelty were the normal traits of their nature. They, under the later Persian kings, had suffered persecution. They had been under the yoke of oppression and victims of foreign aggression for centuries. During 6th and 7th centuries of Christian era they were morally and spiritually at the lowest ebb. A major reason for their degeneration was the corruption of their beliefs about the After-life. They held the view that since they were among the offspring of great Prophets and since they were related to saints and pious men who had dedicated themselves to the service of God in the past, they would be forgiven by the grace of those great men. This false reliance upon them made them negligent of true religious piety and pushed them to life of sin and wickedness.

Buddhism which was a simple creed in the beginning was assimilated and swallowed up by Brahminism and had already converted into idolatrous faith. As Nehru writes in his book, "The Discovery of India" "But both Brahminism and Buddhism deteriorated and degrading practices grew up in them. It became difficult to distinguish the two. If Brahminism absorbed Buddhism, this process changed Brahminism also in many ways"²⁰.

The Arabs of the pre-Islamic age had certain natural traits that marked them out in the contemporary world. They, for example, had no match in eloquence. Freedom and honour--- they valued most. They were superb horsemen, bold, chivalrous, strong of determination, truthful, loyal and trustworthy. They possessed the unique characteristics of manliness, generosity, hospitality and fulfillment of solemn promises. But centuries of isolation in the

and Muslim Spain had not yet appeared on the stage of history to show them the light of knowledge. Even much later in the 10th century of Christian era that we see in Muslim Spain that almost every body knew how to read and write, while in Christian Europe, except the clergy, even persons belonging to the highest ranks were wholly ignorant.¹³ As Philip K. Hitti has quoted renowned Dutch Scholar Dozy "the general state of culture in Andalusia reached such a high level at that time that the distinguished Dutch Scholar went so far as to declare enthusiastically that "nearly every body could read and write" - all this when in Christian Europe only the rudiments of learning were known, and that chiefly by a few churchmen".¹⁴

India once the cradle of great civilizations and religions had morally and socially degenerated. We find in this period of history that every object of nature is adored and worshipped by the people. The society, on the whole, suffered from sexual wantonness, caste system and social distinctions.¹⁵ Kewal Motwani, in his book, 'Manu: a study of Hindu social theory', explains the caste system and Hindu social hierarchy. "Four groups (Varnas). Manu mentions here four types of personality, the fourth being the Sudra. These four types give us the natural division of society into four groups, the brahmans, the Kashatriyas, the vaishyas, and the sudras. The Brahman is the man of intellect. He is created from the mouth of Brahma, therefore, he studies and teaches the Vedas. The kashatriya comes from His arms. he serves the state and wields the sceptre of authority in defence of the group from external danger and internal disorder. The vaishya is a man of desire, he comes from thighs of the Lord. he is pillar of the nation. he keeps the whole group going by attending to its material needs. The fourth group is that of the Sudra. The Sudra comes from the feet of the Lord. He must cooperate with the other groups by calm obedience and patient service".¹⁶

When we come to world religions existing at the time, we find that Christianity that had never possessed a comprehensive and complete code of life which could provide the framework for a civilization and polity and which was a simple creed of monotheism had already been converted into idolatrous faith. Christianity began with the belief in one God and was then corrupted, and the doctrine of the Trinity came to be accepted. In the first century after the disappearance of Jesus, those who followed him continued to affirm

target gradually in a judicious wise manner and carried out his mission with vision, drive and intelligence. We cannot understand and appreciate the great struggle and the strenuous efforts that Prophet made in this regard unless we make a general survey of the conditions that prevailed in Arabian Peninsula in particular in the world in general at the advent of Prophet Muhammad (SAAW).

All the historians agreed on this point that the 6th century of the Christian era was the darkest period of human history. Man had broken his link with his Creator and the teachings of the Prophets had already been either twisted and distorted or altogether forgotten. There was a battle going on between spiritualism and materialism. A few good people having been defeated in this battle (between spiritualism and materialism) withdrew themselves from the field and shut themselves up in monasteries or had gone into wilderness. The others who were left in the society compromised with the ruling junta and supported the unjust rule.

There were two big powers at that time---the Romans and the Persians who enjoyed the monopoly of leadership in the west and in the east respect. We find great mischief and confusion in their empires during this period. Morally they were at the lowest ebb. The society comprised three main classes: the ruling class intoxicated with power indulged in reckless debauchery and sensuality; the middle class took pride in imitating the modes and the manners of the rich and the common people lived in abject poverty. Great religions of the world were distorted and corrupted by the spiritual leaders.

The Khosros of Iran claimed that they had divine blood in their veins. They believed in the Divine Right of kings and maintained that the rulers and spiritual leaders were superhuman.¹¹ They enjoyed unlimited powers and privileges. The Central Asian races were between perverted Buddhism and barbaric paganism and thus they were passing through a transition stage of civilization.

North-Western Europe which now comprises Great Britain, France, Germany etc. had not yet seen the dawn of civilization. "From the 5th to the 10th century", says Brifault, "Europe lay sunk in a night of barbarism which grew darker and darker. It was a barbarism far more awful and horrible than that of the primitive savage, for it was the decomposing body of what had been a great civilization".¹² They were cut off from the main stream of humanity

When we speak of revolution, it at once strikes our mind that there would have been mass slaughter and large-scale massacre in the wake of this 'big change'. It is because of the fact that history of world revolutions is replete with horrible stories of carnage and whole sale massacre. On the contrary, when we come to study the Prophet's revolution, we find to our surprise, that there was no indiscriminate killing of men, women and children during this period. There was least bloodshed. The Prophet did not launch it 'with the sword in one hand and the Koran in the other'⁴. He did not propagate religion by means of sword as it is commonly believed by the West and the infidels in self-defence and for their own survival. The total number of prisoner of wars during the battles is 6564. Only two among them were beheaded because their crimes proved and the rest were set free⁶. If we compare this number with the number of casualties caused by wars and revolutions that took place in the world from time to time we will find the difference.

Millions of people were killed during the wars of Mahabharat that were fought in the name of religion. During the wars of Christians against Christians the Inquisition courts were set up and hundreds of thousands were put to death and thousands were burnt alive⁷. As Malise Ruthven writes in his book, 'Islam in the world', "The cruellest and most destructive wars in human history have been waged against each other by nominally Christian states"⁸. The American Civil War bloodier than any European war between the battles of Waterloo and the Marne, ended by the suppression of the Southern rebellion in 1865⁹. Millions of people were killed during World Wars. World War I (1914-1918) cost nine million military and thirty million civilian lives. World War II (1939-1945) cost seventeen million military and thirty four million civilian lives¹⁰. In Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, millions of people lost their lives. The French Revolution took a heavy toll of human life, it ran into millions. During Algerian war of independence two million and a half were killed. Recently in Afghan war one million and a half and during the war between Iran and Iraq more than one million were killed on both sides.

On the contrary, the Prophet Muhammad (SAAW) brought about a moral and intellectual revolution of unprecedented dimensions. Yet it did not happen overnight rather it took the Prophet twenty three years to accomplish his task. He achieved his