

FAROOKH SENSEI



PHENOMENAL LEADER

MUSINGS ON THE PROPHET



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PROPHET MUHAMMED (PBUH): A LESSON IN AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP

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I have lived almost thirty-three years of my life not knowing the religion of Islam nor reading much about it, but calling myself a Muslim. This doesn't mean I was a disbeliever but rather, I followed it just because I was born and brought up in a family where the religion was practised by everyone around. I was more acquainted with Jesus Christ as a messenger throughout my school days as I had around twelve years of my educational memories connected to Christian managed schools and colleges. The Prophet Mohammed hence came into my life extremely late, but will stay forever as the epitome of an ideal leader and an extraordinary human being.

Modern theories of leadership clearly state that there is no one size that fits all theories. No two leaders can be alike, nor

can their challenges be. Every leader has a distinct goal to achieve with his characteristic premises, which in itself can pose distinctive challenges. The greatness of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) cannot be understood in its true dimension if some light is not thrown on the Arabian society of the time. Corruption was rampant and immorality, drunkenness and gambling were the order of the day.

On the authority of Tafsir-i-Tabari and Tabaqat ul Umam, the author of 'Islam and the World,' it is seen that drinking was so common during the time in which the Prophet lived. The wealth of expression in the Arabic language for 'the language of vine' reveals how passionate the Arabs were about it. Gambling was a matter of pride. Usury was rampant and adultery was not considered much of a vice. Prostitution was also rampant and so were brothels. The ghastly crime of female infanticide was perpetrated, either driven by poverty or the false notion of pride. One out of every ten men were guilty of this crime as reported by Haitham bin Adi in 'Maidani'. Besides these, tribal prejudices, arrogance of ancestry, slavery, the nomadic tribes living on plunder, looting and kidnapping, all made the society a debased one and the Prophet Mohammed did not aim at a mere social revolution here.

Prophet Mohammed, the divinely guided leader, lived the Qur'an in this debased society, changing the very concept and way of life, broadening the thoughts of his countrymen and

widening their sympathies. From the twenty first century leadership books, this may be called coaching and mentoring. His very life served as the standard of conduct for the believer. Named Al-Amin by his companions, his sincerity, thoughtfulness, persistence and wisdom taught others around him how to live in the most affectionate, peaceable and wholesome way, which made him highly accepted among the people. What he reflected through his life was the soul of Islam, the highest wisdom that heaven has revealed to earth. His leadership style was not preaching with words but walking the talk. He went on speaking to who would listen to him; reinforcing his teachings among the pilgrims as they came to Makkah, slowly gaining adherents. A man from among themselves, Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) lived with ignorant people in an age where moral rectitude and the spiritual code had long been forgotten. Despite being laughed at, mocked, and jeered at, Mohammed (PBUH), an illiterate leader, succeeded in establishing a belief system, by living with his upright conduct, sincerity, kindness, a gentle disposition, truthfulness and integrity. That is our leader and that is leadership!

If great human qualities won him followers and built their confidence, it was strategic planning that helped him win and sustain active and willing cooperation of all rank and file of the army in the execution of his war plans. The British Field Service Regulations state that in order that their cooperation

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may be effective, each must know the capabilities and limitations of the other and apply their knowledge in gaining and demanding assistance. Cooperation must be achieved from the highest level of political and strategical planning to the smallest units and subunits of the armed forces. With the minimum in men and material, how could the Prophet Mohammed maintain the security and efficiency in his operations better than his opponents who always outnumbered him in men and material?

Courage and unflinching determination to attain his goal was what made Prophet Mohammed remain in his position, fighting and inspiring others who were losing their courage. He was at the lead taking initiative in all the twenty eight expeditions he had been involved in and reports say that when fighting rose to its height, his men took refuge by his side. The bravest among them was considered to be those who stood by him. It was the kind of leadership where all his companions took courage and strength to fight the fiercest enemies. This companionship made them confident and victorious. Prophet Mohammed achieved this with his self-control, patience, endurance, sense of justice and equality.

According to Tariq Muharbi, a man from the Al- Ansari tribe once stood up and said, "Oh messenger of God, these people belong to the tribe of Bani Thalabah. Their ancestor killed a member of our family. We appeal to you to get one of their

men hanged for that." Our beloved Prophet's reply was, "The revenge of the father cannot be taken on his son." What an amazing sense of justice!

Prophet Mohammed's initiatives in tactics must not be overlooked. He gave humanity practical lessons by insisting on discipline and control in all their movements during all stages of war, treating prisoners with mercy, proving integrity and uprightness. He also stood against falsehood in treaties and any attempts to destroy peace. Even more surprising to a modern leader might be the disciplinary measures of varying nature and scope according to the terrain and the geographical position of the armies. When we learn how proud and honoured each man felt accompanying this leader and completing the missions assigned to them, we understand what an astounding leader he was.

If the followers of the great leader Prophet Mohammed had the zeal to carry with them the message of Islam to the people of every land, it had been fuelled by the spirit instilled in them by this visionary who excelled in the art of blending personal values to untiring diplomacy. If sustainable leadership is what modern books call as true leadership that creates and preserves learning, then what better example can the world offer other than the great leader, Prophet Mohammed himself.