

# Salaam

ISSN 0970-5384

Quarterly to Promote Understanding



**Gospel Values**  
**Qur'anic Values For Human Solidarity**  
**The Holy Qur'an: The Word of God**  
**The Prophet Muhammad : A Beautiful Model**  
**Challenges Faced by Muslims in the Present Age**  
**Indian Muslims: Challenges and Opportunities**  
**Paul Jackson's "A Jesuit Among Sufis"**

---

**ISLAMIC STUDIES ASSOCIATION**

---

**Vol. 39**

**JANUARY 2018**

**No. 1**

# Salaam

ISSN 0970-5384

Quarterly to Promote Understanding

Vol. 39

JANUARY 2018

No. 1



## CONTENTS

Editorial	1
Gospel Values — <i>Paul Jackson, SJ</i>	6
Qur'anic Values For Human Solidarity — <i>Mohammad Behzad Fatmi</i>	13
The Holy Qur'an: The Word of God — <i>Rajat Malhotra</i>	16
The Prophet Muhammad : A Beautiful Model — <i>Sufia Khan</i>	21
Challenges Faced by Muslims in the Present Age — <i>Maulana Farhad Ahmad</i>	25
Indian Muslims: Challenges and Opportunities — <i>Maria Khan</i>	30
Paul Jackson's "A Jesuit Among Sufis" — <i>An appreciation by Keith Abranches, SJ</i>	35
— <i>A review by Khurshid Khan</i>	42
Obituary — <i>Bp. Patrick Nair</i>	44

# THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD: A BEAUTIFUL MODEL

*Sufia Khan*

The Qur'an states about the Prophet: "You have indeed in the Prophet of God a good example." (33:21) So where do we learn about the life of the Prophet and the examples that the Prophet set for all of us? We learn it from the Qur'an, from the Hadith, which are the reports of the Prophet's sayings and actions and also from the biographies that have been written on his life.

## **Unilateral Ethics**

The first thing that the Qur'an says about the Prophet is: "You are truly of a sublime character." (68:4) A saying of the Prophet throws light on what this "sublime character" means. He said, "Never debase your character by saying that if people treat you well, you will treat them well, and if they harm you, then you will do worse to them. Rather, become accustomed to being good to those who are good to you, and not wronging those who harm you."

So when we reflect upon this saying, we understand that there are two levels of character: one is an ordinary character which is governed by the idea 'do as others do to you'. So they treat others the way others treat them. But there is another level, a higher level of character, a superior form of character which is governed by the principle 'do as you would like others to do to you'. This kind of character can be described as a principled character. A person with such a character is not dictated by external circumstances, but his responses and behaviour are governed by his own well-considered principles. If somebody abuses you, and you do

not abuse in return, then you have displayed a higher form of character, a superior form of character.

We see that the Prophet displayed this higher kind of character throughout his life. There are many instances in his lifetime which illustrate this point. During his lifetime when he was in Makkah, he was ridiculed by his people and mocked at for claiming to be a prophet of God. There is one incident when a woman from the elite of Makkan society came up to him while he was sitting near the Kabah. She ridiculed him, denounced him and called him *muzammam*, a word which is opposite in meaning to the word 'Muhammad'. Muhammad means one who is worthy of praise, and *muzammam* means one who is worthy of blame. The reports tell us that the Prophet did not utter a single word in response to the woman's derogatory comment. He did not react negatively. He did not say anything to her in return. So what we learn from this incident is that the Prophet displayed unilateralism in ethics.

The Qur'an guided the Prophet and the Muslims to adhere to the policy of patience. There is a verse in the Qur'an that says: "For the sake of your Lord, be patient." (74:7) This means to be patient for the sake of the divine mission. Because had the Prophet and his followers reacted to the ill treatment of his opponents then it would have further antagonized his opponents and it would have undermined the divine mission of conveying the word of God to his people.

### **Prophet's Behaviour as Head of State**

People generally think that this policy of patience was observed by the Prophet only while he was in Makkah, when his position was weak and the number of his followers was less. But this is not true. Yes, there were some battles fought when he migrated to Madinah. But scholars have shown very conclusively that all the battles that the Prophet fought were defensive in nature. The Muslims under the Prophet did not

launch a single battle of an offensive nature. The Qur'an continued to guide the Muslims to exercise patience even while they were in Madinah. So we see that when the Prophet had become a head of state in Madinah and had the authority, he exercised a lot of self restraint when dealing with some of his opponents who had been captured in the battles that were fought between them. One incident is that of a person who was captured by the Muslims and taken to Madinah. He was known to make very provocative speeches against the Prophet. One companion of the Prophet suggested that two of his lower teeth be pulled out so that he could never make those kind of speeches again against the Prophet. But the Prophet was shocked to hear of such a suggestion and he said, "God will disfigure me for doing something like that on the Day of Judgement, even though I am His messenger."

The Prophet displayed extraordinary compassion towards his opponents, not just that he exercised self restraint, he displayed compassion and forgiveness.

### **Generosity and Compassion**

One very extraordinary incident of forgiveness is at the time of the surrender of Makkah, after almost 20 years of his Prophethood. These were the people, the Makkans, who had persecuted the Prophet and his followers for many years. But when they were brought to the Prophet, he forgave them all and he said that, "There shall be no blame on you, you are free." And even at this stage the Prophet looked upon them as potential recipients of the divine message. He did not seek revenge from them. But he forgave them in the hope that they may accept the word of God and this is exactly what happened. The Makkans who had been his very strong opponents in the past were so touched by his conduct and by the high ethical standards of Islam that they all accepted Islam. Then history is witness that they became great champions of Islam and worked for the cause of Islam.

I was reading in one of Maulana Wahiduddin Khan's books where he has written very beautifully that there is no more effective method of winning a person's heart. The Prophet's example teaches us that there is no more effective method of winning a person's heart than by treating them with generosity and compassion. It is possible to withstand an armed onslaught, but noble conduct is a force in itself that no one can resist.

### **Conclusion**

We also see that the Prophet displayed a lot of compassion in his treatment of non-Muslims. When he was in Madinah he issued a Charter which guaranteed freedom of religion to all citizens including Jews, pagans and Muslims. When he was in Madinah there is an incident when a funeral procession went by and the Prophet stood up in respect of it. A man said to the Prophet, "O Prophet, it was the funeral of a Jew." The Prophet said, "Was he not a human being!" Here also the Prophet was able to discover a commonality between himself and the Jew. He looked upon everyone as human being and not as Jews or Christians.

This is a good example that the Prophet has left for all of us.

(Sufia Khan is doing a PhD in Islamic Studies and is a member of Centre for Peace and Spirituality in New Delhi)