

A democratic system in Islam is expressed through the term shura (council). The Quran translation reads:

[ And those who respond to their Lord and keep up prayer and their affairs [of government] by counseling among themselves and who spend out of what We have given them.] (Quran 42: 38)

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In the Name of God, Most Compassionate, Most Merciful

# MUHAMMAD A BLESSING FOR MANKIND

**COMPILED BY  
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A Publication By "Know The Prophet" Campaign, [www.KnowTheProphet.com](http://www.KnowTheProphet.com)

An Educational Campaign by the Islamic Education & Services Institute

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She is equal to man in bearing personal and common responsibilities and in receiving rewards for her deeds.

She is equal to man in the pursuit of education and knowledge.

Islam enjoined the seeking of knowledge upon Muslim; it makes no distinction between man and woman, who is entitled to freedom of expression as much as man is. Her sound opinions are taken into consideration and cannot be disregarded just because she is a female.

Islam grants woman equal rights to contract, to enterprise, to earn and possess independently. Her life, her property, her honor are as sacred as those of man.

Islam has also given woman a share of inheritance. Before Islam, she was not only deprived of that share, but was herself considered as property to be inherited by man.

## Statesmanship

When Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) arrived at Madinah, he initiated the formation of an Islamic state. After establishing politics, brotherhood and the authority of the state of Madinah, he began negotiations with various tribes around the city and made treaties with them.

When the Makkani unbelievers launched a series of attacks on Madinah, Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) was able to confront them, and when the Makkans were finally defeated in the battle of Al-Khandaq (Trenches), he was able to make truce with them at Hudaibiyah for ten years. This treaty was a masterpiece of practical statesmanship on the part of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him).

His diplomacy in sending and receiving envoys to and from the various chiefs of tribes and foreign rulers, his fairness in conducting judiciary, and his general pardon at the liberation of Makkah, was another proof of his lofty statesmanship.

The State he established in Madinah was not a matter of chance. It was the very nature of his mission that he would establish a state to enforce the way of God. People might accept a new faith but it would take time to change their habits, custom and ways of life. And even if a small group of people succeeded in changing their ways of life there would be many others who would not let these people practice their belief and try to stop them by force. So the Islamic State became an urgent necessity to protect the Islamic way of life.

The State founded by Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) was built physical force, as every state must necessarily be, to fulfill its function of stopping aggression and oppression.

the humble and the lofty. He claimed no distinction and lived amongst his companions as if he was not their leader.

## Neighborliness

He regarded the neighbors as brother and sisters because of their closeness and living in the same vicinity. He once smelt the aroma of the soup cooked by his wife. He told her to give some of it to the neighbors who also smelt it. He said it was not right a Muslim to sleep with a full stomach after having had a good meal but let his neighbor starve. He laid down the foundation for a friendly relation and co-operation among neighbors exemplifying that living as a neighbor, one has one's right and responsibility.

In regard to the rights of a neighbor, the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) said:

"Gabriel (Peace Be Upon Him) used to advise me to take good care of the neighbor until I thought he would make him my heir." (Bukhari *Kitab Al Adab* No. 28 and Muslim *Kitab Al Bir* No. 146)

## Goodwill

He was a good exemplar to those who subscribe to a harmonious society. Islam exhorts people not to violate the rights of others and injure their interest, but should positively cooperate with each other and establish a mutual relationship and social cohesion.

To safeguard the unity and solidarity of the nation and to achieve the welfare and well-being of the community, Muslims have been enjoined to avoid mutual hostility, social dissension, backbiting one another, and hurting others with their hand or tongue.

Islam as brought by the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) exhorts Muslims to visit the sick, to help to the needy and assist the weak. Islam makes no discrimination on the basis of race, color or language. Its appeal is to the entire humanity.

## Respect for Women

The Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) brought changes for the betterment of women's conditions.

Woman is recognized by Islam as a full and equal partner of man in the procreation of humankind. He is the father, she is the mother, and both are essential for life. Her role is no less vital than his. By this partnership she has an equal share in every aspect; she is entitled to equal rights; she undertakes equal responsibilities, and in her there are many qualities and so much humanity as there are in her partner.

## Birth

Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) (Blessings and Peace be upon him) was born in Makkah, Arabia, on Monday, 12 *Rabi' Al-Awwal* (2 August C.E). His mother, Aminah was the daughter of Wahb bin Abd Al-Manaf of the Zahrah family. His father, Abdullah, was the son of Abd Al-Muttalib. His genealogy has been traced to the noble house of Isma'il, the son of Ibrahim (Abraham) (Peace Be Upon Him) (May Peace be upon him) in about the fortieth descent.

Muhammad's father had died before his birth and his mother died when he was about six years old making him an orphan.

In accordance with the tradition of noble families of Makkah, he was taken by a foster mother, Halimah, to her village where he lived for a few years. During these years he was taken to Makkah several times to visit his mother. After the death of his mother, he was placed under the custody of his grandfather, Abd Al-Muttalib. When the grandfather died, he was under the care of his uncle, Abu Talib. By this time he used to look after sheep around Makkah and used to accompany his uncle on trade journeys to Syria.

## Youth

In his youth he believed firmly in the Oneness of God (God)(SWT). He lived a very simple life and hated vanity and pride. He was compassionate to the poor, widows and orphans and shared their sufferings by helping them. He avoided all vices, which were commonly practiced among young people such as gambling, drinking wine, vulgarity and others. He was well-known as *As-Sadiq* (the truthful) and *Al-Amin* (the trustworthy). He was always trusted as a mediator between two conflicting parties in his homeland, Makkah.

## Marriage

When he was about 25 years old, his uncle urged him to work with the caravan which belonged to a wealthy widow named Khadijah. He accepted and undertook the journey to Syria. He conducted business with such prudence and sense of duty that he returned with larger profit than usual. Khadijah was so impressed by the honest and attractive personality of Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) that she offered to marry him which Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) accepted. This marriage was a happy one. They had children. Khadijah was so far his only wife until she died at the age of 51.

## Prophethood

Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) was born amidst a polytheistic (unbeliever) society. He was saddened and sick of the corrupt society around him. He often went to Hira cave in the mountain near Makkah, later

known as Jabal An-nur (the mountain of Light) where he meditated and pondered over the prevailing darkness brought about by ignorance. There he often remained deep in thought in communion with the unseen yet All-Pervading God of the Universe.

One night, while he was meditating in the Hira cave, the Angel Gabriel (peace be upon him) came to him. The Angel aroused him and his mighty voice reverberated in his ears. He was perplexed and did not know what to do. He was asked to read. He replied: "I cannot read!" The Angel repeated three times asking Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) to read, but he replied the same answer. Finally the Angel asked:

[Read in the name of your Lord , who created man from a clot. Read in the name of your God, the Most Bountiful, who taught by means of the pen, and taught man what he did not know.] (Quran 96: 1-5)

This was the first revelation received by Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). He was 40 years old at that time. The revelation continued to come to him from time to time in a period of 23 years.

These series of revelation were arranged according to the divine guidance given to Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), and later collected in the form of a *Mushaf* (book) the Quran (Reading). Most of its verses have clear meaning. Some verses are interpreted in conjunction with other verses and some others were interpreted by the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) himself through his words, actions and agreements which are known as his Sunnah (Traditions).

The Quran and the Sunnah together constitute the guidance and way of life for those who submit their life to God (God) (SWT). People who follow this guidance and way of life are guaranteed by God (SWT) to be saved in this world and the Hereafter.

## Challenges

When the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) called the people to the way of God, not many people listened to his call. Most of them were members of his family and from the low class society. Among them were Khadijah, Ali, Zayd and Bilal. When he intensified his mission (*da'wah*: Call to Islam) by publicly announcing the religion he preached, he won more followers but at the same time had to face many challenges from the nobles and leaders who found their position being threatened and jeopardized. They stood together, under the pretext of defending the religion of their ancestors, to fight the new religion.

The morale of the few people who embraced Islam was heightened when a small group of the respected people of Makkah joined the religion.

Notable among them were `Uthman bin `Affan, Zubair bin Al-`Awwam, `Abd Ar-Rehman bin `Awf, Talhah bin `Ubaydullah, Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas,

mentioned about time, day, week, month, year and century. People are lost if they did not spend the time available to them during this life for good things. It is a great loss if people have to waste the valuable time they have at their disposal for useless activities. It is true that life should be enjoyable but not at the expense of human resources and values which are essential for the continuation of their well-being.

God the Most Knowing had created time and space suitable for human activities for they can attain achievements in life. There are times for work, study, recreation, resting and even celebration. All are parts of activities in worshipping God (SWT) and serving His cause. The Quran says that God (SWT) had created the day for earning and night for resting and enjoyment. He created the sun, the moon and all outer-space objects so that man on the earth can fix the time and arrange the calendar. By having standard time and standard calendar and the movements of astronomical objects, people are able to regulate their timetable in choosing the right moment for them in doing business and carrying out their activities.

Islam prescribes certain times for the daily prayers, certain month for the obligatory fasting and certain time in one's life time for performing the Hajj or pilgrimage which indicates that the religion brought by Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) places the life of Muslims in systematic order. For every move and occasion made by Muslims there is a rule governing it, be it in the form of advice, spiritual guidance or practical directive. If all these directives are followed and understood properly, people will have high discipline and a well-managed life.

Islam encourages people to think correctly before taking any decision. This means planning. There are many verses in the Quran admonishing against doing things unthinkingly and jumping to conclusions.

The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) also showed a good example in fulfilling promise and staying true to treaty, agreement or contract made between parties.

As a man of honor he always remained true to the principles agreed in the treaty, depicting his high discipline and inclination of doing everything in proper order.

## Friendliness

Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) was a warmhearted and faithful friend. He loved his companions. He extended greeting to those he knew and to those he did not know. He treated all people around him with kindness and affection.

He was very courteous to all those who met him. He never contradicted anybody who is not opposed to the teachings of Islam. He treated equally

pay *zakat* (alms) which is a duty enjoined by God and undertaken Muslims in the interest of society as a whole.

For those capable persons whose wealth does not reach the minimum chargeable rate, he can also give voluntary contribution to the needy. This does not mean that the needy should always be receiving help from the affluent ones.

Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) said:

"The upper hand (giver) is better than the lower one (receiver)". Muslim *Kitab Zakat* No. 124

If the receiver of *zakat* can grasp the spirit of the Prophet's (Peace Be Upon Him) saying, he will try his best to be the giver instead of the receiver by endeavoring to better his life as encouraged by the teachings of Islam.

In Islam the possession of more wealth does not raise a man's dignity, nor does poverty degrade him. It is true that wealth is necessary for man to live on this earth but it is only a means, not the end. The end is happiness in life by attaining the higher values and not losing sight of in the pursuit of wealth.

Among the great virtues of Islam is the command to do good and the prohibition to do evil. The good should be preserved and the evil should be discarded. In short, Islam is actually composed of a series of commands and prohibitions. God the most Knowing, the Most Merciful, did not decree any law and regulations but for the good and benefit of his creatures.

The prohibition was decree because of its evil implications to humanity. The evils were created to test the human conscience and challenge their freewill in choosing between right and wrong.

All the commands and prohibitions from God as transmitted through His Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) was intended to purify the human soul in order to live a pure and clean life adored by God (SWT) and human beings.

## Orderliness

One of the teachings of Islam is about orderliness. Discipline, regulation, management, planning and all other terms relating to organization are mostly considered as alien to Islam. On the contrary, Islam exhorts people to live in orderliness and to put the right thing in the right place. The foundation of Islamic order rests on two main principles, the crucial faith in one God (God) and the oneness of humanity. All the frame works were laid down in the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) applied himself to working out the essential details of that order.

One of the great values taught by Islam in this regard is to make use of the time left to humanity. The Quran and the Sunnah (Prophetic traditions)

Arqam bin Abi Arqam, `Ubaydullah bin Harith, Sa'id bin Zayd, `Amr bin Nufail, Fatimah (the wife of Nufail), Asma binti Abu Bakr, `Abdullah bin Mas'ud, Ja'far bin Abi Thalib (May God be pleased with them) and many others. Before this group, Abu Bakr was the first among the earlier followers that impressed the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) very much. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) said about him: "I never invited anyone to the faith who did not display any hesitation in embracing it except Abu Bakr. When I had offered Islam, he showed no hesitation at all in accepting it."

As the result of these challenges from the Makkan unbelievers, some Muslims were subjected to torture, persecutions, isolations and boycotts. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) had to be patient and had to look for the protection of Muslims. He asked Negus, King of Ethiopia to allow Muslims to migrate to his country. Negus welcomed the Muslims emigrants in his territory and refused to hand them over to the Makkan unbeliever rulers.

## Migration (Hijrah)

By the end of the Makkan period, the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) lost two people who were dear to him. They were his most affectionate uncle, Abu Talib, and his faithful and loving wife, Khadijah. After their deaths, the Makkans felt free to do what they wanted to impose to the Prophet and his followers.

In many Makkah was the Ka'bah (the Holy Mosque), which was built by Prophet Ibrahim (Peace Be Upon Him) centuries before as a holy place to worship God (SWT), the One. But in the course of time, the place had been converted by unbelievers to the worship of objects other than God (SWT). People added to it many tradition of their own. They used to visit this place for a few months in a year for pilgrimage. They came from all parts of Arabia, representing various famous tribes. The pilgrimage, in spite of its religious bearing, constituted for the Arabs a yearly festival where people met and indulge in their cultural activities. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) took this opportunity to spread Islam.

Among those who were interested in his call, were a group of people from Yathrib (Madina) in the North of Arabia. They met secretly with the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) and a few Muslims from Makkah in a village called `Aqabah. After becoming Muslims, they took an oath of allegiance to protect Islam, the Prophet and the Makkan Muslims.

The following year, the group of Muslims from Yathrib came again to Makkah. They met the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) at the same place where they previously met. This time, `Abbas bin Abd Al-Muttalib, the Prophet's uncle who was himself not a Muslim yet, was present at the meeting. They invited the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) and the Muslims from Makkah to emigrate to Yathrib. They promised to treat them as true

brothers and sisters. A long dialogue was held between the Muslims of Yathrib with the Prophet's uncle to make sure that they really wanted to welcome the Makkans Muslims in their town. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) agreed at the end to immigrate to the new land.

Upon knowing that, the Muslims had planned to leave Makkah, the Makkans unbelievers tried to stop the immigration but the first group had already migrated to Yathrib. The Makkans had fear that the movement to Yathrib would give the Muslims a new base to spread Islam.

Within two months nearly all Muslims from Makkah, except the Prophet, Abu Bakr, Ali and a few helpless people had migrated. The Makkans then decided to kill the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him). They made a plan for this purpose, but God (SWT) had made another plan over them, to quote the Quran. With various tactics and a good planning, the Prophet finally arrived peacefully in Yathrib, which was later known as *Madinat Ar-Rasul* (The city of the Prophet).

## New Era

In Madinah the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) was able to work freely in spreading Islam. The followers of Islam increased day after day. But the threat by the Makkans did not stop. A few physical confrontations with the Makkans were ensued. Sometimes the battles were won by the Muslims, and sometimes by the Makkans. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) also engaged in battles with the Byzantine and Persian powers that were jeopardizing the existence of Islam from the north and the east. But confrontation with the Makkans stopped for a while after the treaty of Hudaibiyah had been signed between the Muslims and the unbeliever Makkans.

During the Madinah period, the Muslims also established treaties with the Jews of Madinah and the tribes around the city. The Jews broke the treaty, which led to their expulsion out of the Arabian peninsula.

In Madinah, the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) succeeded in establishing Islam as a way of life in its true meaning. He was not only giving guidance on purely religious matters such as *salat* (prayers), *zakat* (almsgiving), *Saum* (fasting) and *Hajj* (pilgrimage) and examples in these matters, and also provided Muslims with rules and laws covering social, economic, political fields.

## Emissaries Entertained in Madinah

It was in Madinah that the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) received envoys and emissaries from various tribes and nationals, asking matters of various sorts, demanding dialogues, negotiations etc. Among the emissaries were an envoy representing the Christian community in Najran (South Arabia). The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) welcomed them, entertained them as

as it is without any publicity it does not deserve. In the lifetime of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him), he found many cases in market places where the merchants tried to cheat the customers. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) said to them:

"Whoever cheats is not one of us (Muslim Book of *Iman* 164 and Ahmed V.3 PP 498)".

Islam laid many regulations the field of economy such as trade, leasing, business transaction, contract and others to prevent unfair dealing within the community and in the world of business at large. What is also prevented by Islam is a monopoly and exploitation by one man or one group at the expense of the others.

## Cleanliness

The first thing in the religion brought by the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) is the concern for cleanliness. The concept of cleanliness in Islam covers physical and spiritual, mundane and religious domains.

Before performing any rituals prescribed by Islam, one should cleanse his body, and his dress, his place of worship and his environment should also be clean.

Prior to carrying out his prayers or starting for pilgrimage, one has to make his *Wudu* (ablution). If he or she is in a state of impurity after having had a lawful intimate intercourse or post-natal period or other reasons, he or she has to take a complete bath by pouring clean water over the whole body.

In the case of daily prayer, every Muslim has to clean his/her private parts, face, hands, feet, mouth, nose, and ears at least five times every day for the five daily prayers. This also reminds him/her to keep his/her soul clean from unlawful deeds.

Cleanliness is not in the physical sense only. The body should be purified as well from evil doings that might harm his relationship with others and with God (SWT). He has to clean his mind from bad intentions or committing unlawful acts. He has to clean his heart from jealousy, hypocrisy and other evil desires. He has to embody hope, truthfulness, forgiveness, compassion, holiness, the sense of brotherliness, neighborliness and other noble qualities.

He has to pay special attention to his diet against all unhealthy food medically and religiously. He has to keep his eyes, ears, and tongue from evil. These are among the noble characteristics as exemplified by Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him).

To clean the wealth, Islam instituted the *zakat* system (way of purifying wealth). A person whose wealth has reached a certain point is obligated to

it. That is why his conduct was the exemplary of human conduct. Islam as brought by the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) is very much misunderstood, as a religion perceived to contain souls and rituals like prayers, fasting, almsgiving and pilgrimage. Thanks to the new developments in the world, Islam is now looked upon in a wider perspective than the narrow-minded view in the past.

The increased interest in Islamic studies by Muslims and non-Muslims supported by the advanced printing technology has begun to open the eyes of the world about the true teachings and intrinsic values of Islam.

## Economy (Expertise and Outlook)

In the field of economic development, the goal is not material gain, but human welfare in general. Islam exhorts that the balance between the material and physical aspects, between the individual and societal needs, be maintained in order to narrow the gap between two opposite sides of human world. It is stated in the Quran:

"Say, who is there to forbid the beauty which God has brought forth for His creatures, and the good things from among the means of sustenance. Say, they are for those who believe [in God (SWT)] in this worldly life, to be theirs alone in the Hereafter on the Day of Resurrection ... Say, the only things my Lord forbids are the shameful deeds, be they open or secret, the sin, unjustified envy, the ascribing of divinity to aught beside God (SWT), and the attributing unto God (SWT) of aught of which you have no knowledge"

So everyone is free to conduct any business he likes outside the harmful and shameful circle he has been warned to refrain from. If he does not listen to this warning, he will be in trouble. Every good quality set as a precondition to a successful business is encouraged by Islam.

The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) himself was a businessman before he was appointed as a Prophet. His ability to run business prudently, by his fairness and truthful conduct in dealing with people had won him the heart of his employer, Khadijah who later offered him marriage. He advocated Muslims to follow the spirit of Prophet Daud's (Peace Be Upon Him) (David) industriousness who earned his living from his own labor. He also said that faith of a Muslim is not complete if he is not good in his profession. He said:

"If you leave matter to those who are not professional, you are waiting for a disaster".

If he works in the production line, his products must be compatible with product of other companies or factories. In order to be marketable, it must suit the taste of buyers and their standards of living. In this regard, Islam teaches not to cheat in offering the product to the market. It must be shown

honoured guests and even allowed them to conduct their religious service in his city.

It was a good occasion to share each other's views on matters of religion. Some members of the envoy were deeply impressed by the treatment they received from the Muslims, thus leading them to embrace Islam.

## Liberation of Makkah

The treaty of Hudaibiyah gave the Muslims a big opportunity to exemplify the true Islam in personal conduct and in relations with peoples and communities. But the peace did not stay long due to the attitude of the Makkian tribal chiefs who broke the treaty. Soon the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) marched very quietly to Makkah in the 8<sup>th</sup> year of the *Hijrah* (emigration) to Madinah. The Makkians gave no resistance and by the whole city surrendered to the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him). He announced a general amnesty for all his enemies and treated all citizens of the city with generosity. A verse of the Quran was revealed on the occasion:

[When the help of God and victory comes, and you see the people enter the religion of God in crowds. So glorify the Name of your Lord and beg His forgiveness. He, verily accept repentance.] (Quran 110: 1-3)

After the liberation of Makkah all the remaining hostile tribes in Arabia began to realize the reality of Islamic faith. People had seen the noble teachings of Islam. Good examples of forgiveness, tolerance, justice, fairness, steadfastness and other qualities as exemplified by the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) and his companions had left an impression in the hearts of hundreds of thousands of people who became Muslims.

## Farewell Pilgrimage

In time the whole Arabia had become the land of Islam. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) intended to perform the Hajj (pilgrimage). He announced his intention to the Muslims in Madinah and the surrounding areas and asked them to join him. This was in fact the only Hajj performed by him during his life time.

On this occasion he taught those who were present with him and to the whole world about the Hajj and the divine message that God had entrusted him to all mankind.

At the last gathering with the *Ummah* (nation) during the Hajj season, the Hajj of *Wada'* (Farewell) a sermon was delivered by the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) at the valley of *Arafat* about 81 or 82 days before his death. It contained the very fundamentals of Islam. Seated on his camel, he spoke with a clear tone and asked who heard his speech to convey it to those who were not present there. Among others he said:

"O people, lend me an attentive ear, for I know not whether, after this year, I shall ever be amongst you again. Therefore listen to what I am saying to you very carefully and take these words to those who could not be present here today.

O people, just as you regard this month, this day, this city as sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you. Remember that you will indeed meet your Lord, and that He will indeed reckon your deeds. God has forbidden you to take usury; therefore all interest obligations shall henceforth be waived.

Beware of Satan, for the safety of your religion. He has lost all hopes that he will be able to lead you astray in big things, so beware of following him in small things.

O people, it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women, but they also have rights over you. If they abide by your right then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in mildness. Do treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with anyone of whom you do not approve, as well as never to commit adultery.

O people, listen to me in earnest, worship God (SWT), say your five daily prayers, fast during the month of Ramadhan, and give your wealth in *zakat*. Perform *hajj* if you can afford to. You know that every Muslim is the brother of another Muslim. You are all equal. Nobody has superiority over the other except by piety and good deeds.

Remember, one day you will appear before God (SWT) and answer for your deeds. So beware, do not go astray from the path of righteousness after my death.

O people, no Prophet or Messenger will come after me and no new faith will be born. Reason well, therefore,

O people, and understand my words, which I convey to you. I leave behind me two things, the Quran and my example, the Sunnah, and if you follow these you will never go astray.

All those who listen to me shall pass on my words to others and those to others again; and may the last ones understand my words better than those who listen to me directly. Be my witness O' God, (SWT) that I have conveyed Your message to Your slaves."

The importance of this sermon can be seen from the Prophet's perception that this occasion may be the last one during his lifetime. He felt that this was the right time to summarize the principles of Islam to his fellow brothers and sisters.

By the perfection of this religion, it means that there's no need for humanity, and for the Muslims in particular, to look for another alternative way of life. As long as one holds fast to the two things left behind by the Prophet (the Quran and the Sunnah), one will never go astray.

## Death

About two months after returning from Makkah for Pilgrimage, the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) became ill but he was still able to perform his prayers in the mosque and give directives to the companions. His health was deteriorating day by day. At the last moment he asked Abu Bakr to lead the prayers in the mosque, every member of his family and every companion was worried about his health. It was on Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> *Rabi'Al-Awwal*, the year 11A.H., when he passed away at the age of sixty three years.

Many people did not believe that he had passed away. They thought that the Messenger of God would live forever. It was Abu Bakr, who had the feeling, since the Farewell Pilgrimage that the death of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) was coming near, He convinced the congregation that the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) had actually passed away. Abu Bakr said to the congregation that if they worshipped Mu, Muhammad had died, and if they worshipped God (SWT), He lives forever. Then recited from the Quran:

"Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) is nought but a Messenger like the Messengers who had surely passed away before him: will you, then, if he dies or be slain, turn round on your heels?"

## A Guidance to follow

Muhammad as a man had already died, but as a Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) he left behind him a legacy in the form of the Quran and the Sunnah. He stressed the urgent need to hold firmly to these two sources during his farewell speech in the valley of Arafat. If people hold fast to them, they will never go astray.

The teachings he left for us if put into practice in their true spirit and proper way will bring a happy life in this world and besides the indubitable rewards that will be received by those who believed in them in the life after death. In this sense, Islam is a worldly religion which cares first for the worldly affairs of humanity. The Hereafter is merely a continuation of the worldly life. It is difficult to portend that man can be saved in the Hereafter without being saved in this world. The safe way is to follow the way shown to us by the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). When his wife, `Aishah, was asked by a companion about the Prophet's (Peace Be Upon Him) daily conduct, `Aishah replied that the conduct of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) was the Quran which is the guidance from God and Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) was given authority by God to interpret