

CBS-2023

Islamic Studies

PART-II

Question no. 8:

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Answer: Introduction: The Final Pilgrimage sermon, delivered by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) during His final pilgrimage in 632 CE, holds immense significance in Islamic tradition. The sermon encompasses numerous teachings and principles that are relevant to the concept of human rights. Unlike any other speech, Khutba haftul-wida (farewell speech), captures the ethos of Islam. It provides Muslims with a great lens for viewing the religion of peace. While focusing on the fundamental touchstones of faith, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), in the final sermon, gives a universal message and sheds light on various aspects of human rights including equity, equality, peace, justice, non-violence, forgiveness, the rights of women, the sanctity of property and life, and the teachings of the pillars of Islam.

Definition of Human Rights:
According to the United Nations,
"Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status."

What does Human Rights Include?:
Human rights includes the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. It must be highlighted that everyone is entitled to these rights without discrimination.

Human Rights in Islam: The way Islam looks at human rights is special because it covers a lot of aspects that are equally relevant and unchanged since the last 1400 years. They are divine rules and laws that are granted by God and no legislative assembly in the world, or any government on Earth, has the right or authority to make any amendment or change in the rights conferred by God.

A Brief Overview of the Sermon of Farewell Pilgrimage: Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) delivered the farewell sermon in the Uranah Valley of Mount Arafat in Makkah, on the 9th of Dhul-Hijjah (6 March, 632). The words of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) were relatively concise and clear. It is a human rights declaration in well-versed and written form. It is one of history's first and most comprehensive charters of human rights. It completely covers all the important aspects of the rights of humans.

Human Rights with the Correlation of the Farewell Sermon of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.):

a. Equality: The Prophet's sermon emphasized the equality of all believers, regardless of their race, ethnicity, or social status. In this temporary world, humans are judged based on their colour, race, religion, caste, and socio-economic status. This creates an imbalance in society. As humans, we tend to judge people based on their physical attributes and not what

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their heart or soul has to offer. The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) stated:

"All mankind is from Adam and Eve. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab have any superiority over an Arab; a white has no superiority over a black; nor does a black have any superiority over a white; none have superiority over another except by piety or good action."

This proclamation of equality serves as a foundational principle of human rights, affirming that all individuals, regardless of their background, possess inherent worth and dignity.

b. **Justice:** Justice is a core component of human rights. In his sermon, the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) emphasised the importance of justice by saying:

"O people, your Lord is one and your father is one. There is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab, nor for a non-Arab over an Arab. There is no superiority of a white over a black, nor a black over white. None have superiority over another except by piety and good action."

This underscores the need for fair and just treatment of all individuals, regardless of their identity, and reflects the Islamic principle that justice should be upheld for everyone.

c. Dignity and Respect: The Prophet's words in the sermon emphasized the sanctity of life and the importance of treating all individuals with respect and dignity. The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) stated:

"Your lives and your property are sacred, like the sacredness of this day, this month, and this city."

This declaration underscores the fundamental human right to life and the importance of respecting the property and dignity of every person.

d. Protection of Women's Rights:

The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) highlighted the rights and dignity of women, as women deserve equal rights as men and should not be treated as their property.

The Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) stated: "Fear Allah concerning women! Verily you have taken them on the security of Allah, and intercourse with them has been made lawful unto you by the words of Allah."

Allah Almighty mentioned in the Holy Quran

"And they (women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them in kindness"

(Quran 2:228)

These verses are a reminder of gender equality and the protection of women's rights, emphasising their dignity and security within society.

e. Economic Welfare: Socio-economic instability is when opportunity and wealth are not distributed equally within the society. This results in making the poor poorer and the rich richer. Economic rights are an essential aspect of human rights.

The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) addressed economic issues in his (P.B.U.H.) sermon by prohibiting usury (interest) and emphasising the importance of fair economic transactions. The Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said:

"All usury is abolished, but your capital belongs to you."

This reflects the concern for economic justice and the elimination of exploitative practices that infringe upon individuals' economic rights.

f. Freedom of Religion: The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) included a call for freedom of religion when he (P.B.U.H.) declared:

"Let those who are present convey this message to those who are absent. It may be that some of those to whom it is conveyed will understand it better than some of those who have heart it."

In the Holy Quran, Allah Almighty mentions:
"There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion." (Quran 2:256)

This message implies the right to religious freedom and the importance of conveying the message without coercion or force.

g. Social Welfare: The Farewell Pilgrimage sermon also touched upon social welfare and the responsibility of society to care for its members.

The Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said:
"Beware! Do not oppress one another, do not sin against one another, and do not envy one another, O Allah's worshippers! Be brothers."

Charity holds major importance in Islam, it is a highly appraisable form of worship. It benefits society at its highest by providing society with its basic needs.

Critical Analysis: The farewell sermon of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) carries profound historical and theological significance. It serves as a guide for contemporary Muslims to follow the right path. It serves as a cornerstone of Islamic ethics and a testament to the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) vision for a peaceful society. The sermon emphasises universal brotherhood, equality, social justice, human rights, women's rights, and religious pluralism. It also emphasises peace, tolerance, and respect for diversity in religious beliefs that mirror the global call for interfaith harmony, and peaceful coexistence. Thus, by following the path exemplified in this last sermon, Muslims can create social justice, interfaith harmony, and a peaceful society.

Conclusion: In conclusion, the Farewell Pilgrimage sermon of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) serves as a profound source of guidance on human rights. It emphasises equality, justice, dignity, and the protection of various rights, including gender rights, economic rights, and religious freedom. These principles outlined in the sermon, continue to resonate in contemporary discussions on human rights and offer valuable insights into building a just and equitable society.