

Islamic Studies - 01

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Q1. "Diplomatic Efforts of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) :

1- Introduction :

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ

"Indeed, in Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) there is a great model for you".

~Al Quran

The life of the last and final Prophet of Islam serves as an exemplary model in his diplomatic efforts. During his time in Makkah, he opted to proclaim Islam through peace and wisdom avoiding conflicts. Haff al-Fuxool and fixation of Hijr-e-Aswad highlight Prophet Muhammad's wisdom even before proclamation of Islam. With the migration to Medina, he strengthened and formulated a welfare state through peace treaties and consultation with the Muslims as well as foreign convoys.

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2- Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) as a Diplomat :

The life of the last and final prophet of Islam highlight his prowess as a strong diplomat both in Makki and Madni eras. Following are the major characteristics which highlight Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) as an extra-ordinary diplomat, serving example for the world till date:

- Peace-making and peace-keeping in times of conflict to avoid war.
- Forgiveness and tolerance as noteworthy traits to spread love and mercy.
- Patience and perseverance in the face of adversity.

All these traits reflect in his diplomatic efforts.

3- Diplomatic Efforts at Makkah:

Following points highlight Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H)'s diplomatic prowess at Makkah:

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i) Trail of Light : Half al-Fuzool and Fixation of Hijr-e-Aswad

- Half al-Fuzool (519 AD) was a pact signed by various Makkian tribal elders and leaders to assist the poor and weak and avoid war. Prophet (P.B.U.H)'s participation in the pact shows his diplomatic wisdom even before the advent of Islam.

The main clauses of the pact and the abidance of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) with the pact years after during the compilation of "Charter of Medina" show his diplomatic prowess. The clauses of the pact are:

- All people shall help the oppressed one against the powerful one.
- To take care of widows, orphans and the wretched.
- To use and put all efforts to avoid waging war.

- The fixation of Hijr-e-Aswad (605 AD) is another landmark incident

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which highlights the diplomatic wisdom of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H). When all the tribal elders were fighting to fix Hajar-e-Aswad in the wall of Kabah, Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) resolved the conflict through his insight which would otherwise have resulted in war. On Prophet Muhammad's decision, the tribal heads said,

"He is trustworthiness one; we liked his decision."

This highlights the importance of Prophet Muhammad's insight and respect for his decision, strengthening his image.

ii- Proclamation of Islam and Social Bycott :

After the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H)'s proclamation of Islam in 610 AD, Quraishites boycotted the clan of Prophet and his followers. They barred marriages with them, cut off all sort of economic trade and

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socially alienated them. However, the Muslims at that time had extremely powerful and brave warriors like Hazrat Hamza (R.A), Hazrat Ali (R.A), Hazrat Jaffar bin abi Talib (R.A), and they were able to wage war. Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) avoided war and peacefully limited his followers to Shab-e-Abi Talib. It shows his diplomatic prowess that how he avoided a war at hand by choosing peace.

iii) Migration to Abyssinia (615-617 AD):

When the people of Makkah boycotted the Muslims fearing the expansion of Islam, they feared persecution and violence. Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H)'s diplomatic wisdom ensured their safety and security by enabling Muslims to migrate to Abyssinia.

iv) Pledges of Aqabah (621-622 AD) and Migration to Medina:

It was Prophet Muhammad's

diplomatic wisdom which enlightened his mind to migrate to Medina when the pledges of Aqabah were concluded. It was a successful diplomatic decision which enabled Islam to expand in the most parts of the world.

4- Diplomatic Wisdom at Medina:

Following points highlight the diplomatic wisdom of Prophet Muhammad at Medina:

i) Construction of Mosques as Channels of Diplomacy:

In 622 AD, immediately after the migration to Medina, Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) constructed Masjid-e-Nabvi, and many more mosques which not only served as places for religious and spiritual enlightenment. These places also served as hubs of knowledge and consultation. Moreover, Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) received foreign delegates and convoys in mosques

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to negotiate and foster peace through friendly relations.

ii) Diplomatic wisdom during wars:

- After the Conquest of Makkah, Prophet Muhammad asked people of Makkah, "What do you think I am going to do with you?" Despite years of animosity, they replied, "Good! You are a noble fellow, son of a noble fellow." Then, Prophet (P.B.U.H) replied, "Go then for you are now free." This highlights Prophet Muhammad's diplomatic wisdom even during conflict which encouraged thousands of people to accept Islam later.

- Similarly, after the Conquest of Khyber, Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) allowed Jews to live as they were living before. This propagated positive image of Islam through Prophet Muhammad's diplomatic prowess.

iii) Diplomatic wisdom in treaties:

Various treaties signed and

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formulated by Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) show his diplomatic prowess.

Treaty of Hudaibiyyah (6AH) was signed by Prophet Muhammad despite the opposition of his fellows. Even Hazrat Umar (R.A) said,

"Are you not the prophet of Allah and are we not upon truth?"

Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) simply replied, "Yes! I am the prophet of Allah and I know better".

While the terms of treaty were hostile for Muslims, but in the longer run, they proved beneficial for the Muslims. For example, a clause of treaty stated that Muslims who get into Makkah would not be returned.

This clause favoured the Muslims in the way that escaped Muslims to Makkah started preaching Islam there.

Similarly, Treaty of Brotherhood between the Muslims of Makkah and Medina and the peace treaty

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with the Christians of Najran show the diplomatic wisdom of Prophet Muhammad. He bound the Muslims, Christians and Jews through peace treaties making Medina a federal and progressive state.

5- Conclusion :

Prophet Muhammad's Makkan and Medinan periods serve as an epitome of diplomatic wisdom. During Makkan period, his efforts to proclaim Islam peacefully and avoid wars highlight his diplomatic wisdom. In Medina, through his exceptional conflict resolution and peace formulation, he strengthened the Muslims position. It is rightly mentioned

وما ارسلك الا رحمة للعالمين

"And I am sent as mercy for all the worlds".

Q2. "Challenges faced by Women and Islamic Empowerment"

1- Introduction :

"Gender equality is a myth!"

The aforementioned words depict the complexity of challenges faced by women. In contemporary world, women face multiple challenges despite the progressive image of the world held. They are deprived of life and security rights, making them victim of gender-based violence, honour killings and harassment. Similarly, right to education, employment and property seem a faraway thing to them. Whereas, Islam enjoins upon the women an elevated and empowered status. They are celebrated as mothers, wives, daughters and sisters. Their dignity is preserved through laws as evident from Last Sermon. They enjoy all other rights equivalent to men.

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2. Challenges Faced by Women:

In the contemporary world, women face multiple challenges and, with the advent of technological modernization, the nature of these challenges has become complex.

1) Compromised dignity:

Women today are no longer respected as wives, mothers, daughters and sisters. The advent of social media through technological revolution and biased media portrayal of women have compromised their dignity. They are being objectified, subordinated and treated as something of beauty and joy. Their treatment in media industry is evident through advertisements, films and movies where they are used as a sign of beauty. It is evident from Miss America Pageant 2011's boycott which showed how women are objectified for beauty.

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standards.

ii) Right to life and security as compromised right :

In contemporary world, women's right to life and security is compromised. It is evident from the increased violence against women in the form of gender-based violence, harassment, honour killings and cultural practices like *karva*, *vari* etc.

iii) Negation of right to marriage:

Women no longer enjoy the right to marriage. Their consent regarding their choice of spouse, age of marriage is no longer entertained. It is evident from cultural practices in many South Asian nations i.e. *waata sata*, *swara*, *vari* etc.

iv) Negation of right to education and employment :

In present age, women in many countries are deprived of right

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education and employment particularly due to religious and cultural constraints.

The women's years of education on an average are 8.2 years (UN Women). They are exempted from economy as well due to traditional standards or glass ceiling. Those working are exploited through job segregation, wage gap and labour exploitation.

v) Lack of inheritance rights:

Women are no longer considered rightful heir to property. They do not own property on their names nor are given share in inheritance. Only 5% women in Pakistan own property on their names which show their exemption from inheritance rights.

3- Women Empowerment in Islam:

The following points mentioned highlight how women are empowered

and elevated in Islam.

i) Right to respect and dignity:

Quran states,

وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ ۝

"We bestowed dignity upon the children of Adam".

This highlights that Islam encourages women's dignity and respect as member of society playing diverse roles. Islam states that "Heaven lies under the feet of mother" elevating the status of mother in society. She is appreciated as wife, as Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) mentioned in Last Sermon, "Fear Allah in the matter of women". Moreover, women are appreciated and respected as sisters and daughters.

ii) Right to life and security:

Islam provides women right to life and security as human rights.

In Islam, killing of a person is as if one killed whole humanity.

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It negates all concepts of violence against women, encouraging their security and safety.

"Take care of your women"

- Prophet Muhammad in Last Sermon.

iii) Right to Marriage:

Islam gives women right to marriage, calling the marriage without women's consent as illegal and against Shariah. During Prophet Muhammad's life, he recalled a woman's marriage who complained him that her will was not considered in marriage. Moreover, Islam gives women right of Haq Mehr and bridal gift.

iv) Right to Education and Employment:

Women are given equal right to education as men, as Prophet Muhammad mentioned,

طالب العلم فريضة على كل مسلم

"Seeking knowledge is compulsory

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for all men and women”.

Promotion of knowledge in Islam can be grasped from the example of Hazrat Aisha (R.A) who served as an exemplary scholar. Moreover, women enjoy equal economic opportunities in Islam as is mentioned,

“He is your Lord who made everything in the earth for you”.

Hence, women have equal right to exploit the natural resources as men.

In this regard, the example of Hazrat Khadija, the noble and wealthiest business lady of Arab is evident.

v) Right to Inheritance:

Women are given right to inheritance in Islam as the Quran states,

“We have made rightful heirs to the property...”

Women, in Islam, enjoy property rights from father as well as husband.

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4- Conclusion :

Since the world has modernised by adopting Western models of progressive society and harmonious world, women are still treated as inferior. Their rights and dignity is compromised. Islam presents women rights as human rights by prioritizing women education, employment, security and sanctity. As the Holy Quran says,

“We have created you in pair”.

It negates the concept of gender inequality as, in Islam, no one is superior because of colour, class, race, gender etc.