

Question #1

The diplomatic efforts of the Prophet SAW clearly show his prowess as a strong diplomat?

والله اعلم
بما نزلنا من كتابك

"We have sent you 'O prophet' only as a mercy for the whole world."

(Surah al-Anbya)

Introduction

Prophet Muhammad SAW showed various skills on and off the battlefield. His diplomatic skills were essential in leading early Muslims. He preferred negotiations over conflict and only used warfare as the last resort. The strategic and diplomatic ingenuity showed by the Prophet SAW had profound impact in the historical development of early Muslim rule. Prophet SAW was an amazing statesman whose example inspired many rulers and statesmen. He encouraged dialogue and peace. His merciful and inclusive acts earned him respect from his enemies and rivals. For instance, his past enemies from Makkah turned into his allies due to his show of mercy. He also used his diplomatic prowess to maintain domestic and international affairs.

وإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

"And Indeed, you are of great moral character."

- Al Quran

Hazrat Muhammad SAW as a strong diplomat

Hazrat Muhammad SAW always preferred communication and diplomacy over war and hostilities. He gave respect to his allies and his enemies. The state of Madinah is a prime example of a state of inclusivity and conscience. Hazrat Muhammad SAW communicated with neighbouring powers to pursue negotiations and understanding.

Madni

Makki Era - The Treaty of Hudaibiyah

"Verily! We have granted you a manifest victory"

- Surah Al Fateh

Madni

In the Makki Era, the treaty of Hudaibiyah is a prime example of diplomacy and strategic genius. Prophet Muhammad SAW negotiated with pagans of Makkah to achieve his goal of peaceful propagation of Islam. He preferred peace and diplomacy to ensure

Survival and expansion of muslim ummah.
Although at that time, many companions doubted the usefulness of the treaty and saw it as a setback. But the pause in hostilities for two years allowed muslims to regroup and grow in numbers. Thus, the negotiated peace treaty of Hudiyyah was the first major instance of diplomatic genius of the Prophet SAW.

Makki Period - Early Propagation of Islam

In the early Makki period, Prophet Muhammad SAW propagated a message of tolerance and peace. He invited the pagans of Makkah to listen to him and reason with him. Most pagans rejected his message, but despite this, he continued to safeguard their assets. This act impressed many pagans and deterred them from harming the Prophet SAW.

Madni Period - Charter of Madinah

"He who does not show mercy, will not be shown mercy."

Sahih Muslim

Prophet Muhammad SAW led the people of Madinah with integrity, patience, and tolerance. The Charter of Madinah is a reflection of such traits. Communities of Muslim, Christians,

and Jews lived in Madinah at the time of the prophet. Hazrat Muhammad SAW created many frameworks in the charter to protect the minority communities. In exchange of Jizya (tax), the non-muslim communities were protected against any invaders within or outside of Madinah. Many western and non muslim historians also consider the charter of Madinah as a revolutionary framework of the early middle ages.

Madni Period - Dialogue with other States

At the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, the Byzantium empire and Persian empire existed as the major powerhouses in military, political, and economic terms. Prophet Muhammad SAW sent letters to both emperors. These letters were respectful, diplomatic, and friendly. They invited these rulers to the faith of Islam and developing economic or trade relations with muslims. These letters embody the essence of Prophet's diplomatic charm which was respectful but assertive.

Madni Period - Mercy in moments of power

Prophet Muhammad SAW led the conquest

of Makkah in 8 AH. Prophet showcased impressive diplomatic feat by conquering Makkah without shedding any blood. He declared amnesty for all who embrace Islam and are present in the house of Abu Sufyan. Although this moment of conquest could have been used violently, the prophet's decision to forgive his enemies impressed many pagans of Makkah. This resulted in doubling of Muslim forces.

When the victory of Allah has come and the conquest. (of Makkah)

- Al Quran

Madni Period - Reconciliation between Muslims

Prophet Muhammad SAW always relied more on mediation and reconciliation to handle disputes among Muslims. For instance, Prophet SAW ordered the Ansar to help out the Muhajir (Migrants) during the early period of migration to Madinah. Prophet Muhammad SAW used dialogue to avoid hostilities between Muslims over the issue of war spoils. Prophet created a clear hierarchy of command within the Muslim community to keep them united.

Makki Period - Dialogue with other Faiths

Prophet Muhammad SAW emphasized the role of dialogue and debate to understand and propagate the message of Islam. Since the start of mission of Prophethood, Prophet Muhammad was often mocked and criticized by his adversaries who couldn't conceive the concept of Monotheism.

Prophet Muhammad SAW never responded to such disrespectful remarks and maintained his integrity. These traits often resulted in gradual acceptance of Islam by people who were impressed by the character and diplomatic efforts of the Prophet SAW.

Conclusion

In short, the Prophet Muhammad SAW emphasized the importance of dialogue over conflict in both his Makki and Madni period. He engaged in peace treaties and negotiations with his enemies. He mediated between his allies and community. He propagated a message of tolerance, domestically and internationally. He only used war as a last resort. Prophet SAW is a prime example of diplomatic charm and powerful negotiator for all mankind.

Question #2

Challenges faced by women today and how Islam empowers them in conquering it.

﴿فمن جندبكم﴾

He created you all from a single being, and then created a mate of the same kind.
- Az Zumar

Introduction:

Islam provides a comprehensive framework for women to live their lives in harmony, protection, and dignity. Women in the modern world are facing many issues both from the modernist values and conservative factions. Islam provides a balanced view to protect the freedom of women and ensure that they become self-sufficient. Islam was the first religion to give many protections and rights to women so they can be empowered individually, spiritually, and financially. Islam in the modern day offers unique and divine solutions to the problems of modernity.

Challenges faced by women today

i) Economic dependence on Men

Women in developing nations, specially

Women in developing nations find themselves being caught by the modern demands of having a job or starting a business. Most women find that they do not possess any assets. Thus, they are dependant on men to provide them their economic needs. This is a major factor in deterring women from having a job.

(ii) Forced Marriages

Some cultures in the world do not allow women to select their partners for marriage. The culture of forced arranged marriages by families has resulted in unsatisfactory lives and increased psychological issues among young women.

(iii) Wage Gap

The issue of wage gap stems from the assumption that women are unequal and incapable of doing the same tasks. Thus, women are often paid less than men for the same amount of work. This has created many problems, such as job quitting by women, decrease in women participation of the labour force, low levels of motivations among

Women.

(iv) Unequal status Inferior Status

Women have been considered unequal and inferior by many of their male counterparts. The treatment of women as inferior is the major reason and core issue behind all other problems women face in the modern age. Women are not respected in professional circles and are not found in leadership positions in most organizations.

How Islam empowers them in conquering these challenges:

i) Property rights and Mahr:

Islam is the first religion to provide comprehensive property rights to women. In Islamic society and culture, women are given property in their adulthood so they can be economically independent from males.

Mahr is a marriage gift which is presented by a woman's husband and is included in the marital contract. It is a gift symbolizing love and affection.

Thus Islam provides economic stability and independence for women to grow in their lives. Hazrat Khadijah was a prime example of an independent, intelligent, and successful woman.