**March 9, 1917**

**The Holy Prophet’s Purity of Character: An Elegant Mix of Selflessness and Forbearance**

I bear witness that none deserves to be served besides Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and messenger of Allah.

After this, I seek the protection of Allah from the accursed devil.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.



And when thy Lord said to the angels, I am going to place a ruler in the earth, they said: Wilt Thou place in it such as make mischief in it and shed blood? And we celebrate Thy praise and extol Thy holiness. He said: Surely I know what you know not. (2:30)



And He taught Adam all the names, then presented them to the angels; He said: Tell Me the names of those if you are right. (2:31)



They said: Glory be to Thee! we have no knowledge but that which Thou hast taught us. Surely Thou art the Knowing, the Wise. (2:32)



He said: O Adam, inform them of their names. So when he informed them of their names, He said: Did I not say to you that I know what is unseen in the heavens and the earth? And I know what you manifest and what you hide. (2:33)

**Mockery and Ignorance of the Holy Prophet’s Opponents**

These verses of the Holy Quran have been the subject of much ridicule by a nation unable to distinguish truth from falsehood and the literal meaning of a word from its metaphorical significance. This mockery has been so insidious that a casual observer is liable to be misled by it and consider the Holy Quran as a meaningless discourse. In fact these verses of the Holy Quran identify a truth that can never be denied by the world at large. Although the narrative appears to be in the form of a dialogue, it expresses a profound truth.

Allah the most High has created two distinct characteristics in man,s nature. There is the milder side of his nature manifested as meekness, humility, submission and piety. The harsh aspect of his nature on the other hand is exhibited in the form of strength, courage, vengeance and bloodshed. The softer side of these human qualities is usually more pleasing and appreciated. In fact, human nature does not reach perfection until given the opportunity to manifest the harsher side of his nature.

**Response to the criticism of the Holy Prophet’s time at Madinah**

Holy Prophet’s time at Madinah has been the subject of exactly the same type of criticism. It is alleged that his life at Makkah was better than the time he spent at Madinah. The reasoning behind this is that at Makkah the meekness of his nature was consistently displayed and he did not fight the enemy. In Madinah, however, he had to pick up the sword to defend against his enemies. Description of the circumstances facing the Holy Prophet that Allah the Most High has related in the Holy Quran, provide an excellent response to these objections. Those great philosophers who say that only mildness of human nature is appreciable are unaware that human existence is not possible just on basis of a mild temperament. In fact, amongst the things necessary for maintenance of human existence, war is an essential component. Without war human existence is impossible. Besides piety human nature has been endowed with other attributes by Allah the Most High. God’s actions also display similar qualities. That is why the Holy Quran states:

I am going to place a ruler in the earth.

Man has been called a *Khalifa* or representative of God. He has been delegated some powers by God that he uses under His stewardship. Man has been given control and power over God’s creation. It is through these powers given to him by Allah the Most High that he rules the rest of creation.

**Men of Higher and Lower Character**

There are human beings with variable temperaments. Some use their faculties and strengths inappropriately while others use them correctly and appropriately and as a result derive excellent benefits from them. The Holy Quran describes this in these words:

Certainly We created man in the best make,

Then We render him the lowest of the low (95:4-5)

Those who use these faculties improperly are relegated to the lowest levels of dishonor and disgrace. In comparison, those using their faculties in a proper manner, reach heights of spiritual and moral excellence. To this group belong the prophets who have specifically been called the *khalifat-Allah* or representatives of Allah. Amongst the prophets is one outstanding individual who developed his faculties to the most excellent degree and he is no other than the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

**Spiritual leader of all humanity**

The truth is that the Holy Prophet was given the most excellent faculties for the rest of humanity to follow his example. The Holy Quran states:

And He has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, all from Himself.. (45:13)

Just as ordinary human beings have been given superiority over the rest of creation, the prophets have been given a special status amongst them. Holy Prophet Muhammad has been selected from amongst the prophets for his excellence of character.

**Standard of Excellence**

What are the distinguishing characteristics of excellence that give a unique and exemplary status to this unlettered prophet? The qualities of a man’s character are manifested in many different ways. This standard of human excellence is not defined by his height, dress, wealth or the amount of love he has for others. In fact this standard depends upon how selfless and impartial in his dealings a person is. More he exhibits these qualities the more he is respected by his peers. His not asking for recompense is proof that he is not motivated by his own desires. Respect for such a person remains as long as he manifests this selfless attitude. The Holy Prophet said:

“We who belong to the assembly of prophets do not leave behind any inheritance.”

Prophets are selfless to the extent that they do not leave behind any inheritance. The more selflessly a task is accomplished, the more deserving of respect is the one who does it. Selflessness and the lack of selfish motives set the standard for respect and honor of an individual. Now let us judge Muhammad the messenger of Allah, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, by this standard.

**Testimony to the Selfless Character of the Holy Prophet**

This incidence is related to a time in the Holy Prophet’s life when his circumstances were those of extreme helplessness. The leaders of the Quraish came to Abu Talib, the Holy Prophet’s uncle, and asked him to tell his nephew not to be critical of their idols. The Holy Prophet obviously did not abuse their idols, for the Holy Quran commands:

And abuse not those whom they call upon besides Allah. (6:108)

What was it that the Holy Prophet said that the disbelievers considered abuse of their idols? These were the proofs he offered to them to demonstrate the helplessness of these deities that they were of no use and only the One God ought to be worshipped by all. The disbelievers were not just asking the Prophet to stop his preaching. Instead they tried to entice him by proposing: “If you desire wealth and power, we will collect a large sum of money for you and make you our king. If you desire a consort, we will give you the hand of the prettiest woman in the land of Arabia.” For a person bent upon satisfying his carnal desires, there could have been no better opportunity. At the time the Holy Prophet also perceived his uncle to be leaning somewhat in favor of this delegation of the Quraish aristocracy. His unequivocal response to his uncle was: “O! Uncle if they put the sun on my right hand and the moon on my left, I will not stop what I am doing.” This reply offers the amazing proof and testimony to his absolutely selfless nature. His heart had no personal motive and desire. He is well aware of his own helplessness and isolation. His only support, his uncle also now seems to be wavering in his commitment. He is surrounded on all sides by the disbelievers who are bent upon harming him. Nevertheless he categorically rejects this offer of power, honor, wealth and carnal enticement, caring the least for their opposition and enmity.

**Truce of Hudaibiyyah**

Another incidence that is of a much later time also offers cogent proof of his selfless nature. The Holy Prophet departs from Madinah in company of fourteen hundred of his companions with the intent to perform the pilgrimage. For almost a year and a half the Makkan disbelievers had not attacked them. On his way there he is met by a contingent of the Makkan disbelievers who warn him that if he goes any further he will have to fight them. The Holy Prophet sent a delegation of his honored companions to convince them that his intent was only to perform the pilgrimage and he would turn back with his followers as soon as this is accomplished. They, however, had no intention of accepting his proposal. The Holy Prophet even sent Hazrat Usman whom they respected a lot to negotiate on his behalf. They said we are willing to let you perform the pilgrimage but Muhammad will not be allowed to do so this year. Eventually a treaty was negotiated that apparently had many clauses showing the weakness of the Muslims. For example if a Muslim turned apostate and joined the disbelievers, they would not turn him over to the Muslims. On the other hand if one of them accepted Islam and joined the Muslims, he would not be permitted to do so and would be returned back to them. These clauses seemed to indicate significant disadvantages for the Muslims but in the end the result was very favorable for the Muslims and the Holy Prophet. The treaty began with the words that it was an agreement between Muhammad the Messenger of Allah and one Suhail ibn Umro who was the representative of the Makkans. The Makkans objected to the words, ‘Messenger of Allah’, on the grounds that they did not consider him as such. Hazrat Ali who was writing the document refused to rescind these words. When the Holy Prophet was informed of this, he asked for the papers to be brought to him and with his own hands removed the words, ‘Messenger of Allah’, substituting them with the words, ‘Muhammad ibn Abdullah’. This shows his selflessness and profound wisdom. Muslims unlike their enemies were not prepared to fight and could have suffered great loss. The Holy Prophet under these conditions gave the least importance to his own honor for he knew that his followers lacked the material resources to fight and would have suffered heavy casualties. He readily sacrificed his honor and struck of the words ‘Messenger of Allah’, in order to save their lives.

**Declaration of the Promised Messiah to remove the word ‘prophet’ from his writings wherever it was used in reference to him**

Today also some reckless individuals have made this a matter of ridicule. I refer to the declaration of the Promised Messiah to remove the word ‘prophet’, from his writings, wherever it was used in reference to him. This poster was published in Lahore in 1892 in response to the allegation of the opponents that he was a claimant to prophethood. This was in spite of his repeated assertions that his claim was only of being a *muhaddath*. The opponents would then site his writings where the word *nabi* had been used albeit in its literal or verbal sense. In order to settle this controversy, the Promised Messiah said, “If they (meaning his opponents from amongst the Muslims) were offended by the usage of this term and their minds are perplexed by it, they should consider this term substituted by the word ‘*muhaddath’* by me. I have no intent under any circumstances to create division and disagreement amongst the Muslims. It has been my intent from the very beginning and Allah the Most High has been well aware of this that the word ‘*nabi* (prophet)’ does not mean a real prophet but a *muhaddath*, whom the Holy Prophet considers recipient of Divine communication. What objection could I have to describe this word in a different manner in order to please my Muslim brethren?”

So in order to clarify his position a poster was published stating:

Consider the word ‘*nabi’* replaced by the word ‘*muhaddath’* in all my writings and consider the word ‘*nabi’* to be deleted

What a clear and definitive proof this was that the type of prophethood claimed by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was not the perfect but partial prophethood referred to in the word *muhaddathiyat*. Now it is being claimed that this action of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was similar to what the Holy Prophet did when he struck of the words ‘Messenger of Allah’ while signing the Truce of *Hudaibiyyah*.

**The Promised Messiah’s deleting the word *nabi* is not similar to the Holy Prophet’s action while signing the Truce of *Hudaibiyyah***

This action of the Promised Messiah has no connection with what the Holy Prophet did at *Hudaibiyyah*. The truce of Hudaibiyyah was not centered about the Holy Prophet’s claim to prophethood. In case of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, one party to the debate was alleging that he had claimed prophethood. He denies this allegation and states that he considers such a claimant to be accursed and a liar. In case of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, the discussion is not about his claim to prophethood nor has he denied it. The discussion is about the truce being signed in which the parties to the agreement have to be mentioned in equal terms. Muhammad the Messenger of Allah, after all is also Muhammad ibn Abdullah. Using the term Muhammad ibn Abdullah does not mean the denial of his prophethood. Putting both parties at an equal footing cannot be objectionable. This was in fact a manifest proof of the Holy Prophet’s selfless nature. At one time he is told to give up his criticism of idol worship, he refuses, what is the reason for that? It is because it does not involve his person but service of the One God. In this matter he could not give up the remembrance of Allah. In case of *Hudaibiyyah*, he did not care about his personal honor and respect.

**Holy Prophet’s selflessness during the Battle of Uhud and his inviolable sense of honor regarding Allah the Most High**

There is another incident related to these battles. During the Battle of Uhud, the Holy Prophet was seriously injured and fell down. The companions formed a human shield around him. The enemy was sending volleys of arrows in that direction which fell upon them. At one point, having thus spent their full might, the leader of the enemy forces Abu Sufyan said, that the Holy Prophet had been killed. He shouted out loud, “Is Muhammad amongst you?” The Holy Prophet cautioned his companions to remain silent. Abu Sufyan then called out, “Is Abu Bakr amongst you?” The Holy Prophet again told his companions to remain silent.

Emboldened thus the enemy cried out loud, “*Hubal* (name of idol worshipped by the Makkan disbelievers)is great, long live *Hubal*!”

The Holy Prophet now instructed his companions to respond. “What should we say O Messenger of Allah they asked?” “You say, Allah is the Most High and Glorified!”

Abu Sufyan retorted, “We have *Uzza* (another idol) with us and you do not have *Uzza* with you!”

The Holy Prophet said, you call out, “Allah is our Patron and He is not your patron!”

What an amazing example of selflessness. The Holy Prophet does not care that the rumor of his death spreads for Allah the Most High is Ever Living. When the enemy, however, ridiculed Allah, his response was immediate. The Quranic verse:

“And Muhammad is but a messenger - messengers have already passed away before him (3:144),” affirms that if Muhammad passes away it would not be unusual.

**Great Passion and Zeal for the Principle of Divine Unity**

Hazrat Abu Bakr was a great upholder of the principle of Divine Unity and a very distinguished individual. This is the Quranic verse he recited when the Holy Prophet passed away. What a precarious time it was! All the companions are gathered together. Hazrat Umar has his sword unsheathed announcing he would put an end to anyone who says the Holy Prophet is dead. An exalted soul like Abu Bakr gets up to the podium and begins his address with these words: “Be aware he who worshipped Muhammad should know that Muhammad has passed away. He who worships Allah the Most High knows that Allah is Alive and will never die.” These words reflect the profound passion within his heart for the Oneness of God. It also reflects upon the selflessness of the Holy Prophet Muhammad who came to proclaim the Oneness of God to the world and never put his personal interest before this principle.

**Follow these Excellent Examples**

One observes these excellent examples of selflessness and lack of self interest in the life of the Holy Prophet. Make these the guiding light for yourself. It is not certain that you would achieve these goals. You can however acquire some benefit from them by making an effort. The more we strive for a purpose and have an excellent example before us, the more we can benefit from it. Therefore have the life of the Holy Prophet as a personal goal and role model for yourself and lead your lives according to it.

**The Insensitivity of the Muslims**

Until this fact is appreciated by the Muslims, they cannot benefit from the teachings of the Holy Quran. I am grieved by this that there are many amongst you who participate in useless customs and expenditures on matrimonial occasions. We do not even bother to ask as to what was the example of our master the Holy Prophet Muhammad on these occasions? We choose to follow what is customary and sadly reject the example of our beloved exemplar, the Holy Prophet Muhammad. Under these circumstances we do not have the right to call ourselves Muslims, because we have made these customs and desires as our lords. If you want to be followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad then follow his footsteps and benefit from his example. You claim to hold him dear but at the same time you disobey his commands and choose to follow your customs and traditions. Can any friend of yours be happy with this that you always do the opposite of what he advises? If you truly love the Holy Prophet then follow his example. If you do not keep his life as a role model before you to follow, your claim of love for the Holy Prophet is not genuine and useless and of no benefit for you.