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The **Life of**

Muhammad

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by

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Foreword

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) occupies a unique position in the history of mankind. In him the institution of prophet hood found its ultimate fulfilment. The old order reached its finale; a new era was inaugurated in the life of man. This is what finality of prophet hood means.

Man stands in need of divine guidance, the real source of those absolute values and eternal principles of moral and social organization on which ideal individual collective life can be built. Man has not been left alone by his Creator to grope in the dark in search for such values and principles. The Guidance has come from the inception of mankind. It has come in two forms: Books of God, and His Prophets. All Books essentially carried the same teachings; all Prophets conveyed the same message. Books embody eternal divine guidance; prophets personify that in space and time. The Message of the Book and the Example of the Prophet go *to* make up an integrated whole, indivisible and inseparable. And all the Books and all the Prophets are inalienable links of this golden chain. Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the book revealed to him, the Qur'an constitute its final links. Through them the guidance has been completed and perfected. Man has now been provided with perfect guidance, and his rational faculties have been so awakened and canalized that he can chart out his course of life in the light of these codes of guidance. No *new* revelation is now needed. The Qur'an and the life-example of Muhammad (peace be upon him) are the eternal guide of man in his unceasing efforts to strive for fulfilment in moral, spiritual and social fields of existence. This makes the life of Muhammad (peace be upon him) unique, and makes it relevant to every human being, wherever he may be.

Although there is a vast body of literature on the life of the Holy Prophet, yet it was being felt that there is no biography in the English language which presents an integrated view of the life,

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Personality and mission of the man who changed the course of history and inaugurated a new era in the life of mankind. Most of the works available in English nave come from people who have looked upon the life of the Holy Prophet from certain colored glasses or limited angles, or who did not have this integrated picture in view. Islamic Research Academy, in collaboration with the Begum Aisha Bawany Wakf, undertook this project. Professor Abdul Hamid Siddiqui, who was assigned this project, has presented the results of his study and research in two volumes. The first volume, *Prophet Hood in Islam,* was published in 1968. It gave an exposition of the need of prophet hood, and the prophet hood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) and its finality. This was a prelude to the present study of the life of the Holy Prophet. Every effort has been made to present the life and message of Muhammad (peace be upon

Him), relying primarily on original sources. This is not a tract on religious polemics; what is aimed at is a clear, precise and positive statement of the life and message of the Prophet of slam. However, certain misconceptions, which have been constantly dinned into the minds of the English readers, have also been rectified in passing.

Finally, a word may be said to our non-Muslim readers. We believe that God's guidance has come in all times and to all peoples. There has been nothing wrong with that Guidance as such; it came from the same source. The wrong lies the other way round: those

Who received the guidance or inherited it did not do justice to that.

In the past most of them unfortunately destroyed that guidance, and neglected or polluted that. Now another dimension has been added to this *attitude-intolerance towards guidance that comes from a source other than theirs.* When they approach other religions and their prophets. And particularly Islam and its Prophet, Muhammad (peace be upon him) with a kind of concealed antagonism, and distorted vision, they, in fact, deprive themselves of a great source of light and guidance. They are prepared to read the lives and works of many social reformers 'with an openness of mind; not so, the life ·and teachings of a prophet, not belonging to their own limited religious tradition. This attitude is as irrational and unscientific as one of not seeing or accepting any piece of molecular or space research which

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Comes from a different source. Why this double standard? We would invite them to study Islam and the life of the Holy Prophet with an openness of mind with which they undertake their other studies. This might help in developing a better appreciation of the message of all prophets, and may assist mankind in finding solution too many of its spiritual, moral and social problems. This would spell well for the entire human race.

In the end we express our gratitude to the Begum Aisha Bawany Wakf for the financial assistance they provided for this project and to Dr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari and Khwaja Abdul Wahid for the trouble they took in reading the manuscript and making valuable suggestions for its improvement.

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