**Sunshine at Madinah**

Studies in the Life of the Prophet Muhammad

*(salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam)*

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***Foreword***

God's greatest blessing on mankind is divine guidance.

This guidance has come through two channels - the Book and the Prophet. The uniqueness of this strategy lies in the fact that the Book and the Prophet represent two facets of the; same reality. Though not a substitute for each other, they represent an integrated and indispensable source for· human guidance.

- 'The' Book represents the Will of the Lord, in its sublime purity, the Word of God, the revelation *with* all its divine grandeur. The Prophet is the person through whom this guidance is revealed. He is the trusted receptacle, the one who receives the divine message, preserves it and communi­cates it to mankind without tampering or interpolation. But he is not a mere clearing-house for guidance. He unlinks that guidance in a manner that his life and character become the noblest personification of that guidance.

He is also not a mere communicator. He is assigned the responsibility of teaching, explaining and reconstructing individual life and social order in accordance with this guidance. He initiates a movement, a process of change and leads it in the desired direction. His life is a chronicle of the historic process of *da'wah* and the consequent transformation of individuals and society.

The Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the last of the Prophets and the Qur'an is the final book revealed by God. Ever since the advent of Islam, the *Sirah* of the Prophet has remained a fascinating subject and a major instrument of *da'wah.* This has been such a favorite theme for Muslim writers and scholars in all periods of Muslim history and in all parts of the Islamic realm that it can be claimed that the largest number of books in Islamic

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History have been produced on the *Sirah* of the Prophet, peace be upon him. Yet the topic remains unexhausted, perhaps even inexhaustible, one of the miracles of Islam.

My brother and colleague, Dr. Zakaria Bashier, joined the galaxy of writers on *Sfrah* by producing, almost a decade ago, a pioneering work: *The Meccan Crucible.* He breathed a new freshness into a subject, the story of an era, covered a thousand times. His approach was unique. He looked upon the life of the Prophet through the prism of the Qur'an. His was not a chronicle of events. It represented the study of the life of a man who brought about the greatest revolution in human history, a study that focused on the man in the context of the mission. It was not a book of history either. It not only portrayed the major events of an era, it tried to peep behind the curtain of history, in an effort to understand its whys and how’s. The focus moved beautifully and mean­ingfully from man to mission, from individual to movement, from past to the present and the future, from chronicle of events to ethos of society and history. This was new to the methodology of *Sirah,* and a contribution which must not. Go unacknowledged.

I had rne pleasure of requesting Brother Zakaria Basnier to continue his studies on the *Sirah* and cover other aspects of the life of the Prophet to complete the picture. I am happy he has continued this valuable work. A small volume, *Hijra:*

*Story and Significance,* has already been published by the Islamic Foundation. Now I am happy that a third study is seeing the light of day: *Sunshine at Madinah.* This contains four major studies: Pillars of the Prophet Muhammad's Society; Two Documents of the Prophet's State; The House of the Prophet Muhammad, and The Socio-Economic Di­mensions of the Prophet's State. A fifth and very valuable study on an approach to the study of *Srah* has been added as an introduction to these studies. In fact this is an introduction to the entire series, beginning with *The Meccan Crucible,* going through *Hijra* and *Sunshine at Madinah,* and hopefully to be concluded by a fourth volume on War and Peace in the Life of the Prophet. I hope and pray that Brother Zakaria Bashier will be able to produce this final volume in the near future.

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Every age has its own needs. The Islamic *Ummah* is today engaged in a struggle to re-establish its true ideological identity in a world steeped in secularism and worship of wealth, technology and power. Islam is not averse to wealth, technology or power; but it refuses to pursue these as goals and objects of human life. They are useful only as long as they remain means and instruments in the service of sublime goals and objectives of life -- the pursuit of Godliness and the establishment of a social order based on justice and brotherhood. When these means begin to be looked upon as ends that paves the way for disaster. Such is the predicament of mankind today. In this context, Islamic resurgence represents a movement to rebuild human society on values of *Tawhid, Taqwa* and *'Adl.* The inspiration for this historic struggle cannot come but from the life of the Prophet, peace be upon him. But his life has to be looked upon from a new perspective. Brother Zakaria Bashier's trio, in my humble opinion, provides one such source, not as a study that comprehends all important aspects of the life of the man who alone can provide the model for today and tomorrow, but at least as an approach to that rich and revolutionary life winch is to be looked upon as a beacon for our own times.

I am grateful to all who helped in the production of the book, especially Dr. M. Manazir Ahsan, the Director Gen­eral of the Foundation and Mawlana Iqbal Azami who read the manuscript and suggested numerous changes and im­provements. Dr. Jamil Qureshi and Mr. Eric R. Fox deserve special thanks for meticulous editing and seeing the book through the press. Finally I would like to thank Mrs. Barratt for typing the manuscript more than once.

May Allah, *subhanahu wa ta'ala,* accept our humble effort and make it a source of inspiration and guidance for all.

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**Khurshid Ahmad**