

Tartars, whom their fear and ignorance were inclined to separate from the human species.

The Mongols first attacked Bukhara and razed it to dust. Not a single soul was spared by them. Thereafter, they laid Samarkand to ruin and massacred its entire population. The same was the fate of other urban centres in the then Islamic world. The Tartars would indeed have most probably devastated the whole of Christendom (then divided politically and suffering from numerous social evils), as stated by H.G. Wells:

A prophetic amateur of history surveying the world in the opening of the seventh century might have concluded very reasonably that it was only a question of a few centuries before the whole of Europe and Asia fell under Mongolian domination. Harold Lamb also writes:

We only know that the German and Polish forces broke before the onset of the Mongol standard, and were almost exterminated; Henry and his barons died to a man, as did the Hospitallers... In less than two months they had overrun Europe from the headwaters of the Elbe to the sea, had defeated three great armies and a dozen smaller ones and had taken by assault all the towns excepting Olmutz.

Then a miraculous event changed the course of history. It not only allowed the civilized world to heave a sigh of relief but also permitted culture and civilization to be built afresh. The hearts of the indomitable Mongols were captured by the faith of their subjects who had lost all power and prestige. Arnold writes in *The Preaching of Islam*:

In spite of all difficulties, however, the Mongols and savage tribes that followed in their wake were at length brought to submit to the faith of those Muslim peoples whom they had crushed beneath their feet.

The names of only a few dedicated servants of Islam who won the savage Tartars to their faith are known to the world, but their venture was neither less daring nor the achievement less

Such details are too horrible to dwell upon today. It was a war carried to its utmost extent — an extent that was very nearly approached in the last European War. It was the slaughter of human beings without hatred — simply to make an end of them. Unchecked by human valour, they were able to overcome the terrors of vast deserts, the barriers of mountains and seas, the severities of climate, and the ravages of famine and pestilence. No danger could appeal them, no stronghold could resist them, no prayer for mercy could move them.

His achievement is recorded for the most part by his enemies. So devastating was his impact upon civilization that virtually a new beginning had to be made in half the world. The empires of Chathay, of Prester John, of Black Cathay, of Kharesem, and — after his death — the Caliphate of Baghdad, of Russia and for a while the principalities of Poland, ceased to be. When this indomitable barbarian conquered a nation all other warfare came to an end. The whole scheme of things, whether sorry or otherwise, was altered, and among the survivors of a Mongol conquest peace endured for a long time.

Harold Lamb correctly says that the impact of the Mongols, brought about by Genghis Khan, has been well summed up by the authors of the *Cambridge Medieval History* in these words:

This 'new power in history' — the ability of one man to alter human civilization — began with Genghis Khan and ended with his grandson Kublai, when the Mangol Empire tended to break up. It has not reappeared since.

The terror of the Mongol invasion was not confined to Turkistan, Iran and Iraq alone. Mongol atrocities provoked trembling even in far-off corners of the world where they could hardly have been expected to carry their arms. Edward Gibbon writes in his *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*:

The Latin world was darkened by this cloud of savage hostility; a Russian fugitive carried the alarm to Sweden; and the remote nations of the Baltic and the ocean trembled at the approach of the

in the closing decades of the twentieth century, Michael H. Hart of the United States of America has prepared a list of 100 most influential persons in history, placing the Prophet at the top. The Prophet (PBUH) of Islam and his followers conferred favours on humanity which have played an unforgettable role in the promotion and development of culture and civilization. We will mention here only two of these, amply supported by historical evidence.

Students of history are aware that in the thirteenth century the civilized world, divided by the two great religions, Christianity and Islam, was suddenly confronted with a situation which threatened the imminent destruction of both the then vast empires, their arts and sciences, their cultures and morals. In short, all that the human race had laboriously achieved during the past hundreds of years once again faced its reduction to barbarism. This was brought about by the sudden rise of Genghis Khan (Tamuchin), a chieftain of the nomadic Mongol tribes, who possessed remarkable qualities of leadership and was able to subdue all that sat in his way. In 619/1219, Genghis Khan turned towards the western and northern civilized countries, ravaging them with fire and sword. How severe a blow the Mongol invasion dealt to all social and cultural progress can be gauged by a few graphic descriptions of Mongol rapine and slaughter, as given by Harold Lamb, Genghis Khan's biographer:

"Cities in his path were often obliterated, and rivers diverted from their courses; deserts were peopled with the fleeing and dying, and when he had passed, wolves and ravens often were the sole living things in once populated lands.

And consternation filled all Christendom, a generation after the death of Genghis Khan, when the terrible Mongol horsemen were riding over Western Europe, when Boleslas of Poland and Bela of Hungary fled from stricken fields, and Henry, Duke of Silesia, died under the arrows with his Teutonic Knights at Liegnitz, sharing the fate of the Grand-Duke George of Russia.

dynasties, but millions of men in one-third of the then inhabited world; and more than that, he moved the altars, the Allahs, the religions, the ideas, the beliefs and souls. On the basis of a Book, every letter of which has become law, he created a spiritual nationality which blended together peoples of every tongue and of every race. He has left us as the indelible characteristic of his Muslim nationality, the hatred of false Allahs and the passion for the One and immaterial Allah. This avenging patriotism of Heaven formed the virtue of the followers of Muhammad (PBUH); the conquest of one-third of the earth to this dogma was his miracle; or rather it was not the miracle of man but that of reason. The idea of the unity of Allah, proclaimed amidst the exhaustion of fabulous the genies, was in itself such a miracle that upon its utterance from his lips it destroyed all the ancient temples of idols and set on fire one-third of the world.”

John William Draper, the reputed author of *A History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*, writes:

“Four years after the death of Justinian, A.D. 569, was born at Makkah, in Arabia, the man who, of all men, has exercised the greatest influence upon the human race.” He says further:

“Muhammad (PBUH) possessed that combination of qualities which more than once has decided the fate of empires ... Asserting that everlasting truth, he did not engage in vain metaphysics, but applied himself to improving the social condition of the people by regulations respecting personal cleanliness, sobriety, fasting and prayer.”

The great historian-philosopher of this century, A.J. Toynbee, is on record as saying that:

“The extinction of race consciousness as between Muslims is one of the outstanding achievements of Islam, and in the contemporary world there is, as it happens, a crying need for the propagation of this Islamic virtue.

It is a strange coincidence that over a hundred years ago Thomas Carlyle chose Muhammad (PBUH) as the supreme hero, and now,

someone. It is a human virtue, at once abiding and universal. Davidson in this respect says:

“Gratitude has been defined as that delightful emotion of love to him who has conferred a kindness on us, the very feeling of which is itself no small part of the benefit conferred. Gratitude is an unselfish joyous response to kindness — a response that is immediate and spontaneous; the ultimate meaning of which is that human nature is so constituted that affection and unity between persons is the foundation of it, ill-will and enmity (all indications to the contrary notwithstanding) being abnormal and depraved.

Ingratitude is, thus, a moral depravity and a perversion of human nature, a sign of benumbed human conscience. The lowest depth to which this immorality can fall is the ingratitude shown to founders of religion, the teachers of morals and the greatest benefactors of humanity. Grotesque parody in deliberately offensive language is not appropriate from anyone, let alone of those noble souls who have founded religions, for it hurts the feelings of millions who not only follow them but who are also willing to lay down their lives for them. Efforts at such offensiveness also entail a denial of truth. No cultured people, country or society should tolerate or defend anyone so depraved and unmannerly, who possesses no conscience.

Now let us refer to the compliments paid to the greatest benefactor of humanity by a few eminent men of letters from this part of the world where I am speaking. One of these candid men, Lamartine of France, says in his tribute to the prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH):

“If greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and astounding results are the three criteria of human genius, who could dare to compare any great man in modern history with Muhammad (PBUH)? The most famous men created arms, laws and empires only. They founded, if anything at all, no more than material powers which often crumbled away before their eyes. This man moved not only armies, legislations, empires, peoples and

7. The integration of religion and knowledge, making one dependent on the other and raising respect for knowledge by declaring it a means of attaining nearness to Allah.
8. Emphasis on the use of intellectual faculties in religious and spiritual matters and encouraging the study and contemplation of natural phenomena.
9. Charging the followers of Islam with the responsibility of spreading virtue and goodness in the world, and making it a duty incumbent on them to restore truth and justice.
10. The establishment of a universal creed and culture.

I will not elaborate upon these points here. Instead, I would rather cite a few eminent western thinkers and writers who have acknowledged these virtues of Islam. One of the bases of culture and civilization — something that enhances gentility, and refinement, civility in conduct as well as in literature — is the acknowledgement of a truth, appreciation of the great achievements of others and returning thanks to those who have done us any favour. The day this noble sentiment is expelled from our lives, literature, ethical standards, intellectual labours, even the right of expressing our thoughts freely, will become meaningless. It will not be a world to live in and die for. It will be a world of beasts and brutes where the ruling passion is to fend for oneself alone. No sentiment will remain except the fulfillment of carnal desires. All rightly ordered relationships between teacher and taught, benefactor and beneficiary, physician and patient, even between parents and children, will peter out and lose their significance.

Gratitude, as defined by William H. Davidson, a contributor to the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, is a spontaneous and natural sentiment generated by the kindness and benefit conferred by

and determination. That great benefactor of humanity replaced barbarism and brutality with the milk of human kindness, magnanimity and courtesy. He struggled unceasingly for the propagation of his noble teachings with complete disregard for his own self, his life or prestige.

Precisely because of this struggle, there arose from among an uncivilized and ill-mannered people noble-hearted men who led a graceful and kindly life, men who started a new era of courtesy and warmth in human history, who engendered gentleness and goodness in those around them. The world obtained a fresh lease of life; justice and fairness became its hallmark; the weak were emboldened to claim their rights from the haughty and strong; mercy and kindness became the norms. It was a time when humanitarianism became a driving force, faith and conviction captured human hearts, mankind began to take pride in selflessness, and virtuous behaviour became habitual with people." We list below, in brief, the precious gifts of Islam which have played a key role in the advancement of human values and culture. A new and bright world, quite different from the decaying and disintegrating humanity at the time of its advent, came into being as a result of these Islamic contributions:

1. The clear and unambiguous creed of the Oneness of Allah.
2. The concept of human equality and brotherhood.
3. The concept of human dignity and man being the masterpiece of Allah's creation.
4. Acknowledgement of the proper status of women and the restoration of their legitimate rights.
5. The rejection of despair and the infusion of hope and confidence in human beings.
6. The fusion of the secular and the sacred, the refusal to accept any cleavage between them.

It seemed then that the great civilization which it had taken four thousand years to construct was on the verge of disintegration, and that mankind was likely to return to that condition of barbarism when every tribe and sect was against the next, and law and order was unknown ... The old tribal sanctions had lost their power ... The new sanctions created by Christianity were working division and destruction instead of unity and order. It was a time fraught with tragedy. Civilization, like a gigantic tree whose foliage had overarched the world and whose branches had borne the golden fruits of art and science and literature, stood tottering ... rotten to the core.

At a time when mankind and human civilization were on the edge of destruction, the Lord and Creator of the word caused a man to be born in Arabia who was entrusted with the most difficult task: not only to rescue mankind from imminent destruction but also to raise it to sublime height, heights hitherto beyond the knowledge of historians and the imagination of poets. If there were not incontrovertible historical evidence to demonstrate his achievements, it would be difficult to believe such greatness. This man was Muhammad (PBUH) who was born in the sixth century. He saved mankind from imminent danger, gave it new life, new ambition, fresh energy, a revitalized sense of human dignity and intellect, as also a new found idealism. It was because of him that a new era came about, an era of spirituality in art and literature, of personal sincerity and selfless service of others, all of which produced an ordered, graceful and kindly culture. His most precious gifts to man were his devotion to righteousness and aversion to evil, his hatred of false Allahs and a passion for establishing justice and morality, and a readiness to lay down one's life for these righteous goals. Such goals ultimately are the fountainhead and incentive for all reforms and improvements. Whatever great and sublime heights man has attained have been the result of such noble sentiments — indeed, all material resources, means and methods owe their existence to human will

gentleman with bold and independent habits of thought to carry on the tradition of frank statement and inquiry embodied in these writings. The social and political chaos accounts largely for the disappearance of the class, but there was also another reason why the human intelligence was sterile and feverish during this age of intolerance. Both empires were religious empires in a new way that greatly hampered the free activities of the human mind.”

The same writer, after describing the onslaught of the Sassanids on Byzantium and their eventual victory, comments on the social and moral degradation to which both these great nations had fallen:

“A prophetic amateur of history surveying the world in the opening of the seventh century might have concluded very reasonably that it was only a question of a few centuries before the whole of Europe and Asia fell under Mongolian domination. There were no signs of order or union in Western Europe, and the Byzantine and Persian empires were manifestly bent upon mutual destruction. India also was divided and wasted.”

Another writer, Robert Briffault strikes a similar note:

“From the fifth to the tenth century Europe lay sunk in a night of barbarism which grew darker and darker. It was a barbarism far more awful and horrible than that of the primitive savage, for it was the decomposing body of what had once been a great civilization. The features and impress of that civilization were all but completely effaced. Where its development had been fullest, e.g., in Italy and Gaul, all was ruin, squalor and dissolution.”

The Civilizations nurtured by ancient religions were disintegrating; this according to J.H. Denison. In *Emotion* as the *Civilization*, he writes:

“In the fifth and sixth centuries the civilized world stood on the verge of chaos. The old emotional cultures that had made civilization possible, since they had given to men a sense of unity and of reverence for their rulers, had broken down and nothing had been found adequate to take their place.

article has been taken form the following websites:

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In certain parts of the world, people enjoy freedom of conscience and choice, are free to lead their lives in peace and amity, to devote their energies to teaching and preaching, researching and making new discoveries. Yet even these parts of the world have not always been so tolerant, nor free from strife, nor disposed towards the co-existence of different peoples, sects and groups, still less sufficiently broad-minded, to accommodate differences of opinion.

Mankind has seemed, many times, to be bent upon self-destruction, and passed through stages when, by its own misdeeds, it has forfeited any right to survival. Men have sometimes behaved like crazed and ferocious beasts, flinging all cultures and civilizations, arts, literature, decency, the canons of moral and civil law, to the winds.

All of us know that the writing of history is of a relatively recent origin. The 'pre-historic' era was very much longer. The decline of mankind when it relapsed into savagery was by no means an agreeable task for historians and writers to record. Nevertheless, we do find narratives of the downfall of empires and the decay of human society, told at long intervals in the pages of history. The first of these date from the fifty century A.D. some are briefly touched and upon here.

H.G. Wells, the well-known historian, writes about the decay of the Byzantine and Sassanid Empires as follows:

"Science and political philosophy seemed dead now in both these warring and decaying empires. The last philosophers of Athens, until their suppression, preserved the text of the great literature of the past with an infinite reverence and want of understanding. But there remained no class of men in the world, no free

2. Mankind's Debt to the Prophet (PBUH)

Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

The following article is by the renowned Islamic scholar Abul Hasan Ali Hasani Nadwi (affectionately called 'Ali Miyan). He is an Islamic Scholar, Historian, and Author of more than fifty books in Arabic and Urdu languages. He was born in 1913 in India. His seminar papers, articles, and recorded speeches number in thousands. His book "Ma za Khasiral Aalam be Inhitat al-Muslimeen" (What the World loose by the decline of Muslims?) increased his visibility in the Arab world at a time when the influence of the British, French, Russians, and Germans was an issue of contention. In recognition of his venerable works he received the King Faisal International Award in 1980 and was awarded the international prize of Sultan Hassan Ali Bolkiah on "سير اعلام الفكر الاسلامي" (Biographies of Islamic intellectuals) from the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies in 1998 and award of the Islamic Personality from United Arab Emirates in 1998. In this article he discusses about the holy Prophet's (PBUH) role in reforming human societies, their cultures, values and prevalent immoral deeds and practices. It highlights on the worsening condition of Arabian colonies. The holy prophet (PBUH) played a pivotal role to civilize, educate and make them well cultured nation among the nations of the world. This