

Al-Mawlid - The birth of the Prophet and the inspiration of spiritual awakening

El Hassan Bin Talal | November 2, 2020

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El Hassan Bin Talal, the uncle of the current King Abdullah II of Jordan, is a fervent believer in interreligious dialogue, a field which he promotes through the Royal Institute of Interfaith Studies which he founded in 1994 in Amman. In a text addressed to Saphirnews on the occasion of Mawlid, celebrating the birth and life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Prince El Hassan sends a message calling on Muslims to make the Muhammadan example a source of spiritual awakening. At a time when the cartoons of the Prophet in France have aroused a wave of anger across the Muslim world, "we must realize that the best way to defend the Prophet (PBUH) is to set a good example and to personify his virtues before Humanity. », says El Hassan Bin Talal.

Since the dawning of the Enlightenment to the present day in which materialism predominates and conflicts abound worldwide, we increasingly need to recall those inspirational figures, who give us hope and guidance, and help us to restore balance, harmony and understanding to human society.

The anniversary of the Prophet's birth (PBUH) is an occasion worthy of being celebrated by all Mankind. If one truly understands the words of the Prophet (PBUH), one realizes that he is "a mercy for the whole world". Non-Muslims have also affirmed and recognised the same. Leo Tolstoy declared: *"The Prophet Muhammad is a great reformer who rendered services to societies proudly. Just remember that he had the honour of guiding an entire nation to the right path. "*

We need ethical solidarity

The Qur'an sees the prophets as part of a whole with each validating the messages of those who went before, especially as regards basic principles and moral values. "Say 'We [Muslims] believe in God and in what has been sent down to us and to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the tribes. We believe in

what has been given to Moses, Jesus, and the prophets from their Lord. We do not make a distinction between any of them. It is to Him that we devote ourselves.’ (The Family of ‘Imran [*Al-‘Imran*]: 84)

The promotion of shared values is common to all the prophets. Amongst the most important points advocated by Islam is that of the importance of embracing a high moral code: *“I was only sent to perfect noble characters”*. (*Saying by Prophet Mohammed PBUH*).

We all agree in the need for an ethic of solidarity, as formulated by His Holiness the Pope in his last message, *“We are all brothers.”*

The prophets are teachers who inspire, who appeal to both our sense of reason and to our moral conscience and who work to purify the spirit and to promote high moral standards. *“Just as We have sent among you a Messenger of your own to recite Our revelations to you, purify you and teach you the Scripture, wisdom, and [other] things you did not know.”* (The Cow [*Al-Baqara*]: 151)

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) describes himself as a teacher: *“God did not send me to be harsh or to cause harm, but He sent me to teach and make it easy.”*

Prophet Muhammad, a guide among men

Prophecy did not negate the fundamental human nature of the prophets or remove their human weaknesses, but it did raise them to a higher spiritual plane. God said, *“Say, ‘I am a human being, like you, to whom it has been revealed that your God is One.”* (The Cave [*Al-Kahf*]:110)

This verse confirms that the essentials of human nature persisted even after Gabriel touched the heart of the Prophet (PBUH). It thus highlights the deep sense of the honour bestowed on man, for all his fallibility, by God.

Muhammad Ibn Abdullah (PBUH) was no Utopian seeking idealist, rather he was a leader and a social reformer who saved his nation from the internal strife which beset it and guided it on the path of piety, brotherhood and wisdom.

“Remember God’s favour to you: you were enemies and then He brought your hearts together and you became brothers by His grace.” (The Family of ‘Imran [*Al-‘Imran*]: 103)

His message includes no nationalistic or tribal dimension. Rather it is a global message that has lit the way for Humanity. The Prophet (PBUH) embodied that which he enjoined and that in which he believed in his own social context. He

stands out as a rare example in all human history of someone who could simultaneously combine the communication of deep spiritual thought with dexterity in the management of state affairs.

The best way to defend the Prophet is to set a good example

On the occasion of his birthday, his nation (*Umma*) must transcend divisions and conflicts. His is a message also to all the peoples of the world, especially now, as we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations. It is time to recall the universality of Man and to acknowledge that the world faces a predicament in the face of diminishing moral values . We need to call for a re-examination of fundamental principles and to build on past human experience; initiatives such as "*Hilf Al Fudul*" (Pact of the Virtuous) which brought together the tribes of Quraysh to "*be all in support of people suffering injustices until they recover their rights* " .

The Prophet (PBUH) said of the above: "*I would never have refused to adhere to this pact, were it against a herd of red camels. Moreover, if I had been invited to a similar pact, after the revelation of Islam, I would certainly have responded favourably.* »

It is therefore appropriate to reiterate that the repeated provocations which consist of mocking, not an establishment clerical class, but the religion and prophets (PBUT), of billions of the faithful [OR believers] , are incitements to hatred, which stoke extremism and dissent between peoples and threaten social harmony.

In the face of insulting depictions of the Prophet (PBUH), some Muslims find themselves driven to respond to evil with evil. Yet I would urge Muslims across the globe to understand that we better honour and defend the Great Prophet (PBUH) by setting a good example and striving to embody his virtues before all Humanity. As true Muslims, wherever we may live, we need to embrace the core values of our faith, broaden our relationships, show our compassion and kindness to neighbours, and support righteous voices and those who stand for peace and harmony among people.

Stand firm in the knowledge that attempts to undermine the Prophet of God (PBUH) cannot diminish his honourable status, and know that the greatest and most reasonable people of all faiths and none do not respond to evil with evil, but arm themselves with dignity and attempt to explain their sadness to those

who lack the wisdom to respect others. Likewise they spurn those who rejoice in any violence, driven by the sole pleasure of causing harm. In this context, I recall the verse from the Holy Qur'an:

“The servants of the Lord of Mercy and those who walk humbly on the earth, and who, when aggressive people address them, reply, with the words of peace.” (The Differentiator [*Al-Furqan*:] 63)

Rediscover the human dimension of the message of Islam

The chain of violent events that have taken place in recent days in different regions of France reflects a polarization of hatred at a time when human dignity is under assault on all fronts by extremists. We must be united as human beings, otherwise, in the words of Mahatma Gandhi, *"if we practice 'eye for eye, tooth for tooth', the whole world will soon be blind and toothless."*

Dominique Moisi, in his work *The Geopolitics of Emotion*, argues that the Muslim world is dominated by a feeling of humiliation which degenerates into a culture of hatred, while the Western world is dominated by a culture of fear.

Today, the first task of Islamic debate must be to rediscover the human dimension of the message of Islam. This implies the need to go beyond the many clichés that dominate our cultural space, to move from the clash of civilizations and the conflict of beliefs to a dialogue of cultures. Likewise to seek out common human values and the complementarity of knowledge and skills and cultural exchange.

We are called to ask ourselves: How can the faithful of different religions contribute to meeting the challenges facing humanity? What can they do about the spread of disease, pandemics and various catastrophes, those foreseen, such as famines and epidemics, and those unforeseen, such as industrial or nuclear accidents, or indeed those self-inflicted catastrophes such as wars and conflicts which turn millions of people into refugees and the homeless, deprived of all shelter?

Taking our inspiration from the Prophet's migration in order to understand the pain and suffering caused by migration and enforced displacement, today at a time when we are witnessing a significant increase in the number of migrants and displaced persons, should galvanise us to take the necessary steps and to

develop a clear strategy based on the current situation and projected future scenarios to adopt policies to prevent and alleviate such suffering.

I have striven - and continue to do so - through my work with the Steering Committee of the World Council on Refugees and Migration, to raise awareness and to discuss the steps needed to build a universal humanitarian system to respond to migration and forced displacement, which afflicts populations in all four corners of the earth. In this regard, I believe that international humanitarian law must be applied to all drivers of conflict be they internal or external if they are to be effective in the world of today and of tomorrow.

Adopt a religiosity that embodies the love of God

The prophets were not sent (by God) to exacerbate people's misery and stir up strife. Rather the Prophet (PBUH) was sent as a merciful and modest messenger, who showed kindness and sensitivity to all creatures. He wished for others that which he wished for himself. According to a hadith reported by Al-Bukhari, "None of you will believe until you love for your brother what you love for yourself." The Holy Bible similarly says, "*Whatever you want men to do to you, do ye even so to them.*" (Matthew 7: 12)

It is my profound hope that today we may see the rebirth of a religiosity that embodies the love of God. An embracing of faith which goes beyond the narrow confines of letters and the search for divergences, towards the generosity of piety, faith and good deeds. In this regard, we affirm that *the Zakat* that Islam sets up as a pillar of religion, represents a practical form of piety and a means of establishing social justice, the forerunner of social solidarity. Zakat deepens the link between the spiritual and ethical aspects on the one hand and the social and economic dimensions on the other.

To conclude, the birth of the Prophet (PBUH) brought life. Are we therefore going to renew our lives following the instructions and guidance of the Prophet or are we going to destroy ourselves by straying from his path? Let us create for Islam this pioneering civilizational act, and this civilizational beacon worthy of its place in the world of values.

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