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## Prophet Muhammad As a Pioneer of Human Rights a Historical Perspective

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### ABSTRACT

Every man as a human being has some rights to live. These rights inherent to all human beings without any discrimination of creed, caste, color or gender. People cultural, social, economic and political development is inconceivable without progress of their rights. The teachings of Holy Prophet (PBUH) revolutionized society with human rights. Holy Prophet (PBUH) established value, dignity and worth of a human which results in progress of the whole society. Illustration of the comprehensive literature review, this study discovers the accomplishments of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) for reforming a society by giving awareness of rights and responsibilities to the people. Holy Prophet (PBUH) the savior of humanity, give humanistic principles for development of a civilized nation. Data is gathered through research and observations and the study approaches to qualitative and analytical methodology. Addressing the research question, "How Holy Prophet (PBUH) revolutionized a society by establishing humanitarian rights?" The findings highlight that Holy Prophet (PBUH) groundbreaking vision of rights essential for the living a dignified life. He (PBUH) introduced reforms for the equality of people, justice, rights of vulnerable, poor, women, labors and workers etc. He (PBUH) advocated for the freedom of religious practices and legal protections as well. It is concluded that these values enshrined in Islamic teachings laid basis for the development of human rights practices and concepts in earlier Islamic world and further than. The study recommended further to give education and teachings regarding rights and obligation to the people align with true Islamic perspective for the development of a civilized nation ensuring protection of human dignity and exclusion of violence.

**Keywords** Rights, Islam, Dignity, Human, Justice

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## Introduction

Human rights are essential to live a dignified life and to protect human individuality and existence. Human rights are belonging to the natural born privileges of the mankind and concerns of his being a humanoid. Human rights are not only relevant to the basic human essentials, but it also related to the development of people, nurturing of their talents, beliefs, thoughts and creativity in current era.

About fourteen hundred years ago the first declaration of human rights as a complete charter is established under the headship of Holy Prophet (PBUH) in Madina. Later in the caliphs period the same human right structure is analysed and advanced structure is established in societies.

In global world this matter of human rights interpretation and application is debated and criticized in different ways. The developed countries in changing world situations taken steps for the protection of human rights in various modes. In 1945, United Nations was established declared fundamental human dignity and equal rights for all human beings irrespective of any discriminations. According to its recommendation Universal declaration of human rights is adopted by all nations based on equality and freedom of men. This charter consists of 30 articles affirming a universal criterion acceptable for all nations. But this UDHR is also criticized and discussed in later years. A complete universally recognized charter of human dignity and rights was given by Holy Prophet (PBUH) before 14<sup>th</sup> century.

This article will discuss the contribution of Holy Prophet (PBUH) in developing human rights and poise in a society. Before this article research has been taken on human right in Islam. But this research will discuss steps taken by Holy Prophet (PBUH) for revolutionizing human societies with rights and privileges. Moreover, what are the principles for ethical development of human dignity in the seerah.

### Aims of the Research:

1. What is the concept of human rights in Islam?
2. What are the principles of human rights development according to Holy Prophet (PBUH)?
3. How Holy Prophet (PBUH) revolutionized society by preserving human rights?

### Methodology:

In this research qualitative methodology is adopted relating analytical and textual approach. For achieving the purpose of research, Quranic text with Ahadith of Holy Prophet (PBUH) is analysed based on central theme of human rights in perspective of Holy Prophet (PBUH).

## Literature review

### I. Concept of Human Rights

Human rights are a phrase referred today as the rights recognized in national and international laws. This phrase also means the rights of every individual organized by a society for ensuring opportunities, privileges and liberties. The etymological definition of human right is:

#### Human rights/hju:

Men raits/plural noun the rights of individual men and women to basic freedoms, such as freedom of speech and freedom of association.”<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, the terminological definition of human rights in western world as the phrase has its background in western world is as following:

“Norms that helps to protect all people everywhere from sever political, legal and social abuses, Examples of human rights are the right to freedom of religion, the right to fair trial when charged with a crime, the right not to be tortured and the right to engage in political activity. These rights exist in morality and in law at the nation and international levels.”<sup>2</sup>

It is obvious from above all definitions that the human right concept is related to all human affairs of a community such as religious, philosophical, cultural, social and religious that is hardly be applicable on universal level worldwide. For this reason, a universal charter drafted by ‘Universal Declaration of Huamn Rights’(UDHR) is globally applicable and covering all human rights, but this document also being challenged by many non-Muslims criticisms regarding its universality.

### II. Islam and Human Rights

Historically it is evident that Islam is the religion granted charter of human rights a long time ago to the world before United Nations, which brought revolutionary change in the life of human beings. Islam give a holistic view of rights and obligations to the human beings for building a society reflective of commitments and responsibilities. The terms used in Quran and Seerah for this are Huquq Allah (Rights of Creator) and Huquq al –ibad (Privileges of Allah’s servant/human beings). According to Allah Almighty all mankind are progeny of Adam. So, all has given equal rights and obligations irrespective of their colour, gender and cast.

كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً<sup>3</sup>

“Mankind was of one religion (before their deviation)”

Holy Prophet (PBUH) sent as the messenger of Allah for the whole mankind. He (PBUH) declared the charter of rights and obligations for the whole humanity.

### III. Principles of Human rights

The rights declared in Quran and the charter of Holy Prophet (PBUH) based on seven principles that help in social construction of society with values of

equity and justice. The Universal code of Islam unity of human beings also achieved from these principles. The values based on these principles are unified further in cultural, socio-political, economic and international rights and behaviour of human beings. The rights and obligations of human beings grounded on the Universal ethics derived from Quran and Seerah of Holy Prophet (PBUH) are as following:

| <b>Islamic Ethical Principles for the rights of human beings</b> |                    |   |
|--|--------------------|---|
| <b>Sr.No</b>   | <b>Principle</b>   | <b>Explanation</b>  |
| 1)   | Unity in life      | Coherence but no conflicts are the objective of life. Unity in the life of one's own individual, in humankind and in the society. A man identifies himself as unified personality irrespective of creed, colour and ethnicity leads towards unified idea of lifecycle and liberates him from fragmentation, contradiction and double standards in life except it results in fidelity, sacrifice, honesty and trust in a civil society <sup>4</sup> .  |
| 2)   | Equality           | This second code provides axiological foundations for human rights. Human beings are required to act with "adl" and cause no danger to his ownself and act with justice even towards with the people in his surroundings as parents, children, relatives, neighbours and even strangers. Unethical conduct towards one's own self and towards others is unlawful and prohibited in Islam. This pillar of Islam implies impartial fulfilment of one's obligations and duties and creation of a honest and unbiased global human community. <sup>5</sup>  |
| 3)   | Protection of Life | This Islamic principle pertaining to protection of human life established emphatically, perhaps nowhere has the sacredness of humanoid life. Allah said in Quran:<br>مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا <sup>6</sup><br>"Whoever killed a human being for other than manslaughter a corruption into earth, it shall be as if he had killed all mankind."<br>This holiness of life in Islam is not specific to any religious, ethnic or cultural group of people but it's a universal law pragmatic at global level <sup>7</sup> . |

|    |                                 |  |
|----|---------------------------------|--|
| 4) | Religious freedom and pluralism | <p>Islam recognizes pluralistic approach towards religious freedom. Allah said in Quran:</p> <p>لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ<sup>8</sup></p> <p>“There shall be no compulsion in (acceptance of) the religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong”</p> <p>Islam give right to every human to observe his religion. Islam is beyond time and space limitations; it also emphasizes on the civil liberties of a Muslim to observe Islamic traditions living in Muslim or non-Muslim atmosphere. This religious liberty also obliges to realize intra religious and inter-religious acceptance and tolerance through a civilizational route.</p> |
| 5) | Legitimacy of Intellect         | <p>In Islam role of ‘Aql’ or intellect stands for liable rational demeanour confirming the transcendence and requisite of revealed knowledge. It is reason and intellect that determine their own confines and justification for wahy (revelation). Intellectual attitudes encourage an environment of understanding, dialogue, interaction and cooperation and liberate a man from agnosticism, skepticism and finitude of experiences.</p>   |
| 6) | Preservation of dignity         | <p>Islam give values to sustain and secure the identity, lineage and dignity of mankind. Islam preserves the genetic lineage of a child by legal ties of marriage. It refers to the inviolability and human privileges of gene<sup>9</sup>.</p>  |
| 7) | Sanctity of property            | <p>Islam preserves rights of ownership and property of a person. No one is allowed to deprive property of other. It refers to protection of property from transferring in a wrong way of tyranny and injustice to others or destruction of it. Islam put restrictions in acquiring property as well give complete legal authority to the owner to dispose or utilize his property as his desire within the limitations.<sup>10</sup></p>   |

#### IV. Human Rights in perspective of Holy Prophet (PBUH)

At the beginning of seventh century, Holy Prophet (PBUH) the protector of humanity has successfully established an ideal universal

practical examples and guidelines for the human dignity and rights. He was born at the age of ignorance, but He (PBUH) was famous for his good quality's honesty, truth, humanity, helper and respect. He has given an ideal exemplary view of society by revolutionizing human beings with dignity and privileges. Holy Prophet (PBUH) groundbreaking vision and contribution to human privileges is as following:

### 1. Rights of Human security:

The purpose of creation of human beings by Almighty Allah is to worship Him and to find bounties of Allah on earth. According to Islam for the prosper of a civilization the fundamental constituents of health, security and food must need to establish.

فَأَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً قَالُوا لَا تَخَفْ وَبَشَّرُوهُ بِغُلَامٍ عَلِيمٍ<sup>11</sup>

“And he felt from them apprehension. They said,” Fear not, and gave him good tidings of a learned boy”

In the Quran security refers to the security from fear and hunger. Another dimension of human security is fear from the punishments of GOD Almighty on imposing injustice, crimes and disobeying commands of Allah. This invokes human beings to remain within the security margins and away from God's penalties.

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) established the first community charter in Al Madina guaranteed security of all human beings with different affiliations. It prohibited thoughts of superiority, discrimination and penalized violators of the values.<sup>12</sup> Holy Prophet (PBUH) gave paramount importance to the security of life and prohibited homicide and suicide. Before the advent of Islam newborn babies especially girls were buried and killed for fear of shame and poverty, Holy Prophet (PBUH) saved human's life by declaring this heinous practice as punishable criminality.

### 2. Rights of Family:

Marriage in Islam is considered as religious duty and right of a male and female. The purpose of Nikkah in Islam is to save moral fiber, character, purity and chaste of couple. Allah said in Quran:

هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَهُنَّ<sup>13</sup>

“They are your garment, and you are theirs.”

By this way sexual enthusiasm is controlled. It not only means to satisfy biological needs but it's a social bonding based on compassion, love, dependence and mutual understanding. Holy Prophet (PBUH) revolutionized Arab society by a marital system to secure relations, mutual affairs and to establish a family system

«تُنَكِّحُ الْمَرْأَةَ لِأَرْبَعٍ: لِمَالِهَا، وَلِحَسَبِهَا، وَلِجَمَالِهَا، وَلِدِينِهَا، فَاطْفَرُ بِذَاتِ الدِّينِ تَرَبُّثَ يَدَاكَ»<sup>14</sup>

(PBUH) introduced system of marriage as a social contract giving rights by God's revelation to both male and female in following ways:

- Both male and female equal right to agree or disagrees with marriage contract.
- A man obliged to pay **MAHR** to the woman at the time of marriage.<sup>15</sup>
- The husband is liable to own financial responsibilities of his family.
- It is obligatory on wife to obey his husband and take care of his home and child's.
- Both man and woman have given the right of divorce.

The purpose of marriage in Islam is also to increase huamn population means fertility. This objective is to preserve dynasty and earth. By establishing a family system, the whole society is preserved<sup>16</sup>.

### 3. Rights of economy

Holy Prophet (PBUH) introduced an economic system supporting not only capitalism but the whole state welfare. According to Islam the actual ownership belongs to Allah. Human beings have right to earn and dispense it as a trustee. Allah said in Quran:

نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَعِيشَتَهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَرَفَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ<sup>17</sup>

Holy Prophet (PBUH) introduced a balanced economic system where individuals recognized by delictual possession of property and increased their wealth by the process of distribution, earnings circulated among needy people in form of fitrah, charity and zakat. Holy prophet (PBUH) said:

«لَيْسَ فِي الْمَالِ حَقٌّ سِوَى الزَّكَاةِ»<sup>18</sup>

Islamic economic system is Divine guided, and its main purpose is socio-economic justice. By teachings of Holy Prophet (PBUH) a mutual relationship between capitalist and workers is established based on brotherhood and benefits of each other. People are forbidden to take benefits or earn money by black market, robbery, monopolization of market, interests and fraud etc. Moreover, Islam give equal rights to both male and female to name or transfer property through inheritance laws.<sup>19</sup> All economic matters related to production, assimilation, consumption, dispersion and the financial system are thoroughly discussed in Quran and practically implies in the life of Holy Prophet (PBUH) based on the following principles and rights:

- Islam differentiated between permitted (Halal) or lawful and forbitted (Haram) and unlawful.
- Human beings have given rights to take full benefits from the bounties of Allah on earth within the bounds and directions of moderation prescribed by God Almighty.

- c. A man has given right of freedom to earn wealth and satisfy his lawful needs, but it discourages to go extreme, cross the limits and get greedy materialist.
- d. Islam value social justice and equitable distribution of wealth in form of Zakat and sadaqa. Both man and woman get share of their property leave by their parents and near kindred by inheritance laws. <sup>20</sup>

#### 4. Political Rights:




Allah has created the whole world for human beings to move and live in. Every man has right to reside anywhere in the kingdom of Allah. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) established a state in Madina based on justice and equality. Allah said in Quran:

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ <sup>21</sup>

“Indeed, we sent our messengers with clear proofs, and with them we sent down the Scriptures and the balance of justice so that people may administer justice.”

Every man has right of citizenship and political asylum regardless of their caste, color and religion. By utilizing the resources of state people meet their basic needs under a free, impartial and independent judicial system derived from liberal and humanitarianism view of Prophet(PBUH) judicial system<sup>22</sup>.

Islamic judiciary system gives rights to all human beings as the rights of individuals that bring social peace and harmony among people. Islamic judicial laws upraise protection of humanitarian rights in following ways<sup>23</sup>

|         |    |                                   |
|--|---|--|
| <i><b>Morality</b></i>   | <i><b>Rights of evidences and confession</b></i>  | <i><b>Practically enforcement of laws</b></i>  |
| Judicial Laws for promotion of justice,morality and rights of redemption,relief and peace. | Islamic Judicial system give rights to the accused person to be respondent or non-respondent to the allegation.This results in freedom of choice to everyone. | Judiciary is responsible to enforce laws practically in the society for the welfare ,potection and security of people. |

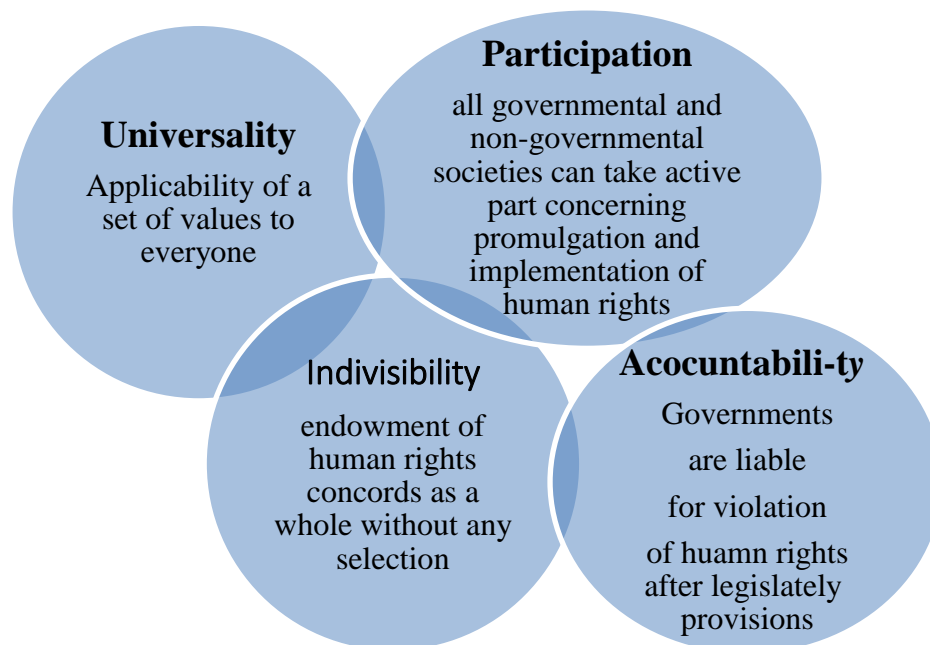
Islamic laws prevail in human beings' life by a practical judiciary system. Holy Prophet (PBUH) introduced Islamic judiciary system based on justice and equality for the protection of human beings' life and to govern social and political affairs of a society. Islam determines social stability and



protection from danger of several offenses by giving punishments on criminal acts. Islam held legally punishments for the violation of privileges or crimes in form of hadud, Tazir and Qisas. All these punishments on the criminal acts aim to preserve human life, dignity and freedom<sup>24</sup>.

## V. Human rights in perception of western laws:

It is important to understand the western perception regarding human right notion especially when it is being contrasted with Islamic approach to human rights. The notion of human rights in modern western philosophy is based on typically exclusivist and reductionist ideologies in nature. One of the beliefs this philosophical tradition is that human beings can possess means and faculties for shaping their destiny independently, free of any metaphysical doctrines originated from any religions.<sup>25</sup> This assumption is recognized by current Muslim scholars as secularization. This perception of secularity coupled with ideology of humanism emphasizing every human being to organize their own lives and societies in accord with humanoid reason.<sup>26</sup> The conception of human rights comprises of various other western principles of humanism, secularism and rationalism such as:



These philosophical western doctrines of human rights aligned with legal provisions of core human rights promulgated by UN structures<sup>27</sup>.



The purpose of UN is to create international relations and complementarity between all countries by promoting set of human rights applicable in every sphere of all countries. Thus, UN human rights treaty's objective is to bring all nations and continents into a single community by meaningful interaction with each other without any discrimination and hegemony.

### Conclusion:

Human rights are the norms for the protection of human social, political and legal affairs. Islam preserves rights of human beings based on universal principles which help to promote unity, justice, freedom and equality in society. Islam aim to preserve human dignity, property, intellectual and spiritual powers. Holy Prophet (PBUH) revolutionized society with privileges and dignity. In contemporary world application of humanistic ideologies of Holy Prophet (PBUH) need to be review for the establishment of widespread human rights. On contrary to this western perspective regarding human rights based on the concept of secularism and rationalism. While Islam is the only religion established Universal rights on global level for all human beings. In contemporary world application of humanistic ideologies of Holy Prophet (PBUH) need to be review for the establishment of widespread human rights.

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