

ALI 255: Spiritual Lessons from the Life of the Holy Prophet (s)

Session Two: The Struggle for Change

Questions

- 1) Why is change so difficult for human beings?
- 2) What difficulties did the Holy Prophet (s) face when he tried to change society?



The next facet of his life is of bringing about proactive change by inviting people (Dawa) to Islam. With it comes the inevitable hostility of the entrenched powers in the society. Change is always threatening, and the greater the change, the more threatening it is. This would be true of the change against any established system of practices, whether it be economic, social or behavioral. It would also be true for change in personal behavior like wearing immodest clothing, promiscuity, and consumption of intoxicants. Changing attitudes that valued pride in wealth and country or class and color of the skin over all else would also be difficult.

<http://www.islamicity.com/articles/articles.asp?ref=IC0405-2299#sthash.5anRIYGp.dpuf>

Speech of Ja'far bin Abu Talib

O King, we were a people in a state of ignorance and immorality, worshipping idols and eating the flesh of dead animals, committing all sorts of abomination and shameful deeds, breaking the ties of kinship, treating guests badly, and the strong among us exploited the weak. We remained in this state until Allah sent us a Prophet, one of our own people, whose lineage, truthfulness, trustworthiness, and integrity were well-known to us . . .

<http://www.ilmfruits.com/2006/jafar-ibn-abu-talibs-speech-to-the-negus/>

Obstacles in the Path of the Prophet (s)

- 1) Deep rooted idolatry
- 2) Stubbornness
- 3) Racism
- 4) Power struggle

The Prophet(s)'s methods for Change

- Appealing to the fitrat of the human being
- Understanding and gentleness
- Fairness and justice
- Appeal to reason
- Being a good example
- Selflessness
- Persistence

Changes brought about by the Holy Prophet (s)

- The Holy Prophet (s) changed the ideology and social structure of the people.
- He elevated the status of people; women, slaves, the poor and restored the rights of people. He reduced the power of the wealthy chiefs who controlled society. He condemned racism and tribal rivalries.
- He opened the minds of the people to education and learning, freeing them of superstitions and traditions.



Muhammad's insistence that each person was personally accountable not to tribal customary law but to an overriding Divine Law shook the very foundations of Arabian society...

Muhammad proclaimed a sweeping program of religious and social reform that affected religious belief and practices, business contracts and practices, male-female and family relations".^[14]

Esposito holds that the Quran's reforms consist of "regulations or moral guidance that limit or redefine rather than prohibit or replace existing practices.

Islam: The Straight Path, John Esposito



A more disunited people it would be hard to find, till, suddenly, the miracle took place. A man arose who, by his personality and by his claim to direct Divine guidance, actually brought about the impossible, namely, the union of all these warring factions.

Ins and Outs of Mesopotamia.



Such then, very briefly, was the condition of the Arabs, social and religious, when, to use an expression of Voltaire, . . . 'the turn of Arabia came'; when the hour had already struck for the most complete, the most sudden and the most extraordinary revolution that had ever come over any nation upon earth.

Bosworth Smith.



Change is never easy.

Not for the **individual** who wants to change but faces resistance from the nafs and whisperings from Shaytan.

Not for the **family** who feel it threatens their comfort and positions.

Not for the **society** which does not like an overturning of established patterns.

Reasons for Resistance to Change

- 1) Unclear outcomes
- 2) Ego battle
- 3) Comfort with present situation
- 4) Overturns established patterns



Incredible change happens in your life
when you decide to take control of
what you do have power over
instead of craving control
over what you don't.

Steve Maraboli, *Life, the Truth, and Being Free*

Links to Check

<http://www.muslim.org/islam/pr-life/17.htm>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hcZ1aZ60k7w>

<http://www.onislam.net/english/reading-islam/about-muhammad/464618-how-the-prophet-brought-about-positive-change.html>