

Dr Farida Khanam And Her Book : Life And Teachings Of The Prophet Muhammad(Pbuh) Its Relevance In A Global Context

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Abstract

The first largest minority community in India are the Muslims. After the separation of sub continent on August 1947 Muslims of India are facing serious problems with regard of their religion. Although they are passing very hard and unfavourable conditions, however they are coping with the situations and slowly progressing ahead, as far as their contribution to Islam is concerned, they have done very much and valuable services in some areas and their successes are very remarkable. Especially in Sirah writing there is a very great name Dr Mazhar Yaseen Siddiquee late. Along with men there are some women too, who made remarkable services and contributions in different fields of Islamic Studies. Women Muslims Scholars are few but in this area they did best things related to Islam and Prophet of Islam. One of them is a shining star for the Muslims community, Dr Farida Khanam Ex Professor in the Jamia Millia Islamia, Islamic studies Deptt New Delhi. Dr Farida is distinguished and prolific writer. She generally write on problems faced by Muslim women, women rights in Islam, Muslim women's historical contribution, gender equity, women education and related issues. She is also a public speaker and activist in building peace, communal harmony and interfaith dialogue. To her credit she has several books and research papers. In this humble paper I shall try to shed lights on this Muslim woman's scholarly work with evaluation of her views and approaches, with regard of her book on the biography of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

Introduction of the author: Dr Farida khunum belongs to India and her father and mother are Molana Abdul Waheed Khan and Sabiha Alvi. Dr Farida has also attributed her book of seerah, which is selected book of our article to the name of his father and mother. She born in 1952 in India and known as renowned Islamic scholar, speaker, writer, translator and advocate of peace.¹ She obtained her doctorate degree Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. Her thesis topic was: An analysis of Religious and Political thoughts of Syed Abu al Maududi.²

Along with editing, she translated many works of her father into English language, among which the commentary of the Quran, Tazkeer ul Quran.³ She served as a chairperson of a CPS (Centre for Peace and Spirituality) an International organization which is founded by her father Abdul Waheed Khan. She spent her life, spreading Islamic teachings in the true sense and promoting its true face which consists of peace and spiritual intention. She is author of numerous books, columns, papers which you keep presenting in lectures and TV programs etc.⁴ She continues

to raise her voice for the rights of women, rather, there is a regular chapter on it in her book of biography.

Introduction of her book:

Book name : Life and teachings of the prophet , its relevance in a global text.

Total pages : 157

First edition 2003 New Delhi India.

Publishers: Good wordbooks.⁵

This book contains 157 pages and have 12 chapters. The book starts with an introduction, in which Dr Farida explains the basic purpose of writing the book. The entire consists of two parts. The first part is named as Sirah which consists of two chapters, while the second part is named as Sunnah, which consists of 10 chapters. In addition to the name of the book, its relevance in a global context is actually explaining the purpose of this book.

Why this book?

In the introduction Dr Farida writes that there are countless books on the biography of prophet in the world and undoubtedly they are important in their own place, but despite this there is an aspect of the biography in front of the world that is still unknown. What has not been clearly studied is, what is the role of the biography of Muhammad in the modern world. According to her the miracles, battles, conquests, described in the biographies of the prophet appeal to a traditional Muslim but to a modern Muslim who examines everything based on scientific principal and common sense. After admitting how can you appeal to him? Modern man wanted peace instead of war and benefiting from experience instead of miracles. He sees the human economic ,social problems and how to find solution of these problems ,instead of how to obtain political and military successes. Therefore, it is necessary to

present Sirah to the modern man as a solution for living a practical life that is comprehensive instead of beliefs, and in this book I have considered the same thing in the modern era, tried to write as per requirements.

2) I want to leave such a book in the biographical library which is not a repetition of the previous books but which fulfils the requirements of living the life of a modern man. Who knows that the life of the Prophet ﷺ is the Peppfect example for the entire world .

3) Another important thing is that the biographical books do not even discuss the one sided efforts made by the prophet for peace , due to

which a bloodless revolution took place in Arabia , which is the need of

today's era. Unfortunately in the biographies books no attention was given to this aspect. The original teaching was given to this aspect. The original teachings of Islam are that the Holy Prophet come to bring peace and prosperity to the society.

4) I have compiled this book so that it can be told how the prophet changed violence, what is real Islam and what has been done by the Prophet for the society and what is its importance in recent.⁶

Author divided the book into two parts, the first one is seerah: In this part the condition of the Arabs, events before and after the Islam, Geographical position of the Arabs and the months and year of the blessed life of the Holy Prophet have also been mentioned. This part has been divided into 2 chapters . The first one is Arabia before Islam and 2nd one is The life of the Prophet Muhammad . In 2nd part of the book there are two chapters and Prophets family structure . Chapter 3 is the concept of worship in Islam, The concept of the state in Islam, status of woman, war and peace Education, The concept of

Spirituality, the relevance of the Quran in modern times and Prophet family structure.⁷

Format and style of the book:

Dr Farida has already said in the beginning of her book that she wants to present the biography of the Prophet away from the traditional way in which books on biography are being written and have been written. Although in my own view she wrote what she thought, but the fact is this does not seem to be correct because his book was published in 2003, while long before that, but many English books had been published even in the same way. Topics have come up like this even before with a little difference and out of traditions. It has been done.

In the first part she has described the blessed life of the Muhammad according to the months and years of his age for example childhood, youth, announcement of Prophethood, migration, civil life, the event were described in the same way as they are in all biographical books which can generally be called historical style. The 2nd part which named as sunnah has ten Chapters and hundred pages in which she has adopted a dialectical and modern approach i.e. in its 1st chapter she has explained the concept of worship on Islam is that, worship is actually the name of love between creator and the creatures, as a proof of this she gave references from Holy Quran and described the spirit of Kalima, Namaz, Fasting and Hajj etc. She said that worship of the God is actually a relationship and this relationship is also useful for the society. In chapter four she described the concept of the state in Islam is stated in sura no 3 verse no 26, which means Allah is the owner. He gives the country to whomever he wants, The Almighty is the one. If some one has received the command then it has been by God's intention and will. She described the Principles and choosing methodology of the Pious caliphs after the Prophet, She demands from the religious scholars that where the rulers or

those in power make mistakes, they should be stopped. She wants justice in society. In chapter five she described the position and status of woman in Islam. She writes that a woman should take care of the veil.⁸ The author's only effort was to draw such a map of the life of the prophet which could help to solve the problems that the Ummah is facing in every field of life can be presented in the light of the biography. That is why ten topics were discussed through ten chapters. If these ten issues are discussed in the light of the teachings of prophet Muslims can be successful by following the sunnah of their Prophet. Now we can say that the author presented the seerah as a practical and applicable shape for the Muslims. The style that is mostly in this book is applied.

First part of the book is a biographical sketch and 2nd one is as applied style.

Addressees of Book:

According to the author the addressees of this book are those who live in the modern world who believe more in the practical world instead of miracles and miraculous events. Those who like the rules and regulations of Islam are the first target of the writer who should be able to live as a good Muslim. In modern society by following the blessed biography of the Messenger of Allah, whose religion did not only make him a prayerer, a Hajji, a faster, a sufi but an excellent Muslim in practical life.⁹

Sources and References:

To know the sources of this book, the book itself be easily used. AL QURAN, books of Hadiths, books of seerah, ibn Hisham, ibn ishaq, Alwaqdi, ibn kathir, tabqat ibn saad, khateeb Baghdadi, history books, few English books are the sources of the book, but it is a characteristic of this book is that every where author tried to give references from the Quran.¹⁰

Importance of the book:

In terms of importance, this book has an important position because the 2nd part of the book deals with the practical life of human beings for example in chapter five author describe the role and status of a women and present the example of Queen Bilquees. In this regard the author believes that if the rule of Queen Bilquees, the Quran narrates and then the attack on them is averted by the decision of queen, whereas if she had followed the advice of her courtiers, they would have been crushed. This means that a women's decision can be over ruled and also valid. Then if the Quran does not declare something to be rejected, it means that the Quran approves it.¹¹

Understanding the Quran and Hadith:

Everywhere Authors has referred to the Quran and Hadith under each title for example under the verse of zakat, which refers to the spending in the cause of God, it is written that this is the last consumption which means the welfare of the society. In other words for education, in the interest of public affairs or to fulfill the needs of the Muslim community. In the same way while describing the spiritual aspect of Islam she writes that meditation is very important for the spiritual intention to flourish. Meditation is not only the name of solitude and silence but it is the name of thinking and concerning.¹²

Avoiding recurrences and fluency:

One of the merits of this book is that there is no repetition of any event, each topic is separate and the verses and Hadiths related to it are separate. There are twelve chapters in the book but all of these are related to each other but having separate status. There is no need to repeat any incident or Quranic verses. For example battle of Badr and Uhud describe on 48, 49, and 50 pages, the battle of Badr and Uhud both of them have been described in similar way and no

sentence has been repeated anywhere. The battle of Badr was ended in one paragraph and the Uhud was started in the same paragraph for example author says, the defeat however did not teach the Qurysh but further enraged them. Determined to wipe out the slot of this humiliation, they now began preparations for a second attack, on a much bigger scale. They raised an army of more than 3000 warriors and made with revenge marched to Madinah led by Abu Sufyan.¹³

Short and concise style:

The shortness of the book can be estimated from the fact that the total number of pages is 157, in the first 57 pages the entire life of the prophet has been described, in about 16 titles, Makki and Madani life of Holy prophet. But the important thing is that despite such a shortness the aspect of the existence is not neglected. It is clear that the objectives of the author is to draw the attention of the Ummah to the lessons learned from the biography.

Simple English language:

It is also the merit of the book that author used simple and easy English language. A simple and even a common reader can understand the meaning, meanings of difficult words can be easily derived. For example author says, The enemies and hypocrites had been plotting all this while they managed to bring to gather all the opponents of Islam for instance. According to one tradition the prophet of Islam said: Do not wish confrontation with your enemy, always ask for peace from God. We can say that these are the sentences of an easy English language.¹⁴

Summary:

The author wrote this book with great effort and zeal and achieved the happiness of presenting a blessed biography of Prophet Muhammad in practically. In my personal opinion Biography

and any thing related to Prophet is so beautiful and charming that hearts are drawn towards it being a woman Dr Farida Khanam has rightly said that she wanted a different book from all others of Prophet's biographies, and it is really different. The author presented the biography of the Prophet to the world through writing as a modern reformer and sage, who was praised as much as possible just as the life of the prophet is universal, his message is also universal.

Books on Seerah or the life of the Prophet exist in great numbers. These are no doubt valuable books in their own right. However, one aspect of Seerah still remains to be highlighted. And that is, the relevance of seerah in the modern world. It is a subject which, despite its great importance, has

yet to be treated with sufficient thoroughness. Life and Teachings of the Prophet Muhammad has been written with the aim of addressing the mind of the modern man. A thing becomes understandable to the modern man only when it is presented within the framework of reason rather than beliefs. The book, therefore, aims to fulfill modern intellectual requirements, focusing on the relevance of the Prophet of Islam in contemporary global context. With curiosity about Islam having arisen in people, there is an urgent need for an objective, in-depth study of Islam in the light of Prophet's life and teachings, which this book aims to fulfill.¹⁵

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¹² Life and Teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, p 125,137

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