

Religious System Under The Holy Prophet (ﷺ)

*Dr. Matloob Ahmad **

*Dr. Aman Ullah Rana ***

ABSTRACT

The Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was the greatest reformer the world has ever produced. Before his advent, Arabia, may the whole of the known world was steeped in vice, superstition and barbarism, social inequality, degraded womanhood, slavery, drunkenness, debauchery, gambling, rapacity blood thirstiness and such other heinous vices were prevalent among the Arabia. Never was the people so low in religious discipline as the Arabs were, never was a nation so disorganized as the Arabs were, nowhere was idolatry so deep rooted as in Arabia nowhere on the globe was so dark a spot as Arabia No Prophet before Hazart Muhammad (ﷺ) seems to have thought of tackling these horrible problems. He ruthlessly attacked them one after another till they were gone there all were due to having bad religious position. The Arabs were very corrupt in the field of religious life. They divided their gods into male and female these were 360 idols in the Ka'bah. The Arabs used to worship Them till they were banished by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) organized a rich religious system due to which there came a big revolution in the field of their religious lives. He arranged for preaching and teaching the faith and its tenets. He appointed great personalities as muftis to give the legal opinion in matters relating religion. A large number of mosques were prepared for performing congregational prayers and imams were adjusted with a complete prescribed system of appointment within a brief span of about twenty three years. He transformed the impious Arabs into an appreciable religious nation.

Key Words: Arabia, Rooted, Horrible, Corrupt, Banished, Revolution.

* Associate Professor Islamic Studies Govt. College University Faisalabad.

** Assistant Professor Arabic National University of Modern Languages Islamabad.

The pre-Islamic Arabs had no inspired Prophet, no revealed book, no clear-cut religious ideology and they had no idea of the system of Government, no idea of moral and decent life. Their religious as well as political life was on a thoroughly primitive level. Their religions could not in any way contribute to the material and spiritual well-being of the Arabs as a whole.

During this period, the Arabs were mainly polytheistic. They worshiped many Gods and goddesses. Each tribe had its own god and goddess and every family had its own household deity. The most important of these gods and goddesses were al-Uzza, al-Lat, al-Manat and al-Hubal who were held in high esteem by the Arabs. Yaghusr, Wadd, Nasr, etc., were minor but important deities of Arabia. Al-Hubal was a special god of the Qurashy of Makkah while Al-lat, al-Manat and al-Uzza were female deities.

Among the Bedouin Arabs, they represented the goddesses of the sun, the planet Venus and fortune respectively, but in Makah they were regarded as the daughters of Allah. Polytheism in its worst form was practised in Arabia. The Kabah was the center of Arab paganism. It has been said that "Idolatry was first introduced into Arabia by Amr bin Luhaiya who brought the great idol, al-Hubal from Hait in Mesopotemia and placed it in the Kabiah."⁽¹⁾ And P-Kennedy also gives the position of Arabs in these words.

Every year men from different parts of the country used to come here to pay homage to their gods. Besides idol worship, the Arabs worshipped the sun, the moon, the stars and the air. They had fallen so low that they would worship, pieces of stone, tree and sand-heap. Human sacrifices prevailed and beliefs in spirit's (Jinns) fairies and oracles were universal in Arabia.⁽²⁾

The pre-Islamic Arabs did not believe in Oneness of God, the immortality of human soul and the Day of Judgment. Only a section of the people called "Hanif" believed in a vague monotheism waraqah bin Nawafal and Zayed him Amr belonged to this section.

The society of Arabia was steeped in vice, superstition and barbarism. "The Arabs were so much given to superstitions that they would not undertake any work whatsoever before they consulted their idols, through the help of oracles constituted by arrows."⁽³⁾ Human sacrifices at the altar of the temples were not infrequent.

(1) D.G Hogarth, A history of Arabia, oxford 1922,p.52.

(2) P.Kennedy, Arabian society at the time of Muhammad , 1926,p.39

(3) Hitti, P.K, History of the Arabs, 1961, p.75-77

Among them “The moral and material condition of Arabia in particular and that of the rest of the globe in general was so deplorable that it could not but call for divine interference.”⁽¹⁾

Thus when the whole of Arabia was groaning under oppression and torture, injustice and cruelty, vice and superstition Muhammad (ﷺ) appeared as a blessing to the Arabs and the whole universe.

Those were the days when religion and state were twins, and the Prophet (ﷺ) combined in his personality the qualities of a religious reformer as well as powers of a political leader. The Prophet’s real objective, or the only passion, so to speak, was to preach divine message to all mankind, with the presence of all difficulties, persecutions, harassment and perturbation of his opponents in Makkah and Madina. The establishment of Islamic state at Madina was actually not a creation of a deliberate policy, but a natural culmination of events and developments that took place after the hijrah.

The career of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) shows that throughout he remained more a Prophet, a religious reformer and a messenger of God than anything else. Though all his actions, political, social and economic, were primarily dictated and determined by religious considerations, he always gave paramount importance to his Prophetic mission i.e. tabligh (preaching) and ta’lim (teaching of Islamic tenets). Even when he was engrossed in building a state or taking field against the enemies of the faith, he fulfilled the demands of his Prophetic office and never failed in preaching his religion to all those with whom he came into contact.

The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) organized and sent missionary parties whenever demand was made by others, or a need felt by himself, sometime in unfavorable circumstances and at times of considerable risk to the life of his followers as the tragedies of Raji and Bi’r Ma’nuh so emphatically prove. Furthermore, he never failed to imprint on the minds of his followers in general, and his officials and functionaries in particular that religion was paramount.⁽²⁾

This strategy of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) was also described by Khawaja J. Buksh in his book during the letters which the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) wrote his officials.

This is substantiated by a number of his letters to his officers such as Mu az b Jabal, ‘Amr b Hazm, ‘Ali b Abi talib, Khalid b Walid and a host of others. They were told in no ambiguous terms on more than one

(1) Gabrieli, F, A Short History of the Arabs, London, 1965, p.44

(2) Gibb, H.A.R, The Arab conquests in Central Asia, London, 1932, p.63-64

occasion that they were not appointed to their posts in order to rule over the people, but to bring them into the fold of Islam. Thus, all the administrators other political and administrative personnel were in fact missionaries of Islam, and historical facts testify that conversion of the people of a number of regions of the Arabian Peninsula, far and near, owed to the efforts of these administrators cum-missionaries.”⁽¹⁾

So far the personal efforts of the Prophet (ﷺ) in preaching his message are concerned, it is an established, fact that he left no stone unturned. As said earlier, whenever and wherever he came into the contact of the people, his first and foremost act was to invite them to Islam Zubayri stated as

In Madina, soon after the hijrah, there was a number of people who still clung to paganism, At the first opportunity he called them to Islam. But, truly speaking, the credit for the conversion of the majority of the Madinese people should go to his greatest missionary, Mus‘ab bin ‘Umayr’ who was sent from Mecca immediately before the hijrah as a muballigh (preacher) as well as mu‘allim (teacher). He was assisted in his work by As‘ad bin Zurarah of Najjar/Khazraj who was the chief of the naqibs.⁽²⁾

The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) always instructed his commanders first to invite the people of Islam, and in case they rejected it, to ask them to accept at least the suzerainty of the Islamic state. That is why, “the Muslim party invariably marched during night so that it could reach its destination at dawn when it was easy to discern whether the people had become Muslims or not. If not, then the Muslims invariably invited them to accept Islam.”⁽³⁾

In light of these directions and instructions of the Holy Prophet (SAW), the military commanders such as “abd-al-Rahman bin Awf, Khalid bin walid. Ali-bin Abi Talib and usamah bin Zayd” invited the people for Islam and succeeded.

During his Madinese phase of life, the Holy Prophet (SAW) organized a number of exclusively missionary parties and sent them to different parts of the Arabian Peninsula and even outside. The detail is stated by the Balazuri in these words.

(1) Bukhsh, J.kh. Contribution to the History of Islam, Calcutta 1930, P.119

(2)Zubayri, Musab bin Abdullah, Nasab Quraysh, Cairo, 1953, p. 254

(3)Ibn Ishaq, Muhammad, Sirah Rasul Allah, Berut, 1978, p.672

Chronologically, the first such mission was organized in safar 4 A.H/July A.D 625, Abu Bara‘Amir b. Malik al-Kilabi came to the apostle in Madina and asked him to send some of his companions to the people of Najd to invite them to your affair. So, the Prophet sent al-Munzir b’Amr al-Sa‘idi with forty of his companions from the best of Muslims. But they were all mercilessly butchered near Bi‘r Ma‘unah. A similar tragedy annihilated another party of Muslim missionaries during this period at a place called al-Raji‘. This was going to preach among the people of ‘Azl and Qarrah at their request.”⁽¹⁾

It seems that the tragic outcome of these two missionary parties dissuaded the Holy Prophet (SAW) from risking the lives of his followers anymore till he was sure of their safety. The conquest of Mecca impressed upon the minds of the hostile Arab tribes that they would no longer get away with impunity after attacking a Muslim party. On the other hand, the Prophet (SAW) had also become assured of the personal safety of Muslim preachers. This was the reason that “very small parties, sometime comprising only one person, were sent to destroy the tribal idols of various regions and invite the people to Islam, they carried out their duty with astonishing speed and determination.”⁽²⁾

These were a number of missionaries who spread the message of Islam among the people of Arabia. These missionaries or envoys of the Holy Prophet (SAW) were two types, one set was sent to foreign rulers and princes while another set approached the native chiefs and heads of Arabian Tribes. “The objective behind the majority of the embassies was religious, or the contents of the Prophet’s letters purport, directly or indirectly, an invitation of Islam”⁽³⁾

For instance, letters to all foreign and local rulers such as Negus of Abyssinia, Haraclius of Byzantine empire al-Harise b. Abi Shimr of Ghassan, al-Muqawqis of Egypt, Kisra (charroes) of Persia, Munzir b. Sawa of Bahrayn, Jayfar and ‘Abd of ‘Uman and various kings of al-Yaaman primarily called them to Islam. Similarly despatches to local Chiefs and princes such as Hawzah b. ‘Ali of Yamamah, Zughatir, the bishop of Najran, the ‘usquffs of Aylah, Maqha and other northern regions, sumamah of Banu Hanifa and other princes of the south contained an invitation to Islam. So, ibn al-Asir says about the gist of these letters.

(1) Balazuri, Futuh al-Buldan , p.42

(2) Gabrieli, F, Muhammad and Conquest of Islam London, 1968, P.123

(3) Hussain, Athar, Prophet Muhammad and His Mission, Bombay, 1967 P. 127

Hence, all the bearers of the letters of this kind were in way religious preachers who not only carried a written or oral message of Islam, but also provided an excellent illustration and a factual explanation of Islam through their sayings and deeds.”⁽¹⁾

On the other hand, al the local chiefs, who accepted Islam, also acted as missionaries among their people as well as their neighbors. For example, Jursum of Guza‘ah, ‘Amr b. Murrah of Juhaynah, brought their people into the fold of Islam. According to the ‘Usd, “all they were appointed by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ)”⁽²⁾. Likewise, all the central administrators and governors were made responsible to preach and teach tenets of the faith in their respective regions. mu‘az b. Jabal, being the governor-general of the entire south as well as the Mu‘allm as tabari says, “ had to move from one region or division to another preaching the divine message among the creatures of God.”⁽³⁾

The Holy Prophet (SAW) gave detail instructions to all foreign and local Governors and chiefs for preaching the teachings of Islam in their personal responsibility. So, the Goitein, says in this regard.

Amr bin Hazm received elaborate instructions from the Holy Prophet (SAW) regarding his duties as a governor. The greatest emphasis was laid down on tabligh (missionary work) can be seen in the instructions given to other governors and administrators, for the conversion alone could, and in fact did, guarantee the stability of the Islamic state.⁽⁴⁾

In short, now it may be safely concluded that not only the functionaries of the Islamic state but all Muslims were preachers (du‘ah) in their own right. Besides, the Holy Prophet (SAW) always organized missionary parties and sent preachers particularly in his last days, when his greatest concern was to preach God’s religion to all mankind.

ARRANGEMENTS TO TEACH THE TENETS OF FAITH:-

More preaching was not enough for the preservation of Islam in the land of its birth and its spread outside as well the stability of the Islamic state unless and until tenets and doctrines of the faith were enshrined firmly in the hearts of the converts.

(1) Ibn al-Asir Usd al Ghabah I, P.276

(2) Ibid, P.278

(3) Tabari, Tarikh, I, p.434

(4) Goitein, S.D Studies in Islamic History and Institutions Leiden, 1966 p.137-39

That is why, the Holy Qur'an commands.

وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنْفِرُوا كَافَّةً فَلَوْ لَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ
مِنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَ لِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا
إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ⁽¹⁾

It is not proper that the believers should go forth all together. Therefore, why not a squadron (group) from each division stay behind so that they may obtain the understanding of Deen (al-Islam) and admonish the people when they return to them so that they may refrain from un-Islamic conduct.

Realizing the importance of the matter, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) always catered for, and attended to, the religious training (which is termed as "تفقهوا في الدين" i.e. (comprehension in religion) of his followers.

Just before the hijra, the Prophet had sent Mus'ab b. 'umayr from Mecca to teach the basic tenets of the faith to the new converts of Madina. Earlier this service was done by very enthusiastically by as'ad b. Zurarah the Naqib al-Nuqaba'. Ibn Sa'd claims that

All the Madinan Muslims used to assemble in the house or the mosque of the latter where religious discourses were regularly made. Another teacher of this period was Ibn 'umm Maktum.⁽²⁾

After the Hijrah, the Prophet himself became the greatest teacher and his mosque biggest Centre of learning, on all occasions he thought his people. A group of poor Muslims popularly called as the Ashab al-suffah (The people of suffah i.e. ledge remained in constant company of the Holy Prophet (SAW) and learnt the fundamentals of religion day and night,"⁽³⁾ while other Muslims who were engaged in various occupations such as agriculture, trade and commerce or worked as manual laborers did come to Prophet only in their free hours to learn.

Apart from the Prophet (SAW), the people of the suffah also received training from various other teachers and learned Muslims.

(1) Al- Tauba 9:122

(2) Ibn sa'd, al-Tabaqat, I, p.220

(3) Abu zur'ah 'abd al Rahman b. 'Amir al-dimashqi, Sirah Rasul Allah (SAW) wa Tarikh al-khlafa, al-Rashidin, Damascus, 1980, p.172

Shibli states about this as

‘Ubadah b al-Samit taught the Qur’an and the art of writing to a number. of persons from among the people of the suffah. And as many as 70 persons from among the people of the suffah used to go to a teacher (mu‘allim) at Madina and remained busy in learning till the break of dawn. The products of this institution later qualified themselves to act as teachers to their own right. Nearly 80 missionaries cum teachers who were massacred in the two tragedies of Bir Ma‘unah and al-Rajil’ were, interestingly enough, picked up from the people of the suffah.⁽¹⁾

In addition to the ashāb al-suffah, there were a number of teachers (mu‘allims) at Madina who taught Qur’an and the sunnah to the students. A tradition in Bukhari says that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) exhorted the Muslims to learn the Qur’an from four of his companions, namely, Abdullah b. Mas‘ud, Salim, ‘Ubayyi b. Ka‘b and Mu‘az b. Jabal. The al-Tabaqat mentions that “a new convert, wardan, the grandfather of al-furat b.yazid, was entrusted by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) for his learning of the Qur’an to Aban b. Sa‘id b. Al-‘As.”⁽²⁾ From the sources it is clear that a permanent arrangement was made at the capital city for the religious training of the Muslim of Madina in particular and converts of the other parts of Arabia in general.

Since the people of surrounding, and especially of far flung, areas could not stay at the capital for neither long for obvious reasons, nor all the converts could be asked to migrate there. Therefore, special arrangements were made for their religious teaching in their native places “usually, batches of new converts paid a visit of homage to their Prophet and stayed in the capital city for a while. During their short sojourn at Madina, they learned basic tenets of the faith.”⁽³⁾ This is further elaborated by Dr. Jawwad Ali in his book which says that

Malik b. al-Huwayris came in a deputation to the Prophet and stayed at Madina for twenty days, learning the fundamentals of religion.

(1) Shibli, sirah, ii, p. 90-95

(2) Ibn S‘ad Muhammad, al-Tabaqat al-kubra, Beirut, 1957, V-ii P.169-72

(3) Ansari, Abd al-Quddus, asar Al-Madinah, al-Munawarah, Madinah, 1368 A.H/1948 A.D.P.147

On the eve of his departure to his native place, he and his fellow-companions were reminded by the Prophet of their duty to impart to their people whatever they had learnt at Madina. A seeker of truth, ‘Amr b ‘Abd Qays from Bahrayn met the Prophet at Mecca and learnt the Iqra; the first revealed surah, and after return to his people, he preached and taught it to other people.⁽¹⁾

When Mecca fell, the Prophet left behind Mu‘az b.Jabal and Abu Musa al-Ash‘ari to teach the Qur’an and basic principles of Islam to the new Meccan converts. Similarly, those slaves of saqif who deserted to the Prophet during the siege of ta’if were entrusted to different companions for their religious instruction. The names of teachers mentioned in this connection are ‘Amr b.Sa‘id, his brothers Khalid and Aban, ‘usman b. Affan, Sa’d b. ‘Ubadah and ‘usayd b. al-Huzayr.

Waqidi, further states about the governors and administrators in these words

In other parts of the Islamic state, governors, administrators and even commanders and tax-collectors were made responsible for the religious instruction of the people of their respective regions. The names of such are Mu‘az b.jabal, the governor general of southern Arabia, Abu Musa al Ash‘ari, governor of Zabid, Rima, ‘Adan and al-Sahil, ‘Amr b.Hazm, governor of Najran, ‘Amr b.Al‘As, governor of ‘Uman, ‘Ala, b. al-Hazrami, governor of Bahrayn. Khalid b. Sa‘id of San‘a.”⁽²⁾

Nothing is explicitly mentioned about the contribution made by the great companions of the Prophet such as Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, Hamzah, Mu‘awiyah and a host of others to the cause of dissemination of the knowledge among the Muslims of the Islamic state, but it could conceivably as well as safely be assumed that they too must have performed their responsibility in this respect. The same is true of all great female companions of the Prophet, particularly the wives of the Prophet. “The books of traditions are replete with numerous examples showing that they, especially ‘A’ishah contributed a lot to the religious training and guidance of Muslims.”⁽³⁾

(1) Jawwad ali Dr., Tarikh al- Arab fi al-Islam: al- Sirah al-Nabawiyah, Baghdad, 1961, P.57-58

(2) Waqidi al. Maghazi P.971-72

(3) Balazuri, Futuh al-Buldan, Cario 1932, P.80-83.

In the end, it could be safely said that the Holy Prophet (SAW) and his followers had made proper and adequate arrangements for the religious training of a new converts, for its alone could have provided a firm and sound foundation to the Islamic structure.

ROLE OF MUFTIS AND LEGAL OPINION GIVERS IN MATTERS REALTING RELIGION

Several sources state that there lived at Madina a number of muftis in the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) who gave legal opinions and verdicts on matters relating to religion. Prophet (ﷺ) created a batch of interpreters of the Holy Quran and the sunnah in his lifetime, so that his religious mission could be carried on smoothly after him. To say that the Prophet had visualized the spread of his religion to other regions and countries is not an unwarranted conjecture, it is fact to gain this objective, Abu Shuhbah states that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) trained a lot of his companions as muftis and jurists during his life.

Therefore, in order to equip his followers and successors suitably, and enable them to cope with new problems and issues arising out of their contacts with new peoples and interpret the Quran and the sunnah in their light, he trained a substantial number of jurists and muftis during his lifetime. To test their ability, he asked them to give verdicts, express legal and religious opinions in his presence.⁽¹⁾

The success and policy of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) in the branch of religious organization is quite evident from the “oft-quoted tradition of Mu‘az b. jabal which contains a dialogue between him and the Prophet (ﷺ) on the eve of the former’s departure to al-Yaman”⁽²⁾ as its governor very significant is its content which established a principle for all times to come that an ‘alim (learned) or jurist, is supposed to decide all issues first in the light of Quran in case of the absence of a Qur’anic injunction on the matter concerned, in the light of Sunnah, and in the absence of both, he is authorized to rely on his discretion (ra’y). Significantly, all the central administrators of the Prophet (ﷺ) or, for that matter, their subordinate officers proved themselves to be quite capable of deciding religious affairs also in their respective regions if they did not feel sure of themselves on any particular matter, they had the privilege of seeking clarification and elaboration from the Prophet himself.⁽³⁾

(1) Abu shuhbah, Muhammad, al Sirah al- Nabawiyah fi Zaw al-Qur’an wal al-Sunnah Cairo, 1973, P.104-105

(2) Ibn Hisham, ‘Abd al-Malik, al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah, cario, 1955,p.59

(3) Hamidullah, M., Muhammad Rasul Allah, Hyderabad deccan, 1974, P.109-111

Ibn Sa'd mentions at least eight muftis five from quraysh and three from the ansar, who issued religious decrees at Madina in the presence of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ).

They were abu Bakr, Umar, Usman, 'Ali, 'abd al-Rahman b. 'Awf, Mu'az b. jabla, 'ubavi b. Ka'b and zayd b. Sabit. But ibn al-jawzi raises the number of the muftis to thirteen by including the names of 'Abdullah b. Mas'ud Huzayfah b. al-yaman, Abu-al-darda, abu-Musa and Salman al-Farsi.⁽¹⁾

Some other Historian say that at least fourteen persons were entitled to give Fatwas. The new names are "abdulah b. 'Abbas, Abu Hurayrah, Anas and 'A'ishah, the Prophet's learned wife."⁽²⁾ While other say that this list consist of as many as twenty five names asserting that the fatwa of some of them could be collected in a voluminous book. It is probable rather certain, that there were many more muftis and there is much truth in a report that their number could go up as high as 120 personalities.

ARRANGMENTS FOR PERFORMING CONGREGATIONAL PRAYERS

By virtue of being the last messenger of God, the Prophet always led congregational prayers at Madina, and in his presence no one could, both theoretically and practically, led the Muslims in prayers. Before his arrival at Madina, however, several persons are reported to have acted as Imams for different congregations. It is said that As'ad b. Zurarah, the Chief of the naqibs of the ansar, performed this duty at Madina before the advent of the Prophet's emissary, Mus'ab b. 'Umayr' who later became congregational (SAW) Imam in his place what the latter what to Mecca to meet the Prophet, it was once again As'ad b. Zurarah, who led prayers.

Ali Muhammad says about the appointments of Imams in these words that

The Hanzalah b. Abi Hanzalah Ansari led the congregational prayers at quba where a mosque, the first one in Islam, was built for the local Muslims. It is also said that there were two Imams of the Muslims of Madina before the hijrah. Mus'ab b. Umar' led the Ansar, while Salim, the maula of abi Hazayfah, acted for the Muhajirs.⁽³⁾

As Islam expanded and the population increased, mosques grew up practically in almost all the clans and tribes of Arabia, for the prayer salah was the most important pillar (ruken).

(1) Ibn sa'd ii, P.335-340

(2) Kattani, 'Abd al-Hayyi, al-Taratib al-Idariyah, Berut, P.57

(3) Ali, Muhammad, Muhammad the Prophet, Lahore, 1924, P.47-48

Even at the capital city of Madina a number of mosques grew up, as the mosque of the Prophet could not accommodate the ever-growing number of Muslims. Apart from the two mosques, namely, mosque of Banu Zurayq and mosque of ‘Amr b. ‘Awf. And ‘Itban b. Malik al-Ansari was the Imam of his people and led them in prayers in their tribal mosque. Another mosque of a clan of the ansar, namely, Banu khatamah of Aws, whose imam was Abdullah b.Umay Khatami. “Muaz b.Jabal also acted as the imam for his people Banu Jusham of Khazraj in congregational prayers in their clannish mosque even after he had offered prayers behind the Prophet in his mosque”.⁽¹⁾

Ibn sa’d writes further about the Imams as

The Usawyd b. al-Huzayr of Aws was the Imam of his people. He also refers to as many as nine mosques at Madina where congregational prayers were regularly offered in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (SAW). They were mosques of Banu Amr, Banu sa’idah, B.Ubayd, B.Salamah, B.Rayih, B. Zurayq, Ghifar, Aslam and Juhaynah.⁽²⁾

Some other Historion mention that there were at least 22 more mosques in and around Madina where congregational prayers were led by permanent Imam. They were the mosques of B.Khadarah, B.Umayyah, a branch of Ansar, B.Baya zah, B. al Hubla, B.Usayyah, Abi Faysala, B.Dinar, ubayyi b.ka’l, al-Fazih, B.Harisah, B.Zafar, Abd al-Ashhal, Waqim, B.Muawiyah, Atikah, B. Qurayzah, B.wa’il and al- Shajarah. “Moreover, it is certain that all tribes and their big clans had their own mosques at madina where permanent Imams led congregational prayers.”⁽³⁾

The local administrators and chief of tribes or clans too usually discharged duties of the Imam, provided they had sufficient knowledge of the Quran and the Islamic tenets. Shaddad b. Sumamah, the Chief of B.ka’b bin Aws, was given the office of the Imam as he fulfilled the required qualifications. In the life of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) there were also found some qualities and qualifications of imam appointments. Ibn al-Asir writes about these qualifications as,

On his part, the Prophet had categorically stated the qualities and qualifications for the Imams in prayers. The one who remembered by heart the maximum part of the Qur’an was the most entitled to lead! in case all were on par with each other, then the most well-versed in the Sunnah.

(1) Lammens, H, Islam, Beliefs and Institutions, London, 1929, P.136

(2) Ibn sa’d, P.344

(3) Tabari, Tarikh , 1,429-30

If they were equal in it too, then the oldest Muhajir, and if they were equal even in that matter! then the oldest in age. So the appointment of ‘Usman b.Abi al. ‘as and ‘Amr b.salmah, as the imams of saqif and Banu ju-sm respectively was made on this principle, although both of them were comparatively very young. ⁽¹⁾

It is not easy here to enumerate all the mosques and their imams in the whole of Arabia, the aim is to establish the point that all the places, where considerable population of Muslims lived, had mosques, and in all those mosques there were permanent imams who led the congregation in five a day prescribed prayers. These imams were either appointed directly by the Prophet himself or selected by the tribesmen, sometimes with his concurrence.

In unusual circumstances companions could also officiate the Prophet as imam in his mosque or at any place.

It is also known that the deputies of the Prophet ﷺ always led the Muslims of Madina in prayers during his absence from the city. ⁽²⁾

Waqidi says that during some places and events, the companions of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) act as Naib Imam of Holy Prophet (ﷺ). This fact is stated as

“During the Tabuk expeditions the Islamic army was divided into two parts a part was headed by the Prophet himself, while the other was placed under the command of Abu Bakar who in his capacity of the Khalifa of the Prophet also discharged the responsibility of the imam of his force. ⁽³⁾

The Muslim commanders, like other administrators and officers of the Islamic state, also acted as leaders in prayer, as the case of Amr b.al-As during the expedition of zat al-Salasil so glaringly shows. In the Tabuk expedition another companion of the Prophet ‘Abd al- Rahman b.Awf, once led the Muslims in a prayer. The Zubayri describes this fact in his book in a very beautiful ways. He says that

The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) had gone somewhere for some work. The time for prayer was about to go when the companions asked Abd al- Rahman b. Awf to lead the prayer. Hesitatingly he advanced and while he was in the middle of the prayer the Prophet returned.

(1) Ibn al-Asir, ‘Usd al- Ghabah, P.386

(2) Ibn ishaq,As-Sirat dar Al-kotob Al-Ilmiyah,Berut Labnan 1950,P.199-200

(3) Waqidi, al-Maghazi, P.875-877

Knowing him coming, ‘Abd al-rahman wanted to withdraw, but the Prophet (SAW) indicated to him to complete it. The Prophet, not only completed his prayers in his Imamah (leadership), but also praised him. ⁽¹⁾

It is too well-known that “the Prophet asked Abu Bakr (R.A) to lead prayers in his mosque during his last illness and, the latter (Abu Bakr) led as many as seventeen prayers in the lifetime of the Prophet (SAW).

Outside the capital city, there were also many mosques in almost in each clan and tribe of the Arabs. The mosque of Abd al-Gays at a village in al-Bahrayn called al-jawasi where first Friday congregational prayer was held soon after the first congregation at the mosque of quba in 622 A.D. “The Mosque of Mecca i.e ka’bah is too well known fact the Meccan Governor, Attab b. Asid was its permanent Imam.”⁽²⁾

Muhammad Rashid Raza States that “in the neighbour of Mecca, city al-ta’if also had a mosque where governor Usman b.Abi al-As al- Saqafi used to lead the prayers.”⁽³⁾

When ‘Amr b.al- ‘As was sent as the Amir over ‘Uman, Abu zayad al-Ansari, one of the Jumma‘of the Quran was also sent along with him as the Imam for the region. This was it seems a special arrangement made for ‘um-an, otherwise the central administrators and governors invariably acted as Imams in their regions as is evident from instances of the governors of Mecca and Ta’if and also from numerous examples mentioned above.

Now it could be said with some certainty that the Prophetﷺ made adequate arrangements in this branch of religious organization which was in fact the greatest pillar of Islam. Because, through this branch, every Muslim was given training to have a status and standard of good Muslim in society and group of humanity, as a loyal and submissive of Allah Ta,ala. Due to these reasons all Muslim Chiefs and administrators succeeded in all fields of their lives in the supervision, teachings and training under the Holy Prophet Muhammad(ﷺ).

(1) Zubayri, Mus’ab bin Abdullah, Nasab Quraysh, Cairo, 1953, P.265

(2) Ibn Hajar, Al Isabah, p.177

(3) Ali Sallabi, Noble Life of the Prophet, Darussalam, Berut, 1955, P-170