

A World That Changed

-- Ali Buhisi

It really is amazing to believe how one person can change the lives of hundreds of people. But if you are easily astonished by that one little fact, you will surely be surprised to believe that three remarkable men, have changed and still change the lives of billions of people. In the year 2007, the total estimated number of Muslims in the world was believed to be at 1.61 billion, these 1.61 billion people chose to follow the path of the prophet Muhammad. In the year 2001, there was an estimated population of 2.1 billion Christians and these 2.1 billion Christians decided on following the path of Jesus. In 2001, 14 million people decided to take the path of Moses and desire the religion of Judaism. These three men, Muhammad, Jesus, and Moses, together have affected about 4 billion people.

Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. Those words are spoken by every Muslim almost every day. Muhammad was born in Mecca in the year 569 C.E., and the moment he reached the age of forty, the angel Gabriel came to him and revealed to him that he will lead a life as the messenger of Allah. At first, Muhammad was meant to send the message of Allah to his family, but later on, the great prophet Muhammad went beyond that and send God's message to all of mankind.

The Prophet Muhammad had one major goal in particular, to lead mankind to the right path, to the path that Allah intended for all peoples. Allah gave Muhammad one final message in which he spoke in Mecca. In his final message, his last sermon, he not only spoke to the people who were there in Mecca, he spoke to the world as a whole, and his message was passed from one generation to the next.

In this message, he told the people that all mankind is brought together from Adam and Eve. No man is superior to another man, everyone is equal. This message has been spread several times throughout history but this is the first time it was said with the specific purpose of everyone on the face of this earth adhering to this message.

Malcolm X was a victim to racism before the April of 1964. Racism was and still is a deep black hole that is filled with nothing but hatred and violence. But in 1964, as Malcolm took his journey to Hajj, which is one of the five pillars of Islam that one must complete in one's lifetime as a Muslim, he discovered how to get people to leave that black hole. Once Malcolm went to Hajj, he saw that the idea of blacks, whites, Asians, and everyone else, can sit down and actually show some forum of love and respect towards one another. Muhammad's message was correct; it changed Malcolm's life, and the lives of many other people. Harmonious coexistence can be tangible.

The prophet Muhammad did not get his message of Islam across to the people in just one step. He faced many challenges. When he first decided to send his message to the people, not many listened; even some members of his family shunned him and tried their best to make his life miserable. But he didn't quit, he kept on sending his message, until he finally got it across. He showed perseverance under the worst of circumstances.

Muhammad spoke his last sermon at the farewell pilgrimage, the last Hajj. About two months after returning, Muhammad felt very ill. But even as Muhammad became sick, that did not prevent him from performing his prayers and duties. The prophet was losing his health day by day. Once he had asked Abu Bakr to take over the prayers at the mosque, all the people became worried about Muhammad's health. The prophet Muhammad died at the age of sixty-three. It came as a great shock to all Muslims for their beloved prophet was gone forever. Abu

Bakr said to the congregation, “If the people worshipped Muhammad, Muhammad had died, and if they worshipped Allah, he lives forever.”

In the dictionary, a society is defined as “an organized group of persons associated together for religious, benevolent, cultural, scientific, political, patriotic, or other purposes.” Muhammad’s society was not just a group of persons; it was mankind as a whole.

About two-thousand years ago God sent an angel, Gabriel, to the land of Palestine, known today as Israel; he sent the angel to a pure young woman named Mary. Mary was engaged to a man named Joseph, he was a carpenter. The angel told Mary that by God's power, she would conceive and bear a son. When Joseph learned that she was pregnant, an angel instructed him to marry her. Joseph took her to Bethlehem to register for a census. While there, Mary gave birth to Jesus. She laid him in a manger because there was no room at the inn. Shepherds visited Jesus in Bethlehem. Later, wise men brought gifts to Jesus. They told Herod the Great, a wicked king at the time of Jesus’ birth, that Jesus would rule the people of Israel. So Herod sent soldiers to kill the children in Bethlehem. Warned by an angel, Joseph took Mary and her son, Jesus to Egypt. After Herod died, they returned to Israel and raised Jesus in a town called Nazareth.

Jesus taught people how to live their lives in a manner. He used the method of sermons and parables just as the prophet Muhammad did. One of Jesus’ most powerful sermons was spoken on top of a mountain. In the Sermon on the Mountain, Jesus taught his listeners five very important burdens. The first burden was to “love your enemies”. Jesus did not want hatred or rivalry between people, he wanted peace amongst all. The second burden was to “not judge people”. There is a figure of speech, “do not judge a book by its cover”, with the ultimate message being to not judge people. The third burden is to “trust God”. No matter where you are,

whether you're alone or in the middle of a crowd, Jesus always said God is always with them, and that all of mankind should trust their lives in God. The fourth burden was to "not be anxious about tomorrow". What Jesus meant by this is that people should not worry about the future and what it has in store for them, that they should just live life to the very last minute, and what is meant to happen will happen. The fifth and final burden was to "do unto others as you would have them do unto you". This final burden was known as the "golden rule". This final burden meant basically what the teachers say to all children in elementary school today, "treat others the way you would like to be treated".

The second method of Jesus to teach the people right from wrong was parables. A parable is a short story with a spiritual meaning. Jesus spoke many parables to the people. Some parables were easy to understand, and others, were very difficult. Mathew, one of the twelve disciples spoke many of Jesus' parables.

Hanging on a cross was the most reprehensible, excruciating and vindictive form of death penalty. In the times of Romans, such a death penalty was obligatory only on the most hardened criminals. The torture of a crucified man is impossible to describe. Besides unbearable pain in every part of the body, the crucified underwent the ordeal of appalling thirst and spiritual affliction until dead. The chiefs of the Jews wanted to ignominy Jesus Christ forever by reproving him to such a death.

Jesus came with his followers to Jerusalem during the Passover festival. He was involved in a public disturbance at the Temple in Jerusalem when he overturned the tables of the moneychangers there. At some point later, he was betrayed by one of his apostles, Judas Iscariot, leading to his arrest. The Romans ruled the city and the Jewish authorities of the city had to

arrest people in order to obey Roman orders to preserve the tranquility. Jesus' disciples went into hiding after he was arrested. Later he was sentenced to death by crucifixion.

When all was ready, the soldiers crucified Jesus Christ. It was about midday, by Jewish reckoning, the sixth hour of the day. When they crucified him, he prayed for his tormentors, saying, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." He was crucified between two robbers, and died. This shows that no matter how much Jesus suffered, he still hadn't wished ill upon his tormentors. The life of Jesus Christ has substantially influenced the course of human history and by virtue of a compassionate attitude toward the ailing, also has contributed to the development of humanity.

When Moses was born, the slaves in Egypt were Jewish. The Pharaoh was terrified of the Jews because he was told by a seer that a Jewish boy will destroy his power one day. He ordered that all Jewish baby boys be killed at birth so that they would not be a threat and fight against him. To save Moses, his mother made a plan. She hid him in a basket and sent him into the Nile River, where he was rescued by the wife of the Pharaoh, who was a gentle woman who did not agree with the policies of her husband.

Moses grew up as an Egyptian prince, but he never forgot he was a Jew. One day Moses lost his temper and killed an Egyptian who had beaten a Jewish slave to death. He had to run away to another land. God spoke to him from a burning bush and told him he must go back and free the Jews from slavery.

Moses went to the Pharaoh and asked him to set his people free. The Pharaoh refused to release his slaves, because they had been building the Pharaoh's grand buildings. Many disasters have been struck upon Egypt. There were ten plagues. Before each one, Moses had warned the Pharaoh what would happen. Moses told him the disasters had been sent by God.

The final plague was disastrous. The eldest son from all the Egyptian families had died. The Pharaoh was in so much remorse that he agreed to let all the Jews leave Egypt. As the Jewish slaves left, the Pharaoh suddenly had a change of heart. The Pharaoh sent an army to get the slaves and bring them back to Egypt. Moses and the Jewish slaves reached a horrible dilemma. As they retreated, they reached the banks of the Red Sea. God spoke to Moses and told him to lift his staff, and then the sea had split in two, leading a path to the other end. Once the slaves have reached across, Moses released the sea while the Pharaoh's army was trapped in the middle; the Pharaoh along with his army died.

The Jews were freed; Moses now had to lead these men to obey God. There was a point where these men ignored Moses, and worshiped a golden calf. Moses destroyed the golden calf and showed these men the true path to God. At first, when Moses spoke to God from the burning tree, he told God that he was not fit for the duty to free the Jewish slaves. God told Moses not to worry, and that God was there with him.

The prophets all were kind hearted and used their own methods, to help benefit their people and their communities. The prophets couldn't just stand on the sidelines, and allow their communities and their people to be corrupted. The prophets used methods of compassion, and benevolence to help benefit their communities and people. The people in today's generation and the generations that are to come after us, our children, and our children's children, can all use the methods of the prophets to help benefit their communities, and the people surrounding their lives.

The people today, can use the methods of the prophets and make a change for good, they could either go from changing the lives of a few, to changing the lives of the community, or even as far as changing the world. There have been countless claims of blaming Muslims of acts of

terrorism. These claims have drastically increased ever since 9/11. There have also been articles in the Washington Post blaming the Islamic Saudi Academy (ISA) for promoting terrorism, and teaching its students acts of terrorism as well. I believe that the people of the Islamic Saudi Academy community, can get through to the writers of these articles, and convince them that the students at ISA are normal kids just like the kids at the public schools, or the kids that you see playing as you drive down the road. The students at the school are just normal people living their lives day by day; they live it to the fullest. The prophets used anti-violent methods to get through to the people. The students at ISA participate in activities involving different schools, such as soccer, basketball, baseball, and even MUN. MUN is a debating program that many schools enter and compete against one another. At one these MUN's that ISA entered, there is video on facebook showing some of the students at ISA and some of the students at public schools dancing to a song, and they are all just friends. Does that image look like students who would commit acts of terrorism? The students at ISA can use this and other methods of kindness, and benevolence to prove they are not committing acts of violence and promoting terrorism. They can use the anti-violent methods of the prophets, peace be upon them, and their way's of persuasion to convince the writers of those articles that they are all just normal.

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