



THE FRAGRANCE OF EAST

Vol. XX No. 8


August 2018

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Value of Love

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

The excellence of man lies in his love and mercy for others: one person is pricked with a thorn but another person feels the pain. Man is gifted with tears which fall from his eyes when he sees a widow's head uncovered in helplessness, a poor man's kitchen unlit, and a sick man in distress. If such a drop of tear is put in a sea of transgression, it will cleanse it. If it falls on a forest of sins, it will burn it and fill the space again with the effulgence of virtue. The angels can bring forward anything, but they cannot present this drop of tear. The angels do not sleep due to their cognizance of Allah's being and attributes, but their vigil does not have the excellence of man's inability to sleep due to the sufferings of others.

The quality of love permeating through the human heart is a very precious gift of God. When something stirs it, it assumes a strange power. It rises above the considerations of religion, community, nation, and motherland. It then only sees another man's heart and feels its suffering and is drawn to it by nature as is pulled an iron chip toward a magnet. ■

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Wisdom of Qur'an

"The 'Ad gave the lie to the Messengers. Recall when their brother Hud said to them 'Have You no fear? I am a trustworthy Messenger to you. So fear Allah and obey me.'

(Al Qur'an - 26:121)

In order to understand this oration from the Prophet Hud, we should bear in mind some details about nature of his people who are also frequently mentioned in the Qur'an:

- i. It was the 'Ad who were given extraordinary power and eminence in the world after the destruction of Noah's people: "And recall to mind when He made you successors after the people of Noah" (al-A'raf7:69).
- ii. They were physically strong and sturdy: "He... amply increased you in stature" (al-A'raf7:69).
- iii. In that age, no nation could rival them: "The like of which was not created in the lands" (al-Fajr 89.8)
- iv. Theirs was a splendid civilisation especially famous for its tall buildings with lofty columns: "Have you not seen what your Lord did with the 'Ad of Iram of lofty columns?" (al-Fajr 89:67).
- v. Their material progress and physical prowess had made them haughty and arrogant: "As for the 'Ad, they deviated from the right way and became arrogant and said: Who is mightier than us in power?" (Ha Mim al-Sajdah41;15).
- iv. Their political power was concentrated in the hands of a few tyrants against whom none could raise a voice."And they followed the bidding of every tyrannical enemy of the truth" (Hud 11:59).
- Vii. Their real malady was their plytheism. (ref.: al-A'raf7:70. ■

Pearls From the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

It is related by Anas that the Apostle of God said: "Man grows old [and all his faculties are enfeebled], but two attributes of his nature become more young and vigorous, namely, desire for wealth and yearning for longevity."

- Bukhari and Muslim

Commentary:- Man is a prey to countless desires and endless aspirations, some of which are positively bad and these can be realised only when one is young and has money. It is the duty of the intellect to save a man from the unhappy consequences of such wishes. But, when due to old age, the intellect, too, fails in strength and its hold on the emotions loses its firmness, some of the desires develop into a passion and begin to rule over him. Attachment of worldly possessions and the desire to have a long life, generally, grow with advancing years. But those who are truly aware of the end of this world and have disciplined their inner selves are an exception to it.

Abu Hurairah narrated to us that the Apostle of God [once] said: "The heart of an old man always remains young in respect of two things: love of the material world and tall desires."

-Bukhari and Muslim

Commentary:- As we have seen in the preceding Tradition, fondness for the material things of life, generally, grows with age but with those who have attained a degree of God-realisation and possess a true understanding of this world and the next it is different. In them, the love of God and yearning for the blessings of Futurity keep developing even in old age and each day of their life marks an advance on the previous one in this respect.■

The Hajj

The Hajj is one of the basic pillar (Rukn) of Islam for those Muslims who can physically and financially afford it. The occasion of its performance comes only once in a year. Its significance is such that whole community gets electrified and activated. This year it falls in the last week of August.

The Holy Qur'an says:

"And proclaim unto mankind the pilgrimage (The Hajj). They will come unto thee on foot and also on every lean camel; they will come from every "deep ravine that they may witness things that are of benefit to them, and mention the name of Allah on appointed days over the beast of cattle that He hath bestowed upon them. Then eat there of and feed there with the poor and the distressed. Then let them make an end of their unkeptness and pay their vows and go around the ancient House (The Ka'ba)" (xxii:27 -29)

Imam Ghazali writes: "If there is an earnest desire for nearness to God, a Muslim will be compelled to strive for it. A lover is passionately attached to every thing that bears an association with the beloved. The House of Ka'ba is associated with God and a Muslim should, therefore, instinctively feel drawn to it, to speak nothing of the attraction of the Recompense promised on it." (Ihya-ul-Uloom, Vol 1 p:24)

To those who will be in the sacred land of Arab and also those who intend to go there in near future following advice is being offered:

1. Remember that you are on a blessed journey. This journey, which is a migration toward Allah, is based on belief in His Unity (tawheed), on sincerity toward Him, on responding to His call, and on obedience to His commands. There is no greater reward than that of a Hajj which is acceptable to Allah Ta'alah-the reward of the Garden of Paradise.
2. Be on your guard against the mischief of Satan, who intends to cause dissention among you. Love each other as brothers and avoid disputes and disobedience to Allah. Know that the Messenger of Allah (may peace and blessings of Allah be on him) said, "None of you has truly relived unless he likes for his brother what the likes for himself."
3. Whenever you have a question concerning religious matters or concerning the Hajj, ask knowledgeable Muslims until you receive a satisfactory answer. This is in accordance with what Allah has said: "If ye realise this not, ask of those who possess the Message." It is also in accordance with what the Prophet (PBUH) has said: "When Allah intends good for someone, He gives him understanding of the religion."
4. Know that Allah has made certain acts fard (obligatory) and other acts sunnah (according to the practice of the Prophet, peace be on him). Allah does not accept a sunnah which violates some fard. Some pilgrims ignore this fact when they harm believing men and women in their zeal to kiss the Black Stone, to hasten in their circuits around the k'abah, to make salah behind the Station of Ibraheem, to drink from Zamzam, and similar practices.

These practices are sunnah. To harm any believer in doing them is haram (prohibited). How is it possible to carry out a sunnah observance while doing a haram deed? Therefore, avoid hurting each other, and Allah will grant you His mercy and will increase your reward.

We would also like to emphasize the following:

- (a) It is not fitting that a Muslim man performs his Salat next to, or behind a woman in the Sacred Mosque or at any other place if it is at all possible to avoid doing so. Women should pray behind men.
- (b) The doors and entrances to the Sacred Mosque are for traffic and should not be blocked by people praying there, even though if it is to join the congregational prayer that may be in progress.
- (c) It is not permissible to block the free flow of people around the K'abah by sitting near the K'abah, by praying near it, or by standing near the Black Stone, or al-Hijr or at the Station of Ibraheem, especially when the place is crowded, as this is a source of harm to other people,
- (d) While safeguarding the dignity of Muslims is a fard, kissing the Black Stone is a sunnah, A fard cannot be sacrificed for a sunnah, When the area is crowded, it is sufficient to point to the Black Stone, saying "Allahu akbar," and to continue to move with the flow of people without causing a break in the lines. Indeed, keeping an easy flow during circuits is the most commendable thing.
- (e) It is not a sunnah to kiss the Yamani corner, but to touch it with the right hand, if it is not overcrowded, and say: "Bismillahi wal-lahu akbar," But if it is difficult to touch it, then move on, do not point to it with your hand, or say takbir, For it is not reported of the Prophet. It is mustahabb (good) to recite the following supplication in between the Yamani corner and the Black Stone:
"Rabbana atina fid-donya hasanatan wa fil-akhirati hasanatan wa qina adhaban-nar",
- (f) In the wake of terrorism all around and recent attempts of explosions in various parts of Saudi Arabia particularly near the Masjid Nabvi in Madina pilgrims should remain cautious and alert .

Finally, the best advice we can give is that one should follow the Book of Allah and the sunnah of His Messenger (peace be on him) in all what one does.

"Obey Allah and the Messenger in order that you may receive mercy,"

S.A.

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Three Fundamentals of Islam

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Unity of God

The eternal message of Islam is based on three fundamentals: belief in the One and Only God, prophethood and resurrection on the Day of Judgement.

Belief in One God as the sole and unassisted author of all creations is the dominant teaching of Islam. Allah is the Creator of All things, and He is Guardian over all things. His are the treasures and the keys of the heavens and the earth. There is no God save Him, the ever-living, the self-subsistent fount of All being. Neither slumber overtakes Him, nor sleep. His is all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth. Who is there that could intercede with Him, unless it be by his leave? He knows all that lies open before men and all that is hidden from them, whereas they cannot attain to anything of His Knowledge save that which He wills them to attain. His eternal glory overspreads the heavens and the earth, and their upholding wearies Him not. And He is the most High, the tremendous! Such is Islam's concept of God, the first and foremost article of faith for every Muslim. It places Godhead in a position above and beyond all limitations. God alone is the Creator and Moulder, the Bountiful and the

Forgiver, the Giver and the Withholder, the Just Ruler and the Great Avenger, the Omniscient and the All-Knowing, the Master of His bondsmen's destinies, the Cherished and the Wise.

The powerful and all-embracing monotheism forms the basis of all the religious, moral and social teachings of Islam. From the principle of God's oneness and uniqueness flows His sole creating power. He is the originator and fosterer of the Universe, the fount of all life-giving grace and the One to whom man is ultimately responsible. He alone is worthy of worship and praise. The attribute of God's unity and transcendence leads on to His measureless mercy and nearness to man. Being the Most Gracious, He rears, sustains and fosters everything from its inception to its final perfection. The benevolence of God bridges the gap between man and his Creator. He ordains: Pray unto me and I will hear your prayer. He is closer to His creations than their jugular veins. He requires no property and no sustenance from His creation. Nor he needs trustees, deputies or mediators. The belief in the unity of God is accompanied and attended by a sense of impeccable justice and fairplay. The believer cannot

be tyrannical, because God is Just and Merciful; he cannot be a liar or deceiver, for he has to render account to the omniscient God who knows the stealthily looks and that which the breasts conceal; he cannot show partiality to anyone since all men stand equal before the Lord; and, because Allah acts in this way, the believer must imitate his Master in dealings with his fellow beings. The faith in one God purifies the soul of the believer from evil and wickedness for he no longer exists for himself but for all his brethren in God's creation.

Prophethood

The second article of faith on which Islam raises its edifice is prophethood or the guidance vouchsafed to man through Divine Messengers and Apostles. God has, in His mercy, provided for all the known and unknown needs of man, the vicegerent of God on earth. He has also endowed man with all the capabilities required to unravel the secrets of physical laws in order to requisition these to his advantage. A little reflection would reveal that nothing which man needs for his existence on this earth has been left unprovided. But man needs something else too: he wants to know his Creator, His attributes, the purpose of creation and the meaning of life itself, for he cannot lead a life without any

purpose or direction. The continuous quest of man for truth since his advent on this earth, the disquietitude of his soul bears a witness to this fact. Then, has God left man to grope in the dark alleys of uncertainty in regard to his most cardinal need? Obviously, this cannot be so. Islam affirms that an order of prophethood has been raised by God in every age and in all parts of the world to explain the true nature and attributes of the Lord and Master, to guide man to the virtuous path in the eyes of his God, and to unfold the meaning and purpose of his life on earth. But all these teachers of humanity were no more than mortals; none of them shared the attributes of divinity nor did they possess any power to benefit or harm anybody save as Allah willed. They were, thus, inspired teachers of humanity, the bearers of good news and warners, who followed that which was revealed to them. Islam, therefore, enjoins the faithful to believe in all the Apostles of God without making any distinction between any of them. It declares unequivocally that Muslims are those who believe and observe the teachings of Divine Apostles in thought as well as in deed for the Messengers of God did bring the Truth; obedience of the Prophets is the obedience of God; revolt against the Prophets is a rebellion against God ; and that Divine torment will afflict those who deny the revelations vouchsafed to

the Messengers of God.

Then, Islam also tells us that the underlying thought and content of the teachings of all the earlier prophets of God was one and the same: their revelations differed only in details because of the time and circumstances in which they were revealed and the capacity of man to understand them. At last the ministry of the last Prophet put a seal on the earlier revelations. Muhammad was sent as the apostle of God for the last era which superseded the guidance brought by earlier prophets. The revelation brought by him not only included and confirmed all the earlier revelations, but it also amended, improved and perfected their teachings and vouchsafed the final version of Divine Guidance to the mankind to meet his requirements till the end of time.

The Hereafter

The belief in resurrection after death and in the Day of Judgement is another essential ingredient of the Islamic creed. All the earlier prophets have demanded a belief the Hereafter, for its denial means rejection of God as the Lord of the Day of Judgement. Nay, its denial renders the belief in God and prophethood meaningless. God is Beneficent and Merciful, no doubt, but He is also Just. He has full and unfettered authority to pardon or punish

anybody He pleases. Still, justice demands that the virtuous and the sinner should not be placed on the same plane. In fact, the world with all its vices and virtues is too limited a place to requite the virtuous us and evil-doers in full measure. There must, therefore, be another existence to dispense justice to both these categories. The Hereafter is thus of basic importance to a religion like Islam which demands the belief in the existence of God and His attributes, the principle of prophethood and revelation through it. Islamic creed, accordingly not only demands belief in the world to come and resurrection of the dead on the Day of Judgement, but also warns the wrongdoers of a dreadful penalty and promises blissful joys and pleasures to the pious and virtuous. The Qur'an says that God has not created man for nothing: nor were the heavens and earth, and all that is between them created playfully. Man should never think that he is to be left aimless. It poses the question whether God shall treat those who believe and do good work in the same way as those who spread corruption on earth. It then emphatically declares that Allah has created the heavens and the earth with Truth, and that every soul shall be repaid what it has earned." And it shall not be wronged in that. ■

The Turkish Leadership Enjoys Popular Support

- Sakir Ozkan Torunlar

On June 24, Turkey left behind the most important election of her democratic history. The first free multi-party election in the country was held in 1950. Over the past 70 years, it witnessed three military coups. However, the bloodshed recorded in the failed coup attempt of 2016, which the nation will remember this weekend, on July 15, cannot be compared with any of the previous ones. Tanks, F-16 fighters, and helicopters from the inventory of the armed forces targeted the national parliament, the presidential compound and the security forces' compounds in Ankara. That night, 251 people, most of them civilians, were killed and more than 2,500 wounded.

At that time, I was the director general in the foreign ministry, in charge of bilateral relations with South Asian countries, including India. In the early hours of the following morning, I received a call from the Indian Ambassador in Ankara, telling me that Mr Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India, would like to talk to Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the President of Turkey. The so-called lovers of democracy in the West who wish to educate others about what democracy should be, waited for days to do what PM Modi had done. In April 2017, it was again India, the first nation who hosted President Erdoğan two weeks after the Turks voted in a referendum to change the country's governing system from a parliamentary to a presidential.

The free media in democracies have an indisputable right to question the elections. Some columnists of both the Turkish and Indian press have honestly

commented on Turkish elections as well as last year's constitutional referendum. However, the criticism of some focused mainly on the credibility of the elections, held under the state of emergency, which was declared immediately after the bloody coup attempt of July 2016. Turkey is not the only European country that has held elections under the state of emergency. France also held presidential elections under a state of emergency declared after a terrorist attack, where the casualty figures were clearly lower than Turkey. The June 24 elections recorded a voter turnout of 87%, the highest ever. From those who went to vote, 98% gave their political choice to the new parliament. The new parliament will be housing the highest ratio of women MPs of Turkish democracy to date. Erdoğan himself received 52.5% of votes, at least 20% higher than his nearest contestant.

Located at the epicentre of a very tough geography, sharing a common borderline of 1,300 kilometers with Iraq and Syria where the fight against the DAESH is still going on, keeping a secular and pluralistic democracy is not easy.

India, like Turkey, has been and still is the target of a number of terrorist organisations. Turkey expects the Indian media to understand its fight against terrorists who enjoy military, financial and logistical support from beyond the borders.■

Sakir Ozkan Torunlar is Turkey's ambassador to India

(Hindustan Times, 13-7-2018)

Hajj: A Fundamental Obligation

-S.Sulaiman Nadwi

Hajj is one of the fundamental parts of 'Ibadat in Islam. It is not a new institution but the first and old mode of worship whereby mankind could develop God-consciousness in him. The word Hajj means, literally, repairing to a place for the sake of visit (*al-qasd li ziyarah*), and in the terminology of the Islamic Shariah, it implies repairing to Bait-Allah (the House of Allah) to observe the necessary devotions (*iqamat-an-li-nusuk*) in the sacred places in the Holy Makkah.

Arabs has its own history of the various stages of human progress. In the days of Ibrahim Khalil (peace be upon him) it became the abode of a family of preachers of religions. During the period of Isma'il (peace be upon him) its population consisted of a few camps and huts only but gradually it developed into a big religious city and after the Prophet hood of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) it became the religious centre of the Muslims world.

In the beginning the practice in vogue was that in every habitation, two houses of special kind were built, one of them was palace of the king of that habitation or fort and the other was the *ma'bad* (the place of worship) of the Kahin. Almost every population had its idol star or deity which was thought to be its guardian and protector and that guardian idol or star was worshipped by that population. The courtyard of the *ma'bad* (the place of worship) was called *Dar-ul-*

Aman. All the sacrifices and nadhrs etc. Offered to these deities and agricultural proceeds were collected there. With the extension of the hold of a habitation there was also an increase in the area of worship of these idols and deities.

Ibrahim's (peace be upon him) native city was Iraq. He was the first mawahhid (believer in One God) in the world who raised his voice against the worship of the sun and the stars and called the people to submit to One God. His relatives and other people persecuted him so much that he was constrained to leave his native city. After travelling through different countries Ibrahim (peace be upon him) turned towards the borders of Arabia and Syria. He got his nephew, Lut (peace be upon him) and his son, Ishaq (peace be upon him) settled in Urdunn (Jordan) and kinan (Palestine) and his other two sons in Madyan, situated on the Red Sea which even today is called Mdyan bearing his name. He (Ibrahim) got his son Isma'il (peace be upon him) settled down in the valley of Faran. All those places were situated on the highway where there was always great rush of trading caravans who went to Hijaz and Yemen from Egypt and Syria and vice versa.

There were two main aims and objects of Ibrahim (peace be upon him) in settling his progeny in such a way; firstly, they would not find any difficulty in getting corn and other necessary goods as long as the trading caravans are coming and

going and could participate in commerce and secondly, these national highways were the best preaching centres for propagating the pure monotheistic religion of Allah or in there words. Tauhid. Here they could spread the true religion by keeping themselves away from highhandedness of the wrathful and tyrant idolaters and star worshippers of Iraq and Syria.

Baitullah

Wherever Ibrahim (peace be upon him) felt the need he raised a stone reciting - the name of Allah and enclosed that place for sacrifice and prayer. In the Torah mention of three such places called Bait Allah (House of Allah has been made.

The same kind of places of worship and Houses of Allah were also built by Ishaq, Yaqub and Musa (peace be upon them). Dawud and Sulaiman (Allah be pleased with them) also constructed Bait al Maqdis which was the Qiblah of Bani Isra'il.

It is thus clear that Ibrahim (peace be upon him) and his progeny usually built such places of sacrifice and Houses of worship. One such House known as the ka'bah or Masjid-i-Haram, also called Masjid-i-Ibrahim is in the centre of the city of Makkah. During the three thousand years since it was first built, the ka'bah was demolished several times, but each time was rebuilt at the same site for the same purpose. The Prophet Ibrahim and his son Isma'il (peace be upon them) built it, as the first sanctuary on earth dedicated to the worship of One God. The story of the building of the ka'ban has been related in

the Holy Qur'an thus:

And remember Ibrahim and Isma'il (peace be upon them both) raised the foundations of the (Sacred) House, (saying): Our Lord, accept it from us, for Thou art the All-Hearing, the All-knowing, Our Lord, make us those who submit to Thee and our descendants a people, who submit to Thee. And show us our rites and forgive us. Indeed. Thou are the Forgiving, the Mercy-Giving.

Remember We made the House a place of gathering for men, and of security. And you take the Station of Ibrahim as a place for prayer. And we covenanted with Ibrahim and Isma'il (peace be them both) that they should sanctify My House for those who circumambulate it, and retire to it for devotion and for those who or prostrate themselves (there in worship. (92: 125)

The Sacrifice of Isma'il and its Conditions

We have already discussed this subject in detail in the introductory note to Vol. I of *Sirat-un-Nabi*. The fact that God had ordered Ibrahim to sacrifice Isma'il and not Ishaq (peace be upon them) stand irrefutably proved by the Holy Qur'an. In the Torah we also find that Abraham had prayed to God in these words: Oh, that Isma'il (peace be upon him) might live in Thy sight. In answer to this prayer God ordered Ibrahim (peace be upon him) in a vision to sacrifice his son. It has been said in the Holy Qur'an:

And he said: Lo! I am going unto my Lord Who will guide me.

My Lord! Vouchsafe me of the righteous. So we gave him tidings of a gentle son.

And when (his son) was old enough to walk with him, (Ibrahim) said: O my dear son; I have seen a dream that I must sacrifice thee. So look what thinkest thou? He said: O my father! Do that which thou art commanded. Allah willing, thou shall find me of the steadfast. Then when they had both surrendered (to Allah), and he had flung him down on his face, We called unto him: O Ibrahim! Thou hast already fulfilled the vision. Lo! Thus do We reward the good. (37: 99-105)

And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice. (37: 107)

And on Ibrahim's followers too this sacrifice was enjoined in the same sense, i.e. showing physical submission and sacrifice in the shape of the sacrifice of an animal.

We must remember that according to the Torahs, the word, 'sacrifice' was synonymous with the word, 'dedication'. Suppose this word was used for a boy in connection with a place of worship, it would mean that the boy was to be cut off from the family and reserved for the service of the temple. But when the same word was used for animals, it meant that those animals were to be slaughtered as an offering to God. So had God decreed in the Torah: For all the first-born among the children of Israel are mine, both man and beast. The man who was dedicated to God would let his hair grow; only when he had reached the holy place of worship

could he get himself shaved.

The Basis of the Religion of Ibrahim is Sacrifice

According to the Holy Qur'an and the Torah the basis of the religion of Ibrahim (peace be upon him) is sacrifice and this sacrifice was the characteristic feature of his prophetic mission and spiritual life. He (Ibrahim) showed extraordinary perseverance and stood the test through which he had to undergo due to which he and his progeny was immensely blessed and rewarded by Allah. It has been said in the Holy Qur'an.

And recall the time when his Lord put Ibrahim to the test with certain commandments and he fulfilled them. He (Allah) said: Behold! I am going to make thee a leader of mankind. (2:124)

Indeed We chose him in the world, and in the Hereafter, he is surely amongst the righteous.

And when his Lord said to him: Submit, he said: I submit to the Lord of the worlds. (2:130,131)

We called unto him: O Ibrahim! Thou hast already fulfilled the vision. Lo! Thus do we reward the good. (37: 105)

The Muslims remember the amazing acts of Ibrahim's (peace be upon him) submission and devotion to Allah, the one being running into the fire reposing complete trust in God and secondly, his readiness to offer his son as sacrifice for the sake of his Lord and send blessings on him every now and then five times daily

in prayers.

O God, bless Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his descendants, as Thou didst bless Ibrahim and his descendants.

Explaining the purpose of animals sacrifice the Holy Qur'an says:

Their flesh and their blood reach not Allah, but the devotion from you reacheth Him. Thus We made them subject unto you that ye may magnify Allah that He hath guided you. (22: 37)

Ibrahim (peace be upon him) resolved to slaughter his loving and only son in obedience to Allah's command and the next moment should have witnessed the deed done, Allah called to him:

O Ibrahim! Thou hast indeed shown the truth of the vision. (37: 104,105)

Thus Ibrahim (peace be upon him) set an example of total obedience, submission and loyalty to his Creator and Great Master in negation of his own desires, feeling and sentiments which has no parallel in the history of mankind. He submitted his will to the Will of Allah. The sacrifice of an animal was only a reflection of his loyalty, devotion and submissiveness to Allah.

Islam Demands Sacrifice

Islam means resignation to the Will of God. It implies complete submission to Allah's commands. The sacrifice given by Ibrahim and Isma'il (peace be upon them) proves, beyond any shadow of doubt, that they were the true and loyal servants of Allah. In appreciation of the sacrifices of

Ibrahim and Isma'il (peace be upon them), Allah, the Exalted, named this sentiment of theirs of resignation and surrender to His as Al-Islam. It has been said in the Holy Qur'an.

Then, when they had both surrendered (unto Allah). (37: 103)

And who can be averse to the religion of Ibrahim, but he who infatuated his mind. Indeed We chose him in the world, and in the Hereafter, he is surely amongst the righteous.

And when his Lord said to him: Submit, he said: I submit to the Lord of the worlds. (2: 130-131)

In fact the religion of Ibrahim (peace be upon him) is based on Al-Islam i.e. resignation and surrender (to Allah). Ibrahim (peace be upon him) prayed Allah again and again.

Our Lord! Make us submissive unto Thee and of our progeny a community submissive unto Thee and show us our ways of worship, and relent towards us. Thou art the Relenting, the Merciful.

Our Lord! And raise up unto them a messenger from amongst them who shall recite unto them —Thy revelations and shall teach them the Book and the wisdom and shall purify them. Verily Thou art the Mighty, the Wise. (2: 129)

And who else can he be than Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) since he alone was raised up from amongst the progeny of Isma'il.

The fact that messenger here implies the Holy Prophet (peace and

blessings of Allah be upon him) only is borne out by the Bible: I will raise up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him (Deut, 18: 18). The phrase from their brethren, clearly means the descendants of Isma'il for had it referred to the descendants of Ishaq (Bani Isra'il) the expression could have been something like it: From amongst you.

Place of Sacrifice

In the Torah the place of sacrifice is given as Moriah. The Jews claim that this was the place where Solomon had constructed his temple (in the Torah called by the name of the House of God). The Christians say that Moriah was the place where Jesus had been crucified. European scholars disagree with both. Sir Stanley says: Abraham rose in the morning, came out of his tent and reached the place where God had ordered him to. But this was not the mountain of Moriah as the Jews hold, nor was it any place near the church of the holy sepulcher. Such a view is more far-fetched than that of the Jews. Still more far-fetched seems to be the belief of the Muslims who consider the mountain of 'Arafat to have been the place. Perhaps the place was somewhere on the mountains of Jerezum and this place looks very much like place of sacrifice. This statement discredits the claims of both the Jews and the Christians. As to the Muslim's claim let us look into its validity. Some translators have translated the Moriah to be a place of high firs, the elevated ground or the place of dream.

Those with a better judgment have believed it to be the name of a place. They did not translate it, letting it stand as it was. As time passed, careless translators put in Morah for Moriah, the more so because Hebrew script has almost a similar written form for both the words. The Torah mentions Morah has situated in Arabia: And the came of the Madyans was in the north in a valley by the hill of Morah.

Considering all the facts and circumstances we may assert that Marwah, not Morah or Moriah, is the name of the place and this Marwa his a Makkahn hill where the Hajis (pilgrims) perform the sa'i. The Arab tradition, references in the Qur'an and the definite indications in the traditions are all so consistently with the hypothesis that a coincidence with so great a coherence would be unimaginable, unless the hypothesis were a fact. Let us thrash it out further.

There is a tradition to the effect that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) pointed towards Marwah and said: This is a place of sacrifice, and all the hills and vales of Makkah are the places of sacrifice.

In the days of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) animals meant for sacrifice were slaughtered not in Marwah but in Mina, which is three miles from Makkah.

Yet the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) designated Marwah as the place of sacrifice. This the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did because Ibrahim (peace

be upon him) offered the sacrifice there.

The Holy Qur'an says:

Then their place of sacrifice is the Ancient House, Bait-al-'Atiq. (22:29)

An offering to be brought to the Ka'bah. (5: 95)

Marwah is situated just in front of the Ka'bah and very close to it. The verses quoted above show that the original place of sacrifice was the ka'bah and not Mina. But when the number of pilgrims increased the boundaries of the ka'bah extended up to Mina.

Makkah and Ka'bah

The ka'ba is the oldest and most venerated of all the houses of worship. It is a culminating point of one's highest hopes, favours and blessings of Allah. It has been the place of worship and God-consciousness since the creation of this world. The highly eminent prophets of Allah visited it and it has been the Qiblah of the worshippers even before the construction of Bait-al-Maqdis. In the Qur'an it has been said by Allah.

Surely the first house appointed for men is the one at Bakka blessed and guidance for the nations. (3: 95)

In the Torah too we find the following verses:

Blessed are the men whose strength is in thee,

In whose hearts are the Highways to Zion; As they go through the valley of Bakka,

They make it a place of springs;

The early rains also cover it with pools,

They go from strength to strength.

.....

In this psalm, the word Bacca or Bukka refers to no other place than Makkah.

The ka'bah, as the Holy Qur'an says is the Bait-at-Atiq (the ancient House). It is said that Adam first erected it. It was demolished several times at the hands of nature or men long before the advent of Ibrahim, even its foundations were not traceable. When Ibrahim (peace be upon him) gave the message of *Tauhid* (Oneness of God) in this all-pervading dismal darkness of 'ignorance and polytheism, the Almighty instructed him to rebuild the Ka'bah. Ibrahim and his son, Isma'il (peace be upon him) found out the old foundations of the ka'bah and started constructing a small square-shaped House. The story of the building of the ka'bah has been related in the Holy Qur'an thus: And when Ibrahim and Isma'il raised the foundations of the (Sacred) House (2: 127). When the House was completed, the divine message came: Do not set up aught with Me and purify My house for those who make the circuit and stand to pray and prostrate themselves. And proclaim among men the pilgrimage; they will come to thee on foot and on every lean camel arriving from every remote path. (22: 26, 27)

Ibrahim (peace be upon him) tried to raise his voice in the land of Chaldeans but he had to face burning fire. He came

to Egypt and Philistines, but nobody cared to listen to him. In short, wherever he opened his lips in praise of One God his voice was lost in the din of idolatry. At last he chose the uninhabited and barren desert of Hijaz where the means of communication were utterly wanting. Abraham's (peace be upon him) voice could not have crossed the walls of the temple, but, no, it travelled East and West and North and South.

Hajj Commemorates the Sacrifice of Ibrahim (peace be upon him)

When the construction was complete, Ibrahim (peace be upon him) ordered Isma'il (peace be upon him) to bring a block of stone, which might be placed at a point from where the people could start going round the ka'bah. In the history of Makkah, this incident is mentioned thus: Then Ibrahim asked Isma'il (peace be upon him) to bring a stone which he could fix at a place from where the pilgrims could start going round.

When the construction of the ka'bah was complete, it was necessary that some God-conscious person should devote whole of his life to the service of God. Such a dedication was termed sacrifice in the law of Ibrahim (peace be upon him). The Torah makes use of this phraseology on numerous occasions. In the Sahih al Bukhari, we find that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to see dreams (vide chapter, How the Divine Revelation started). Dreams are sometimes allegorical, Such as Joseph (Yusuf) had seen the stars, the sun and the moon

prostrating before him. In short, Ibrahim (peace be upon him) dreamed that he was slaughtering his son with his own hands.

He did not take it to be symbolical, and decided to slaughter his son, Isma'il (peace be upon him).

Ibrahim (peace be upon him) had every faith in his own firmness and devotion, but he had to know if the fifteen years old boy could bear it. He wanted to have his consent, and therefore, addressed his son in these words:

O son, I saw in a dream that I should offer thee in sacrifice, consider then thou seest. Resolutely the son replied: O my father, do what thou are commanded, it God pleases, thou wilt find me of the patient ones. (37:106,108)

And lo, there stood a ninety year old man, his sleeves upturned, his hand holding a knife, to slaughter the darling son, the light of his eyes, the boon granted in answer to praying lips. And there lay a blooming youth, brought up in the loving arms of a loving father; but now the loving arm of the same loving father descending on his throat with a deadly weapon. The angels, the heavens and the whole universe, witnessed the scene and were stunned. Allah all of a sudden called a vice on High:

O Ibrahim, thou hast indeed shown the truth of the vision, thus do We reward the doers of good. (37: 109,110)

The firmness, the determination and the astonishing self-sacrifice shown by the son, really deserved to be commemorated for all time to come.

The Facts about Hajj

The whole ceremony of Hajj is commemorative of Hadrat Ibrahim (peace be upon him) and his family's devotion to God, the Almighty. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not introduce it as a new institution but purged it of all evil practices and made it an obligatory act of piety by which one can develop God-consciousness,

It is rightly said that Hajj is the perfection of faith since it combines in itself all the distinctive qualities of other obligatory acts. It represents the quality of *Salat* since a pilgrim offers prayers in the ka'bah. It encourages the spending of material wealth for the sake of the Lord, the chief characteristic of *Zakat*. When a pilgrim sets out for Hajj he disassociates himself from his hearth and home, from his dear and near ones to please his Lord. He suffers privation and undertakes the hardships of journey a lesson we learn from fasting and *I'tikaf*. In Hajj one is trained to be completely forgetful of material comforts and pomp and show of worldly life. One has to sleep on stony ground, circumambulate the ka'bah, run between *Safa'* and *Marwa*, and spend his night and day clad in simple pilgrim's dress. He is not even allowed to get his hair cut or trim his beard. In short, he is commanded to abandon all sorts of comforts for the sake of Allah and submit himself before his Lord, the ultimate aim of the life of a Muslim.

Just as Hadrat Ibrahim (peace be upon him) had come running to the House of Allah in response to Allah's call, a pilgrim visits the ka'bah reciting these words

loudly:

Here I am at Thy service, O Allah;
here I am at Thy service,

Here I am at Thy service, O Allah,
here I am at Thy service, here I am at Thy service. There is not associate with Thee; here I am at Thy service, Verily all praise and grace is due to Thee and the Sovereignty (too). There is no associate with Thee.

For the Muslim, visiting the ka'bah, whether it is for the first or the tenth time is a profound awe-inspiring experience. The worshipper enters the sacred Mosque with a supplication of God's peace and blessings. Looking beyond the throng of pilgrims and the patterns of columns and arches into the vast open courtyard, he catches a glimpse, with a tremor of awe and excitement, of the solitary black-draped ka'bah which is the centre of every Muslim world. After performing a brief *Salat* of "greeting" of the mosque, he makes his way toward the ka'bah through the vast array of Muslims of every place and race on earth in order to perform the first of the pilgrim's rites, that of *tawaf* or circumambulation.

The worshipper is to start the circumambulation from the corner of the ka'bah in which the Black Stone is embedded. He joins the host of Muslims circling the House and pouring out their hearts in supplication to Him. Moving in that sea of worshippers, a deep sense of his smallness and insignificance comes to him. He realizes that God alone is great. Here, under the blazing sun of Makkah,

making his circuits around God's Holy House as he repeats the solemn, fervent supplications of the pilgrim, he has a sense of realization of his own nothingness, his utter dependence on his Creator in face of God's ineffable glory and majesty, and that one day he will come before Him to receive His judgment and the recompense for all he did. While circumambulating the ka'bah a pilgrim kisses the Black Stone as the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) kissed it on the Farewell pilgrimage. It is revered as the only remnant of Ibrahim's (peace be upon him) building but just as the ka'bah is an object of reverence but not of worship so too is the Black Stone and because the Prophet's peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) lips touched it, all pilgrims do the same. After completing seven circuits of the Sacred House he may spend as much time as he wishes in making supplications to God in the immediate vicinity of the ka'bah, and before he leaves he prays two Rak'ahs of Salat. He will then go to the spring of Zamzam, situated underground within the compound of the Sacred Mosque very close to the ka'bah to refresh himself with water. He then goes to a nearby area within the compound of the Sacred Mosque to perform the next rite of Hajj. This is known as Sa'i, that is hastening between two hillocks of Safa' and Marwa separated now by a long marble lined corridor, in commemoration of Hajira's (Hagar's) hurried search for water at this site. The worshipper walks and during part of the way may break into a run, seven times between the two rock-mounds, situated about a quarter of a mile

apart, glorifying and supplicating God. Between the marble arches he catches glimpses of the adjacent courtyard of the Sacred Mosque. At the centre of it stands the black draped ka'bah around which like an endless river flowing on and on day and night since remote antiquity supplicants from every corner of the world, clad in the simple pilgrim's dress move in utter absorption with God, hymning His praises and calling on His name. One who has visited the Sacred House leaves it with an intense longing to return to it again and again and with a vivid understanding of why the ka'bah is indeed the focal point of the earth for the worship of Allah, the praised and Exalted, and the centre of love in the life of the Muslim individual and community.

Pilgrims may arrive in Makkah to perform their tawaf or sa'i either immediately before the days of Hajj or earlier. However the climax of Hajj occurs on the ninth day of Dhul Hijjah, the Day of 'Arafat. The Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) stressed the essential nature of this day's observance saying that one that had been present at 'Arafat would have performed Hajj. 'Arafat is the name of a vast plain some miles outside Makkah; it is treeless and barren without any shelter from the blazing desert sun and encircled by stark jagged purple black rocks. Millions of pilgrims move there during the morning of the 9th of Dhul-Hijjah. After the noon and afternoon prayers have been performed together in the shortened form recommended for travelers, the people have had a chance to eat and rest.

During the afternoon upto sundown, all these human beings who assemble here, from every land and belonging to countless races and cultures, are completely absorbed in supplications to God, Most High, glorifying Him, affirming their utter helplessness and dependence on Him, yearning for His forgiveness, enduring all the fatigues and difficulties of the travel and the pilgrimage itself with its severe climate and hard conditions. The vast, otherwise empty plain is filled with tents and millions of pilgrims, tired and disheveled and totally humble before their Creator standing with hands raised in supplication, many weeping in the intensity of their awe and devotion to Him. Near Mount of Mercy, a hill in the middle of the plain the Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) delivered his Farewell pilgrimage address to his people.

As soon as the sun sets the exodus of the pilgrims from 'Arafat begins. Their next station is Muzdalifa, a barren rock wasteland, a few miles closer to Makkah, where they perform the sunset and night prayers together, spending part of the night resting after the fatigues of the day and engaged in supplications to God, Here they also gather a number of pebbles to be used for stoning three stone columns representing Satan which have stood since ancient times in the village of Mina, to which all the pilgrims go after their brief halt in Muzdalifah, to live for the next two and a half or three days, in a vast tent city before they complete their pilgrims rites and disperse.

These stone pillars stand at the

sites where the Satan appeared to Ibrahim and Isma'il ((peace be upon him) in remote antiquity, tempting them to disobey Allah when Ibrahim (peace be upon him) was talking his son to be scarified at God's command. On each of the three days of sojourn in Mina, countless numbers of pilgrims go to the columns, stoning them with the pebbles they have collected to symbolize their of Satan in the endless human struggle against evil promptings and temptations.

After the first stoning following the Prophet's peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) example and injunction, the pilgrims slaughter an animal in commemoration of Ibrahim's sacrifice a sheep in the place of Isma'il (peace be upon both of them); part of meat is used to feed themselves and their group, and the rest is distributed among the poor. During this period the pilgrims also return briefly to Makkah to perform their final circumambulation of the ka'bah. The pilgrim's home during the mina is a tent shared with other pilgrims, he spends the time in making daily trips for stoning, praying and reading the Qur'an and listening to talks about various aspects of Islam, visiting his fellow pilgrims or resting. Before sunset on the third day or the following morning he leaves Mina and his pilgrimage is now complete.

In addition to its unique spiritual aspects, Hajj is also remarkable, as we have seen that it brings together from every part of earth such an immense diversity of human beings, who in spite of vast difference of culture and language, form

one community (ummah), all of them professing and living by the same faith and all devoted to the worship of the same Creator. "Down to the ages," says Professor Hike "this institution has continued to serve as the major unifying influence in Islam and the most effective common bond among the diverse believers. It renders almost every capable Moslem perform a traveler for once in his lifetime. The socializing influence of such a gathering of the brotherhood of believers from the far quarters of the earth is hard to overestimate. It afforded opportunity for Negroes, Berbers—Chinese, Persians, Syrians, Turks—rich and poor, high and low to fraternize and meet together on the common ground of faith" (History of the Arabs p. 136)

Reforms in Hajj

The obligatory nature of Hajj is quite distinct from other *Ibadat* (acts of devotion). The Arabs were practically ignorant of the times and articles of prayer and did not know how it was to be observed. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) taught them gradually to pray. There was no concept of *Zakat* among the Arabs. Therefore, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) first impressed upon the minds of the people to do good charitable acts and exhorted them to charity, *Sadaqa* and spend for the sake of Allah to help the poor and the needy before *Zakat* was made obligatory on them. There have been various changes in the nature of fast since the Day of *Ashura* till Ramadan. But the rites and formalities of Hajj were already

long in vogue in Arabia. There was, however, a change in the concept and the way of performance of Hajj. In other words, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) purged it of all polytheistic and evil practices which had crept into it and made it an act of piety by which one can develop God consciousness.

The detail of these reforms is given below:

1. The real purpose of worship is to remember Allah, seek forgiveness from Him and to glorify Him. But the custom of the pre-Islamic Arabs was to gather themselves in large number at Mina after the performance of Hajj and extol the greatness of their tribes and the greatness of their ancestors. As the whole Hajj rites were purified of all un-Islamic practices, the aftermath of the pilgrimage was completely spiritualized and the pilgrims were instructed to hymn the glory of Allah.

And when you performed your holy rites (of Hajj) remember Allah, like your remembrance of your forefathers—even with a yet keener remembrance. (2: 200)

2. When they offered the sacrifice of an animal, they rubbed the blood of that animal on the walls of the ka'bah to please God. It was also the practice of the Jews that when they offered the sacrifice they sprinkled the blood of the animal on the altar and burnt the flesh of the animal. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) put an end to both these practices. It was ordained by Allah, the Exalted, in the Holy Qur'an:

Their flesh and their blood reach not Allah, but the devotion from you reacheth Him. Thus have we made them subject unto you that ye magnify Allah that He hath guided you. (22:37)

Explaining the aim and object of sacrifice on this day of commemoration of the amazing sacrifice of Ibrahim (peace be upon him) it was said that it is to feed the poor and the needy.

3. It was the custom of the people of Yaman that when they used to come for Hajj, they did not bring enough provisions for the journey. They said that they depend on God. On their arrival in Makkah they used to beg the people. So the following verse of the Holy Qur'an was revealed:

And take a provision (with you) for the journey, but the best provision is to be dutiful to Allah.

4. Excepting the Quraish, who their standard of distinction over the tribes of Arabia, all other tribes performed the Tawaf of the Ka'bah naked. For this purpose a wooden plank was placed in the ka'bah where all the people put their clothes after taking them off. The only thing which could cover their nakedness depended upon the generosity of the Quraish, that is, some cloth was given by the Quraish specially for the purpose of Tawaf but those who could not get the benefit had to perform the Tawaf in a naked state. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) absolutely forbade this evil practice.

Abu Huraira (Allah be pleased with him) reported: On the Day of Nahr (10th of Dhul-

Hijjah) in the year prior to the last Hajj of the Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) when Abu Bakr (Allah be pleased with him) was the leader of the pilgrims in the Hajj he sent me along with other announcers to Mina to make public announcement. No pagan is allowed to perform Hajj after this year and no naked person allowed to perform the Tawaf around the ka'bah. Then Allah's Messenger (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) sent 'Ali (Allah be pleased with him) to read out the surah Bara'a (At- Tauba) to the people; so he made the announcement along with us on the day of Nahr in Mina: No pagan is allowed to perform Hajj after this year and no naked person is allowed to perform the Tawaf around the ka'bah.

5. The haughty and the self conceited Quraish who took pride on their being the custodians of the ka'bah, stayed at Muzdalifa and thought it below their dignity to proceed on to 'Arafat along with other pilgrims. The Qur'an strikes at the basis of their pride by telling them that they must seek Allah's pardon for this sin of theirs and proceed on to the place where all the pilgrims are required to proceed and stay and consider themselves at par with other Muslims without any distinction of race or social status. It has been said in the Holy Qur'an:

Then press on from where the people press on, and seek forgiveness from Allah, verily Allah is All-Forgiving and All-Merciful. (2:199)

In the pre-Islamic days Hajj had lost its religious and spiritual significance. It was nothing short of a big fair or festival

in which all categories of people participated in every kind of indecency, for instance, indulging in foul talk or foul pursuits, in wrangling and quarreling etc.. Islam ordained that Hajj, being a sublime act of devotion, should be performed with a keen sense of piety and fear of Allah. It has been said in the Holy Qur'an:

The pilgrimage is (to be performed in) the months well known, so whosoever undertakes the duty of pilgrimage in them, should not indulge in lewd talk, nor in ungodliness nor in wrangling during the pilgrimage and whatsoever good ye do Allah knows that: (2:197)

There were two groups of people among the pilgrims: the one said that those who returned from Mina performing the Hajj in the three days of Tashriq, following 'Id-ul-Adha committed a sin, the latter said that those who delayed their stay in Mina were sinful. The Holy Qur'an said:

And remember Allah during the appointed number of says and whosoever hastens on in two days he is involved in no sin, and he who delays, there is no sin for him either; this is for him who is God fearing and fear Allah and know (for certain) that verily unto Him you shall be gathered: (2: 203)

Some persons had innovated Hajj of silence. After assuming Daram they did not speak to anyone. 'Umar (Allah be pleased with him) met such a women who was keeping silence. On questioning the cause of her silence he was told that she was in a state of Hajj of silence. He forbade

her to do so saying: This is an act of ignorance.

Abu Hurairah (Allah be pleased with him) reported: Allah's messenger (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) found an old man walking between his two sons supported by them, whereupon Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: What is the matter with him? He (narrator) said: Allah's Messenger (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) they are his sons and there is upon him the fulfillment of the vow (to walk on foot to the ka'bah, whereupon Allah's Messenger (peace and blessing be upon him) said: Ride, old man for Allah is not in need of you and your vow.

'Uqba bin 'Amir reported: My sister took a vow that she would walk bare-foot to the House of Allah (ka'bah). She asked me to inquire from Allah's Messenger (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) about it and he said: She should walk on foot and ride also.

Abu Huraira (Allah be pleased with him) reported: Allah's Messenger (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) saw a man driving sacrificial camel. He (the Holy Prophet) said: Ride on it. The man said: It is a sacrificial camel. The Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) said: Ride on it. He (the man) said: It is a sacrificial animal. The Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) said: Ride on it. And on the second or third time the Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) added: Woe to you.

When the Ansar returned after Hajj

they did not enter the doors through which they went out for Hajj. The idea behind it was that they were not fit entrances for them being burdened with heavy sins. So they entered the houses from the back of the houses and thought it to be the act of great piety. The Qur'an points out their mistaken notion and says that it is through real piety and fear of Allah that a man becomes virtuous and devoted servant of Allah:

And is no virtue that you enter the houses from the rear but the virtue is of him who guards against evil. Hence enter the house from their doors and fear Allah so that you may prosper. (2:189)

While performing the Tawaf (circumambulation) it was a practice that a person to show himself sinful and guilty, put a string in his nose which was held and drawn by the other person. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) saw a person performing Tawaf in this way. He got his nose string cut.

Ibn'Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) reported: While the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was performing the Tawaf of the ka'bah, he passed by a person who had tied his hands to another person with a rope or string or something like that. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) cut it with his own hands and said: Lead him by the hand.

Ibn 'Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) saw a man performing Tawaf of the ka'bah tied with a

string or something else. So the Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) cut the string.

In the earlier days the Muslims were under the impression that since pilgrimage was an act of religious devotion, it was, therefore, not proper to do anything worldly during this sacred journey. The Qur'an removes this wrong notion from the minds by telling them that it is no sin if they do some trading during the Hajj season.

There is no fault on your part if you seek bounty from your Lord: (2:198)

There were two groups, those who used to refrain from Tawaf between Safa and Marwa in the pre-Islamic Period and those used to perform the Tawaf. The Ansar used to assume Ihram for worshipping an idol called Manat before they embraced Islam, and whoever assumed Ihram (for the idol) did not consider it right to perform Tawaf between Safa and Marwa. When they embraced Islam, they asked the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) regarding it, saying: O Allah's Messenger We used to refrain from Tawaf between Safa and Marwa. So Allah revealed:

Verily (the mountains) As-Safa and Al Marwa are among the symbols of Allah, and whoever performs the Hajj to the ka'bah or performs Umra it is not harmful for him to perform the Tawaf between Safa and Marwa. (2: 158) ■

The Last Message of God And The Last Scripture

- S. M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi*

God sent His messenger on this earth to guide human beings in believing their Creator and to thank Him for His bounties. Also to mould their lives according to His dictates. These messengers were deputed to convey His orders and the scriptures were also meant for the same. The last of these apostles is Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the last scripture is Qur'an Majeed. Both have the unique characteristic that up-till the day of Judgement the sayings of the Prophet, Peace be upon him, and the book would keep guiding all on the path of truth and virtue. He was the greatest of the Prophets who were sent to provide guidance to all the classes, ranks and grades.

With the Prophet, Peace be upon him, the religion was perfected and completed. The faith and truth would guard against any interpolation and mutation, addition and deletion in the Holy Book. The directives of Qur'an, the teachings and deeds of the Prophet, Peace be upon him, would act as source of light up-till the Last Day.

The Qur'an has taken the place of all scriptures. This is the base of the religious Jurisprudence (Shariah) and to abide by it would make Allah happy and satisfied.

For the faithful it should be kept in his mind that to draw maximum benefit out

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of it, he should have complete faith that these are the words of Allah and each letter is leading towards virtue and truth. He should have complete faith that these are the holy diction from God and he is honoured and blessed by its study. God's greatest gift to the mankind is the Qur'an and His last Messenger. He was chosen for the good of the whole mankind and God had created in his person an embodiment of love and truth.

He has no parallel in the whole history of mankind. It should be noted that the devotion to him does not lie in just reading about him but to love him, to carry out his directions and to follow him in all aspects of life.

God told the believers about the exalted status of the apostle and bade him to draw inspiration from the Prophet and to glorify him.

The Prophet has said, "No body among you can be true believer if he does not love me more than his parents, children and all human beings. The Holy Qur'an says.

By the name of your God those people cannot be true believers unless they come to you for the settlement of all their disputes and feel not a bit of annoyance with your judgement.

Then again Qur'an says.

'We have indeed, in the messenger of God, a good example (of conduct) for

any one whose hope is in God and the Final Day.

People who believe in God would find the Prophet a true ideal and an excellent example for them to follow.

These orders clearly indicate that every Muslim should have such a perception of the love, grandeur and piety of the holy Prophet that he should make these qualities as an ideal believer in all the ups and downs of his life. He should see in the person of the holy prophet a man superior to all the outstanding persons in the world.

God has sent His blessings on holy Prophet. He says. "Allah and His angles send blessings on the Prophet O you that believe! Send your blessings on him and salute him with all respects."

If the name of Holy Prophet mentioned in any talk it is obligatory to send blessings on him. If a Muslim does not do it he is acting against the directions of the Prophet.

The Holy Prophet was born in a clan of Arabia and his life span was that of sixty three years. The early forty years of his age were spent in making him perfect to bear the burden of Prophethood and the remaining twenty three years were spent in the application and transmission of the prophetic mission.

Allah would have made these sixty three years of life a period of rest and comfort and would have saved him from all the ordeals and difficulties. He was beloved of Allah and nothing could have

stopped Him to bestow all the pleasures of life on him but the work allotted to him required that he should be well-versed in performing his job and bear the burden of extreme responsibility.

In forty years a man becomes fully matured and his physical and mental qualities come to the top. His personality takes its full shape. Prophet Muhammed, peace be upon him, was blessed with the Prophethood at this age and was made a guide for the whole world and a grand teacher for humanity. He was a symbol of gracefulness, courtesy and mannerly behaviour. His supplication to God was exemplary. God put him to the strong experiences of self-abnegation and unearthly dispositions.

He was born an orphan, the mother parted in his childhood. The kind grandfather died before he came to age, then only the uncle was left and the Prophet, Peace be upon him, got his whole-hearted support in the early ten years of the Prophethood. His pious and loving wife Khadeja gave him all her love and attention. She was a companion and helper. She knew and acknowledged his qualities and gave him all the help. Both the uncle and wife died in the tenth year of his Prophethood. Now there was no one left to treat him with love and kindness. Only the devotion to God was his comfort, He endured all the persecutions, the indifference of relatives, the insolence and threats of the outsiders. He bore it with dignity and honour. He treated his worst enemy with kindness and never

abandoned hope.

When the kind uncle and the loving wife expired and the apostle was persecuted by all, he left for the neighbourly city of Taif. He expected to find some chieftain there whose help might have been a relief from the tortures of Mecca. He met the Chiefs and leaders and invited them to Islam. They proved very cruel and rude. They stirred up some rubble of the town to harass him. These riffraff's followed the prophet abusing and throwing stones on him. The feet of the prophet were injured and smeared with blood. He could not get a cup of water to drink. He left the city and took refuge in an orchard. The oppression was so great that a prayer complaining about his helplessness and pitiable condition and seeking the succour of God came to his lips, "O Allah", said the Prophet, "to Thee I complain of my weakness, resourcelessness and humiliation before the people. Thou art the most Merciful, the Lord of the weak and my Master. To whom wilt thou confide me? To one estranged, bearing ill will, or, an enemy given power on me? If Thou are not wroth on me, I care not, for Thy favour is abundant for me. I seek refuge in the light of Thy countenance by which all darkness is dispelled and every affair of this world and next is set right, lest Thy anger should descend upon me or Thy displeasure light on me. I need only Thy pleasure and satisfaction for only Thou enablest me to do good and evade the evil. There is no power and no might save in Thee.

He had taken the job of spreading

Islam in pursuance to the commands of God. The omnipotent God would have checked these cruel deeds and given solace to the Prophet. In spite of extreme disappointment the prophet did not complain. He only referred to his helplessness and pitiable condition. He was afraid lest the God might not feel annoyed. He repeats his determination to keep the Almighty pleased and satisfied.

The mercy of God was touched by the prayer he sent the angel of mountains who sought the prophet's permission to join together the two hills between Taif was located but the prophet replied, "No I hope God will bring forth from their loins who will worship God alone, associating nothing with Him.

The quality of pity and mercy was absorbed in his soul. Compassion was the special favour granted to him by Allah. God says in the Holy Qur'an: "And we sent thee not save as a mercy for the worlds."

Again he says:

"Now hath come unto you a messenger from amongst yourselves. It grieves him that you shall suffer, ardently anxious is he over you: to the believers is he kind is he most merciful.

The holy Prophet, Peace be upon him, has passed from ordeals and very adverse circumstances since his birth. It had given him a very molten heart and he understood the miseries of the downtrodden and aggrieved. Also it had given him the strong determination to face hardships and bear responsibility. He had

to announce and declare and apply the mission of Prophethood in extreme difficulties. This he did with perfection and after the expiry of twenty three years when the time came for his parting from this mortal world he asked his companions at the end-of the sermon on the occasion of the farewell pilgrimage. "And you would be asked by God about me so what you would say." The companions replied, "We testify that you conveyed the message and fulfilled your mission.

Then he said, "O God be witness.

God made the prophet to undergo in a variety of conditions and state of affairs only to become an excellent example for the believers.

You indeed in the messenger of Allah a beautiful pattern (of conduct).

The prophet had to deal with hypocrites and hidden enemies. He underwent both adversity and prosperity. He had the pleasure of having children and also faced the grief of his son who died in infancy. In his deep sorrow over the infant's death the apostle of God said. "The eyes weep and the heart grieves, but we say nothing that displeases God and we are grieved on being separated from you, Ibrahim.

There was a solar eclipse on the day Ibrahim died. Some of the companions attributed the eclipse to Ibrahim's death, but the prophet corrected them in a speech wherein he said, "The sun and the moon are the two of the signs of God; they are not eclipsed on account of anyones death."

He instructed to remember God and offer prayers at such occasions.

Here is the difference between the prophet and a worldly leader. No such a man would have rejected this observation of the people and used it for his glorification.

The prophet was always solicitous for the pleasures of God and was always apprehensive of His displeasure. When the wind blew he thought that it might be a token of His displeasure. This was when the God said that He would not punish the pagans of Mecca because the prophet lived between them. He always remained engaged in thought to find ways to create passion among the people for the worship of God. The narrators have described him to be always pondering and in a mid of slight gloom. Often he would remain silent but this mood prevailed only when he was alone, otherwise when with companions he was always happy and polite. His tolerance, forbearance, sympathy and wide heartedness was beyond limits.

He was of cheerful disposition. Sometimes he shared some light joke with his companions. He laughed but his laugh was always manifested in smile, never he laughed loudly.

If anybody asked him for something, he gave it. If it was not possible he comforted him with kind and sweet words. Never gave him any stern reply. He did never strike anybody. He was angry only when the honour of God was concerned or the limit set by Him was transgressed.

For youngsters he was like a father, for equals he was companion and friend, for elders he showed due honour.

The prophet used to say, “whoever leaves some property as a legacy, it belongs to his heirs, but his unpaid debts are my responsibility. At the time of danger he was foremost. In any gain he shared it with all. He paid such attention to everyone attending his meetings that everybody thought that none attracted his notice like himself.

God had endowed the prophet with an impressive personality. His features displayed grace and splendour. This automatically attracted a new comer and he recognised him immediately though he never cared to occupy any special place in any sitting. Anybody who saw him for the first time was overawed but when he kept his company he became attached to him with all the warmth of his heart. They used to say that they never saw a man like him either before or after him.

This cheerful disposition and kind behaviour does not mean that he should be called a miraculous personality. This God’s gift throws light on his exalted position. He was an ideal for the believers and they are instructed to follow him in every walk of life. He was the favourite of God but he had to undergo all the hardships for twenty years.

He wished good to everybody, he always sought God’s pleasure, he always thought of the Day of the Judgement and weighed his noble deeds for that Day. He

always expressed his humility before God. This he did for all his life.

God had forgiven his all sins, past or future, yet he was most eager and earnest in paying homage to Him. Once in a night he stood praying for such a long time that his feet got swollen. He said, why should not I be grateful servant. He never indulged in exacting retribution for any offence or excess to himself. He was angry only when the honour of God was trifled.

The life of the prophet is described by the most trustworthy narrators, his truthful and pious companions. Its knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim. This should act as a guide line for all.

The Holy Qur’an says, “There was indeed for them an excellent example for you to follow, for those whose hope is in Allah and in the last Day”.

Qur’an Majeed, the Book of Allah, and the sayings and deeds of the holy Prophet, Hadith and Sunnah, are the grand sources of the religion of Islam. To be true believer one is to follow these sources and to mould oneself according to the directions. The holy prophet has said, “I leave for you the two things of grand magnitude. If you clutch them strongly you would never be misled. One is the book of Allah and the other is to adopt my conduct of life.”

In the words of his wife, the mother of all Muslims, Hazrat Aisha “The Qur’an was his life sketch. ■

Edward Gibbon: Decline & Fall of Roman Empire And The Church

Gibbon was born at Putney, Surrey, on 27th April, 1737, according to the Julian calendar, which England was still using when the Gregorian calendar was finally adopted in 1752, he celebrated his birthday on 8th May. Born into a family of rather good fortune, his father was a wealthy Tory member of Parliament who went into seclusion and left his son to the care of an aunt. Gibbon was a sickly child and his education at Westminster and at Magdalen College, Oxford, was irregular. According to Gibbon's own explanation he was too bashful to spend his time in taverns, but his studies ended anyway after one year: he was expelled for turning to Roman Catholicism - a decision which was undoubtedly directed against one of his intellectually lazy Anglican college tutors. In 1753 Gibbon was sent by his father to Lausanne, Switzerland. He boarded with a Calvinist pastor and scholar, who was very demanding in his teaching, and rejoined the Anglican fold. In Lausanne he fell in love with Suzanne Curchod, who eventually married Jacques Necker, banker. Their relationship was ended by his father, and Gibbon remained unmarried for the rest of his life. Suzanne became the mother of the famous writer and early champion of women's rights, Madame de Staël.

From 1759 to 1762 Gibbon held a commission in the Hampshire militia, reaching the rank of colonel. Before 1763 Gibbon had considered various subjects as worthy of the type of philosophical

analysis that he wished to apply to history: the life of Sir Walter Raleigh, the history of Switzerland, and others. However, he felt that he had nothing original to say about Elizabethan politics and he could not read German.

In 1764 he visited Rome and was inspired to write the history of the city from the death of Marcus Aurelius to the year 1453. After his father died Gibbon found himself in some difficulties, but he was able to settle in London to proceed with his great work. The first volume appeared in 1776, with a certain amount of public reaction to Gibbon's ironical treatment of the rise of Christianity and the actions of early church fathers. Like Voltaire, Gibbon was himself a deist who had little appreciation of the metaphysical side of religion. He examined the secular side of religion as a social phenomenon religion did not have for Gibbon special sanctity. But Christianity had a special role in the fall of the Roman empire "...the church and even the state were distracted by religious factions, whose conflicts were sometimes bloody and always implacable; the attention of the emperors was diverted from camps to synods; the Roman world was oppressed by a new species of tyranny, and the persecuted sects became the secret enemies of their country."

ROMAN EMPIRE

The Decline and fall of the Roman Empire is perhaps the only Western

historical work that is more than one hundred years old and yet continues to be read frequently by the nonspecialised educated public. Why is this so? First, the greatness and tragical character of the subject catches the attention and arouses the imagination and sympathy of its reader, who finds himself at once introduced to a time most fondly wished for by Man, when most civilised people were peacefully united in “the period in the history of the world, during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous” (Decline and Fall, Ch. 3). Yet, Man somehow lost this grace and now continuously wonders why. In an attempt to ascertain the reason, People turn to Gibbon for enlightenment. Second, for the Western Man in particular, there is here a unique fascination: for out of the ashes of the Western Roman Empire were born the modern nations of Europe, while out of the belated fall of the Eastern Roman Empire came sparks which lit Europe's beacon of humanism and science. Seen in this light, although the Decline and Fall concern Rome, it is really an ancient history of Europe and European civilisation, and any Western reader is therefore bound to find in this work illumination regarding his origin and roots.

Consisting of 71 chapters, 2136 paragraphs, some one million and a half words, and footnotes, the Decline and Fall encompasses a millennium and a half of history, covering not merely the Western Roman Empire from the days of the early emperors to its extinction in A.D. 476, but also the Eastern (Byzantine) Empire, which lasted for another thousand years until it was vanquished by the Turks

in 1453. Spatially, the work covers three continents and ranges from the frozen wastes of Siberia to the cataracts of the Nile, from China and Mongolia to the Strait of Gibraltar. It even encompasses, within its asides, the New World of America and the antipodes of New Zealand. Reading the decline and Fall, one cannot help but feel as if he were traveling in H.G. Wells' time machine, finding himself sometimes at the Forum of Rome in the 2nd Century, some other times in the forests of Germany in the 5th Century, yet some other times in the deserts of Arabia in the 7th Century.

What let first to Rome's decline and ultimately to her fall, Gibbon discovers many causes, which he discusses in various parts of his work. For instance, the long period of peace and the uniform government of the Romans gradually extinguished the industry and creativeness of the people, as well as the military discipline and valour of the soldiers (Chs. 2 and 7); the indulgence in luxury, which originally remained confined to the nobles and residents of the Imperial Court, was later extended to the troops, totally corrupting their morals (Ch. 17); the enrolment of mercenary barbarians in the armies, which served to excuse the Roman themselves from military responsibilities, at the same time encouraged the barbarians within the Empire to grow in power and influence (Ch. 17); the multiplication of oppressive taxes was countered and evaded by the rich, who shifted the burden to the poor, who in turn also dodged them and fled to the woods and mountains to become Rome's rebels and robbers *Ch. 35).

Notwithstanding the importance of these many contributing causes, Gibbon considers another two to be the most important and decisive: (1) the invasion of the barbarians, and (2) the growth of Christianity within the Empire. "I have described the triumph of barbarism and religion," he writes in the concluding chapter of his History. Every student of ancient Roman history would be familiar with the foreign enemies of the Roman Empire, most of whom were barbarians; the Goths, Lombards, Vandals, Alemannis, Huns, Persians, Turks, etc. As they had invaded Rome at one time or another, it is easy to appreciate their respective role in her fall. However, it is less easy to understand the role Christianity played as an accomplice. How was it possible that a religion whose humble founder preached love and peace and who later found himself gruesomely nailed to a cross contributed to Rome's Collapse? Let us analyze this position of Gibbon in more detail.

In Gibbon's view, Christianity made for the decline and fall of Rome by sapping the faith of the people in the official (pagan) religion, thereby undermining the state which that religion supported and blessed. To be sure, Gibbon is not blind to the fact that other cults and sects within the Empire were also competing with one another in their attempt to attract believers. As he admits, "Rome, the capital of a great monarchy, was incessantly filled with subjects and strangers from every part of the world, who all introduced and enjoyed the favourite superstitions of their native country" (Ibid., Ch. 2). However, Christianity was to be distinguished from

the other flourishing sects in its claim to exclusivity, or in other words, in its claim that it alone held the key of "Truth" and to Heaven, and that all its competitors were vicious and damned. Moreover, as the early Christians believed in the imminent end of this world, they all put their thoughts in the "next" world. This other-worldly attitude proved most disastrous to the Empire during the barbarian invasions since the Christians, instead of bearing arms to serve the state and the public good, diverted men from useful employments and encouraged them to concentrate on heavenly and private salvation. Needless to say, Gibbon's anti-Christian position aroused the fury of his Christian contemporaries.

GIBBON'S PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

Despite the breadth of Gibbon's historical and geo-graphical knowledge, his understanding of the meaning of history is surprisingly narrow. In Chapter 3 of the Decline and Fall, for example, he describes history as "indeed, little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortune of mankind." Later, in Chapter, 9, he writes that "Wars, and the administration of public affairs, are the principal subjects of history." Indeed, apart from the chapters on Christianity and Islam, the decline and Fall deals mainly with the wars, crimes, and follies of the Romans: there is very little mention of the arts and architecture of the Roman Empire, nor is there any significant description of its economy, science, philosophy, and literature, etc. The ideal historiography, on the other hand, would

seek to portray in each period the total complex, of nations culture, institutions, and ways of life.

Gibbon espouses non dogma of the natural and inevitable progress in history, for he is not a historicist. In fact, he is an anti-historicist: he knows that although human passions are timeless, circumstances are never the same. And while he well recognises that “history..under-takes to record the transaction of the past, for the instruction of future ages” (Decline and Fall, Ch. 16), and therefore that the politics of Rome might illuminate those of England, it would be a distortion of infer that Gibbon crudely integrates the Roman Empire and the British, or more generally, that he sees history as a kind of Nietzschean “eternal return”. No; for Gibbon, history is not an answer book, nor even a compendium of social “laws”. Rather, it is an endless succession of engagements with a past in which the dramatis personae themselves were never fully able to fathom, control, and command events.

Gibbon understands very well that history has no meaning, and that it is up to the historian to give it one. He does not pretend to be objective, because he knows that pure history liberated from subjectivity is a delusion. But although there is no solution to the problem of historical partiality he tries to alleviate this problem by coping with it and also by revealing it, mainly by exposing the prejudices of his sources. Another favourite technique is to hold his judgments in suspense, by offering the reader a range of options in the

interpretation of an event—through fixing multiple layers of insinuation, innuendo and hidden meaning; through coupling contrasting renderings of an action; and through bracing such antitheses as “the avarice or humanity”. “the fear or courage”, and “the price or the policy” of his characters, in order to highlight the irony involved. As a matter of fact, the use of suspense and irony is Gibbon’s dramatic forte.

He correctly recognises that no single perspective is adequate to the historians’ task of description and judgment of human motives, since standards are various while actions and events many-faceted. As one of his biographers observes, “One of Gibbon’s characteristic rhetorical habits is to couple two unlike terms with ‘or’ as if they were equally plausible alternatives for ironic effect, usually with the more probable alternative second” (P. Craddock [1983], p. 106). The following are good examples of Gibbonian suspense, taken from Chapter 5, 23, and 32 of the Decline and Fall respectively:

Till the reign of Severus, the virtue and even the good sense of the emperors had been distinguished by their real or affected reverence for the senate.

From the love, or the ostentation, of learning. [George of Cappadocia] collected a valuable library of history, rhetoric, philosophy, and theology.

Ignorant, or careless, of the impending danger, Chrysostom indulged his zeal, or perhaps his resentment. ■

(Courtesy : The Nation and the World)

Umm Aiman: Woman Warrior Revered As 'Mother'

- Arif Qazi

PROPHET Muhammad (peace be upon him) used to address her as "mother" and said she would go to Paradise in the Hereafter. She was a lady who was like a member of the Prophet's family over the years. She took part in the Battles of Uhud, Khaiber and Hunain. She also had the distinction of migrating twice once to Abyssinia and again to Al-Madinah.

Her real name was Barakah Bint Tha'labah, but she came to be known by her son Aiman's name as Umm Aiman. She was the lady who played the role of mother and took care of the young boy, Muhammad when his mother Aminah Bint Wahab passed away while travelling from Makkah to Madinah,

Umm Aiman was originally from Abyssinia and had been a slave of the Prophet's father, Abdullah Bin Abdul Muttalib.

When the prophet (pbuh) grew up to be a young man he freed her and married her to Obaid Bin Zaid Khazari. When Umm Aiman converted to Islam differences developed between them. Her husband was not willing to swear the oath of allegiance and accept Allah and His Messenger, so they separated.

By her first husband, Obaid, she had a son, Aiman. Thus she became known as Umm Aiman. He grew up to be a very prominent companion and was martyred in the Battle of Hunain. Her second marriage was to Zaid Bin Harithah. He was the general of the Muslim army and was

martyred in the battle of Mu'tah. They had a son, Usamah Bin Zaid, who was another great general of the Muslim army.

Under the guidance of the Prophet (pbuh) she played an active role in Jihad. She was active in various battles. In the battle of Uhud she gave herself up completely to nursing the wounded and providing water to the thirsty Mujahideen in the battlefield. In the battle of Khaiber she was one of the 20 women who fought against the enemy. When her son did not take part in this war because his horse was sick she called him a coward.

Hassan Bin Thabit, a poet devoted to prophet (pbuh), wrote poetry on this occasion, and elaborated on this point. The horse of Aiman had eaten poisoned grain and he could not take part in the battle because he had to tend to it.

In the battle of Hunain this same courageous and fearless warrior Aiman was martyred proving his valour as a warrior of Islam. When the Muslim army was losing ground a few of the Companions – Abu Bakr Siddique, Umar Farooq, Ali Bin Abi Talib, Abbas Bin Abdul Muttalib, Abu Sufyan, Harithah bin Nu'man, Usamah Bin Zaid and Aiman Bin Obaid - were those noteworthy companions who stood their ground with the Prophet (pbuh). They did not falter and displayed unmatched loyalty and bravery.

During the battle of Hunain the Muslim army faced a very critical situation, the army panicked and scattered and the

Mujahideen were on the verge of running away from the battlefield. It seemed that the earth that was spread out so wide was now closing in on them. At this stage when all seemed lost, the Prophet (pbuh) displayed extraordinary courage.

Umm Aiman lost her son Aiman in this battle, but she was a role model in patience and acceptance of the Will of Allah.

During the battle of Mu'tah, Zaid Bin Harithah was appointed general of the Muslim army. The Prophet (pbuh) said if Zaid Bin Harithah was martyred, then Jafar Bin Abu Talib should be made general. If he was also martyred, then Adbullah Bin Rawahah should take his place, and if he was martyred then the Mujahideen should choose anyone they thought suitable. And it was Allah's will that all three of them were martyred one by one. Umm Aiman bore the loss of her husband with great fortitude and asked her son, Usamah too to bear the loss of his father bravely.

The Prophet (pbuh) had great respect for Aiman. Sometimes because of her nature, she would become insistent and stubborn, The Prophet (pbuh) would then be very respectful and patient and try his utmost to please her.

Anas Bin Malik says that the Ansar of Al Madinah gave their date orchards to the Prophet (pbuh); he in turn distributed them among the Muhajirs (migrants) from Makkah. When the Muslims triumphed Quraidhah and Banu Nadheer, the prophet (pbuh) started returning their property to the generous owners. Anas Bin Malik relates that when he went to take back his orchards from Umm Aiman, she refused point blank. On the other hand, she tied a

cloth around his neck, jerked him and said that it was out of the question, that she would return the orchards to him. When the Prophet (pbuh) saw this he tried to persuade her to return the orchards. He said he would give her something of the same value in exchange, but she did not agree. Then he offered her something double the value; she still refused. Then he went on to offer her three times the value and so on. At last, he offered her something ten times the value of the orchards, and she finally agreed. And Anas Bin Malik got his date orchards back.

Umm Aiman sometimes pronounced some words in the Ethiopian dialect. When the Prophet (pbuh) heard her pronunciation of certain words he would just smile pleasantly and correct her. She would not say As-salam-u-Alaikum and would invariably say Assalam la Alaikum. He told her gently one day to just say Salam, as the meaning became the opposite the way she said it. In the same way she mispronounced certain expressions in supplications to Allah; so he told her to keep silent.

She was a very straightforward person with absolutely no malice; she was very soft-hearted, sincere and sympathetic. On returning from the Battle of Bani Mus talaq when the hypocrites spread slanderous regarding the character of Aishah, she vouched unhesitatingly for the purity of her character. This endeared her and increased her worth in the eyes of Aishah. It is recorded in history books that Aishah said about Umm Aiman, "My eyes and my ears have the best impressions about her." ■

Homosexuality - An Offence

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

The Union Government's recent decision regarding the decriminalisation of homosexuality merely keeping in view of protecting the sexual orientation of LGBTQ community does not augur well.

Earlier on July 2, 2009 a Division Bench of the Delhi High Court articulated that Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code is violative of Article 14, 15 and 21 of the Indian Constitution. But despite their hullabaloo, the issue could not proceed. In 2013 the issue was again aired by the Naz Foundation but the then ruling party refused to decriminalise Section 377. It is unfortunate that this time the Union Government as well as the Supreme Court both girded up to scrap section 377 of IPC which makes gay sex an offence.

Not doubt legalising homosexuality will prove disastrous for the society and harm the family structure. If a handful of people indulge in homosexuality, majority of them decry it and their sentiments too must be honoured.

Lord Macaulay in 1860 had drafted the I.P.C. and Section 377 provided punishment for homosexuality as the most hateful, unnatural offence. It is against the order of nature. Lord

Macaulay's contention stood the test of time and for more than a century it protected the society from other pollution. The culture and life values in India are different from other countries. The diversity of India is tremendous. It has its own distinctive features and norms. To examine the issue from religious point of view it is considered a great sin to indulge in unnatural acts.

It is crude, vulgar and immoral act. Well-known yoga guru Swami Ramdev has rightly remarked: "Homosexuals are mentally ill and need hospitalization, not legal validation. It will increase the sickness and harm the society".

Dominic Emmanuel, spokesperson of the Delhi Catholic Archdiocese said: "We strongly believe that sex between same sex partners is immoral, unnatural and objectionable. We also fears that such activities will result in the spread of HIV/ AIDS".

Maulana Syed Jalaluddin Umri of the Jamaat-e- Islami Hind said: "Homosexuality is a punishable offence in the Shariat (Muslim Religious Law).

Dr Gourdas Choudhry, Professor, Gastroenterology at Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Medical Science said: "Homosexuality poses a hazard to health."

Through a study, researchers from

Center for Disease Control, USA, reconfirmed that gays die around 10-20 years younger than those who engage in normal sexual practice.

According to report the common health problems among homosexual men are:

- Increase infection, especially HIV / AIDS, syphilis, gonorrhea, public lice, Hepatitis B, papillonma and warts.
- Increase in cancers, especially of large intestine (colon), prostate, and testes.
- Increase incidence of eating disorders such as bulimia, anorexia nervosa and obesity.
- More psychological problems, such as anxiety and depression, suicides are six time more common among homosexuals than straight people.

As regards Islam, it vehemently prohibits homosexuality. Warning the nation living at the time of Prophet Lut when people deeply indulged in homosexuality the Holy Quran says: "We also sent Lut as a messenger: behold, he said to his people, do ye do what is indecent though ye see its iniquity?" "Would ye really approach men in your lusts rather than women? Nay, ye are a people grossly ignorant!" (S.27 , A 54-55)

Explaining abovementioned verses of the Quran eminent scholar and

commentator of the Holy Quran Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi said: "Observe and compare the increasingly complacent attitude of the modern civilization towards sexual invert and perverts and the growing tendency among contemporary physicians and legislators to condone and make light of even the most atrocious homosexual practices.

Prominent Islamic scholar Sayyid Abul Aala Maududi says: "Islam has closed all the ways leading to sexual anarchy. But for satisfaction of men's animality and propagation of human race it was inevitable that at least one door for sexual satisfaction must be kept open. This was done by giving permission for marriage. Islam ordained that the sexual desire must be satisfied, not by unlawful sexual liaison secretly or openly and immodestly but through the prescribed course so that the whole society comes to know, and it is established beyond doubt, that such and such a man and a woman are now meant for each other".

Above all homosexuality has no place in the religion of Islam, To satisfy sexual desire, Islam has made the institution of marriage. It is only way through which one repress one's sexual keenness. The Holy Prophet said: "You should marry, for that is the best way of saving yourself from casting evil-eyes, and of safeguarding yourself against sexual immorality". That is why the

Prophet said : “This is my way (marriage), and whosoever shuns my way does not belong to me”.

Elaborating the significance of marriage, noted Islamic scholar S.Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi says: “In Islam marriage is not regarded as merely a fulfillment of a natural human need; it is considered an act of worship which, if performed with an understanding of higher religious and spiritual values involved, wins to a person a state of closeness to Allah. The Prophet of Allah, blessing and peace be upon him, set a practical example of the noblest possible married life. He also said : “He is the best among you who is the best for his family, and I am the best for my family”.

The respect for women engendering sincere consideration for their emotion and sensitivity that was Prophet Muhammad’s natural disposition is not found in the practical lives of even the acclaimed champions of women’s cause or famous spiritual leaders and saints; in fact, it is difficult to find it even in the lives of other Prophets, blessing and peace be on them. Prophet Muhammad’s respectful treatment of his pious wives, participation in their recreations (Which were Islamically permissible), thoughtfulness for their emotions, and justice in dealing with them are qualities that remain unparalleled”.

Needless to add that homosexuality is such a menace if it is legalised, the institution of marriage which is a sacred union between a man and a woman will be ludicrous, ridiculous and meaningless. While right from the advent of Adam and Eve till date this custom is in vogue in the society.

Anita Bryant, the famous American singer and gay rights opponent, had rightly said: “If homosexuality was the normal way, God would have made Adam and Steve”.

It is unfortunate that both print and electronic media are doing disservice to our society by highlighting gay parades and subtly endorsing homosexuality.

In this context, recent meeting of All India Muslim Personal Law Board held in Delhi on July 15, 2018 assumes great significance. Like all other religious organisations, the Board too, in principle, is against any move to scrap Section 377. The Board unanimously expressed its concern over the centre’s recent decision.

In short, raising voice against oppressions, atrocities, and other anti-social activities and unholy acts should be a bounden duty of all and sundry. Hence, Apex court should ponder over decriminalisation of homosexuality. For the Section 377 does not infringe the fundamental rights of any citizen.■

An Appeal

Darul uloom Nadwatul Ulama is engaged in its academic and religious pursuits under the patronage and guidance of Maulana Syed Mohammad Rabey Hasani Nadwi. The institute is dedicated to the golden principles of Islam in propagating the virtues and worth of the message of that religion which show the path of salvation.

The academic excellence and proper guidance in character building has been attracting students from far and wide. This has posed the problem as to how cope with this increasing influx. Our resources are limited and unless generosity is shown by you it is difficult to meet the situation.

We earnestly appeal that you come forward and help us in this task. Even a little contribution from you will not only help in running the institution successfully but will earn you benefits of Heavenly favours.

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