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Importance of Knowledge

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

The first revelation that came to Prophet Muhammad, blessings and peace be on him, in the Cave of Hira near Makkah in Saudi Arabia has thus been recorded in the Quran:

Read!

in the name of thy

Lord and Cherisher,

Who created -created man, out of

a (mere) clot of

congealed blood:

Read! and thy

Lord is Most Bountiful,....

He Who taught (the use of)

the Pen, — taught man

that which he knew

not. [XCVI: 1-5]

The Creator of the universe mentions this fact in this first revelation that the fate of knowledge is tied up with the pen. The Prophet who received this revelation in the seclusion of the Cave of Hira was unlettered and did not know how to use a pen. This is an unprecedented incident in the history of the world that the first revelation which comes down to an unlettered Prophet living among an unlettered people in a country where even knowledge of alphabets was not common begins with the word lara ("Read"). The unlettered Prophet is asked in this revelation "to read" which clearly signifies that his followers would not merely be receivers of knowledge; they would also advance knowledge and spread it. The age of this Prophet, thus, was not going to be an age of ignorance and antagonism to knowledge; it was to be an age of knowledge. reason, wisdom, and true advancement. ■

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Wisdom of Qur'an

But there are among men those who purchase idle tales without knowledge or meaning to mislead men from the path of Allah and throw ridicule. For such there will be a humiliating penalty.

(Luqmån 31:6)

There are, in the main, two basic types of entertainment. To one belongs such intense interest in games and sports which make men negligent of their religious obligations. To the other such idle talk which, once again, distracts man from performing his religious duties. In the above verse Allah speaks of both types — vain talk and idle tales. It is to the credit of the Qur'an that the above description applies in equal measure to the latest modes of fun and entertainment, especially radio and television. For these constitute idle talk. The Qur'an specially mentions that people purchase this. It goes without saying that today people spend large sums of money on purchasing various modes of entertainment.

Of course the Qur'an does not specify television or radio on this count. For these gadgets did not then exist. Yet it is not altogether out of place to say that the Qur'an disapproves of television and radio. Those familiar with Arabic idiom readily recognise that the Qur'anic expression covers all forms of idle talk and entertainment. The Qur'anic epithet "idle tales" stands for all radio programmes and videos. Let us be clear, however that the Qur'an does not disapprove of games and sports. Nonetheless, television and radio belong to the category of "idle tales". Even at a time when such gadgets were unthinkable, the Qur'an foretold these modes of entertainment which are no better than "idle tales".

Pearls From the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

It is related by Anas the Apostle of God said: "To set out in the path of God, once in the morning or in the evening is better than the world and all that it contains, and if a bride from among the brides of the dwellers of Paradise cast a glance at the world, the whole space intervening between the two [i. e., from the Heaven to the earth] will be filled with light and fragrance, and the covering for her head is better than the world and all that is contained therein."

-Bukhari

Commentary.— In the opening part of this Tradition the virtue of setting out in the way of God [i. e. , undertaking a journey in the service of Faith] has been referred to and we are told that to do so once in the morning or in the evening is better than the entire universe. The specification of the morning and the evening, here, is probably, due to the fact that, in the olden times, people habitually started on a journey during those parts of the day otherwise if a person left his home at any other time for a religious purpose it will possess the same merit.

In the later part, the wondrous beauty of the celestial brides of the dwellers of Paradise and the worth and value of their apparel have been mentioned, possibly with a view to encourage people to set off from their homes in the service of Faith by telling them that if they will leave their homes and their wives for some time with the object of serving the cause of God, they will be rewarded for ever and ever in Heaven with spouses of such rare charm and elegance that if they glanced towards the earth and the entire atmosphere would be filled with radiance and sweet scent and whose dress was so very costly that the headgear alone was more valuable than the whole of the world.

Editor's Note

Madrasas-Powerhouses of Divine Radiance

The wave of anti-Islam and anti-Muslim vendetta, raging throughout the whole world is specifically aimed at destroying the basic human characteristics so that the entire human race degenerates to the level of animals. Without expressing in so many words, all the programme disseminated through media including TV, Cinema, Clubs and much of print, leave little to imagination. The attitude towards women is deplorable, with their uninhibited, blatant exploitation, made out as women's lib but actually making them servile for carnal and commercial purpose. The first step is to prevent a girl coming into existence; but arrive they do; are enticed into becoming an object of pleasure and display. The institutions and organisations, engaged in raising the level of humanity and to inculcate true human traits, are being targeted with fabricated allegations and efforts to wipe out their very existence, without which the nefarious design would not be fulfilled.

Madrasas are labeled as dense of terrorism whereas an objective unbiased assessment would reveal that in reality terrorism breeds and flourishes in modern educational institutions, with violent clashes fisticuffs to bomb explosions, becoming a routine affair. We declare without any fear of contradiction, a genuine probe into our madrasas would reveal them to clean educational schools, with no subversive activity, whatsoever.

In the past, over the centuries, several countries produced highly learned erudite persons, well versed in religious knowledge and their writings are still an inexhaustible source of enlightenment, for all times to come. Yet Muslims in those countries are hardly aware of teachings and spirit of Islam, Muslims in name and by descent only. They have hardly an inkling of implications and duties of being a Muslim. The state of affairs is a direct outcome of absence of ground level religious schools (madrasas).

A considerable number of Muslims in our country, under the influence of Jesuit and Qadiyani missions have turned apostate. Voices are being raised, though, in protest that these movements endeavor to take people out of madrasas to venues where humans are transformed into mere robots, divesting them of basic human values. What is more, the modern educational institutions dish out knowledge which is bereft of character and drives human race away from humanity.

The mindset behind the nefarious propaganda and actions is the all-encompassing lust for riches and power which are construed as be all and do all. The concerted drive to annihilate not only Muslims but entire culture and social system promulgated by Islam, evolves out of this mindset.

The situation is much akin to a deluge, threatening the very existence of ummah

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(muslim community) and needs to be confronted with adroit steps and cogent plan.

In Islamic schools (madrasas) not only is formal education imparted, but the pupils are trained to become real human beings, imbued with quality character, pious mode of life and altruism. These schools are labeled as worthless with the allegation of turning out persons who can only perform routine religious rituals and are incapable of providing even sustenance for themselves and their kin. Although some persons devoted exclusively to religious preaching for perpetuation of Islamic spirit are always needed, the madrasas include worldly disciplines and knowledge of current affairs in their courses, also. Linguistics, history, economics, sociology, political science and similar subjects are covered to an essential extent.

To a lay observer madrasas appear to proliferate all over but actually the number and coverage is far short of requirement.

The readership here comprises of people who are fired by a desire to heed and understand all the teachings and spirit of Islam. This mindset is inherited from the positive attitude of and upbringing by their progenitors. It is such people who have it in them to ensure that Islamic message and spirit, in word and deed, flourish among the present and future generations and also to be a bulwark against the nefarious designs of anti-Islam forces. The mission can be immeasurably bolstered by the madrasas and an all out effort is needed to maintain these institutions as bastions against the deluge alluded to in the preceding lines. The constant hue and cry for modification of curriculae is in fact a camouflage for the latent intention to dilute the religious mission and render the madrasas ineffective.

An important aspect, not yet fully put into effect, is that the religious and general education should be imparted to girls also, which would be the real harbinger; for a better future generation, with entire enlightened families.

These institutions for religious education commonly known as madrasas are in fact power-stations for generating and spreading of radiance, so as to convey to the entire humanity the divine promise that the faithful are brought into light out of darkness.

All out action, ground work with single-minded devotion to preserve the madrasas is the call of the hour. Mere wishful thinking would take us nowhere.■

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along with a hard copy, duly signed, by post.

The Duty of Muslim Leaders

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

O Believers! Persevere and excel in perseverance and be consistent and fear Allah so that you may thrive.

(AI (Imran 3:200)

The Qur'anic directive above is that Muslims should both persevere and enioin this upon others. Let us no reflect on this directive a little. For a community, especially in its quest for success and glory, patience as an individual quality does not suffice. This should instead be marked by collective perseverance, consistency and resolve. This is essential for the community's rise and growth. Each member of the community should be a source of strength and comfort for other members. Each one should be patient and consistent and preach the same to others. His life should be adorned with a firm and true faith, constancy, high ideals and noble objectives. His virtuous life should be as a role model for others. He should inspire confidence in others and boost their morale. No one should be allowed to air feelings of despondency. Rather, patience, courage and consistency should be affirmed by everyone, even in the face of utter harassment and persecution.

Muslims are also directed to be consistent in their faith. Know that frontiers consist of two types — the

ideological and the physical. Both must be guarded with equal care and caution. Self-respecting nations put everything at stake to defend their frontiers. They lay down their lives in large numbers for this cause. Nonetheless, military defeat is not always final defeat. A set-back does not annihilate a people altogether. For defeat is, at times, followed by victory. For logistical reasons a people may move away from their borders and recover the same at a later stage. During the days of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) and the Companions and throughout Islamic history such rises and falls in military terms have been common. Those addicted only to winning cannot hold their ground for long. A community should experience both defeat and victory for selfdevelopment. Hence why Allah let His beloved Messenger and his Companions enjoy both victory and defeat in the early history of Islam.

The ideological frontier or basis conversely is an altogether different story. A defeat on this score often inflicts a severe blow to a whole community, putting it back for thousands of years. It may even completely seal the fate of that community. Today, Muslims in India are pitted in such a battle. Their identity and

ideology are in peril. The issues haunting them are their preservation as a distinct faith community, their Islamic way of life, their Muslim personal law, their linguistic and cultural distinctiveness, the future of their young generations and the defence of their faith. Only Muslim leaders can devise solutions to these problems, for they are gifted with the requisite knowledge, expertise, sensitivity, far-sightedness and pragmatism. They have the necessary resources to tackle these

problems. Their conscientiousness, timely action and concern for the community can help Muslims overcome the impending dangers. On the other hand, their inaction, lethargy and apathy will deliver a fatal blow to the Muslim community, afflicting it for a long time to come. If they do not sacrifice their petty self-interests for the sake of the community, everyone is bound to suffer such a long loss, for the impending dangers will envelop the entire community.

Importance of Religion for Muslims

Religion occupies a pivotal position in the personal, social, and cultural lives of Muslims due to which they are extremely sensitive in matters relating to their faith. It is, therefore, pertinent that this important point is not overlooked whenever any problem relating to Muslims, individual or collective, moral or social, legal or constitutional, is taken into consideration. That is why Muslims are so particular about the Islamic laws governing their affairs, which are popularly known as Muslim Personal Law. In fact, the fundamental part of the Muslim Personal Law is derived directly from the Quran itself whereas the details and explanations are based on Traditions and Islamic Jurisprudence.

The Muslim Personal Law is an integral part of the Islamic Shari'a (Islamic Code of Laws) and religion and is duly authenticated by the Quran and Hadith. It has not been developed independently by Muslim researchers, social scientists, lawyers or reformers. It, therefore, cannot be changed even by a Muslim government. It is a part of the religion of Islam because in Islam the jurisdiction of religion is not limited to faith and devotional services only; it also covers mutual relationships, rights and duties, and social values and customs. If culture and social life are separated from religion, religion becomes ineffective, and culture and social life become the agents of the wild desires and selfish interests of people. \blacksquare

Companions of The Prophet (SAW)

- S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi*

The way the Prophet (SAW) summoned the people towards Tauheed (Oneness of Allah) and the Faith was such as made whoever heard his message with attention got convinced of the veracity it had. It got instilled and firmly rooted in his heart. Whoever watched and heard him from close quarters did not only get influenced by him but turned, with all his heart and soul, into a devoted, unflinching follower of him and always ready to lay down his life for him-thanks to the Prophet's (SAW) moral, humane, compassionate and affectionate attitude and behavior with the people. And that was not the case with one or two individuals only. It happened to each and every one who came in contact with him with his eyes and ears open to watch and listen. And, thus, within a span of 23 years of his (SAW) missionary life, such a group of the faithful got prepared as has no parallel in the history of the world. It was this very group which held the reins of his vicegerency, in its entirety, after he (SAW) said adieu to this ephemeral world, and kept carrying on, with absolute probity, fidelity and concentration, his (SAW) mission. Even the short span of companionship that the members of this group had with the Prophet (SAW) was enough to make them his staunch followers and believers in him. Since these members were little in number during their 13 year long sujourn in Makkah

This faith got usually generated for

two reasons. One was the miraculous World of Allah Almighty (i.e. the Quran). On having it heard once even, one would undergo a change of heart. The second was having the affability and affection of the Prophet (SAW) closely watched. The number of those who professed Faith on having heard the holy Quran was considerable. And so was the number of those who professed Islam on getting influenced by his morals and the way he addressed himself to the people. An instance of getting influenced by him (SAW) is the incidence of Thumamah bin Uthal. He says that he came to the Prophet (SAW) with the intent to show him his animus, or, rather, to hurt him. But, no sooner he met him than had his heart

^{*} Rector, Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow.

changed. He instantaneously said: 'O Prophet of Allah! By God, I did not cherish so much hatred for anyone in the entire world as I did for you: but now it is you only who is the dearest to me in the entire world.'

That was exactly the state which the believers in him (SAW) got into, thanks to his affection and way of exhortation. As soon as they professed the faith, their hearts got filled with this very kind of love and devotion for him. That was followed by attainment of knowledge, under his guidance and exhortation, about the sublime values of life to the extent that they would not hesitate for a moment in having their lives sacrificed for the sake of those lofty objectives. They would always be ready to lay down their lives at the instance of their reverenced teacher and leader. Howsoever strong their own wish and desire might be, they would totally ignore that in the face of the Prophet's (SAW) wish and desire. They would, in any case, go by what would be desired by him (SAW).

Hence, they had it practically proved on many occasions. One glaring instance is that of the treaty of Hudaibiyah when they acceded, in capitulation to the Prophet's (SAW) desire, to iniquitous terms forced by the Quoraish. Among other instances are: perseverance for more than three weeks in a state of starvation and biting cold courting death on occasion of Ghazwae-Khandaque (the Battle of Trench). When the hostile forces were making direct assaults on him (SAW) during the Ghazwah of Uhad, scores of

the devoted Sahabah (Companions) got mustered in front of him (SAW) and had all the assaults by the enemy received on their chests. They sustained all the wounds with patience and endurance in order to keep the Prophet (SAW) protected from any harm. All of them left no stone unturned in having themselves sacrificed, one after another, for him. Hazrat Talha bin Ubaidullah (RAA) put his hand in front of him preventing the arrows reaching him till all his fingers got covered with blood and the hand was palsied. When Hazrat Abu Ubaidah bin el-Jarrah extracted the beam of the helmet from him (SAW), having it clutched with his teeth, one of his own teeth, too, got unplugged from its socket in the process and fell on the ground. On extracting the second beam, his another tooth, too, came out along with it. Hazrat Abu Dujanah kept standing in front of him making a shield of himself. The arrows kept raining on him but he kept himself bent on him in a steady position till his back got all pierced with arrows.

En route to Madinah on return from the Ghazwah of Uhad, the Muslims passed by a house where a lady of Banu Dinar clan lived. Her father, brother and husband had all got slain in this battle. She had already heard the news of all the three incidents one after another. But, each time, on hearing the news she would enquire about the Prophet (SAW) as to how did he fare? They told her he (SAW) was all right. She came close to him and looked at his auspicious face and called out spontaneously:

(All the afflictions, after having you

with us, have no relevance) (2)

When Zaid bin Duthunnah was brought by the infidels of the Quoraish out of the Harem to be assassinated, Abu Sufyan said to him: 'Zaid! I ask you to tell me under oath would you like to be comfortably among your family members while Mohammad (SAW) be here in your place?' Zaid replied: 'I would not bear so much as a thorn pricking Mohammad (SAW) while I stay comfortably at my home.' Thereupon Abu Sufyan said: 'I have never seen anyone having so much love for anyone as do the companions of Mohammad for him.

Whoever had been in the company of the Prophet (SAW) for even a few moments with Faith in his heart, would be ready to have each an d everything that he possessed sacrificed for him (SAW), barring some of those individuals who, having lived earlier in company of Jews in Madinah, made an ostentatious profession of faith; but, inwardly they were inimical. Yet he (SAW) meted them out, too, the treatment, of mercy and condescension.

And, so the team of the reverenced Companions that got raised was, in the matter of compliance with the religion of Islam brought by the Prophet (SAW) like an insurmountable mountain. Gradually it grew into so large a number that a parallel of it, having so firm a faith and so pious and virtuous, is not traceable in the entire history of mankind. That was all, in fact, Initiated from Allah Almighty who had it predestined that no prophet was required to be raised after him (SAW). And, so, He made the group of the people who had

benefitted from the company and guidance of the Prophet (SAW) adorned with such qualities and character would enable them to promote this religion and the sublime human traits, representing correctly and truly the office of the Prophecy. Each and every member of it was, in his own individual capacity, like an illustrious star in the firmament. That was also the testimony given them by the Prophet (SAW). He said:

(My companions are like stars; whomever you would follow, you would not get deviated from the guided path.)

Obviously, the degree of preferment gained by anyone in his, eyes was proportionate to the degree of proximity he had with him (SAW). The more one got close to him, the more priority was accorded to him by him. The one who had been closest to him was Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique (RAA) whom he (SAW) had camaraderie and friendship with since the pre-Prophecy days. He was approximately his age; only two to two-and-half years younger than him. After the of Prophet's (SAW) departure from this world, the responsibility of running the affairs of Islam from and its promotion was assigned, first of all, to him. Thus, he happened to be the First Caliph. There were successively after him three more Caliphs who were veritably his (SAW) successors. All these four Caliphs were given the epithet of Khulafae-Rashideen (The righteous Caliphs). Through them the trend of Khilafat-e-Rashidah (the righteous Caliphate), that is the Caliphate of the highest order, continued after the Prophet's (SAW) demise for 30 years. Through them, the Islamic constitution for leading the life in conformity with the morals and qualities and the way he (SAW) had adopted, under the guidance received by him through the Revelation, for fulfilling various responsibilities. and which companions were given by him the training of, continued to be promulgated, without any omission or subtraction, through the team of the reverenced companions. That set a great and sublime precedent to serve as an example for the future generations and the path of the correct religion got illumined like the broad daylight for all times to come.

Following the training and tutelage by the Prophet (SAW) for 23 years, the management and administration of the state affairs were run for next 30 years by the most reliable Companions-cum-Caliphs. Throughout this period, the affairs got conducted exactly in the manner adopted in the days of the Prophet (SAW) setting an example for the future. Thereafter, the task of administration got gradually shifted into the hands of the upcoming generation. It did not have the direct supervision of the Prophet (SAW). Nonetheless, it was exactly similar to the pattern adopted during the days of the Prophet (SAW). That, too, was, in fact, a sort of preordained arrangement initiated by Allah Almighty. To wit, it was destined that the first ten years get the administration run by the Prophet (SAW) himself, under the guidance of the Divine revelation, then the subsequent thirty years

get run by the men trained and educated by him (SAW) so as to have, within these forty years, a paragon of ideal administration of the religion of Islam demonstrated and displayed which should be tried to be kept before the eyes to be emulated up to the Day of Resurrection. For, the religion was now perfected and culminated.

Since this paragon is now to be kept in front of one's eyes up till the Doomsday, it is no more required to ever undergo any amendment or modification. It is absolutely sufficient for the reform and welfare of the mankind up till the Day of Resurrection. For, it is the religion sanctioned by Allah Almighty, the One Who Knows; nay, rather, enunciates the nature and needs of the mankind from A to Z. For that very reason it was made perfect and culminated. It was assured by Allah Almighty that He Himself would be the Guard on it to keep it preserved and intact:

(Verily We! it is We who have revealed the Admonition, and Verily We are the guardians thereof.)

At another place it is said:

(To-day I have perfected for you your religion, and have completed My favour upon you, and am well-pleased with Islam as your religion.)

The people who were to keep this trend on after the Prophet (SAW), that is the community of his closest companions, constituted that ideal community which was representative of the religion of Islam. Its members had thoroughly grasped and comprehended the words and deeds of

the Prophet (SAW) and had effaced their own wishes and desires for their sake. They had become the mirror that had the reflection of their Prophet (SAW) inscribed therein. They could not so much as say nor do anything that was against the wish and desire of the Prophet of Allah. This is the community which was called the community of the Companions who were more than thousands in number.

The American military historian, Richard Jabeil, who had served in various important official agencies, including the American secret agency, C.I.A., and is the author of 40 books on various topics, has recently proffered a new research wherein he has acknowledged that Hazrat Mohammad (SAW), the Prophet of Allah, was, if viewed from all aspects, a perfect man and a genius. Throwing light, in particular, on his military skills, more particularly his skills to command and train, he writes:

"Mohammad (SAW) is the first ever Commandant in Islam. He had got such an ideal community of his followers raised as had the Byzantine and Persian empires vanquished. He had such a community raised as had firm and absolute faith in that he (SAW) was Allah's Prophet. It was strictly adhered to each and every thing told by their Prophet, the messenger of Allah. It was ever ready to have everything sacrificed for the sake of preservation of the religion of Islam, the Islamic creeds and precepts (i.e. the Islamic Ideology)."

Richard Jabeil has it further elucidated that:

"The community raised by Mohammad (SAW) was sticklers for principles and regulations. It was always ready to have everything sacrificed for the sake of its mission, its message and attainment of its objectives. Had there not been such a disciplined body of men, bubbling with the zest of devotion and sacrifice and strictly compliant with the code of conduct in life and the order of life taught by their leader and mentor, Islam would not have progressed after the demise of Mohammad (SAW). Getting over the uprising of apostasy by his companions after Mohammad's (SAW) demise and having the renegade tribes restored to, and re rooted in Islam is a cogent proof of the talents that Mohammad (SAW) had to train and guide."

Richard Jabail has written further that: "Mohammad (SAW) had it firmly instilled in the heads and hearts of his Companions and followers that they are destined to have the writ of God enforced all over the world. It was the first ever instance in the history that any community had this belief and conviction that it was having the Dictates of Allah promulgated all over the earth. The community raised by Mohammad (SAW) was not unified on the basis of clan, nationality, race, tribe, region, colour and complexion. It was unified exclusively on the basis of religion that Islam."

Allamah Syed Sulaiman Nadwi (RAA) writes:

"There is not just this much claim about the preceptor of Islam (Hazrat Mohammad- S.A.W., the Prophet of Allah) that he taught the people the Book and the words of Wisdom and conveyed to them the commandments of Allah; but also that he gets them purified with his beneficence and influence. He has the deficient turned into the perfect, the sinner into the pious, the blind into the seer and the dark-hearted into the illustrious of heart. And, so, when he had his splendid life brought to end, there were at least one hundred thousand individuals who had practically been the embodiment of his teachings. That Arab who was earlier at the nadir of morality had reached that point of Zenith in culmination where no star could reach till date.

"If such an effect of culmination were to be found in any preceptor and then it was also to be ensured that for the perfection of this world and its organization and orderliness, it is not only the men of just one faculty and talent that are required but the people of hundreds of various talents are required, then the personage of the Prophet is game for that. By casting a glance over the educational institutions of other preceptors of morality, one would find that in each of them students of only one faculty and branch of learning get educated. In the training camp of Hazrat Musa (AS), education in no other field than that of military one is noticeable. In the school of Hazrat Isa (AS), no other lesson than that of forgiveness and forbearance is imparted. In the monastery of Buddha none other than the ascetic beggars panhandling from door to door are seen. But, come to the great alma mater of Mohammad (SAW), the Prophet of Allah, and you will find there is an all-around university here. There is each and every faculty of human promotion growing here. The entity and personage of the preceptor himself is a full-fledged university wherein department of each and every art and science is exclusively established. There it is that the students of each and every category and propensity come acquire knowledge and perfection in various fields in accordance with their respective tastes and their respective aptitudes. "He (SAW) is seen in his capacity of a man, a father, a husband, a friend, a family-man, a trader-businessman, an officer, ruler, a judge, a military commander, a king,. a teacher, a preacher, a mentor, a recluse, a worshipper and finally a Prophet. It is all these categories and classes of the humanity that come to him and sit as pupils and disciples in front of him. All of them get their share of knowledge and learning, in accordance with their respective profession and skill, from him (SAW).

"Look intently at this great university at Madinat-un-Nabi (the city of the Prophet), Madinah Munawarah, whose roof was made of date-palm leaves and the pillars of date-palm trunks and which was called Masjid-e-Nabawi (The Prophet's mosque). In separate corners of it separate classes of groups of men are in progress. There are somewhere here rulers like Abu Bakr, U'mar, U'thman and A'li taking lessons. Somewhere else herein are the men of prudence and expedience like Talha, Zubair, Mu'awiyah, Sa'd bin Mua'az, and Sa'eed bin Jubair. At some other place are military commanders like Khalid, Abu U'baidah, Sa'd bin Abi Waqquas and A'mr bin el-A'as. At some other place are those who were made later Governors of Provinces. Justices of Courts and legislators. Somewhere else is the assembly of recluses and hermits who pass their days in observance of fast and nights in offering prayers. There are somewhere those mendicants who were. like Abu Zar, Salman and Abu Dardaa. called 'Jesus of Islam'. There were at some place those Suffah (platform) students who used to fetch the firewood from jungles and sold it for their subsistence devoting all the rest of time of the day and the night in gaining knowledge. There were at some place experts in Jurisprudence and Traditions like Hazrat A'li, Hazrat A'ishah, Hazrat Ibn-e-A'bbas, Hazrat Ibne-Masw'ood, and Hazrat Zaid bin Thabit (RAA) who were devoted to the service of knowledge and getting it disseminated. If there is at some place a swarm of serfs, there is at another place a gathering of masters; albeit, there was no discrimination between them on the basis of ostensible grandeur and earthly glory. All of them are assembled at same level of equality and rallying, moth-like, around the same flame of veracity and Truth. All of them are under the spell of same intoxication that was of Tauheed and all are having the same gusto of devotion to the truth surging within their hearts. All of them are exerting their efforts in making a reflection of themselves of the same sacred mirror."

'Sabequeen Awwaleen ' (The foremost Believers) and 'Ashra-e-Mubashsharah' (the ten given the glad tidings in this life itself of getting into

the Paradise):

Those who professed the faith In the very beginning had to face such atrocities and hostilities as were beyond all the limits in severity. Moreover they lasted for years on end. These were inflicted upon such people who were respected in their clans and prior to that they could not have tolerated, come what may, even the slightest slight or inequity even if they had to go to war for that. But, these Faithfuls were commanded to tolerate without being told how long they have to be tolerant and whether it would ever come to an end or not. In such a situation only such people as had their hearts made of stone could have had the self-restraint and endurance or only such feeble and ignoble persons as are not able to confront any inequity whatsoever. But these faithful ones from the Quoraish had the capability to avenge themselves. Yet, because of the Divine command, they were tolerating all that. And, hence, taking this very fact in cognizance and, in consideration of that, their rank was elevated. By giving them the honorific of 'Sabequeen' Awwaleen (the first and the foremost) they were placed at a lofty pedestal. The holy Quran says:

(And the Muhajirs and Ansar, the leaders and the first ones and those who followed them in well-doing, — well-pleased is Allah with them, and well pleased are they with Him, and He hath gotten ready for them Gardens where under the rivers flow, as abiders therein forever. That is the achievement supreme.)

At another place it is said:

(Those among you who expended and fought before the victory shall not be held equal. They are mightier in rank than those who expended and fought afterwards; Unto each hath Allah promised good; and Allah is of whatsoever ye work Aware.)

This is in itself an established fact that those who professed faith in the initial stages had to face much severe situations and the absolute allegiance and devotion that they displayed and the sacrifices that they made were of a level par excellence. This was generally the period prior to the Madinah phase during which they were subjected to boycott and all sorts of persecutions by their own kith and kin. It was followed by their having to put up with getting exiled from their home and hearth, leaving all their possessions and properties and their near and dear ones behind. The Prophet (SAW) was deeply moved by this devotion and attachment on their part. Under instructions from Allah, he (SAW) had the Acceptance accorded by Allah to the firmness of the faith and conviction of many of them and their best rewards to be awarded in the Hereafter revealed.

Among them, those of the grade one were given the sobriquet of 'Ashra-e-Mubashsharah' (the ten given the glad tidings). These were ten individuals who were given the glad tidings of being the inmates of Paradise in one lot. He said:

(Abu Bakr is in Paradise; U'mar is in Paradise; U'thman is in Paradise; A'li is in Paradise; Talha is in Paradise; AzZubair is in Paradise; 'A'bdur Rahman bin Nuf is in Paradise; Sa'd is in Paradise; Sa'eed is in Paradise; and Abu U'baidah bin Jarrah is in Paradise.)

In addition to them, about many other Companions, too, he (SAW) has, individually, expressed words denoting glad tidings of the Paradise. There are glad tidings given by him about those who had taken part in the battle of Badr and the 'Baia'at-e. Ridwaan' (The propitious oath of allegiance). Likewise, there are glad tidings about female Companions also. It may be borne in mind that anything said by the Prophet (SAW) germane to this religion was at the Instance of Allah Almighty Himself. These glad tidings about these prominent individuals were given, by name, on various occasions. An over-all glad tiding covering others is also made. There is in the holy Quran:

(...well-pleased is Allah with them, and well pleased are they with Him)

and the Prophet himself, in his own words too, had given the tidings. About everything said by him (SAW) it is said in the holy Quran that he (SAW) said nothing on his own accord. It is all said on the basis of the revelation made to him:

(And he speaketh not of his own desire. It is but a revelation revealed.)

So, these glad tidings, too, were in accordance with the Divine Revelations. And thus, Allah Almighty had their being the inmates of the Paradise declared in their earthly life itself.■

The Religion of The Future

- Sayyid Qutb

When Islam alone is recognized as the sole saviour from the disastrous dangers toward which humanity is heading, attracted by the glittering illusions of material civilization.

And when it is recognized that Islam alone is capable of offering Humanity the system which coordinates and harmonizes its progress material innovation and spiritual exaltation.

And when it is recognized that Islam alone can establish a realistic system of life, achieving such coordination and harmony that has never been experienced by humanity throughout all history except under Islamic rule.

When all that is recognized, the atrocious crime committed against humanity by those who directed their ruthless and ferocious blows against the pioneers of Islamic resurrection becomes self-evident. Chief among these are people like Mr. Dulles, who ring the alarm bells and call for help to bring such a system into being, and who then mobilize all their forces to vitiate the properties and obstruct the potentialities of the Islamic system, hiding it from those who yearn for a saviour, impeding humanity's free access to it by means of false accusations, hypocritical illusions and specious fallacies.

However, this declared war does not make us lose our absolute confidence in this religion as the religion of the future.

Throughout its long history, Islam has endured and withstood blows more violent and more cruel than those directed against

its pioneers everywhere at present. Without power except its intrinsic vitality, it struggled through all, emerged victorious, continued to survive and preserved the communities and lands under its Protection, even doing so without a sophisticated armory.

Islam protected the Islamic countries against the attacks of Tartars as well as of Crusaders who, had they been victorious in the East as they were in Andalusia, or as the recent Zionist conquerors of Palestine, no Arab nationality or Arab race would have survived. Both Andalusia in the past and Palestine in the present are proofs that when Islam is driven from a certain territory, its language and national identity follow and are equally effaced.

It is worthy to note that the Mamluks who repulsed the Tartars and them from the Islamic countries were not Arabs, but rather belonged to the same race as the Tartars. However, they stood fast against their kinsmen in defense of Islam because they themselves were Muslims, inspired by the Islamic ideal and fighting under the Islamic spiritual leadership ofthe great Muslim scholar (Imam) Ibn Taymiah who led the campaign of spiritual mobilization and who was in the forefront of the battle.

In another instance Saladdin preserved Arabism, the Arabs and Arabic language when he defended the Islamic territory. He was a Kurd himself, not an Arab. Nevertheless, by maintaining the integrity and security of Islam against the attacks of the Crusaders, Arabism was safeguarded as well. In fact, it was his Islamic consciousness that incited him to

fight the Crusaders, just as that same inspiration spurred Al-Zaher Bibars, Al-Muzaffar Qutz and Al-Malik Al-Nassir to fight the barbarian Tartars.

It was Islam that strived in Algeria's one hundred and fifty years of anticolonialist battle to uphold its Arabism, even though the major elements of this Arabism, i.e., the language and culture, were destroyed by France, which considered the Arabic language in Algeria a 'foreign" language and prohibited its teaching! Their Islam alone, alive in the hearts of Muslims. resented the arrogance of the oppressors and defiantly met their attacks, considering them but the Crusaders of a newer age. Only by means of this Islamic consciousness was la resistance in Algeria maintained until it was supplemented by a new Islamic movement led by Abdul-Hamid ben Badis, who gave it new stimuli. This is the important fact of the Algerian movement which imposters and fools try to hide, but it is well-known to the French "crusaders." So aware were they that the all-conquering spirit of Islam was the great hindrance to their success in their war in Algeria that they declared their war against les Musulmans, not against les Arabs or les Algériens!

It was Islam that urged the great Al-Mahdi's revolt in the Sudan against the British occupation of the Upper Nile Valley (Egypt) and then his revolt against their occupation of the Southern territory (the Sudan). A perusal of the declarations of the great Al-Mahdi and of the message of Othman Daqna to Kitchner, Cromer and Tawfiq testify to the genuine vitality of the Islamic incentive.

It was Islam that struggled against

the Italian invasion of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania. From the outposts and mosques of the Sinuses, the whole resistance was started and the fundable fight of the noble Omar El-Mokhtar was initiated.

The first movement of liberation in Morocco emerged from the Islamic spirit as well, The "Berber law" enacted by the French in 1931, aiming at converting the Berber tribes there to atheism and alienating them from Islamic jurisprudence, was the spark that kindled the fire of revolution against the French.

Islam has been fighting since ages, but without arsenals of complex war machinery. Its elements of power are contained in its nature of simplicity, clarity and comprehensiveness. They are embodied in its denial of worship to people and its insistence on worship of Allah almighty, the Creator of People, from Whom alone Islam derives its power and to Whom alone it surrenders. This power is so deeply ingrained in the Muslim mentality that they are able to rise above incidental occurrences such as their subjection to oppression. This oppression shall remain always outside the sphere of conscience, no matter how pugnacious it is. Spiritual defeat, accordingly, would not take place so long as Islam dwells within the heart and conscience, even when, in some cases, a superficial or apparent defeat is inflicted.

Because of these properties of Islam, its enemies, declared their unjustifiable war against it. Islam stood in their way, obstructing their imperialistic exploitation, their oppression and dominance over others. Because of these properties, they launched their scandalous defamation

campaigns. They attempted to substitute other values for Islam, flimsy insipid ideologies completely alienated from this formidable contender, so that international Zionism, international crusading forces, and international imperialism might get to triumph over its opposition.

The intrinsically indomitable properties of Islam arc the of the jealous antagonisms of its adversaries, who long to plunder the Islamic territories and their potentialities. This is the reality behind this fierce physical battle and the smear campaign. This is the genuine reason for the opposition.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the future is for this religion.

"It is owing to the lofty design of this religious system and the natural need of mankind for such a system, that we conclude with unshakable conviction that Islam will be the religion of the future. It has an unprecedented role to play and it will be duly called upon, because this expected role cannot be performed by any creed or system, regardless of the approval or disapproval of the enemies of Islam. In reality, we believe that the whole of mankind cannot dispense with this religion for long...."

This is what we have written at the beginning of this book, and we believe that it is unnecessary to continue asserting this truth by the same logic. Let us then look into some incidents from the factual history of Islam, as these may be most appropriate in this respect.

Suraga Ibn-Malik was chasing the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and his companion, Abu Bakr, while they were emigrating in flight from Mecca and hiding from the Quraish. In his pursuit, Suraga would stumble whenever he was or the heels of his fugitives, but he kept on, coveting the tempting prize offered by the Quraish to whomever would arrest Muhammad and his companion. Perceiving failure, he began to turn back after giving the prophet his oath not to give them up completely. In this moment the Prophet said, "O Suraga would you like to own the bracelets of the Shah?" In other words, Muhammad was promising him the bracelets of the Persian "Shahinshah" (King of Kings). God knows what Suraga imagined the moment this fantastic offer was made by that fugitive, deserted by all except one companion who could hardly defend him and who was accompanying him in secret flight.

But the Prophet (peace be upon him) knew that he was on the right path as surely as the unbelievers were on the wrong one. He was certain that right must overcome wrong, and that it was impossible for injustice to continue without rectification. The wrong was decaying like a tree deprived of water and fertilizer, becoming so rotten that its very roots would die. On the other hand, he saw the right as promising as a robust seed ready to be planted and to grow bearing abundant fruit. He was certain of all this without a shadow of doubt.

Today, we are in a very similar position with similar circumstances and conditions. We are surrounded by a similar pre-Islamic ignorant atheism, and we should not doubt

for a second what the inevitable result will be. It is the result called for by everything in our environment irrespective of the deluding manifestations enveloping us.

The need of humanity for the Islamic way of life now, in contrast to other systems, is no less great in importance than it was in the Holy Prophet's time. Therefore, we should not entertain the slightest doubt that whey happened once under such circumstances will have to occur again. Nor should we nurture any skepticism in view of the ferocious blows directed against the pioneers of Islamic renaissance everywhere, or in view of the gigantic spreading of materialistic civilization. The final word in this issue is not the voluminous wrong or the powerful assaults directed against Islam, but it is the supreme power of right and its unrelenting stamina to survive and reflect these blows.

We are not alone, we have the assurance of nature with us. The nature of existence and the nature of humanity which constitute a mighty tremendous force, greater than all the "civilized" encumbrances attached to nature. Whenever there is conflict between nature and civilization, the first must win out and emerge victorious, however short or however long the duration of the conflict.

But there is one issue which we must take into our consideration. Ahead of us there is a bitter, strenuous, prolonged struggle to free the natural order from manmade shackles and to establish it over and above other orders.

We must prepare ourselves for quite a long time to be fit for this relaxing task.

We must be prepared by means of

exalting ourselves to the level of true religion.

We must raise ourselves to its height by genuine and deep faith in God, and by our knowledge of God, for we cannot believe in Him securely unless we know Him well.

We must raise ourselves to its level by understanding all our surroundings and our contemporary means and methods. Allah will shed His mercy on those who take cognizance of the tides of time and follow the Straight Way.

We must exalt ourselves by assimilating our contemporary culture and civilization, but as mastering it after thorough examination and discriminating choice. We cannot decide what to adopt and what to drop of this culture and civilization unless we have control over them through sure knowledge and experience, both of which will give us the power of choice. We must exalt ourselves by comprehension of the wellsprings of human existence and the things that inspire it to the loftiest heights. Then, we can reject or retain those aspects of this civilization that we deem proper, basing our judgement on an experience of life on a par with our experience of this civilization.

This will really be a long, bitter, strenuous conflict, but it will be an enlightened struggle and a genuine one, too.

May Allah be with us!

"And God hath full power and control over His affairs; but most among mankind know it not." (XII: 21) ■

Manifestation of Providential Powers in The Plant World

And a few Unsolved Biological Mysteries

Allah, the Almighty, is the sustainer of the whole world. His providential power covers and controls the whole universe and its manifestations. By providential power is meant all such activities that are continually taking place in the world. As Allah is the provider and sustainer of all that comes into reckoning in and around the whole plant and animal world, He is also the sustainer and cherisher of geological and heavenly bodies. The Glorious Qur'an declares clearly:-

He is the Lord of all things.

(An'am:164)

Lord of the heavens and of the earth, and all that is between them, and Lord of every point of the sun's risings.

(Saaffat:5)

The Lordship of Allah covers the whole material universe. Nothing, not even any manifestation of nature, is free. Instead everything, be it the tiniest atom or a heavenly body, a plant or an animal, pertaining to material thing or energy, connected with dynamic or static bodies, is bound by physical laws and principles.

Four Factors of Providence

Providence is the other name of the cherishing and sustaining Powers of the God. It has four constituents. They are:

 Creation - It is to bring forth things from non-existence to existence.

- Mohd. Shihabuddin Nadwi

- 2) Orientation -— This involves giving proper shape and proportion to the body system of material objects.
- The Divine Decree All creations are bound by physical laws through the divine decree.
- 4) Guidance Every created entity is guided to adopt scheme that suits to the natural formation of its body.

All these constituents have been referred to in the following Qur'anic verse.

Glorify the name of your Lord, the Most High; Who has created (everything) and then proportioned it (the body system of everything), Who has determined (a natural order for all creations), then guided (them to follow the order of Life).

(A'la:1-3)

These are very comprehensive verses ripe with meaning. These are the four divine principles that cover the whole universe with all its contents. Actually all manifestations of this universe are exhibits of divine providence. A deep study of all material things has to becarried with reference to these four factors and that will be the Qur'anic concept of the study of the universe. This study will unravel such spectacular aspects of creation which are characteristic of the divine creations alone. Obviously the loftiness of the creator can be gauged through a critical study of the creation alone!

Significance of the Study of Providence

The actual details of the exquisite craftsmanship of Allah can be obtained through the animals and plants of the world alone. Such study of the details provide material for thought to both the common man and the scholars. While the learned man is thrilled the common man is equally surprised even if his study is shallow. The variations among the animals and plants are so multifarious that the human mind is perplexed and thrilled at the same time by their observation and study. There will be no way but to accept the existence of a miraculous being endowed with superpowers to create such systems that promote and develop life in the universe. The species are systematically studied under biological sciences. This study confirms the efficiency and truth of the omnipotence and omniscience of Allah.

The significance of the study of the sciences can be gauged by the fact that the first verses revealed on the holy Prophet concern mainly with the study of the creation of various creatures and particularly of man.

Read! In the name of your Lord, Who has created (all that exists). Has created man from a clot.

(Alaq: 1-2)

This is the very first revelation wherein Allah has introduced Himself as the creator of all creatures and has invited man to make a thorough study of the creations. This clearly indicates that if one wishes to know the reality about the providential powers of God, then one has to make a study of the creations. This is because the greatness and perfection of the creator is possible only through the study of His

creations. The knowledge and understanding gained through observation strengthens the Faith and would not allow the believer to wander about in the valleys of thought and philosophies. Neither can the influences of atheism and irreligiousness would shake his firm belief. For this purpose the Glorious Book has reiterated the need to study and reflect on the nature, growth and life of the creations.

Proofs of Providence in Plant Manifestations

Since I have chosen plant life as the topic of my talk, I shall expose the Qur'anic views and concepts about the plant life alone in a way that miraculous features of the providence come out vividly before us. They will go to prove the exquisite powers, creative capacities, philosophy of creation, sustaining the creatures and His endless blessings on them. They will further provide means of strengthening the faith in case of the faithful and of instructing the rebellious. According to the Glorious Qur'an, everything of this colorful world bears testimony to the existence of God, His unity, creativity and providence and this will be enough to negate the atheism and materialism and to prove theism.

Verily, in the alternation of the night and the day and in all that Allah has created in the heavens and the earth are Signs for those people who keep their duty to Allah.

(Yunus:6)

One of the powerful manifestations of His providence is the growth of various kinds of plants that cover the land. Reflecting on the characteristics of these

plants would reveal the Divine Signs in the form of laws of nature.

He it is Who sends down water (rain) from the sky, from it you drink and from it grows the vegetation on which you send your cattle to pasture. With it He causes to grow for you crops, the olives, date palms, grapes and every kind of fruit. Verily! In this is indeed a Sign (of the Divine existence and providence) for people who give thought.

(Nahal: 10-11)

Marvels of the Nature and the Qur'anic Miracle

For making a close observation of the physical and biological manifestations of the plant life, a scientific background is essential. Biology is the science under which botany has to be studied, with special reference to plant activities, characteristics and peculiarities that speak of divine providential powers. They can even be referred as "Marvels of the Nature". They can be studied more concertedly by discerning eyes. For the layman they are nothing but accidental happenings.

The more important observation one has to concentrate on is the fact that these Qur'anic principles and generalizations were revealed 1,400 years ago. They stand to any test by scientific means. Obviously this was not possible for any human being. They can only be enumerated by one who is well versed with the functioning of the inner constituents and has an authoritative hold and knowledge of each and every part of the machine.

A thorough study from the scientific point of view of the Qur'anic principles

brings about the fact that this Glorious Scripture is not only a miracle from the literary aspect but also from the point of being an encyclopedia covering all sciences. No other work —be it a human effort or a super human one- can claim such comprehensive perfection. Its factual claims are irrevocable. They are based on such scientific facts that stand to no change. Even their presentation is so superb that the materialists also cannot but agree with the inevitable truths.

Some facts connected with botanical developments as described in the Book are presented here to prove the providential powers of the Almighty.

Who Brings forth the Living from the Dead?

It has been established by laborious and continuous scientific researches and experiments that a living body or life cannot emanate from dead elements or lifeless constituents. It is only living bodies that can give rise to other living bodies. The experiments of Louis Pasteur bore testimony to this fact. It must be noted that the unit of life is a cell which contains a viscous and moving material called protoplasm. Its presence is common in both animals and plants. The cells in their bodies are packed with protoplasm which is a living matter. All activities of life emanate from it. It is the manifestation of the providential powers.

The whole scientific world is perplexed about its origin. From where and how did this living material come out of the dead bodies? Even experts in embryology could not and cannot solve this great mystery. A group of scientists opine that life

might not have been created on the surface of our planet Earth but on some others from where it might have been planted through meteors on to our planet. This concept merely adds to confusion and the process of creation attains more complexity. From scientific point of view creation is such a mystery which cannot be solved by any human effort. One has to submit to the presence of a great providential power who is ruling all over this vast universe. The reference to this great fact has been made in the holy Book as follows:-

Verily! It is Allah Who causes the seedgrain and the date-stone to split and sprout. He bringsforth the living (protoplasm) from the dead elements, and the Bringer-forth of the dead (like eggs of the birds etc.) from the living. Such is Allah, then how are you deluded away from the truth?

(An'am :95)

This principle truth has been repeated at several places and in different forms in the Glorious Qur'an.

The Mystery of Life

It is certainly a providential miracle that by the intermixing of dead elements (like oxygen. carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, calcium phosphorus, chlorine, sulphur, potassium, sodium etc., which present in protoplasm) a highly complicated living being is created. More miraculous is the fact that the creator repeats these processes of creation is to thus leaving men wondering. Thus from the living (animals and plants). He brings forth dead bodies (seeds, fruits-stones and eggs) and then instills life in them. Bringing out the

exact replica of the bird from its egg and plant from its tiny seed is certainly miracle. Is it not a marvel that mammals give birth to mammals of their species? Does this whole process not amount to creating living beings from living beings alone? Obviously this is a marvel- more stunning and mysterious. The study of genetics unravel many more such mysteries.

Scientifically it is claimed that the cells of animals and plant contain 'genes' and 'chromosomes' which carry the hereditary species characteristics intact and that these are responsible for passage of these characters from one generation to another. However this concept does not explain how the limbs of a body or the branches, leaves, flowers and fruits of a tree can grow preserving and developing all their inherent characteristics? Obviously there will not be any difference in the shape of the leaves. flowers and fruits. There will be not a slight alteration in their colour or other characteristics. is the composition changed, nor is the taste. It appears as if is directing from within to act properly and accurately. Branches asked to grow tall to a certain extent and then spread out. Leaves ordered to adopt such and such shape and to carry out such and such functions. Veins are advised to extend in particular directions and form such and such parts of the body. The flowers and fruits are instructed to absorb such and such constituent elements in such and such proportions so that the particular colours and tastes develop. Thus every plant and tree develops exactly the same characteristics as its predecessor possessed.

The whole process appears like wonderland. A scientist himself is puzzled and declared thus:-

To say that the body form is controlled by the genes is hardly illuminating scientifically than to say that it is controlled by God,

The world of genes and chromosomes is highly complex and has not been fully understood even by scientists. Gene is formed with DNA from four constituents. How exactly these are combined together to produce such complex form is a mystery acknowledged by scientists also:

It was still not known, however, exactly how these four kinds of building units are joined together to form DNA.

Another scientist admits:

Without DNA, living organisms, could not reproduce, and life as we know it, could not have started. All the substances of living matters enzymes and all the others, whose production is catalysed by enzymes—depend in the last analysis on DNA. How, then, did DNA, and life, start? This is a question that science has always hesitated to ask, because the origin of life has been bound up with religious beliefs even more strongly than has the origin of earth and universe. It is still dealt with only hesitantly and apologetically.

Who Repeats Creative Processes?

All processes connected with genes and chromosomes take place in cells. Every cell is a complete factory in itself. It can only be viewed through a microscope. The pity is, man is unable to understand and realise

the truth about this tiny thing even! How did life originate? In a mysterious way whose truth is not known. This process is continually taking place in nature, i.e. this is being repeated in the world of animals and plants continually. Every species gives rise to itself. But the rebirth of a particular species is as mysterious as its first creation. The whole exceed that how this 'spontaneous activity' is taking place? For example, consider a plant that sprouts out of the tiny seed. It appears in the form of the specific parent species. Its branches, leaves, buds, flowers and fruits all retain the 'parental' characteristics intact. It is as if the same artist has created them chiseling to the same extent. Apart from the outer appearances, there will be not even hairsplit differences. These manifestations cannot be explained through any voluntary process. One has no alternatives, but to accept the existence of an Almighty Creator who not only creates millions of species but also would continue to reproduce them in exactly the same form with all original characteristics, intact declaring the providential capabilities. The whole world of wonder struck. Since the world of science is still not in a position to unravel the mysteries of creation, the Qur'an describes the whole process of regeneration of life and revival of species as special diverse activities which pose a challenge to the sciences.

See they not how Allah originated creation, then repeats it. Verily that is easy for Allah. (Ankaboot: 19)

Is not He (better than your gods) Who originates creation, then repeats it, and Who gives you sustenance from heaven and earth? Is there any god with Allah?

Say, 'Bring forth your proofs, if you are truthful.' (Naml :64)

Unity of God and Repudiating Plurality

This principle has been explained at another place in a more elaborate way stressing that creation and rejuvenation of the species is a unique proof of unity of God and is a miracle that is particular to God Almighty alone.

Say: "Is there of your (so-called Allah's) partners one that originates the creation and then repeats it? " Say: "Allah originates the creation and then shall repeat it. Then how are you deluded away (from the truth)?"

(Yunus: 34)

This statement is as true of the modern scientists as it was of the polytheists of yore. Science can neither originate any plant nor repeat the process. Creation can be taken up by one who is well-versed with the inner working of the species of life. It is certain that there is only one Creator, and one Accomplisher of the whole universe and will be only one, Millions of these creatures are nothing but manifestations of His Providence which of course are more than a challenge to science and its followers.

The manifestations of Providence lie spread all over the plant world. Each and every one of the millions of botanical species is a vivid miraculous representative of the Providential Powers. It also stands as an admonition to man. From scientific point of view, every leaf of any tree will be like a complete factory wherein carbohydrate, which is a basic constituent of food, is prepared. How wonderful is this

process of photosynthesis, needs another essay. This whole thing has been summed up in a couplet by Shaikh Saadi, the famous Persian poet.

Leaves of green trees, to discerning eyes

Are pages of volumes leading to His understanding!

Demand of Islam

In conclusion it can authoritatively be declared that in this universe there exists a curiously active being who is engaged in sustaining His creations in an equally curious way. Islam demands that such a creative being be accepted as God, should be worshipped and contact established on strong lines. This demand is not a sign of ancient traditions but a need of the present scientific world. Even the holy Book has advised to partake of Allah's provisions and offer gratitude and not be ungrateful by taking others as partners with Him.

(Who has) Sent down rain from the sky and brought forth there with fruits as a provision for you. Then set not up rivals unto Allah, while you know (well the fact). (Bagara:22)

This statement was applicable on ancient polytheists who were considering other deities also along with the Supreme Being. It is also true in case of the present materialists and atheists who are struggling in the mire of materialism and are awarding the status of God to matter. This amounts to polytheism. It is very essential that man recognises the fact that matter is also a creation of God and that the Supreme Being with creative and providential powers is none other than Allah!

Concept of 'Adl in the Qur'an

- Ayesha Sultana

Adl is the criterion of politics. Adl is the foundation on which the world is constituted. Adl is the soul of commands.

The Holy Qur'an uses two important terms of 'adl and qist to explain the notion of 'adl. The term 'adl and its derivatives and the term qist and its derivatives have been applied in the Qur'an respectively on 28 and 25 occasions with different meanings.

In the Qur'anic perspective, 'adl enjoys an intrinsic value. Health and security in all matters are attached to 'adl. In this Revealed Book 'adl is perceived as a fundamental and essential principle on which the truth of existence has been constructed, according to which the universe functions and based on which pronouncement of Revealed Books and religious laws is accomplished. From the Qur'anic viewpoint, 'adl is both the essence and source of existence; and existence has come into being on the basis of and in accordance with it. Also, the loftiest goal of the world, man and religion is to attain 'adl and actualise it in the society and within man's soul. For this reason, God has emphatically ordered all human beings, particularly the people of faith, to be upholders of 'adl and qist.

In the Qur'anic viewpoint, 'adl is not merely an abstract concept; it is rather a real notion rooted in existence and in man's primordial nature. It is, therefore, a real and essential, and not a conventional,

conception, because commanding a mere abstract and conventional order in general, all-encompassing and perpetual and in all dimensions of individual and collective existence, would be meaningless and devoid of value. However, God has stressed unceasing struggle for 'adl and its realisation in the whole gamut of human life. "Surely, Allah enjoins 'adl and kindness." Among God's attributes one is that He loves the equitable: "Surely, Allah loves the equitable."

The Qur'an is itself the book of 'adl and qist. It is, on one hand, founded on 'adl and, on the other, for the materialisation of 'adl and qist in human society. In general, 'adl is the extrinsic and intrinsic aspect of the Qur'an.

"One dimension of the Qur'an aims to eliminate oppression among human beings and introduce social 'adl among mankind. If we, those who consider themselves to be followers of the Qur'an and the world Muslims strive to expand this dimension of the Qur'an – the dimension relating to the dispensation of Islamic 'adl – in the world, it will become a world acquiring the Qur'an's external appearance."

From the viewpoint of the Qur'an, 'adl is one of the Attributes of God and has different dimensions such as 'adl in the creation of creatures, endowing them with talents, enabling creatures to accomplish

their perfection based on their natural dispositions, management and administration of the world of existence, legislation and enunciation of the laws required by the individual and society; 'adl in the afterlife is, attending to, measuring and evaluating man's deeds on a scale. Divine 'adl is an Attribute of God. While being real, perfect and absolute, it is one of the principles of creation. Accordingly, it is calculated as one of the fundamental principles in the life of the individual and society. This is the meaning of belief in divine 'adl.

Belief in God's 'adl signifies belief in 'adl anywhere and anytime; that is, seeking 'adl not only in philosophy but in sociology as well.

On the other hand, the Qur'an views 'adl as a human and social quality rooted in human primordial nature, which means that in man's nature and creation is ingrained a tendency towards 'adl and 'adl-seeking and an aversion for oppression, tyranny, injustice and discrimination. This is a fact warranted by man in his inner nature even though preoccupation with superficial fools and worldly matters keep him in ignorance. The Qur'an does not recall man to something beyond his human existence, intellect and nature. If the Qur'an calls man to 'adl, it is 'adl that inheres in him.

"We sent aforetime our apostles with Clear Signs and sent down with them the Book and the Balance (of right and wrong), that men may stand forth in justice." – Surah Al Hadid (57), Aayah 25.

The major themes of the Qur'an include God-consciousness, fairness, equity, justice, equality and balance in all our dealings. It stresses the doing of what is right because it is the truth and the Truth represents one of the ninety-nine "beautiful names" of God. As a reflection of His attributes of Al-'Adl (The Just One) and Al-Mugsit (The Upholder of Equity), we are urged to establish justice and deal with all in a manner that assures equity, fairness and balance and safeguards the rights, property, honour and dignity of all people. God assures us that even though He is All-Powerful and none can challenge His Authority, He deals with all with truth, kindness, justice, and the rights of none will be transgressed on the Day of Judgment.

Today the processes associated with globalisation have reinforced and even increased prevailing conditions of inequality among human beings with respect to their political, economic, cultural, and social opportunities. Yet - or perhaps precisely because of this trend there has been, within political philosophy, an observable tendency to question whether equality in fact should be treated as the central value within a theory of justice. In response, we the Ummah should examine a number of nonegalitarian positions to try to show that the concept of equality cannot be dispensed with in any adequate consideration of justice and Islam is the only solution to eliminate oppression and introduce social 'Adl among mankind.■

(Courtesy: Radiance)

Tabrez Ansari & I

- Harsh Mander

Freedom is indivisible. "The chains on any one of my people," Nelson Mandela reminded us, "were the chains on all of them, the chains on all of my people were the chains on me."

There are many things that trouble me about India today. One is our evermounting tolerance of the open and profound injustice done to "other people". A boy stabbed to death on a train does not trouble me because he is Muslim; a young girl brutally gang-raped does not stir my outrage because she is Dalit; an entire people locked down for over a month deserve it because they do not accept India to be their country; and nearly two million people excluded as citizens in Assam do not trouble me because they are "infiltrators" (even if they were born in and love this nation).

India's criminal justice system has always been biased against disadvantaged castes, women and Muslims. Few people who organised and participated in caste and communal massacres and rapes have ever been punished. But in recent years, this official bias has become more open, brazen and unapologetic. A Muslim charged with terror crimes can spend 14, even 23, years in jail, before he steps out, innocent. A Hindu charged with terror is likely to soon walk free, and might even be elected to Parliament. Criminal cases after the 2013 Muzaffarnagar riots collapse wholesale with barely a whimper of protest.

This open bias of the criminal justice system is most visible in mob lynching.

Lynch mobs, who in most cases record their own crimes triumphantly on mobile phone cameras, roam as heroes. The victim, even after he dies, is tainted as a criminal. The most recent example of this is the decision of the Jharkhand police to write down the crime of the lynch mob that attacked Tabrez Ansari from murder to culpable homicide.

Orphaned as a boy, raised by his uncles, as a young teenager, Ansari migrated to Pune to build his life on his own. At 22, now an accomplished welder, he returned home to find a bride. His uncles married him off to a very impoverished Shaista. Her father, an alcoholic, accepted Ansari because he sought no dowry. The two young people were to leave for Pune the morning after his lynching to start their new life; their train tickets were booked. But that was not to be. I feel a personal sense of grief and loss at his killing, especially following our visit of the Karwan e Mohabbat to his home.

Ansari was returning that night after seeking his aunt's blessings. A mob caught him, tied him to a pole, thrashed him savagely for six hours, and forced him to recite "Jai Shri Ram".

People phoned the police several times to rescue the boy, but they did not arrive until morning. They did not register a complaint against the lynch mob until after he died four days later. But they promptly registered criminal charges of robbery against Ansari. The police took him to a local health centre. Although his skull was cracked, and bones broken, the doctors

handed him back to the police after cursory first aid. Police detained him in their lockup. His family pleaded that they be allowed to take him to a hospital, promising to return him to the police after he was better, but they refused. The family secretly took a picture of him in the lock-up. He was clearly wounded critically. The police then presented him to a judge, who should have ordered his medical treatment. Instead, he sent Ansari to jail. The jail authorities should have insisted that he be sent to a competent hospital. They did not. The family saw him once through a screen in jail, as he moaned in agony, begging them to get him to a hospital. Four days after the lynching, Ansari died.

The grounds the police stated for watering down the charge of murder to culpable homicide was that it was "not a case of pre-meditated murder"; and that the second medical report concludes that Ansari died of cardiac arrest, not just a head injury. This ignores an earlier inquiry by senior officials of the Jharkhand government, which concluded that Ansari died due to the negligence of police officials and grave lapses by doctors.

There was no robbery in the village. The police charge-sheet tried to justify the mob crime by charging Ansari with the "intention" of stealing. They ignored evidence on video of this being a religious hate crime. Ansari's uncle, who went to the lynching site in the morning, records in his statement that he heard a member of the mob shout, "Beat him so much that he dies".

There was only one post-mortem. The second report stating that he died due to cardiac failure (signed by five doctors,

none of who were trained in forensics), was based only on the first post-mortem report. The immediate cause of death after violence indeed could be heart-failure, but this opinion deliberately obscures the circumstances which led to organ failure. I spoke to J Amalorpavanathan, retired head of vascular surgery, Madras Medical College. He said the human skull bone is incredibly sturdy. Cracking it requires application of great force. "It is very clear", he said, based on the post-mortem report, "that this young person, who was otherwise healthy and normal, was beaten so severely that he cracked his skull and bled inside his brain. This resulted in his death. In short. he was beaten to death."

What does this add up to? That a mob attacked an unarmed young man murderously in a religious hate crime. The police, judge, doctors and jail officials all abetted his murder with shameful, wilful neglect.

Why is it possible for state authorities to act in this way, over and over again? Because the rest of us don't care. This happened to a working-class Muslim orphan. How does it concern me?

We forget Martin Luther King's iridescent words from Birmingham jail, "Injustice anywhere," he declared, "is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny".

My destiny is tied to that of Tabrez and Shaista Ansari. Until they are assured justice, I will never be free. ◆

Mander is a human rights worker and writer.

(Courtesy: The Indian Express, 14-9-2019)

Who is Our Enemy

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

While dedicating his book to a student "Ignited Minds", former President and the Missile Man of India said: "I dedicate this book to a child who is studying in class 12. Her name is Snehal Thakkar. On 11 April 2002 when I reached Anand by road in the evening, it was under curfew following communal disturbances. The next day, at the Anandalaya High School, while talking to the students, a question came up: "Who is our enemy?" There were many answers, but the one we all agreed was correct came from her: "Our enemy is poverty." It is the root cause of our problems and should be the object of our fight, not our own."

There is no denying the fact that poverty often leads to do evil desires and anti-social activities. The corruption is one of the cause of poverty. So the biggest hurdle in our development and progress is corruption inter alia poverty. It is also the gravest threat to our national security, unity and integrity.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that almost everyone of us is caught in the cesspool of corruption. It is unfortunate that scant attention is paid to halal (legal) and haram (illegal). No doubt only for want of halal (permited) income we see around us chaos, murder, loot, depredation, plundering, pillage, gangsterism, sexual, offences, adultery, fornication, rape, and even match fixing and cyber crime galore. Haram money leads people towards the path of destruction, subversion and ruination. That is why 25 percent of population is still living below the poverty line. Even basic facilities such as education and health care are not available.

It should be noted that right from Nehru era till date corrupt politicians enjoyed power.

It is time we make honest efforts to get rid society of corruption so that an atmosphere of peace and amity may prevail throughout the country.

In short, India's progress depends on the living standards of the vast majority. So long as poverty is not tackled, independence will hold no meaning for us. Having eradicated poverty, we can think of a sound and egalitarian society that may offer equal opportunities to all.

Pages From Islamic History

The Primogenitor of Man: Hazrat Adam (AS):

Allah, the Supreme Being, the Creator of this earth, the sky and the entire universe, created such creatures also as could inhabit them and make use of them. Amongst them was the man whom He made the most important and greatest of all. For having this human being created He had first of all a man made of clay. Then, for his company and for getting the family raised jointly by the two, He created, out of that man himself, his wife. And, then, the human race, getting originated, as it did, from them, got gradually disseminated all over the earth. He, then, assigned this human race the job of managing the affairs of this earth. He created on the earth all the paraphernalia that the man might need, so that the man, with the application of his intellect which the man is bestowed with by his Creator and Master, could explore them as per his need. He taught him the ways to manufacture the things he needed and told him that: all these things, along with the life, are given to you to benefit from, and make use of, them. But, you have to live on this earth a pious life, with righteousness and in accordance with the instructions from your Providence. In case you go wrong you would get punished.

When He created the

primogenitor of mankind, the first ever man, Hazrat Adam (AS), He had him initially lodged in the most comfortable place in the heavens, Jannat (Paradise), Prior to create him Allah had already had another creature, the Jinn, brought into being. He had one of the Jinns, Iblees by name, who had ostensibly become a very devout servant, already lodged, by way of reward for his devotion, in the Paradise. But he had this idiocy committed that when Allah, having conferred upon Adam (AS) great dignity and honor had him lodged in the Paradise, Iblees got envious of him. He grudged that when he was already there why was this individual of a new race bestowed with so much honor and dignity? When Allah the Providence ordered everyone to bow down before Adam in reverence to him, even such a celestial creature as the angles complied immediately with their Lord's order. But, Iblees refused to obey and behaved in a haughty manner. On this disobedience and haughtiness Allah Almighty expelled him out of the paradise and had him thrown on earth. He had His Malediction imposed on him. In order to avenge himself for this disgrace, he enticed Adam and his wife. Hazrat Hawwa, and talked them into taking a bite from a tree which Allah Almighty had already forbidden Adam and Hawwa to eat from. Allah Almighty had told Adam in the very beginning to enjoy each and every plant and tree in the Paradise except that particular tree. The Shaitan, that Iblees, coaxed and sweet-talked them into having it eaten. He told them that there were great benefits in having it. He made them somehow convinced that there was nothing so particularly wrong with eating from this tree. There was, rather much advantage in it. And, thus he made him commit the disobedience, Allah Almighty got displeased with Hazrat Adam for having done so, that despite having forbidden by Him he committed this act. And, so, by way of punishment, He sent him, too down to the earth taking him out of the environs of the Paradise. Iblees still remained adamant on his obedience. He did not even seek the forgiveness from Allah. Hence, he and his progeny were declared unworthy and damned forever.

Adam (AS), however, beseeched Allah for forgiveness with utmost bewailing and lamentation for his disobedience. Hence, Allah forgave him. Nevertheless, because of the trait of disobedience in his nature that had gotten displayed. He decided to make him and his progeny undergo a test of their obedience, by making them stay for a while on earth. Here, while living on earth, they were to furnish the proof, by refraining themselves from committing disobedience to their Lord, that they were really worthy of being taken back into Paradise. The same verdict was made applicable to the Jinn

also. The procedure of conducting this test was decreed to continue and last up till the end of this world, that is, till the Doomsday. In this way the individuals from among the descendants of Adam and the Jinn who were not the progeny of Iblees and were not to follow in his footstep could be tested as to they were going to obedient to Him.

Religious Guidance in the Form of Prophecy:

After the inception of the chain of human life on Earth, human races, one after another, inhabited the Earth. They have been obedient to the Divine Command. But, they started, gradually, giving preference to their earthly desires, self-gratification and self' indulgence, over their religious and moral rectitude. They started getting negligent in being grateful to, and worshipping, their Creator and Master and the Providence of the entire world. They started violating, at will, the commands of Allah Almighty, their Master and Creator. Hence, in order to exhort them, Allah Almighty kept designating, time and again, someone righteous and sagacious, from among themselves as His Messenger to exhort them. Such a person used to be called the 'Prophet'. Thus, these Prophets kept being raised, as per the need, within the peoples. In each and every people, whenever malpractices got rampant, a Prophet was sent to them. Wherever there happened to be a population on the earth and the disobedience to Allah

Almighty got on the increase, a Prophet was sent. Thus, every place had its Prophets. These Prophets kept, admonishing their respective Peoples solicitously and had all their lives and souls devoted to making them see the reason.

Among these Prophets (peace be on them), the first one designated as the Prophet to take care of, and strive for, keeping his descendents on the right path and making them stick to the devotion to God, was Hazrat Adam (AS) himself, the very primogenitor of the human race. Hence, his progeny kept, generation after generation, pursuing the path shown them by Hazrat Adam (AS). But, as and when, with the passage of time and generations, the putrefaction kept creeping in, the Prophets were kept being raised, as per the need, amidst them. Allah Almighty has said:

(And there is not a community but there has passed away among them of a Warner.) (Al-Fatir: 24)

Some of these Prophets have been mentioned, by way of instances, by Allah Almighty in the holy Quran. About the rest He merely stated that there were Prophets sent to each and every people. Among the Prophets described by Allah Almighty in His Book, the one described first of all is Hazrat Nooh (AS). He was assigned the Prophecy centuries after the primogenitor of man, Hazrat Adam (AS), in his progeny. His people had, in

the course of venerating, as they did, the icons they had made of their pious and celebrated figures, moved on, gradually, to worshipping them. They had, thus, abandoning their Creator and Master, who is Single and Alone and has no equal, had started worshipping their celebrities, having them elevated to the status of God. Simultaneously. they had gotten, on the other hand, involved in all sorts of sins and iniquitous acts. Having lived amidst them for nine centuries and a half, Hazrat Nooh (AS) performed his missionary and reformatory obligations. Even after so long a period of exhortation and reformatory efforts by him it were only a few individuals who could come round to worshiping the One and the Single God and having their moral and human condition mended. When there was no hope anymore left about the maximum majority of the people of getting to the path of rectitude, their Prophet, Nooh (AS), made a supplication to Allah to have the punishment inflicted upon them. Thereupon, it was decreed by Allah Almighty about them to have them perished in a deluge. Before the infliction of the punishment, however, Hazrat Nooh (AS) was commanded to have an ark made so that by means of it Hazrat Nooh and his few could be rescued. For, it were the disobedient of the decreed to be perished by the enormous, tumultuous deluge

(And assuredly We sent Nuh to his people, then he stayed among them for a thousand years, less fifty years; and then the Deluge overtook them while they were wrong-doers. Then We delivered him and those with him in the ark, and made it a sign to the worlds.) (Ankabut: 14-I5)

Later, it were the descendants of these very rescued survivers who inhabited the earth. They have been described by Allah Almighty in His Book, the holy Quran. Details of the peoples of some other Prophets who came after Nooh (AS) have also been given in the holy Quran. Those were the Prophets who were raised amongst the peoples of Arab region and the regions surrounding it when they had started disobeying their Lord and insisted on perpetration of sins. And, as and when they went too far in disobeying their Prophets and did not follow their advices, they were afflicted upon with retribution. Amongst them is the people of Aad, one of the generations of the people of Nooh (AS) themselves, who have been mentioned. They were inhabitants of the region lying East of Yemen. Amidst them also, the worship of idols and icons of their own liking, abandoning their actual Master and Creator, had gotten rampant. Along with that, acts of atrocities and aggressions against the poor and the weak, hauteur and conceit and other malpractices had become the order of the day. Amidst them, Hud (AS) was raised as the Prophet by Allah Almighty. His People also persisted in practicing the polytheism and perpetuation in their decadence and depravity. They kept ridiculing their Prophet, Hud (AS). Ultimately, Allah's wrath descended on them.(I)

The narration of this people is followed by the narration of the people of Thamud. These people inhabited the mountainous region in the north of Hijaz area. Amidst them was designated Hazrat Saleh (AS) as the Prophet. These people also used to worship all sorts of gods, having them made up out of their fantasy. They indulged in oppressing the weak and many other obscenities. This Prophet, too, treated by his people with gross cussedness. All his efforts failed to make them mend their ways. In order to make them convinced of Hazrat Saleh's Prophecy and by way of a confirmation thereof, Allah Almighty had a she-camel brought to being and commanded them to refrain from causing any harm to it. But, they killed it and persisted in their obduracy. Hence they, too, were perished. Only the righteous survived. Those who survived and their descendants started leading a pious life. But with the change of generation and passage of time, malpractices and polytheism started creeping in. For their reform, Prophets from among the peoples themselves were designated. After the people of Thamud, description of the people of Lut (AS) and the people of Madyan is made in the holy Quran. All these peoples harassed and harrowed their respective Prophets and did not mend their respective repugnant ways, their malpractices and misdeeds.

The people of Lut were inhabitants of a portion of Palestine. Their greatest malefaction, apart from the polytheism, was the bane of homosexuality which was rampant in them. In it, too, they had, started, employing coercion and stark brazenness. Along with it, they were adamant and obstinate in committing other sins as well. Amongst them was raised Hazrat Lut (AS) who was Hazrat Ibrahim's (AS) nephew. He tried his level best. But, his exhortations were not heeded to. Hence, a very severe volcanic tremor was inflicted upon them and they were all perished.

The people of Madyan were settled in the north of Hijaz region. Apart from the Shirk they indulged in committing defalcation and perfidy in trade and commercial transactions. They were involved in other sins as well. Amongst them was raised Hazrat Shoaib (AS) as the Prophet. He, too, tried very hard to bring them around and make them see the reason. When they remained persistent in their misdeeds and malpractices and crossed all limits, the lacerating punishment took them over.

After the people of Madyan, it is the Egyptian people who have been described in the holy Quran. There in Egypt their king Firaun (Pharaoh) and his folks had played great havoc. There the Israelites were in minority. Whenever any baby boy took birth among them, he would be killed; and, if the new-born were a girl she would be spared so that she could be forced later to serve in the households of Fira'aun's folks. The people of the weaker races were meted out brutal treatment. Furthermore, alongside all that, Fira'aun, having proclaimed himself the god made the people worship him. He would blatantly say: there is none else your god but me. The Israelite Prophet, Hazrat Musa (AS), exhorted him a lot. When a long span of period had passed while he kept exhorting him without there being any break in Fira'aun's brutality and coercion. Allah's wrath descended and Fira'aun and his accomplices were drowned in the sea. Thereafter, these Israelites themselves, after the passage of some time, started getting recalcitrant and deviating from the path shown by their Prophets. transgressed to the extent of even getting involved in polytheistic practices. They persisted in their moral depravities and took to 'swindling and skullduggery. Thereupon, Allah Almighty got them subjected to 'afflictions at the hands of others. Yet; they did not give up their misdeeds and transgressions. And the limit of their obduracy was that they harassed the prophets and had some of them even killed. Lastly, they had all the thoroughly made to have Hazrat Isa (AS) also crucified which were rendered by Allah Almighty infructuous and vain.

These are some instances which are specifically described in the holy

Quran also. Otherwise, there had been thousands of peoples and each of them had Prophets sent to them. Whenever they went to the extremity of their disobedience and malpractices, they met their perdition imposed upon them by Almighty Allah.

their The Israelites had settlements in Egypt and Syria; It was, on the one hand, such a state of their decadence and depravity has been mentioned above. On the other hand. the peoples who were settled in various other parts of the world, too, had, having abandoned Allah Almighty or in association with Him, made up a lot of other deities. Various kinds of vices, too, were rampant amidst them. When all these peoples got totally steeped in polytheism, atheism, tyranny and moral depravity, Allah Almighty got highly displeased and he discontinued, for a while, the chain of Prophets used to be designated earlier on a regular basis. He willed, perhaps, to watch as to what extent could the man go to, if left to himself, in adopting, on his own accord, the life of sensualism and bestiality. Hence, for six hundred long years after Hazrat Isa (AS), Allah Almighty did not send down any Prophet and let the peoples plummet down into the slough. During these six hundred years the entire humanity had acquired extremely vicious habits and had reached extremely obnoxious state. It had all but happened that the human race itself was totally wiped off the face of the earth by the Lord of Worlds in punishment of all that, as is apparent from a tradition narrated by Bukhari:

"Allah Almighty looked at all the dwellers on the earth and was disgusted by them, whether Arabs or non-Arabs, except for some remnants of the Ahl-e-Keetab (the book-holders)."

Yet, the Mercy of the Lords of the worlds superseded His fury and He granted them one more chance to get exhorted. To that end, He raised a Prophet endowed with furthermore sublime characteristics and loftiest possible capabilities. That was no else but our own Prophet Mohammad, son of Abdullah, (SAW). An indication of his getting raised was already made in the Divine books revealed to previous Prophets, that is, Torah and the Gospel. It was stated therein that in the wake of all the nations of all the Prophets, when the vices would be extremely on the rise all over the world and the moral and religious level of the mankind would reach the nadir and be marked by sheer disobedience to God, there would be raised for the last time a Prophet adorned with furthermfected qualities for the reform of the mankind. The intimation about this had also been already given by the name 'Ahmad' of the Prophet Mohammad (SAW). Accordingly, hence, Allah Almighty raised this highly magnificent Prophet from amongst the superior most race of Arabs, the unlettered unsophisticated people of the Middle

East, six hundred years after Hazrat Isa (AS) (Jesus Christ). These people were confined within the very intractable land of the Arab peninsula and were, therefore, protected against the influences of other peoples and their civilizational evils. They were uncivilized but were in the state of their innate nature. Their heads and hearts were void of influences of other races and were, therefore, fully capable of shouldering greatest possible responsibilities. They were destined by Allah to be assigned the responsibility of guiding not only the Arabs but the entire world towards the path of righteousness.

The Prophet (SAW) carried out this responsibility with deliberation, perseverance diligence. and Consequently the conditions were tremendously improved. This resulted in enormous reform in the state of affairs. And, thus, the entire humanity which could have fallen prev to the Divine penalization, subsequent upon their earning the displeasure of their Creator and Master, the Almighty Allah, was saved. With that a new era of human history started. With that such a human society came up as was a paragon and had the capability to the service of guiding the humanity to righteousness. The world was, thus, saved from getting perished. Hazrat Mohammad (SAW), the Prophet was endowed with such characteristics, capabilities and qualities as proved

themselves to be the Mercy for all the worlds. He (SAW) under the instruction from his Lord and Providence, acted with extraordinary sagacity, deliberation and statesmanship. Rendering special succour from Him, Allah Almighty had his performance, made extraordinarily efficacious. It had its own extraordinary effect and led to an enormously great and historical revolution in the states of affairs. Commencing with the Arabs it reached every nook and corner of the world. Because of it, the condition of the life of humans getting transformed the one at which Allah Almighty had expressed His displeasure, reached such a nice state which Allah Almighty expressed His conciliation land delight at. In respect of such companions of the Prophet who had set a record in devotion to the One and the Only God. it was declared:

(Allah is conciliated with them and they are conciliated with Allah).

Prophet's Mission and Message:

All the Prophets who were raised, right from Hazrat Adam (AS) up to Hazrat Mohammad (SAW), strictly enjoined the renunciation of Shirk and adoption of Tauheed, because, it is Allah Almighty who is the Creator of the entire universe. It is He who has furnished the universe with all kinds of goods that might be needed. It is He who has made these goods fully usable by, and easily available to, man as a result of which everyone draws mamum benefits from them throughout all his or

her life and fulfils his/her needs. In fact the life of man itself is sustained by these very goods and their usability and availability. How is it, then, if the man forgets His Magnanimity and, abandoning Him, adopts some odd objects lying hither thither which he fancies can benefit him or pose a threat of causing some harm to him and starts saying: we are helped by so-and-so, our needs are fulfilled by so-and-so and such and such object is magnanimous to us? How is it then that the man attributes the Magnanimity conferred exclusively by his Creator and Master, Allah Almighty, on him to others and asks them for fulfillment of his requirements and, abandoning his real Benefactor who is the greatest of all the benefactors and grants all kinds of beneficence, calls other petty objects his benefactor and master? How will, quite obviously, Allah Almighty, who has created each and everything and bestowed man with each and everything and continues to do so incessantly, allow all that to be perpetrated and be not angry? Hence it is the Shirk which Allah Almighty gets extremely displeased with. And that is something absolutely realistic, sensible and just.

That is why all the Prophets and reformers interdicted, first of all and most of all, the Shirk. Thereafter and along with it, they kept calling for the removal of the rot, whatever and wherever it could generated in the

human character and morals. For example, if there was in some populace, along with the Shirk, some sexual depravity, as was the case with the people of Lut (AS), or some other kind of malpractices were there in voque amidst the peoples, their Prophets prohibited them from them. In some populace, along with the Shirk, the practice of making pilferage while measuring and weighing was rampant as was the case with the people of Madiyan. Their Prophet prohibited his people from doing that. In some populace along with the Shirk, the hauteur and the habit of harrowing the weaker sections was in voque as was the case with Fira'aun's folks of Egypt. There Hazrat Musa (AS) was made the Prophet. He tried hard to make Firaun see the reason and put the fright of retribution from Allah in him and forbade him to indulge in Shirk and tyranny. In some habitations, a fondness along with Shirk, for persecuting the weak and usurping the rights of others taken root. The Prophet there prevented them from doing that, too. Likewise whatever other vices, along with the Shirk, were there in the peoples, their respective Prophets restrained them from all these vices, too, along-with giving the call to adopt Tauheed (the Faith in Unity and Oneness of Allah) in its unassimilated form: that is to worship Allah Almighty alone who is sole Sustainer of the entire universe and all the creatures therein.■

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