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**Ramadan: A Global Season of
Worship and Good Deeds**

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

All these things have made Ramadan a global season and a time of grand celebration of worship, God-remembrance, recitation of the Quran, self-restraint, and piety in which Muslims—educated and uneducated, rich and poor, humble and privileged-participate like close friends and associates all over the world. Ramadan falls at the same time in every city and village in the world. Its arrival can be noticed equally in the palaces of the rich as well as huts of the poor. No one can dare do its rituals differently according to his personal understanding, nor is there any scope for a disagreement in determining the number of its days. The grandeur and beauty of Ramadan is, in fact, easily noticeable throughout the length and breadth of the Muslim world. It seems as if a canopy of effulgence and peace is raised all over the Muslim society. Even those who are slack in Fasting choose to fast in Ramadan for the fear of being alienated in the Muslim community. If for some reason they decide not to fast, they eat in the day hiding from others in shame. The sick and the traveller are, of course, lawfully exempted from Fasting. Fasting is thus observed collectively throughout the world in the same month. This creates a congenial and conducive atmosphere for the believers due to which Fasting becomes easy, hearts soften, and Muslims turn to deeds of worship and submission, sympathy and compassion with greater eagerness. ■

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Wisdom of Qur'an

O Believers! Enter into Islam wholly and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Surely he is an open enemy to you.

(al-Baqqrah 2:208)

This verse, though brief, contains a broad message for man, especially the Muslim community. Contained in it is much food for thought, for here Allah asks believers to be imbued with Islam in full. Another significant directive is to shun Satan's footsteps in that he is man's open enemy.

Let us first explain what is meant by Islam. Many people who have not conducted a study of comparative religions fail to appreciate the fundamental truth that Islam is a set of beliefs and a complete way of life. Other religions are named after their founders or their ethnic origin. Take the example of Judaism, which is named after YeHuda, a member of the Prophet's family. Christianity owes its name to Jesus Christ. Parsis are named after Faris, the old name of Iran, which was the birthplace of their religion. None of these religions represents an extensive call to believe in God or a Way of life. Hinduism takes its name from Sindh, and Brahamanism after a particular class. Buddhism too owes its name to its founder, Gautama Buddha. So is the case with Jainism. In contrast to all these, Islam is the only faith that prescribed a way of life and derives its message from the Scripture and the Messenger. It is based solely on divine revelation. The Shariah stands for His commands. Islam is a set of beliefs and the Shariah. In this respect it is unique, distinct from all other religions. ■

Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

It is related by Abu Hurairah that the Apostle of God said : "Do not be suspicious, for suspicion is the height of falsehood, nor bear a grudge or enmity against each other, nor be jealous of each other, nor indulge in back-biting, nor pry into the secrets of one another, nor try unreasonably to excel one another, nor turn your faces against each other, but O bondmen of God ! live like brothers as the Lord has commanded."

—*Bukhari and Muslim*

Commentary: The evils mentioned above are highly detrimental to the growth of good and friendly relations. They cause ill-will and produce bitterness in the hearts. The sacred Prophet has, first of all, spoken of suspicion which is a form of unfounded feal and misdoubt, and whoever has a suspecting nature sees viciousness in everything a man does with whom he has the least difference, and his attitude towards him is, naturally, influenced by it. The other person, too, reacts and an atmosphere of sullen malice and ill-will is created between them.

The same is the case with the other habits indicated in it. They breed hatred and enmity and leave no room for goodwill and fellowship to develop which the common religious tie demands.

Abu Hurairah relates that the Apostle of God said: "Guard yourselves against envy for envy eats up good deeds as fire eats up wood."

— *Abu Dawood*

Commentary : When the fire of envy burns in anyone's heart, he misses no opportunity to hurt or harm the person at the sight of whose excellence or success he feels discontented, and, if nothing else, he seeks satisfaction by slandering him and speaking ill of him behind his back, and, as we learn from other Traditions of the Prophet, the lowest penalty the envious are going to pay in future existence is that their good deeds will be allotted to those against whom they have sinned. It will, perhaps, explain what is meant by the eating up of good deeds by envy, as stated in the above narrative. ■

Editor's Note 

The Blessed Month of Ramazan

Ramadhan is the month of peace, tranquility, piety, righteousness, generosity and bestowal. Of the five tenets of Islam, fasting in the month of Ramadhan is a must every year. During fast one must abstain from eating, drinking and smoking including inoculation and injections from dawn to dusk. In this context the verses of the Holy Quran which ordain for fasting, as an obligatory duty for Muslims are as follows:

“O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you that ye may (learn) self restraint.” (Fasting) for a fixed number of days; but if any of you is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed number should be made up from later days. For those who can do it (with hardship), is a ransom, the feeding of one that indigent, but he that will give more, of his own free will, it is better for him, and it is better for ye that ye face, if ye only knew”. (S.2,A.183-184)

Ramadhan's significance can be gauged from the fact that “the Quran was revealed to prophet Muhammad(PBUH) in this month as a guide to mankind, also clear (signs) for guidance and judgment (between right and wrong). So every one of you who is present at his house during that month should spend it in fasting, but if anyone is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed period (should be made up) by days later. God intends every facility for you; He does not want to put you to difficulties. He wants you to complete the prescribed period, and to glorify Him in that He has guided you; and perchance ye shall be grateful. (S.2,A.185)

Needless to add that like Salat (Prayers), fasting has been an essential duty for the followers of earlier Prophets. The Bible says that Jesus Christ fasted for forty days (Matthew 4: 1-4, Mark 1:12-13 and Luke 4:1-4). In Peter 2:21 the followers of Christ are enjoined to fast as the Prophet did. Even the Vedas and the Puranas prescribe fasting. Thus earlier peoples fasted though with a difference in the number of days and the prescribed time of fasting.

It should be kept in mind that this particular month has been considered sacred even from pre-Islamic days too. Ibn-Hisham states that the Qurayesh in the days of ignorance spent one month a year on Mt. Hira, practicing penance (Tahannuth). Before instituting fasting of Ramadhan Muhammad (PBUH) evidently observed fast on the tenth of Moharram”. (History of the Arabs, p. 133)

During Ramadhan evil conceals itself while good comes to the fore and the whole atmosphere is filled with piety and purity. The holy prophet says: “The deed of son of Adam is' increased several times (in Ramadhan) and the reward is increased by ten times. But Allah says that fasting is exclusively for Him and He himself will deliver its reward (to His bondsmen) as he abstains from eating and controls his desires only for Him. There are (two instances) of happiness for the fasting Muslim, one is at the time of breaking his fast and the other at the time meeting his Lord. And verily to Allah, the smell of fasting person's breath is the best and cleanliest. “The prophet of Islam also says: There is a door of paradise called Rayyan towards which only the fasting will be called. Only

the fastings will be called. Only the fastings will enter it and those who enter it will never feel thirsty.

It is related by Abu Hurairah that the Apostle of Allah said: "When the month of Ramazan' comes, the Gates of Heaven are thrown open, and the Gates of Hell are shut, and the devils are put behind the bar." (In another report, the "Gates of Mercy" are mentioned in place of the "Gates of Heaven." (Bukhari and Muslim)

"Salman Farsi narrates that the Apostle of Allah delivered a sermon on the last day of Sha'ban in which he said:'

"O my people! You are on the threshold of a month of great solemnity and blessings. It is a month whose one night is better than a thousand months. God has prescribed fasting in this month and make Taraweeh prayers optional whosoever willingly and with good intentions does one good act in this month will have the merit of having done an obligatory act in other months and one who does a prescribed act in this month it will be equal to seventy prescribed act of other months. This is the month of endurance and the reward of endurance is paradise and this the month of sympathy with and care of the needy men of the community". (Mishkat)

It is related by Abu Hurairah that the Apostle of Allah said: "Whoever omits even a single fast of Ramazan without the legal concession of a journey etc. or (a valid excuse like that of illness), amends cannot be made for the thing that is omitted even though he observes fasting throughout the life." (Tirmizi)

It is needless to add that fasting is a shield against sins, crimes, vices and other un-Islamic acts. The prophet says: "Fast is like a shield for protection from satan's attack. Therefore, when one observes fast he should use this shield and abstain from quarreling. If anybody abuses him or quarrels with him, he should simply say: Brother, I am fasting do not expect me to indulge in similar conduct (Bukhari & Muslim)

To restore real spirit of fast, it is incumbent to observe it with prescribed rules and regulations. The noble prophet said: "If one does not give up speaking a lie during fast, God does not require him to give up eating and drinking (Bukhari).

On another occasion, he said: "Many are the people who fast but who "gain nothing from their fasts except hunger and thirst: and many are those who stand praying all night but gain nothing except sleeplessness (Darimi)"

To sum up the fasting according to Islam, is a spiritual discipline and as a consequence it inculcates moral discipline. It imparts moral strength and leads to the promotion of" virtues of piety. ■

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The Message of Idul Fitr

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Allah intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you. [He wants that] you must complete the same number of days and that you must magnify Allah for having guided you so that you may be grateful to Him. And when My slaves ask you [O Prophet] concerning Me, then [tell them] I am indeed near. I respond to the invocations of the supplicant when he calls on Me. So let them obey Me and believe in Me, so that they may be led alright.

(al-Baqarah 2:185-186)

This passage relates to the blessed month of Ramadan. The Qur'anic account of fasting marks the opening of this passage which states that fasting is prescribed as a religious duty for Muslims, as it was for the believers of an earlier date. It is prescribed so that they may become pious. It is further clarified that the Qur'an was sent down during this month and that the Qur'an is guidance for all mankind. Contained in it are signs as guidance and criterion.

In this passage Allah tells Muslims that He intends ease for them. He does not want to put them to any difficulty. Fasting for twenty-nine or thirty days during Ramadan is not an impossible task. Muslims are asked to fast for a limited number of days. This is followed by the directive that they

should celebrate Allah's praise in that He has guided them. They are obliged to praise Him for having blessed them with His guidance. They are also exhorted to thank Allah and express gratitude to Him.

Allah mentions implicitly 'Id in the above passage. Although the festival of 'Id is not specified, the passage states the objective, spirit and function of 'Id. As Allah enables a Muslim to fast during Ramadan and pray at night, he should celebrate Allah's glory. This should be by way of thanks for the bestowal of His guidance. A Muslim stands indebted to Him for blessing him with faith and Islam. Without His leave he could neither fast nor pray. For there are numerous communities besides Muslims in the world. They know well that Muslims celebrate Ramadan in a particular way. Yet it makes no difference to them. Ramadan does not carry any meaning and message for them.

We should be grateful to Allah for having guided us. We should be equally grateful for being blessed with Islam. Moreover, we should be thankful to Him for granting us health which enables us to fast. Above all, Allah grants us the ability and strength to fast. For one may possess everything yet not receive divine guidance to fast. One may be an

adult, with sound physique and other resources yet still not fast. It amounts to disobedience on his part.

That Allah alone grants the ability is the real thing. It is He Who inspires man to fast during Ramadan and to pray to Him. In sum, He guides us to fast. Yet there are those who possess the facilities and resources to fast but who do not do so. This is because Allah does not inspire such a person to fast. A believer is obliged to celebrate Allah's praise for having provided him with the requisite resources and ability to fast. Since there is nothing to prohibit one from fasting, it is imperative for one to fast. The directive to celebrate Allah's praise is on account of the same - the ability granted by Him to fast.

It is part of the *Sunnah* that on the day of *'Id al-Fitr* one should celebrate Allah's praise on one's way to the mosque. On *'Id al-Adha* one should chant such praise aloud: "Allah is great. Allah is great. There is no god besides Allah. Allah is great. All praise is for Allah." It is also part of the *Sunnah* that one should use two different routes for going to the mosque to offer prayer. This results in circulating Allah's praise throughout the whole town. The inhabitants of the town will hence receive this message. While waiting for the *'Id* Prayer to commence, one should keep on praising Him for His guidance and this out of gratitude. For Allah has granted one the ability to fast. One will

be pardoned for missing a fast on account of ill health.

It is common knowledge that festivals are an occasion for expressing joy. One is relieved of one's duties, enabling one to enjoy the festival. Islam is, however, the only faith that *obliges* its followers to perform extra duty on the day of festival. Nonetheless, this duty is not very burdensome. Rather, it accrues more blessings. It instructs the believers in 'Self-restraint and decency. On *'Id* day Muslims are obliged to offer two additional rak'ah of prayer. They are not exempted from discharging their religious duty on this day, as they have to offer extra prayer in between the compulsory *Fajr* and *Zuhr* Prayers. This is the Islamic way of expressing gratitude to Allah.

The Muslim community is thus consistently instructed in thanking Allah. No other religious community is particular about this. The Muslims alone try to perform this. They discharge their duty and thank Allah for enabling them to do so.

Other religious communities do not offer extra prayers or charity on their festival days. Rather, they enjoy life, engrossed in eating and drinking. In Islam, however, the focus is on giving - charity to the poor, gratitude to Allah and celebrating of Allah's praise. This is done in order to thank Allah for His guidance. It expresses Muslims' gratefulness to Him. ■

The Universal Fraternization

- S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi*

Now with the arrival of Muslims of the tribe of the Quoraish in Madinah and their getting united with Aus and Khazraj, the moral and religious bond between the two races of the populace of Madinah, that is Aus and Khazraj, on the one hand, and the Muslims of the Quoraish tribe, on the other, had, at least, eliminated, to a great extent, the prejudicial desperateness between these two races. Under the banner of Islam, both of them got united. Both of them had now just one Mentor and one Leader. And, thus, the Islamic order of life got substantially bolstered by it. It had, in addition, the Prophet's (SAW) sagacious, affectionate and affable guidance available to it. Thus, a force that had its reigns in the Prophet's (SAW) hands, got evolved here. The Muslims coming from Makkah, being members of the Ismailite race did not have the congenital kinship with Aus and Khazraj. Instead, they had deemed each other kind of aliens, nay, rivals, rather. To redeem this desperateness and estrangement, the Prophet (SAW) took the measure that he (SAW) had them formally fraternized. That is, he (SAW) had a covenant of their being brothers, on the line of kinship that exists between the sanguine siblings, formally solemnized. It was on one-to-

one basis . As a result thereof, their racial desperateness got transformed into propinquity and fraternity. Hazrat Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi writes:

“This fraternization was the prelude to establishment of a missionary Ummat, that was the foundation of a unique-of-its-kind, Islamic and universal fraternity which was going to be raised for having a new world order, say, a new world, evolved. It was getting evolved to give the world the correct and specific creeds and such pious objectives as would emancipate it from the desolation and disorder, to give it the bonds of Faith, the real fraternity and unified campaigning. This bond of limited brotherhood between Muhajirs and Ansar thus proved to be the harbinger of a new life for the world of the humanity.”

Hence, with the arrival of Islam in this city and its acceptance of the Islamic injunctions, its habitants got instructed into making themselves brothers to each other, and into adopting, having given up the tribal predilections, the attitude of humanistic compassion and justice. Despite the tribal predilection, the feeling of fraternity got generated in them. They (Aus and Khazraj) had not only themselves become brothers to

* *Rector, Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow.*

each other, but had made the people of Makkah, too, their brothers. With the arrival of the Prophet (SAW) there, a magnificent ambience of love, brotherhood, compassion and commiseration was created there.

Treaty with the Jews of Madinah:

The Jewish tribes domiciled, besides the Arabs, in Madinah hailed, originally, from the Syrian region. They had, having read the prediction of appearance of a Prophet in 'some or the other Arab region of the regions having date-palms' in their scripture, had come over here and got settled. Because of their racial desperateness, they were different in their mindset and characteristics from Arabs. In terms of religion, too, they were distinct from them. Thus, on religious and racial grounds, they had an identity of their own, different from that of the original inhabitants of this place. At the same time, in terms of learning and economy, they had supremacy over Arabs. Taking advantage of it, they drew political and economic benefits there-from. However, in terms of population and numerical strength, Arabs had an edge over them. Members of the Jewish community, owing to their economic and academic supremacy over Arabs, considered the latter inferior to them. In the economic field, they would make a display of their strength. Making threats on academic grounds, they would say that: our books contain this prediction that a Prophet is to appear in these quarters. On his

appearance, we would, under his leadership, have our formal dominance and supremacy attained over you.

Even though their religion was the same as that of Musa (AS) and Musa (AS) was one of Allah Almighty's chosen Prophets, the practices of these Jews as well as the Jews of other regions, too, were not fully in conformity with their religion. They had even made interpolations, as per their own sweet will, in their Divine Book, Torah. And, on the strength of these interpolations, having proclaimed some wrong deeds, too, as the right ones, they would do act as per their own free will.

Ultimately, owing to this sort of persistent contumacy on their part, Allah Almighty had them proclaimed as the despised lot. They had, however, the misconception that the forthcoming Prophet would only be from among-st them. For, quite for some time past, exactly so had been the case. Because of their being descendants of Hazrat Ibrahim (AS), they were having benedictions made on them. It was their incessant disregard of them that had made them the despised lot. Yet, out of their fallacy, they were still expectant of having this last Prophet from among-st them only. It was on the basis of some spatial denotations that some of their family lines had, having come over to Madinah and its northern regions, got settled there and were awaiting the appearance of the Prophet.

But, when the Prophet (SAW) got raised from amongst the Arabs, instead of them, they took umbrage. They refused to accept him (SAW) as the Prophet. But, the Arabs of Madinah, on the basis of what they had heard from the Jews, found the news about his (SAW) Prophecy, being in conformity with what the Jews have been telling them. To them it appeared, rather, sort of proof, too, of the veracity of his Prophecy. That was the reason that an atmosphere favorable to acceptance of Islam with convenience had already been evolved in Madinah. Then, on the Prophet's (SAW) arrival in Madinah, the Jews, seeing that the majority of Madinah people had already joined him (SAW), kept their displeasure, due to the fear of this majority, to themselves. On this end, however, the Prophet (SAW) had, thoroughly, taken in the situation. He, therefore, thought it prudent to have a peace treaty concluded with the Jews so that no atmosphere of any sort of turmoil could be created within the populace of Madinah. Since the Jews were in minority, they conceded to entering into the treaty by way of temporal expediency. In this treaty, provision was had for mutual Peaceful co-existence between Arab Muslims and Jews. Provision was also had in it for maintenance of religious and social autonomy of each other. It was also agreed upon that in case of threat from outside, both the two sides would help each other. After having this treaty

concluded, there was no hindrance left in the way of making call towards Islam and in adoption of the Islamic order and the Islamic way of life in the city of Madinah.

Establishment of Islamic Social Order:

Hence, the Prophet (SAW), having come over here and having the unity and accord generated among its inhabitants, had the social order of the Islamic way of life established here. Under this order all the Muslims got committed to the principle of leading their lives in accordance with the Shariat under the subordination of one, single Ameer. An important issue in this order was that the Muslims who had come over from Makkah and the Muslims who were residents of Madinah belonged to different homelands and. different tribes. Muslims coming over from Makkah had to have it done so, having left behind all their belongings that they had in their homeland as well as their financial resources. They were compelled to come over, empty-handed, to this new place where it was not easy for them to make immediate arrangements for their means of subsistence. Nevertheless, the Faith-equipped life of both of them had reached, thanks to the impact of the Prophet's (SAW) training and education, such a level where whatever arrangement would have been proposed by him (SAW), would have been conceded to by them. He (SAW),

therefore, proposed, in accordance with the norms of Islamic brotherhood and mutual cooperation, the solution of fraternization between them: that the Muslims coming over from Makkah and the residents of Madinah get into such a fraternal bond among-st them as makes, under it, every Madanite Muslim fully associated with one Makkan Muslim and becomes like a brother to him. In this manner, those coming here on migration and their Madinite colleagues got joined together, and both became, so to say, like the original residents, nay, brothers to each other. It had its impact on the economic condition, too. One benefit of the fraternization was that a kinship sort of bondage got established between Mohajirs and Ansar. Its other fall-out was that a united, Islamic society of the entire populace of the city got constituted. On the other hand, the Jewish population stood, under the treaty that was concluded with them, to be an ally of this society. And, thus, with this city, the perfect atmosphere of adoption of Islamic order of life and practice in consonance with its objectives got created. The Prophet (SAW) had, thus, the opportunity to set up the Islamic social order which could not be had set up in Makkah, because of the hostility of the infidels there, their dominance and the tough conditions created by them there. It was only on the individual level that the Divine Commands were in force there. That apart, the missionary work, too, was conducted on individual

level. That too, had, lastly, gotten hemmed in by hardships. It was due to this that the Prophet (SAW) had to, perforce, get migrated from Makkah. And, because of the hounding and harrowing by the Quoraish, a circuitous, roundabout route had to be taken, to avoid getting caught by them, on journey towards Madinah.

Initiation of Azan (the call for the prayer):

As regards to worship, Namaz was already made obligatory. It was offered in Makkah individually and, to some extent, surreptitiously. On arrival in Madinah, this constraint was removed. So, for the purpose of having the Namaz offered in congregation in the mosque, there was the need to give a call to the people. To that end, giving the call that was Azan got prescribed in the very first year of Hijrah (migration). With the Namaz getting offered in the regularized manner in congregation, need was felt to have it decided as to what should be the way to give the call to the people. Someone suggested to have the information conveyed by blowing the conch. Someone else suggested something else. While all this mulling over was going on, one of the companions came to him (SAW) and narrated a dream that he had dreamt. He stated that he saw someone making the announcement in such and such words. Saying so, he uttered the words of Azan (the announcement) within the earshot of all those present. Such were

those words that on hearing them the Prophet (SAW) said that they were numinous and Divinely inspired and that Divine Inspiration takes place by means of dreams also. He (SAW) had, therefore, Hazrat Bilal (RAA) summoned and had the words of Azan taught to him. Thus it was that the practice of Azan got started.

Diversion of Qibla:

Since the location of Masjid-e-Nabavi happens to be between Baitul-Maqdis and Harem mosque of Makkah, there came up the issue of having the Qibla specified. For, in accordance to previous Divine Shariats, Baitul-Maqdis had been the Qibla till then. The Prophet (SAW) and the Muslims were bound to observe that very direction unless and until some new instruction was received. Although, because of the sanctity of Kaba, they yearned to have it only as their Qibla. For this very reason, perhaps, whenever the Prophet (SAW) offered prayers in the Harem mosque, he (SAW), having adopted a place on the Southern side of the Harem to stand, would face Northward. Thus, the direction of the both would be the same. But such a posture was not possible to adopt here in Madinah; and no new instruction had, as yet, arrived about Qibla. Hence, he (SAW) had kept adopting that very direction that was adopted by the Prophets who had preceded him, that is the direction facing towards Baitul-Maqdis. In this posture, however, the direction facing

towards Kaba happened to be on the back.

But, he (SAW) yearned to have the direction facing towards Ka'bat-ullah (Allah's Ka'ba) adopted for Qibla. For, it was the progenitor of the Prophets, Hazrat Ibrahim (AS), the one who had adopted Baitul-Maqdis as the mosque and Qibla, himself, who had built Ka'ba and had proclaimed it to be the greatest centre of religion and worship. He had prayed for it to be granted preeminence and magnificence. Before him, Hazrat Adam (AS), too, had made it the place of worship. It had, on this basis, gotten defined as the first ever House of Allah and had assumed the position of the most central place of worship in the world, as is stated by Allah Himself:

(Verily the first House set apart for mankind was that at Bakka, blest and guidance to the worlds.) (Aal-e-Imran : 96)

Thus, it was obvious that it deserved to be the Qibla. But, unless and until the command from Allah was received to adopt it as Qibla, he (SAW) could not act merely on his own volition as per his own wish. He could only give expression to his wish. Hence, his wish was conceded to by Allah and the command to adopt the holy House of Allah as Qibla was received in the middle of the month of Shaban of the year 2 of Hijrah.

This delay was, most probably, by way of an exercise for the Muslims in

keeping their wish and opinion suppressed for a while. That is why, perhaps, the release of the command got delayed. Anyway, ultimately the Kaba got declared as more exalted than both the two mosques, that is Baitul-Maqdis mosque and the Prophet's mosque, even. The merit of offering prayers in it was declared to be equivalent to the merit of offering one lakh prayers elsewhere. The command received was:

(Turn then thy face towards the sacred Mosque)

This command was received one year and four months after his (SAW) arrival in Madinah. During this period, he (SAW) had his prayers offered from here in the direction facing toward BaitulMaqdis.

This dispensation (the K'aba getting made the Qibla) was resented by the Jews since they held that it was only their own place of worship, Baitul-Maqdis, which was the principal place of worship. But Allah Almighty had made the Prophet, Muhammad (SAW), so associated with Hazrat Ibrahim (AS), that the Shariats of both of them had become one Shariat and the privilege that the Banu Israil had by way of inheritance from Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) got, after it was revoked from Banu Israil, transferred to Muhammad (SAW). The factor of association with the K'aba was common to both of them. And, as the legacy of religious guidance had

now been transferred to Hazrat Muhammad (SAW), the centrality that the Baitul-Maqdis had, too, got transferred to Kaba.

Building up the Islamic Society:

Owing to Madinah Munawwarah getting taken up as his abode by the Prophet (SAW), it was not only the Prophet's mosque that had assumed importance but the entire city of Madinah Munawwarah, too, had earned prominence for this very reason. It was here that the matters and affairs related to Muslims started getting conducted from. Settlement of all their issues related to their religious and social life would be made from here and the instructions in their respect would get issued from here. And, thus, the stage got set for the promulgation of Islamic practical order. Divine instructions regarding religious, social and moral issues started being received. And, since, the Islamic Shariat was not culminated and climaxed with the arrival of the previous Prophets and that was now going to take place with the arrival of the Prophet Mohammad (SAW), instructions regarding the vast range of various and diverse situations in life started, gradually, coming in, in order to have it perfected and culminated and to make it comprehensive and all-encompassing. Issues such as specification of prayers to be offered, fasts to be observed, method and terms of Azan, proscription of gambling and drinking got finalized. Instructions

regarding various aspects of life, whether within the individual sphere of life or within the sphere of collectivity, also started coming in. Intended, on the one hand, to bring reform to these aspects, full consideration was had in these instructions of convenience and ease, also. In addition, instructions regarding friendship with the friends, compliance with the pacts made with allies, assent to combat the intruders, being considerate to the commonweal of the humanity, mutual relations amongst the believers themselves and whatever issues could there get cropped up, kept, gradually and as and when the situation demanded, being issued. These instructions would be received through the verses of the holy Quran as well as various other modes of Revelation made to him (SAW). Thus, all the instructions pertaining to life, in accordance with whatever the demands of the prevailing situations and circumstances were, would be received. Thanks to this manner of having the instructions received, their practical paradigms, too, used to be got demonstrated to them. These instructions were not thus given merely in their conceptual form. Instead, they were kept being expounded by means of practical illustrations as well. Muslims would put them into practice and have them inculcated into minds and committed to their memories. They were later got preserved in tomes so that whenever and wherever situations similar to theirs would exist in future

lives of Muslims they could be applied to them. And, thus, Islam qua religion-cum-Shariat par excellence and perfect, all-around and all-inclusive got preserved for fulfilling the future needs, too, of the Muslims.

Suffah and the people of Suffah:

Subsequent to diversion of Qibla, when the Prophet's mosque got diverted towards Baitullah, the wall of the mosque on the side of the first Qibla and the space adjacent to it, that was in the shape of a platform, got reserved for accommodating those members of the Muslim community who wanted to come over and reside there for getting acquainted with, and learning from the Prophet (SAW), matters regarding the religion. Hence, the people started staying there. The board for them was arranged by the Prophet (SAW) himself like he did for his family members. And the Prophet (SAW), magnanimous that he was and owing to the wont that he had of going all-out to help the poor, would get himself, off and on, into great distress. Situation would, sometimes, come to such a pass as would leave no recourse but to put up with hunger and starvation. But he (SAW) would endure all that. The number of these theology students would sometimes go up to as high as seventy. But, that was how a team of people well-versed in religion got prepared. This place where these people used to be put up was known by the name of Suffah. It is this Suffah which happened to be the first ever Madrasah

in Islam. It proved to be the first ever Madrasah instituted not among-st the Muslims only but among-st the Arabs also. It was given the name of Suffah, that is: platform or podium. It is from this very place that the incessant trend of acquiring knowledge of religious affairs and Islamic instructions imparted by the Prophet (SAW) had gotten initiated. Subsequently, the Islamic Madrasas kept on coming up and getting established all over the world.

Patience and Endurance in Serving the Cause of the Islamic Mission:

The persecution that the Prophet (SAW) and his followers had suffered during the life in Makkah, was in fact inflicted upon them by their own kinsfolk and compatriots. Being, as they did, generally from the same stock of family the former were not inferior to the latter in valour, fervour and sense of honor. Had they wanted, they could have taken, to avenge themselves, such measures as would have robbed them of their rest and repose. Day and night, whenever they found an opportunity, they could have taken revenge from them. But, they were bound under the command that they should keep themselves confined to quietly endure the sufferings, remain patient and be content with only predicatory expostulations and exhortations. The Command that they had was:

(Keep your hands withheld and establish the prayer).

For 13 long years this trend of events had persisted. And ultimately the homeland, too, had to be bidden adieu. Another place was, however, procured where an organism having substantial numerical strength got set up. Permission also got issued to the effect that going on putting up with iniquities on end was no more necessary. Force can be applied in order to defend themselves and resist the onslaughts of the enemy.

Consequent upon this permission, measures as were called for got started to be taken. Nevertheless, there were also instructions to the effect that, in the process of taking these measures, no such measures as were uncalled-for should be taken. In case of operations being necessary, consideration must be had of the human values. Women and children should be treated with due care and concern. Affability, commonweal and peace-making should be the norms. As a result thereof, the enmity of the enemy kept losing grounds while the message of Islam kept gaining them. The net result was that, in the Prophet's (SAW) life-time itself, the entire Arab Peninsula had become proponent of the Prophet's (SAW) teachings and had itself subjugated to his (SAW) dominion. Even the greatest of the great warriors of Makkah who had left no stones unturned to have him stalled, even to have him murdered, rather, had, ultimately, brought themselves under his subjugation. ■

The Meaning Of Islam

- Hammudah Abdalati

The word Islam is derived from the Arabic root "SLM" which means, among other things, peace, purity, submission and obedience. In the religious sense the word Islam means submission to the Will of God and obedience to His Law. The connection between the original and the religious meanings of the word is strong and obvious. Only through submission to the Will of God and by obedience to His Law can one achieve true peace and enjoy lasting purity.

Some outsiders call our religion "Mohammedanism" and address the believers in Islam as "Mohammedans". The Muslims both reject and protest the use of these words. If our faith is classified as Mohammedanism and if we are called Mohammedans, there will be seriously wrong implications. This misnomer implies that the religion takes its name after a mortal being, namely, Muhammad and that Islam is no more than another "ism" just like Judaism, Hinduism, Marxism, etc. Another wrong implication of this misnomer is that outsiders might think of the Muslims, whom they call Mohammedans, as worshipers of Muhammad or as believers in him in the same way as Christians, for example, believe in Jesus. A further wrong implication is that the word Mohammedanism may mislead the outsider and make him think that the religion was founded by

Muhammad and therefore takes its name after the founder. All these implications are seriously wrong or at best misleading. Islam is not just another "ism". Nor do Muslims worship Muhammad or look upon him the same way as Christians, Jews, Hindus, Marxists, etc., look upon their respective leaders. The Muslims worship God alone. Muhammad was only a mortal being by God to teach the word of God and lead an exemplary life. He stands in history as the best model for man in piety and perfection. He is a living proof of what man can be and of what he can accomplish in the realm of excellence and virtue. Moreover, the Muslims do not believe that Islam was founded by Muhammad, although it was restored by him in the last stage of religious evolution. The original founder of Islam is no other than God Himself, and the date of the founding of Islam goes back to the age of Adam. Islam has existed in one form or another all along from the beginning and will continue to exist till the end of time.

The true name of the religion, then, is Islam and those who follow it are Muslims. Contrary to popular misconceptions, Islam or submission to the Will of God, together with obedience to His Law, does not mean in any way loss of individual freedom or surrender to fatalism. Anyone who thinks or believes so has certainly failed to

understand the true meaning of Islam and the concept of God in Islam. The concept of God in Islam describes Him as the Most Merciful and Gracious, and the Most Loving and most concerned with the well-being of man, and as Full of Wisdom and care for His Creatures. His Will, accordingly, is a Will of Benevolence and Goodness, and whatever Law He prescribes must be in the best interest of mankind.

When the civilized people abide by the laws of their countries, they are considered sound citizens and honest members of their respective societies. No responsible person would say that such people lose their freedom by their obedience to the Law. No rational being would think or believe for a moment that such law-abiding people are fatalists and helpless. Similarly, the person who submits to the Will of God, which is a good Will, and obeys the Law of God, which is the best Law, is a sound and honest person. He is gaining protection of his own rights, showing genuine respect for the rights of others, and enjoying a high degree of responsible, creative freedom. Submission to the good Will of God, therefore, does not take away or curtail individual freedom. On the contrary, it gives freedom of a high degree in abundant measures. It frees the mind from superstitions and fills it with truth. It frees the soul from sin and wrong and quickens it with goodness and purity. It frees the self from vanity and greed, from envy and

tension, from fear and insecurity. It frees man from subjugation to false deities and low desires, and unfolds before him the beautiful horizons of goodness and excellence.

Submission to the good Will of God, together with obedience to His beneficial Law, is the best safeguard of peace and harmony. It enables man to make peace between himself and his fellow men on the one hand, and between the human community and God on the other. It creates harmony among the elements of Nature. According to Islam, everything in the world, or every phenomenon other than man is administered by God-made Laws. This makes the entire physical world necessarily obedient to God and submissive to His Laws, which, in turn, means that it is in a state of Islam, or it is Muslim. The physical world has no choice of its own. It has no voluntary course to follow on its own initiative but obeys the Law of the Creator, the Law of Islam or submission. Man alone is singled out as being endowed with intelligence and the power of making choices. And because man possesses the qualities of intelligence and choice he is invited to submit to the good Will of God and obey His Law. When he does choose the course of submission to the Law of God, he will be making harmony between himself and all the other elements of Nature, which are by necessity obedient to God. He will be consistent with the truth and in harmony

with all the other elements of the universe. But if he chooses disobedience he will deviate from the Right Path and will be inconsistent. Besides, he will incur the displeasure and punishment of the Law-Giver.

Because Islam means submission to the Good Will of God and obedience to His Beneficial Law, and because this is the essence of the message of all God-chosen messengers, a Muslim accepts all the prophets previous to Muhammad without discrimination. He believes that all those prophets of God and their faithful followers were Muslims, and that their religion was Islam, the only true universal religion of God (Qur'an, 2:128-140; 3:78-85; 17:42-44; 31:22; 42: 13).

To sum up this discussion, it may be helpful to reproduce my statement which appeared in the Observer Dispatch (O.D.) of Utica on December 4, 1972. The statement shows how much distortion and confusion there is in this regard. The partial overlapping and repetition may be forgiven because of the extreme sensitivity of the issue and the need to reiterate the Islamic point of view.

A particular news item (O.D., Nov, 25) is alarming. It invites sympathy for the misinformed public and pity for many a school teacher or man of the pulpit. It calls upon every man of good will and conscience to stand up to his moral obligations.

Marcus Eliason reported from Israeli-occupied Jordan that "The Moslems," among other things, "worship Abraham as Ibrahim..."

It is incredible in this day and age, in this small world of ours, to read in fresh print that the Muslims worship Ibrahim. It is more incredible yet that this news comes from sources presumably knowledgeable and is passed on to a public entitled to know.

For centuries, many Westerners held and propagated the idea that the Muslims worshiped Muhammed, whose religion was called Mohammedanism and whose followers were known in the West as Mohammedans. Then it somehow became apparent to those Westerners that the Muslims worshiped Allah, a "deity of sorts." And now this new discovery that they worship Abraham as Ibrahim.

The fact is that the Muslims never worshiped Muhammad or any other human being. They have always believed that Muhammad was a mortal like the numerous prophets before him, and it is the highest tribute to humanity that a man could achieve the most exalted status of prophet-hood.

The Muslims believe that Muhammad was the last, not the only prophet, who reinforced and immortalized the eternal message of God to mankind. This message was revealed by God to many prophets of

different nations at different times, including Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, David, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad (peace be upon them). What is more important is that the Muslims believe in them without discrimination against any.

Because of their universal outlook and cosmopolitan orientation, the Muslims sorrowfully consider it an unfortunate misnomer to call them Mohammedans and their faith Mohammedanism. The implications are distasteful and for good reasons. The Muslims do not think of themselves as a racial or ethnic group with any exclusive monopolies. Their religion is not named after a man or place; it is transcendent and atemporal.

The proper name of the religion is Islam and its followers are properly called Muslims. In the religious context, the word Islam means submission to the will of God and obedience to God's

Law. The will of God is defined by the Koran as good and compassionate, and His law as the most beneficent and equitable. Any human being who so submits and obeys is, therefore, a Muslim in a moral state of Islam. It is in this sense that the Koran calls Abraham and all authentic prophets Muslims and designates their religions by one and the same title, namely Islam. Hence, the Muslim is not only a follower of Muhammad exclusively; he also follows Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and the rest of God's messengers.

Finally, the word Allah in Islam simply but most emphatically means the One and only Eternal God, Creator of the universe, Lord of all lords, and King of all kings. The only unforgivable sin in Islam is the belief in any deity besides or other than God. The most common daily prayer among Muslims is: "In the name of God, the most compassionate, the most merciful." ■

Worth and Recompense

It is related on the authority of Sahl bin Sa'ad that the Apostle of God said: "There is a special Gate of Paradise which is known as Rayyan (and) only those who observe Fasting will be allowed to enter through it on the Day of Resurrection. On that Day, it will be called aloud, 'Where are the bondsmen who used to fast for the sake of God and endure the pangs of hunger and thirst?' Such of the bondsmen will respond to the call and save them no one will be permitted to enter by this Gate. When they have entered Paradise through this Gate, it will be shut, (and), after it, no one will be able to enter by it."

- Bukhari and Muslim

The Essentials Of An Islamic Community

- Maryam Jameelah

If we profess to be Muslims who value the integrity of our faith, we must vigorously reassert our religious and cultural identity. It is not enough to condemn the atheism of modern civilization and its institutions so destructive to all we cherish. Instead we must always stress the positive and constructive values of the Islamic way of life and build them up as practical alternatives. Only after these alternatives are provided will it become possible to permanently demolish alien influence. In so doing we shall have to engage in a desperate struggle with vested interests within our ranks who will spare no pains to frustrate our efforts. They will invariably scorn the course of action suggested here as unworkable and the product of wishful thinking. They will point out that because of technological progress, all parts of the world have become so dependent upon each other that no people can remain aloof from modern civilization and hope to survive. They say that it is impossible for any government to function in the modern world based on a Law revealed more than thirteen centuries ago. They insist that the Shariah is a fossil and the Khalifate no more than a museum piece.

It is highly questionable who put "realism" and "practicality" before all else have ever stopped to ponder that were the Holy Prophet of the same turn

of mind, he and his tiny band of followers in Medina would have given up their cause as hopeless, deeming it impossible to fight against the greatest imperialistic powers of the time. Surely the Battle of Badr would never have taken place since the poverty-stricken Muslims were so few in number that they could barely muster an army of 300 ill-equipped men on foot against more than 3,000 well-armed Quraishis on horseback. Do they forget that it was the "realists" who feared the destruction of the idols in the Kaaba because these were the source of income not only of Mecca but of the whole of Arabia. Those who admire "practicality" must logically praise Mu'awiya's worldly triumph over Hazrat Ali and consider Hazrat Hussain hot-headed indeed because his chances of winning at the Battle of Kerbala were almost nil. Indeed, the distinguishing characteristic between the believer and the unbeliever is that while the unbeliever bases his actions upon opportunism and expediency, the believer does what is right regardless of worldly consequences.

We cannot attain an Islamic society until we recognize the supremacy of the Shariah. Ruler and ruled alike are all equally subject to the Divine Law, tyranny and despotism will find no place in an Islamic state. In order to derive full benefit from the Shariah, it must always be interpreted in a strict,

literal sense and no concessions nor compromises whatsoever be made to the so-called "changing times".

This immediately raises the question of Ijtihad (use of independent judgment in interpreting the Shariah) versus Taqlid (or the reliance upon the authority of the previous jurists). It has become the fashion now-a-days to blame the decadence, stagnation and decline of the Muslim world on Taqlid. This popular but misleading belief must be exposed for the fallacy that it, is for Taqlid was the result of these unfortunate circumstances and not the cause. During the Crusades and the Mongol invasions which destroyed so many centres of learning, the leading jurists and theologians were far-sighted enough to realize that society would disintegrate into utter chaos if unqualified, ignorant people were free to tamper with the Shariah as they pleased. The impact of modern Western civilization has created a similar situation of far more serious proportions. Now-a-days Western educated leaders with little or no appreciation of Islamic values, are claiming the right of Ijtihad to mutilate the Shariah beyond recognition. This they do by rejecting the Fiqh of the great classical jurists as no longer applicable to the present day add by casting doubt on the authenticity of Hadith in order to allow them the maximum freedom to introduce Western innovations. This is what the modernizers today understand as Ijtihad.

There is no doubt whatsoever that Ijtihad is a basic and indispensable tool of Islamic jurisprudence sanctioned no less than by the Holy Prophet himself. Thus Ijtihad can never be rejected on principle, but rather only its abuses condemned as interpreted and practiced today. Ijtihad is valid when : (1) it is applied only where there are no specific injunctions of the Quran or Sunnah ; (2) it does not conflict with Quran or Sunnah ; (3) no sophistry is used to obscure the true principles of the Quran and the Sunnah. It is glaringly evident that the modernists have violated every one of these rules, particularly the last.

Any attempt to revise the Shariah in the light of modern conditions is bound to destroy the last vestige of permanency and stability which a Muslim, instinctively and correctly associates with the concept of Divine Law. For if revision is necessary now, it will certainly become necessary a few decades hence when conditions will have changed again and so on until the Law of Islam will be entirely revised out of existence. If this were justified, what right would we have to claim the Law-Giver has conceived the Law of Islam as an eternal proposition? Would it not in that event be much more appropriate to say that this Law instead of creating conditions is subservient to them and that therefore it cannot be Divine Law.

Education is the most important function of an Islamic society. A renaissance of Islam is impossible

without popular support. It can never hope to succeed unless the rising generation understand and fully appreciate the value of our faith. How can this be accomplished?

First of all, we must recognize the mosque as the only proper place for the education of our youth. Every mosque should also be a school. Secondly, the study of Arabic must be made compulsory at all educational levels and given first priority. Every Muslim child should learn not only to read and recite but fully understand the meaning of the original text of Qur'an in Arabic. Arabic must be the medium of instruction and Qur'an, instead of being just another incidental subject, must be the focal point around which the entire curriculum revolves. All other subjects should be taught in relation to Qur'an to avoid any sharp distinction between religious and secular learning. In this way, the entire educational curriculum will be integrated harmoniously. The study of European languages, literature, philosophy and law should be confined to the universities, preferably on the graduate level. Under no circumstances should we expose our children to secularism because there is no deadlier poison to impressionable, immature minds. On the other hand it, is essential that those in positions of authority and influence possess through familiarity with modern civilization in order to effectively combat its influence.

In order to give our youth a clear understanding of the past in relation to

the present, we must revolutionize our attitude in regard to Islamic history. Too many of our educated elite regard the transmission of Greek philosophy by the Mu'tazilites (rationalists) to medieval Europe as the most important contribution of Islamic civilization to humanity. Such Hellenistic philosophers as al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd have been praised more than they deserve. A truer perspective of Islamic history enables us to understand why the achievements of Umar ibn Abd al Aziz, Salah-ud-din Ayubi and Alamgir Aurangzeb were so much greater. Instead of boasting of Islam's contribution to Western civilization, we must be aware of the fact that the transmission of Greek learning to medieval Europe was quite coincidental and had nothing to do with Islam itself. Since Islam is of infallible Divine origin and therefore complete, self sufficient, and independent of man-made philosophy, it is futile to attempt to justify its validity by a comparison with any other civilization, past or present. Hence the uselessness of trying to prove the greatness of Islamic civilization by boasting of its contributions to medieval Europe, for Islam exists independently for itself and not as subservient to other cultures.

Although it is a religious duty for our rulers in their personal capacity to give their full moral support and generous financial contributions for the maintenance and growth of our educational system, our schools should

be freed from direct state control and allowed to flourish on an independent basis. Those who have wealth should be induced to contribute financially to schools at all levels both through Zakat and voluntary charity. With our educational system supported financially through Zakat, voluntary charity, wills and the Waqf foundations, it shall then be possible to make all education completely tuition-free from the primary through the graduate university level. Although primary schools should be open to all children, secondary and university education should be limited to those youth who possess sufficient interest and intellectual capacity to profit by it. Although parents should be given every encouragement to send their children to school, they must not be forced by law to do so because it is the father who must decide how his children are to be reared—not the State.

An important function of an Islamic society is the protection of the family. Strong family ties of mutual affection and responsibility are indispensable for a healthy society. Filial loyalty and respect and consideration for old people must be emphasized and encouraged in every possible way. The most effective means of doing this is to put an end to the cult of youth-worship. When women are made to feel dignified and important in bearing the major responsibility for preserving a wholesome home life, they will have no more desire to play the role

of a man. No longer will they regard their dignity as human beings dependent upon competing with men in business and politics. Neither will they resent being required by law to dress modestly and conceal their bodies in public. An Islamic society must insist on segregation of boys and girls after puberty, ban immoral books, the publication of pictures in newspapers, magazines, books and commercial advertising, forbid the sale of alcoholic beverages and enforce the full penalties of the Shariah against illicit sex.

No poison is more deadly to Islamic moral values than the modern cinema industry. Therefore, it is imperative to ban the importation of all foreign films and prohibit the production of domestic ones. Cinema and television must be limited strictly to educational purposes.

We must make every effort to combat the evil of nationalism and strengthen the bonds of the Ummah from one end of the Muslim world to the other. If the different Muslim countries are unable to unite politically at once, they can pave the way by eliminating visa requirements, passports, tariffs and custom duties in order to promote unrestricted freedom of commerce and travel.

Minority groups living under Muslim rule must be allowed religious and cultural autonomy in self contained communities of their own and their rights scrupulously protected according to the laws of the Shariah.

We will never gain vigour and vitality until we recognize the catastrophic consequences of imitating a foreign culture and do everything possible to put an end to this. Let anyone who doubts the crucial importance of avoiding the adoption of Western dress and living habits, listen to what the historian, Ibn Khaldun (1332—1406) had to say on this subject:

The vanquished always seek to imitate their victors in their dress, insignia and other customs and usages. This is because men are always inclined to attribute perfection to those who have defeated and subjugated them. Men do this either because the reverence they feel towards their conquerors makes them see perfection in them or because they refuse to admit that their defeat could have been brought about by ordinary causes and hence they suppose that it is due to the perfection of the conquerors. Should this belief persist long, it will change into a profound conviction and will lead to the adoption of all the tenets of the victors and the imitation of all their characteristics. This imitation may come about either unconsciously or because of a mistaken belief that the victory of the conquerors was due not to their superior solidarity and physical strength but to the inferiority of the customs and beliefs of the conquered. Hence arises the delusion that such an imitation will remove the causes of defeat. In fact, every country which has

powerful conquering neighbours tends to imitate those neighbours as we see among the Spanish Muslims who imitate their Christian neighbours in their dress and ornaments even to the extent of having statues and pictures on the walls of their homes and shops. And in this the careful observer will mark a sign of inferiority.

Here in this single paragraph, Ibn Khaldun has described with superb insight exactly what is wrong with us. The remedy is obvious. If our pride in our faith and its heritage is genuine, it must be expressed by our physical appearance. If we do not want to be like our enemies, we should not want to look like them either. Certainly we have no right to call ourselves Muslims if we are ashamed to be identified as such.

Only a very poor psychologist will say that these things are merely outward and therefore unimportant. Next to a man's body, his clothes and his home are the nearest things to his soul and have an incalculable influence upon it. It was easy for his soul to conform to Islam in the surroundings which Islamic civilization provided for it, but now, for no good reason, that God-given civilization has been pushed aside ; therefore we find in most so-called Islamic countries, men have shaved off their beards, forsaken their turbans and taken to wearing a dress which puts many obstacles in the way of ablution and which makes the movements of the prayer look ugly and even ridiculous and as for their homes, there is nothing in

them to make one remember God and much to make one forget Him. One of the outward tokens of that inward dignity of the Muslim is the turban. The Holy Prophet praised the turban in many of his sayings just as he also enjoined upon men to grow their beards. It can also be said that the loose, flowing garments such as worn by him and his companions are the only true Islamic dress for this is the only kind of dress which conforms to the movements of the prayer. The Holy Prophet's house in Medina was an extension of his mosque and for more than twelve hundred years, every Muslim house was as an extension of the nearest mosque. Men took off their shoes to enter their homes ; the floors were strewn with ritually purified mats or carpets ; they sat at home as they would sit in the mosque and the ornaments on their walls were all reminders of God—Divine Names, verses from the Qur'an, sayings of the Prophet. This is the essence of Islamic civilization and there is absolutely no reason why any of the things I have mentioned here should have been changed or why the Muslim home today should not still be as an extension of the mosque. Only in such surroundings as these can Islam truly flourish.

What will the world be like under Islamic rule ?

When men recognize the sovereignty of God and the supremacy of His Law, all false values will be automatically swept away. It will be a world where men are slaves of God and not to each other. It would mean freedom

from all forms of tyranny. It will be a world where a man is judged by his character and not by his worldly success. There will be no place for racial discrimination or class hatred. Congregational prayer, Hajj, fasting and Zakat will create strong bonds of affection, trust and responsibility between man and his fellow man. The prosperous will enjoy their wealth as a bounty from God in which the poor have rightful share assured by law. It will be a world without artificiality or deception. Women will not try to be like men nor will the old feel ashamed of their age. Since this world will be recognized as only a temporary abode, people will be preoccupied with eternal salvation and shun as evil all that diverts them from the remembrance of God and the Hereafters. Night clubs, dance halls, theaters, bars, saloons, gambling casinos and brothels would soon go bankrupt and forced to close down for lack of business.

An Islamic society would not be utopia, for perfection does not belong to this world. Some of us will be tempted to break the Law but crime will be limited to isolated individuals instead of a raging epidemic. There will be no confusion in any mind as to what is right and what is wrong. Yes, even in an Islamic society human beings will suffer, for sorrow is as an inseparable part of this life as are its joys. There will be pain, hunger, sickness and death. But despair and boredom will be absent. Suicides will be unknown. Nobody will doubt the meaning or the purpose of life.■

The Religious Practices Of Islam

- S. Athar Husain

SAID THE Prophet of Islam, "God does not accept belief if it is not expressed in deed, and does not accept deed if it does not conform to belief."

Worship of God in all the manifold activities of human life is, according to Islam, the very meaning of this life. Not that God has any need of our worship but it enables us to conform to Divine Laws and to purify and perfect ourselves. It leads us to piety and performance of righteous deeds which are the only things that will count in the Hereafter.

"And whoever hopeth for the meeting with his Lord let him do righteous work, and make none sharer of the worship due unto his Lord."

(Q. 18 : 110)

Says the Qur'an:

"I have not created Jinn and Men but that they should worship Me."

(Q. 51 : 56)

Here worship is not restricted to the purely devotional practices but extends over the whole practical life of man.

Again the Qur'an enjoins:

"Oh people, worship thy Lord who hath created you and the people gone by so that you may attain piety." (Q. 2 : 3)

"Surely Prayer preserveth from lewdness and iniquity." (Q. 29 : 45)

For leading a virtuous life, a certain mental outlook is necessary, and to foster and develop that outlook some devotional and religious practices have been imposed by Islam, namely:

- (1) Daily prayers at stated hours;
- (2) Observance of fast for one month every year;
- (3) Zakat or regular payment of a portion of one's earnings
- (4) Haj or pilgrimage to Kaaba at least once in one's life if one has the means to do so.

DAILY PRAYERS

"Worship is the pillar of religion" says the Prophet.

The five daily prayers were made obligatory for Muslims on the occasion of the ascension (mairaj) of the Prophet. For his followers he declared that the worship of a believer is his own ascension in which he is raised into the presence of God. Its purpose is to engender in the mind of man a living sense of his Creator to whom he has to render eventually an account of his life. It is this primary sense of God in him which elevates the soul of man and energizes him morally to fulfil his role as vicegerent of God on earth.

The spiritual significance of these prayers have so aptly described by the great mystic Shah Waliullah Dehlavi his

book Hujjat Allah al Balighah, Vol. 1.

“Know that one is sometimes transported, quick as lightning, to the Holy Precincts [of the Divine Presence], and finds one’s self attached, with the greatest possible adherence, to the threshold of God. There descend on this person the Divine transfigurations [tajalli] which dominate his soul. He sees and feels things which the human tongue is incapable of describing. Once this state of light passes away, he returns to his previous condition, and find himself tormented by the loss of such an ecstasy. Thereupon he tries to regain that which has escaped him, and adopts the condition of this lowly world which would be nearest to a state of absorption in the knowledge of the Creator. This is a posture of respect, of devotion, and of an almost direct conversation with God, which posture is accompanied by appropriate acts and words ... Worship consists essentially of three elements: (1) humility of heart [spirit] consequent on a feeling of the presence of the majesty and grandeur of God, (2) recognition of this superiority [of God] and humbleness [of man] by means of appropriate words, and (3) adoption by the organs of the body, of postures of necessary reverence. ... To show our honour to somebody we stand up, with a fullsome concentration of attention, turning our faces towards him. Even more respectful is the state when we bend and bow our heads in reverence Still greater respect is displayed by laying down the face—which reflects in the highest degree, one’s ego and self-

consciousness—so low that it touches the ground in front of the object of reverence. As a man can reach the top of his spiritual evolution only gradually, it is evident that such an ascension must pass through all the three stages; and a perfect service of worship would have three postures, Standing up, Bowing down, and Prostrating by laying the head on the ground in the presence of the Almighty; and all this is performed for the necessary evolution of the spirit so that one might feel truly the sublimity of God and the humbleness of man.”

Prayer is an aspiration of the human spirit to be in touch with the Divine Spirit, the fountain head of purity, the possessor of perfect attributes, and to seek His help and guidance:

"Thee do we serve and of Thee do we seek help,

Guide us on the right path."

(Q. 1 : 4, 5)

The material utilities of congregational prayers are also numerous. They enable the believers to meet one another five times a day on terms of perfect equality, to feel akinness of purpose and unity of the community. Removed from the distractions of worldly life the believer feels the sovereignty of God. He lives in a state of spiritual discipline and these prayers regulate his life. The Prophet laid the greatest emphasis on their regular observance with all humility of heart and concentration of mind. Said he,

"Pray as if thou seest thy Lord before thee, seest Him not, pray in the conviction that, God is, at any rate, seeing you."

These prayers are no ritual but a soul elevating experience.

Should not man, the most exalted of creatures to whom all else in the Universe has been made subservient, express gratitude and glorify Him, to whom all Praise is due, when everything in the Universe glorifies Him?

"Has thou not seen that before God are prostrate all things that are in the heavens and on the earth, and the sun, the moon, the stars, and the hills, and the trees and the beasts, and many of mankind." (Q. 22 : 18)

"Has thou not seen how all in the Heaven and on the earth uttereth the praise of God?—the very birds as they spread their wings." "Every creature knoweth its prayer and its praise, and God knoweth what they do." (Q. 24 : 41)

Even "the thunder hymneth His praise". (Q. 13 : 13)

"And all in the Heavens and all on the Earth, each thing that moveth, and the very angels, adore God, and are free from pride;

They fear their Lord who is above them, and do what they are bidden."

(Q. 16 : 50-51)

"Surely prayers at fixed times hath been enjoined on the believers."

"And observe ye the times of

prayers, and fear ye God; for it is He to whom ye shall be gathered." (Q. 6 : 72)

"O Believers! remember God with frequent remembrance, and praise him morning and evening. He blesseth you and His angels intercede for you, that He may bring you forth out of darkness into light; and Merciful is He to the Believers. Their greeting on the day when they shall meet Him shall be "peace". And He hath got ready for them a noble recompense."

(Q. 33 : 41-43)

"O Believers! Observe your duty to Allah. And let every soul look to that which it sendeth on before for the morrow. And observe your duty to Allah. Lo! Allah is informed of what ye do. And be not ye as those who forgot Allah; therefore, He caused them to forget their own souls. Such are the evil-doers." (Q. 59 : 18, 19)

FAST

"O believers! a fast is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may guard against evil—fast for a fixed number of days

"Ramadhan is that [month] in which the Qur'an was sent down as guidance to mankind, and to explain that guidance, and to afford illumination [a criterion to distinguish between truth and untruth]. So, every one of you who is in his home should set about the fast; but he who is sick or upon a journey shall fast a like number of other days. God wisheth you ease, and wisheth not your discomfort, and that you fulfil the number of days, and that you glorify God for His guidance, and that you

be thankful." (Q. 2 : 179-91)

The nature of man presents a paradox. Inherent in it are angelic qualities as well as baser urges. These baser urges have to be kept under control so that man may not deviate from the path of piety. One month's fasting is a rigorous spiritual exercise calculated to help man in this struggle. Fasting means not only abstaining from eating and drinking but also control of passions and carnal desires, and the subordination of one's animal nature to reason and the spirit. Concerted efforts made over a period of one month to lead a pious life of a very high standard fortify the will of the believer, lay down the pattern to be followed during the rest of the year and assist him in following it. Along with the spiritual benefits one derives from fasting, temporal advantages in the matter of health, discipline and development of will-power, etc. are also great. The person who fasts realises for himself the pangs of thirst and hunger and is inclined to be more charitably disposed towards his unfortunate brethren.

Consistent with its rigour, the rewards of fasting are also immense. Says the Prophet.

"For every good deed, there is a measure of reward but for a fast, says God, He himself is the reward."

Thirty days fasting is not so difficult as some may be inclined to suppose. Those who think it is too taxing may well remember the words:

"Allah tasketh not a soul beyond its capability." (Q. 2 :286)

ZAKAT AND SADAQAT

"Observe prayer [salat] and pay the legal impost [Zakat]." (Q. 2 : 43)

In the time of the Prophet and the orthodox caliphs there was no tax on Muslims other than Zakat. The payment of this tax to the Muslim State was made an article of faith and one of the four fundamental rites of the religion. It was the state which ensured that the tax was spent on the purposes enumerated by the Quran:

'The Sadaqat [taxes levied on Muslims] are only for the poor, and the needy, and those who work [for these State revenues], and those whose hearts are to be won, and for [freeing) the necks, and the heavily indebted, and in the path of God, and for the way-farers---a duty imposed by God, and God is the Knower, the Wise." (Q. 9 : 60)

Even where there is no Muslim State it is the duty on every Muslim of age who has sufficient for his subsistence to distribute Zakat for the aforesaid purposes. The Prophet declared that "Zakat was a religious duty and a Divine prescription, on par with belief in one God, the service of prayers, the fasting and the Haj. If belief is a spiritual duty, and prayer, fasting and Haj are bodily duties, the payment of Zakat is a fiscal duty."

Caliph Umar ibn Abdul Aziz used to

say; "Prayer carries us half way to God, fasting brings us to the door of His palace! and alms procure us admission."

The Qur'an employs several terms to designate this tax: Zakat, Sadaqat, Haq (right). So great is the emphasis laid on its payment that in almost every verse of the Qur'an in which prayers have been enjoined upon the believers, they have been directed to pay Zakat and Sadaqat. In the sight of God only those are pious who, along with their belief in the oneness of God and observance of prayers, pay Sadaqat, and are faithful in their contracts and show fortitude in adversity. Says the Qur'an:

"There is no piety in turning your faces towards the east and the west, but he is pious who believeth in God, and the last day, and the angels, and the scriptures and the prophets; who for the love of God disburseth his wealth to his kindred, and to the orphans, and the needy, and the wayfarer, and those who ask, and for redeeming the captive, who observeth prayer, and payeth the legal alms, and who are of those who are faithful to their engagements when they have engaged in them, and patient under ills and hardships, and in time of trouble—these are they who are just and these are they who fear the Lord." (Q. 21 : 177)

Giving of alms is a pre-requisite to attaining goodness:

"Ye shall never attain to goodness till ye give alms of that which ye love: and whatever ye give, of a truth, God knoweth

it." (Q. 3 : 91)

If a man gives alms to the poor, he gives it as if to God as a sort of loan which God will recompense in ample measure:

"If ye lend God a generous loan, He will double it to you and will forgive you, for God is all-thankful, all-Clemente"

(Q. 64 : 17)

"The likeness of those who expend their wealth for the cause of God is that of a grain of corn which produceth seven ears, and in each ear a hundred grains; and God will multiply to whom He pleaseth: God is Liberal, knowing."

(Q. 2 : 261)

Alms are not to be given in a supercilious manner, hurting the dignity of the receiver or to show off one's philanthropy:

"A kind speech and forgiveness is better than alms followed by injury. God is self-sufficient, clement.

O ye who believe! make not your alms void by reproaches and injury, like him who spendeth his substance to be seen of men, and believeth not in God and in the Last day.

No profit from their works shall they be able to gain." (Q. 2 : 263, 264)

The community is to be particularly regardful of those who are destitute s and yet do not beg cut of self respect.

"Alms are for the poor who are straitened for the cause of Allah, who cannot travel in the land [for trade]. The

unthinking man accounteth them wealthy because of their restraint. Thou shalt know them by their mark: They do not beg of men with importunity. And whatsoever good thing ye spend, lo! Allah knoweth it."

(Q. 2 : 273)

The almsgiver does not oblige anyone nor recompenses any gratitude in bestowing alms but in so doing only purifies his heart and seeks the pleasure of God:

"Who giveth his wealth that he may grow [in goodness], and none hath with him any favour for reward, except as seeking the Pleasure of his Lord Most High.

He verily will be content."

(Q. 92: 18-20)

It was asked of the Prophet, "What is the best alms giving?" Replied he:

"That you give alms whilst you are in health and hope to be rich, and fear poverty; and put it not off to the time when [the soul] shall reach your throat, and you shall say, 'This is for such and such a one', when it is already to be his."

The Prophet said:

" 'Which of you loves his heirs' wealth better than his own'? His disciples said 'Oh Prophet of God! there is none of us whose wealth is not dearer to him than his heirs.' The Prophet said, 'His wealth is what is gone before him, and what remains is the wealth of his heirs.

Giving of alms has been encouraged

even when one has not much for himself. Said the Prophet:

"O Aisha! turn not the poor away [from thy door] without giving him something, although it be a date. O Aisha! love the poor, and let them come near thee; God will bring thee nearer to Himself on the day of Resurrection.

HAJ

"Lo! first sanctuary appointed for mankind, was that in Becca [Mecca], a blessed place, and a guidance to the peoples. In it are evident signs, even the standing place of Abraham: and whoso entereth it is safe. And pilgrimage to the House [of Allah] is a duty unto Allah for mankind, for him who is able to journey thither." (Q. 3 : 96-7)

It is obligatory on every adult Muslim, man or woman, to go to Mecca to perform the pilgrimage at least once in his or her life time. The obligation is imposed only on the existence of certain favourable conditions, viz:

- (1) Ripeness of intelligence in the pilgrim;
- (2) Enjoyment of perfect freedom and liberty;
- (3) Possession of necessary means to enable the journey as well as to support the pilgrim's family at home during his absence;
- (4) Feasibility and practicability of the journey.

Some ceremonies, like slaughter of animals, are certainly observed during the

pilgrimage but the sacrifice of animals is not a propitiatory sacrifice but is in commemoration of the sacrifice made by Abraham:

"And for every nation have we appointed a ritual, that they may mention the name of Allah over the beast of cattle that He hath given them for food; and your God is one God, therefore surrender unto Him.. Their flesh and blood reach not Allah, but the devotion from you reacheth Him."

(Q. 22 : 34, 37)

Haj is not a ceremonial on a grand scale but its essential purpose is remembrance of God:

"And when ye have finished your holy rites remember God as ye remember your own fathers. or with a yet more intense remembrance." (Q. 2 : 196)

Literally Haj means an effort. In essence it means a great effort for assimilating oneself with the will of God. In gratitude to God and in obedience to His will, believers from all parts of the world assemble in all humility to forget themselves and their mundane affairs, to be transported to the Divine Presence and enrich the sense of God in their consciousness.

Describing her own experience of the Haj, Lady Evelyn Cobbold has written in her book Pilgrimage to Mecca:

"To be a member of that huge congregation gathered together from the four corners of the Earth, on this sacred occasion and on this sacred spot, and to

join with them in all humility in the glorification of God, to have one's consciousness impressed by the full significance of the Islamic ideals is to be privileged to participate in one of the most soul-inspiring experiences that have ever been granted to human beings. To visit the birth place of Islam, to tread the sacred ground hallowed by the memories of Muhammad's long toil and suffering in his struggle to call erring humanity back to God, is to relive those glorious years of sacrifice and martyrdom, is to have one's soul kindled by that celestial fire which lighted up the whole Earth."

The social aspect of Haj is equally striking. Without any distinction of race, language or birthplace, the pilgrims mix with one another in a spirit of fraternal equality, exchange views and compare experiences to unite their efforts for the common good and manifest most vividly the world brotherhood of Muslims. As Sir Thomas Arnold says:

"No stretch of religious genius could have conceived a better expedient for impressing on the mind of the faithful a sense of their common life and their common brotherhood in the bond of faith."

Haj is, therefore, a sacred duty cast upon those who have got the means to discharge it. Exhorts the Qur'an:

"So make provisions for yourselves [before proceeding on the Haj]; Surely the best provision is to ward off [evil]. Therefore, keep your duty unto Me, O men of understanding."■

Under Islamic Law, Why is A Woman's Share of Inherited Wealth Half That of A Man's?

- Syed Mohammad Hamid

In the pre-Islam Arab society only sons bequeathed the property their fathers. But the Qur'an enjoined that the daughters be given shares in property equivalent to half of what the sons inherited from their fathers. It was a step in the then society where women themselves considered a property and were handed down to the sons from the fathers. It had twin objectives: first to recognize the identity of women as free and independent human and second empowering them financially.

The Qur'an enjoined that the women be given shares in property from fathers, husbands and sons and even childless brothers. The three verses that broadly describe the share of close relatives are found in Chapter an-Nisaa, (ref. verses 11, 12 and 176). In these verses, Allah established the right of children, parents and spouse to inherit a specific share without leaving the matter to human judgment and emotions. The Islamic system of inheritance is a perfectly balanced product of the Creator's knowledge of human needs.

Looked at from the today's context, it might appear unjust if women are given just half of what a male heir inherits from father. But if one were to consider the situation prevailing in 7th

century Arabia, it was a unique initiative as Prophet and Islam were taking a step towards making women owner of assets and resources they could never imagine to own, possess, control, use, spend and invest. Let us acknowledge the fact that women were being entitled to half of what their brothers were inheriting rather than their share was being halved. Viewed in this context, one cannot but admire this initiative.

Now let us turn our attention towards the women's role and the justification for the share of inheritance for women. Looking from the women's role in the society even what was designated for them by Islam and the Qur'an was not unjust. It was logically commensurate to their financial and economic responsibilities which were far less than the male heirs. Islam places the responsibility of sustenance and maintenance of the family on men. It is for men to look after the wives, children and parents. It is they who pay for their food, clothing, shelter and education and even marriage. So women are exempted from any real life expenses compared to men. In such circumstances if they receive half of what their male siblings receive, it could be held more than their legitimate and fair share and quite just and equitable.

So when we look at many roles of women, they will be maintained as daughters by their fathers, as wives by their husbands and as mothers (if they are widows) by their sons. Their financial liability being nil, what they were enjoined to receive was quite substantial.

So the allegation of gender disparity or bias does not hold much water. All that it denotes is that Islam was trying to strike a balance between the financial rights and duties of men and women. While women could save and invest their assets and properties, the men were obligated to spend off their assets and incomes on their women and kids. Over and above the share in

property, men were being asked to give Meher (dowry) upon marriage to their wives.

Suppose someone died leaving a son and a daughter. The son's shares of inheritance will be depleted when he gives a dowry to his wife and supports his family, including his sister until she marries. Any additional income will have to be earned through his work. However, his sister's share remains untouched, or might even increase if she invests it. When she marries, she will receive a dowry from her husband and will be maintained by him, having no financial responsibilities whatsoever. Thus, a man might conclude that Islam has favoured women over men! ■

Phrases Heavier than Seven Heavens and Seven Earths

The Prophet (S) says, "Moses said to Allah, 'O Allah, teach me something with which I can remember Thee and praise Thee with it.'" Allah said, "O Moses say 'There is no God but Allah. Moses said, "O my Lord, all Thy slaves say this, I want such a thing which Thou makest specific to me (that is, tell me some such recitation) which Thou hast not told anyone else). Allah said, "O Moses, (listen) if all the seven heavens and all that they contain are placed in one pan of a balance and the rewards of the phrase 'There is no God but Allah' is placed in the other pan, this other pan will i prove heavier than the first."

- (*Mishkaat*)

Maulana Syed Wali Rahmani (1943-2021)

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

Maulana Syed Wali Rahmani, a distinguished Islamic scholar, an accomplished journalist, a prominent writer, Ameer-e-Shariat Bihar, Odisha and Jharkhand, Executive Member, Nadwatul Ulama, Rector Jamia Rahmani Munger, Founder of Rahmani 30, Patron Qhankah Rahmani Munger, General Secretary All India Muslim Personal Law Board passed away after a brief illness in Patna on April 3, 2021. He was son of Maulana Syed Minnatullah Rahmani, founder All India Muslim Personal Law Board and grandson of Maulana Syed Mohammad Ali Mungeri, founder of Nadwatul Ulama.

Born on June 5, 1943 at Munger, Bihar he received primary education at Jamia Rahmani Munger and later he joined Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama and studied there from 1961 to 1963. After that he graduated from Darul Uloom Deoband. Shortly after his graduation, he joined Weekly Naqeeb Phulwari Sharif Patna and enhanced its standard and increased its circulation. He also served as a teacher in Jamia Rahmani Munger from 1966 to 1977.

Known for his extraordinary caliber, boldness, straightforwardness, integrity and honesty. His good command over Islamic Shariah and politics made him stand out among his contemporaries. He was a celebrated orator. His reformative addresses and scholarly speeches held audience spellbound. He was also an accomplished writer. He authored several books on different subjects.

It should be noted that Maulana Rahmani was not only a religious scholar but also a well-known politician. He had profound and deep knowledge of politics. He served as a Member of the Bihar Legislative Council from 1974 to 1996. He was also elected Deputy Chairman in 1984 and in 1990. Maulana Rahmani played significant role in the field of education. He set up Ramani 30. It is an Indian educational movement that started in 2008 in Patna under

the banner of "Rahmani Program of Excellence". It is such a platform where students are well trained for various national competitive examinations. Every year more than one hundred students are selected for JEE, NEET, IIT and so on from this institution. No doubt, he accomplished Yeoman's service for the poor and downtrodden sections of the society. His outstanding contributions and achievements in the cause of the community will always be remembered.

As General Secretary of All India Muslim Personal Law Board, he played leading role in upholding Board position and its rejuvenation. He was Board's spokesman and was always in the forefront in ascertaining a variety of issues of the Board. Myriad issues of the Board were precisely solved by him.

On his demise a condolence meeting was held in Nadwa in which glowing tributes were paid to him. Rector Nadwatul Ulama and President All India Muslim Personal Law Board Maulana S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi said that the passing away of Maulana Rahmani is a great loss to Muslim Ummah. His death caused a great and unbridgeable vacuum. We often sought advice from him on various issues of the Board. He also recalled his meetings and discussions with him and acknowledged his scholarly brilliance. Maulana Saeedur Rahman Azami Nadwi, Principal Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama and Maulana Nazrul Hafeez Azhari Nadwi HOD Department of Arabic Language and Literature Nadwatul Ulama also addressed the gathering and spread light on various aspects of Maulana Rahmani's life and time.

Maulana Rahmani is survived by two sons and one daughter. Maulana Umrain Mahfooz Rahmani, Secretary AIMPLB led the funeral prayer. He was buried in his ancestral graveyard. Thousands of his admirers from various parts of the country thronged to attend the last rites of the late Maulana Rahmani. ■

Anees Chisti Passes Away

- Abdul Bari Masoud

Well known educationist, intellectual, thinker and author of several books, Professor Anees Chishti has passed away in Pune at the age of 79. He was unsung hero of the community who made tremendous contributions in the progress of the community in the country. He will be also remembered for his dawah works as he translated Islamic literature into local Marathi language. He was a close confidant of late Maulana Abul Hasan Nadvi who launched All India Tahreek e payam-e-insaaniyat with an aim to dispel misunderstandings about Islam. Chisti was one the pillars of this movement.

According to Anees Chishti's family, he first suffered a heart attack and then later normal infected by COVID-19. During his treatment at Azam campus Unani hospital Pune he took his last breath and was buried on Monday, April 5, after Isha prayers at Muhammad Jamia Hussaini Masjid in the city.

As news of his demise spread, condolence messages flooded on social media. Many important personalities expressed their grief and sorrow who acknowledged the scholarly and social services of Anees Chishti.

Chisti was born on February 6, 1943 in Pune. His father Shakeel Ahmad was a freedom fighter. He was educated in Pune and Sholapur. Pune is considered the brain of Brahminical forces.

In his condolence message Maulana Rabay Hasani Nadwi said that Anis Chishti's passing away is the great loss to us. His personality was a marvellous amalgamation of a teacher, orator, writer, preacher and administrator par excellence. Expressing condolences on the demise of Anis Chishti, PA Inamdar administrator of Azam Campus Pune, said his demise is a great loss to the nation. He said that Anees Chishti was recognized as an authority in Islamic studies and science and literature.

Munawar Pir Bhai from Pune termed the demise of Anis Chishti as a great loss of the society and said that he was a very capable and intelligent person. Traveled to many countries, he had a keen eye on Islam and Allama Iqbal. And he described the death of Anis Chishti as his

personal loss.

Talha, nephew of Anees Chishti, said that after the death of Maulana Wali Rahmani, he had gone to Lucknow to meet Maulana Rabay Hasani Nadvi.

After returning from the trip, his health deteriorated and on April 5, at around 5.30 pm, he passed away. The personality of Anees Chishti was a person with various attributes. He was a member of the Majlis-e-Shura of Darul Uloom Nadwa tul Ulema, Lucknow and member of the, All India Muslim Personal Law Board.

He was very close to Maulana Syed Abul Hassan Ali Nadvi, a thinker of Islam, and he was the General Secretary of the All India Tahreek e payam-e-insaaniyat.

He was the author of many Urdu, Marathi and English books. His books have been translated into various languages. He was a connoisseur of calligraphy, a teacher of calligraphy, an Islamic scholar, and an educator. Apart from Urdu, many of his books have been published in Marathi.

Mirza Abdul Qayyum Nadvi, a bookseller and activist from Aurangabad, said that he had spoken to Anis Chishti two days before his death. More than 53 of his books have been published. Anis Chishti was fluent in many languages. These included Urdu, Marathi, Hindi, English, Arabic, Persian and other languages. He was a very good man, a man of knowledge, a good teacher, a good writer, a credible writer, an eloquent speaker, a guest lecturer on the panel of high-ranking training institutes. He has received numerous accolades for his books on education, and books on Muslim freedom fighters and other books. In many countries, his Urdu and English language books are included in the Syllabus.

He trained soldiers at the Indian Institute of Education, College of Military Engineering Pune. He has delivered sermons and lectures on Islamic and scientific and literary topics in different parts of the country. He is survived by a daughter and four brothers. Arguably, his demise made the community further poorer as it was in the shocked after Muslim Personal Law Board General Secretary Maulana Mohammad Wali Rahmani in Patna just two days before. ■

A Pious Lady

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

Women play a constructive role in every aspects of life. The concept of society can not be perceived sans them. The lap of the mother is the first school of a child. The prophet Muhammad (PBUH) manifests the importance of women as follows: "Heaven lies under the feet of mothers". "Women are the twin-halves of men." The Holy Qur'an says: "And of His signs is that He has created wives for you from yourselves that you might find peace of mind in them and He put between you love and affection. He it is Who created you from a single soul and of the same he made his spouse, that he might find comfort in her. The Holy Qur'an further says:" They your wives are as a garment to you, and as a garment to them. "According to Islam the world and all things in it are valuable but the most valuable thing in the world is a virtuous woman.

Recently, we lost a pious and God-fearing woman Aasia D/O Maulana Bashirullah Miftahi and wife of Maulana Dr. Saeedur Rahman Azami Nadwi, principal Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow. She passed away after a brief illness in Lucknow on March 26, 2021.

No doubt, she was a kindhearted, self-conscious, righteous, generous and chaste woman. She spent more than six decades with Dr. Saeedur Rahman Azami Nadwi. She

proved herself a faithful and exemplary wife. She proved boon to him. She took care of entire domestic activities. She left no stone unturned to keep her husband free for his academic, literary, teaching, administrative and Dawah jobs. She was an educated lady. She was fond of religious books and magazines. She was a regular subscriber of monthly magazine "Rizwan", Lucknow.

On her demise various condolence meetings were held in which glowing tributes were paid to her. Besides, a host of persons sent condolence messages to Dr. Azami for expressing their grief to him.

She is survived by two sons Hafiz Lutfur Rahman Azami and Dr. Aatur Rahman Azami Nadwi and six daughters.

Maulana S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi led the funeral prayer. She was buried in Daliganj graveyard. A good number of teachers, students and elites of the city were present at the funeral. May Allah forgive her shortcomings and lapses and adorn her grave with luminosity and refulgence and grant her an elevated position in Jannat al Firdaws. "To the righteous soul will be said, O thou soul, in complete rest and satisfaction! Come and well-pleasing unto Him! Enter thou, then, among My devotees! Yea, enter thou My Heaven." ■

Around the World

The Human Rights Watch Report

US-based HRW published a 213-page report that, it said, wasn't aimed at comparing Israel with apartheid-era South Africa, but at assessing "whether specific acts and policies" constitute apartheid under international law. Israel sought to maintain hegemony over Palestinians from Jordan River to Mediterranean Sea, the report claims. According to HRW, its "report concludes that Israel officials have committed the crimes against humanity of apartheid and persecution", as defined under 1973 Apartheid Convention and 1998 Rome Statute.

It's time to End America's Longest war: JOE BIDEN

US President Joe Biden announced that the remaining US troops will leave Afghanistan by September 11, the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks that took them there in the hunt for Al Qaeda.

He said American forces cannot stay on in the hope of creating the ideal withdrawal conditions and "it's time to end America's longest war".

The draw-down is not based on conditions and will start before May 1, the earlier deadline negotiated by the Trump administration with the Taliban, a senior Biden administration official said. After September 11, US military presence in Afghanistan will be limited to providing protections to diplomats.

"I am now the fourth American president to preside over an American troop presence in Afghanistan. Two Republicans. Two Democrats. I will not pass this responsibility to a fifth." Biden said.

Afghan president Ashraf Gandhi said his forces were "fully capable" of defending Afghanistan. "The Islamic republic of Afghanistan respects the US decision," he tweeted.

New Law allows Putin to Return Power until 2036 MASCOW:

Russian President Vladimir Putin gave final approval to legislation allowing him to hold office for two additional six-year terms, giving himself the possibility to stay in power until 2036.

The 68-year-old Russian leader, who has already been in power for more than two decades, signed off on the bill, according to a copy posted on the government's legal information portal.

Putin proposed the change last year as part of constitutional reforms that Russians overwhelmingly backed in a vote in July. Lawmakers approved the new bill last month.

The legislation will allow Putin to run in presidential elections again after his current and second consecutive term expires in 2024.

Putin was first elected president in 2000 and served two consecutive four-year terms. His ally Dmitry Medvedev took his place in 2008, which critics saw as a way around Russia's limit on two consecutive terms for presidents.

While in office, Medvedev signed off on legislation extending terms to six years starting with the next president.

Putin then returned to the Kremlin in 2012, winning re-election in 2018. ■

(H.T.)

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