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Allah Absolute Owner of All Things

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

It is a basic principle of Islam's economic system that everything belongs to Allah. The Quran teaches man to submit all his affairs to Allah and emphasizes only one responsibility of man—his vicegerancy of Allah on earth. It addresses Muslims in these words:

Yea, give them
something yourselves
out of the means
which God has
given to you.
[XXIV: 33]

It also presents the same theme in the following way:

And spend (in charity)
out of the (substance) whereof
He has made you heirs.
[LVII: 7]

It is clearly stated in the above verses that the true owner of all things is Allah. Man, therefore, does not have any right to take pride in having given out as Zakah a very small portion of his wealth with which Allah has entrusted him.

And what cause
have ye why ye should
not spend in the cause
of God? For to God
belongs the heritage of
the heaven and the
Earth.

[LVII : 10]

Man should, therefore, realize and accept that he is in fact not the master of his belongings, land and property, but merely a trustee answerable to the Supreme Master, Allah the Almighty. ■

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Wisdom of Qur'an

“Those who were unjustly expelled from their homes for no other reason than their saying: ‘Allah is Our Lord.’ If Allah were not to repel some men through others, monasteries and churches and synagogues and mosques, wherein the names of Allah is much mentioned, would certainly have been pulled down. Allah will most certainly help those who will help Him. Verily Allah is Immensely Strong, Overwhelmingly Mighty. (Allah will certainly help) those who, were We to bestow authority on them in the land, will establish Prayer, render Zakah, enjoin good, and forbid evil. The end of all matters rests with Allah.”

(Al-Qur'an – 22:40-41)

When power is bestowed on the believers, they concern themselves with such noble tasks like establishing Prayer and giving out Zakah, and use their power to promote goodness and extirpate evil.

It is, in fact, God Who decides to whom governance of a territory should be entrusted. People who are intoxicated with power are prone to misunderstand that it is they who decide the fate of people. But God, Who has the power to transform a tiny seed into a huge tree, and Who conversely, can turn a huge tree into a pile of ashes, also has the power to strike a fatal blow and make an example of those who, by their acts of repression, struck terror into the hearts of people making themselves appear too well entrenched to be removed from power. On the other hand, He can also raise the down-trodden to heights of power that none can dream of. ■

Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

It has been narrated on the authority of Ibn Umar that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) said: “Beware, every one of you is a shepherd and everyone is answerable with regard to his flock. The Caliph is a shepherd over the people and shall be questioned about his subjects (as to how he conducted his affairs). A man is a guardian over the members of his family and questioned about them (as to how he looked after their physical and moral well-being). A woman is a guardian over the household of her husband and his children and shall be questioned about them (as to how she managed the household and brought up the children). A slave is a guardian over the property of his master and shall be questioned about it (as to how he safeguard his trust). Beware, every one of you is a guardian and every one of you shall be questioned with regard to his trust.”

(Sahih Muslim)

Here, the government's responsibility towards the citizens has been put on a par with parents' responsibility towards their children. Just as the father is bound to ensure the maintenance and well-being of his family, the government is bound to ensure the moral, spiritual, social and economic well-being of its citizens, whose affairs it has undertaken to administer.

Like a shepherd, a father serves his family with a spirit of deep love, affection and self-sacrifice. Similarly, the rulers should serve the people of the State with the same emotions of love and sacrifice. ■

Editor's Note 

Remembering Ahmad Shah

After the Supreme Court's judgment in Babri Masjid case in November 2019 the dispute was settled after a prolonged legal battle of about sixty years. The court's verdict released the disputed site in Ayodhya in favour of Ram Temple's devotees and in lieu of that 5 acres of land in a nearby village Dhannipur was allotted to build a mosque of their choice. The Sunni Central Waqf Board of UP was entrusted to proceed on in this matter. The Board has formed a Trust naming it Indo Islamic Cultural Foundation under the headship of the chairman of Sunni Waqf Board. The Trust is believed to have initiated implementing the plan. It has been decided that apart from the mosque, Health centre, Community Hall, Study Centre etc. may also be built there.

The Trust has after a good deal of deliberation decided that mosque should be named after Maulana Ahmad Shah Faizabadi. The choice of this name from the archives of history is laudable. Now after more than a century people hardly know of Maulana and his contribution in the freedom struggle.

During 1857 after annexing the Delhi Empire British were out to capture other states, Meerut and other places offered strict resistance

and revolutionaries killed many Englishmen and officers. The Faizabad area too could not be spared from the fury of Revolutionaries. Here a Taluqdar (Land Lord) Ahmad Shah took command of the locals and came forward to drive away British from there. He took the vow not only to get his Taluqdari back but to free his country. Since the English annexed the kingdom of Avadh. Taluqdar Ahmad Shah had given his call-in-all for the service of his country and religion. He became a Muslim cleric and set out on a tour through India to preach Revolution. Thus he awakened the people wherever he went. At Lucknow, he openly preached the destruction of the British Power. He also wrote Revolutionary pamphlets and distributed them in whole of Avadh. Fearing his advances English ordered his arrest. An English military force caught him. He was tried for sedition and sentenced to be hanged, and detained for a time in the Faizabad prison. But before the sentence could be executed Avadh broke into revolt and like many a political criminal he slipped at once from the floor of a dungeon to the footsteps of a throne! The Maulana Ahmad Shah was released from jail by the mutineers. ■

S. A.

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Universal Creed And Culture

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Incomparably Unity of Islam

A comprehensive unity of thought and culture, the like of which is not to be found in any other multi-national culture or society, was brought about, and still persists, among the followers of Islam, thanks, chiefly, to their belief in Oneness of God. This creed includes, besides conviction in Divine Unity, faith in the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him), the finality of his apostleship and the accountability in the life-to-come. The mental process emanating from this creed evokes unity of approach in the observation and interpretation of natural phenomenon, ideas and values, purpose of universe and finite nature of earthly life and the world. These had been sunk deep into the hearts of the followers of Islam and were clearly visible in the lives of the holy Prophet, his companions and later generations in varying degrees consistent with their times, circumstances, edification and extraneous influences. But common cultural elements have uniformly been present in all Muslim societies irrespective of the time and space in which they were located. These elements of cultural unity have been deeper, more pronounced and of a distinctive character in comparison to similar traits in other cultures.

Some Distinguishing Features

Islamic cultural unity depends, by

and large, on the Shariah and the moral norms prescribed by it, though the standards may vary in proportion to their compliance with the teachings of Islam. These apparent variations are inevitable, too, owing to the inherent variety in Muslim nations, countries, times and their political and social organizations, but each of these would be found to carry a distinctive stamp of Islam. The common features tracing their origin to Islam in all the Muslim societies can be seen in their unshaken faith in the Oneness of God, a sense of human dignity and equality, modesty and courtesy, hospitality to strangers, anxiety for hereafter, willingness to stake their lives for the cause of God, refraining from acts of cruelty even during warfare, toleration and, in their personal and family life, a consciousness for taharah—the ceremonial, ritual purity and purification—a concept deeper and wider than that conveyed by the word 'cleanliness. Similarly, all Muslim peoples would be found meticulous about the things like permissible and forbidden flesh of certain animals which should also fulfill the requirement of Islamic law by being sacrificed in the name of God. Another special feature of Muslim communities transcending their linguistic differences is that they normally have Arabic names which exhibit their reverence for God and love of the prophets, companions of the holy Prophet and his household members. Names like Muhammad and Ahmad are

equally popular in all Muslim communities.

The religious and cultural unity of Muslim societies becomes even more distinct in religious observances and festivals. The five daily prayers are performed in all countries (according to their own timings of day and night) keeping in step with a set procedure. Anyone belonging to any country can participate in such congregational prayers, without any local guide or assistance, and can even lead the service. Friday is weekly day of special service. Quran is the only religious scripture memorised and recited in the original Arabic text everywhere.

The same is true of call to prayer which proclaims the time for prayer in the same words at all places. Ramadhan is the month of fasting no matter whether it is summer or winter in any particular country. The two common festivals universally observed are the two Ids which attract the largest crowds everywhere. Hajj or pilgrimage to Mecca is yet another source of cultural unity for it has attracted large throngs from far off regions continuously during the long history of Islam. It has been singularly successful in obliterating all the barriers of race, colour, language and regional culture. In the same way, the usual words used for salutation throughout the world of Islam are Assalamu alaikum (peace be on you), while several Quranic expressions like 'Al-hamdu lillah (praise belongs to Allah), Masha' Allah (as God wills), Insha Allah (if God wills) (Inna lillah wa inna ilaihi rajioon (to God we belong and to Him shall be return) are in common use everywhere.

Testimony of Western Scholars

Several scholars have noted this remarkable uniformity of Islamic culture. Here we will cite a few of their observations in this regard. Hamilton A. R. Gibb writes in the *Studies on the Civilisation of Islam*:

“Islam is a concept which, phenomenalized in a number of linked but diverse political, social and religious organisms, covers an immense area in space and time. In different regions and epochs it has presented differing features under the impact of and in response to local geographical, social and political forces. Western Islam for example, in north-west Africa and medieval Spain, though it was clearly related to the Muslim heartlands in Western Asia and its culture was an offshoot of their culture, yet it evolved several distinguishing characteristics, some of which in turn influenced Islam in Western Asia. In other large and self-contained geographical areas, such as the Indian sub-continent and Indonesia, or the steppe lands extending from southern Russia to the borders of China, parallel factors produced similarly distinguishing forms. Yet, each and all of these retain a certain easily recognizable common Islamic stamp.”

Another student of contemporary Islam, Wilfred Cantwell Smith, says about the cultural achievement of Islam:

“The Muslim achievement was seen as intrinsic to their faith. They were not only victorious on the battlefield and effective

in many diverse departments of living, but they succeeded also, and again in relatively short period of time, in integrating life into that wholeness that constitutes a culture. Many elements went into making the Islamic civilization: elements from Arabia, from Hellenism, from Semitic cultures of the ancient Near East, from Sasani Iran, from India. The achievement of the Muslims was that they welded these into homogeneous way of life, and also carried it forward into new development. And it was Islam that provided the integration, as it provided to the drive and power to sustain it. Islamic form was given to almost every aspect of life, whatever its content. And it was an Islamic pattern that gave the society cohesion as well as vitality.

The Basic Ingredient

Islamic culture is dominated by its intense faith in God whose attributes serve as the ideal to be imbibed in the individual as well as social and cultural life of the Muslims. It is a culture hued in the colour of Allah which makes it difficult to conceive its institutions and organisation, nature and characteristics without its prime constituent. Whenever it has been contaminated by foreign influences like national or racial chauvinism, material greed moral decadence or social anarchy such a deviation has proved to be a temporary phase resulting from its negligence of the teachings of the Qur'an and the sunnah. Nevertheless, it always tries to maintain its universalism against external and internal challenges in order

to return to its original source of power as well as to realise the widest possible measure of religious social and cultural unity throughout the Islamic world. It is for this reason that the revivalist endeavour in Islam shows a remarkable continuity throughout its long history. These movements have also been very often successful in their efforts to get the community back to its moorings.

Islam and the West

We have reviewed, albeit briefly, the cultural gifts of Islam which have in the past arrested suicidal trends and put the human civilisation back on the road to progress. It would be worth-while to mention here that Islam can again exert a healthful influence on humanity but in order to repeat its performance again it must occasionally take stock of itself and get rid of the corrupting influences through a judicious intermingling of the old and the new.

Another fact that needs to be kept in mind is that Islamic culture cannot make any impact on others so long as it remains influenced by alien cultures. It cannot claim the attention of others, let alone being able to act as their guide, unless it assures its own adherents of its distinctive character containing elements of divine guidance and that it is still most suitable for all times and climes. They have to realise that it is rooted in the solid ground of the Quran and sunnah. It prescribes a complete system of mandatory religious observances and social obligations covering a greater part of one's life and time with a set of stipulations and injunctions; for example,

it does not equate purification and cultural refinement and decency with cleanliness and abstention from law-breaking but gives them a much deeper and wider content. It has nothing in common with the civilization of the West which has, owing to its peculiar historical development, been brought up in a materialistic, anti-religious and amoral atmosphere. Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbal who had studied the western culture at its own centres has described it in a verse which says that "the spirits of its culture Jacks sanctity."

Islamic Revivalism

It would be worthwhile to give here a quotation from my own work, a biography of the Prophet of Islam, depicting the character and morals of the people held as living models of Islamic culture, as this would be a fitting epilogue to this discussion.

"The prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) made a clean sweep of the existing order of things in the world. The longings and desires of man were now centered on a new objective; the love of God took possession of his being; the pleasure of God became the immortal thirst of human heart; mercy and kindness to God's creatures was recognised as the greatest virtue which became the sole object of man's endeavour. It was then, after the advent of Islam that the leading feature of all the countries, Arabia and Iran, Syria and Egypt, Turkistan and Iraq. North Africa and Spain became the search for higher and tender virtues, in the pursuit or which

we find thousands of love-lorn souls. During this period we see innumerable men of God preaching love of the Lord, kindness and compassion to every sentient being, merits of virtuous living, acquisition of knowledge for attaining the pleasure of God, revulsion to cruelty and indecency and emphasising the grace of humility and modesty. They taught the lesson of human dignity and brotherhood of man and made this earth a kingdom of God.

"If you peep into the interior of these elevated souls, you would witness unbelievable flight or imagination, purity of their innermost feelings and nimbleness of their Perceptions. You would see how they were ever willing to put their own life at stake for others, how they made their own children and family suffer for the good of all and sundry, how they compelled the autocratic kings and potentates to do justice to the weak and the poor and how rightfully just they were even to their enemies. Of a fact it would have been difficult for us to believe today what a fine specimen of humanity, what a sublime soul were these men of God if the historians and biographers had not preserved a truthful record of their lives and doings."

This striking change in the manner and morals of the people was, indeed, the greatest miracle worked by the holy Prophet of Islam.

"Verily God saith in truth: "We have sent thee not save as a mercy for the people."■

Hajj

- S.Sulaiman Nadwi

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Baitullah

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

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

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

the Holy Qur'an thus:

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

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

The Sacrifice of Isma'il and its Conditions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

could he get himself shaved.

The Basis of the Religion of Ibrahim is Sacrifice

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ibrahim (peace be upon him) resolved to slaughter his loving and only son in obedience to Allah's command and the next moment should have witnessed the deed done, Allah called to him: O Ibrahim! Thou hast indeed shown the truth of the vision. (37: 104,105)

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

Islam Demands Sacrifice

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

Allah, the Exalted, named this sentiment of theirs of resignation and surrender to His as Al-Islam. It has been said in the Holy Qur'an.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Place of Sacrifice

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

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

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

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

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

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

be upon him) offered the sacrifice there. The Holy Qur'an says:

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

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

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

Makkah and Ka'bah

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

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

In the Torah too we find the following verses:

Blessed are the men whose strength is in thee,

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

They make it a place of springs;

The early rains also cover it with pools,

They go from strength to strength.....

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

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

Ibrahim (peace be upon him) tried to raise his voice in the land of Chaldeans

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

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

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

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

as Joseph (Yusuf) had seen the stars, the sun and the moon prostrating before him. In short, Ibrahim (peace be upon him) dreamed that he was slaughtering his son with his own hands.

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

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

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

And lo, there stood a ninety year old man, his sleeves upturned, his hand holding a knife, to slaughter the darling son, the light of his eyes, the boon granted in answer to praying lips. And there lay a blooming youth, brought up in the loving arms of a loving father; but now the loving arm of the same loving father descending on his throat with a deadly weapon. The angels, the heavens and the whole universe, witnessed the scene and were stunned. Allah all of a sudden called a vice on High: O Ibrahim, thou hast indeed shown the truth of the vision, thus do We reward the doers of good. (37: 109,110)

The firmness, the determination and the astonishing self-sacrifice shown by the

son, really deserved to be commemorated for all time to come.

The Facts about Hajj

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

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

Just as Hadrat Ibrahim (peace be

upon him) had come running to the House of Allah in response to Allah's call, a pilgrim visits the ka'bah reciting these words loudly: Here I am at Thy service, O Allah; here I am at Thy service. Here I am at Thy service, O Allah, here I am at Thy service, here I am at Thy service. There is not associate with Thee; here I am at Thy service. Verily all praise and grace is due to Thee and the Sovereignty (too). There is no associate with Thee.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

These stone pillars stand at the sites

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

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

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

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

Reforms in Hajj

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

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

The detail of these reforms is given below:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

When the Ansar returned after Hajj

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Sirat-un-Nabi by S.Sulaiman Nadwi, V-5, page-117-134)

From The 19th Century, The Story of A Dissenting Judge And Colonialism

- Mohammad Nasir

At a time when courage has become rare, one has to look up to those who stood for dissent in the colonial era.

Syed Mahmood, son of the great social reformer of 19th century India, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, was the perhaps first judge to espouse the cause of judicial freedom. He was born on May 24 in 1850.

Mahmood made history during his six-year stint as a judge of the Allahabad High Court (HC) from 1887 to 1893, which was the highest position a “native” could hold in the British Government of India.

He was the first Indian Muslim and the first north Indian to be appointed to any HC in India, besides being the first non-European member of the Allahabad Bar.

From the age of 32 in 1882, he officiated as a judge of Allahabad HC thrice, before eventually becoming permanent in 1887.

As a judge, Mahmood stood out for demonstrating judicial integrity

through dissent.

Even while he was still only a temporary judge of the Allahabad HC, he wrote dissenting judgments with vigour and fearlessness, and put humanity at the centre of his judicial universe, a digression from the purely legalistic approach of earlier judges.

In his famous dissenting judgment in Queen Empress vs Phopi, he recognised “fair trial” as an essential part of the criminal justice system, in defiance of the then colonial law, to protect the rights of the accused in situations where they were neither present in person before the court nor represented by a lawyer.

Similarly, in Queen Empress vs Babulal, his dissent put checks on torture of prisoners for extraction of confessions under the colonial evidence law.

Thereafter, the chief justice of Allahabad HC, Sir John Edge, stopped assigning Mahmood criminal cases. Eventually, this hostility with Chief Justice Edge culminated in Mahmood’s

resignation from judgeship in 1893. As a truly independent judge, he simply could not accept judgeship being dependent on the frowns and smiles of the British.

Sir Syed, his father, saw it as a spiteful act of “Englishmen robbing Indian civil servants of their self-respect”, but was proud his son had the courage to stand up to the British.

Tej Bahadur Sapru, a prominent Indian freedom fighter who helped in drafting the Indian Constitution, termed the episode a “public calamity”.

Imagine those days of the last quarter of the 19th century when Justice Mahmood was the only Indian among British judges. As an Indian judge of standing in colonial India, he perhaps exemplified the burden of double consciousness — having to think of as an Indian judge in British India.

As a son of India with a judicial aptitude far ahead of his time, many of his dissents were later accepted by the courts, and continue to be the law of the land.

He was quoted by the Supreme Court (SC) of India in the ShayaraBano judgment abolishing the practice of triple

talaq; and recently, in 2020, SC in Raghunath vs Radha Mohan, quoted with approval his judgment on the Muslim law of pre-emption.

While Mahmood is most reputed for his metier in Muslim law, his judicial scholarship sparkled in other areas of law as well, leavened by his vintage quest for a reason to confront orthodoxy and dogma.

His pronouncements on Hindu Law not only widened the grounds for Hindu widows for claiming maintenance but were also useful in drawing the legislative framework of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 — the modern codified Hindu law governing marriage and divorce.

The enduring light of Mahmood shines from the intellectual integrity he never let go of in moments of conflict.

To the Indian legal fraternity, he will inspire us to learn deeply, think clearly and most crucially, never be afraid, when it is time to speak. ■

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Admonitions And Exhortations

- S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi*

Among the admonitions and exhortations he (SAW) gave during this Hajj in his sermons, one great admonition was that the human fraternity must have egalitarianism. He had it proclaimed that each one of the human fraternity was equal to the other. Excellence of anyone over the other would be only to the extent by which he would be more deferential and considerate to commandments of his Lord, the Almighty Allah, than the other. The more scrupulous about His commands one would be in leading his life, the more reverential he would be. His (SAW) words are:

(O people, do you know what month and what day is this? And which city you are in?" They replied: 'This is the day of great sanctity; this month is very sacred and city has great sanctity'. Thereupon he (SAW) said: "The life, property and honour of anyone of you are as sacred for anyone else till the Day you meet Him (your Lord) as this day, this month and this city are." Then he said: "Listen to me so that you could lead (real) life. Beware! Do not wrong. Beware! Do not wrong. Beware! Do not wrong. It is not lawful for anyone to take anything from the property of a Muslim unless it was by his consent.

Every claim on anyone's life and everyone's property that was deemed lawful in the days of Ignorance is now abolished up till the Day of Judgement. And the first claim of blood-vengeance that I remit is that of Rabeeyah bin el-Harith bin Abdul Muttalib. He was a suckling (babe) among Bani Laith when Hudail killed him. All the usury of the pagan past is (also) abolished and Allah has commanded that the first one to be abolished is that of Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib. Your capital amount would, of course, be yours; neither you do wrong to anyone, nor you be wronged by anyone. Behold! Do not become infidels after me beheading one another. And, behold! The Devil has despaired of ever being worshipped by those who offer Namaz; but, he would keep sowing seeds of dissensions among you. And fear Allah concerning women. For, they are reliant on you. They possess nothing for themselves. They have a right of theirs on you and you have a right of yours on them which is that they should not let anyone else than you get into your bed, nor let anyone whom you dislike enter your house. In case you have apprehension of their insubordination, exhort them, leave them alone in their beds and hit them in such a way as is not agonizing. You

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owe them their meal and their clothing in a fair manner; for, you have had them under Allah's security and have made them legitimate for you by the Word of Allah. Behold! Whoever holds anything in trust should return it to whoever had trusted him with it. I have left amidst you something which so long you would hold it fast, you would never go astray. That is the Book of Allah. And, you would be asked (by Allah) about me; so what are you going to say?" They said: "We would testify that you have conveyed (the message) and fulfilled (your mission) and did exhort (us)". Thereupon, he (SAW) raised his forefinger towards the sky and said thrice: "O Allah! Be witness". Thereafter he (SAW) extended his open hands and said: "Have I delivered the message? Have I delivered the message?" Then he said: "Those present here should convey it to those not present. For, many of those who are not present (on some occasion) are more felicitous than the direct listeners.")

This was the Declaration made by the Prophet (SAW) for the first time in the history of mankind. It constituted one of the momentous principles of Islam. It is, hence, on its basis that whenever they (the Muslims) get together, whatever the occasion, whether of performance of worship or something pertaining to normal life, all of them, black and white, slave and master, ruler and the ruled

stand side by side to each other.

That was the first-ever Declaration of egalitarianism and human dignity. A Declaration somewhat resembling to that was also adopted by the current united council that is United Nations 13 hundred years thereafter. Prior to the Islamic Declaration, the tyranny that was rampant among the non-Muslim nations on the basis of colour and race, this Declaration was an attempt to put a stop to that. The Islamic society has, however, been acting it out up to a considerably fair extent, for last fourteen hundred years.

The second most important Declaration he (SAW) made was rendering the practice of usury unlawful which the affluent had taken to as a device for earning profits without having to exert any labour on their part. And, in order to take advantage of the helplessness of indigence of the indigent, they had made it a tool of perpetrating horrendous acts of cruelty on them all over the world. It is He (SAW) who had put a stop to this practice. And he (SAW) took the lead in this direction by outright abolishment of usury profits of his beloved uncle, Hazrat A'bbas (RAA).

The third Declaration he (SAW) made was that the iniquity and discrimination that was in vogue on the basis of diversity of colour and race of

(Cont. to page 30)

A Muslim Man Gives Dignity To The Departed in 2nd Wave

- Oliver Fredrick

Mohammed Ghizaal Siddiqui gave dignity to the dead when there was despondency all around during the second wave of Covid-19 and many people could not even say a final goodbye to their loved ones.

Mohammed Ghizaal Siddiqui battled the pandemic situation in his own way while doctors, paramedical staff and other frontline workers also did so with firm determination.

Siddiqui, a general merchant who is in his late fifties and hails from Uttar Pradesh's Bareilly district, says he performed around 385 burials and cremations during the Islamic holy month of Ramzan, which started on April 13, coinciding with the peak of the Covid second wave.

He is perhaps the only person in UP to have performed the last rites of such a large number of people in the second wave.

The task of giving dignity to the departed, especially unclaimed bodies is not new to Siddiqui, who says he has been doing it for the last 38 years.

But the number of bodies he had to lay to rest during the second wave made the pandemic experience much grimmer for him.

"In the last 38 years, I have handled more than 7000 unclaimed dead bodies, including the ones whose family members couldn't afford giving the last rites to their loved ones, but this situation was different. In a mere 30 days during Ramzan, I gave

burials to around 345 bodies and performed the cremation of around 40. I would pray to Allah to not to make me see this horrific phase again in my life," says Siddiqui as he goes through the records of the bodies at his office in the Quila locality of Bareilly.

Initially, he says, he never thought that he would have to lend a helping hand to the families of the Covid-19 patients.

"But when I saw people in such a helpless state that they couldn't perform the last rites of their loved ones, I thought if not me, then who else would (do it) and I decided to lend a helping hand to the family members of Covid patients," he says.

Siddiqui also says the peak 30 days starting from April 12 are still fresh in his memory when he used to get around 20 to 30 calls for assistance daily and about 10-12 of the callers sought help for performing the last rites of their loved ones.

"There were situations when all the family members were in isolation or hospitalized. In some situations, all members of the family were dead. In a majority of the instances, no family member turned up to perform the last rites," says Siddiqui.

In particular, one instance from Shahmatganj locality of Bareilly moved Siddiqui to the core. He received a distress call from two Muslim sisters, asking for help in performing the last rites of their father and brother who passed away due to Covid-19.

“Their mother was hospitalised and the father and the brother were dead. There was no one to attend the bodies. I then attended the bodies and gave them a decent burial,” he recalls.

He says he is thankful to his wife Sufiya and his children for supporting him throughout.

“During the initial days of service to the patients who died due to Covid, I called my wife and said I did not want to risk their (family’s) lives, hence I would be residing in isolation at another house of ours for a few days. But my wife’s reply moved me. She said: nothing could harm us since you are serving humanity. Please come and stay with us, we will take all precautions to keep us all safe,” he recalled.

Sufiya Ghizaal, Siddiqui’s wife, says she made sure that the clothes were handled carefully and washed thoroughly in hot water.

“In that entire phase, we also made sure that we took proper steam (inhalation), wore mask and followed other precautionary measures,” she adds.

She also says this phase was terrifying for her as well even though she had been seeing her husband attending unclaimed bodies for the past three decades.

Siddiqui also thanked the people of Bareilly who helped him from behind the scenes in bearing all the expenses of his noble work. ■ *(Hindustan Times, 27-06-2021)*

(Cont. from page 28)

the human beings was exterminated. In this regard, he (SAW) did not care even for the supremacy his own clan, the Quoraish, enjoyed, on tribal level, among Arabs. He ordered all the Muslims to live among themselves like brothers, maintain mutual terms of sympathy and cooperation and that no one should be the cause of depredation of the life and honour of anyone else. These interdictions he (SAW) issued just like various interdictions made on performance of Hajj. For, these matters, too, carry devotional status. Backsliding in them, too, warrants punishment from Allah. Thus, in the permanent constitution of Islam, provision is made, along with human egalitarianism and mutual partnership in creed and religion, for recognition of each other’s fundamental rights and honouring them. To that end, getting assembled around the Ka’ba and, discarding the differences of colour, race and language, giving a demonstration of egalitarianism and equality, he (SAW) revived and reestablished the same way of life which his progenitor, Hazrat Ibrahim (AS), had given a call to, under instructions from his Lord:

(And proclaim thou among mankind the pilgrimage; they shall come unto thee on foot)

and had it proclaimed that whether Arab or non-Arab, and whether white, black or red, all are equal. If the superiority is to be earned by anyone, it would be earned only on the basis of one’s righteous virtues. ■

Various Dimensions Of Education

- Mahar Abdul Haq

In its opening Chapter (Surah Fatiha) the Holy Qur'an says: Praise be to God, The Cherisher and Sustainer of the world; Most Gracious, Most Merciful; master of the Day of Judgement. Thee do we worship, and thine aid we seek. Show us the straightway, the way of those on whom thou hast bestowed thy Grace, those whose (portion) is not wrath, and who go not astray.

(1:2-7)

The nature of goodness, truth and beauty cannot be diverse or multiple. It is the most perfect law of unity emanating from the Supreme Real One that governs every iota of existence in the known and unknown Universes and thus becomes the source of all Values for human beings. The philosopher in Education is, therefore, responsible, on account of his better wisdom and sharper insight, to check effectively all vagrancies of thought and make clarifications about the nature of Truth and Reality.

Etymologically, 'to educate' means 'to lead out' or 'to bring out'. Man has been endowed with many capabilities but most of them remain dormant or embryonic until something awakens them, nourishes them and 'brings them out' for a full Play, Education, therefore, stands for bringing out and developing to their full potential all the faculties that are latent in each individual. The Arabic word 'Rabubiyyat' or 'Tarbiyyat' has something more to add above meanings of Education. Among the

inherent capabilities of man there are some if not checked properly, have the tendency to disintegrate human personality. Rahuhiyyal meant not only to bring forth, nourish and evolve but also to look after, give right proportion, sustain and carry a thing to its desired end successfully. It is thus bringing out and directing a harmonious flow all human capabilities for an individually and socially valuable, not pernicious, end. This cannot be left to chance or experiences of trial and error, for that would mean chaos and disorderliness amounting to a denial of man's own faculties of setting things right. Man, therefore, needs an artificial or 'contrived' education in addition to that which he receives automatically through experience.

Some philosophers hold that his need for education arises from the fact that, among all other animals, man is perhaps the one most ill-equipped with instinctive mechanism for dealing profitably with his environment. According to the teachings of the Holy Quran man is 'altogether a new creation' as compared to an 'animal' just as Vegetation is altogether a new creation as compared to minerals or just as an 'animal' is altogether a new creation as compared to vegetation, in spite of a few similarities common to them all. He has, therefore, to be studied in his position as man only and not as an animal. It would be much profitable if dissimilarities are paid a closer thought.

Some living things fend for themselves from their very birth because they have no purpose of life before them other than just fending for themselves. In many others that have a period of helpless infancy the mechanisms they need for adult life are soon gained as a matter of growth rather than by way of learning. This is because they are merely 'things' and they have to reach an adult life for procreation only and no more. Man is not a 'thing' in that sense; he has many higher purposes to fulfill. His longer period of dependent infancy has a very important objective behind it. In his later years he has not only to take care of himself but to take care of others also and prepare for a higher plane of 'life' which starts after the physical 'death'. He has to share big responsibilities and pass through a number of thorny paths of life with care and caution; He has to protect his spiritual 'self' from disintegration. The very fact that education is a life-long process for human beings alone is by itself a proof of the fact that beyond this earthly world 'life' must go on further to a newer and higher plane and that this worldly span of a few decades is just a period of training and preparation for it. Among all the other 'things' of Nature, Man holds a position of superiority because of his higher faculties of feeling, understanding, thinking and willing. These 'things' either do not possess these faculties at all or have very little of them. For this very reason these are all 'things' and are not responsible for their actions; and for this very reason their actions are 'measured' or 'predetermined' actions; that is to say, they cannot do otherwise what

they do instinctively. This is the reason that in our man-made laws, the responsibilities of the children, the mentally retarded, the grown-ups, the educated, the wise and the highly talented persons are fixed in varying degrees according to the level of their consciousness—the wisest carrying the highest burden on their shoulders.

Yet from another angle we can observe that where there is a lack of these faculties nature itself assumes all or most of the responsibilities of nourishing, sustaining and evolving the objects of Creation to their full potentialities. For example in stones and other 'dead' matter where there is no consciousness everything is done by Nature itself through its fixed and unchangeable laws. The diamond in the coal, the pearl in the oyster, the fruit in the genesis of the seed, 'the dead from the living and the living from the dead' all evolve according to their predetermined rules of individual evolution which the 'things' themselves can neither change nor amend nor defy. We can also see that in higher 'things' in which 'life' or consciousness makes its first appearance Nature withdraws as much as it necessary according to the level of consciousness which the 'things' possess, giving each living thing as much freedom to work unassisted as is required for its nourishment, sustenance and evolution. So these 'things' have either no period of training or have a very short one which just enables them to satisfy their physical needs and no more. In them the acquisition of 'abilities' is a matter of maturation of instincts, not education. It is man alone who is the most plastic an

educable of all the creation of Allah and, as such, he stands in most need of a right sort of education.

By right sort of education we mean an education meant for and suitable to human beings and not that which the lower creation of Allah requires. In some directions, and to certain extent, man gets automatic rather than deliberately instituted training. In the natural course of his life he meets with situations which he never expected; he learns lessons which he never wanted to learn; he develops capabilities for overcoming such difficulties as appear suddenly before him, and he acquires knowledge which no one else had designed for him. But all this automatic learning is too limited to enable him to cope efficiently with all the complex situations of his life. Education of the right type will enable him to achieve his accomplishment more easily, more speedily and more profitably with the added help of the required skills, attitudes and values than otherwise.

Some pessimists like Nietzsche, and before him Epictetus, have remarked that "man is the animal who is forever ashamed of himself, as being incurable an idealist, he is always dissatisfied not only with external things as they are but with himself also as he is, because he is ever striving to improve both." It is said that, "among all the animals man seems to be the only one capable of observing himself in mirrors— whether physical mirrors or the mental mirrors called reflections, and what he finds, when he does this, seldom pleases him altogether. Man is thus the

animal capable of self-criticism and hence self-improvement." These remarks which are very much derogatory to the whole of mankind present a medley of jumbled up ideas and are the outcome of confused thoughts about man.

According to the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, it makes no difference if one rejects Truth and Reality and the existence of God or His Goodness, Beauty and Virtue but if he rejects the dignity and honour of man his sin is unpardonable. This is because man has been created in the best of moulds and the most beautiful pattern. He is to be honoured and respected for no other reason than that he is a human being. The very assertion of the pessimists that he is the only being who can look at himself in mirrors belies the statement that he is an animal. In fact, man is much above the rest of Allah's creation in having the power to contemplate and introspect. When he looks at himself in mirrors he does not find faults with 'himself; he rather appreciates the goodness and beauty of his creation. Nobody has ever broken a mirror in anger or disgust over his ugliness. Even he who seems to be the ugliest in the eyes of others does never think so about himself. The murderers, robbers and doers of most heinous crimes, too, have a spark of goodness in them. In their heart of hearts their human self is never prepared to accept that they have fallen down from their high status of being a man to the lower degree of brutality. Whatever 'ugliness' they find in themselves in the mirror of social values is the result of an uncongenial environment in which their human-ness remained suppressed while

brutality' developed into the 'second nature' of habit. Consequently looking into mirrors leads on to what may be called self-advancement from a good to a better and from a better to a still better stage and not to self-improvement in the sense of removing defects or uglinesses. Improvement comes in when something is defective. Man has no defects in his nature; he has only imperfections in his beauties. As perfection knows no limits, therefore human nature, though full of goodness and beauty at every past stage, moves on continuously towards a more and still more beautiful future. "Surely man will be raised up stage by stage", says the Holy Qur'an. Thus, education is keeping on advancing towards a limitlessly perfect ideal, and, for that very reason, it is a life-long process both for the individual and the humanity taken collectively.

If, on the other hand, we fall into the error of presuming that man is incorrigibly defective, education would come to a dead stop: firstly, under the belief that he cannot remove his defects with all his possible efforts and, secondly, under the impression that once his defects are removed he does not require any more improvement. Those who think that whatever knowledge they possess at any stage of life is enough for them and they require no more of it are 'Unbelievers' in the light of the Holy Qur'an. When we speak of right sort of education we certainly mean that education which follows the path of Divine Guidance that gives full recognition to man's goodness and beauty, to his honour and respect, to his high destiny and to the potentialities

he has for achieving the Ideal. In the words of the Holy Qur'an, the state of the unbelievers who have no faith in Truth, Goodness and Beauty, and the Unity of the Vital Principle that governs the Universe is "like the depths of darkness in a vast deep ocean, overwhelmed with billow topped by billow, topped by (dark) clouds: depths of darkness, one above another: if a man stretches out his hand, he can hardly see it! For any to whom Allah gives not light, there is no light!" (24:40)

Man has, within his own being; certain 'capabilities' which can either integrate his personality or shatter it into pieces. It is also within his own power of choice to let these capabilities work either way—towards the path of Enlightenment or towards the Path of Darkness. The Path of Enlightenment is the Path of human-ness and the Path of Darkness is the Path of animality. The right type of Education is the only means that can guide and train man's 'will' to choose the right path of enlightenment instead of the wrong path of darkness.

The processes through which Education takes place are:

- i) Instruction,
- ii) Training, and
- iii) Indoctrination.

Although substantial part is played by observation and imitation of what is observed yet the linguistic, emotional, spiritual or even gestural communication between the teacher and the taught has no parallel.

To instruct is to build something in. It may be the knowledge of facts, relations, rules, laws or principles to be built into the mind or a specific way of thinking, feeling, behaving, reacting or responding to the internal or external calls of duty that is to be constructed. Instruction is, thus, the process that incorporates information as well as an effective and proper use of that information into the mind of the learner.

Training is the process of imparting merely the practical knowledge of some operation, whether mental or physical. It is just giving exercise in a particular skill to the extent of habit formation. Animals are "trained" for certain operations; they cannot be instructed or educated because they are devoid of feeling, understanding, thinking and willing. Man's superiority over the rest of creation is to be recognized from the point of view of his educability also, because it is he alone who can be instructed as well as trained. In other words, it can be said that if a man remains confined only to what he is physically or mentally trained for and does not rise above the level of habit-formation in 'skills', he loses his superiority over the animals. His actions will be just 'mechanical' or animal actions, devoid of feeling, thinking, understanding and willing which lead to freedom from animality.

Apart from information and skills, there are certain beliefs and allegiance also which help shape the conduct, disposition and feelings of the individual and the society in which he lives. These dogmas are implanted in the mind usually through indoctrination rather than through formal instruction. But if this method by-

passes man's powers of critical judgement, it will not have full acceptance of the individual as it will leave a margin of doubt in his mind. To check the waywardness of the free-will indoctrination is necessary, but it must always remain subordinate to the other rational methods. The Holy Qur'an enjoins us not to drop rationality anywhere. Even men of faith are strictly warned that "when they are admonished with the signs of their Nourisher they must not droop down at them as if they were dumb and blind", (73:25). Thus, the right method of education, which the Holy Qur'an sanctions, is a combination of all the three methods stated above on the principle that attention called to facts, and to the inferences which the facts warrant, must always remain combined with psychological process of suggestion through example. The Qur'anic methods of education are:

- i) 'Zikr' and 'Fikr' (Remembrance and contemplation), as instruction,
- ii) 'Saum'wa 'Salat' (Fasting and canonical prayers) as training, and
- iii) 'Amr bil Ma'aruf and nahy anilmunkar', (mutual admonition and counselling for recognized behaviour and prohibition for unapproved conduct) as indoctrination. Each commandment of the Holy Qur'an which begins with "do this" is followed by the words "so that". These latter words explain the rationality of the commandment that precedes them. This indoctrination comes in through reason or "submission to evidence" and in this

way all that is imparted in the minds 'becomes "faith" which is the highest form of education and the most sublime aim for all true knowledge.

One very important thing to remember is that all education, whether it is through instruction, trainings indoctrination or through a balanced combination of all the three methods is always self-education. It is 'self-education' that makes possible for the learner to excel even his teacher. If it were not so, advancement in knowledge would have been impossible and the 'amount' of learning could not increase. 'Faith' or training of the 'will' combined with self-surrender to higher values is another name for self-education and for this there can be no better motivation than the belief that even this-worldly acts of ours are other-worldly acts for which we are fully responsible.

The next educational dimension concerns the nature of man who is to be educated. Some people say that man's nature is all good; some say it is all bad. Some hold the view that it is neither good nor bad but it is like a clean slate on which impressions can be made by the teacher, the society and the environment, in whatever shape they want. As the Holy Qur'an has 'man' as its subject-matter, therefore, it discusses at length all the various aspects of human nature in respect of its multiplex relationships. In the Chapters that will follow we shall try to study man in as many aspects as are necessary for building up a systematic philosophy of education. Suffice it to say here that

according to the Holy Qur'an human nature is basically good though it has the tendency to fall down to the lower state of animality also.

It is the right philosophy of education alone that can bring intelligent order and discipline, true sense of responsibility and efficiency into the chaotic world-situation. The present-day educational institutions are ineffective because of the wrong philosophy of education that puts too much premium on individual achievements but not on the means with which 'achievements' are made. A lopsided progress without any sense of accountability for individual actions is no progress at all because it has no purpose to fulfill except more and more progress even at the cost of disintegration of the human soul. For educational reforms to produce concrete and useful results we must first have full knowledge of the existing state of affairs in our institutions as to how far we have deviated from the path of absolute values that alone can bring about universal unity of mankind, peace and prosperity for all. Then we must know all about the social, political, economic and such other factors as are responsible for the downfall of our educational standards. In the third place, the reformers must be equipped with all the powers that are necessary for putting the reforms into effect. And lastly, each and every member of the Ummah must know what 'education' really means and what functions it has to perform at each of the various stages of schooling and in each of its possible dimensions. ■

Democracy In Islam

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

The term democracy is derived from the two Greek words 'demos' and 'kratia'. These two together mean 'authority of the people'. Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the USA, has precisely defined democracy. He held democracy as 'the government of the people, by the people and for the people'. M.K. Gandhi says: "My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest. That can never happen except through non-violence. (Harijan, 18-5-1840) He further says: "True democracy can't be worked by twenty men sitting at the centre. It has to be worked from below by the people of every village." (Harijan, 18-1-48)

The history bears witness that since its inception Islam laid great stress on democratic values and secular norms. It is Islam which first practiced democracy in the world.

Islam has been the most tolerant and egalitarian of all religions. Muslims had ruled more than 800 years over Spain. But not a single incident of forceful conversion occurred. Such cases are also not seen in other countries under the sway of Muslim rulers including the longest period of Mughals rule in India. What to say for forceful conversion to Islam, the Holy Prophet strictly prohibited to harm or to hurt non-Muslims in any way. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) says: "Whoever torments the Zimmis (non-Muslims) torments me."

Islam also enhances sense of justice,

equality, morality, ethics, tolerance, forbearance, sympathy, integrity, honesty, brotherhood, fraternity, kindness, generosity, cleanliness, sanitation, enlightenment, wisdom and the like. The beauty and elegance of Islam is that it puts each thing in its proper place. Islam's main plank is to set up such a friendly environment wherein all people may live with peace and serenity regardless of caste, creed, colour and region. According to Islam all people are from the same origin and source and they were made into nations and tribes just to know each other, as confirmed by the following Quranic words: "O mankind We created you from a single male and a female, made you into nations and tribes, and ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted with all things." (49:13)

That is why Islam enunciates that cooperation and help should be in matters of piety and virtues and not in evil and unholy acts and deeds. The holy Quran says: "Help ye another in righteousness and piety, but help not one another in sin and rancour: fear Allah : for Allah is strict in punishment" (5:2)

Following sayings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) are worth quoting.

Once the holy Prophet said : "Help your brother whether he is oppressed or oppressor". His companions asked, "How could we help if he is oppressor?" The

prophet replied: "Stop him from oppression." Narrated Abu Musa: Some people asked Allah's Apostle (S) "Whose Islam is the best? i.e. (Who is a very good Muslim?) He replied, "One who avoids harming the Muslims with his tongue and hands." Narrated Anas : The Prophet (S) said, "None of you will have faith till he wishes for his Muslim brother what he likes for himself." Prophet says: "He is not true Muslim who eat his fill, and leaveth his neighbours hungry." Again he said: "The Muhajir is he who denounces the evil, and then keeps aloof from it." The Prophet declared, "He who hurts a dhimmi (non believer living in an Islamic state) hurts me and he who hurts me annoys God." He also said, "On the Day of Resurrection, I shall denounce him who oppresses a dhimmi or violates his right or puts a responsibility on him which is beyond his strength or takes something away from him."

These above traditions of the Prophet indicate that his mission is only for restoring dignity and upliftment of people and setting up an atmosphere of peace and amity throughout the world. It should be kept in mind that it is Islam which first offered the concept of common citizenship and promoted a multi-religious and pluralistic society.

When the Prophet settled down in Madina, he constituted a city-state, in which Muslims, Pagan Arabs, Jews and Christians, all entered into a stable organism by means of a social contract.

In latter days wherever Islam spread, this trend was kept alive by Muslim rulers too.

Needless to add that right from the

very outset Islam has been the most tolerant and egalitarian of all religions.

Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi says : "The spirit of human brotherhood built up by Islam is not hampered by concepts of racialism or sectarianism, be it linguistic, historic, traditionalistic or even of dogmatic nature. Its power to unite different races and nations in one brotherhood has always been recognized. Islam was the first religion which preached and practiced democracy." (Islam and Civilization, P.25)

Similar thoughts are of the well known Indian freedom fighter and poetess Mrs Sarojini Naidu. She says: " It was the first religion that preached and practised democracy; for in the mosque when the call from the Minaret is sounded and the worshippers are gathered together, the democracy of Islam is embodied five times a day when the peasant and the king kneel side by side and proclaim, "God alone is great." I have been struck over and over again by this indivisible unity of Islam that makes a man distinctly a brother." (Speeches and Writings of Sarojini Naidu, P. 169)

In short, if we study Islam and ponder over its contributions and services to humanity, we come across to the conclusion that current misgivings about Islam are unfounded. Suffice it to say that Almighty Allah Himself addressed the Prophet to say, "O Muhammad, say to people, "To you be your religion, and to me mine." (109:6) That is why the Prophet never compelled Jews or Christians to accept Islam. The Holy Quran strongly advocates that "There shall be no coercion on matters of faith." (2.256) ■

Around the World

UN Report:Fleeing war and persecution, over 82million displaced globally till 2020

GENEVA: Despite the coronavirus pandemic, the number of people fleeing war and persecution continued rising last year, with global displacement climbing to over 82 million - double the figure a decade ago, the UN said. A fresh report from the UN refugee agency showed global displacement figures swelled by around three million in 2020 after an already record-breaking year in 2019, leaving a full one percent of humanity uprooted and displaced. The report highlighted how drawnout crises like those in Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia and Yemen were continuing to force people to flee, while eruptions of violence in places like Ethiopia and Mozambique were causing surging displacement.

During the pandemic, "everything else has stopped, including the economies, but wars and conflict and violence and discrimination and persecution, all the factors that pushed these people to flee, have continued", UNHCR chief Filippo Grandi said. The UN agency found that by the end of 2020, a record 82.4 million people were living as refugees or asylum seekers, or in so-called internal displacement within their own countries, up from some 40 million in 2011.

Biden assures Afghanistan of support after troop drawdown

US President Joe Biden assured visiting Afghan leaders Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah of sustained American support after the withdrawal of troops but made it clear that the fate of Afghanistan will now be in the hands of its people now.

Biden and Ghani, who was accompanied by Abdullah, chairman of Afghanistan's High Council for National Reconciliation met at the White House amid growing concerns about the fate of the current government, with continued escalation of violence by the Taliban, who have

backed out of peace talks till the departure of US troops.

Afghan President Ghani, at the same time, sought to project confidence in the face of resurgent Taliban. He dismissed a US intelligence report that has forecast the fall of Kabul within six months of the departure of the last of US troops, scheduled for as early as July, saying such dire prediction "turned out false" in the past.

In the bluntest remarks on the issue yet, secretary of state Antony Blinken said in Paris that the US is assessing the situation on the ground in Afghanistan and "whether the Taliban is, at all, serious about a peaceful resolution of the conflict".

"Our troops may be leaving but our support for Afghanistan is not ending in terms of support and maintenance of helping maintain their military as well as economic and political support," Biden said, seeking to assure the Afghan leaders.

300 migrants may have died in capsized near Yemen, says UN

DUBAI — A U.N. official said that as many as 300 migrants may have died after a ship capsized recently off Yemen's coast, highlighting the risks of a longstanding migration route from the Horn of Africa to Gulf states in search of work. A number of bodies washed up at Ras al-Arah on Yemen's Red Sea coast After the incident.

751 graves found at indigenous school in Canada

REGINA, CANADA: Investigators have found 751 unmarked graves at the site of a former residential school for Indigenous children - a discovery that follows last month's report of 215 at another school. The 751 bodies were discovered at Marieval Indian Residential School, about 140km east of Regina, the capital of Saskatchewan. ■

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