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Islamic Morality

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Among the moral attributes which have particularly influenced the Islamic culture are hospitality, liberality and open-handedness. These qualities, again, are a heritage from Hazrat Ibrahim about whose generous reception of guests there has occurred the following verse in the Quran :

Has the story reached these of the honoured guest of Abraham ? (LI : 24)

Pilgrims and foreign chroniclers who had the occasion to live, for any length of time, among communities, tracing their descent 'from him either racially or spiritually, have recorded most pleasant memories of their stay in this respect. They have invariably been impressed by their warm hospitality and friendly feeling towards guests and strangers. One can still notice in the countries of the Middle East, which have not yet been swept off their feet by the mounting tide of Western Civilization, glimpses of the hospitality that had enabled globetrotters-like Ibn-e-Batuta and Ibn-e-Jubair to enjoy the comfort and warmth of home during travel. The Indian Muslims in spite of their being placed so far away from the natural seat of Islamic Civilisation and the fact that Islam had reached their, country long after it had passed the peak of its glory, also are conspicuous for their cordial treatment of the guests. Hospitality is a part of the tradition of Muslim homes, and although modern economic conditions have put a 'curb on it, Muslims still feel happy on the arrival of a guest and consider it a source of good fortune and an Islamic virtue to entertain him open-heartedly. ■

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Wisdom of Qur'an

We have revealed for you [O men!] a Book in which is a message for you. Will you then not understand?

(al-Anbiya' 21:10)

The above Qur'anic verse contains a wealth of meaning. One learns that the Qur'an is like a transparently clear mirror in which everyone can see their own image reflected. One realises on studying it what role one has to play in society. Likewise, one finds in its light the way to gain proximity with Allah. For the Qur'an deals, in the main, with man — his conduct and character. Contained in it are some role models for man. More importantly, it is concerned solely with man, his features and conditions. Little wonder then that classical 'Ulama' looked upon it as a lively Book, holding out as a mirror to the human condition. They did not take it as some archaic work, dealing with dated history and communities of yore. They recognised that it is concerned with man's everyday life, with the ever-changing situations faced by man and the varying challenges contingent upon time and space.

Our worthy ancestors knew well their strengths and weaknesses. They recognised reality. They derived all their guidance from the Qur'an. To resolve their problems they turned to it and found in its pages the images of their mindset and features. As a result, they did not have much difficulty in identifying solutions to their problems. They thanked and glorified Allah for this, sought His forgiveness and strove to mend their ways. ■

Pearls From the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Sufiyan bin Abdullah Saqfi has related to us that, once, he asked the Prophet, 'to Apostle of God ! Tell me an all-encompassing thing about Islam so that, after you, I may not have to ask from anyone in this regard.' The Prophet replied, "Say, I believe in God, and remain true to it."

—Muslim Commentary.— It is enough for a man to make himself the faithful bondsman of God by affirming faith in Him as the Lord and Creator of the Worlds, and, then, to make the conscientious fulfillment of the duties stemming from it his characteristic behaviour and way of life.

This Tradition is included among the "all-embracing sayings." The sacred Prophet has summed up the fundamental meaning and purpose of Islam in a few words. Faith in God and constancy and steadfastness in it constitutes the pith and essence of Islam. The significance of faith in God has already been explained in the commentary of the Tradition placed at the head of the present compilation while steadfastness means to pursue faithfully and unchangingly the Straight Path and to persevere in it at all times. Strict observance of the Divine injunctions, positive as well as negative, is, so to speak, the name of constancy in Faith. Some of the leading Sufi-saints have remarked that "steadfastness is better than a thousand supernatural deeds." Once a person has learnt the lesson of steadfastness, he has learnt everything. After it, there is left nothing for him to aspire for. At various places in the Quran, felicity has been associated with faith in God and steadfastness. Take the following verse, for instance.

Lo! those who say Our Lord is Allah, and afterward are upright, the angels descend on them saying: Fear not nor grieve, but hear good tidings of the Paradise which ye promised. (xli : 30)

Seeing that the Traditions of the Prophet were based upon Quranic teachings it can be said that the reply to Sufiyan bin Abdullah Saqfi was in the light of the verses like the one reproduced above. ■

Editor's Note 

Peaceful Life

India is a multireligious country. People of different religions, caste, faiths, spread over more than two dozen states live peacefully. Enjoy the benefits of the sermons of their religious heads. No religion teaches hatred or ill-will against another religion. India was ruled by Muslim rulers for more than 800 years. Christians dominated for about 200 years. If Muslim or Christian rules would have tried that whole nation must have been followers of their faith. But basic religion because of its glow and adherence to faith survived.

Of late, in certain parts of the country nefarious activities have raised their head. It is unfortunate that political parties in power in some states encouraged rowdy elements to raise issues which have no relevance. For instance in Karnataka they objected Muslim girls in coming to colleges putting on 'Hijab'. How does it matter to others if one hides her face or head but a big agitation was launched

against Muslim girls wearing Hijab. Similarly, another issue of 'Halal Meat' has been raised and marketing of 'Halal Meat' is being stopped by force. How does it matter if one eats what type of meat but since Muslim butchers and consumers of 'Halal Meat' are Muslims there is annoyance against them. The latest agitation getting currency is of "Azan from mosque". Azan is a call for Muslims to come for prayer in mosque. It is only a few minutes affair. But it is hurting our non-Muslim brothers and there is a mass agitation against it.

It is unfortunate that some state governments are taking side of the rowdy elements and ignore the constitutional rights and privileges granted to citizens in general. We are hopeful that Indian Government will get these issues resolved and peace will prevail. ■

S.A.

We solicit articles for publication in The Fragrance of East. Suitable remuneration will be paid to writers. We prefer receipt of articles on:
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The Message of Idul Fitr

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

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

(al-Baqarah 2:185-186)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Personality Endowed With The Loftiest Virtues

- S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi*

Allah, the Lord of the worlds, was to entrust this last designated Prophet of Him, Hazrat Mohammad (SAW), with such a magnificent obligation as cannot be within the power of a common man to sustain. Hence, Allah Almighty had made his exterior and interior both much more healthy and strong and endowed with much superior qualities compared to till other human beings from the moment of his birth itself; then He had him, specially for this very purpose, passed through diverse and toughest vicissitudes of life such as would help the man in confronting various conditions and in devising appropriate course of action with determination and courage. First of all, he was made to undergo the impuissance of orphanage. Soon after his birth, by the time he entered the age of early discernment he found that he was deprived of paternal patronage. On attaining the age of six years, he was deprived of mother's patronage as well; whereas hundreds of his coevals all around him were lucky to have their parents' protection and care. Such a situation is normally a cause of severe mental distress and dejection for, and affects the head and heart of, an innocent child of tender age. After the deprivation of mother's protection at the age of six years, there was only the grandfather who could be

affectionate to him. But, at the age of eight years, he, too, left him desolate. Such a deprivation cannot normally be endured by any child without having any adverse effects. The course of his life gets convoluted and it becomes uncertain whether he would ever be able to achieve success in life. But, in case he endures this burden by means of some godsend of a valour, then his personage develops within itself a good deal of capability to endure the tough situations and to have a break-through made as per the need and preference. Allah Almighty had, particularly, granted Hazrat Mohammad (SAW) this valor and courage. Because of it, he had in him generated a faculty of duly perceiving the exigencies of situations and events and the comprehension and courage to meet the challenges of life in appropriate manner. It was, therefore, not long before he took to the course of contentment and dignity becoming to a respectable life; and in spite of the tough conditions, he had his life accomplished with self-respect and fortitude.

Hence, from the time of his getting into the age of contemplation and perception itself, he had started looking at the waywardness prevalent all around him in the surroundings with disgust. He was deeply shaken by the fact that there was in the people, on one hand, the yearning for a respectable life, courage and valour and various humanistic

* Rector, Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow.

virtues; but, on the other hand, for the placation of the religious urge, they worshipped, having made with their own hands, statues in human and animal forms and sought from them the fulfillment of their needs. They asked them in such a manner as one would do some human living being or, rather, some power greater than the human being, for fulfillment of one's needs. The Prophet (SAW) saw no rapport between the two things. To him they appeared contrary to each other: that, on one hand, the sense of, or, rather, hyper sensitivity about, supremacy and grandeur of the human being and, on the other hand, so much self debasement as genuflecting and humiliating themselves before lifeless objects such as clay and stone. He (SAW) kept himself distanced from such a concept and such mean and debased matters. Perhaps that was, too, a reason for occurring to him, during the phase prior to his receiving the Divine Revelation and getting the Guidance through it, to ponder over the hidden secrets of the universe and life, taking to isolation, on getting uncomfortable with the conditions prevailing in his surroundings. And, hence, for this purpose he had started going to, and spending some time in, a cave of a mountain outside the city.

Hilf-el-Fuzool (Al-Fuzool Pact):

Once there was a commission of an act of aggression on the part of a notable person ('Aas bin Wail) against a stranger and alien person (of the tribe

of Zubaid) in settlement of the claim due him. A few respectable persons of the clan constituted a committee for having the claims of the rightful claimants duly restored. He (SAW) participated in it, too. And, whenever it was necessary to do something in legitimate matters of the clan or the city, he (SAW) took part in it. In view of his probity and reliability, people had so much confidence in him that they left their possessions in his trust and relied on him.

Participation in Trade with Hazrat Khadeeja and the Wedding:

A respectable and rich lady of his clan who used to import commercial merchandise from, and export the same, abroad was, on having become a widow, feeling the need of assistance from some reliable and ingenious man in connection with export of her merchandise abroad who could travel in company of, supervise over, and keep a watch on, her slave. On the basis of the information she had of his virtues, she requested the Prophet (SAW), too, for the assistance and having made him the in-charge of the expedition, she sent him abroad in company of her slave. She had, as if, tested in this way the quality of his performance and practical aptitude. By undertaking this journey, he (SAW) conducted that lady's business in very profitable way. Moreover, the slave who had accompanied him during the journey extolled, too, highly, his performance and probity, on his return.

Hence, that lady made the offer herself to get married to him (SAW), whereas she had earlier received proposals from several respectable persons for marriage with her and had declined. This lady was Hazrat Khadeejah bin Khuwailed. She was fifteen years older than him in age. But, on the basis of the virtues that she saw in him she decided to get into wedlock with him. He was then 25 years of age and Hazrat Khadeejah was 40 years of age. But, he (SAW), too, agreed on getting married to her. He ignored this difference in ages and deemed the respect that she commanded in her clan preferable. This wedding of the Prophet (SAW) was his first one, as an ordinary man does not usually get into with a women senior in age than him. But, he (SAW) was the person with a disposition that always kept the qualities and virtues more in view than anything else. He (SAW) conceded, therefore, to this wedlock with pleasure. Having entered into the wedlock, he (SAW) had now formally become an inmate of the house. On the other hand, in the commercial matter, too, they became eligible to complement each other. The two together maintained the bondage with great love and attachment. Within the city circle, too, they kept performing the obligations of life with good reputation.

As a result of this wedding, he had now acquired additional powers in the business of Hazrat Khadijah who was

now his wife. Its other fall-out was that whatever financial worry he had was almost over. He (SAW), then, keeping himself aloof from the deviation that he was observing in the milieu of Makkah in respect of religion, paid more attention toward remembrance of, and devotion to, Allah Almighty. It used to be mostly in the form of contemplation over and remembrance of, his Lord after having retired to some secluded place. He was provided by his wife, Hazrat Khadijah, with a slave that was Hazrat Zaid bin Hartha. He had turned into a very good assistant to him (SAW). Motivated by the humanitarian impulses, he (SAW) had, having him freed, made him his companion. Such an act used to be done in those days by means of adopting the slave as one's son, also.

Taking Up Hazrat Ali, Abu Talib's Son, in His Tutelage:

On the other hand, on his getting financially eased, the feeling that he (SAW) had of the indigence of his affectionate and extremely compassionate uncle, Abu Talib, became more acute. Motivated by that very feeling, he (SAW) proffered a suggestion before his another uncle, Hazrat Abbas. He suggested that: since Abu Talib had many sons and their financial burden is too much for him to bear, we should, therefore, provide him some sort of relief, by taking at least two of them, one each, in our custody and making them our liability. Hence,

according to this suggestion one of the two sons was taken by Hazrat Abbas and made to join him, and the other was taken by the Prophet (SAW) and made to join him. Hazrat Abbas undertook the liability of Aqeel and he (SAW) undertook that of Hazrat Ali. Hazrat Ali's age, too, was 30 years less than his (SAW). That is normally the difference that exists between the ages of fathers and their sons. At the time of his being taken into his (SAW) custody his age might have been about five years and that of the Prophet (SAW) might have been 35 years. Thus, he lived almost all his life with the Prophet (SAW) like a son. He (SAW) also had it in mind that he was his cousin (uncle's son).

Building the Ka'ba:

Under his religious fervour, irrespective of other factors, He (SAW) used to go to Bait-ullah (the house of Allah) for the purpose of worshipping his Providence and, in accordance to the extent he could learn the way of worshipping reportedly traced back up to his ancestors, Hazrat Ibrahim and Hazrat Ismail, the very builders of the holy house of Allah, he performed the ritual of worship. The practice of worshipping idols that was in vogue was repugnant to his mind. Hence, keeping himself detached from them he had the ritual of worshipping his Lord performed in his own way. Meanwhile, need was felt to have the Ka'ba repaired. There was no roof on it. Walls, too, were only up to man's height. And,

since Makkah is situated in a low-lying land, on occasions of occurrence of floods everything got into a shambles. So the Quoraish felt the need to have it repaired. In the meantime they came to know that at Jeddah a ship, having wrecked had gone on the rocks. One of the chiefs of the Quoraish, having gone there, obtained, on behalf of the Quoraish, its wooden planks. With them, they started constructing the Ka'ba anew. And, since it was the job that pertained to the sacred place of worship, representatives of all the clans of the Quoraish took part in it. He (SAW) had already attained then the age of 35 years. He, too, took part in it. He would fetch stones getting them loaded on his shoulders and get them to the place meant for them. That had even caused bruises on his shoulders. And, then, when it was the time for the black stone to be placed at its place, a brawl erupted amongst the Quoraish. For, every one of them wanted to earn the felicity of having it placed with his hands. The brawl had reached to the point of all but a full-fledged war.

At last, it was decided that whoever arrives first the next day early morning at the holy house of Allah should be asked to give his verdict in this matter, and that should be admissible to everyone. The next morning this distinction happened to be the lot of the Prophet (SAW). It was he who had reached there first of all. Seeing him, all of them got delighted. They said: It is he, the AlSadique, Al-Ameen (the

truthful one!, the trustworthy one!) He is absolutely the right person. Hence, the verdict was sought from him. The verdict he passed was that all of them should, putting the black stone on a sheet of cloth, jointly carry it. Everyone should hold the side of the sheet on his end. Hence, all of them, holding the sheet from all the four sides, held it up. When they had it taken to its designated place, he (SAW), lending his support to it, had it ensconced in its place.

Thus, by his prudent ruling, he (SAW) had the people of the Quoraish pacified and got them rescued from that tussle which could have led, on getting deprived of the felicity of the black stone, to virtual sabre-rattling, as used to be the norm with the Arabs for the sake of honor. Due to this act performed by him, he got further raised in esteem in their eyes. All the members of the clan were already highly appreciative of his piety and virtues. This incident gave an additional fillip to his esteem. They started laying more reliance on him on momentous occasions.

Divine Care and Tutelage:

These lofty humanistic characteristics were generated in him partly due to congenital factor, unadulterated nature and magnanimity which were in him, and also owing to impact of the lofty ancestral, atavistic traits. These were then further boosted and buttressed by the practice he had of facing and enduring all sorts of rough and tough situations of life which had

started coming his way from the days of his very early childhood itself.

Anyway, the harsh conditions, the adversities of life and privation from closest loving ones proved to be helpful in generating in him courage and determination and firmness of character. He adopted the lofty human characteristics and kept himself aloof from those vices which get germinated in ordinary, licentious youngsters and youths. This was, in fact, due to Favour from Allah, the Lord of the worlds. It was due to this special Favour from Allah Almighty that he followed the path of righteousness and virtues. Out of this very liberal atmosphere, Allah Almighty was to choose an individual of truthful, lofty humanistic characteristics and morals, to be made such a Prophet as would have to be the preacher and the precursor of the true religion up till the Doomsday. In the holy Quran, the Lord of the worlds has a reference made to it, too. He did so on the occasion when, after having been made the Prophet, there was once a delay in the Revelation that used to keep coming from Allah Almighty and the Prophet became apprehensive of whether it was so because of Allah Almighty's Favour had been withheld from him. It was then that the entire Surah (chapter) that follows was revealed:

(By the morning brightness, by the night, when it darkens. Thy Lord has not forsaken thee, nor is He displeased. And the Hereafter indeed better unto

thee than the present life. And soon shall thy Lord give unto thee so that thou shall be well-pleased. Did He not find thee an orphan? So He sheltered thee. And He found thee wandering, so He guided thee. And he found the destitute, so He enriched thee. Wherefore as to the orphan, be not thou overbearing unto him. And as to the bagger, chide him not; and as to the favors of thy Lord, discourse thou thereof.)

Hazrat Abu Bakr's Companionship:

Among his approximate coevals amongst the Quoraish, Hazrat Abu Bakr was one with whom he (SAW) had gotten more familiar and attached. He, too, was a scrupulous man with a neat and clean track record. Because of that, both of them, having liked each other's virtues, had become mutually very intimate with each other and a close association and bondage had evolved between them. This bondage turned later on into an ideal one. On the manifestation of the Prophecy, he professed the Faith in him (SAW) and conceded to obeying him with total conformity of the head and the heart. And so he remained uninterruptedly in an ideal manner throughout his life.

Spending Time in Seclusion in the Cave of Hira:

Even before he was assigned the Prophecy, he (SAW) had, having felt the decadence in the religious and moral conditions, started contemplating what was all that was going on and how man

was getting farther and farther from his humanism. Due to these feelings, he would sometimes betake himself far away from the city populace. Getting isolated from the populace, he would pass some time in a cave. Obviously, the urge and the motive for passing some time in isolation and seclusion must have been in the quest of the essential truth and for contemplation and meditation in this matter. And that must have been a result of his profound sensitivities. Later, as the Providence of the universe had decreed, on occurrence of far too much depravations and vices amongst the Arab as well as the non Arab human beings, to have a Prophet designated for exhortation and bring reform in the people, He had him (SAW) chosen for the purpose. And, according as the moment destined for assignment of the Prophecy kept approaching, he (SAW) started getting portentous signals thereof from the Unseen. Hence even before he was made the Prophet, voices accosting him with the epithet of "Allah's Prophet", had started coming to him from pebbles and plants. Hearing these voices, he (SAW) would, in astonishment, have his attention diverted towards them. But whoever was uttering those words would not be seen. Consequently, on attaining the age of 40 years which is, from both physical and moral viewpoints, a perfect and standard level of maturity, he (SAW) was invested with the sublime position of the Prophethood. ■

The Present Condition And A Few Appeals

- S. Bilal Abdul Hai Hasani Nadwi*

Governments come and go. One gets considerable time and some gets less. It is an outward success and its future is not stable. In India itself such a phase passed during the time of Indra Gandhi that it didn't seem that her government ever faced such decline. Every climax has decline. If its tenure can be predicted, it can be guessed from its stout efforts which nations and organizations perform. The future of any government lies in its enduring efforts which it performs continuously. Cutting across the outward success, the basic work must be accomplished which for the nations' success appears sole key otherwise it would be election like efforts which may increase some seats and vice versa. But it is not the solution of the matter.

At the present situation, a great responsibility lies on Muslims who possess religious, social and moral conduct of life from which other nations

are devoid. But unfortunately Muslims are unable to project it before the world which was ever their glory.

It is imperative for them to introspect themselves and embark a new journey. They may face scores of obstacles and hindrances in their journey but who have their desired goals and main targets never lose hearts, ever look for new ways and strive for the new marg.

It should be noted that frustration has no place in Islam. Muslims never exhibit it. So, the word "frustration" must be deleted as a wrong word. The first and foremost thing is that we must enhance our (iman) faith. Believing in Allah and always express pleasure on His decision. Whatever happens indeed is according to Allah's will. Even one comes to power with Allah's order.

The second thing is that we will have to come forward in the field of education and take its system in our

* *Nazir-e-Aam, Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow*

hands. Considering the demands of life, we will have to prepare ourselves for every sphere of life and carve a new way for humanity by mingling education with morality which the entire world immensely need. To achieve it we will have to set up Islamic schools and colleges everywhere in a great number where 95% of our population acquire education. If we don't think of these institutions, the new generation will slip away from our hands. For further studies, decent coaching centers should also be set up on large scale where our new generation may imbibe ethical values of Islam along with secular education.

The third thing is that we must build central mosques in every locality where children of the concerned area may easily get Islamic education and may strengthen their "iman" (faith) and be able to lead their lives according to Islamic Shariah. Besides, we should become aware of every community problems and difficulties and strive to dispel them and also think of their

employment. Philanthropists should regard it their main duty.

The fourth thing is that we must absorb morals of Islam and mend our ways of life and try to put an end to the prevailing misconceptions about Islam. We should win hearts with our morality and good dealings. Thus the task will be easy. Apart from it we should communicate the message of love and brotherhood and distribute books and pamphlets related to the Message of Humanity from which the job of brainwashing and character moulding may be easy. Holding corner meetings and dialogues will also be useful in this regard. Strengthening Madrasas should be our basic responsibility. These are forts of Islam. We may gain strength and power through these institutions. These are some important and necessary tasks before us. Accordingly, we must girdup our loins to perform team work. Allah will surely help us and in sha Allah, the conditions will change tomorrow. ■

(English Rendering: O.R. Nadwi)

When Will This Pandemic End?

- Shahid Jameel

A friend has had Covid for the third time, catching it most recently from her seven-year-old son, who brought it from school. Several other children in his class were infected, prompting the school to shut down the entire class. The past week also saw media frenzy around the XE variant, and a revised booster (sorry, precaution dose) policy unveiled by the government. Let's try to unpack what all this means and answer two key questions: How is this pandemic different and when will it end?

Covid is different from other pandemics in our collective memory. The virus is different, and biology plays a big role in both the spread and control of disease. The other coronavirus scare before this in recorded history was the 2002-03 SARS outbreak, which subsided after infecting about 8,000 people globally, with no variant-driven waves of infection. Both SARS and Covid were due to novel viruses with no pre-existing immunity when they emerged in the human population.

■ However, those infected with the former were infectious only when symptomatic, but the latter spread efficiently even from those without symptoms. That distinction was the difference between a few thousand and over 500 million recorded infections. More spread has also allowed the virus more freedom to mutate, resulting in thousands of variants. One variant of concern has replaced the other to cause waves of infection, illness and mortality.

■ Another difference is organised testing

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and genome sequencing to track Covid. Daily bulletins tell us how many new infections were detected from Delhi to New York, and the viral variants responsible for these. With technology not available during the 20th-century pandemics, all we got post-facto were numbers of hospitalised cases with flu-like illnesses and deaths.

The 2009-10 swine flu was 21st century's first pandemic, during which an estimated 700 million to 1.4 billion people were with over 2, 84,000 excess deaths. Though it was available, genomic surveillance was not used as much. Technology has allowed better planning but has also added to public anxiety.

■ The third and most important is the availability of multiple vaccines during this pandemic, which is a first. Since vaccines for Covid first became available, over 11.4 billion doses have been administered globally with 64.8% of the world's population having received at least one dose of a Covid vaccine. Though disparities remain, cumulative data from over 120 countries show a clear inverse correlation between the rate of vaccination and Covid-associated mortality.

The point that is often missed is that all vaccines protect very well from severe disease and death but give variable protection from infection and even that wanes with time. And that is why we need boosters. They reduce reinfections and virus spread and protect the vulnerable (elderly and those with significant co morbidities) from severe illness.

Words like 'herd immunity' and 'endemic' have entered casual conversation over the

past two years. To many they represent the beacon that will signal the end of Covid. The concept of herd immunity comes from our experience with other (mainly childhood) vaccines, wherein the vaccinated majority protects the vulnerable minority.

However, this would work if SARSCOV-2 infected people only once or those vaccinated gained immunity to infection. We know this is not the case. Increasing numbers of documented reinfections among both vaccinated people and those with prior infection, would make it impossible for herd immunity to work in Covid.

When will the virus become 'endemic'? That is hard to say, but seasonal influenza can be a good guide. It's always around but becomes more prominent at certain times of the year depending upon geographic location and largely causes mild illness. The mortality rate from seasonal influenza is 0.1% or less. Assuming it takes 2-3 weeks (average 18 days) from case positivity to death from Covid, the current global average mortality rate is 0.2%, with regional variations: Germany, 0.08; France, 0.11; Italy, 0.18; UK, 0.25; South Africa, 0.54; US, 1.37; and India, 1.86. So, Covid is getting there, but is not there yet.

Though India is now reporting only about 1,000-2,000 infections and 30 deaths daily, this mortality rate is surprising considering that 71% of the population has received vaccines - 60% have two doses and 11% have one dose. With India's current test positivity rate at 0.23% , there are many more daily infections than the ones that are being detected and reported. The higher mortality rate may also reflect poor healthcare facilities, patients reporting late for care, or a combination.

Here are five suggestions on the way forward.

■ India has done very well with vaccinations and should stay on course with a priority to (a) give the second dose to those who have received only one; and (b) give boosters to the Vulnerable that includes the elderly and those with co morbidities. This is where last week's policy shift on boosters will help. A 59 year-old with comorbidities can now get a booster, which was not possible earlier.

■ Testing and environmental surveillance should continue to track both numbers and emerging variants. Just like Delta and Omicron, a 'new variant that is more infectious and/or more severe can dramatically alter the pandemic's trajectory.

■ Improve ventilation of closed spaces and continue masking, especially for those at increased risk.

■ Manufacture Covid drugs; these will be needed to manage endemic infections.

■ Develop a strategy for managing Long Covid, which considering the millions infected in the country, will continue to be a burden on the workforce and the healthcare system for many years to come.

When will the pandemic end? While the start is definite the end is not. That is because pandemics are not just biological or medical events, but also social, economic and political ones. Historically, economic and psycho-social factors force people to get on with their lives before public health authorities declare the pandemic to have ended medically. We are also witnessing this for Covid in several regions. The challenge will be to balance socio-economic factors with the medical ones. It's time to move on. Cautiously. ■

(The Times of India 15-04-2022)

Core of Education As Revealed in The Holy Qur'an

- Mohammad Alamgheer

Islam is the only universal code of human life, including his life in the world and world hereafter. To make him successfully capable of leading honest and truthful life in this mortal planet, he has been blessed with the Divine guide Hazrat Mohammad (SAW) who was entrusted with the preaching of holy script Al-Quran, the Last and Final words of Allah the Almighty. And it is strikingly noteworthy that the revelation of this Book starts with its maiden holy verse IQRA BISME RABBIKALLAJI KHALAQ: meaning Read in the name of the Lord Who created. It is because a man, illiterate and ignorant, would not be able to appreciate the significance of his life, his Creator and the world in which he has been sent down to stay till his death successfully and profitably. Famed historian P.K.Hitti is therefore, seen to interpret the term IQRA in the way that it is the very QURAN connoting "recitation, lecture, discourse." Or the study of the Quran intensively and comprehensively asks to shape one's mind, manner and attitude just after the directives of the Quran alone. That is why the term education is being used to define as the process of changing the attitude of a child to the desired direction, and here it means the direction of the teaching and manner as the Quran asked for. However in 'Mishket Sharif', one of the holy six volumes on Hadith, it is stated that Allah (Swt) Himself, recited the chapters (suras) viz. 'Taha' and 'Yasin' before the Angels, thousand and thousand years before the creation of the universe. The

divine recitation had uniquely spell bounded the Angels who are seen to opine, 'Certainly that people are fortunate indeed upon whom this would be revealed, that heart might be happy which would be able to sustain it, and that tongue would indeed be delighted enough which would discuss and dialogue on and about it.' However through it is known that, man is the best of all creations, but at the same time it is to be noted that the Holy Quran is unquestionably superior to him. Because this Holy Book has been designed to make man superior to other creation by endowing him alone with the power of articulation or the art of literary, rhetoric expression, in using terms and terminologies, in creating poetic as well as prosaic rhymes and rhythms both rationally and morally to upkeep his control & superiority over all the creations. Allah (Swt) has already such declaration for him in His holy book about which both humans as well as the Jinns face His challenge in composing another work equal or equivalent to this Revelation.

His this challenge has gone unmet and will remain so till the Day of Resurrection.

Al-Quran is the creation of Allah and the subject matters of it are all the things, lives, visible and invisible, that Allah has created to decorate the universe for good living and breathing of all mortal beings. His last creation is Man, the lovely expression of His own image in the form of Adam (As.).

Now to make him well fitted is this world to lead meaningful and wise living till his death, Adam ((As) was well acquainted with all the things and objects along with their inherent qualities and characteristics. Allah Himself taught him directly showing all the essentials. And from this event, we have had the maiden examples of (1) Direct Method of Teaching (2) Teaching by Demonstration (3) The concepts of a Teacher and (4) A Student-Allah being Himself the First Teacher and Hazrat Adm (As) His First Student. Moreover we have also got the concept of the contents of curriculum, nay Curriculum for mankind as a whole there from. Hence it would have not been possible to have such concept of Teaching and Education provided Hazrat Adam and his espouse Bibi Hawa (As) were not expelled from the Heaven as the rewarding punishment for taking fruit of the forbidden tree having been allured by Iblis or the Satan. And this incident is also one of the core-subjects of education indeed:

Thus from Hazrat Adam (As) to the last Prophet Hazrat Mohammad (SAW), a train of Prophets had been sent down to the earth for making mankind educated and enlightened to build up the edifice of human civilization and culture through the passage of ceaseless flowing of Time and Energy. All the Prophets had with them Sahifa or Kitab (The holy guide books) to teach their nations, and from this tradition we have got the concept of the 'TEXT BOOK' for us to be followed in forming our minds and manner to imbibe the will and wishes of our Creator, Allah the Almighty as best as possible.

Allah has by the way of emphasising the verse laid the absolute importance to acquire the art and skill of learning in one Makkan Sura :The Clot (Al-Alaq), where He said to His Prophet Mohammad (SAW) "Read in the name of the Lord Who createth, createth man from a clot. Read and thy Lord is most Bounteous Who teacheth by the pen, teacheth man that which he knew not (96, 1-5)." Translation from M.Pickthall's The Glorious Quran? This extract if minutely is studied, it becomes transparent that the contents of the education of Holy Quran are:

I. God centering Whom 2. Man has to study Him and His creations not fully known and 3. His bounties to preach through his words and writings. In other words: the subject matters of the holy Quran, as it is envisaged by the Islamic Scholars and Islamicists, are in succession:

1. Allah- the Creator of the worlds,
2. Man- of different categories: Momen, Munafiq, Mushrek and Kafirs.
3. The Nature-both in literary and literal sense.

The aims and objectives of the teaching of the Holy Quran are to inculcate upon human-mind the following in scientific method and reasoning:

- a. Allah: Allah alone is the Creator of the entire worlds,
- b. He is the Creator of Man,
- c. He has sent down Adam (As) and his progeny with a specific purpose to be fulfilled by him in the way as desired by the Creator,

- d. To make man pious and God-fearing through which he would be fortunate to become favorite to his Master both here in this world and the world hereafter.

To help man reach this cherished goal, Allah has sent the last and final Prophet Hazrat Mohammad (SAW) to him (mankind) as in the words of him (Prophet) "Buestu Mualliman"- I have been sent down on earth as the Teacher". Thus the Prophet (SAW) has throughout 23 year long his Prophetic life established the undying golden example of following the lessons of the Quran both in letter and spirit.

Hence we in fine see that it is the

Holy Quran that has provided us the maiden concept of Education as a Science and Art of Humanity to study curriculum and syllabus following Prophet Mohammad (SAW) as the Teacher along with the Quran and his Hadith as the core-subject of teaching.

We should indeed be ever grateful to Allah, the Benign, for giving us the way to be supreme among all His creations acquiring His Prophet, teaching from "the cradle to grave" of our lives remembering the following holy verse of Him stressing the fact:

The Beneficent hath made known the Quran. He has created men, He hath taught him utterance. (55, 1-4). ■

Two Degrees Can Be Pursued Together At Different Univs Too

NEW DELHI: UGC's new guidelines will now allow students to simultaneously pursue two full-time degree programmes in physical mode. "As announced in the National Education Policy-2020 and in order to allow students to acquire multiple skills, the UGC is coming up with new guidelines to allow a candidate pursue two degree programmes simultaneously in physical mode. The degrees can either be pursued at the same or different universities," UGC chairperson M Jagadesh Kumar said. The guidelines say, "With the rapid increase in demand for higher education and limited availability of seats in regular stream, several higher education institutions have started a number of programmes in open and distance learning mode to meet the aspirations of students... The issue of allowing students to pursue two academic programmes simultaneously has been examined by the UGC, keeping in view the proposals envisaged in the NE which emphasises the need to facilitate multiple pathways to learning involving both formal and non-formal education modes."

Kumar said this is an attempt to provide students with as much flexibility as possible for their "holistic, integrated and learner-centric" education. HEIs can admit about 3% of students for on-campus learning. "Many universities are now offering both ODL and online programmes. With the modified regulations for online education, which we are going to announce in a couple of weeks, many top quality institutes in India will also start offering degrees online," Kumar said.

"The degree or diploma programmes conducted after the new guidelines are implemented shall be governed by the regulations notified from time to time by the UGC and also by respective statutory and professional councils wherever applicable," he added.

"Multiple skill set should be a subset of a single degree and cannot traverse between two degrees. This decision needs a review considering that there are existing options to achieve the desired objective without a need for this new policy to pursue two degrees simultaneously," said S Vaidhyasubramaniam, VC, SASTRA deemed university. .

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Adam

- Muhammad Sa'eed Siddiqui

The name of Adam has been mentioned eighteen times. It has been mentioned in the Surah Baqarah at one place: Prostrate yourselves before Adam. At the second place, it has been mentioned: And He taught Adam all the names. At the third place, it has been said: O Adam! Dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden and at the fifth place it has been stated: Then Adam learnt from his Lord words (of penitence).

In the Surah Al-i-'Imran, it has been stated at one place: Allah preferred Adam and Noah. At a second place Allah has said: The likeness of 'Isa with Allah is as the likeness of Adam. He created him of dust. In the Surah Al-'Araf, He has said at one place: Fall ye prostrate before Adam! The same verse has been repeated in the Surah Al-Kahf. In the Surah Maryam, while mentioning about the Prophets, it has been said: These are the seed of Adam.

In the Surah Ta Ha it has been stated at one place. And verily We made a covenant of old with Adam. At the second place it has been mentioned: And when We said unto the angels: Fall prostrate before Adam. At the third place, it has been stated: Therefore We said: O Adam! This (the Devil) is an enemy unto thee. At the fourth place, it has been mentioned: O Adam ! Shall I show thee the tree of immortality? And at the fifth place, it has been said: And Adam disobeyed his Lord, so went astray.

As regards the derivation of this word 'Adam', the linguists have divergent views. According to one group, it implies the surface or crust of earth. The second group holds the view that it denotes the brownish or red colour. The third group expresses the view that this word is derived from Udmah which means the mixture and composition of various elements, and ingredients. Raghیب has given more versions in his Mufradat Qur'an. One version is that this word is not of Arabic but it relates to the Hebrew. The scholars and commentators of the Bible are of the view that in the Hebrew, this word means a man or a human being.

From the interpretations, commentaries and explanations of the Holy Qur'an, it transpires that Adam was the first human-kind and the first Prophet. He was the first progenitor of the human race. Jinns and angels were created before him. Adam was fashioned out of wet clay, which could be moulded in any shape. When it began to sound like a baked brick, Allah breathed into it and it turned into a living and conscious man.

The primary purpose of creation of Adam and the human race in this world is to establish Divine vicegerency on earth and to execute, enforce and administer Allah's law therein. The Holy Qur'an has laid stress on his competency to be a vicegerent on earth. When he was elevated to this exalted position (of being

Allah's vicegerent), the other creation viz. Jinns etc. were commanded to prostrate before him. All of them obeyed except Iblis. He refused to obey as he thought himself to be superior to Adam, since he was of fire, whereas Adam had been made out of clay. He was, therefore, expelled out of Paradise due to his arrogance and self-conceitedness. Henceforth, he became a sworn enemy of Adam and all the human race.

Adam and Eve had the freedom to eat anything in Paradise except the fruit of the forbidden tree. The Satan tempted both Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, saying that there was no harm in eating it, as this would prove to be an effective means of perpetuating their stay in Paradise and they were thus induced to eat it. Due to this lapse on the part of Adam and Eve, they were sent down from their erstwhile state (of Paradise). Both of them were filled with remorse and sought repentance. They were forgiven; but they were ordered to get down on earth, as the real purpose of Adam's creation was to make him Vicegerent on earth and he was kept in the Garden temporarily for his trial and training.

The Qur'an and Hadith are silent as to which part of the land did Adam and Eve descend for the first time. Some traditions say that it was Sarandip (Ceylon). But most probably, they landed in Iraq, the inland of Dajla and Farat. However, they lived long on earth and had many children the most famous among them were Habil and Qabil (according to Torah "Cain"). The other well-

known son of theirs was Shaith, who was a Prophet. According to some traditions, Adam's age was one thousand years. The above information is not derived from the Holy Quran.

Of course, it has been said in the Holy Qur'an that We made the progeny of Adam the best creation. In Judaism and Christianity, Hadrat Adam has been acknowledged as sacred and Abul Bashar (father of mankind). In the Torah, a detailed mention of him has been made. In the ancient scriptures, we also come across his name. The Book Birth of the Torah makes a detailed mention of him commencing from the following passage:

The Almighty had neither descended water from the sky nor was there Adam to till the land. Vapors rose from the land and covered it. The Almighty made Adam from the clay and breathed into its nostrils, so he became a living being.

(Birth 2: 5-7).

The following expositions have also been given in this book that at the birth of Adam's first son, his age was one hundred and thirty years and he died at the age of nine hundred and thirty years. It has also been stated that:

He was created in the image of God.

Birth (1 : 27)

The day God created Adam, He created him in His image. Frequent mention of Adam, is also seen in New Testament. According to the modern

writers, the existence of evil and sin begins from the existence of Adam, and the salvation of humanity depends upon Christ. At one place, in the Holy Qur'an, mention of Hadrat Adam and Hadrat 'Isa (Christ) has been made together; but only this much has been said: The likeness of

'Isa with Allah is as the likeness of Adam. He created him of dust.

Al-Baqarah: (2: 31, 33, 34, 35, 37), Al-i-'Imran (3: 33, 59), Al-A'raf (7: 11), Bani Israil (17: 61), Al-Kahf (18 : 50), Maryam (19 : 58), Ta Ha (20 : 115, 1 16, 1 17, 120, 121). ■

Same-Sex Marriage Against Indian Culture: Govt To HC

PRAYAGRAJ: The UP government has opposed recognition of same-sex marriage in the Allahabad HC on the ground that "such marriages are against Indian culture and Indic religions and shall be invalid as per Indian laws, which have been designed keeping in mind the concept and existence of a man and a woman".

Considering the submissions of the state government, Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav of the Allahabad High Court in his judgement dated April 7 rejected the request to recognise the same-sex marriage, disposing of the habeas corpus petition filed by one Anju Devi, mother of one of the girls in the lesbian relationship. The mother had sought custody of her daughter (23) alleging that she had been illegally detained by another 22-year-old woman (Opposite party No 4 in the case).

Earlier, on the mother's plea, the court had on April 6, 2022, issued an order wherein both the girls were directed to be produced before the court. On April 7, 2022, they came to the court and submitted that they were major and in love, and had entered into a same-sex marriage with mutual consent. They also showed a matrimonial contract letter to the court.

Further they prayed before the court that since they are adults and have entered into a homosexual marriage, therefore, such marriage should be recognized by the court.

It was there specific sub mission that Supreme Court had decriminalized all consensual sex among adults, including homosexual sex in its ruling in the case of Navtej Singh Johar & Ors. v. Union of India thr. Secretary Ministry of Law and Justice AIR 2018 SC 4321. They argued that though the Hindu Marriage Act talks about the marriage of two people, homosexual marriage has not been opposed by the legislation.

The additional government advocates, representing the Uttar Pradesh government opposed the prayer of the girls on the ground that our country runs according to the Indian culture, religions, and Indian law and in India, marriage is considered to be a sacred 'samskara', whereas, in other countries, marriage is a contract. Referring to the Hindu Marriage Act, the AGAs further submitted that it talked about marriage between a woman and a man and in the absence of either of them, marriage cannot be accepted in any way, as it would be beyond the Indian family concept.

Further stressing that the Hindu Marriage Act 1955, Special Marriage Act 1954, and even the Foreign Marriage Act 1969 also do not allow homosexual marriage, the State of UP argued that even Muslim, Buddhist, Jain, Sikh etc, religions have also not recognized homosexual marriage.

The government counsel said according to Indian Sanatan Vidhi, in total 16 types of rituals are there including the rituals ranging from pregnancy to funeral rites and in all 16 rituals, a man and a woman have a definitive role to play and in their absence, such rituals can't be completed. ■

(The Times of India)

The True Standard of Values

- Sikandar Azam

In our beloved country the politics of hate for the Muslims has been ruling the roost for the last few years. Not a single day passes when the news of hate propaganda or harassment and subjugation of minorities, in particular Muslims, from some part of the country or the other, hit the headlines. We can say that the politics of hate has become the way of the world here. Let us discuss here what the divine guidance says in such circumstances.

A close study of the Qur'an reveals that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), during the early days in Makkah wherefrom he started preaching the message of God to the Makkans, along with his followers had to face almost the same circumstances. At that time God related to His Prophet the story of Prophet Moses and Pharaoh to show to him and the world at large how He protected Moses right from the time he was born and how He foiled the plans of Pharaoh – and thereby to establish the true standard of values and power. The fact remains that the true power not only in our physical world but in the entire universe rests with the Lord Creator and none else. And whatsoever power we see the foolhardy wielding recklessly to subjugate 'others' is the power delegated by God in fact to test them how far they can go onto the path of recklessness.

Surah al-Qasas, the 28th Chapter of the Qur'an, presents this story in great detail. The Qur'an (28:4) says: "Pharaoh

exalted himself in the land and divided its people into castes." This is what we see today. How they are exalting in the land and how they are dividing the people of the land into 'we' and 'others'.

Then the Qur'an adds: "One group of them he persecuted...." This persecution of sorts is also being practised in sheer violation of the Constitutional norms and international covenants. In the same breath, the Divine Book asserts: "For certain, he was one who sows corruption." Here corruption has been used in its widest meaning, i.e. all the acts of exalting, dividing the people and persecuting them come under the purview of corruption.

In the very next verses, the Qur'an declares the ultimate end of the evildoers: "But it was Our will to bestow Our favour upon those who were oppressed in the land and to make them leaders, and to make them the ones to inherit (the land), and to establish them securely on earth, and to let Pharaoh, Haman and their hosts experience at their hands the very things against which they were taking precautions." (28:5-6)

Needless to say, no power on earth however mighty and however equipped with provisions can challenge the might of God. This warning of God is strong enough for the practitioners of corruption to think coolly and mend their ways. ■

Three Basic Concepts of Islam

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

All prophets who had been sent by Almighty Allah for the guidance of people laid stress on three basic concepts of Islam i.e. At-thauheed (The oneness of Allah), Ar-Risalah (Prophethood), and Al-Akhirah (Hereafter).

These three basic concepts are embodiment of all Quranic injunctions and the do's and don'ts prescribed by prophetic traditions.

Needless to add that unlike other religions, the Islamic creed is based on dogmas. The holy Quran says: "Not a messenger did We send before thee without this inspiration sent by us to him: that there is no God but I, therefore, worship and serve Me." (S 21, A 25)

Now come to the three basic concepts of Islam. The first and foremost tenet of Islam is oneness of Allah. For real objective of life is attainment of pleasure of Allah. Almighty Allah alone deserves worship. There is no deity except Him. If we worship except Him, it would be an act of polytheism. In Islamic concept polytheism is an unforgivable sin. It is contumacious treason against Him. This is a rebellion against the Creator. Almighty Allah forgives all sins except polytheism. The Holy Quran says: "Allah forgiveth not that partner should be set up in to Him; but He forgiveth anything else, to whom He pleaseth, to set up partners with Allah is to devise a sin most heinous indeed".

(S 4, A48)

Maulana S, Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi has precisely said: "Belief in Oneness of Allah is the first and foremost tenet of the Islamic faith. It does not leave any space for an intermediary between the worshipper and his Lord in matters of worship and supplication. It also does not allow any room for belief in the diversity of Gods, or in the existence of a person as Gods reflection, or in God merging with any of His creatures to become one with him. Instead in Islam a believer clearly confesses that there is no God but Allah, the Almighty, the Independent. He has no father, no son, and no associate of any kind. He alone is the Creator of the universe, exercises complete administration of the world, and holds full control of the land and the sky. He does not need help from anybody. Allah has always existed and shall exist for ever. His attributes are perfect, worthy of praise and glory. He is above all limitations and weaknesses, whatsoever. His knowledge encompasses all and everything. This whole universe came into existence at His will. He is the Living, the Hearing, the Seeing. There is none like Him. He alone deserves worship, the highest manifestation of reverence. It is He Who cures the sick, provides sustenance to creatures, and removes hardship from the suffering. To take anything except Allah as deity, to bow or prostrate in front of it in

devotion, and to supplicate to it for favours which are only in Allah's power (for example, granting a baby, bringing luck, reaching a devotee for help anywhere, hearing everything from any distance, and knowing the secrets of heart) is called, in Islamic terminology, Shirk (polytheism). It is the most serious sin which is not forgiven unless the person committing it offers sincere repentance. It is related in the Quran that Allah's power is such that when He intends to do a thing, He simply says "Be", and it becomes (Yassen: 82). He does not dwell in any specific place or direction. Whatever He wills comes to pass, for nothing can ever happen against His will. He is absolutely independent. Nobody can order Him for anything or question Him about any of his actions. Wisdom is His attribute and all His actions reflect wisdom, ultimately leading to good. None except Him is the true Lord". (Islam an Introduction, P. 4-5)

In this context it would be worthwhile to quote the following verses of the holy Quran.

"Allah! There is no God but He, the living things the self subsisting, supported of all. No slumber can seize Him nor sleep. His are All things in the heavens and on earth who is thee can intercede in His presence except as He permitteth? He knoweth what (appeareth to His creatures as) before or after or behind them. Nor shall they compass aught of His knowledge except as He willeth. His throne doth extend over the heavens and the

earth, and He beeleth no fatigue in guarding and preserving them for He is most high, the supreme in glory". (S 2 A 255)

"Allah is He, than whom there is no other God, Who knows all things both secret and open, He, most gracious, most merciful. Allah is He, than whom there is no other God, the sovereign, the holy one, the source of peace and perfection. The guardian of faith, the preserver of safety, the exalted in might, the irresistible, the justly proud glory to Allah! High is He above the partners they attribute to Him. He is Allah, the Creator, the Originator, the Fashioner to Him belong the most beautiful names: whatever is in the heavens and on earth, don't declare His praises and glory: and He is the exalted in might, the wise". (S. 59, A, 22-24)

There is nothing whatever like unto Him, and He is the one that hears and sees". (S. 42, A, 11)

It should be kept in mind that we cannot count Allah's bounties, blessings and the holy Quran says: "say: if the ocean were ink (where with to write out) the exhausted than would the words of my Lord, even if we added another ocean like it, for its aid". S.18, A.109). And again "And if all the ocean were ink, with seven yet would not the words of Allah be exhausted in the writing: for Allah is exalted in power, full of wisdom". (S. 3 1, A. 27)

The prophet says: "Verily, there are ninety-nine names of Allah, whosoever recites them shall enter paradise",

(Bukhari and Muslim)

The holy Quran says: “Say: Call upon Allah, call upon Rahman: by whatever name ye call upon Him, (it is well): for to Him belong the most beautiful names”. (S. 17, A. 110) . A hadith records the following ninety-nine names, as Asmaul Husna (beautiful Names)

1. Al-Rahman	= The Merciful	21. Al-Basit	= The Spreader
2. Al-Rahim	= The	22. Al- Khafiz	= The Abaser
	Compassionate	23. Ar- Rafi	The Exalter
3. Al-Malik	= The King	24. Al- Muizz	= The Honourer
4. Al-Quddus	= The Holy	25. Al- Muzil	= The Destroyer
5. As- Salam	= The Peace	26. As- Sami	= The Hearer
6. Al- Mu'min	= The Faithful	27. Al- Basir	= The seer
7. Al- Muhaimin	= The Protector	28. Al- Hakim	= The Ruler
8. Al- Aziz	= The Mighty	29. Al- Adl	= The Just
9. Al- Jabbar	= The Repairer	30. Al- Latif	= The Subtle
10. Al- Mutakabbir	= The Great	31. Al- Khabir	= The Aware
11. Al- Khaliq	= The Creator	32. Al- Halim	= The Clement
12. Al- Bari	= The Maker	33. Al- Azim	= The Grand
13. Al- Musawwir	= The Fashioner	34. Al- Ghafur	= The Forgiving
14. Al- Ghaffar	= The Forgiver	35. Ash- Shakur	= The Grateful
15. Al- Qahhar	= The Dominant	36. Al- Ali	= The Exalted
16. Al- Wahhab	= The Bestower	37. Al- Kabir	= The Great
17. Al- Razzaq	= The Provider	38. Al- Hafiz	= The Guardian
18. Al- Fattarh	= The Opener	39. Al- Muqit	= The Strengtheners
19. Al- Alim	= The Knower	40. Al- Hasib	= The Reckoner
20. Al- Qabiz	= The Restrainer	41. Al- Jalil	= The Majestic
		42. Al- Karim	= The Generous
		43. Al- Raqib	= The Watcher
		44. Al- Mujib	= The Approver
		45. Al- Wasi	= The
			Comprehensive
		46- Al- Hakeem	= The Wise
		(Al- Hakim)	

47. Al-Wadud	= The Loving	73. Al-Akhir	= The Last
48. Al-Majeed	= The Glorious	74. Az-Zahir	= The Evident
49. Al-Bais	= The Raiser	75. Al-Batin	= The Hidden
50. Ash-Shahid	= The Witness	76. Al-Wali	= The Governor
51. Al-Haqq	= The Truth	77. Al-Muta'ali	= The Exalted
52. Al-Wakil	= The Advocate	78. Al-Barr	= The Righteous
53. Al-Qawi	= The Strong	79. Al-Tauwab	= The Acceptor of Repentance
54. Al-Matin	= The Firm		
55. Al-Wali	= The Patron	80. Al-Muntaqim	= The Avenger
56. Al-Hamid	= The Laudable	81. Al-Afuw	= The Pardoner
57. Al-Muhsi	= The Counter	82. Ar-Ra'uf	= The Kind
58. Al-Mubdi	= The Beginner	83. Maliku'l-Mulk	= The Ruler of the Kingdom
59. Al-Mu'id	= The Restorer		
60. Al-Muhyi	= The Quickner	84. Zu'l-Jalali	= The Lord of
61. Al-Mumit	= The Killer	Wa'l Ikram	Majesty and Liberality
62. Al-Hay	= The Living		
63. Al-Qaiyum	= The Subsisting	85. Al-Muqsit	= The Equitable
64. Al-Wajid	= The Finder	86. Al-Jami	= The Collector
65. Al-Majid	= The Glorious	87. Al-Ghani	= The Independent
66. Al-Wahid	= The One	88. Al-Mughni	= The Enricher
67. Al-Samad	= The Eternal	89. Al-Mu'ti	= The Giver
68. Al-Qadir	= The Powerful	90. Al-Mani	= The Withholder
69. Al-Muqtadir	= The Preventing	91. Az-Zarr	= The Distresser
70. Al-Muqaddim	= The Bringer Forward	92. An-Nafi	= The Profiter
71. Al-Mutakhkhir	= The Deferrer	93. An-Nur	= The Light
72. Al-Awwal	= The First	94. Al-Hadi	= The Guide
		95. Al-Badi	= The

- Incomparable
96. Al-Baqi = The Enduring
97. Al-Waris = The Inheritor
98. Ar-Rashid = The Director
99. As-Sabur = The Patient

Muhammad Kunju Salim Says: "The essential dogma of Islam is Tawheed or belief in the Oneness of God; God is one and ONE only There is no other reality, Other than God. He is eternal and indivisible. It is condensed in a single phrase: La Ilah Illallah. The elements of the Absolute Unity of God even though occurs throughout Quran, they are predominant in Sura II. 256, Sura XXVII. 26, and Sura CXII. Sura XXVIII. 88 states the Unity of God precisely thus: "And cry not unto any other God along with Allah. There is no God save him. Everything will perish save His countenance. His is the command, and unto Him ye will be brought back". Again in Sura, CXII, it is given as follows: "Say! He is Allah, the One! Allah, the eternity, Besought of all! He begetteth not nor was begotten. And there is none comparable unto Him".

God has absolutely no Partner and that no one is equal or rival to Him. He has no associate, nor sharer. He has taken no wife to Him, nor child, He has no beginning, not ending. Without having no form, or shape, He is colourless. He is the only Creator and Restorer of all things in the world and heavens. He is powerful, mighty, omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. He has full knowledge of all things of the

past, present and future, and knows all secrets however small it may be. These attributes are emanations of the Essence of God (Dhat) and not to be understood independently of the Essence of God. Allah willed that nothing could happen without His will, Knowledge, Decision, and Decree. He is the most Gracious. He rewards the good actions twice. He punishes the sinners by justice. He forgives by grace". (Islam Ethics and Teachings, P. 45-46)

In short, Allah is the Lord of mankind (Rabbin-Nas), king of mankind (Illahin-Nas) and The Lord of the universe (Rabbil Alameen).

Prof. Khurshid Ahmad writes in Islam: Its Meaning and Message: "But is (Tawheed) is not merely a metaphysical concept. It is dynamic belief and a revolutionary doctrine. It means that all men are the creators of one God they are equal. Discrimination based on colour, class, race or territory is unfounded and illusory. It is a remnant of the days of ignorance, which changed men down to servitude. Humanity is one single family of God and there can be no sanction for those barriers. Men are one and not bourgeois or proletarian, white or black, Aryan or non-Aryan, Westerner or Easterner. Islam gives a revolutionary concept of the unity of mankind". (P. 30)

The second Tenet of Islam is Prophet-hood.

The holy Quran says, "There is no nation to whom a warner has not been

sent.” (35:24) To every people we sent a prophet to teach them to worship God and to avoid evil (16:36)”. O ye who believe, believe in God and His apostle and the Book (Quran) which He hath sent down to His apostle and scriptures which He hath sent down formerly. Whoever denieth God and His angles and His Books and His apostles and the Last Day hath strayed far from the truth (4:136) “ We have sent to mankind messengers proclaiming the truth and warning that may henceforth have no excuse for ignorance” (4: 165)

It should be kept in mind that besides having reposed faith in all prophets and apostles, Muslims must also believe that prophet Muhammad is the last prophet of Allah and there would be no prophet after him. If anyone claims to be a prophet of Allah after Him, he would be a liar and an imposter. Almighty Allah sent a good number of prophets for guidance of mankind but the holy Quran has only mentioned 25 of them. The main plank of all prophets was to emancipate the people from superstitions and uncertainties and lead them to the right path.

Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi writes: “After the per-determined decree of God had been fulfilled, it was announced that no guidance in regard to the Cree and the Law, on which depends the salvation of man in this world and the next, shall henceforth be imparted through revelation or the angels or any new messenger of God, and that the communication of divine command through these sources shall be

terminated after Muhammad, the last of the prophets.”

It is important to observe that the Quran repeatedly refers to the angels, particularly Gabriel, through whom divine revelations were sent down to the earlier prophets as well as to the last prophet of God for the edification and guidance of human beings.

“He sendeth down the angels with the spirit of His command unto whom He will of the Spirit of (saying): Warn mankind that there is no god save Me, so keep your duty unto Me.” And lo! It is a revelation of the lord of the worlds, Which the True Spirit has brought down upon thy heart, that thou mayst be (one) of the warners, “In plain Arabic speech.”

“And it was not (vouchsafed) to any mortal that Allah should speak to him unless (it be) by revelation or from behind a veil, or (that) He sendeth a messenger to reveal what He will by His leave. Lo ! He is Exalted, wise.”

“Say: The Holy spirit hath revealed it from thy Lord with truth, that it may confirm (the faith of) those who believe, and as guidance and good tidings for those who have surrendered (to Allah).”

Nor doth he speak of (his own) desire,

“It is naught save an inspiration that is inspired which one of the mighty powers hath taught him one vigorous: and he grew clear to view when he was on the uppermost horizon. “Then he drew nigh

and came down till he was (distant) two bows' length or even nearer, "And He revealed unto His slave that which He revealed." "Say (O Muhammad, to mankind): Who in an enemy to Gabriel! for he it is who hath revealed (this Scripture) to thy heart by Allah's leave, confirming that which was (revealed) before it, and a guidance and glad tidings to believers." "That this is in truth the word of an honoured messenger, mighty, established in the presence of the lord of the Throne, "(One) to be obeyed, and trustworthy: "And your comrade is not mad, "Surely he beheld him on the clear horizon: and he is not averse of the Unseen , "But the inspirations, intuitions and spiritual visions perceptible to the evolved and elevated souls, betaking to vigils and meditations, have nothing to do with the revelations clothed in the dress of divine messages from the Most High to His apostles: since, such inspiration may sometimes be bestowed to those who are neither godly in spirit nor on the right path.

Termination of prophet-hood after Muhammad is an edict from God and it has been announced in no uncertain words such as to leave any doubt about its purpose and intention. Nobody can dispute this divine command unless he has an axe to grind or else a concealed reason for his conduct. (Islamic Concept of Prophet-hood, P. 152-155)

Maulana S.Sulaiman Nadwi writes in his book 'Muhammad the Ideal Prophet' : "A model which can serve as a standard

for every class of the people acting under different circumstances and states of human emotions will be found in the life of Muhammad (SAW). If you are rich ,there in the example of the tradesman of Mecca and the master of Bahrain's treasures: if you are poor, you can follow the interneer of Shu'yeb Abi Talib and the emigree of Madina: if you are a king, watch the actions of the ruler of Arabia: if you are vassal, look at the man enduring hardships imposed by the Quraish of Mecca: if you are a conqueror, look at the victor of Badr and Hunayn: if you have suffered a defeat a defeat, take a lesson from the one discomfited at Uhad: if you are a teacher, learn from the holy mentor of the school of Suffah: if you are a student, look at the learner who sat before Gabriel; if you are a sermonizer, direct your eyes to the discourser delivering sermons in the mosque at Madina: if you are charged to preach the gospel of truth and mercy to your persecutors. observe the helpless preacher explaining the message of God to the pagans of Mecca: if you have brought your enemy to his knees, look at the conqueror of Mecca: if you want to administer your lands and properties, discover how the lands and groves of Bani al-Nadir, Khaibar and Fadak were managed: if you are an orphan, do not forget the child of Amina and 'AbdAllah left to the tender mercy of Halima: if you are young, see the character of Mecca's shepherd: if you have travelling business, cast a glance at the leader of caravan under way to Basra: if you are a judge or

arbiter, look at the umpire entering the holy sanctuary before the peep of the dawn and installing hajr-ul-Aswad in the Ka'aba, or the justice of peace in whose eyes the poor and the rich were alike; if you are a husband, study the behavior of the husband of Khadija and 'Ayesha: if you are a father, go through the biography of Fatima's father and grandfather of Hasan and Husain: in short, whoever and whatever you may be, you would find a shining example in the life of the holy prophet to illuminate your behavior. He is only beacon of light and guidance for every seeker after truth. If you have the life of the prophet of Islam before you can find the examples of all the prophets, Noah and Abraham, Jonah and Moses and Jesus. If the life and character of each prophet of God were deemed to be a shop selling the wares of one commodity, that of Muhammad (SAW) would verily be a variety store where goods every description can be had to suit the tastes and needs of all". (P. 64—65)

We are followers of the last prophet. It is imperative for us to carry out his teachings in letter and spirit .The Qur'an advises us; say: if you love Allah, follow me: Allah will love you and forgive your sins: for Allah is oft forgiving, most merciful (Al —Imran 3:31) And again: O' you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the messengers (Al-Nisa, A: 59), We sent not a messenger but to be obeyed, in accordance with the will of Allah (Al- Nisa, A:64)

Our iman (faith) is not complete until we love Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) more than anyone else. The prophet said: You cannot be Muslim unless you love me more than yourself, your father and your sons and all other human beings." (Bukhari And Muslim)

The Third Concept of Islam is Hereafter.

Contrary to other faiths Islam has a unique and different concept regarding the Day of judgement. It would not be an exaggeration to say that whole gamut of Islamic life depends on the Hereafter. The holy Quran says: "What is the life of this world but amusement and play? Man's real home is in the Hereafter, if only he knew". (29 : 64)

It should be noted that a Muslim whatever he does in this world is for the Hereafter. A Muslim shirks in committing unholy acts for he will have to be accounted for them before Allah on the Day of Judgement. No doubt, the fear of the Hereafter baffles Muslims from perpetrating all sort of evil acts.

Maulana Manzoor Nomani has rightly said that "Faith in the Hereafter implies, in a word the placing of one's complete trust in the revelation made by the prophets that, at the end of this mortal life, there is to come another life and another world in which men will be requested for the good or evil they might have done during their earthly sojourn,"

The holy Quran says: "The dwellers

of paradise will ask the inmates of Hell, what brought ye into Hell-fire? They will reply, "We were not of those who observed the prescribed prayers, and we indulged in vain talk with idle thinkers, and we questioned the happening of the Day of judgement, till death overtook us" (Q:74:42-47) It further says : "O mankind! fear your Lard ,for the convulsion the Hour (of Judgement) will be a thing terrible. Hour of terrible "(al-Hajj 22: 1) "Tell my servants that I am indeed the of- Forgiving, Most Merciful. And My penalty will be indeed the most grievous penalty (al Hijr 15-49-50)

"O mankind! If you have doubt about the Resurrection, (consider) that We created you out of dust, then out of sperm, then out of a leech-like clot, then out of a morsel of flesh, partly formed and partly unformed, in order that we may manifest (Our Power) to you :and We cause whom We will to rest in the wombs for an appointed term, then do We bring you out as babes, then you are called to die, and some are sent back to feeblest old age, so that they know nothing after having known (much) and (further)you see the earth barren and lifeless but when We pour down rain on it: it is stirred (to life)it swells, and it puts forth every kind of beautiful growth in pairs, this is so ,because Allah is the Reality.It is the Who gives life to the dead and it is He Who was power over all things".(alHajj22:5-6) It is He Who sends the winds like heralds of glad tidings, going before His Mercy: when they have carried the heavy-laden clouds, We drive them to a land that is dead, make

rain to descend thereon, and produce every kind of haruest therewith: thus shall We raise up the dead: perchance you may remember. (Al- Araf7 :57)

"It is Allah Who sends forth the wind, so that the raise up the clouds and we drive them to a land that is dead, and revive the earth therewith after its death: even so (will be) the Resurrection!" (Fatir 35 : 9)

"And they say: "What When we lie hidden and lost, in the earth, shall we indeed be in a Creation they deny the meeting with their Lord! (Qaf50:3)

"They say: "What ! When we are reduced to bones and dust, should we really be raised up (to be) a new creation?" (al-Isra 17:49)

"A Sign for them is the earth that is dead. We do give in life, and produce grain there from, of which you do eat". (YaSin36:33)

"What! Are you more difficult to create or the Heaven (above) Allah has constructed?" (al-Nazi'at 79:27)

"See they not that Allah Who created the Heavens and the earth, has power to created the earth, has power to create the like of them (anew)?" (al-Isra 17:99)

"We give (new) like therewith to land that is dead: thus will be the Resurrection. (Qaf 50:11)

Say: "Travel through the earth and see how Allah did originate creation: so will Allah produce a later creation: for Allah has power all things." (al-Ankabut 29:20)

In his book "Lift Up Your Hearts". Abdur Rashid Siddique writes: "It is worth remembering that the Hereafter will be metamorphoses and radical changes in everything. Material things will lose their weight and actions and deeds will have weight and can be measured. Reality of everything will be revealed. Inanimate objects and parts of the Human body will be able to speak! Thus, there is no escape from that Day, when the whole of mankind will be assembled and each one has to give account of his deeds individually before Allah (swt). There will be no one to help and to intercede on his behalf. Each one will be asked to recite his own record and judge for himself. There are many verses that graphically depict the Day of judgement. Even the very many graphic words used for that Day are indicative of its horror and its calamity' Some of these words are:

al-Qari'ah	The Calamity
al-Zalزالah	The Earthquake
al-Haqqah	The Reality
al-tammam al-kubra	The Great Disaster
al-Sa'iaah	The Blast
yawm Thaqil	A Hard Day
al-Yawm al-Muhit	The Encompassing Day
yawm al-Fasl	The Day of Separation"(P.30)

Muhammad kanju Salim says: "The

approach of the Last Day will be preceded by certain sign-8 Lesser Signs (Isharatu-Saah) and 17 Greater Signs (Alamotus Satah)

The Lesser Signs

1. The decay of faith among men.
2. Mean and worthless persons rising to eminence
3. Men will lose interest in religious matters, and they will be more interested in sexual pleasures so that maid servants bear children of their masters.
4. Tumults and seditions,
5. There will be an outbreak of war probably with the Greeks or with the Romans
6. The world will have more distress and calamity. Wickedness and violence will prevail.
7. The provinces of al-Iraq and Syria stop paying tribute.
8. The buildings of al-Medina shall reach to as far as Mecca.

The Greater Signs

1. The sun will rise in the west.
2. A monster called Dabbatul Arz having the head of a bull, the ears of an elephant, the horns of a stag, the neck of an ostrich, the breast of a lion, the colour of a tiger, the back of a cat, the back of a cat, the tail of a ram, the leg of a camel, and the voice of an ass

- will appear thrice in several places. Its swift movement makes overtaking it impossible.
3. In a war with the Romans or Greeks, Constantinople will (all to some 70,000 descendants of Isaac,
 4. The coming of Anti-Christ (Dajal) an one-eyed false or lying Christ bearing on his brow the letters "KFR" signifying unbelief who will ride a white ass for 40 days (equal to 440 ordinary days. One day is equal to one year, another to a month, another to a week and the rest will be ordinary days. One day is equal to one year, another to a month, another to a week and the rest will be ordinary days. Totaling all these will be equal to 440 days). He ride on until he is slain by Jesus.
 5. The descent of Jesus on earth, near the white tower to the east of Damascus and conduct the mid-day prayer. Then he will slay the Anti-Christ at the gates of Lyda. He will marry and have children. He will rule the world for 40 years,
 6. Wars with the Jews.
 7. The re-appearance of the barbarous tribes' Gog and Magog and in the end they will be destroyed.
 8. Clouds of smoke will fill the earth.
 9. Three eclipses of the moon, one in the east, another in the west and the third in Arabia will be seen.
 10. Al-lat and Al-Uzza will be worshipped especially in Arabia.
 11. The river Euphrates will retreat, revealing heaps of gold and silver. This exposed wealth will be the cause of destruction of many.
 12. Demolition of Ka'ba by Ethiopians.
 13. Speaking of inanimate things.
 14. An outbreak of fire in the province of al-Hijaz.
 15. A descendant of kahtan will drive men before him with his staff.
 16. The coming of Mahdi, that is one from the family of the prophet.
 17. A wind shall blow and sweep away the souls of all who have but a grain of in their hearts.

In the Hadith literature, there is a Saying of Prophet related by Anas. He says that "the prophet had said. 'Verily decay of wisdom, ignorant people, drinking and open adultery are signs of the approach of Last Day'" (Imam Bukhari) (Islam —Ethics and teachings P.65-66)

S. Athar Husain has precisely said: "The life in this world is not an end in itself but is an organic stage of the eternal life and disappears to assume a higher form:

Your creation and resurrection are but as (the creation and raising of) a single soul. (41:27)

And surely from state to state shall ye be carried. (84:19)

This life is ephemeral no doubt but

it has a tremendous instrumental value. In fact, it is the key to the life hereafter. The earth is a testing ground and upon the achievements of this life will depend whether a man will enjoy eternal bliss 'what no eye hath seen and no ear hath heard and no mind of men hath conceived' or terrible agony, anguish and damnation in Hell.

The Quran uses a number of similes and metaphors to describe the eternal bliss of heaven and the terrible agony of hell, but in this earthly life, none can form even a remotely precise idea of that bliss or agony.

Those who believe and do right, joy is for them and bliss their journey's end.

What will convey to them what the consuming fire (hell), is; it is the fire kindled by God which hearts. (104:5-7)

The cardinal principle of this life according to Quran is its accountability in the hereafter. That alone gives it meaning and purpose. The reaction of one's deeds are ineffaceably imprinted on one's soul to be carried to the life beyond.

And every man's deeds have We fastened about his neck. And on the Day of Resurrection will we bring forth to him a book which shall be preferred to him wide open; 'Read thy book; there needeth none but thyself to make an account against thee this day.' (17:14-15)

Resurrection and life after death are as certain and inevitable as the life of his world. Resurrection is certain because

God has promised it; it is certain because justice and wisdom demand it for sake of just retribution for one's deeds. Or as Frithjof Schuon says, "one proof of immortality of the soul-which is essentially intelligence or consciousness-is that the soul could not have end beneath itself, in other words matter or the mental reflection of matter. The higher cannot be merely a function of the lower, it cannot be only a means in relation to what it surpasses."

The Quran makes it clear that this Universe has not been created for pastime nor is the life of this world a mere accident. Says the Quran, 'What! Deemed ye then that We created you for naught and that ye would not be brought back to Us.' (23:117) Having been created in the 'best of moulds' and as the highest form of Creation, man has not been created just to live for a few moments and then get completely annihilated. On the contrary, the earthly life has a definite purpose to serve and a goal towards which it has to move. And that goal is the 'Life Hereafter'. (The Message of Qur'an, p. 24-26)

In a nutshell, a Muslim cannot be perfect, unless he adheres to the above mentioned concepts of Islam. It is therefore a bounden duty of all Muslims to carry out the teachings of Islam and lead their lives as Almighty Allah stands for His beloved prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and asks him to say : Lo! My worship and sacrifice and my living and my dying are meant for Allah, Sustainer of the worlds.(Surah al-An'am:A, 162)■

A Tale of Two Real Humans

At a time when frantic efforts are being made to polarise and divide India's plural society on communal lines, reports of the members of one community coming to the aid of the people in need belonging to another community indeed leave a soothing effect. Two recent reports, one from Ballia district of Uttar Pradesh and the other from North Dinajpur district of West Bengal make the point home. Jagran.com on March 18 reported that a (burqua-clad) Muslim lady saved the life of a Hindu Brahmin lady, who was admitted to District Hospital Ballia. Manisha Pandey, wife of Gopal Upadhyaya of Tikhampur in Ballia district, was admitted with labour pain and advised caesarean; she required blood of AB Negative group. As AB Negative is the rarest blood type, even after frantic search her husband was unable to fetch even a single unit of the required blood. He contacted a donor Sagar Singh Rahul and sought his help. Sagar Singh contacted other donors but no one's blood matched the blood of the lady. Then Sagar Singh contacted Raju Khan of Gudri Bazar. Luckily, Raju Khan's wife Simmi Shaikh's blood group matched with Manisha Pandey's.

When Simmi came to know that a lady required blood of her group, both she and her husband Raju readily agreed to help the lady in need and

rushed to District Hospital Ballia where Simmi donated her blood to Manisha Pandey and thus helped save the life of Manisha and her newborn baby.

In another development reported on March 17, when Haslu Mohammad of Kachimuha in Raiganj, North Dinajpur district of West Bengal heard of his friend Achintya Biswas' condition and the doctors' advice for Biswas, 34, to undergo a kidney transplant as the only option to save him, he volunteered to donate one of his kidneys.

Mohammad applied to the state health department to seek approval. Then, his application was transferred to the local police to investigate if his motives were dubious. The investigation proved that Mohammad's offer was, indeed, noble. A local policeman reportedly said that a report is on its way to the state health department, giving him the green light to go ahead with the donation. Haslu's wife, Manoara, said her husband did what a human being is supposed to do for a friend, irrespective of which community we belong to.

Both Simmi Shaikh and Haslu Mohammad are being hailed for serving the cause of humanity by helping the persons in need save their life on totally humanitarian ground.■

(Courtesy: RadianceViewswweekly)

Around the World

IN HIROSHIMA, JAPAN PM, U.S. ENVOY WARN RUSSIA OVER NUCLEAR THREAT

TOKYO: Japan's prime minister and its US ambassador warned Russia against the use of nuclear weapons during a visit to Hiroshima, the site of an atomic bomb attack in World War II.

Their warning comes after Moscow refused to rule out deploying its nuclear arsenal, saying it could be used in the Ukraine war if Russia faced an "existential threat".

Japanese leader Fumio Kishida and Ambassador Rahm Emanuel visited a peace memorial park and museum, where the US diplomat called Russia's position "unconscionable".

Around 140,000 people died when Hiroshima was bombed in 1945, a toll that includes those who survived the explosion but died after from radiation exposure.

Three days later Washington dropped a plutonium bomb on the Japanese port city of Nagasaki, killing about 74,000 people and leading to the end of World War II. The US remains the only country ever to have used nuclear weapons in conflict.

Emanuel issued a statement condemning Moscow's position.

"The history of Hiroshima teaches us that it is unconscionable for any nation to make such a threat," he said.

Kishida said "the horrors of nuclear weapons must never be repeated".

Meanwhile, Russia's "bragging" about its nuclear weapons is fuelling a dangerous arms race, Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky told the Doha Forum.

Zelensky also called on Qatar, which organises the annual meeting of international political and business leaders, to increase production of natural gas to counter Russian efforts to use energy as a weapon. ■

NO SURVIVORS IN PLANE CRASH WITH 132 ON BOARD, SAYS CHINA

BEIJING: Chinese authorities officially confirmed that there were no survivors in the crash of a China. Eastern 737-800 earlier this week with 132 people on board. The announcement by an official of the Civil Aviation Administration of China at a late-night news conference was followed by a brief moment of silence. Investigators have identified 120 of the victims through DNA analysis, state media reported. Construction excavators dug into the crash site in the search for wreckage, remains and the second black box, the flight data recorder. ■

HUBBLE SPACE TELESCOPE SPOTS OLDEST AND FARTHEST STAR KNOWN:

Astronomers announced the discovery of the farthest and oldest star ever seen, a dot of light that shined 12.9 billion years ago, or 900 million years after the Big Bang that gave to the universe. That means the light from the star travelled 12.9 billion light-years to reach Earth. The finding was part of efforts using the Hubble Space Telescope to search for some of the universe's farthest and earliest galaxies. By a lucky coincidence, the astronomers were able to discern a single star system within one of those galaxies. "It was an unexpected surprise to find something so small," said Brian Welch, a graduate student at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore who is an author of a paper published in the journal Nature that describes the discovery. ■

MALIAN, FOREIGN SOLDIERS KILLED HUNDREDS: HRW

DAKAR: Malian troops and suspected Russian mercenaries allegedly executed around 300 civilian men over five days during a military operation in a central town, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said. ■

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