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Post Box No. 93,
Nadwatul Ulema
Tagore Marg,
Lucknow -226007

Ph. No. : 0522-2740406

Fax : (0522) 2741221 E-mail: nadwa@sancharnet.in

Rs. 12/-



The Fragrance of East

Founder:

Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (RAH)

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The Quranic Dictum

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

The Qur'an lays stress on following the way of the prophets and asks the believers, time and again, to pattern their lives and conduct after the example set by the messengers of God.

"Verily in the messenger of Allah ye have a good example for him who looketh unto Allah and the Last Day, and remembereth Allah much."

It directs the Muslims to beseech God always to show them the right path.

"Show us the right path, The path of those whom Thou hast favoured;

Not (the Path) of those who earn Thine anger nor of those who go astray."

This prayer which forms part of the service repeated several times a day, teaches man to seek the companionship of the prophets, their leaders and guides and God-loved souls. Whoever shall live up to this supplication by coming close to the appearance and behaviour of these pious souls shall undoubtedly be sanctified and redeemed by divine grace. ■

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Wisdom of Qur'an

"Allah has promised those of you who believe and do righteous deeds that He will surely empower them as vicegerents in the land even as He empowered those that preceded them, and that He will firmly establish their religion which He has been pleased to choose for them, and He will replace the state of fear that they are in with security. Let them serve Me and associate none with Me in My Divinity."

(Al-Qur'an – 24:55)

This Aayat aims at warning the hypocrites that God's promise to bestow His vicegerency on Muslims does not apply to those who only have Muslim names or who were registered as Muslims on the occasion of a census or at the time of their birth. That promise was in fact meant for true Muslims who are firm in their belief, who are righteous and God-fearing in their character and conduct, and who faithfully follow the religion of God, who are committed to purge themselves of every taint of polytheism and who worship with full devotion the One True God and none else. Those who are devoid of these qualities and only claim with their tongues that they are believers do not deserve to receive this favour, nor was the promise of this favour meant for them.

The term *khilāfah* means to possess the powers granted by God. In this sense all the descendants of Adam are vicegerents of God on earth. It also means to possess and exercise the powers of vicegerency within the parameters of God's sovereignty and in accordance with God's Will. ■

Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud relates that the Holy Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) said: "One who has an iota of pride in his heart will not be able to enter the Paradise." One of the Companions said: "O Messenger of Allah! Some persons like nice clothes and shoes." The Holy Messenger said: "Allah is Elegant and Beautiful, and He likes elegance and beauty. Pride means rejecting the truth out of haughtiness and considering others as low."

(Sahih Muslim)

The Holy Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) has warned the believers against the ill consequences of pride. He says that a person who has even an iota of pride will not be able to enter the Paradise.

A believer submits his all to Allah. Therefore in his entire life he would act in a modest way. A true believer knows it full well that he is being watched by the Creator, and that he cannot achieve any success unless Allah sanctions it. When all power rests with Allah, there is no room for pride, arrogance or self-conceit. Humbleness and subservience to Allah's Will should discipline our life.

As for human desire to adorn oneself in a decent manner, the Blessed Messenger clarifies that it does not amount to pride, for Allah is the source of all elegance and beauty and He likes it for His slaves as well. Then what actually constitutes pride? The Blessed Messenger explains that it lies in rejecting truth when one comes across it and in considering others to be inferiors. ■

THE POLITICS OF LANGUAGE: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ARABIC

Language is a method of human communication. In both its spoken and written form it insists on the use of words in a structured and conventional way. In fact it is language, which distinguishes man from other living beings. The newly born baby learns to speak from mother. As he or she grows up and starts speaking we say he is talking in mother tongue.

The issue of language has sadly been much politicized. It is unfortunate that often a language is associated with a particular religion and its followers. English, the widely spoken language in the world is linked with Christians and it is popular in UK and USA and in the anglophile world. Sanskrit is known as the language of Hindus. Arabic is considered to be the language of Arabs and Muslims in the Islamic world. This concept of associating languages with particular groups or religion is not only illogical but also misleading. The issue needs some discussion, and we hope to come back to it in our later issues. The ever-increasing popularity of the Arabic language in lands where Islam spread is the subject matter of our consideration in this column.

Arabic as its name suggests is related to Arabs. It is the language, which is written from right to left, in contrast to other languages, which start from the left to right. The classical or literary language is based largely on that of the holy Quran. This was to be expected Prophet Muhammad (pbh), the last prophet of Islam, was born and brought up in Arabia and the holy Quran was revealed to him in the language he understood-Arabic. After Islam spread to Syria and Mesopotamia, Persia, North Africa and Spain, different forms of contact between members of the faiths sparked the polemical debate between Muslims and Christians. And this contact made Arabic-the language of the conquering Arabs-the spoken language of the Christian *dimmis* of the urban centres.

There is no denying the fact that Islam helped Arabic in becoming one of the most popular language of the world. It acquired sophistication and helped in the social and cultural development as well of Islamic civilization. The Arab historian Ibn-i-khaldun (1332-1406) has aptly remarked that inquisitiveness to learn science is not restricted to any particular religious group. Science in Islamic societies was international; it inherited all the earlier scientific traditions and fused them into one new whole. The most important factor contributing to the universality of the Islamic scientific culture was the Arabic as the universal language of communication. It may be noted that many of the scientists who wrote in Arabic were not themselves Arabs. Yet, so much was the lingua franca status of arabic that between 9th and 16th centuries most of the scientific works were written in Arabic.

Of late, the Arabic language is assuming greater importance because lack of its

knowledge is considered a big hurdle in developing cordial relations between Arabs and non-Arab nations. Moreso, according to an Indian Social Scientist, Dr. Satish Sharma of Sagar University, after every two weeks one language of the world is eliminated. If this process is continued then by the end of this century only English, Chinese, Hindi / Urdu and Arabic will survive.

Realising the importance of Arabic in developing cordially with the Arab world the government of USA is showing keen interest that Americans in good number should learn Arabic. Before 1998 only two percent student were taking lessons in Arabic but during 1998-2002 the percentage has risen 92 and about 10,600 students are taking tuitions in Arabic. The American Center for Applied Languages in its survey found that Arabic is taught in 70 primary and secondary schools. Though Muslims run most of these schools, the US government is quite liberal to assist any institution, which imparts knowledge of Arabic. Apart from according all facilities in America, Americans are encouraged to get to Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Tunis to learn Arabic. Presently 480 American students are on the rolls of Egyptian Universities to learn Arabic. In Journalism too Arabic Journals and newspapers are no less than of other languages.

In India we have a better infrastructure to promote the Arabic language. With little interest and proper patronage the famous Islamic seminaries like Darul Uloom Deoband, Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulema, Mazahirul Uloom Saharanpur, Jamia Salfia, Varanasi and other reputed centres can help in the popularising of Arabic learning. Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulema is playing a pivotal role in promotion of Arabic. The Arabic language and literature occupy prominent place in its curriculum. It has produced eminent Arabic literature and scholars. The Arabic language is not confined to only Islamic works but it helps in establishing cordial relations with Arabic speaking countries. It has a rich treasure of art, literature and culture. Now modern subjects too are being translated and assimilated in this language. In countries where Arabic is the medium of instruction books on science, medicine, philosophy, psychology and social sciences are being translated in Arabic from other languages. The importance of Arabic can be gauged by the simple fact that in international conferences Arabic knowing interpreters are engaged and automatic translation facilities are provided to delegates. Government of India, realizing the importance of Arabic has also established centres for the promotion of the language. A good number of Nadwa educated persons are proving quite helpful in this task.

S.A.

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The Order of the Four Rightly-Guided Caliphs

-S.Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

And the sun runs its course for a period determined for it. That is the decree of Allah, the exalted in might, the All-knowing.

(Ya Sin 36:38)

Allah has ordained the course of the sun. It moves consistently towards the points of its rising and setting. This law was put in place by Allah, Lord of the universe Who is Almighty and All-Knowing. Little wonder then that He has been able to devise and enforce it. If one is mighty, it does not necessarily mean that a system one develops is perfectly in order. Likewise, it may be devoid of underlying wisdom. If one does not possess absolute knowledge, the system will run into trouble. By the same token, if one does not enjoy the power to enforce it, the system will not come into force.

The above verse speaks pointedly of the solar system, specifying that the sun moves by Allah's will from a particular point to reach another preordained point. Its course is run, owing to Allah's power and knowledge. The above may stand also for the institution of Prophethood, true faith and the call to faith and their interrelationship. Everything in the

above sphere, as in the solar system, is preordained and perfectly well organised. Nothing is left to chance. Moreover, both are characterised by an unmistakable rationale. Everything is in accord with Allah's will and command. His wisdom is all-pervasive. The system is wholly dependent upon His will.

Let us take a look at the Prophet's successors known popularly as the Rightly-Guided Caliphs. They came to centre stage after the Prophet Muhammad's demise and were appointed Caliphs in a particular order. Allah provided each of them with an opportunity to perform this role. This course of events was determined by Almighty and All-Knowing Allah. The whole system worked with cohesion. This demonstrates how perfect is divine mercy, wisdom and authority.

It emerges from a study of the history of various faith communities that the defence and maintenance of faith is of paramount importance. The protection of faith is the key to its success and spread. The bearer of divine faith occupies pride of place. His successors ensure the preservation and spread of faith. The latter reject attempts to tamper with the divine arrangement.

This is their first and foremost duty. Hence, the fate of a faith depends very much on the selection of disciples, for they help preserve faith in its original form. As a result its teachings continue to flourish.

Apart from firm faith, the gnosis of Allah and unadulterated, monotheism, another very important prerequisite for the survival of faith is its adherents keen sensitivity to the preservation of their faith. The Prophet's successor should have this outstanding quality. He should be extremely particular about the identity of faith.

Again, one learns from the history of world religions that corruption crept into these as they were not fortunate enough to have trustworthy custodians of faith. Hence these religions changed beyond all recognition as there was no one to oversee their preservation. May Allah shower His blessings upon Abu Bakr, the Prophet's successor and the first Caliph who was very keen to keep Islam secure to its original source. Abu Bakr's numerous qualities, especially his commitment to justice and piety, his proximity to Allah, his altruism and his perfection are graphically recorded in works on *Sirah* and *Hadith*.

Nonetheless, his outstanding quality, which was then needed most, was his exceptional attachment to the

cause of preserving Islam as it was bequeathed by the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). He ensured that the Muslim community did not deviate an inch from the Prophet's way. Undauntingly, he resolved to follow in the Prophet's footsteps. His commitment to this objective may be described as his special trait. As a result, Muslims are seen to this day practising the same religious duties which were prescribed by the *Shari'ah* at the outset and as promulgated by the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). In this way, Islam has been safe to a large extent from accretions and tamperings. All this is a result of Abu Bakr's special efforts on this count. We stand indebted to the first Caliph for following our faith in its pristine purity. He met a pressing need of the day in confronting this challenge. His saying on this issue is reflective of the depths of his devotion to the cause and his unwavering faith. He is, for example, on record as declaring. "Can there be any alteration in faith while I am alive? Can anyone dare tamper with the faith prescribed by Allah?" Abu Bakr possessed this quality of preservation which is essential for the survival of a faith.

Besides preserving faith, it was also necessary that Muslims be made to adhere to their Islamic faith. Equally important was the constancy and

consistency on the part of those who were to serve as role models for subsequent generations of Muslims. Muslims were to emulate their exemplary character and conduct.

During 'Umar's reign, parts of the Roman and Persian empires, and Egypt and Syria were subdued. Fabulous wealth thus accrued to the Muslims and rich tributes were paid to the Islamic State in Madinah. Muslims came across such luxury which was beyond their imaginations. Yet would such sudden affluence misguide Muslims to the path of pleasure seeking and materialism?

At this juncture Allah arranged for 'Umar to become Caliph as he held very strong views about the Arabs' identity and distinctive features. He saw to it that the Muslim masses did not fall prey to materialism. He controlled the spread of affluence and luxury and urged the Arabs to maintain the main traits of their character and conduct - piety, hard work, simplicity, horse riding, contentment and military skills.

After 'Umar's era, things were well under control. Apostasy and tampering with the articles of faith were ruled out once and for all. The Islamic values of human equality and justice were manifest. It was fairly evident that the Islamic state would ensure the goodness of everyone. It was

anticipated that people would enter the fold of Islam in large numbers. The emergence of illustrious figures in all fields of study was imminent. Needless to add, such towering figures appeared in the field of *Hadith* studies as Imam Abu Hanifah, Malik, Shafi'i and Ahmad ibn Hanbal. To this galaxy of first-rate scholars also belong Imam Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Yusuf and Muhammad and such eminent military generals and conquerors as 'Uqbah ibn Nafi" Tariq ibn Ziyad and Muhammad ibn Qasim.

Later on, Allah's choice for Caliph fell on 'Uthman as his tribe had gained fame in state craft and military conquest. It is only natural after all that ties of kinship consolidate a state, for members of the same ruling tribe take state craft as their own and act with the utmost sincerity. In sum, a Caliph of 'Uthman's standing was needed at that time. History records a large number of conquests during his reign. We know that Cyprus, huge chunks of Africa, Central Asia, and Persia fell to Muslims.

By 'Uthman's day Islam was deeply entrenched in security. There was no force to pose a threat to its political, military and administrative order. Muslims had now been ruling over vast empires for a long time, which in turn had left its mark on cultural life. New political strategies were also employed, and Muslims became familiar with the political order and values, which

governed their policies. Nonetheless, they needed a mentor to instruct them in the demands of both their state and their faith.

At this juncture the fourth Caliph, 'Ali appeared on the scene. His excellence lay in the primacy he accorded to the dictates of faith over political interests and motives.. He displayed such firmness on this issue that the Muslims themselves became more concerned about their faith, even if this entailed loss of political power. In essence, 'Ali made no allowance for political gain, if this compromised any religious principle.

He left behind a role model demonstrating how to adhere to the basic articles of faith even in the face of civil war and severe opposition from fellow Muslims. He withstood all internal pressures and ensured that faith enjoyed supremacy over politics and diplomacy. Imam Abu Hanifah brought home the insightful point that without 'Ali's example, we could not have gained any guidance on how to deal with internal opposition and disorder.

In sum, 'Ali's qualities were the need of the hour. Allah thus helped the Caliphate system. It represents His Might and Omniscience. Not only has Allah ordained the course of the sun, rising in the east and setting in the west, He has also devised various phases for

the institution of Prophethood and divine guidance. After passing through several and different stages faith is then completed. Allah provided the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) with worthy successors. All this is reflective of the truth that Allah is Almighty and All-Knowing. ■

Do good deeds and abstain from major sins

Hazrat Abu Huraira and Abi Saeed (R.A.) narrate that Rasulallah, Sallallah alaihi wasallam, said: I swear by the One in Whose control is my life! Any bondsman who offers five time prayers, keeps fast during Ramdhan, pays the poor-due (Zakat) and abstains from the seven major sins, the eight gates of the Paradise will be opened for him. Then (the Messenger) Rasulallah, Sallallah alaihi wasallam, recited this verse:

“If you avoid the great sin which are forbidden to do. We shall expiate from you your (small) sins.”

(Surah An Nisa, verse 31)

The Effects of Faith (Iman)

-S.Sulaiman Nadwi

In the previous pages the true significance of Faith and its six branches or articles, namely, Faith in God, Angels, Divine Books, Messengers, Hereafter and Divine Decree has been discussed in detail, stating why it is essential to affirm our belief in each of them and how far the belief in them is beneficial for the humanity. It has already been stated that in every religion of the world, especially in Islam, the greatest emphasis has been laid on *Iman* (Faith).

These discussions were on principles. Now once again we stress this point that Faith is, as a matter of fact, so important that it has the foremost position in Islam, as the goal at which Islam aims at reaching, cannot be achieved, without the light of Faith.

Before acting upon any concept or ideology, it is essential that we are fully convinced about its truth and efficacy. If it is not so, we can neither act upon it sincerely nor can it satisfy our conscience and heart. Since all our actions are directed and controlled by our heart, unless it is changed, the course of our actions cannot be changed. The goodness of our actions depends upon the correctness or soundness of our heart. If it is correct, everything will be correct.

There is another point to note. The Jews had given greatest importance to

their customs and practices. On the other hand, the Christians considered Faith as the only way of salvation. This lesson was specially given by the disciples of Christ in their writings and epistles and it was stressed that the salvation of a person depends upon his Faith and not upon his actions. As compared with these beliefs, the first excellent teaching of Islam in this respect is that both these things are the basis of religion and the salvation of man neither depends upon only *Iman* nor upon only action, but upon both i.e. correctness of *Iman* and application of the basic principles of *Iman* (Faith) in practical life with sincere devotion and fervour.

The other important point is that the significance of the articles of Faith is because of the fact that they prepare a man for '*Amal-i-Saleh* (pious acts and deeds) by arousing in him the sense of responsibility to lead a good and pious life in accordance with the Will and Commands of Allah.

It is a plain fact that a tree is known by the fruit it bears, in the same way the tree of *Iman* is recognised by the fruit it bears. Then whosoever proclaims *Iman*, but his actions know no change and his behaviour is contrary to his belief which he professes, we must understand that *Iman* has not taken its roots in the depth of his heart. This is the reason why the

Holy Qur'an considers every pious and good deed as the special and prominent quality of a *Mu'min*. On every important occasion it addresses the Muslims as: O ye who believe! It is, therefore, obvious that only those whose hearts are rich with the wealth of *Iman* can act upon these commands. On many occasions it has been said in the Holy Qur'an: if you are believers.

It is quite evident that this way of addressing has been adopted for the believers only who deserve to be addressed like this.

Those who believe are stauncher in their love for Allah.

(2:165)

It is clear that love for Allah is the greatest sign of *Iman* (Faith).

It has been said in another Surah of the Holy Qur'an:

The saying of (all true) believers when they appeal unto Allah and His Messenger to judge between them is only that they say: We hear and we obey. And such are the successful.

(24: 51)

One of the important effects of *Iman* is that it makes a person obedient to Allah and His Messenger and teaches him to submit to Allah's Will and Commands and follow the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). It has been said in another verse:

It is obvious that mutual love and affection among the Muslims is also a sign of *Iman*. In one of the verses of the Holy Qur'an it has been said:

In Allah do believers put their trust.

(3: 122)

The trust in Allah and reliance on Him are the excellent virtues of a Muslim. In the *Surah Mu'min* of the Holy Qur'an the virtues of the believers have been explained as under:

Successful indeed are the believers Who are humble in their prayers, and who shun vain conversation, and who are payers of the poor-due; and who guard their modesty.... And who watch their trusts and their covenants and who pay heed to their prayers. These are the heirs Who will inherit Paradise.

There they will abide.

(23: 1-11)

It has been said that the excellent virtues of a *Mu'min* (sincere believer) are: Humility in prayer, shunning futile talk, payment of *Zakat* (poor-due) and charity, guarding modesty and chastity; keeping of covenants, observance of prayers at the appointed times. There is a notable point in the above verses that mention of prayer being the distinctive mark and virtue of a *Mu'min* has been made both in the beginning and the end of the above verses. The prayer is, therefore, the foremost sign of *Iman* and greatest stress has been laid on this action.

It is narrated on the authority of Abu Huraira that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: Iman has seventy branches, or over sixty branches, the most excellent of which is the declaration that there is no god but Allah and the humblest of which is the removal of what is injurious, from path.

It is narrated on the authority of Anas b. Malik that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed:

None amongst you believes (truly) till one likes for his brother or for his neighbour that which he likes for himself.

Abu Sa'id al-Khudri reported: I heard Allah's Messenger as saying: He who amongst you should see something abominable should modify it with the help of his hand; and if he has not strength enough to do it, then he should do it with his tongue, and if he has not strength enough to do it, (even) then he should (abhor it) from his heart, and that the least of faith.

Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: You shall not enter Paradise so long as you do not affirm belief (in all these things which are the articles of faith) and you will not believe as long as you do not love one another: Should I not direct you to a thing which if you do, will foster love among you: i.e. give currency to (the practice of paying salutation to one another by saying) *as-salamu 'Alaikum*. ■

(*Sirat-un-Nabi*, page 212-214)

Whoever committed sins by day and night should beseech forgiveness from Allah

Allah, the Exalted, has said: "O My slaves! I have made oppression unlawful upon Me and have made it unlawful for you, so do not oppress one another. O My slaves! All of you are astray, except whom I have guided (to the straight path). So seek guidance from Me, I will guide you. O My slaves! All of you are hungry except whom I have fed, so seek food from Me, I will feed you. O My slaves! All of you are naked, except whom I have clothed so seek clothing from me, I will clothe you. O My slaves! Verily you commit errors day and night, and forgive all sins, so seek forgiveness from Me, I will forgive you. O My slaves! You will not be able to harm Me and succeed in such a purpose. O My slaves! Even if the first and last of you, men, and jinn, were as pious as the one with the most pious heart amongst you, that would not cause any increase in my kingdom.

O My slaves! Even if the first and last of you, men and jinn were as wicked as the one with the most wicked heart amongst you, that would not cause any decrease in My Kingdom.

O My slaves! Even if the first and last of you, men and jinn, were to stand in one plain and ask of Me, and I were to give every one what he asked that would not decrease what I possess even to the extent of the water which a needle, when dipped into sea, can take out from it.

O My slaves! They are only your deeds which I put to your account and then pay you in full for them, so he who finds (therein) good, should praise Allah, and he who finds otherwise should undoubtedly blame no one but himself, alone." (Muslim 2/319) ■

Ali Muttaqi and His North African Colleagues

-Scott Kugle*

This article will present an inter-regional network of Sufis in the fifteenth century CE, a network of "Usuli Sufis" who cultivated a distinctive kind of Sufism. Usuli Sufis sought to fuse juridical rectitude with sainthood in hopes of reforming Sufism from within. Originally developed in North Africa and spread to the Hijaz, some Sufis from South Asia elaborated its ideas. The most important of them was 'Ali Muttaqi from India (1480-1568 CE). He was Sufi and hadith scholar from India who took allegiance to Zarruq's ideology and formal initiatic lineage. He explored the various paradigms of saintly authority but settled on an "Usuli Sufi" pattern. In the end, he estranged himself from his colleagues ritually, ideologically and even geographically as he entered voluntary exile from Gujarat. In Mecca, he encountered the reformist sainthood developed by Ahmad Zarruq from Fes, Morocco (1442-1493 CE), the best exemplar of Usuli Sufis. In his own Arabic and Persian writings, 'Ali Muttaqi and his followers spread Zarruq's ideas and ideals in South Asia.

Usuli Sufis in South Asia

'Ali Muttaqi was born in 1480 CE in Burhanpur That city is now

* *(Department of Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies, Emory University, USA)*

considered part of Madhya Pradesh, but in the 15th century the capital of Khandesh with important links to Gujarat and the Deccan. It harbored a long tradition of Sufi activity, yet 'Ali Muttaqi was not satisfied with its local flourishing forms. In the course of his spiritual journey, he explored the various paradigms of saintly authority to be found in his time, and rejected one after the other. In the end, he would estrange himself from his colleagues ritually, ideologically and even geographically as he entered voluntary exile from Gujarat. He would end up in Mecca, where he encountered the Usuli Sufi orientation developed by Ahmad Zarruq and found that it was in accord with his own aspirations and experience.

In Burhanpur, the Chishtiyya community was especially prominent. The eminent Chishti saint, Burhan al-Din Gharib, had lent his name to the city itself. As the patron saint of the city (and also of the dynasty that ruled as the fruit of his blessings), Burhan al-Din set a strong precedent for Burhanpur's tradition of sainthood. He secured renown through his love of sama sessions of poetry, rhythm and music, which could lead those in attendance into states of ecstasy. These behaviors were signs of the subject's experience of self-surrender, or even selflessness.

Even among Chishti communities that cultivated the ritual of sama Burhan al-Din Gharib's love of musical ecstasy was extreme. He suffered far his reliance on poetry and music, and so he moved from Delhi and settled in the Deccan while his admirers lived in later generations in Burhanpur. In the eighty-five years between the founding of Burhanpur and the birth of 'Ali Muttaqi, Burhan al-Din's disciples and admirers fashioned a lively local culture that elevated public ecstasy as strongest criteria to demonstrate one's authority as a saint.

'Ali Muttaqi's father had him initiated into the Chishtiyya lineage at the age of seven or eight, at the hand of an elderly spiritual guide named Baha al-Din "Shah Bajan" (d. 911/1506). He was an example of the classic Burhanpuri saint, famed for his love of musical sessions and his original devotional poetry in early Urdu of the Deccan region (known as Gujari). 'Ali Muttaqi, however, rejected this musical style of devotion, its local character and the way that it combined elements of Hindu devotional practices, such as the singing of Bhajans or hymns. Instead of urging Sufis to be absorbed in meditation, contemplation, or musical ecstasies, 'Ali Muttaqi urged them to study religious knowledge as the highest form of worship. "One who is always engaged in good deeds is always engaged in *dhikr*, or remembering God...To chose to sit in

isolation and perform *dhikr*, that is like taking medicine to cure a specific illness. You only need it from time to time, as you feel sick...But seeking knowledge is such an important form of worship that is anyone lays it aside, they must reflect on their conscience and review their state of *taqwa*."

In his youth, Ali Muttaqi served in the court at Mandu but soon renounced worldly ambition. In his extreme asceticism and interest in reviving the sharia, Ali Muttaqi was influenced by the Mahdawi movement of Sayyid Muhammad Jawnpuri (d. 910/1504-5). Sectarian violence in Gujarat led him eventually to oppose the Mahdawis. He travelled to Multan seeking a Sufi master who harmonized with his reformist sense of piety and asceticism, and he became the only known disciple of the ascetic Sufi Husam al-Din b. Muhammad and learned from him to limit Sufism to the Prophet's sunna. In his first written work, *Tabyin al turuq ila allahi taalla* (Exposition of the Ways towards God), Ali Muttaqi argued that all paths of Sufism require the solid foundation of legal rectitude, observance of shari'a, and knowledge of hadith in affirmation of Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d. 505/1111). "Dissatisfied with the outward formalities of inherited saintly authority and the way masters trained disciples among his contemporary Sufi colleagues, [Ali Muttaqi] to Multan to search for the true principles of the path of spiritual

development." Ali Muttaqi's travels were an experiment in absolute trust in God (tawakkul) and death of self-will (al-mawt al-ikhtiyari) that inspired written works on Sufism without a guide, like *Hidayat rabbi inda faqad al-murabbi* (My Lord's guidance if one has no master for training).

'Ali Muttaqi became one of the greatest hadith scholars in South Asia, and is known until today as the author of *Kanz al- 'Ummal*, a collection of hadith arranged by juridical topic. Like Zarruq insisting that Sufis must first study jurisprudence, 'Ali Muttaqi insisted that Sufis must first study hadith, scripture, and law. Only then would they qualify to become Sufi disciples, and perhaps eventually be recognized as saints. He became critical of Sufis around him who did not follow this ideology, especially other popularly acclaimed saints who enjoyed positions of power. In writing, he described his state of singular despair at the spiritual alienation he felt for all surrounding him in Gujarat. "Only the impostors and hypocrites have prospered, those who are busy with envy, lies and worldly ambitions... so how can it be legal to take them as spiritual guides and Sufi masters?" This elegy to his times served as an introduction to his advice to all who desire to sincerely pursue sainthood. For them, he defined intimacy with God (*qurb*) and then defined the saint (*wali*) as one whom the experience of closeness and intimacy

with God has indelibly touched. He denounced Sufi masters who relied on music or philosophy and led a persecution of the Shattari Sufi Muhammad Ghawth Gwaliyari (d. 970/1562-3).

Even as he grew critical of other saintly styles in South Asia, 'Ali Muttaqi lived through political turmoil which pushed him into exile. 'Ali Muttaqi became an advisor to the Sultan of Gujarat, Bahadur Shah Zafar, just when the kingdom was threatened by Mughal dynasty that was coming to power in Delhi and Agra. 'Ali Muttaqi was critical of the sultan's military over-ambition that sparked an open rivalry with the Mughal emperor Humayun, who organized a pre-emptive invasion of Gujarat in 1534 CE. While the Gujarati army retreated in disarray and the Mughals poised to absorb Gujarat as a province, 'Ali Muttaqi chose a life of exile. He fled to Mecca and continued to study hadith and law with teachers were also Sufi masters, who combined scholarship with saintliness in the style of Usuli Sufis. 'Ali Muttaqi took initiation from them into a new Sufi lineage that fostered reformist teachings.

Prominent in the lineage adopted by 'Ali Muttaqi is Ahmad Zarruq. As 'Ali Muttaqi joined the Sufi circle around Abu al-Hasan al-Bakri, he must have read their favored devotional text, *al-Hikam* and its commentaries, including those by Zarruq. He argued that the pursuit of religious knowledge

is the foundation for one's being a Sufi, and even more so for being a saint. He harshly criticized any Sufi who thinks that study and learning are distractions from true spiritual work, presenting this analogy drawn in the simple lines of caricature. "Those who claim to love Allah and the Prophet but refuse to pursue knowledge are like a person afflicted with passionate love for a sweetheart such that he is helpless without his lover. Imagine that this man is informed that his sweetheart is behind a high wall, and that the only way to reach his love is to climb it. Upon hearing this news, he says 'This wall is a veil, an obstacle between my lover and me, so I'll turn my back on it and reject it!' Hearing this logic, all the people around him will tell him that he is an idiot. He should clearly work to climb the wall to reach his lover, rather than turn his back on the wall altogether. Those who desist from acquiring religious knowledge are all idiots like this man."

This conscious effort to blur the popular distinction between Sufi worship and scholarly effort became a pillar of his teachings. This was the beginning of 'Ali Muttaqi's Intense engagement with the ideas, writings, and persona of the Moroccan Zarruq who had died half a century before,

Zarruq as an Usuli Sufi

Ahmad Zarruq was born in 1442 CE grew up in Fes. He studied the

Qur'an, hadith and the principles of jurisprudence (*usul al-fiqh*) at the madrasa of al-Qarawiyyin, where he also came into contact with Sufism of a distinct kind. By Zarruq's time, the madrasa was a juridical training ground and a passport for government service, but Sufi devotions and legal studies thrived side by side, practiced and taught by the very same authorities whom we can call "juridical Sufis." They were jurists who sought to unite Sufis and jurists together into one community. They did this by drawing juridical students into Sufi patterns of spiritual cultivation.

Recent scholarship on Islamic saints has taken into account the important role of Sufis who are also jurists or hadith scholars. Vincent Cornell has documented the important interactions between these two fields; not only were there many prominent Sufis who were also jurists, but many jurists contributed to the preservation of saintly narratives and reputations through the composition of hagiographies. In this context, they moved toward defining a type of saint particular to their own community : a saint who not only had jurists as devotees and allies, but a saint who was himself a jurist. This mode of sainthood stood out in particular relief to Zarruq.

Zarruq first learned about Sufism through the text, *Kitab al-Tarwih fi Isqat al-Tadbir*, by Shaykh Ibn 'Ata' Allah al-

Iskandari. This text presents a simple argument in a penetrating way: to really believe in the unique singularity of Allah, one must not rely on one's own ego, ambition, or planning. However, it is a deceptively simple text; under its appeal to practical reason and juridical norms, it opens a bottomless well of meditation possibilities. For if one abandons self-concern, one in effect abandons the ego as well, and meditates on the possibilities as well as the limits of selflessness and sainthood. This was Zarruq's introduction that led him to the central text to Ibn 'Ata' Allah's spiritual method, *al-Hikam*. This intellectual style of Sufi devotion cultivated in the Shadhiliyya Order was transmitted through Ibn 'Ata' Allah's texts, and Zarruq called it "the Usuli's way of being a Sufi." Juridical Sufis were active members of the society and were developing a particular paradigm of sainthood that was suited to their community. This was the paradigm of the juridical saint, to whom they gave the title *al-Wali al-Jami'*, "The Saint who Joins" spiritual illumination to juridical rectitude (*al-Jami' bayn al-Shari'a wa'l-Tariqa*).

Ahmad Zarruq held a compound allegiance to three lineages: the Qadiri, the Madyani, and the Shadhili. Zarruq did not distinguish between these three lineages and appears to have taken initiation into all three at once from a single master. Zarruq quotes his Sufi master as saying that "Spiritual training

as currently understood is no longer valid. In this time, there only remains spiritual assistance through the Shaykh's lofty aspiration and inner *state* (*al-ifada bi-himma wa hal*). Therefore, you are obliged to follow the book [the Qur'an] and the example [of the Prophet's guidance], without adding any practices or subtracting any." Following his teacher, Zarruq proposed that disciples should simply study the scriptural sources that remained as the legacy of the Prophet Muhammad. In studying, disciples would learn to act within the limits of the law, as derived from these scriptural sources. By acting within the law, they will enact goodness within society without overt reliance on Sufi institutions. However, they must pursue this study, legal understanding, and social action in the company of a saintly guide who will direct their actions, not through discrete rituals or through charismatic authority, but simply through the spiritual power of his attention and concentration.

Zarruq's initiation into a Sufi community that fused three lineages into one provided him with a tool for reform. Within this innovative context, Zarruq put forward some startling suggestions for his disciples, suggestions that broke with many of the tenants of institutional Sufism. In this article I will present four of these suggestion with reference to his classic text, *Qawaid al-Tasawwuf*, the "Principles of Being a Sufi," in which he most clearly lays out the advantages to this "skeptical" style of reformed

discipleship.

Zarruq's first suggestion is that one should test a spiritual guide before becoming committed to him. Zarruq asserts that his role as Sufi guide is more like that of a teacher in the scholarly disciplines and it is of a spiritual master. In his view, Sufi training is a cooperative endeavor between master and disciple, since both share an equal place as subjects of the sharia and the norms of religious law. The disciple should thoroughly examine and test a potential guide before offering allegiance to him, and be on guard for any mistakes or heedlessness in regard to religious custom.

His second suggestion is that one should never abandon one's power of reason. This follows from the necessity of testing one's spiritual guide against the touchstone of the shari'a. Zarruq asserted that one should never dedicate oneself to serving a shaykh to the point of abandoning the power of one's reason. Sufi communities often taught that absolute obedience to the master's command is the key to Sufi training, so much so that a proverb circled widely that "the disciple should be in the hand's the master like a corpse in the hands of the one who washes it." Such extreme deference even to the point of passivity was, for Zarruq, an example of abandoning the necessary discrimination of reason.

Thirdly, Zarruq recommends that one should read books to learn about

being a Sufi. These included a wide variety of texts, starting with basic scholarship and jurisprudence. Many guides did not counsel reliance on books at all or were openly dismissive of book-learning. However, Zarruq admitted that books might, in some cases, even replace a living guide especially since he felt that authentic saints were so rare in his era. One could rely on books for guidance, especially if one had "a sincere companion" with whom to read and share observations.

Finally, Zarruq made a most radical recommendation. He said that spiritual training without an absolute master is possible, if one can achieve "death before death" More specifically, "death before death" was the principle experience upon which any Sufi practice aimed. This death to self-will could be achieved on one's own, or with a trusted companion. One did not need the structure of an absolute spiritual master in order to experience "dying to yourself before your actual death.

In his writings, Zarruq makes these recommendations to Sufi disciples. He did this to break the grip of authority that, in his critical view, Sufi masters exerted over their disciples. Charismatic and authoritarian saints, in his view, did not live up to his ideal of the Jurist Saint as advocated by Usuli Sufi communities. Zarruq made a claim that startled his Sufi colleagues in its wide-ranging ramifications: a person must be trained as a jurist first, and only

then seek spiritual growth as a Sufi. He asserted that anyone who does not undergo the intellectual and moral rigors of legal training is unqualified for Sufi practices, especially for the higher levels of spiritual experience through which one lays claim to moments of selflessness, or further, to persisting sainthood. Those who fail to do so are not just unqualified for what they claim for themselves, they are actually dangerous: first to their own spiritual state and second to those who follow them. Zarruq reduces this complex argument down to the pithy recommendation 'Be a jurist first then a Sufi; don't be a Sufi first then a jurist.'

With such recommendations, Zarruq argues that juridical reasoning has a central role to play in critically evaluating any and all who lay claim to the status of saint. Further than simply justifying his own critiques, Zarruq argues that saint and jurist are complementary roles. In Zarruq imagination, the only way to insure that the saint and jurist should be complementary roles is to insist that they be one and the same person, in the figure of the Jurist Saint.

'Ali Muttaqi as an Usuli Sufi and Hadith Scholar

'Ali Muttaqi's engagement with his forerunner Ahmad Zarruq is deep. He took initiation into the Sufi order propagated by Zarruq in Mecca. Through it, he joined the community of Sufi oriented hadith scholars active in

Mecca and Medina. While Zarruq was an Usuli Sufi who trained as jurist, Ali Muttaqi was an Usuli Sufi who trained as a hadith specialist. It did not matter whether the scholarly discipline was Islamic law or hadith studies, both tempered their attachment to Sufism with training in a scholarly discipline which gave them an alternative authority in Islam.

In Mecca Ali Muttaqi joined the hadith circles of Abu I-Hasan 'al-Bakri (d, 952/1546) and his son Muhammad Abul-Makarim al-Bakri (d, 994/1586), who combined sharia studies with Sufism. They introduced him to the famous hadith scholar, Ibn Hajar al-Haythami (d, 974/1566-7), who considered the younger Muttaqi his equal and accepted from him initiation into sufism, Ali Muttaqi's lifelong project was to make hadith reports more accessible to scholars and jurists. He edited al-Suyuti's *Jami al-jawami* and *Jami al-saghir* combining the reports and reorganising them by content (matn) under legal topics. Although Ali Muttaqi is well known today as a hadith scholar, In his own time he was equally revered as a Sufi master.

Ali Muttaqi revealed his engagement with Zarruq through his written works as well as the stories told about him, His personality is memorialized in the collection of saintly biographies by 'Abd al-Haq Muhaadith from Delhi, entitled *Zad al-Muttaqin fi Suluk Tariq al Yaqin*

(Provision of the Pious for travelling the Path of Certain knowledge) Ali Muttaqi wrote several commentaries on Zarruq's works. *Dabita li-Usul al-Tariqa*, aims to establish exactly the meaning of Zarruq's Principle's of the path. *Sharh Qawa'id at-Tariqa* is 'Ali Muttaqi's commentary on Zarruq's Principles of Being a Sufi,' He composed a commentary on the fifteenth commentary by Ahmad Zarruq on the wisdom savings of Ibn 'Ata Allah. Most fascinating is Ali Muttaqi's commentary on a short epistle of Ahmad Zarruq on the subject of the death of self-will (*al-mawt al-ikhtiyari*), Zarruq's original epistle exists only through 'Ali Muttaqi's commentary, and has not received wide circulation among adherents to the Shadhilyya in North Africa. 'Ali Muttaqi composed the commentary, entitled *Hadha hidayat Rabbi 'indo Faqd al-Murabbi* (My Lord's Guidance in a Spiritual Guide's Absence) in 1567 CE, three-quarters of a century after Zarruq's death, based upon Zarruq's *Suluk al-Tariq idha fuqida al-Rafiq* (Traveling the Path When You have No Companion).

In addition to these direct commentaries on 'Zarruq's writings, 'Ali Muttaqi edited, commented upon and translated into Persian many of the classic texts that Zarruq advised for his followers in the path of Usuli Sufism. He arranged into topical subjects the wisdom sayings of Ibn 'Ata' Allah in his *Tabwib Sharh al-Hikam*. He further

translated into Persian parts of Ibn 'Ata' Allah's *Kitab al-Tanwir* that formed Zarruq's introduction in his youth to the way of Usuli Sufism, He entitled this Persian translation *al-Tawassul fi'l-Yaqin wa'l-Tawakkul* (Means to Arrive at True Faith and Reliance upon Allah Alone). He hoped that it would popularize Ibn 'Ata' Allah among Sufis in South Asia who might not have the fortune of knowing Arabic or traveling to Mecca to make the astounding personal connection to Zarruq as he did.

In conclusion, what is the significance of this remarkable mirroring of texts and personalities between Ahmad Zarruq from Morocco and 'Ali Muttaqi from India? It reveals a sub-stream of Usuli Sufism within the wider circles of jurists and hadith scholars in idealizing a figure of juridical saint, they took an elitist and reformist posture, in regard to other varieties of Sufi practice. Initiations in this Usuli style of sufism travelled widely, from North Africa to Egypt, from Egypt to the Hijaz and Yemen, and from there to Gujarat and wider South Asia. The spread of Usuli Sufism, to Ali Muttaqi and then through him to others, is integrally related to its reformist stance and ideological sharpness, for its exponents were often in rebellion against local compromises in Sufi practice. ■

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The System of Morality in Islam

-Muhammad Hamidullah

MEN may be divided into three principal categories:

- (1) Those who are good by nature, and incorruptible in the face of temptations, whose very instinct suggests to them whatever is good and charitable.
- (2) Those who are just the contrary and are incorrigible.
- (3) Those who belong to the intermediary group, and behave suitably if they are constrained thereto by supervision or sanction, but who would otherwise lapse into a state of carelessness or do injustice to others.

This last category comprises the immense majority of the human race, the members of the other two extreme categories comprising but a few individuals. The first kind (like human-angels) does not require any direction or control; but it is the second kind (like human-devils) which must be controlled, and prevented from doing evil. Great attention has to be devoted to the third kind (human-men).

The members of this third category resemble in certain respects the beasts - they are calm and content with what they possess, so long as they perceive nothing better in the possession of others, or do not suspect some mischief on the part of others. This

evil propensity in the face of temptation has been, at all times, the object of intense preoccupation on the part of human society. Thus the father controls his children. The head of the family, of the tribe, of the city-state, or of any other group of men tries to force those who are placed under his authority to be content with what they possess, and not to usurp that which others have obtained in an honest and legitimate way. Perhaps the very aim of human society is none other than controlling temptations and remedying damage which has already been done. All men, even members of the same nation, are not developed alike. A noble spirit is willing to sacrifice and do works of charity. An intelligent spirit sees very far, and consequently any prospect that would compromise attaining some immediate gain, prevents it from doing evil, even if it should not be persuaded to sacrifice on its own initiative. As to the ordinary spirit, not only does it not willingly consent to sacrifice, but it will even permit itself to thrive at the expense of others, unless there be a fear of violent and immediate reaction on the part of its victim, or society, or any other superior power. The obtuse spirit is not even deterred by this fear, and so it persists until the end with its criminal objectives, struggling against all opposition, until society imposes a state

where it can no longer exert itself recklessly, such as a punishment by death or imprisonment.

All laws, all religions and all philosophies try to persuade the masses, or the intermediary category, [3] to behave in a suitable manner and even to offer voluntary sacrifices in order to help the poor, the destitute and those who have needs and still cannot satisfy them, through no fault of their own.

Characteristic Traits of Islam

Islam is an all-embracing mode of life. Not only does it prescribe beliefs but also the rules of social behaviour. Moreover, it occupies itself with the nicer application and functioning of its laws. We know that Islam does not believe in the life of this world as an end in itself, or in a body without a soul. On the contrary, it teaches belief in the Hereafter. Its motto, as enunciated by Qur'an, is "The best in this world as well as the best in the Hereafter." It is thus that not only does it praise what is good and condemn evil, but it also provides rewards and sanctions, both spiritual and material. As far as its injunctions and prohibitions are concerned, Islam inculcates within the spirit a fear of God and the last judgement after the Resurrection, and the punishment of Hellfire. Not content with this, it takes all possible precautions in the realm of material sanctions, in order to deter man from permitting himself acts of injustice and violation of the rights of others. It is thus that the believer prays and fasts even when he is not coerced

to do so and he even pays a tax when the government ignores fixing the amount or finds itself unable to secure payments by force.

The Basis of Morality

It often happens that motives or circumstances can bring about a profound change in the significance of an act which may outwardly seem to resemble one another. For instance, the death occasioned at the hands of a brigand, of a hunter mistaking his victim for game, of a fool, or a minor, in self-defence, by a headsman executing the capital punishment ordered by a tribunal, a soldier defending his country against an aggressive invasion, etc. - in all these' cases, the killing is sometimes punished more or less severely, sometimes pardoned, sometimes considered a normal duty which entails neither praise nor condemnation, and' sometimes obtains high praise and honour. Almost all human life is composed of acts whose good and evil nature are relative. This is why the Prophet Muhammad has often declared: "Acts will be (judged) only according to intention."

Islam is based on the belief that Divine revelation was sent to men through prophets as intermediaries. Its law and morality, like its faith, are therefore based on Divine commandments. It is possible that in the majority of cases, human reason should also arrive at the same conclusion. But essentially it is the Divine aspect which

has the decisive significance in Islam and not the reasoning of a philosopher, a jurist or a moralist, the more so because the reasoning of different individuals may differ and lead to completely opposite conclusions. Sometimes the motive of discipline is found underlying an obligation and practice which is apparently superfluous.

First of all, one may divide human actions into good and evil (represented by orders and prohibitions). Acts from which one must abstain are also divided into two inclusive categories: (i) Those against which there is temporal sanction or material punishment in addition to condemnation on the day of the Final Judgement, and (ii) those which are condemned by Islam without providing a sanction other than that of the Hereafter.

In a saying attributed to the Prophet (and reported by Qadi 'Iyad, in his *Shifa*, ch. 2) we see the conception of life envisaged by Islam, " 'Ali asked the Prophet one day about the principles governing his general behaviour, and he replied, "knowledge is my capital, reason is the basis of my religion, love is my foundation, desire is my mount for riding, remembrance of God is my comrade, confidence is my treasure, anxiety is my companion, science is my arm, patience is my mantle, contentment is my booty, modesty is my pride, renunciation of pleasure is my profession, certitude is my food, truth is

my intercessor, obedience is my sufficiency, struggle is my habitude and the delight of my heart is in the service of worship. ""

On another occasion, the Prophet Muhammad said, "The sum-total of wisdom is the fear of God." Islamic morality begins with the renunciation of all adoration outside God, be it adoration of the self (egoism), or adoration of our own handicrafts (idols, superstitions) etc. and the renunciation of all that degrades humanity (atheism, injustice, etc.).

Abolishing the ineluctable inequalities (based on race, colour of skin, language, place of birth) Islam has proclaimed (and realized more than any other system) the superiority of the individual based solely on morality, which is a thing that is accessible and open to everybody -without exception. This is what the Qur'an (49: 13) has said: "O mankind, lo! We have created you of a male and a female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another; verily the noblest of you in the sight of God is the one who is the most pious; lo! God is Knower, Aware."

In a beautiful passage (17: 23-9), the Qur'an gives twelve commandments to the Muslim community, and says:

- (i) Thy Lord hath decreed, that ye worship none save Him.
- (ii) And that (ye show) kindness to parents. If one of them or both of

- them were to attain old age with thee, say not 'Fie' unto them nor repulse them, but speak unto them a gracious word. And lower unto them the wing of tenderness through mercy, and say: My Lord! Have mercy on them both, as they did care for me when I was little. Your Lord is best aware of what is in your minds. If ye are righteous, then lo! He is ever Forgiving unto those who turn (unto Him) in repentance.
- (iii) Give the kinsman his due, and the poor, and the wayfarer, and squander not (thy wealth) in wantonness. Lo! the squanderers are ever brothers of the devils, and the Devil was an ingrate to his Lord. But if thou hast to turn away from them, waiting mercy from thy Lord, for which thou hopest, then speak unto them a gentle word.
- (iv) And let not thy hand be chained to thy neck nor open it with a complete opening, lest thou sit down rebuked, denuded. Lo! thy Lord enlargeth the provision for whom He will, and straineth (it from whom He will). Lo! He is ever Knower, Seer of His slaves.
- (v) Slay not your children, fearing a fall to penury; we shall provide for them and for you. Lo! the slaying of them is a great sin.
- (vi) And come not near unto fornication. Lo! it is an abomination and an evil way.
- (vii) And slay not the life which God hath forbidden save with right. Whoso is slain wrongfully, we have given power unto his rightful representative, but let him not commit excess in slaying. Lo! he will be helped.
- (viii) Come not near the property of the orphan save with that which is better till he come to strength;
- (ix) And keep the covenant. Lo! of the covenant it will be asked.
- (x) Fill the measure when ye measure, and weigh with a right balance; this is meet, and best refuge.
- (xi) Follow not that whereof thou hast no knowledge. Lo! the hearing and the sight and the heart - of each of these it will be asked.
- (xii) And walk not in the earth exultant. Lo! thou canst not rend the earth, nor canst thou stretch to the height of the hills. The evil of all that is hateful in the sight of thy Lord. This is part of the wisdom wherewith thy Lord hath inspired thee (O Muhammad). And set not up with God any other god, lest thou be cast into hell, reprov'd, abandoned.
- These commandments, comparable to and more comprehensive than those given to Moses, were revealed to the Prophet during the Mi 'raj.
- It would be too lengthy to cite here all the Quranic exhortations. However, we may quote a passage

(4:36-8), in which it speaks of the social behaviour of the average man:

“And serve God; ascribe nothing as partner unto Him: (show) kindness unto parents, and unto near kindred, and orphans, and the needy, and unto the neighbour who is of kin (unto you) and the neighbour who is not of kin, and the fellow-traveller and the wayfarer, and (the slaves) whom your right hands possess; lo! God loveth not such as are proud and boastful, who hoard their wealth and enjoin avarice on others, and hide that which God hath bestowed upon them of His bounty; for disbelievers. We prepare a shameful doom. And (also) for those who spend their wealth in order to be seen of men, and believe not in God nor the Last Day; whoso taketh Satan for a comrade, a bad comrade hath he.”

In another passage (49: 10-12), the Quran describes the characteristics of Muslim society:

“The believers are naught else than brethren; therefore make peace between your brethren and observe *your duty to God*, that haply ye may obtain mercy. O ye who believe! Let not a folk deride a folk who may be better than they are, nor let women (deride) women who may be better than they are; neither defame one another, nor insult one another by nicknames. Bad is the name of lewdness after embracing the faith. And whoso turneth not in repentance, such are evil-doers. O ye who believe! Shun much suspicion. For

lo! some suspicion is a crime. And spy not, neither backbite one another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother (by backbiting)? Ye abhor that (so abhor the other) and keep your duty to God. Lo! God is Relenting, Merciful”

The Fault and its Expiation

Nobody could object to good counsel, offered in the above mentioned verses, but man has his weaknesses. He is composed jointly of the elements of good and evil. By his innate defects, he gets angry; he is subject to temptation, and is driven to do harm to those who are weaker and have no means of defending or avenging themselves. Similarly, his noble sentiments make him repent afterwards; and in proportion to the force of his repentance, he tries more or less to rectify the harm he had done.

Islam divides faults into two broad categories . . . those which are committed against the rights of God (unbelief, neglect of worship, etc.), and those against the rights of men. Moreover, God does not pardon the harm done by a man to his fellow-being - it is the victim who alone can pardon. If one does harm to another creature, be it man, animal or any other, one commits in fact a double crime - a crime against one's immediate victim, and also a crime against God - since the criminal conduct in question constitutes a violation of the Divine prescriptions. Thus when there is an injustice or crime

against another creature, one has not only to try to repair the damage, by restoring to the victim, of one's violation, the right which had been taken away from him, but he also has to beg pardon from God. In a famous saying of his, the Prophet Muhammad gave a warning, that on Doomsday, a certain person would be thrown in Hell because he had tied up a cat with a rope giving it neither to eat nor to drink, nor letting it go and seek food, thus causing the death of the poor animal in inanition [from lack of nourishment]. In another Hadith, the Prophet spoke of Divine punishment to those men who did not fulfil their duty against even the animals, by not giving them sufficient food, or loading them beyond their strength, etc. The Prophet prohibited even the hewing down of trees without necessity. Men should profit by what God has created, yet in an equitable and reasonable measure, avoid all extravagance and waste.

When one causes damage to another and wishes to mend it, there are several ways he could adopt. Sometimes by merely asking pardon everyth ing is set rig ht. At other times it may be necessary to restore the rights which were taken away, or replace them if the original rights could not be restored, and so on.

To show clemency to others and pardon them is a noble quality and upon this Islam has often insisted. In eulogizing it, the Qur'an (3:133-4) says: "And vie one with another for forgiveness from your Lord and for a

Paradise as wide as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the pious, who spend (as charity) in ease and in adversity, who control their wrath and are forgiving towards mankind. And God loveth the doers of good."

God is incomparably more forgiving and merciful than the most merciful of men. Among the names with which Islam calls God, there is Rahman (Most Merciful), Tauwab (Most Pardoning) 'Afu (one who effaces faults), Ghaffar (Most Forgiving), etc. Those who commit a sin against God, and then repent find God full of indulgence. Two verses of the Qur'an may show the Islamic notion of the bounty of God:

- (a) "Verily God pardoneth not that partners should be ascribed unto Him, while He pardoneth all else to whom He will. (4:116)
- (b) "... O My slaves who have been prodigal to your own hurt! Despair not of the mercy of God. Verily God forgiveth all sins; verily He is the Forgiving, the Merciful. (39:53).

If one gives up disbelief and turns to God to beg pardon from Him, one can always hope for His clemency. Man is weak, and often breaks his resolutions, but true repentance can always restore the grace of God. There is no formality, no buying of Divine pardon through the mediation of other men, but one must turn directly to God and present to Him one's sincere regrets in a tete-a-tete conversation

(munajat); for He is the knower of all and nothing can be concealed from Him. "The Love of God for His creatures is a hundred and more times greater than that of a mother for her child," as has once been remarked by the Prophet, for the Prophet Muhammad has said: "Mercy has been divided by God into one hundred portions, of which He has retained Himself 99 and distributed the one portion among all the beings living on the earth; the mutual mercy found among the creatures comes from the same." In a saintly saying (hadith qudsi) the Prophet reports God as saying: "Whoever tries to approach Me by a span, I approach him by a cubit, whoever comes towards Me walking, I run to meet him". The Qur'an (11:114) announces no doubt: "Verily good deeds carry away evil deeds." Alms and charities are no doubt recommended, yet they do not buy automatically the Divine pardon for a given sin; each has an independent existence, and God's freedom is absolute.

The Injunctions

The Qur'an often employs two characteristic terms to designate good and evil. Thus it refers to ma'ruf (the good known' to everybody and recognized as such), and munkar (the evil denounced by everybody and recognized as such). In other words, the Qur'an has confidence in human nature, in the common sense of man, "There will never be unanimity in favour of evil, even if some people permit it to themselves" is the purport of a well-known saying of

the Prophet. The Qur'an (3: 110) calls the faithful "the best community" and explains that this is so because they "enjoin good (ma'ruf) and forbid evil (munkar) and believe in the One God." Another passage (103: 1-3) is still more emphatic, "By the Time! Lo! Man is in a state of loss, save those who believe and do good works, and exhort one another to truth (or right) and exhort one another to endurance (or constancy)."

But there are also injunctions against particular evils. As has already been remarked, there are those which accompany a sanction and a public punishment, and those regarding which there is only a warning of punishment in the Hereafter, and, except in cases of extraordinary gravity, public authorities do not take cognizance of them.

In his celebrated speech, on the occasion of the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Prophet declared the inviolability of the rights of a man in all the three categories of person, property and honour. In fact the Muslim penal law takes it into account, declaring that the principal crimes are the following: murder, damage to body, fornication and adultery (which are all crimes against the person), theft and highway robbery (which are crimes against property), and calumny' against chastity, and consumption of alcoholic drinks (constituting crimes against honour). All these are punished.

As for the damages against a person, the punishment is in principle

retaliation - life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. But there is first of all the great principle of motive and intention. Has one caused damage voluntarily or only by accident? Again, there is the choice for the victim (or the heirs of his rights) to agree to a 'monetary reparation, or even pardon completely. If the judicial proof establishes that the crime was intentional, then the public authorities have no right to pardon, for the matter rests with the sufferer.

Entirely different is the case of fornication and adultery. For the consent of the parties does not attenuate its gravity. The Prophet had so greatly succeeded in developing justice and self-criticism among his companions that they preferred the severest public punishment in this world to the one in the Hereafter. So they presented themselves voluntarily before the Prophet, and confessed their sins and submitted themselves cheerfully to the legal sanctions. Outside confession, it is always very difficult to prove illicit sexual relations, if the parties were willing. In order to diminish temptation, Islam has taken other precautions as well: prohibition of promiscuity; of easy and unsupervised meetings between the young of opposite sexes if they are not near relatives; and even the recommendation of the veil to cover the face of a woman if she goes out in the street or meets strangers. Far from attracting the gaze of the amorous strangers by her coquetry, it is the duty of a Muslim woman to reserve her

beauty and her attraction only for her husband. The veil has other advantages also for the woman. One knows the great difference between the exterior of those women who work in the fields, for instance, and of those who are not exposed to the sun. One knows also the difference between the outer and inner feathers of a bird. In fact the veil preserves for a longer time the charm and freshness of the skin. One can see that plainly on comparing the skin of the face or hands with that of other parts of the body which are habitually covered. The veil does not at all signify seclusion, but it does diminish the temptation that could attract strangers. It is abusing the credulity of the simpleton to make-believe that covering the face with a veil generates tuberculosis. This disease is as prevalent among people where women-folk never use the veil, not only in Black Africa, but even in the most highly developed societies from Finland to Italy, as the latest research has brought to light. In passing, it may be mentioned that there is no legal penalty for the neglect of this Quranic recommendation.

We are not required to enter into the details of the different aspects of the injunctions against theft and highway robbery, or other crimes against property.

It is a characteristic of Islam to have imposed a penalty on the defamation of women in the matter of their chastity. When one thinks of the numerous occasions when one indulges

in conjecture against neighbours or other women and the ease with which one gives liberty to one's tongue, in the company of friends, one will admit that this Islamic injunction is well founded in the interests of society. If someone intends to accuse a woman, one should produce judicial proofs; otherwise, conjecture which touches the honour of a woman will be punished with severe sanctions.

The prohibition of alcoholic beverages is one of the most well-known traits of Islam. It was by gradual steps that the Qur'an had enforced it: "They question thee about alcoholic drink and games of chance; say: In both there is great sin and certain profits for men, yet the sin of them is greater than their usefulness" (2:219). Again (4:43): "O ye who believe! Draw not near unto service of worship when ye are drunk, till ye know that which ye utter. . ." And finally (5:93-94): "O ye who believe! Verily wine and games of chance, and idols, and divining arrows are only infamy of Satan's handiwork; leave it aside, that haply ye may prosper. Satan seeketh only to cast among you enmity and hatred by means of wine and games of chance, and to turn you from remembrance of God and from (His) worship. Will ye then abstain?" It will not pass unnoticed that in this last verse, the Qur'an includes alcoholic beverages and idolatry in the same category. During his life, the Prophet Muhammad administered forty stripes to those who violated the injunction. The caliph 'Umar

doubled the punishment, arguing that drunkenness led to obscene loquacity in which one calumniates [slanders] the chastity of women, for which latter crime the Qur'an (24:4) has imposed the punishment of eighty stripes. Therefore alcoholic beverages should also have the same sanction. How much enormous economic loss would be avoided, and how many homes would recover peace, if drink, so dangerous to health and morality, were given up!

Among the acts for which no definite penalty has been prescribed but which are left to the discretion of the judge, we may mention games of chance of all kinds (including lotteries, gambling on race results, etc.). Who does not know the tragedies of casinos? How many homes have not been ruined in the vain hope of easy gain -and therefore illicit gain? Lotteries, on rational scales, gradually upset the equitable distribution of the country's wealth, and prove to be the source of all economic ills. They also affect politics.

In his anxiety to cleanse society, and above all public administration, from corruption, the Prophet employed the severest terms of condemnation: "One who takes as well as one who offers bribe would both go to Hell." One day, a tax-collector submitted his accounts to the Prophet, saying: These are the public revenues, and these are gifts which people have offered me. Becoming furious, the Prophet mounted the pulpit of his mosque and spoke: "Let

these tax-collectors remain in the house of their mothers and see if gifts come to them!" Without the knowledge of her husband, one day the wife of the caliph 'Umar sent through an official envoy, proceeding to Byzantium, a present to the wife of the emperor who in her turn, sent a precious necklace. When the caliph learnt of this, he confiscated the necklace in favour of the Public Treasury, and paid his wife the value of her original present to the empress as has been recorded by Tabari.

In order to ameliorate public morality, the Prophet said one day: "Don't insult time; it is God that you insult, because the succession of nights and days comes from Him." This is an admonition that deserves to be considered by our contemporaries even today. After all what avails our malediction of the weather so many times every day, if not to prove our own stupidity?

Islam does not exact the impossible; it seeks only to bring a constant betterment of human morals into all walks of life by means available to individuals and collectivities. And the responsibility will always remain personal. So the Quran (2:286) says: "... for each soul, it is only that which it hath earned, and against it only that which it hath deserved. . ." A noble spirit does not permit itself evil on the pretext that others also indulge in the same. Instead of imitating the vices of others, one should rather set others an example of good and of integrity of character.

Some remarks may be made on social conduct in general. Regarding the rights of good neighbourliness, the Prophet Muhammad declared: "Gabriel has so often and so greatly insisted upon the rights of neighbours, that I feared that he was going to accord them the right to heritage even as to the, near relatives of a deceased." It is related that there lived a Jew in the neighbourhood of the Prophet in Madinah, and the Prophet himself set an example to show how a Muslim should treat his non-Muslim neighbours. Among other daily acts of courtesy, the Prophet used to go to the house of this Jew if he fell ill, in order to inquire about his health, and to be otherwise of help to him. As regards daily relations with others, the Prophet declared: "None of you is a believer if he does not like for his brother exactly that which he likes for his own self." Or again: "The best of men is he who does well to others." The Qur'an (59:9) has spoken of a concrete case, that of the first Muslims of Madinah, who had extended their hospitality to the Meccan refugees, and it cites them as an example of practical Islam: ". . . they prefer (the Refugees) above themselves though poverty be their (own) lot..."

To conclude; "O ye who believe! Be ye staunch in justice, witnesses for God, even though it be against yourselves or (your) parents or (your) kindred, whether (the case be) of a rich man or a poor man. . ." (Qur'an 4: 135). ■

'My Journey to Islam': A Canadian Convert's Story

- Abdullah Al-Kanadi

'The Muslim kid left a copy of the Qur'an on the shelf, either he forgot it or left it on purpose, I don't know. When I started reading it, I soon became infuriated with this book when I saw that it made more sense than the Bible,' writes ABDULLAH AL-KANADI in this concluding part of the narrative of his accepting Islam as his way of life.

I still remember to this day my first encounter with a Muslim. One of the boys brought his friend to the youth house. He was a Muslim kid whose name I forgot. What I do remember is the boy saying, "I brought my friend 'so and so,' he's a Muslim and I want to help him become a Christian." I was absolutely amazed by this 14-year-old kid, he was calm and friendly! Believe it or not, he defended himself and Islam against a dozen Christians who were hurling abuses at him and Islam!

As we sat there fruitlessly thumbing through our Bibles and getting angrier and angrier, he just sat there, quietly smiling and telling us about worshipping others besides God and how, yes, there is love in Islam. He was like a gazelle encircled by a dozen hyenas, yet the entire time, he was calm and friendly and respectful. It blew my

mind!

The Muslim kid left a copy of the Qur'an on the shelf, either he forgot it or left it on purpose, I don't know. When I started reading it, I soon became infuriated with this book when I saw that it made more sense than the Bible. I threw it against the couch and walked away, seething with anger; yet, after I read it, I had a niggling doubt at my core.

I did my best to forget about the Muslim kid and just enjoy my time with my friends at the youth house. The youth group used to go to various Churches on weekends to prayer events and Saturday nights were spent in a huge Church instead of at the bar. I remember being at one such event called 'The Well' and I felt so close to God and wanted to humble myself and show my Creator my love for Him. I did what felt natural, I prostrated. I prostrated like Muslims do in the daily prayers, yet I didn't know what I was doing; all I knew was, that it felt really good... it felt right, more than anything else I had ever done. I felt very pious and spiritual and continued on my path but as usual, started to feel things slipping away.

The pastor always taught us that we must submit our will to God's, and I wanted nothing more than to do that; but

I didn't know how! I always prayed: "Please God, make my will Yours, make me follow Your will" and so on, but nothing ever happened. I felt myself slowly slipping away from the Church as my faith ebbed away.

It was at this time that my best friend, the Christian man who had helped me come to Christ, along with another close friend of mine, raped my girlfriend who I had been with for two years. I was in the other room too drunk to know what was happening and unable to stop anything. A couple weeks later, it was revealed that the man who ran the youth house had molested one of the boys that I was friend with. My world was shattered!

I had been betrayed by so many of my friends, people who were supposed to be close to God and working toward Paradise. I had nothing left to give, I was empty again. I walked around as before, blindly and without direction, just working and sleeping and partying. My girlfriend and I broke up soon afterwards. My guilt, rage and sadness encompassed my entire being. How could my Creator allow such a thing to happen to me? How selfish was I?!

A little while after, my manager at work told me that a 'Muslim' would be working with us; he was really religious and we should try to be decent around him. The minute this 'Muslim'

came in, he started *Da'wah*. He wasted no time in telling us all about Islam and everyone told him they didn't want to hear anything about Islam, other than me! My soul was crying out and even my stubbornness could not squelch the cries. We started working together and discussing our respective beliefs. I had given up on Christianity completely, but when he started asking me questions, my faith surged and I felt I was a 'Crusader' defending the Faith from this evil 'Muslim.'

The fact of the matter was that this particular 'Muslim' wasn't evil like I had been told. In fact, he was better than me. He didn't swear, he never got angry and was always calm, kind and respectful. I was truly impressed and decided that he would make an excellent Christian. We went back and forth asking things about each other's religions, but after a time I felt myself getting more and more defensive. At one point, I became very angry... Here I was, trying to convince him of the truth of Christianity, and I felt it was he who was on the truth!

I started to feel more and more confused and didn't know what to do. All I knew was that I had to increase my faith; so I jumped in my car and roared off to 'The Well.' I was convinced that if I could only pray there again, I could get the feeling back and the strong faith and then I could convert the Muslim. I

eventually got there, after speeding the entire way, and found it was closed! No one was in sight; I frantically looked around for another similar event so I could 'charge up' but found nothing. Dejected, I returned home.

I started to realize that I was being pushed in a certain direction, so I prayed over and over to my Creator to surrender my will to His. I felt that my prayer was being answered; I went home and laid in bed and at that moment I realized that I needed to pray like never before. I sat up in bed and cried, 'Jesus, God, Buddha, whoever You are, please, please guide me; I need You! I have done so much evil in my life and I need Your help. If Christianity is the correct way, then make me strong, and if it is Islam, then bring me to it!'

I stopped praying and the tears went away and deep within my soul I felt calm; I knew what the answer was. I went to work the next day and said to the Muslim brother: "How do I say 'hi' to you?" He asked me what I meant and I said, "I wanted to become a Muslim." He looked at me and said "Allahu Akbar!" We hugged for a good minute or so and I thanked him for everything and I began my journey into Islam.

I look back at all the events that happened in my life over time, and I realize that I was being prepared to become a Muslim. I was shown so much mercy from God. Out of all that

happened in my life, there was something to learn. I learned the beauty of the Islamic prohibition of intoxicants, the prohibition of illegal sex, and the need for the *hijab*. I am finally on an even keel, no more am I too much in one direction; I am living a moderate life, and doing my best to be a decent Muslim.

There are always challenges, as I am sure many of you have felt, as have I. But through these challenges, through these emotional pains, we become stronger; we learn and, I hope, turn to God. For those of us who have accepted Islam at some point in our lives, we truly are blessed and fortunate. We have been given the chance, a chance for the greatest mercy! Mercy which we don't deserve, but still will, God-willing, be given on the Day of Resurrection. I have reconciled with my family and have started looking to start my own, God willing. Islam truly is a way of life, and even if we suffer poor treatment by fellow Muslims or non-Muslims, we must always remember to be patient and turn only to God.

If I have said anything incorrect it is from me, and if anything that I have said is correct it is from God, all praises are due to God, and may God bestow His mercy and blessings upon his noble Prophet Muhammad, Amen.

May God increase our faith and make it in accords to that which pleases Him and grant us His Paradise, Amen!■

Alcohol is The Mother of Most Evils

- Mohammad Akram

So many things are found in this world. They are used as food and for health, and they have distinct benefits. There are some other substances such as drugs and hard drinks that are indulged in by people for getting a kick. Those taking them think that they will use it occasionally and they will not cause any harm to them. They are only party drugs and drinks. However, these are habit-forming and when people become addicted to them, they lose control over their selves and their lives. People, while using them, do not think about their negative aspects. In this short article, I want to discuss the bad effects of alcohol. An increasing alcohol use, especially by yuppies, causes lysis in not only personal health and social relations but also it has overall negative impact and ultimately leads to evil consequences.

According to a survey, 62.5 million people in India drink alcohol with the per capita consumption being around four liters per adult per year. For every six men, one woman drinks alcohol in India.

About 90 per cent of all cases of rape happen when the rapists are in an intoxicated condition. The same is true in the cases of molestation. Almost all

the cases of incest are due to intoxication of one or more of the persons involved.

Some incidents happen in which the women, wives, children and other relatives are burnt by their intoxicated husbands and close relatives under the influence of liquor. They engage in violence either in a fit of anger, or when family and friends deny them money to drink alcohol. One of the major causes of increasing suicide cases among males and females is addiction to alcohol. When their addiction overwhelms them and they do not have the money to fulfill their desires, they resort to violence with their parents, wives or friends to extract money for their needs. Among many other causes, alcohol is one of the main reasons for social and family violence. People lose their senses when they are under the influence of **alcohol** and under its influence, they commit crimes, but only later, they realize that what they had done was so outrageous.

Each year thousands of people die because of alcohol consumption and around a billion of people are hospitalized. Alcohol consumption is associated with heart damage, high blood pressure and stroke, liver

damage, cancers of the digestive system, other digestive system disorders (e.g. stomach ulcers), sexual impotence and reduced fertility, increasing risk of breast cancer, sleeping difficulties, brain damage with mood and personality swings, loss of concentration and memory problems—and all these manifestations of alcohol use are widely known.

Recent studies have shown that drinking alcohol can in fact cause permanent damage to memory and learning ability. Having drunk alcohol, person is affected to a such extent that he is unable to walk without help, and makes the person apathetic, sleepy, with laboured breathing, unable to remember events, and suffers from loss of bladder control and possible damage of consciousness.

People concerned about ill effects of alcohol use have now become vocal with many rural hamlets seeing women agitating to shut down liquor shops in their areas. They realize the dangerous consequences of growing intake of hard drinks that ruins the lives of farm labour.

Prophet Muhammad (saws) has said more than fourteen hundred years ago.

Some of the companions asked the prophet (saws) about wine, but he forbade it. They again asked him, but

he forbade him. The questioners said to him: prophet o Allah it is a medicine. The prophet said: "No it is a disease"

In addition to health problems, alcohol also affects relationships, finances, work, and may result in legal problems. Intoxication is the most common cause of alcohol-related problems, leading to injuries and premature deaths.

Prolonged drinking habits account for two-thirds of the years of life lost from drinking. Alcohol is responsible for 30% of road accidents, 44% of fire injuries, 34% of falls and cases of drowning, 16% of child abuse cases, 12% of suicides and 10% of industrial accidents.

Hence, we find Islam completely forbidding the consumption of alcohol, whether in large or small amounts. The Prophet Muhammad said:

"If a large amount of anything causes intoxication, a small amount of it is also prohibited." In this hadith, we see the perfection of Islam as a religion, its conclusiveness as a legal code, and its comprehensiveness as a way of life.

The Qur'an says:

O you who believe! Approach not prayers with a mind befogged, until you can understand all that you say... (4: 43)

It does not mean that alcohol is

allowed outside of salah but it is haram. This ayah was revealed during Islam's early advent when it was lawful. This was the first step when prohibition of alcohol was introduced in three stages.

It is natural tendency that any beloved thing which has become an addiction is not easy to away with. It required constant de-conditioning of the mind so that the addicted person's realizes firmly its evil influence and gradually leaves it of his own free will. This was the method adopted in Islam- to prepare the ground first so that a receptive seed can take root and do away with the evil inclinations embedded in the psyche.

In another place, the Qur'an mentions:

"They ask thee concerning wine and gambling, say: "In them is great sin, and some profit, for men; but the sin is greater than the profit..." (2:219)

The last and clear mention of prohibition of alcohol by Allah (swt) in the Qur'an occurred as follows:

O you who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows, are an abomination of Satan's handiwork. Eschew such (abomination), that you may prosper. The devil wants only to cast among you enmity and hatred by means of strong drink and games of chance and to turn you from remembering Allah and from prayer.

Will you not then abstain?" (5:90-91)

These verses are the ones that declared total prohibition of alcohol to the Muslims. After this verse was revealed, the Muslim citizens of Madinah immediately began to spill their stocks of wine into the sand and streets; so that the wine ran through the streets of Madinah. Individuals, who up until that moment were enjoying guiltlessly a glass of wine, quickly emptied their cups on the ground and spit out the alcohol from their mouths. They rushed to make ablutions in order to purify themselves.

Islam gave people such teachings that first, it made the minds of people receptive to the change, and then they accepted easily the benefits and the need to follow Almighty Allah's command.

Likewise, today making rules and regulations is not enough and demanding a total ban of alcohol sale in the country cannot reduce the drinking habits of people, unless the Islamic way is applied. I mean that the government should make efforts to establish organizations and institutions, which can take steps to reform society. Mahatma Gandhi's efforts bore some fruit and Gujarat to this day is an alcohol-free state. So why not the rest of India, and the world? ■ (E.C.)

Around the World

HOW BRITISH MUSLIMS ADD VALUE TO BRITAIN'S PROSPERITY

Ahead of the 9th World Islamic Economic Forum (WIEF), the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) launched a report on 28 October highlighting the achievements and contribution of British Muslim businesses and business people to the UK economy and the new economic-sectors created to cater for a growing Muslim market. There are some 2.78 million Muslims in the UK, the report highlights how they contribute £31 billion plus to the UK economy, how some 114,548 Muslims are in 'higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations', how *13,400 Muslim-owned businesses in London alone creating 70,000 jobs, how over a £1 billion being spent on the halal food industry, and how British Muslims have an estimated spending power of £20.5 billion.

With big deals being made at the World Islamic Economic Forum this week, the report highlights the added value the Muslim world brings to the UK's economic prosperity. With Islamic finance totalling £1.3 trillion, London has become a major centre for the industry and Islamic finance has helped build the UK's newsiest landmarks. ♦

First Englishman to record his Haj experience

The first Englishman to perform Haj and record his experience is believed to be Joseph Pitts of Exeter (1663-1739), and the first British woman was Lady Evelyn Cobbold (1867-1963). Though Pitts was probably not really the first British Muslim to perform Haj, he was the first to write an account in

English, of the pilgrimage. Born in Exeter, Joseph Pitts had a basic education before going to sea as a boy. However, on his first voyage in 1678, his small fishing boat was captured off the coast of Spain by an Algerian corsair vessel. Its Muslim captain turned out to be a Dutchman and its first mate an Englishman. Pitts converted to Islam, then performed Haj and spent about four months in the Holy City before going to Madinah. He covers almost every element of the religion and manners including the first-ever description in English of the holy sites of Makkah and Madinah. Lady Evelyn Cobbold, Mayfair socialite, owner of an estate in the Scottish Highlands, was also the first British-born female Muslim convert to record her pilgrimage to Makkah. ♦

Tawakkol Karman Donates Nobel Prize Money

Tawakkol Karman, the Nobel Peace prize winner for 2011, has donated her cash prize to the families of those killed during the Arab Spring revolution in Yemen, reports said on 31 October. A status update on her Facebook page revealed that she had given her \$500,000 prize money to charity. "I have waited for this to dedicate the most precious of what I own to the greatest of those whom I have ever loved," said Karman. Karman became the first Arab woman and the youngest person ever to become a Nobel Peace winner for her efforts for freedom during the revolution. Hundreds of Yemeni people lost their lives while thousand were wounded in the 2011 protests which ousted President Ali Abdullah Saleh. ♦

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