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The Fragrance of East

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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

"Those who believe and do good deeds, We shall cleanse them of their evil deeds and reward them according to the best of their deeds."

(Al Qur'an – 29:7)

Belief consists of truthfully accepting all what God's Book and His Messenger ask the person to believe in. As for good deeds, they consist in carrying out the directives of God and His Messenger. A person's whole being can do good deeds. The good deeds of a man's heart and mind are that his thought and intention be pure and sound. The good deeds of his tongue consist of abstention from uttering evils and saying only that which accords with truth and justice. As for the good deeds of the limbs of the body, they consist of devoting his life to obeying and serving God and following His laws and commands.

A person's belief and good deeds are mentioned as being instrumental in bringing about the following results: (i) that he will be purged of his evil deeds, and (ii) that he will be rewarded according to the best of his deeds and receive compensation that will be well in excess of his good actions.

Purging a person of his evil deeds means that whatever sins he might have committed before embracing the true faith will be forgiven as soon as he enters Islam's fold. Moreover, his lapses, which were not committed out of wilful rebellion, will be overlooked in consideration of his good deeds. When he adopts the life of faith and good deeds he will attain self-development and overcome many of his weaknesses. ■

Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

Abbas relates that one day he was riding on a mule behind the Holy Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) while he said: "I want to teach you something. Obey Allah and He will look after you. Safeguard His Commandments and He will ever be with you (as your protector). When you must ask, ask Allah alone. When you must seek help, seek help from Allah alone. Remember! If all mankind join to help you, they can only help you to the extent that Allah has already decreed. And if all mankind join to harm you, they cannot harm you except to the extent that Allah has already decreed for you."

(Tirmidhi)

This hadith teaches six lessons. First, the believers must obey Allah in each and every walk of life. The natural corollary of this unflinching obedience to Allah is that Allah looks after those who obey Him.

Second, the believers must follow the Commandments of Allah in words and deeds and bear witness to the Truth whenever the situation demands and invite others to do so. Resultantly, Allah will ever be with them as their Protector.

Third, the believers must ask none but Allah for whatever they need. Fourth, man needs help and guidance; for this purpose the believers should turn to Allah alone. Fifth, the fellow beings can help a believer only to the extent that Allah has decreed. And sixth, no one can harm a believer except to the extent that Allah has already decreed for him, however united the enemies come out to harm him. ■

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 Ouran 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 two 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 languages 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 cordiality 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 students were taking lessons in Arabic but during 1998-2002 the percentage has risen to 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 go 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 Deeband, Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulema, Mazahirul Uloom Saharanpur, Jamia Salfia, Varanasi and other reputed centres can help in the popularizing 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 litterateur 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. New 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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True Followers of the Islamic Faith

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Among the believers are men who are true to their covenant with Allah. Of them some have fulfilled their obligations and some of them are still waiting, but they have never changed in the least.

(al-Ahzab 33:23)

The above Qur'anic verse captures the essence of the believers' covenant with Allah. It signifies the Islamic movement, the call to truth and the believers' unwavering and single-minded commitment to Islam. Implicit in it is also the assertion that the believers are ever ready to sacrifice all that they have for this cause. Reading this one recalls the history of Islam, especially of the early days.

This verse stands out as a glowing tribute to the accomplishments of those who strove for the cause of Islam. For it makes a pointed reference to the believers' covenant and presents a role model for Muslims until the Last Day. It spells out the role of Muslims, their obligations to their Lord, and their assignments. One learns as to what entitles believers to receive divine bounties and what makes their deeds acceptable in His sight. The verse

further offers a concise definition of Islam to believers, as it reminds them of their covenant with Allah.

Among the many millions of Muslims, some are specified in the above verse as being believers with firm resolve. This refers to such pious and noble souls who firmly believe in Allah's promise and who display their total commitment in His cause. Praise is heaped on them for their discharging their obligations to Allah. Then mention is made of those among them who have completed their appointed term and returned to Allah. They will be lavishly rewarded. Their reward in the Next Life will be unending. Those still alive look forward to divine rewards and are true to their covenant. They have not changed their commitment in any degree.

As already stated, the verse under study provides a concise definition of Islam. Early Muslims followed this standard. Accordingly it presents the role model valid until the Last Day. Allah sanctioned this example. Islam does not consist of the mere verbal uttering of its creedal statement. One reciting it will, no doubt, be taken as a Muslim. For no one can contest his faith. We are bound to love and respect

everyone who recites Islam's creedal statement. Yet Islam goes far beyond this. A Muslim born as a Muslim must follow all the Islamic rituals. More important, however, is his commitment to his covenant with Allah. The pledge is that a Muslim will lead his whole life in accordance with Allah's commands. For He is the Creator and Sustainer of all, able to benefit and harm' everyone. Only He can honour or disgrace someone. He does whatever He wills and is the Supreme Master.

Islam's creedal statement: "There is no god besides Allah" also represents a pledge. One uttering it testifies, both in word and deed, that Allah alone is the Creator and Regulator of the whole universe. All creation and commands are His. He has not abandoned the universe after having created it. Nor has He delegated authority to anyone. Man is asked to try his best and make the most of the opportunities available to him. He may utilise properly or abuse the resources put at his disposal. Allah is the Absolute Master of all that exists. Not a leaf falls without His leave. Nor can anyone move an inch unless He approves it. No change is admissible without His sanction. One's fate cannot be altered. Nor can the destiny of a people undergo any change unless He decides so.

Islam is essentially a covenant. Muslims are obliged to fulfill it. We must take Allah as the Creator and Regulator of this universe. We must recognise only Him as the Master of the universe. We must concede that our fate is decided by Him in that He alone can confer benefits or inflict loss upon us. We must vow not to surrender to anyone other than Him. Nor should we invoke anyone besides Him for meeting our needs.

As already indicated, Islam is synonymous with a pledge. It is to be seen how many of us are true to this pledge, for men are liable to forget their oaths. We must remind ourselves of the glorious examples of the Prophet's Companions. After professing Islam they cared little about their lives. Nor did they stick to false notions of honour and glory. They paid no heed to the praise or criticism of fellow human beings. Their only concern was their loyalty to Islam.

Muslims must appreciate this truth, especially in our turbulent times. Allah has blessed us with the bounty of Islam. He has done us an immense favour. Our verbal profession of Islam is meaningless. We may bear Muslim names and our way of life may contain some Islamic elements. We may occasionally visit the mosque. Our main

duty as believers, nonetheless, is to be true to our pledge to Allah. As Muslims we should pose a challenge to our surroundings. In our beliefs, acts of worship, conduct, dealings, way of life, social relations, marital ties, family and neighbourhood relationships and in every human activity we must behave as Muslims. Our commitment must be to divine laws. In every respect we should be governed by Allah's commands, even if this entails the loss of all of our belongings, assets and earnings, reducing us to utter destitution. Islam has nothing in common with nationalism. Nor is it specific to any particular culture. Islam does not recognise the nominal acceptance of some people of its faith. Regrettably this is the grim reality today.

Essentially, Islam is a covenant with Allah made publicly by believers. The only thing we find decisive and appealing is that which is endorsed by Allah and His Messenger. We are bound to the Prophet Muhammad's elucidation of faith. We are committed to the will of Allah and of His Messenger. By the same token, we must emulate the Prophet's role model. We should always be mentally prepared for the loss of our property and lives. At times our loyalty to Islam may land us in serious trouble. Conditions vary from one country to another. Yet Muslims should adhere fast

and firm to their faith. We may be treated as disloyal citizens in a Godless country, with the doors to education and employment shut on us. Economic avenues may be denied to us. Yet even in the face of such persecution we must act only on the commands of Allah and His Messenger.

Allah brands as true believers among Muslims those who are true to their covenant. The Qur'an speaks highly of the truthful people. They draw accolade for their sincere and total commitment, free from any hypocrisy. Allah the Most Honourable bestows a high rank upon such. It is the highest honour imaginable for man. Overjoyed at this exaltation, these true believers had no hesitation in giving away their belongings and sacrificing their lives for His sake. They displayed their sincerity to their covenant and did not budge by even an inch.

On studying the condition of today's Muslims let us ascertain how faithful they are to their covenant. Muslims today are concerned only about their petty, material interests, their worldly gains and losses, their political and economic pursuits, their pecuniary prospects, their safety and security and their status in public life. Such insubstantial things are dear to them.

Allah attaches no importance to these. The Qur'an talks about true believers, some of whom have passed away. They attained martyrdom, shedding every drop of their blood in Allah's cause. Some true believers are alive amongst us today. Allah has not ordained their death. Notwithstanding their active participation in *Jihad* and conquest some were not martyred. Take the example of Khalid ibn Walid. He fought valiantly in numerous battles. He led the Muslim army to victory in many encounters. Yet Allah let him survive. Some no doubt, were killed in His way as their term had come to an end. Some attained martyrdom on the battleground while others breathed their last in their homes. Their devotion to *Da 'wah* was total, as they preached Islam wherever they went, be it their home town or battleground. They spent their lives, looking forward to their return to Allah. There was not the slightest shift in their devotion to Allah and Islam.

The Qur'anic passage cited above provides the role model for all of us. If I am asked, about a code of conduct and a way of life for, Muslims I will definitely prescribe the same role model which is outlined in this passage.

Islam does not stand for a token professing of faith. Leading one's life

like a Muslim does not represent Islam either. Rather, Islam signifies our covenant with Allah Who is Omnipresent, All-Hearing, Who knows the Unseen and is the Creator of all the worlds. As Muslims we are obliged to prefer the *Shariah* to local customs. We must however exercise self-restraint in practising the *Shariah*. *Shariah* commands should guide us in every respect. Allah confers the title of "true believers" on the Companions and some Muslims of the early days. Yet this designation is valid for all times. Whoever is true to the covenant and discharges his obligations towards Allah may be taken as a "true believer". This is the only way out for us. True believers should be our role models and our understanding of Islam must be: "There is no god besides 'Allah." We are bound to place a premium on all the teachings of the Qur'an and the Messenger, and we should turn to Him alone for any gain or loss.

Islam originated from Allah and His Messenger. It encompasses articles of faith, acts of worship, marriage and burial rituals, inheritance, marital ties and links with neighbours. It is an all-embracing faith. ■

The Constitution of the State

- Shibli Nu'mani

Though the Caliphate was founded in the time of Abu Bakr, administrative development started with the accession of 'Omar. Many vital problems were no doubt settled in the two year Caliphate of Abu Bakr. The "Apostates" were exterminated and invasions abroad commenced but no special constitutional forms were yet established, nor was the brief period of his reign sufficient for such evolution. While on the one hand he carried his conquering arms so far afield that the whole empire of the Chosroes and great province of the Eastern Rumis Empire were annexed to the Muslim state, on the other hand, 'Omar established a complete network of civil administration and brought it to such a high state of development that most of the major administrative departments of the state had come into existence before he died.

But before we come to discuss the details of constitution and laws of his government, it is necessary to determine whether the nature of the state was autocratic or democratic. The Arab civilization had not yet reached the stage where this could be decided but it is enough here to find out whether the methods of his government resembled those of an autocracy or a democracy, that is, whether the state tended to depend upon the personal authority of the Caliph or upon public opinion.

DEMOCRACY AND AUTOCRACY CONTRASTED

The principal distinction between a democracy and an autocracy is whether or not the public has a right to have a say in the governance. The greater the right or opportunity the public has to interfere the more democratic will government be considered to be, and the ultimate end of a democratic state is that the personal authority and prerogatives of the head of the state should completely vanish and he should be counted no more than as a member of the executive body. In an autocracy, on the contrary, the whole administration of the state depends upon the personal will of one man. That being so the following consequences follow inevitably from an autocracy:

1. The affairs of the state, instead of employing the talents of all capable persons, are determined by the wisdom and statesmanship of only a few executives.
2. As nobody has any concern with the affairs of the state with the exception of a few officials, administrative talents gradually disappear from the majority of the people.
3. Special rights and interests of different groups and communities remain unprotected for, those interested in the safeguarding of those rights, possess no influence in

the state administration, while those who have the influence can have no such sympathies with the rights of others as latter themselves would have.

4. As nobody with the exception of a few state officials has any right to interfere in the affairs of the nation and the country, the spirit of public service gradually vanishes from among the people and selfish interests become the only motives of life.

These are the necessary consequences of autocratic rule and are its unavoidable concomitants, whereas democracy tends to create exactly opposite results. Therefore the question whether a state is autocratic or democratic can also be decided by reference to its consequences.

It is not enough to contend that democracy being in keeping with the Arab character any state established in Arabia must of necessity have been democratic. Three big kingdoms, namely, the Lakhmid, the Himyarite and the Ghassanid, had existed in Arabia from remote past and were all of them autocratic. Tribal heads were no doubt elected on democratic principles, but they had no powers of government and their position was no more than that of army commanders or judges. The Caliphate of Abu Bakr left the matter undecided for, though his election took place by the will of the majority, it was after all a sudden decision, as 'Omar himself explained,' 'Let no one fabricate the lie that Abu Bakr's election was a mere accident and has ended. Though It was sudden. Allah safeguarded us against its

unsafe implications.'

None of the states around 'Omar was democratic. Persia had never evinced any talent for democracy. Rome had had this distinction in ancient times, but democracy had vanished from the Rumi world long before the age of 'Omar and had given place in his day to a pure despotism. Without having any pattern or example before him, 'Omar yet laid the foundations of a democratic state, and though owing to the peculiar conditions of the age, the principle could not be developed in all its aspects and implications, the prerequisites essential to a democratic form of government were brought into being.

CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY DURING OMAR'S CALIPHATE

The most vital and fundamental of them was the establishment of a Consultative Assembly. Whenever an important question came up for decision, the Consultative Assembly was called, and no question was decided without free debate and without the consent of the majority. The whole body politic of Islam was divided at the time into two groups, namely the Muharjirin and the Ansar. They were the leaders of the people, and the whole of Arabia looked upon them as their representatives.

MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY AND HOW IT WAS CONVENED

Members of both the groups necessarily always took part in the deliberations of the Assembly The Ansar consisted of two tribal groups, the Aus and Khazraj, and it was considered essential

that members of both the groups should be present in the Assembly meetings. We are not in a position to give the names of all the members of the assembly. We know, however, that 'Uthman, 'Ali 'Abdur-Rahman b. 'Auf, Mu'adh b. Jabal, Ubayy b. K'ab and Zaid b. Thabit were included. The assembly was called in the following manner: A public crier went out in the capital calling the people to prayers. When the people had collected, 'Omar would enter the Prophet's Mosque and say two rak 'ats of prayer with them. He would then ascend the pulpit and address the congregation on the matter in hand.

MEETINGS OF THE ASSEMBLY

In ordinary matters of daily occurrence, decisions of this congregation were considered sufficient. But for deciding matters of unusual importance a general assembly of the Muhajirin and Ansar was convened. For instance, when on the conquest of Syria and Iraq some Companions of the Holy Prophet insisted that the conquered lands should be divided up among the army and given away to them as their private estates, a large assembly was held comprising, besides the commonality of all old Muhajirin and Ansar, ten leading men, five from among the Aus and five from Khazraj, who commanded high esteem in the whole nation. The assembly sat for several days, and men spoke with the utmost freedom and without fear. We quote here a few sentences from the speech which 'Omar made on this occasion, as they enable one to understand the nature of the Caliph's office and make an estimate of his powers and

prerogatives. He said: I have given you the trouble to assemble here in order that you might participate in the burdens put upon me in respect of the state, for I am only one from among yourselves, and I do not desire that you should follow my wishes.

In 21 A.H. on the occasion of the battle of Nihawand when the persians had made such vast preparations that the people at Madinah thought it was necessary for the Caliph to lead the expedition in person, a large consultative assembly was held, at which Uthman, Talhab. 'Abdullah, Zubairb. al-'Awwam, 'Abdur-Rahman b. 'Auf and others made speeches. They were of opinion that the Caliph should not go in person. 'Ali was also of the same opinion, and it was finally decided by the will of the majority that 'Omar should not go to the battlefield. Similarly, the pay of the soldier organization of the secretariat, appointments of civil officers, freedom of trade to foreigners and assessment of import duties and other questions of state were, as expressly stated by historians of the period, decided by free discussion in the consultative assembly. Books of history contain even reports of speeches made on such occasions. These assemblies were held not merely out of piety, but because, as explained by 'Omar, Caliphate were not lawful without consultation, There is no Khilafat without consultation," he said.

The consultative assembly was called only on special occasions when vital issues had to be decided. There was another council in which current administrative and other questions of lesser importance were discussed. This

council sat always in the Prophet's Mosque and only the Muhajirin took part in it. Daily reports from districts and provinces that arrived in the Caliph's court were presented to this council by 'Omar who consulted with them on any details that called for discussion. The question of levying Jiziyah on the Magians was discussed in the first instance in this council. Baladhuri speaks of this council as follows: "The Muhajirin used to gather in the mosque and 'Omar used to sit with them, and talk with them about world affairs. One day he said he did not know how he should treat the Magians."

CITIZENS' ROLE IN THE ADMINISTRATION

Apart from the consultative assembly, every citizen had a voice in the state administration. Provincial governors and district officers were often appointed with the approval of the people, and at times appointments were made even by election. When the question came up of appointing revenue officers for Kufah, Basrah, and Syria, orders were sent by 'Omar to the three provinces that the people of each province should select from their midst a person whom they considered to be the most honest and capable and send him up to Madinah. They selected 'Uthman b. Farqad, Hujjaj 'Allat and Ma'n b. Yazid for the three provinces, respectively, and the three were appointed accordingly."

S'ad. b. Abi Waqqas was a Companion of eminence and conqueror of Anusherwan's capital. He was appointed governor of Kufah. But when the

people complained of his administration, he was removed.

It is one of the most important principles of democratic governance that every citizen should have the right and be given the opportunity to defend his rights and interests. Omar's government vouchsafed this right to every individual and the people exercised it with utmost freedom. Deputations came nearly every year from the districts for the purpose of keeping the Caliph posted of all affairs, representing their hardship and seeking redress of grievances. 'Omar himself had the right proclaimed on several occasions, so much so that he addressed public audiences especially for the purpose of informing them of their rights, clarified it in official orders, and on one occasion, as shall be explained later in fuller detail when we come to speak of the civil services, he invited provincial governors from all over the empire at the time of Hajj and announced the principle of individual liberty in public assembly.

NO SPECIAL PRIVILEGES OF THE CALIPH

The great beauty of a truly democratic system of government that the ruler stands on a level of perfect equality with the common mass of the people in the matter of personal rights and can claim no special privileges or exemption from any law; that he should receive no more for from the public revenues than what is necessary for his maintenance; that in ordinary civil life he should enjoy no distinction by virtue of being the ruler, and that his powers should be limited and

every citizen should have the right of criticising him. These principles were evolved to such a high degree during the Caliphate of 'Omar that no room was left for further development, and whatever evolution was effected was achieved by virtue of the Caliph's own example. He himself explained on several occasions what his position and powers as Caliph were. A few sentences from a speech he delivered on one of these occasions may be cited here to illustrate the point. He said: I have no greater right on your money (i. e. the public treasury) than the guardian of an orphan has on the latter's property. If I am wealthy, I shall not take anything. If I am needy, I shall take for my maintenance according to usage. Yemen, you have many rights on me, which you should demand of me. One of those right is that I should not collect revenues and spoils of war unlawfully: the second is that the revenues and spoils of war that come into my possession should not be sent unlawfully; another is that I should increase your stipends and protect the frontiers, and that I should not cast you into unnecessary perils. "

Addressing 'Omar on one occasion a man said again and again, "Fear Allah, O 'Omar". One of those present rebuked the man and said he had had enough, whereupon 'Omar said, "Let him say it. If these people did not exhort me so, they would be useless, and if I did not listen; I would be in the wrong. " These details are enough to show that the nature of Khilafat, its power and limitations had become well known to the people, and the awe and majesty of despotism had

vanished from their hearts. The speech M'aadh b. Jabal made on the nature of Omar's Caliphate when he was on an embassy to the Rumis is a true picture of what a democratic state ought to be, nor can it be improved upon even today.

We have learnt the nature of Omar's Caliphate and turn now to his administration.

One of the first requirements of a sound administration is a clear departmentalization which is an evidence of a progressive culture. As one room suffices for all the needs of a home in the earlier stages of civilization, and as civilization advances, separate rooms are built for eating, sleeping, receiving guests and other needs and occasions, so also the case with governments. In the earlier stages of development all departments of administration remain mixed up: the governor of a province becomes commander of the army in time of war; for resolving disputes he becomes a judge and carries out the functions of the police for the punishment of crimes. As civilization progresses, separate departments come into existence for dealing with different matters and each department is placed under a separate officer. It is one of the most remarkable achievements of 'Omar that though Arab civilization was as yet at an elementary stage and the state had been in existence only a few years, many branches of the state administration, which were formerly combined, were organized into separate departments, which we now proceeded to study in detail. ■

Hamd

- Abul Kalam Azad

In Arabic, the word Hamd means Praise. The grammatical prefix Al denotes a definite article. So, Al-Hamdu Lillah really means, "Praise (strictly speaking) is for Allah only", since all goodness and perfection exist only in Him and proceed from Him.

Why does the chapter begin with the praise of God? It is, because, such is the initial reaction inevitably created on the mind of one who takes his first step in the direction of God.

What then is the road one should take to seek knowledge of God? The Quran says there is but one road to it, and that is to reflect over the phenomenal world of creation. The study of an invention takes the student so to say, directly into the very presence of the inventor himself.

Those who bear God in mind, standing, sitting, and reclining, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and of the earth, they will say: "Our Lord! Thou has not created all this in vain".

(Q:3:191)

Visualize for yourself what his first impression will be when an earnest seeker of truth reflects over the working of the universe? He will notice that his very being and all that is at work outside of him are the handicraft of a consummate artist; and that the touch of His grace and tender providence is dearly felt in every particle of the universe. Naturally, his mind will be filled with wonder and admiration, so much so, that he will cry out instinctively: "Praise is for God only, Lord of all Being!" Praise truly is His who is the fountainhead of the grace, beauty, and perfection which subsist

in every corner of His creation.

The tragedy of the human mind has lain in this that it tends to lose itself in the things of creation and does not always strive to step beyond them to seek the Creator Himself. Man is dazzled by the artistry of the veils which first meet his eye, but rarely does he attempt to lift them and reach Him who has thrown such attractive veils over His own creative beauty. The worship of the phenomenal owes its origin to this defect in vision. The expression, "Praise is for God only", is a definite affirmation of the fact that the beauty and benevolence which subsist in a variety of forms in every field of existence are but manifestations of the attributes of God. Whatever the esteem in which we may hold beauty, perfection or goodness, the credit should go not to the phenomenal object which displays these qualities, but to the artist who fashioned it into a thing of beauty.

Allah

Prior to the revelation of the Quran, the term Allah was used in Arabic as a proper name for God, as is borne out by the writings of pre-Islamic poets. It was never used in the sense of an attribute, although He was credited with numerous attributes. The Quran has but followed the usage:

Allah has beautiful names or attributes; so invoke Him by them.

(Q:7:180)

Did the Quran adopt the term Allah merely out of regard for etymology, or was there any intrinsic appropriateness about it compelling adoption?

In the annals of ancient religious concepts, there was a period when man

used to worship objects of nature. In course of time, this form of worship developed into the worship of demi-gods. As corollary to this development, different names in different languages came to be applied to the new deities, and, as time went on, with the widening of scope in worship, the significance of the terms applied also widened. But since it was not agreeable to human nature to let the human mind ignore the concept of a Creator for the world, there lurked therein, alongside of the thought of demigods, the idea, in one form or other, of a Supreme Being as well. So, in addition to the numerous terms coined to designate demi-gods, a term also had necessarily to be invented to apply to this unseen highest being as well.

For instance, a study of the Semitic group of languages - Hebrew, Syriac, Aramaic, Chaldean, Himyarita and Arabic - discloses that a special style of word formation and of sound had been in vogue among the Semitic peoples to denote the Supreme Being. The alphabets A, L and H combined in varied form to constitute the term by which this Supreme Being was to be styled. The Chaldean and Syriac term *Ilahia*, the Hebrew *Iloha* and the Arabic *Ilah* are of this category. It is the *Ilah* in Arabic which assumed the form of *Allah* and was applied exclusively to the Creator of the universe.

But if the term *Allah* is derived from *Ilah*, what then is *Ilah*? Lexicographers have given different stories. The most plausible is that it is itself derived from the root 'lah, ar, ejaculation expressive of wonder or helplessness. Some lexicographers trace the term form *Walah* which bears the same significance. Hence the ten *Allah* came to be used as the proper name for the Creator of the universe in respect of whom man can express nothing except his sense

of wonder which increases in intensity, the more he thinks of Him, only to admit, eventually, that the road to the knowledge of God begins and ends in wonder and humility. Says a poet:

Thou art beyond my speech and thought

Woe be unto my specifications of you and my comparisons!

Now consider whether, of all the terms which man has used, there could be any better term than this (*Allah*) to apply to God. If God is to be called by any attribute, an endless number of terms could be suggested. But attributes apart, if God is to be given a proper name, what other term is then except this to designate a being which inspires nothing but wonder?

This is the reason why whenever anything was said in respect of the highest knowledge gained of God, it was to only admit that the utmost that man could say of God was simply to acknowledge the profundity of his ignorance about Him. The prayer of a gnostic has always been: "O God increase me in my wonder over what You are". Likewise, the admission of philosophers has always been: "We know this much that we know nothing".

Since the term *Allah* is used as a proper name for God, it has necessarily to cover all the attributes that can appropriately be associated with His Being. If we visualize God in any particular attribute of His, as when we refer to Him as *Al-Rabb* or *Al-Rahim*, we confine our vision within the limits of the attribute concerned. We shall think of Him only as one who possesses the attribute of Providence or Mercy. But when we refer to Him as *Allah*, our mind instinctively clenches the sum total of all the qualities attributed to Him, or what He necessarily must possess. ■

Rights of Minorities in India

- P.S. Munawar Hussain*

Democracy paves the way for emergence of rule of law. The principles of rule of law recognize the rights of the citizens. Minority groups are vulnerable groups in any society and require protection and safeguards. The minority communities deserve the attention of the legislature and the judiciary in providing safeguards for the protection of their human rights in preserving their language, culture, ethnicity, etc.

Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and subsequent jurisprudence provide the main elements of a definition of the term minority; i.e. 'an ethnic, religious or linguistic group, fewer in number than the rest of the population. A minority is a group with linguistic, ethnic or cultural characteristics, which distinguish it from the majority. Secondly, a minority is a group which usually not only seeks to maintain its identity but also tries to give stronger expression to that identity.'

In the words of Mark Twain, India is the cradle of the human race, the birthplace of human speech, the mother of history, the grandmother of legend, and the great grandmother of tradition. Our most valuable and most instructive materials in the history of man are treasured up in India only. As per the census 2011 the distribution of population of different religious communities and their percentage in India is as follows.

* Registrar, MANUU Hyderabad, Telangna.

S.No.	Religion	Population (In Million)	Percentage
1.	Hindu	966.3	79.8
2.	Muslim	172.2	14.2
3.	Christian	27.8	2.3
4.	Sikh	20.8	1.7
5.	Buddhist	8.4	0.7
6.	Jain	4.5	0.4
7.	Other Religions & Persuasions (ORP)	7.9	0.7
8.	Religion Not Stated	2.9	0.2

India is a pluralistic society having a number of religions, languages and cultures in its cradle. Unity in diversity is its striking feature. As per the census of India the linguistic distribution of population in percentages is as under:

S.No.	Language	Percentage to total population
1	Hindi	41.03
2	Bengali	8.11
3	Telugu	7.19
4	Marathi	6.99
5	Tamil	5.91
6	Urdu	5.01
7	Gujarati	4.48
8	Kannada	3.69

9	Malayalam	3.21
10	Oriya	3.21
11	Punjabi	2.83
12	Assamese	1.28
13	Maithili	1.18
14	Santali	0.63
15	Kashmiri	0.54
16	Nepali	0.28
17	Sindhi	0.25
18	Konkani	0.24
19	Dogri	0.22
20	Manipuri *	0.14
21	Bodo	0.13
22	Sanskrit	N

Source: Census of India

The Constitution of India does not define the word 'Minority'. It refers to 'the Linguistic and Religious Minorities. The rights of the minorities have been enshrined in various articles of the Constitution of India.

The Supreme Court of India in TMA PAI Foundation vs. State of Karnataka has ruled that the definition of Minorities shall be in relation to a particular State/Union Territory. It prescribed that:

"Linguistic" and religious minorities are covered by the expression minority" under Article 30 of the Constitution. Since reorganization of the States in India has been on linguistic lines, therefore, for the Purpose of determining the minority, the unit will be the State and not the whole of India."

Thus religious and linguistic

minorities, who have been put at par in Article 30, have to be considered State wise. This implies that the Punjabis though they constitute minorities at the National level and are not minorities in the State of Punjab, but they shall be considered minorities in the State of Andhra Pradesh. Similarly Hindus who is a majority community would be a numerical minority in Punjab. Prof Zoya Hassan in her Article Defining Minorities feels that defining minorities at State level would limit the notion of minorities, entailing as it does the adoption of an essentially statistical concept of minorities.

The characteristics that make the minority groups distinctive and vulnerable are language, religion, culture and gender etc. The Minority communities shall be determined in relation to their power equations with the majority community.

The rights of Minorities have been recognized internationally. United Nations Declaration on Minorities 1992, under Article 1 defines minorities as a small group of people having national, ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic identity, and provides that States should protect their existence.

Human rights are universal and are applicable to all human beings, including members of the minority communities. Since the inception of the 20th century the voices for the rights of minority have gained greater resonance and relevance all over the world.

ARTICLE 14

The principle of non-discrimination and the concept of common citizenship

are enshrined in the Indian constitution. The first and foremost is the Right to Equality (Article 14) which is an extension of the rights ensured in the Preamble to the constitution. Article 14 of our Constitution says that the State shall not deny to any person equality before the law and shall provide equal protection for every person within the territory of India. Though this Article appears to be very short and simple, it is one of the greatest pillars of democracy. It protects both minority and majority alike against the discriminatory conduct of the government. This provision describes the concept of equality which is a hall-mark of democracy.

ARTICLE 16

The Constitution under Article 16 speaks about the equality of opportunity. Clause (1) of this Article says that there shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State.

Article 16(2) states that no citizen shall on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, or place of birth, residence or any of them, be ineligible for or discriminated against in respect of any employment or office under the State.

Article 16(4) contemplates that nothing in this Article shall prevent the State from making 'any provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens which, in the opinion of the State, is not adequately represented in the services under the State.

The Supreme Court of India in the

case of Venkataramana B. v. State of Madras observed that Clause (4) of Article 16 only permits reservation for 'backward classes of citizens' who are not, in the opinion of the State, adequately represented in the services of the State. It does not permit reservation for any person who does not belong to the category of 'backward classes', nor does it enable the State to reserve posts on communal lines.

The Supreme Court in Rajendran CA. v. Union of India, held that, Cl. (4) of Art. 16 is an instance, and elaboration of, the principle of classification which is inherent in Cl. (1) (paras 57, 396).

In the famous case of Indra Sawhney v. Union of India, the Supreme Court observed that (Cl. (4) is exhaustive of the concept of reservation in favour of backward classes. It does not follow however that Cl. (1) does not permit any reservation for any class other than backward. But in the latter case, the reservation will be valid only if it satisfies the test of reasonable classification and the State shall have to satisfy that such a provision was necessary in the public interest to redress an exceptional situation [paras 59, 399]. In this case the Supreme Court also observed that:

"It is therefore clear that economic criterion by itself will not identify the backward classes under Article 16(4). The economic backwardness of the backward classes under Article 16(4) has to be on account of their social and educational backwardness. Hence no reservation of posts in services under the State, based exclusively

on economic criterion, would be valid under clause (1) of Article 16 of the Constitution.”

It surmises that the expression backward classes are not linked to religion or caste and this expression is religion neutral.

The matter, whether a Government aided minority institution shall comply with the reservation policy of the government, came up before the Supreme Court in *Sindhi Education Society & Anr vs. The Chief Secretary, Govt of NCT of Delhi & Ors*’, The Supreme Court held that since the constitution provides the minorities, right to establish and administer schools/ institutions, the appointment of the teacher is part of regular administration and management of the school. Once the teachers possessing requisite qualification were selected by the minorities for their educational institutions the state could have no right to veto the selection of teachers. It further observed that State actions should be *actio quaelibet it sua via* and every discharge of its duties, functions and governance should also be within the constitutional framework. This principle equally applies to the Government while acting in the field of reservation as well. It would not be possible for the Courts to permit the State to impinge upon or violate directly or indirectly the constitutional rights and protections granted to various classes including the minorities.

ARTICLE 25

Article 25 of the Constitution ensures freedom of conscience and religion. It says that subject to public order

morality and health and to the other provision of this part all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and right to freely profess, practise and propagate religion.

This article guarantees that every person in India shall have the freedom of conscience and shall have the right to profess, practise and propagate religion, subject to restrictions imposed by the State on the following grounds-

- (i) Public order, morality and health;
- (ii) Other provisions of the Constitution;
- (iii) Regulation of nonreligious activity associated with religious practice;
- (iv) Social welfare and reform;
- (v) Throwing open of Hindu religious institutions of a public character to all classes of Hindus.

In *Stainislaus Rev. v. State of MP. 8*, the High Court of Madhya Pradesh observed that since the freedom belongs to every person, the freedom of one cannot encroach upon a similar freedom belonging to other persons, Hence, punishing forcible or fraudulent conversion would not be violative of this article.

A seven Judges Bench of Supreme Court in ; *Commr., H.R.£. v. Lakshmindra Thirtha Suiamiar*”, and in *Ratilal Panachand Gandhi v. State of Bombay*’? has held that subject to the restrictions which this Article imposes, every person has a fundamental right under our Constitution not merely to entertain such religious belief as may be approved of by his judgment or

conscience but to exhibit his belief and ideas in such overt acts as are enjoined and sanctioned by his religion and further to propagate his religious views for the edification of others. This has been reiterated in the case of Dargah Committee v. Syed Hussain Ali in the year 1961.

In the case of Ramji Lal Modi v. State of U.P., the Supreme Court said that Clause (1) of Article 25 'Subject to public order, morality and health', the freedom of religion is subject to the interest of public order so that it would not authorise the outrage of the religious feelings of another class, with a deliberate intent. In Saifuddin Saheb, Sardar Syedna Taher v. State of Bombay"; it said these words save the power of a competent Legislature to prohibit deleterious practices, such as the sacrifice of human beings in the name of religion. The freedom guaranteed by Cl. (1) is subject to the power conferred upon the State by Cl. (2) of this Article as has been held in Venkataramana Devaru v. State of Mysore":

This view has been affirmed by the fact that most of the judges of the 9 Judge Bench in Bommai v. Union of India, who have founded their conclusions as to the contents of 'Secularism' under the Indian Constitution on its various relevant provisions such as Articles 25 -28, 30 and Articles 14- 16. Thus it is held that notwithstanding the insertion of the word 'Secularism' in the Preamble in 1976, the scope of 'Secularism' has to be gathered from the substantive provisions of the Constitution existing before the said amendment made by the 42nd

Amendment of the Constitution. The insertion of the word Secular through this amendment has formalised the pre-existing situation. Drawing from the foregoing provisions, the majority of the 9-Judge Bench in Bommai; S.R. v. Union of India 16 has laid down the following ingredients of 'Secularism' under our Constitution.

- I. The Constitution prohibits the establishment of a theocratic State (Arts. 156, 162).
- II. Not only the State is prohibited to establish any religion of its own, but it is prohibited, further, to identify itself with or favouring any particular religion (Para 156), because the State is enjoined to accord equal treatment to all religions and religious sects or denominations [Paras 156, 453(10)].
- III. On the other hand, Secularism under the Indian Constitution does not mean an anti-God (para 192)17 or atheist society (para 194).90
- IV. It only means the equal status of all religions, without any preference in favour of or discrimination against anyone of them.

The doctrine of 'basic features' is not found in any of the express provision of the Constitution. On the other hand, it is a judicial innovation, doctrine of basic features introduced in 1973 by thirteen Judges Bench of the Supreme Court in Kesavananda Bharathi vs State of Kerala" overruling to established rule of Constitutional interpretation that all parts of a written Constitution and all its guarantees, have equal importance as

held in *Gopalan, A.K. v, State of Madras.*

It is a novel doctrine introduced 17 years after the adoption of the Constitution which strengthen the basic structure of the Constitution judicially from the spate of amendments. But the basic features have so far not been defined by any of the constitutional bodies.

ARTICLE 26

Article 26 contemplates that, Subject to public order, morality and health, every religious denomination or any section thereof shall have the right, to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes, manage its own affairs in matters of religion, own and acquire movable immovable property and to administer such property in accordance with law.

This article guarantees certain rights to every religious denomination, subject to 'public order, morality and health', and the rights are capable of being enforced by or on behalf of a denomination.

The word "denomination" has been described by the Supreme Court in *Commr. HR.E. v. Lakshmindra Thiratha Swamiar*", as "a collection of individuals, classed together, under the same name; a religious sect or body having a common faith and organization and designated by a distinctive name". In order to constitute a religious denomination, the Supreme Court prescribed three conditions in *Jagadishwaranand Avadhuta, Acharya v. Commr. of Police, Calcutta*" which are:

(a) It must be a collection of individuals

who have a system of beliefs or doctrines which they regard as conducive to their spiritual well-being, i.e., a common faith.

(b) A common organisation.

(c) Designation by a distinctive name.

This Article of the Constitution contemplates not only a religious denomination but also a section thereof; hence, a 'Math' is religious denomination within the meaning of Art. 26 as contemplated in *Commr. HR.E. v. Lakshmindra Thiratha Swamiar*+. The religious denomination constitutes a Christians sect or a sect of Muslims, as has been held in *Durgah Committee v. Hussain Ali, Syed.*

On the other hand, the *Aurobindo Society or Aurovttle Arya Vysya Community*, worshipping goddess *Matha Kanyakaparameswari* have been held not to constitute a religious a denomination as per these respective judgements in *Mittal, s.P. v. Union of India*"; and *Sri Kanyaka Parameswari Anna Satram Committee v. Commissioner, HR.C. & E. 26* as per these respective judgements.

The Constitutional Bench of Supreme Court, in *Commissioner, Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Madras v Sri Lakshmindra Thirtha Swamiar of Shirur MutP7* held that the context "Matters of Religion" is not confined to the faith and religious beliefs and includes the practices which are regarded by the community as part of its religion. It further held that a Law which takes away the right to administer the religious denomination all together and

vests it in any other authority would amount to violation of right, guaranteed in clause b of Article 26 of the constitution.

Again a Constitutional Bench of Supreme Court in *S. Azeez Basha & Am vs. Union of India*", while dealing with the rights of minority to establish educational institutions, also dealt with the provisions of Article 26 of the Constitution and observed that the words "establish and maintain" contained in Article 26 (a) must be read conjunctively. A 'religious denomination' can only claim to maintain that institution which has been established by it. The right to maintain institutions would necessarily include the right to administer them. The right under Article 26 (a) of the constitution will only arise where the institution is established by a 'religious denomination' and only in that event, it can claim to maintain it.

Further the Constitutional Bench of Supreme Court in *Khajamian Wakf Estates vs. State of Madras?*", held that the religious denomination can own, acquire properties and administer them in accordance with Law. In case they lose the property or alienate the same, the right to administer automatically lapses for the reason that property ceases to be their property. Article 26 (d) of the Constitution protects the right of 'religious denomination' to establish and administer the properties as clauses (c) and (d) of Article 26, guarantee a fundamental right to any religious denomination to own, acquire, establish and maintain such properties.

In 2014 the Supreme Court in the case of *Dr. Subramanian Swamy vs. State*

of Tamil Nadu & Ors³⁰ reiterated its earlier decision and held that the right to maintain institution would necessarily include the right to administer them.

The religious matters will also include matters of food and dress as has been held by the High Court of Orissa in *Ram Chandra Deb v. State of Orissa*," The people from the religious denomination shall enjoy complete autonomy in the matters of rights and ceremonies, customs and traditions as essential according to the tenets of their denomination as has been decided by the Supreme Court in *Sarup Singh vs. State of Punjab*. 32

But the sacrifice of cow by Muslims during the celebrations of Bakrid (Id ul Zuha) has been held by the Supreme Court in *Moti Das Mahant v. Sahi, S.P* as not relevant to the religion.

ARTICLE 27

Article 27 contemplates that, no person shall be compelled to pay any taxes, the proceeds of which are specifically appropriated in payment of expenses for the promotion or maintenance of any particular religion or religious denomination.

Under this Article any allocation of proceeds of any tax for the payment of expenses for establishment; maintenance or promotion of any particular religious denomination for the reason that a secular state which guarantees freedom of religion cannot afford to spend public funds for the promotion of maintenance of the particular religious denomination. In *Commr., HR.E. v. Lakshmindra Thiratha Swamiar*" it has

been held that, this article does not prohibit the levy of a 'fee' for the defraying of expenses of the State for regulating the secular administration of religious institutions wherever they exist, to ensure their proper administration. Article 27 is not attracted to such a case as there is no question of favouring any particular religion or religious denomination, by such imposition. In the case of *Kesavananda Bharati vs. State of Kerala*? it is observed by the Supreme Court that, the object of Article 27 is to maintain secularism and hence we must construe it from that angle.

In the year 2011 in the case of *Praful Goradia vs. Union of India*? the subsidy offered by government of India in the airfare of Haj pilgrims was challenged as unconstitutional. The Supreme Court while observing that the parliament has the legislative competence to enact the Haj Committee Act in view of entry 20 to list 1 of the seventh schedule to the constitution which states "pilgrimage to places outside India" and held that:

"Article 27 would be violated if a substantial part of the entire income tax/central excise/customs duties/sales tax or any other tax collected in India, were to be utilized for promotion or maintenance of any particular religion or religious denomination. It is nowhere mentioned in the writ petition as to what percentage of any particular tax has been utilized for the purpose of the Haj pilgrimage. If only a relatively small part of any tax collected is utilized for providing some conveniences or facilities or

concessions to any religious denomination that would not be violative of Article 27 of the Constitution. Thus, there is no violation of Article 27 as also Articles 14 and 15 of the Constitution."

The Supreme Court further held that:

"It is attracted when the statute by which the tax is levied specifically states that the proceeds of the tax would be utilized for a particular religion. Article 27 would be attracted even when the statute is a general statute, like the Income tax Act or the Central Excise Act or the State Sales Tax Acts, which do not specify for what purpose the proceeds would be utilized, provided that a substantial part of such proceeds are in fact utilized for a particular religion".

In the year 2011 in the case of *Union of India & Ors VS. Rafique Shaik Bliikan & Anr* the Hon' Supreme Court while quoting extensively from Islamic jurisprudence in its interim order strongly directed the Central Government to progressively reduce the amount of subsidy given to the Haj pilgrims, so as to completely eliminate it within a period of 10 years. It further observed that nomination of members to the Goodwill delegation is in complete violation of Article 14 of the constitution and no purpose would be served by sending such a large, unwieldy, amorphous and randomly selected delegation. While disposing of this case in the year 2013 the court reiterated and confirmed its earlier orders/

directions and further directed the Central Government to prepare a five year plan of action for better arrangement of Haj Pilgrimage.

ARTICLE 28

This Article states that no religious instruction shall be provided in any educational institution wholly maintained out of State funds.

What is prohibited is religious, not moral education dissociated from any denominational doctrines as held by the High Court of Madras in *Nambudripad Kidangazhi Manakkal Narayanan v. State of Madras*"

Clause 2 of Article 28 provides exemption when it says nothing in Clause (1) shall apply to an educational institution which is administered by the State but has been established under any endowment or trust which requires that religious instructions shall be imparted in such institution.

ARTICLE 29

Article 29 (1) assures that any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture' of its own shall have the right to conserve the same. No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained or aided by the State, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them.

The Supreme Court in *St. Xavier's College v. State of Gujarat*" has held that, these two articles (Articles 29 & 30) confer

four distinct rights.

- (i) Right of any section of citizens to conserve its own language, script or culture [Art.29(1)].
- (ii) Right of all religious or linguistic minorities to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice [Art.30 (1)].
- (iii) Right of an educational institution not to be discriminated against in the matter of State aid on the ground that it is under management of a minority [Art. 30 (2)].
- (iv) Right of a citizen not to be denied admission into State- maintained or State-aided educational institution on ground only of religion, race, caste, or language [Art. 29 (2)].

In this case the Supreme Court further observed that there is no fundamental right of a minority institution to get affiliation from a University. When a minority institution applies to a University to be affiliated, it expresses its choice to participate in the system of general education and courses of instruction prescribed by that university and it agrees to follow the uniform courses of study. It further observed that:

"The minority institutions have the right to administer institutions. This right implies the obligation and duty of the minority institutions to render the very best to the students The best compliment that can be paid to a minority institution is that it does not rest on or proclaim its minority character".

ARTICLE 30

Article 30(1) contemplates that all minorities whether based on religion or language shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.

In the year 1978, the 44th amendment to the constitution has inserted clause 1A under this article which reads as under:

(1A) In making any law providing for the compulsory acquisition of any property of an educational institution established and administered by a minority, referred to in clause (1), the State shall ensure that the amount fixed by or determined under such law for the acquisition of such property is such as would not restrict or abrogate the right guaranteed under that clause.

Article 30 (2) contemplates that the State shall not, in granting aid to educational institutions, discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language.

A Seven Judge Bench of the Supreme Court in the case of P.A. Inamdar vs. State of Maharashtra" discussed the entire gamut of Law in relation to minority educational institution and noticed that the right conferred by Article 30 was more in the nature of protection for minorities. It protects minority institution from regulatory legislations framed under Article 19 (6), but still they were not immune from regulatory control. The Supreme Court was primarily concerned in that case with admission of

the students to different institutions where it observed that even within the scope and ambit of Article 30(1) there was a need for imposing reasonable restrictions even on the minority institution, and such direction would not vitiate and hurt the minority status.

While dealing with the issue of Minority character of Aligarh Muslim University, a Division Bench High Court of Allahabad in January 2006 held that the Aligarh Muslim University is not a Minority University within the meaning of Article 30 of the Constitution and hence the provision of 50 percent reservation for Muslims is invalid. The Allahabad High Court cited the judgement of the Supreme Court in S.Azeez Basha & Anr vs. Union of India which rejected the claim of the AMU being minority institution. However the Supreme Court issued an interim order to maintain status quo.

The issue of rights of minorities came up before the Supreme Court in the case of Kanya Junior High School, Bal Vidya Mandir vs. U. P. Basic Shiksha Parishad", the Court observed that the Law did not contemplate granting of any higher rights to the minority as opposed to majority and it only conferred additional protection.

In Gandhi F 'aiz-e-am College vs. University of 'Agro" the Supreme Court held that a Law which sought to regulate the working of minority institutions by providing that a broad-based management committee by including therein the Principal and the senior most teacher, was valid and not violate of the right under Article 30(1) of the Constitution. In Lily Kurian vs.

Sr. Lewina? the Supreme Court struck down the power of the Vice-Chancellor to veto the decision of the management to impose a penalty on a teacher. It was held that the power of the Vice-Chancellor, while hearing an appeal against the imposition of the penalty, was uncanalized and unguided. In the case of All Saints High School vs. Govt of A.p46 a regulation providing that no teacher would be dismissed, removed or reduced in rank, or terminated otherwise except with the prior approval of the competent authority, was held to be invalid, as it sought to confer an unqualified power upon the competent authority. In Frank Anthony Public School Employees Assn vs. Union of India" the regulation providing for prior approval for dismissal was held to be invalid, while the provision for an appeal against the order of dismissal by an employee to a tribunal was upheld. It was further held that the regulations regarding pay and allowances for teachers and staff would not violate Article 30. However in 2010 the Supreme Court in Sindhi Education Society & Anr vs. the Chief Secretary, Govt of NCT of Delhi & Ors48 held that once the teachers possessing the requisite qualifications were selected by the minorities' educational institutions, the State would have no right to veto the selection of the teachers.

In the year 2006 the Supreme Court in the case of Kanya Junior High School, Bal Vidya Mandir vs. U.P. Basic Shiksha Parishad" has kept a clear line of distinction between laws made by the State to regulate the administration of educational institutions receiving grant-in-aid and the administration of the minorities

institutions and held that if such regulations interfere with overall administrative control by the management over the staff or abridges or dilutes, in any other manner, the right to establish and administer educational institutions, in that event, to such extent, the regulations will be inapplicable to the minorities.

In May 2014 in a recent judgment the Supreme Court in Pramati Educational & Cultural Trust vs. Union of India" observed and held that:

"Thus the power under Article 21A of the Constitution vesting in the State cannot extend to making any law which will abrogate the right of the minorities to establish and administer schools of their choice. We, however, hold that the 2009 Act insofar as it applies to minority schools, aided or unaided, covered under clause (1) of Article 30 of the Constitution is ultra vires the Constitution".

ARTICLE 345

This article contemplates that, subject to the provisions of articles 346 and 347, the Legislature of a State may by law adopt anyone or more of the languages in use in the State or Hindi as the language or languages to be used for all or any of the official purposes of that State.

The Allahabad High Court in K.R. Sunil vs. Director 1.1. T. Kanpur" has held that so long as the law as envisaged by this Article is not passed by the State Legislature, no individual can insist that he has a fundamental right to submit his

thesis in Hindi or that an ordinance of a university which requires him to submit his thesis in English is unconstitutional and void.

ARTICLE 347

It says that on a demand being made in that behalf, the President may if he is satisfied that a substantial proportion of the population of a state desire the use of any language spoken by them to be recognized by that state, direct that, such language shall also be officially recognized throughout the State or any part thereof for such purpose as he may specify.

This Article has not attracted significant response from the Judiciary. However in September 2014, in U'P. Hindi Sahitya Sammelan vs. State of Uttar Pradesh a five Judge Bench of the Supreme Court Presided by the Chief Justice R.M. Lodha, held that the amendment to the U.P. Official Language Act in 1989 and subsequent declaration of Urdu as Second Official Language of the State is not unconstitutional. It further held that Articles 345 and 347 are two different and independent processes of making widely used language an official language of a State.

ARTICLE 350

This article ensures that every person shall be entitled to submit a representation for the redress of any grievance to any officer or authority of the union or a state in any of the languages used in the union or in the state as the case may be.

Article 350 A states that it shall be

the endeavor of every state and every local authority within the state to provide adequate facilities for instruction in mother-tongue at primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups; and the President may issue such directions to any State as he considers necessary or proper for securing the provision of such facilities.

Article 350 stipulates that there shall be a Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities to be appointed by the President. It shall be the duty of the Special Officer to investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided for linguistic minorities under this Constitution and report to the President upon those matters at such intervals as the President may direct and the President shall cause all such reports to be laid before each house of the Parliament and send to the Governments of the states concerned

The Supreme Court while reaffirming the provisions of Articles 29 (1) and 350A observed in the case of English Medium S.P.A. v. State of Karnataka" that, linguistic minority has the fundamental right to conserve its own language and Art. 350A directs every State to provide adequate facilities for education at the primary stage in the language of a linguistic minority for children belonging to such a community. These articles would be violated if a State compels a linguistic minority, at the primary stage, to study a regional language, i.e., a language other than their own, but not so, if they are given an option in this respect. It further held that the Courts should not interfere with the Government's formulation of its language

policy and implementation thereof. In the same case it held that the policy would, however, be unconstitutional if it prescribes that, at the primary level, Hindi or any other regional language shall be the sole medium of instruction.

Article 350 B (2) contemplates that it shall be the duty of the Special Officer to investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided for linguistic minorities under the Constitution and report to the President upon those matters at such intervals as the President may direct and the President shall cause all such reports to be laid before each house of the Parliament and send to the Governments of the States concerned.

The Government of India has constituted National Minorities Commission under the National Minorities Commission Act 1992 and made it a statutory and a constitutional body. This Commission was entrusted with the responsibility of the progress and development of Minorities and examine the complaints if any from the minority communities. The National Minority Commission was first established in the year 1978.

The National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions Act was legislated in the year 2004 and it was further amended in 2006 empowering this Commission to take up suo moto cases and to enquire about the dispute relating to affiliation of minority institutions to a particular University and submit its reports to the appropriate government for implementation.

The Supreme Court in *Bal Patil VS. Union of India* in 2005 has cautioned the Minorities Commission and observed that:

"Commissions set up for minorities have to direct their activities to maintain integrity and unity of India by gradually eliminating the minority and majority classes. If, only on the basis of a different religious thought or less numerical strength or lack of health, wealth, education, power or social rights, a claim of a section of Indian society to the status of 'minority' is considered and conceded, there would be no end to such claims in a society as multi-religious and multi-linguistic as India is. A claim by one group of citizens would lead to a similar claim by another group of citizens and conflict and strife would ensue."

The various Articles of the Constitution providing rights to the minorities, clearly and firmly sum up towards a multi-religious, multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-racial Indian Society, interwoven into an inherent unity, harmony and integration. Rights are universal and are inherent to all human beings, including members of minority communities. In addition to those universal rights, minorities, as individuals and groups, are entitled to minority-specific human rights linked to their minority status and identity. Pluralism and inclusive growth would be distant dream if the minority citizenry are not allowed to stand shoulder to shoulder with their counterparts from the majority community. ■

The Main Merits of Islam And the Advantages of Applying its Sharee'ah

- Suleiman Bin Abdul Rahman Al-Hageel*

1. The superiority of the Creator, Allah:

This means that the provisions of Islamic Sharee'ah, its systems and principles, are not the work of humans, who have their own limitations and who are tossed around by the tides of change in different times and in different places and cultures. This Islamic Sharee'ah has been set forth by the Creator and Commander of this universe, the Lord of all its inhabitants.

2. The universal message of Islamic Sharee'ah:

The Islamic Sharee'ah with all its constituent components - commandments, stipulations, and codes of moral conduct, is universal. Islamic Sharee'ah has a universal human dimension as it is for the whole of Mankind. It is the direction to righteousness for all the inhabitants of the globe. It is not a body of legislation for one race or one region or one group of people. It is for Man and it addresses Man irrespective of race, geographical origin, color, gender or language. Thus, there is no place at all for racial discrimination, class discrimination, nor tribal fanaticism. All persons are equal; no one is superior to anyone else. Piety and righteousness are the only criteria for nobility among people.

3. Comprehensibility and universality (the comprehensive nature) of Islamic Sharee'ah:

Islamic Sharee'ah as a system of guidance to righteousness, is distinguished for being thorough and comprehensive in that it deals with all aspects of life in Moslem society or community. This quality of comprehensibility of Islamic Sharee'ah includes all spheres of life whether they be matters of creed, belief, religious rites and rituals, or the code of moral conduct. It includes also matters of a mundane secular nature such as incrimination, private and personal affairs, the social system and international relations or matters pertaining to legislation about political and economic systems. All these provisions, stipulations and principles of Islamic Sharee'ah form a complete scheme of life and all-embracing social order. There is nothing superfluous, nothing lacking. They have the qualities of constancy as they are the legislation set by the Lord and Sole Master of the universe.

4. The qualities of suitability for all times in all places, with a reasonable scope for innovations:

Islamic Sharee'ah meets the need of humanity and fulfills Man's aspirations and responds to the changing and increasing demands of modern life. It enables Man to keep abreast of the advancements and developments of all civilizations at all times, as it has an all-embracing system of directions for the

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regulation of social and economic affairs, transactions, administrative and constitutional matters and international relations. Take for example, the rule of justice. Allah says,

"O you who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah and be just witnesses and let not the enmity and hatred of others make you avoid justice. Be just: that is nearer to piety, and fear Allah. Verily, Allah is Well-Acquainted with what you do."

Allah also says,

"Verily! Allah commands that you should render back the trusts to those, to whom they are due: and that when you judge between men, you judge with justice. Verily, how excellent is the teaching which He (Allah) gives you! Truly, Allah is Ever All Hearer, All seer."

The rule of justice, as has been cited in the preceding holy verses, is a systematic constant rule that is not susceptible to change or modifications as it is applicable for all times, at all places. However, the means and mechanisms of applying this rule allow for modifications and adaptations should the need arise due to the demands of modern times. Thus, the application of the rule of justice at one court or another is a matter left for those who have the power to decide on the basis of their changing needs. The Islamic Sharee'ah first and foremost calls for the application of the rule, but the mechanism and the methods of applying that same rule are up to those concerned as long as the Islamic courts acknowledge and abide by the rule itself.

The same goes for the provisions for Shura (consultations) which have been cited in the Holy Qur'an explicitly:

"And by the Mercy of Allah, you dealt with them gently. And had you been severe and harsh hearted, they would have broken away from about you; so pass over their faults and ask Allah's Forgiveness for them; and consult them in the affairs. Then when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah, certainly, Allah loves those who put their trust in Him."

"And those who answer the Call of their Lord [i.e. to believe that He is the only One Lord (Allah), and to worship none but Him Alone], and perform As-Salat, and who conduct their affairs by mutual consultation, and who spend of what We have bestowed on them."

The rule for Shura is a complete and constant rule irreplaceable and immutable. The rule should be applied for all times at all places, but the mechanism for its application is a matter that is adaptable according to the requirements of different times. Thus, to apply Shura in a small ministerial council consisting of a think tank, or to opt for a local council for each district or country or, to form several Shura councils, is a matter to be decided upon by the parties concerned at a particular time. Again, Islamic Sharee'ah aims to apply its provisions and regulations of Shura (consultation), but the method of implementation can be by whichever means are most suitable as long as they are practiced in accordance with the teachings of Islam.

5. Maintaining a balance between the spiritual and the material:

One of the merits of Islam is that it does not recognize a conflict or even a significant separation between the spiritual and material aspects of life. It does not confine itself merely to purifying the spiritual and the moral life of Man in the limited sense of the word. Its domain extends to the entire gamut of life as a complete whole. It properly delineates Man's place on earth and his relationship to His Creator, Allah, his duties and rights towards himself, his family and others as well as his place in his community.

Islam as a complete legislation and a perfect code of conduct does not recognize self-imposed poverty or self abasement as virtues, nor does it recommend monastic or hermitical seclusion.

At the same time, it does not allow Man to indulge in the materialistic side of life to the point where he becomes heedless of His Lord and the life- hereafter. Islam urges man to maintain a balance between the spiritual and the practical spheres of life.

6. Paying equal attention to the individual's interest and society's interest:

One remarkable merit of Islamic Sharee'ah is that it allows for coordination and harmony between the interest of the individual and that of the whole community. It regulates the individual's place in the scheme of life, i.e., his relationship with his community. Islam stipulates the individual's rights as well as the community's in a well-balanced and

impartial manner. It sets the proper bounds of each and establishes strong ties between them. In cases of conflict of interest, Islam gives priority to the community's interests.

7. Performance of duties without overtaxing abilities:

A remarkable feature of Islamic Sharee'ah is its provisions for performing one's duties at ease and without strain or embarrassment. Exalted Be Allah, says,

"And strive hard in Allah's Cause as you ought to strive (with sincerity and with all your efforts that His Name should be superior). He has chosen you (to convey His Message of Islamic Monotheism to mankind by inviting them to His religion, Islam), and has not laid upon you in religion any hardship, it is the religion of your father Ibrahim. It is He (Allah) Who has named you Muslims both before and in this (the Qur'an), that the Messenger Muhammad may be a witness over you and you be witnesses over mankind. So perform As Salat, give Zakat and hold fast to Allah [i.e. have confidence in Allah, and depend upon Him in all your affairs] He is your Maula (patron, Lord, etc.), what an Excellent Maula and what an Excellent Helper! "

These verses from the Holy Qur'an assert that Islam does not require any man to do what he lacks the capacity nor ability for. Islam does not enforce rites or rituals that are beyond Man's ordinary capabilities. Rather all the requirements of the Islamic faith enter within the category of Man's capability to perform

them, so that Man will have no excuses for not carrying out duties and religious rites.

8. Islamic Sharee'ah as the final and complete faith:

Islamic Sharee'ah is the final revelation, the consummation of all the preceding heavenly faiths and messages, which it came to compliment and conclude. It encompasses all the Prophets' and Messengers' calls, and combines them in an all-embracing code of divine guidance. The Holy Qur'an states on more than one occasion that Allah (Glory Be to Him) commands the belief and acceptance of all the preceding Prophets and messengers, their books and, their messages. Allah says,

"Say (O Muhammad): "We believe in Allah and in what has been sent down to us, and what was sent down to Ibrahim, Ismai'l, Ishaque, Ya 'qub, and Al-Asbat [the twelve sons of Ya 'qub] and what was given to Musa, Iesa and the Prophets from their Lord, We make no distinction between one another among them and to Him (Allah) we have submitted."

The Prophet and Messenger, Mohammad (may peace and blessings be upon him) pointed out that he was sent to perfect the divine code of morals and that his message was the last that would complete the preceding messages. The Prophet (May peace and blessings be upon him) says:

(I and all other Prophets before me are like a person who built a house. which was perfect albeit for the corner stone.

People started roaming around enjoying its beauty, said: are you going to finalize the construction of this house by placing its final brick? I am like that final brick which completes the house. I am the final and last Prophet who was sent to perfect the preceding sacred faiths).

It is a well-known fact that the Prophets' messages all agree upon the following:

- a. All stipulate the call to monotheism and forbid making associations with the Only God, Allah.
- b. All stipulate the calls for "Iman" (reposing faith in Allah) His angels, books, messengers and the Day of Judgment.
- c. All agree on the call for morality, virtuous behavior, and all-embracing code of moral conduct.
- d. All call for the worship of Allah, the sovereign, Lord of the universe, the Glorious, and for the redemption of Man from the serious sin of associating others with Allah's worship.
- e. All stipulate for the establishment of the basis for peace, love, kindness and enjoining in God and forbidding evil among the peoples and nations of the world.

The Holy Qur'an makes reference to all of these denotations of all the heavenly messages. Allah, says,

"Say (O Mohammad): "O people of the scripture (Jews and Christians): come to a word that is just between us and you, that we worship none but Allah,

and that we associate no partners with Him, and that none of us shall take others as lords besides Allah. Then, if they turn away, say: Bear witness that we are Muslims.

9. Originality and permanence of Islamic Sharee'ah:

By making divine revelations the primary source of knowledge, it gives permanence and stability to moral standards, while affording reasonable scope for genuine adjustments, adaptations and innovations, though not for perversions, ill variations or moral fluidity.

The Holy Qur'an, which is the primary source of Islamic Sharee'ah, will be preserved and sustained forever, as it is Allah's will to keep it preserved to be studied and memorized. Allah says,

"Verily We: it is We Who have sent down the Dhikr (i.e. the Qur'an) and surely, We will guard it from corruption."

The Holy Qur'an has been in existence for more than fourteen centuries and is still the Qur'an for all humanity in letter, word, sentence, meaning, interpretation and recital.

The originality and authenticity of the Holy Qur'an has been acknowledged by some western intellectuals such as Professor (Reynold Nickloman) who in his book "The Literary History of the Arabs" says: "the Holy Qur'an is a splendid doctrine for humanity which shows precisely the true meanings of Mohammad's (may peace and blessings be upon him) conducts and deeds

throughout all his life. We even find in it (the Holy Qur'an) a rich and unique treatise which is beyond suspicion and impossible to counter argue and through which we can trace the "Sira" history of Islam since its beginning and emergence in early history. We can never find anything comparable to it in Christianity, Buddhism or in any ancient religion.

10. One of the main characteristics of Islam is the principle of human brotherhood:

Islam defined the relationship between Man and his brethren according to the principles of equality and justice; piety and righteousness are the only real criteria for nobility. Based on these principles, Islam calls for the protection of Moslems' honor, blood, dignity, possessions, mind, and money. Islamic Sharee'ah's chief objective is all Mankind's interests and not the interest of one class of people, or one race or one nation to the exclusion of others. Islamic Sharee'ah does not aim at the worldly benefits of Moslems while disregarding their moral and spiritual interests, or their condition in the hereafter. It is inconceivable that all these matters and considerations could be included in a secular man-made ideology. But as a code of divine guidance, (the Islamic Sharee'ah), all of these objectives and interests can be realized. This is a solid confirmation that the Islamic Sharee'ah was sent for the welfare of all humanity, for the realization of equality and justice on earth, and for salvation in this life and the hereafter. This is a distinct characteristic of the Islamic Sharee'ah's call for a universal and absolute justice. ■

What is the Brain?

Consciousness

Consciousness is a constellation of attributes of mind such as subjectivity, self-awareness, sentience, and the ability to perceive a relationship between oneself and one's environment.

Unconsciousness

Unconsciousness is an alteration of mental state that involves complete or near-complete lack of responsiveness to people and other environmental stimuli. Being in a comatose state or coma is an illustration of unconsciousness.

Fainting due to a drop in blood pressure and a decrease of the oxygen supply to the brain is an illustration of a temporary loss of consciousness.

How and why do we dream?

Dreams have fascinated nearly everyone for thousands of years. There are two different schools of thought as to why we dream: the physiological school, and the psychological school. While many theories have been proposed, not single consensus has emerged as to why we dream.

Some researchers suggest that dreams serve no real purpose, while other believe that dreaming is essential to mental, emotional and physical well-being. One theory for dreaming suggests dreams serve to clean up clutter from the mind.

How does the brain control body temperature?

The Hypothalamus part of the brain regulates body temperature much like a thermostat. The hypothalamus knows what temperature your body should be (about 98.6 Fahrenheit or 37 Celsius), and if your body is too hot, the hypothalamus tells it to sweat. If you're too cold, the hypothalamus makes you start shivering. Shivering and sweating helps get your body's temperature back to normal.

Are humans born with all their brain cells?

Babies are born with around a 100 billion brain cells, but only a small number of neurons are actually connected. By three years of age a child's brain has formed about 1,000 trillion connections, about twice as many as adults have. At around 11 years, the brain begins to prune unused connections. Connections that are used repeatedly in the early years become permanent; those that are not are eliminated. Hence the saying: "Use it, or lose it."

How and why do we sleep?

We still don't fully understand the importance of sleep. However, we do know that sleep is the time when the body does most of its repair work; muscle tissue is rebuilt and restored and tissue-building growth hormone is secreted during sleep.

A good way to understand the role of sleep is to look at what happens when we don't get enough sleep.

Are IQ tests accurate measures of intelligence?

First you need to define intelligence, a very hard task, think about it. Intelligence is an encompassing term. "We cannot measure intelligence when we have not defined it," said journalist Walter Lippmann in the early 1920s.

According to most current definitions intelligence is made up of the skills of logical reasoning, problem solving, critical thinking, and adaptation.

IQ tests are not very reliable and the scores may vary as much as 15 points from one test to another. The average IQ scores for many populations have been rising at an average rate of three points per decade since the early 20th century with most of the increase in the lower half of the IQ range.

When is the brain considered dead?

Brain death is the irreversible end of all brain activity (including involuntary activity necessary to sustain life) due to total necrosis of the cerebral neurons following loss of blood flow and oxygenation. A brain-dead individual has no clinical evidence of brain function upon physical examination. This includes no response to pain and no cranial nerve reflexes.

Reflexes include pupillary response (fixed pupils), oculocephalic

reflex, corneal reflex, no response to the caloric reflex test and no spontaneous respirations. The diagnosis of brain death needs to be rigorous to determine whether the condition is irreversible.

Legal criteria vary, but it generally requires neurological exams by two independent physicians. The exams must show complete absence of brain function, and may include two isoelectric (flat-line) EEGs 24 hours apart.

If tests show brain activity, the patient may be in a coma or vegetative state. A brain dead person doesn't show brain activity. It is important to distinguish between brain death and states that may mimic brain death. Some comatose patients can recover, and some patients with severe irreversible neurologic dysfunction will nonetheless retain some lower brain functions such as spontaneous respiration, despite the losses of both cortex and brainstem functionality.

Thus, anencephaly, in which there is no higher brain present, is generally not considered brain death, though it is certainly an irreversible condition in which it may be appropriate to withdraw life support.

Today, both the legal and medical communities use 'brain death' as a legal definition of death. Using brain-death criteria, the medical community can declare a person legally dead even if life-support equipment keeps the body's metabolic processes working.

Do brain supplements work in enhancing memory and brain power?

As we age our brain is more susceptible to memory loss and diseases such as Alzheimer's disease. The functionality of the human brain can also be affected due to problems in nervous system or inadequate blood supply to the brain.

Interesting Brain Facts:

The diameter of an individual brain neuron is just 4 microns thick, you could fit 30,000 neurons on the head of a pin.

- * Your brain generates nearly 25 watts of power while you're awake, which is enough to light up a light bulb.
- * Alcohol interferes with brain processes by weakening connections between neurons.
- * Every time you have a new thought, or recall a memory, a new brain connection is made between two or more brain cells.
- * A living brain is so soft you could cut it with a table knife.
- * Loss of oxygen for just 5 to 10 minutes can cause serious brain damage. The brain can stay alive for 4 to 6 minutes without oxygen. After that cells begin die.
- * The average adult's brain weighs 3 – 4 lbs. but consumes 20% of the body's oxygen supply.

- * The human brain contains around 400 miles of blood vessels.
- * There is no sense of pain within the brain itself which explains why brain surgeons can probe areas of the brain even when the patient is awake.
- * The left side of your brain (left hemisphere) controls the right side of your body; and, the right side of your brain (right hemisphere) controls the left side of your body.
- * Your cerebral cortex is about as thick as a doctors tongue depressor and it grows thicker as you learn more.
- * You will lose consciousness in 10 seconds after the loss of blood supply to the brain.
- * Of all creatures on earth humans have the most complex brain.
- * Differences in brain weight and size do not equal differences in mental ability.
- * If stretched out the cerebral cortex would be 0.23 sq. m or 2.5 sq.ft.
- * Average surface area of the cerebral cortex is 2,500 cm² or 2.69 sq.ft.
- * There are about 100 billion neurons in the human brain, the same number of stars in our galaxy. ■

[Courtesy: <http://www.disabled-world.com/artman/publish/brain-facts.shtml>]

Valentine's Day: Reality or Mirage

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

Valentine's Day is celebrated on 14 February each year with elan. This is originally a Roman festival. As far as we Indians are concerned, it has no sense for us. One has rightly said, "it is a tragedy of our time that our youths are bent on accepting every glitter of the 'Modern' era as fashion and symbol of progress".

It is unfortunate that we Indians are more susceptible in copying other without realizing the worth of the acts observed by others. It shows our imbecility, idiocy, impassivity, inanity, insanity and stupidity. Rabindranath Tagore describes of such mania in one of his poems with these words: "Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit".

In this context it may be said that Holi and Rakcha Bandhan both are sacred festivals in India. Both have their radiant and redolent backgrounds and significant importance. But Christians, Jews and the like never celebrate it in their respective countries.

As regards Valentine's Day, various legends narrated about it. But the most famous is that during the third century Roman Claudius wanted to have a big army. But most of the people

did not like to leave their hearth and home. So the emperor banned the marriage of soldiers. Despite this mandate St. Valentine, the Bishop of the local church performed marriage secretly. When the emperor came to know about Valentine's breach of order. He ordered his soldiers to put him into Jail. One day the prison guard said to his daughter to visit Valentine in the cell. Accordingly St. Valentine fell in love with the jailer's daughter. It is said due to this reason he was executed on 14 February 270 EC, Since then 14 February is observed as the day of "Feast of lovers" in Rome.

Now let us see to what extent celebration of this festival is justified. Was the sacrifice of Valentine for prevailing the truth or any other noble cause? We shall dispassionately ponder over the ins and outs of this legend.

It is an open secret that Valentine's Day leads on youths to the path of obscenity, immodesty and indecency. It has no any good aspect through which one may take advantage of.

It is time we must keep away from such absurdities and take pride in our own culture and civilization. Good deeds lead to good and evil deeds to evil. ■

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