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THE FRAGRANCE OF EAST

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Characteristics of Ibrahimi Civilization

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

From the point of view of Islamic belief, morality and way of life, Indian Muslims, along with Muslims of all other lands, possess a distinctive civilization for which there can be no more appropriate and comprehensive title than 'Ibrahimi' Civilization'. This Civilization has three essential attributes which have fixed their stamp on its entire spiritual, intellectual and social design and given it a flavour and a character that are manifestly its own. The three attributes are God-consciousness, Monotheism (which has been taught ceaselessly by all the Prophets belonging to the line of Hazrat Ibrahim and a complete elaboration of which is contained in the Qur'an), and a permanent, natural awareness of human dignity and equality that never deserts the mind of a Muslim. It is these characteristics which lend a distinctive personality to the Ibrahimi civilization. As far as we can say, in no other system of civilization are these features so strikingly in evidence. ●

(Muslims in India p. 66)

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Wisdom of Qur' an

"So eat of what Allah has provided you, lawful and good, and give thanks for Allah's favors, if it is Him that you serve".(Surah al-Nahl-114)

Commentary:

A possible connection is that Allah (swt) is addressing the Makkan unbelievers, then passing through a phase of hunger and fear, that they could instead believe in Him and His Messenger and "eat of what Allah has provided you, lawful and good" (Razi).

"He has only forbidden carrion, blood, swine's flesh, and what has been hallowed to other than. But whoever is driven to it, neither desiring (it) nor transgressing, then, surely, (unto such) Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Kind".(Surah al-Nahl-115)

Commentary:

That is, anything dedicated to, or hallowed for other than Allah whether it is an animal, a food article, or something else. For example, in some parts of the Muslim world, a goat or ram is named after a Sheikh (peer), and sacrificed at his arrival in town or village. Now, they might spell Allah's name while slaughtering the animal, but since it was dedicated to other than Allah, the jurists declare its meat unlawful to the Muslims, as well as such act of dedication (Au). ●

Pearls From the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

It is related by Abdullah bin Omar that the Apostle of God said: "To offer up Namaz in congregation is twenty-seven times more meritorious than to offer it up alone."

-Bukhari and Muslim

Commentary:

Just as there is a difference of grade and degree in the properties of the things of the material world, and their worth and utility varies in accordance with it, our deeds, too, belong to various grades and standards the detailed knowledge of which is possessed only by God. When the Prophet tells about an act that it is superior to such-and-such an act by so many degrees he does so on the basis of the knowledge vouchsafed to him by the Almighty. Thus, the observation made in the above Tradition about Namaz said in congregation to be twenty-seven times more deserving of Divine reward than the one said individually is a truth inspired by God to the Prophet and conveyed by him to his followers. It is, now, the duty of the faithful bondsmen that, believing wholeheartedly in its veracity, they took care always to offer Namaz in congregation.

It, also, shows incidentally, that a Namaz celebrated singly is not lost altogether but is of a lesser grade by twenty-seven times which, clearly, is a matter of great sorrow and misfortune in itself. ●

Editor's Note:



Putting Salt on the Wound

On December 6, 1992 Babri Mosque in Ayodhya, a historical monument, was demolished with the active support of State government and connivance of the Union government headed by PV Narasimha Rao. Thanks to the electronic media the whole drama of rowdiness was seen all over the world. It is said that Prime Minister too watched it throughout the day. VHP leaders Ashok Singhal and Vedanti are on record that they were in touch with Narasimha Rao and had his blessings for pulling down the structure to make way for building the Ram Mandir. To cover up the failure of government in protecting the mosque Justice Manmohan Singh Liberhan Commission was set up to pin down the culprits. Justice Liberhan took 17 years in assessing the situation and indicting those who built up the euphoria for destroying the mosque and finally got it pulled down.

Madhu Trehan of Newstrack covered the 6/12 episode and recorded what happened - and what did not happen on that day. Reacting on Liberhan Commission report she has written a very illuminating and interesting write up in Hindustan Times (December 21, 2009), we reproduce it below. Newspaper articles lose their value after a few hours but Trehan's observations need to be preserved and that can be done in our files.

It should have taken 60 minutes -30 minutes to watch the footage from Newstrack, the old video magazine, and 30 minutes to write the report. Newstrack's December 1992 edition gave a minute-by-minute account of what happened in Ayodhya on December 6, 1992. And yet, M.S. Liberhan took 17 years to come up with what he came up with.

Mritinjoy Jha along with his team were in Ayodhya from November 23, 1992.

Thousands of pumped-up, slogan-shouting people were pouring in, carrying pick-axes and other equipment. Manoj Raghuvanshi, with another Newstrack team, had pulled the story together. In his voice-over, Raghuvanshi spoke about "a chief minister who spoke from both sides of his mouth-promising the Supreme Court that no construction would take place on the disputed site- and a prime minister who trusted everybody, including his central forces sent ostensibly to defend the masjid."

The recordings captured Hindu leaders, including Tyagi Maharaj and Acharya Dharmendra, exhorting the crowd that the masjid must be destroyed and a temple built. Uma Bharti in her speech made three crucial points by demanding answers from the crowd; "Will you restrain yourselves when the leaders ask you to? Will you maintain peace and observe rules? Will you obey your leaders?" The crowd bellowed a yes. But did the BJP really believe that it could control the *kar evaks*, the RSS volunteers, the Bajrang Dal and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad after its own passion-rousing *rathyatra*?

Rehearsals of demolition teams practicing with ropes, pick-axes and boulders were recorded by Newstrack. The images included Bajrang Dal leader Ramesh Pratap in Khaki shorts 'directing' with a whistle.

Each time they pulled down a 'practice boulder', there were cheers. Bajrang Dal president Vinay Katiyar stated on camera, "I have never formulated any strategy keeping the Supreme Court in mind." At the Marg Darshak Mandal meeting on December 5, 1992, VHP president Ashok Singhal responded to Newstrack's query on whether he would obey the Supreme Court order to maintain the status quo: "Nonsense! We have nothing to do with courts. We are unaffected by the court order."

The disputed area was cordoned off and only sadhus and journalists were allowed in. Around 11.00 am on December 6, BJP leaders Murlu Manohar Joshi, L.K. Advani and the VHP's Ashok Singhal were seen walking into the area. Ayodhya District Magistrate R.N. Srivastava smugly told the Newstrack team:

"We have made full arrangements," adding excitedly, "There is a lot of enthusiasm in the public." Any fear of anything happening? "No fear", Srivastava replied. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) D.B. Rai maintained that "peace and calm will prevail". Srivastava, along with other senior bureaucrats, then settled down on a terrace to observe the demolition. Tea was served as they watched the proceedings.

As the mob started to demolish the cordoned-off area of the Babri Masjid, there was a clear divide between the general crowd and the hardcore *kar sevaks*. After being given a cue, the *kar sevaks* started assaulting journalists, breaking cameras and most journalists made a run for it. Newstrack's sound recordist Ashok Bhanot hid tapes under a *charpai* in nearby house. Another team carried on shooting.

The hardcore *kar sevaks* wearing yellow head-bands then started weeding out the general crowd (wearing orange head-bands) and only those trained and part of the demolition plan entered the area of the masjid. Singhal was seen shoving people himself. There was confusion among the faithful about why they were being thrown out. Those who resisted were beaten up. There was a specific plan with assigned roles for the demolition. Any 'freelance' help was not welcome.

"Watch this. the single-most crucial development that led to the destruction of the disputed structure -at this point there was no direct threat to the shrine and certainly no threat to the police- for some unknown reason: these troops suddenly lined up and filed out of the shrine area", says Raghuvanshi in the voice-over of the footage. "Was this direct collusion? Were they ordered to leave and if so, by whom? There was no tear gas. No rubber bullets. No lathi charge. No firing. There was no attempt whatsoever to even try to defend the shrine."

As sadhus blew conch-shells and *kar sevaks* scaled the barricades to the masjid with pic-axes, ropes and shovels, a small contingent of police stood just below the bureaucrats'

terrace. A police rebellion was caught on camera. As the demolition began, a frantic-looking SSP D.B. Rai ordered his troops to stop the demolition. The police force shuffled nervously, refusing to move even as Rai shouted at them.

The bureaucrats kept sipping on their tea. Cameraman Bharat Raj realised then that the action to capture was not confined to the destruction of the masjid, but also the inaction around it.

The Censor Board banned the Newstrack tape. We appealed to the Appellate Tribunal in Bombay. Justice B. Lentin passed an order that stated, "Not only should this tape be allowed, it should be compulsory viewing for every citizen of India." Doordarshan showed nothing.

We had 36 tapes of 20 minutes each, which totalled 12 hours. I was furious with Raghuvanshi for wasting so much tape on a 30-minute story. M.S. Liberhan asked Newstrack to hand over the tapes. I refused to hand over 12 hours of original tape and we gave him the edited story.

In the 17 years that Liberhan took to write his report, the BJP was in power for six years and the Congress for ten. One can presume that all the 48 extensions were given to Liberhan by both these parties, since the Congress and the BJP were in power for 16 out of the 17 years. It doesn't take a genius to figure out that the tabling of the report did not suit either party.

Here's the simple conclusion: both parties were responsible for the destruction of the Babri Masjid.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has ordered an inquiry into the leaking of the Liberhan report. This is the wrong inquiry to order. Journalists were simply doing their job to get the contents of the Liberhan report to the public. There should be an inquiry into who gave Liberhan 48 extensions and took Indian citizens for a Rs 8 crore ride. ●

S. A.

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

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Worship in Islam

Greatest importance is accorded to worship, next only to creed, in the prophetic religions among which Islam occupies a place at the top. It is, because worship is the very end and purpose of the creation of man. God has clearly stated in the Qur'an.

"I created the jinn and mankind only that they might worship Me." (51:56)

All the religious scriptures have formulated laws about the acts of worship and invited their followers to observe them. Islamic law has likewise presented them but with greater perfection. The Prophet of Islam was so zealous about them that his ardour for worship can hardly be described in words. Scores of Qur'anic verses and hundreds of ahadith exist which explain the great merit of worship and invite the believers to perform them with a solemn heart; those who are constant in prayers have been praised and the people indifferent to them have been severely criticized. They contain an appeal to except others in the performance of worshipful observances.

The Qur'an holds that even domination over a country and fighting in the way of God are simply the means for establishing prayer.

"Those who, if We give them power in the land, establish worship and pay the poor-due and enjoin kindness and forbid iniquity. And Allah is the sequel of events." (22: 41)

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Even a cursory glance at the Qur'an is sufficient to convince any one that what is required of man is nearness and submission through observance of prescribed acts of worship (that is, prayer, poor-due, fasting and pilgrimage). He will be asked about them on the Day of Judgement and punished for their non-observance. Those who will be sent to hell will be asked:

"What hath brought you to this burning? They will answer: We were not of those who prayed, nor did we feed the wretched. We used to wade (in vain dispute) with (all)waders, and we used to deny the Day of Judgement till the inevitable came to us." (74:42-47)

At another place the reason for entry into hell is thus explained:

"For he neither trusted, nor prayed. But he denied and flouted. Then went he to his folk with glee." (75:31-32)

These verses are clear enough to show that the acts of worship have a central place in the scheme of life prescribed accountable on the Day of Judgement. The remaining matters like establishment of a theocratic state and endeavour for public weal have a secondary place, or are just the means to achieve this end.

The first and foremost in these prescribed observances is *salat* or the prayer. It is a pillar of religion and the distinguishing mark between a believer and a non-believer. The believers are thus

commanded by God:

"And establish worship, and be not of those who ascribe partners (unto Him)." (30:31)

Imam Bukhari has given in the Jami a *hadith* of the Holy Prophet, on the authority of Jabir, which reports him as saying: "Discontinuance of prayer stands between a man and his infidelity."

Another *hadith* recorded in the Tirmidhi says: "The barrier between belief and disbelief is discontinuance of prayer."

Observance of prayers is a condition precedent for salvation: it is the protector of faith. It is held up by God as the primary condition for granting guidance and piety. It is incumbent on everyone, on the slave and the free, on the rich and the poor, on the sick and the healthy whether they are in the camp or cantonment. No adult is exempt from it under any circumstance -as against fasting, pilgrimage and poor-due which have been made stipulatory, depending on the fulfillment of certain conditions and at certain periods. Prayer, on the other hand, has to be observed even on the battlefield. It is an obligation that even the prophets of God cannot afford to neglect, leave alone the saints and gnostics, for God has clearly ordained:

"And serve thy Lord till the inevitable cometh unto thee." (15:99)

Salat is to the believer what water is to the fish. It is the greatest shelter or haven of peace for the believer. If *salat* is offered with a perfect heart, it will guard the observer against yielding obedience to deities other than God, going in for unenlightened paganish way of life and

sliding down to the immoral behaviour, for all these are wholly antagonistic to the spirit of *salat*.

Salat is not a wooden, dead ritual in which there is no scope for spiritual development or wherein everyone is compelled to stay at the same level. Its scope is very vast, taking the devotee forward from one stage to another until he attains perfection of spirit, and advances to the heights that are beyond the imagination of man. In its vitality and potency to create a living relationship with God and to attain His propinquity nothing in the entire scheme of *shariah* can be compared to *salat*. It has enabled the true and pious believers in every age and of every race to attain such spiritual heights and inner excellence that the rationalists cannot dream of them. Their number is legion. *Salat* is the legacy of prophethood which has been handed down meticulously, with all its forms, regulations and content by one generation to another. *Salat* was the most valued and pleasing form of worship to the Holy Prophet. He always had the greatest satisfaction and peace through prayer. He often used to say: "The coolness of my eyes lies in *salat*." The Prophet used to ask Bilal, whenever the time came for prayers: "O Bilal, give the call to prayer and bring comfort to my heart." Hudaifa, a companion of the Prophet, relates that whenever the holy Prophet was faced with any difficulty he used to offer prayers instantly.

The *salat* of the Holy Prophet was the most sublime example of what is known as *ihsan*. Once on being enquired about the significance of *ihsan*, the Prophet is

reported to have replied: "(It meant) that you worshiped God as if you were seeing Him, and if you were not seeing Him, He, at least, was seeing you." This is the prayer required of every believer for he is ordained to follow the example of the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet once directed the Muslims: "Offer prayers as you see me offering." We shall now give here a brief sketch of the prayer as offered by the Prophet.

The Way Holy Prophet Offered *Salat*

For *salat* is the adoration of and proximity to God, the Holy Prophet has stressed the need of performing *wadu* or ablution for attaining complete state of physical purity. The Prophet also recommended to brush one's teeth with a *miswak*, and once he said, "Had I not been aware of the hardship to my people, I would have ordered them to brush their teeth before every prayer."

When the Holy Prophet stood up for prayers, he audibly recited, "Allah-o-Akbar" that is, the *takbir-e-tahrima*, and said nothing before it. He used to raise his hands, while uttering Allah-o-Akbar, in a way that his palm faced the *qiblah*, his fingers wide open and then he kept his right hand on the back of left hand's palm. In obligatory prayers he used to recite the invocation:

"Holiness to Thee, O God! And praise be to Thee! Blessed is Thy name! Great is Thy greatness! And there is no deity but Thee!

Different invocations have been reported for *tahajjud* and *nafl* or voluntary prayer, such as:

"O Allah! Make me as distant from

my wrongs as the east and west are removed by Thee. O Allah! Wash me of my sins with water and snow and hailstone. O Allah, cleanse me of my sins as dirt is washed out of a white cloth."

Thereafter, the Prophet recited, "I betake myself to Allah for refuge from the accursed Satan", and "I begin in the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate," and then followed it up with the *Suratul Fatiha*. His recital was clear, audible and every word was pronounced distinctly. He paused at the end of every verse, almost intoning the last word. Having finished the *Suratul Fatiha* he said, "Amin". He paused twice for a little longer time; first between the *takbir* and the *Suratul Fatiha* and then in between the *Suratul Fatiha* and the other *Surah* he recited after it or before genuflexion. The *surah* recited after *Suratul Fatiha* was often a longer one but sometimes he selected a shorter one usually during travels or on other similar occasions. Very often he recited the *surah* of moderate length which was neither very long nor too short. In the *fajr* prayers he usually recited one of the longer *surahs* known as *tawal-i-mufassal* consisting of 60 to 100 verses. It is related that during the travels he normally recited *Surah az-Zilzal* or the *Ma'uzatain*. In the *fajr* prayer on Fridays he usually recited *Surah Alif Lam Sajdah* and *Surah Dahr* and when there was a bigger congregation, such as, on Fridays or Ids, he normally recited *surah Qaf*, *Suratul Qamar*, *Suratul Ala* and *Suratul Ghashia*.

His recital was often longer in the *zuhr* prayer while in the *asr* prayer it was normally half of the former. If he recited a

shorter *surah* during the *zuhr* prayer than the one recited during *asr* was almost of equal length to that: in the *maghrib* prayers he is reported to have recited both the longer and shorter *surahs* but normally it was one of the *qisar-imufassal*. Normally one of the *suras* of middle length were recited in the *isha* prayers. Once when Ma'adh b. Jabal recited Suratul Baqarah in the *isha* prayer he admonished him saying "O Ma'adh, would you plunge the people in dissension?"

In Friday prayers he recited the whole of Suratul Jumah and Surah Munafiqun or Suratul Ala and Suratul Ghashiya. Except for Friday and Id prayers he had no fixed schedule of *suras* for recital which could not be changed. The first *rak'at* of *fajr* prayer used to be longer than the second one or normally it was so in every prayer, but in the *fajr* prayer the recital was the longest in comparison to other prayers because the Qur'an says: "Verily the recital (of the Qur'an) at dawn, Lo! The recital is witnessed."

In the *ruku* (genuflexion) the Prophet bowed down by placing his hands on the knees, as if he was holding them, the hands being straight and kept at a distance from the sides, the back also being kept straight, while he recited, "Glory be to my Lord, the Most Majestic", normally he recited these words ten times. Every act in the prayer was performed with grace and ease. While raising his head from the *ruku* he uttered, "Allah hears him who praises Him"; when he got up making the waist straight, he said, "Our Lord, Thou art Praised",

Sometimes he added a few more words to it. Then with another *takbir*, Allah-o-Akbar, he went down into prostration, his knees touching the ground before he placed his hands on it. But, while getting up the hands were raised first and then the knees left the ground. While in prostration the forehead and nose were placed on the ground, the hands were kept apart on the sides so that one could see the pit of the arms, while the palms took the position in line with his shoulders and ears. He performed the prostration with complete repose, the fingers of the foot pointing towards the *qiblah*, and he murmured: "Glory be to my Lord, the Most High", or a few words more, normally repeating the same ten times. In the voluntary prayers he very often supplicated while in prostration. Then he sank backward upon his heels, placed his hand on the thighs, and said, "My Lord, Forgive me, have mercy on me, make me secure, guide me and give me sustenance." Thereafter he stood up, leaning on foot figures, knees and thighs, and started the recital without any pause, repeating the second *rak'at* like the first one. When he sat down in *tashahhud*, his left hand was placed on the left thigh and right hand on the right thigh. He raised his first finger of the right hand during the *tashahhud* and asked his companions to recite it in the same way. His recitation in *tashahhud* was:

"Veneration and worship and sanctity all are for God. Peace be on thee, O Prophet, and his mercy and blessings. And peace be on us and upon God's righteous servants. I witness that there is no deity save Allah and I witness that Muhammad is His servant and

messenger.”

Sometimes the Prophet shortened the *tashahhud* but there is no report to suggest that he ever recited *darud* before it or beseeched protection against torments of the grave or hell or the perils of earthly life or of Dajjal.

Then he got up again leaning on foot-fingers, knees and thighs, as in the first *rak'at*, and performed the subsequent *rak'ats*. In the last *rak'at* wherein the prayers were terminated, he sat down to recite the foregoing *tashahhud*.

After the *tashahhud* he recited the *darud* and then supplicated as follows:

“O Allah, I seek refuge from the torments of the grave, and from the perils of Dajjal, and from the vicissitudes of life and death. O Allah, I seek thy refuge from the sins and the burden of loans.”

The Prophet is reported to have taught this supplication to Abu Bakr:

“O Allah, I have wronged heavily my ownself and none can forgive the sins save Thee; then, grant me salvation from Thee and have mercy on me. Thou art the Forgiving, the Merciful.”

A few more supplications are reported to have been taught by the Prophet to his companions. He turned the head, after reciting one of these supplications, to the right, saying, “Peace and mercy of God be on you”, and repeated the same turning his head to the left. Thereafter the Prophet kept sitting but turned to the left or right. 'Abdullah b. 'Abbas relates that he could know when the Prophet terminated his prayer by utterances of Allah-o-Akbar. He recited, *isteghfir* thrice immediately after terminating the prayer and then glorified

the Lord with these words:

“O Allah! Thou art peace and peace is from Thee; Thou art Holy, the Possessor of Glory and Honour.”

The Prophet kept sitting facing the *qiblah* only so long as he recited the above prayer. Thereafter he turned towards the congregation, sometimes to the left or the right, and then recited the following hymn after every obligatory prayer:

“No deity is there save Allah, the One, without any associate. To Him belongs the dominion and all praise. And He is potent over everything. O Allah, there is none to debar (anyone) from what Thou bestows, and none to give what Thou withholds. Nothing of one's benefit can reach him save from Thee.”

Another laudation he recited was:

“No deity is there save Allah; the One, without any associate; His is the dominion and for Him are all praises; and He is potent over everything. There is no strength, no power save in Allah.”

He also recited:

“No deity is there save Allah, we worship none save Him; His are the favours and praises and excellences. No deity is there save Allah, we worship none save Him; (we) make religion exclusive for Him howsoever it may displease the disbelievers.”

He told his followers that it was commendable to recite *Subhan Allah* (Glory be to God), thirty-three times; *Al-hamdu lillah* (All praise be to God), thirty-three times and then *La ila Illallah, wahdahu, la shrik lahu, lahu-ul-mulko wa lahul hamd wa hua ala kull-i-shayin qadeer* (There is no deity save Allah, the One, without an associate unto Him; to

Him belongs the dominion and all praise and He is potent over everything.) In accordance with another report attributed to the Prophet, Allah-o-Akbar (God is Great) is to be recited thirty-four times to complete this litany.

The Prophet used always to offer at least twelve *rak'ats* of additional prayers: four before the zuhr prayer and two after it, two after the *maghrib*, two after *isha* and two before the *fajr* prayers. These *sunnat* prayers were often performed by him in his own house but he never missed them. Normally, he performed a prayer constantly once he started offering it. In the *sunnat* prayers mentioned above, those of the *fajr* are more meritorious. It is related by Ayesha that the Prophet attached greatest importance to the two *rak'ats* of *fajr* prayer. She also says that the Prophet normally performed the *nafil* and *sunnat* prayers in his house and never gave up the *witr* prayer whether he was travelling or at home. In this way the *sunnat* of the *fajr* and *witr* have a greater importance among all the other supplementary prayers. After offering the *sunnat* of the *fajr* prayers, the Prophet used to lie down, leaning to the right, for taking a brief rest. In regard to the congregational prayers, he is reported to have said: "Prayer offered with the congregation has an excellence twenty-seven times greater than that offered alone." Abdullah b. Mas'ud relates: "We have seen the times when only the hypocrites missed the congregational prayer. Even those offered prayers in the congregation who came to join it with the help of two persons.

The holy Prophet never missed the

tahajjud (mid-night) prayers whether he was at home or out on excursion. If he was ever unable to offer them owing to sleep or illness, he offered twelve *rak'ats* in lieu of it during the day. In the night he offered eleven or thirteen *rak'ats* (including *witr*). The *tahajjud* and *witr* prayers were performed in different ways: he recited the *qunut* in *witr*; the recitation during the night was often audible but sometimes inaudible; sometimes he made the *rak'ats* longer or shortened them; and offered the *witr* mostly in the later part of the night. The *nafils* or supererogatory prayers were performed, during the journeys, on the mount facing the direction he was going while the *ruku* (genuflexion) and *sajdah* (prostration) were observed just by making signs for the same.

The holy Prophet and his companions used to offer thanksgiving prostration on every divine favour or on being saved from any menace. If they came across a Quranic verse mentioning prostration, they performed the prostration instantly with Allah-o-Akbar.

Friday was hallowed and certain additional prayers not performed on other days were observed on that day. He instructed his companions to take bath and perfume themselves and make haste in going for the Friday prayers. This was to be regarded as his *sunnah*. The Prophet used to recite the Suratul Kahf on Fridays and put on the best dress he had on that day. Imam Ahmad quotes the Prophet in the Musnad, on the authority of Abu Ayyub Ansari, as saying. "If one takes bath on the Friday, and perfumes, and puts on a nice dress and then goes to the mosque in a dignified manner, and there

he offers such voluntary prayers as he desires, without causing inconvenience to anyone, and keeps quiet from the time the Imam ascends the pulpit (i.e. listens the sermon attentively), then it would serve as an expiation of one's sins from one Friday to another." Sahihain record a saying of the Prophet related by Abu Hurairah: "There is an auspicious moment on every Friday; if a believer is engaged in prayer and supplicates to God at that moment, God shall answer his prayer." Scholars differ about the appointed hour of this auspicious moment but the majority view is that it arrives sometimes after the *asr* prayer. A large number of companions and their disciples and Imam Ahmad hold his views.

The Prophet, used to deliver a brief sermon before the Friday prayer but prolonged the prayer itself. He spent sufficient time in the recollection of God and exhorted others to do the same. In his sermons, the Prophet usually explained the creed and practices of Islam, forbade what he considered necessary or commanded acts he desired to be carried out. While delivering the sermons, he never took the sword in his hand but before the pulpit was erected he used to lean on a bow or a staff. He used to stand for delivering the first part of the sermon, then sat down for a little while, and thereafter concluded it with the latter part of the sermon. Bilal recited *iqamah* immediately after the sermon was concluded.

The prayers of the two Ids were performed in the *Idgah*; only once he performed the prayer of Id in his own mosque owing to rains. He used to put on

th nicest dress he had on the occasion of Id. The Prophet used to take a few dates, usually odd in number, before going for the prayer of Id-ul-Fitr but he took nothing on Id-ul-Azha until he returned from the *Idgah*. He took a little meat of the sacrificed animal on return. He used to take bath on the two Ids and offer these prayers without *iqama* or *azan*. The Prophet and his companions never offered any prayer in the *Idgah* before or after the Id prayers. The sermon was delivered after the Id prayers. The sermon was delivered after the Id prayers and the number of *takbirs* in it were increased. After the prayer was over, the Prophet turned towards the congregation, exhorted them and gave such directions as he desired or else sent out a detachment, if the occasion demanded. Thereafter he went to the women and exhorted them to be benevolent. The women, it is reported, contributed to charities with both hands. The Prophet repeated the *takbir* in his sermons of the Ids. He went for the Id prayer by one way but returned by another route.

The Prophet had also performed the prayer of *Kusuf* (eclipse of sun) and delivered a sermons on that occasion. Once the Prophet offered the *kusuf* prayer when his son Ibrahim had died. He discountenanced superstitious notions in his sermon in which he said:

"Verily the sun and moon are two signs of God, and are not eclipsed on account of the life or death of any person. Whenever you see them, remember God and supplicate to Him, Glorify Him and offer prayers and give out alms."

Istisqa prayer (for bringing down

rains) is reported to have been offered by the Prophet in different ways. In regard to burial service the Prophet's way was different from all other people. The prayer offered at the time of burial consisted of devotion and adoration of God as well as supplication and invocation of blessings on the dead. The Prophet and his followers used to stand as in other prayers, praise and glorify the Lord and seek divine forgiveness for the dead since the burial service was primarily meant to supplicate for the departed soul. When the Prophet went to the graveyard, he prayed for all the persons buried there and beseeched divine blessings for them. He instructed his companions to utter the following while visiting a graveyard.

“Peace be on the believers and the Muslims resting here; we are also, God willing, about to meet you; we seek well-being for us and you from God.”

Zakat and Charities.

The Prophet's attitude towards wealth whether it belonged to him or to the members of his household, typically reflected his outlook towards life, riches and the world at large. It was the attitude of a man to whom the Grandeur and All-Powerfulness of God were self-evident realities, whose conduct reflected the morals of God and whose gaze was ever fixed on the Day of Resurrection and final Judgement. He used to remark very often:

“O Allah, there is no life except the life of the hereafter.”

The Prophet used to pray God for himself and his dependants thus:

“(I wish) to have a square meal on one day and go hungry on the other.”

“O Allah, grant sustenance to the progeny of Muhammad only as much as it is necessary to sustain (their) life.”

The Prophet never liked to keep with him anything in excess of his needs or the money received by him for being given out in charity. Ayesha relates:

“During the Prophet's last illness I had six or seven dinars with me. He instructed me to give them to the poor and the needy, but I could not get time to do so owing to his illness. He asked me again what I had done with those dinars. I replied that I had forgotten to give them out because of his illness. He sent for the coins, and taking them in his hand, said. “What would be supposed of the Prophet of God if he meets his Lord while this still remains with him.”

Another *hadith* reports the Prophet as saying:

“He who has a conveyance in excess of his need should give it to him who has no conveyance; he who has some provisions in excess should give it to him who is without it.”

Describing the Prophet's practice of dealing out alms Ibn Qayyim writes:

“The Prophet spent most of his wealth in charities. Whatever was bestowed by God on him, he always took a moderate view of it. If anybody asked him for any thing that he had, he gave it to him without a second thought. He gave out everything without the least consideration of his own needs. Actually he liked to give out alms and charities and took such a joy in giving away something to others as was seldom felt by the man receiving it. Surpassing everybody in generosity, he gave away with an open

hand. If anyone in need of anything came to him for help, he always gave him precedence over himself and lavished upon him clothes or food or whatever he wanted. His help was showered down in different ways; sometimes he assigned a thing to someone, sometimes it was given as a gift and sometimes by way of alms. Often he purchased a thing and then gave back both the thing purchased and the price, as he once did with Jabir. Sometimes he took a loan and returned it with an addition or purchased something and gave more than the price demanded. If he accepted a gift, he gave another gift better and many times more costly than the one given to him. In short, his munificence took varied and novel shapes in helping others bounteously."

In regard to *zakat* the instruction given by the Prophet for its period and method of assessment, eligibility to pay it and the purposes for which it should be utilized are too well-defined and comprehensive. They take note of the needs of the well-to-do as much as the needy and the poor. *Zakat* purifies the wealth of the rich and makes them eligible to receive divine favours.

The *zakat* collected from the rich in any area was got distributed by the Prophet among the poor and the destitute in the same locality. It was brought to him for distribution to others only when it was in excess of the requirements of the people where it was collected. He used to send the collectors of *zakat* only to the people who possessed such recognizable goods (*amwal-i-zahirah*) as chattels, culminations, groves etc. He instructed the collectors of *zakat* to accept not the

best of the produce but that of moderate quality and value. The Prophet also instructed to pay *fitrah* before leaving for Id prayers.

Saum and the Prophet's Practice

Fasting was made obligatory in 2 A. H. and the Prophet left this fleeting world after he had kept the fasts of *Ramadhan* of 9 A. H.

The way the Prophet kept fasts made it a perfect and sure means of achieving its objectives (self-reformation and complete submission to God) without turning it into penance or self-mortification. During the month of *Ramadhan*, the various acts of worship offered by the Prophet were intensified: Gabriel paid a visit to him, and listened the Qur'an recited by him. Whenever Gabriel called upon the Prophet, his munificence knew no bounds; during such periods he showered down alms and gifts on others with both hands. During *Ramadhan* the Prophet paid varied divine honours which were normally not offered in other months. Sometimes he fasted continuously although he forbade his companions to do the same. When the companions invited his attention to his own practice, he replied, "I am not like you. I spend my nights (day, according to another report) with my Lord, who gives me sustenance." He placed great emphasis on *sahur*, the predawn meal, and declared it to be his *sunnah*. Anas b. Malik relates that the Prophet said, "Take the *sahur*, for the *sahur* carries blessings." He is also reported to have said: "The *sahur* makes our fast different from that of the *ahl-al-kitab*." The Prophet forbade to

delay the fast-breaking and described the practice as a source of evil and the usage of dogmatic among the *ahl-al kitab*. He once said, "People will remain safe and secure so long as they will make haste when (the time for) *iftar* arrives," and also, "Din (religion) will be victorious so long as the people will make haste in *iftar*, for the Jews and Christians purposely delay it." In the *sahur* the Prophet and his companions used to make delay until its time was about to expire.

The Prophet used to break the fast by taking a few fresh dates and if these were not available he took dried ones or simply water before offering the prayer. While breaking the fast he used to say:

"O Allah, I kept the fast for Thee and break it with Thy sustenance."

He also used to observe:

"Thirst is quenched, the veins are wet and, God-willing, the reward is absolutely certain."

The Prophet used also to make interruptions in the fast during the *Ramadhan*: often he fasted, often not, and allowed the companions to observe or discontinue fasting. If an enemy was about to attack, he instructed the companions to refrain from fasting so that they may remain fit to face the enemy. However, it was during *Ramadhan* that he had to fight some of the decisive battles, such as, the battle of Badr and also had to set out for the conquest of Mecca during which the congregation kept increasing until in the fourth night there was such a huge throng that the Prophet's mosque proved insufficient to accommodate all of them. That night the Prophet came out of his house only for the *fajr* prayer, although

on the first three nights he had led the *tarawih* prayers. After prayer was over, he addressed the people, saying, "It is not that I was not aware of your assembly here in such numbers, but I was apprehensive of this (*tarawih*) prayer being made obligatory for you, and then you might not be able to act up to it." The observance of *tarawih* prayers remained optional until the death of the Prophet. After him his companions kept up the practice enthusiastically and ultimately it became the distinguishing mark of the *ahl-sunnat-wal-jamaa't*.

At times the Prophet used to go on fasting continuously and sometimes he left it altogether. When he fasted continuously it seemed as if he would go on with the fast for ever, when he left it one thought that he would not fast any more. But he never fasted for the whole month at a stretch except in the month of *Ramadhan*. He also fasted more during Sha'ban than in any other month. He fasted specially on Mondays and Thursdays. Abdullah b. Abbas says, "The Prophet never missed the fast during the *ayyamul-abyadh* (i.e. the bright days or the 13th, 14th, and the 15th of each lunar month) whether he was travelling or in his home."

He also commanded others to fast on these days. He was very particular about the fast on the *ashura* day (i.e. the tenth of Moharram). Once when he was fasting on the day of *ashura* he was told that the day was deemed as consecrated by the Jews and Christians. He replied, "God willing, if I remain alive I will fast on the ninth also."

The Prophet never fasted on the

day of *arafa* nor he was given to unbroken fasting for several days. It is related in authentic *ahadith* that he said: "Allah liked most the fasts of Dawud who fasted on alternate days."

The Prophet often used to enquire on coming to his house if there was anything to eat. If the reply was in negative, he used to say, "Alright, I am fasting today."

It was the practice of the Prophet to observe *aitikaf* during the last ten days of *Ramadhan*. Once when he missed it, he retired in *aitikaf* during *Shawwal*. He used to remain in *aitikaf* for ten days each year, but in the year he died he retired for twenty days. Gabriel used to go over the whole Qur'an completed the recital twice."

Prophet's Hajj and Umra

There is no difference of opinion that after the hijrah, the holy Prophet performed only one hajj which is known as *Hujjatul wida'a* in 10 A. H. Hajj was accordingly made incumbent in 9 or 10 A. H. The Prophet performed, after the *hijrah*, three or four *umras*, all in the month of *Dhul Q'ada*.

A brief description of the hajj performed by the Prophet is given here.

When the Apostle of Allah decided to go for the pilgrimage he got a public announcement made and the people started making preparation for the journey.

Large numbers came to Medina as the news spread and even larger throngs joined the Apostle in the way until it became difficult to count the multitude. The swarming crowd of the faithful

around the Apostle set out from Medina on Saturday, the 25th of *Dhul Q'ada*, after performing the four *rak'ats* of *Zuhr* prayer followed by a sermon in which he explained the essentials of putting on the *ihram*.

The Messenger of God then went ahead raising his voice in the praise of God: "At Thy service, O God, at Thy service, at Thy service; Thou hast no partner, at Thy Service; Praise and Grace art Thine and the Dominion; Thou hast no partner." The entire crowd chanted this *talbia* alongwith the Apostle, some curtailed a few words while others supplemented it with a few more in a tremor of excitement; but the Apostle did not admonish them. The Apostle of Allah kept on repeating these words until he reached *Araj* where he encamped. Abu Bakr and the Apostle rode the same dromedary.

The stages ahead in the journey were at al-Abwa, the wadi of Asfan, Sarif and then Dhi Tuwa where he stayed during the Saturday night. It was now the 4th of *Dhil Hijja*. The Prophet offered the morning prayer at that place and also took bath before proceeding onwards. The caravan now bent its steps towards Mecca and entered the valley from its heights. It was an hour or so before noon when his glance fell on the Ka'ab. He exclaimed: "O God increase the honour and estimation and deference and awe of Thy House"; and then lifting up his hands, he raised his voice to say, "God is Great," and then said, "Thou art Peace, O God! Peace is from Thee; O God! Cause us to live in peace."

The first thing he did on entering the sanctuary was to go straight to the

Ka'ba. He kissed the Hajar Aswad, the sacred black stone studded in the north-east corner, and then moved on to encompass the Ka'ba seven times, commencing on the right and leaving the Ka'ba to his left. He went round the circuits, thrice at a quick step and then took four rounds at a slow pace.

The Apostle was taking quicker steps but the paces were not long. The seamless garment in which he had wrapped himself was thrown loosely on one shoulder, the other being left bare. Each time he passed the Hajar Aswad, he touched it with the stick in his hand and kissed it. Thereafter he took to the Muqam-i-Ibrahim and recited the Qur'anic verse: "Take as your place of worship the place where Ibrahim stood (to pray)", and offered two rak'ats of prayer at the place. Going to the Hajar Aswad after the prayer, he kissed it again and then he took himself to As-Safa from the door opposite him. On reaching near As-Safa, the Apostle said: "Lo! As-Safa and Al-Marwa are among the indications of Allah. I begin with what Allah began with."

Then he went to As-Safa from where the Ka'ba was within his sight. Facing the qibla, he again proclaimed the greatness of God, saying:

"There is no god but God alone who has no partner: to Him belongs the dominion; to Him all praise is due; and He is omnipotent. There is no god but God who alone has fulfilled His promise, helped His servant and has alone routed the confederates."

The Apostle remained in Mecca from Saturday to Wednesday. On

Thursday morning he came to Mecca alongwith other Muslims, performed the *zuhr* and *asr* prayers and stayed there for the night. It was the night before Friday. After the sun had risen he made for the Arafat where he saw the tent pitched for him at Namirah. God's Messenger rested in the tent and when the sun had passed the meridian he ordered his camel Qaswa to be brought to him. When it had been saddled for him he went down on it into the valley and addressed the people. He explained to the people the fundamental principles of Islam and struck at the roots of polytheism and ignorance. He commanded the people to treat as inviolable and sacrosanct the life, honour and property of every man as warranted by every religion and declared that all the usages and customs of the pagan past were trampled underneath his feet. The usury of the pre-Islamic days was abolished by the Apostle although he allowed recovery of the original sums lent to the debtors. The Apostle dwelt in his sermon on the rights of women, threw light on the mutual obligations of the husband and wife and bade the people to deal kindly and provide food and clothing to their spouses in a fitting manner. Thereafter referring to the Book of God he told his companions that if they continued to hold it fast they would not fall into error. Finally, he told that on the Day of Judgement God would ask them about him, so what answer would they give on that Day. The entire congregation replied, as one man, that they would testify that he had conveyed the message and fulfilled his mission. Then, raising his hands towards the sky the Apostle said,

“O God, be a witness,” repeating it thrice. He asked those present to inform those about it who were absent.

The sermon ended, and the Prophet asked Bilal to give the call to prayer. After the call was over, he performed the noon and afternoon prayers, performing only two *rak'ats* of each. The day he delivered this sermon was Friday.

The Apostle then mounted his camel and came to *mauqif*, the place of standing, where he remained on the back of his camel until sunset, lamenting, beseeching and glorifying the Lord. He appeared to be tormented and disconsolate, repeatedly raising his hands in prayer to his chest, like a man bereaved and indigent, crying for his livelihood. He was heard saying:

“O God, Thou hearest what I say; and seest where I am, and knoweth what I conceal or reveal. Nothing can remain hidden from Thee. I am tormented, indigent and miserable, seeking refuge with Thee as one sorrow-stricken and horrified. I acknowledge my sins and confess my faults; I call upon Thee like a beggar and cry unto Thee like an abased sinner; I beseech Thee like one who is dismayed and harassed, fallen prone before Thee, shedding tears; like one who has thrown oneself at Thy feet and is licking the dust. O God, cause me not to fail in my supplications to Thee; be Kind and Merciful unto me; Lo! Thou art the Best of all those who are implored and the Most Generous of all the givers.”

It was then that God sent down the revelation: “*This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My*

favour unto you and have chosen for you as religion Al-ISLAM.” (5:2)

When the disc of the sun had disappeared, the Prophet left Urfa with Usama up on his dromedary behind him, and wended ahead slowly, holding the halter of his camel in a way that his head, bowed in submission to God, almost touched the saddle. The Apostle of Allah was repeating the *talbia*. “At Thy service, O God, at Thy service...”, and asking the people to proceed slowly and gently. He kept raising his voice in the *talbia*, until he reached Muzdalifa. There he ordered Bilal to give the call to prayer and performed the sun-set prayers before even the camels were knelt down and unloaded. He recited the night prayers after the camels had been unloaded and then went to take rest and slept till dawn.

Having performed the dawn prayers early in the morning, the Prophet mounted Qaswa and came to Mashar al Haram, the Sacred site in Muzdalifa, where facing the *qibla*, he continued supplicating God and glorifying Him until the morning light was clear. Then he left Muzdalifa with Fazl b. Abbas up behind on his dromedary, chanting the *talbia* all the way. He asked Ibn Abbas to pick up seven small pebbles for *rami jamar*. When he came to the middle of the valley of Muhassar, he urged his camel to go fast and passed the plain quickly for it was the place where punishment was inflicted on the army of Abraha. The Prophet came to Mina and from there to the Jamart ul-aqaba. There he cast the pebbles after the sun had well risen and ended it with the recitation of the *talbia*.

Returning to Mina, the Prophet

delivered a glowing address in which he dwelt on the sacredness of *yaum-un-nahr* and the significance God had assigned to the day. He elucidated the honour and distinction conferred by God on Mecca over all the cities of the world and called upon the people to follow whoever ruled over them in accordance with the Book of God. Then, asking the people present there to learn the rites of pilgrimage from him, the Prophet urged them not to revert to the ways of the infidels, killing one another after him. He asked those present to convey everything he had told them to those who were absent, thereafter he said:

“Worship your Lord, offer prayers five times a day, observe fast for a month (in Ramadhan), obey those of you who are in authority and you shall enter the paradise of your Lord.

The Prophet also said something to his companions on this occasion which alluded to his valediction and hence the pilgrimage came to be known as the Hujjatul Wida'a or Farewell Pilgrimage.

Thereafter he went to the place of sacrifice in Mina and sacrificed sixty-three camels with his own hand the number of sacrificed camels being the same as the years he remained alive. He ordered Ali to sacrifice the remainder to make up a total of one hundred camels sacrificed on his behalf. The sacrifice having been completed, he sent for the barber, got his head shaved and distributed his shaved hair among the people. Then he returned to Mecca on his camel and went round the Ka'ba again. After that he came near the well of Zamzam and drank its water with out sitting down, and returned to Mina the

same day. He spent the night at Mina and stayed there until the sun had passed the meridian; then left for lapidation of the Jamrah. Starting from the first one he went on to throw pebbles on the middle and finally on the last Jamrah. The Prophet delivered two sermons at Mina, one on the Day of Sacrifice which has been mentioned earlier, and the next on the day after.

The Prophet tarried at the place to perform the lapidation at the Jamrah on the three days after the Day of Sacrifice, known as *ayym-i-tashriq*. Thereafter he left for Mecca; first he circumambulated the House of God at dawn for taking leave of the sacred House and asked his companions to get ready to depart. Then he set forth for Medina.

Having arrived at Ghadir Khum, the Prophet addressed the people again and said:

“Whoever loves me should love Ali also. O God, hold him dear who is attached to Ali and be hostile to him who bears ill-will to Ali.”

The Prophet bivouacked for the night at Dhul Hulaifa. When the outskirts of Medina came into sight he raised his voice to say, “God is Great”, three times and then said, “There is no god but God; He is one, without a partner; to Him belongs the dominion and the praise and He has power over all things; (We are) the returning and the repenting and the submitting and worshiping; God has fulfilled His promise and helped His bondman and He alone has routed the confederates.”

The Prophet entered Medina in the broad daylight. ●

Financial Institutions Need be Cleansed Of Usury

S. M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi

The present day secularism, democracy, national freedom and other different kinds of Western ideas and tendencies under whose influence all the view points and setups are made, are all immersed in, philosophies after life and Godlessness. These are entirely opposed to religious conceptions, Islamic philosophy and thinking. Islam, which the western civilization has considered a religion of outdated ideas and concepts and is shivering to break it. Islam is a comprehensive code of life which cannot be in harmony with Western ideas and thinking because the western philosophy of life is based on disgust for religion and complete freedom of individual. Moreover, personal benefit is its main objective, and its philosophy of life. So, in the financial matters of the West, disgust for religion and desire of making worldly profits has made usury and gambling an ingredient of life. Economy under going any phase of life can not evade usury system. Western made banking system is an effective way of recovering and promoting the usury system and it has been considered a cultural necessity, rather an indispensable part of human life, even though it may exploit the members of human society and may harm financial bases of the community. This fondness has made the banking system and effective medium to achieve the objective.

Going through history it is known

that the curse of usury has been the custom of ignorant, disgusted, sick and selfish societies and civilizations. As opposed to it all revealed religions have declared usury as prohibited. Christianity and Jewry had also prohibited usury which their learned men used to underline and exhort their people because Torah and Bible had contained these prohibitions. Torah says, "If you give loan to anyone of my Umma, do not set over him, do not claim profit in your money". Similarly in Bible also it is written, "If you gave loan to people from whom you need reward, then what is your superiority, do not expect profit from the loan you give, then only you will get good reward".

For sometime this has been the doctrine of European Christianity and a part of their laws. But it has lost identity with passage of time, until the French revolution annulled the prohibition of usury completely and its council legislated a law legalizing usurious transactions. Then other European countries, in their disgust for religion and their greed for money, absorbed this curse in its entire financial body. Wherever Europe went in the world, it carried its culture, popularized this curse and included it in every department of human life. Now usury is absorbed in every vein and muscle of Europe. Jews have a great role in popularizing usury.

Examining it impartially, it is proved that interest based transactions are not only religiously but also worldly,

unhealthy practices. Taking loan on interest seems an immediate relief to the taker and an additional means of income to the lender but the interest based business is growing more and more hollow from inside. So many countries are becoming hollow because they have stock piled interest based loans. Therefore, their developments do not bring about financial well-being which looks like a mirage. The financial experts of such a financially strong country like America are expressing their worries about the daily down fall of financial graph. This super power country is squeezed under the burden of interests and countries receiving interests based loans are unnerved and jittery of this burden. India also spends a large part of its budget in payment of loans which is increasing every year and a large portion of Indian income is spent in payment of loans.

Every usurious nation believes that the profit gained in business dealing is similar to the profit gained by interest. This is the conception with which the modern culture has not separated a normal business transaction and interests based dealing. According to the philosophy of this culture, they have no distinction between business and a interests based dealings: They say, "The trade is like usury", but Islam has propounded a different clean justified view point in contradiction to their concept, which is based on Allah's approval and disapproval. Allah has created mankind and knows best, what is beneficial and what is harmful for man and when He prohibits anything He knows that it is really harmful. Then, He is the creator of all mankind, therefore it is necessary to obey Him. So, condemning usury He

says: "Allah has permitted trade and prohibited usury."

Usury was forbidden in Jewish religion and then it was also forbidden in Christianity. So in Europe and America where Jews and Christians live together and, where usury is forcefully carried on, is sin in their own religion also. But they do not care about it. Instead they have made it essential while it is not only evil in religion; it is evil in worldly affairs too. So, the entire system of Europe is based on the philosophy of carelessness to lawful and unlawful. Adopting this system, even with some minor alternations, its evil consequence cannot be avoided. In these circumstances, we Muslim have to devise a separate setup which should contain the theory based on the commands of Allah and instructions of the Prophet. This contains solutions of all our problems. It will have its source from the following verse: (That which ye lay out for increase through the property of (other) people, will have no increase with Allah: But that which ye lay out for charity, seeking the countenance of Allah, (will increase): it is these who will get a recompense multiplied).

In its light, the establishment of our financial institution and their administration will be carried out with honesty and cooperation that we have to do it for the pleasure of Allah and sincere help to our people and not with the intention of what we are going to get from it and what profit we will make from it which will give rise to a selfish way and it will completely lose the feeling of mutual sympathy and the sense of reward in the After-life. ●



The Dark Side of Learning

S. M. Wazeh Rasheed Nadwi

It is a distinctive feature of Islam that it has laid emphasis on earning more than any other religion has done. Islam has included acquisition of knowledge in its religious teachings and conferred a high status to a learned man. But Islam has bifurcated knowledge in two categories; one is advantageous knowledge and the other is disadvantageous knowledge. At present time, we are getting more experience of advantages and disadvantages of knowledge it is the age of advancement and popularity of learning. The proportion of learned people in this age is higher than it was in any other age. Today institutions imparting education and training are available from village to village. What is desirable is that these centers of education should provide lessons of equality and message of humanity, promote moral values, teach manners of co-existence, spread the feelings of human welfare and play their important role in making and promoting of human society, but what has happened is contrary, now knowledge is used to teach the methods of exploitation and to derive personal benefits. And this tendency is the cause of the deprivation and adversity of mankind in the modern age. This is why man is quarrelling with man and has become bloodthirsty. Families are clashing with families and governments are clashing with governments. The reason of all this is the

clash of objectives an insistence on personal benefits. Knowledge and learning has now become a means of misleading. Now the shade of knowledge and learning is used to weave a network of cheating and deception and the centers of knowledge and learning create an atmosphere of fear and awe. Those countries which are very advanced in science produce most advanced lethal weapons for homicide. Knowledge is used to cover the acts of the criminals and at the same time convict the innocent people, instead. This is done by those countries that are very advanced educationally and most developed technically and culturally.

Israel is one of these advanced countries who are more developed educationally than other advanced country but it has occupied another country, brutalized its original inhabitants and compelled them to take refuge in other countries. These developed and advanced countries who are superior to other countries in education and culture are supporting and helping Israel. Israel violates international laws and its men of learning even Nobel laureates of European countries approve of its crimes.

Such countries include erstwhile Soviet Union which occupied Afghanistan and massacred millions of its innocent people and also banished millions out of Afghanistan. Then they forfeited the civil rights of these people

and tyrannized them to the point that they sought refuge in other countries and compelled the remaining population to adopt a way of life according to their standards. A very large part of the world suffered tyranny of the oppressors and spent their lives as slaves. And those people who preferred the ideologies of the occupiers had attacked the ideologies of other people. The educationally and scientifically advanced countries kept talking of the superiority of their own knowledge and culture and declaring the remaining part of the world as uneducated and undeveloped. They changed the laws of the lands, compiled an untrue history, corrupted the regional cultures and tried to impose their language, their culture and their thinking. They created the problems of Palestine and Cyprus and held out their help and supports to countries on ethnic bases and brought the world at a point where killing and massacre is the only way. The oppression and tyranny of Britain can be measured from independence movement of India. An eminent journalist has proved in his book that Britain had massacred 11 million Indians to occupy and take control of the country, (when the total population of India including present Pakistan, Bangladesh and Burma was only 150 million). This is more than double of the controversial figure of Jewish holocaust.

Germany is one of the advanced countries scientifically and culturally. During the time of Hitler, the tyranny and cruelty inflicted on Jews are an important part of history. These developed countries fought two wars which cost the lives of

about 70 million people. The holocaust of Jews in Germany (which may be true or false) cannot be denied, even doubt is an inexcusable crime, but the question here is as to who had committed this act? Did Muslims do it who are frequently blamed with violence? Or did the people of the east do it who are labeled with ignorance and backwardness? The answer is that if this holocaust is true then it is an open proof of the brutality and beastliness of the German race who are the representatives of the civilization and culture of Europe. In case it is a false propaganda then it is a very good example how the western world can join together and agree on this falsehood.

Among the advanced and developed countries, the most prominent is USA who killed million of Japanese by atom bombs. An did a lot of blood shed in Vietnam for a number of years and treated the unarmed Vietnamese like cattle. Yet unsatisfied, they moved to Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine to quench their thirst for blood and targeted the habitants with brutality.

Among these advanced and developed countries there is France who shed the blood of one million Algerian Muslims; prepared an army of rebels who were opposed to religious and moral values and spread its network in other parts of the world.

These are few instances of the advanced, civilized and cultural countries. If the bloody stories of these countries are related and the tyrannies and callousness are compiled, it will fill up volumes and volumes. ●



Media and the Muslims*

Mirza Asmer Beg

Introduction

The pervasive and vigorous presence of the media as a principal element in any cultural definition was brought to our notice by Marshall McLuhan, in his authoritative book, *Understanding Media*. The only message, he warned us, was the medium; in our age the medium is the master, a demon master. Yesterday Saddam was the Arab moderate par excellence, today he is a Hitler. The nature and influence of the media as central to the understanding of power and domination are accepted widely today. Pictures on television can be as devastating to a country as a volley of missiles falling on it. Through the media the opposing position can not only be triumphed over but also, by denying it access, it can cease to exist altogether.

The powerful media offensive is compounded for Muslims: they appear not to have the capacity to defend themselves, worse, they appear unable to even comprehend the nature and objections of the onslaught. The empty bluster of the leaders and the narrow minded whining of the scholars make them appear pitiful, like pygmies arguing among themselves while the powerful giant of an enemy is at the gate. It is the ordinary Muslim who senses the immensity of the danger. He is conscious of the potential scale of the battle and the forces arranged against him; his tension is

made worse because he has so little faith in his own leaders.

In the media no serious effort is made to understand Islam and its real meaning. The word Islam which is derived from '*silm*', means peace. Islam has no place for violence. Islam believes that one who kills a human being has killed the whole humanity. The right approach should have been to judge Muslims in the light of the real teachings of Islam. However, the media generally tend to judge Islam in the light of behavior and actions of Muslims, but the same logic is not applied when the action of those professing other faiths are judged. So when the Taliban regime in Afghanistan destroyed the Buddha statues in Bamiyan, the world's media was quick to link it to fundamentalist Islam and its dangerous teachings, whereas, when the U.S. forces in Iraq presided over the plunder of thousands of priceless artifacts, transcripts and archaeological material from the National Museum in Baghdad, the media did not attempt to cast aspersions on their religion or the Western civilization.

It is really strange that the media never examine critically those tenets of other religions which are violative of basic human rights and defy rationality, rather they tend to glorify and create a positive image of other religions. The approach, however, is very uncharitable

* Extract from "Muslims in India Perceptions and Misperceptions".

when it comes to Islam. It is projected as anti-democracy, anti-Western and anti modernity. Calls are given for reform and review of different tenets of Islam.

These calls are rarely sincere and mostly mischievous. The intention being to project that hundreds of years old teachings of Islam have no place in this modern world. Those who make this calculated assault are also aware that Muslims would react against such suggestions. Sometimes the reactions could turn violent. This strengthens the argument of these media created experts that Muslims are intolerant and they do not want to change with the times.

In the face of the power and aggressiveness of the media, Muslims appear to have lost the capacity to represent themselves, even to express what they see and know as the reality of their lives. Muslim reality for the world has become the images on television and the countless hostile words in the papers. Muslims in the media have no voice, no platform, so they cannot object or explain. Muslim expressions of cultural identity are dismissed as fanaticism, Muslim demand for basic rights seen as fundamentalism. In this media game Muslims-weak and impotent cannot win. Their frustration, therefore, finds expression in anger and in violence.

Image of Islam

The mass media provide a certain picture of Islam and reflect powerful interests in the society served by the media. Along with the picture, which is not merely a picture but also a

communicable set of feelings about the picture, goes what we may call its overall context. Context here means the picture's setting, its place in reality, the values implicit in it and not least the kind of attitude it promotes in the beholder. The media observe certain rules and conventions to get things across intelligibly, and it is these, often more than the reality being conveyed, that shape the material conveyed by the media. Since these tacitly agreed upon rules serve efficiently to reduce an unmanageable reality into "news" or "stories" and since the media strive to reach the same audience which they believe is ruled by a uniform set of assumptions about reality the picture of Islam, is likely to be quite uniform.

Negative images of Islam are quite prevalent and they do not correspond to what Islam "is", but to what certain sections of the media take it to be. These sections have the power and the will to propagate that particular image of Islam, and this image therefore becomes more prevalent, more present, than all others.

The present coverage of Islam canonizes certain notions, texts and authorities. The idea that Islam is medieval and dangerous for example has acquired a place both in the culture and the polity that is very well defined. Authorities can be cited for it, references to it can be made, arguments about particular instances of Islam can be adduced from it. And in turn such an idea furnishes a kind of a priori touchstone to be taken account of by anyone wishing to discuss or say anything about Islam. From

being something out there Islam is turned into an orthodoxy of this society. It enters the cultural canon, and this makes the task of changing it very difficult.

Stereotypes and Caricatures

Vulgar stereotypes and caricatures are circulated by the media. The media have reserved the tag of "terrorist" only for Muslims who are involved or are alleged to be involved in acts amounting to terrorism. So a non-Muslim involved in such activities can be anything but a terrorist. The media very seldom question the authenticity of government versions on terrorist incidents. The national English dailies routinely carry reports with titles like "unidentified Laskar-e-Toeba terrorist killed" without pausing to think that if the alleged terrorist was unidentified, how did the police know that he belonged to a particular terrorist organization. Often those killed are so imprudent that they carry their names and addresses and those of their accomplices in their pockets for the convenience of the security forces.

Whenever, terrorism is being discussed on the T.V. or in the press, the picture of a terrorist is shown as a person with a typical Muslim beard and appearance. Long after the discussion or the write up have been forgotten, the picture remains etched in the memory of the viewers/readers. So whenever they hear or read the term "terrorist", the picture in their memory gets refreshed.

An Islamophobic climate on the issue of terrorism has been created. Islam has been vilified as an intrinsically

intolerant religion prone to extremism. In this picture every Muslim in India figures as Pakistan's fifth column and his religion as the fount of "global terrorism". He needs to put in extra effort to prove his patriotism, but thanks to the media created image he is still viewed with suspicion.

This has led to the social and political discourse in India getting so badly vitiated that large numbers of urban-middle class people, especially the young, now spout rabid inflammatory anti-terrorism (read anti-Muslim) rhetoric. Middle class audiences on talk shows reflect this. In the 'Movers and Shakers' show on Sony T.V., Shiv Sena Supremo, Bal Thackrey won applause for demanding that Indian Muslims must be sent to Pakistan as Hindustan belonged only to the Hindus.

The media's attacks on Muslim extremists easily convert into an attack on the entire body of Muslims. It is then difficult to distinguish between the two types of Muslims created in the minds by the media. For non-Muslims beneath the quiet facet of every ordinary Muslim there is a mad Mullah struggling to emerge, the sooner and more effectively he is put down the better.

Muslim polygamy has been reduced to a caricature and is always used as a stick to bear Islam. In reality, however, its incidence among Muslims is quite low and official figures have shown that an almost equal percentage of Muslims and non-Muslims practice it. Interestingly, according to the Union Ministry of Welfare's figures 5.8 percent Hindus practice polygamy as against 4.3

percent Muslims.

In popular cinema a shady character is usually a Muslim. A butcher is necessarily a Muslim. Who is depicted as being able to cut the neck of animals and humans with equal felicity. Needless to add that he has many children. A Muslim family is usually shown as living in medieval times, bereft of education and not in sync with today's world. The image of a typical Muslim which takes shape in the minds of an ordinary non-Muslim is that of an illiterate man with four wives and many children, running a small trade, having sympathy/collusion with terrorists and cheering for Pakistan in a cricket match against India. This is not to suggest that no Muslim comes true to this image or at least some features of it, but so do some non-Muslims. The problem actually is that in a ruthless and deliberate sweep the whole community has been given this image. One Muslim is, therefore, seen to be typical of all Muslims and of Islam in general.

Islam and Jihad

The term fundamentalist which otherwise is a harmless word, has been given a negative connotation and has been reserved only for Muslims. So people associated with SIMI or Jamat-e-Islami are fundamentalists but those belonging to VHP or RSS are not. Imam Bukhari is a fundamentalist but Praveen Togadia is at best a hardliner.

The media have been able to equate Jihad with terrorism. They have been able to make people believe that Jihad, which is one of the basic tenets of

Islam, means a religious war of aggression for the purpose of proselytizing or exacting tribute and exterminating the idolaters. Actually Jihad does not classically or literally signify war, warfare or hostility, and is never used in such a sense in the Qur'an. The Arabic terms for warfare and fighting are Harb and Qital. The Qur'an does not teach a war of aggression but has allowed a war of defence, clearly setting forth the grounds in its justification and strictly prohibiting offensive measures. It says: "Fight for the sake of Allah those that fight against you but do not attack them first. Allah does not love the aggressors."

The term militants and Jihadis are used interchangeably by the media. In fact, these two terms are contradictory to each other. While militancy is aggressive, Jihad is defensive. This irresponsible linkage of an Islamic concept with militancy has led to the presentation of Islam as a violent religion.

Although some misguided Muslims in order to justify their inhuman actions hide under the cover of Islam, the media have been all too willing to accept their explanation as the truth. The media are fond of using terms 'like Islamic terrorists' and 'Islamic Jihadis.' The link between Islam and terrorism is too obvious and clear.

Islam and Women

The media have presented a wholly incorrect negative stereotype of women in Islam as inanimate objects, submissively attending to the needs of the lord and master, locked away in darkened

homes. In reality, the potential of women in Islam is far superior to anything what Hindu and other civilizations offered. Muslim women are central to family affairs from domestic decision making to outside matters. Where their lot is miserable it is to be attributed to Muslim male tyranny, not Islamic advice.

However, an isolated incident like the marriage of a minor Muslim girl in Hyderabad to a Saudi Shaikh is converted into an attack on women in Islam. The media give extensive coverage and the whole story is discussed threadbare. It is a different matter that child marriage is a norm in some parts of India among non-Muslims, but it does not interest the media. This is not to justify that the marriage of a Muslim minor is right but to illustrate the media's "great concern" for Muslim women, which actually leads to strengthening the negative stereotype of women in Islam. It ought to go without saying that media are profit seeking corporations and therefore quite understandably have an interest in promoting some images of reality rather than others.

The media never try to look at the rights which have been given to women in Islam. No other major religion has given as many rights to women. But whenever this issue comes up for discussion, a very grim picture of women in Islam is presented. The veil which Muslim women use to cover their bodies decently and protect their modesty is seen as a symbol of physical and mental enslavement, which is forced upon women by men. They cannot accept that behind the veil could be an enlightened woman who has

decided to use the veil voluntarily. For the media, exposure of the female body has somehow come to be construed as a form of women empowerment. As Islam does not subscribe to this simplistic logic, its approach is said to be antithetical to modernist tendencies.

The media are adept at creating a controversy where none exists. The very natural and positive concept of divorce (Talaq) in Islam has also been dragged in a needless debate. The controversy over triple divorce has come in handy to demonize Islam. Learned editorials and researched papers are written on this subject without understanding its real meaning and context. Although divorce is allowed in Islam, but not the way it is presented in the media. The irreducible basis of what the media have to say on this subject is that in Islam a married woman is like a pawn in the hands of her husband and he can get rid of her by simply uttering the word 'Talaq' thrice in one go. This is an extremely ignorant and mischievous distortion. Instead of recognizing this positive concept in Islam where the contract of marriage allows and honourable exit for both the parties after they have explore all means of living together and failed. Divorce is the last and not the first option. This certainly is more natural and human than the irrevocable marriage in some religions where both the parties have to live together, come what may, till death. The result is clandestine illegitimate affairs, secret second marriages and in some cases murder of the spouse when no other option seems viable.

Instead of applauding this provision in Islam, the media have decided to concentrate upon the technicalities of its operationalization without trying to understand it properly. The irony is that a positive feature of Islam has been used as a stick to beat it.

Islam is News

The vernacular press is forthright and brazen in pursuing an anti-Islam and an anti-Muslim line. Their consistency on this count has been successful in poisoning the minds of ordinary folks. Concocted stories and canards against Muslims have been responsible for many a riot in independent India. The English press, however, is more circumspect in this regard. Nevertheless, the media's affiliation with power gives its coverage of Islam more strength, durability and presence.

Over the past decade or more, an aggressive campaign is being run by the Hindu right to malign the Muslim religious institutions called 'Madrasas'. The media have dutifully gone along. They have never bothered to go and investigate as to what is the real basis of these allegations. They truthfully report what the likes of Advani, Togadia and Singhal have to say. The ordinary people accept what they read and hear and take it as 'The Truth'. Muslims are advised to revise the courses being taught in these Madrasas. The media, however, are not alarmed at what is taught in schools run by the Sangh-controlled Vidya Bharti, which

specialize in suppression, distortion and invention of historical facts.

Issues and controversies about Islam and Muslims are taken up or invented and that becomes News. Whether it is triple *Talaq* or alimony to divorced Muslim women or a small incident in the Muslim University or Muslim opposition to some blasphemous publication. These Islamic topics are picked out of a huge mass of Islamic details and for the media, these topics define Islam so as to exclude everything not fitting neatly. The issue is then blown out of proportions and learned editorials are written suggesting as if these are the real issues confronting Muslims. For the non-Muslims the image which comes out of such coverage is that of a people who are still living in the past and are not comfortable with the present. Even their religiosity is primitivised.

Conclusion

These images stem partly from a lack of understanding of Islam among non-Muslims and partly from the failure by Muslims to explain themselves. For Muslims, therefore, it is good time to pause to reflect and to attempt to re-locate the main features of Islam. The sheer range of approaches and biases and consequent confusion oblige us to attempt clarification. The problem is not that there are too few answers but that there are too many. The path ahead is difficult, but that must not deter us from trying to present the whole truth in its proper context. ●



Virtues of Salat

Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

Islam rests on five pillars: Kalima (declaration of faith) that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, Salat, Sawm, Zakat and Hajj. These are the five tenets of Islam in which Salat assumes more significance. Muslims repose faith in Allah and His last Prophet Muhammad (SWS) by reciting Kalima. Fasting in the month of Ramadhan comes once in a year. Zakat and Hajj too are for those Muslims who can afford to give Zakat and bear the cost of pilgrimage to Mecca to perform Hajj. But Salat, is obligatory for every Muslim till he or she is alive. Thus Salat is the main pillar of Islamic Shariah. It has been described as the foundation of faith. It is Salat which differentiates between believers and non-believers. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said: "To discard Salat is to be linked with *Kufr* and *Shirk*." "Discarding of Salat is the only partition between *imaan* and *Kufr*." The holy Prophet further said: "Salat is the first and the foremost thing ordained by Allah, and it shall be the first and the foremost thing to be reckoned for on the Day of Judgement."

Abdullah bin Masood said: "Once, I inquired of the holy Prophet, which act of man is the dearest to Allah. The Prophet replied, Salat. I then inquired which act comes next (in order of merit) and the Prophet replied, kindness to parents. I again asked what is next, he answered Jihad."

Abu Zar narrates that once the holy Prophet (SAW) came out of his house. It was autumn and the leaves were falling off the trees. He caught hold of a branch of a tree and its leaves began to drop in large number. At this he remarked, O, Abu Zar!

When a Muslim offers his Salat to please Allah, his sins are shed away from him just as these leaves are falling off this tree."

Abu Huraira narrates that once the Prophet asked companions, "Do you believe that dirt can remain on a person bathing five times a day in a brook running in front of his door?" No, replied the companions. No dirt can remain on his body. The Prophet remarked. So, exactly similar is the effect of Salat offered five times a day with the grace of Allah, it washes away all the sins."

The holy prophet said: "The position of Salat in Islam is as the position of the head in a body." "Fire has been forbidden to touch those parts of the body which touch the ground while performing the *sajdah*." Allah keeps relenting towards a person so long as he is engaged in Salat."

Naufil bin Muaawiyah narrates that he heard the Prophet (SAW) saying: "A person who has missed one salat is like one who has lost all his family and wealth."

Abdullah bin Amr narrates that once the Prophet (SAW) while talking about salat said: "For its votary, salat shall on the Day of Judgement, be a light for him, an argument in his favour, and a means of his deliverance. Whereas there will be no light, no defence and no deliverance from doom for him who does not guard his salat, and he shall meet the fate of Pharoa, Haamaan and Ubbay bin Khalaf."

Describing the salient features of Salat, Hammudah Abdalati stated: It is a matchless and unprecedented formula of intellectual mediation and spiritual devotion of moral elevation and physical exercise, all combined. It is an exclusively Islamic experience where every muscle of the body

joins the soul and the mind in the worship and glory of God. Though it is difficult to express in words full meaning of the prayer, yet it can be explained as below:

1. A lesson in discipline and willpower;
2. A practice in devotion to God;
3. A vigilant reminder of God and constant revelation of His goodness;
4. A seed of spiritual cultivation and moral soundness;
5. A guide to the most upright way of life;
6. A safeguard against indecency and evil against wrong deviation;
7. A demonstration of true equality solid unity and brotherhood;
8. An expression of thankfulness to God and appreciation of Him;
9. A course of inner peace and stability;
10. An abundant source of patience and courage of hope and confidence.

(Islam in Focus)

Late S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi says: "The five daily prayers, with their fixed hours and Rakats, are the spiritual food, restorative and panacea prescribed for mankind by its Creator and Preserver, the Lord of Lords, the All-Knowing and the All-Wise. One should refrain from questioning the Law and Wisdom of the Supreme Being, the All-Seeing and the Omniscient, who is not only the Healer of the souls but, also their Maker and submit implicitly to His Will. The Salat ought to be offered up at the hours and in the form, measure and manner laid down by God. The celestial significance of these hours, their inner radiance and the heavenly blessings which descend during them and the rich provision of spiritual advancement they contain are known only to Allah and His Apostle."

He further says: "Salat is not merely the name of certain physical movements. It is not a wooden, lifeless ritual or something of a military discipline in which one's own choice or volition has no place. It is an act in which all the three aspects of human

existence, physical, mental and spiritual find their due expression. The body, the mind and the heart participate in it jointly and in an ideal manner. The acts of standing erect kneeling and prostration appertain to the body, recitation appertains to the tongue, reflection and contemplation to the mind, and fear, repentance and lamentation to the heart." (The Four Pillars of Islam)

It is unfortunate that scant attention is paid by us towards Salat. Unless we offer Salat regularly, we can not achieve our ends at any rate. The holy Quran says: "Successful indeed are the believers, those who humble themselves in their prayers." Prophet Muhammad said: "Salat is the ascension of believers." He further said, "Salat is the coolness of my eyes."

It is mandatory to offer Salat punctually and motivate our family members also for practicing Salat. No doubt it keeps us away from devilish and unholy thoughts and acts. The holy Quran says: "For prayer restrains from shameful and evil deeds."

In short, Salat is the backbone of Islamic Shariah. The holy Prophet said: "There is no place in Islam for those who do not offer Salat." He declared: "Salat is the support of the religion whosoever abandons it, he throws away the religion."

The Prophet (SAW) is reported to have said, "A person neglecting his salat (even though he makes it up later) shall remain in Hell for a period of one Haqb. A Haqb is equal to eighty years of three hundred and sixty days each, and a day in the Hereafter shall equal one thousand years of this world."

May Allah give us strength to offer Salat regularly and show us the straight path, the path of those whom Thou has bestowed Thy grace, those whose (portion) is not wrath and who go not astray, Ameen! ●



Justice Sine Qua Non For Peace

Javed Jamil

The UNESCO describes “An Agenda for Peace Definitions” as follows:

“peace is dynamic. Peace is a just and non-violent solution of conflicts. It generates equilibrium in social interactions, so that all of the members of society can live in harmonious relations with each other. Peace is good for society. Where there is violence there is no peace. Where there is injustice and absence of liberty, there is no peace. In order for there to be equilibrium in the dynamic of social interactions, peace must be founded on justice and liberty.”

Justice is universally recognize as indispensable for peace. Islam is no different in this regard. However, Islam is different because in Islam, justice and peace are not the same as in the modern world; it has a much more comprehensive meaning. Islam literally means Peace, and is defined as submission to God which means that peace cannot be obtained without total submission to the Lord of the universe. Similarly Iman means total satisfaction, which again can be obtained only through undivided devotion to God.

When the Holy Qur'an calls, “Enter Islam wholeheartedly”, it does not merely invite its adherents to follow the institutionalized system of Islam; it also signals to them that the real, comprehensive and long lasting peace can be achieved only through total acceptance of the System of God. The Holy Qur'an states: “The System for you is the (system of) peace” and “Call them to the House of Peace”. In Islam, peace is not just a state of absence of war or

chaos in society; it has the broadest and the most comprehensive meaning, in terms of extent, depth and longevity, including all the components of peace described above. It has to be not just personal, not just family and not just social; it has to be at all the three levels and in the widest discernible sense. At individual level, it does not merely mean peace of mind; it encompasses physical, mental and social health. At family level, it comprises peaceful relationship between husband and wife, between parents and children, and among children themselves. At social level, it does not only indicate absence of war or chaos, it also means absence of all forms of crimes and social tensions, and prevalence of mutual brotherhood and justice.

Peace is also not something bound by time or space; it is as much for this world as for Hereafter; peace is eternal. This is to be ensured that Islam's message of Grand peace has to percolate down the lowest strata of society. And this to be done in a way that the world does not feel threatened by the emergence of an institutionalized and political Islam, but learns to apply moral and socio-economic principles of Islam for the benefit of the whole mankind.

Justice in Islam is not just an act of punishing the culprits; it is a proactive and dynamic exercise that involves steps in advance to ensure justice at all levels. Justice does not merely involve a decision between two or more disputing men, communities or nations; justice is a much bigger exercise aimed at distribution of God's bounties justly, acting kindly with all

especially those who need special attention and to ensure that the posterity does not suffer from the ill effects due to misconceived acts of those who matter at present.

The Holy Qur'an says:

Say: "My Lord hath commanded justice." (7:29/A)

O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to God, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor, for God can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest ye swerve, and if ye distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily God is well-acquainted with all that ye do. (4: 135/A)

Speak justly, even if a near relative is concerned... (6:152/A)

O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for God, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to piety... (5:8/A)

And God means no injustice to any of His creatures. (3:108)

God commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion. (16:90)

If they do come to thee, either judge between them, or decline to interfere. If thou decline, they cannot hurt thee in the least. If thou judge, judge in equity between them. For God loveth those who judge in equity. (5:42/A)

Judge thou between them by what God hath revealed, and follow not their vain desires. (5:49/A)

Thus, according to the Qur'an,

Justice is all-encompassing and includes legal, natural, social and divine justice as the essential constituents.

Legal Justice

Legal Justice is the most powerful arsenal for defeating chaos of all types in society. Justice must not only be done but must also be seen done. Furthermore, it must be achieved swiftly. Any system of justice that denies justice to the victims of crime or unduly delays it cannot ensure social peace. The present legal systems all over the world have dismally failed to safeguard life and honour of the people. On the contrary, this has helped, directly and indirectly, the cause of criminals and the forces of evils. It looks advanced in method but extremely poor in results. It appears to profess humanity but promotes inhumanity. It has increased the crime rate to dangerous levels and has been transforming in increasing numbers good human beings into criminals. Islamic system of justice is based on speedy trial and a punishment equal to the crime with right to pardon only in the hands of the victims or the heirs of victims. In sharp contrast to the modern system that safeguards the interests of criminals, Islam primarily aims at bringing justice to both victims and convicts.

In the modern world, legal justice has been sacrificed at the altar of economic fundamentalism. The more the organized business gained ground the more criminals were produced. The procedures of trial have continued to become technically superior; but the effectiveness of the judicial system in lowering the rate of crimes has drastically

diminished. With the overwhelming involvement of money, legal profession has become increasingly popular. Advocates have become pettifoggers eager to serve their clients, who offer them huge sums as fees, rather than assist the cause of justice.

The ethical code of the profession has unequivocally laid down the principle that the lawyer's obligation is to look after the interests of his client, it is the duty of the presiding officer to arrive at the truth. Advocates have therefore in effect become white-collared, legally recognized hirelings of the offenders of law, and use all possible means including their golden tongue to subvert justice. Judges have been left with no direct method to come to a reasonable and just conclusion. They have no option but to rely on the evidence and arguments presented by the contending lawyers.

Advocacy has been reduced to a foul play of words and logic. Still, it is presumed that the net effect of the lies of the two contending parties of lawyers will unfold the truth. What a travesty of judicial reasoning! The net effect is that the malefactors are having hey day, lawyers are growing in riches, and the weak, the poor and the oppressed are suffering.

Social Justice

Islam wants society to be peaceful and social justice is the first step in that direction. Social justice involves social equality, security of all irrespective of caste, creed or race, equitable distribution of wealth, resources and opportunities and ensuring honour and dignity of every

human being and is defined as submission to God because the real peace cannot be achieved without wholly submitting to the injunctions of God.

Islam creates a social, political and economic system to ensure social justice. The grand objective of Islamic system therefore is to ensure peace at all levels. This cannot be achieved without taking three basic steps: first, to enjoin the righteousness and forbid evil; second, to ensure justice; and third, to foster unity and brotherhood. It is this trio that also forms the foundation of the Islamic political set-up. Justice is also to be ensured at the international level; there must be ways to guarantee that small and weak nations do not suffer at the hands of powerful nations.

Zakah and Jihad are two important way to achieve social justice. Zakah complemented with declaration of total ban on usury, hoarding, commercialization of forbidden social evils and exploitation leads to economic justice. Jihad in Islam is obligatory, and is an important constituent of the Islamic mission of universal peace and justice. It is in fact incumbent on all the human beings to engage in this mission. But for Muslims it is a divine duty.

Jihad is meant for protecting the weak against the mighty; for alerting the forces of evil that their sordid adventures will not go unchallenged; for giving the oppressed sections a voice and wrecking the nerve-centres of the tyrants; and for giving the exploiters sleepless nights. Jihad prepares a person to sacrifice his possessions including his life if required for the cause of God. But Mujahids must

clearly know that the objective of Jihad is not to bring certain persons to power, nor to bring theocracies to the whole world through sheer use of force.

“Deen”, the system of God does not necessarily mean the establishment of a theocratic government through violent means; it means the rule of justice. Fighting is only the last but an open option in Jihad. If conditions are justifiable for fighting, it becomes obligatory; if conditions do not demand fighting; it becomes aggression. If its objectives are for the welfare of the masses it is desirable; if it is an excuse for selfish ends, it is an unparalleled sin. Jihad through peaceful means must always continue without halt; Jihad through arms must be an aberration. But once the conditions are justifiable, fighting must see no sympathy for the enemy; it must be given a crushing below. Fighting against the wicked is no violence; it is an exercise aimed at minimizing violence. Killing bacteria and viruses through antibiotics and antiviral drugs is essential to maintain a healthy life. If microbes are not killed, they will kill the very person who provides them the food for their sustenance.

When social justice fails to establish itself as system, the consequences are often dangerous. It can lead to pursuit of unauthorized and unjustified methods by certain groups to gain justice. Terrorism is one such effect. While terrorism cannot be condoned, it must be recognized that it is usually the product of the suppression of certain people. It is the weapon of the weak

against the mighty, which have large armies at their disposal.

When the innocent are killed in wars, big powers tend to dismiss it as collateral damage. But when innocents are killed in terrorist attacks, it is regarded as a ghastly crime against humanity. If terrorism is to be successfully tackled, its root causes have to be found. Justice is the only answer to terrorism. Attempts to kill terrorists or terrorise them may have a short-term impact. But in long term, it will breed bigger and more dangerous forms of terrorism.

Natural Justice

The Holy Qur'an says:

“He will substitute in your stead another people; then they would not be like you!” (47:38)

Allah has made this world primarily a place of trial and not justice, but still Allah gives natural justice here also in the form of natural punishments and replacement of one people in power by the other people. Natural methods like earthquakes, floods, falling of asteroids, diseases and other afflictions have often come as punishments for misdeeds of the people of certain areas. It can be noted that while Hereafter will be a place where individuals will be judged, nations and communities are judged in this world. There will be no punishment for the nations, tribes or communities as a whole in the Hereafter. Aad, Pharaoh, the people of Sodom and many other peoples received natural punishment for failing to comply with God's commands. Still, people are

suffering from widespread effects of exceeding the God's bounds. These include natural disasters and diseases like AIDS, both of which are mostly the consequences of the misuse of God given freedom for personal ends.

Divine Justice

While Islam tells human beings to act with justice, it also makes it clear that even if humans do not act with justice, God will make justice prevail in the life to come. Natural justice is a natural attempt to restore justice and harmony in this world. But it often punishes even those people who were not individually responsible for the widespread evil or corruption in a particular society. Hereafter will undo whatever injustices individuals have faced in the world. Hereafter is the best guarantor of peace.

One often feels inclined to think if God is there why He allows these enormous sufferings and why oppressors go scot-free. Many atheists utilize this as an argument in favour of the non-existence of Supreme Being. The truth however is that the apparent sufferings of the weak, poor and innocent and the apparent successes of the strong, debauched and aggressors necessitates the presence of Supreme Being and Hereafter. If this alone is the whole life and there is no Hereafter and none to take cognisance of what is happening there is no way all these sufferings can be undone, honour of the sufferers can be restored and the perpetrators of crime can be brought to justice. If a person is murdered, there is no way he can be restored to life; no amount of compensation to the family of the

deceased and no amount of punishment to the murderer can undo his death. If a father or mother loses their son, how can they get him back? Even if the killer is hanged this will not fill the vacuum created in their life; their son cannot get back his life and they cannot get their son back.

Millions of people died at the hands of Hitler, Stalin and many other dictators. Hundreds of thousands lost lives in American bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Most of those killed were innocent. How can they get justice in this world? This is a world where one can be punished for one's actions, but more often one escapes the punishment. Here people suffer for others' faults. The Holy Qur'an clarifies that this world is a place of trial, not that of judgement. It makes clear that humans suffer here due to their own faults. This does not mean, as is erroneously interpreted sometimes, one suffers due to one's fault in the past. On the contrary, it applies to mankind as a whole. Man suffers due to man's faults, not necessarily one's own but often somebody else's. This necessitates the Day of Judgement where every single deed of an individual will be taken into account for arriving at the judgement. No act, good or bad, of no individual will remain unaccounted for. The judgement will be without blemish; everybody will feel satisfied for what he gets.

Let us all endeavour to unite mankind for the purpose of establishing justice in this world in accordance with the commands of God! This alone is the guarantor of peace in this world and the Hereafter. ●

All India Muslim Personal Law Board on Liberhan Report

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) held its executive committee meeting on 20 December, 2009 at Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama in Lucknow.

Presided over by AIMPLB president Maulana Rabey Hasani Nadwi, the committee expressed displeasure over the Action Taken Report (ATR) on Liberhan Commission recommendations. It also examined findings of the Liberhan Commission report. The Board also announced that the community could not forgive the Congress and the then Prime Minister Narasimha Rao for the demolition of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya. Assistant secretary general Abdul Rahim Quraishi told journalists, the committee hail Liberhan Commission for holding RSS, VHP, BJP, Bajrang Dal and Shiv Sena responsible for the conspiracy behind Babri Mosque demolition. But, it maintained that Union government is not taking the report seriously. Briefing reporters, Quraishi said, the Congress and Rao could not be absolved of the responsibility for the demolition of the mosque on December 6, 1992.

"How can they be forgiven? Neither the Congress nor its then leader Narasimha Rao may be forgiven for demolition of the historic Babri Masjid," a top office-bearer Abdul Rahim Quraishi told reporters. To further embarrass the Congress, the AIMPLB general secretary added, "Vajpayee may be morally and legally responsible ... but technically we can't blame him."

However, despite reservation over the ATR, the Board said the report was actually correct and sound." Quraishi also pointed out that the report was not

politically motivated. The AIMPLB has decided to meet Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram to demand proper implementation of the report. He said in the light of findings of Liberhan report, the CBI should be asked to reopen conspiracy cases so that role of more people, including the officers could be investigated. He said the civil and criminal cases pending in Lucknow and Rae Bareilly should be expedited.

The AIMPLB has also rejected the UPA government move for the establishment of Central Madrasa Board and Prevention of Communal Violence Bill.

Commenting on the Central Madrasa Board Maulana S. M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi said, "it is strange that some people who were terming Madrasas as dens of terrorism a few years ago, how they became well-wisher of ours now. We should remain aware of them."

Quraishi said religious institutions should not come under the control of the government. He said there should be national debate on the Bill. With reference to an apex court decision stating that a divorced Muslim wife would continue to get maintenance from her ex-husband if she did not remarry, the Board urged Muslims to go to Sharia courts for redressal.

Later the Board appointed local cleric Maulana Khalid Rasheed Farangi Mahli its organising secretary for the upcoming conclave in March 19-21, 2010 in Lucknow. ●

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AROUND THE WORLD

Thousands call for sharia to stem corruption in Indonesia

Thousands of hardline Muslim protesters staged rallies in Indonesia urging the government to apply Islamic law as the only way to tackle widespread corruption.

Members of Hizbut Tahrir demonstrated in several cities including the capital Jakarta, venting anger at a \$700 million bank bailout at the centre of a corruption scandal that has put highlevel officials under fire.

In Jakarta, thousands of protesters took to the streets with their families and children, carrying banners condemning the capitalist system as the root of corruption.

"The Bank Century scandal proves the failure of capitalism system," read one big banner. "By adopting *sharia* under Islamic caliphate, Indonesia is free from corruption," said another.

Lawmakers are probing allegations of corruption linked to the bailout last year of Bank Century after the country' top auditor found strong indications of "violations". "The capitalist system has ruined our economy.

That's the source of all problems in our country," Hizbut Tahrir spokesman Muhammad Ismail Yusanto declared at the rally.

Hundreds of members of the group also rallied last week on World AIDS Day to demand the implementation of *sharia* law to prevent the spread of HIV rather than condom use. ●

Israel-Palestinian conflict killed 8,900 in 20 years: NGO

The Israel-Palestinian conflict has claimed almost 8,900 lives in two decades, the vast majority of them Palestinians, the Israeli human rights group B'Teslem said in a statement. Israeli forces killed 7,398 Palestinians, including 1,537 minors, both in Israel and the occupied territories during that period, while Palestinians

killed 1,483 Israelis, including 139 minors, B'Teslem said. Among the Israeli victims, 488 were police officers or military troops, and the remaining 995 were civilians killed in attacks in Israel or in the occupied territories, the statement said. This year, marked by Israel's military offensive in the Gaza Strip, was the bloodiest in the past two decades for Palestinians.

A total of 1,033 Palestinians, including 315 minors, were killed so far in 2009, most of them during the Gaza war, the report said, adding that a total of 1,387 Palestinians were killed during the Israeli offensive. Thirteen Israelis were killed, including four soldiers by friendly fire, in the three-week-long war that was launched on December 27. For Israel, 2002, at the height of the second Palestinian intifada, or uprising, was the deadliest year, with 420 people killed, including 259 civilians of whom 47 were minors, the statement said. The statement, which marks B'Tselem 20th anniversary, also said 335 Palestinians are currently held without trial under Israeli military orders. In 1989 the number reached 1,794.

It also said Israeli authorities tore down 4,300 Palestinian homes over the past 20 years. Israel justifies the demolitions saying the houses lacked the necessary permits, but Palestinians and human rights groups say the documents are virtually impossible to obtain. In addition, B'Tselem estimates that 6,240 houses were destroyed during military operations in Gaza, including 3,540 during the December-January offensive which Israel said it launched to halt rocket attacks from the Hamas-run Palestinian enclave.

The group took out a full-page ad in the Haaretz daily which looked like a funeral notice and stated: "The B'Tselem organisation regrets to announce that it has reached 20." "We are fed up and people are fed up of us, but four million people live in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are to this day deprived of their most basic human rights and they are even more fed up than we are," it said. ●

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