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BLAST IN MECCA MASJID

Who was behind the blast in Hyderabad is still shrouded in mystery. But a biased media and prejudiced officials have started parroting the names of some high sounding outfits like Lashkare Toiba, Jaishe Mohammad, Harakatul Mujahidin and Jehade Islami etc manned by some misguided persons based in Pakistan, Kashmir or Bangladesh. Now a new angle is being added by dragging the name of Tablighi Jamat. The Pioneer, a mouth-piece of the right wing, editorially comments that "By all accounts, the act of terror that was executed in Hyderabad was not aimed at Hindus or any other group of 'infidels' but was the result of a sectarian crisis, within the Muslim community. It is said that growing presence and influence of 'Tablighi Jamat' preachers was objected to by the entrenched religio-political establishments. This led to an explosive clash'. This argument is based on explosions in Guntur in 2000, Malegaon in 2006, and Hyderabad 2007 which coincidentally or otherwise occurred around the time the Tablighi Jamat held its ijtimā (congregation).

Founded in the 1920 by late Maulana Mohammad Ilyas Kandhelawi, the Jamat mostly concentrates on the reformation of Muslims and warns them of "*Amrbil maroof wan Nahin anil munkar*" (Do good and restrain yourselves from evils). Because of its missionary style of functioning the VHP and RSS have always opposed the Jamat, even threatened its members and issued stern warnings against its activists. Tablighi Jamat was founded to counter the rise of aggressive Hindu proselytizing movements as "shuddhi" and "Sangathan". The Tablighi Jamat is for in reawakening of faith and purification of the self and community. It does not sound logical to attribute the present explosion to the sectarian crisis amidst Muslims. In December 2002, terrorists attacked the Sai Baba temple in Dilsukhnagar of Hyderabad. In October 2005 a suicide bomber blew himself up at the Task Force Headquarters near Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister's residence, were they also the result of sectarian crisis?

The damage caused by the explosion in the midst of the Friday congregation attended by more than 10,000 Muslims could have been greater but for the

stone slab of the raised platform, that bore the brunt of the blast. Moreover, the loss of life would have been incomparable, and horrendously worse had two bombs planted elsewhere in the mosque, later defused by the police, exploded.

There is a need to cooperate with the appropriate authorities in taking preventive and protective measures against extremism and terrorism. The machinery responsible to oversee the law and order too needs to be cautious and remain confined to their lawful acts instead of getting berserk. In Hyderabad they have given very poor show of their performance. Forensic experts of Osmania Medical College, Hyderabad where autopsies of the five persons killed in police firing, stated that two were shot in the chest, two in the abdomen and one person in the leg. All the wounds were caused by bullets fired from the Self Loading Rifles used by the police. It is quite contrary to the statement of DG Police that rubber bullets were fired by the police just to scare the crowd.

Time has come when both state and union governments should get to the very roots of such mischievous acts and create an atmosphere for peaceful living. The aim of such attacks has been to throw a lit match stick into a communal cauldron. So a strict vigilance and efficient and unbiased surveillance are the need of the hour. ■

S.A.

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MEANING AND IMPORT OF THE FOUR BASIC TERMS OF THE QURAN

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

The eminent scholar and thinker of the day and the founder of Jamat-e-Islami, Maulana Saiyid Abul Ala Maududi, while mentioning the Quranic terms 'Ilah', "Rab", 'Din' and 'Ibadat', and Islamic phraseology in his popular and famous book the *Four Basic Quranic Terms* wants to establish that at the time of the descent of the Quran, every addressee thereof whose mother tongue was Arabic, knew the import and meaning of the four basic Quranic terms. He writes,

“When the Quran was first presented to the Arabs they all knew what was meant by Ilah or Rabb as both the words were already current in their language. They were not new terms, nor were new meanings put upon them. They knew fully well what the connotations were and so, when it was said that Allah alone is the Ilah, and the Rabb and that no one has the least share in the qualities and attributes which the words denote they at once comprehended the full import, understood completely without any doubt or uncertainty as to what specifically was being declared to pertain to Allah exclusively and what was being hence denied to others. Those who opposed the precept were very clear in their minds as to the implications of denying others than Allah to be Ilahs or Rabbs, in any sense, while those who accepted it knew equally well what they would have to give up by their acceptance and what they would forego. Similarly, the words 'Ibadah' and 'Din' were in common use, and the people knew what was meant by 'Abd' what state was implied by 'uboodiyyah' (the state of being an 'abd') what kind of conduct was referred to when the word 'ibadah' was used, and what was the sense of the term 'Din' so, when they were told to give up the *ibadah* of all others and reserve it exclusively for Allah, and give up all other dins and enter into the Din of Allah only, they felt no difficulty in concluding what the Quranic d'awah (message) implied and the drastic revolution in their way of life it sought to bring about”.

But according to him this state did not last long, these self-evident truths became obscure and the four fundamental terms of the Quran, which were accepted facts of Islam, got covered up by thick veils of ignorance, negligence and non-Arab influence. After writing the above mentioned paragraph he writes:

“But as centuries passed, the real meanings of these terms gradually underwent

subtle changes so that, in course of time, instead of the full connotations, they came to stand for only very limited meanings of restricted and rather vague concepts. One reason was the gradual decline of interest to have the same meaning for the later generations of Muslims that they had for the original Arabs to whom the Quran had been revealed. It is for these two reasons that in the more recent lexicons and commentaries many of the Quranic words began to be explained not by their original sense but by what they had by then come to stand for, e.g.,

The word *Ilah*, as used in respect of others than God, came to be synonymous with idols of gods;

The word *rabb* came to mean only someone who brings up or rears or feeds another or provides for his worldly needs;

'*Ibadah* began to be understood as the performance of a set of rituals of "worship",

Deen began to mean a religion, or belief in some precepts; and

The word *Taghoot* began to be translated to mean as idol or the Devil."

Describing the consequence of this state of affairs, he writes, "This being the case, is it any wonder that, through the mist that has come to surround the precise sense of the four terms in question, more than three fourths of the teachings of the Quran, of rather, the real spirit there of, have become obscured and this is the main cause of the shortcomings that are to be seen in peoples, beliefs and acts despite the fact that they have not formally given up the faith of Islam but are still in its fold."

Perspicacity of the Ummat and the Distinction of the Quran

On reading these passages one who has not made deep and extensive study and who is not aware of the fact that God has preserved this Ummat from going astray generally, can infer that the reality of Quran remained hidden from the Ummat or the majority of it, for a long time and the Ummat remained collectively ignorant of the reality of the basic terms round which revolves the whole structure of the Book and on which rests the edifice of its teachings and exhortations and the veil could be lifted only by middle of twentieth century.

On a cursory look this conclusion may not appear very damaging and serious but its impact on mind and the way of thinking would be far-reaching for it raises doubts in the capabilities of the Ummat which is not only the bearer of the religion and the message but is responsible for its expansion over the world and its elucidation and protection. It also casts doubts on the history of the Ummat and belittles the achievements of its renovators, reformers and religious doctors in scientific and scholarly fields and in their practices. For future also it will raise doubts about the authenticity of what is being said of understood today. It will also give strength to the philosophy of 'the apparent and the hidden' and 'the

kernel and the shell' and make religious truths incomprehensible and obtruse riddles which was the way of different groups of Batinites in different times.

Relationship between Words and their Meanings

Many of the readers who have not closely studied the history of religions and schism may not be able to appreciate this brief statement. I am, therefore, reproducing what I have written in the first volume of my book the Saviours of Islamic Spirit about the technique of the Batinites.

"The scripture has clearly laid down the tenets of belief and code of conduct, if only because these are meant to be understood and acted upon by every human being:

And We never sent a messenger save with the language of his folk, that he might make (the message) clear for them. (Ibrahim:4)

"The meaning of this verse is manifestly clear. The Prophet of Islam too had explained the import of divine revelations and lived up to those precepts so that his followers might not remain in any doubt. The vocabulary of the Quran and its meanings have thus been handed down, from the Prophet, without any break, and have ever afterwards been recognized and accepted by everyone as authentic and genuine, and to which no one raised any objection. The terms, Prophethood (nabuwat) and apostleship (risalat), angels (malaika), requital (ma'ad), paradise (jannat), hell (dozakh), the law (shariah), obligatory (fardh), necessary (wajib), lawful (halal), unlawful (haram), poor-due (zadat), prayer (salat, fast (rozah), pilgrimage (hajj), and similar other words convey a concise and definite purport of the doctrines, rites, ceremonies, and teachings of Islam. In truth and reality, these teachings and articles of faith have been handed down without any divergence whatsoever and so has been the vocabulary and terminology evolved to dignify the former. The two have become so inter-dependent that one cannot suffer any mutation without a variation in the other.

"Whenever the words 'Prophet', 'Apostle', 'Messenger', 'Prayer' or 'Poor-due' are used, these denote the same exposition as taught by the Prophet and understood by his companions and successors; all of whom acted upon these in a particular manner and transmitted the import of these words which have been handed down by one generation to another. The Batinites knew that the interdependence of Quranic vocabulary and its meanings form the key to the exposition of the doctrines of Muslim faith; these constitute the moorings of intellectual and practical life of the Ummah, connecting the later generations with the fountainhead of divine guidance which lay in the past. If they could only drive a wedge between the past and the present, asunder the connecting link by rendering the import of Quranic vocabulary ambiguous and oracular, undefined and obscure, then the Ummah, should be made to give credence to any innovation of deviation, agnosticism of

infidelity.”

The Basic Characteristics and Distinction of the Quran

Diversity between words and their meanings is against facts and the belief that the ‘Din’ was not only given in book form but also transmitted in action from generation to generation and the transmission had included both words and their significance. God has described the Quran at numerous places as ‘an open book’ and a ‘clear Arabic.’

At the start of chapter Joseph’ God says, “Alif. Lam. Ra. These are the verses of the Book clear in itself.” (Q. 12:1)

The Surah ‘The Rock’ starts as, “Alif. Lam. Ra. These are the verses of the scripture, a Quran, clear in itself.” (Q.15:1)

The chapter ‘The Ant’ begins as ‘Ta. Sin. These are the verses of the Quran- The Book lucid (in expression)”. (Q.27:1)

The first verse of the Chapter ‘The Poets’ is: “Ta. Sin. Mim. Here are the signs of the lucid Book!” (Q26:1)

In the chapter ‘The Poets’ is indication of the clarity and easy understanding of the Revelation-

Verily this hath descended from the Lord of all domains of existence. The Trusted Spirit hath let it descend upon thy heart, that thou mayest function as a warner, through the medium of the clear Arabic tongue.” (Q. 26:192-193)

The chapter “The smoke’ starts as “Ha. Mim. By the clear Book.” (Q. 44:1)

The Quran has repeatedly and emphatically stressed that it is a clear, lucid, explicit and a book easy to understand then how can it be believed that the Book could not convey the real import and significance of the four basic terms round which, it said, revolves the entire gamut of beliefs, action, exhortations and preaching.

At many places in the Quran it has been said that its verses are firm, distinct and lucid. Says it,

“He it is Who has sent down to them the Book: Some verses of it are definite in meaning. These form the mother of the Book (the basic therein).”

“And the believers say, ‘why does not a revelation come down (to declare war against them who do not believe).’ But when a decisive revelation is sent down, giving therein the order to fight, thou seest the diseased of the heart look towards thee with the look of one who is sinking at the hour of death.” (Q. 47:20)

“Here is a Book whose verses are complete in their form and content and are set forth clearly by one who is All-wise and All-informed.” (Q. 11:1)

The eminent exegetist Hafiz Ibn Katheer in explaining the verse 'Definite forming the mother of the Book' writes that 'it is so clear and explicit in logic that none can bear any doubts about them. He quotes Muhammad bin Yasar about them, 'They are the assertion of God, support of His servants and serve to silence the opponents and the critics. Their real meaning cannot be twisted or distorted.'

Allama Alusi in his famous commentary, 'Ruh-ul-Ma'ani' explains 'Muhakamat, as follows, "Definitive is a quality of the verses meaning thereby that the verses in their meaning are explicit, obvious in their logic, definite in their language and unassailable by any doubt of apprehension."

As regards the Quran being plain and distinct (Mufasssal) there is mention about it at fifteen places.

These qualities and definitions negate the contention that many basic truths of the Quran remained concealed for a long time. In the chapter 'The Rock' God has said "Without doubt, it is We Who have sent down this guidance, and without doubt, We shall guard it." (Q. 15:9)

The announcement and the promise of protection implies appreciation of the meaning and purpose of the scripture, its implementation and adoption in life. What can be the value of importance of a book and what can be the benefit and outcome of its protection if, for a long time, it remains in abeyance, un-understood and un-acted upon? But God had addressed the Prophet, "For collection (of its various parts) and its recitation (in a form) rests with us. When we deliver, you are to listen and recite in the same manner. It is our responsibility to let its meaning be clear." (Q. 75:17-19)

In explaining 'letting its meaning be clear' Hakim-ul-Islam Shah Wali Ullah Dehlavi writes in his masterpiece 'Izalat-ul-Khifa:

"God says that explanation of the Quran is His responsibility and that in every age He would raise a considerable body of persons who would explain the meaning, elucidate the words and the reasons and occasions for descent of its various parts so that the true import and significance may be manifest to the people. This comes later to its memorization and preaching. The Holy Prophet was himself its commentator and elucidator. Writing of exegeses followed its collection in a standard form and the general practice of its recitation. This started with Hazrat Ibn Abbas".

The supposition that such basic words, without which the purpose, significance and meaning of the Quran and its commandments and exhortations cannot be understood, remained un-discerned and obscure for centuries would be against the Divine promise of clarification contained in the words 'would let its meaning be clear.'

Did the Community as a whole ever Fall in Error,

The type of research conducted and the style of description adopted by Maulana Maududi would lead one to conclude that the Ummat went through a long period of ignorance of the true import of the basic terms and their connotations and a mystery on which depended the soundness of their thinking and action. That would be tantamount to clear ignorance and negligence and even to perdition. But the Quran, the Sunnat, the compilation of Ahadith, collectively establish that, unlike previous communities, this community would never fall in general and universal error. Many eminent Muhaddithin and Ulama have held that though the famous Tradition 'My community would never collectively fall in error and deviation', is not established in so many words, the import of the Tradition is, nevertheless, true. The famous Andalusian Muhaddith and critic Allama Abu Muhammad Ali bin Hazm (d. 456A. H.) has written in his book, 'Al-Ihkam fil Usul-il-Ihkam' -

"The Muhaddithin say that it is true that the Ummat-e-Muhammadiya shall never agree on something false for the Prophet (peace be on him) himself had said that in every age there would be torch bearers of the truth. It is narrated that the Prophet (peace be on him) had said, "My community would never collectively fall in error and deviation". Though its words and authenticity of transmission are not fully established, yet its import and consequence are roved by many fully established Ahadith which prophecy the presence in ever age of upholders of truth".

Hafiz Ibn Qaiyyim says "we are beholden to God that the community collectively would never agree to give up even one Sunnat except what had been rescinded by the Prophet himself."

Hafiz Ibn Katheer writes in his famous commentary on the verse of the chapter, 'Women', "As for him who sets himself against the Apostle despite the opening out for him the right path and follows any path other than that of the faithful" (Q.4:115) says, "A guarantee has been given to this Ummat that it has been safeguarded from agreeing upon any thing wrong."

Shaikhul Islam Ibn Taimiya writes about consensus, "The consensus of the community is always right for, praise be to God, it can never agree on error or falsity. This distinction has been spelled out in the Book and the Sunnat. The Quran says, "You are the best of communities who shall follow the Apostle, the Ummi Prophet, whose advent is foretold in the Torah and the Evangel. He will enjoin them what is right and forbid them what is wrong" and "The faithful men and women, are friends of one to the other, they enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil." If the community were to adopt erroneous ways, it would mean that the obligation of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, has not been discharged even though the Quran says, "And likewise, have We

moulded you into a model society that you might be a pattern unto others, even as the Prophet has been a pattern unto you.” (Q.2:143)

The Dictate of Intelligence

Ordinary intelligence cannot accept the supposition that this great community in which were born very outstanding and eminent Ulama, scholars, litterateurs and savants in every age, was continuously ignorant of the basic truths on which depend the understanding and preaching of the Quran, particularly in proximity to the prophetic era. Even Maulana Maududi does not accept that the community erred in understanding any Hadith or decisive verse of the Quran what to say of the basic truths, and the error could continue for any length of time. In discussing the famous Hadith ‘Imams from amongst the Quraish,’ he writes, “can it ever be accepted that the Ulama of the community failed collectively to understand a definite statement and continued to remain in error for centuries”, even though this Hadith has nothing to do with beliefs, or necessities of life or requirements of the religion.

On the same principle, the Maulana has based his arguments against Qadianis in interpreting the words ‘the last of the prophets’ which has been understood down the ages in only one age in only one sense and the community has been all along quoting the interpretation of its stalwarts and pillars.

Comments of a distinguished Egyptian scholar and the leader of Ikhwan.

Allama Hasan Ismail al – Huzaibi, who was selected as the leader of Ikhwan-al Muslimin, after Imam Shahid Hasan al-Banna, and on whose profundity, erudition, sincerity, perspicacity and steadiness, the community was justly proud, comments on the theory of Maulana regarding the four basic terms in his Book ‘Dawatun la-Quzat’ as follows: “The assertion is factually and historically incorrect for whatever meaning might have been given to them in the days of ignorance, the Quran fixed their meanings and import and explained fully and clearly each of these terms. Their significance is unveiled in such a manner that it leaves not an iota of doubt or ambiguity. This exposition has left no necessity for search for their literal or dictionary meanings or what was understood by the terms before the descent of the Quran. No Muslim can have the slightest doubt that the manner of presentation of the Quran, its exposition and elucidation are not decisive, lucid, authoritative and of the highest standard. Not only this but it is imperative to adopt and rely upon and to accept their demand and consequence, irrespective of the fact whether they correspond with what was understood by them in pre-Islamic days or is contradictory to those concepts.

Then he proceeds to give examples from the Quranic verse where they have been

used: " Will it be true to say that when the Arabs were divided into clans and tribes and each had its own dialect, when there was no common government, no common beliefs, culture and civilization, when they were illiterate and there were only a handful who had any thing to do with reading or writing, when they were enveloped in the gloom of ignorance and decadence, when they had among them no divine book, nor any scholarly tradition, when they were so low and inferior, then the correct significance and import of the terms 'Ilah, 'Rab', 'Ibadat' and 'Din' were commonly known to them and so well publicized that every person knew them equally well without any doubt or ambiguity, but when God sent down His Scripture with the verse, "Without doubt it is we who have sent down this Revelation, and without doubt We shall guard it" and which is preserved from any interpolation or tempering as the Quran says, "Falsehood shall not touch it whether it cometh either from in front of it or from behind it" (Q.41:42), and in the text of which there is no ambiguity nor is there any flaw in its exposition and by the daily recitation of which millions of servants of God attain Hid pleasure and nearness and the verses of which are loudly recited in congregational prayer, then the meaning and significance of the terms receded behind a curtain and they were no longer current and well known and the Ummat lost the bounty vouchsafed to it. It is becoming for any man to make such a fantastic assertion when the Book of God is preserved in the hearts of Muslims and otherwise. If any body reads only Surah Fatiha and Surah Ikhlas or the Surah al-Falak and An-Nas, on him will be manifest the meaning and significance of these terms of which the pre-Islamic people had not even an inking. The assertion of the author (Maulana Maududi) that in Muslim society the terms 'Ilah', 'Rabb' 'Din' and 'Ibadat' were not understood as they were understood in pre-Islamic days at the time of descent of the Quran, is an unwarranted and untrue assertion and a baseless and fatuous accusation. The few verses of the Quran that I have cited as an example alone establish the meaning of Divinity and Providence. In no age the commentators of the Quran rested with one explanation of the word 'Rab', but explained it at every place in the context of the verse. (So wide and deep is the range and character of the term).

Allama Hasan Ismail al-Huzuaibni then proceeds to quote various verses of the Quran to explain the range of meaning of the terms 'Rab' and then elaborates the meaning of the term reproduces the statements of Maulana Maududi that "When was meant by 'Ilah' or 'Rab' as the words were already current in their language. They were not new terms, nor were any new meanings put upon them. They knew fully well what the connotations were and so, when it was said to them that Allah alone is 'Ilah' and 'Rab' and that no one else has the least share in the qualities and attributes which the world denote, they at once comprehended the full import, understood completely without any doubt or uncertainty as to what was denied to others" and comments, "if this discourse is intended to

assert that at the time of conferment of apostleship (on the Holy Prophet), every Arab in Najd and Hijaz had fully understood his preachings, the reality of 'Tauhid' and had grasped the full implication of the first testimony that 'there is no god but God', the assertion will have to be substantiated by proof and it would not be just enough to say that the meaning of 'Ilah' and 'Rab' were well known and current among the Arabic speaking people. Who can say that he had carried out any census and knew the state of every individual when all the people of Najd and Hejaz etc. did not even belong to the Arabian race having Arabic as their mother tongue, when a great number of outsiders had settled down there, when amongst them were a large number of slaves brought from different countries and races and many were free foreigners having non-Arabic languages of their own. History has preserved the names of many propagandists belonging to Iranian, Roman and Abyssinian races and the Quran has indicated their presence in the verse, 'And indeed We know that they say. Without doubt a human being teacheth him. But the speech of the person they hint at is non-Arabic while this is clearly the Arabic language.' (Q.16:103) ■

"Abu Huraira reports that a person came to the Prophet (S) and said, "I have relative and I treat them according to the demand of kinship, but they behave badly with me; I treat them softly but they are harsh with me. (What should I do then)?" The Prophet (S) said, "If thou art describing the position correctly then thou art feeding them hot ashes. (Remember) Allah's Help will always be with thee to protest thee from them, as long as thou holdest on to thy present treatment." (Muslim)

PATIENCE

S. Sulaiman Nadwi

Most of the people are not aware of the real meaning of the word patience. They interpret it in the sense of helplessness and wretchedness of a person who is quite helpless to take revenge from his enemy. Let us see how far it is correct.

Patience as used in the literal sense means, to refrain from or to be steadfast, that is, to maintain one's self by refraining from anxiety and confusion and to remain steadfast. It does not mean helplessness and wretchedness but facing the situation courageously, without being disheartened or depressed. This word has been used in this sense in the story of Musa (Moses) and Khizr in the Holy Qur'an:

He said: Thou shalt find me, if God will, patient, and I shall not disobey thee in the matter. (18:62)

He said: Did not I say that thou can not have patience with me. (18:72)

Had they been patient till thou comest out to them it would have been better for them; God is Forgiving, Merciful. (49:5)

Will you keep steadfast? Thy Lord is surely seeing. (25:20)

The word patience has been used in the above sense in the Holy Qur'an but at some places there has occurred a little change in its meanings according to the change in events. However, their sense is the same: steadfastness and perseverance. The meanings in which this word has been used in the Holy Qur'an are given below:

To Wait for the Proper Time

The first thing is to encounter all difficulties and hardships that come in the way, adhering to the cause firmly till success. In the beginning when the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) called the people to Tauhid (affirmation of faith in Oneness of God) and Islam, the whole of Arabia became hostile to him and raised a storm of protest against him. They created all sorts of obstacles in his way of preaching the religion. The opposition was so great that he felt anxious as is human nature. His goal seemed too difficult to reach. At that time Allah, the Gracious gave him the message of solace and comfort and asked him to continue his mission and wait for His decision which would come at the proper time:

Then be patient till God judges between us (7:87)

And be patient till God gives Judgement (10:109)

And be patient; God will not waste the wage of the good-doers. (11:115)

Be patient. God's promise is true. (40:55)

Even in this state of waiting when on the one hand helplessness and miserable plight of the small band of believers was tottering their footsteps and on the other hand the power and strength of the enemy and the storm of protest raised by them was wavering their mind, the Muslims were ordained to remain steadfast in the path of truth having firm hope in the success of their sacred mission:

It should not happen that if the decision of Allah comes late you forsake the truth disheartened by the difficulties and hardships and join the disbelievers:

And be patient for the decision of thy Lord, and do not obey any sinner or unthankful man among them. (76:24)

The story of Jonah (Yunus) was related to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) when Jonah (Yunus) saw that punishment on the disobedient and arrogant people was being delayed, he gave up his endeavours. The real position was that in their punishment was averted. It was, therefore, said to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to show patience and not to feel disheartened:

Be thou patient for the judgement of thy Lord, and be not like the man of the Fish; (68:48)

Another meaning of patience is that one should not be discouraged and disheartened nor should he feel anxiety and frustration in the face of difficulties and hardships that come in the way of propagation of Islam and endure them taking them to be the decree of Allah putting trust in Allah that he would in His infinite mercy remove his sufferings.

Allah has Praised such People

And who are patient at what befalls them. (22:35)

On hearing the fabricated news from his sons that wolf had eaten Yusuf, Ya'qub (peace be upon them) said:

He said: No, but your souls have contrived a thing for you; sweet patience; God's aid is to be sought against what you describe. (12:18)

On hearing that his other son has been detained in Egypt, he said:

He said: No, but your souls have contrived a thing for you; so sweet patience! May be that God brings them to me all together. (12:83)

The fortitude with which Ayyub (peace be upon him) bore the physical tortures and pangs of poverty have been praised by Allah in the following words:

We found him a patient; how excellent a servant! He was a penitent. (38:44)

Isma'il (peace be upon him) placed his neck under the knife of his loving father saying:

He said: O my father, do as thou art commanded, thou shall find me, God willing, among the steadfast. (37:102)

Showing Forbearance in Difficulties and Hardships

The third meaning of patience is that one should not pay heed to the difficulties and

hardships that come in the way of achievement of the cherished goal of conveying the message of Islam. Despite the hatred and opposition of the enemies of Islam who mocked and jeered at him (the Holy Prophet) and passed sarcastic and taunting remarks at him and put all sorts of obstacles to check the onward march of Islam, he was not depressed and disheartened and faced all this boldly and courageously and ultimately succeeded in his mission. At the second revelation when the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was commanded to call the people to Islam he was also reminded of this fact.

Such occasions did come in the lives of the Prophets (peace be upon them) and the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was commanded to emulate them.

So be thou patient as the Messengers of resolute determination were patient, and do not seek to hasten for them. (46:35)

Hadrat Luqman advised his son to teach the people the true religion of Allah, and ordered them to do good and abstain from evil and face the difficulties and hardships which came in this path courageously and manfully.

O my son, establish the prayer, bid the desirable, forbid the disgusting and endure patiently what befalls thee; surely that is resolute matter. (31:17)

The infidels jeered at the Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him), tortured him by their sarcastic remarks: They mocked at the poor, miserable and wretched condition of the Muslims and taunted the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that the punishment from Allah which was soon to descend upon them had not yet come. It was said to him (the Holy Prophet) not to care for their remarks nor feel dejected and depressed but carry out his mission with devotion following the example of the past Prophets (peace be upon them).

Be patient with what they say, and mention Our servant, the mighty David; he was a patient. (38:17)

The only way to develop this virtue of patience in us is that we should love Allah from the core of our heart and repose trust in the Omnipotence of God.

So be patient on what they say, and hymn the praise of thy Lord. (22:103)

Not only should we pay any heed to the sarcastic and taunting remarks of the enemies; but we should forsake them in a better way:

And be patient for thy Lord's sake. (74:7)

Tolerance, Forbearance

The fourth meaning of the word patience is that one should overlook the bad attitude of the wrong-doer and forgive the fault of the person who misbehaves, annoys and tortures you. In other words he who overlooks your fault and forgives the wrong-doer and shows tolerance is morally superior to the person who gives mental torture to the other person. There are many verses of the Holy Qur'an in which the word patience has been

used in this sense:

If you punish, punish as you were punished: but if you are patient, it is surely better for the patient. Be patient, yet thy patience is with the help of God: and do not grieve over them, nor be in distress for which they devise. (11:126,127)

This is a kind of patience which indicates great moral courage and the Muslims are exhorted to show this moral courage for the sake of Allah only and not because of weakness or fear of the enemy or any other reason.

Such as persevere in seeking their Lord's countenance and are regular in prayer and spend of that which we bestow upon them secretly and openly and overcome evil with good.

Theirs will be the sequel of the (heavenly) home. (13:22)

The angels would salute such people saying:

The angels enter unto them every gate (saying):

Peace be unto you because ye persevered. (13:23,24)

A notable point in the above verse is that in the beginning of the verse some good deeds like patience, prayer, sadaqa, overcoming evil with good have been enumerated, but the special virtue for which the angels pray for the believer is patience as unless a person does not have this virtue, he would not take the pain to pray of encounter the hardships that come in his way of repay the evil with goodness. This point has been elucidated in another verse of the Holy Qur'an:

The good and the evil are not equal. Repel with the fairest; and Lo! The one between whom and thee there is enmity, shall be as if he was a bosom friend. But none receives it except those who show patience and none receives it except a man of mighty fortune. (41:34, 35)

The persons who commit atrocities and spread evil and mischief could not escape the punishment of Allah. A true Muslim should forbear and forgive of anyone does wrong to him and annoys and tortures him because of his religious beliefs.

Steadfastness

The fifth important meaning of patience is to show persistent courage, perseverance and steadfastness in the battle-field in case there is war with the enemy. In the Holy Qur'an the word patience has been used again and again in this sense and the persons who possess this virtue have been called truthful and pious as it is they who fulfill the covenant they had made with Allah. The Holy Qur'an says:

And they fulfill their covenant, when they make it; and are patient in adversity, hardship and in time of peril; such are the ones who spoke true, and such are God-fearing. (2:177)

Success in the battle-field depends upon four things: Dhikr (remembrance) of Allah, obedience to the leader of that time, mutual cooperation, harmony, and valiance and

perseverance, and courage in the battle-field.

O Believers when you encounter a host, stand firm and remember God much, that ye may succeed.

And obey God and His Messenger, and do not quarrel together, lest you lose heart and your power departs; be patient, God is with the patient. (8:45,46)

The deficiency in the number of supporters of true religion can be made only by their spiritual and moral superiority and by their virtue of patience and steadfastness. History bears ample testimony to the fact that only a small number of firm minded and persevering soldiers overcame quite a large army. Islam had taught this lesson to its followers in the very beginning when their number was small and its enemies were in majority.

O Prophet urge on the believers to fight. If there be among you twenty patient men they should overcome two hundred and if there be among you a hundred; they should overcome a thousand of unbelievers for they are a people who do not understand.

Now God has lightened it for you, knowing that there is weakness in you; so if there be among you a hundred patient men, they should overcome two hundred: And if there be among you a thousand they should overcome two thousand, by the leave of God: God is with the patient. (8:65 66)

The Muslims were ordained not to care for their small number. They could fight against double their strength if they did not lose heart and show patience and steadfastness. Allah's help is with those who are patient and persevering. In the story of Talut and Jalut stress has been laid on this very point in the Holy Qur'an:

They said: We have no power today against Goliath and his hosts. But those who reckoned that they should meet God, said: How many a small company has overcome a large company, by the leave of God; and God is with the patient.

So when they faced Goliath and his host, they said: Our Lord, Pour out upon us patience and make firm our feet, and help as against the unbelieving people. (2:249,250)

Allah imposed a condition on the small and weak party of believers that they would succeed provided they persevered and remained patient and encountered the hardships courageously reposing unwavering trust in the might of Allah.

Then, thy Lord for those who emigrated after they were persecuted, then struggled and were steadfast-thy Lord thereafter is surely Forgiving, Merciful. (16:110)

If the Muslims desire to dominate and rule they must inculcate this virtue in them. The Bani Isra'il having emancipated from the worst kind of slavery of Pharaoh, had to encounter the neighbouring disbelievers. So Musa (peace be upon him) gave this first lesson to his people:

Musa said to his people: Seek help with God and be patient; the land belongs to God. He gives it in heritage to whom, out of His servants. He wills; and the end-result is for the God-fearing. (7:128)

The insignificant number of Bani Isra'il had no comparison with the large number of unbelievers of the neighbouring countries of Egypt, Syria, Kin'an, but when they showed perseverance and courage and encountered the enemy with a firm and determined mind, giving them a tough resistance, all the obstacles gave way. Although they were surrounded by the enemy from all sides they became the ruler of a free and independent State and continued to rule for a long time. Allah, the Exalted, has explained that the secret of their success lies in patience. It has been said in the Holy Qur'an:

And We made the people, that were oppressed, to inherit all the east and the west of the land, We had blessed, and the most fair word of the Lord was fulfilled upon the Children of Isra'il for that they showed patience and We destroyed utterly what pharaoh and his people have been making, and what they have been building. (7:137)

It is thus clear that the weak and helpless Israelites became a dominating and ruling nation by showing constant patience and perseverance and Allah, the Almighty, bestowed upon them the kingdom of Syria as has been stated in the Holy Qur'an.

And we appointed leaders among them to guide by Our Command, when they endured patiently, and they had sure faith in Our signs. (32:24)

In the above verse of the Holy Qur'an two reasons for this favour have been explained, firstly, it was due to their implicit faith in Allah and secondly, they acted upon His command patiently. It is on these two pillars that the edifice of the growth and development of a nation is built. First of all we must be sure about the veracity of our convictions and beliefs and after making sure we should not hesitate to act upon them however great may be the difficulties, hardships, dangers and hazards which come in the way.

In the battle of Uhud, the Muslims suffered a defeat and seventy of them sacrificed their lives in the cause of Allah. Some of the Muslims were disheartened and felt dejected. Allah, the Exalted, quotes to them the example of the Prophets of the past as to how they showed patience despite difficulties and hardships in the cause of religion.

Many a prophet there has been, along with whom large armies fought, and they did not lose heart on what afflicted them in the way of God, nor showed weakness, nor did they humble themselves; and God loves the patient.

They only said: Our Lord, forgive us our sins and our excesses in our affair and make firm our feet, and help us against the disbelieving people. (3:146,147)

This verse has unveiled the reality behind the word patience and removed the misconceptions about it in the minds of people. This word is not synonymous with the words helplessness, weakness of endurance of what cannot be cured, but it implies using all possible means to encounter the difficult and hard situations with determination and perseverance, it also means not to lose heart in adversities, to make constant efforts till one's success and achievement of goal. One should also pray to Allah to forgive him for any excess or faults on his part which had been committed deliberately or in deliberately and

grant him more courage and strength to overcome his enemies. Allah, the Exalted, has said that success of the Muslims depends on fulfillment of two essential conditions: the one is devotion to Allah and the other is to overcome the difficulties and hardships through patience and perseverance.

The success in this world and the blissful life in the Hereafter is for the persons who do not lose heart and adhere to the cause of Truth under all circumstances and the advantage of supporting the Truth and facing the hardships or difficulties that come in its way, is that it develops in man the power of discrimination between the right and the wrong as has been said in the following verse of the Holy Qur'an:

Or, did you think that you should enter the Garden when God has not yet known those of you who struggle, (nor) known the patient? (3:142)

Self-Control

The most critical time in the life of the people and nations is that when they win a tremendous victory or suffer a crushing defeat. At these times it is very difficult to maintain control over one's self or his overwhelming feelings and sentiment: But it is the sure test how far one can maintain his control and balance in his sentiments; this balance of mind of self-control develops a person's character and enhance the honour and prestige of the nation by fostering in their people the qualities of seriousness, patience and tolerance. A Muslim has been given the lesson that the joys and delights of life should not make him proud and haughty and forget of Allah nor should the adversities can be overcome by patience and self-control. The All-Knowing the All-Wise Allah says:

And if we let him taste prosperity after some hardship has touched him, he says: The evil has gone from me; he is joyous, boastful, except those who are patient and do righteous deeds; for them is forgiveness and a mighty large. (11:11)

Constancy in Keeping One's Duty to Allah

One implication of patience is to rise to the occasion and encounter the impending danger with courage and patience and perseverance. Another implication of patience is to perform the duty assigned to a person by Allah constantly and continuously throughout his life with sincerity and devotion. The observance of the duties we owe to Allah like prayers and other Ibadat (acts of devotion), and to act upon His will and commands with regularity and continuity is rather a difficult task and it cannot be done without implicit faith in the truthfulness of religion and patience. We should be loyal and obedient to Allah and all our actions should be to earn His pleasure; this being the greatest proof of our unwavering faith and selfless devotion to Allah. It has been ordained:

Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between them; so serve Him and be steadfast in His service; dost thou know any that has His name? (19:65)

And bid thy people to prayer and be thou steadfast on it. We do not ask that for a provision. We ourselves provide thee; and the ultimate end is for the God-fearing. (22:132)

So God shall guard them from the evil of that day, and grant them radiance and gladness; and recompense them for their patience with a garden and silk. (76:11,12)

That is, the reward for pious deeds his Paradise. It is rather difficult for a person to keep away from the temptations and avoid lust, greed, lewdness, voluptuousness and luxurious way of life of ease and comfort and accumulation of wealth and riches. Apparently there is a great glamour, excitement, and attraction in these things and in this false social set up of the present day, the possessors of wealth are counted among the high gentry. In such a state of affairs it requires great patience and moral courage to follow the commands of Allah and be honest without caring for the pleasures of this transitory life. If a person refrains from earning a lot through illegal means, deceit and fraud it is because Allah has ordained him not to do so. Allah has given him patience which is indeed a mighty power. He has endowed to his bondsmen who are steadfast.

Those having a superficial view of judging the things fall a prey to greed to see so much wealth, but those possessing patience and deep insight into the real value of things fully know that the wealth and riches of this world are only transitory and fleeting things and the blessings and rewards which Allah bestows upon his pious and virtuous men are enduring:

So he went forth to his adornment. Those who desired the present life said: Would that we had the like of what Korah has been given; he is surely a man of mighty fortune. But those who had been given the knowledge said: Woe to you. The reward of God is better for him who believes and does righteousness, but none receives it except the patient. (28:79,80)

The patient would be recompensed from the treasure which is always full to the brim and would never exhaust:

What is with you shall come to an end, but what is with God shall remain; and We will surely recompense the steadfast their wage for the best of what they did. (15:97)

It was further said: Observe prayers as good deeds annul evil deeds. In this message there is a guidance and reminder for those who receive the guidance:

And establish the prayer at the two ends of the day and early hours of the night; the good deeds drive away the evil deeds; that is a reminder for those who receive the guidance:

And establish the prayer at the two ends of the day and early hours of the night; the good deeds drive away the evil deeds; that is a reminder for the mindful.

And be patient; God will not waste the wage of the good deeds. (11:114,115)

The blessing and Rewards of patience

The blessings and rewards of patience are countless and limitless:

Surely the steadfast will be paid their wages in full without reckoning. (39:10)

Patience is counted as one among the most excellent moral qualities and highly

praised virtues of this world and in the Hereafter. It has been said in the Holy Qur'an:

Surrendering men and surrendering women, believing men and believing women, obedient men and obedient women, truthful men and truthful women, patient men and patient women, humble men and humble women, charitable men and charitable women, fasting men and fasting women, and men and women guarding their private parts, men and women remembering God much- for them God has prepared forgiveness and mighty wage. (39:35)

Patience and Prayer – key to Success and Alleviation of Sufferings

The virtues can be explained in only two words, patience and prayer. The Jews did not accept the true message of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) because of disease in their heart and also because of fear that if they embraced Islam they would have to give up their luxurious way of living of ease and comfort and undergo financial and other hardships. It is obvious that those accustomed to an easy-going way of living could not afford it.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prescribed spiritual treatment for their disease:

Seek help with patience and prayer; it is indeed hard except to the humble.

It was said that prayers would affect and turn their hearts and patience would resolve the difficulties and remove the hurdles in the path of truth. After migration when the Quraish of Makkah took up arms against the believers and the time for testing the sincerity and devotion of the Muslims came, the following verses of the Holy Qur'an were revealed.

And do not say of those who are killed in the way of God:

They are dead; no they are living, but you do not perceive.

We will surely try you with something of fear and hunger, and loss of possessions, lives and fruits; give thou good news to the patient.

Who when an affliction befalls them say: We belong to God and to him we are returning.

They are the ones on whom rest greetings and mercy from their Lord, and they are the guided one. (25:152,157)

These verses told the Muslims as to how should be their way of living: They should show patience and self-control and remain steadfast in adversities such as loss of lives and properties in the cause of Allah as ultimately we are to return to Allah. We should not hesitate to sacrifice all that is in our possession, even our lives for the sake of Allah and there is a glad tidings of immense favours and rewards for such person. ■

ULAMA'S SACRIFICES FOR FREEDOM : MAULANA RABEY HASANI NADWI

All India Muslim Personal Law Board president and rector of Nadwatul Ulama Maulana Syed Rabey Hasani Nadwi while speaking at a function of Jauhar Foundation said that it is our duty to familiarize the new generation with the sacrifices made by our ulama and departed leaders in the country's war of independence and also their services in the fields of religion, communal harmony, national unity, and education. He said that thousands of ulama sacrificed their lives during the freedom struggle but their unique services have been forgotten. In the textbooks the sacrifices and services of our ulama have been omitted as if they did nothing for freedom of the country. He said that past creates the present and the present gives rise to future. Therefore, it is essential that services and sacrifices of our forefathers for the country's independence, which are being deliberately ignored, should be passed on to our future generation. Jauhar Foundation has achieved remarkable success in spreading and popularizing the achievements and values of our forefathers among the people and new generation in a very short time. Maulana Majid Mas'ood, rector of Madrasa Saulatya of Makkah, was present in this function as chief guest. This madrasa was established in Makkah by the great revolutionary Haji Imdadullah after his migration to Hijaz in the wake of the defeat in 1857. ■

Abu Huraira reports a hadith that the Prophet (S) said, "A noble nature demands that when the guest is leaving the house the host should accompany him (while saying good bye) up to the door of the house." (Ibn Maajah)

COURAGE AND FAITH

Mohammad Habib

CICERO an orator, philosopher, and statesman from ancient Rome, once said: "A man of courage is also full of faith."

HASAN Ali, a 60-year-old man from Faridabad in India's Haryana State, is one such man whose faith gave him the courage to come for last year's Haj. Despite his acute disability, he was able to perform Haj with courage. He is Abdul Razzak Bhatt, 44, of Kulgam, in Jammu and Kashmir State, who is partially blind.

"Bhatt has one eye with light perception, which in medicinal terms is called 6x48 vision," explained Dr. Nadeem Siddiqui, Indian medical mission in-charge in Makkah. "He does not need a guide as Ali did."

The two were among the 157,000 Indian who performed Haj recently. Both came for Haj for the first time. Bhatt was accompanied by relatives and Ali was taken care of by people from his hometown, but he was provided a full-time guide by the Indian consulate general beginning from the time when the pilgrims moved to Mina, Siddiqui told Haj & Umra.

Though of a bit less than average height and wiry Ali is straight as a stick, strong as steel and sensitive to the slightest waft of smell and movement.

He speaks in a commanding, authoritative, but not domineering voice, a voice that is clear and resonant, and reflects his confidence. So much so that one cannot help thinking that he could command the prestigious, colourful and massive Republic Day Parade in New Delhi with ease.

Ali said that he has been blind from birth and as such is unmarried "who will marry me?" He said matter of-factly when asked if he was married and how many children he had. "These kind people take care of me," he said pointing to his room mates. "Moreover, from Mina onwards the Indian consulate provided me with a full-time guide."

He said his four brothers – two elder and two younger – who are all well to do helped him to come for Haj. "They asked me to perform Haj, and bore all my expenses. I have one sister, who is younger to me. Her husband is not well off financially, but my brothers have promised to send them also for Haj next year," he said, pronouncing duas

(prayers) for them profusely for the “noble gestures.”

Asked if his disability was a predicament, and what sort of problems he faced, and if he had any hesitation in accepting his brothers’ offer because of his not being able to see, Ali who memorised the Qur’an when he was 15 years old, said “There is another light besides the one in the eyes.”

He quoted the following verse from the Qur’an:

“God is the Light

Of the heavens and the earth.

The parable of His Light

Is as if there were a Niche

And within it a Lamp:

The lamp enclosed in Glass:

The Glass as it were

A brilliant star:

Lit from a blessed Tree,

An Olive, neither of the East;

Nor of the West,

Whose Oil is well-nigh

Luminous,

Though fire scarce touched it:

Light upon Light!

God doth guide

Whom He will

To His Light:

God doth guide

Whom He will

To His Light:

God doth set forth Parables

For men : and God

Doth know all things,”(xxiv:35)

“There can be no darkness with such Light and Guide,” said Ali who teaches the

Qur'an to his brothers' and sister's children. "Now I will also start teaching to other children as well- from the neighbourhood and so on," he said enthusiastically.

Asked if he had any advice or message for others, he said, "I have only duas and good wishes for the people. For advice and message, one must follow the Qur'an and the Sunnah."

Asked what he bought to take home, he mentioned dates, rosaries, and prayer mats. "Zam Zam we will get on return at Delhi airport. A very nice arrangement by the consulate people, which I'm told has been introduced for the first time this year," Ali said.

There were deaths and births also among the pilgrims. A majority of those who died were in their 60s.

Dr. Siddiqui said that most of the deaths were due to natural causes such as cardiac arrest, and cardio respiratory arrest. Other reasons included heart failure, hypovolemic (hemorrhagic) shock due to polytrauma following road traffic accident, multi organ failure due to acute renal failure with ischemic heart disease with pleural effusion, coma (diabetes mellitus), and cardio respiratory arrest due to blood cancer and pneumonia.

The first birth was of baby girl Habiba Khatoon to 25 year old Gulshan Jahan, wife of Hafiz Mohammad Haroon, 28. Habiba was born when the couple was returning with other Indian pilgrims from Madinah to Makkah. During a stopover for prayer nearly 100 km from Makkah, the mother started getting birth pains and the women in the group formed a secluded corner using bed sheets, and delivered the baby, who is quite they had miscalculated the birth and were expecting it to take place quite some time after return from Haj.

"It is Allah's wish and gift. Habiba is lucky to be born here. We have two daughters in India. One is three years old, and another six," Haroon told Haj & Umra. They are from Udhamsinh Nagar in Uttaranchal State.

Talking about medical care and facilities, Dr. Suhel Ajaz Khan consul (Haj & HOC) said that special attention was paid to help Ali and Bhatt perform their Haj rites. Besides providing a 24 hours guide to Ali from Mina onwards, they and all the centenarian were given medical check-ups, and their health was monitored every day. "A chart was maintained and care provided accordingly," he explained.

Khan said that the number of x-ray machines was increased from two last year to four this year. Three of these were in Makkah and one is Madinah. There were 12 dispensaries in Makkah and a staff of 250 medical and paramedics. There were nine ambulances, with two in Madinah.

He said that this year the total number of pilgrims had gone up by 10,000, reaching 157,000, of which 110,000 came through the central Haj Committee (CHC), and 47,000

through private tour operators (PTOs). The increase had been among CHC pilgrims, whereas the number of PTOs remained the same as last year – 47,000.

A majority of the pilgrims – 27000- were from the Uttar Pradesh State. The minimum number was from Dadra Nagar Haveli (15) and Daman (10).

There were 12 embarkation points in India, the same number as last years. These were Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Kolkata, Kozikode, Lucknow, Mumbai, Nagpur and Srinagar.

Moreover, there were two feeder stations. Pilgrims from Patna in Bihar and Guwahati in Assam came from Kolkata, and those from Aurangabad from Nagpur.

Khan said that 49,000 pilgrims had come direct to Madinah, and 61,000 to Jeddah. All those who had arrived in Madinah departed from Jeddah, and a majority who had arrived in Jeddah left from Madinah.

The flights from Bangalore, Delhi, Kozikode, Lucknow and Nagpur arrived in Madinah and departed from Jeddah.

Among the Indian pilgrims, there were also eight centenarians. Of them, five were male and three female, the eldest among all being a 110 years old woman Jamila Khatoon from Maharashtra State.

The others were Amjad Khan, 106, of Uttar Pradesh; Mohammad Amiruddin Khan, Assam, and Mohammad Abdul Haque, Bihar, both 105; Asgari of UP, 104, Lal Khan of Ajmer in Rajasthan, 102; and Thakor Sakina Bibi of Gujarat and Mohammad Liyaqat of Andhra Pradesh, both 100 years old.

Lal Khan who was accompanied by his 90- year old wife, said this was her first Haj. They have four sons and four daughters, of whom one son was born blind but has memorised the Quran. They were accompanied by one of their daughters and her husband, both of whom performed the Haj for the second time.

"We all prayed that other sons and daughters could also come for the Haj", Lal Khan said.

This was not the first time that the Indian mission in the Kingdom looked after centenarian Hajjis. The oldest pilgrims this year and last year were both 110 years old.

This year, it was Jamila Khatoon, a woman from Maharashtra, and last year a man, Miya Sarfraz Ahmad Khan of Jammu and Kashmir.

Khan said that last year there 100 and older. Of the total seven were men and six women. Twelve came through the CHC, and one-160 year-old Maman Valu Miru of Gujarat – through private tour operator.

The number of centenarians last year was more than double the figure of the year before when there were six centenarians.

Of the men, two were 106 years old, two 105 years old, and three 110, 108, and 100 years of age. As for women, four were 105 years old, and two 106 years old.

The oldest and the second oldest of the centenarians were 110 years old and 108 years old men.

The oldest Indian pilgrim was 110 year old Miya Sarfraz Ahmad Khan while the second oldest was 108-year-old Ghulam Ahmed Bhat.

The oldest women pilgrim from India, both 106 years old, were Zeeba Begum from Jammu and Kashmir and Husaini Bai from Rajasthan. Of the 13, a majority (six) were 105 years old, four 106 years old, one 110 years, one 108 years, and the youngest among the group was 100 years old.

During Haj 2004, the oldest living man in the world, and perhaps history, came for the annual pilgrimage. He was Rahim Khan, popularly known as Habib Miyan, from the Pink City (Jaipur) in Rajasthan.

The 134- year-old Rahim Khan was accompanied by two grandsons, Mehmood Khan Abbasi, 52, Chuttan Khan Abbasi, 41, and their 90-year-old mother Munni Bewa.

"I know that I am the oldest person in the world," Habib Miyan told Haj and Umra haltingly soon after he had arrived from Delhi at the Haj Terminal in Jeddah on December 28, 2003.

According to the National Association for the Blind, India, in the rural areas, there are 22 blind males and 28 blind females per 100,000 people.

In urban areas, the ratio is 15 males and 25 females per 100,000.

Dr. M.L. Kataria, who has been operating a health-care centre for the inmates of the institution for the blind in Chandigarh for several years, says that out of a total global blind population of nearly 20 million, India has the misfortune of having 10 million. While 80 per cent of these less fortunate are curable, there is an acute dearth of qualified ophthalmologists, or, for many reasons, these patients have no access to the centres of sight-restoration. While a few NGOs do organise eye camps, mostly in and around urban areas, the state health care services have no organised regular mobile eye-care facilities for the rural and remote areas.

"Therefore, there seems to be a permanent statistical stagnation at 80 per cent of even the curable blind in India," he says.

According to the norms laid down by the International Association for the Preven-

tion of Blindness, a person is blind if he cannot count fingers at a distance of 1.5 metres or if his vision (in the USA, less than 1/10 of normal vision). The population so affected is nearly 50 million in India.

“The most tragic aspect of blindness in India is that more than 30 per cent of the blind lose their eyesight by the time they reach the age of 25 to 35 he says.

In 1974, the world health organization established the international Agency for Prevention of Blindness to coordinate the work of national agencies. In India, the national Association for the blind, a voluntary organization, was formed in 1952. The Central Government established the National Institute for the Blind at Dehra to work out strategies for solving the national problem.

There are not many regional voluntary agencies for the blind. Chandigarh established the Society for the Care of the Blind, a voluntary agency, in 1972. It started a school with only five children in a rented house. Today, the Institute for the Visually Handicapped caters to more than a hundred blind children, adolescent, persons, men and women, from Chandigarh, Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir.

The institute has one of the best residential schools in the region from class 1 to classes 10+2. At present the girls are day scholars. However, the school is soon going to expand to a capacity of 150 (100 boys and 50 girls), with residential facilities for girls also. The school has been consistently securing 100 per cent success rate in the first division, year after year, in the examinations conducted by the Central Board of Secondary Education.

Of a staff of 20 teachers, six, including the head master, are blind.

Besides academics, the institute also conducts extensive vocational training programmes like typewriting in English, Hindi and Punjabi, stenography, instrumental and vocal music, wax work, weaving of household articles, cane work, stitching, knitting and culinary skills, and computer education. It has its own band and a drama club. ■

(Courtesy : Haj and Umra)

The Prophet(S) has said, "One should not be unjust to one's brother." Neither orally nor physically. No injustice and oppression is allowed. In other words, all forms of injustice conceivable in this world, are prohibited.

ISLAMIC PASSION

Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

Morals of Islam act on human nature similar to that of fire which purifies iron and melts it so that it can be moulded into an effective instrument. The credit of its goes to Prophet Muhammad who came on earth to guide people from darkness into light and lead them to path of salvation, progress and prosperity.

Needless to add that the religion that the Prophet Muhammed brought is based on the concept that all human beings regardless of caste, creed, colour, language, culture and origin form one community. In the words of the holy Quran: "O mankind! We have created you from a single pair of male and female, constituted into diverse, peoples and nations that you know and co-operate with one another. The best among you in the sight of God is the most pious, the most virtuous". (49:13)

Unlike other religions Islam is not only a religion but a complete code of life. Islam is an Arabic word which connotes submission, surrender and obedience. Its another literal meaning is "peace" and it signifies that one can attain real peace of body as well as mind only through submission and obedience to Allah.

We may easily comprehend from the above connotations of Islam that in true sence entire creation of the whole world, literally follows the religion of Islam. The sun, the Moon the earth, air, water, stones, trees, animals and other innumerable things found in this cosmos are thus Muslims. For all things run on a specific course and pronounce Allah's praise and glorify Him. The holy Quran says: "The seven heavens and the earth, and all beings therein, declare His glory. There is not a thing but celebrates His praise; and yet ye understand not how they declare His glory! Verily He is oft-forgiving, Most-Forgiving. (S.17, A.44)

The holy book further says: "Seest thou not that to Allah prostrate all things that are in the Heavens and on earth, the Sun, the moon, the stars, the hills, the trees the animals and a great number among mankind?" (S.22, A.18)

In this context it would be apt to mention that three basic concepts of Islam as laid down by prophet Muhammad and all Prophets who had been sent by Almighty Allah to this universe before him for the guidance of people are : At-thowhid (The oneness of Allah); Ar-Risalah (Prophethood); Al-Akhirah (Hereafter).

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

Now come to the three basic concepts of Islam. The first and foremost tenet of Islam is oneness of Allah. For real objective of life is attainment of pleasure of Allah. Almighty Allah alone deserves worship. There is no deity except Him. If we worship except Him, it would be an act of polytheism. In Islamic concept polytheism is an unforgivable sin. It is contumacious treason against Him. This is a rebellion against the creator. Almighty Allah forgives all sins except polytheism. The holy Quran says: "Allah forgiveth not that partner should be set up into Him; but He forgiveth anything else, to whom He pleaseth; to set up partners with Allah is to devise a sin most heinous indeed" (.4, A.48). Abu Amr relates on the authority of Sufyan b. Abudullah that he said to prophet, 'O Apostle of Allah, tell me something about Islam that I may not require further elucidation from anybody. The Prophet replied: I have faith in Allah, and stick to it firmly" Abdullah bin Busre reports that a person said to the Prophet (PBUH), "O Apostle of God! I have known many commandments of Islam (but it is difficult for me to act on them simultaneously) therefore, tell me the one which I can make the passion of my life." The Prophet said, "Keep your tongue wet with remembrance of God."

The second tenet of Islam is Prophethood. The holy Quran says: "There is no nation to whom a Warner has not been sent" (35:24)". To every people we sent a Prophet to teach them to worship God and to avoid evil....(16:36)" O ye who believe, believe in God and His apostle and the Book (Quran) which He hath sent down to His apostle and scriptures which He hath sent down formerly. Whoever denieth God and His angles and His Books and His apostles and the Last Day hath strayed far from the truth (4:136) "We have sent to mankind messengers proclaiming the truth and warning that men may henceforth have no excuse for ignorance" (4:165)

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

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

only he knew". (29:64)

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

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

The holy Quran says: "the dwellers of paradise will ask the inmates of Hell, what brought ye into Hell-fire? They will reply, " We were not of those who observed the prescribed prayers, and we were not of those who fed the poor, and we indulged in vain talk with idle thinkers, and we questioned the happening of the Day of Judgement, till death overtook us" (Q:74: 42-47)

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

"Abu Huraira reports a hadith that the Prophet (S) said, "One Muslim is a brother to other Muslims (in religion). (And I pronounce the command of Allah for him) that he should not do injustice to them nor deny them help (in good deeds). Nor should he look down upon them. Those of you who loudly make protestations of piety, listen!) Piety lies in this place." (The prophet (S) pointed out three times towards his heart to indicate the place, then said). 'This evil is enough for the Muslim that he looks down contemptuously on his Muslim brother. (Please listen attentively) All the things of a Muslim are prohibited for the Muslims - his blood, his property and his honour."

GENESIS

(In the Name of Allah, the Most Benevolent, the Most Merciful)

Rumana Ahmad*

Who is the creator of the paradise,
Of the gaudy day and starry night,
Who is the creator in disguise;
Of glittering stars and planets bright.

Who has created the moon and sun,
This beauteous earth and the blue sky,
The verdant grass, where children run;
And those deep oceans where treasures lie.

Who created these tall trees and blooming flowers,
Those waterless deserts and snow capped mountains,
Who sends down those heavenly showers;
To replenish the dry streams and fountains.

Who moulded Adam from wet soil,
And thus created the human race,
Beatowing it with courage in turmoil;
And blessing it with wisdom and grace.

God alone is the creator of everything,
Of inscrutable deeps and unknown lands,
By whose will, the birds sing;
And the waves dance on the yellow sands.

SLAVERY IN MODERN SCENARIO

Shamsul Huda Qasmi

Islam always encourages building a good and healthy society where peace and harmony must prevail among the people by their mutual cooperation and understanding. Discrimination and maltreatment with any class of people have no place in Islamic social order. Islam vigorously asserts to behave well with neighbours, be he believer or not. Islam orders to wink at 70 mistakes of the slaves daily, if he exceeds the limit, you may punish him. Islam challenges the non-believers to show such conducts to their slaves and servants. The prophet (saw), while leaving for heavenly abode, said, "I advise you to be mindful of salah and courteous conduct to slaves."

Despite the fact, Islam has a clear guidance of a healthy society and strict directives with regards to slaves and servants, the western media and anti Islamic elements move heaven and earth to malign the true face of Islam when talking about the Islamic concept of slavery but do not dare to notice the inhumane treatment of the USA with the prisoners in the Guantanamo Bay. They are chained hand and foot in a fetal position to the floor, without a chair, or food or water. The conditions are so pathetic that they urinated and defecated on themselves. They are fainted due to the unventilated rooms. Is it not human rights violation what the US is doing across the world? What's more, according to a report, approximately 655000 people have died since the US invaded and occupied Iraq, not to speak of mass killing in Afghanistan.

This is the result of human made rules and laws and going against the natural teachings what Islam has directed its followers about war prisoners and slaves. Through history there have been wars and innumerable people killed and made captives. In Islam, enslaved are distributed among the army men and not put behind the bars whereby the government incurs extra burden of managing jails, providing food and clothes to the prisoners. Moreover the prisoners remain deprived of the society life. They always feel locked up and remain the enemy of the government. While observing the Islamic directive the government avoids the extra burden on the treasury and the inmates feel free to walk and enjoy the life of society. He does not have the kind of feeling of imprisonment. If the master shows courteous conduct to the slave, he would treat the family as his own. The slave finds enough freedom to learn sciences and arts and become civilised and cultured

under the supervision of his master. We, therefore, find numerous stories of slaves in Islamic history wherein they reached the highest glory to sciences and arts and were raised to even office of governor and king. The history bears witnesses of the slaves who became jurists, muhaddith, commentator of the Qur'an and man of letters and so forth.

It is the teachings of Islam that compel the masters of inmates to behave well with them. Islam directs the masters to dress the slaves what he desires for himself, provide the food what he prefers for himself, and seat him beside himself. The prophet (SAW) continued to warn the same till he breathed his last. The Prophet (SAW) said, "I advise you to be mindful of salah and courteous conduct to slaves."

In today's scenario we witness only oppression, subjugation and abuse in the name of liberalisation and modern civilisation. The harsh and inhuman treatment with the prisoners in Cuba by The USA Army, in no case, is justified. It is an open violation of international law.

It is Islam that can give shelter and justice to one and all. May Allah enable us all to understand Islam and follow its commandments! ■

Abu Huraira says while reporting a hadith that a man came to the Prophet (S) and asked as to which charity brings the highest rewards. The Prophet (S) said, "It is that charity which you give out when you are in good health, when you are temptations to hoard wealth, when you are afraid of poverty and expect to become rich rather than at a time when you are on the verge of death and say that such and such thing should be given away to such and such person and that this particular article is for that particular person. In fact, all this wealth and articles will themselves become other people's possessions." (Bukhari)

CLERICS REJECT PM PROPOSAL FOR MADRASA BOARD

Even among members of the minority community, there are few takers for Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's proposal of creating Central Board for Madrasa Education.

Singh, who faced Opposition criticism for making the announcement during the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, also failed to win the hearts of Muslim clerics. Clerics from all sects, except some Shia leaders, have condemned the decision and termed it as "interference in religious matters of Muslims."

Miffed by the proposal, the All India Board (ALMPLB) rejected in outright at the recently-held meeting of its executive body at New Delhi. The Board's opinion was supported by the old boys association of Aligarh Muslim University as well as the Islamic Centre of India.

At the ALMPLB meeting, the Prime Minister's move was dubbed a conspiracy against minorities. The Board members said only 5 per cent of Muslim students go to madrasas and if the Union government was serious about doing something for the minorities it should waive fees and provide scholarship to them.

Vice-president of the Board Maulana Kalbe Sadiq, while talking to The Indian Express, said: "Yes there was a division of opinion within the board but the final decision is against the move of the Union government."

Executive member of the Board and Imam of Aishbagh Eidgaah, Maulana Khalid Rasheed, was more critical and said the Union government should leave madrasa students to their own fate. "We are giving them modern education along with religious teaching. The Union government has no right to interfere in our affairs and specially when we are not asking for any financial assistance," he said. He dared the Union government to make a similar proposal for the RSS-run Saraswati Shishu Mandirs.

The head of the AMU alumni association in Lucknow, Omar Saleem, too supported the views of AIMPLB and said that any such move should be initiated after taking the Board into confidence. ■

(Siddharth Kalhans in Indian Express)

SCIECNE SEAL ON MUSLIM HISTORY

New Delhi : Scientists have confirmed what historians have known.

Genetic studies have suggested that Muslims in northern India are mostly descendants of local people who embraced Islam rather than repositories of foreign DNA deposited by waves of invaders.

The studies by scientists in India, Spain and the US indicate that while the Shias and the Sunnis in Uttar Pradesh are mostly descendants of converts, the former have some elements of paternal foreign ancestry.

The Shias and the Sunnis in Uttar Pradesh display higher genetic affinity to northern Indian caste populations than to western or central Asian populations.

The findings, based on the analysis of genetic material from 60 Sunni and 59 Shia volunteers, will appear in the American Journal of Physical Anthropology.

The researchers say their studies are the first to test two ideas on the ancestry of northern Indian Muslims - they may be descendants of local people who converted to Islam, or they may represent bloodlines of Muslims who arrived in three waves between the 8th and 14th centuries.

"Our results point to conversions in both groups, but greater foreign ancestry in the Shias," said Suraksha Agrawal, a team member and head of medical genetic at the Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Medical Sciences, Lucknow.

Agrawal has tried to piece together maternal and paternal lineage of Muslims by analysing genetic material called mitochondrial DNA (mt DNA), which is acquired only from mothers, and Y Chromosome, which is passed down only by fathers.

"In the mt DNA, we do not see discrete signals from our biologist at Florida International University in the US and one of the collaborators, said. "Thus, both are, for the most part, groups". He told The Telegraph.

However, the Shias do show DNA signatures of foreign DNA from southwest Asian and North Africa in the Y chromosome, Herrera said.

"Until now, there has been no genetic study to explore the historical extrapolations of Muslim ancestry in India." Herrera added. "History can set contaminated over time. But DNA does not lie." ■

(The Telegraph, Calcutta)

WORKSHOP ON “FIQAH”

A three-day work shop for “Muftis” was organized under the aegis of Al-Mahadul-Al-Aali Lil Qaza-e-Wal Ifta a unit of Nadwatul Ulama Lucknow from May 15-17, 2007. Teachers of 170 Madrasas affiliated with Nadwa-tul-Ulama participated in the workshop.

Dr. Saeedur Rahman Al-Azami Al-Nadwi Principal Darul-Uloom Nadwatul Ulama in his opening address said that there are forces which want Islam to be obliterated from the surface of earth. The need of the hour is that we comprehend different issues of Muslims and solve them in a quiet way.

In his key note address Maulana Rabey Hasani Nadwi Rector Nadwa-tul-Ulema asserted that there is no possibility of any change and deviation in religion. Islam is based on the holy Quran. Allah has promised to rescue Islam. The conspiracy to malign Islam has been going on since long. But their efforts are being thwarted at every stage. Maulana asked Muftis that they strive hard to preserve the spirit of Islamic laws. While issuing fatwas care should be taken to adhere to the true spirit of Islam. The workshop was held for guidance of Muftis so that they keep these sensitive and delicate issues in their mind when they issue fatwah.

Maulana Salman Husaini Nadwi advised Muftis not to depend only on the books of fiqh but acquire proper knowledge of the Quran and Traditions. Knowledge of Arabic language is also desired.

Mufti Atiq Ahmad Bastavi pointed out some shortcomings in today's teaching of Islamic laws. He further introduced some important books on Islamic Laws too.

Mufti Junaid Alam Nadwi President Darul-Ifta Imarate-e-Sharia Bihar exhorted Muftis not to issue fatwa in a hurry.

Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani desired that Muftis should be embodiment of all virtues and qualities.

On this occasion a new book “Ila Nizamin Alame-in Jadeed” written by Maulana S.M. Wazeh Rashid Hasani Nadwi Director of Education Nadwatul-Ulema was released. Introducing the book and its author, Maulana Nazrul Hafiz Nadwi Editor-in-Chief Tamir-e-Hayat said the book is on the sensitive issues. The author of this book is an eminent educationist and veteran writer and litterateur. He has deep knowledge about the current affairs. Besides two books of late Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi on Islamic law and one book of Maulana Syed Mahmud Hasani Nadwi were also released.

President Al-mahadul-Al-Aali Lil-Qaza-e-wal-Ifta Mufti Muhammad Zahur Nadwi thanked representatives and impressed upon the need of holding such workshop to abreast Muftis of latest issues and proper interpretation of “Shariah”.

The programme concluded with the prayer of Maulana Rabey Hasani Nadwi. ■
(O.R. Nadwi)