



# THE FRAGRANCE OF EAST

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# The Fragrance of East

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## The Quranic Dictum

### S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

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

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

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

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

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

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

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### **Wisdom of Qur'an**

***"They say: 'If we were to follow this guidance with you, we should be snatched away from our land.' Have We not established for them a secure sanctuary to which fruits of all kinds are brought as a provision from Us? But most of them do not know."***

*(Al Qur'an – 28:57)*

This is what the Qurayshite unbelievers used to say as an excuse for not accepting Islam. When we reflect on this, we realise that this was indeed the main reason for their denial. In order to appreciate it fully, we should bear in mind the position of Quraysh in those times, a position which they felt would be undermined if they were to accept Islam. "What initially lent eminence to the Quraysh in Arabia was their descent from Ishmael. When, thanks to the sagacity of Qusayy ibn Kilab, the Quraysh became the custodians of the Ka'bah and settled down in Makkah, their importance grew." "Here is God's first answer to the excuse the Quraysh offered. This response amounted to saying: "Is it not because of God's special favour that it is looked upon with respect and veneration by all, and every year thousands of people come to it as pilgrims? It is thanks to this favour that you have become the leaders of Arabia and the major beneficiaries of the flourishing international trade of your time. Do you think that by rebelling against God Who, in the first place, bestowed this favour on you, you will prosper, and that you will be instantly destroyed if you follow God's Religion?" ■

### **Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)**

***"Abu Hurairah relates that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) said: "A person who calls people towards doing good deeds will get the same reward as those who follow him and do good; and nothing will be diminished from the requital of the latter. Similarly, those who call the people towards vice will have the same punishment as those who follow him without any diminution in the punishment of the perpetrators."***

*(Muslim)*

*Our deeds are either good or bad as no deed can be both good and evil. And people, in given circumstances, are tempted to do either good or bad deed. This hadith gives good tidings to a person who not only does good deeds but invites others to do so. It also warns a person against inviting his/her fellow beings to vice. Calling people towards doing good deeds is in itself a virtuous act. It wins the pleasure of the Lord Almighty as well as provides an opportunity for the invitee for doing good deeds. Contrary to it, the act of inviting people to commit some evil is in itself a vicious act. It earns the Divine wrath as well as puts the invitee in a position that earns the Divine wrath. "God is All-Powerful. He can give reward and award punishment to whom He wills. He knows perfectly well the deeds done by His servants as well as the intention lurking behind the commission of the deed. Hence His judgement is based on human actions. He however can forgive whomsoever He wills. ■"*

## The Blessed Month of Ramazan

Ramadhan is the month of peace, tranquility, piety, righteousness, generosity and bestowal. Of the five tenets of Islam, fasting in the month of Ramadhan is a must every year. During fast one must abstain from eating, drinking and smoking including inoculation and injections from dawn to dusk. In this context the verses of the Holy Quran which ordain for fasting, as an obligatory duty for Muslims are as follows:

“O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you that ye may (learn) self restraint.” (Fasting) for a fixed number of days; but if any of you is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed number should be made up from later days. For those who can do it (with hardship), is a ransom, the feeding of one that indigent, but he that will give more, of his own free will, it is better for him, and it is better for ye that ye face, if ye only knew”. (S.2,A.183-184)

Ramadhan's significance can be gauged from the fact that “the Quran was revealed to prophet Muhammad(PBUH) in this month as a guide to mankind, also clear (signs) for guidance and judgment (between right and wrong). So every one of you who is present at his house during that month should spend it in fasting, but if anyone is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed period (should be made up) by days later. God intends every facility for you; He does not want to put you to difficulties. He wants you to complete the prescribed period, and to glorify Him in that He has guided you; and perchance ye shall be grateful. (S.2,A.185)

Needless to add that like Salat (Prayers), fasting has been an essential duty for the followers of earlier Prophets. The Bible says that Jesus Christ fasted for forty days (Matthew 4: 1-4, Mark 1:12-13 and Luke 4:1-4). In Peter 2:21 the followers of Christ are enjoined to fast as the Prophet did. Even the Vedas and the Puranas prescribe fasting. Thus earlier peoples fasted though with a difference in the number of days and the prescribed time of fasting.

It should be kept in mind that this particular month has been considered sacred even from pre-Islamic days too. Ibn-Hisham states that the Qurayesh in the days of ignorance spent one month a year on Mt. Hira, practicing penance (Tahannuth). Before instituting fasting of Ramadhan Muhammad (PBUH) evidently observed fast on the tenth of Moharram”. (History of the Arabs, p. 133)

During Ramadhan evil conceals itself while good comes to the fore and the whole atmosphere is filled with piety and purity. The holy prophet says: “The deed of son of Adam is' increased several times (in Ramadhan) and the reward is increased by ten times. But Allah says that fasting is exclusively for Him and He himself will deliver its reward (to His bondsmen) as he abstains from eating and controls his desires only for Him. There are (two instances) of happiness for the fasting Muslim, one is at the time of breaking his fast and the other at the time meeting his Lord. And verily to Allah, the smell of fasting person's breath is the best and cleanliest. “The prophet of Islam also says: There is a door of paradise

called Rayyan towards which only the fasting will be called. Only the fastings will be called. Only the fastings will enter it and those who enter it will never feel thirsty.

It is related by Abu Hurairah that the Apostle of Allah said: "when the month of Ramazan' comes, the Gates of Heaven are thrown open, and the Gates of Hell are shut, and the devils are put behind the bar." (In another report, the "Gates of Mercy" are mentioned in place of the "Gates of Heaven." (Bukhari and Muslim)

"Salman Farsi narrates that the Apostle of Allah delivered a sermon on the last day of Sha'ban in which he said:'

"O my people! You are on the threshold of a month of great solemnity and blessings. It is a month whose one night is better than a thousand months. God has prescribed fasting in this month and make Taraweeh prayers optional Whosoever willingly and with good intentions does one good act in this month will have the merit of having done an obligatory act in other months and one who does a prescribed act in this month it will be equal to seventy prescribed act of other months. This is the month of endurance and the reward of endurance is paradise and this the month of sympathy with and care of the needy men of the community". (Mishkat)

It is related by Abu Hurairah that the Apostle of Allah said: "Whoever omits even a single fast of Ramazan without the legal concession of a journey etc. or (a valid excuse like that of illness), amends cannot be made for the thing that is omitted even though he observes fasting throughout the life." (Tirmizi)

It is needless to add that fasting is a shield against sins, crimes, vices and other un-Islamic acts. The prophet says: "Fast is like a shield for protection from satan's attack. Therefore, when one observes fast he should use this shield and abstain from quarreling. If anybody abuses him or quarrels with him, he should simply say: Brother, I am fasting do not expect me to indulge in similar conduct (Bukhari & Muslim)

To restore real spirit of fast, it is incumbent to observe it with prescribed rules and regulations. The noble prophet said: "If one does not give up speaking a lie during fast, God does not require him to give up eating and drinking (Bukhari).

On another occasion, he said: "Many are the people who fast but who "gain nothing from their fasts except hunger and thirst; and many are those who stand praying all night but gain nothing except sleeplessness (Darimi)"

To sum up the fasting according to Islam, is a spiritual discipline and as a consequence it inculcates moral discipline. It imparts moral strength and leads to the promotion of" virtues of piety.■

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## The Message of Ramazan

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi\*

O Believers! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you. That you may become pious. (Al-Baqarah 2: 183)

The above Qur'anic verse lays down that fasting is a religious duty incumbent on all Muslims. Until the last Day the command embodied in this verse remains valid. Embedded in the verse is thus much food for thought.

First, the command is addressed to believers. For the command involves doing something which is difficult. It calls for courage and patience to fast. Accordingly, mention is made first of faith. The believers are asked to discharge this duty. For they have pledged their servitude to Him, affirming that He is the Master and Ruler-interest. For they are obliged to perform whatever He commands of them. This is because of their servitude to Him. Being His servants they are expected to behave thus. They are at His beck and call. Allah being All-Wise begins the command in the above fashion. Otherwise, secular laws are promulgated without any reference to one's gain or safety against some loss. Although Allah is the absolute Ruler, Creator of the heavens and earth who exercises total control over everyone's life, honour and property, He invokes the conviction of believers. Muslim are exhorted to act on the dictates of their

faith. They are expected to respond vigorously and positively to His call. Against this backdrop they are told that a month-long fasting is prescribed for them as a religious duty.

Allah is thoroughly conversant with human nature. For He is man's Creator. At the same time, He makes certain allowances for man out of His wisdom and mercy. Whenever He enacts a command, He prepares man mentally for it, enabling him to obey His command willingly. Man is instinctively repulsed by something new and odd. However, on realising that something is a standard practice, followed down the ages by many generations, man is drawn towards it and feels no hesitation in obeying such a command.

Believers are informed that fasting was a duty obligatory upon earlier generations as well. One learns from the history of world religions and nations that fasting has been a religious obligation in some form during all periods of time. Its details may be found in religious and historical works. One learns the exact form and duration of fasting among different religious communities. Finer points about the restrictions and the starting and concluding times of fasting may also be gleaned. Constraints of space prevent us from exploring this point any further.

The important truth home though

is that fasting helps man attain piety. The Qur'an employs the term taqwa in this context. Generally speaking, words are invested with different meanings with the passage of time. A pious person is taken to be one who is constantly engaged in worship, and who sleeps little. One who does not fall asleep at all is recognised as a perfectly pious person. He is expected to offer prayers all the time and is very cautious about each and every issue, be it religious or mundane. In the original Arabic, however, taqwa does not carry these shades of meaning. It does not imply that one blessed with taqwa is given wholly to worship, stays awake throughout the night and fasts round the year. Instead taqwa signifies in the original Arabic a state of mind and consciousness. It encompasses one's temperament and way of thinking, Ramadan helps man attain piety. Yet it does not mean that with the passage of Ramadan, piety comes to an end. Piety is not some temporary condition.

Piety represents a constant state of self-control and restraint. If a child is brought up well, he imbibes the value of respecting his elders. He does not indulge in any act in the presence of his elders which may be offensive to them. By the same token, he refrains from mocking or insulting them. Piety signifies such a training of the mind which guides one to practice moral values all the time. A pious person thinks carefully before taking any

action whether his act is permitted by the Shari'ah or not. This reference to the Shari'ah at every step is a pointer to one's piety. Take the illustrious examples of Abu Bakr and 'Umar, the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, holding exalted rank among the Prophet's Companions. They were witness to the revelation of the Qur'an. Furthermore, they possessed mastery over the Arabic language and idiom. They were born and brought up in Makkah and used the local language fluently. As true Companions they never felt shy of seeking clarification from the Prophet (PBUH). Once they asked 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud to define taqwa. To this he replied: "O Commander of the Faithful! Have you ever walked on a path with thorns on either side?" When 'Umar replied in the affirmative, he asked as to how he walked on that path. 'Umar replied: "I walk cautiously, ensuring that body and clothes are safe against thorns." 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud exclaimed: "This is the definition of taqwa - to lead life in a way with our doing anything which may displease Allah. One's deeds should not be discordant with the Shari'ah."

Those not familiar with Arabic idiom think that fasting is prescribed for making believers pious. It is not however the point that one who fasts for twenty-nine or thirty days in Ramadan will turn into a pious person at the end of the month. One who fasts, recites the Qur'an often and prays to Allah at night, including offering Tarawih



Prayers, does not turn automatically into a pious person. This is not the end of his test. It signifies, at most, that he did not eat or drink during the daytime in Ramadan even what is lawful and wholesome, and he did so at Allah's command. Even a drop of water was not consumed by him. Needless to add, water is one of the greatest divine bounties. Allah has created every living being out of water. A true believer does not eat food during the daytime of Ramadan, though he was provided with food by Allah. He had food items at home bought out of his lawful earnings. Yet he did not take food or water, though he needed these as a human being. Only in deference to Allah's command did he not touch these otherwise lawful and wholesome things from dawn to dusk. Not a drop of water should pass his lips. Since one does all this in accordance with Allah's command, one should make a point of living by His directives after Ramadan as well. One should discern between the lawful and the unlawful. We are very sensitive to any impurity. Let us bear in mind that disobedience to Allah is the most damaging impurity.

As we forego lawful and wholesome things during Ramadan in deference to Allah's command, we should not draw near any sin after the month of Ramadan is over. We should not do anything which may displease him. Nor should we ever tell a lie. By the same token, we should not give false testimony or hurt

any fellow Muslim's feelings. We should not deny anyone his due or indulge in slandering. We should refrain from stealing, injustice, violence, and hurting others. Piety consists in shunning all that is sinful, impure and immoral. A constant effort to keep away from evil constitutes piety.

There is some difference an act of worship and piety. The latter represents an outlook and temperament. One may perform acts of worship. However, in a state of anger and in mundane transactions one may disregard the spirit of one's worship. This underscores a lack of piety. One's mind should be permeated with piety. Fasting is prescribed for Muslims for instilling piety into their minds and hearts. One should think all along of one's ultimate return and accountability to Allah.

Piety signifies God-consciousness. One should weigh up before doing anything whether this act will please or enrage Allah. One should ascertain first whether such action is in accord with the Shari'ah or not, and whether it is lawful or not. One's action should follow the command of Allah and His Messenger. Becoming habitual about this constant checking infuses piety into one. This is the rationale behind declaring fasting in Ramadan as an obligatory duty. For it may bless one with piety. ■

*(Guidance from the Holy Quran by S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, Page 80-84)*

## Zakat

- Syed Sulaiman Nadwi

“And pay the poor-due”. (2 : 83)

The word *Zakat* is derived from the word *zaka* which means “it (a plant) grew”. The second derivative of this word carries the sense of purification, e.g. *qad aflaha man zakkaha* (He is indeed successful who purified himself). The other word used for *Zakat* both in the Qur’an and the *Hadith* is *sadaqa* which is derived from *sidq* (the truth). Both these words are highly significant. The spending of wealth for the sake of Allah purifies the heart of man of the love of material wealth of this world.

Islam proclaims that the true owner of everything is not man but Allah, Who bestows wealth on people out of His beneficence as He sees fit. Hence those to whom He has given more have an obligation to spend from His bounty on those who need help. The payment of *Zakat* which is the share of Allah and the Muslim community in the Muslims’ wealth, purifies his remaining possessions and makes his ownership of them legal and permissible. It also purifies the heart from greed and selfishness. In any society there will always be people in distress and want for one reason or another: due to some calamity, war, a disabling condition, the inability to find work or orphans, widows and the aged who are unable to work and who have no one to provide for them. Obviously there must be some permanent, workable provision for them which is also compatible with human dignity and which simultaneously eliminates bitterness and envy between the rich and the poor. It is to be remembered that in spite of the modern

advances in economic systems, method of distribution of wealth, and concern for the rights of the human beings to have their basic needs met, no ideology or economic system has been able to develop any institution comparable to *Zakat* for dealing with the problem of poverty while at the same time offering a solution to class rivalries and hatred.

*Zakat* is the most effective means to improve the economic condition of the have-nots. It is not a mere tax, but a form of worship whereby a man comes close to his Lord. The Muslims have, therefore, been enjoined to pay *Zakat* with the same sense of earnestness and devotion in which the seeker of the pleasure of the Lord observes the prayer.

It should also be remembered that *Zakat* or *Sadaqa* in Islam is an obligatory act which every Muslim is enjoined to perform if he is sincere in his belief in Allah and the Hereafter. Thus there is no burden of obligation on one who receives *Zakat*, but a sense of thankfulness and gratitude on the part of the giver, since he has been enabled by the recipient to discharge his obligation which he owes to Allah and society.

The importance of *Zakat* can be understood from the fact that it has been mentioned at eighty two places in the Holy Qur’an in close connection with prayer. The companions of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) knew its basic importance in Islam. It is a known fact that after the death of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

some of the tribes who believed in Oneness of God and observed prayer, refused to pay *Zakat*, and the first Caliph Abu Bakr (Allah be pleased with him) in an answer to the advice of Hadrat 'Umar (Allah be pleased with him) to show tolerance towards them, said in explicit terms "By Allah, I would definitely wage war against them who separate prayer from *Zakat*." "

Jabir b. 'Abdullah (Allah be pleased with him) reported: I gave the pledge of allegiance to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for offering prayer perfectly, giving *Zakat*, and giving good advice to every Muslim.

Ibn 'Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) reported: A delegation of the tribe of 'Abdul Qais came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said: O Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) we are from the tribe of Rabi'a, and the infidels of the tribe of Mudar stand between us and you; so we cannot come to you except during the sacred months. Please order us to do something (religious deeds) which we may take it from you (carry out) and also invite to it our people whom we have left behind. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: I order you to do four things and forbid you four others: (I order you) to have faith in Allah, and confess that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah, (and the Prophet) gestured with his hand like this (i.e. one knot) and to offer prayers perfectly and to pay the *Zakat*, and to pay one-fifth of the booty in Allah's cause. And I forbid you to use *Dubba'*, *Hantama*, *Naqir* and *Muzaffat* (all are utensils used for preparing alcoholic drinks).

Ibn 'Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sent Mu'adh (Allah be pleased with him) to Yemen and said: Invite the people to testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and I am Allah's Messenger and if they obey you to do so, then inform them that Allah has enjoined on them five prayers in every day and night, and if they obey you to do so, then inform them that Allah has made it obligatory for them to pay the *Zakat* from their property and it is to be taken from the wealthy amongst them and given to the poor. In the fifth year of the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) mission, the life became so utterly unendurable for Muslims at Makkah that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) advised them to leave the city and go to Abyssinia. A group of Muslims, therefore, migrated to the Kingdom of Negus who asked about their religion.

In reply Hadrat Ja'far (Allah be pleased with him) said besides other things: The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) commanded us to serve God and join no one in His service, and he commanded us to pray; give alms and to keep fast. Ibn 'Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) said: Abu Sufyan narrated to me the *Hadith* of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), the conversation which happened between him (Abu Sufyan) and Heraclius and quoted from it: "He (the Prophet) ordered us to pray perfectly and pay the *Zakat*, to keep good relations with kith and kin and to be chaste."

#### **The Rate of Zakat**

*Zakat* is paid on the surplus of wealth which is left over the passage of a

year. Leaving aside merchandise, animals and agricultural yield, *Zakatis* paid at almost uniform rate of 2% percent.

The minimum standard of surplus wealth over which *Zakat* is charged is known as *Nisab*. It differs with different kinds of wealth, the most important being 200 dirhams or 52½ tolas (nearly 21 oz.) in case of silver, and 20 *mithqals* or 7½ tolas (nearly 3 oz.) in case of gold. The *Nisab* of cash is the same as that of gold and silver.

A basic principle has been laid down for the *Sadaqa (Zakat)* in the agricultural produce. If the land is irrigated by artificial methods, one-twentieth part of the yield is to be paid as *Zakat*, but if the land irrigated by rainfall, streams, rivers, fountains or by the moisture of the earth, i.e. by the natural resources of water, then one-tenth (*usher*) is to be paid as *Zakat*. There is some difference of opinion whether 'usher is levied on all types of agricultural yield or some particular types. Imam Shaukani and Amir Muhammad Isma'il are in favour of the second opinion, i.e. it is to be paid on wheat, barley, dates and raisins and Imam Malik and Shafi'i believe that *Zakat* is payable on that yield which can be dried and stored for food.

According to Imam Abu Hanifa, *Zakatis* to be paid on all types of agricultural yield, provided the aim of cultivation is to improve upon the land and make it useful for growing of crops. Thus only fuel, bamboo, grass and those trees which bear no fruit are exempted for *Zakat*. He considers *Zakat* to be compulsory even on vegetables and fruits, which, according to some *Ahadith*, are exempted from *Zakat*. The scholars have reconciled the two views

saying that the exemption granted in case of vegetables implies that the proceeds of the *Zakat* are not to be sent to Bait-ul-Mal, but the owner may himself distribute it among the poor. (Maulana Anwar Shah, *Faid-ul--Bari*: Vol. III p. 46).

The horse which is used for fighting in *Jihad* is exempted from the payment of *Zakat* but on horses which are reared for trade *Zakat* is levied. Similar is the case of slave. Now when slavery is abolished, the question of payment of *Zakat* on slaves does not arise. *Faid-ul--Bari*: Vol: II, p.39)

A women must pay *Zakat* out of her ornaments. A trader is also required to pay *Zakat* on his goods. In case of treasure trove or minerals one-fifth (shall be taken by the State).

In case of booty (gains of the battle) one-fifth (shall also be taken by the State). It has been said in the Holy Qur'an:

And know that whenever ye takes as spoils of war, lo! a fifth thereof is for Allah and for the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and for the kinsman (who hath need) and orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, if ye believe in Allah and that which We revealed unto Our slave. (8 : 41)

### **Zakat (Sadaqa) Fitr**

The prescribed *Sadaqa* of Ramadan is a compulsory payment which every Muslim is required to make as a token of thankfulness to Allah for having enabled him to observe fasts. It is preferable and, according to some jurists, obligatory to pay *Sadaat-ul-Fitr* before going out for prayer, because its early payment would enable the poor to participate in the rejoicing of 'Id-ul-Fitr. But if one missed to pay it before, one can offer

it after their. It is binding on every Muslim whose possession come up to the *Nisab* of *Zakat*. The general opinion of the scholars in that *Sadaqat-ul-Fitr* is equal to one sa of dried dates or barley per head (A sa' is equal' to 112 ounces or 3½ *seers*), Imam Abu Hanifa is of the opinion that in case of fine wheat it is equal to half a sa'. The grain or barley or wheat may be converted into cash and then payment made. So far as children and slaves are concerned, their parents and guardians are required to pay the *Sadaqa* on their behalf. The *Sadaqa* of wife is to be paid by her husband.

The following table shows the *Zakat* prescribed on cattle by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and sent in writing to the Governors for collection. The illustrious companions of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also sent the copies thereof to the collectors of *Zakat* to collect it as ordained therein.

Name of cattle	Number	Rate of Zakat
Camel	1 to 4	Nil
Camel	5 to 9	One goat or sheep
Camel	10 to 14	Two goats or sheep
Camel	15 to 19	Three goats or sheep
Camel	20 to 24	Four goats or sheep
Camel	25 to 35	Yearling female camel
Camel	36 to 45	A two years old female Camel
Camel	46 to 60	A three years old female camel
Camel	61 to 75	A four years old female Camel
Camel	76 to 90	Two camel's female two year old colts
Camel	91 to 120	Two camel's female three year old colts
Camel	Above 120	The <i>Zakat</i> is to be calculated by the aforesaid rule
Goat or sheep	1 to 39	Nil
Goat or sheep	40 to 120	One goat or sheep
Goat or sheep	121 to 200	Two goats or sheep
Goat or sheep	201 to 300	Three goats or sheep
Goat or sheep	Above 300	One goat or sheep on every hundred
Cow, bull, buffalo	1 to 29	Nil
Cow, bull, buffalo	30	A one year old calf
Cow, bull, buffalo	40	A calf of two years
Cow, bull, buffalo	Above 40	The <i>Zakat</i> is to be calculated according to the aforesaid rule
Cow, bull, buffalo	60	Two yearling calves
Cow, bull, buffalo	70	One-year old calf and a calf of two years
Cow, bull, buffalo	80	Two calves two years old
Cow, bull, buffalo	90	Three calves one-year old
Cow, bull, buffalo	100	Two calves one year old and one calf two years old
Cow, bull, buffalo	More than Hundred	Upon every ten head of cattle, a calf two years-old alternatively. Thus upon one hundred and ten kine the <i>Zakat</i> is

two calves, two years old and a one-year-old and a one-year-old calf; and upon one hundred and twenty, four calves one-year-old. The method, however, of calculating the Zakat on large herds of cattle is by dividing them into thirties and forties imposing upon every thirty one-year-old calf and upon every forty one calf two years old.

Gold  
  
Silver

Twenty mithqals or 7½ tolas (nearly 3 oz)  
Two hundred dirhams or 52½ tolas (nearly 21 oz)

**Zakat upon Articles of Merchandise**

Articles of merchandise should be appraised, and a Zakat of 2½ percent should be paid upon the value, if it exceeds two hundred dirhams in value. Zakat is not due on the necessaries of life, such as dwelling houses, clothes, household utensils or furniture, or cattle kept for immediate riding or slaves employed as actual servants, or armour and weapons designed for present use, or upon books of science and technology used by scholars or upon tools used by craftsmen.

**Zakat upon Horses**

When horses and mares are kept indiscriminately together, feeding for the greater part of the year on pasture, it is the option of the proprietor to give a Zakat of one dinar per head on the whole, or to appreciate the whole and give five per cent on the total value. No Zakat whatever is due upon droves of horses consisting entirely of males, or entirely of mares. There is no Zakat due upon horses or mules, unless they are articles of merchandise, nor is it due upon war horse, or upon beasts of burden, or upon cattle kept for drawing ploughs and so forth.

The Zakat is payable to the Muslim State or some other authority; it must be collected at some central place and then distributed. One-third or one-fourth of the Zakat may be kept in the hand of the person who pays the Zakat, for distribution

The minimum limit of surplus wealth after the passage of one year on which Zakat is charged is known as Nisab. In case this surplus wealth falls short of this limit no Zakat is payable thereon as indicated below:

<b>Name of Possessions</b>	<b>The Minimum limit below which Zakat is not Payable</b>
Grain and fruits	Five wasqs. Wasq is nearly equal to 5 mounds and 2½ seers. Thus five wasqs would mean 25 mounds and 12½ seers.
Camels	Five number
Cows, bulls, buffaloes	Thirty number
Goats, sheep	Forty number

according to his choice. The Qur'an (4:5) recognizes that wealth is the basis and essential means of the subsistence of the humanity. Therefore, it should not be surprising that payment of *Zakat* is one of the fundamentals of Islam. In Islam one does not pay a tribute to the chief of the city for his personal luxury and vanity, but the primary motive of *Zakat* is religious and spiritual and growing and purifying one's self. It is in fact a good means of ameliorating the hard lot of the poor and the needy and enabling them to stand on their own legs. Its social significance is that it awakens in man the sense of brotherhood with less fortunate members of society. From the economic point of view it discourages hoarding and concentration of wealth and helps its steady and constant flow from the rich to the poor. The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: The chief of a people is in fact their servant. In order to demonstrate the truth of this saying, and the absolute selflessness with which he assumed the direction of his people both as spiritual guide and the head of the State, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) formally declared that the revenues of the Muslim State, coming from *Zakat* payers, were religiously forbidden to him and to all the members of his tribe. If the head of the State does not abuse public confidence it follows that his subordinates cannot but be more scrupulous in the performance of their duties.

### **The Expenditure out of Zakat**

The Qur'an speaks in detail of the expenditure of the State and the principal heads of government budget:

The *Sadaqat* (*Zakat*) are only for the poor and the needy, and those who work (for these State revenues), and those whose hearts are to be won, and for (freeing) the necks and the heavily indebted, and for the cause of God, (for) the wayfarers; a duty imposed by God, and God is the Knower, the Wise.

(9: 60)

In the first category of beneficiaries come the poor (*fuqara*), and the needy (*masakin*).

Those who work for the revenues are the collectors, accountants, those in charge of the expenditure, controllers, auditors, who practically embrace the entire financial administration, both civil and military, of the State. As for those whose hearts are to be reconciled they are of four kinds:

- 1) Non-Muslims who are hostile toward Islam in order to pacify their anger by spending on them and bringing them over to the aid of the Muslims.
- 2) In order that they abstain from doing harm to the Muslims.
- 3) Those new converts from whom there is danger that due to their past enmity against Islam or lack of steadfastness they would revert to their former religion if it was not spent on them.
- 4) Those by whose means conversion to Islam becomes possible for the members of their tribes.

The term, freeing the necks, implies the emancipation of the slaves and the ransoming of the prisoners of war.

Aid to those who are heavily indebted or have too great charge may be

realized in different ways. We see the caliph 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) organizing a service of interest-free loans also.

For the cause of God includes every charitables act and deed to promote the cause of Islam and the jurists have not hesitated to start with the military equipment for the defence of Islam, since Islam struggles solely for the establishment of the Sovereignty of Allah.

As for the "wayfarers", one can help them not only by hospitality but also by assuring them health and comfort, security of routes and every other measure for the well-being of those who pass through a place other than their own, be they countrymen or strangers.

### **The Persons who Deserve Zakat More than Others**

Before the advent of Islam it was generally thought that the reward for payment of *Zakat* to the strangers and unknown persons was greater than the payment to one's own relatives but in Islam the order in which we should spend our wealth is: First on one's own self then on one's wife and children, then on relatives and friends and neighbours and then on others. So the *Zakat* on the surplus wealth which is left over after the passage of year should be preferably paid to the relatives, friends or neighbours as they deserve most. It is, however, not correct to say that if preference is given to the relatives than others, then who will help the poor and the needy. It is not so as everyone of us has his relatives and if we look to the need of our relatives, it would mean fulfilling the

needs of the whole humanity. It does not at all mean that however small be the need of the relative than others preference in paying the *Zakat* will always be given to the relative. Nothing is farther from the truth. Only in that case where the needs are equal the relative or the friend or neighbour will be deserving more for *Zakat* than a stranger or an unknown person. In other words, this factor of need being equal shall be kept in mind before giving preference in payment of *Zakat* to the relative or friend or neighbour or others.

Abu Huraira (Allah be pleased with him) reported Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as saying: *Miskin* (poor man) is not the one who goes round to the people and is dismissed with one or two morsels, and one or two dates. They (the Prophet's companions) said: Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then who is *miskin*? He said: He who does not get enough to satisfy him and he is not considered so (as to elicit the attention of the benevolent people), so that charity may be given to him, and he does not beg anything from people.

Here we have been given the true definition of *miskin* and told about the people who may be regarded as the true recipient of charity. The professional beggars are not *miskin*, but those self-respecting poor men who exert their utmost to find an honest living and stand on their own feet, but they do not get means enough to do so. Moreover, they want to preserve their dignity and do not like to disclose their poverty to the people. Such persons deserve charity. It has been said in the Holy



Qur'an:

And of them is he who defameth thee in the matter of the alms. If they are given thereof they are content, and if they are not given thereof; behold they are enraged.

(How much more seemly) had they been content with that which Allah and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had given them and had said: Allah sufficeth us, Allah will give us of His bounty, and also His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Unto Allah we are suppliants. (9 : 58,59)

Once a person asked the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to give him something out of *Zakat* He said: O man! None of the human beings, even the Prophets, has the authority to distribute the *Zakat* of his own accord; it rests with Allah. If you come under the category of eight beneficiaries of *Zakat* as ordained in the Holy Qur'an, I can give (*Zakat*) to you.

These eight categories of expenditure out of *Zakat* budget include all types of good and virtuous acts and deeds for the well-being of others; expenditure on those *fuqara'* and *masakin* (poor and needy) persons who exert their utmost to find an honest living and stand on their own feet, but they do not get means to do so or on those aged, ailing, blind, crippled and disabled persons who are unable to do any work or on widows and orphans who have none to support. Besides these, those on whom *Zakat* can be expended are: preachers of Islam, religious scholars,

writers, soldiers defending the borders of the Islamic State, persons detained by the enemies etc., of whom no exhaustive list can be prepared, and who have devoted themselves entirely to the cause of Islam that they find no time to earn their livelihood. It has been said in the Holy Qur'an:

(Alms are) for the poor who are straitened for the cause of Allah, who cannot travel in the land (for trade). The unthinking man accounteth them wealthy because of their restraint. Thou should know them by their mark. They do not beg of men with impunity. And whatever good thing ye spend, lo! Allah knoweth it. (2 : 273)

### Practical Measures to Improve the Economic Condition

Almost all the religions of world have talked of the blessings and rewards of sympathizing with the poor and the needy. Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is the first and the last of the Prophets who has taken practical measures to ameliorate the hard lot of this less fortunate class enabling them to stand on their own legs as the bitterness of their life cannot be cured by mere sweet words and attractive promises of the future. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself led an extremely simple life and had none of the luxuries and comforts. Abu Huraira (Allah be pleased with him) reported Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as saying: O Allah, make for the family of Muhammad the provision which is a bare subsistence. 'Abdullah b. 'Amr b. 'As (Allah be pleased with him) said: He heard Allah's

Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as saying: Destitute amongst the emigrants would precede the rich emigrants by forty years in getting into Paradise on the Day of Resurrection. Poverty of a person is not a matter of disgrace or low social status in the sight of Islam nor is the wealth of a person a standard of his dignity and excellence as the Holy Qur'an has set this standard in the following words:

Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct.

(49: 13)

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) often said in supplication: O Allah let me live as *miskin* (poor man) and let me die as *miskin* (poor man) and let me be with them on the Day of Judgement 'A'isha (Allah be pleased with her) said: O Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) why? He said: Because they will enter Paradise before the rich persons. He then said: Do not send away any *miskin* disappointed and give him something, may be half a date. O 'A'isha (Allah be pleased with her), love the poor, Allah will love you. *Ashab-us-Suffah* were poor strangers, without friends or place of abode. They implored the Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for protection. They learnt the Islamic way of life and also worked to earn their bare necessities of life. As they were poor persons, when Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) went to meals, he used to call some of them to partake with him; and he selected others to eat with his companions.

Neither wealth makes the man evil nor poverty makes him an angel. Just as wealth is the cause of many evils, in the same way poverty is the cause of many evils and sins. The tremendous task of Prophethood was to save the humanity from these evils and sins by purifying their hearts from all evil thoughts and fancies. Although Islam has exhorted his followers to work hard and has placed no restrictions on earning by honest and lawful means it is against avariciousness and greed and craziness for collecting wealth through unfair and illegal means. Whereas Islam talks of wealth as *Khair*, and *Fazl*, good thing and bounty of Allah, it discourages hoarding and concentration of wealth and helps its steady and constant flow from the rich to the poor. In the Ahadith too, wealth has not been deprecated.

Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) visited S'ad (Allah be pleased with him) as he was ill. He (S'ad) said: Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), I own a large property and I have only daughter as my inheritor. Should I not will away the whole of my property? He (the Holy Prophet) said: (Yes) one-third, and one-third is quite substantial. And what you spend as charity from your property is *Sadaqa*. and your spending on your family is also *Sadaqa*, and what your wife eats from your property is also *Sadaqa*. and that you leave your heirs well off (or he said: prosperous) is better than to leave them (poor and) begging from people. He (the Holy Prophet) pointed this with his hand. There were poor as well as rich among his (Holy Prophet's) followers. He treated them alike and made no

distinction between them. The poor amongst the emigrants came to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said: The possessors of great wealth have obtained the highest ranks and the lasting bliss. He (the Holy Prophet) said: How is that? They said: They pray as we pray, and they observe fast as we observe fast, and they give charity but we do not give charity, and they set slaves free but we do not set slaves free. Upon this the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: Shall I not teach you something by which you will catch upon those who have preceded you, and get ahead of those who come after you, only those who do as you do being more excellent than you. He (the Holy Prophet) asked them to recite a *dhikr*. The poor amongst the emigrants returned to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) saying: Our brethren, the possessors of wealth have heard what we have done and they did the same. So the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: This is Allah's Grace.

Hakim b. Hizam (Allah be pleased with him) reported: I asked the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and he gave me, and then again I asked him and he gave me and he then said: This wealth is (like) green and sweet (fruit), and whoever takes it without greed, Allah will bless it for him, but whoever takes it with greed, Allah will not bless it for him, and he will be like the one who eats but is never satisfied. And the upper (giving) hand is better than the lower (taking) hand.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) strictly

forbade all illegal and unlawful means of acquisition of wealth and property such as deceit, fraud, forgery, dishonesty, looting, usurping, aggression, gambling, usury etc. The most effective and easiest means of exploiting and looting the poor and the needy i.e. usury is considered in Islam as synonymous with war against Allah and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as has been said in the "Holy Qur'an:

O ye who believe! Observe your duty to Allah, and give up what remaineth due to you from usury. If you are (in truth) believers.

And if ye do not, then be warned of war (against you) from Allah and His Messenger.

In the inherited property all the relatives who are its legal heirs according to the *Shari'ah* have their fixed right. The captured country is not the personal property of anyone in Islam but is a public property. Similar is the case of the bounties of nature such as water, pastures, grass, mines, mineral and other treasure troves falling to the lot of a country without any labour or struggle. The lands of the enemy coming into possession without waging war is not the right of the chiefs of clans or tribes nor of rich and wealthy persons but the poor and the needy and the helpless persons deserve them most. It has been said in the Holy Qur'an: That which Allah giveth as spoil unto His Messenger from the people of the townships, it is for Allah and His Messenger and for the near of kin and the orphan and the needy and the wayfarer, that it become not a commodity between the rich among you.

(59: 7)

Miserliness, avarice and greed are the worst of evils in the sight of Islam. It has been said in the Holy Qur'an:

And whose is saved from his own avarice such are they who are successful. (59 : 9)

Lo! Ye are those who are called to spend in the way of Allah, yet among you there are some who hoard. And as for him who hoardeth, he hoardeth only from his soul-And Allah is rich, and you are poor.

(47 : 39)

O ye who believe, render not vain your charity by laying an obligation and by hurt, like him Who expends his wealth to be seen of men and he believes not in Allah and in the Last Day. (2 :264)

The man who spends not for the cause of Allah, but for laying an obligation and hurting one's feelings and for showing off his generosity is one who is devoid of sincere belief in Allah and trust in Him for His granting of reward to him in the Hereafter.

There were such persons among the companions of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who considered it unlawful to withhold anything for the next day and not to give it away for the sake of Allah like Abu Dharr (Allah be pleased with him) and there were persons like Abu Bakr (Allah be pleased with him) who spent all their wealth in the cause of Islam when the need arose and there were also such persons who gave over their whole merchandise in the path of Allah like

'Abdur Rahman b. 'Auf (Allah be pleased with him) and there were also those who fed the hungry and themselves went without food and comforted the poor and the needy, suffering the pangs of hunger themselves like 'Ali (Allah be pleased with him) and some of his (Holy Prophet's) companions from Ansar. The Holy Qur'an has praised them in the following verses:

And feed with food the *Miskin* (poor) the orphan and the prisoner for love of Him. (76 : 9)

Those who entered the city and the faith before them love those who flee unto them for refuge and find in their breasts no need for that which hath been given them, but prefer (the fugitives) above themselves though poverty become their lot. (5:9)

### Disapproval of Begging

Abu Huraira (Allah be pleased with him) is reported to have heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as saying: It is better for one among you to bring a load of firewood on his back and give charity out of it (and satisfy his own need) and be independent of people, than he should beg from people, whether they give him or refuse him. Verily the upper hand is better than the lower hand, and begin (charity) with your dependents.

Abu Huraira (Allah be pleased with him) reported Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as saying that Allah said to him: Spend. I will bestow on you. He (the Holy Prophet) said: Richness does not lie in the abundance of (worldly) goods but richness is the richness of soul (heart, self). ■

## The First Revelation

- S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi\*

As to the initiation of the Divine Revelation, here it is as to how it did happen. On his attaining the age of forty, the age which his Prophecy commenced at, Allah Almighty sent to him His angel, Gibrail (AS). At that moment he was, for the sake of his isolation, in the cave of 'Hira' atop the mount 'Noor' situated nearby. Hazrat Gibrail arrived in the cave and delivered to him the first Divine message. With it got the office of the Prophecy initiated. And, this first Divine message commenced with the mention of knowledge. It was mentioned with the strict instruction to a person, who was unlettered and had not gone through the customary process of education, to associate knowledge with the name of Allah Almighty. It was something he had, till then, kept himself aloof from. On having received the Revelation, he (SAW) got initially frightened. For, owing to its heavenly sublimity and magnificence it had its own particular weight. He (SAW) felt the weight of its magnificence so much that he started wondering how he would be able to bear it and get along with it. But, Allah Almighty who had entrusted him with the load of this great responsibility had known all along that his personage had already been invested such a capability

of endurance and endeavor as would not make him only able to bear it, but enable him to do full justice to this reverend office as per its due.

### Descent of Revelation in Ramadan:

**This first Revelation had descended on the 27th Ramadan.** It contained the words of Allah Almighty Himself and got established as the first verse of the Sura 'Iqra' in the holy Quran. This Revelation contained the command of performing the act of reading. By it, he (SAW) was bidden: 'do read', whereas he was, up till then, unlettered, that is, he did not know how to read or write. But, along with the command of performing the act of reading, it was also commanded that the act of reading should be associated with the name of the Lord of the universe; and the Faith must be had in that his Lord was very, very munificent. It was the very first Revelation that descended exactly in the words of Allah Almighty that was received by him. It was continuously followed up by a series of Revelations till a full-fledged book, the holy Quran, got confected. It contained matters pertaining to conditions and requirements of Islam and Muslims and Islamic injunctions. It is by means of all this that the Shariat of Islam got constituted. Apart from this Quranic Revelation, there were other means

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\* Rector, Nadwatul-Ulama, Lucknow.

also by which the Revelation started descending. Sometimes it took place by means of dreams and sometimes the Archangel, Gibrail, would convey Allah Almighty's message in his own words. The chain of the Divine Revelation had thus started and the instructions regarding the mission of the Prophecy had started coming to him.

The reverend wife of the Prophet (SAW), Hazrat Aisha (RAA), narrated how the first Revelation was received by him, thus:

"When, after spending a period in devotion and meditation in the cave of 'Hira', the moment destined for the Revelation to be received set in, the angel came to him and said to him: read! The Prophet (SAW) said: I do not know how to read. He (SAW) says: 'That angel took hold of me and squeezed me hard and then released me and said: read! Thereupon I said the same thing that I do not know how to read.' He says: 'He again took hold of me and squeezed me hard to the extent that I got very exhausted. Then he released me and said: read! I said: I am not the one who knows how to read. Thereupon he again took hold of me and squeezed me hard for the third time, too. Then he released me and said these words:

(Recite thou in the name of thy Lord Who has created everything, has created man from a clot! Recite thou, and thy Lord is the most Bountiful. Who has taught man by the pen, has taught man what he know not.)'

"Thereafter the Prophet (SAW) returned home carrying with him those verses which the angel had made him recite. He was feeling so much weighed and frightened that his heart was throbbing. On having reached his respected wife, Hazrat Khadijah (RAA) he said: Cover me up! Cover me up! He was then covered up till the fright that had taken hold of him was gone. Then he narrated to Hazrat Khadijah what had happened to him. He mentioned to her this incident, its great weight that he had felt and the fear that he had had and said: I am afraid I might lose my life. Thereupon she cheered him up and said: Not on any account! I swear by God, Allah would never disgrace you. You are, no doubt, the one who fulfills all the obligations that you have on you towards the relatives. In case you come across someone distressed and wearied, you carry his load to his place. In case of someone being destitute and hungry, you help him make earnings. In case there is a guest, you extend all the hospitality that is possible. In case of occurrence of any calamity or disaster you extend relief to those affected. ■

## True Faith and Islam Hold the Guarantee of Salvation

- M. Manzoor Nomani

It is related by A'amish Tab'ee, on the authority of his teacher, Abu Saleh [not being certain whether he had related it on the authority of Abu Hurairah or Abu Sa'eed Khadri] that "during the days of the Battle of Tabouk when [the stock of food had been used up completely and] people were tormented with hunger, they said to the Prophet, 'Sir! If you allow, we may kill the water-carrying camels and eat their flesh as well as obtain oil from them.' The Prophet replied, 'Alright; you may do it.' Then, Omar came to him and said, 'O Apostle of God! If you did so [i.e., allowed them to slaughter the camels], we will run short of transport. [Let it, therefore, not be done]. In its place, tell them to bring whatever provisions are left with them, then, pray to God for an increase in the supply of food. It is hoped God will grant an increase in it.' 'Yes; you are right,' the Prophet replied. He, thereupon, sent for a large piece of leather (on which food is laid out). When it was spread on the ground, the Prophet ordered the men to bring what was left with them of the foodstuffs. Thus, somebody came with a handful of Zurra,' somebody with a handful of dates and somebody with a piece of bread till these articles got collected, in a small quantity, on the piece of leather. The Apostle of God, then prayed for the increase, and, after it, he said to them. 'Now, fill your vessels from it.' They all filled their vessels so that [in the army of about thirty thousand] not a single vessel remained empty. Everyone ate to his

heart's content and some of the food was still left. Upon it, the Prophet said, 'I affirm that there is no deity save God and I am his Apostle. There is no bondsman who appears before God with these two' affirmations made sincerely and without a trace of doubt or reservation and yet is prevented from entering Paradise,"

*Commentary*-The import of the above saying is obvious. The purpose of reproducing it here is related to the last part of it in which the Prophet, after bearing testimony to the Oneness of God and his own Apostleship, has declared that whoever affirms these two things, honestly and truthfully, and dies in that state shall go to Heaven.

Those who are acquainted a little with the mode of expression of the Quran and the Traditions will be knowing that the testimony of God's Oneness and the Prophet's Apostle-ship necessarily implies the acknowledgement of the religious call of the sacred Prophet and the acceptance of Islam as one's faith. The making of the two affirmations by anyone is always taken to mean that he has accepted the Prophet's call and embraced the creed of Islam. This Tradition, therefore, signifies no more and no less than this that whoever, on the pronouncement of the formula of La-Ilah-a-Illa-l-Lah, Mohammadur Rusoolil-lah (There is no deity save God and Mohammad is the Apostle of God), accepts the religious call of the Prophet and makes Islam his faith from the bottom of his heart and with full

certainty and dies in that state will, doubtlessly, go to Heaven.

It logically follows that if a person makes a formal declaration of the formula of Faith but does not embrace Islam and continuous to profess some other religion or acknowledges Divine Unity and Apostleship but rejects the other principal tenets like belief in the Quran and the Hereafter, he shall not be worthy of the glad tidings contained in the above Tradition.

In fine, in this saying the testimony of God's Oneness and Mohammad's Apostleship stands for the recognition of the religious call of the divine Apostle and the acceptance of Islam as one's faith. The other Traditions in which the tidings of Paradise are given only on the affirmation of Divine Unity and the pronouncement of Lah-Ilaha-Illa-lah also convey the same meaning. These are, in fact, the familiar and recognised ways of indicating the acknowledgement of the spiritual message of the Prophet and the embracing of the faith of Islam.

This Tradition also shows, incidentally, that :-

(i) However great or important a man may be, even if he is an Apostle of God, if he expresses his opinion on anything and a follower or servant of his, endowed with a sound judgment, feels that it is erroneous or harmful, he should not hesitate to place his considered view respectfully before him and the person of higher rank or position should, on his part, think calmly over it, and, if it appears to be a better and wiser suggestion, accept it in preference to his own idea.

(ii) The granting of a prayer, and, specially, the manifestation of the acceptance thereof in a supernatural manner, is among the signs of God and an exceptional indication of devoutness and His favour that it is the source of the promotion of inner happiness and tranquillity among the believers is beyond dispute. It is a legacy of Apostleship as is evident from the recitation or the confessional Formula by the holy Prophet. Those who feel inquietude instead of joy at the mention of such Divine rewards and treat the reports of miraculous happenings like these with contempt and ridicule are, in fact, spiritually sick and victims of a diseased mentality ;

Ibada bin Samit has related to us that he heard it directly from the Prophet that "God has forbidden the Fire of Hell for him who pronounces the formula of There is no god save One God and Mohammad is the Apostle of God with a true heart"

-Bukhari

*Commentary*, -In this Tradition, too, the affirmation of Divine Unity and Apostleship of the Prophet Mohammad signifies the acceptance of the call of Islam. The testimony that there is no deity but God, and Mohammad is His Apostle is inclusive of the whole of Islam, and whoever declares it to be true makes the whole of Islam his faith, If, after it, he succumbs to the weaknesses that are peculiar to man and commits a sin, his religious consciousness will compel him to make amends for it through the prescribed methods of repentance and atonement, and, God willing, he will, thus, be saved from the Punishment of Hell.



Ma'ad bin Jabal has narrated to us that "once I was riding on the same camel with the Apostle of God, with only the rear part of the saddle separating me from him [i. e., he was sitting very close to the Prophet] that the Prophet called me without halting. 'Ma'ad bin Jabal,' he said, I replied, 'Here I am. Please speak.' Again, after, covering some distance, the Prophet said, 'Ma'ad bin Jabal.' 'Here I am. Please speak.' I replied. Then, again after a little while, he said, 'Ma'ad bin Jabal.' 'Here I am. Please speak.' I, again, replied. On the third occasion, the Prophet said, 'Do you know what is the claim of God on bondmen,' 'God and His Apostle know best.' I replied. The Prophet observed, 'The claim of God upon bondmen is that they worshipped Him and obeyed Him and associated no one with Him.' Then, after travelling for some time, he said, 'Ma'ad bin Jabal'. 'Here I am. Please speak,' I replied. The Prophet said, 'Do you know what is the claim of the bondmen on God ?' 'God and His Apostle know best.' I replied. 'It is that He did not punish them,' said the Prophet."

Bukhari and Muslim

*Commentary.*-A few points are worthy of note in this Tradition.

(i) The way in which Ma'ad has mentioned the fact of his riding on the camel with the Prophet and sitting so close to him at his back before narrating the main Tradition call be due to various reasons:

Firstly, the special affection the Prophet had for Ma'ad and the place of great trust and confidence he enjoyed in his court ought to be kept in mind in or 'er to understand why the Prophet chose to

tell Ma'ad something he did not want to be made known to the general body of Muslims, as is clear from the succeeding Tradition.

Secondly, by describing the event, item by item, Maad might be wanting to emphasise his certitude about the Tradition, i. e., he might be aiming to show to the people that he remembered the Tradition so well that even the minute details concerning it were preserved in his memory.

Thirdly, since the lovers are given to prolong the description of what transpired during the memorable moments spent in the company of the beloved so as to derive the utmost pleasure from it, Ma'ad, too, might have related in detail the event of his riding with the Prophet on the same camel.

(ii) The Prophet called Ma'ad thrice, at brief intervals, and, then, at the third time he told the first part of what he wanted to tell, and the second part of it was told by him on calling Ma'ad for the fourth time. The commentators have explained it by suggesting that the Prophet, perhaps, wanted to draw Ma'ad's attention fully so that he listened carefully to what he was going to say. Another explanation can be that the Prophet was not sure whether to tell it to Ma'ad or not, and he told him only when his mind was finally made up. But to us, both the interpretations are rather far-fetched. "What appears more probable is that the Prophet was seized with an unusual state of feeling at that time. He addressed Ma'ad and, then, before he could say anything got lost in thought. Hence, the intermissions.

(iii) The substance or the Tradition is that the claim of God upon the bondmen is that they should worship and obey no one save Him and ascribe no partners to Him, and if they did so and fulfilled the claim, God has accepted for Himself the right of the bondmen that He would not bring down His punishment upon them.

In the above Tradition, also, worshipping of God and keeping away from Polytheism stands for the acceptance of Islam and observance of its tenets, and since during those days the doctrine of Divine Unity was the main dividing line between Islam and Paganism, it has been made the starting point in this as well as many other sayings of the Prophet. Besides, the worship of God and avoidance of Polytheism marks the indispensable characteristic of Islam, and, therefore, it is often used to signify the Islamic faith itself. The view [that in this Tradition the worship of God and abstention from Polytheism denotes the acceptance of Islam as one's creed] is further supported by another report of it [which we are going to reproduce below], again from Bukhari and Muslim, in which belief in and affirmation of Divine Oneness and Apostleship is also mentioned, and, in yet another version, Namaz and Roza are spoken of as well along with the testimony of the Oneness of God and Apostleship of Mohammad.

It is stated by Anas bin Maalik that "the Apostle of God called Ma'ad when he was travelling with him on a camel and said, 'O Ma'ad!' 'Here I am, O Apostle of God!' replied Ma'ad. 'Please speak.' The Prophet, again, said, 'O Ma'ad!' 'Here I am,

O Apostle of God I Please speak,' Ma'ad replied. Once again, the Prophet said, 'O Ma'ad.' 'Here I am, O Apostle of God', replied Ma'ad. 'Please speak'. It happened thrice. [At the third time] the Prophet observed, 'Who so affirms with a true heart that there is no god but one God and Mohammad is His Apostle, God has forbidden the Fire of Hell for such a person.' Ma'ad, on hearing the glad tidings, asked the Prophet, 'May I tell it to the people so that they all may be happy.' 'They will, then, rely solely upon it and sit back,' the Prophet replied. This Tradition was related by Ma'ad on the dying day for fear of being called to account for concealment of knowledge."

-Bukhari and Muslim

*Commentary-* The similarity of the opening parts of the two Traditions shows that they refer to the same incident. The only difference between them is that while in the first narration the phrase, "worship of God and avoidance of Polytheism," has been employed to signify the acceptance of Islam, in the second the same truth has been expressed in the form of the "testimony of the Oneness of God and Apostleship."

Again, in another report of the above tidings [as reproduced in Mishkaat from Musnad-i-Ahmad] Ma'ad has mentioned Namaz and Roza, also along with Divine Unity. It reads:

"Whoever appears before Allah in such a state that his skirt is free from the stain of Polytheism and he offers regularly the five daily prayers and observes fasting, he shall be forgiven" [Ma'ad adds that] he said to the Prophet, "Sir! If you permit, I

may communicate the happy tidings to everyone." The Prophet, upon it, replied, "Leave it. Let them sort it out."

Although the mode of expression in the three reports is different and there is some variation of preciseness in the choice of words, the purport of all of them is the same, viz. whoever will accept sincerely the call of Faith and Islam [the fundamental tenets of which are abstention from Polytheism, affirmation of Divine Unity and Apostleship, and observance of prayer and fasting] for him the promise of deliverance from God is firm and positive.

Those who conclude from such saying that a person will remain protected against Divine chastisement and the Fire of Hell will never touch him after the acknowledgement of Divine Oneness and Apostleship, however unsound his religious beliefs and sinful his conduct may be, are not only incapable of appreciating the true significance of these Traditions but they also repudiate and reject hundreds of other Traditions [and even Quranic verses] which do not conform to their warped judgement and are clearly in contrast with their wishful thinking.

It is related by Ma'ad that "the Apostle of God told me that the testimony that there is no deity save God is the key to Heaven."

-Musnad-i-Ahmad

*Commentary.*-In this Tradition, also, only the testimony of Divine Oneness has been spoken of, and here, too, it means the recognition of the call of

Faith and the acceptance of Islam as one's creed in the same way as in the common Urdu idiom the pronouncement of the Kalima [Confessional Formula of Islam] denotes the embracing of Islam. The Muslims and the non-Muslims alike regarded the testimony of Divine Oneness and Apostleship as equivalent to the profession of the Islamic religion at the time at which the holy Prophet had made these observations :

Abu Zarr Ghifari relates that "[one day] I went to the Apostle of God but he was asleep, covered with a white sheet. [After some time], I went again [and found that] he had awoken [from sleep]. At that time, he said, 'The bondsman who says There is no god but One God and dies in that state shall go to Heaven'." Abu Zarr relates that he exclaimed, "Even if he commits theft? Even if he commits adultery?" The Prophet replied, "[Yes]! Even if he has committed adultery [and] even if he has committed theft." [Abu Zarr goes on to relate that] he again exclaimed, "Even if he commits adultery, Even if he commits theft?" The Prophet, again, replied, "Yes! Even if he has committed adultery [and] even if he has committed theft." [Abu Zarr relates that], once again, he asked with astonishment, "O Apostle of God! Will anyone who had affirmed La Ilaha Il-Lallah go to Heaven even if he has committed adultery [and] even if he has committed theft? The Prophet remarked, "Yes". In spite of Abu Zarr! [he shall go to Heaven] even if he has committed adultery [and] even if he has committed theft."

-Bukhari and Muslim

*Commentary.*-In this Tradition, again, the pronunciation of the formula of Faith, La Ilaha Il-Lallah, denotes the acknowledgement of the entire creed of Monotheism i. e., [Islam], and it is beyond doubt that whoever will do so with a truthful heart shall go to Heaven. In case he has committed a sin in spite of being a Believer, God will admit him into Paradise, forgiving him his sins and without punishing him for his misdeeds if he is deserving of pardon for any reason, and, supposing he is not worthy of pardon, he will yet go to Heaven, even though after undergoing punishment. Whoever believes sincerely in Islam shall, at all events, enter Paradise even if after passing through a spell of chastisement in Hell.

Abu Zarr put the same question to the Prophet, over and over again, probably because it appeared to him rather strange that a person who had been guilty of such mortal sins as adultery and theft could find a place in Heaven. Till then, this precept had not come to his knowledge. We find it hard, today, to understand the hesitation of Abu Zarr because we have been born into Islam and have learnt these elementary principles in the natural way at home.

It is related by Osman bin 'Affan that the Apostle of God said, "Whoso died in the state that he knew with complete certainty that no one was worthy of worship aside of God shall go to Heaven."

-Muslim

*Commentary.*-In this Tradition, also, the state of complete certainty in the truth of La Ilaha-Il-Lallah signifies the state of faith in the entire creed of Monotheism

and the gaining of admission into Paradise denotes what we have explained earlier, i. e., every believing man shall go to Heaven either straight away, by the Mercy of the Lord, or after undergoing punishment for his transgressions, depending on what the balance-sheet of his deeds on earth calls for.

It is related by Atban bin Maalik [and he is one of the Ansar Companions of the Prophet who fought in the Battle of Badr] that "[once] I presented myself before the Apostle of God and said, 'My vision has become impaired and I lead the prayer-services of my people. Thus, when it rains and the small stream that lies between my house and the houses of my people begins to flow it becomes impossible for me to go to their mosque and lead the congregation. O Apostle of God! I [therefore] request you to come to my house and offer Namaz there so that I may make the spot [where you offer worship] the permanent place of worship for myself.' The Prophet replied, 'God willing, I will come.' On the very next morning, when the day had advanced a little, the Apostle of God and Abu Bakr came to my house and the Apostle of God sought my permission to enter. I gave him the permission. When he came in, he did not sit, but asked me, 'What place do you prefer in your house where I may offer the prayer?' I pointed towards a part of the house, upon which the Prophet stood up and commenced the prayer after saying Allah-o-Akbar. We, also, stood behind him in a row. The Prophet offered two Rak'ats [of Namaz] and turned his face in salutation. I requested him to stay and

partake of the Khazeera we had prepared for him. [One hearing about the Prophet's presence] some of the neighbours also came and joined in the meal. Then one of them asked, 'Where is Maalik bin Dakhshan [or Ibn-I-Dakhshan]?' Someone from among them replied, 'He is a Hypocrite. He has no love for God and His Apostle.' The Prophet, thereupon, remarked, 'Do not say so. Do you not see that he believes in La Ilaha Il-Lallah and seeks the good pleasure of the Lord through it?' The same person said, 'Allah and His Apostle know best. We [on our part], find that his sympathy and inclination is towards the Hypocrites.' 'Verily', replied the Prophet, 'God has forbidden the Fire of Hell for anyone who has said La Ilaha Il-Lallah with a sincere heart and whose intention is nothing but to seek the countenance of the Lord through it'.

-Bukhari and Muslim

*Commentary-* In it, again, the forbidding of the Fire of Hell for anyone who recites the Kalima of La Ilaha Il-Lallah denotes what we just said while explaining the sayings of the Prophet belonging to the same category. Further, in the report appearing in Sahih Muslim, Yash-hudu La Ilaha Il-Lallah [affirmed there is no god but One God] has been mentioned in place of Qala La Ilaha Il-Lallah [said there is no god but One God], but both the expressions convey the same meaning, i. e., the acknowledgment of the call and the adoption of the faith of Islam. As we have seen already, during the days of the Prophet it was the popular way of indicating the acceptance of Islam as one's religion.

The Companion who had described Maalik bin Dakhshan as a Hypocrite knew of no transgression on his part except that he kept the company of the Hypocrites and was on friendly terms with them. From it we can know how sensitive the Companions were with regard to Faith. Even a minor thing like this was so repugnant to them that they denounced it as Hypocrisy. The Prophet's admonition, further, carries the less that if weaknesses like these are present in some people but they are earnest in their affirmation of Divine Unity and Apostleship it will not be correct to mistrust them or to condemn them so severely.

It is related by Anas that the Apostle of God said, "They all will be taken out of Hell who said, La Ilaha Il-LaLah and there was even a barley grain's weight of good in their hearts; then they, also, will be taken out who said La Ilaha Il-Lallah and there was a wheat grain's weight of good in their hearts; and then they, also, will be taken out who said La Ilaha Il-Lallah and there was an atom's weight of good in their hearts."

-Bukhari and Muslim

*Commentary;* This Tradition, once more, confirms the view that the pronunciation of the Kalima of La Ilaha Il-Lallah signifies the acceptance of the entire creed of Islam and shows that all those will, ultimately, be taken out of Hell who recite the Confessional Formula and profess Islam and possess any amount of good [i.e., the light of Faith] in their hearts. In this Tradition, the word Khair has occurred thrice and we have translated it as good. But in another report [which also

has been mentioned in Bukhari] the word Iman [Faith] has been used instead of Khair which strengthens the view that here the light of Faith is meant by Khair.

Two most significant points emerge from this Tradition which form a part of the universally accepted principles of Faith

(i) Many people will be cast into Hell on account of their evil deeds though they may have affirmed faith in the Kalima of La Ilaha Il-lallah:

(ii) If in their hearts there will be the least amount of Faith [or, in the words of the Tradition, even of the weight of an atom], they will, eventually, be taken out of Hell. It cannot be that a Believer of the lowest order lived permanently in Hell along with Infidels and Polytheists, however sinful his earthly conduct might have been.

In Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, Traditions conveying the same meaning have also been related on the authority of Abu Sa'eed Khadri, Jabir and Abu Huraira, and, in other compilations, on the authority of Abu Bakr, Abu Moosa and many other Companions. According to all authorities the point under discussion is proved from the Prophet through successive Traditions. In the detailed version of Abu Sa'eed Khadri of the above Tradition, contained in Bukhari and Muslim, it is candidly stated that the Faithful who have attained salvation will pray earnestly for forgiveness of sinful Muslims who will have been thrown into Hell and the Lord will allow them to go and take out of Hell everyone in whom they saw even a dirham's weight of good. Consequently, a large number of persons answering to this

description will be taken out. Next, permission will be given to them to go and take out of Hell everyone in whom they saw even half-a-dirham's weight of good. Consequently, a large number of persons answering to this description will, also, be taken out. Afterwards, they will be commanded to go and take out everyone in whom they saw even an atom's weight of good. Thus, a large number of persons belonging to this group will also be taken out. Ultimately, the intercessors will, themselves, declare, "Our Lord! Now, we have left no one in Hell who possessed any amount of good." God will, then say: "The angels have interceded, the Apostles have interceded, and the Faithful have interceded, and the intercession of all of them has been accepted. Now, only the turn of the Most Merciful among those who show mercy remains." He will, thereupon, take out of Hell, by His Own Hand or Forgiveness and Mercy, even those who will not have to their credit even a single act of virtue. About such people it is also mentioned at the end of Abu Sa'eed's report that "they will be the ones set free by the Lord. He will admit them to Heaven, sans the deed they may have performed and sans the good they may have done."

During the early centuries of Islam the sects of Merjia and Khawarij had gone the way of 'excess and curtailment' in respect of this doctrine and, even now, the inclination of some people is towards 'excess' and, of others, towards 'curtailment'. We, therefore, thought it fit to discuss it at some length here. ■

## Human Nature And Human Psyche in Qur'anic Perspective

- Tauseef Ahmad Parray

Undoubtedly holy Qur'an is the Best and most Excellent, Complete and Comprehensive Book, containing guidelines and message, rules and guiding principles of Truth, regarding all aspects of human life-religious, social, political, economic, moral, spiritual, etc. That is, the guidance of Qur'an- a Book which appeals to the conscience of each person (or to "human psyche") to think, understand, and weight this guidance for himself -covers all aspects of human life, both individual and collective, ranging from individual and social, material and moral, economic and political, legal and cultural, national and international. The Quran invites humans to the Right Path of living so that he may be able to lead a happy, virtuous, and peaceful life on this earth. It is an open invitation to each individual to accept the way of life for his own good. It is up to each individual to accept or reject it of his own free will. The nature of this invitation and message clearly shows that it appeals to the conscience of each person or to "human psyche" to think, understand, and weight this guidance for himself, for there is no thrust upon anyone forcibly (Q. 2:256) and thus it exhorts them to think and reflect carefully before rejecting or denying their Lord (Q. 6:149; 16:9; 76:3; 10:35; 27:59, 60).

There are numerous Qur'anic verses wherein the "psychological approach" is apparent related to all matters concerning mankind and covering all aspects - from spiritual and moral to socio-political and legal matters. For example, the Qur'an refers to the various evils or "narrow and mean qualities" of man (Q. 3: 180; 4:36-7; 104: 1-3; 47:38)-like falsehood and hypocrisy (Q. 22:30; 9:77), extravagance (Q. 17:26-27), exploitation (Q. 3: 161), backbiting and slander (Q. 49:12), jealousy (Q. 21:109; 4:54), conceit and vanity

(Q. 4:36; 17:37)-which likely corrupt the social norms of a society, and the Qur'an has very eloquently drawn attention (among others) of the theologians and psychologists to them, so that they may study the problems in their proper perspective and suggest possible solutions.

In this vein, when we look into the concept of man from an Islamic perspective, it becomes clear that there are numerous verses of the Qur'an reflect man's nature (Q. 4:28; 21:37; 50:16-18; 70:19-35; 75:31,40; 95:4). In fact, Allah has subjected for man, who is created "in a best stature" (Q. 95:4), "whatsoever is in heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, and has completed and perfected His Graces" upon mankind, both "apparent" as well as "hidden", evident and concealed, seen and unseen, known and un-known (Q. 31:20).

According to holy Qur'an, man has been created as a distinguished Being, Ahsan al-Khalq (the best among the creation), and enjoys the superiority among all other creations of Allah, as is proclaimed in holy Qur'an in various verses: 95:4; 30:30; 32:7. Man is created on the very nature of Fitrat Allah, and, therefore, is not created in vain, but with purpose and responsibility: "And I (Allah) created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me (Alone)" (Q. 51:56; see also, 39: 64-66).

Man is bestowed with supreme and special blessings, and the goal of his work is to submit to Allah and is expressed in terms of Khilafah (Caliphate/ Representativeness). He is representative of Allah on earth and His creation is purposeful (Q. 2:30) and thus conducting his and others' lives according to the will of God. As Khalifah of Allah on earth, he is responsible. A man is created to serve and worship Allah; and this responsibility makes man "Crown of the creation". He has to

transform this world according to Allah's Will. To realize the Will of Allah is the purpose of man and is 'Ibadah (or ahsan al-amal). World is the means and agent to realize the purpose.

Allah has made all, on earth, subservient and submissive to man. World becomes source of man's gratefulness (Q. 16:14). Allah has completed and perfected His

Graces upon mankind, both "apparent" as well as "hidden" (Q. 31:20). As Islam's focus is man in general and in totality, so earth is meant for all humans and its endeavor is for whole mankind. Neither isolation nor particularism is endorsed in Islam; neither tribalism nor nationalism and relativism have any place in Islam, for holy Qur'an rejects it in clear and categorical terms ■

### **Muslim Delegation: Modi Concerned About 'Hatred in Name of Cow protection'**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi told a group of 25 Muslim leaders that triple talaq should not be politicised and urged the minority community delegation to take the responsibility for initiating reform in this regard. The Muslim leaders who met the PM, under the umbrella of the Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, were led by its president Maulana Qari Mohammad Usman Masnurpuri.

The PM said democracy's greatest strengths are "harmony and amity". After the meeting, the PMO and the Muslim leaders released separate statements.

Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind general secretary Maulana Mahmood Madani said: "The PM was apprehensive about growing hatred in the name of cow protection and he assured us that he would not let this trend prosper." The delegation said in its statement that "manslaughter on the pretext of cow slaughter have sent shock waves of terror and fear through Muslims, Dalit and the weakest sections of society" and they were "afraid that the fear and despondency, if unchecked, could prove highly counter-productive".

"No one is above the law. It must be administered with total impartiality and equality. Your recent reprimand to private groups taking law into their hands and launching murderous attacks for cows has sent a correct message but much has to be done by law enforcing agencies and the state administration," the delegation's statement said.

The PM emphasised the government does not have any right to discriminate among citizens.

Modi said the new generation must not be allowed to fall victim to the rising tide of extremism.

"On triple talaq, the PM reiterated that the Muslim community should not allow the issue to be politicised and urged the assembled gathering to take the responsibility for initiating reform in this regard. The delegation members appreciated the Prime Minister's stand on the issue," the PMO statement said.

Madani said separately: "The PM appreciated our stand that divorce was an internal issue of the Muslim community and the community itself should take reformative steps." The delegation also met National Security Advisor Ajit Doval. The PMO said the delegation praised Modi's vision. "The delegation expressed a common resolve to combat terrorism with all their might. They added that it is the Muslim community's responsibility that under no circumstances should anyone compromise the nation's security or well-being." ♦

*(Courtesy: The Indian Express, 10-05-2017)*



## 'Islam is More Than Just an Arab Phenomenon

- Aliyah

Islam has intercepted my life since adolescence. It has crossed my path many times; in the form of friends and acquaintances and also in the form of an inexplicable interest in anything Islamic or 'middle-eastern'. Of course, Islam is more than just an Arab phenomenon.

Only after studying, working and travelling did I return to a question which had eluded me since my teens: Which is the right religion? I had investigated my Jewish roots in my mid-teens. I found out a little information about Judaism and then summoned the courage to call the local Jewish Temple. I hit a dead end though – the rabbi told me there was no way I could become Jewish if my mother was not Jewish (my father is Jewish but my mother is Mormon). A classmate at high school, whom I helped sometimes at the library with his English assignments, was a Muslim. Unbeknown to me this man, after not seeing him for 15 years, has become my husband now. SubhanAllah!

I had been married previously, to a Jehovah's Witness. I thoroughly researched what the JW's taught (well, they kind of push it on you!) – but I didn't buy it. I just couldn't accept the 'God has a son' thing or the fact that they are false

prophets – re: 1918, 1974 – Armageddon prophesies. I lived a very comfortable life with my previous husband. It just wasn't enough-money is not everything. I was searching for something to make my life worthwhile. I knew that if I really prayed sincerely, from the depth of my heart, that God the Creator of all that exists, would answer me. One day, I knelt on the floor (unbeknown to me then, in sajda) and prayed, really prayed from the bottom of my heart for God to lead me to the right way to worship Him. I fell down into prostration, with my forehead on the floor, calling out to Him, silently, "Please God, please God, please lead me to the Truth!" – later, after I found out the principles of Islam, I was amazed to discover that this is how Muslims pray! SubhanAllah!

Little by little, the pieces of the puzzle started to fall into place. I had a friend who worked at a nightclub. She introduced me to some Muslims she knew from work. I was curious about their religion – they lamented that they didn't have strong enough faith to be religious – may Allah guide them. A light clicked on in my head – they weren't practising Muslims but they loved Islam and were so passionate about it! I was

curious about September 11 too. I did some research on the internet about Islam. I never saw them (those Muslims) after that but my thirst for learning about Islam was insatiable. When I discovered that the Qur'ān has not changed, not even one letter, since its revelation, I was amazed! While studying with the JW's I was almost going to start learning Hebrew and Aramaic to get the real meaning of the Bible. And here was a book, revealed from God in the original language that people can read for themselves! This is what I had been searching for! That really was the last piece of the puzzle that fell into place.

Everything I learned about Islam just seemed so natural to me. The expression 'coming home' really is the right way to describe the way I (and other new Muslims) feel when they accept Islam. I never questioned why I had to do certain things (like pray, fast, give charity). Covering my hair when I went out took about three months for me to do fully. I started by going to Islamic ladies functions or to the shops with a scarf and little by little my dress became more modest and after about six months I wore abaya too. I felt such a hypocrite to wear it some places and not others so I just made the decision to wear it all the time. The saddest thing I had to do was to give away my beloved puppy dog, for the sake of Allah, Alhamdulillah.

I was sad for losing her but happy to do it to please Allah.

Work was hard too. Some clients thought I was playing some kind of joke the first time I wore a scarf to work. That really did hurt – that people thought Islam is something someone would joke about. I don't work anymore – my boss wasn't very Muslim-friendly. As my clothing became more and more modest, she withdrew more and more too. I guess in her feminist eyes I was standing for everything that she was trying not to be. I could only take so much pressure.

After I was married and then had a miscarriage she suggested I take some time off work and we would have 'a talk' in a few months – she never called and I didn't bother either. I got tired of defending myself everyday – call me chicken but I just had enough! I also found solace that I was pleasing Allah by staying home (Qur'ān: Al-Ahzaab 33:33)

Well, that's the short version! Allah the Almighty has made things easy for me though. While He has tested me, He has blessed me with a truly wonderful husband (the one I knew from school) who loves and fears Allah maybe even more than me. Alhamdulillah! ■

*(Courtesy: Radiance)*

## Prophet's Sermon on Ramazan

Baihaqi reported on the authority of Salman Al-Farsi ® that Prophet (PBUH) delivered a sermon on the last day of the month of Sha'ban and said:

"O people! The month of Allah (Ramadhan) has come with its mercies, blessings and forgiveness. The days of this month are the best among the days and the nights are the best among the nights and the hours during Ramadhan are the best among the hours. This is a month in which you have been invited by Him (to fast and pray). Allah has honoured you in it. In every breath you take is a reward of Allah, your sleep is worship, your good deeds are accepted and your invocations are answered.

"Therefore, you most invoke your Lord in all earnestness with heart free from sin, evil, and pray that Allah may help you to keep fast, and to recite the Holy Qur'an. Indeed! Miserable is the one who is deprived of Allah's forgiveness in this great month. While fasting remember the hunger and thirst on the Day of Judgment. Give alms to the poor and needy. Pay respect to your elders, have sympathy for your youngsters and be in towards your relatives and kinsmen. Guard your tongue against unworthy words, and your eyes from scenes that are not worth seeing (forbidden and your ears from sounds that should not be heard.

"Be kind to orphans so that if your children may become orphans they will also be treated with kindness. Do repent to Allah for your sins and supplicate with raised hands at the times of prayer as these are the best times, during which Allah Almighty looks at His servants with mercy. Allah answers if they supplicate, responds if they call, grants if He is asked and accepts if they entreat, a people! You have made your conscience the slave of your desires.

"Make it free by invoking Allah for forgiveness. Your back may break from the heavy load of your sins, so prostrate yourself before Allah for long intervals, and make this load lighter. Understand fully that Allah has promised in His Honour and Majesty that, people who perform salat and sajda (prostration) will be guarded from Hell-fire on the Day of Judgment.

"O people! If anyone amongst for *iftar* (meal at sunset) for any believer, Allah will reward him as if he had freed a slave, and Allah will forgive him his sins. A Companion asked: 'but not all of us have the means to do so' The Prophet (PBUH) replied: 'Keep yourself away from Hell-fire though it may consist of half a date or even some water if you have nothing else.'

"O people! Anyone who during this month cultivates good manners will walk over the Sirat (bridge to Paradise on the day when feet will tend to slip. For anyone who during this month eases the workload of his servants, Allah will make easy his accounting, and for anyone who doesn't hurt others during this month, Allah will safeguard him from His Wrath on the Day of Judgment. Anyone who respects and treats an orphan with kindness during this month, Allah shall look at him with kindness on that Day. Anyone who treats these kinsmen well during this month, Allah will bestow Him on that Day, while anyone who mistreats his kinsmen during this month, Allah will keep away from His Mercy.

"Whoever offers the recommended prayers during this month, Allah will save him from Hell, and whoever observes his obligation during this month, his reward will be seventy times the reward during other months. Whoever repeatedly invokes Allah's blessings on me, Allah will keep his scale of good deeds heavy while the scales of others will be tending to lightness. Whoever recites during this month an ayat (verse of the Holy Qur'an) in other months.

"O people! The gates of Paradise remain open during this month. Pray to your Lord that they may not be closed for you. While the gates of Hell are closed, pray to your Lord that they never open for you. Satan has been chained, invoke your Lord not to let him dominate you."

(The Muslim World League Journal)

## The Message of Idul Fitr

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

*(al-Baqarah 2:185-186)*

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

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

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

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

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

resources yet still not fast. It amounts to disobedience on his part.

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

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

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

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

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

(Guidance from *The Holy Quran*  
by S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi)

## Islam And Terrorism

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

Terrorist attacks are on an increase almost throughout the world. It cannot be ascribed to have sanction of any religion. Terrorists have no faith. They are demons, sapiens and ruffians. Religion leads people to the ethical values and good norms and keeps them aloof from mischievous and unscrupulous deeds. Above all, it infuses fear of God in them. No religion allows terrorism, corruption, rancor, envy and hatred.

It is unfortunate that today Islam is being projected as a threat to peace, while it came to faster peace and tranquility all over the world.

There is an international well knitted programme to denigrate Islam and its ideology. No stone is being left unturned to obliterated it from the surface of the earth. These trends have come up after 9/11 episode in USA.

The fact is that Islam has been the most tolerant and egalitarian of all the religions. It is an open secret that the sixth century was the darkest phase in the history of mankind. The moral fabric of the society had been torn to shreds. The people had sunk into complete moral depravity. It was the Prophet Muhammad who saved them from the abysmal of destruction and degradation.

There is no denying the fact that the main purpose of Islam is nothing but to liberate the soul of people from superstitions and banalities and emancipate them from the evils of slavery and degradation and lead them to the path of salvation, progress and prosperity. The

holy Quran says: "You are the best people evolved from mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and you believe in God?" (Al-Quran 111, 110)

Islam has never proved to be a barrier in the progress and development. History cannot cite any instance from other religions of the world that has played a leading role in the field of science and technology as Islam did. Robert Briffant has rightly said: "Science is to modern world... It was not science only which brought Europe back to life. Other and manifold influences from the civilization of Islam communicated its first glow to European life." (The Making of Humanity, P.190)

According to Islam all people are from the same origin and source and they were made into nations and tribes just to know each other, as confirmed by the following Quranic words:

"O Mankind We created you from (a pair) of a single male and a female, made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not that ye may despise each other.)" (Al-Quran49-13)

Islam does not allow war for material benefits and greed, such as wars of imperialism, exploitation and for subjugation of one nation by the other.

It is needless to say that Islam has no relation at all with injustice, corruption and any kind of terrorist acts. However, description branding Muslims as terrorists and militants indicate at best the ignorance of Islamic ideology .

Strangely, despite gross misconceptions and bad notions against Islam today is the fastest growing religion in the world. Conversion to Islam at the point of sword is not seen anywhere. The Holy Qur'an vividly says: "Let there be no compulsion in religion." Islam guarantees equality of opportunity for all without any distinction of caste and creed and treat them alike. The Holy Qur'an says: "your requital shall be yours and my requital shall be mine."

Needless to add that right from the very outset Islam has been the most tolerance and egalitarian of all religions. Muslims had ruled more than 800 years over Spain. But not a single incident of forceful conversion occurred. Such cases are also not seen in other countries under the sway of Muslim rulers including a longest period of Mughals rule in India.

What to say for forceful conversion to Islam, the Holy Prophet strictly prohibited to harm or to hurt non-Muslims in any way. Prophet Muhammad says: "Whoever torments the Zimmis (non-Muslims) torments me."

It goes without saying that Islam introduced Human rights and stressed its importance. The last sermon of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is the first charter of Human Rights in Islam.

It should be kept in mind that the terms of Human rights had been alien for a long time. After the French Revolution of 1789 and American Revolution of 1775, the concept of Human Rights fostered. Even after Second World War, United Nation Organization (UNO) has set up a Human Rights Commission.

In this context we may recall what Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar says:

"Islam is not a bundle of dogmas and doctrines that theologians plague humanity with. It is a complete scheme of life, a perfect code of right conduct and a comprehensive social polity as wide as human race and in fact as wide as the human creation." Similarly according to Swami Vivekananda : " My experience is that if ever any religion approached to this equality (egalitarianism) in an appreciable manner, it is Islam and Islam alone, I am firmly persuaded, therefore, that without the help of practical Islam, theories of veganism, however fine and wonderful they may be, are entirely valueless to the vast mass of mankind." (Letters of Swami Vivekananda, P. 463). The similar thoughts are also of G.B. Shah, he says: I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful Vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me possesses that assimilating capacity to the changing phase of existing which can make itself appeal to every age. I have studied him- the wonderful man and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the saviour of humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness. I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today." (G.B. Shah, The Genuine Islam, Singapore, Vol. 1, No, 8, 1936).

It will be in the fitness of things that one should know Islam before leveling any allegation against it. It is time to foster brotherhood and fraternity regardless of caste and creed and create an atmosphere of peace and amity throughout the world.■

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