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Islamic Morality

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Among the moral attributes which have particularly influenced the Islamic culture are hospitality, liberality and open-handedness. These qualities, again, are a heritage from Hazrat Ibrahim about whose generous reception of guests there has occurred the following verse in the Quran :

Has the story reached these of the honoured guest of Abraham ? (LI : 24)

Pilgrims and foreign chroniclers who had the occasion to live, for any length of time, among communities, tracing their descent 'from him either racially or spiritually, have recorded most pleasant memories of their stay in this respect. They have invariably been impressed by their warm hospitality and friendly feeling towards guests and strangers. One can still notice in the countries of the Middle East, which have not yet been swept off their feet by the mounting tide of Western Civilization, glimpses of the hospitality that had enabled globetrotters-like Ibn-e-Batuta and Ibn-e-Jubair to enjoy the comfort and warmth of home during travel. The Indian Muslims in spite of their being placed so far away from the natural seat of Islamic Civilisation and the fact that Islam had reached their, country long after it had passed the peak of its glory, also are conspicuous for their cordial treatment of the guests. Hospitality is a part of the tradition of Muslim homes, and although modern economic conditions have put a 'curb on it, Muslims still feel happy on the arrival of a guest and consider it a source of good fortune and an Islamic virtue to entertain him open-heartedly. ■

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Wisdom of Qur'an

"The believers are but brothers." (49: 10).

"The Believers, men and women, are protectors, one of another." (9:71)

"But they have broken their religion among them into sects, each group rejoicing in its belief." (23:53)

"And obey Allah and His Messenger, and do not dispute with one another lest you lose courage, and your strength depart, and be patient; surely, Allah is with those who are patient." (8:46)

"If Allah willed, He would have made you one nation (religion) but that He may test you in what He has given you. So strive (as in a race) in good deeds." (5:48)

"Truly, your nation is one united nation, and I am your Lord," (21 :92)

"Verily this (your nation) is one nation, and I am your Lord, so keep your duty to Me." (23:52)

"O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another. Verily, the most honorable of you with Allah is the one who has piety." (49:13)

And hold fast, all together, by the rope which God (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves; and remember with gratitude God's favor on you; for ye were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His Grace, ye became brethren; and ye were on the brink of the pit of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus doth God make His Signs clear to you: That ye may be guided (3: 103)

Obey Allah and His Messenger and do not quarrel among yourselves lest you lose heart and your momentum disappear. And be steadfast. Allah is with the steadfast.(8:46) As for those who divide their religion and break up into sects, thou hast no part in them in the least: their affair is with God: He will in the end tell them the truth of all that they did. (6: 159)■

Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

* Narrated Anas bin Malik: Allah's Apostle said, "Whoever prays like us and faces our Qibla and eats our slaughtered animals is a Muslim and is under Allah's and His Apostle's protection. So do not betray Allah by betraying those who are in His protection." (Sahih Bukhari, Volume 1, Book 8, Number 386) "

* Nu'man b. Bashir reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: The similitude of believers in regard to mutual love, affection, fellow-feeling is that of one body; when any limb of it aches, the whole body aches, because of sleeplessness and fever. (Sahih Muslim, Book 032, Number 6258)

* Narrated Abu Huraira: Allah's Apostle said, "Beware of suspicion, for suspicion is the worst of false tales. And do not look for the others' faults, and do not do spying on one another, and do not practice Najsh, and do not be jealous of one another and do not hate one another, and do not desert (stop talking to) one another. And O, Allah's worshipers! Be brothers!" (Sahih Bukhari, Volume 8, Book 73, Number 92)

* Narrated Ubaida: Ali said (to the people of 'Iraq), "Judge as you used to judge, for I hate differences (and I do my best) till the people unite as one group, or I die as my companions have died." And narrated Sad that the Prophet said to 'Ali, "Will you not be pleased from this that you are to me like Aaron was to Moses?" (Bukhari, Volume 5, Book 57, Number 56)

* Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should serve his guest generously; and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should unite the bond of kinship (i.e. keep good relation with his kith and kin); and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should talk what is good or keep quiet. (Bukhari, Volume '8, Book 73, Number 160)

* "A Muslim is brother of another Muslim. He does not oppress him, nor does he leave him at the mercy of others." (Sahih Muslim Book 032, Number 6219)

* The Prophet said, "None of you will have faith till he wishes for his (Muslim) brother what he likes for himself." (Sahih Al-Bukhari Volume 1, Book 2, Number 12) ■

Truth

Truth prevails is an old saying and there is no doubt of its being proved true. It is said that man is a social animal. He acquires habits and practices with which he is surround. In this fast moving life morality has taken a back seat and all those habits which provide instant benefits and pleasure have been adopted for temporary gains.

Whenever humanity has distracted from an honest and rightful path Almighty has sent His messengers for reform. These messengers have come from time to time in different periods and by their preaching helped the society to adopt rightful and truthful way in their lives. The last prophet, as we believe, was Muhammad (Peace be on him) who tried his best to reform the society and make the people God fearing, truthful, honest and loyal. His contributors to the humanity is ever praiseworthy and laudable. By his own practices in life he tried to convey and convince his followers that a truthful life is the only way which may lead them to heaven and by that they can earn the pleasure of God.

Falsehood and breach of trust are inimical to faith. The Apostle of God said: "There is no place for any habit in the nature of a true Believer except falsehood and breach of faith." It denotes that Faith and the shameless habit of lying cannot coexist. A true Muslim may have any other weakness, but he can never be a habitual liar and a false-hearted and untrustworthy person. Should,

however, it will show that the reality of Islam has not yet dawned, upon him and he must care himself of the vicious habit if he is not to rest content with the state of imperfection in faith.

The prophet has said: "When a bondsman talks a lie, the Angel goes a mile away (from him) owing to the stench." He on another occasion said: "A most serious form of betrayal of faith is that you talk a lie to a brother while he believes that you are truthful in what you say."

Our Judicial System is so defective that often on the basis of affidavits, relying on their truthfulness, cases are decided. The affidavits are sworn generally on false facts. Islam warns of such practice. To hear false witness in a court of law and take a false oath are among the worst kinds of falsehood and stern warnings of punishment in the life to come have been given on them.

The holy Quran and many Hadiths (saying of the Prophet) have warned of the punishment to liars, back-biters, imposters and others so let us be cautious on this count and try to abide by the diktats of Quran and Hadiths. ■

S.A.

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along with a hard copy, duly signed, by post.

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

'Abdul Qadir was born in Gilan in 470 A. H. He was an Arab by descent, being the tenth descendent of Hasan ibn 'Ali, but belonged to Iran by migration of his ancestors. He came to Baghdad in 488 A. H. at the age of 18 years. It was perhaps not merely fortuitous that he arrived at Baghdad to acquire education almost at the same time when another reputed teacher, al-Ghazali, was leaving the city in search of truth. Although inclined to penance and cultivation of religious observances from an early age, he addressed himself wholeheartedly to acquire education under the most reputed teachers of the time such as Abul Wafa Ibn 'Aqeel, Muhammad ibn Hasan al-Baqillani and Abu Zakariya Tebrezi. Thereafter, he turned to mysticism and was guided in its tenets and practices by Sheikh Abul Khair Hammid ibn Muslim al-Dabbas and Cadi Abu Sa'eed Makhrami, and was allowed by the latter to initiate others in the mystic order of his mentor.

Popular Enthusiasm:

After completing his education of religious sciences as well as the training in mystic disciplines, 'Abdul Qadir began his *career as a teacher* in the seminary of his teacher Cadi Abu Sa'eed Makhrami. In his sermons which were delivered in the premises of the same institution, there was soon such a rush of people that extensions had to be carried out in the building of the institution. It appeared as if the whole of Baghdad assembled in his congregations. At the same time, he claimed such an attention and deference from the people attending his lectures that even the kings

would have envied it. Sheikh Muwaffaq ud-din ibn Qudamah, author of the al-Mughni, records that he had not seen a man more revered for his piety and religious learning than 'Abdul Qadir. The king, his chief and ministers attended his sermons along with the rank and file and used to sit in a corner without any fanfare. Scholars and jurists rubbed shoulders with the students. The enthusiastic devotion of the people coming to his lectures can be well imagined by the fact that often as many as 400 inkpots were counted, which were brought in to take down the notes of his sermons.

Moral Excellence:

Notwithstanding the implicit reverence cherished for 'Abdul Qadir by the people, he was always modest, humble and unpretentious. He often left his work to attend to the needs of a child, a destitute or a slave girl. Never evading the company of the poor he even washed their clothes or performed similar other personal services for them, yet he never stood up in the honour of any person of the rank or the elite. If the Caliph ever paid a visit to him, the chroniclers of his time report, he deliberately went inside his house so that he might not have to stand up to welcome the king. He used to come out of the house after the Caliph had seated himself. 'Abdul Qadir never paid back the courtesy call to any vazier or the king.

Those who have seen 'Abdul Qadir have paid a glowing tribute to his moral excellence and large-heartedness, modesty and hospitality, generosity and goodness of his heart. One of his

contemporaries who has had the opportunity of enjoying the company of 'Abdul Qadir says that he had not seen a man more polite, large-hearted and charitable than Sheikh 'Abdul Qadir. Despite his erudition and eminence, he respected his elders, met the youngsters with a good grace, always saluted first, hailed the poor courteously with deference but never stood up to welcome the grandees or nobles, nor did he ever pay a visit to any minister or governor.

Another contemporary of 'Abdul Qadir, Hafiz Abu-'Abdullah Muhammad ibn Yusuf al-Baraali reports:

"His prayers were readily answered. Being extremely tender-hearted, he would burst into tears (if anything sorrowful or touching was mentioned to him). More often he was to be found immersed in meditation and recollection of God. He was soft-hearted, courteous, cheerful, generous and compassionate. Being the offspring of a noble family, he was also highly reputed for his profound knowledge and piety."

The testimony of Muhi ud-din Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad ibn Hamid al-Baghdadi, a jurist-scholar of those times runs as follows:

"Always disposed to avoid things unseemly and indecorous, he only pressed for the desirable and befitting. He would boil with indignation if the Divine commandments were overstepped but remained listless to the wrongs and ill-treatments to his own person. He would never seek revenge save for the sake of God Almighty, nor, send back a beggar without giving him something. If he had nothing to give he would part with the

clothes he had been putting on."

'Abdul Qadir took pleasure in feeding the poor and spending freely to meet the needs of the destitute. Ibn al-Najjar reports that 'Abdul Qadir often used to say: "If I were given treasures of the whole world, I would spend it all on feeding the poor." Sometimes he said: "It seems that I have a hole in my hands. I cannot keep anything with me. If I had a thousand dinars, I would spend every single shell before the daybreak." He had given instructions to his servants that as many guests as possible should be invited for the dinner. During the dinner he always sat with the poor and lowly, chatted with his students or enquired about the welfare of those who did not happen to be present there. His behaviour was so affectionate that everyone who met him gained the impression that 'Abdul Qadir had the highest regard for him. He overlooked the faults of others and if anyone stated something on oath, he readily accepted his statement. He never gave out the secrets of others nor stated anything before others that might put someone to shame.

Reassurance to the Dejected:

The annalists of his time agree that quite a large number of miracles were worked by 'Abdul Qadir. Sheikh-ul-Islam 'Izz ud-din ibn Abdul-Salam and Ibn Taymiyah are of the view that 'Abdul Qadir was a worker of incessant miracles but his miracle of miracles was filling the heart of the despaired and broken-hearted with faith, hope and enthusiasm. He infused a breath of new life, zeal and self-confidence into countless persons through his powers of speech and the spiritual power of his heart. He was, in truth, a blessing for the world of Islam for he renovated and revived the true content of the faith and tapped the sources

of moral and spiritual strength for a religious renaissance. Sheikh (Amr al-Kaisani reports that there was hardly a sermon delivered by 'Abdul Qadir after which a number of Jews and Christians did not embrace Islam, marauders and robbers did not repent for their sins and heretics and apostates did not renounce their mistaken beliefs.

Al- Jubba'i relates that 'Abdul Qadir once told him that he wished to lead the life of a recluse in the wilderness but God had willed that people should derive benefit from him. And, it was a blessing granted unto him that more than five thousand Jews and Christians embraced Islam and about a hundred thousand sinners and criminals repented for their misdeeds on account of him.

Teaching and Missionary Activities:

Gifted with divine grace and illumination, 'Abdul Qadir was ever conscious of the purification of spirit and rectitude of morals, yet he did not lose sight of the importance of teaching and disseminating the correct doctrines of the faith. Being a follower of the Hanbalite school of Sunni theology, he endeavoured, like his mentor, to root out innovations and deviations from the orthodox faith and practice. Because of his forceful defence of the strict orthodoxy, reports Ibn al-Sam'iani, the traditionist and their followers came to be held in high esteem by the masses.

'Abdul Qadir used to take daily a class each of the Qur'anic exegesis, Traditions and Jurisprudence in which he also explained the differences between various juristic schools of Islam. The classes were held in the morning and evening, while 'Abdul

Qadir listened to the recitation of the Qur'an after the mid-day prayers and thereafter dictated fauwas on religious or legal questions referred to him. In formulating his answers 'Abdul Qadir generally followed the Shafe'ite and Hanbalite schools of jurisprudence. His juristic-opinions were highly praised by the juristic-scholars of Iraq for these provided a striking example of the acuteness of his intellect.

Once the question referred to him was that a man had taken an oath that he would perform a religious observance in a manner that nobody else in the whole world would be able to share the privilege with him but, if he failed to fulfil his undertaking, this would mean an irrevocable separation between him and his wife. The scholars were astounded by the strange oath taken by the man and could not suggest an observance which could be performed by him alone in the whole world. 'Abdul Qadir, however, replied that the man should be allowed to circumambulate K'aba alone seven times to perform the lesser Hajj. Everyone agreed that this was the only authorised religious observance which he could perform alone at a time when no body else would be engaged in the same prayer.

Certitude of Knowledge:

Profound knowledge of the religious lore and meticulous observance of the Traditions of the Holy Prophet, aided by the grace of God, had unveiled the mysteries of celestial world to 'Abdul Qadir, who had reached the stage where discrimination between truth and untruth, divine intuition and demoniacal imposition is born in a man. He had acquired the certitude of knowledge that the Shari'ah of the Last Prophet was perfect and unchangeable, and that any claim made contrary to the divine edict was

simply a satanic suggestion. 'Abdul Qadir himself relates an incident that he once came across. He says:

"Once I saw a dazzling light which filled the entire sky. Then a human frame appeared therein and said, 'O 'Abdul Qadir, I am Lord, thy God. I have made every- thing prohibited lawful unto thee.' I replied, 'Get away from me, O Devil.' As soon as I uttered these words, the lustre in the sky turned into darkness and the human frame began to fizzle out into smoke. Then I heard someone saying, 'Abdul Qadir, I had misled seventy mystics with this device, but God saved thee on account of thy knowledge and piety.' To this I rejoined, 'No. It was simply a grace of God.' After 'Abdul Qadir had related the incident someone asked, 'How did you know that it was the Satan.' 'Since he told me', replied 'Abdul Qadir, 'that he had made the things prohibited lawful for me'."

He used to tell his disciples that if any action transgresses the commandments of God, then it is surely an imposition by the Satan. In such cases one should return to the tenets of the Sharirah, inculcate an unflinching faith, and firmly reject the temptations of self-indulgence; for, whatever is not permitted by the Shari'ah is decidedly misleading.

Trust in God:

The unailing and penetrating vision into the Tawhid or Unity of God had conferred upon 'Abdul Qadir that sublime piety which produces an absolute resignation in the will of God. He explains the state of resignation in these words:

"When a man finds himself in a trouble, the first endeavours to get rid of it. If he fails, he seeks the help of others, such

as, kings, officials, grandees or the rich, or, physicians in the case of an illness. When this effort also fails him, he turns to God with invocations and praises, and not unoften with tears and lamentations. In other words, he does not: look for the assistance of others so long as he can obtain the requisite help from his own self; similarly, he does not implore God if he can get the help from His creatures; and, finally, when he does not get any help from that source too, he surrenders completely to God Almighty. It is only at this stage that man seeks the help of God with prayers and invocations, lamentations and tears but God does not accept his entreaties till he gets tired of these too. Then, being completely dejected and broken- hearted, he is permeated by an illumination of spirit which makes him indifferent to the causes and effects. Now he has a sublimated soul, unconscious of everything save the Divine Being and aware of the true content of Tawhid (Unity); he has now a certitude of knowledge that save God nothing has any power to do or undo a thing; to Him belongs the power to move a thing or keep it stationery, to promote or debase, to benefit or harm, to give life or bring death, to give honour or indignity, or to make affluent or indigent. The man is now like a ball in the hands of a player, or a child in the lap of a nurse, or else a corpse in the hands of those who bathe it; for, these are completely at the mercy of those who possess them. Likewise, the man thus loses his identity in the will of his Master; immersed in his higher-self he has no comprehension of anything save the acts of his Lord, nor does he witness or hear or think anything else. If he seeks anything, it is the craftsmanship

of the Supreme Creator; if he hears, it is His voice; if he comprehends, it is by the knowledge vouchsafed by Him; and if he is enlivened, it is only by His nearness. Thus, in the state of total absorption, he gets peace only through the grace and blessings of God; he detests to depend on anything save his Lord; he surrenders himself completely before the will of God; acquires the knowledge of mysteries hidden from the senses through intuition and illumination of heart; and overflows with the gratitude of the Lord for His countless blessings.”

Love of Humanity :

The love of humanity, in general, and the affection for the Ummah, in particular, was symptomatic of ‘Abdul Qadir’s sublimated soul and indicative of his close affinity to the successors of the Prophet. In one of his sermons he delineated the object and the mental states of different types of persons visiting a market. Coming to the last category, he perhaps describes his own feelings in these words:

“ And there is the fifth man whose heart is filled, when he enters a market, with the awe and reverence of the Almighty to seek His blessings for those present in the market. He becomes oblivious of everything else save his benediction for the people; he remains immersed, from the time of his entry into the market till he comes out of it, in the solemn invocation of divine blessings and in repenting for the sins of those who happen to be there, and thus he hardly gets any time to see what they are selling or buying. His heart bleeds and eyes shed tears over the ingratitude of man while his tongue remains busy in thanking

God over what He has bestowed unto his bondsmen.”

The Times of ‘Abdul Qadir:

‘Abdul Qadir spent 73 years of his life, in Baghdad, When he came to Baghdad, Caliph Mustazhir b’Illah Abul ‘Abbas (487-512 A. H.) was the reigning monarch after whom four other ‘Abbasid Caliphs, al-Mustarshid b’Illah (512-559 A. H.), al-Rashid b’Illah (deposed 529 A. H.), al-Muqtafi l’ Amr Illah (530-555 A. H.) and al-Mustanjid b’Illah (555-565 A. H.) succeeded to the throne one after another.

This was one of the most troublous times of the ‘Abbasid rule when the Caliphs and Saljukid Kings vied with each other for maintaining their supremacy. The former being shorn of their temporal power were prevailed upon, sometimes with their permission but not unoften through coercion, by the Saljukid Kings to accept their domination. This also sometimes engulfed the Islamic world into fratricidal conflicts in which the Muslims shed the blood of one another.

Several such incidents took place during the reign of Caliph al-Mustarshid, He was a brave and wise administrator who won numerous battles but he was finally defeated by the Saljukid King Mascud in 529 A. H. Ibn Kathtr, giving an account of the Caliph’s defeat writes:

“The Sultan (Mas’ud) gained victory and the Caliph. (al-Mustarshid) was taken prisoner. Baghdad was ransaked which plunged the city into sorrow. The people dismantled the pulpits of the mosques, gave up attending congregational prayers and women came out lamenting for the Caliph and other captives. The people in other parts of the

country followed suit with the result that Malik Sanjar had to ask his nephew to reinstate the Caliph. Mas'ud acted on the advice of his uncle but the Caliph was assassinated by the emissaries of the Batinites while he was on his way back to Baghdad."

These heart-rending incidents were witnessed by 'Abdul Qadir. He saw the Muslims engaged in internal strife and bloodshed. The ghastliness of these feuds and forays, the cruelty, savagery and treachery of those who engaged in them and the miseries they inflicted upon their foes for the transitory pleasures of power, position and riches made him extremely sad. It is true that he had nothing to do with these struggles for power; he was nevertheless alive to the miseries inflicted on the people and evil effects of the unsettled conditions during his times. Through his sermons therefore, he endeavoured, with the seriousness of purpose and ardent zeal characteristic of him, to give a call for moral propriety and rectitude of the self: he vividly explained the transitory nature of the world and its fleeting pleasures, the need for coveting the eternal bliss and preparing for the life-to-come, and the importance of evoking faith and correct mental attitude consisting of right conduct in speech, livelihood and ethical behavior.

Sermons of 'Abdul Qadir:

The discourses of 'Abdul Qadir had a magnetic effect which is still discernible in them. 'Abdul Qadir is at his best in Futuh ul-Ghaib and al-Fatah al-Rabbani. In describing the love and unity of the Divine Being he appears to be inspired by higher sources. The reader can still find the spirit of sincerity and enthusiasm running through these sermons.

Following in the footsteps of the Prophet, his successors and the illuminated saints of the old, 'Abdul Qadir touched on the current problems of his days, analysed the reasons for the miseries and maladies of the people and provided answers to their doubts and deficiencies. Along with this, the tremendous sincerity and earnest zeal for the welfare of the people fired his haranguing-with a frenzy of enthusiasm and magnetic effect capable of pulling the strings of the heart.

Unity of the Divine Being:

The forces of worldliness had become so strong during 'Abdul Qadir's time that the entire social and economic life of the community appeared to be woven into the context of political situation then obtaining; people had developed a tendency of depending upon the kings and nobles for realisation of their worldly ends and had begun to treat them as ultimate dispensers of benefits and harms. In order to counteract this mistaken tendency of the people, he says in one of his sermons:

"This entire creation is like a man who has been imprisoned and chained by a king whose dominions are vast and countenance awesome. The prisoner has been hanged from a pine tree beneath which overflows a river, wide and deep. "The king is seated on an elevated chair, having arrows and bows, javelins and spears by his side. He hits the captive with whatever weapon he desires. Now, would it be prudent for anyone witnessing the scene to divert his attention from the king and expect harm or favour from the captive instead of the king? Would not such a man be deemed a fool or even mad? Oh God, I seek thy refuge from blindness after having

being given eyes, from being cast off after getting near Thee, from regression after being promoted to Thy favour, from being misled after obtaining Thy guidance and from apostasy after having been granted faith."

In another sermon he asks to instill the love of God to the exclusion of everything else besides Him.

"Keep your eyes fixed on Him who is looking at you; keep yourself before One who keeps Himself before you; love Him who loves you; hark unto Him who calls you; seek help from Him who can save you, take you out of the darkness of ignorance, cleanse you of the impurity of your soul, and redeem you from the baser-self and misleading temptations, despair and timidity. Your earthly desires are like your foolish friends who keep you off the righteous path and deprive you of the things, pleasing and desirable. How long would you remain slaves of your desires, temptations, greed, pride, in short, this transitory world? How long would you remain forgetful of the Hereafter and of your Creator; the Fashioner of everything, the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden; everything is couched within His grasp from which emanates the love within your heart, the peace and solace, blessings and favours?"

Again, he throws light on the same topic in another lecture:

"The entire creation is helpless. Nothing can do good or harm to you. It is only God who lets a thing be done by you, or, in other words, the will of God finds expression through you or somebody else. God has already destined whatever

is to happen to you; whether it be beneficial or harmful; and, the destiny cannot be changed. Those who are faithful and virtuous set an example unto other creations. There are a few among these who have so purified their heart that their interior and exterior selves have become one; even if they have riches, their desires never see the with the worldly attachments. Verily, only those are courageous, valiant and powerful who have purified their hearts and attained this stage of illumination. Unto these alone belongs the kingdom of Heaven and Earth for they have cleansed their heart of everything save God; they are like a soldier who guards the door of his heart, with the sabre of Tawhid (Unity) and the Shari'ah in his hand, to bar the entry of all creations to a place reserved for the Creator. Since they have attuned their hearts to the ultimate source of power, the Shari'ah beautifies their exterior while Tawhid and the wisdom of God's knowledge decorate their interior."

Explaining what is meant by the false objects of worship; he says:

"You put your trust in your own self, in others, in your wealth, in your rites and customs, in your trade and business, or in your rulers; but, in whatever object you place your reliance, it becomes, to say the truth, your object of worship. If you fear someone, or expect harm or favour from him or else deem him as an intercessor with God, then he is the object of worship for you."

On another occasion, 'Abdul Qadir vividly described the jealousy and pride of God and His abhorrence of all associates, as also the wisdom lying behind the loss of

the things adored and loved by man.

"You often complain, as you would ever do, that you have to suffer the loss of whatever you set your affections on. The object of your fancy, if it is a human being, either separates or dies. If it is wealth that you care for, you incur losses or are deprived of it. Then, should I tell you, that God is in love with you, and He is jealous too! He has created you for Himself but you want to be enraptured by others! Have you not heard what God has said: He holds them dear who love Him, 'and also, I created the jinn and humankind only that they might worship Me,' And, are you not aware of what the Prophet once said: When God loves anyone; He places him in trouble but if he puts up with it with endurance and forbearance, God then sets him apart for Himself. Requested to elucidate what he meant by 'setting apart of a man', the Prophet replied: God deprives him of his possessions and progeny. This is so because it is natural for a man to love his offsprings and possessions and thus his love which should have been for God alone is divided between the Creator and the created, between the Eternal and the finite.

"God is, however, extremely Proud and Mighty and therefore He destroys whatever threatens to become an associate in the love for Him. It is only then that the heart of the man whom He loves gets attuned to Him. And, then, this man can claim to enjoy the distinction of what has been described thus by God : He holds them dear who love Him. It is the stage when the heart of the man is cleansed of all idols and associates (of God) such as the off springs, riches,

pleasures and desires. It has now no yearnings, no longings left-worldly or otherwise, not even those relating to piety and miraculous powers, stations and stares, nearness and remoteness; the heart becomes a bottomless vessel in which nothing can be kept. God Almighty being extremely Proud and Jealous makes the heart of His beloved incapable of nourishing any other desire; He shrouds the heart of His devotee with His awe and a gasp of admiration, and guards it with His Glory and Might so that nothing can get inside this heart; nor can the possessions and riches, family and progeny, friends and relations, piety and miraculous powers do any harm to it. None of these finds a place in the heart of such a man nor, then, God remains, jealous of them. Whatever is granted thereafter to this man is a gift or reward from his God so that he may be of help to those who are around him or visit him."

Refuge of the Broken-hearted:

The Muslim society in the time of 'Abdul Qadir could broadly be divided into two classes. The first of these comprised the men of substance who were deficient in faith and virtuous behaviour. As against this, there was another class, poverty-stricken and down-trodden, but endowed with faith and a spirit of righteousness, moral strength and uprightness. These people, sometimes, feeling disconcerted and broken-hearted, viewed the affluent with jealousy and mistrust, and regarded themselves as deprived and discarded. 'Abdul Qadir holds out hope and cheer to these people in one of his sermons. He says:

"O' empty-handed beggarly fellows, the world would appear to be at logger-

heads with you; you are barefooted, unclothed and unfed, broken-hearted and ill-starred, evicted from every place and deprived of your longings and fancies. But do not say that God has reduced you to poverty, turned the world against you, abandoned, maligned or persecuted you, did not assign the portion of earthly pleasures due to you, or did not bestow honour and fame upon you. Nor is it proper for you to complain that God has granted his favours to others, made them reputed and honoured, although they belong to the same faith as you do and are the progeny of Adam and Eve like you.

“It is really so because you are like a fertile land on which God is sending down the rains consisting of endurance and resignation, conviction and faith, knowledge and grace. The tree of your faith is taking roots, sprouting forth its branches, its shade closing over you, pushing out new shoots and fruits, getting higher and bigger without your providing any fertilizer to it. God Almighty knows what you really need. He has, therefore, assigned a befitting place for you in the Hereafter. He has made you a lord in the life-to-come where His bounties are countless, inconceivable and unheard of. As God has said, nobody knows what delights have been stored for your eyes in the Paradise. This shall be your recompense for the faithful performance of what has been enjoined unto you, and your endurance, resignation and submission to the will of God.

“As for those who have been well-afforded in this world, they have been placed in easy circumstances for they are like a barren land, rocky and sandy, which

neither stores nor absorbs the rains, and it is difficult to implant the tree of faith in it. It has, therefore, to be provided with fertilizers so that the weak saplings of their faith may get nourishment and push out the shoots of righteous action. Thus, if the wealth, honour and fame are taken away from them, the tree of their faith shall waste away and its leaves and fruits shall wither although God intends to make it strong. Therefore, my poor brethren, you ought to know that the faith of the wealthy does not have deeper roots, it lacks that strength which has been endowed to you, and it needs the riches and earthly prizes for its nourishment. If these gifts were to be taken away from them, their faith will give place to blasphemy and they shall join the ranks of infidels, apostates and hypocrites, unless, of course, God bestows on them spiritual light and illumination, endurance and resignation to strengthen their faith.”

Worldly Pleasures:

‘Abdul Qadir did not preach asceticism nor did he exhort to give up the worldly possessions. What he emphasised upon in his sermons was that these should be made use of by a man to the extent he needs them but he should never allow himself to become a slave of his desires and temptations, nor should he hold the earthly gifts dear to his heart. Explaining the purport of the Tradition which runs: Verily, the world has been created for you, and you have been created for the Hereafter, he says:

“Do not try to obtain your share of the worldly gifts in a way that you have to keep standing before it like a beggar. You ought to be like a sovereign who keeps

himself seated while the gifts are presented before him. This world acclaims those who stand and wait at the door of God Almighty but it demeans those who wait upon it. Therefore, get your share of the worldly benefits without demeaning yourself or compromising your dignity, and this is what Allah expects of you."

In another sermon he says:

"It is perfectly lawful to lay hands on the world and its gifts, to possess it or even to accumulate it for a commendable purpose, but it is forbidden to set your heart upon it. You may allow it to stand at the door of your heart but it is prohibited to allow it to get inside the door, for it shall not bring any honour to you."

Critique of the Kings :

(Abdul Qadir did not sermonise and admonish the populace alone; he fearlessly performed the duty made incumbent by the Shari'ah i. e. of enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong; and, whenever he considered it necessary, he publicly denounced the actions and policies of the kings, nobles, and officials. He bitterly criticized the faults of the great ones without the slightest consideration of their power or position. Hafiz 'Imad ud-din ibn Kathir, a historian of his time, has made a mention of it in these words:

"He admonished all—the caliphs, vaziers, kings, jurists, elite and the laity—to adopt the righteous course and to forsake the things forbidden. He openly criticized, unsparingly, everyone to his face in his discourses.

"He used to denounce the authorities sternly if any tyrant was

appointed to a public office by them. He never cared for anyone if he saw the commands of God being overstepped."

Ibn Kathir writes that when Caliph al-Muqtafi I'Amr Illah appointed Abul Wafa' Yahya, a man notorious for his cruelty, as a Cadi, 'Abdul Qadir admonished the Caliph in these words:

"You have appointed a man notorious as the 'Most Tyrant' to rule over the Muslims. What would your answer be tomorrow on the Day of Judgment, before the Lord of the Worlds, the Most Merciful ?"

Ibn Kathir further says that when the Caliph came to know of the admonition of 'Abdul Qadir he burst into tears and immediately dismissed Abul Wafa' Yahya from the office.

'Abdul Qadir also vigorously condemned this-worldliness of those scholars, jurists and saints who were prepared to accept an office or to act as entourages of the rulers. He held this class responsible for the waywardness of the kings and ruling chiefs. In one of his addresses he rebuked these elements thus:

"Ah, you are the fellows who have misused your knowledge and wisdom. What have you to do with your predecessors? You are enemies of God and His Apostle; you are no less than the robbers, tyrants and hypocrites! How long will you persist in your pious fraud? How long will you continue to don this shroud of assumed piety for the sake of your kings and rulers? How long will you remain a slave of power and position, passions and desires? Verily, you and

most of your kings are tyrants and traitors unto God and His bondsmen. O' God, our Lord, either degrade these transgressors and humiliate them or make them repent for their sins; either mortify the tyrants and efface them from Thy earth or let them mend their ways."

On another occasion he addressed a religious scholar with these words:

"Are you not ashamed that your avarice has forced you to serve these tyrants and crave for the emoluments declared unlawful and prohibited by the Shari'ah? How long shall you hold on to your mean pursuits? The kingdom of the rulers to whom you are playing a second fiddle shall shortly be no more and then you shall be presented before God Almighty who is Eternal, Omnipotent."

Concern for Moral Rectitude:

Extremely solicitous of eradicating the moral laxity and viciousness produced by ever increasing opulence, luxury and indolence in the metropolis of Islam, 'Abdul Qadir sometimes came out with the most severe criticism of the then society giving expression to his heartfelt misery over the sinful ways of the people. This was the impassioned appeal made by 'Abdul Qadir in one of his sermons:

"The edifice of Faith built by the Apostle of God is being demolished, brick by brick, and now it is about to fall to pieces. Come, O' mankind, to rebuild what has been dismantled and renovate what has been laid waste. Until this task is completed, we have to work jointly as a team. Come to my aid, O' Sun, O' Moon and O' Stars."

Again, in another sermon he says:

"Islam is shedding tears. Its wail of woe is on account of the blasphemous hypocrites and innovators who are practising a pious fraud by attributing things that do not belong to Islam.

"Look at your predecessors. They lived like you but enjoined the right and prohibited the wrong. But you have forgotten them altogether so soon after their death !

"Do you not know that even dog is faithful to his master? He guards his fields and the cattle, is pleased to see his master although he does not get more than a few crumbs in the evening. You are favoured with the bounties of God but, quite the other way, you are neither thankful to Him nor you dutifully perform the task assigned to you. Instead, what you do is to break His commands and transgress the limits of the Shar'ah."

Reform and Renovation:

The impressive sermons of 'Abdul Qadir were a source of inspiration to innumerable persons in Baghdad. These enabled thousands to offer earnest repentance for their sins but in order to build up a movement aiming at a widespread and permanent reform of the social, moral and spiritual life of the people, it was necessary to find out a way whereby more durable relations could be fostered between the mentor and the disciples and, at the same time, arrangements could also be made for the religious education and training of the latter. As it were, the discourses did not provide a permanent link between the speaker and the audience. People came to these meetings, listened

to the sermons and left to come back again or not, at their sweet will. Many of them persisted in the way they had been treading along without paying any heed to the call of the reformer to purify their souls and to rectify their moral behaviour.

Religious seminaries and educational institutions too did not provide an answer to the problem because of the vast population of Muslims and the mundane pre-occupations of the people. The problem of making arrangements for a continued and concerted effort for the education and training of the people in religious tenets and practices, and infusing a breath of new life in the vast numbers spread over far off lands defied a solution in the absence of a truly Islamic State. The foremost business or rather the end of the Caliphate was, in the words of Caliph 'Umar ibn 'Abdul 'Aziz, to guide the people in moral rectitude rather than to collect revenues for the conduct of administration. The then Muslim States were, however, not only indifferent to this fundamental objective but were also extremely allergic to any movement or criticism on this score which could pose a threat to their political supremacy. Thus, these governments being suspicious of all efforts made for the resurgence of Islamic spirit, and, erroneously taking these as movements designed to build up political leadership, lost no time in crushing them.

In these circumstances there was no way left to revivify the religious spirit and fill the people with an enthusiasm, zeal and self-confidence for reintroduction of the precepts of religion in their daily life. The only alternative left was to call upon the people to take an oath of allegiance for the purpose. Following in the footsteps of the

Apostle of God, it had become necessary that a guide of spiritual and moral excellence should obtain an oath, or the ba'it, as it is called, from the people willing to offer sincere penitence and undertaking to lead a virtuous life in future in accordance with the directions of their mentor. If placing oneself under the instruction of an inspired guide meant that he was fairly started upon in his journey to the end of purification of spirit and moral rectitude; the oath of allegiance enjoined a much more onerous responsibility on the mentor himself. The guide or the spiritual teacher had to lead the wandering soul of the disciple taking the ba'it, stage by stage, from cleansing of his spiritual impurities, renouncing the love of worldly temptations and desires, wealth and honour, infusing an spirit of moral uprightness and correct ethical behaviour, following the teachings contained in the Qur'an and the Traditions, to the illumination of the pupil's soul. This was, in truth, what the ba'it meant and by which the inspired souls tried to infuse into their disciples, through preaching and personal example, loving care and unalloyed sincerity, an inner vitality of spirit and strength of moral integrity. As the experience shows, the reformers and renovators of faith did succeed in revivifying the true faith and tapping new sources of popular strength in their own times, through this tried and infallible method which just copied the procedure and technique followed by the Prophet of Islam. Innumerable persons have been provided with an opportunity of not only adopting a virtuous life through this method but have also been led to attain even the stage of "Divine Acquaintance" and "Love" by the inspired guides and teachers, of whom the mentor par excellence was Sheikh Muhi ud-

din 'Abdul Qadir Jilani. The history of peoples subscribing to the faith of Islam will bear a witness that no guide with an illuminated soul had been more successful than 'Abdul Qadir in bringing about a revival and resurgence of the true Islamic spirit. At the same time, the method followed by him is still the easiest and most effective way of filling the people with faith and enthusiasm aiming at the reformation of their lives in accordance with the tenets of Islam.

A few divines and mystics had employed the method of ba'it, as the annalists report, before 'Abdul Qadir but none had achieved the success as he did. With his profound knowledge, intellectual gifts, charming and loving personality and spiritual excellence he renovated the system of ba'it and founded a new mystic order known as the Qadiriyyah. 'Abdul Qadir elaborated and systematised the mystic practices, made these more wide-based and developed to make them more harmonious with the tenets of the Shari'ah. Countless people were guided through this path of self-discipline, devotion to God and virtuous living during the life time of 'Abdul Qadir, and after him, his disciples propagated the Qadiriyyah order in almost every Islamic country. The branches of the order were founded in Yaman, Hadhramaut, India, Indonesia and in the countries of Africa where it helped innumerable people to come back to the path of loyalty and obedience to God and His Apostle. 'Abdul Qadir and his disciples were also successful in converting a considerable number of non-Muslims to Islam.

Influence of 'Abdul Qadir:

The moral and spiritual excellence of 'Abdul Qadir, his unflinching devotion to

God, the efficacy of his sermons, the inspiring and regenerating influence exercised by him over the people in his own time and the upright character and moral rectitude of those who have had an opportunity to be instructed by him, mark him as one of the most eminent men of God horn in Islam. He was not only a worker of incessant miracles, as the chroniclers of his time report, but his miracle of miracles lay in his inspiring and impressive teachings which made thousands to turn away from the lust of power and wealth and to inculcate the true spirit of faith through self-correction and purification of the soul. In short, his was an striking example of the innate power of Islam to produce a true spirit of religion, love of God and moral righteousness in an age of crass materialism.

Death of 'Abdul Qadir:

'Abdul Qadir died at the age of 90, in 561 A. H. An account of the death of 'Abdul Qadir has been preserved by his son, Sharaf ud-din 'Isa. Thus he writes:

"During his last illness, 'Abdul Wahab (brother of Sharaf ud-din) requested Sheikh 'Ab ul Qadir to give him some advice which he could follow after his death. The Sheikh replied: 'Inculcate a deep consciousness of the sublimity and grandeur of God. Fear not anyone nor cherish a desire for benefit from anybody save God. Entrust all of your needs to Him and then have confidence in Him. Whatever you need, place it before God with a conviction in the prospect of its fulfilment. Keep yourself constantly occupied with Tawhid, the Unity of God, on which there is a consensus; for, when the heart is filled with awe, love and respect for Him,

nothing can escape it or get out of it.' Thereafter he asked his sons to clear out saying: 'You find me here with yourself but I am really with others. Make room for the angels who are here besides me. You ought to be courteous and pay homage to them. I find the blessings from God descending here for which you should leave ample space.' He saluted from time to time some invisible beings for a day and a night. He would say: 'May the peace and blessings of God be upon you. May God pardon you and me and accept our repentance. Come, in the name of God Almighty, and do not go back'."

Once he said:

"Woe be unto you. I care not a whit for anything, neither for the Angel of Death or any other angel. My God has bestowed blessings on me far in excess of you.

"In the night the Sheikh died he gave a loud cry. He lifted and stretched his hand several times. Thereafter, he addressed his sons, 'Abdur Razzaq and Musa, saying: 'May God have peace and blessings on you. Pay attention to God and grasp His attributes.' Then he said: 'I am just coming to you. Be more kind to me.' He remained unconscious for a while after that. On regaining consciousness he exclaimed: 'There is as much difference between you and me as between the heavens and the earth. Don't think of me like anybody else.' When 'Abdul 'Aziz, one of his sons, asked about his illness, he replied: 'Don't ask me anything. I am immersed in the gnosis of God Almighty.' In reply to another question asked by 'Abdul Aziz his reply was: 'Nobody knows my illness, nor can

anyone diagnose it, neither the jinn, nor men, nor angels. The command of God never supersedes His knowledge; the order changes but not His knowledge; God may override His command by another one, but never what is contained in His knowledge. He obliterates or preserves whatever He desires; He is the final Authority above whom there is none; unlike a human being who has to render an account for his actions, God is Omnipotent. Now I know the secrets of His attributes; they are what they are.'

"One of his sons, 'Abdul Jabbar asked him if he had any pain. The Sheikh replied to him: 'I have pain in my entire body except my heart which is attuned to God.' Then in his last moments he said: 'I seek the help of God Almighty save whom there is no other God; Glorified is He, the Most High; He is Ever-living for death seizeth Him not; Praise be unto Him for He is the Exalted, the Mighty; He exercises His power through the death of his creations. I bear witness that there is no God save Allah and that Muhammad is the Apostle of God.' His son Musa relates that he tried to say 'Ta'azzaza' i. e. 'Exalted and Dominant is He' but he was not able to pronounce it correctly. He tried again and again till he pronounced the word correctly. Thereafter, he said thrice; 'Allah, Allah, Allah,' his voice failed thereafter, the tongue having been fixed up in the palate, his soul departed from the body."

'Abdul Qadir left quite a large number of pious and saintly disciples who continued to disseminate his message and fight this-worldliness and its vices like opulence and luxury, fame and power. ■

Paradigm of Ultimate Piety

-S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi*

The holy Prophet (pbuh) was deputed by the Almighty as His messenger, preacher, guardian for the entire humankind upon earth, and their leader with unparalleled qualities of casting an instant and lasting influence upon anyone, except for those harbouring deep rooted grudge. Just as much as a glance upon his glowing visage or a few of his invaluable utterances would suffice for anyone to become his devotee. Examples of persons embarking upon his (pbuh) annihilation, more out of ignorance than enmity and ending up as devout muslims, simply upon hearing a few words of the prophet (pbuh), abound in recorded history.

Ever since a young age, he was reputed to be a trustworthy custodian of whatever people left to his care. This was much before bestowal prophethood, his counsel was considered reliable in solving problems or in matters of dispute.

During a renovation of the holy Ka'aba, a difference among Qureish arose about the privilege of placing *hajar-i-aswad* (the revered black stone) to its appointed site. A senior citizen among them suggested that whosoever reached the precincts of Ka'aba first the next morning, should be assigned the job. By dint of chance, it was none other than

Mohammad (pbuh) who made it first and hence was accepted as the unanimous choice for the coveted task. He (pbuh) devised a unique methodology; arranged for a sheet of cloth and placing the balck stone upon it, asked one representative of each clan to hold it aloft, simultaneously, and carry it to its assigned spot. He then himself lifted *hajar-i-aswad* to the actual site. The procedure not only provided equal honour to all groups, but earned all round acclaim.

When Muhammad (pbuh) was chosen by God as His Prophet and pronounced the Divine message publicly, he maintained an attitude as if he was not even aware of such an admonition.

Once the Prophet (pbuh) aimed a whipcord towards his mount but it, advertantly, struck the back of one of the associates. Without as much as offering an explanation for the act to be unintended and hence excusable, he (pbuh) exposed his back for the associate to take revenge. The associate, for from going ahead, kissed the back in profound reverence, saying that he had long been looking forward for such rare opportunity.

A lady was once accused of theft and her kin sought exemption from punishment, to which the Holy Prophet (pbuh) replied that the edict of Allah has to be complied with and that he would rule the same even if it were for his own beloved

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daughter, Fatima (rah).

The same daughter, under hardships of domestic chores, with callous on her palms and fingers, requested for one house-maid from among those being provided to Muslims at large. The Prophet (pbuh), his extreme love and affection not with standing, surmised that the bounties in the here after shall far out weigh the comforts in this world and advised for her to pray and recite eulogy to Allah, continuously.

An infant son of the Prophet (pbuh), named Ibrahim, passed away and perchance, a solar eclipse occurred simultaneously, which some persons of infirm belief, attributed to the sorrowful demise. The Prophet (pbuh) declared promptly and unequivocally, that such phenomenon have no relevance and both occurrences are separately willed by God and despite his extreme personal grief, brooked no infringement in Oneness (*tawheed*) of God. The only outward symptom of his deep sorrow were the tears that welled up from his eyes but not a word beyond the pleasure of Allah was uttered: "Your departure, O Ibrahim, grieves me no end."

His daughter Hazrat Zainab (Raz) sent words about entire population turned hostile to him (pbuh) to the extent of subjecting him to hardships. Yet, such was the reputation of his integrity that those who had entrusted their valuables to his custody had not the slightest doubt about their safety. Ultimately when the holy

prophet (pbuh) migrated from Makkah, under trying circumstances, each and every person received his possession intact.

While expounding the message of God and inviting people to the fold of Islam, the holy prophet (pbuh) never used by any harsh words or recourse to coercion. He would explain to them the concept of *tawheed* (unity of God) and elucidate the Divine message amicably that it sank in smoothly, obviating the slightest show of offence from any quarters.

During one of the confrontations with combatant non-believers, he (pbuh) suspended his sword from a tree and relaxed in its shadow, dozing off a bit. An opponent sensed the opportunity and, sword unsheathed in hand, accosted the Prophet (pbuh) as to where was any power on earth to protect him at this stage. Prompt reply from prophet was "Allah". The opponent trembled, his sword slipping off was picked up by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) who repeated back the idiotator's question. There was no go for the latter but to beg for pardon. The Prophet (pbuh) inquired whether he would embrace Islam, to which the reply was in negative but a promise never to harm or oppose the Prophet (pbuh) was made. He was let off without any chastisement or compulsion.

The holy Prophet (pbuh) always treated his associates (*Sahaba*) most affectionately and in a brotherly manner, sharing with them, both turmoils and joy,

seeking advice, without any ostentaion of the superiority which was bestowed upon him, in explicit terms, by the Almighty, who in is Holy Book advises all and sundry to keep their vioce lower than that of the Prophet (pbuh) and guard against any act which might aggrieve or inconvenience him. While the associates complied scrupulously, the prophet himself her infant child being in the throes of death. The Prophet (pbuh) reached the place, took the child in his lap and upon seeing the soul take flight could not control his tears. Questioned by an associate, he replied that the tears represented the tenderness ingrained by the Almighty, who Himself was kind to those who are kind of heart.

The visit to Taif was described by himself (pbuh) as one of the most tortuous incidents of his life. He pleaded with Allah for protection against a most cruel enemy, yet would not deter from the venture as it was His will and for remedies looked up only to Him.

Such was the character of the Prophet (pbuh) (*uswa-i-hasanah*), that given all frailties and strength as integral to human nature, he would on no account demit faith in God and path of contentment: a shining and eternal beacon for all human kind.

May the Almighty shower all his blessings upon the Prophet (pbuh), his household, his associates and the true believers. ■

(English rendering: Mashhoon Ahmad)

Tipu Sultan's Crusade

‡ S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Muslims have played a very significant role in the national struggle for freedom. They have been in the forefront of it. It was, after all, from their hands that the British had wrested power in India. When British Imperialism was spreading its tentacles over the country and devouring one Province after the other, the first man to realise the gravity of the danger was the lion-hearted Tipu Sultan of Mysore. He saw clearly that unless determined efforts were made in time to thwart the nefarious designs of the greedy aliens, the whole of India would ultimately be swallowed up by them. With this resolve, he unsheathed his sword and jumped into a fierce, life-and-death struggle against the British exploiters.

Tipu Sultan made a valiant bid to unite the Indian princes against the British usurpers. He even wrote to Sultan Salim III of Turkey to join hands with him for the expulsion of the British. His whole life was spent in the struggle. He came on the verge of success, the English were about to be swept out of the land, but they managed to achieve through diplomacy what they could not gain by arms. They cleverly obtained the support of some rulers of the South and by the use of other methods of treachery and deceit brought to nought the patriotic ambitions of that gallant son of Mysore. Tipu Sultan was finally killed in the thick of battle on May 4, 1799. He preferred death to a life of servitude under the British. His famous, historic, words spoken a little before he met his death were: "To live for a day like a tiger is far more precious than to live for a hundred years like a jackal". It is reported that when the British Commander, General Horse, received the news of the Sultan's death and went to inspect his corpse, he cried out. In exultation: "From today India is ours".

The history of India does not tell of a braver patriot and a more uncompromising enemy of foreign rule than him. In his life-time he was the most hated man among the English. To give vent to their spite, Englishmen in India even went to the extent of giving to their dogs the name of Tipu. It continued to be like this with them for a long time. ■

(Muslims in India)

The Family in Islam: Structure, Principles, And Rules

- Khurshid Ahmad

We have discussed the salient features of the Islamic outlook on life, the foundations of the family in Islam and its objectives and functions. In this final section an effort shall be made to explain briefly the actual working of the institution of the family in Islam, its structure, principles and rules.

1. Marriage and Divorce

Marriage, as a social institution, is essentially a civil contract. And as a civil contract it rests on the same footing as other contracts. Its validity depends on the capacity of the contracting parties, which according to Islamic law, consists in having majority (bulugh) and discretion. Mutual consent and public declarations of the marriage contract are its essentials. The law does not insist on any particular form in which this contract is entered into or on any specific religious ceremony, although there are different traditional forms prevalent amongst the Muslims in different parts of the world and it is regarded advisable to conform to them. As far as the Shari'ah is concerned, the validity of the marriage depends on proposition on one side (Ijab) and acceptance (Qubul) on the other. This offer and the acceptance can take place directly between the parties, or through an agent (Wakil). In a traditional Muslim marriage the bride's consent is

procured through her representative. Normally there are at least two witnesses to this matrimonial contract, entered into at a family ceremony. There is also a dower (mahr) which husband pays to the wife and which is for her sole and exclusive use and benefit. The last (i.e. dower) is an important part of the scheme, but it is not essential for the legality of the marriage that its amount must be pre-fixed. As such its absence would not render the marriage invalid although husband is expected to pay it according to custom.

Being a civil contract, the parties retain their personal rights as against each other as well as against others. The power to dissolve the marriage- tie rests with both parties and specified forms have been laid down for that. Marriage in Islam is not a temporary union and is meant for the entire span of life. Dissolution of marriage is, however, permitted if it fails to serve its objectives and has irretrievably broken down.

Family arbitration is resorted to before final dissolution. This has been laid down in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. If this fails, then steps are taken for dissolution of the marriage. There are three forms of dissolution: divorce by the husband (talaq), separation sought by the wife (Khula) and dissolution of the

marriage by a court of an arbiter. Detailed laws and by-laws have been laid down by the Qur'an and the Sunnah in respect of these and have been modified in the fiqh literature to regulate different aspects of marriage and family life.

Muslim marriage is usually a contracted marriage. Although marriage is primarily a relationship between the spouses, it, in fact, builds relationships between two families, and even more. That is why other members of the family, particularly the parents of the spouses, play a much more positive role in it. Consent of the bride and the bridegroom is essential, in fact, indispensable. Despite the fact that free mixing of the sexes is forbidden, it is permitted for the intending partners in marriage to see each other before the marriage, what however stands out prominently is that marriage in Muslim society is not merely a private arrangement between the husband and the wife. That is why the whole family contributes effectively towards its arrangement, materialisation and fulfilment.

2. The Way Marriage is Contracted

No specific ceremony is prescribed for marriage. In principle it has been stressed that marriage should take place publicly. Other members of society should know of this development, preferably in a way that has been adopted by the society as its usage (urf). Normally the Nikah (contract

of marriage) takes place in a social gathering where members of both families and other friends and relatives gather. Nikah can be performed by any person. Usually in Muslim society there are persons known as Qazi who discharge this responsibility. In Nikah-sermon they recite from the Qur'an and the Sunnah and invite the spouses to a life of God-consciousness, purity, mutual love and loyalty and social responsibility. Then the marriage is contracted wherein Ijab (proposal) and Qubul (acceptance) are made before the witnesses. After the Nikah the bride moves to the bridegroom's house and both begin till a new chapter of their life. After the consummation of marriage, the bridegroom holds a feast for the relatives and friends. The real purpose of these gatherings and feasts is to make the event a social function and to let the society know of it and participate in it. The Prophet has recommended the people to hold these celebrations with simplicity and to share each others joy. He said:

"The best wedding is that upon which the least trouble and expense is bestowed." And that: "The worst feasts are those marriage-feasts to which the rich are invited and the poor left out. And he who refuses to accept an invitation to a marriage feast verily disobeys God and His Prophet."

3. The Structure of a Muslim Family

The structure of the family is three fold. The first and the closest consists

of the husband, the wife, their children, their parents who live with them, and servants, if any. The next group, the central fold of the family, consists of a number of close relatives, whether they live together or not, who have special claims upon each other, who move freely inside the family, with whom marriage is forbidden and between whom there is no hijab (veil). These are the people who also have prior claim on the wealth and resources of a person, in life as well as in death (as beneficiaries, known as in matter of inheritance 'sharers' the first line of inheritors). The crucial thing in this respect is that they are regarded as Mahram, those with whom marriage is prohibited. This constitutes the real core of the family, sharing each other's joys, sorrows, hopes and fears. This relationship emerges from consanguinity, affinity and foster-nursing. Relations based on consanguinity include (a) father, mother, grandfather, grandmother and other direct descendants: (b) direct descendants that is, sons, daughters, grandsons, granddaughters etc; (c) relations of second degree (such as brothers, sisters and their descendants) and (d) father's or mother's sisters (not their daughter or the descendants).

Those based on affinity include (i) mother-in-law, father-in-law, grandmother-in-law, grandfather-in-law; (ii) wife's daughters, husband's sons or their grand or great grand daughters or

sons respectively; (iii) son's wife, son's son's wife, daughter's husband, and (iv) step-mothers (step-father). With some exceptions as the same relations are forbidden through foster-nursing. (al-rida'ah).

This is the real extended family and the nucleus of relationships. All those relations who are outside this fold constitute the outer periphery of the family. They too, have their own rights and obligations, as is borne out by the fact that a number of them have been included in the second and third lines of inheritors. The general structure of the family is presented in a diagram on the next page.

4. The Position of Man and Woman

In the internal organisation of the family, a man is in the position of the head and the over-all supervisor. In fact, it is the eldest member of the extended family who occupies the position of the head. A man's major responsibilities lie outside the family. He is to support the family economically and materially, he has to look after the relations of the family with the rest of the society, economy and policy and he has to take care of the demands of internal discipline within the family. A woman's major responsibilities lie within the family. Here too, the eldest woman is regarded as the centre of the family organisation but within each circle and fold the relative central position is enjoyed by that woman who constitutes

its core. A spectrum of mutual rights and responsibilities has been evolved in such a way that balanced relationships are developed between all. The Qur'an says:

"Men are in charge of women, because Allah has made the one of them to excel the other, and because they spend of their wealth (for supporting them and the family)".

"And they (women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them, according to what is equitable, and men have a degree (of advantage) over them, Allah is Mighty, Wise."

This is in the interests of proper organisation and management within the family. There is equality in rights. There is demarcation of responsibilities.

Man has been made head of the family so that order and discipline are maintained. Both are enjoined to discharge their respective functions with justice and equity.

The question of equality or inequality of the sexes has often been raised. This issue is, however, the product of a certain cultural and legal context, and is really not relevant to the Islamic context where the equality of men and women as human beings has been divinely affirmed and legally safeguarded. There is differentiation of roles and responsibilities and certain arrangements have been made to meet the demands of organisations and

institutions not on the basis of superiority or inferiority of the sexes but in the lights of the basic facts of life and the needs of the society. Every role is important in its own right and each person is to be judged according to the responsibilities assigned to him or her. Their roles are not competitive but complementary.

5. The Family and Society

The Family is a part of the Islamic social order. The society that Islam wants to establish is not a sensate, sex-ridden society. It establishes an ideological society, with a high level of moral awareness, strong commitment to the ideal of Khilafah and purposive orientation of all human behaviour. Its discipline is not an imposed discipline, but one that flows out of every individual's commitment to the values and ideals of Islam. In this society a high degree of social responsibility prevails. The entire system operates in a way that strengthens and fortifies the family and not otherwise.

The Family is protected by prohibiting sex outside marriage. Fornication (Zina) as such has been forbidden and made a punishable offence. All roads that lead to this evil are blocked and whatever paves the way towards it is checked and eliminated. That is why promiscuity in any form is forbidden. The Islamic system of Hijab is a wide-ranging system which protects the family and

closes those avenues that lead towards illicit sex or even indiscriminate contact between the sexes in society. It prescribes essential rules and regulations about dress, modes of behaviour, rules of contract between the sexes and a number of other questions that are central or ancillary to it.

The finer qualities of life have been given every encouragement, but they have been torn from their carnal or sensate context and oriented towards what is noble and good in human life. A number of preventive measures have been taken to protect the family from influences that may corrupt or weaken its moral and social climate. Some of these measures are in the nature of moral persuasions, others take the form of social rules and sanctions; and some take the form of law whose violation entails exemplary punishments. All these protect the institution of the family and enable it to play its positive role in the making of Islamic society.

Marriage and the family in Islam should be studied and understood in the context of the scheme of life Islam wants to establish. They cannot be understood in isolation. The concept of man and the family which Islam gives is in conflict with the concept of man and the family that is prevalent in the West today. We do not want to be apologetic at all. We refuse to accept the allegedly value-neutral approach that willy-nilly fashions the life and perspective of man in the

secular culture of the West today. We think the disintegration of the family in the West is, in parts, a result of confusion about the place and the role of the family in society and about the purpose of life itself. If the objectives and values of life are not set right, further disintegration of this and other institutions cannot be prevented. The tragedy of our times is that changes are being imposed upon man under the stress of technological and other external developments and the entire process of change is becoming somewhat non-discretionary and involuntary. In an age in which freedom is worshipped like a god, man is being deprived of the important freedom- the freedom to choose his ideals, values, institutions and patterns of life. One of the greatest tasks that lie ahead is restoration and rehabilitation of this freedom of choice and its judicious and informed use to set the house of humanity in order. Non- human and amoral forces be they of history or technology must not be allowed to decide for man. Man should decide for himself as vicegerent of God on the earth. Otherwise, whatever be our achievements in the fields of science and technology, we shall drift towards a new form of slavery, and man's forced abdication of his real role in the world. This we all must resist, at least all those people who believe in God and the existence of a moral order in the Universe.■

The Quran Proves Resemblance Between Mankind and Animate Beings

- Ahmad Wahaj al-siddiqui

God the Unique said: There is not an animal on the earth nor a bird that flies on its two wings. They are communities like you. Nothing We have Omitted in the Book Then unto their Lord they will be gathered. Qur'an - Al-Anaam /38.

The Scholars held that all the animate beings that Allah hath created other than mankind are covered by Arabic two words Dabbah and Bird. Dabbah includes all the animals, and Bird include all flying mammals 'Are communities like you'. That is to say that animals are Ummah, Bird are Ummah, mankind and Jinn all are Ummah i.e. communities.

Abdullah bin Mughaffal reported the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Had the dogs not been community, I would have ordered to kill all the dogs. You kill among them every black wild dog. (Abu Dawood, Al-Tirmizi, Al-Nasai). This order of the Prophet could not be appreciated for a long time. But now we know that in the developed countries the women use them for sexual satisfaction. The Christian Priests have held, that if proved kill the dog and kill that woman.

Animals and Birds resemble in various aspects with humankind:

- a) Allah said: Whatever is in the heaven and whatever, is in the earth Glorifies Allah and He is the Almighty, the All Wise. (Quran-59/1)
- b) And We subdued the hills and the birds to hymn our praises along with David.
- c) These are creations of Allah as we are. The birds of a feather flock together i.e. live like a family as pigeons etc. They have a system of communication between them.
- d) They search for their providence like human beings.
- e) The male and female live together make their nests and bring up their young ones.

Nothing we have omitted in the Book. This refers to the Preserved Tablet which contains every minute detail of everything in creation in the world. 'Not a leaf falls but He knows it, there is not a grain in the darkness of the earth, not anything fresh or dry but it is noted in the Book' i.e. the Preserved Tablet. (Quran-6/59)

The Qur'an specified 'Bee', 'Ant' and a bird Hudhud (woodpecker).

And your Lord inspired the Bee, take thy Habitations in the hills, and in

the trees and in that which thy erect. (Qur'an-16/68) 'The Lord inspired the Bee'. This inspiration is coded in the DNA of cell nuclei of the Bee, which is the very basis of life for all the animate beings. The Geneticists are unanimous that life on this planet had come into existence in its primeval origin by Allah the Great Creator and did never have any change since then. The Cell Theory has finally proved it.

Bee is an insect that lives almost in every part of the world. There are about 20,000 species of bees. Only the kind known as honey bee produce honey and wax in large amount which is used by people. Flowers provide for bees tiny grains of pollen and sweet liquid called nectar from blossoms they visit.

The bees that live together and work in large colonies like men in their colonies. In each colony, they may have as many as 80,000 members. Honeybees have more developed societies.

A typical honey bee colony is made up of queen and thousands of workers. The queen is the female honey bee that lays eggs. The workers are unmated female offspring of the queen. The drones are the male offspring. During mating the drones placed semen inside the queen's body. The semen contains sperm that causes laying eggs. After mating the queen lays eggs for the

rest of her life. The queen may live as long as five years produce up to a million eggs during her lifetime.

Honeybees live in hives. Their hive is a storage in a honey comb. The honey comb is mass of six sided compartments called cells made exactly in a geometrical precision. Worker bees build the honey comb of wax produced by their bodies. The bees in' each hive have their special odor. That makes them to detect bees from other hives. The guard bees attach the stranger bees, which are from the other colonies. Thus they behave like human beings living together in their own social group.

Domesticated Honeybees

What is special about *Apis mellifera*, better known as honeybees, is that they store honey and make wax. Beekeepers raise them in hives for honey production and pollination.

The workers have stingers, but only use them to defend themselves and their colony, and will die after stinging.

There are several types of honeybees. Beekeepers choose the type they want to raise according to specific traits that suit their needs. Some bees are better honey producers, while others are more resistant to disease and hardier for winter survival. Italian honeybees are the first domesticated honeybees brought to North America.

They are gentle and widespread, in part because they are so adaptable to different climates. Their bodies have yellow-brown and dark brown bands.

These honeybees reproduce quickly and keep a large colony over the winter. The downside to this is that they need more honey and pollen stored to survive the winter. Thus we see the bees have a social and collective life like men as stated in the Qur'an in the verse under citation.

ANTS that lives in organized communities. Ants are known as social insects. A community of social insects is called colony. Ant colony may have hundreds, thousands, or millions of members. Each colony has one or several queens. Their chief job is to lay eggs. Most members of an ant colony are workers: The workers build the nest or search for food, they take care for the young, fight the enemies. Males only job is to mate with young queens. After mating the males soon die. As the men are divided into different nations, the ants are also divided into various kinds.

Army ants live by hunting other insects. A kind is own as slave makers, which raid the nests of other ants and steal the young, which they raise as slaves. Harvester ants gather seeds and store them inside their nest or anthill. Certain kinds of dairying ants keep insects that give off sweet liquid when ants milk them.

There are 10,000 kinds of ants, the largest are more the than 2.5 centimeters and the smallest are 0.1 cm. In spite of their small size the ants are amazingly strong. Most ants can lift objects that are ten times heavier than they are. Some can lift objects that are fifty times heavier than their bodies.

The scientists have found that the ants have very amazing communication system. The Qur'an confirmed it seventh century: 'An ant called its way to other ants: O Ants! Enter your dwellings lest Solomon and his armies crush you unperceiving. (Qur'an -27/18)

BIRD is an animal with two feathers. They have great flying ability. The fastest, bird can reach speeds of well over 160 kilometers per hour. The two feathers of the birds played a roll in development of aeroplane. Inventors built airplanes only after only after they patterned the wings exactly. after the shape of a birds wings.

There are about 9,300 species of birds. Birds live in all the parts of the world. All the birds hatch from eggs. They have one mate at a time with whom they raise one or two sets of babies a year. Some birds keep the same mate for life. Most baby birds remain in the nest for several weeks after 'hatching their parents feed them.

The migration of the birds is most fascinating and least understood events in nature. Numerous species fly

tremendous distances. The European Warbler, the white throat is one of many birds that breed in Europe and spend the winter in Africa or Asia. The black poll Warbler the North American no bigger than sparrow, flies non-stop about 4,000 Kilometers to its winter home in South America. Arctic terns are the champions of long distance migration. They fly about 18,000 kilometers from their breeding ground in the Arctic to their winter home in the Antarctic. The birds return to the Arctic few months later. They thus travel about 36,000 kilometers in less than a year. Snow Geese migrate in enormous flocks. Some snow geese make their summer homes as far as the Arctic coast of North America and their winter home as far south as Mexico.

The geneticists have held that these birds get direction from their DNA, which sits in the nuclei that spur growth, digestion, heart beat thinking and feeling. It is following its built in plan, which it has carried down the corridors of time. It is the direction of their DNA that makes them to take right course while flying during the day or night in reaching to their destination. Their DNA have given them skill. These DNA: have given them skill of communication and they communicate with each other and call for a joint action flying in swarms. Throwing further light on the social life of the birds it has been found that relationship between male and female

is known as pair bond. A male and female form a pair bond after series of courtship displays by the male and favorable response from the female. Each species have its own display and responses. The other animal too have social life. The Communication with birds was taught to Solomon, See Qur'an-27/16).

How precisely the Qur'an told that all these creatures, animals, and the birds: They are creatures like unto you when nothing was known about them in seventh century. This is miracle of the Qur'an and proves that it is -Book of Allah (God the Unique) and not written by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as brayed by the Jewish and Christian scholars.■

Tipu died a historic Death Fighting the British: Prez

President Ram Nath Kovind landed in the middle of the ongoing controversy over Tipu Sultan's legacy by praising the 18th century ruler in his address to the joint session of the legislature here on Wednesday.

Speaking at the event on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of the Vidhana Soudha, Kovind said: "Tipu Sultan died a heroic death fighting the British. He was also a pioneer in the development and use of Mysore rockets in warfare. This technology was later adopted by the Europeans."

(Hindustan Times, 26-10-2017)

Umar bin 'Abdul-Aziz: The Illustrious Descendant of Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab

- Mohammad Dawood Sofi

'Umar bin 'Abdal-Aztz or 'Umar-II, the illustrious "Umawi caliph entitled as the fifth Pious Caliph (Khalif I Rashid) of Islam, (r.717-720 C. E), was the son of a grand-daughter of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, the second Pious Caliph. 'Umar-II not only inherited the blood but also the qualities of his great illustrious maternal ancestor. His father 'Abd al-'Aziz, brother of 'Abd al-Malik, was the governor of Egypt. Though belonging to the royal and state apparatus, 'Umar-II, by his character and nature, was an embodiment of humble qualities. 'Unaffected piety, a keen sense of justice, unswerving uprightness, moderation, and an almost primitive simplicity of life formed the chief features in his 'character', as depicted by Syed Amir Ali in his, A Short History of the Saracens.

Historical records reveal that 'Umar-II willingly proclaimed to eschew his succession as a Caliph on his nomination by Caliph Sulayman as his successor. He regarded this way of his selection a dictatorial one and thus, left the people with their choice of choosing anyone for this significant position. However, owing to his stately persona 'and familiarity as a pious person, the

people unanimously agreed upon his succession to Caliph Sulayman. Thus, people of different denominations accepted and put their trust in him to enjoy a period of a just, pious and able leader of the community.

As a Caliph, 'Umar II scrupulously with utmost fear of Almighty Allah carried the state affairs and never resorted to any royal enjoyments. To highlight his unique role as a Caliph among, the Umayyad rulers, it is tempting here to quote:

One day his wife, Fatimah, daughter of 'Abd al- Malik found him weeping after the prayers. She asked him if anything has happened that caused him grief and pain. In reply to this he told her, "O, Fatimah, I have been made the ruler over the Muslims and the strangers, and I was thinking of the poor that are starving, and the sick that are destitute, and the naked that are in distress, and the oppressed at are stricken, and the stranger that is in prison, and the venerable elder, and him that has large family and small means, and the like of them in the countries of the earth and the distant provinces, and I felt that my lord would ask an account of them at my hands on the day of

resurrection, and I feared that no defence would avail me, and I wept.”

Following the Glorious Prophet and his Rightly- Guided Companions ‘Umar-II exhibited a genuine statesmanship befitting a follower of the Prophet and a descendant of the famous Caliph ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab. Unlike some of his predecessors, he never used and considered the state treasury as his own but always utilised the property for public affairs. The main reason behind recognizing as the Fifth Rightly Guided Caliph of Islam lies in his extreme piety, honesty and deliverance of justice while sustaining both as a common man as well as the ruler of a global Ummah (nation). Even the hardcore and extreme faction of Muslims like the Khawarij (Kharijites) amazingly regarded and recognized ‘Umar bin’ Abd al-’ Aziz as a valid Khalifah unlike the other umawi rulers. They withheld any sort of objection and disturbing phenomena during his tenure.

His election to the office reminded of the first era of Muslim governance. By exempting the reverts from paying Kharaj, he materialised the practicability of the concept of equality in Islam. His God-oriented policies influenced a large number of people who embraced Islam to witness the divine light. However, having informed by the governor of Egypt regarding the decline

in the tax collection, the Caliph replied, “Allah sent the prophet as a missionary, not as a tax-gatherer.” ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al- ‘Aziz took another unique step by providing the Mawalis,(the non-Arab Muslims) pension for military services, which was earlier an exclusive privilege of the Arabs.

Similarly, his compassionate attitude towards the Dhimmis (whose blood and property he once again proclaimed to be sacred) offered a recollection of the era of Rightly-Guided Caliphs. The Jizyah collectors were pressurised to avoid any means of harsh treatment with the Dhimmis. His sociable policies towards the other communities and denominations of the society materialised the concepts of a pluralistic, welfare based and harmonious society.

With his noble foresightedness and able leadership capacity, ‘Umar bi ‘Abd al-’Aziz made the recruitments and appointments of the government officials on the basis of the required merit and qualifications as set by the religious law. He abandoned any ways or sub- ways of favouritism or partial approach in this regard. Thus, it is not strange to locate a number of his able officials like his governors, Samah bin Malik, Isma’il bin ‘Abd Allah and others belonging to diverse tribes and denominations within the society.

Various stern decisions like the imprisonment of Yazid bin Muhallab, a person involved in misappropriation of the spoils of war, reflect his austere approach towards the dishonest, unjust and irreligious lot. 'Umar-II ordered his officials for the culmination of every unjust and irreligious policy of the state brought into action by his 'Umawi-predecessors. He is reported to have proclaimed to the officials:

You must know that the maintenance of religion is due to the practice of justice and benevolence; do not think lightly of any sin; do not try to depopulate what is populous; do not try to exact from the subjects anything beyond their capacity; take from them what they can give; do everything to improve population and prosperity; govern mildly and without harshness; do not accept presents on festive occasions; do not take, the price of sacred books; impose no tax on travellers or on marriages or on milk of camels; and do not insist on the poll tax from anyone who has become a convert to Islam.

The policies adopted by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz reflect his bent towards consolidation of the empire for bringing peace and prosperity rather than widening it by geographical means. Thus, it is easy to understand that the Muslim cavalry from Constantinople had

to move back and also the expeditions were stopped.

The God-centred and society-oriented policies of Caliph 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz, however, could not allegedly prove fruitful for the licentious members of the 'Umayyad House'. They felt a dire need of deposing him in order to secure their worldly interests. and for this reason got him poisoned, eventually leading to his death in 101 A.H.1720 C.E.

Extreme piety, austere sense of justice, unswerving uprightness, moderation, austerity and simplicity, were the noble qualities that reflected in the persona of Caliph 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz. He served as an ideal of the Prophetic way of life and followed His glorious Companions while offering his services in the state apparatus. Such has been his stately influence on the people not only of his age but of the posterity as well that even the Orientalists like William Muir eulogizes him with the words, as "It is relief amidst bloodshed, intrigue and treachery to find a Caliph devoted to what he believed at the highest good both for himself and his people." In short, the reign of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz, not less than a miracle, reflects the most fertile and attractive period of Islamic governance after the Pious Caliphate in the history of Islam. ■

Root Out Illiteracy

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

Education is an essential tool for understanding realities of life. It is backbone of the nation. No nation can progress sans this asset. All religions emphasize on acquiring knowledge. We find that in spite of its importance scant attention is paid in this direction.

Time has come when we should gird up the loins and come forward to work for spreading education and motivate others to achieve this precious essence without which our life is bleak and meaningless. The illiteracy is the greatest hindrance in our progress and prosperity. Needless to add that human beings are considered superior to other creatures of Allah by virtue of knowledge.

Emphasizing the importance and significance of education vice-President Mohammad Hamid Ansari has rightly said that to combat the ghost of communalism, people of the country would have to equip themselves with the weapon of education. If all get educated, surely there will be communal harmony and peace in the nation. Education also plays a vital role in the development of the country. We will have to educate every person if we want to become a developed country. He further added that "The southern states of the country focus on education and have given a number of intellectuals and scientists but the northern India still lags behind in education. We need to focus on education in the coming times and should take steps to improve the situation".

Here, it is significant to note that

Islam has made education mandatory for its adherents. Even the first revelation was sent to prophet Muhammad (PBUH) by Almighty God indicates towards knowledge.

The holy Quran says:

"Read in the name of thy Lord Who created man, out of a leech like clot: Read and thy Lord is most bountiful. He who taught the use of the pen, taught man that which he knew not". (S. 96A. 1-5)

The holy Qur'an further says: "God brought you out of the wombs of your mother knowing nothing, but gave you the faculties of hearing, sight and perception Would you not thank Him? (16:78) Is the man devoid of knowledge the equal of the man in the know? Do you not think? (39:9) O my Lord! Advance me in knowledge." (2:114)

If we think why God commenced the first (PBUH) revelation with reading, we find that the age in which prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was sent, was the age of ignorance. It is obvious that without knowledge ignorance and stagnation can not be dispelled. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has laid great emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge. The Prophet said: "Seeking knowledge is incumbent upon every Muslim man and woman".

"Seek knowledge from cradle to the grave". "Acquire knowledge even if one has to go to China." Knowledge, says a Tradition of the sacred Prophet, is the lost

property of a Muslim and he is the rightful owner. The Prophet further said: "Acquire knowledge, because he who acquires it in the way of the Lord performs an act of piety; who speaks of it, praises the Lord, who seeks it adores God, who dispenses instruction in it, bestows alms, and who imparts it to its fitting objects, performs an act of devotion to God, Knowledge enables its possessor to distinguish what is forbidden from what its not, it lights the way to Heaven; it is our friend in the desert, our society in solitude, our companion when bereft of friends; it guides us to happiness; it sustains us in misery; it is our ornament in the company of friends; it serves as an armour against enemies. With knowledge the servant of God rises to the height of goodness and to a noble position, associates with sovereigns in this world and attains to the perfection of happiness in the next".

Noted Scholar K.K. Usman has precisely said: "Prophet Muhammad for the first time in the history of Arabian peninsula made knowledge an essential tool for understanding realities of life. Under his inspiring guidance, learning acquired respect and reverence which remained the hallmark of Islamic civilization for centuries afterwards. The importance which the Quran attaches to knowledge can further be explained by the frequency with which it has used the 'word ilm (knowledge). According to one estimate it has been used 750 times in the Quran. In the mind of a Muslim, knowledge should include everything which reason and Revelation can unearth for the betterment of mankind". (This is Islam, p, 135)

It should be kept in mind that Islam always emphasizes on acquiring profitable and advantageous knowledge. Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) supplication is as follows: "O Allah, I seek your refuge from a knowledge that does not benefit, from a heart that does not fear, from a soul that is not satisfied, and from a prayer that is not granted."

Swami Vivekananda says: "What is education? Is it book-learning? No. Is it diverse knowledge? Not even that. The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful is called education. Now consider, is that education as a result of which the will, being continuously choked by force through generations, is now well-nigh killed out; is that education under whose sway even the old ideas, Let alone the new ones, are that education which is slowly making man a machine? (Teachings of Swami Vivekananda, P,50)

Mahatma Gandhi held same views regarding education. He said: "Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live for ever".

It should be a bounden duty of a parent to impart education to children from their early childhood. In fact, it is such a gem that creates awareness, and helps in development of mental faculties. It provides ability to distinguish between good and evil. To have a refined, well-mannered and suave child who may later become an asset to the family and society in general is really nice. Parents must, therefore, assert on proper and good education of their progeny. ■

The Taj Mahal is A Victim of Prejudice

- Karan Thapar

It could either be rank ignorance or plain prejudice and I have a hunch I know which it is. The UP government's attitude to the Taj Mahal is more than negligence. It suggests deliberate disregard. And the chief minister's belated reassurance – from Kerala of all places – does little to dispel my doubts.

The Taj is unquestionably India's biggest tourist attraction. It's renowned as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Tagore called it "a tear drop on the cheek of time". UNESCO considers it a World Heritage Site. Many travel to India just to see it. And a picture by the Taj is what everyone wants.

Yet, when the Yogi Adityanath government presented its first budget it didn't allocate any cultural heritage funds for the Taj. In June the chief minister said: "The Ramayana and The Geeta represent Indian culture not the Taj Mahal". He also claimed gifting replicas of the Taj to foreign visitors is "not a part of Indian culture". Finally, a recently released 32-page glossy brochure, called 'Uttar Pradesh Paryatan-Apaar Sambhavanaayein' translated as 'Uttar Pradesh Tourism – Unlimited Possibilities', which is intended to promote tourism, ignores the Taj Mahal altogether. Leave aside a photograph, there's isn't even a reference to this iconic monument. Yet a whole page has been devoted to the Gorakhnath Temple, of which the Yogi is the head priest.

If this attitude is inexplicable, what makes it worse is the background against which it's happening. Instead of increasing, the number of tourists visiting the Taj have been steadily falling since 2012. Figures quoted by the Washington Post and given by the ministry of tourism show that by 2015 there was a 35% drop of foreign tourists. Even if you add domestic tourism, the figure for total tourists dropped by 113,400 from 2012 to 2015. Worse, the tourism ministry doesn't have a clear explanation. It blames the economy, lack of infrastructure and general security concerns.

On the other hand, promotion of the Taj is one certain way of reversing this trend. Research shows that international tourists are most easily attracted by things they want to see. Just as the Tower of London and Buckingham Palace draw visitors to Britain or the Eiffel Tower and Versailles to France or the Statue of Liberty and the Empire State Building to America, the Taj is the magnet that brings them to India.

Alas, the Yogi Adityanath government either doesn't accept this or, possibly, doesn't like it. As Rajiv Saxena, the secretary of the Tourism Guild of Agra, says: "The current state government is not supporting Agra as a tourist destination because of its Mughal monuments. Money for tourism development has not been announced. Their focus is on religious tourism."

This brings me to the concern I started with. Are the Yogi and his government ignoring the Taj because it was built by the Mughal Empire? Is it viewed as a symbol of Muslim conquest? Is their treatment of the Taj revenge for 1,200 years of invasion, conquest and rule?

When questioned the Yogi glibly states "the Taj is an integral part of our heritage". Of course it is and even he can't deny that.

Yet when asked about the allocation of funds all he will say is money for its "conservation has been allocated." So the Yogi won't let the Taj fall into rack and ruin. But what about promoting it? What about using its magic to attract visitors? What about boasting the Taj is Indian and we're proud of it? ■

(Hindustan Times, 08-10-2017)

INDONESIA TO BUILD INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY IN 2018

UNA - "Indonesian President Joko Widodo wishes to make Indonesia's Islam a global significant force," Mastuki, head of the information center of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, said.

Mastuki made the remarks when commenting on the government's plan to start building the campus of Universitas Islam International Indonesia (UIII), or Indonesia International Islamic University in Depok, south of Jakarta next year.

Indonesia, which is home to the largest Muslim population on earth, is widely recognized as a land of moderate Islam. The archipelago takes pride in religious harmony.

President Joko Widodo (Jokowi) made public that plan in July of last year during the opening ceremony of the 26th Qur'an Recital Competition (MTQ) in Jakarta. But he did not mention an exact time frame for the plan to materialize.

The President: "The time has now come for Indonesia to become a source for the Muslim world's thinking, a source for the Muslim world to learn." He mentioned Indonesia as becoming like a patented drug recipe, which is a moderate Islam.

Meanwhile, Vice President Jusuf Kalla said that UIII would open post-graduate programs only and that the Ministry of Religious Affairs would coordinate the operation of its campus, *Global Indonesian Voices* (GIVnews) reported.

A number of experts from other countries like Egypt, the UK, the United States, Canada and Australia will be involved to design curriculums for the university. Students are expected from those countries and others, according to Kalla as reported by Tempo.co.

"There will be lots of research and development of ideas, and their contents will be 'international," the Vice President told the reporters. The university will have a grandiose, large campus in an area where student dormitories and a housing complex for lecturers will also be located. As much as 75 percent of students are expected to be foreigners.

UIII is meant to prepare Islamic thinkers and intellectuals, Jusuf Kalla said as reported by the Cabinet Secretary website.

The vice president added that the government would allocate a relatively small amount of funds for building the new university. Funding, including grants, had been planned to come mainly from abroad. A senior official at the ministry of religious affairs had said that many Western countries had expressed interest in the would-be university. ■

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