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Religion as Guardian of Life

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Time is a proportionate and balanced mixture of stability and change, stagnation and movement. If it loses either of these characteristics, it will lose its relevance. Islam as a religion accepts this fact and is ready to make necessary accommodations, but it holds the position that as religion it has to guide life, not simply follow it. Religion, as Islam pleads, does not have to passively approve all changes. It is not lifeless like the needle of a barometer which moves up or down mechanically to measure the pressure of the atmosphere, or a weather-cock fixed on the top of a building which moves to show the direction of the wind. The function of religion is not simply to acknowledge and show the changes which are occurring at a time. Its obligation is to check whether a change is healthy or unhealthy, constructive or destructive. It has to evaluate the effect of a change on mankind at large and on its promoters in particular. It judges all pros and cons of a change before it approves it. It, therefore, will discourage a change if it is destructive. It may even oppose the latter kind.

At this point we can see a clear difference between religion and morality. Religion feels obliged to oppose wrong inclinations, whereas morality simply identifies them. ■

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Wisdom of Qur'an

"If We wished, We could take away that which We have revealed unto you; then you would find none there over to plead against Us."

(Surah al-Isra:86)

Commentary:

Ibn Mas'ud explained that a time will come when a wind will blow from the Syrian region after which nothing will be left of the Qur'an neither in print nor in the breasts. In support of his words, Ibn Mas'ud recite this verse (Ibn Jarir). This report is trustworthy (Qurtubi). The report is in Sa'id b. Mansur, Ibn Abi Shaybah, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Tabrani, Hakim, (who declared it sahih), Ibn Marduwayh and in Bayhaqi's "Sho'ab al-Iman". (Dhahabi agreed with Hamikm in ruling it as trustworthy: S. Ibrahim). The report has also come through Mu'adh b. Jabal, through Abu Hurayrah in Ibn Abi Hatim and Hakim who rated it Sahih, and through Hudhayfah b. al-Yaman in Abu al-Sheikh, Daylami and Ibn arduwayh (Shawkani). The report of Hudhaifah says, "The Qur'an will get worn as the print on a cloth (gets worn) until a time will come when people will not know what is fasting, or Prayers, or Hajj, or charity. In that phase a time will come to pass on Allah's Book a night after which not a verse will remain on the earth. Thereafter, very old men and women will say, 'We found our forefathers saying these word: "there is no god save Allah." They wouldn't know what is Prayer, or fast, or Hajj, or charity." At that Sila (b. Zufar) asked, "Of what benefit will the words 'there is no god save Allah' be to them?" Hudhayfah ignored the question. He asked him three times. Hudhayfah finally turned to him and said, "O Sila. It will rescue them from the Fire." He said it three times. ■

"Except for a mercy from your Lord. Surely, His bounty has ever been great upon you. Say, 'If the men and Jinn gathered together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they will never produce its like, even if some of them were helpers unto others."

(Surah al-Isra 87)

Commentary:

It is said that a group of Jews visited the Prophet (saws) and accused him that what he had brought of the Qur'an was not revelation.

They demanded that he should bring a true one, or they will bring something equivalent of what he had brought. In response Allah (swt) revealed this verse (Ibn Jarir). ■

Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

"Abu Hurairah narrates that "the Apostle of God, once, happened to pass by a heap of corn (which belonged to a trader). The Apostle of God thrust his hand into it and his fingers felt damp. On being asked, the trader replied that rain had fallen upon it. (So, he had placed the wet corn that was on the top under the dry corn). The Apostle of God, thereupon, observed: 'Why did you not let the wet corn remain on the top so that the buyers could see it? (Listen), he who deceives is not of us."

-Muslim

Commentary:

Another version of the same incident quoted by Tabrani in Mo'jam-iKabeer-wa-sagheer, on the authority of Hazrat Ibn-e-Masud, has it the, t the Apostle of God, lastly, said: "The sequel of such deceitfulness is hell. ■

"Relates Wasila bin el-Asqa that "I myself heard the Apostle of God say; he was saying: 'Whoever sold a defective thing to anyone without disclosing the defect to the buyer would be caught, permanently, in the wrath of God.' (Or was it) (that) 'he would always be cursed by the Angels?"

-Ibn Majah

Commentary:

Sometimes, a narrator is not sure of the exact words spoken by the holy Prophet, and by way of caution, he indicates his lack of certainty while relating the event. In the above Tradition, too, Hazrat Wasila bin el-Arqam was caught in two minds and could not decide whether the Prophet had said about the deceitful seller that "he would be caught, permanently, in the wrath of God," or that "he would always be cursed by the Angels." ■

TERRORISM - ISLAM - MADRASA

There is a general feeling among scholars that a section of a 'mainstream' media, ever on the prowl for stories of terrorism linking it with Islam and Madrasas as a stick to beat Muslims with, has sensationalised the issue.

We are not aware of the condition prevailing in religious institutions of other countries but certainly in India these madrasas are the cradles where main emphasis is laid on character building and growing up as God fearing citizen. There are thousands of madrasas which do not have even roof over their heads so imparting any closed door training is just a myth.

Madrasas in India have had a history of staunch nationalism. They have lived in an atmosphere of liberalism and tolerance - the natural result of uninterrupted secular democracy and adherence to constitutionalism. We have in India particularly in cow-belt two powerful but rival Islamic schools: The Deobandis and the Barelvis. Both have their own networks of madrasas but their conflicting ideologies do not disturb the public order. The world famous seminary was established in Deoband (distt. Saharanpur) in 1876 by ulema who actively participated in war against British control in 1857. Their aim was to safeguard traditional Islamic learning and values and liberating India from the clutches of British control. Ulema of Deoband supported the Indian National Congress in its struggle for freedom.

According to a report among the Asians in England, Indians including Muslims, came out on top in terms of education and employment. The question which must be disturbing foreign authorities as to why madrasas continue to be nationalists and carry a positive

mindset in India.

To link Indian Islamic schools (called madrasas) with terrorism is not justified by any means. Roots of terrorism must be looked for elsewhere. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has aptly advised that a collective strategy needs to be evolved to free the world from the scourge of terrorism, which is now a global phenomenon.

Recent blasts in different countries are proof that the so called war against terrorism is not working. It can not be tackled by conventional security measures. The only solution, albeit a long term one is to eliminate the root cause of terrorism: unemployment and discontented youths who are swayed by ideologues of hate and xenophobia. In response to an internet statement by a terrorist group which said that blasts in London and Egypt were to warn "the global evil powers which are spilling the blood of Muslims in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, Chechanya" Al-Ghad, a Jordanian newspaper said: "killing innocent people will not contribute to the liberation of Palestine and the killing of innocent Iraqis will not accelerate American withdrawal."

Many Islamic scholars and clerics of international repute including Maulana S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi, President of All India Muslim Personal Law Board and Rector of world known Islamic university, Nadwatul Ulema have come but with the statements that: "They forbid barbaric acts against innocents who have nothing to do with the political demands; these are not the martyr operations but barbaric suicide attacks and the culprits deserve only God's punishment." ■

S.A.

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

Some Special Features of the Medieval Educational System

-S.Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

The medieval educational system was not without its faults. Both from the technical and the academical points of views it suffered from a number of defects and shortcomings. Yet the glowing religious fervour of its architects and other leading men had endued it with certain values which had come to belong to it typically, and are not to be found in the educational structure of the modern times. - Here we aim to deal briefly with some of them. The examples we are going to cite form but a fraction of the innumerable instances of lofty idealism and religious zeal one comes across while examining the educational history of India under the Muslims.

Sincerity and Self-Denial

Utter sincerity and self-effacement were the chief distinguishing features of the teachers of old. The religious merit of the profession of teaching and the reward promised on it in the Hereafter had become a part of faith with them; hence, a majority of the teachers, if not all, looked upon their work as an act of worship and engaged themselves in it wholly as a high-religious duty and with a view to propitiate God and to earn His good pleasure. Many among them lived like ascetics, enduring poverty with resignation and good cheer. Remarkable instances of it are found in the records of the lives of Muslim Ulema and teachers of those days.

Take this incident. It is related by Maulana Ghulam Ali Azad Bilgrami from his teacher and mentor, Mir Tufail Mohammad Bilgrami, about the well-known teacher and Traditionist of Bilgram, Mir Syed Mubarak that:

“One day I was with Mir Mubarak when he rose to perform the *Wazu*, but staggered and fell down. I rushed to his aid, and lifted him up. It took him some time to regain consciousness; then I enquired about his condition, After great persuasion he told me that he had eaten nothing for the last three days. The Maulana had not revealed his situation to anyone nor accepted anything from anybody during that time. I was moved to tears on hearing it, and returned home at once. I got prepared the Maulana's favourite dish and took it to him. The Maulana expressed great pleasure at it ; he bestowed much affection on me and blessed me profusely, but, then, he said, 'If you don't mind, may I say something?' I begged him to do so, whereupon he observed, 'Such a food is known among us, the Sufis, as *Ta'am-i-Ishraf*, and although the Fiqh does not prohibit it- the Shariat even allows the eating of impure food after three days of continuous starvation-it is against the practice of Sufi-ascetics to avail themselves of *Ta'am-i-Ishraf*.'

“After this I quietly left the place taking the food back with me. I waited outside for some time, then went in again and

asked the Maulana, 'Were you expecting me to bring back the meal after I had taken it away?'

'No' the Maulana replied. 'Then it has ceased to be *Ta'am-i-Ishraf now*,' I said. 'You were not looking forward to it.' My argument appealed to the Maulana and he agreed to eat. He remarked, 'You have acted very wisely today!'

This, admittedly, is a unique case of its kind, but the educational history of medieval India is so abundantly studded with glittering episodes of ascetic self-abnegation and devotion to the cause of learning as a high religious duty that these qualities seem to have become a part of the tradition of the educational set-up of those days. No less astonishing is this further example of sincerity and self-denial on the part of teachers belonging to the same period of time.

Maulana Abdul Rahim (d. 1884) was a teacher in Ramour. He was offered by Mr. Hawkins, the Commissioner of Rohilkhand, the post of a teacher in the Bareilly College on a salary of Rs. 250/- per month with a promise of further rise in future. The Maulana declined the offer, pleading that he would thereby forfeit the monthly stipend of Rs. 10/- he was getting from the Rampur State. Taken by surprise at this reply, the Commissioner enquired why should the Maulana bother about the stipend when he was offering him twenty-five times as much. The Maulana, then, said that there was a jujube tree in the courtyard of his house in Rampur, the fruit of which was of the sweetest, and he would miss it sorely at Bareilly. The materialistic Englishman could still not get to the real meaning of the Maulana's

excuses. He explained that the jujubes could easily be brought to Bareilly from Rampur for the Maulana to enjoy. The Maulana, then, brought up another argument. He said that his pupils in Rampur would be put to great loss if he moved to Bareilly, while, at the same time, he too would be deprived of the opportunity of serving them. The Commissioner replied that he would grant them scholarships to complete their education at Bareilly. The Maulana, then, played his last card. He submitted what answer would he give to God on the Day of Judgment for accepting remuneration for the sacred work of teaching. The Englishman then, gave up in desperation and the Maulana spent the rest of his days in Rampur on a stipend of Rs. 10/- per month.

Engrossment

The teachers of the bygone days were so thoroughly engrossed in their profession that it is not possible to convey even a faint idea of it, today, without the aid of examples. They had made the work of teaching and instruction the sole passion of their lives, and kept themselves engaged in it during most of the hours of day and night, till the end of their time. Allama Wajihuddin Gujarati, for instance, taught regularly for 60 to 65 years, Maulana Abdus Salam Lahori, Mulla Abdul Hakim Sial-koti and Maulana Ali Asghar Kannauji for 60 years, and Maulana Ahmad Amethwi, alias, Mulla Jiwan, till the last day of his life.

It is said of some teachers that they used to give lessons even while eating or going out somewhere. Mulla Abdul Qadir Badayuni says of his teacher,

Maulana Abdullah Badayuni, that "a party of pupils used to accompany him when he went to the market to buy provisions for his family, and the Maulana would teach them in the way."

Maulana Abdul Hai Firangimahali, an outstanding master of the ultimate phase, regularly gave a lesson before the *Fajr* (early morning) prayers. Many other teachers in the past are known to have been in the same habit.

Devotion to Pupils

The deep and sincere affection the teachers of the former days had for their pupils will definitely appear now to be a thing of the fables. They literally treated them as their own children. Not infrequently would they bear their expenses and share their meals with them. It is written, for example, of the famous teacher and royal physician to the Court of Akbar, Hakim Ali Gilani that "he regularly gave lessons to students and never took his meals without them."

Maulana Mohammad Afzal was so strongly attached to his pupils that when a pupil, Mulla Mahmood Jaunpuri, died, the shock of it proved too much for him. Writes Maulana Ghulam Ali Azad Bilgrami, "No one saw the Maulana smile (after it), till after forty days he himself went up to join his pupil."

Maulana Abdul Ali *Bahrul Uloom* was invited to Bohar (Burdwan) on a sumptuous salary by Munshi Sadruddin. The Maulana pointed out that there were about a hundred students with him, and it was not possible for him to accept the offer unless adequate provision was also made for their boarding and lodging. It was only after Munshi Sadruddin had agreed to the

condition that the Maulana went. Similarly, when the Maulana took up service at Madras, at the invitation of Nawab Wala Jah, he used to spend his entire salary of Rs. 1,000/- per month on his students and no part of it would reach his family at Firangi Mahal in Lucknow. Worried, his son, Maulana Abdul Nafey, went to Madras to plead with him to send some part of his income for the maintenance of his dependents, but the Maulana remained adamant.

Attachment of Students to Teachers

The students, on their side, were bound to their teachers by the strongest ties of devotion, reverence and loyalty. In this connection, it will, perhaps, always be remembered that on hearing the news of the death of Mulla Nizamuddin of Firangi Mahal (which later turned out to be false) one of his pupils, Syed Kamaluddin Azimabadi, died of shock while another, Syed Zarif Azimabadi, cried so hard that his eyes were permanently damaged. Even if these episodes are treated as an exception, the boundless devotion of the pupils for the teachers was a most common feature of the former educational system as we learn from the records left behind by scholars of their masters.

Patronage by Kings and Noblemen

Kings and noblemen vied with each other in the patronage of learned scholars and teachers. They considered it a privilege and a religious obligation to serve men of arts and learning and provide for their needs and comfort. To illustrate our point we will reproduce the following incident as narrated by Mohammad Qasim Bijapuri in his *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* :

"Once Qazi Shahabuddin Daulatabadi was gravely ill. Sultan Ibrahim Sharqi went to visit him, and after enquiring about his condition and making proper arrangements for his treatment and looking into other necessary things, he asked for a cup of water. When it was brought the Sultan made a circular movement with the cup round the Maulana's head, in token of an offering, and then drank the water, praying, 'O God! send down on me the affliction ordained for the Maulana, and grant him recovery'."

On the death of Amir Fathullah Shirazi, Emperor Akbar is reported to have expressed his grief in these words: "Had the enemy taken him prisoner and demanded the whole of my Empire's treasure as ransom, the bargain would still have been a most profitable one; the precious gem would not have proved costly at that price."

Mulla Abdul Hakim Sialkoti was weighed twice in silver, and Qazi Mohammad Aslam Harawi (father of Allama Mir Zahid), once in gold, by Emperor Shahjehan, it being the highest form of recognition with the rulers of old.

The stupendous reception Maulana Bahruil Uloom was accorded at Madras has been described thus by Maulana Waliullah Firangimahli;

"When his palanquin reached the royal palace the Maulana wanted to step down from it, but Nawab Wala Jah motioned him to remain seated, and, applying his own shoulder to the palanquin, lie carried it in. The Nawab, then, urged the Maulana to sit in his place on the throne; he kissed his feet, and said, 'I never knew that my stars were so blessed that you would

grace me with a visit and shed lustre on my house by your presence.

Due to the magnanimity and encouragement of the noble lords and other well-to-do persons a vast network of *madrassas* had been set up in the country. We can imagine about the other parts of the land from the undermentioned account furnished by Maulana Ghulam Ali Azad Bilgrami of the marvellous expansion of education through private patronage in his own Province of Oudh:

"Throughout the Province of Oudh, as also in the Province of Allahabad, there are found, at every five or, at the most, ten miles, settlements of respectable and highranking (Muslim) families. These families enjoy pensions or fees, in land or cash, granted to them by the Government for their maintenance. They have built mosques, schools and spiritual seminaries, from place to place, where teachers and learned men are actively engaged in the spread of education. They have produced a great urge among the people for the pursuit of knowledge. Students, in large numbers, travel from one town to another in quest of learning, and take up their residence where they find the greatest scope for the prosecution of their studies. Their needs are taken care of by benevolent persons who regard it an act of great virtue. Emperor Shahjehan often used to say, 'The eastern areas are the Shiraz of my Empire'.

Solicitude for Spiritual Advancement

With all their intellectual and literary attainments and importance, the learned scholars of old were fully alive to their spiritual needs and strove hard for

self-purification and cultivation of a living, all-pervading consciousness of the Almighty. They believed that it was as necessary for their fulfilment to render respectful service to spiritual guides and mentors as to sit at the feet of secular teachers for the acquirement of temporal knowledge and learning. No considerations of prestige were allowed by them to stand in the way. They upheld their honour and dignity zealously before the worldly kings and peers and bent not even by an inch in obedience to them, and yet were submissiveness and humility itself when it came to the humble lords of the spiritual realm. The unique combination of awareness of the self with self-denial was a grand characteristic of the lives of the teachers of the former days. It is an incontrovertible fact of the educational history of medieval India that the exceptional personalities belonging to it were all unfailingly bound in allegiance and loyalty to Some spiritual leader of their time.

The entire educational and intellectual structure of India bore, in its initial stage, the impress of these three masters, Allama Abdul Muqtadir Kindi Thanesari (d. 1388), and his two pupils, *Maulana Khwajgi Dehlai* (d. 1406) and Sheikh Ahmad Thanesari (d. 1398). All of them were the spiritual disciples of Sheikh Naseeruddin *Chiragh-i-Dehli*.

Then we come upon the name of Allama Wajihuddin bin Nasrullah Gujerati (d. 1589), "who devoted 67 years of his life to teaching religious and secular sciences at Ahmedabad. His pupils were dispersed over a wide area, from Ahmedabad to Lahore, spreading light

and learning wherever they were. He had the signal honour of being elevated to the rank of 'Master of Masters' in his own lifetime." The famous educational centres of Kora Jahanabad, Amethi, Jaunpur and Lucknow shone solely with his radiance. He, in his turn, was the spiritual protege of Sheikh Mohammad Ghaus Gwaliori and had received numerous blessings from him. Two, other notable scholars and teachers of the time, Shah Pir Mohammad and Maulana Ghulam Naqsh-band, who were an institution by themselves, also belonged to the same line of spiritual guidance and instruction.

Finally, It was the turn of Mulla Nizamuddin to dominate exclusively the educational scene from India to Iran and Afghanistan. He was not only a devoted follower of a *Qadria* divine, Syed Abdul Razzaq Bansawi, but was literally intoxicated with the love for his mentor. Every word of his biographical study of him, *Manaqib-i-Razzaqia*, breathes out the depth and intensity of his devotion.

The founder of Darul Uloom, Deoband, with its country-wide activities of religious and spiritual guidance and reform, Maulana Mohammad Qasim Nanawtawi (d.1879) and its other patron and benefactor, Maulana Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi (d. 1905), again, were the disciples and *Khalifas* of Hazrat Haji Imdadullah Mahajir Makki. Likewise, Maulana Syed Mohammad Ali Monghyri, who founded the Nadwatul Ulema at Lucknow, was a *Khalifa* of Hazrat Maulana Fazlur Rahman of Ganj Moradabad in the district of Unnao. Thus, at every turn of its history, we find the educational endeavour of the medieval

days touched by the spiritual magnificence of some deep-hearted man of God. Therein, we imagine lay the secret of its strength, effectiveness and spiritual glory.

Curiously enough, teachers and scholars of impeccable worth and ability were, not unoften, bound in allegiance to such spiritual leaders as were technically not scholars themselves and were not considered as learned by their contemporaries. Some remarkable instances of it are afforded by the dutiful attachment, as disciples, of the Ulema of the eminence of Maulana Mohammad Ismail Shaheed and Maulana Abdul Hai Burhanwi to Hazrat Syed Ahmad Shaheed, of an outstanding genius like Mulla Nizamuddin to Hazrat Syed Abdul Razzaq Bansawi, and of that great scholar with an original mind, Maulana Mohammad Qasim Nanawtawi to Hazrat Haji Imdadullah. These instances, which can, surely, not be ascribed to mere chance, speak in clearest terms of the utter humility and total selflessness of the learned scholars of that time. They tell of priceless qualities of head and heart that held the key to the phenomenal success they achieved in their mission. As we have said earlier, moral and spiritual evolution together with the attainment of intellectual glory and endowment of learning with earnestness and the spirit of God-seeking were the chief attributes of the older educational set-up. Consequently, there was forged an intimate contact between men of learning and enlightenment and the masses which enabled the former to exert a strong and ennobling influence on the society as a whole. Further, the scholars and other learned men were,

generally, able to summon up enough moral stamina to resist the pull of worldly temptations and of benefits accruing from alignment with princely courts, and save themselves from other moral weaknesses—a thing which could not be possible merely on the strength of intellect and learning. The single-minded devotion, the immaculate sincerity and the unalloyed unselfishness with which the educationists, teachers and scholars continued to serve the cause of learning for as many as 800 years were due, in no small measure, to the guidance, training and moral and spiritual purging and sanctification they received at the hands of holy men.

Till the very end, it was a tradition with Arabic institutions that their students, after they had completed their studies, went to live for some time with spiritual guides whom they or their teachers held in high regard and with whom they also felt themselves to be in tune spiritually for the development of that aspect of their personality which could not be taken care of in a purely academical environment. The students coming out of the institution founded by Maulana Lutfullah (which was an international seat of learning of the last phase), sought the haloed society of Maulana Fazlur Rahman of Ganj Moradabad, while the inclination of the teachers and pupils of the *madrassas* of north-western India (like those of Deoband and Saharanpur) was towards Thana Bhawan, Gangoh and Raipur where Haji Imdadullah Mahajir Makki, Hazrat Maulana Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi and their disciples served as beacons of moral and spiritual guidance. ■

HAJJ: A FUNDAMENTAL OBLIGATION

-S.Sulaiman Nadwi

Hajj is one of the fundamental parts of 'Ibadat in Islam. It is not a new institution but the first and old mode of worship whereby mankind could develop God-consciousness in him. The word Hajj means, literally, repairing to a place for the sake of visit (*al-qasd li ziyarah*), and in the terminology of the Islamic Shariah, it implies repairing to Bait-Allah (the House of Allah) to observe the necessary devotions (*iqamat-an-linusk*) in the sacred places in the Holy Makkah.

Arabs has its own history of the various stages of human progress. In the days of Ibrahim Khalil (peace be upon him) it became the abode of a family of preachers of religions. During the period of Isma'il (peace be upon him) its population consisted of a few camps and huts only but gradually it developed into a big religious city and after the Prophet hood of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) it became the religious centre of the Muslims world.

In the beginning the practice in vogue was that in every habitation, two houses of special kind were built, one of them was palace of the king of that habitation or fort and the other was the ma'bad (the place of worship) of the Kahin. Almost every population had its

idol star or deity which was thought to be its guardian and protector and that guardian idol or star was worshipped by that population. The courtyard of the ma'bad (the place of worship) was called *Dar-ul-Aman*. All the sacrifices and nadhrs etc. Offered to these deities and agricultural proceeds were collected there. With the extension of the hold of a habitation there was also an increase in the area of worship of these idols and deities.

Ibrahim's (peace be upon him) native city was Iraq. He was the first mawahhid (believer in One God) in the world who raised his voice against the worship of the sun and the stars and called the people to submit to One God. His relatives and other people persecuted him so much that he was constrained to leave his native city. After travelling through different countries Ibrahim (peace be upon him) turned towards the borders of Arabia and Syria. He got his nephew, Lut (peace be upon him) and his son, Ishaq (peace be upon him) settled in Urdunn (Jordan) and kinan (Palestine) and his other two sons in Madyan, situated on the Red Sea which even today is called Mdyan bearing his name. He (Ibrahim) got his son Isma'il (peace be upon him) settled down in the valley of Faran. All those

places were situated on the highway where there was always great rush of trading caravans who went to Hijaz and Yemen from Egypt and Syria and vice versa.

There were two main aims and objects of Ibrahim (peace be upon him) in settling his progeny in such a way; firstly, they would not find any difficulty in getting corn and other necessary goods as long as the trading caravans are coming and going and could participate in commerce and secondly, these national highways were the best preaching centres for propagating the pure monotheistic religion of Allah or in there words. Tauhid. Here they could spread the true religion by keeping themselves away from highhandedness of the wrathful and tyrant idolaters and star worshippers of Iraq and Syria.

Baitullah

Wherever Ibrahim (peace be upon him) felt the need he raised a stone reciting - the name of Allah and enclosed that place for sacrifice and prayer. In the Torah mention of three such places called Bait Allah (House of Allah has been made.

The same kind of places of worship and Houses of Allah were also built by Ishaq, Yaqub and Musa (peace be upon them). Dawud and Sulaiman (Allah be pleased with them) also constructed Bait al Maqdis which was the Qiblah of Bani Isra'il.

It is thus clear that Ibrahim (peace be upon him) and his progeny

usually built such places of sacrifice and Houses of worship. One such House known as the ka'bah or Masjid-i-Haram, also called Masjid-i-Ibrahim is in the centre of the city of Makkah. During the three thousand years since it was first built, the ka'bah was demolished several times, but each time was rebuilt at the same site for the same purpose. The Prophet Ibrahim and his son Isma'il (peace be upon them) built it, as the first sanctuary on earth dedicated to the worship of One God. The story of the building of the ka'ban has been related in the Holy Qur'an thus:

And remember Ibrahim and Isma'il (peace be upon them both) raised the foundations of the (Sacred) House, (saying): Our Lord, accept it from us, for Thou art the All-Hearing, the All-knowing, Our Lord, make us those who submit to Thee and our descendants a people, who submit to Thee. And show us our rites and forgive us. Indeed. Thou are the Forgiving, the Mercy-Giving.

Remember We made the House a place of gathering for men, and of security. And you take the Station of Ibrahim as a place for prayer. And we covenanted with Ibrahim and Isma'il (peace be them both) that they should sanctify My House for those who circumambulate it, and retire to it for devotion and for those who or prostrate themselves (there in worship. (92: 125)

The Sacrifice of Isma'il and its Conditions

We have already discussed this

subject in detail in the introductory note to Vol. I of *Sirat-un-Nabi*. The fact that God had ordered Ibrahim to sacrifice Isma'il and not Ishaq (peace be upon them) stand irrefutably proved by the Holy Qur'an. In the Torah we also find that Abraham had prayed to God in these words: Oh, that Isma'il (peace be upon him) might live in Thy sight. In answer to this prayer God ordered Ibrahim (peace be upon him) in a vision to sacrifice his son. It has been said in the Holy Qur'an:

And he said: Lo! I am going unto my Lord Who will guide me.

My Lord! Vouchsafe me of the righteous. So we gave him tidings of a gentle son.

And when (his son) was old enough to walk with him, (Ibrahim) said: O my dear son; I have seen a dream that I must sacrifice thee. So look what thinkest thou? He said: O my father! Do that which thou art commanded. Allah willing, thou shall find me of the steadfast. Then when they had both surrendered (to Allah), and he had flung him down on his face, We called unto him: O Ibrahim! Thou hast already fulfilled the vision. Lo! Thus do We reward the good. (37: 99-105)

And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice. (37: 107)

And on Ibrahim's followers too this sacrifice was enjoined in the same sense, i.e. showing physical submission and sacrifice in the shape of the sacrifice of an animal.

We must remember that according to the Torahs, the word, 'sacrifice' was synonymous with the word, 'dedication'. Suppose this word was used for a boy in connection with a place of worship, it would mean that the boy was to be cut off from the family and reserved for the service of the temple. But when the same word was used for animals, it meant that those animals were to be slaughtered as an offering to God. So had God decreed in the Torah: For all the first-born among the children of Israel are mine, both man and beast. The man who was dedicated to God would let his hair grow; only when he had reached the holy place of worship could he get himself shaved.

The Basis of the Religion of Ibrahim is Sacrifice

According to the Holy Qur'an and the Torah the basis of the religion of Ibrahim (peace be upon him) is sacrifice and this sacrifice was the characteristic feature of his prophetic mission and spiritual life. He (Ibrahim) showed extraordinary perseverance and stood the test through which he had to undergo due to which he and his progeny was immensely blessed and rewarded by Allah. It has been said in the Holy Qur'an.

And recall the time when his Lord put Ibrahim to the test with certain commandments and he fulfilled them. He (Allah) said: Behold! I am going to make thee a leader or mankind. (2:124)

Indeed We chose him in the

world, and in the Hereafter, he is surely amongst the righteous.

And when his Lord said to him: Submit, he said: I submit to the Lord of the worlds. (2:130,131)

We called unto him: O Ibrahim! Thou hast already fulfilled the vision. Lo! Thus do we reward the good. (37: 105)

The Muslims remember the amazing acts of Ibrahim's (peace be upon him) submission and devotion to Allah, the one being running into the fire reposing complete trust in God and secondly, his readiness to offer his son as sacrifice for the sake of his Lord and send blessings on him every now and then five times daily in prayers.

O God, bless Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his descendants, as Thou didst bless Ibrahim and his descendants.

Explaining the purpose of animals sacrifice the Holy Qur'an says:

Their flesh and their blood reach not Allah, but the devotion from you reacheth Him. Thus We made them subject unto you that ye may magnify Allah that He hath guided you. (22: 37)

Ibrahim (peace be upon him) resolved to slaughter his loving and only son in obedience to Allah's command and the next moment should have witnessed the deed done, Allah called to him:

O Ibrahim! Thou hast indeed

shown the truth of the vision. (37: 104,105)

Thus Ibrahim (peace be upon him) set an example of total obedience, submission and loyalty to his Creator and Great Master in negation of his own desires, feeling and sentiments which has no parallel in the history of mankind. He submitted his will to the Will of Allah. The sacrifice of an animal was only a reflection of his loyalty, devotion and submissiveness to Allah.

Islam Demands Sacrifice

Islam means resignation to the Will of God. It implies complete submission to Allah's commands. The sacrifice given by Ibrahim and Isma'il (peace be upon them) proves, beyond any shadow of doubt, that they were the true and loyal servants of Allah. In appreciation of the sacrifices of Ibrahim and Isma'il (peace be upon them), Allah, the Exalted, named this sentiment of theirs of resignation and surrender to His as Al-Islam. It has been said in the Holy Qur'an.

Then, when they had both surrendered (unto Allah). (37: 103)

And who can be averse to the religion of Ibrahim, but he who infatuated his mind. Indeed We chose him in the world, and in the Hereafter, he is surely amongst the righteous.

And when his Lord said to him: Submit, he said: I submit to the Lord of the worlds. (2: 130-131)

In fact the religion of Ibrahim

(peace be upon him) is based on Al-Islam i.e. resignation and surrender (to Allah). Ibrahim (peace be upon him) prayed Allah again and again.

Our Lord! Make us submissive unto Thee and of our progeny a community submissive unto Thee and show us our ways of worship, and relent towards us. Thou art the Relenting, the Merciful.

Our Lord! And raise up unto them a messenger from amongst them who shall recite unto them —Thy revelations and shall teach them the Book and the wisdom and shall purify them. Verily Thou art the Mighty, the Wise. (2: 129)

And who else can he be than Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) since he alone was raised up from amongst the progeny of Isma'il.

The fact that messenger here implies the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) only is borne out by the Bible: I will raise up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him (Deut, 18: 18). The phrase from their brethren, clearly means the descendants of Isma'il for had it referred to the descendants of Ishaq (Bani Isra'il) the expression could have been something like it: From amongst you.

Place of Sacrifice

In the Torah the place of sacrifice

is given as Moriah. The Jews claim that this was the place where Solomon had constructed his temple (in the Torah called by the name of the House of God). The Christians say that Moriah was the place where Jesus had been crucified. European scholars disagree with both. Sir Stanley says: Abraham rose in the morning, came out of his tent and reached the place where God had ordered him to. But this was not the mountain of Moriah as the Jews hold, nor was it any place near the church of the holy sepulcher. Such a view is more far-fetched than that of the Jews. Still more far-fetched seems to be the belief of the Muslims who consider the mountain of 'Arafat to have been the place. Perhaps the place was somewhere on the mountains of Jerezium and this place looks very much like place of sacrifice. This statement discredits the claims of both the Jews and the Christians. As to the Muslim's claim let us look into its validity. Some translators have translated the Moriah to be a place of high firs, the elevated ground or the place of dream. Those with a better judgment have believed it to be the name of a place. They did not translate it, letting it stand as it was. As time passed, careless translators put in Morah for Moriah, the more so because Hebrew script has almost a similar written form for both the words. The torah mentions Morah has situated in Arabia: And the came of the Madyans was in the north in a valley by the hill of Morah.

Considering all the facts and circumstances we may assert that Marwah, not Morah or Moriah, is the name of the place and this Marwa his a Makkahn hill where the Hajis (pilgrims) perform the sa'i. The Arab tradition, references in the Qur'an and the definite indications in the traditions are all so consistently with the hypothesis that a coincidence with so great a coherence would be unimaginable, unless the hypothesis were a fact. Let us thrash it out further.

There is a tradition to the effect that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) pointed towards Marwah and said: This is a place of sacrifice, and all the hills and vales of Makkah are the places of sacrifice.

In the days of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) animals meant for sacrifice were slaughtered not in Marwah but in Mina, which is three miles from Makkah.

Yet the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) designated Marwah as the place of sacrifice. This the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did because Ibrahim (peace be upon him) offered the sacrifice there.

The Holy Qur'an says:

Then their place of sacrifice is the Ancient House, Bait-al-'Atiq. (22:29)

An offering to be brought to the Ka'bah. (5: 95)

Marwah is situated just in front

of the Ka'bah and very close to it. The verses quoted above show that the original place of sacrifice was the ka'bah and not Mina. But when the number of pilgrims increased the boundaries of the ka'bah extended up to Mina.

Makkah and Ka'bah

The ka'ba is the oldest and most venerated of all the houses of worship. It is a culminating point of one's highest hopes, favours and blessings of Allah. It has been the place of worship and God-consciousness since the creation of this world. The highly eminent prophets of Allah visited it and it has been the Qiblah of the worshippers even before the construction of Bait-al-Maqdis. In the Qur'an it has been said by Allah.

Surely the first house appointed for men is the one at Bakka blessed and guidance for the nations. (3: 95)

In the Torah too we find the following verses:

Blessed are the men whose strength is in thee,

In whose hearts are the Highways to Zion; As they go through the valley of Bakka,

They make it a place of springs;

The early rains also cover it with pools,

They go from strength to strength.

In this psalm, the word Bacca or

Bukka refers to no other place than Makkah.

The ka'bah, as the Holy Qur'an says is the Bait-at-Atiq (the ancient House). It is said that Adam first erected it. It was demolished several times at the hands of nature or men long before the advent of Ibrahim, even its foundations were not traceable. When Ibrahim (peace be upon him) gave the message of *Tauhid* (Oneness of God) in this all-pervading dismal darkness of 'ignorance and polytheism, the Almighty instructed him to rebuild the Ka'bah. Ibrahim and his son, Isma'il (peace be upon him) found out the old foundations of the ka'bah and started constructing a small square-shaped House. The story of the building of the ka'bah has been related in the Holy Qur'an thus: And when Ibrahim and Isma'il raised the foundations of the (Sacred) House (2: 127). When the House was completed, the divine message came: Do not set up aught with Me and purify My house for those who make the circuit and stand to pray and prostrate themselves. And proclaim among men the pilgrimage; they will come to thee on foot and on every lean camel arriving from every remote path. (22: 26, 27)

Ibrahim (peace be upon him) tried to raise his voice in the land of Chaldeans but he had to face burning fire. He came to Egypt and Philistines, but nobody cared to listen to him. In short, wherever he opened his lips in praise of One God his voice was lost in

the din of idolatry. At last he chose the uninhabited and barren desert of Hijaz where the means of communication were utterly wanting. Abraham's (peace be upon him) voice could not have crossed the walls of the temple, but, no, it travelled East and West and North and South.

Hajj Commemorates the Sacrifice of Ibrahim (peace be upon him)

When the construction was complete, Ibrahim (peace be upon him) ordered Isma'il (peace be upon him) to bring a block of stone, which might be placed at a point from where the people could start going round the ka'bah. In the history of Makkah, this incident is mentioned thus: Then Ibrahim asked Isma'il (peace be upon him) to bring a stone which he could fix at a place from where the pilgrims could start going round.

When the construction of the ka'bah was complete, it was necessary that some God-conscious person should devote whole of his life to the service of God. Such a dedication was termed sacrifice in the law of Ibrahim (peace be upon him). The Torah makes use of this phraseology on numerous occasions. In the Sahih al Bukhari, we find that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to see dreams (vide chapter, How the Divine Revelation started). Dreams are sometimes allegorical, Such as Joseph (Yusuf) had seen the stars, the sun and the moon prostrating before him. In short, Ibrahim

(peace be upon him) dreamed that he was slaughtering his son with his own hands.

He did not take it to be symbolical, and decided to slaughter his son, Isma'il (peace be upon him).

Ibrahim (peace be upon him) had every faith in his own firmness and devotion, but he had to know if the fifteen years old boy could bear it. He wanted to have his consent, and therefore, addressed his son in these words:

O son, I saw in a dream that I should offer thee in sacrifice, consider then thou seest. Resolutely the son replied: O my father, do what thou are commanded, if God pleases, thou wilt find me of the patient ones. (37:106,108)

And lo, there stood a ninety year old man, his sleeves upturned, his hand holding a knife, to slaughter the darling son, the light of his eyes, the boon granted in answer to praying lips. And there lay a blooming youth, brought up in the loving arms of a loving father; but now the loving arm of the same loving father descending on his throat with a deadly weapon. The angels, the heavens and the whole universe, witnessed the scene and were stunned. Allah all of a sudden called a vice on High:

O Ibrahim, thou hast indeed shown the truth of the vision, thus do We reward the doers of good. (37: 109,110)

The firmness, the determination and the astonishing self-sacrifice shown

by the son, really deserved to be commemorated for all time to come.

The Facts about Hajj

The whole ceremony of Hajj is commemorative of Hadrat Ibrahim (peace be upon him) and his family's devotion to God, the Almighty. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not introduce it as a new institution but purged it of all evil practices and made it an obligatory act of piety by which one can develop God-consciousness,

It is rightly said that Hajj is the perfection of faith since it combines in itself all the distinctive qualities of other obligatory acts, It represents the quality of *Salat* since a pilgrim offers prayers in the ka'bah, It encourages the spending of material wealth for the sake of the Lord, the chief characteristic of Zakat. When a pilgrim sets out for Hajj he disassociates himself from his hearth and home, from his dear and near ones to please his Lord. He suffers privation and undertakes the hardships of journey a lesson we learn from fasting and I'tikaf. In Hajj one is trained to be completely forgetful of material comforts and pomp and show of worldly life. One has to sleep on stony ground, circumambulate the ka'bah, run between Safa' and Marwa, and spend his night and day clad in simple pilgrim's dress. He is not even allowed to get his hair cut or trim his beard. In short, he is commanded to abandon all sorts of comforts for the sake of Allah and submit himself before

his Lord, the ultimate aim of the life of a Muslim.

Just as Hadrat Ibrahim (peace be upon him) had come running to the House of Allah in response to Allah's call, a pilgrim visits the ka'bah reciting these words loudly:

Here I am at Thy service, O Allah;
here I am at Thy service,

Here I am at Thy service, O Allah,
here I am at Thy at service, here I am at
Thy service. There is not associate with
Thee; here I am at Thy service, Verily
all praise and grace is due to Thee and
the Sovereignty (too). There is no
associate with Thee.

For the Muslim, visiting the ka'bah, whether it is for the first or the tenth time is a profound awe-inspiring experience. The worshipper enters the sacred Mosque with a supplication of God's peace and blessings. Looking beyond the throng of pilgrims and the patterns of columns and arches into the vast open courtyard, he catches a glimpse, with a tremor of awe and excitement, of the solitary black-draped ka'bah which is the centre of every Muslim world. After performing a brief Salat of "greeting" of the mosque, he makes his way toward the ka'bah through the vast array of Muslims of every place and race on earth in order to perform the first of the pilgrim's rites, that of tawaf or circumambulation.

The worshipper is to start the circumambulation from the corner of the

ka'bah in which the Black Stone is embedded. He joins the host of Muslims circling the House and pouring out their hearts in supplication to Him. Moving in that sea of worshippers, a deep sense of his smallness and insignificance comes to him. He realizes that God alone is great. Here, under the blazing sun of Makkah, making his circuits around God's Holy House as he repeats the solemn, fervent supplications of the pilgrim, he has a sense of realization of his own nothingness, his utter dependence on his Creator in face of God's ineffable glory and majesty, and that one day he will come before Him to receive His judgment and the recompense for all he did. While circumambulating the ka'bah a pilgrim kisses the Black Stone as the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) kissed it on the Farewell pilgrimage. It is revered as the only remnant of Ibrahim's (peace be upon him) building but just as the ka'bah is an object of reverence but not of worship so too is the Black Stone and because the Prophet's peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) lips touched it, all pilgrims do the same. After completing seven circuits of the Sacred House he may spend as much time as he wishes in making supplications to God in the immediate vicinity of the ka'bah, and before he leaves he prays two Rak'ahs of Salat. He will then go to the spring of Zamzam, situated underground within the compound of the Sacred Mosque very close to the ka'bah to refresh himself

with water. He then goes to a nearby area within the compound of the Sacred Mosque to perform the next rite of Hajj. This is known as Sa'i, that is hastening between two hillocks of Safa' and Marwa separated now by a long marble lined corridor, in commemoration of Hajira's (Hagar's) hurried search for water at this site. The worshipper walks and during part of the way may break into a run, seven times between the two rock-mounds, situated about a quarter of a mile apart, glorifying and supplicating God. Between the marble arches he catches glimpses of the adjacent courtyard of the Sacred Mosque. At the centre of it stands the black draped ka'bah around which like an endless river flowing on and on day and night since remote antiquity supplicants from every corner of the world, clad in the simple pilgrim's dress move in utter absorption with God, hymning His praises and calling on His name. One who has visited the Sacred House leaves it with an intense longing to return to it again and again and with a vivid understanding of why the ka'bah is indeed the focal point of the earth for the worship of Allah, the praised and Exalted, and the centre of love in the life of the Muslim individual and community.

Pilgrims may arrive in Makkah to perform their tawaf or sa'i either immediately before the days of Hajj or earlier. However the climax of Hajj occurs on the ninth day of Dhul Hijjah, the Day of 'Arafat. The Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him)

stressed the essential nature of this day's observance saying that one that had been present at 'Arafat would have performed Hajj. 'Arafat is the name of a vast plain some miles outside Makkah; it is treeless and barren without any shelter from the blazing desert sun and encircled by stark jagged purple black rocks. Millions of pilgrims move there during the morning of the 9th of Dhul-Hijjah. After the noon and afternoon prayers have been performed together in the shortened form recommended for travelers, the people have had a chance to eat and rest. During the afternoon upto sundown, all these human beings who assemble here, from every land and belonging to countless races and cultures, are completely absorbed in supplications to God, Most High, glorifying Him, affirming their utter helplessness and dependence on Him, yearning for His forgiveness, enduring all the fatigues and difficulties of the travel and the pilgrimage itself with its severe climate and hard conditions. The vast, otherwise empty plain is filled with tents and millions of pilgrims, tired and disheveled and totally humble before their Creator standing with hands raised in supplication, many weeping in the intensity of their awe and devotion to Him. Near Mount of Mercy, a hill in the middle of the plain the Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) delivered his Farewell pilgrimage address to his people.

As soon as the sun sets the exodus of the pilgrims from 'Arafat

begins. Their next station is Muzdalifa, a barren rock wasteland, a few miles closer to Makkah, where they perform the sunset and night prayers together, spending part of the night resting after the fatigues of the day and engaged in supplications to God. Here they also gather a number of pebbles to be used for stoning three stone columns representing Satan which have stood since ancient times in the village of Mina, to which all the pilgrims go after their brief halt in Muzdalifah, to live for the next two and a half or three days, in a vast tent city before they complete their pilgrims rites and disperse.

These stone pillars stand at the sites where the Satan appeared to Ibrahim and Isma'il ((peace be upon him) in remote antiquity, tempting them to disobey Allah when Ibrahim (peace be upon him) was talking his son to be scarified at God's command. On each of the three days of sojourn in Mina, countless numbers of pilgrims go to the columns, stoning them with the pebbles they have collected to symbolize their of Satan in the endless human struggle against evil promptings and temptations.

After the first stoning following the Prophet's peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) example and injunction, the pilgrims slaughter an animal in commemoration of Ibrahim's sacrifice a sheep in the place of Isma'il (peace be upon both of them); part of meat is used to feed themselves and their group, and the rest is distributed

among the poor. During this period the pilgrims also return briefly to Makkah to perform their final circumambulation of the ka'bah. The pilgrim's home during the mina is a tent shared with other pilgrims, he spends the time in making daily trips for stoning, praying and reading the Qur'an and listening to talks about various aspects of Islam, visiting his fellow pilgrims or resting. Before sunset on the third day or the following morning he leaves Mina and his pilgrimage is now complete.

In addition to its unique spiritual aspects, Hajj is also remarkable, as we have seen that it brings together from every part of earth such an immense diversity of human beings, who in spite of vast difference of culture and language, form one community (ummah), all of them professing and living by the same faith and all devoted to the worship of the same Creator. "Down to the ages," says Professor Hike "this institution has continued to serve as the major unifying influence in Islam and the most effective common bond among the diverse believers. It renders almost every capable Moslem perform a traveler for once in his lifetime. The socializing influence of such a gathering of the brotherhood of believers from the far quarters of the earth is hard to overestimate. It afforded opportunity for Negroes, Berbers—Chinese, Persians, Syrians, Turks—rich and poor, high and low to fraternize and meet together on the common ground of faith" (History of the Arabs p. 136)

Reforms in Hajj

The obligatory nature of Hajj is quite distinct from other *Ibadat* (acts of devotion). The Arabs were practically ignorant of the times and articles of prayer and did not know how it was to be observed. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) taught them gradually to pray. There was no concept of *Zakat* among the Arabs. Therefore, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) first impressed upon the minds of the people to do good charitable acts and exhorted them to charity, *Sadaqa* and spend for the sake of Allah to help the poor and the needy before *Zakat* was made obligatory on them. There have been various changes in the nature of fast since the Day of *Ashura* till Ramadan. But the rites and formalies of Hajj were already long in vogue in Arabia. There was, however, a change in the concept and the way of performance of Hajj. In other words, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) purged it of all polytheistic and evil practices which had crept into it and made it an act of piety by which one can develop God consciousness.

The detail of these reforms is given below:

1. The real purpose of worship is to remember Allah, seek forgiveness from Him and to glorify Him. But the custom of the pre-Islamic Arabs was to gather themselves in large number at Mina after the performance of Hajj and extol the

greatness of their tribes and the greatness of their ancestors. As the whole Hajj rites were purified of all un-Islamic practices, the aftermath of the pilgrimage was completely spiritualized and the pilgrims were instructed to hymn the glory of Allah.

And when you performed your holy rites (of Hajj) remember Allah, like your remembrance of your forefathers-even with a yet keener remembrance. (2: 200)

2. When they offered the sacrifice of an animal, they rubbed the blood of that animal on the walls of the ka'bah to please God. It was also the practice of the Jews that when they offered the sacrifice they sprinkled the blood of the animal on the altar and burnt the flesh of the animal. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) put an end to both these practices. It was ordained by Allah, the Exalted, in the Holy Qur'an:

Their flesh and their blood reach not Allah, but the devotion from you reacheth Him. Thus have we made them subject unto you that ye magnify Allah that He hath guided you. (22:37)

Explaining the aim and object of sacrifice on this day of commemoration of the amazing sacrifice of Ibrahim (peace be upon him) it was said that it is to feed the poor and the needy.

3. It was the custom of the people of Yaman that when they used to come for Hajj, they did not bring enough provisions for the journey. They said that they depend on God. On their arrival in

Makkah they used to beg the people. So the following verse of the Holy Qur'an was revealed:

And take a provision (with you) for the journey, but the best provision is to be dutiful to Allah.

4. Excepting the Quraish, who their standard of distinction over the tribes of Arabia, all other tribes performed the Tawaf of the Ka'bah naked. For this purpose a wooden plank was placed in the ka'bah where all the people put their clothes after taking them off. The only thing which could cover their nakedness depended upon the generosity of the Quraish, that is, some cloth was given by the Quraish specially for the purpose of Tawaf but those who could not get the benefit had to perform the Tawaf in a naked state. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) absolutely forbade this evil practice.

Abu Huraira (Allah be pleased with him) reported: On the Day of Nahr (10th of Dhul-Hijjah) in the year prior to the last Hajj of the Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) when Abu Bakr (Allah be pleased with him) was the leader of the pilgrims in the Hajj he sent me along with other announcers to Mina to make public announcement. No pagan is allowed to perform Hajj after this year and no naked person allowed to perform the Tawaf around the ka'bah. Then Allah's Messenger (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) sent'Ali (Allah be pleased with him) to read out the surah Bara'a (At- Tauba) to the

people; so he made the announcement along with us on the day of Nahr in Mina: No pagan is allowed to perform Hajj after this year and no naked person is allowed to perform the Tawaf around the ka'bah.

5. The haughty and the self conceited Quraish who took pride on their being the custodians of the ka'bah, stayed at Muzdalifa and thought it below their dignity to proceed on to 'Arafat along with other pilgrims. The Qur'an strikes at the basis of their pride by telling them that they must seek Allah's pardon for this sin of theirs and proceed on to the place where all the pilgrims are required to proceed and stay and consider themselves at par with other Muslims without any distinction of race or social status. It has been said in the Holy Qur'an:

Then press on from where the people press on, and seek forgiveness from Allah, verily Allah is All-Forgiving and All-Merciful. (2:199)

In the pre-Islamic days Hajj had lost its religious and spiritual significance. It was nothing short of a big fair or festival in which all categories of people participated in every kind of indecency, for instance, indulging in foul talk or foul pursuits, in wrangling and quarreling etc.. Islam ordained that Hajj, being a sublime act of devotion, should be performed with a keen sense of piety and fear of Allah. It has been said in the Holy Qur'an:

The pilgrimage is (to be performed in) the months well known,

so whosoever undertakes the duty of pilgrimage in them, should not indulge in lewd talk, nor in ungodliness nor in wrangling during the pilgrimage and whatsoever good ye do Allah knows that: (2:197)

There were two groups of people among the pilgrims: the one said that those who returned from Mina performing the Hajj in the three days of Tashriq, following 'Id-ul-Adha committed a sin, the latter said that those who delayed their stay in Mina were sinful. The Holy Qur'an said:

And remember Allah during the appointed number of says and whosoever hastens on in two days he is involved in no sin, and he who delays, there is no sin for him either; this is for him who is God fearing and fear Allah and know (for certain) that verily unto Him you shall be gathered:(2: 203)

Some persons had innovated Hajj of silence. After assuming Diram they did not speak to anyone. 'Umar (Allah be pleased with him) met such a women who was keeping silence. On questioning the cause of her silence he was told that she was in a state of Hajj of silence. He forbade her to do so saying: This is an act of ignorance.

Abu Hurairah (Allah be pleased with him) reported: Allah's messenger (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) found an old man walking between his two sons supported by them, whereupon Allah's Messenger (peace

and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: What is the matter with him? He (narrator) said: Allah's Messenger (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) they are his sons and there is upon him the fulfillment of the vow (to walk on foot to the ka'bah, whereupon Allah's Messenger (peace and blessing be upon him) said: Ride, old man for Allah is not in need of you and your vow.

'Uqba bin 'Amir reported: My sister took a vow that she would walk bare-foot to the House of Allah (ka'bah). She asked me to inquire from Allah's Messenger (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) about it and he said: She should walk on foot and ride also.

Abu Huraira (Allah be pleased with him) reported: Allah's Messenger (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) saw a man driving sacrificial camel. He (the Holy Prophet) said: Ride on it. The man said: It is a sacrificial camel. The Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) said: Ride on it. He (the man) said: It is a sacrificial animal. The Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) said: Ride on it. And on the second or third time the Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) added: Woe to you.

When the Ansar returned after Hajj they did not enter the doors through which they went out for Hajj. The idea behind it was that they were not fit entrances for them being burdened with heavy sins. So they entered the houses from the back of the houses and thought

it to be the act of great piety. The Qur'an points out their mistaken notion and says that it is through real piety and fear of Allah that a man becomes virtuous and devoted servant of Allah:

And is no virtue that you enter the houses from the rear but the virtue is of him who guards against evil. Hence enter the house from their doors and fear Allah so that you may prosper. (2:189)

While performing the Tawaf (circumambulation) it was a practice that a person to show himself sinful and guilty, put a string in his nose which was held and drawn by the other person. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) saw a person performing Tawaf in this way. He got his nose string cut.

Ibn'Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) reported: While the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was performing the Tawaf of the ka'bah, he passed by a person who had tied his hands to another person with a rope or string or something like that. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) cut it with his own hands and said: Lead him by the hand.

Ibn 'Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) saw a man performing Tawaf of the ka'bah tied with a string or something else. So the Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) cut the string.

In the earlier days the Muslims

were under the impression that since pilgrimage was an act of religious devotion, it was, therefore, not proper to do anything worldly during this sacred journey. The Qur'an removes this wrong notion from the minds by telling them that it is no sin if they do some trading during the Hajj season.

There is no fault on your part if you seek bounty from your Lord: (2:198)

There were two groups, those who used to refrain from Tawaf between Safa and Marwa in the pre-Islamic Period and those used to perform the Tawaf. The Ansar used to assume Ihram for worshipping an idol called Manat before they embraced Islam, and whoever assumed Ihram (for the idol) did not consider it right to perform Tawaf between Safa and Marwa. When they embraced Islam, they asked the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) regarding it, saying: O Allah's Messenger We used to refrain from Tawaf between Safa and Marwa. So Allah revealed:

Verily (the mountains) As-Safa and Al Marwa are among the symbols of Allah, and whoever performs the Hajj to the ka'bah or performs Umra it is not harmful for him to perform the Tawaf between Safa and Marwa. (2: 158) ■

IKHWAN STRATEGY IS WORKING

-Zafarul - Islam Khan

Below is an interview MG Editor DR ZAFARUL-ISLAM KHAN gave to Radiance Viewsweekly which carried it in its 25-31 August 2013 issue. Dr Khan has spent seven years in Egypt as a student of Al-Azhar and Cairo Universities during 1966-1973. He maintains contact with Egyptian people and their issues.

Almost one and a half months have passed since the military coup in Egypt and the situation is worsening every passing day. Whom do you think is responsible for these calamities?

This is a very complex situation. We cannot say that this or that one party is responsible. The military, the Egyptian "liberals" and those who are supporting the military within the country and outside are responsible for the unfolding tragedy. America and other western countries are responsible because they approved of the coup. They might be saying something else now because of these continuous killings which are impossible for anyone to justify. In fact, western power gave the green signal to the military to do what they are doing now. And the Gulf countries like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE and others also are responsible because they are politically and financially backing the new military regime. There is the news coming out of American sources that the Gulf rulers even financed the coup itself with one

billion dollar paid in advance. So you cannot say that only one party is responsible. The Gulf countries are doing so for their own political aims and survival. Also, the Egyptian Army has maintained a very strong relationship with America since Anwar Sadat's time. This allows the US to use the army to influence local politics as we have seen earlier in the cases of Indonesia, Pakistan and Turkey.

Egypt is one of the most important players in the Arab world. Post-change of guard and induction of democracy, it was hoped that the country will lead the Arab world. Do you think prosperity will prevail in near future?

Egypt is not one, but the most important player in the Middle East and North Africa. Egypt is the biggest power in the Arab World in terms of population, army, in terms of achievements, history, manpower, etc. and any development in Egypt influences the whole region. Egyptian policies have always been pivotal for the whole area. Whenever it takes an initiative, it becomes a fashion in the whole region to follow. Western powers and Gulf rulers do not want any democratic and free government in this area so that their policies and hypocrisy are not challenged in the region which will lead to a great loss in their business. In earlier days also, colonial forces had tried to grab power in Egypt but they

could not because the Ottoman State was very strong those days.

Do you think President Morsi had taken a wrong decision when he appointed General Sisi as the minister of Civil Safety?

It was the mistake of Morsi and his group, not just Morsi's alone. When the military ousted Morsi, they at once arrested at least 300 people because they knew they were the core group of the President. These people thought that now that a new president has been elected democratically and freely, everything would be under his control including the police apparatus and the army. But this was their mistake. I think the main reason behind this failure is that the Muslim Brotherhood could not estimate the situation on the ground because of their segregation from politics for decades. They just thought it was good and enough that people elected their party and presidential nominee and he will be able to exercise power democratically. But the reality was that though Mubarak had gone, his people were there in every department, like the ministry of interior, police, army and even judiciary. Since Gamal Abdel Nasser, all spheres of Egyptian life and government have been controlled by the army. Morsi and his people were wrong in their thinking that they have tamed the big elephant. In fact, they never did. The Mubarak-men, since the first of day of Morsi in office, used all kinds of tricks and tactics to make him fail, using the military and police and by using the judiciary which too was all Mubarak-appointed. The President did not realise

the gravity of the matter till his last days in office. I think Muslim Brotherhood members should have adopted the same policy what was practised in Iran and should have cleansed the whole system, especially the police and intelligence.

Can we say Morsi failed in Egypt given that he could not avert what had been expected since day one?

I think this is not the correct way to describe what happened in Egypt. In fact, the elected government failed to understand the complexity of the situation and they took things on face value. The ruling party also failed to take lessons from others somewhat experiences like Iran and Turkey. They should have deeply studied the situation at local as well as international levels and how others tackled potentially counter-revolutionary forces.

It has been said that some "super-powers" have been actively involved in this coup because they feared the new regime might be a threat to them in future. So at this stage can one say that no government can run without the consensus of "super-powers"?

No, this is wrong. The best example is that of Cuba which is almost as tiny in dimension as Gaza but it is not only surviving but also flourishing despite continuous sanctions and several American attempts to overthrow the revolutionary regime these past five decades. Also, you have the example of Gaza where all the super powers – the USA, Israel and even the pro-west Arab world – is hell-bent to overthrow the

Hamas government but did they succeed? Zimbabwe is another example where the western powers have been active against the government for some 30 years. But did they succeed? Same is the case with a number of countries in South America like Nicaragua, Chile and Venezuela. Same is the case with the current governments of Iran and Sudan. These examples prove that a determined government and its people can weather the oddest situations in the contemporary world. But this needs strong strategy which was lacking in the Egyptian case.

How do you see the hostile role of media, especially in the Egyptian case?

It is understood that the media, especially the western media, is hostile to Muslims everywhere. I think the MB should have taken more care about it and should have established some good media houses not only in Egypt but also outside Egypt so that it could function even in situations like the present one. I used to get daily emails from some news sources in Egypt but the very day the military overthrew Morsi, it all stopped. The army people must have gone to the places from where such services were running and shut them down like the four local television stations of MB and allied forces which were immediately closed down after the coup. Undoubtedly, MB men had established some local Arabic channels but this was not enough. They should have extended their media presence to other languages, especially English, in order to reach out to the common man all over the world. Also the Morsi regime gave unbridled freedom to the press which was not

justified in a country which had not known freedom of expression for six decades. The freedom of press under Morsi was unprecedented in the whole world and the President himself was being attacked and ridiculed every single day by newspapers and TV channels which no one could even dream of during Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak days. That is why the media was exploited by opponent of democracy and used to discredit the Morsi regime in the eyes of the Egyptian people. What people read in newspapers and watch on TV channels matters in a society as it shapes their understanding and mindset.

Thousands of common men have been killed so far and the toll is constantly rising. So, in your opinion, should MB change its strategy?

No. I think their strategy is working. Sorrowfully, some people are losing their lives, becoming martyrs for the cause of legitimacy and democracy. But their agitation is peaceful despite all these grave provocations. It is the other side which is resorting to naked violence. I am confident, the MB will remain peaceful but some elements from the MB might ditch them and form violent groups. I think we are facing a spectre of civil war in Egypt which will continue for quite a long time as we have earlier seen in Algeria in 1991 when the Islamists there were similarly robbed of their electoral mandate and some of them turned violent and continue to this day which has resulted in over one lakh deaths. We fear the same tragedy might be repeated in Egypt as a result of unseating an elected President and government. ■

HAJJ: THE JOURNEY OF HEARTS

-Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

Hajj is the culminating tenet of Islam. "The word Hajj means, literally, repairing to a place for the sake of visit (al-qasd liziyarah), and in the terminology of the Islamic Shariah, it implies repairing to Bait-Allah (the House of Allah) to observe the necessary devotions (iqamat-anlinusuk) in the sacred places in the Holy Makkah." (Sirat-un-Nabi-vol-5 page-117)

Hajj is such a worship by which one exhibits one's servitude and slavery and shows humility, meekness, and condescension before a philanthropist.

It should be kept in mind that Hajj surpasses in merits and excellences as compared to other tenets of Islam. For sacrifice of body and sacrifice of wealth both are required in the trip of Hajj. A part from it pilgrims (Hajees) get absorbed in prayer and worship till they return home from this auspicious journey. Hajj is obligatory once in his or her life-time, if he or she can afford to undertake a journey to Makkah" The Holy Quran says: "Pilgrimage to the House (of Allah) is a duty men owe to God those who can afford the journey" (111:97) Abdullah Bin Umar narrates that a person came to the Apostle of Allah and asked: "What makes the Hajj obligatory?" "the wherewithal of Journey

and the conveyance" replied the prophet. Hence if one does not perform Hajj despite one's means, is not a true Muslim but an imposter.

It is related by Caliph Ali that the Apostle of Allah said: "Anyone whom Allah has given enough to perform the Hajj, and he, also, has a conveyance which can take him to the House of Allah, if he still fails to do so then it does not matter, whether he dies a Jew or a Christian and it is so because Allah has said: "Pilgrimage to the House (of Allah) is a duty men owe to God those who can afford the journey" (Tirmizi).

Needless to add that the whole trip of Hajj is a paragon of devotion. It is celebrated in commemoration of the sacrifice of Hazrat Ibrahim and Hazrat Ismail. One may guess from the trip of Hajj that what does Almighty Allah ask from us? It tells us the importance and significance of obedience and submission. Allah was so pleased with the deeds and doings of Hazrat Ibrahim and Hazrat Ismail that it was made obligatory for Muslims to remember the sacrifice by including it in the five fundamental tenets of Islam.

In Hajj, pilgrims exhibit complete submission and dedication to their Creator and Sustainer. After wearing Ihram (the unsewn towels wrapped

round the body during Hajj) they surrender themselves on the threshold of Allah reciting the Talbia "Allahumma labbaik; labbaik laa shreeka Laka Labbaik; innal-hamda wan nai mata Lak wal mulk; Laa shareek Lak. (O God! here I am in Thy presence! Thou hast no partner! all praise is for Thee and from Thee are all blessings! To Thee alone belongs Power and Rule! Thou' art -without a partner!)

Late Maulana S.Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi says:

The most fascinating feature of the Haj is the spirit of enchantment, devotion and self-effacement which pervades the entire pilgrimage, from the beginning to the end. In it the governance of the mind is entrusted to the heart and the glorious example of the earnest men of God and His genuine adores, and their fore-runner, Hazrat Ibrahim, the Friend of Allah, is followed in every act and observance. Sometimes the pilgrim walks zealously round the House of Ka'aba, sometimes he kisses the Black Stone and sometimes he portrays the intensity of mother's love at Safa and Marwa by running where Hazrat Hajira, the mother of Hazrat Ismail, had run and walking with poise and dignity where she had walked in that way. Thereafter, he is bidden to leave for Mina on the 8th day of Zil-Hijja, and, then, to stay in the valley of Arafat and devote himself earnestly to prayer and supplication.

The night is spent at Muzdalifa and, for no other reason than to emulate the example of Hazrat Ibrahim and the sacred prophet."

He further says: "The most striking part, however, of this unique display of love, imitation and emulation is the rite of Rami Jemar which is simply the simulation of an act performed by Hazrat Ibrahim. There is a force in following the example of the devout servants of the Lord which is catching. The inner radiance of these glorious specimens of faith, their matchless spirit of love and dedication is transmitted to those who strive to follow in their footsteps like an electric current. It is the best and most effective way to attract the Mercy of Lord. No spectacle is more enthralling for those who have experienced this feeling than the getting together of ardent adorers and faithful bondmen on that blessed land for re-enacting the magnificent episode and recreating the sublime events that had taken place thousands of years ago but have been eternalised by God and endowed with His gracious acceptance. It has been decreed by His that His loyal and truthful servants, from all over the world, will re-enact the whole series of events in the same way and in the spirit of defeating and disgracing the Devil, fortifying the faith and emulating the soul stirring example of Hazrat Ibrahim." (The Four pillars of Islam: p,235-236)

It should be borne in mind that

the Hajj fosters unity, integrity, brotherhood, fraternity and equality. "Down to the ages" says professor Hike "this institution has continued to serve as the major unifying influence in Islam and the most effective common bond among the diverse believers. It renders almost every capable Moslem perform a traveler for once in his life time. The socializing influence of such a gathering of the brotherhood of believers from the far quarters of the earth is hard to over estimate. It afforded opportunity for Negroes, Berbers, Chinese, Persians, Syrians, Turks, rich and poor, high and low to fraternize and meet together on the common ground of faith" (History of the Arabs p. 136)

We further comprehend the significance and importance of the Hajj through the Harvard Study. A study of Hajj pilgrims by Harvard Kennedy school in the US has found that the Hajj promotes tolerance among pilgrims and does not lead to an increase in negative attitude toward the west. The study entitled "Estimating the Impact of the Hajj; Religion and Tolerance in Islam's Global Gathering" said that the annual pilgrimage develops a tolerant attitude among pilgrims toward other religions and cultures. Evidence suggests that the Hajj increases tolerance, which seems to apply not just within the Islamic world but also beyond it" adding that increase of unity does not lead to antipathy toward non-Muslims.

Moreover the Hajj makes the pilgrims pure, sinless and spotless. The holy prophet says: "Whoever performs the Hajj and commits no lustful act during it not disobeys God (in any other way) shall return from it as pure and sinless as he was at the time of his birth" It is related by Abdullah bin Masud that the Apostle of Allah said: "Perform the Hajj and Umra again and again for both, the Hajj and Umra, remove Poverty and sins in the same way as the furnace removes the impurities of gold, silver, and iron and there is no lesser recompense on a pure and sincere Hajj than paradise". Narrated Abu Hurairah the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was asked, "which is the best deed?" He said: "To believe in Allah and His Apostle", He was then asked: "which is the next (in goodness)?" he said: "To participate in Jihad in Allah's cause" He was then asked: "which is the next?" He said: "To perform Hajj-Mabrur".

It is imperative that we must prepare for this pious journey and avail blessings of Allah from it. Besides we should do our best to gain the pleasure of God. It is the greatest phenomenon to attain nearness to God. It keeps us away from obnoxious acts and unholy activities. The Hajj teaches us the same message and rejuvenate our faith and belief. May God give us strength to undertake this sacred journey. ■

The Mother of all Problems

-Shaikh Mujibur Rehman*

Historians would continue to quibble over the validity of the use of short stories as the equivalent of archival evidence in writing history. Scholars of other hues would generally suspect the objectivity of a work by an author who writes about her close relative, and fondly introduces her subject as, "*Manto Abbajan*." Nonetheless, the value of this book by Ayesha Jalal is beyond such concerns. This book challenges the conventional orthodoxy of methodological disputes. She explains as follows, "An imaginative inquiry into Manto's personal and literary biography enables an expansion of historiographical apparatus deployed thus far in explaining the causes and narrating the experience of partition."(p.3)

Like Harvard sociologist Theda Skocpol, Ayesha Jalal was catapulted to stardom by virtue of her exceptionally original doctoral research on Mohammed Ali Jinnah. Ever since, Prof Jalal has pushed the boundary of history writing in each of her successive projects in more than two decades of her global career as a

major historian on South Asia. In these works, she has made seminal arguments about some universal questions on core issues of identity, Islam and nation-state. After reading this book, Manto fans have a legitimate question for her: Why did Ayesha Jalal take so long to write this book? Well, it is a good question. But the most desirable answer is that these two decades have positioned her to put the weight of her credibility and fame to expand the reach of this work hopefully to a varied audience of a new generation. Manto remains an iconic voice of post-Ghalib Urdu writings at a time when the Urdu language is decoding survival puzzles in the subcontinent, especially in India.

The book has three sections: stories, memories, and histories. Each part has three well-researched chapters. The first part deals with the biographical aspect of Manto, though fragments of it appear in subsequent parts in relation to narratives of his various stories. The other two parts grapple with substantially different questions, about partition politics, and related issues of identity, global politics, and human nature. The political argument that dominates the book was that partition was not a

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solution. Rather, it has become the mother of all problems in the politics of the sub-continent, and has given birth to such mire that outside forces have become inevitable players, and increasingly, it is not the progress, but the survival of various nation-states that has become the paramount question of our time. Manto perhaps saw it all as a visionary story teller. The chapter titled "Pakistan and Uncle Sam's Cold War" is based on Manto's letters and reflects a few layers of such arguments. He was deeply critical of both the United States and the Soviet Union. He wrote the first of his nine letters to Uncle Sam on 16 December 1951- eleven days before being admitted to the anti-alcoholic ward in a mental hospital.

Sadat Hasan Manto was born on May 11, 1912 at Sambrala in Ludhiana district, a descendant of a Kashmiri Muslim trading family that had migrated to Punjab in early 19 century. The name *Manto* comes from the Kashmiri word, *Mant*, meaning a stone weighing one and half seer, or approximately three pounds. It refers to what his Saraswat Brahman ancestors were entitled to collect as rent from the cultivating peasants.

Manto's mother, Sadar Begum, was the second wife of Khwaja Gulam Hasan, a trained lawyer who went on to become a Sessions Judge. Manto, his most genius son, failed to realise

his father's ambition. As a child, Manto was fond of kite flying, but extremely poor in formal education unlike his siblings, some of whom earned British degrees. Manto passed his school-leaving examination in the fourth attempt but failed in Urdu.

Real-life people

Manto was inspired by the popular folk hero, Bhagat Singh. The early chapters offer detailed insights to the circumstances in which Manto was drawn to writing. His subjects were invariably real-life people, and his characters were the products of illicit social exchanges that took place in the alleys of notorious urban neighbourhoods. Through the translation, and reading of writers such as Maupassant, Hugo, Chekhov, and Tolstoy and many others, Manto taught himself the craft of story writing.

The first part is essentially biographical. These narratives give the factual details of his family history, and stories about his upbringing. Its first chapter is titled "Knives, Daggers, and Bullets Cannot Destroy religion." But the chapter on Bombay, and another titled, "Living and Walking Bombay" in the following section, offers deep insights into the challenges he confronted during his writing career. He eventually had to leave Bombay, owing to the partition. Manto arrived in Lahore via Karachi around 7 or 8 of January.

He wrote his first story, *Thanda Gosht*, (Colder than Ice) mainly to please his friend, Ahmed Nadeem Quasimi, for his newly launched journal, *Naqoosh*. The chapter, *On the Post-Colonial Moment*, offers details about many of Manto's iconic stories and the context in which they were written. He wrote *Toba Tek Singh* in 1954, after spending time in Lahore's mental asylum for his alcoholism, which remains the finest satire on partition in any language so far.

The final chapter, "A Nail's Debt", offers the details about his death, and stories about his friends and fans. The author writes, "As his body was lowered to freshly dug grave at Miani Saheb, several of Manto's fictional characters were spotted in the crowd, among them, Babu Gopinath; Kanshi, the pick pocket of Jaib Katra,

and Bishan Singh of Toba Tek Singh." This chapter also highlights the indifference of the Pakistan state towards one of its most gifted citizens, and his family. The Pakistani state looked at him more as a pornographer, and alcoholic, and its radio and television chose not to air his stories, and its text books chose not to teach his stories. On August 14, 2012, however, Pakistan honoured him with the highest civilian award, *Nishan-e-Imtiaz* (Order of Excellence), but given the kind of humanist he was, he would have perhaps turned down that award, particularly because it was given on August 14. All in all, this is an indispensable piece of reading for literary critics, historians and scholars of South Asia. ■

(Courtesy: *The Hindu*)

**"The more I study the more
I discover that the
strength of Islam
does not lie
in the sword"**

- Mahatma Gandhi in *Young India*

Islamophobe Embraces Islam

Former Dutch Islamophobe and a former leading member of far-right Dutch politician Geert Wilders' party Arnoud Van Doorn visited the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah to pray and say sorry for becoming part of a blasphemous film.

Doorn was among the Freedom Party leaders who produced the blasphemous film, *Fitna*. Last month he reverted to Islam after an extensive study about the religion and the Prophet (peace be upon him). He said that the worldwide outrage against the film made him study about the Prophet (pbuh) and that eventually led to his conversion.

He headed for Makkah to perform *Umrah* after meeting the two imams of the Prophet's Mosque, Sheikh Ali Al-Hudaifi and Sheikh Salah al-Badar, who enlightened him on how to lead the life of a good Muslim and confront challenges facing Islam in the West.

A member of the Dutch parliament and The Hague City Council, Doorn announced his decision to accept Islam on his Twitter profile. He also posted a tweet in Arabic declaring that "there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is his Prophet."

At first, other users took the news as a joke. After all, an active supporter of a notorious Dutch hater of Islam, Wilders, he repeatedly approved Islamophobic statements and public actions, and personally participated in them. But Doorn, who now serves as a regional adviser at

the City Hall in The Hague, personally confirmed his decision to practice Islam in an official letter to the city mayor.

Most recently, the politician filed a formal application to the mayor of the city to allow him to perform prayers obligatory for Muslims during his working hours.

"I can understand people are skeptic, especially that it is unexpected for many of them," Doorn told *Al-Jazeera* English satellite channel. "This is a very big decision, which I have not taken lightly."

"In my own close circle, people have known that I have been actively researching the Qur'an, *Hadith*, *Sunnah* and other writings for almost a year now," he said. "In addition, I have had numerous conversations with Muslims about the religion."

Driven by his party's anti-Islam discourse, Doorn decided to dig in for the truth about the religion himself.

"I have heard so many negative stories about Islam, but I am not a person who follows opinions of others without doing my own research," he said. "Therefore, I have actually started to deepen my knowledge of Islam out of curiosity."

The 46-year-old has continued on The Hague Council as an independent candidate since splitting from Wilders's party. Doorn's decision to embrace Islam has won mixed reactions in the

Netherlands.

"According to some people I am a traitor, but according to most others I have actually made a very good decision," he told *Al-Jazeera*. "The reactions are generally positive and I also received quite some support via twitter. It feels good that people who do not know me personally have understanding of my situation and support me in my choice."

Asked if he now regretted joining the Freedom Party, he replied: "I have learned that every experience in life has

a purpose. However, with the knowledge I have today, I would have undoubtedly made a different choice."

For the Dutch politician, finding Islam was finally guiding him to the true path in his life. "I have made mistakes in life as many others. From these mistakes I have learned a lot," Doorn said. "And by my conversion to Islam I have the feeling that I finally found my path. I realize that this is a new start and that I still have much to learn as well." ■

(Saudi Gazette April 23, 2013)

AIMPLB executive slams UP Govt, BJP for riots (September 23, 2013, The Poiner)

The All-India Muslim Personal Law Board has severely criticised the Samajwadi Party Government's 'casual attitude' during the Muzaffarnagar riots while blaming Bharatiya Janata Party for the communal violence.

As expected, the AIMPLB executive committee members raised the Muzaffarnagar riots in the meeting held on Sunday. They expressed disappointment over the casual attitude of the SP Government in controlling the violence.

"The executive committee not only flayed the BJP for stoking communal passions in the state but also expressed strong disappointment over the casual attitude of the state Government in controlling the violence that took the life of scores of innocent people," said AIMPLB member.

SQR Ilyas after the meeting.

The AIMPLB executive discussed the Muzaffarnagar riots for over an hour. Majority of the members were of the view that had the SP Government taken action immediately, several lives would have been saved.

Even the Congress-led Central government was not spared by the executive. The members said the Central Government should not have relied on the state Government and should have taken action at their level.

"The Board is of the view that all that happened in Muzaffarnagar and its adjoining districts was a political game. With little time left for the parliamentary elections, these riots were politically engineered," Ilyas said.

The AIMPLB asked the Central Government to pass the Communal Violence Bill at the earliest.

"The AIMPLB executive passed a resolution that if the Communal Violence Bill could not be passed, the Central Government should not wait and bring an ordinance on it," Ilyas said.

The executive also expressed disappointment that the Central Government did not introduce a separate waqf properties eviction bill promised by it.

"The AIMPLB has asked the Central Government to issue an ordinance on eviction from waqf properties without waiting for the next session to introduce a bill," said Ilyas. ■

Around the World

QUR'AN OFFERS PANACEA FOR MODERN PROBLEMS

There is an urgent need to spread the divine message of Qur'an in the modern world, which is beset with conflicts and problems, in order to promote global peace and stability, said a physician at the Jeddah National Hospital. Having embraced Islam recently, she highlighted the scientific facts in the Holy Qur'an saying it emphasizes the divinity of the Qur'an being the word of God. "Who will be a better guide for us than our Creator," she asked, and called upon Muslims as well as non-Muslims to learn the Qur'an. The Qur'an is not a book of science, but a book of signs and miracles. She referred to various scientific facts mentioned in the Qur'an including the Bing Bang theory, the role of male's sperm in determining the sex of fetus, the role of mountains in stabilizing the earth, the barrier between sweet and salt waters, the communication between ants and the well-organized life of bees. ■

ASSAD REGIME'S SEIZURE OF MEDICAL AID 'A WAR CRIME'

Syrian government forces have committed war crimes by seizing medical aid from convoys bound for rebel-held areas, European Union aid chief Kristalina Georgieva said on 12 September. "There are cases where medical kits, surgical kits, are removed. What it means is that on the other side, a wounded man, woman or child could die," Georgieva told reporters. "It is a war crime to remove surgical kits from a convoy, or to prevent help getting in, or, what is even worse, to target medical facilities and bomb them, to shoot at doctors," Georgieva said in Geneva, where US Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov were to hold talks on efforts to control Syria's chemical weapons.

"Thirty-one humanitarian workers have lost their lives. Turning a blind eye to a violation of international humanitarian law is a war crime too," she added. She said fewer than

half of the eight million Syrians who need aid received it on a regular basis, as the civil war that has claimed more than 100,000 lives and driven two million refugees abroad shows no sign of abating. ■

EGYPT BROTHERHOOD MEMBERS JAILED FOR LIFE

An Egyptian military court has sentenced 11 Muslim Brotherhood members to life in prison. Forty-five other Brotherhood members were handed five-year jail terms on 3 September, and eight defendants were acquitted. The men were accused of "shooting and adopting violent means" against the army in Suez on 14 August following a military crackdown in the streets of Cairo against supporters of the ousted President Mohamed Morsi. Since then, most of the Brotherhood's top leadership has been arrested and face charges of inciting violence. Morsi was himself referred to trial on 1 September on that charge. ■

OIC WANTS TERRORISM DEFINED

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) says the world needs a clear-cut definition of terrorism to remove any ambiguity and maintain strong consensus on the issue. In a statement on 5 September to the third meeting of heads of police organisations and agencies in the OIC member states, Secretary-General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu said this definition should be adopted by the UN global counterterrorism strategy. The OIC had contributed to the strategy.

He said major events were unfolding in the Muslim world, which require enhanced cooperation between states. He said the OIC has always urged its member states to coordinate efforts and collaborate to strengthen international partnerships through the UN, which in September 2011 endorsed the Saudi and OIC-backed initiative to establish an International Counter-Terrorism Centre. ■

OUR REPRESENTATIVES ABROAD

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