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Malice a Serious Evil

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

The thing that the Prophet of Allah, blessings and peace be on him, has denounced most after Shirk (ascribing partners to Allah) is malice. It is related in a Tradition that in the Night of Deliverance in which Allah generously forgives the sinful, three kinds of people are not granted forgiveness: persons disobedient to their parents, habitual drunkards, and those who nourish ill-will and malice for other Muslims. The Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, has specially instructed Muslims to remain mindful of the rights of relationship on one another. It comes in another Hadith that the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, said that Allah had ordered him to do nine things, one of which was "that I establish relationship with him who severs relationship with me, forgive him who offends me, and give him who withholds from me." It is not really a matter of credit that one should treat those courteously with whom he has good relationship. Islam urges upon its adherents that they treat even those with courtesy and goodwill who hurt them. ■

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Wisdom of Qur'an

"Indeed, We created man from a mixed sperm drop, to try him, and therefore We made him capable of hearing and seeing. We showed him the way, whether to be grateful or disbelieving."

(Al-Qur'an – 76:2-3)

These verses highlight man's real position in the world and the position of the world for man. He is not like trees and animals that the object of his creation be fulfilled on earth itself, and he should die and perish here after he has played his appointed role over a period of time according to the law of nature. Furthermore, this world is neither a place of punishment for him as the monks think, nor a place of rewards as the believers of the law of transmigration think, nor a place of entertainment and enjoyment as the materialists think, nor a battlefield as the followers of Darwin and Marx think, but in fact it is a place of test and trial for him. That which he regards as his age, is in fact the time given to him for the test. Whatever powers and capabilities he has been given in the world, the thing that have been placed under his control and authority, the various positions and capacities in which he functions, and the relationships that he enjoys with other men, all these are the countless papers of the test and this test continues till the last breath of his life. The result is not to be announced in this world but in the Hereafter when all his answer-books will have been assessed, decision will be given whether he has come out successful or failed. And his success or failure wholly depends on what he thought of himself while he functioned here and how he answered the papers that were given him here. If he believed that he had no God, or that he was the slave of many gods, and while answering the papers thought that he was not to be held accountable before his Creator in the Hereafter, his whole lifework went wrong. And if he regarded himself as the slave of One God and worked in the way approved by God, with the accountability of the Hereafter always in view, he stood successful in the test. ■

Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

Zaid bin Khalid al-Juhani relates that a person asked Allah's Apostle (may Allah bless and greet him) about picking up stray articles, whereupon he said: "Make announcement about it for a year, and recognise well the strap and the bag (containing that); then spend that; and if its owner comes, make him the payment of that." He (the enquirer) said: "Messenger of Allah, what about the lost goat?" He said: "Take it, for that is yours or for your brother, or for the wolf." He (again) said, "(What about) the lost camel?" The Messenger of Allah was enraged until his cheeks became red and then said: "You have nothing to do about that; it has feet and a leather bag (to quench its thirst) until its owner finds it."

(Sahih Muslim)

The term *luqta* in the Arabic text of this hadith signifies the property which a person finds lying upon the ground and takes away for the purpose of preserving it, as a trust. In ordinary circumstances, it under one's custody if one happens to find it. According to some jurists, it becomes binding for a man to take the stray thing in his charge if it is liable to perish in case it is not preserved. So far as the period of its preservation is concerned, it is one year, but it can be extended up to three years keeping in view the nature of the commodity. If the commodity is valuable and it is easy to preserve it, then the period is longer, otherwise it is short. Then the trustee should make regular advertisement of the fact that he has found a stray thing and its owner should come to him to take it. At the end of the period, if he deems expedient, he should make use of that in case he is insolvent. If the finder of a stray property discovers the owner, having bestowed it in alms or given it as charity, the owner has two things as option: he may approve of and confirm the charity, or if the owner chooses, he may claim it from finder; but he can do this in case the finder is solvent enough to pay that back. It is laudable to secure stray goats and sheep, but not of oxen, horses and camels. ■

Tragedy in Mecca

Recent incidents during Hajj period in Macca are quite tragagic. First, a sand-storm of high velocity crashed the part of a crane parked on the first floor which fell down on pilgrims offering prayers or circumbulating around the 'Kaba'. A good number of lives were lost in it. Soon after a tragedy occured in Mina where about thousand of Hajjis were crushed to death and hundreds were injured. It was a repeat of 1906 episode in which only about 400 pilgrims had lost their life.

The performance of Hajj is a lifetime achievement for a Muslim who lives far away from Saudi Arabia. Hajj is one of the five 'pillars' of Islam. However, it is a must only for those who can financially afford the expenditure involved in it and are also physically fit to perform its rituals.

Just about a decade or so before the close of 20th century it was not easy to undertake the arduous journey from India to Saudi Arabia. Only sea route was open to Jeddah this had a deterrent effect on those who wished to reach Mecca, the holiest place for a Muslim. However, with all round development, the 'air travel' which till recently was confined only to rich people has become accessible to common people as well.

The travelling facilities, tremendous developments and improvements in Saudi Arabia have opened a flood-gate of pilgrims to the holy land. Now the number of pilgrims reaching Mecca is increasing every year.

By all standards Saudi government leaves no stone unturned to offer as much facility and comfort to the visiting pilgrims as possible. But often some rituals which are to be performed at Mina, a desert plain about 5 km. away from Mecca run into trouble. This tent city which comes to life only for a few days during the Hajj is quite

susceptible to accidents. In the past many pilgrims lost their lives when their tents caught fire. In 1990 stampede which took lives of 1426 pilgrims occurred in the tunnel which has been laid for proper flow of pilgrims between Mecca and Mina. But a constant danger always haunts pilgrims at Jamrat. There are three pillars depicting the devil. Hajis are required to stone one pillar a day. The time for stoning them is also fixed. On the last day this ritual takes place when the sun starts declining. Since after performing this ritual one rushes to Mecca for circumambulation around the Kaaba, Hajis make haste in this performance. This year stampede at Mina on the last day killed about 1000 pilgrims. Stampedes at the Jamrat occur almost annually, of course of different intensity, because many of the pilgrims are- new to the ritual, and simply have not learnt about the dangers, they do not clearly understand the actions that must be taken to avoid creating a catastrophe, according to a Saudi official. Additionally, due to diversity of languages and dialects spoken by the pilgrims, it is a Herculean task for the security forces to communicate directions to the pilgrims.

The ritual of stoning of the devil has long been a source of anxiety for Saudi authorities. Hajj committees and other social organisations of various countries must take the responsibility to educate the person going for Hajj. It is heartening to learn that Saudi government has started pulling down a disaster proof bridge near Mecca. Since legitimacy of Saudi Arabia's ruling family in the eyes of many Muslims rests on its ability to host pilgrims from across the world every year their concern is quite understandable. ■

S.A.

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Preserving Islam for Future Generations

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Were you present when death appeared before Jacob? Behold, he said to his sons: "What will you worship after me?" They said: "We shall worship your God, the God of your fathers - of Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac, the One True God, to Him we bow [in Islam]."

(al-Baqarah 2:133)

This verse appears in the early part of the Qur'an. It is then worth studying why Allah accorded such importance to this event. Whatever is linked with Allah is meaningful and helps man gain proximity with Him. It protects one against numerous threats. If one studies this passage causally, it will appear to one as no more than an event that preceded the Prophet Jacob's demise. Reading it without attention one is liable to miss its legal, historical, cultural and inner meanings. Allah states that what is in the Qur'an is to be read until the Last Day. Allah has therefore, included in it only such material which provokes man's reflection and which is bound to provide many lessons. Let us first note the universal truth enunciated in the passage. Everyone who is born is mortal. One has to return to Allah at the expiry of one's life span. This universal law applies to the Messenger of Allah as well.

Regarding the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) the Qur'an specifically says that notwithstanding his being a Messenger of Allah, he is mortal. Like other messengers he too will pass away one day. He has to return to Allah, as is ordained by Him. Undoubtedly, he will enjoy close proximity with Allah. Yet as a mortal human being he will face death. Given this, it is all the more perplexing as to why so much attention is focused on the Prophet Jacob's demise. Many of us read and fail to appreciate the underlying meaning behind this passage.

While Muslims are addressed, the Qur'an asks them: "Were you present when death appeared before Jacob?" This is a feature special to the Qur'an. As it projects something graphically, evoking the full attention of its audience, it follows the above technique. At that time, when the Prophet Jacob (peace and blessings be upon him) was breathing his last, he asked his sons as to what they would worship after him.

Let us recall that the above incident involves the Prophet Jacob (peace and blessings be upon him), son of Isaac and grandson of Abraham. He was also the nephew of the Prophet Ishmael (peace and blessings be upon him). In

sum, he belonged to the illustrious family of Allah's messengers. Of them, special mention should be made of the prophets Abraham and Ishmael (peace and blessings be upon them). Allah dubbed the former as His friend and the latter is the progenitor of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). The Prophet Jacob's son was Joseph, who too, was Allah's messenger. Generally speaking, at the time of his death, a Muslim does not ask the question posed by the Prophet Jacob (peace and blessings be upon him). This holds true even of devout Muslims - scholars and spiritual masters alike - for they assume that they have already instructed their children in the fundamentals of Islam, the concept of Allah and the creedal statement of Islam. Their children bear Muslim names and the adults among them, whom Allah enables, go to the mosque and offer prayers there. The young ones see their elders praying. Likewise, the names of Allah and His messengers are mentioned in their homes. All this made Muslims complacent and hence on their deathbed they did not verify the faith of their children.

If one were to collect the wills of deceased persons, one would gather a large collection. Some of these are marked by historical insight and literary features, and reflect the workings of the human psyche. On studying the wills of 'Ulama', religious leaders, reformers,

activists, rulers and officials, one gets a fair idea of the relationship between parents and children. These epitomise human feelings, emotions, wisdom and intellectual brilliance. These unravel the interplay of man's intricate psychology. Reading these one is struck by the unity of human emotions. Most men are found giving almost identical pieces of advice, irrespective of their different eras and varying mental, socio-cultural and religious backgrounds. They often impart the advice of patience to their near and dear ones. They advise their children to maintain unity and not to quarrel over their inheritance. Some instruct them to repay any debt owed by them. Others ask them to realise the loans lent by them. It is common for them to hand over legal papers. Some of them who are God-conscious and religious insist that the loans borrowed by them be repaid. This is the general thrust of wills left behind by the deceased.

In the case under study the children of Allah's messengers were involved. We love and respect them, for they were trained by the messengers themselves. They were witness to the markedly religious ambience of their home, marked by prayers, remembrance of Allah, and supplications and invocations to Him. They had seen their mothers turning fervently to Allah in every crisis. They had not come across the name of any deity,

for they knew Allah alone as the supreme Lord. They looked upon only Allah as All-Powerful, holding His sway over the universe and Master of all loss and gain. They recognized only Him as the source of all hope and fear. These children were unaware of any doctrine other than that of monotheism. Likewise, they knew only prayers and fasting as religious obligations.

Yet the Prophet Jacob (peace and blessings be upon him) is seen in this passage as not taking any chances. When one is particular about something, one does not leave anything to chance, indulging in speculation. In a crisis one frankly expresses what ails one. For example, if one falls ill, one informs one's children of one's pain and clearly asks them to call in a physician. The same holds true for an extremely hungry person. He is unable to exercise much self-restraint and unabashedly asks for food. This applies equally to members of the elite and ruling classes. It is hence worth studying why the Prophet Jacob (peace and blessings be upon him) summoned his children and other family members, asking them what he did.

These were his last moments. He did not have much time and energy left. Some people intuitively know about their approaching death. The Prophet Jacob (peace and blessings be upon him) being the messenger of Allah had some inkling about his last hour. He realized well that he was about to die. He spoke

his last words to his family, words which were markedly different from those uttered by other dying people. Generally, wills instruct inheritors not to fight among themselves, to lead life honourably and decently, to take special care of female and young members of the family and to maintain ties of kinship. This has been the trend for centuries. However, the Prophet Jacob (peace and blessings be upon him) raised an issue which was very dear to him. He took it as a highly significant and decisive matter on which hinged the eternal success of his children. Any lapse on his part on this count, he thought, would incur a serious loss for them. He was very particular about the issue which he discussed with them.

For him, the most important issue was the preservation of the faith of his children, their thorough grounding in faith and their adherence to true faith until their last breath. With this aim in mind he assembled them. As he passed away at a ripe age, his grandchildren would have been beside him as well. His nephews and other close relatives too, must have gathered. At that critical moment he pointedly asked them the question: "What will you worship after me?" He wanted to ascertain the level of their faith, which would put his mind at rest. This was his only concern. The Qur'an and other works do not refer to any other issue raised by him on his deathbed. His attention was focused

solely on the object of worship by his children.

The Qur'an recounts this event for a variety of considerations. He posed a specific question and received a pointed reply. They affirmed their unwavering belief in the Oneness of the One True God. The Qur'an does not record any other details of this meeting. His children might have expressed their surprise over the question set by him, for he had thoroughly instructed them in monotheism. Moreover, they had been witness to the profession and practice of monotheism in their home. Being the sons and grandsons of the messengers of Allah they were firm believers. They were his own progeny who could not deviate an inch from his faith. The Qur'an, nonetheless, recounts only their prompt and reassuring reply to the question: "We shall worship your God, the God of your fathers." They affirmed their allegiance to the faith of their ancestors, for they had been eloquently warned against the dreadful consequences of polytheism. In professing the faith of such illustrious forefathers as the prophets Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael and Jacob (peace and blessings be upon them), they made it plain that they would prefer death to indulging in polytheism. Thus they reassured Jacob, that they would continue to adhere to their ancestral faith. They declared their firm belief in the One True God. Their vow thus

satisfied him on his deathbed.

This is how every Muslim should behave. He should always, be on guard regarding his faith. He should supplicate to Allah to enable him to profess and practise Islam until his last breath. It is the best end for him to die in a state of Islam. He should also ensure that his children adhere as well to the true faith and that they never turn to anyone besides Allah. Securing this assurance from them is very important. Indeed, one should make a point of so doing. Apart from practising faith Muslims should denounce disbelief. For Allah loves those who loathe false gods and turn to Him alone. Whoever rejects Satan and believes in Allah holds on to a firm bond. For true faith it is essential, in equal degree, to reject fully all that disbelief stands for. Allah should be Muslims' only object of worship. Rejection of disbelief precedes the affirmation of true faith. We should better bear these points in mind.

The verse quoted at the outset of this reminder reflects the ideal mould of a Muslim. In recording this event, the Qur'an has preserved a role model until the Last Day. Every Muslim is supposed not only to read this passage, but also draw lessons from it. The Qur'an is not very particular about relating historical events, it is not after all some work of history. Instead, we should look at this passage, as indeed all others, as instructing us in how to lead our lives. ■

Meaning of 'Ibadat in Islam

- Syed Sulaiman Nadwi

The word *'Ibadat* used in Islam has a different connotation than that used in other religions of the world. *'Ibadat* in Islam means an expression of a man's deep sense of humility and submission to His Creator and Master. *'Ibadat*, whether observed singly or in congregation, whether at the appointed hour of ritual prayer or at any sudden longing of his heart to call His Lord, reflects the one single attitude of submission, humility, and closeness to Allah. *'Ibadat* is, therefore, the negation of the word (pride). It has been said in the Holy Qur'an:

Lo! those who scorn My service,
they will enter hell disgraced.

(40: 60)

Only those who believe in our revelations who when they are reminded of them, fall down prostrate and hymn the praise of their Lord, they are not scornful.

(32 : 15)

If the attitude of man is not that of submission and resignation to the Will of the Master, howsoever his acts may be pious and virtuous they cannot be termed as *'Ibadat*, for which piety and sincerity of heart and good intention, in other words, *Iman* is a pre-condition. It has been stated in the Holy Qur'an:

Far removed from it will be the
righteous

Who giveth his wealth that he may
grow (in goodness),

And none hath with him any favour
for reward,

Except as seeking (to fulfill) the
purpose of his Lord Most High.

He verily will be content.

(92: 17-21)

And whatever good thing ye spend,
it is for yourselves, when ye spend not
save in search of Allah's countenance.

(2: 272)

And feed with food the needy, wretch,
the orphan and the prisoner, for love of
Him, (saying): We feed you, for the sake
of Allah only.

(76:8,9)

And woe to the worshippers.

Who are heedless of their prayer;

Who would be seen (at worship)

Yet refuse small kindness.

(107 : 4-7)

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has elucidated the above verses of the Holy Qur'an in these few but comprehensive words:

Verily (the reward of) actions
depends upon intentions.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to the people who had left their homes and migrated to Madinah.

Each person will get (the reward of) his intention; whose migration is for Allah and His Messenger, his reward is with Allah. As for him whose migration is for the world or for a woman to marry her, his migration will be (rewarded) for that he intended. Therefore, every action which is done to please Allah, in obedience to His command, is called *'Ibadat*. If you spend one lakh rupees simply to earn-reputation and popularity it would not be *'Ibadat*; but a small amount spent by you for Allah's cause in obedience to His command will be amply rewarded by Him. *'Ibadat* means purification of heart and soul and sincerity of action and resignation or submission to Allah's will and commands. It has been said in the Holy Qur'an:

O mankind! Worship your Lord, Who hath created you and those before you, so that ye may ward off (evil).

(2 :21)

It is obvious from the above verse that the main aim and object of *'Ibadat* is to develop *Taqwa* (piety) in man.

Taqwa implies that state of mind which inspires a man to do good and pious deeds and shun and hate bad and evil deeds. Once the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: The piety is here (and while saying so) he pointed towards his chest thrice.

The Holy Qur'an has used the words *Taqwa-tul-Qulub* to elucidate this point. As we have already said, the real aim and object of *'Ibadat* is to inculcate such thoughts and sentiments in the mind as arouse in him an intense love for good and virtuous deeds and hatred for sins and evils. Prayers, fasts, etc., and all other *'Ibadat* are only means to this end. Therefore, all those actions and deeds performed by a person in accordance with the Shari'ah can be defined as *'Ibadat*. It was generally considered that *'Ibadat* was confined only to prayer, worship, sacrifice; but the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) taught a vast concept of *'Ibadat*. According to his Divine teachings every pious act and deed which is done purely for the sake of Allah and for the benefit of mankind with the sole aim to please Allah falls under the definition of *'Ibadat*. The acts and deed which we do for the sake of Allah are free from all sorts of hypocrisy, false show or ostentation; their aim is not to win popularity or applause, nor to earn any material gain, nor are they meant to keep the people under obligation.

As a result of the above teachings, the distinction between religion and world which were hitherto considered as contrary to each other ended. In Islam all those works which are done purely to please the Lord without any selfish material motive behind them and are not for the sake of false show, popularity or applause are called religious works. The Messenger of Allah

(peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to the companions who observed fast during the day and stood in prayer during the whole night: Do not do that for your body has a share of its own in you, your eye has a share of its own in you, your wife has a share of her own in you. And your guest has also the right that you should entertain him. In short, the fulfillment of all these rights and carrying out Allah's commands are '*Ibadat*'. Earning of livelihood through lawful means and giving thanks to Him are also '*Ibadat*': So worship Him and put thy trust in Him.

(11: 123)

To show patience and perseverance in adversity is also '*Ibadat*'.

Therefore, worship thou Him and be thou stead-fast in His service.

(19: 65)

To console a dejected and disheartened person and to forgive a person who had committed a fault are also '*Ibadat*'.

A kind word with forgiveness is better than almsgiving followed by injury, Allah is Absolute, Clement.

(2 : 263)

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

Do not consider anything insignificant out of good things even if it is that you meet your brother with a cheerful countenance.

A person while going along the path found a thorny branch upon it. He pushed it to a side and Allah approved (this action) of his and granted him pardon.

Do not bear aversion against one another and do not be jealous of one another and be fellow-brothers, servants of Allah. The one who looks after and works for a widow and for a poor person is like a warrior fighting for Allah's cause or like a person who fasts during the day and stands up (for prayer) all the night. Should I tell you something more significant than Zakat, prayer and *Sadaqah*? The companions said: O Messenger of Allah! Tell us about it. He said: Reconciliation between the persons having estranged relations.

Salman Farsi (the Persian) (may Allah be pleased with him) came to another companion Abu Dharr. He saw that Abu Dharr's wife was wearing poor and dirty clothes. When Salman inquired about the cause for this she said: Your brother has become averse to this world. Then the meal was brought for the guest but Abu Dharr refused to take it saying that he was keeping fast but Salman insisted that he would not take the meal unless he shared with him, so Abu Dharr broke the fast. When it was night, Salman said to Abu Dharr: Go to bed now. In the last hours of the night, Salman awakened him for prayer and both said the *Tahajjud* prayer. Then Salman said to him: Your Allah has a right on you, your body has right on you. Your wife has also right on you, so you should fulfil the rights of all. Abu Dharr repeated

this speech of Salman in the presence of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) whereupon he (the Holy Prophet) said: Salman has said the truth.

The people said to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): Which deed is loved most by Allah. He replied: To believe in Allah and to participate in Jihad for Allah's cause. They said: The release of which of slaves would bring (us) the greatest reward. He replied: The one whose price is high and who is valuable for his master. They said: If one has nothing (to give in charity)? He said: He should work with his hands so that he may benefit himself and give in charity. They said: If he does not have the means to do so? Then he should help the needy, the aggrieved person (by word or action or both). They said: If he does not do it. He said: Then he should enjoin what is good. They said: If he does not do that? He said: Then he should refrain from doing evil for that will be considered for him as a *Sadaqa* (charity).

Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as saying: Verily Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, would say on the Day of Resurrection: O son of Adam, I was sick but you did not visit Me. He would say: O My Lord, how could I visit Thee whereas Thou art the Lord of the worlds? Thereupon He would say: Did not you know that such and such servant of Mine was sick but you did not visit him and were you not aware of this that if you had visited him, you would have found Me by him. O

son of Adam I asked food from you but you did not feed Me. He would say: My Lord how could I feed Thee whereas Thou art the Lord of the worlds? He said: Did not you know that such and such servant of Mine asked food from you but you did not feed him, and were you not aware that if you had fed him you would have found him by My side? (The Lord would again say): O son of Adam, I asked drink from you but you did not provide Me. He would say: My Lord how could I provide Thee whereas Thou art the Lord of the worlds? Thereupon He would say: Such and such servant of Mine asked you for a drink but you did not provide him, and had you provided him drink you would have found him near Me.

This impressive way of teaching instilled piety, love and devotion in the minds of the people for Allah as the aim of all their acts of devotion (*'Ibadat*) was only to please Him. It was said to Sa'd (may Allah be pleased with him) who desired to spend all his wealth in the cause of Islam: O Sa'd, whatever you spend with the intention that it is for Allah you will get the reward thereof, even the morsel of bread which you put in the mouth of your wife has its reward. He (the Holy Prophet) said to Abu Mas'ud of Ansar (Allah be pleased with him): When a Muslim spends on his wife, it is also a *Sadaqa*.

Abu Dharr (Allah be pleased with him) reported: Some of the people from among the companions of the Apostle of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to him: Messenger of Allah,

the rich have taken away (all the) rewards . They pray as we do; they keep the fast as we keep, and they give Sadaqa out of their surplus riches. Upon this he (the Holy Prophet) said: Has Allah not provided for you (a course) by following which you can (also) do Sadaqa? In every declaration of glorification of Allah (i.e. saying Allah-o-Akbar) is a *Sadaqa*, and every praise of His (saying *al-Hamdu Lillah*) is a *Sadaqa* and every declaration that He is One (*La ilaha illa'llah*) is a *Sadaqa*, and enjoining good is a *Sadaqa*, and forbidding of that which is evil is a *Sadaqa* and in man's sexual intercourse (with his wife) there is a *Sadaqa*. They said: Messenger of Allah, is there reward for him who satisfies his sexual passion among us? He said: Tell me, if he were to devote it to something forbidden would it not be sin on his part? Similarly if he were to devote it to something lawful, he should have a reward.

It is evident from the above Ahadith that in Islam the concept of '*Ibadat*' is very wide and every good and virtuous action or deed done in obedience to Allah and to seek this pleasure is '*Ibadat*'. According to the following verse of the Holy Qur'an, the purpose of creation of humankind and Jinns is '*Ibadat*'.

I created the Jinn and humankind only that they might worship Me.

(51 : 56)

Thus all your activities and your entire life is '*Ibadat*' if it is in accordance with the law of Allah, if your hearts are filled with

His fear and if your ultimate objective is to earn His pleasure. If you help to poor and the destitute, give food to the hungry and serve the ailing and the afflicted persons and do all this not for any personal gain of yours but because Allah has so ordained, they constitute '*Ibadat*'. If you abstain from falsehood, malice, indecent and foul language, abuse, and speak truth and talk goodly things for fear of Allah, it is also '*Ibadat*'. Even your economic activities-the activities to earn your living to feed your dependents are '*Ibadat*' if you remain honest and truthful and observe the law of Allah. If you follow the will and commands of Allah in all the spheres of life and abide by them in dealing with your parents, neighbours, relatives, friends and all those who come in contact with you, verily all these actions of yours are '*Ibadat*'. Thus whenever you do good or avoid evil for fear of Allah, in whatever sphere of life and field of activity you may be, you are discharging your Islamic obligations. This is the true significance of '*Ibadat*' viz, total submission to the will of Allah, the moulding into the patterns of Islam the entire life, leaving out not even the most insignificant part thereof; to help achieve this aim a set of formal '*Ibadat*' has been constituted to serve as a course of training. The more assiduously we follow the training, the better equipped we are for bringing harmony between our ideals and practices. The '*Ibadat*' are thus the pillars on which the edifice of Islam rests or stands.

Now let us see what code of conduct Muhammad (peace and blessing

of Allah be upon him) has taught as ordained by Allah, the Almighty: The four obligatory Duties which are in fact the basis of all our good and virtuous deeds must be observed by each and every person professing to belong to the Muslim community, and these are as under:-

- 1) Good and pious acts which pertain exclusively to the Creator and His creatures have been given under the heading *Salat*.
- 2) Good and pious acts and deeds done for the benefit and comfort of mankind have been given under the heading, *Zakat and Sadaqa* (charity).
- 3) Bearing hunger and thirst for the sake of some sublime and noble cause in order to feel in one's body what the poor and hungry feel, and make one realize the responsibility to feed and give drink to the hungry and thirsty and purify the heart from the filth of lust and temptations which are great obstacles in the way of moral and spiritual elevation.
- 4) Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, has ordained Hajj to foster the feelings of brotherhood among the Muslims who flock together from all corners of the world to visit the Ka'bah, the centre of love and devotion for all, irrespective of races, nations, rich or poor or high or low. ■

Love and Affection

Love is ingrained in the nature of man. His clay has been kneaded with it. Along with the five senses by which man perceives and responds to the material world there is another instinct in him which we call love, affection or attachment. This instinct can be strong as well as weak, manifest as well as hidden. But if it were to become extinct, it would be a clear proof of the fact that man has lost his intrinsic superiority and worthiness, turned away from his original destiny and into the domain of fossils and stones. Man is both loyal and sensitive. His emotions are excitable and his feelings are delicate. He is drawn irresistibly towards beauty and perfection. He is sake of beloved. The memorable stories of lovers, the stirring deeds of all men of faith and suffering and the entire emotional and intuitive literature and lyrical poetry of the world are inspired by the tender passion called love. ■

Internal Rectification and Devotion of Allah

-S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi

The elements of *tasawwuf* (mysticism), *ihsan* (sublime God-consciousness), and *tazkiyah batin* (internal purification) were deeply imbued in the life of Sheikh Abul Hasan 'Ali Nadwi. But they were often overshadowed by his overwhelming engagement in the effort of improving condition of Muslims and presenting Islam to non-Muslims. As a result, most people were unable to see this aspect of Islam in his life. Not only was he associated with the discipline of *tazkiyah batin*, but he had thoroughly studied influential literature on it and had undergone strenuous exercises to excel in it.

Sheikh Nadwi's study of the discipline of *tazkiyah batin* began with Imam Ghazali's monumental book *Ahya ul 'Uloom* which he read at an early age. He was also greatly influenced by the thinking and supervision of his mother and elder brother. His mother was the daughter of Sheikh Syed Shah Ziaun Nabi Hasani who was a renowned spiritual personality of his time and she was known to have been most affected by him in the family.

Sheikh Nadwi's mother kept a very vigilant eye on Sheikh Nadwi from his very childhood and always labored hard to steer him in the right direction. Whenever she found him showing even the slightest inclination towards the worldly interests of

his peers, she immediately put a stop on it. She always described to him examples of pious and spiritual people and encouraged him to be like them. She often talked about her father Syed Shah Ziaun Nabi Hasani, his *khalifah* (deputy) Sheikh Syed Muhammad Amin Nasirabadi and Sheikh Nadwi's paternal grandfather who was also a distinguished spiritual elder of his time.

Only about a hundred years ago, the famed personality of Sheikh Syed Ahmad Shaheed (d. 1831) had emerged in the family and the stories of his spirituality, piety, and sacrifices were still fresh in the minds of family members and they used to often talk about him. All of these had created in Sheikh Nadwi an inclination towards *tazkiyah batin* from the very childhood.

Dr. Syed 'Abdul' Ali Hasani had closely observed his father and was earnestly following his footprints. As a result, he was also closely associated with the pious and learned people of his time. He was a disciple of Sheikh Syed Hussain Ahmad Madni and used to be his host in Lucknow.

Sheikh Nadwi, after finishing his formal education, wanted to establish a spiritual connection with some spiritual elder. For that purpose, he approached Sheikh Ghulam Muhammad Deenpuri who

was a renowned spiritual elder of Punjab. Sheikh Deenpuri in turn directed him to his *khalifah* Sheikh Ahmad 'Ali Lahori. Sheikh Lahori accepted Sheikh Nadwi as his disciple and instructed him to remain isolated from public as well as his relatives for a specified period of time and stay in a room in Badshahi Masjid (in Lahore) by himself. Since the *masjid* was away from the populated area, it used to become very lonely in the night - something that Sheikh Lahori deemed necessary for *tazkiyah batin*. In addition, Sheikh Lahori also prescribed a regimen of *awraad* and *adhkaar* (words recited to remember Allah) to attain excellence in internal purification. Through these means, Sheikh Nadwi was able to attain the desired level of spirituality and was later conferred *khilafah* (permission to render spiritual guidance to others) by Sheikh Lahori.

That was the time when Sheikh Nadwi was in his prime youth - the age at which very few individuals are able to keep away from worldly interests and activities. But he was very determined and spiritually enlightened. He was very particular about his *awraad*, *adhkaar*, and *tahajjud* (pre-dawn prayer) and he maintained these in future also when he was teaching and taking care of his home and family.

In addition to remaining in close contact with his spiritual mentor Sheikh Ahmad' Ali Lahori, Sheikh Nadwi also maintained relationship with other elders. He also visited Hakimul Ummat Ashraf Ali Thanwi (in Thana Bhawan, a small town

located in Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh) and used to attend Sheikh Thanwi's gatherings during his visits to Lucknow.

Gradually Sheikh Nadwi became very close to Sheikh Muhammad Ilyas Kandhlawi and Sheikh' Abdul Qadir Raipuri, and gained their special trust and attention. His relationship with Sheikh Raipuri developed further and he became one of Sheikh Raipuri's prominent *khulfah* (spiritual deputies). Although Sheikh Nadwi had *khilafah* (permission to guide others) from several other elders, he usually guided people in the tradition of Sheikh Raipuri and most of his associates took *bay'ah* (oath of spiritual allegiance) in this tradition.

Sheikh Nadwi had permission to render spiritual guidance in all four major traditions of *tasawwuf*. In addition, he also had permission in the tradition of his ancestor Sheikh Syed Ahmad Shaheed which is known as Muhammadiyah tradition; he gave permission to some of his *khulfah* to render spiritual guidance in this tradition.

In addition to having close connection with Sheikh Raipuri, Sheikh Nadwi maintained close contact with other elders of *tasawwuf* as well and visited them on a regular basis to seek their blessings. Thus he used to go to Bhopal's Shah Muhammad Yakoob Mujaddidi who was a high-ranking Sheikh of the Mujaddidiyah tradition, Allahabad's Shah Muhammad Wasiyullah Fatehpuri who was a prominent *khalifah* of Hakimul Ummat

Ashraf' Ali Thanwi, Shah Muhammad Ahmad Partapgarhi who was a *khalifah* in the tradition of Shah Fazlur Rahman Ganj Moradabadi, Sheikh 'Abdus Shakoor Farooqi Lakhnawi, Haji 'Abdul Ghafoor Jodhpuri, and Sheikh Muhammad Ahmad.

By maintaining good relationship with these spiritual elders, Sheikh Nadwi had won a special place in their hearts. Their diversity helped him develop the ability to combine many different traits in his personality which in turn proved very effective in mentoring and guiding his own associates.

During the lifetime of Sheikh Raipuri, if someone approached Sheikh Nadwi for *bay'ah*, he directed that person to Sheikh Raipuri for it. However, if that person had some hesitation in taking *bay'ah* with Sheikh Raipuri or was insistent upon taking *bay'ah* with Sheikh Nadwi, he accepted that request out of necessity. Sometimes, Sheikh Raipuri also directed people to take *bay'ah* with Sheikh Nadwi.

In addition to maintaining very close connection with Sheikh Raipuri in spiritual matters, Sheikh Nadwi also consulted him in all of his other activities and engagements. In fact, he used to approach Sheikh Raipuri as if he was seeking his permission in those matters. Before undertaking any foreign trip, he used to first go to Raipur (town where Sheikh Raipuri was residing) and seek Sheikh Raipuri's approval.

Once he got an opportunity to go for *hajj* (pilgrimage to Makkah). He went to

Sheikh Raipuri and informed him about it. Sheikh Raipuri, due to some reason, did not give his consent as a result of which Sheikh Nadwi dropped his plan. During that conversation, Sheikh Raipuri looked at Sheikh Nadwi's face and found total compliance and obedience in him.

Next year, Sheikh Raipuri himself made arrangement for Sheikh Nadwi to go for *hajj* and accompanied him in that trip saying that it was the reward for listening to his advice the previous year without any hesitation. Besides enjoying the privilege of performing *hajj* with Sheikh Raipuri, Sheikh Nadwi was also able to derive many other benefits from that trip. He visited Egypt, Sudan, and Syria and got an opportunity to observe various Islamic movements in those countries. He also met prominent scholars and religious elders and exchanged his ideas with them regarding religious, academic, and d'awah (calling people towards Allah and His divine religion) efforts. Thus it was not merely a *hajj* trip. It in fact gave Sheikh Nadwi a rare opportunity and experience that helped him greatly in his future endeavors.

In that very trip, Sheikh Nadwi also got the opportunity to go inside the Baitullah (cube-shaped structure in Makkah which is known as the House of Allah). Sheikh Raipuri and those who were traveling with him were also able to avail that opportunity. The person-in-charge of the key to the Baitullah, Sheikh Shaibi had become so close to Sheikh Nadwi that he opened the Baitullah the next day also for

those who had missed the opportunity on the first day.

In Syria, Sheikh Nadwi met Sheikh Ahmad Haroon Al-'Asal Al-Hajjar who was a highly-respected spiritual elder of Al Ghazaliyah tradition of *tasawwuf*. Sheikh Al-Hajjar had significant influence in Damascus and its surroundings and people of all walks of life were benefitting from him. Sheikh Nadwi became very close to him during that visit.

Allah had blessed Sheikh Raipuri with a very special talent. He had a very good understanding of the conditions of Muslims of the entire Islamic world and he understood it very well as to what was needed to improve their condition and alleviate their suffering. He, through his associates, kept himself fully informed of what was happening around the world. Thus on the eve of Sheikh Nadwi's trips to foreign countries, he used to advise Sheikh Nadwi as to what kind of suggestions and advice Sheikh Nadwi should give to the rulers and influential people of those countries.

After Sheikh Raipuri passed away in 1962, Shaikhul Hadith Muhammad Zakariya Kandhlawi became Sheikh Nadwi's closest elder who was very kind and affectionate to Sheikh Nadwi. It was due to this closeness and trust that Shaikhul Hadith Muhammad Zakariya Kandhlawi wanted Sheikh Nadwi to write the foreword of all of his (Shaikhul Hadith's) books that were published in Arabic. One can gauge the affection and

attachment that Shaikhul Hadith had for Sheikh Nadwi by looking at the following letter that he wrote to Sheikh Nadwi from Madinah, Saudi Arabia, on 22nd Jumada Awwal 1393 Hijri (24 June 1973):

I did not forget you in d'ua (prayer) either in Makkah or Madinah. And I don't remember missing on any day sending salaah (blessing) and salaam (salutation) to the Prophet on your behalf. You will not disagree with me that I do not feel with anyone as comfortable as with you.

By remaining in close contact with prominent spiritual elders of his time, Sheikh Nadwi was able to understand different methods and traditions of spiritual mentoring and purification. This enabled him to utilize a variety of techniques in mentoring and grooming his own associates. If there was an associate who belonged to a certain environment and had the potential of carrying out the effort of *islah* (reform) effectively there, Sheikh Nadwi utilized methods that prepared that associate to do the work effectively in that very environment.

Sheikh Nadwi designated several of his associates as his *majaz* (deputy) to carry out the work of guiding and mentoring people on his behalf, both in India and foreign countries. He gave such permission to those about whom he felt that they could effectively serve Islam and develop good moral character in people. It included several who attained prominence in this respect; Sheikh 'Abdur Rasheed N'umani is one of them.

Sheikh Nadwi's method of spiritual mentoring was based on hadith and *sunnah* (traditions of Prophet Muhammad). He did not emphasize on any specific regimen of *tasawwuf* as much as on sincerity of intention, service to deen (Islam), and adherence to *sunnah*. He prescribed a lighter regimen of *adhkaar* to those who were engaged in teaching or learning of deen or in any other service of deen. Generally, he prescribed only those *adhkaar* which were less burdensome on human body and mind. The recitation of Quran and *adhkaar* which are derived from *sunnah* formed the core of what he prescribed to his disciples. In *adhkaar*, *kalimah tawheed* (words proclaiming the oneness of Allah) served as the main anchor and he recommended its recitation in a way that affected the heart.

At the time of taking *bay'ah* (oath of spiritual allegiance) from his disciples, Sheikh Nadwi uttered the same words that the Prophet Muhammad used to utter and had been mentioned in Quran in reference to *baitun-nisa'* (oath of allegiance of women). He emphasized on the belief in the oneness of Allah, His power, His decree, and in seeking His help in every matter.

In his own daily routine, in addition to reciting *adhkaar*, Sheikh Nadwi was very particular about recitation of Quran. He recited *Surah Yaseen* (thirty-sixth chapter of Quran) several times a day and made *d'ua* (supplication) thereafter. In his *d'ua*, he included all of his relatives, elders,

friends, those who had asked him for *d'ua* and all individuals and groups who were serving Islam and promoting Islamic teachings. He was so punctual in this practice that he never missed it and he used to do it in such a way that only those who were very close to him knew it.

It was also his daily routine to recite certain verses of Quran to seek protection from evils, diseases, harms, and calamities. He recited *Surah Al-Kahf* (eighteenth chapter of Quran) every Friday which was his habit from the very childhood.

The main qualities which Sheikh Nadwi had extracted from the lives of his elders and mentors were (1) humility, (2) respect for others, (3) service to deen (religion), (4) concern for the betterment and progress of humanity, and (5) concern for a system of education that would make students aware of the vices and challenges of their time, prepare them to meet those challenges and equip them with the ability to serve deen and *millat* (Muslims and humanity). He used to focus on nurturing these qualities in his associates and students and guide them accordingly.

He appreciated everyone who had anything positive to offer towards *deen*. He gave due respect and recognition to those who possessed qualities pertaining to *deen*. Sometimes he gave so much respect to a person that people around him thought that he was overestimating that person by not knowing his real worth.

But, the fact was that he was doing so simply as an act of respect that was due to a *momin* (believer).

Sheikh Nadwi greatly valued those who were striving and making sacrifices for the betterment and progress of Islam and Muslims. On the other hand, he was deeply hurt by those who were hurting the cause of Islam and Muslims. He had seen and understood the Islamic world. He had visited Europe and America. The hostile attitude of the anti-Islamic forces had made him very concerned and he used to remain restless at all times for the same. He used his pen and speech with full dedication for the benefit of Islam and Muslims even though it sometimes required risking his own prestige and standing. He used to say that it was not a big sacrifice to put on line one's prestige and position for the sake of truth. There were plenty of such examples in his life.

Not only did he publicly voice his opinion against the efforts that were aimed at harming Islam and Muslims in India and elsewhere, but he also spoke to the leaders and authorities with courage and advised them accordingly. And he did so even in situations where he himself was in danger of being harmed, but Allah protected him in every situation due to his sincerity. If he noticed any deficiency in the approach or thinking of an Islamic organization, he pointed it out with courage and wisdom. Sometimes, people were surprised by his courage and felt that it was not the right time to speak out, but he

went ahead without fearing for consequences. His approach of giving utmost respect to an individual and appreciating even the smallest good of a person was so effective that even his harsh words were taken in stride by people.

In the eyes of Sheikh Nadwi, all the above-mentioned qualities fell well within the realm of *tasawwuf* which is nothing other than fulfilling the requirements of *iman* (faith) and developing its temperament. He had in front of him the following verses of Quran in which the characteristics of a believing person are described:

Successful indeed are the believers who are humble in their prayers, who shun vain conversation, who are payers of the poor-due and who guard their modesty

-Al-M'uminun, 23:1-4

He was very particular about developing these qualities of *iman* in the society in order to bring reform. Before the conditions in Burma (now Myanmar) became very hostile to Muslims, he had sternly warned them to correct their *iman* and social life lest they might be afflicted with great difficulties. He had given similar warnings in his speeches to the people of Lebanon and Syria before revolution and upheaval gripped them. In his visits to Kuwait and Dubai also, he implored people to adopt the life of true believers and live a life according to the will of Allah.

He considered all of these activities to be part of *tasawwuf* and often reminded his disciples to the same. He also prescribed to his disciples the traditional regimens of *tasawwuf* which were derived from Quran and *hadith* or were recommended by authentic spiritual elders in accordance with *sunnah*. His approach, which was developed under the supervision and guidance of his esteemed elders, proved very beneficial to even those who were not so akin to the traditional regimens of *tasawwuf*.

He was very particular about not hurting anyone even though he might himself suffer. Sometimes, those who wanted to meet him or seek some kind of assistance from him would put him in a difficult situation. But he tolerated them and never let them know about his inconveniences. In some instances, because he could not fulfill their request or there was some misunderstanding, they started a campaign to defame him. But his response was not to reply back to such allegations. He even refrained from mentioning them in his gatherings as he considered it to be an act of backbiting.

He stayed away from backbiting at all costs even though it involved someone who had hurt him. He was never heard saying anything bad about anyone in his gatherings unless it pertained to protecting *deen* and *millat* from a possible damage. Even in those situations, he avoided personal attacks or criticism. Even with those who opposed him openly, he was nice and respectful instead of being

revengeful. If one of his associates told him that the person whom he was giving such a good treatment had in fact done such and such harm to him he simply replied, "I am aware, but this is my way".

Some people, in opposing him, gave him such a hard time that he became very distressed. But he only said, "Allah will decide in this matter. We are not going to retaliate." Generally, such people realized their mistakes after some time and subsequently changed their attitude towards him.

On one hand, he refrained from retaliating to those who harmed or mistreated him and, on the other, he wished well for everyone. Time and again, he was faced with very trying and difficult situations, but he always showed tolerance, kindness and leniency and refrained from reacting to those allegations. He always followed the example of a true *momin*.

He kept his eyes on his own shortcomings and avoided looking for faults of others. In solitude, he used to cry, repent, confess, and seek forgiveness. He used to express his needs to Allah with deep anguish by reciting the Quranic verse.

My Lord! I am needy of whatever good
You send down for me.

- Al-Qasas, 28: 24

He also used to recite other prayers and supplications including the Quranic verse:

I only complain of my suffering and my grief to Allah.

- Yusuf, 12: 86

Overwhelmed by the concern and worry for dying in the state of iman (firm faith), he often used to recite the Persian saying:

Khodaya 'aaqibai mahmood gardaan

O God! Make my end pleasant.

In dealing with his relatives, Sheikh Nadwi practiced the *sunnah* of *sila-rahmi* (establishing and mending relationship with relatives) and gave them love and co-operation. In case of those relatives who had caused him severe harm, he not only ignored their behavior, but also treated them nicely and gave special help and co-operation to them.

In Sheikh Nadwi's opinion, all these practices fell within the realm of *tasawwuf*, *ihsan*, and *tazkiyah* batin as is evident from the books that he has written about the elders of *tasawwuf* and *tazkiyah nafs*. To those who took *bay'ah* with him, he advised them to read sermons and biographies of elders. His recommendations included books, lectures, and sayings of Sheikh Ashraf' Ali Thanwi, *Fazail-e-'Aamaal* (published in English as *Teachings of Islam*) by Shaikhul Hadith Muhammad Zakariya Kandhlawi, his own books *Dastoor-e-Hiyat* (published in English as *A Guidebook for Muslims*), *Seerat Syed Ahmad Shaheed* (Urdu) and *Sawaneh Maulana Abdul Qadir Raipuri* (Urdu), *Zade-e-Safar* (Urdu) by Amatullah Tasnim

Sahiba, and *Mo'ariful Hadith* (published in English as *Meaning and Message of the Traditions*) by Sheikh Manzoor N'umani. He also recommended recitation of Quran with translation.

His greatest emphasis was on correcting and strengthening '*aqidan* (*faith*). One must have full conviction that there is no one except Allah who gives life and death, health and sickness, children and sustenance. No one except Him controls destiny of good or bad and no one except Him is worthy of worship. One must always remain mindful that it is He who creates and it is He who sustains.

After '*aqidah*, he emphasized most on *salah* (daily obligatory prayers). These must be performed at their prescribed times with full observance of devotion and *sunnah*. Negligence and slackness in *salah* cannot be recompensed in any way.

He also emphasized heavily on correcting *niyah* (intention). One must perform every deed, whether it pertains to this life or the hereafter, with the intention of getting reward and pleasure of Allah. The same must also be observed in matters pertaining to social dealings and activities in order to receive rewards for them.

He also used to remind people to observe the *sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad in every aspect of life, adhere to Prophet's instructions and study the life of Prophet. Instead of prescribing too many regimens, he used to prescribe only what one could easily do. ■

Tragedies during Hajj 2015

This year during the Hajj two incidents took place. One on September 11, a construction crane collapsed on the premises of Masjid-e- Haram, killing about 200 pilgrims and leaving hundreds injured. The other, on September 24, when Mina Stampede occurred during the symbolic stoning of the devil ritual in which about one thousand Hajjis were killed and more than 1500 wounded.

As we know and also believe that everything takes place by the will of Allah. Not even a blade of grass can move without His wish. Accordingly the twin ill-fated incidents i.e. the Makka crane crash and the Mina Stampede should be deemed as of same nature. Such incidents are out of control of human being. They should not be designed as political issue. The other thing is that nobody knows about five things except Allah. They are called 'Mafatihul-ghaib' (keys of unseen). The holy Qur'an says: "Verily the knowledge of the hour is with Allah (alone). It is He Who sends down rain, and He Who knows what it is in the wombs. Nor does anyone know what it is that he will earn on the morrow. Nor does anyone know in what land he is to die. Verily with Allah is full knowledge and He is acquainted with all things." (S. 31, A 34): As regards the death of pilgrims, their martyrdom in two incidents during the Hajj may be destined.

Services of Saudi Government during the Hajj are laudable. They left no stone unturned in providing various facilities and in maintaining adequate security and ample comfort to pilgrims. Above all, they regard pilgrims as guests of Allah.

This year nearly two million people across the globe attended the Hajj, one of the largest annual gatherings in the world. The Hajj is one of the five pillars of Islam and every capable Muslim must perform it at least once in a life time.

May Allah save Haramain Sharifain from vicious designs of enemies and their evil devices. Ameen! ♦

(Obaidur Rahman Nadwi)

Value of Man in Islam

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Prophet Muhammad, blessings and peace be on him, elevated the position of human being and value of human sympathy and compassion to a height which was beyond human imagination. According to the teachings of Islam, if a person fails to sympathize and support an aggrieved person, he is like one who fails in obeying Allah. The following saying of the Prophet, which is a Divine Tradition (*Hadith Qudsi*), underscores this theme very effectively.

“Allah will tell one of His bondsmen on the Day of Judgement, ‘I fell ill, but you did not visit Me’. He will reply, ‘Lord! how could have I visited You, for You are the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds?’ Allah will tell him, ‘Didn’t you know that such and such slave of Mine was ill, but you did not visit him. Had you visited him, you would have found Me there. O son of Adam! I asked you for food but you did not give food to Me’. He will submit, ‘My Sustainer and Cherisher how could have I provided You with food, for You Yourself are the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds?’ Allah will tell him, ‘Don’t you remember that such and such slave of Mine asked you for food, but you did not give food to him. Had you given food to him, it would have reached Me. O son of Adam, I asked you for water but you did not give Me water to drink.’ He will submit again, ‘Lord! how could have I given You water to drink, for You are the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds?’ Allah will tell him, ‘Such and such bondsman of Mine asked you for water but you did not give him water to drink. Had you given him water to drink, you would have found it with Me’ (Muslim).”

This is, indeed, the highest level of Allah’s appreciation of a person’s help to his fellow beings. There is yet another Tradition in which the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, has emphasized the value of having compassion and goodwill for one another:

“None of you could
be a perfect believer
unless he wishes for
his brother [in faith]
what he wishes for
himself.”

Al-Zahrawi: The Pioneer of Modern Surgery

-Abdul Ali

Abul Qasim Khalaf Ibn al-'Abbas al-Zahrawi (936-1013 CE), known to fame in Europe as Abulcasis, was undoubtedly the greatest Arab surgeon of his time and one of the greatest of all times. He descended from the Ansar tribe of Arabia whose ancestors had settled earlier in Spain. He was born and brought up at al-Zahra, the royal suburb of Cordova, the capital of Muslim Spain, which compared in grandeur and magnificence with Baghdad and Constantinople. He studied medicine and other current Islamic sciences at the schools of Cordova. He soon flourished as a distinguished physician-surgeon-pharmacologist, following which was appointed by Caliph al-Hakam II as his court physician. He lived most of his life in Cordova where he studied, taught and practiced medicine and surgery. He was a contemporary of renowned Andalusian chemists such as Ibn-Wafid and Maslamah Ibn Ahmad al-Majority. He was 77 years old when he died in 1013 CE.

When al-Zahrawi appeared on the scene, surgery was a neglected branch of medicine. No sincere efforts were made by his contemporary physicians to develop this science. He therefore, devoted himself to this task, and made

spectacular achievements in this field. He revolutionized the science and art of surgery by inventing new methods and tools to help heal patients. He would emphasize upon his students wishing to learn surgery the importance of studying anatomy of the human body. He also made it binding upon them that they must be thoroughly acquainted with the functions of different organs of the human body: their shape, usage, temperament, ligaments, tendons and the connections of blood vessels (arteries and veins).

In the course of time al-Zahrawi became such a distinguished surgeon that both students and patients flocked to him from different parts of Europe and the Muslim world for advice and treatment. He introduced new operations and devised innovative surgical techniques and instruments. In the judgement of the renowned historian Will Durant, Cordova in that period had become the favourite resort of Europeans for surgical operations. In his capacity as physician-surgeon, he rendered valuable services to humanity by making numerous researches and inventions that helped lay the foundations of modern surgery and its allied branches. He introduced such new ideas as cauterization of wounds,

crushing a stone inside the bladder and the necessity of vivisection and dissection. He was very expert in the treatment of wounds, accident injuries and extraction of arrows as well as in the setting of bones in both simple and compound fractures. He also performed several delicate operations including removal of the dead foetus and amputations.

As narrated by the physician, once a small girl cut at her throat with the intention of committing suicide. Having severely wounded her windpipe, she fell unconscious.

That meant a sure death in those days. However, the victim was immediately detected and brought to the surgeon. When he examined the wound, he found that the jugular vein was not affected. Only the windpipe was severely cut, from which wind was passing. He stitched the wound, treated and cured the girl. It is worthy of mention that he was the first to have used thread of silk for stitching wounds.

Furthermore, al-Zahrawi's diagnosis and clinical account of various diseases have been found to be very accurate. For instance, while describing his observation on rabies, he says that the disease occurs more frequently in winter than in summer. As regards human rabies, he explains that hydrophobia is caused by "an extreme dryness of the brain and the invasion of

the body by bile". Being a surgeon, he suggested cauterization of the wound with a hot iron or cupping glasses. He also prescribed the use of diuretics, udorifics, pure wine and hot baths.

Al-Zahrawi had great concern for medical ethics. Among numerous instructions given by him, he ensured that when a female patient was being treated or operated, the presence of a trained midwife was a must. He emphasized that medical treatment should be patient-oriented. He would admonish his students, saying that they should not embark upon anything unless they had positive knowledge of giving the patient a good result. He also cautioned them against greed and desire for worldly gains.

As Gynaecologist

Al-Zahrawi had great expertise in midwifery and gynecology also. He was the first physician to describe ectopic pregnancy in 963 which in those days used to be a fatal affliction. He was also the first to identify the hereditary nature of hemophilia. He skillfully performed caesarean operations and wrote in detail about them. In his book *al-Tasrif* he has given illustrated pictures of several gynecological instruments including vaginal speculum and obstetric forceps.

It is height of either intellectual dishonesty or ignorance on the part of

Western historians of medicine that some of the most original inventions of al-Zahrawi are ascribed to Western physicians and surgeons. For example, the "Kocher method" known after the Swiss physician and surgeon Theodore Kocher (1841-1914) for fixing dislocated shoulders was first invented by al-Zahrawi. Likewise, the obstetric position of childbirth known as the Walcher position after the German physician Walcher (d.1935) was first successfully applied by al-Zahrawi. Al-Zahrawi was also the inventor of the obstetric forceps for the sake of facilitating the task of delivery in cases of emergency. But the credit for this invention is wrongly given to Peter Chamberlen I (1560-1631), physician to king James I and his wife. It is said that this instrument was kept a closely guarded secret by the succeeding generations of his family for a long period of time.

As Orthopedic and Dental Surgeon

Al-Zahrawi was an excellent orthopedic surgeon of his time. He was the first to undertake treatment of the fracture of the pelvis. He has written in detail about different kinds of simple and compound fractures as well as dislocations of joints including those of the shoulder joints. His advice to immobilize the shoulder joints is very similar to the (A-O) splint of the modern age. He also developed a plaster of his

own formula. The modern plaster known as plaster of Paris is an improved form of the said plaster.

Likewise, as a dentist *his main contribution* was that he made sophisticated instruments to cleanse dirty teeth as well as to pull off decaying ones by shaking and loosening them. He also developed the art of setting artificial teeth made from the bones of animals. Of the various dental instruments developed by him, turn-key for extraction, dental saw and file, and instruments for extraction of roots were particularly very important. He is also credited with having developed and applied the method of tying gold and silver wires to bridge gaps between the teeth.

His Operative Methods

The operative methods developed by al-Zahrawi in case of different cases are astonishingly modern. He has described in detail in the surgical part of his al-Tasrif his personal observations and case histories regarding operative surgery for both teaching purposes and practical applications in different cases such as cataract, hydrocele, lithotomic or extraction of bladder stones, etc. An account of his operative procedures in case of cataract is quoted below which may be taken as a sufficiently illustrative specimen of his style and method of describing case histories.

Cataract:

“The patient should sit down cross-legged before you, facing the light in full sun, and firmly bind up his sound eye. Then lift up his eyelid with your left hand, if it be the left eye in which the humour is; or with right hand, if it be the right eye; then take the couching needle in your right hand if it be the left eye; or in your left hand if it be the right eye. Then put up the tip of the needle near corona, about the thickness of a probe away, into the white of the eye itself, on the side of the lesser can thus. Then thrust the needle firmly in, at the same time rotating it with your hand, until it penetrates the while of the eye, and you feel that the needle has reached something empty. The depth the needle goes in should measure as the distance from the pupil to the edge of the iris, which is the corona of the eye; you will see the metal in the pupil itself because of the transparency of the corneal tunic. Then put the needle into the place containing the humour; then press the point downwards time after time. If the humour comes down at once, the patient will at once see whatever his vision is opened upon while the needle is still in his eye. Then let him rest a little while and if the humour goes back up again depress it a second time without taking the needle out. When it stays down firmly and slocs not come back again, gently draw the needle out,

twisting it slowly with your hand. Then dissolve a little pure rock salt in water and wash the eyeball with the solution, then apply all over the outer aspect of the eye carded - linen or wool moistened with oil of roses and egg-white and bandage it up together with the sound eye. Now we and our contemporaries apply pounded cumin with the egg-white”.

His Main Monumental Work

Al-Zahrawi was the author of an illustrated medical encyclopedia comprising 1500 pages under the title al-Tasrif Liman 'Ajara 'an al-Talif (An Aid to Him Who Lacks the Capacity to Read Voluminous Books) which remained the standard textbook on surgery and medicine in Europe for several centuries. It took the author about 40 years to complete this encyclopedia, in the preparation of his he has frequently referred to eminent Greek and Roman physicians. It also contains a large body of clinical information. He noted that a good physician should rely on his own observation of the patient and his/her symptoms rather than simply accepting what the patient says, as is the practice employed by modern physicians. He has described not only how to treat diseases, but also how to prevent them. He has dedicated parts of the encyclopedia to discussing what foods should be avoided, how to maintain a

healthy diet, and how to use food as part of a treatment plan. This encyclopedia remained a standard reference work in Islamic and European medicine for more than 500 years. It is relevant even today.

The book comprising thirty treatises was held in high esteem in medical circles for a long period of time as a thesaurus of medical knowledge that covered all aspects of the healing art known at that time. It contained a wide range of medical topics including pharmacology and psychiatry. It also included detailed medical observations collected by him during his career of about fifty years of training, teaching and practice. To quote the author's own words: "Whatever I know I owe solely to my assiduous reading of books of the ancients, to my desire to understand them and to appropriate this science; then I have added the observation and experience of my whole life". The author dedicated this life-long encyclopedia to his students whom he addressed as his children in the Hippocratic tradition.

The first two treatises of al- Tasrif contain chapters on the anatomy of the human body. Being aware of the importance of the science of anatomy, he made it mandatory for surgeons to be well-versed in it. They also include chapters on general identification of terms and classifications; remedial agents and pathology; prognoses and

diagnoses; counseling the patient with compassion; and the need to know the patient's general condition and his personal history. In them he classified 325 diseases and discussed their symptomatology and treatment. Besides, the author has clarified that both habit and natural disposition of man play an important role in the making of his personality. They were translated into Latin as Liber Theoricae which was printed in Augusburg in 1519.

Of the remaining parts of the book, the 28th, 29th and 30th treatises deserve special mention. The 28th treatise was greatly appreciated in Europe under the Latin title Liber Servitoris which deals mainly with the preparation and manufacturing processes of products and extracts from the three natural kingdoms, i.e., plants, minerals and animals. Pharmaceutical techniques for making tablets, lozenges, troches, syrups, etc., are also discussed in it.

The 29th treatise is also of great historical importance. It is on synonyms of drugs in several languages, namely Arabic, Greek, Syriac Latin and Spanish, arranged in the alphabetical order; substitutes of drugs in case of non-availability of original ones; and weights and measures as used in various localities. Comparisons between different weights and measures have also been made in it.

Finally, the 30th treatise of the book in 300 pages comprising three sections is on surgery and its applications, a field which was completely neglected by the author's contemporary physicians. The first section containing 56 chapters deals in detail with different aspects of cauterization and the tools and techniques used in it. The second section comprising 93 chapters deals with matters relating to incision, perforation, wounds and their healing, bloodletting, wet and dry cupping; while the third section is devoted to the discussion of fractures and dislocation of joints including fracture of the pelvis, bone-setting, bruises or contusions, and the use of medical dressings and bandages.

This treatise also contains designs and illustrations of about 200 surgical instruments, some of which the author had designed and developed himself. The three notable instruments developed by him are: (1) an instrument for internal examination of the ear, (2) an instrument for internal inspection of the urethra, and (3) an instrument for removing foreign bodies from the throat. It is remarkable to note that the surgical instruments discussed in this book have been profusely illustrated and vividly described for the first time in history for both teaching purposes and practical applications.

The surgical part of the encyclopedia was early translated into Latin by the renowned Italian scholar Gerard of Cremona in 1178. Later, it was translated into Hebrew, French and English also. Various editions of the book were published at Venice in 1497, at Basel in 1541, and at Oxford in 1718. An idea of its popularity may be had from the fact that its Latin version went into as many as ten editions between 1497 and 1544, and that all European authors on surgery from the 12th to the 16th centuries quoted extensively from this surgical treatise. As described by Dr. Ibrahim Shaikh in his article on al-Zahrawi, they included Roger of Salerno (d. 1180 CE), Guglielmo Salicette (1201-1277), Lanfranchi (d. 1315), Henri de Mondeville (1260-1320), Mondinus of Bologna (1275-1326), Bruno of Calabria (d. 1352), Guy de Chauliac (1300-1368), Valescus of Tarant (1382-1417), Nicholas of Florence (d. 1411) and Leonardo da Bertapagtie (d. 1460) of Padua.

This surgical treatise was considered so indispensable to medical students in those days that the above-mentioned Guy de Chauliac, the father of French surgery, appended its Latin version to his own work. The Great Surgery which was published in Latin in 1363 CE. Further idea of the importance of the book may be derived from the fact that for about five centuries it was taught

as the standard text on surgery at the universities of Salerno in Italy and Montpellier in France as well as at other medical schools of Europe. In short, the book continued to be read and quoted by eminent physicians and surgeons in the West up to the time of Fabricus of Aquapendent (d.1619), the teacher of William Harvey.

Conclusion

This brief introduction of al-Zahra wi as physician and surgeon gives a clear idea of the fact that the lofty achievements and performances of modern medicine in the field of surgery have deep roots in the researches made by him, who left his indelible marks on the development of surgery in Europe. His 30- volume encyclopedia of medicine and surgery was used as a standard text throughout Europe for several centuries. He pioneered many of the procedures and materials still used in operating theatres today. No wonder, he was the most frequently cited surgical authority of the Middle Ages. An idea of the influence he exerted upon Europe may further be had from the fact that Guy de Chauliac quoted al- Tasrif over 200 times, while Pietro Argallala (d.1453) described al-Zahra-wi as the chief of all surgeons. He was also frequently referred to by the French surgeon Jacques Deleehamps (1513-1588). Besides, the street in Cordova

where al-Zahra- wi lived is named in his honour as Calle Abulcasis. The house on this street in which he lived is preserved today by the Spanish Tourist Board with a bronze plaque installed in January 1977 which reads: "This was the house where Abul Qasim lived". His main contribution in this respect has been rightly evaluated by Donald Campbell in the following words:

"The chief influence of Albu-casis on the medical system of Europe was that his lucidity and method of presentation awakened a prepossession in favour of Arabic literature among the, scholars of the West: the methods of Albu- casis eclipsed those of Galen and maintained a dominant position in Europe for five hundred years...The surgery of Albucasis became firmly grafted on Europe after the time of Guy de Chauliac".

In view of the points discussed above, it would be no exaggeration to say that al-Zahrawi deserves to be appropriately designated as the father of modern surgery. He minutely discussed all aspects of surgery and its various branches, from ophthalmology and diseases of the ear, nose and throat, surgery of the head and neck, dentistry and dermatology to general surgery, gynecology obstetrics and orthopedic surgery. ■

Muslim Personal Law Board Vows to Fight Communal Forces

HYDERABAD: The country's minorities should be rescued from "brahmanical social order" that is supported and imposed by the Union government, said executive council member of the India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB), Maulana Syed Khalil-ur-Rahman Sajjad Nomani. The government is propagating brahmanical culture using its political power, he added, expressing AIMPLB's stand-point.

The Board launched a movement in Te-langana to safeguard constitutional rights and faith of religious minorities titled Deen aur Dastur Bachao (Save Religion-Save Constitution) campaign. The campaign is already operational in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.

The Union government is being run by the RSS, Mr. Nomani said. By imposing Surya Namaskar, other yoga practices and Vande Mataram in public institutions, including schools and colleges, the government is imposing Vedic culture on minorities, Mr. Nomani said.

"The Board gave the government its chance to institute secular public policies. But now with the Prime Minister holding a two-day meeting with the RSS, the Board has realised that it should remind Mr. Modi that he PM not just to the some sections of society but to all," Mr. Nomani said. After Mr. Modi took over the reins, 127 churches have been destroyed by right-wing outfits, he pointed out, adding even the representatives of Christian churches have joined hands with AIMPLB to battle communal forces.

Mr. Nomani said that the social, secular and democratic fabric of the Constitution is currently under threat as the Centre has decided to coerce the minorities to accept right-wing dictates. "After due study, the Board will approach the Supreme Court to put an end to imposition of yoga and Vande Mataram in educational institutions," he said speaking to The Hindu on the sidelines. The Board had earlier got a favourable order from Rajasthan High Court that made the practices optional. ■

– Mikhila Henry

(The Hindu)

Three Challenges

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

On 15 August, 1947 India attained independence. At the very outset independent India faced three challenges. The first was how India may survive as a unified country. The second was to strengthen democracy. The third was to ensure development and well-being of the nation.

To deal with these three challenges the first thing immensely felt was its own constitution. Accordingly the task of framing the constitution of India was given to the Constituent Assembly, a sub committee of the Constituent Assembly was set up with Dr. Ambedkar the then Law Minister as its head. The constitution was drafted, signed and adopted on 26 November 1949 and it came into force on January 1950.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India tried his level best to steer the country to right direction exercising democratic practices in accordance with the constitution. But it is unfortunate that post Nehru, the condition of the country adversely changed. Even the country had to witness emergency during (1975-77). Each government, instead of eradicating poverty, ensuring unity and restoring democracy here, tried to fetch votes to strengthen its own party. Even Indira Gandhi's famous slogan: Garibi Hatao (Remove poverty) was also considered as an election gimmick.

Broadly, India still faces aforesaid three challenges. Even after six decades of independence, basic facilities such as education and healthcare are not freely available to its citizens.

Moreover, non-congress Government, whenever came to power, conditions deteriorated leading the country to the path of devastation and ruin by adopting British Policy "divide and rule" Particularly targeting minorities. Even it began to raise its finger to their loyalty. While it can vividly be said that Muslims contribution in freedom struggle is no less but they are also feeling neglected. Today atrocities and oppressions are deliberately meted out to them.

Maulana S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi, Rector Nadwatul Ulama and President All India Muslim Personal Law Board has rightly said: "It is painful that whenever any terrorist activity takes place in the country, security forces without making proper investigation, target Muslim youths on false charges, a number of them are held on assumed and concocted charges." In his opinion it is a grave injustice to link terrorism to any particular community.

The Government must work in accordance with the constitution. There should be no discrimination on the basis of community, caste or religion. That is the only solution to meet the challenges. ■

Ethics and Morality at the End of History

- Pete Dolack

Strange, isn't it, that the system supposedly representing the apex of human development — even the end of history — has no place for ethics or morality.

Perhaps this becomes inevitable when an ideology develops to the point where the economy is considered to be outside the environment. From that dubious — to put it overly modestly — vantage point, the journey to seeing the environment, and the natural resources and life it contains, as nothing more than a cow to be milked at will is not a long one. A forest counts as nothing unless it can be monetized, which often means knocking it down. Clean air? Clean water? Luxury items for those who can afford them, and thereby profits for those who can bottle it and create a market for them.

A thoughtful article in the May 2009 issue of *Monthly Review* caused me to think more about this. The authors of this article, *Capitalism in Wonderland*, written by Richard York, Brett Clark and John Bellamy Foster, discuss the models used by mainstream economists, which vary only on the degree to which they discount future life. Yes, that is as cold-blooded as it sounds.

Neoclassical economists base their increasingly insane conclusions that global warming is no big deal and, at worse, will cause little economic damage, on the convenient, self-serving assumption that future generations will be wealthier and

therefore it will be cheaper for our descendants to clean up our messes than it would be for us.

The authors write:

“Where they primarily differ is not on their views of the science behind climate change but on their value assumptions about the propriety of shifting burdens to future generations. This lays bare the ideology embedded in orthodox neoclassical economics, a field which regularly presents itself as using objective, even naturalistic, methods for modeling the economy. However, past all of the equations and technical jargon, the dominant economic paradigm is built on a value system that prizes capital accumulation in the short-term, while devaluing everything else in the present and everything altogether in the future.” [p. 9]

From that, orthodox economists slide down a slippery slope in which some humans are valuable and others are without value. Such a mentality is exemplified by Lawrence Summers' infamous memo when he was chief economist for the World Bank, in which he wrote:

“I think the economic logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest wage country is impeccable and we should face up to that... The costs of pollution are likely to be non-linear as the initial increments of pollution probably have very low cost. I've always thought

that under-populated countries in Africa are vastly UNDER-polluted.”

Summers’ attitude, although usually not expressed in such a direct way, is not out of step with his profession. The *Capitalism in Wonderland* authors lay bare the ramifications of this type of thinking:

“[H]uman life in effect is worth only what each person contributes to the economy as measured in monetary terms. So, if global warming increases mortality in Bangladesh, which it appears likely that it will, this is only reflected in economic models to the extent that the deaths of Bengalis hurt the [global] economy. Since Bangladesh is very poor, economic models... would not estimate it to be worthwhile to prevent deaths there since these losses would show up as minuscule in the measurements... This economic ideology, of course, extends beyond just human life, such that all of the millions of species on earth are valued only to the extent they contribute to GDP. Thus, ethical concerns about the intrinsic value of human life and of the lives of other creatures are completely invisible in standard economic models. Increasing human mortality and accelerating the rate of extinctions are to most economists only problems if they undermine the ‘bottom line.’ In other respects they are invisible: as is the natural world as a whole.” [p. 10]

This is the irrationality and immorality that underlies industrialists’ and financiers’ drive to allow the “market” to make all social decisions. Markets are nothing more than the aggregate interests of the largest and

most powerful industrialists and financiers. They, in turn, through their stranglehold on the world’s economic heights, are able to have decisive sway over governments, which are not disembodied entities somehow floating above society but rather are a reflection of the relative strengths and weaknesses of social forces.

The modern corporation has a legal duty only to provide the maximum profit for its shareholders. In other words, it is expected to act to further its own interest without regard to anything else. The corporation is considered a legal person under U.S. law — one that has neither biological limits nor barriers to its growth. Joel Bakan, in the introduction to his book, *The Corporation: the Pathological Pursuit of Profit and Power*, summed up capitalism’s dominant institution this way:

“The corporation’s legally defined mandate is to pursue, relentlessly and without exception, its own self-interest, regardless of the often harmful consequences it might cause to others. As a result, I argue, the corporation is a pathological institution, a dangerous possessor of the great power it wields over people and societies.”

Even without “corporate personhood,” however, the relentless competition of capitalism would induce this behaviour, and the winners of that competition are those most willing to crush all obstacles, human and environmental, while foisting the costs onto others. ■

Really, we can’t do better than this?

[Courtesy: Information Clearing House]

Identity and Citizenship: An Indian Perspective

- Hamid Ansari*

- Speculating on the 'ifs' of history, Edward Gibbon had visualised a course of events that might have resulted in the teaching of the interpretations of the Qur'an at Oxford. He could not foresee a happier, intellectually more rewarding, happening that the concluding decades of the twentieth century would bring forth. Among its manifestations is the establishment of this Centre.

- It is a truism that the human being is a social creature and societies consist of individuals who come together for a set of common purposes for whose achievement they agree to abide by a set of rules and, to that extent and for those purposes, give their tacit or explicit consent to the abridgment of individual free will or action. They, in other words, do not get subsumed totally in a larger whole and retain their individual identity. This identity, as pointed out by William James and sustained by more recent social-psychological research, is a compound of the material, social and spiritual self. Furthermore, and when acting together in smaller groups, they develop group identities and these too are retained. Thus, in every society, we have identities at three or four levels, namely individual, group, regional and national. We can also, in this age of globalisation, add an international dimension to it. The challenge in all societies, therefore, is to accommodate these layered identities in a framework that is harmonious and optimally conducive to social purpose.

- .. The superstructure of a democratic polity and a secular state structure put in place after

independence on August 15, 1947 is anchored in the existential reality of a plural society. It is reflective of India's cultural past. Our culture is synthetic in character and, as a historian of another generation put it, 'embraces in its orbit beliefs, customs, rites, institutions, arts, religions and philosophies belonging to different strata of societies in varying stages of development. It eternally seeks to find a unity for the heterogeneous elements which make up its totality'. It is a veritable human laboratory where the cross breeding of ideas, beliefs and cultural traditions has been in progress for a few thousand years. The national movement recognised this cultural plurality and sought to base a national identity on it. The size and diversity of the Indian landscape makes it essential. A population of 1.27 billion comprising of over 4,635 communities 78 percent of whom are not only linguistic and cultural but social categories. Religious minorities constitute 19.4 percent of the population; of these, Muslims account for 13.4 percent amounting in absolute terms to around 160 million. The human diversities are both hierarchical and spatial. The *de jure* WE, the sovereign people is in reality a fragmented 'we', divided by yawning gaps that remain to be bridged. Around 22% of our people live below the official poverty line and the health and education indicators for the population as a whole, despite recent correctives, leave much to be desired.

- .. The Indian approach steers clear of notions of assimilation and adaptation, philosophically and in practice. Instead, the management of diversity to ensure (in Nehru's words) the integration of minds and hearts is

* Vice President of India.

accepted as an ongoing national priority. Some have described it as the 'salad-bowl' approach, with each ingredient identifiable and yet together bringing forth an appetising product.

- The question of minority rights as a marker of identity, and their accommodation within the ambit of citizenship rights, remains a live one. It is not so much on the principle of minority rights (which is unambiguously recognised in the Constitution) as to the extent of their realisation in actual practice. A government-commissioned report on Diversity Index some years back concluded that 'unequal economic opportunities lead to unequal outcomes which in turn lead to unequal access to political power. This creates a vicious circle since unequal power structure determines the nature and functioning of the institutions and their policies'.

- The past six decades have witnessed immense changes in social and political perceptions in societies the world over. Theories and practices of 'assimilation', 'one-national mould' and the 'melting pot' have been discredited and generally abandoned; instead, evolving perceptions and practical compulsions led individual societies to accept diversity and cultural pluralism. In many places, on the other hand, a process of reversal induced by xenophobia, Islamophobia and migrant-related anxieties, is also under way. The concept of multiculturalism, pioneered to address accommodation of diversity within the framework of democracy, is being openly or tacitly challenged. An ardent advocate of multiculturalism concedes that 'not all attempts to adopt new models of multicultural citizenship have taken root or succeeded in achieving their intended effects' because 'multiculturalism works best if relations between the state and minorities are seen as an issue of social policy, not as an issue of state security'.

- There is an Indian segment to the debate on multiculturalism. It has been argued that 'while a multicultural polity was designed, the principles of multiculturalism were not systematically enunciated.' It is asserted that multiculturalism goes beyond tolerance and probes areas of cultural discrimination that may exist even after legal equality has been established; it therefore 'needs to explore ways by which the sense of alienation and disadvantage that comes with being a minority is visibly diminished, but in a way that does not replace the power of the homogenising state with that of the community. It should therefore aspire towards a form of citizenship that is marked neither by a universalism generated by complete homogenisation, nor by particularism of self-identical and closed communities'.

- These debates and practices vindicate in good measure the vision and foresight displayed by the founding fathers of the Republic of India. The vindication is greater when considered in the context of the size and diversity of India and the stresses and strains it has withstood in this period. And yet, we cannot rest on our laurels since impulses tilting towards 'assimilationist' and homogenising approaches do exist, suggestive of imagined otherness and seeking uniformity at the expense of diversity. Indian pluralism, as a careful observer puts it, 'continues to be hard won'. Hence the persisting need of reinforcing and improving present practices and the principles underlying them. Such an endeavour would continue to be fruitful as long as 'the glue of solidarity' around the civic ideal remains sufficiently cohesive, reinforced by the existential reality of market unity and the imperative of national security. There is no reason to be sceptical about the stability of the tripod. ■

(YMD)

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