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# The Fragrance of East

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## Divine Judgement About Mankind

**S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi**

Allah is the One Who sends down rain after men have given up all hope, and scatters His mercy far and wide. He is the Protector, Worthy of all praise.

(al-Shūra 42:28)

This Qur'anic verse embodies immeasurable guidance for everyone. The "rain" in the verse may also be taken to mean anything that rescue as one and provides one with help in a crisis. It is Allah alone Who comes to man's rescue as he faces problems. Again, it is He Who lends man a supporting hand. As a dying person is revived when a drop of elixir is given him. Allah provides solace to the scorching earth by blessing it with rainfall. Allah responds to man's petition. At a time when everyone, including the high and the mighty, had despaired of rain, Allah sends down rain which revives the dead land. Thus He showers His mercy. For He alone is man's protector deserves all praise.

The divine attributes mentioned in this context appear to very carefully chosen. All of His names are excellent. His is the best example. Reference is made, nonetheless, to two of His attributes — Protector and Worthy of all praise, for these are directly linked with rescuing humanity and with truth. Allah is the Protector of humanity. No owner would like to see his field as barren. As mankind's Protector, Allah ensures its revival. In equal measure, Allah is deserving of all praise. It does not befit His mercy and majesty to abandon humanity. ■

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

***“They are the ones who will be rewarded for their patience: lofty palaces will be granted to them, and they will be received with greeting and salutation. Therein they shall abide for ever: how good an abode, and how good a resting place!”***

*(Al-Qur'ân – 25:75-76)*

These *ayaahs* deal with the rewards of patience. The word *cabr* (patience, fortitude) in the Arabic text is used in its most comprehensive sense. Various, it means to endure persecution at the hands of the enemies of Truth with courage and to bear whatever hardships come one's way while striving for the establishment of the true Faith of God.

It also means to remain steadfast against all fears and to refuse to succumb to enticements; to resolutely fulfil one's obligations in spite of Satan's temptations and one's own carnal self; to shun the unlawful and to remain within the bounds of the lawful set by God; to spurn all pleasures and benefits that might accrue from acts of sins, and to cheerfully put up with difficulties and losses in order to follow the Path of righteousness and virtue and to accept every trial and adversity that one might encounter.

In sum, this one word embraces a whole universe of meanings regarding true Faith, a truly religious approach to life, and good moral conduct inspired by religious Faith.

*Ghufrah* means a lofty building. It is generally translated as the 'upper chamber' which brings to mind a two-storey building. The loftiest buildings constructed here are mere caricatures of the palaces of Paradise. ■

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

***Tamim al-Dari relates that Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) observed: “Al-Dîn is the name of sincerity and well-wishing.” Upon this we said: “For whom?” He replied: “For Allah, His Book, His Messenger and for the leader and the general Muslims.”***

*(Sahih Muslim)*

*Nasiha* means sincerity and well-wishing. *Nasiha* for Allah implies that man's heart is cleansed from all impurities with regard to belief in Allah, i.e. one should believe in Him as the Creator and Master with all His Attributes and with an earnest desire to obey all His commands.

*Nasiha* for Allah's Book means that it should be sincerely believed as a revelation from the Lord and be read and understood with utmost zeal and enthusiasm.

*Nasiha* for the Messenger signifies that his Apostleship must be affirmed with perfect sincerity of heart, and whatever he has vouchsafed to humanity should be respected as the Will of God, and he should be respectfully followed in all his precepts and examples.

*Nasiha* for leaders implies that they should be respected, obeyed and given support in all those affairs which they conduct according to the Shari'ah. And if they deviate from the path of righteousness, they should be advised and admonished, and sincere efforts be made to bring them back to the right path.

*Nasiha* for general Muslims is that they should be advised in all matters concerning the good of this world as well as the hereafter.

*Nasiha* thus covers the whole gamut of religion as its scope is as wide as that of Islam. ■

*Editor's Note* 

## Beauty of Islam

The Creator of the universe laid down rules for its inhabitants for a peaceful and pious life. With the passage of time and increasing population God sent messengers (Prophets) to guide them and make them believe that they should not forget their Creator and follow the path which has been shown to them.

Mosses came to guide the people on right path. After his demise his followers deviated from the marg shown by him and made additions and deletions in book which he had left behind. Similarly Jesus Christ was born to make reforms as God wished. But when he was crucified his followers declared him as the son of God and forgot noble messages brought by him.

In the end God sent the last prophet Muhammad (PBH). He successfully spread the message of Creator and helped in establishing a pure and pious community. Since instructions of God sent through Muhammad (PBH) have been compiled in the Holy Quran no room was left for any omission or insertion in it and thus Islam was spread smoothly. There are beauties in this religion. They are beyond what pens can fully right and enough expressions cannot be found to describe the virtues of this religion; because it is the religion of Allah. Just as the eye cannot encompass the perception of Allah and man cannot encompass His Reality on Knowledge, so can the pen not encompass His law in description. Ibn Al-Qayyim said, "If you reflect on the dazzling wisdom in this Upright Religion, this pure faith and the Law enacted for mankind which no expression can perfectly describe, whose description cannot be perfected, the likeness of which wisdom of the wise cannot propose - even if all wise men are to be as perfectly wise as the wisest one among them, who's beauty and virtues are

perceived and attested to by the perfect and honourable intelligence, that the world had not known a law better and greater than it even if the messenger of Allah had not brought any proof in support of it, all that would have been enough an evidence that it is from Allah. Every aspect of this religion shows perfect knowledge, perfect wisdom, expensiveness of mercy, righteousness and kindness, absolute inclusion of all that is hidden and manifest and the knowledge about the beginnings and ends. It also shows that it is one of the greatest favours that Allah has bestowed on His slaves, for He bestows not on them a favour greater than the fact that He guided them to this religion, made them its adherents and chosen it for them. Hence reminds His slaves of the fact that He guided them to it. He says,

“Indeed, Allah conferred a great favour on the believers when He sent among them Messenger (Mohammad) from among themselves reciting unto them His Verse (the Quran), purifying them and instructing them in the Book and the wisdom (the Sunnah) while before that they had been in manifest error.”

He also says, making Himself known to His slaves and reminding them of His great favour on them, calling them to thank Him for making them among its adherents,

“This day I have perfected your religion for you.”

It is therefore part of showing gratitude to Allah on this religion. ■

**S.A.**

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## Indo-Islamic Culture

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

### Two Determining Factors

The cultural structure of Muslims everywhere is determined by two major factors: (i) Islamic belief, way of life and system of ethics, and (ii) the indigenous civilisation and local customs which are bound to make their influence felt as a result of living and mixing with the original elements of the population.

The first constituent—Islamic faith, way of life and code of ethics—is the common attribute of the cultural make-up of Muslims all over the world. Wherever they may be living, and whatever their language or dress, this attribute is shared by them universally, and by virtue of it they impress as members of a single brotherhood in spite of the so many things that differentiate them locally. The other component forms that part of their culture which distinguishes them from their co-religionists living in other parts of the world and imparts to them their individual national character.

The Indian Muslims are not exempt from this general principle. Their culture, which has taken centuries to evolve itself, is a combination of both Islamic and Indian influences. This two-fold aspect has, on the one hand, endowed it with a beauty and a richness which is characteristically its own and, on the other, it holds forth the assurance that this culture will operate here not like an alien or a traveller but as a natural, permanent citizen who has built his home in the light of his peculiar needs

and circumstances, past traditions and new impulses, and has also made a pleasant and enduring contribution to the native environment that surrounds him. To seek to deprive a person—or to make him revolt against—transcendental values and ethical ideals which are common between him and large portions of mankind spread all over the globe will mean an attempt to freeze his spiritual fountain-heads and destroy the universality of his outlook. In the same way, it will be utterly futile and unjust to expect him to cut himself aloof from his environment and lead a life of complete immunity from the local influences.

### Characteristics of Ibrahimi Civilization

From the point of view of Islamic belief, morality and way of life, Indian Muslims, along with Muslims of all other lands, possess a distinctive civilization for which there can be no more appropriate and comprehensive title than 'Ibrahimi' Civilization'. This Civilization has three essential attributes which have fixed their stamp on its entire spiritual, intellectual and social design and given it a flavour and a character that are manifestly its own. The three attributes are God-consciousness, Monotheism (which has been taught ceaselessly by all the Prophets belonging to the line of Hazrat Ibrahim and a complete elaboration of which is contained in the Quran), and a permanent, natural awareness of human dignity and equality that never deserts the mind of a Muslim. It is these characteristics which lend a

distinctive personality to the Ibrahimi civilization. As far as we can say, in no other system of civilization are these features so strikingly in evidence.

### **Place of God in the Life of a Muslim**

Faith in the existence of God and a constant awareness of Him and a ready expression of this awareness is a fundamental and inalienable constituent of the life and culture of Muslims. Islamic Civilization can aptly be compared to a dress which is worn in different styles at different places according to the taste and climatic and other conditions prevailing there but its texture is the same everywhere and it is dyed in the same hue so deep that every tissue and fiber of it is totally impregnated with it. The name of God and His remembrance run like blood in the veins and arteries of Islamic Civilization. When a child is born in a Muslim home, the first ceremony it undergoes, within a few minutes of its birth, is that the Azan is spoken in its ears. Thus, the first name it becomes familiar with, even before he acquires his own name, is that of God. On the seventh day, the Aqqa is performed, as approved by the Prophet, when an Islamic name is given to it, the choice generally falling on one which expresses the sentiment of loyalty to God or proclaims His absolute Unity and Oneness or is patterned after the names of that most exalted group of Monotheists—the Prophets—or their pupils or immediate disciples. When the time comes for the child to begin his education and go to the school, it is celebrated with the recitation of the name of God and a few verses from the holy

Quran. This ceremony is known among Indian Muslims as Tasmiya Khwani or Bismillah. At marriage, again, the name of God is invoked to unite together in a permanent bond two mature and responsible persons who also have to take the pledge to uphold the prestige of that name throughout their lives.

The wedding sermon is delivered in the manner sanctified by the Prophet's practice, expressing gratitude to God for having created the human race in pairs of men and women and exhorting the couple to live and die in a state of faithfulness to Him. When the auspicious day of I'd-ul-Fitr arrives, a Muslim is called upon to raise his voice in the affirmation of His Glory and Greatness (Allah-O-Akbar) and offer two rakats of prayers in thanksgiving, after he has bathed himself and put on a clean dress. At I'd-ul-Azha, he is desired to offer up animal sacrifice in God's name. Finally, when the ultimate stage of life's journey is reached, a Muslim is instructed to focus all his attention on that very name. Every Muslim, man or woman has the ambition of dying with the sacred name of God on his or her lips. When the news of his death circulates all educated (and even uneducated) Muslims who hear it spontaneously repeat the Quaranic word, Inna Lillah-e-wa Inna Ilaih-e-Rajeoon (meaning, "To God we belong, and to Him do we return"). The funeral prayers, which are the last act of service to him, reverberate with the name of God from beginning to the end. These prayers are a solemn request to the Almighty by the participants for the salvation of the soul of the departed and for themselves that they



may be granted a life of loyalty and devotion to Him in this world and of peace and felicity in the next. As the body is lowered in the grave it is to the accompaniment of these words : “ In the name of God, and according to the way of His Apostle’s religion and the Millet “ In the grave, the face is turned towards that universal centre of Divine worship and Monotheism which goes by the name of Ka’aba (House of God). Wherever a Muslim may be buried his face will, without exception, be in line with that one place at Mecca in Arabia. After the burial, no Muslim passer-by will, usually, fail to offer the Fateha at his grave and pray for the remission of his sins and the deliverance of his soul. In fine, the name of God and its remembrance are a constant companion of a Muslim’s life from the cradle to the grave.

But these were the more important landmarks of man’s earthly sojourn. In his everyday existence, also, a Muslim is never destitute of God-remembrance. When a Muslim sits down to eat, he begins his meal with the name of God and ends it also in the same manner. Those who are particular about the observance of the Sunnah of the Prophet carry out the minutest details of life with the name of the Lord on their lips and His thought embedded in their hearts. Take such a trifling thing as a sneeze. A Muslim is required to remember God when he lets it out, and those who hear it, also, are instructed to send up a prayer for him. What is more, the daily conversation of a Muslim is interspersed with phrases like Masha Allah (as God willed), Insha-Allah

(If God willeth) and La Haul-a-Wa La Quwata Illa Billah (There is no power or virtue but in God). These phrases, apart from being ideal prayer-formulas, have gained currency as terms of everyday speech not only in Arabic, but in the languages of those countries too, where Muslims have been living for some time and which have received the impress of Islamic Civilization. In truth, these phrases are in the nature of convenient aids to God-remembrance. The culture, language and the daily life of no other people will be found to be so thoroughly soaked in faith in God-existence and an all-embracing consciousness Him. The basic ingredient of the culture and civilization of Indian Muslims, transcending the frontiers of race, nationality and geography, is this very faith and consciousness which has become the mark and symbol of their daily existence.

### **Monotheism**

The second main constituent of their culture is the creed of Monotheism. Belief in the Oneness of God is manifest in all their activities from spiritual conviction to practical conduct and from worship to festivals and ceremonies. Five times in a day, it is proclaimed from the minarets of their mosques that no one is worthy of worship except One God. Their homes and studios are expected to be free from every trace of idolatory and polytheism—photographs, statues and images having been prohibited to them by their religion. The same principle has to be followed even while making or buying toys for children. Be it a religious or a national celebration, the birthday of a spiritual

leader or a political hero, or the ceremony of national flag-hoisting, it is forbidden to Muslims, and repugnant to their Monotheistic civilization, to bow before a portrait or an image, to stand reverently before it or to pay it floral tributes in any form. Wherever Muslims will be honest in their loyalty to the Islamic civilization, they will remain strictly removed from such practices. The transgression of the limits of Monotheism, in imitation of the manners and customs of another people or from any other motive, even in such minor matters as the giving of a name, the observation of a function or ceremony, the showing of respect to elders or the expression of one's modesty and humility is an act prejudicial to the spirit and teachings of Islam.

#### **Human Dignity and Equality**

The notion of human dignity and equality has become a part of the essential nature of Muslims and a permanent attribute of Islamic character. Things like social exclusiveness or untouchability are completely foreign to Muslim society. A Muslim will have no hesitation in dining with another Muslim or any other person. Several Muslims will readily eat from the same vessel one will freely partake of the other's left-over, or drink the water left behind in his tumbler. The master and the slave will fall in the same row and offer the Namaz standing shoulder to shoulder with each-other. Any learned person, however lowly he may be, socially or economically, can lead the prayers and the highest dignitaries and noblemen will follow him readily.

#### **Lesser Attributes**

Besides these fundamental characteristics there are some other distinguishing features of a lesser importance of the Ibrahimi Civilization which are common to Muslims everywhere. These include habits and customs, such as, the performing of all good deeds, like eating or drinking or the passing over of something to anyone with the right hand, dress-restrictions— for example, the dress must cover the body properly— the garment for the lower extremities should be long enough to conceal the knees and short enough to stop above the ankles—men are forbidden the use of silk— and stress on cleanliness. Adherence to these regulations will generally be the rule where Islamic Civilization is present in its true, unpolluted form and where it is not so, it will be a sign of social and moral degeneration.

#### **Fine Arts**

Its simplicity and sobriety is another characteristic of the Islamic Civilization. In the matter of fine arts it adopts a balanced, temperate, attitude. It does appreciate beauty and refinement, yet, at the same time, it frowns severely upon certain forms of self-indulgence and sensuality to which the West has given the imposing label of 'Fine Arts'. Some of these are dancing, painting and photography (of living beings) and sculpture. Similarly, there are certain things in which Islam has advised caution and moderation. For instance, a Muslim is permitted to enjoy music, but within

certain limits. Absorption in fine arts is, in any case, contrary to the spirit and social destiny of Islamic Civilisation and inimical to the generation of that fear of God, solicitude for the Hereafter and the high ethical standard which are expected of a Muslim. Had the check and control of the Islamic Shariat and Civilization not been there, it would not have been possible for Indian Muslims to maintain the temperateness that is their distinction, to some extent or another, in this respect in a country which has been so strongly attached to fine arts from the ancient times that they have become a part of popular worship.

### **Islamic Morality**

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

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

Pilgrims and foreign chroniclers who had the occasion to live, for any length of time, among communities, tracing their descent from him either racially or spiritually, have recorded most pleasant memories of their stay in this respect. They have invariably been impressed by their warm hospitality and friendly feeling towards guests and strangers. One can still notice in the countries of the Middle East, which have not yet been swept off their feet by the mounting tide of Western

Civilization, glimpses of the hospitality that had enabled globetrotters like Ibn-e-Batuta and Ibn-e-Jubair to enjoy the comfort and warmth of home during travel. The Indian Muslims in spite of their being placed so far away from the natural seat of Islamic Civilisation and the fact that Islam had reached their country long after it had passed the peak of its glory, also are conspicuous for their cordial treatment of the guests. Hospitality is a part of the tradition of Muslim homes, and although modern economic conditions have put a curb on it, Muslims still feel happy on the arrival of a guest and consider it a source of good fortune and an Islamic virtue to entertain him open-heartedly.

### **Indian Influences**

One of the most valuable fruits of Indo-Islamic fusion is the Urdu language. Refined and progressive to the very core, this language represents what is best in the Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Sanskrit languages. The dress of the upper and urbane sections of Indian Muslims is another noteworthy example of the intermingling of Indian and Islamic cultures. It reflects refinement of taste and polished living in good measure. Further, there is the graceful, easy and well-mannered mode of life which grew up in Delhi, Lucknow, Hyderabad and the other important centres of Muslim influence towards the end of the Mughal rule. Excessive respect of parents, including the display of a particular kind of humility and correctness of behaviour in their presence, and the exaggerated purdah of women along with certain other special regulations governing their conduct are

features which are generally not found among Muslims belonging to other lands. In their evolution the peculiar conditions of life in India, the needs and interests of Muslims as the ruling race and indigenous customs and traditions have obviously taken an active hand.

The practice so commonly observed among Indian Muslims of marrying only in the family or in their own particular group of families or in a family of an equal genealogical status with them is also typically Indian and influenced wholly by the caste and other permanent distinctions of birth obtaining in the country. Muslims living outside India look upon such customs with curiosity. They are not bound down by them and give thought only to social and economic considerations—apart from personal inclination, of course,—while contracting matrimony. Similarly, the custom of making too much fuss over occasions of joy or grief, of spending beyond means on them and going in for unnecessary ostentation, is a speciality of the Indian society which has made its way among Muslims, otherwise the Islamic mode of carrying out such ceremonies is one of simplicity and quiet dignity.

The disgraceful treatment meted out to servants by their masters, which is sometimes so outrageous as to reduce the servants to the level of 'untouchables', is, again, a product of the social impulses received from India together with the general degeneration that had set in among the Muslims during the declining years of their power.

All said and done, it is an incontrovertible fact that Muslims have

benefited immensely from the ancient cultural heritage of India. It has enriched them in a number of ways. The successful manner of their meeting the onslaught of the Western Civilization and preserving their cultural identity unmaimed—a thing which has not been possible in the so-called Islamic countries—, the depth and profundity evident in their thought, and mysticism (Tasawwuf) are due largely to the action exercised on them by the social, cultural and intellectual processes native to India. These processes have, in conjunction with the basic impulses of Islamic thought and way of life, given shape to a composite Indo-Islamic Culture representing at once the supranational Civilization of Islam and the local philosophy and social design of India.

With all this, Islamic values and ethical standards have also suffered a distinct transfiguration in India. Though it is much less as compared to what has been the experience of other peoples who, like Muslims, came from alien lands to make India their home, it is still profound enough to have moved a sensitive and well-meaning Muslim poet of the nineteenth century, Khwaja Altaf Husain Hali, to make a friendly complaint about it to the motherland. When two civilisations meet, the transmission of cultural effects and impulses between them is always a two-way process. It cannot be that one exercises its influence on the other without being simultaneously influenced by it. Such a thing would be both unnatural and incorrect. Human existence is based essentially on the noble principle of give-and-take. In it lie its strength and its glory.■

## Salvation

- Mahar Abdul Haq

In religions other than Islam 'Man' is believed to be held up in the prison-house of the world. His release from this prison-house is Salvation. Some believe that man is sent to this world for undergoing punishments for the sins that he committed in his previous 'birth'. If he does not do good deeds in his present birth as man, his soul will get the body of either a man or an animal or an insect or anything that gods decide for him for his punishment. This circle of births and re-births will continue till the 'soul' either purifies itself of all its contaminations when finally it will be sent to Suarg (Heaven) or it gets incorrigibly involved in sin when it will be sent to Narg (Hell). A release from the circle of births and re-births either way (in Heaven or Hell) is called Mukti (Salvation). This word 'Mukti' literally means the end or stoppage. Vedanta or the Hindu mystic philosophy believes that human spirit (Atma) has somehow got separated from its original soul (Param Atma) and stuck in the muddy mire of matter where it is crying and screaming in pain and misery. A release from this miserable plight and rejoining of the part with its whole is Salvation. Some others believe that every human being carries with him at his birth the burden of the 'original sin' of his parents (Adam and Eve) and he cannot get deliverance from sin and damnation unless he believes in redemption

wrought by atonement. Yet there is another religion that believes that every desire brings in its wake pain and misery. Salvation lies in getting rid of all wishes and desires and in attaining Nirvana which means extinction of individuality and absorption into the Supreme Spirit. In this doctrine the highest aim of this life of ours is to obtain salvation from sorrow, pain, and such other incidents as make life a constant struggle.

In fact, all these religions believe that before coming down to this world man was in a state of perfect bliss, that here he got involved in pain and misery, and that securing a release from this misery, and going back to his original state of felicity is the aim of his life here on the earth. The Holy Qur'an rejects all these beliefs and tells us that man is not here for undergoing punishment for the sins of his previous birth, nor does he bring with him the original sin of his parents, The world is not a prison from which he has to seek release, nor is his soul a part of the Supreme God, stuck in the muddy mire of this world and crying for reunion. Every human child that is born on this earth, brings with him a clean slate of his soul. He is endowed with some powers, some capabilities, some realisable possibilities to 'become' something, and some potentialities which he has to actualise.

The aim of life is not going back to the position of 'as-you-were'; it is rather to go ahead, to advance progressively, to evolve. The life on this earth is a probationary training in which man's 'soul' gets development. Through his own righteous efforts man is enabled to receive not only the good things of this life but also the purity of high character and spiritual strength that leads him on to the fitness for proceeding towards the higher stages of evolution. Thus, the aim of life here below is not to get rid of the world; it is rather to subdue the forces of Nature and to lay open for the benefit of the whole humanity whatever bounties the conquest of Nature brings forth. Nature, that has its unseen forces working in the outer world as well as in the inner world of man, puts up great resistance, but it is bound to yield to the constant and patient perseverance of the man of strong will and highly proportionate personality which he himself builds up by following the guidance of his Creator. The class of humanity that organizes its life's programs in accordance with the divine laws and commandments remains secure from the detriment of the physical forces of Nature and is protected against annihilation, destruction or absorption in the mighty waves of furious oceans of time. It overcomes all the temptations too that thwart his progress and this, according to the Holy Qur'an, is Salvation. The Arabic word 'Najat' (translated as Salvation) means to remain secure from

some dangerous thing. It also means a high mount to which floods cannot reach or which is distinctly prominent in its environment.

Sometimes it so happens that a class of humanity gets entangled in the snares and obstacles of the antagonist forces of Nature (both external and internal) on account of its own misdeed, but soon it realizes its mistake and comes back on the Right Path. This, too, is Salvation. The Israelites, for example, got this salvation from the cruelties of Pharaoh.

The conceptions about Hell, either of its being a prisoners' cell or of a purgatory are against the Qur'anic teachings. He who leads his life on this earth according to the Holy Qur'an's guidance goes on to the higher stages of life which are free from fear and grief and have abundance of Allah's bounties, whereas he who cannot develop his 'soul' becomes too weak to advance further. Going ahead into blissful life is Paradise and being held back for want of fitness is to be left behind in the Hell-fire of anguish, disappointment and sorrow. He cannot come out of this "place of restraint" because he cannot be sent back to the world of deeds for "earning" the suitability required for further evolution called heaven. According to the teachings of the Holy Qur'an Heaven and Hell are modes of existence of the soul rather than places in time and space. As each individual soul is responsible for his own deeds,

therefore, he earns suffering or enjoyment for itself in accordance with what he himself does in this world of trial and probation. No one can suffer on behalf of the other; nor can anyone transfer his share of pain and pleasure to anyone else, whatever relationship one may have with him.

### **HEAVEN AND HELL:**

The Holy Qur'an uses the word Jannat for Paradise. It is used for a garden, the density of the trees, the thick foliage of which covered up the whole of the ground of the garden. The Arabs used this word in their literature for all the ideas connected with joy, bliss and worldly achievements. In the rest of the world, too, a garden is regarded as a place of rest, comfort, peace, tranquility, freedom from worldly cares and worries etc. So the Holy Qur'an has used this word in the same sense because its message is universal and the word 'garden' is used everywhere for the same meanings.

Some people who do not accept the virtues of a regular, well-disciplined life of religion object that almost all the great religions are hedonistic. This objection arises from the fact that religion, when it depicts the rewards of virtue and the punishments of vice, uses sensualistic language. Paradise is conceived as the vision of unfulfilled desire which is physical. There are two ways of looking at these descriptions: they may be taken literally or they may

be taken metaphorically. The grosser minds have always taken them literally but the Qur'an, notwithstanding very vivid physical imagery, warns us that they are to be taken as analogies and parables. It says:

1. "The analogy of paradise promised to the righteous is that there flow in it rivers; its fruit is perpetual. (47:15)
2. "A likeness of the garden. (35:13)
3. "No soul knows what is in store for him that will refresh the eyes. (32:17)

"The mind at the lower level which is yet in the grip of the senses has to be appealed to in terms of the sources. But as we rise higher, our conception of virtue and vice and of the consequent rewards and punishments becomes more and more intellectualised. The Qur'an gives us moral wisdom at this higher level where it ceases to use sensual imagery.

The story of Adam is, in fact, the story of human potential on the one hand and his psychological and intellectual conflicts on the other. The story describes in very subtle allegories his animal instincts as well as his spiritual capabilities that can surely and successfully raise him above the animal level. In that pre-historic, pre-social, primitive age man really lived in Paradise. There was an abundance of goods that he needed for his bare living and he knew not the difference between

the possessive pronouns 'mine', 'yours', or 'his' or 'theirs'. But this primitive life was not above the level of eating, drinking and making merry:

“O Adam’ Dwell you and your wife in the Garden and eat of the bountiful things therein as (where and when) you will.”(35:2)

However, after this, when the social life of man started the idea of ownership gave birth to clashes in interests and the Paradise in which he lived was consequently lost.

This lost Paradise which can be regained by following the guidance of Revelation is, then, the second Paradise or Adam’s Earthly Paradise which the Qur’anic social set-up wants to build on a universal level on this earth. This social set-up ensures not only an abundance of utility goods without the exploitative high-handedness of anyone but full development of human ‘self’ or personality also, at the same time.

After the death of the body all the material goods necessary for earthly life will be left behind and only the ‘self’ which will have developed and reached its spiritual evolution will advance towards further stages of evolutionary life. The Holy Qur’an has described this evolutionary life as the Hereafter as well as the Paradise. At this stage of our consciousness we cannot fully understand the exact pattern of life in the Hereafter. The Holy Qur’an has, therefore, described its details

allegorically to give us some idea of the eternal Bliss of this future life. It has used the same words for this Paradise which it has used for the earthly Paradise of man. For this reason, the meanings of these words should be understood not in their real but in their symbolic sense. It may, however, be borne in mind that the Paradise of the Hereafter, too, is not the last destination of the life’s journey. It is like a resting place from where the ‘self’ or human spirit has to proceed further along the path of a continuity of life. We are not told here at this stage of our consciousness as to what the next destination after a while’s rest in the Paradise will be, but from some clear hints given in the Holy Qur’an we can say that the Caravan of life will ever remain on the move even after our sojourn in the Paradise.

Those whose spiritual development is held up here in this world for their own misdeeds will fail to evolve their selves and therewith lose their aptness to continue life beyond death. Those who do not see the light of Allah’s guidance and follow their own passions will be too feeble and underdeveloped to be able to proceed further. Their evolution will stop and they will remain forever in a state of deprivation and disappointment which is allegorically called Hell.

In the words of Iqbal: “Heaven and Hell are states, not localities. The descriptions in the Qur’an are visual representations of an inner fact, i.e.



character. Hell in the words of the Qur'an is God's kindled fire which mounts above the hearts—the painful realization of one's failure as a man. Heaven is the joy of triumph over the forces of disintegration. There is no such thing as eternal damnation in Islam. The word eternity used in certain verses, relating to Hell, is explained by the Qur'an itself to mean only a period of time (78:23). Time cannot be wholly irrelevant to the development of personality. Character tends to become permanent; its reshaping must require time. Hell, is conceived by the Qur'an, as not a pit of ever-lasting torture inflicted by a revengeful God; it is a corrective experience which may make a hardened ego once more sensitive to the living breeze of Divine Grace. Nor is Heaven a holiday. Life is one and continuous. Man marches always onward to receive ever-fresh illuminations from an Infinite Reality which every moment appears in a new glory. And the recipient of Divine illumination is not merely a passive recipient. Every act of a free ego creates a new situation and thus offers further opportunities of creative unfolding."

In verse 46:55 of the Holy Qur'an it is said that for those who fear the time when they will stand up before their Nourisher-Sustainer, there will be two gardens, containing many branches of arts and sciences. In them there will be fruits of every kind in pairs—and the

fruits of the gardens will be within easy reach of all.

This is the kind of pure bliss that leaves no sting behind for which Educators and the Learners must aspire. When every soul realises its own responsibility, it looks less and less to reflected lights, and through the beauty of a dawn-like awakening it is prepared more and more for the splendour of the Permanent Light of Allah which provides unfailing guidance to the whole of humanity. The Holy Qur'an is a warning to mankind, —"to any of you that chooses to press forward or to follow behind." (74:37)

Another point of importance for the educators is that this world and the next one are not only interlinked as stages of evolution but that the evolution itself has no final stoppage; it continues even after the righteous souls enjoy the blissful life of Eternity. The light, of Faith and good deeds will run forward before them to illuminate new and higher avenues of evolution and the souls will pray to Allah:

"O our Lord! Perfect our Light for us," (66:8, 57:12 19)

We are also told that in the heavens, lofty mansions, one above another; have been built. (20:39). As heaven is not a geographical place and lofty mansions are not buildings of brick and mortar, therefore, the idea is of the continuity of evolutionary stages for the soul, and the Muslim educator has to

prepare the learners for this blissful life of evolution. How is he to do it is a matter of further research for the planners of educational programmes.

Persons whose spiritual development is arrested here are sure to lose their potential for evolution forever. Thus incapacitated for an onward march, they will remain stuck to the state where they are left. As this state of incarceration of the soul or its inertness cannot have any variation or change, therefore, the Holy Qur'an uses words meaning Hell all in the singular number. For the soul that proceeds on further or that whose capabilities for an onward march have received full development, there can be many evolutionary stages. To this the Holy Qur'an refers by using the words for Paradise in singular number, in the plural for two, and in the infinite plural also. This proves the fact that progress and evolution cannot be finite. If they were, life would lose all its charms.

The Holy Qur'an—the final Message of Admonition—is “a warning to mankind,” to any of you that chooses to press forward or follow behind.” (74:36-37), to understand what lagging behind means we must first believe that man's short stay on this earth is no more than a sojourn on a wayside rest-house. This stop-over is not the be-all and end-all of the Mighty River of Life which has flown for thousands of centuries in human calculation. It must flow on and on continuously for ever and ahead of

all notions of time and space. Death is the gate-way which opens up life's new highways for the Life's onward march. If man has given strength to his 'Self' by following the Path of Right Guidance during his sojourn on this earth he will automatically continue his journey along the new highways. But if he has disregarded the Guidance and followed his own paths instead of following the paths shown by Right Guidance he will be too weak and tired to proceed further. His aptitude for onward march will get impaired and he will be obliged to stay on forever on the threshold of this gate-way. His incapability carries with it the sense of remorse and the agonizing feeling of failure, disappointment, deprivation and loss of grace and honour. This is the same process which Biologists tell us about the extinction of some animal species from the physical world for want of proper adaptiveness to environments. The 'Self' that adapts not to the atmosphere of the Supreme Will of Allah and goes astray by following the crooked Paths of its own passions fails to develop the aptitude to live in the Spiritual World. Consequently, he is thrown away as useless-trash—unfit to survive the shock of physical death, unfit to march on in the company of stronger and purified selves, unfit to live on in a higher plane of life and unfit to enjoy the bounties of the Garden of Bliss! He must go extinct.

The Holy Qur'an uses the word

‘Jaheem’ for this stay-behind. The root-word (Jahm) means ‘to open the eyes and fix them upon something’. Ijham is to abstain, desist. Tajahhum is to be narrow, be oppressed, hence to burn with rage, passion, desire etc. Those who lag behind while others march on do indeed kindle afire in their ‘hearts and keep burning over the loss of their fitness to keep pace with the current of evolution:

“(The Fire) which doth mount to the hearts” (7:104)

The same idea is implicit in the word ‘Jahannam’ usually translated as Hell. This word literally means a pit or a deep ditch which restricts free movement and has no outlet or way of escape. In Verse 8: 104 it is described as a prison and in Verse 8:17 as a vault.

Lower passions and base desires bring about man’s fall from his high seat of humanity to the mean state of animality. This life of lowliness is called ‘Hawiyah’ meaning ‘bottomless pit.’(101) It is that state of life in which man’s intellectual faculties avail him not and for want of rest and satisfaction he roams about in utter confusion. It is no less than a blazing fire, of course.

The burning sensation of failure, anger, jealousy, deprivation, revenge etc., is compared with the scorching sun of the barren deserts called ‘Saqar’ in Verse 49:54. The same idea is contained in the word ‘Hutamah’ which means a —blazing fire, which leaves no

trace of the burnt object. It also means a piece of land of which all the grass and verdure has been crushed under the hoofs of a large number of cattle. The social system in which humanity is crushed under the iron heels of the exploitative classes or where masses are forcibly pushed into the blazing fire kindled by the opulent few or where human potential for rising to higher spiritual level is suppressed by the brutality of human beings, is no less than either a pit of fire or a prison-cell. We know that only consciousness will go with the ‘Self’ after the bodily death of man, therefore, hatred, jealousy and other spiteful passions that are commonly associated with evil will be felt with great intensity by the consciousness of the wrong-doers and this agony itself will be the severest punishment for them. So this is the Hell of which the fire, kindled by man himself, reaches the very hearts. On the other hand, the social system that provides ample means for free and unrestricted development, for all human beings, on basis of equality, love, co-operation and mutual respect is the system which creates a blissful atmosphere here in this world, as well as in the world of the Hereafter. Having reached from time to a timeless state the righteous will be free from all fear and sorrow as regards the past, the present and the future. This is because they will have merged their ‘will’ into the ‘Universal Will’ of the Infinite in the world of matter and motion left behind them. ■

## Sunny Side Up

India and Saudi Arabia signed a memorandum of understanding on September 10 to cooperate in the field of energy. The highlight was the emphasis on renewable energy, which includes the possibility of connecting national grids through an undersea interlink. Both countries are executing a huge pivot towards renewable energy (RE) from traditional sources. Saudi Arabia aims to increase domestic RE capacity to 50% of total energy by 2030. India's formal goal is to more than double RE capacity of 175 GW in 2022 to 450 GW by 2030.

The trend in both countries mimics a massive global push towards RE. IEA forecast that by next year RE capacity addition will take the global capacity to 4500 GW, which is equal to the power output of the US and China combined. The top-down push towards RE through a combination of fiscal incentives in many countries hasn't quite solved what comes next. RE production is linked to right conditions such as sunshine, unlike energy from fossil fuels. RE, therefore, makes grid management tricky as power demand is not constant through the day.

India's uneven state-wise RE development provides an insight into the challenge. Once storage costs for RE are brought into the picture, the cost calculus of RE is not always attractive. The ideal solution is to move power through the grid to other locations as there are variations in peak power demand. India's huge scale-up in RE by 2030, which is likely to be led by solar, will present significant downstream challenges in terms of grid management.

If there's a global surge in RE capacity addition, connecting national grids is a way to make it financially viable. Energy storage technology through batteries is fast improving but it needs countries to find ways to ensure that trade in critical materials such as cobalt that go into batteries is not weaponised. It's early days yet in the India Saudi Arabia MoU, but it's important to explore linking national grids to deal with the surge in RE capacity. Here, both countries start with the advantage of a stable diplomatic relationship. ■

*(Editorial, The Times of India, 13-9-2023)*

## The Implications of the Expansion of Brics

- Talmiz Ahmad\*

On August 24, the 15th BRICS summit in Johannesburg announced that the five-member grouping (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) had invited six new members — Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) from West Asia; Egypt and Ethiopia from Africa, and Argentina from Latin America. It was reported that 40 countries have shown interest in BRICS' membership, with 22 having submitted formal applications. From 2009, BRICS has met annually at summit level, and is backed by several ministerial and expert conclaves. It has spawned two major institutions – the New Development Bank (NBD) to provide development assistance and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement that supports countries facing short-term balance-of-payments pressures. The NBD has already financed 96 projects valued at \$33 billion.

BRICS members have been united in their dissatisfaction with the West-dominated international institutions that had emerged after the Second World War — the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations and its various bodies, particularly the Security Council, and more recently, the World Trade

Organization. At Johannesburg, the UN Secretary General António Guterres described them as reflecting “yesterday’s world”. The United States has led the western alliance in both the political and economic areas.

BRICS challenges this West-led world order: it promotes intra-BRICS economic and political cooperation, builds institutions outside western control, and agitates robustly for wide-ranging reforms to accommodate the presence and interests of emerging economies. The Johannesburg Declaration categorically asserts that the members’ “strategic partnership” will be directed at achieving “a more representative, fairer international order”. The recent expansion of BRICS’s membership has shaped a grouping that is aligned in terms of global perceptions and interests, and collectively provides considerable economic clout to the enlarged conclave. With the proposed expansion, BRICS will have 46% of world population, while its share of the global GDP will go from 31.5% in PPP terms to 37%, far ahead of the GDP of 30.7% of the G-7. The five core members account for 23% of global exports and 19% of global imports; with the new members, these figures will be boosted by 3.7% and 3%, respectively. The

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major impact will be on the energy sector: out of global oil production of about 90 million barrels per day (mbd) in 2022, the earlier five BRICS members had accounted for 20% of global output; this will go to 42%.

### **An addition of geo-strategic Value**

The new BRICS members will bring considerable geo-strategic value to the grouping. Those crack IAS.com from West Asia are already closely tied to BRICS members: 35% of Saudi oil production goes to China and India; Russia, already a major oil supplier to China and India, is now looking at Brazil as a market. Despite sanctions by the United States, Iran has increased oil production from a low of 400,000 barrels per day in the Trump period to 2.2 mbd in August this year, most of it going to China. Egypt and Ethiopia are an important presence in the strategically important Horn of Africa and the Red Sea, while Argentina is the second largest economy in Latin America.

Rather than look at the issues being raised at BRICS' summits and other meetings, western commentators have disparaged the grouping as having no shared vision and being a "talk-shop" with no worthwhile achievements. These criticisms have little substance. BRICS leaders have met over 15 years and every time have overcome their internal divisions and competitions to issue a consensual "Declaration". Over

the years, the declarations have expanded in content, focused on specific deliverables and have steadily expanded their areas of interest.

In the Johannesburg Declaration, while several paragraphs call for wide-ranging reforms in international organisations, the bulk of the document focuses on intra-BRICS cooperation and outreach to other developing countries. Thus, members have agreed to "encouraging the use of local currencies in internal trade and financial transactions" between BRICS and other trading partners.

The Declaration also reflects the shared views of its members on several political issues — the centrality of the United Nations; the problems in West Asia, i.e., Syria, Yemen, Palestine, the Arab peace Initiative, and the Iran nuclear agreement; the war in Ukraine and global terror.

### **Outlook For Regional And Global Affairs**

The new BRICS members, particularly those from West Asia, naturally fit into this political and economic framework. From 2020, both Saudi Arabia and the UAE have shrugged off the U.S. yoke and shaped independent foreign policy paths for themselves. Saudi Arabia has pursued de-escalation and dialogue, ending the Qatar blockade in January 2021, engaging with Turkey, and opening

interactions with Iran from April 2021. These regional engagements culminated in the China-brokered accord with Iran in March this year.

The UAE has also normalised ties with Iran and is focusing on expanding its maritime footprint across the Gulf, the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa. Iran's entry into BRICS is propitious in that, besides its role in the energy sector, it opens up opportunities for accelerated regional economic cooperation, besides the revival of the moribund north-south connectivity projects through the Chabahar port with

which India is associated.

While western writers continue to harp on the emerging global binary divide and the "new cold war", India and other BRICS members reject this short-sighted view and insist on asserting their strategic autonomy in a multipolar world order, with member-nations demanding that their voices be heard and their interests respected. It is not surprising, then, that a recent media report described the Johannesburg summit as a "turning point in modern history". ■

*(The Hindu- 6-9-2023)*

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*(continued from page 37)*

He further says, "Character is much more precious than even a vast empire. For good character helps one gain the gnosis of Allah. In turn, one is blessed with His guidance and mercy. By comparison, an empire is something material and ephemeral, whereas good character resting on firm faith enables one to conquer everything- one's own self and all that exists in the universe. It grants such victory against which all worldly conquests pale. If one's intention is pious and sincere it helps establish huge institutions. Left to their own devices institutions are subject to decay and fall. In contrast, sincere intention leads one to the way of Allah. One is guided fully to adhere to the Shariah. One's deeds are thus in line with divine will. With such an outlook one can conquer everything. A true believer is not overawed by worldly glory and pomp. (Ibid,133)

To sum up, education is a must. It is the backbone of every nation. That is why Islam lays unprecedented stress on education. As it has been vividly mentioned in the first revelation of the Holy Qur'an, "Read! In the name of your Lord Who has created all that exists." One may easily guess what sort of education the first revelation refers to. The education which establishes and maintains the relationship of Allah with man. The Prophet of Islam dubbed it as profitable knowledge (Ilme Nafay). It is imperative for everyone to engrave the message of the verse on their hearts and minds. It is a powerful verse. It covers all kinds of knowledge which human beings need to lead a civilized and peace-oriented life.

Hence, character building should be the main concern of education. Accordingly, to achieve it, ethics-centric education must be imparted in all institutions across the world. ■

## Personal Life, Traits And Practices of The Prophet

- S. Athar Husain

*“O Muhammad verily thine will be a reward unending, and thou art of a highly elevated character.”*

(Q. 68: 3, 4)

MUHAMMAD (Peace on him) was born in the full blaze of history. There is no mystery about his personality, there are no fairy tales woven around him. There is an authentic account of his lineage and parentage, his birth and early childhood, his youth and manhood, his surroundings and connections. The dawn of apostleship in him was such a tremendously striking event and caused such an uproar and turmoil that thereafter he came into dazzling limelight and became the focus of attention of all Arabia. His life was so dynamic, so packed with thrilling and consequential events that it caused an upheaval in the religious, cultural, social, political and economic life of the country. It is not at all surprising, therefore, that what he said or did was attentively listened to and closely observed and remembered by heart, like the Quran, by hundreds of his devoted disciples and carried to the farthest corner of Arabia and, in course of time, recorded in writing. His sayings and practices form the enormous literature of Hadith (Traditions) of which the more well-known are Mawatta by Ibn Malik, Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, Sunan Nisai,

Sunan Tirmizi, Sunan Ibn Maja and Sunan Abu Dawud. They record the minutest details of his life both private and public. How detailed they are can be gathered from the fact that Tirmizi alone has fifty-two chapters devoted to his appearance, hair, gray hairs, comb, dress, socks, shoes, ring, sword, armour, helmet, turban, trousers, gait, pillow, bed, eating utensils, his way of eating, drinking, sitting, walking, talking, sleeping and scenting, what he ate, his way of doing ablutions for prayers, his prayers, fasting, recitation of the Quran, meditation, his disposition, general behaviour, the way he smiled and laughed, etc., etc. The Traditions run into thousands and thousands and there is hardly any conceivable aspect of life which they do not cover. From this immense mass of authentic literature culled out of a huge corpus we can but take a select list of the Traditions, by way of illustration, to give an idea of the Prophet's personal life and to show how he practised what he preached.

### **AUTHENTICITY OF THE TRADITIONS**

Before we attempt to deal with this subject, it may not be out of place to say a few words about the authenticity and accuracy of these books of Traditions. Contrary to the notion advanced by some Occidental scholars like Sir



William Muir and Goldzeiher that the writing of Traditions started some ninety years after the Prophet's death, the work had actually started in the life-time of the Prophet. Abdullah bin Umroo, a companion of the Prophet, was the first to write the Traditions and he compiled a book called Saadqa (Ibn Saad, Vol. 2, p. 125) containing Traditions he himself had heard. Similarly Ali compiled a large number of Traditions (Sahib Bukhari, Vol. 2, p. 1084); Abdullah bin Abbas, another companion, had made a collection (Tirmizi KitabuL-alal, p. 691); Jabir bin Abdullah's collection was compiled by Wahab Tabai (Tahzeeb, Vol. 1, p. 316) and that of Abu Huraira by Haman bin unabba, later reproduced in the books of Traditions as Sahifa Haman. Likewise Abdullah bin Masud had recorded what he had heard from the Prophet and his record was shown to the people by his son Abdul Rehman. The Traditions quoted by yet another companion, Anas, were written down by his disciple Aban (Darmi, p. 68). The compilation of these scattered accounts of Traditions and those which the people had memorised was begun by the 'Tabei'n, i.e. people who were either the immediate disciples of the companions or were persons living in the same age as the companions and the Prophet but had not had the privilege of meeting the Prophet. Among them, the men of learning and intelligence, all pious and

God-fearing, started the sacred task of collecting the Traditions. To name a few, Muhammad bin Shahab Zuhri. Hashsham bin Hurwa, Qais bin Abi Hazam, Ata bin Abi Raba and Said bin Jabir, went from door to door, personally met the narrators of the Traditions and collected a mass of Traditions numbering about three lakh. Over two lakh were repetitions, for the same traditions were repeated by many. Quite a number were spurious or of doubtful character. The collection of Imam Zuhri (50 A.H. to 124 A.H.) is still extant under the name of Tahzeeb Zuhri. It was this mass which was sorted out, sifted, tested and retested by such luminaries as Imam Bukhari, Imam Muslim, Imam Tirmizi, Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal and others. The methods employed were such as no scholar anywhere in the world, in- any period of history, has ever attempted. The chain of transmitters of the Traditions was checked by spot verifications necessitating thousands of miles of travelling. The piety, veracity, acumen and intelligence of the reporters were carefully enquired into. If any link was found untrustworthy, the Tradition was rejected; if a link was found missing but the Tradition came up to other tests, it was described as feeble or poor. The result of this laborious and painstaking investigation was that salient details of the lives of about 1,300 companions and a large number of the transmitters were recorded and handed down to posterity.

Alongside this verification of the transmitters, critical tests were applied to check the veracity of the Traditions in the light of the Quran, undoubted Traditions, reason and intelligence and those that failed to come up to the mark were discarded. It was indeed a stupendous task, but religious zeal and fervour and dedication and piety on the part of the scholars, who had made the task the solitary ambition of their lives, carried them through. For instance, Imam Bukhari devoted sixteen years of his life to the compilation of his great work.

The first of these well-known and authentic books is Muwatta which was brought out by Imam Ibn Malik in 120 A.H in Medina. Ibn Malik has himself mentioned the names of twenty-five Tabei'n from whom he had heard the Traditions, and who were still alive and residing in Medina. The last of that group died in 145 A.H. The Muwatta was read to these Tabains and copies were sent to various. About a thousand persons read it from Imam Malik himself (Shah Abdul Aziz Dehlari-Bustanni Muhaddisin). Seoti in the foreword to his book, Tanwir-ul-Hawalik, has mentioned the names of fifty scholars who studied the work with Imam Malik himself and then quoted him in their own works.

There is, thus, no doubt about the authenticity of these books of Traditions and they are revered next to the Quran in the entire Muslim world.

As regards the importance of Traditions we might note what the learned scholar H. A. R. Gibb has to say:

“The Quran is comparatively short and even in this small book the greater part has no direct bearing on dogmatic, ritual, legal, political and social questions. The general principles by which all these matters should be regulated are- to be found in the Quran, but not all of them are set out with equal clearness and detail. It is, therefore, essential to interpret and elaborate the relevant texts. The natural, and indeed the only possible interpreter whose judgment can be trusted is the Prophet through whom they were revealed. According to the Quran itself the Prophet was possessed not only of the kitab, the written ‘book’ but also of the hikma the ‘wisdom’ whereby ultimate principles can be applied to the details and episodes of ordinary life. Consequently, his actions and sayings, transmitted by chains of reliable narrators, form a kind of commentary and supplement to the Quran.”

### **OPINIONS OF HIS ENEMIES**

Before we enter into the details of the Prophet’s personal life, let us see what his enemies thought of him. When he started his mission and invited the Quraish to abandon idol-worship and other practices of their forefathers and to worship God the Almighty alone, they were appalled at his audacity. They

thought he had gone crazy. They called him a sorcerer, a poet, a lunatic and a person possessed. When he continued his mission, they were incensed; they reviled and insulted him, they mocked him, threw filth and stones at him, persecuted him and his followers but they had not a word to say about his personal conduct and character.

Nazar bin Haaris, a chief of a tribe intervening in a meeting of the chieftains of the Quraish, spoke to them thus:

“O Quraish, you could not find a way out of this misfortune that has befallen you. Muhammad grew up before you. He was the most truthful, trustworthy and the most liked person among you but now that he is grown up and has presented before you something, you call him a sorcerer, a poet and a possessed person. By God I have heard him. He is not what you say.”

His inveterate enemy Abu Jahal said on one occasion, “Muhammad I do not call you a liar but what you say I do not accept” (Tirmizi). It was on this occasion that the Quranic verse was revealed:

“We know well how their talk grieveth thee, though in truth they deny not thee (Muhammad) but these transgressors deny the revelations of Allah.” (Q. 6: 33)

The Prophet had put a bold

question to the concourse of Quraish at Safa: “Will you believe me if I say that an army was coming to you from the other side of the hill’ and it replied ‘Yes. We have not known you telling lies.

### **OPINIONS OF HIS ASSOCIATES**

We will now cite the opinions of a few people who were closely associated with the Prophet and who had watched him constantly in his house as well as outside.

“Have you not read the Quran? The Prophet was, indeed, the Quran in action,” said Aiysha, his widow, to some Muslims when requested to tell them something about his personal life.

When the mantle of Prophet-hood had just fallen on his shoulders, Muhammad found the responsibility overwhelming His wife Rhadija consoled him in these words: “Oh Messenger of God, God will not leave you unaided for you amply discharge the rights of your kith and kin, you pay the debt of debtors, you assist and support the poor, you generously entertain your guests and you always support what is right and help the people in distress.”

We have it again on the authority of Aiysha that, “he would never chide anyone nor even retaliate against any wrong done to him, but used to forgive the aggressor. He was far removed from any vice. He never took revenge against any one, never beat anyone be he a slave or servant or an animal and. never

refused a proper request.”

Ali states, “He was genial, kind-hearted and noble. He was always inclined to be kind and tender and was not hardhearted. He never uttered anything foul or unbecoming. He never tried to find weaknesses of persons. If he did not like a request made to him, he would neither convey his approval nor deny it outright. Those who knew him well would understand what this meant. He did this for he did not like to hurt anyone’s feelings but would rather assuage them.” Again Ali says, “He was highly generous and gracious, strictly truthful and kind hearted. Those who had the privilege of sitting with him were delighted by his company. Whoever saw

him for the first time was but with greater acquaintance would start loving him.

Hind, his step-son by his first wife Khadija, says, “He was always gracious. He would never hurt anyone’s feelings nor would say anything that might sully anyone’s honour. He used to thank persons for the smallest favours. He never lost his temper over a personal matter nor took revenge. But if anyone opposed what was just and right, he used to get angry and would relentlessly support the right cause.”

We now give a brief sketch of the Prophet’s traits and personal life based on the traditions and historical accounts. ■

*(To be continued)*

### **Greatest Religion**

Humanity is the greatest religion.

If you have a human approach, you are a religious being.

The twin pillars of Sufism are selfless service and love.

Only one who loves can serve.

Feelings of hatred and enmity  
are a curse. For humanity to win,  
replace them with mutual love  
and friendship.

**- Moinuddin Chishti**

## Ibn Khaldun's Views on Knowledge

- Shaukat Ali

Ibn Khaldun, in spite of his deep-seated rationalism and keen and observant eye over the complex and fast-changing nature of human affairs, adhered very closely to the traditions of Muslim scholarship. He added something of his own to its theory and practice, but on the whole, the underlying pattern was the same. The Muqaddima eloquently confirms his religious bias, although he is much more critical of the established authorities whose views had choked creativity among intellectuals of Islam.

Ibn Khaldun believes that the source of knowledge is man's ability to think rationally. He says, "It should be known that God distinguished man from all other animals by an ability to think which He made the beginning of human perfection and the end of man's noble superiority over existing things." In his opinion, human thinking works in three different ways. Firstly, it provides man with the mental equipment to observe the world around him and manipulate it for his own good. This he calls the discerning intellect. Secondly, he has to think so that he can watch the behaviour of other human beings with whom he has to deal in various areas of his life. He employs a variety of methods in this

direction, and produces that superb cargo of life called the enrichment of experience. This is experimental intellect. Thirdly, thinking is a source of hypothetical knowledge. This is something which is captured within the realm of sense perception. There is no immediate practical utility of it. He entitles such an activity of mind as speculative intellect.

The world around human beings is topsy-turvy, and unless knowledge and perception reduce this chaotic mass of observations and experiences to some disciplined form, life becomes meaningless. Man must also use his thinking faculties to find causal relationship between objects and things. In his opinion, 'the degree to which a human being is able to establish an orderly causal chain determines his degree of humanity.

Knowledge is essential for three basic reasons. Firstly, it facilitates cooperation among human beings. Sociability of man is an unquestioned reality. Nothing in life can be accomplished in isolation. The variety of human needs, frailty of human character, and physical weakness, prompt men to live in company and seek others' help. Knowledge alone helps

them to understand the nature and purpose of such a co-operation for various occasions. Secondly, the pathways of life are strewn with many ghoulish objects. Man is in dire need of knowledge to differentiate between good and evil so that he can avoid the latter and perpetuate the former. And lastly, knowledge economizes time and increases human energies, to resolve the numerous imponderable problems of life. If each individual was to search out a solution for every problems of life. If each individual was to search out a solution for every problem, independent of the knowledge which he gathers from other's experiences, very little would be accomplished. Ibn Khaldun has depicted the role of knowledge and experience in the following words:

Those who follow this procedure during their whole life become acquainted with every single problem but things that depend on experience require time. God made it easy for many human beings to obtain this (social knowledge) in a time shorter than the time required to obtain it through experience, if they will follow the experience of their fathers, teachers and elders, learn from them and accept their instruction. People can, thus, dispense with lengthy and careful (personal) study of events—

people who are not willing to learn and follow others, need long and careful study in order to be educated in these things. They are unfamiliar to them, and the knowledge they obtain of them is uneven.

No discussion of knowledge in Islam could be complete without thorough understanding of its spiritual and religious foundations. As mentioned earlier, according to Islam the Quran as the revealed word of God is the fountainhead of all knowledge. All secular knowledge, accumulated through observation, reflection or experimentation is meant to verify, support and strengthen the religious beliefs of the people.

Ibn Khaldun has also made a searching and insightful examination of the religious connotations of knowledge in Islam. Before making an assessment of his views, it would, however be essential to keep in mind that in spite of his great faith in scientific enquiry, he remained convinced about the decisive role of the many religious principles which cannot be verified by scientific scrutiny. Secular knowledge in his opinion is good, but the complete veil from the face of the realities is lifted only by religion. He says:

The removal of the veil to which we have referred is achieved only

through training in dhikr exercises—of which the best is prayer, which forbids sinful and evil actions—through abstinence from all distracting food consumption—of which the most important part is fasting—and through devoting oneself to God with all one’s power.

Above the material world, in his opinion, is the spiritual world, which is the source of our ‘perception and volition.’ This is the world of angels. To enter this world is the culmination of humanity. This is very rare but such a disposition is within the realm of possibility. A person who has reached the stage of angelicality, becomes eligible for revelation.

All prophets, in Ibn Khaldun’s opinion, are endowed with such disposition and are custodians of supernatural knowledge. They are human but their knowledge is superhuman. What they gain at the supernatural stage of prophesy becomes then an integral part of their humanity. He says, “When the prophets quit that state and resume their humanity, the knowledge they have, does not quit for it has become attached to it in the former condition, their experience constantly repeats itself, until their guidance of the nation of believers, which was the purpose for which they

were sent, is accomplished.”

Islam alone, according to Ibn Khaldun, among great religions of the world, has an elaborate system of religious sciences. The science of speculative theology, is meant to accumulate proofs and evidence by which innovations and deviations which are repugnant to the spirit of Islam could be effectively repudiated. The main purpose in the creation of the science of theology was to fortify the canonical law. To start with it was simple, but with the passage of time it became extremely complex, and most of its discussions were crowded with abstruse and baffling interpretations of the religious law.

The four schools of thought, i.e. Hanafite, Shafite, Hanbalites and Malikites, were always embroiled in endless disputations over the nature and meanings of Islamic doctrine as enunciated in the Quran. With the passage of time, public discussions among the various schools of thought became so acute that a special science of disputation had to be evolved. In this science, elaborate rules for argumentation, procedure for conducting such debate, time and reasoning and a special ethical code of conduct had been laid down. This excessive fixation to speculative theology became not only one of the major causes of stagnation in Islamic

thought, but also as the main reason for the ceaseless struggle to find precedents and authoritative expositions. Proponents of each school of thought were constantly striving to prove their conclusions to be definitive, and spent a lot of their time in establishing the authenticity of the sources. Ibn Khaldun says:

The school doctrine of each authority became, among his adherents, a scholarly discipline in its own right. They were no longer in a position to apply independent judgments and analogy. Therefore, they had to make reference to the established principles from the school doctrine of their authority, in order to be able to analyze problems in their context and disentangle them when they got confused.

Since scholarship was confined only to the transmission of what was already known and established, it was essential to examine the authenticity of the transmitters. It was this blind faith in precedent, and complete lack of desire on the part of Muslim scholars to do some analytical examination of their own, which Ibn Khaldun repudiated vehemently.

Whatever form knowledge might take, it is essential according to Ibn Khaldun that it should be imparted in a

scientific manner. Each human being irrespective of time, place, and race has his share of intelligence. How he develops it would depend on the facilities for scientific instruction which are provided in a particular civilization. Ibn Khaldun is against blind acceptance of the truth. Discussion and disputation in his opinion are the proper means to cultivate natural talent. They increase understanding and resolve problems which might at first glance seem to be insoluble. Mere memorizing of what has been said before does not help in the advancement of knowledge.

After these introductory remarks about the nature and meaning of knowledge in human life, Ibn Khaldun turns to his main theme of the impact of civilization on human understanding and knowledge. In his opinion, the tempo of learning is closely linked with the stage of civilization at which the society is at a particular moment in history. Sedentary culture, centred in big urban centres, he points out, is most conducive to the growth of knowledge. Material prosperity, peace and comfort entailed by it create the proper atmosphere wherein intellectual pursuits can thrive without those hindrances which crowd the primitive stage of human civilization. Moreover, in a sedentary culture, there is more refinement and articulation which are so essential for clarifying issues and opening new vistas for the



synthesis of the diverse elements in human thought. Since most of the national talent is concentrated in urban centres, the opportunity for the cross-fertilization of ideas and opinions is very wide. Continuous debates and discussions strengthen the spirit of inquiry and make human understanding spacious. If in a culture, these conditions are not available, the harvest of knowledge would be very poor. The moment sedentary culture starts declining there is a corresponding deterioration in arts and sciences. It is for this reason that very often the fall of a dynasty and the destruction of its urban centres has meant the disappearance of literary and scientific talent. In this respect he drew his illustration from Maghreb, the territory of which he had very profound and first-hand knowledge. He says:

If this has been established, it should be known that the tradition of scientific instruction at this time has practically ceased (to be cultivated) among the inhabitants of Maghrib, because the civilization of Maghrib has disintegrated and its dynasties have lost their importance, and this has resulted in the deterioration and disappearance of the crafts, as was mentioned before. Al-Bayrawan and Cordova were centres of sedentary culture

in the Maghrib and in Spain respectively. This civilization was highly developed and the sciences and crafts were greatly cultivated and very much in demand in them. Since these two cities lasted a long time and possessed a sedentary culture, scientific instruction became firmly rooted in them. But when they fell into ruin, scientific instruction ceased in the West.

In other words, political and social decadence of the Muslim Spain was a major cause for the disappearance of that tremendous urge for scientific inquiry, which had highlighted the history of that country for a long time. Ibn Khaldun then compares this sorry state of affairs in the Maghrib with the conditions of learning in the Eastern part of the world. In the East, he found that civilization was still flourishing, and as such, arts and sciences still attracted lots of talent. This comparison is made to substantiate his contention that knowledge is a fruit of advanced and stable civilization. When civilization deteriorates, arts and sciences also decline, and as civilization dies, they must disappear too.

The Muqaddima, also, has thrown some light on the concept of ijihad, which as mentioned earlier was one of the greatest contributions of Islam towards the growth and development of

human intellect, but which, due to the tragic error of history, was not allowed to remain a permanent feature of Muslim scholarship.

Ibn Khaldun attributes the 'closing of the doors of ijtihad' to the rigidities of the schools of thought which emerged under the influence of the towering personalities of the four Imams. People became tradition bound and all other authorities on religion and philosophy were thrown into oblivion. Scholars themselves became hyde-bound conservatives, and intolerant of any kind of difference of opinion. The biggest hazard in this development was that with an object to outdistance each other they would not hesitate to put all kinds of superimposed interpretations on very simple principles of the faith. At some stage these distortions became so rampant that jurists took the most drastic step of forbidding independent reasoning in the understanding of the religion. He has summed up his impression as follows:

Thus (scholars) came to profess their inability (to apply independent judgment) and had the people adopt the tradition of the (authorities) mentioned and of the respective group of adherents of each. They forbade one to modify his traditional allegiance, because that would imply frivolity. All that remained after basic

textbooks had been produced in the correct manner, and the continuity of this transmission had been established, was to hand down the respective school traditions and, for each individual adherent, to act in accordance with the tradition of his school.

It seems rather strange that Ibn Khaldun, with his unsurpassable passion for objectivity, and scientific inquiry, did not dwell at length on such a vital aspect of Islamic civilization. It is difficult to extract any definite opinion on ijtihad from his Muqaddima. He however does make a plea for independent research but his advocacy is vague and guarded. He says:

If you are afflicted by such (difficulties) and hampered in your understanding (of the problems) by misgivings and disturbing doubts in your mind, cast them off! Leave all the technical procedures and take refuge in the realm of the natural ability to think given to you by nature. Let your speculation roam in it and let your mind freely delve in it, according to whatever you desire (to obtain) from it.

Ibn Khaldun did not elaborate the means by which freedom of mind is to be obtained, not did he clarify the extent of independent thinking allowed to interpret religious doctrines. Probably the contemporary conditions did not

permit him to make a categorical or sweeping statement on such a sensitive issue.

The uncompromising orthodoxy of some of his immediate predecessors had not left much scope for independent and philosophical thinking in Islam. Even if Ibn Khaldun had desired, it would have been difficult for him to undo the influence the giants of theological sciences had on the masses. Moreover, long before he started his illustrious career of speculation and writing, philosophy which was one of the major propulsions behind independent thinking, had lost its enticing graces for the people. Everything in philosophy which corroborated with religion had already been included in theological studies, and the rest had been discarded. Ibn Khaldun himself being a fundamentalist had very little faith in philosophy. The result is that in the *Muqaddima* he has very little to say about the merits of philosophy. In fact, he treats it scornfully at the end of sciences like magic and astrology which in his opinion are fake and manifest nothing but human frivolity. He entitles his discussion of the subject as "the Refutation of Philosophy" which in itself is an indication of his contempt for secular learning. Ibn Khaldun argues that *falasifah* (the philosophers) are misguided because they try to discover all secrets of life, and universe through

'mental speculation and intellectual reasoning,' and commit the most sacrilegious act of scrutinizing articles of the faith with reason and rationality. The most objectionable aspect of philosophy, in his opinion, is the effort of the philosophers to prove that human beings have the ability to achieve goodness and virtue without religion. He has depicted the point of view of the philosophers on this vital issue in the following words:

They assume that happiness consists in the perception of existence with the help of such conclusions (if at the same time, such perception is) combine with the improvement of the soul and soul's acceptance of virtuous character. Even if no religious law had been revealed (to help man to distinguish between virtue and vice), they think the acquisition of virtue possible by man because he is able to distinguish between vice and virtue in his actions by means of his intellect, his ability to speculate and his natural inclination to praiseworthy actions, his natural disinclination for blameworthy actions. They assume that when the soul becomes (virtuous), it attains joy and pleasure, and that ignorance means eternal pain. This in their opinion is the meaning of bliss

and punishment in the other world.

He further points out those Muslim scholars who accepted Greek thought deviated from the path of God. He proclaims that most of their findings are fraudulent and ought to be rejected. In other words, the falasifah (philosophers), in his opinion, falsify the truth of Quran, and like astrologers, alchemists, and magicians are guilty of considerable harm to religion. Human intellect, in his opinion is completely incapacitated to probe into the laws enunciated by the religion. To know the unknowable through arguments and disputation does not appeal to Ibn Khaldun. Philosophers with all the sweep of their imagination and penetrating logic can not match the wisdom of the Holy Prophet. He says:

The perceptions which the Master of the religious law (Muhammad) had are wider (than those of philosophers) because they go beyond rational views. They are above them and include them, because they draw their support from divine light.

The theologians in his opinion did study logic of pre-Islamic philosophers but that was only to refute the contentions of those Muslim scholars who had started questioning several fundamentals of Islam. The early speculative theologians vehemently

opposed the science of logic, but after al-Ghazzali and Ibn al-Khatib, the Muslim scholars started taking a somewhat lenient view of this branch of philosophy. Ibn Khaldun is aware of the uses of logic for clarification of mind and vivification of intellect, but he is also convinced that some of its aspects are pernicious and students of law and religion ought to be at guard against them. These attributes in his opinion are contrary to Islam. He says:

Thus as one has seen, the science of logic is not adequate to achieve the avowed intention (of the philosophers). In addition, it contains things that are contrary to religious laws and their obvious meaning. As far as we know this science has only a single fruit, namely it sharpens the mind in the orderly presentation of proofs and arguments, so that the habit of excellent and correct arguing is obtained.

Ibn Khaldun's deep attachment to religion is manifested throughout his Muqaddima. Anything which adversely affects the doctrines of Islam seems to him redundant. Even his passion for scientific investigation dwindles considerably when results of such investigations prove detrimental to any principle of faith which has a divine sanction behind it. ■

## Education And Morality

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

Today, education is almost everywhere. Science and technology have made great strides in every sphere of life. Though human beings have landed on the moon their character and conduct have not changed so far. Today, human beings do not fear wild animals, if they have any fear it is of their fellow beings. Ironically, developed countries who dub themselves civilized and educated, always have their daggers drawn. The scenario of the First World War and the Second World War is not hidden from anyone. Apart from that, we know how developed countries ill-treat and eat up developing and backward countries. The present Russia-Ukraine war is a living example of it.

What is the reason behind it? If one ponders over it, one will certainly find that their education is devoid of morality, ethical values and sublime norms. Truly speaking, education is like that of a tree and moral character is its fruits. It is a well-known saying that the tree is known by its fruits. But it is unfortunate that almost every uncivilized and inhuman act is done by civilized and learned persons. The need of the hour is that today tremendous stress must be laid on acquiring education along with moral and ethical norms. Education and morality both are inseparable.

It is worth mentioning that man making is the sole concern of education and it is impossible sans morality. Good manners enjoy a place of crucial significance in the realms of Islamic

teachings. The Prophet himself said, "I have been sent by God to teach moral virtues and to evolve them to highest perfection". He further said, "The best of you are those who possess the best of manners". On the Day of Recompense nearest to me will be the one who displays in one's daily life the best of manners." On the Day of Reckoning the most weighty item in the 'Balance of Deeds' will be good manners."

It should also be noted that the main aim of education is to understand the real relationship of man with Allah. When we come to know our real nexus to our Creator, we will fear Him. And obviously we will keep ourselves aloof from sins, crimes, and scores of other anti-social activities. The Holy Qur'an says, "Be you faithful servants of Allah because you teach the Book and because you study it". (Al Imran 3:79)

Explaining the above verse of the Holy Qur'an, Maulana S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi says,

"For the wealth of meaning it embodies, this verse stands out as a miracle in itself. In short, Allah asks men to become His faithful servants. They are then able to train and guide others. They must however maintain a close and constant link with their Lord. More importantly, they should be characterized by sincerity, unwavering faith and a commitment to reform others."(Guidance From the Holy Qur'an, p, 128)

*(continued on page 23)*

## Inside India

### He is Determined to Turn The Tide Against Ocean Pollution

Seventeen-year-old Haaziq Kazi has a vision of cleansing our oceans of plastic waste. In pursuit of this goal, the teenager has designed the prototype of a ship that can suck out plastic waste from the oceans using centripetal force.

“My prototype is like a large vacuum cleaner with tubes connected to large dust bags,” Haaziq says.

According to Unesco, plastic waste makes up about 80% of all marine pollution, and around 8 to 10 million metric tonnes of plastic ends up in the oceans each year. Research states that, by 2050, plastic will likely outweigh all fish in the sea.

Haaziq explains how the idea struck him. “Once while washing my hands, I noticed the swirl of water swishing down the drain, and I knew what could be done. I drew a ship with saucers attached to it and named it ERVIS,” he says.

Haaziq's parents, Nilofer and Sarfaraz Kazi, encouraged him to pursue this dream. “As a child, Haaziq was always curious. He asked questions and was extremely persuasive. Failure did not deter him,” his father says.

He did well in academics and also excelled in extracurricular activities. He started playing the piano at the age of four and was a speedcuber who took 13 seconds to solve the Rubik's Cube, his parents say.

Haaziq, who is from Pune, is now studying in the US and is researching ways to build a working prototype of the ERVIS.

“Haaziq was with us till class 9 before moving overseas. He was a bright child and always wanted to try new things,” says Sandeep Chhabra, the principal of Indus International School in Pune.

Haaziq has a three-tier plan to suck out plastic waste from the seas – to segregate it,

analyse the collected waste, and prevent ocean pollution.

ERVIS will be powered by solar and renewable energy, he says. He designed the schematic prototype with help from some scientists and researchers.

“It will have saucers that will float on the surface, gravitate to create a whirlpool and pull waste towards its centre. This waste will be segregated into large, medium, small, and microplastic waste via tubes connected to various storage centres and repurposed into other products,” Haaziq says, adding that the filtered water can be pumped back into the ocean.

However, the bright idea is facing challenges. “Things are a bit slow on ERVIS right now as funding is an issue,” he says.

Sarfaraz adds, “Making a ship can cost millions of dollars. The question that is on Haaziq's mind now is – how can waste collection be monetised? That's the reason he has been meeting venture capitalists and experts to understand more.”

Meanwhile, Haaziq has started a foundation to work on behavioural change by educating the youth. ERVIS Foundation educates people about the threats faced by the marine ecosystem. It also provides a platform for sharing views on the environment.

The foundation conducts workshops, conclaves, and talk shows where experts discuss issues affecting the marine ecosystem.

Haaziq is also concerned about sargassum (algae) affecting the marine ecosystem. “I am also working on an incubator of ideas and robotics-based projects like building an underwater vehicle that works like a drone for research,” he says. ■

*(The Times of India- 12-9-2023)*

## Around the World

### **UK PM Roasted Back Home Over 'Weak Language' in G20**

LONDON: After being regaled in India, UK prime minister Rishi Sunak faced the music back in Britain where he was heavily criticised by MPs in the House of Commons for not securing tougher wording against Russia in the G20 leaders' declaration, as well as for the UK being left out of a landmark new economic corridor agreement.

Sunak was also repeatedly asked if he had asked PM Narendra Modi to secure Scottish Sikh Jagtar Singh Johal's release and whether he raised with him the fact that India is buying oil from Russia.

Leader of the opposition Sir Keir Starmer described the joint declaration from the weekend as "disappointing" with "weaker language than last year's summit".

Conservative MP Rehman Chishti pointed out that India was one of "44 non-aligned states not supporting sanctions against Russia, which is delaying the war in Ukraine". ■

### **Aftershock Rattles Morocco as Toll Tops 2,100+ From 6.8-Earthquake**

An aftershock rattled Moroccans as they prayed for victims of the nation's strongest earthquake in more than a century and toiled to rescue survivors while soldiers and workers brought water and supplies to desperate mountain villages in ruins.

The UN estimated 3,00,000 people were affected by Friday night's magnitude 6.8 quake and some Moroccans complained on social networks that the government wasn't allowing more help from outside. International aid crews were poised to deploy, but some grew frustrated waiting for government to officially request assistance. ■

### **On The Last Day of Stay, a Date With Qutub Minar & Humayun's Tomb**

Several heads of state, first ladies and ministers visited World Heritage Sites Qutub Minar and Humayun's Tomb on the last day of the G20 Summit on Sunday. They not only praised the beauty of the monuments but also the way they have been conserved.

French president Emmanuel Macron, who visited Qutub Minar, wrote in the visitors' book, "Thank you so much for this visit and your effort to preserve this part of your history. With respect and friendship." Officials said Macron inquired about how the conservation work is done, when a stone deteriorates and the process of changing it. "We took him to the 12th century Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque in the complex, where the conservation work is on," said an official. A live demo of carving heavy ornamental stones was also organised for the president. "He was shown how a drawing is made on a buttress paper, which is followed by carving it on a stone by hammering it lightly with a flat chisel to enhance the outline. They were keen to know the process," said an official of Archaeological Survey of India.

A few members of European Commission also visited the Unesco World Heritage Site. "What a great place of history and art! Thank you so much for this experience," wrote one of them. ■

### **Flood death toll in Libya's city of Derna crosses 5,100**

The death toll from flooding that hit the eastern Libyan city of Derna reached more than 5,000 a local health official said, as authorities struggled to get aid to the coastal city where thousands remained missing and tens of thousands were homeless.

"Bodies are everywhere, inside houses, in the streets, at sea. Wherever you go, you find dead men, women, and children," Emad al-Falah, an aid worker from Benghazi, said over the phone from Derna. "Entire families were lost."

### **Dam Burst**

Mediterranean storm Daniel caused deadly flooding in many towns of eastern Libya, but the worst-hit was Derna.

As the storm pounded the coast on Sunday, residents said they heard loud explosions when the dams outside the city collapsed.

Floodwaters washed down Wadi Derna, a river running from the mountains through the city and into the sea. ■

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