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Prophetic Call and Reformatory Movements

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

There are also revivalist and reformatory movement which expound the concept of Hereafter, its underlying wisdom, the benefits flowing from it and the invaluable contribution of the concept in establishing a stable society imbued with the sense of moral responsibility, but, evidently, the philosophy of after-life employed by them only as a means of educating the people and impressing upon them the spiritual-moral view of life preached by Islam. There is no denying the fact that their endeavour is praiseworthy, for one cannot have a congenial, orderly and ethical society without inculcating the belief in the Hereafter. At the same time, however, the method adopted by these movements is quite different from the way of thought, procedure of reform and the behaviour and deportment of the prophets and their followers. The methodology of reform evolved by the apostles, of God is inspired by an unflinching faith and sincere conviction, a heart-left sentience and fervid enthusiasm: it is a living faith which encompasses the entire being of the believer. The reformist movements on the other hand, are simply an external, outward expression of these deep-seated emotions of faith. The discourses of the former on sequel and life-after-death are marked by their instinctive conviction, glowing ardor, passionate eagerness, impressive earnestness and delicious ecstasy while the latter promote the idea as an expedient to social and moral reform of their people in order to build up a coherent, stable and ethical society. The difference between logical disputations and the secret springs of conviction, and the results achieved by the two, are too well known to be discussed here to explain the difference between the two. ■

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Wisdom of Qur'an

“(Adhere to the True Faith and) turn to Him, and establish Prayer, and do not be of those who associate others with Allah in His Divinity.”

(Al Qur'an – 30-31)

“To turn to God means anyone who opts to act independently of God's directives and thus deviates from the path prescribed for him by God, or whoever betrays God by accepting to serve aught apart from the One True God, should give up that attitude and revert to serving God Whose born servant he is.

Man should dread the punishment which he will incur by acting independently of, or worshipping others besides God, despite the fact that it is God Who brought him into being. Man should, therefore, shun all attitudes that lead to God's wrath.

Turning to God and holding His wrath in awe are acts of the heart. In order that this state of heart might become manifest and be reinforced, one needs to engage in physical acts which indicate that one has truly returned to the service and worship of the One True God, One Who has no associates in His Divinity. The regular performance of these acts helps develop in man the state of returning to and fearing God. This is why God asks him to engage in the establishment of Prayer.

The performance of the five daily Prayers at their stated times is the most effective means to develop God-consciousness and God-fearing. Thus man rehearses over and over again the Qur'an's teaching that man should believe in God and submit to Him in his day-to-day life. ■

Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

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

(Sahih Muslim)

This hadith gives good tidings to one who invites people to virtue, and warns a person against inviting his fellow beings to vice. Calling people towards doing good deeds is in itself a virtuous act. It wins the pleasure of God. Contrary to it, the act of inviting people to some evil is in itself a vicious act. It earns the Divine wrath.

God can give reward and likewise award punishment, here on earth and in the hereafter as well, to whom He wills. But this does not mean that His judgement is baseless. He knows perfectly well the deeds done by His servants as well as the intention working behind the commission of the deeds. Hence His judgement is based on human actions. He however can forgive whomsoever He wills.

This hadith encourages Muslims to call people towards doing good deeds because it will yield to him the same reward as those who in response to his call do good deeds. Similarly, it forbids them to invite people to do evil because it is a sin and earns the same punishment. ■

Editor's Note 

15th August

15th August is a momentous day in our life. In the preceding night of 15th August, 1947 Britain transferred power to us. After a long freedom struggle beginning from 1857 War of Freedom, we have become victorious and got independence from the clutches of the Britishers. The advent of Englishmen as traders was their object of gaining hold on India's land. The Battle of Plassey in 1757 in which they defeated Bengal ruler Siraj-Ud-Daula helped them to make further advances and thus, they reached Delhi in 1857 and after internment of Bahadur Shah Zafar the last Mughal Emperor they established British rule in whole of the country.

The war of freedom which was subdued after the imposition of the British Rule was again ignited around 1920 under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and finally we won the freedom on August 15th, 1947. Our first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru describes the day as follows; "The appointed Day has come in the day appointed by

destiny and India stands forth again, after long slumber and struggle, awake, vital, free, and independent. The past things on to us till in some measure and we have to be much before we redeem the pledges we have so often taken. Yet the turning point is passed, and history begins anew for us, the history which we shall live and act and others will write about.” He further says; “It is a fateful moment for us in India, for all Asia and for the world. A new star rises, the star of freedom in the East, a new hope comes into being, a vision long cherished materializes. May the star never set and that hope never is betrayed.”

Let us enjoy and rejoice the day with great zeal and enthusiasm and pray for Long Live India! ■

S.A.

We solicit articles for publication in The Fragrance of East. Suitable remuneration will be paid to writers. We prefer receipt of articles on:
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along with a hard copy, duly signed, by post.

Islam: Meaning, Nature And Scope

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Islam means surrendering oneself totally and unconditionally to Allah. In Islam the rules of religion are applicable to life in total. This fact cannot be fully appreciated unless one duly comprehends the relationship of man with God as enunciated in Islam. According to the teachings of Islam, every Muslim is a faithful bondsman of Allah. His relationship with Allah is permanent and comprehensive. It is deep as well as wide, personal as well as general. It is related in the Quran:

O ye who believe! Enter
into Islam wholeheartedly;
and follow not the footsteps
of the Evil One, for he is
to you an avowed enemy.

[11: 208]

In Islam there is no division of loyalty, or reservation of any kind. It does not entertain any division such as 'this is mine and that is thine'; or 'one share for the state, the other for God, and the third for the family and tribe'; or 'one part for religion and one for politics'. In

Islam all belongs to Allah. In it all endeavours of a Muslim are essentially worship. A Muslim stands in front of his Lord as a bondsman totally dependent on His mercy. The teachings of Islam cover life in totality. Nobody is allowed to introduce any change in them. Even the greatest scholar or Islamic leader of a time has no right to introduce a change in an Islamic injunction if it is explicitly laid down in the Quran as final.

Allah requires from believers that they practise Islam fully, not partially as they do now-a-days. Unfortunately, Muslims in general have now moved quite far away from the teachings of Islam in, for example, codes of culture, customs of marriage, and traditions of inheritance. There are Muslims whose understanding of the tenets of the Islamic faith is clear and correct, but they are negligent toward practising even obligatory deeds of worship. There are, on the other hand, others who observe Islamic injunctions both in matters of faith and worship, but they remain

highly untrustworthy in morals and dealings. They do not miss an opportunity to deceive: they dishonestly measure and weigh their goods less while selling, cheat their business partners, and cause trouble to their neighbours. The true teachings of Islam are, nevertheless, clearly related in the following traditions of the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him:

“A Muslim is he from whose hands and tongue other Muslims are safe.”

And “None of you is a true believer unless his neighbour is safe from his mischief.”

Unfortunately, there are some Muslims who have wrongly excluded dealings and morals from religion. They think that Islam as a religion comprises only the tenets of belief and rituals of worship. They, thus, remain heedless, for example, to the value of honesty in dealings. Fulfilment of a promise, carefulness in dealing with a trust, and honesty in giving due share to the rightful, which are essential teachings of Islam, have no meaning for them. They feel free in disregarding others' just claims on them, do not

observe religious rules in dealings, and do whatever suits their mundane interest.

The Companions of the Prophet of Allah who were groomed under the special disciplinary care of the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, observed the teachings of Islam in total and emerged as true living models of Islam. Their lives—belief, worship, dealings, morals, celebrations, earnings, and ways of governing a state—fully corresponded to the injunctions of the Islamic Shari'a.

Value of Faith in Islam

The value of man's bondsmanship to his Lord is based on the correctness of his faith. If a person's faith is incorrect, his deeds, even his worship, are not acceptable to Allah. But if his faith is correct, even a small number of good deeds may suffice for his eternal salvation. Thus, the most important obligation of a Muslim is to learn about things in which he has to believe and which he has to practise. These tenets of faith are fundamental in order for a person to qualify as a Muslim. They are commonly shared by Muslims

throughout the world and are as follows:

Oneness of Allah (Tawheed)

Belief in Oneness of Allah is the first and foremost tenet of the Islamic faith. It does not leave any space for an intermediary between the worshipper and his Lord in matters of worship and supplication. It also does not allow any room for belief in the diversity of gods, or in the existence of a person as God's reflection, or in God merging with any of His creatures to become one with him. Instead, in Islam a believer clearly confesses that there is no god but Allah, the Almighty, the Independent. He has no father, no son, and no associate of any kind. He alone is the Creator of the universe, exercises complete administration of the world, and holds full control of the land and the sky. He does not need help from anybody.

Allah has always existed and shall exist for ever. His attributes are perfect, worthy of praise and glory. He is above all limitations and weaknesses, whatsoever. His knowledge encompasses all and everything. This whole universe came into existence at His will. He

is the Living, the Hearing, the Seeing. There is none like Him. He alone deserves worship, the highest manifestation of reverence. It is He Who cures the sick, provides sustenance to creatures, and removes hardship from the suffering. To take anything except Allah as deity, to bow or prostrate in front of it in devotion, and to supplicate to it for favours which are only in Allah's power (for example, granting a baby, bringing luck, reaching a devotee for help anywhere, hearing everything from any distance, and knowing the secrets of heart) is called, in Islamic terminology, Shirk (polytheism). It is the most serious sin which is not forgiven unless the person committing it offers sincere repentance.

It is related in the Quran that Allah's power is such that when He intends to do a thing, He simply says "Be", and it becomes (Yassen: 82). He does not dwell in any specific place or direction. Whatever He wills comes to pass, for nothing can ever happen against His will. He is absolutely independent. Nobody can order Him for anything or question Him about any of his actions.

Wisdom is His attribute and all His actions reflect wisdom, ultimately leading to good. None except Him is the true Lord.

Fate, good or bad, has been decreed by Allah. He knows in advance things that are to happen in the future and causes them to come to pass.

He has created the Angels, who are high in rank and close to Him in relationship. The Devils (Shayateen) are also His creatures who are a source of evil for mankind. He has also created the Jinns.

The Quran is a book revealed by Allah. Its words as well as their intended meaning are all from Allah. It is complete and safe from interpolation and change. A person who believes that an addition or deletion had taken place in it is not a Muslim.

It is true that the dead will be brought to life again on an appointed day. Accountability, reward, and punishment are true. The Heaven and the Hell exist in reality.

It is true that Allah sent prophets to mankind in the world. It is also true that Allah sent His commandments to inform and

educate His bondsmen through the prophets. Muhammad, blessings and peace be on him, is the last of Allah's prophets. No prophet will be sent after him. The message brought by him is for the whole world. In this exceptional privilege and on some other points of preference, he excels all other prophets. The faith of a person in Islam is not valid and complete unless he affirms faith in the prophet-hood of Muhammad, blessings and peace be upon him. No other religion is acceptable to Allah and can ensure salvation in the hereafter. Nobody is exempted on account of his piety and godliness from following the injunctions of the Islamic Shari'a.

Abu Bakr Siddique was the rightly chosen Imam and Khalifa, vicegerent, after Prophet Muhammad, blessings and peace be upon him. After Abu Bakr, Umar ibn Khattab, Uthman bin Affan, and Ali bin Abi Talib were all rightly chosen to this office. The Companions of the Prophet are the leaders of the Muslims in religion. It is forbidden to mention them in a derogatory way. It is obligatory on Muslims to hold them in esteem and respect. ■

The Reality of Faith

- S. Bilal Abdul Hai Hasani Nadwi*

Faith is not just a matter of declaring it with the tongue, in reality it is related to the heart. If someone considers himself a Muslim and also acts like a Muslim, the world may consider him a Muslim, but if his heart is not humbled before Allah and he has not been able to get out of the circle of doubts and suspicions, then it is very difficult for him to be included in the list of believers. He is tested in times of hardship and difficulty. At that time, if a person is steadfast and his heart is completely satisfied, then he is a believer. Allah Almighty says: Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, "We believe" and that they will not be tested".

"We did test those before them, and Allah will certainly know those who are true from those who are false." (S.29.V.1-2)

This same truth is stated in the fifteenth verse of Surah Hujurat "Only those are believers who believed in Allah and His Messenger, and have never since doubted, but have striven with their belongings and their persons in the cause of Allah: such are the sincere ones".

It has been mentioned in the above verse that the Bedouins of Banu Asad came with their claim of faith, and they

were told that you are not yet believers. The above verse is explaining faith, and from here it is also being explained to these Bedouin tribes that if you want faith, the first condition is to have complete faith in Allah and His Messenger, without any doubt about it, and the main sign of this is that the sacrifice of life and property should not be difficult.

Everyone can easily understand that if there is a great benefit in view, difficulties become easier for a person. The more certain one is of the benefit, the easier the difficulties on his path become. This is the case with faith. The stronger the faith in Allah and His Messenger, the greater the certainty of its best results. Then the condition of a person becomes such that even his own life is of no value in this path.

This was the secret of the sacrifices of the companions. On the occasion of the Battle of Uhud, a companion, while eating dates, became unconscious and said, "This is a long life. Throw the dates and drink the cup of martyrdom. "He felt the fragrance of Paradise, and the companions' faith was reaching the level of observation and belief. It is narrated from Hazrat Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) that if Paradise and Hell were brought before me, my faith would not increase. The result of this faith was that he changed

* Rector Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow.

the conditions of the world. Wherever he went, the world changed. The winds of faith and certainty began to blow. He was trained by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). One became a hero who lived in his company. This is the reality of faith.

As faith in Allah and in His Messenger Muhammad (PBUH) increases, the heart's abode becomes more prosperous. No power in the world can destroy the abode of the heart. The secret of the lowliness of Muslims today is that the abodes of the hearts are desolate. Until the candles of faith and certainty are not lit in them, it is very difficult for Muslims to attain honor and exaltation. The promise of exaltation is based on faith: "And you must gain mastery if you are true in faith."(S.3.V.139)

Muslims number in the billions, not millions, but they have no value in the world. The reason for this is the lack of faith and certainty, or rather, its general absence. The result is that faith is being sold for money. The Prophet (PBUH) predicted this in a Hadith,

"A man will be a Muslim in the morning and an infidel in the evening; he will be a Muslim in the evening and an infidel in the morning; he will sell his religion for the little things of this world.

Today this thing is appearing as a reality.

As long as faith is not strong in Allah and His Messenger (PBUH), and a person remains dependent on worldly

means, it is very difficult to remove doubts and suspicions, and the criterion for this is that whenever the need arises to sacrifice one's life and property in the path of Allah, one should always be ready. When faith is strong and it becomes easy to sacrifice, this is a sign of truthfulness. These people are called "Sadiqeen". Truth means truthfulness. Here, truthfulness of the tongue is not enough, but truthfulness of both speech and action is meant. Truthfulness should be in speech, truthfulness in action, and truthfulness in intention. These people are called Sadiqeen here because they do not become Muslims only with their tongues, but their hearts also testify to it and they accept it with their hearts. Their tongues are the true interpreters of the hearts. They are the ones who are truthful. They neither manipulate nor are they manipulated.

The Holy Qur'an vividly says, "Say : What! Will ye tell Allah about your religion? But Allah knows all that is in the heavens and the earth: He has full knowledge of all things. They impress on thee as a favour that they have embraced Islam. Say, "Count not your Islam as a favour upon me: Nay, Allah has conferred a favour upon you that He has guided you to the Faith, if ye be true and sincere. Verily Allah knows the unseen of the heavens and the earth: and Allah sees well all that ye do".(S.49.V.16-18). ■

(English rendering by Obaidur Rahman Nadwi)

To My Countrymen

- APJ Abdul Kalam*

*Where the mind is without fear and
the head is held high*

Where knowledge is free

*Where the world has not been broken
up into fragments*

My Father, let my country awake.

—Rabindranath Tagore

All through this book I have spoken about the power of the imagination. It lies at the heart of the creative process and is the very substance of life, allied as it is to the power to attract to us what we most desire. This power makes all the difference between the winners and the losers. I would like to see in twenty years a literate and poverty-free India. I dream of an India governed by noble leaders. I dream of a system where the work of scientists and technologists is focussed on specific missions driven by goals relevant to the common man. How is this dream to be made real?

We need to realize that missions are always bigger than organizations, just as organizations are always bigger than the individuals who run them. Missions need effort and the mind provides the purpose. Seen this way, consider which department or ministry will take man to Mars and build a habitat there? Can 200,000

MW of electric power be generated by isolated efforts in thermal, hydroelectric, nuclear and nonconventional sectors without an integrated effort? Can the second green revolution happen without agricultural scientists, biotechnologists and irrigation experts working together? Without proper diagnostic facilities in clinics and affordable drugs reaching our masses, our biotechnology laboratories and medical councils will continue to perpetuate each other's survival without serving the purpose of their existence: to set in place the most advanced medical facilities and make these available to the people at reasonable prices.

I have dwelt upon my own experiences that made me aware of the energy field which is created by a vision. It is a power that arises from deep within you. This power is the basis for the movement towards excellence we saw at the time of independence. I have been touched by this power on many occasions while facing a challenge. Pre-independence India reverberated with it. It helped us humble a mighty empire.

Jamshedji Nusserwanji Tata brought the steel industry to India even though the British rulers were not favourably disposed to the idea. Acharya P.C. Ray nurtured the

* Former President of India.

chemical and pharmaceutical industries. We saw the birth of many great institutions like the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, started by J.N. Tata, the Banaras Hindu University established by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, and Aligarh Muslim University set up by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. Some of the progressive maharajas too set up universities, as in Baroda. There are many examples. In all these cases, the motivation was to see India come up in the world, to demonstrate that 'India can do it'.

Are we in a position to continue that work, revive that spirit of enterprise? Shall we ever see cars designed and manufactured in India dotting the roads in Frankfurt or Seoul? Or Indian satellite launch vehicles place communication, weather and remote sensing satellites of other nations in orbit? Or see India build power stations for the USA, Japan and China? The possibility will remain remote if we stay with the present trend of low aim.

Today we are witnessing good progress in the software sector but almost all of the hardware is imported. Can we rise higher on the value scale there? India design an Operating system that become household name in the world Of computers? Our exports consist to a large extent of low-value raw material such as iron ore and alumina. Can we not convert these into wide range of products that find

an international market? We have hundreds defence production industries but why India not manufacture and market the Main Battle Tank, missiles, aircraft, guns and other defence equipment? We have the most important core competence in the form of our multifaceted manpower and basic infrastructure. What is that we don't have?

Let us think what prevents us in undertaking such challenges. We have to analyse how we can give a new dimension to our style of functioning, across the individual interests of various ministries and even industries and institutions, to follow an integrated action plan. The motive force has to be love for the country. We need a vision that is shared by the entire nation.

In the drive for development, some states are faring better than others in the country. Bright young entrepreneurs have energized the national technology scene. Bangalore, Chennai, Mumbai. Delhi and Hyderabad are hells of business activity. But even though the IT sector is a very visible area of success and has brought in some capital investment, in terms of overall development this is not enough. Even if you take up the IT area as a mission, manpower is the most important need. Those living away from the cities must also have access to a good education to join the talent pool. And this should

happen fast.

My visits to the north-eastern states— Tripura and Assam—and to Jharkhand showed me our untapped potential. Tripura's economy rests on forest products, including bamboo cultivation. It is rich in mineral wealth, as also in natural gas. But the transport facilities are in bad shape. It is difficult to travel, interact and organize business. There is isolation. In Jharkhand too there is mineral wealth besides its resources in terms of forestry products and handicrafts, all of which need to be developed. In Assam, there is no shortage of resources and the state has good educational infrastructure. All the ingredients required for a developed economy are there but there is insurgency and unrest among people. A focussed mission will integrate people.

States such as Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab and Karnataka have made me realize that much can be achieved once efforts are made to channel development funds for improvement in areas such as education and health. These and other states can become good examples of economic development.

Our intellectual forums, political platforms, academic institutions and chambers of commerce are full of discussion and debate. There is noise, a lot of it in fact. There are endless debates, arguments, hypotheses, and theories, and yet

there is little progress. However, the theme of a developed India is not discussed in board rooms and technology conferences. I want all of us—institutions, political parties, industries, communities, families, individuals—at every level to take full responsibility for what is good or bad in our situation, for what we possess and that which we do not. This would mean that we stop blaming others for the circumstances we find ourselves in. Taking responsibility also means a willingness to exercise our abilities to the fullest. This will make us worthy of enjoying the benefits that come with effort.

What I have tried to tell you in this book is that we must be aware of our higher self and view ourselves as citizens of a developed nation. We are a great civilization and each one of us born here must trust in the wisdom of this civilization. Our scriptures tell us that there is no barrier us and the world, that we are the world just as the world is in us. It is for you to put yourself in tune with the music of the universe.

There are a few points I would like to mention.

The needs of a nation's people are bigger and much more important than any other considerations. The mission of Parliament is that it has to be alive and dynamic over issues vital to the existence of our very nationhood. Our freedom did not come as a gift. The whole country struggled for decades to achieve the

first vision of independence, so we have to protect it. There were excellent leaders in all walks of life—science, education and industry. To preserve this freedom from intruders and others who would compromise it is our bounden duty and not a matter of choice and convenience. No ideology is above the security and prosperity of our country. No agenda is more important than harmony among the people.

Students should get ready to transform India into a developed nation. Ignite your minds and think big.

A teacher once said, 'Give me a five-year old child. After seven years, no God or Devil will be able to change the child.' Will all teachers be such gurus?

The administrators have a great opportunity to link the people and political leaders. They should always take decisions that are good for the people. I believe it only executive like empowered district collectors who can assist transformation. The state-Central integrated fund has to be deployed in mission mode programmes.

Fifty years after independence, the results of scientific effort have not reached the people to the extent required. It is time the advances in science and technology are deployed in a big way to transform rural life.

Global competition is on, be it

WTO, competition from multinationals or China. For industrialists, competing with high-performance and cost-effective products will result in growth for the industry. Competitiveness and innovation are the two pillars of industrial growth. Industries by working together can generate multinational institutions, reversing the present trend.

The IT community, by its innovativeness has given India stature in the world. India is a competitive nation in IT today. IT must be used for healthcare, telemedicine, to remove illiteracy, generate skills and for e-governance and tele-education. Transform the nation into a knowledge society with IT as the linking tool.

Finally, the farmers have given this country surplus food with their sweat. Time has come for two events to take place in agriculture sector. One is the value addition of all agricultural products. The second is to improve the quality of agricultural products and compete in the world market. Above all marketing itself is a great business tool; we have to create a new cadre for this purpose.

And to God the Almighty! Make my people sweat. Let their toil create many more Agnis that can annihilate evil. Let my country prosper in peace. Let my people live in harmony. Let me go to dust as a proud citizen of India, to rise again and rejoice in its glory. ■

(Extracted from Ignited Minds)

The End of Humanity

- Jean Dreze*

A recent poll conducted in 24 countries by the Pew Research Center reveals that Israel is very unpopular in most of these countries. The main exception is India, where just 29% of the respondents had an “unfavourable” view of Israel. A slightly higher proportion (34%) had a favourable view, and the rest had no view.

Perhaps this was a biased sample, where privileged sections of the population are over-represented. But the popular sentiment may or may not be more critical of Israel among the underprivileged, because they are not necessarily well informed on this issue. Clearly, there is some passivity in the response of the Indian public to the horrific war crimes that are taking place in Gaza.

India’s support of Israel

For nearly two years now, the people of Gaza have been mercilessly displaced, bombed, starved, and deprived of medical care. More than 50,000 people — mainly civilians — have been killed, and many more grievously wounded. Countless children have been shot, dismembered, burnt alive or buried under the rubble. Some of them had

to be amputated without anaesthetics. More than 200 journalists and a thousand health workers have been killed. Schools, hospitals, mosques, and universities have been razed to the ground. Today, the entire population of Gaza is on the verge of famine. All this was deliberate, planned, announced, and live streamed.

Against this background, one would expect Israel to be very unpopular in India, as elsewhere. One reason why it is not (judging from the Pew Survey) may be that the Indian government has firmly sided with Israel in this conflict. The main reason is not far to seek: India depends heavily on Israel for military and surveillance technology. The two countries have deep commercial ties especially but not only in the defence sector. The Indian government has actively supported Israel’s assault on Gaza in many ways: for instance, by subsidising joint ventures in the defence sector, sending Indian workers to Israel in replacement of Palestinian workers, casting an abstention vote in several United Nations resolutions critical of Israel, and — last but not least — suppressing public protests against Israel.

With the government and the

* *Development economist based in Ranchi.*

corporate sector on Israel's side, the mainstream media know better than to take the other side. The public is kept in the dark. Social media could help, but Gaza gets lost in a torrent of attention-seeking trivia. Some social media algorithms, notably X's, are also likely to be biased against posts critical of Israel or supportive of Palestine. Many X accounts, for instance, have been suspended after exposing uncomfortable truths about Gaza.

Solidarity and selfishness

Meanwhile, the people of Gaza have been immensely inspiring examples of courage and solidarity. Hundreds of Palestinian journalists have risked their life, and often lost it, to report the events. Doctors and nurses continue to treat the wounded even as bombs rain down on them. Relief workers work around the clock to provide people with a semblance of shelter and food. Ordinary civilians are helping each other to pull people or bodies from under the rubble. Recently, a mother who had lost all her children risked her life to fetch food for other children.

It is another matter that the people of Gaza may start turning on each other soon, as famine intensifies. In the last stages of a famine, people stop being able to see beyond their own hunger. The same mother who risked her life to feed

hungry children may start snatching food from them. For all we know, the real purpose of Israel's blockade may be to incite Palestinians against each other.

There is a sharp contrast between the spirit of solidarity in Gaza and the selfish behaviour of the billionaires who recently took control of the United States, the world's richest and most powerful country. As soon as they came to power, these billionaires started redesigning public policies and institutions in their own interest, or rather in the interest of their class – the super-rich. This involved, first and foremost, eroding if not dismantling barriers to accumulate wealth: regulatory bodies, environmental safeguards, affirmative action, redistributive taxation, social security, political opposition, you name it. It also involved more imaginative projects such as taking over Greenland, raiding Ukraine's mineral resources, and converting the Gaza strip into a luxury resort.

It is not an accident that values of compassion and solidarity are found in Gaza, while the opposite values prevail at the other extreme of the spectrum of power. The race for power is not particularly kind to those who are distracted by the demands of empathy or morality. Nor is it surprising that greed and selfishness are celebrated in high places. Morality is like oxygen – the higher you get, the

less there is of it in the atmosphere. It is this morality-free atmosphere that has made it possible for the governments of the U.S. and other countries to support the Gaza genocide.

Our own ability to feel, speak, or act for Gaza is being defused even as the Government of Israel scales ever-rising heights of brutality and cruelty. Most of the local journalists and other

vocal witnesses in Gaza have been killed. The rest are too scared, hungry or exhausted to report what is happening there. In any case, communication facilities are minimal, and Gaza's agony is losing its "newsworthiness". Darkness and silence prevail as Gaza descends into hell. If we do not come to our senses, this will be the end of humanity. ■

(The Hindu, 10-7-2025)

Syria Violence Toll Tops 1,000, Claims Monitor

DAMASCUS: A Syria monitor said that the death toll from violence in the country's south involving Druze fighters and their Bedouin rivals, as well as government forces, armed tribes and Israel, had topped 1,000.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said those killed since July 13 included 336 Druze fighters and 298 civilians from the religious minority group, 194 of whom were "summarily executed by defence and interior ministry personnel".

The dead also included 342 government security personnel and 21 Sunni Bedouin, three of them "summarily executed by Druze fighters" Another 15 government forces were killed in Israeli strikes, the Observatory said.

US-Brokered Ceasefire

Syria's armed Bedouin clans on Sunday announced that they had withdrawn from the southern city of Sweida following over a week of clashes and a US-brokered ceasefire, as humanitarian aid convoys started to enter the battered city.

The clashes between militias of the Druze religious minority and the Sunni Muslim clans threatened to unravel Syria's already fragile post war transition. Israel also launched dozens of airstrikes in the Druze majority Sweida province, targeting government forces who had effectively sided with the Bedouins.

A series of tit-for-tat kidnappings sparked the clashes in various towns and villages in the province, which later spread to the city.

Syrian President Appeals

Interim President Ahmad al-Sharas, who was more sympathetic to the Bedouins, had tried to appeal to the Druze community while remaining critical of the militias. He later urged the Bedouins to leave the city, saying that they "cannot replace the role of the state in handling the country's affairs and restoring security".

The Syrian Red Crescent said it sent 32 trucks loaded with food, medicine, water, fuel and other aid, after the fighting left the province with power cuts and shortages.

The UN International Organiization for Migration said 128,571 people were displaced during the clashes, of those 43,000 on Saturday alone. ■

(Hindustan Times, 21-7-25)

Rights and duties as per the Constitution

- Karan Thapar

Odd as it may seem, I sometimes wonder if our judges are their own worst enemies. At times, they can say the strangest things—almost as if they got carried away. Do they not worry about its implications? Are they not concerned about its impact? Let me illustrate my point by referring to Justice Surya Kant's and Justice Kotiswar Singh's handling of the Ali Khan Mahmudabad case.

First, they accused Mahmudabad of "dog-whistling" and using words with double meanings. They said his "choice of words is deliberately made to insult, humiliate or cause some kind of discomfort to others." But they didn't say what words they were referring to. Instead, they went on, "He could convey these very feelings in a very simple language...use terminology, which is simple, respectful and very neutral." But, again, they didn't identify what they were alluding to.

This prompted the scholar Gautam Bhatia to point out that a dog-whistle is usually at a frequency inaudible to human ears. So, what part of Mahmudabad's Facebook posts were dog-whistles? Who were the "dogs" he was whistling to? And who were the "non-dogs" he was ignoring?

None of this was pointed out by the judges. Should it not have been? Instead, they said: "To holistically understand the complexity of the phraseology employed and for proper appreciation of some of the expressions used in these two online posts, we direct the Director General of Police, Haryana, to constitute an SIT." But this body will only comprise police officers. Surely lexicographers like Samuel Johnson and Noah Webster would have been more appropriate?

Actually, this was the least of the concerns aroused by the two judges' comments. More worrisome are these sentences: 'Everybody talks of rights. I have the right to do right to do that ...without telling you what your duty is towards the nation.'

But whilst the Constitution specifically identifies the fundamental rights conferred on us as citizens, it doesn't identify constitutionally enforceable duties. We don't even have a duty to be patriotic. We have every right to be sceptical and questioning rather than wrap ourselves in the flag. So, on what basis were the judges equating rights with duties? They did not say.

However, it is what they said about the students and faculty of Ashoka University, where Mahmudabad is a professor that is most perplexing. "If they dare to do anything we will pass an order ...it is not acceptable to us that some of these so-called private universities open, and then all kinds of elements join hands there, and they start making irresponsible statements. We know how to deal with these people."

What on earth prompted this? They simply threw this comment into the mix of other things they said without any explanation or justification. It is almost as if a fantastical leap of thought led them from one issue to another, even if they are not at all connected.

So, what prompts judges to speak like this? These are not things they might say when they are playing devil's advocate to explore the depths of a particular argument. This sounds very much like their own opinions. And that leaves one to wonder whether they are playing to the gallery rather than sticking loyally to their duty as guarantors of our constitutional rights. The mere fact such a question can be asked suggests they spoke too much. At the very least, they were not judicious.

However, the bit that truly stunned me is what Gautam Bhatia wrote in this newspaper. He was referring to the gag order the two judges placed on Mahmudabad. He wrote: "It is important to point out that the judiciary does not have the power to gag or silence someone; it's only empowered to determine whether the government's decision to do so is constitutional or unconstitutional."

When I asked Bhatia whether this meant the judges have exercised powers they do not have, his discreet but telling reply was they had acted "beyond their jurisdiction". All I can say is oh dear! ■

(Karan Thapar is the author of Devil's Advocate The Untold Story.)

(The Hindustan Times, 1-6-25)

On Khula, Reteration of Existing Jurisprudence

- Tahir Mahmood*

The Telangana High Court has held that a Muslim wife has an absolute and unconditional right to dissolve her marriage through khula and that the husband's consent is not a prerequisite for its validity, in a significant ruling that underscores the autonomy of Muslim women within personal law. (Hindustan Times, June 27). This case has been prominently reported across the media and is being projected as an unprecedented ruling.

The fact is the Telangana ruling (Arif Ali vs Afsarunnisa, June 24) for the most part, merely reiterates and affirms the elaborate exposition of the law on khula found in a Kerala high court case decided four years earlier (Abdul Samad vs State of Kerala, 2021). The judge-author of the Telangana judgment, Moushumi Bhattacharia, has reproduced verbatim major parts of the Kerala verdict, of course with proper acknowledgment, but without adequately explaining its background. The issue has to be understood in its proper perspective.

The practice of unilateral divorce

pronounced by Muslim husbands is notoriously known in Indian society. What is not as widely known is that Muslim law had enabled married women also to dissolve their marriage without approaching a court. This procedure is known as khula, by taking recourse to which a wife disgruntled with her marriage may initiate the process of divorce. If, at her behest, the husband divorces her, the marriage stands dissolved. If he obstinately refuses to let this happen, the decisive voice will be hers. On her request, a religious functionary specializing in Muslim law, or a court, may affirm that on a proper exercise of her right to khula by the wife the marriage has come to an end.

In India, however, there has been an erroneous belief that for effecting a khula the wife must obtain her husband's consent, and in a disputed case should approach a qazi or court for adjudication. This misbelief is absolutely baseless. In all of my books on Muslim law I have explained the true law on khula and have tried to remove the misconceptions in this regard.

Under the Shafei school of Muslim law, which is widely followed in Kerala, a married woman can instantly dissolve her marriage on a few specified grounds. Known as

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faskh, this provision is limited to the Shafei law and is not shared by the Hanafi school of Muslim law which is predominant in the rest of the country.

In an old case decided in 1973 a judge in Kerala High Court of the time, V Khalid (later elevated to the Supreme Court), had ruled that after the extension of the Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act, 1939 to the state, this provision of the Shafei law could not be enforced. His decision was misunderstood by the lower courts to mean that a khula also can be obtained only through judicial proceedings. This was a misreading of the decision. A judge of the late Justice khalid's calibre could not have given such an irrational verdict.

In subsequent years, several women whose cases of khula were not recognised by the lower courts sought relief from the high court. These cases were clubbed and decided by a single Judgment in the Abdus Samad case cited above.

The learned Kerala Judge, Muhamed Mustaque, began his judgment with the query "Have Muslim women lost their right to invoke extra-judicial divorce, after the coming into force of the Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act, 1939 is the short and straight forward question rising for consideration in these cases."

After an elaborate discussion of the Muslim law on khula with repeated references to established legal sources (including my book, Muslim Law in India and Abroad, 2016), he answered the query in the negative, adding that "these cases speak in abundance about the patriarchal mindset followed in the society for decades depriving Muslim women their right to invoke extrajudicial divorce."

In the Telangana case under discussion, a Muslim wife had duly exercised her right to khula as per the law. Her husband challenged its validity in a family court pleading that as he had not consented to it, the marriage remained intact. A learned judge of the family court restated at length the true law on khula, (borrowed from the Kerala High Court verdict of 2021) and rejected his plea.

The husband then went in appeal to the high court, where justice Moushumi Bhattachaya upheld the family court's decision. Extensively citing the Kerala verdict and several other judicial decisions, she concluded that "the consensus which emerges from the ions is that khula is a no-fault divorce initiated by the Muslim wife" and "a no confrontational form of divorce and one which is privately settled after the parties have made an attempt to preserve the

marriage.” An admirable description of the concept, indeed.

Notably, Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act enforced in 2019 has outlawed and criminalised only the so-called “triple pronounced by Muslim husbands (which was surely based on a view of the law). It has not affected in the least the correct Islamic procedures either for talak by men or for khula by women. Three years after the enactment of the 2019 Act. Supreme Court had upheld family Court’s ruling that the marriage

of a woman who had properly exercised her right to khula was no more intact (Rehana Begum vs State of Assam, 2022).

The reality of justice delayed is justice denied plays havoc with the couples bearing the pangs of irretrievably broken marriages. All forms of extra-judicial divorce cannot, for this reason, be condemned in absolute terms. Happily, true Islamic law ensures gender parity at least in this regard. ■

(The Hindustan Times, 30-6-2025)

Trump Blocks WHO Pandemic Reforms

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump’s administration said the US was rejecting changes last year for the World Health Organization (WHO) on its pandemic response, saying they violated the country’s sovereignty.

Trump on returning to office on January 20 immediately began his nation’s withdrawal from the UN body, but the State Department said the language from last year would still have been binding on the US.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr, who is a long-time critic of vaccines, said the changes “risk unwarranted interference with our national sovereign right to make health policy.”

“We will put Americans first in all our actions and we will not tolerate international policies that infringe on Americans’ speech, privacy or personal liberties,” they said in a joint statement.

Rubio and Kennedy distanced the US from amendments to the International Health Regulations, a legal framework for fighting disease agreed last year in Geneva. “We regret the US decision to reject the amendments,” WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a statement posted on X.

He stressed the amendments “are clear about member states sovereignty,” adding that the WHO cannot mandate lockdowns or similar measures. ■

Role of Maulana Barkatullah Bhopali in The Freedom Struggle of India - Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

Maulana Barkatullah Bhopali was one of those freedom fighters who sacrificed everything to get India free. This illustrious son of India was born on 7 July 1854 at Itawara Mahallah, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh and died on 20 September, 1927 at the age of 73 in San Francisco, California, United States of America.

He was not not an erudite Islamic scholar but also a man of many sided genius. He was an accomplished and a fiery journalist besides being a nationalist to the core. He was also an author of several books and a polyglot who knew more than eight languages. Bhopal University was renamed as Barkatullah University in 1988, after him.

Needless to add that Maulana Barkatullah dedicated his life to the Independence of India. He was a key figure in the Indian nationalist movement. He is known for his bold and fiery speeches and revolutionary writings against British rule. He also served as the Prime Minister of India's "Government - in- exile". He always advocated for India's Independence through journalism and public speaking. He founded the Indian Home Rule Society and actively engaged in various revolutionary groups. In 1915, he became the Prime Minister of the Provisional Government of India,

established in Kabul with Raja Mahendra Pratab as its president.

He was a prominent figure in the Ghadar Party, a revolutionary organization formed by Indian expatriates in the United States of America in 1913 to overthrow British rule in India.

Undoubtedly, his efforts with the Ghadar Party and his role in the provisional Government of India demonstrated his commitment to India's freedom struggle.

Education:

He received his primary education in his locality. Thereafter, he joined the prestigious Suleaymanny School where he memorized the Holy Qur'an and studied Sihah Sittah (the six canonical books of Hadith). He did his graduation from this institution in 1878. Thus he became an accomplished Maulana and a learned scholar of Arabic, Persian and Islamic Studies. Here he got opportunity to learn English up to the Matric level. Thus he was educated from primary to college level at Bhopal. Later, he went to Bombay and London for higher studies.

It should be noted that "Maulana Barkatullah was a born revolutionary. He started giving signs of his revolutionary nature from his early life. First of all, he became self-dependent.

He also developed a keen interest in getting proficiency in the English language in order to be able to plead the cause of his country's independence at the international level in a more efficient manner. In 1883 he suddenly left Bhopal at the age of 23 and joined service at a Christian Missionary School in Jabalpur. Then he left for Bombay where he diligently studied the English language for four years. From there he went to England for higher studies in 1890. But he could not continue his formal education there, as he became preoccupied with political and revolutionary activities aimed at getting independence for his country.

The Maulana was one of those freedom fighters who spent the major part of their lives outside India. The main countries of his activities were England, Japan, the United States of America, Turkey, Afghanistan, Russia and Germany. He remained busy touring these countries and seeking support for the liberation of India. When he reached London, the main thought which agitated his mind was as to how such a small country like England could become so prosperous and powerful that they ruled a big country like India. He was convinced that the British rule over India was the main cause of its misery. "(Musalmanon ka Jang- e- Azadi mein Hissah, p,19)

As a fiery Journalist:

He was an accomplished journalist. He carved a niche in the field of journalism. He brought out several

magazines and journals in different countries. In Japan, he edited "Islamic Fraternity" and he edited "Al - Islah" in France and Germany. He actively used journalism to promote India's Independence. His writings focouaed on the need for unity among Indians and criticized British rule.

In 1895, he was invited by the British convert Abdullah Quilliam to work at the Muslim Institute in Liverpool. Maulana got opportunity to write in two organs of Muslim Institute of Liverpool "the Crescent" and Islamic World". He wrote a plethora of articles in both magazines. Besides, Maulana's write-ups had continuously been published in the newspapers of England. Specially, "Landon Times" published Maulana's articles with regularity.

He subsequently taught at the Oriental College of University of Liverpool.

In England, he met two prominent revolutionaries, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Shyamaji Krishna Verma, and interacted with them closely. Greatly influenced by their revolutionary thoughts, he became filled with nationalistic zeal.

"Another important plan of the revolutionary mission launched by Maulana Barkatullah was to attack British India with the assistance of Turkey and Germany by raising an army of volunteers in the name of Jund- e- Allah (Army of Allah). The main objective of this army was to dislodge the British not only from India, but also

from other countries of the Middle East. Medina in Saudi Arabia was the headquarters of this army, while Kabul Constantinople and Tehran were other centers of recruitments to it under the centralized supervision of Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi. Thus Maulana Barkatullah may also appropriately be credited with having been an early champion of the cause of Asian solidarity. But the Indian Government in exile could not function for a long period of time, because the Afghan government, under pressure from the British withdrew its support, following which the mission had to be closed in Afghanistan.

Even after the collapse of the parallel Indian government in Kabul, Maulana Barkatullah far from being nervous, remained active and busy making his best efforts for the Independence of his country. He toured a number of European and Asian countries canvassing support for India's freedom. Along with Raja Mahendra Pratab and others he met Lenin on 7th May, 1919. He also wrote and published a Persian pamphlet under the title "Bolshevism and the Islamic Nations" which was translated into English by Captain Samad Shah, a British Indian officer. But the pamphlet was proscribed and banned in British India. (Muslims in India, op.cit., Vol. 11, p. 122)

Maulana Barkatullah lived about 11 years in England.

It should be noted that Maulana Barkatullah arrived in New York in 1899,

where he kept in touch with fellow revolutionaries and scholars. He was involved in the formation of the Pan-Aryan Association in New York in 1904. He was actively involved in campaigning for Indian Independence from there. He was also one of the founders of the Ghadar Party in San Francisco in 1913. Maulana stayed approximately six years in the United States of America.

Similarly, Maulana moved to Japan in 1909. He taught in Japan for nearly five years, from 1909 to 1914. He was a professor of Urdu at Tokyo university. He also published two journals "The Islamic Fraternity" and "Al - Islah" there. His anti-British activities in Japan, including publishing seditious materials, eventually led to his departure in 1914. He stayed five years in Japan.

In short, Maulana Barkatullah occupies a significant position in the history of India's freedom struggle.

More importantly, for thirty five long years the period of his exile from India- he wandered from place to place as a political refugee, with a price on his head. He suffered much. He went through all kinds of ordeals. Yet nothing could deter him from his grim purpose. No doubt, he lived for India and died for India.

This great revolutionary, staunch freedom fighter and illustrious son of India must always be remembered especially on 15th August the Independence Day of India. ■

The World of Dream

- Syed Sulaiman Nadwi

The seeing of visions in sleep or in a semi-wakeful state of mind is a highly strange, wonderful and complex phenomenon. We shall not go into the detail thereof in the light of the ancient or modern theories as much has already been said on this subject in the books of psychology. According to the Holy Qur'an and the Ahadith, dreams are mainly of three types. One is the vision of the Prophets. These visions are always true as these are revelations from Lord to His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The dreams of other men can be divided into two kinds; one which is seen by the noble, pious and truthful man as even in sleep, the lower elements in his soul are dominated by higher or nobler elements. Thus his dreams represent truths. These dreams have been called forty-fifth or forty-sixth or even seventieth part of the prophecy. But these cannot be considered as hundred percent authentic prophecies because no other human being, besides the Prophets, can have complete control over his lower elements in the state of sleep. There is no denying the fact that the unconscious and

subconscious mind of the pious man is dominated by noble thoughts and desires, and he, therefore receives in the dream suggestion from the Divine but this suggestion cannot be held to be immune from error as is the case with the Prophetic suggestions of the Prophets (peace be upon them). The second type of dream which has been called *Hulm* in the Qur'an and the Sunnah is in fact the expression of ones suppressed carnal desires. This is what has been termed in the Hadith as a (bad) vision emanating from the devil.

The pious and sacred hearts of the Prophets (peace be upon them) despite the fact that they live in this world remain indifferent to worldly temptations which is not possible for ordinary man. Therefore, the facts and mysteries of the heaven and the world are revealed to the Prophets (peace be upon them) both in sleep and in the state of wakefulness.

Their (Prophet's) eyes do sleep but their hearts sleep not (Bukhari).

In reality the sleep and the dream are the hidden signs of Allah

only if we can understand.

And of His signs is your slumber by night and by day, and your seeking of His bounty Lo! herein are portents for folk who heed.

(30:23)

The sleep and the death resemble each other. The only difference which exists between the two is that in the case of death the soul is separated from the body for ever but in the case of sleep the soul is separated from the body only temporarily. In the case of death, all ties of relationship are physically broken, whereas it is not so in the case of sleep. The Holy Qur'an has drawn our attention to this daily phenomenon.

Allah received (men's) souls at the time of their death, and that soul which dieth not (yet) in its sleep He keepeth that (soul), for which He hath ordained death and dismisses the rest till an appointed turn. Lo! herein are portents for people who take thought.

(39:42)

As we have already stated, the visions of only those persons are true and realistic whose sight and sense of hearing are sharp, and whose power of comprehension is

strong and those who excel in nobility and piety; the mirrors of whose hearts are free from the rust of sin and evil. It has been said in the Holy Qur'an:

Those who believe and keep their duty (to Allah) Theirs are good tidings in the life of the world and in the hereafter. There is no changing the words of Allah—that is the Supreme Triumph.

(10: 64, 65)

When the above verse of the Holy Qur'an was revealed, the companions inquired: O Allah's Messenger! What is glad tidings in this world. He said: It is a good vision which is seen by a Muslim. He said: Prophet-hood and Apostle-hood have ended but one thing still remains and it is glad tidings. The people inquired: O Allah's Messenger! What are glad tidings. He said: The good visions of a Muslim are one element among the elements of Prophet-hood. It has been narrated on the authority of various companions in Sahih Bukhari and Muslim and Tirmidhi that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: The pious dream is the forty-sixth part of the Prophecy. The significance of the dreams can be judged from the above Hadith. But

we should bear in mind what kind of dream is a part of Prophet-hood. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings Allah be upon him) said:

A good vision (Ruya) comes from Allah and a (bad) dream (Hulm) from devil.

It has been mentioned in Sahih Muslim and Tirmidhi that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: The most true visions among you are of that person who is the most truthful among you. In fact the inner-self of a man is reflected through his outward actions and behaviour.. If his tongue speaks the truth, his mind and soul would have true visions.

There is a vast difference in the dreams of a Prophet and that of a common man. When a common man is in a state of sleep, his heart also sleeps but when the eyes of the Prophet are sleeping his heart remains awakened. 'A'isha (may Allah be pleased with her) said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) once observed the Tahajjud prayer for long and then went to bed without observing the Witr prayer. 'A'isha (may Allah be pleased with her) said: Messenger of Allah, do you sleep before observing the Witr prayer? He said: O 'A'isha, my eyes

sleep but my heart does not sleep.

In view of the above Ahadith, the majority of 'Ulama' of Islam agree that the Ru'ya (visions) of the Prophets are true and authentic like Divine revelations and inspirations. Ibrahim (peace be upon him) saw in a dream that he was sacrificing his first-born son. He entertained no doubt and suspicion about its being the decree from Allah and he carried it out as if it was a Divine revelation in a state of wakefulness. The same was the case with the other Prophets (peace be upon them). They had no doubt about the authenticity and practicability of their dreams. There were many occasions in the life of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that the commandments conveyed to him by means of dreams were as true and authentic as the Divine commandments and the knowledge sent to him through revelations. It has been said by Ibn 'Abbas in Tirmidhi that the vision of the Prophet is also a Divine revelation.

In the Holy Qur'an and Sahih Ahadith, a number of events and observations have been mentioned when the metaphysical things like virtue, evil, faith etc. were shown in the bodily shape or form. It has been stated in the Bible and the Holy

Qur'an that Jibril (may Allah be pleased with him) came to Mary in the human form to convey to her the glad tidings of the birth of 'Isa (peace be upon him).

It has been mentioned in the Ahadith that the Paradise and the Hell were brought before him (the Holy Prophet), His companions have narrated these Ahadith in the following words:

Jabir b. 'Abdullah reported that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

All these things were brought to me in which you will be made to enter. The Paradise was brought to me (till I was close to it) that if I (had intended) to pluck a bunch (of grapes) out of it, I would have got it. The Hell was also brought to me.

Ibn 'Abbas reported that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: I saw Paradise and reached out to a bunch of grapes and had I taken it, you would have eaten of it so long as the world endured. I saw the Hell also.

The beginning of revelation for the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was preceded by true visions (al Ru'ya al Sadiqah) which used to come like the breaking of tie dawn.

Samura b. Jundab reported that when Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had performed his dawn prayer he turned his face towards them (that is towards the companions) and said: Did anyone of you see any vision last night? The people related to him their visions. If it was a good vision, he made the interpretation thereof. In case it was a jumbled dream he told that it was a mere thought and desire. In the meanwhile, if the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had himself seen a vision he would relate it.

The dreams of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as mentioned in the Ahadith were of two kinds. They were either the similitude of that guidance and knowledge with what Allah, the Exalted and Glorious had sent him. He has expounded and interpreted them in his own words. The others were the true events and realities which were revealed to him. The latter dreams are of two types. The first consist of the prophecies of this world and the knowledge of the unseen and the others pertain to the knowledge of the Hereafter or are revelation of Divine mysteries. We will relate here these events under separate headings.■

(To be continued)

The Word Al-Rehman

- Razi Siddiqi*

Most Gracious, Most Compassionate, Most Beneficent. These are the conventional meaning of the word Al-Rehman used by most of the English commentators of the holy Quran. However, Maulana Fateh Mohammad in his Urdu translation used the word 'Khuda' which is equivalent to God. The other Urdu commentators used the word Rehman as such, without any translation.

The word Al-Rehman is mentioned 57 times, and the word Ar-Raheem is mentioned 123 times. These numbers do not include which has occurred 114 times in the holy Quran.

The name "Al-Rehman" is mentioned in 10 different Surahs of the Quran. These Surahs are Al-Fatihah (1), Surah Maryam (19), Surah Ta-Ha (20), Surah Al-Ambiya (21), Suray Al-Furqaan (25), and Surah Ya-Sien (36), Suray Az-Zukhruf (43), Suray Quaff (50), Surat Al-Mulk (67), Surah Ar-Rahman (55), and Suray An-Naba (78).

Here is interesting statistic of Allah's names. Out of 99 names of Allah, only 65 names have been

mentioned in the Holy Quran. The word Allah is mentioned 2724 times, Rabb (The Lord) is mentioned 900 times, the word Aleem is mentioned 157 times, Aziz is mentioned 92 times, Gaffar and Haleem are mentioned 91 times each. In Suray Al-Mujadilah (58) word 'Allah' is mentioned in every Ayat. The name 'Mohammed' (pbuh) is mentioned four times in four different Suray and the name 'Ahmed' is mentioned at one place. Names of other prophets are mentioned many times; Moses-136 times, Ibrahim-69 times, Nuh-43 times and Isa-25 times, May Allah be pleased with all of them.

Let us examine the first three Ayats of Suray Fatha:

In the Name of Allah — the Most Compassionate, Most Merciful.

All praise is for Allah—Lord of all world,

The Most Compassionate, Most Merciful,

Now, please read the translation of the same Ayats as I understood.

In the name of Allah, the Creator, Sustainer and the Ruler of the worlds, Who is Most Merciful.

All praise is to Allah-Lord of all

* Hewlett, New York

worlds, The Creator, Sustainer, and the Sole Ruler of the Worlds Who is Most Merciful.

The importance of the word Al-Rehman is evident from the following Ayat of holy Quran. Say, O Prophet, "Call upon Allah or call upon the Al-Rehman—whichever you call, He has the Most Beautiful Names (Asma-ul-Husna) (17/110).

Suray Al-Rehman:

The word Rehman was not understood by the Arab folks before the revelation of Quran. They used to ask, "What is Rehman?" (25/59,60). "He is the One Who created heavens and the earth and everything in between in six Days, then established Himself on the Throne. He is Al-Rehman! Ask none other than the All-Knowledgeable about Himself. When it is said to them, "Prostrate to Al-Rehman". They ask in disgust, "What is Al-Rehman? Will we prostrate to whatever you order us to?" And it only drives them farther away. To explain the meaning of Rehman, Allah revealed this entire Suray and named it 'Suray Rehman'. Therefore, the true meaning and the explanation of the word Al-Rehman can be understood by reading the entire Suray Rehman (55). At many other places the

meaning and the explanation of the word Al-Rehman are explained. For example, in Suray Mulk (67) Allah Says, "He is Al-Rehman—in Him alone we believe, and in Him alone we trust. You will soon know who is clearly astray." (67/29). "Which powerless force will come to your help instead of Al-Rehman? Indeed, the disbelievers are only lost in delusion" (67/20). "Have they not seen the birds above them, spreading and folding their wings? None holds them up except Al-Rehman" (67/19). He is the One Who created seven heavens, one above the other. You will never see any imperfection in the creation of Al-Rehman. So, look again: do you see any flaws? (67/3). Similarly, in Suray Al-Furqan (25) in Ayats 59-60 "He is the One Who created the heavens and the earth and everything in between in six Days then established Himself on the Throne. He is Al-Rehman! Ask none other than All-Knowledgeable about Himself. The context of usage of this name in the Quran clearly defines its meaning. However, it should also be understood in connection with the word Al-Raheem. The combination of two words, i.e. Al-Rehman and Al-Raheem (the two Attributes) completely describe the nature of Allah. The word Rehman as indicated at all the places in Quran,

has nothing to do with Him being only Compassionate or Beneficent. It fully represents His authority, and His Creativity. He is the sole Creator, Sustainer, and Ruler of the Universe or in summary Al-Mighty. However, the meaning of the word Raheem indicates that He rules this universe with His Mercy. Nowhere is the word Raheem used in any other context other than 'Mercy in other words when we say-we say that in the name of Allah who is sole Creator, Sustainer, and Ruler of the Universe (Al-Mighty) and He rules this universe with His Mercy; and I seek His Mercy. He is Merciful. To confine the meaning of Rehman as 'Gracious, Compassionate or Beneficent does not seem to be justified. It is like saying the meaning of the word 'mother' is love. It is lot more than that. Motherhood is a lot more than just loving her child. Similarly, Rehman is a lot more than being 'gracious' or 'compassionate' or 'beneficent'. He is Al-Mighty- the ruler of the Universe.

Let us examine the main contents of Suray Al-Rehman to understand its full meaning. Then I will also discuss various places in other Suras where the word Rehman is used. A parallel example is the sentence (Then which of your Lord's 'favors' will you -

humans and jinn' both deny?). This sentence has been repeated 29 times in Suray Rehman. Many times, it has not come near the meaning of 'favour'. It is more like warning (of the hell) to those who do not obey Allah, like Ayats 44, and 45. This is the reason some commentators including Maulana Moudoodi have used different adjectives instead of only 'favour' depending on the situation or context.

First, let us talk about Rehman's creation in this Suray Rehman: He created the Man and Jinn, sun, moon, earth, mountains, trees, and the bushes, and various kinds of fruits and nuts, oceans and rivers, all kinds of water. Then, we proceed to His creations of hereafter, like paradise and the hell, and their contents. He also talks about the way He runs this Universe- with Justice (55/7). Then He talks that all His creations are sustained and run on daily basis only by Him alone (55/29). Finally, He described that one day all will end except Him. He is the Creator, Who created and sustained the Universe, and one day He will end this, Universe. Nothing will be remaining except your Lord whose name is full of glory.

Blessed is the Name of your Lord, full of Majesty and Honor.■

Abdullah bin Mas'ud

- Abdul Aziz Ash-Shanawi

The First To Openly Recite The Qur'an In Makkah

His Lineage

He is 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud bin Ghafil bin Habib bin Shamkh bin Far bin Makhzum bin Sahilah bin Kahil bin Al-Harith bin Sa'd bin Hudhail Al-Hadhali. His mother's full name is Umm 'Abdullah bint Wadd bin Suwa'ah.

His Kunyah

Ibn Mas'ud was known by the Kunyah, Abu 'Abdur-Rahman.

His Acceptance Of Islam

'Abdullah bin Mas'ud was one of the earliest of people to accept Islam.

The First To Openly Recite The Qur'an

During the early days of Islam, as they were gathered in Darul-Arqam, the Muslims said to one another, "By Allah, the Quraish has not yet heard the Qur'an recited out loud for them, so who will go and make them hear it." "I (will go)," was the quick reply of 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud.

"You?" Mus'ab bin 'Umair asked in a surprised tone.

Suhaib bin Sinan Ar-Rumi explained the general sentiment: "We

fear that they will (harm) you. We want a man who has a large clan to defend him from the people when they will want to (harm) him."

"Leave me to go, for indeed, Allah will defend me," replied 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud as he was walking towards the door.

He proceeded forth until he reached the Station of Ibrahim; it was morning time, and the Quraish were nearby in their places of gathering. Then 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud raised his voice, saying, "In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

"The Most Gracious (Allah)! He has taught (you mankind) the Qur'an (by His Mercy). He created man. He taught him eloquent speech."

As he continued to recite the Verses, the leaders of the Quraish, who could plainly hear him, asked one another, "What is this?"

"It is indeed Ibn Umm 'Abd," said 'Uqbah bin Abu Mur'ait.

"And what is Ibn Umm 'Abd saying?" asked Abu Jahl bin Hisham.

"He is saying some of the poetry with which Muhammad came," said An-Nadr bin Al-Harith.

"Muhammad allured him, just as

he allured some of the slaves, claiming that his new religion puts the slave and his master on an equal footing,” added Abu Sufyan bin Harb.

Forthwith, the chiefs of Quraish gathered upon ‘Abdullah bin Mas’ud, and they began striking him in the face. As they were beating him, ‘Abdullah did not waver; rather, he continued to recite from Suratur-Rahman. He then returned to his companions, bloodied and beaten, a sight that moved them all. Sa’d bin Abu Waqqas washed Ibn Mas’ud’s face and said, “This is what we feared upon you.” Ibn Mas’ud said, “The enemies of Allah have never been easier (i.e., more insignificant) to me than they are now. And if you wish, I will go to them tomorrow morning with the same (message).”

Az-Zubair bin Al’-Awwam Talhah bin ‘Ubaidullah, Bilal bin Rabah and ‘Uthman bin Maz’un — these all said, “No, that is enough for you; you have made them hear what they despise.” Despite his being poor, emaciated, and weak, ‘Abdullah bin Mas’ud was able and willing to defy the Quraish; thus he became the first — after the Messenger of Allah — to openly recite the Qur’an in Makkah.

Torture At The Hands Of The Quraish, And The Two Migrations

If a Muslim was weak, if he was a slave, if he did not have status in

society, or if he did not have protection from one of the prominent members of Makkan society, he had to undergo physical torture at the hands of his owner — if he was a slave — or the leaders of his clan — if he was a freeman. Of the said torture, ‘Abdullah bin Mas’ud was not exempt; to the contrary, he was inflicted with a great deal of physical torture and punishment, but he remained brave and steadfast, refusing to renounce his religion. Thus when the opportunity presented itself, when the Messenger of Allah gave his Companions permission to migrate to Habashah — where there was a just king — ‘Abdullah bin Mas’ud migrated, fleeing with his religion from trial and affliction. He later returned, but the situation did not get any better for Muslims in Makkah; in fact, it got worse, until finally the way to a more permanent migration was made open for them. And so ‘Abdullah bin Mas’ud joined the other Muslims in migrating to Al-Madinah.

His Brother From The Muhajirun, And His Brother From The Ansar

In Makkah, the Messenger of Allah formed a bond of brotherhood between ‘Abdullah bin Mas’ud and Az-Zubair bin Al-Awwam, and in Al-Madinah, between ‘Abdullah bin Mas’ud and Sa’d bin Mu’adh.

The Day Of Badr And The Death Of Abu Jahl (The Fir'aun Of This Nation)

Perhaps no man dedicated more of his time, energies, and resources to fighting the Messenger of Allah and Islam than Abu Jahl. Earlier, we mentioned that a Kunyah — Abu so-and-so, or Abu such and such (father of ...) — could have both a literal and a figurative meaning, the latter being intended for the Kunyah of Abu Jahl. In pre-Islamic times, his Kunyah was actually Abul-Hakam, Hakam being derived from Hikmah, which means wisdom; or from Hukm, which means 'to rule.' So his Kunyah indicated that he was a man who was endowed with much wisdom and a man whose judgments were sound. But after the advent of Islam, he took on a new Kunyah, Abu Jahl, Jahl meaning ignorance. And until this day, the name that he is known by is Abu Jahl.

In the Makkan period of the Prophet's biography, Abu Jahl lost no opportunity in harming the Prophet and the Muslims. But his reign of terror came to an end during the battle of Badr, where he was struck to the ground and made to bleed profusely, barely remaining alive.

It was 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud who came across the dying Makkan chief

on the battlefield. 'Abdullah recognized him and placed his leg on his neck. Arrogant till the last, Abu Jahl said, "You are climbing (with your leg) something to difficult (and high) for you, O small shepherd of sheep."

'Abdullah said, "Has Allah humiliated you, O enemy of Allah?"

"And how has He humiliated me? There is no semblance of shame upon a man whose own people have killed him." Then he asked, "To whom does victory belong today?"

Having the last say in the matter, 'Abdullah said, "To Allah and His Messenger," after which he beheaded Abu Jahl and carried his head to the Messenger of Allah. The Messenger of Allah then praised Allah for the death of the evil oppressor and staunch enemy of Islam.

Special Privileges In The House Of The Prophet

'Abdullah bin Mas'ud enjoyed the privileges of entering upon the Messenger of Allah putting on his shoes for him, walking in front of him, providing cover for him when he took a shower, and waking him up when he fell asleep. The Prophet said to him:

"You have permission for the veil to be lifted (for you) and for you to hear my private conversations, until I forbid you."

The Ranking And Merits Of ‘Abdullah bin Mas’ud

One day, the Messenger of Allah ordered ‘Abdullah bin Mas’ud to climb an Arak tree, in order to bring down a Siwak — a stick used to brush and clean one’s teeth — for him. As ‘Abdullah was getting up, his calves became exposed, and seeing the extreme thinness of them, the Prophet’s Companions began to laugh. The doctor of hearts, minds, and souls said:

“By the One Who has my soul in His Hand, the two calves of ‘Abdullah will be stronger and mightier on the Day of Resurrection than Uhud and Harrah (two well-known mountains).”

And on another occasion, the Prophet said:

“Whosoever wants to hear the Qur’an fresh as it was revealed, then let him hear it from Ibn Mas’ud.”

The Prophet loved to hear ‘Abdullah bin Mas’ud recite the Qur’an. He once said: “Recite for me, O ‘Abdullah.” ‘Abdullah said: “I recite to you, and to you it was revealed, O Messenger of Allah?” He said:

“Indeed, I love to hear it from other than me.” Ibn Mas’ud then began to recite these Verses:

“How (will it be) then, when We bring from each nation a witness and

We bring you (O Muhammad as a witness against these people? On that day those who disbelieved and disobeyed the Messenger (Muhammad) will wish that they were buried in the earth, but they will never be able to hide a single fact from Allah.”

The Prophet then became overwhelmed by tears, tears that continued to flow from his eyes until he signalled with his hand and said: “Enough for you (i.e., stop reciting for now), enough for you, O Ibn Mas’ud.”

It is reported that ‘Abdullah bin Mas’ud said, “I took 70 Surahs (Chapters) from the mouth of the Messenger of Allah, and none can contend with me about them.” And in a narration reported by Muslim, ‘Abdullah bin Mas’ud said, “By (Allah), none has the right to be worshipped but Him: There is no Surah (Chapter) in Allah’s Book except that I know where it was revealed. And there is no Verse except that I know what it was revealed about. And were I to know about anyone who is more knowledgeable than me concerning Allah’s Book and who can be reached by (a journey on) camels, I would have ridden to him.”

‘Abdullah bin Mas’ud’s eminence was recognized and appreciated by the Prophet’s other

Companions ‘Umar testified to his eminence with the words: “Ibn Mas’ud is filled with Fiqh (understanding of the religion). Abu Musa Al-Ash’ari said, “Don’t ask me about anything as long as this Habr (authority, scholar) is among you.” And Hudhaifah bin Al-Yaman said, “I have not seen anyone who bears a more similar resemblance to the Messenger of Allah in his guidance, his dignified comportment, and his character than Ibn Mas’ud.”

In Kufah

After ‘Abdullah participated in the conquering of Ash-Sham (Syria and surrounding regions), the Leader of the Believers, ‘Umar O, sent him along with ‘Ammar bin Yasir to Yemen, assigning the former with the duty of teaching people their religion, and appointed the latter as Amir (leader, governor). The following is the message that ‘Umar sent with them: “These two are among the most eminent of Muhammad’s Companions, so be guided by their examples.” Years later, ‘Uthman — during his caliphate — appointed Ibn Mas’ud as Amir of Kufah, only to later discharge him of his duties and call him back to Al-Madinah.

His Narrations From The Messenger Of Allah

‘Abdullah bin Mas’ud was a

prolific narrator of Hadith; he took many of his narrations directly from the Prophet, and others by means of the likes of ‘Umar and Sa’d bin Mu’adh. And there are many who narrated from him, the most prominent of whom are the following:

‘Abdullah bin ‘Umar, ‘Abdullah bin ‘Amr, ‘Abdullah bin ‘Abbas, ‘Abdullah bin Az-Zubair, Abu Musa, Abu Rafi, Abu Shuraih, Abu Sa’id, Jabir bin ‘Abdullah, Anas, and Abu Umamah; and from his family, his two sons ‘Abdur-Rahman and Abu ‘Ubaidah; his nephew ‘Abdullah bin ‘Utbah; and his wife, Zainab Ath-Thaqafiyyah.

His Death

‘Abdullah bin Masud died in Al-Madinah, in the year 32 H. Though his exact age at the time of his death is not known, he was between the ages of 63 and 69. One narration indicates that he was buried at Al-Baqi’ and that the Leader of the Believers, ‘Uthman bin ‘Affan, led his funeral prayer. However, another narration indicates that it was Az-Zubair bin Al-’Awwam who led his funeral prayer and that, as per ‘Abdullah’s instructions, he was buried at night. Because of the nature of these instructions, ‘Uthman — it appears — did not know of the burial, and so he later reproached Az-Zubair for not informing him about it. ■

Around the World

Hasina Indicted in ‘Crimes Against Humanity’; Ex-IG Becomes a State Witness

DHAKA: Former PM Sheikh Hasina was indicted in cases of “crimes against humanity” in absentia by Bangladesh International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) with one of the co-accused, a former IG of police, turning state witness to the alleged atrocities perpetrated by her govt. during the last year protests that led to her ouster.

The ICT has “framed the charges”, including of mass killings, murder and torture, against Hasina — who fled to India — alongside “fugitive” former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal and ex-IG Chowdhury Abdullah al Mamun, who is in custody, according to the prosecution.

The justice Md. Golam Mortaza-led three-member ICT bench approved Mamun’s request to become an approver. Chief prosecutor Mohammad Tajul Islam told reporters that after the ICT read the charges to Mamun he was accused of, he pleaded guilty, expressed his willingness to assist it in “uncovering the full extent of the crimes”, and voluntarily agreed to become an approver. Mamun is expected to have detailed knowledge of the “crimes against humanity” and those involved, Tajul said.■

2,442 Incidents of Communal Violence

Bangladesh witnessed 2,442 incidents of communal violence over a span of 330 days from August 4 last year, when political unrest peaked, a minority advocacy group in the country said. “Most of these violent incidents happened between August 4 and August 20 last year,” the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council said. The nature of violence ranged from murders and sexual assaults, to attacks on places of worship, and arrests on charges of alleged defamation of religion, it said, adding perpetrators have largely evaded justice. ■

Turkish President Erdogan hails PPK for disarmament

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan hailed start of a disarmament process by militant Kurdish separatists as the end of a “painful chapter” in Turkey’s troubled history.

Erdogan told a meeting of his ruling AKP party in Ankara that the more than 40-year-old “scourge of terrorism” for which the Kurdistan Workers’ Party - or PKK - was responsible is on its way to ending. His remarks came a day after male and female members of the PKK in northern Iraq set their rifles and machine guns on fire.

“Today the doors of a great Turkey, a strong Turkey, a Turkish century have been opened wide,” Erdogan said. ■

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