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**Life Does not Consist in
Only Eating And Drinking**

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Let us realise that the joys of life are not confined to eating and drinking. At times, facing hunger is more joyful than having a full belly. There have been many noble souls belonging to various religions who preferred starving to eating, and who gave the food of their family to others. Our country too, witnessed such incidents. These values sustain religions, civilisations and the human race. Had it not been so, the human race would have been extinct by now. Like other creatures, man too, would have vanished from the planet earth.

So, we all should maintain and promote normalcy, mutual confidence and love and goodwill for everyone, irrespective of their religion, nationality or linguistic group. We should take him as a member of our fraternity, whether he belongs to our town or country or not. We should have concern for everyone, for he is a human being and hence one of our brethren. We have ties of kinship, both close and distant ones. We may have our close relatives in such far-off countries as Arabia, Iran, England or US. ■

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Wisdom of Qur'an

"Tell them: 'Call upon those whom you fancy to be [your helpers] beside Him! They have no power to remove any affliction from you, nor can they shift it.' Those whom they call upon are themselves seeking the means of access to their Lord, each trying to be nearer to Him. They crave for His mercy and dread His chastisement. Surely your Lord's punishment is to be feared."

(Al-Qur'an-17:56-57)

These verses throw a challenge to the unbelievers and polytheists to call upon their self-made deities whom they consider to be their helpers beside God to come to their rescue at times of affliction. They assert that these deities have no power to remove any affliction.

Not only prostrating oneself before someone other than God but also praying to and invoking anyone other than God amounts to associating others in His Divinity, i.e. to polytheism. Prayer and invocation are modes of worship and anyone who invokes someone other than God is as guilty of polytheism as an idol-worshipper.

Nor can anyone other than God avert a calamity or alter anyone's plight. If someone entertains such beliefs about anyone other than God, then such beliefs are false and betray the fact that he associates others with God in His Divinity. How ironic that those whom the polytheists invoked and whom they sought to intercede with God on their behalf were themselves in need of God's mercy, dreaded His punishment, and were constantly on the look-out for the means which would bring them close to Him. ■

Pearls From the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

It is reported on the authority of Ibn Abbas that Muadh said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) sent me (as governor of Yemen) and (at the time of departure) instructed me thus: you will soon find yourself in a community one among the People of the Book; so first call them to testify that there is no god but Allah, that I (Muhammad) am the messenger of Allah, and if they accept this, then tell them that Allah has enjoined upon them five prayers during the day and the night, and if they accept it, then tell them that Allah has made Zakat obligatory for them that it should be collected from the rich and distributed among the poor, and if they agree to it, don't pick up (as a share of Zakat) the best of their wealth. Beware of the supplication of the oppressed for there is no barrier between him and Allah.

(Sahih Muslim)

The People of the Book never denied the existence of God. Their belief however was not correct as it was alloyed with wrong conceptions and mistaken notions. This shows that mere faith in God is not enough. Therefore, the Holy Messenger asked Muadh to call the People of the Book to testify God, first and foremost. Calling to the prophethood of Muhammad is indicative of the fact that belief in his prophethood is an integral part of the faith. This hadith highlights the practical wisdom with which Dawah should be imparted to the fellow beings. ■

Editor's Note 

Creation of The Universe

When we build a house it is ensured that foundations of pillars and walls should be strong enough to bear the weight of the roof. However, we are quite amazed when we see that sky over our head is there without any support. Is it not strange? This universe with its heavens, earth, stars, galaxies, seas and all living things are created from non-existence by God and they occupy their position firmly. The Holy Quran says:

“Say (O Muhammad): Do you verily disbelieve in Him Who created the earth in two days and you set up rivals (in worship) with Him? That is Lord of the worlds. He placed therein (i.e., the earth) firm mountains from above it, and He blessed it, and measured therein its sustenance (for its dwellers) in four days equal (i.e., all these four ‘days’ are equal in the length of time) for all those who ask about (its creation). Then He rose over towards the heaven when it was smoke, and said to it and to the earth, ‘Come both of you willingly.’ Then He completed and finished from the creation (as) seven heavens in two days and He made in each heaven its affair. And We adorned the nearest (lowest)

heaven with lamps (stars) to be an adornment as well as to guard (from the devils by using them as missiles against them). Such is the decree of Him the All-Mighty, the All-Knower.”

He also says,

“Have not those who disbelieve know that the heavens and the earth were joined together as one united piece, then We parted them? And We have made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe? And We have placed on the earth firm mountains, lest it should shake with them, and We placed therein broad highways for them to pass through, that they may be guided. And We have made heaven a roof, safe and well-guarded. Yet, they turn away from its signs.”

Each and everything on the earth make us believe that there is a heavenly power which has created them. All these things are the greatest sign of the creator. ■

S.A.

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Joys of Life Filled With Love

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Man needs love most in life

I am grateful to the President of this meeting and other respectable persons present here. For they had not seen or heard me earlier yet they reposed trust in me and spoke highly of me. I feel gratified by their compliments. These are a source of inspiration for me. Man does not need only food, clothes and money. He needs love most. If one does not get love, and possesses all else, he feels as if he is in a museum, watching everything yet having nothing. One receiving love and affection forgets even his suffering, fatigue, anger and sorrow. Man is always after love, mutual trust and he appreciates it most. I am therefore thankful to you all for having trusted me.

The Malaise Afflicting Us

The most serious malaise afflicting our society is that we do not trust one another. May God forgive our politicians, enable them to do good and direct them to the right path. Our political leaders have lost their credibility. They have made us distrust everyone. One fears to open his mouth. Today it is incredible that one may say something selflessly. The worldly-wise people always assume that there must be some motive behind what we say. Some are more tactful and express themselves only at the

opportune moment. Some say it too hastily. The shrewd ones state their intention only later. Anyway, what is important is that people have lost credibility and mutual trust. Though it is my first visit to your town, I am indebted for having reposed confidence in me. You trusted your brethren who told you that I will share some good points with you. And you gave up your business and assembled here in large numbers. This has boosted my morale. This is what makes the world going. Otherwise, we are confronted with a disgusting situation which may drive us mad or force us to go into exile. It is such a depressing scene everywhere. We have despaired of mankind. Life rests on the ray of hope. It is so gratifying that you trusted me. Otherwise, I had no link with you. I had not met you earlier. Most of you do not read newspapers and magazines. Nor would you be familiar with my books which may have reached only some madrasahs. Yet you chose to listen to me. This underscores your faith in humanity.

A Parable

Let me, relate to you a story about a saint, known in Delhi as Sultanji. The locality in Delhi, Nizamuddin is named after him. He is more famously known as Nizam al-din

Awliya. Someone brought a pair of scissors in his session. Upon spotting it, he said: "I do not need it. I am not here to cut or tear anything. On the contrary, I link hearts. I do not tear hearts asunder. Better give this a pair of scissors to someone and bring me a needle for sewing. I am here to draw people together, not to repulse them."

Divisive Forces

Many divisive forces are at work presently. Fragmentation is highly common. Even our tongue has turned into a sharp weapon. I am devoted mostly to academic work and do meet a cross section of people. For me, politics is the biggest divisive force. It is too extensive, too sharp and too far-reaching. A politician has his impact across the country. Divisive forces work overtime in the national and state capitals namely, Delhi and Lucknow. Every political party is engaged in divisive activities. This nefarious work is carried out by every political leader, journalist and writer. Man is supposed to use his tongue for promoting and reinforcing love and kindness. This was, however, the case in yesteryears. Today everyone is in the morass of sectarianism and divisive politics. We use our tongue for sowing discord among people, for shedding blood. Same holds true for our pen. Pen is another tool for bringing people closer. This was, however, the practice in the past. We are now given totally to abusing and defaming

others. Both tongue and pen are now abused for fanning hatred and violence.

The Power of Pen

The Editors' Conference held in Lucknow some time ago was addressed by our Prime Minister. She had inaugurated it. Some of my friends brought her to Nadwah. Both Hindu and Muslim editors were present at this august conference. I was asked to speak. I related to them a classical Persian couplet which reads thus: "Tread softly, for many will be hurt by you. Pen controls the fate of millions. That poet had only few persons in his mind. But, with the recent advancement in journalism and its ever-growing impact, it has assumed great importance. A journalist should be better addressed as His Majesty.

The range of media is wide and vast. Journalists now exercise the same power which was once enjoyed by kings. However, if they turn to a destructive course, its impact would be far-reaching. I therefore urged editors to take great care in using their pen. For much discord today is owing to poisonous writings.

There are many noble souls in our country who have promoted love and understanding. I have been to many countries, including some distant ones. I have visited many Muslim countries. However, these champions of mutual love and

cordiality are not in such large numbers in other countries. Being a student of history, I am very fond of reading books on history. Rather, it is my hobby or passion. We learn from history that some of these saints came to India from distant places. Some of them were natives. They strove hard for establishing peace and fraternity. I recounted to you the incident related to Nizam al-din Awliya. He loved humanity. On reading the account of saints, we learn the meaning of love. These saints had respect for fellow human beings.

The Poison Killing Our Society

It is a general tendency that one's weaknesses are attributed to his religion. The followers of a religion are given a label, even if a lapse is committed by only an individual. That person is not a representative of his community or religion. What accounts for this attitude is the poison which has seeped into our mind, which has, in turn, vitiated our system, our milieu, and our entire society. There is an urgent need to detoxify. If it is not done, our life will become difficult. Far from being a saint, I am only an ordinary person. However, God has invested man with the discerning ability to forecast future happenings. It is like one's assertion about the impending rain on noting lightning and storm. His above assertion is certainly not some prophecy.

Rather, it is an everyday

occurrence. By the same token, the daily happenings around us indicate that in the absence of any deterrent action, our society and country would be destroyed soon. For the hostility, misperceptions and hatred permeating our society, literature, educational system, philosophy and politics do not augur well for our country.

The Philosophy of Fear and Hate

A leading European philosopher is on record having remarked: "If you want to keep a community under your control, do not let them become extinct. Rather, use the psychosis of fear and hate against them. Make them afraid of someone and keep them quarrelling with others. By employing this strategy you will maintain leadership and enjoy power uninterruptedly." CEM. Joad is the author of these two works: i) Introduction to Modern Philosophy and ii) Guide to Modern Wickedness. He was the Head, Department of Philosophy at the University of London. He is famous for these two thought-provoking books. He adds that if you are unable to find a community for infusing fear and hate into others, invent one, including a celestial or imaginary one. Invent an enemy, be it a star or the sun or the moon, fish or river, as an object of hate before your followers and make them fearful of it. This will help you enjoy power and control. People will be lost

in fighting or fear while those in power will not face any challenge. If our country is destroyed, how can we the discerning ability to forecast future happenings. It is like one's assertion about the impending rain on noting lightning and storm. His above assertion is certainly not some prophecy. Rather, it is an everyday occurrence. By the same token, the daily happenings around us indicate that in the absence of any deterrent action, our society and country would be destroyed soon. For the hostility, misperceptions and hatred permeating our society, literature, educational system, philosophy and politics do not augur well for our country.

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that if you are unable to find a community for infusing fear and hate into others, invent one, including a celestial or imaginary one. Invent an enemy, be it a star or the sun or the moon, fish or river, as an object of hate before your followers and make them fearful of it. This will help you enjoy power and control. People will be lost in fighting or fear while those in power will not face any challenge. If our country is destroyed, how can we survive? We may win an election, grab an office or win some popularity, yet we will face the horrible consequences of this poison. We may confront this danger in our own life time. Or it may strike in the next generation of our own children.

Man loves his children most. He works hard and invests money for them. If we plant an orchard, we know that we may not get its fruits in our own lifetime. We know that we are investing it for our children. This long term planning is innate in the human nature. Think of your children. If this hate and fear continue, though our generation will pass away in 60-70 years, the plight of our country would be pitiable. We have to be careful about the atmosphere which our children will inherit.

Seeds of Hatred Sown Everywhere

It is common knowledge that a farmer sows seeds, which results in the growth of plants and then he reaps harvest. Same holds true for the crop

of hate and fear. This crop grows wildly and fast. Once the seeds of hatred and fear are sown, one will have a huge yield, higher than that of any grain such as wheat, maize, barely or paddy. Today the seeds of hatred are sown everywhere in our country. One community is fearful of another. They try to hide their fear as well. This is a symptom of a complex. One who projects himself as a lion-hearted person betrays sheer cowardice. Let me do some plain talking. Hindus and Muslims fear one another. They hate and fear one another at the same time. Yet they cover up their fear. For they do not want to be exposed as coward. If you dig deep into their psyche, you will note this mutual fear. Every citizen is in the state of fear. Be assured, you need not fear me. Hindus and Muslims fear one another because of the lack of mutual understanding between them. They have never explored love which God has bestowed upon them.

Our Weakness

If we let everyone to love, it will grow and deep bonds of love, as between mother and her child, will develop. However, since there is a lack of communication between Hindus and Muslims, they cannot develop any mutual love."

Our history, literature and poetry are suffused with love.

Yet the same love is not allowed to flourish. All channels of

communication have been sealed. The only outlet is of hatred. While love is not allowed to prosper, hatred has a field day. For winning election and for gaining power, a politician resorts to the divisive politics of hatred. He makes people fight against one another. In contrast, the one promoting love and peace is asked to retire from the public scene. He is bluntly told that he is not needed and that he should stay at home.

In my opinion, this is our main weakness. If one appears at the stage and delivers a fiery speech inciting Muslims thus: "O Muslim brethren! See the injustice done to you in this country. The Hindus are bent on crushing you. They would not allow you to live with dignity." His outburst will render my presentation null and void. My friends will only keep watching him while he will cast a spell on the audience. He will turn popular instantly. Likewise, if another speaker turns up who incites the feelings of Hindus and alerts them against Pakistan and its designs, the audience will abandon the speakers and chair of this forum. The crowd will then not listen to anyone. This is our weakness which is responsible for our present plight.

This weakness is owing to our laxity in that we have given a free hand to those who exploit human beings. These mischievous elements know that the easiest way to fool people is

to fill into them the seeds of hatred and fear. This gives them control over people. As to those who preach love and self restraint, they have no listeners. Only few persons respond, and that too half-heartedly. This is the danger looming over our country.

If this trend continues, there will be no one to attend a meeting like this. In the next twenty years you will not get any response at all. God has given you a chance now. So work hard and learn the lesson of peaceful co-existence. All of us together should try to rescue our country. Let us appreciate the bounties which God has lavished upon this country. Regard it as your own country and love everything of it. Learn to live like human beings. Then you will enjoy life. You will appreciate even if you do not have money. You will be happy with even limited resources.

Miracles of Love

A family blessed with love enjoys life, even though they may be poor. They enjoy sound sleep and have a good time. In contrast, the families riven by quarrels, litigation, and jealousy have no peace of mind. They are apprehensive about murder, robbery, public humiliation and court cases. A family may have a huge bank balance and all amenities like TV and other luxury items yet they have no joy of life. They do not have any time for leisure and for family life. In contrast,

there are homes without any amenities i.e. TV, radio, excellent crockery, finishing and decoration. Yet they are blessed with mutual love and happiness. A large family with four sons and two daughters lives happily, full of sacrifice and affection for another. They receive warmly their guests and visitors. Social relations keep them occupied. Elderly ladies lavish affection on the young ones. The seniors motivate and guide their juniors. They follow centuries-old custom of patting on the head and touching the feet. On observing their life one realises what the joys of life are, even with meagre resources. For the rich with their plentitude do not have so satisfying lives.

Lead Life Marked By Love

Let all of us learn to lead life, which is marked by love. Then we will find out what it means. The constant fear of one another has made our lives miserable. People in one locality are terrified of those in another. Colleagues, though working on the same desk do not trust one another. They apprehend that the other one may lodge a complaint or get him implicated in bribery. This is if the messy condition of our offices, localities and institutions. Those entrusted with moral education and character building are themselves mired in corruption. Our educational institutions may be of good quality.

However, we know that the colleges and universities in other towns are not up to the mark. They have lost their credibility. Students do not respect their teachers and the latter have no affection for the former. Rather, they stand as two opposite enemy camps, bent upon destroying each other.

I need not elaborate more. We all should assimilate basic human values. We were imparted this lesson first by God's Messengers. They had been sent down for the same objective. These Messengers had their companions and disciples. Then there were saints and devout persons. I recounted to you the instructive incident related to a noble soul. Someone presented him a pair of scissors of good quality. He, however, declined, saying that the mission of his life is to unite people, not to hurt them. He was devoted to the cause of bringing people closer to one another. This is a simple message, devoid of any complex philosophy. Today our country needs love, trust and understanding. Divisive forces are already at work in every village, town, locality, school and madrasahs. What is needed now is the message of mutual love, help and support. Our country has many models who promoted love and trust. We should respect and appreciate others. Still we have some noble souls who selflessly work for the welfare of humanity.

An Incident

Once we were returning from Atraula. Our friend, a physician, was driving. We had been there to attend a friend's wedding. As we left, a vehicle carrying a young veiled woman, hit our car. She fell down and fainted. Our friend being a physician was carrying medicine. A little later she gained consciousness. In the meantime all the villagers assembled on the spot. That we had no animosity against that woman had no meaning for them. We were on our way to Lucknow. However, there stood a crowd before us, carrying sticks. We had nothing to do with them. We did not even know which village it was. The situation could soon take a communal turn and we could be killed. However, a teacher appeared on the scene. He seated us and assured us that no harm would be done to us. He did not let anyone move towards us. He took us to the nearby police station and was keen on bearing all the expenses. We told them that we had sufficient money. Someone bluntly asked him as to why he was protecting us while we were Muslims and he was a Hindu. The questioned him about his kindness to us. He replied: "We all are human beings. May God protect them." We never met him again. However, our country is proud of such noble souls. This ensures happiness and peace in our midst. We want to carry the same message in every nook and corner of our country. This

message should be imbibed by all Hindus and Muslims. This is the very purpose for which we have arrived in your town.

A Lone Voice

It is a matter of concern for us as to who would listen to our lone voice. There are so many newspapers and public meetings. We are able to address only two to three hundred persons in this town. Will it suffice for bringing about a revolution? However, this is how a beginning is always made. If one thought only about his limited reach, no cause could be taken up. Take our Freedom struggle as illustrative. The leaders of our Independence movement, Gandhi, Ali Brothers and Motilal Nehru did not have a large following in the early stage. Millions did not initially turn up at their meetings. It was after a long time that their mission received mass support. So it is a single seed which makes the difference. Were every farmer to think alike that it is futile to sow a few seeds, there would be no grain in our country and we will starve to death.

Build Mutual Trust

I urge you to create an ambience of love and trust. Our scripture, the Qur'an presents the outline of an ideal society. In the context of a baseless allegation against someone the Qur'an asks the believers as to why they did not repudiate that charge. For

since they could not do such a wrongdoing, they should not have expected one of them to commit it. We should have an ideal society in which everyone should think highly of others. This thought should not occur to us that one of us could do any wrong. The Qur'an seeks to create such a healthy, trustworthy society.

We should have such confidence in others that we should not be even prepared to hear anything against them. This is a common human lapse that we readily buy a negative story about anyone. When we shop, this equation is based solely on mutual trust. Same holds true for our relationship with a physician, with the belief that he would diagnose well and cure us. As a student approaches a teacher, he holds the belief that the latter is well informed and will impart him best education. Trust binds us to fellow human beings. In its absence our society would collapse like a pack of cards. Our society will be then sapped of life.

This is our message to you and to the whole country. This is what has brought us here. This is the essence of Payam i - Insaniyat mission. Since all of you are educated people, I do not have to elucidate any further.

Please promote mutual love and trust make our country, India a paradise on earth.■

The SIR Exercise And The Points of Concern

- Karan Thapar*

I wonder how many of you are following the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise currently underway? I ask because it could affect your right to vote. Some of the facts that have emerged are disconcerting. They raise deep and fundamental questions.

For instance, it's reported that the voters list in 17 of the 19 states and Union Territories where the third phase of SIR is being conducted has shrunk by over 15%.

This means net SIR deletions in the 30 states/UTs where at least its first phase is over are around 12 crore. Maharashtra alone might drop 2 crore voters: 32.8% could be lost in Delhi, 12.8% in Chandigarh. These are huge numbers.

Separately, Hindustan Times has reported that 1.1 million Delhi voters were inexplicably deleted from the rolls even before the SIR exercise began. This happened between January 2025 and June 2026.

It sharply contrasts with the fact that between the state assembly election of 2020 and the Lok Sabha

election of 2024, 0.4 million were added whilst a similar number were added between the 2024 Lok Sabha election and the 2025 state assembly election. Why were they dropped? There's no available explanation.

Surely as the population increases, the number of voters should increase as well? Doesn't that stand to reason? Government estimates put the adult population in 2024 at 99 crore. At that time, the voters list was 98 crore. That was almost an exact match.

Today, Yogendra Yadav, the national convenor of the Bharat Jodo Abhiyan, says the adult population could be 103 crore but the voters list is likely to shrink to 88 crore-15 crore voters could have been deleted. That's a very sizeable number.

It's facts like these that have, no doubt, led Ashok Lavasa, a former election commissioner, to question the SIR exercise. It may be legal, as the Supreme Court has ruled, but is it fair?

Take the example of Bengal, where 27 lakh cases have been sent to tribunals because of alleged logical discrepancies. Right to Information replies have revealed that some 82,000 have been adjudicated and in

* Karan Thapar is the author of Devil's Advocate: The Untold Story.

91% of the cases, it was found the names were wrongly deleted. They had to be restored. Doesn't that raise serious questions about the credibility of this category called logical discrepancies? Doesn't the Election Commission owe us an explanation?

Or take the smaller example of Delhi. The Hindu reports that, as a result of the SIR exercise, in 24 of the 70 assembly constituencies there are now fewer electors than the number of people who voted the assembly elections of 2025. Frontline reports that in polling booth 33 in Chandni Chowk out of 909 voters, 908 have been deleted. Doesn't that raise questions about the accuracy and credibility of the SIR exercise?

After Bihar, phase two and phase three of the SIR exercise requires voters to be mapped to the 2002 electoral rolls. But what's so sacrosanct about 2002, asks former chief election commissioner SY Quraishi. He reveals that his own father's name was misspelt in that year. That's unlikely to be the only error.

If something similar happens to

you, you could be dropped as a voter on the grounds that your citizenship is questionable. Under the SIR exercise block level officers (BLOs)-mostly government school teachers - have been given the authority to decide whether a voter, who is already on the rolls and has voted earlier, is a citizen of India and can continue on the rolls. Is it right to give such powers to BLOS?

First in Bihar and then in Bengal, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, the SIR exercise was held just before the elections Given were due. Given all the problems that have occurred many of which were predictable why did it have to be held at this time and in such a compressed timeframe? This question has been often asked but never answered.

Elections are one of the cornerstones of democracy. But if the electoral rolls are questionable, or even doctored as some fear, how much damage will that do to India's democracy? That's the final question I want to leave you with.■

(Hindustan Times, 20-09-2026)

"He is perfect believer who is best in morals and the best among you are those who are nice to their womenfolk."

(Tirmidhi)

Iqbal's Concept of Khudi And Tasawwuf

- Syed Khalid Husain

Khudi ko kar buland itna ke har taqdeer se pehle / Khuda bande se khud poochhe bata teri raza kya hai. (Elevate the Self to such heights that, before issuing every decree of destiny, God Himself should ask (His) servant tell me what is your wish.)

Ae Tair-e-Lahooti! Us rizq se maut achchhi / Jis rizq se aati ho parwaz mein kotahi. (O bird who flies to the Throne of God, you must keep this truth in sight: To suffer death is far nobler than bread that clogs your upward flight.)

The above couplets in Urdu, the language of some 400 million people in the world, are from the poetry of Mohammed Iqbal, one of the most outstanding and influential poet-philosophers, Islamic thinkers and scholars of the 20th century.

The first couplet highlights the significance of *Khudi* (Self) in an individual as the source through which one can take oneself closest to the Ultimate (Allah Almighty), and the second couplet explains Iqbal's philosophy of the purpose of life, which is effort and struggle, and not passive attitude like that of some mystics.

Both these couplets are from *Bal-i-Jibril* (Gabriel's Wing), one of Iqbal's three books of poetry in Urdu, published in 1935. The other two books are *Bang-*

i-Dara (The Call of the Marching Bell), published in 1924, and *Zarb-i-Kalim* (The Rod of Moses), published in 1936.

We would discuss here the twin subjects of *Khudi* and *Tasawwuf* (mysticism) and what Iqbal means by them.

But before that, it seems necessary to give a brief introduction of the poet and his work.

Iqbal was born on November 9, 1877, in Sialkot, a town of the Indian subcontinent that went to Pakistan after its partition in 1947. Educated initially by private tutors in languages and writing, history, poetry and religion, Iqbal became proficient in several languages and the skill of writing prose and poetry. Iqbal studied philosophy, English literature and Arabic at the Government College in Lahore (now in Pakistan) and obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1892, graduating cum laude.

While studying for his master's, Iqbal came under the wings of Sir Thomas Arnold, a scholar of Islam and modern philosophy at the college. Sir Arnold exposed young Iqbal to Western culture and ideas, and served as a bridge for him between the ideas of East and West. At Sir Thomas's encouragement, Iqbal travelled to and spent many years studying in Europe.

Iqbal obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree from Trinity College at Cambridge in 1907, while simultaneously studying law at Lincoln's Inn, from where he qualified as a barrister in 1908. The same year he returned to India. With doctorate in philosophy, Iqbal was knighted in 1922 by King George V, who gave him the title of "Sir". Iqbal died in 1938.

The poetry of Iqbal, who is commonly known as *Shayer-e-Mashriq* (Poet of the East) and *Hakeem-ul-Ummat* (Sage of the global Muslim Community), in Urdu, Arabic and Persian is considered to be among the greatest of the modern era and his vision of an independent state for the Muslims of British India inspired the creation of Pakistan.

Referred to as Allama (scholar), Iqbal's thoughts in his work primarily focused on the spiritual direction and development of human society and centred on experiences from his travel to and stay in Western Europe and the Middle East. He was profoundly influenced by Western philosophers such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Henri Bergson, and soon became a strong critic of Western society's separation of religion from state and what he perceived as its obsession with materialistic pursuits.

SPIRITUAL AND POLITICAL

REVIVALISM

Iqbal was a strong proponent of the spiritual and political revival of Islamic civilisation and culture. The poetry and philosophy of Maulana Rumi, a 13th-century Persian poet, jurist, theologian and Sufi, bore the deepest influence on Iqbal's mind. Deeply grounded in religion since childhood, Iqbal would begin intensely concentrating on the study of Islam, the culture and history of Islamic civilisation and its political future.

Iqbal would feature Rumi in the role of a guide in many of his poems, and his works focused on reminding his readers of the past glories of Islamic civilisation, and delivering a message of a pure, spiritual focus on Islam as a source for socio-political liberation and greatness. Iqbal denounced political divisions within and among Muslim nations, and frequently alluded to and spoke in terms of the Ummah.

Explaining Khudi

In 1915, Iqbal published his first collection of poetry, *Asrar-e-Khudi* (Secrets of the Self), in Persian. The poems delve into the concepts of ego and emphasise the spirit and the Self from a religious and spiritual perspective. Iqbal has gone so deep into the ocean of the Self that it has become difficult for a common person to dive with him to that depth. Various prominent Islamic scholars have defined the complex and complicated

concept of Khudi as enunciated by Iqbal in the light of the Quran, Hadith and certain incidents that occurred during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be to him).

To writer and academic Asif Iqbal Khan, the Self by Iqbal is taken to mean a sort of system or unity of psycho-physical experiences. He says: "We may analyse our mental states, at any moment of our life, into certain elementary experiences, which, however, never exist in a vacuum. These experiences are found as parts of an organic unity but this unity does not exist apart from its constituent states."

Prof. Muhammad Munawwar, a prominent Iqbal scholar, notes: "One must think of the highly negative significance in Persian of the word Khudi with its implications of selfishness, egotism and similar objectionable meanings. Iqbal gives this word a new meaning as Self, Personality, Ego in an absolutely positive meaning."

Asrar-i-Khudi, Iqbal's first philosophical poetry book in Persian, deals mainly with the individual and is concerned with the philosophy of religion. The poems emphasise the spirit and the Self from a religious and spiritual perspective.

Rumuz-i-Bekhudi (The Secrets of Selflessness), his second book in Persian published in 1918, discusses

the interaction between individual and society.

In *Asrar-e-Khudi*, considered to be his finest poetic work, Iqbal explains his philosophy of the Self. He proves by various means that the whole universe obeys the will of the Self. Iqbal condemns self-destruction. For him the aim of life is self-realisation and self-knowledge. He charts the stages through which the Self has to pass before finally arriving at its point of perfection, enabling the knower of the Self to become the vicegerent of Allah on earth.

Iqbal believes the answers to essential questions regarding the Self are important in determining morality for both the society and the individual. In *Asrar-e-Khudi*, he says the system of the universe originates in the Self and the continuation of the life of all individuals depends on strengthening the Self.

"The form of existence is an effect of the Self, / Whatsoever thou seest is a secret of the Self,

When the Self awoke to consciousness. / It revealed the universe of Thought.

A hundred words are hidden in its essence: / Self-affirmation brings not-self to light."

To Iqbal, Khudi is strengthened by Love:

“The luminous point whose name
is the Self / Is the life-spark
beneath our dust.

By Love it is made more lasting, /
More living, more burning, more
glowing.

From Love proceeds the radiance
of its being. / And the development of its
unknown possibilities.”

Iqbal further says that when the Self
is strengthened by Love, it gains
dominion over the outward and inward
forces of the universe:

“When the Self is made strong by
Love / Its power rules the whole world.

The Heavenly Sage who adorned
the sky with stars / Plucked these buds
from the bough of the Self.

Its hand becomes God’s hand, /
The moon is split by its fingers- / It is the
arbitrator in all the quarrels of the world.”

Iqbal says that the purpose of the
Muslim’s life is to exalt the Word of Allah
and that the Jihad, if it be prompted by
land-hunger, is unlawful in the sight of
Islam:

“Imbue thine heart with the tincture
of Allah, / Give honour and glory to Love!

The Muslim’s nature prevails by
means of love: / The Muslim, if he be
not loving, is an infidel.”

VIEW ON TASAWWUF

Looking at his book *the*

*Reconstruction of Religious Thought
in Islam*, a timeless intellectual
challenge of the first rank, it appears that
Iqbal is inclined to accept mysticism as
an experience. It is the nature of mystic
experience which has always been a
point of discussion among the scholars
and Sufis.

Pakistani Islamic scholar Dr
Khalid Alavi says Iqbal’s treatment of
mysticism is twofold. He accepts mystic
experience as a source of knowledge
and a useful way of approaching reality.
Since his concept of Islam is not of a
monastic order, and he perceives Islam
as a unifying force between the spiritual
and temporal world, so he does not
accept a passive attitude. To him “the
function of sufism in Islam has been to
systematise mystic experience; though
it must be admitted, that Ibn-i-Khaldun
was the only Muslim who approached it
in a thoroughly scientific spirit.”

Iqbal’s philosophy of the purpose
of life is Sufi: he defines the human
being as *Tair-e-Lahooti* (a traveller to
the Realm of the Unknowable and
Unlimited). *Lahut* is a Sufi term, and the
purpose of our Creation is to know and
draw near our Lord. This is pure Sufism.

Iqbal has a critical view of
mysticism. His criticism is on two
different bases. He believes that life is
activity, and a person having
communication with God cannot be a
passive individual. A human being

coming in touch with the Supreme Being is illuminated. He becomes a moving spirit in the society. It seems that such an individual is having a burning fire within him and he is part of God's activity in this world. To him a Sufi is a creative and active agent of Divine will. He criticises those who cause passivity and create inactiveness among the Muslims. He says:

"If a devotee is free, his spiritual stations are self-restraint, self-respect and a shout of joy that "I am the creative truth".

But if he is subjugated and enslaved, his pantheism shows that he is dead, he himself is a grave, and also a sudden death."

Iqbal differentiates between *Faqr* and *Rahibi*, and condemns monasticism (*rahbaniyat*). He says:

"Your Islam is something else, because in your view *Faqr* and monasticism are the same things.

(The fact is) that *Faqr* is disgusted with monasticism's love for peace and tranquillity. *Faqr*'s ship is always in the

storms and commotion."

Iqbal criticises those who favour passivity and create inactiveness among the Muslims. As he says in *Armaghan-i-Hijaz*:

"If a devotee is free, his spiritual stations are self-restraint, / Self-respect and a shout of joy that "I am the creative truth.

But if he is subjugated and enslaved, his pantheism show that he is dead, / He himself is a grave, and also a sudden death."

His message to the sufis is very clear:

"Come out of the monasteries and follow the example of Shabbir (martyrdom); for the monastic life is just grief and affliction.

Your religion and morality show signs of monasticism. / This is the state of decay which is the symptom of every dying nation."■

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Five Goodwills

Tamim Dari reports a hadith that verily the Prophet (S) said, "Religion is the name of goodwill". He repeated this statement three times to me." (The Sahaba) asked him, (Sire) For whom is this good will meant?" The Prophet (S) said, "This goodwill is for Allah, for His Book, for His Apostle, and for the imams (rulers and ulama) and for all the Muslims."

Migration To Madinah

- S. M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi

Suffah and the people of Suffah:

Subsequent to diversion of Qibla, when the Prophet's mosque got diverted towards Baitullah, the wall of the mosque on the side of the first Qibla and the space adjacent to it, that was in the shape of a platform, got reserved for accommodating those members of the Muslim community who wanted to come over and reside there for getting acquainted with, and learning from the Prophet (SAW), matters regarding the religion. Hence, the people started staying there. The board for them was arranged by the Prophet (SAW) himself like he did for his family members. And the Prophet (SAW), magnanimous that he was and owing to the wont that he had of going all-out to help the poor, would get himself, off and on, into great distress. Situation would, sometimes, come to such a pass as would leave no recourse but to put up with hunger and starvation. But he (SAW) would endure all that. The number of these theology students would sometimes go up to as high as seventy. But, that was how a team of people well-versed in religion got prepared. This place where these people used to be put up was known by the name of Suffah. It is this Suffah which happened to be the first ever Madrasah in Islam. It proved to be the

first ever Madrasah instituted not amongst the Muslims only but amongst the Arabs also. It was given the name of Suffah, that is: platform or podium. It is from this very place that the incessant trend of acquiring knowledge of religious affairs and Islamic injunctions imparted by the Prophet (SAW) had gotten initiated. Subsequently, the Islamic Madrasahs kept on coming up and getting established all over the world.

Patience and Endurance in Serving the Cause of the Islamic Mission:

The persecution that the Prophet (SAW) and his followers

had suffered during the life in Makkah, was in fact inflicted upon them by their own kinsfolk and compatriots. Being, as they did, generally from the same stock of family the former were not inferior to the latter in valour, fervour and sense of honor. Had they wanted, they could have taken, to avenge themselves, such measures as would have robbed them of their rest and repose. Day and night, whenever they found an opportunity, they could have taken revenge from them. But, they were bound under the command that they should keep themselves confined to quietly endure

the sufferings, remain patient and be content with only predicated expostulations and exhortations. The Command that they had was:

(Keep your hands withheld and establish the prayer).

For 13 long years this trend of events had persisted. And ultimately the homeland, too, had to be bidden adieu. Another place was, however, procured where an organism having substantial numerical strength got set up. Permission also got issued to the effect that going on putting up with iniquities on end was no more necessary. Force can be applied in order to defend themselves and resist the onslaughts of the enemy.

Consequent upon this permission, measures as were called for got started to be taken. Nevertheless, there were also instructions to the effect that, in the process of taking these measures, no such measures as were uncalled-for should be taken.

In case of operations being necessary, consideration must be had of the human values. Women and children should be treated with due care and concern. Affability, commonweal and peace-making should be the norms. As a result thereof, the enmity of the enemy kept losing grounds while the message of Islam kept gaining them. The net result

was that, in the Prophet's (SAW) life-time itself, the entire Arab Peninsula had become proponent of the Prophet's (SAW) teachings and had itself subjugated to his (SAW) dominion. Even the greatest of the great warriors of Makkah who had left no stones unturned to have him stalled, even to have him murdered, rather, had, ultimately, brought themselves under his sujagation.

Strict Commands to have the Necessary Measures taken for the Propagation of the Message of Truth:

When the Muslims got in Madinah Munawwarah the opportunity to have a regular community established and they had acquired the prowess to have the aggressive operations of their foes resisted by application of force, permission was granted to them to resist the enemy's designs, if any, of getting into armed conflicts, by taking to armed methods, to the extent they were necessary. With that, that phase of their Islamic life got launched wherein they were not allowed to remain content with their individual modi operandi but were called upon to set up a collective organization, too, for taking collective and concerted measures. For, the religion of Islam has in it the directives and action plan provided for, like it does for the individual life, for the community life also. Its principles and

basic directives had been in promulgation in times of the Prophets of previous nations also. Under the command and guidance of the Prophet (SAW), the Muslims kept being imparted, gradually and as per the requirements, throughout the tenure of his pious life, the directives in this regard till towards the end of the last year of his (SAW) pious life they were reached the pinnacle of perfection and culmination.

Since the life in Makkah was involuntary and individual in nature, the instructions received during that phase pertained to only that extent of life. But now that the Muslims, having come over to Madinah, had acquired collectivity and power of enforcement, instructions as were required in these conditions, too, got issued to them. The compass of these instructions covered all aspects of the social life. Hence, it contained orders to the effect that, keeping the Islamic order of life no more confined to the extent of fulfilling only the individual requirements, the entire human community should now start adopting the order of life that conforms with the Will of its Providence, that is Islam. Such an order could not have been possible to put into practice on wide scale during the period of stay in Makkah. But, now on arrival in Madinah it could be put into practice. Since the concern of the Muslims'

practical life had now reached, getting extended from the individual-level reformation, to the urgency of reformation at the community level, the Muslims were now called upon, and instructed likewise, to make their efforts, too, in conformity with that level. Besides making use of the collective strength that the Muslims had now obtained in Madinah in achieving their philanthropic, religious objectives, they were granted permission to make its use in their defence and in making the religion of Truth triumphant, too. When the enemy got bent on launching a regular operation, permission to make use of regular force to encounter it was granted. That they had succeeded in quietly enduring, with patience and perseverance, the atrocities and acts of violence perpetrated by the enemy against them for 13 long years itself got their victimization acknowledged as a fait accompli in the reckoning of Allah Almighty. Being victims, as they were, they were now declared entitled to be backed up. Hence the permission to stand up to their enemies and resist them now.

The Mandamus issued was:

(Permission to fight is given to those who are fought against, because they have been oppressed, and verily Allah is Potent over their succor.) (Al-Hajj: 39)

Thereby they were granted the permission to have armed confrontation with the enemies. And, when the armed operations started being launched with force and vigour by the enemy, strict regimental instructions got issued to face the enemy:

(And fight them until there be no more temptation, and their obedience be wholly unto Allah) (Al-Baqra: 193)

The benefit accrued thereupon was told to be:

(And, it not for Allah's repelling people, some of them by means of others, the earth surely were corrupted; but Allah is Gracious unto the Worlds.)

(Al-Baqarah: 251)

The fact of the matter actually was that: On the Muslims having arrived in Madina Munawwarah and getting united and combined with their local Muslim brethren, the infidels of Makkah had started looking at them with additional detest and trepidation. They had started hatching schemes to have them crushed getting into Madinah itself. Whatever military manoeuvre in this respect was perceived by them as feasible was under their active consideration for implementation. Hence, it had become necessary on the part of Muslims to make them aware that they should deem them no more the self-

same Muslims as they were there in Makkah. They would now tolerate no more the aggressions against them. Hence, the Prophet (SAW) started, to start with, dispatching small-sized armed contingents called Saryas of Muslims to various suburban areas wherefrom the threat of intrigues was felt by him (SAW). It was mostly done for the purpose of keeping a watch on regions lying in the vicinity of Madinah Munawwarah and gauging the gravity of the danger posed by the activities of Quoraish there. The intent was to make, thus, the enemies realize that the Muslims were not off their guard and that they were keeping the activities of the enemies under their surveillance; that they would no more quietly tolerate any aggression. And, hence, no one should be left in the dark and be deluded.

The First Experience of Military Confrontation by Muslims:

With that objective in view, the Prophet (SAW) dispatched Sarayah (contingents) in various directions. They were allowed only to take stock of the situation and have it shown to the enemy that the Muslims were no more feeble and would not desist any more from combating the force with force. To that end, the Prophet (SAW) adopted, in the first instance, by way of the first measure, to keep tabs on the manovours and mobilisations of the Quoraish and have the possibility

of any action on their part gauged. The coastal region adjacent to Madinah was the route that the caravans plying between Makkah and Syria had to pass through. The Quoraish, the trustees of the Kaba that they were, had enjoyed the laissez passer sort of facility all over the place and could travel wherever they wanted to with immunity. They had this facility on this route, too.

No tribe would ever get into their way. Hence, the caravans of the Quoraish kept travelling with immunity North-South, to-and-fro, for commercial purposes. That was the prerogative enjoyed exclusively by the Quoraish. Otherwise, the order of the day amongst the Arabs, in general, was that no tribe would let any member of any other tribe pass through its territories without having obtained its specific permission. In case anyone tried to force his way through, it would become an issue calling for a full-fledged war with him. And, hence, the people of one region would pass through the another one only after having secured asylum with some influential person of that region.

Madinah had now become a dominion of Muslims. Many of these Muslims were from the tribe of the Quoraish whom the Quoraish had harried so much that they had to vacate Makkah, leaving all their belongings behind and had arrived in

Madinah, robbed and ruined. Their properties and possessions had now been taken possession of by the Quoraish who had, thus, their financial status further boosted. More than that, they had started expending this very wealth on bolstering their military might. Hence, the Muslims, on having arrived in Madinah, had this objective also in view that: as and when the parties of the Quoraish happen to pass through these quarters, attempts may be made by the Muslims to have their usurped wealth restored from the Quoraish. It was, after all, their wealth which the infidels of the Quoraish had usurped from them. And, it was because of this usurpation by them that the Muslims were facing, being in Alien land as they did, severe financial constraints, whereas, the Quoraish were boosting and buttressing their trade further with this very wealth.

Hence, the Muslims, on getting the information that a party of the Quoraish, headed by their arch-enemy, Abu Jahl, was passing through their territories on a journey apparently meant for trade purposes, had a contingent of theirs despatched, in order to reconnoiter it. But, by the time they reached the site, the party had already crossed over. No face-off, therefore, took place. But, when this party of the Quoraish returned with their commercial merchandise, the

Prophet (SAW) dispatched a team of thirty youngmen towards the sea route to have it checked. He (SAW) had appointed Hazrat Hamza bin Abdul Muttalib its Ameer. The Muslims, on arrival there, had a face-off, too, with them. The situation had come close to the point of clash when a person from the tribe of Juhainah who had terms with both the two sides saved the situation, through negotiations, from turning into a clash. This incident had taken place six months after the Hijrah (that is: the day the Prophet (SAW) had migrated on).

Another incident took place in the eighth month of the first year of Hijrah. It was reported to the Prophet (SAW) that a group of two hundred youth of the enemy had mobilized at Rabigh, a place in between Makkah and Madinah. Thereupon, he (SAW) dispatched a team of about sixty to seventy Muslim youth, under the command of Ubaida bin Al-Harith, to collect the information. Here a mild scuffle took place; but there was no regular battle.

Likewise, in the ninth month of the first year of Hijrah, it was reported to him (SAW) that at a place called 'Khiraaz', a horde of people from the Quoraish were getting mobilized. He (SAW) had, therefore, a detachment of twenty horsemen, under the command of Hazrat Sad bin Abi Waqqas, despatched. By the time

Muslims reached there, the people from the Quoraish had already fled away from there. This party of Muslims had, therefore, come back.

Then a report was received about the mobilization of the Quoraish at the place called 'Wuddan'. To tackle that, the Prophet (SAW) himself, having appointed Hazrat Sad bin U'bada as his viceroy in Madinah, personally went there'. There, too, the people had fled away from the place before his (SAW) arrival there.

Then, in the seventeenth month since the Hijrah, a party of the Quoraish was reported to have arrived in the region of 'Buwat'. There, too, he (SAW) himself went. But, the enemy had already beaten a retreat. There was, therefore, no occasion of any encounter.

The same month, a party from the enemies, commanded personally by Amr bin Jabir Fahri, got accessed to the outskirts of Madinah Munawwarah and went on a spree of pillage and plunder. In its pursuit, the Prophet (SAW) himself had to set out, along with a team of Muslims. He (SAW) went in his pursuit up to the vicinity of 'Badr'. But, he (Amr bin Jabir Fahri) and his cohorts had gone so far ahead as were not possible to be caught. This incident got to be known by the name of Ghazwa-e-Safwan. ■

(To be continued)

The Teachings of The Qur'an

- S. Bilal Abdul Hai Hasani Nadwi*

The Qur'an is the last book of Allah. It was sent by Allah through Jibrail (AS) to the last prophet Muhammad (PBUH) for the entire human beings living in the world. It has also been said "Hudal Linnas" (Guidance for mankind).

The Holy Qur'an encompasses every aspect of human life. Allah Himself mentioned its main purpose in Sura Ibrahim, "A Book which We have revealed unto thee, in order that thou mightiest lead mankind out of the depths of darkness into light". (S.14.A.1)

It is true that those who study the Holy Qur'an will find their goals and destination in this world and the Hereafter. And who follow it in letter and spirit are dubbed as "Muttaqi"(pious persons). Hence, their lives are absolutely cautious and meticulous. They always fear Allah. Those who derive benefits from the Holy Qur'an are described as Muttaqi and such persons attain practical guidance from it. That is why at another place the Holy Qur'an says, "Hudal Lilmuttaqeen" viz guidance for the pious persons.

Truly speaking, the first invitation of the Qur'an is Tawheed (unity of Allah). Allah sent all His Messengers with this mission. Accordingly, it had been the mission of every prophet. "O My people! Worship Allah! Ye have no other god but Him. The Oneness of Allah is frequently mentioned in various verses of the Holy Qur'an. His Godhead was illustrated in different sophisticated ways.

Associationism (Shirk) was condemned in many verses of the Holy Qur'an. It was candidly said that "Allah forgiveth not that partners should be set up with Him; but He forgiveth anything else, to whom He pleaseth." (S.4.V.48)

The crux of the matter is that unity of God implies the tremendous responsibility of being Allah's vice-gerent on earth, which was the sole mission of all prophets.

Everybody who ponders over the Qur'an and tries to understand it, naturally begins to abhor Shirk or associationism. A great scholar of the Holy Qur'an has written that readers of the Qur'an may become everything but not polytheist.

After the reform of belief (Iman), the most striking aspect on which unprecedented emphasis was laid down in the Qur'an is reformation in society. To begin with, special importance was given in numerous places of the Qur'an in order to put an end to social and moral evils. Individual and collective rights and matters have also been beautifully illustrated in the Qur'an. It has also described the narration of the doing away of some social evils in the stories of some messengers with great importance.

The Holy Qur'an says, "O My people! worship Allah: ye have no other god but Him. And give not short measure or weight. I see you in prosperity, but I fear for you the chastisement of a Day that will encompass you all around." (S.11.A.84)■

(English Rendering by Obaidur Rahman Nadwi)

(To be continued)

* Rector Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow.

The Basic Tenets of Islam

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

The morals of Islam act on human nature in a way that is similar to that of fire, which purifies iron and melts it so that it can be moulded into a useful instrument. The credit for this comparative guideline goes to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) who came on earth to guide people from darkness into light and lead them onto the path of salvation, progress and prosperity.

Needless to add, the religion that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) brought is based on the concept of all human beings, regardless of caste, creed, colour, language, culture and origin, are from one community. In the words of the Holy Qur'an: "O mankind! We have created you from a single pair of male and female, constituted into diverse people and nations that you know and cooperate with one another. In the sight of Allah the best among you is the one who is most pious, most virtuous". (49:13)

Unlike other religions, Islam is not only a religion but a complete code of conduct. Islam is an Arabic word which connotes submission, surrender and obedience. Its another literal meaning is "peace" and it signifies that one can attain real peace of body as well as mind only through submission and obedience to Allah.

We may easily comprehend from the above connotations of Islam that in the true sense entire creation of the world literally follows the religion of Islam. The sun, the moon, the earth, air, water, stones, trees, animals and other innumerable things found in this cosmos are thus Muslims. For all things run on a specific course and pronounce Allah's praise and glorify Him. The holy Quran says, "The seven heavens and the earth, and all beings therein, declare His glory. There is not a thing but celebrates His praise; and yet ye understand not how they declare His glory! Verily He is oft-forgiving, Most-Forgiving (S.17, A.44)

The Holy Book further says, "Seest thou not that to Allah prostrate all things that are in the Heavens and on earth, the Sun, the moon, the stars, the hills, the trees, the animals and a great number among mankind?" (S.22, A.18)

In this context it would be apt to mention that three basic concepts of Islam as laid down by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and all Prophets who had been sent by Almighty Allah to this universe before him for the guidance of people are At-thowheed (The oneness of Allah); Ar-Risalah (Prophethood); Al-Aakhirah (Hereafter).

These three basic tenets are embodiment of all Qur'anic injunctions and the do's and don'ts prescribed by prophetic traditions.

Now come to the three basic concepts of Islam. The first and foremost tenet of Islam is oneness of Allah. For real objective of life is attainment of pleasure of Allah. Almighty Allah alone deserves worship. There is no deity except Him. If we worship except Him, it would be an act of polytheism. In Islamic concept polytheism is an unforgivable sin. It is a contumacious treason against Him. This is a rebellion against the Creator. Almighty Allah forgives all sins except polytheism. The Holy Qur'an says, "Allah forgiveth not that partner should be set up into Him; but He forgiveth anything else, to whom He pleaseth; to set up partners with Allah is to devise a sin most heinous indeed" (4, A.48).

Abu Amr relates on the authority of Sufyan b. Abdullah that he said to Prophet, "O Apostle of Allah, tell me something about Islam that I may not require further elucidation from anybody. The Prophet (PBUH) replied: "Have faith in Allah, and stick to it firmly." Abdullah bin Busre reports that a person said to the Prophet (PBUH), "O Apostle of Allah! I have known many commandments of Islam (but it is difficult for me to act on them

simultaneously) therefore, tell me the one which I can make the passion of my life." The Prophet (PBUH) said, "Keep your tongue wet with remembrance of God."

The second tenet of Islam is Prophethood. The Holy Qur'an says: "There is no nation to whom a Warner has not been sent" (35:24). To every people We sent a Prophet to teach them to worship Allah and to avoid evil...."(16:36). O ye who believe, believe in Allah and His apostle and the Book (Qur'an), which He hath sent down to His apostle and scriptures which He hath sent down formerly. Whoever denieth Allah and His angels and His Books and His apostles and the Last Day hath strayed far from the truth (4:136) "We have sent to mankind messengers proclaiming the truth and warning that men may henceforth have no excuse for ignorance" (4:16)

It should be kept in mind that besides having reposed faith in all prophets and apostles, Muslims must also believe that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the last Prophet of Allah and there would be no Prophet after him. If anyone claims to be a Prophet of Allah after him, he would be a liar and an imposter. Almighty Allah sent a good number of Prophets for guidance of mankind but the Holy Qur'an has only mentioned 25 of them. The main plank of all Prophets was to

emancipate the people from superstitions and uncertainties and lead them to the right path.

The third concept of Islam is Hereafter. Contrary to other faiths, Islam has a unique and different concept regarding the Day of Judgement. It would not be an exaggeration to say that whole gamut of Islamic life depends on the Hereafter. The Holy Qur'an says, "What is the life of this world but amusement and play? Man's real home is in the Hereafter, if only he knew." (29:64)

It should be noted that for a Muslim whatever he does in this world is for the Hereafter.

That is why the real life of believers is the life to Hereafter. A Muslim shirks in committing unholy acts for he will have to be accounted for them before Allah on the Day of Judgement. No doubt, the fear of the

Hereafter keeps Muslims away from perpetrating all sorts of evil acts.

The Holy Qur'an says, "the dwellers of paradise will ask the inmates of Hell, what brought ye into Hell-fire? They will reply, "We were not of those who observed the prescribed prayers, and we were not of those who fed the poor, and we indulged in vain talk with idle thinkers, and we questioned the happening of the Day of Judgement, till death overtook us" (Q:74: 42-47)

In a nutshell, a Muslim cannot be perfect, unless he adheres to the above-mentioned tenets of Islam. It is therefore a bounden duty of all Muslims to carry out the teachings of Islam and lead their lives as Almighty Allah stands for His beloved Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and asks him to say: "Lo! My worship and sacrifice and my living and my dying are meant for Allah, Sustainer of the worlds."■

4,812 books removed from Jammu and Kashmir Libraries

Around 21.81 lakh books were screened, and 4,812 books withdrawn from government and private college libraries in the Union Territory this year, the Jammu and Kashmir government told the Assembly. The government informed the House that 21.81 lakh books had been screened in college libraries since July, including 12.48 lakh books in the Kashmir division and 9.32 lakh in the Jammu division.

Out of 4,812 books, 518 were banned books and 4,249 were non-banned books. At least 1,752 books had been referred to the Director, Colleges, for expert examination, it said.

(The Hindu, 23-09-2026)

Amir Khusrau The Parrot of India (1253-1325)

- Sunil Khilnani

Night's just falling over a green and tranquil stretch of south Delhi — one of those enclaves where serried ranks of Audis and BMWs stand ready behind driveway gates. You'd never guess, pausing outside the five-star Oberoi Hotel, that you're a short walk from the still-beating heart of a medieval city.

Across a busy flyover, through a maze of thrumming byways, you'll find hawkers selling prayer caps and shawls, rose petals and kebabs. As the lane narrows, the crowd grows conspicuously poorer, with many people begging for alms. At a canopied gully that feels like a tunnel, the pace of footsteps starts to quicken, and suddenly a green archway appears. It opens into a courtyard of carved pillars and filigreed screens. Hidden at the centre of this old labyrinth, this irruption of history is a tomb: the dargah of the thirteenth-century poet Amir Khusrau.

Khusrau called himself Tuti-yi-Hind, 'The Parrot of India'. The title hints at his ability to flit between roles and voices during his long life. By turns warrior, court poet and passionate Sufi devotee, he was above all a quick-witted literary survivor. His sensitivity to the tastes of all manner of patrons and audiences, added to his faith in Sufism, have helped his words endure for 700 years.

He was a poet of profound ambiguity. The Mughal emperor Jahangir, who ruled a vast dominion from Delhi three centuries after Khusrau's death, was said to joke about a court singer who, asked to explain one of Khusrau's lyrics, perished from the exertion. In those lyrics, layered with meanings, perspectives suddenly shift, much as they do in the imperial metropolis that was his home:

There is a prosperous and populous city

Where fragments of moon gleam at every turn.

Each fragment holds a shard of my shattered heart.

A man of many names, he was known also as Amir Khusrau Dihlavi — one who belongs to Delhi. He was the first to bring the city into the literary imagination — and to give it one. Khusrau's Delhi was compared by one of his contemporaries, the historian Ziya al-Din Barani, to Baghdad and Cairo, Constantinople and Jerusalem. As it would become again after the Partition of 1947, it was in large part a refugee city: a beneficiary in its day of an influx of emigres from west and central Asia, fleeing the Mongol conquests. Scholars, religious thinkers, artisans and poets settled there in such numbers that it came to be known as the Qubbat al-

Islam, the Dome of Islam. And Delhi had riches too — plundered bounty that fed the Persianate tastes of the successive Afghan and Turkic Sultans who sat atop a north Indian culture strongly, though by no means unequivocally, Hindu.

In this culturally layered and mobile society, Khusrau was a marvel of linguistic and social dexterity. So artfully did his verses, composed in Persian and in the local language of Hindavi (the precursor to modern-day Urdu), seem to integrate the traditions of Sufi Islam and Hindu India that, in the twentieth century, the founding fathers of the modern Indian state made him a mascot of cultural harmony. But his style wasn't about reconciling differences between Hindu and Muslim cultures; rather, it spoke across beliefs and traditions.

There's a cinematic quality to the story of Amir Khusrau's life: it is outsized, over-dramatized even, but it nevertheless captures something about the often violent flux of his time. From his writing, we know his father was driven from his home in the Turkic regions of central Asia by Mongol invasions and brought to India, possibly as a slave; he later became a devout soldier in the ranks of a Delhi sultan. Khusrau's mother, born a Hindu, had converted to Islam. A decade or so after the marriage, her husband died in battle and Khusrau, their precocious second son, now eight, was sent to Delhi to live with his

prosperous grandfather.

There, the story goes, he met a man from the same region as his father, who would eventually change his life: Nizam al-Din Auliya, one of the great saints of India's Sufi tradition. Nile Green, Professor of History at the University of California, Los Angeles, explains: 'According to tradition, Amir Khusrau meets Nizam al-Din Auliya when he's a child, and even as a kind of child protege, if you like, a kind of medieval Persianate Mozart. He's said to have improvised for Nizam al-Din the verse:

Tu an shahi ke bar aiwan-e-qasrat

Kabutargar nashinad baz gardad

You are the great king that,

If a pigeon should sit on the roof of his palace,

it will become a hawk.

This fabled meeting would help secure Khusrau's place in Indian history—but not before he had lived through religious war, imprisonment, innumerable wine-induced hangovers and unparalleled celebrity as a poet in the royal courts.

Although Khusrau started composing verse when very young, like most poets, then and now, he had to make a living. So he followed his father's example and became a fighter for Muslim rule. He was just five years old when the Mongols sacked Baghdad, the centre of the Abbasid Caliphate, which at one point ruled from north India to Algiers. As a

young man, Khusrau took part in several campaigns against the Mongols and for the expansion of Islam, before he was captured — a traumatic experience that he later tried to put into words.

The Muslim martyrs dyed the desert with their blood, while the Muslim captives had their necks tied together like so many flowers into garlands. I was also taken prisoner, and from fear that they would shed my blood, not a drop of blood remained in my veins . . . My tongue was parched and dry from excessive thirst and my stomach seemed to have collapsed for want of food. They left me nude like a leafless tree in winter or a flower that has been much lacerated by thorns.

Eventually Khusrau escaped, returning to Delhi and transforming himself from a soldier into a poet. He used family connections to enter the shahi majlis or royal gatherings where, in the company of musicians and young boys, poets extemporized, competing with each other in a sort of medieval poetry slam. Nile Green describes the milieu:

The king and his closest companions are gathering round, no doubt drinking a great deal of wine — wine is one of the key subjects of the poetry that Amir Khusrau and other Persian poets of the period write about. And while they're sitting there getting drunk and listening to music, Amir Khusrau or other nadim, other drinking companions, would simply improvise on a theme that the sultan or

another patron would throw out. 'Improvise me a poem on the mole on the cheek of this beautiful boy sitting here!' Immediately, they'd have to improvise in that way. If it was a good line, a good bait, a good couplet, then perhaps the king would throw the poet a gold coin or two. And indeed Amir Khusrau gets his first pen name, Sultani, precisely after the name of one of these gold coins.

The Persian poetry of the court reveled in multiple registers, winking between worldly passion and spiritual ecstasy. Khusrau fast became an adept, weaving subtle innuendos into his popular songs. There is plenty of homoeroticism in his verse, which endears him to modern social progressives, and certainly pleased those sultans with a taste for young boys, though the more puritanical might choose to hear it as innocent praise of the city:

O Delhi and its artless idols,

Who wear turbans and crooked
beards,

They drink the blood of lovers openly,

Although they drink wine secretly.

They do not obey commands
because

They are made willful by their
extreme beauty.

Muslims have become sun-
worshippers

Due to these saucy and innocent
Hindus.

These pure Hindu boys
Have caused me to go to ruin and
to drink.

Ensnared in their curly tresses

Khusrau is like a dog with a collar.

Khusrau's playfulness flowed from his use of a rhetorical device he claimed to have invented, *iham*, meaning 'of the imagination'. For Khusrau, the poet must unveil the multiple meanings of words, so as to stimulate the audience's imagination. Equally, though, the audience must bring to the poem enough subtlety of intelligence to uncover the poet's intended meaning.

Khusrau was entertaining royals at a particularly turbulent period in the history of Delhi; in his adulthood, five sultans would rise and fall. As he sycophantically celebrated the virtues of patron after patron, he was invited to join ever-larger courts. The last one he served was centred at Tughlaqabad, a once grand fortified city, now a hauntingly desolate place surrounded by modern-day Delhi's relentless sprawl. These were courts rife with feuds, betrayals and murder - not the best environments for writerly contemplation. Still, somehow, he continued to be inventive in his work, writing poems and verse in every genre he knew.

Soon he became the most admired court poet of his time. But his words suggest a creeping exhaustion, the

medieval equivalent of burnout. He wrote of being enslaved at his patron's feet, of drinking his ruler's dregs. The Parrot of India was rich, much admired — and seemingly depressed.

Composing panegyric kills the heart,

Even if the poetry is fresh and elegant.

Though Amir Khusrau is buried at the Delhi dargah, the larger shrine complex is dedicated not to him but to the man entombed beside him: Nizam al-Din Auliya, the Sufi master Khusrau first met in his grandfather's house. Sufism flourished in India during the era in which Khusrau lived. It offered mystical unity with God, with different Sufi masters teaching their own paths, or *tariqa*, to that end. The mystic states and secrets of Sufism could not be learned from books, however — only through the close bond between spiritual teacher and devotee.

When Khusrau was aged around fifty, he turned to Nizam al-Din for spiritual strength. The mystic had a compound — a sort of parallel court — in Ghiyaspur, a village on the edges of Delhi. Among his many devotees were other artists and intellectuals who sought refuge from palace politics. There, under Nizam al-Din's protection, Khusrau finally found a stable home.

Nile Green believes the tenuousness of life at court may have broken Khusrau.

‘He was working in that extremely tense environment, with a couple of quite psychotic sultans, very bloodthirsty figures,’ Green says, ‘I can’t help but think that it was the stress of that environment that drove Amir Khusrau - not as a poet, but as an ordinary human being trying to do his job in court to the solace and the comfort and the sympathy of the Sufi environment.’

Increasingly, Khusrau seemed to consider himself a Turk-e Hindi, an Indian Turk. When accused by a contemporary of stylistic blemishes in his verse, Khusrau struck back with pride and irritation:

I am an Indian Turk, I reply in Hindavi;

I have no Egyptian candy with which to speak to an Arab.

It was a signal that the ethnic origins he shared with his master were becoming more important to him. His work expressed what would come to be seen as the ideal of Sufi devotion: a merging of identity between master and follower. In some of his best-known lyrics, there’s also a sense of rich friendship with Nizam al-Din - an equal relationship of the sort that would have been unimaginable with the sultans:

I have become you, you have become me.

I have become life, you have become body.

From now on, let no one say that

I am other and you are another.

Even more than Khusrau’s Sufi devotional poems or Persian verses, his popular songs — qawwalis and lyric ghazals he composed in Hindavi — have sustained his fame over the centuries. Through many generations, Khusrau’s songs were transmitted orally; by the time they were written down in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a huge body of songs, poems and verses had been attributed to him. In the decades after India’s independence, many of them — rearranged — became staples of Indian cinema. Although a fair number might not actually have been composed by Khusrau, they were nevertheless absorbed into his legend.

Javed Akhtar, a poet and master songwriter of contemporary Indian cinema, emphasizes how embedded Khusrau — ‘an intellectual giant with a multi-faceted personality’ has become in the Indian imagination. ‘This concept of Sufi poetry, this concept of an amalgamation of dialects and a language called Urdu, it has all started from Khusrau,’ he says. ‘And we’ve internalized what he started so much that we are not even conscious that we are doing it.’

Partly as a result of the fluent combination in his lyrics of Persian tropes and imagery, and metaphors drawn from

the Indian landscape, Khusrau became an embodiment of the nation's unofficial motto, 'unity in diversity'. When Gandhi listened to Hindu and Muslim musicians playing and singing Khusrau together, he would ask, 'When shall we see the same fraternal union in other affairs of our life?'

Today in India, Khusrau's Persian is read by only a handful of scholars. In Iran and Afghanistan, where he might find many more readers, the Parrot of India is seen as too Indian a writer to be part of the literary canon. His is the fate of those whose linguistic universe, or cosmopolis, has been chopped up by the boundaries of national identity. Across north India, however, millions of people still turn for comfort to the melancholic beauty of Khusrau's Hindavi songs, and his tomb, in the city he loved, is very much a living shrine.

Like Khusrau's poetry, Delhi, too, remains ambiguous in its cultural mixing — not a melting pot, but home to hundreds of different communities, living adjacent to one another, often with benign indifference. As with Khusrau himself, a certain vision - often brittle of a cosmopolitan, tolerant nation has been projected onto the city. But Delhi is also a hard place, marked by gross inequalities, spasms of communal violence and the peremptoriness of political power — a city that requires you to speak in different voices to different people, and that might, as Khusrau said, break your heart.

Every Thursday, in the dargah's enclosure, musicians in shimmering turquoise kurtas, their fingers bejeweled with bling, perform qawwalis attributed to Khusrau in rapturous, resonant voices for worshippers and visitors of all backgrounds. But beyond the dargah, and the medieval warren in which it sits, north India's present-day politics can be a good deal less accommodating of religious diversity. As elections approach, tensions between religious communities get exploited by major political parties. Newspapers tell of riots over the desecration of a mosque, of a church destroyed, of forced conversions in neighbouring states.

The world of cultural amalgamation and mixing that some think Khusrau inspired can seem illusory, even unnecessary, to many people in power today. It is a troubling thought—one that makes me reach back for Khusrau's artful straddling of awkward differences. His faith in the civility of this city rings in my head, and has me hoping that he's right:

If a Khurasani, Greek, or Arab
comes here

he will not face any problems,

for the people will treat him kindly,
as their own,

making him feel happy and at
ease.■

Inside India

Cannot Penalise Refusal to Sing National Song, says: The Supreme Court on Tuesday observed that while a democratically elected government may give shape to the scope and length of the National Song, it can not violate individual and collective religious freedoms or subject conscientious objectors, who refuse to sing one or all the stanzas of the Vande Mataram, to penal consequences.

"What is the National Song is not in dispute... It is for the democratically elected state to decide and give aspiration as to what the National Song is, whether it should be two stanzas or four stanzas. But nobody can infract Article 25 and 26 (religious freedom) or subject a conscientious objector to penal consequences... It is for the conscientious objector to recite one or all stanzas of the National Song with out subjecting himself to criminal prosecution," Justice Joymalya Bagchi, part of a three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, observed. He said the 1986 Supreme Court precedent in the *Bijoe Emmanuel ver-sus State of Kerala* upholding the right to religious freedom, constitutional tolerance, and silent objection still holds true.

The court sought a response from the Union government on a petition filed by renowned Carnatic vocalist and author T.M. Krishna challenging the Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Act, 2026, read with the administrative directions issued by the Union Home Ministry in January and a subsequent circular in July. Mr. Krishna, represented by senior advocate S Muralidhar "and advocate Prasanna S., said the amended law and executive orders compel the playing and mass singing of the entire six stanzas of Vande Mataram ahead of the National Anthem at public functions. Non-compliance would risk three years Imprisonment or fine or both. Stanzas three to six of Vande Mataram were "expressly devotional deity-invoking, and non-secular" and the scheme violated fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution and offended the basic feature of secularism, the petitioner said.

The petition said the amended Section 3 of the Act not only regulates national protocol and prescribes a uniform code of conduct for public functions, but also "compels a ceremony of assent to a symbol whose last four stanzas are expressly devotional, deity invoking and non-secular".

"By mandating the rendition of all six stanzas under penal sanction, the state transforms what is unquestionably a contested historical symbol into a compelled orthodoxy. The measure is formally neutral but, manifestly, substantively coded. It sends a signal of majoritarian religious alignment and inflicts expressive subordination on believing Muslims and other conscientious objectors," the petition said.

Justice Bagchi, in the initial moments of the hearing, said religious flavour or an icon or homage to a particular God may not perhaps impact secularism in a constitutional democracy. "If so, nothing can be a stronger example of positive secularism than the American Constitution, yet the American National Anthem uses the word 'God'," the judge reasoned.

Noting that the court is often loath to articulate national aspirations or second-guess nationalism, Justice Bagchi said the Bench would definitely examine if the 2026 amendment and the government circulars choke the rights of conscientious objectors.

Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta interjected to remark, "let us not bag the National Song in sensationalism". "We are not here to create sensations. We are here only to ensure that the law of the land declared under the *Bijoe Emmanuel* judgment governs the 2026 amendment of the Act," Justice Bagchi said.

Dr. Muralidhar criticised the law-making process, saying a definition of the 'National Song' required broader debate and consensus. He emphasised that it cannot be thrust upon citizens under threat of penal action. He further pointed out that the Home Ministry's office memorandum was never gazetted and cited no supporting provision of law.

The Solicitor-General stated that the "law-making process is done as per the Constitution, lawmaking cannot be as per Naxalites' idea". Mr. Mehta's comment was strongly objected to by Dr. Muralidhar, saying it was offensive and did not behove the office of a law officer of the government. Dr. Muralidhar said such comments were merely playing to the gallery. The debate also invited comments from senior advocate Sanjay Hegde and Justice Bagchi who took to countering Mr. Mehta's remarks. ■

(The Hindu-23-9-2026)

Around the World

We came out with our heads held high: Pezeshkian before UN speech

Agence France-Presse TEHRAN

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian vowed to "firmly defend" his country's positions, as he departed for New York to attend the UN General Assembly.

"We emerged with our heads held high, and this is a source of dignity and pride for all of us. Therefore, we will firmly defend our positions in international forums," he said before flying out of Iran, according to footage broadcast by state television.

The President is due to speak at the UN meeting.

"We will make the best possible use of this opportunity to convey Iran's plight to the international community. We will firmly tell our adversaries that, despite all the unfairness and injustices, the Iranian people have stood their ground," he said.

Mr. Pezeshkian will be the highest-ranking Iranian official to set foot on American soil since the start of the war, which began in late February with U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran.

The U.S. has approved the UN visits for part of the Iranian delegation despite the war, but the group will be subject to movement restrictions, according to the U.S. State Department.

The Iranian President's communications team has not been authorised to travel however, having been denied visas. Their barring was described as "hostile" by Iranian presidential spokesperson Habibollah Abbassi.

The reopening of the strategic Strait of Hormuz remains at the heart of the conflict between Tehran and Washington.

Traffic in the vital maritime corridor, through which one-fifth of the world's hydrocarbons passed before the war, has been severely disrupted, with Iran firing on commercial ships and demanding it approve passage.

In response, the U.S. is maintaining a counter-blockade of Iranian ports while upping economic pressure on Iran.

The crisis escalated in recent month with Iran's allies in Yemen, the Houthis attacking Saudi Arabia and launching an offensive in Yemen against the Saudi backed forces. The Houthis have since taken over Yemen's entire Red Sea coast.

***Saudi Arabia says Houthis targeted Mecca**

The Saudi-led coalition battling the Houthis vowed retaliation, saying "the security of the Two Holy Mosques and the pilgrims is a red line".

"The coalition will not hesitate to take the necessary and deterrent measures against the Terrorist Houthi Militia."

Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Saree said Saudi Arabia had launched more than 450 strikes on Yemen this week, and that in response, the group had targeted a Saudi air base in the south and a state oil company facility in the Red Sea port city of Yanbu.

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation bloc of 57 Muslim countries condemned the "heinous attacks", while Arab League chief Nabil Fahmy called it "a matter of extreme gravity".■

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