

A SHORT  
PRESENTATION  
ON  
ISLAM

SYED ABUL HASAN ALI NADWI

**Muhammad Al-Hasni Trust  
Rae Bareilly, U.P.**

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### Translator's note

While every effort has been made to keep the meaning of the book *Islam ka T'aruf* as close as possible to its original expression, the terminology used by the author at some places had to be elaborated upon for the benefit of readers totally unfamiliar with the subject. Consequently, such additional information, instead of being included in the main text, appears in footnotes and text-boxes separately.

In bringing this book to its present shape there has been an abundance of Allah's mercies upon me, praised be His sacred name; also support of some people was truly commendable. Dr. Abdur Rab, my neighbor, lent some famous books on Islam to me from his personal collection and *Janab* Wazeh Rasheed *Sahab* of Nadwatul Ulema gave me an assortment of *Hazrath* Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi's remarkable writings including authoritative translations of his works by the Late Dr. Asif Qidwai among others, study of that copious literature served as an initial groundwork for me before I could finally take up the actual translation. The compiler of the original work *Janab* Abdullah Hasni *Sahab* was kind enough to explain to me terms and expressions of Persian, Arabic and Urdu whenever I faced any difficulty in their comprehension. Mr. Farhat Afzal, a cousin of mine, pointed out to me the many mistakes of punctuation that I had made and thus helped me improve the final manuscript considerably. I thank all these gentlemen for their valuable contributions.

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Place: Lucknow

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## Foreword by the Compiler

These are times when a storm of propaganda, against Islam and Muslims, is raging around the world. Under the spell of the propaganda, everybody who can write with any degree of merit, views that writing against Islam is a necessary thing to do. In these circumstances, it becomes the responsibility of those who know, understand and practice Islam to uncover the reality of the propaganda, so that the world comes to know the truth about Islam and nobody is left with the excuse that he lacks correct knowledge. Our concerted efforts towards this end include the publication of the title *Islam ka T'aruf* in several languages. Thousands of God's servants are being enlightened by the truth that it presents. It is a pleasure that our Mr. Iqbal, who resides in Jeddah, took an exceptionally strong liking for *Islam ka T'aruf*. He worked long hours and studied every detail to capture its soul in English and by the grace of God, completed his work recently. May Allah the Exalted accept his endeavors and utilize his labor in a way that people hitherto ignorant and distant from Islam become aware about its truth.

*Syed 'Abdullah Hasni Nadwi*

Nadwatul 'Ulema,  
Lucknow

Rabiul Awwal 27, 1433  
February 20, 2012



## Foreword to the 1998 Urdu Edition

**M**en of learning have written a large number of books in their bid to present Islam and they have been successful in projecting the true face of this great religion. They all deserve to be thanked for their labor and dedication. However, to give an overall idea of Islam in a nut-shell need was being felt for a book that would be concise yet comprehensive, would be objective in its approach, and present the right image and a faithful picture of Islam before the readers because the majority among Muslims – particularly a large number of Muslims who live in India – have become victims of ignorance and superstitions. They have themselves become unfamiliar with the totality of the Islamic system. So much so, that there seems to be no perceptible difference between them and people who are alien to Islam. As a result, a number of hurdles have sprung up in the path of those of us who try to search for the true form of Islam in real life and wish to follow it. The removal of these hurdles and the correct presentation of Islam is the duty of every sympathizing Muslim. It is a task which has continued on large and small scales, in one form or the other, at every time and place. The present book too is a link in this auspicious chain.

In compiling this book due care has been taken to ensure that whatever material is sourced, it is from the writings of the Islamic thinker *Hazrath* Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi because he stands out among his contemporaries. God has blessed him with great popularity and made him a favorite with the readers. His writings have a wide appeal. His approach to the subject is always unbiased and its treatment: comprehensive. Besides, different – rather opposing – sects and groups repose confidence in his personality which is laced with sincerity, compassion, kindness and an empathy that he has for the sufferings of others.

Books from which we have extracted most of the material are: *Hindustani Musalman ek nazar mein* (Urdu), *Dastoor-e-Hayaat* (Urdu) and *Arkaan-e-Arbaa'* (Urdu).



I take this opportunity to thank those of our brothers who, with great diligence and dedication, copied the extracts from *Hazrath* Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi's books and booklets, got the photo-type-settings prepared and gave them the form of a book; especially our brother *Moulvi* Risaluddin Nadwi who did his best and completed this work with zeal and devotion. Likewise, Brother *Moulvi* Wasee Sulaiman Nadwi who assisted him deserves to be thanked. Last but not the least, it is necessary to thank brother *Moulvi* Muhammad Shahid Nadwi for proof-reading the entire book with great care.

May Allah the Exalted accept this small book, make it a means to acquire necessary knowledge about Islam and open the doors of His guidance for all of us.

*Syed 'Abdullah Hasni Nadwi*

Nadwatul 'Ulema,  
Lucknow

## Preface

**T**he world, in spite of its expanses, has become the semblance of a home. Its inhabitants may be affiliated to different communities, sects and classes but they are all inmates of this home. Therefore, for co-existence – which is the accepted norm of a decent and peaceful life – integration, co-operation and partnership among the different communities, sects and groups of various descriptions of a population; and for fostering confidence, love and respect among their members it is necessary that each community not only develops an acquaintance with the temperament and taste, faith and religious traditions of the other community, it should value and respect them as well.

Very regrettable indeed it is that inmates of a home, the residents of the same locality, those who frequent the bazaars and shop together, study in the same educational institutions, those who give each other company in private and public offices, co-travelers in trains, buses and planes, and those for whom the chances of developing an acquaintance with each other are readily available; these very people live like strangers. They have almost as much alienation from each other's beliefs, ways of worship, religious teachings and characteristics of each other's religions as was found in ancient times. Although those times were entirely different; inhabitants of different parts of the world then had not heard about each other nor were there quite so many facilities to recognize and get familiar with one another.

In India it is about one thousand years that Hindus and Muslims have been living together. In cities, towns, villages and hamlets theirs has been a mixed population and a shared domicile. Plenty of opportunities were readily available to them to intermingle and know each other in big and small markets, centers of learning, public offices, at post offices and railway stations, in trains and buses. Moreover, since the last about hundred years, both have taken part together in political movements and social work programs. But it is one of the world's most astonishing facts and a kind of riddle not easy to solve that each is like an alien to the other. Having almost no idea whatsoever of the

other's religious beliefs, civilizations, way of life, etiquette and universal distinctions. They live and behave as though they were people of two far-flung countries in ancient times.

Each community's knowledge about the other is scant and superficial and that too is based mostly on gossip, prejudice and fantasy. Each community harbors serious misunderstandings about the other and often relies upon hatred laden literature, political propaganda, vitriolic history, textbooks and unauthentic tales and stories to form an opinion about the other. Each has held a totally wrong and repulsive impression about the other. If there were an unbiased group of common people from one community who are simple and good at heart and they were quizzed about the fundamental articles of faith, about social relations or principles of social life of the other community, then this group would either confess ignorance or their responses would evoke spontaneous laughter from the knowledgeable. The writer of these lines who travels a lot and mingles with people of every class has had this experience many a time.

But this is not something to laugh at; it is a matter to grieve about. After living together for so many centuries we are unfamiliar with one another to this extent. Responsibility for this situation does not rest with any single community; it is on all. Especially responsible have been and are those of us who work in the field of religion, social workers, those who have true love for the country and those who are friends of humanity. They either did not make a serious effort to introduce one community to the other, or if they did, it was not quite enough.

The civilized world of today has accepted the necessity of acquiring correct information about one another to be the basic principle for a fulfilling community life that is characterized by mutual love, respect, confidence, peace and tranquility; such a community can then expect to pool its resources and make concerted efforts for the best of purposes. If a number of sects and groups comprise a community or population, then every sect and group should know the tenets that the other sect and group believes in. What code of conduct, societal rules and regulations it adheres to and considers such an adherence compulsory for itself? What is that particular aura that covers its culture and way of living? What are the values it holds dear in life? What does it need to be at peace with itself and conduct itself with confidence? What ideals does it value above its own life and considers dearer than its own children? If we wish to share some happy moments with its members and if we have the

occasion to talk to any one of them, which sentiments and sensitivities we should especially pay attention to during our conversation? Answers to these questions fulfill the prime condition for co-existence: that, people should have knowledge about each other to the extent necessary. This is the accepted norm for a decent and peaceful life. Deviations from which would result in loss. In the Indian context, the loss arising from the present situation is affecting both Hindus and Muslims alike. It is affecting India as a consequence. And eventually, in the final analysis, it spells a loss for all of humanity. Huge gulfs permanently exist between communities. Minds have suspicions and hearts: bitterness. Men have become collectively bankrupt. Devoid of a great wealth that is the beauty and light of this life and Allah's blessing of inestimable value: *the joy of living*; the joy of living life cheerfully with love and affection, with confidence on one another and with respect for each other's creed and culture. The result is that the energies, resources and capabilities of some communities, and there is no harm or fear in saying that those of Muslims especially, are being spent in offering clarifications and defenses for themselves.

So far as the earlier period of Muslims and their history is concerned; the question of their role in nation building, its progress, its administration and stability is concerned; or the question of their contributions in the fields of culture and civilization, prose and poetry, and arts and sciences is concerned; or as regards the memorials they have left behind – many good books have already been written by writers of stature. A few years ago the writer himself had written *Hindustani Musalman* which was published in Arabic, Urdu and English. But since all these are subjects of history, they are mostly of interest to students and research scholars.

On a more current note, the writer's *Hindustani Musalman ek nazar mein* was published a few years ago in Urdu, Hindi and English to meet the need of a book that would correctly illustrate the way Muslims should be. Irrespective of the way they are. The purpose was to present them before their fellow countrymen in true form and color, without the addition of tints, presumptions and ambiguities; and without being uncharitable or unjust to them in the course of the presentation. A chasm still remained, there remained the need for a handy and concise book that would present the true picture and the gist of Islam because many Muslims and our non-Muslim brethren find voluminous books strenuous to read. It is a pleasure for me to note that *Moulvi* Syed Abdullah Hasni Nadwi has taken a step in this direction. *Moulvi* Hasni is a Lecturer of Theology. He teaches some basic books at Darul 'Uloom,

Nadwatul 'Ulema, Lucknow, which is a premier Islamic institution internationally renowned for its grand history and academic excellence.

To *Moulvi* Hasani goes the credit of compiling the present book. For its compilation, he has drawn material from *Hindustani Musalman ek nazar mein* which portrays Muslims comprehensively and highlights their Articles of Faith, Civilization and Culture, Education and Training and their Way of Life. Portions especially those pertaining to Fundamentals of the Faith of Muslims, their Religious Obligations, and Principles of their Civilization and Culture, have been drawn from some of my other published works in which the treatment of these subjects was more thorough.

Therefore, the present book is useful, covers important topics, integrates the essentials and contains information that is authentic.

*Syed Abul Hasan 'Ali Nadwi*

Nadwatul 'Ulema,  
Lucknow



Chapter: 1

## **Islam: Meaning, sense and purviews**

Islam is the name of totally giving oneself up and surrendering oneself unconditionally before God and in Islam the perimeter of religion surrounds the entire life span. This is a fundamental truth which can not be grasped without first understanding the nature of relationship between God and His slave. Every Muslim is an obedient slave of God and his relationship with God is multi-faceted; it is everlasting and general (in the sense that He is the Sovereign and all human beings are his subjects), though deep it is also expansive, though finite it is also comprehensive.

There is a verse in the Noble Quran:

I seek refuge of Allah from devil the outcast  
In the name of Allah the Compassionate the Merciful

**O ye who believe! Come, all of you, in to submission (unto Him); and follow not the footsteps of the devil. Lo, he is an open enemy for you.<sup>1</sup>**

Here we have no reserve and no allocation that: this much is mine and this much yours – this much for the country – this much for the State – this much for God – this much for the family and tribe – this much for religion and community – and this much for political interests. No. Whatever is present is God's. Here worship is all-pervading. Before God, a Muslim's entire life is humility personified, slavery personified.

The purview of Divine law extends across and steers the entire practical life and nobody has the right to make any amendment in it. Even the most celebrated jurist and the *Imam* of an age do not have the permission to amend a word or change a dot in those matters which are unequivocally decided in the Glorious Quran.

Allah the Exalted and the Islamic faith demand total submission. However, I

<sup>1</sup>. V 208: *Al-Baqrah*: Chapter 2: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall.



say with clarity and consider it my duty to be unambiguous that we Muslims have wandered away and wandered very far away from *Shariath* (Divine laws) in our ways of living, in the way we conduct our affairs and in the ways we adopt in matters of, for instance, matrimony and inheritance. While some of us, by the grace of God, follow the religion to the extent of holding correct perceptions with respect to the Oneness of Allah, apostleship, Hereafter and other essential tenets of faith but they are weak in observing acts of worship. Then there are those who are strong in faith and worship. But what to say of their conduct and ethics! When it comes to conduct and ethics, they are utterly unreliable. They will not miss any chance to hurt the interests of those who they deal with. They will weigh less and measure less. As business-partners you will find them unjust and untrustworthy. If there is a neighbor they will torment him.

According to a Prophetic Tradition<sup>2</sup>:

*Muslim is he from (the oppression of) whose tongue and hand  
Muslims remain safe and secure.*

None of you can become a believer until your neighbor becomes safe from your torment and oppression. So now what to say! We have among us a certain class of people that has expelled inter-personal relations and ethics from the purview of religion; their understanding is that correct faith and a variety of acts of worship is all that is necessary: neither transparency in dealings nor keeping of promises; neither care for anything kept in their trust nor any fairness; nothing at all. Unconcerned with the rights of fellow human beings, they enjoy total freedom from the liability of close relatives and those who have a right over them. In their inter-personal relations, in business matters and other disciplines of life even, their actions and the way they choose to proceed are simply a product of their sweet will.

Muslims who were groomed by *Hazrath* Muhammad, the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, were the *Sahabah* (Urdu; meaning: The Noble Companions), may Allah be pleased with them. They were the

Islamic etiquette makes it compulsory that whenever the name of a prophet, or of his companions, is mentioned it is followed by a short invocation. Readers will therefore find the following invocations throughout this book: *peace and blessings of Allah be upon him*, or, *peace be upon him*. or, *may Allah be pleased with him*. Please also refer sub-section 3.4.3. of Chapter 3 in this regard.



most faithful. Their lives were cast entirely in the mould of religion. Their faith, their worship, their dealings, their manners, their rituals, their ceremonies, their victories, their rule, their statecraft – all of these – and the way they spent the days and nights of their life were in conformity with *Shariath* (Divine laws).<sup>3</sup>

### 1.1<sup>a</sup> The importance of faith in Islam

Basic to being a slave of God is the correction of faith and belief. If the faith of a person is flawed and his belief is corrupted, then neither is his worship acceptable nor any of his actions will be deemed right. If somebody's faith is correct and belief is right then even his minor good deeds would carry more weight. Therefore, first of all there is a need to enquire about those points, to have faith upon, to believe in and to comply with which is necessary and without complete confidence in which nobody deserves to be called a Muslim. It is these articles of faith that are shared by all Muslims throughout the world.

### 1.1<sup>b</sup> Fundamentals of the Islamic faith

These articles of faith are:

#### Article 1: Belief in God's Oneness (*Tawheed*):

The Oneness of Allah, *Tawheed* in Arabic, is an article of faith purely and uniquely Islamic. Under this article there is no need for an intermediary between God and His slave, who would intercede in matters of supplication and worship. In this article there is also no provision for: polytheism<sup>4</sup>, the ideas of somebody being God's incarnate and shadow, and the doctrines of

2. (continued from previous page) ..... Noble Traditions are complimentary in nature. While the Holy Quran is from Allah the Exalted, the Noble Traditions are a record of the beloved Prophet's – peace and blessings of Allah be upon him – words and deeds. 'Ahadith', 'Hadith literature' and 'The Noble Traditions' are synonymous terms. One classification differentiates The Noble Traditions in to Prophetic Traditions and Sacred Traditions. The Sacred Traditions (called *Ahadith Qudsiyah* in Arabic; singular: *Hadith Qudsi*), are a record of those of Allah's revelations to the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, which are not part of the Holy Quran. Only one Sacred Tradition appears in this book. 3. Every obedient slave of Allah should strive to pursue these ideals. Their best example was in the personality of *Hazrath Muhammad*, apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and the second best in the lives of his Noble Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. A glimpse of both appears in Chapter 6. 4. Faith and belief in the existence of numerous and multiple gods and deities.

transmigration and merger of Creator and creature<sup>5</sup>. On the contrary there is the acceptance and proclamation of the Divinity and the Oneness of Allah the Exalted, the Eternally Besought of all, Who begetteth not nor was He begotten, the Absolute Owner who has no partner in His Kingdom, in whose Hand is the creation and the fashioning of the universe, the maintenance of order in the world and the Sovereignty of the earth and the heavens.

That is to say that, there is a Builder of nature's marvelous workshop, He always was and will always be. All praise is unto Him. All good qualities and the highest degrees of those qualities are His. He is free from all kinds of blemishes, imperfections and weaknesses. His knowledge encompasses all that exists and every branch of knowledge that there is. The entire universe exists because of His intent. He is the Alive; the All-Hearing; the All-Seeing. Neither is there anyone like Him nor has He a rival or equal. He has no resemblance and He does not depend on help. He has no partner, companion or helper in the administration and running of the universe. He alone deserves to be worshipped (to be respected in the extreme). He alone cures the sick. He alone provides subsistence to His creation and removes their sufferings. Deifying others besides Allah, debasing oneself or expressing humility in the extreme before them, prostrating before them, supplicating to them or asking help from them in matters that are not in human control and are only in Allah's power – for example blessing a couple with offspring, writing fate: good or bad, causing to send and deliver help everywhere, capability to listen at any distance, to know what is in people's hearts and what is hidden – are sins that, in Islamic terminology are jointly and severally termed *Shirk* (Arabic; 'i' pronounced as in 'shin', not pronounced like the English word 'shirk'; meaning: associating partners with Allah). *Shirk* is the biggest sin. Sins of this category are not forgiven by the Lord without repentance.

The Glorious Quran has stated that:

**But His command, when He intendeth a thing, is only that  
He saith unto it: Be! And it is.<sup>6</sup>**

**Article 2:** Allah the Exalted neither descends in somebody nor does He impersonate someone. Nobody is His incarnate. He is not limited to a place and direction. Whatever He decrees happens and whatever He does not decree

5. God's entry in to a creature and both the Creator and the creature becoming one. 6. V.82: Chapter 36: *Yaseen*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall.

does not happen. He is the Absolute. The Eternally Besought, Who does not stand in need of anything. No one commands Him. Nobody can question Him as to what He is doing. Wisdom is His attribute; every action of His is wise and good. There is no (real) Ruler except Him.

**Article 3:** Fate, good or bad, is from Allah. He has prior knowledge of everything that will come to pass and grants to everything its existence.

**Article 4:** His are the angels, high ranking and trusted. He has created the devils; they become a cause of evil for humankind. Among His creation are also the *Jinn*.

**Article 5:** The Holy Quran is from Allah, the Exalted. All its words and their meanings are from Him. It is complete and guarded against tampering i.e. deletion, addition and alteration; anybody who is convinced that it has been tampered with, that something is missing from it, or something has been added to it, is not a Muslim.

**Article 6:** The Hereafter (Urdu: *Aakhirath*)

After the knowledge of Allah's Being and His Attributes, the next profound subject whose knowledge the prophets, peace be upon them, impart to the world is that of the Hereafter. Without them, this knowledge can in no way be obtained from any other source. The essence of this knowledge is that man will die but to return to a second lifetime, this universe will be fractured, fragmented and re-built, in that second lifetime man will be called to account for the deeds and misdeeds of his previous lifetime, and whatever he must have done in his worldly life will appear before him.

Man has no means to acquire this knowledge except through the agency of the prophets, peace be upon them. Man's powers of exploration and enquiry can neither encompass this subject in the first place nor can deny its veracity. Senses, intellect, experience, and besides these, man's latent powers viz spirituality and intuition, none of all these powers and resources have the capacity to prove the existence of some other kind of life and its details besides the life of this world. Likewise, it is impossible to be in a situation that a person in this life can observe the world of the Hereafter.

All this information pertains to the Unseen. Man can not, on his own, grasp

that which is Unseen, his intellect and the various branches of knowledge at his command and disposal are all of no avail to him. They neither can prove nor can disprove anything of the Unseen.

Man is left therefore with only two options. Either he should place confidence in the prophets, attest their claims on the bases of the latter's personal observations and evidences or, in spite of his lack of any substantial proof and evidence to the contrary, blatantly reject whatever the prophets say.

**Say (O Muhammad): None in the heavens and the earth  
knoweth the Unseen save Allah; and  
they know not when they will be raised (again).  
Nay, but doth their knowledge reach to the Hereafter?  
Nay, for they are in doubt concerning it.  
Nay, for they can not see it.<sup>7</sup>**

However, as mentioned above, the signs of this future phenomenon, this truth of enormous proportions and indications of its approaching occurrence are found very much in this life and in this world. Man, therefore, can figure out for himself that this incident, surely, will happen and that his intellect actually does not offer any resistance to accepting this premise.

Two signs are as follows.

The first striking parallel to the methodology of Resurrection and a convincing evidence for it lies in the birth and life of man himself – in his coming to existence from naught. In reaching the peak of his existence gradually it is noteworthy that how many stages he has gone through. From sperm he assumed the form of a fertilized ovum, from a fertilized ovum to a clot or a form leech-like, then to a lump of undifferentiated or differentiated tissue, then was formed a lump of skeletal tissue, then the bones were clothed with flesh and finally a new creature was formed. After he emerges from the dark confines of the abdomen he spends sometime in the cradle of infancy and childhood. He then steps in to the greenery of youth. Either his next step falls at the doorstep of death or he is given enough respite to see the autumn of old age after he has seen the springtime of his life. From here begins his return march. Once he reaches old age after youth, childish tendencies re-visit him.

7. V. 65-66: Chapter 27: *An-Naml*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall.

His abilities fail one by one, mind and memory leave him. Once again he becomes helpless like a child, dependent on the care and concern of others. He begins to neglect himself and no more recognizes all those things that he had hitherto known so well. At this juncture one leg of his journey ends. But the journey doesn't. Only a stage called death and the world of *barzakh* (Arabic; meaning: partition) has arrived. Death is like the stopover of that tired wayfarer, who will move along once he has caught his breath. Surely, whosoever knows the reality and truth of man (dust and water), his beginning and his creation, what intellectual hitch can he have in believing the coming back to life after death? And whosoever has observed so many transformations in the life of man, what difficulty has he in accepting the possibility of a last revolutionary change?

The second glaring example of life after death is in the scenes of dead earth coming back to life. These keep appearing before our eyes with unmistakable regularity. This earth in whose bosom lies a trust – the life sustaining belongings and treasures of thousands of human beings to be born and of animals that would come to life on it – itself lies dead. Her lips are parched with dryness. She is an insensitive and dead body of dust. Neither is she alive nor she has any life sustaining resource for any thing. But when drops of the elixir of life fall from the heavens on her lips, moisten her throat and reach her bosom, that very same earth suddenly wakes up from her mortal sleep. The energy of life and the beauty of youth run through her. She swings, she sways and seems as if intoxicated. Her mouth throws out the treasure of riches, greenery and life. Fragrant vegetation, verdant fields, worms and insects that live and spread on her surface inform us of the earth's life within as also of her coming to life. Who has not seen this scenic manifestation of earth's life in springtime and in rainy season?

In miraculous words, the Holy Quran has made references to the phenomenon of the earth's life and the life supporting quality of water at several places:

**And it is Allah Who sendeth the winds, and they raise a cloud;  
then We drive it unto a dead land and  
We quicken thereby the earth after the death thereof.  
Even so shall be the Resurrection.<sup>8</sup>**

8. V.9: Chapter 35: *Faatir*: Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi also meaning of V.19: Chapter 3: *Aal Imran* on front cover by Abdul Majid Daryabadi.



**And of His signs is that thou beholdest the earth lowly,  
and when We send down thereon water,  
it stirreth to life and groweth.  
Verily He who quickeneth is the Quickener of the dead.  
Verily He is over everything Potent.<sup>9</sup>**

**And Who sendeth down from the heaven water in measure;  
then We quicken a dead land therewith:  
even so ye shall be brought forth.<sup>10</sup>**

Apart from these two signs and clear-cut examples, the majestic and sprawling workshop of our universe continually offers examples and manifestations of life after death, day and night. Every moment things are being formed and being spoiled, and fragments being joined to form things anew. Whereas, from a thing devoid of life and consciousness is being formed a healthy, wide awake and an admirable living form; a healthy life form is being reduced to lifeless and dead matter. Many such materials are there that can manifest opposite effects and hence can produce opposite results. Many such life forms are there whose populations keep renewing constantly and many who regenerate. Whosoever has in some measure or the other learnt about the infinite and unfathomable powers of the Builder of the Universe, the origin of populations of innumerable creatures, the loftiness of genesis and creation, he can not even for a moment have any doubt about life after death. And, he finds no logical hurdle in accepting this prophecy.

**Observe they not what wise Allah originateth creation?  
And then He shall restore it. Verily for Allah that is easy.  
Say thou: go about in the land and behold  
what wise He hath originated creation; and then  
Allah shall produce another production;  
verily Allah is over everything Potent.<sup>11</sup>**

**Article 7:** After death, the coming back to life of the dead in their own bodies is incontrovertible. The bestowal of rewards and pronouncement of sentences on the Day of Reckoning is incontrovertible. That Paradise and

**9.** V.39: Chapter 41: *Ha Meem Sajdah*: Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi. **10.** V.11: Chapter 43: *Az-Zukhruf*: Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi. **11.** V.19-20: Chapter 29: *Al-'Ankabooth*: Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.

Hell are present is incontrovertible.

**Article 8:** The coming of Allah's messengers to the world is incontrovertible. Also incontrovertible is that God the Exalted commands and guides His slaves through the words and the agency of His noble prophets. *Hazrath* Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is God's last apostle. After him there is no prophet; his apostleship and his invitation to Islam are for the whole world. In terms of this merit and distinction and other similar distinct-

Phrases like *Invitation to Islam* and *Invitation to Tawheed (Oneness of Allah)* frequently appear in Islamic literature. Readers will like to be informed that, in Islamic terminology, propagation of religion is customarily referred to as *Da'vath* (Urdu) i.e. *Invitation*. Extending an invitation, even in common social settings, is considered an expression of respect for the invited.

-ions he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is the most distinguished of all the prophets, peace be upon them. Without believing in his apostleship, belief is not credible and religion has no Truth. Verily the Religion of Truth is Islam; other than which no religion enjoys acceptance before Allah nor does it become a means of deliverance in the Hereafter. Even the most towering of personalities does not override the commandments of *Shariath*, whether he is among the most devoted slaves of God, the abstinent or the ardent in worship.

**Article 9:** It is incontrovertible that *Hazrath* Abubakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, was the *Imam* and *Khalifah* after *Hazrath* Muhammad, the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, followed by *Hazrath* 'Umar Ibn Khattab, *Hazrath* 'Uthman Ibn 'Affan and *Hazrath* 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with them. The Noble Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, are the religious leaders and guides of Muslims. To speak ill about them is forbidden and it is necessary to hold them in high esteem and express respect towards them.<sup>12</sup>

12. Sections 1.2<sup>a</sup> and 1.2<sup>b</sup> are adapted from the author's *Hindustani Musalman ek nazar mein* (Urdu) pgs 69-74 with slight modification.

## Acts and forms of worship

After faith, the one thing to which Islam gives great importance, lays immense stress and places a lot of emphasis upon is worship; it is the foremost aim, objective and purpose for which human beings are born. Allah the Sanctified has Himself stated:

**I created the jinn and human kind only that they might worship Me.<sup>1</sup>**

According to the Islamic *Shariath*, four acts of worship are obligatory<sup>2</sup> on every sane and adult Muslim man and woman. That is why, these acts of worship are called 'the four pillars of Islam'.

1. Prayers of the five specified times everyday.<sup>3</sup>
2. Provided a person meets the criteria he/she must purify his/her assets by paying *Zakat* (poor-due) that is applicable on those assets, annually.
3. Fasting in the month of *Ramzan*.
4. And *Haj* of the Holy Ka'bah is obligatory once in a lifetime upon every Muslim who can afford it.

These obligatory acts of worship are such that their rejection by an individual expels him/her from the sphere of Islam and someone who permanently shirks them stands, as if, expelled from the cohesive group of practicing Muslims.

1. V.56: Chapter 51: *Az-Zariyaat*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall. 2. The author implies here that, in Islam, there are numerous acts of worship which are not obligatory but their detail is beyond the purview of this concise book. 3. They are, namely: *Fajr* prayer, offered about 45 minutes before sunrise; *Zuhr* prayer, offered about half an hour after the sun reaches its highest point at noon; *Asr* prayer, offered in the afternoon; *Maghrib* prayer, offered just after sunset and the *Ishaa* prayer offered in the early part of the night. [Apostrophes in the transliteration of the Arabic words 'Asr and 'Isha indicate the missing letter 'Ain. The Arabic letter 'Ain has a valorized pronunciation and it has no equivalent in the English alphabet. This notation is followed throughout the book].



## Prayer (*Namaz*) – The first pillar of Islam

The word *prayer* is not employed in this book in the general sense of its dictionary meaning, it has instead been used specifically to denote an Islamic act of worship whose obligatory nature, relation with the soul, preconditions and the procedure for offering it to Allah the Exalted form the subject matter of this entire section.

Among the obligatory acts of worship, the foremost and the most important is prayer (*Namaz*). It is a pillar of religion, the sign of Islam and the mark of a Muslim. So much so, that it has been declared to be the line of demarcation and the criterion for distinction between Islam and the non-Islamic beliefs. Allah the Exalted says:

**And establish worship, and be not of those  
who ascribe partners (unto Him).<sup>1</sup>**

And the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is reported to have said:

*(The separation or merger)  
between Allah's bondsman and disbelief is (by) the  
(observance or) non-observance of prayer.<sup>2</sup>*

According to another Tradition, with a different chain of reporters, he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is also reported to have said:

*(The difference) between belief and disbelief is the  
(observance or) non-observance of prayer.<sup>3</sup>*

Prayer is the criterion for deliverance and the protector of belief. Allah the Exalted has referred to it among the fundamental preconditions for receiving

1. V.31: Chapter 30: *Ar-Room*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall. 2. Narrated by *Hazrath* Jabir, may Allah be pleased with him; *Sahih* Bukhari. 3. Related by Tirmizi.

His guidance and for developing God-consciousness. Offering of prayer is obligatory for all times to come and in every condition upon everyone viz. free-man and slave, rich and poor, sick and healthy, traveler and resident. No adult in any circumstance can be exempted from it. However, when unable to stand he may sit and offer prayer and if he can not sit he may lie down and offer prayer and even if this posture is troublesome for him he may employ gestures to offer the prayer. But he will not be excused from offering prayer. So much so that it is mandatory to offer prayer (in a particular manner) even in the battlefield. And that prayer is known as *Salatul Khawf*. A concession is granted during travel, in the sense that, the obligation of a four *Rak'at* prayer (*Zuhr*, *Asr* and *Ishaa*) is discharged by offering only two *Rak'at*. The *Sunnath* and *Nafil* in such prayers become optional and their *stressed status*<sup>5</sup> becomes void.

Prayer is such a duty that no prophet and apostle neglects it nor any faithful servant of Allah, mystic or *mujahid*<sup>6</sup> shuns it. Prayer is to the believer as water is to the fish. Prayer is a realm of peace and a realm of refuge for the believer. If a prayer is really what it ought to be, then it leaves no place for the worship of and slavery to false gods, a life of ignorance and baseness of character; prayer and these things are in open contrast with each other.

Allah the Exalted says:

**Verily, prayer preserveth from lewdness and inequity.<sup>7</sup>**

### 2.1.1. Prayer (*Namaz*) – Sustenance for the soul

Since man was destined to become the vicegerent of Allah on earth and was to be appointed to an extremely sensitive position, desires were placed in him and some needs too were ingrained in his nature. There are emotions in him and there is in him a passion for love also; he is sensitive to affliction and alive to happiness also; he has a pioneering spirit and a thirst for knowledge

4. *Rakah* (Arabic)/ *Rak'at* (Urdu): A *Rak'at* consists of three steps: the *Qayaam* the *Ruku'* and the two *Sujood* (pl. Arabic; sing. *Sajdah*; meaning: prostration). And a prayer may consist of one, two, three or four *Rak'at*. 5. Stressed status of prayers: *Sunnat* and *Nafil* are supererogatory prayers which were offered by the prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, either regularly and termed *stressed* or not regularly and termed *unstressed*. 6. *Mujahid* (Urdu): Somebody who struggles in defense of faith. 7. V.45: Chapter 29: *Al-Ankabooth*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall; this portion of the present section was adapted and abridged from the author's *Dastoor-e-Hayaath* (Urdu) Pgs 93-98.

also. He is fully capable and competent to profitably exploit the earth's precious reserves and deposits and utilize them to achieve his objectives. To meet the responsibilities of that sensitive and important position (Allah's vicegerent on earth) and for the realization of that special purpose for which he was created in the first place, he has not been fashioned – like the heavenly bodies, the mountains, the plants, inorganic matter, the animals – to remain in an upright position continuously, in a continually bowing position, in a continually prostrating position or in states of continuous glorification and continuous remembrance of the Lord. Rather in view of the foregoing facts, man needed a form or a system of worship, which would be concordant with his nature, his status and dignity in the universe and with the responsibilities that his position of being God's vicegerent entailed.

On the one hand worship was undeniably necessary for him because it was the demand of his nature, the duty and the responsibility that was being given to him, the intention behind his coming in to existence, the voice of his conscience, the nourishment for his heart and soul, and the medium through which he would need to translate his virtue, his trustworthiness and his human distinction. On the other hand it was equally necessary that his worship be neither less nor more. That it be in perfect harmony with his person and personality, with his sensitive and important position and with his unique station in this universe; like a dress which fits him and looks elegant on him, neither tight nor loose.

*Namaz*, in fact, is just that kind of dress which is immaculately measuring up to his being and in which no flaw whatsoever is seen.

### **Lo! We have created everything by measure.<sup>8</sup>**

To offer all of the five obligatory prayers at times that Allah the Exalted has fixed for them is necessary, references to those times also appear in the Glorious Quran. Also fixed is the number of *Rak'aat* that comprise each of these five prayers, here again conformance is necessary.

#### **2.1.2. How the prayer (*Namaz*) should be offered**

Allah the Exalted has blessed the *Namaz* with such a characteristic air and

8. V.49: Chapter 54: *Al-Qamar*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall.

environment of honor and respect, tenderness of heart and humility, dignity and sobriety, co-operation and collectivism; that the like of which is not found in the act of worship of any religion and followers of any prophet. We shall get an idea of it, from the wisdom laden commandments and laws, teachings and guidance that relate to prayers, in the sub-sections to follow.

Let us now enquire, how the prayer should be offered. What to recite in it? How to stand upright for it? How to bend in it? How to begin and conclude it?

### **2.1.3. The call for prayer (*Azaan*)**

Let us begin with the *Azaan* which is said aloud five times a day. It is unlikely that its familiar echo has not filled the environs of any village, any city or any neighborhood with a mixed population. I suggest that you first listen to the words of the *Azaan*, then read its meaning:

**Allah is the Greatest; Allah is the Greatest;**  
**Allah is the Greatest; Allah is the Greatest;**  
**I bear witness that there is no god except Allah;**  
**I bear witness that there is no god except Allah;**  
**I bear witness that Muhammad is the apostle of Allah;**  
**I bear witness that Muhammad is the apostle of Allah;**  
**Come to prayer; Come to prayer;**  
**Come to success; Come to success;**  
**Allah is the Greatest; Allah is the Greatest;**  
**There is no god except Allah.**

### **2.1.4. *Azaan*: the announcement for *Namaz* & an invitation to Islam**

The call (*Azaan*), fixed in Islam, to make the announcement for prayer and invite people for it, by the one on whom the Islamic *Shariath* had descended,<sup>9</sup> not only expresses the aims, meaning and realities about the prayer that is to follow; the aims of Islam, the symbols of Allah's Oneness and the soul of religion too are mixed in it in such a crystal clear, eloquent, concise, beautiful and melodious manner that this call, which a *Muezzin* (one who calls for prayer from a mosque) raises from the minarets of a mosque five times a day,

9. Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

has acquired the form of a focused and cogent invitation to Islam. It is that singular and unique call which is free and safe from every kind of apparent ambiguity and the accompaniment of any musical instrument. It is at once the summary and the exposition of religion.

The *Azaan* is also a proclamation of Allah's Greatness and Magnificence, that, He is the Greatest of all who are great. Then it has two testimonies. A testimony of Allah's Oneness and a testimony of apostleship.

I bear witness that there is no god except Allah.

And

I bear witness that Muhammad is the apostle of Allah.

It has an invitation to attend the prayer and a phrase which says that prayer is the path of success both in this world and in the Hereafter and implies that without prayer success can not be achieved anywhere. It is because of these reasons that the *Azaan* has become a thoroughly comprehensive invitation and an eloquent announcement which a moment in time sends out to the heart and the mind of man. It attracts the attention of both the Muslim and the non-Muslim, produces alertness in the lazy and cautions and awakens the negligent.

### 2.1.5. Purification

The word *purification* is not used here in the sense of the physical and chemical processes that it commonly denotes, like a noun or a verb. It has instead been used to denote 'a state of purification', more like an adjective, in the context of Islamic concepts like: *Wuzu*, *Ghusl*, *Taharath*, *Zakat* and *Tazkiah-e-Nafs* which though spiritual in nature are reflected in physical actions. *Wuzu*, *Ghusl*, *Taharat*: purification of the body, reflected in washing ourselves (Sub-section 2.1.5., 2.1.6. and 3.). *Zakat*: purification of wealth, reflected in the disbursement of the poor-due (Chapter 2, point 2; Chapter 2, Section 2). And *Tazkiah-e-Nafs*: purifying the human mind of evil, reflected in a person's noble behavior (Chapter 6). Please also refer to Chapter 3: Section 3.2.

For offering the prayer it is mandatory to perform *Taharath*<sup>10</sup> and *Wuzu*. Allah the Exalted says:

<sup>10</sup>Washing oneself with water ~~after~~ the calls of nature.

**O ye who believe!**  
**When ye rise up for prayer,**  
**wash your faces and your hands up to the elbows,**  
**and lightly rub your heads and (wash) your feet up to the ankles**  
**and if ye are unclean, purify yourselves**  
**and if ye are sick or on a journey,**  
**or one of you cometh from a closet,**  
**or ye have had contact with women and ye find not water,**  
**then go to clean, high ground and rub your faces and your hands**  
**with some of it,\***  
**Allah doth not wish to place a burden on you,**  
**but He wishes to purify you and**  
**would perfect His grace upon you,**  
**that ye may give thanks.<sup>11</sup>**

(\* This dry procedure of attaining purification is called *Taymoom*)

If this meticulous system of purification and *Wuzu* is practiced with the realization that the commandments of Allah and His apostle, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, are being carried out and that their reward is certain<sup>12</sup> they produce in a human being a sort of awakening and agility, a concern and consideration for the Divine and a frame of mind that prepares one to welcome the opportunity for offering the prayer and receive the splendor and tranquility associated with it.

The Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had also taught people to clean their teeth with a *miswak*<sup>13</sup> in order to derive the full

**11.** V.6: Chapter 5: *Al-Maidah*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall. **12.** The two terms used by the author here are *Eeman-o-Ehtesab* which mean that a person has total belief on the promises that Allah has made and on the returns and rewards indicated by the apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, on the performance of acts specified and he performs these acts with interest, aware of their greatness in the sight of Allah. Such an attitude has a marked influence on the acceptability and weight of virtuous deeds in the sight of Allah the Exalted. It is related on the authority of *Hazrath Abu Hurairah*, may Allah be pleased with him, who said that the apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said that: *When an obedient Muslim (or believing person) performs Wuzu and washes his face, every sin that he has done with his eye is washed away from his face with water, or with the last drop of water; when he washes his hands, all sins of his hands that his hands have committed go away with water, or with the last drop of water; so much so that he becomes absolutely clean and purified of all sins.* *Sahih Muslim* and *Muatta'* additionally mention that: *When he washes his feet then all sins of his feet that he walked with to commit a sin, if at all, are washed away.* (Related by Muslim and Tirmizi) **13.** A chewing stick, of the *Arak (Peelu)* tree, the size of a toothbrush.



benefits of *Wuzu* and *Taharath* and as part of getting ready for the prayer (which, in fact, is a believer's private conversation, supplication and hymn that he quietly whispers to Allah the Exalted), laid much emphasis upon its regular use and even said:

*Had it not been for that extra effort that I fear for my followers I would have ordered people to use 'miswaak' before every prayer.*<sup>14</sup>

### 2.1.6. Ablution (*Wuzu*) before prayer

A Muslim has to perform ablution (*Wuzu*) before prayer. *Wuzu* is that especial procedure for attaining purification without which prayer is not valid. First the hands are washed up to the wrists three times. Then the mouth is rinsed three times. Then the lower nasal passage cleaned with water three times. Then the face is washed three times, from the hair marking the top of the forehead down to the chin and sideways from one ear lobe to the other. Then after the right fore-arm including the elbow has been washed three times, the left fore-arm including the elbow is washed three times.<sup>15</sup> Then the entire head is wiped once, that is, rinsed palms are moved over the hair on the head. The last step is that after the right foot is washed up to the ankle, the left foot is similarly washed. Subsequent to excretion of urine, stool and wind, repetition of this *Wuzu* becomes necessary and without *Wuzu* a *Namaz* is no good; if somebody falls asleep then that too makes it necessary for him to perform *Wuzu*. Unless *Wuzu* is nullified as mentioned above, several prayers can be offered with one and the same *Wuzu*.

### 2.1.7. The procedure of worship routinely followed by Muslims in the mosque

After going to a mosque, if a man is in a state of purification he proceeds to offer supererogatory prayers (*Sunnath* or *Nafil*) straight away. Otherwise, he first performs *Wuzu* and then offers those prayers. If he has already offered such prayers then he sits silently waiting for the congregational prayer; or he reads or recites the Holy Quran; else he can also get busy with his daily schedule of recitations and chants if he follows one. When the time arrives for the congregational prayer, then first of all the *Iqamath* i.e. the

14. Related in Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim. 15. Repetition of these steps of *Wuzu* three times each is a *Sunnath* (prophet's practice) otherwise *Wuzu* is considered to have been done if each of its steps is performed properly twice or even once.

announcement for the commencement of the congregational prayer is said aloud. All its words are the same as those called out in the *Azaan*. Only two sentences are additional whose sense is:

**The congregation is about to stand in prayer.<sup>16</sup>**

**The congregation is about to stand in prayer.**

### **2.1.8. Formation of rows & the congregation of *Imam* and followers**

All the people, whether individuals scattered in a mosque or groups engaged in some other pious duties within the mosque's precincts, come forward to stand in rows. As the *Iqamath* gets over, the *Imam* – generally a theologian from the neighborhood, or a *Hafiz* i.e. someone who has learnt the entire Holy Quran by heart, or any educated Muslim<sup>17</sup> – raises his hands up to the level of earlobes saying *Allahu Akbar* then places his folded arms on the navel and begins the prayer. Thus he and the followers, like slaves with arms folded in front, stand before God and he stands ahead of the followers in the middle. For a short while the *Imam* and the followers remain silent and almost inaudibly recite a supplication whose words can be translated as follows.

**O Allah! Thou art sanctified, and praise is Thine.**

**And Thy name is of Great Blessedness and**

**Thy Greatness is Supreme,**

**and none else is worthy of worship except Thee.**

At this point it is necessary to point out to the reader a universal rule that the language in which the *Azan* and *Iqamath* are called out and the *Namaz* is offered is Arabic. So, even if it is not pointed out every time that *below is provided the meaning of passages and phrases that are recited in the course of the prayer in Arabic*, it is implied that the actual words are in Arabic.

**16.** The Arabic phrase if translated literally reads as: *The prayer is about to stand*. (In the language of literary criticism, this is an example of metonymy i.e. the fact of referring to something by the name of something else closely connected with it e.g. we say that: *The class has read Bukhari* but we mean that: *The class has read the writings of Bukhari*.) **17.** In Islam, *Imams* and *Ulema* (theologians) do not comprise some exclusive class of priests and clergy without whom Muslims can not perform various acts and kinds of worship. Anybody from among the Muslims can discharge the duties of an *Imam*. However, now-a-days for the sake of convenience and exigencies of management *Imams* and *Muazzins* have been appointed in most mosques. Since they devote their entire time to this work, a salary is paid to them by the neighborhood or the Muslim community or by the *Waqf* (Trust) concerned.



Then if the prayer is one which is offered aloud<sup>18</sup> the *Imam* recites the Holy Quran in a raised voice. First he recites *Surat-ul Fatihah*, the one *Surath* (Chapter of the Holy Quran) which is recited in every prayer. *Surat-ul Fatihah* is the preface of the Glorious Quran and the exposition of Islam. It is the most frequently recited portion of the Holy Quran and occupies a place of great honour in Islam. Therefore, its meaning is being copied below.

**In the name of Allah the Compassionate the Merciful.**

**All praise unto Allah, the Lord of all the worlds.**

**The Compassionate, the Merciful.**

**Sovereign of the Day of Requital.**

**Thee alone do we worship and of Thee alone do we seek help.**

**Guide us Thou unto the path straight.**

**The path of those whom Thou hast favoured,  
not of those on whom is indignation brought down,  
nor of the astray.<sup>19</sup>**

On completion of this *Surath* both the *Imam* and the followers say *Aameen* (O Allah accept our supplication).

After the recitation of *Suratul Fatihah* the divine commandment is to recite such a portion from the Holy Quran which a person already knows and can easily recall. Hence Allah the Exalted says:

**Recite, then, of the Quran that which is easy for you.<sup>20</sup>**

Its purpose is to ensure that the meaning of the Holy text and the spiritual states it produces in man get firmly lodged in his mind and heart, acquire nourishment and grow in strength, it becomes possible for him to explain them in detail to others and thus their roots become deeper and stronger because prayer is as much worship as it is an education.

The *Imam* recites any *Surath* (chapter) of the Holy Quran or he may recite

18. Prayers offered aloud: Of the five obligatory prayers three are offered aloud these are *Fajr*, *Maghrib* and *Isha*. Two prayers, *Zuhr* and *Asr*, are offered in a suppressed voice i.e. the *Imam* does not raise his voice throughout these prayers except when he has to say aloud the commands for beginning the prayer, for *Ruku'*, for *Sujood* and for ending the prayer. 19. Chapter 1: *Al-Fatihah*: Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi. 20. V.20: Chapter 73: *Al-Muzzammil*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall.

some verses from the Holy Quran. Here are meanings of two very short chapters.

In the name of Allah the Compassionate the Merciful

**By the time.  
Verily man is in loss.  
But not those who themselves believe and work righteous works,  
and enjoin upon each other the truth,  
and enjoin upon each other endurance.<sup>21</sup>**

In the name of Allah the Compassionate the Merciful

**Say: He is Allah, the One!  
Allah the eternally Besought of all!  
He begetteth not, nor was begotten.  
And there is none comparable unto Him.<sup>22</sup>**

Then the *Imam* says aloud the *Takbeer* (*Allahu Akbar*) and all assume a half upright posture called the *Ruku*<sup>23</sup>. In this posture

**Glory be unto my Lord, the Majestic<sup>24</sup>**

is said three or more times. Then the *Imam* says aloud:

**Allah listened to whosoever praised Him<sup>25</sup>**

and all stand upright for a while and the followers say:

**O our Lord! All praise is for Thee!<sup>26</sup>**

Then the *Imam* saying *Allahu Akbar* goes down on his knees to perform the *Sajdah* (prostration) and the *Muqtadi* (followers) follow him. In prostration, the forehead and the nose touch the ground, both palms rest on the ground, elbows are kept raised above the ground and away from the sides, knees and

21. Chapter 103: *Al-'Asr*: Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi 22. Chapter 112: *Al-Ikhlaas*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall. 23. Both 'u's pronounced as in 'sugar'. 24. Translation adapted with slight modification from: Lessons in Islam; Mufti Kifayatullah. 25. Translation extracted from: Lessons in Islam; Mufti Kifayatullah. 26. Translation adapted with slight modification from: Lessons in Islam; Mufti Kifayatullah.

toes touch the ground,

**Glory be unto my Lord, the Most Exalted<sup>27</sup>**

is said three or more times after which all sit straight in a particular posture and then saying *Allahu Akbar* perform the second prostration in the same way.

During prayer, the prostration is the ultimate condition of nearness to God (it portrays humility and submission in the extreme). God loves and likes most this expression of humility by His bondsman. According to a Tradition:

*The bondsman is nearest to his Sustainer during prostration  
therefore supplicate profusely in it.*<sup>28</sup>

So the prostrating Muslim considers this opportunity to be a blessing for himself and supplicates with great intensity of feeling before God. Then all stand upright for the second *Rak'at*. The steps to be followed are the same as described above for the first *Rak'at*. In terms of its steps each *Rak'at* is thus analogous to the other. After every two *Rak'at* sitting is compulsory. And in that particular sitting posture (*Qa'dah*) after which the prayer has to be concluded with *Salam*, the worshipper prays additionally as follows.

1. **All the salutations, prayers and the best words and righteous works are for Allah. Peace be on you O prophet, and the blessings of Allah, and His grace. Peace on us and on all the righteous servants of Allah. I bear witness that none but Allah is worthy of worship and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and apostle of Allah.**<sup>29</sup>
2. **O Allah, bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad as Thou blessedst Ibrahim and the family of Ibrahim. Verily, Thou art worthy of praise and art the Most Exalted. O Allah bestow Thy favors on Muhammad and the family of Muhammad as Thou bestowedst Thy favors on Ibrahim and the family of Ibrahim.**

27. Translation adapted with slight modification from: Lessons in Islam; Mufti Kifayatullah. 28. Source: Abu Da'ood; Nasae. 29. Translation adapted with slight modification from: Lessons in Islam; Mufti Kifayatullah.

Verily, Thou art worthy of praise and art the Most Exalted.<sup>30</sup>

3. **Our Lord! Give unto us in the world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and guard us from the doom of fire.**<sup>31</sup>
4. **O Allah, I seek Thy protection from the torment of the Hell and Thy protection from the torment of the grave and Thy protection from the trials of living and dying and Thy protection from the evil in the turmoil of Antichrist.**<sup>32</sup>

### **2.1.9. The self-confidence of a believer and determination of the class and party to which he belongs**

After a worshipper has done full justice to the hymn and praise of Allah and after he has invoked *Peace* and *Blessings* (Para nos. 1 and 2, Sub-section 2.1.8) on his own prophet, Muhammad, the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, he too surely gets some share out of those peace and blessings, without which he is incomplete and which is what he seeks and desires from God. They comprise the sign of Islam and are employed as the salutation of Muslims, he says:

**‘Peace on us and all the righteous servants of Allah’**

This is the manner in which his place and status in society is determined and expressed and one comes to know that everywhere and in every period of time he is with the righteous servants of Allah, as one of their partners who equally shares peace and brotherly love, safety and divine blessings, with them. This statement produces hope and self-confidence in him and dispels helplessness, depression and (in the current terminology of psychologists) inferiority complex; it gives him a place to stand in one row alongside other worshippers of this *Ummath*<sup>33</sup> (which includes the most distinguished of the learned men, illustrious scholars, righteous servants of Allah and those who are totally devoted to Him) and accords to each an equal position.

**30.** Translation adapted with slight modification from: Lessons in Islam; Mufti Kifayatullah. **31.** V.201: Chapter 2: *Al-Baqrah*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall.

**32.** Translation adapted with slight modification from: Lessons in Islam; Mufti Kifayatullah. **33.** The Muslim community. (For a brief explanation of the term *Ummath* please refer to the text-box at the beginning of Chapter 3).

**They are Allah's party.  
Listen ye! It is Allah's party who are the successful.<sup>34</sup>**

Then the worshipper supplicates for himself and implores Allah to grant him refuge against the afflictions of the grave and hell, the evil in the trials and slip-ups of living and in the trials of dying and the evil in the turmoil of Antichrist because all of these things deserve: that refuge with Allah be taken from them and that prayers be made for divine protection against the evil and the trial that is inherent in them. According to a Prophetic Tradition, the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is reported to have said that:

*After Prophet Noah, peace be upon him, no prophet has lived  
who has not warned his people against Antichrist,  
I also warn you against him  
and ask you to beware of him.*

### **2.1.10. The beauty of a prayer's conclusion**

At the conclusion of the prayer, after beautifully and perfectly observing all etiquette and conditions and despite meeting all the claims that the prayer has upon him, a worshipper confesses to his inadequacy, his condition appears to speak for him, 'I could not worship Thee as was Thine right to be worshipped' it says. He concludes the prayer with those memorable words that the beloved prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had taught to *Hazrath Abu Bakr Siddique*, may Allah be pleased with him. (After the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, *Hazrath Abu Bakr Siddique*, may Allah be pleased with him, is the most virtuous among Muslims).

*O Allah! I have done wrong to myself, great wrong indeed,  
and none except Thee forgivest the sins  
hence grant me forgiveness from Thy pardon and favor and  
have mercy on me. Verily Thou art the Forgiving, the Merciful.<sup>35</sup>*

Thus does this wholehearted worship conclude, with a confession of mistakes and on feelings of regret and remorse; there can not be a more appropriate

**34.** V.22: Chapter 58: *Al-Mujadalah*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall. **35.** Related in *Sahih Bukhari*.

and more befitting end than this to anybody's 'Journal of Activities'.<sup>36</sup>

### **2.1.11. Mosques and their importance & centrality in Muslim social life**

Mosques are built specifically for this purpose. In terms of simplicity, solemnity, serenity, a pleasing ambience of spirituality, quietness of atmosphere and manifestly prominent signs of Allah's Oneness, they are entirely different from the places of worship of other faiths and communities.

**(This lamp is found) in houses which Allah hath allowed to be exalted and that His name shall be remembered therein. Therein do offer praise to Him at morn and evening. Men whom neither merchandize nor sale beguileth from remembrance of Allah and constancy in prayer and paying to the poor their due; who fear a day when hearts and eyeballs will be overturned.**<sup>37</sup>

**And the places of worship are only for Allah,  
so pray not unto any one along with Allah.**<sup>38</sup>

**Set your faces aright at every prostration, and call on Him,  
making religion pure for Him.**<sup>39</sup>

**O Children of Adam!  
Look to your adornment at every place of worship.**<sup>40</sup>

Appropriately enough, mosques had transformed into religious centers of Muslims and the fountainheads of their education & training, their guidance & reform. Collective and religious matters of Muslims were solved there

36. Readers unfamiliar with Islam will not be able to comprehend the author here. According to the Islamic faith, Allah the Exalted manages and administers the affairs of this world through the agency of angels. Thus angels are appointed to write down every action of a human being, good or bad. Similarly, angels are appointed to collect this 'Journal of Activities' twice everyday once at the time of *Fajr* Prayer and once at the time of *Asr* Prayer and present them before Allah the Exalted. So while Allah sends His messages through 'Revealed Books' to humankind, humankind sends 'Journals of their Activities' back to Him and a two-way communication between God and man exists with angels carrying the messages in both the directions. 37. V.36-37: Chapter 24: *An-Noor*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall. 38. V.18: Chapter 72: *Al-Jinn*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall. 39. V.29: Chapter 7: *Al-A'raaf*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall. 40. V.31: Chapter 7: *Al-A'raaf*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall.



and guidelines related to various disciplines of life and concerning various important matters were given to them. When an event of large proportions occurred or when a difficult problem came up and Muslims needed fresh instructions and guidance, the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, ordered the announcement of *Salatul Jamea'h* among Muslims, which implied that: today Muslims from other neighborhoods and those living far away may also pray at the Prophet's Mosque as something important is to be said.

Mosques constantly enjoyed this cohesive centrality. This centrality was the pivot around which the entire life revolved. Springs of knowledge and guidance erupted from mosques; reform movements and movements for adoption of righteousness originated from here and it was from here that they used to spread.

### 2.1.12. Friday – the 'Eid of the week

The Arabic word 'Eid means a solemn festival. Most of you know that 'Eid is the annual festival of Muslims. Friday is considered to be the 'Eid of the week.

Every Friday, instead of the *Zuhr* prayer, a special Prayer of Friday is offered; its time is the same as that of the *Zuhr* prayer though; on the one hand a reduction has been made that two *Rak'at* are offered instead of four, on the other hand two enhancements have been made in it viz:

- The (*Khutbah*) sermon precedes the prayer (*Namaz*) and
- The prayer is offered in a raised voice (as compared to the *Zuhr* prayer which is offered in a suppressed voice on all other days of the week).

### 2.1.13. Friday – a day blessed with honor and distinctions

Such decorum, such words of encouragement to observe righteousness and a variety of such other distinctions and spiritual enhancements constitute the Prayer of Friday that firstly there has come about a manifold increase in the magnificence, dignity and eminence of this prayer and secondly there are born new sentiments and zeal for performing various forms of worship, for attaining nearness to Allah and for maintaining unity and co-operation (in matters of righteousness and fear of God) among Muslims. Allah the Exalted says:



**O ye who believe! When the call is made for the prayer of Friday,  
Haste unto the remembrance of Allah and leave your trading.  
That is better for you if ye did but know.<sup>41</sup>**

According to a Prophetic Tradition:

*Allah the Exalted seals the heart of the one who leaves  
three consecutive Fridays because of laziness and carelessness.<sup>42</sup>*

For the Prayer of Friday it is mandatory to perform *Ghusl*<sup>43</sup>, use *miswaak*, apply perfume and take maximum possible care for purification and subtleties of behavior; a sermon is delivered before the *Namaz*; the sermon that used to be delivered by the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was not a conformist routine address – lifeless, soulless and devoid of message and guidance, it rather used to be entirely in the context of contemporary life and events. Also mandatory is to listen to the sermon in absolute silence, with maximum calmness, so that, in that peaceful and spiritual atmosphere complete and proper benefit may be derived from its message – because in its time, place and occasion, there is a clear indication that the sermon is a form of worship and it is not oratory. During the sermon, conversation is strictly prohibited, to the extent that, even stopping someone sitting next to you from talking is prohibited because even that will disturb the calm and lessen the dignity that the sermon demands. A Prophetic Tradition mentions that:

*Whosoever said 'Be quiet' to his companion (at the time of Khutbah) on  
a Friday, even such a one was superfluous and vain in his speech.*

#### **2.1.14. Meaning of an Arabic sermon (*Khutbah*)**

Presented here is the meaning of an Arabic sermon which represents the tone and tenor of the Sermons of Friday.

Subsequent to praise unto Allah and the invocation of peace and blessings upon his Noble Prophet,

<sup>41</sup>. V.9: Chapter 62: *Al-Jum'ah*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall. <sup>42</sup>. Related by *As-haab Sunan* i.e. Collectors of Traditions of a legal nature on various subjects including those pertaining to congregational prayers; names of celebrated Traditionists like Abu Daud, Nasaee, Tirmizi and Ibn Majah, among others, appear in this class of Traditionists. <sup>43</sup>. *Ghusl*: To bathe according to a specified Islamic procedure in order to attain purification.

O People! Adopt *Tawheed* (Clearly understand that Allah is One in His Being and Attributes and clearly understand that He has no partner) because *Tawheed* is the greatest obedience to God and its adoption is an act most holy. In whatever you do, have shame of Allah and watch your step before Him because this habit of being shy and watchful of one's conduct before Allah constitutes the foundation of all righteousness. Hold firm to the way and the practice of the Apostle of Allah (*Sunnath*<sup>44</sup>) because *Sunnath* guides but towards compliance and obedience; and whosoever will obey Allah and His Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, such a one will be treading the straight path and will be the achiever of the cherished goal. Always keep away from innovations that have been created in religion (sing: *Bid'at* pl: *Bid'aat*) because their result is Allah's disobedience and apostasy. Throughout your life, let truth be your manner because there is deliverance in truth and destruction in falsehood. Make the doing of favors to people and kind behavior a custom of your life because Allah loves the benefactors. Never lose hope of Allah's mercy because He indeed is the Most Merciful of all who are merciful. Do not fall for the world lest you lose everything. Lo! Nobody can die until his portion of livelihood has reached him. Therefore any effort to earn livelihood which entails Allah's disobedience and clubs means that are allowed and forbidden, legal and illegal, is vain. Adopt good means to meet your ends. Trust in God in all your works because Allah has great consideration for those who trust Him. Do not shy away from supplications because Allah hears everybody and bestows to everybody. Keep begging forgiveness of your sins from Allah and be regular in *Istaghfar* (supplications particular to begging forgiveness) for it will bring grace upon your wealth and children. Allah the Exalted says in the Glorious Quran:

**And your Lord hath said: Pray unto Me and I will hear your prayer.**

**Lo! Those who scorn My service they will enter Hell, disgraced.**<sup>45</sup>

May Allah grant to you and me more and more portion from the wealth of the Holy Quran and may He cause its verses and wise advices to benefit you and me. I pray to God for my Forgiveness as well as yours and of all Muslims. You on your own also seek Forgiveness from Him. Verily, He is the Most Forgiving, Most Merciful.

44. The Urdu word *Sunnath* literally means *tradition* or *practice*. However in Islamic writings *Sunnath* when not specified as *Sunnat-e-Ibrahimi* i.e. Prophet Ibrahim's Practice or *Sunnatullah* i.e. Allah's Practice, implies the *Practice of Prophet Muhammad*. 45. V.60: Chapter 40: *Al-Mo'min*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall.

### **2.1.15. All prayers are not identical and spiritual levels of worshippers also are not one and the same**

Prayer is not something static and finite like a metal mould in which all are uniform or like a wooden plank on which every worshipper is compelled to remain at the same level and is incapable of advancement. It is, in fact, a very vast and expansive field in which a worshipper ascends from one state to another, exaltation to perfection, and from perfection to those transcendental states that lie beyond his thought and imagination. In it the place and position of people is widely different and separate from each other and everybody is at a different level. How can a prayer offered thoughtlessly, ignorantly, compete with a prayer offered with calm, concentration and relevant juridical knowledge? Likewise, how can prayers of common Muslims and prayers of the knowledgeable and prayers of those who are firm of belief, all be placed on the same plane. Then, this too is not necessary that the prayer offered today should resemble the prayer offered yesterday or one that was offered a few months or a few years ago and the worshipper keeps offering prayers of the same spiritual standard always.

That is why prayers are mentioned in the Glorious Quran in two contexts: bad and good. Allah the Exalted says:

**Ah, woe unto the worshippers. Who are heedless of their prayer.  
Who (only) make a show of their worship.  
Yet refuse small kindnesses!<sup>46</sup>**

And while mentioning prayers in the second context, He says:

**Successful indeed are the believers.  
Who are humble in their prayers.<sup>47</sup>**

Similarly, the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, too has mentioned two kind of prayers. One characterized by fear of God and humility, tenderness of heart and concentration; the other, a deficient prayer characterized by thoughtlessness and carelessness. About the first kind the narration of a prophetic tradition is as follows:

**46.** V.4-7: Chapter 107: *Al-Ma'oon*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall. **47.** V.1-2: Chapter 23: *Al-Mu'minoon*.. The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall.

*The Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, performed Wuzu, a perfect Wuzu, (then said that) whoever performs Wuzu like my Wuzu and then offers a two-rakat prayer without bringing any thought in his heart, all his past sins will be forgiven.<sup>48</sup>*

Hazrath 'Uqbah bin 'Aamr, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said that:

*Whoever, Muslim, performs ablution well, then offers a two rak'at prayer standing, with both his heart and face\* remaining rapt in attention towards prayer, then Paradise becomes due on him.<sup>49</sup>*  
(\*spiritually and physically)

About the second kind of prayers 'Ammar bin Yasir, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that: I heard the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, saying that:

*Man even is relieved of his prayer and yet (the credit of) only one tenth of that prayer comes in his lot and sometimes one-ninth, one-eighth, one-seventh, one-sixth, one-fifth, one-fourth, one-third and half.<sup>50</sup>*

The Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, also said that:

*'Most wicked is the man who steals his own prayers.'*  
*The Noble Companions submitted,*  
*'O Apostle of Allah how does someone steal his own prayer?'*  
*The apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said,*  
*'Neither performs the Ruku' properly nor the Sajdah'.<sup>51</sup>*

Hazrath Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, narrates that the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said that:

48. Related by Bukhari and Muslim on the authority of Hazrath 'Uthman Ibn 'Affan, may Allah be pleased with him. 49. Related by Muslim. 50. Related by Muslim. 51. Related by Nasae.

*This is a hypocrite's prayer:  
 he sits watching the sun, once the sun becomes yellow (colored) and  
 has reached between the two horns of the devil he stands up,  
 then in the manner of the striking of a hen's beak  
 prays four rak'aat hastily in such a way that  
 the remembrance of Allah is certainly little in it.<sup>52</sup>*

During prayer the spiritual levels of people differ and the prayer of one person cannot be presumed to be congruent to somebody else's prayer. Accordingly the prayer of the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was the most superior, perfect, of the best quality, spiritually the most exalted and in God's Balance it weighed the heaviest. As compared to somebody else's prayer the prayer of *Hazrath* Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, was the closest to and had the most striking resemblance with the beloved Prophet's prayer. This was the reason why during his terminal illness the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had directed *Hazrath* Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, to substitute for him and lead the prayer and in spite of *Hazrath* 'Aishah's opinion that *Hazrath* Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, lead the prayer, the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had said 'Ask Abu Bakr to lead the prayer'<sup>53</sup> and everybody had complied accordingly.

In addition to the foregoing, the accuracy with which a prayer can gauge the class and standard of people nothing else – for instance knowledge, intellect or some kind of academic contribution – can. Certainly, prayer is that valid and reliable measure which can give a fair idea of a man's religion and his place in Islam. Personalities whose names are eternally alive in Islamic history and who are seen as much superior to their contemporaries achieved their place and position and their immortality, by creating a distinction and developing a merit in this very prayer and by raising it to the point of *Ihsaan*<sup>54</sup>.

52. Related in Sahih Bukhari. 53. Related in Sahih Bukhari 54. *Ihsaan* in Islamic terminology is that you worship Allah in a manner as if you are seeing Him; if that is not possible for you to do at least you should be aware and conscious that although you do not see Him He is watching you always.

## Poor-due (*Zakat*) – The second pillar of Islam

The Arabic word *Zakat* does not have an equivalent in English but it is translated here as *poor-due*. The binary term *poor-due* too is not employed in this book in the general sense of its apparent meaning; it has instead been used specifically to denote *a measure of wealth whose distribution, as per Allah's commandment, among specified recipients constitutes an act of worship in Islam*. Brief details about its obligatory nature, conditions for its deduction, formulae employed in its calculation, periodicity of its distribution and eligibility of its recipients form the subject matter of this section.

**But if they repent and establish worship and pay the poor-due, then are they your brethren-in-religion.<sup>1</sup>**

### 2.2.1. The importance of Poor-due in Islam and its status under *Shariath*

In the Glorious Quran *Zakat* is mentioned with *Prayer* in the same breath eighty two times. The entire Quran thus seems to be full of 'establish worship and pay the poor-due'. Besides, at every single place where the Holy Quran describes the qualities of Muslims, there too 'who establish the prayer and give the poor-due'<sup>2</sup> appears invariably. The Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has listed it among the fundamentals of Islamic faith; he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is reported to have said that:

*The foundation of Islam rests on five things:  
bearing witness that no one is worthy of worship except Allah,  
establishing worship (Namaz), paying the poor-due,  
observing the fasts of Ramzan and performing the Haj.*

The beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was asked 'What is Islam?' He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, replied that:

*Worship Allah and ascribe no partners unto Him,*

1. V.11: Chapter 9: *At-Tawbah*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall. 2. V.55: Chapter 5: *Al-Maidah*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; M. M. Pickthall.



*establish the obligatory prayers,  
pay the poor-due and observe the fasts of Ramzan.*<sup>3</sup>

In the Tradition reported by Dhammam bin Th'ulbah it is mentioned that:

*Dhammam bin Th'ulbah once asked the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, that 'I make you swear by Allah and ask you if Allah the Exalted has commanded you to obtain poor-due from the rich among us and distribute (it) among the poor', the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said, 'Yes certainly'.*

Prophetic Traditions on this subject are in such abundance that to count them is difficult, the chains of their narrators too are innumerable<sup>4</sup> and the consensus of the *Ummath* is that *Prayer & Zakat* are each a reciprocal of the other and that since centuries and generations, *Prayers* are being offered and *Zakat* is being paid regularly.

Allah the Exalted has declared the establishment of prayer and the payment of *Zakat* to be a clear sign of a healthy acceptance of Islam, the execution of its commandments, being at peace with Allah and having brotherly relations with fellow Muslims.

It is mentioned in the Glorious Quran:

**But if they repent and establish worship  
and pay the poor-due, then leave their way free.  
Lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.**<sup>5</sup>

In another place Allah the Exalted says:

**But if they repent and establish worship and pay the poor-due,  
then are they your brethren-in-religion.**

3. Related by Sheikhaan; on the authority of *Hazrath Abu Hurairah*, may Allah be pleased with him. 4. The word used here by the author is *Tawatur* (Urdu) which though translated as 'innumerable' here also has a statistical connotation. It means that the number of people who hear a statement or see a deed and then the number of people who narrate it to others on the former's authority in every age, be so high that the hypothesis that the whole lot are narrating a falsehood is rejected. 5. V.5: Chapter 9: *At-Tawbah*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad M. Pickthall.



**We detail our revelations for a people who have knowledge.<sup>6</sup>**

### **2.2.2. The basic concept of Islam's economic system: Everything is under Allah's ownership**

The Glorious Quran has handed over all human affairs to Allah's custody and has made man responsible for only one position and that is *The Khalifah*. (The position of being Allah's *Khalifah*: His vicegerent, on earth).

Sometimes it addresses the Muslims in the following manner:

**and bestow upon them of the wealth of Allah which  
He has bestowed upon you<sup>7</sup>**

and sometimes in the following manner:

**and spend of that whereof He hath made of you trustees<sup>8</sup>**

The verses quoted above proclaim in crystal clear terms that the real Owner and the real Inheritor of all things is Allah the Exalted. Therefore, if a man spends a few coins for His sake he has, in fact, no right to feel arrogant or proud about it.

**What has happened to you that ye spend not in the way of Allah,  
when unto Allah belongeth the inheritance of  
the heavens and the earth?<sup>9</sup>**

This situation demands – rather its natural corollary is – that man relinquishes all that he owns, he is left with no right to make use of his land and property in the least and he becomes totally imprisoned, restricted and resigned.....

### **2.2.3. The secret and expediencies of extending ownership of assets towards man**

6. V.11: Chapter 9: *At-Tawbah*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall. 7. V.33: Chapter 24: *An-Noor*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; M M Pickthall. 8. V.7: Chapter 57: *Al-Hadeed*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; M M Pickthall. 9. V.188: Chapter 2: *Al-Baqarah*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; M M Pickthall.

....however, the Mercy and Wisdom of Allah the Exalted have not dealt with man in this manner. Man has not been deprived of a claim on goods and property and the fruits and results of his labor by unilaterally relating them to God; and even if it had been so, there would, even then, have been neither surprise nor complaint in it *but* man would then have lost his self-confidence, zeal of working, faculty of growth, competitive spirit, passion for research and to be precise, that exhilaration and joy that he gets upon seeing the results of his efforts and the fruits of his labor.

It is that same natural delight children find in identifying parents' possessions and even small household items with themselves. If man is shorn of this sentiment he will be shorn of compassion, sincerity and love; and of the imagination and yearning to preserve and develop goods and property. Life will lose its activity, enthusiasm of working, competitive spirit, struggle, courage and excitement, each of which is essential for man's existence and progress. And, the world will then become a huge factory in which human beings will be moving like the deaf and dumb parts of a machine, devoid of heart, conscience, prosperity and delight – like humanoids.

This is the reason why in the Glorious Quran, Allah the Exalted has again and again connected ownership of assets with man and not with his Creator and Sustainer.

**And eat not up each other's property among yourselves in vanity,  
nor seek by it to gain the hearing of judges that ye may  
knowingly devour a portion of  
the property of others wrongfully.<sup>10</sup>**

In short, such verses are abounding in the Glorious Quran wherein not only ownership of assets has been extended towards man, Allah the Exalted has given further expanse to the definition of *wealth* – whatever a man expends in Allah's way and for the good of His slaves is in Allah's words a *goodly loan* unto Him. He says:

**Who is it that will lend unto Allah a goodly loan, so that  
He may give it increase manifold for him?<sup>11</sup>**

**10.** V.245: Chapter 2: *Al-Baqrah*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall. **11.** V.245: Chapter 2: *Al-Baqrah*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall.

#### **2.2.4. The need for such a special and standard system of *Zakat* that would get along with every class of people and every period of time**

When the Islamic society had reached the highest levels in terms of firmness of belief, moral training, obedience of Allah and submission unto Him, generosity and selflessness, freedom from individual and collective egotism; and it had grown in numbers; when its moral and spiritual standards and classes had become well defined and society became stratified in groups and categories; among these categories were the rich, the poor and men of average means. There were such benevolent people among them, that giving away charity for who was not only a matter of good taste it had become rather their nourishment and it was not only a trait of their character it had become rather their second nature. There were among them the misers and the thrifty. And there were the moderates. On the one hand there was such strength of faith that it could enable a person face the biggest of dangers, give the biggest of sacrifices and resolve the most difficult of issues; but on the other hand there were examples of such feebleness of faith also that one would probably expect to find either in some far flung corners of the Islamic world or in the generations who would dwell the earth towards its end. It was Allah's great Wisdom and Mercy that for a society having such diverse and varying conditions, He decided such an explicit and fixed *Nisab* (minimum capital on which *Zakat* becomes due) whose measure and count, principles and criteria, signs and symbols are all fully explained and fixed. *Nisab* is neither so disturbingly large that it lies beyond the reach of the middle income group nor is it so less that it falls in the sight of the affluent, the wealthy, those who can take courageous decisions and those who have the willingness to spend in Allah's way.

Again, it was Allah's great wisdom that He neither left this decision to somebody's opinion or to human courage and boldness nor was it consigned to those human sentiments in which fluctuations are normal and which are constantly subject to ebbs and tides. It was also not assigned to law-makers and theologians or rulers because it is not possible to place total confidence on them, even they too are not entirely safe and secure from dictates of the self. In view of all these factors, *Zakat* as a function of its *Nisab* and measure was made obligatory.

### 2.2.5. Which capital heads is *Zakat* payable on and what wisdom lies in its calculation?

The Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, fixed the measure of *Zakat*, enlisted all capital heads over which the payment of *Zakat* is obligatory and classified them in to four broad categories. These categories list such possessions that almost each one of us comes across them in our daily life.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Category: Produce of agriculture and horticulture.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Category: Livestock (Camels, cows, goats etc.).
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Category: That which still forms the base of the monetary establishment i.e. gold and silver; and
- 4<sup>th</sup> Category: Merchandize, in terms of all its varieties and departments.

The beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has also taught us as to when the payment of *Zakat* becomes due. Payment of *Zakat* is obligatory once a year. However, on the produce of agriculture and horticulture one year will be deemed to have been completed when grains have matured to the full and fruits have ripened. The truth is that to be more just than this was simply not possible. If *Zakat* was to be paid every month or every week it would have been very harmful for the rich or if it was obligatory once in a lifetime it would have become detrimental to the interests of the poor and the needy. From this point of view there could not have been a more appropriate and balanced rule than the present one which stipulates that *Zakat* has to be paid every year. The measure of *Zakat* has been decided after giving due consideration to the labor done and efforts made, the ease enjoyed and the hardship endured, by the owners of *Nisab*. Therefore, capital and wealth that a man gets unexpectedly and in a lump sum (e.g. mine, mineral deposit or buried treasure) is not subject to a waiting period of one year for the purpose of paying *Zakat*, its *Khums* (one-fifth) becomes due for payment immediately. However, if somebody's toil and labor constitute inputs for an enterprise and he has toiled and labored to earn his wealth then its '*Ashur* (one-tenth) becomes due for payment, as for example in agriculture and horticulture etc. Agriculture being referred here is the kind in which though the farmer tills the field and sows the seeds, Allah the Exalted irrigates his field for him by means of rain water; he has neither to irrigate the field nor has to dig a well and fix a Persian wheel to draw water. Of course, if somebody irrigates the field by means of water that is drawn by buckets or through some other device

then one-twentieth part of the produce becomes due on him. And, half of even that i.e. one-fortieth part of the earnings if the nature of the enterprise is such that its development is a function of the owner's personal diligence, where he is responsible for its management, safety and security. This is because as compared to farming, here the owner has to exert himself more and has to supervise constantly. The extent of supervision in farming, orchards and groves etc. is less than for example in trading; also a person does not have to devote so much time to farming and cultivation as he must to a shop, factory or company. Continuing the sequence, rain based farming, which incidentally yields better crop also, is relatively easy than farming in artificially irrigated lands. And, the chance discovery of a treasure, in whatever form, in which no effort has to be made at all, is the easiest thing that can happen as compared to the enterprises mentioned above. Accordingly, for cash – 200 Dirham and for gold – 20 *Mithqal*<sup>12</sup>, for grains and fruits – 5 *Wasaq* (5 x 150 Kilograms), for goats – 40 goats, for cows – 30 cows and lastly, for camels – 5 camels, were fixed as *Nisab*.

### 2.2.6. The uses of Zakat

In a verse of Chapter 9 (*Surah Bara't*) of the Holy Quran, Allah the Exalted has outlined the uses of *Zakat*:

The doles (ordained) are only for the poor and the needy and those who collect them and those whose hearts are to be reconciled and (the doles should be used) to free the captives and (to repay the loan of) the debtors and for the cause of Allah, and (to help) the way-farers; (all of which is) a duty imposed by Allah.  
Allah is the Knower, the Wise.<sup>13</sup>

### 2.2.7. Zakat is not a tax or penalty; it is a permanent act of worship and a system Divinely ordained

Regarding *Zakat* it should be borne in mind that it is not akin to a mere tax or

12. During the time of the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, one *Mithqal* was equivalent to one Dinar and one Dinar equal to 10 Dirham. In this manner 20 *Mithqal* were equal to 200 Dirham. 200 Dirham according to the researches of majority of Indian scholars are equivalent to 52.20 *Tolas* of silver. 20 *Mithqal* or 20 Dinar are considered equivalent to 7.5 *Tolas* of gold. 13. V.60: Chapter 9: *Al-Baraa't*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall.



penalty or Government levy. Like *prayer* and *fasting* it is a permanent act of worship, a means to attain nearness to God and a Divine system for moral reform and training. Therefore, while making the payment of *Zakat* a person should rise above the mean sentiments of seeking respect or showing arrogance in giving to the poor and needy, he should not make the payment of *Zakat* appear to be a favor that he is doing on someone; there should rather be politeness, humility and a spirit of thankfulness to God in it; and he should regard the *acceptor* of *Zakat*, instead of himself, as the benefactor because without the latter's acceptance the obligation of *Zakat* would be impossible to fulfill. It is also required of those entitled to receive *Zakat* to personally search for the sources, ensure their enlistment among the recipients of *Zakat*, and assist thereby in the arrangement made for its distribution. Also, it is better that *Zakat* is paid by the wealthy of a locality to the poor of the same locality (Exception to this kind of distribution will be those localities only where those entitled for receiving *Zakat* do not live). In the Glorious Quran, *Zakat* has been declared to be an exact parallel opposite the *interest* (which is forbidden in Islam) and to the same extent as *Zakat* has been praised, the latter has been condemned.

#### **2.2.8. Encouragement to expend as un-ordained dole and charity, wealth that is in excess of needs**

This was the model of ethics and strength of character in accordance with which the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had trained his Noble Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and his entire *Ummath*. The Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, gave such effective teachings to the former when he encouraged them to spend their wealth and left for the latter such a rich legacy of inspiring instructions that after reading them, the thought that *man probably has no right at all in the wealth that he has in excess of his needs* comes to the mind. After reading those Traditions, when a person examines his own life and reviews the abundance and facilities he enjoys and the ease and comfort that he lives in, he feels very uncomfortable. He begins to feel that everything he has is in excess of needs and in surplus; beautiful clothes, lavish meals, luxurious means of transport and the profusion of life's comforts, all appear wrongful and unlawful to him. Although it concerns moral encouragement only and not any law or divine commandment but this certainly was the perfect precedent set by the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

**Assuredly there hath been for you: in the apostle of Allah  
an excellent pattern for him who hopeth in Allah and  
the Last Day and remembereth Allah much.<sup>14</sup>**

In a *Sahih* Tradition the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is reported to have said that:

*Whosoever has an extra means of transport he must give it then to him  
who does not even have a single means of transport,  
whosoever has an extra tiffin he must give it to him  
who has no tiffin.<sup>15</sup>*

The beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said that:

*Whosoever has food for two he should then feed a third too and  
whosoever has food for three he should let a fourth join in.<sup>16</sup>*

The beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, also said that:

*That person did not believe in me who filled his stomach and  
slept the whole night and his neighbor went hungry  
although the former had knowledge of it.<sup>17</sup>*

We learn from yet another Tradition that: A man came to the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and said that, 'O Apostle of Allah clothe me', the beloved Apostle, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said to him that, 'Do not you have a neighbor who has two extra sets of dresses'? The man submitted, 'There are more than one'. The beloved Apostle, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said that, 'May Allah the Exalted not put him together with you in Paradise'.<sup>18</sup>

### **2.2.9. Islamic perspectives on the worth of man and the importance of sympathizing with him**

The Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has elevated

14. V.21: Chapter 33: *Al-Ahzaab*: Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid. 15. Related by Abu Da'ood. 16. Related by Tirmizi. 17. Related by Tabrani Fil Awsat. 18. Related by Tabrani.



the position of man and the value and importance of helping him at times of need and of sympathizing with him in distress to *such a lofty level that it is impossible to imagine a standard any higher*. He who errs in this domain is like him who disobeys and offends God directly. A famous Sacred Tradition is that: On the Day of Judgment Allah the Exalted will say to His bondsman that, O son of Adam, I fell ill and you visited Me not. He will say: O Lord, and how should I visit You when You are The Lord of the worlds? He will say: Did you not know that my servant so-and-so had fallen ill and you visited him not? Did you not know that had you visited him you would have found Me with him? O son of Adam, I asked you for food and you fed Me not. He will say: O Lord, and how should I feed You when You are The Lord of the worlds? He will say: Did you not know that My servant so-and-so asked you for food and you fed him not? Did you not know that had you fed him you would surely have found that (i.e. the reward for so doing) with Me? O son of Adam, I asked you to give Me water to drink and you gave Me not. He will say: O Lord how should I give You water to drink when You are The Lord of the worlds? He will say: My servant so-and-so asked you to give him water to drink and you gave him not water to drink. Had you given him water to drink you would have surely found that (i.e. the reward for so doing) with Me.<sup>19</sup> *This was the lofty level that was referred above and it is indeed impossible to imagine a standard any higher.*

Nothing more can now be said about sympathy and favor, justice and fair-play than that which the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had once said:

*None of you will become a complete Muslim until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself.*<sup>20</sup>

19. Related in Sahih Muslim [Translation adapted with slight modification from: Forty Hadith Qudsi, Selected and translated by: Ezzeddin Ibrahim & Denys Johnson-Davies (Abdul Wadoud); pages 88-90]. 20. Related in Sahih Bukhari.

## **Fasting (*Rozah*) – The third pillar of Islam**

Before we begin this chapter, readers unfamiliar with the early history of Islam would like to know that the life and time of the beloved Prophet *Hazrath* Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and his earliest Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, is distinguishable into an earlier Makkan period which was full of difficulties, followed by *Hijrath* (Emigration of the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, from Makkah to Madina) and a later Madinan period marked with ease and prosperity.

### **2.3.1. The commandment for fasting and related verses in the Holy Quran**

The Divine commandment for Muslims to fast had already been revealed but fasting<sup>1</sup> was made obligatory at such a time after *Hijrath*<sup>2</sup> when the clouds of distress had cleared, the period of hardship and poverty had ended, Muslims had heaved a sigh of relief in Madinah and there they had begun to lead a life of ease and comfort. Probably, the delay in enforcing the Divine commandment was because of the fact that had fasting been made obligatory in a miserable period many people might have discerned it to be *fasting under constraint*, a consequence of two factors namely: their poor economic conditions and the kind of atmosphere that prevailed in Makkah. They would have felt that fasting is only for the poor and the needy, the distressed and the oppressed, while the wealthy and prosperous who own orchards, groves and lands are exempt from it.

1. The term *Rozah* does not have an equivalent in English. In this section of Chapter 2, therefore, the words *fast* and *fasting* are not employed in the generalized sense of their dictionary meanings, they have instead been used specifically to denote an *act of worship in accordance with the Islamic faith*, whose definition, laws, objectives, soul and spirit, form the subject matter of this section. 2. Emigration by a prophet on the command of Allah the Exalted or by the follower(s) of a prophet in accordance with the provisions of *Shariath*; particularly, emigration in the face of persecution on account of one's belief in the Oneness of Allah. Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had to set out on *Hijrath* from Makkah to Madinah but only when Allah permitted him to do so. It was the time when he was completely surrounded by enemies who were bent on assassinating him following the exodus of the nascent community of Muslims from Makkah mostly to Madinah. The Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and his companions and followers had been facing intense persecution at the hands of the strong Quraysh tribe with no sign of a let-up at all in sight. Readers can now differentiate that every emigration is not *Hijrath* and every émigré not a *Muhajir*.

Moreover, the verse that declared fasting to be obligatory was revealed at a time when faith had permeated and had taken root in peoples' hearts and there was already born in people a sense of attachment, a love, for prayers. The entire body of Muslims, every moment, was prepared to submit before every Divine commandment and law of *Shariath* and it used to appear, as if, they had been waiting for it. The Quranic verse which declared fasting to be obligatory was:

**O ye who believe!  
Fasting is prescribed for you,  
even as it was prescribed for those before you  
that ye may ward off (evil).**

**(Fast) a certain number of days;  
and (for) him who is sick among you,  
or on a journey, (the same) number of days;  
and for those who can afford it there is a ransom:  
the feeding of a man in need;  
but who so doth good of his own accord, it is better for him;  
and that ye fast is better for you if ye but know.**

**The month of Ramzan in which was revealed the Quran,  
a guidance for mankind, and clear proofs of the guidance,  
and the Criterion (of right and wrong);  
and whosoever of you is present, let him fast the month  
and whosoever of you is sick or on a journey  
(let him fast the same) number of other days;  
Allah desireth for you ease  
He desireth not hardship for you;  
and (He desireth) that ye should complete the period  
and that ye should magnify Allah for having guided you  
and that peradventure ye may be thankful.<sup>3</sup>**

These verses which declared fasting to be obligatory on Muslims for the first time were not like those dry laws that are enforced by a state on a member of

3. V.183-185: Chapter 2: *Al-Baqrah*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall.

society on the basis of a bond of mere political and public relation between them. These verses appeal to the faith and belief, the mind and conscience, the heart and emotions of people all at once and nourish them as well. They create a favorable intellectual environment for not merely passing the law but for its acceptance with happiness also. And this is an undeniable miracle of Quran's principle of inviting people to Islam, its insight into human psychology and its wise law making.

**(It is) a revelation from the Wise, the Owner of the Praise.<sup>4</sup>**

Allah the Exalted has addressed those who abide by this law with the words *O ye who believe!* and in this manner, as if, prepared them in advance for the implementation and compliance of all future commandments which would be sent to them however strict and burdensome they personally might find the laws to be – because that exactly is what their belief demands and claims from them. If somebody has reposed his belief in Allah the Exalted, has accepted Him as his God and Sustainer, the Owner of permissions and prohibitions, Worthy of reverence and obedience, has handed over to Him the reins of all his actions and loves Allah with his heart and soul; *then*, it would be only appropriate that he submits – without why and wherefore – to every commandment, every law, every decision and every demand of His.

**The only saying of the believers when they were called to Allah and His apostle that they might judge between them was that they said: We hear and we obey.<sup>5</sup>**

**And it is not for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His apostle have decreed an affair, that they should have any choice in their affair.<sup>6</sup>**

**O Ye who believe!  
answer Allah and the apostle when he  
calleth you to that which quickeneth you.<sup>7</sup>**

These verses defined the degree of compliance to *Shariath* that was expected

4. V.42: Chapter 41: *Ha Meem Sajdah*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall. 5. V.51: Chapter 24: *An-Noor*: Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid. 6. V.36: Chapter 33: *Al-Ahzaab*: Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid. 7. V.24: Chapter 8: *Al-Anfaal*: Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid.

of an individual; that *Shariath* in the totality and integration of all whose obligations, forms and acts of worship, commandments and laws, lies the elixir of life for all human beings. After that, Allah the Exalted says: O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you. In the history of religions, this was neither a *first* nor an *innovation*. Allah the Exalted had previously made fasting obligatory on the *People of the Book* (Jews, Christians and Sabians) and on all peoples who were given a religion and a *Shariath*. Thus did Allah the Exalted lessen the burden and mitigate the heaviness of feeling that a person who is singled out suffers from. If a person gets to know that the restraint on him is not something new, that there have been precedents of it, many peoples and followers of many prophets had abided by it, then the same restraint will become bearable for him to some extent and his confidence too will increase.

After that, Allah the Exalted says that fasting is not something whose purpose is to put people in hardship and trial for no reason. It is meant to be a mystical exercise and training that would reform and purify. In fact fasting is that training school for inculcating good conduct from which a human being steps out thoroughly groomed; who firmly holds the reins of his wishes himself. Wishes do not rule over him rather he rules over his wishes. If he can refrain from provisions pure and permissible on Allah's command, why will he not try to save himself from prohibited and unlawful things? A person who gives up cool, sweet water and healthy delicious food to obey his Lord, can he accept to even cast a glance at things unlawful and forbidden? This is the sense of 'that ye may ward off (evil)' in the verse quoted in the beginning of the present sub-section.

Then He says that do not think that the days of the month are too many, these are just a few days that race away one by one and before you can even realize it, they are gone. Moreover what comparison does one month, in which only the day is spent in fasting, have with the days and nights of a year spent in comfort, delight, rest and leisure?

### **2.3.2. What is *Rozah*?**

Fasting in Islam is different from the religious *Vrat* observed customarily on specified days and the restriction on food intake for physical fitness and medical reasons. In fasting, food, beverages, water and even swallowing and drinking medicine is prohibited. Also the option of selective food intake is not available, that, grains are prohibited but fruits are allowed or lime and salt



can be taken with water or plain water is allowed; ingestion of any of these or similar things voids the fast. Successive fasts of sixty days are the penalty for eating or drinking something intentionally during fasting. If it slips from somebody's mind that he is fasting and he eats or drinks something then, however, it does not void the fast.

### 2.3.3. Distinctions, virtues and commandments related to fasting

The format of fasting presented in Islam is complete in terms of its laws and the corresponding objectives they serve, it offers maximum guarantee of benefit and in it *the scheme of things* and *the wisdom* of the Mighty, the Knower, the Wise and the Aware God are fully manifested.

**Should He not know what He created?  
And He is the Subtile, the Aware.<sup>8</sup>**

He has singled out one entire month – the month of *Ramzan* in which the Quran was revealed upon the earth's skies from *the tablet preserved* – for successive fasting. The Divine commandment is to spend its days in fasting and the permission is to eat and drink in its nights.

It is reported on the authority of *Hazrath Abu Hurairah*, may Allah be pleased with him, that the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said that: *Every action of the son of Adam is increased many times and the good deeds are increased between ten and seven hundred times except fasting because Allah the Exalted says that, 'Verily it (Fasting) is for Me alone and I will give its recompense. For My sake he foregoes food and bodily desires, so for him who fasts are two joys, one at the time of Iftar (the time when the fast ends) and the other when he will meet his Sustainer. And verily the change in the breath of one who fasts is better and more pure than musk before Allah the Exalted'.*

*Hazrath Sahl bin Sa'd*, may Allah be pleased with him, narrates that the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said that, *'There is a door of Paradise called Riyyaan through which nobody except those who used to fast for Allah's sake will be called. Whosoever shall be from among those who used to fast shall enter it and he who will enter it will never be thirsty.'*

8. V.14: Chapter 67: *Al-Mulk*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall.

### 2.3.4. Why has *Ramzan* been associated with fasting?

Allah the Exalted has made *fasting* obligatory in *Ramzan* and made each a reciprocal of the other. The truth is that in the confluence of these two blessings and in the congregation of an auspicious time and an auspicious act lie great wisdom and importance. The foremost reason that compounds the importance is that, *Ramzan* is the month in which the Glorious Quran was revealed and a humanity that had lost its way saw the first light of the day. So like the dawn that has for ever been associated with the commencement of the fast, it was most appropriate that this month too – in which had arrived the dawn of humanity's long dark night – was associated with one full month of fasting; especially because this particular month excels all other months in attributes like mercy, blessings, spirituality and relation with the soul. So, *Ramzan* certainly deserved that fasting adorned its days and worship, its nights.

There is a very deep relation and a special compatibility between fasting and Quran. That is why, the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would take great care to recite the Holy Quran as much as possible during *Ramzan*. According to *Hazrath* Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was the most generous of people, however, during the period when Archangel Jibreel (Gabriel), peace be upon him, visited him in *Ramzan*, his generosity increased all the more. *Hazrath* Jibreel, peace be upon him, used to visit the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, every night in *Ramzan* and they used to take turns in reciting the Quran to each other. That, in particular, was the time when the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was seen to be swifter than the rush of breeze in acts of generosity, charity and righteousness.

### 2.3.5. Arrival of the worship season worldwide and a carnival of righteous deeds everywhere

All these distinctions have made *Ramzan* such a great time for worship and self-discipline, remembrance of Allah, God-consciousness and the recitation or reading of the Glorious Quran that Muslims of the East and the West, learned and illiterate, rich and poor, meek and courageous – i.e. people of every kind and of every group – are seen as partners and companions, friends and supporters, of each other. This *Ramzan-effect* is present simultaneously in every city, every village and every hamlet. The splendid manifestation of



*Ramzan* is seen both in the palace of the rich and the hut of the poor. The result is that neither becomes willful and headstrong. Even if they are master and servant, there is never a dispute between them on the observance of the fast. Every person who Allah the Exalted has favored with the gift of sight can make out for himself across the length and breadth of the Islamic world the majesty and the beauty of *Ramzan*. It seems as if a vast canopy of splendor and tranquility is stretched all over the Islamic society. Those people who are a bit lax and lazy in fasting, they too feel compelled to fast for fear of cutting a sorry figure before the majority of fasting Muslims and if for some reason they are unable to fast, they eat in seclusion out of embarrassment, exceptions are:

- Those few irreligious and disobedient individuals who have no hesitation in shamelessly eating in public.
- The sick and the travellers who are *deemed to be handicapped* under *Shariath*.

This worldwide and collective fasting automatically creates such a conducive and happy environment that: the observance of a fast appears to be easy, hearts are softened and people get inclined towards various acts of worship, devotion, compassion and sympathy.

### **2.3.6. Rising in the last quarter of the night for the Pre-dawn meal (*Sehri*)**

Some nourishment is taken before dawn. [To acquire the strength for fasting so that hunger and thirst do not become excessively troublesome during the day.] This pre-dawn meal in the terminology of *Shariath* is called *Sahoor*, in India it is known as *Sehri*, it is a *Sunnath*<sup>9</sup> and people are encouraged to have it.

The Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has himself declared it a *Sunnath* for Muslims. *Hazrath* Anas bin Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, has narrated that the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said that, *Eat the pre-dawn meal because the pre-dawn meal has blessings in it.*<sup>10</sup>

**9.** Practice of the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him **10.** Related in Sahih Muslim and Sahih Bukhari.

*Hazrath 'Amru bin Al' Aas, may Allah be pleased with him, has narrated that the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said that 'the difference between our fasting and the fasting of the People of the Book is of this very pre-dawn meal'.<sup>11</sup>*

The beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has also prohibited delaying the *Iftar* (End of fasting), declared its delay to be indicative of disturbance and turmoil and the mark of the faithful among the People of the Book who exceed the norms in worship. *Hazrath Suhail bin Sa'd*, may Allah be pleased with him, narrates that the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said that, '*As long as people will make haste in Iftar they will remain on goodness*'.

The routine of the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was: *Iftar* before prayer. *Iftar* consisted of a few half-ripe dates, if half-ripe dates were not there then dry dates, else a few draughts of water.

At the time of *Iftar* he – peace and blessings of Allah be upon him – also used to say words which mean:

*O Allah for Your sake (I) observed the fast and  
with the provisions You have bestowed (I) end it.*

And words which mean:

*The thirst is quenched, the veins moistened and,  
Insha' Allah (i.e. God willing), the reward is confirmed.*

### **2.3.7. Rozah: its spirit and its precautions**

Islamic *Shariath* is not content with the form and façade of fasting. Its attention goes beyond and sharply focuses on the spirit and reality of this worship. Only nourishment and sexual relations have not been declared unlawful, it has also made unlawful and prohibited every such thing that defeats the objectives of fasting, undermines its philosophy and is detrimental to its spiritual and moral benefits. It has built around the fasting a fortress of etiquette, God-consciousness, noble thoughts and chaste expression. The

<sup>11</sup>. Related in *Muatta'*; Tirmizi.

Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has said that:

*Anybody among you who fasts should neither use foul language and indulge in vain speech nor should he shout and create a racket, if somebody abuses him or is bent upon quarreling with him he should say: I am on fast.*<sup>12</sup>

He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has also said that:

*Not at all does Allah the Exalted need him to abandon his eating and drinking who does not abandon telling lies and acting upon those lies.*<sup>13</sup>

Fasting that is devoid and deprived of the spirit of God-consciousness and chastity is a fictitious design and a body without soul. According to one Tradition the beloved Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings upon him, said that:

*Many who fast earn naught from their fasting sans thirst, many who pray earn naught from their standing except sleeplessness.*<sup>14</sup>

Hazrath Abu 'Ubaidah, may Allah be pleased with him, narrates that the Apostle of Allah said that:

*Fasting is a shield, until it is torn apart.*

Islamic fasting is not the name of prohibitions only – orders and commandments that disallow eating, drinking, slander, back-biting, fighting, quarrelling and the use of foul language – it is an aggregate of positive orders and commandments as well. Worship, reading and recitation of the Glorious Quran, remembrance of Allah, His glorification, compassion, sympathy and giving preferential treatment to the poor fill the Fasting season. The Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has said that:

*Whosoever will seek to obtain nearness to Allah with a solitary act of one good quality in Ramzan, it will be considered the equivalent of fulfilling one*

12. Related in Sahih Bukhari. 13. This Tradition meets the authenticity criteria of Bukhari and Muslim. 14. Related in Sahih Bukhari.

*obligation on other days; and whosoever will perform one obligatory act of worship he will be like him who performs seventy such obligatory acts of worship on days other than the days of Ramzan.*

*Ramzan* is the month of forbearance and the reward of forbearance is Paradise. It is the month of sympathy too. *Hazrath Zaid bin Khalid Al-Jahni*, may Allah be pleased with him, narrates that the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said that:

*Whosoever arranges an Iftar (breakfast) for one who is fasting will get a reward equal to the reward of the person who was fasting and the fasting person's reward will not be lessened.*

Allah the Exalted has also instilled in this *Ummath*<sup>15</sup> the collective spirit of being very mindful of the prayer of *Taraweeh* and of making elaborate arrangements for offering it in congregations during the nights of *Ramzan*. The proof of *Taraweeh* being a separate prayer exists in the practice of the prophet but the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, offered it for three days only and then discontinued, so that it might not be declared obligatory on his followers and become a cause of hardship for them.

All these engagements have made *Ramzan* a period of mass celebration of worship, a season of reading and reciting the Glorious Quran and springtime for the righteous, the God-fearing, the ardent in worship and the pious. In *Ramzan* the religious sentiment of this *Ummath*, its high regard for religion and its fondness for worship fully manifest themselves and come to the fore; its repentance and penitence, softening of the hearts of its members, its spiritual inclination towards God, regret and remorse over its failings and the spirit of overtaking each other in righteous deeds are at such a zenith that no community and no group of men can reach to even ten percentiles of it.

**That is the bounty of Allah,  
which He giveth unto whom He will,  
Allah is of infinite bounty.<sup>16</sup>**

15. Brethren in faith i.e. the community of Muslims.

16. V.4: Chapter 62: *Al-Jum'ah*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall.

### 2.3.8. *E'tikaf*<sup>17</sup>

*E'tikaf* of the last 'Ashrah<sup>18</sup> of *Ramzan* is a deed of great virtue. A favorite practice of the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him; *E'tikaf* completes the array of benefits that *Ramzan* offers and the objectives it serves.

During *E'tikaf* it is desirable to offer *Namaz*, read and recite the Glorious Quran, remember Allah through incantations of the *Tasbeeh*, *Tahmeed* and *Takbeer*; seek His pardon – through *Istaghfar* – and repetitively recite the *Darood*<sup>19</sup> for the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

The Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was always very particular in performing the *E'tikaf*. Muslims too in every place and period have performed *E'tikaf* regularly. As a result, it has acquired the status of a symbol of *Ramzan* and a regularly observed *Sunnath*. On the authority of *Hazrath Aishah*, may Allah be pleased with her, it is reported that the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, always used to perform *E'tikaf* during the last 'Ashrah of *Ramzan* until his demise and then his noble wives, may Allah be pleased with them, continued to observe the established routine of *E'tikaf*.

*Hazrath Abu Hurairah*, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to perform *E'tikaf* for ten days during every *Ramzan* but performed it for twenty days in the year that he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, passed away.

During *E'tikaf* there is strict prohibition on going out of the mosque except for reasons beyond human control (answering the calls of nature, performance of *Ghusl* in the normal course or when necessitated by nocturnal emission

17. To restrict oneself to a mosque in order to devote maximum time to worship and seek Allah's pleasure. The period of *E'tikaf* may vary. Therefore, in terms of its span, the meaning of *E'tikaf* includes but is not restricted to 'the last ten days of *Ramzan*'. 18. The Arabic word 'Ashrah' means '10'. However, in the context of the lunar month of *Ramzan* which can either be of 29 days or of 30 days the phrase 'the last 'Ashrah' implies 'the last 9 or 10 days as the case may be'. 19. *Tasbeeh* i.e. saying *Subhan Allah*, meaning: Glory be unto Allah; *Tahmeed* i.e. saying *Al-Hamdu lillah*, meaning: All praise be to Allah; *Takbeer* i.e. saying *Allahu Akbar*, meaning: Allah is the Greatest; *Istaghfar*: begging forgiveness from Allah; and *Darud*: A supplication before Allah to invoke His blessings specifically on Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

(please also refer to Footnote 37 of Sub-section 2.1.13). *Wuzu* also must be performed in the ablution area located within the precincts of the mosque.

### 2.3.9. The Night of Power<sup>20</sup>

The Holy Quran and the Noble Traditions describe the virtue of the Night of Power at several places and assign great importance to it. Allah the Exalted says:

In the name of Allah the Compassionate the Merciful.

Lo! We revealed it (i.e. the Quran) on the Night of Power.  
 Ah, what will convey unto thee what the Night of Power is!  
 The Night of Power is better than a thousand months.  
 The angels and the Spirit descend therein  
 by the permission of their Lord with all decrees.  
 (That night is) Peace until the rising of the dawn.<sup>21</sup>

The beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is reported to have said that:

*Whosoever will perform worship,  
 with firm belief and with sincere hope of gaining reward,  
 during The Night of Power,  
 will have all his previous sins forgiven.<sup>22</sup>*

Allah the Exalted, in His limitless wisdom and mercy, has concealed the Night of Power somewhere in the last 'Ashrah of *Ramzan* so that:

- Muslims remain engaged in seeking it out
- their longing for it is increased
- their resolve is heightened and
- they spend all of the last ten nights of *Ramzan* standing in prayer, worshipping Allah, supplicating, entreating, to Him; as was the routine of the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be

<sup>20</sup>. Every *Ramzan* comes a night called *Shab-e-Qadr* (Urdu) i.e. *The Night of Power* or *The Night of Honor*. <sup>21</sup>. Chapter 97: *Al-Qadr*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall. <sup>22</sup>. This Tradition meets the authenticity criteria of Bukhari and Muslim.



upon him.

*Hazrath 'Aishah*, may Allah be pleased with her, narrates that: when the last 'Ashrah of *Ramzan* used to begin, the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, kept awake the whole night, enjoined the same upon everybody in the home and became very firm of resolve.<sup>23</sup>

The majority of Prophetic Traditions is unanimous about the occurrence of the Night of Power during the last 'Ashrah of *Ramzan*, and that too in the odd numbered nights of its last week. Below are presented three Traditions:

- *Hazrath Ibn 'Umar*, may Allah be pleased with him, narrates that in strikingly similar dreams of some Companions of the Apostle of Allah, may Allah be pleased with them, Allah showed the Night of Power as being in the last week of *Ramzan* and the Apostle of Allah's – peace and blessings of Allah be upon him – reaction at that time was: *'I see that your dream mostly relates to the last week, so now whosoever desires to seek the Night of Power should seek it in the last week itself.'*<sup>24</sup>
- *Hazrath 'Aishah*, may Allah be pleased with her, narrates that the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, performed *E'tikaf*, became reclusive, during the last 'Ashrah of *Ramzan* and used to say: *Seek the Night of Power in the last 'Ashrah of Ramzan.'*<sup>25</sup>
- *Hazrath 'Aishah*, may Allah be pleased with her, also narrates that the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to say that: *Seek the Night of Power in the odd numbered nights of Ramzan's last 'Ashrah.'*<sup>26</sup>

### 2.3.10. Sighting of the new moon of 'Eid ends *Ramzan*

Time flies. The twenty nine, thirty, days of a lunar month are not too many, after all. People with a greed for worship and spirituality were not even content, ceaseless was their cry ..... *"Is there some more?.....Is there some more?"*.

**23.** This Tradition meets the authenticity criteria of Bukhari and Muslim. **24.** This Tradition meets the authenticity criteria of Bukhari and Muslim. **25.** This Tradition meets the authenticity criteria of Bukhari and Muslim **26.** Related in Sahih Bukhari.

The common Muslim was just about getting accustomed to the fasting with each passing day, that the night of the new moon has arrived. *Ramzan* packs his baggage and departs from Muslims promising to be back the next year. The moon of *'Eid* has appeared. Endurance with a tint of gratefulness is substituted by gratefulness with a tint of endurance. A guest, a messenger of Allah, has departed; another guest, another messenger of His, has arrived. That indeed was a commandment to which we had submitted and now we have a commandment anew. Until today it was sinful to eat in the day time, tomorrow it will be sinful not to eat.

## **Pilgrimage (*Haj*) – The fourth pillar of Islam**

**And proclaim unto mankind the Haj. They will come unto thee on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every deep ravine. That they may witness things that are of benefit to them, and mention the name of Allah on appointed days over the beast of cattle that He has bestowed upon them. Then eat thereof and feed therewith the poor, unfortunate. Then let them make an end of their unkemptness and pay their vows and go around the ancient House.<sup>1</sup>**

*Haj* is the fourth pillar of Islam. The words employed in the Holy Quran and in the Traditions for somebody who does not perform the *Haj* in spite of meeting its criteria are such that one begins to fear his expulsion from the sphere of Islam and from the cohesive group of practicing Muslims. The duty of *Haj* is discharged at times specified, at a place appointed. The times specified for it fall in *Zil Haj* which is the last month of the Islamic lunar calendar.

### **2.4.1. The account of Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, in the Glorious Quran and its relevance to the *Secure City*<sup>2</sup>**

Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, was born in the home of a high priest, a *Purohit*, named Aazar. Aazar was a sculptor by profession who carved idols; he was also a high priest in the city's biggest place of worship and was thus attached to that place of worship through both his faith and his profession. That was a very difficult situation, because, if faith gets linked with profession and religious sentiment with monetary gain and both begin to stride together, complications and difficulties compound. In that unreceptive and dark environment there was nothing that could kindle sentiments of love and belief and rouse anybody to revolt against the ignorance and folly of associating partners with God and idol worship. However, there was something

1. V.27-29: Chapter 22: *Al-Haj*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall. 2. Epithet for Makkah (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) used in the Holy Quran.

exceptionally different about that *whole heart*<sup>3</sup> which had already been prepared for prophet-hood and the building of a new world order.

And We verily gave Abraham of old his proper course and  
We were aware of him.<sup>4</sup>

He launches his revolt from a stage which even the world's mighty revolutions, at times, bypass. That stage is *life within the four walls of a home*: the place where a human being is born and brought-up, grows up and attains his youth; where everything around him demands that he spend all his life with it. Now unfold all those events which the Glorious Quran mentions in its clear, evident, eloquent and miraculous style. These include: Prophet Ibrahim's (peace be upon him) breaking of idols; strong indignation of the priests over that incident, their surprise and helplessness; their bid to take revenge against the courageous young rebel and lighting a big fire for him and the fire becoming pleasantly cool and safe for the great Prophet and lastly, Prophet Ibrahim's (peace be upon him) eloquent dialogue and question-answer session in the court of a despotic ruler.

This rejection and revolt result in the entire city becoming his enemy. The whole society appears to be enraged with him. The government of the day too, closely monitors his movements and oppresses him but he does not worry about any of these things and gives them no importance. It appears as if he had been expecting and had already foreseen this aftermath. He sets out on *Hijrah* from his hometown; a composed man, very happy and content to hold on to his real capital: the wealth of his belief. He travels all alone without friend or helper, the one exception being his wife, however. Not a single man comes along with him. Among the people who he meets along the way, he sees the same pattern everywhere, quite like the one that he had left behind: idolatry plus associating partners with God plus endless desires plus ignorance. It confronts him wherever he goes. He reaches Egypt – goes through great trial and indignity over there – succeeds in departing with his wife who the reigning monarch was plotting to victimize – then reaches Syria. The climatic conditions of Syria suite him. He settles there and restarts the work of invitation to *Tawheed* and the censure of idolatry.

3. Translation of *Qalb-e-Saleem* adapted from V.89: Chapter 26: *Ash-Sho'raa* (The Poets): Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi. 4. V.51: Chapter 21: *Al-Ambiya*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall.

He begins to like Syria for the lush flourishing country that it was, where the means of earning livelihood were abundant and which was abounding in natural beauty; but soon receives a Divine command to go towards a country that in terms of greenery and prosperity is just the opposite of Syria. Before Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, there is no such thing as a right to live in a place of one's choice, he harbors no attachment to any country or homeland. The slave of Allah's command, the one who is ever ready to act upon His hints and signals, he considers the whole world to be his homeland and all humanity to be his family. The command he receives includes that while proceeding on *Hijrath* he should take his wife *Hajirah* and their infant son, whose only diet is milk, along with him.

Upon his arrival in a country and a valley where there was nothing except sun-baked rocks on all sides – its climate and seasons unbearably severe, not a drop of water anywhere, an awesome stillness all around and where there was no consoler or sympathizer in whose company they could have felt relaxed and reassured – the respectable personage gets another Divine command. Now the command is to trust in God, leave his weak and feeble wife and his infant son there and simply in compliance of His command depart; in a way that he is entirely at peace with the Will of God – without bewailing, without fear and anxiety, without disenchantment or getting fed up, without weakness in resolve and without entertaining any doubt about the Divine assurance. He should depart instead, in defiance of human experience, against the force of normal impulse, with an indifference towards and a complete detachment from resources, with belief in the Lord unseen and with full trust and confidence in Him, especially, at a time when feet begin to slip and distrust begins to raise its ugly head.

After he goes away all that was feared, naturally happens. The infant becomes restless with thirst, the mother too feels overwhelmingly thirsty but where is water to be found in this wilderness! Here, even those small pits and cavities in which puddles are formed after rains are not to be seen anywhere. This is when maternal affection reaches a peak somewhere in the mother's heart and she begins to sense the impending danger. In the hope of finding water or spotting a passing caravan that might be carrying water with it she frantically goes running between two nearby hillocks. Anxious, worried, as she reaches the second hillock the thought of her restless child comes to her mind.....how would he be?.....without stopping for a moment she runs back to where the infant was.....reassures herself that he is alive and surviving the trauma.....again anxiety mounts up within her.....again she runs towards the same

hillocks.....may be somebody could be seen.....may be some sign of water could be spotted! On the one hand there is restlessness and an uneasiness in her which is the natural outcome of the situation she is in. On the other hand there is a typical serenity in her which is produced only by having firm belief and by reposing total confidence in Allah. In spite of the fact that she is the wife of one prophet and the mother of another prophet she does not consider the adoption of means, making of efforts and adopting a course of action to be the antithesis of belief and trust in God. She is disturbed for sure but there is not a trace of despair in her, her faith in God is unshaken but it is not marked by suspension of efforts, inaction and laziness. It is a scene the likeness of which the heavens have perhaps never witnessed before. This is the moment when the Mercy of God stirs up. In miraculous manner there erupts a spring of water nearby! *The Zam-Zam*: that blessed and eternal spring, in Makkah, that never dries up nor does its output ever decrease. The one spring that is sufficient for the whole world and all generations. Even today, after centuries, people from all corners of the world are benefiting from it and their thirst is being quenched by it. Allah the Exalted has kept cure and nourishment, reward and blessings in it.

The act that was involuntary of a sincere and believing lady has been declared to be voluntary for others. Allah the Exalted has made it compulsory for all who perform the *Haj* to emulate her when they come to Makkah; be they the most celebrated of intellectuals, the beautiful, the handsome, the philosophers and the most exalted of rulers and kings. Unless they perform the *Sa'ee* (brisk walk) between those two hillocks, where *Hazrath Hajirah* had once stepped, their *Haj* cannot be considered complete. In fact, the twin hillocks have become the destination of everybody who loves Allah and longs to meet Him and the *Sa'ee* exemplifies best the standpoint of a believer in this world because he too is an aggregate of dualities: intellect and sentiments, feelings and faith. He fully utilizes his intellect in matters concerning the expediencies and necessities of his life but, sometimes, submits to those heartfelt emotions too whose roots are deeper and stronger than those of intellect. He lives in a world which is overstuffed with enticement, sexual desires, ornament, decorative fabrications and natural phenomena but like a worshipper performing *Sa'ee* between the two hillocks of *Safa* and *Marwah* – without casting even a sideways glance, without getting entangled in anything and without pausing anywhere – he swiftly goes away. All he is concerned about is his destination and his future. He considers his life to be but like the numbered rounds a pilgrim performing the *Sa'ee* makes between the two Makkan hillocks; a life that he spends in obeying his Lord and emulating his



ancestors. While his belief is not an obstruction in inquiry and logical reasoning, his recourse to practical action – his *Sa'ee* – does not disturb his confidence and trust in God. The *Sa'ee*, therefore, is an activity whose entire worth, soul and message can be summed up in just two words: *love* and *loyalty*.

Now, the infant we had talked about grows up. He attains an age when paternal affection for the son increases naturally. He accompanies his father outdoors. Runs and plays with him and always remains close to him. His father, in whom the sentiments of human sympathy and love were present in a very high degree, too develops great affection and inclination towards his sweet child, his darling. And this is the biggest problem. The *whole heart* that he is blessed with is created to love nobody except God, it is not the heart of any ordinary man, it is the heart of *Khalilurrehman*<sup>5</sup> – the personage who Allah has chosen as His friend. Love can endure anything but a divide, a rival it can not tolerate at all. When this is the condition of common human beings when they are in love, imagine what would be the expectations of God's love! It is at this point that Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, gets the first indication to sacrifice his beloved son. Dreams of prophets are the equivalents of Divine Revelations, therefore when he gets the same indication several times he becomes sure that the son's sacrifice is what Allah desires from him and that is the task that he has to carry out. So first of all he tests his son because it is difficult to perform the sacrifice without his support, steadfastness and endurance. The son upon hearing of the dream displays utmost obedience, nobility of character, total submission before Allah's command and acceptance of whatever is written in his fate. And why would he not? He, the son of a prophet, is a prophet and the grandfather of a prophet.

**(Abraham) said: O my dear son, I have seen in a dream that I must sacrifice thee. So look, what thinkest thou?  
O my father! Do that which thou art commanded.  
Allah willing, thou shalt find me of the steadfast.<sup>6</sup>**

Now unfolds the event that human intellect fails to comprehend and which leaves it dazed. The father steps out escorting his beloved and obedient son, he is going to sacrifice him on an indication from God and the son being

5. The title of Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, in the Holy Quran; meaning: *Friend of The Compassionate* (*The Compassionate* is an attribute of God, also it is synonymous with His name: *Allah*). 6. V.102: Chapter 37: *As-Saaffaat*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall.

obedient to his Lord and to his father is accompanying him willingly. Both have the same purpose in their minds: to carry out their Lord's command and pay obeisance to Him unquestioningly. On the way, the devil, who has always tried that man remains deprived of felicity, meets them and obstructs them in carrying out their intentions. In the guise of sympathy, using beautiful words, he makes a presentation of God's disobedience before them and coaxes them towards worldly life. But both father and son fail his designs and become all the more determined to comply with Allah's command. And that climax is reached the sight of which would shock the angels, the man and the jinn alike. Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, lays his son down on the ground, puts the knife on his throat and with all his might attempts to slaughter him. But Allah's *scheme of things* is different. To slaughter Prophet Ismail, peace be upon him, was never in His *scheme of things*. The aim instead was to slaughter that budding love which was sharing the love of God and was beginning to rival it. And that love had already been slaughtered the instant the blade was put on the son's throat. Prophet Ismail, peace be upon him, was born to live, see the springtime of his life, raise a family and it was destined that the most distinguished of apostles, *Hazrath* Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would be among his descendents. How could he be slaughtered before the completion of God's plan for him? Allah the Exalted sent a ram from Paradise as a ransom for Prophet Ismail, peace be upon him, that it may be slaughtered in his place. And the sacrifice of certain listed animals was declared to be a practice of Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, for all his disciples and followers in later generations to observe. During the specified days of sacrifice, his followers still renew the memory of that *Supreme Sacrifice* and spend their monies in Allah's way to offer sacrifices.

Then when the twain had submitted themselves and  
 he had prostrated him upon his temple.  
 We cried Unto him: O Ibrahim  
 of a surety thou hast fulfilled the vision. Verily We!  
 thus We recompense the well-doers.  
 Verily that! that was a trial manifest.  
 And We ransomed him with a mighty victim.  
 And We left for him among the posterity:  
 Peace be Unto Ibrahim:<sup>7</sup>

Allah the Exalted has also preserved for posterity the episode of *Prophet*

7. V.103-109: Chapter 37: *As-Saaffaat*: Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.

***Ibrahim, peace be upon him, and the devil*** and He has commanded to pelt stones at those places where the devil had stood in the way of father and son and had tried to dissuade them from the task that they had been assigned. This pelting of stones has been declared a rite which is performed every year during the divinely appointed, hence excellent, days of the *Haj*. Its *raison d'être* is to cultivate hatred for the devil; additionally it is to enable man openly defy and rebel against him. It is an act in which a believer feels great pleasure, life and charm; but the condition is that he should have the correct understanding of faith, should be firm of belief and the sentiments of carrying out Allah's commandments should rise high and spread in him like the strong waves of an ocean. As he reviews the villainy of the devil in the story of Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, a believer begins to feel as if he too is engaged in a battle against the forces of evil – the devil and his hordes - and he concludes that the devil's lot is nothing else other than stoning and insult.

Many years pass over this incident. The child has now become a young man. Allah the Exalted has blessed him with prophet-hood and eminence. Also, Prophet Ibrahim's (peace be upon him) invitation to *Tawheed* has produced gratifying results and the work of invitation has spread considerably. It now needs such a center in which people can repose their confidence and which in turn can strengthen and nurture their beliefs. Numerous were the palaces of kings and temples dedicated to idols in this world, where carnal desires and the devil were worshipped. But there was no House as yet on Allah's earth to worship Allah, in which sincerely He alone could be worshipped. A House that could be kept clean and free from all kinds of pollution and impurity, for the benefit of all those who would establish worship there and get the privilege of visiting it. Therefore, now when faith has become strong enough to stand on its own and the foundation of a Muslim *Ummath* has been laid, God guided Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, to build the *Baitullah*<sup>8</sup>: a House which would be a sanctuary for all humanity and a cradle of peace, where only Allah would be worshipped. Father and son, together build that blessed and glorious House which in terms of appearance is quite simple and ordinary but in terms of greatness: very firm and exalted. Both of them toil, carry heavy rocks and raise its walls.

And recall what time Ibrahim was raising the foundation of  
the House and also Ismai'l, praying: our Lord! accept of us;  
verily Thou! Thou art the Hearer, the Knower!

8. Literally: House of Allah. This is a reference to the Holy Ka'bah in Makkah.

**Our Lord! make us twain submissive unto Thee, and  
of our progeny community submissive unto Thee,  
and show us our rites, and relent toward us!  
Verily Thou! Thou art the Relentant, the Merciful!<sup>9</sup>**

This House is established on unadulterated faith and belief; a precedence of such foundations does not exist anywhere else in the world. Allah the Exalted, granted it a goodly acceptance and by way of recognition, made permanence its destiny, elegantly clothed it with beauty and magnificence, turned hearts towards it, made it the place toward which humanity would turn in prayer and made it an object that exercises a magnet-like pull on their hearts. People, as if, compete in rushing towards it and consider it an object in whose path it is worth foregoing comforts and offering sacrifices. This House is devoid of and is guarded against all kinds of apparent beauty and artificial beautification and is situated in such a city which is very far from the distractions that are typical of culture and civilization and the noisy stream of life. Yet there is so much attractiveness in its simple structure that people are madly drawn towards it. They reach here in multitudes, brimming with excitement and they remain impatient to catch a glimpse of it. Once it was built and the House was ready, a voice from the Heavens called out:

**And proclaim unto mankind the Pilgrimage.  
They will come unto thee on foot and on every lean camel;  
they will come from every deep ravine;  
that they may witness things that are of benefit to them,  
and mention the name of Allah on appointed days  
over the beast of cattle that He hath bestowed upon them.  
Then eat thereof and feed therewith the poor, unfortunate.  
Then let them make an end of their unkemptness and  
pay their vows and go around the ancient House.<sup>10</sup>**

During Prophet Ibrahim's period, this world was a slave of resources and people used to place undue trust in them. They were somehow convinced that resources by themselves were absolute, self-sufficient and – instead of being influenced – produced effects. Consequently, resources that were known to them acquired the status of deities. Sanctity of this degree coupled with

9. V.127-128: Chapter 2: *Al-Baqrah*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall. 10. V.27-29: Chapter 22: *Al-Hajj*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall.

dependence had, in effect, created a new version of idolatry parallel to the existing one, in which the masses were already drowned. The life of Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, was actually a rebellion against this new breed of ‘sculptors’ and ‘idol worshippers’. It was an invitation to believe in the pure and unadulterated tenet of the Oneness of Allah the Exalted, in His Omnipotence and in the all encompassing expanse of His Knowledge. The great prophet’s life was a deafening proclamation that Allah alone creates things from naught. That He is the Causer of the causes, the Owner of the causes. That whenever He pleases, He disengages causes from their sources and even divests materials of their properties and transforms them in to things that are their contrasts. That He utilizes materials whenever He Wills and puts them to whatever use He Wills and appoints them to carry out whatever tasks He Decrees. People prepared a fiercely burning furnace for Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, and:

**They cried: Burn him and stand by your gods,  
if ye will be doing (something).<sup>11</sup>**

But Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, knew that fire is subservient to the Will of Allah and its property to burn is not something self-sustaining or which can never be separated from it. An extension of the nature of fire, this property, is a trust unto fire from Allah the Exalted, its reins are in His Hand and He loosens or pulls them at His Will. And within moments He can, if He so Wills, transform this very fire into a bed of roses and a garden breathtakingly beautiful. With this belief and conviction he calmly stepped in to the fire and what he had thought, also did happen.

**We said: O fire, be coolness and peace for Abraham!  
And they wished to set a snare for him but  
We made them the greater losers.<sup>12</sup>**

People’s faith and experience, in general, was that an abundance of water, fertile soil, farms and gardens sustained life. Therefore, for the purpose of settling with their idols and clans they always used to look around for such cities and countries that were worth becoming their motherland, where the soil was fertile, the country prosperous and full of greenery, water was in plenty and where facilities for trade and industry were also readily available.

**11.** V.68: Chapter 21: *Al-Ambiya*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall. **12.** V. 69-70: Chapter 21: *Al-Ambiya*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall.



Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, not only rebelled against this mix of faith, experience, tradition and custom, he also set an example by choosing for a mother and an infant who comprised his small family, a barren valley for a home; a valley which was neither arable nor was its location any promising for trade. Virtually detached from the world, it was situated very far from the centers of commerce, trade routes and regions that were rich and prosperous in those days. Upon reaching there he supplicated to Allah the Exalted, that He bestow upon them their provisions from His infinite bounty, incline hearts towards them and without apparent means and surface links cause all kinds of fruits to reach there continually. He prayed in the following words:

**Our Lord!**

**I have settled some of my posterity in an uncultivable valley  
near unto Thy Holy House,  
our Lord! That they may establish proper worship;  
so incline some hearts of men that they may yearn towards them,  
and provide Thou them with fruits  
in order that they may be thankful.<sup>13</sup>**

Allah the Exalted granted acceptance to his supplication in a way that He ensured besides provisions, security for them too; furthermore, He made their city such a center where all kinds of fruits poured in and divine favors descended.

**Have We not established for them a sure sanctuary,  
whereunto the produce of all things is brought (in trade)  
a provision from Our presence?  
But most of them know not.<sup>14</sup>**

**So let them worship the Lord of this House.  
Who hath fed them against hunger  
and hath made them safe from fear.<sup>15</sup>**

The blessed personage had brought and left his family in a land where not even so much water was available as to moisten one's throat but Allah the

**13.** V.37: Chapter 14: *Ibrahim*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall. **14.** Holy Quran: Chapter 28: *Al-Qasas*: v 57: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall. **15.** V.3-4: Chapter 106: *Al-Quraish*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall.



Exalted caused a stream to flow out of that sandy and rocky land. Water gushed out of the sand on its own and has continued to flow in the same manner to this day. People drink as much as they can from it and lug it with them in cans when they go back from here.

He leaves his family in such deserted and uninhabited a place where any sign of life is impossible to find but soon that same place gets inhabited and flourishes and people from every region of the world can be seen there. The life of Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, challenged the excessive materialism and the worship of resources of his period. It was also a statement of total confidence in the Absolute Omnipotence of Allah. And it has been a practice of Allah the Exalted since times immemorial that He makes material resources subservient to a true belief in Himself. Then by His Will, from those very resources, produces such things which the materialistic eyes fall far short of, rather they are incapable of, comprehending what they see.

#### **2.4.2. The Haj – a commemoration of the accomplishments and qualities of Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him – a revival of his teachings and his invitation to the Oneness of Allah**

Actually the *Haj*, its rites and procedures, its history i.e. specially the events and happenings connected with those rites and procedures, the strong symbolisms of unconcern with the apparent, and of freedom and liberation from egotism and conceit, reflected in the arresting simplicity of a pilgrim's dress, the rites of *Ihram*, *Wuqoof*, *Ifadah*, *Rajm*, *Sa'ee* and *Tawaf* that he performs, all taken together constitute an attempt and comprise a course of action to strengthen and make functionally effective in one's daily life the Islamic ideals of *Tawheed*, negation of resources, trust in God, offering sacrifice in His path, obedience unto Him and endeavoring to seek His pleasure. It is an open rebellion against habits, customs and traditions, false standards and fabricated values; and a revival of strong belief, true love, matchless sacrifice, first-rate selflessness and first-rate unselfishness. The *Haj* stands guarantee to the continuance and the development of: higher objectives, pious sentiments, spiritual and religious values and, above all, a brotherhood which occupies a plane much higher than artificial nationalities and the imperfect and constricting parameters of race and motherland – a people whose brotherly affinities are based on human and Islamic values. It is a call to adopt Prophet Ibrahim's path and *maslak* (school of thought), to develop his kind of spirit in us and to keep aloft the flag of his *Invitation to*

*Tawheed* in every age, everywhere.

**The faith of your father Abraham (is yours).  
He hath named you Muslims.<sup>16</sup>**

God will never deprive the *Haj* of those blessed personalities who we call the *Ulema-e-Haq* i.e the rightly-guided scholars, people who enjoy acceptance in Allah's Court, people who invite mankind to *Tawheed* and reform, people with piety in their hearts and people whose souls are clean. Their very presence lends to the atmosphere of the *Haj* such a high degree of spirituality and radiance that it melts the most merciless of hearts and moves the cruelest of characters. The heretics and the disobedient too begin to get inclined towards repentance and penitence. Those eyes that had never shed tears of joy or fear spontaneously overflow upon reaching here. The cold fireplaces of hearts are re-ignited. The Mercy of Allah descends; tranquility holds the whole environment in its embrace and the devil finds no place to even hide his face. According to a Prophetic Tradition:

*The devil is never seen more scorned, debased, driven out and burning with rage as he is on the day of 'Arfah and he is in this condition only because he sees with his eyes Allah's Mercy descending and Allah forgiving numerous major sins.<sup>17</sup>*

The atmosphere of that short duration has a certain ecstasy in it. It seems as if some kind of current has touched it. Those Muslims who arrive here from distant places rebuild settlements in the forlorn and empty wastelands of their hearts. They collect provisions for their return journey: belief and love, zeal and a sense of collective honor, first hand knowledge of the signs of Allah's Oneness and an understanding of many aspects of Islamic jurisprudence – lasting provisions which will remain with them even after they have reached their homes and will help them face all kinds of inducements, pressures, temptations and fears. Upon returning to their respective countries they share this wealth, or shall we say these gifts, with their brethren who were unable to stand in attendance here, either due to physical weakness and disease or some other constraint. Thus does that current of energized belief run through the

**16.** V.78: Chapter 22: *Al-Haj*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall. **17.** On the authority of 'Abdul Malik (*Mursal*). *Mursal* is that tradition which is directly narrated by a successor without the link of a companion between him and the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

entire body of the Muslim *Ummath*. It creates among the ignorant a fondness for knowledge; lifts the spirits of the spiritless and the weak; creates enthusiasm in the dejected and confidence in the hopeless. It rejuvenates the *Ummath* to deliver its message to the world, carry out its duty of inviting human kind to Allah's way and this point onwards the journey of its life assumes a novelty that was never there before.

### **2.4.3. Showcased! A brotherhood based on Islamic and human values & a fraternity which is global**

*Haj* marks the triumph of the Islamic nationality over those secondary identities of Muslims – intra-Islamic, linguistic and territorial – that have made many Islamic countries (due to different factors and under pressure) their victim. The *Haj* is the manifestation and proclamation of the Islamic nationality. Upon reaching here all the followers of Islam, after freeing themselves of their native and national dresses with which they were always identified and with which many of them have an attachment to the point of bias, adopt Islam's national uniform. In the terminologies of religion, Islamic jurisprudence, *Haj* and 'Umrah this uniform is called: the *Ihram*. With utmost humility before the Lord, in the acceptance of being His weak creation, displaying utter powerlessness before Him, amidst cries, tears and lamentations, in the same language, they chorus the same anthem and raise the same slogan:

... .. At Thy beck and call ... O Allah! ... At Thy beck and call  
At Thy beck and call...there is no partner unto Thee....  
At Thy beck and call  
Thou art the Owner of: all praise... all favors... and Sovereignty  
There is no partner unto Thee ... ..

Among them, the nation of Islam that is, there is no distinction of king and subject, lord and servant, rich and poor, high and low, and the Islamic nationality, recognizable in the uniformity of their dress and chant, is writ large across the entire Makkan panorama. The same is true during all related actions, other forms of worship that overlap with *Haj*, the performance of rites, and the convergence of multitudes at the sacred signs and places that are associated with *Haj*. Everywhere people of every Islamic community and country are seen together shoulder to shoulder. All differences of far and near, Arab and non-Arab are wiped away. Between the hillocks of Safa and Marwah all run together, travel to Mina together, go to 'Arafat together, together they stand

in attendance at Jabl-e-Rahmath to supplicate and all spend the night at one place.

**But when ye press on in multitude from 'Arafat,  
remember Allah by the sacred monument.  
Remember Him as He hath guided you,  
although before ye were of the astray.<sup>18</sup>**

Together they return, move together and halt together.

**Then hasten onward from the place whence  
the multitude hasteneth onward, and ask forgiveness of Allah.  
Lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.<sup>19</sup>**

In Mina too they stay together and perform the rites of *Nahr* (sacrifice), *Halaq* (shaving of the head) and *Rami al-Jamraath* (stoning the devil) together.

Till the time they possess the *Haj* (And it will be their cherished possession till the end of the world, God willing), until then, their secondary identities and the un-Islamic invitations to which they are exposed, can never succeed to swallow Muslims. Muslims will not become pie for them. In each of their respective countries, with which their love is natural due to inborn sentiments and nationalistic feelings, Muslims can never succeed to build a new *Ka'bah*, which could become a substitute location for *Haj* and could attract all other Muslims to throng around it. The present *Qiblah*<sup>20</sup> will remain one and the same, forever. Towards it all the dwellers of the East and the West, Arab and non-Arab will turn their faces in prayer. The *Baitullah* (Holy *Ka'bah*) too will remain one and the same always. For its *Haj*, Muslims of every description – Indian, Afghan, European and American – will continue to travel year after year.

**18.** V.198: Chapter 2: *Al-Baqrah*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall. **19.** V.199: Chapter 2: *Al-Baqrah*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall. **20.** *Qiblah* is an Arabic term. It is the name of that direction in which Allah the Exalted has commanded Muslims to offer prayer i.e. towards the Holy *Ka'bah* in Makkah. More specifically, with respect to the coordinates of a worshipper the *Qiblah* is the direction towards the Holy *Ka'bah*, located at 21°25'24"N, 39°49'24"E. We can determine it by a compass or it can be shown on a 2-dimensional map made to scale. *Qiblah* can be any of the 360° around the Holy *Ka'bah*, depending on the location of a worshipper on earth. This universal rule of facing the (continued on next page)

**And (remember the time) when We made the House (at Makkah)  
a resort for mankind and a sanctuary (saying):  
take as your place of worship the place  
where Abraham stood (to pray).<sup>21</sup>**

People in the remotest corner on the face of the earth will experience its pull and they will reach there crossing difficult terrain. They will make vows and implore the Lord to bless them with a day that they might go to the *Baitullah* and they will count every passing day before their eyes actually see it. They will perceive attendance in that Holy Court as being their strongest desire and indeed a thing most fortunate, most auspicious, to happen.

#### **2.4.4. The duty of Haj is specific to an appointed period and place**

This entire duty and worship is related to Makkah and its sub-urbs: Mina and 'Arafat. All the rites are performed there only. They are neither performed in any other month of the year except *Zil-Haj* nor on any other dates even within *Zil-Haj*. This obligation can also not be fulfilled anywhere except in Makkah, Mina and 'Arafat. Events, personalities, philosophies and expediencies related to the *Haj* and the objectives which the *Haj* is meant to serve, collectively demand that this grand duty be performed in this very month, on these very dates and at these very places. The duty of *Haj* commemorates the sentiments of *Tawheed*, love, self-denial, selflessness and sacrifice that were present in Allah's two blessed prophets: Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, and Prophet Ismail, peace be upon him, who were at once His lovers and His beloved. It is also an enactment of their accomplishments embodying intense love of God at the selfsame places and times. In them lies great potential for creating a state of being intoxicated with Allah's love, sentiments of self-denial and selflessness and a sense of liberation and independence, even if for a short while from customs and traditions, habits and habitats, formalities and laws and all self-imposed standards of mankind. Then, without *Haj* the purpose of

**20.** (continued from previous page) Holy *Ka'bah* during prayer is most apparent in live telecasts of congregational prayers from Masjid Al-Haram in Makkah that houses the Holy *Ka'bah*. Worshippers can be seen standing in concentric rows around the Holy *Ka'bah*. Every worshipper in a circle faces the Holy *Ka'bah* but from a different angle. And each and every angle, or shall we say radius, is the *Qiblah* for all those worshippers who are standing along it. Application of the rule of facing the Holy *Ka'bah* is also manifest in the layout of mosques throughout the world: inside the mosque, the *mihrab* (tall niche) where the *Imam* stands to lead the congregation and the pulpit from where he delivers the sermon are always constructed along the wall that faces the *Qiblah*. **21.** V.125: Chapter 2: *Al-Baqrah*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall.

always keeping Muslims from around the world – in whatever the age they live and wherever on earth they might dwell – linked and bonded to the Ibrahimian civilization, the Center of Islam and the Holy *Ka'bah* would be impossible to serve.<sup>22</sup>

**22.** For *Haj* to become obligatory on a person it is necessary that he has the financial capacity to meet his travel and other sundry expenses and leave an allowance for his dependents that is sufficient to meet their expenses while he is away. Also necessary are: safe passage, availability of conveyance up to the Holy *Ka'bah* and physical fitness to undertake the journey. [For complete details please refer to the writer's *Arkaan-e-Arb'aa* (Urdu); available at: Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, Nadwatul Ulema, Lucknow.]



## Some religious and sociocultural (*Millee*) distinctions of Muslims

The term *sociocultural* is not used in this chapter in terms of its conventional meaning, it is used to convey the specific sense of the Urdu term *Millee*. The term *Millee* has no equivalent term in English. Readers unfamiliar with this term would like to know that *Millee* is the adjective of the noun *Millath*. Two Urdu words *Millath* and *Ummath* are interchangeably used by writers. The difference between the two words, however, is of terms of reference. While *Millath* is used for a particular people, *Ummath* is used in a more general sense. A *Millath* are followers of a particular prophet. However, the entire human population is classified in to two. A people who have accepted the faith: one *Ummath*. And, a people who are invited to faith: the second *Ummath*. Since Muslims follow the teachings of Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, they are called *Millath-e Ibrahim*. But in general terms they are an *Ummath* since they have accepted the Islamic faith propagated by Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Therefore, '*Millee* distinctions' of Muslims mean distinctions that are found in them by virtue of following the teachings of Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, which have as much been a part of their cultures for over forty centuries as they are a part of their present day society.

### 3.1. The first distinction of all Muslims: One revealed faith and a religion and *Shariath* (Divine laws) which like all God-made laws do not change

The first distinction of all Muslims of the world is that their identity as a sociocultural fraternity is founded upon one revealed faith and a stable religion and *Shariath* – these for the sake of brevity are called their *religion* despite the fact that the term *religion* does not convey the correct sense here and its shared usage for different meanings creates many misunderstandings and confusions – that is why their *Milli* name and worldwide sobriquet is derived from a root that reflects a particular faith and conduct and not from the name of any race, family, religious leader and founder of religion or country. Practitioners of common world religions relate themselves towards their respective religious leaders, founders of religions, prophets, countries or races and their names are derived from the names of those personalities, races and countries, for example, Jews are called *Yahud* and *Bani Israeel* i.e. *Children of Israel*, *Yahudah* is the name of one of the sons of Prophet Yaqoob (Jacob), peace be upon him, and *Israeel* is his own name; the term *Christian*

is related to *Christ* (Prophet 'Eisa, peace be upon him) and in the Holy Quran, Christians are also remembered by the sobriquet of *Nasaarah*, *Nasserah* (Nazareth) being the hometown of *Hazrath* Maseeh, peace be upon him; practitioners of the religion of *Majoosees* (Literary Arabic) in India are commonly remembered as Parsees, their correct name is *Zoroastrians*, which relates to *Zoroaster*, the founder of their religion; *Buddhism* and *Buddhists* relate to their founder and religious leader Gautam Buddha and similar is the case with most Indian religions.

### 3.1.1. The honorific title of *Ummath-e-Muslimah*

However, the nation of *Muslims* – who are remembered in the Holy Quran, in all religious books, historical narratives and literary classics by the sobriquets of *Muslimoon* (Arabic) and *Ummath-e-Muslimah* (Persian, Urdu etc.) and who even now are known and recognized, in every corner of the world, by the sobriquet *Muslim* – relate to the word *Islam*. The Arabic word *Islam* means bowing one's head in obeisance before the Sovereignty of God, surrendering before Him and giving oneself up in His custody, taken together all of these constitute a permanent decision, a defined conduct, a way of life and a school of thought for leading one's life. In spite of strongly connecting with their Apostle, they as a nation are not called *Mohammedan*. In India, the British for the first time had coined the name *Mohammedans* for them and named their law *Mohammedan Law* but people who were familiar with the soul of Islam objected to it, they preferred to retain the same ancient sobriquet of *Muslim* for themselves and duly replaced the term *Mohammedan* by *Muslim* in the names of institutions that had become popular as *Mohammedan College* or *Mohammedan Conference* during early British rule.

### 3.1.2. Faith, religion and *Shariath* are of fundamental importance to Muslims

For the same reason, *faith*, *religion* and *Shariath* occupy a place of fundamental importance in the overall system to which their lives conform, in their civilization and in their way of life. Muslims naturally happen to be extraordinarily sensitive in matters that relate to them. When deliberating upon their personal matters or their national issues, while formulating laws, in the drafting and adoption of a constitution or amendments thereof, so much so that in common social settings demanding basic decencies too, there is a need to keep in view this basic truth. To be borne in mind is also the fact that

the core and basic portion of their Personal Law is extracted from the Holy Quran and its details, sections and expositions are founded on Traditions and Islamic Jurisprudence.

Muslim Personal Law is a part of the *Shariath* (Divine law) and the religion of Muslims. First, its legal status is authenticated by the Holy Quran and the Traditions. Second, it is neither the product of some social experiment nor a specialized area of social sciences and it is also not a system propounded by intellectuals, law makers and reformers. That is precisely why even a Muslim government can not make any change, whatsoever, in it.

Additionally, Muslim Personal Law is considered a part of religion and it becomes necessary for every Muslim to act in accordance with it first because in Islam the sphere of religion is not hemmed in by articles of faith and acts of worship, it prevails upon inter-personal relationships, rights and duties, way of life and modern culture; secondly because if religion is banned from modern culture and way of life, and modern culture and way of life are partitioned from religion, then while religion becomes ineffective, confined and weak, modern culture and way of life degenerate into uncontrolled vehicles and instruments of desires and petty interests.<sup>1</sup>

### 3.1.3. Nobody has the right to amend or alter the laws of *Shariath*

- Whereas, some portion of these laws appears in the Glorious Quran with such clarity and finality or
- The legal status of a certain portion is authenticated by Traditions whose chain of narrators are innumerable<sup>2</sup> and people have been practicing it since the time of the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, with such continuity or
- The consensus reached by Muslim theologians is so decisive with respect to a certain portion,

that whosoever rejects it, shall now be considered to be outside the sphere of Islam both in principle and under the law. In the areas of its interpretation and

1. For further understanding of this subject please refer to the author's *Muslim Personal Law ki Sahili Nau'yyath-o-Ahmiyath* (Urdu). 2. The term used by the author here is '*Tawatur*', please see footnote no. 4 of sub-section 2.2.1.

application no matter how much consideration is given to prevalent conditions; any alteration, change and amendment in the law itself is out of question. In this matter even the representative government and Legislative Assembly of any country, where Muslims happen to be in majority, do not have the authority to make any change. And suppose a change is made or there is a plan to incorporate a change, then such an action is synonymous with tampering with the Holy text and interference in religion.

Subjects of *Ijtihad*: However, those interpretative law-points can be deliberated upon in which continuously flexibilities have been created or amendments have been made, when landmark changes have occurred. Muslim intellectuals and specialists of Islamic jurisprudence who have the ability to conclusively reinterpret the law-points by exercising their will and authority may do so but only after necessary debate, review and reflection. Then, allowing for the new conditions and whatever change has come about they may make the rulings consistent with the times and with the demands of practical life. Recourse to this process, called *Ijtihad*, was taken continually in every period of Islam's history and it is necessary to employ it till the last generation of Muslims.

### **3.2. Second sociocultural distinction: A special concept and system of *Taharath* i.e. bodily purification<sup>3</sup>**

A special concept and system of bodily purification is the second sociocultural distinction of Muslims. At this juncture let us also understand the difference between cleanliness and purification. Whereas cleanliness means that one's body be free from dirt and grime and clothes be neat and clean; purification means that the body or clothes be free from urine, excrement or such filthy things as a drop of alcoholic drink, blood, canine saliva, dung and so forth, like droppings of forbidden birds etc. Now, if the body or a garment is defiled by even the tiniest of urine droplets or a drop of blood or dung or bird dropping then no matter how clean the body and how sparkling the dress, a Muslim is not in a state of purification and he will not be able to offer prayer to God with that body and in that garment. Similarly if he has not washed himself after urinating and defecation or he needs to bathe, then too he is in a state of impurity and can not offer prayer (*Namaz*). The same commandment extends to kitchen utensils, earthenware, plastered and un-plastered floors. It is not necessary that if they appear tidy and spotlessly clean they are in a state of

3. Reader may refer back to the text-box under sub-section 2.1.5. Purification, if necessary.

purification too. If any of the abovementioned impurities defiles any of the abovementioned things then lest purified it will neither attain purification nor become usable on its own.

### **3.3. The third sociocultural distinction: The dietary systems of Muslims comply with the dictates of the Bounteous Quran**

Their third sociocultural distinction is in terms of their diet. They are not free to consume food, beverages, meats of animals and birds, at will. That they may eat and drink whatever they like. In the Glorious Quran and the *Shariath* a line has been drawn between *Halaal* and *Haraam* (Allowed and Forbidden) and *Khabees* and *Tayyab* (Prohibited and Permissible) for their guidance which they find impossible to cross. As regards quadrupeds and birds they are duty-bound to slaughter them in the manner prescribed in *Shariath*, invoking Allah's name on them, failing which they can not consume of their meat. In case a quadruped is not slaughtered in accordance with *Shariath* or while hunting if one has not been quick enough to slaughter a bird in accordance with *Shariath* and it dies, then such meat under Islamic Law falls under the definition of the term: *carrion* – whose consumption is unlawful for them. Likewise, if an animal is slaughtered with the intention of offering it as a sacrifice to anyone other than Allah or if at the time of sacrifice a name other than Allah's is invoked upon it – be it the name of some god or goddess or idol or the name of some apostle of Allah, God-fearing pious personage and martyr in Allah's way – then that meat also is categorized as *carrion* whose consumption is unlawful. Among animals those which are forever forbidden and impure are pigs and dogs. Consumption of some animals is prohibited and their meats are forbidden although they are not impure in themselves e.g. predators: lion, leopard, panther etc. Similarly, some birds are allowed for them and some are forbidden. For example *birds of prey* and those birds that use their toes to grasp and lift food like falcon, hawk etc. are *forbidden*. And those birds that are *not birds of prey* and eat with their beaks are *allowed*. Actually this selection is a sign of the Ibrahimian civilization, the great Prophet's taste and his intuitive choice have been declared the standard in this regard and Muslims, to whichever country of the world and whichever period of history they might belong, have compulsorily been bound to adopt it.

**3.4. Fourth sociocultural distinction: They strongly connect with Hazrath Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, from the depths of their hearts and emulate him (But in their expressions of**



### reverence towards him they do not exaggerate)

Their fourth distinction is that they strongly connect with their Apostle, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. In their perception, the position of the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is not only that of a great human being, respectable personality and religious leader; their relationship to his being is a shade different from that and a shade beyond. So far as the greatness of the Apostle, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is concerned, it cannot be expressed more profoundly than the famous line of an Urdu verse that says, *ba'd az Khuda buzurg tu'ee; qissah mukhtasar*. Poetic devices apart, its sense in English would be more or less:

Venerable after God art thou -  
eulogies to you are thus abridged

They are restricted from entertaining thoughts implying that he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, in any way partners with God and from referring to him in exaggerated terms, in the manner that followers of some prophets consider permissible for their prophets. A *Sahih* Tradition clearly quotes the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, as having said that:

*'Never raise me beyond my limit and never exaggerate about me in the manner that Christians consider permissible for their Prophet, refer to me as the Slave of God or Apostle of God if you have to'.*

#### **3.4.1. An example or precedent of the deep affection and love in which Muslims hold their Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is not found anywhere**

But alongside this balanced faith and reverence, Muslims have such a sentimental attachment with their Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and such is the way they connect and bond with him from the depths of their hearts that the like of it – in our limited knowledge and according to whatever little we have read – is not found between any other people or *Millath* and their Prophet. It will be correct to say that thousands and lakhs of individuals among them hold the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, closer to their hearts than their parents, their children and their



own lives. They consider defending his honor to be their sacred duty and can never tolerate any act or remark even remotely blasphemous about him. In this regard, they happen to be so emotional and sensitive that at any such inauspicious time and place they just become uncontrollable and do not flinch even from sacrificing their lives. Every period of history is replete with events and evidences that support the truth of this statement. Even today his name, his honor, his city, his words and relics associated with him, are the most dear possessions of Muslims.<sup>4</sup> They produce the rush in their blood and the heat in their nerves.

The frequency with which Muslims invoke *Darud* (Blessings of Allah) on the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him; the virtues of *Darud* that are taught to them and the importance that reciting *Darud* is given in their community; the amazingly high number of his biographies circulating in different languages of the world and biographies still being written; are phenomena that are unique in themselves. Also the soulful depth of feeling, the sentiment of love that pours out from the heart, the excellence of poetic devices and expressions, fluent and moving use of language, and the sweetness of narration that find expression in *N'aatiyah Kalaam*, both old and contemporary, have absolutely no parallel in world's literatures.

*N'aatiyah Kalam*: The entire corpus of poetry composed by Muslims and Non-Muslims alike in the honor of the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

### 3.4.2. Faith on the discontinuance of prophet-hood

An important article of the faith of Muslims is also that *Hazrath* Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is the last of Allah's prophets; and that ancient chain of prophet-hood and revelations which had continued up to him has ended for ever. Now, after him, whosoever claims to be a prophet is a liar creating mischief. Founded upon the Holy Quran, the Traditions and the *Tawatur*<sup>5</sup>, this article of faith has acted like an iron curtain and a line of demarcation for the Muslim society and it has saved them from falling prey to the conspiracies of the crafty and the cunning in every age.

**4. SUGGESTED READING:** For a more detailed account of the life of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, read *Nabi-e-Rahmat* (Urdu, Hindi and English); available at: Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, Nadwatul Ulema, Lucknow. **5.** Explanation has appeared under Reference no. 4 of Section 2.2.

### 3.4.3. Love for the Noble Companions and The Dwellers of the prophet's home, may Allah be pleased with them

All those personalities who lived during the time of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and got the honor of being in his company are commonly, out of respect, called the *Sahabah* (The Noble Companions) by the Muslims. Muslims consider it necessary to hold a good opinion about them and acknowledge their services in the cause of Islam. They consider them to be exemplary Muslims, their benefactors and elders. Whenever they make a reference to any of the *Sahabah* in their speech or writing they mention the words *Razi Allahu 'Anhu* after his name, meaning: May Allah be pleased with him. Even among the Companions, they consider the four illustrious Companions, *Hazrath* Abu Bakr *Razi Allahu 'Anhu*, *Hazrath* 'Umar *Razi Allahu 'Anhu*, *Hazrath* 'Uthman *Razi Allahu 'Anhu* and *Hazrath* 'Ali *Razi Allahu 'Anhu* – who became the Prophet's Successors and successively the Caliphs after the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had passed away – to be in one group that ranks the highest and mention their names after the name of the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, in the sermons delivered every Friday and the two Sermons of *'Eid-ul Fitr* and *Eid-ul Azha*; to them and six other Companions, the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had given glad tidings of Paradise in their very lifetimes. This blessed group of ten Companions is called the *'Ashrah Mubashshirah*.

Muslims consider it their duty to love all members of the Prophet's family who are called the *Ahl-e-Baith* (Dwellers of the prophet's home), they include his noble wives, daughters and grandsons (*Hazrath* Imam Hasan and *Hazrath* Imam Hussain), may Allah be pleased with them. Muslims always remember them with love and reverence, respects and etiquette, and consider doing so to be a compulsory component and a claim upon them of their love for their Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

### 3.4.4. The greatness of the Glorious Quran and its place in Islam

Just as they do not regard the *Sahabah* to be ordinary people, they also do not regard the Glorious Quran to be merely an anthology – of sagacity, moral instructions and societal laws – that needs be respected to some extent and needs be acted upon only when it suites one's convenience. Instead, from beginning to end, in word and essence, they regard it to be a discourse from

God and a Divine Revelation. Each and every letter and each and every dot of which is guarded and in which even the slightest change, like that of a comma, is impossible to make. They always perform *Wuzu* before they read it and place it, out of respect, at an elevated place.

### **3.4.5. The custom of learning the entire Glorious Quran by heart among Muslims**

Learning the entire Glorious Quran by heart is a global custom. There are regular and established schools in India for it where the art of *Tajweed* (Phonetics and elocution) is taught and guidance is provided in committing the Glorious Quran to memory. In India alone the number of *Huffaz* (boys and men who have learnt the Glorious Quran by heart) has exceeded thousands and their figure has reached to lakhs. Among them are such excellent *Huffaz* who are known to recite the entire Holy Quran from memory in a single night and such personalities are also found who, since years, have been routinely reciting the complete Holy Quran from memory once daily during *Ramzan*. Quite a high proportion among the *Huffaz* is of ten to twelve year old children who have learnt this voluminous book by heart and can recite it with flawless diction. Among the women folk also a large number of *Hafizaath* (girls and ladies who have learnt the Glorious Quran by heart) has been there in every age.

### **3.5. Fifth sociocultural distinction of Muslims: Concern for the global Islamic brotherhood, interaction with it and interest in its affairs**

Pragmatism demands that this particular sociocultural distinction of Muslims be understood and given its due allowance. The distinction is that they regard themselves to be a global *Millath* and consider their religion to be a major world religion unto whose Creator the entire universe submits; together with all the sentiments of attachment, love, support and loyalty to their own country, of which they are citizens, and besides actively participating in that country's development and progress, they visualize themselves to be either a member of that abovementioned international family or a family within that international *Millath*. They take interest in common Islamic affairs, are influenced by the misfortunes and problems of other Muslim countries and do not regard the expression of sympathy for them – the extent to which it is possible – and extension of moral support to them to be contrary to the love for their motherland and loyalty to their country; rather they visualize their

actions to be the cumulative demand of religion, kindness, human nature and justice; and believe their actions to be beneficial for their own country and incremental to its stability. This is their sociocultural (*Millee*) nature and a claim that the teachings of Islam and their centuries old history places on them. Before forming an opinion about them or deciding a course of action for them, it is very necessary to understand this distinctive streak of their nature.

### Two great festivals

'Eid-ul Fitr and 'Eid-ul Azha, remembered as 'Eid and Baqreed also, are two great festivals of Muslims. 'Eid falls on the 1<sup>st</sup> of Shawwal, when the month of Ramzan ends and the moon of Shawwal (the 10<sup>th</sup> month of the Islamic calendar<sup>1</sup>) is sighted. Since the month of Ramzan is the month of fasting and it is spent in endurance, worship, religious and spiritual engagements and self-restraint, naturally the moon of 'Eid<sup>2</sup> is eagerly awaited and there is more joy if the moon is sighted specially on the 29<sup>th</sup>. In Urdu, the moon of 'Eid ('Eid ka chand) and the moon of the 29<sup>th</sup> (Unteesveen ka chand) have become popular idioms for: *joy and longing*. As the sun sets on the 29<sup>th</sup> of Ramzan, Muslims of every age and class scan the sky, intently looking for the dim luminous crescent. If the moon is not sighted on the 29<sup>th</sup> a fast is observed again the following day and the moon's sighting on the 30<sup>th</sup> becomes certain. The moment the moon is sighted, voices rise a few decibels in excitement and the dusk is rent with greetings of *Mubarak! Salamath!* The young wish their elders. Children in their innocent ways break the happy news of 'Eid to the elderly and ladies of the family and take their blessings. And the educated, especially those who try to act in accordance with the *Sunnath* (Practices of the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) supplicate in the following manner when they see the crescent.

*Allah is my Sustainer and yours O crescent,*

1. *Hijrath* is an event of great importance in Islam and it marks the beginning of the Hijri calendar which is the Islamic calendar. The word *Hijri* is derived from *Hijrath*. Unlike the Gregorian calendar, the month in Hijri calendar changes on the sighting of the new moon and the date changes at sunset. The night of 'Eid is thus the night between the last day of Ramzan and the day of 'Eid. The Hijri being a lunar calendar the concept of leap year is not there in it; the month is either of 29 or of 30 days depending on the sighting of the moon; and the number of months is 12 whose names in descending order are: *Muharram-ul Haraam, Safar-ul Muzaffar, Rabi'ul Awwal, Rabi'ut thani, Jamadi-ul Awwal, Jamadi-ut thani, Rajab-ul Murajjab, Sha'baan Al-Mu'azzam, Ramzan-ul Mubarak, Shawwal, Zee Qa'dah* and *Zil Hajj*. 2. The author has referred to the moon of Shawwal as the moon of 'Eid. In colloquial Urdu, the moon of Shawwal is popularly known as the moon of 'Eid probably because it is the only crescent that ushers in a month and a festival and the festival attracts more attention than the month.

*(you sure are) the symbol of guidance and goodness!*

*O Allah! Allow this month to begin:  
with peace, firmness of belief, safety and security for us;  
with our obedience unto You and  
with the hope of succeeding to act according to Your Holy Will.*

#### **4.1<sup>a</sup> Reception of 'Eid and the agenda for the day**

As 'Eid approaches, preparations for its reception get under way several days in advance but on the night of 'Eid festivity is in the air. Markets and homes pulsate with activity. In the morning, arrangements are made for the 'Eid i.e. for expressing the fact that on the day of 'Eid there is no fast and in a contrast with the last 29 or 30 days, on the day of 'Eid Allah has allowed to take nourishment. It is yet quite early in the morning that ripe dates or *Sheerkhurmah*<sup>3</sup>, whatever is affordable, is served. Everywhere people take due care to meet the mandatory requirements<sup>4</sup> for *ghusl*. Those who God has given the means, think that they should wear new clothes on this day. Neat and clean, well-dressed, wearing 'Atar and perfumes, people proceed towards 'Eidgah. Before going to 'Eidgah, some grain is handed over to the poor, it is called the *Sadqah fitr*. In a sense, it is an expression of thanks to the Lord for having inclined hearts towards fasting in *Ramzan*. If it is in the form of wheat, its weight is about 1.65 Kg (per person of the donor's family) and if it is barley, the weight doubles. Alternatively, even its cash equivalent can be paid – an amount which keeps fluctuating with the market rate of those cereals. Apart from each of the adults, this particular *Sadqah* is given for each of the children too. Whereas the practice of the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is to offer the Prayer of 'Eid after the sun has ascended, the earlier the better, its largest congregation is held at the city's 'Eidgah.

#### **4.1<sup>b</sup> Prayer of 'Eid**

When Muslims go to offer the Prayer of 'Eid, all along the way, they keep chanting in a subdued voice words of Allah's praise and words of thanks to Him. It is a precept of the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be

3. A sweetmeat prepared mainly from vermicelli, dates, milk, and sugar. 4. Primarily, obtaining such clean quality of water as is specified in *Shari'ah*, arranging for so much quantity of water of tolerable temperature as would be sufficient to wash the whole body and arranging for a duly purified and covered place to perform the *ghusl*.



upon him, that people take one route to '*Eidgah* and another on return so that in both directions Allah's Majesty, Muslims' liking for worship and the community's dignified unity, become apparent.<sup>5</sup>

In a contrast from the five daily prayers and the Prayer of Friday, before the Prayers of '*Eidain* i.e. of '*Eid* and *Baqreed* there is no *Azaan* and no *Iqamath*, no *Sunnath* and no *Nafil*. As soon as Muslims have assembled or it is time for the prayer, the *Imam* stands ahead of the congregation and begins the prayer. Quite like the usual prayers, the *Takbir* (saying: *Allahu Akbar*) is called out two times in each *Rak'ath*, first to begin the prayer and second for *Ruku'* but in the Prayers of '*Eidain* i.e. of '*Eid* and *Baqreed* under the Hanfi school the *Takbir* is called out four times in the upright position of each *Rak'ath*.<sup>6</sup> Immediately after the prayer, the *Imam* goes up to the pulpit and delivers the Sermon of '*Eid* which, like the Sermon of Friday, has two portions. After the first address he sits down for a few seconds, then stands up and delivers the second address. On Fridays the sermon precedes the prayer, in '*Eid* the prayer precedes the sermon. The content of the sermon throws light on the reality of '*Eid* and the message it brings, commandments and issues connected with '*Eid*, the demands of the time and the claims that it has upon humankind.

#### **4.2. Meeting the mandatory requirements for the sacrifice in *Baqreed* and the greatness of sacrifice in Allah's sight**

In '*Eid-ul Azha* (*Baqreed*) only sacrifice is additional. The rite of *Sadqah fitr* is not there in it. Besides, there is one more difference: '*Eid* falls on the 1<sup>st</sup> of *Shawwal* and '*Eid-ul Azha* on the 10<sup>th</sup> of *Zil Haj* (the 12<sup>th</sup> month of the lunar calendar) i.e. the day when *Hajis* performing the *Haj* in Makkah become free after completing the last of the *Haj* rites at Mina – a Makkan sub-urb four miles from Makkah city – and get busy in *Zikr* (remembrance of Allah), worship, sacrifice, utilization of Allah's favors and feasts. Another difference is that '*Eid* lasts for one day and '*Eid-ul Azha* extends over three days (10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of *Zil Haj*). Although the prayer of '*Eid-ul Azha* is offered on the 10<sup>th</sup> of *Zil Haj* but the sacrifice can be offered till the sunset of the 12<sup>th</sup>. Also, on the occasion of '*Eid-ul Azha*, the *Fajr* of 9<sup>th</sup> through the '*Asr* of the 13<sup>th</sup> *Zil Haj*, after every obligatory prayer, choicest words called the *Takbeerath-e-Tashreeq* are recited in a raised voice. They are an anthem of Allah's greatness in which His praise is extolled and their meaning is:

5. Another benefit is that it streamlines traffic movement. 6. Complete procedure for offering the Prayer of '*Eid* is available in books of Islamic jurisprudence.

*Allah is the Greatest.  
 Allah is the Greatest.  
 Except Allah there is nobody worthy of worship.*

*Allah is the Greatest.  
 Allah is the Greatest.  
 Verily He is Allah who we thank.*

Sacrificial meat is divided into three parts, one part for domestic consumption i.e. for the family of the person who offers the sacrifice, his guests and himself, one part for friends and acquaintances and one part for the poor and destitute. On the day of 'Eid and the three days of 'Eid-ul Azha fasting is not permissible. These four days are counted with the days in which nourishment is normally allowed. Muslims, by and large, have sumptuous meals in 'Eid-ul Azha. This day a lot of people are blessed with such delicacies that many a time don't reach them and so much meat comes in their share that many a time is not available to them the whole year.

#### **4.3. Both festivals are International Festivals of Muslims**

The festivals of 'Eid-ul Fitr and 'Eid-ul Azha fall in the categories of:

World Festivals
-----------------

&

International Festivals of Muslims
------------------------------------

In their global celebration no country, race and class is left out. And these are the very festivals over whose status, in religion and under *Shariath*, nobody differs. Nothing contentious has ever been spoken on their account in any period. In almost all countries, whether they are Muslim majority countries or countries where Muslims are in minority, there is no big difference in terms of their celebration, engagements of the day and obligatory acts of worship particular to them. That is the crowning distinction of all those religious acts and rituals; they are authenticated by the Glorious Quran and by the Prophetic Traditions and they have continuously and constantly been practiced among Muslims.

## **The Muslim way of life**

### **5<sup>a</sup>.1. From birth up to puberty**

Islamic *Shariath* has chalked out the entire course of life for a Muslim beginning from the time that he is born till the time he passes away and has sought to structure his cultural environment in such a way that a Muslim is not able to disregard this reality and he lives in the awareness of certain facts throughout, namely: that we are an *Ummath* which has an identity of its own; that we, the members of *Millath-e-Ibrahimi*<sup>1</sup> and *Ummath-e-Muhammadi*<sup>2</sup>, practitioners of a distinctive *Shariath* and constitution of a school of thought for life, are loyal slaves of Allah who believe in His Oneness; may our lives be spent in complete loyalty to that constitution and school of thought, and may we die in that very religion and *Millath*, he prays.

#### **5<sup>a</sup>.1.1. Birth of a child and the saying of *Azan* and *Iqamath* softly in his ears**

When a Muslim family is blessed with an offspring, the newborn is first of all brought to some pious gentleman in the neighborhood or to a family elder who, softly, in a subdued voice says the *Azan* in his right ear and the *Iqamath* in his left ear. Calling out the *Azan* and *Iqamath* (Their meanings were given under sub-sections 2.1.3. & 2.1.7) are particular to *Namaz*. Leave aside the *Namaz*, a newborn can not make out what the *Azan* and *Iqamath* mean and obviously he does not know what for they are said. The intention, perhaps, is that the first sounds he hears be the name of Allah and the call to worship Him. On this occasion for the sake of blessedness, a tiny bit of any kind of date chewed by some venerable personage is put in the infant's mouth; this too is a tradition. It is a *Sunnath* also, which owes its origin and authentication to what the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, liked to do at such times.

#### **5<sup>a</sup>.1.2. Infant's '*Aqeeqah*: the rite and its performance**

1. Followers of the Ibrahimian faith. The terms *Millath* and *Ummath* were explained at the beginning of Chapter 3. 2. The Muslim brotherhood.

It is a desirable act (*Mustahab*<sup>3</sup>) to perform the infant's '*Aqeeqah* (shaving the head; *Moondan*) on the seventh day. If for some reason it is not performed on the seventh day, the ceremony is postponed to the fourteenth day and to multiples of seven after that. Whereas in case of a baby boy two male goats are slaughtered Islamically, in case of a baby girl one male goat is slaughtered. Meat is distributed among the poor and relatives; it is also cooked at home for the family and the family's guests. But the other aspect is that, '*Aqeeqah* is not classified in *Shariath* as an obligatory act (*Farz*) or a necessary act (*Wajib*) and the same rule applies to the slaughter of animals on this occasion. If somebody can not perform it, for whatever reason, it is not necessary.

### 5<sup>a</sup>.1.3. Name of the child and the projection of an Islamic image from it

It is a common practice that on the occasion of '*Aqeeqah*, without much fanfare, the name of the child is announced. Very often a family elder or a knowledgeable and pious gentleman from the neighborhood or from the mosque is requested to propose the name; alternatively the parents themselves or their elders select a name of their choice. Preference is given mostly to the names rooted in Arabic so that the names of children project an Islamic image and it becomes clear from the name itself that the child is a Muslim. Muslim intellectuals point out many psychological benefits in it and to stress the importance of compulsorily adopting such names cite examples of certain countries (like China) where it is not possible to assess from a name whether a person is a Muslim or non-Muslim. So far as the Islamic *Shariath* is concerned, in *Shariath* no legal compulsion has been placed on Muslims to adopt any particular names, the only guidance offered is that the best names are those that reflect servitude to God (in the sense of His Oneness). This has led to a trend. In all Islamic countries of the world, the most common Muslim names are those that begin with the word '*Abd*, meaning *slave*, like Abdullah<sup>4</sup>, Abdurrehman, Abdul Wahid, Abdul Ahad, Abdussamad, Abdulaziz, Abdul Majid, Abdul Majeed and so on. Also the necessity that names should not reflect association of partners with Allah, disobedience unto Him and arrogance, is universally agreed upon; hence the words *Malikalmulook* and *Shahenshah* are disliked.<sup>5</sup>

3. An act the performance of which brings Divine reward but its non-performance is not a sin and the person who shuns it is not called to account is classified as *Mustahab*. 4. *Abdullah* is the composite of '*Abd* and *Allah*; meaning *Slave of Allah*, the names that follow are composites of '*Abd* and *Allah*'s attributes. 5. *Malikalmulook* and *Shahenshah* are Arabic and Urdu for *King of kings*, both words exude arrogance.

### **5<sup>a</sup>.1.4. Selecting a name with inherent blessedness and good reputation, hence the preference for names of Prophets and the Noble Companions**

In the matter of names naturally a Muslim's mind first of all goes to his own Apostle, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and his highly honorable friends and companions and the respectable and lovable members of his noble family, may Allah be pleased with them, and because he considers their names to be blessed and auspicious he prefers their names over every other name before him.

Connected with names it is a point not devoid of interest that whereas Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, by descent is in the Ismaeeli branch of the family after Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, and Muslims in general have more psychological affinity towards it; and whereas the distance and difference between the Bani Ismaeel and Bani Israeel (Arabs and Jews) have been there since the very beginning, the fact remains that because a basic tenet of the Muslim faith lays down that all who God chose to deliver His message, peace be upon them, are to be respected and venerated and because it is essential to have faith on them irrespective of whether they happened to be in the Ismaeeli branch or the Israeeli branch; Muslims have not fallen prey to racial bias in the adoption of names. Furthermore, in India alone there would be lakhs of Muslims named after Prophet Ishaq (Isaac), peace be upon him, and his descendents; and called Ishaq (Isaac), Yaqoob (Jacob), Yusuf (Joseph), Da'ood (David), Sulaiman (Solomon), Musa (Moses), Haroon (Aron), 'Eisa (Jesus), Imran, Zakaria (Zachariah) and Yahya (John) – all of these names are related to the Israeeli branch. Likewise, among the women-folk are found names such as Maryam (Mary), Safoora and Aasiyah which are names of venerable ladies of the Israeeli branch.

### **5<sup>a</sup>.1.5. Lessons in purification and *Taharath***

When the child becomes old enough and begins to understand and comprehend what he is told, he is taught to perform the *Taharath*, that is to say, attaining purification by washing himself with water after urinating and defecation. He is taught to keep away from impure things and save his body and clothes from impurities. Obviously a child can not take full precautions in this regard and factors like immediate atmosphere, education and upbringing, occupation of the family and their profession exercise quite an influence. Still, faithful parents attend to these matters with great sincerity and they should.



### 5<sup>a</sup>.1.6. Persuasion, guidance and drill for *Namaz*

By this age the child is already taught to perform the *Wuzu* and he is told interesting facts about *Namaz* so as to arouse his interest in worship. The child's father or family elders frequently take him out to the mosque and the child, as he stands in the congregation alongside his elders and neighbors, learns to offer prayers from observation. A Prophetic Tradition mentions that the child should be instructed to offer prayers when he is seven years of age; he should be urged at length to offer prayers when he is ten years old and admonished if he does not.

### 5<sup>a</sup>.1.7. Education and training on Islamic manners and the Islamic way of life

At this very age, faithful parents and mothers with some educational background teach the child Islamic manners, for instance, he is taught that all good deeds are to be done by the right hand (i.e. the right hand should be used to take food, to hold a glass of water, hand-shake etc.) and that the left hand is to be used to wash himself clean after the calls of nature in order to attain purification. He should drink water in a sitting position and as far as possible in three breaths; he should wish his elders; whenever he sneezes he should say *Al-Hamdulillah*<sup>6</sup>; say *Bismillah*<sup>7</sup> before eating anything and end his meal with words of praise and thanks to God. At this very age he is encouraged to learn by heart a few short chapters of the Noble Quran and some everyday *azkaar* i.e. some oft-repeated words and common phrases or Quranic verses of Allah's remembrance. Such events and circumstances from the lives of Allah's prophets and His pious slaves are narrated to him that make his faith correct and firm, his thoughts virtuous and noble, and help him perceive those personalities as exemplary.

### 5<sup>a</sup>.2. Post-puberty up to death

With the onset of puberty<sup>8</sup>, prayer, fasting and in special conditions (whose details are available in books on Islamic Jurisprudence) *Hajj* and *Zakat* become obligatory on the young lad and if he deliberately neglects them he is ruled a sinner. Now, the law of allowed and forbidden (*Halaal* and *Haraam*), reward and punishment, becomes directly applicable on him and like a

6. Literally: *All praise unto Allah* but also an expression for thanking Allah. 7. In the name of Allah. 8. For reaching puberty an age of fifteen years is considered sufficient.



responsible, sane and adult human being he becomes accountable for his actions in this life and in the life after death.

### **5<sup>a</sup>.2.1. Marriage in accordance with the practice of the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him (*Nikah Masnoon*)**

In Islam, the compulsory rite of *Nikah* rather the wedding ceremony itself is very simple and brief. Its status in life is that of a duty, a demand of nature and an act of worship and it needs be performed in the same vein. A few simple words of proposal, a few simple words of consent and two witnesses are all that is essential. Their purpose is to substantiate the fact that the relationship between the couple is not criminal or clandestine and their meetings are not shrouded in secrecy. For the same reason it is necessary to let the word go around and publicize the *Nikah* a little (avoiding extravagance). Witnesses are essential for it. Man should understand that the payment of *Mehr*<sup>9</sup> is necessary and he should take responsibility of his wife's security, respect and maintenance. Except for the foregoing nothing else is necessary.

In Islamic history there are also instances as the following: despite the fact that Muslims were in a very small number in Madinah and Madinah was inhabited within a very limited area during the time of the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, still some of the companions – Makkan immigrants having extremely close family and homeland ties with him – who got married in Madinah did not even think it necessary to invite the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, to their *Nikah* get-together (although the presence of the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, in any gathering was a source of honor and a cause of blessings for all). And he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, learnt about the happy occasion and the development afterwards, when it was all over and when a passing reference to it was made in some other context.

### **5<sup>a</sup>.2.2. The custom of conducting the *Nikah* and its procedure**

Closer to the practice of the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is that the *Nikah* be conducted by the girl's father or by some other

<sup>9</sup> An amount, in cash or kind, that a husband pays to his wife after they enter wedlock, it is a condition in the *Nikah* agreement. The payment of *Mehr* is sharing and partnership in action and it helps the newly wed begin their married life on a note of mutual trust.

*Wali*<sup>10</sup> because the *Nikah* of *Hazrath* Fatima, the Prophet's daughter, may Allah be pleased with her, and *Hazrath* 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was conducted by the beloved Prophet himself, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. At the time of *Nikah* two witnesses and a *Wakeel*<sup>11</sup> go to the girl and the *Wakeel* informs her that her *Nikah* is being done to a man called so and so, on so much *Mehr*. These words are replied invariably by a silence which is deduced as the evidence of consent and the equivalent of approval. The witnesses and the *Wakeel* are usually family members and close relatives of the girl. When they return and join the *Qazi*<sup>12</sup> the latter delivers the Sermon of *Nikah* (*Khutbah-e-Nikah*) in a raised voice in which he recites some verses of the Noble Quran, cites certain Prophetic Traditions and makes prayers to Allah in words appropriate for the occasion, which are all in Arabic. Then he conducts the *Eejab-o-Qubool*<sup>13</sup>. Usually his words are: 'I give so and so, daughter of so and so, on his behalf, on so much *Mehr*, to you in *Nikah*. Do you accept?' To which the bridegroom, in a voice which is audible enough to those who are seated close to him, says 'I accept'. The *Qazi* and those attending the ceremony supplicate for the newly wed. They pray to Allah that the newly wed be blessed with mutual love, affection and lead a successful and happy married life.

### 5<sup>a</sup>.2.3. A short talk mentioning the rights of husband and wife at the time of *Nikah*

Of late many scholars after delivering the Sermon of *Nikah* in Arabic which includes verses from the Holy Quran have started delivering a short talk in Urdu (vernacular) which sheds light on the reality of *Nikah* and the obligations and responsibilities it entails. They try to see that the *Nikah* is not reduced merely to custom and enjoyment, and that the bridegroom and people present on this occasion get a religious and moral message and a sense of responsibility is aroused in them.

### 5<sup>a</sup>.2.4. A typical talk

Below is the transcription from the sound recording of a talk that was delivered at the time of a *Nikah*. Its tone and content typify the above referred reformist

10. In the terminology of Islamic jurisprudence a *Wali* is that male member of the girl's family who is sane, adult, fulfils the criteria of becoming an heir and the *Shariath* has granted him the authority to act on behalf of the girl. 11. *Wakeel* is the person who has the authority to act as somebody's deputy by virtue of the latter's permission or order in the matter of the latter's rights. 12. The cleric conducting the *Nikah*. 13. The proposal and the consent.

trend to quite an extent.

### Quote

I seek refuge of Allah from devil the outcast

**In the name of Allah the Compassionate, the Merciful**

**O Mankind!**

Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from the twain hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women. Be careful of your duty toward Allah in whom ye claim (your rights) of one another, and towards the wombs (that bore you). Lo! Allah hath been a Watcher over you.<sup>14</sup>

**O ye who believe!**

Observe your duty to Allah with right observance, and die not save as those who have surrendered (unto Him).<sup>15</sup>

**O Ye who believe!**

fear Allah, and speak a straight speech.

He will rectify for you your works, and forgive you your sins. And whosoever obeyeth Allah and His apostle, he hath indeed achieved a mighty achievement.<sup>16</sup>

Gentlemen!

*Nikah* is not merely adherence to custom and tradition and fulfilment of a bodily need. The *Sunnath* of *Nikah* far from being one act of worship is a combination of several acts and kinds of worship. Related and associated with it is not one directive of the *Shariath* but umpteen of its directives. It has a place in the Holy Quran as well as a place in the Prophetic Traditions. Books of Islamic Jurisprudence even have a chapter exclusively devoted to it. But this one *Sunnath* is treated with such rampant thoughtlessness like no other *Sunnath* and compulsory rite is; it has rather been turned into a maiden

14. V.1: Chapter 4: *An-Nisa'*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall. 15. V.102: Chapter 3: *Aal Imran*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall. 16. V.70-71: Chapter 33: *Al-Ahzaab*: Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid.

for disobeying Allah, acts of arrogance, obeying the devil and displaying bondage to baseless customs and traditions. *Nikah* has a complete message for our life – you can get an idea of it from the very verses of the Noble Quran recited in the beginning whose recitation in the Sermon of *Nikah* is authenticated by the practice of the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. In the first verse the origin of the human race is mentioned which is extremely appropriate and auspicious on this blessed occasion, as *Hazrath Adam*, peace be upon him, was the one and only human being to begin with and one was his life-partner, through them Allah the Exalted created the human race which then occupied the entire face of the earth. Allah the Exalted bestowed between those two personalities such love and intimacy and so blessed was their companionship that the world of today is but a testimony to it. So, through the two lives that are meeting today, what difficult is it for God to raise a clan and grant happiness and fulfilment to a family!

Then Allah says: have some shame of Him in whose name you question each other i.e. demand your rights and ask favors.

Gentlemen! Life is a question, a perpetual question, from beginning to end; trading, governance, education, all involve categories of similar questions. In each of these areas a party questions and a party answers – this question-answer format is distinctive of cultured living. What do you think this nuptial pact, this *Nikah*, is? This also is a civilized question, there are blessings in it. One decent family has put a question before another decent family that our dear son needs a life partner, his life is incomplete; please help us complete it. The second family has welcomed that question and the two bearing Allah as witness between them have come together. And two beings who till yesterday were total strangers, the most unrelated and the most distant have become so uniquely intimate that it is not possible to imagine any intimacy and uniqueness beyond it. Linked in their destinies, now each person's grace and delight has become dependent on the other's. And all of this is the marvel of Allah's name which, in a moment, has transformed:

- the forbidden to allowed,
- illegal to legal,
- negligence and sin to obedience and worship
- and has brought about in lives a revolution of immense proportions.

Allah the Exalted says that now live up to the name you took. It would be a very selfish thing if you take Him as witness, serve your purpose, then forget

all about His majestic name and do not meet His demands in your life. In future too remember His name and never let Him down. Then, He says: remain thoughtful of relatives.

Fear Allah in Whom ye claim (your rights) of one another and  
(avoid apathy) towards the wombs (that bore you).<sup>17</sup>

Today a new bond is being formed so it becomes necessary to say a few words about the old bonds also. This relationship does not make the older relationships obsolete, their rights and tenures have not come to an end. It should not happen that you remember your relationship with your wife and forget the multiple bonds with your mother; consider care for a father-in-law to be necessary and turn away from your real and natural father. If the thought that who will supervise conducts and who will remain with them round-the-clock, crosses somebody's mind, Allah says:

Verily Allah hath been a Watcher over you.<sup>18</sup>

He is the Overseer, the Witness, who will remain with them always.

And We are closer to him than his jugular vein.<sup>19</sup>

The second verse helps recall a bitter but inevitable reality. It was only for a God's chosen messenger to mention a reality so bitter in a gathering so cheerful and happy, so that man does not become forgetful of his end and keeps his sights fixed on the wealth that will go with him and will remain with him: the wealth of his faith. It was said that, however delightful, prosperous and long this life, your concern should be that it ends on a note of obedience to God, correctness of belief and firmness of belief. This was the reality which the *the most successful human being of the world*—who Allah had blessed profusely with all kinds of riches: His grace, the best things in life: wealth and prosperity, position and dignity, good looks and elegance—could not forget even after he had scaled the peak of human accomplishment. May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

Now in the end, moments before the bridegroom utters that blessed phrase 'I

**17.** V.1: Chapter 4: *An-Nisa'*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall. **18.** V.1: Chapter 4: *An-Nisa'*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall. **19.** V.16: Chapter 50: *Qaaf*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall.

accept' – which all of us are eagerly waiting to hear – the Noble Quran has delivered a message: O ye who believe! Fear Allah and speak words to the point. It is as if the bridegroom is being guided to realize that the words he is about to speak imply both responsibility and far reaching implications; when he says 'I accept' he must understand how big is the undertaking he has furnished and how big is the responsibility he is given. Allah the Exalted further says that if this examining and weighing of words before speaking them out becomes somebody's habit and a sense of responsibility gets permanently ingrained in his nature, then his entire life, his words and his deeds will be cast in the mould of truth and honesty; he will become an exemplary character; one who deserves God's pardon and His pleasure. The divine message ends with: Real success lies in obeying Allah and His Apostle, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him; neither in bowing to the dictates of the self nor in strictly following custom and tradition.

### Unquote

After the Sermon of Nikah is delivered and *Eejab-o-Qubool* is over, dried dates are distributed, sometimes they are also thrown around for fun and teenagers and children scramble for them, each trying to collect as many dates as he can. This is an ancient tradition of the *Nikah* ceremony.

### **5<sup>n</sup>.2.5. A worship called married life**

In Islam, matrimonial relationship is not seen in the form of a need; it has instead been accorded the status of worship which takes man closer to God. That is to say, our image of a matrimonial relationship and the nuptial pact of *Nikah* is not of a precondition which had to be fulfilled and without which it was not possible to procure the charm of life; instead it has been given a religious shade, declared to be worship and for this reason the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, also presented the most distinguishing example of it in his own life. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is reported to have said that:

*The better among all of you is he who is better for his family and  
I am better for my family among all of you.*

Therefore, if you carefully study the life of the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, you will see for yourself that the respect for



the weaker sex, the understanding and regard for their emotions and sublime feelings that he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had, are not found even in the most vehement advocates of womankind and in those who claim to champion the cause of women's honor; the same is true for the most celebrated of holy men, *Rishis*<sup>20</sup> and *Munees*<sup>21</sup>, so much so that it is difficult to find these qualities even in the lives of personalities who Allah chose to deliver His message. The Prophet's bids to please his noble wives, may Allah be pleased with them, his participation in their justified amusements, his regard for their emotions, and the balance and equality he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, maintained among them have got no parallel anywhere.

Not only towards them, the manner of the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, towards children too was so affectionate that for their sake he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would shorten his *Namaz* – the thing he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, loved the most. To see that no mother was put to trouble, whenever a child began crying during congregational prayers, the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, invariably shortened the recitation of Quran and ended the prayer quickly. That was the height of his sacrifice. Before the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, the most valuable and the most important thing was *Namaz*, therefore there also could not have been a bigger sacrifice for him. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to say that:

*Sometimes I feel like prolonging a prayer  
but when I hear the wailing of a child it occurs to me that:  
isn't it that his mother's heart would be too much with him;  
his mother should not become anxious.  
Therefore I shorten the prayer.*<sup>22</sup>

#### **5<sup>a</sup>.2.6. Distinctive conduct of Muslims in the face of natural crises**

After describing a virtuous act and happy occasion, we shall now dwell upon the natural crises and different circumstances which a Muslim, rather every human being, faces in his life.

Sickness and suffering are part and parcel of human life but a Muslim is not excused from offering *Namaz* even in such a condition. However, with regard

20. Hindu saint. 21. Plural of Hindu recluse with a vow of silence. 22. *Nai Duniya; America mein saaf saaf baatein.*

to prayers, the Islamic *Shariath* does grant many concessions to a person who has fallen sick. For instance if he cannot go to the mosque to pray with the congregation he is permitted to discharge this obligation at home, if he cannot stand upright to offer the prayer he may sit, if it is difficult for him to pray while sitting then he may lie down, if his physique still fails him he may employ gestures. If the use of water is detrimental to his health, *Taymoom* instead of *Wuzu* is permitted for him<sup>23</sup>; it is also necessary that, if he can, he should wash himself clean after the calls of nature.

To call upon the bedridden is considered a courtesy that earns great reward in Islam but the guidance it offers is: (1) not to stay with the unwell for too long, (2) enquire about the health of the sick person and (3) return early. Staying for too long and lengthy conversation invariably trouble the sick or their attendants. Those conditions however are exempt when a sick person himself likes company or when it is necessary to keep him in good humour.

#### **5<sup>a</sup>.2.7. The inevitable crisis of death and the chain of distinctive Islamic procedures related to it**

Ultimately in a human being's life occurs the crisis from which none among the humankind can escape and which makes no discrimination of religion, religious group, nation and race – the inevitable crisis of death. At such a time what needs to be done in Muslim homes, what are the special procedures and what are routine; a brief sketch follows.

#### **5<sup>a</sup>.2.8. Concern and preparation for the end**

Even if in terms of practising Islam a Muslim may not stand tall and in terms of spirituality may not be extraordinary, he remains immensely concerned about the end: that he should depart from the world with his belief intact, with the *Kalima Shahadat* on his lips and the tenets of *Tawheed* and prophet-hood unshaken in his heart. It has always been there in Muslim societies, especially where any effect of religious education exists and people care to think of the Hereafter, that when one Muslim requests another Muslim to remember him in his prayers or if he gets the privilege of calling upon some pious personage, he expresses this dormant wish saying 'please pray for me that my end be good'. The common Muslim perceives a good end to be a thing most fortunate and his biggest success, and he envies the most a Muslim

**23.** *Wuzu* and *Taymoom* have been described in Chapter 2.1, sub-section 2.1.5.

who goes away from the world reciting the *Kalimah Shahadat*, remembering God.

When a Muslim takes his last gasps and the irreversible stage in his condition begins, his kith and kin, friends, acquaintances and people present at that time urge him to recite the *Kalimah* (There is no god except Allah; Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah) or at least repeat Allah's name if he can. But if his speech fails him, weakness overtakes him and his voice is no more, then instead of exhorting him to pronounce any words people present over there begin repeating the *Kalimah* or Allah's name themselves. If they get the impression that his tongue is dry, a little *Zam Zam* water (if available in the home) or fresh juice of pomegranate or *Kewra* water (depending on the condition of the patient and weather) is dropped in his mouth. People sitting close to him begin reading the *Surah-e-Yaseen*<sup>24</sup>, its reading at such a time is highly recommended for its virtues. And when he is on the verge of breathing his last or after his soul has departed, his face is positioned in the direction called the *Qiblah*.<sup>25</sup>

#### **5<sup>a</sup>.2.9. Regard for the practices of the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, in obsequies**

After he passes away, preparations to give him a bath get underway and a shroud is arranged for him. Care is taken that the cloth for the shroud is new, duly purified and white. A man's shroud consists of an unstitched long shirt, a leg-sheet and an outer sheet; a woman's shroud has in addition a scarf and a blouse piece. The procedure for giving the bath too is stipulated, it is duly detailed in books of *Fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence). Every Muslim is eligible to give the bath. A bath given by pious people and those who have knowledge of stipulations and of the practices of the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is considered still better. At such a time relatives and friends and people who were near and dear to the deceased, consider it a privilege to serve their relative or friend for the last time ever.

#### **5<sup>a</sup>.2.10. Funeral Prayer (*Namaz-e-Janazah*)**

The funeral prayer is offered after the bier with the mortal remains of the deceased has arrived. Attendance in this prayer is an act that fetches great

24. Chapter 36 of the Holy Quran. 25. Readers may refer back to reference no. 18 of Chapter 2.4 if necessary.

reward from Allah. This prayer too is congregational but without the *Ruku'* (bowing) and the *Sujood* (prostrations). All people attending the prayer stand in a congregation of odd number rows: one, three, five, seven etc. Then any religious scholar or pious person or the Imam of the neighborhood mosque steps ahead and with the bier placed before him, stands in a position that is lateral to the dead body's chest and begins the prayer. This prayer has four *Takbeerat* (saying *Allah-u-Akbar* more than once in a raised voice) in it; every word otherwise is recited quietly. After the first *Takbeer* a prayer is recited. It is the same prayer that is recited in every *Namaz* after *Takbeer-e-Tahreemah*<sup>26</sup> (Its meaning was given in the context of the five daily prayers under sub-section 2.1.8). After the second *Takbeer* the *Darud Shareef*<sup>27</sup> is recited. After the third *Takbeer* all Muslims recite a prayer quietly, its meaning is as follows.

*O Allah! Grant forgiveness to the living of us and the dead of us,  
present and absent, young and old, and men and women.  
O Allah! Whomsoever of us You keep alive, cause him to live on Islam  
and whomsoever of us You raise from this world,  
raise him firm on belief.*

If it is the funeral of a child, boy or girl who has not yet reached puberty, then another prayer is recited instead. Meaning:

*O Allah! Make this child our precursor, a recompense and store unto us  
in the Hereafter and an intercessor for us (on the Day of the rising of  
the dead) and to his intercession grant Thy holy acceptance.*

#### **5<sup>a</sup>.2.11. To take turns in shouldering the enshrouded body placed on the bier and to walk up to the grave with it**

After the fourth *Takbeer* the funeral prayer ends with *Salaam* and people carry the bier on their shoulders to the graveyard. Under *Shariath* (Divine Law) carrying the bier, bringing the body to its final destination (the grave)

26. The saying of *Allahu Akbar* which initiates the prayer and, except prayer, prohibits every other voluntary act besides it. 27. Invocation of Allah's blessings on the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Readers may refer back to point no. 2 towards the end of sub-section 2.1.8 for its text if necessary.

and staying there until burial, is regarded a highly virtuous deed and great reward in the Hereafter is mentioned for it. That is why you will commonly see that people vie to carry the dead to the graveyard and no matter how far the graveyard and however harsh the weather, turn by turn, on the shoulders of Muslims the body reaches the graveyard quite soon. In these days of city life and urban lifestyle and in huge metropolises and cosmopolitan cities where graveyards are generally located far away, carrying the body on hearse is also becoming common practice. Constraints and the extraordinary remoteness of the graveyard apart, the practice of the Prophet – though not Allah's command – is the same as has been described above.

#### **5<sup>a</sup>.2.12. Procedure for placing the body in the grave and the way dust is cast normally**

Normally the grave is kept ready beforehand and when the body reaches there, some people descend into the burial chamber and help place the body in a manner that its face is positioned in the direction called the *Qiblah*. Then, after covering the burial chamber with bamboos or wooden planks, dust is dropped from above. The following Quranic words are on the lips of people as they cast dust over the grave:

**Thereof We created you,  
and thereunto We return you,  
and thence We bring you forth a second time.<sup>28</sup>**

When the burial is over and dust piles up so that it appears like the hump of a camel, close relatives stay back for a while, they pray for the Forgiveness of the deceased and read the Glorious Quran. This too is a practice of the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

#### **5<sup>a</sup>.2.13. Meals from kindred for the inmates of the home where somebody has passed away and the way to share grief**

When a home is stricken by grief and a relative passes away then generally on that day food is brought from the homes of relatives and friends for the bereaved family and their relatives who have assembled at their home. This custom is based on the idea that the bereaved are not in a condition to prepare

28. V.55: Chapter 20: *Taha*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall.

and organize their meals themselves. So it is only proper to keep them relaxed and free from work for a while. In fact, it is one *Sunnath* that is being practiced in the Islamic society as yet without break. Depending on the position that the deceased held in the society and his relations with people, thrice or for three days meals arrive from the homes of relatives and friends. At meal-times the bereaved and their sympathizers sit and eat together.



## **Islamic civilization and culture**

May peace be upon the prophets, they not only invited people to faith, divine laws and a new religion which are collectively called Islam they also happen to be the founding figures of civilization, societies typical of cities which were the precursors of our day urban population clusters and a new way of life which collectively deserve to be called the Rabbani civilization<sup>1</sup>.

This civilization has certain distinctive principles and tenets, signs and symbols which make it conspicuously superior to other civilizations and urban societies that emerged and thrived in the age of ignorance. This superiority while being noticeable in its spirit, basics and fundamentals, is prominent in its details and manifestations too.<sup>2</sup>

Articles of faith, life according to Islamic principles and ethics comprise a characteristic factor of the Muslim civilization. This factor, or let us say this value, is common to all the component civilizations of Muslims in different countries. Whatever the country and in whichever the corner of the world Muslims might reside, whatever their tongue and in whichever the way they might choose to dress, this common value is always found there. And on its basis they are seen as members of one family everywhere and custodians of one civilization. Moreover, it is on account of this common factor that Muslims all around the world are seen as bearing the mark of a distinctive civilization for which there are no suitable and apt describing words other than: The Ibrahimian Civilization.

### **Ibrahimian-Muhammadan Civilization**

Prophet Ibrahim Khalilullah, peace be upon him, was the founder and leader of a monotheistic civilization the foundations of which rest on the Oneness of God, belief in Him, His remembrance, human nature that is fashioned to walk the straight path rather than deviate, a whole heart, regard and fear of Allah the Exalted, mercy on human kind and good taste.

1. Rabbani (Urdu) meaning: of God; Divine 2. Mansab-e-Nabuvath aur uske aali muqaam haamileen (Urdu) pp 121-122.

Ibrahimian manners and way of life have seeped down into every vein and fiber of this civilization. In this connection the words of the revelation are:

**Lo! Abraham was mild, imploring, penitent.<sup>3</sup>**

**Lo! Abraham was soft of heart, forbearing.<sup>4</sup>**

Whereas Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, was the founder and the one who established this civilization, *Hazrath* Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, the last of the prophets and a descendent of Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, was its renovator and the one who steered it to perfection. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, brought about its revival and produced the color of immortality in it. Its principles and tenets were reinforced by him in such a way that the post-revival life in the Arab heartland developed all the makings of a lasting and global civilization.

### **5<sup>b</sup>.1. Three distinctive aspects of the Ibrahimian civilization**

The Ibrahimian civilization has three prominent distinctions:

1. Belief in the Being of God and living every moment in the awareness of His Presence.
2. *Tawheed* (As taught by the prophets of the Ibrahimian lineage and the complete exegesis of which is found in the Holy Quran).
3. The instinctive and eternal ideas of decency and equality among mankind which are an integral part of the Muslim mindset.

These distinctions are so pronounced in the Ibrahimian civilization that they have imparted to it a certain novelty vis-à-vis all other civilizations of the world. So far as we know, these distinctions are not found in such a bright and conspicuous degree in any civilization.

#### **5<sup>b</sup>.1.1. Allah's remembrance in the lives of Muslims**

Belief in the Being of God and living every moment so profoundly conscious of His Presence that its effect is reflected in one's behavior, is a ubiquitous superiority that has befriended the Muslim civilization and has formed an

3. V.75: Chapter 11: *Hud*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall. 4. V.114: Chapter 9: *At-Tawbah*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall.

inseparable part of Muslim life. Muslim civilization and Muslims in their way of life should compulsorily, without a hitch, adopt different types of dresses whose designs and styles bear the influence of different tastes, local conditions, variations of weather and climate and the impact of foreign cultures. All those dresses have been, as if, dipped in one color and now there appears no warp or woof of those dresses that remains to be dyed. Allah's name and His remembrance flow and circulate like blood in every vein and fiber of their civilization and way of life. When a Muslim child is born, then first of all, words of *Azaan* are softly said in his ears and thus before he gets to know even his own name, the name with which an acquaintance and attachment is cultivated in him is the sacred name of Allah. When he is seven days old his '*Aqeeqah*' is performed in accordance with the practice of the prophet. An Islamic name is chosen for him and preference given to those names in which our servitude to Allah and Allah's Unity is proclaimed or it is adopted from the names of the world's largest group of believers in Allah's Oneness: the prophets and their followers. The stage of education is reached, formal schooling has to begin, the commencement is with Allah's name and Quranic verses. The stage of *Nikah* is reached, to form a lasting relationship between two responsible human beings, Allah is taken as witness and both are made to agree that they would not let down His sacred name.

**Be careful of your duty toward Allah in Whom ye claim (your rights) of one another and towards the wombs (that bore you).<sup>5</sup>**

The Sermon of *Nikah* delivered in accordance with the practice of the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, mentions Allah's favor on mankind, that He created among the progeny of Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, pairs of men and women and it exhorts the newly wed to live and die as obedient slaves of Allah. The auspicious and happy occasion of 'Eid arrives and the guidance for people is to bathe, wear clean clothes, extol the Greatness of Allah through the anthem of *Takbeerat-e-Tashreeq* and offer two *Rak'at* prayer to thank Him on that day. 'Eidul Azha arrives and brings persuasion with it to offer sacrifice in Allah's name.

As the last and inevitable stage of life arrives, it is His sacred name that the dying are urged to repeat. The strongest wish and effort of every Muslim man and woman is that the last word and the last utterance on his or her lips be the sacred name of Allah and that he or she departs from this world repeating it.

5. V.1: Chapter 4: *An-Nisa'*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall.

Upon hearing of his demise, the immediate reflex of every literate Muslim is an all too common phrase which despite being the classical Arabic of Quran has also found a place in colloquial Urdu. The reference is to:

**Lo! we are Allah's and lo! unto Him we are returning.<sup>6</sup>**

When the time comes to serve him for the last time ever and bid him adieu i.e. offer his *Namaz-e-Janazah* (Prayer for the dead) the name of Allah is there in it from beginning to end. People pray for his Forgiveness and as for themselves they beg Allah to bless them with obedience unto Him and cause them to depart from this world but as believers. They say, '*Bismillah*' before lowering him in his grave and consigning him to his last resting place. In accordance with the practice of his Prophet's *Millath* and the teachings of his religion, his face is positioned towards that International centre of worship and God's Oneness which is called: *The Baitullah* (The Holy *Ka'bah*). No matter where a Muslim is laid to rest, his face will always be in that direction. After he has been returned to dust, whenever a Muslim passes by his grave, he prays for his Forgiveness and halts a moment to recite the *Faatihah* (a form of supplication) there. In short, Allah's name and His awareness provide companionship at every moment and at every step in the journey of life.

So much for the life's prominent stages; in the day-to-day life also Allah's remembrance keeps constant company. A Muslim takes Allah's name before he begins his meal and takes Allah's name and says words of thanks to Him after he has had his meal. Almost all actions of people who are particular in following the *sunnath* are done with Allah's name and bearing His Will in mind, like taking food, water and beverages<sup>7</sup>, changing dresses and even going for and coming back from the calls of nature. The guidance for him who sneezes is to take Allah's name and the instruction for him who hears him sneeze is to supplicate for him. And it is not that times other than these are devoid of Allah's remembrance. *Masha'Allah*, *Insha'Allah*, *La hawl wala quwwath illa billaah* are not only mentioned in and transmitted to us from the Prophetic Traditions as words of Allah's remembrance, they have integrated into the local language and entered colloquial parlance in countries where Muslims have settled or have been living for a long time and where their civilization has had its influence. Besides, all these are but pretexts to attract one's attention towards Allah and His remembrance. If we conduct a

6. V.156: Chapter 2: *Al-Baqarah*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall. 7. In accordance with the pronouncements of the Bounteous Quran as discussed under sub-section 3.3.

comparative study, no other civilization's way of life, language, literature and day-to-day living will be seen so much drenched in the color of belief in Allah's Being and awareness of His presence as this civilization's is. The first internationally shared aspect of the civilization of Muslims is this belief and awareness of Allah that has become the distinguishing mark and a vital sign of their life.

### **5<sup>b</sup>.1.2. Second international aspect: The tenet of *Tawheed***

The second international aspect and insignia of the Islamic civilization is its tenet of *Tawheed* which is highly discernible everywhere: from articles of faith to actions and from various forms of worship to ceremonies. Five times a day the minarets of their mosques proclaim this tenet of their faith that: Except Allah there is nobody worthy of worship and servitude. Their buildings and even their studio apartments should be protected against signs of idol worship and *shirk* (association of partners with Allah). Portraits, statues and idols are not permissible for them, so much so, that in the kind of toys that children should play with, it is necessary to keep this aspect into consideration. On any of the occasions like religious ceremonies, country-wide festive celebrations, birthdays of political leaders, birth anniversaries of religious figures or the flag hoisting ceremony, it is prohibited for a Muslim and is against his monotheistic civilization to bow or stand with folded hands before portraits and statues or shower petals upon them or garland them; wherever Muslims will stand firm on their Islamic civilization and will practice its tenets, they will refrain and distance themselves from this sort of an act. Crossing the limits of *Hijazian Tawheed*<sup>8</sup> – in areas like names, ceremonies, taking oaths in the names of saints wherein extraordinary respect and reverence is shown towards them, making requests to people in the tone of supplications to God and adopting the ways of any other people – is tantamount to deviation from Islam.

### **5<sup>b</sup>.1.3. Third international aspect: The tenet of decency and equality among humankind**

The third international aspect of the Islamic civilization is its idea of decency and superiority in a human being and its tenet of equality among humankind. A Muslim is fed on this tenet since his infancy and it eventually becomes his

**8.** *Tawheed* in the form that it was taught to the people of *Hijaz* (Now Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) by Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.



Islamic nature. The natural consequence of this tenet is that a Muslim is unfamiliar with and alien to the habit and tradition of untouchability. He agrees without reservation to dine with another Muslim or another human being and insists on others to dine with him. Different and several people use the same salver when they eat together. They eat each other's left over food and drink each other's left over water. Master and servant stand shoulder to shoulder in prayer. A man of learning though of meager means can become the *Imam* and men of noble lineage and highly ranked officials are under divine compulsion to pray behind him.

**Inbuilt and branch distinctions:** Besides the abovementioned distinctive superiorities in terms of principles and fundamentals, the Ibrahimian civilization also has certain inbuilt and secondary distinctions which are shared by all Muslims of the world. For instance, doing all good deeds with the right hand i.e. using the right hand to hold food, water, give something to somebody or take something from somebody.

## **5<sup>b</sup>.2. In Islamic society trades are neither permanent nor contemptible**

In Islam, trades and services neither have a permanent, everlasting and unalterable status nor on their bases are communities and classes defined. Spurred by need and convenience, individuals in the past generations adopted certain trades; sometimes a trade remained confined to an individual and sometimes it was practiced for several generations. Even today there are certain brotherhoods, each engaged in a particular trade but such a practice has neither any religious status nor is it an unalterable law of Muslim society.

In these brotherhoods anybody can change his trade or occupation whenever he likes and neither anybody objects to it nor is any trade looked down upon in Islam. In the Islamic capital of the world (Makkah, Madinah) and the Arab countries, some highly honorable religious scholars and distinguished Muslims carry in their names a word that indicates a trade, which some remote ancestor of theirs had adopted in a bygone era, but they neither have to feel ashamed about it nor do they lose respect in the sight of others.<sup>9</sup>

9. For instance, the word *Khayyaat* (Arabic; meaning: Tailor) was an essential part in the name of the highly respected cleric who used to deliver the sermons and lead the prayers in *Haram Shareef* (Makkah's biggest mosque which houses the Holy Ka'bah) just a few years ago. Similarly names of some religious scholars have *Hallaaq* (Arabic; meaning: Barber), *Zayyaat* (Arabic; meaning: Oil seller), *Sawwaaf* (Arabic; meaning: Cotton merchant), *Qassaab* (Arabic; meaning: Meat-seller) attached to them and there is no indignity in it from any point of view.



### **5<sup>b</sup>.3. Widow re-marriage and the distinctive advantage of Indian Muslims**

Widow re-marriage was never considered improper or objectionable from the point of view of *Shariath* or the customs and traditions of Muslims. It was the practice of their Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and in every age highly honorable religious scholars, devout elders, theologians and celebrated monarchs unhesitatingly married ladies who were widows and arranged the re-marriage of their widowed sisters and daughters. Though presently many Muslim widows, either by choice or under one constraint or the other, live without re-marrying, the tradition of re-marriage should be put into practice. In other countries this tradition is still prevalent and it is not at all improper to bring a widow in one's *Nikah*.

### **5<sup>b</sup>.4. The tradition of *Salaam* and the difference in the ways of wishing and replying**

*Salaam* is a tradition that is common to all occasions in everyday life. It is the international and pan-Islamic salutation of Muslims. One who wishes says *As-Salamu 'Alaikum* which means: May God bless you with safety, security, well-being and good health. Its reply is *Wa 'Alaikum As-Salam*, meaning: On you also be His blessings of safety, security, well-being and good health.

### **5<sup>b</sup>.5. The place of knowledge in Islam**

About the 12<sup>th</sup> of February 611CE, in the cave of *Hira* near Makkah, descended the first revelation upon the Arab Prophet, *Hazrath* Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Its words were:

(O Muhammad) Read in the name of thy Lord who createth.  
Createth man from a clot.  
Read: And thy Lord is the Most Bounteous.  
Who teacheth by the pen.  
Teacheth man that which he knew not.<sup>10</sup>

The Creator of the universe even in the first installment of His revelation and

10. V.1-5: Chapter 96: '*Alaq*': The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall.

even in the first splash of His mercy on mankind did not postpone or delay the proclamation of the fact that the destiny of knowledge is bound to the pen. In the solitude of the cave of Hira was an unlettered Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, who had gone to receive Allah's message, a guidance, for all mankind and such was his plight that his hand had never known the flourish of a pen and he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was altogether unfamiliar with the art of writing. Does even a single precedent of such an event exist in world history? Is this height of divine mercy even imaginable? That upon an unlettered Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, amidst an unlettered nation and an illiterate country (where literacy was not common, let alone universities and institutes) descend the words of Allah's revelation, the link of communication between the Heavens and the earth is established after a lapse of centuries and its commencement is with the word 'Read'. Although the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had never read anything in his life, in the revelation that descends upon him God says to him categorically: '(O Muhammad) Read!' This signalled that the nation which will be given in his charge will not be merely a student nation; it will be an instructor nation for the world and it will be a nation imbued with knowledge. That nation will propagate knowledge across the world. The age assigned to him will not be an age of illiteracy. It will not be an age of savagery. It will not be an age of ignorance. It will not be an age of suppression of knowledge. That age will be an age of knowledge, an age of intellect, an age of wisdom, an age of constructive activity, an age of humanitarian concerns and an age of progress.

*Read in the name of thy Lord Who createth.*<sup>11</sup> The greatest disaster was that the bond between knowledge and the Sustainer had snapped. As a result, knowledge had swayed off the straight course. That broken bond was restored when the Lord Himself dwelt upon the subject of knowledge and conferred an honor upon this resource. Simultaneously however a warning was issued that pursuit of knowledge should begin with 'the name of thy Lord' because knowledge is every bit His bestowal, His creation and only under His guidance can it make a balanced progress. This was the world's loudest revolutionary and revolutionizing sound that struck the ears in our world like thunder; it was something that nobody could have speculated. If a team of intellectuals and men of letters from all over the world were invited to guess that what would a revelation now about to descend going to begin with? What subject would be assigned the top priority in it? I understand that not one man out of the whole lot, who was familiar with that unlettered

11. V.1: Chapter 96: 'Alaq: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall.

nation, its mind and temperament, would have said that it would begin with the Arabic word *Iqra* (Read).

It was an invitation to a revolutionary idea that the march of acquiring knowledge should begin under the guidance of God, the Wise, the All-knowing because the journey is too long and the path too twisted and perilous. Caravans face the threat of being plundered in broad daylight. At every step are formidable and abysmal valleys and deep rivers flow here. At every step are serpents and scorpions. Therefore, in this journey an expert guide must keep company and that Expert Guide is the Being of God. And sterile knowledge and literature are not being referred here. The reference here is not to the acquisition of that knowledge which is the name of unproductive verbosity and the name of merely playing word games. Not that knowledge which is the name of mere entertainment. Not that knowledge which is the name of inciting one against the other. Not that knowledge which is the name of driving nations to destructive confrontations. Not that knowledge which is the name of teaching a trade that would be a means to feed the unsatiable appetite for plenty. Not that knowledge which trains only in rhetoric. Instead, the message is very precise.

**Read in the name of thy Lord Who createth.  
Createth man from a clot.  
Read: And thy Lord is the Most Bounteous.  
Who teacheth by the pen.  
Teacheth man that which he knew not.**

*Read, that your Lord is the Most Bounteous.* How can He be unaware of your needs and your weaknesses? *Read: And thy Lord is the Most Bounteous. Who teacheth by the pen.* Here is a point to ponder. Could anybody have raised the pen to a level more honorable? The Lord even in that first revelation of the cave of Hira did not neglect the pen. Those days if you looked around for a pen perhaps you would not find it anywhere in Makkah. However, if you conducted a thorough search the only chance to find it was in the home of a Waraqah Bin Nawfal<sup>12</sup> or a *Katib*<sup>13</sup> who had returned from the distant land of Persia after having learnt to read and write a little.

**12.** Waraqah Bin Nawfal was an Arab scholar who had profound knowledge of the Holy Torah and the Holy Bible, and was well versed in the Hebrew language. He lived in the time of the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, **13.** In ancient Arabia a literate man used to be called a *Katib* (Arabic).

The revelation then states a revolutionizing and immortal truth that: knowledge has no upper limit. *Teacheth man that which he knew not.* What else is scientific research otherwise? What are these advancements in technologies that we see around us? Man is going to the moon, we are travelling in space, and distances are reducing throughout the world; if not the marvel of *Teacheth man that which he knew not*, what else is all of this?

### **5<sup>b</sup>.6. The approach of a Muslim towards Fine Arts**

A cautious approach and a level viewpoint with respect to 'Fine Arts', sobriety of manner and a natural preference for truth and reality comprise a distinctive feature of this civilization. It values exquisite taste, cleanliness, beauty and elegance but some amusement skills – to which Europe has given the epithet of *Fine Arts* – it has declared illegal e.g. dance, creating images (of life forms) and the carving of sculptures; and with respect to some, it calls for caution and moderation e.g. song and singing. It is permissible to enjoy song and singing but in a moderate way and with certain restrictions. Absorption in these *Fine Arts*, in any case, goes against the spirit and goals of this civilization, also it is to the detriment of fear of God in a Muslim, his concentration on the Hereafter and the standard of morality expected of him.

### **5<sup>b</sup>.7. Religion is the overseer of life**

Time is the name of stability and change i.e. their balance, combination and aggregate. Just as time has a kind of stillness in it, it has a flow. If time loses either of its characteristics and potentials, it will lose its utility.

Similarly positive and negative waves are always at work in all existences, personalities and life forms of this universe. It is in the merger of these two kinds of waves that each entity is performing its duty and fulfilling the responsibility assigned to it.

It is not in the definition of a religion to conform to all sorts of changes. The description of a thermometer however does include such a feature because a thermometer has to reflect degrees of hot and cold. Conformity to change is also essential to the description of a weather-cock that is installed at some airport or atop a high-rise building simply to ascertain the direction of wind. But defining a religion on the lines of product descriptions is not possible. Gentlemen, I think that none of you would like to bring down religion from

its exalted position to the level of a thermometer or a weather-cock and imply that the function of a religion is only to continually testify, acknowledge and reflect the changes of an age. What to talk of a true and revealed religion; even representatives and followers of a so-called religion will not agree to accept this proposition.

Religion accepts change to be a reality and it has all the necessary provisions to accommodate a righteous, natural and permissible change. Religion supports life and its support, association and devotion to life are not empty words; it performs a duty towards civilizing people by differentiating for them as to which change is righteous and which improper, which tendency is destructive and which constructive. If religion is allowed to play this role actively, what will be its result in the interest of all mankind or at least in the interest of those who follow it? Besides being an associate of this fleeting life, religion is life's censure, overseer, guardian and mentor as well.

It is not for a guardian to blindly support and indiscriminately put the stamp of attestation on every right and wrong tendency of the human being under his guardianship. Religion is not the kind of mechanical system in which only one kind of stamp, the same shade of ink and the same type of arm is installed everywhere, and the moment a document or writing is placed before it, its job is to affix the stamp of attestation on it automatically.

Religion will first examine it and then deliver its judgment. Through motivation and sometimes, when other options exhaust, through warnings it will try to prevent an individual from presenting a wrong document and if a wrong document is placed before it, with which either it does not agree or which it considers fatal and destructive to the cause of humanity, then not only will it refuse to affix the stamp of attestation on it, it shall attempt to obstruct it as well.

Here emerges a difference between morality and religion. The duty of a specialist of morals and psychology is only to identify a wrong tendency or to give his opinion about it. However, religion considers its responsibility and obligation to obstruct it – then it goes a step further – and attempts to halt its advance as well.



## **Moral instructions and purification of mind**

### **6.1. Objectives of the conferment of apostleship on *Hazrath Muhammad*, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him**

Allah the Exalted has mentioned in numerous verses of the Holy Quran the foremost and main objectives of conferring apostleship on *Hazrath Muhammad*, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and the lofty benefits of a fundamental nature that accrue from it. In one such verse He says:

**Even as We have sent amidst you an apostle from amongst  
you, who rehearseth unto you Our revelations and purifieth you,  
and teacheth you the Book and wisdom, and  
teacheth you that which ye were not wont to know.<sup>1</sup>**

Within the larger purview of the aims of the Prophet's – peace and blessings of Allah be upon him – invitation and the divine conferment of apostleship upon him, moral instructions and purifying the human mind of evil, occupy a place of great importance. Quranic narration in its inimitable style tells us that *wisdom* indeed means sublime morals and Islamic etiquette. After mentioning the principles of morality and etiquette – and orders regarding some very elementary mistakes that we tend to make in our lives – in Chapter: 17, *Al-Israa'*, the Quran goes on to collectively refer to them by the term *wisdom*.

**This is (part) of that *wisdom* wherewith thy  
Lord hath inspired thee (O Muhammad)<sup>2</sup>**

In words that are loaded with emphasis and that include much within their purview, the beloved Apostle, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has mentioned the grand purpose for which apostleship was conferred upon him.

1. V.151: Chapter 2: *Al-Baqrah*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall. 2. V.39: Chapter 17: *Al-Israa'*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall.



*The only reason of conferment of apostleship upon me was that I set the highest standards of moral behaviour.<sup>3</sup>*

And in the personality of the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was indeed an ideal and the best example of noble manners.

Says the Quran:

**And lo! thou art on sublime morals.<sup>4</sup>**

On being asked about his manners *Hazrath* 'Aishah, may Allah be pleased with her, said:

*If you wish to enquire about his manners, see the Quran!<sup>5</sup>*  
(Implying: His manners were in congruence with the teachings of the Holy Quran.)

Her wisdom and the purity of her mind were the result of the great blessing of being the life partner of the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and his constant companionship. Under his – peace and blessings of Allah be upon him – affectionate training and benign protection, blossomed a generation of lofty character and excellent attributes, who had been guarded against all baseness of character, bad habits, bad manners, mean attributes, turmoils and trials of the psyche, effects of ignorance and deceptions of the devil. A prophetic pronouncement testifies to it; the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is reported to have said that:

*The best people are the people of my age.<sup>6</sup>*

An illustrious companion *Hazrath* Abdullah bin Mas'ood, may Allah be pleased with him, has very eloquently introduced the cohesive group of the prophet's noble Companions, his acknowledgement about them is concise but all-encompassing and significant:

Pure at heart, rich in knowledge, free from formalities.

3. Mutaa'; Imam Malik. 4. V.4: Chapter 68: *Al-Qalam*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall. 5. Sahih Muslim. 6. Sahih Muslim and Sahih Bukhari.

May Allah be pleased with them, they were the produce of Islam's springtime, the masterpiece of a prophet's ability of character building and community development and the miracle of a prophet's power to train and purify.

## 6.2. A permanent workshop on building human character

Ever since the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, passed away and assemblies that were graced by his presence faded into history, three blessed streams of guidance viz. the Holy Quran, the Noble Traditions (*Hadith*) and the glorious biography of the prophet – though obviously no substitute for the Prophet's gracious presence, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him – kept filling the void. The corpus of Islamic jurisprudence and wisdom was a permanent worldwide clinic and hospital for the treatment of diseases that afflicted the hearts, turmoils of the psyche and deceptions of the devil.

However, under the influence of different political, economic and ethical factors and with the passage of time, the *Hadith* education system of old, its moral and practical aspects and its age-old trend of instruction, learning, teaching and exposition were gradually pushed into obsolescence. Its place was taken completely by a new trend that was more attractive to the society of its time, created more worth in the sight of the people and helped secure high positions and offices. As a result, the teaching and learning of *Hadith*, confirmations of the different schools of religion, researches conducted to collect corroborative evidences in their support and studies on the life of the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, all became confined within articles of a historical and academic nature.

In spite of this state of affairs, the Noble Traditions and the biography of the beloved prophet, the two major streams of guidance besides the Holy Quran, still remain the most effective, easy and practicable means to impart moral education, purify human minds of evil, cleanse rusted hearts and polish the mirrors of human souls.

Material that is found in the Noble Traditions is of two types. The first type relates to the apparent i.e. the form and appearance of virtuous actions and their expressed commands e.g.

- *Qayaam* (standing posture in prayer) and
- *Qu'ood* (pl. of sitting posture in prayer)

- *Ruku'* (bowing posture in prayer)
- *Sujood* (pl. of prostration)
- Reading of the Holy Quran
- Glorifying God
- Supplications
- Chants and words of Allah's remembrance
- Invitation to faith
- Propagation of faith
- The supreme effort in defense of faith and battles fought under the command of the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him
- Relations with friends and foes in times of peace and war
- Other stipulations and issues

The second type concerns the latent: latent conditions that accompany the performance of virtuous deeds; attaining these latent conditions is the real purpose and ultimate aim of the command for virtuous action. We may interpret these latent conditions in the terminology of emotions as: sincerity and self-evaluation, trust in God and steadfastness, abstinence and contentment, selflessness and generosity, manners and bashfulness, God-consciousness and humility, penitence and lamentation, tenderness of heart while supplicating, preference for the Hereafter over the mundane, seeking Allah's pleasure and longing to see Him, a balanced nature, healthy taste, kindness and mercy over Allah's creatures, sympathy for the weak, subtlety of feeling, purity of sentiments, munificence and magnanimity, tolerance and forbearance, hospitality and humbleness, valor and bravery, loving and hating for Allah's sake, favor and piety, from subtle to very subtle and extremely delicate forms of nobility of character and human sentiment, pardon for the trespasser, forging ties with those of kin who snap them, adopting an attitude of grant and bestowal with him who is miserly. Similar to these there are many conditions which are incomprehensible without a study of role models and examples and their verification too is difficult without careful observation and constant watch.

Therefore, we present here a comprehensive description of the noble attributes of the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his children, as narrated by those personalities who were closest to him, were well aware of his private and public life, personal and social life, and his family life, and who had a very deep understanding of human psychology and the subtleties of disposition. After this description we shall dwell briefly upon the excellent morals and nature of the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings

of Allah be upon him.

### 6.3. A comprehensive and eloquent character sketch of the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his children

Let us be content here with two testimonies. The first is that of Hind Bin Abi Halah, may Allah be pleased with him, (who is the son of: The mother of believers<sup>7</sup> Hazrath Khadijah, may Allah be pleased with her) the maternal uncle of Hazrath Hasan and Hazrath Husain, may Allah be pleased with them. The second testimony is given by Hazrath 'Ali Bin Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, concerning the morals and nature of the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

Hind Bin Abi Halah says:

The Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, always remained concerned about the Hereafter and kept himself occupied with acts that held the promise of success in the Hereafter; neither did this sequence ever break nor could he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, ever relax. The Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, often remained silent for long, did not speak unnecessarily, began his conversation by pronouncing words clearly<sup>8</sup> and ended it similarly. His conversations and public addresses were very clear, explicit and to the point. They neither were unnecessarily extensive nor unduly concise. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was mild natured and soft spoken, not harsh of manner and inconsiderate. Neither slighted anybody nor liked to be slighted himself.<sup>9</sup> God's favour, however less (i.e. even if hardly visible), was highly valued and considered abundant by him and he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, did not say anything adverse about it. Neither did he speak ill about food and beverages nor praised them. The world and anything worldly never angered him but when any of

7. *The mother of believers* is a title of respect that precedes the names of the noble wives of the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. 8. That is, did not mix or mince words with inattention and indifference in the manner of the proud. 9. The word used here in the original Arabic text can be pronounced either way i.e. *Muheen* or *Maheen*. If we presume that the word intended is *Muheen* it would mean that *he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, did not slight anybody* and if it is *Maheen* then it would mean that *he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, did not like himself to be slighted and humiliated*. In other words he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was neither harsh of manner nor did he have a docile character that he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would tolerate everything. On the contrary, his personality was the confluence of awe, command, majesty and dignity.

God's rights was trampled upon, nothing could withstand his wrath, so much so that eventually he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, avenged it. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, neither got angry for his own sake nor did he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, take revenge for himself. When pointing towards something, he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would gesture with his entire hand in that direction; when expressing surprise, would turn one of his hands from the wrist upside down; during conversation, wrapped the palm of the right hand around the thumb of the left hand. Turned his radiant face away from the direction where something infuriating or unpalatable was being said, and ignored it. Lowered his eyes when he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, felt happy. Did not burst into laughter; at the most he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, only smiled in a manner that exposed his blessed teeth, that were as pure and as clean as hailstones.

### The second testimony

*Hazrath 'Ali*, may Allah be pleased with him, was among those people who were closest to the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. He had access to the best sources and got the best opportunities of knowing and learning about him. And at the same time, his proficiency in writing character-sketches and painting word pictures was second to none. He describes the personality of the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, in the following manner.

The beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, by nature was all too far from offensive language, shamelessness and immodesty. Not even in the least would he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, indulge in anything of the sort ever. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, never raised his voice in bazaars; never returned a wrong for a wrong, he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, rather pardoned and let go of him who wronged against him. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, never physically assaulted anyone, except when the occasion was the defense of his faith and the battle was being fought purely in Allah's cause. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, never raised his hand over a servant or a woman. Also, I never saw him avenging any wrong or high-handedness that he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had been subjected to, save and except when the offender transgressed divinely prescribed limits and his behaviour belittled divine honour and sanctity. Of course, if any kind of blasphemy was committed then he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, stood up against it and



would be the angriest of men. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would choose the easier of the two options. When he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, came home, he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, looked much like ordinary people; washed his clothes, milked the goat and would tend to all the necessary tasks of domestic life himself.

Would guard his blessed tongue and would speak only about a thing that concerned him. At different times consoled, encouraged and showed kindness to people but did not antagonize them. Would treat with respect and honor any respectable person of any community and brotherhood who came to meet him and would appoint him to a good and high ranking position. His comments about people were cautious and did not deprive them of his enthusiasm and courtesy. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would keep himself regularly informed about the conditions of his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and kept inquiring from people about their day to day affairs.

When something good was said about something, he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would elaborate upon its goodness and endorse it; if something bad was said about something, he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would pin-point the harm in it so the statement about it would become all the more unconvincing. His dealings with people were balanced and remained the same, regardless of who he dealt with, no variation or change ever came about in them. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, never became negligent of his duties, lest others too became negligent and lost interest. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was equipped to the extent necessary for every situation and occasion. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, neither denied rights nor in giving rights exceeded the limits. People who remained close to the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, were select and the best among his followers. The best in his sight was he whose friendship and courtesy was universal; respect and honor were his who was ahead of all others in terms of sympathy and compassion and who helped other people and co-operated with them. The Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to remember Allah when he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, rose to his feet and with His remembrance used to sit down. Whenever he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would grace a gathering (where other people were already sitting) he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would occupy a place at the periphery and asked his companions also to follow suite. In the gatherings that the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, graced, he, peace



and blessings of Allah be upon him, gave due attention and regard to people who sat with him and those who sat in the audience. Anybody who attended his blessed assembly would think of himself to be the foremost in his sight. If somebody insisted that the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, sit with him for a while or if somebody needed to converse with him, the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would listen extremely patiently and calmly to all that he had to say, so much so that he completed his conversation and left on his own. If somebody asked for something and sought some help from him, he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would not let him go away without providing enough to meet his need or, if that was not possible, replied in a tone that was polite and considerate at least. The beauty of his conduct was boundless and the same for everybody who met him and he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had become a father figure for the people around him. In the matter of rights, all people were equal in his sight. Assemblies graced and patronized by the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, were essentially assemblies of knowledge and awareness where modesty and bashfulness, patience and trustworthiness were the norms. Neither voices were raised there nor anybody's imperfections revealed. Neither was there an attack on anybody's honor and respect nor were anybody's weaknesses publicized. All were equal over there. And only in terms of their God-consciousness did they earn their distinction over one another. There, people dealt respectfully with their elders and treated those who were younger to them with kindness and affection, gave priority to the needy over themselves and (in the scorching heat of that desert country) kept travellers and arriving visitors under their protection and care.

*Hazrath 'Ali*, may Allah be pleased with him, further says:

The beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was always seen with a happy and cheerful countenance, had a lively air about him; was very mild of manner in talking and meeting with people and was kind hearted.<sup>10</sup> He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was neither harsh of nature nor in the habit of using harsh words, not the one to talk at the top of his voice; not the one to get into indecent or substandard conversation; not the one to slander

**10.** The original text can be interpreted in three ways: (1) The Arabic expression here means one who readily showed compassion, favor and grace and who let go of him very easily who wronged against him. (2) Another view is that it means he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, did not get in to an altercation with anyone. And (3) According to one interpretation it means: calm and dignity, fear of God and humility.

and not a tight-fisted miser. If something was said to his dislike, he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would neglect it (i.e. disregarded it and did not take cognizance of it); did not let the one who said it feel dejected over what he had said and did not reply to it. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, scrupulously avoided three things:

- 1<sup>st</sup>: quarrel
- 2<sup>nd</sup>: arrogance and
- 3<sup>rd</sup>: unnecessary and irrelevant engagements

Similarly, he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, did not let three things harm others:

- he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, never spoke ill of anybody
- never slandered anybody and
- never went after anybody's weaknesses and undisclosed matters

And he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, spoke only those words which held the hope of divine reward. When he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, spoke, people in his audience lowered their heads as though birds were sitting on them;<sup>11</sup> and only when he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, paused did those people speak and they never got into an altercation before him. In the assemblies graced by the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, if somebody said something the rest would listen in silence so much so that he would complete whatever he had to say; the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, gave every speaker the same importance as the one before him (that is to say, a person would get the opportunity to take his time and say whatever he had to and the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, also calmly listened to him and equally valued what each one of them had to say). That upon which everybody laughed, the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, too would laugh; that upon which everybody expressed surprise, he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, too would. The ill-mannered prattle of the traveller and the foreigner and all kinds of questions that they raised would be heard by the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, with patience and tolerance so much so that his noble companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would interrupt to divert the attention of such persons (to ensure that the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him,

11. The sense is: Absolutely motionless (lest the birds fly away with the slightest movement).

was not put to any sort of strain). He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to say, 'If you find somebody in need, help him'. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would take to words of praise and admiration approvingly only if somebody spoke highly about him in a balanced way. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, remained silent when somebody was talking and never interrupted him but if the speaker began to exceed the limit then the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would either ask him to stop or rose to his feet and dismissed that session.

He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was the most generous of human beings, magnanimous, truthful in speech and mild of nature. In his way of life and dealings with people, he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was generous to an extreme degree. Anybody who saw him for the first time would get impressed by him, he who stayed with him would get familiar with him, then got fascinated by him and would fall in love with him. Recounting his good memories about the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, a person is on record to have said that, 'neither before nor after did I see anybody like him'. May peace and blessings of Allah be upon our beloved Prophet.<sup>12</sup>

#### **6.4. A glimpse of the sublime morals of the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him**

The beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was the most generous of men, mild natured and the most respected for his lineage. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, did not lead a detached life away from his companions, rather he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, kept close ties with them, used to chat with them, behaved light heartedly and in good humor with their children and let those children sit in his lap. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to accept everybody's invitation be he a slave, freeman, maid-servant, poor or needy; visited people if they took ill even if the one who was ill lived at the farthest end of the city; if somebody offered an excuse for something, he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would accept it.<sup>13</sup> To see to it that nobody was put to inconvenience or had to squeeze himself among the people who sat surrounding him, the

**12.** Excerpt of *Shamael Tirmizi* reproduced from the author's *Nabi-e-Rahmat* (Urdu). **13.** On the authority of *Hazrath Anas Bin Malik*, may Allah be pleased with him. (Abu Naeem: *Al-Hilyatul Awliyaa'*). Here, readers unfamiliar with Arab customs will like to know that it was normal in those days to sit on the floor, as Muslims still do in the mosques, so the noble companions, may Allah be pleased with them, sometimes got quite close to the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, when they surrounded him and sat in his company.

Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was never seen sitting with legs outstretched in the company of his companions, may Allah be pleased with them. If his noble companions, may Allah be pleased with them, recited poems, listened to poetry and talked about certain things and incidents of the days of ignorance, the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, either remained silent or gently smiled. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was extremely kind hearted, loving by nature and was the embodiment of favor and grace. ‘Call both my sons!’ (meaning his grandsons, *Hazrath Hasan* and *Hazrath Hussain*, may Allah be pleased with them) he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would say to his daughter *Hazrath Fatima*, may Allah be pleased with her. Both of them would come running to him and he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would greet them with hugs and kisses.<sup>14</sup> One of the grandsons of the Prophet (daughter’s child) was brought to him in a condition that he had breathed his last. Tears began rolling down the beloved Prophet’s eyes – peace and blessings of Allah be upon him – at which *Hazrath S’aad bin ‘Ubaadah*, may Allah be pleased with him, said, ‘O Apostle of Allah what is this? (I see tears in your eyes!) The beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, replied, ‘This is mercy which Allah the Exalted places in the heart of whosoever He likes and verily Allah showers mercy upon His slaves who are merciful.’<sup>15</sup>

When the arms of *Hazrath Abbas*, may Allah be pleased with him, were tied in an uncomfortable position along with other prisoners of the Battle of Badr, the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, heard him groan with pain and he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, could not sleep. When this information reached the Ansar, they untied the arms of *Hazrath Abbas*, may Allah be pleased with him. And even expressed their desire to waive his ransom but the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, did not agree to it.

He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was extremely affectionate and compassionate and used to favor him a lot for his circumstances. Always gave an allowance for the all too frequent albeit temporary conditions of boredom, loss of confidence and lulls in people’s dispositions. For this reason he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to intersperse his talks with recesses so that people do not begin to get fed-up. While leading congregational prayers if he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, heard a child crying he would shorten the prayer and say that:

14. *Shamael Tirmizi*, Chapter: *Munaaqib Al-Hasan Wal-Husain*, Razi Allah ‘Anhuma. 15. Book of diseases, Chapter: *Visiting sick children* and Book of funerals; Sahih Bukhari.

*I stand for prayer and just when I want to prolong a prayer I hear a child cry so I shorten it lest his mother feels troubled and hurt.*

The beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to say that:

*None of you should complain to me regarding the other because I want to appear before you in a condition that my heart be absolutely unbiased.*

The beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was like an affectionate father for Muslims. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to say that:

*Whosoever has left an inheritance it belongs to his heirs; if there is some loan that is our liability.*

He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had no tendency of going to extremes. *Hazrath 'Aishah*, may Allah be pleased with her, says that when the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has to give preference to one out of two tasks, he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, invariably prefers the easier of the two, provided there is not the slightest hint of sin in it; if there was sin in it the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would be the farthest from it. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to say that:

*It pleases Allah the Exalted to see the sign of His favor upon His slave.*

In his home the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to live much like one of the common folk. *Hazrath 'Aishah*, may Allah be pleased with her, says that the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to clean his clothes himself – milked the goat – did all his personal work himself – stitched a patch in his dress at times – and at times repaired his shoe. *Hazrath 'Aishah*, may Allah be pleased with her, was asked that how the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to live at home? She replied that: he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to remain engaged in household chores and when it was time for prayer he used to go outside to offer prayer; and she narrates that:



the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had the most generous and mildest nature of all people and normally his face wore a happy countenance. *Hazrath* Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, states that I have not seen anybody who is more affectionate and merciful for his family members than the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. On the authority of *Hazrath* 'Aishah, may Allah be pleased with her, it is reported that the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said that:

*The better among all of you is he who is the best for his family members  
and I am better than all of you in the matter of relations  
with family members.*

*Hazrath* Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, reports that the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was never critical of the quality of food that was served to him, he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had it if he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, liked it and left it if he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, did not like it.

*Hazrath* Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, says that I served the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, for ten years; during that period the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, not even once gave the slightest hint of annoyance; neither did he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, say 'Why did you do such-and-such thing?' nor did he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, ever say 'Why did you not do such-and-such thing?' The companions of the beloved Prophet, may Allah be pleased with them, were very thoughtful of him and would not rise upon his arrival because the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, did not like it; and he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would say that do not commit excesses when you praise and eulogize me the way the *Nasaarah* (people of Nazareth) had done with respect to 'Eisa Ibn Maryam; I am but a slave; you may call me *The slave of Allah and His apostle*. *Hazrath* Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, reports that any of the slave girls and maid-servants of Madinah would hold the prophet's hand, speak to him about whatever she had to and made him walk with her as far as she liked. When 'Adi Bin Hatim<sup>16</sup>, may Allah be pleased with him, appeared in the benign presence of the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him,

16. 'Adi bin Hatim, may Allah be pleased with him, was the son of Haatim Taaie. The famed Arab poet Hatim Taaie, whose generosity became the stuff of legend and idiom, was Christian by faith, lived in the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD and passed away before the advent of Islam.



the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, invited him to his home. A house-maid passed them a cushion to lean upon. As the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, sat down on the floor, he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, placed the cushion between himself and 'Adi. 'Adi is on record to have said, 'From his action I could understand that he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was not a king'. A man once saw the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and he was so over-awed by his commanding and dignified personality that he began to tremble. The beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said to him:

*Do not be nervous, I am no king, I am very much the son of a lady of Quraish who used to eat dried meat (as part of her staple diet).<sup>17</sup>*

The beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, at times used to sweep the floor of his home, tied the camels, gave them fodder, sat down with the house-maid to have food with her, helped her sometimes by kneading the flour and used to buy provisions for the home from the market himself.

If the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, came to know something about somebody which he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, did not like, he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would not say why so-and-so did such a thing? He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would rather say: what has happened to people that they are doing such deeds or speaking such words. Thus without naming anyone in particular, he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would restrain people from repeating that action.

He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to treat weak and exhausted animals and quadrupeds with affection; ordered people to be gentle with them because Allah's commandment is to deal with everything in a good way and treat everything gently. Therefore it was said that, should you kill, adopt a good method; if you have to perform *Zabeehah* (slaughter taking Allah's name on the sacrificial animal), perform it in a good way; whosoever wishes to perform the *Zabeehah*, he should first sharpen his knife and before performing the sacrifice let the sacrificial animal take rest. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has said that fear Allah in how you treat these

**17.** Ibn Majah: *Kitab-ut-Ta'mah*. (The prophet's emphasis that the same food is eaten in his home that the common people eat, was to reassure the man that he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, too was one of the common folk).

speechless animals. Should you use them as transport, treat them with kindness. Should you eat their meat, see that they are in good health. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, teaches us to behave politely with our attendant, servant, laborer and slave. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to say that whatever you eat give the same to them; let them also wear the same kind of clothes as you wear; and do not put Allah's creation in tortuous trial. Whosoever Allah the Exalted has placed under your subordination, they are your brothers, attendants and helpers; and whosoever's brother is in his subordination, he should give him the same food that he eats, and clothe him with the same kind of clothes that he himself wears. Do not assign to them such work which is beyond their capacity and if you must give them such assignment then assist them in carrying it out.

A desert Arab once came to the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and asked him, 'How many times should I forgive my servant in one day?' The beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, replied, 'Seventy times' and said, 'Pay the wages to the laborer before his sweat gets dry'.<sup>18</sup>

### **6.5. The nature of the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his children**

From the very beginning it has been in the nature of man that he tries to emulate even the habits and traits of the personality he loves and respects; though under *Shari'ah* neither it is his job nor is there any legal compulsion upon him to copy. Love has a constitution which is certainly one of its kind. A true lover is inquisitive about and remains preoccupied with finding out the habits and traits of the beloved, things that the beloved loves and likes, as also behaviours, habits and things that he does not like. And he is also anxious to know and remains concerned about the mannerisms of the personality whom he loves the most, like his gait and posture, his dress, garments and even about such minor things that otherwise have no legal import.

This was the stimulant that fired the scholars of old to produce prestigious and magnificent works on the beloved prophet's nature – may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. And even today that chain of stimulation, enthusiasm and outpour has not stopped. In this class of literature, the

**18.** Abridged from the author's *Nabi-e-Rahmath* (Urdu) vol. II pg. 174. All narrations in this section were extracted from *Suhah* and *Sunan* works; complete references are cited in *Nabi-e-Rahmath*.

*Shamael*<sup>19</sup> of Imam Tirmizi got maximum acceptance and popularity. Below are presented some abridged extracts of the *Shamael* on the nature of the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him:

When the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, walked, it seemed as if he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was stepping down a slope. When he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had to pay attention to somebody, he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would position his entire body towards him. The beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, by habit kept his eyes low cast. Rather than skywards, his eyes most of the time remained towards the earth. The habit of the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was mostly to look from the corner of his eye and take in the maximum view. While walking, he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would let his companions, may Allah be pleased with them, overtake him and allowed himself to be left behind. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would be the first to greet with a *Salam* whomsoever he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, met.

His hair on the sides were up to half the ears and at the back they were less than shoulder length but more than the size that falls up to the ear lobes. In other words, the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, liked to keep hair of an average length, neither too long nor short.

The beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is also known to have parted his hair. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to apply hair oil on his head profusely and used to comb his beard very often. When he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, began to perform *Wuzu* or comb his hair or wear his shoes he began with the right. The beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had a kohl container out of which every night he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to apply kohl in one eye three times and then in the other eye three times. Among dresses he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, liked the long shirt the most. When he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, wore a new dress he mentioned it by its name (to express his happiness) e.g. 'Allah the Exalted has given me this long shirt' and would say similar words for a turban, sheet etc. and supplicated as follows.

**19.** Hafiz Ibn Katheer, the famed Arab historian, known for his exposition of the Holy Quran and a biography of the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, also has to his credit a book by a similar title: *Shamael Ar-Rasool*.

*O Allah! To Thee belongs all praise and  
I thank Thee for clothing me with this garment.  
I seek of Thee the good in it  
and the good in the purpose that this garment is made for;  
I seek Thy refuge from the evil in it and  
the evil in the purpose that it is made for.*

And he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to say that adopt the wearing of white clothes; one should dress in white while alive and in white sheets the dead should be buried; it is the best of dress codes.

Najashi<sup>20</sup> sent the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, a pair of black socks, he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, wore them and after performing *Wuzu* also wiped over them with his wet hand and offered *Namaz* in shoes whose sole was made of two layers of leather stitched together. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to say that nobody should walk wearing a single shoe, either he should wear both the shoes or take off the pair entirely. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, did not let people eat with their left hand and walk around wearing a single shoe. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to say that when you wear shoes, put in the right foot first and when you take them off take out the left foot first. The beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is reported to have worn a ring in his right hand and got a ring designed that bore the following inscription: *Muhammad* in the first line, *Rasool* in the second line and *Allah* in the third line; and he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to take it off when he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had to go to the toilet.

At the time of the conquest of Makkah, when the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, entered Makkah, he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was wearing a black turban. The beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, invariably left the loose end of his turban

Readers unfamiliar with the prescribed norms of dressing up in Islam will not understand the following conversation and will like to know that a men's dress that covers the ankles is considered indicative of pride and arrogance, secondly, Muslims are expected to follow the example of the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, in all walks of life.

20. Title of the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE king of Ethiopia.

hanging between his shoulders.

*Hazrath* 'Ubaid bin Khalid Al-Mahrabi, may Allah be pleased with him, says that once I was going somewhere in Madinah when somebody behind me called out, 'Lift up that leg-sheet'. I turned in the direction of the speaker and noticed that he was the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. I said, 'This is an ordinary piece of cloth' (Implying: What arrogance can there be in it?), and he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said, 'Is my example not for you?' When I heard his reply I looked at his leg-sheet, it was up to half his calves.

He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would not lean against anything while eating something and he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, also used to say that, 'I do not lean against anything when I eat something'; and he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to lick his fingers thrice after meals. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, never had his food sitting on a hard bed or in small plates and never were chapatees prepared for him. It was inquired from *Hazrath* Qatadah, may Allah be pleased with him, 'Then what did he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, eat in?' He said, 'From a leather *dastarkhwan*<sup>21</sup>'. The beloved Prophet's – peace and blessings of Allah be upon him – favorite vegetables were pumpkin and bottle-gourd and he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, also liked pudding and honey. Among meat portions, he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had a preference for the meat of the upper forelimb; *Hazrath* 'Aishah, may Allah be pleased with her, says that the meat of the upper forelimb was not his favourite in the literal sense, meat was only seldom available to him; because the meat of the upper forelimb takes less time to cook the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to like it, so that after getting through with the cooking quickly, the remaining time could then be devoted to more important engagements. For the same reason, he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, liked to eat the leftover food from the pan or the bowl.

The beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to say that whosoever eats his food without invoking God's name on it, the devil joins in with him. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has also said that, 'If somebody begins his meal and forgets to say the *Bismillah* (In the name of Allah), he may say:

21. A leather sheet upon which only food was served and which was spread flat on the floor at meal times.



*With the name of Allah  
at the beginning (of this meal) and at the end of it*

After meals he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to say:

*All praise unto Allah,  
who provided us to eat and drink and  
caused us to be raised: Muslims.*

After meals when the *dastarkhwan* was wrapped up he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to say:

*All praise: profuse, good and blessed unto Allah.  
Nobody can cease to beseech Him and  
nobody can forsake Him; He is our Sustainer.*

He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to say that: It pleases Allah the Exalted that whenever His slave eats and drinks something, he eulogizes Him and extols His praise.

The beverage that the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, liked most was cool sweetened water.<sup>22</sup> He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to say that no nourishment substitutes for food and water the way milk does. It is reported that he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, drank water of the Zam-Zam well<sup>23</sup> in a standing position and used to drink water in three breaths.

The beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had a small perfume container. From that he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to take out 'Atar (perfume in an oil base) for his use and (if somebody

22. Dates if immersed in water for a short while lend to it a sweet taste. This traditional Sherbet-like beverage, sweetened water basically, was used as an effective re-hydrant in the desert climate of Arabia centuries ago. 23. Description of the Zam-Zam well appeared under sub-section 2.4.1 in the account of Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, whose period dates back to several thousand years before Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. After centuries of constructions and renovations around the Holy Ka'bah, today the Zam-Zam well lies below the central courtyard of the Haram Shareef in Makkah. Muslims drink the blessed water of the Zam-Zam well while standing as it is the practice of their Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Except for the water of the Zam-Zam it was the practice of the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, to drink water in a sitting position.



offered it to him as gift) never turned it down. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to say that three things should not be turned down: cushion, fragrance<sup>24</sup> and milk. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said that fragrance of a men's perfume diffuses in the atmosphere and color is imperceptible and perfume for women is that whose color is dominant and fragrance, subdued.

*Hazrath* 'Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, says that the beloved Prophet's – peace and blessings of Allah be upon him – way of talking was different from the way you people talk non-stop. His conversations used to be clear, every subject distinct from the other, so that those who sat with him committed his words to memory and (sometimes) the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, repeated his words up to three times to make sure that his audience understood him. The beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, never went into peels of laughter; at the most he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, only smiled. 'Abdullah Bin Harith, may Allah be pleased with him, says that I have not seen anybody who smiled more often than the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, did. However, sometimes the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, also laughed in a manner that his blessed teeth were visible. Jarir Bin 'Abdullah, may Allah be pleased with him, says that after I became a Muslim, the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, never refused me admittance before his benign presence and he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to smile on seeing me. *Hazrath* Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, says that the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to mix and mingle with us and enlivened us with his sense of humour; for instance, I had a younger brother and the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, asked him good-humouredly, 'O Abu 'Umair where did the chick go?' (Abu 'Umair had a chick which he kept in a cage and he used to play with it. The Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said these words in a lighter vein when the chick died). The companions, may Allah be pleased with them, once submitted, 'O beloved Prophet – peace and blessings of Allah be upon him – you sometimes employ gentle humour when you are with us' and he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, replied, 'Yes, but I never say anything wrong'. Sometimes he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, made proverbial use of poetry and quoted verses of *Hazrath*

24. The Urdu terms used by the author here denotes *the entire class of fragrances*: sources of fragrance like flowers and scented woods, extracts and concentrates like Rose water and 'Atar. Nowadays, in the wide range of consumer goods that is available fragrance is a prominent ingredient.

'Abdullah Bin Rawahah or other poets; accordingly sometimes quoted a line of Tarafah whose meaning is:

*Sometimes such a one brings the news to you,  
who you have not paid anything in return.<sup>25</sup>*

He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, sometimes used to say that the most truthful words a poet has ever written are the words of Labeed Bin Rabi'ah. When read with their context, their sense in English would be more or less:

*Beware! Except Allah the Everlasting,  
the worldly form is but to pass away.*

Once a finger of the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was injured by a stone and it bled. The beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said a couplet at that time whose meaning is:

*Thou art a finger that received no harm  
except for having bled;  
(And that has not gone in vain, for)  
the pain was suffered in Allah's way.<sup>26</sup>*

To encourage his army during the Battle of Hunain he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, repeatedly said aloud a couplet whose meaning is:

*I am beyond doubt and suspicion a prophet  
(And) I am in the progeny of 'Abdul Muttalib.*

25. Tarafah ibn al Abd (543 – 569 CE) was a nomad poet, born in Bahrain, who led a tragic life and was famous for his satirical verse. Although Tarafah had written this line in pre-Islamic days, the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to recite it in the context of Quranic revelations brought to him by the Archangel Jibreel, peace be upon him. 26. Apparently there seems to be some reservation in attributing the authorship of this couplet to the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, because in his honour Allah says in the Holy Quran: *And We have not taught him poetry, nor it befitteth him.* (V.69: Chapter 36: Yaseen; Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi). One answer to this reservation is that involuntarily saying of certain words appropriate to the situation does not contradict the Quranic pronouncement. The other explanation that has been offered is that, it is somebody else's couplet which the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had recited to testify to his own condition.

The beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, allowed the recitation of poetry, gave away a prize for its recitation and even liked to hear poetry himself. *Hazrath* Jabir Bin Samrah, may Allah be pleased with him, says that he had attended over a hundred gatherings which the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had graced with his presence; in those gatherings, the companions, may Allah be pleased with them, recited ballads recounting tales and events of the age of ignorance and the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, (did not stop their recitation) listened to them quietly and at some places even smiled with his companions. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to get a podium placed in the mosque for *Hazrath* Hassan Bin Thabit, may Allah be pleased with him, so that the latter got a platform from where he could – through his poetry (encomia) – introduce the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, to a larger audience and defend him as his spokesman. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, also used to say that Allah, the Truth and the Exalted, helps Hassan through the Holy Spirit (Archangel Jibreel, peace be upon him) as long as he acts in defence of religion or acts as the spokesman of the Apostle of Allah' and replies on his behalf.

When the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to lie down to rest he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would put his right hand under his right cheek and would say:

*O my Lord! When You raise Your bondsmen  
grant me protection from your punishment.*

When he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, retired to bed he would say words that meant:

*May my death and living be in Your name O Allah!*

On waking up he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would supplicate as follows:

*All praise unto Allah  
Who brought us back to life after having caused us to die and  
towards Him only we have to rise and return.*

The beloved prophet's bed on which he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon

him, used to sleep was made of leather and filled with the fiber of date palms. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to visit the sick, attend funerals and accept invitations of even the slaves. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, performed the *Haj* riding a she-camel with an old pack-saddle and over the saddle was spread out a cloth worth probably less than four Dirham. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said that if I am given a limb portion of mutton I would accept it and if somebody invited me over a meal that consisted of just that much I would definitely go. It was one of his noble habits that if something was done to his dislike, he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, did not ask people to stop it there and then. The beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, accepted gifts and gave gifts in return. His shyness and his modesty were far more than the shyness and modesty of a veiled maiden. And, when something happened to his dislike you could read it immediately from his blessed face.

## **The place and position of women in Islam**

Islam has performed a significant feat in connection with the restoration of dignity and credibility of womankind by securing for them a suitable position in the human society and liberating them from draconian laws, unjust customs and traditions, and the narcissism and arrogance of men. Even a cursory reading of the Glorious Quran is enough to understand the stark difference between an uninformed viewpoint and the Quranic/Islamic point of view with respect to women. Individual behaviour and community laws relate to these core orientations.

Quranic verses revealed concerning one half of the humankind, the weaker sex, instill confidence in a woman because they clearly define that there is a predestined position for her both in society and before God. She can co-operate in areas of religion and knowledge, in the service of Islam, virtue and God-consciousness; and she can fully participate in building a pious society. Quranic verses regarding the acceptance of deeds, felicity and deliverance, and success in the Hereafter always mention women with men. Allah the Exalted says:

**And whoso doeth good works, whether of male or female,  
and he (or she) is a believer, such will enter Paradise  
and they will not be wronged the dint in a date-stone.<sup>1</sup>**

In another place He says:

**And their Lord hath heard them (and He saith):  
Lo! I suffer not the work of any worker, male or female, to be lost.  
Ye proceed one from another.<sup>2</sup>**

Similarly, where He mentions the bestowal of opportunities and means to attain *good life*, the Lord not only remembers women with men, His guarantee

1. V.124: Chapter 4: *An-Nisa'*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; M.M. Pickthall. 2. V.195: Chapter 3: *Aal Imran*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall.

and promise for *good life* extends to both the sexes. *Good life* is the English for *Hayat-i-tayyibah* – a highly meaningful and comprehensive Quranic expression which, besides carrying the sense of an exemplary and successful life, conveys the infinite meanings of respect and peace.

**Whosoever doth right, whether male or female and is a believer,  
him verily We shall quicken with good life, and We shall pay them  
a recompense in proportion to the best of what they used to do.<sup>3</sup>**

In the context of good attributes, virtuous deeds and important departments of religion, the Glorious Quran not only mentions men with women and gives an indication that in terms of virtuous deeds and gentle attributes there is no difference between males and females, it also, in a shift of style, describes one good attribute after the other, mentions it in men, then everytime associates the same attribute with women, no matter how verbose the format might become.

Its underlying wisdom is that human minds trained under the shadow of un-Islamic religions and philosophies and along an ancient way of living and etiquette, are unable to conceive the fact that women too can have the attributes that are found in strong and capable men. Such minds have always been discriminatory. They have even debarred women from developing many a proficiency lest the former have to endure their competition and superiority in those areas. Join me in reading the verse below:

**Lo! men who surrender unto Allah and women who surrender,  
and men who believe and women who believe,  
and men who obey and women who obey,  
and men who speak the truth and women who speak the truth,  
and men who persevere (in righteousness) and women who persevere,  
and men who are humble and women who are humble,  
and men who give alms and women who give alms,  
and men who fast and women who fast,  
and men who guard their modesty  
and women who guard (their modesty), and men who remember Allah  
much and women who remember - Allah hath prepared for them  
forgiveness and a vast reward.<sup>4</sup>**

3.V.97: Chapter 16: *An-Nahl*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall. 4. V.35: Chapter 33: *Al-Ahzaab*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall.



The Glorious Quran does not mention women only in the context of worship and acts of devotion to God, it mentions them along with capable men also, with religious scholars, with men of determination, with those who endure difficulties in conducting social audits on religious and moral parameters, and toil in the path of *Enjoin the right and forbid the wrong* – a kind of social drive aimed at developing a pious society. The Quran envisages the believers, men and women, as one united cohesive group who would co-operate on principles of virtue and God-consciousness.

**And the believing men and believing women are friends one unto another: they command that which is reputable and restrain from that which is disreputable, and establish prayer and give the poor-due and obey Allah and His apostle. Those! Allah will surely show mercy to them; verily Allah is Mighty, Wise.<sup>5</sup>**

The holy Quran glances over factors like gender, race, complexion and ancestry altogether and it singularly declares God-consciousness as the means and the yardstick for scaling the peak of human eminence.

**O mankind! Lo! We have created you from a male and a female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the best in conduct. Lo! Allah is Knower, Aware.<sup>6</sup>**

The foregoing teachings are more than sufficient to instill courage, self-respect and self-confidence among women, and to protect them – in the terminology of modern psychology – against inferiority complex.

It is the practical consequence of these very teachings that among Islam's celebrated women,<sup>7</sup> – since the time of the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, to the present day – we witness a large number of lady teachers and ladies who were adept in up-bringing, ladies who participated in Holy wars and ladies who were nurses, literary figures and writers, *Hafizaath* (Girls and ladies who learn the entire Holy Quran by heart), narrators of Prophetic Traditions, the ardent in worship, the devout, and ladies

5. V.71: Chapter 9: *At-Tawbah*: Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid. 6. Holy Quran: Chapter 49: *Al-Hujraat*: v 13. 7. In this connection biographies of Islam's celebrated women may be referred.

in possession of fortunes who were held in high esteem in the society. They possessed ideal and exemplary personalities, from whom much intellectual benefit was derived and under whom people were trained.

Of all the rights that Islam has given to the Muslim woman, some are:

- The right of ownership and right to ancestral property
- The right to sell and purchase
- The right of separation from husband (the right to *Khula* if necessary)
- The right of dissolution of betrothal (if she does not agree to it)
- And the right to participate in the Prayer of *'Eidul Fitr*, the Prayer of *'Eidul Azha*, the Prayer of *Friday* and other congregational prayers

Details of rights besides these are available in literature on Islamic jurisprudence (*Fiqh* literature).<sup>8</sup>

8. Adapted from *Tahzeeb-o-tamaddun par Islam ke asraat-o-ehsaanaat* (Urdu) by Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi.

## The place and position of humanity in Islam

### 8<sup>a</sup>.1. Man is the deputy and vicegerent of God<sup>1</sup>

Islam has told us that man is God's deputy on earth, His vicegerent and the trustee of the world. The world is a trust (*waqf*) and man is a trustee (*Mutawalli*), his job here is to organize and direct. The world is dotted with myriad trusts (*waqfs*) that vary between the small and the large. In turn, this entire world, this whole universe, is one huge and magnificent trust (*waqf*); neither is it the proprietorship of anybody nor it is any ancestral property that an heir is free to squander. This trust (*waqf*) has predators, grazing animals, birds, trees, rivers, mountains, gold, silver, provisions of food and all divine favors that descend upon this world and nowhere else. All of these resources have been given in man's custody because he knows their nature and cares for them, his mundane form is created from the dust of this trust, and it is essential for a custodian to have the capabilities that he has, namely, *familiarity and knowledge* and *care and concern*. Since man knows the profit and loss equations of this world and since things that he needs too have been placed in it, he can become a good trustee.

For example, such a person can only manage a library well who has a passion for learning, likes books and is interested in them. If the management of a library is placed in the charge of an ignorant person then no matter how noble and nice a man he may be, he can never make a good librarian. But one who has a passion for learning and has some connection with books will devote sufficient time there, he will make a substantial addition to the collection and will make all efforts to develop the facility.

Similarly, since man is a native of this world, he is interested in the world and

1. The worthlessness to which human life is reduced today and the way mankind is being annihilated, had stirred the author to start a social forum, *The Message of Humanity*, whose purpose was to help people recall their long forgotten lesson and re-acquaint them with their true place and position. Under the aegis of that forum public meetings were held in different parts of the country, a lot of literature was distributed and people who sympathized with mankind were contacted. People who are compassionate towards the sufferings of humanity may write to: The office, Message of Humanity Forum, Post Box 93, Lucknow – 226001.

needs it too, he is familiar with it, also cares for it, he has to live in it, also has to die in it; therefore, he will look after it very well and will make proper use of the favors that God has bestowed upon him. Nobody except him can deliver the kind of quality that he delivers in this job.

### **8<sup>a</sup>.2. Only man is suitable for all the organizing in this world**

When Allah the Exalted created Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, and appointed him as His vicegerent on earth, the angels who are a pure and spiritual creation who neither sin nor have the desire to sin said that, 'O Lord! You are appointing as Your vicegerent in the world, one who will shed blood! We hallow Thee and remain occupied in Thine worship, bestow this position upon us'. 'You do not know this matter', replied Allah the Exalted. He arranged an examination for Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, and the angels. Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, was fashioned from the dust of the earth, was destined to use the world, his constitution was created to adapt to it, so he was also familiar with each and everything that was there in it. He answered cent percent correctly. The angels had no concern with those things and therefore they could not answer. God thus demonstrated that man, in spite of all his weaknesses, was suitable for all the organizing in this world and the supervision of this trust. His weaknesses and needs rather testified to his suitability for that position. Had the world been inhabited by angels then most of the worldly favors would have been rendered useless. Not on any account would they have seen the development that man, driven by his need and desire, brought about in them.

### **8<sup>a</sup>.3. A successful substitute**

Nevertheless, you should also remember that it is the obligation of a deputy and a substitute to remain wholly devoted to him who has made him a deputy and present in himself a specimen and reflection of his mentor's morals. If I am somebody's substitute here, I shall be called a successful and loyal substitute only when, within my limited capacity, I try to take his kind of actions and develop his kind of morals. To be God's vicegerent is to cultivate His virtues in us and develop a similarity with His attributes. We are told that among His attributes and virtues are knowledge, mercy, appreciation, the doing of favors, administration, chastity, the capacity to pardon and forego, grant and bestowal, to do justice and implement it, protection and security, love, majesty and grace, the capacity to call criminals to account and take revenge,

comprehensiveness of approach and an extensive vision.

#### **8<sup>a</sup>.4. Demonstration of divine virtues**

'Adopt God's virtues' was the teaching that *Hazrath* Muhammad, the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had given to mankind. Although man within his human limits and with all his human weaknesses can create in himself a reflection of Divine virtues and attributes, he can never become God but demonstrate Divine virtues to the world he can; as a true deputy this is his job. If man begins to consider himself a deputy of God in reality and adopts His virtues as the moral standards of his everyday life, you can make a guess as to what kind of progress he would make, to which spiritual level he would ascend and during his reign as a deputy and vicegerent how prosperous and verdant would the world become. Religion imparts the most exalted and well-balanced image to a human being. It declares him to be God's vicegerent, His substitute in all the organizing on this earth and a trustee (*Mutawalli*) to this sprawling and magnificent trust (*waqf*); there can neither be a higher honor for man than this nor for mankind a higher ascent.

#### **8<sup>a</sup>.5. Two contradictory images**

However people by themselves established two images that contradict each other, somewhere man was made out to be God and people began to worship him and somewhere he was considered to be worst than a beast and was driven like cattle. Some men became self-styled gods and some began to consider themselves as being inferior to animals, in their understanding two square meals was their only concern and a body was all they had. Both of these images are incorrect, they are rather evidently atrocious. Man is neither God nor beast; man is only man but God's deputy. The whole world has been created for him and he has been created for God. The entire world is answerable to him and he is accountable to God. This planet, this world, is not anybody's personal property, it is a trust (*waqf*) and man is its trustee (*Mutawalli*). Without this image and this tenet the jig-saw puzzle of this world can never fall in place. History bears testimony that whenever man strayed from the straight path, exceeded his limit, tried to act God and thought of himself to be the real Owner of the world or when he fell from his position and considered himself to be a beast or gave up organizing and overseeing the world and evaded the duties and responsibilities of life, destruction became his lot and this world too was devastated.

### 8<sup>a</sup>.6. A message of love and harmony

Allah the Exalted says:

**Remember Allah's favor unto you, how ye were enemies  
(who wished to kill each other and  
did not even like to see each other's faces)  
and He made friendship between your hearts so that ye  
become as brothers by His grace.<sup>2</sup>**

[Text in parentheses author's]

This verse relates to an actual incident. It is also a reminder of the times when servitude to God and His worship had become difficult for the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and the Muslims in Makkah; and fellow Makkans, by and large, in their folly had failed to realize that he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was their well-wisher who wanted to lift them from their lowly level, extricate them from a life of indignity and disgrace and transform them in to a nation that would enlighten the whole world.

Let love become universal, let it become global. End differences and quarrels. Let mankind know the purpose of their life. Let the capabilities of valor and generosity with which God has blessed mankind and His favors of love and wealth, which are being spent on petty and ordinary matters, be properly utilized. Nations are fighting nations. Countries harbor enmities against countries. Thousands of wrangles are there within brotherhoods. Disobedience of God is rampant. Such wrongs are being committed that offend God and incite His wrath. Man is hunting for man the way predators hunt for animals in a jungle. It is shocking that mankind has become game for man. Islam wants to extract them from nadirs and lift them to an exalted position but the people of Makkah would not understand. Emotions working in their hearts were: a person from so-and-so's house and from such-and-such family has made so much progress! When the life of *Hazrath* Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and his noble companions, may Allah be pleased with them, became difficult in Makkah, they were compelled to leave their beloved motherland.

A motherland is dear to every human being but the purpose of life takes

2. V103: Chapter 3: *Aal Imran*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall.



precedence and that happens to be absolutely tremendous.

### 8<sup>a</sup>.7. The battle ready Aws and Khazraj

After leaving Makkah – on *Hijrath*<sup>3</sup> – when the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and his disciples arrived in Madinah, another intractable problem was in store there. In Madinah were two brotherhoods and both were Arabs but since long there was enmity between them. Each brotherhood spoke of its virtue and the other's fault. When there is no higher goal in sight, fights erupt over trifles.

I belong to a family of *Zamindars* (landlords). My relatives on the maternal side were among the well-to-do *Zamindars* of their time. In our area, during the *Zamindari* days, a fight would begin over trifles, lawsuits would be filed, and a dispute would flare up over an acacia tree or over the boundary of a field or over the divider along adjacent fields or over 'I-was-passing-by-and-so-and-so-did-not-wish-me'. There you go – fighting would break out, boycotts would be called and children would be instructed not to go to so-and-so's house. What would children make of these tales! They would play together and become one again.

Education ought to have integrated mankind but play unites the world of today. Teams of one country go to another country. Hosts and tourists closely cooperate with each other in play. Alas! Education does not unite but games do, sobriety does not unite but amusement does.

When there is no higher purpose in sight and when the human world engulfed in fires, the rot that afflicts it and the horrible acts that provoke God's wrath and debase and trample mankind no more evoke compassion and are met with cold indifference; people begin to take interest in games and entertainment like children or they begin to give importance to such petty differences that make you feel both distressed and amused. The condition of the people of Madinah before the arrival of the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was also the same; people of Aws and Khazraj used to fight each other in quite the same way. They used to quench their thirst with each other's blood as though there was no greater aim left for them other than that. This urge was there in them since years. It was when the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and his noble companions, may

3. Please refer to footnote no. 2 of sub-section 2.3.1 if necessary.

Allah be pleased with them, reached Madinah that the people of Madinah found a higher purpose before them. Revelations of profound realities brought about a radical transformation in them. They had become the best of friends, their friendships became legend and they totally forgot their past. The Jews living in Madinah did not like it. They tried a lot to incite clashes between them. At times they even recited couplets before them, written in the days of ignorance, which celebrated tribal bigotry and ignorance-time loyalties. Aws-Khazraj did not accept the influence of these instigations. The love of Allah and His Apostle, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had washed away their enmities. So base had their past begun to appear before them that they shuddered even at the thought of it and it made their hair stand on end.

When a collective danger looms or when a moment of collective joy arrives, people come together, the way they gather around the Ka'bah, uniform in dress and speech. Sharing life's real purpose – i.e. longing to meet God, seeking His pleasure, serving mankind and trying to alleviate its sufferings – also evokes the same reaction. At such times, trivial matters seem so contemptible that even their thought becomes nauseating. The beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, on one such occasion had remarked, 'Let it go, it is such a bad thing to do'. The incident was that the residents of Madinah (the *Ansar*) and the emigrants from Makkah (the *Muhajireen*) got into a fight over a well. One called out to his tribe. The other complained of injustice to his supporters. It was then that the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had said, 'Let it go, it is a very disgraceful thing to do'.

Thanks to the training given by the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and the blessings of Islam, there came about such a revolution in the lives of *Muhajireen* and *Ansar* that blood-soaked, exhausted in battle, they are in the throes of death and feeling thirsty, yet when water is brought, they gesture towards the other wounded companion and insist that he be served first. This degree of selflessness was produced by the unique ties of Islam, love for the real purpose and love for the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. So heady was the intoxication of these ties that the *Ansar* of Madinah made the *Muhajireen* of Makkah equal partners in their shops, farms and properties.

**8<sup>a</sup>.8. The thing most disliked after *shirk* i.e. associating partners with Allah, is mutual rancor**

The thing that the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has condemned the most after *shirk* (associating partners with Allah) is mutual rancor. A Prophetic Tradition mentions that on the *Night of Immunity* (*Shab-e-Baraa' r<sup>4</sup>*) in which mass forgiveness and pardon is granted, when the river of divine mercy overflows, three persons are denied the glad tidings of Forgiveness: he who is disobedient to his parents, the habitual drunkard and he who has ill-will and malice in his heart against his Muslim brother. The beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was very emphatic about taking care, specially, of blood relations. He, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said that, included among the nine commandments that my Lord has given me is also that: I establish relationship with him who severs relationship and ties with me, forgive him who wrongs against me and give to him who has deprived me.

It is no marvel to keep on good terms with him whose dealings with us have the warmth of friendship and affection. Excellence lies in being kind towards him who harbors enmity and inflicts losses.

## **The innate gift of being humane**

### **8<sup>b</sup>.1. 'God is not despaired of the human race'**

The way God deals with the human race is the converse of the way a human being deals with it. To the question: Is God not despaired of the human race? The answer is: His mercies and favors are raining upon this world, upon this *Sansaar*, incessantly; everything in the universe has pinned its hopes on the human race. However, the manner in which we conduct our affairs with one another tells that we are despaired of man.

A 'thinker' says, that every child who comes in this world proclaims that God is not disappointed with mankind. Had He been disappointed, He would not have caused this race to grow in numbers and He would no more have sent it to the world that it may put its capabilities and destinies to test. However, man destroys man, man hates man, man exploits man; he lives on another man's blood like a leech, considers him a customer, makes profits through him and announces through his conduct that he has no hope left in the capabilities and future of mankind. These demonstrations of God and man are going on continuously. Each and every drop of rain announces that the Creator of the world is still not disappointed with His thirsty creation ..... His cruel creation. The earth is capable of supporting vegetation and its produce is an announcement that: God is not disappointed with the dwellers of this earth. The sun shines and it never goes on strike. The moon appears as usual; it spreads its luminous sheet, cools the eyes and comforts the hearts. All these phenomena are an announcement that: God is still not disappointed with man.

However, common human conduct proves that we all are disappointed with man. We are demonstrating through our mind-sets and actions that to a man, who is a masterpiece of God's industry, we give no significance. Manifestations of God's omnipotence and the beauty of his creation are there in everything.....a flower.....a bud.....a tiny droplet.....a blade of grass.....a speck of dust.....the leaves of a tree.....whatever you look at, it seems that there is a world in it. The most beautiful creation among them, the most

captivating, is man. Each and every thing, the entire universe, is created to serve him. In unison they announce that man is God's beloved and the best of all His creations. If you liken this world to a wedding procession, he is the bridegroom. But the way you and I commonly behave, proves that man has got no merit at all. Through our actions we sue ourselves in God's court, beseeching Him to recall us from this world. It is as though we wish to prove true the angelic apprehension, which God Himself had confuted – at the time of man's creation God had said:

**Lo! I am about to place a viceroy in the earth**

And the angels had expressed their apprehension:

**Wilt thou place therein one who will do harm therein  
and will shed blood.**

When God questioned Adam, peace be upon him, about the knowledge of things, he gave the right answers. The angels had failed to answer. God had caused man to win; we are defeating him.

## **8<sup>b</sup>.2. 'A glass tycoon bids the highest for broken mirrors'**

God said that you do not know what marvelous qualities there are in man. How the river of knowledge gushes forth from his being. The seas would not have the expanse and the depth, which he has. The twinkle of love that he has in his eyes, you can not produce. There is softness and love in his heart, his heart melts and feels hurt when he sees others in pain; you are deprived of these things. Iqbal<sup>1</sup> had made a very bold statement when he had said:

O Archangel do not emulate my way of imbibing the truth  
and my way of getting drunk with Divine love;  
it is best that the angels closest to Allah  
who do not have to toil like us in the world  
remember Him, glorify Him and circumambulate.<sup>2</sup>

1. Dr. Mohammad Iqbal (1877-1938) the celebrated Urdu poet who wrote: *Sare Jahan se achchha Hindostan hamara*. For readers who know Urdu, the couplets quoted by the author in this section are: (1) *Na kar taqleed aye Jibreel merey jazb-o-masti ki; tan-asaan 'arshiyon ko zikr-o-tasbeeh-o-tawaaf oola* (2) *Dard-e-dil ke waastey paida kiya insaan ko; warna 'ta'at ke liye kuchh kam na they karr-o-bayan*. 2. *Kulliyaat-e-Iqbal*, 1986 Reprint, *Baal-e-Jibreel*, Pg. 17.

And bolder is:

*Created man for heart-ache;  
else for devotion there was no dearth of pomp and praise.<sup>3</sup>*

The angels do not have this wealth; opposite angels, man can lay down before God a broken-heart.

*Whoever the swishing dagger bloodies the leader writhes in pain;  
there's a feeling he has for every earthly being.<sup>4</sup>*

Somebody else is stabbed, somebody else's foot is pricked by a thorn but our heart feels the pain. The most precious resource at a person's disposal is the resource of mercy, the resource of love. A tear-drop that falls from the eye at the sight of a scarf-less widow or at the sight of the cold hearth of a poor man who has no food to prepare or upon hearing the groans of the sick, that tear-drop can purify the sea if it were to fall in it and if it were to fall in a jungle of sins it would burn everything away and replace it with light. The angels can present everything but they can never present that tear-drop whose worth even you have not recognized.....the tear-drop that one human being sheds for another human being. The angels can not but keep awake looking at their Lord, realizing the presence of His Being and Attributes but the wide awake state of the angels has got no comparison with the sleeplessness of a person who is unable to shut his eyes out of concern for somebody else's misery and pain.

A human being's most valuable asset is that he is affected by the distress of others. He has the basic ingredient of love in him; the moment it finds a stimulant it becomes active. Once that happens, he doesn't give even a look at religion, community, sect, motherland or country. Man sees only the heart of man and sympathizes with him. The way a magnet attracts iron and the latter must submit to that attraction, likewise the magnetism of one human heart exercises a pull at another human heart.

3. Readers unfamiliar with the context of this verse will like to know that, according to Quranic accounts, angels were created before the creation of man. The noble traditions indicate that they are in extremely large numbers. The angels hymn the praise of the Lord night and day and never get weary. 4. For readers who know Urdu, Ameer Khusro's couplet quoted by the author above is: *Khanjar chaley kisi pey tadaptey hain ham Ameer; sare jahan ka dard hamarey jigar mein hai.*



### 8<sup>b</sup>.3. ‘What good is life sans compassion?’

If a man is robbed of this wealth he will become bankrupt. If a country is deprived of it – if there were a country which had wealth like that of America, a system like that of Russia, oil deposits like those of Arab countries, abundance and plenty everywhere, a Ganga of gold and a Jamuna of silver flowing through it but the spring of love has gone dry in it – then such a country is bankrupt. Allah’s mercies will not descend upon it.

Still the human eye has the capacity to weep. Still, the human heart has the capacity to flutter, to smolder and feel hurt. The heart which is devoid of this capacity is not called a heart; it is called a piece of flint.

Before Allah it is not worth a cowry – be it the heart of a Muslim or of a Hindu, Sikh or Christian. A heart is there to flutter, to shudder, to cry, and to be more verdant than the earth, more refreshing than a waterfall, more expansive than the universe and in its ability to lash like a torrent it should surpass the clouds.

That is not a human eye which is never moist, that is the flower of narcissus. That is not a human heart which is never hurt to see others in pain, which does not know what it is to become restless and to weep over the sorrows of humanity; that is the heart of a tiger. The forehead on which beads of repentance never appear that is not a forehead..... that is some kind of a rock.

Paralyzed is the hand which does not extend in the service of humanity. Better than the hand which is raised to slaughter a human being would have been the paw of a lion. If man’s job was to hack, then instead of hands, nature would have given him a sword. If the purpose of man’s life on earth was only to amass wealth, instead of a beating heart a cash box would have been installed in his chest. Had man been assigned the work of making plans of destruction only, he would not have a human brain as a built-in feature, he would rather come fitted with the brain of some *Shaitan*<sup>5</sup>, some *Rakshas*<sup>6</sup>, in him.

The wonders of man’s anatomy are talked about but if you observe the wonders of his heart, you can see them eclipse the wonders of structure. He is gifted with such a heart that if somebody is in distress in the East, he becomes

5. *Shaitaan*: (Arabic & Urdu) meaning: devil. 6. *Rakshas*: (Hindi) meaning: devil.

restless in the West. It was a life in which the heart played the dominant role that, once the Battle of Badr was over and the arms of captives were tied behind their backs, the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, moved by the sufferings of people in captivity could not sleep the whole of that night. If a child cried behind him while he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, led the congregation, the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would shorten the *Namaz* lest the child's mother became restless. If a heart causes somebody to suffer and torments somebody, then what material should we count that heart with?

Brothers! The totality of God's interactions with His creation tells us that He is not despaired with the human race. If the water-works department can suspend the supply of water and if the power-house can suspend the supply of electricity, can God not suspend the descent of His favors? But just as the municipality is not disappointed with people living within municipal limits and it continues to serve them, God too is providing water to the whole world and His command to all His creation is to serve man. The entire factory – God's unfathomable factory that we call the universe – is dedicated to serve man. God is not disappointed with him. But what are we trying to prove by our manner? Are we proving that we consider man to be a superior being? Do we consider him dignified? Do we consider him our equal? Do we consider him to be a part of us?

The line of action that we have adopted is the biggest threat to humanity as a whole. There is no outside threat. Gone are the days of nations besieging nations. The threat is from within. The threat is of rising antipathies against mankind and its consequent trampling, and of people shirking the responsibility of human welfare. The need is to guard both the country and the nation against it.

#### **8<sup>b</sup>.4. The place of mankind in the universe**

The Apostles, peace be upon them, had told mankind that if you become subordinate to the world and allow your desires to dominate you, this entire life will become abnormal and disorganized, and such anarchy will prevail that your very world will become hell for you. If man does not recognize himself, he will continue to fall from the place he occupies and mankind will be doomed to ruin and destruction.

It has been told in the Noble Quran that after creating man, the angels were

asked to pay obeisance to him, which gives us the lesson that: for the human race to stoop before anybody other than its Creator, is something base. Deserving prostration, after God, could have been His angels because they are the worker-managers of the universe. By Allah's leave, they bring the rain and blow the winds. But in the manner of a ruler who introduces his deputy to his staff, God had introduced man to the angels, making the angels prostrate before him, so that people remember till the day of Resurrection that it is not fit for them to stoop before anybody except before God. Human beings, however, by neglecting their lives and personalities are disgracing and killing the innate gift of being human.<sup>7</sup>

7. *Payam-e-Insaaniyat* (Urdu) pgs. 55-56; by Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi.

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