

From the Editor's Desk...

As we all know that seeking knowledge is obligatory in Islam for every Muslim, man and woman. Muslims made great advances in many different fields, such as geography, physics, chemistry, mathematics, medicine, pharmacology, architecture, linguistics and astronomy. They integrated the earlier works of the Indians, Persians and Greeks into a new synthesis.

Within a few years of Muhammad's (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) mission, a great civilization sprang up and flourished. The outcome is shown in the spread of Islamic universities; Al-Zaytunah in Tunis, and Al-Azhar in Cairo go back more than 1,000 years and are the oldest existing universities in the world. Indeed, they were the models for the first European universities.

Muslims have always had a special interest in astronomy. The moon and the sun are of vital importance in the daily life of every Muslim. By the moon, Muslims determine the beginning and the end of the months in their lunar calendar. By the sun the Muslims calculate the times for prayer and fasting.

It is also by means of astronomy that Muslims can determine the precise direction of the Qiblah, to face the Ka'bah in Makkah, during prayer. The most precise solar calendar, superior to the Julian, is the Jilali, devised under the supervision of Umar Khayyam.

Muslim astronomers were the first to establish observatories, like the one built at Mugharah by Hulagu, the son of Genghis Khan, in Persia, and they invented instruments such as the quadrant and astrolabe, which led to advances not only in astronomy but in oceanic navigation, contributing to the European age of exploration.

Muslim scholars paid great attention to geography as well. In fact, the Muslims' great concern for geography originated with their religion. The Qur'an encourages people to travel throughout the earth to see God's signs and patterns everywhere. Islam also requires each Muslim to have at least enough knowledge of geography to know the direction of the Qiblah to pray five times a day.

Among the most famous names in the field of geography, even in the West, are Ibn Khaldun and Ibn Batuta, renowned for their written accounts of their extensive explorations.

In 1166, Al-Idrisi, the well-known Muslim scholar who served the Sicilian court, produced very accurate maps, including a world map with all the continents and their mountains, rivers and famous cities. Al-Muqdishii was the first geographer to produce accurate maps in colour.

*I would like to say that the religion Islam and the Islamic scholars and pioneers showed the world a new and the best way of life. **Arif Mateen Ansari***

The Blessed Night

(Lai-La-tul-Mu-baa-ri-ka)

Professor Dr. Muhammad Adil

Submission to Allah ta'aa-laa is the surest mode of success in life. According to the Qur'an, "Lo! religion with Allah (is) the surrender (to His will and guidance). (3:19). The surrender and submission to the will of Allah is continuous because life is also continuous till eternity. Life in this world and the hereafter are only intervening periods. In fact, periodicity in time is also the creation of Allah sub-haa-nu-hu for the development and enlightenment of Man as described by Qur'an Majeed in chapter 76 i.e. (Ad-dahr or Al-Insann-Man or Time because they are interlinked. "Hath there come upon man (ever) any period of time in which he was thing unremembered." (76:1) So according to the Qur'an dahr, (دبر) is time and heen (حين) is a particular period of time. Man has been sent into this world for a particular period of time to develop himself and enlighten himself for the glorification of his Creator as envisaged through the agency of the Prophets (A.S.) till the culmination of the viceregency of Allah upon the last and final Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) Man is the creation of Allah ta'aala in the periodicity of time. A complete Code of life has been chalked out for him to keep himself away from all extraneous matter of developing society alien to the teachings of the Prophets. He has been enjoined to observe Salaat at fixed hours. "When ye have performed the act of worship,

remember Allah, standing, sitting, and reclining. And when ye are in safety, observe proper worship. Worship at fixed hours hath been enjoined on the believers" (4:103) So, Time (دبر) periodicity (حين) particular age of time (كتاباً موقوتاً) fixed hours (عصر) and proper time (وقت) as delineated in the Qur'an Say: "He alone will manifest it at its proper time." (7:187) The description of the (destined) Hour (الساعة). They ask thee of the (destined) Hour, when will it come to port" (7:187) thus all these periodicities in the time are the hall marks for the development of Man both spiritually and physically.

Again, according to the Qur'an, "Lo! the number of the months with Allah is twelve months by Allah's ordinance on the day that He created the heavens and the earth. Four of these are sacred. That is the right religion. So, wrong not yourselves in them. And wage war on all the idolaters as they are waging war on all of you. And know that Allah is with those who keep their duty unto Him)" (9:36) So, with the above mentioned back ground of time it is clear that there are twelve months according to Qur'an Majeed. Four of them are sacred Zi-qa-ad, Zil-Hijj, Muharram and the segregated, singular, sacred & exalted month of Rajab-ul-Murajjab known — as the month of Allah as one of the traditions of the Prophet of Allah, Muhammad(ﷺ) declares and the month preceding it is

Shabaan which has been described as the month of the Prophet of Allah, Muhammad (ﷺ). During the month of Sha-baan, the Messenger Prophet of Allah, Muhammad (ﷺ) used to keep himself in readiness for the incoming month of Ramadan, the month for the whole of Muslim Ummah, According to the researches of Allama Raa-fi-ee (R.A.) Sha-baan is derived from the word sha'b (شعب) which means the disseminator, the bestower of the blessings of Allah all round just as the branches of the tree grow and spread their shadows throughout. It is a month of continuous showering of Divine Mercy. "As a command from our Presence — Lo! we are ever sending a mercy from thy Lord. Lo! He is the Hearer, the knower." (44:5-6) According to Hazrat 'Aysha (R.A.) the Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) used to fast very frequently during the month and declared it as his (ﷺ) month.

In fact, sha'-baan is the month of favours from Allah — "the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds, Most Gracious, Most Merciful" (1:2-3) and of the blissful nights Qur'an Majeed makes a mention of ten Nights (89:2) which are distinctly sacred. They are believed to be the first ten nights of Zil-Hijjah, the month of Pilgrimage. Besides these ten nights there occur three individual nights in the Islamic calendar which are sanctified and associated with Allah's mercy and special blessings. These are the Night of Power (Lai-la-tul-Qadr), the Blessed Night (Lai-la-tul-Mubarakah), and the Night of Celestial Ascension (Miraj) of Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).

The consensus is that the Celestial Ascension took place on the twenty seventh night of the month of Rajab. The Night of Power is one of the odd nights of the last decade of the month of Ramazan. The blessed Night, (Lai-la-tul-Mubarakah), is commonly believed to be the fifteenth night of the month of Shabaan. Qur'an Majeed refers to this night thus:

"By the Book that makes things clear; We sent it down during a Blessed Night: For We (ever) wish to warn (against evil) In that (night) is made distinct every affair of wisdom by command, from our Presence. For We (ever) send (revelations) as a Mercy from your Lord: For He hears and knows (all things)". (44:2-6).

The day and the night of the fifteenth of Shabaan are of great veneration and full of blessings, Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) has induced Muslims to keep fast during the day and to observe vigil during the night to offer optional (Nafl) prayer and to pray for the salvation of the dead by offering Feteha or by recitation of Qur'an Majeed. This night is particularly well suited for repentance from sins and seeking forgiveness of Allah.

Revelation Of Qur'an Majeed

The Night of Power and the Blessed night both are associated with the revelation of Qur'an Majeed. Certain Commentators of Qur'an Majeed have expressed the view that any night on which Allah's Message descends is indeed a blessed night. Whether it is described as the Night of Power or the

Blessed Night. Certain other religious scholars have explained that the Night of Power and the Blessed Night are two different nights. As for the descent of Qur'an Majeed, they surmise that it was sent down from the Preserved Tablet to the earth's firmament on the Blessed night, whereas its Revelation to Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) commenced on the Night of Power and it continued for twenty-years. Qur'an Majeed says:

"Nay, this is a Glorious Qur'an (inscribed) in a Tablet Preserved." (85:21-22)

"It is We Who have sent down the Qur'an to you by stages" (76:23)

"Ramadhan is the month in which was sent down the Qur'an as a guide to mankind. ." (2:185)

Views Of Shah Abdul Aziz

Commenting on the Quranic Chapter Qadr (The Night of Power) Hazrat Shah Abdul Aziz (Rahmatullah alaih) says: "It needs be understood that some of the Commentators interpret Qadr as Fate. They have opined that on the Night of Power are determined the subsistence, deaths, calamities, ailments, course of actions and other worldly incidents pertaining to the succeeding year. Transcripts of these matters are made out from the Preserved Tablet and assigned to the respective scribe angels to put into effect in course of the whole of the following year. Preferably however, it seems that the destinies are so determined on the night falling in the middle of Sha-'baan called the Night of Barah. Certain Follower: (Tabi'in) considered that although these

transcriptions are begun on the Night of Bliss, they are brought to conclusion on the Night of Power." At another place, in the same context. Shah Abdul Aziz says: "The Night of Bliss which is termed by many religious scholars as the Night of Barah is the fifteenth of Shabaan."

The Blessed Night

Besides the revelation of Qur'an Majeed, there are several virtues associated with the Blessed Night. Hazrat Ekramah (R. A.) has elucidated that it is during this Night that events for the succeeding year such as death and the call to the Pilgrimage, are decided in the Heaven. Imam Ibn Kaseer (R.A.) has said that everything and event due to occur during the coming twelve months, including marriages, births and deaths, are recorded on this Night. Furthermore, it is on this Night, that the concerned angels are advised of the predestined course of the coming year's events, including the span of life and the livelihood of every living being.

Almighty Allah ordinarily graces the earth's firmament in the latter third part of the night that is at the time of Tahajjud. It is reported by Hazrat Ali (R.A.) that He (Holy Prophet ﷺ) said that when the middle night of Shabaan comes, Almighty Allah graces earth's heaven right from the sunset up to the dawn, disposed in His Mercy to bestow on the seekers forgiveness, sustenance, and relief. (cf. Mishkat)

Invocation

Let us be thankful to Allah and seek His blessings and forgiveness in our vigil

on the Blessed Night. May Allah bestow on us His Mercy and settle our affairs with kindness. May He prompt us to do good and to fear Him to attract His Mercy. Qur'an Majeed states:

"Do no mischief on the earth after it has been set in order but call on Him with fear and longing (in your hearts); For the Mercy of Allah is (always) near to those who do good." (7:56)

Hazrat Anas (R.A.) has narrated that on the eve of the month of Rajab, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) used to pray, "O Allah! make the months of Rajab and Shabaan auspicious for us and let the month of Ramazan come upon us".

Hazrat Aisha (R.A.) has said that, compared to other months the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) used to fast more often in the month of Shabaan' as if it were a month of fasting.

Hazrat Umme Salma (R.A.) found the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) fasting for two consecutive months and these were none other than Shabaan and Ramazan.

The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) has said that Shabaan, the month placed between Rajab and Ramazan, is the month in which the people's deeds are presented to Allah, and for this reason the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) paid greater attention to good deeds and fasting. (Baihaqi-Shu'bul-Imaan)

Shabaan can rightly be called the month of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) as it was in this month in 2 A.H. that Qur'anic verse regarding Salat-O-Salam (blessings and salutation of Allah and

His angels, for the Holy Prophet) was revealed and believers were asked to offer their respect to him (ﷺ).

"God and His angels send blessings on the Prophet ye that believe! send ye blessings on him and salute him with all respect" (33:56)

The devotional recitations and prayers of the Faithful during the above night are magnified and rewarded in a greater measure than usual. The night should be spent in remembrance of Allah and not in amusement. Quran Majeed says:

"In that (night) is made distinct every affair of wisdom". (44:4)

Per another Hadith, Allah the Almighty, looks with favour in the Earth's firmament to forgive the sinners, except the Mushrik (those guilty of associating others with Him) and those who are malicious and spiteful. (Ibne Majah).

Hazrat Ali (R.A.) has urged Muslims to keep awake and pray during the night and to fast on the next day According to him the Almighty Allah directs His Gracious Mercy to the Earth's heaven and calls those seeking forgiveness to come forward to be forgiven, those seeking livelihood to get their heart's desire and the sick, the ailing and the worried are blessed with comfort (Ibne Majah) The blessings of Allah are numerous and all embracing. The Mercy and Compassion of the All-Merciful await a request from the sinful to be pardoned. There is a Hadith recommending the following invocation for recitation during the night.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ عَفُوٌّ تُحِبُّ الْعَفْوَ فَاعْفُ عَنِّي

Al-laa Hum-ma in-na-ka 'a-fuwwan tu-hib-bul 'af-wa fa'fu 'an-nee.

O Allah! Surely Thou art the Forgiver, Thou lovest to forgive, so forgive me.

Sheikh Abdul Haque Mohaddis (R.A.) the great savant of Delhi (India) has narrated that Allah, the Almighty, bestows His attention every night towards the earth's heaven at the time of Tahajjud (pre-dawn optional prayer) but on the fifteenth night of Shabaan He graces the earth's heaven from Maghrib to Fajr (from sunset to dawn). Those who keep awake for 'Tahajjud' and other acts of devotion are the fortunate ones to receive the Divine blessings. According to a Hadith, blessings of Allah, the Almighty, are so numerous as to make His forgiveness cover the sins of the supplicants even if the number of their sins be equal to the number of hairs on the goats of the tribe of Bani Kaib, (A famous tribe of Arabia, in the

days of the Holy Prophet, owning large flocks of goats and sheep) (Tirmizi).

The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) used to visit on this night Jannatul Baqee the graveyard of Medina and pray for the dead in emulation of the noble example of the Holy Prophet his followers should pray likewise for their dead.

"For every nation there is an appointed time. When their time cometh, then they cannot put it off an hour, nor hasten (it)," (10:49). So be ready to meet the challenge of time. Time waits for none: surely it passes on to the detriment of those who are involved in it except those who do virtuous acts in life: "By time; Lo! man is in a state of loss, save that who believe and do good works, and exhort one another to truth and exhort one another to endurance." (103:1 to 3) So we must be in a state of readiness to surrender to the will of Allah always. We must shine and not sparkle out!

نماز گناہوں کو مٹا دیتی ہیں

رسول اللہ ﷺ نے صحابہ سے پوچھا: "اگر کسی کے دروازے پر ایک نہر ہو اور اس میں وہ ہر روز پانچ بار غسل کیا کرے، تو کیا اس کا کچھ میل کچیل باقی رہ سکتا ہے؟ صحابہ رضی اللہ عنہم نے عرض کیا کہ کچھ بھی میل نہ رہے گا۔ آپ ﷺ نے فرمایا کہ یہی حالت ہے پانچوں وقت کی نمازوں کی، کہ اللہ تعالیٰ ان کے سبب گناہوں کو مٹا دیتا ہے۔"

(بخاری: 528، عن ابی ہریرہ رضی اللہ عنہ)

The Arab Navigation

Dr. Riyadh Mahmood Ruwaiha,

Few of us know that the Arabs have been masters of the seas and guides of the entire world in navigation, many generations before Islam and after it. The following is an attempt to illustrate the same fact.

The Arabs of Ahsa and the South

Many centuries before the birth of Christ, the Arabs of Ahsa and the South were combing the Arabian Gulf, the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. They traded with the peoples living along the shores of these seas, though the ships in which they sailed were of the primitive type made of planks of wood tied together with ropes. These ships were rowed by small oars known as 'Al-Mara.'. The sails they used were triangular. After the Arab conquest of the Mediterranean Sea, the sailors of the region adopted triangular sails after the Arab fashion, and they use such sails till today, though before the Arab conquest the sails used in the said region were square.

The Arabs of the North

The Arabs of Ahsa and the south were not the only people who busied themselves with navigation, the people of the north had also participated in the seafaring activities. Tabri says that 'Ubulla' (north-eastern region) was known before Islam as the 'Gate of India' because the large amount of trade transacted between the two lands. The people of 'Petra' (north western region) were also known for

their seafaring activities.

The Yemenites

History tells us that the southern coast of the Arabian Peninsula—the coast of Yemen—used to be crowded with the Arab ships and sailors as early as the first century of the Christian era. This part of Arabia was inhabited by the tribe of Himyar, noted for their naval activities. They had contacts with Somalia, Eritrea, India and China. Aden was the centre of trade between India and Egypt where merchants of the respective nationalities bartered their goods. The port of Aden was also resorted to by several Greek and Roman merchants who erected a church. This may be one of the causes of the penetration of Christianity later in the Arabian Peninsula.

Arabs in Somalia and Ethiopia

Similarly, history reveals to us that 'Aksum' in Ethiopia was founded by the Arabs who came from southern Arabia and ruled-over Somalia and the neighboring lands. Zanzibar was ruled by an Arab Sultan. They came to these lands and settled there as an outcome of their seafaring activities. In a similar way, they settled along the coast of the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf.

The People of Saba

It is an established fact that the people of Saba (southern Arabia) were the masters of the sea-route connecting

Asia with Europe during the third century before Christ. A coffin was discovered at Jiza (Egypt) with the 'Ma'ienite' script dating back to 263 B.C. It read that an Arab priest of one of the Egyptian temples, known as 'Zaid Aal bin Zaid' used to import through his ship, ropes and fragrant wood from Yemen and export to it beautiful Egyptian clothes. It can be concluded that the said Zaid was appointed as a priest of an Egyptian temple because of the need of the fragrant wood and gurus that were imported from Arabia to be used in religious rituals.

Similarly, carvings were found in one of the Islands of the Aegian sea the 'Ma'ienite' script—sanctifying the gods worshipped in southern Arabia. This island was known as 'Belos' and was the centre of trade with the Mediterranean lands in the second century B.C.

Navigation and Arabic Poetry

It may be noted that the Arab poets have mentioned navigation in their poetry using similes relating to the seafaring life. They compared the box carried on the camel's back with ships mounting the waves. Tarafah, who lived in the sixth century of the Christian era in Bahrain on the eastern coast mentioned the seafaring life in one of his long poems. The poem establishes the fact that the people of Bahrain were good navigators and that some of their towns were famed for ship-building. The famous navigators 'Ibn Majid' belonged to this part of Arabia.

Seasonal Winds and Magnetic Needles

The Arabs discovered the seasonal winds and the schedule of the hurricanes and thus they could mark out the suitable time for undertaking a voyage. Maswoodi says that the Arab; used to consult a guide book known as 'Rahmani' in their voyages. The Rahmani was a guide on navigation.

The Muslim Arabs were the first to use the magnetic needle in the eleventh century of the Christian era. Next to them were the Italian sailors who introduced it in Europe.

Navigation after Islam

The attention the Arabs paid to navigation did not suffer in the least after Islam, it rather increased. After the expansion of the Muslim State and the downfall of the Byzantine and Persian Empires. The

Muslim Naval Fleet traversed the oceans alongside the ships carrying merchandise.

There are several verses in the Holy Qur'an which encourage Muslims to pay full attention to the sea and seek the numerous blessings of God which are stored therein.

It is well known that the people of Qur'aish had commercial relations with Ethiopia and naturally, the Holy Prophet (peace be upon has made the best use of these relations as he ordered Muslims to migrate to that country. The ruler of Ethiopia, Negus, greeted Muslim cordially and granted them peace and security and refused to hand

them over to the leaders of Qur'aish who had come to take them back as bondsmen.

History also reveals it to us that the Muslim community settled in China enjoyed certain rights which were not granted to any other community. They had the right, among other rights, to take their disputes to their own judges and not those of the state.

Arabs in Korea

During their explorations, the Arabs had reached Korea which named by 'Abu'l-Qasim Ubaydallah ibn Abdallah ibn Khordadbeh' as 'The Land of Shila'. Describing it, he says. "There is a lot of gold in it and those of the Muslims who entered it continued to live there and adopted it as their homeland. What lies on the other side of it is not yet known".

The Majid

It is a proven fact that the Arabs continued to be the masters of Indian Ocean right up to 1498 A.D., when the Portuguese navigators entered this ocean.

It is a strange coincidence indeed that the guide of the Portuguese in Indian Ocean was to be an Arab Trader named Ahmed bin Majid who piloted their ships from Malindi on East African coast to Calcutta. It is an irony of fate that an Arab was to be the guide of the Portuguese in the exile of Arabs from those waters—for never afterwards were the Arabs able to drive away the European nations from the region nor could they compete with them in this

respect.

Under Caliph Umar

During the Caliphate of Umar bin Khattab (may Allah be well pleased with him) we hear for the first time, of the Arab naval fleet. It may be noted that Umar's Caliphate extended over a period between 634 and 644 A.D. Proceeding from the Arabian coast, the fleet launched an attack over the Ethiopians who used to pillage the coastal towns of Arabia. The fleet reached up to 'Adoles' in 641 A.D.

Bahrain and Omman

The Arabs used the coasts of Bahrain and Omman for naval expeditions in some of their conquests. The naval operations were some of the military strategies adopted by Muslim governors either to attack or to defend, as in the case of the Ethiopians and the Byzantines.

During the caliphate of Umar, the governor of Bahrain—Uthmah bin Abul Aas al-Thaquafi sent a naval expedition to 'Thana', a town on Indian coast near Bombay. He also sent his brother Mughirah bin Abul Aas to Daibal at the mouth of River Sind, in 636 A.D. When the navy returned from Thana, he wrote to Umar about the expeditions as he had not taken his permission earlier. Umar replied him saying: "My brother of the Thaquif! you have loaded an insect on a stick. By God! if they should come to some harm I would take as many men from your tribe".

It is said that Umar was afraid of sending Muslim soldiers across the sea

and that he had never allowed it except once against the Ethiopians who used to pillage the Arabian coasts.

The correspondence that took place between Umar and Mua'wiyah the governor of Syria, is well known to the students of history. Mua'wiyah wrote to Umar seeking his permission to conquer Cyprus. He wrote: "O commander of the Faithful! in Syria there is a town whose inhabitants hear the barking of the dogs of the Byzantians and the crowing of their cocks. They are opposite the shore of Hims".

Description of Sea by Amr

Umar then wrote to the governor of Egypt, Amr bin Aas to describe the sea, whereupon Amr wrote to him: "It is a great creature on which rides a small creature—there is nothing around except Water and the sky—if the ship inclines on the sides, it tears the hearts and if it shakes, it sets the heads reeling—confidence is increasingly on the decrease and doubt ever on the increase. It is like an insect on the stick—if the stick inclines on the sides it drowns and if it escapes (that fate) it is dazzled".

After reading this fearful description of the sea, Umar wrote to Mua'wiyah forbidding him from sending Muslims across the sea. He wrote: "By God! one single Muslim is dearer to me than all that all the Byzantine Empire contains".

From this story—which appears to be a fabricated one—it is concluded that Arabs had nothing to do with seafaring else how could their caliph be ignorant

of the conditions of the sea? His forbidding his governors from undertaking naval expeditions cannot stand as a proof against Arabs being a seafaring nation and they being the masters of the seas for quite a long period before Islam and after it, as it is a fact proved by history.

The Conquest of Cyprus

Though Mua'wiyah was not able to convince Umar about expedition against Cyprus, he was successful in that respect with Uthaman during his Caliphate. The permission was given by Uthaman on the condition that Mua'wiyah should also take his wife with him as a proof against any extraordinary danger to Muslim soldiers.

In 649 A.D. the Arabs launched a naval attack on Cyprus and in the following year they also conquered the island of 'Arwad'. That means that the Muslims began to use a naval fleet in their wars within less than fifteen years after their conquest of the eastern shores of the

Building up of a Strong Navy

In view of the Byzantian pillage of the Syrian and Egyptian shores, which they did with the help of their powerful navy, Muslims were obliged to build a strong navy for defence. Soon it emerged into being and was the most powerful navy of those days. It was now able to comb the Mediterranean Sea Without any fear from the enemy. The sea was now its basin as it was, some time back, of its rival, the Byzantian fleet.

The Battle of the Masts

The superiority of the Arab fleet was established over that of the Byzantians in the battle known as the Battle of the 'Masts'. The victory of the Arabs over the Byzantians in this battle established them as the masters of the Mediterranean for many generations.

In 655 A.D. a fleet of 200 ships set sails from Egypt under the command of its governor Abdulah bin Sa'ad. Almost at the same time a similar number of ships set sails from Syria under the command of Abul Aa'War. The purpose of both fleets was to sail to the coast of 'Likya' to cut down the Cypress trees to build ships. They met each other on the way.

While the Arab fleet was progressing onwards peacefully, it was confronted by a large fleet of the Byzantians composed of 500 ships. The encounter was now unavoidable, so the Arabs proposed to their rivals to come to the land and fight, which they refused as they were confident of the superiority of their navy. The Arabs had to fight, but they adopted a rare technic which enabled them to fight with at great ease as on land—they brought their ships close to the enemy ships in such a way that both fleets were inter-locked, providing wide plain on the sea. The battle ended in a glorious victory for the Arabs.

The story of the interlocking of the ships is difficult to believe. They might have destroyed the Byzantian fleet little by little in a series of attacks in which the Egyptian sailors who had a great deal of experience in handling

the man-of-war proved of good service to the Arabs. Most of the enemy ships were drowned and the Arab fleet landed at the shores of 'Likya'. From that day onwards the superiority the Arab fleet was established and it became a serious threat to Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantium, Cicily, etc.

It is astonishing to note, as the Western Historians remark, that the Arabs gained superiority over the already advanced naval powers within such a short period. Yet it is a fact revealed by history it is an undeniable proof of the courage and intelligence of the Arabs.

Alexandria

The participation of the Arabs in seafaring kept on increasing with the lapse of time. Alexandria turned into a flourishing port as it had been in the days of the Romans. In 641-42 A.D., Amr bin Aas opened the canal 'Trojan' which opened in the Red Sea. Through this canal he sent 20 ships loaded with wheat to Medina during the famine.

Tabri records that caliph Mansoor sent a naval expedition against the people of 'Kirk' in 153 A.H. These people had been guilty of pillaging Jiddah in 151 A. H.

The Suez Canal

The idea of digging the Suez Canal first occurred to Amr bin Aas then to Caliph Haroon al-Rashid but it was abandoned by both because it would unite the Mediterranean with the Red Sea and the enemy fleet might endanger the pilgrims coming to Mecca by sea. The canal was finally to be dug

by a French engineer in 1869 A.D.

The fear of Amr and Haroon was not baseless, for when the Crusaders captured 'Eilah' on the Gulf of Uquabah they made a similar attack in 1183 A.D.

The Sea-Guide of Ibn Majid

The Arab writers have produced a lot of useful literature on navigation which proves that the Arab activity in the Indian Ocean always continued to increase until it reached its peak in the 9th century A.D.

In the 14th Century A.D., the famous Arab navigator, Ahmed bin Majid, wrote his famous guide-book on navigation in the writing of which he had to rely on his personal experience as well as the writings of Arab writers on this subject, as

Abu'l-Qasim Ubaydallah ibn Abdallah ibn Khordadbeh, the author of *Al-Masalik-Wal-Mamalik* [The Book of Roads and Kingdoms] (850 A.D.) and Maswoodi, the author, of '*Muruj al-Dahab wa Ma'adin al-Jawhar*' (948 A.D.) and *Al-Tanbih wal-Ashraf* (955 A.D.).

There are also other writers of some fame on this subject, like Al-Yaqubi (891 A.D.), Ibn al-Faqih and Ibn al-Rush (903 A.D.) Ustukhari (950 A.D.) and Ibn Hawqal who wrote many books on the subject shortly after the date mentioned last.

The last book on the subject written in Arabic was '*Al-Marwazi*' written in 1120 A.D.

(Continued from page #. 28)

and should act always in a manner which is conducive to the attainment of the maximum good of the maximum number. And it is not only "good" which

a Muslim has to give to others but also "grace". God Almighty says in the Holy Qur'an. "Do not forget to practise grace in your mutual relations.

Whither Pakistan Culture and Nationhood

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(Contd. from the last issue)

The Way Out

The situation is undoubtedly one of anxiety but not of despair. "It can still be rectified provided we start realizing that both Pakistan and Islam are in real danger, that to overcome this danger it is imperative that both the government and the people work in an organized manner hand in hand commensurate with the magnitude of the danger. This does not mean that each one of us must mark time for some other person to take the initiative and only then to join hands with him. Every individual must make his own contribution to this grand endeavour. Only then can the tide be reversed. Firstly, we must be clear in our minds about the misunderstanding and mental confusion mentioned earlier. Reformation of thought is of fundamental importance. This work can be achieved to a considerable extent by each person acting individually. Starting from one's own family members the circle can be gradually extended to one's relations, friends and neighbors. We should understand clearly that this effort can be successful only if our approach is patient, forbearing and backed by convincing arguments. Any hard and harsh line will have the opposite effect. This article should also be considered as a humble effort in that direction. Along with this individual effort collective endeavor is just as

important. It is necessary therefore that a purely non-political organization should be formed for the reformation of thought. This body should establish support with the leading thinkers, writers, journals, publishing houses and with the television and radio authorities. In cooperation with them it should organize the publication of books and brochures on the various aspects of the problem in large quantities to be distributed in every corner of the country. Along with it study groups should be formed in various places to provide for discussion and exchange of views to enable the people to remove their doubts, misapprehensions and intellectual confusion. Even in our existing literature there is no dearth of such gems, which have enabled the Muslims to develop a sense of unity and brotherhood and an intense love for the Prophet and can still do so. The works of Hali, Akbar, Zafar Ali Khan and Iqbal are replete with such ideas. It is a matter of surprise that those parts of Iqbal's works where he has preached against racial, geographical and linguistic prejudices and against the Western concept of nationalism are seldom included either in the education syllabi or in radio and television programs. The same is true of parts of his works where he has preached against socialism. It is amusing to find that his following couplet is often quoted in favor of

socialism.

جس کھیت سے دھقان کو میسر نہ ہو روزی
اس کھیت کے ہر خوشہ گندم کو جلا دو

"The farm which provides not the farmer with his food, is worth burning down, each ear of its wheat."

But seldom one hears of his great masterpiece "Iblis ki Majliss Shoora" the like of which in well reasoned and effective denunciation of socialism hardly exists in any literature. Even if it is reluctantly mentioned effort is made to belittle its importance. The literary front is a very important one which socialism masquerading in the garb of progressivism is gradually capturing over since 1935. Its influence in our literature has penetrated so deep that no poet, novelist or writer is considered great unless he preaches the socialist view point. Any person who is conscientious enough not to fall in line with them but to strike a path of his own is ignored.

Regarding the new generation, it is not possible to bring about any change in their ideas without changing the educational system. It should be the purpose of our new educational policy to turn out good Muslim men of character and enlighten most who would not only assimilate and master modern knowledge but also again can assume leadership in human thought as was the case with the early Muslims. The world knows and accepts that the ill educated Arabs in a very short period mastered all learning of China, Iran, India, Egypt and Greece in such a way that for centuries they were the world

leaders in thought and learning.

It is an undeniable fact that Pakistan is an ideological state which has come into existence in the name of Islam to preserve and promote its way of life and culture. There is thus no logical reason why any attempt to subvert this ideology and supplant it by another should not be defined as treason in the Pakistan Penal Code. In this category, should also fall all attempts to undermine the stability and integrity of the country.

Another factor which a far-sighted person like Gandhi envisaged and which was his strongest argument against the establishment of Pakistan was that the Muslims will not rest content merely with the creation of Pakistan but would join hands with the neighbouring Muslim countries which would make them much more powerful than India itself. Thus soon after the establishment of Pakistan it became the objective of the Indian foreign policy to create various obstacles in the way of Muslim unity and to bedevil Pakistan's relations with the other Muslim countries, The Western powers because of their centuries old enmity with Islam look askance at this united Muslim bloc. Had they thought rationally they would certainly have concluded that the only power against that can serve as an effective bulwark is the formation of a strong Muslim bloc. Since the Western countries also at least profess to subscribe to moral, religious and democratic values the chances of their coming to a cooperative understanding with the

Muslim bloc are better.

The combined resources of the Western powers and the Muslim world would be so overwhelming that it would not be possible for the socialist countries to match them. But they chose not to understand the far-reaching implications of this new equation in the balance of power. In any case, we must stand on our own feet. It is in our blood that Muslims the world over constitute one fraternity. This latent spark can become a flame once again and "the glow from that fire will truly light the world". When the ideal of Muslims being one nation looms large then our petty prejudices will automatically fade away. When the goal of Pakistan was before us we were all just Muslims there were no Bengalis, Punjabis, U.Pites, Sindhis, Pathans or Baluchis. Once Pakistan was achieved smaller issue in the absence of bigger ones assumed prominence. The endeavour to achieve a long cherished goal of world Muslim unity can once again produce the same results. The seed of Muslim unity which was sown some years ago in the shape of the R.C.D. can grow into a mighty tree if jointly nurtured by the Muslim nations of the world because of the recent Rabat conference. We must be clear in our minds that Jerusalem and Kashmir cannot be freed by passing mere resolutions. As Akbar Allahabadi put it:

لفظوں کا تموج کچھ بھی نہیں ایک کھیل ہے یہ ایک نقل ہے یہ
بازو کی بھی قوت شامل ہو اس وقت میں وہ بامعنی ہے

"The vibration of words will avail us nothing; it is a mere show, a mere

mimicry: it only becomes sensible when associated with the prowess of the arms".

This strength of arms referred to by him must be created and it can be so created.

First, we must establish a united front for collective defence. In the modern world, warfare is based on industrial and technological powers. Normally military strength is proportionate with economic power. The industrial potential of a country is its war potential. Thus, a country's military power is almost as great as its industrial strength. Almost because industries can manufacture only hardware and not courage, morale fervour, faith and mastery in the art of warfare. These are qualities without which no military equipment can either be used effectively nor can victory be won against heavier odds. For instance, during the 1965 war our various forces and equipment were numerically much inferior to that of India's. But our forces had much higher morale, religious fervor and determination to do or die which enabled them to withstand the far superior Indian might. Just as military power is not sufficient to ensure victory so also mere patriotic fervor and faith do not suffice. Had this not been so there would have been no command in the Holy Qur'an that side by side with faith in God the horses should also be kept ready. Now aircrafts, missiles and tanks have replaced horses and we are dependent on other countries for their supply. It should be our endeavor to

produce them ourselves. At present when new methods in industrial production are being discovered almost every day, when better and better goods are being produced in shorter and shorter time, when faster and faster means of communication are being developed, when more and more effective means of destruction are being invented, when atomic energy looks like turning the earth into heaven or hell, it is not possible for Pakistan or any other Muslim country to provide single handed the astronomical sums of money and technological know-how needed to match the industrial capacity of any Western country. But the Muslim world collectively can certainly do so: All kinds of natural resources and agriculture produce are abundantly available in the Muslim world and the abundance of oil has placed unlimited funds at its disposal. Technical

expertise is also available although on a limited scale which can soon be expanded with proper training. In short various industries, can be established through cooperation in different parts of the Muslim World to make it self-sufficient in a short period. Then our united military command would be able to retrieve Jurusalem and free Kashmir and India would not also dare to ill treat her Muslim citizens. We would then be able to pay full attention towards the establishment of an Islamic way of life and to the development of Muslim culture. It would not be surprising if this results in the evolution of a Commonwealth of Islam. As they say a journey of a thousand miles begins with single step. Let us take that first step. May Allah, the Holy Prophet's life and the Holy Qur'an be our guide.

(Concluded)

(Continued from page #. 22)

In conclusion, it is to be stated that Ibn al- Haitham has fully enunciated the following problems of philosophy which are if not cogently but certainly causally and meaningfully related with life.

1. Sense Perception.
2. Mind's construction of objects.
3. Things as values.
4. Common world.
5. Reality.

With the above philosophical problems we are also guided in the problems which are directly related to man and his specific universe, which may thus be categorized which:

1. What we are,
2. Body,
3. Unity of Selfhood,
4. Knowing,
5. Values,
6. Our growth,
7. Our achieving.

Ibn Al-Haitham (Part—III)

Dr. Basharat Ali

Science and Philosophy

Among the Muslim thinkers, Ibn al-Haitham is to be credited for the total integration of Science and Philosophy. This was done under the precept of the Qur'an. The term 'Hikmah' clearly indicates the pattern of integralism to be sought between Science and Philosophy.

According to the integralistic policy of Ibn al-Haitham science and philosophy should be one in aim, method and spirit. The only difference between science and philosophy is that science aims at specific truth and philosophy at generic truth. But the procedure of both is that of free intellectual inquiry in a spirit of skeptical and critical thinking for the new, rather than submissive loyalty to ancient authority and dogma. These are the ideas constantly referred to by the Qur'an. In the modern culture the dualism and conflict between philosophy and science, persist despite the fact attempts were made to bring amelioration between the two. It has awfully been neglected that in every depth and levels of science there is an element of philosophy. Similarly, the philosophy cannot remain aloof from the haunted influences of Science. In every depth and level of the imaginative vision of philosophy there are element of empiricism. It is a sham logic to assume that even in the verified empirical conclusions of science, there is no element of imaginative vision. The

greatest service to human culture in general and more particularly to the systems of culture and knowledge done by the Muslims is to be seen in the direction of cohesion, unity and integration between science and philosophy. Therefore, that most of the philosophers in the culture of Islam were famous scientists. Most of their philosophic theories became the scientific truths of a later age. The highest beauty of Ibn al-Haitham's thought is to be identified in this axiom that as soon as a philosophic problem is solved, it is automatically claimed as part of science.

The attempt of the Muslims to keep the unity of science and philosophy based as it is on the Qur'anic teaching, is necessarily natural and historically true. That abstract and specialized form of the love of wisdom which arrogates to itself the generic name of philosophy has throughout history been sustained by two great intellectual interests, the interest in nature and the interest in man. The tenth and the eleventh centuries were noted for an unprecedented progress in the knowledge of nature and philosophy. Ibn-al-Haitham carried us beyond the aims and needs of the scientific view into what constitutes the field of inquiry of philosophy. There is no break between philosophy and the science. All that science achieves gives philosophy a running start.

Comparative study of Religion and

the Sociology of Religion

It has been stated in his autobiography that from the very inception of his growing age he was interested in the critical study of the various sects and religious class of society of his time. According to his postulate these sects and classes were segregated and individualized on the basis of their personal opinion about religion and subjectivism in the belief system. This diversity of opinion at the times of initial growth made him sceptic. The function of the sceptic is to make us realize that no knowledge attainable by the human mind is absolutely certain. The systems of belief other than Islamic are open to revision. The idea of scepticism as developed by Ibn al-Haitham is to solve the antinomy and its implications. It may be held that the antinomic conflict is irreconcilable and that the nature of reality is thereby proved unknowable. Skepticism is thus established. Any problem in which the two primary criteria of truth are regarded as ultimately refitting one another would be essentially insoluble. Ibn al-Haitham solved it by stating that skepticism is not a denial of belief but rather a denial of pseudo beliefs as represented by various sects and classes. According to his assertion truth is only one (of Jumla: Falasfutul Islam). The logical inquiry as to the ways of knowing is concerned with the questions that how our beliefs are derived and justified. The initial problem which is to be taken as a hindrance for the belief according to Ibn al-Haitham are superstition prejudice, unwarranted doubts, hasty conclusions and the non-perceptibility and

incognizance of things rational. Beliefs in terms of rationality undoubtedly mean (1) testimony of reasoning and the empiricism (2) intention (3) abstract reasoning (4) reasoning from universal principle... the Divine guidance and prophetic directions (5) Sensory experience and (6) Practical activity and successful consequences. These items have been included by Ibn al-Haitham in facts of reasoning i.e., Amoori Aqliya (امور عقليہ). **How wrong is the statement of late Joactim Wach when he says that Max Muller is the first founder of the modern comparative religion. The real fact is that the first founder of this science was Ibn al—Haitham.** It is to be noted that Ibn al-Haitham not only discovered history of religion, but also through his identification of the sciences of folklore, sociology and psychology he contributed heavily to the initially founded science of comparative religion by Ibn-i-Hazam. With the turn of 9th and 10th centuries, philosophy and theology, which had degenerated into epistemology began to reassert themselves. By stressing the non-rational element in religion without neglecting the value of rational investigation, an exaggerated intellectualism and scholasticism were excluded by Ibn al-Haitham. If it is the task of theology to investigate, buttress, and teach the faith to the community and kindle zeal for the defense and spread of the faith, it is the responsibility of comparative study of religion to guide and to purify it. This guidance is the necessary function of the Muslim. The comparative study of religion is the part of the beliefs and the cultural systems of

the Muslims because they are given life and honour to “cause it to prevail over all religions, though the polytheists are averse” (9:33).

There are deferent stages of understanding; one stage would be partial, another integral comprehension. Thus it is conceivable that we could do justice to a particular religious thought without being able to grasp others appearing in the same context or to grasp this context as a whole. Religious communities, as pointed out by Ibn al-Haitham recognize this by stratifying their religious groups, especially those with an esoteric character. From the remarks of Lutfi Jumma in his book on page 265, we are persuaded to infer that there is no hope of understanding a religion in religious phenomenon without the most extensive information possible, whoever has had wide experience with human character possesses one more qualification for understanding an alien or sectarian religion, for such a person has directly contacted the minds of people in the variety of their acting feeling and ways of thinking. It is important it for one to realize that there are different ways to be religious, to know and to worship God, for in the area of expression between man and man the narrowed religious fellowship show differences (Jumma 265). The group as well as the individual will be religious in its own way. Thus Ibn al-Haitham refers here the legitimate range of psychological and sociological differences. This is not an endorsement of pluralism or relativism. Even if one holds fast to the belief that Truth is one it is possible to

concede that there are many mansions.

In contrast to a most modern western scholar; Webb Clement C.J. Ibn al-Haitham deems it most necessary to study scriptures and the doctrines of different religious groups in their original languages (Jumma, second para p. 265). From the lines of arguments of Ibn al-I-laitham we are sure that he was against pluralism or dualism. It is held by him that Truth is one, as the cosmos is one; hence religion and knowledge also must be one. This insight according to him is all important (Opcit Jumma p. 256). It is right to say that no understanding and no interpretation of sources is possible without interest of the scholar. He must engage in a dialogue with the past but, not primarily because it is a part of his own history. Ibn al-Haitham was right in pointing out that the realm of the understanding extends between the utterly foreign and the totally familiar.

The study of these sources, literature, beliefs and thoughts held by various sects, says Ibn al-Haitham were not useful at all. Perceptions and inferences are the only legitimate sources, to know the truth.

The method of knowing Reality, stresses he, must be based upon the Divine sources.

It is not contrary to, but rather in harmony with the Qur’anic teachings which teach that truth is God’s truth and hence one truth. The truth is that there is an order in man’s cosmos of knowledge (Al-Alaq 96) even as there is order in the universe (Al-Mulk).

The quest for knowledge of the interior aspects of religious experience wherever and whenever that experience may occur constitutes another legitimate approach. This is the methodology followed by Ibn al-Haitham. Individual and group feelings, together with their dynamics must be explored. In these thought patterns, the traces of the sociology of religion and phenomenology are to be clearly identified. Rather than undertaking a comparative study of many cultures and religions of the different people, sociology of religion seeks the analysis of the structures and processes essential to a particular culture.

As a sociologist of religion Ibn al-Haitham sought to understand the role and function of religion and religious institutions in relation to the other structures and processes of a society.

Psychology

In his Kitab-un-Nafs, he says that if we search the self at work creating for itself under cosmic influence the world it apprehends, we see it as a power to bring into being a social order, its world of experiences, whatever it is that comes to us from the dynamic order takes on meaning only insofar as we fix at some form of elementary response. We give the object unity in variety and appreciable duration. In the above patterns of thought one can easily discover the clear influences of the Qur'an, enunciated in the sura Al-Nahl. This method or interpreting in terms of Nafs or self, holds along the whole gamut of existence. The unique feature of Ibn al-Haitham's Psychological

orientation is to be seen in his stress that we locate self in the world of our experiences. It is the central fact of its environment. In treating it thus we treat it as an object. He was a physician and scientist through and through and hence, he followed the same methodological procedure in his study of psychological problems. He says that self thus examined shows various forms of activity—perceptions and other noetic functionings, feelings in great variety and conations. The beauty of his study of Nafs is to be seen in this view point that we know the noetic functioning as distinguishable Psychic events, and discover close connections between them and the neural system of the body.

What is the self? I look within and find consciousness of certain emotions and memories, this consciousness taken as a whole is myself. The whole self is one's total experience in one's continuing life.

Talking about volition, Ibn al-Haitham says that volitional activity expresses the true nature of the self more adequately than any other function. It comprises the desire for a certain objective, same conception of method for its realization and the committing of one-self to the realizing. This volition gathers the self into a dynamic unity—undoubtedly we have no other alternative than to agree with Ibn al-Haitham that a theory of volition carries with it a theory of the self. Naturally any Psychology without a self is here at a loss.

Theory of religion

This is a separate category of Ibn al-

Haitham's though nothing to do with comparative religion and the sociology of religion. It has been asserted by him that there is no life without religion. By this thesis, it has been logical on the part of our thinker to infer that there is neither thorough going sociality nor culture without religion. To establish his thesis, he has postulated from nature and pan psychism. He says that there is every variety and gradation of value content in the objects of nature. Nature yields many a suggestion that the gifted can weave into a fabric of beauty. The aesthetic extension of ordinary reality into imaginative spheres is matched by extension in other directions. Such are the intellectual horizon that leads one into the boundless realm of abstract truth, the moral into the intangibles of moral value, the religious into the profoundest emotions of the human spirit. Religion rests on beliefs concerning the essential nature of man and his relation to the Power that expresses itself in the universe. In these thought patterns one can easily visualize the clear influence of the Qur'an. The Qur'anic methodology is empirical. The Holy Book always refers to nature for the existence of God, the Creator, the Sustainer and Almighty.

A religion that is alive to the ever-advancing knowledge and insights of men will be in the forefront of progressive movements and will be a constant inspiration to the all dimensional development of man. Religious ideals furnish the most powerful incentives to right living and hence have profound moral and

spiritual significance. The exercise of religion creates and irradiates a beauty that transforms the whole of life. He stresses one point with great emphasis, "Religious values only originate in communion with God".

Methodology

The development of science is not possible without persistent application of scientific research method, observation, experience, experimentalism, analysis and recording etc. So far one need not hesitate to accept the above thesis. In the study of humanities, social sciences, sociology and the spiritual sciences, it is emphatically stressed by our thinker that their origination, development and progress depend on epistemology. By this he means the inter-relationship and cohesion of the two methodological procedures, a philosophy and scientific research into one category based on realism, the debate between monist and dualist in epistemology is interminable for each has an obvious truth.

The perceptual experience, the main epistemological procedure exclusively adopted in scientific investigations, itself is unquestionably monistic. Neither common sense nor recent science finds any distinction between precept and thing. But the cause of the perceptual experience cannot be found nor its validity established without reference to what is beyond the Psychic events, that is without some sort of multiple explanation.

(Continued on page #. 17)

Sufiism:

The Uncovering of the First Veil: Concerning the Gnosis of God (*Ma'rifat Allah*)

Ali Bin Uthman Al-Jullabi Al-Hujwairi (R.A.)

The Apostle said: "If ye knew God as He ought to be known, ye would walk on the seas, and the mountains would move at your call." Gnosis of God is of two kinds: cognitional ('ilmi) and emotional (hali). Cognitional gnosis is the foundation of all blessings in this world and in the next, for the most important thing for a man at all times and in all circumstances, is knowledge of God, as God hath said:

"I only created the genii and mankind that they might serve Me" (Quran.51:56), i.e. that they might know Me. But the greater part of men neglect this duty, except those whom God hath chosen and whose hearts He hath vivified with Himself. Gnosis is the life of the heart through God, and the turning away of one's inmost thoughts from all that is not God. The worth of everyone is in proportion to gnosis, and he who is without gnosis is worth nothing. Theologians, lawyers, and other classes of men give the name of gnosis (marifat) to right cognition ('ilm) of God, but the Sufi Shaykhs call right feeling (hal) towards God by that name. Hence they have said that gnosis (ma 'rifat) is more excellent than cognition ('ilm), for right feeling (hal) is the result of right cognition, but right cognition is not the same thing as right feeling, i.e. one who has not cognition of God is not Gnostic (arif), but one may have cognition of

God without being a gnostic. Those of either class who were ignorant of this distinction engaged in useless controversy, and the one party disbelieved in the other party. Now I will explain the matter in order that both may be instructed.

You must know that there is a great difference of opinion touching the gnosis and right cognition of God.

The Mu'tazilites assert that gnosis is intellectual and that only a reasonable person ('aqil) can possibly have it. This doctrine is disproved by the fact that madmen, within Islam, are deemed to have gnosis, and that children, who are not reasonable, are deemed to have faith. Were the criterion of gnosis an intellectual one, such persons must be without gnosis, while unbelievers could not be charged with infidelity, provided only that they were reasonable beings. If reason were the cause of gnosis, it would follow that every reasonable person must know God, and that all who lack reason must be ignorant of Him; which is manifestly absurd. Others pretend that demonstration (istidlal) is the cause of knowledge of God, and that such knowledge is not gained except by those who deduce it in this manner. The futility of this doctrine is exemplified by Iblis, for he saw many evidences, such as Paradise, Hell, and the Throne of God, yet they did not

cause him to have gnosis. God hath said that knowledge of Him depends on His will (Quran:vi,111). According to the view of orthodox Muslims, soundness of reason and regard to evidences are a means (sabab) to gnosis, but not the cause ('illat) thereof: the sole cause is God's will and favour, for without His favour ('inayat) reason is blind. Reason does not even know itself: how, then, can it know another? Heretics of all sorts use the demonstrative method, but most them do not know God. On the other hand, whenever one enjoys the favour of God, all his actions are so many tokens of gnosis; his demonstration is search (talab), and his neglect of demonstration is resignation to God's will (taslim); but, in reference to perfect gnosis, resignation is no better than search, for search is a principle that cannot be neglected, while resignation is a principle that excludes the possibility of agitation (idtirab), and these two principles do not essentially involve gnosis. In reality Man's only guide and enlightener is God. Reason and the proofs adduced by reason are unable to direct anyone into the right way. If the infidels were to return from the place of Judgment to this world, they would bring their infidelity back with them (cf.Quran: vi, 28). When the Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali, was asked concerning gnosis, he said: "I know God by God, and I know that which is not God by the light of God." God created the body and committed its life to the spirit (jan), and He created the soul (dil) and committed its life to Himself. Hence, in as much as reason and human faculties and evidences

have no power to make the body live, they cannot make the soul live, as God hath said: "Shall he who was dead and whom We have restored to life and to whom We have given a light whereby he may walk among men ...?" (Quran: vi, 122), i.e. "I am the Creator of the light in which believers are illumined". It is God, that opens and seals the hearts of men (Quran: xxxix, 23; ii,6): therefore, He alone can guide them. Everything except Him is a cause or a means, and causes and means cannot possibly indicate the right way without the favour of the Causer. He it is that imposes the obligation of piety, which is essentially gnosis; and those on whom that obligation is laid, so long as they are in the state of obligation, neither bring it upon themselves nor put it away from themselves by their own choice: therefore, Man's share in gnosis, unless God makes him know, is mere helplessness. Abu'l-Hasan Nuri says: "There is none to point out the way to God except God Himself: knowledge is sought only for due performance of His worship." No created being is capable of leading anyone to God. Those who rely on demonstration are not more reasonable than was Abu Talib, and no guide is greater than was Muhammad; yet, since Abu Talib was preordained to misery, the guidance of Muhammad did not avail him. The first step of demonstration is a turning away from God, because demonstration involves the consideration of some other thing, whereas gnosis is a turning away from all that is not God. Ordinary objects of search are found by means of demonstration, but knowledge of God is

extraordinary. Therefore, knowledge of Him is attained only by unceasing bewilderment of the reason, and His favour is not procured by any act of human acquisition, but is miraculously revealed to men's hearts. What is not God phenomenal (muhdath), and although a phenomenal being may reach another like himself he cannot reach his Creator and acquire Him while he exists, for in every act of acquisition he who makes the acquisition is predominant and the thing acquired is under his power. Accordingly, the miracle is not that reason should be led by the act to affirm the existence of the Agent, but that a saint should be led by the light of the Truth to deny his own existence. The knowledge gained is in the one case a matter of logic, in the other it becomes an inward experience. Let those who deem reason to be the cause of gnosis consider what reason affirms in their minds concerning the substance of gnosis, for gnosis involves the negation of whatever is affirmed by reason, i.e. whatever notion of God can be formed by reason, God is in reality something different. How, then, is there any room for reason to arrive at gnosis by means of demonstration? Reason and imagination are homogeneous, and where genus is affirmed gnosis is denied. To infer the existence of God from intellectual proofs is assimilation (tashbih), and to deny it on the same grounds is nullification (ta'til). Reason cannot pass beyond these two principles, which in regard to gnosis are

agnosticism, since neither of the parties professing them is Unitarian (muwahhid). Therefore, when reason is gone as far as possible, and the souls of His lovers must need search for Him, they rest helplessly without their faculties, and while they so rest they grow restless and stretch their hands in supplication and seek a relief for their souls; and when they have exhausted every manner of search in their power, the power of God becomes theirs, i.e. they find the way from Him to Him, and are eased of the anguish of absence and set foot in the garden of intimacy and win to rest. And reason, when it sees that the souls have attained their desire, tries to exert its control, but fails; and when it fails it becomes distraught; and when it becomes distraught it abdicates. Then God clothes it in the garment of service (khidmat) and says to it: "While thou wert independent thou wert veiled by thy faculties and their exercise, and when these were annihilated thou didst fail, and having failed thou didst attain." Thus it is the allotted portion of the soul to be near unto God, and that of the reason is to do His service. God causes Man to know Him through Himself with a knowledge that is not linked to any faculty, a knowledge in which the existence of Man is merely metaphorical. Hence to the gnostic egoism is utter perfidy; his remembrance of God is without forgetfulness, and his gnosis is not empty Words but actual feeling.

Table Talk

Maulana Dr. Muhammad Fazl-ur-Rahman al-Ansari al-Qaderi (R.A.)

B.Th., Ph. D

Among the social virtues which Islam has emphasised the most important is the virtue of Justice. It is so important that when the preacher gives the Friday Sermon, the Sermon is not considered complete unless the following verse of the Holy Qur'an is recited.

“Verily Allah commands you to do justice (to all creatures under all circumstances).”

The concept of social justice has been different in different religions and ideologies of the world. A study of history reveals that the idea of fundamental human rights was practically unknown before the advent of Islam, and even among the most civilized nations and races the principle of common humanity and common fundamental human rights was not honored. For instance, the Jews divided humanity distinctly into two groups, namely, the children of the House of Israel and the rest of mankind whom they called Gentiles. There was not only this distinction but also the distinction in the matter of their respective rights. The Jews considered themselves to be the chosen people of God and regarded the Gentiles as barbarians and unworthy of honour. All the rights were the rights of the Jews while the non-Jews had no place in their social order except that of beasts of burden.

According to Jewish philosophy the

only natural role of the non-Jews was to act as slaves of the Jews. We find similar ideas in Hinduism. When the Aryan invaders from the North subjugated India they relegated the sons of the soil to a social status which was worse than slavery. And this distinction continued even when the original inhabitants of India had embraced the religion of the invaders. They were actually chipped off into a distinct caste known as the Sudra and this status has been maintained till today.

According to Hinduism, it is the birth-right of the Brahmin to be the supreme master and it is the bounden duty of the Sudra to behave always as a most despised slave. The Brahmin is the very incarnation of holiness and the Sudra by nature and constitution filthy and despicable, so much so that according to the law of Manu if a Sudra comes so near to a Brahmin that his voice can reach the ears of the Brahmin the Sudra is punished for defiling the sanctity of the Brahmin by pouring molten lead into his ears. What justice the Sudra can obtain under such a law is obvious. How a Hindu should treat a non-Hindu in matters which involve justice can also be judged in this perspective. Indeed the Hindus regard all humanity outside the three upper castes of the Hinduism as *maliakshas* which means those who are filthy, barbarians, robbers and

devils-incarnate.

As regards Islam, its basic teaching is that all humanity, is one family. Islam calls it the "Family of God". As regards racial and linguistic and territorial divisions of humanity, Islam emphasizes that they are merely nomenclatures and that no human being should fall into the deception of regarding these distinctions as having any intrinsic significance or value. According to Islam, all human beings are equal as human beings and there are certain fundamental human rights which no human being can be permitted to violate. The Islamic state ensures these fundamental rights to all, whether they are Muslims Christians or Pagans. Islam goes even so far as to lay down the law that a Muslim individual or a Muslim state has absolutely no right to commit even the slightest act of injustice against even the worst enemies. Moreover Islam has, for the first time, laid down the law that inside the Islamic social order everyone is under the control of the law and no one can be above the law even though he may be the head of the state. This ideal of justice has not been achieved even by the most advanced modern states whether capitalist or communist.

Well- Doing (Ihsan)

Ihsan, or Well-doing, forms one of the most important virtues in Islam. The Holy Qur'an says: "Verily, Allah commands you to practise justice and doing good to others (as a regular programme of your life)."

The human nature consists of two elements so far as the human relations are concerned. There is an element of selfishness and is an element of altruism. The element of selfishness is grounded in the instinct of self-defense. The element of altruism or sympathy is based on the paternal instinct. The balanced human personality is that wherein the instinct of self-preservation and self-defense does not come into conflict with the interests of other people. It is to be subordinated and sublimated.

According to Islam, every human being has a definite individuality and worth of his own. But no human being is born in a vacuum. Rather, he is the product of society and all that any individual normally possesses comes to him in the final analysis from his social environment. It is his parents who are his first benefactors. After them come other human beings, among whom the teachers enjoy the most prominent place. Thus there is a continuous series of benefactors who always exist in the normal course for all human beings.

A person has to obey his parents in order to get physical and moral benefits from them. Similarly, he has to obey his teachers in order to get spiritual blessings. In all these processes the medium through which the various blessings flow is Love and sympathy. If the parents do not have sympathy and love for their offsprings, the latter will go to dogs. If the teachers do not have sympathy and love for their students, they will not transmit knowledge in the requisite measure and manner. If the

government does not have sympathy and love for the people, there will be bungling and quarrels 'on all sides. All this means that sympathy and love for others form the very basis of human social existence.

Indeed this is so, for if everyone were to live for himself alone, humanity shall be transformed into a herd of wild beasts. This would happen, because the interests of no two human beings are exactly alike. The ancient philosopher who for the first time in human history seem to have propounded the philosophy of Individualism was Epicurus of Greece. The motto of human life attributed to him is as follows: "Each one unto himself and the devil take the hindmost." This philosophy of selfishness in its ultimate social perspective can only lead to the law of the jungle. As regards its civilized form it is that which it has taken in the modern materialistic civilization of the West under the label of Capitalism, and which when turned upside down has assumed the shape of the hydra-headed monster of Communism.

Islam has given us a spiritual philosophy of life which is based on the notions of the "fatherhood" of God and the brotherhood of man. According to Islam, every human being should always keep before himself the following two infallible principles :

1. God is the source of all life and light and all types of blessings in general; and every human being should consider every blessing of God as a sacred trust.

2. All human beings, whatever their country or colour or creed, are members of the same family, and it is the duty of every individual to live not for his selfish good but for the common good and thereby to earn Divine Pleasure and to fulfill his duty as a trustee of the Lord.

In Islam the love of God forms the basis of the love for fellow beings. And this principle is most reasonable. He who does not love God and does not care for his relation with God cannot logically love his fellow-beings except based on expediency which is another name for self-interest. For such a person, it is impossible to make any sacrifice for others and to render service to them without any ulterior motive. This being so, the Islamic principle of the love of God and leading one's life solely for God forms the basis of *Ihsan* in Islam.

According to the Islamic teachings, he who does injury to others and in this manner propagates evil will go to Hell, and it is only those who live to serve others and to promote the good of others that are the loved ones of God. All forms of wealth and all other means of benefitting one's self or others which a Muslim possesses are according to Islam first and last a trust from God, and no Muslim has the right to spend his assets and to employ his faculties to his own liking—the likings his baser self. He must keep Divine Pleasure before him as the goal. The natural conclusion from this would be that a Muslim should abstain from doing anything which is based on selfishness

(Continued on page #. 13)



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World Federation of Islamic Missions

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السلام علیکم ورحمۃ اللہ وبرکاتہ

میرے محترم و عزیز بھائیو!

الحمد للہ! ماہ رمضان کی آمد آمد ہے جو کہ بڑی فضیلت و برکت والا مہینہ اور نیکیاں کمانے کا زریں موقع ہے۔ جیسا کہ اللہ سبحانہ و تعالیٰ کے پیارے حبیب ﷺ کا فرمان مبارک ہے کہ "رمضان کا مہینہ میری امت کا مہینہ ہے جس میں بخشش و مغفرت ہے۔"

قرآن مجید میں اللہ رب العزت کا فرمان ہے: "وَتَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ عَلِيَّ الْبِرِّ وَالْتَّقْوَىٰ" (المائدہ: ۲) نیکی اور تقویٰ کے کاموں میں ایک دوسرے سے تعاون کرو۔ اس تناظر میں جب ہم اوفاق العالمیہ للعدوۃ الاسلامیہ کی خدمات کو دیکھتے ہیں تو یہ ادارہ بیک وقت عظیم الشان دینی، تعلیمی، تبلیغی، رفاہی، معاشرتی اور اخلاقی خدمات سر انجام دے رہا ہے۔ اس ادارہ کی مختلف النوع دینی و رفاہی خدمات کے علاوہ سب سے اہم اور نمایاں کارنامہ تعلیم کے شعبہ میں الجامعۃ العلمیۃ الاسلامیہ کا قیام ہے جو اس کا ذیلی ادارہ ہے۔ اس ادارہ میں جدید نفسیاتی طریقہ ہائے تدریس کی روشنی میں مکمل آزادی کے ساتھ طلبہ میں خدا کے سامنے جو ابداہی، ذمہ داری، فرض شناسی کے احساسات پیدا کرتے ہوئے ان کی خواہیدہ قوتوں کو بیدار کیا جاتا ہے، ان میں دلچسپی، لگن اور جستجو کا مادہ پیدا کیا جاتا ہے جس کے نتیجے میں بغیر کسی سختی و تشدد کے طلبہ نہ صرف بورڈ و یونیورسٹی میں انتہائی بہترین اور امتیازی نمبروں سے کامیابی حاصل کر رہے ہیں بلکہ گذشتہ چھ دہائیوں سے ایسے باکمال، لاجواب، بہترین، علم دہن میں یکتا افراد تیار ہو رہے ہیں جو مختلف شعبہ ہائے زندگی سے وابستگی کے ساتھ دین کی تبلیغ و نشر و اشاعت میں بڑھ چڑھ کر حصہ لے رہے ہیں۔ الغرض یہ ادارہ نیکی و بھلائی کے کاموں میں مصروف عمل ہے۔ اس ادارہ کے ساتھ تعاون کرنا نیکی اور بھلائی ہی کا کام ہے۔ اور نیکوکاروں کے بارے میں ارشاد باری تعالیٰ ہے: "إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضَيِّعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ" (التوبہ: ۱۲۰) اللہ رب العزت نیکی کرنے والوں کے اجر ضائع نہیں کرتا۔ اور ایک اور مقام پر فرمایا: "اللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ" (البقرہ: ۱۹۵) اللہ رب العزت نیکی کرنے والوں سے محبت کرتا ہے۔

معزز حضرات! یہاں کے فارغ التحصیل طلبہ ماشاء اللہ دنیا کے بیشتر مسلم اور غیر مسلم ممالک میں دعوت دین کے فرائض انجام دے رہے ہیں اور افراد کی تعلیم و تہذیب کے لیے اسلامی مطبوعات پر مشتمل ادارے کی شائع کردہ انگریزی اور اردو کتابیں تبلیغی مقاصد کے حصول میں اہم ثابت ہوتی آئی ہیں۔ یہاں یہ وضاحت بھی ضروری ہے کہ ڈاکٹر حافظ محمد فضل الرحمن انصاری دارالافتاء میں طلبہ ماہر قراء و حفاظ معلمین کی زیر نگرانی حفظ قرآن میں مشغول ہیں اور کثیر تعداد میں حفظ قرآن کی سعادت حاصل کر چکے ہیں اور کر رہے ہیں۔

ادارے کے مندرجہ ذیل شعبہ جات اس کار خیر میں مصروف عمل ہیں:

☆ عالمیہ انسٹیٹیوٹ آف اسلاک سینٹر (ڈگری کالج)	☆ قادریہ لائبریری (جس کا ذخیرہ 35000 سے زائد قیمتی کتب پر مشتمل ہے)
☆ ڈاکٹر حافظ محمد فضل الرحمن انصاری دارالافتاء	☆ دارالقرآن (ناظرہ قرآن پاک) ☆ ایف آر انصاری اکیڈمی سینٹرری اسکول
☆ ہومیو پیتھک دواخانے (دارالصحہ)	☆ ایک انگریزی ماہنامہ انٹرنیشنل منارٹ (The Minaret Monthly)

بفضلہ تعالیٰ یہ تمام دینی و سماجی خدمات آپ ہی جیسے ہمدرد حضرات کے تعاون سے جاری ہیں جو ادارے کو زکوٰۃ، صدقات و عطیات یا قربانی کی کھالوں سے حاصل ہوتا ہے۔ لہذا آپ تمام مخیر حضرات و کرم فرماؤں سے پر زور اپیل کی جاتی ہے کہ اس مبارک مہینہ میں اپنی زکوٰۃ، صدقات عطیات کی رقوم ادارہ ہذا میں جمع کرائیں تاکہ روزمرہ کے اخراجات کے علاوہ اشاعت دین و دیگر فلاحی و دینی کاموں کو فروغ حاصل ہو۔ اللہ تعالیٰ آپ کو اجر عظیم عطا فرمائے اور حامی و ناصر ہو۔ آمین

الدامی الی الخیر: جنرل سیکرٹری

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اور اس کے برعکس غضب اور ناراضگی مول لے کر جا رہا ہوں یعنی میں تو بے خبری میں مارا گیا کیا کرنا تھا اور کیا کر کے جا رہا ہوں۔

اعمال سے میں اپنے بہت بے خبر چلا

آیا تھا کس لئے اور کیا میں کر چلا (سودا)

ہمارے اعمال ایسے ہیں کہ جب میزان سجے گا اعمال تولے جائیں گے اس وقت سوائے شرمساری و ندامت اور افسوس کے کچھ حاصل نہ ہوگا۔

روز حساب پیش ہو جب مراد فتر عمل

آپ بھی شرمسار ہو مجھ کو بھی شرمسار کر

اس بے خبری پر مستزاد یہ کہ اللہ اور اس کے رسول ﷺ کے احکامات سے مسلسل روگردانی کرتے ہوئے گناہوں کے پہاڑ جمع کرنے کے باوجود ہم مغفرت اور جنت کے اعلیٰ درجوں کو اپنا حق سمجھتے ہیں۔ القہار اور الجبار کے قہر اور جبر کی ہمیں کچھ بھی پرواہ

نہیں (الامشاء اللہ، و نعوذ باللہ من ذالک)۔ بقول اقبال عظیم

ہم نے حق مغفرت کو اپنا ورثہ جان کر

یہ تصور کر لیا قہر خدا خاموش ہے

اس کا یہ مطلب ہرگز نہیں کہ ہم صرف ڈر اختیار کریں اور امید کا دامن ہاتھ سے چھوڑ دیں۔ صرف ڈر انسان کو مایوس کر دے گا۔ لہذا

ضروری ہے کہ انسان مایوسی اور ناامیدی سے بچنے کے لئے امید کا سہارا ضرور لے لیکن غفلت اور بے حسی سے محفوظ رہنے کے لئے ڈر

(تقویٰ) کو بھی تھامے رکھے۔ اگر ہم صحابہ کرام رضوان اللہ علیہم اجمعین کی زندگیوں پر نظر دوڑاتے ہیں ان کے یہاں امید اور خوف

کا ایسا حسین امتزاج نظر آتا ہے اور وہ اس اعلیٰ ترین کیفیت پر فائز نظر آتے ہیں جس کا آج تصور بھی نہیں کیا جاسکتا۔ جیسا کہ حضرت

عمر فاروق رضی اللہ عنہ کا قول ہے کہ اگر یہ اعلان ہو کہ کوئی ایک شخص ہی جنت میں جائے گا تو میں امید کرتا ہوں وہ میں ہی ہوں گا

اور اللہ کے قہر سے ڈر اتنا کہ اگر یہ اعلان ہو کہ کوئی ایک شخص ہی جہنم میں جائے والا ہو گا تو مجھے ڈر ہے کہ وہ بھی میں ہو سکتا ہوں۔

مغفرت اور جنت میں داخلہ ہمارا حق نہیں خالصتاً رب کریم کی عطا و کرم و فضل ہے۔ جو دائمی سکون و راحت کا سبب اور اخروی نجات

و فوز و فلاح کا باعث ہے۔ لہذا ابدی راحت و آرام اور آخرت کی آگ سے بچنے کی فکر کی جانی چاہئے۔ جس کی اللہ رب العزت نے قرآن

مجید اور فرقان حمید میں تاکید کی ہے۔ "اے ایمان والوں اپنی جان اور اپنے اہل و عیال کو جہنم کی آگ سے بچاؤ۔" (التحریم: ۶)

غفلت اور بے عملی کا توڑ: ہمیں شعبان کا مہینہ ہمیں وقت کی اہمیت کا بھی احساس دلاتا ہے۔ کیونکہ حدیث مبارکہ میں آتا ہے کہ اس

مہینہ آئندہ سال دنیا سے رحلت کر جانے والے افراد کی فہرست تیار کی جاتی ہے۔ جیسا کہ حدیث مبارکہ ہے۔

حضور اکرم ﷺ کسی مہینے میں بھی شعبان سے زیادہ روزے نہیں رکھا کرتے تھے اور وہ اس لئے کہ اس مہینہ، اس سال میں مرنے

والوں کی فہرست تیار کی جاتی ہے۔ (مصنف ابن ابی شیبہ)

اب کون جانے کہ اس فہرست میں ہمارا نام بھی شامل کیا جا چکا ہے یا نہیں۔ اب جب یہ احساس ہم پر غالب ہو گا تو کسی بھی فرد کے لئے

ممکن ہی نہیں کہ وہ فراغت کے ساتھ بیٹھے۔ اس میں شک نہیں کہ دنیاوی زندگی فانی ہے۔ اسے ایک دن ختم ہو جانا ہے۔ وہ آخری لمحہ

خواہ ایک دن بعد آئے یا ہزار سال کے بعد بہر حال اختتام لازم ہے۔ لیکن اگر اسی فانی زندگی کو اللہ اور اس کے رسول ﷺ رب

کی رضا جوئی کے لیے استعمال کیا جائے تو یہ فانی زندگی ہی ہمیں جاودانی لمحات اور ابدی نعمتوں سے نوازے گی۔ بقول احمد ہمدانی

حیات دہر کو کہتے رہے ہیں لوگ فانی بھی

حیات دہر نے بخشے بھی لمحے جاوداں کیا کیا

رکھے گا جس کا آج سے چودہ سو سال پہلے اسلام نے نہ صرف تصور دیا بلکہ وہ عملی معاشرہ بھی قائم کر کے دیا جو آج کے اس نام نہاد اور ترقی یافتہ مہذب دنیا میں ملنا محال ہے۔

رمضان کی تیاری کا مہینہ: کام کی اہمیت جتنی زیادہ ہو اس کی تیاری بھی اتنی ہی زیادہ کرنی پڑتی ہے اس کے لئے اتنا ہی سخت ہوم ورک کرنا پڑتا ہے۔ بہترین منصوبہ بندی کرنی پڑتی ہے کہ کم سے کم وقت میں بہترین نتائج حاصل کئے جائیں۔ رمضان کے مہینے کی اہمیت قرآن و احادیث مبارکہ سے ثابت ہے اس لئے اس مہینے کے آغاز سے قبل ہی مسلمان کو ذہنی اور جسمانی طور پر مکمل تیار ہونا چاہئے۔ اور اس تیاری کا بہترین وقت شعبان کے علاوہ اور کون سا ہو سکتا ہے۔ اسی لئے رسول اکرم ﷺ سے جب افضل ترین (نفل) روزوں کا پوچھا گیا آپ ﷺ نے فرمایا کہ شعبان کے روزے جو رمضان کی تیاری اور اس کی تعظیم کی غرض سے رکھیں جائیں۔ حضور ﷺ کا ارشاد مبارک ہے: "رمضان کی تعظیم کی خاطر رکھے گئے شعبان کے روزے افضل ترین ہیں۔" (بیہقی)

نصف شعبان اور قبولیت و عائد عاموسن کا ہتھیار ہے۔ اللہ تعالیٰ بندہ کے دعا مانگنے پر خوش ہوتا اور بندے کو حکم دیتا ہے کہ وہ اس سے دعا مانگے۔ ہر عقل مند ذی شعور اور معرفت رکھنے والے فرد کے لئے لازم ہے کہ وہ دن میں کسی ایک گھڑی ضرور اپنے رب سے مناجات کرے۔ جیسا کہ صحف ابراہیم علیہ السلام میں ہے: علی العاقل مالہ یكون مغلوبا علی عقلہ ان یكون لہ ساعة یناسی فیہا ربہ۔ عقل مند کے لئے لازم ہے کہ دن کی ایک گھڑی رب سے مناجات کرے۔

دعاؤں کی قبولیت کے لحاظ سے شعبان کی پندرہویں رات بھی بہت اہم ہے۔ ایک حدیث مبارکہ میں ہے: "پانچ راتیں ایسی ہیں جن

میں دعا رد نہیں کی جاتی۔ جمعۃ المبارک کی رات، رجب کی پہلی رات، پندرہ شعبان کی رات، عید کی رات اور نحر کی رات۔" (بیہقی) شعبان اور اہمیت وقت: یوں تو انسان کو پورے سال رب کی رضا و خوشنودی حاصل کرنی چاہئے لیکن طابع بشری ہے کہ انسان سستی، کابلی، غفلت اور لاپرواہی کا مظاہرہ کرتا ہے اور بالعموم گروہ قلیل کے سوا اکثریت عبادت سے غافل رہتی ہے جیسا کہ حدیث مبارکہ ہے "یہ وہ مہینہ ہے جو رجب اور رمضان کے درمیان ہے اور جس سے لوگ غافل ہیں۔ اس مہینے میں لوگوں کے اعمال اٹھائے جاتے ہیں اور مجھے زیادہ محبوب ہے کہ میرے اعمال اس حالت میں اٹھائے جائیں کہ میں حالت صوم میں ہوں۔" (سنن نسائی)

بہی عمومی رویہ ہے کہ انسان کی عمر میں اضافے کے ساتھ ساتھ اس کی دنیا سے محبت، دنیا میں رہنے کی آرزو بھی بڑھتی رہتی ہے اور اس کی نعمتوں کے چھن جانے کا خوف اور غفلت کا عنصر بھی بڑھتا جاتا ہے۔ بقول بہادر شاہ ظفر

کم نہیں ہوتی اس دنیا کی الفت بڑھتی جاتی ہے

جوں جوں عمر بڑھتی جاتی غفلت بڑھتی جاتی ہے

انسان اسی غفلت اور بے عملی کا شکار رہتا ہے اور اسی بے خبری میں مبتلا رہتا ہے یہاں تک کہ اس کی اجل کا پیام آجاتا ہے۔ جب یہ پیغام آجائے گا اور زندگی کی گھڑیاں مکمل ہو جائیں گی تو پھر کسی بھی طور اس میں اضافہ نہ کیا جائے گا۔ "اور اللہ تعالیٰ مہلت نہیں دیا کرتا کسی شخص کو جب اس کی موت کا وقت آجائے۔" (المنافقون: ۱۱)

پھر اس کے لئے سوائے افسوس اور اس بات کے اقرار کے سوا کوئی چارہ نہیں کہ وائے نادانی میں تو اپنے اعمال سے بالکل ہی بے خبر تھا دنیا میں اپنے رب کی رضا و خوشنودی کے حصول کی خاطر آیا تھا

ماہ رسول ﷺ (شعبان، شہری)

ابو عبد القادر محمد بکھی

مہینہ دیگر مہینوں سے افضل قرار پائے گا۔ حدیث مبارکہ ہے:
"شعبان میرا مہینہ ہے پس جس نے اس مہینے کی تعظیم کی اس نے
میرے حکم کی تعظیم کی"۔ (بیہقی)

اصلاح معاشرہ: یہ مہینہ اصلاح معاشرہ کے لئے بھی اہم ہے۔ ایک
حدیث مبارکہ ہے: "شعبان کی پندرہویں رات اللہ رب العزت
مخلوق پر توجہ فرماتا ہے اور مشرک اور عداوت رکھنے والے کے
سوا تمام مخلوق کی مغفرت فرما دیتا ہے۔" (الجم الکبیر)

اس حدیث کے تناظر میں شعبان کا مہینہ معاشرتی اصلاح کے لئے
انتہائی اہمیت کا حامل ہے، کیونکہ معاشرہ میں بگاڑ کا سب سے بڑا سبب
کینہ، عداوت، کدورت، نفرت اور انتقام کے جذبات ہیں۔ ان تمام
منفی جذبات کا حامل شخص اپنی ذات کو بھی نقصان پہنچاتا ہے
اور معاشرہ کو بھی۔ وہ کبھی اپنے بھائی کے لئے بھلائی، خیر اور کامیابی
کا طالب نہیں ہو سکتا جو دین اسلام کا حسن اور پہچان ہے۔ دلوں میں
بغض اور کدورت بہت سی برائیوں، اخلاقی اور روحانی بیماریوں کو جنم
دیتی ہے اور اشرف المخلوقات (انسان) کو عرش سے فرش پر مارتے
ہوئے اسے مٹی کے ڈھیر میں تبدیل کر دیتی ہیں۔ بقول میر

اس کدورت کو ہم سمجھتے ہیں ڈھب ہیں یہ خاک میں ملانے کے
جب مسلمان یہ جان لیتا ہے کہ ان برائیوں کے ہوتے ہوئے اس کی
مغفرت نہیں ہوگی تو وہ انسان ان منفی صفات کو مکمل چھوڑنے کی
کوشش کرے گا۔ اس طرح وہ اپنے ذہن، جسم، فکر و نظر، جان
و دل، نفس و روح کی مکمل اور بہترین صفائی، طہارت و پاکیزگی
حاصل کرتے ہوئے ایک ایسے بلند تصوراتی معاشرہ کے قیام کی بنیاد

یوں تو تمام ایام، ماہ و سال بلکہ ہر گزرتا لمحہ فرد اور کائنات کے لئے
بہت قیمتی ہے جس کی اہمیت اپنی جگہ مسلمہ ہے۔ کیونکہ انفرادی
طور پر اگر دیکھا جائے تو کسی کو علم نہیں کہ آنے والا لمحہ اسے میسر
بھی آئے گا یا نہیں۔ اس کی زندگی کی ساعتیں کتنی باقی ہیں۔ اگر
کائنات کی سطح پر دیکھیں تو دن رات (24 گھنٹے) اس کائنات کا ذرہ ذرہ
گردش میں ہے۔ ہر لمحہ کچھ نہ کچھ ہوتا رہتا ہے اور ہے گا۔ کل
یوم ہونی شان۔ ہر روز وہ ایک شان میں ہے۔ بقول شاعر:

رات دن گردش میں ہیں سات آسمان

ہو رہے گا کچھ نہ کچھ گھبراہٹیں کیا

لیکن اس کے باوجود کچھ ماہ، ایام اور ساعتیں زیادہ اہمیت اور فضیلت
والی ہیں۔ ان میں نیکیوں کی طرف میلان بڑھ جاتا ہے اور ان کے
اجر میں کئی گنا اضافہ ہو جاتا ہے اور جو بھی دعائیں مانگی جاتی ہیں وہ
مقبول ہوتی ہیں۔ جس طرح بعض مقامات کو دوسرے مقامات
پر فضیلت و فوقیت حاصل ہے۔ ویسے تو زمین پوری کی پوری اللہ رب
العزت کی ہے جہاں چاہے کوئی عبادت کرے لیکن کچھ مقامات
ایسے خاص ہوتے ہیں کہ وہاں خود بخود اندرونی طور پر انسان میں
نیکیوں کا میلان بڑھ جاتا ہے اور ان مقامات پر نیکیوں کے اجر و ثواب
میں بھی کئی گنا اضافہ ہو جاتا ہے جیسا کہ مسجد الحرام اور مسجد نبوی
وغیرہ۔ اسی طرح کچھ دن اور مہینے دوسروں پر بعض اعتبار سے
فضیلت رکھتے ہیں۔ ایسا ہی ایک مہینہ شعبان المعظم کا ہے۔ اس
مہینے کی اہمیت کا اندازہ اس بات سے لگایا جاسکتا ہے کہ اسے رسول
ﷺ نے اپنا مہینہ قرار دیا۔ حضور ﷺ سے نسبت کی وجہ سے یہ