

The Significance in Fasting in Islam

Dr. H. H. Bilgrami

“Fasting in Islam is not an ascetic practice, nor is it to inflict pain on the body It is the subjection of passion and emotions whereby the soul is brought nearer to God it is not mere abstinence from the purpose of fasting with peoples other than Christians.

The idea of fasting is in no way peculiar to Islam. Fasting is prescribed to Muslims as it was prescribed to those before them (The Qur’an, an, 2:186). But the true significance of fasting as retained in Islam is found missing in many of those forms which are practiced today by various nations, both in spirit and in purpose. It would, therefore, be interesting to see (a) the primitive idea of fasting, and (b) the Christian ideas of fasting as found today. Only then, I think, shall we be able to find the real purpose and meaning of the fast in Islam.

“The purposes of fasting as religious, magical or social customs are various” says the author of “Non-Christian Fasting” in ‘The Encyclopaedia of Religions and Ethics’. “It may be an act of penitence or of propitiation, a preparatory rite before some act of sacramental eating or an initiation, a mourning ceremony, one of a series of purification rites”.

I would quote here just a few instances from this article to illustrate the primitive idea of fasting.

We find interesting examples of American Indian youth undergoing penance in order to find a vision that may be his guardian spirit for his whole life.

Similarly among Musquakie Indians there is a custom of putting a boy on a nine years’

training where fasting is given great importance. The fast starts with the deprivation of one meal and it is lengthened till it is stretched over days and nights without food or water. Then he is put to a nine day fast during which the lad wanders in the wood and has feverish dreams in one of which he learns what his “medicine” is to be. (Encyclopaedia of Religions and Ethics)

There are young tribesmen among the Algerians and other; they begin by blackening the Boy's face, then they cause him to fast for eight days without giving him any food. This induces dreams which are carefully inquired into. (Encyclopaedia of Religions and Ethics)

It is interesting to find that in Bank Islands fasting is used for adding power to charms or magical acts. For it is thought that he who fasts makes his magical act more likely to succeed by his being in a purer state of body for it. It is all the more interesting to note that here a man would fast so long that when the day arrived on which he was to use his charm he was too weak to walk.

Another example of fasting is to be found in the history of ancient Egypt. They underwent a fast before entering certain temples. They were under the impression that food conveyed evil influences into the body and fasting would render the body devoid of impurities.

Similarly, among Cherokees, at the dance at which the new corn was eaten, only those could eat who had prepared for it by fasting and prayers.

An analysis of these practices shows that these fasts were based either on the fear of demons or ghosts or other evil spirits who were to be satisfied by sacrifices and fast, or an underlying idea of the dualism of body and soul. The soul was considered pure and the body as impure or evil, and fasting seemed to be a great asset to them to keep the body away from any further impurities, and thus it developed into an ascetic practice.

The idea of fasting was to torture the body, an abstention from food on the ground that the food would add evil to the body. There are examples in the Tibetan Buddhist ceremonies that sometimes a continued fast for four days is kept of which the first two are preparatory with confession, prayer and devout reading continued till late at night. On the third day there is a strict fast, no one being allowed to swallow his saliva. Prayers and confessions of sins are made in complete silence and the fast is continued till sunrise on the fourth day.

Fasting in Christianity

Let us now turn to the idea of fasting in Christianity. I would here again refer to the splendid chapter of "Fasting – Christian" in the Encyclopaedia of Religions and Ethics, by A.J. Maclean, some extracts from this article are sufficient to give a clear idea of the purpose and spirit of fasting in Christianity, and it need not be said that the article is most authentic from every point of view of Christianity.

Mr. Maclean says that two sayings of Jesus have gone to mould the idea of Christianity about fasting: (a) though the disciples of Jesus did not fast as did John the Baptist's disciples the literal interpretation of Mark 2:19 and Luke 5:33. .S "Yet the day would come when the Bridegroom would be taken
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away from them and then they should fast in those days". . . . led to the institution of a practical rule as to the duration of the Paschal-fast; and (b) the fasting must be unostentatious (Matt. 6:16 et-seq.). Although Jesus himself fasted for 40 days, he left no regulation for fasting; he gave the principles and left his Church to make rules for carrying them out. "This," he further says, "explains why the Church was so slow in developing a system of fasting and festivals. No rules on the subject could claim to come directly from the Master himself. It is hardly probable that first disciples imitated the stricter Jews in voluntarily adding to the day of Atonement the two weekly fasts (Luke 18:12) of Monday and Thursday."

The author then proceeds with the growth of fasting under the Church and wants us to bear in mind the "caution that customs varied much and therefore we must be careful to pay attention to the particular age and country of which our authorities speak, without assuming that because we find a custom mentioned in one of the older Fathers it must have been characteristic of the whole Church from the beginning". Thus period by period he goes on mending the facts that emerge from a particular period, and the fast that developed during that age, till he comes to the fast at the present day in the west. Here he points out that "Since the Reformation the Church of England, while fixing the fasting days, has made no rule as to how they are to be observed, leaving them to the individual conscience; but Acts of Parliament of Edward VI and James I, and proclamation of Elizabeth vigorously enforced the ordered abstinence from flesh-meat on fast days and gave the curious reason for the injunction that the fish-trade and the

shipping might be benefited”.

An Anglican Homily of Fasting (Part I) defines fasting as “withholding of meat, drink, and all natural food from the body”, and (Part 2) “a restraint from some kind of meat and drink”. It permits two meals on fast days.

I would not go into the details of the Christian way of fasting, as contrary to the very ascetic views of early tribesman on fasting, the above quotation is sufficient to indicate the ultra rational attitude on fasting as evolved by the Christian Church in its two essentials: (a) leaving it to be matter of individual conscience in its observance and (b) permitting certain things to keep the fast going.

Fasting according to the Qur’an

Let us now turn over to the Holy Qur’an, which had come to direct humanity and mankind at the last stage of its evolution with definite purpose and instructions, and each word of which was put into practice by the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) to show that is not merely an ideology to be believed in but a principle of life to be acted upon. The Muslims cannot say that their light and guidance, i.e., the Prophet (ﷺ), did not work out those principles of divine revelation in his life.

In fact, it is through his actions and through his traditions that the Muslims have been able to understand the true significance of the principle of fasting like various other principles of their lives.

The Muslims are fortunate that they are not left to grope in the dark to find the purpose of fasting and to know how this is to be achieved; when and how this is to be observed and what are its limitations.

The Holy Book of God The Qur’an. 2 : 183 - 187 is very explicit on all these points:

“O ye who Believe, Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may (learn) self-restraint.

“(Fasting) for a fixed number of days; but if anyone of you is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed number (should) be made up from days later. For those who cannot do it, there is a ransom—the feeding of one that is indigent. But he that will do good of his own free will. it is better for him and it is better for you that ye fast, if ye only knew”.

“Ramadhan is the (month) in which was sent down the Qur’an as a guide to mankind, also clear (signs) for guidance and judgement (between right and wrong). So everyone of you who is present (at his home) during that month should spend it in fasting, but if anyone is ill, or on a journey the prescribed period (should be made up) by days later. God intends every facility for you; He does not want to put you to difficulties. He wants you to complete the prescribed period and to glorify Him in that He has guided you; and perchance ye shall be grateful.

“When My servants ask thee concerning Me, I am indeed close (to them): I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calleth on Me; Let them also, with a will, listen to My call, and believe in Me: that they may walk in the right way.

“Permitted to you, on the night of the fast, is the approach to your wives, they are your garments and ye are their garments; God knoweth what ye used to do secretly amongst yourself; but He turned to you and forgave you; so now associate with your

wives, and seek what God hath ordained for you and eat and drink until the white thread of dawn appears to you distinct from its black thread: then complete your fast, till the night appears; but do not associate with your wives while ye are in retreat in the mosques. Those are the limits (set by) God : approach not nigh thereto, thus doth God make clear His signs to men: that they may learn self restraint”.

An analysis of the purpose of Islamic fast

Let us pause to analyze the purpose and the spirit of the Islamic fast. At the very outset it is made clear that the fast, as a form of prayer, is nothing new to the believers; it had been prescribed for, and was being practiced by, those who were before the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). While historians are in the dark about the method and purpose of fasting of the earlier Prophets, there are traditions which throw lights on the fasts of Moses, David and other Prophets. For instance, when ‘Umar asked the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) about one who kept fast for one day and broke the fast on the other, the Prophet (ﷺ) remarked that this was the fast of David, but he did not encourage ‘Umar to follow it. He also made it quite clear that as far as the purpose of fasting was concerned there was absolutely no difference, the only difference lay in the form of the fast, as the tradition citing.

Amr bin ‘Aas says that the difference between the Muslims and other nations that were given the Books lay in that the Muslims took “early meals before dawn” whereas the non-Muslims did not. Or, in another Tradition, the Prophet (ﷺ) said that Jews and Christians delayed in breaking their fast, has not been different in Minaret

the “Peoples of the Book” but while Islam retains the spirit and the form because of the Book and the Traditions of the Prophet (ﷺ), the meaning and the divine purpose is lost by others. The significance which is assigned to fasting by ordinary human beings according to their conceptions at various stages of the developments of human civilization, obviously lacks the real value of the fast, which is to enrich the soul.

This brings us to the significance and purpose of fasting in Islam. Fasting is just a form of prayer like Salat (Prayers) or Zakat (the other form of prayer, that is the “moral elevation of man and his spiritual betterment”. (The Holy Qur’an). The object of fasting has been laid down in one word, taqwa, which is often translated as self restraint (The Holy Qur’an), but which certainly includes besides self restraint or guarding against evil, fear of God, piety, carefulness about one’s duties, perseverance and cautiousness.

Let us turn to the Qur’an and see some of the implications of the word taqwa and note how this one attribute is chosen by God for those who receive His mercy here and in the Hereafter.

We come across this word at the very commencement of the first chapter, “The Cow”. It opens with words: “A.L.M. This book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide for those who are “Muttaqi” (who guard against evil or fear or are pious or careful of their duties)”.

Here both the positive and negative sides of our deeds are implied in the word ‘taqwa’. Or take other examples:

“O men! serve your Lord who created you and those before you so that you may

guard (against evil) (The Qur'an 2:21).

"Yea, whoever fulfils his promise and guards against evil, then surely God loves those who guard against evil" (The Qur'an 3:75).

While in these verses the negative side of 'taqwa' may seem prominently mentioned, there are various places where the positive and affirmative sides of the word is clearly stressed, e.g.: "And be careful of your duties to God that you may be successful" (The Qur'an 2:189).

The Qur'anic definition of righteousness

The full significance of the word 'taqwa' is, to the best of my knowledge, found in the 171st verse of the second chapter of the Holy Qur'an. I would like to draw your attention to it:

"It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East or the West, but righteousness is that one should believe in God and the last day and the Angels and the Books and the Prophets, and give away wealth out of love for Him to the near of Kin and Orphans, and the needy and the wayfarers and the beggars and for the (emancipation of) the captives and keep up prayer and pay the poor rate: and the performers of their promise when they make a promise and the patient in distress and affliction and in the time of conflict – these are those who are true to themselves and these are they who are muttaqi (who guard against evil, fear God, or are pious and careful of their duties)" (the Holy Qur'an).

No wonder this one word in its full connotation is chosen by God as the very criterion of the greatness of man in His eyes.

"Great with God is one who has greater 'taqwa' (the Qur'an 49:13).

To my men, this wider meaning is always implied when the word taqwa is referred to. The very purpose of revealing the Book is defined by God in these words:

"And this is a Book we have revealed blessed, therefore follow it and guard against evil" or (be careful of your duties)" "that mercy be shown to you" (The Qur'an 6:156).

Therefore, it is not surprising to find that this Holy Book was revealed in the month of Ramadhan and fasting was made obligatory on all Muslims under certain conditions, so that they might learn this 'taqwa'; and the laws about Ramadhan end with the same object and purpose:

"Thus doth God make clear His signs to man that they may learn self-restraint—taqwa—which may be translated as self-restraint for want of a better and more suitable word in English. What is lacking in the English translation is that implied fear of God, or 'that implies conscientiousness of a rightly guided soul which is not merely contented with a philosophical understanding of the Divine Being but which soars high to seek a more intimate knowledge of and association with the object of its pursuits" (Muhammad Iqbal, 'The Reconstruction of Religious Thought', London, 1934).

It is in this sense that the word 'taqwa' is used in the Book; fasting as a form of prayer is therefore to teach us this taqwa. For when other forms of 'Ibadat', or prayers, bring us to a state of mind when our soul is in communion with that being for some time, the fast tries to keep up that state for the whole day-for the whole

month, and thus provides Muslims with an opportunity to put their misguided actions on right lines.

Fasting for any purpose other than spiritual betterment is not true-fast.

Fasting is described in the translations of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) as a shield that protects, one from evils (Muslim's sahih); and while a Muslim is carefully adjusting himself in all the various activities of his life for the whole month with a view to creating those godly attributes in himself and directing his actions in such a way that they may all seem to spring from the one idea of illumining his very being, he is proceeding towards the goal for which he has been created i.e. "worship and glorify Him".

It is only during the month of Ramadhan that a Muslim is able to develop himself in accordance with the Divine will on the path of righteousness and truth, and to learn as to how the whole of his life in all its deeds and actions can be transformed into a complete 'Ibadat' (worship). No doubt gradually and slowly a few would reach that stage also where, in the words of the Qur'an, they can say:

"Say, surely my prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are all for God and the Lord of the worlds" (7: 163).

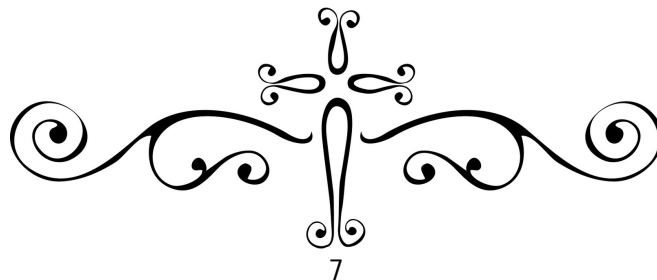
Perhaps it will not be out of place here to emphasize that fasting for any other purpose than to learn taqwa, or, in other

words. as a form of Ibadat, may be no true fast at all. For fasting in Islam is not an ascetic practice nor is it to inflict pain on the body, as has already been pointed out. It is the subjection of the passions and actions whereby the soul is brought nearer to God and it is not mere abstinence from food or drink, as the reported words of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) clearly point out that God does not care for the abstinence from food and drink of those who cannot refrain from talking and doing evil.

There is no denying the fact that any abstention from food from the point of view of health, as is often suggested by doctors, may be good for our health, and some of us may find satisfaction that because of the fast they have not suffered from any stomach troubles for a long time, but if it is for such purpose and it will fall under the category about which the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) says:

"What a large number of those fasters there is for whom hunger and thirst are the result of its fast?" (Muslim Sahih).

A careful study of the Qur'an will show that while salat and zakat (prayers and the poor-rate) have been emphasized very often, we do not find a repeated mention of fasting, for the obvious reason that the spirit of fasting could have been understood to mean an ascetic practice and the true significance would have been lost sight of in mere abstention from food and drink.



Eid-ul-Fitr (The Festival of Fast Breaking)

Dr. Ghazala Munir

This religious festival in fact is an expression of thanks giving to Allah Almighty for His grace in enabling His faithful servants to observe the fasting month of Ramazan besides the daily 'Taravah Prayers', recitation of the 'Holy Qur'an' and works of charity.

According to Hazrat Anas (RDA), when the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) migrated to Madinah, he found that the people of the town had set aside two days in the year for fun, sport and merry making. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) told the Muslims of Madinah that Allah had appointed two better days for them in the year, the day of Eid-ul-Fitr and the day of Eid ul-Azha.

The Muslims celebrate Eid ul-Fitr on the first of the lunar month of Shawwal. This religious festival in fact is an expression of thanks giving to Allah Almighty for His grace in enabling His faithful servants to observe the fasting month of Ramazan besides the daily Taravah Prayers, recitation of the Holy Qur'an and works of charity. While Eid ul-Azha is celebrated on the 10th of lunar month of Zil-Hajj to commemorate the great sacrifice offered by prophets Ibrahim and Ismail (AS) to please Allah.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) said: "The heart of the person who remains awake (in Ibadaat) during the night of Eid ul-Fitr and Eid ul-Azha will not die on the day when hearts will be dead, i.e. the Day of Qiyamah."

The nights of both Eids i.e. the nights proceeding the Days of Eid are auspicious occasions which should be observed with reverence and worship. The Holy Prophet

(ﷺ) said that these nights are great occasions of Ibadaat and of gaining the proximity and special Mercy of Allah Ta'ala.

These blessed nights, should therefore not be allowed to pass by in idleness. Full advantage should be taken of these opportunities by offering obedience and Ibadaat unto Allah Ta'ala to the best of our abilities. Istighfaar (seeing forgiveness for sins), Tilaawat (reciting the Qur'an), Nafil Salaat, Durood, etc. should be profusely offered on these blessed nights.

Among the reward which will be obtained as a result of observing the sanctity of these glorious Eid Nights, the greatest reward in the tiding conveyed to us by Holy Prophet (ﷺ) in the above mentioned Hadith, viz. the heart will not be smitten with terror and fear on the Day of Qiyamah when the upheavals of the Day will be so fearsome that men will appear to be intoxicated.

Eid ul-Fitr, the festival which marks the end of Ramazan occurs on 1st Shawwal, the first day of the following month, and its celebration extends over a period of three days. This occasions is a time of great joy and thankfulness for Muslims because they have completed their obligation of fasting, a month long discipline of the body and appetites, and it is an occasion for celebration. The festival is characterized by

a special 'Salat', visiting and exchanging greetings and good wishes, and it is a time of special happiness for the children.

The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Verily, on the day of Eid ul-Fitr when the Imaam comes out for day of Eid Salaat, there is no Call (Azaan), no Iqaamah nor anything on that day."

Great Rewards:

From the above mentioned Hadith it is clear that on the Days of Eid, the Takbeer should not be recited at the place where the Eid Salaat is to be performed. Everyone should engage themselves in Zikr and Takbeer silently. The day of Eid is not merely a festive occasion. A Muslim acquires great rewards from and draws close to Allah if he spends the day of Eid according to the teachings of Shariah and Holy Prophet (ﷺ). The following eleven things have been prescribed to be done on Eid ul-Fitr.

1. To rise early in the morning.
2. To brush the teeth.
3. To have bath for Eid after the Fajr prayer.
4. To put on the best available dress.
5. To use the perfume.
6. To arrange for one's personal adornment and decoration.
7. To give away Eid charity (Sadqa I Fitr, etc.) before departure for the Eid ground.
8. To eat something sweet before going for the 'Eid Prayer'.
9. To reach the Eid ground as early as possible.
10. To walk to the Eid ground by one way and return by the other however, there is no harm if one rides back home.

11. To pronounce the following Takbir on the way in a low voice:

"Allah is Greatest, Allah is Greatest"

"There is no god but Allah"

"and Allah is Greatest, Allah is Greatest"

"and all praise is for Allah".

Muslims fasting during the month of Ramazan observe the sanctity of the sacred month by obeying the shariah instructions in this regard, yet wittingly or unwittingly if they do commit mistakes and errors. Sadaqah Fitr (Eid Charity) has been enjoined upon to inculcate the habit of expending one's wealth willingly in the cause of Allah and to atone for the small errors to make the fast as perfect as possible and so acceptable to Allah. Besides this, the great wisdom and benefit of enjoining Eid Charity on the well to do persons is to help and enable the poor and needy individuals of society also to obtain for themselves the basic necessities of life a little more easily and join others in the celebration of Eid and the great congregational service held on this occasion.

Sadaqah:

The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) enjoined Sadaqah Fitr so that those fasting are purified of their errors and the poor and needy ones are enabled to arrange for their basic necessities of food and clothing. Therefore, the Sadaqah of the person who gives it away before the Eid Prayer will be accepted by Allah as real charity but the Sadaqah of the one who delays and pays it afterwards will be treated as ordinary charity.

Eid day is the day of rejoicing, and the

power and strength of Islam is manifested by the great numbers and congregations of the Muslims; the Sadaqah of fitr not only promotes that cause but also helps to perfect the fast.

No Nafil Salaat should be performed in the Eid Gaah before or after Eid Salaat. It is undesirable to perform the Eid Salaat in any other place besides the Eid Gaah without any valid excuse. It is vitally important to listen to both the Khutbahs after the Eid Salaat. If for some reason the Khutbah is not audible, it is still necessary to remain seated till the Khutbah terminates. It was not the practice of Holy Prophet (ﷺ) to shake hands after Eid Salaat. It is sinful not to listen to the Khutbah.

Method of performing Eid Salaat are as follows: -

1. Make the intention: "I am performing two Rakaat Eid Salaat which is Waajib with six extra Takbirs which are also waajib".
2. After the takbir Ula (1st Takbir) fold the hands and recite the. sanaa.
3. Then lift the hands thrice. while saying Allah-o-Akbar. After the first two times leave the arms loose and after the third fold them.
4. Now, Surah Fateha and a surah will be recited by the Imaam and the Rakaat will be completed like in any other Salaat.
5. The second Rakaat will be performed similarly except that before going into

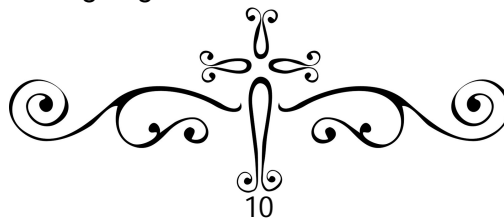
Ruku, and hands will be lifted thrice (whilst saying Allah-0-Akbar) and each time they will be left loose on the sides.

6. With the 4th Takbir, the ruku should be made.

7. The remainder of the Salaat should be completed like in any other Salaat.

8. Dua should be made after the Salaat instead of after the Khutbah. Eid cards with Qur'anic verses on them is not permissible in the light of the Shariah of Islam. The custom of Eid cards involves an act of sacrilege against the Noble Qur'an. It is not permissible to adopt the religious customs of unbelievers. Our Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Whoever imitates a nation becomes one of them." Printing of the verse of Qur'an on these cards is abominable as it is Tauheenul Qur'an or Disgracing and Defiling the Qur'an.

Traditionally, both Eid ul-Fitr and Eid ul-Azha are occasions for exchanging visits with relatives and friends throughout the entire period of observance of each festival. Gifts (usually of money or new clothes) are given to children, who delight in wearing their beautified new things for the occasion, and special sweets or other foods are served to guests. Throughout the Muslim world, the atmosphere during the days of the Eids is distinctly special combining social with spiritual aspects in a way which brings joy and pleasure to people of all ages and walks of life.



The Meaning of Tasawwuf

Maulana Shahidullah Faridi

Tasawwuf can be called the inwardness of Islam. Islam, like most other faiths to a greater or lesser extent, consists firstly of certain beliefs, such as the existence of God, and coming of the Judgement, and reward and punishment in the next life. and the outward expression of these beliefs in forms of worship, such as prayer and fasting, all of which concern man's relationship with God: and secondly, a system of morality, which concern man's relationship with man, and has its outwards expression in certain social institutions and laws, such as marriage, inheritance, and civil and criminal laws. But it is obvious that the basis of this faith, the spirit that gives it life, is man's relationship with God. Forms of worship are simply the physical vehicles of this relationship. and it is this relationship again which is responsible for the origin. the significance and the ultimate sanction of the principles of morality and their formulation into a specific social and legal system. If the interior converse with the Supreme Being and inspiration from Him are present, then they are comparable to the soul within the body of the exterior religion: if they die away, or in proportion to the extent they wither or become feeble the outward form of the faith becomes like a soul-less body, which by the inexorable law of nature swiftly succumbs to corruption. It is therefore man's direct relationship with his Maker which is the breath and life of religion, and it is the study and cultivation of this relationship that the Word Tasawwuf connotes.

It may be wondered why the words "Sufi", which means "woolen-clothed", and Minaret

"Tasawwuf", which means the path of the Sufis, i.e. the woolen-clothed ones. should have become so universal in order to denote something which belongs properly to the realm of the spirit. This name is symbolic rather than descriptive. To be a Sufi does not require a person to literally wear woolen clothes, but presumes an inner quality which was at one time characteristic of those who wore them. In the early generations of Islam, through the closeness to the time of the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) and the illumination of his incomparable spirituality, which encompassed so completely the inner and the outer. the comprehension of the inwardness of Islam enwrapped in its outward expressions was so general that no group of people who devoted themselves specially to this aspect of the faith was distinguishable. It was only when the inevitable course of development of human affairs began to run and the original trunk of universality to throw out branches of specialization, that Islamic knowledge was progressively divided into the interior and the exterior. and the general word 'ILM' (Knowledge) began to denote more the academic study of the Qur'an, Hadith and Fiqh than their spiritual content, contrary to its Qur'anic use in the sense of "Knowledge of Allah". At this stage that body of Muslims who devoted themselves more particularly to the cultivation of the spiritual heritage of their Prophet (ﷺ), began to use the term "Ma'rifat"(Recognition of Allah) and "ARIF " (One who recognizes Allah) to denote this inward aspect of knowledge, and indeed still to the present day. So it was possible that instead of Sufis they might have been

termed "Ahle Ma'rifat" or "Arifin". But every aspirant to spiritual development is not an Arif, and the average human mind seeks more the outer badge than the inner reality; which in this case is anyway difficult to describe so the habit observed in certain Godly persons (in reaction to the excessive luxury of the times) of wearing coarse woolen clothes, which were then the marks of extreme poverty, was taken as the symbol of all those who sought the inner life, and this term's convenience and simplicity has withstood all the vagaries of time and place throughout the Islamic world.

The visible formulations of Islam are therefore, both enlivened by the spiritual and moral force behind them and so they are the manifestations of this force, and at the same time they are the means of attaining these spiritual and moral qualities: this can be said to constitute their main purpose. Thus these two aspects of Islam are mutually generative, each one producing the other. It can be seen from the Word of Allah, The Qur'an, that wherever something concerns man's outward actions as decreed, its inward content and purpose is also stressed. Take prayer for instance; Allah says "Observe Prayer for My remembrance" (20:14): or "The believers have attained success; who are lowly in their prayers" (23:1), emphasizing that the object of Prayer is not the mere outward performance, but to remember Him with a humble heart. In the case of fasting Allah says: "Fasting has been decreed for you, as it was decreed for those who came before you, that you may be God-fearing" (2:183) Regarding sacrifice on the occasion of Pilgrimage, He says: "It is not their blood or their flesh which reaches Him, but the devotion from you"

(22:37). On the subject of marriage: "It is one of His signs that He has made for you mates of your own kind that you may find peace in them, and He has created affection and kindness between you." (30:24). On spending for the poor: "They (the righteous) give food to the needy, the orphan and the 'prisoner, for the love of Him; they say: We feed for the sake of Allah only, and desire no reward or thank from you" (76:8, 9). If we reflect on these and other similar indications in the Qur'an, we are led to the conclusion that if it is necessary to observe the outward ordinances of the faith, it is equally necessary to develop within ourselves those qualities which are their soul; that these two are complementary and one cannot exist in a sound state without the other. When the word "Shariat" is used, one immediately calls to mind the basic beliefs of Islam, without which a person cannot be reckoned a Muslim, and the external decrees comprising forms of worship, rules of behavior and civil and criminal laws. In short, it is the outwardness of Islam which is normally referred to by this term. But we have seen that within this outer Shariat there exists an inner Shariat of equal importance, which constitutes both its inspiration and goal. Like the word "Ilm" (Knowledge) which originally comprised both the inward realization of divine truths as well as outward knowledge of Islamic tenets, the term "Shariat" (the road) should really include the devotion of the heart to Allah as well as specific beliefs, and the attainment of moral excellence as well as submission to the law. But just as "Ilm" come to mean only book knowledge, so "Shariat" came to mean only the law; as a result, the Sufis, the devotees of the spirit

of Islam, began to use the word 'Mar'ifat' for inner relationship with God, and in places of the word "Shariat", they chose the word "Tariqat" (the path) to denote the way to spiritual perfection. Just as the outer "Shariat" consists of two parts, belief and practice, so also does this inner "Shariat" manifest itself in two main fields.

The first is man's attitude to his Maker, from the Qur'an and the teachings of the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) we learn that this attitude should be inspired by love, hope, fear, gratitude, patience, trust, self-sacrifice and complete devotion: and that He should be felt to be constantly near. This is the inwardness of belief. The second is man's attitude to his fellow men: Allah and His Prophet (ﷺ) have taught us that this should be inspired by sympathy, justice, kindness, unselfishness, generosity, sternness, on matters of principle, lenience wherever possible, and that we must avoid pride, jealousy, malice, greed, selfishness, miserliness, and ill-nature. The qualities will not be found explained in the books of Fiqh, it required a group of people distinct from the jurists, to determine and develop the science of the soul, of these two parts of the inner Shariat, it is the first, i.e. man's relationship with God, which is the root, the moral attitude of man's towards his fellows being derived from it. It is the realization that all men are creatures of the One God, and that He wishes us to treat them with mercy and kindness, and at times justice, which should reflect His own sublime qualities, and that if we succeed in this we shall win His pleasure, that is the real basis of morality. Some have made the mistake of imagining that morality can exist by itself without the foundation of religion, and have tried to promulgate a non-religious ethical

code as a substitute for faith. This is nothing but a mental illusion. It comes about in this way: through the medium of religious teaching, a certain moral outlook permeates the whole society, and colours not only the specifically religious life, but education and social customs and habits of thinking and acting. When at a later stage some people take to agnosticism and rebel against the established faith, they are unable to separate themselves from this moral attitude which has now become the very stuff of their mental being. Without realizing the origin of their morality, they fall into error of considering it self-existent, and imagine that they can reform society by simply calling upon people to be ethical. But it is a matter of observation that such inherited moral attitudes, when out off from the tree of religion to which they owe their being very quickly decay, and it is not long before the very basis of morality is questioned and finally denied, and non-moral philosophers are openly proclaimed. Whereas the morality based on faith in God, derived from a revealed Book and given life by the consciousness of Divine pleasure has in it the seeds not of decay but of growth and fruition.

That it is man's inner relationship with Allah which gives meaning and value to his outward expression of belief and the performance of his religious duties is asserted most pointedly in one of the most famous sayings of the Noble Prophet (ﷺ). The following incident is reported by Omar, the second Khalifa.

"We were sitting with the Messenger (ﷺ) of Allah one day when a man appeared with very white clothes and very black hair, with no signs of travel on him. None of us

recognized him. He came and sat before the Prophet (ﷺ) with his knees touching his knees, and his hands placed on his thighs. He then said: "O! Mohammed tell me, what is Islam?" The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: ".Islam is that you testify that there is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is the Messenger of Allah, and that you establish prayer, and Zakaat, fast the month of Ramadaan and make the pilgrimage to the House of Allah if you are able." The man said: "You are right", and we wondered that he both asked and confirmed the answer. Then he said: "what is Iman ?" The Prophet replied: 'Iman is that you believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers and the Last Day, and that you believe in the predestination of good and evil." The man said: "You are right. Now tell me what is ehsan (good performance)?" The Prophet replied: "That you worship Allah as if you are seeing Him and if you do not see Him, He surely sees you."

Then after asking about the Last Day, the man left, and the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) informed his companions that this was the Angel Gibrael who came to teach them their religion!

Here the word Ehsan, which means to perform something in the best manner, is explained as "the worship of Allah as if you are seeing Him, and if you do not see Him, He surely sees you". This means that the consciousness of the presence of Allah, and the feeling of Love and awe which accompany it, must permeate both our faith and practice (Iman and Islam) and it is in proportion to this consciousness that our excellence in religion can be judged. Clearly this sense of presence is not to be confined only to worship, but to all our

actions (one version of the above incident, in fact, has "work for Allah" as if you are seeing Him)". It is precisely this awareness of the nearness and presence of Allah the Sufis have as their ultimate goal in all their activities.

So far we have been speaking of the Muslims' relationship with Allah in a general way. But Tasawwuf has a more specific content, that is to say, it aims at bringing the notice to the direct spiritual experience. The fountainhead of Islam (a fact which is often forgotten) is the direct spiritual experience of the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) by means of which the message of God was conveyed to man. This spiritual experience had many forms, and was continuous throughout the period of the Prophet's prophet-hood, starting from the initial vision of the Angel when the call to the divine mission was sounded, and persisting throughout the inspiration of the Divine Book, with other manifestations such as Hadith-Qudsi (Divine Inspirations apart from the Qur'an itself.) and revelations of the next world. It is illustrated particularly in the Meraj (The Ascension), which culminates in the vision of the Supreme Reality. When the essence of prophet-hood is the spiritual experience, it would be strange indeed if some portion of this aspect of the prophetic life were not inherited by the Prophet's companions and those who followed them. So we find a tradition of spiritual experience alongside that of the more obvious branches of religious teaching concerned with beliefs and practices. In the early stages it was not considered proper to publish such experiences and considerable reticence was observed; it was thought sufficient only to hint at them. As time passed, reticence

was lessened and gradually the science of Tasawwuf was outwardly formulated, although the very nature of these most inward matters makes some reticence inevitable at all times.

Abu Huraira, one of the intimate companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) used to say: "I acquired two vessels from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) one of them I published, but if I published the other my throat would be cut". This is an interesting allusion to the danger of making a show of spiritual experience before those who do not understand them. If the experiences are believed, then some people out of ignorance are inclined to raise the one who is spiritually gifted almost to divinity, if not to make him into God Himself. If they are disbelievers, the doubters become guilty of denying what is true, and deprive themselves of certain special benefits which it is the Will of God that they should have. This is the reason why sufis have always counseled great caution in the matter of describing some of their spiritual states in detail as these can only be appreciated in the tasting, and not in the description. In spite of the obvious references in the Qur'an, the Hadiths and the lives of the companions, some have tried to deny this spiritual heritage of the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) and claim that the early Muslims were only "ascetics" and not "mystics". But to perceive spirituality where it exists is not given to everyone, even to perceive it at all; let it suffice to say that the extraordinary dedication to Allah and His Prophet (ﷺ) and their commands by the leading companions and followers would be inexplicable without a profound spiritual experience.

I have said that in the early period the outer and the inner aspects of Islam, that is, the outward observance and its spiritual content, were not divided but formed a homogeneous whole, but as time passed and specialized knowledge increased, it became necessary and inevitable that a body of Muslims should devote themselves more particularly to the inwardness of Islam which came to be known as Tasawwuf. If we consider the development of Tasawwuf as a science, that is the science of the soul, we find that it provides a close comparison with the development of other sciences based on the principles of the Divine Book and the life of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ). To take the science of Hadith as an example, we find that during the first century, which was the time of the Companions and the followers, things remained very much in the original form of personal teaching from those who sat in the company of the Great Ones, with little sign of elaboration and formulation. During the second century we begin to find a more or less comprehensive collections and criticisms, which culminate in the third century in critical recessions based on now thoroughly elaborated and determined principles. In the case of Fiqh we find a similar process; after the first century of the direct and practical teaching of the companions and followers, the second century produces elaborate compendia of legal decisions and formulation of principles of jurisprudence which again by the third century has been built up into a relatively independent science. Tasawwuf too, was constructed into a spiritual science on the firm foundations of the spiritual heritage of the Prophet (ﷺ) of God; here again, the elaboration begins in the second century in

the recorded sayings and treatises and books of the early Sufis. and in the third century Tasawwuf appears as a fully developed and formulated spiritual science. It is just as gratuitous to talk critically of later innovations in the matter of Tasawwuf as it is in the matter of Fiqh, Hadith and Tafsir. There is a world of difference between elaborations and innovations, which people with muddled minds find difficult to distinguish.

Although the development of Tasawwuf can be historically compared with that of the other sciences, there is an intrinsic superiority in Tasawwuf which should be well remembered. This superiority lies in that the expansion of the science of spiritual development is based on experience and direct observation confirmed in its broad pattern by thousands of travelers on the upward path of the soul, whereas the other sciences mainly owe their formulation to reason and conjecture. All, of course, are founded on tradition, that is, the Qur'an and its living commentary by the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) and his followers, but the process of later elaboration has this fundamental difference. It cannot be contested that direct experience, especially when it is common to large numbers of people, is a vastly more authentic source of knowledge than rational speculation. For instance, after the date provided by revelation and the chief instrument in the development of Fiqh is "Qiyas" (analogy) or "Rai" (opinion). The main pillar of the science of Hadith is "Jarh" and "Ta'dil", which means the critical examination of the reliability of the reporters of a certain Hadith in addition to its subject matter. Obviously these processes are rational and

speculative. The development of Tasawwuf, however, has consisted of the progressively more detailed exemplification of the spiritual experience constituting the inner heritage of the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) and has no content of conjecture and opinion. This vital element has resulted in a remarkable unanimity among the proponents of this science throughout the ages and whatever the difference there exist are those of emphasis or mode of expression and do not show any real cleavage in the essential unity.

We have already alluded to the function of Tasawwuf, which is to perfect the relationship of man first with His God, and secondly with his fellow men. Now it is obvious that only very few people have the call to devote themselves entirely to spirituality and become as it were specialists in the inner life. This appears to be the result of some innate urge which so drives those who possess it as not to allow them to follow any other vocation. This is not to say that even these specially gifted few entirely abandon all usual worldly activities. on the contrary, we find in Islam, in distinction from other religious communities, that its greatest scientists of the soul were mostly married, had children and conducted their house-hold and similar affairs like other men. It is another matter that during the period of training for spiritual development a certain retirement, either total or partial is usually required, as indeed it is during the acquirement of other branches of specialist learning. It is also true that even after reaching expertness many of the Islamic spiritualists paid very little attention to the earning of their livelihood and spent their whole time in teaching and giving solace, help and

encouragement to the common people. Their physical wants were looked after by their pupils and admirers. as was the practice until recently even in the case of those who taught children how to read and write. In this deliberate neglect of their own material needs in order to devote themselves more unhamperedly to their mission, they observed the utmost selflessness and resignation to Allah, and never expressly or by implication gave any sign of the poverty or even hunger which they often had to undergo. If they neglected the world, it was only as far as their own wants were concerned; they never neglected the wants of those who came to them for spiritual nourishment, or even for physical nourishment if they had any to spare for in addition to being at the service of those who were hungry for the things of the soul, they often conducted public kitchens for the feedings of the poor, and engaged themselves in the healing of the sick in body as well as those who were sick in spirit, as is well known to those who have studied their lives.

Just as spiritual specialists are few by the nature of things, so also the number of the pupils who shape their lives in close conformity to those of their masters is also very small. These selected followers are those who, have the inner call, are later charged with the duty of carrying on the work of teaching and exhortation in a new generation. But the majority of those who visit these inheritors of the more inward traditions of Islam are those who, while

engaged in their daily vocations, wish to refresh themselves from the toils of the world at the pure springs of sincerity and devotion which they find so abundant with the Sufis. It is here that we see the influence of the Sufis working and giving new life to the whole wide land of the community. The ordinary men and women who spend a part of their time with the Sufis acquire some measure of inspiration for their spiritual and moral betterment, and to this measure their whole lives are affected. It is the spiritual orientation and the moral attitude which constitute the fountain-head of human thought, and so of human action. Events in the man's history, and the growth, flourishing, and decay of the peoples can always be traced back to these inner sources. The contact of people of the world with the Sufis, whether they be kings, princes, captains, merchants, administrators, artisans or peasants, indirectly affects the whole movement of the nation along the uneven road of time. It is from these most intimate wells of inspiration that a certain quality is given to the thought and life of a whole culture; what a pity that some superficial intellects are unable to perceive these undercurrents of history. Economics, politics, and social life are all controlled by the mental processes of man; he can only ignore at his peril these deep directive Forces from which his mental processes emerge. The apparent obscurity and detachment of the Sufi conceal an activity of radical importance to the whole Muslim nation.



The Supremacy of Law in Islam

Dr. Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi

All scholars of Muslim political institutions are aware of the fact that Islam believes in the supremacy of law. No person can claim exemption from its jurisdiction, nor is any individual or institution recognized as possessing an authority superior to that of the Law.

The highest executive authority in the classical days of Islam has held to be the Caliph by the jurists, who was as subservant to the law as the humblest citizen of the Muslim State, whether Muslim or non-Muslim. Most political scientists of Islam in the Middle ages agree that there do arise conflicts between one citizen and another and sometimes even between private interests and the general good.

It is therefore, necessary to have an impartial arbitrator to adjudicate between them and to adjust rival interests into a harmonious social entity. No human being can be so free from the pull of his own interests or, at least, his likes, dislikes and prejudices as a set of principles embodied in a law. Hence the best arbitrator in matters of all human relations is a law that is perfect and absolutely free from defects.

The importance of law can be judged from the fact that God Himself makes all His actions to accord with His Way (Sunnat 'ullah) as distinguished from other Sunnahs. As all the attributes of God are good and moral in the highest and most perfect form, His Sunnah is the embodiment of all the moral virtues in their more purified forms. All moral values are reflections of the attributes of God and are, therefore, absolute. These are the values accepted by Islam. They are eternal and

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absolute and there is, and can possibly be, no question of relativity of contingency, so far they are concerned.

Thus the quality of any human action or virtue is not determined by the changing patterns of criteria based upon contingent, opportunistic or convenient standards of assessment. In other words, every action or attribute is good or bad intrinsically and the yardstick of measuring its beneficence or malevolence does not change from time to time. This is what is meant when we speak of absolute values. They offer a constant, never changing scale of reference. If God has imposed on Himself His Sunnah and naturally shunned the capriciousness of discarding what has become a law with Himself for any seemingly beneficent action, who can claim to be above a law willed by Him for His creations?

Limits of Law

As the limits of law willed by God for His creation would be difficult to comprehend by merely rational process, God has revealed through His Messengers the morality encompassed by His Sunnah. Only that part has been revealed through the prophets to man which concerns their volition. Another part of the law has been ingrained in the very essence of all substances and animate beings. This part concerns the entire field of physical existence. This law is rigid which every created object, whether animate or inanimate, must follow, which it has neither the inclination nor the capacity of transgressing.

It is this part of God's Sunnah that is the grist for the scientists mill. Science can only make discoveries regarding these laws, can even utilize them to some extent but cannot change an iota of them. If the moral law had also been left for the human beings to discover like the physical law, it would most surely have retarded human development. The entire basis of the moral law is the capacity to choose; here no choice is imposed, only the possibilities have been pointed out. Man has been given the capacity to choose for a clearly discernable reason, because otherwise he could not have risen above the limits of mere sordid physical existence.

All progress, mental, moral and spiritual is based upon this fact of man having been endowed with the capacity of choosing. His freedom of choice—denied to the rest of the creation—has been given to him because, in fact, he is a denizen of two worlds, the physical and the moral. Little reflection is needed to understand why morality cannot be based in necessity, it has perforce to lie in choice.

The very idea of choice demands that the choice must be clear. In other words, rationally speaking, a moral choice is possible only when the mind of the one who has been called upon to choose understands the difference between good and bad and right and wrong. This difference, to be clearly cognizable, must not be arbitrary and must be subject to law. It has to follow a pattern and must not deviate from it, otherwise it would become arbitrary and unintelligible.

To make it comprehensible this pattern of moral choices has been translated into the form of the Islamic law, the Shariat, indeed, the Shariat, as it has developed in the

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course of history, combines within itself two factors—the immutable and the mutable. The former has come through revelation and the Sunnah of the divinely guided Prophet which comprises both his oral traditions (Hadith) and his practice.

The latter, namely the imitable factor in the Shariah consists of the results of the Ummah's efforts to interpret the immutable factor for application to the myriad situations of life. The former embodies the basic principles of morality and the latter their understanding. Both of them are inviolate within their spheres, the former being absolute in their character and the latter requiring dispassionate, objective and honest sincerity of purpose.

Basic Morality

In other words, the basic morality remains absolute and unchanging and the effort to comprehend and apply it to human situations does not permit any twisting or corruption of the meaning. Of course the second part in which the human mind is to be applied is a matter of sensitive expertise, capable of being handled by the adequately trained and competent jurists.

The conception of law is basically removed from its Western definition as law being the will of the sovereign. The difference arises because in Islam the law is the will of the Absolute Sovereign, God Himself: in the western conception it is the will of a mundane sovereign.

I need not discuss here the difficulties that Western thinkers face in trying to locate the mundane sovereign because of the ever elusive seat of real and full Sovereignty. It would make this discussion more manageable within the short space at my disposal to take the lawyer's identification

of this sovereign either with a person or an institution vested with full legal authority.

Indeed this identification is no more than a convenient legal fiction which has been created to make legislation possible and without it the Western conception of all man-made laws would be reduced to an absurdity. The days of the Czars and powerful despots ruling by ukases and decrees have now faded into oblivion at least apparently.

Now the first example of legal sovereign known to the world is the British Parliament which theoretically "can do anything except changing a man into a woman and vice versa". But the exception relates merely to a physical fact and no legislation is effective against physical laws.

But the legal rights of man and woman can be so changed by the British Parliament that legally their positions are completely reversed. Therefore even this facetious exception to the authority of British Parliament will have to be dropped and then British Parliament would seem to emerge as absolute in its legal authority. But is it absolute?

Unwritten Law

Let us try to understand the limits of its authority and soon it will become obvious that this reputedly unlimited authority is a mere legal fiction. Let it but once go against popular opinion or violate one of the many conventions that oil the machinery of British democracy and it would have knelled the toll of its own death.

This is because there is, in the West an unwritten law that is higher than all legislation and legislative authority and which is not at all changeable by interested

persons and parties. It is this higher sense of responsibility that maintains the norms of corporate life and sustains its democratic flavour. If nullifies the utility of rubber stamp majorities and dictatorship disguised as parliamentary democracy.

The Shariat is in fact wider in its scope than the secular traditions of Western democracy which last only so long as their validity does not come to be questioned or modified. The secular traditions of Western democracy are neither immutable nor transcendent of the needs of contingent situations and in this respect are not absolute. Yet during the time they are held valid, they cannot be violated even though the parliament be held to be sovereign. Therefore, all students of the growth and powers of parliamentary democracy understand fully the limitations of its authority.

It, therefore, cannot be claimed that any parliament has the authority to do whatever it deems fit and ride roughshod over intelligent and discerning public opinion without setting itself up consciously as a tyrant which is conscientious and honest parliament, would not attempt to do, nor would it suffer itself to be used through subservient majorities to destroy the decencies of responsible political behaviour.

However, it is by no means impossible that some parliaments may act in an irresponsible manner. A parliament may cast political decencies to the winds, it may completely discard the mandate on which it was elected, it may even turn unpatriotic and, either through fear or avarice, may sell the true interests of the voters to save its skin or fill the coffers of its members.

These dangers have been present in the minds of political thinkers as well as framers of constitutions. The well-known dictum that there is no tyranny greater than the tyranny of the majority is based upon bitter experience. Yet it is a consoling thought that such parliaments are soon brought to their senses through direct action.

However, the dislocation caused in normal life in such situations is serious, even though necessary to save the people from unbridled tyranny or even corruption. Such dangers can be avoided if parliaments are not made absolute and indeed the architects of political institutions have devised several methods of dealing with irresponsible legislatures, but they have succeeded only to a limited extent. These are the provisions of a rigid constitution, which cannot be changed easily by parliament to its own advantage. There are the powers of reference and referendum, the power to recall truant members and the provision of an independent judiciary whose integrity cannot be purchased by an executive or undermined by a parliament and entrusting such a judiciary with adjudicating on constitutional matters.

No effective remedy, however, has been found by lawyers and political scientists against tyranny and usurping of authority by power-motivated persons. They can be checked only through readiness to suffer hardships in a well-organized movement of direct action. The only efficacious remedy against tyranny is the determination to fight it.

In this connection the value of an immutable law claiming divine origin that cannot be amended to suit the whims of ambitious or power-hungry despots will be readily recognized. To be effective, such a

law must be firmly anchored to the deepest emotions of those who believe in it. It can then command their fullest loyalty. This is the quality of the Shariah because it is based on faith.

The difference between all forms of secular ethics and a morality based in religion is that the former is generally the result of a sense of loyalty to the welfare of the society, whereas the latter commands an emotional loyalty because of the emotions playing an overwhelming role in all religious matters. The former appeals to the intellect at best and leaves the common people cold, whereas the latter has the same appeal for men of all intellectual levels.

So far as the Shariah is concerned, it should not be presumed that its appeal is limited to the Muslims, because non-Muslim intellectuals and jurists have paid tributes to its innate rationalism. It is not the result of any theoretic or speculative exercise of the human mind untested by experience; on the contrary, it has a history of several centuries of actual working in extensive areas. Therefore, it, at least, deserves careful examination of its potentialities. In particular in the political field it can effectively counter all illegal or immoral attempts at usurping authority. It also guarantees freedom because all human rights are inviolate and no excuse is held valid by it to tamper with the liberty of the people. Only when the supremacy of a law that lays so much emphasis as the Shariah on human rights and liberties is recognized can the people breathe the air of freedom and hope for protection against the exercise of any arbitrary exercise of authority.

Some people think that the acceptance of the Shariah would rule out the possibility of

any further legislation and make the society much too rigid for healthy development. This notion is not warranted. If a country has its basic law inscribed in a constitution, it does not rule out any further legislation. The limit and scope of legislation are carefully defined, but it is not ruled out. Similarly, the Shariah basically deals mostly with fundamentals.

Its mutable sector is theoretically neither fundamental nor difficult to change but it is

possible to do so only in accordance with some principles. Even if all the corpus of Shariah including the voluminous rulings of the jurists is adopted as it is, it does not cover all the fields of human activity. Indeed a much vaster area is left out in which legislative activity is freely permitted. This area is technically called 'Muhabbat' and covers almost the entire ground of modern development.

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that man must wage against himself and on behalf of himself. The same principle applies to Islamic society which has to be built upon the bedrock of social welfare, justice and equality of opportunities.

Jamal al-Din Al-Afghani was undoubtedly right when he insisted that the malaise in Islamic communities could only be remedied through a proper understanding of the Qur'an.

The Book is stylistically extremely concise and its contents can only be interpreted against the background of its entire text. A few commentators, even among Muslims, have erroneously held the view that some of the earlier verses of the Qur'an were abrogated during the process of revelation which began in 610 and continued for more than two decades. In other words, this warped theory militates against the concept of Divine infallibility which is central to all religions that believe in God.

Two indispensable principles, therefore, emerge for a correct interpretation of the Qur'anic message. The first is that its injunctions cannot be taken out of context and have to be understood against the pronouncements of the Qur'an as a whole;

the second is that not a single verse or statement was abrogated during the long process of its revelation.

Extremists have extracted passages of the Qur'an to justify suicide bombings and other terrorist acts. They have also exploited the flawed concept of abrogation. For instance, the conditional permission to fight is misconstrued as authorization for indiscriminate slaughter. Consequently absurd theories have emerged about a "sword verse" although the word "sword" does not appear even once in the Qur'an. It is interesting that Qur'an itself predicts in one of its verses (Chapter 3:7) that some of these pronouncements will be deliberately distorted by people who refuse to accept its actual message.

Finally, there is ample scope for legislation in Islamic societies. The percentage of strictly legal text in the Qur'an is very small indeed. The Qur'an contains some 6,200 verses and of these only 100 deals with ritual practices, 70 verses discuss personal laws, 70 verses civil laws, 30 penal laws, and 20 judiciary matters and testimony. This implies that there is no impediment in the way of parliaments in Islamic countries from enacting laws in line with modern values. (Courtesy: DAWN)

Bias against Islam

Iftikhar Murshed

Expressions such as “Islamic extremism” reflect both a misunderstanding as well as a bias against the religion. The Qur’anic world view is that of peace and tolerance while aggression is expressly prohibited.

it is, nevertheless, also true that Islam spread like wild fire within a hundred years of the Prophet Muhammad’s (ﷺ) death. Arab armies established a vast empire stretching from Spain, across North Africa to the river Indus in what is now Pakistan.

In Islamic history, there has never been any forced conversion because the Qur’an prohibits coercion in matters of faith. Consequently, no wars of religion have ever been waged. There has never been any inquisition as in medieval Europe and no heretic has been burnt at the stake.

Violence is anathema to Islamic doctrine. In the year 630, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) triumphantly re-entered his native city, Makkah. The event changed history. In 1882, Stanley Lane-Pool wrote:

“The day of Muhammad’s (ﷺ) greatest triumph over his enemies was also the day of his grandest victory over himself. He freely forgave the Qureysh all the years of sorrow and cruel scorn in which they had afflicted him and gave an amnesty to the whole population of Makkah”. Not a drop of blood was shed. In contrast, the Crusaders massacred without pity more than 70,000 Muslim men, women and children when they entered Jerusalem in 1099.

Hatred of Islam has been a recurrent theme of history. Political and military violence

against Muslims did not end with the Crusades in Palestine or even with the successful completion of the Reconquista in Spain when, on January 2, 1492, Ferdinand and Isabella received the keys of the Alhambra, the Muslim palace in Grenada.

The 19th and early 20th centuries witnessed aggression against and occupation of Muslim territories in the Middle East and North Africa. In 1830, the French colonized Algiers, the British captured Aden in 1839. These colonial powers between them took Tunisia in 1881, Egypt in 1882, the Sudan in 1889 and Libya and Morocco in 1920. They promised independence to these countries but, in effect, divided the region between themselves into spheres of influence and occupation.

Through all this and much more, the Crusader attitude towards Islam continued to prevail in the West. In the introduction to her biography of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), Karen Armstrong writes that on entering Jerusalem in 1917 General Allenby boasted that “the Crusades had been completed” and when French troops reached Damascus their commander went straight to Saladin’s tomb in the Great Mosque and declared: “Nous ravenous, Saladin;” (We have come back, Saladin”).

The Balfour Declaration of 1917 which eventually resulted in the emergence of Israel in Arab and Palestinian territories in 1948 set a modern-day precedent for ethnic and religious cleansing in which Muslims were the victims. This is as true of the Balkans as it is of the Middle East and Kashmir.

The Crusades signified outright aggression against Islam; the 19th and early 20th centuries colonization. From 1945, till the collapse of the Berlin wall, the West was selective in its approach to the Islamic world. It supported those countries that could promote its cold war objectives, but was indifferent to the grievances of those it did not need to defeat its former super-power adversary, the Soviet Union. Even through this period, some intellectuals of the West openly expressed contempt for Muslims.

The post-cold war era has witnessed unparalleled terrorist violence. Most of these atrocities whether in Russia, Spain, the US, Indonesia, the Middle East or elsewhere have been perpetrated by men and women professing Islam. These incidents resulted in the perception that violence is encouraged by the Qur'an and obscured its doctrinaire emphasis on peaceful coexistence and tolerance.

The first revelation allowing Muslims to fight is in Chapter 22 verse 39 of the Qur'an which came immediately after Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) left Makkah for Madinah in 622. However, the permission was conditional and restricted to fighting only in self defense. This stress against aggression is further elaborated in the second chapter revealed about a year later and repeated in other Qur'anic passages. The clear and simple message is that the only justification in Islam for war is to fight against aggression. Muslims are also obliged to terminate warfare should the aggressor subsequently incline towards peace.

Furthermore, kindness and not hostility towards those professing other beliefs is ordained: "As for such (of the unbelievers) as do not fight against you on account of (your)

faith, and neither drive you forth from your homeland, God does not forbid you to show them kindness and to behave towards them with equity: for, verily, God loves those who act equitably. "Muslim are also obliged to grant protection to "those who ascribe divinity to aught besides God" and escort them to a place of safety should they ask for such help.

With a global vision so enlightened and moderate, the question arises how a small number of extremists have managed to distort the inherently peaceful message of Islam. A possible answer is that the Qur'an is quoted out of context and misinterpreted by persons professing to be Muslims. Their pronouncements have been unthinkingly accepted by those who are determined to project Islam as a religion that endorses extremist violence.

The word "Jihad", for instance, is completely misunderstood. Its implication is vast and is not confined to war which, in any event, can only be waged against an aggressor. The Qur'an urges Muslims to defend all places of worship where the name of God is mentioned including churches, synagogues and mosques. Any attempt to prevent followers of other creeds from practicing their religion is prohibited.

One of the early Qur'anic commentators, Ibn Sa'd, narrates a striking illustration of this principle when a delegation of Christians from Najran called on Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) shortly before his death. They were given free access to his mosque and allowed to perform all their religious rites even though the attribution of divinity to Jesus, or to any person, violates a fundamental Islamic tenet.

At another level, "Jihad" implies the continuous struggle (Continued on page # 22)

Zaitoon (Olive)

Cure for Seventy Diseases

Khalid Hussain Mirza

Zaitoon (Olive) the sign of peace and friendship in this world, has its description in Holy Qur'an in the following words: "By the fig and olive and the mount of Sinai and the city of security We have indeed created man in the best of moulds. Then do We abase him (to be) the lowest of low Except such as believe and do righteous deeds for they shall have a reward unfailing what then, can after this, make deny the last judgment, is not Allah the Wisest of judges." (95:1-8)

The plant of olive reaches the height of 3 meters leaves are bright green and very attractive and the fruits are of bright bluish or violet colour, possesses a metallic taste. It is known from old ages. During the excavation of ancient Egyptian graves, vessels full of olive oil were found with other articles. According to the scholars of Hadith, on subsidence of Toofan-e-Nooh, when water level came down, the first thing on the earth that was seen was the olive plant.

The plant is extensively found in Asia Minor, Palestine, Roman territory, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, Italy, North Africa, Algeria, Tunisia, California, Mexico, Peru and South zone of Australia. Usually it is imported from Spain, Italy, France, Turkey and Greece. Though olive fruits are very nutritious it is not usually eaten due to its metallic taste. Rather pickles of its fruits are largely consumed in Europe. The fruit preserved in vinegar is imported from Greece and liked very much in Europe and in Arabian countries.

Olive oil is a good preservative for other eatables too. Sardine and other fishes are

tinned and preserved in olive oil. The smokeless burning of olive oil is a peculiar feature, which produces a bright light. The Holy Qur'an stresses the importance of Zaitoon on several occasions: (Al-Anaam, 6:99, 141), (Al-Nahl, 16:11)

Sayyid Al-Ansari (RDA) narrates that the Prophet (ﷺ) said "Eat the olive oil and massage it over your bodies since it is a holy tree." (Tirmizi, Ibn Maja). Alqama Bin Amir (RDA) narrates that Prophet (ﷺ) said, "There is olive oil for you, eat it, massage over your body, since it is effective in Hemorrhoids (Piles)." (Ibn Al-Jauzi).

Aqba Bin Amir narrates that the Prophet (ﷺ) stated "You have the olive oil from this Holy tree, treat yourself with this, since it cures the Anal fissure (Basoor)."

Khalid Bin Saad (RDA) narrates, "I came to Madinah with Ghalib Bin Al Jabr. Ghalib became ill during the journey. Ibn Abi Ateeq came to see him and told a narration from Hazrat Aisha(RDA) that the Prophet (ﷺ) told about the cure in Kalaunji. We crushed a few seeds of Kalaunji and mixed it with olive oil and dropped in both nostrils, after which Ghalib became healthy." (Ibn Maja, Bukhari)

Abu Hurairah (RDA) narrates that the Prophet (ﷺ) stated, "Eat the olive oil and apply it (locally), since there is cure for seventy diseases in it, one of them is Leprosy."

Zaid bin Arqam (RDA) narrates, "We have been directed by the Prophet (ﷺ) that we should treat the pleurisy with Qust-e-Behri

(Qust Sheerin) and olive oil.” (Tirmizi, Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Maja).

Olive oil has a place in Govt. Pharmacopeia of USA and Britain (British Pharmacopeia). Both of these countries have given prime importance to olive oil for the treatment of various ailments and have fixed standard parameters to evaluate its purity.

It contains Palmatic Acid, Oleic Acid, Linoleic Acid, Steanic Acid, Myristic Acid and Glycerides. It is not dissolved in water but in Alcohol, Ether, chloroform and Liquid Paraffin. The adulterant very often used in the olive are of the seeds of tea plant, Aracis oil in the market samples of olive oil. Sometimes Machine Gun oil and refined Mobil oil are also found.

Olive oil is extracted from the ripened fruits. The unripe and over ripe fruits contain less amount of the oil. The fruits are processed three times. Successively, the first round oil is the best in quality, golden colour, with a light fragrance and known as virgin oil. Some varieties of olive oil remained unchanged in its effectiveness for years together. It contains therapeutic potential even if it is a thousand years old. Despite the prime importance and holiness given by Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) no work has been done to find out its efficacy for the ailments other than the Hemorrhoids, Anal fissure, Skin diseases, Pleurisy and Leprosy, which are already described by the Prophet (ﷺ), whereas the Prophet (ﷺ) himself says that it contains cure for seventy diseases.

According to Ibn-Qayyim the red coloured oil is better than blackish one, is an exhilarant, glows up the facial complexion, provides prevention against poisons, regulates the digestive process, expels intestinal parasites,

makes the hair lustrous and minimizes the aging problems. The massage of olive oil with common salt over the gums is a remedy for several diseases of gums and teeth. The local application of olive oil or the water extracted from the crushed olive leaves is effective on boils, rashes and itching. The chronic ulcers and boils, which show difficult, healing conditions are healed up with the use of olive oil locally.

According to Zahbi it strengthens the hairs and body, hence could be used as good tonic in old age problems and to delay the aging process. It also useful in sexual weakness. Combination of normal saline olive oil is highly effective in burns cases. The decoction of olive leaves in water is effective against mouth and lip ulcers and allergic dermatitis also. The concentrated aqueous extract of olive leaves and fruits are very effective against dental cavities. Application of this solution shows very good effects on Leukoplaquea in mouth. This solution is applied with vinegar on Alopecia, grow the hair and remove the Alopecia.

It is also stated that the local application of this extract removes the scars of small-pox and boils. The powder of seeds mixed with butter is effective in brittle nails. The pickles prepared from olive fruits are a good appetizer and removes constipation. The smashed leaves are applied locally to check excessive perspiration. The water extracted from the leaves with honey is used as eardrops and affect in various ear ailments.

The oil procured by burning of olive wood is effective against all fungal infections viz a viz, Ringworm, T. versicolor etc, in addition to Eczema, Psoriasis, Dandruff and Alopecia. The local application of olive oil on scalp is highly effective against dandruff. It grows the

hairs and checks, the loss of hairs. The application of olive oil in eyes relieves the inflammation. The massage of olive oil over the body tones up the muscles and organs, it relieves muscular pains. Some physicians also advocate the massage of olive oil for epilepsy. The ointments prepared from olive oil are very good healing agents. It heals sinus and fistula very quickly. 25ml of olive oil mixed with 250 ml of barley water, if taken internally, is highly effective against chronic constipation. It is a good Diuretic, hence is used in Ascities. It also removes the kidney stones.

A conventional regimen is also available comprising of olive oil and other herbal drugs having potential against the gall bladder stones. It is stated that this regimen dissolves and expels the Gall bladder stones.

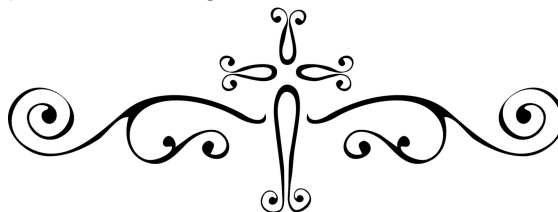
In view of the researches carried out in USA and England, it is concluded that it is a good nourishing diet during the ailments of kidney where nitrogen-containing food/proteins intake is contra indicated.

Since the Prophet (ﷺ) stated that it is a good remedy for Anal fissures, hence for the same complaint, patients were advised to take two spoonful of olive oil at bedtime and an ointment was applied on fissure locally at retiring and in morning, prepared from 8 spoonful of olive oil and 2 spoonfuls of ground hen leaves. This showed very good effects against the problem. It is a good tonic for hair and maintains the luster. Its combination with other prescribed drugs of

Tibb-al-Nabvi is a very good remedy for Psoriasis and Eczema. The impressions of several doctors practicing in Middle East and North Africa reveals that no case was detected of Gastro Intestinal Carcinoma among those who were used to consuming olive oil. Japanese doctors also endorse this fact and have the opinion that olive oil prevents the incidence of G.I.T Carcinoma.

The Prophet (ﷺ) stated that it is a good remedy for intestinal inflammations. Therefore it was used in the cases of G.I.T ulcers and found very much effective. It is also observed that remedy equates the benefits of olive oil in hyper acidity and gas troubles.

The Prophet (ﷺ) recommended the use of olive oil in Pleurisy. Keeping this in view olive oil was administered in various diseases of Respiratory tract and it was observed that the regular users of olive oil were least affected with common cold and Pneumonia. The clinical experiences of well-qualified and highly established doctors in profession who take a keen interest in Prophet's medicine reveal that olive oil is a good supportive treatment in Tubercular infection of either site. According to a narration of Khalid Bin Saad (RDA) in Ibn Maia, one spoonful of Kalaunji was pulverized and mixed with 12 spoonful of olive oil. This suggestion was dropped into the nostrils morning and evening for the cases of chronic epistaxis. The result were found highly positive.



Duties Towards Relatives

Dr. Maulana Muhammad Fazl-ur-Rahman Al-Ansari Al-Qaderi

Duties towards relatives stand in the Islamic order of duties on a high level. In their order of merit they come next only to the duties towards the parents, the offspring, the husband and the wife. In the Holy Qur'an there are at least twelve places where the service to the relatives has been mentioned not in terms of charity but in terms of duty, which means that in Islam it is not an optional virtue to do good to one's relatives but a bounden duty, the non-fulfillment of which amounts to sin.

Indeed this duty is so infallible that a Muslim cannot be relieved of it even when anyone from his relatives commits any wrong against him. The Holy Qur'an says: "These who possess affluence and are blessed with prosperity it is not for them to withdraw their support from their relatives and others who might need their help (on the basis of a complaint that they might have against them)" (24:22).

And while doing good to relatives under all circumstances is a duty, cutting off relations with them is considered in Islam as a great sin.

The Holy Qur'an says: "The transgressors (Fasiqeen) are those who break the covenant of God after binding themselves with it and those who tear asunder what God has ordered them to join." (2:27).

Here the commentators of the Holy Qur'an explain the last part of the verse as referring to the blood-relations.

The Islamic point of view concerning the duties towards relatives has also found strong expression in the sayings of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). For instance, once a companion requested the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) to show him the way whereby he might attain Paradise. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Render true obedience to God, do not make anyone partner with God, offer your prayers with the right spirit and in the right manner, pay the poor-tax and fulfill your duty towards your relatives."

According to another Hadith, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) has said: "He who does not fulfill his duty towards relatives will not enter Paradise."

There is yet another Hadith which says: "Whoever desires to be blessed with increase in his wealth and in his age he should be careful of his duty towards his relatives."

It has also been emphasized by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) that it is no merit to do good and to be good only to those relatives who behave nicely and decently towards us; rather the merit consists in doing good to those relatives who are not good to us.



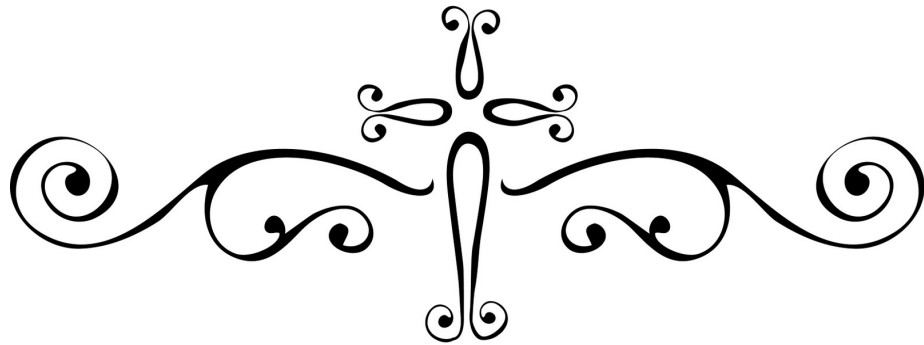
خشیت الہی اور خوف خدا پیدا نہ ہو تو اس کا واضح مطلب ہے کہ روزے کے اصل مقصد سے محروم ہیں۔ اگر کوئی روزے رکھ کر ہی جھوٹ، لوٹ کھسوٹ، قتل و غارتگری، ملاوٹ، ذخیرہ اندوزی، بد نظری اور بد عنوانی (Corruption) میں ملوث ہے تو اس کو بھوک اور پیاس کے سوا کچھ حاصل نہ ہوگا۔ جیسا کہ آپ نے فرمایا ہے۔

(صحیح البخاری، کتاب الصوم، باب من لم یدع قول الزور والعمل بہ فی الصوم، ج 3، حدیث 1903 (تحقیق محمد زبیر بن ناصر)، مطبوعہ: دار طوق النجاة، 1422ھ)

ترجمہ: حضرت ابو ہریرہ سے مروی ہے کہ رسول اللہ ﷺ نے فرمایا: جو جھوٹ بولنا اور اس پر عمل کرنا ترک نہیں کرتا تو اللہ تعالیٰ کو کوئی ضرورت نہیں کہ وہ اپنے کھانے پینے کو چھوڑ دے۔
الغرض روزے کا بنیادی مقصد اللہ تعالیٰ کی رضا اور خوشنودی کے حصول میں ہے اور یہ تقویٰ اور پاکبازی کی نعمت سے ملتا ہے۔ لہذا رب تعالیٰ نے اپنے بندوں کو حکم فرمایا کہ روزہ رکھو تاکہ اس کی برکت سے متقی اور پرہیزگار بن جاؤ۔ یہی مقصد صیام ہے۔

ترجمہ: تب میں نے اہوا کے دریا پر روزہ کی منادی کرائی تاکہ ہم اپنے خدا کے حضور اس سے اپنے اور اپنے بال بچوں اور اپنے مال کے لیے سیدھی راہ طلب کرنے کو فروتن بنیں۔ کیونکہ میں نے شرکے باعث بادشاہ سے سپاہیوں کے جھٹے اور سواروں کے لیے درخواست نہ کی تھی تاکہ وہ راہ میں دشمن کے مقابلے میں ہماری مدد کریں کیونکہ ہم نے بادشاہ سے کہا تھا کہ ہمارے خدا کا ہاتھ بھلائی کے لیے ان سب کے ساتھ ہے جو اس کے طالب ہیں اور اس کا زور اور قہران سب کے خلاف ہے جو اسے ترک کرتے ہیں سو تم نے روزہ رکھ کر اس بات کے لیے اپنے خدا سے منت کی ہے اور اسے ہماری سنی۔ (کتاب مقدس، ازراہ، باب 8، آیت 23-21 مطبوعہ: بائبل سوسائٹی، لاہور 1993)

مذکورہ بالا کتاب مقدس کی تمام آیات سے ثابت ہوتا ہے کہ گذشتہ امتوں پر بھی روزے کا حکم تھا اور اہل کتاب روزہ رکھا کرتے تھے۔ الغرض روزے کا مقصد اطاعت الہی اور خوشنودی رہنے اور اللہ تعالیٰ کی تعلیمات و ہدایات پر عمل پیرا ہو کر ہی تقویٰ و پرہیزگاری کے زیور سے آراستہ و پیراستہ ہو یا جاسکتا ہے۔ اگر



(کتاب مقدس، یسعیاہ، باب 8، آیت 6-5 مطبوع: بائبل
سوسائٹی، لاہور 1993)

5 Speak unto all the people of the land,
and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted
and mourned in the fifth and seventh
month, even those seventy years, did ye
at all fast unto me, even to me?
(zechariah:7:5,kjv)11

ترجمہ: کہ ملت کے سب لوگوں اور کاهنوں سے کہہ کہ جب تم
نے پانچویں اور ساتویں مہینے میں ستر برس تک روزہ رکھا اور ماتم کیا
تو کیا کبھی میرے لیے خاص میرے لیے روزہ رکھا تھا؟

(کتاب مقدس، زکریا، باب 7 آیت 5 مطبوع: بائبل
سوسائٹی، لاہور 1993)

21 Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the
river of Ahava, that we might afflict
ourselves before our God, to seek of him
a right way for us, and for our little ones,
and for all our substance 22 For I was
ashamed to require of the king a band of
soldiers and horsemen to help us against
the enemy in the way: because we had
spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of
our God is upon all them for good that
seek him; but his power and his wrath is
against all them that forsake him.23 So
we fasted and besought our God for this:
and he was intreated of us. (ezra:8:21-
23,kjv)

Minaret

جب وہ خداوند کی عبادت کر رہے تھے، روزے رکھ رہے تھے تو
روح القدس نے کہا میرے لئے برنباس اور ساؤل کو اس کام کے
واسطے مخصوص کر دو جس کے واسطے میں نے ان کو بلا یا تب انہوں
نے روزہ رکھ کر اور دعا کر کے ان پر ہاتھ رکھ کر انہیں رخصت
کیا۔

(کتاب مقدس، اعمال، باب 13، آیت 2-3، مطبوع: بائبل
سوسائٹی، لاہور 1993)

5 Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a
day for a manto afflict his soul? is it to
bow down his head as abulrush, and to
spread sackcloth and ashes under him?
wilt thou call this a fast, and an
acceptable day to the Lord?6 is not this
the fast that I have chosen? to loose the
bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy
burdens, and to let the oppressed go free,
and that ye break every yoke?
(isaiah:58:5-6,kjv)

ترجمہ: کیا یہ وہ روزہ ہے جو مجھ کو پسند ہے؟ ایسا دن کہ اس میں
آدی اپنی جان کو دکھ دے اور اپنے سر کو جھاؤ کی طرح جھکائے اور
اپنے اپنے نیچے ٹاٹ اور راکھ بچھائے؟ کیا تو اس کو روزہ اور ایسا دن
کہے گا جو خداوند کا مقبول ہو؟ کیا وہ روزہ جو میں چاہتا ہوں یہ نہیں
کہ ظلم کی زنجیریں توڑیں اور جوئے کے بندھن کھولیں اور
مظلوموں کو آزاد کریں بلکہ ہر ایک جوئے کو توڑ ڈالیں۔

(Elm hill press.)

ترجمہ: اور جب تم روزہ رکھو تو ریاکاروں کی طرح اپنی صورت
اداس نہ بناؤ کیونکہ وہ اپنا منہ بگاڑتے ہیں تاکہ لوگ ان کو روزہ دار
جانیں۔ میں تم سے سچ کہتا ہوں کہ وہ اپنا اجر پاچکے۔ بلکہ جب تو
روزہ رکھے تو اپنے سر میں تیل ڈال اور منہ دھونا کہ آدی نہیں بلکہ
تیرا باپ جو پوشیدگی میں ہے تجھے روزہ دار جانے۔ اس صورت میں
تیرا باپ جو پوشیدگی میں دیکھتا ہے تجھے بدلہ دے گا۔ (کتاب
مقدس، باب 6، آیت 18-16 مطبوعہ: بائبل سوسائٹی، لاہور
1993)

37 And she was a widow of about
fourscore and four years, which departed
not from the temple, but served God with
fastings and prayers night and day.
(Luke: 2:37, kjv)

ترجمہ: وہ چوراسی برس سے بیوہ تھی اور ہیکل سے جدا نہ ہوتی تھی
بلکہ رات دن روزوں اور دعاؤں کے ساتھ ساتھ عبادت کیا کرتی
تھی۔ (کتاب مقدس، لوقا، باب 2، آیت 37 مطبوعہ: بائبل
سوسائٹی، لاہور 1993)

2 As they ministered to the Lord, and
fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me
Barnabas and Saul for the work
whereunto I have called them. 3 And
when they had fasted and prayed, and laid
their hands on them, they sent them away
(the acts of the apostles: 13:2-3, kjv)

یقیناً روزہ انتہائی سخت محنت اور مجاہدہ کا تقاضہ کرتا ہے۔ اپنی
خواہشات نفسانی کو قابو میں رکھنا ایک دشوار گزار مرحلہ ہوتا ہے
لیکن رب تعالیٰ نے مومنین کی دلجوئی اور حوصلہ افزائی کے طور پر
فرمایا کہ یہ روزے جو تم پر فرض قرار دیے گئے ہیں تو وہ تم سے پہلے
لوگوں پر بھی فرض قرار دیے گئے تھے تاکہ جب گزشتہ لوگوں
نے عمل کیا ہے تو اس عمل کی سختی میں تھوڑی کمی واقع ہو جاتی ہے
اور انسان باہمت اور حوصلے کا مظاہرہ کرتا ہے۔ کہ گزشتہ قوموں
نے اس حکم پر عمل پیرا ہو کر اجر و ثواب پایا۔

اللہ تعالیٰ نے گزشتہ قوموں پر بھی روزے فرض کیے تھے۔ اس کا
مدعا اور منشا پر ہیز گاری اور پاکبازی کی نعمت سے سرفراز کرنا تھا۔
اگر ہم الہامی مذہب (Revealed Religion) میں عیسائیت
اور یہودیت کی مقدس کتاب (Holy Bible) کا مطالعہ کریں
تو ہمیں اس مقدس کتاب میں بھی روزے کا حکم ملتا ہے۔

16 Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the
hypocrites, a sad countenance: for they
disfigure their faces that they may appear
unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you,
They have their reward. 17 But thou,
when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and
wash thy face; 18 That thou appear not
unto men to fast, but unto thy Father
which is in secret: and thy Father, which
seeth in secret, shall reward thee
openly. (Matthew, 6:16-18, kjv, printed in
united states of America. 1984, 1977 by

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باطن کا تزکیہ کیا جائے اور تقویٰ، پرہیز گاری اور للہیت پیدا کی جائے۔ اس پورے مہینے میں مشقت و ریاضت کروائی جاتی ہے کہ جب اللہ کے بندے نے اللہ کے حکم پر حلال کو ترک کر دیا تو وہی اللہ کا بندہ اللہ کے حکم پر عمل کرتے ہوئے حرام کو بھی ترک کر دے گا۔ لہذا مہینے بھر کی انتھک محنت اور جہد مسلسل پھر اگلے گیارہ مہینوں میں کار فرما رہی ہے۔ اس طرح تخلیق کا مقصد حاصل ہو جاتا ہے کہ اللہ تعالیٰ نے اپنے پاک کلام میں ارشاد فرمایا:

ترجمہ: "اور نہیں پیدا فرمایا ہم نے جن و انس مگر اس لیے کہ وہ میری عبادت کریں۔" (سورۃ الذاریات: 56)

روزے کے ذریعے سے انسان رب تعالیٰ کے حضور سر تسلیم خم کر دیتا ہے کہ تیرے حکم پر حلال پر عمل کرتا ہوں اور تیرے حکم پر حرام کو ترک کرتا ہوں۔ اس تابعداری اور فرمانبرداری سے بندہ اللہ کا بندہ بن جاتا ہے۔ اللہ تعالیٰ نے روزے کی فرضیت کے بارے میں ارشاد فرمایا:

ترجمہ: "اے ایمان والوں فرض کیے گئے ہیں تم پر روزے جیسے فرض کیے گئے تھے ان لوگوں پر جو تم سے پہلے تھے کہ کہیں تم پرہیز گار بن جاؤ۔" (سورۃ البقرۃ: 183)

اللہ تعالیٰ نے اس بے مثال کائنات کو تخلیق فرمایا اور انسان کو اپنا خلیفہ و نائب بنا کر اس شاہ کار دنیا میں مبعوث فرمایا اور انسانی زندگی کے لیے ضابطہ حیات مقرر کیا کہ جس پر عمل پیرا ہو کر انسانیت نجات (Salvation) حاصل کرتی ہے اور وہ خوشی و اطمینان سے زندگی بسر کرتے ہیں۔ اس مسلمان اور فرحت بخش زندگی کے لیے احکامات نازل فرمائے تاکہ ان کے ذریعے سے اپنے خالق و مالک اور رازق کا عرفان حاصل کر سکیں اور اللہ تعالیٰ کی تمام تعلیمات اور ارشادات کا اصل الاصول مدعا حصول تقویٰ ہے۔ نماز کا اصل مقصد خشیت الہی کا حصول ہے۔ زکوٰۃ کا مقصد مال خرچ کر کے قرب الہی حاصل کرنا ہے۔ روزے کا مقصد و منشا تقویٰ و پرہیز گاری کی نعمت سے مستفیض ہونے کے ہیں۔ روزے کے ذریعے اور وسیلے سے انسانی نفس کا تزکیہ و تصفیہ ہوتا ہے۔ خواہشات نفسانی پر قابو پایا جاتا ہے۔ اخلاق رذیلہ قبیحہ سے بچنے کی قوت و طاقت پیدا ہوتی ہے اور یہ صلاحیت سخت محنت، ریاضت اور مجاہدے کے بعد حاصل ہوتی ہے۔ اللہ تعالیٰ نے رمضان المبارک کے پورے مہینے میں روزے فرض قرار دیے ہیں تاکہ اس پورے مہینے میں سخت محنت و مشقت سے روزے رکھ کر اپنے