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The Qur'an as the only Authentic Revealed Book in the World

H.E. Dr. Hafiz Muhammed Fazlur Rahman Al-Ansari Al-Qaderi (R.A.)

Absolute authenticity in respect of the purity of its text forms the Holy Qur'an's distinctive claim—a claim in which it stands unique among all the sacred books of the world: those based on the concept of Divine Revelation and others that are not. Among the former, the Jewish and Christian scriptures stand out most prominently.

As to the Jewish sacred books, from where Christianity derives its base, the reformed Judaism of today has forsaken completely the age-old claim, which is the very foundation of the Jewish faith, namely, the claim relating to their status as divinely-revealed books, as also their authenticity as records of the teachings of Jewish Prophets. According to the Jewish Encyclopaedia, the emphasis on divine origin has given way to the admission of “the human origin of the Holy Scriptures,” with all their holiness and infallibility shattered, so much so that “the ancient view of a literal dictation by God must be surrendered.” Also, “the prophet and the sacred writer were under the influence of the Divine Spirit while revealing by word or pen...(but) the human element in them was not extinguished, and consequently, in regard to their statements, their knowledge, and the form of their communication, they could only have acted as children of their age” (vol. vi, pp. 608-609).

This ugly situation has emerged for Judaism basically because the Message of God preached and taught by the Jewish Prophets (God bless them all!) was lost, in respect of its original purity, by the Jewish people long ago under the strains and stresses of historical circumstances. What remained was an adulterated and corrupted form of religious teaching and incorrect history, and on that Judaism has been fed ever since. As a result, we find today Jewish

scholarship between the devil and the deep sea in respect of the authenticity of the Jewish religion. While “the ancients regarded the whole mass of the national religious writings as equally holy,” the moderns have denied completely God's authorship of any Jewish sacred book. “That the real authority of the Bible is intrinsic rather than prescriptive”. Says Joseph (Judaism as Creed and Life), “becomes clear as soon as we think of the circumstances in which the Scriptural canon was formed. The decision by which certain books were included in the Bible and others excluded, was a purely human decision. The great teachers sat in judgment upon the claims of various works, and decided upon those claims by the light of reason — in other words, by the internal merits of the works themselves. Nor was the decision always easy. The fate of some books, like Ecclesiastes, and Canticles, and Esther, was, we learn trembling in the balance even as late as the third century of the present era.... The Bible, being the work of godly men, necessarily contains both a Divine and a human element. But since everything human is imperfect, we must not expect to find an absolutely perfect representation of Divine truth even in God's Book..... Some of the Biblical stories are clearly legends...The Pentateuch is the work not of one hand but of many hands. ...Similar views prevail among scholars with regards to other books of the Bible” (pp 18, 20, 22, 23, 24). Modern scholarship, which has given birth to reformed Judaism, supports the above views of Joseph unanimously. For instance: with respect of the infallibility of the Jewish scripture and its authenticity as the Word of God, Valentine's One Volume Jewish Encyclopaedia tells us: “Jewish tradition.... does not hesitate to admit later elaboration

and revision of certain books in the Bible....As an unimpeachable source of history and chronology the Bible is often disappointing, exhibiting statements and data which seem either vague or contradictory, or else fail to agree with what is known of contemporary oriental history and chronology.” (pp. 93, 95).

As to the Christian version: “With the advance in the technique of textual criticism during the course of the last generation, with a more searching analysis of the matter of the text, and with the use of the comparative method in evaluating the tradition embodied in the narrative, it has become even more patently evident that orthodox opinion in regard to the authenticity of the Bible can’t be maintained.” One has only to go through the findings of the official representatives of Christianity, as recorded in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, to discover the impeachment of the authenticity of the Old and the New Testaments by the Christendom of today. In the words of one of the best Biblical apologists, who wrote for the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (vol. vii, p. 263): “It is now a commonplace of Biblical learning that God has been at no pains to prevent errors of history and knowledge and defects in the text and its transmission from finding an entrance into the sacred pages of His Written Word” Rev. Bosworth Smith, who seems to be more frank, is more rational in his confession. Comparing the confirmed claim of the Qur’an to absolute authenticity with the baseless orthodox Christian claim concerning the Bible, he says: “The Bible in particular makes no such claim...The Bible is the work of a large number of poets, prophets, statesmen, and lawgivers, extending over a vast period of time, and incorporates with itself other and earlier, and often conflicting documents.” (Mohammad and Mohammadanism, p. 19).

It may be observed here in passing that it is not only the so-called “revealed” religions but also the “unrevealed” ones that suffer

from inauthenticity with regard to their sacred texts. Although our present discussion does not directly relate to unrevealed religions owing to their different basis, we may with advantage refer to one such major religion, namely, Buddhism, to reveal the situation on that side. To quote just one authority: “The truth is that the oldest stratum of the existing scriptures (of Buddhism) can only be reached by uncertain inference and conjecture... I confess that I do not know what the “original gospel” of Buddhism was... Buddhism is a body of traditions in which few names stand out, and in which fewer dates are precisely known. It is indeed most exasperating when we try to apply our current ideas of historical criticism.”

To revert to the scriptures which claim to be revealed, the following verdict of an English scholar is final: “The truth of the message is intimately connected with the authenticity of the record, and a critical theory which assails the one assails the other”.

With this verdict – and the principle on which it is based is incontrovertible — Judaism and Christianity, both are ruled out; while the absolute authenticity of the Qur’an proves the genuineness of its Message, and here the judgment emerges in all its grandeur that if Divine Revelation alone is the true and valid basis for Religion, then the Holy Qur’an alone gives us the true Religion – the Religion revealed by the Creator and Sovereign of the universe and man.

The Process of Preservation and Propagation

The arrangements instituted by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) were perfect not only in respect of the communication of Qur’anic revelations but also concerning their preservation.

In this connection, it should be noted that although paper and parchment were not available in abundance, all important literary work was preserved through writing on

parchment or on paper. The concept of writing on parchment or paper has been clearly projected in the Qur'an itself when it says: If We (i.e., God) had sent unto the (O Muhammad!) a book (or, a writing) on paper (or parchment), so that they could touch it with their hands...(vi:7).

Supplies of paper, and even of parchment, being very limited, the initial writing of the revelations was very naturally executed by using other writing materials of those days, e.g., flat bones, chiseled stems of palm-leaves and wooden or stone tablets. But once this initial work had been executed, the writing of the revelations, in accordance with their arrangement dictated to the Scribes by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), on proper pieces of paper or parchment, which were seemingly in the form of the leaves of a book, was undertaken without fail. The evidence in this respect is explicit. For instance, al-Hakim has recorded the testimony of no less an authority than Zaid ibn Thabit, under the heading of "Compilation of the Qur'an during the time of God's Messenger", thus: "He said: "We (the Scribes) used to compile the Qur'an from the (records of revelations made on) *ruqa* (i.e., pieces of paper or of parchment)," (Al-Mustadrak, vol. ii, p.611).

In this way grew up quite a good number of copies of the Holy Qur'an under the direct instruction and supervision of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). Then, the copies compiled by the Scribes were handed over to other Companions, as we have already noted, so that they copied them out in order to possess their own copies for reading as well as memorization. The copies compiled by the Scribes as well as the others continued to grow in content with the progress in revelation until they were declared to be complete by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), who proclaimed in clear terms: "I am leaving in your midst a thing which (in terms of its importance) is such that you will never fall into error so long as you hold to it firmly; and it is the Book of God (i.e., the Qur'an)", (Abu Da'ud: Sunan, vol. i,p. 264).

When we attend to the problem of the number of copies of the Qur'an that existed during the Holy Prophet's time and look into the statements contained in Bukhari's Sahih (vol. m, p. 143), Muslim's Sahih (vol. vii, p.243), (vol. ii, p. 252), Tahdhib al-Tahdhib (vol. vii, p. 243), Isti'ab vol. ii, p. 565) Usud al-Ghabah (vol. ii, p. 286), Ibn Sa'ad's Tabaqat (vol. ii, p. 112), etc., we become sure of the existence of at least fifteen copies. Then, when, we consider the number of the Scribes appointed by the Holy Prophet, the number of copies goes further up. Again; when we consider the total situation in the Muslim community of the Holy Prophet's (ﷺ) time with reference to widespread activity of recitation and memorization, we are compelled to consider the number of copies as still higher.

After the demise of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) the number of copies multiplied by leaps and bounds under the compulsion of the law of demand and supply, so much so that before the commencement of the caliphate of Uthman thousand, upon thousands of copies had come into existence. Ibn Hazm bears testimony to it thus: "When the Prophet (ﷺ) passed away, Islam had already spread in the whole (Arabian) peninsula from the Red Sea to the (southern) coast of Yemen and from the Persian Gulf to Euphrates. There were innumerable townships and villages inside the peninsula where all the inhabitants had declared allegiance to Islam and had constructed the mosques. There was no town, village, or quarter, where the Qur'an was not recited at the mosques during prayers. Children and male and female adults, all, learnt it, and it was also coopted out in writing. After the Prophet's period, Abu Bakr (RDA) ruled as Caliph for 2 ½ years.....the recitation grew more and more. There was no town where the copies of the Qur'an were not available. After that, Omar (RDA) became the Caliph and conquered the length and breadth of Persia and the whole of Syria and Egypt. In those countries also there was no inhabited

place where mosques were not built and new copies of the Qur'an were not made. The leaders of congregational prayers recited it, and the children all over the east and the west (of the Islamic empire) learnt it. This period lasted for ten years and some months. When Omar (RDA) died, at least one hundred-thousand copies of the Qur'an must have been in existence." (Kitab al-Fasl, vol. ii, p. 78).

Since then up to this day, the number of copies that have gone into circulation is beyond all possibility of countering. But the text of the Holy Qur'an has not suffered even the slightest deviation and variation. Truly had it been proclaimed by God at the time of its revelation: "*We have, without doubt, sent down the Message (i.e., the Qur'an), and We are assuredly the guardian thereof,*" (xv:9).

It is necessary to observe here that the Qur'an was propagated by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) not only in written form but also orally, he being not merely the deliverer of the Divine Message but also its Teacher par excellence (xii:2); and the Muslims were asked by him not only to read the holy book but also to memorize it. In this way a double process of preserving the purity of the text of the Holy Qur'an came to exist, and a perfect system of teaching it originated with the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) himself.

Thus we find Bukhari reporting about Abdullah ibn Mas'ud that he said: "I learnt directly from the mouth of God's Messenger about 79 chapters." (Sahih, vol. ii, p. 141). The same Companion also reported, according to Muslim's Sahih (vol. I p. 121), that: "God's Messenger asked me to recite the Qur'an before him. Thereupon I enquired: Should I recite to you while it has been revealed to you? He replied: 'I like to hear it recited by others'. So I recited the chapter al-Nisa?"

Thus were the Companions trained by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) as licensed teachers of the Qur'an for the masses and they performed

this function, under appointment from him, with utmost diligence. Just by way of examples: Miftah al-Sa'adah (vol. I. p. 349) reports: "Abu 'Aliyah said: I recited the Qur'an to Omar four times"; and, according to Dhahabi's Tabaqat al-Qurra' (p. 606): "When Abu Darda would finish his morning prayer, he would set his students in batches of ten. Once he counted them, and they were more than sixteen hundred."

The system of teaching that developed had the memorization of the Qur'an as its vital part, and a continuous chain of licensed and authorized teachers grew, and had continued to grow from generation to generation, not only to propagate the text of the Qur'an but also to preserve its purity, in which connection a whole science has developed; and the uniform oral as well as written transmission down the centuries through successive generations of Qur'anic teachers belonging to divers races and countries, has crowned the Holy Qur'an with the merit of tawatur to a degree of glory where even the slightest possibility of doubt in respect of the purity of its text is totally eliminated.

That is the only reason why even those hostile western scholars, for whom the highest virtue is to revile Islam on the flimsiest grounds, had to bow their heads in humility when confronted with the problem of the authenticity of the Qur'an and had to grudgingly admit the purity of its text scholars, such as: Palmer (The Qur'an—English Translation; Introduction, p. LIX); Wherry (Commentary on the Kuran, 1, p. 349); Snouck Hurgronje (Mohammedanism, p. 18); William Muir (Life of Mohammad, Introduction, p. xxiii); Philip K. Hitti (History of the Arabs, p. 123); and Torrey (Jewish Foundation of Islam, p. 2). To quote just the last reference: "*The Koran was his (i.e., Muhammad's) own creation; and it lies before us practically unchanged from the form which he himself gave it.*" Had the blinding fire of antagonism to Islam not burned in (Continued on page # 7)

Ali – A Symbol of Nobleness

S. G. Jilanee

My eyes are sore and my legs are thin, but I will stand by you, O Messenger of Allah, “Thus said a young lad of ten, when the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) put his message before his own relatives. The boy was Ali (RDA), the cousin of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and about ten years old. Ali was born some 30 years after the birth of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). He was the youngest among the first Muslims. His father, Abu Talib, was the Holy Prophet’s (ﷺ) real uncle. His mother was Fatima, daughter of Asad of the Banu Hashim clan. He was raised by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) in his own house, more like a son — the age gap was so wide — than as a cousin.

Because of this close association, Ali imbibed the features of the Prophet’s (ﷺ) character and the spirit of Islam, which was reflected in all his actions. For example, when the battle of Khyber, he brought his foe, Marhab, to the ground and sat on his chest about to slay him, Marhab spat on Ali’s face. Instead of striking the man with rage, Ali (RDA) sheathed his dagger and left him. Asked why he had spared the culprit, Ali (RDA) answered: I had intended to kill him in the name of Allah, but when he spat on me, I feared my own anger would dilute the purity of my purpose. So I spared him.

And, finally, while dying Ali, when offered milk, is said to have asked if his assassin, Abdur Rahman bin Muljam al-Sarimi, had been offered milk as well. Ali (RDA) further decreed that ibn Muliam should be killed with one stroke as he had struck Ali only once.

The association with the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) also fostered a bond of deep love. The night when the Prophet (ﷺ) left for Madina, his house was surrounded by blood thirsty men. Drawn swords flashed all round. They were ready to kill. However, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) asked Ali (RDA) to lie in his bed while he himself left unnoticed. Ali (RDA) gladly and

calmly slept in the bed whole night. He was happy that he had helped saved the Prophet’s (ﷺ) life.

This young man was also possessed of remarkable courage, bravery and fearlessness. Ali (RDA) first distinguished himself as a warrior in 624 A.D. at the battle of Badr. He defeated the Banu Ummaiyad champion Walid bin Utba, as well as many others Makkans soldiers. At the battle of Uhud, when others fled after suffering reverse, Ali (RDA) stood firmly by the Holy Prophet’s (ﷺ) side. At the battle of Khandaq, when Amr ibn ‘Abd Wudd, a warrior from the enemy side, crossed the ditch, and nobody from the Muslims was prepared to take him on, it was Ali again who fought and slew him. And at Khyber, when after two days of battle the Muslims failed to take the fort, the Prophet (ﷺ) declared “Tomorrow I will give the standard to a man who is loved by Allah and His Prophet (ﷺ) and who loves Allah and His Prophet (ﷺ) “That man was Ali (RDA). And Ali took the fort. It was there that the encounter with Marhab happened. Ali (RDA) accompanied the Prophet (ﷺ) in all his battles except Tabuk. It was shortly after the battle of Badr that Ali (RDA) married the Prophet’s daughter Fatima (RDA).

When the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) decided to proceed on the Tabuk expedition, he did not want to leave Madina, the capital city, unguarded, and decided to leave Ali behind as his deputy. Ali (RDA) felt unhappy over being left with women and children. The Prophet (ﷺ) is quoted as having said to him: “*Will you not be pleased that you will be to me like Aaron to Moses?*”. (Al-Hadith)

In 656, the third caliph Uthman (RDA) was murdered in his own house, in Madina, by rebellious Muslim soldiers. For several days there was no caliph, no ruler of the Muslim Ummah. In this moment of crisis a faction of the citizenry turned to Ali (RDA) and urged

him to seek the caliphate. Ali (RDA) at first refused. He was horrified by the assassination of Uthman (RDA), and did not wish to appear to be profiting from the situation. But his supporters insisted and Ali (RDA) finally allowed himself to be proclaimed caliph.

Muawiyah (RDA), Governor of Damascus, raised an army and marched against Ali (RDA), demanding vengeance for the death of Uthman (RDA). A prolonged battle took place in July 657 in the plain of Siffin (Suffein). The battle seemed to be turning in favour of Ali (RDA), when a number of the opposing army, fixing copies of the Holy Quran to the points of their spears, exclaimed that the matter ought to be settled by reference to this book, which forbids Muslims to shed each other's blood.

At this point, Ali's soldiers refused to fight any longer, and demanded that the issue be referred to arbitration. Abu Musa Ash'ari

was appointed advocate for Ali (RDA), and 'Amr ibn-al Aas for Mu'awiyah (RDA). Amr persuaded Abu Musa that it would be to the advantage of Islam that neither candidate should resign, and asked him to give his decision first. Abu Musa having proclaimed that he deposed both Ali and Mu'awiyah. Amr declared that he also deposed Ali, but invested Mu'awiyah with the caliphate.

This decision greatly injured the cause of Ali (RDA). Meanwhile three Muslim zealots (kharijists) agreed to assassinate Ali, Mu'awiyah and Amr. The assassins sent against Mu'awiyah and Amr failed, the only assassin who succeeded was the one who attacked Ali (RDA).

Ali suffered a mortal head wound on the 19th of Ramadhan while he was performing morning prayers. The sword that wounded him is said to have been poisoned. Ali (RDA) died on the 21st of Ramadhan (three days after he was stabbed) in Kufa in 661.

(Continued from Page #. 5)

the heart of Torry in the manner it did; he could have spoken at least in the tone of Bosworth Smith, who said: "*In the Koran we have, beyond all reasonable doubt, the exact words of Mohammad without subtraction and without addition*" (Mohammad and Mohammdanism, p. 22). And it is not only Bosworth Smith who says so, but many others. For instance, F.F.

Arbutnot has confessed that: "... *complete text of the Koran...has remained the same, without any change or alteration by enthusiasts, translators, or interpolators, up to the recent time. It is to be regretted that the same cannot be said of all the books of the Old and New Testaments.*" (The Construction of the Bible and the Koran, p.5).

ATTENTION TO OUR READERS

It is our earnest request to the readers and subscribers "THE MINARET Monthly International" to extend their help and co-operation for increasing its circulation, convincing friends for advertisement, sending goods articles and giving precious suggestions for the improvement of the magazine.

Allah Almighty's Lion

Written by:
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Allah Almighty's Lion, well known Ali,
The courage did coin, therefrom Ali.

Among the Muslims, the earliest Ali,
Though young, yet eager and earnest Ali.

Abu Turab was his famous surname,
The Prophet's faithfulness was his life aim

Great parents' good and great son,
In the sky of Islam, a luminous sun.

Shone as the "Knowledge-Gate"
Each dawn with fortunate- fate.

Nominated for the victory of Khyber,
No wonder, Haider! Haider! Haider!

Bridegroom in the beloved Prophet's house,
Tayyebah Tahirah became his blessed spouse.

Husnain Kareeman came of his clan
No doubt, he was a matchless man.

Ali was an embodiment of superb wisdom
Legend in the line of awesome martyrdom

Ali was radiant reader of the Quran,
The permanent practitioner of the Quran.

His was this quote and creed:
"A man is valued by his deed."

O my Best Creator, The Greatest Master,
Each day, my life - span is running shorter.

Kindly have mercy on miserable Saleem
By Ali's esteem, O Aleem', O Haleem'!

The Meaning of Zakat Islam's System of Social Security

Dr. Hasan Zaman

Zakat is one of the main pillars of the fundamental principles of the Islamic social system. In other words, it is an indispensable method or technique for the implementation of Islam in society. In Al-Qur'an, the principle of Zakat (compulsory payment out of annual savings of the relatively well-off for the preservation, development and stability of the Islamic society) has been rehearsed time and again (82 times), along with the principle of Salat. The basic point among others is the remembrance of Allah, and Zakat may be said to be a focus of constant and pointed attention to the ordering of social affairs in the Islamic polity, based on remembrance of Allah. In that sense, Salat is the foundation of Zakat. On the other hand, without Zakat, society loses its Islamic spirit, its vigour and potentialities, as it is the objective basis for the enforcement of the principle of responsibility to Allah.

Islam has not presented any hidebound theory of economics. It has laid down the principle of justice. Wealth is necessary and legitimate but is not the end of life. Wealth is a means to a better life and not an end in itself: "Allah has given you wealth as a means of subsistence." (Al-Qur'an 4:5). "Nobody can be respected because of possession of wealth, nor can one be held in disdain because he has no wealth." (Al-Qur'an 89:15-16). Earning, in a legitimate manner, is not only a right but a duty: "When the prayer is ended, disperse in the land and seek of Allah's bounty, but remember Allah much, so that you may be successful." (Al-Qur'an 62:10). Allah has made the earth subservient to you, so move about therein and seek of Allah. (Al-Qur'an 67:15). Islam emphasizes Sadaqah or general charity as a commendable duty of Muslims. Every good action, with remembrance of Allah, is

charity. But Zakat is not just almsgiving or charity. It is more than that; it is a duty of the better equipped and the better placed in life and the right of the common man in a genuine Islamic society. Individuals for whom and on whom Zakat is applicable (Ahl-i-Nisab) are specifically laid down. He may pay a portion (1/3) of Zakat by himself in order to meet the needs of his near or known people and areas, but the major portion must be paid to society (to the "Baitul Mal" of the state as representative of society).

Meaning of Zakat:

Etymologically speaking, Zakat means "that which purifies." Zakat purifies wealth. A man possessed of wealth is in a very advantageous position, which is denied to his less fortunate brother. Wealth begets facility and generates more wealth and advantages with relatively less effort. So, by helping society to help the needy, the poor and the depressed, the payer of Zakat thereby purifies his wealth and his society and, by eliminating the sources of deprivation, oppression, conflict and discord, paves the way for harmony, co-operation, goodwill and peace. Zakat is an act of worship, a religious duty, a duty to Allah. As it is no favour to the poor, who feel no humiliation or subservience, the whole process is saturated with the spirit of friendship and fraternity. Salat purifies the soul and Zakat purifies wealth (Al-Qur'an 9:103) and adds to the purity of the soul. A Muslim is not a servant of wealth but of Allah — and is dedicated to Him and Him only.

Another literal meaning of Zakat is "that which increases." The payment of Zakat becomes spiritual when it is done in the remembrance of Allah; hence, it will lead to an increase in wealth. Moreover, Zakat

checks the unsocial concentration of wealth in fewer hands and distributes it to the common people. Thus, it is an urge for greater enjoyment and, in turn, for greater production. If you accumulate, you lose; but if you produce more, you enjoy more. Thus, Zakat is a constant drive to production.

Zakat represents the right to social security for the poor and the needy. The needy and the deprived have rights over the relatively well-off (Al-Qur'an 51:19). If a township cannot maintain the starving, then the people are said to have strayed from the path of Allah (Hadith). All resources of Allah are "gifts to all human beings." (Al-Qur'an 2:29). Let not wealth circulate only among the rich (59:7).

Rules of Zakat:

According to Al-Qur'an, Zakat should be spent on the following:

- For the poor.
- For the needy (to supply the basic capital to earn a living).
- For the emancipation of slaves and prisoners of war.
- For those in debt.
- For those who have newly accepted Islam.
- For the collectors of Zakat.
- In the way of Allah (for good works, defense and propagation of Islam).

Zakat is obligatory on all Muslims who have in their possession for one year gold of the minimum weight of 7½ tolas, or silver of the minimum weight of 52½ tolas. It is obligatory not only on gold and silver but also on cattle, camels, sheep, goats and all articles of trade. Precious stones and pearls, as articles of trade, are liable to Zakat except when really used (and necessary) for personal use. The minimum annual rate is 2½%.

The first two propositions stipulate that Zakat should be given to the poor and the needy. It is clear then that its benefits have

to be conferred upon all needy and poor persons irrespective of community. All these (Muslims) and those (non-Muslims) have been given the bounty of Allah and none can be deprived of the same (Al-Qur'an 17:20).

Obligatory Character:

Thus, it is established that the most distinguishing yardstick of Zakat is its obligatory character. Zakat combines the concepts of moral and social obligations and harmonizes the concept of moral obligation and legal or social obligation as compulsory factors in the body politic.

General Sadaqah or charity has its moral and psychological function, but there is no element of force or compulsion behind it. You may or may not pay Sadaqah (although Sadaqah is commendable), but nobody can force you in the matter. You pay it at your discretion. But Zakat is compulsory and should therefore be collected by the state.

Zakat:

In the Islamic social system, Zakat, as a social principle, is unique in the organization of the Islamic social order. A person who distinguishes between Salat and Zakat is not a Muslim (Alamgiria, p. 239). Sayyidna Abu Bakr (RDA) waged war against those who refused to pay Zakat. Al-Mawardi says: "He who does not want to pay Zakat is not killed but compelled to pay it, so much so that if he wages war, he may be killed in the process."

Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) has said: "To pay Zakat only is not sufficient. One must have the spirit of sacrifice and dedication. The spirit or attitude to man must be reformed and elevated." Al-Qur'an says: "It is better to treat well and forgive men rather than to pay and ill-treat people" (2:265). Zakat is a levy on accumulated wealth above a definite limit, whereas income tax is a tax on income. Zakat is directly related to Allah and utilized only for the specific purposes prescribed. The payment of income tax does not

absolve a person of the duty of paying Zakat, or vice versa.

Social Security:

The social security system as envisaged through the method of Zakat is different from capitalist and socialist social security. In the socialist system, the history of social security is a history of class struggle, bitterness and conflict. It is established through legislation after ages of struggle, class hatred and a sense of deprivation on the part of the less wealthy. In the capitalist system, it is a stop-gap arrangement or patchwork.

In the Islamic system of social security, none of these features exist. For Muslims, Zakat is not a matter of legislation or an issue in class struggle. It is a duty of some and is automatically adjusted. Zakat is a given principle and is not a subject of legislation in the sense that it is neither attained by legislation nor can it be repudiated by legislation. Zakat may be a matter of legislation only in the sense of devising appropriate ways and means for its proper implementation.

Conclusion

It is a matter of great regret and misfortune that Muslim countries have yet to organize the system of obligatory social security as envisaged in Zakat. But in an Islamic society, this is a must.

Many non-Muslim countries have introduced, under pressure of circumstances, a compulsory system of social security. We lag behind, although for us this is a religious obligation. Muslims had been pioneers in the idea, but now we lack initiative and action.

It is time the Muslim countries came forward and implemented the compulsory system of social security as envisaged in Islam. If Zakat is properly implemented, poverty is bound to disappear. During the earlier period of Islam, Zakat had been an obligatory system, but later on it was abandoned.

A special Zakat department must be instituted for the collection and reimbursement within the Islamic polity. The department will have, apart from field workers, collectors and distributors utilizing modern mass media of communication (radio, TV), especially in the month of Rajab, and conduct Zakat surveys assisted by a research cell. Statistics of poor people and/or areas should be collected regularly and in detail (preferably in the month of Rajab). Zakat may be spent on new factories to create employment for the people. Normally, Zakat collected at a place should be distributed there.

Islam will then truly be a boon as envisaged by Al-Qur'an: "releasing them (mankind) from the burdens and chains upon them" (7:157).

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WOMEN AND THEIR STATUS IN ISLAM

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Virtues of Ramadhan

I'tikaf - A source of forming complete spiritual connection with Allah

The meaning of I'tikaf is to seclude oneself in the mosque with the express نية (intention) of I'tikaf. There are three different types of I'tikaf.

(a) Wajib I'tikaf:

This I'tikaf becomes compulsory when a person makes it obligatory upon himself. An example of this is when a person makes a vow to Allah that if He fulfils a certain wish of his, he will undertake to perform so many days I'tikaf. In this case, the moment his wish is granted, I'tikaf becomes compulsory. A person may just make unconditional vow whereby he makes I'tikaf Wajib upon himself for a certain number of days. This becomes a Wajib duty on him from that moment onwards.

(b) Sunnah I'tikaf:

It used to be the general practice of Rasulullah (ﷺ) to perform I'tikaf in Ramadhan. At times he used to remain in the masjid for the whole month and during the last year of his life he was in I'tikaf for twenty days.

(c) Nafil I'tikaf:

There is no special time or specific number of days for Nafil I'tikaf. A person may make niyyah for any number of days at any time, even for his whole life. Imam Abu Hanifah (RA), however, states that it must be for at least one full day.

Imam Muhammad (RA) states that there is no limit on the minimum period of time. The fatwa subscribes to this latter view. Therefore, it is desirable for anyone entering a masjid to make the niyyah (intention) of I'tikaf for the period that he will remain in the masjid. So while he is in 'ibadat, he also gains the reward of I'tikaf.

In view of the above, it is advisable that everyone entering the masjid to join the congregation prayer, should on entering the masjid, make the niyyah for I'tikaf. In that case, it means that as long as he remains busy with Salat, zikr, listening to lectures or sermons, he also receives the reward of the I'tikaf.

Objectives and advantages of I'tikaf

The reward for I'tikaf is great. Rasulullah (ﷺ) constantly performed I'tikaf. The example of a person who sits in the masjid in I'tikaf is like a person who having gone to a certain place for something, remains there until it is granted.

Allama Ibn Qayyim, on explaining, the significance of I'tikaf, writes that the actual aim of I'tikaf is to divert the heart from everything except Allah, and to join it with Allah alone, thereby forming a complete spiritual union with the Creator.

All worldly connections are thus cut off for the sake of gaining Allah's attention. All thoughts, desires, love and devotion become centered around Him. In consequence His love is attained — a love and friendship that will be the only friend in the loneliness of the grave. When a person has that, then who can possibly imagine the great ecstasy with which that time in the grave will be spent? In Maraquil Falaah, the author writes that I'tikaf, when properly and sincerely performed, is a most virtuous deed. One cannot possibly enumerate all the great advantages and benefits that flow from it. In actual fact, what takes place in I'tikaf, is that the heart is drawn away from everything else except the Creator, while our whole life is actually laid down at His doorstep. One remains in 'ibadat all the time. Even when one is asleep, one is still in

His service, striving for nearness to Him. Allah says (according to a Hadith): *“Whoever draws near to Me (the length of) one hand, then I draw nearer to him (the length of) two hands; and whoever draws near to Me by walking, I draw near to him running.”*

In I'tikaf one goes to Allah's House and the most Kind Host always honours a guest who visits Him. The one in I'tikaf also attains safety in Allah's fortress where no enemy can reach. Besides this, there are numerous other virtues and distinctive features of this important 'ibadat.

Where to perform I'tikaf

The best of places for I'tikaf for males, is the Masjidul Haram in Makkah. The next best is the Masjid Nabawi in Medina, and the third is the Baitul Muqaddas. Thereafter, comes the Jamia Masjid in one's own town, and last but not least, the masjid nearest to one's home.

As for females, they should perform I'tikaf in the masjid inside their homes. Where, however, no masjid exists and the desire to offer I'tikaf be there, one room of the house should be set aside for this purpose. I'tikaf is in fact an easier task for women. A special section of the house, most commonly the prayer room, is set aside wherein they seclude themselves, remaining in 'ibadat. The domestic duties can then be performed by daughters or servants, and the women in I'tikaf, while remaining in a section of her own house, is spiritually rewarded for it. It is so very unfortunate that in spite of the comforts of our present age, our womenfolk still remain deprived of the blessings of I'tikaf.

”Abu Sa'iyd Khudri (RA) reports that Holy Prophet (ﷺ) once performed I'tikaf for the first ten days of Ramadhan. Thereafter, he made I'tikaf in a Turkish tent (inside the masjid) for the middle ten days. Thereafter, he raised his head out of the tent and said, “Verily in search of Laylatul Qadr I did

perform I'tikaf for the first ten days, then for the middle ten days. Then someone (an angel) came and told me, “It is in the last ten days whosoever has made I'tikaf with me should continue it for the last ten days. I had indeed been shown that night and then made to forget, which it shall be. And verily did I see myself prostrating to Allah with my forehead on mud on the morning after the night. Seek Laylatul Qadr, the last ten nights of Ramadhan; seek it among uneven ones.

Abu Sa'iyd (RA) says: “That same night it rained. The roof of the masjid leaked, and I looked at Holy Prophet (ﷺ) two eyes and on his forehead were remains of water and mud. This was on the morning of the 21st performing Sujood in muddy clay”.

Reported in Mishkaat

It used to be the general practice of Holy Prophet (ﷺ) to perform I'tikaf in Ramadhan. At times he used to remain in the masjid for the whole month and during the last year of his life he was in I'tikaf for twenty days. Because he always secluded himself in the masjid for the last ten days, the 'Ulama consider it Sunnah Mu'akkadah to perform I'tikaf for that period.

From the above Hadith it can be deduced that the major object behind I'tikaf was to search for Laylatul Qadr. What better manner can there be than to be in I'tikaf, because one is considered to be in 'ibadat all the time, whether one is awake or asleep. Furthermore, one in I'tikaf is free from all daily tasks and thus, has all the time to devote to Zikrullah (the remembrance of Allah), and meditation.

Throughout Ramadhan Holy Prophet (ﷺ) exerted himself and increase his 'ibadat and when the last ten days came along, he had no limit in exerting himself. He himself remained awake throughout the night and awakened his family for the same purpose. Aa'isha (RA) reports:

“During Ramadhan Holy Prophet (ﷺ) tied his lungi tightly about him, staying awake all

night and a waking his family (for the purpose of 'ibadat)". "Tied his lungi tightly about him" means either that he knew no limits in exerting himself in 'ibadat; or that he gave due importance and preference to 'ibadat, and avoided all forms of sexual contact.

Ibn Abbaas (RA) relates that Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said, "The person performing I'tikaf remains free from sins, and he is indeed given the same reward as those who do righteous deeds (in spite of not having done those deeds as a result of having been secluded in the masjid)".

Reported in Mishkaat from Ibn Majah

It should be remembered that one remaining secluded in the masjid is not allowed to depart from there for worldly needs. He may only set forth to the outside for the calls of nature, to perform ablution or ghusl or for attending Jumah when that is not performed in the same masjid, after which he must return forthwith. Now this Hadith points to two great benefits of I'tikaf.

Firstly, one is saved from sin. It is true that it very often happens that one falls into sin without having ever intended to do so. (The world all around us is full of temptations). To commit sin in the blessed month of Ramadhan is indeed a great injustice to

ourselves. By remaining secluded in the masjid, one completely avoids the temptation to sin. Secondly, it would appear outwardly that when one is secluded in the masjid, one is automatically at a disadvantage by not being allowed to perform certain good deeds like joining funeral prayers, attending burials, visiting the sick, etc. That is not so, because according to this Hadith, one is rewarded for these deeds even though he may not be performing them. What a great favour from Allah! How great is Allah's bounty! By performing 'ibadat, one receives the reward of numerous other 'ibaadahs. In fact, Allah seeks the slightest cause to bestow His blessings. His blessings could be received in abundance with a little effort and plea, if only we can understand and properly appreciate these favours. That proper appreciation and understanding can only enter our minds when we have the true love and interest for our Deen.

Note that I'tikaf breaks when one leaves the masjid even for a duty on behalf of a fellow Muslim. When that I'tikaf is wajib, it will mean that it has to be performed all over again. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) never left the masjid except for the calls of nature and wudhu.

(Continued from Page #. 15)

the zakat funds were also employed for relieving the non-Muslims who are in need of help. The Caliph Omar himself utilized the zakat funds for assisting some Christians in Palestine who suffered from leprosy. There are numerous other examples in connection with this case. All these events, such as Caliph Omar helping the Christians, were not more and not less the expression of an

attitude deeply rooted in the Islamic conception of humanity, which not only embraces all mankind but even dumb animals and inanimate nature³. The Quran gives a lucid explanation to all these things. Bearing this in mind, let us all strive for the Islamic ideals of humanity, wherever, we may be, and in whatever situations we are".

'Idul Fitr

Dr. Hussein Alatas

'Idul Fitr is generally associated with two fundamental pillars of Islam. One is fasting for about a month, and the other is the payment of zakat. This khutbah shall be centered around these two points. Besides that I shall also say something about the meaning of the word 'Idul Fitr'. The word 'Id means something that always recurs. The word 'fitrah' means the true nature of a thing. The religion of Islam is called by the Quran as the fitrah, or nature created by God wherein He has created all men. For this reason the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) said that every child was born in the religion of Islam because Islam is none other than the true ideal nature of man. That which made him a Jew, or a Christian, according to the Prophet, was the education he received from his parents. To return to the word 'Idul Fitr', by it is then clearly meant the return to our real nature after one month of fasting, for the true nature of man does not imply continuous fasting forever.

Apart from this, Idul Fitr is associated with the payment of a certain amount of money or property. It is then clear to us Muslims that the true nature of man, contained in the meaning of the word fitrah, includes, to a very great extent, the endeavour to decrease the sufferings of fellow human beings. For this very reason, the payment of zakat is associated with Idul Fitr, that is, the recurring state of returning to the true nature of man, because this true human nature, as we mentioned just now, includes the attempt to diminish the burden of others. He who does not think of this, and who does not want to part from his wealth for the good of his brothers, is not considered as a Muslim by the Holy Quran. It does not only concern wealth, but everything else which we possess more than others, ought to be utilized for the benefit of humanity. A person who has knowledge sins against God if he does not impart his knowledge to those who

need it. So is it in the various departments of life and action. It was these broad and liberal teachings of Islam, which had their roots in an ideal concept of humanity, that caused a mighty upheaval in Arab society in the 6th century A.D., so much so that it overflowed onto the whole world. We can agree with Edward Gibbon, a famous English historian, when he said that the rise of Islam was a memorable event which had cast a lasting imprint on the face of the nations of the globe. Besides this, as the Belgian historian- Professor Henri Pirenne said, the spread of Islam around the Mediterranean exerted a power influence in the history of Europe such that a new period could be said to have been started. This was all caused by the dynamic spirit of Islam which had given birth to a progressive social order designated as a socialistic democracy by Professor Gustav Diercks.

The strong influence of Islam during the Middle Ages in Europe, was verified by the results of research done by European scholars in this direction. I shall give here some of the views of certain Western scholars. Mosheim, a Christian German historian wrote in his well-known book, that the father of European enlightenment at the end of the 10th century, Pope Sylvester II (died 1003), had obtained most of his knowledge from the Muslims in Spain. Many Christians studied there and translated a lot of Arabic works into Latin. Mosheim then continued in the following words: "And truth requires us to say that the Saracens of Arabs, particularly of Spain, were the principle fountain of whatever knowledge of medicine, philosophy, astronomy, and mathematics that flourished in Europe from the 10th century onwards."

In the Netherlands, a scholar of history and philosophy, Professor F. Sassen, said that those who went to the Near East for the

Crusades (1096—1291) during the 11th and 12th century, brought new cultural influences when they returned to Europe from the Islamic East. According to Professor Sassen they derived these influential cultural elements from the Muslims whose culture and civilization were then superior to that of Europe. All these cultural influences, including scientific knowledge, were disseminated through all parts of Europe.

It is now time for us to say something about fasting and zakat. Concerning the idea of fasting, it is not necessary for us to give a further explanation about it. The idea behind fasting is generally known to us, that it fortifies us psychically to increase our power of enduring hardships and strengthens our capacity to sacrifice, together with the aim of impressing upon us the realization of how the poor and needy feel in the absence of sufficient food.

How is it then with zakat! Zakat is a system of wealth distribution in Islamic society, whose aims and principles are very progressive. The meaning of the word zakat is derived from a word which means purification. It appears here that Islam from the very beginning viewed the acquisition of wealth as involving certain infringements of social justice, be it consciously done or not. To face this reality, Islam made it compulsory that the Muslims pay their zakat once a year. We therefore understand why zakat contains the meaning of purification. Apart from this, as Abdul Rahman Ibn Khaldun stated, the value of our wealth and property is conditioned by social situations.' For instance, if I build a house and afterwards sell it, thereby acquiring an amount of money, I must not unhesitatingly conclude by saying that the amount of money which I thus procured was the fruit of my own labour. The house which I sold was, for instance, situated on a street much favoured by the public, If the house was isolated from public life, the price would certainly have been less. Because of this

fact that the value of property is conditioned by social situations, it is therefore comprehensible that if a man becomes rich, he becomes so with the help of his society, and therefore it is reasonable that he returns part of his wealth to his society for the general good.

The amount of zakat due from every person above a certain standard of wealth, is one fortieth of the whole possession. This standard of wealth, that is the line dividing those who have to pay zakat and those who have not to do so, is called in the Shariah 'nisab' (نصاب). The nisab is always fixed on the criterion of sufficiency in meeting the requirements of a satisfactory life, in different times and places. In fixing the line of the nisab, due and primary consideration is always given to the public weal. Islamic laws, as Professor Santillana pointed out, have always laid the emphasis on public weal. "Having as its scope social utility, Muslim law is essentially progressive, in much the same way as our own. Being a product of language and logic it is a science. It is not unchangeable and depending on mere tradition. The great schools of law agree to this point."

If the amount of zakat collected is not sufficient to meet the demands of the situation, the Islamic state could ask more assistance from those who can afford it.

This zakat wealth collected for the public weal, is meant for the sustenance of the poor and the needy, for paying the salary of the officials employed, for the support of those who are engaged in scientific research or inclined to the pursuit of truth, for the emancipation of slaves and captives, for assisting those who desire to straighten their debts, for helping the travelers who are in difficulties, and for everything that moves on the path of God. All these are mentioned in the Quran. It is thus plain to us that the conception of social justice is nothing new to us Muslims. Apart from what was mentioned above, (Continued on page #. 13)

True Definition of Love

Believers regard all the faithful as their brothers. They do not hesitate to make any sacrifice for the good of another believer or to ensure his or her comfort. This idea of love possessed by believers can only be acquired through faith and living by the moral values of the Qur'an.

Love is one of the greatest blessings Allah has bestowed on humanity. Allah has created human nature in such a way that a person will take pleasure from loving and being loved, from friendship and from intimacy. Being with people who live by the moral values of the Qur'an, enjoying love and friendship with them, brings a believer greater pleasure than many other blessings. Therefore, the Paradise that Allah has promised to His servants whom He loves and with whom He is well pleased is a place of extraordinary beauty in which true love, friendship and intimacy will be experienced with enormous joy forever. The information Allah provides about the life of Paradise in the Qur'an, always refers to joy, friendship, love, conversation, pleasing words and peace. Everything that might prove an obstacle to love and friendship has been kept far removed from the people of Paradise. In one verse, for example, Allah has revealed that He will strip away any rancor in the hearts of the companions of Paradise (Surat al-A'raf, 43). All vices that might represent an obstacle to love and friendship, such as jealousy, enmity, rivalry, anger, discord and touchiness, will be excluded from Paradise.

One of the main characteristics of Muslims, who have been given the glad tidings of Paradise, is that they love all Muslims who abide by Allah's messengers, prophets and approval, in this world too. This bond of love and friendship between believers is revealed in these terms in the Qur'an:

"Your friend is only Allah and His Messenger and those who believe: those who perform prayer and give the alms, and bow." (Surat al-Ma'ida, 55)

The faithful feel a closeness to all devout believers who strive to earn Allah's approval, and adopt them as their friends and guardians. They take great pleasure from being with them under all conditions. They are bound to all Muslims with great loyalty and devotion. This love is not based on any interest, or lineage or race. Money, rank, culture or material values are of no importance to them. They approve of the people of whom they expect Allah to approve; devout believers on the path of Allah are some of His most beloved servants. For that reason, believers also have great love and consideration for one another. Many verses of the Qur'an refer to the love, attachment, compassion and consideration that believers have for one another. Some of these verses read:

"Hold fast to the rope of Allah all together, and do not separate. Remember Allah's blessing to you when you were enemies and He joined your hearts together so that you became brothers by His blessing. You were on the very brink of a pit of the Fire and He rescued you from it. In this way Allah makes His Signs clear to you, so that hopefully you will be guided." (Surah al 'Imran, 103)

"The believers are brothers, so make peace between your brothers and heed Allah so that hopefully you will gain mercy." (Surat al-Hujurat, 10)

"Allah loves those who fight in His Way in ranks like well-built walls." (Surat As-Saff, 4)

In another verse Allah reveals this love among believers thus:

"Those who were already settled in the abode [Madina], and in faith, before they came, love those who have migrated to them and do not find in their hearts any need

for what they have been given and prefer them to themselves even if they themselves are needy. It is the people who are safeguarded from the avarice of their own selves who are successful.” (Surat al-Hashr, 9)

Believers regard all the faithful as their brothers. They do not hesitate to make any sacrifice for the good of another believer or to ensure his or her comfort. This idea of love possessed by believers can only be acquired through faith and living by the moral values of the Qur’an. Allah reveals in one verse that He will bestow love on those who believe and do devout works:

“As for those who believe and do right actions, the All-Merciful will bestow His love on them.” (Surah Maryam, 96)

Our Prophet (ﷺ) has expressed the importance of love and the superior nature of believers who live by true love in one of his hadiths:

“Allah said: ‘Those who love one another for My glory, will have minbars of light, and the Prophets and martyrs will wish that they had the same.’ (Reported by Tirmidhi, 4/24, Bab ma ja’a fi al-hubb fi Allah)

The true source of this love that believers have for one another is their deep love of Allah. Believers whose purpose in the life of this world is to attain the approval, mercy and Paradise of Allah spend their entire lives for Him. As is revealed in the verse *“Say: ‘My prayer and my rites, my living and my dying, are for Allah alone, the Lord of all the worlds,’”* (Surat al-An’am, 162) they aim at attaining His approval in their every deed, in all their behavior. The love of believers, who devote all they have to attaining the good pleasure of Allah, is again for Allah alone. The love of Allah of a believer who knows Allah by all His names, who witnesses His might and greatness at every moment, who feels His mercy, love and compassion throughout his life, is incomparably greater than any other love. Believers’ love for other believers is similarly powerful and deep

because it is based on the love of Allah, and they love in order to attain the approval of Allah. Another reason why this love is strong and permanent is because they know that the friendship with the faithful will last forever in the Hereafter.

In the Qur’an Allah has given the moral values of the Prophet Yahya (peace be upon him) as an example of this sensitivity of believers regarding love:

[We said:] *“Yahya, take hold of the Book with vigour.”* We gave him judgement while still a child, and affection and purity from Us—he guarded against evil... (Surah Maryam, 12-13)

In the hadiths, our Prophet (ﷺ) has recalled that the love believers feel for one another is for the approval of Allah:

“Whoever loves for Allah’s sake, hates for Allah’s sake, gives for Allah’s sake and withholds for God’s sake has a perfect faith.” (Abu Dawud)

There are three qualities whosoever has them will taste the sweetness of Iman: *“loving Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) above all else, loving someone solely for the sake of Allah, and hating to return to disbelief after Allah has rescued him from it, as much as he would hate being thrown into Hellfire.”* (Sahih Bukhari).

Believers who have great love of Allah, fear Allah, and make sincere endeavors so that He might approve of them, are auspicious individuals who bring beauty to the world. Due to these superior moral values, they also love the things that Allah has created, feel affection and compassion for them, and wish to protect them and bring them goodness and beauty. Allah has given the glad tidings that in return for this pleasing love stemming from the faith in believers’ hearts and their fear of Allah, and for their sincere loyalty to Him, He will reward them with Paradise, the most beautiful sphere of love and faithfulness. It is an important religious adherence for the faithful to remind

one another of the importance of loving Allah and believers. Every believer must strive to live by the love to be experienced in Paradise while still in this world, and they must bind themselves to Allah, our only friend and guardian, and to other believers, with love and devotion.

The Spiritual Strength that Comes from Believers' Love and Solidarity

What lies behind the attachment of people who do not believe in Allah and the Hereafter is generally the importance imputed to worldly values and expectations directed towards worldly interests. By coming together, these people in one sense make a mutual agreement of interests; the parties support one another and thus seek to achieve mutual advantages. The people in that alliance know that their togetherness is not based on trust or friendship, and that, even though this is not openly stated, the alliance is dependent on a number of conditions. When the element of either party that provides the other with these advantages is eliminated, the alliance also falls apart. Whether this leaves the other person in difficulties or needing support is of no interest to other. That is because the alliance formed has stemmed solely from a joining of forces and an expectation of benefits. For that reason, when these expectations are removed, it is perfectly natural that the alliance should also fall apart. As revealed by Allah in the verse *"Their hostility towards each other is intense. You consider them united but their hearts are scattered wide. That is because they are people who do not use their intellect,"* (Surat al-Hashr, 14) no matter how much those who do not believe may appear to enjoy unity and solidarity, fundamentally they cannot actually be united.

The only force on Earth that can establish true friendship and alliance among human beings is "faith." With their friendships, believers who fear the Day of Judgement have laid the foundations of a sound alliance

that begins in this world and that will continue forever in the Hereafter. They love one another with no expectation of benefit or advantage, out of pure intentions and solely for Allah's approval, and are one another's friends for that approval. It is impossible for this bond, based on love of Allah and fear of Allah, to be lost unless Allah so wills.

The faithful constitute a great spiritual force with the strength their love for one another for Allah's approval gives them. As revealed in the words of one verse, *"But those who were sure that they were going to meet Allah said, 'How many a small force has triumphed over a much greater one by Allah's permission! Allah is with the steadfast,"* (Surat al-Baqara, 249), even if they are few in number, with the faith in their hearts they acquire great enthusiasm and will with which to overcome terrible difficulties and troubles. They obtain the assistance and support of Allah because of the moral values they display. As Allah has revealed in the verse, *"You shall be uppermost if you are believers,"* (Surah Al 'Imran, 139), they constitute such a spiritual force that nobody can turn them against one another, and that nobody can break.

Since they sincerely seek Allah's approval, they never engage in any confusion, disagreement or dispute among themselves. That is because the word of Allah is one; the verses of the Qur'an are clear. Since all believers abide unconditionally by the Qur'an and always act with a view to gaining as much approval from Allah as possible, a great harmony and order ensues. All matters can be easily resolved within a harmonious order. A powerful solidarity is formed because they behave in the light of the moral values of the Qur'an and the interests of believers, even when they conflict with their own interests, and hold their brothers' desires above their own.

Since believers intend to be one another's eternal friends in the Hereafter they are

bound to one another with a deep love, respect and loyalty. Therefore, they know no rivalry, disagreement or dispute. Due to their fear of and sincere faith in Allah, no matter what difficulties or troubles they may encounter they never fall into defeatism, moral relativism or lack of will. If there is a flaw in one of them, the others will support him with proper moral values and encourage him towards goodness. Since they constantly command one another to perform what is good and to avoid evil, their faith and strength constantly grow. This spiritual strength possessed by believers, whose objectives, endeavors and prayers are always the same, which stems from faith and love, has been described by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi with the following example: "For just as one of man's hands cannot compete with the other, neither can one of his eyes criticize the other, nor his tongue object to his ear, nor his heart see his spirit's faults. Each of his members completes the deficiencies of the others, veils their faults, assists their needs, and helps them out in their duties. Otherwise man's life would be extinguished, his spirit flee, and his body be dispersed. Similarly, the components of machinery in a factory cannot compete with one another in rivalry, take precedence over each other, or dominate each other. They cannot spy out

one another's faults and criticize each other, destroy the other's eagerness for work, and cause them to become idle. They rather assist each other's motions with all their capacity in order to achieve the common goal; they march towards the aim of their creation in true solidarity and unity. Should even the slightest aggression or desire to dominate interfere, it would throw the factory into confusion, causing it to be without product or result. Then the factory's owner would demolish the factory entirely." (Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, Risale-i Nur Collection, "The Twenty-First Flash")

This example given by Bediuzzaman is of great importance with regard to being able to comprehend the union and unity stemming from the love among believers. On account of the sincere love and devotion that stem from their faith, in the same way that the machinery in a factory comes together to constitute a great force, so they acquire an unshakable spiritual strength with their mutual love and devotion.

"Your friend is only Allah and His Messenger and those who believe: those who perform prayer and give the alms, and bow." (Surat al Ma'ida, 55)

"Allah loves those who fight in His way in ranks like well-built walls." (Surat as-Saff, 4)

Al-Fath Al-Rabbani

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Call for Better Understanding Between Islam and Christianity

We reproduce below the excerpts of the historic and scholarly address of Prince Charles, the then future King of Britain to Eminent Scholars and Muslim Diplomats at the Oxford University Printed in Dawah Highlights for the interest of our readers. Editor

I believe wholeheartedly that the links between these two worlds matters more today than ever before, because the degree of misunderstanding between the Islamic and western worlds remain dangerously high, and because the need for the two to live and work together in our increasingly interdependent world has never been greater. At the same time I am only too well aware of the minefields which lie across the path of the inexpert traveler who is bent on exploring this difficult route. Some of what I shall say will undoubtedly provoke disagreement, criticism, misunderstanding and probably worse. But perhaps, when all is said and done, it is worth recalling another Arab proverb: "What comes from the lips reaches the ears. What comes from the heart reaches the heart".

The depressing fact is that, despite the advances in technology and mass communications for the second half of the 20th century, despite mass travel, the intermingling of races, the ever-growing reduction — or so we believe — of the mysteries of our world, misunderstandings between Islam and the West continue. Indeed, they may be growing. As far as the West is concerned, this cannot be because of ignorance. There are one billion Muslims worldwide. Many millions of them live in countries of the commonwealth. Ten million or more live in the West, and around one million in Britain. Our own Islamic community has been growing and flourishing for decades. There are nearly 500 mosques in Britain. Popular interest in Islamic culture in Britain is growing fast.

History of Conflict:

It is odd, in many ways, the
Minaret

misunderstanding between Islam and the West should persist. For that which binds our two worlds together is so much more powerful than that which divides us. Muslims, Christians and Jews are 'people of the Book'. Islam and Christianity share a common monotheistic vision: A belief in the divine God, in the transience of our earthly life, in our accountability for our actions, and in the assurance of life to come. We share many key values in common: Respect for knowledge, for justice, compassion towards the poor and underprivileged, the importance of family life, respect for parents. 'Honour thy father and thy mother' is a Quranic precept too. Our history has been closely bound up together. There, however, is one root of the problem. For much of that history has been one of conflict: Fourteen centuries too often marked by mutual hostility. That has given rise to an enduring tradition of fear and distrust, because our two worlds have so often seen that past in contradictory ways. To western school children, the two hundred years of Crusade are traditionally seen a series of heroic, chivalrous exploits in which the kings, knights, princes and children of Europe tried to wrest Jerusalem from Muslims. To Muslims, the Crusades were an episode of great cruelty and terrible plunder, of western infidel soldiers of fortune, perhaps exemplified best by the massacres committed by the Crusaders when, in 1099, they took back Jerusalem, the third holiest city in Islam.

For us in the West, 1492 speaks of human endeavour and new horizons, of Columbus and the discovery of the Americas. To Muslims, 1492 is a year of tragedy the year Granada fell to Ferdinand and Isabella,

signifying the end of eight centuries of Muslims civilization in Europe. The point, I think, is not that one or other picture is more true, or has a monopoly of truth. It is that misunderstandings arise when we fail to appreciate how others look at the world, its history, and our respective roles in it.

Our judgment of Islam has been grossly distorted by taking the extremes to be the norm. That, ladies and gentlemen, is a serious mistake. It is like judging the quality of life in Britain by the existence of murder and rape, child abuse and drug addiction. The extremes exist, and they must be dealt with. But when used as a basis to judge a society, they lead to distortion and unfairness.

For example, people in this country frequently argue that the Sharia law of the Islamic world is cruel, barbaric and unjust. Our newspapers, above all, love to peddle those unthinking prejudices. The truth is, of course, different and always more complex. My own understanding is that extremes, like the cutting off of hands, are rarely practiced. The guiding principle and spirit of Islamic law taken straight from the Qur'an, should be those of equity and compassion. We need to study its actual application before we make judgments. We must distinguish between systems of justice administered with integrity, and systems of justice as we may see them practiced which have been deformed for political reasons into something no longer Islamic. We must bear in mind the sharp debate taking place in the Islamic world itself, about the extent of the universality for timelessness of Sharia law, and the degree to which the application of that law is continually changing and evolving we should also distinguish Islam from the customs of some Islamic states.

We in the West need also to understand the Islamic world view of us. There is nothing to be gained, and much harm to be done. By refusing to comprehend the extent to which many people in the Islamic world genuinely

fear our own western materialism and mass culture as a deadly challenge to their Islamic culture and way of life. Some of us may think the material trappings of western society which we have exported to the Islamic world television, fast-food, and the electronic gadgets, of our everyday life are a modernizing, self-evidently good, influence. But we fall into the trap, of dreadful arrogance if we confuse 'modernity' in other countries with their becoming more like us. The fact is that our form of materialism can be offensive to devout Muslim and I do not just mean the extremists among them. We must understand that reaction, just as the West's attitude to some of the more rigorous aspects of Islamic life needs to be understood in the Islamic world. This, I believe, would help us understand what we have commonly come to see as the threat of Islamic fundamentalism. We need to be careful of that emotive label, 'fundamentalism', and distinguish, as Muslims do, between revivalists; who choose to take the practice of their religion most devoutly, and fanatics or extremists who use this devotion for political ends. Among the many religious, social and political causes of what we might more accurately call the Islamic revival is a powerful feeling of disenchantment, of the realization that western technology and material things are insufficient and that a deeper meaning to life lies elsewhere. in the essence of Islamic belief.

Islamic Contribution:

Ladies and gentlemen, it there is much misunderstanding in the West about the nature of Islam, there is also much ignorance about the debt our own culture and civilization owe to the Islamic world. It is a failure which stems, I think, from the "straight-jacket of history which we have inherited. The mediaeval Islamic world, from Central Asia to the shores of the Atlantic, was a world where scholars and men of learning flourished. But because we have tended to see Islam as the enemy of the

West, as an alien culture, society and system of belief, we have tended to ignore or erase its greater relevance to our own history. For example, we have underestimated the importance of 800 years of Islamic society and culture in Spain between the 8th and 15th centuries. The contribution of Muslim Spain to the preservation of classical learning during the dark ages, and to the first flowering of the renaissance has long been recognized.

Islam nurtured and preserved the quest for learning. In the words of the tradition the ink of the scholar is more sacred than the blood of the martyr. Cordoba in the 10th century was by far the most civilized city of Europe. We know of lending libraries in Spain at the time when King Alfred was making terrible blunders with the culinary arts in this

country. It is said that the 400,000 volumes in its ruler's library amounted to more books than all the libraries of the rest of Europe put together. That was made possible because the Muslim world acquired from China the skill of making paper more than four hundred years before the rest of non-Muslim Europe. Many of the traits which modern Europe prides itself came to it from Muslim Spain. Diplomacy, free trade, open border, the techniques of academic research, of anthropology, etiquette, fashion, alternative medicine, hospital, all came from this great city of cities. Mediaeval Islam was religion of remarkable tolerance for its time, allowing Jews and Christians the right to practice their inherited beliefs, and setting an example which was not unfortunately copied for many centuries in the West.

**THE QUR'ANIC FOUNDATIONS
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Marriage – the only Cementing Force

Muhammad Anisur Rahman, Advocate

Sex instructs has been declared a “motivating force of life” by no less a psychologist than Dr. Sigmund Freud, even then no effective measure is taken to legislate acts to regulate the life force methodically, on the contrary sexual anarchy, destroying the cultural fibres, is let loose in the social order.

Many stalwarts who dominated the stage commended “abolition of marriage” caring a fig for its ugly impact on the family set-up and ignominious impression on the Nation Building. Movements were launched and Muzdak, a religious reformer of Iran preached and practiced unscrupulously, “wealth and woman” as a common property. The history of Muzdakism was repeated when Soviet Russia, in the first five years plan, abolished marriage by the statutory provision.

Social system of the Hindus does not subscribe the view of abolition of marriage, but it has lowered the prestige of woman and made her subservient to man. “Kanneyadan, the gift of the bride presents a vivid picture of the aptitude of the Indian Pundits. Over and above doctrines of asceticism and renunciation to glorify life and attain salvation are valid proofs to minimize the importance of married life and its valuable contribution to the evolutionary process.

“Motivating force of life” has been slightly treated, here and there, in the human history but great men appeared on the scenes and threw challenge to “the movements of abolition of marriage” In the twentieth century Fuhrer of Nazi Germany diagnosed marriage a panacea for health and longevity. He thus writes in his famous book “Mein Kamph” as follows, “To wage war against syphilis means fighting against prostitution, against prejudice, against old established customs, against current

fashions, public opinions and last but not least against prudery in certain circles.

The first preliminary condition to be fulfilled before the state can claim a moral right to fight against all these things is that the young generation should be afforded facilities for contracting early marriages. In Germany Hitler devised marriages a means to fight social evils deteriorating the society.

In England a great thinker like Lord Westbury once spoke: *“Marriage is the very foundation of civil society and no part of law and institution of the country can be of more vital importance to its subject than those which regulate the manner and conditions of forming and if necessary of dissolving the marriage contracts”*.

Napoleon Bonaparte told the French, *“Give me good mothers and I will give you a good Nation”*. *In this declaration solemnity of marriage is not at all brushed aside. In the modern World only Turkey has adopted the right course. Langsam writes in his book “The world since 1914”, as follows “In Turkey civil marriages were made obligatory after Sept., 1926 though these might be supplemented by religious ceremonies. The minimum legal age for marriage was placed at seventeen for woman and eighteen for man”*.

There are great Biologists who have observed that married couples live longer than the unmarried people. Married couples are assets to the society but unmarried ones are liabilities and burden as well as they are dangerous to the social threads.

Sex urge is innate in human beings, nay it is the fountain head of creativity. The Holy Qur’an candidly disclosed centuries before *“وخلقناكم ازواجاً”* and “I have created you couples”. It points out sex predominance over the law of evolution. Evolutionary processing is meted in sexuality. Negative and the positive forces

when come together discharge sparks of energy propelling the life force.

Energy of man cannot be static. It must display its creativity. Hence society is in great need of such laws which are to regulate properly the use of energy. That is why principle of marriage has been accepted in the society of man as a correct process for the sparks of energy to contribute systematically the biological development on the foundation of which the gigantic edifice of evolutionary forces have been given birth.

Despite the fact that opinions differ from man to man, to grip effectively the proposition of marriage even then the Holy Prophet of Islam (ﷺ) has tackled it in a more comprehensive manner in the human history than anybody else. He (ﷺ) has proclaimed, "Wife is a citadel and one can defend himself from onslaughts of the devil and hence man should take shelter in it, the quicker the better. Marriage is a great force for cultural fusion, political stability and social refinement and that is why the Holy Prophet of Islam (ﷺ) has emphatically demanded his followers to marry and has declared that he who does not marry cannot belong to his fold.

النكاح من سننئ فمن رغب عن سننئ فليس منئ (متفق عليه)

"Marriage is (an essential part of) my practice, and whoever deliberately abandons or shows aversion to my way has no connection with me."

The credit goes to Islam and Islam alone which has propounded explicitly the importance of the marriage philosophy. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) by his commandments declared marriage a compulsory act for his followers.

The Holy Qur'an has accepted laws of Monogamy as well polygamy as a rule and as an exception respectively. Marriage for a Muslim is a must;—one wife is compulsory and if he can administer justice he can have

One, Two, Three and Four in exceptional circumstances.

The main aim of the enactment is to control and channelize sparks of energy for the normal development of social forces, further to strengthen the political setup to contribute to the evolution of the species of man.

Cultural Fusion

A glance on the creation will unfold the truth that unity is spread in diversity. This concept has been beautifully depicted in a couplet by one of the greatest poets of Indo-Pak Sub-continent, Hazrat Gulam Ali Rasikh Azimabadi, another Mir in the realm of Urdu poetry, and it is as follows: —

کس قدر بو قلموں جلوہ ہے اپنا کوئی بھی اسکی تجلی نہیں
تکرار کے ساتھ

Lustre of our beloved is so chameleon, No illumination of His is repeated.

Allah has unfolded in the Holy Qur'an that He has created mankind in various colours and innumerable clans only for the purposes of identification but the parochial leadership misused such marks for self-aggrandizement.

Among all the distinctive features of identification, the affinity of language is the most powerful, and it has given birth to regionalism ultimately made a tool for the exploitation of the under dogs and the campaign of hatred to succeed.

Somewhere creed has over powered the force of language as for example Ulster in Ireland. It is a place where English language is spoken but Catholics and Protestants cannot live together under the canopy of one language. One is cutting the throat of the other. In East Pakistan language and script is more powerful. It is the difference of language and script that has created unbridgeable gulf between Bengali and non-Bengali Muslims, despite the fact that both of them believe in one and the same creed of religion.

It was perceived long ago by the Muslims of Bengal that the difference of script of language and the growth of culture on the foundation of such language was bound to be exploited by the enemies of Islam and that was the reason why they adopted Qur'anic script for Bangla language which made great headway towards cultural Fusion and has remained in force thousands of years during the Muslim rule in Bengal till the coming of the Britishers, when the Hindus launched a movement against Qur'anic script and succeeded in substituting Nagri script for Bangla language and created situation for the growth of separatism.

The high ups and the people in power in Pakistan completely ignored the venomous expression of Gandhi who once said that he did not like Urdu only because it was written in Qur'anic script. It has been also overlooked that East Pakistan is surrounded on all sides by Nagri Script whereas West Pakistan is surrounded by Chinese and Latin script on the one side and Qur'anic script on the other. The Hindu leadership remained alive and situations after situations against the cultural Fusion of Muslims of the Sub-Continent was brought into being and East Pakistan has become an easy prey of the totalitarian caucus of Hindus in 1971.

Muslim of Pakistan must rise like one man and accept the challenge of the subversive activities and disorderliness released in East Pakistan by the Hindu agents and the Bharati Government and give reply in a manner befitting to a great Nation like that of Indian Muslims who stood like a great force for the creation of Pakistan and uprooted all the distinctive features and disruptive philosophies of Europe given birth to tear asunder the Muslim brotherhood and triumphed in the establishments of Islamic fraternity and a state on the ideology of Islam.

The Muslims must move towards Cultural

Fusion once again. The need of the hour is to develop Pakistani culture instead of Bengali or Punjabi. Only Pakistani culture can face the threat of disintegration of the country and it can be successfully achieved through matrimonial alliances. All sorts of hurdles, obstacles and barriers can be subjugated without difficulty if the steps of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) are followed who just after migration, brought about cementation of Muslim brotherhood *عقد المواخاة* and the ties of marriage eradicated the distinctive marks of identification between the Mohajirs and the Ansars, between the black and the white, and the rich and the poor. The Prophet (ﷺ) himself married his sister to a slave.

In East Pakistan unless the challenge of Bangla Nationalism is met successfully and the separatist tendency created is effectively replied the peace in future is impossible. Marriage ties between Bengali and non-Bengali not one, two, three, but thousands and thousands in number should be advocated, encouraged nay brought about. Cultural Fusion, political stability and social unison in East Pakistan is possible if the Government in power can legislate laws for compulsory marriage between Bengalis and non – Bangalis. Marriage with the Hindu Princess by Akbar, the Great Moghal Emperor, was responsible for the political stability of his empire. A few marriages of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) also, created harmony between warring tribes of Arabia and removed many stumbling blocks in the development of Islamic fraternity.

Unity of God

The concept of the unity of God is the corner stone of the Islamic code of life. It aims at the unity, unification and unison of the society of man, having diversity in social frame work and marriage, a social force, plays a very vital role in blending happily different cultural forces into one entity.

In East Pakistan bullets are used — brothers

killing brothers. Injuries caused by bullets cannot be healed up but by the marriage ties. Recently a session Judge narrated to me the story of a murder case disposed of by him. He told me that when the murder case came to his file he perused the papers and discovered that two families were at daggers drawn for about two decades and every year a murder was committed by either of the parties. Enmity between them was at its highest. The learned Judge proceeded further and said that he thought out a plan to put an end to the family feud of the parties for ever, so that no murder should ever take place in future. Only the decision of the murder case would not have stopped the killing in his opinion and nipped in the bud the animosity prevailing among them. He said that he invited both the parties at a dinner and discussed thread bare the causes of enmity and after a good deal of discussion he suggested to them that the only remedy to do away with the enmity and stop the recurrence of murder in future was the establishment of matrimonial relationship between the parties at loggerhead. The learned Judge happily expressed that they accepted his advice and he selected three girls and three boys of either parties and brought about marriages under his command. After the marriage no murder has ever taken place between the parties so deep in enmity for such a long time.

Unless such measures are adopted in East Pakistan and Sindh particularly and in the

whole of Pakistan generally, the distinctiveness of the difference of the cultural forces of so many provinces of Pakistan will grow and will be exploited by the enemies of Pakistan and repercussions of unprecedented massacre, rape and arson will be repeated again and again on the sacred soil of Pakistan and the loss of lives and the holocaust will know no bounds.

The scheme of inter-Provincial marriages can be launched even by the private sector as well and the Government can easily achieve success in the scheme if fifty per cent services of every Province are provided to the people of the other Province. East Pakistan being bigger can be provided fifty percent in frontier Provinces. Only by such administrative arrangements the Provincial complexion of the social order and the parochial administrative set up can be completely revolutionized and death blow can be given to all sorts of biases, prejudices and narrow – mindedness.

Here the saying of the Quaid-i-Azam echoes and re-echoes who once unambiguously expressed that if the horns of Provincialism should not stop growing he would remove the Punjabis into Bengal and vice versa. Today Pakistan is confronted with terrible danger on account of parochial Provincial feeling and so unless the very complexion of the social order as well as the administrative setup is changed in a way as to remove local colour and Pakistani nationalism ingrained, the solidarity of Pakistan is at stake.



UNITY

“And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allah (i.e. this Qur’an) and be not divided among yourselves...”

(Qur’an 3:103)



A Message

His Eminence Dr. Muhammad Fazlur Rahman Ansari, Al-Qaderi, رحمه الله عليه M.A., Ph. D. (R.A) at a multiracial function organized in his honour by the Pretoria Islamic Society (South Africa) in 1971, gave the following personal message to the Muslims:-

“If you love Allah, love all human beings. All creation is Allah’s family. He who insults Allah's family, insults Allah and he who honours Allah's family honours Allah.

Deal with every human being first and foremost as a human being. Let not any other consideration come between this. Because before being a Muslim, a Christian or a Hindu, every one of you is a human being first and foremost and this is what Islam emphasizes. That these are rights of every human being as a human being and those rights are inviolable and if you cannot stand by those, then you are not true to your own self as a human being. You are insulting your own Humanity.

Appreciate good wherever it is found even in your enemy and hate evil but not the evil-doer.

The Islamic principles are based on one concept, namely, good-will for all and ill-will for none.”

علم و حکمت

(لفظ ”علم“ (۸۳۴) بار قرآن میں آیا ہے)

کیا جاننے والے اور نہ جاننے والے یکساں ہو سکتے ہیں؟ اور نصیحت تو عقل رکھنے والے ہی قبول کرتے ہیں (الزمر-۹)

اسلام علم و حکمت کو مومن کی گمشدہ میراث اور حصول علم کی کوشش کو ہر مسلمان پر فرض قرار دیتا ہے۔ اللہ نے اپنے حبیب محمد صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم کو دعا کی ہدایت کی کہ آپ دعا کیا کیجئے۔ اے میرے رب میرے علم کو بڑھا۔ علم (سائنس) اشیاء کی ماہیت کے بارے میں جاننے کا نام ہے اور حکمت معلوم اشیاء کی حقیقی قدر معین کرنے کی صلاحیت کا نام ہے۔ عقل و دانش یک ایسی نعمت ہے جو اللہ نے کسی نہ کسی درجہ میں ہر مخلوق کو عطا کی ہے۔ حقیقی دانش مندی وہی ہے۔ جو اس صلاحیت کو مثبت استعمال کرے۔ کتاب حکیم بار بار انفس و آفاق میں موجود نشانیوں کے بارے میں تدبر، تفکر، تعقل کا حکم دیتا ہے۔ مسلمانوں کا عروج بھی اسی سے وابستہ رہا اور جب ہم نے اس سے منہ موڑ لیا اور مغربی اقوام نے اس کو اپنایا تو ان کو عروج حاصل ہوا علم ہماری میراث تھی لیکن ہماری غفلت نے آج یہ صورت پیدا کر دی کہ ہم اپنی میراث سے ہی غافل ہو گئے مسلمانان عالم کی پسماندگی، غربت اور جہالت سے نکلنے کا واحد علاج جدید علوم و فنون کا حصول ہے۔ آپ ﷺ نے فرمایا کہ ”جو شخص حصول علم کیلئے نکلے وہ جب تک واپس نہ آئے وہ اللہ ہی کے راستے میں ہے۔“

(ترمذی)

انتخاب:- مولانا ابو فہیم انوار اللہ خان

تو اللہ بھی اس کا بن جاتا ہے اور انکی ہر رات ہی شب قدر ہو جاتی ہے۔

مغفرتِ گناہ

نبی پاک ﷺ کی ایک حدیث ہے کہ:

مَنْ قَامَ لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا
غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ (بخاری شریف)

یعنی جو شخص لیلۃ القدر میں ایمان کے ساتھ اور ثواب کی نیت سے کھڑا ہو اس کے پچھلے تمام گناہ معاف کر دیئے جاتے ہیں۔ یہ شب نہایت خیر و برکت والی ہے اور اس کی عظمتوں کا عقل انسانی ادراک نہیں کر سکتی۔

قرآن حکیم میں اس کی فضیلت کے متعلق اک بات یوں کہی گئی لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ (القدر) کہ اس رات میں عبادت و ریاضت ہزار مہینوں کی عبادت سے زیادہ نفع والی ہے۔

لہذا خوش نصیب ہیں وہ لوگ جو رحمت باری سے فیضیاب ہونے کی جستجو کرتے ہوئے استغفار کریں۔ اس رات کو جو لوگ خلوص دل سے اللہ سے مغفرت مانگتے ہیں اللہ تعالیٰ ان کے گناہ معاف کر دیتا ہے۔

شب قدر میں ہر چیز سجدہ ریز ہو جاتی ہے یہاں تک کہ درخت بھی اس رات میں سجدہ کرتے ہیں اور زمین پر گر پڑتے ہیں پھر اپنی جگہ پر آجاتے ہیں مگر عام لوگوں کی نسبت اہل نظر کو شب قدر کا زیادہ مشاہدہ ہوتا ہے۔ دراصل اس رات کا مزہ اور سرور الفاظ میں کیسے بیان کیا جاسکتا ہے کیونکہ جو بات انسان کے ذاتی تجربے اور مشاہدے میں آتی ہے وہ ادراک میں کیسے پیدا کی جاسکتی ہے؟

اس رات کو عشاء اور فجر کی نماز باجماعت لازماً ادا کرنی چاہئے کیونکہ نماز جماعت کے ساتھ ادا کرنے کا جو ثواب ہے وہ شب بیداری سے زیادہ ہے اس لئے پہلے نماز بعد میں شب بیداری۔

عارفین اور اولیائے کرام کو اللہ کی رحمت سے یہ رات معلوم ہوتی ہے کیونکہ اس رات کو وہ اپنی باطنی نگاہ سے عرش معلیٰ سے ایک خاص قسم کے نور کا ظہور دیکھتے ہیں جو آسمانوں اور دنیا والوں پر ظاہر ہوتا ہے وہ عام راتوں میں نہیں ہوتا بلکہ صرف شب قدر میں نازل ہوتا ہے۔ علاوہ ازیں شب قدر میں زمین پر ملائکہ کا نزول ہوتا ہے اور اہل اللہ اپنی باطنی نگاہ سے جب ملائکہ کو دیکھتے ہیں تو اس سے بھی شب قدر کا علم ہو جاتا ہے۔ باقی جنہیں اللہ تعالیٰ شب قدر کے بارے میں بتانا چاہے بتا دیتا ہے۔ اصل بات تو یہ ہے کہ جو اللہ کا بن گیا

Step out of your own self and keep your distance from it. Practice detachment from your possessiveness, and surrender everything to Allah. Become His doorman at the door of your heart, obeying His command by admitting those He instructs you to admit, and respecting His prohibition by shutting out those He instructs you to turn away, so that you do not let passion back into your heart once it has been evicted.

Shaykh Abd Al Qadir Al Jilani (RA); Seventh Discourse from Futuh al-Ghaib - On removing the cares of the heart [qalb]

راتوں میں شب قدر کو تلاش کر دو، کبھی حکمت سے خالی نہیں ہو سکتا اور یقین کریں کہ جو شب قدر کو تلاش کرنے کی کوشش کرتا ہے اسے ضرور پاتا ہے۔

ستائیسویں رات بحیثیت شب قدر

آئمہ مجتہدین کے ایک گروہ نے اپنے خیال کے مطابق رمضان المبارک کی ستائیسویں شب کو لیلة القدر قرار دیا اور ان کے خیال کے مطابق ہر سال ستائیسویں رات ہی شب قدر ہوتی ہے۔ حضرت ابی بن کعب رضی اللہ عنہ ستائیسویں شب کو یقیناً شب قدر کہتے ہیں۔ حضرت شیخ عبدالقادر جیلانی رحمۃ اللہ علیہ بھی اسی کے قائل تھے اور فرماتے ہیں کہ زیادہ باوثوق ستائیسویں رات ہے حضرت ابن عباس رضی اللہ عنہما بھی اسی کے قائل تھے۔ اکثر مفسرین اور علماء کرام بھی اسی پر اتفاق رائے کرتے ہیں کہ شب قدر ستائیسویں رات ہی ہوتی ہے، حضرت امام اعظم ابوحنیفہ رحمۃ اللہ علیہ بھی اسی کے حامی تھے۔

ستائیسویں رات کو ویسے بھی آخری راتوں پر فضیلت حاصل ہے کیوں کہ اس رات کو اکثر مساجد میں تراویح میں قرآن پاک مکمل ہوتا ہے۔ لہذا یہ رات جشن قرآن کے نام سے مشہور ہو گئی ہے اور لوگ کثرت سے عبادت کرتے ہیں اس لئے ستائیسویں شب کی فضیلت زیادہ ہے۔

شب قدر آخری عشرہ کی طاق راتوں میں بدل بدل کر آتی رہتی ہے لیکن زیادہ تر ستائیسویں رات ہی ہوتی ہے اور اسی رات کا شب قدر ہونا زیادہ ترین قیاس ہے۔

مسلم شریف میں حضرت زربین جمیش رحمۃ اللہ علیہ فرماتے ہیں کہ میں نے ایک مرتبہ حضرت ابی بن کعب رضی اللہ عنہ سے پوچھا کہ آپ کے بھائی حضرت ابن مسعود رضی اللہ عنہ فرماتے ہیں کہ جو شخص سال بھر قیام کرے گا وہ لیلة القدر کو پائے گا۔ حضرت

ابی بن کعب رضی اللہ عنہ نے جواب دیا ”عبداللہ بن مسعود رضی اللہ عنہ پر اللہ تعالیٰ کی رحمت ہو ان کا اصل مقصد یہ تھا کہ لوگ ایک خاص وقت پر بھروسہ نہ کر لیں ورنہ انہیں معلوم تھا کہ وہ رمضان کے آخری عشرہ میں ہے اور یہ بھی کہ وہ رمضان کی ستائیسویں رات ہے۔“

پھر حضرت ابی بن کعب رضی اللہ عنہ نے حلفاً یہ کہا کہ وہ رمضان کی ستائیسویں تاریخ ہے۔ پس میں نے پوچھا کہ اے ابو منذر (حضرت ابی بن کعب کی کنیت تھی) آپ یہ بات کس بنا پر کہہ رہے ہیں۔ تو انہوں نے جواب دیا ایک علامت پر کہہ رہا ہوں جو رسول اللہ ﷺ نے ہمیں بتائی تھی اور وہ نشانی یہ ہے کہ اس روز جو سورج نکلے گا اس میں تیزی نہ ہوگی۔ (مسلم شریف)

اسی حدیث کی بنا پر یہ قیاس کیا جاتا ہے کہ رمضان المبارک کی ستائیسویں رات ہی زیادہ تر شب قدر ہوتی ہے کیوں کہ اس سلسلے میں حضرت عمر رضی اللہ عنہ سے روایت ہے کہ رسول اللہ ﷺ نے فرمایا کہ جو شخص رمضان شریف کی ستائیسویں شب کو صبح تک عبادت میں مصروف رہتا ہے وہ مجھے پسند ہے بہ نسبت اس کے کہ وہ رمضان کی ساری راتوں میں شب بیداری کرے۔

شب قدر کی علامات

شب قدر صاف شفاف چمک دار اور کھلی ہوتی ہے۔ اس رات میں نہ زیادہ گرمی ہوتی ہے اور نہ زیادہ ٹھنڈک بلکہ یہ رات موسم بہار کی راتوں کی مانند ہوتی ہے۔ معتدل اور خوشگوار نفا ہوتی ہے۔ اس رات میں شہاب ثاقب نہیں ٹوٹتے۔ رات کے پچھلے پہر تو بے حد کیف و سرور ہوتا ہے۔ آسمان کی طرف دیکھنے سے نور زمین کی طرف آتا ہوا معلوم ہوتا ہے نیز یہ بھی علامت ہے کہ شب قدر کے بعد والی صبح کو سورج میں تیزی نہیں ہوتی۔

بعض بزرگوں نے رمضان کی ستائیسویں شب میں سمندر کا پانی چکھا تو میٹھا معلوم ہوا۔ بعض نے یہ بھی بیان کیا ہے کہ

لیلة القدر

بخشش و مغفرت کا سنہری موقع

رستم علی شہزاد مجددی

اندر اعتکاف فرمایا پھر سر مبارک خیمہ سے باہر نکال کر فرمایا کہ میں نے اس رات کی تلاش میں رمضان شریف کے پہلے عشرہ کا اعتکاف کیا پھر درمیانی عشرہ کا اعتکاف کیا مگر پتہ نہ چلا پھر فرشتے نے میرے پاس آ کر کہا کہ شب قدر رمضان شریف کے آخری عشرہ میں ہے۔ علاوہ ازیں اور بھی احادیث سے یہ ظاہر ہوتا ہے کہ شب قدر رمضان کے آخری عشرہ میں ہوتی ہے۔ آخری عشرہ کے تعین کے بعد یہ بھی احادیث سے عیاں ہوتا ہے کہ یہ آخری عشرہ کی طاق راتوں میں ہوتی ہے جیسا کہ رسول پاک ﷺ نے فرمایا کہ شب قدر کو طاق راتوں میں تلاش کرو۔ (مسلم شریف)

طاق راتوں سے مراد اکیسویں، تیسویں، پچیسویں، ستائیسویں اور اٹیسویں رات ہے۔ حضرت عبادہ رضی اللہ عنہ سے روایت ہے کہ رسول پاک ﷺ باہر تشریف لائے تاکہ ہمیں شب قدر کی اطلاع دیں۔ مگر دو مسلمانوں میں جھگڑا ہو رہا تھا آپ ﷺ نے ارشاد فرمایا میں اس لئے آیا تھا کہ تمہیں شب قدر کی خبر دوں مگر فلاں فلاں شخصوں میں جھگڑا ہو رہا تھا۔ جس وجہ سے اس کا تعین اٹھالیا گیا۔ کچھ بعید نہیں کہ یہ اٹھالینا اللہ کے علم میں بہتر ہو۔ لہذا اب اس کو آخری عشرہ میں تلاش کرو۔

اس بحث سے یہ ظاہر ہوتا ہے کہ شب قدر طاق راتوں میں سے کوئی ہوتی ہے۔

طاق راتوں کے بارے میں رسول اکرم ﷺ کا اظہار تھا مگر یہ مسلمہ حکم نہیں تھا کہ شب قدر ضرور طاق راتوں میں ہی ہوا کرے گی لیکن رسول مقبول ﷺ کا یہ اظہار خیال کہ ”طاق

شب قدر کے بارے میں کوئی تعین نہیں ہے کہ فلاں رات شب قدر ہے۔ مگر اتنا ضرور ہے یہ ماہ رمضان المبارک کی ایک قدر والی رات ہے جسے صرف تلاش کرنے والے ہی پاتے ہیں۔ حضور ﷺ نے ماہ رمضان المبارک کے موقع پر ایک دفعہ یوں ارشاد فرمایا ”یہ مہینہ تمہارے پاس آ گیا ہے ایک با عظمت اور برکت والا مہینہ، ایسا مہینہ کہ اس میں ایک رات ایسی ہے جو ہزار مہینوں سے بہتر ہے۔“ (ابن ماجہ۔ بیہقی)

قرآن وحدیث سے صراحتاً یہی ظاہر ہوتا ہے کہ شب قدر رمضان المبارک میں ہوتی ہے اور یہ رمضان کے آخری عشرے میں سے کوئی رات ہوتی ہے۔ رمضان کے اکیسویں روز سے لے کر ۲۹ یا تیسویں روز تک کے دنوں کو آخری عشرہ کہا جاتا ہے۔ عشرہ عربی میں دس کے لئے بولا جاتا ہے لہذا رمضان کے آخری دس روزوں کو آخری عشرہ کا نام دے دیا گیا ہے۔

شب قدر رمضان المبارک کے آخری عشرہ میں

حضرت عائشہ صدیقہ رضی اللہ عنہا سے ایک روایت ہے کہ رسول اللہ ﷺ نے ارشاد فرمایا کہ شب قدر کو رمضان المبارک کے آخری عشرہ میں تلاش کرو۔ (مسلم شریف)

شب قدر کے آخری عشرہ میں ہونے کے بارے میں رسول پاک ﷺ کی یہ حدیث بھی ہے جو بخاری شریف میں حضرت ابو سعید رضی اللہ عنہ کے حوالے سے درج ہے۔ شب قدر کی تلاش میں رسول اکرم ﷺ نے رمضان شریف کے پہلے عشرہ میں اعتکاف فرمایا پھر حضور ﷺ نے درمیانی عشرہ میں ترکی خیمہ کے