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Science and the Islamic world

Dr. Syed Amir

Abbasid Caliph, Al-Mamun (786-833), a noted poet himself, was a great patron of the arts and sciences. The House of Wisdom or the Institute of Higher Learning, he founded more than twelve centuries ago in Baghdad which attracted a large number of linguists and scholars from around the world who came in quest of new knowledge.

The scholars, Muslims and non-Muslims, who worked there made impressive contributions to science, medicines, philosophy, mathematics and astronomy. Numerous prized books and manuscripts were translated from Greek, Sanskrit and Latin into Arabic, while Arab researchers enriched the classic texts with their own critical and erudite commentaries. Books, such as the Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and *Theology* as well as Galen's entire collection of medical treatise were rendered into Arabic. Many books were also translated from Arabic into Latin and served to transmit the cumulative knowledge of the East and ancient Greece to Europe. The remarkable feature of the institute was that, in an era of religious orthodoxy and ecclesiastical intolerance, it placed no restrictions on the intellectual thought processes and permitted scholars unprecedented freedom to pursue knowledge wherever it took them. Royal and public patronage joined hands to usher in the golden era of Islamic science that was to last for many centuries.

In time, the majestic Islamic metropolises, Baghdad, Cordoba and Damascus, become centers of excellence, acquiring

renown for their unrivalled universities and advanced civilization. The writings of two medieval Muslim physicians and philosophers, Ibn Sina (Avicenna, 980-1037) in Central Asia and Ibn Rushd (Averroes, 1126-1198), in Cordoba are often credited with providing the stimulation that, helped launch the European renaissance. Both scholars in their treatises emphasized the importance of logic and reason in understanding natural phenomena, rooted in principles established by Aristotle nearly a millennium earlier. Ibn Sina's celebrated work, *The Cannon of Medicine*, was translated into Latin and disseminated throughout Europe during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and was to serve as the standard medical text for hundreds of years. Spanish-Muslim philosopher, Ibn Rushd, in his dissertations argued that there was no contradiction between logic and science on the one hand and religion on the other, as both had valid claims on rationality. Perhaps, the last medieval Muslim scholar who made a major contribution to human knowledge was the anthropologist Ibn Khaldun (1332-1395) who's *Muqaddamah* is recognized as the earliest, landmark of the rise and fall of human civilizations.

After flourishing for many centuries, the splendid age of Islamic sciences seems to have ended around the fifteenth century. For a long time, Muslims had kept only sparse contacts with Europeans, believing they had little to learn from them. Momentous developments, such as the Renaissance Reformation and Industrial Revolution, seem to have passed them by,

leaving them behind in many branches of knowledge, including science and technology. In recent times, Muslim scientists working in their own countries have not made any remarkable discoveries during this period. Out of a total of 787 Noble Laureates who received the prize since its inception over a century ago, only nine have been Muslims; among these only two, Ahmad Zewail of Egypt and Abdus Salam of Pakistan, were recognized for their contributions to science. However, neither of them worked in his native country. The other seven were Nobel Peace Prize winners or honoured for their contributions to literature.

The technology gap between the Muslim world and the West is now attracting worldwide concern. International agencies, such as the United Nations and UNESCO, have set up various panels to examine the root causes of this growing disparity. The highly prestigious international science journal, NATURE, in an unprecedented move, devoted a whole section of its November 2006 issue to the analysis of the contemporary relationship between Islam and science. The journal has relied for its conclusion on the statistical data base collected from 57 members of the organization of Islamic countries (OIC), representing some 1.2 billion people. The findings are both sobering and distressing. This essay is based on the data drawn mostly from the Nature article.

In reality, attempts to collect any meaningful data from all 52 Islamic countries proved fruitless. Most did not have any documented information to contribute. However, it was possible to draw upon the official records from 22 countries. Much of the available

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information, unfortunately, paints a dismal picture. The average annual spending on research and development (R & D) in these countries is about 0.34 percent of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP), a measure of a country's total economic output, compared to the global average that is nearer to 2.4 percent. Turkey and Malaysia are exceptions; their spending on science relative to their income is highest among the Muslim countries and is comparable to that spent by some non-Muslim countries with equivalent GDRs. Pakistan is grouped with the low-income countries of the OIC, Bangladesh, Mauritania, and Uganda, and its spending is estimated to about 0.3 per cent of its GDP.

The neglect of science becomes most glaring in the case of oil-rich countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Brunei, which spend a lower percentage of their income than even poor countries, such as Pakistan, Sudan and Senegal. The reasons are not hard to find; their priorities lie elsewhere. Kuwait, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Syria and Oman spend about 7 per cent of their GDP on military hardware, an enormous sum, which has earned them the dubious distinction of being the world's top spenders on armaments. In a felicitous move, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Iran, Morocco and Tunisia, according to the World Bank, have now substantially increased their spending on education.

The overall neglect of science is reflected in the number of researchers per million people in the Muslim world estimated during 1996-2003. Muslim countries had some of the lowest ratio, an average of 500 researchers per million people, as compared to over 5,000 in Japan, Sweden and Finland. Only, Jordan fared better, with

2,000 researchers. Not surprising, with so few active scientists, the scientific output of Muslim countries has been miserable. The National Science Foundation in America estimated that in 2003 were 699,000 scientific articles published world-wide. The average number per million population was 137; however, for OIC members the number dropped to 13. Turkey again was an exception, having achieved a remarkable publication record of 6,224 articles per year, with Iran and Egypt coming next, with each publishing about 1,800 articles. Turkey's spectacular success is attributed to its modern and progressive education system reformed after the 1923 revolution that emphasizes the teaching of science and mathematics.

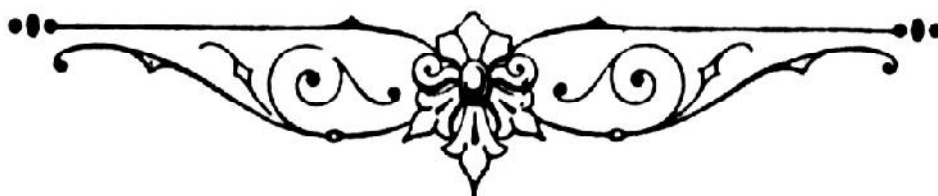
The lack of emphasis on science and education has influenced multiple facets of knowledge. According to the Arab Human Development Report prepared by a group of 26 Arab scholars, on the average, only about 300 books are translated into Arabic annually. Just one European country, Greece, translated five times more books than entire Arab world. It is estimated that since the reign of Caliph Al-Mamun, spanning a period of more than one thousand years, a mere 100,000 books have been rendered into Arabic from all source.

A number of reasons have been advanced to explain the decline and degeneration of science in the Arab/Muslim world,

provoking a lively debate among scholars and intellectuals. Dr. Nader Fergany, the lead author of the Arab Human Development Report, and a contributor to Nature's section on Islamic science, believe that the primary reason is not so much a deficit in investment in research, the overarching deficiency is the absence of democratic institutions in the Islamic world and a tradition that smoothers all dissent and free expression, a vital prerequisite for the generation of new, innovative ideas. Institutions of learning, such as universities and colleges, in the West serve as crucibles where new theories are tested and vigorously debated. Arab/Muslim countries do not encourage public expression of dissent or deviation from established, long-embedded convictions.

Many scholars believe that today's global culture and the advent of the information age offer an unprecedented opportunity to the Islamic world to catch up with the western science by acquiring knowledge so freely available through the abundant sources of mass communication. There are other steps that can be taken readily. Dr. Fergany recommends that an important first measure would be the reversal of the brain drain. If sufficiently powerful incentives are offered that may lure back some of the bright scientists working in the West to their homelands.

(Courtesy: DAWN)



Napoleon's Profession of Islam

Shaheer Niazi

Islam is a religion akin to human nature. Thus every right-thinking man whose mind is not clouded with prejudices can easily appreciate the Divine Faith. The man who embraces Islam in fact discovers his own moral self. It is, therefore, no wonder that Napoleon would have professed Islam. Much has been written on this topic. Mr. Shaheer Niazi's article is a valuable contribution to the existing stock. (The Editor).

European historians have been deliberately evading the question whether Napoleon Bonaparte had professed Islam or not, only to suppress the issue. In many cases it is avoided but at the same time it is oft relegated to scanty and remote historical remarks.

A modern author, Tomlin speaks of Napoleon's conquest of Egypt in the following manner.

When Napoleon invaded Egypt in 1797 A.C. he took with him a large party of savants and archaeologists. With whatever degree of sincerity Bonaparte himself embraced oriental ideas, at one point he proclaimed his intention of becoming a Moslem and it appears that in spite of certain disqualifications (the authorities finally decided that circumcision was not an indispensable condition of embracing Islam) he was officially admitted to the faith. E.W.F. Tomlin: Great Philosophers of the East (Grey Arrow edition, pp. 30).

Tomlin's statement, which is seemingly based on French documents, definitely required no clarification but it is of course a guarded assertion. However, it provides sufficient ground to further investigation in this context. Before broaching the subject of Napoleon's inclination towards Islam, we must peel off the skin of the French Revolution to a visible depth, so that we

are able to adjudge the circumstances and causes that made Napoleon a man of difference.

The French Revolution was double-sided; on the one hand, it was a protest of the people against the tyranny of the Bourbon monarchy and on the other hand it was a resentment against the cruel conduct of the Christian clergy. "**Liberty, Equality and Fraternity**" was the motto of this revolution. The French people in 1789 contended (Philip van Ness Mayers: A Short History of Ancient, Mediaeval and Modern Times (ed. 1955), Vol. II, p. 264) for the same principles as the English people who defended in 1642 and 1688 C.E. and as the American colonists maintained in 1776 C.E. One is amazed to know that one-third of the total land in France was in the possession of the Christian clergy and the clergymen were leading their lives like landlords and nobles.

The revolutionary spirit (Ibid., p. 268) of the French philosophy was imbibed mostly by two great writers, namely, Voltaire (1694-1778). It may be noted that though some of Voltaire's disciples had developed an atheistic philosophy in his name but in fact Voltaire was a "theist" combating atheism and Christianity with equal force and Rousseau (1712-1778). Rousseau did not believe in the Pauline Christianity and rejected the philosophy of Redemption,

Atonement and Trinity, etc. He believed that God is One and Jesus was His Messenger of Peace. Evidently it is more akin to Islam than the present form of Christianity which has deviated from the original teachings of Jesus Christ.

Since there is no need to go into details of the French Revolution, we will proceed by summarily disposing of the events which may be the cause of far-reaching effects and changing the mind of the great General Napoleon Bonaparte. The first National Assembly of France came into being on 17 June, 1789 and 4 August, 1789 when the privileges granted to the nobles and the clergymen were totally abolished.

The Declaration of the Rights of Man (1789) included “the equality of men”, “the sovereignty of people” and “the law of impartial nature”, etc. The nationalization of the Church property after the promulgation of the Declaration of Rights, and the prosecution forced King Louis XVI to migrate secretly in 1791, but his failed and was subsequently punished to death.

After the execution of the queen, Marie Antoinette of the Girondins and of Madame Roland, the Convention was busy in reforming all the old institutions, customs and practices, to give a new life to France. Even the calendar was changed.

The young generation had reacted against Christianity to the extent of atheism. They had compelled the Bishop of Paris to abdicate (Ibid. p. 287) his office and then many of the clergymen followed his example throughout the country. The madness of the people culminated in the worship of reason. A celebrated beauty personating the “Goddess of Reason” was set upon the altar of the Notre Dame in Minaret

Paris.

Worship of the Supreme God

During the progress of events in 1794 there were two groups confronting each other; one was religious-minded and the other anti-religion. The Jacobins were divided in three factions, headed respectively by Danton, Robespierre; and Herbert Robespierre guided the religious movement and consequently freed himself from his most virulent Christianity, as he believed that the State can be founded on atheism.

In a remarkable address delivered before the Convention, he eloquently defended religion but on a rational basis. He declared that the people of France recognize the existence of the Supreme Being and His worship as an essential of life.

These were the circumstances when Napoleon Bonaparte came into the limelight as a military hero. At the age of twenty-seven in 1796-7, he animated a new spirit in the French army and gained a victory on the Italian front. The very next year, in 1798, the Directors of the Convention received Bonaparte with great enthusiasm but at the same time they were scared due to the fear of Bonaparte’s popularity; therefore, they engaged him very cleverly in wars and deputed him to conquer Egypt. He obeyed the orders, fought the “Battle of Pyramids” and entered Cairo as a conqueror. Cairo was the place where the problem of his conversion to Islam incubated.

Napoleon’s Profession

Napoleon Bonaparte was one of those persons who were deeply influenced by the doctrine of Voltaire, Rousseau and

Robespierre, but in one aspect he was far ahead of these persons and it was his understanding of Islam. It seems that he was fully conscious of the true meaning of the word "Islam" as it is used for all the Prophets of Bani Israel, the righteous persons and even the disciples (Havariyyun) of Jesus Christ, in the Holy Qur'an.

The author Nakula mentions that after the conquest of Egypt, Bonaparte addressed an assembly of the savants, governors and the nobles at Cairo on 2 July 1798 and declared:

"In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate. There is no god but Allah. He has got no son and He reigns without a partner.

"Surely I have told you on different occasions and I have intimated to you by various discourses that I am a Muslim and I glorify Prophet Muhammad and that I love Muslims."

On another occasion Napoleon had made an attempt to convince the Egyptians about the monotheistic religion of the French people. Once Goethe had also asserted his opinion about monotheism and righteousness, saying, "If this be Islam, do we not all live in Islam? Yes, all of us who have any moral life live in Islam".

It is also on record that in the same year, i.e. in 1798 Napoleon Bonaparte had celebrated with great pomp the birthday of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).

Some scholars are of the opinion that though Napoleon Bonaparte was not a hypocrite in his views on Islam and he had expressed his ideas clearly and unequivocally like a perfect monotheist Minaret

when he said: "J'aime mieux le religion de Mahomet" (I profess the religion of Muhammad), but this too cannot be ruled out that there was political tinge in his motive, but it makes no difference. We can still insist that Napoleon sincerely believed in the unity of God and Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). There are some fine discourses of Napoleon which are included in his "Memoirs of St. Helena". The following is a leaf from his diary:

In the evening after dinner the topic turned on the subject of religion. The Emperor participated in it for a long time. The Emperor with a very lively and warm emotion said, "All the people proclaim the existence of God. This is indubitable. But why the people of different faiths fight against each other at all the time and at all the places? Because men are of course human beings. Moreover the priests have spread everywhere fraud and falsehood... Ever since I have felt the desire of reestablishing religion, I would have made it serve as a basis and as foundation of social life, if I have had the power to do it. Religion is, in my opinion, the foundation of good morals, true principles and good manners. I cannot believe all that which runs counter to my reason, making one insincere and hypocritical. To say, whence I come, what I am and whether I go, is beyond my understanding, yet, nevertheless it is all truth. I am like a watch that exists but does not know itself". (Memorial de Sainte Helene, Vol. II, p. 269, referred to in Bonaparte et l' Islam, pp. 277-8).

"As for me (continues Bonaparte) my opinion is formed on the basis of a manuscript which I obtained at Milan. It was a copy of the History of the Jews by

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Josephus, in which one could see that the manuscript was interpolated by adding a few words about Jesus because Josephus had not mentioned any person by the name of Jesus in his time”.

“The Pope tormented me very much for possessing this manuscript. This much is certain that public opinion was in favour of the worship of a unique God, and those among the ancients who spoke about it, were well received. Similar is the case of mine because public opinion has made me Emperor”.

“I read the Bible and I find that Moses was an able man... The science which proves to us that the earth is not the centre of the heavenly movements has struck a great blow at religion. Joshua stops the sun. (Ibid.; cf. The Journal published from St. Helena, edited by General Baron under the title, Journal inedit de 1815-1818 A.C.).

“A prince of Italy one day gave a piece of gold to a Capuchin monk in the Church who wanted to ransom some souls from Purgatory. The monk being pleased with the gain cried out: ‘Ah! my Lord, I see thirty souls going to Paradise’. ‘Have you seen them?’ asked the prince. ‘Yes, my lord’, said the monk. See how they cheat men. That is why I prefer the religion of Muhammad (ﷺ) which is not based on ridiculous things.

The aggregate of the statement noted above can lead us easily to conclude that Napoleon was a man of understanding and whatever he did and declared was not merely a political stunt but a genuine urge that made its way to the profession of Islam which was the best way of salvation in his opinion. Now we refer to some remarks passed by Napoleon himself about Prophet Minaret

Muhammad (ﷺ) and Islam during the discussions that took place in St. Helena, where he had leisure time at his disposal. The following remarks are based on Bonaparte et l’ Islam (pp. 105-23), which are in fact the proceedings noted by the worthy secretaries whenever the discussions were held. He said:

- (a) Moses revealed the Existence of God to his nation, Jesus Christ to the Roman World, but Muhammad (ﷺ) to all the continents.
- (b) Arabia was idolatrous when six centuries after Jesus, Muhammad (ﷺ) introduced the worship of the God of Abraham, of Ishmael and Jesus.
- (c) The Arians and some other sects had disturbed the tranquility of the East by agitating the question of the nature of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Muhammad (ﷺ) declared that there was none but One God Who had no father, no son, and that Trinity imported the idea of idolatry.
- (d) Muhammad (ﷺ) was such a spiritual prince that within a few years there were thousands of men around him to obey, and half of the world was under their feet. They snatched away more souls from false gods, pulled down more idols and influenced the spiritual world in fifteen years more than Jesus did in his whole life-time. Muhammad (ﷺ) was of course a great man.
- (e) The Parthians, the Scythians, the Mongols, and the Tartars have generally shown themselves enemies of sciences and arts but reproach cannot be fastened on to the Arabs. They were fond of poetry, literature, medicine, chemistry and mathematics

and they managed the translations of *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, *Euclid* and other Greek and Latin authors, etc. They also founded colleges for medicine, astronomy and moral sciences.

A man named Ahmad had corrected the tables of Ptolemy. He also measured one degree of meridian from San'a to Kufah. The Arabs invented many things including sun-dials, astrolabes and numerical signs (algebra). The followers of Muhammad (ﷺ) had devoted their lives to the service of humanity.

Everybody knows that the Arabs were the great collectors of books. There were 6000 volumes on astronomy and 100,000 books in all in the royal library at Cairo, on different subjects. In the library at Cordova, there were 300,000 volumes. The arts and sciences that flourished for five hundred years under the Caliphs were brought to naught by the invasion of the Mongols.

- (f) Muhammad (ﷺ) reduced the number of wives which one could marry. Before him it was indefinite and a rich man could marry as many wives as he liked in Arabia. He thus restricted polygamy. Those who take objection to polygamy, perhaps, do not understand that polygamy is a social and climatical problem and the Orientals are different in temperament.

There was a time when polygamy was also authorized in the West. The Jews, the Assyrians, the Persians, the Tartars and the Africans could have more wives than one. There is another aspect of polygamy and that is to unite the people of different races in one family.

It may serve as a great instrument of unity between the black and the white locals and foreigners. Moreover, people learn to live together with the strangers. If we should like our colonies to give liberty, to get rid of the colour prejudice, we shall have to allow polygamy.

- (g) In the East, slavery never had the same character as in the West. The slavery of the East is like that which one finds in the Holy Scriptures. The slave inherits his master's property and marries his daughter. The majority of the Pashas had been slaves. Many of the grand viziers, all the Mamluks, 'Ali Bey, Murad Bey had been slaves. They began their lives by performing the most ordinary service in the house of their masters and were subsequently raised in status for their merits or by favour. In the West, on the contrary, the slaves have always been below the position of the domestic servants. The Romans emancipated their slaves but the emancipation did not give them equal rights like the free-born. ("*Bonaparte et l' Islam pp. 105-23*").

It is on record that Napoleon Bonaparte in one of his speeches had declared frankly: "The time is not far away when I shall be able to unite all the wise and educated men of all the countries and establish a uniform regime based on the principles of the Qur'an which alone can lead men to happiness".

This was the dream of Napoleon Bonaparte, the great conqueror and reformer, which could not unfortunately be fulfilled; and after this declaration by Napoleon, the anti-Islamic forces of Europe let him down, defeated him and confined him to prison in St. Helena.

The Immortality of the Soul

G.S. Hameed

Rumi in his immortal Masnavi describes the last scenes of the death of Bilal, the great negro companion of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).

When Bilal's last hours of life approached him, his beloved wife saw the pale face of her husband indicating how he was struggling between life and death. She was moved by the scene and said, "Alas, how terrible and sad it is that you are going to depart from this world!"

Bilal quite calmly replied, "Bibi, do not say like that. No doubt my struggle over my disease may apparently appear to be hard and terrible to you, but I depart from this world quite happily."

Rumi says when Bilal was explaining the philosophy of death to his wife, his face was aglow to such an extent that even the freshness and beauty of narcissus, rose and lily would pale before it.

You may well say he was a black Negro. But Rumi says he whose heart is black, would only see the black negro, but he who has been blessed with a gift of discrimination, would readily see his great worth in the inner sterling qualities and would adore such a black man as Bilal was, just as you adore the black or blue pupil of any eye – especially the beloved's eye.

Explanation by Hazrat Bilal

Bilal said: "Do not look at the dead body which is like a dark cloud, but look at the soul, which is like a luminous moon shining amidst the cloud or like an imperishable

lustre of a diamond or ruby, which cannot be destroyed, although you may crush it to pieces".

"Therefore, death in fact must be happily faced when the time for departure arrives from this transitory world to its proper place of destination-eternity."

Bilal continued to explain the philosophy of death to his wife thus:

"God Almighty in His wisdom has arranged His Plan in such a manner that limited as is the space of the world, in spite of its apparent magnitude and vastness, it cannot accommodate all the persons in the world for an eternal period since the time of Adam and Eve. It must continuously give an opportunity to other 'newcomers' to habitat themselves in this world.

"Besides this, the constitution of the human body is made by Nature in such a manner that in spite of all the best possible precautions to live a healthy life on most scientific principles, it is apt to decay after eighty or even a hundred years.

"The best possible precautions or best medical aid cannot save the person from final disintegration."

Comparisons

Bilal compared life to a king, and the body which contains life, to a palace.

When the palace becomes dilapidated and decayed, the king feels it no longer safe and fit to live in a crumbling palace. Hence, the king departs to his proper place of safety-a limitless life in the nearness of the Eternal.

The soul feels that it has been released from captivity as it was imprisoned in the body, and feels happy to get to the limitless eternity.

Bilal asks his wife just to ponder for a while how one feels in the dream. One feels as if one is roaming about freely thousands of miles away, visiting strange lands in a wink of the eye.

And just as one feels happy in a dream to get released from the body and experience the conquest of time and space, it is no wonder that the soul, like sound, when it gets released from its imprisoned cage, is capable of enjoying its aerial flight in limitless space.

Bilal concludes that the soul, when it gets released from the body, feels as happy to emerge as a child feels happy to emerge from the imprisonment of the mother's womb.

The body may feel pain when it releases the soul, just as the mother feels pain at the time of giving birth to a child.

Other Views

It is a popular belief among Muslims that the souls of relatives would be anxiously waiting to see what exalted position the soul of the next relative would occupy.

When the soul is freed from the four walls of its imprisonment, i.e., body, it enjoys freedom which it was incapable of enjoying so long as it was locked in the body. When the obstruction is removed, it is capable of enjoying a unique faculty in the abode of eternity.

The more virtuous the life in this world, the greater would be the place of exaltation of the soul in the Hereafter, like the souls of
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the prophets, saints, martyrs and righteous people.

Even a naked observation will show that matter cannot be destroyed. Water, which evaporates, is returned back to us from clouds in the form of rain.

We try to extract the essence or scent from flowers like rose and jasmine. The flower, like the body, may perish and become dust, but its essence cannot be destroyed.

You may crush the diamond to pieces but its inner qualities, lustre, and effect cannot be destroyed.

So with the soul. The cycle of life and soul is as mysterious as the creation of the Universe—the earth, the sun, the moon, the myriads of stars and all the gifts of Nature, which man is capable of observing or perceiving, through the senses.

No scientist has yet fathomed or unraveled how this Universe was evolved. Professor Einstein says the “inventor” of this evolution is God—call Him by whatever name you like: Allah, Eeshwar or Ahuramazda.

The Qur'an enlightens us that soul is “امر ربي” — it is an act of God. But of its knowledge only a little is given to us. Without cause, there will not be any effect.

Ibn Hazen and Darwin

It will not be out of place to mention here how the ancient philosophers like Al-Hazen and Jalaluddin Rumi were thinking six hundred years before Darwin, in terms of the doctrine of evolution and progressive development.

Al-Hazen propounded:

“In the region of existing matter, the mineral kingdom comes lowest; then comes the

vegetable kingdom; then the animal; and finally the human beings.

“By his body, he belongs to the material world, but by his soul he appertains to the spiritual or immaterial. Above him are purely spiritual beings like Angels.

“Thus, the lowest is combined by a chain of progress to the highest. But the human soul perpetually strives to cast off the bonds of matter and, becoming free, soars upwards again to God, from Whom it emanated.”

Shams Tabraiz

How beautifully the great Saint Shams Tabraiz, the teacher of Rumi, unfolds the secret of life:—

Happy the moment when we are seated in the palace,

Thou and I.

With two forms and two figures, but with one soul,

Thou and I.

It is indeed amazing how Rumi was also thinking scientifically in terms of evolution to explain the philosophy of continuity of the soul after death.

Rumi's Views

Rumi says (mind you, six hundred years before Darwin):—

“Dying from the inorganic we developed

into the vegetable kingdom.

“Dying from the vegetable kingdom, we rose to the animal. And leaving the animal, we became men.

“Then what fear that death will lower us? The next transition will make us what no mind can conceive. We shall merge in the One True Infinity, as in the beginning.

“Have we not all been told that all of us will return unto Him? ‘إنا لله وانا اليه راجعون’.

“How rationally and scientifically the Qur’an enlightens us!”

Abode of the Soul

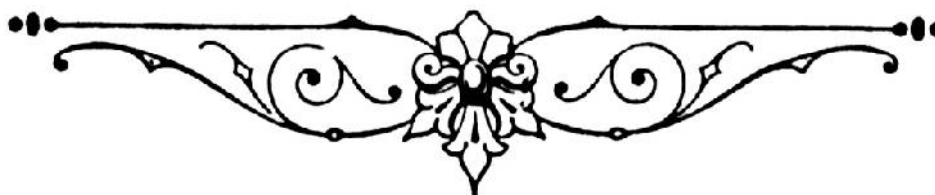
Whatever good you do in this world will be found already in the next world. Whatever evil you do will also be there. You are “weighed and tested” and you must not be found wanting.

To be good and virtuous and to serve humanity is the aim of perfection, bringing solace to the soul; and all the other blessings of the earth and heaven will automatically follow.

But all true faiths are one on this cardinal principle of Islam:

“Could this universe come into being without a Creator? Could there be an effect without the cause?”

This cause is, then, the abode of the souls—the Prime Soul.



SELF REALISATION: Its Meaning and Need

A. K. Faizuddin Ahmed

“Verily We proposed to the Heavens and to the Earth and to the mountains to receive the trust, but they refused the burden and they feared to receive it. Man alone undertook to bear it, but both proved unjust, senseless.” – The Qur’an.

The creation of man is objective. The object is clearly understood from the Qur’anic verse referred to above. So man was created with the object of a divine trust reposed in him. Allah created man with clay and He also created Jinn from “Smokeless fire”. He created man with greater potentialities than other creations, because man is to carry the divine trust. Man has been given the wisdom and power of reasoning to differentiate right from wrong. This is the whole theme around which all actions and omissions of man must move.

How can man carry the trust unless he appreciates the will behind the trust? How can a man discharge the duties of a trustee unless he realises the purpose of the trust? So the first and foremost thing required of man is to understand Allah and the scope of the trust he is to carry. To understand or realise the power of Allah, man first of all is to realise himself. He must realise himself, his position and relation with Allah and the universe if he desires to realise Allah. Allah is always in man and it is therefore easy for man to realise Allah in Absolute Reality, if man can only understand himself by unbiased reflection and comprehension about the universe in all its embodiments.

1. Allah created the rest of His creations (*Makhlūqat*) for man and subservient to man. The sun, the moon, the air and the rain, the sea

and the earth and all in between, have been created for the benefit of man both in spiritual and material aspects of his life. That does not, however, mean that the man should be a despot in his conduct. As Iqbal has put it: "Man is related to Nature and this relation, in view of its possibility as a means of controlling Her forces, must be exploited in the interests, not of unrighteous desire for domination, but in the interest of free upward movement of spiritual life." So, the relation of man with the universe is the corner stone for the guidance of man in carrying out the trust which he received. The whole behaviour of man in his natural conduct is to emanate and work out of the fountain-spring of his relation with the universe.

As man accepted the trust which was refused by the heavens and the earth and the mountains, he did so with a full sense of responsibilities. Responsibility carries with it all duties. Without duties, there can be no responsibilities. So, man, to carry the trust, must pick up his duties with success. Here man is confronted what he is to enquire of the scope and the will behind the trust. The will behind the trust is simple. It is to establish the laws of God on the earth during the probation-ship of man and to

falsify the fear expressed by the Angels that man "will do ill and shed blood" and will not celebrate God's praises and extol His holiness.

Man is therefore bound to worship Allah and celebrate His praises by establishing regular prayer. Prayer is a mode of remembrance (*Dhikr*) of Allah with the sole object of establishing a communion with Allah and attaining Absolute Reality. When a man is in prayer, his desire must be to have a view of the countenance (sight) of God by approaching so close to Him. This position cannot be attained by anybody by dint of merits of his prayer, but it is a kind gift of God to whom He pleases. This prayer does not mean perpetual and formal prayer in isolation. Such prayer is to be fixed and established by man in the turmoil of other spheres of pure lives. To attain perfection in prayer, absolute devotion is called for. For absolute devotion isolation is the prime need. But that isolation is not the isolation which some people seek to attain by renouncing the worldly affairs by engaging themselves in deep thoughts about the power (*Hikmat*) of Allah. He is most likened unto Allah who passes night in calling Him by standing and prostrating (Qur'an). It is by prayer and prayer alone that man is raised high in his position. Best of such prayer is the prayer in the later part of the night (*Tahajjud Prayer*) when man can have complete isolation.

Man by being the favoured creation and having the gift of sense and knowledge is obliged to express his gratitude to Allah by directing his gifted power and energy in the way of Allah to establish the Laws of Allah by humbly and usually seeking the favour of God in every action and aspiration. It is desired by God that man should direct his

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natural energies in establishing social order wherein the supreme and immutable laws will be respected, followed and obeyed. For such a purpose, man is to mould and form his inner self and develop a dictating and commanding capacity in such a way as to raise a wall of hindrance against any inroad of evil desire that is also active in man. Man is in a perpetual struggle with the evil forces of nature and it is to conquest these forces of the desires for attaining perfection and salvation. If a man renounces the worldly affairs and social spheres of human life with a view to conquer the evil, he does not conquer it, but avoids it in a selfish mode of life and thereby neglects the active aspect of human life by keeping his eyes closed against the movement and swim of Nature.

To appreciate the position of man in relation to God, which position man is supposed to give expression to through prayer, he should first of all realise the purpose of his prayer. Why is man to glorify Allah by his prayer? Is it for the benefit of Allah that man should pray? Has prayer been commanded by Allah as He is in need of any prayer from man? The answer is: "No". Allah is not in the need of prayer. Prayer has been commanded for the sole benefit of man. By prayer, man traverses the "straight path" to establish a holy communion with Allah and to attain perfection and a sublime position in this life and in the Hereafter. In this way by prayer and worship, man is to realise that Allah is the "*Khaliq*" and he is the "*Makhluk*" and he is sustained and nourished by Allah. This realisation of man is his *Iman* and it is the spirit of this realization that will actuate man in the discharge of his duties as a trustee which have been reposed on him. With this

spirit so realised, man will proceed to establish the Laws of God in the earth for attaining unity of mankind through the doctrine of *Tawhid*.

This is the first step which man must traverse in the way of his self-realisation from which he is to learn that his relation with Allah is that of a *Makhluk* to *Khaliq*. He is to return to God and is answerable to Him for his actions; his power and will are limited and those of Allah are unlimited. The next step towards self-realisation of man is his appreciation and understanding of his position as a trustee in relation to the universe and the first point that is to be picked up by man in this regard is to find out his position in relation to other men and rest of the creation.

God created man in pairs, which means that man would live in society and in a social order as enjoined by Allah in the Qur'an. It is therefore a prerequisite of such a society that man should be conscious of his duties. It is the duty of a Muslim to "enjoin what is right and to prevent what is wrong" (Qur'an). Man is therefore to realise and see that he is not a party to doing what is wrong and he prevents his fellow-beings from doing any manner of wrong. When man realises this and accepts this spirit for his day-to-day conduct, perfect equity and justice is sure to reign supreme in the social sphere of man. If man is conscious about his duties in the social orbit and he faithfully discharges his duties as such, then he will have no need of being concerned about his rights, as individual rights in that society would automatically come to be respected and enforced. If none commits any wrong, there can be no infringement of anybody's rights and no clamour for assertion of individual rights;

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such a social order is the ultimate aim of a Qur'anic Society which man has been enjoined to form and organize.

Doubt is harboured in some quarters as to the possibility of a social order where there will be no wrong. To them, it seems, it is not practicable for human beings to live in pure life, free from the clutches of the active forces of evil in them and around them. To them, evil-hood is a part and parcel of human life. But such a conception is basically wrong. Man is created an honest and pure being and it is the world that makes man corrupt and debased. Is it unnatural for man to remain pure and honest? The answer is: "No" Man is naturally pure, otherwise he would not have been chosen to be the Vicegerent of God. Why do some think that purity and honesty is impossible? It is because they have so much debased and deformed their souls by a totally materialistic outlook of life that their souls seem to have been "sealed up." They do not consider anything in terms of moral value even though moral dictates are dormant in them. They certainly do not desire what is hateful (*Munkar*) but most unconsciously perpetuate the hateful things in their own affair. When any of them, while passing by, finds that a man is robbing another man of his money in the way, he will certainly have his conscience pricked against it and may even resist it, but when he himself robs off another, his conscience will not prick, only because the motive for gain is then upper-most in him as he has taken up the passion (*Hawa*) of gain as his deity to be worshipped for the moment. If a man therefore does not desire the hateful in others, why cannot he actuate the same conscience against himself? This is because he has debased his soul by selfish

pursuits and does not desire of himself what he desires of others. It is only a question of rational desire to live a pure life according to the standard of a Qur'anic Society. If it is the urge of a soul from within dictating passions towards moral values of life and pure behaviour for rational exercise of the limited free-will granted to man, it is an urge for desire to maintain the spirit of Tawhid in active movement to establish amity of man in action and in feelings that will inevitably bring in an Islamic social order in its true form and force.

From such a social order man will come into the sphere of his life in the state which is but a combination of socialist group of men in a large area for a common cause. The state in Islam is a machinery to see that the laws of God are abided by the members of the social groups and the sovereignty of God is respected. Every state must have an ideal to be attained and it is the duty of every individual citizen to constitute his might towards the attainment of that ideal according to his means and capacity. If the state happens to lose its ideals, disintegration is sure to set in and bring its ultimate extinction. If the individuals do not cherish to uphold the ideal, the state cannot function rightly as every individual is a limb of the composite state organ. If one limb becomes defective, the whole organ is affected. The individual therefore is to realise himself in reference to his relation to the society and the state to be able to identify himself with the greater cause of the state, for the, greater good. This realisation is the crux for the state to uphold the balance of justice as enjoined in the Qur'an. If this realisation is achieved, there can be no problem for the state. Every individual then will discharge his

duties according to the plan and programme of the state. The educator will educate his pupil to make him a true citizen for shouldering his responsibility according to the spirit and terms of the trust; the producer will produce commodities according to requirements of the millat and put them in the market with the spirit of service and construction; the worker will go on doing his duties for the good of himself and ultimately of the community accepting work as a joy of life and not as pain; the officer will carry his business with the unbiased spirit of corporate service; the administrator will see that the balance of justice is upheld in every sphere of activities of the state according to the spirit of the trust.

The religion of Islam has regulated and prescribed in a very just and wise manner what are the rights, duties and relationship of man with his fellows in society and in a similar degree to the state. The *millat* or the community has been made responsible for its members and at the same time the individual has been enjoined to observe and look to the interests and well-being of other members in the same manner as he guards and observes his own interests and welfare. The individuals are therefore answerable for the *millat*. This is a very nice arrangement as it creates a mutual responsibility between the individual and the community and the administrators of the state. There can be no doubt that such an arrangement is the best way to combating and eradicating social evil and corruption if the principles of moral values are scrupulously observed by the members. This is possible only when the individual and, as a consequence, the whole community, (continued on page 29)

The Role of the Muslim Mother in Education in Contemporary Society

Aliah Schleifer

The woman in Islam, like most other women, has various capabilities and responsibilities. To the Muslim woman, however, her responsibilities are of prime importance as she lives here worldly life in anticipation of the reward to come — that of Paradise. Thus, she looks to her religion for guidance about how she can best divide her time and energy, and upon doing so, it becomes obvious that certain activities are not desirable; others are permissible, but not essential, while some are of maximum importance to her goal – one of which is the dutiful concern for her children. She also sees that she must be firm in her outlook, regardless of the fleeting trends of a pragmatic world. In this respect, there are three basic factors to consider in relationship to the Muslim mother's role in the education of her children today. The first is, an understanding of what is meant by "education". The second point is what the mother should do to fulfill her role as educator and the final point; is how contemporary life affects the Muslim woman and her responsibilities toward her children.

Defining Education

The word "education" in English can be translated in two ways in Arabic: *tarbiyah* and *ta'lim*. In fact, the Ministry of Education in Egypt is called: *wizarah at-tarbiyah wa at-ta'lim*, thus implying that "education" is a combination of the two. If one goes back to the original meanings of these words, Ibn Manthur, for example, in *Lisan al-'Arab* says that the root of *tarbiyah*, i.e., *riha* (رَبَا) Minaret

means to increase, to grow, and thus, *tarbiyah* is used for everything that grows, e.g., the child, the plant, etc. This would give the meaning of "rearing" or "up-bringing" in English, i.e., the reference to children, the careful responsibility for the years up to adulthood when growing stops. In the traditional understanding of *ta'lim*, the root '*ilm* (علم) means: knowledge, awareness and perception. According to *Lisan al-'Arab* in the discussion of '*allamahu al-bayan*, it is this "knowledge, awareness, perception." which Allah has given man that distinguishes man from beast. Therefore, '*ilm*, in its Islamic ambience implies something uplifting, not just an awareness of sensual perceptions or even a gathering of useless or detrimental information. The Qur'anic lexicon, *Mu'jam Al-Mufahras Li Alfaz Al-Qur'an Al-Karim*, further indicates the Qur'anic meaning of '*ilm*. In surah Ar-Rum (30:56), '*ilm* is combined with *iman* (faith), and who is better than parents to instill in a child knowledge that comes from faith, especially the mother – by example – as she is more likely to be physically present with the child more hours of the day. Also, in the surahs that mention accounts of the Prophets (عليهم السلام), '*ilm* is combined with "wisdom", e.g., surah Al-Oasas (28:14) which is a reference to the Prophet Musa (عليه السلام), Ibn Kathir quotes Mujahid as saying that the combination of "wisdom and '*ilm*" is prophecy (*an-nubuwa*). The prophetic version of this kind of '*ilm* came purely as a Mercy from Allah and only when and if He deemed a human being

suitable and ready for it, but it gives us a guide to what the highest form of 'ilm for human beings is, and a model to strive towards, i.e., knowledge which is used wisely. Then, in surah Al-Mu'min (40:7), two of Allah's characteristics are described in combination — Mercy and 'ilm (i.e., Awareness), thus providing the deep understanding the human beings to the best of their ability that they must not misuse their knowledge in cruel and unmerciful ways.

The modern usage of the words: *tarbiyah* and *ta'lim* have come to overlap in a sense while, at the same time, they have lost their spiritual meanings and gained new secular ones. Hans Wehr defines *tarbiyah*, with relationship to people, as: education, upbringing; teaching, instruction; pedagogy, and *ta'lim* as: education; apprenticeship and *fann at-ta'lim* as: pedagogy. Thus, if the mother is to understand her role as a Muslim in educating her children, she may find it necessary to re-educate herself in her religion, beginning with the clarification that education is not just something that is done in schools, but rather it is a joint effort, a process from birth to adulthood that provides the child with knowledge, awareness and perception, a knowledge which is spiritually uplifting, which is based on strong faith, and which must be used wisely and mercifully.

The Mother as Educator

Education as defined above concerns all kinds of knowledge: behavioral and theoretical. It is not even easy to make the distinction between religious and secular, as is often done, since all information and perceptions — from the Islamic point of view — should be filtered by religion and

should be a vehicle for uplifting the individual. In fact, it was this awareness that allowed the great thinkers of Islam to tread in the deep waters of man's accomplishments and rise above the useless to discover the meaningful. Thus, the Muslim mother has a full-time job in the training and educating her children in the love for and knowledge about their religion, and in the application of these perceptions to their lives in general, both inside the home and outside - with friends, at school and ultimately in the greater community, where, hopefully, they will make their individual contributions to society as a whole.

Of course, the training and educating children in the home should be a shared effort between both parents. The mother's role, in this respect, however, is clearly defined in the well-known hadith found in Al-Bukhari and Muslim:

“On the authority of Ibn, 'Umar (RDA) the Prophet (ﷺ) said: Each of you is a guardian and is responsible for his ward. The ruler is a guardian and the man is a guardian of the members of his household; and the woman is a guardian and is responsible for her husband's house and his offspring; and so each of you is a guardian and is responsible for his ward.” This great effort which the mother exerts is both recognized and rewarded, as the Qur'an says:

"Lo! I cause not the work of any worker, male or female, to be lost." (3:195).

"And whoever does deeds of righteousness - be he male or female - and he is a believer; those will enter Paradise, and not the least injustice will be done to them." (4:124).

As religious knowledge forms the basis for understanding and dealing with life, Muslims look to the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) to provide guidelines as to which knowledge is essential. Every Muslim's mother should assume responsibility for teaching the behavioral aspects and the *fard* (obligatory duties) to her children. As for the informational aspect of education, this, of course, depends on the capability of the mother, and the more she knows, the better educated her children will be. The child first begins to learn by repetition and imitation. How much the child actually understands during the early years is not clear, although recent studies indicate that at some deep level of consciousness, he perceives more than we think. What is important, for our purposes is that the Prophet (ﷺ) considered the age of seven to be a suitable age to begin actually teaching the child as this is the age at which he obviously begins to understand. And by the age of ten, he should be responsible for some of the *fard* duties, e.g., prayer and fasting. In the early childhood period, it is important to remember that children's questions should be answered, but simply and briefly, as much as the child can understand.

The focal point of the Five Pillars of Islam is the *shahadah*, thus, it should be the first thing a child hears at birth and through repetition and imitation, he should learn to say it as soon as possible.

"On the authority of Ibn 'Abbas (RDA), the Prophet (ﷺ) said: Pronounce as the first words to your children, 'There is no God but Allah', and recite to them at death, 'There is no God but Allah.'" (Al-Hakim)

"On the authority of 'A'ishah (RDA):
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Whoever brings up a small child until he says 'There is no God but Allah', Allah will not call to account." (At-Tabarani in Al-Awsat; Ibn 'Addi)

Yet the child's understanding of the meaning of the *shahadah* will come as a by-product of learning and accepting the other four Pillars, along with the other acts of Sunnah which are so intrinsically a part of the life of a Muslim. For example, in learning to make the five obligatory prayers, the child learns submission to Allah's will as he sees his mother, at the early stage of his life, daily watching whatever she is doing to make her prayers. Furthermore, he begins to learn the importance of cleanliness when he sees that she makes *wudu* before prayer. This attribute, easily generalized, can be applied to all aspects of his life so that it will not be difficult for him to understand that the concept of cleanliness is a basic characteristic of the Muslim. Short *du'a* (s) which are another form of prayer are easy for children to learn, and even before they can understand the full meaning of the words, they can begin to grasp the concept that Allah is the Provider, the Sustainer, the One to Whom we give thanks. At an early age, the child can learn the 99 names of Allah, which will deepen his knowledge of Allah and His relationship to His creatures, and will also give the child goals to strive towards the human level. Praying together at home is preparation for *Juma* prayer, and is in itself another lesson for the child as it teaches him that a Muslim should be precise in his behaviour and orderly, additional traits which can easily be generalized.

Fasting during the month of Ramadan, zakat and other forms of charity, and if

possible, the hajj or the umrah will also be internalized if at first they are behaviours which have been naturally imitated by the child. The reasons for doing them can come later. When the child begins to ask questions about Creation, Paradise, Hell, etc., this is the time to start telling him stories from the Qur'an and the life of the Prophet (ﷺ). Not only will this provide the correct answers his young mind seeks, but it will also give him further role models and an awareness of additional facts that will help him to complete his understanding of worldly and spiritual reality. The Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Companions (RDA) will become his lifetime guide to right and wrong. He will begin at first, of course, with their application to eating, dressing, greetings, politeness, manners of speech, respect for elders and other details of life.

A further factor of the *tarbiyah* aspect of education is role definition. It should be clear to the child, lest by virtue of the daily events of the house-hold, which behaviour are distinctively masculine, which are feminine and which are essential for any human being. The mother is responsible for training her daughters in child-rearing and household duties, and for encouraging her sons to become the providers and protectors of their future families. At the same time, she must not make either the girls or the boys so rigid that they would not be willing to help their future partner in time of need as we know from the hadith that the Prophet (ﷺ) permitted women to provide charitable financial help to their husbands when necessary and he (ﷺ) himself helped his wife 'Aishah when she needed it. So, the idea is not to bring one's children up to be arrogantly selfish, but to

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instill in them by example, the benefits, to the family and to society, of a home which is based on equilibrium, a home in which each individual tries to fulfill his or her role to the best of his or her ability.

As the child begins to develop at school, he will begin to require help with this educational process, rather than solely *tarbiyah*. At this stage, when *tarbiyah* and *ta'lim* begin to merge, the parents' input is crucial, again, especially the mother's as she is more available. These are the filtering years, which never stop, actually until death. But, at this stage, when the child is surrounded by a newer and different kind of knowledge, he desperately needs an adult whom he trusts to help him to fit into the world as he has learned, it should be, i.e., a reality based on the tenets and practices of Islam. This need becomes strongest during the period of adolescence when physical changes produce emotional upsets, when peer pressure is most intense and when school knowledge begins to broaden greatly. Thus, children need their mothers at later stages, as much as, if not more than they did in the early period.

The Effect of Contemporary Life

Today, especially in the West, women are working in all fields. Due to their intense involvement with their jobs, their concern with domestic responsibilities is steadily decreasing. They have no time and in many cases no desire. They relinquish childrearing responsibilities to schools which reinforce a blurring of social identity, pictorially and even in the language of the texts used, schools which are consciously dedicated to an irreligious perspective. Some women in the Muslim world are

affected by what is happening in the West and following their example; others maintain full-time jobs in order to supplement their husband's income as life has become much more expensive to manage. However, the net result on family-life is the same, whatever the reason. In fact this trend of the full-time working mother is one of the main factors that has led to a serious breakdown in social ties, morality and sexual identity, all of which are the cornerstones of a cohesive society. As a result of this growing lack of sexual identity and morality, homosexuality is on the increase—and AIDS. According to the *Herald Tribune* of Sept. 21-22, 1985: "The number of cases of acquired immune deficiency syndrome has doubled annually since the disease was first diagnosed in the U.S. and it is speculated that if this rate continued, the entire American population would be wiped out in fifteen years."

In the West, parents and children have become alienated, leading to an increase in old-age homes; thus creating a situation in which the younger no longer benefit from the wisdom and stability of mature adults, who love them. Drug addiction among the youth is on the rise, and the lack of concern for marriage as an institution has resulted in an increase in unwed mothers, broken homes and legalized abortion, to mention just a few of the problems. Some actual statistics are found in a front page article of the *Herald Tribune* of Nov. 4, 1985:

"At least 15 percent of American (16 to 19 years of age) are unlikely to become productive adults because they have already become disconnected' from society as a result of drug abuse, delinquency pregnancy, unemployment or dropping out of school.

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"Almost two million youths, including up to half the high school population in some major cities, fall in that group and the number is growing, according to a study conducted by a business subcommittee of the Education Commission of the States.

"Drug and alcohol abuse among young people is 60 times higher than it was in 1960.

"The higher incidence of suicide, crime, drug use and pregnancy among teens, the report said, are all signs of alienation and disconnection. All suggest that family, community, school and other agencies of socialization and integration (presumably Religion) are not working as they once were."

Some Western women are beginning to have second thoughts about the problem of maintaining careers, even top-level ones, and family responsibilities at the same time. *New York magazine* (July 15, 1985) did a cover story about this phenomenon. The following are some sample quotes which give an indication of the underlying reasons for their change of mind:

"Rebecca Murray works as a records manager for a large financial institution and earns \$ 40,000 a year – with plenty of potential to move up. But none of this compensates for what Rebecca feels is missing in her life.

'Time', she says, 'I don't have enough time for my child, I don't have enough time for myself, and I never have enough time for my husband. He gets whatever I have left at the end of each day, and usually that's nothing?'"

"Phyllis Harlem gets home at 7.00 or 7.30 each night feeling exhausted. Her long

hours at work as a lawyer make time with her two year old daughter more precious. She says, I adore her so, and I feel so much guilt at being away that I'm probably too intense when I'm with her.' The child rarely goes to sleep before 9.30 or 10.00 p.m. – and Phyllis rarely stays up past 11.00. That leaves little time for anything – including her husband. 'We never sit and just talk,' she says. 'We're too tired.'

"The opposite choice is being made by an increasing number of women who spent the past 10 or 15 years building careers – but now find their priorities shifting. Prompted by an unexpectedly powerful desire to spend more time with their children, more and more women are cutting back (i.e., on the time they spend working outside the home.)."

Conclusion

If the Western woman is beginning to re-think her role in society, what about the Muslim mother? Will she follow the "liberated" trend, or will she stick firmly to her traditions? Will she consider career and money first important, or will she choose family stability? And ultimately, will she choose the superficial rewards of this world over the eternal reward of Paradise? These choices are becoming increasingly more difficult for some women to make. However, those mothers who have decided to give prime importance to the educating of their children will have given their children a foundation which schools cannot fully provide. They will have given them the

bases for faith, piety and love of Allah and His Prophet (ﷺ). They will have opened their minds to a desire for useful knowledge, which might eventually lead to wisdom. They will have helped to form the characteristics of generosity, mercy and justice in their children's personalities, along with the *adab* of cleanliness, orderliness, precision, politeness, etc., just a few of the benefits society may reap from her efforts. Additionally, these same children can be expected to grow into mature adults who will return her kindness, devotion and concern by placing her in the highest position of respect, such respect and concern as can only be deserved by the greatest of generosity:

"On the authority of Abu Hurayrah (RDA) : A man came to Allah's Apostle (ﷺ) and said: O Apostle of Allah! Who is more entitled to be treated with the best companionship by me?' The Prophet (ﷺ) said, 'Your mother' The man said, 'Then who?' The Prophet (ﷺ)' said, 'Your mother.. Then man said again, 'Then who?' The Prophet (ﷺ) said, 'Then your father'." (Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

Thus the active participation of a Muslim mother in both the *tarbiyah* and the *ta'lim* aspects of the behavioral and theoretical education of her children forms the spiritual and psychological cornerstone of the future generation of believing Muslims.

(Courtesy Muslim Education Quarterly)



The light of the soul

Dr. Waffie Muhammad

We must understand that when Allah (swt) created the human body and He fashioned it in the Garden, Shaitan looked down on it and had one thing in his mind about Adam, i.e., "I am better than him." Allah (swt) records this in Surah A'raf;

Allah said: *"What prevented thee from bowing down when I commanded thee? He said: 'I am better than he: Thou didst create me from fire and him from clay'"* (Chapter 7, verse 12)

When Shaitan failed to see was the fact that Hazrat Adam (A.S.) had a soul.

What we have to achieve in this world is to allow the light of our soul to permeate the cells of our body and Insha Allah we will become a body of light. If you can cause the light of your soul to permeate your cells, your body will no longer be flammable because light of the soul is more refined than fire. This is what Shaitan does not want the progeny of Adam (A.S.) to achieve because we will become superior to him.

Allah (swt) has made a communication channel between the soul and the physical body and this is your nafs. The nafs can have a negative or positive impact upon the soul. Therefore, because of this, Shaitan will work on our nafs. If your nafs contributes positively, you will be polishing and shining your soul, and cause it to grow. Example, if you restrict your hands from committing evil, the light of your soul will flow into your hands. We should all learn and recite Dua e Noor after every salaah;

"O Allah! Let there be light in my heart, light in my eye sight, light in my hearing, light on my right, light on my left, light above me, light under me, light in front me and light behind me, and provide me with light."

If you become a refined light, Shaitan has no way of getting to you. He will attempt to get you by decorating the callings of the nafs, i.e. make those things look beautiful so you will be inclined to it. You will find this mentioned in the Holy Qur'an in the following verse:

"By Allah, We (also) sent (Our Prophets) to Peoples before thee (O Prophet): but Satan made their own acts seem alluring (i.e. beautiful) to them". (16:63)

He does not want you to stand up on the Day of Qiyamah with a personality of light. This is why Islam has practices that are divinely revealed for a purpose. Islamic practices are meant to divert your attention from the material things and allow you to refine yourself.

In order to achieve success in this world we must practice humility, simplicity and submission. Don't become arrogant. If you have faith and trust in your Lord, He will take care of your affairs, insha Allah. We really cannot understand the wisdom of Allah (swt). What we have to do is to build our light so that we can gain closeness to Him. Refine your light. Material things can either help or distract, depending on how you use it. You can benefit from it or it can bring about your destruction. One of the best avenues for success is simplicity. One example of humility and simplicity in Islamic

history was when Hazrat Umar (RA) entered Jerusalem after the Muslims took over control. Hazrat Umar (RA) entered by walking beside a donkey on which his servant was sitting. Once in the city he was taken to the Al-Aqsa sanctuary. When he reached the Noble Sanctuary of Al-Aqsa, Umar (RA) was shocked to find it covered in rubbish. The Caliph knelt down immediately and with his own hands began to clear the area. Shaitan knows our weakness and he will use them against us. He will also attack you through your companions, so be careful. May be this is one reason why Allah says to us in the following verse about our wives and our

wealth. He says:

“O you who believe! Let not your riches or your children divert from the remembrance of Allah. If any act thus, the loss is their own”. (63:9)

“O you who believe! Truly, among your wives and your children are (some that are) enemies to yourselves, so beware of them. But if you forgive and overlook, and cover up (their faults): Verily, Allah is Most-Forgiving, Most Merciful”. (64: 14)

This year let us sincerely try to cause the light of our soul to permeate the cells of the body and insha Allah, Allah (swt) will take care of the rest.

THE QUR'ANIC FOUNDATIONS AND STRUCTURE OF MUSLIM SOCIETY'

By

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Deep Meditations

Muhammad Shafique Siddiqui

In one of the Ahadith the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said EHSAN means that your worshipping to be such as if you are seeing Allah. But if this does not happen you should believe that He is seeing you. In the light of this Hadith we should meditate into the entire manifestations of Allah including our own moves, their effects and after effects. This mode of 'accountability' would reveal where we are at fault and what further steps are needed to amend it.

The state of meditation is such that one forgets his very existence. Sometime he is so engrossed in his meditation that he fails to note what is going all around him. Imagine the situation where a man is sitting close to a king. He is there in a state that at all events he had to keep the honour and respect of the king in the forefront. So naturally his total attention is focused towards the king. Bibi Zulaikha once when close to Hazrat Yusuf placed a cover at the mouth of an idol. On enquiry she said I cannot face the idol when I am in different pose. So the basic treatment in meditations is the knowledge that Allah knows and watches all his moves and that if one does commit a vice in spite of such attention, he is bold enough to challenge Him and if he feels that He doesn't see and watch him, he is an infidel.

While meditating into the affairs of this Universe one should not forget that piety is the crux of all events. For him in this world the best is that, which is for the life Hereafter. "About the sustenance he should have firm faith that Allah has promised his food and He alone feeds.

Believe it that your sustenance for existence is procured. It may be available through your efforts. Even if you do not gain it through your efforts it would come to you on voluntary basis.

The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) has enjoined upon all to keep always three things in mind. Never care the instruction of a man who is out to tell you about the moves of Allah. Let it be an admitted fact that all is managed and arranged by Allah. The second thing is that, all his matters be away from hypocrisy and the third is that between the matters of this world and the world Hereafter one should take up the matter of Hereafter first. So when the meditation centred round the manifestation of Allah one should sit keeping his face towards *Qibla*. One should keep in mind that at such manifest a move, one should have sincerity of purpose in the forefront. One should make out the programme that after فرض (Obligatory) he should take up نوافل (Voluntary). One should carefully select his share for Hereafter during ones stay in this world. One should note that his time is involved in three consecutive days. One that is passed away. He cannot make amends on all that has passed away. The other is the one that is to come. For this he should not bother. The present day is all in all for him to do. So care for this day and think deeply what is to be done today. The crux of all this thinking is the fact that none knows what is the time of his departure from this Universe. So he must take all moments as the final one and obey the commands of Allah faithfully. In yet an another Hadith the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said there are four

modes that are to be kept in mind. The first that one should do “*Munajat*” of Allah; the second that he should ponder over the working of this world and all the manifestation of Allah. The third moment may be used toward the compliance of his necessities and urges. So while on the dinner table he must continue *Zikr* and *Fikr*. By this he would be able to utilize such moments to his advantage and in achievements of *Khair Kathir* for Hereafter.

Accountability is yet another way of meditation. One should take account of his deeds daily. This should be on regular basis. Whatever one has done, right or wrong, he can be in a better position to judge it. So where there is a way to rectify it, it should be rectified immediately. And if it cannot be done because it was an act of sin, one should then beg Allah’s forgiveness.

Some sages when meditating kept in view that they were enveloped on all sides by the Noor of Allah. By this they realised that a river of Noor flew all around them and they were encircled with a sense of beauty, peace and mercy. This state continued till it was broken by interruption from outside. Some sages have meditated the entire course of their death and their burial procession to the graveyard including, the moaning of their children and relatives all around. The final internment in the lap of grave made them ready to reply the questions of Angels. The broodings in regard to the daily life is somewhat like this. How the affairs of the day were managed

by him, what, if any, were the ‘matters requiring his needs and requirements, how far he succeed in the performance of his obligatory duties and what he gained in his life in this world and in the life Hereafter. If committed virtuous deeds, he felt grateful to Allah and if committed some sin, he begged for forgiveness.

Some sages considered deeply into their birth and then the entire course of their life, right from the childhood to the grown up age. In such a long span of life, every move appeared before him like a film producing certain effects. In this practice he found where he had pitfalls and where he could do some service to Allah and his creatures. Sages have said that when Allah wants a man a better his life in the other world he makes his eyes sharp enough to see for himself where he had been wrong. Then for all these wrongs he feels compunction and remorse and thus the penance of all these miserable moments is so great that tears roll down his eyes and he seeks pardon from Allah most humbly and earnestly.

To be brief by dedication to meditation, we bring round before our eyes all aspects of human behaviour, the role that we have played and still playing, in our present life set up. This is a great achievement that one feels sorry for past misconduct and prepares for future correct behaviour in all events of life.

May Allah bless us with *toufiq* for acting on the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Ameen.

حاسبوا قبل ان تحاسبوا ط

Lailut-ul-Qadr (Night of Power When the Holy Quran Descended)

M.M.Ansari

The expression "a thousand months" used in the verse is not to be taken literally. It rather points to an indefinitely long span of time, a time beyond human count, or timeless time so to say. Time has not only a quantitative but also a qualitative connotation. Related to the revelation of the Word of God, it touches the very apex of excellence.

"We have indeed revealed this (Quran) on Lailat-ul-Qadr. And what will explain to you what Lailat-ul-Qadr is? Lailat-ul-Qadr is better than a thousand months. In it come down the Angels and the Spirit (Jibrail), by God's permission, with all decrees. Peace — this until the break of the dawn." (Al-Quran:-97)."

The Arabic word QADR has several shades of meaning. It stands for Power, Measure, Honour, Worth, Destiny, Determination, etc. Commenting on the above cited Quranic Chapter, Hazrat Shaikh Mohiyuddin 'Abdul Qadir (RA) says, "Revelation of Holy Quran began on this night, i.e. Lailat-ul-Qadr. Then Almighty God did bless it forever with three excellences. First, status of this night is elevated to so good that practicing goodness this night is like doing it for one thousand months. Secondly, the phenomena that is predestined to occur in this world; come down upon the firmament of the earth this night. Thirdly, it is during this night that God sends spiritual peace that lends sweetness and delight to man's act of devotion to God." The revelation of Al-Quran by itself is the choicest gift of love and consideration to man from the Creator. It contains His final Word sent to the last of His apostles for the guidance of entire mankind for all times. Almighty God

elucidates:

"...We have made this (Quran) a light with which We guide such of Our servants as We will..." (42:52).

The event of the descent of the Glorious Quran, the Divine Book of Wisdom and Guidance, demands spirited celebration and earnest thanksgiving to God, the Most Merciful. For this purpose Lailat-ul-Qadr undoubtedly offers a commensurate opportunity to the believers.

A Thousand Months:

The expression "a thousand months" used in the Qur'anic Verse is not to be taken literally. It rather points to an indefinitely long span of time, a time beyond human count, or timeless time so to say.

It is said that once Hazrat Rabi'a of Basrah (RA) was sitting with a wax-candle, a needle, and a hair in her hand. In the accompanying message to the contemporary saint she said, "Be like a candle to illumine the world while you yourself burn. Be like a needle which is but cares not for a costume for itself. When you have done these two things, a hair's worth of time will be like a thousand years for you."

This anecdote illustrates how human beings, through their selfless acts of piety

and tender fellow-feeling, can add new dimensions to the limited time at their disposal. We measure life in terms of the profane time divided into nights and days, but righteousness and its intensity is the divine perimeter for it. It is the quantum of reward from God that man earns in a given time that makes one night equivalent to “a thousand months”. It depends on the quality of one’s acts of goodness and worship. To illustrate, about the Ramadan fasting the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Every good action of the son of Adam will be multiplied from ten up to seven hundred times.” (Agreed)

Search for the Night:

Speaking of the sanctity and bliss of Ramadan, Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) said that its first ten days comprise the decade of Mercy; the middle ten of Forgiveness, and the last ten, of Salvation. (Baihaqi). Great indeed are the blessings of the holy month of Ramadan, and of its last ten days in particular when acts of worship reach their climax and which also include *E'tikaf* and Lailat-ul-Qadr devotions.

There was inquisitiveness among the early believers to know which particular night was Lailat-ul-Qadr. When the Companions asked about it from the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), Hazrat 'Ayesha (RDA) has reported that he said:

“Search for it in the odd ones of the last ten nights of Ramadan.” (Bukhari)

The consensus of scholars in Islam is that it is the twenty-seventh night of Ramadan.

Poet-savant Shaikh Sa'di of Shiraz (RA) has succinctly put, “If every night were the Night of Qadr, the Night of Qadr would be of no worth.”

The believers set out in search of this night in the last decade of the month of Ramadan. The pleasure of this spiritual quest is unique. Hazrat 'Ayesha (RDA) has narrated another tradition of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) as follows:

“I asked: O Messenger of God! Tell me if I were to discover the night that be Lailat-ul-Qadr, what should I recite in it?”

The holy Prophet (ﷺ) advised her to make the following supplication to God: “O God! You are Forgiving, You love forgiveness, so do forgive me.” (Bukhari).

Night of Power: God’s Sign:

God manifests His Power not only in the fitful furies of nature such as tempests, rains, and thunder, but also in regular and routine happenings in the cosmic system like the passage of time. Says He:

“It is God who alternates the Night and the Day: Verily in these things is an instructive example for those who have vision.” (24:44)

He proclaims “by the Night as it conceals” (92:1), and “by the Night when it is still” (93:2), and “by the Night when it retreats” (74:33), and “by the Night when it passes away” (89:4). He also proclaims “by the Ten Nights” (89:2) whose identity is shrouded in mystery. He asks His Messenger:

“Stand (to prayer) by night, but not all night, half of it or a little lesser a little more; and recite the Quran in slow, measured rhythmic tones.” (73:2-4).

Conclusion:

In God’s scheme of things, night has a charm of its own. It claims any God-fearing man’s attention for devotional practices. The Night of Power, or Lailat-ul-Qadr as a

special significance of its own. Throughout the mundane life, man oscillates between a fixed fate and a limited free will. Lailat-ul-Qadr offers a unique opportunity for the exercise of man's limited free will within a limited time to seek the good pleasure of God by totally resigning himself to His command. The believers all over the world spend this night in the recitation of Holy Quran, offering long-drawn special prayers, observing night vigil for meditation (Fikr) and remembrance (Zikr).

And God, the Most Merciful, listens to man's prayer and responds to His servants' beseeches, as He tells His Messenger:

"When My servants ask you concerning Me, I am indeed close (to them): I listen to the prayer of every supplicant when he calls on Me. Let them also, with a will, listen to My call and believe in Me, so that they may walk in the way that is straight." (2:186).

May Allah guide us to the Straight path. Ameen!

(Continued from page 16)

are conscious of their own selves and their potentialities. In other words, man is to be constantly conscious of his duties, as guardian of his own conscience to make him do good and refrain from doing mischief even though no one might be keeping watch on him to detect or control his deeds. The Holy Qur'an and the Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) have, in a most precise manner, urged for such a conduct and behaviour in every man to enable him to carry the trust which has been reposed on man by God. A *millat* or a community which is constituted of such individuals as have realised themselves to understand life and human-hood as described before, in a Qur'anic Society and there righteousness will prevail and there will be complete surrender of the self to the will of God and no selfish ambition will have dictating power therein.

What is it to be righteous in individual conduct? The Holy Qur'an says: "*It is not righteousness that you turn your faces to the East and to the West, but righteousness is whoever believes in God and the Last Day and the Angels and the Holy Scripture*

(Qur'an) and the Prophet (ﷺ), and gives wealth for love of God to kindred and to orphans and to poor people and to homeless people and to beggars and to emancipate slaves; and who is constant in prayer and pays the poor-rate (zakat) and those who keep a treaty when they make one and who are patient in disaster and distress and adversity those are they who are sincere. Those are the God-fearing (Muttaqin)." (2:177). Righteousness is not a vague admonition of perfection or a blind acceptance of a sentimental creed. It is rather actual doing of right by every man and woman in order to constitute a community that will uphold the balance of justice and righteousness.

None can realise his duties unless he realises himself with a spiritual bias alongside his material bias having engaged himself in constant fight against evils. For this he must actively believe in Allah and surrender to His will bearing always in mind that his ultimate goal is to Allah, to render account of his deeds. Allah says: "*I have established life and death to test which of you are best in deeds.*" (Qur'an: 67:2).

Happy Eid ul Fitr Lines

Written by: Dr. Saleem Ullah Jundran

The month of Ramadan bade us farewell,
The moon of Shawwal became visible.

Thanks Almighty Allah for the blessed day of Eid,
He would grant us ample reward to our good deed.

The believers' labour would find its fine fruit,
We would walk in happy mood wearing nice suit.

We will take sweet dates in its number odd,
Prior to Eid - Prayer, our home we depart.

For the faithful followers, special reward and epithet,
And who exceeded, the moment of mourn and regret!

For the Muslims, it's sole salvation- day,
Thereby, devil would weep and yell today.

Eid-day, we all shall offer prayers six,
We shall not indulge in halal-haram-mix.

Eid-day, we shall serve fitrana to the destitute,
Whatever, Sharia' has fixed its right magnitude.

I shall present Eidee to my children & wife,
Cheerfully, in sha' Allah, free from strife.

Now let us raise hands for everyone,
Grief and sorrow may come across none

We shall glorify the Name of Most Beneficent,
He is All-Hearing, admire Him loud or silent.

Allah may shower upon us His devotees' love,
Our flight of wings, it may heighten far above.

Allah may grant health to every sick and patient,
He is the Most Merciful, the Most Beneficent.

From ECE to Ph.D. , I beg for the glory of my every student,
May he leave behind the story of his integrity, every moment!

With the Name of Rabb-e-Kareem, always read,
Your Creator's favour would you always lead.

I will heartily pray for my parents and teachers today,
They have enabled me to think and reflect this way.

کیونکہ وہ تقویٰ سے زیادہ قریب ہے۔" (المائدہ: ۸)

ایک دوسری جگہ ارشاد فرمایا گیا: "جب تم لوگوں کے درمیان فیصلہ کرو تو انصاف سے فیصلہ کرو، کیونکہ اللہ انصاف کرنے والوں کو پسند کرتا ہے۔" (المائدہ: ۴۴)

اس طرح قرآن کریم نے بار بار انصاف پر مضبوطی سے قائم رہنے کی تاکید کی ہے۔ چنانچہ کہا گیا کہ مسلمانوں کو چاہئے کہ وہ حق و انصاف پر اس مضبوطی سے جم جائیں کہ کوئی طاقت انہیں ان کی جگہ سے نہ ہلا سکے۔ وہ اپنی سیرت و کردار میں حق و صداقت کا پیکر ہوں۔ مضبوطی کے ساتھ حق کے لئے کھڑے ہونے والے اور حق و انصاف کے لئے لڑنے والے بن جائیں۔ اسلام، چاند و سورج کی طرح اپنا ایک وجود رکھتا ہے اور اس وجود کے ساتھ وہ تمام خصوصیات وابستہ ہیں، جن پر ایک اچھے معاشرے کی بنیاد قائم ہوتی ہے۔ یہی وجہ ہے کہ اسلامی روایات کا تحفظ انسانی زندگی میں دائمی صداقتوں کے اعلیٰ ترین اظہار کا تحفظ ہے۔ اسلام، انصاف اور مساوات کے ذریعے، سیرت انسانی کو ایک نئے اسلوب اور عمرانی سانچے میں ڈھالتا ہے، کیونکہ عدل و مساوات ایک عمرانی عمل ہے۔ جو تہذیب و شائستگی کی نشوونما میں بہتر کردار ادا کرتے ہیں اور ان ہی انصاف و مساوات سے اسلام کی دماغی توانائیوں کو فروغ ملتا ہے۔ اسلامی عدل و مساوات کا عالم یہ ہے کہ ایک آدمی بھرے مجمع میں خلیفہ وقت سے مواخذہ کر سکتا ہے اور خلیفہ وقت کو عوام کی عدالت میں جوابدہ ہونا پڑتا تھا۔ چنانچہ تاریخ کا یہ ایک مشہور واقعہ ہے کہ جب حضرت عمرؓ جمعہ کا خطبہ دینے کھڑے ہوئے تو ان کے پاس دو چادریں تھیں۔ حضرت سلمان فارسیؓ نے برلمان پر نکتہ چینی کرتے ہوئے پوچھا کہ اے عمر! یہ دو چادریں کہاں سے آئیں؟ تو آپؓ نے فرمایا، ایک میری ہے اور دوسری میرے بیٹے عبداللہ بن عمر کی ہے۔ اسی طرح خلافت فاروقی کی تاریخ کا ایک اہم واقعہ ہے کہ جب روم کا سفیر مدینہ پہنچا اور اسے دریافت کیا کہ تمہارا

بادشاہ کہاں ہے؟ تو اسے صحابہؓ کی طرف سے جواب ملا کہ، "ہمارا کوئی بادشاہ نہیں، البتہ ہمارا ایک امیر ضرور ہے۔" اسی طرح ظہور اسلام سے قبل شاہی حکومت میں شخصی اختیار اور خاندانی وراثت دونوں پائی جاتی تھیں۔ اسلام نے ان دونوں چیزوں کو عدل و مساوات کے منافی قرار دیا۔ چنانچہ سیدنا صدیق اکبرؓ کے بارے میں حضرت علیؓ کا قول ہے کہ "اگر خلافت کے لئے قوت اور استعداد کی جگہ محبت کا اعتبار ہوتا تو وہ اپنے بیٹے کو حکومت پر فائز کرتے اور یہ تجویز پیش بھی ہوتی، مگر انہوں نے نامنظور کر دیا۔" کیونکہ سرداری، وراثت کا تمغہ امتیازی نہیں، بلکہ وہ علم و عمل سے ملتی ہے، اعلیٰ نسبی، اس کا پیمانہ نہیں، بلکہ ذاتی استعداد و صلاحیت اس کا معیار ہے، یہی وجہ ہے کہ حضرت عمرؓ کی یہ ہدایت تھی کہ عبداللہ بن عمر کو منصب حکومت حاصل کرنے کا کوئی حق نہیں ہوگا۔

غرض اس طرح اللہ کی عدالت کی وہ شریعت، فاران کی چوٹیوں اور مکہ کی وادیوں سے نمودار ہوئی، جو دنیا میں مظلوموں کے آنسو بہانے اور ظلم کی پرورش کرنے نہیں آئی تھی، بلکہ مظلوموں کو ظلم سے نجات دلانے اور کائنات میں حق و انصاف کی آواز بلند کرنے آئی تھی۔ وہ ایک ایسی آواز تھی، جس نے باطل پرستی کی تمام طاقتوں کو لرزادیا اور دنیا کو حق و صداقت کے باب میں عدل و مساوات کی فتح کی بشارت سنائی، غرض اسلام، انصاف اور مساوات کا علمبردار ہے۔ وہ نہ نسل کی قید گوارا کرتا ہے اور نہ رنگ کی، نہ دریا کا بہاؤ اس کی راہ میں حائل ہو سکتا ہے اور نہ پہاڑوں کی ممتیں اس کے دائرے کو محدود کر سکتی ہیں۔ وہ ایک روشنی ہے کہ اگر پوری طرح کائنات میں جاری و ساری ہو جائے تو دنیا میں صحیح معنوں میں عدل و انصاف پر مبنی مثالی معاشرہ قائم ہو سکتا ہے۔ عدل و مساوات انسانی معاشرے کے لئے ناگزیر ہیں، اس حقیقت میں کوئی شک نہیں کہ اسلام ایک ایسے معاشرے کی تشکیل کرتا ہے، جس میں عدل و مساوات کی علمبرداری ہو، اور معاشرے کے تمام افراد کو تمام بنیادی حقوق حاصل ہوں۔

اسلام میں عدل و مساوات کا تصور اور انسانی معاشرے پر اس کے اثرات

پروفیسر ڈاکٹر سید وقار احمد رضوی

نسل اور قوم کے درمیان تقسیم نہیں کیا جاسکتا۔ اس لحاظ سے تمام انسان، خاص طور پر سب مسلمان ایک ملت اکائی ہیں۔ جمہوری اقدار کا یہ وہ سبق ہے جو آج سے چودہ سو سال پہلے اسلام نے دنیا کو دیا۔

رسول اللہ ﷺ کے ظہور کے وقت تمام دنیا اس اختیار سے محروم تھی اور شاہی طرز حکومت پر قانع عرب میں قبائلی طرز ملوکیت قائم تھا۔ دنیا عظیم روم، عظیم فارس کے دو بلاکوں میں بٹی ہوئی تھی۔ پیغمبر اسلام ﷺ نے ان سب کا خاتمہ کر دیا اور نئے نظام کی بنیاد مشورے پر قائم کی۔ مطلق العنان حکومتیں اور خود سر ظالم بادشاہ عوام کو کچل رہے تھے۔ دنیا ان کے ظلم و عدوان سے تنگ آ چکی تھی۔ انسانیت ایک انقلاب کے لئے تیار تھی۔ اسلام جو انقلاب لایا، وہ دنیا کے حق میں نعمت ثابت ہوا۔ اس طرح نئی بھلائیاں ابھری اور دنیا سے خرابیوں کا خاتمہ ہوا۔ اس جمہوریت و مساوات نے بنی نوع انسان پر بڑا اچھا اثر ڈالا۔

بہترین زندگی وہ ہے جو تضاد سے پاک ہو۔ اس عیب سے پاک وہی نظام ہو سکتا ہے، جس کے دائرہ فکر اور دائرہ عمل دونوں کا مرکز عدل و مساوات پر قائم ہو۔ اسلام ایک ایسا ہی دین ہے۔ وہ وقت کی حرکت میں حقیقت کی علامت کو دیکھتا ہے اور دنیا کو ظلم کے خلاف آواز اٹھانے کی دعوت دیتا ہے۔ وہ چاہتا ہے کہ دنیا سے ظلم و نا انصافی کا خاتمہ اور انصاف کا بول بالا ہو۔ چنانچہ قرآن نے حکم دیا: "اللہ عدل و احسان سے کام لینے کا حکم دیتا ہے۔" (النحل: ۹۰)

ایک اور جگہ ارشاد باری تعالیٰ ہے: "انصاف سے کام لو،

اسلام ایک ایسی طاقت ہے جو زندگی کے باہمی تضاد، نفرت، دشمنی، ظلم اور نا انصافی کے سیلاب کو روکتا ہے اور اس کی بنیاد عدل و انصاف پر قائم کرتا ہے۔ اس کا بنیادی اصول یہ ہے کہ اللہ ایک ہے۔ تمام انسان برابر ہیں۔ اسلام نے سب سے پہلے طبقاتی، خاندانی اور نسلی غرور کا خاتمہ کیا۔ اس نے انسانیت کو قانون عدل و مساوات کی طرف بلا دیا۔ جس پر ایک مثالی معاشرے اور اچھی سوسائٹی کا انحصار ہے اور یہ تعلیم دی کہ عربی کو عجمی پر اور عجمی کو عربی پر کوئی بڑائی اور فضیلت حاصل نہیں۔ تمام انسان آدم سے (آدم کی اولاد) ہیں اور آدم مٹی سے پیدا ہوئے تھے، اس لئے یہاں گورے اور کالے، آقا اور غلام کا کوئی فرق و امتیاز نہیں، جو بلندی ہے وہ اچھے کردار اور اچھے اخلاق و اعمال سے ہے اس کے علاوہ کوئی اور میزان عظمت و جلالت نہیں۔ جو شخص نسلی برتری پر غرور کرتا ہے اور دوسرے انسانوں کے مساوی درجے کو تسلیم نہیں کرتا، وہ اس اجتماعی نظام کا فرد نہیں، جس کی طرف آنے کی دعوت قرآن دیتا ہے۔ چنانچہ قرآن مجید کا ارشاد ہے: "بے شک یہ تمہاری امت فی الحقیقت ایک ہی امت ہے، اور میں تم سب کا پروردگار ہوں۔ پس میری عبودیت کی راہ میں تم سب ایک ہو جاؤ اور نافرمانی سے بچو۔"

یہی وجہ ہے کہ اس کی نگاہ مشرق و مغرب کے منطقتوں پر پڑتی ہے، کیونکہ وہ تمام انسانیت کا دین ہے۔ اس کے نزدیک کل کائنات ایک ہے۔ وہ ایک ناقابل تقسیم تہذیبی درشہ ہے۔ جس کو ملک،