

A SHORT PRESENTATION ON

ISLAM

First International Edition

BY

SYED ABUL HASAN ALI NADWI

Translation

IQBAL AHMAD

A SHORT
PRESENTATION
ON
ISLAM

SYED ABUL HASAN ALI NADWI

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Translator's Notes

First and Second Limited Editions of 2012

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

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

Iqbal Ahmad Ibn Khalil Ahmad
MA, MBA (Alig).

Date: February 6, 2012
Place: Lucknow

First International Edition 2015

It is a great pleasure for me to present the First International Edition of this book to the English readership everywhere through this digitized version. Urdu equivalents of Arabic words like *Namaz* for *Salah*, *Rozah* for *Sawm*, used in the previous editions would have been incomprehensible for many readers outside India, therefore Arabic words have been retained, as everywhere people are more familiar with them. Expressions have been improved, the cover design has been revised and it is hoped that this new edition will appeal to a lot of people worldwide. May Allah accept this humble effort, bestow its reward upon my Late friend Sheikh Abdullah Hasni Nadwi, may Allah have mercy on him, and cause its precious benefit to spread far and wide.

Iqbal A. K. Ahmad

Date: February 5, 2015
Place: Jeddah

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Foreword by the Compiler

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

Syed 'Abdullah Hasni Nadwi

Nadwatul 'Ulema,
Lucknow

Rabiul Awwal 27, 1433
February 20, 2012

Foreword for the 1998 Urdu Edition

It is necessary for me to make a few acknowledgements and apprise the readers of a few facts, which are as follows.

Many writers have produced introductory books on Islam and have made successful attempts at presenting Islam in its true form. They all deserve to be thanked in accordance with their respective labor and efforts. However, for a complete introduction of Islam, need was being felt for such a book that would be concise and comprehensive, as also objective and middle-of-the-road that would present the right conception and a faithful picture of Islam before the readers; because a large section of Muslims themselves and specially a lot of Muslims who live in India have become victims of ignorance and superstition, they have themselves become unfamiliar with the totality of the Islamic system to such an extent, that no difference is felt between them and those who are entirely alien to Islam. As a result, many obstacles have sprung up in the path of Islam's acceptance, to present Islam correctly after removing them, is the duty of every sympathizing Muslim. It is a task which has, more or less, continued in one form or the other, at every time and place. The present book too is a link in this auspicious chain, may Allah accept it, and make it a means of guidance.

In compiling this book due care has been taken to ensure that whatever material is sourced, it is from the writings of the Islamic thinker *Sheikh* Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi because Allah the Exalted has blessed his writings with such acceptability and appeal, world fame and wide popularity, moderation and comprehensiveness, which is not found in the works of any of his contemporaries. At the same time, different, rather opposing, classes and organizations repose confidence in his personality which actually is the result of his sincerity, compassion, kindness and sympathy that he has for the sufferings of others. That is why, from his books and booklets only (specially *Hindustani Musalman ek nazar mein*,

Dastoor-e-Hayaat and *Arkaan-e-Arbaa'*, which are all his Arabic and Urdu works) we have compiled this book.

Lastly, it is my duty to thank those of our brothers also who, with great diligence and dedication, copied extracts from *Sheikh* Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi's books, got the photo-type-settings prepared and gave them the form of a book. Especially Brother *Moulvi* Risaluddin Nadwi who assisted me very much and completed this work with interest and zeal, labor and devotion, and likewise, Brother *Moulvi* Wasee Sulaiman Nadwi who assisted him deserves to be thanked. Last but not the least, it is necessary to thank Brother *Moulvi* Muhammad Shahid Nadwi for his efforts in proof-reading the entire book with great care.

May Allah the Exalted accept this work and after making it a means to provide introductory knowledge on Islam unlock the doors of guidance, which is not at all difficult for Him.

Syed 'Abdullah Hasni Nadwi

Nadwatul 'Ulema,
Lucknow

In the name of Allah the Compassionate, the Merciful

Preface

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

However. How regrettable it is that inmates of one home, residents of the same locality, those who go to bazaars and markets together and come back together, those who give each other company in centers of education, offices, district courts, those who travel together in trains, buses and planes, and those for whom the chances of developing an acquaintance with each other are readily available; they have, almost, so much estrangement and alienation from each other's tenets of faith, acts of worship, religious teachings and distinctions, as was found in ancient times when people living in different parts of the world had not heard about each other nor there were quite so many facilities to recognize and get familiar with each another.

In India it is about one thousand years that, Hindus, Muslims are living together. In cities, towns, villages and neighborhoods theirs is a mixed population and a shared domicile. In bazaars, wholesale markets, centers of education, district courts, offices, and now it is over a hundred years that, in political movements, social work campaigns, railway stations, post offices, trains and buses, opportunities to mix and mingle and develop acquaintance with each other are easily available to them; but it is one of the world's most astonishing facts and a kind of riddle not easy to solve that each has almost as much estrangement and alienation with each other's religious beliefs,

civilization and way of life, ways and manners, and national distinctions, as used to be often between inhabitants of two countries in ancient times. Each one's information about the other is deficient, superficial, cursory and mostly based on rumors and conjectures and opinions. Each community is suffering from a lot of serious misunderstandings about the other and sometimes because of hatred laden literature, political propaganda, vitriolic and tinted historical narrative, textbooks prescribed in curricula, and baseless tales and stories, has established a wrong and repulsive image in its mind and understanding of the other. If an unbiased group of one community, quizzed some individuals who are simple and good at heart about the fundamental articles of faith, rules and principles of the way of life of the other community, then either they will express ignorance or they will give such replies which would evoke spontaneous laughter among the knowledgeable. The writer of these lines who travels a lot and who mixes and mingles with people of every class and every level, in trains and buses, has had this experience many a time; but this is not something to laugh at, it is a matter to grieve about. That, after living together for so many centuries we are unfamiliar with one another to this extent. Responsibility for this situation does not rest with any single community, it is on all; and especially on those who work in the field of religion, social workers, those who have true love for the country and those who are friends of humanity, that they did not make a serious effort to introduce one community to the other, or if they did, it was not quite enough. The civilized world of today has accepted a principle. That, for love, respect, mutual confidence, a safe and secure life and for all good purposes, and for cooperation and team work, it is necessary to acquire correct information about one another. Every element, every community and every group in a population should know that what principles does the other element, community and group places its faith upon. Which laws does it strictly complies with and considers them essential for itself. What is the color (interesting and exciting details or qualities) of its civilization and way of life? What are the life values it holds dear? What does it need to be free from anxiety and lead a confident life? Which beliefs and aims are dearer to it than its own life and more lovable than its progeny? While interacting with it, in sharing some happy and pleasant moments with it, what sentiments and feelings should be kept in mind? For co-existence, which is the accepted principle for a decent and peaceful life, the first condition is to be familiar with each other to the extent necessary.

The loss from this state of affairs is affecting Hindus, Muslims, equally and eventually India, rather all humanity. Huge gulfs permanently exist between different communities. Hearts have bitterness and minds: suspicions.

Men have become collectively deprived of living with love and affection, of the ability to laugh, to talk, to enjoy life, to trust each other and have respect for each other's cultures and creeds. The result is that the capabilities and energies of some communities, and there is no fear or harm in saying that those of Muslims especially, are being spent over offering clarifications and in defending themselves.

So far as the earlier period of Muslims and their history is concerned; and that, what role Muslims have played in the nation's construction and progress and its organization and stability; what enhancements they have made in the fields of civilization and urbanization, prose and poetry, arts and sciences and what all landmarks they have left behind, on that many good books have already been written by writers of stature, and several years ago the writer of these lines himself had written *Hindustani Musalman* which has been published in Arabic, Urdu and English. However, this is a subject of history and mostly of interest to students and research scholars.

Similarly, the need was also for such a book in which, overlooking what and whatever Muslims are, they be presented before their fellow countrymen, in terms of how they should be and what genuinely is their true face and complexion; neither tint nor opinion be added, neither exaggeration be employed nor the narrative should be uncharitable towards them and usurp their rights. For this purpose, the writer of these lines wrote *Hindustani Musalman ek nazar mein* which has already been published several years ago. However, besides these books the need for such a book still remained that would be handy and concise, which would present a faithful picture of Islam and would include a complete overview of it, because many of our Muslim and non-Muslim brethren find voluminous books strenuous to read.

It is a moment of happiness that *Sheikh* Syed Abdullah Hasni Nadwi (Lecturer, Darul 'Uloom, Nadwatul 'Ulema, who is the son of such a Islamic scholar and literary figure whose Arabic writings, academic papers

and the papers he wrote for inviting mankind to faith, used to impress and move masters of Arabic literature and highly learned Arab writers to tears) took this blessed step, which is beneficial and auspicious for all communities, the educated, and the just.

He has compiled this book keeping before him the writer's work, published under the title of *Hindustani Musalman ek nazar mein*, which gives an overview of the Articles of Faith of Muslims, their Way of life and Civilization, and Education and Training and their entire life pattern; and some of the writer's other published works which cover Fundamentals of the Faith of Muslims, their Religious Obligations, and Principles of their Civilization and Way of life; and he himself is a master and teacher of Religious Instruction and some fundamental books at Darul 'Uloom, Nadwatul 'Ulema, Lucknow, which is a premier Islamic institution internationally renowned for its grand history and academic excellence. Then, family-wise also, he is the heir and owner of a very vast and authentic culture and wealth of knowledge.

Therefore, the present book is in every way, useful, important, authentic and comprehensive.

Syed Abul Hasan 'Ali Nadwi

Nadwatul 'Ulema,
Lucknow

Chapter: 1

Islam: Meaning, sense and purviews

Islam is the name of totally giving oneself up and surrendering oneself unconditionally before God and in Islam the perimeter of religion surrounds the entire life span. This is a fundamental truth which can not be grasped without understanding the nature of relationship between God and His slave. Every Muslim is an obedient slave of God and his relationship with God is everlasting, covers all aspects of his life, it is deep as also expansive, it is limited as also comprehensive. At one place the words of the Noble Quran are:

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

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

Here is no safeguard and nothing is earmarked on the lines of – this much is mine and this much yours – this much for the country – this much for the State – this much for God – this much for the family and tribe – this much for religion and community – and this much for political interests. No. Whatever is present is God's. Here worship is all-pervading. Before God, a Muslim's entire life is humility personified, slavery personified.

The purview of religion overwhelms every aspect of life and nobody has the right to make any amendment in it. Even the most celebrated authority on Islamic Law and Jurisprudence and the *Imam* of an age do not have the permission to amend a word or change a dot in matters which are categorically decided and have the status of unequivocal truths in the Glorious Quran.

Allah the Exalted demands and Islam too requires that its practitioners enter its fold completely. I say with clarity and consider it my duty to be

1. V 208: *Al-Baqrah*: Chapter 2: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad M. Pickthall.

unambiguous that in our way of life, ways we adopt in weddings and marriages, ways we adopt in matters of inheritance, and the way we conduct our affairs and dealings, we are far from *Shariah* and very far from it. While some of us, by the grace of God, practice religion to the extent of holding correct beliefs with respect to the Oneness of Allah, apostleship, Hereafter and other essential tenets of faith but are not punctual in observing acts of worship; many are those who are no doubt strong in faith and worship but please do not ask me of their conduct and ethics, for in conduct and ethics, they are utterly unreliable. If they will deal with somebody they will not miss any chance to undermine his interests, will weigh less, and measure less. If they will be in business and in case that is a partnership then they will be found to commit unjust acts and acts that will hurt the interests of partners. If somebody will be their neighbor then he will suffer harassment at their hands.

According to a Noble Tradition²:

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

None of you can become a believer until your neighbor becomes safe from your torment and your oppression. So now what to say! There is a class of people that has expelled inter-personal relations and ethics from the purview of religion; their understanding is that tenets of faith and a variety of acts of worship is all that is necessary; neither transparency in dealings nor keeping of promises; neither care for anything kept in their trust nor any fairness; nothing at all. Unconcerned with the rights of fellow human beings, totally free from the liability of close relatives and those who have a right over them; in their inter-personal dealings, in business matters and other disciplines of life even, they do as they please.

Muslims who were groomed by *Sayyadna* Muhammad, the Apostle of

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

2. Noble Traditions: The teachings of the Holy Quran and the (continued on next page)

Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, were the most faithful. Their lives were cast entirely in the mould of religion. Their faith, their worship, their dealings, their manners, their rituals, their ceremonies, their victories, their rule, their statecraft – all of these – and the way they spent the days and nights of their life were in conformity with *Shariah* (Islamic law).³

ع

This calligraphy means:

May peace and blessing of Allah be upon him.

Readers will find this calligraphy throughout the book.

1.1^a The importance of faith in Islam

The foundation of being a slave of God rests upon the correction of the tenets of faith (*Aqaaed*) and belief (*Eemaan*). He whose faith is flawed and belief is corrupted, then neither is any act of his worship acceptable nor any of his actions will be deemed right; and whose faith is correct and belief is right then even his small good deeds are enough. Therefore, first of all there is a need to enquire about those points, to have faith upon, to believe in and to comply with which is necessary, and without having firm conviction (*Yaqeen*) on which nobody deserves to be called a Muslim. It is these articles of faith that are shared by all Muslims of the world.

1.1^b Fundamentals of the Islamic faith

These tenets, or shall we say articles, of faith are:

Article 1: Belief in the Oneness of God (*Tawheed*):

Belief in the Oneness of Allah, *Tawheed* in Arabic, is a pure and matchless

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

article of faith in Islam. Under this article there is no need for an intermediary between God and His slave, who would intercede in matters of supplication and worship. In this article there is also no room for, polytheism⁴, the ideas of somebody being God's incarnate and shadow, and the doctrines of transmigration and merger of Creator and creature⁵. On the contrary there is admission and acceptance of the Divinity and the Oneness of Allah the Exalted, the Eternally Besought, Who neither has a father nor a son, nor a partner in His Kingdom; in His very Hand is the genesis and creation of the universe, the maintenance of order in the world and the Sovereignty of the earth and the heavens.

In other words, there is a Builder of this workshop of nature, Who always was and will always be. He bears the whole lot of virtues, all forms of praise, the whole lot of good attributes in excellent degrees; and is free from all kinds of blemishes, imperfections and weaknesses. His knowledge encompasses the whole lot of existences and every branch of knowledge that there is.

This entire universe exists only because He so intends. He is the Alive; the All-Hearing; the All-Seeing. Neither is there anyone like Him nor has He a rival or equal. He has no resemblance and He does not depend on help. He has no partner, companion or helper in the administration and running of the universe. Only He, singularly, is deserving of worship (i.e. to be respected in the extreme). Only He, singularly, cures the sick; provides livelihood to people and removes their sufferings. (1) Deifying others besides Allah, (2) debasing oneself or expressing humility in the extreme before them, (3) prostrating before them, (4) supplicating to them or asking help from them in matters that are not in human control and are only connected with Allah's Omnipotence – for example (5) blessing a couple with offspring, (6) writing fate: good or bad, (7) causing to send and deliver help everywhere, (8) capability to listen at any distance, (9) to know what is in people's hearts and what is hidden – are sins that, in Islamic terminology are jointly and severally termed *Shirk* (Arabic; 'i' pronounced as in 'shin', not pronounced like the English word 'shirk'; meaning: associating partners with Allah); and that is the biggest sin which is not forgiven without repentance.

In the Glorious Quran it has been stated that:

4. Faith and belief in the existence of numerous and multiple gods and deities. 5. God's entry in to a creature and both the Creator and the creature becoming one.

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

Article 2: Allah the Exalted neither descends in somebody nor does He impersonate somebody. Nor anybody happens to be His incarnate. He is not restricted to a place or direction. Whatever He decrees that happens and whatever He does not decree does not happen. He is the Absolute, the Eternally Besought, Who is not in need of anything. Nobody can wield authority over Him. Nobody can question Him as to what He is doing. Wisdom is His attribute; every action of His is wise and good. There is no (real) Ruler except Him.

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

Article 4: His are the angels, high ranking and very close to Him. The devils too are the creation of God the Exalted and they become the cause of evil for people. Among His creation are also the *Jinn*.

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

Article 6: The Hereafter (Arabic: *Aakhirah*)

After the knowledge of Allah's Being and His Attributes, the next profound subject whose knowledge the prophets, peace be upon them, provide to the world and, without them, which can not be obtained from any other source in any way is that, man will die but to return to a second lifetime and this universe will be fractured, fragmented and re-built. In that second lifetime man will be called to account for the deeds and misdeeds of his previous lifetime. Whatever he has sown in his worldly life, that he will reap.

Man has no means to acquire this knowledge except through the prophets, peace be upon them. The capabilities of inference and conclusion that man

6. V.82: Chapter 36: *Yaseen*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall.

possesses can neither obtain this knowledge in the first place nor can disprove it. Senses, intellect, experience, and besides these, man's hidden powers (will power etc.) and any power and resource out of spirituality and intuition, none have the capacity to prove the existence of some other kind of life and its details besides the life of this world. And neither there is such a possibility that the world of the Hereafter may be observed in this life. All this information pertains to the Unseen and man can not, on his own, grasp that which is Unseen; his specializations and his intellect are of absolutely no avail to him; through those specialized fields of knowledge and intellects neither can that be proved nor disproved.

Man is left with only two options. Either place confidence in the prophets and attest their statements after studying the observations and evidences that establish the truth of those statements or, in spite of the lack of any substantial proof and evidence to the contrary, blatantly reject them.

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

However, as mentioned above, the signs (as detailed in the revealed scripture) of this approaching reality and phenomena that support the possibilities of its unfolding are found in this world and in this life, from which man can deduce that this event is by every means possible and, according to his mental faculties, there is no hurdle in it.

Its first striking parallel and convincing evidence is the birth and life of man himself. How many stages he has covered between his coming to existence from naught and from existence to the completion of his existence. From sperm he assumed the form of a fertilized ovum, from a fertilized ovum was made a clot or a form leech-like, then was formed a lump of undifferentiated or differentiated tissue, then was formed a bony structure, then the bones were clothed with flesh and then a new creature was formed. Then after emerging from the dark confines of the abdomen he spent

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

sometime in the cradle of infancy and childhood. He then stepped in to the greenery of youth. Then either his next step fell at the doorstep of death or he was given enough respite, after having seen the springtime of his life, that he also saw the autumn of old age and began the return journey of his life. In other words, after youth, in his old age childish tendencies re-visited him. His capacities failed one by one, mind and memory left him. Like a child he became helpless, dependent on the care and concern of others. He began to neglect himself and every thing that he had hitherto known so well became unrecognizable for him. At this juncture one leg of his journey ends, but his journey does not. Only a transitional stage called death and the world of *barzakh* (partition) has arrived. Death is like the stopover of that tired wayfarer, who will move along once he has caught his breath. Surely, whosoever knows the reality and truth of man (dust and water), and then his beginning and the way he has been tempered, what intellectual hitch can he have in believing the coming back to life after death? And whosoever has observed so many changes in the life of man, what difficulty has he in accepting the possibility of a last revolutionary change?

The second glaring example of life after death is in the scenes of dead earth coming back to life which keep appearing before our eyes again and again. This earth, in whose bosom lie the lifetime belongings and treasures of thousands of human beings to be born and beasts that would come to life, itself lies dead, her lips are parched with dryness. That actually happens to be an insensitive and lifeless corpse of dust, neither is it alive nor it has any life sustaining resource for any thing. However, when drops of the elixir of life fall from the heavens on its lips, and moistening its throat they reach its bosom, then that same earth all of a sudden wakes up from her mortal sleep. The energy of life and the beauty of youth run through her. She swings, she sways and seems as if intoxicated. Her mouth throws out the treasure of riches, greenery and life. Fragrant vegetation, ripened crops waving in the wind, and worms and insects that have crawled out and that spread on the surface of the earth, inform us of a subterrestrial life and how the Lord blesses with life. In springtime and in rainy season the scene of this life of the earth, who amongst us has not seen with his eyes?

**And it is Allah
Who sendeth the winds, and they raise a cloud;
then We drive it unto a dead land and
We quicken thereby the earth after the death thereof.**

Even so shall be the Resurrection.⁸

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

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

Apart from these two signs and manifest examples, this majestic and sprawling workshop keeps presenting illustrations and scenes of life after death, day and night. Every moment things are fabricated here, they get out of order, are knocked down and are being continuously refabricated. From a thing devoid of life and consciousness is being made a form quite healthy, conscious and living; and from a form that is quite well and living is obtained a thing that is totally lifeless and inorganic. Many materials are able to display effects and results that are opposite to their nature. Within many life forms the domination of either life-building processes or deterioratory processes of life continues to happen. Whosoever has read, however little, about this infinite power of the Creator of the universe, embryology of creatures and the extensiveness of the processes of genesis and creation, he can not even for a moment have any doubt about life after death. And, as far as his intellect is concerned he sees absolutely no hurdle in it.

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

Article 7: After death, the coming back to life of the dead in their own bodies is incontrovertible. Rewards and punishments, and the accountability of the Hereafter is incontrovertible. The presence of Paradise and Hell is incontrovertible.

8. V.9: Chapter 35: *Faatir* **9.** V.39: Chapter 41: *Ha Meem Sajdah* **10.** V.11: Chapter 43: *Al-Zukhruf* **11.** V.19-20, Chapter 29, *Al Ankabooth*; Daryabadi Quran Translation; A. M. Daryabadi.

Article 8: The coming of messengers to the world by the Will of Allah is incontrovertible and that God the Exalted commands and educates His slaves through the words and the agency of His noble prophets, peace be upon them, is incontrovertible. *Sayyadna* Muhammad ﷺ is God's last apostle, after him there is no prophet, and his apostleship and Invitation to Islam are for the whole world. In terms of this eminence and distinction

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

and, apart from this, in terms of other similar distinctions he ﷺ is the most distinguished among the prophets, peace be upon them. Without believing in his apostleship, belief is not credible and religion has no Truth. Verily, Islam alone is the Religion of Truth; other than which no religion is acceptable in the Court of Allah and the means of Deliverance in the Hereafter. Even the most eminent of the eminent personalities i.e. devoted slaves of God, the abstinent or the ardent in worship, does not violate the commandments of *Shariah*.

Article 9: It is incontrovertible that *Sayyadna* Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, was the *Imam* and *Khalifah* after *Sayyadna* Muhammad, the Apostle of Allah ﷺ followed by *Sayyadna* 'Umar Ibn Khattab, *Sayyadna* 'Uthman Ibn 'Affan and *Sayyadna* 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib respectively, may Allah be pleased with all of them. The Noble Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, are the religious leaders and guides of Muslims. To speak ill about them is forbidden (*Haraam*) and to hold them in high esteem and express respect towards them is ordained (*Wajib*).¹²

12. Sections 1.1^a and 1.1^b are adapted from the author's *Hindustani Musalman ek nazar mein* (Urdu) pgs 69-74 with slight modification.

Chapter: 2

Acts and forms of worship

After faith which is a spiritual aspect, the physical aspect to which Islam gives great importance, lays immense stress and places a lot of emphasis upon are acts and forms of worship, which are the foremost aim, objective and purpose of the birth of human beings. Allah the Sanctified has Himself stated:

I created the jinn and human kind only that they might worship Me.¹

According to the Islamic *Shariah*, four acts of worship are obligatory² on every, sane and adult, Muslim man and Muslim woman. And for this very reason, they are called *Arkaan-e Arb'aa* (i.e. 'the four pillars') of religion.

1. Prayers of the five specified times everyday.³
2. If a person meets the criteria for *Zakat*, then the payment of *Zakat* (poor-due) applicable on his/her assets once a year.
3. Fasting in the month of *Ramzan*.
4. And *Haj* of the Holy Ka'bah (provided a person can afford it) which is obligatory once in a lifetime.

These obligatory acts of worship are such that he who refuses to observe them abandons the sphere of Islam and someone who permanently shirks (neglects to observe) them stands, as if, expelled from the cohesive group of practicing Muslims.

1. V.56: Chapter 51: *Az-Zariyaat*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall. 2. The author implies here that, in Islam, there are also numerous acts of worship which are of a non-obligatory nature. 3. They are, namely: *Fajr* prayer, offered about 45 minutes before sunrise; *Zuhr* prayer, offered about half an hour after the sun reaches its highest point at noon; *Asr* prayer, offered in the afternoon; *Maghrib* prayer, offered just after sunset and the *'Ishaa* prayer offered in the early part of the night. [Apostrophes in the transliteration of the Arabic words like *'Asr* and *'Isha* indicate the missing letter *'Ain*. The Arabic letter *'Ain* has a valorized pronunciation and it has no equivalent in the English alphabet].

Chapter 2: Section: 2.1

Prayer (*Salah*) – The first pillar of Islam

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

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

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

And the beloved Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

*(The line of demarcation
between Allah's bondsman and disbelief
is the non-observance of prayer.²*

According to another Tradition, with a different chain of reporters, he ﷺ is also reported to have said:

*Between belief and disbelief (the line of demarcation)
is surely the non-observance of prayer.³*

Prayer is the condition for Deliverance and the protector of belief, and Allah the Exalted has stated it as one of the basic conditions for receiving Divine Guidance and cultivating God-consciousness. Prayer is obligatory upon every free-man and slave, rich and poor, sick and healthy, traveller and

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

resident, for all times to come and in every condition. In no circumstance can any adult person be exempted from it. However, if unable to pray while standing then he may sit down, and if he can not pray while sitting then he may lie down, and if this posture even is troublesome for him then he may use gestures to offer the prayer; but the prayer will not be waived. So much so that it is mandatory to offer prayer (in a particular manner) even in the battlefield. And that prayer is known by the name of *Salatul Khawf*. A concession is granted during travel, in the sense that, the obligation of a four *Rak'ah*⁴ prayer (*Zuhr*, *'Asr* and *'Ishaa*) is discharged by offering only two *Rak'aat*. The *Sunnah* and *Nafil* in such prayers become optional and their *stressed status*⁵ becomes void.

Prayer is such a duty that not even a prophet and apostle can annul it, what to talk of any faithful slave of Allah, mystic or *mujahid*⁶. Such is prayer in the interest of the believer, as water is in the interest of the fish. Prayer, for the believer, is a place of refuge and a dominion of peace; and if prayer is genuinely what it ought to be, then it has no compatibility with the worship of entities other than Allah, slavery to entities other than Allah, life of ignorance and base conduct; and both of these are in open contrast with each other.

Allah the Exalted says:

Verily, prayer preserveth from lewdness and inequity.⁷

2.1.1. Prayer (*Salah*) – Nourishment for the soul

Since man was to become the deputy of Allah on earth and was to occupy an extremely sensitive position, for this reason desires too have been placed in him and some needs too have been bound to him. There are emotions in him and the warmth of love also; sensitivity towards pain and the consciousness of happiness also; liking for research and thirst for knowledge also. He has all the competence and capability to exploit the treasures and deposits of the earth and utilize them to meet his objectives.

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

To discharge the responsibilities of that sensitive and important position (Allah's deputy on earth) and to complete the orbit of that special objective for which he has been created, he was not restricted like the heavenly bodies, the mountains, the plants, the beasts and inorganic matter to postures of continuous *Qayaam* (the upright position in prayer), continuous *Ruku'* (the half-upright position in prayer), continuous *Sujood* (the position of prostrations in prayer) and to continuous glorification and chant. Instead, in view of all the foregoing facts, man needed such a form or system of worship which would be in harmony with his nature, the duties of his position, his status and place in the universe that is accorded to him in the form of being the Deputy of God on earth.

On the one hand worship was necessary also for him because it is the demand of his nature, the Intention behind his existence and that responsibility and duty of his existence, the voice of his conscience, the nourishment for his heart and soul, the medium of translating his virtue and trustworthiness and an essential for establishing his human credentials. On the other hand it was equally necessary that his worship was according to his build and personality, and in concordance with his sensitive and important status and his singular place in this universe; and it had to be like that dress which fits him and looks elegant on him, neither tight nor loose, neither long nor short.

Salah, in fact, is this very dress which is immaculately measuring up to his being and in which no flaw whatsoever is seen.

Lo! We have created everything by measure.⁸

To offer all these five prayers (that have been made obligatory) is necessary at those very appointed times that Allah the Exalted has fixed for them. Those times have also been indicated in the Glorious Quran. Also fixed is the number of *Rak'aat* that comprise each of these five prayers, conformity to which is necessary.

2.1.2. How should a prayer (*Salah*) be offered

Allah the Exalted has blessed the *Salah* with such an air and environment of

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

honor and respect, tenderness of heart and humility, dignity and sobriety, co-operation and collective sentiment; that the like of which is not found in the act of worship of any religion and nation (of any prophet). We shall get an idea of it, from the wise commandments and laws, guidance and teachings, in the sub-sections to follow.

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

2.1.3. The call for prayer (*Azaan*)

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

**Allah is the Greatest; Allah is the Greatest;
Allah is the Greatest; Allah is the Greatest;
I bear witness that there is none else worthy of worship except Allah;
I bear witness that there is none else worthy of worship except Allah;
I bear witness that Muhammad is the apostle of Allah;
I bear witness that Muhammad is the apostle of Allah;
Come to prayer; Come to prayer;
Come to success; Come to success;
Allah is the Greatest; Allah is the Greatest;
There is none else worthy of worship except Allah.**

2.1.4. *Azaan*: the announcement for *Salah* and an invitation to Islam

The call (*Azaan*), fixed in Islam, to make the announcement for prayer and invite people to it by the one who has taught us the Islamic *Shariah*,⁹ not only expresses the aims, meaning and realities about the prayer; instead the aims of Islam, the signs of belief in Allah's Oneness and a complete exegesis of the soul of religion too has been included in it in such an eloquent, concise, beautiful and melodious manner that this call, which a *Muezzin* (one who calls for prayer from a mosque) raises from the minarets

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

of a mosque five times a day, has acquired the form of a focused and cogent invitation to Islam. It is that one and only call which is free and safe from every kind of apparent ambiguity and the accompaniment of any musical instrument; and the summary and exposition of religion has been covered in it.

The *Azaan* is also a proclamation of Allah's Greatness and Magnificence, that, He is the Greatest of all who are great. Then both the testimonies are present in it, a testimony of belief in the Oneness of Allah as also a testimony of apostleship.

I bear witness that there is none else worthy of worship except Allah.

I bear witness that Muhammad is the apostle of Allah.

It has an invitation to attend the prayer and a declaration that prayer is the path of success both in this world and in the Hereafter and that without it success can not be achieved anywhere. It is because of all these reasons that the *Azaan* has become time's thoroughly comprehensive invitation and eloquent announcement addressed to both the heart and the mind. It attracts the attention of both the Muslim and the non-Muslim, produces alertness in the lazy and cautions and awakens the negligent.

2.1.5. Purification

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

For offering the prayer it is mandatory to perform *Taharah*¹⁰ and *Wudu*. Allah the Exalted says:

**O ye who believe!
When ye rise up for prayer,**

10. Washing oneself with water after the calls of nature.

**wash your faces and your hands up to the elbows,
and lightly rub your heads and (wash) your feet up to the ankles
and if ye are unclean, purify yourselves
and if ye are sick or on a journey,
or one of you cometh from a closet,
or ye have had contact with women and ye find not water,
then go to clean, high ground and rub your faces and your hands
with some of it,***

**Allah doth not wish to place a burden on you,
but He wishes to purify you and
would perfect His grace upon you, that ye may give thanks.¹¹**

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

If this arrangement of purification and *Wudu* is practiced with the realization that the commandments of Allah and His apostle ﷺ are being carried out and that their reward is certain¹², then it produces in a human being a sort of awakening and agility, a frame of mind marked by concern and consideration for the Divine, and the capacity and ability to welcome the approaching prayer and receive the splendor and tranquility associated with it.

The Apostle of Allah ﷺ has also taught people to clean their teeth with a *siwaak*¹³ in order to complete the array of benefits associated with *Wudu* and *Taharah* and make preparations for the prayer (which, in fact, is a believer's private conversation, supplication and hymn that he quietly whispers to Allah the Exalted), and laid much emphasis upon its regular use and even went on to say that:

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

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

2.1.6. Ablutions (*Wudu*) before prayer

A Muslim has to perform ablutions (*Wudu*) before prayer. *Wudu* is that especial procedure for attaining purification without which prayer is invalid. First the hands are washed up to the wrists three times. Then the mouth is rinsed three times. Then the lower nasal passage cleaned with water three times. Then the face is washed three times, from the hair marking the top of the forehead down to the chin and sideways from one ear lobe to the other. Then after the right fore-arm including the elbow has been washed three times, the left fore-arm including the elbow is washed three times.¹⁵ Then the entire head is wiped once, that is, rinsed palms are moved over the hair on the head. The last step is that after the right foot is washed up to the ankle, the left foot is similarly washed. Subsequent to excretion of urine, stool and wind, repetition of this *Wudu* becomes necessary and without *Wudu* a *Salah* is no good; if somebody falls asleep then that too makes it necessary for him to perform *Wudu*. Unless *Wudu* is nullified as mentioned above, prayers of several times can be offered with one *Wudu*.

2.1.7. The routine and manner of Muslims in a mosque

After going to a mosque, if already in a state of purification then immediately, else after performing *Wudu*, a man gets busy in offering supererogatory prayers (*Sunnah* or *Nafil*). If he has already offered such prayers, then in that case he sits in silence waiting for the congregational prayer; or he reads or recites the Holy Quran; or gets engaged in his daily schedule of recitations and chants. When it is time for the congregational prayer, then first of all the *Iqamath* i.e. the announcement for the commencement of the congregational prayer is said aloud. All its words are the same as those called out in the *Azaan*, only two sentences are additional, whose sense is:

The congregation is about to stand in prayer.¹⁶
The congregation is about to stand in prayer.

14. Related in Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim. **15.** Repetition of these steps of *Wudu* three times each is a *Sunnah* (prophet's practice) otherwise *Wudu* is considered to have been done if each of its steps is performed properly twice or even once. **16.** The Arabic phrase. . .contd on next page

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

All people in the mosque, whether waiting for prayer here and there or engaged in some other righteous deed, come forward to stand in a row. At the conclusion of *Iqamath*, the *Imam* – generally some religious scholar from the neighborhood, or some *Haafiz-e-Quran*¹⁷, or any educated Muslim¹⁸ – saying *Allahu Akbar*, raises his hands up to the level of earlobes then places them on the navel and begins the prayer. Thus he and the followers with arms folded stand before God like slaves. He stands ahead of the followers in the middle. For a short while all, the *Imam* and the followers, recite a supplication in silence whose words can be translated as follows.

**O Allah! Thou art sanctified, and praise is Thine.
And Thy name is of Great Blessedness and Thy Greatness is Supreme,
and none else is worthy of worship except Thee.**

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

Then if the prayer is one which is offered aloud¹⁹ the *Imam* recites the Holy Quran in a raised voice. After concluding the above supplication he recites *Surat-ul Fatihah*. It is a *Surah* (Chapter of the Holy Quran) which is recited in every prayer and it is the preface of the Glorious Quran and the abstract of Islam. It is the most frequently recited portion of the Glorious Quran and occupies a place of great honour in Islam. Therefore, its meaning is being presented below.

16. (contd from previous page) . . . if translated literally reads as: *The prayer is about to stand*. (In the language of literary criticism, this is an example of metonymy i.e. the fact of referring to something by the name of something else closely connected with it e.g. we say that: *The class has read Bukhari* but we mean that: *The class has read the writings of Bukhari*.) 17. Somebody who has learnt the entire Holy Quran by heart. 18. In Islam, *Imams* and *Ulema* (theologians) do not comprise some exclusive class of priests without whom Muslims can not perform various acts and kinds of worship. Anybody from among the Muslims can discharge the duties of an *Imam*. However, now-a-days for the sake of convenience and exigencies of better management *Imams* and *Muazzins* have been appointed in most mosques. Since they devote their entire time to this work, a salary is paid to them by the neighborhood or the Muslim community or by the *Waqf* (Trust) concerned. 19. Prayers offered aloud: Of the five obligatory prayers three are offered aloud these are *Fajr*, *Maghrib* and *Ishaa*. Two prayers, *Zuhr* and *Asr*, are offered in a suppressed voice i.e. the *Imam* does not raise his voice throughout these prayers except when he has to say aloud the commands for beginning the prayer, for *Ruku'*, for *Sujood* and for ending the prayer.

**In the name of Allah the Benificent the Merciful.
Praise be to Allah, Lord of all the worlds.
The Beneficent, the Merciful. Owner of the Day of Judgment.
Thee (alone) we worship; Thee (alone) we seek for help.
Show us the straight path.
The path of those whom Thou hast favoured,
not (the path) of those who earn Thine anger,
nor of those who go astray.¹⁹**

On completion of this *Surah* both the *Imam* and the followers say *Aameen*, which means, *O Allah accept our supplication*.

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

Recite, then, of the Quran that which is easy for you.²⁰

Its purpose is to ensure that the meaning of those words and the states of mind associated with them get lodged in the heart, they acquire more strength and nourishment, it becomes possible to explain them thoroughly and teach them in detail, and their roots become deep and strong, because, prayer is worship also and an education also.

The *Imam* recites any *Surah* (chapter) of the Noble Quran or some verses of the Noble Quran. Below are presented meanings of two very short chapters.

In the name of Allah the Compassionate the Merciful

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

In the name of Allah the Compassionate the Merciful

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

19. Chapter 1: *Al-Fatihah*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall. **20.** V.20: Chapter 73: *Al-Muzzammil*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall. **21.** Chapter 103, *Al 'Asr*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Daryabadi. **22.** Chapter 112, *Al Ikhlāas*; Translation: Pickthall.

Then the *Imam* says aloud the *Takbeer* (*Allahu Akbar*) and all assume a half upright posture. It is called *Ruku*²³. In it

Glory be unto my Lord, the Majestic²⁴

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

Allah listened to whosoever praised Him²⁵

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

O our Lord! All praise is for Thee!²⁶

Then the *Imam* saying *Allahu Akbar* goes down on his knees to perform the *Sajdah* (prostration) and the *Muqtadi*²⁷ too do as he does (one, because he emulates the beloved prophet ﷺ and, secondly because they extend their support to him before God by following him). In prostration, the forehead and the nose touch the floor; both palms rest on the floor; elbows are kept raised above the floor and away from the sides; knees are placed on the floor. During prostration:

Glory be unto my Lord, the Most Exalted²⁸

is said three or more times after which the congregation sits in a particular posture and then saying *Allahu Akbar* performs the second prostration in the same way.

Prostration in the prayer is the ultimate condition of nearness to God and God loves and likes most this expression of humility by His bondsman. According to a Tradition:

*The bondsman is nearest to his Sustainer during prostration therefore supplicate profusely in it.*²⁹

So the prostrating Muslim considers this opportunity to be a blessing for

23. Both 'u's pronounced as in 'sugar'. 24, 25, 26. Translation adapted with slight modification from: Lessons in Islam; Mufti Kifayatullah. 27. *Muqtadi* is one word for the entire congregation behind the *Imam*. 28. Source: Abu Da'ood; Nasaee. 29. Translation adapted with slight modification from: Lessons in Islam; Mufti Kifayatullah.

himself and supplicates with great depth of feeling before God, then all stand upright for the second *Rakah*. Its procedure is the same as was described above for the first *Rakah*, every *Rakah* follows the pattern of this typical *Rakah*. After every two *Rak'aat* to sit down is compulsory. And in the one sitting posture (*Qa'dah*) after which the prayer has to be concluded with *Salam*, a further addition of the following supplication is made.

All the salutations, prayers and the best words and righteous works are for Allah. Peace be on you O prophet, and the blessings of Allah, and His grace. Peace on us and on all the righteous servants of Allah. I bear witness that none but Allah is worthy of worship and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and apostle of Allah.³⁰

O Allah, bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad as Thou blessedst Ibrahim and the family of Ibrahim. Verily, Thou art worthy of praise and art the Most Glorified. O Allah bestow Thy favors on Muhammad and the family of Muhammad as Thou bestowedst Thy favors on Ibrahim and the family of Ibrahim. Verily, Thou art worthy of praise and art the Most Glorified.³¹

Our Lord! Give unto us in the world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and guard us from the doom of fire.³²

O Allah, I seek Thy protection from the torment of the Hell and Thy protection from the torment of the grave and Thy protection from the trials of living and dying and Thy protection from the evil in the turmoil of Antichrist.³³

2.1.9. The self-confidence of a believer and determination of his class and league

After fulfilling the obligation of hymn and praise due to Allah and after invoking peace and blessings (reference 30 and 31 above) on His prophet, *Sayyadna* Muhammad, the Apostle of Allah ﷺ, the worshipping Muslim too gets some share out of those peace and blessings – of which he is needy

30. *At-Tahyaat*: Translation adapted with slight modification from: Lessons in Islam; Kifayatullah. **31.** *Darood Shareef*: Translation adapted with slight modification from: Lessons in Islam; Kifayatullah. **32.** V.201, C2, *Al Baqrah*; The Meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall **33.** Translation adapted with slight modification from: Lessons in Islam; Mufti Kifayatullah.

and desirous – and which is also the sign of Islam and the salutation of Muslims, he says:

'Peace on us and all the righteous servants of Allah'

This is how his place and status is determined and revealed, and one comes to know that everywhere and at all times he is with the righteous servants of Allah, and he is their partner and co-sharer in peace and brotherly love, safety and divine blessings. This assertion produces hope and self-confidence in him and dispels hopelessness, depression and (in the current terminology of psychologists) inferiority complex; it makes him stand in one row alongside other worshippers of this *Ummah*³³ (which includes the most distinguished of the learned men, illustrious scholars, righteous servants of Allah and those who are totally devoted to Him) and accords to all of them an equal status.

They are Allah's party.

Listen ye! It is Allah's party who are the successful.³⁴

Then the worshipper supplicates for himself and implores Allah to grant him refuge from the torment of the grave, the torment of Hell, the trials and slip-ups of life and death, and the evil in the turmoil of Antichrist because all of these things deserve that refuge in Allah be taken from them and that prayers be made for divine protection against the evil and trial that is inherent in them. According to a Noble Tradition, the Apostle of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said that:

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

2.1.10. The beauty of a prayer's conclusion

At the conclusion of the prayer, after diligently observing all etiquette and conditions and in spite of worshipping as the rights of a prayer demand, a worshipper confesses to his inadequacy and says, as if, through his condition that, 'I could not worship Thee as was Thine right to be

34. V.22: C,58: *Al-Mujadalah*; Meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall.

worshipped!’ He concludes the prayer with those memorable words that the beloved prophet ﷺ had taught to *Sayyadna* Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, who is after the Apostle of Allah ﷺ the most righteous among the Muslim nation.

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

Thus does this wholehearted worship conclude, with a confession of mistakes and on feelings of regret and remorse. There can not be a more appropriate and more befitting conclusion than this to anybody's 'Journal of Activities'.³⁶

2.1.11. Mosques and their importance & centrality in Muslim society

For this purpose such mosques were built which are in terms of their simplicity and solemnity, serenity and pleasing ambience, their spiritually blissful atmosphere and manifestly conspicuous signs of belief in the Oneness of Allah, entirely different from the places of worship of other faiths and communities.

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

35. Related in Sahih Bukhari. **36.** Readers unfamiliar with Islam will not be able to comprehend the author here. According to the Islamic faith, Allah the Exalted manages and administers the affairs of this world through the agency of angels. Thus angels are appointed to write down every action of a human being, good or bad. Similarly, angels are appointed to collect this 'Journal of Activities' twice everyday once at the time of *Fajr* Prayer and once at the time of *Asr* Prayer and present them before Allah the Exalted. So while Allah sends His messages through 'Revealed Books' to humankind, humankind sends 'Journals of their Activities' back to Him and a two-way communication between God and man exists with angels carrying the messages in both the directions. **37.** V.36-37: C. 24: *An-Noor*: Quran; Translation: Pickthall. * Heart of a believer.

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

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

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

Appropriately enough, mosques had become the religious center of Muslims and the fountainhead of their education and training, and guidance and reform. Collective and religious issues of Muslims were solved in them. Orders concerning different important affairs and different walks of life were given to them. When an event of large proportions occurred or when some expedition was under consideration and Muslims needed fresh instructions and fresh guidance, the Apostle of Allah ﷺ ordered that the announcement of *Salatul Jaam'eh* be made among Muslims; that is to say: Muslims from other neighborhoods and from remote, distant, areas too pray at the Prophet's Mosque today as something important has to be said.

Mosques retained this centrality and all-embracing nature throughout. Entire life rotated around this very axis. Springs of knowledge and guidance, movements of reform and adoption of righteousness, all used to originate and spread from this very center.

2.1.12. Friday – the 'Eid of the week

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

On Friday, instead of the *Zuhr* prayer, a special Prayer of Friday is offered. Its time is the same as that of the *Zuhr* prayer. On the one hand a reduction has been made in it that instead of four, two *Rak'aat* are offered, on the other hand is an addition that the sermon (*Khutbah*) is delivered before the prayer (*Salah*) and the prayer is offered in a raised voice.

38. V.18: Chapter 72: *Al-Jinn*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Muhammad M. Pickthall. **39.** V.29: Chapter 7: *Al-A'raaf*; The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall. **40.** V.31: Chapter 7: *Al-A'raaf*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; M. Pickthall.

2.1.13. Friday – Its class and distinctions

The prayer of Friday consists of many such formalities, encouragements and numerous such distinctions and additions, because of which there has come about a manifold increase in its magnificence, dignity and eminence; and through these a new sentiment and zeal is created for acts of worship and nearness to Allah and for the unity and co-operation (in virtue and fear of God) among Muslims. Allah the Exalted says:

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

According to a Noble Tradition:

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

To perform *Ghusl*⁴³, use *siwaak*, apply perfume and give maximum attention to purification and politeness is mandatory for the Prayer of Friday and a sermon is also delivered in it before the prayer. The sermon that the Apostle of Allah ﷺ used to deliver on Fridays was not one of those conformist, routine, addresses which has neither life, nor soul and which is devoid of message and guidance, instead it used to be entirely in concordance with contemporary life and events. To listen to the sermon in absolute silence and with calmness is also mandatory, so that, in that peaceful and spiritual atmosphere its complete and proper benefit may be derived, because in its time, place and occasion the sermon is worship, not mere oratory. During the sermon, conversation is strictly prohibited, to the extent that, even stopping someone sitting next to you from talking is prohibited because even that much will disturb the calm and lessen the dignity that the sermon demands.

A Noble Tradition mentions that:

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

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

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

Presented below, as an example, is the meaning of an Arabic Sermon:

“Subsequent to the hymn and praise unto Allah and peace and blessings on His noble prophet.

O People!

Adopt *Tawheed* (Think of Allah as being One in His Being and Attributes and do not think of somebody as being His associate) because *Tawheed* is the greatest worship of God and its adoption is an act most holy. In whatever you do, have a sense of honor and deference before Allah because this habit of having a sense of honor and deference constitutes the foundation of all righteous deeds. Hold firm to the way and the practices of the Apostle of Allah ﷺ because his way and practices guide but towards devotion and obedience; and whosoever will obey Allah and His apostle ﷺ such a one will be treading the straight path and will be the achiever of the cherished goal. Always keep away from new ideas and new ways of doing things that have been introduced in religion (sing: *Bid'ah* pl: *Bid'aat*: innovations) because their result is Allah's disobedience and waywardness. Throughout your life, let truth be your manner because there is deliverance in truth and destruction in falsehood. Make the doing of favors to people and kind behavior a custom of your life because benefactors are the beloved of Allah. Never lose hope of Allah's mercy because He is the Most Merciful of all who are merciful. Do not fall for the world lest you lose everything. Lo! Nobody can die until his portion of livelihood has reached him. Therefore any effort to earn livelihood which entails Allah's disobedience and clubs means that are allowed and forbidden, legal and illegal, is vain. To achieve your ends adopt good means also. Trust in God in all that you do, because Allah has great consideration for those who trust Him. Do not shy away from supplicating because Allah hears everybody's complaint and fills everybody's bowl. Keep praying for the forgiveness of your sins from Allah and be regular in *Istaghfar* (supplications particular to asking forgiveness) for it will bring grace upon your wealth and children.

Allah the Exalted says in the Glorious Quran:

**And your Lord hath said: Pray unto Me and I will hear your prayer.
Lo! Those who scorn My service they will enter Hell, disgraced.**⁴⁴

May Allah grant to you and me more and more portion from the wealth of the Holy Quran and may He cause its verses and wise counsels to benefit you and me. For myself, for you and for the whole lot of Muslims, I hereby seek God’s Forgiveness. You also seek Forgiveness from Him. Verily, He is the Most Forgiving, Most Merciful.”

2.1.15. Prayers are not identical and the spiritual levels of worshippers also are not identical

Prayer is not something static and finite like a metal mould or a wooden plank, in which all may be alike and every worshipper compelled to remain at the same level and incapable of advancing beyond that. It is, in fact, a very vast and expansive field in which a worshipper ascends from one condition to another condition, and from peak to perfection, and from perfection he reaches to those transcendental stages that lie beyond his thought and imagination. In it the place and position of people is widely different and dissimilar from each other and everybody’s plane is different. How can a prayer offered thoughtlessly, ignorantly, compete with a prayer offered with the sentiment of seeking to be in God’s Presence and with the right juridical knowledge? Likewise, how can prayers of common Muslims and prayers of those having mystic knowledge and prayers of those who are firm of belief, all be placed on the same plane. Then, this too is not necessary that the prayer offered today should resemble the prayer offered yesterday or one that was offered a few months or a few years ago and the worshipper keeps offering prayers of the same spiritual standard always.

That precisely is why references to prayers in the Glorious Quran appear in two ways. Once where the conduct of the worshipper is bad, and once where it is good. Allah the Exalted says:

**Ah, woe unto the worshippers.
Who are heedless of their prayer.**

44 V.60: C.40: *Al-Mo'min*; The Meaning of the Glorious Quran; Muhammad M. Pickthall

**Who (only) make a show of their worship.
Yet refuse small kindnesses!**⁴⁵

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

**Successful indeed are the believers.
Who are humble in their prayers.**⁴⁶

Similarly, the Apostle of Allah ﷺ too has mentioned two types of prayers. One characterized by fear of God and humility, tenderness of heart and bliss; the other characterized by thoughtlessness and carelessness: a deficient prayer. About the first type the apostle of Allah ﷺ has said:

*The Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him,
performed Wudu, and performed it well, (then said that)
whoever performs Wudu like my Wudu and then offers a two-rakat
prayer without bringing any thought in his heart,
all his past sins will be forgiven.*⁴⁷

Sayyadna 'Uqbah bin 'Aamr, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that the Apostle of Allah ﷺ said that:

*Whosoever Muslim performs ablutions well,
then offers a two rak'at prayer standing,
with both his heart and face
remaining rapt in attention towards prayer,
then Paradise becomes due on him.*⁴⁸

About the second type of prayers 'Ammar bin Yasir, may Allah be pleased with him, narrates that I heard the Apostle of Allah ﷺ saying that:

*Man even finishes offering his prayer and yet (the credit of)
only one tenth of that prayer comes in his lot and
sometimes one-ninth, one-eighth, one-seventh, one-sixth,
one-fifth, one-fourth, one-third and half.*⁴⁹

45. V.4-7, C.107, *Al Ma'oon* **46.** V.1-2: Chapter 23: *Al-Mu'minoon*; The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall. **47.** Related by Imam Bukari and Imam Muslim on the authority of Sayyadna 'Uthman Ibn 'Affan, may Allah be pleased with him. **48 & 49** Related by Muslim.

The Apostle of Allah ﷺ also said that:

'Most wicked is the man who steals his own prayers.'
The Noble Companions submitted,
'O Apostle of Allah how does someone steal his own prayer?'
The apostle of Allah ﷺ said,
'Neither performs the Ruku' properly nor the Sajdah'.⁵⁰

Sayyadna Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, narrates that the Apostle of Allah ﷺ said that:

This is a hypocrite's prayer who sits watching the sun:
once the sun becomes yellow (colored) and
has reached between the two horns of the devil he stands up,
then in the manner of the striking of a hen's beak
prays four rak'aat hastily in such a way that
the glorification of Allah is certainly little in it.⁵¹

In prayer the ranks of people are different and the prayer of one cannot be likened to the prayer of the other. Accordingly the prayer of the Apostle of Allah ﷺ was the most superior, perfect, of the best quality, spiritually the most exalted and in God's Balance it weighed the heaviest. As compared to somebody else's prayer the prayer of *Sayyadna* Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, was the closest to and had the most striking resemblance with the prayer of the beloved Prophet ﷺ. For this very reason during his terminal illness the Apostle of Allah ﷺ had directed *Sayyadna* Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, to substitute for him and lead the prayer and in spite of *Sayyedah* 'Aishah's opinion that *Sayyadna* 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, lead the prayer, the beloved Prophet ﷺ had said *'Ask Abu Bakr to lead the prayer'*⁵² and everybody had complied accordingly.

In addition to the foregoing, the accuracy with which the class and rank of people can be estimated through prayer nothing else – for instance knowledge, intellect or some kind of academic contribution – can. Only prayer is that valid and reliable measure which can give an idea of a man's religion and his place in Islam. Personalities whose names are eternally

50. Related by Nasaae. 51. Related in Sahih Bukhari. 52. Related in Sahih Bukhari.

alive in Islamic history and who are seen as much superior to their contemporaries, have achieved their place and position and their immortality, by creating a superiority and distinction in this very prayer and because their prayer had ascended to the level of *Ihsaan*⁵³.

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

Chapter 2: Section: 2.2

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

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

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

2.2.1. The importance of Poor-due in Islam and its status under *Shariah* (Islamic Law)

In the Glorious Quran *Zakat* and *Prayer* are mentioned together at eighty two places. Thus the entire Quran seems to be full of 'establish worship and pay the poor-due'. Apart from this, at every single place where the attributes of Muslims are described, there also each time '**who establish the prayer and give the poor-due**'² has appeared. The Apostle of Allah ﷺ has listed it among the basic pillars of Islam; he ﷺ is reported to have said that:

*The foundation of Islam rests on five things:
to bear witness that there is none else worthy of worship except Allah,
to establish worship (Salah), to pay the poor-due,
to observe the fasts of Ramzan and to perform the Haj.*

The beloved Prophet ﷺ was asked 'What is Islam?' He ﷺ replied that:

*Worship Allah and ascribe no partners unto Him,
establish the obligatory prayers,
pay the poor-due and
observe the fasts of Ramzan.³*

1. V.11: Chapter 9: *At-Tawbah*; 2. V.55: Chapter 5: *Al-Maidah*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; M. M. Pickthall. 3. Related by Sheikha; on the authority of *Sayyadna* Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him.

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

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

Traditions on this subject are in such abundance that to count them is difficult, they have reached the 'numerous chains of narrators'⁴ limit, and the consensus of the *Ummah* is that *Zakat* is entirely inseparable from prayer and that since centuries and generations compliance to this commandment is regular.

Allah the Exalted has declared constancy in prayer and the payment of *Zakat* to be a sign of the health and acceptance of Islam, compliance to its commandments, observance of a truce with Allah and having brotherly relations with Muslims.

It is mentioned in the Glorious Quran:

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

In another place Allah the Exalted says:

**But if they repent and establish worship and pay the poor-due,
then are they your brethren-in-religion.
We detail our revelations for a people who have knowledge.**⁶

2.2.2. The basic concept of the Economic System of Islam: Everything is Owned by God

4. The word used here by the author is *Tawatur* (Urdu) which though translated as 'numerous chains of narrators' also has a statistical connotation. It means that the number of people who hear a statement or see a deed and then the number of people who narrate it to others on the former's authority in every age, be so high that the hypothesis that the whole lot are narrating a falsehood is rejected. **5.** V.5: Chapter 9: *At-Tawbah*; The Meaning of the Glorious Quran; Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall. **6.** V.11; Chapter 9, *At Tawbah*; The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad M. Pickthall.

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

Sometimes it addresses the Muslims in the following manner:

**and bestow upon them of the wealth of Allah which
He has bestowed upon you⁷**

and sometimes in the following manner:

and spend of that whereof He hath made of you trustees⁸

Present in the above verses is a clear announcement of the fact that the real Owner and the real Inheritor of all these things is Allah the exalted. Therefore if a man spends a few coins in His way, he has no right to feel arrogant or proud over it.

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

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

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

However, the Mercy and Wisdom of Allah the Exalted has not dealt with man in this manner and by unilaterally relating goods and property and the fruits and results of human labor to God has not left him deprived, and even if it had been so, there would, even then, have been neither surprise nor complaint in it *but* by doing so man would have lost his self- confidence, zeal of working, faculty of growth, competitive spirit, passion for research and, to be precise, that exhilaration and bliss in life that he feels upon

7. V.33: Chapter 24: *An-Noor* **8.** V.7: Chapter 57: *Al-Hadeed*. **9.** V.188: Chapter 2: *Al-Baqrah*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Muhammad M. Pickthall.

seeing the results of his efforts and the fruits of his labor.

It is the same natural delight that children find in identifying their parents' possessions and their household belongings with themselves. If man is deprived of this sentiment he will be deprived of compassion, sincerity and love; and of the imagination and yearning to preserve and develop goods and property. Life will lose all its activity, enthusiasm of working, competitive spirit, struggle, and that courage and excitement which is essential for the continuity of man's life and progress. The world will become a huge factory in which human beings will be moving like the deaf and dumb systems and components of a machine, neither they will have heart nor conscience, neither prosperity nor delight.

This is the reason why in the Glorious Quran, Allah the Exalted has again and again connected wealth towards man and not towards his Creator and Provider.

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

In short, such verses are abounding in the Glorious Quran wherein not only ownership of wealth has been extended towards man, rather Allah the Exalted has added an extra dimension to it which He has defined as 'goodly loan'; whatever a man expends in Allah's way and for the good of His slaves, that in His sight is a *goodly loan*. He says:

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

2.2.4. The need for such a special and standard system of *Zakat* that would be good for every class of people and every period of time

When firmness of belief, moral training, obedience to Allah and submission unto Him, generosity and selflessness, freedom from individual and collective egoism reached the highest levels in Islamic society, and it grew

10. V.188: Chapter 2: *Al-Baqrah*; 11. V.245: Chapter 2: *Al-Baqrah*; The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall.

very extensive, and different moral and spiritual ranks and classes became well defined in it; at that time, different groups and categories of people were formed, among which were the rich, the poor and men of average means. There were such benevolent people also among them, that for them giving away charity had become their food and taste, rather their disposition and second nature. There were the misers and thrifty also, and those who walked the middle path and the temperate also. On the one hand, there was such strength of faith that could face the biggest of the big dangers, give the biggest of the big sacrifices and resolve the most difficult of the difficult issues; on the other hand, there were such specimens of feebleness of faith that one can witness either in some far flung corners of the Islamic world or in the generations of the last era. It was Allah's great Wisdom and Mercy that for a society having such diverse and varying conditions, He decided such an explicit and fixed *Nisab* (minimum capital on which *Zakat* becomes due) whose measure and count, principles and criteria, signs and symbols are all fully explained and fixed. *Nisab* is neither so large that it becomes troublesome for the middle income group to carry that much burden, nor it is so less that it falls in the sight of the affluent, the wealthy, the enterprising and those who spend in Allah's way.

Again, it was Allah's great wisdom that He neither left this decision to somebody's opinion or human courage and boldness nor was it entrusted to those human sentiments in which fluctuations are normal and which are constantly subject to ebbs and tides. It was also not assigned to law-makers and Islamic scholars or rulers because it is not possible to place total confidence upon them also and they also are not entirely safe and secure from their individual bents of mind. In view of all these factors, *Zakat* as a function of its *Nisab* and rate was made obligatory.

2.2.5. On which capital heads is the payment of *Zakat* ordained and what wisdom lies in fixing its rate?

The apostle of Allah ﷺ has fixed the rate of *Zakat*, and has also pointed out those capital heads over which the payment of *Zakat* is obligatory; he ﷺ has also informed us as to when the payment of *Zakat* will become due. He ﷺ has split those capital heads into four categories and all four of them are such that more or less everybody comes in their contact.

1st Category: Produce of agriculture and horticulture.

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

Payment of *Zakat* is obligatory once a year. However, on the produce of agriculture and horticulture one year will be deemed to have been completed when grains have matured to the full and fruits have ripened. And the truth is that to be more just than this was simply not possible. If *Zakat* was to be paid every month or every week it would have been very harmful for the rich or if it were obligatory once in a lifetime it would have become detrimental to the interests of the poor and the needy. From this point of view there could not have been a more appropriate and balanced commandment than, that, its payment be made every year. The rate of *Zakat* has been decided keeping in view the labor and effort of the owners of *Nisab* and how facile and tough their work is. Therefore, capital and wealth that a man gets unexpectedly and in a lump sum (e.g. mine, mineral deposit or buried treasure) is not subject to a waiting period of one year for the purpose of paying *Zakat*, and its *Khums* (one-fifth) will become due for payment immediately that he gets it. However, if somebody's toil and labor constitute inputs for an enterprise and he has toiled and labored to earn his wealth then its *'Ashur* (one-tenth) will become due for payment, as for example in agriculture and horticulture etc. Agriculture implied here is the kind in which though the farmer tills the field and sows the seeds, he has neither to irrigate the field nor has to dig a well and fix a Persian wheel to it to draw water, instead Allah the Exalted irrigates his field for him by means of rain water. Of course, if somebody irrigates the field by means of water that is drawn by buckets or through some other device then one-twentieth part of the produce becomes due on him. If the nature of the enterprise is such that its growth is a function of the owner's personal efforts, its management, safety and security is his responsibility, then half of even that i.e. one-fortieth part of the earnings will become due on him because in it he has to keep more busy than in farming and agriculture and has to supervise all the time. The extent of supervision in farming, orchards and groves etc., is less than in trading and one also does not have to devote so much time to farming and cultivation as he must to a shop, factory or company. Similarly, crop production by rain is better and easy than by employing artificial irrigation. Similarly, the chance discovery of a treasure is the

easiest thing to happen as compared to all these occupations and one does not have to do anything in it. Accordingly, for cash – 200 Dirham and for gold – 20 *Mithqal*¹², for grains and fruits – 5 *Wasaq* (5 x 150 Kilograms), for goats – 40 goats, for cows – 30 cows and lastly, for camels – 5 camels, were fixed as *Nisab*.

2.2.6. The uses of Zakat

Allah the Exalted has stated the uses of *Zakat* in a verse of *Suratul Baraa't* (Chapter: 9; The Holy Quran).

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

2.2.7. Zakat is not a tax or penalty, instead it is a permanent act of worship and a system divinely ordained

Regarding *Zakat* it should be borne in mind that it is not merely some sort of tax or penalty or Government levy. Like *prayer* and *fasting* it is a permanent act of worship, a means to attain nearness to God and a Divine system for moral reform and training. In making its payments also, the sentiment of seeking respect, doing a favor to somebody, pride and arrogance should not be there, instead there should be politeness, humility and thankfulness to God in it, and instead of himself one should regard the acceptor of *Zakat* as the benefactor. It is also required of those entitled to

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

receive *Zakat* to search for the sources, ensure their enlistment there and complete the formalities for receiving the *Zakat*. Also, it has been considered better if *Zakat* is paid by the wealthy of a locality to the poor of the same locality (save and except, if the recipients of *Zakat* are not to be found there). In the Glorious Quran, *Zakat* has been declared to be an exact parallel but opposite to *interest* (which is forbidden in Islam) and to the same extent as *Zakat* has been praised, the latter has been condemned.

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

The Apostle of Allah ﷺ had trained his Noble Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and his entire *Ummah* in accordance with his own conduct and his own life, and in encouraging people to spend their riches gave such inspiring instructions and left such counsels for posterity that after reading them one begins to think that man probably has no right at all in the wealth that he has in excess of his needs. After reading those Noble Traditions, when a person examines his own life and reviews this comfort and luxury, this abundance and facilities, at that time, he feels very uncomfortable. He begins to feel that everything is in excess of his need and is in surplus, and these beautiful clothes, multiple-course meals, luxurious means of transport and the profusion of life's comforts, all appear wrong and not permissible to him. Although this subject comes in the purview of moral encouragement only and does not relate to any commandment of *Shariah* or law but the example set by the apostle of Allah ﷺ was exactly as described above.

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

In a *Sahih* Tradition the beloved Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said that:

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

14. V.21: Chapter 33: *Al-Ahzaab*: Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi. 15. Realted by Abu Da'ood.

The beloved Prophet ﷺ also said that:

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

The beloved Prophet ﷺ said that:

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

It is mentioned in yet another Tradition that:

*A man came to the Apostle of Allah ﷺ and said that, 'O Apostle of Allah clothe me', the beloved Apostle ﷺ said to him that, 'Do not you have a neighbor who has two extra sets of dresses'? The man submitted, 'There are more than one'. The beloved Apostle ﷺ said that, 'May Allah the Exalted not put him together with you in Paradise'.*¹⁸

2.2.9. The worth of man and the importance of sympathizing with him, in the sight of Islam

The Apostle of Allah ﷺ raised the position of man and the value and importance of helping him at times of need and sympathizing with him in distress to such a lofty level, that to imagine some other standard higher than that is impossible. He who fails in this domain is like him who disobeys and fails before God Himself. A famous Sacred Tradition is that: On the Day of Judgment Allah the Exalted will say to His bondsman that, O son of Adam, I fell ill and you visited Me not. He will say: O Lord, and how should I visit You when You are The Lord of the worlds? He will say: Did you not know that my servant so-and-so had fallen ill and you visited him not? Did you not know that had you visited him you would have found Me with him? O son of Adam, I asked you for food and you fed Me not. He will say: O Lord, and how should I feed You when You are The Lord of the worlds? He will say: Did you not know that My servant so-and-so asked you for food and you fed him not? Did you not know that had you

16. Related by Tirmizi. 17. Related by Tabrani Fil Awsat. 18. Related by Tabrani.

fed him you would surely have found that (i.e. the reward for so doing) with Me? O son of Adam, I asked you to give Me water to drink and you gave Me not. He will say: O Lord how should I give You water to drink when You are The Lord of the worlds? He will say: My servant so-and-so asked you to give him water to drink and you gave him not water to drink. Had you given him water to drink you would have surely found that (i.e. the reward for so doing) with Me.¹⁹

So far as the position of man and the importance of sympathizing with him in distress is concerned, this, in Islam, was its limit. And so full of sympathy and favor, justice and equity, is a tradition of the beloved prophet ε that nothing can surpass that:

None of you will become a 'complete' Muslim until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself.²⁰

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

Chapter 2: Section: 2.3

Fasting (*Sawm*) – The third pillar of Islam

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

2.3.1. The commandment for fasting and related verses

Allah the Exalted revealed the commandment for Muslims to fast but this fasting (*Sawm*¹) was made obligatory at such a time after *Hijrah*² when the clouds of distress cleared, the period of hardship and poverty ended, and Muslims heaved a sigh of relief in Madinah and their life became easy and comfortable for them. This happened, probably, because had fasting been made obligatory in a period when conditions were miserable, many people might have discerned it to be *fasting under constraint* and a consequence of economic conditions and the kind of atmosphere that prevailed in Makkah; and they would have felt that fasting is only for the poor and the needy, victims of calamities and the oppressed, while the wealthy and prosperous who own orchards, groves and lands are exempt from it.

Apart from this, the verse that declared fasting to be obligatory was revealed at a time when faith had permeated and had taken root in the hearts of Muslims and they had already developed an extreme attachment, rather a

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

love, for *Salah*; the whole lot of Muslims were prepared to submit before Divine commandments and laws of *Shariah* every moment and it used to appear like they are only waiting for it. The verse that declared fasting to be obligatory was:

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

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

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

These verses in which for the first time in Islam fasting was declared obligatory, were not like those dry laws that are enforced on grounds of a mere political and public relation that exists between a member of society and the state. These verses appeal to faith and belief, mind and conscience, heart and sentiments, all at the same time and provide nourishment to the whole lot of these things; and they create a favorable atmosphere not only for promulgating the law but also for welcoming it with happiness. And this

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

is an undeniable miracle of Quran's principle of inviting mankind to Islam, its insight into human psychology and its wise law making.

(It is) a revelation from the Wise, the Owner of the Praise.⁴

Allah the Exalted has addressed those people to whom this law was entrusted with the words *O ye who believe!* And in this manner, as if, prepared them in advance for the implementation and execution of all future commandments that God would send to them, however strict and burdensome on their psyche they might find the laws to be, because this precisely is what belief demands and claims from a believer. If somebody has reposed his belief in Allah the Exalted, has accepted Him as his God and Sustainer, Sovereign of permissions and prohibitions, worthy of reverence and obedience; has handed over to Him the reins of all his actions, and loves Allah with his heart and soul; then it would be only appropriate that he submits, without why and wherefore, to every commandment, every law, every verdict and every demand of His.

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

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

O Ye who believe! Answer Allah and the apostle when he calleth you to that which quickeneth you.⁷

This is compliance to such a *Shariah* (Divine/Islamic Law) which is in the totality of its obligatory acts, acts of worship, commandments and laws, the elixir of life for human souls. After that, Allah the Exalted says: *O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you.* However, in the history of religions, this was not a first-ever occasion or some innovation. Prior to them also Allah the Exalted had made fasting obligatory on all ‘People of the Book’

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

(Jews, Christians and Sabians) and on the whole lot of nations who practised a religion and *Shariah* (religious/Divine law). Thus did Allah the Exalted lessen the burden and mitigate the heaviness of feeling that a man who is singled out suffers from. If man gets to know that the restraint on him is not something new, that there have been precedents of it, and many nations and followers of many prophets had abided by it, then the same restraint, to some extent, will begin to get bearable for him and his determination will become firmer than before.

After that, Allah the Exalted says that fasting is not something whose purpose is to put people in hardship and trial for no reason. It is for mystical exercise and training, purification and reform. It is, in fact, a training school for moral education from where a well grounded human being steps out in such a way that the reins of his wishes are in his grip; wishes do not rule over him rather he rules over his wishes. When he gives up pure and permissible things on Allah's command, then why will he not try to save himself from prohibited and unlawful things? A person who gives up cool mineral water and wholesome delicious food in obeying God, how can he accept to even cast a glance at things unlawful and impure. This is the very sense of 'that ye may ward off (evil)'.

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

2.3.2. What is *Sawm*?

Fasting in Islam is different from the religious *Vrat* (Hinduism) observed customarily on specified days and quitting food intake for physical fitness and medical reasons. In the fasting prescribed in Islam every type of food and liquid, and even swallowing of medicine and its administration via throat through any procedure is prohibited. Also the option of selective intake of nourishment, foods and liquids, is not available, that, grains are prohibited but fruits are allowed or lime and salt can be taken with water or plain water is allowed; taking any of these types of things voids the fast. And if such an act has been done intentionally, then successive fasting for sixty days is the penalty for it. If it slips from somebody's mind that he is

fasting and he eats or drinks something, then that will not void the fast.

2.3.3. Fasting: Distinctions, virtues and commandments

The plan of fasting that Islam has presented is complete both in terms of its laws and objectives, guarantees maximum benefit and in it *the scheme of things* and *the wisdom* of God the Mighty, the Knower, the Wise and the Aware is fully manifest.

Should He not know what He created? And He is the Subtle, the Aware.⁸

He has selected one entire month – the month of *Ramzan* in which the Quran was revealed – for a month long period of successive fasting, in which the commandment is to spend the days in fasting and the permission is to eat and drink during the nights.

It is reported on the authority of *Sayyadna* Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, that the Apostle of Allah ﷺ said that:

Every action of the son of Adam is increased many times and the good deeds are increased between ten and seven hundred times. Allah the Exalted says that, 'except fasting because verily it (Fasting) is for Me alone and only I will give its recompense. Foregoes food and bodily desires for My sake, so for him who fasts are two joys, one at the time of Iftar (when the fasting ends) and one at the time of meeting his Sustainer. And verily the change in the breath of one who fasts is better and purer than musk before Allah the Exalted'.

Sayyadna Sahl bin Sa'd, may Allah be pleased with him, narrates that the Apostle of Allah ﷺ said that:

'There is a door of Paradise called Riyyaan through which nobody except those who used to fast for Allah's sake will be called. Whosoever shall be from among those who used to fast thus, only he shall enter it, and he who will succeed in entering it, will never be thirsty.'

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

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

Allah the Exalted has decreed that *fasting* is obligatory in *Ramzan*, and that they both are inseparable from each other; and really the confluence of these two blessings and felicities carries great wisdom and significance. And its foremost reason is that, *Ramzan* is the very month in which the Glorious Quran was revealed and a humanity that had lost its way saw the first light of the day. So it was most appropriate that like the dawn that has forever been associated with the commencement of the fast, this month too, in which had arrived the dawn of humanity's long dark night, was associated with one full month of fasting; especially because this particular month excels all other months in attributes like mercy, blessings, spirituality and relation with the soul. So, *Ramzan* rightly deserved that fasting adorned its days and worship beautified its nights.

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

2.3.5. A world season of worship and universal celebration of righteous deeds

All these distinctions have made *Ramzan* a period of mass festivity and a global season for worship, glorification, recitation and reading of the Glorious Quran, abstinence and God-consciousness. In it the whole lot of Muslims from the East and the West, learned and illiterate, rich and poor, meek and courageous, every kind and every group of individuals, all are seen as partners and companions, friends and supporters, of each other. This *Ramzan* is observed in every city, every village and every hamlet at the sametime. The palace of the rich and the hut of the poor, in both its splendid manifestation is seen. The result is that neither anybody becomes

willful and headstrong nor there is any dispute between them on choosing to observe the fast. Every person who Allah the Exalted has blessed with an unbiased vision can himself witness across the length and breadth of the Islamic world the majesty and the beauty of *Ramzan*. It seems as if a vast canopy of splendor and tranquility is stretched all over the Islamic society. Those people who are a bit lax and lazy in fasting, they too feel compelled to fast for fear of cutting a sorry figure before the majority of fasting Muslims and if for some reason they are unable to fast, they eat in seclusion out of embarrassment, exceptions are those few apostates and sinners who have no hesitation in shamelessly eating in public or the sick and the travellers who are deemed to be handicapped under *Shariah*. This is a collective and worldwide fasting which automatically creates such a conducive and happy atmosphere in which the observance of a fast appears to be easy, hearts are softened and people turn their attention to various acts of worship, devotion, compassion and sympathy.

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

Some nourishment is taken before dawn. (To acquire the strength for fasting so that hunger and thirst do not become excessively troublesome during the day.) This pre-dawn meal in the terminology of *Shariah* is called *Sahoor* and in India it is known as *Sehri*; it is a practice of the beloved prophet ﷺ and a deed for which fondness also has been inculcated.

The Apostle of Allah ﷺ has himself declared it a *Sunnah* for Muslims. *Sayyadna* Anas bin Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, has narrated that the Apostle of Allah ﷺ said that, *Eat the pre-dawn meal because the pre-dawn meal has blessings in it.*⁹

Sayyadna 'Amru bin Al'Aas, may Allah be pleased with him, has narrated that the Apostle of Allah ﷺ said that, *'the difference between our fasting and the fasting of the People of the Book is of this very pre-dawn meal.*¹⁰

The beloved Prophet ﷺ has also prohibited the delaying of *Iftar*¹¹, he ﷺ has pronounced it to be an indication of disturbance and waywardness, and the custom of those of the faithful among the People of the Book who exceed

9. Related in Sahih Muslim and Sahih Bukhari. **10.** Related in Muatta'; Tirmizi **11.** Ending the fast at sunset is called *Iftar*.

the norms in worship. *Sayyadna* Suhail bin Sa'd, may Allah be pleased with him, narrates that the Apostle of Allah ﷺ said that, '*As long as people will make haste in Iftar they will remain on goodness*'.

The routine of the beloved Prophet ﷺ was that he ﷺ used to perform *Iftar* before prayer, a few half-ripe dates if available, if not then dry dates, else a few draughts of water.

At the time of *Iftar* he ﷺ also used to say words which mean:

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

And words which mean:

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

2.3.7. Protection of the spirit and reality of the *Sawm*

Islamic *Shariah* is not content with the form and façade of fasting, instead it has also given total attention towards the spirit and reality of this worship. It has not only forbidden nourishment and sexual relations, instead it has declared as forbidden and prohibited every such thing that defeats the objectives of fasting, and is detrimental to its multi-faceted wisdom and its spiritual and moral benefits. It has built around the fasting a rampart of etiquette, God-consciousness, noble thoughts and chaste expression. The Apostle of Allah ﷺ has said that:

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

He ﷺ has also said that:

Not at all does Allah the Exalted need him to leave his eating and

12. Related in Sahih Bukhari.

*drinking who does not leave telling lies and acting upon those lies.*¹³

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

*Many who fast earn naught from their fasting sans thirst,
many who pray earn naught from their standing
except keeping awake in the night.*¹⁴

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

Fasting is a shield, until it is torn apart.

Islamic fasting is not the name of seizing freedoms only – orders and commandments that disallow eating, drinking, slander, back-biting, fighting, quarrelling and the use of foul language – it is also an aggregate of many orders and commandments that invite to righteous acts. This is a period dedicated to worship, reading and recitation of the Glorious Quran, glorification and chant, compassion, sympathy and giving preferential treatment to the poor. The Apostle of Allah ﷺ has said that:

*Whosoever will seek to obtain nearness to Allah with a solitary act
of one good category in Ramzan,
it will be considered the equivalent of fulfilling
one obligation on other days;
and whosoever will perform one obligatory
act of worship he will be like him who performs seventy such obligatory
acts of worship on days other than the days of Ramzan.*

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

Whosoever arranges an Iftar for one who is fasting will get a

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

*reward equal to the reward of the person who was fasting
and the fasting person's reward will not be lessened.*

Allah the Exalted has also instilled in this *Ummah*¹⁵ the sentiment of being mindful of the prayer of *Taraweeh* and making elaborate arrangements for it in mosques. The proof of *Taraweeh* being a separate prayer exists in the precedence set by the beloved prophet ﷺ, but he ﷺ had discontinued after offering it for three days only, so that it might not become obligatory on his followers and become a cause of hardship for them.

All these engagements have made *Ramzan* a period of mass celebration of worship, a season of reading and reciting the Glorious Quran and a springtime in the interest of the righteous, the God-fearing, the pious and the ardent in worship. In it the religious sentiment of this *Ummah*, its respect for religion and its fondness for worship fully manifest themselves and come to the fore; its repentance and penitence, softening of hearts, inclination towards God, sense of regret and the spirit of competing with each other in righteous deeds are at such a zenith that no nation of the world and no group of people are any match for it.

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

2.3.8. *E'tikaf*¹⁷

E'tikaf of the last '*Ashrah*'¹⁸ of *Ramzan* is also a deed of great virtue. A favorite practice of the Apostle of Allah ﷺ; *E'tikaf* completes the array of benefits that *Ramzan* offers and the objectives it serves.

During *E'tikaf* it is desirable to offer *Salah*, read and recite the Glorious Quran, glorify Allah and remain engaged in *Tasbeeh*, *Tahmeed*, *Takbeer*

15. Brethren in faith i.e. the community of Muslims. **16.** V.4: Chapter 62: *Al-Jum'ah*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall. **17.** To restrict oneself to a mosque in order to devote maximum time to worship and seek Allah's pleasure. The period of *E'tikaf* may vary. Therefore, in terms of its span, the meaning of *E'tikaf* includes but is not restricted to 'the last ten days of *Ramzan*'. **18.** The Arabic word '*Ashrah*' means '10'. However, in the context of the lunar month of *Ramzan* which can either be of 29 days or of 30 days the phrase 'the last '*Ashrah*' implies 'the last 9 or 10 days as the case may be'.

Istaghfar and the repetitive recitation of *Darood Shareef*¹⁹ for the beloved Prophet ﷺ.

The Apostle of Allah ﷺ was always very particular in performing the *E'tikaf* and Muslims too, in every place and period, have remained regular in it. As a result, it has acquired the status of a sign of *Ramzan* and a regularly observed *Sunnah*. On the authority of *Sayyedah* Aishah, may Allah be pleased with her, it is reported that the beloved Prophet ﷺ always used to perform *E'tikaf* during the last *'Ashrah* of *Ramzan* until his demise and then his noble wives, may Allah be pleased with them, preserved the established routine of *E'tikaf*.

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

During *E'tikaf* there is strict prohibition on going out of the mosque except for reasons beyond human control (calls of nature, *Ghusl*, post-coitus bath). *Wudu* also must be performed within the precincts of the mosque.

2.3.9. The Night of Power²⁰

The Holy Quran and the Noble Traditions have underscored the virtue of the Night of Power at numerous places. Allah the Exalted says:

In the name of Allah the Compassionate the Merciful.

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

19. *Tasbeeh* i.e. saying *Subhan Allah*, meaning: Glory be unto Allah; *Tahmeed* i.e. saying *Al-Hamdu lillah*, meaning: All praise be to Allah; *Takbeer* i.e. saying *Allahu Akbar*, meaning: Allah is the Greatest; *Istaghfar*: begging forgiveness from Allah; and *Darood Shareef*: A supplication before Allah to invoke His blessings specifically on Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. **20.** Every *Ramzan* comes a night called *Laylat-ul-Qadr* (Arabic) i.e. *The Night of Power* or *The Night of Honor*. **21.** Chapter 97, *Al Qadr*; Meaning of the Glorious Quran; Muhammad M. Pickthall.

The beloved Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said that:

*Whosoever will perform worship with firm belief and sincere hope of earning reward, during The Night of Power, his previous sins will be forgiven.*²²

Allah the Exalted, in His limitless wisdom and mercy, has concealed the Night of Power somewhere in the last 'Ashrah of *Ramzan* so that: (a) Muslims remain engaged in seeking it (b) their longing for it is increased (c) their resolve is heightened and (d) they spend all of the last ten nights in its attraction, in prayer and worship, supplication and entreaties; as was the routine of the Apostle of Allah ﷺ.

Sayyedah 'Aishah, may Allah be pleased with her, narrates that: when the last 'Ashrah of *Ramzan* used to begin, the Apostle of Allah ﷺ kept awake the whole night, enjoined the same upon everybody in his home and became very firm of resolve.²³

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

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

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

Time flies. The twenty nine, thirty, days of a lunar month are not too many, after all. People with a greed for worship and spirituality were not even content as yet. Ceaseless was their cry*"Is there some more?.....Is there some more?"*. The common Muslim was just about getting accustomed to the fasting with each passing day, that the night of the new moon has arrived. *Ramzan* packs his baggage and departs from Muslims promising to be back the next year. The moon of *'Eid* has appeared. Endurance with a tint of gratefulness is substituted by gratefulness with a tint of endurance. A guest, a messenger of Allah, has departed; another guest, another messenger of His, has arrived. That was as much His commandment as this commandment is His. Until today it was sinful to eat in the day time, tomorrow it will be sinful not to eat.

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

Chapter 2: Section: 2.4

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

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

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

2.4.1. The account of Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, in the Glorious Quran and its relation with the *Secure City*²

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

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

*whole heart*³ which had already been prepared for prophet-hood and the building of a new world order.

**And We verily gave Abraham of old his proper course and
We were aware of him.**⁴

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

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

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

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

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

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

he is alive and surviving the trauma.....again anxiety mounts up within her.....again she runs towards the same hillocks.....may be somebody could be seen.....may be some sign of water could be spotted! On the one hand there is restlessness and an uneasiness in her which is the natural outcome of the situation she is in. On the other hand there is a typical serenity in her which is produced only by having firm belief and by reposing total confidence in Allah. In spite of the fact that she is the wife of one prophet and the mother of another prophet she does not consider the adoption of means, making of efforts and adopting a course of action to be the antithesis of belief and trust in God. She certainly is anxious. However, her anxiety has no trace of despair in it and her absolute trust in God has no place for a lull, inaction and lethargy. It is a scene the likeness of which the heavens have perhaps never witnessed before. This is the moment when the Mercy of God stirs up. In miraculous manner there erupts a spring of water nearby! *The Zam-Zam*: that blessed and eternal spring, in Makkah, that never dries up nor does its output ever decrease. The one spring that is sufficient for the whole world and all generations. Even today, after centuries, people from all corners of the world are benefiting from it and their thirst is being quenched by it. Allah the Exalted has kept cure and nourishment, reward and blessings in it.

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

without pausing anywhere – he swiftly goes away. All he is concerned about is his destination and his future. He considers his life to be but like the numbered rounds a pilgrim performing the *Sa'ee* makes between the two Makkan hillocks; a life that he spends in obeying his Lord and emulating his ancestors. While his belief is not an obstruction in inquiry and logical reasoning, his recourse to practical action – his *Sa'ee* – does not disturb his confidence and trust in God. The *Sa'ee*, therefore, is an activity whose entire worth, soul and message can be summed up in just two words: *love* and *loyalty*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And recall what time Ibrahim was raising the foundation of

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

**the House and also Ismai'l, praying: our Lord! accept of us;
 verily Thou! Thou art the Hearer, the Knower!
 Our Lord! make us twain submissive unto Thee, and
 of our progeny a community submissive unto Thee,
 and show us our rites, and relent toward us!
 verily Thou! Thou art the Relentant, the Merciful!**⁹

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

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

During Prophet Ibrahim's period, this world was a slave of resources and people used to place undue trust in them. They were somehow convinced that resources by themselves were absolute, self-sufficient and – instead of

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

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

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

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

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

People's faith and experience, in general, was that an abundance of water, fertile soil, farms and gardens sustained life. Therefore, for the purpose of settling with their idols and clans they always used to look around for such

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

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

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

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

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

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

The blessed personage had brought and left his family in a land where not

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

even so much water was available as to moisten one's throat but Allah the Exalted caused a stream to flow out of that sandy and rocky land. Water gushed out of the sand on its own and has continued to flow in the same manner to this day. People drink as much as they can from it and lug it with them in cans when they go back from here.

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

2.4.2. The *Haj* is a commemoration of the accomplishments and attributes of Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, and a revival of his teachings and invitation to belief in the Oneness of Allah

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

is a call to adopt Prophet Ibrahim's path and *maslak* (school of thought), to develop his kind of spirit in us and to keep aloft the flag of his *Invitation to Tawheed* in every age, everywhere.

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

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

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

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

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

their brethren who were unable to stand in attendance here, either due to physical weakness and disease or some other constraint. Thus does that current of energized belief run through the entire body of the Muslim *Ummah*. It creates among the ignorant a fondness for knowledge; lifts the spirits of the spiritless and the weak; creates enthusiasm in the dejected and confidence in the hopeless. It rejuvenates the *Ummah* to deliver its message to the world, carry out its duty of inviting human kind to Allah's way and this point onwards the journey of its life assumes a novelty that was never there before.

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

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

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

Among them, the nation of Islam that is, there is no distinction of king and subject, lord and servant, rich and poor, high and low, and the Islamic nationality, recognizable in the uniformity of their dress and chant, is writ large across the entire Makkan panorama. The same is true during all related actions, other forms of worship that overlap with *Haj*, the performance of rites, and the convergence of multitudes at the sacred signs

and places that are associated with *Haj*. Everywhere people of every Islamic community and country are seen together shoulder to shoulder. All differences of far and near, Arab and non-Arab are wiped away. Between the hillocks of Safa and Marwah all run together, travel to Mina together, go to 'Arafat together, together they stand in attendance at Jabl-e-Rahmah to supplicate and all spend the night at one place.

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

Together they return, move together and halt together.

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

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

Till the time they possess the *Haj* (And it will be their cherished possession till the end of the world, God willing), until then, their secondary identities and the un-Islamic invitations to which they are exposed, can never succeed to swallow Muslims. Muslims will not become pie for them. In each of their respective countries – with which their love is natural due to inborn sentiments and nationalistic feelings – Muslims can never succeed to build any such new *Ka'bah* that would replace the *Haj* and around which all Muslims would converge. The present *Qiblah*²⁰ will remain one and the same, forever. Towards it all the dwellers of the East and the West, Arab

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

and non-Arab will turn their faces in prayer. The *Baitullah* (Holy Ka'bah) too will remain one and the same always. For its *Haj*, Muslims of every description – Indian, Afghan, European and American – will continue to travel year after year.

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

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

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

This entire duty and worship is related to Makkah and its sub-urbs: Mina and 'Arafat. All the rites are performed there only. They are neither performed in any other month of the year except *Zul-Haj* nor on any other dates even within *Zul-Haj*. This obligation can also not be fulfilled anywhere else except in Makkah, Mina and 'Arafat. Events, personalities, philosophies and expediencies related to the *Haj* and the objectives which the *Haj* is meant to serve, collectively demand that this grand duty be performed in this very month, on these very dates and at these very places. The duty of *Haj* commemorates the sentiments of *Tawheed*, love, self-denial, selflessness and sacrifice that were present in Allah's two blessed prophets: Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, and Prophet Ismail, peace

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

be upon him, who were at once His lovers and His beloved. It is also a re-enactment of their accomplishments embodying intense love of God at the selfsame places and times. In them lies great potential for creating: a state of being intoxicated with Allah's love, sentiments of self-denial and selflessness and a sense of liberation and independence, even if for a short while from customs and traditions, habits and habitats, formalities and laws and all self-imposed standards of mankind. Then, without *Haj* the purpose of always keeping Muslims from around the world – in whatever the age they live and wherever on earth they might dwell – linked and bonded to the Ibrahimian civilization, the center of Islam and the Holy *Ka'bah* would be impossible to serve.²²

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

Chapter: 3

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

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

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

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

peace be upon him; practitioners of the religion of *Majoosees* (their Arabic name) in India are commonly remembered as Parsees, their correct name is *Zoroastrians*, which relates to *Zoroaster*, the founder of their religion; *Buddhism* and *Buddhists* relate to their founder and religious leader Gautam Buddha and similar is the case with most Indian religions.

3.1.1. The honorific title of *Muslimoon*

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

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

For the same reason, *faith, religion and Shariah* occupy a place of fundamental importance in the entire system of their lives and in their civilization and way of life, and they naturally happen to be extraordinarily sensitive in matters that relate to them. When deliberating upon their individual and community issues, also in formulating laws, in the drafting and adoption of a constitution or amendments thereof, so much so that in common social settings demanding basic courtesies, there is a need to keep in view this basic truth. To be borne in mind is also the fact that the core and basic portion of their Personal Law is extracted from the Holy Quran and its details, sections and expositions are based on the Noble Traditions and Islamic Jurisprudence.

Muslim Personal Law is a part of the *Shariah* (Islamic law) and the religion of Muslims and it is authenticated by the Holy Quran and the Traditions. It is not the yield of some social experiment or specialized area of social sciences or the work of intellectuals, law makers and reformers. That is why even a Muslim government can not make any change in it.

It is a part of religion and it becomes necessary for every Muslim to act in accordance with it, also because in Islam the orbit of religion is not confined to articles of faith and acts of worship, rather it overwhelms inter-personal relations, rights and duties, way of life and every hue and format of civilization; and also because if religion is separated from civilization and way of life, and civilization and way of life are detached from religion, then religion becomes ineffective, confined and weak, and civilization and way of life degenerate into vehicles gone out of control and into instruments of desires and vested interests.¹

3.1.3. No one has the right to amend or alter the laws of *Shariah*

- Whereas, some portion of these laws appears in the Glorious Quran with such clarity and finality or
- The legal status of a certain portion is authenticated by Traditions whose chain of narrators are innumerable² and people have been practicing it since the time of the Apostle of Allah ﷺ with such continuity or
- The consensus reached by Muslim theologians is so decisive with respect to a certain portion,

that whosoever rejects it, shall now be considered to be outside the sphere of Islam both in principle and under the law. In the areas of its interpretation and application no matter how much consideration is given to prevalent conditions; any alteration, change and amendment in the law itself is out of the question. In this matter even the representative government and Legislative Assembly of any country, where Muslims happen to be in majority, do not have the authority to make any change. And suppose a

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

change is made or there is a plan to incorporate a change, then such an action is synonymous with tampering with the Holy text and interference in religion.

However, those subjects of *Ijtihad* and interpretative law-points in which amendments or flexibilities have continuously been created with the changes in times can be deliberated upon by Muslim intellectuals and specialists of Islamic jurisprudence who have the ability to conclusively deduce and interpret, issues and law-points, by exercising their will and authority; and after necessary debate, review and reflection, giving allowance for prevalent conditions and recent changes, they may make the rulings consistent with the times and demands of practical life. Recourse to this process, called *Ijtihad*, was taken continually in every period of Islam's history and it is necessary to employ it till the last generation of Muslims.

3.2. Second sociocultural distinction: A special concept and system of *Taharah* i.e. bodily purification³

A special concept and system of bodily purification is the second sociocultural distinction of Muslims. At this juncture let us also understand the difference between cleanliness and purification. Whereas cleanliness means that one's body be free from dirt and grime and clothes be neat and clean; purification means that the body or clothes be free from urine, excrement or such filthy things as a drop of alcoholic drink, blood, canine saliva, dung and so forth, like droppings of forbidden birds etc. Now, if the body or a garment is defiled by even the tiniest of urine droplets or a drop of blood or dung or bird dropping then no matter how clean the body and how sparkling the dress, a Muslim is not in a state of purification and he will not be able to offer prayer to God with that body and in that garment. Similarly if he has not washed himself after urinating and defecation or he needs to bathe, then too he is in a state of impurity and can not offer prayer (*Salah*). The same commandment extends to kitchen utensils, earthenware, plastered and un-plastered floors. It is not necessary that if they appear tidy and spotlessly clean they are in a state of purification too. If any of the abovementioned impurities defiles any of the abovementioned things then lest purified it will neither attain purification nor become usable on its own.

3. Readers may please refer to the text-box at the beginning of sub-section 2.1.5. Purification, if necessary.

3.3. The third sociocultural distinction is their system of nourishment, that complies with the dictates of the Bounteous Quran

Their third sociocultural distinction is that in having food and beverages, and meats of quadrupeds and birds, they do not have the freedom to eat and drink whatever they like. For their guidance the Glorious Quran and the *Shariah* have drawn a line between *Halaal* and *Haraam* (Allowed and Forbidden) and *Khabees* and *Tayyab* (Impure and Pure). They find that impossible to cross. It is their bounden duty to slaughter quadrupeds and birds in the manner prescribed in *Shariah*, invoking Allah's name on them, failing which they can not consume of their meat. If a quadruped is not slaughtered in accordance with *Shariah* or while hunting if one has not been quick enough to slaughter a bird in accordance with *Shariah* and it dies, then they are required to consider such meat as *carrion*. Similarly, if an animal is slaughtered with the intention of offering it as a sacrifice to an entity other than Allah or if at the time of sacrifice a name other than Allah's is invoked upon it – be it the name of some god or goddess or idol or some prophet, holy man and martyr – then that meat also is graded as *carrion* whose consumption is not permissible for them. Among animals those which are forever forbidden and impure are pigs and dogs. Consumption of some animals is prohibited and their meats are forbidden although they are not impure in themselves e.g. predators: lion, leopard, panther etc. Likewise, some birds are allowed for them and some are forbidden. For example, *birds of prey* and those birds that use their toes to grasp and lift food like falcon, hawk etc. are *forbidden* and those birds that are *not birds of prey* and eat with their beaks are *allowed*. Actually this selection is a sign of the Ibrahimian civilization, the great Prophet's taste and his intuitive choice have been declared the standard in this regard and Muslims, to whichever country of the world and whichever period of history they might belong, have been asked to adopt it compulsorily.

3.4. Fourth sociocultural distinction: Heart felt attachment and intimacy with Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, (but free from exaggeration and hyperbole in expressions of reverence towards him)

Their fourth distinction is the deep attachment they have with their own Apostle ε. Among them, the position of the Apostle of Allah ε is not only

that of a great human being, respectable personality and religious leader; their relationship with his being is a shade different from that and a shade beyond. So far as the greatness of the Apostle ε is concerned, it cannot be expressed more profoundly than the famous line of an Urdu verse that says, *ba'd az Khuda buzurg tu'ee; qissah mukhtasar*. Poetic devices apart, its sense would be more or less:

*Venerable next to God you are -
eulogies to you are thus abridged*
(May peace and blessings of Allah be upon our beloved prophet.)

They are restricted from entertaining thoughts implying that he ε in any way partners with God and from referring to him in exaggerated terms, in the manner that followers of some prophets consider permissible for their prophets. A *Sahih* Tradition clearly says that:

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

3.4.1. The deep affection and platonic love that Muslims have for their Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has no precedent

However, alongside this balanced faith and reverence, Muslims have such a sentimental attachment with their Prophet ε and such is the way they connect and bond with him from the depths of their hearts that the like of it – in our limited knowledge and according to whatever little we have read – is not found between any other people or *Millath* and their Prophet. It will be correct to say that thousands and lakhs of individuals among them hold the Prophet ε closer to their hearts than their parents, their children and their own lives. They consider defending his honor to be their sacred duty and can never tolerate any act or remark even remotely blasphemous about him. In this regard, they happen to be so emotional and sensitive that at any such inauspicious time and place they just become uncontrollable and do not flinch even from sacrificing their lives. Every period of history is replete with events and evidences that support the truth of this statement. Even today his name, his honor, his city, his words and relics associated with him, are the most dear possessions of Muslims, they produce the rush

in their blood and the heat in their nerves.⁴

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

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

3.4.2. Faith on the discontinuance of prophet-hood

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

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

Muslims refer to all those personalities who lived during the time of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and got the honor of being in his company, by the common alias of *Sahabah* (The Noble Companions). They consider it necessary to hold a good opinion about them and acknowledge their services; and consider them to be exemplary Muslims, their benefactors and elders.

4. SUGGESTED READING: For a more detailed account of the life of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, read *Nabi-e-Rahmat* (Urdu, Hindi and English); available at: Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, Nadwatul Ulema, Lucknow. 5. Explanation has appeared under Reference no. 4 of Sub-Section 2.2.1.

Whenever they make a reference to anyone of the *Sahabah* in their speech or writing they mention the words *Razi Allahu 'Anhu* after his name, meaning: May Allah be pleased with him. Even among the Companions, they consider the four illustrious Companions, *Sayyadna* Abu Bakr *Razi Allah 'Anhu*, *Sayyadna* Umar *Razi Allah 'Anhu*, *Sayyadna* Uthman *Razi Allah 'Anhu* and *Sayyadna* Ali *Razi Allah 'Anhu* – who became the Prophet's Successors and successively the Caliphs after the beloved Prophet ﷺ had passed away – to be in one group that ranks the highest and mention their names after the name of the beloved Prophet ﷺ in the sermons delivered every Friday and the two Sermons of *'Eid-ul Fitr* and *Eid-ul Azha*; to them and six other Companions, the Prophet ﷺ had given glad tidings of Paradise in their very lifetimes. This blessed group of ten Companions is called the *'Ashrah Mubashshirah*.

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

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

The same is their affair with the Glorious Quran, that they do not regard it to be merely an anthology of sagacity, moral instructions and societal laws that needs be respected to some extent and needs be acted upon only when it suites one's convenience. Instead, from beginning to end, in its words and their meaning, they regard it to be a discourse from God and a Divine Revelation. Each and every letter and each and every dot of which is guarded and in which even the slightest change, like that of a comma, is impossible to make. They always perform *Wudu* before they read it and place it, out of respect, at an elevated place.

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

Learning the entire Glorious Quran by heart is a global custom. There are regular and established schools in India for it, where the art of *Tajweed*

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

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

The fifth sociocultural distinction of Muslims whose understanding and keeping which into consideration is the demand of a realistic attitude, is that, they regard themselves to be a global *Millath* and consider their religion to be a universal and worldwide religion; together with all the sentiments of attachment, love, support and loyalty to their own country, of which they are citizens, and besides actively participating in that country's development and progress, they visualize themselves to be either a member of that abovementioned international family or a family within that international *Millath*. They take interest in common Islamic affairs, are influenced by the misfortunes and problems of other Muslim countries and do not regard the expression of sympathy for them – the extent to which it is possible – and extension of moral support to them to be contrary to the love for their motherland and loyalty to their country; rather they visualize their actions to be the demand of religion, kindness, human nature and justice; and believe their actions to be of benefit and a source of stability for their own country. This is their sociocultural (*Millee*) nature and a claim that the teachings of Islam and their centuries old history place on them. Before forming an opinion about them or deciding a course of action for them, it is very necessary to understand this distinctive streak of their nature.

Chapter: 4

Festivals of Muslims

Two great festivals

'*Eid-ul Fitr* and '*Eid al Adha*, remembered as '*Eid* and '*Baqreed* also, are two great festivals of Muslims. '*Eid* falls on the 1st of '*Shawwal*, when the month of '*Ramzan* ends and the moon of '*Shawwal* (the 10th month of the Islamic calendar¹) is sighted. Since the month of '*Ramzan* is the month of fasting and it is spent in endurance, worship, religious and spiritual engagements and self-restraint, naturally the moon of '*Eid*² is eagerly awaited and there is more joy if the moon is sighted specially on the 29th. In Urdu, *the moon of 'Eid* ('*Eid ka chand*) and *the moon of the 29th* (*Unteesveen ka chand*) have become popular idioms for: *joy and longing*. As the sun sets on the 29th of '*Ramzan*, Muslims of every age and class scan the sky, intently looking for the dim luminous crescent. If the moon is not sighted on the 29th a fast is observed again the following day and the moon's sighting on the 30th becomes certain. The moment the moon is sighted, voices rise a few decibels in excitement and the dusk is rent with greetings of *Mubarak! Salamath!* The young wish their elders. Children in their innocent ways break the happy news of '*Eid* to the elderly and ladies of the family and take their blessings. And the educated, especially those who try to act in accordance with the '*Sunnah* (Practices of the Prophet ﷺ) supplicate in the following manner when they see the crescent.

Allah is my Sustainer and yours O crescent,

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

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

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

4.1^a Reception of 'Eid and the agenda for the day

As 'Eid approaches, preparations for its reception get under way several days in advance but on the night of 'Eid festivity is in the air. Markets and homes pulsate with activity. From the morning itself preparations begin, to demonstrate the fact that there is no fast today and in a contrast with the last 29 or 30 days, today Allah has given permission to resume normal food and water intake. It is yet quite early in the morning that ripe dates or *Sheerkhurmah*², whatever people can afford, is served. Everywhere people take due care to meet the mandatory requirements³ for *ghusl*. Those to whom God has given the means, think that they should wear new clothes on this day. Well-groomed, wearing *Itar* and perfumes, people proceed towards 'Eidgah. Before going to 'Eidgah, some grain is handed over to the poor, it is called the *Sadqah-e fitr*. In a sense, it is an expression of thanks to the Lord for having inclined hearts towards fasting in *Ramzan*. If it is in the form of wheat, its weight is about 1.65 Kg (per person of the donor's family) and if it is barley, the weight doubles. Alternatively, even its cash equivalent can be paid – an amount which keeps fluctuating with the market rate of those cereals. Apart from each of the adults, this particular *Sadqah* is given for each of the children too. Whereas it is a *Sunnah* to offer the Prayer of 'Eid after the sun has ascended above the horizon, the earlier the better, its largest congregation is held at the city's 'Eidgah.

4.1^b Prayer of 'Eid

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

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

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

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

4.2. Meeting the mandatory requirements for the sacrifice in '*Eid Al Adha* and the greatness of sacrifice in Allah's sight

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

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

raised voice. They are an anthem of Allah's greatness in which His praise is extolled and their meaning is:

*Allah is the Greatest.
Allah is the Greatest.
Except Allah there is none else worthy of worship.*

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

Sacrificial meat is divided into three parts, one part for domestic consumption i.e. for the family of the person who offers the sacrifice, his guests and himself, one part for friends and acquaintances and one part for the poor and destitute. These days have been deemed days of normal food and water intake and on the day of 'Eid and on the three days of 'Eid al Adha fasting is not permissible. Muslims, by and large, have sumptuous meals in 'Eid al Adha. This day a lot of people are blessed with such delicacies and so much meat preparations come in their share that many a time such food is not available to them the whole year.

4.3. Both festivals are International Festivals of Muslims

The festivals of 'Eid-ul Fitr and 'Eid al Adha are WORLD FESTIVALS and INTERNATIONAL FESTIVALS OF MUSLIMS in which there is no exception of country, race and class. And these are the very festivals over whose status, in religion and under *Shariah*, nobody differs and nothing contentious has ever been spoken on their account in any period. In almost all countries, whether they be Muslim majority countries or countries where Muslims are in minority, there is no big difference in their ways of celebration and their acts and obligations, and this is the distinction in the whole lot of those religious acts and rituals, which are, authenticated by the Quran and the Traditions, and have continuously and constantly been coming down through the ages among Muslims.

5^a.1. From birth up to puberty

Islamic *Shariah* has made arrangements for a Muslim from birth to death and has tried to build such an atmosphere in which a Muslim is not able to ignore this fact, and at all times and in all stages of life he remembers (a) that we are an *Ummah* which has an identity of its own; (b) that we, the members of *Millath-e-Ibrahimi*¹ and *Ummath-e-Muhammadi*², followers of a distinctive divine law and constitution that govern a school of thought for life, are loyal slaves of Allah who believe in His Oneness; (c) that our lives ought to be spent in complete loyalty to that constitution and school of thought; (d) and that, when we die, we ought to die on that very religion and *Millath*.

5^a.1.1. Birth of a child and the saying of *Azaan* and *Iqamath* in his ears

When a child is born in a Muslim family, then first of all the newborn is brought to some pious man or elder of the family or of the neighborhood, who softly says the *Azaan* in his right ear and the *Iqamath* in his left ear. Calling out the *Azaan* and *Iqamath* (Please see 2.1.3. & 2.1.7 if necessary) are particular to *Salah*. Leave aside the *Salah*, a newborn can not make out what the *Azaan* and *Iqamath* mean and obviously he does not know what for they are said. The intention, perhaps, is that the first sounds he hears be the name of Allah and the call to worship Him. On such an occasion there is also a custom of putting in the infant's mouth a tiny bit of fresh or dry date chewed by a pious elder for the sake of blessedness, this custom is authenticated by the blessed act of the Apostle of God ﷺ and this *Sunnah* had started from there only.

5^a.1.2. Infant's '*Aqeeqah* and its procedure

It is a desirable act (*Mustahab*³) to perform the infant's '*Aqeeqah* (shaving

1. Followers of the Ibrahimian faith. The terms *Millath* and *Ummath* were explained at the beginning of Chapter 3. 2. The Muslim brotherhood. 3. *Mustahab* is an act . . . contd on next page

the head; Hindi: *Moondan*) on the seventh day. If for some reason it is not performed on the seventh day, the ceremony is postponed to the fourteenth day and to multiples of seven after that. Whereas in case of a baby boy two male goats are slaughtered in accordance with *Shariah*, in case of a baby girl one male goat is slaughtered. Meat is distributed among the poor and relatives; it is also cooked at home for the family and the family's guests. However, under *Shariah*, neither '*Aqeeqah* is obligatory or ordained (*Farz or Wajib*) nor is the slaughter of those animals. If somebody can not perform it, for whatever reason, it is not necessary.

5^a.1.3. Name of the child and the expression of 'the Islamic' in it

It is a common practice that on the occasion of '*Aqeeqah*, without much fanfare, the name of the child is announced. Very often a family elder or a knowledgeable and pious gentleman from the neighborhood or from the mosque is requested to propose the name; alternatively the parents themselves or their elders select a name of their choice. Preference is given mostly to the names rooted in Arabic so that the names of children project an Islamic image and it becomes clear from the name itself that the child is a Muslim. Muslim intellectuals point out many psychological benefits in it and to stress the importance of compulsorily adopting such names cite examples of certain countries (like China) where it is not possible to guess from a name whether a person is a Muslim or non-Muslim. So far as the Islamic *Shariah* is concerned, no legal compulsion has been placed on Muslims to adopt any particular names, the only guidance offered is that the best names are those that reflect servitude to God (in the sense of His Oneness). This has led to a trend. In all Islamic countries of the world, the most common Muslim names are those that begin with the word '*Abd*, meaning *slave*, like Abdullah⁴, Abdurrehman, Abdul Wahid, Abdul Ahad, Abdussamad, Abdulaziz, Abdul Majid, Abdul Majeed and so on. Also the necessity that names should not reflect association of partners with Allah, disobedience unto Him and arrogance, is universally agreed upon; hence the words *Malikalmulook* and *Shahenshah* are disliked.⁵

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

5^a.1.4. Preference for names of Prophets and the Noble Companions, for the blessedness and good reputation inherent in them

In the matter of names naturally a Muslim's mind first of all goes to his own Apostle ﷺ and his highly honorable friends and companions, and the respectable and lovable members of his noble family (*Ahl-e-Baith*), may Allah be pleased with them, and he gives preference to their names both for blessedness and for his selection to be auspicious.

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

5^a.1.5. Lessons in purification and *Taharah*

As the child grows up a little and begins to understand and comprehend what he is told, he is taught to perform the *Taharah*, that is to say, attaining purification by washing himself with water after urinating and defecation. He is taught to keep away from impure things and save his body and clothes from impurities. Obviously a child can not take full precautions in this regard and factors like atmosphere, education and upbringing, family occupation and profession also play quite a role in it, but in spite of that, faithful parents attend to these matters with great care and they should.

5^a.1.6. Persuasion, guidance and drill for *Salah*

By this age the child is already taught to perform the *Wudu* and a fondness for *Salah* is also aroused in him. The child's father or family elders frequently take him out to the mosque and the child, as he stands in the congregation alongside his elders and neighbors, learns to offer prayers from observation. A Noble Tradition mentions that the child should be instructed to offer prayers when he is seven years of age; he should be urged at length to offer prayers when he is ten years old and admonished if he does not.

5^a.1.7. Education and training on Islamic manners and the Islamic way of life

At this very age, faithful parents and educated mothers teach the child Islamic manners, for instance, he is taught that all good deeds are to be done with the right hand (like hand-shake, having food and water, and so on) and that the left hand is to be used to wash himself clean after the calls of nature in order to attain purification. Water is to be drunk in a sitting position and as far as possible in three breaths; elders have to be wished; after sneezing *Al Hamdulillah*⁶ has to be said; meals have to begin with *Bismillah*⁷ and end with words of praise and thanks to God. At this very age he is encouraged to learn by heart a few short chapters of the Noble Quran and some everyday *azkaar* i.e. some oft-repeated words and common phrases or Quranic verses for glorifying Allah. Such events and circumstances from the lives of Allah's prophets and His pious slaves are narrated to him through which his beliefs become correct and firm, his thoughts become pious and good, and he begins to consider them as ideal personalities.

5^a.2. Post-puberty up to death

With the onset of puberty⁸, prayer, fasting and in special conditions (whose details are available in books on Islamic Jurisprudence) *Haj* and *Zakat* become obligatory on the young lad and if he deliberately neglects them he is considered a sinner. Now, the law of allowed and forbidden (*Halaal* and *Haraam*), reward and punishment, becomes directly applicable on him and like a responsible, sane and adult human being he becomes accountable for his actions in this life and in the life after death.

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

5^a.2.1. Marriage in accordance with the practice of the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him

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

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

5^a.2.2. The custom of conducting the *Nikah* and its procedure

Closer to the practice of the Prophet ﷺ is that the *Nikah* be conducted by the girl's father or by some other *Wali*¹⁰ because the *Nikah* of *Sayyedah* Fatima, the Prophet's daughter, may Allah be pleased with her, and *Sayyadna* 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was conducted by the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, himself. At the time of *Nikah* two witnesses and a

9. An amount, in cash or kind, that a husband pays to his wife after they enter wedlock, it is a condition in the *Nikah* agreement. The payment of *Mehr* is sharing and partnership in action and it helps the newly wed begin their married life on a note of mutual trust. **10.** In the terminology of Islamic jurisprudence a *Wali* is that male member of the girl's family who is sane, adult, fulfils the criteria of becoming an heir and the *Shariah* has granted him the authority to act on behalf of the girl.

*Wakeel*¹¹ go to the girl and the *Wakeel* informs her that her *Nikah* is being done to a man called so and so, on so much *Mehr*. These words are replied invariably by a silence which is deduced as evidence of consent and the equivalent of approval. The witnesses and the *Wakeel* are usually family members and close relatives of the girl. When they return and join the *Qazi*¹² the latter delivers the Sermon of *Nikah* (*Khutbah-e-Nikah*) in a raised voice in which he recites some verses of the Noble Quran, cites a few Traditions and supplicates to Allah in words appropriate for the occasion, which are all in Arabic. Then he conducts the *Eejab-o-Qubool*¹³. Usually his words are: 'I give so and so, daughter of so and so, on his behalf, on so much *Mehr*, to you in *Nikah*. Do you accept?' To which the bridegroom, in a voice which is audible enough to those who are seated close to him, says 'I accept'. Then the *Qazi* and those attending the ceremony supplicate. And they pray that, may God bless the newly wed with mutual love and affection, and may their married life be successful and happy.

5^a.2.3. A short talk mentioning the rights of husband and wife at the time of *Nikah*

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

5^a.2.4. A typical talk

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

Quote

I seek refuge in Allah from devil the outcast

In the name of Allah the Compassionate, the Merciful

11. *Wakeel* is the person who has the authority to act as somebody's deputy by virtue of the latter's permission or order in the matter of the latter's rights. **12.** The Islamic scholar who conducts the *Nikah*. **13.** The proposal and the consent.

O Mankind!

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

O ye who believe!

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

O Ye who believe!

**fear Allah, and speak a straight speech.
He will rectify for you your works, and forgive you your sins. And whosoever obeyeth Allah and His apostle, he hath indeed achieved a mighty achievement.**¹⁶

Gentlemen!

This *Nikah* is not merely adherence to custom and tradition, and for fulfilment of a bodily need. The *Sunnah* of *Nikah* far from being one act of worship is a combination of several acts and kinds of worship. Related and associated with it is not one directive of the *Shariah* but tens and dozens of its directives. It has a place in the Holy Quran as well as a place in the Noble Traditions. Books of Islamic Jurisprudence even have a chapter exclusively devoted to it. However, this one *Sunnah* is treated with such rampant thoughtlessness like no other *Sunnah* and compulsory rite is; it has rather been turned into a maidan for disobeying Allah, arrogant behavior, obeying the devil and displaying bondage to baseless customs and traditions. *Nikah* has a complete message for our life, you can get an idea of it from the very verses of the Noble Quran that were recited in the beginning, whose recitation in the Sermon of *Nikah* is authenticated by the practice of the Apostle of Allah ﷺ. In the first verse the origin of the human race is mentioned which is extremely appropriate and auspicious on this blessed occasion, as Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, was the one

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

and only human being to begin with and one was his life-partner, through them Allah the Exalted created the human race which then occupied the entire face of the earth. Allah the Exalted bestowed between those two personalities such love and intimacy and so blessed was their companionship that the world of today is but a testimony to it. So, through the two lives that are meeting today, how can it be difficult for God to raise a clan and grant happiness and fulfilment to a family!

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

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

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

Allah the Exalted says that now live up to the name you took. It would be a very selfish thing if you take Him as witness, serve your purpose, then forget all about His majestic name and do not meet His demands in your life. In future too remember His name and never let Him down. Then, He says: remain thoughtful of relatives.

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

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

Verily Allah hath been a Watcher over you.¹⁸

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

And We are closer to him than his jugular vein.¹⁹

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

Now in the end, moments before the bridegroom utters those auspicious words 'I accept' – which all of us are eagerly waiting to hear – the Noble

17. V.1: Chapter 4: *An-Nisa'*; The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall. 18. V.102: Chapter 3: *Aal-i-Imran*; The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall. 19. V.16: Chapter 50: *Qaaf*; The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall.

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

Unquote

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

5^a.2.5. A worship called married life

In Islam, matrimonial relationship has not been seen as a need of life; it has instead been accorded the status of worship which takes man closer to God. That is to say, among us the concept of a matrimonial relationship and the nuptial pact of *Nikah* is not of a precondition that had to be fulfilled anyhow because it is a need of life and without it life remains tasteless; instead it has been given a religious shade, declared to be worship and for this reason the Apostle of Allah ﷺ also presented the most distinguishing example of it in his own life. He ﷺ is reported to have said that:

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

Therefore, if you carefully study the life of the beloved Prophet ﷺ you will see for yourself that the respect for the weaker sex, the understanding and regard for their emotions and sublime feelings that he ﷺ had, are not found even in the most vehement advocates of womankind and in those who claim to champion the cause of women's honor; the same is true for the most

celebrated of holy men, *Rishis*²⁰ and *Munees*²¹, so much so that it is difficult to find these qualities even in the lives of other prophets, peace be upon all of them. The Prophet's (ﷺ) bids to please his noble wives, may Allah be pleased with them, his participation in their justified amusements, his regard for their emotions, and the balance and equality he ﷺ maintained among them have got no parallel anywhere.

Not only towards them, the manner of the beloved Prophet ﷺ towards children too was so affectionate that for their sake he ﷺ would shorten his *Salah* – the thing he ﷺ loved the most. To see that no mother was put to trouble, whenever a child began crying during congregational prayers, the Prophet ﷺ invariably shortened the recitation of Quran and ended the prayer quickly. That was the height of his sacrifice. Before the Apostle of Allah ﷺ the most valuable and the most important thing was *Salah*, therefore there also could not have been a bigger sacrifice for him. He ﷺ used to say that: *Sometimes I feel like prolonging a prayer but when I hear the wailing of a child it occurs to me that: hope his mother's heart is not inclined towards him; hope his mother does not get anxious. Therefore I shorten the prayer.*²²

5^a.2.6. Distinctive conduct of Muslims in the face of natural crises

After describing this virtuous deed and delightful ceremony, we shall now dwell upon the natural crises and different circumstances which a Muslim, rather every human being, faces in his life.

Sickness and suffering are part and parcel of human life but a Muslim is not excused from offering *Salah* even in such a condition. However, with regard to prayers, the Islamic *Shariah* does grant many concessions to a person who has fallen sick. For instance if he cannot go to the mosque to pray with the congregation he is permitted to discharge this obligation at home, if he cannot stand upright to offer the prayer then he may sit, if it is difficult for him to pray while sitting then he may lie down, if his physique still fails him he may employ gestures. If the use of water is harmful for his health, *Taymoom* instead of *Wudu* is permitted for him²³; it is also necessary that, if he can, he should wash himself clean after the calls of nature without assistance.

20. Hindu saint. 21. Plural of Hindu recluse with a vow of silence. 22. *Nai Duniya; America mein saaf saaf baatein*. 23. *Wudu* and *Taymoom* have been described in sub-section 2.1.5.

To visit the sick is a courtesy that earns great reward in Islam but the instructions are (a) not to stay with the unwell for too long, (b) enquire about the health of the sick person and (c) return early, as staying for too long with the sick and lengthy conversation invariably trouble the sick or his attendants. Those circumstances however are exempt in which a sick person himself likes that visitors spend a lot of time with him and to keep his attention diverted is necessary.

5^a.2.7. The inevitable crisis of death and the chain of distinctive Islamic procedures related to it

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

5^a.2.8. Concern and preparation for the end

A Muslim – even though in practical and spiritual terms he may not stand tall and be very distinguished – worries a lot about his end that he should depart from the world with his belief intact and die with the *Shahadah* and the tenets of *Tawheed* and prophet-hood unshaken in his heart. In Muslim societies, especially where any effect of religious education exists and people care to think of the Hereafter, it is a custom coming down the generations that when one Muslim requests another Muslim to remember him in his prayers or if he gets the privilege of calling upon some holy personality, he expresses this dormant wish saying 'please pray for me that my end be good'. The common Muslim perceives a good end to be a success and a thing most fortunate, and he most envies the sight of a Muslim going away from the world reciting the *Kalimah Shahadah*, glorifying God.

When a Muslim takes his last gasps and the irreversible stage in his condition begins, his kith and kin, friends, acquaintances and people present at that time urge him to recite the *Kalimah* (None else is worthy of worship except Allah; Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah) or at least repeat Allah's name if he can. However, if his speech fails him, weakness overtakes him and his voice is no more, then instead of exhorting him to pronounce any

words people present over there begin repeating the *Kalimah* or Allah's name themselves. If they get the impression that his tongue is dry, a little *Zam Zam* water (if available in the home) or fresh juice of pomegranate or *Kewra* water (depending on the condition of the patient and weather) is dropped in his mouth. People sitting close to him begin reading the *Surah Yaseen*²⁴, its reading at such a time is highly recommended for its virtues. And when he is on the verge of breathing his last or after his soul has departed, his face is positioned in the direction called the *Qiblah*.²⁵

5^a.2.9. Regard for the practices of the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, in the last rites of the deceased

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

5^a.2.10. Funeral Prayer (*Salat-ul Mayyat*)

The funeral prayer is offered after the bier with the mortal remains of the deceased has arrived. Attendance in this prayer is an act that fetches great reward from Allah. This prayer too is congregational but without the *Ruku'* (the half upright posture) and the *Sujood* (prostrations). All people attending the prayer stand in a congregation of odd number rows: one, three, five, seven etc. Then any religious scholar or pious person or the Imam of the neighborhood mosque steps ahead and with the bier placed before him, stands in a position that is lateral to the dead body's chest and begins the prayer. This prayer has four *Takbeerat* (the saying of *Allah-u-Akbar* more than once in a raised voice) in it; every word otherwise is recited quietly. After the first *Takbeer* a prayer is recited. It is the same prayer that is

24. Chapter 36 of the Holy Quran. 25. Please see footnote no. 20. of Chapter 2.4, if necessary.

recited in every *Salah* after *Takbeer-e-Tahreemah*²⁶ (Its meaning was given in the context of the five daily prayers under sub-section 2.1.8). After the second *Takbeer* the *Darood Shareef*²⁷ is recited. After the third *Takbeer* all Muslims recite a prayer quietly, its meaning is as follows.

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

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

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

5^a.2.11 To take turns in shouldering the enshrouded body placed on the bier and to walk up to the grave with it

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

26. The saying of *Allahu Akbar* which initiates the prayer and, except prayer, prohibits every other voluntary act besides it. **27.** The invocation of peace and blessings of Allah upon the beloved Prophet. Readers may see reference no. 31 of sub-section 2.1.8 for its text if necessary.

5^a.2.12. Procedure for placing the body in the grave and the way to cast loose earth over the grave

Normally the grave is readied a couple of hours before burial and when the body reaches there, some people descend into the burial chamber and help place the body in a manner that its face is positioned in the direction called the *Qiblah*. Then, after covering the burial chamber with bamboos or wooden planks, loose earth is dropped from above. The following Quranic words are on the lips of people as each of them casts a few handfuls of loose earth over the grave:

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

When the burial is over and earth piles up so that it appears like the hump of a camel, close relatives stay back for a while, they pray for the Forgiveness of the deceased and read some verses from the Holy Quran. This too is a practice of the beloved Prophet ﷺ.

5^a.2.13. Meals from kindred for the inmates of the home where somebody has passed away and the way to share grief

When some home is stricken by grief and some relative passes away, then generally on that day food is brought from the homes of relatives and friends for the bereaved family and their relatives who are present there at that time. This custom is based on the idea that a bereaving family is not in a condition to prepare and organize meals themselves. So it is only proper to keep them relaxed and free from work for a while. In fact, it is one *Sunnah* that is coming down the generations in Islamic society until now. Depending on the position that the deceased held in the society and his relations with people, thrice or for three days meals arrive from the homes of relatives and friends, and all sit and eat together.

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

Chapter: 5 Part: b

Islamic civilization and culture

The prophets, peace be upon them, not only invited mankind to faith, divine laws and a new religion called 'Islam', they also happen to be the founders of civilization and urbanization and a new way of life which deserve to be called the Rabbani Civilization.¹ This civilization has certain distinctive principles and fundamentals, signs and symbols by virtue of which it becomes conspicuously superior to other civilizations and urban societies, characteristically pagan or 'ignorant' (to use Islamic terminology). This superiority is as much noticeable in its spirit, and basics and fundamentals, as in its detail and manifestations.²

The first element of the civilization of Muslims consists of articles of faith, Islam as the principle of life and ethics. This element is the shared portion of various civilizations of Muslims in different countries of the world. Whatever the country and in whichever the corner of the world Muslims might reside, whatever their tongue and in whichever the way they might choose to dress, this common value is always found there, and on its basis they are seen as members of one family and as upholders of one and the same civilization everywhere. In terms of this very *common element* all Muslims of the world have a distinct civilization of their own for which there are no suitable and apt describing words other than: The Ibrahimian Civilization.

The Ibrahimian-Muhammadan Civilization

Prophet Ibrahim Khalilullah, peace be upon him, was the founder and leader of such a pious Civilization whose foundations rest on the Oneness of God, on glorifying Him, belief in Him, regard for Allah the Exalted and fear of Allah, balanced nature and a healthy heart, mercy on human kind and good taste.

Ibrahimian morals and way of life are ingrained in every vein and fiber of

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

this civilization, about which it has been said:

Lo! Abraham was mild, imploring, penitent.³

Lo! Abraham was soft of heart, forbearing.⁴

On the one side Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, was the founder and the one who established this civilization, and on the other side the Apostle of Allah ﷺ who was also his descendent, was the one who renovated and steered this civilization to perfection, who brought about its revival and produced the color of immortality in it and reinforced its principles and fundamentals in such a way that gave it the form of a lasting and worldwide civilization.

5^b.1. Three distinctive features of the Ibrahimian civilization

The Ibrahimian civilization has three prominent distinctions:

1. Belief in the Being of God and living every moment in the awareness of His Presence.
2. The tenet of *Tawheed* i.e belief in the Oneness of God (As taught by the prophets of the Ibrahimian lineage and the complete exegesis of which is found in the Holy Quran).
3. The instinctive and eternal ideas of decency and equality among mankind which do not leave the mindset of any Muslim.

These distinctive features are such, that they have bestowed to the Ibrahimian civilization a new face opposite all other civilizations of the world. These distinctions, so far as we know, are not found in such a bright and conspicuous way in any civilization.

5^b.1.1. Acts of glorifying Allah in the lives of Muslims

Belief in the Being of God and living every moment so profoundly conscious of His Presence that its effect is reflected in one's behavior, is such a universal distinction which is a companion and an inseparable part of

3. V.75: Chapter 11: *Hud*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall. **4.** V114: Chapter 9: *At-Tawbah*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall.

the entire civilization and entire life of Muslims. Muslim civilization and way of life should make compulsory dresses of various designs and styles bearing the influence of different tastes, local conditions, variations of climate and the impact of foreign cultures, but they are dresses that have been, as if, dipped in one color and now there appears no warp or woof of those dresses that has not been dyed in that color. Allah's name and acts of glorifying Him flow and circulate like blood in every vein and fiber of their civilization and their way of life. When a Muslim child is born, then first of all, words of *Azaan* are softly said in his ears and thus before he gets to know even his own name, the name with which an acquaintance and attachment is cultivated in him is the sacred name of Allah. When he is seven days old his '*Aqeeqah*' is performed in accordance with the *Sunnah*. An Islamic name is chosen for him and preference given to those names in which our servitude to Allah and Allah's Oneness is proclaimed or it is adopted from the names of the world's largest group of believers in Allah's Oneness: the prophets and their followers. The stage of education is reached, formal schooling has to begin, the commencement is with Allah's name and Quranic verses. The stage of *Nikah* is reached, to form a lasting relationship between two responsible human beings, Allah is taken as witness and both are made to agree that they would not let down His sacred name.

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

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

As the last and inevitable stage of life arrives, it is His sacred name that the dying are urged to repeat. The strongest wish and effort of every Muslim

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

man and woman is that the last word and the last utterance on his or her lips be the sacred name of Allah and that he or she departs from this world repeating it. Upon hearing of his demise, the immediate reflex of every literate Muslim is an all too common phrase which despite being the classical Arabic of Quran has also found a place in colloquial Urdu. The reference is to:

Lo! we are Allah's and lo! unto Him we are returning.⁶

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

So much for the life's prominent stages; in the day-to-day life also acts of glorifying Allah keep constant company. A Muslim takes Allah's name before he begins his meal and takes Allah's name and says words of thanks to Him after he has had his meal. Almost all actions of people who are particular in following the *sunnah* are done with Allah's name and bearing His Will in mind, like taking food, water and beverages⁷, changing dresses and even going for and coming back from the calls of nature. The guidance for him who sneezes is to take Allah's name and the instruction for him who hears him sneeze is to supplicate for him. And it is not that times other than these are devoid of glorifying Allah. *Masha' Allah, Insha' Allah, La hawl wala quwwath illa billaah* are not only mentioned in and transmitted to us from the Noble Traditions as words of glorifying Allah, they have

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

integrated into the local language and entered colloquial parlance in countries where Muslims have settled or have been living for a long time and where their civilization has had its influence. Besides, all these are but pretexts to attract one's attention towards Allah and glorifying Him. If we conduct a comparative study, no other civilization's way of life, language, literature and day-to-day living will be seen so much drenched in the color of belief in Allah's Being and awareness of His presence as this civilization's is. The first internationally shared aspect of the civilization of Muslims is this belief and awareness of Allah that has become the distinguishing mark and a vital sign of their life.

5^b.1.2. Second international sign: The tenet of *Tawheed*

The second international sign and indication of Islamic civilization is its tenet of *Tawheed* which will be prominently seen everywhere from faith to deeds and from acts of worship to ceremonies. The minarets of their mosques proclaim this tenet of their faith five times a day, that, None else except Allah is worthy of worship and servitude. According to principle in Islam, their buildings and even their studio apartments should be protected against idolatory and signs of *shirk* (association of partners with Allah); portraits, statues and idols are not permissible for them, so much so, that even in the choice of toys meant for children a regard for it is necessary. Be they religious ceremonies or country-wide celebrations, be they the birthdays of political leaders or the birth anniversaries of heads of religions or else the flag hoisting ceremony – to bow before portraits and statues, to stand before them with folded hands or to garland and wrap them in flowers is prohibited for a Muslim and against his monotheistic civilization, and wherever Muslims will be firm on their Islamic civilization and leading their lives in accordance with it, they will be refraining and distancing themselves from this act. In names, in ceremonies, in oaths, in reverence and respect towards elders and in the way that requests are made to anybody, to transgress the limits of *Hijazian Tawheed*⁸ and follow in the foot-steps of some other people is tantamount to deviation from Islam.

5^b.1.3. Third international sign: The tenet of decency and equality among humankind

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

The third international sign of Islamic civilization is that idea of decency and superiority of man and that tenet of equality among mankind on which a Muslim is fed since his infancy and which has become his Islamic disposition. The natural consequence of this tenet is that a Muslim is unfamiliar with and alien to the habit and tradition of untouchability. He will agree without reservation to dine with another Muslim or another human being and will insist others to dine with him. Different and several people will use, without reservation, the same salver when they eat together. They will eat each other's left over food and drink each other's left over water. Master and servant stand shoulder to shoulder in prayer. A man of learning though of meager means can become the *Imam* and men of noble lineage and officials of high rank have to pray behind him.

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

5^b.2. In Islamic society trades are neither permanent nor contemptible

In Islam, trades and services neither have a permanent, everlasting and unalterable status nor on their bases are communities and classes defined. People at different points in time adopted some trade due to need and convenience; sometimes that remained confined to only an individual and sometimes it was practiced for several generations. Even today in certain brotherhoods one particular trade is practiced but neither it has any religious status nor is it an unalterable law of Muslim society.

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

9. For instance, the word *Khayyaat* (Arabic; meaning: Tailor) was an contd. on next page.

5^b.3. Widow remarriage and the privilege that Indian Muslims have in this case

Widow remarriage was never considered improper or objectionable from the point of view of *Shariah* or the common law and traditions of Muslims. It was the practice of their Prophet ﷺ and in every age highly honorable religious scholars, devout elders, theologians and celebrated monarchs unhesitatingly married ladies who were widows and arranged the remarriage of their widowed sisters and daughters. Though presently many Muslim widows, either by choice or under one constraint or the other, live without re-marrying, the tradition of remarriage should be put into practice. In other countries this tradition is still to be found and *Nikah* with a widow is not at all improper.

5^b.4. The tradition of *Salaam* and the difference in the ways of wishing and replying

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

5^b.5. The place of knowledge in Islam

About the 12th of February 611CE, in the cave of *Hira* near Makkah, descended the first revelation upon the Arab Prophet, *Sayyadna* Muhammad ﷺ. Its words were:

**(O Muhammad) Read in the name of thy Lord who createth.
Createth man from a clot.
Read: And thy Lord is the Most Bounteous.**

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

Who teacheth by the pen.**Teacheth man that which he knew not.¹⁰**

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

*Read in the name of thy Lord Who createth.*¹¹ The major fallacy was that human beings had severed the relationship between their knowledge and their Lord; its damaging consequence was that human knowledge had left the straight course. That severed relationship was restored here. When knowledge was dwelt upon, and thereby accorded a privileged position, a warning too was issued along with it: your pursuit of knowledge should begin with *the name of your Lord* because knowledge is very much His bestowal, it is His creation and only under His guidance can it make a balanced progress. This was the world's loudest revolutionary and

10. V.1-5: Chapter 96: '*Alaq*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad M. Pickthall. 11. V.1: Chapter 96: '*Alaq*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Mohammad M. Pickthall.

revolutionizing sound that struck the ears in our world like thunder; it was something that nobody could have speculated. If a team of intellectuals and men of letters from all over the world were invited to guess that what would a revelation now about to descend going to begin with? What subject would be assigned the top priority in it? I understand that not one man out of the whole lot, who was familiar with that unlettered nation, its mind and temperament, would have said that it would begin with the Arabic word *Iqra* (Read).

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

Read in the name of thy Lord Who createth.

Createth man from a clot.

Read: And thy Lord is the Most Bounteous.

Who teacheth by the pen.

Teacheth man that which he knew not.

Read, that your Lord is the Most Bounteous. How can He be unaware of your needs and your weaknesses? *Read: And thy Lord is the Most Bounteous. Who teacheth by the pen.* Here is a point to ponder. Could anybody have raised the pen to a level more honorable? The Lord even in that first revelation of the cave of Hira did not neglect the pen. Those days, if you looked around for a pen, perhaps, you would not find it anywhere in

Makkah. However, if you conducted a thorough search the only chance to find it was in the home of a Waraqah Bin Nawfal¹² or a *Katib*¹³ who had returned from the distant land of Persia after having learnt to read and write a little.

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

5^b.6. The attitude of a Muslim towards Fine Arts

A distinctive feature of this civilization is its sobriety, its realistic approach and as regards 'Fine Arts', a cautious attitude and a level viewpoint. It values exquisite taste, cleanliness, beauty and elegance but some branches of those entertainment arts, to which Europe has given the epithet of *Fine Arts*, it has declared illegal e.g. dance, sculpture and creating images (of life forms); and as regards some branches, it instructs to exercise caution and moderation e.g. song and singing – because it is permissible to enjoy and employ it in a moderate way but with certain restrictions. Absorption in these *Fine Arts*, in any case, goes against the spirit and aims of this civilization, and it is detrimental to the fear of God, concern for the Hereafter and the standard of morality that is expected of a Muslim.

5^b.7. Religion is the overseer of life

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

Similarly positive and negative waves are always at work in all existences, personalities and life forms that are there in this universe. By the simultaneous existence of both these waves in entities, that duty is performed and that responsibility is fulfilled which has been assigned to

12. Waraqah Bin Nawfal was an Arab scholar who had profound knowledge of the Holy Torah and the Holy Bible, and was well versed in the Hebrew language. He lived in the time of our prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, **13.** A literate man in ancient Arabia.

them.

It is not in the definition of a religion to conform to all sorts of changes. The description of a thermometer however does include such a feature because a thermometer has to reflect degrees of hot and cold. Conformity to change is also essential to the description of a weather-cock that is installed at some airport or atop a high-rise building simply to ascertain the direction of wind. However, defining a religion on the lines of product descriptions is not possible. Gentlemen, I think that none of you would like to bring down religion from its exalted position to the level of a thermometer or a weather-cock and imply that the function of religion is only to continually certify, acknowledge and reflect the changes of an age. What to talk of a true and revealed religion; even representatives and followers of a so-called religion will not agree to accept this proposition.

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

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

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

to obstruct it as well.

Here emerges a difference between morality and religion. The duty of a specialist of morals and psychology is only to identify a wrong tendency or to give his opinion about it. However, religion will try to stand like a guard in the path of that tendency and will halt its advance.

Chapter: 6

Moral instruction and purification of mind

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

ع

This calligraphy means:
May peace and blessing
of Allah be upon him

Allah the Exalted has mentioned the conferment of apostleship on *Sayyadna Muhammad* ع, its primary and fundamental objectives and its tremendous and essential benefits, in numerous verses of the Holy Quran, He says:

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

Among the objectives of invitation of mankind to faith and the conferment of apostleship on *Sayyadna Muhammad* ع, moral instruction and purifying the human mind of evil, occupy a place of great importance. And the style of Quranic narration tells us that *wisdom* indeed implies sublime morals and Islamic etiquette, after mentioning the principles and basic commandments regarding those morals and etiquette in Chapter: 17, *Al-Israa'*, the Quran goes on to collectively refer to them by the term *wisdom*. Allah says:

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

In words that are loaded with emphasis and that say much within their purview, the beloved Apostle ع, has himself mentioned the grand purpose for which apostleship was conferred upon him.

The very reason of conferment of apostleship upon me was

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

*that I personally demonstrate the virtuous qualities
that comprise moral behavior in their most perfect form.*³

And the beloved Prophet ﷺ was indeed the best model and the most perfect example of noble manners.

Says the Quran:

And lo! thou art on sublime morals.⁴

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

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

Her wisdom and the purity of her mind were the result of the great blessing of being the life partner of the Apostle of Allah ﷺ and his constant companionship. Under his affectionate training and benign protection, blossomed a generation of lofty character and excellent characteristics, who had been guarded against all baseness of character, bad habits, bad manners, mean traits, turmoils and trials of the psyche, effects of ignorance and deceptions of the devil. The beloved Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said that:

*The best people are the people of my age.*⁶

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

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

They were the produce of Islam's springtime, the specimen of character building and human development by a prophet and the miracle of a

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

prophet's training and purification.

6.2. A permanent workshop on building human character

Ever since the beloved Prophet ﷺ passed away and assemblies that were graced by his presence faded into history, three blessed streams of guidance viz. the Holy Quran, the Noble Traditions (*Hadith*) and the glorious biography of the prophet continued to fill the void. The corpus of Islamic jurisprudence and *wisdom* (in the sense described above) was a permanent worldwide clinic and hospital for the treatment of diseases that afflicted the hearts, turmoils of the psyche and deceptions of the devil.

However, under the influence of different political, economic and ethical factors, and with the passage of time, the *Hadith* education system of old, its moral and practical aspects and its age-old methodology of instruction, learning, teaching and exposition were gradually over-shadowed completely by a new trend that was more attractive to the society of its time, created more worth in the sight of the people and helped secure high positions and offices. As a result, the teaching and learning of *Hadith*, became restricted to historical and academic research papers on confirmations for the different schools of religion, collection of corroborative evidences in their support and the life of the beloved prophet ﷺ.

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

Material that is found in the Noble Traditions is of two types. The first type relates to actions, their appearance and form, and their expressed commands like:

- *Qayaam* (standing posture in *Salah*) and
- *Qu'ood* (pl. of sitting posture in *Salah*)
- *Ruku'* (the half upright posture in *Salah*)
- *Sujood* (pl. of prostration)
- Reading of the Holy Quran and the glorification of Allah
- Supplications
- Words of glorification and chants

- Invitation of mankind to Islam
- Spread of the word of Allah
- To strive in the way of Allah (*Jihad*) and battles fought under the command of the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him (*Ghazwaat*)
- Relations with friends and foes in times of peace and war
- Other stipulations and issues

The second type concerns such conditions that were felt in the heart upon the performance of those deeds and which are the real purpose and ultimate aim behind the command for those deeds. We may interpret these conditions as: sincerity and self-evaluation, trust in God and steadfastness, abstinence and contentment, altruism and generosity, manners and bashfulness, fear of God and humility, penitence and lamentation, tenderness of heart while supplicating, preference for the Hereafter over the mundane, seeking Allah's pleasure and the longing to see Him, a balanced nature, healthy taste, kindness and mercy over Allah's creatures, sympathy for the weak, subtlety of feeling, purity of sentiments, munificence and magnanimity, tolerance and forbearance, hospitality and an unpretentious manner, valor and bravery, loving and hating for Allah's sake, favor and piety, from subtle to very subtle and extremely delicate forms of nobility of character and humanness, to forgive and overlook the one who has been wicked in his dealing, the forging of ties with those of kin who snap them, adoption of an attitude of grant and bestowal with him who is miserly. Similar to these there are many conditions that are incomprehensible without examples and precedents and their verification too is difficult without careful observation and constant watch.

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

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

Let us be content here with two testimonies. The first is that of Hind Bin Abi Halah, may Allah be pleased with him, (who is the son of: The mother of believers⁷ Sayyedah Khadijah, may Allah be pleased with her) the maternal uncle of Sayyadna Hasan and Sayyadna Husain, may Allah be pleased with them. The second testimony is given by Sayyadna 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, concerning the morals and nature of the Apostle of Allah ﷺ.

Hind Bin Abi Halah says:

The Apostle of Allah ﷺ always remained concerned about the Hereafter and kept himself occupied with acts that held the promise of success in the Hereafter; neither did this chain ever break nor could he ﷺ ever relax. The Prophet ﷺ often remained silent for long, did not speak unnecessarily, began his conversation by pronouncing words clearly⁸ and ended it similarly. His conversations and public addresses were very clear, explicit and to the point. They neither were unnecessarily extensive nor unduly concise. He ﷺ was mild natured and soft spoken, not harsh of manner and inconsiderate. Neither slighted anybody nor liked to be slighted himself.⁹ Anything that God blessed him with, however less (i.e. even if hardly visible), was highly valued and considered abundant by him and he ﷺ did not say anything adverse about it. Neither did he ﷺ speak ill about food and beverages nor praised them. The world and anything worldly never angered him but when any of God's rights was trampled upon, nothing could withstand his wrath, so much so that eventually he ﷺ avenged it. He ﷺ neither got angry for his own sake nor did he ﷺ take revenge for himself. When pointing towards something he ﷺ would gesture with his entire hand in that direction; when expressing surprise, would turn one of his hands from the wrist upside down; during conversation, wrapped the palm of the right hand around the thumb of the left hand. Totally turned his radiant face

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

away from the direction where something infuriating or unpalatable was being said, and ignored it. Lowered his eyes when he ε felt happy. Did not burst into laughter; at the most he ε only smiled in a manner that exposed his blessed teeth, that were as pure and as clean as hailstones.

The second testimony

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

The beloved Prophet ε was by nature all too far from offensive language, shamelessness and immodesty. Not even in the least would he ε indulge in anything of the sort ever. He ε never raised his voice in bazaars; never returned a wrong for a wrong, he ε rather pardoned and let go of him who wronged against him. He ε never physically assaulted anyone, except when the occasion was the defense of his faith and the battle was being fought purely in Allah's way. He ε never raised his hand over a servant or a woman. Also, I never saw him avenging any wrong or high-handedness that he ε had been subjected to, save and except when the offender transgressed divinely prescribed limits and his behaviour belittled divine honour and sanctity. Of course, if any kind of blasphemy was committed then he ε stood up against it and would be the angriest of men. He ε would choose the easier of the two options. When he ε came home, he ε looked like one of the common folk; washed his clothes, milked the goat and would tend to all the necessary tasks of domestic life himself.

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

Described the goodness of a good subject and endorsed it; condemned a bad subject and undermined it. His inter-personal dealing was balanced and uniform, no variation or change ever came about in it. He ε never became negligent about anything, lest others too started becoming negligent and lost interest. He ε was equipped to the extent necessary for every situation and occasion. In the matter of rights, neither gave less nor more than the limit. People who remained close to the Prophet ε were select and the best among his followers. The best in his sight was he who wished well for all and was courteous towards everybody; respect and honor were his who was ahead of all others in terms of sympathy and compassion and who helped and co-operated with other people. The Prophet ε used to remember Allah when he ε rose to his feet and used to sit down glorifying Him. Whenever he ε would grace a gathering (where other people were already sitting) he ε would occupy a place at the periphery and asked his companions also to follow suite. In his assemblies, the beloved Prophet ε gave people who sat beside him and in the audience their full share (of his attention and regard). Every attendee of his ε assembly would think that none else was more important than him in his ε sight. If somebody made the beloved Prophet ε sit with him for some reason or discussed some exigency with him, in that case, the Prophet ε would listen extremely patiently and calmly to all that he had to say, so much so, that after completing his conversation he left on his own. If somebody asked for something and sought some help from him, he ε would not let him go away without fulfilling his need or at least replied in a tone that was polite and considerate. The beauty of his conduct was boundless and the same for the whole lot of people and he ε had become a father figure for them. In the matter of truth the whole lot of people were equal in his sight. His assembly was essentially an assembly of knowledge and awareness of God, where modesty and bashfulness, patience and trustworthiness were the norm, neither voices were raised there nor anybody's imperfections revealed, neither was there an attack on anybody's honor and respect nor were anybody's weaknesses publicized. All were each other's equal over there, and only in terms of their God-consciousness did they earn their distinction over one another. There, people dealt respectfully with their elders and treated those who were younger to them with kindness and affection, gave priority to the needy over themselves and kept travellers and arriving visitors under their protection and care.

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

The beloved Prophet ﷺ was always seen with a happy and cheerful countenance, had a lively air about him; was very mild of manner and kind hearted.¹⁰ He ﷺ was neither harsh of nature nor habitual of using harsh words, not the one to talk at the top of his voice, not the one to get into indecent or second-rate conversation, not the one to slander and not a tight-fisted miser. An idea that was not to his liking, he ﷺ would simply neglect (i.e. overlooked it and did not raise objection) neither explicitly turned it down nor responded to it. He ﷺ had entirely guarded himself against three things (a) quarrel (b) arrogance and (c) unnecessary and irrelevant engagements; likewise, he ﷺ did not let three things harm others (a) he ﷺ never spoke ill of anybody (b) never slandered anybody and (c) never went after anybody's weaknesses and undisclosed matters. And expressed only those ideas which held the hope of divine reward. When he ﷺ was engaged in conversation, people in his audience lowered their heads as though birds were sitting on them¹¹ and only when he ﷺ paused did those people speak and they never got into an altercation before him. If somebody talked in his assembly all the rest would listen in silence, so much so, that, he would complete whatever he had to say. Before the beloved Prophet ﷺ, the topic raised by every person had the same status as that of the first person he ﷺ had heard (that is to say, a person would get the opportunity to take his time and say whatever he had to, and he was heard with the same patience and patronage). That upon which everybody laughed, the Prophet ﷺ too would laugh; that upon which everybody expressed surprise, he ﷺ too would. The ill-mannered prattle of the traveller and the foreigner and all kinds of questions that they raised would be heard by the Prophet ﷺ with patience and tolerance, so much so, that his noble companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would interrupt to attract the attention of such persons towards themselves (so that the beloved Prophet ﷺ was not put to any sort of strain). He ﷺ used to say, 'If you find somebody in need, help him'. He ﷺ would take words of praise and admiration approvingly only from him who stayed within normal limits. He ﷺ remained silent when somebody was talking and never interrupted him, well, if the speaker began to exceed the limit then the Prophet ﷺ would either ask him to stop or would cut short his

10. The original text can be interpreted in three ways: (1) The Arabic expression here means one who readily showed compassion, favor and grace and who let go of him very easily who wronged against him. (2) Another view is that it means he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, did not get in to an altercation with anyone. And (3) According to one interpretation it means: calm and dignity, fear of God and humility. **11.** The sense is: Absolutely motionless (lest the birds fly away with the slightest movement).

conversation by rising from the assembly.

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

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

The beloved Prophet ε was the most generous of men, mild natured and the most respected for his family background; did not live in isolation from his companions, instead kept close ties with them, used to chat with them, behaved light heartedly and in good humor with their children and affectionately made those children sit in his lap; used to accept the invitation of slave, freeman, maid-servant, poor and needy, everybody; visited the sick even if they were at the farthest end of the city; accepted an excuse if somebody offered one for something.¹³ For the reason that nobody was put to trouble or difficulty, he ε was never seen sitting with legs outstretched in the presence of his noble companions, may Allah be pleased with them. When the noble companions, may Allah be pleased with them, listened and recited couplets among themselves and talked of things and events of the days of Ignorance¹⁴ (*Jahiliyah*), at that time, he ε either remained silent or gently smiled. He ε was extremely kind hearted, loving by nature and was the embodiment of favor and grace, 'Call both my sons!' (i.e. his grandsons, *Sayyadna* Hasan and *Sayyadna* Hussain, may Allah be pleased with them) he ε would say to his daughter *Sayyedah* Fatima, may Allah be pleased with her, both of them would come running to him and

12. Excerpt of *Shamael Tirmizi* reproduced from the author's *Nabi-e-Rahmat* (Urdu). **13.** On the authority of *Sayyadna* Anas Bin Malik, may Allah be pleased with him. (Abu Naeem: *Al-Hilyatul Awliyaa'*). **14.** Please remember that by *Ignorance* is not only implied life in Arabia before the conferment of apostleship on Prophet Muhammad ε rather it is every such un-Islamic life and system whose source does not happen to be (a) the Revelation and (b) prophet-hood and (c) *Kitabi-Ilahi* (Allah's revealed book) and (d) the practices of the noble prophets, peace be upon them; and which does not conform to issues and commandments for life in Islam. [Excerpt from *Islam ke teen buniyaadi 'aqaaed*; by the author].

he ε would greet them with hugs and kisses.¹⁵ One of the grandsons of the Prophet (daughter's child) was brought to him in a condition that he had breathed his last, tears began rolling down the eyes of the Prophet ε at which S'aad bin 'Ubaadah, may Allah be pleased with him, said, 'O Apostle of Allah what is this? The Prophet ε replied, 'This is mercy which Allah the Exalted places in the heart of whosoever He likes and verily Allah is merciful towards those very slaves of His who are themselves merciful'.¹⁶

When along with other prisoners of the Battle of Badr the arms of *Sayyadna* Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, were tied in an uncomfortable position and the Apostle of Allah ε heard him groan in pain, he ε could not sleep. When the Ansar came to know this, they untied his arms and wanted to waive his ransom also but the beloved Prophet ε did not agree to that idea.

He ε was extremely affectionate and compassionate and gave a lot of consideration to the circumstances of people. Always kept an allowance for human disposition, the fact that people get fed-up, and the frequent albeit temporary occurrence of loss of confidence and lulls. For this reason he ε used to intersperse his talks with recesses so that people do not begin to get fed-up. If he ε heard a child cry he would shorten the prayer and say that:

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

The beloved Prophet ε used to say that:

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

The beloved Prophet ε was like an affectionate father in the interest of Muslims. He ε used to say that:

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

He ε was free of the trait of going to extremes. *Sayyedah 'Aishah*, may

15. *Shamael Tirmizi*, Chapter: *Munaaqib Al-Hasan Wal-Husain*, *Razi Allah 'Anhuma*. **16.** Book of diseases, Chapter: *Visiting sick children* and Book of funerals; *Sahih Bukhari*.

Allah be pleased with her, says: when the Apostle of Allah ﷺ has to give preference to one out of two tasks, then he ﷺ always prefers the one which is easier provided there is not a trace of sin in it, if there was sin in it then he ﷺ would be the farthest away from it; and used to say that:

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

In his home the beloved Prophet ﷺ used to live like common people do. *Sayyedah 'Aishah*, may Allah be pleased with her, says that the beloved Prophet ﷺ used to clean his clothes – milked the goat even himself – did all his personal work by himself – stitched a patch in his dress – repaired his shoe. *Sayyedah 'Aishah*, may Allah be pleased with her, was asked that how the beloved Prophet ﷺ used to live at home? She replied that: he ﷺ used to remain engaged in household chores, when it was time for prayer then he ﷺ went outside to pray; and she narrates that, he ﷺ was the politest and the most generous of people and wore a cheerful and happy countenance. *Sayyadna Anas*, may Allah be pleased with him, narrates that I have not seen anybody who is more affectionate and merciful for his family members than the Apostle of Allah ﷺ. On the authority of *Sayyedah 'Aishah*, may Allah be pleased with her, it is reported that the Apostle of Allah ﷺ said that:

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

Sayyadna Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, reports that the Apostle of Allah ﷺ never picked out deficiencies in any food, ate it if he had the appetite, left it if it was not to his taste.

Sayyadna Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, says that I served the beloved Prophet ﷺ for ten years, neither did he ﷺ ever give the slightest hint of annoyance and nor did he ﷺ say 'Why did you do such-and-such thing?' and 'Why did you not do such-and-such thing?' His companions did not stand up upon his arrival because he ﷺ did not like it and used to say that do not go overboard when you praise and admire me, the way that the *Nasaarah* (people of Nazareth) did in their dealings with 'Eisa Ibn Maryam; I am but a human being; you may call me *The slave of Allah and His*

apostle. Sayyadna Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, reports that any of the slave girls and maid-servants of Madinah would hold the prophet's hand, speak to him about whatever she had to and made him walk with her as far as she liked. When 'Adi Bin Hatim¹⁷, may Allah be pleased with him, called upon him, he ε invited him to his home, when a house-maid passed a cushion to lean upon, he ε placed that between himself and 'Adi and sat down on the floor himself. 'Adi is on record to have said, 'From that I became sure that he ε is not a king'. A man saw him and began to tremble before his commanding and awe-inspiring personality. The beloved Prophet ε said to him:

*Do not be nervous, I am no king, I am very much the son of
a lady of Quraish who used to eat dried meat.*¹⁸

At his home, the beloved Prophet ε would sweep the floor – corralled the camels and gave them fodder – would have food with the house-maid and helped her knead the flour – and would buy provisions for the home from the market himself.

If he ε came to know something about somebody which was to his dislike, he ε did not say why so-and-so did such a thing? Instead he would say: what has happened to people that they commit such sort of acts or utter such sort of words. Thus without naming anyone, in particular, would restrain people from that act.

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

17. 'Adi bin Hatim, may Allah be pleased with him, was the son of Haatim Taaie. The famed Arab poet Hatim Taaie, whose generosity became the stuff of legend and idiom, was Christian by faith, lived in the 6th century AD and passed away before the advent of Islam. 18. Ibn Majah: *Kitab-ut-Ta'mah*. (When the prophet ε said that his mother too lived on the same staple as the common folk, it was to reassure the man that he ε too was one of them.

well. Should you eat their meat, see that they are in good condition. Among his teachings is that good treatment be meted out to attendants, servants, laborers and slaves. He ε used to say that whatever you eat give the same to them, let them also wear the same kind of clothes as you wear, and do not put Allah's creation in tortuous trial. Those who Allah the Exalted has placed under your subordination, are your brothers, servants and helpers; he who has a brother in his subordination, should give the same food to him as he eats, and clothe him with the same kind of clothes as he himself wears; do not assign to them such work which is beyond their capacity and if you must give them such assignment then join them in carrying out that work.

A desert Arab once came to the beloved Prophet ε and asked him, 'How many times should I forgive my servant in one day?' The beloved Prophet ε replied, 'Seventy times' and said, 'Pay the wages to the laborer before his sweat gets dry'.¹⁹

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

From the very beginning it has been in the nature of man that he tries to emulate even the habits and traits of the personality he loves and respects; though neither *Shariah* enjoins it upon him nor he is under any other legal compulsion to do so. Unique are the principles enshrined in the constitution of love. A true lover is inquisitive about and remains preoccupied with finding out the habits and traits of the beloved, and what all the beloved loves and likes, on the other side, he also wants to know and is concerned about behaviours, habits and things that he does not like. Then he tries to learn about the company the beloved keeps, his gait and carriage, his dress and garments, and even about those things about which no law or regulation asks anybody to find out.

This was the stimulant that drove the scholars of old to produce prestigious and magnificent works on the nature of the beloved prophet ε and even today that phenomenon continues. In this class of literature, the *Shamael*²⁰ of Imam Tirmizi got maximum acceptance and popularity. Below are

19. Abridged from the author's *Nabi-e-Rahmath* (Urdu) vol. II pg. 174. All narrations in this section were extracted from *Suhah* and *Sunan* works; complete references are cited in *Nabi-e-Rahmath*. **20.** Hafiz Ibn Katheer, the famed Arab historian, known for . . . contd. on next page.

presented some abridged extracts of the *Shamael* on the nature of the beloved Prophet ﷺ:

When the apostle of Allah ﷺ used to walk it appeared as though he ﷺ was stepping down a slope. When he ﷺ was attentive to somebody, he ﷺ would also physically turn towards him. His eyes remained low cast. Most of the time his eyes remained towards the earth rather than skywards. A noble habit of the beloved Prophet ﷺ was that he ﷺ did not look piercingly at anything or anybody. When walking in a group, he ﷺ would let his noble companions, may Allah be pleased with them, overtake him and allowed himself to be left behind. He ﷺ would be the first to greet with a *Salam* whomsoever he ﷺ met.

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

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

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

20. Continued from previous page known for his exposition of the Holy Quran and a biography of the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, also has to his credit a book by a similar title: *Shamael Ar-Rasool*.

And he ﷺ used to say that adopt the wearing of white clothes; one should dress in white while alive and in white sheets the dead should be buried; it is the best of dress codes. Najashi²¹ sent the beloved Prophet ﷺ a pair of black socks, he ﷺ wore them and after performing *Wuzu* also wiped over them with his wet hand and offered *Salah* in shoes whose sole was made of two layers of leather stitched together. He ﷺ used to say that nobody should walk wearing a single shoe, either he should wear both the shoes or take off the pair entirely. He ﷺ did not let people eat with their left hand and walk around wearing a single shoe. He ﷺ used to say that when you wear shoes, put in the right foot first and when you take them off take out the left foot first. The beloved Prophet ﷺ is reported to have worn a ring in his right hand and got a ring designed that bore the following inscription: *Muhammad* in the first line, *Rasool* in the second line and *Allah* in the third line; and he ﷺ used to take it off when he ﷺ went for the calls of nature.

At the time of the conquest of Makkah, when the beloved Prophet ﷺ entered Makkah, he ﷺ was wearing a black turban. The beloved Prophet ﷺ invariably left the loose end of his turban hanging between his shoulders.

Sayyadna 'Obaid bin Khalid Al-Mahrabi, may Allah be pleased with him, says that once I was going somewhere in Madinah when somebody behind me called out, 'Lift up that leg-sheet'. I turned in the direction of the speaker and noticed that he was the beloved Prophet ﷺ, I said, 'This is an

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

ordinary piece of cloth' (Implying: What arrogance can there be in it?), and he ﷺ said, 'Is my example not for you?' When I heard his reply I looked at his leg-sheet, it was up to half his calves.

He ﷺ would not lean against anything while eating something and he ﷺ also used to say that, 'I do not lean against anything when I eat something'; and he ﷺ used to lick his fingers thrice after meals. He ﷺ never had his food sitting on a hard bed or in small plates and never were chapattis prepared for him. It was inquired from *Sayyadna* Qatadah, may Allah be

21. Title of the 7th century CE king of Ethiopia.

pleased with him, 'Then what did he ε eat in?' He said, 'On a leather *dastarkhwan*²². The beloved Prophet's ε favorite vegetables were pumpkin and bottle-gourd and he ε also liked pudding and honey. Among meat portions, he ε had a preference for the meat of the upper forelimb; *Sayyedah* 'Aishah, may Allah be pleased with her, says that the meat of the upper forelimb was not his favourite in the literal sense, meat was only seldom available to him; because the meat of the upper forelimb takes less time to prepare the Prophet ε used to like it, so that after getting through with the cooking quickly, the remaining time could then be devoted to more important engagements. For the same reason, he ε liked to eat the leftover food from the pan or the bowl.

The beloved Prophet ε used to say that whosoever eats his food without invoking God's name on it, the devil joins in with him. He ε has also said that, 'If somebody begins his meal and forgets to say the *Bismillah* (In the name of Allah), he may say:

*With the name of Allah
at the beginning (of this meal) and at the end of it*

After meals he ε used to say:

*All praise unto Allah, who provided us to eat and drink and
caused us to be raised as Muslims.*

After meals when the *dastarkhwan* spread before him was wrapped up he ε used to say:

*All praise: profuse, good and blessed unto Allah.
Nobody can cease to beseech Him and
nobody can forsake Him; He is our Sustainer.*

He ε used to say that: It pleases Allah the Exalted that whenever His slave eats and drinks something, he extols His hymn and praise.

The beverage that the beloved Prophet ε liked most was cool sweetened

22. A leather sheet upon which only food was served and which was spread flat on the floor at meal times.

water.²³ He ε used to say that no nourishment substitutes for food and water the way milk does. It is reported that he ε drank Zam-Zam water²⁴ in a standing posture and used to drink water in three breaths.

The beloved Prophet ε had a small vial for keeping perfumes. From that he ε used to take out *'Itar* (perfume in an oil base) for his use and (if somebody offered it to him as gift) never turned it down. He ε used to say that three things should not be turned down: cushion, fragrance²⁵ and milk. He ε said that fragrance of a men's perfume diffuses in the atmosphere and color is imperceptible and perfume for women is that whose color is dominant and fragrance, subdued.

Sayyadna 'Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, says that the beloved Prophet's ε way of talking was different from the way you people talk non-stop. His conversations used to be clear, every subject distinct from the other, so that those who sat with him committed his words to memory and (sometimes) the Prophet ε repeated his words up to three times to make sure that his audience understood him clearly. The beloved Prophet ε never went into peels of laughter; at the most he ε smiled. 'Abdullah Bin Harith, may Allah be pleased with him, says that I have not seen anybody who smiled more often than the Prophet ε did. However, sometimes the beloved Prophet ε also laughed in a manner that his blessed teeth were visible. Jarir Bin 'Abdullah, may Allah be pleased with him, says that after I became a Muslim, the Prophet ε never refused me an audience and he ε used to smile on seeing me. *Sayyadna* Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, says that the beloved Prophet ε used to mix and mingle with us and enlivened us with his sense of humour; for instance, I had a younger brother and the beloved Prophet ε used to ask him good-humouredly, 'O Abu

23. Dates if immersed in water for a short while lend to it a sweet taste. This traditional Sherbet-like beverage, sweetened water basically, was used as an effective re-hydrant in the desert climate of Arabia centuries ago. **24.** Description of the Zam-Zam spring appeared under sub-section 2.4.1 in the account of Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, whose period dates back to several thousand years before Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. After centuries of constructions and renovations around the Holy *Ka'bah*, today the Zam-Zam well lies below the central courtyard of the Haram Shareef in Makkah. Muslims drink the blessed water of the Zam-Zam well while standing as it is the practice of their Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Except for the water of the Zam-Zam it was the practice of the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, to drink water in a sitting position. **25.** The Urdu terms used by the author here denote *the entire class of fragrances* i.e. sources of fragrance like flowers and scented woods, extracts and concentrates like Rose water and *'Itar*. Nowadays, in the wide range of consumer goods that is available, fragrance is a prominent ingredient.

'Umair where did the chick go?' (Abu 'Umair had a chick which he kept in a cage and he used to play with it. The Prophet ﷺ said these words in a lighter vein when the chick died). The companions, may Allah be pleased with them, once submitted, 'O beloved Prophet ﷺ you sometimes employ gentle humour when you are with us' and he ﷺ replied, 'Yes, but I never say anything wrong'. Sometimes he ﷺ made proverbial use of poetry and quoted *Sayyadna* 'Abdullah Bin Rawahah or other poets; accordingly sometimes quoted a line of Tarafah²⁶ whose meaning is:

*Sometimes such a one brings the news to you,
who you have not paid anything in return.*

He ﷺ sometimes used to say that the most truthful idea to which a poet has ever given expression is the one voiced by Labeed Bin Rabi'ah:

*Beware! Allah alone is the Everlasting,
while death o'ertakes the created beings.*

Once a finger of the beloved Prophet ﷺ was injured by a stone and it bled. The beloved Prophet ﷺ said a couplet at that time whose meaning is:

*Thou art a finger that received no harm
except for having bled;
(And that has not gone in vain, for)
the pain was suffered in Allah's way.²⁷*

During the Battle of Hunain the battle-cry raised by the beloved Prophet ﷺ

26. Tarafah ibn al Abd (543 – 569 CE) was a nomad poet, born in Bahrain, who led a tragic life and was famous for his satirical verse. Although Tarafah had written this line in pre-Islamic days, the Apostle of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to recite it in the context of Quranic revelations brought to him by the Archangel Jibreel, peace be upon him. 27. Apparently there seems to be some reservation in attributing the authorship of this couplet to the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, because in his honour Allah says in the Holy Quran: *And We have not taught him poetry, nor it befitteth him.* (V.69: Chapter 36: *Yaseen*; Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi). One answer to this reservation is that involuntarily saying of certain words appropriate to the situation does not contradict the Quranic pronouncement. The other explanation that has been offered is that, it is somebody else's couplet which the beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had recited to testify to his own condition.

consisted of two rhyming lines meaning:

*I am beyond doubt and suspicion a prophet
(And) I am in the progeny of 'Abdul Muttalib.*

The beloved Prophet ﷺ even permitted the recitation of poetry, even gave away a prize for its recitation and even liked to hear poetry himself. *Sayyadna* Jabir Bin Samrah, may Allah be pleased with him, says that he had attended over a hundred assemblies of the beloved Prophet ﷺ in which the companions, may Allah be pleased with them, recited ballads recounting tales and events of the age of Ignorance and the Prophet ﷺ (did not stop their recitation) listened to them quietly and at some places even smiled with his companions. He ﷺ used to get a podium placed in the mosque for *Sayyadna* Hassan Bin Thabit, may Allah be pleased with him, so that the latter got a platform from where he could introduce the Prophet ﷺ through his poetry (encomia) to a larger audience and defend him like his spokesman. He ﷺ also used to say that Allah, the Truth and the Exalted, helps Hassan through the Holy Spirit (Archangel Jibreel, peace be upon him) as long as he acts in defence of religion or acts as the spokesman of the Apostle of Allah ﷺ and replies on his behalf.

When the beloved Prophet ﷺ used to lie down to relax he ﷺ would put his right hand under his right cheek and would say:

*O my Lord! When You raise Your bondsmen
grant me protection from your punishment.*

When he ﷺ retired to bed he would say words that meant:

May my death and living be in Your name O Allah!

On waking up he ﷺ would supplicate as follows:

*All praise unto Allah
Who brought us back to life after having caused us to die and
towards Him only we have to rise and return.*

The beloved prophet's bed on which he ﷺ used to sleep was made of leather and filled with the fiber of date palms. He ﷺ used to visit the sick, attend

funerals and accept invitations of even the slaves. He ε performed the *Haj* riding a she-camel with an old pack-saddle and over the saddle was spread out a cloth not worth even, probably, four Dirham. He ε said that if I am given a limb portion of mutton I would accept it and if somebody invited me over a meal that consisted of just that much I would definitely go. It was one of his noble habits that if something was done to his dislike, he ε did not ask people to stop it there and then. The beloved Prophet ε accepted gifts and gave gifts in return. His shyness and his modesty were far more than the shyness and modesty of a veiled maiden. And, when something happened to his dislike you could read it immediately from his blessed face.

Chapter: 7

The place and position of women in Islam

Islam has performed a significant feat in connection with the restoration of dignity and credibility of womankind by securing for them a suitable position in the human society and liberating them from draconian laws, unjust customs and traditions, and the narcissism and arrogance of men. Even a cursory reading of the Glorious Quran is enough to understand the stark difference between an uninformed viewpoint and the Quranic/Islamic point of view on women dependent upon which are both individual behaviour and community laws.

Quranic verses revealed concerning the better half of humankind, the weaker sex, instill confidence in a woman because they clearly define that there is a predestined position for her both in society and before God. And she can co-operate in areas of religion and knowledge, in the service of Islam, virtue and God-consciousness; and she can fully participate in building a pious society. Quranic verses regarding the acceptance of deeds, felicity and deliverance, and success in the Hereafter always mention women with men. Allah the Exalted says:

**And whoso doeth good works, whether of male or female,
and he (or she) is a believer, such will enter Paradise
and they will not be wronged the dint in a date-stone.¹**

At another place He says:

**And their Lord hath heard them (and He saith):
Lo! I suffer not the work of any worker, male or female, to be lost.
Ye proceed one from another.²**

Similarly, where bestowal of opportunities and means to attain *good life* is mentioned He remembers women with men, rather gives a guarantee for it

1. V.124: Chapter 4: *An-Nisa'*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; M.M. Pickthall. **2.** V.195: Chapter 3: *Aal-i Imran*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall.

and makes a promise for it. *Good life* is the English for *Hayat-i-tayyibah*, a highly meaningful and comprehensive Quranic expression which, carries the sense of an exemplary and successful life and convey the infinite meanings of respect and peace.

**Whosoever doth right,
whether male or female and is a believer,
him verily We shall quicken with good life, and We shall pay them
a recompense in proportion to the best of what they used to do.³**

At the time of mentioning good attributes, virtuous deeds and important departments of religion, the Glorious Quran not only mentions men with women and gives an indication that in terms of virtuous deeds and kind attributes there is no difference between males and females, instead in contrast to this collective reference describes each good attribute separately and when it mentions one good attribute in men then each time associates the same attribute with women, no matter how verbose the format becomes.

Its underlying wisdom is that human minds trained under the shadow of un-Islamic religions and philosophies and along an ancient way of living and etiquette, are unable to conceive the fact that women too can have the attributes that are found in strong and capable men. Such minds have always been discriminatory. They have even debarred women from developing many a proficiency alongwith men lest the former have to endure their competition and superiority in those areas. Join me in reading this holy verse:

**Lo! men who surrender unto Allah and women who surrender,
and men who believe and women who believe,
and men who obey and women who obey,
and men who speak the truth and women who speak the truth,
and men who persevere (in righteousness) and women who persevere,
and men who are humble and women who are humble,
and men who give alms and women who give alms,
and men who fast and women who fast,
and men who guard their modesty
and women who guard (their modesty),**

3.V.97: Chapter 16: *An-Nahl*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall.

**and men who remember Allah much
and women who remember -
Allah hath prepared for them forgiveness and a vast reward.⁴**

The Glorious Quran does not mention them only in the context of worship and acts of devotion to God, it mentions them alongwith capable men also, with religious scholars, with men of determination, with those who endure difficulties in conducting social audits on religious and moral parameters, and toil in the path of *Enjoin the right and forbid the wrong* – a kind of social drive aimed at developing a pious society. The Quran envisages the believers, men and women, as one united cohesive group who would cooperate on principles of virtue and God-consciousness.

And the believing men and believing women are friends one unto another: they command that which is reputable and restrain from that which is disreputable, and establish prayer and give the poor-due and obey Allah and His apostle. Those! Allah will surely show mercy to them; verily Allah is Mighty, Wise.⁵

The Holy Quran glances over factors like gender, race, complexion and ancestry altogether and it singularly declares God-consciousness as the means and the yardstick for scaling the peak of human eminence.

**O mankind! Lo! We have created you from a male and a female,
and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another.
Lo! the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the best in conduct.
Lo! Allah is Knower, Aware.⁶**

The foregoing teachings are more than sufficient to instill courage, self-respect and self-confidence among women and to keep them away from, in the terminology of modern psychology, inferiority complex.

It is the practical consequence of these very teachings that among Islam's celebrated women,⁷ – since the time of the Apostle of Allah ε to the present day – we witness a large number of lady teachers and ladies who

4. V.35: Chapter 33: *Al-Ahzaab*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall. 5. V.71: Chapter 9: *At-Tawbah*: Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid. 6. V.13: Chapter 49: *Al-Hujraat*: The Meaning of the Glorious Quran; Muhammad M. Pickthall. 7. In this connection biographies of Islam's celebrated women may be referred.

were adept in up-bringing, ladies who participated in Holy wars and ladies who were nurses, literary figures and writers, *Hafizaath* (Girls and ladies who have learnt the entire Holy Quran by heart), narrators of Noble Traditions, the ardent in worship, the devout, and ladies in possession of fortunes who were held in high esteem in the society. They possessed ideal and exemplary personalities, from whom much intellectual benefit was derived and under whom people were trained.

Of all the rights that Islam has given to the Muslim woman, some are:

- The right of ownership and right to ancestral property
- The right to sell and purchase
- The right of separation from husband (the right to *Khula'* if necessary)
- The right of dissolution of betrothal (if she does not agree to it)
- And the right to participate in the Prayer of *'Eidul Fitr*, the Prayer of *'Eidul Azha*, the Prayer of *Friday* and other congregational prayers

Details of rights besides these are available in literature on Islamic jurisprudence (*Fiqh* literature).⁸

8. Adapted from *Tahzeeb-o-tamaddun par Islam ke asraat-o-ehsaanaat* (Urdu) by Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi.

The place and position of humanity in Islam¹

8^a.1. Man is the deputy and *Khalifah* of God

Islam has told us that man is God's deputy on earth, *Khalifatullah*² and the trustee of the world. The world is a *waqf* (trust) and man is a *Mutawalli* (trustee), his job here is to organize and direct. There exist many small and large *waqfs* (trusts) in the world. This entire world, this whole universe, is one huge and magnificent *waqf*, it is not somebody's personal property or somebody's ancestral property that he may squander the way he likes. This trust (*waqf*) has predators, grazing animals, birds, trees, rivers, mountains, gold, silver, provisions of food and all worldly blessings. All of these have been given in man's custody because he is familiar with their nature and cares for them. Man himself, is created from the dust of this very trust, is made of this very dust, and it is essential for a custodian that he meets both the conditions (a) familiarity and knowledge and (b) care and concern. Man knows the profit and loss equations of this world and things that he needs too have been placed in it. Therefore, he can make a good trustee.

For example, he only can manage a library well who has a passion for knowledge, an attachment with books and an interest in them. If the management of a library is placed in the charge of an ignorant person he can never make a good librarian, howsoever noble and nice a man he may be. However, one who will have a passion for knowledge and a compatibility

1. The worthlessness to which human life is reduced today and the way mankind is being annihilated, had stirred the author to start a social forum, *The Message of Humanity*, whose purpose was to help people recall their long forgotten lesson and reacquaint them with their true place and position. Under the aegis of that forum public meetings were held in different parts of the country, a lot of literature was distributed and people who sympathized with mankind were contacted. People who are compassionate towards the sufferings of humanity may write to: The office, Message of Humanity Forum, Post Box 93, Lucknow – 226001. 2. *Khalifatullah* is a title of honor bestowed upon the father of all mankind Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, by Allah the Exalted Himself; *Khalifah* is synonymous with 'Deputy' but by virtue of the duties he was given its meaning is nearer to 'viceroy' (A viceroy who God had sent on earth) i.e. a deputy on a special duty. However, since God, The King of kings, cannot be likened to the kings and queens of this world and His *Khalifah* cannot be likened to their viceroys, therefore instead of 'Viceroy' I have written the God given title *Khalifatullah* as it is.

with books, he will devote sufficient time there, will make substantial addition to the collection and will develop the facility.

Similarly, since man is the dweller of this very world, he is both interested in it, as also stands in need of it, he is familiar with it, also cares for it, he has to live in it, also has to die in it; therefore, he will look after it very well and will make proper use of the favors that God has bestowed upon him. Except him nobody else can do this job, as well, as he does.

8^a.2. Only man is suitable for all the organizing in this world

When Allah the Exalted created Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, and appointed him as His deputy on earth, the angels who are a pure and spiritual creation who neither sin nor have the desire to sin said that, 'O Lord! You are appointing as Your deputy such a one who will shed blood in the world! We hallow Thee and remain occupied in Thine worship, bestow this position upon us'. God replied, 'You do not know this matter'. God tested Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, and the angels. Because Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, was fashioned from the dust of the earth and he was destined to use the world, his nature had an inborn compatibility with it, hence he was also familiar with each and everything in it. He answered cent percent correctly. The angels had no concern with those things and therefore they could not answer. Thus did God demonstrate that man only, in spite of all his weaknesses, was suitable for the organization of this world and the supervision of this trust, rather these very weaknesses and needs of his proved his suitability for that position. Had the world been inhabited by angels then most of God's worldly favors would have proved to be useless. Not on any account would they have seen the development that man, driven by his need and desire, brought about in them.

8^a.3. A successful substitute

However, you should also remember that it is the duty of a deputy and a substitute to faithfully advocate the cause of the mentor who has appointed him a deputy, and become an example and reflection of his morals. If I am somebody's substitute here, I shall be called a successful and loyal substitute only when, to the extent that is possible for me, I try to copy him and develop his kind of morals. To be God's deputy is to cultivate His virtues in us and develop a correspondence with His attributes. We are told

that among His attributes and virtues are knowledge, mercy, appreciation, the doing of favors, administration, chastity, the capacity to pardon and forego, grant and bestowal, justice and its implementation, protection and security, love, majesty and grace, the capacity to call criminals to account and take revenge, comprehensiveness and expansiveness.

8^a.4. Demonstration of divine virtues

'Adopt God's virtues' was the teaching that *Sayyadna* Muhammad ﷺ had given to mankind. Although man within his human limits and with all his human weaknesses can create in himself a reflection of Divine virtues and Allah's attributes, he can never become God. However, he can demonstrate Divine virtues to the world and this, precisely, is the job of a true deputy. You can make a guess, that if man really begins to consider himself a deputy of God and makes Divine virtues the standard of his life, then during his period as a *Khalifah* and reign as a deputy, what will be the state of his own progress and ascent, and the condition of world's prosperity and verdure? Religion grants a most exalted and a most balanced image to a human being. It declares him to be the deputy of God, His substitute in the organization of this planet and a *Mutawalli* (trustee) of this magnificent *waqf* (trust); there can not be an honor for man and an ascent for mankind higher than this.

8^a.5. Two contradictory images

However people by themselves established two images that contradict each other, somewhere man was made out to be God and people began to worship him and somewhere he was considered to be worst than a beast and was driven like cattle. Some men became self-styled gods and some began to consider themselves as worst than animals. They think that the stomach is all they are concerned with and a body is all that they are given. Both of these images are wrong, rather a clear atrocity. Man is neither God nor beast; man is very much a man but God's deputy. The whole world has been created for him and he has been created for God. The entire world is answerable to him and he is accountable to God. This planet, this world, is not anybody's personal property, it is a trust (*waqf*) and man is its trustee (*Mutawalli*). Without this conception and this tenet, the jig-saw puzzle of this world can never fall in place. History bears testimony that whenever man strayed from this straight path, exceeded his limit and tried to act God

and thought of himself to be the real owner of the world or when he fell from his position and considered himself to be a beast or gave up organizing and overseeing the world and evaded the duties and responsibilities of life, then destruction became his lot and this world too was devastated.

8^a.6. A Message of love and unity

Allah the Exalted says:

Remember Allah's favor unto you, how ye were enemies
(who wished to kill each other and
did not even like to see each other's faces)
and He made friendship between your hearts so that ye
become as brothers by His grace.³

[Text in parentheses author's]

This verse is related to an event. It dates back to the time, in Makkah, when servitude and worship of God had become difficult for the Apostle of Allah ﷺ and the Muslims, and the locals over there in their folly had failed to understand that, “he ﷺ is our well-wisher, he wants to lift us above the baseness of the earth, extricate us from a life of disgrace and indignity and carve us into such a nation that would illuminate the whole world”.

Let love spread in the whole world. Let differences and quarrels end. Let people of the entire world know the purpose of their life. The capability that Allah the Exalted has given, the blessings of valor and generosity, love and wealth that He has granted, all of which are being wasted on petty and ordinary matters, put them to proper use. Nations are fighting nations. Countries are the enemies of countries. Thousands of wrangles are there within brotherhoods. Disobedience of God is rampant. Such wrongs are being committed that offend God and incite His wrath. The way predators hunt their prey in jungles, that is the way man is hunting for man. It is surprising that mankind has become game for man.

Islam wants to extract them from nadirs and lift them to an exalted position but the people of Makkah would not understand. Emotions working in their hearts were: how can a person from so-and-so's house and from such-and-such family rise so much! When the life of the beloved prophet ﷺ and his

3. V103: Chapter 3: *Aal-i Imran*: The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Pickthall.

noble companions, may Allah be pleased with them, became difficult in Makkah, they were compelled to leave their dearly loved motherland.

A motherland happens to be dear to every human being but the purpose of life happens to be higher, absolutely tremendous.

8^a.7. The battle ready tribes of Aws and Khazraj

When the beloved Prophet ﷺ and his disciples performed the *Hijrah*³ from Makkah and arrived in Madinah, another intractable problem was in store here. Here were two brotherhoods and both were Arabs but since long there was enmity between them. Each brotherhood spoke of its virtue and the other's fault. When there is no higher goal in sight, fights erupt over trifles.

I belong to a family of *Zamindars* (landlords). My relatives on the maternal side were among the well-to-do *Zamindars* of their time. In our area, during the *Zamindari* days, a fight would begin over trifles, lawsuits would be filed, and a dispute would flare up over an acacia tree or over the boundary of a field or over the divider along adjacent fields or over 'I-was-passing-by-and-so-and-so-did-not-wish-me'. There you go – fighting would break out, boycotts would be called and children would be instructed not to go to so-and-so's house. What would children make of these tales! They would play together and become one again.

Education ought to have integrated mankind but today games unite the world. Teams of one country go to another country. Hosts and tourists closely cooperate with each other in play. Alas! Education does not unite but games do, sobriety does not unite but amusement does.

When there is no higher purpose in sight, when there remains no sympathy and feeling for the human world engulfed in fires, the misery that afflicts it and the horrible acts that provoke God's wrath and debase and trample mankind; then people, like children, get interested in games and entertainment or they begin to give importance to such petty differences that make you feel both distressed and amused. Before the arrival of the beloved Prophet ﷺ the condition of the people of Madinah was also the same; the people of Aws and Khazraj used to fight each other in quite the same way. They used to quench their thirst with each other's blood, as if,

4. Please refer to footnote no. 2 of sub-section 2.3.1 if necessary.

there is no higher aim other than that. This urge was there in them since years. When the Apostle of Allah ﷺ and his noble companions, may Allah be pleased with them, reached Madinah, only then the people of Madinah found a higher purpose. Revelations of profound realities brought about a radical transformation in them. Now they became the best of friends. A single soul in two bodies, they totally wiped out their past from their minds. This was not to the liking of the Jews living in Madinah. They tried a lot to incite clashes between them. At times they even recited couplets before them from the days of Ignorance, which celebrated tribal bigotry and ignorance-time loyalties. Aws-Khazraj did not accept the influence of these instigations. The love of Allah and His Apostle ﷺ had washed away those enmities. So base had their past begun to appear before them that they shuddered even at the thought of it and it made their hair stand on end. When a collective danger looms or a moment of collective joy arrives, people come together, the way they gather around the Ka'bah, uniform in dress and speech. Similarly the vision of 'The Ka'bah Ultimate' arrives before the spiritual eye, that is to say, the Being of Allah the Exalted, the seeking of His pleasure, the sentiment of serving His slaves and removing their pain and suffering. At that time, trivial matters seem so contemptible that even their thought becomes nauseating. The beloved Prophet ﷺ on a similar occasion had remarked, 'Let it go, it is such a bad thing to do'. The incident was that the residents of Madinah (the *Ansar*) and the emigrants from Makkah (the *Muhajireen*) got into a fight over a well. One called out to his tribe. The other complained to his supporters of injustice. It was then that the beloved Prophet ﷺ had said, 'Let it go, it is a very disgraceful thing to do'. Thanks to the training given by the beloved Prophet ﷺ and the blessings of Islam, there came about such a revolution in *Muhajireen* and *Ansar* that blood-soaked, exhausted in battle, they are in the throes of death and feeling thirsty, yet when water is brought, they gesture towards the other wounded companion and insist that he be served first. This degree of selflessness was produced by the ties of Islam, devotion to the purpose and love for the Prophet ﷺ. So heady was the intoxication of these ties that the *Ansar* of Madinah made the *Muhajireen* of Makkah equal partners in their shops, their farms and their properties.

8^a.8. The thing most disliked after *shirk* i.e. associating partners with Allah, is strained relations

The thing that the Prophet ﷺ has condemned the most after *shirk* is strained

relations. A Noble Tradition mentions that on the *Night of Immunity (Shab-e-Baraa't*⁵) in which mass forgiveness and pardon is granted, when the river of divine mercy is in flood, three persons are denied the glad tidings of Forgiveness: he who is disobedient to his parents, the habitual drunkard and he who has ill-will and malice in his heart against his Muslim brother. The beloved Prophet ﷺ specially laid stress on taking care of blood relations. He ﷺ said that, included among the nine commandments that my Lord has given me is also that:

*I establish relationship with him who severs relationship and ties with me,
forgive him who perpetrates atrocity on me
and grant to him who deprives me.*

It is no marvel to keep on good terms with him whose dealings with us have the warmth of friendship and affection. Excellence lies in adopting a good attitude towards him who acts with hostility and inflicts losses.

5. The 14th of the month of *Sha'ban*; the translation *Night of Immunity* adapted from The Translation of the Holy Quran; Abdullah Yusuf Ali.

Chapter: 8 Part: b

The innate gift of being human

8^b.1. God is not despaired of the human race

The affair of God with the human race and the affair of the human species with the human race, is a total contrast. To the question, is God not despaired of the human race? The answer is, His mercies and favors are raining upon this world, upon this *Sansaar*, incessantly; everything in the universe has pinned its hopes on the human race. However, the manner in which we conduct our affairs with one another says that we are despaired of man.

To quote a thinker¹, every child who comes in this world proclaims the fact that God is not despaired of the human race. Had He been despaired, then He would not have caused its population to grow and would no more have sent it to try its luck and test its capability in the world. However, man oppresses man, man hates man, man exploits man; sucks blood like a leech, takes him for a customer and reaps benefit through him, and announces through his attitude the opinion that he is despaired of the capability and future of humanity. These demonstrations of God and man are going on continuously. Every raindrop that falls from the sky announces that the Creator of the world is not yet despaired of His thirsty creation, of His cruel creation. The earth is capable of supporting vegetation and its produce is an announcement of the fact that God is not despaired of the inhabitants of this earth. The sun shines and it never goes on strike. The moon appears as usual and it spreads its luminous sheet, cools the eyes and comforts the hearts. All these phenomena announce the fact that Allah the Exalted is yet not despaired of man.

However, your acts and our acts prove that we are despaired of man, through our role and performance we are demonstrating the fact that to man who is a masterpiece of God's industry we, at least, accord no prestige.

1. The word used here by the author is '*mufakkir*' (within inverted commas) which, besides 'thinker', lend it the additional meaning of 'a person who is concerned over the present situation'.

Manifestations of God's Omnipotence and the beauty of his creation are there in everything.....a flower.....a bud.....a tiny droplet.....a blade of grass.....a speck of dust.....the leaves of a tree.....whatever you look at, it seems that there is a world in it. The most beautiful creation among them, the most captivating, is man. Each and every thing, the entire universe, is created for him. All of this announces the fact that man is God's beloved and the most eminent of all created beings. If you liken this world to a wedding procession, then he is the bridegroom in it. However, your and our courses of action prove that man has got no good quality in him. Through our actions we file a petition against ourselves in God's court, that we be recalled from this world. It is as though we wish to prove true the angelic apprehension which God Himself had confuted. When at the time of man's creation God had said:

Lo! I am about to place a deputy in the earth.

The angels had expressed their apprehension:

**Wilt thou place therein one who will do harm therein
and will shed blood?**

When God questioned Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, about the knowledge of things, he had given the right answer. The angels had failed to answer. God had caused man to win; we are defeating him.

8^b.2. A glass tycoon bids the highest for broken mirrors

God said that you do not know what marvelous qualities there are in man, how the river of knowledge gushes forth from his being, the seas would not have the expanse and the depth which he has, the twinkle of love that he has in his eyes, you can not present to Me. There is softness and love in his heart, his heart melts and feels hurt when he sees others in pain; you are deprived of these things. Iqbal² had made a very bold statement when he had said:

2. Dr. Mohammad Iqbal (1877-1938) the celebrated Urdu poet who wrote: *Sare Jahan se achchha Hindostan hamara*. For readers who know Urdu, the couplets quoted by the author in this section are: (1) *Na kar taqleed aye Jibreel merey jazb-o-masti ki; tan-asaan 'arshiyon ko zikr-o-tasbeeh-o-tawaaf oola* (2) *Dard-e-dil ke waastey paida kiya insaan ko; warna 'ta'at ke liye kuchh kam na they karroobiyen*.

O Gibreel! Emulate not,
 my way of imbibing truth and my way of getting drunk;
 angels who dont toil and sweat of the brow know;
 first remember Him, glorify Him and circumambulate.³

And bolder is:

Created man for heart-ache;
 otherwise for obedience,
 there was no dearth of cherubims.⁴

The angels do not have this wealth; opposite angels, man can lay down before God a broken-heart.

Whoever the swishing dagger bloodies the leader writhes in pain;
 there's a feeling he has for every earthly being.⁵

Somebody else is stabbed, somebody else's foot is pricked by a thorn but our heart feels the pain. The most precious resource at a person's disposal is the resource of mercy, the resource of love. It is that tear-drop which falls from the eye at the sight of a scarf-less widow or at the sight of the cold hearth of a poor man or upon hearing the groans of the sick, that tear-drop can purify the sea if it were to fall in it and if it were to fall in a jungle of sins it would burn everything away and relplace it with light. The angels can present everything but they can never present that tear-drop whose worth even you have not recognized.....the tear-drop that one human being sheds for another human being.

We wake up in the dead of night
 when all the world is sound asleep
 and make an offering of tear drops
 (to the Lord of the worlds)

3. *Kulliyat-e-Iqbal*, 1986 Reprint, *Baal-e-Jibreel*, Pg. 17. 4. Readers unfamiliar with the context of this verse will like to know that, according to Quranic accounts, angels were created before the creation of man. The noble traditions indicate that they are in extremely large numbers. The angels hymn the praise of the Lord night and day and never get weary. 5. For readers who know Urdu, Ameer Meenai's couplet quoted by the author here is: *Khanjar chaley kisi pey tadaptey hain ham Ameer; sare jahan ka dard hamarey jigar mein hai.*

The angels cannot sleep because of seeing the Lord constantly, realizing the presence of His Being and Attributes but there is a person who is unable to shut his eyes out of concern for another person's affliction and pain, to the class of his sleeplessness the wakefulness of the angels cannot ascend.

The most precious thing in a man's possession is that he is affected by the pain of another being. He has the basic ingredient of love in him, the moment it finds some stimulant it becomes active, then he neither looks at religion nor at community, neither at sect nor at region, neither at motherland nor at country. Man sees only the heart of man, feels the pain it conceals. The way a magnet attracts iron and the latter must submit to that attraction, likewise the magnetism of one human heart exercises a pull at another human heart.

8^b.3. What good is life sans compassion?

If a man is robbed of this wealth then he will become bankrupt. If some country is deprived of it if the wealth of America, the organization of Russia, oil deposits of the Arab countries be there, abundance and plenty be everywhere, a Ganga-Jamuna of Gold and silver be flowing, but in that country the spring of love has dried up then that country is bankrupt, upon that country Allah's mercies will not descend.

Still the human eye is able to shed tears. Still the human heart is able to flutter, to smolder and feel hurt. A heart which has lost this ability such a heart is not called a heart it is, instead, called a tile of stone, which is not worth a cowry in the sight of God, be it the heart of a Muslim or of a Hindu, Sikh or Christian. A heart is there to flutter, to shudder, to cry, and to be more verdant than the earth, more refreshing than a waterfall, more expansive than the universe and in its ability to lash like a torrent it should surpass the clouds.

*Will somebody exhort the stray cloud
of smouldering summers to shed its rain,
the way the tears from our eyes
in ceaseless constant torrents rain.*

That is not a human eye which is never moist, that is the flower of narcissus which poets liken to a beautiful eye. That is not a human heart, that is the

heart of a tiger which is never hurt to see others in pain, which does not know what it is to become restless and to weep over the sorrows of humanity. The forehead on which beads of repentance never appear, that is not a forehead, that is some flat vertical rock.

Paralyzed is the hand which does not extend in the service of humanity. Better than the hand which is raised to slaughter a human being was the paw of a lion. If man's job was to hack, then instead of hands nature would have given him a sword. If the purpose of man's life was only to amass wealth, then instead of a beating heart a cash box could be placed in his chest. If the work of man was to make plans of destruction only, then the brain of a human being would not have been placed in him, the brain of some *Shaitan*⁵, some *Rakshas*⁶, would have been there instead.

The wonders of creation in the body of a human being are talked about but if you see the wonders of his heart, then the wonders of the body would pale before them. He is gifted with such a heart that if somebody is in distress in the East, he becomes restless in the West. It was a life ruled by the heart that, at the time of the Battle of Badr when the arms of those people who were taken prisoner were uncomfortably tied behind their backs, then moved by the suffering of those prisoners the Apostle of Allah ﷺ could not sleep the whole night. If a child cried behind him he ﷺ would shorten the *Salah* lest the child's mother became restless. If a heart likes to hurt somebody and torment somebody, then what good is such a heart anyway?

Brothers! The entire affair of God with His creation tells us that God is not despaired of the human race. Your water-works department can suspend the supply of water and your power-house can suspend the supply of electricity, then can God not suspend the descent of His favors? Just as the municipality is not despaired of people living within municipal limits and it continues to serve them, God too is providing water to the whole world and His command to all His creation is to serve man. The entire workshop is busy serving man. God has not got despaired of him. However, what are we trying to prove by our conduct? Are we proving that we consider man to be a superior being? Consider him dignified? Consider him our equal? Consider him to be a part of our body, our child?
The line of action that we have adopted is the biggest threat to human

5. *Shaitaan*: (Arabic & Urdu) meaning: devil. 6. *Rakshas*: (Hindi) meaning: devil.

population. There is no outside threat. Gone are the days when nations used to go marching to besiege other nations. The threat is from within i.e. the threat of antipathy against the human being and the trampling of humanity. Turning a blind eye to social welfare. The need is to protect both the country and the nation against it.

8^b.4. The place that God has accorded to humanity

The messengers⁷, peace be upon them, had told mankind that if you become subordinate to the world and allow your desires to dominate you, then this entire life will become abnormal and disorganized, and such anarchy will prevail that this very world will become hell for you. If man does not recognize himself, he will continue to fall from the place he occupies and humanity will get ruined and destroyed.

It has been told in the Noble Quran that after man was created, the angels were asked to prostrate to him, which gives us the lesson that it is a humiliation for mankind to prostrate before anybody other than its Creator, when for prostration the most deserving after God were His angels only because they are the workforce of the universe; by Allah's leave, they bring the rain and blow the winds. The way that a ruler introduces his deputy to his staff similarly God had conducted an introduction by making the angels prostrate before man, so that, till the day of Resurrection the human species remembers the lesson that it is not fit for it to stoop before anybody else except before God, but human beings by neglecting their origin and substance are humiliating and killing humanity.⁸

7. Messengers refers to both angels and men, however, men are customarily called prophets and a prophet to whom a book is Revealed is called an apostle. 8. *Payam-e-Insaaniyat* (Urdu) pgs. 55-56; by Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi.

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(Non-English terms are italicized)

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Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, born in 1914, one of the leading Muslim scholars of the twentieth century hailed from a family which has produced many illustrious figures and intellectuals. He was Secretary, Nadwatul Ulema, Lucknow; Chairman, Managing Committee, Darul Musannifeen (Shibli Academy), Azamgarh; Member, Academy of Arts and Letters, Damascus, and the Higher Council of the Islamic University, Madinah; Member of the Executive Committee of the Federation of Islamic Universities, Rabat and of the Academy of Arabic Languages, Oman; a founder member of the Constituent Council of the Muslim World League, Makkah, and Chairman of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies in Oxford University, U.K. He was awarded the King Faisal Award for his services to the cause of Islam in 1980. He passed away in 1999.

As a writer and orator of great merit he expressed himself in Urdu and Arabic; his highly authoritative works in both these languages are numerous; many have been translated in Persian, French, Turkish, Indonesian and English. Among the English translations of his works are – Islam and the World; Western Civilization; Islam and Muslims; Four Pillars of Islam; Saviours of Islamic Spirit; Glory of Iqbal; Stories of the Prophets; MUHAMMAD, the Last Prophet; and Economic Order in Islam.

A SHORT PRESENTATION ON ISLAM too is a work of translation; the original book *Islam ka T'aruf* (Urdu), a compilation of his writings was published in 1998. It is a reliable reference book which provides an overview of Islam and Islamic sociology and gives important insights useful for everybody.