

The Line Of THOUGHT AND ACTION



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Translator's note

While every effort has been made to keep the meaning of the book *Jaada-e-fikr-o-'amal*, as close as possible to its original expression, at some places elaborations were necessary for the benefit of readers totally unfamiliar with the subject. Consequently, such additional information instead of being included in the main text appears separately in notes at the end of the articles and in text-boxes too, at a few places. Following the pattern of 'God and god', names of events and things of the Hereafter begin with capitals to distinguish them from the worldly, e.g. Forgiveness (*Maghfirath*), Deliverance (*Nijaat*), Hell (*Jahannam*), etc.

Today that this duty to God and service to humanity reaches completion, it is because of an abundance of Allah's mercies upon me, prayers of my parents and teachers and support of my family and friends, specially, *Janab* Syed Bilal Hasni Nadwi *Sahab*, the author's younger son, compiler-publisher of *Jaada-e-fikr-o-'amal* and Director of Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi Center for Research, Dawah and Islamic Thought, Rae Bareilly, whose support I value and acknowledge with gratitude. He organized the timely Urdu translation of all Persian and Arabic couplets in the book and their delivery to me because he knew that I did not know these languages. That contribution of his colleagues and *Janab* Abbas Nadwi *Sahab* of Jamiah Aishah lil Banaat, Rae Bareilly, in particular, was excellent and I am very thankful to them for it. Thanks are also due to my friends, Prof. Syed Hamid Hasan of King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, for the nice laptop he gave me that made my work extremely easy and Mr. Syed Israrul Haq of Batterjee Medical College, Jeddah, for reading the last draft as an unbiased reader and his valuable suggestions. Incidentally, all three of us studied at St. Francis' High School, Lucknow, India – now St. Francis' College – when we were boys, little did we realize then that bonds of the alma mater would last for so long.

The one person who left me in inconsolable grief, my late friend Syed Abdullah Hasni Nadwi, may Allah have mercy on him, I must thank the most, posthumously though, for giving me this collection of his missionary-journalist father to translate when I met him in June 2012. Therefore, this translation is, by default, also a work of preservation and restoration of our rich heritage of Islamic Journalism in India, some articles are around fifty years old in it. This aspect we have built in the theme of the book's design: *Ink and old newsprint*. May Allah accept our humble efforts and cause the ideas contained in these thought provoking articles to become popular among the English readership everywhere.

Iqbal Ahmad Ibn Khalil Ahmad
MA, MBA (Alig)

Place: Jeddah
Date: February 24, 2015

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Publisher's note

Praise unto Allah the Sustainer of the worlds
and peace and blessings of Allah be upon the most distinguished of the prophets
and the last of the apostles, *Sayyadna* Muhammad, his family and all his companions.

Jada-e-fikr-o-amal (Urdu) is the second book of my respected father *Hazrath Maulana** Syed Mohammad Al Hasni, may Allah have mercy on him; earlier those of his articles were published under the title '*Quran aap se mukhatib hai*' (Urdu) that were written in the manner of elucidations and expositions of various verses of the Glorious Quran, and drawing inferences from them and in the light of those verses, the *modus operandi* of the reform and construction of society was presented in easy language and a clear style.

The articles now before you are those editorials of *Ta'meer-e-Hayat* in which the *Maulana*, may Allah have mercy on him, has cleared the roads of thought and action, and after exposing the trials and evils of the time, has advised courses of action for steering away from them. These articles have as much the deep feelings of his heart as the exquisiteness of his analyses and insight, and then the might of his pen has produced in this mix the roar of a waterfall and the force of a storm.

Maulana Muhammad Al Hasni, may Allah have mercy on him, lived for only forty four years. However, during the short period of his active life he used his pen to lead the way for the world of Islam. By virtue of his Arabic writings he is considered to be in the same league as the leading Arab scholars and missionaries of his time. The role that he had played in exposing the trial inherent in *Arab nationalism* was fully acknowledged by the Arab world. *Al Ba'th Al Islami*, the Arabic mouthpiece of Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulema, Lucknow, he started publishing at a time when his age was only twenty years,

*While the word *Maulana* in Arabic means *Our Patron*; in Urdu *Maulana* means *a certified moulvi* and it neither means nor implies God, it is rather synonymous with *Sheikh*.

yet his powerful and thought provoking editorials earned him a place in the ranks of veteran journalists.

Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulema began publishing its Urdu mouthpiece *Ta'meer-e-Hayat* too under his editorship. For this also he wrote such forceful editorials that their freshness is intact and felt even today. The distinctive feature of the late *Maulana's* writings is that they identify the diseases that afflict contemporary society and pin-point the weakness, untangle complex problems and present the portrait of a true Islamic society.

Since the last five decades Indian Muslims are living under, more or less, the same circumstances that were created after 1947. The need for articles that the late *Maulana* had written keeping those circumstances before him is felt the same way even today, as it once was. Even these circumstances of Muslims are not any new. And not here alone, circumstances of a majority of Muslim countries are quite like these. This is an additional reason that the need and utility of these articles increases all the more.

Several editions of the book had appeared in Urdu and necessity was being felt that an English version of this book be brought out as well, so that its benefit becomes universal. It is a matter of great pleasure that respected *Janab* Iqbal A. K. Ahmad *Sahab*, the translator who had rendered *Islam ka T'aaruf* by *Hazrath Maulana* Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi into English under the title of *A Short Presentation on Islam* which subsequently earned considerable popularity, took up this task. And he completed his work recently which is now before you.

The respected translator has been very close to my elder brother *Hazrath Maulana* Abdullah Hasni Nadwi, may Allah have mercy on him, and undertook both these works only in consultation with my respected brother. We hope that, besides the writers and him, these works will prove to be a perpetual

expiatory offering for my respected brother also; and the field of inviting mankind to Islam, specially, will benefit from them.

May Allah the Exalted accept it and cause its benefit to spread among all mankind.

Bilal Abdul Hai Hasni Nadwi

Director,
ABUL HASAN ALI NADWI CENTER
for Research, Da'wah & Islamic Thought

Date: February 24, 2015

Place: Rae Bareilly, UP, India

From materialism towards spirituality

Whatever one might say and might write today about our present day world, there is no doubt that its main religion is 'selfishness' and its chief *Peer* (Urdu; *eer* pronounced as in *eel*, meaning: spiritual guide) is the 'stomach' and it is such an *International Peer* that devotion to it is spread all across the East and the West, and Arabia and Persia, everywhere, and its authority is accepted in every country. For sure it has allowed many a lesser *Peer* like nationalism, dictatorship, color and race, and *devotees* of mother-tongues and motherlands to spread out their checker-boards and build their circles of influence, but it is on the condition that they all live as its subordinates, and *earn beneficence*¹ through it only, and keep it paramount in every benefit and earning.

Its result is that, those model personalities have vanished from the sight of the society who used to raise the standard of revolt against this

universal religion and its chief *Priest* or *Purohit*, and casting aside all its influences (which we in our current terminology denote by fancy names,

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such as, a high standard of living, better economics, material progress and economic prosperity) used to announce through their action, that to have good food, wear good clothes and live in a nice house, merely, is not the name of humanity; instead these are such human needs whose fulfillment should be accompanied by thankfulness, by showing how much you value them, and calm; to gaze upon them tantalizingly like children, fall for them like the perennially starved and lose one's bearings if one gets them, is a cruel insult and disgrace to the higher intelligence and lofty potentials of a human being.

In the role of a sign of God on this earth and like a flag held high in this jungle of humanity, these model personalities who were found in every age and every place, by the grace of God, invited mankind to the proposition: that, free yourselves from the slavery of the self and the captivity of the *stomach* because of which one creation of God is called the cow – ox, pig and by the disgraceful name of a dog – which has only two things before it: its wish and its stomach.

Whenever selfishness and greed and, by corollary, the dark clouds of materialism and predatory behavior have held any country and society or any population and tribe under their sway, at that time, Allah's sincere and chosen slaves and highly courageous and high-spirited human beings, presented against the customs and traditions of the world, conjectures and experiences of mankind, information and universally accepted principles of the age and the direction of the tide, an example of such a lifestyle and spiritual level in which no difference had remained between clay pots and exquisite crockery on the one hand and rupees and guineas² on the other; and from the king to the fakir all had become equals, and the attitude and treatment meted out to them was solely as per Allah's commandments,

rulings of the *Shariath* (Divine law/Islamic law) and in the light and guidance of the *Sunnath-e-Nabvi* i.e. practices of the beloved prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

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Islamic etiquette makes it compulsory that whenever the name of a prophet or of the last 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 be upon him; may Allah be pleased with him/her*. For the supplication that follows the name of prophet Muhammad - ***peace and blessings of Allah be upon him***— we have used the following Arabic calligraphy which is traditionally used by most authors everywhere:



These exalted archetypes of humanity (who are the blessedness of this earth and the pride and wealth of entire humanity) always dealt a heavy blow to selfishness and the dominance and rule of the *stomach*, and told us that beyond the delight of industry or the culinary and the satisfaction of carnal desires, there is one more delight; after getting a taste of which a man does not even care to turn and cast a look at these petty and mortal delights. However, before tasting that, there happens to be a need for some sacrifice, selflessness and steadfastness.

In today's world, the thing that needs to be emphasized the most is that, man has to be apprised and reminded, again and again, that what tremendous and marvelous capabilities Allah the Exalted has blessed him with, and what amazing stations and levels lie within his range and reach, and if God inspires him to act according to His Holy Will and if he once gathers the courage to attain freedom from the binding or attraction of the self, then, what lovely universes, what wonderful delights, rather what delightful heavens await him in this very world.

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

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Unto them are glad tidings in the life of the world and in the Hereafter³.

In a reference to this very truth, a man of metaphysics and mystic had once said that, '*lau aalamu al-malook maa nahnu feeh laqataloona bis-syoof*' (If the kings got the whiff of the bliss in which we live, they would come laced with swords to confront us out of envy and jealousy) and there is not the least surprise and exaggeration in what he had said. By the mere progressive utilization of material resources, when a man can fly like the birds, sail in the waters like fish and throw scaling ladders up to the stars; and when a man by merely building his body, giving it exercise and practice, through self-confidence and self-awareness, can accomplish astonishing feats in the physical field, and can make possible the impossible; then, can the same man, by employing the capabilities and the latent powers of his heart and soul, not ascend to those stations before which all these superb worldly achievements and material progress and wonders are worth no more than games that children play or their clay toy houses!!

He has to be apprised that with knowledge of God and knowledge of the truth of his own being, an unjust and sinful man ascends from which level to which level, how dust turns into gold and from the atom is formed the sun, how the dweller of the world becomes independent of the world? How in this world he revels in the delights of heaven, and even more than that, he perceives Allah's look of Kindness upon his heart and he feels delighted and honored by His favors, courtesies, glad tidings for the Hereafter and good news for this world.

*Jo ham dil pe uska karam dekhte hain
to dil ko ba az jaam-e-Jam dekhte hain*

The moment our heart His Kindness feels

we lose no time and view our heart
in the goblet of Jamshed⁴

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How he becomes a sea of beneficence and generosity for the creation!
And from the light of his heart and the blessings in his being a large number
of people benefit, acquaintances and strangers, friends and foes, those
who are far and those who are near, each according to his capacity,
sagacity and capability that Allah gives him to act according to His Holy Will;
his being becomes the center and focus of creations; and his influences
ripping through the curtains of time and distance reach the future
generations.

How his prayers are answered, misfortunes are put off, blessings descend,
and his existence becomes a sheet of compassion and tranquility that
stretches over the entire setting. How love for him is poured into the
hearts of human beings, and trudging, trekking, now falling and now rising
they come to meet him; and madly, uncontrollably, clasp his hand; and
consider it a felicity to walk behind him; and regard every tremor of his lip
and every cursory glance he casts at them to be a cause of pride and
privilege for themselves, and speak to him but through their plight.

*Aanaan ke khaak ra ba-nazar kimiya kunand
aaya bood ke gosh-e-chashm-e bema kunand*

Those people, whose sheer look turns dust into gold,
can it not be that towards me, they once with kindness see?

How he wants to hide and he cannot, turns away from the world and the
world falls at his feet, wants to keep away from aristocrats and kings, and
in their search for him they keep following his trail. How he crosses the
boundaries of kith and kin, and family and tribe, to become the wealth of
entire humanity, the grace of this earth and a blessing for earthly beings.

Men have to be prepared through counseling, again and again, that they spend some portion of their material resources, powers of hearts, and

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intellectual and practical capabilities, and hidden potentials, over rising above the baseness of the self and the *stomach*, attain freedom from the golden cage of materialism and turn their attention towards their Lord and Master with heart-felt sincerity, repentance and regret.

They should spend some small portion of their time on self-evaluation and on a review of their lives, whatever weaknesses they see they should try to remove them; thank Allah if He gives them the capability to act according to His Holy Will; use tears to give a cleansing wash to the spots and blemishes of the heart, because, for this, there is no other reliable substitute; make: *Seek help in patience and prayer*⁵ a principle to live by. They will, certainly, have to sacrifice at least some of their carnal desires, physical pleasures and material benefits; will also have to coerce their heart, will have to punish it at times, will have to negotiate a truce with it at times, will have to experiment with methods of inducement and of punishment, both; will have to oversee and guard all three things, the heart, the brain and the eye, because if these will come under control then the viscera and the limbs and all that relates to the practical and the physical will also become subordinate to it.

For sure, after a short period in this struggle and this training, the path ahead becomes easy, Allah the Exalted Himself says clearly, *And those who strive hard in Us, We shall surely guide them in Our paths*⁶. However, this matter is, in fact, a lifelong matter, a lifelong struggle and a trial that lasts the entire age of a person, and upon this very test and trial depends the recompense and reward of the Hereafter.

This much is for sure, that after one takes the path of virtue, the powers of evil naturally become weak and by advancing along the path of vice the

powers of virtue automatically begin to weaken and exhaust. However, this struggle will remain till the last breath and he only will be considered successful who Allah the Exalted, at that critical moment also, saves from

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test and trial and includes among those who are closest to Him and among *the people of the right flank*⁷.

*Aye dil tamaam nafa' hai saudaa-e-ishq mein
ek jaan ka ziyaan hai, so aisaa ziyaan nahin*

O heart there's every gain, in obsession with God's love;
life is all one loses, so not much of a loss is that.

Notes and references

1. Readers unfamiliar with the Attributes of God in Islam will not catch the pun here and will like to know that one Attribute of Allah the Exalted is *The Beneficent* and man earns *beneficence* through none else other than Him.
2. Guinea: An old British gold coin, that used to be called *Asharfi* in Urdu (= now GBP 1.05).
3. V.64, chapter 10, *Yunus*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; A. M. Daryabadi.
4. Jamshed was the fabled king of ancient Persia, besides other literatures he is also mentioned in Zoroastrian scriptures. According to popular legend, he had a goblet in which he could view all that was happening.
5. V.153, chapter 2, *Al Baqrah*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; A.M. Daryabadi.
6. V.69, chapter 29, *'ankaboot*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; A. M. Daryabadi.
7. Readers unfamiliar with Islamic terminology will like to know here, that according to the Glorious Quran (verses 7 – 11, chapter 56, *Al waq'eah*: the Event) on the

Day of Resurrection the entire mankind will be split into three groups, *people of the right flank* destined for Heaven, *people of the left flank* destined for Hell and a *foremost group* of the extremely pious who will remain the closest to God in their Afterlife.

Win the hearts! Be the Conqueror of the Age!

Man's greatest excellence is that the outward and inner sides of his personality be alike. On the one hand, his chest be full of belief and conviction, and his heart with undying love, and on the other hand, his tongue be in agreement with his heart and his action be endorsing these sentiments and states of mind. If somebody attains this distinction, then such attraction and charm will be produced in every word and deed of his, and in every writing and speech of his, which will not be possible to depict in words, but every human being will feel its sweetness and it will seem to him, as if, somebody has voiced what was yet in his own heart, or his long lost treasure has been returned to him.

*Dekhna taqreer ki lazzat ke jo usne kaha
main ne yeh jana ke goya yeh bhi mere dil mein hai*

Look at that delightful speech! That whatever he said
I thought, as if, that that too lies in my heart somewhere.

WIN THE HEARTS! BE THE CONQUEROR OF THE AGE! | 9

In this world of vested interests, where people are only familiar with what it means to identify expediencies and deal in a materialistic way, the following call is certainly unfamiliar, but even now, it has all the power to conquer hearts and marshal the nations of the world.

*Jo dilon ko fateh kar le
wohi faatah-e zamana*

Win the hearts! Be the Conqueror of the Age!

If there is still anything that offers charm and value to human beings trampled by materialism and buckling under the weight of vested interests and desires, it is precisely this power of belief and conviction and sameness of the apparent and the concealed. Although their apostasy marred atmosphere and materialistic education and training have apparently drawn out all the warmth and enthusiasm, and simplicity and liveliness from their heart, and have tried to replace it with such an artificial and mechanical heart that is free from every type of subtle feeling and is devoid of pain and love, but whenever this call strikes their ears, their heart seems to be beating and pulse seems to be moving, and it so appears that had this call been raised with a little more strength, then perhaps, it would have been sufficient to shake them up and bring them back to their senses.

It is the strength of sincerity and selflessness, fear of God and genuine humanity, and the correspondence of word and deed that is being entirely neglected today, rather being trampled and being pushed into extinction everywhere. Present in the world are those who strive, rather burn

themselves up, for the pettiest of the petty things and those who lay down their lives for the most ordinary of the ordinary desires.

Hazaron khwahishen aisee ke har khwahish pe dam nikle

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Desires in thousands of such type,
that o'er each desire the heart shudders.

However, the commodity whose demand was felt the least on the present world map and which was believed to merit no significance in every country, is this very set of real human attributes, upon which depends the wellbeing of societies and deliverance in the Hereafter; and in whose absence entire life has been reduced to 'desire and greed' and 'drinks and music' and the entire world has been reduced to a 'market of wholesale auctions', in which life has become synonymous with death, and death the eventual solution of life. In the couplet below a poet has depicted the entire materialistic world, not some particular individual:

*Zindagi hai ya koi toofaan hai
ham to is jeene ke haaton mar chale*

Is this life? Or is it some fierce storm?
Thanks to this lifestyle, we bid adieu!

The entire issue is that statements be so phrased that the object is achieved and the other person too remains in the dark about the state of the heart and the actual intention. Our purpose ought to be served no matter if it costs somebody's life. We ought to have the complete range of comforts and luxuries, rather pointless decoration and beautification, even if, two square meals a day and necessary clothing is not available to others.

This pure materialistic temperament has overwhelmed the entire world after the Western nations came to power and the period of Islamic

rule declined, and it seems that it has also permeated the global climate. However, the number of years that God has blessed human beings with and the lofty arrangements that He has made for their life and progress is absolutely not the fault here. At fault are these very humans, who are

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bent upon rebelling, and have stooped to the point of disgracing and debasing themselves; who have decided to lead their lives with disrespectful indifference and disregard to the light and guidance of prophet-hood or who in spite of having belief and faith are negligent

Dictionary does not have the word *prophet-hood*. Readers will like to note here that God's chosen messengers can be both angels and men. However, it is customary to refer to human messengers as prophets, and prophets who are also given a revealed book are called apostles. While the institution of apostles (*Risaalat*) is referred to as apostleship, there is no specific word for the institution of prophets i.e. *Nabuvat*. Therefore, we have little option than to refer to *Nabuvat* as prophet-hood. It is a binary term that highly learned translators too have employed in the past.

towards it in practical terms; who want to treat and cure vested interests with vested interests and treat desires by desires; who want to put out the raging fire of sensuality by a more powerful sensuality; who have tried to push man's subtle feelings and his conscience into extinction, and have presumed that by doing so, all the trouble and confusion will end and human life will embrace tranquility; who have mercilessly rejected every cry of protest that the heart has raised and have brutally crushed every tremor in it; and who have slaughtered at the altar of wealth and honor, every form of sympathy, grief, truthfulness, piety, devotion to duty and uprightness known to humanity.

In this jungle of human beings where everybody is possessed by an evil jinn of desires, the very same light of apostleship can show the way, that has taught man to forego rights rather than claim rights; that has given us the teaching: *finding in their breasts no desire for that which hath been given (away)*¹; that has declared manliness to lie in the suppression of

anger and not in giving vent to it; that has commanded mankind to restore relations with those of kin who snap them; that has exhorted man to endure sorrow and remove other people's sorrows; that invites man to the principle of: be the last in receiving benefits and lead in selflessness and

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sacrifice; that has kept family members and relatives behind when awarding benefits, and outsiders always in front; that, in private life and public life, in the darkness of the night and the brightness of the day, while lonely and while in company and gatherings, at every place and on every occasion, has declared maintaining physical and emotional stability and not revolting against these principles of Islam even in the face of any inducement, and any fear and temptation, to be the real jewel and peak of humanity. Whose teaching is that, be served in the least and serve others as much as possible; be generous and munificent as much as possible and avoid beggary and even the thought that somebody should help you; benefit the creation and seek its recompense from the Creator; and make obedience and worship of God and the spread of His religion the purpose of your life, but do not be desirous of its reward from creation.

These principles of Islam are not merely artificial flowers or rosy views for which oratorical eloquence or the fluency of a pen can suffice; for it, self-control, rather self-denial, a lot of determination and uprightness, and a lot of steadfastness and tolerance and more than everything else, humility and repentance and the state of being heart-broken is necessary, because without this, one cannot see any lock of life opening and any knot of the heart untangling.

*Tu bacha bacha ke na rakh ise
tera aa'ina hai woh aa'ina,
ke shikastah ho to 'azeez tar
hai nagaah-e aa'inasaaz mein*

Don't keep saving it, preserving it,

your mirror is that mirror unique;
splintered, broken, it becomes
the most dear in The Maker's sight.

WIN THE HEARTS! BE THE CONQUEROR OF THE AGE! | 13

For this, there is only one rule before each one of us irrespective of the class to which we belong: that we take stock of our lives every once in a while and make an effort to produce sameness between our apparent and hidden; those things in which we believe and have faith only, or principles for which we have presumed that only admiring and praising them is enough, let us honestly commit ourselves to act upon them; and with sincerity and resolve, with the realization of our deficiency and powerlessness, with total confidence on the power and mercy of God, try beginning a new life. It will be a life fully capable of melting hearts that are harder than stone and transforming defiant and evil men into obedient and faithful slaves of God, and compassionate and sympathizing friends of humanity. For this life, then there will neither be need for any advertisement nor for any announcement, this life will in itself be the proclamation of its success and superiority, and on the face of the earth it will demonstrate a way of life that God likes the most.

Human conscience has not become dead, only thick curtains of negligence and materialism have been drawn in front of it, this curtain escapes being slashed because of our lazy pace, cowardice and insufficient reach; and a clean and holy face hidden behind it is unable to reveal itself before the eyes of the world.

The nature of human beings is the same and God's message too is the same, but definitely because of the dark clouds of selfishness, vested interests and materialism, today the whole world seems to be sinking into pitch darkness. However, Muslims still have that torch with them that can dispel this darkness. This torch is the light of God and the messengers He had sent (peace be upon them), which has in every dark period of history

provided illumination for the lost caravan of humanity and has made journeying along the road of guidance and deliverance easy for it.

Reference: 1. V.9, C.59, *Al Hashr*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; A. M. Daryabadi.

A message of 'the sentiment of love' to the present times

Muhabbat ka paigham 'asr-e-haazir ke naam

Among the creations of Allah the Exalted, the most distinguished and the most superior creation is the human being, and in that human being the most superior, the most precious and the most delicate thing is the heart, and a solitary pearl of this heart and its priceless treasure is love.

*Dar kharnam kaa'enaat kardim nigaah
yak daanah muhabbat ast baaqi hamah kah*

I scanned the earth from end to end
and spotted a solitary pearl of love!
The rest was trees, shrubs and grasses
in heaps living and dead.

Eliminate this pearl of love and the whole existence is stone and crust, and all this world is a heap of grass and hay. The distinctive quality of this pearl, this sentiment, of love is that it cannot tolerate too beloveds even for a

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single moment; having become intimate with one it alienates itself from the entire universe; having been beside itself and enchanted with one, it feels frustrated and disgruntled with the whole world; with the value inherent in it, it can buy only one thing and this transaction it can make only once; even when it is in the midst of everybody, it does not bond with anyone; even when having relations with everybody, it does not relate with anyone; it remains free even in shackles and chains; remains enchanted and dead-drunk even alongside one's wisdom and consciousness; it gives no importance to courts great and grand, and very respectfully welcomes the sincere who spend their lives on mats of palm-leaf; in its sight a midnight sigh and a prayer at dawn is superior than a thousand sultanates, and better than a thousand crowns and royal caps.

*Ke bard nabazd shahaan-e zamn-e payaame
ke bakoo-e mae khurdshaan do hazaar Jamm bajaame*

The fakir that I am,
who'd deliver my message,
in the king's benign presence?

That in The Wine-Seller's alley
even a cup of wine is valued,
at two thousand Jamsheds¹.

However, together with all these attributes, so keen is its sense of honor that the shadow of anybody else and even the trace of any other thought is intolerable for it. This sentiment enters the heart only when it finds it

absolutely vacant; no form of flattery, coaxing and cajoling or longing and pining has any effect on it. All it sees is that whether its exclusive balcony, the heart, is absolutely vacant for it or not, whether the pride of the place in it has been tastefully decorated for it or not.

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*Ataani hawaha qabla 'an 'ariful hawa;
fa-sadafa qalbi khaali-yan fa-tamakkana.*

Even before I could know what love really was
His love caught me unawares!
It found my heart free of world,
and made my heart its dwelling.

And when it does arrive, such is that arrival that the doors of the heart are closed for everything else; and the distraction and thought of entities other than Allah is unable to reach even up to its doors, and if ever it does, the ferocity of him there followeth a flame gleaming² is witnessed and verily those who fear God, when an instigation from the Satan toucheth them, they call to mind and lo! They are enlightened³ manifests itself.

For us, the only message of this self-respecting sentiment of love, with a keen sense of honor is: "Leave your 'self' behind and draw near to me. However, first let your perceptive eye see and take lesson, that in the 'curtained enclosure' of your heart what sort of unclean dogs and pigs and what sorts of poisonous snakes and scorpions you have reared, you have dumped the filth of your whole existence and your entire lifetime in this very heart. Which type of filth is it that you have left your heart empty of; of sin and the love of entities other than God which pollutant is it, that your heart is guarded against; which type of atrocity is that whose perpetration you have not deemed permissible on it!?

You piled gold and silver and made heapsof diamonds and jewels in your heart and kept worshipping them with great devotion; your foreheadused to be on the ground and the heart used to prostrate to somethingelse.

*Jo main sar ba-sajdah hua kabhi, to zameen se aane lagi sadaa,
tera dil to hai sanam aashnaa, tujhe kya milega namaz mein?*

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When once in a while I did prostrate,
the earth stirred and thus spake:
your heart is full of an idol's love
what will you in the *Namaz* get?

With folded hands apparently you used to be before God, but in your imagination used to swim the picture of an audience with some other royal. The sight of the worn-out palm mat of the mosque used to evoke memories of Iranian carpets and designer sofas in your heart.

In your greed for power and love for position how many rights did you trample; how many innocent and faultless people did you remove from your way; subjected your own self to how many deceptions and for how long kept your brothers entangled in that fraud; how many delusions of your own making did you take for reality, and with your eyes closed kept walking behind that 'reality', so much so, that it has now brought and abandoned you in such a dumping site of litter and filth, from where you do not know your way back, and there is no true guide with you.

You have through the pathway of *what ye hide in your breasts and what your glances steal*⁴ dirtied the private chamber of your heart in what terrible ways; and after decorating it, on and on, with all sorts of absolutelyunclean thingsyou are feeling delighted!

You have turned your heart into a zoological park and in that you have kept various kinds ofanimals. These animals are live portrayals of

your morals and deeds, your greed after entering the heart has taken the form of a dog, your lust has acquired the guise of a pig, your atrocity has put on the hide of a wolf and your sadism the appearance of snakes and scorpions. In short, which genus and species of these animals, reptiles and arthropods, is there, that you have not arranged for in the zoo of your heart and do not punctually feed it?

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You have made piles of filth in it and wait for scents of musk and amber to spread! Sown thorns and have the expectation that flowers will bloom! You have locked all the doors of your heart but one, and the only door you have left ajar is the door of satisfying carnal desires. You leap at every charming and good-looking thing as though that alone is your biggest desire and ultimate longing, but once you satisfy your desire with it, your manner with your second object of desire is more maniacal and restless as compared to the one before.

*Hazaron khwahishen aisee ke har khwahish pe dum nikle
bahot nikle mere armaan lekin phir bhi kam nikle*

Desires in thousands of such type,
that o'er each desire the heart shudders;
my many longings were fulfilled
but they were yet, far too few.

Then, you try to reflect that how many beautiful and precious moments did you dedicate to your worldly gods and your self-styled lords; what tremendous sentiments of anguish and ardor, pride and submission, sacrifice and selflessness have you wasted over such worthless and ridiculous things that, perhaps, even remembering them must be making you laugh as also weep today.

For the sake of your heart, how many idols did you make and break, how many beloveds did you choose and desert; what all things became

the passion of your heart; what all things brought tears in your eyes in the pursuit of what sort of yearnings and longings did you waste your entire life; for what sort of *frags and earthenware*⁵ did you present the offering of your heart without a hitch; for what sort of temporary and base delights did you put all your capital at stake! Over your heart's ordinary desire and your childish urge what enormous divine favors and triumphs you have

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spurned, that were, otherwise, destined for you!

*Yak lahzah ghaafil bodah am
sad saalah raaham door shud*

Inattention of a moment does deflect
from the path straight, by a century!

You said *At your beck and call*⁶ at every sound you heard; tried out every prescription, followed the advice of every herbalist and quack; considered it your sacred duty to carry out every little suggestion of the self, and for that you remorselessly spent your precious moments, squandered your valuable earnings, generously spent your energies and utilized every potential you had to your heart's content. So then, do you think that the Will of God, God's pleasure and a passport to that Exalted Palace, is so cheap that you need no love and longing for it? But wait, God's verdict goes against it! In order to nurture the love of God you will, first of all, have to cleanse the *Ka'bah* of your heart of all those idols⁷, you will have to suppress your heartfelt desires and, at times, will have to endure the pangs of hunger too⁸, will have to slaughter the 'self' in your very lifetime and will have to go against yourself at every step⁹, will have to develop the strength to trample every incitement and invitation of the self¹⁰, and will have to tolerate, whether with a smile or with tears, a separation from all those things that were your favorite and remained with you all your life."¹¹

If to love 'God the Truth' is our longing, then this alone is the path to take, and desperation of zeal and the lightning-like restlessness of true desire is the first condition of this path and the first lesson of the *Collection of love poems*, that we wish to compose.

Do men imagine that they will be left (at ease) because they say, we believe, and will not be tested with affliction? Lo! We tested those who
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*were before them. Thus Allah knoweth those who are sincere, and knoweth those who feign.*¹²

Notes and references

1. Jamshed, the fabled king of ancient Persia.
2. V.18, chapter 15, *Al Hijr*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
3. V.201, chapter 7, *Al A'raaf*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
4. V.19, chapter 40, *Al Mu'min*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
5. An idiomatic reference to *immaculate dresses and magnificent buildings* usually by pious ascetics, in colloquial Urdu.
6. In compliance of Allah's command to Muslims to perform the Haj, pilgrims from all over the world enter Makkah at the appointed time chanting *At Your beck and call! O Allah! At your beck and call!* The Haj thus prepares a Muslim to say *At Your beck and call! O Allah! At your beck and call!* through his action at each and every command of God.
7. The undertone of every phrase, this point onwards, reminds us of several events. Here it reminds us of the incident of the removal of idols from the Holy Ka'bah, in Makkah, by the beloved prophet Muhammad ﷺ which restored its sanctity as the center of *Belief in the Oneness of God* on earth forever.
8. Reminds us of the persecution of the beloved prophet *Sayyadna wa Habeebna* Muhammad ﷺ and his friend *Sayyadna* Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased

with him, both of who, on occasions, had to tie stones on their bellies when suffering from acute starvation.

9. Reminds us of the remarkable life and times of *Hazrath Ibrahim bin Adham*, may Allah have mercy on him, who transformed from being a monarch to being a Sufi sage; he renounced the glitter and comforts of royalty and led an extremely simple life, so much so, that people did not even usually know that he was once a king. He ruled, around 730 CE, the ancient city of Balkh, a place now near Mazaar-e-Sharif in Northern Afghanistan.

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10. Reminds us of an incident of *Sayyadna Ali Ibn Abi Talib*, may Allah be pleased with him. During a battle being fought in the cause of God, the rightly guided Caliph had spared a polytheist who, in desperation, after being overpowered had spat on his blessed face, because, had he then killed him it would have been to avenge himself. He, may Allah be pleased with him, did not act upon the instigation of his 'self'.
11. Reminds us of the life and highly trying conditions of Prophet Ayyoub, peace be upon him, whose endurance, patience and steadfastness is exemplary. In his vividly chronicled trials Allah the Exalted had, except for his life, withdrawn almost everything he had, but when the mighty prophet, peace be upon him, stood successful in those trials, Allah blessed him with a quality of life many times better than he had previously lived.
12. V.2-3, chapter 29, '*Ankaboot*, The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall.

An excellent parable on Guidance from Allah

Everybody knows the meaning of 'Guidance' and in *Salah* all of us regularly recite *Guide us Thou unto the path straight*¹, but what anyway is the reality of Guidance in human life? One of its best parables was noticed in a record of the sayings of Late *Sheikh* Thanwi², may Allah have mercy on him. He recounts his experience, that, once in my railway compartment a Muslim officer climbed in. The train left the platform. He asked me as to where I was going. I told him the name of that place (probably it was Lucknow or some other city). The moment he heard that, suddenly he got extremely worried. He had by mistake boarded the train that was

steaming away in exactly the opposite direction. I tried to calm him by saying that there is nothing to worry about, alight at the next station and board the other train. In spite of that, the farther the train went, his perplexity and uneasiness and my calmness increased in equal measures. The reason was that though the train was nearer to the station where he was now to alight but it was getting farther from his final destination and, to the same extent, my destination was getting nearer. At

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that time it occurred to me that, in this world, the example of a believer too is more or less the same say the world is a train, and two people have boarded it, the only difference is that one is approaching the destination and the other is moving away from it. When one heads in the right direction, the satisfaction that is derived and the benefits that accrue cannot be obtained by the latter in any way; and this, in fact, is the precise meaning of *Guide us Thou unto the path straight*, and the same essentially is the reality of Guidance in human life.

These are not the exact words of *Maulana* Thanwi, only their sense has been stated here. However, the fact is that it has a lot of material for us to contemplate and think about.

As contemplation will deepen on this reality of *Guide us Thou unto the path straight*, all curtains will be lifted, one by one. The *peaceful soul* (Arabic: *Nafsul Mutma'innah*), for whom there are glad tidings of God's pleasure and heavenly favors, is in fact the fruit of this very Guidance and correctness of orientation. *Verily I have set my countenance towards Him who hath created the heavens and the earth*³ is its exegesis and *Lo! Verily the friends of Allah! No fear shall come upon them nor shall they grieve*⁴ is the explanation and exposition of this very Guidance. Those of our fellow travelers to whom this divine favor is not available, no matter in how much comfort they may be, and goods and chattels they might have, how can they avail that genuine peacefulness which is accessible to the traveler of the right path and the right direction? If these travelers of the world are

drunk to such a degree in their carousing, comfort and luxury, that they have forgotten all about the destination or if they are arrogant and rebellious to such a degree, that in spite of knowing, they are feigning ignorance, then they will come to know of its reality upon arrival at the station; this station is actually that world of the grave where a man has to stay from death until the Resurrection. Over there, when they will be asked to produce their tickets, then except regret and misfortune they will

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not be having anything on them. At one place the words of a Noble Tradition are that, *In the grave, when man will be questioned about his belief in God, religion and the beloved prophet ﷺ, the believer will readily give the right answer and the infidel will say, 'Alas! I do not know'.*

Guidance actually is to have the right orientation, the class of all remaining details comes after that and, in this matter, correctness of faith and health of intention is of utmost importance. First, we should see that there is no adulteration of manifest *shirk*⁵ or veiled *shirk* by any chance in our faith, belief in God and trust in God is not accompanied by belief in somebody else and trust in somebody else; second, that there is no desire for showoff or fame and publicity by any chance in the things we do. The verse *Thee (alone) we worship; Thee (alone) we ask for help*, which is repeated in every *Salah* regularly and without whose recitation the obligation of *Salah* cannot be discharged, is much for the same reason, that we consider all forms of worship and seeking of help to be connected with the Most High Being of Allah, the Blessed, the Exalted, *only* and harbor no doubt of any sort on this score. If we are on the right path and we also have the right realization of this great blessing, then that is a sign which has been referred to as the *peaceful soul*; contrary to this is the condition of those people whose orientation is not right and who have gone astray and are on the wrong path. Now, every person among us should see that what is his condition, and if his condition is good, then how he is offering thanks for this blessing and discharging his duty of a believer in accordance with the level of belief (*Eemaan*) that Allah has granted him. If you read *Surat-ul-*

Faatihah in this light and reflect upon the meaning of *Guidance*, then a lot of realities will be understood.

*I seek refuge in Allah from Satan the outcast.
In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.
Praise be to Allah, Lord of all the worlds.
The Beneficent, the Merciful.*

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*Owner of the Day of Judgment.
Thee (alone) we worship;
Thee (alone) we ask for help.
Show us the straight path.
The path of those whom Thou hast favored;
not (the path) of those who earn Thine anger,
nor of those who go astray⁶.
Amen.*

Notes and references

1. V.6, chapter 1, *Al Faatihah*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; A. M. Daryabadi.
2. *Maulana* Ashraf Ali Thanwi, may Allah have mercy on him.
3. V.79, chapter 6, *An'aam*, Daryabadi Quran Translation, A. M. Daryabadi.
4. V.62, chapter 10, *Yunus*, Daryabadi Quran Translation, A.M. Daryabadi.
5. *Shirk*: Arabic; *i* pronounced as in *shin* not as in the English word *shirk*, meaning: The association of partners with God. [SUGGESTED READING: *Islam ke Teen Buniyadi 'Aqaed* (Urdu) by Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi.

Available at: Academy of Islamic Publications and Research, Darul Uloom,
Nadwatul Ulema, P.O. Box 119, Tagore Road, Lucknow 226001 U.P.]

6. Chapter 1, *Al Faatihah*, Meaning of the Glorious Quran; Muhammad M. Pickthall.

The journey of life

The journey of life sans any companion and guide, and any sympathizer and sincere friend can never be considered complete. A traveler on the path of life stands in need of guidance, of warning, of affection and kindness, of encouragement and sympathy at every inch of the distance; for this important, crucial and long journey he has but to choose some companions, has but to repose confidence in somebody, has but to obey somebody, has but to accept somebody's advice. In his suffering and pain, comfort and relief, calm and satisfaction, indefiniteness and dissatisfaction, in short, at every turn of this journey and in every condition, he acquires

strength through these sincere guides and companions, they soothe his tensions, his suspicions are quelled, and his dissatisfaction is removed; and with a new zeal and confidence he keeps marching ahead along this path. If it were not for these lifelong companions, it would become impossible to live, no pleasure and attraction would remain in life, one would stumble at every step, at every turn one would be in doubt as to what is the right direction. The remoteness of destination and the burden of loneliness, a

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choked heart and bottled-up emotions and thoughts, would freeze and suspend the functioning of the mind, senses, and the faculty of decision making of a human being, and cast a pall of darkness over his eyes, and would make him feel that death is better than this drab and tasteless life.

This precisely is the reality that we denote by the term atmosphere. Atmosphere actually is the name of a few companions in our lives, who happen to be our partners in this journey and march with us in the form of a delegation or a congregation; they stand in need of our help and we stand in need of their help, among them none can become indifferent to anybody, one cannot dictate the other. All appear to be aboard the same boat and gripped with the same concern of reaching the destination, safe, secure and at the earliest.

After the significance and primacy of the final destination, it is this atmosphere only that comes at number two. In other words, after deciding that what direction we will take, what all stages we will cross and what will be the real and final destination? We need to see that the destination of those companions is not per chance any different from ours, instead of Ka'bah they are not probably going to Turkistan. After thoroughly satisfying ourselves on this score, we will have to see that how much commitment do they have for the purpose of this journey, is their yearning true or false, do they even qualify or not for enduring the hardships of this path and settling rights along its course? Just the flowers of this path are

dear to them and they hate and dread the thorns. Or their condition is that which a poet has portrayed as follows:

*Gulshan parast hoon mujhe gul he nahin azeez
kanton se bhi nibaah kiye ja raha hoon main*

The garden worshipper that I am, the flower alone isn't dear to me,
with the thorns too, I am continuously accommodating.

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Hope it is not that, instead of striding up to the *Real Beloved* they have got entangled in the fascinations and exquisite beauty of this long journey in such a way, that now they do not have much concern left about reaching the destination. Hope it is not that, their sentiments and frames of mind, their manner and method happen to be the exact opposite of the demands of the destination and the conditions that apply to this path, and they are totally insensitive to the idea of curbing of passions – suppression of desires, enjoying the thoughts of the destination, and finding a certain delight in the hardships He sends, offering thanks for the favors He grants, realizing their own worthlessness and artlessness, helplessness and fall from grace, misery, poverty and indigence – and are totally unfamiliar with the reality of having pride and confidence in this venerable relationship, and for them its honor and prestige is no more than meaningless words and lifeless principles.

After finalizing the destination, the first need of every traveler on the path of life is the search and quest for such guides and fellow travelers who would fit this standard perfectly and whatever they say they also do. Their life has got to be a fascinating example of sincerity and dedication to God, uprightness and truthfulness, and love and loyalty.

The foregoing prescription is neither the contrivance of some brain nor some theoretical discourse. The Glorious Quran has suggested this very methodology for the believers:

*O ye who believe!
Have respect and consideration for Allah,
and be with the truthful.¹*

A very big flaw of our contemporary society and its very big weakness is to overlook the importance of atmosphere and show negligence towards it in the journey of life.

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For each one of us, regardless of his level and standard, the selection of good guides, advisors and fellow travelers is such a delicate task, that a slight lapse in it can give the entire life a wrong orientation or can create obstacles in it and can entangle a person in different things.

If a man's atmosphere does not happen to be good and the standard of his companions does not happen to be as specified by the Holy Quran and the Noble Traditions – an excellent model of conformity to which has been presented by the Noble Companions and our forefathers – in that case, he has to depend on many things for his intellectual and spiritual nourishment. Study of religious literature, attendance in religious meets and likewise there are other learning options with which he likes to calm his religious sentiment and fill his spiritual void. Certainly, at times these things work wonders and hundreds of examples are there, that some verse from the Glorious Quran, some particular event, some couplet, some book or speech created such a permanent prick in the conscience of a man which could then never vanish and persisted until it had brought about a change in him; but generally this does not happen. The practice of Allah is that, for every task, man has to do all that Allah the Exalted has commanded him to do for it.

This point can be understood by an ordinary example. In the season of blazing summers and hot and dry easterly winds there is a way to get relief from thirst and restlessness, that we take *sherbet* intermittently, make use

of ice; but everybody knows that the benefit of these things will be temporary and man will not find deliverance from the intensity of heat, blasts of scorching winds and thirst; but if he starts living in an air-conditioned home, then for him, as if, there will come about a change in the season itself, rather we should say that immediately his world will change. Public meetings, speeches, books, periodicals – the position of all these things is that they are only a part of this atmosphere, not its sum. An atmosphere can be reinforced through them, they can further expand its

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orbit, but out of these, neither can any single thing substitute for the atmosphere nor can it serve the need that an atmosphere serves.

In the verse of the Glorious Quran cited above, our attention has been drawn towards the quest for a good atmosphere and we have been told to choose the company and friendship of good and truthful people, and undertake this journey of life with them.

Ashigh will be the standard of these companions and guides, so much sooner it will be possible to reach the destination. Of whatever degree will be their belief and conviction, sincerity and selflessness, their yearning for Truth and their fear of God; at whatever level of knowledge of God and whatever stage of being conscious of Him they will be; the extent to which they will be infused with spiritual effect and power, and warmth of belief and conviction; the kind of conviction and awareness they will have of the Being and Attributes of God, and, in short, the degree to which they will have a deep, true and genuine relation with God; that much beneficial and impressionable they will be for others and so much soon we will be able to acquire that *Cherished Pearl*², which, in every age, is considered to be the longing of the far-sighted and the holy, the outcome of all their striving and the singular gain from the universe.

*Har do aalam qeemat khud gufta
nirakh bala kun ke arzaani hanoz*

To both the worlds
You have told Your worth,
raise that worth O Lord
it is still very less!

In this long and dangerous journey of life, beset with disturbances and trials, it is necessary to have an all-around foresight, essential to keep in

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mind and deal meticulously with seemingly petty matters, and the need is to keep an eye on each of our own weaknesses, their removal and control. However, the most basic and important point is the selection of such guides and fellow travelers, and such companions (a) who would prove to be of benefit to us in making this life useful, raising the fortune of this speck of dust, making pebbles the envy of the moon and transforming this unjust and ignorant, sinful and sin-stained man, into a being deserving the prostration and envy of angels, beloved and close to God, the center of His choice and kindness and the focus of His glory, gifts and rewards; and (b) who would not allow us to become unmindful of that most important truth upon which depends the success and failure of man, and towards which in this materialistic age attention is minimum, and which is called conservatism, monasticism and renunciation in this so-called age of 'realistic attitudes'.

That which prompts one to think of the Hereafter, that which reminds one of death³, that which encourages one to die before dying i.e. cross the milestone of desires and leave the stage of the self behind, that which rouses a fascination for Heaven and creates a lasting, true and real desire to meet God, that which inclines man to lay down his life and heart for Him, and get intoxicated, rather get dead-drunk in His thoughts, and that which invites man to accept for Him every type of trouble and every sort of danger cheerfully and with happiness— that atmosphere is such an indispensable necessity for each one of us, ignoring which is like gambling

with our life or consigning it to uncertainty, lack of confidence, doubt and suspicion, and walking along a path about which it is difficult to say that where and when it will end and where it will lead its traveler.

The search and quest for that atmosphere should top the list of all the other engagements and needs of our life. God's earth is not devoid of the pious, His truthful and sincere slaves were born in every period and every place, and as long as He wills this continuity will remain intact. His

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chosen slaves even today possess the same spiritual effects and even today they can deliver the same benefit to us, and in this journey of life they can even now be relied upon. However, true yearning and thirst is the condition.

Everything depends upon yearning; if we do not have the yearning then let the angels descend from the heavens, even they will not be able to benefit us. Correct perception of the delicate nature of life and the importance of atmosphere, is such a gateway that through it we can enter a good atmosphere and lead the journey of life under the shade of God's succor and mercy. I wish that this realization could develop in us and we were able to collect our strength and turned all our attention towards this important matter, and at no time became oblivious about it.

Notes and reference

1. V.119, chapter 9, *At Tawbah*, Arabic to Urdu Translation: Syed Muhammad Al Hasni.
2. The love of Allah the Exalted for His slave.

3. The expression used here by the author is *Haazimul lazzaat* (Arabic); meaning: A thing that ruins delights and feelings of great excitement i.e. death.

The real gateway to success!

Profitable knowledge and righteous work, are two such pillars or, in more appropriate words, two such wires of Islamic life that unless they join, the picture of a true Islamic life cannot be pieced together at all. An exact faith and every act in accordance with it, is that axis around which the entire Islamic system is rotating. If knowledge is deprived of action, it

has no worth and utility, likewise, if action is devoid and bereft of profitable knowledge then it is ignorance and waywardness in precise.

The high frequency with which '*such as have faith and do righteous deeds*' has been repeated again and again in the Glorious Quran, serves to thoroughly instill in a man's heart the notion, that, until he will not possess both these qualifications he will not be able to meet success.

Alas, both these things that once were inseparable are now getting increasingly separated from each other. If somebody is a scholar he does not feel the need to work, and if there is a worker he does not understand

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the importance of acquiring knowledge or lays his foundation on wrong knowledge, which is an even more harmful and dangerous thing to do.

The lament of deterioration and inferiority of Muslims is common everywhere and has become a topic repeated by sheer force of habit; but if you look at it closely, its predominant cause is practical deficiency. Many other things that are said in this connection, they too are a consequence of underperformance. To enable Muslims avoid this lapse the definition of *an Islamic deed* is not restricted to just a few rituals, instead it takes into its orbit every walk of life e.g. a Muslim has been offered inducement in Islam to work hard, to engage himself in trading and to benefit others; and if he does not act upon it, then it means that he is not practicing his religion properly. He wrongly trusts somebody, stoops to sycophancy and hurts his own self-respect, which means that he has not properly understood the spirit of his religion or having understood, does not practice it. If you look in this light, then at the bottom of most problems this inconsistency between knowledge and action will become clearly visible.

This inconsistency of knowledge and action makes so tremendous a difference in realities that because of it many apparently alive humans are characteristically dead, many who are seen as blessed with Guidance are wayward, and many of the successful are disappointed and utter failures.

If you see in the light of their knowledge, the level of most people will appear to be better, rather, at times, their level will appear to be very high; and if you see in terms of deeds, you will find such dark and deep nadirs wherein as far as the eye can see there is darkness, nothing but darkness.

This however describes such a situation in which not even a ghost of an action is there, and if there is light, it is like the glow of a firefly in the pitch dark of a rainy night. However, this observation does not relate to every

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type of knowledge and action, every type of knowledge and action is not acceptable in the sight of Allah the Exalted. Only profitable knowledge and righteous action are implied here; in other words, knowledge that leads man to God and action that is up to the mark on the touchstone of *Shariah*.

Several such things come in our life that we always keep in sight and in our opinion they have the status of a principle and standard. However, if the standard that remains before us is: 'what is the ratio between our knowledge and action', then perhaps our reality would soon dawn upon us, and this very discovery is the actual gateway to reach God.

He who recognized his own self, verily he recognized God.

Our
passage through
dismal
atmospheres

It is an incident from the recent past, that in a certain area a vicious epidemic broke out and terror and confusion began spreading rapidly among people. In that condition a visibly shaken gentleman visited a God-fearing sage and began to give vent to his anxiety and apprehensions. The sage gave him an examining look and said, 'After all, what is there so much to worry about, the horse has not broken loose or has it?' He actually meant to say that if the reins of the horse are in your hands and Allah the Exalted is seeing this and everything is happening in accordance with His Holy will, scheme of things and wisdom, He is also the Merciful, also the Knowledgeable, He is also the Wise, also the Able, so then, what is there to worry about, to feel anxious and to get disheartened?

The gentleman states that, 'That terse response was an eye opener and it felt like all the heaviness has been taken off the heart!'

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For our present circumstances, problems and difficulties, dangers and anxieties, this is such a miraculous cure and a *luminous hand*¹ before which the grimmest of the grim clouds of hopelessness cannot stay for a single moment; and before which, mighty defense strategies and preparations and material resources and equipment appear to be utterly insignificant and ineffective. This is the power of *His affair, when He intendeth a thing, is only that He sayeth unto it: be, and it becometh!*²— after which one cannot even imagine of any delay in the circumstances to change, rather for a revolution to come about in the earth and the skies. However, in order to attract the attention of this power towards us and earn its support, two things are required the most, first thing, *Confidence in Allah* and second: *Relation with Allah*. In Allah the confidence that He will not waste us, will not impose any cruel and tyrannical government upon us, will protect us from ignominy and slavery. The Glorious Quran says: *Is not He best Who answereth the distressed when he calleth unto Him and removeth the evil, and hath made you the successors in the earth? Is there any god along with Allah? Little ye reflect!*³ At other places it says: *And*

your Lord hath said: Call unto Me, and I shall answer your prayer. Verily those who are stiff-necked against My worship, anon they will enter Hell disgraced⁴ and: We are nigher unto him than his jugular vein.⁵

At one place the words of a Sacred Tradition are: *(God says,) I am the way my slave conjectures I am.⁶*

Another Tradition says: *If a bondsman trusts his own policies, and on the strength of his own intellect goes on making a way for himself, in that case, Allah the Exalted keeps no concern with him. And to give the exact words of the Tradition: He does not care in the least that to which valley he went and perished.⁷*

This is not restricted to only a few verses and Traditions. The entire Quran and the Traditions are full of references about the importance, the

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blessings and the effects of having Confidence and Trust in Allah, and with threats on doing the contrary; and so much emphasis has been laid upon it, that after Belief in the Oneness of God and Apostleship, its importances singularly appears to be the most.

The second thing is *Relation with Allah*, which is an inseparable part of that *Confidence*, rather it will be more appropriate to say that in the absence of a *Relation with Allah* the state of *Confidence in Allah* too is not possible to attain. Till the time that *Relation with Allah* is not set right, intention is not good, deeds are not evaluated, and a relation of love and fear is not developed with Allah, until then, how can one have confidence on Him and total belief in His covenants?

However, one thing is beyond doubt, that the most prominent manifestation of *Relation with Allah* is in the form of *Confidence in Allah* and its marvels reveal themselves in what comprises the heart of that relationship.

If we have to estimate the extent of *Relation with Allah*, then we should find out that how much is the portion of *confidence and conviction* included in it, and what is its strength and its level. This alone is its most excellent measure, the most profound indicator and the most exalted that it can be.

When Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, had set forth towards the *uncultivable valley*⁸, the first question that Sayyedah Hajirah, his wife, had asked him was, 'Has Allah the Exalted given you this order? And when she came to know that He indeed had; in a very satisfied manner then, rather in a manner laced with much pride and confidence, she had said, 'In that case He will not waste us'.

When Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, and his fellow travelers were

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pushed to the shores of the river⁹ by the blood-thirsty army of Pharaoh and apparently no possibility of escape was left; at that time, with what confidence and with what love Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, had said: '*by no means, verily with me is my Lord; He shall show me the way*'.¹⁰

And, during the Battle of Badr when Muslims began to backslide and the threat became too obvious, that their tiny contingent (which was the last and only ray of light for all humanity and all ages) might get drowned in the thick of the battle. The beloved prophet ﷺ supplicating with what grief, what confidence and what relation and anguish, had spoken the following words: O Allah! If this contingent too gets annihilated then who will remain to worship Thee?

In all of these three, most significant and unusual, events, *Relation with Allah*, conviction and confidence, and love and anguish are so manifested, that none of them can be viewed separately from the other, and these are the very elements after whose appearance a human being's relation with the Creator of the universe and the Causer of the causes is established in

such a way, that any external power and agitation, and the toughest of the tough trials cannot then weaken it.

Apart from this, to attain the state of *the peaceful soul* there is no other means better than these two things, and to cleanse the heart of its anguish, dread, frustration, defeatist bent, low spirits and delusions and distractions, there is nothing else that acts faster.

The Glorious Quran clearly states *Lo! In the remembrance of Allah hearts do find rest.*¹¹ And: *And whomsoever putteth his trust in Allah He will suffice him.*¹²

Half-heartedness, hopelessness and anguish are, in fact, such imaginary clouds that gather over the heart due to, ill will in the heart, sins and an

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absence of *Relation with God* or due to a weakness in that relation; externally they often have no reality. After focusing the heart on the thoughts of One God and after living in the consciousness of His Omnipotence and extensive Mercy, these clouds begin to disperse on their own and the mirror of the heart begins to glitter with rays of hope and certainty. Together with the darkness, all formidable scenarios, illusionary shapes, anxieties and wrong views that had taken root, and suppositions that had transformed into realities and were troubling the heart, begin to disappear like bubbles, and the depth of the heart and its external surface get purged of it completely.

This relation and confidence is, equally, a solution to our problems, a key to our success and a cure for our fear and grief, a medicine, a weapon, a means and an end.

There is no need to go to any far off place for it, it should be searched in the secret confines of the heart; in this very flowerbed does this bud

blossom and in this very garden it is found. Only that door of the heart which is lying locked since long and behind which there is nothing except dirty things, worms and insects, needs to be opened, and it needs to be purified and illuminated with the light of God.

*Tu zaghuncha kam nadmeeda
dar-e dil kusha be-chaman dara*

Don't take the form of a dormant bud
that makes the heart its habitat,
make my heart a primrose path
and step out into this lovely place.

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Notes and References

1. One of the miracles of Prophet Musa, peace be upon him; his hand used to shine by Allah's leave.
2. V.82, chapter 36, *Yaseen*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
3. V.62, chapter 27, *An-Naml*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
4. V.60, chapter 40, *Mu'min*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
5. V.16, chapter 50, *Qaaf*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
6. Sahih Bukhari, Book of Oneness of God, Chapter: Pronouncements of God, Topic: Words of instilling fear of God in the soul.

7. Ibn Majah; Chapter: Trust in God and conviction.
8. Description of Makkah in the Glorious Quran.
9. The Nile, Egypt.
10. V.62, chapter 26, *Sho'raa*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
11. V.28, chapter 28, *Ar-Ra'd*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
12. V.3, chapter 65, *At-Talaaq*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.

The way
to produce
character!

There is no doubt that the most pressing need of our people today is character, and this is such an accurate diagnosis of the disease, arriving at which constitutes the most difficult and delicate job in providing treatment and therapy to an individual, and an even more complicated and tough job in providing treatment and therapy to a nation and country.

Today our country is not short of anything, God has blessed it in every way. First of all let us take education. After foodstuffs, if there is a need towards which man turns his attention on priority, then that is education. This advancement of knowledge and development of skills, as compared to the past has now become very common, and in some states and cities of our country its ratio has undoubtedly increased. Centers of higher education and technical education dot the entire sub-continent. In universities, admissions of students are on the rise with every passing day. The same promising conditions prevail in industry, trade, social work, welfare activities and our developmental plans. Our country is more

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developed than many of its neighbors and now it has also joined the fraternity of atomic powered nations. However, we should admit with regret, the fact, that alongside these educational and constructive advancements, there has been a prominent decline in our individual and national character, and its signs are conspicuous in every walk of life, and its consequence is that our masses are not getting their due benefit of these things; and weakness of character, starting from the four walls of a home, to school and college, shop, factory, private and public organizations, is being felt everywhere; and the irretrievable loss it is inflicting on the country is now no secret.

Now the question we face is that how to produce character? The thing that our universities, centers of broadcasting and publication, our powerful press, our politicians, our judiciary and administration are unable to produce and who are not finding the end from where to begin this work, and knock at the door of the flagging, sleeping, heart of man and give it the

right orientation; how are we to produce that thing with our limited resources and capabilities?

However, respected readers, the answer to this question is easy because it has no other answer except one i.e. it is a lock that has only one key and without this key no power, intellect and human capability can open it.

This key is the fear of God and belief of accountability before Him.

No doubt today our people need to develop character, but this is only a good diagnosis of the disease and it is commendable. Its treatment, however, is possible in only that one condition when all resources of education and training, broadcasting and publication, and public relations are focused on one objective: That, we have to produce in our people such a sentiment of fear of God, sense of responsibility, belief of accountability in the Court of God, and truthfulness and trustworthiness, that would

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never abandon it, be it darkness, be it light, private life or public life.

The difference between the approaches of prophets and apostles sent by God and philosophers and thinkers of the world is only so much that the prophets, before worrying about the dwelling, worry about the dweller. Their interest is, that the human being who will live in it, what kind of a person he is? What kind of morals does he have? What kind of character he bears? How much integrity and truthfulness is there in him? Does he fear God or human beings like himself? Does he tie his fate to God or to things created by Him? They determine the purpose of an education before deciding its content; they rectify the intention before the act; reform the unit before reforming the group; ensure the fitness of a man's brain and heart, before the fitness of his body and dress; and make arrangements for the everlasting home, before they turn towards a transitory world. Now, let us reflect that a human being possessing ideas like these will be having what sort of character?

Sayyadna 'Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, is the second rightly guided Caliph of Islam and his name shines in world history by the title of *Farooq-e-A'zam*. I shall present before you here, one of his famous incidents so that we may get an idea of what we should do to produce character.

It was a habit of Sayyadna 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, that early in the morning, before day-break, he used to patrol the city and look for tell-tale signs that, per chance, no atrocity and dishonesty is being done and nobody's rights are being usurped anywhere. Once, while walking through an alley, an extraordinary conversation struck his ears. A mother was speaking in a suppressed voice to her daughter, 'O daughter, before it is day-break get over with mixing water in the milk! Quick!' The daughter replied, 'Have you not heard the announcement of *Ameer-ul-mu'mineen* (Title for a reigning Caliph) that water must not be mixed in milk'. The

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mother said, '*Ameer-ul-mu'mineen* must be sleeping in his home comfortably, where is he looking at us over here?' The daughter said, 'he certainly is not looking at us, but God is watching us!'

'*But God is watching us!*' This precisely is the feeling and conviction that can produce the right character in us, such character, that would remain unmoved by the biggest of the big bribes, the biggest of the big benefits and the toughest of the tough trials.

Once this conviction develops in man, he remains sure-footed in every test and trial, and now time has arrived to write this history not by the pen but by action, an exceptional incident of this category is preserved in the history of integrity and character.

When Muslims captured the Sultanate of Iran, at that time during one of the last clashes, a Muslim soldier got hold of the invaluable crown of Shah Khusro, which was too dazzling to look at and its cost too was not easy to estimate. The rank of this slave of Allah was no higher than a common foot-soldier and at the time that he found it there was no eye-witness. However, without a moment's vacillation he brought it covered in a shawl to his reporting officer or commander and entrusted it to his custody. The commander, impressed by that man's honesty, asked him his name. The reply he gave to that, is to this day the crowning glory of history and it is worth engraving on the pure tablet of one's heart.

He said that, *He for Whom I have done this work, knows my name.*

That was the character of an honest and faithful man and this is the character of a humble soldier and the third instance being presented before you is that of the Sovereign of the Muslim State itself, who history remembers by the name of *Ameer-ul-mo'mineen Sayyadna Umar bin 'Abdul 'Aziz.*

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The incident of *Sayyadna Umar bin 'Abdul 'Aziz* is recorded in several books of History, that he used to process official papers in the light of an oil wick or an oil lamp (as was the custom those days). Once the messenger of a provincial governor brought official papers for him. It was night time. 'Umar bin Abdul Aziz came out, studied the papers, when he was through with it, the messenger enquired about some domestic matters, the moment *Sayyadna Umar bin 'Abdul 'Aziz* heard that, he immediately extinguished the lamp with a light blow. The messenger asked the reason, upon which 'Umar bin 'Abdul 'Aziz replied, 'Wealth of Muslims is not there to be spent over conversations about 'Umar's domestic life.'

These few incidents have been presented simply to give us an idea that in order to produce character what sort of change is needed in a man's mind

and vision, thoughts and ideas, and his aims and intentions; and what we should do to bring about that change?

This is such a class of character, for which not certificates and degrees, rather fear of God, a love for the slaves of God, sense of responsibility, trustworthiness and integrity, sincerity and unselfishness, selflessness and sacrifice, are needed; however, the root and foundation of all these, is fear of God and belief of accountability before Him, and this precisely is the spirit in all the incidents that were cited above.

Today the kind of troubles that our society is suffering from, that neither relates to food and clothing nor to physical health, nor to the mental faculty alone; these troubles are the produce of a heart in which no fear of God is left, no affection for His creation is left, no anguish for the humankind is left, no sentiment and courage to work purely for seeking God's pleasure is left. This is the actual joint that has got dislocated.

Today the solution of our national issues lies hidden in integrity and

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strength of character, but this sort of character cannot be produced without bringing about a change in the heart and a change in the purpose and intention, this is the unfortunate part. This is the very thing towards which least attention is being paid today. Its result is that every course of action that we adopt is back-firing and everything that we build is breeding destruction. If no thought is given to the reform of thieves, their mentality is not changed, hatred for theft and a sense of regard and consideration of God is not developed in them, then these thieves even after acquiring prestigious qualifications will remain thieves, rather they will become more cunning and organized than before. The same is true for every vice. I shall respectfully request the well-wishers of this country, my friends and Indian brethren to give their undivided attention to the important, basic and urgent task of character building, because if undivided attention is directed towards this task, then not only will these

plans of ours prove to be useful, rather such amazing and gratifying results will be obtained from them which presently we do not even expect; and if we treat it with negligence, as has been going on up to now, then these very things ultimately will become a nuisance for us, and from these very educational institutions and centers that provide services on a national scale, such selfish, opportunist, merciless, man-like beasts will be produced who are difficult to imagine today and towards which possibility some glimpses and signs have appeared right now.

*Chaman ke maali agar bana len mo'afiq apna sh'aar ab bhi;
chaman mein aasakti hai palat kar chaman se roothi bahaar ab bhi.*

If the gardeners of the garden
adopt a supportive stance,
towards springtime,

the garden can even now
witness the return of,
the sulking springtime.

Isn't it
high time?

Religion is a very vast term. It implies, a procedure for leading life, the etiquette of inhabiting the world, temporal needs and spiritual needs, and total conformity with the guidance and teachings brought to us by the noble prophets, peace be upon all of them, in every branch of *The rights of Allah* and *The rights of His slaves*.

This is such an idea of religion over which there is no conflict. People of every school of thought and every seat of learning, and every congregation, and every class are convinced about it, but despite this, today we see great division and dissension in the practical life of Muslims. They have divided life into various compartments. About some fields of activity they have given their verdict that they are fields of religion, and with respect to some fields of activity they hold a preconceived notion that they do not fall in the purview of pure religion. For example, to construct a bigger mosque next to an existing mosque, to continuously perform Haj after Haj, to spend thousands and lakhs of Rupees on assemblies of

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Meelaad (birthday celebrations of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ), rather sometimes, to squander money remorselessly on 'Aqeeqah¹, *Qurabani*² and weddings, constitutes religion in precise for them; but in order to revive religion, for protecting and aiding religion, for the perpetuation and conservation of religion, if some collective initiative is taken, then, they consider spending their time, their labor and their money over that to be almost totally futile. Proposals for religious *madarsahs* and religious institutions, organizing programs for the spread of Allah's message and its publication, they reluctantly, somehow or the other, understand; but if somebody starts talking about organizing Muslims and their political consolidation and puts forth its ways and means before them, they think that such discussions do not fall under the purview of religion and their heart and mind does not accept that they waste their support, time and effort, and finances on it.

In comparison to this, the right conception of religion or in other words the right religious temper is that, whatever be the need of religion, whenever it may arise, must be fulfilled; and instead of dissension and confusion in this regard, that sort of solidarity, practical unity, order and discipline, and obedience should be exhibited which was the distinction of the Noble Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and is the manner of true Muslims, and which Sa'd bin M'aaz, may Allah be pleased with him, had translated in front of the beloved Prophet ﷺ in the following words:

By Allah! If you will lead us even up to Al-Bark in Ghamdaan (a place far away) we shall throughout keep in step with you; and by Allah! If you will lead us even into the sea, we shall enter it along with you.

What can be holier than a mosque and more blessed than the Haj, but if needlessly somebody builds a second mosque close to where one mosque already exists or shunning all obligations, goes about spending his entire wealth on Haj, then that will not be called a religious deed, even if its

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façade be hundred percent religious. Its only reason is that religion is an aggregate and is established on a system. Our children keep going without religious education in increasing numbers, riots after riots break-out, and blood of faultless Muslims be spilled in them as though it was worthless; to eliminate and mutilate their religious identity and to make them unproductive, harmless, paralyzed, sycophants, devoid of conscience, full-fledged conspiracies be rife on all four sides; at such a time, to construct mosques, offer prayers, needlessly perform Haj after Haj and bring gold from there, and exhibit our wealth by making the most of weddings and marriages and other happy occasions, will neither benefit our religion nor our world. Construction of magnificent mosques where there is no need for them and performance of supererogatory Haj at the expense of obligations, even if accompanied by the right religious sentiment and the intention to earn reward, is patently wrong. Leave

alone the attitude that we have adopted. Is this the same *goodly loan* that God has, in the Glorious Quran, demanded from Muslims again and again? The way we handle our religious and *milli*³, and political and collective matters, from that at least it appears (we seek refuge of Allah) that we want to bribe Allah to serve our purpose. If it is not a bribe then what else it is? Built a mosque, that is more than enough, all past and future sins forgiven! Started *amadrash*, roped in a *Moulvi Saheb* from somewhere and lodged him in it, that is more than enough, relax! A few Rupees have been doled out to the representative or collector of donations of some *Madrasah* and that too after bothering him a lot, making him run back and forth and, sometimes even, after humiliating him. Now there is no need to do anything, no need to ponder over anything, no need to solve any religious and educational problem of Muslims.

However, for tax evasion, obtaining licenses and permits, and, availing facilities and acquiring a grip over favorable environments to further our business interests, and for appeasing those people from whom, even if in the distant future, some concession, ease or monetary gain is expected

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both our wallets and our safes are entirely at their disposal; and with our body and soul we extend to them a red carpet welcome.

This state is definitely not the state that Allah and His apostle ﷺ demand. The spirit of religion and the demand of religion is as follows:

When it is said unto you *march forth light and heavy and strive hard with your riches and your lives in the way of Allah*⁴, march forth. That is to say, for whatsoever need of religion the call is raised, one should promptly rise for it, be it the spread of Allah's word, *madrasah*, political organization of Muslims or some industrial and commercial scheme or the establishment of a permanent fund to solve difficult and complicated problems of Muslims or the issue of the Urdu language or the question of children's

education, elections and voting, in short, everything that relates to the perpetuation and protection of Muslims and Islam is covered in this fragment. Only the rule for its scheduling will be, that at what time which need is more urgent, it is a job that relates as much to a sound mind, wisdom and reading of situations, as to the overall condition of the community and leadership. It is also our duty that we try to figure out as to what is being demanded and when, what step should be taken in what situation, what do circumstances call for and clearly signal? If we sincerely employ this sound mind, wisdom and the ability to read situations with which Allah the Exalted has blessed every human being, then all problems will be resolved automatically and we will be able to understand every issue. After all, when our mind functions very well in trade, commerce and other similar fields, and our intellect works superbly that at what time what work we should do, somewhere we spend so lavishly that people who see us are taken by surprise, sometimes extracting even a single *paisa* (one hundredth of an Indian Rupee) from our pocket is difficult, the reason for it is that we know very well that whatever we are spending today, tomorrow we will recover many times more than that in the form of net profit. The entire life itself is the name of necessity and need. When we

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are thirsty, we drink water, we do not start having food; in hunger our first concern is food, next is water; in stomach ache we do not take pills for headache, we take medication for the specific gastric condition only. So much for necessities. The plight of needs is that, at times, to work is the need but considering our general disposition we give preference to rest. We act this way because after that we have to take up a more critical and important job, and therefore the intervening rest, in which a little time is apparently lost, is not disagreeable to us. Apart from this, depending on whether we are feeling hot or cold, our frames of mind and physical conditions also keep changing. However, in the matter of religion and for bringing our community and *milli* issues under control, we never take the trouble of even pondering over what presently does the *millath* need, hope it is not, that our effort, our money, our mind and intellect, and

strength and capability is being spent in the wrong place and going waste or merely because of incorrect orientation and a flaw in assessing the need it is hurting our interests, instead of serving them!

In our daily life, if in order to protect ourselves from cold weather we wrap ourselves in a quilt or blanket in the evening, we throw it off in the morning immediately, because this is the very demand of morning routines and weather conditions. However, in our political and community life we have wrapped ourselves in such a blanket that does not relieve us nor we are able to release it. Be it the chill of the night or the sweltering heat of the noon, we do not feel the need to take-off this cloak and if somebody encourages us to do so, we get upset. As a result, even in those issues that are as clear and evident as the proverbial sunny day and even in those manifest realities about which no honest and sincere human being should have any doubt or disagreement, this blanket or cloak does not cease clinging to us or else we do not let go of it. Without any religious sanction, we are imprisoned all by ourselves in compartments that we have ourselves built and carved, and if somebody invites us to something outside of these compartments, some voice strikes our ears, then that

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voice seems very unfamiliar, alien, and at times dubious and suspect, and sometimes harmful and lethal to us. To the extent that each one of us is entangled in his fantasies, that much distant and deprived he is from understanding circumstances, timely and wise decision-making and moral courage.

We have perhaps decided for ourselves that we shall keep religion like a subordinate unto us and shall say *At your beck and call** when it calls us until it will support our temperament. [*Please refer to note 6, page 20, if necessary.]

Perhaps we have decided for ourselves that we have to, forever, adhere to that signature lifestyle of Indian Muslims which they have been following

since the last many years i.e. permanently reconciled to: bad to worse circumstance and every type of ignominy or co-existence; so that our livelihood, our pocket, our stomach and belly, our business and commerce, and our personal or at the most group interests remain safe. However, after relegating religion to our subordination do we expect to keep God pleased? And for the safety or guarantee of our commerce and standard of living will this lifestyle be of any help to us, which is contemptible according to the Glorious Quran and is abject and worthless in the eyes of the worldly also, and which some people interpret as hypocrisy, sycophancy, lack of conscience, selfishness; some people as insensitiveness and lack of wisdom and as a most serious indiscretion shown in the interest of Islam and Muslims?

Isn't it high time that affluent Muslims bid farewell to this wrong lifestyle, which has left the Muslims of India embarrassed and humiliated in their own eyes? Today, in this crowded world where those who have no belief in Allah, His apostle ﷺ and the accountability of the Hereafter, are easily able to raise enormous funds for their political and national needs; Muslims, thanks to their naive affluent are facing such a disgraceful and

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ridiculous situation which is neither easy nor pleasant to portray, this is such a tragedy of our national life and religious vision for which words are not enough and dwelling upon which can become a cause of trouble for many.

*Anad ke pesh tu guftam gham-e dil tarseedam
ke tu aazardah shuwi warnah sukhan basiyaar ast*

Your displeasure it is that I fear
and voice not the sorrows of my heart,
otherwise, for narration's sake,
lots is there to narrate.

Notes and references

1. The rite of shaving the head of the new born. Hindi: *Moondan*.
2. The rite of sacrifice of a sheep, goat, cattle or camel on the occasion of 'Eid-al-Azha (proper noun; Arabic; colloquial Urdu: *Baqreed*).
3. The term *Milli* has no equivalent in English. Readers unfamiliar with this term will like to know that *Milli* 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-Ibrahimi*. 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 matters* of Muslims mean matters that concern them by virtue of following the teachings of Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, that have as much been a part of their cultures for over forty centuries as they are a part of their present day society.

4. V.41, chapter 9, *At-Tawbah*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.

Community life and its claims upon us

In spite of a conflict in points of view, which is entirely human and natural, there are some etiquette and claims of community life that we should bear in mind and fulfill at every point of conflict. This is not only the teaching of Islam and an order of *shariah* (Divine law/Islamic Law), it is also the demand of a healthy nature and mankind's popular and accepted moral values, which are referred to again and again in the Glorious Quran by the term 'al-ma'roof' (Arabic) i.e. with goodness; sensibly and sympathetically; according to tradition.

Unfortunately, among us, Muslims, these attributes have been on the decline since a longtime. If we wish to express these attributes in two intelligible points, we can denote them by *a liking for principle* and *the capacity to tolerate*.

Community life of Islam is not the name of mere outward propriety or some kind of technique. In it there is invitation on the one hand to stay

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firm on faith and principle, and persuasion on the other hand to yield to collective decisions and exercise self-restraint also.

In *Surat-ul 'Asr*¹ this very truth has been stated in a very conspicuous and clear manner, Allah the Exalted says: *By the time. Verily man is in loss. But not those who believe and work righteous works and enjoin upon each other the truth, and enjoin upon each other endurance.*[Endurance; meaning: *Sabr* in Arabic].

Sabr is a very extensive word which relates as much to *The rights of Allah* as it does to *The rights of His slaves*. Its usage is appropriate for various settings. To keep away from sin and hold the reins of the self is *sabr*; to tolerate hurtful comment or to deliberately retract from a position of

strength too is *sabr*; to avoid criticism and fault-finding is *sabr*; to act against one's temperament and habits too is *sabr*. In short, *sabr* has a thousand aspects and everybody, by being a little alive to situations, can feel that on which occasion it is necessary for him to exercise *sabr*.

Readers totally unfamiliar with Arabic/Urdu would like to know here that, in addition to the above, dictionary gives the following meanings of *Sabr*: 1. Endurance 2. Forbearance 3. Patience 4. Self-restraint 5. To submit to the Will of God and 6. To resign to one's fate.

How much forbearance and tolerance is required in community life, especially in tasks of the good and prosperity of the *Millath* (Please refer note 3, page 55, if necessary), service and support to Islam, and in humanitarian initiatives, can correctly be guessed by those very people who have had an exposure to it. However, even by keeping before himself, the ups and downs, difficulties and complexities of the limited community life of a home and neighborhood, every individual can have an idea of it to some degree or the other.

The point to note is, that amidst complicated issues of community or
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public life, what should be our behavior with each other?

Every person amongst us possesses certain signature sentiments and opinions, not only his way of thinking and temperament, rather his accent and manner even is different from others. When this is an accepted reality and a law of nature, then we should take it for granted from day one, that after stepping into community or public life, this conflict of points of view will arise at almost every step and we will have to encounter it again and again.

A limit of this forbearance and tolerance too has been determined by Islam. Reconciliation and cooperation, toleration and restraint are permissible in which situations and in which situations they are not

permissible; what is that orbit within which we should not deviate even by a hair's breadth from our stand or our school of thought; in which place we should hold our ground and in which place we should not? For all these things the Glorious Quran has given us the rule of *enjoin upon each other the truth*. Wherever the risk is that justice and truth, principle and basics, and fundamental truths and realities, might get hurt, at such places we should remain so firm-footed on our stand that no pressure or inducement or fraud is able to shake us. However, if we feel that as a result of this conflict, the danger is not to these basic principles and truths, but the interest of the *millath* might get hurt, then we should not have the slightest hitch in changing our stand and course of action, even if it be detrimental to our own interest.

On this issue, *Sayyadna 'Ali Karam Allah Wajhu's*² famous incident is a beacon of light for us. *Sayyadna 'Ali*, may Allah be pleased with him, kept up his attack against an infidel wrestler till the time that he was sure of the fact that he was defending a just cause, but the moment the wrestler spat on his face, he naturally flew in to a rage; but that same anger made him realize that now if he killed him it would be for his own ego. So he spared

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him saying just this, 'First I was retaliating for a just cause, but if I retaliate now, that will be for my 'self', therefore I spare you'. These borders or orbits of justice and ego we will often see merging and getting jumbled in our community initiatives. However, the fact is that these demarcating lines neither merge nor get jumbled. On the contrary, because of a dearth in our wealth of belief³ we are not able to make out that line of demarcation very clearly.

If we simply keep in view the following verse and make it a hallmark of our life and struggle: *it may happen that ye may hate a thing which is good for you, it may happen that ye love a thing that is bad for you*⁴; then starting from our ordinary domestic disputes and day-to-day matters,

the whole lot of highly contentious and political issues can be resolved amicably.

Conflict takes an ugly turn only when interests clash with interests. If we remove this *interests* factor from clashes, then all these conflicts will automatically disappear which are eating the *Millath-e-Islamiyah* from within like weevil and have become the biggest obstruction in its reform and control.

Spotting good qualities in others is an art and acknowledging them generously, the bigger art. After entering any practical field we need to hone our skills in this art, so that the roads of teamwork can be smoothened as much as possible. There is no doubt that right now the entire Islamic world is prey to these conflicts, but that oppressed *Millath* of India which is in the grip of common good, in such a way, that to differentiate anything in it is unimaginable; where all parties and organizations, dailies and periodicals are aboard the same boat, and all are being driven by the same stick; where religious and political leaderships have the same issues before them; and where the work of enlightening the new and fresh leadership and the *Millath* about new roads and new

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destinations requires unlimited amounts of tolerance, uprightness and broadmindedness; just there, individual and personal differences, and disparities of tastes and temperaments, also absence of team building and team leading skills, disunity among individuals of different capabilities and qualifications, extremism in fleeting and sentimental issues, the habit of not discussing anything, one's own opinions, one's own decisions, rather more than necessary confidence on one's own desire, one's own taste, and one's own temperament, the attitude of ignoring other people's opinions or regarding them as not worth the consideration, and assuming one's own viewpoint to be no less than an eternal truth, are such weaknesses of our community life that are now as manifest as the

proverbial sunny day, and they are causing immense harm to the extremely important tasks of the *Millath*.

This precisely is the disease from which, more or less, all of us are suffering. All of us sub-consciously think that we hold the final picture of reality and the actual knot of the problem, and the other person is at a loss to understand this issue better than us or give an opinion better than ours; and this, very much, is the basic mistake that has always harmed community linked initiatives of Muslims.

Evaluating ourselves before evaluating others, is the easiest way to meet those claims of community life that we keep trampling regularly. This course of action is not only for community workers, instead it is necessary for every believer and, to be precise, a claim that Islam and our belief in it have upon us.

Notes and references

1. Chapter 103, *Al-'Asr*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
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2. The words *Karam Allah Wajhu* meaning: may Allah's Kindness be upon his face on the Day of Resurrection, are suffixed as a mark of honor exclusively after the name of *Hazrath 'Ali ibn Abi Talib*, may Allah be pleased with him. The blessed Caliph never turned his face towards anything forbidden in his entire lifetime, so much so, that he was cautious not to turn his face downwards and look at himself below the navel.
3. The English word *belief* is not used here in the general sense of its dictionary meanings, it is used to convey the meaning of the Urdu/Arabic word *Eemaan* i.e. belief in the articles of Islamic faith, specially the Oneness of God, Apostleship and the Hereafter, among others, accompanied by righteous action which compliments and endorses that belief.

4. V.216, chapter 2, *Al-Baqrah*, The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall.

A simple way to cultivate belief*

*For the sense of 'belief' here, please refer to note 3, page 61, if necessary.

Allah the Exalted has described religion as very easy and practicable for every human being. He has undoubtedly fixed classes of belief (*Eemaan*) and the diversity that He has kept in those classes is not equal to, it is rather greater than, what we see in this world, that is to say, on the one side are people who are not even aware of the count of the wealth they have and on the other side are people to whom one meal a day is not available. However, ranks of belief are much more exalted and superior than these economic distinctions. Not everybody gets this blessing. Allah the Exalted provides food and clothing certainly to all in spite of this contrast of status and fulfills everybody's needs, but not everybody gets the wealth of belief; and once received, then it is not usurped.

Tabrani has related a marvelous statement of *Sayyadna* Abdullah bin Mas'ood, may Allah be pleased with him, from which we get answers to many things and obtain a lot of light and guidance. He writes: '*Abdullah*

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bin Mas'ood, may Allah be pleased with him, is reported to have said that, verily, Allah the Exalted has distributed morals amongst you the way He has distributed provisions amongst you; and Allah the Exalted gives wealth to him also who He likes, and also to him who He dislikes, and gives belief to him only who He loves; when Allah the Exalted loves some slave of His, in that case, He bestows belief upon him. Therefore, whosoever finds it hard to spend money, and fears in his heart to fight the enemy, and finds it displeasing to rise in the night (for glorifying Allah) he ought to profusely repeat the words: None else is worthy of worship except Allah, and Allah is the Greatest, and all praise unto Allah, and glory be to Allah¹.

In this quote, several important points and facts have been stated. The first fact is that, the way that Allah the Exalted has distributed provisions, in the same way He has distributed morals too.

The second fact is that, Allah the Exalted gives wealth to him even who He dislikes as also to him who He likes, but belief (*Eemaan*) He grants only to him who He happens to love.

The third fact which has been stated is that there are three symptoms of the state of being deprived of the Truth: (a) spending wealth in the way of God may not be easy (b) fear of enemy be so intense that it seems to choke out the breath and (c) to rise in the night be difficult; then the solution advised for it is to glorify God profusely and say: *None else is worthy of worship except Allah; Allah is the Greatest; all praise unto Allah; glory be to Allah.*

So far as the second fact is concerned, in this connection we have only to say that many Muslims among us think in their folly that ease in getting worldly goods is a sign that Allah is happy and pleased with us; they begin to take for its standard, not fear of God and righteous deeds, but an abundance of worldly goods instead. In spite of their serious shortcomings

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and acts of blatant disobedience, if Allah the Exalted grants them wealth and riches, they feel no embarrassment before His Pardon and Kindness and His Generosities ad-infinity, that how disobedient and to what degree negligent we are of Him and to what extent Merciful and Affectionate, Concealer of our failings and Oft-forgiving towards us He is. We do not think that riches are actually something in which the believer and the infidel, pious and sinful, scholar and illiterate, all are equal. Granted, if we get these riches along with belief then that is our good fortune; but belief or faith, Allah the Exalted grants only to him who He likes.

The last useful point is that to understand the actuality of belief Allah has told us three things. Through this every person among us can grade his life, neither he needs any big analysis in it nor very deep thinking and concentration.

- First, spending wealth in the way of God be very hard upon one's natural disposition.
- Secondly, one be afraid of fighting the enemy.
- Thirdly, one be unable to overcome the tranquilizing effect of the night (in other words, standing in prayer in the night and rising for worshipping Allah before dawn be very burdensome for him.)

These are three very simple signs that have been stated and in the same breath its remedy too has been prescribed. All these are diseases of the heart, produced mostly as a result of an excess of wealth, excess of sins and neglect of the counsels and worship of God. For this the most pressing and the first requirement is that the heart be cleansed of all its rust and, in whatever degree, a propensity and capability (a) of receptiveness and (b) to appreciate the subtle, be developed in it. Once this much is achieved,

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then all the remaining things will automatically become easy for us, because as long as the heart is devoid of receptiveness and cleanness, and it is dominated by turbidity and materialism, until then, for anything good to wield its influence over it is difficult. After cleansing of the heart and the development of propensity in it, sometimes by a verse of the Holy Quran, a tradition, an event and a hint, that job is done, which, generally, even large and grand public assemblies on religion, books and speeches cannot do. It is such a switchboard that the moment it is activated, many of our dormant capabilities (that lie covered in various wraps of darkness) will begin to function within no time. At that point, so much propensity for doing good will be produced in us, that upon hearing words of persuasion

to spend riches in the way of God, our heart will back our hearing; that baseless fear of enemies will be expelled from our heart, which used to restrain us from taking up many just and essential causes and which had rendered our heart utterly powerless before the violent waves of materialism; to get up in the night, implore God for each and everything, and bow our head before Him with fear and hope, and servitude and broken-heartedness too will become easy for us. For obtaining all these blessings and honors, a short procedure has been advised, that chant the praise of God profusely and keep your tongue and heart engaged in His glorification.

It does not mean that after chanting some words of glorification three or four hundred times and completing our routine recitations we can be relieved of all responsibility. The very reason that these three symptoms have been described is to make us realize, that the sole purpose of glorifying God is that, it should lead us to the reality of belief – faith to be precise – lead us to conviction. What is this *belief* and *conviction*? Its prominent features have already been stated in this quote.

If our intention is right, then we can at all times make an estimate of what are our chants and glorification of God giving to us? What is the condition

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of our heart? To what degree has sensitivity developed in it?

Across only these three parameters even, if we keep checking the expected changes that must come about after glorifying God, then too, we will be able to estimate quite a lot.

Along with this glorification of God, one is not to sit idle and wait, the need is to take practical steps. Glorification is only to facilitate, to make way, to produce capability and receptiveness. If action is initiated alongside glorification, then this glorification will act like a propeller for that action which will then become easy also, forceful also, blessed also, and

together with these things, there will be produced in it protection against slip-ups also.

This chant and glorification can be done at all times, while walking, moving, lying, sitting, more appropriate is to do the chant after prayers and then continue with it always, meaning to say, as much as possible; because in the Noble Traditions the method of glorifying God that has been told to us is that *your tongue should always remain saturated with chants and words of glorifying Allah.*

This precisely is the way along which succor and the ability to act according to Allah's will and blessedness and strength will be obtained in religious pursuits; and despite remaining engaged in worldly endeavors and purely economic and material occupations, such remarkable cleanness of the heart will be achieved, and propensity and longing will rise to such a level in it which is necessary to guide us to the reality of belief i.e. our faith; it is a way that equally benefits the religious and the worldly, everyone, and be it the *madrasah* or the bazaar, it is useful everywhere. In it is everybody's gain and nobody's loss.

By adopting it, the work of those people who are discharging the duties of
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leading and reforming the *Millath-e-Islamiyah* and inviting mankind to Islam and spreading Allah's word, will make progress, it will be protected and will gain strength, and above everything else, the risk of losing direction and becoming oblivious to our real purpose will be minimized.

People who are work-shy and laid back, will get encouraged by it, their assignments will be expedited, their flaws will be corrected; due to the cleansing of their hearts many new truths will come to light before them, their own reality will be revealed to them and they will come to know as to 'where we were and where we are going!'

By adopting it, such an inlet of belief (*Eemaan*) will open in the hearts of those people who are engrossed in the world and do not keep much concern with religious subjects and do not take much interest in the issue of Islam and Muslims, that they will develop the ability to understand the claims of religion and words of virtue will affect their hearts. If all of us, besides this glorification, keep the aforementioned 3-step test also before us, then we will keep getting an idea of our own reform and self-control and our orientation too will remain correct.

However, honesty of intention and correctness of resolve is the condition; otherwise nothing will be achieved and even if achieved, then too, it would be as good as having achieved nothing.

Reference

1. The *Musnad*, volume 1, page 387; Imam Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Hanbal. (The citation is a *mauqoof hadith*. Such traditions are reported without attributing their text to the beloved prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.)

Misplaced
division

Islam is a complete and comprehensive system of life, among its major and minor things there is a certain coherence, not one of its things, whichever, can be viewed in isolation from the other. To capture a faithful picture, it is necessary that our eye falls on all its virtues at once and we actually feel, that starting from the mighty and great laws of Islam up to its ordinary etiquettes and inducements, there runs such a shared value that can be discerned with a little concentration. Many things, that are considered to be far beyond or far below the system of Islamic thought or considered to be independent of its influence and area of control, are positively under its influence and about each one of them Islam holds a clear and definite opinion. It is a different matter that because of some streak of intellectual fright in us, we be at a loss to present it in sufficient clarity and detail.

Matters of civilization, in this connection, assume more importance. About many aspects of civilization, fairly sensible and educated people think that these are a result of discretions that human beings have exercised and of societal evolution, and that they do not convey anything in particular,

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although, civilization actually happens to be both the reflection and embodiment of beliefs, thoughts, sentiments and ideas. The actual and only reason why we find guidance in Islam for every corner and every field of human civilization and its most developed formats, is that, in the sight of Islam, human life in spite of all its ups and downs, differences and distances, is a single unit. And it is necessary for the right interpretation of Islam that its abovementioned mutual coherence be presented in a very pleasing manner and a blow be dealt to that absurd portrayal which has segregated everything into separate compartments, and even in that

segregation the attitude is so unjust that it bears a close resemblance to the following verse of the Glorious Quran:

*Out of what Allah hath produced in abundance in till and cattle, they assigned Him a share: they say, according to their fancies: 'this is for Allah' and 'this for our 'partners'! But the share of their 'partners' reacheth not Allah, whilst the share of Allah reacheth their 'partners'; evil (and unjust) is their assignment!*¹

Reference

1. V.136, chapter 6, *Al-An'aam*, Translation of the Holy Quran; Abdullah Yusuf Ali.

An
all-inclusive
idea of

religion

The all-inclusive, extensive and practical idea of religion that Islam has given to us is not only acts of worship, rather, all permissible deeds are religion provided they are accomplished with the purpose, sentiment and intention of seeking God's pleasure. It does not say this only for seizing control, instead its demand from us is that all those engagements that we imagine to be our personal work and whose cause we deem to be our personal motive and material gain or physical pleasure, we accomplish with the understanding that they are religion, with a religious sentiment and religious spirit. It is not convinced of the division that some deeds are for Allah's sake and some are people's own engagements and own needs which have no relation with the Will of God and His scheme of things. Instead, as appears in the Glorious Quran, *Unto Him the whole affair shall be brought back*¹, we will have to answer for every deed, every act and interference, influence, authority, expense, possession, use, reorganization and embezzlement. Everything in this world has been created for our eternal success, our Deliverance and to raise our ranks; and our life will be

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able to scale the peak of spiritual perfection only when we will make this world too our religion, and will begin to satisfy our demands and needs, and fulfill our rights and obligations, keeping Allah's pleasure and eternal success in view.

If this world is created for man and man for the Hereafter, then all permissible things of this world, all the legitimate relations, rights and

formalities should be for man's success and triumph, his spiritual progress, his reward and recompense, and to raise his ranks.

To avoid the misuse of resources and rights and, considering that they would become our intercessors in the Hereafter, to put them to right use, is the real spirit of Islam and a fundamental premise to which it invites mankind.

Even our trading is worship, whether it be of a small scale or a large scale, provided the sentiment working behind it is that profit earned through it, will be spent on those who have a right in it and on the needy, and will remain free from even the traces of our parsimony and extravagance. This is the very trading about which a Noble Tradition gives the following glad tidings: *On the Day of Resurrection, truthful and trustworthy Muslim trader will be raised with the martyrs.*²

If we run some big factory and earn a lot of capital, then this too is worship, provided we draw on this capital for fulfilling the needs of the unemployed and the needy, for the publication and progress of religion and for other similar undertakings, and do not spend it only on our own self or on the fun and leisure, and comforts and luxuries of our family members. About this kind of capital, words of a *Sahih* Tradition are: *Clean wealth is far too good for a pious man.*³

If we take healthy food, take up exercise and sports as our hobbies and

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adopt other similar permissible ways and means to maintain our health and mental capabilities, then that too is worship provided our intention and aim be that with better health we will be able to render more service to religion and offer extra worship to God. Regarding this very health the beloved prophet ﷺ has said that, *Wealth is not harmful for the one who abstains from sin and health is better for the abstinent than wealth, and a heart inclined towards goodness is a blessing.*⁴

However here emerges a point that we will have to bear in mind permanently. If there are such poor people also in our neighborhood to whom even too square meals a day and necessary clothing to cover themselves is not available, then our first obligation will be to help them, no matter if this puts a burden on our good food and our hard-earned income; because at that time, service to religion and act of worship will be precisely this.

The teaching of Islam for us is that we ought not to consider our life to be worthless and try to understand that through it we can get a chance to stock more and more righteous deeds. The beloved prophet ﷺ, is reported to have said that, *Nobody from amongst you should yearn for death nor supplicate for it before his hour arrives on its own because his death terminates his deeds; for a believer, his age increases his good.*⁵

In this world, believers spend their lifetimes and so do the infidels, Allah's submissive and obedient slaves, as also those who revolt against His religion. For both, there are some demands and needs of life which they satisfy. From a human or biological point of view there is no difference between them. Whatever difference there is, it is of the differentiation between the allowed and prohibited and the dissimilarity of intentions and purposes.

Allah the Exalted says: *Who hath created life and death that He may try*

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*you, which of you is best in conduct*⁶ *AND say thou: these* on the Day of Judgment, shall be for those alone who in the life of this world have believed.*⁷ [**These refers to 'adornment and clean food' mentioned earlier in the verse.*]

In the use/consumption of these pure and permissible things, both are together, however, since a believer uses/consumes them for his Hereafter,

in the Hereafter they will be reserved for him; and the infidel employs it for his worldly progress, worldly honor and fame, and hence derives its benefit in the world, and as appears in the Glorious Quran *in the Hereafter his will be no portion.*⁸

Words that appear in a Noble Tradition are: *Among the believers, the most perfect is he, who bears the best moral of all and behaves in the kindest and most caring manner with his family members.*⁹

Words that appear in another Noble Tradition are: *If a man desires recompense of the Hereafter through (spending on) his family members, then that (spending) is propitiatory offering for him.*¹⁰

Now, if a believer bows his head in obeisance before the command of Allah the Exalted and goes about leading his married life in accordance with the system He has taught us, within the limits that He has set, and with sentiments of obedience and compliance to His will, then, as a reward thereof Allah the Exalted transforms his entire life into worship and a store unto the Hereafter. And his good conduct with his wife which, so far, was only a demand of companionship and human nature, due to a change of intention, becomes a provision for his eternal journey and a stairway for his spiritual progress.

In each and every corner and portion of our life the instruction that we have been given is that the Hereafter should always remain in our sight. In
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the Islamic system are found complete and comprehensive instructions for the most critical of the critical and even the most private of the private aspects of human life. If we enquire into the details of supplications alone, we will notice that there is no field of life for which we have not been told one supplication or the other. These supplications always remind us of our foremost purpose in life and produce in us a relation with God, conviction about the Hereafter, a longing for Heaven and the fear of torment.

This actually is an announcement of the fact, that the Hereafter has so much importance for us that every act and every deed of ours should be utilized in its preparation. Three sectors, belief (*Eemaan*) in God and conviction (*Yaqeen*) about Him, respect for divinely set limits, and performance of deeds with total belief and hope of rewards, constitute that circle within which each of our deeds can transform into an intercessor of the Hereafter and a means of Deliverance, and we can, even while satisfying our human demands and needs, and settling the rights that are incumbent upon us, earn God's pleasure and ascend to high and exalted ranks.

Allah the Exalted has instructed us that we make this supplication to Him: *Our Lord, Thou createdst not all this in vain. Hallowed be Thou! Save us Thou, from the torment of the Fire!*¹¹ All these worldly things and necessities, interests and relations, have not been created in vain; they have a purpose, which has been stated in the last part of the supplication, that is, *Deliverance from the torment of the Fire!*

The distinguishing mark of a believer, whose belief is total (not partial), is that in spite of living in this world and while utilizing it, using it and exploiting its permissible resources within the limits of *Shariah*, his heart should remain secured to the Hereafter. He should earn but not to accumulate or to indulge in extravagance, instead, to spend in Allah's way and on the education of His slaves; he should take care of his health as

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best as he can but not for employing it in activities that are not permissible and in the wrong places, instead, for Islam's progress and publication, spread of Allah's word and for inviting mankind to faith. The words of the Glorious Quran at one place are: *And those who give whatsoever they are given, while their hearts are anxious that unto their Lord they are to be returners.*¹² Each and every deed and each and every syllable of his body language should express that this world is not his real nest, his life should

look like the life of a wayfarer. When his mind goes to the blessings of the Hereafter, rewards and honors from God, this world should appear like a prison and cage to him; and his life should become a heavy burden upon his shoulders. This same idea has been stated with clarity in a Noble Tradition: *The world is a prison for the believer and it is a heaven for the infidel*. His conviction about the Hereafter should be such, as if, he is actually seeing it with the eye of his heart and soul, and is restlessly waiting for that auspicious day when he will get the permission to leave and appear in the presence of his Lord. This is the right stance and course of action that the Quran calls for, with which God's pleasure, His succor and help, and His unlimited rewards, and never ending recompense are associated, and upon which respect and honor are covenanted.

SUGGESTED READING: Readers unfamiliar with the overall system of Islam are recommended to refer to A SHORT PRESENTATION ON ISLAM by Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, pages 171, Publisher: Muhammad Al Hasni Trust, Rae Bareilly. Available at: Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, Nadwatul Ulema, Tagore Marg, Lucknow.

Notes and references

1. V.123, chapter 11, *Hud*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.

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2. Chapter title: *Encouragement to conduct gainful business*, Book of Businesses; Ibn Majah.
3. (Clean: Implies legally acquired, free of interest and on which Zakat, if applicable, is regularly paid) Sahih Bukhari.
4. Chapter title: *Encouragement to conduct gainful business*, Book of Businesses; Ibn Majah.

5. Chapter title: *Abhorrence for the longing to die*, Book of chants and supplications; Sahih Muslim.
6. V.2, chapter 67, *Al Mulk*, Meaning of the Glorious Quran; Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall.
7. The complete verse 32 of chapter 7, *Al A'raaf*, from the Daryabadi Quran Translation reads as follows: *Say thou: who hath forbidden the adornment which Allah hath produced for His servants and the clean things of food? Say thou: **these on the Day of Judgment, shall be for those alone who in the life of this world have believed**; thus We expound the signs unto a people who know.*
8. V.20, chapter 42, *Ash-Shoura*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
9. Chapter title: Perfection of belief and fluctuations in it; Book of belief (*Eeman*); Tirmizi.
10. Deeds: In accordance with their intentions and expectations, Book of belief; Sahih Bukhari.
11. V.191, chapter 3, *Aal Imran*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
12. Verse 60, Chapter 23, *Al Mu'minoon*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.

Rules of

brave young men

*Shorish-e-'andaleeb ne rooh chaman mein phoonk di
warnah yahan kali kali mast thi khwab-e-naaz mein*

The call and flutter of a single soul
in his mates aroused the zeal to act,
else every self-conceited being,
free of cares, was lost in dreams.¹

The entire grandeur of life exists thanks to valor and the spirit of sacrifice, if these do not exist then no external source can keep this cold compartment warm. If the entry of valor and sacrifice is taken out from the dictionary of life, then it will be reduced to merely a book of accounts or a grocer's shop in which playing safe and avoiding risk will always be given the priority; and over-reliance on expediency and pacifism will bedecked the fashion of the day and the currency of the time.

Scan through the pages of human history and you will learn that its
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incredibly magnificent portions rest only upon two columns: sacrifice and selflessness. Whenever this world began to get devastated and it was overwhelmed by negligence and stagnation, laziness and sloth, the enlivening breeze of sacrifice and selflessness awarded to it a fresh lease of life, its shriveled buds became blooming flowers, wilting and infirm autumn leaves once nourished and watered lifted their heads high; a wave of

awakening ran across the sleepy environment and within no time the earth and the skies changed; a change came about in the season; a transformation occurred in nature and characteristics; ideas and thoughts were influenced; new standards replaced old standards, and the manifestation of *We quicken thereby the earth after the death thereof*² was so obvious that even the blind could not reject it and Pharaoh's magicians also fell down in prostration before the Divine Omnipotence saying: *we believe in the Lord of the worlds. The Lord of Musa and Haroon.*³

Be they the battles of Badr and Hunain⁴ or the battlefields of *Qadsiyyah* and *Yarmook*⁵, be it the victory of *Hitteen*⁶ or the event of *Karbala*⁷, all of them are shining chapters of this very sacrifice and different aspects of the story of valor and the desire to meet God, and supremely dear fragments of our life; and priceless portions of our history, over which we should justifiably be proud and happy for our martyrs and victors.

Time and time again it has happened that amidst a dead population, a lively soul played the music of life in such a way, that the miraculous atmosphere of *Rise by Allah's leave*⁸ was seen and a picture of *lo! They will be standing, looking on*⁹ revealed itself. At times the messianic character of some *drunkards with clean breaths* performed a feat of such proportions that even the ancient desert dwellers and desert travelers of yore could not perform. The famous Urdu poet Jigar Moradabadi says:

*Tu bahut pehle jahan par tha wahin aaj bhi hai
dekh rindaan-e khush-anfaas kahan tak pahunche*

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Ye still are
where ye were long back;
look how far *the drunkards*
*with clean breaths*¹⁰ have reached.

Sometimes the falling prestige and crumbling greatness of entire nations was saved by the truthful speech and boldness of a lone individual and by the sacrifice and valor of a lone slave of Allah, in such a way, that no explanation except *Allah's are the hosts of the heavens and the earth*¹¹ was possible to put forth for it.

The standard of any nation's greatness and excellence, and the measure of its descent and ascent, is the existence of such truthful, courageous, bold and high-spirited individuals amidst it, who would all the time be prepared to give the biggest of the big and the lengthiest of the lengthy sacrifices for the sake of their goal and principle, and it would not be possible for any power to deflect them from that path; in joy and sorrow, relief and trouble, who would be with their nation; and who would be its partners in every phase that it goes through; who can neither be bribed nor can they be deceived and enticed; whose character be a guarantee of their liking for truth and their truthful speech, and whose sincerity be absolutely beyond casting a doubt upon; who would not be giving these sacrifices in the hope of coming to power with an eye on some benefit, this would rather be their faith and principle, their taste and the way they are. The combination of service and sacrifice, truthful speech and boldness is in itself a very great strength and it has a major share in bringing about great revolutions and changes, the building and fashioning of nations and in turning the tide of circumstances. In the lives of nations, at times, protracted struggles, wisdom and recognizing expediencies do not perform that task that well-timed audacity and truthful speech does. It does the work of years in months and the work of months in days. It breezes through such paths that lie beyond the imagination of those who subscribe

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to expediency:

*Bey khatar kood pada aatish-e Namrood mein ishq
'aqaal hai mahv-e tamasha-e lab-e baam abhi*

Love fearlessly plunged himself
in the fire of Nimrud,
wisdom is still horror-struck
and watching from afar.

Before it, the top priority is: faith, conscience and goal. It does not tolerate any such thing that would hurt or weaken it. It can make no deal on their account, yet in every deal does keep them in sight compulsorily. Even in the most crucial of the crucial moments and the enticing of spots, the leg of its uprightness is not seen to wobble, because it raises such a protecting boundary of these three things around itself which keeps it safe from the whole lot of those dangers and away from the whole lot of off-ends – a boundary upon which it does not allow the faintest attack. If there happens to be a danger to its life it is seen to welcome that with a smile, and it feels no hesitation and trouble in doing so. *They said: no harm! Verily unto our Lord we are to be returners.*¹²

*Aye dil tamaam naf'a hai sauda-e ishq mein
ek jaan ka ziyaaan hai so aisa ziyaaan nahin*

O heart! It's all profit
in obsession with God's love,
the one loss is of worldly life:
not much of a loss, at that!

Without identifying and getting a taste of this strength of truthful speech,
service and sacrifice, no big change and revolution can come about in our

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life, no big service can be rendered and no big progress can transpire; as much necessity as is today to build the new generation on these foundations and train it according to these principles, this much, perhaps, there never was; these last few years have totally taken the veil off this reality and have totally exposed this necessity. In our leadership too,

besides other shortcomings the most serious shortcoming is the lack of service and sacrifice, truthful speech and boldness, to a perilously low extent. It is a particular whose column cannot be filled by some form of knowledge and wisdom and some sort of expediency and far-sightedness. In fact, using knowledge and wisdom in place of service and sacrifice, and where the occasion calls for truthful speech and courage, employing far-sightedness and expedient action is extremely harmful and fatal – and a lethal poison for public life; and in this global gathering of humankind, he sure is reliable and a veteran who has at times been a prey of *the courage of a drunkard and the slip-up of a drunk*.¹³

*Nikal jaati hai sachchi baat
jiske munh se masti mein
faqeeh-e maslahat-been se
woh rind-e baadakhwar achha*

Who speaks when drunk but truthful words
much better is that drunkard,
than the jurist who explores expediency
when called to judge in fairness.

This world is in the habit of respecting him only, who is by habit self-assured; listens attentively to that very person who has the courage to speak the truth; clears the way for him only, who has the ability to make way for himself and bring difficult situations under control; devotes its life for him only, whose entire life has been the hallmark of devotion and the spirit of sacrifice, to whom by all means are acceptable the sharp and

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bitter criticisms of his servants and loving peers, and offensive before whose eye and base and disgraceful in whose sight be the flattering theatrics of the indolent and those who subscribe to expediencies.

This is a canon of nature since time immemorial, entire world history bears testimony to it, and each of its periods is replete with its proofs.

Any attempt to achieve success through some new path that goes against this canon and law, will not prove to be fruitful for us, it is going to be a detrimental form of burying one's head in the sand or of keeping oneself in delusion, and it will increase dangers all the more, will weaken the morale of the nation which then will have no worth left in the sight of others. Apart from this one path, all the paths that are there, cannot leave any durable and everlasting imprint, cannot exercise any big influence on the country and the *millath*, cannot bring about any significant and noticeable rise in the wealth of the *millath*, and cannot produce any change in circumstances.

If in accordance with this *Sunnath Allah* (practice of God), somebody develops in himself the gems of service and sacrifice, truthful speech and boldness, time is still prepared to give him a rousing welcome. With these attributes, mountains of difficulties will prove to be supportive of him and without these attributes he will have to face acrimony and disappointments at almost every step.

With these attributes, even failure is triumph and without these attributes even victory is defeat. With these attributes, even thorns are flowers and without these attributes the entire life is dependency and the embodiment of a beggar's bowl. In appearance it is life for sure, but in reality it is no life.

Zindagi hai magar paraa hai

Life, apparently yes, but pawned it is!

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However, the path of love and sacrifice is separate from all those paths, twice as theirs is its dignity; here victory and defeat, trouble and relief, happiness and sorrow, path and destination, are all one and the same, and all are brilliant reflections of a Beloved's refulgent Countenance.

*Rah-rawan raakhastagi raah-e-neyst
ishq ham rahast, ham khud manzilast*

For the one who must o’ertake
exhaustion is no impediment,
for love is as much a path,
as much the place to reach.

Notes and references

1. There were other interpretations also of this couplet, therefore, I tried to produce one interpretation for the English readership that was pertinent to the context of this article. (Translator)
2. V.9, chapter 35, *Faatir*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
3. V.121-122, chapter 7, *Al A'raaf*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
4. The battles of Badr and Hunain are categorized in Islamic terminology as *Ghazwaath*, meaning, battles fought under the command of our beloved prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Both places, located in the Arabian peninsula, are now in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
5. Plains of Qadsiyyah and Yarmook: **(a)** Qadsiyyah was a small town on the West bank of river Ateeq, a branch of Euphrates. According to present day

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geography it is situated at the Southwest of Al Hillah and Kufah in Iraq. The battle of Qadisiyyah fought in July 636 CE, was the decisive engagement between the Arab Muslim army and the Sassanid Persian army during the first period of Muslim expansion. It resulted in the Islamic conquest of Persia

and was key to the conquest of Iraq. **(b)** The plain of Yarmook lies about 65 Kms South-east of Golan Heights, an upland region East of the Sea of Galilee. The battle of Yarmook, fought in August 636 CE under the command of the legendary warrior Khalid bin Waleed, may Allah be pleased with him, was a major battle between the Muslim Arab forces of the Rashidun Caliphate and the armies of the Eastern Roman Empire. It is regarded as one of the most decisive battles in military history.

6. Hitteen was a Palestinian village 8 Kms West of the city of Tebrias located on the West coast of the Sea of Galilee, now in Israel. The battle of Hitteen was fought in Ramzan 583H between the Muslim armies led by Salahuddin Ayyoubi, may Allah have mercy on him, and the Crusade forces. Following the victory of Salahuddin, may Allah have mercy on him, in this battle the Crusade cities and fortresses such as Tebrias, Akko, Qaisariyyah, Nabulus, Jafa and Beirut came under Muslim control, also the Holy city of Jerusalem, after a gap of 90 years, became a Muslim dominion once again.
7. Karbala is situated in Iraq. It was the scene of a highly tragic engagement on the 10th of Muharram 61H corresponding to May 31, 680 CE in which, prominently, the grandson of the beloved prophet – peace and blessings of Allah be upon him – *Hazrath* Imam Hussein, may Allah be pleased with him, all of his congregation, including all of his sons present at that time *Hazrath* Ali Al Akbar and *Hazrath* Ali Al Asghar (a few months old) attained martyrdom. May Allah have mercy on all of them.
8. Words that (Jesus) Prophet'Eisa, peace be upon him, used to say, upon which the dead used to come back to life.
9. This is a description of the Resurrection of mankind. V.68, C.39, *Az-Zumar*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.

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10. *Drunkards with clean breaths* refers to those God fearing personalities who are dead-drunk in piety.
11. V.7, chapter 48, *Fath*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.

12. V.50, chapter 26, *Sho'raa*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.

13. This phrase does not imply that 'at times' Islam allows drinking. *The courage of a drunkard and the slip-up of a drunk* is the literal translation of *jurrah-e-rindanaah wa laghziish-e-mastana*. These are similes of Urdu poetry, *jurrah-e-rindanaah* implies: A show of courage in which all caution is thrown to the winds; and *laghziish-e-mastana* implies: a stagger though not a fall.

The real field

of striving:observance of the *Sunnah**

*Practices of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him

The real field of man's striving is not the corner of a mosque, the room of a shrine, beads and prayer-mat; it is home, bazaar, peer circle and society; and if in this field the grip over the practices of the beloved prophet ﷺ is not loosened, then it is possible to sail through all endeavors and all stages without any extra effort. What behavior ought to be meted out to a foe, what attitude be adopted with a friend, how to behave with family members, what are the rights of a neighbor, what are our moral responsibilities in society, how should unpleasant issues be endured, what does it mean to serve and to sympathize. These are such lessons that are not taught in primary and secondary school or in some university and college, they are rather taught subconsciously, in homes, on roads, while going here and there and talking to people. Immediately a person wakes up, his lesson begins and this lesson continues all by itself alongside the whole lot of his preoccupations, he does not need to supplement his efforts by some new action, rather, to correct the intention behind actions happens to be necessary.

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The order of things in Islam is that first avoid sins, prohibited (*Haraam*) and dubious¹ things, then decorate yourself with virtuous deeds. Man used to have his meals, it is routine, now when he dines he ought to think that the meal before him is not per chance prohibited or dubious, not earned through atrocity or usurping other people's rights. Two people would be having the same meal; in one's mind would be, that, this food is allowed (*Halaal*) and permissible for us, he would take Allah's name before eating the first morsel, during the meal his heart would be full of gratitude, after the meal he would say a short prayer that extols His praise and expresses his own helplessness and needs; the other man will be deprived of all these divine blessings, either he will be negligent and will remain deprived of its reward in the Hereafter or he will be an agnostic and food will become a torment for him in his Afterlife. A thing with one form has two realities; and on this very reality rests the decision about the act that was associated with it. The same is the condition of every act of a human being. There is no activity and no act of his, for which a clear guidance in the practices of the beloved apostle ﷺ does not exist.

If man keeps the biography of the beloved prophet ﷺ before him and tries to act upon it in letter and spirit, then, in that case, he does not stand in need of any additional striving and meditative exercise, because in the blessed deeds of the beloved prophet ﷺ is present the treatment for every baseness of the human psyche. The daily routine from morning to evening and the etiquette of living in a society, are two such areas in which conformity to the practices of the beloved prophet ﷺ is absolutely sufficient for a Muslim and by doing that much he can reach up to the highest stage of spiritual progress. From the Quranic verse, *And verily thou art of a high and noble disposition*² and the Tradition, *I was annunciated to set the highest standards of moral behavior*³, we come to know that every act, every virtue, every word and deed of the beloved prophet ﷺ is rooted in a high degree of resolve and perfection. For example, if man struggles for years on end to get rid of a certain personality disorder or some bad

habit, then too, he will not be able to reach the standard that a deed performed by the beloved prophet ﷺ occupies. The reason for it is that Allah the Exalted has bestowed His acceptance upon that deed and has associated Deliverance, Forgiveness, blessedness and piety with it till the day of Resurrection.

No matter how small this deed and *Sunnath* might appear to be before other endeavors in the way of God and strenuous meditative exercises, but in terms of efficacy and result it is far greater than that, provided it is carried out with sincerity and right intention.

The most prominent supernatural quality of the beloved prophet's biography is that a small deed mentioned in it is heavier than the biggest of the big deeds, in God's Balance. Secondly, to act upon it is easy for every Muslim. Neither very high educational qualification nor very deep meditation, is the condition for it. At one place the words of a Tradition are that *When the beloved prophet ﷺ had two options before him, he always chose the option that was easy*. Similarly he ﷺ is reported to have said that, *'the better deed is that which is moderate and produces lasting good'*; in other words, which is free from going to extremes or from sentimentality, exaggeration and violence. Every aspect of his biography is immortal and every deed of his is a guiding light for the entire humanity, but these two aspects are such that they hold the status of glad tidings and good news for Muslims. All the service that is presently being rendered to knowledge of Islam and to religion, around the world, and all the categories of the purification of mind that scholars of truth (Islam) and authorities on Islam have told us, their purpose and ultimate aim is to attain maximum possible nearness to the prophet's biography, their purpose is to create in man that yearning for perfection and that skill at identifying it, after which, other than the deed of the beloved prophet ﷺ no deed remains dearer to him.

The greatest message of the beloved prophet's biography and its most significant miracle is that it has presented before the entire humanity a model of such a perfect and complete lifetime which is, in every time period, for every group of people and in every condition and circumstance, possible to act upon, rather easy to act upon. Not one person can say that it does not contain the solution for his problem or the answer to his question. Alongside the greatest of the great truths about the universe and a miracle and distinction like the *Me'raj*⁴, the etiquettes and principles that are found in the beloved prophet's biography pertaining to common human needs and household chores, rather up to worship, in that it is clearly visible that the bright sun of prophet-hood has not left any single treasure-house of human life in darkness.

Notes and references

1. Something about which a person is uncertain if it is allowed or prohibited e.g. apparently *Halal* food but about which he is unsure if it is purchased from *Halal* income or not.
2. V.4, chapter 68, *Al Qalam*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; A. M. Daryabadi.
3. Chapter title: *The beauty of manners*, *Muatta'*; Imam Malik.
4. The Arabic word *Me'raj* literally means: Ascent. Readers unfamiliar with Islam would like to know, in brief, that the event of the *Ascent* is one of the most vividly described miracles of the life of the beloved prophet ﷺ.

The journey was as follows: Masjid Al Haram (also called the Grand Mosque), Makkah – to Masjid Al-Aqsa, Jerusalem – to the Seven Skies one beyond the other, meeting earlier prophets on the way – to *Sidrat-ul Muntaha* (a blessed tree beyond which even the angels are not allowed to go; it is the point up to where Archangel Gibreel, peace be upon him, kept him company) – then he ﷺ went the distance ahead all alone till he ﷺ reached in the benign

Presence of Allah the Exalted and conversed with Him— again to the Seven Skies one after the other on the way back – to Masjid Al-Aqsa, Jerusalem – to Masjid Al Haram, Makkah.

The journey to the Heavens is called the *Me'raj* and the part of the journey between Makkah and Jerusalem is called the *Asraa'*. Allah the Exalted says in the Glorious Quran, V1, chapter 17, *Al Asraa'*: *Glory to (Allah) Who did take His servant for a Journey by night from the Sacred Mosque (The Grand Mosque in Makkah) to the Farthest Mosque (Masjid Al-Aqsa in Jerusalem) whose precincts We did bless, in order that We might show him some of Our signs; for He is the One Who Heareth and Seeth (all things)**. We come to know from a Tradition that God had compressed this entire journey within the duration of a few seconds because when the beloved prophet ﷺ had stepped out of his home in Makkah, he ﷺ had shut the door behind him pulling it by the door-chain and when he ﷺ had returned, the harmonic motion of the door-chain had not yet stopped. Also, *Salah* that Muslims offer five times a day is a gift of *Me'raj*, its commandment was given by Allah the Exalted Himself to the beloved prophet ﷺ and the same postures were adopted in *Salah* of human beings that he ﷺ had seen the angels adopt in their prayers.

[*English translation of the verse by Abdullah Yusuf Ali.]

The sacrifice-sincerity combination

Religion, in fact, is the name of sacrifice. Religion begins with sacrifice and its extreme also is sacrifice. It is the same thing which has been stated as, *Heaven has been surrounded by things difficult and trying for the self and Hell has been surrounded by lusts.*¹ The same theme appears at one place as, *The world is a prison for a believer and it is a heaven for an infidel.*² The same subject is also stated in the following Tradition: *None of you will be a true believer until his heart's desires become subordinate to the teachings I have brought.*³ In short, the Traditions and the Quran both are replete with subjects of this type, and by way of emphasis they have also been repeated again and again, so that this reality gets firmly lodged in hearts and minds.

Sacrifice itself, however, is of two types (a) evident sacrifice and (b) hidden sacrifice. Evident sacrifice is that which every person would consider a sacrifice and in situations where religion and the world would be in open collision he would give preference to religion. Opportunities of hidden

sacrifice of course, at times, defy comprehension and man remains at a loss to understand that what type of sacrifice is being demanded from him at that time?

At times, man thinks that in the matter of the world and the Hereafter, he has accepted the commandments of religion and has accordingly sacrificed the world, and has joined the ranks of the faithful, now he has no need to offer sacrifices again and again. Although if you give a little thought to it, you will know that after this evident sacrifice or what is visibly a sacrifice, there is a long chain of hidden sacrifices that continues till one departs from this world. However, one thing is certain that their occasion is not easy to grasp and at times understanding their nature becomes difficult.

These are sacrifices of our habits, habitats, favorite things, and our choice, our temperament, our taste, rather at times, of our mannerisms. The Glorious Quran has not merely demanded Muslims that they carry out Islamic commandments, rather its demand is also that they ought not to feel burdened and upset in carrying them out; rather, in a state of mind marked by peace, willingness, confidence, submission and gratitude they ought to act upon the teachings, verdicts and training given by the beloved prophet ﷺ. The Glorious Quran clearly mentions: *Aye! By the Lord, they shall not believe until they have made thee judge of that which is disputed among them, and then find no vexation in their hearts with that which thou hast decreed, and they submit with full submission.*⁴

No matter how innocuous and harmless, useful and profitable our tastes and states of mind, our view and opinion, and our favorite methodology might appear to us, it is not at all reliable and dependable until and unless it is certified by religion and along with it the sticker of sacrifice is not affixed to it. Avoiding the entertainments of this world and its colorful enticements alone is not sacrifice, rather every rebellion against the self is sacrifice, even when it may appear to be well within the orbit of religion.

For example, if a person who is propagating the virtues of *Salah*, rebukes somebody or gets angry and begins to use inappropriate words for him before everybody and thinks that he is doing so for the sake of religion, then he should find out that how much is the portion of his ego and how much is the expression of truth in it? In this situation, to suppress one's anger and to speak in general terms following the perfect example of the beloved prophet ﷺ is also a form of sacrifice. Similarly, in those religious and *milli*⁵ tasks (which a Muslim carries out with the understanding that they are his pure religion and for the purpose of earning God's pleasure) to tolerate comments against one's taste and sentiments, and not to insist on only one's favorite school of thought (*maslak*), too is a big sacrifice. Difficulties like these are encountered every now and then by him who follows a religious lifestyle; in order to emerge successful from their midst, a great deal of selflessness, steadfastness and determination is needed. If man has remained firm-footed in this crisis and he has given the proof of his courage while tiding over these stages, then it is hoped from the Being of Allah the Exalted that sacrifices like these, in due course, will become relatively easy and pleasant for him and he will begin to derive from them the delight that a true lover finds in playing to the tunes of a beloved.

However, the thing from which this sacrifice will get its strength and nourishment is sincerity. *Hijrath* is an enormous sacrifice, but the words of a Noble Tradition are: *Whosoever's emigration (Hijrath) be for the sake of worldly gain or for marrying a woman, his emigration will be considered for the sake of that only towards which he is migrating.*⁶

The point to note here is that, it should not be that we make a sacrifice too and this sacrifice after being polluted and tainted by our motives (like the lust for power and wealth etc.) goes waste.

The proof of sincerity is found in sacrifice and sacrifice is dependent upon sincerity; both the things are inseparable. Sacrifice is that in every

situation one exercises self-control and sincerity is that all this be for Allah's sake; neither for becoming an idol among the masses nor to charm people by one's promptness and service, neither to impress people by one's sacrifices or one's learning and merit, and one's skill and mastery, nor for exhibiting one's intellect and genius, and for benefitting one's nation. If one's sights are upon service to the nation alone and the sentiment of earning divine pleasure or, in other words, sincerity (*ikhlaas*) is not included in it; if we are loyal only to our people and *millath*, not loyal to God; if we render these services so that merely our conscience remains clear, our national trait of self-respect is appeased, our dominance and superiority is proved, our co-religionists and fellow countrymen can move rapidly along the road to progress; absent from it is the conviction about Allah's covenants and the sentiment of earning reward, recompense and divine pleasure (and this is quite possible); then we should take it for granted that all our efforts are futile and in the sight of *Shariah* they are worthless; and the danger is that, God forbid, we might be categorized as a people about whom the Glorious Quran says:

*They are those whose effort is wasted in the life of the world, and they deem that they are doing well in performance. They are those who disbelieve in the signs of their Lord and in the meeting with Him; so of non-effect will be made their works, and We shall not allow them on the Day of Judgment any weight.*⁷

We should always try to figure out as to what does God want from us at the present time, place and occasion? Our reading of situations, our conscience, our viewpoint, our policy, and our intellect and vision or the service we render and the labor we do, whatever is there, it is relative, not absolute. We like contentment not because it is something that is better for a man and he finds the calm of heart and peace of mind in it, but because, this is the very Will of Allah the Exalted.

*Gar tama' khwahad zaman Sultan-e-deen
khaak bar farq qana't b'ad izeen*

If the Monarch of the Hereafter wants greed from me;
Let us then forget all about contentment.

Islam has taught us humility, but in the days of Haj, during *Tawaaf-e-Qudoom*⁸, *Ramal* (to walk with a stiff gait) is mandatory; pride and arrogance are forbidden, but at the time of war, pride and war-cry is permissible and commendable; to have a hair-cut and to clip nails regularly is part of upbringing in Islam, but in Haj one has to move around in two unstitched sheets like the proverbial mad lover and before the rite of sacrifice, hair-cut, clipping nails, everything is prohibited. In short, many things like these are found in *Shariah* and they are there so that we always keep into consideration the fact that, maybe we see obvious loss in a certain thing, but while obeying God's commandment and trusting Him alone, we better put up with that loss anyhow. If at a certain time we are overtaken by an ecstatic bout of piety and abstinence of some kind, at that time even, we ought not to keep the state of our heart and sentiments before us (no matter how exalted and chaste those sentiments might be) rather let divine commandment and the prophet's practice be our guide, even if, apparently it looks like being in conflict with that piety and abstinence.

In our individual and missionary life, utmost scarcity is precisely of these two things i.e. sincerity and sacrifice, therefore, in this very direction it is necessary to give the maximum attention.

Notes and references

1. Chapter title: *Characteristic features of Heaven*; Book of Heaven, Sahih Muslim.

2. Chapter title: *The world is a prison for believer and heaven for the infidel*; Book of mysticism; Sahih Muslim.
3. Chapter title: *Hold firm to the prophet's practices*; Book of beliefs, Mishkaath.
4. V.65, chapter 4, *An-Nisaa'*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
5. For a short explanation of the term *milli*, please refer to note 3, page 55, if necessary.
6. Chapter title: *How did the Revelation begin?*; Book of Commencement of Revelation; Sahih Bukhari.
7. V.104-105, chapter 18, *Al Kahaf*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
8. *Tawaf-e-Qudoom*: *Tawaf* means circumambulation of the *Baitullah* in Makkah, seven times. *Tawaf-e-Qudoom* is the first *Tawaf* a Haji offers to God at the time of Haj. (It is a point not devoid of interest that *Tawaf* also means circumambulation by angels of the *Baitul Ma'moor*, that is located exactly above the *Baitullah* in the Heavens. It is like a Ka'bah for the angels.)

The right path of sacrifice, duly defined

In this world every human being has to take recourse to sacrifice and selflessness in some measure or the other, viz. sacrifice of life, sacrifice of wealth, sacrifice of timings, and sacrifice of habits and desires. In every human being, Allah the Exalted has bestowed the sentiment of love and the passion for sacrifice in some degree or the other. Together with his known senses of perception, He has kept an unknown sense also which keeps coaxing him towards his love and passion and, at times, makes him carry out tasks that are Herculean and impossible.

What should be the pivot and purpose of this sacrifice, which being deserves our sacrifice and love the most, and what type of sacrifice does that being like us to offer? With respect to this, there have always been two groups in the world, people who subscribe to Truth and people who subscribe to falsehood or Muslims¹ and non-Muslims. One class made their heart, their family, people like themselves, land, wealth and

national respect, their god and goal; deemed them to be the pivot of their sacrifice

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and love, and the last stop of their journey; and all their tireless activity became limited and dedicated to the temporary life and a short-lived springtime. *They are those whose effort is wasted in the life of the world, and they deem that they are doing well in performance.*²

The course of action, faith and conviction of Muslims was totally different from this. The actual focus of their love and sacrifice always remained the Being of Allah, the Blessed, the Exalted; and in every period of time they gave all sorts of sacrifices in His path; and whichever sacrifice, at whatever time it was demanded, they offered it immediately; and never was in the leg of their uprightness any tremor or in their claim of love for God any laxity seen. *Of the believers are men who have fulfilled that which they covenanted with Allah. Some of them have performed their vow, and some of them are waiting, and so they have not changed in the least.*³ They never subjected sacrifice to division, they did not treat it the way that, unfortunately, we Muslims are treating it today.

What is this *division*? This division is, that the sacrifice of a male goat we have set aside for Allah's sake, and the sacrifice of time, wealth, habit and desire we have reserved for ourselves. The annual sacrifice is for Allah's sake and the daily sacrifice is for ourselves, our favorite child, favorite wife and for earning wealth and property.

Today Muslims have assumed that by sacrifice for the sake of Allah the Exalted is only meant that perform the Haj every year, throw lavish parties of '*aqeeqah* and *walima*, and during *Baqreed*⁴ sacrifice some quadruped⁵, and after that you do not have to do anything the whole year, other than relax. Unfortunately, some people have included some prohibited things additionally in it, and along with this philosophy of leisure, there is a dash

of enjoyment and cultural entertainment also in it. They make offerings of *chaadars*⁶ to graves; enjoy 'Urs and *Qawwali* (death anniversary and mystic songs sung in chorus); organize fetes near graves of pious elders and come

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back after having their sins forgiven and receiving a one year guarantee for Heaven.

Those people who are safe from these innovations and away from these bad deeds, after giving their monthly donation to some *madarsah*, organizing a roadside stall of free drinking water during summers and arranging for a *Hafiz Sahib* (a gentleman who knows the entire Holy Quran by heart) in some mosque, come to believe that whatever sacrifice they had to make for Allah the Exalted they have done that, now there is no need for them to sacrifice anything else, and should there arise a need for it they themselves are the lawful recipients for it now. After this, we complain that Allah's Succor does not arrive, Muslims are not provided any aid. Please remember, that the covenant of succor is not linked with the sacrifice of a male goat, instead it is conditional upon the sacrifice of habit and the sacrifice of desire. *Their flesh reacheth not Allah nor their blood: but it is piety from you that reacheth Him.*⁷ Allah has no desire for uncooked or roasted meat, multiple course meals and preparations whose fragrance hangs in the air, and these things do not reach Him; what reaches up to Him is heartfelt respect and deference, fear of God and the love of God and the sacrifice of wishes and riches in the way of God, and in this alone is the power to attract His Mercy.

Is it not a fact, that for us to do tedious mental work in offices from morning to evening, to be on government duty night after night, and for the sake of our trade and the development of our business, to tolerate every calamity with a smile and put up with every trouble is easy; but in the morning, to leave our bed and rise for *Salah* is difficult!?

Is it not a fact, that over a slight delay in being served betel, cigarettes and tea, we begin to get upset, furrows appear on our forehead; and if we happen to delay some obligatory *Salah*, happen to usurp somebody's right, happen to commit some violation of *shariah*, then we do not even feel

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having transgressed!?

Is it not a fact, that over a petty desire and demand of our heart, we spend as much money as we like; unstoppably indulge in every sort of extravagance to pander to our mood; and after spending a few *annas*⁸ over some proper use and on some necessity that relates to the reward of the Hereafter and the covenant with God, we feel as if we have atoned for all our sins!?

These are just a few facts. A closer look would reveal that our entire life is full of specimens of this type.

The reason for it is that we never felt the necessity of getting rid of our bad habits and putting a check on our wants; sacrifice to which we subscribed throughout was that flawed custom mentioned above.

The reality of sacrifice is that: First of all, man ought to strike the blade on the jugular of his intention, his desire, his habit and his temperament. Decide to act upon the command of God and the apostle ﷺ, not upon the command of his heart. And at every twist of this type, out of fear of God and a concern for the accountability of the Hereafter, restrain his hand from evil, suppress his urge and back away from it; *and as for him who dreaded standing before his Lord, and restrained his soul from lust, verily the Garden! – that shall be his resort*⁹; he who chooses not to listen to any unlawful sound or voice, no matter how sweet and soulful it might be, solely because Allah the Exalted has prohibited listening to it; turns his eyes away from a sinful thing, no matter if he encounters it again and again, for the sole reason that it is a violation of divine

commandment; who rises from a gathering of friends despite all his interest to stay on, solely because slander and fault-finding is going on there; who rejects a whole lot of unjust and unlawful demands made by his family members, in spite of his love and relation with them, solely because there is

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infringement of the commandments of *shariah* and commitment of sin in their fulfillment, and clearly testifies before his parents, his brothers and his nearest of kin, in spite of his regard for them and his shyness before them that, 'this is the very commandment of Allah the Exalted'.

A degree less than this is: That, where he fulfills hundreds of his desires around-the-clock and to meet the demands of his heart immediately gets prepared to give every sort of sacrifice, just there he may, for once, carry out the instructions of Allah the Exalted, spend his wealth to knock at the door of His mercies and attract His kindness also, and for His sake, in some measure or the other, offer the sacrifice of his heart and wealth, his desire and habit also.

At least, he can avoid the more heinous and evil of sins and try to guard himself against slander, breach of trust, falsehood, looking at anything with malevolence and the neglect of obligatory acts; and if he must sacrifice some of his timings and habits in this path then he should not flinch from doing so at all.

This is the correct depiction of sacrifice upon which God's succor is covenanted. There is no division in this sacrifice. It covers everything, from the sacrifice of a quadruped to the sacrifice of the self, rather this sacrifice of the animal is a reflection of the *sacrifice of the self* itself, and a picture of its similitude, and its expression in material form. And what to talk of sacrificing an animal, the commandment and hint to sacrifice a personality like Prophet Isma'eel, peace be upon him, was for much the

same reason, that that love be sacrificed, which exists in the heart of an affectionate father for his beloved son.

The reality of sacrifice and its spirit (be it the sacrifice of time or of wealth, be it of life or of desires, be it of love or of habit and tendency) is that man gives up fearing the atmosphere, society and government before the fear

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of God, and renounces the love of human beings, the love of wealth and all other affections before the love of God and His apostle ﷺ and give it preference over all his relationships, attachments, habits and desires.

At one place the words of a Noble Tradition are that: *The belief (Eemaan) of none amongst you shall be perfected until I become more beloved to him than his wealth, family and his being.*

And the Glorious Quran itself clearly states: *Say if your fathers and your sons and your brothers, and your wives, and your tribe and the wealth ye have acquired and merchandize for which ye fear there will be no sale and dwellings ye desire are dearer to you than Allah and His messenger and striving in His way: then wait till Allah bringeth His command to pass, Allah guideth not wrongdoing folk.*¹⁰

This is the very path of sacrifice striding along which some slaves of Allah had changed the destiny of all mankind and had understood their own reality. For earning Allah's succor, even today, this is 'the path. And this is the very path of its kind which is open for Muslims in every form of government, Muslim or non-Muslim, so any question of majority and minority, freedom and restriction, does not arise in it at all.

Notes and references

1. Readers unfamiliar with the basics of Revealed Religion (that follows the format of a book and an apostle) will like to know here that God's Revealed Religion is synonymous with Truth and any faith other than that is falsehood, and the word Muslim means *one who submits to the Will of God* and applies

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to any individual who subscribes to the guidance and teachings of the prophet of his time. By this token, just as believers of the Glorious Quran and followers of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ are called Muslims, similarly, believers of the *Holy Torah* and followers of Prophet Musa (Moses), peace be upon him, were Muslims of his time; and believers of the *Holy Bible* and followers of Prophet E'isa (Jesus), peace be upon him, were the Muslims of his time.

2. V.104, Chapter 18, *Al Kahaf*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
3. V.23, Chapter 33, *Al Ahzaab*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
4. *Baqreed* is colloquial Urdu for *Eid-ul-Azha*.
5. Usually a male goat, sheep, cattle and camel.
6. Colorful satin or velvet coverings for the grave that are, at times, also exotically embroidered.
7. V.37, C.22, *Al Haj*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
8. In the old monetary system of India, six Paise made an Anna and sixteen Annas made a Rupee. In 1957 these ninety six Paise to a Rupee were replaced by hundred Naye Paise to a Rupee, the Rupee was decimalized and the Anna was abolished; and in 1964 the term *Naye* from *Naye Paise* too was dropped.

9. V. 40-41, C:79, *An-Naaziyaat*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
10. V.24, C:9, *At-Tawbah*, Meaning of the Glorious Quran; Muhammad M. Pickthall.

The annihilation of countless stars brings about a daybreak

ke khoon-e sad hazaar anjum se hoti hai seher paida

For Muslims, Islam's eternal and universal message is that they ought not to lose courage because of misfortunes and hardships. If as a demand of human nature some hopelessness and frustration does arise in them, so for that God says: *if ye are suffering, then they (your enemies) suffer even as ye suffer, and you hope from Allah that which they hope not.*¹

If by the setting of the stars it becomes possible that the morning of hope would dawn, if temporary troubles become instruments of permanent relief, then this is an occasion not of complaint and dejection but for expressing thanks and gratitude.

*ek jaan bastanad sad jaan dahad
aan ke dar khaatir na aayad aan dahad*

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From amidst us He takes a soul
to bless us with a hundred souls,
and grants to us such kind of things
of which we have no knowledge.

Only we should make sure, as to how much love of God and the apostle ﷺ, the sentiment of laying down our life and sacrificing everything for the religion of Islam do we have in us, is there or is there not in our heart the passion to serve the country and the *millath* and sympathy for mankind; does or does not any restlessness develop in us over the miserable condition of our country and the carelessness of Muslims? Do we or do we not find in ourselves the courage to criticize wrong policies and take the country along right lines with us? How good is our judgment about who is our friend and who is our enemy, who is sincere and who selfish, who looks up to God and who looks up to opportunities?

If these few traits are found in us; if we are familiar with, know the worth of and would like to play the character of a self-respecting and true Muslim, a noble citizen who loves his motherland, and a friend of humanity, a missionary and soldier to the extent possible; then don't worry, no earthquake and calamity of this world will be able to harm you, *Insha Allah* (God willing). If at all we can be harmed, it is only from within.

baaman aancheh kirad aan aashnaa kirad

Treatment you have meted out to me,
reminds me but of friends;

Whatever deficiency and flaw that is there within our ranks, the disagreement that is there among our congregations, the insensitivity and inaction that is endemic in all Muslims, the manner in which the feeling of loss and the ability to take lesson is departing from the

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millath, the way that lack of obedience to God and the sentiment of selfishness have tightened their grip over the system of our life; that actually is the real sign of danger for us. Not Russia nor America and not China and Pakistan are so dangerous for us, as our own discord and our insensitivity is. Ironically, our worries are, that how is the war going on in Vietnam where precisely has the spaceship Apollo reached? How many blasts rocked Ireland? Subsequent to Nixon – Mao summit, what likely is going to be the world's political climate? However, we are not at all bothered that in this country itself, what is going to be our plight in the near future? And if the pace of our negligence and insensitivity, and inaction and unconstructiveness remains as it is, then in terms of our religious, educational, economic and political standing, we will be at that stage of want and bankruptcy, when except for looking blankly at the face of the government, we will have nothing else to do. Participation in infrastructural and economic plans is too big to talk of, we will not even get the wind of it. Our status will only be that of a spectator; the government too will be fed up with us that how long should it serve this slow-paced, inactive and dejected community.

Now, if you like this very condition, then by all means keep sleeping peacefully. Toil and labor and keep filling the coffers of the czars and moguls of commerce and trade. They have ample demand for a

community that is apprentice by profession, whose poor ladies can do eye-straining gold embroidery and hand over the produce of their labor in exchange of some small change to those big businessmen whose heart has absolutely no sympathy for us; but your sleep should not get disturbed by anything of this kind. If your own business is safe, if your standard of living is high and on the whole satisfactory, if girls of your family are becoming 'civilized and well-bred' by studying in some mission school, if your boys are enjoying life and are racing around aimlessly in cars; if you spend thousands and lakhs of Rupees in the month of Rabi-ul Awwal, only in one big city and easily spend more than this on the '*aqeeqah*' (Hindi: *moondan*)

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of your child and the wedding of your daughter; if from one end to the other end of the city you have stretched a canopy of decorative light bulbs and erected brightly lit arches along thoroughfares, and have bathed every nook and corner of the bazaar in light; if over the wedding, the month of Rabi-ul Awwal and the Festival of Bangladesh, you normally spend with equal zeal because the motive in all three is to earn name and fame . . . !! Then there is no need to grieve over anything, there is no hurry, dine, watch the springtime of impeccable *sherwanis*, smart figures, well-laid tables, and jokes that would make you forget your sorrows, and humor which takes you into the dream-world of oblivion; and call ten or twenty people over to some function and rejoice, that how prosperous and how free from cares and worries your *millath* is!

Today the necessity of Muslims is to slay and choke their own emotions and desires, not flow with their current; and this is the one and only way to build the *millath*.

The way, to elaborate, is that we obey the commandment of God and the apostle ﷺ not that of our heart. At the time of taking every major step and confronting every situation, we ought to see that what is it that the *millath* needs, what insoluble issues are being faced by Muslims, in which direction

is the new generation going? How the most important initiatives of the *millath*, merely for paucity of funds, are on their last legs. How are self-respect and sense of honor vanishing from the hearts. How rampant is the lack of conscience and the compromise of brain and heart. Selfishness and self-centeredness is taking root among Muslims like a disease. How many necessary formalities upon which depend the factories of factory owners, hotels of hoteliers and the fraternity of traders, are lying suspended merely due to the inattention of a certain class of Muslims and the danger is that, God forbid, they might sink the remaining things also (that are now fewer in number).

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The danger is not to the Arabic medium *madarsahs* only, to schools that impart religious education, to religious dailies and periodicals only, the danger is not to *moulvis* of mosques only (those poor souls are to quite an extent safe from this danger because what is it they get anyway, which can be snatched from them?); the real danger is to those of the wealthy who are not keeping their ear to the ground and are completely unaware and negligent of the dust-storms raging in their surroundings, the frightening events that are lesson enough and the heart-wrenching incidents which are unfolding on all four sides of them.

This, then, is the condition of the class that is called affluent by Muslim standards, if viewed against general standards of affluence it would probably not even qualify to join this rank. The middle income class, that has always been the more numerous, is so suppressed under the burden of life and has become so work-shy because of protracted inaction and rest, that no call has any effect, whatsoever, on it.

Since many long years this class is dysfunctional. It has not been briefed about any work, Muslim leadership has not assigned any duty to it. As a nation it has never been found to be intoxicated with any one purpose, engrossed in any one activity and occupied in rendering some service.

Since it has been unemployed for such a long time its working potentials have become sort of paralyzed. It was but for an occasion like this that a poet had said:

nava-ra talkh-tar mizan cho zauq naghma kam yaabi
hadi-ra tez-tar mi khwan choon mahmal-ra giraan-beenee

If you see the audience isn't relishing it
add more bitterness to the song;
when you find the camel at a lazy pace,
O Camel rider! Louder sing your rustic song.

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But alas! Today we are seeing that, this very bitter and very loud yell even is incapable of producing movement in it. Those who are ever so fond of sleeping are so sound asleep, that even the intense heat of the sun is unable to wake them up.

This is such a reality that if somebody begins to take it for mere poetic fantasy that would not be out of place because this is the way the Muslims of India have spoiled their own image.

The issue of education is apparently a dry issue, constructive undertakings test patience and are fraught with difficulties, but it is surprising that even an interesting thing like the election is unable to attract the attention of this minority (for claiming whose rights, this precisely is the constitutional and traditional procedure in this country). At this critical moment (when the political hierarchy is reorganized for a five-year term) it has given no proof of any consciousness and unity, and order and discipline; neither slogans could have any effect upon it nor statistics and irrefutable facts and information. You just have a look at Muslims, a strange and perplexing uniqueness will be seen; they are aboard the same boat but sulking, not seeing eye to eye, even in troubled waters their hands will be seen seizing each other's collars and their tongues will be pouring out criticism and lies.

Majority of them can be seen creating partitions among Muslims in the name of reform and brotherhood.

Therefore, today we invite this dispersed, distracted, dejected and spiritless community to Islam, as seriousness and respect do not come for free. There are some conditions for it. There is a procedure for it. Life itself is an art and living nations very well understand and make use of this art. And presently on the world stage, only Muslims are such a nation to whom God's eternal book, the light of the prophet's guidance and the brilliant history of Islam have most explained the principle of remaining eternally alive and the entire Noble Quran is full of it. Honor and the state

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of being prosperous – abundance of provisions – peace and security – popularity and the state of being lovable– *Imamath* and *Hijrath* (These terms do not have equivalents in English, inaccurately though, they can be: *leadership* and *emigration*) – victory and God's Succor– deliverance and felicity both in this world and the Hereafter, each and everything has been stated with utmost clarity and in detail. That he who does this, will get this; act against your desires and habits, in that case you will make such-and-such progress; practice total obedience and subordination, remain behind the *Imam* and hold firm to the rope of God, in that case you will achieve such-and-such type of success; adopt a life of God-consciousness and honesty, then you will get this; work with patience and determination and selflessness, then you will earn such-and-such thing.

Honor and eminence: He has associated with belief² and

The state of security: He has kept dependent on the belief being pure, and being free from every type of adulteration, personal desire, habit, innovation in religion and sin, desire for fame and exhibitionist tendency, vested interest and expediency and opportunism.

For the first thing He has said: *Ye shall overcome, if ye are believers.*³ And in another place, the condition He has mentioned with belief is this: *It is those who believe and confound not their belief with wrong doing. These! Theirs is the security and they are the guided.*⁴

God's book has thoroughly explained every detail of His master-plan before Muslims. Now, to mold their lives in accordance with it and to pull themselves out of the swamp of insensitivity and discord is their responsibility; and if they shirk a responsibility which is theirs then there is no fault of God in it. He is the Self-Sufficient and the Eternally Besought of all and has no family ties with anybody. *And thine Lord is not an oppressor unto His bondsmen.*⁵

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Notes and references

1. V.104, chapter 4, *An-Nisaa'*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
2. The English word *belief* is not used here in the general sense of its dictionary meanings. It is used to convey the specific sense of the Urdu/Arabic word *Eemaan*, meaning: belief in all articles of the Islamic faith.
3. V.139, chapter 139, *Aal-e 'Imran*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
4. V.82, chapter 6, *Al An'aam*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
5. V.46, chapter 41, *Ha Meem Sajdah*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.

Present circumstances and the critical responsibility of Muslims

Responsibility of Muslims in this country is far more lofty and critical than slogans, ambitions and desires. If they continue with their selfsame style of presenting a wrong picture of Islam through their life and keep using the name of Islam for achieving their ends, then even the

biggest of the big powers and the biggest of the big governments cannot save them. If a Muslim country errs in this matter then that too will have to face a ruinous backlash. Allah the Exalted has not confined His Sovereignty to any particular country and people, He has not made any covenant of success and eminence with any people merely on the basis of their homeland and nationality. His announcement is clear: *Not your desires nor those of the People of the Book (can prevail): whoever works evil, will be requited accordingly;*¹

If His succor has been covenanted, then it is only upon belief (*Eemaan*) and righteous work and one's own striving. For this reason, if we long for a change to come about in circumstances and are desirous of respect and security, then we will have to walk the same straight path that Allah the

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Exalted has proposed for us for all times to come.

That path, to elaborate, is that we lead life like responsible and noble human beings and true and practicing Muslims in our country; and under the guidance of *Shariah* and *Sunnah* (Divine law and practices of the beloved prophet ﷺ) remove the whole lot of those deficiencies from our life that have absolutely no truck with the life of a Muslim, especially those deficiencies and weaknesses due to which the non-Muslims are getting suspicious and disgusted with the clean, bright and holy teachings of Islam.

These deficiencies and weaknesses are: Those wrong and un-Islamic customs and traditions, and habits that have already got lodged in our society. Rudeness and dishonesty, breaking of promises and the breeching of agreements, wastage and extravagance, atrocity and injustice, and baseless rites and innovations in religion, are such kind of things that cut a very wrong impression not only about us but also, by corollary, about our beloved prophet ﷺ and Islam in the minds of non-Muslims.

Each one of us (whether man or woman) should bring about such a phenomenal and evident change in his life, from which in one look everybody may gather, that he is a son of *millath-e-Ibrahimi* and a true follower of the beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and a type of person who is somewhat different from others, his measures of profit and loss are separate from standards of success and failure; even those who see him off and on do not remain from getting impressed and in their hearts too is born the desire that they join and share in this grace of God. Instead of being an idle and dysfunctional nation that lives in the world of wishes and forecasts (made by astrologers, palmists, etc.), every member of our *millath* should be dynamic and on the move, engaged and engrossed in one righteous work or the other, sympathetic towards God's creation, and beneficial and useful for his country. He should now after giving up mutual differences, conflicts and the struggle for leadership for ever, join with all

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his heart and soul in the reconstruction of the *millath* on the lasting and eternal, worldwide and universal, human and ethical foundation of Islam.

Those hands that had once upon a time built the *Baitullah* (the Holy Ka'bah), the same hands can today build the entire humanity around it. However, this task can be accomplished at the hands of those very Muslims who very well recognize this responsibility and this duty that comes with the position with which Allah the Exalted has honored them.

Each one of us should view his correction as if it were the correction of the whole *millath*. Abandoning the long wait for the *millath* to get corrected, we should now get engaged in correcting our own selves. This precisely is our right portion in the reform, construction and progress of the *millath*, and our humble tribute in the Court of the Prophet-hood of the beloved prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

The right interpretation of an Islamic life-sketch and character, its practical illustration and live portrayal is so fascinating in itself, that even today it can melt hearts and turn foes into friends, and can bring about such a revolutionary change in circumstances which is difficult for us to even imagine in its entirety right now.

Therefore, leaving the tales of Pakistan and Hindustan, *Iran and Tooran*² for good, generate among Muslims a new wave of life and activity, shun the path of complaints and grievances, develop an honest relation with that God and the sentiment of total obedience to Him, in the grip of whose Omnipotence are the earth and the skies, and a single indication from Whom is sufficient to change the destiny of the entire world; in Whose Hand is the key to our rise and honor, and to benefit from Whom the one and only condition is: belief, righteous work and hard striving in the cause of religion.

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The nature of man is the same as it was before; sincerity, love, sympathy, moral character, good deeds and the rendering of service, are respectable in his eyes even today as they were before; many people think that in this bazaar of a world and this market of auctions, where principle and character are sold for Cowries, over there such things find no buyer now. However, the fact, in all fairness, is that the rarer the article that goes under the hammer, the more is its significance. In the lives of ailing nations, such episodes keep recurring once in a while, when their sense of taste gets impaired and all these facts become meaningless and worthless to them, but thank God that our motherland has not reached that stage as yet. Here a call of love and an act of sincerity, even now, has the power to captivate hearts and make people our prisoner. Today entire humanity is dying for each and every draught of the life sustaining water that these sentiments are. If Muslims come forward to demonstrate with their word and deed, character and role, the fascinating and complete peace³ that they possess, in which all these human and moral

virtues have been merged and which has in every age guided human beings and healed the sick, then there is no reason that this prescribed cure would refuse to rejuvenate and heal us today.

However, for this, Muslims will first have to address themselves. They will have to hold themselves, instead of others, responsible for their troubles and will have to bring about a fundamental change in themselves.

*And strive in His cause as ye ought to strive (with sincerity and under discipline). He has chosen you, and has imposed no difficulties on you in religion;*⁴

In other words, while striving hard to counsel the *millath* and help it succeed and bring about a change in circumstances, let there be no deficiency or slackness from our side; every Muslim, without exception (a) ought to consider this to be his foremost duty and (b) make the whole lot
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of his relations, stakes and all interests or traditions subordinate to it.

In the second part of the verse *and has imposed no difficulties on you in religion*, we are told that we need not consider this work of religion to be some mountain that has to be scaled. We are not being asked to do something that is beyond our capacity. Allah the Exalted has not kept any sort of oppression, difficulty and complication in religion. Today the extent to which carrying out Allah's commandments and acting upon *Shariah and Sunnah* (Divine law and practices of the beloved prophet ﷺ) is being considered impractical and difficult that, in fact, is an unconscious fabrication and the produce of our brain and mind. If even one step will be taken resolutely, then all these difficulties of the path of Truth will, *Insha Allah*, disappear slowly but definitely on their own; and issues that we are presuming to be very difficult, they will then appear to be extremely easy. However, this will only happen when we have fulfilled the previous

condition *And strive in His cause as ye ought to strive (with sincerity and under discipline).*

In other words, every Muslim, at whatever the level and status he may be, should set such an example through his life that by looking at it people can become aware of the virtues of Islam and its distinctive features. If there is something dirty and some pollution in his atmosphere then he first ought to hold himself responsible for its removal. Without any pride and arrogance, he ought to understand that every Muslim is a beacon of light in his own right. God has caused him to be born, for him to first of all do an evaluation of himself and after that for the evaluation of others.

hai haqeeqat jis ke deen ki ehtesaab-e ka'enaat

Whose religion, in truth, is the criterion,
of right and wrong in the universe.

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There is a whole-time responsibility upon him, that in weddings, mourning(s), in meetings and gatherings, in offices and shops, he should not ignore anywhere that he has a duty of his own also – which constitutes the basis and foundation of the collective duty of the *millath* – because if he errs in this domain then its loss he himself and, with him, the whole *millath* will have to bear.

If he is a trader, then he should be a trustworthy and sympathetic trader and he should try that this trustworthiness and honesty becomes common among other members of his trade also. If he is an employee, then he should be upright, hardworking and devoted to his duty. If he is wealthy, then in that wealth he should exercise utmost caution about allowed and forbidden (*Halaal and Haraam*), justified and unjustified (*Haq and Na-haq*) and should fulfill the rights of God and His slaves that have been devolved upon him. In short, each one of us should be concerned about how he can

serve religion within the orbit of his work and environment and how he can carry out that tremendous responsibility that has been entrusted to every individual of the *Ummath-e Muhammadiyah*.⁵ If you refer to the full text of the verses cited above, three things are especially mentioned in them, *namaz* (prayer), *zakath* (poor-due) and *e'tisaam billah* meaning: a deep and true relation with Allah. These three points are, as if, milestones and landmarks for his journey; after crossing these, to go astray or fail is entirely out of question. *Insha Allah*.

This is a divinely structured program, about whose result also Allah the Exalted has made us aware, that is, *He is your Patron: an Excellent Patron and Excellent Helper*.⁶

Provided we do this much, then from across the veil of the Unseen, the Skill and Kindness of Allah the Exalted will arrange for our succor, security and honor; and who can be more skillful, supporting, helping and adept at removing difficulties other than Allah the Exalted!!

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Notes and references

1. V.123, chapter 4, *An-Nisaa'*, The meaning of the Holy Quran; Abdullah Yusuf Ali.
2. There is no country called *Tooran*. The Urdu idiom *Iran aur Tooran ke qisse* means: to engage in superfluous and exaggerated conversation.
3. *Peace* in Islamic terminology means safety, security, well-being, good health and includes the infinite meanings of bliss and happiness.
4. V.78, chapter 22, *Al Haj*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
5. Another term for Muslims.

6. V.78, chapter 22, *Al Haj*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.

A
new
frontline!

The clash of Truth and Falsehood is not any new. These clashes have been going on since ever and will continue until the Day of Resurrection, but earlier, this clash used to take place in open plains and its decision too was reached quickly; now this clash rages within families, inside homes, rather within the rooms of homes, on radios and televisions, in books and magazines, along thoroughfares and in alleyways and, to be brief, in every nook and corner of life. The reference is to those irreligious campaigns that have turned the entire atmosphere toxic and poisonous. It is that typical state of affairs in which no temporary arrangement can work. A merely defensive course of action will bring so much gain that, minute by minute, these campaigns will become more powerful. The necessity is to gather courage and mount an attack on the very source of disturbance because of which all these evils are erupting in the society. And the methodology for it is that: (a) At every frontline, after casting away the defensive stance, a position of open confrontation be adopted, and (b) the deployment of religious element at every such frontline and area

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where the irreligious holds its sway. Not only an individual ought to perceive confronting it to be his duty, instead it ought to become the object of his liking and interest. Here a thought might cross the mind, that such a powerful campaign of 'the irreligious – backed by countless resources and innumerable members – how, after all, is it possible to confront it? However, if we concentrate, we will find the answer to this question very easily, this answer exists in the book of Allah the Exalted in advance.

*If ye shall succor Allah, He shall succor you and make firm your feet.*¹

The gist of the whole lot of powers of falsehood, its entire army and camp, equipment and resources, is just so much as appears in a Noble Tradition. When the polytheists of Arabia, with great pride, raised their slogan:

**We have 'Uzza (name of an idol);
And 'Uzza you have not!**

Upon that, Muslims were commanded that in a tit-for-tat response they also raise their slogan and raise it equally aloud.

**Allah is our Patron and Accomplisher;
You have no Patron and Accomplisher!**

All their strength and power, and pomp and show, on one side, they do not have that make-weight which can draw victory and divine succor. Of course to make a beginning with sincerity is our duty; completion and success, and result and conclusion, is the work of Allah the Exalted and His grace and reward.

The following proclamation of the Glorious Quran is for every period of time: *And faint not, nor grieve; ye shall overcome if ye are believers.*²

A NEW FRONTLINE! | 121

For this, our responsibility is only so much that we be true Muslims. By true Muslims is meant that we be sincere and ought to be doing this work purely for Allah's pleasure and, secondly, we ought to have in us a missionary's spirit and the sentiment of spreading Allah's word among mankind. The words that appear in a Noble Tradition are: *He who loved for Allah's sake and hated for Allah's sake, such a one perfected his belief.*³ For perfecting belief and to reach the stage of *ye shall overcome* these two propellers or, shall we say, two currents *loved for Allah's sake* and *hated for Allah's sake* are necessary, in the manner that positive and negative terminals are necessary to generate electricity.

Until these two currents will not unite into one strong stream, the flood of 'the irreligious will be impossible to neutralize at any front. Collectively

and individually, we need to check whether these qualities are present in our own selves and our youth, or not, that have been described as the condition for perfecting belief and upon which divine succor has been covenanted.

Notes and references

1. V.7, C.47, *Muhammad*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
2. V.139, Chapter 3, *Aal-e 'Imran*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
3. The complete text of the Tradition is as follows: *He who loved for Allah's sake and hated for Allah's sake and gave for Allah's sake and held back for Allah's sake, such a one perfected his belief* [Chapter title: Evidences of the increase in belief and of decrease in it; Book of the prophet's practices; Abu Da'ood.]

Not of
`a la Great Wall of China,
the necessity is of
A Great Wall of Belief!

In the present time the building of dams is the in thing, and there is no doubt, that in economic terms its importance has increased a lot today. Water that used to go waste earlier, that is now saved, stored and employed in various large-scale undertakings; a large area of land comes under cultivation, hydro-electric power is generated for factories, a lot of people get livelihood, in rural areas the situation of electricity and water is eased, communications grow and systems of transport are established on sound lines, an increase comes about in per capita and national incomes and agricultural produce rises phenomenally. If people work with honesty and sincere intention then all these benefits and results are certainly expected.

However, the sad side of the picture is that the concern and attention governments (whether they be Islamic or un-Islamic) direct towards all these matters today, not even a small part, rather not even one percent of it do they direct towards solving those problems which are more serious

... A GREAT WALL OF BELIEF! | 123

and critical than these, for example, (a) the country's moral leprosy (b) that conscience which has stopped functioning (c) the sense of responsibility that is gradually disappearing altogether (d) a free-wheeling lifestyle that is being openly propagated in the back-streets and alleyways (e) love for money and (f) the craze for position (g) corruption and (h) gambling.

Why is it so and why, after all, such great minds as we have amidst us do not approach such a big and manifest reality?

This query is a natural reflex. However, if we will reflect, we shall reach the conclusion that there is only one reason for it, that is, the plunder of the spiritual world we do not see with our eyes. Consequently, we do not come to know of its occurrence. The farthest that these materialistic eyes of ours reach, that distance even after using the largest of

the large telescopes does not stretch beyond the House of Parliament or the throne of a Sultanate.

All we see is that, so much land lies dry and is uncultivable, we are unable to see that so many hearts have already become barren and deserted. Clearly visible is that so many villages are deprived of light and electricity, not visible to us is that how many eyes are deprived of light (of divine guidance), how many intellects have been *sealed* and how many hearts have been locked (to keep out divine guidance).

The term *sealed* in Islamic terminology is a highly unfortunate state in which human intellect ceases to accept Divine Guidance and God's crystal clear message becomes incomprehensible to man.

We are able to see that so many families are deprived of wealth, but we are unable to see that entire localities and, at times, entire countries are deprived of the light of belief (*Eemaan*) and unfamiliar even with the foremost needs of humanity, ordinary principles of citizenship and the basic values of integrity and trustworthiness.

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We are able to see that so many of our children are deprived of education and do not recognize letters of the alphabet, but unable to see that hundreds of thousands and tens of millions of these human beings around us are ignorant about their Creator and Lord, unfamiliar with the apostle ﷺ and his teachings, and unconcerned and uninformed about the Hereafter, and in their hearts there appears to be no effect of God's greatness, fear of God and love for Him.

For tackling epidemics our country has a discreet arrangement of vaccinations, hospitals and quarantines. However, for ethical epidemics – that are fast spreading in the name of dance, music and art and through cinema, radio, dailies and magazines that are high on sexual content, spy thrillers, pornography, morally damaging posters and advertisements, and obscene songs – we do not have any hospital, any quarantine and any protective law, and nor do we ever feel the need for it.

For this evil producing storm of moral decadence which is taking the whole country and society in its sway, the idea of any Aswan, Mangla or Bhakra Dam does not cross our mind.

Losses and devastations wrecked by the limited floods of the Nile and the Euphrates, Ravi and Jhelum, and Ganges and Yamuna, agreed and accepted. However, also for the flood of immoral behavior, corruption, shamelessness and alcoholism and of the worship of wealth that is flowing neck high in every society (irrespective of Muslim and non-Muslim), a Great Wall of Belief is necessary today, a wall not made of brick and rock or lead and iron – `a la Great Wall of China!

Of fear of God, conviction about a second lifetime, bashfulness and sense of honor, true friendship with humanity, evaluation of conscience, honesty and truthfulness, it has to be that wall of *Eemaan* (belief) which is far more essential than the dams, bridges and embankments that are built for

... A GREAT WALL OF BELIEF! | 125

saving water or storage of water or for irrigation and electricity; and over which easily is spent millions and billions of Rupees, the most precious capital of hearts and brains and the best extract of human endeavor.

No matter how grand these dams and plans that we have may be, if our nation does not have the heroic traits of moral responsibility and moral strength, then they cannot be of any use to it, cannot save it from any internal danger and external aggression and cannot postpone its fall and decline. They stand before the nation as if they were some device of deception, nourish its false pride or negligence and drunkenness; like a mountain they intercept its path and block its vision. The nation is delighted every time it sees them that in such-and-such part of the world, such-and-such of our people have established their political and economic

superiority. However, this entire construction actually happens to be the sand of moral weakness and it cannot withstand even a single shock.

From India to Egypt and Syria, rather up to Morocco and Algeria, the standard of progress being presumed is one and the same: high dams and magnificent hotels. The high dam of Aswan is a large dam of the entire region around the Mediterranean Sea. However when Israel attacked, at that time it was learnt that on the one side the structure of the dam was coming up and on the other side the nation was being eaten from within; secrets were sold, every luxury was indulged in in the battlefield, female operatives of the Jewish intelligence continued to keep contact with military officers, the youth occupied themselves with pornographic telecasts, songs of Abdul Wahab and Umm Kulthoom and listening to hypnotizing and mesmerizing speeches or they kept wrangling among themselves and remained busy in the tug-o-war for leadership; discotheques continued to flourish and the beaches remained full of activity as usual, a very large number of people committed treason and hatched conspiracies against the country.

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All this was a small outcome of the nation's negligence towards moral strength and the gem of gallantry, its contempt of belief, and its carelessness towards fear of God and the accountability of the Hereafter, which was exposed in one armed conflict.

Perhaps we had presumed that Aswan Dam will create moral courage and uprightness also in the nation, its character will become strong; belief and conviction, gallantry and courage will also develop in it, wealth and woman, nothing will be able to lure it, and no stiff hour of trial will be able to shake its feet.

Aswan Dam (or whichever dam it be on any river of the world), will surely do its job, those benefits also will be obtained from it for which it has been

built; but the nation's moral construction, the moulding of its character, the guarding of its conscience, its evaluation, its guidance and the responsibility of leading it are things that lie beyond its capacity.

Our plans and programs are very auspicious and beneficial, they are very necessary and indispensable for the economic infrastructure; but they will be useful and will survive only in the condition that those who stand to benefit from them survive, and by falling prey to moral weaknesses do not end up losing them.

Today not only in our country rather in the whole Islamic world, a new type of dam is needed for the stormy waves of moral decadence and corruption.

Together with the Great Wall of China, today we need a Great Wall of Belief, whose building material is not brick, rock and iron; it is rather education and training, the reform of cinema. And, instead of allowing radio, television and press to degenerate into vehicles of moral ruin, moral decline and momentary delight; we have to make them vehicles that

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would facilitate moral construction, arouse the sense of responsibility, develop the power of confrontation and create firmness of character.

The need is to give a bit of practical demonstration, that, this world is not a market of auctions or some gambling den, where only money raises the bid and defeat and victory are transacted; it is a God-made planet and a God-given grant, it is a great blessing from God and our very crucial responsibility. This life is not a thing that one gets again and again, it has been given only for once and after it is taken back, it will never be possible to get it a second time. Therefore, one should live in its fragrant heaven and garden, like noble and honest, hardworking and responsible human beings, not like predators and cattle or like thieves and dacoits.

The way we are dealing with our country today, from that it appears as if this is not our country, it belongs to some enemy. Every person has assumed that his world is just his stomach and it has to go round and round at any cost; his country is just the home he owns where all sorts of luxuries should be available, no matter if rights of hundreds of human beings have to be usurped for it; and his hometown is just his kitchen garden in which every fruit of this world, every flower and every blessing should be present, no matter if all the poor laborers of the world be living in misery, debts and be dying for every single grain of cereal.

This is a very dangerous disease and epidemic, against which all friends of humanity and especially Muslims (who possess God's last message and the eternal light of the prophet-hood of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ) should come forward; and before everything else should turn their attention towards this killer disease, which has already spread its tentacles into every home and the sorrowful consequences of which are appearing before our eyes in the Arab region and non-Arab region, everywhere.

Two important foundation structures of our society

By scanning contemporary Muslim society we get the impression that it needs special attention on two things.

One: The way of life.

The other: Livelihood.

You will find here all types of campaigns and initiatives, viz. religious, educational, political and *Islaahi**, but you will not see the attention that is

* 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. The same work when done among Muslims is called *Islaah*; the term *Islaahi* that appears above is the adjective of *Islaah*.

desired being given towards societal reform and stability of livelihood. As a result, on the one side social ills, inequities in dealings, lack of character and moral bankruptcy are increasing day by day, on the other side,

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indigence and poverty too are rising at a fast pace. That is why, we need to devote special attention today to the reform of *the way of life* and *religious training*, through this work every educational and reform campaign will find support automatically because it is an inseparable component of those campaigns. For clarity of expression, we can restate this task in the form of two major objectives.

FIRST OBJECTIVE: Consideration for the principles of *shariah* (Divine law) and effort to act in accordance with it in the areas of, the rights of Allah's slaves, transparency and correctness of dealings, solidarity and brotherly relations, trust and integrity, cleanliness and refinement, honesty and

righteousness, commerce, agriculture, business and other material transactions.

SECOND OBJECTIVE: Complete abstention from customs and innovations in religion, attempts to curtail unnecessary expenditures and stop decoration and illumination in ceremonies, the establishment of a private fund (*Bait-ul-maal*) to grant loans, extension of monetary support and encouragement to small-scale and cottage industries, the establishment of a cooperative store and cooperative society.

Such are these objectives, that they will fill the above mentioned void in our educational and political drive to a great extent and will help establish livelihood and our way of life on sound foundations.

To run this campaign, the amount that is presently being spent on costly functions, and other similar things, may be donated to *Bait-ul-maal*, so that, while that can be utilized to meet the occupational needs of Muslims, the door to wasteful expenditures too is closed for good.

In the present times, most evils are entering the Muslim nation through just these two routes: either slavery to customs and traditions, and

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unconcern with the commandments of *shariah* prepares them to commit wrongful acts or poverty is driving them towards wrong avenues. On the other side is such a type of affluent class, that unconcerned with all these problems it is engrossed in earning and squandering. If by persuading these people, an interest-free financial services bank is established that can grant loans for publications, educational, commercial, agricultural and domestic needs, then this elitist class can become an excellent and hassle-free source for the progress of small traders and skilled workers, rather for the cottage industries and handicraft enterprises even.

Similar is the system of the *Shariath House* which actually should be established amidst Muslim populations and the whole lot of personal disputes or matters related to Islamic jurisprudence should be decided there. By doing so, a large portion of the time, mind and wealth of Muslims will be saved from being drained and will be utilized in the cause of religion, and it will become possible to act easily upon *Shariah*. These are some issues whose resolution can contribute a lot in reforming Muslims and in their political and economic stability. And this can be started and can be run in every district.

The basic point is that, its necessity be felt in general and people realize that, 'what a pathetic stage negligence towards these things has brought us to.' We hope that more gentlemen will like to reflect upon this issue with seriousness and sympathy and will shed light on this important subject.

We are of the opinion, that there is no such idea herein with which one may differ. However, the need still is to decide its details and give more thought to its operational stages.

An unavoidable
phase in
inviting mankind

to Islam

Among the phases and stages of spreading Allah's word and inviting mankind to Islam, a grave and critical phase that arrives is: despair and pessimism. People who are connected in one way or the other with the work of inviting mankind to Islam keep experiencing it quite a lot. Often it so happens, that in spite of working to our full capacity in any given territory or city, the success achieved is not entirely to our satisfaction. At times, in the presence of all requirements and reasons for success from A to Z, one finds himself staring at the face of absolute failure. Sometimes frustrated by oppositions, hindrances and difficulties of the path a missionary loses confidence and he sees respite in retirement and seclusion. However, careful observation will reveal that all these are the natural ups and downs and normal stages in inviting mankind to Islam, passage through which is inevitable, and ultimate success is only his who

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passes through these as also measures up to the severity of this trial.

If the purpose of inviting mankind to Islam and the spread of Allah's word is defined in the beginning then in that case, perhaps, we might not have to face much complication and confusion. Behind hopelessness and depression operates the urge that the scale of work and the standard of success that we have set for ourselves is achieved.

Often the sentiment working behind it is that, so many individuals ought to come under our circle of influence, the area of inviting mankind to Islam ought to become so extensive, the number of our disciples and

devotees ought to rise to so much; although if you look at it carefully this thing is not really correct. It is normal for ideas to cross every human mind but they are not at all worth giving the status of an aim, and they should never be allowed to interfere with the sheer delight of endeavor and devotion to the aim. For precisely this occasion, words that appear in the Glorious Quran are as follows: *It can hurt you not as to whosoever strayeth so long as ye keep yourself guided.*¹ If the right understanding of the Hereafter be before us; compliance of God's commandments be dearer to us than our sentiments; the delight of carrying out commandments and the priority of divine pleasure be more precious and preferable in our sight than worldly wealth; then in that case, the short-lived difficulties of the path and the temporary disappointments in inviting people to Islam, instead of creating a demoralizing effect in us, will create a unique state of mind marked by selflessness and self-sacrifice, ecstasy and inebriation, and through these will be arranged the mechanism for our reform, progress and self-improvement.

In this connection, more than the evaluation of the universe is the necessity for the evaluation of the self. Wealth and monetary success that comes with God's displeasure and *shariath's* violation and infraction, carries no worth for a believer; and with God's pleasure and *shariath-*

AN UNAVOIDABLE PHASE . . . | 133

compliant action the slipping away of the biggest of the big riches from his hand, never becomes a cause of grief and sorrow for him.

To be precise, the entire workshop of the reform of human beings, rectitude and guidance, and inviting mankind to Islam and the spread of Allah's word, exists, so that it becomes a means for our own reform, the path of rectitude and guidance is created for us, we rise in ranks, and our sins are forgiven. Therefore, if we get this treasure with failure, then over such superficial failure and frustration let a thousand successes and triumphs be sacrificed.

And suppose in this world all get reformed, all become pious slaves of Allah who are acceptable in His sight, everywhere the winds of belief and conviction start blowing and the wealth of repentance and reform becomes inexpensive and commonplace, however, no credit for all this comes in our lot— then for us, its absence and presence is all one and the same.

If you look from this aspect, then you will see that the extensiveness of the invitation of mankind to Islam is not so much necessary and indispensable, as its peacefulness and depth is.

The Arab region and the non-Arab region, and the Orient and the Occident, today wherever you will go you will hear the hawkers shouting the same line: *Mustafa unavailable! On sale prices 'bu Lahab!*² But, from this climate, will it be right to draw the conclusion that we abandon the work of inviting mankind to Islam and abort, by ourselves, the one course of action which holds the hope? Certainly not.

The Glorious Quran is full of references to this delicate, unavoidable and significant phase of inviting mankind to Islam. Therefore, missionaries and the whole lot of believers will get maximum help from the study and

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contemplation of the Glorious Quran. And you will find in it an ointment for every wound, an analgesic for every pain, and a convincing and complete answer for every problem and question you have.

*And who is more truthful than Allah in discourse?*³

Notes and references

1. V.105, chapter 5, *Al Maidah*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
2. Readers unfamiliar with Islam will like to know here that 'Mustafa' is one of the appellations of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Whereas, 'Abu Lahab' was a tribal chief who lived in Makkah, he was an enemy of God and His apostle ﷺ and Allah the Exalted gave him and his wife the wrathful news of life in Hell for ever, in his very lifetime; chapter 111 of the Glorious Quran is precisely to this effect. The author creates a faithful picture of the 'spiritual market' of the world where 'men of virtue' are apparently not in demand and therefore unavailable; and 'men of vice' are apparently in demand and therefore cheaply available.
3. V.87, chapter 4, *An-Nisaa'*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.

The benchmark of civilization

in Islam

People think of civilization in different ways, various notions and theories are there, and numerous explanations have continually been offered for it. Therefore, the moment we talk of *Islam and civilization* we should think that, what is the benchmark of civilization in Islam?

The plight of civilization (civilization in the sense of, a society, its culture and its way of life) is such, that a thing is against etiquette in one family, commendable in the second family and permissible in the third family. By researching families, tribes, cities and countries such things will certainly be found at every level that will appear to be highly in conflict and contrast with each other. In the East, the standard of civilization is something else, in the West it is something else. Similar is the plight of the standard of beauty. Ethiopians of Africa, the Chinese of Mongolia, the Japanese, the white-complexioned inhabitants of Europe, all have separate points of view about beauty. In such a situation, how can it be believed that *to be*

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civilized is one single substance, that keeps to one standard and one level everywhere.

In this connection, there is a fundamental point that is necessary to keep in mind. That, *to be civilized* is a value-added quality and its entire worth is associated with the greatness of purpose it serves, e.g. in the opinion of Islam if a person is an embezzler, a bad character or is devoid of conscience, and is unprincipled, then – in spite of all his apparent etiquette, politeness, the suaveness of his conversation, the admirable way

in which he dresses, and all his knowledge, skill, and the refined way in which he leads his life – he is *uncivilized*.

This is such a fundamental principle, that by keeping it before us we can very well understand the logic in the Islamic standard of civilization.

The same idea can be expressed in other words as follows: In Islam the prelude to becoming civilized begins from within and this starting point in un-Islamic theories is without; in Islam its foundation rests on the Hereafter, in un-Islamic theories its foundation rests on worldly life; and *Verily the noblest of you with Allah is the most God-fearing of you*¹ means just this.

To elucidate this idea, two examples are being presented here. In *Du'a-e-Qunooth*², every person among us recites daily that, *whosoever is openly involved in impiety and sinfulness we leave him and choose total separation from him*.

This is the starting point of a disagreement with modern materialistic civilization which will be visible at every turn and stage. Civilization of the present age says that sinfulness and impiety is a human being's personal affair, nobody should have any concern with it and therefore relations can unhesitatingly be established with such persons; but the Islamic viewpoint

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is that, if keeping close relations with him who rebels against a government is crime, then how is compromise and friendship with him who rebels against God to be considered proper and permissible? Today's world will interpret it as separatism or conservatism and narrow-mindedness but the Islamic standard of civilization is absolutely different from modern materialistic ideas. That is why, no such junction arrives on its track where both can be seen to arrive at one point and unite. Similar is the Islamic standard of civilized behavior: *And it hath been revealed to you in the Book*

*that when ye hear Allah's revelations being disbelieved in and mocked at, sit not down with them until they plunge in a discourse other than that: for, then, ye shall surely become like unto them.*³ (In other words, we should never sit in gatherings where, there is a chance that, lack of respect will be shown towards God and the prophet ﷺ and in case such a conversation begins, we should rise and walk out from there with no consideration for the etiquette of that gathering.)

In the opinion of those who, in the name of freedom of thought, invite mankind to the worship of desires, this will be construed as obscurantism, bias and sentimentality. However, in Islam it will be entirely in accordance with the norms of civilization (civilization in the sense of a human society that is very developed and organized) rather, this in precise will be civilized behavior and those who sit in that gathering, by its standards, will be called extremely uncivilized people.

These are two examples that immediately came to my mind. Otherwise, careful observation will reveal that the entire system of the Islamic way of life is replete with instances and examples of this type.

Leaving no food in plates after a meal, licking the fingers, cleaning teeth with a chewing stick, these are such things that are intolerable for the modern Western way of life, however, the Islamic viewpoint in this matter is crystal clear. In its opinion the source of civilizing humanity is the

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commandment of God and the example set by the beloved prophet ﷺ, not theories of our own making.

In the modern world, civilization is the name of selfishness, in Islam: of selflessness; in the modern world, civilization is the name of self-centeredness, in Islam: of self-neglect. It is that basic point of difference which sets the Islamic standard of civilization totally apart from the whole lot of present and past man-made standards, rather *hypotheses*, to use a

more proper word. Therefore, if somebody talks of civilization and its advanced formats, again and again, in the context of Islam, then he should do some hard thinking that what is the sense of civilization in his own mind? Hope it is not that, in his innocence, he is taking the same immoral sense of civilization that has gained currency and whose standard bearer is the West. If that is so, then he is trying to attribute such a thing to Islam, that Islam is totally independent of.

To see the splendid manifestation of Islamic civilization and its most advanced formats we need to look towards the hut of the rightly-guided Caliph 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, not towards the royal courts of Baghdad and Damascus or the gilt palaces of Granada and Seville; for its explanation we need not refer to Ibn Rushd⁴ or Farabi⁵; practical examples of the chaste Islamic lives of the Noble Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, the Successors, Islamic scholars and holy men of the *Ummath-e-Muhammadiyah* are sufficient for it.

Islamic civilization will not be found in fine arts, in the delicate bends and curves of the arts of architecture and painting. Its search should be conducted in the eternally alive and exemplary biographies of the pious, which chronicle their conduct, their determination and selflessness and the services they have rendered; those who we remember by names like *Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jeelani*, may Allah have mercy on him, *Sheikh Nizamuddin Awliyaa'*, may Allah have mercy on him, *Hazrath Mujaddid Alf*

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Thani, may Allah have mercy on him, and *Hazrath Syed Ahmad Shaheed*, may Allah have mercy on him.

Regarding the art of building construction the Glorious Quran has spelt out its standard: *Build ye on every high place a monument for vain delight: and seek ye out strongholds, that haply ye may last forever! And if ye cease by force, cease ye as tyrants.*⁶

The entire worth of prose and poetry too exists when it is in line with that purpose (which civilization serves in Islam) and strengthens it, the moment this value-added element will dissociate itself, the soul will leave the body, and its status in the sight of Islamic civilization will become only that much which has been described in the Glorious Quran as follows:

*And the poets – it is those straying in evil who follow them. Seest thou not that they wander distractedly in every valley? And that, they say what they practice not? Except those who believe, work righteousness, engage much in the remembrance of Allah, and defend themselves only after they are unjustly attacked, and soon will the unjust assailants know what vicissitudes their affairs will take!*⁷

Conducting researches in Islamic history, over the patronage that monarchs had extended to dance and music or their unnecessary constructions from a supportive (not critical) point of view or applauding and praising the manifestly un-Islamic aspects of their court life; or trying to present Ibn Sina (called Avicenna in the West), Ibn Rushd and Muskoyah as heroes of Islamic history; or getting interested in ancient civilizations of countries, like the Assyrian civilization⁸, Finiqi civilization⁹ and Pharaonic civilization and its advanced formats¹⁰, raising calls for their revival, praising and admiring them with love and respect, cannot definitely be called service to Islamic civilization. This proves, if anything, the fact, that we are unfamiliar and unaware of the Islamic standard of civilization or are

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prey to the awe of 'the un-Islamic and inferiority complex; and in this age of extreme greed and material appetites, cannot even speak of the Islamic standard openly and, more than God, fear those human beings who cannot harm us at all.

Civilization is not the name of such a thing that can be transported from one place to another place without loss in transit. It should be searched among hypotheses propounded by man and principles that God has decided forever. If it is subordinate to principles that God has told us and to the example set by the beloved prophet ﷺ it is civilization; and if it is against them, then in spite of all its claims, philosophies, campaigns and libraries, it is the antithesis of civilization.

*Apart from Truth, what (remains) but error? How then are ye turned away!*¹¹

Notes and references

1. V.13, Chapter 49, *Al Hujrath*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
2. A supplication usually recited in *Witr* prayers.
3. V.140, Chapter 4, *An-Nisaa'*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
4. Ibn Rushd (1128 – 1198), Spanish Muslim philosopher, known as Averroes in the West, hailed as the most celebrated thinker and scientist of the 12th

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century, who made remarkable contributions in philosophy, logic, medicine, music and jurisprudence that exercised their influence over several centuries.

5. Abu An-Nasr Al-Farabi (870 – 950), Turkistani Muslim philosopher, known as al-Pharabius in the West and given the epithet of the *Second Teacher* (*al-Muallim al-Thani*), Aristotle being the first; contributed profoundly to science, philosophy, logic, music, medicine and sociology, and stands out as

authoring an Encyclopedia. His contributions too exercised their influence over several centuries.

6. V.128-130, chapter 26, *Ash-Sho'raa'*, The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall.
7. V.224-227, C.26, *Ash-Sho'raa'*, The meaning of the Holy Quran; Abdullah Yusuf Ali.
8. The 12th century Assyrian civilization derives its name from the ancient city of Ashur, the capital of Mesopotamia, now Iraq. Assyrians were a Semitic people who played a major role in the foundation of the civilization of mankind. Their main occupations were farming, mining and forestry, they had the largest standing army in West Asia, knew two languages, namely, Akkadian and neo-Syriac and were advanced in science and mathematics and are known to have developed medical science. Their empire extended to some regions of modern Turkey, the north of Tigris; and their fall came in the 7th century BC when they were reduced to a small nation of Diaspora scattered over West Asia.
9. Albanian coastal zone along the Adriatic has been the cradle of early civilizations, namely, **Foenike (Urdu/Arabic: Finiqi)**, Apollonia, Aulona (Vlora), Orikum, Onhezmi etc. Finiqi civilization prospered during 7th and 6th centuries BC in what is now Vlore County, in South Albania.
10. One of the six civilizations globally to arise independently, the ancient Pharaonic civilization of Northeastern Africa dates back to 3000 BC. It was concentrated along the lower reaches of the Nile in Egypt and was ruled by

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Pharaohs. Pharaoh is a title used by the monarchs of the Pharaonic civilization who considered themselves to be living gods and ruled with absolute power. It is said that the word Pharaoh comes from the Holy Bible and was used by the prophets *Sayyadna* Yusuf (Joseph) and *Sayyadna* Musa (Moses), peace be upon them.

11. V.32, Chapter 10, *Yunus*, The meaning of the Glorious Quran; Abdullah Yusuf Ali.

Towards a

bright future

In the sight of those who blankly watch the face of circumstances, and those who act as signaled by causes and events, the future of Muslims depends only upon the balance of power, the largeness and smallness of their populations, compromises with situations and their ability to render the stream of their *Milli*¹ existence miscible in new currents. The standard and dogma they go by is that:

- First of all, we should see that what change do circumstances and events want from us.
- The priority before everything else is that we adapt ourselves according to those circumstances and events.
- Subsequently we can observe that our principles and ideals or our civilization and culture get affected by them to what degree, because in order to survive and to make progress we will have to bear those *Milli* losses also to an extent.

In the solutions they propose for solving the problems of Muslims and in
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the way they want to guide them, naturally, this same mind-set is at work.

On issues related with the education, urban life and the way of life of Muslims, the viewpoint of making compromises by a little give and take is very common in the minds of these people. Sometimes in undertones and

sometimes openly they keep propagating this notion and think that this alone is the final and practical solution of these and all other issues.

Is this confirmedly, however, a practical and realistic viewpoint? Will we, after an objective and unbiased deliberation, still reach the same conclusion?

Careful observation will reveal, that, this mindset and viewpoint has actually been produced on two accounts: one, presuming Muslims as being identical to other nations of this world; the other, Islam and being unfamiliar with it. The most important and central point from where we should make a beginning is that, Allah the Exalted does not deal with Muslims the way He does with other nations. About those nations Allah the Exalted has said, again and again, in the Glorious Quran that, We have kept the rope long for them and have given them latitude; even in their construction is destruction, even in their comfort is calamity, even in their luxury is trial, and even in their rise is fall.

Allah says in the Glorious Quran: *Whosoever shall disbelieve, him also I shall give enjoyment for a while; thereafter I shall drive him to the torment of the Fire – an ill abode!*²

In another place He says: *And strain not thine eyes after that which We have given classes of them to enjoy; the splendor of the life of the world, that we might try them therein; and the provision of thy Lord is the best and most lasting.*³

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At one more place He says: *Let not wherefore their riches and their children amaze thee. Allah intendeth to torment them therewith in the life of the world and that their souls pass away while they are infidels.*⁴

Certain Traditions mention, that when man places his confidence in something else and becomes indifferent towards God, and after that, does some work trusting his own resources, thereupon Allah the Exalted withdraws His Hand from him and He does not even bother about the fact that to which valley he went and ruined himself.

Allah the Exalted turned His merciful Eye away from those nations because of their arrogance and pride, vainglory and the repression they unleashed across the earth, their scorn for prophet-hood and apostleship, and over-confidence in their own knowledge and power (stated in the Glorious Quran in the following manner: *He (Qaroon) said: I have been vouchsafed this because of the knowledge that is with me.*⁵); and just as the Satan was given time till the Day of Resurrection to mislead, similarly, his followers too were allowed a certain freedom, that they make as much preparations as they can to get a taste of their rebellion and drunkenness.

What has been its outcome?

After spurning the real and genuine support of God, these nations were forced to bow their heads before every object of this world. Very proudly they say that, we have conquered nature and have thrown lassoes around the moon and stars, but observe closely and you will see that they have tied their future to what an odd and strange variety of things. transitory, lifeless, merciless and devoid of conscience. After turning away from the threshold of the One Real God, how many shrines they had to bow before, and what petty and abject things they had to adopt for their

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aim and purpose. They have laid the foundation of their future on portions of bread and components of bombs, on political conditions that change by the minute, rather it will not be wrong to say – on the immeasurably short lived moments of human consciousness. Today it is no veiled or hidden fact that a head of state's ordinary slip of mind or wrong line of thinking

can prove to be and result in the death and tragic destruction of tens of millions of people. The result of leaving God and clinging to circumstances is that, Allah the Exalted has tied their future to the mirrors and screens of radars in such a way, that even a slight lapse in calculation can stoke the flames of a world war; over a prestige and ego issue, blood of tens of millions of human beings can be shed with remorseless cruelty. Given the ever growing use of latest war technique and technology and the ever growing reliance upon it, the destruction and safety of human beings now depends only on a few individuals, rather only on a few pushbuttons, pressing which can immediately unleash before us the frightening specter of such a catastrophe, the correct idea of which these slaves of circumstances and self-neglecting humans, even themselves do not have.

For a living nation, which has a belief, a faith, the responsibility of inviting mankind to Truth, and a message to deliver, is not the lesson that it become a subordinate of circumstances. The way to its bright future is not that it chisel and grind its *Milli* form to fit that into the mold of some new atmosphere, and sit down, resignedly, content with the scrapings. The way for it is only that, which the Glorious Quran has already pointed out with remarkable clarity.

*Allah hath promised those of you who believe and work the righteous works that He shall make them successors on the earth even as He had made those before them successors, and that He shall surely establish for them their religion which He hath approved for them, and that He shall surely exchange unto them after their fear a security.*⁶

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The entire history of this *Ummath* bears testimony that it never took unfavorable circumstances, hardships and acrimonies as anything more than the cloud of dust raised by its moving caravan; but that was after it had straightened its affair with God and had fulfilled its conditions. The deployment of *Sayyadna* Osama's army by *Sayyadna* Abu Bakr (may Allah

be pleased with him) too was against the demand of circumstances; for *Sayyadna* Khalid, may Allah be pleased with him, to confront innumerable Romans with a handful of people too was against circumstances; after the *Mujahideen* had landed on the shores of Andalus⁷, Tariq bin Ziyad's decision to burn the boats and the Muslim cavalry's spurring horses into the Atlantic too was against circumstances; but always remember, that all this was after Muslims had felt satisfied about their religious condition and the future of their religious life; not before that.

The spirit and message of Islam is that, you have been sent to change circumstances in this world; not to rotate about the axis of circumstances, but

shart awwal qadam aanast ke majnoon baashee

Conditional to the first step is that
be madly in love with God.

The first condition for it is that in every stream of life, viz. prayers and the recitation of the Glorious Quran, dealings and way of life, occupations and livelihoods, in short, at every turn and in every field of life, live as if you are seeing God. Keep straight your affair with God. Let there not be any slackness in your religious life, anything against Islam in your way of life and any disobedience of God and trampling of His commandments in the way you handle both your, Islamic and human, rights and relations.

Towards a bright future this precisely is our first step. If we think that it is against foresightedness, the understanding of expediencies, and political
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correctness and in 'the present circumstances' it is very difficult to think in this manner and work in this way, then we should refer to the Glorious Quran which is always and everywhere a beacon of light for us and from which we can obtain complete guidance regarding every minor and major issue. For those intellectuals and wise men and, in current terminology,

those who hold a 'realistic' viewpoint it says: *Or thinkest thou that most of them listen or understand? They are only like cattle; nay, they are worse astray in path.*⁸

On the other side, for those who act upon the procedure prescribed by God and His apostle ﷺ and those who trust God more than circumstances and events, an announcement appears in the Glorious Quran again and again:

*Those are the ones whom Allah has guided, and those are the ones endowed with understanding.*⁹

Notes and references

1. For a short explanation of the term *milli*, readers may refer to note 3, page 55, if necessary.
2. V.126, chapter 2, *Al Baqrah*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; A.M. Daryabadi.
3. V.131, chapter 20, *Taha*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; A.M. Daryabadi.
4. V.55, chapter 9, *At-Tawbah*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
5. V.78, chapter 28, *Al Qasas*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
6. V.55, chapter 24, *An-Noor*, Daryabadi Quran Translation; Abdul Majid Daryabadi.
7. Andalus was a country that consisted of what is now Spain, Portugal, Andorra (a micro-state in Europe) and parts of Southern France.

8. V.44, chapter 25, *Al Furqan*, The meaning of the Holy Quran; Abdullah YusufAli.
9. V.18, chapter 39, *Az-Zumar*, The meaning of the Holy Quran; Abdullah Yusuf Ali.