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WE EXPRESS SOLIDARITY WITH PALESTINANS

US President Donald Trump's recognition the occupied Jerusalem as the capital of Israel is deplorable. By this act he has dragged US to a wrong side of history committing a flagrant violation of international law as well as relevant UN Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. This decision by a world champion of Democracy and infringement of Palestinian rights and culture are unjustified and lamentable. It is also against the sentiments of more than 1.5 billion Muslims around the world.

UN Security Council castigated the declaration of Trump. The representatives of Britain, France, China, Germany, Italy and Sweden were unanimous that Trump's decision has created a grave danger for the peace in the Middle East.

India voted in the UN General Assembly against US move of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and expounded its age-old-support for Palestinian's cause which was commended by world community.

The Israeli government has been slowly, but surely, following a meticulously drawn-up plan to drive the Palestinians out of their homeland and capture the whole of Palestine, including

Jerusalem, as their own. The government of Israel has been following a three strategy to achieve this aim: (1) Physical annexation of Jerusalem; (2) Change in the demographic pattern; and (3) Demoralisation of the Palestinians to weaken their resistance. In fact, Israel had moved its ministerial offices to Jerusalem and on 23 January 1950 had proclaimed the city its capital. At the outset of the War of 5 June 1967 Israel occupied the Arab controlled sector of Jerusalem and immediately proceeded to "unify" the city. This unification was nothing but an annexation. On 28 June 1967 Israel extended its "law, jurisdiction and administration" to an enlarged municipal area of Jerusalem which included the Old City.

The Security Council also adopted four resolutions that condemned Israel's actions in Jerusalem. These were: resolution 252 of 21 May 1968, resolution 267 of 3 July 1969, resolution 271 of 15 September 1969, and resolution 298 of 25 September 1971. In these resolutions, the Security Council deplored the failure of Israel to show any regard for General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. In its resolution of 25 September 1971 the security council declared that it: "Confirm in the clearest

possible terms that all legislative and administrative actions taken by Israel to change the status of the City of Jerusalem, including the expropriation of land and properties, the transfer of populations, and legislation aimed at the incorporation of the occupied section are totally invalid and cannot change that status”.

The measures which Israel has taken, and is still taking despite UN condemnation, aim at the displacement of the original inhabitants of Jerusalem, both Christian and Muslim, and at the dispossession of their lands and properties, and aim on the other hand, at packing the Holy City with greatest possible number of Jews.

The second part of their campaign to demoralize the Palestinian Muslims in their efforts to somehow destroy Al-Aqsa (the 3rd holiest place for Muslims from where Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) ascended to the Heaven in the Night of Miraj.) As part of this plan, they are digging up foundations of Al-Aqsa Mosque in the garab of archaeological excavations.

However, Nobody has right to reduce Palestinians rights in Al-Quds, the Aqsa, the whole land of Palestine, return of refugees, dismantling settlements and establishing a real sovereign state. The fact remains that the invasion of Palestine by Israel itself was a wholesome violation of all internal norms and values.

The Muslim world would never accept the Trump's declaration of the city of Al-Quds as the capital of the occupying Zionist State, of Israel. Markazi Jamiat Ahle Hadeeth Hind

categorically rejects this illegitimate move and considers it a forgery of history. America must stop unjust support to Israel and respect the original inhabitants of Palestine.

By the time this magazine was going to press, Maulana Asghar Ali Imam Mahadi Salafi, Ameer Markazi Jamiat Ahle Hadeeth Hind, was (January 16, 2018) on his way to Cairo, Egypt to attend a conference to reject Trump's move of the city of Al-Quds as the capital of Israel. The Conference is being organised by the Muslim council of Elders at Al-Azhar in support of Al-Quds and to protect the status of Jerusalem. Dignitaries like H.H. Pope Tawadrop II of Alexandria; Bishop Polos Mutran, Dr. Tarek Mitri, Beirut; Cardinal Patriarch Mar Bechara Boutras Al-Rahi; W.C.C. General Secretary Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit and Thierry Alain Ramband are to attend the Conferece.

At-last, it is a credit to Maulana Asghar Ali Imam Mahadi Salafi, Ameer Markazi Jamiat Ahle Hadeeth Hind to attend such an important Conference in support of Al Quds and bring awareness to protect the status quo of Jerusalem as well as to show solidarity with Palestnians, the original inhabitants of the land.

Prior to this, Maulana Asghar had been twice invited to Egypt to attend Conferences on Religion and Culture and against Terrorism.

May God help Palestinian's cause and protect the status of Jerusalem. We solemnly show solidarity with Palestinians and their causes and culture.



THEIR HEARTS TREMBLE

“Surely those who stand in awe for fear of their Lord, who have full faith in the Signs of their Lord, who associate none with their Lord in His Divinity, who give, whatever they give in charity, with their hearts trembling at the thought that they are destined to return to their Lord. (Surah, Al Mominoon, 23:57-60)

Believers are never devoid of fear of God, nor are they heedless of Him. Nor do they act according to the dictates of their whims, disregarding Him above them Who is ever vigilant and Who seizes those who engage in wrong-doing and transgression. The hearts of believers are filled with fear of God, and it is this which prevents them from committing evil. The word “Signs” embrace two different kinds. On one hand, it means the signs which are brought forward by the Holy Prophet on God behalf. On the other hand, it includes those signs that are found within man as well as those that are scattered around the universe. Now, to believe in the signs of the Book amounts to confirming their truth. As for belief in the signs in the universe and in man’s own being, this suggests having faith in the truths to which these signs testify.

Believing in God’s signs requires one to believe in the Oneness of God. The statement that such people do not associate aught with God in His Divinity seems to have been made in view of man’s known weakness: that occasionally people engage in one form of *shirk* or another, that they associate others with God in His Divinity despite their belief in His Signs.

Abdullah Yusuf Ali writes:

“Their hearts are full of reverence for Allah and fear lest their charity or their hearts be not good enough for acceptance before their Lord; for they have the certainty of a future life, in which they will stand before the Judgement Seat. They fear for their own worthiness, but they hope in Faith”.

However Some unbelievers who rejected Faith and rejoiced in the vanities of this world. In spite of the proclamation of Truth, they are doubtful of the future Life and Judgement.

In addition to their rejection of Faith, they have against them positive deeds of wrong-doing, from which, an account of their contempt of the Light from Allah, they will not desist until they are sharply pulled up for punishment and then repentance will be too late.

HUMAN VALUES

1) Abdullah Bin Masud reported that the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.) said: The first decision which will take place between the people on the Day of Resurrection, will concern the bloods. *(Saheeh Bukhari & Muslim)*

2) Abu Hurairah reported that the two women from the tribe of Hudail fought and one of them threw a stone on the other and killed her and what was in her womb. The Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.) decided that the ransom of her baby was to free a slave man or a slave girl and the blood money of the woman (killed) would be paid by the offender (the other woman) and he (the Holy Prophet) appointed her children as heirs and other persons who were related to them *(Saheeh Bukhari and Muslim)*

3) The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) said: "If anyone of you come across an evil, he should try to stop it with his hand (using force), if he is not in a position to stop it by means of his tongue (meaning he should speak against it). If he is not even able to use his tongue then he should at least condemn it in his heart. This is the weakest degree of faith. *(Saheeh Muslim)*

4) The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) said: "The Head of the State is the guardian of him who has no body to support him." *(Abu Dawood and Tirmizi)*

5) A woman belonging to a high and noble family was arrested in connection with a theft. The case was brought to the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.), and it was recommended that she may be spared the punishment of theft. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) replied: The nations that lived before you were destroyed by God because they punished the common man for their offences and let their dignitaries go unpunished for their crimes; I swear by Him (God) who holds my life in His hand that even if Fatima (the daughter of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) has committed this crime then I would have amputated her hand."

6) Hazrat Anas relates that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) said: "A person can not be a perfect Muslim unless he desires for his brother (in faith) that which he desires for himself. *(Saheeh Bukhari and Muslim)*



GANG RAPE: FORGOTTEN FACTS

By Dr. Javed Jamil

The New Year celebrations were postponed in many places throughout the country as India did not feel like celebrating in the wake of the gang rape of its “brave daughter” and her subsequent death. That the people felt enraged gives some hope that social vices would now start receiving much greater attention than they get till now. For the last 20 years, I have been speaking and writing extensively on commercialization of human susceptibilities particularly alcohol, gambling and commercial sex. I have often felt frustrated why these issues do not jolt even those whose religious consciousness regards them “prohibited”. I am piqued even more now because not even the mass rage against Delhi rape case attracted any debate on the real factors involved in sex related crimes. The whole issue has unfortunately been given a man woman turn, as if it is only crimes against women that are on the rise and all other crimes have disappeared. Three factors that have been completely side-tracked are:

1. The failure of judicial system as a whole at the international level in controlling crimes;
2. The large-scale commercialization of sex and its destructive effects; and

3. The relationship between rapes and alcohol/drugs.

4. We are living in a world where the more advanced and extensive the judicial system of a country is the more horrendous are its crime statistics. This is true of all the developed countries including the USA, Europe and Australia. In all these countries, Fear of God and Fear of Law have become too weak to have any demeaning effect on crimes. Thanks to the rise of New World Order, the judicial system has not only been catering to the needs of the forces of globalization but has become a big money-spinner, which makes people engaged in the system rich without delivering what is supposed to it.

Despite their horrible failure, they have no dearth of people showering encomium on these systems. No wonder then that rapes are becoming increasingly common throughout the world; and Western countries including the USA, France, the UK and Australia occupy top ranks in the list of maximum rates of rapes. More than once a minute, 78 times an hour, 1,871 times a day, girls and women in America are rape with more than 90000 raped every year. India with

its mixture of Westernised legal systems and fast westernizing socioeconomic system is also becoming increasingly criminal.

Sex has of course become the pivot on which the wheel of world economy revolves. The merchants want men and women together everywhere to keep the wheel rolling without caring much for their security. They are busy in publishing reports that prostitution and pornography in fact have a depressing effect on the incidence of rapes, as if prostitution and pornography are no crimes themselves. I have seen people arguing for hours to prove that eve-teasing is a much bigger crime than rapes, prostitution and promiscuity. I don't blame them because this is the kind of the ideological feedback they get from the media.

In this article, however, I would like to focus more on the relationship between alcohol/drugs and all sex related problems including rapes.

It is widely known that alcohol increases the risks of unhealthy sexual behaviour. Studies of unhealthy sexual behaviour. Studies of AIDS in other countries, such as Thailand, indicate that alcohol consumption influences many dimensions of sexual behaviour. One such study, which included students, soldiers, and clerks revealed that "heavy drinking increased the odds of having had sexual intercourse; increased the odds of having visited prostitutes; and decreased the odds of consistent condom use in sexual encounters with sex workers (Van Landingham and others, 1993).

Another report says, "The relationship between drinking and HIV risk behaviours, such as visiting commercial sex workers or having sex without condoms, is not one of simple causality. It has been argued that drinking behaviour cooccurs with other dangerous factors; such as risk-taking includes beverages made from sugarcane alcohol and agaves, such as mescal and sotol. Aguardiente means "burning water" (Aledina-Mora, 1999).

Here are some of the findings of reports on the relationship between rapes and alcohol:

1. Alcohol use by the victim or the perpetrator is frequently associated with acquaintance rape.

In one, study 26% of men who acknowledged committing sexual assault admitted that they were intoxicated at the time of the assault, and an additional 29% reported being mildly buzzed-55% were under the influence of alcohol.

2. In the same study 21% of the college women who experienced sexual aggression on a date were intoxicated at the time of the assault, and an additional 32% reported being mildly buzzed-53% were under the influence of alcohol.

<http://www.montana.edu/wwwai/imsd/alcohol/Vanessa/vwrapefactsheet.htm>.

The effect of alcohol can also be seen in the cases of abuses. The National Incidence of Child Abuse and Neglect reported that "there is certainly a reason to suppose the number of cases of actual abuse might be rising, since child abuse could be expected to rise when drug and alcohol

abuse were increasing and when broken homes were becoming more complex.”

EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL ON MEN

A report sums up the effects of alcohol on men and women in terms of their sexual behaviour:

“Men expect to feel more powerful, sexual and aggressive after drinking alcohol. Expectancies have power of their own, independent of any genuine physiological processes. When people expect a certain outcome, they tend to act in ways that enhance the likelihood that the outcome will occur. For example, if a man feels powerful and strong after drinking alcohol, then he is more likely to assert his viewpoints forcefully and to end up in a verbal or physical argument. Studies show that men who think they have been drinking alcohol (whether or not they really have) feel sexually aroused and are more responsive to erotic stimuli and rape scenarios.

“Many studies show that men are more likely than women to interpret a variety of verbal and nonverbal cues as evidence that a woman is interested in having sex with a man. For example, males were more likely than females to rate revealing clothing, secluded date locations such as his room or the beach, drinking alcohol, complimenting a date, and tickling a date as more indicative of a desire to have sexual intercourse.

“The tradition of female reluctance and male persistence makes it easy for men to ignore the women’s “no” and force sex on a genuinely unwilling partner. Both the man and the woman might not view this situation as rape. But if sex occurred without verbal consent, or force was

used to obtain sex against the woman’s will, then what happened is legally defined as rape.

“Alcohol consumption by men is likely to enhance the likelihood that misperception will occur and lead to sexual assault. For example, for some men going out on a date or going to a party includes an initial hypothesis that sex will occur. Drinking alcohol may cause men to interpret or reinterpret a woman’s behaviour as a sign of her desire to have sex with him-in way that fits his initial hypothesis. And he will ignore what she is doing or saying that shows that she is not interested in sex. If a man starts out on a date thinking, “I’m going to have sex,” he is starting out with a hypothesis that doesn’t take the other person into account. It is a rape mentality.”

EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL ON WOMEN:

The same report also describes the effects of alcohol on women: “Alcohol consumption may cause women to ignore or miss cues that suggest an assault is likely. It may keep a woman from realizing that her friendly behaviour is being perceived as seduction. (Research studies have shown that men are inclined to misperceive a woman’s friendliness as a sign of sexual interest). Drinking may keep a woman from noticing a man’s attempts to get her into an isolated location or his encouragement to drink even more. Alcohol consumption may also decrease the likelihood that women can successfully resist an assault, either verbally or physically.

“Men frequently feel justified in forcing sex on women who, they believe, have been leading them

on or are being sexual teases. *Legally sexual provocation, whether intentional or not, justification for rape; sex with someone unable to give consent (e.g. drunk) is also rape.*

“There are many stereotypes about women who drink alcohol. One common belief is that women who drink alcohol are more sexually available than women who do not drink. The results of one study showed that a woman who had few alcoholic drinks was viewed as more drunk only soft drinks to respond positively to a sexual advance, as more willing to be seduced, and as more likely to engage in sexual intercourse.”

Another study showed that men were more likely than women to assume that a woman who drank alcohol with her date was interested in having sex with him. *Forty percent of the men who took part in this study felt that it was acceptable to force sex on a drunk date. In a different study 75 percent of a group of acknowledged date rapists said that they sometimes got women drunk in order to increase the likelihood of having sex with them. Many date rape victims report that their attacker fed them drinks for several hours before the attack.*

“Women who were drunk when raped are often viewed by others as partially responsible for what happened. Interviews with a group of college students showed that the male attacker was held less responsible for the rape when he was intoxicated than he was when he was reported as being sober. In contrast, the female victim was held more responsible when she was

intoxicated than when she was reported as being sober. Thus, in terms of how others will perceive their behaviour, the costs of intoxication are higher for college women than for college men”.

Alcohol remains the most commonly used date rape drug, being readily available as well as legal, and is said to be used in the majority of sexual assaults. Many assailants used alcohol because their victims often willingly imbibe it, and can be encouraged to drink enough to lose inhibition or consciousness. Sex with an unconscious victim is considered rape in most if not all jurisdictions, and some assailants have committed “rapes of convenience” whereby they have assaulted a victim after he or she had become unconscious from drinking too much.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Date_rape_drug

However, in the typical Western style, the emphasis in all such writings has been not on curbing drinking habits but on insisting that drinking of women does not absolve the rapist of his crime. An article by Jaclyn Friedman (We News commentator) says:

“Blasting women with warnings about getting drunk in public does little to help them and sidesteps men’s responsibility for sexual assault, writes Jaclyn Friedman. She advocates three steps that could be more effective.

“(WOMENSENEWS)... In 1992, while I was an undergraduate, I was raped by a fellow student while we were both drunk. He was not a date. I did not even like him when we were at a party together, a party at which I tried too hard to “keep up” with my friends in the alcohol

department and wound up far more drunk than I wanted to be. So I went back to my room. And he followed me. And then he raped me.

Looking back, I can imagine a number of social or institutional interventions which might have helped prevent this attack from happening. But none of them includes the approach that so many articles on this subject take, which is to “raise awareness” among young women that getting drunk in public puts them at greater risk of exploitation and sexual assault.

Why is this an impotent approach? For all the same reasons abstinence-only education does nothing to stop the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (and may even contribute to it).

Very few people of any age or gender go out and drink enough to get drunk thinking it’s a responsible thing to do. However true it may be that its safer not to get drunk (approximately 70 per cent of rapes among college students involve alcohol or drug use), its not like young women don’t already hear about the risks from parents, college administrations, the nightly news, or any of the 25 “CSI” or “Law and Order” clones on TV”.

While there is no reason why the act of a rapist should be condoned on account of the vulnerability of his victim due to any factor, including alcohol, there is no reason why a campaign against alcohol should not accompany the campaign against rape. It may be argued that in India’s case, it is mainly the rapists who are under the effect of alcohol; and women in

most cases are not inebriated. But this gives even a greater reason why all the activist campaigning against rapes, particularly women, must wage a simultaneous war against alcohol and drugs.

In the final analysis, four important elements have to be recognized in any drive against rapes.

1. In order to control rapes, rapes should be seen as one of the crimes. All serious crimes including murder and rapes are on the rise; and if the situation has to change we will have to adopt a different legal ideology which haunts the criminals and adequately punishes them. The old dictum that “Ten criminals can be freed but one innocent should not be hanged” is nothing but an excuse for saving the criminals. Instead of looking things in individual cases the net effect has to be ensured.

2. The commercialization of sex and nakedness has not place in a civilized society. There should be a concerted campaign against all its ramifications;

3. There should be a campaign against all the factors that lead to crimes including rapes; neglecting anyone will have disastrous consequences. Alcohol in particular needs urgent attention.

Moral Empowerment of society is required if civilized behaviour is to be ensured. Comprehensiveness is the key to any planning, and this is what is also required in dealing crimes including rapes.



THROW OUT MOTHER OF ALL EVILS: ALCOHOL

Dr. Abul Hayat Ashraf

Delhi Police in its Annual Press Conference on 11th January, 2018 presented the annual crime data.

The Hindustan Times reported about liquor and its related offences in Delhi. It will be interesting to read it:

“As many as 70 people were prosecuted every day for drinking in public in 2017, latest police data shows. Last year, 52 people were fined for the same offences each day. Delhi police annual crime data shows that 24, 770 people were fined for consuming liquor in public in 2017 (Till December 15). In 2016, 19148 people were caught drinking in public places.”

“Cases of smuggling, supply and illegal possession of liquor also increased in 2017 by 17.69% from the previous year. Also, 2753 people were arrested last year for trafficking and sale of illicit liquor, compared to 2365 people in 2016.

“According to police data, the seizure of country made liquor also increased from 337094 bottles in 2016 to 467359 bottles in 2017. Public drinking is a hazard because it leads to brawls and street crimes and crimes against women. There have been cases where people, especially youngsters, committed crimes under the influence of alcohol”. (*Hindustan Times, Delhi p.04, dated January 12, 2018.*

One of the major troublesome areas of human existence is the problem of sin or evil in the world. The symbolic event Adam and Eve life in the Garden of Eden tells us that the human being is imperfect and ever wanting. Much more important is the fact that God is ever prepared to respond to the sincere calls of those who seek His aid. Now lets see what Islam says about drinking alcohol and its sin.

Islam says drinking wine is a great sin, making it clear that it is reprehensible in His Sight. This is quite enough to make some Muslims give up liquor altogether, though many others still took intoxicating drinks:

Allah says in the Holy Quran: “*Believers! Intoxicants, games of chance, idolatrous sacrifices at altars, and divining arrows are all abominations, the handiwork of Satan. So turn wholly away from it that you may attain to true success. By intoxicants and games of chance Satan only desires to create enmity and hatred between you, and to turn you away from the remembrance of Allah and from Prayer. Will you, then, desist?*” (*Surah Al-Maidah, 5:90-91*)

Before the revelation of the last injunction, the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) had warned the people that intoxicants were highly displeasing to God. Hinting at the possibility of their being prohibited,

he advised people to dispose of intoxicants if they had any. A little later on the present verse was revealed and the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) then proclaimed that those who had intoxicants should neither consume nor sell them, but rather destroy them. Intoxicating liquors were poured into the streets of Madinah. When asked if such liquor might be offered to the Jews as a gift the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) replied in the negative and said: "He Who has prohibited it has also required it not to be given away as a gift. "Some people inquired whether it was permitted to make vinegar out of such liquor. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) told them not to do so, but to throw it away instead. Another person asked insistently whether or not an intoxicant can be used as medicine. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) replied that far from being a remedy for any malady it was in itself a malady. Others sought permission to consume intoxicating liquor on the plea that they lived in a very cold region and had to work very hard, and that the people of that region habitually drank intoxicants to combat exhaustion and cold. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) inquired if the drink concerned did cause intoxication. On being told that it did, he said that they should abstain from it. They pointed out that the people of their region would not accept this, to which the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) replied that they should fight them.

It is reported by 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) said: "God has cursed *Khamar* (wine) and him who drinks it, him who provides it to others and him who buys or sells it, him who squeezes (the grapes) into wine and him who causes others to squeeze grapes (in order to make wine), him who carries it and him to whom it is carried". (See *Ahmad bin Hanbal, Musnad*).

According to another tradition the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) instructed not to eat at the table where intoxicating drinks were being taken. In the beginning the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) even forbade the use of vessels in which intoxicating drinks had either been made or served. Later on, when the prohibition of drinks was completely observed the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) withdrew the interdiction regarding the use of these vessels.

Though the *Khamar* in Arabic means literally "The drink made from grapes", it was also used figuratively for intoxicating liquors made from wheat, barley, raisins, dates and honey. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) applied the prohibition of wine to all intoxicants. In this regard we find categorical statements, from the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) embodied in traditions: "Every intoxicant is *Khamar*, and every intoxicant is prohibited."

"Every drink which causes intoxication is prohibited". I forbid everything which intoxicates". In a Friday sermon 'Umar defined *Khamar* in the following manner: "Whatever takes hold of the mind is *Khamar*".

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) also enunciated the following principle: "If anything causes intoxication when used in large quantity, even a small quantity of it is prohibited". If a large quantity of something causes intoxication, when used in large quantity of something causes intoxication, to drink even a plamful of it is prohibited".

In the time of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) no specific punishment had been laid down for drinking. A person caught drunk would be struck with shoes, fists, and whips made of twisted cloth and palm sticks. The maximum number of lashes

to which any culprit was subjected was forty. In the time of Abu Bakr the punishment continued to be forty lashes. In the time of ‘Umar the punishment continued to be forty lashes also, but when he saw people persist in drinking he fixed the punishment at eighty lashes after consulting the companions. This was considered the prescribed legal punishment for drinking by Malik and Abu Hanifa, and even by Shafii, according to one tradition.

According to Islamic Law, it is bounden duty of an Islamic government to enforce this prohibition. In the time of ‘Umar the shop of a member of the thaqif tribe, by the name of Ruwayshid, was burnt down because he carried on the sale of liquor. On another occasion a whole hamlet was set on fire because it had become a centre of illegal traffic in liquor.

The prohibition of alcoholic drinks is not by any means an arbitrary action or a dictatorial decree of God. It is first and foremost a Divine intervention in the best interest of man and for his own sake. When the Holy Quran describes the forbidden things as bad, impure and harmful, it has a vigilant eye on man’s morality and wisdom, on his health and wealth, on his piety and common behaviour. The sole purpose is to show man how to develop himself according to an upright course of life in order to be a health unit in the structure of the family, then of the society, and eventually of humanity at large. Reliable medical doctors now verify the harm of the alcoholic drinks which can be seen here under this report:

BAD EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL

Alcohol’s impact on the body starts from the moment someone takes his/her first sip. Drinking alcohol can cause abnormal activation of

digestive enzymes produced by the pancreas. Alcohol can cause slurred speech, drowsiness, vomiting, diarrhea, upset stomach, headaches, breathing difficulties, distorted vision and hearing, impaired judgement, decreased perception and coordination, unconsciousness, anemia (loss of blood cells), coma, blackouts (memory lapses, where the drinker cannot remember events that occurred while under the influence).

The doctors say that drinking and continued use of alcohol is associated with many health problems including:

Unintentional injuries such as car crash, falls, burns, drowning, intentional injuries such as firearm injuries, sexual assault, domestic violence, increased family problems broken relationships, alcohol poisoning, high blood pressure, stroke and other heart-related diseases, liver disease, sexual problems, permanent damage to the brain, Vitamin B1 deficiency, which can lead to a disorder characterized by amnesia, apathy and disorientation, ulcers, gastritis (inflammation of stomach walls), malnutrition, and cancer of the mouth and throat.

COMPLETE BAN ON ALCOHOL:

It is high times to put a complete ban on the sale and use of alcohol and to introduce prohibition order in the country. The government should bring about legislation as recommended by the Directive Principles of state Policy in our constitution to put a nationwide ban on alcohol. The right thinking people have lauded the Bihar government under Nitish Kumar for enforcing total prohibition in state and felt that this initiative must be emulated by other state governments of India. *(Cont on Page 30)*

THE WOMAN TODAY!

The male sponsored and thoroughly organized tyranny against woman is spread over millennia, opines Dr. S. Ausaf Saied Vasfi

Is anybody out there to listen to her cries and echo of her cries? Is anybody out there to observe her oppression and the conspiracy of silence over her plight? Is anybody out there to pay heed to her protest and the popular insensitivity to her agony? Is anybody out there to sympathetically consider her impassioned pleas for her proper place in the society?

Quagmire

The equilibrium of human society depends upon two things: one of them is the nature of relationship between man and woman. The moment you disturb it, the society goes off the rails. And there is no bottom of the pit in which the disequilibriumed society falls headlong. It turns out to be a quagmire, the more she tries to come up, the more she goes down.

Initially neither it was she, nor even today it is she, who can be held responsible for the unenviable position. The chief culprit is man. It is he who has, destroyed her individuality, her persona and her uniqueness. The beauty of this "genocide" is that either she has no idea inveigled into believing that she has attained, or is soon going to attain, the ultimate glory. In the process, the predator has mauled rather brutalized her. In today's so-called civilized world, she happens to be the most oppressed, the most exploited

and the most bullied lot.

Difficult Question

As far as examples or data are concerned, one, in fact, does not know from where to begin, and from which continent or country. The male sponsored and thoroughly organized tyranny against woman is spread over millennia.

Let us, to be precise, concentrate on our own country which claims that civilization dates back to centuries and centuries before the birth of Christ (be Allah's blessings upon him).

Here is a brief catalogue of crimes against the poor, defenceless creature. And there is nothing new in it. In fact you can, if you like, update this catalogue on yearly, nay monthly, nay weekly, nay daily basis. Are we exaggerating?

In our country exceptions apart - speaking in general terms, every effort is made to prevent the birth of a girl child. The educated do so. If this effort does not succeed, in which her mother or father is supposed to play a major role, she is fed, clothed and educated less than her brother. Because of her suitors' peculiar trait of greed, she is supposed to bring enormous dowry. If her parents fail, she runs the risk of being torched alive. As a divorcee or a widow, her future is as dark as ink. An old ailing and

widow mother is religiously sent to the holy places by her rich sons (and sons-in laws). For the sake of filling her tummy, she has to beg or clean utensils of the well-to-do in these sacred cities. As a widow she is considered inauspicious even to participate in her own son's or daughter's marriage. There are, then, cases when she has been married to gods. In some cases she is also sacrificed at the alter of gods by her father. She is pawned also. Also she is sold in the market. That she is, sometimes, killed after rape is not the news. She is gangraped also. She is raped as a retaliatory measure for the crime committed by her father or mother. Then he tries to legitimize that prostitution by pleading to legalise it. No holds are barred if she happens to belong to a lower caste. Lynching or hacking to death is sure if she dares to marry a boy of higher caste. That even in posh localities of metropolitan cities, she is abused and beaten up by her educated, rich and forward looking husband is equally true. As bigamy is prohibited and even looked down upon among our brethren belonging to sometimes, either simply killed or got liquidated through hired assassins. All this amidst the claim that "woman is worshipped in Bharat"!

Glimpses of Worship

According to the *Rigved*, the foremost of all the four *Vedas*, women are not worthy of friendship their hearts are like those of the wolves. (10-95-15) Also see *Shat Path Brahmin* (11-5-1-9).

"Women are the army of slaves and their armaments." (*Rigveda*: 5-30-9)

"There is to be found in woman, shudra, dog and cow falsehood, sin and darkness." (*Shat Path Brahm*, 14-1-31)

"Women have no share in will or inheritance. Nor in the (recital of) Vedic mantras." (*Boudhayam Dharm Sutra* 5-2-53 and *Manu Smriti* 9-18)

"Woman is Anrit that is the incarnation of Falsehood." (*Maitrayani Samhita* 1-10-11)

"Women are lacking in strength. They have no share in property. They talk in a weaker manner than the obstinate." (*Tattriya Samhita*: (6-5-8-2)

Following are the traits of women as enumerated in *Anushashan Purv*: "Lying, working unthoughtfully, foolhardiness, deep greed, impunity, mercilessness, stone-hearted". According to *Ramayana, Amya Kand*, (45:29, 30) women are seducers, naughty, tyrants and separators.

"In the religion of women, there is no God except the husband." (*Ram Gharit Manas; Bal Kand*: 125:27) "No woman is worthy of listening to the Ram Katha, for women are by nature less prudent, lack knowledge, unclean". (*Ram Charit Manas* (133:1, 143:2).

"Woman is a torch leading to the Hell; says *Hem Chandra*.

According to *Mahabharat's Anushashan Parv* women are liars (19-6)

"Nothing else is worse than the women. They are the blade of a razor, poison, snake and fire." (*Mahabhart's Anushashan Parv*: 28:12, 29).

"There is hardly one *pativarta* (obedient to her husband) among hundreds or thousands of

women” (ibid 19:93). “Women deserve harsh treatment. They possess the deceitfulness of *Rakshasas* (evil spirits), *Shamber*, *Namuchi* and others. They have a tendency to attract men towards them. The well-to-do therefore, are cautious in talking to them. The virgins however mislead all whether well-to-do or not.” (ibid 38:16, 48:37-38)

In the *Anyodhya Kand of Ramayana* (47-4) it is said: “The learned have written correctly about women’s temperaments. Their cunning and deceit are not comprehensible and it is impossible to reach to their depth.

One may even grapple with his shadow, but it is difficult to get the right clue of her conduct and character:”

In the *Sundar Kand of Ramacharitmanas* it is said, “drum, fool, shudra, animals and women they all deserve tyranny and oppression.”

For further details about the status of women in a Hindu society Tulsidas’ *Hindu Samaj ke Path Bhrashtak* edited by Vishvanath may be referred to. “*Asian Age*” September 25, 95.

Ground Realities

Here is a November 73 story reported in June 98. For the past 23 years, she has been living in the twilight zone. Indeed, for Aruna Shanbag, the day begins and ends in the metal bed or ward No. 4 of the King Edward Memorial (KEM) Hospital in Central Mumbai. Crippled forever, Aruna lives just for the sake of living. The cold metal bed in Ward No.4 has been the centre of her life since 1973. It was not as if she never had a different life. Her world crumbled on November 23, 1973, for no fault of hers. On that fateful day, Aruna who was just 20 and

working as a nurse was preparing to leave after a hard day. Throughout the day she had been nursing a group of school children who were admitted to the hospital due to food poisoning. After being through with her duties, in the wee hours of the next day, Aruna went to the changing room of nurses in order to freshen up before leaving for home, but unfortunately she could never make it. For lying in wait, was ward boy who had been carefully monitoring her movements that night. Finding an opportune moment, he trapped her, choking her with a leather leash, which cut off the oxygen supply to her brain; he brutally raped her. The hapless Aruna was discovered next morning in an unconscious condition. The damage had already been done. Despite all efforts, there was little that the doctors could do to bring her back to normalcy. Since that fateful day, Aruna Shanbag has been in what the doctors call a ‘vegetable’ state. Though the ward boy was caught later, but shockingly he was let off for want of evidence.

A December ’99 Story

Here is a story that dates back to December 99.

Three brothers raped a 16 year-old Dalit girl and then burnt her to death at Geejgarh village in Dausa district on December 14 evening. A Dalit couple, employed as labourers at a stone mine, had gone out for work while their three daughters were at home. Three sons of an influential Dalit, belonging to another caste, intruded into their houses beat up the younger two girls and told them to go away. Then they raped the eldest girl. Even as she cried for help, they poured kerosene over her and set her afire.

Books after books can be compiled having just

newspaper reports. Because each and every regional or national newspaper carries such stories on a daily basis. The only highlight point of these stories is the because of the frequency of the cases, they have ceased to stir us.

Below we give another cause in which father raped his daughter. Her mother colluded with her tormentor. So did her brothers and sisters. The said case was reported in October 79:

Incest & Murder

It is a tale of the murder of a young girl. A middle aged father sexually abuses his teenage daughter for over a year. She becomes pregnant. The father then tries to absolve himself of responsibility and accuses the girl of being involved with a boy from the neighbourhood. The girls suffers silently for several months but subsequently, reveals the true identity of the father of her child. Desperate, the father then colludes with his wife to try and stop the girl from talking. Fearing social humiliation and ostracisation, they decide to do away with their pregnant daughter and poison her. She dies in Safdarjung hospital, after suffering from acute nausea and brain fever.

In March 98, it was made known officially that cases of rape involving fathers, uncles or step fathers were rising in the National Capital. In the North East district, 62 cases of rape were reported in 1997 against 49 cases in 1996. Of these, 79 per cent of rape were committed by persons known to the victims. While 15 per cent of the crime were committed by unknown persons, six per cent were committed by father/uncles/step-fathers.

Words Begger Description

The Indian women's plight can, perhaps, never be delineated through words. Because they begger description. To underscore our point, we reproduce a few lines from an editorial of *The Asian Age* (November 15, 99)

“The Rajput Kings used to quietly watch, in fact enthusiastically approve and applaud, women who would burn themselves in the fire of *jauhar* rather than fall into “enemy hands” once their men died. Some school text books insist on telling young children about how (the text books add the give away “It is said” before the story) Rani Padmini, with allegedly 16, 000 women for company, preferred walking into fire at Chittorgarh as the menfolk engaged in a last-ditch battle of survival. Forty-odd-year old Charan Shah, who first dressed herself in a bridal finery and then immolated herself after her husband died of tuberculosis a few days ago may or may not have read or heard all this medieval claptrap. But even if she had, and believed in what essentially is nothing but the crime of suicide, she should not be the only one to be blamed. After all, the social system allows such ghastly practices to take place in these times.”

The said edit was done after reports that hundreds of people were visiting with reverence that sati site, Satpurwan in Mohoba (UP). They wanted it declared as “Sati asthal”. What is glorious in burning a widow passes our understanding. And by the way, our RSS-BJP brethren hold brief for what in the language of law is considered a crime. What Mrs. Vijayaraje Scindia stated on the subject is sufficient to silence the Saffronite who try to deny that fact.

Not long ago, to be exact, on March 8, another Woman's Day went by. There were symposium, seminars, edits and resolutions and demands for women quota in Parliament. The backdrop in which this Day was observed, deserves notice:

The crimes against women steadily increase from 1, 15, 723 in 1996 to 1,31, 338 in 1998 as the latest National Crime Records Bureau's report states. Whether it was kidnapping and abduction, which rose from 14, 877 in 1996 to 16, 381 in 1998, or molestation, which rose from 35, 246 to 31, 046 in the same period, things have only deteriorated. Of the states, Uttar Pradesh notched the highest number of cases followed by Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. Delhi, despite accounting for only 1.3 per cent of the national population, reported the third highest rate of such crimes. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report, rapes registered a two per cent decline in 1998 from the 1997 figure, although the total number of incidents stood at the high number of 15, 0341. Of these, 55 percent of cases involved women in the age group of 16-30 years, 22.8 per cent were in the age group of 10 to 16 years. Children below 10 accounted for 4.2 per cent of total rape committed in 1998.

She is Sold

We said about women are sold in our country. Read the following in the December 4 issue of *The Indian Express*. The report is by G. Ranganath: "The crowd is growing and the voices raising. In the dusty Andhra Pradesh town of Eluru, the auctioneer opens the bidding. "Look at this beautiful one. This looks spicy and attractive. Pay Rs. 5, 000 and it's yours". The bid begins at Rs. 5, 000," a bidder shouts. Others

join the race. The price is going up till it reaches Rs. 9,000 sometimes even much more and the object of auction, a young woman, is handed over to the highest bidder. In an auction at Eluru a few days ago, eight young women in the age group of 16-30 years were up for grabs. Shocking? Not in this part of the country".

She is Pawned

We said woman in our country is pawned. *The Pioneer* of July 13, 97 carried a 2-columning the brother of a minister in the Shankersinh Vagela Government, have been arrested for forcing a hotel employee to "mortgage" his wife for Rs. 20, 000. The incident has shades of the Mahabharata where Yudhishtir ended up losing Draupadi after staking her in a game of *chaupad*. The only difference in this real life enactment of the ancient epic is the rescue act-a la Krishna - performed by the judiciary.

The story was by R.K. Misra datelined Gandhinagar.

She is Sacrificed

We said woman is sacrificed in our country: Kosu Ganga Kaveri, of the village of Nunepalli which comes under this mandal, says her father wanted to sacrifice her to propitiate a local deity. Ganga Kaveri says her father, Kosu Bapiraju, was intent on offering her life to Bapanamma, a "hill deity" to whom he had already "offered" her brother. Bapiraju kept her and her sister, Surya Kumari, in house to prevent them from running away, Ganga says. But, both escaped from the house when their mother inadvertently opened the door. They then trekked six kilometers down the hills of Nunepalli and reached Seethapalli village.

The story was carried by *The Indian Express* by its correspondent Rampa Chandaran in its March 8 issues of 98.

Female Foeticide

We said about female foeticide in our country. A report in *The Asian Age* in March last year, said: Law and ethical values always take a backseat when it comes to desire for a male child. As more and more reports of the girl child facing an unsafe and shaky future in the city pour in, experts say that a change in the mindset of couples is the only solution that can prevent the practice of female foeticide, infanticide and gender specific conceptions in favour of a male child. Mostly, it is the woman who under pressure from her in-laws undergo the test and go for an abortion if it is a female foetus. Moreover, since the agreement is between the doctor and the patient, there are no papers to prove. It is double victimization of the victim. Even the MTP Act is violated many times putting the mother at risk, she added.

“Baraat” After 110 Years

Due to this, inexplicable crime, there are townships in our country which rarely receive baraat. The September 17 issue of *The Times of India* carried the following story last year: It's not as if Devra hadn't seen baraats that went out of the village. So, when it received one earlier this year, history was made. It was the first in 110 years. For a century and 10 years this remote village in Barmer district of Rajasthan did not receive single baraat. And simply because it was ensured that no girl born in this village survived after birth. A girl child does not live here very long. In fact, she is killed immediately after birth either drowned in a tub

of milk or fed affeem (opium) or simply smothered with a pillow. The story was by Yashwant Raj.

Varanasi, Mathura Widows

About the plight of widow in Varanasi, Ritu Menon in *The Hindu*, (February 20) this year:

Let us take widows of Varanasi first. Kaushal Kishore Misra, spokesman of the Kashi Shankriti Rasksha Sangharsh Samiti, has said that *Water* depicts Varansi as a “cultural hell with widows’ brothels, debauched rich citizens, polluted Ganga, *Pandits* engaged in rationalizing every social ill, and silent gods and goddesses”. Well, what’s so surprising about that? It may be shocking, but everybody knows about the desperate and miserable plight of widows-33 million of them in our twice born country, whether in Banaras or Brindavan or anywhere else. Can it be hidden? Can any discussion of it be forbidden? Should we then expect to be told that we cannot oppose Sati, female genital mutilation (far more prevalent than anyone is willing to admit) and every other inhuman “customary” practice because they are part of somebody’s idea of “tradition”? Even more outrageous: are we supposed to defend “debauched rich citizens” and condone the rationalizations of pundits and godmen?

The widows of Mathura and Varanasi, have nothing to look forward except death. After hours of Bhajan, the princely sum they earn is Rs. 2. How are they exploited. To quote Virinda Gopinath *The Indian Express* (Feb. 5): If it is not the tehsildar who refuses to fill their forms for pension, it's the bank clerk who forges their signature, or the landlord who takes funeral expenses before renting out the room or the

priest or householder who has sexually exploited them and kept them as cheap labour.”

Here description of widows is equally pathetic: Wrapped in yellowing cotton saris, the elderly, frail women carry the crushing weight of widowhood: Years of deprivation, exploitation, poverty and hunger, fathers and brothers, even husbands, they flock to Kashi and Mathura, looking for shelter and solace. They arrive in trains and buses from far-flung Bengal, Assam, Tripura, Manipur, Nepal and Bangladesh following their “Pandas and gurus” who bring them here.

Childless Widows

What Surendra K. Datta Ray reveals *The Asian Age* (February 23) is equally disquieting: An estimated 3.5, million childless widows are traditionally shunned as doubly inauspicious because they have neither husband nor son. Once widows were burned alive on the husband’s funeral pyre. That still happens occasionally in Rajasthan, land of kings and orthodoxy’s last bastion. Elsewhere, especially in West Bengal, widows are more commonly turned out into the street to fend for themselves. With the cropped head that is the sign in widowhood, draped only in a white cotton sari without colour or ornament, many of these women take refuge in place of pilgrimage along the upper Ganges about 1,600 kilometers (1,000 miles) away. Some are paid the equivalent of 8 cents to chant for seven or eight hours a day in temples and Ashrams. Others are sucked into vice, including drug trafficking and prostitution.

It is not that there is any dearth of laws to protect the widows or the harassed wives, who are

beaten up also. There are Domestic Violence and Matrimonial Proceedings Act, Matrimonial Homes Act. Married Women’s Property Act, Matrimonial Causes Act, Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependent Act, etc. etc.

Married to God

We said girls, infants married to gods in our country. Read the first two paragraphs of a report in *The Indian Express* (February 20): In cyber savvy Pune, kids of her age are being prepared for school, with parents making them parrot that C stands for computer and M for mouse. But 50 km south of the city, in the temple town of Jejuri, three-year old Sunanda merrily jingles bells and swings to the pitch of folk songs. The village children titter and elders stare, while little Sunanda immerses herself in a daily ritual. She has known no other life from the time her parents abandoned her at the temple of Khandoba. Nor will she know any other life. Because Sunanda, who was left on the temple steps when she was just 60-day-old, is to be wedded to the lord of Jejuri.

In the same paper, Leela Maran said on February 24: A survey has revealed rampant child prostitution in Ernakulam, Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode cities of Kerala. Children even below the age of 14 are involved in the trade. While 40 to 45 per cent of them are boys, girls comprise 55 to 60 per cent. Again at least 53 per cent of them end up pregnant, with 32 per cent of them resorting to abortions in hospitals. In Ernakulam, street children confessed to aborting pregnancies using pills under instructions from adult prostitutes or peers, or using herbal medicines. Around 27 per cent admitted to used of oral contraceptives.

Here it would not be inappropriate to speak about abortions.

Our country tops in (illegal) abortions in the world. It was revealed in August 1998 that according to official information, four million abortions take place in Bharat every year as against 15 million taking place in the rest of the world. Estimates reveal that in 1991, against the 25 million births in the country, 11 million were abortions.

As reported earlier, quite stringent laws are there. The rape law was amended in 1983. Cruelty against women was made crime in 1984. In 1986, the offence of dowry death was introduced. But there are no convictions.

Easy Abortion

How easy has our government made rape, fornication and adultery, can be imagined from the fact that now cheap clinics are available for abortion. There are special packages for students. This is being advertised in newspapers. Now “without any questions” one can have one’s foetus aborted for a song and go from hospital to her home happily just after two hours! Add to it just a few years in jail for a “proved” rape. Then see the “safe-sex” methods. Does it not provide encouragement?

What Is The Limit?

You may ask what is the limit to which promiscuity, extra marital and pre-marital sex is being promoted by our guardians of administration? One recalls that former Union Minister Renuka Chaudhry of erstwhile United Front Government had announced that ‘we do not care who is sleeping with whom, but we care whether they are using condoms or not?’

The truth is that we too are simply ignorant about this question.

What we, however, know is how Islam tackles the question pertaining to man-woman relationship, the bedrock and the sheet anchor of any society’s poise and equilibrium.

Islam stipulates different duties and rights to man and woman. For a clear-cut position, it draws a quite pronounced line of demarcation, so that no sex steps on the toes of the other. Their respective roles too have been defined in unambiguous terminology. This demarcation rules out the question of high or low and equality and inequality. There is no discrimination on the basis of sex. The penal code, the civil code, the criminal procedure codes are same for both the sexes. She can inherit, earn and own property as much as she likes.

Restrictive or Permissive?

Islam is, as in other aspects, positive on polygamy. It is not at all apologetic about it. Before taking exception to this “audacity” of ours, note carefully that Islamic laws on polygamy are not permissive but restrictive. Islam does not encourage the institution, but restricts and regulates it. See this in the historical backdrop. To quote a historic case:

“Among all eastern nations of antiquity, polygamy was a recognized institution. Its practice by royalty, which every where bore the insignia of divinity, sanctified its observance to the people.” Polygamy was practiced among the Modes, Babylonians, Assyrians, Persians and Hindus with no restriction as to the number of women one might wed. Similarly it existed among that Israelites, Persians, Syro-phoenician races and

Athenians. The Spartans forbid polygamy but, on the other hand, permitted polyandry.

It is History

It is a matter of history that “The wives, with the exception of the one first married, laboured under severe disabilities. Without rights and without any of the safeguards which the law threw around the favoured first one, they were slaves of every caprice and whim of their husbands. Their children were stigmatized as bastards, precluded from all share in the inheritance of their father and treated as outcasts from society”.

To quote Zeenat Shaukat Ali (*The Empowerment of Woman in Islam*) “It is essential to understand that Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) did not introduce polygamy into his legal system as is commonly and conveniently believed. He found himself amidst a system where polygamy was a common feature not only among the Arabs but the Persians and Jews as well. The persecution of women on the social and sexual scale can be determined by the history of the time when Arabs buried their daughters alive and widows were inherited as an integral part of the property of the heirs. Christianity considered them soulless and burnt them as condemned witches, while Jews sold their minor daughters at a price they thought fit. Women had no status in the eyes of the law in any legal system of the world in that era.”

Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) introduced rights and privileges for women that other legal systems voluntarily adopted with the influx of time. He curtailed and restricted polygamy unions, insisted on perfect equality between the sexes in the

exercise of all legal powers and functions.

He restrained polygamy by limiting and insisting on *Adl* (justice) not only in the form of physical requisites and domestic comforts but also in matters of respect and love thereby giving a completely new outlook to the degraded status of women. The verse from the Qur’an reads: “*If ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly with the orphans, marry women of your choice, two or three, or four; but if ye fear ye shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one.*” (*Holy Quran 4:3*)

Islamic Family

In the family conceptualized by the Quran and Sunnah, the male partner is head and the female partner is manager, charged not only with social and moral but also financial responsibility. It is a simple division of spheres.

How Islam plugs all the loopholes of sexual turpitude, which therein is a cardinal sin, cannot be understood without fully appreciating the stress put by the Quran and Sunnah on chastity, purity and fidelity on the part of both male and female.

Look how in the light of Qur’anic verses and the Holy Traditions, Islam creates chaste, faithful couples and how a model Muslim deals, or ought to deal with woman as a daughter, as a wife, or as a mother:

In the society, envisioned by Islam, there shall not be ogling, chasing women, enticing them or fiddling with them in anyway. They are, and shall be, respectable, responsible citizens. Doors of justice shall remain open to them round the clock.



The Importance of Knowledge in Islam (In the Light of Holy Qur'an)

Muhammad Ibrahim Sajjad Taimi

In so many verses of the Holy Qur'an and in more than one sayings (Hadiths) of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the importance and significance of knowledge and education has been thoroughly discussed and described. If you go through the Holy Quran, searching for the glory of knowledge, you will be greatly surprised to find out the first revealed verse of the Quran, imperatively commanding the Prophet (PBUH) is to read. In the first five revealed verses of the Holy Quran, the word "IQRA" has emerged two times. No religious Scripture in the world has paid so much attention to attaining knowledge except Islam.

It is a crystal clear reality that the New Testament begins with the lineage of Prophet Isa (PBUH), the Old Testament begins with the creation of the universe. The Shrimad Bhagwad Geeta begins with the mention of the armies participating in the Mahabharata War, the Guru Grantha's first verse deals with the praise of the All-Mighty Creator, and so on. Even a single word shedding light on the importance of knowledge, has not been included in the beginning of the Four Vedas. Every Veda starts with the praise of the Panch Tatwas (five organs) and their significance.

Moreover, it is also worth mentioning that in the time of revelation of the Qur'an, the Arab society was deeply indulged and sunk in every kind of social vices and ethical sins. Illiteracy was common among the Arabs.

So, it is deeply surprising that no vice and no crime is discussed over, by the Holy Qur'an at the first step. No mention of the lineage of Muhammad (PBUH) is made and no greatness of the Quraish tribe is placed in the first revelation. Even you can't trace a little bit of mentioning the Makkan inhabitants, having more than 360 idols in the midst of the Ka'bah which was built by Prophets Abraham and Ishmael (PBUT) for the purpose of worshipping Only One Allah.

This clears that the nation that was being prepared by the Quranic teachings, was going to be the Ummah (nation) of education and knowledge that is called in Arabic "Ummat-e-Iq'ra". That's why, we find word "*ilm*" other words derived from it 850 times in Holy Quran casting light on the significance of education and knowledge.

The question is, why Islam gives so much importance to education and knowledge and wants its followers get educated at first and

foremost? Yes, because education and knowledge is the most precious and most glorious asset in the world. Because, a nation without knowledge is like a building without foundation. The Muslim Ummah is considered as a well-built house, where the strength depends on the structure and quality of the individual block that forms the house.

It is important because it is used to mitigate most of the challenges faced in life. The knowledge that is attained through education helps open doors to a lot of opportunities for better prospects in life. It is important because it helps a human being recognize his real Creator and Cherisher. It is important because it leads to the rightly guided path of Allah and His Prophet, and protects from going astray on the path of the devil. That was the secret behind the success story of early Muslims and Muslim rulers.

It is obligatory to attain knowledge in Islam, because, it is the only resource to gain grandeur and glory in the world and in the Hereafter as well. Allah (SWT) declares in Holy Quran.

“He grants wisdom to whom He pleases, and he to whom wisdom is granted, is indeed granted abundant good. But none remember (will receive admonition) except men of understanding. ” (Surah Al Baqrah; 2:209)

It is worth mentioning that the word “Hikmah” literally means wisdom, but it means here the knowledge and the understanding of the Qur’an and the Sunnah and one’s ability to speak and act in the correct and right way.

Here, in this short essay, we intend to realize the importance of education and knowledge in

the light of some verses of the Qur’an InshaAllah.

1- Allah (SWT) has drawn a distinguishing line between those who have knowledge and who have not, and declared that scholars have preference in His sight, to illiterates by far. He says:

“Say :”Are those who know, equal to those who do not know?” (Surah Az-Zumar, 39:9)

The verse does mean that the learned ones are far better than illiterates in the sight of Allah the All-Mighty, and this is such a grand glory and greatness that no other greatness can touch even its footsteps.

2- Whoever seeks knowledge and help other people to learn, will get uncountable rewards from Allah (SWT). Allah (SWT) will grant him high ranks in this world and the Hereafter, as He makes promise to the believers and those who seek knowledge which goes as follows:

“Allah will exalt those who believe among you, and those who have been granted knowledge to high ranks.” (Surah Al-Mujadilah, 58:11)

3- Knowledge is more important than wealth and property. Therefore, no wonder, if knowledge is the most important thing to which Allah (SWT) directed Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to pray that he would be granted more and more of it. Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Qur’an:

“And say: O my Lord! increase me in knowledge.” (Surah Taha, chapter no,20: verse no,114)

4- However, having knowledge must not be a reason for being arrogant. In fact, having more and more knowledge about ourselves and the world makes us feel more humble before the greatness of Allah (SWT) and gets us realize His fear more and more. Describing this great quality of God-fearing people Allah(SWT) says:

"It is only those who have knowledge among His servants that fear Allah." (Surah Fatir, chapter no,35,verse no: 28)

The Knowledge in Islam comprises all human thoughts and activities. The Holy Quran proclaims that Muslims constitute the best society of they mankind when they uphold virtues and renounce vices. In such a society, we should speak truth, fulfil our promises, discharge our trusts, be chaste in thoughts and actions, withhold our hands from striking and that which is unlawful and bad.

5- Above all these rewards and blessings of Allah (SWT) bestowed to the seekers of knowledge, there is a matchless and unique blessing and favour that He has included the scholars and the seekers of knowledge, in the golden chain of the witness-bearers of His being only One to have right to be worshipped, as the verse bellow recalls :

"Allah bears witness that none has the right to be worshipped but He, and the angels, and those having knowledge (also give this witness) that He maintains His creation in Justice. None has the right to be worshipped but He, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise "

(Aal Imran, chapter no, 3,verse no, 18).

6- It is also to be remembered by heart that the

governance and ruling over the earth is fully dependent on knowledge and wisdom. Everyone is aware of the discussion that took place between Allah (SWT) and the angels. When the angels got informed by Allah that He was going to appoint Adam and his descendants as vicegerent and architect on the earth, the angels said : *"Will you place therein those who will make mischief therein and shed blood, while we glorify You with praises and thanks and sanctify You?"*

He said :*"I know that what you do not know".*

And then He (SWT) taught Adam all the names of everything, then He showed them to the angels and said : "Tell me the names of these things if you are truthful" (Surah Al-Baqrah, 2:30-31)

The angels accepted their guilt and when Allah ordered them to prostrate themselves before Adam and they prostrated except Iblis, the devil, he refused and was proud and was one of the disbelievers.

These verses tell us clearly that knowledge has an upper hand over all things that exist on the surface of the earth. All prosperity and reward has been firmly connected to wisdom and knowledge.

Actually, there are so many verses in the Qur'an that show us the significance of knowledge and wisdom, but we have noted here a few of them for instance and think that they are quite enough to make us realize the importance and grandeur of knowledge.

(The writer is Principal at Madarsa Sirajul Uloom Gerwa Ghat, Katihar, Bihar)

MANAGE YOUR TIME FOR SMOOTH SAILING IN THE BOARDS (Class 10 and 12 Exams)

Compiled by Dr. Abul Hayat Ashraf

Managing your time effectively is an important part of studying. One common mistake is creating an overly restrictive schedule which does not work. The second mistake is telling yourself that scheduling just does not work for you. Try to be realistic and honest with yourself when determining those things that require more effort and those that come easier to you. The following list will guide you through time management.

Think about when your brain works best—morning, night or the middle of the afternoon. Plan your things to do list accordingly. If you are going to read a difficult article for the first time, don't start at 10 p.m unless you are comfortable staying awake during the late hours. Do something less demanding in these hours, organize your notes, or write the next day's thing to do list.

Schedule and priorities: Have a regular study time and place each day. This helps to get you into the study mode. Get everything you need before you start studying. Make a list of what you have to do and list it in order of importance. Schedule the important stuff first.

PLAN YOUR SESSIONS: Do the difficult stuff first. That way, when, you reach your

saturation phase you will only have to grapple with very simple things.

TAKE BREAKS: Don't study longer than 50 minutes at a stretch. Use the other ten for a run around the block or to eat a snack (i.e. take a break).

AVOID GETTING STUCK: If you can't figure something out, skip it, and get help later. However, skipping everything is not allowed.

DIVIDE AND CONQUER:

Break your projects up into smaller bits, and complete those bits one by one.

SET MILESTONES:

Setting milestones help to manage the time and task better. You can also set rewards for reaching those milestones.

REWARD YOURSELF: The reward can be small, like treating yourself to some ice cream, or larger, like buying that new outfit you have had your eye on. Rewards also don't have to cost money, like going to play some basketball with some friends at the park. Enjoy yourself when you pass a milestone, stick to your reward plans to make them worth the effort.

REVIEW REGULARLY: Regular reviewing benefits taking stock of the work done. We have said this before. It's important. Better read it again. Also monitor your progress at reasonable periods and make changes where necessary. If you find that you are consistently allotting more time than necessary to a specific chore, change your future schedule accordingly.

SAY NO TO DISTRACTIONS: No matter how attractive they are unless, of course, its on the schedule.

Time management is an important component of an effective study habit. Individuals have their own ways of managing time. Try using this grid while managing your time-urgent and important, urgent but not important, not urgent but important and neither urgent nor important.

When planning study time for your exams, answer these two questions. How much time do I need to devote to studying for the exam and how much time do I have to study for this exam?

It's fairly easy to determine the answer for the second question. But the first question calls to arrive at a definite answer. Your answer can be accurate or near accurate if you ask yourself the following questions.

* How much time do I usually spend studying for this type of exam? What results have I got? (if you usually spend three hours and you are getting D grades, perhaps you need to reassess the time spent?)

* What grade do I feel get?

* What special study do I have to do?

* Organise the material you need to study, pace yourself and check to see how much hour of review. How does this compare to what you have left to study?

Following these tips will help you secure a good result. What's better you will be stress free during preparations.

TAKE IT EASY, BOARDS ARE LIKE, ANY OTHER EXAM

Tufail Ahmad name changed, a class 12 student, is under pressure, His neighbour, Latif, scored 94% in the class 12 Boards a year ago and Tufail Ahmad's parents expect him to perform a lot better. He is not the only one in such a situation. With the Boards just two months away, many students find themselves weighed down by expectations.

As Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, a senior psychiatrist at Moolchand Meditly pointed out, comparisons with other students, parental expectations, and peer pressure are major concerns for students attempting their Board exams.

"These concerns bog students down, leading to severe examination stress which can be defined as a feeling of anxiety over one's performance, the results and reaction of parents and friends," he said.

A class 10 student admitted to having a tough time dealing with parental pressure. "If parents, don't force their expectations on the students, they can make their own goals and achieve them. When I have made my target of the day on a certain amount of syllabus that I will cover, my parents shouldn't force me to study more". A

parent admitted that “With college admissions becoming difficult these days, is an increased parental pressure on children”.

Much harm can be caused by expectations, said a parental coach. Parental expectations driven by their social standing can hamper a student’s performance. It is imperative to create a comfort zone and generate a “we are with you “felling among children, especially during exams”, said the parental coach.

As to how is he dealing with parental pressure, a student from the Indian School said; I want to become a doctor but my parents expect me to join the family business after finishing my studies. Seeing my unfinished dedication, they accepted it, and gave me five years to turn my dream into a reality.

DO NOT IGNORE YOUR EYES

1. Take a five minute break after every 50 minutes of studying as a regular routine.
2. Make sure the room has enough light. Studying in a dark room leads to eye strain.
3. If your eyes start aching and you can’t see clearly while reading, you may require glasses, see an eye specialist.
4. Blink frequently whenever you study for long periods at a time. Blinking helps in keeping your eyes moist.
5. Sleep for 7-8 hours for optimal eye comfort.
6. Wash your hands properly before using contact lenses.
7. Drink plenty of water.

(From Page No.15)

There are a number of harmful effects of consuming alcohol on society, the economy, on morality and health. The excuse given by various state governments that leaning alcohol would seriously compromise the revenue they earn by way of taxing the alcohol industry. The cost that government has to bear in terms of trying to prevent the crimes committed under the influence of alcohol, the various medical and health expenses that are caused by various diseases due to alcoholism, the breakdown in family system and the abundance of court cases and litigation because of alcohol, is far greater than the income accrued by the government by taxing the alcohol industry. The right thinking people believe that our Creator and Sustainer has prohibited alcohol and other intoxicants precisely because of these reasons.

Almost all states of Indian Federation have imposed partial restrictions on manufacturing and sale of this dangerous brew. Yet the fear of losing a big source of revenue restrains these governments from banning it completely.

According to a report about 65 to 70 million Indians are regular drinkers and their number is alarmingly on the increase. From 1970 to 1996 the number of drinkers doubled. More than 85% cases of violence against wives happened under the influence of alcohol.

It is high time that a big campaign by NGOs, religious and social organizations, social workers Imams, preachers should be started to mould the public opinion to completely ban this mother of all evils in the country.

Markazi Jamait Ahle Hadeeth Hind is initiating a big campaign against Alcoholic drinks. This article is a part of this campaign. May God make us success in this campaign. Ameen!