

**The  
SIMPLE  
TRUTH**  
MONTHLY  
June, 2018

Vol. No.12      Issue No.6

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Publisher  
**Mohammad Irfan Shakir**

**Subscription**  
Rupees 100/= per annum  
Rupees 10/= per copy

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## A CONSPIRACY AGAINST MUSLIM UNIVERSITY ALIGARH

It is highly condemnable the trespassing of 143-year old AMU boundary and raising of objectionable slogans by a group of Hindu Vahini Youths on May 2, 2018. It is a very serious issue that the UP government failed to provide security for the former Vice President of India, Mr. Hamid Ansari who was supposed to be felicitated at the university the day the violence broke out. The row started after BJP M.P. Satish Gautam wrote a letter to the AMU authorities, objecting to Jinnah portrait in students union.

In fact, the portraits of all life members of the students Union hang there. Jinnah, a founder member of the University court, had also been given this honour before partition in 1938.

The incident happened when the AMU students were demanding action against an outsider-group that entered the campus which was a breach in the security of Mr. Hamid Ansari. The Strategic negligence of UP police for assaulting the peacefully protesting students cannot be justified in any way.

We express sympathies with the injured students and ask the district administration to nab the culprits and police personal and take strict action against the youth of Yuva Vahini for disturbing peace in the campus.

The present incident at Aligarh campus should be read in line with the growing vandalism that is being unleashed by Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad on campuses across India. The AMU incident is the latest in the row.

The issue is not portrait of Jinnah but it is against educational institutions. They are attacking AMU and spoiling its good name because they do not want the marginalised community to study.

Meanwhile anguish is simmering among the people following a request made by an RSS functionary to hold their shakhas at the university campus.

In addition to it, Mr. Garundhwaj Singh, the grandson of the late Jat King. Mahendra Pratap Singh, demanded that his grandfather's portrait be displayed at AMU and University should be named after his grandfather. The said Jat King had leased 3.4 acres of the land to AMU in 1929 at a rate of Rs 2/=00 per annum.

It is high time that sincere citizens should come together to save AMU and safeguard constitutional values in the country.

However, the AMU students and other concerned people should maintain peace and calm in the campus in this hour of crises.

## ALLAH'S PROMISE IS TRUE

*“In this Holy Quran We have explained things to people in myriad ways. But no matter what sign you bring to them, those who are resolved upon denying the Truth will say: “You are given to falsehood”. Thus does Allah seal the hearts of those who have no knowledge. Therefore, (O Prophet), have patience, surely Allah’s Promise is true. Let those who lack certainty not cause you to be unsteady”. (Surah Al-Room, 30:58-60)*

Things of the highest moment have been explained in the Holy Quran from various points of view as in this Sura itself, by means of parables and similitudes drawn from nature and from our ordinary daily life. But whatever the explanation, however convincing it may be to men who earnestly seek after Truth, those who deliberately turn their backs to Truth can find nothing convincing. In their eyes the explanations are mere “vain talk” or false argements.

When an attitude of obstinate resistance to Truth is adopted, the natural consequence (by Allah’s law) is that the heart and mind get more and more hardened with every act of deliberate rejection. It becomes more and more impervious to the reception of Truth, just as a sealed envelope is unable to receive any further letter or message after it is sealed.

The believers should be so firmly anchored in their conviction that there should be no reason whatsoever for enemies to consider them so feeble hearted that they can be overpowered by the latters “hue and cry”.

Nor should the believers feel persuaded to make any compromise with enemies under the spell of any plea. On the contrary, such enemies should find the believers so vigilant as regards their objectives, so mature and deeply entrenched in their beliefs, so determined in their resolve, and so firm in their character that no threat can frighten them, no can any price howsoever high cajote them, nor any danger, loss or suffering deflect them from their chosen path and nor can their religious faith ever be a matter of bargain.

The Prophet of Allah does not slacken in his efforts or feel discouraged because the Unbelievers laugh at him or persecute him or even seem to succeed in blocking his message. He has firm faith, and he knows that Allah will finally establish His Truth. He goes on in his divinely entrusted task, with patience and perseverance, which must win against the levity of his opponents, who have no faith or certainty at all to sustain them.

## SHOW MERCY TO FELLOWS

1. Jabir bin Abdullah reported that the Messenger of Allah said: Allah is not kind to one who is not kind to men". (*Bukhari & Muslim*)

2. Abdullah bin Amar reported that the Messenger of Allah said: (As for) the kind, the Merciful is kind to them. Be kind to those who are in this world; then He who is in the heaven will show kindness to you". (*Abu Daud and Tirmizi*)

Islam gives utmost importance to service to humanity. It teaches the believers to alleviate the sufferings of fellow beings. This act of caring for others is elevated on par with worship to Allah. If anyone of our fellow beings falls sick or suffers from some ailment, this eventuality throws dual responsibility on our shoulders. One is submission into the Will of Allah, the Exalted. And the other responsibility is to have deep sense of service to humanity at large. The sick belong to the strata of society which is depraved, emaciated and utterly helpless, and as such deserves our highest sympathies. They attract our deep sympathies for the prime reason that not only are they incapable of rendering any help to others but are also themselves dependent on and deserving of other's help. Therefore, it becomes the foremost duty of a Muslim to look

after them, and to care and nurse them with due care and compassion.

Allah is known as Rahman and Raheem (kind). In showing kindness by sending down food, clothing rain, sun-rays, wind and other things for maintenance of human life, He makes no distinction between man and man. Similarly a Muslim should make no distinction when there is a pressing need of a man, no matter from whatever tribe or nation he comes. In this way, all other attributes of Allah should be followed for the service of humanity, because service to humanity is the service to Allah. This is also clear from the following tradition: Allah will ask: O son of Adam! I asked you food, but you did not give Me food. He will reply: O my Lord! How could I have fed You when You are the Lord of the universe. He will say: "Did you not know that such and such a servant of Mine asked you food, while you did not feed him? Did you not know that if you had fed him, you would surely have found that with Me."

However, service to humanity may be done by showing kindness to the orphans, to the poor and the distressed, giving food and drive to the hungry and thirsty, nursing and visiting the sick, trying to impart education and advising them to stick to right path.

# Zakah & its Administration

Abdul Lateef M. Adetona Nigeria

Islam being a complete way of life sets a great premium on the welfare of Muslims and utilizes a number of means through which material wealth circulates amongst members of the Muslim Ummah. These means include Sadaqah (donation), Hibah (gift), Mirath (inheritance), Mahar (dower) and of course, Zakah.

It is the divine design of the Almighty that material means are not equitably distributed amongst the people. The Quran speaks of this as follows:

*“Is it they who would portion out the Mercy of your Lord? It is We who portion out between them their livelihood in this world, and We raised some of them above others to ranks, so that some may employ others in their work.” (Quran, 43:32)*

Despite of this inequality in the means provided by Allah, Islam takes measures for their even distribution and circulation, one of such measures is the institution of Zakah, which is our focus in this paper. Our concern is more with the plausibility of its administration (including its collection and distribution). In doing justice to the theme of this study, I will begin with sub-themes such as

definition, the rate of Nisab, eligibility for paying Zakah and Zakah administration.

## Definition:

Zakah, first and foremost, is a pillar of Islam. It has been defined in many ways ranging from being a welfare contribution to a mean through which wealth is purified. It is also described as obligatory charity. It can however be defined technically as “a special rate taken at a specific time from a specific amount at a specific level and expended on specific areas.” The above definition takes care of every aspect of Zakah’s administration viz. specific rate, taken at a specified period from a specific amount at a specific level and expended on specific areas.

*Nisab*: This is the minimum level that a Muslim’s material possessions must have reached before he becomes eligible to pay Zakah. This is not restricted to money or gold alone. It covers all human possessions including merchandise, agricultural produce and cattle. Whoever is seen to have possessed the *Nisab* is seen as rich and should allow a portion to be deducted from his wealth to those in need.

In the prophetic era, the *Nisab* was fixed at 20 dinars for gold and 200 dirhams for currency. It usually amounts to same whether the payment is

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made in gold or in currency. If the amount fixed at that period is to be used, *Nisab*, currently will be around 126 dollars as a dinar is currently fixed at 51.3 US dollars or thereabouts.

The Nisab for possessions other than money had equally been fixed during the Noble Prophet's lifetime and had since remained unchanged. They are as seen in the table:

It is expedient to note here that when one is in possession of currency and other goods for which, *Zakah* is to be paid, all possessions will be included in calculating the *Nisab* as well as the rate of paying the *Zakah*. *Zakah* is however not due on such animals as horses, mule or donkeys. Household utensils such as plates, chairs as well as mats are equally exempted. Utensils made of gold and silver will be included for the calculation of *Zakah*.

#### **Eligibility to pay *Zakah* :**

There are certain conditions that makes someone eligible to pay *Zakah*. They include:

- (a) The wealth possessed by the person reaches the *Nisab*.
- (b) The full ownership of such wealth.
- (c) The possession remaining with the possessor for a whole year.

Attainment of puberty is a non-condition in this regard. If a minor is in possession of a property that has attained the *Nisab*, his guardian will annually make arrangement for the payment of *Zakah* on such possessions. Similarly properties left behind by a deceased Muslim and on which *Zakah* is already due cannot be distributed to

the heirs until the amount of *Zakah* is deducted because *Zakah* here is a right of Allah.

#### **Recipients of *Zakah*:**

The Glorious Quran (Surah 9:60) enumerates the categories of people entitled to receive *Zakah*. They are as follows:

1. *The Poor*: A person whose possession is insufficient for his livelihood. His possession might have become close to the *Nisab* but may be inadequate to take care of himself and his family. He thus becomes eligible to accept *Zakah*. He is given a preference above all others because it is most likely that the amount received by him in a particular year will augment his financial means and he will be no more in need of *Zakah*, and consequently becomes eligible to pay *Zakah* to others.

2. *The pauper*: This is an indigent person whose condition is worse than poor. He is someone who has nothing absolutely. He is entitled to receive *Zakah*.

3. *The one who works on *Zakah**: The worker, who is paid from the proceed of *Zakah* because it is on *Zakah* that he has dissipated some energies working on the collection, collation of data of eligible people to pay or receive *Zakah*. He also partakes in the collection and distribution of *Zakah*.

4. *Those whose hearts are to be reconciled*: This is in relation to those who have been showing interest in Islam but who nurse the fear of what might be the consequence of their actions. When they receive *Zakah*, it gives them assurance that Islam will take care of their welfare. This category of people were however excluded from *Zakah* during the time of Caliph

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Omar Ibn Al Khattab, a decision based on the fact that those who wanted to accept Islam then had nothing to fear. Experience in contemporary events has shown that in some cases these people may still receive Zakah. For example, a former Rev. Father, John Jomo was dispossessed of all his belongings when he accepted Islam and was thus impoverished for reverting to the natural religion. If he did not receive the assistance of the local Muslim community, he probably would have reverted to his former faith out of frustration. He is now Ibrahim Jomo, a Da wah worker in Lagos. It is our opinion that this class of receivers recognized by Islam can still be considered for Zakah.

5. *Manumission of Slave*: This is a cause that Islam has always championed from the very beginning. It is a way of worship that pleases Allah. It is preferable that Zakah is used in the manumission of slaves than spent on poors and paupers who at least have freedom. A slave pauper or poor may not be allowed by his masters to enjoy whatever Zakah is given to him.

6. *Debtor*: Islam also allows that a debtor who incurs debt not as a result of indolence or recklessness be given Zakah to enable him to sustain a financial standing.

7. *In the Cause of Allah*: Zakah proceeds can be spent on projects which are meant to promote the cause of Allah especially when the collection for the year is so enormous that it covers all other aspects earlier highlighted.

8. *The Wayfarer*: Zakah will be given to a wayfarer, who needs money to meet the expenses of his journey. A wayfarer is eligible to receive Zakah if the following conditions are met:

(i) that the journey is not criminally motivated

(ii) that he becomes poor during journey though he may be rich at home.

(iii) And that nobody can lend him money during that period.

#### **Administration of Zakah:**

Zakah, in the early period of Islam was administered by the state. The caliph used to appoint a representative who led a group of people to collate and calculate details of total annual possessions of Muslims and collect Zakah from them. They also distributed Zakah to eligible recipient.

Zakah, to the early Muslims was as important as Iman, Salat, Siyam and Hajj that Caliph Abu Bakr As Siddiq, on assumption of his caliphate, vowed to fight those who were using the demise of the Noble Prophet to negotiate exemption from Zakah. Abu Bakr insisted on his stand despite the advice of leading companions. He convinced them that his insistence was based on the fact that evasion of Zakah payment was like renouncing the faith, refusing to perform the compulsory fast and seeing Hajj only as voluntary.

It was also in the era of the caliph, Omar Ibn Abdul Aziz who took special interest in Zakah administration in Damascus. He made sure that Zakah was well administered and in less than two years after he became the caliph, there was no body in Damascus, in need of Zakah. By implication those who were then paying Zakah were on the increase.

This shows that wherever the Zakah administration is well handled, the society will

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benefit immensely from it. The above experiment was successful because it was in an Islamic State and those in charge of the administration of Zakah were also sincere Muslims.

In a country like Nigeria, we want to examine the possibility of Zakah administration. Let it be clarified here that Islam recognizes three kinds of states. They are:

***Darus Salam:*** A State of Islam or peace. This is a state where Islam is reigning and the Shariah is the constitution.

***Darul-Harb:*** A state of war. This is a community where Islam is not allowed at all and the Muslims are persecuted.

***Darus-Sulh:*** This is a state where though Islamic rule is not prevalent, Muslims are still not prevented from practicing their religion peacefully. This is a state where adherents of different faiths co-exist harmoniously. This is neither a secular state nor a theocratic one but a multi-religious state.

The Nigeria state belongs to the third category, Darus Sulh. Muslims practice their religious duties without major hinderance. However, rituals such as salat and Siyam, have been perfectly institutionalized, except Zakah.

### **Some Suggestions**

It has been earlier said, that Zakah was administered centrally and by the state in the early days of Islam. One of the basis for this is the expression mentioned in the above (Al Amiluna Alayaha) that some people must work on Zakah. It is when Zakah is administered in this organized manner that can benefit a lot of

people. Such benefits which may not be available when Zakah is not centrally administered include the following:

1. The enhancement of complete subservience to Allah thus allowing Zakah to play its actual role as a pillar of Islam.

2. It provides the rich Muslims the opportunity of sharing their excess wealth with the less fortunate among them.

3. It creates in them the impression that wealth is all from Allah and that Muslims are only trustees of what they have.

4. It brews serenity, amity and brotherhood in any given community where it is duly administered.

5. It is therefore, not of order, if the Muslim groups and organizations come together and set up a Zakah foundation in very locality, perhaps on the basis of local government council areas. This will not only work as it may also fall in line with prophetic admonitions on Zakah that it should as a matter of policy be distributed where it was collected except on rare occasions and for specified reasons. Each of the local Zakah committees should be empowered to collect data on every Muslim resident in the locality and with that prepare a register of those eligible to collect or pay Zakah.

Workers in this committee will be adequately compensated from the Zakah fund and volunteers coming up may be acceptable to the given community. Zakah worker must possess qualities such as piety, integrity, people's confidence, contentment, and above all knowledge of the work. The work requires knowledge in the diverse field of *fiqh*



(Jurisprudence), *Iqtisad* (economics), *Hisab* (mathematics and statistics) and general knowledge of Islam and its principles.

If the effort of having a Zakah committee at the local level does not appear visible or fast enough, a committee may be set up on the neighborhood basis.

The committee of whatever level will have its initial problems on the collation of names of eligible recipients, eligible payers and the working of the amount due in Zakah from the properties of eligible payers. With sincerity of

purpose, faith and persistent commitment of the organizers, the Zakah committee which may work on local or neighborhood basis will grow all over the region.

To achieve this, enlightenment of the need to administer Zakah centrally will have to be intensified and thus will it be popularized as a more acceptable way of Zakah payment and receipt and which will (Insha Allah) become acceptable to all.

<b>Wealth</b>	<b>Nisab</b>	<b>Rate of Zakah</b>
Agricultural produce	5 awsaq (653) Kg per harvest	5% in case of irrigated land if not 10%
Gold, silver and ornaments made from them	85 grams of gold, 595 grams of silver	2.5% of value
Cash in hand & at bank	Value of 102 US dollars	2.5% of value
Cows and buffaloes	30 in number	For every 30 one 1-year old and for 40 one 2-year old
Produce of mines	Any quantity	20% of value of produce
Camels	5 in number (up to 24) *23-35 in number *36-45 in number  *46-60 in number * 61-75 in number *76-90 in number *91-120 in number * 121 or more in number	1 sheep/goat for every five *1 one year old she camel *1 two year old she camel *1 three year old she camel *1 four year old she camel 2 two year old she camels 2 three year old she camels and for every 50, and additional 1 two year old she camel.

## SADQATUL-FITR

It is reported that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) said: “Remember! Sadqatul Fitr is *Wajib* (strongly recommended, just short of obligatory) on every Muslim, man or woman, free or in servitude, adult or child.”

### PURPOSE:

Ibn Abbas reported that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) made the Sadqatul Fitr obligatory for the purpose of: purifying our fasting from vain talk and shameful mistakes, to make arrangements for the poor and the needy for food and clothing (for the festival of Eid). *Abu Daud* and *Ibn Majah*

### WHO SHOULD PAY?

Every adult Muslim, with sufficient food for the family for a day, should pay *Sadqatul Fitr* for himself/herself and all his/her dependents. Even those who did not fast should pay it. *Sadqatul Fitr* should also be paid for the child born or the person died before the Fajr (dawn) on the day of Eid.

### HOW MUCH SHOULD BE PAID?

At the time of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.), payment of *Sadqatul Fitr* was made in terms of

wight of grain. The Muslim jurists agree that *Sadqatul Fitr* can be paid in cash equivalent to the cost of a full meal for a person.

The measure of *Sadqatul Fitr* in wheat, flower, barn and dried fruits is half Sa'a; and in dates or barley one Sa'a. Imam Shafi'i holds the view that the measure in all the above articles is one Saa'. But in all cases, value of the measure must be ascertained to give laxity to the above rule. In some countries, it can be given in staple food crops such as rice or bread. It is also lawful to pay the equivalent price, because price satisfies the various wants of the poor and the needy. One Saa' is equivalent to 2½ Kilos. Like Zakat, *Sadqatul Fitr* was an organised institution but it fell afterwards into disuse.

### WHEN TO PAY?

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) said, “whoever paid it (*Sadqatul-Fitr*) before *Salatul Eid*, it is acceptable before Allah. Whoever paid it after *Salatul-Eid*, it is just a charity. “The companion of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) used to pay it a few days earlier. (*Bukhari*)

Imam Shafi'i holds the opinion that *Sadqatul Fitr*

can be paid as early as the beginning of Ramadhan. It is suggested that Sadqatul Fitr should be paid early enough so it will reach the needy and the poor before the Eid prayer. It will enable them to use it for food and cloth and give them the opportunity to enjoy the happiness of Eid-ul-Fitr.

### WHO SHOULD BE PAID?

Sadaqatul Fitr should be paid directly to the needy and the poor. However, you can also pay it to an organisation, which would distribute it in accordance with the teachings of Islam. Remember that it is still your responsibility. So make sure before paying that the organisation will distribute it according to the teachings of Islam and before Salat-ul-Eid.

## INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

The letters to the Editor Section wants to hear from you

Are you concerned about certain issues that are being talked about? Your opinions are important to us.

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The Simple Truth

Ahle Hadeeth Manzil, 4116, Urdu Bazar,  
Jama Masjid, Delhi-110006



## The Simple Truth (Monthly)

### Statement about Ownership

(According to Form IV Rule 8) (see Rule 8)

1. Name of Magazine: The Simple Truth  
Language: English
2. Periodicity of the Publication: Monthly
3. Place of Publication: Markazi Jamiat-e-Ahle Hadees Hind, Ahle Hadeeth Manzil 4116, Urdu Bazar, Jama Masjid, Delhi-110006
4. Printer's Name: Mohammad Irfan Shakir  
Address: C-125/2 Abul Fazal Enclave Part:II Saheen Bagh, Jamia Nagar, New Delhi-25 (Whether citizen of India) yes, citizen of India
5. Publisher's Name: Mohammad Irfan Shakir  
Address: C-125/2 Abul Fazal Enclave Part:II Saheen Bagh, Jamia Nagar, New Delhi-25 (Whether citizen of India) Yes-citizen of India.
6. Editor's Name: Dr. Abul Hayat Ashraf  
Address: Markazi Jamiat Ahle Hadees Hind, Ahle Hadees Manzil 4116, Urdu Bazar Jama Masjid, Delhi-110006, (Whether citizen of India) yes-citizen of India
7. Ownership: Markazi Jamiat Ahle Hadees, Hind  
I, Mohammad Irfan Shakir, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature

Mohammad Irfan Shakir

# IMPORTANCE OF I'TIKAF

By Dr. Abul Hayat Ashraf

'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) reported that the Messenger of Allah (may peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) used to observe 'itikaf in the last ten days of Ramadhan till Allah called him back (to his heavenly home). Then his wives observed 'Itikaf after him. (*Saheeh Muslim*)

Itikaf literally means "To stay in a place". Technically, it is staying in a mosque for a certain number of days, especially the last ten days of the month of Ramadhan. The idea behind 'itikaf is to exhort the Muslims to devote themselves exclusively to prayer and devotion at least for a few days during the year in order to develop deep God-Consciousness, because it is this consciousness which is the fountainhead of a Muslim's thought and deed.

'Itikaf is in fact the next stage of fasting in spiritual development and purification of soul. During the days of 'Itikaf, the Mu'takif dissociates himself from all worldly affairs and spends his time in prayer and supplication.

Women should observe 'itikaf not in the mosque but in their houses at places where they offer prayer.

The male should observe 'itikaf in the mosque, whereas the females should observe it in their

houses. 'Itikaf is not an obligatory act, although the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) took great care to observe it. 'Itikaf can be observed in any part of the year, but it should be preferably observed in the last ten days of Ramadhan as it was the common practice of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.)

During 'Itikaf the Mu'takif (who seclude themselves for some time in a mosque) do not leave the place for worldly affairs, except for necessary purposes. The time is spent in recitation of Holy Quran, in performing Zikr, and supplicating and worshipping Allah. They eat there and sleep there in seclusion. This seclusion is called 'Itikaf.

'Itikaf bears much importance in the life of the believers. It is very much instrumental in getting the purpose of Ramadhan viz. Striving for *Taqwa* (piety) fulfilled. Ramadhan itself is the annual celebration of the Revelation of the Holy Quran. The Holy Quran says that it was revealed in one of the blessed nights of Ramadhan called *Lailatul Qadr*. And the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) guides the believers to seek *Lailatul Qadr* in one of the last odd nights of Ramadhan. 'Itikaf helps them seek the Night of Dignity in the best possible manner. (*Cont. on Page 29*)

# MUHAMMAD THE PROPHET OF ISLAM

**By Prof. K.S. Ramakrishna Rao**

In the desert of Arabia was Muhammad born, according to Muslim historians, on April 20, 571. The name means “highly praised”. He is to me the greatest mind among all the sons of Arabia. He means so much more than all the poets and kings that preceded and succeeded him in that impenetrable desert of red sand.

When he appeared, Arabia was a desert-a nothing. Out of nothing of the desert a new world was fashioned by the mighty spirit of Muhammad a new life, a new culture, a new civilisation, a new kingdom which extended from Morocco to Indies and influenced the thought and life of three continents Asia, Africa and Europe.

When I thought of writing on Muhammad the Prophet (S.A.W.), I was a bit hesitant because it was to write about a religion one does not profess and it is a delicate matter to do so, for there are many persons professing various religions and belonging to diverse schools of thought and denominations even in the same religion. Though it is sometimes claimed that a religion is entirely personal yet it cannot be gainsaid that it has a tendency to envelope the whole universe seen as well as unseen. It somehow permeates, sometime or other, our hearts, our souls, our minds, their conscious parts, sub-conscious parts, unconscious or

whatever part they contain or are supposed to contain. The problem assumes overwhelming importance when there is a deep conviction that our past, present, and future all hang by the soft, delicate, tender-silked cord. If we further happen to be highly sensitive, the centre of gravity is very likely to be always in a state of extreme tension. Looked at from this point of view, the less said about other’s religion the better. Let our religions be deeply hidden and embedded in the recesses of our innermost hearts fortified by unbroken seals on our lips.

But there is another aspect of this problem. Man lives in society. Our lives are bound with the lives of so many, willingly or unwillingly, directly or indirectly. We eat the food grown in the same soil, drink the water from the same spring, breathe the air of the same atmosphere. Even while staunchly holding our own views, it would be helpful, if for no other purpose, at least to promote proper adjustment to our surrounding, if we also know to some extent, how the mind of our neighbour moves and what are the main springs of his actions. From this angle of vision, it is highly desirable that one should try to know all religions of the world, in the proper spirit, to promote mutual understanding and better appreciation of our neighbourhood, immediate and remote.

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Further, our thoughts are not scattered as they appear to be on the surface. They have got themselves crystallised around a few nuclei in the form of great world religions and living faiths that guide and motivate the lives of millions that inhabit this earth of ours. It is our duty, in one sense, if we have the idea of ever becoming citizens of the world before us, to make a little attempt to know great religions and systems of philosophy that have ruled mankind.

In spite of these preliminary remarks the ground in the field of religion, where there is often a conflict between intellect and emotion, is so slippery that one is constantly reminded of fools that rush in where angels fear to tread. It is also so complex from another point of view. The subject of my writing is about the tenets of a religion, which is historic, and its Prophet, who is also a historic personality. Even a hostile critic like Sir William Muir speaking about the Holy Quran says, "There is probably in the world no other book which has remained twelve centuries with so pure a text." I may also add, Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) is also a historic personality, every event of whose life has been most carefully recorded and even the minutest details preserved intact for the posterity. His life and works are not wrapt in mystery. One need not hunt for the accurate information and embark on arduous expeditions to sift the chaff and husk from the grain of truth.

My work is further lightened because those days are fast disappearing when Islam was highly misrepresented by some of its critics for reasons, political and otherwise. Prof. Bevan writes in *Cambridge Medieval History*, "The accounts of Muhammad and Islam which were

published in Europe before the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century are now to be regarded as literary curiosities." My problem to write this monograph is easier because we are not generally fed now on this kind of history and much time need not be spent on pointing out our misrepresentations of Islam.

The theory of Islam and Sword for instance is not heard now frequently in any quarter worth the name. Principle of Islam that there is no compulsion in religion is well known. Gibbon, a historian of worldwide fame, says, "A pernicious tenet has been imputed to the Muhammadans, the duty of extirpating all the religions by the sword." This charge of ignorance and bigotry, says the eminent historian, is refuted by the Quran, by the history of Mussalman conquerors and by their public and legal toleration of Christian worship. The greatest success of Muhammad's life was effected by sheer moral force without the stroke of a sword.

To the Arabs who would fight for forty years on the slight provocation that a camel belonging to the guest of one tribe had strayed into the grazing land belonging to another tribe and both sides had fought till they lost 70,000 lives in all, threatening the extinction of both tribes, to such furious Arabs, the Prophet of Islam taught self-control and discipline to the extent of praying even on the battle-field.

When, after repeated efforts at conciliation had utterly failed, circumstances arose that dragged him into the battlefield purely in self-defence, the Prophet (S.A.W.) of Islam changed the whole strategy of the battle-field. The total number of casualties in all the wars that took place during this lifetime, when the whole

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Arabian Peninsula came under his banner, does not exceed a few hundreds in all. He taught the Arab barbarians to pray, to pray not individually but in congregation, to God Almighty even amidst the dust and storm of warfare. Whenever the time for prayer came-and it comes five times every day-the congregational prayer had not to be abandoned or even postponed. A party had to be engaged in bowing their heads before God while another was engaged with the enemy. After finishing the prayers, the two parties had to exchange their positions.

In an age of barbarism, the battle field itself was humanised and strict instructions were issued not to embezzle, not to cheat, not to break trust, not to mutilate, not to kill a minor child or a woman or an old man, not to hew down date palm nor burn it, not to cut down a fruit tree, not to molest monks and persons engaged in worship. His own treatment of his bitterest enemies was the noblest example for his followers. At the conquest of Makkah, he stood at the zenith of his power. The city which had refused to listen to his mission, which had tortured him and his followers, which had driven him and his people into exile and which had unrelentingly persecuted and boycotted him even when he had taken refuge in a place more than 200 miles away, that city now lay at his feet. By the laws of war he could have justly avenged all the cruelties inflicted on him and his people. But what treatment did he mete out to them? Muhammad's (S.A.W.) heart overflowed with the milk of love and kindness as he declared, "This day, there is no reproof against you and are all free".

This was one of the chief objects why he permitted war in self-defence to unite human beings. And when this object was achieved, even his worst enemies were pardoned. Even those who had killed his beloved uncle, Hamza, mutilated his dead body, had ripped it open and chewed a piece of his liver.

The principle of universal brotherhood and the doctrine of the equality of mankind which he proclaimed represent very great contribution of Muhammad to the social uplift to humanity. All great religions have also preached the same doctrine, but the Prophet (S.A.W.) of Islam had put this theory into actual practice and its value will be fully recognised, perhaps, sometime hence, when international consciousness being awakened, racial prejudices would disappear and a stronger concept of the brotherhood of humanity comes into existence.

Sarojini Naidu, speaking about this aspect of Islam, says, "It was the first religion that preached and practised democracy; for, in the mosque, when the minaret is sounded and the worshippers are gathered together, the democracy of Islam is embodied five times a day when the peasant and king kneel side by side and proclaim, "God alone is great." The great poetess of India continues, "I have been struck over again by this indivisible unity of Islam that makes a man instinctively a brother. When you meet an Egyptian, an Algerian, an Indian and a Turk in London, what matters is that Egypt is the motherland of one and India is the motherland of one and India is the motherland of another."

Mahatma Gandhi, in his inimitable style, says, "Someone has said that Europeans in South

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Africa dread the advent of Islam-Islam, that civilised Spain; Islam that took the torch of light to Morocco and preached to the world the Gospel of Brotherhood. The Europeans of South Africa dread the advent of Islam, as they may claim equality with the white races. They may well dread it. If brotherhood is a sin if it is equality of the coloured races that they dread, then their dread is well founded.”

Every year, during the pilgrimage season, the world witnesses the wonderful spectacle of this international Exhibition of Islam in leveling all distinctions of race, colour and rank. Not only the Europeans, the Africans, the Persians, the Indians, the Chinese all meet together in Makkah as members of one divine family, but they are all clad in one dress, every person in two simple pieces of white seamless cloth, one piece round the loin and the other piece over the shoulders, bare-headed, without pomp or ceremony, repeating “Here am I, O God; at Thy command; Thou art One and the Only; Here am I.” Thus there remains nothing to differentiate the high from the low and every pilgrim carries home the impression of the international significance of Islam.

In the words of Prof. Hurgronje, “The League of Nations founded by the Prophet of Islam put the principle of international unity and human brotherhood on such universal foundations as to show candle to other nation.” He continues, “The fact is that no nation of the world can show a parallel to what Islam has done towards the realisation of the idea of League of Nation.”

The Prophet (S.A.W.) of Islam brought the reign of democracy in its best form. Caliph Umar,

Caliph Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet (S.A.W.) Caliph Mansur, Abbas, the son the Caliph Mamun, and many other caliphs and kings had to appear before the judge as ordinary men in Islamic courts. Even today we all know how the black Negroes are treated by the civilised white races. Consider the state of Bilal, a Negro slave, in the days of the Prophet (S.A.W.) of Islam nearly 14 centuries ago. The office of calling Muslims to prayer was considered to be a position of honour in the early days of Islam and it was offered to this Negro slave. After the conquest of Makkah, the Prophet (S.A.W.) ordered him to call for prayer and the Negro slave, with his black colour and his thick lips, stood over the roof of the holy Ka’abah, the most historic and holiest place in the Islamic world, when some proud Arabs painfully cried aloud, “Oh, this black Negro slave, woe to him. He stands on the roof of Holy Ka’abah to call for prayer.”

As if to answer this outburst smacking of pride and prejudice, both of which the Prophet (S.A.W.) of Islam aimed at elimination, he delivered a sermon in which he said:

“Allah is to be praised and thanked for having rid us of the vices and pride of the days of ignorance. O people! Note that all men are divided in two categories only: the pious and God-fearing who are esteemable in Allah’s reckoning, and the transgressors and hard-hearted, who are lowly and contemptible in the eye of Allah. Otherwise all human beings are the progeny of Adam and Allah has created Adam of clay.”



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This was later approved and confirmed by Quran in the following words: “*O mankind! Surely We created you from a single pair of a male and a female and have made you nations and tribes that you may know each other. Verily the most honoured among you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most righteous and God-fearing.*” (Surah Al-Hujrat, 49:13)

The Prophet of Islam thus brought about such a mighty transformation that the noblest and purest among Arabs by birth offered their daughters in marriage to this Negro slave and whenever the second Caliph of Islam, known to history as Umar the great, the commander of the faithful, saw this Negro slave, he immediately stood in reverence and welcomed him by exclaiming, “Here comes our master, here comes our lord.” What a tremendous change was brought by Quran and Prophet Muhammad in the Arabs, the proudest people at that time on earth. This is the reason why Goethe, the greatest of German poets, speaking about the Holy Quran, declared, “This book will go on exercising through all ages a most potent influence.” This is also the reason why George Bernard Shaw said, “If any religion has a chance of ruling over England, nay, Europe, within the next 100 years, it is Islam.”

It is this same democratic spirit of Islam that has emancipated women from the bondage of man. Sir Charles Edward Archibad Hamilton said, ‘Islam teaches the inherent sinlessness of man. It teaches that man and woman have come from the same essence, possess the same soul and have been equipped with equal capabilities for intellectual, spiritual and moral attainments.’

The Arabs had a very strong tradition that he alone can inherit who can smite with the spear and can wield the sword. But Islam came as the defender of the weaker sex and entitled women to share in the inheritance of their parents. It gave women, centuries ago, the right of owning property. Yet it was only 12 centuries later, in 1881, that England, supposed to be the cradle of democracy, adopted this institution of Islam and an Act was passed, called ‘The Married Women’s Act’.” But centuries earlier, the Prophet (S.A.W.) of Islam had proclaimed, “Women are the twin halves of men. The rights of women are sacred.” “See that women are maintained in the rights granted to them.”

Islam is not directly concerned with political and economic systems, but indirectly and, in so far as political and economic affairs influence man’s conduct, it does lay down some very important principles of economic life. According to Prof. Massignon, Islam maintains the balance between exaggerated opposites and has always in view the building of character which is the basis of civilisation. This is secured by its law of inheritance, by an organised and not an optional system of charity known as Zakat, and by regarding as illegal all anti social practices in the economic field like monopoly, usury, securing of pre-determined unearned incomes and increaments, cornering markets, hoarding and creating artificial scarcity of any commodity in order to force the price to rise. Gambling is illegal. Contributions to schools, to places of worship, hospitals, digging of wells, opening of orphanages are the highest acts of virtue. Orphanages have sprung for the first time, it is said, under the teachings of the Prophet (S.A.W.) of Islam. The world owes its

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orphanages to this Prophet who was himself born an orphan.

A historian once said, a great man should be judged by three tests. Was he found to be of true mettle by his contemporaries? Was he great enough to rise above the standards of his age? Did he leave anything as permanent legacy to the world at large? This list may be further extended but all these three tests of greatness are eminently satisfied to the highest degree in the case of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.). Some illustrations of the last two have already been mentioned.

The first of the three is, was the Prophet (S.A.W.) of Islam found to be of true mettle by his contemporaries?

Historical records show that all contemporaries of Muhammad (S.A.W.), both friends and foes, acknowledged the sterling qualities, the spotless honesty, the noble virtues, the absolute sincerity and the absolute trustworthiness of the Apostle of Islam in all walks of life and in every sphere of human activity. Even the Jews and those who did not believe in his Message accepted him as arbitrator in their personal disputes on account of his scrupulous impartiality. Even those who did not believe in his Message were forced to say "O Muhammad, we do not call you a liar, but we deny Him who has given you a Book and inspired you with a Message." They thought he was one possessed. They tried violence to cure him. But the best of them saw that a new light had dawned on him and they hastened to seek that enlightenment. It is a notable feature in the history of the Prophet (S.A.W.) of Islam that his nearest relations, his beloved cousin and his close friends, who knew him most intimately, were thoroughly imbued with the truth of his

mission and convinced of the genuineness of his divine inspiration. If these men and women, noble, intelligent, educated and intimately acquainted with his private life had perceived in him the slightest signs of deception, fraud, earthliness or bad lack of faith in him, Muhammad's (S.A.W.) moral hope of regeneration, spiritual awakening, and social reform could all have been foredoomed and the whole edifice would have crumbled to pieces in a moment. On the contrary we find that the devotion of his followers was such that he was voluntarily acknowledged leader of their lives. They braved for his sake persecutions and danger; they believed, trusted, obeyed and honoured him even in the most excruciating torture and severest mental agony caused by excommunication; even unto death. Would this have been so had they noticed the slightest backsliding in their leader?

Read the history of the early converts of Islam and every heart would melt at the sight of the brutal treatment of innocent men and women. Sumayya, an innocent woman, is cruelly torn into pieces by piercing through with spears. An example is made of Yasir whose legs are tied to two camels and the beasts are driven in the opposite direction. Khabbab Bin Arth is made to lie down on a bed of burning coal with the brutal legs of the merciless tyrant on his breast so that he may not move and this makes even the fat beneath his skin melt. Khabbab Bin Adi is put to death in a cruel manner by mutilation and cutting off his flesh piecemeal. In the midst of his tortures, when asked whether he did not wish Muhammad (S.A.W.) in his place while he was in his house with his family, the sufferer cried out that he was gladly prepared to sacrifice

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himself, his family and children and all to save Muhammad (S.A.W.) from the prick of a thorn. Scores of heart-rending incidents of this type may be narrated. But what do all these incidents show? Why was it that these sons and daughters of Islam not only surrendered to their Prophet (S.A.W.) their allegiance but made a gift of their bodies, hearts and souls? Isn't the intense faith and conviction on the part of the immediate followers of Muhammad (S.A.W.), the noblest testimony to his sincerity and to his utter self-absorption in the task assigned to him?

And these men were not of low station or of inferior mental calibre. Around him, in quite early days, gathered what was best and noblest in Makkah, its flower and cream, men of position, rank, wealth and culture, and from his own kith and kin, those who knew the ins and outs of his life. All the first four Caliphs, with their towering personalities, were converts of this early period.

The *Encyclopedia Britannica* says, "Muhammad (S.A.W.) is the most successful of all Prophets and religious personalities." But this success was not the result of mere accident. It was not a windfall. It was a recognition of the fact that he was found to be of true mettle by his contemporaries. It was the result of his admirable and all-compelling personality.

The personality of Muhammad (S.A.W.), it is most difficult to get into the whole truth of it. Only a glimpse of it I can catch. What a dramatic succession of picturesque scenes? There is Muhammad (S.A.W.), the Prophet. There is Muhammad, the General; Muhammad, the King; Muhammad, the Warrior; Muhammad, the Businessman; Muhammad the Preacher; Muhammad the Philosopher; Muhammad, the

Statesman; Muhammad, the Orator; Muhammad the Reformer; Muhammad, the Refuge of Orphans; Muhammad, the Protector of Slaves; Muhammad, the Emancipator of Women; Muhammad, the Judge; Muhammad, the Saint. And in all these magnificent roles, in all these departments of human activities, he is alike a hero.

Orphanhood is the extreme of helplessness and his life upon this earth began with it. Kingship is the height of the material power and his life ended with it. From an orphan boy, persecuted refugee to an overlord, spiritual as well as temporal, of a whole nation and arbiter of its destinies, with all its trials and temptations, with all its vicissitudes and changes, its lights and shades, its ups and downs, its terror and splendour, he has stood the fire of the world and come out unscathed to serve as a model in every phase of life. His achievements are not limited to one aspect of life, but cover the whole field of human conditions.

If for instance, greatness consists in the purification of a nation, steeped in barbarism and immersed in absolute moral darkness, that dynamic personality who has transformed, refined and uplifted an entire nation, sunk low as the Arabs were, and made them the torch-bearers of civilisations and learning, has every claim to that greatness. If greatness lies in unifying the discordant elements of society by the ties of brotherhood and charity, the Prophet (S.A.W.) of the desert has got every title to this distinction. If greatness consists in reforming those wrapt in a degrading superstition and pernicious practices of every kind, the Prophet of Islam has wiped out superstitions and irrational fear from the

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hearts of millions. If it lies in displaying high morals, Muhammad (S.A.W.) has been admitted by friends and foes as Al-Amin, and Al-Sadiq, the trustworthy and the truthful. If a conqueror is a great man, here is a person who rose from a helpless orphan and a humble creature to be the ruler of Arabia, the equal of Khosros and Caesars, one who founded a great empire that has survived all these 14 centuries. If the devotion that a leader commands is the criterion of greatness, the Prophet's name even today exerts a magic charm over millions of souls, spread all over the world.

He had not studied philosophy in the school of Athens or Rome, Persia, India or China, yet he could proclaim the highest truths of eternal value to mankind. Unlettered himself, he could yet speak with an eloquence and fervour which moved men to tears of ecstasy. Born as an orphan and blessed with no worldly goods, he was loved by all. He had studied at no military academy; yet he could organise his forces against tremendous odds and gained victories through the moral forces which he marshalled. Gifted men with a genius for preaching are rare. Descartes included the perfect preacher among the rarest kind in the world. Hitler in his *Mein Kampf* has expressed a similar view. He says: "A great theorist is seldom a great leader. An agitator is far more likely to possess these qualities. He will always be a better leader. For, leadership means ability to move masses of men. The talent to produce ideas has nothing in common with capacity for leadership." But, he says: "The union of the theorist, organiser and leader in one man is the rarest phenomenon on earth; therein consists greatness." In the person of the Prophet (S.A.W.) of Islam the world has

seen this rarest phenomenon on the earth, walking in flesh and blood.

And more wonderful still is what the Reverend Bosworth Smith remarks: "Head of the State as well as the Church, he was Caesar and Pope in one; but, he was Pope without the Pope's claims, and Caesar without the legions of Caesar, without a standing army, without a bodyguard, without a place, without a fixed revenue. If ever any man had the right to say that he ruled by a right divine, it was Muhammad (S.A.W.), for he had all power without its instruments and without its supports. He cared not for the dressings of power. The simplicity of his private life was in keeping with his public life."

After the fall of Makkah more than one million square miles of land lay at his feet. Lord of Arabia, he mended his own shoes and coarse woolen garments, milked the goats, swept the hearth, kindled the fire and attended to other menial offices of the family. The entire town of Madina, where he lived, grew wealthy in the later days of his life. Everywhere there was gold and silver in plenty and yet in those days of prosperity many weeks would elapse without a fire being kindled in the hearth of the king of Arabia, his food being dates and water. His family would go hungry many nights successively because they could not get anything to eat in the evening. He slept on no soft bed but on a palm mat after a long busy day, to spend most of his night in prayer, often bursting with tears before his Creator to grant him strength to discharge his duties. As the reports go, his voice would get choked due to weeping and it would appear as if a cooking pot was on fire and boiling had commenced. On the day of his death his only assets were a few coins, a part of which went

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to satisfy a debt and the rest was given to a needy person who came to his house for charity. The clothes in which he breathed his last had many patches. The house from where light had spread to the world was in darkness because there was no oil in the lamp.

Circumstances changed, but the Prophet (S.A.W.) of God did not. In victory or in defeat, in power or in adversity, in affluence or in indigence, he was the same man, disclosed the same character. Like all the ways and laws of God, Prophets of God are unchangeable.

An honest man, as the saying goes, is the noblest work of God. Muhammad was more than honest. He was human to the marrow of his bones. Human sympathy, human love was the music of his soul. To serve man, to elevate man, to purify man, to educate man, in a word, to humanise man-this was the object of his mission, the be-all and end all of his life. In thought, in word, in action he had the good of humanity as his sole inspiration, his sole guiding principle.

He was most unostentatious and selfless to the core. What were the titles he assumed? Only two, Servant of God, and His Messenger; Servant first and then a Messenger. A Messenger, and Prophet like many other prophets in every part of the world, some known to us and many not known. If one does not believe in any of these truths one ceases to be a Muslim. It is an article of faith, with all Muslims.

“Looking at the circumstances of the time and the unbounded reverence of his followers” says a Western writer “the most miraculous thing about Muhammad (S.A.W.) is that he never claimed the power of working miracles.” Miracles were performed but not to propagate

his faith and were attributed entirely to God and his inscrutable ways. He would plainly say that he was a man like others. He had no treasures of earth or heaven. Nor did he claim to know the secrets that lie in the womb of future. All this was in an age when miracles were supposed to be ordinary occurrences, at the beck and call of the commonest saint and when the whole atmosphere was surcharged with supernaturalism in Arabia and outside Arabia.

He turned the attention of his followers towards the study of nature and its laws, to understand them and appreciate the Glory of God. The Quran says: “*We did not create the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in play. We did not create them all but with truth. But most men do not know.*” (*Surah ad-Dukhan, 44:38-39*) The world is not an illusion, nor without purpose. It has been created with truth. The number of verses in the Quran inviting close observation of nature are several times more than those that relate to prayer, fast, pilgrimage, etc., all put together. The Muslims under its influence began to observe nature closely and this gave birth to the scientific spirit of observation and experiments which was unknown to the Greeks. While the Muslim Botanist, Ibn Baitar wrote on Botany after collecting plants from all parts of the world, described by Mayer in his *Gesch der Botanika* as a monument of industry, while Al-Byruni travelled for forty years to collect mineralogical specimens, and Muslim Astronomers made some observations extending even over twelve years, Aristotle wrote on Physics without performing a single experiment, wrote on natural history carelessly stating without taking the trouble to ascertain the most easily verifiable fact that men have more teeth than animal.

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Galen, the greatest authority on classical anatomy, informed that the lower jaw consists of two bones, a statement which is accepted unchallenged for centuries till Abdul Latheef takes the trouble to examine a human skeleton. After enumerating several such instances, Robert Priffalut concludes in his well known book, the making of *humanity*: “The debt of our science to the Arabs does not consist in startling discoveries or revolutionary theories. Science owes a great deal more to the Arab culture: it owes its existence.” The same writer says: “The Greeks systematised, generalised and theorised but the patient ways of investigation, the accumulation of positive knowledge, the minute methods of science, detailed and prolonged observation, experimental enquiry, were altogether alien to Greek temperament. What we call science arose in Europe as a result of new methods of investigation, of the method of experiment, observation, measurement, of the development of mathematics in a form unknown to the Greeks... That spirit and these methods were introduced into the European world by the Arabs.”

It is the same practical character of the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) that gave birth to the scientific spirit, that has also sanctified the daily labour and the so-called mundane affairs. The Quran says that God has created man to worship him but the word *worship* has a connotation of its own. God’s worship is not confined to prayer alone, but every act that is done with the purpose of winning the approval of God and is for the benefit of humanity comes under its preview. Islam sanctifies life and all its pursuits provided they are performed with honesty, justice and pure intents. It obliterates

the age-long distinction between the sacred and profane. The Quran says if you eat clean things and thank God for it, it is an act of worship. It is a saying of the Prophet of Islam that a morsel of food that one places in the mouth of his wife is an act of virtue to be rewarded by God. Another tradition of the Prophet (S.A.W.) says: “He who is satisfying the desire of his heart will be rewarded by God provided the methods adopted are permissible.” A person who was listening to him exclaimed, ‘O Prophet of God, he is answering the calls of passions, he is only satisfying the cravings of his heart.’ Forthwith came the reply: “Had he adopted an unlawful method for the satisfaction of this urge, he would have been punished; then, why should he not be rewarded for following the right course?”

This new conception of religion that it should also devote itself to the betterment of this life rather than concern itself exclusively with super mundane affairs, has led to a new orientation of moral values. Its abiding influence on the common relations of mankind in the affairs of everyday life, its deep power over the masses, its regulation of their conceptions of rights and duties, its suitability and adaptability to the ignorant savage and the wise philosopher alike are characteristic features of the teachings of the Prophet (S.A.W.) of Islam.

But it should be most carefully borne in mind that this stress on good actions is not at the sacrifice of correctness of faith. While there are various schools of thought, one praising faith at the expense of deeds, another exhorting various acts to the detriment of correct belief, Islam is based on correct faith and right actions. Means are as important as the end and ends are as important as the means. It is an organic unity.

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Together they live and thrive. Separate them and they both decay and die. In Islam, faith cannot be divorced from action. Right knowledge should be transferred into right action to produce the right results. "Those who believe and do good, they alone shall enter Paradise." How often these words come in the Qur'an? Again and again, not less than fifty times these words are repeated. Contemplation is encouraged, but mere contemplation is not the goal. Those who believe and do nothing cannot exist in Islam. Those who believe and do wrong are inconceivable. Divine law is the law of effort and not of ideals. It chalks out for the men the path of eternal progress from knowledge to action and from action to satisfaction.

But what is the correct faith from which right action spontaneously proceeds, resulting in complete satisfaction? Here the central doctrine of Islam is the Oneness of God. There is no god but one God, is the pivot from which hangs the whole teachings and practices of Islam. He is unique not only as regards His divine being but also as regards His divine attributes.

As regards the attributes of God, Islam adopts here as in other things too, the law of the golden mean. It avoids, on the one hand, the view of God which divests the divine being of every attribute and rejects on the other, the view which likens Him to things material. The Quran says, on the one hand, there is nothing which is like Him; on the other, it affirms that He is Watching, Hearing, Knowing. He is the King Who is without a stain of fault or deficiency, the mightiness of His power floats upon the ocean of justice and equity. He is the Beneficent, the Merciful. He is the Guardian over all. Islam does not stop with this positive statement. It adds

which is its most special characteristic, the negative aspect of the problem. There is also no one else who is guardian over anything. He is the mender of every breakage, and no one else is the mender of any breakage. He is the restorer of any loss whatsoever. There is no god but One God, above any need, the Maker of bodies, Creator of souls, the Lord of the Day of Judgment and in short, in the words of Quran, to Him belong all the excellent qualities.

Regarding the position of man in relation to the Universe, the Quran says: "*God has made subservient to you whatever is on earth or in the Universe. You are destined to rule over the Universe.*" But in relation to God, the Quran says: "*O man, God has bestowed on you excellent faculties and has created life and death to put you to test in order to see whose actions are good and who has deviated from the right path.*"

In spite of free will which he enjoys to some extent, every man is born under certain circumstances and continues to live under certain circumstances beyond his control. With regard to this, God says according to Islam, it is My will to create any man under conditions that seem best to me. Cosmic plans, finite mortals cannot fully comprehend. But I will certainly test you in prosperity as well as in adversity, in health as well as in sickness, in heights as well as in depths. My ways of testing differ from man to man, from hour to hour. In adversity do not despair and do not resort to unlawful means. It is but a passing phase. In prosperity do not forget God. God's gifts are given only as trusts. You are always on trial; every moment on test. In this sphere of life "their's is not to reason why, their's is but to do and die." If you live, live in

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accordance with God; and if you die, die in the path of God. You may call it fatalism. But this type of fatalism is a condition of vigorous increasing effort, keeping you ever on the alert. Do not consider this temporal life on earth as the end of human existence. There is a life after death and it is eternal. Life after death is only a connecting link, a door that opens up hidden reality of life. Every action in life, however insignificant, produces a lasting effect. It is correctly recorded somehow. Some of the ways of God are known to you, but many of His ways are hidden from you. What is hidden in you and from you in this world will be unrolled and laid open before you in the next. The virtuous will enjoy the blessings of God which the eye has not seen, nor has the ear heard, nor have they entered into the hearts of men to conceive of them. They will march onward reaching higher and higher stages of evolution. Those who have wasted opportunity in this life shall under the inevitable law, which makes every man taste of what he has done, be subjected to a course of treatment of the spiritual disease which they have brought about with their own hands. Beware of a terrible ordeal. Bodily pain is torture, you can bear it somehow. Spiritual pain is hell, you will find it unbearable. Fight in this life itself the tendencies of the spirit prone to evil, tempting to lead you into iniquitous ways. Reach the next stage when the self-accusing spirit in your conscience is awakened and the soul is anxious to attain moral excellence and revolts against disobedience. This will lead you to the final stage of the soul at rest, contented with God, finding its happiness and delight in Him alone. The soul no more stumbles. The stage of struggle passes away Truth is victorious and falsehood lays down its arms. All complexes will then be resolved.

Your house will not be divided against itself. Your personality will get integrated round the central core of submission to the will of God and complete surrender to His divine purpose. All hidden energies will then be released. The soul then will have peace. God will then address you, *'O thou soul that art at rest, and restest fully contented with thy Lord, return to thy Lord, he is pleased with thee and thou be pleased with Him, so enter among my servants and enter into My Paradies.'*

This is the final goal for man; to become on the one hand the master of the Universe and on the other to see that his soul finds rest in his Lord, that not only his Lord will be pleased with him but that he is also pleased with his Lord. Contentment, complete contentment, satisfaction, complete satisfaction, peace, complete peace will result. The love of God is his food at this stage and he drinks deep at the foundation of life. Sorrow and frustration do not overwhelm him and success does not find him vain and exulting.

Thomas Carlyle, struck by this philosophy of life writes: "And then also Islam that we must submit to God; that our whole strength lies in resigned submission to Him, whatsoever He does to us, the thing He sends to us, even if death and worse than death, shall be good, shall be best; we resign ourselves to God." The same author continues, "If this be Islam, "says Goethe," do we not all live in Islam?" Carlyle himself answers this question of Goethe, "Yes, all of us that have any moral life, we all live so. This is yet the highest wisdom that heaven has revealed to our earth."

(Courtesy: Radiance, 6 January, 2001)



# THE PROPHET'S SIMPLICITY A ROLE-MODEL

By. Ibn Abdullah

*“And verily, you (O Muhammad) have an exalted standard of character.” (Al-Qur’an-68:4)*

The world today is at peak of progress in terms of science, technology, communication and development. Human civilisation has reached unprecedented frontiers as far as material life is concerned. If the human being were a purely material entity, it would have been reasonable to assert that mankind has fulfilled the purpose of its existence and that, as far as the future is concerned, ‘only the sky is the limit, to his success.

This is not the case. The human being is not a machine, but a complex creature whose life rests on beliefs, feelings, fears and hopes, not just rationality. So much material progress, so little happiness that is how the life of many people can be summed up. From leading political figures to business tycoons, from parents to teenage children, from paddy workers in China to stock brokers in New York, all suffer from the lack of a role-model. Even in Muslim societies around the world, in many cases, men and women lack a model of simplicity to enable them to feel at ease in their skins. Yet, Muslims have such a universal model in the personality of the one whom they bear witness that he is the last

Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.). While the rest of the world is under no compulsion to take the latter as their example, by essence of their adherence to Islam, Muslims are required to follow the Messenger (S.A.W.). The key for them and for the world to achieve happiness is the example of simplicity as explained and as lived by Muhammad (S.A.W.), the Messenger of God.

In modern times, we are used to ephemeral issues and happenings, to illusions and appearances rather than realities, to the artificial instead of the natural, in short, to exaggeration rather than simplicity. As a direct consequence, the human being is no more free but becomes a slave of trends, fashions, ideologies and cultures imposed upon him. He loses his natural sense of simplicity, if not, his genuine personality. One of the first lessons that anyone perceives on studying the life of Muhammad (S.A.W.) is that he was absolutely ‘natural’ an unbelievable fact for one who was incessantly receiving revelations. Never had a person who is in contact with the supernatural shown so much rationality, common sense and wisdom. He was normal to the extent that those who denied his prophethood could not agree among themselves as to whether he was a magician, a liar or one possessed. He was neither of these as his

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simplicity proved. Thus, for all of us living in the modern world, it is vital that we remember his example and comeback on earth if the taste of material success ever tries to carry us too far above the clouds.

Genuine simplicity combines humility, elegance and wisdom. And it is a universal recipe for happiness because to each person who applies it in his life, simplicity does not deny him his own identity. Humility is expressed in front of all creation because the human being is humble in front of his Creator. Elegance is akin to beauty, the fruit of a sincere desire to be sincere and true, to say good words and to act positively. Truth is beauty, and beauty is truth in the elegant simplicity of the Messenger of Allah (S.A. W.). However, such simplicity is incomplete without a golden touch of wisdom. One has to look at the stamina, endurance, clemency, forgiveness, perseverance and patience of Muhammad (S.A.W.) in times of difficulties and his cheerfulness, thankfulness, gratitude and sharing of joy in times of ease-always in close remembrance of Allah to be convinced that the man is indeed the 'city of wisdom' of all times.

The anecdotes authentically related on the life of Muhammad (S.A. W.) are indeed abundant, all pointing for the benefit of those to come after him, the example of a role model in all common spheres of life. Simplicity as a political leader, simplicity as a father, simplicity as an army commander, simplicity as a husband, simplicity as a friend and a companion, simplicity as a human being and, even for his specific case, simplicity as a Prophet: Muhammad (S.A.W.) was not known differently. Yet, his name stands highest among the children of Adam. Here some

food for thought for all those who aspire to achieve real happiness.

#### **Simplicity in his body language:**

More than a person's words or his actions, his body language speaks volumes on his simplicity. Muhammad (S.A. W.) was the most modest of men and the first one to cast his eyes down. When he disliked a thing, his companions could read it on his face. He did not stare at a person in his face. He looked to the ground more than he looked skywards. His utmost looks were glances. His laugh was not much more than a smile, something he often did. He was the first to give his hand when meeting someone and the last to end the hand shake. His walk was neither too slow or too fast, but moderate without any arrogance.

**Simplicity in his speech:** His companions reported that he was never known to say "No!" to anybody. He listened carefully to the one addressing him, even if that person had interrupted him brutally. His speech was mild; he never used foul language. He was known for his eloquence, but he would speak to different people according to their level of understanding.

**Simplicity in his character:** He was the most gentle and the most generous of men. He was the last to get angry and the first to be satisfied. If given the opportunity to choose between two affairs, he would always choose the easiest and the most convenient. However, if he was certain that it was sinful, he would keep away from the affair as far as he could. He never took revenge for harm done unto him. His gifts and endowments manifested a man who did not fear poverty. He was most truthful and honest. He

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was named Al-Ameen, the Truthful, even by his enemies. He was far from conceit and pride. Last but not least, he was in constant remembrance of Allah imploring His forgiveness, asking His help, thanking Him, adoring Him.

**Simplicity in his attitude towards his family and relatives:** His wife Ayisha reported that he used to repair his shoes, mend his dress and do what ordinary men did in their homes. He would maintain family ties, visit his relatives and send them presents. He was the best of husbands. He showed respect for the elders and love for the children. He was a tender and caring father. Similarly, he showed special attention to the poor, the needy and the orphans.

**Simplicity as a leader:** The examples are many to show that as a leader, whether in the battlefield or in administering the affairs of the people, he never considered himself above them. He was their servant in his capacity as leader. He was often in the thick of the battle closest to the enemy and he was subjected to the same favours and sufferings as everyone else. He is related to have said that Allah hates to see a slave of His privileged over others. He was just and fair, even if the decision was against his own companions. No specific seat or throne was assigned to him he would take his seat in an assembly like anyone else. He had no bodyguards and he was always accessible to anyone.

When at the age of 63, Muhammad (S.A.W.) passed away, he had not a single Dinar to his name. However, the heritage he left for mankind was the greatest that any human being could grant to his heirs. He gave us, by the mercy of Allah, the Holy Quran and the Sunnah, a

guidance towards genuine happiness in this life for anyone who believes and puts into practice the Message of Islam. It is a legacy open to all, irrespective of his or her origins and it is valid for all times. It is the secret for success not just in this world but also in the hereafter. At the foundation of the message of Islam is an example of simplicity, that of the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (S.A.W.).

Courtesy: Radiance, 31 December, 2000)

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*(From Page No.14)*

‘Itikaf is wajib. Its importance can be ascertained with the fact that at least one person from a locality must observe ‘Itikaf failing which the entire locality may have to suffer some sort of divine punishment or the other hardship. The Muslims are obliged to observe every Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.). And the Hadith says that the Holy Prophet used to observe ‘Itikaf till Allah called him back. That is, this is life long Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.). It is a pity that in some Muslim localities some very old person who have now nothing to do in life comes forward, and in some other cases people search such a person for ‘spending’ the last ten days of Ramadhan in a mosque. However, in some other societies (Muslim dominated society), a number of Muslims, say 20-30, mostly youth observe ‘Itikaf. In the former situation. Muslims need to rectify their attitude so that they may be blessed in these last ten days of Ramadhan.



## 18<sup>th</sup> ALL INDIA COTEST OF MEMORISATION, TAJWEED, AND TAFSEER OF HOLY QURA'N

Markazi Jamiate Ahle Hadeeth is conducting its 18<sup>th</sup> All India Contest of Memorization, Tajweed and Tafseer of Holy Quran on Saturday-Sunday 28-29 July, 2018 (15-16, Dhul Qada, 1439) at Ahle Hadeeth Complex, D-254, Abul Fazal Enclave Jamia Nagar, Okhla, New Delhi with a lot of attractive prizes.

### THE CATEGORIES:

1. Memorization of Holy Quran, Tajweed wa Qira'at and it's related questions (30 para);
2. Memorization of Holy Quran, Tajweed wa Qira'at and it's related questions (20 para);
3. Memorization of Holy Quran, Tajweed wa Qira'at and it's related questions (10 para);
4. Memorization of Holy Quran, Tajweed wa Qira'at and it's related questions (5 para)
5. Nazira Recitation of Holy Quran with Tajweed and Qira'at and its related questions (30 para);
6. Translation and Tafseer of Sura An – Noor, Al – Furqan, Muhammad, Al – Hujarat and Al – Tilaq (Written Test).

**IMPORTANT EXPOSITION:** If there are less than 5 contestants in any of the categories, Jamiat has right to cancel the contest of that category.

**LAST DATE OF REGISTRATION:**  
25 July, 2018.

**CONDITIONS:** (1) Application should be on prescribed forms available at Ahle Hadeeth Manzil, Jama Masjid, Delhi-6 (2) The applicant should not be more than 25 year old. (3) Should not be among celebraty Qurra of the country; (4) Have not participated in any international contest of Tajweed and Qira'at; (5) Should not have participated in the same category before. (6) The application must reach to the office at least 5 days prior to the contest; (7) The photocopy of certificates must be attached with the application. The original copy must be presented at the time of contest; (8) The nomination must come from a Muslim Organisation or Institute; (9) Unacquainted candidates with Tajweed would be debared from the contest.

**DETAILS AND FORMS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM:** Committee of Tajweed, Memorization and Tajweed, Markazi Jamiat Ahle Hadeeth, Ahle Hadeeth Manzil, 4116, Urdu Bazar, Jama Masjid, Delhi 110006. Phone:011-23273407, Fax:011-23246613,

Email: jamiatahle hadeeshind@hotmail.com

Note: *The candidate himself would bear the travel expenses. The Jamiat would provide food and lodging.*