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Chief Editor
Asghar Ali Imam Mahadi Salafi

Editor
Dr. Abul Hayat Ashraf

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Address:
**Markazi Jamiat-e-Ahle Hadees Hind
Ahle Hadees Manzil**

4116, Urdu Bazar, Jama Masjid,
Delhi-110006

Ph: 011-23273407

Fax: 011-23246613

website: www.ahlehadees.org

E-mail: Jamiatahlehadesshind@hotmail.com

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PATH FOR PEACE AND PROGRESS

Islam is a religion of peace, mercy and benevolence and Muslim should do good unto others, even if they have done harm unto them. A careful reading of history brings home the fact that Muslims have never been and will never be people who create mischief or support injustice and aggression. Muslims are the harbingers of mercy, advocates of peace, architects of culture and builders of civilization. They strive for all that is beneficial to mankind. Islam does not prevent its followers from dealing with people of other faiths. For it is a religion of tolerance and calls for peaceful co-existence with other communities.

Muslim way of life must focus on achieving stability, protecting people's rights, preventing evil, doing away with injustice and allowing people to lead contented lives.

The timeless rules and verdicts of this religion are the authority which charts for us our way in life. To these rules we appeal for guidance. They are the basis of our power and the source of our pride.

The following five point-plans for Muslims may be useful.

First, they should go back to Islam and its original sources, settle their differences on the basis of

shariah and unify their positions. In other words, Muslims should make serious effort to acquaint with the basics of their religion and put its teachings into practice.

Second, they should adopt means of development and keep away from extremism. Eradicating illiteracy through specialist schools, so that a joint effort may be made to achieve further progress in areas of general knowledge.

Third, they should understand that Islam is a simple and tolerant religion and should intensify efforts to create a deeper awareness of the significance of their own role in an ever-changing world.

Fourth, Muslims should do good and be just to others as long as they openly donot declare them as enemies.

And fifth, Muslims should realize that justice is the basis on which relations between Muslims and the rest of the world rests. In Islam, justice has an absolute value and as such is binding on Muslims in all circumstances. Further, the Muslim's media organizations should counter the smear campaign against Islam and Muslims, singling out satellite channels which spread poisonous thoughts and ideas.



BE UPHOLDERS OF JUSTICE

Believers! Be upholders of Justice, and bearers of witness to truth for the sake of Allah, even though it may either be against yourselves or against your parents and kinsmen, or the rich or the poor; for Allah is more concerned with their well-being than you are. Do not, then, follow your own desires lest you keep away from justice. If you twist or turn away from (the Truth), know that Allah is well aware of all that you do". (Surah An-Nisa, 4:135)

Justice is Allah's attributes, and to stand firm for justice is to be a witness to Allah, even if it is detrimental to our own interests (as we conceive them) or the interests of those who are near and dear to us.

Islamic justice is something higher than the formal justice of Roman law or any other human law. It is even more penetrative than the subtle justice in the speculations of the Greek philosophers. It searches out the intermost motives, because we are to act as in the presence of Allah, to whom all things, acts, and motives are known.

It is not enough for believers to up-hold justice themselves: they are expected to be its standard-

bearers. They are supposed not merely to practise justice in their own dealings but to strive for its triumph. They have to do all within their power to ensure that injustice is eradicated and replaced by equity and justice. A true believer is required to be the pillar supporting the establishment of right and justice.

The testimony of the believers should be solely for the sake of God. Their testimony should not be biased in favour of any of the parties concerned, they should not use any opportunity for personal aggrandizement, and they should not seek to please anyone but God.

Abdullah Yusuf Ali writes in his commentary. Some people may be inclined to favour the rich, because they expect something from them. Some people may be inclined to favour the poor because they are generally helpless. Partiality in either case is wrong. Be just, without fear and favour. Both the rich and the poor are under Allah's protection as far as their legitimate interests are concerned, but they cannot expect to be favoured at the expense of others. And He can protect their interests for better than any man.



RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY

1) Abdullah Bin Amr reported: One day I went at noon to the Messenger of Allah. He said that he heard the voice of two men who differed over a verse. Then the Messenger of Allah came down to us while wrath could be recognized in his face and said: Verily those who were before you were destroyed owing to their difference about the Book (*Saheeh Muslim*)

Religious controversy at present is the widespread epidemic disease in the Muslim society. Controversy is an evil of the tongue which envelops the light of the heart with darkness. Everything has got some effect, and the effect of such a controversy is the darkening of soul from which ultimately no light of faith can appear. It is a weapon for the devil given unnoticed to the so-called learned men to set fire to the peaceful society. The following example should be kept in mind by such men. Two men were once quarrelling over a mango. One says it is bitter and another sweet. They went on quarrelling for a whole day. A third man came there and solved the problem in a second. He told them both to taste the mangoes instead of quarrelling. Both of them tasted it in a second and found that it is sweet. The quarrel thus happily ended. Similar should be the case with all pious men. True pious men tasting spiritual

food do not at all enter into religious duels. It is only the so-called learned men who have not drunk deep in the fountain of knowledge who enter into such quarrels. The religious scriptures forbade such religious duels. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) once expressed anger when two men quarreled about a verse of the Holy Quran. He said that any controversy about the Holy Quran is infidelity. He again said: "Verily those who were before you were destroyed by this. They set up the book of Allah, some part of it against others, but the Book was revealed, some part of it corroborating others. So don't belie one by the other. What you know, say therefrom; and what you are ignorant of, entrust it to one who knows. Verily the worst of evils are the evils of the learned, and the best of good is the good of the learned, Do you know what will destroy Islam?-The slips of the learned men, controversy of the hypocrites about the Holy Quran, and the injunctions of the misguided leaders. As for the injunctions in which there are differences of opinions before the Prophet, he ordered his companions to go away from him. In case when controversies become rampant, the Muslim should hold fast to the Holy Quran, Hadith and ways of the four rightly guided caliphs and the illustrious companions.

ISLAM FOR MODERATION, TOLERANCE AND PEACFULL CO-EXISTENCE

By Dr. Syed Abdul Bari

If we carefully examine the various revolutions having taken place in the world till now, we find that their story is blood-stained and the men in the forefront of these revolutions have trampled upon hundred and thousand of corpses. Victories have been achieved and celebrated, but only after an abominable lull had come over in the passing phase punctuated with the cries of millions along with the lethal dance of death.

However, contrary to historical trends, a revolution did take place in the history of the world which is seemingly unparallel in these terms. It was a revolution which diverted the course of history and civilization, a revolution which changed the way of life, a revolution which overturned the creed of the worship of several gods and deities (polytheism) to usher in the bright light of monotheism or the worship of one and only one God. If we analyse the extent of bloodshed, loss of human lives, destruction and plunder, we notice that setting aside the negligible number of the loss of a few hundred human lives, millions of people came into its fold voluntarily, without any coercion, terror or violence. It presented a model approach of ensuring human rights for everyone and making them the torch-bearers and protagonists of peace, equality and harmony in this universe. The reference here is to the life-giving revolution brought about by our

Noble Prophet, Muhammad (S.A.W.).

Islam never allowed violence or bloodshed of any sort, even in case of bringing about a change or revolution. It has always stood for winning over the hearts of people to bring about a revolution or change. If, somehow, it is not possible, then it would be better to show patience and forbearance under such circumstances, that is why, during the 13-years-long period in Makkah, Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) together with his pious and devoted companions faced numerous torments all along the way. However, the Prophetic stand was that of going ahead with the task of spreading the religion avoiding the violent course against the infidels, no matter how great was the oppression perpetrated by the Quraish against the Muslims. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) permitted his companions to migrate from Makkah but restrained them from retaliating against the Quraish. On the other hand, Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) went on calling people towards the worship of Allah, the Creator, with exemplary patience and forbearance.

Ultimately, this intellectual and ideological sapling transformed into a revolution mativating a sizable section of the populace not only to support it openly, but to be impressed with the greatness and truthfulness of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.).

This section of people cultivated immense sympathy for Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) and his companions as the power and prestige of the ruling class and the elite began to erode despite all efforts. Despite the conspiracy of the infidels of Makkah to assassinate the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.), his safe migration from there eventually turned out to be his biggest victory over his opponents. The Holy Quranic verses revealed during this period underscore tolerance and patience: *“But keep in remembrance the name of your Lord, and devote yourself to Him wholeheartedly. (He is) Lord of the East and the West, there is no God but He; take Him therefore for your disposer of affairs, and have patience with what they say and leave them with noble (dignity) and leave me (alone to deal with) those in possession of the good things of life.”* (Al-Quran, 73:8-11)

“Patiently then persevere, for the promise of Allah is true and ask forgiveness for your fault and celebrate the praises of your Lord in the evening and in the morning.” (Al-Quran, 40:55)

“O my son, establish regular prayer, enjoin what is just and forbid what is wrong and bear with patient constancy whatever betide you, for this is firmness (of purpose) in (the conduct of) affairs.” (Al-Quran, 31:17)

During the period he spent in Makkah, Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) tried to imbue his companions with the moral qualities, and furthermore, burnished these qualities with the credo of *Tawheed* (Monotheism), the backbone of Islamic faith. Infused with this moral strength, the Noble Prophet (S.A.W.) did no swerve throughout his life and continued to face challenges and subsequently emerged victorious with patience and tolerance.

It is indubitably true that the Almighty bestows the leadership of the world only on those people who are materially and morally sound. Moreover, it is also an established fact that the weightier criterion is that of moral strength as compared to physical resources, extraneous reasons and materialistic means. In the words of an Islamic scholar:

“Its distinctive characteristic which not only makes him a permanent species of his sort but also makes his vicegerant of God on the earth. It is that of being the bearer of moral right and duties. Truly, when the morality is the essence of humanity then one will have to accept that it is the ethics itself which is decisive in the betterment or decline of human life. In fact, the rise and fall of mankind are governed by none other than these moral laws themselves. Islam transforms the basic moral qualities of an individual from smaller spheres to a global level. Furthermore, it strengthens them a hundred times more intensely. The basic human virtues comprise of all those characteristics which are mandatory for the success of man in this world whether his objectives are righteous or not. Whichever individual or group inherits these characteristics which are a must for man’s success in this world, he shall definitely be successful. Moreover, he will get an edge over others. The following are the common moral obligations or virtues sans which he would not be able to gain superiority or pre eminence over people just on the basis of materialistic means. They are: will power, power of judgement, resolution and courage, tolerance and endurance, patience and forbearance, valour and intrepidity, industrious and diligence passion for one’s mission and a die-hard attitude, farsightedness, prudence, dutifulness, sense of responsibility,

understanding, the situation and taking appropriate measures accordingly, control over one's emotions and desires and the ability to influence and win others."

Most of the revolutions have scratched the earth on the basis of these traits only. Without these traits, neither can violence work nor can its place be taken by terrorism. According to an Islamic scholar, the gentle traits upon which the dignity and prestige of man is pivoted and which have always proved to be the decisive factors are: self respect, generosity, benevolence, sympathy, justice, magnanimity, veracity, integrity, trustworthiness, trustfulness, honouring one's word, plausibility, decency and temperance, purity and cleanliness, refinement of heart and soul and an alliance between them. Inculcating these traits within himself, makes a man capable enough to render any task in this world, whatsoever. However, these are not the only factors which bring about an Islamic revolution.

Instead, there are certain other factors which must also be inculcated. In the words of an Islamic scholar, these attributes provide an exact focal and pivotal point to basic human moralities and thus, he becomes righteous, personified, in this way. The axis of these attributes is the concept of *Tawheed* (Monotheism), as is believed by Islam, which demolishes all boundaries of self, clan, community or country and activates him to uphold the Truth and Truth alone.

Undoubtedly, Islam imbues the virtue of patience and tolerance throughout the span of human life. All the more, it makes the human life a strong and stabilised force to reckon with not only against a few or specific variety of peril, troubles and difficulties, but also against every such greed, every such fear, every such anxiety and every

such longing, which is bound to lead man astray from the path of righteousness and virtues.

"Therefore, a person who strives to bring about an Islamic revolution, sticks to his ideologies and *modus operandi* despite all odds, innumerable dangers, trying times and perils and despite no signs of any perils and despite no signs of any consequential results in his worldly life. He does not step into the web of any ideological or functional malfunctions regardless of any assurances or a blooming garden of hopes and opportunities before him. Hence the concept of Islamic patience under-lines the nature of deserting the evil way of life being hopeful of the final judgement of the world Hereafter and putting a firm foot on the path leading to righteousness. It would be seemingly cumbersome of an Islamic revolution to transverse this path without this commendable quality.

In a nutshell, Islam has no links, whatsoever, with the idea of bringing about a revolution using violent or extremist means. On the contrary, the revolution which Islam talks of, surfaces out of materialistic means but along with moral excellence and supremacy, a prime component of which is to win the hearts of people."

A well known scholar says in this respect: "Hearts are not won over by means of a handful of pleasing and bright principles. In fact, all such attributes, viz; real solicitude, good intention, usefulness, sympathy, gentleness and justice are required which stand altogether firm and unselfish in the events of war and peace, "victories and defeats, friendship and enmity and other such harrowing circumstances. These above-mentioned attributes are related to those supreme states of the best ethical behaviour, whose status is far beyond that of the fundamental moralities and ethics. "It is indeed

those faces which gain victory just on the basis of materialistic motives and a handful of ethical virtues, that do not appear to break free from the shackles of obstinate nationalism, racism, regionalism and materialistic gains, ultimately becoming a victim of self-centredness of individual, community as well as national levels. Although, they do claim to uphold human dignity, uniform human rights and equality, implicitly, but the fact is that they tend to employ all sort of unethical means as and when the situation develops. Furthermore, they readily quit the human virtues of truthfulness, fulfilment of promise, fair dealings, impartiality in dispensing justice, integrity and trustworthiness, thereby indulging in all possible evil and crooked means to achieve their objectives.”

The world today can be classified into two groups of countries. One of the categories comprises those where there is monarchy and oligarchic rule but they do work for the welfare and happiness of their subjects, promoting basic ethical values in some way apart from safeguarding their power. The second category consists of those nations which follow a democratic set-up wherein one has the full freedom to present and express his views and work towards changing the system or bringing about a change in the government peacefully.

Apparently, a small-scale success could be achieved by means of violence or terrorism in both these cases, which would be quite ephemeral. However, it would be foolish to expect a permanent or gigantic change sweeping across the whole world. Such kinds of activities are ideologically unsound on a long-term basis besides being short-sighted, particularly in democratic countries. There is no possible positive outcome of such violent activities.

The use of violence in solving internal political

disputes is also un-Islamic. Unfortunately, since Islam and the Holy Quran were not understood and interpreted as it should have been, a peaceful *Shoura*-based ideology could not be promoted in the society else extremism prevalent today would have been replaced by wisdom, and confrontation by harmony and cooperation. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) had never given permission to solve mutual conflicts or dissensions by violence, whatever the circumstances might be. It was termed as zeal of pre-Islamic times. In the contemporary times, hardly has any extremist organisation emerged successful in its endeavours even upto a certain extent. Instead, it has been seen that the unarmed, humble and meek, peace loving but determined people have often turned the despotism of kings, colonial subjugation and dictatorial arrogance to dust at times. The long and short of it is that the history, traditions and nature of Islam are an eloquent witness to the fact that it has never supported or stood for terrorism or violence. In fact, the radical revolution it has brought about in this world is based solely on moral and ethical power which can also be termed as the index of a noble and peaceful revolution. Finally, in the words of a famous scholar: “Islam does not create an ambience for violence like socialism or fascism. It is certainly a misconception that it does not tolerate anything against its pleasure and intentions. The contemporary materialistic culture has found the solution for difference of opinions and ideologies in bullets and murder. Further, these zealous have found a million ways to transform an accused into a criminal.”

However, the Islamic ideology tries its best to win over hearts and change the mindsets in its quest of leading people away from the path of vice to virtue.

PROPHET MUHAMMAD IN INDIAN SCRIPTURES

Dr. Muhammad Ahmad

Truth is always explicit and needs no argument. We may be unable to understand it or certain people make vain attempts to ward it off us. But, now it is no secret that the Vedas, Upanishads and Puranas prophesied the advent of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) as the last Prophet. Scholars advocating humanism have put forward such cogent testimonies as have brought the truth to lime light.

The great man prophesied in the Vedas as the camel – rider is no other than Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.). According to the Vedas, he would be named Narashans. Narashans means Muhammad in Arabic. All the action and deeds of Narashans as mentioned in the Vedas stand in miraculous resemblance to those of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.). The Puranas and Upanishads talk of incarnation in the present era (Kalki Avatar), which testifies to Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.). His personality and characteristic features reflect upon Prophet Muhammad's life. In addition, the Upanishads have mentioned in no ambiguous term the name of Muhammad (S.A.W.) as the Messenger of Allah. The Puranas and Upanishads also repeatedly aver that God is One and has no partner. In the light of these truths, sincere efforts can be

made to unite the humanfolk and strengthen unity and integrity among them. It is also need of the hour. These truths can prove milestone in this era of racial discrimination and communalism. It can crop up brotherhood and create such a moral and civilised society as does not smack of violence, exploitation, destruction and disgust. Dr. Ved Prakash Upadhyay of Allahabad University has also presented his research papers on “*Narashans and the Last Sage*” and “*Kalki Avatar and Muhammad.*”

It is no wonder that there is a prophecy about Narashans or Muhammad in the Vedas; for, scriptures had been giving prior information about the arrival of God's Messengers. It is however certainly miraculous that Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) has been prophesied in more scriptures than any other Prophet. This is why we find the mention of Prophet Muhammad as the last messenger in Christian, Jewish and Buddhist scriptures also.

The term “Narashan” is made of two words – *Nara* and *Ashans*. *Nara* means “man” and *Ashan* means “one who is praised.” Sayan has said that Narashans means one praised by men. Dr. Ved Prakash Upadhyay says that this word does not relate to any god. *Narashans* itself

makes it explicit that one whose adjective is “praised” is a man. If one assumes that “Nara” belongs to some god, it is necessary to clarify for them that the word *Nara* is neither a synonym of “god” nor does it stand for any species of “gods.”

Nara means a man as it is one of the synonyms of man. *Muhammad* like *Narashans* also means “praised”. *Muhammad* is a derivative from *hamd* which means “to praise”. In the Rig Veda there is a word “kiri” which means God praiser. “Ahmad” also has the same meaning and is Muhammad’s name.

The Rig Veda is the oldest of all the Vedas. It has eight verses, beginning with the word “Narashans” (part 1, chapter 13, verse 3; C18, V.9; C100, V.4; P.2, C3, V.2; P.5, C5, V.10; P7, C2, V.2 P.10, C64, V.3; P.10, C142, V2). “Narashans” is mentioned in the 1319th verse of the Sam Veda Sanhita and in the 27th verse of chapter 28 in Vajsnayee Sanhita. Besides *Taittiriya Aranyakand Shatpath Barahmin* epics Yajur Veda, Sam Veda and Arthav Veda have a mention of *Narashans*.

Narashans is mentioned to have been worshiped in the Vedas, while during the *Rigved* or *Krit* era. Narashans was invoked while performing *yagans*. For the purpose the word *priya* was used.

Narashans characteristic features can be likened to those of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) as follows:

Narashans is mentioned to have “Sweet tongue” in the Rig Veda; i.e. Sweet language would be a salient feature of his personality. Everyone knows that Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) was

sweet towards others.

AWARE OF MYSTERY

Narashans is mentioned to have knowledge of the unknown. One having this kind of knowledge is also called a poet. Narashans has been called a poet in the Rig Veda. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) was aware of the future events through the revelation. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) had already prophesied about the defeat of Romans in their war against Iranians and about their victory the next year. The Romans carried the day in the battle of Nainva in 657 A.c. *Sura Rum* throws light on it. After their defeat, the Romans are mentioned to have won the battle again. In addition, the Muslims are predicted to emerge victorious over the unbelievers in the near future.

Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) was an apple of God’s eye and knew Him most. He was a *Nabi*: *Nabi* is a derivative of *Naba* meaning messenger. He was a Messenger of God. According to Acharya Rajneesh, he was like a flute (a link) to reach God, which is played upon by somebody else.

RICH IN GOOD GRACE

Narashans is mentioned to be rich in good grace. In the Rig Veda the word *Swarchi* is used while characterising him. *Swarchi* is made of two words *shobhna* and *ayiruvaryasyasa* i.e. (one) replete with beautiful grace. This word means such a beautiful person whose face lights up with grace. The Rig Veda says that he will enlighten each and every house with his grace. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) made everyone see the

light. He put an end to ignorance and showed those groping in the darkness the way to salvation.

The Rig Veda says, *Ahmidhi pituspari medhamratsya jagram*” (8, 6, 8 – 90) meaning Ahmed (Muhammad) performed first and foremost sacrifice and became sunlike. The Sam Veda says, *Ahmidhi, pitu parimedhamratsya jagrah. Aham surya ivajani.*” (2, 6, 8) that is, “Ahmad (Muhammad) received a lifestyle full of wisdom from God, I am lightening like the Sun.”

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had so handsome grace that people could not stop themselves by his attraction. In this connection Rev. Word Worth Smith writes in *Muhammad and Muhammadanism*,. “Even Muhammad’s antagonists felt compelled to respect him, being impressed upon by his attraction and Glory. In spite of all obstacles and opposition Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) lit the lamp of knowledge in every house.”

SOCIAL REFORMER

According to the Rig Veda, Narashans is a social reformer. Needless to say that the entire gamut of Prophet Muhammad’s teachings as well as the Quran revealed upon him can help a sinner wash his sins. It is a mirror of fair path. By seeing this mirror and treading this path, a person can seek forgiveness from God. His worldly life and life after death can be successful. Islam prohibits gambling and consumption of liquor and other alcoholic stuff and disallows use of illegal earnings interest and taking away rights of fellow beings. It establishes an

unoppressed, non-destructive and exploitation – free society.

That Narashans would have 12 wives is proved by a verse contained in the Arthava Veda, which has a mention of his riding a camel. “He who has two beautiful she-camels for riding or he who rides on camels along with his 12 wives, - the height of his praise and reverence touches the skies and then comes down with wind – like speed.” (Arthava Veda, Kuntap, Chapter 20/127/2)

As per this verse Prophet Muhammad had 12 wives. It is noteworthy that no religious innovator, save and except Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.), had 12 wives. According to Hindu scriptures some sages had hundreds of wives.

SIMILIRITY ABOUT BIRTHPLACE

The above mentioned verse of the Atharva Veda also gives vent to the place of his birth as well. The reference to camel – riding means that the last messenger would be born in such a place as abounds in camels. In deserts camels are found in abundance and Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) was born in a desert land.

Not only the Vedas, but the Puranas also have a mention of Muhammad’s link with deserts. The Bhavishya Puran (chapter 323, verse 5) says, “an instructor would migrate along with his companions. His name would be Muhammad. He would come to the desert.” The verse 6, 7 and 8 of this chapter are also related to Prophet Muhammad (S.W.A.).

It would not be out of place to mention here that the Bhavishya Puran recounts about a number of Prophets. It has also a long chapter on Islam. This

Puran makes everything about Prophet Muhammad abundantly clear. As Muhammad has much proximity with Prophet Muhammad also came true. They do not need any explanation. Bhavishay Puran says: He would be born circumcised; he would have no long hair; he would be bearded; he would eat Halal meat; he would propagate his message vehemently and in unequivocal words; he would call his followers “Mooslie” owing to their fight against those bent upon spoiling the religion. He would be the creator of the religion of this meat-eating community. (part 3, chapter 3, verses 25-27)

These predictions of the Bhavishya Puran are so vivid that they can well be attributed to Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.). There is no doubt that the Vedas and some other Purans were composed much before the advent of Islam.

OTHER SIMILARITIES

In the Arthava Veda there are a few mentions about *Narashansa*, in an allusive way though. “God would give the sage Mamhe hundred golds, ten thousand cows, three hundred Arabian horses and garlands.” (Arthava Veda 20, 127, 3)

Here “Mamhe” refers to Muhammad. “Hundred golds” means hundred excellent people, whom Prophet Muhammad used to teach, and who used to instruct people and safeguard them; they are called *Ashabe – Suffa*. Furthermore “ten thousand cows” means noble persons. “Cow” is a figurative word which is generally used for noble persons. Prophet Muhammad’s followers numbered ten thousand at his eleventh hour. His companions also numbered ten thousand at

the time of the Conquest of Makkah, they neither waged hanging to his neck. He had nine swords.

ELIMINATION OF THE WICKED

Kalki Avatar is characterised to have eliminated the wicked. “For the propagation of religion and elimination of the wicked gods will come to the aid,” says kalki Puran. (Chapter 2, verse 7)

Prophet Muhammad destroyed the wicked. He reformed, bandits, and other anti – social elements, taught them humanity and showed them the right path. He made uncultured people cultured. He helped women regain their rights. He demolished the edifice of idolatry and declared that Islam is not a new religion but an ancient religion. Angels also came to his help for elimination of the wicked. Allah says in the Holy Quran, “God had helped you at Badr, when you were a contemptible little force. Then fear God; Thus may you show your gratitude. Remember (that) you said to the faithful.” Is it no enough for you that God should help you with three thousand angels (specially) sent down.” Yes; if you remain firm and act all right even if the enemy should rush here on you in hot haste, your Lord would help you with five thousand angels, making a terrific onslaught.” (3:123-125)

“O believers! Remember the Grace of Allah on you when there came down on you hosts (to overwhelm you). But We sent against them a hurricane and forces that you did not see, but Allah sees all that you do”. (33:9)

JAGATPATI

The word *Jagat* means “world” in Hindi and

pati is a derivative of *pa* meaning “to *“safeguard.”* Kalki Avatar has also been called Jagatpati in the Bhagawat Puran (part 2, Chapter 2, verse 19). Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) is a Jagatpati, as he reformed it and showed it the right path. He spread divine message for the human beings. The Holy Quran says: “Say O men! I am sent unto you all as the messenger.” (7:150)

“Blessed is He Who sent down the criterion to His servant so that it may be an admonition to all creatures.” (25:1)

According to Kalki Puran, Kalki Avatar would kill “Satan” with the help of four brothers. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) did so with four companions – Abu Bakr (R), ‘Umar bin Khattab (R), ‘Usman bin Affan (R), and ‘Ali bin Abi Talib (R).

LAST PROPHET

The Bhagwat Puran says that Kalki Avatar would be the final Prophet (Part 1, chapter 3, verse 25). Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) announced that he was the last Prophet.

Kalki means one who eats pomegranates and one who guides others to repentance. Prophet Muhammad (S.W.A.) used to eat pomegranates and dates and at that time he uprooted idolatry and atheism.

DEPARTURE TO NORTH

The Kalki Puran says that Kalki would make for the hill and receive knowledge from Parshuram there. Later, he would go to the north and return from there. Prophet Muhammad

(SAW) also went to the hills and received divine knowledge from Gabriel. Later, he had to go to Madina and return to the South, and recaptured the lost areas.

DIVINE POWER AND ATTRIBUTES

The Bhagwat Puran says that Kalki Avatar would be virtuous (part 12, chapter 2). The Mahabharata has also mentioned his salient attributes – He would be a great scholar, he would belong to high caste, he would be self – controller, brave, less spoken; samaritans and grateful. Prophet Muhammad (S.W.A.) was in possession of all these attributes. He was a man of profound scholarship. He disclosed many mysteries and made predictions which eventually came true. There are various instances to bear testimony to his high knowledge.

He was born of a Hashim family in Quraish dynasty, which was a respectable family and traditional guardian of K‘aaba. He also had the divine attribute of self – control. “He has modesty, and kindness, patience, and riveted the affections of all around him,” said Sir William Muir in *Life of Muhammad*.

He also received revelation from God through the angel Gabriel. Lainpool writes in his book *Introduction: Speeches of Muhammad* that there is no doubt that divine message was sent upon Muhammad (S.A.W.). Sir William Muir observes “He was now the servant, the Prophet, the vicegerent of God.” Prophet Muhammad was also very brave. Dr. Ved Prakash Upadhyay relates an incident. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) asked a wrestler Rukhana in a cave the reason why he did not fear God and believe

in Him. At this the wrestler asked for the clarification. Prophet Muhammad then asked him whether he would believe in God if he was defeated in a wrestle by him (Prophet). The wrestler replied in the affirmative. Then Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) defeated him in the wrestle. Allama Qazi Salman writes in *Rahmatul – lil – Almeen* that the Prophet dumped him thrice, but the wrestler did not admit him to be a Prophet and nor did he believe in God.

He was also less – spoken. What he spoke was so impressive that people were unable to forget. (*Life of Muhammad* by W. Muir). Philanthropy is a significant attribute possessed by a sage. He was always forward in helping the beggars. That was why the poor would throng his home and never returned dejected.

He had also the quality of gratefulness. His remarks to Ansars bear testimony to his gratefulness. In this way it is clear that Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) had all the attributes unravelled in the Indian scriptures.

FRAGRANT BODY

The Bhagwat Puran has predicted that Alkali Avatar's body would throw such fragrance as it would please others. (part 12, chapter 2, verse 21). History has it that one who shook hands with the Prophet had a fragrant hand the whole day. Once Umme Saulat collected the sweat covering the Prophet's body. Asked, she replied that she mixed it with perfumes as it was better than all other perfumes.

GRACEFUL

The Kalki Purans says that he would be grace-

ful. According to Hadith, Muhammad (S.A.W.) was the most graceful most ideal and bravest of all. Sir William Muir says that he was the most handsome, bravest, light faced and most generous of men.

PREACHER

Dr. Ved Prakash Upadhyay writes in *Kalki Avatar Aur Muhammad Sahib* (p. 50-51): It is famous in India about Kalki Avatar that the religion he would establish would be Vedic and his teachings would be divine; It is clear that the Holy Quran is a Divine Word; The Holy Quran contains the same, Suras for policy, righteousness and love as the Vedas do. The Quran prohibits idolatry and stresses upon oneness of God and mutual love. The Vedas promulgate *Ekam Satya* and cosmopolitanism. They ordain for devotion to God. The Muslims offer prayers five times a day, following the Quranic teachings, while only a few Brahmins worship three times a day.

It is necessary to clarify here that Vedic and Quranic teachings have similarity to a large extent. For instance, the Vedas, Geeta and Smirities ordain to worship one God and seek pardon from Him for the sins.

Dr. Upadhyay says that he was taken aback at the similarities between Kalki Avatar and Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.). The incarnation the Indians are waiting for already took birth and it was Muhammad: (page: 57)

UPANISHADS ABOUT MUHAMMAD

Islam and Muhammad (S.A.W.) are mentioned at many places in Upanishads. Nagedranath Basu has included in second part of Vishwa

Kaush those verses of the Upanishads that have something to do with Islam and Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.).

God is Allah. He is One. Sun and water are (created) by Him. Indeed, Allah... is King of all creations. (say) Friends! Accept Allah as your God... He helps all the people like a Friend... Allah is the Greatest, Best, Most Perfect and Most Sacred. Muhammad is the best Prophet of Allah. Allah, the Eternal, Absolute is the Cherisher and Sustainer of the whole world. All the good deeds are for Allah. In fact, Allah has created sun, moon, and stars. Allah sent all sages (Prophets) and created moon, sun and stars. He sent all the sages and created the sky. Allah created space (earth and sky). Allah is best. There is no God but Him. O Worshipper! Say: There is no God but Allah. Allah is eternal. He sustains the whole world. He removes all the evils and distresses. Muhammad is Allah's messenger. He is a sustainer of this world. Hence, announce that Allah is One and there is no God but Him." (Aupnished: 1-7)

LAST BUDDHA AND MUHAMMAD (S.A.W.)

One who was predicted as the last Buddha in the Buddhist scriptures is Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.). Goutam Budha said to his loving disciple Nanda at his eleventh hour, "Nanda! I am neither the first Buddha nor the last one in this world. Another Buddha will come to instruct truth and philanthropy. He will have holy conscience, pure heart. He will lead the human beings with knowledge and wisdom. He will enlighten the world as I taught people the immor-

tal truth. He will show the world a path, pure and perfect. Nanda! His name will be Maitreya." (Gospel of Buddha, by Carus, page 217). It is only a human being that it can be Buddha, not a deity. Maitreya means merciful."

It is natural for the last Buddha to possess all the attributes held by Gautam Buddha. Buddha is characterised as follows: He is a respectable and well – off; He has off – springs; He is a married person as well as ruler. He lives a complete life; He himself does his work. He is only a propagator of religion; When he lives in solitude he is surrounded by gods and demons; There is only one Buddha at a time in the world; He has firm followers who cannot deviate from the right path; He will need no teacher; Every Buddha reminds others of his predecessor and warns to them to salvage themselves from the "Mir i.e. Satan; He has a more solid neckbone than others. While turning his neck round, he used to turn his whole body round.

Maitreya is mentioned to be merciful and have organised gatherings, under Bo – tree. Under this tree Buddha gets knowledge. Dr. Ved Prakahs Upadhyay has verified that Buddha is similar in characteristics to Prophet Muhammad. He says, "There is Quranic revelation about Prophet Muhammad's dignity and richness that he was poor, God made him rich. He became rich much before attaining Prophethood. He had many horses. He had a camel "Alaqsaw" which he rode to Madina from Makkah. He had 20 camels whose milk was sufficient for him and his offsprings and for all the guests together. Camel – milk was a significant diet for them. He had seven goats for milk. He did not have any

buffalo as there is no buffalo in Saudi Arabia. He had seven gardens of dates, which were donated for religious purposes.

He had three immovable properties stretching around several *bighas* of land. He was in possession of many wells. Well is considered a very precious possession in Saudi Arabia. He had twelve wives, four daughters and three sons. India's earlier Budhas had smack of this attribute – to have wife and children. (Life of Muhammad by Sir William Muir, pp. 545-546)

Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) did rule over the country. He also established his superiority over some of the great kings of the time. He lived a complete life. He did not pass away at young age nor was he killed.

He himself used to perform his works. He propagated the religion throughout his life. Many historians have verified this. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) lent credence to his predecessors. The Holy Quran says, "say ye: we believe in Allah and the revelation given to us, and to Ibrahim, Ismail, Ishaq, Yaqub and the Tribes, and that given to Musa and Isa, and that given to (all) prophets from the Lord. We make no difference between one and another of them and we submit to Allah."

Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) again and again warned his followers to ward off Satan. The Holy Quran says "About whom (Satan) it is decreed that whoever turns to him for friendship, he will lead him astray and he will guide him to the chastisement of the Fire." (22:4) His followers never deviated from the right path and never parted with his company throughout his life. There was

no Buddha any where in the world during the life time of Muhammad. When he attained Prophethood the whole world was steeped deep in social and religious chaos. He had no teacher. He did not learn how to read and write. Hence he is called *Ummi*. The Holy Quran is a collection of verses revealed upon him by God. Bo – tree is a sine qua non for each and every Buddha. Parker, banyan and gooler trees are often used by Buddha. According to some of the modern Buddhist scholars, the Bo – tree of the Buddha Maitreya is the iron wood tree. (Muhammad in the Buddhist Scriptures, page 64).

Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) had organised gatherings under a tree in Hudaibiya. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) was merciful, hence called *Rahmatullil Aalameen* meaning mercy to all worlds." (*Narashans Aur Antim Rishi* page 54-58)

The Bo – tree covers a vast area. It is said that Buddha used to stare at the Bo – tree, Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) saw a tree in heaven, which stands on the right side of God's throne. A rider cannot cross its shadow even in hundred years.

It is said that while turning, Maitreya would turn his whole body round. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) used to turn his body round when ever he saw his friend. It is palpably clear that one who is prophesied as Maitreya in Buddhist scriptures is no other than Prophet Muhammad.



SCIENTIFIC SIGNS IN THE QURA'N

EXAMPLES FROM THE AREA OF EARTH SCIENCE

Prf. Zaghloul El-Naggar

One of the main features of our planet is its fractured nature. These fractures allow enormous amount of molten rock to flow out and produce these mid-oceanic ridges. Unless the earth has these fractures that can communicate with the areas of high heat flow below the Earth's crust, life on earth would have been virtually impossible. One wonders how the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) knew these facts since he never rode the sea. How would he know this unless he was informed by Allah, the Creator.

THE SEA SET ON FIRE:

In Surah At-Tur (52:6), Allah swears an oath: *Wal Bahril Msjur*, (By the sea set on fire.") Water and fire are incompatible, water quenches fire and fire causes water to evaporate and it is virtually impossible to have water and fire in one place. Therefore, early commentators on Holy Qura'n thought in the first instance that the verse probably is referring to *Akhirah*, the last hour, because there is another verse which says: *Wailizal Biharusujjirat* translated as: "When the seas will be set on fire." But the context of the oath in Surah At-Tur is in our present day life. They immediately said that it could not refer to *Akhirah*, and has to refer to our worldly life. Then they started looking for another meaning for the word *masjur*, other than "set to fire."

They found in the Arabic language that some of the meaning of *sajjara* means *mala-a wa kaffa* (it has been filled with water and kept from transgressing on land). This is true because we have many instances in the history of our planet when the seas encroached more on land than they do today. We also know that the maximum amount of fresh water on land is stored in the form of ice caps in the two pole as well as at the peaks of high mountains.

This massive amount of fresh water does not need more than 4-5 degrees Celsius to melt and 4-5 degrees are nothing in the climatic changes of our planet. If these ice caps were made to melt, this can raise the water level of seas and oceans by 100 metres or so and would be more than enough to drown most of the present day civilizations which lie very close to shore lines. The commentators thus said that the meaning of *al-Bahirl masjur* is not "the sea set on fire" but "the sea that is filled with water and stopped from transgressing on land." This is correct, but when the scientists went down to study the mid-oceanic ridges, they found that they are all composed of volcanic rocks. They also found that the network of fault lines that traverse the planet actually ooze magma at temperatures that exceed 1000 degree Celsius resulting in seas and oceans that are actually set on fire. Water boil-

ing to super heated steam at temperatures of 200 degree Celsius or more. This is a fact that came to our knowledge only in the late 60's of the century.

MOUNTAINS IN THE HOLY QURA'N:

Another striking example in the Holy Qura'n relates the mountains. The Holy Qura'n speaks about mountains in 49 different verses. In one of these verses the Holy Qura'n describes mountains as pege or pickets. "And the mountain as pegs (*Awtada*) (78:7). If we take any scientific or linguistic dictionary of today and look for the meaning of mountain, we will find that scientists define mountains as high elevations on the surface of our planet. Elevations that exceed 610 m in hight are called mountains and anything below this regarded as a hill.

Scientists have now come to realise that mountains are not just surface elevations or protrusions, but that they extend 10-15 times their surface elevations into the ground, and these are called mountain roots. Mountain roots were never known to scientists before the turn of this century and they were highly debated until recently. A peak like mount Everest, which is almost 9 km above the ground's surface, has a root that develops for more than 125 km inside the Earth's outer rocky layer. Just as the peg or picket's function is mainly to hold the tent solidly to the ground, so too is the exact same role of mountains. We have come to know that the outer rocky layer of the Earth is fractured by faults into plates that float on molten magma. With the earth's rotation around its own axis, these floating plates would have been rapidly moving had it not been for the stabilising influence of mountains. No soil could have accumulated, no water could have been stored in the

soil, no plant could have germinated, no road constructed, no house could have been built, and life would have been impossible on our planet. For this reason Allah showered his bounties on man by fixing the earth with mountains. Mountains act like pegs or pickets that hold the continental masses down and stops them moving. Prophet Muhammad (S.A. W.) is quoted to have said in an authentic hadith that when Allah created the earth it started to shake and jerk, then Allah stabilised it with mountains.

IN OUR SOLAR SYSTEM:

The source iron (Fe), we read in the Holy Qura'n: "Verily, We have sent down iron in which there is great might and uses for human beings." (57:25) When the early commentators of the Holy Qura'n tried to explain this verse, they explained that *anzalnaa* (We have sent down), was not a physical sending down but meant that iron was created with the qualities of strength and might. However, it has recently been proven that all iron, not only in our planet but in the entire solar system was obtained from outer space. This is because the temperature of the sun cannot generate iron. The sun has a surface temperature of 6000 degree Celsius. There exists much hotter stars which are known as no-vae or super novae where temperatures can reach 100s of billions of degrees Celsius and it is in these stars that iron is formed. When the percentage of iron reaches a certain proportion of mass of the star it explodes and these exploded particles travel in space until they are captured by the gravitational fields of other heavenly bodies. This is how our solar system all obtained its iron and it is an established fact today that all the iron in our solar system was not generated or created within the system but has come to it from outer space.

KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH TEENS

By: Michelle al-Nasr

I would like to just talk to you mom to mom. No lecture, no judgements; just as one Muslim mom to another.

I would like to commend the mothers, grandmothers and aunts, my sisters, who are raising teens – especially those in non-Muslim countries. It is a hard and often times, a thankless job with struggle after struggle. . . . And sometimes even heartache.

But I think, I feel, and I pray that we all have some viable options that will help us, as Muslim parents, get through those tough teen years.

Although they struggle for their burgeoning independence, our teens need us more than they let on and, often, much more than we think they do. Teens still need our love and our guidance, our authority and our concern. It is a big world out there, and without directions, teens can easily take the wrong path.

But, we all know that. So, what can we do to better our chances of keeping in touch with our teens?

RELY ON YOUR CREATOR

“And whoever relies upon Allah – then He is sufficient for him” (Surah: 65:3)

First and foremost, we must rely on help from our Creator. Reliance in many forms,

subhanallah; whether it is decisions we make or actions we take. When we are confused about how we should go about taking to, or even punishing our teens we need to consult Allah and ask for His guidance to the best way.

We are all individuals, and because of that, guidance and discipline must take on different forms accordingly. One person may respond positively to a lecture, where others may tune it out completely. We must lovingly listen to our teen and find out what positive actions we can take to make them take notice. One of the best ways is to find out what they are about. This will help us to reach them in a way that they may listen to our words and take those words to heart.

There is never a better time to make the Istikhara salah than when you need guidance. You should never make any decision until you have asked for Allah’s guidance with the Istikharah salah. Reliance on Allah can help you feel more confident in your decision and will teach your teen that, for all things – large and small, and no matter how old we are – we must always place our trust in our Creator to be successful.

RELY ON OUR LOVE

Next, we must rely on ourselves as loving parents who want the best for our kids.

It is so important to let our teens know, at all

times, how much we love them. It is often easy to fall into the rituals of questioning and criticizing our teens on a daily basis, sometimes we may even be unaware that we do it so often. However, every word of criticism we utter, our teens remember – even if we do not.

In order to get our teens to open up to us, be honest with us and talk to us about their stress, their fear and their dreams we must learn to give constructive criticism, this means talking to them frankly, without threatening or negative words.

For example, instead of saying, “Your room is filthy.”

You could say, “Your room looks so great cleaned up, don’t you think?”

Emphasize the positives because there are enough negatives in the world for everyone. Think about how much negatives you must face when you leave the home – your teens deal with the same stuff, but has more pressure to fit in because he/she has not yet grounded on Islamic identity. Make home and your company a safe, fun and loving place for your teens.

Finally, when you are listening or talking to your teens, look into their eyes and give them your attention, This, in itself, shows your attentions, sincerity and your love.

TUNE OUT THE TUBE

Many of our teens get their messages of personal worth and ideals from watching television and playing video games, that is – if we allow it. I just read an editorial in the New York Times today that discussed the fact that many adults today “have lost all sense of what are appropriate forms of play for children and teenagers.” I could not agree more, and double time that for

television. Even commercials need to be screened by an adult. There is no such thing any more as “family viewing.” Now in order to watch any programme, it has to be taped and edited – including many children’s animated programmes in order to eliminate the unnecessary garbage.

Video games are just as bad, even worse. We can often times purchase a game for our teens as a “gift” and be unaware of the messages being sent. One example is one of the hottest video games, entitled Grand Theft Auto. The name itself implies a little, but not the whole story. Bob Herbert of the New York Times, states, “This is a game in which all boundries of civilized behaviour have vanished. You get to shoot whomever you want, including cops. You get to women to death with baseless bats. You get to have sex with prostitutes and then kill them. (And get your money back) The game is a phenomenal seller. At close to \$50 each, millions of copies are sold annually. “And many teens won and love this game.

RELY ON YOUR COMMUNITY

Finally, we can not do it all by ourselves. We all need community support. Our community can play such a vital role for our teens – many times we underestimate the significance of it. Our communities can help to establish norms, and provide the “right” type of peer pressure that many teens respond to positively. Our community can provide spiritual guidance and friendship that, as an adult, we cannot provide.

Although our kids may have many material possessions, many are still needy. Their need originates from their natural state, a component of their being that needs to feel love and compassion, most especially, from their parents.

WOMEN'S DIGNITY, RIGHTS AND EMPOWERMENT IN ISLAM

By Shah Abdul Hannan

The society has made significant progress during the last 50 years. Women like men have come forward, not equally though. The oppression that is being unleashed on people particularly women has a foundation. The oppression is not descending from the sky. The ideological foundation of the persecution on women by men and at times by women themselves is the belief that women are inferior to men. This belief originates from some erroneous ideas prevailing in society. And, on this belief rests the whole edifice of oppression and deprivation of and disrespect for women.

If we want to eliminate persecution on women from our society, it can be done within the parameters of Islam. I want to make it very clear that in a country like ours where 90 per cent people are Muslims, we would not be able to move without Islam. Those who have revolted against Islam could not last long and are not able to sustain. With all humility I would like to say that if we can move ahead within the framework of Islam, then it will be good in all respects. I firmly believe that there is such a framework in Islam as can ensure the progress of women.

I am not in favour of distorting Islam nor am I

inclined to giving temporary interpretation of Islam. In true sense, Islam has empowered women, and Islam has upheld respect for women. Islam has ensured rights for women. What could be the basis or “ideological foundation” on which depends the fundamental equality of men and women? God has not created all human beings with similar appearance. Two persons are never equal in every dot or in all respects. One person is different from another in terms of his weight, height, colour, education etc. But basically every human beings is equal—equal to Almighty Allah. The following four arguments prove this:

1. Allah has made it very clear that the real human being is *Ruh*. We call it soul or spirit. The real man is not body. The body will perish in the grave. Those who believe in Islam know that the fundamental element of man is the *Ruh*. Allah created all human beings and their *Ruh* (spirit) at the same time, created them the same way and asked them a single question. All men and women gave the same answer. The Holy Qur'an says:

When they Lord drew forth from the children of Adam from their loins their descendants and made them. Testify concerning them

(saying); “Am I not your Lord (Who cherishes and sustains you)?” They said: “Yea! We do testify!” (Al-A’araf:172)

It means all men and women reached an agreement on one point that is, “You are our Lord and we shall obey you.” Here no separate agreements were made with men or with women. So, the first word about our ideological foundation is that the real human being is the *Ruh* (spirit) and all spirits are equal. Any other inequality or dissimilarity, if any, is insignificant or very small compared to the equality of human soul or spirit.

It means that the spiritual personalities of human beings are the same and as human beings all are equal. This is the fundamental foundation of equality among men and women.

2. We, men, boast of our physical structure as superior to that of women and think that perhaps God has created us a better mould. But God has made one thing very clear in the Holy Qur’an that there is, of course, some difference between all human beings but everyone is “the first class” and superb. In Sura Teen Allah says: “We have indeed created the human beings in the best of moulds.” He did not say that only men were created in the best of moulds. It means there is difference in our appearance and in our structures. But everyone is excellent.

So, to establish the fundamental equality of men and women or to launch a new movement for women or the humanity at large men should not say that the structure of women is bad. Those who are believers must not say this. This is the second proof of basic equality among men and women. I say “basic” because there would

remain some minor differences between men and women.

3. Allah clearly says: all people belong to one family the family of Adam and Eve. In Sura Nisa Allah says:

“O mankind! Revere your Guardian Lord, Who created you. From a single person, created, of like nature, his mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women”.

It proves that we belong to a single family. We are children of Adam. In the Holy Qur’an Allah addressed the human beings as, “children of Adam” many times. As the children and parents together make a family, similarly all human beings together make a family in the eyes of Islam.

The family of human beings is above all other families. It means that our fundamental honour and dignity is the same. There may be some difference on minor issues but worldly dignity is no real dignity. The only foundation of respect to Allah is *Taqwa* (obedience to Him).

Allah has never said that men are more respectful or women are less respectful to Him. He says, *only those who obey Him is respectful to Him.*

If this were the foundation of respect to Allah, then does the difference created by men matter at all? Allah says He never differentiates one person from another except on *Taqwa* or piety or obedience to Him. So we are children of one family and our fundamental dignity is the same. In Sura Hujrat, (Ayat 13) Allah says:

“O mankind! We created You from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each

other (not that you may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the Sight of Allah is (the person who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)."

Allah says in Surah Al Nisa "Fear Allah through whom you demand your mutual (rights) and (revere) the wombs (that bore you): for Allah ever watches over you."

Allah says clearly, "revere the wombs". While commenting on this verse a famous Islamic scholar of Egypt, writes: These words were never written in any other literature in the world prior to The Holy Qur'an. He said in a detailed commentary of this verse that all human beings are essentially equal. But among them, women are superior in a sense. Because by revering the wombs Allah has in fact asked us to respect mothers and respect women as a whole. So this proves the equality of our basic social status. This is the third proof of our new ideological foundation.

4. At the time of creation Allah said, "I will send into the world my representative." Allah did not say that He was sending women or men. He sent human beings but called them His representatives. The entire human race is His representatives irrespective of the sex. But it is true that if we commit sin, commit crime, commit murder, carry out oppression, and lose our faith in Him then we will lose our faith in Him then we will lose our status as Khalifa. But basically we all are the representatives of Allah. (The Qur'an 2:30; 35:39)

All empowerment lies with this status as Khalifa.

No one can perform one's responsibility without power or authority. To perform one's responsibility as Khalifa each man or woman must have some authority.

The foundation of woman's empowerment lies with this Khilafat lies the foundation of empowerment of all women and men, the poor and the weak. So this is the fourth proof of fundamental equality between men and women. Islam wants that every person should be empowered. But if women stand deprived now, they should be empowered first. If men are deprived at any time, they should be empowered.

We must think first about anyone who is deprived; at present we must put in efforts for the empowerment of women. But, what should be real work of a woman? Whether they should only stay at home? If any woman freely decides to stay at home, she has rights to do so. It is applicable to a man also. But Almighty Allah has never said that women will have to stay at home and will not be able to do anything outside. On the contrary, Allah has given the same basic responsibility to women as well as men. In Sura Tawba Allah says, men and women have six responsibilities:

"The believers, men and women, are protectors of one another: They uphold what is just, and forbid what is evil; they observe regular prayers, practise regular charity and obey Allah and His Messenger."



Misuse of Water Contributing to Ecological Imbalance

The reckless felling of trees, denudation of hills, industrial pollution in the form of effluents from the factories, burning of fossil fuels, human and animal excreta along with excess pesticides, insecticides, weedicides and other chemicals finding their way to ponds, lakes, reservoirs and rivers have brought human kind to the precipice of disaster of sorts. We must reinvent agro-industrial-technological civilization to balance the self, community and other elements of nature in relation to environment such as air, water, energy and soil, which are in a precarious condition. In the midst of all diversity of various life forms, we are one humanity and one Earth family with a shared destiny. We swim or sink together. We have to cultivate and act with a sense of shared responsibility to the well-being of the Earth Community. Every person, institution and government has a duty to advance the indivisible goals of justice, world peace, sustainability and respect and care for the larger community of life. We must preserve a strong sense of belonging to the universe.

CRUCIAL MOMENT

Today our world stands at a defining moment. It is at a crossroads. It has to take a firm decision which way it shall go? Will it ignore the laws governing the biosphere (living place for all forms

of life-human, animal and plant) and hasten its end, or will the wiser counsels prevail? Lack of foresight to view all the creation of Allah with a just approach threatens the fabric of life. Man's greed and lust for immediate gain trampling upon others long-ranging benefits, has landed the entire mankind into unimaginable situation where its very existence is in danger. Human beings have acquired the ability to radically alter the atmosphere, their surroundings and the evolutionary processes by their interventions-acts of commission and omission.

WORLD: HOME TO ALL CREATURES

The Earth is our home and home to all living beings who are held in a condition of ecological balance as living beings and non-living beings are inseparably woven together to facilitate survival of life on this planet earth. Human beings are an interdependent community of life. The life has a magnificent diversity of life forms and cultures. We must feel fascinated and humbled before the grand and wise scheme of the creation of the universe. We must share deep regard and consideration for the sources of our being. Consequently we owe thanks to the creator and a sense of indebtedness to our past generations which bequeathed us a rich heritage. We must also embrace responsibilities to maintain ecology

for our safe living as also handing over an atmosphere congenial to life and growth to our future generations.

CAUSE OF DISTURBANCE

There is great violence, poverty, discrimination, unequal distribution of natural resources, utilization, absence of sense of responsibility to own liability for setting right the environment by the polluter, consequent suffering, disease, ill harmony and lack of ecological balance for a happy living. Wonder of wonders, this is happening even when scientific instruments and implements give exact measurement of various pollutions and induced imbalances due to man's actions, and scientific process of analysis has made the corrective measures possible. Economic analysis gives the exact quantum of loss in monetary terms of the detrimental actions and technology adopted by developed countries to further their interests. The tragedy is that the polluter avoids his moral and social responsibility to bear the expenses for the corrective measures.

NEED FOR PUBLIC AWARENESS

The thoughtless and unchecked consumption of natural resources. These have been used for agriculture, industry, transport and communication, development of science and technology, materials and energy, and for the sake of man's comfort and luxury. The result is that vital life supporting systems like air, water and the soil have been disturbed. Hence the imbalanced ecology. To improve this deteriorated environment and to avoid its further deterioration, the human beings have a great responsibility. For this purpose one must know about man's needed eco-friendly conduct.

This vital knowledge must be disseminated on a large scale by including the subject matter in syllabi of different courses, through effective means of public opinion formation and mass communication, through meetings, debates, dialogues at gatherings, conferences, seminars, workshops, discussions and public participatory techniques. Individuals and groups of people pursuing very different occupations and professions have to be involved in the process of improving the environment.

BE WARNED OF MAN'S ACTIVITIES

Among the many species that existed, flourished and vanished from the earth, mankind has withstood the turbulence and vicissitudes of testing times. Owing to its vast capabilities, reasoning faculty, minute observing power, multi-activity performance and curiosity, mankind has been responsible and disturbing the environment. The comfort of using air-conditioners and refrigerators has led to depletion of ozone layer, which is responsible for many skin diseases and other adverse effects. Global warming is yet another dangerous phenomenon whose ill-effects are becoming obvious day by day.

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

The scope of such studies extends to almost all living and non-living beings and influences them each moment of their life. The natural resources drawing our attention are forests, water, soil (land), air, food, minerals, plants, animals, energy, etc. Consequently pollutions caused due to air, water, soil, solid wastes, medical wastes, noise, radioactive and magnetic materials, etc. are sources of great disturbance and adverse effects on the health of living beings.

We need pure air, i.e. air free from undesired ingredients viz. harmful gases, suspended matters, etc. Likewise, we need pure drinking water which should be free from bacteria and other pollutants. While impurities in air and water can be allowed up to some extent, called permissible limits, their excess causes deterioration of health of human beings and other living organisms, and they may be affected by air borne diseases such as asthma, cough, bronchitis (due to sulphur-di-oxide), giddiness, defects of nervous system etc. (due to lead), cancer, lung and kidney problems, unconsciousness (due to carbon monoxide), chronic fibrosis, bronchopneumonia due to nitrogen oxide and nitric oxide, nasal cavity, bronchitis and respiratory problems like breathing trouble. In case of excess of undesirable impurities in water, cholera, dysentery, typhoid fever, hepatitis, etc are caused. These are serious diseases which require careful treatment. It is therefore, necessary that due care must be taken before-hand.

BEHAVIOR OF WATER

We know that water flows, erodes and damages river banks, deposits sand silt, inundates areas, destroys crops and brings devastation to people, animals and trees during flood. Its short availability causes famines. During flood, it fells trees, submerges precious cultivable land, uproots people from their homes and hearths, severely damages roads and means of communication. In normal times also, it evaporates into atmosphere and leaves salt layer on the surface of the cultivable land decreasing its yield successively, rendering it ultimately unfit for cultivation. Then it becomes impossible to

obtain any crop from it. It flows as sheet of water on land, creeps and seeps into ground raising ground water level.

Rivers changes their course and meander, carry away with them men, animals, trees and house hold goods when rivers are in spate. Water endangers, weakens and damages civil engineering structures constructed to store, control and regulate water such as canals dams reservoirs, barrages cause ways etc. As such water must be correctly assessed, cautiously stored, carefully diverted, wisely allotted to different sectors of its use

ROOT CAUSE

The large scale damage to our ecological system has resulted from our misconceived perception that we can conquer nature and subjugate it according to our whims and fancies. In our struggle for existence, we had to face many challenges on many fronts and in so doing we forgot the idea of peaceful coexistence with nature. While conceiving development projects in the sectors of irrigation, power agriculture industries and mining etc. we forgot the time-tested norm that a decent life and sustainable development is possible only in harmony with nature.

We have to relearn the unforgettable lesson from the perusal of history that indiscriminate use of water, abuse of land and disturbance in ecosystem have caused many celebrated civilizations of the world to perish. The ancient civilization of the Nile, the Tigris and Euphrates, the Indus valley all collapsed when the onslaught of man's vagaries could not be withstood any more. Removal of vegetative cover, excessive soil erosion, due to over grazing by the cattle, land

slides by man's developmental activities such as construction of roads, etc. are some of the reasons causing ecological imbalance.

THE WAY AHEAD

If we were to review the use of water, the direct and indirect problems causing ecological imbalance and their results over last five decades, we get clear warning signals loud and powerful enough to awaken us from our deep slumber. There are problems of irrigating fields for crop production, fruit-trees (orchard) vegetables, grasslands, agricultural productivity per unit area of land, drought, flood, water logging, water pollution, medical care and health. These will assume increasing frightening postures in coming times. This is so because water is needed for agriculture (mainstay of about 70% Indian population), environment, animal husbandry, horticulture, industries urban and rural development medicine and health and in fact in many segments of human developmental activities.

The problems related with these aspects require lasting solution with a view to have stable agricultural production and all-round development atmosphere for a better life. This is required to bring sunshine to the dismaying and neglected lives of teeming millions who become the first victims of natural furies and man's mismanagement of natural disasters.

The unwise use of surface and ground water along with indiscriminate use of chemicals has made life risky, painful and threatened with annihilation. We must desist from wastage or natural resources and must use those resources which are renewable under the working of

natural processes. This will check depletion of limited available natural resources.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Unfortunately, concern for ecological balance dawned upon us quite late. The ecological problems of the West in the aftermath of their industrial revolution must have acted as an eye-opener for us to be forewarned of the danger lying ahead. We moved on the road to material development without ethical and moral concern for deprived sections of our society, plant and animal kingdom. We did not pay heed to the consequences of employment of heavy machinery for large scale industrial production.

RESULT

Slums, unhealthy and unhygienic living, air and water pollution, degradation of land etc. without preventive and remedial steps.

We must adopt a long-term approach to the vexed question of development which is essential but must not sacrifice the genuine interests of the future generations to live in a clean atmosphere. We must bequeath to our future generations a world with liveable atmosphere. Ecologically, man's action at one place does not have consequences limited to that man or that place only but reach far and wide as water and air cannot be compartmentalized. Ecological oneness of whole world must get deeply ingrained in our psyche. Science technology, communication and transport facilities have knit the whole world into one entity. Devastating effects of development on ecology must force us to adopt sustainable development, by restoring loss of depleted ecosystems.



MAULANA ASRARUL HAQUE QASMI

Maulana Asraul Haque Qasmi, a famous columnist, religious, social and political leader, member of Parliament passed away on December 7, 2018 due to heart attack at the age of 76 At Kishan Ganj, Bihar.

He was born on February 15, 1942 at Tipu village in Purnia district, Bihar. He got his early education at local Madarsa and shifted to Darul Uloom Deoband for his higher religious education and got his highest degree in 1964.

He started teaching carrier at Madarsa Badrul Islam, Begusarai, where he taught Hadith, Fiqah and other related subjects. He was pious, social and hard working which made him familier to Jamiat Ulamai Hind. He was appointed as a Secretary of Jamiat Ulamai Hind in 1974 and later as General Secretary in 1981. He served the said Jamiat for almost 22 years.

He founded All India Muslim Council in 1992 with the assistance of Maulana Qazi Mujahidul Islam Qasmi and Dr. Manzoor Alam.

His birth place and adjoining areas were extremely back ward in education and knowledge. The situation hit him hard and founded All India Talimi wa Milli Foundation in

2002 for the uplifment of Muslims of the area. He also founded a Milli Girls School in Kishangaj on December 8, 2002. The same is affiliated with CBSE Board having 400 girls as its students. It is a residential school offering 300 girls with all hostel facilities in the premises. The credit goes to late Maulana who established Madrasa and schools in Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and UP. A branch of A.M.U. was established in Kishanganj through his hard endeavours.

Maulana Qasmi was an editor of Aljamiat and chief editor of Milli Ittihad for some time. He was elected as a Member of Parliament in 2014 and served the country and Community from its platform. He was president of All India Talimee and Milli Foundation, Court member of Muslim University Aligarh and Jawaharlal Nehru University. He also was member of Muslim Personal Law Board and Darul ‘Uloom Deoband. He was an author of dozen of books on contemporary issues.

May Allah give him peace in the heaven and bestow His Mercy on him as well as forgive his all sins and shortcomings. Ameen.