

The SIMPLE TRUTH

MONTHLY

January, 2024

Vol. No.18 Issue No. 1

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Publisher
Mohammad Irfan Shakir

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

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January, 2024

“The Simple Truth”

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Editorial:

SOCIAL HARMONY-NEED OF THE HOUR

Allah says in the Holy Quran: *“O mankind! We created you from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know each other. Verily the most righteous of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you”.* (Surah Al-Hujarat, 49:13)

India by the grace of Allah has the honour of being the second largest country of the world. Its population is 128 crore and estimate Muslim's population is about 15 crore in the country. But very large part of our population is poor, suppressed and devoid of human dignity. Muslims population follow Islam as their religion. Islam is a natural course for humanity. It caters to all the legitimate needs and the natural urges of all human beings. It responds to all requirements of human life in a harmonious and balanced manner.

Islam is peace. There could be

no peace in the world unless the inner self of man becomes an embodiment of peace, tranquility and harmony. This inner peace and harmony is the only guarantee for establishing justice and equity in human relations. This is real key to lasting peace in the world in general and India in particular.

Islam avoids extremes so as to maintain balance and orderliness in society. Monopoly and cut-throat competition are, therefore, disapproved. Justice to all is Islam's essence as it enables man to lead a good and happy life and at the time it strengthens bonds of human brotherhood and fortifies social fabric.

Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) was not only just, but he started to bridge the gap between poor, high and low. He visualized a society where there should not be any exploitation by one section over the other. The Holy Quran and Sunnah

speaking at length about the primordial nature of man. He should not disregard his obligation to his near and dear ones, his parents, his spouse and children, his kith and kin and the whole humanity.

We are in India and article 15 of Indian constitution ensures prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. The constitution also promises equality of opportunity in matters of public employment. Article 30 of the constitution, guarantees minorities "right to establish and administer educational institutions of its choice. But some of the fascist forces want to rob them of the rights to start and manage their own institutions.

Muslims in their golden periods of the past provided ample testimony to prove their pledge to this noble cause. It is a historical fact that Muslim rulers treated their non-Muslim subjects with a true spirit of human fraternity and dignity. It is a fact that non-

Muslims found equal opportunities for developing their cultural ethos and intellectual genius in the great metropolises of the Muslim-domes like Baghdad, Basra, Kofa, Cairo, Andalus and other great countries of Islamic culture.

It was their sincere desire to serve their fellow human beings that brought glory to the Muslims and non-Muslims alike in the first place of Islamic history. We must emulate their illustrious example in letter and spirit to prove to the world that we continue to deserve the position earmarked for the Muslim Ummah as well as the other nations as the "middle nation". We must establish a social order in the world in which selfless service of humanity, irrespective of caste, colour, and creed is administered.

The confidence has to be restored among the Indian citizens who are in need of sympathy and trust. It is necessary to remove the misconceptions and create trust amongst all communities.

RECKONING

The time of people's reckoning has drawn near, and yet they turn aside in heedlessness. Whenever any fresh admonition comes to them from their Lord, they barely hear it and remain immersed in play, their hearts set on other concerns. (Surah Anbiya, 21; 1-2)

This means that the Day of Resurrection is near. The Day is not far away when people will be made to appear before God to render an account of themselves. The advent of the Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) has ushered in the last phase of human history; as compared to earlier phases, mankind is now closer to its eventual end.

People do not take heed of God's warning. They are so immersed in this heedlessness that they are incapable of thinking seriously about what their end will be let alone paying attention to the Messenger who has come to warn them.

Each Surah of the Holy Quran, revealed to the Holy Prophet

Muhammad (may peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) and recited to the people, represents a piece of good counsel and admonition.

The words used here may be interpreted in more than one way. We have opted for the interpretation to be found in the above translation, wherein we take "just" to refer to life as a whole. Hence, the verse means that because of the unbelievers indifference to God and the Hereafter, they treat their lives merely as sport and jest rather than as a serious affair. Alternatively, the verse means that the people do not listen to the Holy Quran with the serious attention that it deserves; they rather take it as a jest.

Abdullah Yusuf writes: that every minute sees them nearer to their doom, and yet they are sadly heedless, and even actively turn away from save them.

Pearls from the Prophet:

GOOD MANNERS

Aisha (R.A.A.) says that she heard the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) as saying: A believer can achieve the position of one who regularly fasts during the day and spends the night in prayer, through his good manners". (*Sunan Abu Daud*)

Good players play a vital role in human life. If a person is goodmannered, respects his elders, has love and affection for the youngsters and sympathy for those who stand in need, has gets a position in society. Everyone like to respect him. This is the position that he would earn here in this physical world. But good manners are so important in eyes of Islam that the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) says that a believer would be highly rewarded in the Hereafter. He gives the good tidings that a believer can achieve the position of one who regularly fast during the day and spend the night in prayer through his good manners.

In another Hadith the Holy

Prophet (may peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) calls the believers with good manners the best among the Ummah. Abdullah bin 'Amr bin Al-Aas (R.A.) relates that the by nature the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) neither talked indecently, nor did he listen to indecent talk. He used to say: The best of you are those who have the best manners.

It is have that the saying Politeness costs nothing but earns much credit comes true. After pride, selfconceit and haughtiness have never been acknowledged as the qualities of a civilized society. They can simply earn disrespect, dishonor and failure in life. So the fact remains that good manners serve as lubricant in the vehicle of human relationships.

There is a Hadith in Bukhari and Muslim: That he who truly believes in Allah and the last day should speak good or keep silent"

IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION TO UPLIFT WEAKER SECTIONS

By. Hamid Ansari (Former Vice President of India)

The recent report of the committee for the Evolution of the New Educational Policy, set up by the HRD Ministry, states that while the gross Enrolment Ratio in elementary Education is satisfactory high, “the quality in terms of learning outcome is undeniably poor”. It cites as evidence the ASER 2014 Report. One of the cause for it, it states, is teacher absenteeism estimated at over 25% every day”.

Another document made public by the HRD Ministry recently states that “though India has made significant progress in terms of enhancing access to and participation in all levels of education, the overall picture of education development in the country is mixed and there are many persisting concerns and challenges relating to access to and participation in education, quality of the education imparted, equity in education, system efficiency, governance and management,

research and development and financial commitment to education development”.

“Despite all the governmental and social effort the overall literacy rate in 2011 was 73 percent, with a noticeable gap between male literacy at 80. 9% and female literacy at 64. 8%.

“If the SC, ST and religious minority children comprise 76% of those out of school, the levels of literacy among them cannot but be reflective of this state of affairs. In regard to the largest religious minority children, the 2006 Sachar Committee Report had observed that only 17 % of them above the age of 17 were found to have completed matriculation as compared to the general average of 26%. Another report, in 2013 found that the level of matriculation education among Muslims both in rural and urban areas is lower than even SCs and STs. This is also evident in higher education?

This then is the challenge. It

also means that despite the initiatives of successive governments, the corrective in its totality cannot come from the government alone and has to be supported and supplemented by public and community initiatives. Excellent examples of the later are to be found all over the country. The lament is that this is sporadic, patchy, and very unevenly spread geographically and community wise.

This lack of community level effort is particularly noticeable amongst the Muslims, in 2014 the then chairman of National Commission for Minority Educational institutions had observed that “in South India, the Muslim community has established centres of excellence. But in north India, they cannot even maintain the educational institution established by their forefathers”.

Surely, the good examples can be emulated and instances of inaction overcome in today’s India in which the operative slogan is “Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas,” educational progress starting with quality elementary, secondary and skills education is imperative if all segments of society have to be

together on the starting line.

The preamble of the Constitution and its sections of Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles represent a national consensus on the type of society which we as citizens wish to create. These, in a nut shell, stipulate a society based on the principles of secularism, socialism and democracy, seeking social, economic and political justice, providing for liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship, equality of status and opportunity, and based on fraternity assuring the dignity of individuals and unity of nation.

These lofty ideals are realizable only through equality of status and opportunity which, in turn, are contingent on an educated citizen body. We would do well to recall Nelson Mandela’s observation that “education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”. The power of education extends beyond the development of skills we need for economic success. It contributes to national building and growth of an egalitarian society. Education means more than acquiring knowledge. It empowers people to

develop personality and become politically active. It is the fundamental precondition for political development, democracy and social justice.

It was for this purpose that the Constitution was amended to insert a new Article, 21 A, which made elementary education a Fundamental Right. Recognizing that large sections of our people have been disadvantaged due to a long history of social, economic and political discrimination of affirmative action by reserving seats in educational institutions for socially and economically weaker segments.

The fundamental right under Article 30 of religious and linguistic minorities to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice has to be viewed in this context. Many minorities have benefited from it. Can the same be said to segments of this audience?

The require is to go beyond guftar. A need of the hour is a corrective step with all the energy and intensity that can be mustered. This must be focused not only on the well-to-do but principally on the poor.

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water resources. The 520, 000 Israeli settlers use approximately six times the amount of water more than that used by the 2-6 million Palestinians in the West Bank.

The reasoning behind this is quite straight forward, according to Stephanie Westbrook, writing in Israel's +972 Magazine. "The company pumping the water out to "Mekorot", Israel's national water company. Mekorot not only operates more than 40 wells in the West Bank, appropriating Palestinian water resources. Israel also effectively controls the Valves, deciding who gets water and who does not.

"It should be no surprise that priority is given to Israeli settlements while service to Palestinian towns is routinely reduced or cut off," as is the case at the moment.

The unfairness of it all is inescapable. Yet, for nearly five decades, Israel has been employing the same policies against Palestinians without much censure or meaningful action from the international community.

Aqeedah & Manhaj:

HOW IS BID'AT (INNOVATION), AS A VIOLATOR OF RELIGION?

By. Sh. Hafiz Bin Ahmad Al-Hakami

QUESTION: WHAT IS THE
OPPOSITE OF SUNNAH?

ANSWER: The opposite of
SUNNAH IS BIDT (Innovation) that
is to make, as law, what Allah has
not permitted to be made a law. It
is what the Prophet (S.A.W.)
referred to saying, “*Whoever adds
to our religion is to be rejected*”.
(Saheeh Al-Bukhari & Muslim)

The Prophet (S.A.W.) said:
Follow my SUNNAH and the
SUNNAH of the well guided caliphs
after me. Take firm hold of it with
hands and teeth. Beware of
innovation, for every innovation in
religion is “DHALALAH” (An act of
going astray)” (Ahmad and Tirmizi)

The Prophet (S.A.W.)
.....referred to its happening saying:
“My Ummah will be divided into
seventy three sects all of which will
be thrown into Hell except one” (*Al-
Tirmithee and by al-Hakim*) He
(S.A.W.) specified this sect saying:
They are those who follow the way I
and my Companions follow” (Allah
cleansed the Prophet (S.A.W.) of the
people of Bidah) in the following
verse:

Allah said: (*Verily, those who*

*divide their religion and break up
into sects (all kinds of religious
sects). You (O Muhammad (S.A.W.)
have no concern in them in the
least. Their affair is only with Allah)*
Surah Ana'am, 6:159)

QUESTION: HOW IS BIDA'T
(INNOVATION), AS A VIOLATER OF
RELIGION?

ANSWER: It is divided into two
types: One that makes a person a
Kafir (unbeliever) and one that does
not.

QUESTION: WHAT ARE THE
INNOVATIONS THAT DEEM THEIR
DOER A NON-MUSLIM?

ANSWER: They are many. They
are whatever denied of what is
known to be necessarily part of
religion, because this entails
disbelief in the Holy Quran and
what Allah sent with His
Messengers, such as the innovation
JAHAMIYAH sect who denied the
Attributes of Allah and said that
the Holy Quran was created or that
the Attributes were created,
denying that Abraham was a close
friend of Allah, or that Allah spoke
to Moses. The Qadariyah sect also
denied Allah's knowledge, His

deeds and His Destiny. Also there is the innovation of those who say that Allah looks like His creatures. On the one hand, some of the above had the prior intention of destroying the basis of Islam and planting the seeds of doubt in its people. Such are sure “Kafirs” They are foreign to Islam and are its worst enemies. On the other hand, some are confused and do not know. Those are only pronounced “Kafirs” after confronting them at a trial and evidence is brought against them.

QUESTION: WHAT IS THE “BIDAT” THAT DOES NOT DEEM ITS DOER A NON-MUSLIM?

ANSWER: It is the one that does not entail disbelief in the Holy Quran or in what Allah sent His Messengers with, such as the innovation of *Marwani* sect. The virtuous companions denied their innovation but did not call them “Kafirs” for saying it or undo the hand of allegiance for it. An example of such is delaying some prayers till the end of their proper time, making the “Khutbah” (Sermon) before the Prayer of Eid, sitting for the same “Khutbah” during Jumah and other prayers, abusing some of the Prophet’s (S.A.W.) companions on the member (pulpit), etc. They did such

acts not because they believe them to be Islamically legal, but out of their own wrong interpretations, personal wishes and worldly reasons.

QUESTION: HOW IS “BIDAT” (INNOVATION) IN WORSHIP SUBDIVIDED?

ANSWER: It is subdivided into two kinds: The first is worshipping Allah in a way He did not prescribe. As what some of the ignorant people, among the *Sufi* sect, do by worshipping Allah through singing, using music and dancing. About those, Allah mentioned the following verse:

Allah said: “*Their Salat at the House (of Allah, i.e. the Kaabah at Makkah) was nothing but whistling and clapping of hands*” (Surah Al-Anfal, 8:35)

The second is worshipping Allah in a way He prescribed but not in the correct way. Praying bare headed when in *Ihram* is lawful, but praying bare-headed when not in *Ihram* with the intention of this being an act of worship is an example of the second type. Likewise, is performing any act of worship in the wrong way to which it is prescribed, like praying at prohibited times, fasting the day of doubt or fasting during Eid.

Blessings of Recitation of Holy Quran

By Hakim Mohammed Said

“Recitation of the Holy Quran is the form of worship which brings a servant nearest to Allah.” According to a well known Hadith the best amongst the believers are they who learn and teach the Holy Quran. Learning and teaching are not anything different and distinct from recitation, but a mode of the same act. It is because of this that recitation of the Holy Quran has been declared as the best of all human actions and the reciters are recognized as the elite of the Ummah in virtue and righteousness. The term Ahlul-Allah (the people of Allah) is understood and used by all of us. There is Hadith, in Ibn Maja, that by " Men belonging to Allah" is meant the people who regularly recite the Holy Quran. According to a hadith, in Miskhat, on the Day of Judgement three categories of men will be on the top of the mount of the Black Musk and one will be of those that recite the Holy Quran solely to seek Allah's approbation.

Abu Imam Bahli quotes the Holy Prophet as saying that a reciter of the Quran gets the reward of ten noble deeds for each letter of the Holy Quran that he recites. “I do not say that Alif-Lam-Mim is one letter- Alif is one letter, Lam is another letter and Mim still another.” The Holy Prophet has also said that the true believers should cultivate in his heart the inclination and the desire to recite the Holy Quran, because it is this act which is an undeniable proof of

the believer's love of Allah and of His Prophet. Everything that belongs to the beloved, his disposition, his habits, his manners of speech, his bearing is adorable and lovable for the man who loves. The Holy Quran is the Word of Allah. The Momin, therefore, should have profound love for it in his heart. Those who repeat the words of their beloved lovingly often attract the attention of their beloved and succeed in winning his regard. Accordingly those who devote much time to the recitation of the Holy Quran invite the kindness and mercy of Allah to their person.

A companion of the Holy Prophet Amr bin al-As says that every verse of the Holy Quran means specific grade in the paradise and a lamp for the home. Another Companion, Abu Hurayra says that a house in which the Holy Quran is recited is blessed with many bounties of Allah and that where it is not recited has to face hardship and adversity.

Sufyan Sori says that when a man recites the Quran angles kiss him between his two ears.

According to a Hadith quoted by Baihaqi, Companion Khalid Bin Aqiba came into the presence of the Holy Prophet and requested him to recite the Holy Quran before him.

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) started the recitation from the verse and concluded it

at the end of the chapter. The companion asked the Holy Prophet to recite them again. When the Prophet finished, the Companion exclaimed with great fervour, "It is so sweet, it is inner part of the sweetness of the drops of rain and its manifest portion has the freshness and succulence of sweet fruits.

Abdullah Bin Masud, a close Companion of the Holy Prophet and a profound exegete has said that on the Day of Judgement there will be no intercessor better than the Holy Quran. Recitation will intercede on behalf of the reciter in the Court of Allah, the Almighty, the World Sustainer. It is true that the best form of recitation is that which is accompanied by full understanding of the verses and an analytical insight. But even he who just recites, will not be deprived of the benefits and the blessings that are inherent in the recitation. Recitation, pure and simple, brings a great recompense. Continuous recitation over and over again does at some stage create the state of contemplation and the meanings begin to reveal themselves. In reality, recitation of the Holy Quran is one of the primary acts of Islamic worship. To enable a person to be pleased with the excellences attached to the recitation of the Holy Quran the only condition is the belief that he is in communication with Allah and what he is reciting is the Word of the Creator.

Mullah Ali Qari has written on the authority of Hafiz Ibn Hajar that the recitation of the Holy Quran, irrespective of the fact whether the reciter understands the words or not, is an act of worship and undoubtedly has a recompense, because the

mere utterance of the words of the Quran constitutes devotion to, and remembrance of, Allah. That mere recitation, without knowledge of the meaning of the text, is accepted as recompensible is a proof of the virtue of reciting the Quran.

Abdul Wahab Sherani writes that one thing in which the Imam sought divine guidance in particular was whether a man who recites the Holy Quran without understanding its meaning will get a recompense and will be allowed to come close to Allah. He was given the tidings that even a person who recites without understanding will be blessed with nearness to Allah.

Shah Waliullah has written in his treatise *Chahar Bab* that the recitation of the Holy Quran is superior to Takbir (the call to Allah), Tasbeeh (humbly repeating His name as a form of worship), Saum (fasting), Sadqah, (charity), Nawafil (voluntary prayer). It is therefore, obligatory for every Muslim to recite some portions of the text everyday, conforming to the standard enunciation, with clarity and distinctness. Because the virtue of reciting with proper Tajwid enunciation, has been reiterated in a large number of Ahadith.

If a man can learn to understand the meaning of the text, it will undoubtedly be better for him. But if he cannot, then it will suffice, if, while reciting the Holy Quran, he keeps conscious of the fact of its being Allah's Word and that all its injunctions, positive as well as negative what it orders one to do and what it requires one to abstain from and the incidents narrated in it, are all true and he has complete faith in their veracity.

LIFE AFTER DEATH

By. S.M. Pasha

Barring lunatics and young children there is no one who does not know what death is. There are several definitions and descriptions of death scientific and non-scientific. The simplest one is “to cease to live”.

To come back to our subject, life after death is called *barzakh* which is the place where souls live before going to Paradise or Hell. To my limited knowledge, there is only one Ayat (Verse) in the Holy Quran which speaks of *barzakh*. It is Ayat 23 of *Suratul Mominun* (Chapter 23). There are several *Ahadith* about it. I have called a few from the many. The Quranic verse states; “When death comes to one of them, he/she says: My Lord! Send me back so that I may do good in that which I have left behind. “Not it is just a word that he/she speaks and behind them is *barzakh* until the day when they will be resurrected”.

The Angel *Izraeel* has been assigned by Allah the task of extracting life from the living from them at the pre-destined time in the pre-destined manner. What happens after one dies is described by different religions in their own way. Here, let us see what says:

Before the advent of Islam in Arabia, Arabs were pagans,

worshippers of several gods and goddesses. They did not believe in the life after death. The warning given by the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) that Allah will be angry if human being do not thank Him, they accepted. That the well-to-do should help the needy, they accepted. What they were unable to, and refused to accept was belief that there is life after death. They, therefore, pooh-poohed the idea of life after death as something meant to console widown, grieving mothers, the poor, the downtrodden and slaves. They declared, in short, that the idea of life after death with its offer of reward or punishment was a delusion. They considered death to be the end of existence. They were of the opinion that only gods and goddesses did not die, but live forever. Besides them, there were poets whose poems in praise of galiant heroes who continued to live after their death in the minds and hearts of people after their departure. They scofted of the idea that dry bones buried deep in earth would ever be brought to life. What the pagan Arabs thought and said many present day so-called rationalists think and say. Be that what it may, let us examine what Islam says about life after death.

BEGINNING OF THE FINAL JOURNEY:

When a Muslim hears the news about the demise of another Muslim or witnesses the death of another Muslim, he/she says: *Inna Lillahi wa inna Ilaihe Rajioon*. (From Allah we come and to Him we will return). The dead body is so placed that the head faces the *qiblah*. It is washed and shrouded in two unstitched pieces of cloth.

The body is carried to the graveyard for burial after it is washed and shrouded in two unstitched pieces of white cloth and the prayers are said before burial. As regards weeping of the bereaved, spontaneous tears are allowed, but loved and demon starve weeping is forbidden. The body is then carried to the graveyard and buried.

According to Hadith narrated by Sayyadna Anas (R) and reported by Imam Bukhari when a human being is laid in his or her grave and when his or her associates retreat forty steps from the grave, two angels descend from the heaven and make the dead sit in the grave and ask him/her three questions: (1) Who is your Rabb (God Almighty); (2) Who is your Rasool (Prophet) and (3) to which faith do you belong? If the person answers correctly, that his/her Rabb is Allah, his/her Rasool is Muhammad (S.A.W.) and that

his/her religion is Islam, he or she is shown his/her place in Paradise. If he/or she fails to give the right answers, his/her punishment commences and he/she is shown his/her place in Hell.

As regards the punishment one gets in the grave if he/or she had led a wicked life, here is a Hadith narrated by Sayyida Asma bint Abu Bakr (R) who said that once the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) stood up and delivered a sermon on the punishments in the grave. The sermon made people weep profusely. It is for this reason that Muslims are advised to recite this *dua (invocation)* very often.

“Allahumma innee ‘aoodhu bika min adhabil qabre, wa ‘adhabin naar, wa min fitnatil mahya wal mamat wa min fitnatil Masih ad-Dajjal” (O Allah!) I seek refuge with. You from the punishment of the grave and from the punishment of Hell-fire and from the fitnah (trials and afflictions) of life and death and from the *fitnah* of al-Masih ad-dajjal, the Messiah the imposter).

RESURRECTION:

When the Israfeel (Angel) will be directed by Allah to blow once again for the second time the trumpet, the Day of Resurrection dawns and the dead are given life so that they may be questioned about their life on earth.

From Darkness to light:

THE LOGIC OF THE HOLY QURAN LED ME TO ISLAM

By. Jamal Zarabozo

My own experience with the Holy Quran is what led me to eventually become a Muslim. I come from an American, Christian background. When I started to read and study about Islam that was the background that I was coming from.

There are many aspects of Holy Quran that affected me in many ways. And one of the first aspects that I think is very important has to do with the preservation of the Holy Quran.

A PRESERVED BOOK:

If we are going to say that we believe in God and we agree upon the fact that we believe in God, and even if we accept the fact or the concept of revelation from God, and if we want to follow this revelation. One of the first and most important aspects is that we have to have a strong reason to believe that this revelation has actually been preserved in its original source.

It does not make any sense really to say that I am going to follow God's revelation when we realize or when we know that what

we are holding in our hands perhaps has not been preserved, or may good reason to believe that it hasn't been preserved.

One of the first things that stuck out to me with respect to the Holy Quran has to do with preservation of the Holy Quran.

The Holy Quran was revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) for a period of 23 years. And so this book was passed on by the Prophet Muhammad to his followers, and it has been preserved minutely since that time to this day.

And as a non-Muslim reading about Islam, I was somewhat surprised by how many of the non-Muslims admitted and accepted the fact that the Holy Quran that we have today is actually the Holy Quran that was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad over 14 hundred years ago.

This was a very significant point for me because I had actually studied the history of the Bible before that time. The history of the Holy Quran is completely different

from the history of the Bible, and from the earliest days this Quran was known and recognized and preserved. It was not compiled by later counsels some two or three hundred years after the time of Prophet Muhammad.

So this is one thing that stood out to me, and as I said this was of great significance to me in the sense that if we are going to follow something that's coming from God then we have to make sure that what have is actually that thing that came from God.

INVITATION TO THINK AND PONDER:

One of the aspects of the Holy Quran is the fact that throughout the Holy Quran God is telling human beings to think and ponder.

And the thing that God is calling mankind to in the Holy Quran is actually something that is consistent with their nature. It is something that is understandable to the human because this is actually the natural way that human beings have been created. And therefore God throughout the Holy Quran tells us to ponder over creation and think about things; and this call and this argument and the conclusion of it is that you

will recognize that fact that there is actually only one Creator and that this Creator is deserving the worship.

Therefore there is no leap of faith in Islam. The definition of faith in Islam from a Quranic perspective is not to believe in something that you cannot prove. Many people in the west think of faith as a mystery or something that you can't prove.

This is not the way of the Holy Quran. The Holy Quran is calling people to a truth that they can recognize a truth that they can understand. And as I said Muslim Scholars explained this by the fact that this truth is actually what their own human nature is all about. This is what their soul is seeking. So the fact the Holy Quran was continually calling people to think and to ponder, and God is giving people arguments showing the proof of the Holy Quran, showing the proof of what God is calling us to. And this was another aspect that struck me quite a bit at that time.

And at the same time also some of the difference between the Holy Quran and the Bible in particular, and this by the way is not supposed to be a critique of the

Bible or Christianity or Judaism or whatever, but since they asked me to speak about the Holy Quran and this is my own experience. I felt this is the best way to express myself.

At that time when I was a non-Muslim, most of the books that I was reading about Islam were actually by non-Muslims. And they were claiming that the Prophet Muhammad stole from the Bible, stole from the Christians and the Jews that he knew before and so forth. And actually the difference between the Holy Quran and the Bible is another aspect that influenced me greatly.

THE NATURE OF GOD:

And I would just like to highlight for example the issue of the nature of God. All the Holy Quran is about God. And if you think about God and His Attributes and so forth as the Holy Quran explains it, you will get a very clear picture of who it is that you are worshipping? And you get a clear picture of the kind of excellence and greatness of this object of worship.

When you read for example passages in the Old testament and compare them to what you find in the Holy Quran, you find that if the

Prophet Muhammad was really stealing from the Bible, its amazing that the Prophet Muhammad was very selective in stealing from the Bible!

For example, in the story of Adam and Eve you find the story also in the Holy Quran. You find that they are told not to eat from a tree, but the Holy Quran doesn't say it was the tree of knowledge. It did not say that God was afraid that if humans eat from that tree, they would compete with God.

But you don't find for example God walking in the Garden of Eden looking for Adam, like you find in the Bible. In Genesis, you find God walking in the garden and looking for Adam "Where are you, what's happened".

The teachings about God in the Holy Quran will teach you about the real attributes of God. You will not find anything similar for example to Jacob wrestling with God and Jacob defeating God in a wrestling match.....

Or another important one in the Old Testament is God repenting of the evil that He himself committed, that you find in Exodus 30-2-14.

SANSKRIT WAS REVIVED BY THE MUGHALS

By Asfaq Mirza

Sanskrit is one of the ancient languages of India, but it was never a language spoken by the common man. It had been a court language in the past, besides a language spoken by Brahmins and scholars belong the upper castes, who wrote religious tracts and created literature in this language. The greatest obstacle in its progress was its distance from the common man, so much so that the common man was not even allowed to listen to this language.

Then, some Muslim Scholars happened to learn the language which caused its progress, particularly during the Mughal era. Today, the general impression was that during the Mughal period, discrimination was practiced not only against Sanskrit but also against the Hindus in general, but this is a historical lie. Audry Trishke, a historian of the University of Stanford says that old Sanskrit books reveal that there was a strong cultural bond between

the Hindus and Muslims. She adds that during the Moghal era, there was no religious or cultural dispute. Trishke in her book "Cultural of Encounters" has written in detail about Sanskrit at the Mughal Court. Both the Communities had 'extreme regard for each other between the 18th and 18th centuries and there was no religious and cultural disputes.

The general impression has been that the Muslim held ill-will towards Indian languages, religions and cultures. The writer says that the idea of discord between various communities was propagated during the British period from 1757 to 1947. The British tenure came to an end in 1947, but the rightist Hindus saw as an advantage in keeping the fake feuds alive between the Hindus and Muslims. Therefore, they encouraged and propagated such feuds in order to take advantage thereof.

Trishke says that the present day religious tension

between India's Hindus and Muslims is due to nurturing wrong notions about the Mughals. Here, the history of the sub-continent is not studied properly. In order to justify religious intolerance, religious tensions created during that period are referred to, but the same actually did not exist during that period.

Trishke's research tells us that Muslims did not want to erase Hindu culture or Hindu religion in India. As a matter of fact the interest of early Muslims was in exploring Indian subjects. India's scientific subjects were dealt with in Sanskrit books. Trishke spent much time in the US and India doing research on this subject and visited many libraries and document centres.

She found that Mughal noblemen, wealthy people and scholars, had close links with the scholars of Sanskrit, that Hindu and Muslim intellectuals had close links during those centuries. She further discovered that they had close exchange of views on linguistic and religious issues. She found that it is not true that Mughals wanted to finish off Indian Science and literature. The fact is

just the opposite. Mughals protected the ancient Indian Science and art and it is their credit that many books are safe till this day.

Mughals put in great efforts in the development of education during their era. They played an important role in the furtherance of literature under their rule. The mosques of that era used to run maktabas which taught both girls and boys. In Babar's era, a department was established for this purpose to build schools and colleges. The Mughal emperor Humayun was a scholar of geography and astronomy. He had established his personal library in Sher Manzil of the old fort. One portion of it still remains intact. Its new name is "Sher Mandal". Humayun had great interest in books. He always travelled with a selected stock of books. He had every close relations with Persian Kings. Scholars of Iran used to visit India for patronage. This educational exchange gave birth to Hindi and Urdu languages. Akbar, son of Humayun, although illiterate, had great appreciation for arts and sciences. He used to listen to books read to him by scholars. He got

many Sanskrit books translated into Persian and had been decorated with beautiful pictures. These included Ramayna and Mahabharata.

According to historian Badayuni, after conquering Gujrat, Akbar filled up his library with many rare books. He had a department of translations. Akbar's library was a unique one of his times and of the earlier times. Besides, he established many tombs and madarsas at Fatehpur Sikri, Agra and other places. His foster mother, Maham Anga, had established a madarsa and masjid in Delhi with the name of "Khairul Manazil", which included a mosque. The ruins of this building still stand opposite the old fort.

Fatehpur Sikri had been converted into a basic centre of education, which Akbar build as his capital. Here lived scholars Abdul Qadir Badayuni. Faizi and Nizamuddin. Akbar's tenure was a period of the development of Persian literature in India, as well as for the development of Sanskrit. In the "Aaeene-Akbari", names of 59 great Persian poets of Akbar's court are mentioned. Scholars were besides them. Many Scholars had

expertise both in Persian and Sanskrit. Abdur Raheem Khane-Khanan was a scholar in the era of Akbar and Jahangir. He was a great scholar of Sanskrit who patronized scholars and was one of the renowned poets of Hindi.

Akbar's successor, Jahangir, has a good knowledge of Persian and Turkish. He patronized learned people, including Sanskrit scholar. Jahangir's mother was a Rajput, therefore, he was fond of Sanskrit from his childhood. Similar was Sahajahan's case. His maternal relatives were also Rajputs and he patronized Hindu Arts and learning. He devoted attention to architecture and patronized Sanskrit scholars. His prime minister Chandrabhan Brahmin, was a great scholars and was knowledgeable in religious texts. Brahmin was also the first Urdu poet having printed work and was the first Hindu poet of Persian language with printed work. He translated Sanskrit text into Persian. As he was instructor of Dara Shikoh, the credit of keeping him away from religious bigotry goes to him. Thus he was instrumental in Dara Shikah's ordering the translation of Shrimad

Bhagwat Gita, Yog Vishishth, Upanishads and Ramayana into Persian. He got 52 Upanishads translated with the name of “Sair-e-Akbar”.

During the Mughal era, princesses and daughters of noble families used to get educated. Renowned among them were Galbadan Begum (Baber’s daughter), Sallema Sultan (niece of Humayun), Noor Jahan (Jahangir’s wife). These ladies worked for the spread of education and patronized Sanskrit scholars in the same ways as they did the Persian Scholars. They established a number of maktabas and madarsas, whose scholars knew both Persian and Sanskrit.

During the Mughal era, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, Delhi, Gujrat, Lahore, Sialkot, Jaunpur, Ajmer, etc. were renowned centres of education and culture. Persian was the official language of the Mughal empire but Sanskrit too was also used in the court. During the Mughal era, regional languages also got opportunity to develop. Among them were “Khari Boli”, “Brij Bhasha”, “Awadhi”, Bhajpuri, and “Poorabi”, which were the languages of common people in

various regions. During the same period, Bengali got a chance to develop in Bengal. Kashmiri Language also developed during the same period. Rom Charit Manas by Tulsii Das, Sur Sagar by Sur Das and Padmawat by Malik Muhammad Jaisi were written during this period. A number of books were written without the patronage of the state.

Sanskrit books written during the Mughal period included Akbar Kaaleen itihās by Mahesh Thakur, Akbar Shahi Shrangar Darpan by Padam Sunder, Bhanchandra Charitra by Jain Acharya Sudhchandra Upadhyay, Heera Sabha Game by Dev Vimal govindacharya Saraswati and Jagannath Pandit were patronized in the court of Shahjahan. Jagannath composed Ras Gangadher and Ganga Lehri. Pandit Jagannath was the court poet of Shahjahan. The renowned Hindi poet Birbal, Man Singh, Bhagwan Das, etc were members of Akbar’s court. Tulsii Das and Sur Das were Scholars of the Mughal period who became immortal in the Hindi literature and history because of their works. Raskhan is also remembered for his Hindi work.

Feature:

PALESTINE'S "PRAYER FOR RAIN" HOW ISRAEL USES WATER AS A WEAPON

By. Ramzy BarouD

Entire communities in the West Bank either have no access to water or have had their water supply reduced almost by half. This alarming development has been taking place since. Israeli's national water company "Mekorot" decided to cut off or significantly reduces its water supply to Jenin, Salfit and many villages around Nablus, among other regions.

Israel has been "waging a water war" against Palestinians, according to Palestinian Authority. The irony is that the water provided by "Mekorot" is actually Palestinian water, usurped from West Bank aquifers. While Israelis, including illegal West Bank settlements, use the vast majority of it. Palestinians are sold their own water back at high prices.

By shutting down the water supply at a time that Israeli officials are planning to export essentially Palestinian water. Israel is once more utilizing water as a

form of collective punishment.

This is hardly new. I still remember the trepidation in my parents voices whenever they feared that the water supply was reaching a dangerously low level. It was almost a daily discussion at home.

Whenever Clashes erupted between stone-throwing children and Israeli occupation forces on the outskirts of the refugee camp, we always, instinctively rushed to fill up the few water buckets and bottles we had scattered around the house.

This was the case during the First Palestinian intifada or uprising, which erupted in 1987 throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Whenever clashes erupted, one of the initial actions carried out by the Israeli Civil Administration a less ominous title for the offices of the Israeli occupation army was to collectively punish the whole

population of whichever refugee camp rose up to in rebellion.

The steps the Israeli army took become redundant although grew more vengeful with time; a strict military curfew (meaning the short shutting down of the entire area and the confinement of all residents to their homes under the threat of death, cutting off electricity and shutting off the water supply.

Of course, these steps were taken only to challenge the authority of a well-equipped army, they invested whatever meager resources or time that they had to plot their survival.

Thus, the obsession over water, because once the water ran out, there was nothing to be done; except, of course, that of Salat-al-Istisqa, or the “prayer for Rain” that devout Muslims invoke during times of draught. The elders in the camp insist that it actually works, and reference miraculous stories from the past where this special prayer even yielded results during summer time, when rain was least expected.

In fact, more Palestinians have been conducting their prayer for rain since 1967 than at any other time. In that year almost exactly 49

years ago, Israel occupied the two remaining regions of historic Palestine: the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. And throughout those years. Israel has resorted to a protected policy of collective punishment; limiting all kinds of freedom, and using the denial of water as a weapon.

Indeed water was used as a weapon to subdue rebelling Palestinians during many stages of their struggle. In fact, this history goes back to the war of 1948, when Zionist militias cut off the water supply to scores of Palestinian villages around Jerusalem the ethnic cleansing of that region.

During the Nakba (or Catastrophe) of 1948, whenever a village or a town was conquered, the militias would immediately demolish its wells to prevent the inhabitants from returning. Illegal Jewish settlers still utilize this tactic to this day. The Israeli military, too, continued to use this strategy, most notably in the first and second uprising. In the second Intifada, Israeli airplanes shelled the water supply of whichever village or refuge camp they planned to invade and subdue. During the Jenin Refugee camp invasion and

massacre of April 2002, the water supply for the camp was blown up before the soldiers moved into the camp from all directions, killing and wounding hundreds.

Gaza remains the most extreme example of water related collective punishment, to date. Not only the water supply is targeted during war but electric generators, which are used to purify the water, are often blown up from the sky. And until the decade long siege is over, there is little hope to permanently repair either of these.

It is now common knowledge that the Oslo Accord was a political disaster for Palestinians, less known, however, is how Oslo facilitated the ongoing inequality under way in the West Bank.

The so called Oslo II, or the Israel-Palestinian Interim Agreement of 1995, made Gaza a separate water sector from the West Bank, thus leaving the strip to develop its own water sources located within its boundaries. With the siege and recurring wars Gaza's aquifers produce anywhere quality water. According to AN of ERA 90 percent of Gaza water (is) unfit for human consumption.

Therefore, most Gazans subsist on sewage polluted or untreated

water. But the West Bank Should at least theoretically enjoy greater access to water than Gaza. Yet, this is hardly the case.

The West Bank's largest water source is the Mountain Aquifer, which includes several basins; Northern, Western and Eastern. West Banker's access to these basins is restricted by Israel, which also denies them access to water from the Jordan River and to the Coastal Aquifer. Oslo II, which was meant to be a temporary arrangement until a final status negotiations are concluded, enshrined the existing inequality by giving Palestinians less than a fifth of the amount of water enjoyed by Israel.

But even that prejudicial agreement has not respected, partly because a joint committed to resolve water issues gives Israel veto power over Palestinian demands. Practically, this translates demands. Practically, this translates to 100 percent of all Israeli water projects receiving the go ahead, including those in the illegal settlements, while nearly half of Palestinian needs are rejected.

Presently, according to Oxfam, Israel controls 80 percent of Palestinian **(Cont on Page No. 10)**

WHO WILL STOP THESE PALISTINIANS CHILD KILLARS?

By. Aijaz Zaka Syed

Editors face this dilemma in the news room almost on a daily basis. Every time there's slaughter of almost innocent which is like a daily occurrence these days, those in the news business face the predicament: to publish or not to publish?

I agree with many of my colleagues that some of these gory images of the carnage, this mindless bloodletting with bodies of children, youths in their prime and desperate men and women carry their loved ones in their arms, are not most pleasant to look at the first thing in the morning.

In fact, given a choice that's the last thing most of us would want to see when we pick up the newspaper in the morning.

We like to begin our day on a positive note, if we could help it. While we breakfast with our lovely families and see our pretty children get ready for the School, we are not really looking forward to such disturbing picture of other people's

dead children.

Most journalists, media networks and their audiences around the world are understandably sick and tired of going on and on about the "Palestine Problem". If many of them often suffer from what you, would call the 'coverage fatigue', you can't really blame them.

How long can you go on publishing the same sad, depressing pictures and woefully familiar stories? As a colleague said the other day; "What's new about the Palestinians getting killed? "They have been dying for the past 65-70 years, my friend".

One of my bosses decided me for running the report about a family of 14 Palestinians four of them children getting killed in an Israeli raid on the from page. "We should have had some positive local stories on Page I, "he emphasized.

I could not argue with him because, as they say, the boss is

always right even when he isn't.

I couldn't tell him that there is not a more local story than this one. This is our own story, whoever we are and wherever we live. This is the really looking forward to such disturbing picture of other people's dead children.

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One of my bosses decided me for running the report about a family of 14 Palestinians four of them children getting killed in an Israeli raid on the front page. "We should have had some positive local stories on Page 1," he emphasized.

I couldn't argue with him because, as they say, the boss is

always right even when he is not.

I couldn't tell him that there is not a more local story than this one. This is our own story, Whoever we are and wherever we live. This is the story of the good verses evil and the truth verses falsehood.

This is our own struggle for justice, freedom, and dignity. After all, what is it that the Palestinians are fighting for? They have been struggling for basics like liberty and right to live a life of dignity in their own country, in the land that they inherited from their ancestors.

These are things that you and I have always taken for granted. We take them for granted because we did not have to fight for them, cradle to the grave. We inherited these rights thanks to our good fortune of being born in a free country.

Why are the Palestinians dying all over again? They are dying because they want to live in dignity. They refuse to submit themselves to the tyranny and the disgrace of occupation like you and me, they want nothing from life but to live in peace, security and dignity in the comfort of their homes, with their loved ones. Like us, they want their children to get the best of education and grow up

to enjoy a life better than their own.

But do they have a choice? They have to suffer the most ruthless and vile occupation regime the world has ever known because the world books the other way. The blessed inter-national community that leader, writers and pundits keep telling us about is too powerless and self-serving to act.

What can the world community do anyway when the United Nations has even dispensed with the pretence of passing resolutions perfunctorily appealing the Israelis and Palestinians to exercise restraint?”

Yes. In the hypocritical court of international justice both the oppressor and the oppressed are equal. But how are the victims supposed to exercise restraint? By not being in the way? But does it really matter?

In any case, what has the civilized world and its vaunted institutions dedicated to peace done so far stop the world’s longest-running ethnic clean-campaign?

Bank-Ki-moon, the UN chief, has finally stirred out of his slumber often more, than two weeks and more than 500 Palestinian casualties. And what’s

the point of crying over the Western and US indifference. Has it made any difference? Ever?

But do we in the media have a choice? If this conflict has gone on for nearly 70 years now and the Palestinians continue to die like flies, should we stop reporting about it?

Should the media stop doing its job of telling the truth as it is for fear of offending the fine sensibilities of our sensitive readers? If we do not speak out against this ceaseless genocidal campaign against a helpless and defenceless people, who will? Especially if the Middle East media does not take a stand on the issue, who will?

Just look at the obscenity of this conflict. More than 90 per cent of the victims of this genocidal campaign, apparently to save Palestinians from ‘ Hamas terrorism, “have been civilians and an overwhelming number of them women and children.

After unleashing their craven terror on a besieged, helpless people, the brave Israelis are now running around pleading with their ever dependable friends in Egypt and elsewhere for a truce.

What has Israel achieved? What

is its game? Who would dare raise these questions?

News agencies dutifully and dispassionately point out in a foot note that this round of the hostilities between the Israelis and Palestinians has been the deadliest since Israel's last invasion of Gaza.

That's it. The media has not done with its duty. So has so world, after issuing its regulation appeals for peace and cessation of hostilities. Yes, hostilities. Cheated out of their entire country and backed away in the choking, prison that is Gaza. Palestinians are guilty of still existing.

Perhaps its futile to blame the world community. It has understandably grown weary of this endless bloodshed in the holy land.

But the killing machine that is Israel never stops. It continue to kill-kill and kill-until the Palestinians give up what little remains of their ancient land or give up their right to live.

Those four children wiped out while playing on the Gaza beach would never know what their crime was. Ten-year old Nour Al-Wajedy looks like an angel as she sleeps in peace, shrouded in white. She was killed when Israel hit Rafah

refugee camp. Nearly the whole family was wiped out. Twelve-year old Abdul Rahman Al-Batsh hasnot stopped crying since he lost his father and 17 other family members in the bombing of an apartment. They think we are worth nothing. They are killers, and one day I will avenge my father, ITV's Middle East correspondent reports him as saying. A photograph of Abdul Rahman, his shoulders slumped against a car, shows the moment when he discovered his father was among the dead. His pain painwrenched face has become one the most powerful images of Gaza conflict.

Is there no one who can stop these child killers? Where is the international community when we need it so badly? What has happened to the world's conscience? How long will it maintain its silence? Silence is crime. Silence is complicity. As the Holy Prophet (SAW) warned, those who see evil and do nothing about it also share the guilt. We are guilty.

(Courtesy Radiance weekly 9-Auguts 2014)
