

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Al-Inaam

A bi-annual Islamic periodical

Al-Inaam	A bi-annual Islamic periodical
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Biographies of the Sages

Mufti Ebrahim Desai

The Quran Kareem is replete with the different incidents of the lives of the Prophets and Messengers (Alayhimus Salaam). Some Surahs of the Quran Kareem have been named and dedicated to these Ambiya, for example, Surah Yusuf (AS), Surah Ebrahim (AS), and Surah Muhammad (Salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam). At times Allah Ta'ala also informs us about His pious slaves like Luqman (AS), Dhul Kifl (AS), and Dhul Qarnain (AS). The purpose of mentioning these episodes is not to teach the Ummah lessons in history but to create a beautiful example to be followed and imitated for the Mu'mineen. Allah Ta'ala mentions in the Holy Quran,

﴿ لقد كان في قصصهم عبرة لأولي الألباب ﴾

“Verily there is a lesson in their stories for people of understanding.”(Surah Yusuf: 111)

In adherence with this, our Akaabir (pious predecessors) would also mention the life stories and incidents of their saintly predecessors. The benefit in discussing the life sketches and biographies of the sages is that it awakens the desire to follow in their blessed and guided footsteps. The Akaabir set examples of taqwa, humility, piety, steadfastness and servitude that serve as a guide for us. Such qualities can never be acquired except through the Suhbat (companionship) of the saintly souls whom Allah has chosen. By reading their stories, we create a spiritual connection with them.

In this regard, Hadhrat Maulana Mahmood Madani Sahib (Mudda Zilluhu), Hadhrat Mufti Ebrahim Desai Sahib (Mudda Zilluhu), and the other respected Asaatizah at Madressah In'amiyyah dedicated to nurturing the spirituality of the students decided to commence a class known as "Akaabir ke Haalaat" to discuss our pious predecessors. This class proved to be tremendously beneficial, providing examples of unparalleled sacrifice by our pious elders for Deen and the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala. When listening to the life sketches of these luminous guiding stars, the students were left with a great yearning in their hearts to emulate these eminent scholars of Islam. A list of various Tarbiyah programs for the students is listed hereunder:

- Zikr majlis as advised by their spiritual mentor every morning after Fajr Salaah
- Half hour tilawat of the Holy Quran which is part of the Madrasah time table schedule
- Ishraq Salaah & Chaasht Salaah under the supervision of the Ustadh of the class. This is also for the Hifz students.
- Daily Majlis pertaining to various etiquettes of attaining knowledge and relative subjects after Asr Salaah
- A group of students also regularly wake up for Tahajjud Salaah

With this Tarbiyah programme, it is hoped that the students will begin to color themselves with the spiritual hues of our Akaabir.

For the benefit of the rest of the Ummah, these biographies will be published regularly so that everyone may benefit from the examples and the spirituality of the Akaabir.

الإمام المجتهد أبو جعفر محمد بن جرير الطبري - رحمه الله تعالى -

Imām Abu Ja'far Muhammad Ibn Jarīr At-Tabarī

(رحمه الله)

Imām Abu Ja'far Muhammad Ibn Jarir Al-Tabari (رحمه الله) was born in the year 224 A.H. in Tabaristan and he passed away in the year 310 A.H. in Baghdad.

He memorised the Quraan at the age of 7 and began gathering Ahadith at the age of 9! His travels in search of knowledge began after managing to persuade his father into allowing him to do so at the mere age of 12!

He travelled through the Islamic world in search of knowledge and went to various towns and villages of Khurasan, Iraq, Syria and Egypt. He later settled in Baghdad and remained there till his demise.

While on sojourn, he encountered a lot of poverty and financial difficulty. He once had to sell the sleeves of his shirt to buy food because the money that was being sent by his father was delayed. He also experienced extreme poverty while he was in Egypt in the year 256 A.H.

His student, Imām Abu Bakr Ahmad Ibn Kāmil (رحمه الله) relates that he once said, " I memorised the Quraan when I was 7 years old, I led the people in salaah when I was 8 and I began writing Ahadith at the age of 9.

My father once saw in a dream that I was in front of Rasulullah (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) with a bag filled with stones and I was throwing the stones away. An interpreter told him that when I grow up I would assist and protect the Dīn of Allah. Hence my father was of great assistance to me in my studies although I was young."

He further states: "We were studying under Imām Muhammad Ibn Humaid Al-Rāzi (رحمه الله) in the town of Ray.¹ During the day we used to go to Imām Ahmad Ibn Hammād Al-Dulabi (رحمه الله) who used to live in a village far away from Ray. After his lesson, we would run like possessed men to acquire the lesson of Imām Muhammad Ibn Humaid Al-Razi (رحمه الله)."

It is said that Imām Ibn Jarir wrote more than 100 000 Ahadith from Imām Muhammad Ibn Humaid Al-Razi (رحمه الله) alone.

¹ Present day Tehran.

He also went to Kufah where he met several Muḥaddithīn. From amongst them was Imām Abu Kuraib Muhammad Ibnul 'Alā Al-Hamdānī (رحمه الله) who had a very stern temperament.

He says: "Once when I went to the house of Imām Abu Kuraib (رحمه الله) with the Ashābul Hadith (students of Hadith), he peeped through a hole and saw the Ashābul Hadith crowded at his door so he asked : "Which of you have memorised all that he has written from me thus far?"

They began to look at each other. They then turned to me and asked if I knew all those Ahadith by heart? I replied in the affirmative. They then informed him. Upon his enquiry, I said: "You narrated this (Hadith) to us on a certain day and that (Hadith) on another day and so on..."

Imām Abu Kuraib (رحمه الله) realized his potential and asked him to come in. Thus the others used to get a chance to listen to the lesson due to him!

Imām Ibn Jarir (رحمه الله) shunned the worldly affairs. He was an expert in every field. He was a Qāri who knew nothing else but Quraan, and a Muḥaddith who knew nothing else but hadith and so on...

He was also one who would mix with people. He would attend any invitation or walimah upon being invited. He would also join

his companions and go to the fields to have a meal, but when he used to be at home, nobody would disturb him except under dire circumstances due to him being occupied with compiling his knowledge.

Abul-Qaasim Ibn 'Aqil Al-Warraaq (رحمه الله) says: " Imām Ibn Jarir (رحمه الله) once said to his students: "Are you'll ready to write down my lesson on the Tafsir (commentary) of the entire Holy Quraan"? They enquired as to how lengthy it would be. "30 000 pages"! he replied. They said: "This would take a long time and cannot be completed in one lifetime. He therefore made it concise and kept it to 3000 pages. It took him 7 years to finish it from the year 283 till 290.

He then said to them: "Are you'll ready for a book on the history of the world, from Adam (a.s.) till this day?" They asked as to how lengthy this one would be, and he replied in a similar manner to what he had said regarding his Tafsir. They contested as they had to the previous request. He then said: "Inna Lillah!! Enthusiasm has been destroyed!"

Imām Abu Haamid Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Al-Isfarayini (رحمه الله) said : " If someone had to travel all the way to China just to acquire the tafsir of Imām Ibn Jarir (رحمه الله) it would be very much worth the trip!"

Imām Abu Bakr Ibn Khuzaimah (رحمه الله) said : " I have read his Tafsir from beginning to end and I do not know anyone on the face of this earth who is more learned than him.²

Imām al-Simsimi (رحمه الله) says: Imam Ibn Jarir (رحمه الله) used to write 40 pages every day for 40 years!!

Some of his students had counted the number of days he lived from the time he became baaligh (mature) till the day he passed away, and they divided it by the number of pages that he wrote which effectively meant that he would have written 14 pages a day every day!!!³

He is reported to have said :

" ما حللت إزاري على حلال ولا حرام قط "

This means that he did not get married all his life.⁴

In other words: He had devoted his entire life for the "assistance and protection of the Deen of Allah" (as seen by his father in the dream...)

Tafsir Ibn Jarir Al- Tabari (known as Jaami' ul Bayaan) has been published in 14 volumes.²

³*Remember that one needs to first acquire knowledge for a long time , then one could be able to compile one's own works....so what about those days?...*

⁴*There were many such 'Ulamaa who had abandoned marriage for the sake of preserving knowledge. Shaikh 'Abdul Fattah (r.a.) has gathered the names of some of them in a book entitled: "Al-'Ulamaaul -'Uzzab".*

This great Imām (رحمه الله) who was also a mujtahid passed away in Baghdad in the year 310 A.H..

May Allah Ta'ala fill his grave with noor (divine light) and may He grant us the ability to take maximum benefit from this great Mujtahid's books. Ameen.

Among the lessons to be learnt from the life of this illustrious Imām are:

- The sublimity of his courage that he was prepared to write a book that would take an entire lifetime to compile.
- His value for time which enabled him to compile so much of knowledge.
- The age at which he commenced his quest for Islamic knowledge and his thirst whereby he had mastered practically all the fields of the knowledge of deen.
- The assistance that his father had offered him in the path of knowledge.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, "Do not entertain a desire in your heart for the wealth which you may see in the possession of others." [Musnad Ahmad]

Earthquake

A Natural Disaster or Consequence of Misdeeds?

The Ummah of Rasulullah *صلى الله عليه وسلم* and the world as a whole is facing numerous calamities in the form of hurricanes, earthquakes and other natural disasters. Quite often we term them, as done here, to be "Natural Disasters". This term gives an understanding that such Calamities are natural and we do not have anything to do with their occurrences. The particular calamity in this question is the Earthquake.

Earthquakes happen due to geographical causes. Science today tells us about the causes from tectonic plates and the shifts within them causing friction and thus resulting in earthquakes. These aspects, though true, cannot be taken as the absolute cause for the earthquake. Unfortunately, science views phenomena to be a product of tangible "cause and effect".

This is the reason why when something happens and the cause is not determined, the occurrence is called an anomaly. Or it could even be that the causes are known to happen and yet the symptoms that were supposed to have resulted from these causes are not experienced.

Thus, the absolute cause or the origin of the cause of that occurrence is something beyond what science may grasp. This origin beyond our understanding is Allah *ﷻ*. He alone commands the Earth and all its aspects. Whatever may cause an earthquake, that cause is also commanded by Allah *ﷻ*.

Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'an,

"And whatever calamity befalls you, it is due to your own doings and Allah forgives many of your shortcomings." Qur'an 42/30.

Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم explained the Tafseer of this ayah to

Hazrat Ali رضي الله تعالى عنه thus,

"O Ali! whatever calamity befalls you; illness, affliction or any worldly calamity; it is the earning of your own hands."

Allah تعالى و سبحانه says,

"Corruption has spread on water and land due to the doings of mankind. In order that Allah make them taste the penalty of some of their doings. Perhaps they may retract. (from their disobedience) Qur'an 30/41.

And,

"Why would Allah punish you if you were grateful and believed. And Allah is Most appreciative, All-Knowing." Qur'an 4/147.

And finally regarding the calamity at hand, this Hadith sheds light on it.

"When my Ummah will be involved in fifteen activities, then calamities will descend upon them:

- 1. Public finances will be regarded as personal property*
- 2. Amanat (Trust) will be abused*
- 3. Zakat will be considered a tax (burden)*
- 4. Wives will be obeyed*
- 5. Mothers will be disobeyed*
- 6. Friends will be well-treated*
- 7. Parents will be ill-treated*
- 8. Noise and commotion will be common in Masjids*
- 9. Unqualified persons will occupy positions of responsibility*
- 10. Respect will be shown to some people merely to escape their tyranny*
- 11. Liquor will be consumed openly*
- 12. Men will don silk garments*
- 13. Singing girls will be available (for entertainment)*
- 14. Musical instruments will be rampant*
- 15. The Pious predecessors will be reviled and vituperated;*

The Ummah should then await hurricanes, earthquakes and transformation of some people (into animals). (Tirmidhi)

And finally, Hazrat Abdullah bin Abbas رضى الله تعالى عنه states:

"The nation that is involved in misappropriation of trust (embezzlement), Allah will fill their hearts with terror for their enemies. The nation that is engaged in fornication will experience a large number of deaths. The nation that cheats in measure will have their sustenance curtailed. The nation that legislates against the truth and justice, will experience great bloodshed and the nation that breaks its contracts, will be subdued by the enemy." (Mishkaat)

Having understood this, we should judge ourselves and see whether we are liable for these happenings or not. Allah سبحانه و تعالی sends these calamities either as a test or a punishment. If one takes heed from it and returns to the righteous path, then it is a test and if one sways further away from the path, then it is a punishment.

Allah says,

"If the people of the locality had believed and dopted taqwa (piety), We would have opened upon them the blessings of the heavens and the earth, but they denied and falsified, thus We seized them due to their actions." Qur'an 7/96.

Maulana Yusuf Ludhianvi رحمه الله عليه says,

"A Muslim should take heed from these earthquakes and should ask for forgiveness, give Sadaqah and leave all his evil habits."

(Aap ke Masail aur un Ka Hall, Vol. 1, Pg 386)

Mufti Farooq Meeruti Saheb برکاتہ دامت writes eight measures that we should take so that we may be saved from calamities and the wrath of Allah. These eight points are:

- 1. Every Muslim, male and female, must immediately resolve to at least fulfil the basic requirements of Islam, salat in particular.*
- 2. A massive educational programme to be specially launched on an organized basis with emphasis on religious education and education of adults.*
- 3. Basing our social life on the Sunnah and our economic activities solely on the laws of Shari'ah.*
- 4. Total abstention from mutual conflicts and in fighting.*
- 5. In case of contention, to amicably solve any problems through proper arbitration.*
- 6. Encouragement of business, trade and skills.*
- 7. Dissociation from all customs and rituals at the time of birth, marriages, funerals and other occasions.*
- 8. Particular emphasis on cleanliness, tidiness, health education and physical fitness.*

(Calamities on Muslims: Causes and Cures)

In doing so, we will convert a potential punishment of Allah ﷻ into a test and attain the blessings and acceptance of Allah ﷻ ان شاء الله.

Faizel Niazi, second year student

Lessons of Udhiyah / Qurbani

Qurbani is once a year but it has lessons which every Muslim can apply for the rest of the year.

1. Importance of Qurbani

Allah mentions sacrificing of an animal side by side with Salaah in a number of verses of the Quraan :

- a. "Verily my prayer, my sacrifice, my life and my death are for Allah, the Lord of the worlds."
- b. So turn in prayer towards your Lord and sacrifice (animals)."

(108 : 2)

Salaah is a pivotal component of Islam. Without Salaah little of Islam remains. The fact that sacrifice has been mentioned alongside Salaah shows that it is an important form of worship.

The Prophet Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam mentioned that when a person slaughters a Qurbani animal, he is forgiven at the fall of the first drop of blood. The animal will be brought on the Day of Qiyamah with its blood, meat, limbs, etc and placed on his scale of deeds. The Prophet Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam also mentioned that there is a reward attached for every hair or fibre of wool on the body of the sacrificed animal.

2. Respecting a personality by action not by statues and portraits

Islam teaches a unique method of paying respect to a great personality. In other cultures, a person of respect is remembered by his statue or portrait. Islam commands that the practical act of the individual be emulated. The sacrifice of Ibrahim Alaihis Salaam was virtuous and we are commanded to do the very same action every year. The life of the Prophet Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam was so beautiful that every Muslim has been instructed to live their lives in his mould. The running of Bibi Hajira between Safa and Marwa is in

the same way remembered by every Muslim who performs the Tawaaf.

3. Islam teaches peace not violence

Before we slaughter the animal we take the name of Allah seeking His permission and asking for His blessings. The taking of a life is by no means a minor task. When Muslims are so scrupulous about respecting animal life, how much more scrupulous should they not be when it comes to respecting human life? By no means are Muslims terrorists and blood-thirsty fanatics! Muslims are taught to adhere to a code of ethics even on the battlefield.

4. Superiority of the Islamic method of slaughter

Islam, being a perfect way of life, has taught us how to slaughter an animal. The Prophet Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam taught us not to cause unnecessary pain and torture to the animal at the time of slaughter. It is with this in mind that Islam gives the following general guidelines :

The knife used for slaughtering should be well sharpened so that it slits the throat easily, without causing undue pain. The knife should not be sharpened in front of the animals as this may drive fear into them.

The animal should be slaughtered in isolation so that other animals cannot see the slaughter.

The animal should be laid on the ground with ease and should not be mercilessly dragged to the place of slaughter.

Research studies have proven that the Islamic method of severing the veins causes less pain to the animal than the method of stunning. Studies have also shown that the blood drains out of the animal more effectively in this way rendering the meat more wholesome and pure. This is nothing surprising to a Muslim. Every Sunnah and teaching of Islam is perfect as it has been chosen for man by his Creator, Allah.

5. Building leadership qualities and removing pride

Every prophet of Allah looked after sheep at some point in his life. This was a divine system of training aimed at teaching the Prophet Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam leadership qualities. It inculcated simplicity in them and taught them that true reward comes with hard work. Tending to sheep may be a menial and low task but it is from ground zero that great leaders develop.

6. The Command of Allah and human logic

Ibrāhīm Alayhis Salaam had two choices : to follow the cry of his heart or to submit to the call of his Creator. He chose to submit. There was no logic in killing his own son, Ismā'īl Alayhis Salaam, for no apparent reason. Ismā'īl Alayhis Salaam had not committed any sin or major wrong. But, this was a command from Allah which needed to be followed whether it conformed to logic or not. Eid-ul-Adha hinges on the spirit of surrender and submission to the divine call. A true Muslim accepts every command of his Creator without question and without searching for loopholes.

7. Spirit and Body

If we look at any form of worship in Islam it has deep spiritual and moral significance. When we sacrifice an animal it should be done for the pleasure of Allah only. Allah wants to see what is in the heart of man.

"It is not their flesh nor their blood that reaches Allah, but it is your piety that reaches Him..." (Surah Hajj)

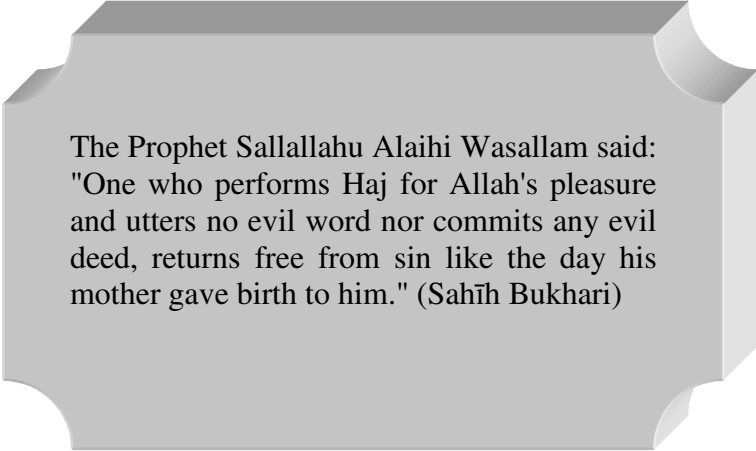
8. Qurbani teaches sacrifice

When Ibrahim Alaihis Salaam chose to sacrifice his son, he taught us the golden lesson that love for Allah in man should be stronger than the love for himself, his family and his emotions. It is also a reminder that Islam teaches sacrifice and hard work as opposed to a life of endless pleasure and comfort.

9. Worship must be of superior quality

Islam teaches us to sacrifice animals of the best quality. They should be free from faults and defects. An animal that is blind, lame or has a structural defect from birth is not suitable for sacrifice. This teaches us that our relationship with Allah must be of a superior quality. We should not give a sub-standard effort.

When we have to meet for an important business meeting, we make sure that we dress perfectly, speak perfectly and focus our attention perfectly so that nothing important is missed. When we are in Salaah, we should similarly be in peak performance. Our dress, recitation of the Quraan and concentration should be perfect. Similar is the case with all the other forms of worship in Islam. ●



The Prophet Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam said:
"One who performs Haj for Allah's pleasure and utters no evil word nor commits any evil deed, returns free from sin like the day his mother gave birth to him." (Sahīh Bukhari)

The Brilliance of Imām Abū Hanīfah

(Rahimahullāh)

Moulānā Ebrāhīm Muhammad

Imām Bukhārī (*Rahimahullāh*) has narrated a hadīth in the chapter of Tafsīr in his Sahīh in which Rasūlullāh ﷺ said that if īmān was present by the Pleiades (Thurayyā) star, then the people or a person of this nation would obtain it. Allāmah Suyūṭī has mentioned in Tabyīdus Sahīfah that this hadīth refers to Imām Abū Hanīfah (*Rahimahullāh*).

An incident of the brilliance of Imām Abū Hanīfah (*Rahimahullāh*) has been mentioned in Fatāwā Ālamgharī. Once a woman came to Imām Abū Hanīfah (*Rahimahullāh*) and said that her brother had passed away leaving behind 600 dinars in his estate. However, she complained of receiving only one dinar as her share from the deceased.

Imām Abū Hanīfah (*Rahimahullāh*) asked her who had distributed the estate. She replied that it was Imām Abū Hanīfah's student, Dāwūd Tā'ī. Imām Abū Hanīfah replied that if he was the one who had distributed the estate, he would not commit any oppression. Through his intuition, Imām Abū Hanīfah asked her if the deceased was survived by a paternal grandmother. She replied in the affirmative. He asked her if the deceased had two daughters. She replied in the affirmative. He asked her if the deceased was survived by one wife. She said, "Yes." He asked her if she had 12 brothers. She replied in the affirmative.

Imām Abū Hanīfah said that if this was the case, then she was rightfully entitled to one dinar only. The reason for this was that the paternal grandmother inherits one sixth of the estate which in this case was 100 dinars. The two daughters inherit two thirds which is 400 dinars. The wife is entitled to one eighth which is 75 dinars. The remainder is 25 dinars. According to the rule of, ‘the male inherits twice the share of the female’, the twelve brothers would each inherit two dinars and the sister would inherit one dinar. ●

Āishah Raḍiallahu Anhā narrates that the Prophet Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam strove harder and took greater pains to observe prayer, etc. during the last ten days of Ramaḍān than during the other days. (Sahīh Muslim)

Love for Children

Nabī Karīm ﷺ undoubtedly was a fountain head of guidance for each and everyone of us. From amongst the bejewelled crown shinning on Nabī Karīm ﷺ, one radiant gem was his uprightness in character. From amongst the undimmed lustre of this gem was his beautiful quality of being kind to children.

Nabī Karīm ﷺ was moved much by a mother's love for her children. A very poor woman once visited Sayyidatina Āisha ؓ together with her two very young daughters. Sayyidatina Āisha ؓ had nothing with her except a piece of date lying on the floor. She picked it up and gave it to the woman who split it into two pieces and gave each daughter the equal halves. Sayyidatina Āisha ؓ narrated the episode to Rasūlullāh ﷺ when he came home. Nabī ﷺ then remarked, "When Allāh ﷻ bestows children to anyone and he (the parent) gives them their right, he is protected from hell.

Sayyidina Khālid Ibn Saīd ؓ came one day with his young daughter. She was wearing a yellow dress. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Sanah, Sanah." This word means beautiful in the Ethiopian language. He used this word because she was born in Ethiopia. The children played with the seal of prophethood on the back of the Prophet ﷺ and this baby girl also played with it. Sayyidina Khālid ؓ scolded her but the Prophet ﷺ asked him to leave her alone.

The Prophet ﷺ once received some clothes. He asked those present, "Whom shall I give it to?" There was no response. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Call Ummu Khālid." When she came, he dressed her with it and said, "Don it and wear it off."

Just as Nabī Karīm’s ﷺ love and generosity for them was intense, his patience for them too knew no bounds.

Once one of the companions ؓ said that he used to go into the orchards when he was a child and pelt the dates on the tree with stones. He was caught and taken to the Prophet ﷺ who asked him why he hurled the stones. He said: “To bring down the dates.” Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “Eat the dates that lie on the ground but do not throw stones,” and he stroked the boy’s head.

It was the Prophet’s ﷺ practice that when anyone presented the first fruit of the season, he presented it to the youngest child nearest to him at that time. He used to hug children and stroke them lovingly.

Sayyidinā Jābir Ibn Samurah ؓ reported that as a child he offered salāh behind the Prophet ﷺ. After the salāh the Prophet ﷺ went towards his home and Jābir ؓ followed him. Other boys also joined in and Nabī ﷺ stroked all the boys including Jābir ؓ affectionately.

As Nabī ﷺ entered Madīnah on his emigration from Makkah, the young girls came happily to their doors and began singing to welcome him. He called out, “O girls, do you love me?” They responded with one voice, “Yes, O Messenger of Allāh.” He said, “I love you too, children.”

Food For Thought

If a man who had been given the responsibility of delivering the message of Allāh to every single Ummatī, could take out time to play with children, why is it so difficult for parents today to find a

little quality time to spend with their children. Don't you have time to at least love your children?

O Parents, while you are alive, make your presence count – children count on you!

If children are deprived of the enjoyment of spending quality time with their parents, they turn to friends who introduce them to drugs, rave clubs etc. to give them enjoyment. If enjoyment is not found here, it leads to suicide. Whereas if there was love and enjoyment at home, they would not be at these places. Today, this is the downfall of the Ummah and it all stems from lack of quality time spent with the children.

Remember Nabī's ﷺ kindness caused the children to love him too. Therefore they wholeheartedly accepted his advice and desired to be like him in all facets of life. The same could result between you and your children.

Do not be like the Bedouin who once said to the Prophet ﷺ, "You people love your children but I have ten children. I have never hugged them." The Prophet ﷺ said: "If Allāh has taken away love from your heart, what can I do?" ☪

Zaheer Vadia, 6th Year

From a Mother-in-law

"My best advice to any parent of a married child that may be reading this is "Just go slow"...close your eyes and think back to when you were a daughter or son-in-law. Your children love you and they love their spouses, but let them lead their lives. We had our time. Now this is theirs!!"

Malawi - Where Islam Acts In Silence

Jaffar Chiosa

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

Islam, perhaps the oldest religion in Malawi, has been a dominant force, especially among the Yao people. The Yao and Swahili speakers who were associated with the Arab traders, brought Islam to Malawi in the early 16th century. The expansion of Islam is also attributed to the trading caravans, which usually had Muslim teachers. Being educated, these teachers joined the nomadic caravans as secretaries to the heads of the caravans, but also helped convey messages that local chiefs might wish to send to each other or to their contacts on the coast.

The Muslim Association of Malawi, with its headquarters in Blantyre, evolved out of a Central Board for Muslim Education which was set up in the 1950s to coordinate the work and represent the interests of the Muslim community as a whole. The Association has received and continues to receive financial help from Kuwait and other Muslim sources to fund radio programs, women's conferences, youth camps and other charity- orientated activities.

For a long period of time, Muslims and other faiths have continued to live in peace. This peaceful co-existence was first tested by the colonial British government in the early fifties and later by the ruthless power of the Malawi Congress government. Although unofficial estimates indicated that Muslims consist of 12% of the population during and throughout the entire MCP era, no Muslim rose to the position of high prominence in public life which was dominated by products of the Christian mission, mainly from the Protestants comprising of CCAP (Dr Banda, Hon. Tembo, Aron Gadama), the Seventh-Day Adventist Churches (Late Khanga, Bwanali and Chakuamba) and later the Roman Catholics (Late Lunguzi, Maxwell Pashane and Yohane) to mention a few.

The only Muslim to have risen to a position of prominence in the party or government was Mr Bakili Muluzi who succeeded the late Albert Muwalo as

MCP's secretary general in 1976 but it was not long before he was dismissed. Several theories have been circulating concerning his fate. Many people believe his dismissal had something to do with abuse of party funds and other disciplinary issues like allegations that he was caught stealing tobacco bales from Dr Banda's Mgodhi farm in Machinga and that he was also reported to have been fond of making some advances towards female party members and a serious rape allegation against Mrs Somanje, wife of Mr Somanje-MCP's Treasurer General at the time.

However, none of these allegations were brought to court and Dr Muluzi himself denied their existence, insisting that he resigned on personal grounds. Intelligence reports and entries in the Presidential diary reveal that Dr Muluzi's forced resignation was purely based on religious grounds. He was forced to resign days after an article in the Herald newspaper in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia), described the Malawi Muslim community as "fundamentalist" and owing allegiance to Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini of Iran, chief architect of the Iranian revolution. Keeping Dr Muluzi as his second in command was therefore too risky to Dr Banda. He had to go and it happened. Entries in Dr Banda's diary show of an order to neutralize Islam's influence and put Dr Muluzi 'under check'.

Although there was no official policy against Muslims at that time, several hostile actions did occur. For example, Muslims were not allowed to open Islamic education schools to the public till the late 80's. In 1989 a newly opened primary school was quickly closed by the government in Zomba, apparently as a result of lobbying from Christian quarters. Unlike government and Christian schools, the school was free and was increasingly becoming popular. A year earlier, arrival of an Islamic missionary from the Ahmadiyya sect, Sheikh Hajiri caused a stir. His teachings were more sympathetic to Christianity than Islam. He was imprisoned and spent several weeks in prison without any charge. Since the closure of the Zomba-based Islamic primary school, there was no incident whatsoever between Christians and Muslims.

On March 12 1990 an Italian-based Christian NGO, Droits de l'homme sans frontières reported thus: *"The number of mosques has grown enormously, following a precise expansionist strategy , the foodstuffs that are being sold (above all the meat products) are all in accordance with Islamic law. This last*

fact, although seemingly secondary, is a cause of great tension because the Christians have no intention of being subjected to such customs."

CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

Despite enormous differences in Christian sects, there seem to be unity when it comes to making a stand against Islam. Differences between Catholics and many anti-Catholic Protestant churches are quickly mended to form a frontline against Islamic growth. It comes without saying that whenever a Christian comes across the word Islam, his/her mind is pre-occupied with generalizing terms such as fundamentalists, terrorists, or at worse a bunch of crazy people without formal education. Against these unfair prejudices from most Christians, Islam seems to be growing at an unprecedented level. What is more breath-taking and moving is that despite Christian demonisation against Muslims, Muslims still refer to Christians as "Our Christian Brothers"

In 1995 Pastor Lot Mbale Mbuu, founder of the Ndirande-based controversial Pharisaic Seventh-day Apostolic Church, represented the Christian community in a hot debate with Muslims on the theme "Which of the two, Christianity or Islam, is a true religion?" The debate was held on the Nyambadwe School Grounds near Ndirande township. The Islamic faith was represented by Mr Ajassi and other "learned sheiks". The debate was very emotional and was disrupted by people who jeered at the Muslim customs and declared Pastor Lot the winner. Korans and Muslim skull-caps were grabbed, torn and burnt. From then on, he was known as the "Christian Lawyer." His staunch opposition to Islam was also evidenced in his establishment of "Christian butcheries" to rival the Halaal butcheries. He urged Christians to eat meat slaughtered by their Christian friends rather than to give the Mwalimus (Sheikhs) a living, a very common practice in Malawi but thankfully, the incident was isolated and confined to Ndirande boundaries and surprisingly, Islamic followers did not retaliate.

However, Malawi started simmering with religious tension between Muslims and Christians from 1999 when Bakili Muluzi, a Muslim, was re-elected president of Malawi. Mosques were set ablaze and some houses belonging to people suspected of supporting Muluzi, were torched. The tension heightened when the ruling United Democratic Front party pushed

for a constitutional amendment to allow Muluzi another five-year term in office. The proposal split Malawi's religious circles with the Muslim Association of Malawi supporting the amendment while Christian faiths mobilised all their resources to fight the bill. Another case was an attempt by the government to introduce religious studies where Islam would be taught like Christianity. The proposal, though sensible in a secular state like Malawi, drew stiff resistance from most Christian faiths.

Unfounded claims were made to the extent that the ruling party, the United Democratic Front, were trying to Islamise the country. In no time tension rose between Muslims and Christians. A case in point occurred in September 2002 when the Catholic Church, through Monsignor Joseph Kim officially launched a complaint to the Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA) on allegations that Radio Islam was airing what the Church described as provocative and insulting programs. The tit for tat game would change, on 30th June 2003 when Muslims in Mangochi rioted against Christian establishments in reaction to the deportation of five foreign nationals suspected of belonging to the Al Qaeda network.

The riots went on for two days, targeting Christians. Seven churches in two cities were damaged, as were offices of the aid agencies, 'Save the Children' and 'USAID'. *"They came chanting Islamic slogans,"* said Cedric Kamoto, pastor of the CCAP church in Mangochi at the time. *"They said we should get out of Mangochi because it's not meant for Christians. They accused us of bringing Americans in Malawi to disturb their interests."* He fled the church as rioters attacked it for an hour. Upon investigation, it turned out that the rioters were largely villagers who had no clue about what Al-Qaeda was in the first place but were simply touched by the injustice done to a Muslim brother.

EXPANSION IN SILENCE

While Islam was only found in the southern region and a few selected urban districts, there seemed to be an increase in many parts of Malawi where the establishment of Islamic missions were unheard of. Dr Muluzi is often blamed by many Christians as the figure behind the growth of Islam in Malawi. While preparing this article, most of the converts to Islam whom the

writer spoke to, had surprisingly good, solid arguments for converting to Islam. These converts are mostly seen writing articles in newspapers for the defense of Islam and its tenets.

A number of individuals felt that Islamic Social laws are comprehensive, that they are a complete guide to life, and consequently, that they brought about orderly living. They pointed to the fact that people need boundaries by which to live by, especially in the democratic Malawi where people seem to be taking matters of law into their own hands, while leaving out the needs of the majority. Islam, they felt was the only religion which was giving them these boundaries.

In contrast, quite a few respondents pointed out that Christianity was just not powerful enough to change the evils of modern-day life. This was compounded by a number of newly-released inmates especially from Chichiri, Maula and Zomba prisons. A number of those with whom the writer interacted, had come into contact with Islam in prison, where they had been reformed by "Muslim brothers" who came weekly for the Jum'ah prayers and Qur'anic classes. Now that they were "*on the outside*", they believed that the disciplined lifestyle, espoused by Islamic law, was the sole reason which kept them from going "*back in*". They were appreciative of the local Musjid's role in supporting them with work and small businesses as they start their new lives outside prison cells. It seems like most Christian converts feel abandoned after joining their respective churches. All they are given is hope for a better tomorrow and nothing tangible.

Another attraction was Islam's lack of a priesthood. Islam has no medial agents. One will not find a "pope" or even a set of cardinals, reverends and pastors within Islam. As a result, the believer, they felt, is not dependent on someone else for his relationship with God, and therefore, can go directly to Allah.

A further attraction for new converts was that of Islamic education for young children, "while they were still impressionable." It was the Muslim schools, they felt, which would reform society and instill just and orderly sets of values upon the next generation. The writer had solicited a Christian view on Islam and education by asking a non-Muslim friend to visit Muslim schools in Dedza and Mangochi and several other Qur'anic schools in Blantyre. His

response was that while the schools seemed to be small and ill-equipped, the children appeared to be well-disciplined and happy. And, not surprisingly, one of the schools produced four straight distinctions in Mathematics last year.

Among the respondents to the questionnaire, there were three women who felt that Islam gave them, as women, added fulfillment. For instance, they were permitted to own property, while at the same time they were offered the best protection from an outside hostile world. One recounted incidents where Christian widows have found themselves in property conflicts with their husband's relatives and was shocked to come up with 6 names of women in a space of 10 minutes. While this may surprise some, the perception by most Muslims to their Christian brothers was, "We take care of our women better than the Christians do."

David Lamb, the Los Angeles reporter, who wrote the best-selling book 'The Africans', while living and traveling for four years in Africa, echoes this point. He states that one of the best comparisons between a Christian and Muslim country in Africa was the safety of the streets within the larger cities. He felt that he would never let his wife walk alone at night, and sometimes even during the day in most of the larger African Christian cities. Yet, he had no fear of permitting his wife to wander freely within any of the larger African Muslim cities.

Here is another point where truth stands clear from error. In Islam, between 2 to 5 % of your annual saving goes directly to the poor, which may include a relative. In Christianity, 10% of your entire income, goes to the so-called 'non-profit' organization, the Church. This is named "Tithing" and the Church claims that the Bible backs up this 10% donation.

What is more interesting in these teachings of donations or religious based support activities are the stark differences between the Church and Islamic charity is that large amounts of money are left with individuals often called 'church workers', therefore opening the opportunity for corruption, while in Islam, the principle beneficiary of the religious contribution is the "poor". The benefit of giving the money directly to the poor as prescribed in Islam, is that you can connect with the people in need. You can enjoy and share in their happiness when you help them.

Another case of Islamic generosity that baffled many was when the writer came across this story from a non-Muslim nurse at Chilomoni clinic whose two daughters (also non-Muslim) are studying medicine in Turkey –all funded by the Muslim charity and yet they are not Muslims. This cannot happen in any other church within the Christian kingdom. You have to be a member of the church to be exposed to scholastic opportunities. In fact, in churches like the Seventh-day Adventist Church and CCAP, membership alone cannot earn you help. You must be a church worker or the son of a church worker to receive a bursary. The nurse's family is now an active Muslim activist busy advertising Islam's generosity and defending its beliefs. She is in full veil today at the clinic.

Another area of interest is the behaviour of the beneficiaries of the said scholarships. Here comparisons were drawn between Christians and Muslims who were recipients of religious scholarships. Out of 15 medical student recipients of Islamic scholarships, 14 of them returned to Malawi and are working in Malawi whereas from a combination of 30 medical students from Christian-funded scholarships, only six returned to Malawi with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The same has also been said of recipients of government funding. The rate of return to Malawi is higher on the Muslim side than the Christian one. The Muslim beneficiaries tend to be more active in religious activities than those of other churches.

What is it that makes the followers of Islam stick to their promises while the Christians do not? May be this would need an introspective soul searching. Any major Christian organisation you can think of in Malawi has a network of medical and to some extent hospital establishments. What is shocking is that despite these establishments being instrumental in the quest to '*help Jesus in his mission to redeem humanity*', their response to the current HIV epidemic is rather disappointing. They are charging the public to administer the ARV HIV drug while Muslim clinics are doing the same for free. Here again, from the point of view of a poor person, he will see God in a Muslim clinic and pure commerce in any Christian-manned establishment. On this point alone, Islam has proved to surpass Christianity with its care and discipline towards the poor people whom '*Christ died for*'. Last but not least is that what is common among Christian Churches while absent among Islamic Mosques is

that the Ministers in Christianity take a salary for themselves whereas in Islam, the Ministers consider preaching the words of Allah, a reward in itself.

CONCLUSION

From this discussion it seems that Islam has been, is, and probably will be making a dynamic impact in Malawi whether we will have another Muslim president or not. Many people are coming into contact with Islam for the first time, and are finding that there is something appealing for them. In terms of statistics, there seems to be a marginal 3-4% increase in Muslim converts since the UDF came to power. The charge that Dr Muluzi wanted to Islamise the country is therefore largely exaggerated. I am sure the impact of Islamic influence will continue to grow in Malawi's social development. What I propose is that other than seeking destruction of each other's faith, we should try to please Allāh. Piety is the goal to be reached. ●

In a khutbah at Minā, Nabī Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam said : "O people, verily your Rabb (Allah) is One and verily your father is one (Ādam alaihis salaam). Remember, there is no virtue of an Arab upon a non-Arab and vice versa, nor is there any virtue of a white person above a black person or for a black person over a white person except in taqwā (piety). Verily the noblest amongst you in the sight of Allah is the one who is the most pious." (Baihaqī).

Children's Corner

Qārī Ismāīl Abdul Azīz

RIDDLES

Q. What is a cat's favourite breakfast?

A. Mice Krispies

Q. What should you do when a bull charges you?

A. Pay him.

Q. How long is a shoe?

A. One foot.

Q. What gets wetter the more it dries?

A. A towel.

Q. Why didn't the mummy answer the phone.

A. He was all tied up.

Q. What has a lot of teeth but never eats?

A. A comb.

Q. What is the perfect cure for dandruff?

A. Baldness.

Q. What is the difference between a butcher and a light sleeper?

A. One weighs the steak, and the other stays awake.

Q. Which man shaves more than ten times a day?

A. A barber.

Q. What is the fastest way to spread news?

A. Tell it to a woman.

Word Search

1. City in Saudi Arabia sacred to all Muslims.
2. The first house of Allāh Ta'ālā.
3. The major pilgrimage to Makkah.
4. The minor pilgrimage to Makkah.
5. The pilgrim's dress.
6. Going around the Ka'bah.
7. The two hills upon which Ḥaḍrat Hājirah ﷺ climbed to search for water.
8. Hastening between the two hills.
9. Devotional calls of the pilgrim. (Words uttered by the Hāji)
10. Name of a well in Makkah.
11. Name of a mountain and plain near Makkah.
12. Arabic name for the black stone.
13. Place near Makkah.

14. The cloth of the Ka'bah.
15. The direction of Salāh.

W	A	S	I	T	U	Z	Z	A	M	A	A	N	I	Y	A
R	U	M	L	A	F	S	T	T	A	L	B	I	Y	A	H
Q	E	R	K	F	L	A	F	O	N	E	U	N	T	O	P
G	H	I	L	A	A	F	X	A	U	R	A	S	Z	W	E
L	D	Z	A	R	T	A	L	E	M	A	R	W	A	H	A
I	H	H	E	A	R	S	Y	I	R	A	P	H	M	Y	G
P	W	A	L	Y	M	A	K	K	A	H	G	O	Z	A	U
T	A	L	U	D	I	V	O	U	H	A	V	K	A	I	L
A	L	B	F	A	N	E	L	E	P	T	A	N	M	L	S
W	A	I	H	R	A	A	M	N	S	A	L	A	T	A	H
A	B	Q	U	R	B	A	N	M	E	W	H	A	J	A	A
A	A	B	K	A	B	A	H	I	E	L	A	D	O	H	N
F	Y	O	W	M	U	N	U	T	A	R	E	P	B	I	O
D	H	A	J	A	R	U	L	A	S	W	A	D	T	O	Y

A virtuous act performed during the first ten days of Zul Hijjah is more pleasing to Allah than on any other day. (Sahīh Bukhārī)

Cartoons: Freedom to Abuse

The Danes have neither defended freedom of speech well nor upheld another sacred secular principle, mutual respect between peoples of all faiths

Haroon Siddiqui

The protracted, still-raging controversy over a Danish newspaper's caricature of the Prophet Muhammad is a case study of the West's troubled relations with Muslims. It features the easy clichés of the age - freedom of speech vs. Islamic intolerance, and open democratic debate vs. politically correct cravenness.

But what it has actually exposed is the European media's tendency to exploit anti-immigrant, particularly anti-Muslim, bigotry, as well as the Danes' readiness to bow to the gods of commerce. The story began last fall when an author complained he could not get an artist to illustrate a children's book about Muhammad's life, given Islam's prohibition against depicting the Prophet, lest it lead to idolatry.

Jyllands-Posten, the conservative mass circulation daily, asked 40 illustrators to defy the ban. On Sept. 30, it published a dozen of their drawings. The first to complain were Danish Muslims. They were ignored. Muslim ambassadors to Denmark asked to meet the prime minister. Anders Fogh Rasmussen refused. Flemming Rose, the paper's cultural editor, said he had commissioned the cartoons to break the self-censorship he felt had descended on Europe since the 2004 murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh by a Muslim (since convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment). Editor Carsten Juste said he saw no reason to apologize. Prime Minister Rasmussen walked a fine line, denouncing "any expression that attempts to demonize groups on the basis of religion or ethnic background," but adding that "freedom of speech is not negotiable." As protests spread worldwide, Editor Juste struck a disingenuous note. "We are sorry if Muslims have been offended."

But the issue goes well beyond the old debate over whether freedom of expression has limits. It does in countries like Canada, which have anti-hate laws. But

regardless of the presence or absence of legislated limits, every society has its own notions of what is acceptable and what is not. We can be certain that the editors publishing the Muhammad caricatures would not smear their pages with anti-Semitic graffiti or commission drawings maligning the Pope.

And had the editors opted to be that offensive, we can be equally certain that not too many people would have been rushing to their defense. It is this double standard that is at the heart of the repeated conflicts between the West and the world of Islam over how far anti-Islamic provocateurs can go in baiting Muslims, repeatedly, knowing full well the depth of Muslim feelings about their most cherished beliefs.

Invoking freedom of speech or the need to puncture political correctness are no more than smokescreens to hide that larger, and uglier, truth. The Danes have neither defended freedom of speech well nor upheld another sacred secular principle, mutual respect between peoples of all faiths. In balancing these two competing rights in this troubled world at this time, thinking people and responsible public institutions should err on the side of advancing mutual understanding, not fanning more conflicts. ❁

The holy Prophet Sallallahu alayhi wasallam said,
“Whoever desires to have expansion in his sustenance
and a prolonged life, should treat his relatives with
kindness.”

(Sahīh Bukhārī & Sahīh Muslim)

وآخر دعوانا ان الحمد لله رب العالمين

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