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Thought for the Month

Ramadhan is the (month)
In which was sent down
The Qur-an, as a guide
To mankind, also clear (Signs)
For guidance and judgment
(Between right and wrong).
So every one of you
Who is present (at his home)
During that month
Should spend it in fasting,
But if any one is ill,
Or on a journey,
The prescribed period
(Should be made up)
By days later.

Al-Quran- 2:185

EDITOR

Prof. Sanghasen Singh

CIRCULATION MANAGER

Syed Arshad Karim

CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

162, Jogabai Extension
Jamia Nagar, New Delhi
PIN-110025
India

Phone 26981187,
26989253, 26987467
Fax : 91-11-26981104

E-mail:
manzoor@ndf.vsnl.net.in

FOCUS

Brothers in Islam! The second act of worship that Allah enjoins upon you is *Sawm* or the Fasting. It means abstaining from dawn to sunset from eating, drinking and sex. Like the Prayer, this act of worship has been part of the Shari'ahs given by all the Prophets. Their followers fasted as we do. However, the rule, the number of days, and the periods prescribed for fasting have varied from one Shari'ah to another. Today, although fasting remains a part of most religions in some form or other, people have often changed its original form by accretions of their own.

O Believers! Fasting is ordained for you, even as it was ordained for those before you (al-Baqarah 2:183).

Why has this particular act of worship been practised in all eras?

Islam aims to transform the whole life of man into a life of worship. He is born a slave; and to serve his Creator is his very nature. Not for a single moment should he live without worshipping, that is surrendering to Him in thoughts and deeds. He must remain conscious of what he ought to do to earn the pleasure of God and what he ought to avoid. He should, then, walk on the path leading to Allah's pleasure, eschew that leading to His displeasure just as he would avoid the embers of a fire. Only when our entire lives have become modeled on this pattern can we be considered to have worshipped our Master as is His due and as having fulfilled the purport of 'I have not created jinn and men except to worship Me'.

The real purpose of ritual acts of worship – Salah, Zakah, Sawm and Hajj – is to help us come to that life of total worship. Never think that you can acquit yourselves of what you owe to Allah only if you bow and prostrate yourselves five times a day, suffer hunger and thirst from dawn to sunset for thirty days in Ramadan and, if wealthy, give the Alms and perform the Pilgrimage once in a lifetime. Doing all this does not release you from bondage to Him, nor make you free to do whatever you like. Rather, one of the underlying purposes of enjoining these rituals upon you is to develop you so that you can transform your whole lives into the 'Ibadah of God.

How does the Fasting prepare us for this lifelong act of worship?

All acts of worship include some outward physical movement, but not the Fasting. In the Prayer you stand, sit bow down and prostrate yourselves; all these acts are visible to everybody. In Hajj you undertake a long journey and travel with thousands of people. Zakah, too, is known to at least two persons, the giver and the receiver. None of these acts can remain concealed; if you perform them, other people will come to know about it.

But the Fasting is a form of 'Ibadah which is entirely private. The All-knowing God alone knows that His servant is fasting. You are required to take food before dawn (*Suhur*) and abstain from eating and drinking anything till the time to break the Fast (*Iftar*). But, if you secretly eat and drink in between, nobody except God will know about it.

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Activities of the IOS Headquarters

A G Noorani gets IOS Lifetime Achievement Award

The Institute of Objective Studies organised an impressive investiture ceremony at the Deputy Speaker Hall, Constitution Club of India Annexe on May 23, 2015 to confer the Sixth IOS Lifetime Achievement Award on the eminent constitutional expert, author and well-known political commentator, Mr. A G Noorani. He was presented with the Scroll of Honour by the Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University, Lt. Gen. Zameer Uddin Shah. While former Chief Justice of India, Mr. Justice A M Ahmadi, handed over a cheque for one lakh rupees, the judge, Supreme Court of India, Mr. Justice A K Sikri presented the memento to him.

Presiding over the function, Justice Sikri recalled that as a student of law at the Delhi University he used to read Mr. A G Noorani's books. He said that some people were sent by God to accomplish the important job assigned to them. They performed the job well by creating a milestone. Noorani was one of them, who by his works, carved out a niche for himself. Everybody was not that fortunate. He said that for great people, money did not matter. What mattered

to them was recognition and honour. It was difficult to say who was honoring whom; whether society was honoring Mr. Noorani or by honoring him it was honoring itself. Either way, it was a win-win situation. Both of them must feel honoured, he remarked. He

the Aligarh Muslim University stood for secular and pluralistic outlook with the promotion of modern education and concern for marginalised sections. He informed that girl students constituted 40 percent of the total strength by claiming that the fee structure of the university was cheaper than other universities in the country. Detailing the projects undertaken by the university, he said that recycling of water and close cooperation with clean-up Ganga and Yamuna campaigns were part of them.

He informed that the AMU was also the first green university in the country. As 80 percent students of the university were Urdu speaking, it had retained the distinct flavour. The university was also known for its tehzib and culture. He said that during the last three years of his tenure as Vice-Chancellor, he experimented that the problem why the Muslim students failed to compete with others lay in the lack of good schooling. He noted that the problem lay in the lack of good schooling. Denying the charge of discrimination against Muslims, he

pointed out that the non-availability of best educated hands came in the way of better opportunities of employment. In order to give proper education to children, Sir Syed Public School had been opened for all sections of society. In a bid to build bridges between madrasa education and modern scientific education, AMU was also



L-R: Prof. Z.M. Khan, Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam, Lt. Gen. Zameeruddin Shah, Mr. Justice A.K. Sikri Mr. A.G. Noorani, Justice A.M. Ahmadi and Mr. Asaduddin Owaisi

observed that the text of the scroll of honour was testimony to his deep and incisive knowledge of a variety of subjects he had been writing on.



A view of the audience

Praising the IOS for the work being done by it in the field of research and publication, he urged the Institute to undertake research on the topics suggested by Mr. Noorani. He wished Mr. Noorani good health and a long life.

Speaking as the guest of honour, Lt. Gen. Zameer Uddin Shah said that

focusing on madrasa education. This experiment had yielded encouraging results with some of the students getting admission to the Jamia Millia Islamia and the Hamdard University, he added.

Justice A M Ahmadi described A G Noorani as a prolific writer who wrote on various issues confronting our socio-political life. Commenting on the country's current political situation, he said that India was passing through trying times. Attempts were being made to scare away the Muslims who constituted the largest minority. A calculated move was on to marginalise them by denying the fundamental rights guaranteed under the Indian Constitution. In this connection, he made special mention of the Keshavan and Bharti case decided by the Supreme Court, which ruled that the fundamental rights formed part of the basic structure of the Constitution and as such they could not be changed or abolished. This was next to impossible so long as the Indian judiciary remained independent, he pointed out. He said that ever since an autocratic government had assumed reins of administration at the Centre, perception of threat to the minorities had gone from bad to worse. Congratulating Mr. Noorani for the award, he said that he deserved it. It must have come to him much earlier, he remarked.

Mr. A G Noorani referred to a speech of the late President of India, Dr. Zakir Husain who had said that the AMU will look at India will decide the future of Muslims in the country and the way the country will look at AMU will decide the future of democracy in India. The then Union Education Minister, Mr. MC Chagla took upon

himself the responsibility to reduce the AMU to a department of the Ministry of Education. The erstwhile Vice-Chancellor of AMU, Nawab Ali Yavar Jung could not resist him. This was the beginning of a process to undermine the status of the university as a centre of high academic excellence. Luckily, the present incumbent, Lt. Gen. Zameer Uddin Shah had done a yeoman's job in restoring the past glory. He asked the IOS to document information it gathered in various areas of study, particularly riots and human rights. Calling for selection of target areas, he suggested that the detailed

young boys were denied jobs by a diamond business house in Mumbai recently, he concluded.

The chairman of IOS, Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam held that in honouring Mr. A G Noorani, the institute was honouring the finest of values of humanity. These values were held sacred by our religions, faiths and the Constitution which entrusted us with the task of building a humane society. He said that Mr. A G Noorani's achievements as an advocate, his body of writings as a scholar and his faith in the Indian Constitution were indeed inspiring everyone. "For our young nation, we need role models who stood for harmony and represented the diversity of our great country", he remarked. Today, there were innumerable challenges we faced as a nation. We were witnessing tyranny in the process of democracy. Our nation today stood divided between the super rich and the

super poor. He opined that there was discord in our society and it was growing. He concluded by saying that as a think-tank, IOS was constantly striving to build bridges between academics, intellectuals, organisations, NGOs and the activists.

In his welcome address, the Secretary General of IOS, Prof. Z M Khan remarked that Mr. Noorani was a well-known figure in academic and intellectual circles. He was known nationally and acclaimed internationally. His comments on and analyses of issues were of high order. He said that the IOS was modestly contributing to the study of the plight of the have-nots and the marginalised sections of society. He explained that it



Justice A.M. Ahmadi presenting the cheque to Mr. A.G. Noorani

studies should be undertaken by focusing on the states like Assam, Maharashtra, Telegana, Andhra Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir etc.

Referring to riots he said that they took place first in the minds of people. He observed that the commissions of inquiry set up to probe the circumstances leading to riots, had conclusively found that they were aided, abetted and organised by the RSS and its organisations like Bajrang Dal and BJP. Laying special stress on school-level education, he said that the lack of education among Muslims continued to be a problem area. Education, he noted, was essential for securing jobs as also for setting up good business. That discrimination against Muslims was growing could be gauged from the fact that two Muslim

was an effort to come closer to the people.

Earlier, the function began with the recitation of a verse from the Holy Quran by Hafiz Athar Hussain Nadwi. While the citation was read out by Mr. S M Shafiq, the proceedings were conducted by the Prof. of Law, GGSIU and the Assistant Secretary General, IOS, Prof. M. Afzal Wani, Advocate-on-Record, Supreme Court of India, Mr. Mushtaq Ahmad proposed a vote of thanks.

The function was attended by a galaxy of intellectuals, academics, diplomats, politicians, journalists, bureaucrats and social activists. These included former chairman of National Commission for Minorities, Prof. Tahir Mahmood, Dr. Asaduddin Owaisi, MP, Mr. Siraj Husain, IAS, Mr. Ahmad Rashid Sherwani, senior journalists, Mr. Siddharth Varadarajan, Mr. Iftekhar Geelani, Mr. Qurban Ali and Dr. Zafrul Islam Khan. Dr. Pervez Miyan, Chairman of Delhi Hagg Committee, and the Ambassador of Egypt to India were also present.

Lecture to Welcome Ramdhan

The Institute of Objective Studies organized a lecture or Dars-e-Quran to welcome the holy month of Ramdhan on June 1, 2015. Maulana Abdullah Tariq, who looks after the affairs related with mosques in India, recited and explained some verses from Surah Furqan. These verses have described the characteristics of believers. He said that these good merits of believers have not been described for the sake description. The purpose is that Muslims of all time must try to adopt them in their lives. These are the

requirements of being a believer and Muslim, he said.

He also said that Ramdhan is the month of worship, of seeking God’s forgiveness and His blessings. So all Muslims need to worship more in this holy month. Day in day out they should seek the forgiveness of God. He made it clear that God is Merciful and Forgiving and He likes that human beings turn to Him and seek His blessings and forgiveness. Sincere Muslims, therefore, must capitalize on this occasion and seek God’s forgiveness for their sins, he said.

Maulana Tariq also emphasized

Maulana Tariq also explained that Ramdhan is the month of charity as well. Believers are those who spend in the way of God. Spending in the way of God has wider implications. It means spending your money on just causes. Believers feed the hungry, help the needy and the poor with their money. They avoid over-spending and lead a balanced life, explained Maulana Tariq. He also said that God is One, the Lord, the Cherisher. He is Raziq, the Giver of Rizq, livelihood. It is He who gives us health and He has commanded us to spend a portion of our wealth on the poor and the needy. He reminded that God rewards us many fold in this holy month.

Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam also spoke on this occasion and explained that spending on the poor and the needy is very important in Islam. This can be done individually as well as collectively. Every society has its quota of poor and the marginalized. Muslims have been obligated by God to help such

people in a meaningful way. The help could be one-time, on short term basis and also on long term basis. Long term strategies for removal of poverty may be more effective and therefore it should be adopted, said Dr. Alam.



Maulana Abdullah Tariq delivering Dars-e-Quran

that along with seeking God’s forgiveness, Muslims are required to do their Ihtesaab, having a critical look on one’s deeds, omissions and commissions, with a view to reforming or correcting them in order to become a better God-fearing Muslim. He explained that *Tauba*, seeking God’s forgiveness is a serious business seeking God’s forgiveness means that you would not repeat the mistakes you committed earlier. He reminded that well God is Most Forgiving but He is also Just and His justice is uncompromising. His punishment for sinners is indeed very harsh. Therefore Muslims must seek His forgiveness with full responsibility and consciousness.

Activities of the IOS Chapters

CHENNAI CHAPTER

Report of IOS Chennai chapter from April 2014 to March 2015.

On 23.05.2014 (Friday) Sham-E-Muzakara was organized by IOS Chennai chapter at New College, Chennai. The meeting commenced with the recitation of few verses from holy Quran by Mr. Moosal Kaleem, a final year B.Com student of New

College. Dr. Major Zahid Husain, coordinator, IOS Chennai chapter welcomed the gathering and Dr. Z. Abdul Lateef, Vice Principal and Professor of Arabic, New college introduced the chief guest Prof. Dr. Jamaluddin, Principal, Waqf board Muslim orphanage college, Vayanadu, Kerala.

He highlighted the importance of learning Arabic and emphasized on knowing the meaning of Quran with translation in respective mother tongues. The meeting attended by Dr. S. Abdul Malik, Principal, New college, faculty members, students from professional institutes and boarders from New college hostel. The meeting ended with a dua by Hafiz. Mohammed Anzar sahab.

On 25.07.2014, an iftaar party was organized at the IOS Chennai chapter. Br.Mushtaq Ahmed, Architect, Prof. Nasar khan, Principal, MEASI school, Dr. S. Abdul Malik, Principal, New college, Br.Abdur Raheem Patel, Dr. Major Zahid Husain, coordinator, IOS Chennai chapter and a host of brothers from various discipline attended the iftaar party.

IOS Chairman Dr. Md. Manzoor Alam's Visit To Chennai from 25 August to 27 August 2014

On 25th Aug.2014, Dr. Md. Manzoor Alam arrived from Bangalore by Jet Airways at 9pm. He was received by Br. Ibnu saud, Founder Member IOS & Dr. Major Zahid Husain, Coordinator, IOS Chennai Chapter at Chennai Airport.

On 26th Aug.2014, Br. Mushtaq Ahmed, Architect called on Dr.Saab at

his hotel and held discussions with him. At about 12.15pm Dr. Saab was accompanied by Br. Ibnu Saud & Dr. Major Zahid to Janab M.M. Hashim Sahib's office in Chennai (Jb Hashim sahib is a leading leather business man, an educationist & a philanthropist). Dr. Saab held discussions with him for two hours about the newly proposed project of IOS followed by Lunch hosted by Janab Hashim Sahib.

At 3.15 pm, Dr. Saab held discussions with Janab Ahmed Meeran Sahib, MD Professional Couriers at his office accompanied by Br, Ibnu Saud, Br Patel & Dr. Major Zahid.

welcomed the gathering & Br. Ibnu Saud translated the speech of Dr. Saab in Tamil. Br. Thambi in charge of IOS Book House, Chennai highlighted about the publications of IOS. It was a very interesting session when Dr. Saab in detail threw light on the history of our country before & after the independence & the role played by our community leaders. Moulavi Khan Baqavi appealed to all Ulamas present in the meeting for unity and coordination among them.

Br. Ibrahim Alam, Director, Qazi Publications, New Delhi also attended the meeting.

Dr. Major Zahid proposed vote of thanks & the meeting ended with DUA by Br. Ibnu Saud followed by Dinner.

On 27th Aug.2014, Dr. Saab was accompanied by Br. Saud, Br.Mustaq & Br. Patel for IOS site

Visit in Chennai (30 kms from IOS Chennai Chapter)

At about 11.45 am Janab A. Md.

Ashraf Sahib, Hon.Secretary, MEASI, an Educationist & a businessman called on Dr. Saab at his hotel accompanied by Dr.Major Zahid and held talks for about 45 minutes regarding the new proposed project of IOS. Br. Mushtaq, Br. Ibnu Saud, Br. Abdur Raheem patel were also present during the discussion.

At about 12.30pm Dr. Saab was taken to IOS Chennai Chapter (IOS Book House) & held discussions with members of the IOS Chennai Chapter. Br. Thambi, In charge of IOS Book House suggested that more IOS publications be made available.

Dr. Saab suggested that all the IOS Publications should be made available to all the Muslim Institutions &



L-R: Mr. Abdur Raheem Patel, Captain Ameer Ali, Dr. M. Manzoor Alam and Mr. Ibnu Saud

Dr. Saab also had an appointment with Janab U.Md. Khaleelullah Sahib, Chairman, Muslim Educational Association of Southern India (MEASI) at New College, but he could not meet Chairman MEASI, as he was indisposed and spoke to Dr. Saab over phone and wished him for the evening program at New College.

After Maghrib salah Dr, Saab had an interaction with the Ulamas, Educationist, Researchers, Media persons & Community Leaders, followed by Question & answer session. Capt. Ameer Ali, President, All India Milli Council, Tamil Nadu Branch presided over the meeting, Br. Abdur Raheem Patel, Finance Secretary, IOS Chennai Chapter

Madrasas. He also suggested that the translation of IOS publications can be made after obtaining the details of reputed translators. During discussion Dr. Saab also suggested that how endowments can be created and also thrown light on the proposed project of 1400 glorious Muslim personalities.

Dr. Saab also suggested that the achievements of IOS can be forwarded to all Muslim Institutions in Tamil Nadu especially to all the elite community of Chennai. Dr. Saab apprised that poor people of our community can be helped through the Govt. schemes. He also felt that before mid 2015, a State level conference should be conducted and all the Muslim economists should be invited.

After the Zoher salah Br. Mushtaq hosted Lunch for Dr. Saab and the members of IOS, Chennai Chapter. Dr. Saab personally called on the father of Mushtaq Ahmed at his house and enquired about his health and made DUA for his speedy recovery. Before leaving for Chennai airport Dr. Saab was taken to Rahmath Pathipagam (an Islamic Book Centre) and held talks with Moulavi Khan Baqavi and Moulavi Yusuf Baqavi in connection with the translation of IOS publication in Tamil.

At about 4.15 pm Dr. Saab left for Chennai Airport enroute Delhi.

Visit of Dr. Abdullah Jiffry on 16.11.2014.

The IOS Chennai chapter organized a meeting on 16.11.2014 at The Preston College, Chennai. The meeting commenced with the qirat by Dr. Major Zahid Husain, coordinator, IOS Chennai chapter. Br. Abdur Raheem Patel welcomed the chief guest. Dr. Abdullah Jiffry highlighted the Healings of medicines of Prophet (PBUH). Prof. M.H. Jawahirullah, M.L.A., Tamilnadu legislative assembly, Janab Inayatullah sahib, Br. Abdur Raheem Patel, Br. Ibnu Saud, Doctors from various medical varsities, educationists and social workers attended the meeting.

Dr. Major Zahid Husain, coordinator, IOS Chennai chapter, proposed the vote of thanks followed by dinner.

On 28.12.2014, Sham-E-Muzakara was held at the New college, Chennai. Dr. Prof. Zafrullah Khan, H.O.D of historical studies, The New College, interacted with the prominent muslim educationist on the history of muslim freedom fighters in the past.

Dr. Major Zahid Husain, coordinator, IOS Chennai chapter, thanked all the guests present. The meeting ended with a dua by Hafiz Sikander sahib, Imam, New college masjid.

On 20.3.2015, Sham-E-Muzakara was held at the premises of Baitul Maal Tamil Nadu & presided over by Jb. Inayatullah sahib. The meeting commenced with recitation of few verses from Holy Quran by Dr. Muzaffaruddin, prof of Urdu, new college. A galaxy of eminent people attended this meeting. It was suggested by Jb. Katib Mohd. Haneef, (a consultant Technologist and a Urdu lover) that the number of Urdu speaking people are less in Chennai & hence Tamil speaking youth can also be roped in for the newly proposed Center for Youth Development. Br. Rahim Patel said that we have been inviting Tamil speaking Muslims & non Muslims for all our centrally & state level organized IOS Chennai chapter programs. In one such International conference organized in Chennai to commemorate 25 yrs of IOS existence, we have even allowed paper presenters in Tamil language also. Many renowned Tamil scholars like Kaviko Abdur Rahman, whose mother tongue is Urdu, is a regular invitee for all our organized programs. The other members present acknowledged the reply given by Br. Abdur Rahim Patel & supplemented by Dr. Major Zahid Husain, Coordinator IOS Chennai chapter. A first time invitee by name Janab Iqbal Basha, (Rtd) IFS, opined that it is high time we should involve youth from all

communities to instill in them the spirit of communal harmony & patriotism. Others suggested that since IOS concentrates more on research oriented activities, it is better if young teachers cum researchers can be motivated to take part in all IOS programs. Br. Malikul Aziz, a journalist, who had attended a program on Media at Bangaluru suggested that programs of such caliber can also be conducted in Chennai by inviting Chairman of IOS Dr. Mohd. Manzoor Alam. Copies of IOS kabarnama distributed to all present. Two copies of the Mutaaliaat, received from IOS Delhi were also presented to Katib Mohd Haneef & Journalist Malikul Aziz sahib. since both are well versed in Urdu & ardent lovers of Urdu. The meeting ended with dua. Others present were: Brothers fayaz husain. Advocate, Madras high Court, Zahirudin (baitul maal Tamil nadu) Dr. Ghulam, Prof. of Commerce, Quaide Millath College, Chennai.

Under the aegis of IOS Chennai chapter, a consultative meeting was held on 14.03.2015 to discuss about the revamping of Anjuman-e-Tarraqi Urdu, a body which is playing a major role in retaining Urdu in govt. aided schools. Janab Enayatullah sahib, Br. Abdur Rahim Patel, Major Zahid Husain, Br. Zahiruddin (secretary, Baitul Mail Tamil Nadu) Br. Haneef, an Engineer by profession attended the meeting.

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The private nature of the Fasting ensures that you have strong faith in God as the One who knows everything. Only if your faith is true and strong, you will not dream of eating or drinking secretly; even in the hottest summer, when your throats dry up with thirst, you will not drink a drop of water; even when you feel faint with hunger, when life itself seems to be ebbing, you will not eat anything.

To do all this, see what firm conviction must you have in that nothing whatsoever can ever be concealed

from your God! How strong must be His fear in your hearts. You will keep your Fast for about 360 hours for one full month only because of your profound belief in the reward and punishment of the Hereafter. Had you the slightest doubt in that you have to meet your Maker, you would not complete such a fast. With doubts in heart, no such resolves can be fulfilled.

In this way does Allah put to the test a Muslim's faith for a full month every year. To the extent you emerge successful from this trial, your faith becomes firmer and deeper. The Fasting is both a trial and a training. If you deposit anything on trust with somebody, you are, as it were, testing his integrity. If he does not abuse your trust, he not only passes his test, but, at the same time, also develops greater strength to bear the burden of greater trusts in future. Similarly, Allah puts your faith to severe test continuously for one month, many long hours a day. If you emerge triumphant from this test, more strength develops in you to refrain from other sins. This is what the Qur'an says:

O believers! Fasting is ordained for you, even as it was ordained for those before you, that you might attain to God-consciousness (al-Baqarah 2: 183).

The Fasting has another characteristic. It makes us obey the injunctions of the Shari'ah with sustained intensity for prolonged periods of time. Salah lasts only a few minutes at a time. Zakah is paid only once a year. Although the time spent on Hajj is long, it may come only once in a lifetime, and for many not at all. In the school of the Fasting, on the other hand, you are trained to obey the Shari'ah of the Prophet Muhammad, blessings and peace be on him, for one full month, every year, day and night.

You have to get up early before dawn for *Suhur*, stop all eating and drinking precisely at a certain time, do certain activities and abstain from certain activities during the day, break your Fast (*Iftar*) in the evening at exactly a

certain time. Then, for a few moments only you relax, before you hurry for long late evening prayers (*Tarawih*).

Every year, for one full month from dawn to sunset and from sunset to dawn, you, like a soldier in an army, continuously live a disciplined life, following certain rules all the time. You are then sent back to continue your normal duties for eleven months so that the training you have received for one month may be reflected in your conduct, and if any deficiency is found it may be made up the next year.

Training of such profound nature cannot be imparted to each individual separately. Like how an army is trained, everyone has to act at the same time at the sound of the bugle so that they may develop the team spirit, learn to act in unison, and assist each other in their task of development. Whatever one person lacks may be made up by another, whatever deficiency remains in him may be compensated by yet another.

The month of Ramadan is earmarked for all Muslims to fast together, to ensure similar results. This measure turns individual 'Ibadah into collective 'Ibadah. Just as the number one, when multiplied by thousands, becomes a formidable number, so the moral and spiritual benefits accruing from the Fasting by one person alone are increased a million fold if a million people fast together.

The month of Ramadan suffuses the whole environment with a spirit of righteousness, virtue and piety. As flowers blossom in spring, so does *tawqa* in Ramadan. Everyone tries extra hard to avoid sin and, if they lapse, they know they can count on the help of their many other brothers who are fasting with them. The desire automatically arises in every heart to do good works, to feed the poor, to clothe the naked, to help those in distress, to participate in any good work being done anywhere, and to prevent evil. Just as plants have their season of flowering, so Ramadan is the

time of year for the growth and flourishing of good and righteousness. For this reason the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, said: Every good deed of a man is granted manifold increase, ten to seven hundred times. But says Allah: Fasting is an exception; it is exclusively for Me, and I reward for it as much as I wish (*Bukhari, Muslim*). All good deeds grow, this shows, in proportion to both the intention of the doer as well as their results, but that there is a limit to their growth. The Fasting, however, has no such limit. In Ramadan, in the season for the flourishing of good and piety, not one but millions of people jointly water this garden of virtue. The more you sincerely perform good deeds in this month and the greater you avail yourselves of its blessings, the more will you radiate their benefits to our other brothers. The more you sustain the impact of the Fasting on your life during the subsequent eleven months, the more will our garden flourish, and flourish without limit. Should its growth become inhibited, the fault must lie with you. You are now probably saying to yourselves: We do observe the Fasting and perform the Prayers but the promised results are nowhere to be seen. One reason for this situation I have explained earlier. After snapping the vital links between various parts of Islam and injecting into it many new things, you cannot expect the same results as from the whole. A second reason is that the way you look at the 'Ibadah has changed. You believe that mere abstention from food and drink, from morning till evening, amounts to 'Ibadah; once you do all these things you have worshipped Allah. Ninety-nine per cent or even more among you are unmindful of the real spirit of 'Ibadah which should permeate all your actions. That is why the acts of 'Ibadah do not produce their full benefit. For everything in Islam depends on intention and understanding.

From *Let Us Be Muslim* by Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi, pp. 183-188.

OPINION

BJP's Misgovernance
by Ishtiyaque Danish

The views expressed in the article do not necessarily reflect the editorial policy of the Newsletter (editor)

The self proclaimed clean BJP is hugely unclean today. Ministers after ministers are being caught red-handed in one or another corrupt activities. Other scandals have also hit the party hard. There is no governance as far as the interests of the common people are concerned. The image of the 'clean party' has indeed nose-dived.

The BJP has adopted a two-pronged policy to hide its all round failure. First, it has resorted to its old strategy of spreading communal poison in the society and, second, it has adopted the policy of launching schemes and programmes with fanfare. The purpose is to divert public attention from the real issues.

The real issues are poverty and illiteracy. The policy of unchecked globalization and economic liberalization has hit the poorest of the poor the hardest. The prices of essential commodities are skyrocketing making it difficult for people to feed their families. Similarly, the cost of medicine has increased manifold and, as a result, people are dying for they cannot purchase them.

Higher education is in a dire strait. Cities and villages need more schools, colleges and universities. In Delhi students who scored 95% cannot find a

seat in science subjects. But the Central Government is more interested in creating trouble for Kejriwal than opening colleges for worried students.

The Modi-led government is living on the moon and has become out of touch with realities on the ground. People need improvement, in basic facilities like in education and health sectors but the Modi government has launched a massive drive for digital India. The drive is aimed at providing opportunities to Ambanis and other capitalists to sell more phones and maximize their wealth. People need money to survive today but the government has launched schemes that would take care of their kith and kin after they die.

Don't think that the Modi Government has misplaced priorities. Their policies are deliberate and well-calculated. BJP is the party of the rich and therefore its government is doing everything that will make them richer. Like the capitalists it thinks that the poor are to be condemned and middle classes are to be constantly fooled. They won the general elections by selling dreams and still seem to be in that very mode. Because they do not have any realistic policy or solution for the problems of common people.

India is a country of extremes. There are super rich and the poorest of the poor. The challenge before the government is how to make globalization humane so the poor do not feel neglected but, on the contrary, feel empowered. But the Modi Government is hardly doing anything to minimize the gap between the rich and the poor. It is only by making globalization friendly to the poor that the government can help its subjects properly. But sadly it has chosen to please the Ambanis which means to adopt policies that will create a favourable environment for the capitalists. Under Modi dispensation the poor is bound to become poor.

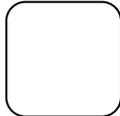
Crores and Crores of people are living below the poverty line. More or less the same number is illiterate. The challenge of removing poverty and illiteracy is indeed immense. It seems as the Modi Government has given up, for it is not doing enough for poor and illiterate India. Ignoring the poor and illiterate is tragic.

People must rise to reverse this inhuman policy.

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