

Editorial

UN Resolutions on Kashmir: Recent Skirmishes in the Camp of Kashmir's Freedom Politics

In recent months the United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) on Kashmir and their effectiveness to resolve the Kashmir problem has once again become a subject of controversy in the freedom camp of Kashmiri politics. Some have openly come out against these resolutions, casting doubts over their effectiveness while at the same time acknowledging their inherent worth. Others have sharply reacted to it, reiterating the established view that UNSCR are the main, if not the only (the other nearest option being Tripartite talks) solution to the Kashmir problem. This is not the first time such skirmishes have been witnessed; let us therefore take a closer look into this matter and assess what it is all about.

It often happens that when a serious issue becomes a part of popular discourse, it gets loaded with all sorts of confusions. Kashmir issue is no exception and it is mainly, if not wholly, because of this fact that such controversies as the one relating to UNSCR keep coming up from time to time. In order to understand such matters - that is, matters that are complex or have acquired complexity, one has to adopt an approach of isolating the threads which though distinct, are constituent parts of the overall argument and therefore mutually interlocked. For the sake of understanding we have to untie the knots and examine the individual threads. We can identify three threads here: one, the Problem itself; two, the Solution of the problem and three, the Approach to the solution.

As far as the problem is concerned, we, as aware and conscious beings with a definite outlook on life, should have a view about it and not just a view but a firm conviction according to the timeless standards of truth and justice. Conviction does not need to be popular; if I see an innocent person murdered, I will regard it as an evil act even if the whole world should disagree and even if at some stage, I also give up my position, the act itself will continue to remain evil because evil is intrinsic to it and does not depend on mine or anyone else's endorsement.

As regards the two other elements, namely, the Solution and the Approach, there is no intrinsic good or evil in these; their goodness or lack thereof depends on their capability to produce results. Thus any solution can be regarded as the best solution if it succeeds in fully resolving the problem, i.e. the problem in question should cease to exist once the solution has been applied to it. There is a practical angle as well: solutions have always to be commensurate with the tools and resources (which includes the capacity to subsequently generate further resources) available in a given situation, at a given point in time.

The third element, namely Approach, is simply the best strategic course of action leading to the solution. We must remember solutions are not brought about instantly by one single action; a host of co-ordinated and highly strategised steps are required for a solution to be ultimately translated into reality. For instance, if there was a problem with a room and the solution to it was emptying the room of all its contents, the approach cannot be removing things in a haphazard manner; one needs to work in a proper, orderly fashion. Removing large items like a bed or table may require the smaller items lying in the way to be removed first. An approach can be regarded as the best if it definitely leads to the solution, minimises costs, maximises results and always presents a realistic roadmap to arriving at the solution. The Solution, and the Approach, both relate to the practical and strategic domain and like any other activity in the practical domain, both must fall within the broad parameters of what is lawful but their worth also depends on their effectiveness and usefulness. The three elements described can be seen as three distinct threads by observing the example below:

Supposing there is a building that has been uninhabited

for a while, is old and unkempt and thus at constant risk of collapse. Additionally, owing to the storage of chemicals and other such substances, gases are seen leaving the building. Local residents have discussed, deliberated and finally concluded that this building poses a serious hazard to the community. In such a scenario, the existence of this building is the problem. It has been further decided, after due deliberation that the best solution is the demolition of the building. The question that now arises is how exactly to go about doing that? What is the precise approach that will lead to the solution because depending on the tools and resources available, there may be more than one possible approach. If the locals have access to huge machinery, they may choose to bring down the building by dynamiting it. That will require some technology but it will be short and decisive: a single blast and the problem is resolved. But if the people of the locality are not as resourceful, they will have to search alternate ways which may be far more tiresome and time-consuming as well as require a greater resolve, hard work, constant effort, and steadfastness. This is the decisive moment at which people must decide if they wish to proceed with the demolition of the building along with all the costs, or if the better option may be to rethink the issue and consider other alternative solutions to resolve the problem. In the life of communities and nations, this is not a one-among-many decision, it is the decision. It involves a trade-off with consequences that span generations. While rethinking in itself is completely legitimate, if such a decision buys some ease and comfort for people at the cost of compromising the safety and security of future generations, it would be nothing short of a criminal act, based either on short-sightedness, vested interests or both.

After this conceptual intro, we can now proceed to specifically discussing Kashmir. Here too, we will attempt to discern the various threads of problem, solution, and approach from the package called the 'Kashmir Issue'.

As regards the problem, legal formulations aside, let us consider the reality of it. That is, let us ask what - in real terms- is it that has been agitating the minds of the Kashmiri people and has been unacceptable to them all along the past six decades. The answer will be that the people of Kashmir are not at ease nor have they felt comfortable in being a constituent part of the state of India that emerged in 1947. This situation happened to them in the way that an earthquakes or flood might; they didn't opt for it. Kashmir was brought under Indian control by an armed invasion and over six decades down the line, things have not changed much: India continues to hold on to Kashmir by sheer use of force albeit under a democratic façade. So Kashmir's current political status as a constituent part of India is the problem.

Now, what is the solution. Simple: changing the political status so that Kashmir no longer remains a part of India - in other words, to end India's sovereignty over Kashmir. If this is done, the problem will cease to exist.

After identifying the problem and stating the solution, the next task is how to go about it. What is the approach that will lead to the solution? It is at this stage that the topic of UNSCR comes in. UNSCR, we must bear in mind, are not the solution per se, they provide a method and means to the solution. It is relevant to note here that UNSCR are only indirectly related to Kashmir; their direct relationship is to the then newly-emerged domains of India and Pakistan and the state of war that existed between the two. These resolutions originated not in response to a plea by the then princely state of Jammu & Kashmir calling for UN intervention in response to invasion, rather it was in response to India's complaint that its territory had been invaded by Pakistan and thus

the UN should intervene. To India's utter shock and frustration, the UN did not follow India's wishful thinking of Kashmir being an integral part of India like Bihar but instead proposed a plebiscite that would ascertain whether the people of Kashmir wished to accede to India or Pakistan. The binary choice was owing to the particular context: the UN, to put it simply, asked India and Pakistan not to fight over Kashmir because it was, as a matter of fact neither India nor Pakistan's land but a sovereign political entity whose people were entitled to decide such a matter, following the demise of the Dogra Empire. Thus by sheer luck, Kashmiris, by being granted an opportunity to vote on their political future, had access to a resource which is not easily available otherwise, and would require much hard work and struggle. Going back to the earlier example of the hazardous building, this was like having access to the big dynamite machinery to swiftly solve the problem except this time, something unfortunate happens: the enemies of the community create road blocks in the way of the machinery therefore making it impossible to reach the site. This imposed a new task upon the locals; exerting all their effort into removing the blockade. At this point crops up the previous vital question of whether to continue with their efforts to remove the blockade or search instead for a new approach to bring about the demolition of the building. This precisely is the analogy: the UN not only passed the resolutions, it went ahead with their implementation until impediments were thrown in its way, chiefly by India in collusion with its proxies in Kashmir, with the result that a resource that we were luckily granted access to remains, effectively, unavailable to us. The critical question now is whether to strive for its availability or look for another resource. The relevance and legitimacy of this question increases with each passing day. It may be recalled that back in 2004 the then president of Pakistan, Pervez Musharraf made some similar controversial statements about UNSCR and plebiscite, to which I immediately commented and I reproduce it here: "Plebiscite, it should be noted, is not part of the Pakistan's stand on Kashmir; it has been and still is for most of the supporters of Kashmir cause and for Pakistan as well, a preferred tool and a practical mechanism for the solution of this issue. It is not part of our conviction on what the dispute of Kashmir is; the core of that conviction is that India's presence in, and sovereignty over, Kashmir is completely illegitimate, and must be ended. Since it is not a matter of belief or conviction where the value is intrinsic, we have to look for the value of plebiscite in its capacity to deliver the results, its ability to unlock the issue and set the ball rolling. If it fails in that, it gets devalued, I am afraid." Eight years down the line, talk of a solution has become even more urgent and we must remember this urgency will go on increasing as the problem continues to fester. People cannot live with problems forever, least of all a problem so central to their lives as the Kashmir problem. The voices for rethinking will definitely arise and should do, but what is absolutely essential is a solid sense of responsibility and commitment on both sides - the proponents and opponents - of new solutions and approaches.

We can safely assume that within the freedom camp there are groups who will articulate new solutions and strategies and those who will oppose it and insist on the classical paradigm, i.e. UNSCR. Those who articulate new ideas should do so after due homework and with a great sense of responsibility. It is not enough to offer a new way of coming out of a difficult situation; what is equally important, if not more, is a clear guarantee that this new solution leads to the proper destination. That is, the new solution won't only change the situation for

The Guidance

“The way” is other than “the straight path”. There may be various and different ways taken by various chosen servants proceeding on the way of worship and submission; but “the straight path” is only one, as Allāh points to it in these words: Indeed, there has come to you a light and a clear Book from Allāh; with it Allāh guides him who follows His pleasure into the ways of safety and brings them out of utter darkness into light by His permission and guides them to the straight path (5:15-16). See, how the verse refers to “the ways” (in plural), and to “the straight path” (in singular). Now, there may be two explanations for it. Either “the straight path” is the same thing as “the ways”, or “the ways” on going further join together and then merge into the straight path.

The Straight Path, the Sirat-i-mustaqim

We continue with the translation and commentary of sura Al-Fatiha. In this issue verses 6-7 are taken up, and this will continue in the next issue.

Guide us to the straight path (6), the path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours, not of those inflicted by Thy wrath, nor of those who have gone astray (7).

Al-Fatiha (The Opening), Verses 1-7

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Translation: In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Translation: All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.

الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Translation: The Beneficent the Merciful.

مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

Translation: The Master of the Day of Judgment.

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

Translation: Thee do we worship and Thee do we beseech for help.

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

Translation: Guide us to the straight path.

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ

غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

Translation: The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours, not of those inflicted by Thy wrath, nor of those gone astray.

Commentary

QUR ‘AN: Guide us to the straight path . . . nor of those who have gone astray: The meaning of “al-hidāyah” (guidance, to guide) may easily be understood, if we consider first the significance of the “path”. “as-Sirāt” (path) is synonymous with at-tarīq and as-sabīl. In these verses, Allāh has commended the path that it is straight and that it is the path taken by those upon whom Allāh has bestowed His bounties and favours. It is this path guidance to which has been asked for. And it is the ultimate goal of the worship: The servant prays to his Lord that his worship, clean from all impurities, be performed in this path.

Allāh has mentioned in His Book that He has laid down a path for man, nay, for all the creation, a path upon which they are proceeding. He says: O man! surely thou art striving to thy Lord, a hard striving, until thou art to meet Him (84:6); . . . and to Him is the ultimate resort (64:3); . . . now surely to Allāh do all affairs eventually come (42:53). There are many such verses, showing that all are proceeding on a prescribed road and that their destination is Allāh.

So far as the way is concerned, Allāh has said that there are two ways, not one: Did I not enjoin on you, O children of Adam! that you should not worship the Satan? Surely he is your open enemy. And that you should worship Me; this is the straight path (30:60-61). So, there is a straight path, and also there is another path. Again He has said: . . . then verily I am near; I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he calls on Me, so they should answer My call and believe in Me, that they may walk in the right way (2:186); Call upon Me, I will answer you. Verily, those who are arrogant to My worship shall soon enter hell, disgraced (40:60). Obviously, Allāh is near to His servants, and the nearer path to Him is that of worship and prayer. Compare it with description of those who do not believe in Him: . . . these shall be called to from a far-off place (41:44). Obviously, the station of unbelievers is far-off place.

There are thus two ways to Allāh, a near one - the way of the believers - and a distant one, that of the others. It is the first difference between the ways.

Second difference: Surely (as for) those who reject Our signs and turn away from them haughtily, the doors of heaven shall not be opened for them (7:40). What is the function of a door? To let authorized people pass through it and bar the entry to unauthorized ones. The verse shows that there is a passage from the lower level to the upper heights. On the other hand, Allāh says: . . .

and to whomsoever My wrath descends he shall perish indeed (20:81). The word translated here as “shall perish” literally means “shall fall down”. Therefore, there is another passage coming for the upper heights to the lower level. Also He says: . . . and whoever adopts unbelief instead of faith, he indeed has gone astray from (i.e., has lost) the right way (2: 108). Allāh uses the term “polytheism” for “going astray”.

Accordingly, people are divided into three categories: First, those who proceed to the upper heights - those who believe in the signs of Allāh and are not arrogant to His worship. Second, those who fall down to the lower levels - they are those upon whom the wrath of Allāh has descended. Third, those who have gone astray from the right path; they are lost, wandering hither and thither. The last verse under discussion points to these three categories: “the path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours, not of those inflicted by Thy wrath, nor of those gone astray.”

Obviously, “the straight path” is separate from the last two paths. It is the path of the believers who are not arrogant. At the same time, the following verse shows that the straight path itself may be divided in various “traffic lanes”, ways or branches: . . . Allāh will exalt those of you who believe, and those who are given knowledge, in high degrees . . . (58 :11). This statement needs some elaboration:

Every straying is polytheism and vice versa, as may be inferred from the words of Allāh: . . . and whoever adopts unbelief instead of faith, he indeed has gone astray from the right way (2:108). The same is the theme of the verse: Did not I enjoin on you, O children of Adam! that you should not worship the Satan? Surely he is your open enemy. And that you should worship Me; this is the straight path. And certainly he has led astray a great multitude from among you (36:60 - 62). Likewise, the Qur’ān counts polytheism as injustice and vice versa, as may be seen in the words which the Satan shall utter after the judgment will be delivered against him and his followers: . . . surely I disbelieved in your associating me with Allāh, before; surely it is the unjust that shall have the painful punishment (14:22). Then it counts injustice as straying: Those who believe and do not mix up their faith with injustice, those are they who shall have the security and they are those who shall be guided aright (6:82). It should be noted that they shall be guided aright and shall have security against straying or its resulting punishment only if they do not mix their faith with injustice and inequity.

It is clear from looking at these verses together that going stray, polytheism and inequity all have the same effect; all three are adjunct to each other. That is why it is said that each of them is identifiable by the other two. For all practical purposes the three are one and the same, although they may be different in their literal meaning.

The straight path, then, is different from that of those who have gone astray; it is a path which is far away from polytheism and injustice. There can be no straying in this path - neither in hidden ideas and beliefs (for example, the disbelief or the thoughts disapproved by Allāh) ; nor in open actions or omissions (like committing a sin or omitting a good deed). It is the true monotheism in belief and in deeds. And what is there after the truth but error? The above-mentioned verse 6:82, fits on it completely. That verse guarantees security in the way and promises perfect guidance. The promise is inferred from the fact that the original word translated as “guided aright” is noun-agent, and the grammarians say that such a noun is really made for future. This is one feature of the straight path.

Allāh has identified those bestowed with divine favours, in the verse: And whoever obeys Allāh and the Apostle, these are with those upon whom Allāh has bestowed favours from among the prophets and the truthful and the martyrs and the righteous ones; and excellent are these as companions (4:69). The belief and the obedience have been explained shortly before it in these words: But no! by your Lord! they do not believe (in reality) until they make you a judge of that which has become a matter of disagreement among them, and then they do not find straitness in their hearts as to what you have decided and submit with entire submission. And if We had prescribed

for them: Kill yourselves or go forth from your homes, they would not have done it except a few of them; and if they had done what they were admonished, it would have certainly been better for them and most efficacious in strengthening (them) (4:65-66) . Those who truly believe are really strong in their servitude and submission, in words and in deeds; in appearance and in secret. Yet such perfect believers shall be placed in a rank behind those upon whom Allāh has bestowed favours; that is why Allāh has said, “these are with those . . .” and not, ‘among those’. They shall be with them, but not of them. It is further strengthened by the last sentence, “and excellent are these as companions”. Companions are other than the self.

There is another, somewhat similar, verse in fifty-seventh chapter: and (as for) those who believe in Allāh and His apostles, these it is that are the truthful and the martyrs with their Lord; they shall have their reward and their light . . . (57:19). The believers, thus, shall be included in the ranks of the martyrs and the truthful - in the life hereafter. The fact that it will happen in the next world is inferred from the words, “with their Lord”, and “they shall have their reward”.

Those bestowed with divine favours who are the people of the straight path - with whose relationship the straight path is identified - have greater prestige and higher rank than these believers who have cleansed their beliefs and actions from straying, polytheism and injustice. Pondering on these verses together, one feels sure that this group of the believers (with this quality) still continues; it has not come to its end. Had this group completed its term, it would have been counted among (and not, “with”) those bestowed with favours; these believers would have gone up and instead of being with those bestowed with favours, would have become part of them. They probably are among those who have been given knowledge from Allāh, as He says: Allāh will exalt those of you who believe, and those who are given knowledge, in high degrees (58:11).

The people of the straight path are bestowed with excellent bounties that are more precious than that of the complete faith and perfect belief. This is the second feature of the straight path.

Allāh repeatedly mentions as-sirāt (path) and as-sabīl (way) in the Qur’ān; but He has never attributed to Himself except one straight path; although He attributes several ways to Himself. And (as for) those who strive hard for Us. We will most certainly guide them onto Our ways (29:69).

Likewise, He has never ascribed “the straight path” to any of his servants, the only exception being this verse under discussion which ascribes it to those who are bestowed with divine favours; but He frequently attributes “the way” to one or the other of His chosen servants: Say: “This is my way; I invite you unto Allāh; with clear sight (are) I and he who follows me” (12:108); . . . and follow the way of him who turns to Me (31:15); . . . the way of the believers . . . (4:115). It is an indication that “the way” is other than “the straight path”. There may be various and different ways taken by various chosen servants proceeding on the way of worship and submission; but “the straight path” is only one, as Allāh points to it in these words: Indeed, there has come to you a light and a clear Book from Allāh; with it Allāh guides him who follows His pleasure into the ways of safety and brings them out of utter darkness into light by His permission and guides them to the straight path (5:15-16). See, how the verse refers to “the ways” (in plural), and to “the straight path” (in singular). Now, there may be two explanations for it. Either “the straight path” is the same thing as “the ways”, or “the ways” on going further join together and then merge into the straight path.

There is another difference between the straight path and the way. Allāh says: And most of them do not believe in Allāh without associating others (with Him) (12:106). Note how the believers are said to associate others with Allāh. It shows that some sort of polytheism (that is, straying) may co-exist with belief (and the belief is a “way”); in other words the way may co-exist with polytheism. But the straight path cannot do so because it is not the path of those who have gone astray.

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Every path and philosophy of life is based on a belief, outlook, and value system vis-a-vis being or on an explanation and analysis of the world. The kind of conception that a school of thought presents of the world and of being, the manner in which it contemplates it, is considered the intellectual foundation and support of that school. This foundation and support is termed the world view. All religions, customs, schools of thought, and social philosophies rest on a world view. A school's aims, methods, musts and must nots all result necessarily from its world view.

Levels and Degrees of Tauhid

Tauhid has levels and degrees, as does its opposite, shirk. Until one has traversed all the levels of tauhid, one is not a true muwahhid(monotheist).

(Tauhid is a belief, an 'aqeedah' and as such belongs to the class of knowledge, and, at the same time, Tauhid is an eternal movement towards Allah(SWT), which the author calls Tauhid in practice and belongs to the class of being and becoming. In this issue, levels and degrees of theoretical Tauhid are discussed with reference to Essence, Attributes, and Acts of Allah(SWT), and in the next issue Tauhid in practice will be taken up focusing on worship ----- editor)

Essence

Tauhid as regards the Essence means to know the Essence of the God in its unity and uniqueness. The first knowledge anyone has of the Essence of God is of His self-sufficiency. This means that He is the Essence that stands in need of no other being in any respect. In the language of the Qur'an, He is the Self-sufficient. All need Him and receive help from Him, but He is free of need: "O people! You are those in need of God, and God is the Self-sufficient, the Praiseworthy" (35: 15). In the language of the hukama', He is the necessary Being.

They also ascribe to Him priority, which refers to His role as Principle, source, and Creator. He is the Principle and Creator of other beings, which are all from Him, but He is from nothing. In the language of the hukama, He is the Primal Cause. This is the first knowledge and first conception anyone has of God. That is, whoever thinks about God, whether in affirmation or denial, belief or disbelief, has such a conception in mind: He asks himself, "Is there a Reality that is dependent upon no other reality, but upon Whom all realities depend, through Whose will all realities have come into being, and Who has not Himself come into being through any other principle?"

Tauhid as regards the Essence implies this Reality does not admit duality or multiplicity, has no likeness: "There is nothing like Him" (42: 11). There is no other being at His level of existence: "And there is none comparable to Him" (112:4). That a being should be considered an individual member of a species, as for instance that Hasan should be considered an individual member of the human species, such that the existence of other members of this species may automatically be inferred, is among the characteristics of creatures and contingent beings. The Essence of the Necessary Being is above such implications and thus free from them.

Because the Necessary Being is single, the universe is necessarily single in respect to its principle and source and in respect to its point of return and end: The universe neither arises from numerous principles nor reverts to numerous principles. It arises from one Principle, one Reality: "Say, God is the Creator of all things"(13:16). It returns to that same Principle, that same Reality: "Behold, all affairs course to God" (42:53).

The relation of God and the world is a relation of Creator and created, that is, a relation of creative cause and effect, not a relation such as that of light to the lamp or that of man's consciousness to man. God is not separate from the world. He is with all things, but the things are not with Him: "He is with you wherever you may be"(57:4). But that God is not separate from the world does not imply that He is like light to the lamp or consciousness to the body. If this were so, God would be an effect of the world and not the world the effect of God, as light is an effect of the lamp, not the lamp the effect of the light. Likewise, that God is not separate from the world and man does not imply that God, the world, and man all have one mode of being and that they all live and move with one will and one spirit. All these are attributes of the created, the contingent. God is above the attributes of created beings. "Glory to your Lord! The Lord of Power! [He is free] of what they ascribe to Him" (37: 180).

Attributes

Tauhid as regards the attributes means to perceive and know the Essence of God in its identity with its attributes and the attributes in their identity with one another. Tauhid as regards the Essence means to deny the existence of a second or a likeness, but tauhid as regards the attributes means to deny the existence of any sort of multiplicity and compoundedness in the Essence itself. Although the Essence of God is described by the attributes of perfection -beauty and majesty-it does not have various objective aspects. A differentiation between the Essence and the attributes or between attributes would imply a limitation in being. For a boundless being, just as a second for it cannot be conceived, neither can multiplicity, compoundedness, or differentiation between essence and attributes be conceived.

Tauhid as regards the attributes, like tauhid as regards the Essence, is among those principles of the Islamic sciences and among those most sublime and elevated of human ideas that have been crystallized most especially in the Shi'i school of thought. 'Ali says in the first sermon of the Nahj al-Balagha: "Praise to God, Whom the praise of the speakers does not attain, and Whose blessings the counters do not reckon, and Whose due the strivers do not fulfill, Whom the far-reaching aspirations do not reach, and Whom the plummetings of the sagacious do not attain, of Whom there is no limit to the description, and of Whom there is no qualification." He mentions the limitless attributes of God. A few sentences later, he says: "The perfection of devotion to Him is the rejection of attributes to Him, because any object of attribution bears witness that it is other than the attribute, and any attribute bears witness that it is other than the object of attribution, so whoever ascribes attributes to God (praise Him!) has associated Him, and whoever has associated Him, ... " In this passage 'Ali has both affirmed attributes of God ("to Whom there is no limit to the description") and negated them ("any attribute bears witness"). The attributes by which God is characterized are clearly the boundless attributes to the boundlessness of the Essence, identical to that Essence, and the attributes God is above and free of are the limited attributes distinct

from the Essence and from other attributes. Therefore, taluhid as regards the attributes means perceiving and knowing the unity of the Essence and the attributes of God.

Acts

Tauhid as regards acts means perceiving and knowing that the universe, with all its systems, norms, and causes and effects, is God's act and God's work and arises from His will. Just as the beings of the universe are not independent in essence, all subsisting by Him and dependent on Him, He being in the language of the Qur'an the one Self-subsistent by means of whom the universe subsists, neither are these beings independent in terms of effecting and causality. In consequence, just as God has no partner in essence, neither has He any partner in agency. Every agent and cause gains its reality, its being, its influence and agency from Him; every agent subsists by Him. All powers and all strength are by Him: "Whatever God intend, and there is no strength except by Him-no power and no strength except by God."

Man, like all other beings, has a causal role in and effect on his actions. He is indeed more influential in shaping his own destiny than are the others, but he is by no means a fully empowered being, one left to his own devices. "I stand and sit by God's power and strength".

Belief in complete empowerment of a being, human or otherwise, by way of assignation, entails belief that that being is a partner with God in independence of agency, and independence of agency further entails independence in essence, which is inimical to tauhid as regards the Essence, not to speak of tauhid as regards acts. "Praise to God, Who does not take a wife and has no son, and with Whom there is no partner in rule, and Who has no supporter from inability, so magnify Him."

Is theoretical tauhid, that is, to know God in His unity of essence, unity of essence and attributes, and unity of agency, possible? If it is possible, does such knowledge contribute to human happiness or is it superfluous? I have discussed the possibility or impossibility of such knowledge in Usul-i Falsafa va Ravish-i Ri'alism (Principles of Philosophy and the Method of Realism), but how we envision it depends on how we understand man and his happiness. The tide of materialistic thought about man and being has led even believers in God to conceive of questions of theology as useless and vain, as a kind of abstractionism and flight from reality. But a Muslim who views the reality of man as not just the corporeal reality, who views the basic reality of man as the reality of his sipirit, whose substance is the substance of knowledge, sanctity, and purity, well understands that so-called theoretical tauhid (the three levels I have described), in addition to being the foundation of tauhid in practice, is itself in its essence the highest perfection of the soul. It truly elevates man to God and grants him perfection. "To Him ascends the good word, and He exalts the righteous deed" (35: 10). Man's humanity is dependent upon his knowledge of God. Man's knowledge is not separate from man; it is the most basic and dearest part of his existence. To whatever extent man attains knowledge of being, the system of being, and the source and principle of being, he has realized half his substance, which is knowledge, science, gnosis.

Next Issue: Tauhid in practice as it relates to realm of being and becoming

Editorial

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the better but will also resolve the problem underlying the present state of agony. It will be purely selfish if new solutions are offered only with the view of changing the current situation and bringing about so-called peace without fully addressing the core problem and ensuring that it is justly resolved. We call it selfish because such solutions only serve to complicate the problem and would simply transfer the burden onto our future generations, leaving them with a Kashmir Problem that is many times more complicated. The onus of explaining to people how a new solution, a new approach not only works (as opposed to the classical ones which are considered not to have worked) but also how it resolves the underlying problem, lies squarely with the proponents of new solutions. That is where the responsibility factor comes in.

Those opposing the new solutions have their own burden of responsibility: they cannot oppose new voices purely for the sake of taking the moral high ground and/or playing to their respective galleries; they will need to come up with a convincing argument and realistic explanation of how the classical solutions and approaches can be made to work. The onus on them, though different, is no less heavy: if their solutions are trusted to solve the underlying problem, they in the first place, will need to get their own minds clear about how these solutions will be made to actually work and then make a credible case. Such a case should clearly reflect their concern for the people's sufferings and their understanding of the political realities inside and outside Kashmir. Neither adherence to old solutions and approaches nor offering new ones is intrinsically wrong as long as their advocates, first, understand the merits and strategic wisdom of their respective approaches, and then own up the responsibility of clearly arguing them out before the public at large.

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Neighbours

IB's communal mindset exposed*

By: Shahnawaz Alam, & Rajiv Yadav

Lucknow: People from across Uttar Pradesh, who assembled here on 20 June at the People's Court organized by U.P. PUCL on the issue of intelligence agencies and terrorism, expressed their views and bitter experience. People who were harassed and tortured in the name of terror narrated their experience as to how women and children have been mentally tortured or suffer from mental trauma. Apart from this representatives and activists of human rights organizations discussed the issue in detail.

Shaukat Ali of Pratapgarh narrated his side of the story. He said that from 15 August 2008 the ATS and other intelligence agencies are continuously trying to frame him. Intelligence agencies are trying to fabricate evidence against him. Shaukat spoke about the letter he received in the name of Lashkare-e-Toiba wherein it was written that he has been made "area commander of Lashkar". "I informed the DM and SP about this fake letter and asked them to enquire about it but so far no inquiry has been made. Instead, people from the ATS threatened me as to why I reported this letter to the district administration," said Shaukat adding that he apprehends that ATS and intelligence agencies may frame him on false charges in the days to come.

Mohammad Shadab alias "Mr Bhai" from Azamgarh, one of whose sons (Dr Shahnawaz) is missing and another (Sajid) is in jail, said that both ATS and intelligence agencies framed his sons. ATS and intelligence agencies have claimed that his son got arms training abroad but the fact is that they never went abroad, he stressed. "For so many years I have been asking the government to probe the claims made by these intelligence agencies but so far

nothing has happened. Intelligence agencies are creating trouble for me in one way or the other and the whole of Azamgarh has been named as Atankgarh [terror town]," he said.

Zainab, wife of Basheer, started crying, while narrating the story of her husband who was picked up recently from Bangermau as a "terrorist linked to Indian Mujahiddin". She said that her husband was in hospital at the time of the blast for which he was arrested. She herself was pregnant at the time but she lost her child due to miscarriage as a result of torture by intelligence agencies. How can she accept that her husband is facing terror charges when he was by her side in hospital at that point of time. Ishaq, brother-in-law of Basheer, said that his brother Shakeel was also picked up on false terror charges. "These agencies in the name of investigation are harassing me too, mentally and physically," he said.

Anwar, brother of Kausar, narrated how his brother who lived in Kunda Pratapgarh was held by STF on 9 February 2008 and lodged in Lucknow jail. They asked for Rs one lakh as bribe to let him off but when he failed to pay the bribe, his brother was sent to jail.

Saima, sister of Farhan, who lived in Lucknow and was sentenced for life term on weak evidence, said that they claimed that his brother was to leave shortly for Pakistan to get training there. She said that one day STF people in plainclothes, without informing them, picked up her brother. Later on when LIU [local intelligence unit] came to our house, we came to know that he has been picked up by the STF. She said that her family was fighting a case based on an unknown crime.

Speakers, who had come from various places, questioned

the very existence of "Indian Mujahideen". They said it is a creation of the intelligence agencies and on its pretext innocent Muslim youth are being arrested on false and fabricated terror charges. Activists demanded a white paper on "Indian Mujaheedeen" by the government because at times the government said that Indian Mujaheedeen is an organisation of SIMI, at others it claimed that it is linked to Lashkar or ISI. SR Darapuri (IPS retd), a former inspector general of Police and vice president of PUCL, said that the way intelligence agency operate shows that it is not answerable to the government but to Bajrang Dal and Vishwa Hindu Parishad.

Prof. Rooprekha Verma, former vice chancellor of Lucknow University, said that the intelligence agencies are engaged in projecting a bad image of the Muslims for quite long and this gets further magnified through the media.

Advocate Shoaib raised the issue of torture and harassment of innocent Muslims in jails. Another activist, Tahira Hasan, asked the people to protest against the communal mindset of our intelligence agencies.

President of Shramjiwi Journalist Union, Siddarth Kalhans, criticised the role of the media by saying that the media without verifying the police version rushes to publish news. As a result, over the years the credibility of the fourth pillar of our democracy has suffered.

*Courtesy: The Milli Gazette, New Delhi. Published Online: Jun 26, 2012, Print Issue: 1-15 July 2012

Healing of the Hearts

On Knowledge

Knowledge is the basis of every sublime state and the culmination of every high station. That is why the Holy Prophet said, 'It is the duty of every Muslim, man and woman, to seek knowledge,' that is, the knowledge of precaution (taqwa) and certainty.

The Holy Prophet said, 'Whoever knows his own self knows his Lord; moreover, you should acquire that knowledge without which no action is correct, and that is sincerity ... We seek refuge with Allah from knowledge which has no benefit', that is, from knowledge which is contrary to actions performed with sincerity.

Know that a small amount of knowledge requires a great deal of action, because knowledge of the Hour requires the person who has such knowledge to act accordingly during his entire life. 'Isa [a] said, 'I saw a stone on which was written, 'Turn me over', so I turned it over. Written on the other side was "Whoever does not act by what he knows will be doomed by seeking what he does not know, and his own knowledge will be turned against him."

Allah revealed to David, 'The least that I shall do to someone with knowledge who does not act by his knowledge is worse than the seventy inner punishments which result in My removing from his heart the sweetness of My remembrance.' There is no way to Allah except via knowledge. And knowledge is the adornment of man in this world and the next, his driver to Paradise, and by means of it he attains Allah's contentment with him.

He who truly knows is the one in whom sound actions, pure supplications, truthfulness and precaution speak out; not his tongue, his debates, his comparisons, assertions or claims. In times other than these, those who sought knowledge were those who had intellect, piety, wisdom, modesty and caution; but nowadays we see that those who seek it do not have any of these qualities. The man of knowledge needs intellect, kindness, compassion, good counsel, forbearance, patience, contentment and generosity; while anyone wishing to learn needs a desire for knowledge, will, devotion (of his time and energy), piety, caution, memory and resolution.

Hazrat Imam Ja'far Sadiq

The Guidance

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Each of these ways has some excellence or some deficiency - but not so the straight path. Each way is a part of the straight path, but is distinguished from the other ways. It may be inferred from the above-mentioned verses as well as from others. For example, Allāh says: And that you worship Me; this is the straight path (36:61); Say: "Surely, (as for) me, my Lord has guided me to the straight path; (to) a most right religion, the faith of Ibrāhim the upright one" (6:161). The worship and the religion are common to all the ways, and they are also "the straight path". The relation of the straight path to the ways of Allāh is that of the soul to the body. The body, during the life, undergoes countless changes, varies from day to day - from infancy to childhood; from adolescence to youth, from middle to old age and to senility. But the soul remains the same, and is always one with body at every stage. Sometimes, the body is inflicted with undesirable effects, which the soul would never accept, if left to itself. But the soul - the creation of Allāh, upon which He created the man - never deteriorates. Yet, in all these states, the body remains one with the soul. Likewise, the ways of Allāh are one with the straight path; but sometimes a way - the way of the believers, of the followers of the Prophet of those who turn towards Allāh or any other way - suffers from some kind of deterioration, although the straight path is immune from all defects and imperfections. You have seen how one of the ways, the belief, sometimes combines with polytheism and straying, but the straight path does not do so. In short, the ways are of various grades -near or distant; safe or unsafe; clean or unclean - but all are in the straight path, or, let us say, are one with the straight path.

Allāh has mentioned this fact, in a parable of truth and falsehood, in these words: He sends down water from the heaven, then the valleys flow according to their measure, and the torrent bears along the swelling foam; and from what they melt in the fire for the sake of (making) ornaments or apparatus arises a scum like it; thus does Allāh compare truth and falsehood; then as for the scum, it passes away as a worthless thing; and as for that which profits the people, it remains in the earth; thus does Allāh set forth parables (13:17). It clearly shows that the hearts and mind differ in their abilities and capacities to receive the divine knowledge and spiritual perfection, although all partake of the same divine sustenance.

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Thanks----- Editor