

A Journey of a *Sufi*
Sufism and Poetry

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Sufi
Sufism and Poetry

S.L.Peeran



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Dedicated to

***My Parents, Grandparents, Fore Bearers all,
My Peers, Sufis, Saints, Seers and Gurus***



*Moin-ul-Vizarath
A.K. Syed Taj Peeran*

Died 23.02.1965

In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent and Merciful

Preface

A Journey of a Sufi is a saga and a tale of a practising Sufi, who has lived in the world like any one but differently, practising the ancient Sufi wisdom. He hails from a Sufi background, whose forebearers hail from the Holy Prophet's family. The book has three sections. The first section is a biography of a Sufi facing the life's turmoil's from the Sufistic point of view. The second section deals with 40 articles on Sufism, and the third section is about selected Sufi poems of the author.

It is hoped that the book will infuse interest in the readers in the study of Sufi classics and ancient literature.

S.L. Peeran

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Part I

My Beginning

Our upbringing and social, domestic environment was centred on certain beliefs, more particularly belief in God, His Prophet and in saints. Though Western and modern life was around us yet it did not made us irreligious nor too much superstitious. The way of life was a mixture of English ways of dressing, eating at the table with fingers in crockery, use of electric stoves and heating water in electricity. There had been use of English language, reading of daily newspaper, occasional and very rare viewing of films in theatres that was after we were fully grown up in a highly restricted manner. The film songs were heard from some quarters or the other. When I was 13 years old the radio made an entry in the house, as it was a prestige symbol in every home; after the demise of my grandparents.

An Arabic elderly teacher was appointed to teach reading of 'Quran e shariff.' As a small child the letters of the alphabet were being rehearsed by my mother or some elderly lady, who would come to teach my sisters. The appointment of an Arabic teacher was the first introduction to the religion.

Although nothing was understood from the holy book yet the sagely figure with a neat turban, long flowing, white beard, with a vast coat and a long, neat kurta with a pocket-watched attach to a chain, one end tagged to the button of the vast coat, had a great sobering effect on the mind. The presence of sagely,

elderly grandparents, their disciplined way of life also had a great impact. The grandparents were regular in prayers, five times a day, punctual in their daily chores. They maintained domestic servants and a driver and an English Rover car of 1948 model. It is still maintained by my cousin as a vintage one. Our grandfather would dress up in neat clean suits, shoes and would go out every day in his car at a particular scheduled time to do some social work to a Muslim orphanage; Central Muslim association; a Hindu old age home known as Ashakta Poshakta Sabha; or to Red Cross Society. He would receive men from all walks of life for counselling or for advice. He would subscribe to journals and magazines like *Readers Digest*, Life and spiritually attuned magazines in Urdu known as *Munadi* from New Delhi, on which was a picture of a well-known mausoleum of a Sufi saint, Hz. Khawaja Nizamuddin Awaliya. The house was two-storeyed with sufficient space in front and backyard; with coconut trees, drumstick and guava trees and 'chakaota' trees in the backyard. My grandmother was a strict lady, who would not allow anyone to cross her portion housing my grandfather's room, her room with an attached bath and toilet, her dining-cum-modest kitchen with an electric stove. In the big central hall were a big dining table with six chairs where my grandfather and father would dine. We would sit to study at this table under the able guidance of our grandfather. But, we here to take our meals in the backyard where a separate kitchen, hall, bath existed in the tiled roof building.

My father was more than 40 years elder to me, while my grandfather had crossed his eightieth year and my grandmother was in her seventies. My father was a calm, withdrawn person, unmindful of the domestic affairs. He would neatly dress up after breakfast and leave for work. Very rarely till near about his retirement, he would come for lunch. He would mostly dress up in a good suit and go to office, and in the evening spend his leisure time in Bowring Institute, a social, cultural club. He would

borrow four or five books including *National Geography* at a time from their library to dig himself in it, when he returned home after we were all in bed.

Our domestic life was very modest. We had very few apparels and clothes patched at various places, at shoulders and back of knickers. We were not provided with pants till we reached high school. Till then we had to wear knickers only. We accepted our fate unmindful of our needs; being satisfied with *roti-dal* for breakfast. On Sundays as a special treat, we would get *khichidi*, coloured rice with *dal* in it with a sprinkle of *ghee*. While in school for lunch, *roti* and *dal* rolled in newspaper; if at home, *sambar* and rice. Sometimes with a pickle or *papad*. At night for dinner, the gravy of a vegetable. Rarely with a small piece of meat of lamb. Non-vegetarian food was considered as a luxury, as my mother could not afford to buy it. The driver or our cousins would buy from the butcher in the city market mutton shop on a loan basis. The entries were made in a pocket-size book. Each time about 200 gms would be purchased for consumption of 10 children and parents. Sometimes, when guest arrived the entire cooked mutton gravy would go to them, leaving us with mere tomato and onion gravy. The grocery was also purchased on a loan basis. So also cloth and other necessities. After the retirement of my father, his pension was reduced to negligible. He bought a Raleigh cycle, to cycle to his favourite joints; he could not afford to travel in city buses, as also they could not take him to the places he desired. He was a totally withdrawn and recluse person, non interfering in the domestic life and in our matters. My mother's responsibility doubled and it became extremely difficult for her to manage the household with the eldest son-in-law and other children beginning to live with her. There was a never-ending arrival of guests. My father was blessed with six sisters and three brothers. Their families and a large number of relatives from my mother's side were always present in the house. My mother at times had to

either sell her silverware or pledge her jewellery meant for her daughters, to meet the untoward expenses.

During my father's service in the government electric department, two of my eldest sisters got married. Five more were in the line, all school and college-going with their expenses and needs. My mother tried her hand making readymade clothes and selling them in the city market. We were ready with our helping hands. When this did not succeed, she started a poultry farm. At first, there was setback but with the help from the poultry department, she set up a good one in a two-tier system. It made good business but due to sudden drought and non-availability of poultry feed, the business came to a grinding halt. Portions of the large house was segregated and let out, including the first floor portion for rentals. After a lapse of time, the tenants became defaulters and two of them a big nuisance. My father had to move the civil court and after a prolong litigation, one cruel tenant ultimately vacated. But, this was a great blow on my father's health. He was diagnosed for carcinoma of the throat. The doctors had split opinion on treatment. The cancer specialist and the ENT advised surgery coupled with radiation and chemotherapy, while a retired radiologist from Christian College advised against surgery. Since he wielded more influence on my father, through my aunty, who was also a cancer patient under his treatment, my father opted for radioation and chemotherapy without going in for surgery. But it had a disastrous effect. The crippling disease won the battle and my father could not fight anymore. He stoically faced it for about three years, calmly, patiently without giving up his cheer and spiritually-elevated mind. Finally he succumbed to it by being bedridden for more than four months, and died on the July 1979, when I was 29 years of age.

My mother faced all the turmoils bravely and stoically. She had to arrange for the marriages of her daughters. All the pension

benefits of my father and the savings were fully drained in performing the marriage of my third sister. She was wedded to my cousin, my mother's sister's son, just arrived from UK after specialization in jute technology. His parents had moved to Karachi after India's partition. The entire family arrived and their to and fro expenses were to be met, besides performing the marriage in the usual Indian grand style. There was nothing left after this wedding. The poultry business also came to a close.

My elder brother had joined engineering course. This sudden change in the financial affairs had affected his studies and there was a break in his education. He took up real estate business and with the income generated, the family expenses was augmented.

In the meanwhile my younger brother graduated and took up employment in a British paint company as a technical representative and his entire salary went to support the family. My brothers helped financially in the weddings of two of my sisters, which was celebrated on the same day. One of our sisters was wedded to a clerk in a nationalized bank, who rose to retire as the Regional Manager of that bank. The other was wedded to my cousin, my mother's younger sister's son who had been selected as an IPS officer and posted to the West Bengal cadre. He rose to the post of Director General of Police.

My youngest uncle, a Lt. Col. in the Indian Army also came to my father's rescue by loaning some amount, which was cleared after my father's demise by disposing of a double-barrel gun inherited by my father. While my father was very sick, my younger sister got married with the help provided by both my brothers. Meanwhile my elder brother completed his engineering course and commenced his own electrical contracts and agro service centres at two small towns near Bangalore. My father could see the betrothal ceremony of my youngest sister to an engineer in a

reputed public centre undertaking, just three days before he breathed his last.

I had not been earning much, first commencing my career in iron business. After its failure and my ill health and consequent hospitalization and recovery, I joined a steel company as a Labour Welfare Officer, having completed a postgraduation course in that field. Later, I joined an industrial law & personnel management consultancy. The salary was very meagre, enough to pay for my conveyance charges. Being dissatisfied with their ways of dealing with labour disputes, their recalcitrant and diabolical ways, I left their company. Meanwhile I graduated in law. After a few months of serious thinking and contemplation, I decided to join law profession. I enrolled as a lawyer on 26 March 1976.

My grandfather inherited a great spiritual heritage and legacy being a descendant of Holy Prophet. The great saint of Baghdad Hz Shaikh Abdul Khader Jilani, is in the lineage. My father, grandfather and all ancestors inherited the saint's spiritual legacy of Qadria order, without any break. About four centuries ago, one direct descendant of the saint, namely Hz. Syed Fathulla, landed from Baghdad at Ankola, Karwar district, Karnataka, and set up a *khankha* (monastery) for spreading Islamic spirituality and the message of Islam. All his sons were eminent and their descendants continued to follow the spiritual path of the Qadria order. One son, Hazreth Syed Kasim, settled in Lakshadweep Island in the Arabian Sea. His descendants continue to work in that order as Sufis till date and have maintained their spiritual links with my father and with me so far. My father is the spiritual preceptor of one Abdul Khader, a direct descendant of Hazreth Syed Kasim, residing in that island.

Abdul Khader passed the legacy of Khilafat to me in the year 2000, while I was in Chennai working as member judicial in the Customs, Excise & Service Tax Tribunal. This is besides the

mantle of Khilafat received from my saint, who had received it from my grandfather and his father.

During the rule of Nawab Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan, my direct ancestor Hazreth Syed Mohiuddin was the Sajjada Nishin, spiritual head of a dargah of Hazreth Syedana Abdul Qader, more popularly known as Hazreth Qader Awaliya, at Kirangoor Koppal, Srirangapatna taluk. This saint Qader Awaliya is the brother of Hazreth Syed Fathaula, who came from Baghdad. The then queen of Mysore was impressed with the spirituality of the saint Hz. Qader Awaliya, and bestowed agricultural lands and dug a 'Kalyani', an open well with open steps as constructed near temples.

Nawab Hyder Ali & Tippu Sultan had taken shelter in the dargah after their defeat in second Mysore war with the Maratas. Later they reestablished their rule. They paid homage to the Darga by increasing the land grants and becoming spiritual disciples of the then Sajjada Nishin Hz Syed Mohiuddin, the grand father of Siraj ul Ulma Syed Shahabuddin, my great grandfather. The office of the Sajjada Nishin was inherited by the eldest son, who is trained in Islamic laws and is a spiritual adept.

After the fall of the rule of Tippu Sultan, his family was interned in Vellore fort. My ancestor, Hz. Syed Mohiuddin, and his family also accompanied the family of Tippu Sultan, being the spiritual precept of the family. Our family record discloses that Hz. Syed Mohiuddin died in his eighties and through his eldest son, Hz. Syed Abdulla, the chain of adepts and precepts was carried on.

Hz. Syed Shahabuddin was born in the year his grandfather, Hz. Syed Mohiuddin, died in the year 1820. Hz. Syed Shahabuddin was brought up under the care of the begums of Tippu Sultan and educated in Vellore and in Madras. He became very proficient in Islamic law, Arabic, Persian and Urdu. He received the title

from the Maharaja of Mysore of 'Siraj ul Ulma' meaning "Sun among the Scholars." He attained name and fame through his scholarship. He became the 'Khalifa' of a prominent saint of Vellore known as "Qutab e Vellore", who was head of Arabic college known as "Madrasa e Lateefia". He had a large following in Mysore state. He also recited the annual 'fateha' on the occasion of the 'Urs' of Tippu Sultan. This legacy of reciting 'fateha' was carried on in our family till 1984 when the then chairman of the Wakf Board discontinued this practice. However the practice of paying homage to Tippu Sultan from the dargah of Hz. Qader Awalija is still being carried on the occasion of the "Urs" of Hz Qader awaliya.

Hz. Moulana Moulvi Syed Shahabuddin died in the year 1905 in Bangalore leaving behind my grandfather, A.K.Syed Taj Peeran, and his stepbrother, Syed Pasha Peer and two stepsisters. My second sister was married to the elder son of Syed Pasha Peer, namely, Syed Hassan Pasha, an Engineer, who migrated to UK with my sister and settled their. My grandfather was a BA graduate and joined Mysore civil service as inspector of schools, and rose to become Revenue Commissioner and Inspector General of Police. He retired honourably with a title bestowed by the Maharaja as "Moin ul Vizarath", meaning Pillar of Ministry. He was nominated to the legislative council for a term after his retirement. He was a social worker and served many institutions till his end. My father was the eldest son. He inherited the office of Sajjada Nishin and that position has passed on to my elder brother, Syed Hidayath Peeran, whose son, Syed Salmaan Peeran, is married to my daughter, Sumaiya.

My father got married to the eldest daughter of a well-known unani practitioner of Madras, who was also bestowed with a title by Viceroy of British India, namely, 'Shifa ul Mulk' Hajee Hakeem Syed Maqdoom Ashraff Saheb. He was also considered as a pious and sagely person.

My family history discloses that from our Prophet's time the spiritual legacy is being carried on in our family. My ancestors have been carrying the work of Sufism from generation to generation. The adepts and precepts are referred in Sufi terminology as 'peers' and they carry the family name of 'Peeran'. We have made our humble efforts in keeping up to the traditions despite the cultural onslaught.

My elder brother, after a few years of carrying on business in the agro service, took up employment in Saudi Arabia and worked there for over 25 years. In his absence, I had to carry on the duties attached to the dargah of Hz. Qader Awaliya. This had been sensed by both my grandfather and my father, and therefore I was repeatedly told to carry on the Sufistic studies and maintain the family traditions. I took up its studies and took interest in learning about Sufism from Sufi masters. I undertook repairs of the dargah and built a wall around the Kalyani. I recommenced the "Urs" of the dargah from 1985 onwards, which is continuing ever since. My brother has taken voluntary retirement from his work and has since taken charge of the dargah, but my work in Sufism is continuing. I continue to participate in the 'Urs' function. I was bestowed with the 'Khilafat' (spiritual mantle) by my spiritual guide, namely, Moulana Moulvi Hazrath Syed Qudrathulla Bokhari Saheb in the year 1986 during the annual "Urs". The said sage also bestowed the Sufi mantle 'Khilafat' to my elder brother as well. He had received the mantle from my grandfather and his father as well in the Qadria order.

My interest in spiritualism was from my young age. I served my grandfather in his last days. I observed and was much impressed with his manners, conduct and his spirituality. I was convinced that there was a world beyond one's self and we need to improve one's self constantly. My father's patience and calmness in facing the turmoils was a constant guide to me. My

Urdu teacher in high school was an eminent Sufi, and I learnt much from my high school days. Our relationship sustained throughout till his passing away. We started an International Sufi Centre, of which he was the first Chairman and I was a Trustee with five other persons.

Till my grandfather's period none of my ancestors took up to any employment and were Sufi adepts and precepts, carrying on the work in Islamic spiritualism and spreading God's word. They totally dedicated their lives to God's ways, unconcerned with worldly matters and affairs. My grandfather was first in the lineage to get Western education along with traditional training in the Sufistic way of life. He gave both Western and traditional education to my father and to my uncles. My father was an electrical engineer and served for a long period in the government electricity department. My first uncle, M. Syed Murshed Peer, graduated in BA from Aligarh University and joined Mysore civil services and retired as Special Secretary and Chief Electoral Officer. My second uncle, Syed Ashraff Peeran, also graduated from the said university and did his law from Madras Law College. He practised law for a considerable time. He became District and Session Judge and was later elevated to high court but died, while he was still in service. My youngest uncle, Syed Peer Pasha, joined the Indian Army and retired as a Lt. Col. in the Punjab Regiment. All my uncles were very jovial, kind, affectionate and loving. My judge uncle was very popular both as a lawyer and as a judge. His sudden passing away within one month of his elevation to the high court was a great shock to his family and all his relatives and friends. His children were still in schools and colleges. However, they succeeded in life and are well placed.

I am the seventh child to my parents being born on 4 March 1950 at Bangalore. I nurtured from my young days under the influence of my parents, grandparents and teachers a passion to

acquire Sufistic knowledge and to follow in the footsteps of my ancestors. As I entered college the study of Urdu, English literature and study of social sciences opened my mind to esoteric sciences. I steadily gathered knowledge in this subject. I started collecting classical books and reading them in my leisure time. I did my level best to live up to the ideals of Sufism of practising truth, honesty, straightforwardness, total reliance on God, and silently accepting the decree of the Lord and not being greedy or over ambitious in charting a career to seek fortune, wealth and worldly fame. During my father's prolonged illness, I started making small pilgrimages to Sufi dargash and sit in deep meditation. I was regular in visiting the mausoleum of the saint, Tawakkal Mastan at Cottonpet, Bangalore. This saint is very popular among Hindus and Muslims. They flock in thousands during his annual fare. They hold the belief that the Saint has the capacity to bless and cure the sick. I found a lot of peace while sitting in meditation in his mausoleum.

I would meet sagely divine persons in Bangalore and elsewhere, and seek their guidance and advice. One such person lived in KGF. He was a very divine person and would give me solace and wise counsel. He had a very rare and uncanny gift in predicting the future happenings although he was uneducated and did not resort to any predictive sciences. He would close his eyes and tilt his head in the direction of his heart, and immediately get the answers to our questions. It was a rare gift. He was very humble to the core. He was totally dedicated to God and immersed in long meditations. He was a recluse and unmarried. He has been my guide for decades, being courteous to a fault. My meetings with him convinced me that there is much truth in ancient scriptures and in the teachings of Sufism.

The divine and Sufi personalities convinced my faith that there is Divine consciousness dwelling in man that guides him to truth, straight paths, learning, knowledge, fairness and justice.

After my father's demise, I visited Ajmer Shariff to pay my homage to Saint Khwaja Garib un Nawaz, and seek his blessings for continuing the adepts and precepts in the family. I prayed for a virtuous, straightforward and clean life besides bestowing me with a virtuous, sincere and pure life partner. While travelling in a train to Ajmer Shariff, I dreamt of the saint and had a conversation with him. I was convinced that he was bestowed with miraculous powers.

After my return from Ajmer Shariff, my army uncle and my mother persuaded me to get married. I insisted on marrying in a Sufi family, who held its beliefs dear to the heart. The girl should not look up to worldly pleasures but should be interested in pursuing my interests. I shunned a grand marriage, including accepting any gifts or even a garland or a kerchief, from my in-laws, friends and relatives. With God's grace my wishes were fulfilled. I was wedded to the eldest daughter of a deeply honest and religious Professor and Principal of a government polytechnic, who ended his career as a Deputy Director of Technical Education. The wedding took place in a mosque without any fanfare. My father-in-law was known for his honesty, trustworthiness, straightforwardness, truthfulness, leading a deeply religious life. His wife was a lady fully given to spiritual way of life. So much so, that my wife was taught at home and not sent to school. My wife was put to religious and spiritual studies. She took the school final exam privately and joined Maharani's College to complete her graduation. She never heard a film song or visited a theatre. Thus, she was to create an atmosphere in my private life of dedication to Sufistic life and to its practices, and my wishes with God's Grace were fulfilled.

After my marriage, I set up my own household by renting a home in a newly sprung up locality behind NIMHANS on Hosur Road near Bangalore Dairy. I did not ever own a radio or

TV as I considered it a great distraction to meditation, spiritual thinking and thoughts. I begot a daughter as my first child to my great joy. I named her as Sumaiya, after the first Muslim martyr in Mecca, martyred by her cruel master for accepting the truth and in accepting the Prophet as the holy master. I was blessed with two sons. I named them after my paternal and maternal grandfathers. Thus commenced my life's second journey.

My younger brother, Syed Sadaqath Peeran, studied in the first batch of the first Muslim college. He was a keen debator participating in several debates and winning laurels. He successfully contested the college student's union elections. His dynamism paid off as he became the governing member of the college management. He served the institution continuously for three decades and ended up as Chairman of the institution. He became the Director of Amanath Cooperative Bank started by the said institution. Due to his continuous social work, the government appointed him as the member of state public commission for a period of five years and he served as member of Wakf Board. He also became a successful businessman besides dedicating his life for social work and for the upliftment of the community. He is a philanthropic person, always caring for several indigent students, always giving a helping hand to many relatives and ever willing to help any one approaching him for help. He always said that my grandfather and my mother were instrumental in his pursuit of his spirited work.

My second sister, Shakira, left in the year 1967 for UK to accompany my brother-in-law, an Engineer by profession. Unfortunately after sometime he became a heart patient and passed away in 1986 leaving behind two young daughters. My sister entered into the civil service of UK. Due to her dedication to her work, she was appointed as Justices of the Peace for the Magistrate Court of Birmingham. She has been carrying on social

work for disabled persons. She also attributes her spirited work to the inspiration drawn from the family values held dear to her heart.

Our family values in the Sufistic way of life have been very strong and the family bonds have been strengthened. The entire family of my cousins, first, second and many distant and far off relatives live in a bond. Many families join us by marriage and friendship. During marriages or festivities or during grief, a wide circle of relatives, friends from various walks of life would come together in a bond, all standing together through thick and thin. This social spirit is found not only among Sufis but also among millions of Indians practising great Indian tradition and spirituality. They humble themselves before the Lord in all humility, sublimity and sincerity, thus bringing peace and amity to mankind.

Legal Profession

In the year 1975, while I was still engaged in the services of industrial law and personnel management consultancy, and gaining considerable experience in the labour management field by visits to hundreds of small, medium and large industries, a sudden break and shock occurred. My father's immediate brother, who had just retired as Special Secretary & Chief Electoral Officer to the Government of Mysore, developed some stomach ailment. I was one of the attendants at the hospital. Initially it was suspected as an ulcer and an operation was performed. As he did not improve, a second operation was suggested to know what was troubling large intestine. It was found to be cancer developing at a galloping speed. My uncle did not recover from the anesthetic effect. He passed away. All our relatives and friends had gathered in our usual traditional way for the last rites. This had a tremendous effect on my mind and thinking. When I resumed work, my mind had turned away from it and from the worldly snares, craftiness and cunningness.

I had been an Enquiry Officer engaged in several domestic enquiries conducted against erring workers for misconduct. One enquiry lasted for six months in a Battery Manufacturing Company, another in a Lamp Manufacturing Company and in a Systems Company. I became fully conversant with the principles of natural justice, and the methodology and procedure to conduct

a domestic enquiry, and to prepare a report of the proceedings. A report is judgmental on the charges levelled, the defence taken, the evidence on record and analysis of the same. I had also gained much experience in a study conducted in major industries which included public industries on the factors outside the factory influencing the minds of the workers *vis a vis* production. Much of the social evils, effect of low payment of wages, employment of labour by management came to light. Our advisors' partisan advice and methods adopted for removal of disgruntled workers and union leaders were observed by me. My visits to hundreds of units only showed that managements wanted advice and guidance to evade the rigours of the labour laws and to know as to how to prevent imposition of employees insurance and provident funds laws. They were keen to avoid payment of employee's benefits, incentives, bonuses and lawful dues.

Since my mind had turned Sufistic, it started revolting against such practices and accompanying advice given by my bosses. I could not contain myself anymore. Although one medium steel industry where I served as Labour Welfare Officer had offered a rosy career, likewise the short-term service in a Battery Manufacturing. Company as Personnel Manager appeared to give a boost to my career, giving a very good fortunate position in my life, but my mind was stilled. I preferred a life of recluse, of a fakir, indigent and in poverty than earn money through wrong, illegal and dubious means or by cunning and crafty ways.

Thus, the trauma of the death of my uncle added to my depression and my mind refused to allow me to work in the leading consultant's office. I had also been attending labor courts and industrial tribunals. The method adopted to defend the industries, factories and business units was dilatory tactics and all such ways to defeat the lawful dues of the workers. There was heavy collusion between the union leaders, consultants and the

managements. In the name of management science, every possible trick and tactics were employed to keep the workers at bay and to get their lawful minimum wages, incentives, bonuses, insurance and provident fund benefits.

The revival of Sufistic philosophy at the time of gathering of the entire large family, at the sickness and passing away of my uncle, put me to serious thinking and questioning the way of life I should lead. I was prepared for all types of ordeals, hurdles and difficulties but my mind and soul could never accept the dubious ways of the world and to make my life luxurious and comfortable at the cost of others. When I resumed work in the consultant's office after the bereavement of my uncle, my bosses chided me for my short absence. The silence on their part to offer condolence and sympathy exposed before me the cruel ways of the world. I was treated like any other factory worker from whom only hard work without any reward and incentives was expected. There was no camaraderie, love, affection, sympathy and good will. My mind refused to be part of these ways and the cruel ways of the world.

The next morning was different was for me. The entire comfort and pleasures of the job evaporated. I was reacting and rubbing shoulders with senior Works and General Managers, Senior Managers, Directors of companies. I was treated as an expert in my field and given attention, but it did not have an iota of influence on my mind. My mind was questioning several aspects of right and wrong ways of the world. The salary paid to me was modest but there was promise for a very high one, equivalent to the one or more taken by any Personnel Manager of any top industry. Like Siddhartha, my mind turned away from the evils of the worldly glory, mirth, comfort and enjoyment.

After I stopped going to the office, my bosses made attempts to get me back to work. All persuasions by my friends

and relatives were useless. My parents were silent observers, without either offering sympathy or encouraging me to join back to work. They understood my plight and mental makeup and thinking. They left me to follow my own untrodden path. My bosses then offered me a very good position, that of Personnel Manager with all the comforts of a car, an independent AC office and such things. But my mind was made up for a life of recluse, detachment, for study and for higher thinking. I had realized in the past three years of my work that the soul would get corroded and mind blocked and we would be straitjacket. We would be tailor fitted to do any specific type of work for life and that would be the end.

I thought of taking up banking service and took the entrance exam. I got the form for civil service exam. But my deep thinking determined a different course of life. I realized that the worldly ways were cruel, wicked and corrupt, and for release and recreation people would consume alcohol or take to pleasure seeking. Thus, my mind said No to doing business or anything connected with it. My mind took me to classical writings like those of Leo Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Mahatma Gandhi, Tagore, philosophic works of Sufi masters like Moulana Rumi, Hafiz, Sa'di, Ibn ul Arabi, and works of saints of India, Arabia, Iraq and elsewhere. Left in deep meditation I would visit saintly mausoleums, meeting fakirs and saints. For six long months, my mind debated as to what I should do in life. My parents were in dire straits. Both my brothers had just stepped into careers. I had bought a two-wheeler on loan for work and for visits to industries. The loan was required to be cleared. Initially the loan was advanced by my good Samaritan aunty, a spiritually elevated soul, by pledging her jewellery, which I was unaware of, till my father disclosed to me that she was a cancer patient and the loan was required to be cleared by releasing the jewels from the bank, where my brother-in-law worked. He had helped in securing the

loan. My friend came to my rescue in arranging the loan from a private financier. Somehow, the loan was cleared.

A chance meeting with my cousin who asked me to prepare a lease deed opened my mind to the thought of entering the legal profession. Although my father and many others were suggesting me to do so, I had hesitated to join it due to the profusion of lawyers. I had taken to professional social work course which also dealt with labour welfare, personnel management and industrial law. When I decided to join the legal profession, I was faced with another ordeal, a big one. There was none to finance me for the enrolment fee, for buying the professional dress, shoes and other accessories. Both my brothers at my mother's insistence shared the enrolment fee, but for professional dress, I could not get any help. The enrolment form was Rs 2 which also I could not afford. A friend who was studying with me and doing combined study got me the enrolment form, but I dared not ask anyone for help. At last, my father, a member of a cooperative society on loan basis purchased cotton cloth from it for stitching a pair of white pants and shirts. Our family tailor stitched it in my home and stitching charges were paid by my mother. But, to get a black coat was still an ordeal. I had a cousin who was elder to me by 16 years and always appeared friendly and social. We would spend hours together in philosophic talks; he loaned me Rs100 to buy the cloth for the black coat. My eldest brother-in-law offered to get it stitched by his tailor. Thus, ended the ordeal of the enrolment. It taught me to be patient, tolerant and bear the ordeals stoically.

Entry into the Legal Profession

Finding a Law Office

Stepping inside the legal profession is like finding a way with broken sails in a vast ocean or like getting lost in a thick jungle.

The Indira Gandhi regime had imposed an emergency in the country and the fundamental rights of the citizens had been suspended. There was grave economic depression with several repressive legislations and ordinances without any legal relief. The banks had been nationalized with increased interest rates on the loans. The government was severe on hoarders' community with increased taxation. There was an atmosphere of severe depression, frustration and unhappiness. There were general strikes and many public industries and companies were getting closed. Labour trouble was the order of the day. The country was unable to contain the inflation. There was a curb on the free flow of money. The wings of the judiciary had been clipped. There was supersession of judges and the legal fraternity was in the doldrums. All these cumulative factors were hurdles for any new entrant to the legal field. The effect of socialism was being felt. I had to meet several advocates to help me join an office to start the nitty-gritties of the legal profession and learn to climb the ladder. One lawyer, who was related to my uncle from my father's sister's side, had a poor practise on the civil side. He discouraged me from joining the civil side or to practice on the criminal side of the law. He took me to several law offices on the taxation side for my initiation, but without any success. Several advocates with several years of practice were reluctant to take any junior advocate for lack of work. The junior advocates were not paid any stipend and they were facing severe hardships. During the time I enrolled, it was near summer vacation for the courts and the result was that I could not get any placement. I was a novice and totally at sea with regard to legal practice and procedure on the civil and criminal side. I was not keen to practise in a high court side as it was an appellate court and there were not encouraging factors for initiates. The trend was to get going on the civil side by serving a lawyer with good briefs for five or 10 years.

With penury facing me, I had to tighten my belt to face the storms. I could not use my two-wheeler, as I had no money for petrol. I would walk all the way to the courts and would sit in some court hall to watch the proceedings or sit in the library to refresh my knowledge on the fundamentals of law. But I could not grasp much nor learn anything on drafting, pleading and conveyancing side without anyone guiding me.

Some of my law college classmates, who had succeeded in finding a lawyer's office, were themselves facing hardships and were discouraging me from continuing in the profession. Some were jealous and not inclined to be friendly. All those like me without a lawyer's office would gather in the library or in the advocate's association lounge for a chitchat with a large number of briefless lawyers of considerable age in their back and experience in life.

I had a classmate in my graduation days, who had completed his law degree and had also done his masters in law. He was from an extremely poor background and indigent circumstances. He had struggled against all odds, stark poverty and deprivations, but extremely intelligent. He was not good looking, was short, thin and dark-complexioned with white shining protruding teeth. He was a mudaliar Tamil-speaking person with command over Kannada and Telugu languages. He did not undergo any apprentice in any lawyer's office. With his own efforts, intelligence, patience and self-study he started his own law office. One day, it occurred to me as if in a dream to approach him to learn the nitty-gritties of law practice. My finding him in his modest office in a small room was a relief from my initial frustration. It was like finding a log for safety by a drowning person. He was very compassionate, kind, sober and his humble temperament and softness made me extremely comfortable. He did not hesitate to teach me the basics of practice and procedure

of civil and criminal courts. He shared his fee received in a bail matter in a moffusil court of Rs.18 which happened after several months of my enrolment. This was my first earning as a lawyer, earned without my efforts.

My association with my friend was short-lived, as he was selected as a law officer in a financial institution, and he gave his office to his friend. My friend advised me to join some good law office to gain expertise as one's experience is counted on the basis of briefs handled by one. While moving with him in the courts, he introduced me to large number of his friends. Some had considerable years of law practice. One such friend was a Tamil Iyer brahmin, who had come down from Delhi with his aged father and sister. His father was a government servant in Delhi. He had worked for a senior lawyer in Delhi and knew Hindi very well. He was very jovial but a chatterbox, highly superstitious and when it came to handling clients, he would become short-tempered and would come down heavily on them. This would create an awkward situation for the clients. His temperamental nature drove away many clients from him. However, he could conduct bank matters with ease.

My relationship with him lasted for about a year. I would go to his house for consultation and accompany him every day to the courts to watch him conduct the cases. My association with him, though brief, was fruitful, in as much as I could gather about the structure, powers and jurisdiction of various courts. I also got acquainted with drafting, pleading and conveyancing. I was able to develop some self-confidence, although pecuniary-wise there was no benefit whatsoever. It was hard times for me and for my family. My court uniforms were getting worn out, so also my shoes. Sometimes, I would be in dire straits without any financial support from any quarter. When this was the case, my father was stricken with throat cancer and my attention was fully diverted.

It was a great shock for the family. In this condition my father had to fight the court cases with his tenants. I supported his litigations by taking him to the court and appealing on his behalf to handle the case early due to his health condition. Finally the case was taken out of turn and my father succeeded in getting the order of eviction, but the tenant succeeded in getting extension of time for vacating the premises from the high court by one year. He vacated a portion of the first floor and fully vacated the premises only after my father's demise.

During my father's illness, I was taking him to the cancer experts and for radiation at the Kidwai Cancer Institute. I was in attendance as much as I could to give him comfort, solace and company. He was at peace, totally surrendered, and silent. Initially he was unwilling to give up his cycling. We insisted that he stop cycling and allow me to take him wherever he desired, on my scooter. During the three years of his illness, I watched his slow deterioration in his health. My mother was totally dedicated to him and served him faithfully with all devotion and care till his end on Saturday, 7 July 1979 at 7.40 am. The last six months of his life were mostly in hospitals as an in-patient.

In the meantime, my mother and my army uncle, who had retired but had been enrolled to serve NCC as Commandant was also taking care of my father and was always by his side. He suggested that my elder brother should get married. My mother sought the hand of her niece, her elder brother's daughter. We engaged a luxury bus and departed to Madras for wedding on 30 July 1978.

After my disassociation with the brahmin lawyer, I was spending my time in the library. It was almost one and half years after my enrolment. I had quite of a large acquaintance among lawyers with considerable years of practice. I was slowly noticed by many lawyers. My surname helped me in getting noticed, as

also on account of my late judge uncle, whose name and fame was still fresh in the memory of large number of lawyers and judges. I was called to the chambers of prominent lawyers. I consulted my mother, who also possessed uncanny powers to suggest as to whether the office of such a lawyer would suit me or not. I placed three names of lawyers before her, while she was in prayers during the night. Next morning, she recognized the names as those of lawyers. She could say with preciseness about their caste, the line of practice and the success they commanded in the field. She disapproved of the names of all of them and gave reasons as to how they were unsuitable to my future prospects. I was amazed at her uncanny powers.

Finally, one day, while I was sitting in the lawyers lounge, the Additional Central Government Counsel arrived, conversing with an elderly advocate, who happened to know me and my grandfather. Looking at me, he enquired from this senior person who I was and in whose office I was an apprentice. The senior person told him who I was and about my difficulty in getting a suitable law office for the last one and half years. The ACGC called me to his side and made enquires about me. He offered to help me get a placement in any law office I desired. I could see a Divine hand in this chance meeting. I met him in the high court chamber and suggested the name of a senior advocate on the labour side, as I had specialization in this line. He spoke to the said counsel who was willing to take me in his office. When I had fully prepared to join his office, I had a chance meeting with a junior advocate colleague, who was quitting the office of a high court advocate, who had a huge practice in the high court and considerable work on the civil side. This person informed me that he was joining a bank as Law Officer and I could take his place to handle all the civil litigation. I informed this fact to the ACGC who liked the suggestion and was more than pleased to hear the name of this high court advocate. The advocate was

dedicated and very hard working. He was about 40 years old but had achieved a meteoric rise. The ACGC spoke to this advocate and he accepted the suggestion to take me in his office to handle civil litigations. My mother also approved of this office. I met him in his chamber on a good day in September 1977. After a formal introduction, he welcomed me to join his office the same day. Thus ended my initial period of turmoil, storms and tempests.

The ACGC was elevated later to the high court bench. He succeeded as Chief Justice and after retirement was appointed as the state's Lokayukta. He passed away due to cancer immediately on his retirement. He earned a name as a gentleman judge, soft-spoken, kind, affectionate and compassionate.

Silver Lining on the Dark Clouds

During my deep despondency and period of crisis and waiting, sudden help and succour came to me as if from the Divine. I had a vision and dream; I saw Hazreth Jesus (peace be on Him), standing on a podium, clad in white, and besides him was a person of same stature and age, similar to him, also clad in white. I was in awe and wonder. I asked Hazreth Isa (Jesus) (Peace be on Him) whether I should convert to Christianity, for which he answered that there was no need for it and I could retain my faith. I asked him to pray for my peace and faith. He told me to be in the company of his companion and got down from the podium and left. As his companion too got down from the podium, I felt informal and calm. I asked the same questions as I had posed to Hazreth Isa (PBUH) (Jesus). He gave the same answer and I asked him to pray from my peace and faith. I asked his name and he answered that his name was Philips. I noted down the name. The dream ended. When I woke up, I heard the call for prayers (Azan) from the nearby mosque.

I made enquires from many Christian friends, as to who Philips was, but none could answer me. However, I heard about him after sometime, which I shall narrate in due course.

One day after this vision and dream, I got a call from my uncle, my father's sister's husband, an aged person, who had retired as Labour Commissioner, to come to his house immediately. When I reached there, I found two persons sitting in front of him. One was introduced to me as the proprietor of a pickle factory and the other one was his son-in-law. The proprietor was an aged person, while his son-in-law was middle aged. His workers had gone on a strike and had sabotaged his production work. He had placed under suspension 10 of his workers and wanted advice from my uncle, who had been an advisor on the labour side after his retirement. My uncle sought my opinion. I gave my advice as best I could. Both of them agreed on my advice and suggestion. They asked me as to whether I could take up the work of holding domestic enquiry in respect of these workers. I agreed to do so. They asked me my fees. I said that I would accept any amount they would fix and pay. They insisted on my mentioning the sum, and with great hesitation, I mentioned a paltry sum. The benign proprietor replied that I did not know how to ask and he knew how to pay. We met several times for consultation. I placed my credentials of having conducted domestic enquires in several industries. He was satisfied and gave me full scope to prepare the chargesheet and proceed with the domestic enquiry. The work went on for a long time. He paid me in all rs 3,000 in instalments of Rs 500 each month. This came as a great relief to me in my distressful days.

One day he asked my advice as to whether he should retain his business or sell it off to the Birlas, who were keen to buy it, as his company was earning good foreign exchange. I told him that I would answer his query provided he told me who was

Philips. He took me to his dining room, where hung the picture of the Last Supper of Hz. Isa (pbuh) (Jesus) and his companions. He told me that he had bought this portrait from Jerusalem. I identified the person in the picture as that of Philips. He told me that it was so. He informed me that Philips was also crucified when it became known that Hz Isa (pbuh) (Jesus) had been resurrected. After hearing this story, I mentioned to him of my dream and I was blessed to have this dream. I advised him that the storm created in the factory would blow over and that he would be able to solve the labour problem and trouble. He informed me that he was a Syrian Christian and he was supporting about a hundred churches. I was convinced by this dream followed by my engagement in the work that we were tools in the hands of destiny and there was Supreme Consciousness, which guided our career and affairs.

I had another dream. I was sleeping in a room, when a door behind me opened and Lord Krishna, as a young boy with a peacock feather on his 'bandana,' almost blue in complexion entered my room. His presence was followed by a luminous light and the room was aglow with it. He turned towards me and said that I was a good person and that he could turn me into a cow and send me to the world where I could help the humanity. He started reciting Sanskrit slokas; I started rising up from the lying posture. I felt a fear that I may be turned into a cow. I started calling for help from my ancestor saint. I fell on my bed with a thud and woke up, with my heart beating fast.

I made enquiries from many of my Hindu friends about the meaning of this dream and the significance of my being turned into a cow. None could interpret the dream. Later, a Christian friend, whom I had placed in the pickle factory as Manager, told me that Lord Krishna was a cowherd and he had a cow known as 'Kamadhenu', which gave so much milk that the entire humanity was fed on it.

After sometime, my uncle again rang up and summoned me urgently, I found two persons sitting before him. One among them was a Managing Director and Proprietor of a Pesticide Company. There was a strike in his factory and production had come to a standstill. He was required to make urgent supplies to the government and the labour trouble had put him in difficulties. I gave the necessary advice in the matter. I went to the factory late in the evening hours and prepared the necessary notices. He paid me a fees of Rs 200, which came as a blessing to me. The Proprietor asked me the same question whether he should dispose of his business. I counselled him patience. I asked whether he worshipped Lord Krishna. He mentioned to me that his ancestors had built a temple for Lord Krishna and he was managing the same. I told him of my dream and that he would not be harmed and that his problem would be solved. It happened that way. He became my first client. My first flight journey was with his Manager to Hyderabad to attend to his work. I was his Advisor till the factory went into liquidation. For some time, they paid me the retainer fee of a small amount of Rs150. Due to financial distress, they could not pay me the retainer, but I continued to give my services for almost a decade till I was selected as Member Judicial and left for Delhi.

These two dreams were quite poignant and were like a premonition and guidance to me. I was to consider the whole humanity as one and that everyone's distress and call for help from the Divine was being answered. One may worship the Divine in whatever form but the help from the Divine is uniform to all, irrespective of the faith they hold. It is love and compassion that prevails over all our difficult circumstances and one should not lose faith. One should retain certainty of faith, and remain patient and pursue one's goals with everlasting goodness, shunning evil and bad ways.

Internship in My Senior's Office

My association with my senior started on a sweet note, but it came to difficulties when my father's illness became intense, and I had to take a break to take care of him. After his demise, my senior attended the funeral and after my sister's wedding in November 1979, I accidentally met him in the high court, where I went to attend my father's tenant's case. Piteously looking at me, he said that now it was all over, meaning the mourning, responsibility of the wedding of my sister, and the tenant's case, and that there was no domestic hurdle. Therefore, I should rejoin his office.

I resumed attending office and continued to work after my wedding. As mentioned earlier one day, he suddenly recruited a raw junior on a recommendation of a Minister, hailing from his home town. He told me in an angry tone that one should leave a senior's office after three years.

It so happened that my veterinarian friend had asked from the rent controller for self-occupancy of his wife's residential accommodation on vacation of their tenant. The minister's PA had filed an application for allotment of that house and had engaged the services of my senior. I introduced my friend to him but he did not take this lightly. He felt that I was trying to influence him in the case. After my friend's request was turned down and he left the office, my senior bawled out that it was time for me to leave his office. It came to me as a jolt. I did not attend the office for the next two weeks. I mulled over the matter and then took a small gift of a wall clock and went to his office to thank him. Initially, he took offence at my leaving the office abruptly and did not accept the gift. After sometime his indignation slowed down. Being a compassionate person he asked me to open the gift wrapper of the box. He liked the quartz clock in the background of a sunrise visible from the back of a forest

trees. He wished me good luck and asked me to give a written report on the status of the pending cases, which I handled. We have maintained till date the cordial relationship. He hosted a party for me and my wife and to all his juniors, when I got the appointment. He spoke affectionately about me to all his juniors. He visited me while I was in Delhi a couple of times even after his elevation as a high court judge. When I left for Delhi, his children were small and studying in Bishop Cotton School. One of his sons has followed in his footsteps to practise law, having completed his law course from National Law School, Bangalore. Now, after his retirement as a Judge, he is practising as a Senior Counsel in the Supreme Court. His eldest son is a Heart Specialist. His only daughter is also a law graduate from NLC Bangalore and is in preparation to become a Solicitor in UK.

When I joined my senior in September 1977, he was elder to me by seven or 10 years. He was considered as a young prosperous and a bright lawyer. He was the son-in-law of a District Judge, who later became Registrar of the High Court. His brother-in-law joined his office to practise law leaving behind a lucrative banking career. He succeeded in the state assembly election and for some time was Minister for Fisheries & Ports. My senior's brothers were advocates at Udipi and Puttur. He had a large clientele from his District. The Land Reforms Act had abolished absent landlords and granted occupancy rights to the tenants. It gave rise to thousands of writ petitions, writ appeals and appeals before the Land Appellate Tribunal. Vijaya Bank belonged to his community and as the Standing Counsel he handled large number of bank suits. He was also Standing Counsel to the Agricultural University, Ware House Corp.

My senior's office also had many house eviction petitions, partition suits, original declaratory suits, probate and succession suits; partnership suits, cases of all kinds under Civil Procedure

Code besides a few sessions' cases. I was made fully in charge of all civil matters of all the civil courts. An honorarium of Rs100 was initially paid to me and later increased to Rs 250 with strict instructions that I shall not deal with fee matters in office cases, but I was at liberty to take independent briefs. My senior guided and assisted me in my private briefs, whenever I approached him in few of my briefs in appellate high court matters for assistance. The honorarium was just enough for my conveyance and miscellaneous expenses. I did not get any pecuniary relief and my misery continued except that I was fully engrossed in legal work and there was no disappointment on this count. But, I felt that I did not come up to my senior's expectations except in few cases where he fully acknowledged my fullest assistance to him in prestigious cases of Vijaya Bank and other cases. The work was a quite routine one.

At one point my senior told me that it was not enough to rush to office and rush back home, but I needed to put my heart and soul in the work. He was bold, courageous and a bull worker and tenaciously argued his matters before the high court. He had a large number of cases to argue every day besides preparing for new ones and also for giving time to the clients. He would start his work by 8.30 am in the morning and go on working till 10 to 11pm in the night including on Saturdays and Sundays. Occasionally, he would host a party in his house inviting several of his colleagues and friends. After I discontinued his office, he took additional space in the same building and his number of juniors increased many folds. His integrity, honesty was unquestionable. He was elected as Chairman of the Bar Counsel and also as a Member of Central Bar Counsel before his elevation as a High Court Judge, which position he occupied with great popularity and success for over seven years.

My senior had great agility of mind, was quick in grasping, had alertness and was given to hard work. He did not while away his time in vain talks, as he was hard-pressed for time. Every moment for him was precious. He was blessed with good health, a loving and dedicated wife and a happy family. He lived near the railway line in Kumara Park in a rented house. As he prospered, he was allotted a big site 50'/80' near BDA complex in RT Nagar. He built a good house, after I left for Delhi many years later, but his office still continues in Jeevan Building in Kumara Park. His fame increased and brought him good high court work. If matter was legally complicated, he would engage the services of senior counsels like S. G. Sunder Swamy or G. Krishnamurthy, then doyens of the Bar. It was extremely difficult for me to match with the pace of the hard work, agility and alertness of my senior. None of the juniors had that capacity. Before I joined his office, he was teaching law in government Law College, but he discontinued it due to heavy work in his office. But I did not find any politically sensitive cases or election matters, constitutional or complicated legal work requiring indepth study, preparation and delving deep in the case law, to prepare preposition of law and argue the legal validity or not of any legal provision. That way my senior was lacking great forensic skills and his knowledge cannot be counted as scholarly and one of deep legal luminary. However this shortcoming was not a handicap or hindrance to him to be among the first-rated high court advocates.

I was afflicted with migraine from my childhood. Several treatments were administered but to no avail, and I had to live with it throughout my life. I did not have the capacity to take up urgent emergent matters and to rush to court for immediate relief. My nerves would give in. I always approached a matter methodically, scientifically and not also in a tearing hurry.

I was consistent in my approach and took things in a measured way, due to health reasons and mental make-up. Thus there was a great contrast between my nature and that of my senior's. It was but natural that I could not give much assistance to his high court work and I had to confine to civil court's work, where matters proceeded at a slower pace.

Building up a Library

When I stepped into the legal profession, my knowledge of law had rusted except for my proficiency in labor laws, industrial laws and personnel management. I did not have a single law book, Association I had to sit in the Bar Assn. library and refresh my knowledge of law. The first and foremost was to learn the practice and procedure of civil law and criminal law. I was penniless to buy even bare Acts and any pieces of legislation. My dear father saw my predicament as I had to walk up all the way to the courts and not having even a penny to share half a cup of coffee, which the Bar Association canteen would supply for 15 paise. From his princely pension of Rs.120 he would pay me a pocket money of Rs.20. I knew that my dear father would not live long enough to see my prosperity. I therefore wanted to preserve his gift in buying books that would give me company, knowledge and be my constant guide.

To begin with I wanted to preserve the memory our family tradition of being fakirs, by buying a tambourine, carried by fakirs to play divine songs. The next three pocket monies were for purchase of D'Souza's, *Drafting, Pleading and Conveyencing*, Mitra's *Interpretation of Statutes and Commercial Dictionary* and Chatterjee's *Interpretation of Statutes*. All were paperback editions priced at Rs 25 and Rs 20. All three books have great value for me. As I write this memoirs, these three books are on my library shelf to always remind me of my father's love and generosity. I preferred to forgo the pleasure of having half a cup of coffee to quench my thirst

but to buy bare Acts and books, first from the pavements near Mysore Bank and Avenue Road. Any small earnings would go to buy these. *The Mulla's Transfer of Property*, then priced at Rs 60 is still on my shelf. These books helped me to gain mastery over these subjects and I gained proficiency when I was teaching these subjects in the law college for a period of eight years and during my law practice. The thirst to buy the complete set and the entire volumes of *All India Reporter* and *Mysore Law Journal* was unquenchable, till a time arrived when I had enough earnings from conveyancing and insurance cases to procure the entire set from a lawyer of more than a decade service, who had joined State Bank of Mysore. He disposed of his library for a sum of Rs. 5,000 I saved every penny forgoing all my pleasures to buy the new set of *Supreme Court Cases; AIR Manual, Quenquential Digest, AIR Digest* of fifty years.

A personal tragedy and error costed me heavily inasmuch as that my veteranian friend begged and borrowed a sum of Rs. 6,000. His pleadings were so persistent that my wife's saving for maternity purpose was given away to him, which he did not return to me, till I left for Delhi. My wife had to go to him to insist that he repay the loan. However the immediate payment of the nursing home's bill was done by disposing of the newly purchased set of books at a discount price and at a great loss. I had purchased old set of books in which I found the translation of Abu Hanifa's "Hidaya" and such priceless textbooks, which I still possess. My passion for acquiring books has not diminished. Though after my selection as a Member of the Tribunal, there was no need of AIR volumes yet I retained them with the hope that I may require it in the future. I took great care of my library. During my service, I collected tax journals. I had to procure 10 wooden shelves to keep these books. My books on Islam and Sufism also increased in number. My wife took great care of the books while transporting them first to Delhi, then to Madras and

then to Bangalore. After I took voluntary retirement, I disposed of the law library but retained books on literature, religion and Sufism.

My second son completed his law graduation and proceeded to UK for his master's course. He desired to do a solicitor's course and settle down there. But fate decided otherwise and he returned to India and resumed law practice. To his great dismay, I had disposed of the law books. I had to move to a private accommodation and the space available there was not enough to keep all the law books. Further, I was under the impression that he would be settling in UK and may not be in need of the law books. I had decided not to practice law and seeing the redundancy of the law library disposed of the same. My son regretted my selling off the books as it is difficult again to build such a library. Now in the present times, the advocates are making use of the electronic library. In any case, I could not have carried the burden of the huge collection of *AIR* and several digests. I retained a few books to cherish my memory.

My thirst for collection for old classics is still not quenched. I encouraged my children to cultivate a habit of reading classics. I am glad that they too have a passion for books. As I am the Founder Trustee of International Sufi Centre and Editor of Sufi World the literary and Sufi classics and Sufi works have been of great assistance to me. I am gaining more and more knowledge. Knowledge is oceanic and increasing at a galloping speed. One's lifetime is not enough to drink even a single cup of knowledge. But it gives satisfaction to the soul and spirit. It nourishes it and gives solace. It is a great diversion from the mundane life. Reading books is the best pastime among all the hobbies, though materially one may not gain much as compared to possession of antiques, paintings and philately, which are more lucrative. But those hobbies may not be mentally enriching and intellectually satisfying.

Marriage and Thereafter

My dear father passed away on 7 July 1979 at 7.40 am as correctly foretold by the Sufi of KGF. After his obsequies, we set to prepare, after sometime, for the wedding of our last sister. During this period sudden communal disturbances rocked our locality due to 'Idgah' ground, which the non-Muslim community wanted to be retained as a playground. It belonged to the Muslim community, who wanted partly to construct a college for the community. The police had enforced curfew in our locality. The wedding was to be conducted in our house in the adjacent space with a 'shamiana' in the evening. Due to restrictions, the timings were changed to the morning and the function was conducted in the big hall of our residence, with police permission. Only a few close relatives could participate in the 'Nikah' ceremony. The groom's side fully cooperated with us. After the wedding I chanced meet to my senior in the high court premises and on his advice I resumed the court work in his office till I started my own practice on 11 August, 1981.

My uncle from the army was transferred from Hassan to Kolar as NCC Commandant. We frequented his house and we invited him to stay with us in the upstairs portion till he could get his tenant vacated from his old dilapidated house inherited by him, just close to our house. After his retirement, he accepted our invitation and shifted to our first floor portion on the vacation of our tenant. I took charge of his legal work and could succeed in bringing a compromise between him and his tenant. His tenant vacated his house during the year 1981, before my wedding took place.

My uncle in 1981 persuaded me to get married as I had completed 31 years of age. I had apparently developed self confidence and was carrying on the legal work independently also besides my senior's work. But I was indigent and without any

means or possession of any assets. With my meagre income and savings, I requested my mother to buy a small jewellery set for the bride. I could not think of any lavish or even a modest wedding as I myself was in financial need. As the pressure from my mother and uncle increased, I had to lay down some strict conditions for choosing the bride. My wedding took place in 'Jumma Masjid' in Palace Guttahalli, Bangalore on Sunday, 7 June 1981.

I could manage to get a 'Sherwani' and a 'Shalwar' 'Kameez' stitched for this purpose besides a 'safari' suit, which was the fashion of the day. The close relatives and family members were served with lunch in the compound space with a shamiana put up for this purpose in the bride's rented premises. I did not receive any gifts, dowry, presents or even a garland. My parents-in-law, in keeping up with my sentiments, kept all the arrangements to a bare minimum. We returned home with the bride in the evening without any fanfare, rituals or 'rasams', as per tradition, except for placing the hand of the bride in my hand by father-in-law. As per the Muslim tradition, the groom should host a dinner for the bride's family, friends and relatives of both sides. I did not have any means, even a penny. My friend, a schoolmate, came to my rescue with a loan of Rs. 5,000. A modest dinner was hosted from my side. My friends and a few lawyers, clients, relatives from both sides attended the reception. Divine help came to my rescue and I received Rs. 5,000 within one month in a documentation of an immoveable property matter. I cleared my loan with my friend before the close of one month as promised by me.

On the first Sunday after my wedding, when I was in my late uncle's house on a customary visit to introduce my wife, I got a phone call from my friend of a neighbouring office to attend college teacher's meeting the next evening. It was a surprise

wedding gift from my friends and from the Principal, who started the Karnataka Ryot Sangha and the Law College. They were present at the reception dinner hosted by me on the day following the wedding. I was thrilled and I went to the meeting wearing my father's suit. I considered it as a blessing from my dear father. I felt that my values and principle had been appreciated and there were lot of people who held dear to their hearts good values in life.

My wife was innocent like a lily and a rose and came from a humble background. She has become my friend, philosopher and guide in the literal sense. She has put her heart and soul to serve my mother, sisters, sisters-in-law and a large number of their children. She has been of help in all their endeavours, helped and assisted everyone, who came to her seeking her help. She is unassuming, friendly and social. She accepted whatever sum I gave her for household expenses without any demands, grouse and grievances. It was a great relief for me, and my family life was one of solace, contentment and cheer. After couple of months of marriage, juniorship in my senior's office came to an end and I had to perforce commence my own practice from 11 August 1981. My wife withstood the initial trials and tribulations including the ripples in the joint family life, till I decided to separate from the joint family for better peace and good will

My Own Legal Practice

As I had detailed in my previous chapter, I had to wait for a long time to find an internship in an established office of an advocate, who was considered in the legal parlance as senior but not a senior designated lawyer by the Chief Justice of a state high court. A senior designated advocate does not entertain clients and does not take instructions from them. He is briefed only by advocates. In the advocate's bar, an advocate having an office and giving place to a junior for training purpose is also referred to as a senior

by his juniors. Internship with such an office of an advocate plays an important and pivotal role in the career of an advocate. A junior is exposed to the law practice, gets a sound grinding in the procedure and practice of the court. He gets to know about the various parameters of complex legal issues and complicated legal matters. He learns about the Evidence Act and how the chaff is required to be separated from the grain, how the issues are required to be raised and sound pleadings are required to be put forth; how the matter is required to be placed in the legal notice; how a plaint is required to be laid and the case is required to be established; how the lawyers should assist the court to arrive at the correct judgment. For that purpose, the case is required to be summed up by good arguments supported by relevant and pertinent case law. All these stages are required to be conducted with meticulous precision. Every case before a court is required to be filed within the time prescribed by the Limitation Act, and the procedure to be followed from the beginning and conclusion of a matter is to be strictly followed in terms of Civil and Criminal Procedure Code and Evidence Act.

A junior advocate first gets familiar with the office procedure and then gets acquainted with the procedure of preparing and filing plaints in the office of the jurisdictional courts—civil and criminal. A junior advocate gets to know the various divisions of the civil and criminal courts and the procedure followed by the individual courts till a judgment is executed and the relief gained by the litigant. Then, a junior advocate moves on to the appellate side and gets acquainted with its procedure and practice. All this requires great diligence, patience and hard work. Every step of the legal procedure is required to be memorized and mastered by a junior advocate with the guidance of his senior in the office and the staff of the advocate. Right from the stage of arranging and stitching the papers, till the execution of the judgment and decree, a junior

advocate has to methodically follow step by step every procedure and practice. For this an office of an advocate should have all types of briefs on civil, criminal and appellate side. Additional fields of specialization are added day by day. A successful lawyer will have practice on all sides and in each individual section of law.

From the date of enrolment till I joined the office of my senior, I had to wait a period of 18 months. Initially, I accompanied my friend and classmate at the graduate level in St. Joseph's College. He quit practice and joined the service of a financial corporation. Unfortunately and tragically after a decade or less than that he died due to some deadly disease, leaving behind his young wife and two small children. This was a tragic case of a person, who had struggled to come up in life in very dire circumstances, from acute poverty to gain a master's degree in law out of his own effort. But before he could enjoy the fruits in life, he died leaving behind a mourning, young, dutiful wife and small children. The first one being a girl, today she is a double graduate with further qualifications and she is employed in the same financial corporation. The second is a boy who is equipping himself with higher qualifications. I cherish his memory that has left behind many happy memories of college days and short association in the courts.

My friend introduced me to a brahmin friend of his. The association with my brahmin friend lasted till September 1977, when I left his company and joined the senior's law office. During this period of 18 months, I was exposed to severe hardship, despondency and despair. But I gained experience and watched closely the manners and behaviour of litigants, lawyers, judges, laymen, friends and relatives. It was a close encounter of a different kind. It was a period, when I had to pass through a severe test of endurance and patience. I had to face jeers, taunts,

criticisms from family, friends and relatives, and from dear and near ones. I was a nobody, a novice and, in common lingo, a 'phoot' lawyer, meaning a greenhorn and good-for-nothing fellow.

During this period of eighteen months, I got three cases for getting 'letters of administration' from the Administrative General as my first case. Where a deceased leaves company shares and cash amount in the bank, the legal heirs are required to get this certificate from the above-named authority. All the three litigants were widows and hence I did not charge any fee. From known friends and relatives, I got matters of small cause for issue of legal notices and for recovery of those amounts before the court of small causes. In the company of my lawyer friends, friends practising in chartered accountancy, I got legal matters of interest. I gained valuable experience in conducting domestic enquiry in the labour disputes from the point of issue of charge-sheet, conducting the enquiry and preparation of final report. This work I was familiar with by having worked in the factory as Labour Welfare Officer and as field officer in the Industrial Management and Personnel Management Consultant's office.

A few relatives approached me for preparing power of attorney, lease agreements, lease and sale deeds, and similar conveyancing work. I handled one partition matter and helped my relatives in drawing up a partition deed. The deed was prepared by a lawyer, who was acting on behalf of a purchaser of a portion of the immovable property. The deed of partition was required to be drawn up, before a portion falling to the few legal heirs could be sold. I became acquainted with the entire practice and procedure of civil and criminal courts before I joined my senior's office.

I was closely following some sensational murder cases from the time of the beginning of the session's evidence and its conclusion, arguments, judgment and sentencing of the accused

to life imprisonment. Thus, I had gained full confidence as an advocate. From the first day of joining my senior's office, I was to handle the matters in the civil court by myself every day. My senior and another accomplished junior were confined to high court and revenue appellate tribunal. My senior attended the civil court to argue some important contested bank matters. But I conducted all other matters and built up a strong mental strength, self-confidence, knowledge and experience. Slowly my hard work, endurance, honesty, integrity were being noticed by all those around me besides my senior and his clients. My senior assisted me in some of my own individual matters in urgent appeals before the high court to seek interim relief and in insurance appeals. Thus, with in a period of time, I established myself as a lawyer of some merit. I gained proficiency in drafting, pleading and conveyancing matters. I was exposed in all-round civil litigations and in few criminal matters including one session's murder case.

Parting Company from My Parental and Ancestral Home

After a couple of months of my marriage, I realized that if I needed to practise my principles and values then I needed to establish my own independent household where I could receive my clients and my guests and I could be master of my own self. I could receive my clients at any hour for consultation without hindrance. I needed privacy and the clients' matters were required to be kept confidential. My mother's residence was not conducive for my private and legal matters. It was a big house with many families residing under one roof. I was not contributing financially and after my wedding, much pressure was felt by the members of the household. There were many embarrassing moments. With a heavy heart and great reluctance I decided to take a rented premises, which would have good connectivity. My friends came to my rescue. I was able to get a small house with one office room, two bedrooms, a hall, a dining room and an entrance for

parking my scooter, for a rent of Rs 600. I still needed Rs 6500. A law college friend had a matter with me. On knowing my need, he helped me. Thus, with the help of the lawyer of the landlord, I could get the premises on rent. I finalized the rental agreement on 28 February 1982 and moved there on the evening on my thirty second birthday with my wife, mother, and elder sister. Next morning, I got up on hearing the call of prayers from the near by mosque. I was reciting the Holy book, when consistently I heard a voice within me to keep my scooter outside the house which I did. After sometime, the house bell rang and outside stood my client, whose labour dispute I had got settled. He said that his father had commanded him to settle my fees immediately that morning itself. He was searching for the house, when he spotted my scooter and rang the bell. He had received a demand draft of Rs. 5,000 from the company, where he worked. His services had been terminated. He returned to me the borrowed sum and a small token of fees. Thus, the first morning in my rented home started on a good note and tidings. I was penniless on the first morning. The Divine knows our needs and He fulfils it in His own strange ways and manners, thus, in a classic way, teaching me to fully rely on the Divine for all my needs. I felt that the Divine was guiding me and that I need not fear and I could set my sails in the vast ocean of life putting full faith in Him.

Finding an Office Accommodation—Sastry and Co

As I took up my own practice, I had some sure income of Rs.450 from the salary paid by the Law College. I had hardly about 20 to 30 files and the income from the court mattres was very meager and modest. I had not learnt to fix and demand fees from my clients, and till I joined service, I accepted whatever little sum my clients paid me in the court matters. Only in very exceptional cases, I could get some amount but never more than Rs.500 or

Rs 1,000. Only on settlement of insurance claim cases, I could get some fee which appeared to me to be a handful but when I look back today and from the measure of fees fixed by lawyers, it was a modest amount. Conveyancing work would get me some measure of fee. Overall, I could clear my rental, office and domestic expenses on a marginal level. I maintained accounts, the books I still treasure.

My walk was a very measured one. I had learnt to conduct cases with much confidence. The conveyancing, drafting and pleading work had attained some mastery. All original work was within my capacity and command. As my work progressed, I had to engage the services of a young person in his teens for my clerical assistance. Today, he has his own office with junior lawyers assisting him. Although he could not complete his law studies, yet he has succeeded in carrying on legal assistance work.

I could not learn the craftiness, the cunningness of which the legal profession has gained the dubious distinction. Making money was farthest from my mind. The legal profession was therefore a challenge to me. I had clients, who totally relied on my character, and I wished to maintain their confidence and faith. As a majority of them were in dire straits, I could not press for payment of dues but to be content with whatever little sum they paid me. I had a large number of indigent clients, who could not afford to pay me and I had to conduct their matters with compassion and understanding. My job in the legal profession was like walking on thorns and pebbles barefoot. I gained rich legal experience from the clients and it was also spiritually elevating. I could understand and gain an insight into the socioeconomic conditions of the people, who were suffering on account of litigation. Litigation could bring ruination; it could break a happy home; separate a joint undivided family. It could bring in indebtedness, sorrows, sufferings, pain besides unemployment and resultant consequences.

When I separated from the joint family and rented a house-cum-office, my wife was in the family way. It was a challenging circumstance and a difficult one to commence the legal practice with penury and stark poverty facing me. But I had supreme self-confidence and faith in the Divine, that He would not let me down. I had taken a vow not to spread my palm or beg before others, never to borrow, come what may. My wife was of the same nature. She kept all our domestic matters a secret and never divulged it to her parents, my mother or to my relatives. There was no telephone line connecting our house-cum-office. I had to meet my clients in the Advocates Association every day. Our neighbours upstairs were very friendly, cordial, cooperative and loving person. They would take care of my wife in my absence from home, being away to court, and in the evening to the college for giving lectures. They were able to get me some legal work by introducing me to some litigant clients. Our immediate neighbour, a Reddy gave her partition matter to me. She had a phone, and she was more cooperative in making available the phone on payment basis. The phone line was connected to my house more than five years after our occupation. It was very difficult to get telephone connections in those days.

One fine day I met a person in the court premises, who had stood for election for law college student's union. He asked me for my visiting card and enquired as to where my office was located. I told him that I did not have an office and that I operated from my residence. After a few days I received a letter from him inviting me to his office. I did not respond. After he sent me a third reminder, mentioning that he was only trying to help. I met him in his office. He sounded genuine and sincere.

The office was centrally located near Corporation Office at OTC Road. His office had a telephone connection and had three rooms which included a reception-cum-waiting lounge. He wished

to share his office. I accepted his offer on a condition that I pay him Rs.300 every month; that I would receive incoming telephone calls; and would not use his phone for outgoing calls, and he should keep his telephone locked. We agreed on these terms and continued to share the office till I joined the service. I entered his office, "Sastry & Co", in September 1983 after one and a half years of setting up my own home. It came as a great heavenly boon and help and my patience was doubly paid. Even after my parting from him, he was generous to my juniors, who continued to function from his office for about two decades till they could set up their own offices. My friend did not ask them to leave his office despite his two sons and one daughter-in-law joining his office.

I had learnt to work in his office with dignity, poise and equanimity, so also my staff and juniors. They never overstepped their limits. We would be away to courts during the day and would use his office during early and after evening hours. He allowed us to keep our files and books. He was exceedingly courteous and a genuine friend, My friendship continues till date. My consultation on the labour management was modest with four or five companies, who retained me on a regular retainer basis. I was not short of work. The salary in the college was more of a stipend and it increased to Rs. 750. The college was within two furlongs of the office and it became very convenient for me to attend to my professional and college work. The court premises were less than half a mile and my residence was about three to four km from the office and court premises. It became clear to me that Divine help was always with me and was a source of strength and energy. I totally relied on the Divine One and was totally convinced that for every deed good or bad or evil, Divine Grace or retribution visited us in full measure. The more good deeds we performed, doubly were the blessings and joys. However I must mention that the change from home office to "Sastry &

Co" did not bring any prosperity. The earnings remained status quo except that it gave me enormous convenience to my work with my juniors and staff joining me.

Senior's Neighbouring Advocates' Offices

There were offices of prominent advocates in the same building of that of my senior's office. The office immediately next to my senior's office was central to the building, a very big one. It was of an advocate from Rani Bennur, a Champion of Backward Classes and he himself hailed from a tribal area. During the period of Sri Devaraj Urs as Chief Minister, this advocate was appointed as Chairman of Backward Classes Commission. His report was monumental and hailed as a pioneering effort and the first of its kind in India. It was referred by the US Supreme Court. When I joined my senior's office, he was Law Minister. Many of his juniors were in politics and few of them became ministers, chief minister and central minister. His enterprising juniors during his absence were social activists and more or less of my age group or a little older. I came in close contact with them. One had done Master's in law hailing from Ankola and from Tumkur. Immediately after my wedding, in June 1981, I got a call from him asking me to come to the college to a meeting of Professors. Thus, began my career as a Professor of Law under the Principal, who started the Ryot Sangha. For the first year I was given the subject of Legal & Constitutional History, later was added the subjects of Special Contract; Transfer of Property; Drafting, Pleading & Conveyancing, which subjects I taught with great relish for a period of eight years, till I joined the Services. It was my sincere and dedicated teaching which attracted the attention of subsequent Principal, who's senior was a Supreme Court Judge.

In January 1987, the Government of India sent a circular to all the Supreme Court judges, chief justices of all the states to nominate the names of prominent and eligible advocates and

senior district judges for consideration by the constituted committee for the post of Member Judicial of Customs, Excise & Gold Control Tribunal. My friends and college Principal prevailed upon me to send my biodata. I was not inclined to get into services for multiple reasons. I was already in the Sufi thinking and desired to live a Sufistic life. Besides I had small children and felt very diffident to enter government service with the risk of transfers every now and then. Further, I had taken up my ancestral work of maintenance of our family Darga and its related duties in the absence of my elder brother. I had mixed feelings, when I received a letter from the ministry to send in my resume. There were attending the large number of district judges were attending the interview. Within a couple of days of sending my resume, I too was called for the interview on 26-3-1987 at the office of the Commissioner of Central Excise, Nungamgkam, Madras.

The selection committee comprised senior Supreme Court Judge, Justice O.P. Chinnappa Reddy; Sri S. Venkatesan, President of CEGAT and Sri Rammaiah, Law Secretary. I was the youngest among all the candidates. The Madras centre was for the southern states. My name was fourth in the list of candidates for interview. The interview lasted for almost an hour. In the end, the entire panel members asked me why I chose to apply for the post, when I had good practice and that I am still young. I replied that I wished to serve the cause of the judiciary. I noticed the Chairman of the committee writing on my resume "selected". I felt that the Divine's decree was being written, otherwise I would not have noticed the remarks of being "selected".

My Principal was very happy when my order of selection was intimated to me. He mentioned to me that he learnt from his senior that I had done extremely well in the interview out beating all the candidates. Fate decreed that I take in the end

voluntary retirement before my 58th years on my completion of 20 years in the government. This, I consider it as a blessing in disguise. I was eligible for full pension besides other pensionary benefits of several lakhs of rupees, which otherwise I would not have received, had I been elevated to high court due to a break in service. The pensionary benefits came in handy for funding my son's higher education abroad and for the expenses of his wedding. The decree of the Divine is more perfect than what we imagine and think for ourselves. Though disappointed on my non-promotion and non-elevation, now when I look back in perspective, it was for my own good and in line with my own principles. I had gained expertise in the line of my work and my proficiency helped me disposing of a record number of appeals in the tribunal. I had really worked hard in the betterment of the work at all the three centres, where I was posted. I cleared a huge backlog of pending cases at Chennai, streamlined the work, set up additional court halls for the third member both at Chennai and at Bangalore. I continued to work with the same zeal and enthusiasm at all the three centres and brought all-round improvement.

To Delhi

I had to slowly hand over my work to two of my juniors and to my clerk. All of them were sincere, although not brilliant. One was from Bangalore rural area and another from a taluk of Tumkur district. I had to take great pains to teach them the fundamentals of law practice, which I had learnt in a hard way. I gave them full liberty to deal with the matters and guided them fully. They picked up the work although in a measured and slow pace. However they started gaining the experience and also the confidence of the clients. Moreover, they continued to function from "Sastry & Co", which perhaps is also one of the reasons for the work to remain with them. I did not ask them to transfer the files to clients. In all I had more than 300 files, in which for large amount of fees had remained unpaid and uncollected. Just within a year's time, when I returned on a holiday, I discovered that my juniors had prospered well and within a couple of years they seemed to have earned enough to buy immovable assets. I am satisfied and happy that they were not to suffer like me on account of financial distress. They had gained enormous experience in my office and they were able to work hard to increase the volume of work. They were considerate, when they took a portion of my library, furniture and my two-wheeler. They paid me a small amount, which helped me to meet the expenses for boarding my flight to Delhi and later to meet my family

expenses. They travelled to Delhi by flight and the money was useful for transportation of the library of books.

My colleague in the college, a senior by age of seven years, was also selected along with me. He was practising on direct taxes and on state taxes. The post was above the cadre of a district judge and the salary was equivalent to that of a high court judge. We decided to travel lighter fly to Delhi on Friday, 21 April 1989. My friend's erstwhile senior was a former MP and his former colleague was also a MP from his native town of Tumkur. He arranged for our stay in the Karnataka Bhavan through his contacts. Unfortunately, when we landed in the evening and reached the Bhavan we were bluntly informed that there was no place available. It so happened that the Governor's rule had been imposed in Karnataka and a large number of MLA's had landed in Delhi and so there was paucity of accommodation. My friend contacted his former colleague over phone, the MP from his native town. Fortunately he was available and we landed at his residence. The MP was willing to accommodate my friend but was reluctant to take me in. I had to literally beg him to allow me to stay till I made alternative arrangements. He expressed his inability to accommodate me as in the other rooms, there were occupants and there was no bed available for me. I mentioned that I would lie down on the sofa in the night and I would not mind for any discomfort to me. With great reluctance he permitted me to stay with him.

It was the month of Ramzan and I was in the state of fasting. My mother had packed a light breakfast in a small tiffin box. I took his permission to break the fast. Being a vegetarian, he objected to my eating my home food in the belief that it must be a non-vegetarian food. I had to again plead with him and convince him that it was only bread and butter.

The next day, we decided to see the office of the tribunal. The office was an old two-storyed building and surrounded by such buildings. In front of the office was a multistoryed office of the Central Power Corporation.

We reported to the Private Secretary of the Senior Vice President. We were ushered into his chamber. He was extremely polite, courteous to a fault and a gentleman to the core. He expressed his surprise that we had not informed him of our joining. I immediately produced the copy of the letter written to the Registrar intimating him of our arrival in Delhi and about our reporting for work. The Registrar was very disappointed that a young person like me had been selected for the post and hence did not inform the Sr. V.P. of our reporting for work. His hostility was very clear and obvious. Later, it assumed a great dimension and he was very hostile, adverse and was creating lots of difficulties for me in particular and other members in general. The Sr. V.P. instructed the Dy. Registrar to allot us the chambers and take our joining report. He left for the court in the company of a Member Judicial, who was also selected with us but had reported earlier. He was a retired District Judge from the state of Gujarat and had acted as a Vice-Chancellor. It came as a great surprise and shock for him and my colleague that both of them had been placed below me in the seniority list. They openly expressed their resentment and unhappiness. It created an embarrassing situation for me. I told them that I would forgo my seniority and they should not feel unhappy on this count. It took almost a few years for them to accept this fact. My unflinching courtesy and high regards and respect earned their good pleasure.

Though the Senior VP apparently showed courtesy and spoke politely yet he did not arrange any get-together of all the members of the Delhi bench for our introduction. The amended cause list showing our names for that week was issued to the

Senior Technical Member, with whom we were to sit in the bench. My first sitting was with a Bengali gentleman and the Gujarati Member Judicial. When the latter learnt that he was junior on the bench, he expressed his total disappointment, chagrin and expressed it in unpleasant words. The thin Bengali gentleman was very curt, discourteous and rude. It was a great disappointment for me. I was flabbergasted.

In the evening my colleague at the dinner table was extremely morose and showed his unhappiness. I had to reassure him that I would consider myself as junior to him forever and I was like 'Laxmana' to him. Now, even after more than two decades I continue to show my deep respect and treat him as my elder brother. There were very many moments in the service when a majority of members let me down solely on this count and it created a lot of jealousy and ill feelings. The stark reality of politics in public service started slowly dawning on me day by day in the tribunal. The following days I sat with the Member Technical from Andhra and Member Technical from Punjab. Their outward behaviour was better but they showed their displeasure by marking files for writing judgment on my second day and third day of the sitting on the bench, although on the bench was available another member for whom the file could have been marked. They did not treat the other members who joined with me in the same manner as they treated me. They gave them time to settle down. My plea to allow me time to first settle down for at least a week did not impress them. I took it as a challenge and my judgments were ready within a few days. My initial judgments laid good the proposition of excise law and reported by the excise law reporter. I gathered and mastered the basics as early as possible within the shortest possible time and showed my mettle.

I was to encounter the worst possible situation in the MP's residence. He could not tolerate my presence and was somehow reluctant to retain me. I made enquiries from my staff about any hostel accommodation or guest house, where I could shift from the MP's residence. The courteous Punjabi gentleman rang up to the Director of Training, who was willing to accommodate me in the house meant for trainees at Mayapuri. But, my colleague did not want me to shift leaving him alone in the MP's house. He found my company comforting perhaps, but I was feeling very uncomfortable.

After two weeks, the MP starting knocking on the toilet when I had occupied it for bath at 5 am. I started next day to go in the toilet at 4 am then at 3 am. As soon as I would go inside the bathroom and start my bath, he would start banging the door and start shouting. I realized that I had to quit his place. I packed up my belongings and left the place without seeking leave of the MP, which infuriated him more and was not relished by my colleague. I felt relieved and comfortable at Mayapuuri trainee's quarters. I was given an independent room with all possible comforts. I was also provided with breakfast and dinner. There was a separate drawing room, table and chair for writing purpose. One another reason for not shifting immediately to this place was the reluctance of the Sr. VP to allow the car to go as far as Mayapuri, which was at a distance from the office premises. The Gujarati gentleman took up residence at Rajouri Garden, which was still further away from Mayapuri. This enabled me to shift to the trainee's quarters, but I had to wait for two weeks and more and put up with pranks of the MP. I came to the rescue of the Gujarati gentleman by loaning him Rs 10,000 as advance payment of his rent to his landlord. This small gesture on my part mellowed him for a time and he became friendly from then onwards.

The kind Dy. Registrar processed our application for allotment of transit accommodation and for regular allotment. My family and my mother joined me in the month of June. I was to go on tour to Calcutta Bench and I traveled with my family in a passenger train. On our return I had been allotted transit accommodation in the Asia House in the eighth floor. We shifted there and my daughter did not have difficulty in getting admission in Carmel School, Channakyapuri, New Delhi. But it was a great ordeal to admit my elder son in any school. After a lot of struggle my son was able to get admission in Bharati Vidya Bhavan, nearby. My younger son was admitted with great difficulty in Shanti Niketan, Connaught Place.

I had to face great hardships and hurdles at every stage in Delhi. The hostility of the senior members was so grave that ultimately I had to brief my condition and my intention of quitting the tribunal report my intention of. One senior member was totally uncooperative in court matters; highly injudicious and totally unaware of court matters and manners. He was highly indecisive and was unwilling to agree with my judgments and orders. He would give vague and totally baseless reasoning and differ from me in every judgment. But, fortunately for me, every third member on reference would agree with my judgments. Despite this fact, he continued to behave in this manner till I was transferred to Chennai after nine years of my service.

One senior member was fond of politicking and warring with government and central board. His grievance was that there was no wage parity between the members of the central board and the members of the tribunal. After a prolonged battle the disparity was corrected by the Fifth Pay Commission, although the central administrative tribunal had rejected his plea. His legal knowledge was minimal and conducting of court proceedings was awful and pitiable. He was domineering in the court. He would

not read case papers but raise ridiculous and irrelevant questions with the advocates, unconnected with the case. He would be seen every day drawing pictures in his notebook instead of taking notes of the arguments of the advocates. His mates would get wary of his antics and his refusal to close the case for judgments. He would adjourn cases for 20 or more times without bringing a finality to the proceedings, with the result that there would not be any disposal of appeals on his bench. One day he refused to come to court and used very unpleasant language. I had to bear with him for long till it became intolerable and I had to bring it to the notice of the Sr. VP, who changed my sitting from his bench. Likewise, other members would also take up grievances with him to the Sr. VP and later with the President when he assumed the office. This continued till he retired. He took charge of the Tribunal on two occasions and messed up the entire administration by issuing hundreds of irrelevant office orders, practically one or two every day. The matter came to such a pass that the Editor of *Excise Law Times* had to take up the matter with the finance ministry for a expeditious appointment of a full-fledged President and a Rtd Chief Justice of a high court. During the period of the President, a running battle was waged by this said senior member till the President was forced to transfer him to the Calcutta Bench. But on the retirement of the President, he was again appointed as in-charge President. He again created a mess of the tribunal's affairs till he retired in 1999. By then I had been transferred to Chennai Bench.

As soon as I took charge and joined the Tribunal in 1989, the staff of the Tribunal approached me and disclosed to me that "none in Tribunal worked on their salary." It was a shock to the new members. Slowly the affairs of the tribunal, its malfunctioning and its shabby administration starting coming to light and to our notice. The rumours about those whose image was not bright and were indulging in dubious practices became

clear to all the new members. It is to be said to the credit of the Senior V.P in charge as President that his integrity was unimpeachable, so also his courteous behavior. He was considered as a 'Silent Buddha' for his saintly nature. This was considered as a big drawback for strong administration, as he could not shake the administration or the ministry to get the due benefits for the tribunal. There were large number of vacancies unfulfilled and the allotment of budget for the tribunal was a pittance. There were lethargic members, who kept the files pending for months and years without pronouncing orders.

We discovered to our great dismay and shock that advocates and parties were choosing the occasion of Deepavali to gift the government officials with umpteen precious things in kind along with sweet boxes, dry fruits, silk saris and whatnot. While I was in Asia House, the first Deepavali came in the month of Sep/Oct '89. One council who had argued the case came to the flat with his 'gifts,' while I was away to a Sufi shrine to pay my homage. My wife refused to take any of the gifts and strictly warned him and turned him away. While leaving the place, he placed in my children's hands a box of pastries. When I returned after my prayers, I took the box of pastries to the office next day and with a note returned it to the member in charge. But this unsavory incident came to the light of all the members. Some were one with me. The Sr. VP on return became cold with me for some unknown reasons. Then on my stay in the tribunal was in the troubled waters. One senior Member kept up his tirade against me on account of my young age. He would daily deride me and chide me for something or the other.

We again learnt about the leakage of draft judgments to the counsels. This was another challenge to be met. The PA/Ps would vouch for their good conduct and confidentiality kept in the matter but there were black sheep among the staff and

registry. The Joint Chief Departmental Representative and DRs would meet us in our chambers and appraise us of the misconduct of a few members including staff. It became a delicate thing for us. Indeed a few members took us in confidence and mentioned that we should be "liberal" and "help their friends". We were convinced that things were really not good in the functioning of the tribunal. The combined attitude of the Registrar and a few members and the malfunctioning of the tribunal gave us serious misgivings as to whether it was the right decision to have joined the tribunal and that too at a young age.

My talk with the Bengali member of an information shared by an advocate with regard to the top officer of the registry approaching his client to collect his "Mamool" ruffled the feathers. The result was that the top officer of the Registry sent me a threat through my PA to dislodge me and that I should be careful with my life. I took up this matter with our colleagues and the Senior VP. He told me to give it in writing, which I did by recording the statement of my PA. This panicked the Sr. VP and he told me not to press the issue and that he would look into the matter; he returned my written plea. I put up my papers before the Sr. VP indicating my mind to discontinue my services on account of the behaviour of the top officer of the registry. He assured me of looking into the matter.

In January 1990 he changed my bench and took me in his bench. But he cold shouldered me. It became awful for me and gave me serious misgivings on my joining the tribunal.

During my eight months of my joining the tribunal, I had put up my best to the most awkward situations. My allotment of quarters came to me, which was close to our office, but the acute shortage of office vehicles made me walk to the office carrying my briefcase. There was one old standard van and only one car to ferry more than eight members from different localities of

Delhi, far and wide. The vehicles with members would reach the office beyond the court time. My sitting was with Sr. V P. He was very punctual and he advised me not to wait for the vehicle which would come to me only after dropping off the members causing enormous delay. The result was that I was treated like an ordinary staff of the tribunal. I was not accustomed to the vagaries of the weather of severe cold and severe heat of Delhi and it caused me great inconvenience. I chose to also work on Saturdays at the office. I would intimate to the Sr. VP and arrangements would be made to enable me to sit in my chambers to prepare the judgments. I would be the lone person in the entire building. There would be no staff or PA to assist me. Due to acute shortage of PA's, we were given only one of them as against two of them to assist us. The typing of orders was done on old manual typewriters. Due to weather conditions and enormous time spent by the PAs in the court, practically they would not get any time to either take dictation for typing final orders or type out handwritten orders. The result was that orders were lying with the PAs for months together. There was no panacea to this problem. The second and third folders would invariably not contain the entire file. The members would be handicapped while hearing the appeals without the paper book being complete. The classification and valuation appeals were highly technical and required greater assistance with technical information from textbooks, technical dictionaries and enormous case laws. It was difficult to carry all this material home to write the orders. Therefore, the orders were to be prepared in the office with the help of these materials. We were equipped with law books and a few technical ones but not all. There was acute financial hardship for procuring textbooks for the library. We had to depend on the extracts provided by counsels in the paper books but there would not be sufficient information required to decide the difficult issues in the cases. Thus, there was deficiency in the tribunal on each and every count.

From January 1990 onwards, I sat with the Sr. VP and alternatively with another Tamil brahmin member technical who was soft-spoken, efficient and honest. Unfortunately, he lacked legal expertise and this would result in difference of opinion. The third member would invariably resolve it in favour of my opinion after hearing counsels of both sides. It happened in one matter that the Sr. VP placed the difference of opinion before two senior technical members and one judicial member against the rule and the practice of the tribunal to place the matter before only one third member. There cannot be three members to hear the difference of opinion matter. Yet, to my fortune, all the three members agreed with my opinion, thus causing embarrassment to the Sr.VP. However, he was excessively polite but due to misunderstanding in the workplace, I placed my papers and applied for long leave.

I left with my family to Bangalore with bag and baggage and took school leaving certificates for my children. This really shook all the members and the staff. While I was in Bangalore on leave, the Editor of *ELT* spoke to me over phone and assured me of the support of the Bar Association. The Sr. VP wrote to me to rejoin office. My colleagues also advised me to rethink about the matter. I met my friends and the Principal of Law College. They were taken aback to hear about the affairs of the tribunal and about the mess in which the administration stood, about the corrupt practices and how I was treated there. They advised me to rejoin the college but my close relatives, mother and father-in-law discouraged me and persuaded me to give another chance. I took the help of my friends and relatives and admitted my children in goods schools in Bangalore and left for Delhi to resume my duties.

I was welcomed by one and all. There was a change of heart. Soon the Sr. VP got his promotion as President. On request of

all the members, he started calling for full court meetings to discuss about the administration of the tribunal and about the suggestions for improvement. Slowly things started improving. The head of the registry was reined in and shown his place by the members. Apparently unity was shown but inner scheming and politicking continued. Two new technical members resumed charge on retirement of members from Bengal and Andhra Pradesh. In their place two eminent persons from the department joined as members. One was Director General of Revenue Intelligence and another Director General of Anti-Evasion.

The DGRI was a Punjabi gentleman, very polite and courteous. Both were known for their integrity. But DG Anti-Evasion was revenue-minded and very impolite, rude, short-tempered and given to harsh ways. He slowly showed his displeasure about the affairs of the tribunal. He worked hard and initially came on Saturdays to the office to write orders. Finding lack of assistance, he stopped coming but like other members took the files home to write the orders.

One fine day, we were shocked to hear that the President had put in his papers. He could not anymore put up with the recalcitrant ministry and uncooperative members. When asked for the reason he mentioned that his house had been vacated by the tenant in Madras and he would like to call it a day. On the day of remitting the office, just a few hours before the customary tea party hosted in his honour, he sent a letter advising all members to maintain camaraderie, which somehow he found lacking among the members. This parting letter was not welcomed by the members. None the less, it was a sad parting of ways. During the year 1990, the President with the cooperation of all the benches could get a total disposal of ten thousand appeals except from the bench headed by one senior member.

My family was in Bangalore and the house here was totally empty except for the bedding. One day, I had a severe fever. The President visited me and found to his dismay that not even a chair was available for him to sit. He became very compassionate towards me and we sat together on the bench for the next one year, when he left the service. The VP mellowed down but did not change his manner of court work. He continued in the same manner of functioning giving way for difference of opinion in the cases. With the change of attitudes and members becoming little more courteous with me, I also mellowed down. For two years, I had worked hard and had produced almost a hundred judgments. This had sealed the lips of the members, who were doubtful about my efficiency and calibre. Almost all the difference of opinions had been answered in my favour. The Bar Association and departmental representatives were more than happy and satisfied. I had made it known that I was unapproachable and a dangerous person, if anyone dared to think of "wine and dine" with me. There were a majority of honest members who were silently suffering because of the misdeeds of a minority of unbecoming ones.

Downfall of the Tribunal

With the sudden departure of the President, an honest Tamil brahmin, the curtain of an era of the first batch of members who had been inducted on the inception of the tribunal in 1982 came down. The seniormost member had about eight to 10 years of service left for him. He carried a political clout and lived in a flamboyant style. His entire salary amount got deducted for various loans taken by him and his take-home salary was meagre but he lived in style and wore expensive suits. He got allotted his flat near Connaught Place mostly meant for MPs and ministers. He had a large number of visitors to his home and office. He was in the habit of coming late to the office in the

morning hours. He had practised as a lawyer on the income tax side and was fond of citing Income Tax Reporter (ITR) offhand. None could check its relevance and authenticity as those reports were not available in the library. Everyone wondered whether it was a correct citation and how it had relevance in the excise and customs matters. He would preside in all the benches with any convenient member-technical of his choice and keep a large number of cases partly heard. A time came when there would be series of partly heard cases of different benches with different members listed per day. The result would be that there would be no continuity of one bench sitting for whole day. This acting President got his promotion as full-term President, gratis the Secretary Bar Association filing a case before the Supreme Court for expeditious appointment of a regular President for the tribunal. The Chief Justice of India gave a direction for appointment of the President with in a fortnight. The result was that the government, being hard-pressed for time, was forced to confirm him as the President of the tribunal.

As time passed the figures of disposals of appeals came down drastically. The Editor of *Excise Law Times* carried a series of damaging articles exposing the malfunctioning of the tribunal, about the misfeasance of the President and alleging his collision with multinational companies. The allegations were serious in nature. The members drawn from technical and judicial sides were annoyed and taken aback. A serious embarrassment occurred to those technical members who were sitting with the President.

It was decided in the meeting of the members that a committee of members be constituted to meet Senior Counsel Sri Parasaran to initiate legal action against the Editor of the ELT. The member (T) who was DG Anti-Evasion was one such member, who was much disturbed and felt that the reputation of the members of the tribunal had been tarnished, as he had an

unstinted career. Sri Parasaran suggested that he would bring it to the notice of the Chief Justice of India. The Chief Justice took suo motto action by issuing notice to the Editor on the articles written by him wherein he alleged that a mafia gang had been working in the tribunal besides about other various irregularities and malfunctioning in the tribunal. The Supreme Court after hearing the Editor's case directed the government to constitute a high powered committee to enquire about the serious charges brought by the Editor of the ELT.

The government constituted a committee, comprising the Additional Secretary (Revenue administration) and Joint Secretary (law) to go into the charges by the Editor of *ELT*. The Committee came to be known as 'Kaw Committee.' It went into a detailed investigation in its own way and produced a report. It gave a detailed report on the charges besides several suggestions for the improvement of the tribunal. In the meantime the Supreme Court in another matter (Chandra Kumar's case) directed the government to appoint only Rtd. Chief Justices of high court or a serving high court judge to head the tribunals. On the completion of the term of the President, he was relieved without renewing his term. The President unsuccessfully challenged the matter in the court. With the relieving of the President from his post, a bad phase of the tribunal came to an end after his messing up of the affairs for more than three years.

Vice President in Charge

The senior member technical had done a lot of politicking for the removal of the President. As Vice President, he was made in charge of the tribunal till a regular President could be appointed. However his appointment did not mend matters. He was known for his inefficiency and bad administration. On the pretext of administrative work he kept accumulating the files for writing the orders. He was in the habit of adjourning the cases for

innumerable times. He would never agree with well-laid-down proposition of law and would show his judicial indiscipline. He was in-charge President for about six months till a regular President was appointed by the government in consultation of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

The Editor of *ELT* again moved the Supreme Court for expeditious appointment of the President and brought to its notice the malfunctioning of the tribunal by the in-charge President. The Vice President issued hundreds of office orders, each order contracting the other, creating confusion in the administration. Some office orders were ridiculous. However, he was able to rein in the working of the registry and its head. The registry had kept hundreds of files of regional benches in gunny bags without dispatching them. I was asked to do the inspection of the registry and submit my report. I submitted my report and the VP acted on it and took action. The result was that much of the issues of the registry were solved. The office premises were not in a tidy condition. The same were put in order.

Another result of the 'Kaw Committee' report was the transfer of one member (technical) to the Eastern bench Calcutta. There were a number of complaints against him, which had been brought to the notice of the committee. The member brought to the Delhi bench from Calcutta was a Tamil brahmin known for his integrity and honesty. His presence in Delhi bench brought a semblance of respectability.

Tribunal under the President, a Retired Chief Justice of Madhya Pradesh (1996-1998)

The retired Chief Justice of, Madhya Pradesh, was originally drawn from Kerala high court, a Tulu brahmin, His strict style of functioning and hard work won him name and fame. The high court of Madhya Pradesh had fallen to disrepute due to internal

squabbling and tardy disposal of cases. He was transferred from Gauhati and Sikkim high court. He brought a sea change in the functioning of the high court. On the eve of his retirement, the Chief Justice of India specially picked him to join as the President of the tribunal. He was reluctant to take up the posting as he felt aggrieved that he had been overlooked for elevation to the Supreme Court. The Chief Justice of India impressed upon him the urgent need of his services to mend the affairs of the Tribunal. He took it up as a challenge and joined as the President in the year 1996.

The VP in-charge had already made a mess of affairs and the Chief Justice of India had informed him so. The Secretary Revenue briefed him on the affairs of the tribunal and about the disrepute gained by it under the previous President. On the very first day of his joining the tribunal, he gave a dressing down in the morning itself to all the members in a very tough and strong tone. He did not mince words and meant every word of what he said. No more were the days of the benches adjourning the court midday or keeping the files pending for orders beyond 90 days. The Members were strictly advised to dictate the orders in the open court on the completion of arguments of both sides. The President would transfer files from other benches on the court completing its work before the court's timings. The benches were compulsorily to work full time from 10.30 am to 4.30 pm with a break for lunch. He released all part heard cases and directed for rehearing and decide the cases on the bench itself. The practice for constituting three members for a single bench was discontinued and each bench comprised of only two members.

He accepted my suggestion for constituting a bench for deciding all old cases, irrespective of the category of cases allotted for respective benches. This bench could dispose of large number of cases as most of the issues were covered and decided by a large number of decisions.

Another suggestion which he accepted and implemented was to increase the limit of the single member bench from rupees one lakh to rupees ten lakhs. This also helped in disposal of large number of appeals. I had given many suggestions to the 'Kaw Committee'; one such one was to disband the difference between the special bench and the regional bench. The President pursued this matter with the Finance Ministry and brought an amendment in the law and all the files of each region were transferred to those benches. This also resulted in shifting of benches to the respective regions.

The President took steps to create more benches in Mumbai. In course of time the Mumbai bench was shifted to bigger premises and four benches began to function there. Later, after a lapse of time a new bench was created in Ahmadabad. Efforts were made for creation of a bench at Bangalore and after a lapse of time with my tremendous efforts from my working at Chennai, the Bangalore Bench became a reality.

Initially, the President started having circuit benches in places where the tribunal did not have its bench to facilitate the litigants being heard in their places. The President with his example of hard and sustained work and strict supervision and being a hard taskmaster could achieve a record disposal of ten thousand appeals in a year. But he was totally disappointed with the tardy disposal and in the manner of working by the two senior members. Both were lazy and refused to change their habits. They were practically at loggerheads with him. Unfortunately, I happened to be the accompanying member on their bench. The President would chastise me for non-functioning. I would explain my difficulties working with them either as the Presiding Member or with a non-cooperative colleague with me. One senior member would not start his court in time. He was a smoker and had prostate problem. He would get up from the bench midway and

not resume the work till late afternoon, and close the bench working much before the closing time. The VP was also doing the same. This would annoy the President very much.

Finally it became clear to the President that the technical member and the senior member were on a wrong footing. The President had no option but to recommend to the government to transfer the VP to the Calcutta bench. The government accepted the suggestion of the President and transferred the VP to the Eastern bench Calcutta.

In the meanwhile, the tenure of the President came to a close and the VP managed to get back to Delhi bench again as in-charge President. Before he was transferred to Delhi, the vacancy of the member judicial at Chennai fell vacant. The President recommended my transfer to Chennai. I got the orders of transfer in the first week of March 1998. I took charge of an independent bench.

The President during his almost three years' tenure took a large number of measures for the effective functioning of the tribunal. After showing record number of disposals of thousands of appeals in the first year of his tenure, the government came forward to cooperate with the President in providing increased staff, a car for each member, and for computerization of the work. The manual typewriters were dispensed with and the stenographers were provided with electronic typewriters as a first step. Later computers were introduced. The President got additional funds sanctioned. A personal library for members and home office was provided. The suggestion for computerization was accepted and the scheme was drawn up. The succeeding President allotted the pilot project of computerization to the Chennai bench. Later, under the stewardship of the technical member at Chennai, tenders were called for and contract was awarded to a computer company. Before the work could be

completed, the member technical died suddenly and I had the good fortune to complete the entire computerization of the Chennai bench.

In 1991, I fell sick and I was unable to walk every day to the court. Therefore, I purchased a second-hand scooter on a loan of Rs 15,000 from the government. My nephew is now using it even after 20 years. The new car was allotted at the end of 1997 and I used it only for a period of less than six months, when I was transferred in March 1998 to Chennai. I strictly used the car for official purpose only. The office was quite close to my house. In 1990, members refused to take me home in the car on the ground that I was not in the car pool.

The President watched closely the work of each member. He examined my judgments and one fine day in open court, he acknowledged my judgments as laying down a clearcut proposition of law and for its clarity. He took me in his larger bench of five members on two occasions and he was the presiding member. Both the matters took full one week. I had to write my separate order, disagreeing with the majority, the reason being that the classification issue pertained to the old tariff and all the appeals under the old tariff had reached finality. The new tariff had been implemented years ago and it was not a good law to change the tribunal's views when appeals had been decided and the revenue had accepted the tribunal's view. I cited many Supreme Court rulings. Later, the apex court upheld my minority view.

In a large number of appeals, my minority view were affirmed by the apex court. I sat in the classification benches for almost nine years. I also sat in the north regional bench. Hundreds of orders were reported in the law journals and duly accepted by the apex court. In a few appeals, the orders went in favour of revenue but the Supreme Court reversed it on technical grounds.

In an ayurvedic medicine matter, we took a view that patent & proprietary ayurvedic medicines were made from chemicals and not as per ayurvedic formula, and therefore could not be accepted as ayurvedic drugs. The Supreme Court took a contrary view, that the revenue had not withdrawn the licence granted to the ayurvedic manufacturer and mere use of the chemicals would not make the drug a non-ayurvedic medicine. Later, the revenue changed the structure of classification of ayurvedic medicine and introduced a measure of tax to remove the misuse of the concession granted to the ayurvedic manufacturer, thereby, bringing a finality to the dispute as per the ruling of the tribunal.

In another matter pertaining to classification of tarpaulins, we took the view in support of the revenue's contentions that it is not cotton fabric as understood in trade and common parlance we took support from tribunal rulings approved by the Supreme Court. Yet, the apex court disagreed with the tribunal ruling. The revenue again changed the law to approve our proposition.

We had decided on tackling a large number of appeals, purely technical in nature, after examining several technical books, scientific materials and Harmonized Explanatory Notes. The rulings were in great detail and lengthy. Both sides would be satisfied with our rulings.

The main defects in the appeals arising from the orders passed by the Commissioner of Central Excise and Customs were that they mostly did not follow the principles of natural justice and lacked judicial discipline inasmuch as they did not follow the rulings of the tribunal, high courts and Supreme Court. Their poor knowledge of law would also be an impediment in passing correct orders.

Initially, I had noticed a large number of appeals on refusal of grant of refund of taxes collected without authority of law.

Refund appeals would be a scope for malpractices. We suggested for amendment of law of unjust enrichment. Several high courts pointed out the unjust enrichment gained by the manufacturer, as he would have collected the taxes from the customers and would be gaining unjustly. The government examined the issue and brought an amendment to the law, and the unjust enrichment of the manufacturer was done away with. This plugged a great loophole, which was a cause and scope for illegal gratification.

The Supreme Court also directed the government to constitute a committee of secretaries to examine the appeals and dispute of public industries. This was another area where the scope for illegal gratification was in practice and cases of public sector companies were all subject to scrutiny by the Committee of Secretaries.

The greatest achievement of the President was to hear the appeals of Tobacco Company where demands of over Rs 800 crores had been confirmed. He took up the appeals on a day-to-day basis. He had already directed the Company to deposit more than Rs 300 crore. He wrote a lengthy order confirming the demands and imposed a penalty on the Company; however, the bench set aside the personal penalty on the directors. This order was pronounced just before his retirement. However, the apex court reversed the order. The government appropriated the pre-deposit amount by entering into a compromise with the Company. The President, after his retirement, disclosed to me on my meeting him in Bangalore that the Tobacco Company through a known person had contacted him and attempted to induce him to accept Rs 10 crore to decide the matter in their favour. This disclosure showed the extent to which litigating companies would attempt to win over the judges to give them desirable orders in their favour.

In Chennai

I joined the Chennai bench the next day of my receiving the transfer order. I had cleared all the files before getting the order. From the date of recommendation by the President till the date I got the order was a fortnight or so, and during this period I could clear all the files. I had informed the Assistant Registrar of Chennai bench for arranging my stay. He had reserved my stay in the guest house of the Commissionerate office at NH Road.

The Commissioner had been selected as member technical and was awaiting orders to join the tribunal. He obliged me by also allowing my family to stay in the third floor portion of the building where a large room was available. One ground floor quarter in IT quarters had been in bad condition due to water logging and had not been allotted anyone for long. I prevailed on the Estate Officer to allot it to me assuring him of vacating it when repairs were to be done. Thus, I could stay near the Shastry Bhavan, where my office was located.

When I took charge of the Chennai bench, both the long-standing members had retired. For an interim period a judicial member from Calcutta bench had been transferred, and on his retirement I was posted to Chennai. The long-standing members did not carry a good reputation as the Editor of *ELT* was regularly attacking the malfunctioning of the bench. The Bar Association also had long-standing grievances on the working of

the bench and about the strained relationship between the members.

When I took charge, the members of the Bar Association met me with a long list of grievances. They also wanted more space for them and the working of the registry was required to be regularized. There was no system of listing of the appeals on the basis of seniority. It was brought to my notice that about a thousand appeals had not been numbered for a decade and the demand drafts were lying in the files. The junk in the office had accumulated for a decade. The law journals had not been kept in a bound condition the library was full of cobwebs. The record room was in a total mess with cobwebs, and dust and chaos.

The technical member had joined recently and was not fully equipped with the court procedures. He had had a long stint in Mumbai, Poona and Belgaum. He cooperated with me in putting the bench in order. The capacity of the bench was for 2000 files but due to disbanding of special benches, about 6,000 files had been transferred to the Chennai bench, which was for all the four southern states. It was a challenging and herculean task for me. Fortunately, the stenographic assistance was top class. We evolved a system to rotate them in the court. After each dictation the next steno would replace the other. By evolving this system, all the dictation of orders in short matters would be typed and be ready for signature on the same day. We streamlined the administration and saw to it that the orders were released within three days. The Chennai staff fully cooperated in the matter, and slowly and steadily our disposal figures increased day by day, as against hundred disposals required to be given our final disposal figures were doubled and tripled with equal number of disposals of short matters. Every Saturday, I would go to office to record the judgments. The staff and stenos would come in rotation to complete the pending work.

The President visited Chennai and expressed his supreme satisfaction with our working. We were able to bring absolute transparency in our working. The counsels were advised to move the court in urgent matters and to file an application for early hearing of appeal in urgent matters. They were required to file application for condonation of delay in filing the appeals, which practice was not in vogue. All appeals having high stakes and revenue and having recurring effects were heard out of turn by granting out-of-turn hearing. Thus within a short time, the entire administration was streamlined. We could create extra space for the Bar Association. The almirahs in the library were shifted to the court hall and the space of the library was utilized for making a chamber for the third member, who would come on tour. The record room was shifted to another space created for that purpose and an extra additional court hall was made for the third member to function in.

Chennai was selected for computerization. We called for tenders and keeping absolute transparency selected the lowest tender. All the tender companies were asked to give demonstration and the lowest tenderer was the best in presentation as against Tata's and big companies, who quoted astronomical figures. Thus, the computerization work began in earnest and all the details of 8,000 appeals were fed in the system. We were able to bunch appeals on the basis; of similar issues and could dispose of appeals on batch basis, there was all round happiness and satisfaction.

But unfortunately, after two years of my taking over a tragedy occurred in the sudden death of the technical member, while he was undergoing angioplasty in Apollo Hospital. It changed the whole atmosphere and rhythm of the working of the bench. There was absolute camaraderie and smooth functioning but with the sudden death of the technical member,

matters became grave and there was disturbance in the functioning of the bench.

For almost one and a half year there was no regular bench member. The members from other benches were coming on tour for a short period of one week or at best two weeks. Each member had his own temperament. A few did not carry a good reputation and were cunning and shrewd. Their visits were more a picnic for them. They were entertained by the Commissioners and Chief Commissioner and various persons. Some were “wining and dining”.

A few were very good and cooperative. One such person was a Sardarji, who opted to stay for a longer period. He was hard working and fully cooperated in the working of the bench. It cannot be said with regard to the departmental representatives. One had gained a bad reputation in view of his clandestine activity. The Central Vigilance Commission, after due inquiry of his involvement in an irregular activity transferred him to a remote place. Persons who did not carry good reputation were often posted to the tribunal. One person had suffered the ignominy of facing a penalty of rupees one lakh in a customs case. He did not learn any lesson and continued with his activity.

Before the death of the Technical Member, a new President hailing from Kerala and functioning as Chief Justice of Gujarat high court took over the tribunal. He was close to Satya Sai Baba. He desired frequent arrangements of the touring bench to Kerala, Bangalore and Hyderabad. He took decisions for setting up a bench at Bangalore. In this regard I had been pursuing the matter for setting up the bench at Bangalore with the cooperation of the Bar Association. The technical member with his influence in the finance ministry could get the necessary sanctions and additional funds. The Bangalore Bar Association located a building in the Karnataka FKCCI complex. With due sanctions,

the Bangalore bench was inaugurated in the year 2001, but it happened after the demise of the technical member. I had worked hard for its setting up and for transferring the files of the Kerala and Karnataka, and later the files of Andhra Pradesh were also transferred

The interim period between the taking over of two Presidents was filled with the Vice President again taking charge on his return from the Calcutta bench for a period of six months till the President took over. But his style of functioning remained the same. During the interregnum period, he did not complete his judicial work and when he retired there were more than 300 files in which he had not recorded his judgments. He was busy politicking and making hectic efforts for the post of the President. The Editor of the *ELT* and the Bar Association by then were wry of his style of functioning. They worked against him. He retired before the next President could take over.

In 1998, one post of Vice President fell vacant and in 1999 another post stood vacant. A lady member, senior to me, was to be promoted along with me for the two posts which fell vacant. Both our names were recommended by the President for the appointment to the finance ministry. Usually the vacancy for the vacant post would be filled up within weeks, as had happened from the inception of the tribunal in 1982. For reasons unknown the promotion of both the members did not come through for years, despite reminders sent by the President. The finance ministry had cleared the papers and sent the recommendation to the cabinet secretary for clearance who called for a second recommendation on the ground that the file had been misplaced. The next lady President sent the recommendation again. But the file did not get cleared despite the Revenue Secretary sending reminder after reminder to the Cabinet Secretary. From the copy of the papers obtained after a lapse of some years by the Editor

of *ELT*, which copies were provided to me, it was clear that the Cabinet Ministers had cleared the file on both the occasions but some officers in the cabinet secretariat had deliberately not returned the file to the finance ministry for issue of orders. This non-clearance of our names for the post of VP had created unhappiness in both the members, who were judicial members and both had stepped in their fiftieth year of age.

It so happened that the technical members were nearing retirement. Their grievance was that both the judicial members would be VPs for a decade and that they would not get a chance for promotion. This created ill feelings in them and they started campaigning openly for one post to be reserved for them. They made representations collectively and individually. This brought about a piquant situation. Their clamour grew more and more. The touring technical members were vociferous with me in regard to their claim. This created a bad atmosphere. Most unfortunately they adopted all means and methods to tarnish the image of both the members in order to stall the promotion. Their efforts paid off.

While laying down the office the retiring President made some unsavoury remarks in my confidential report for the year 1999-2000, although he had recorded that I was "hard working, gave good disposals without keeping any pendency and had good knowledge of law". I was put to great pain and anguish due to these adverse remarks. The entire Bar Association came to my rescue. Senior advocates offered their services to challenge the matter in the central administrative tribunal (CAT). One senior advocate took up the matter as a challenge. Finally the matter was decided in my favour by the CAT Chennai. The adverse remarks were expunged. It was also laid down that the President was not vested with powers to record the confidential reports of members in law, and on merits the President should confine

himself with performance of the members and not to be carried away by extraneous matters. The lady President was personally prejudiced with me and took up the matter personally in appeal to the high court of Madras. After prolonged litigation, the high court of Madras upheld the judgment of the CAT.

In the meantime, for the succeeding periods, the lady President, ignoring my hard and sustained work, carried the ill will and again made unsavoury and adverse entries in the CR, which were extraneous to the work, as well as to the work and functions of the member. It was more personal in nature. Moreover when the CAT had laid down that the President had no powers in law to record the CR, her action was totally illegal and unsustainable. She continued to bear the ill will and recorded adverse entries for three year, although, she had recorded that I had put in hard work, had good knowledge of law and did not retain files. She had also noted that I had carried out computerization and had kept the place neat and clean.

The post of VP was made a selection post on the recommendation of the lady President. A committee was constituted for the selection of the VP. The lady President being one of the main members in the Committee, my selection to the post of VP was overruled and in my place a judicial member, 10 years my junior, was selected. I had disposed of more than 10,000 appeals and an equal number of short matters. I was independently in charge of the bench and had cleared a huge backlog in Chennai bench besides putting the bench in order. I had carried out computerization and also more than 2,000 judgments had been reported in the law journals It was a great shock to me and my family. The Bar Association of Chennai, Delhi, Bangalore, Mumbai and Calcutta were equally surprised and shocked. They were able to see politics behind my non-selection.

In support of my representation to the adverse entries made by the lady President the senior advocates and members of the Bar Association gave affidavits in support of my representation. I appealed to the CAT Bangalore on my non-selection to the post of VP. However on my transfer to Mumbai from Bangalore bench on 30 October 2008, I took voluntary retirement and brought the curtains down on my service.

Meanwhile, the Madras high court judgment was challenged in the Supreme Court. But the government gave an undertaking that it was in agreement with the CAT's and high court's judgment on the striking down of the adverse entry in the CR but was only seeking power for the President to record the CRs of the members. The Chief Justice of India recorded the undertaking and wrote down that the proceedings against me shall not come in the way of my promotions and future appointments. But it was too late. The Committee had already overruled my selection to the post of VP despite the fact that my honesty, integrity, hard work and capacity to write good timely judgments were not questioned, but in fact were endorsed. The lady President solely wanted to support the CR of her predecessor. A great injustice was meted out to me. It resulted in anguish, pain and suffering. But I did not allow this to effect my working. I doubled my efficiency and hard work.

Bangalore Bench Period

On my resumption of charge at Bangalore bench, I was welcomed with open arms by the Bar members and DRs. The technical member hailed from Lucknow and spoke chaste Urdu, a gentleman to the core. He was efficient, knowledgeable and a very sober, kind and a silent person. We had a very good rapport till he was transferred to the Delhi bench. The lady President in the meanwhile retired. In her place a retired Judge from Gujarat was appointed as President. A Commissioner (Appeals) from

Bangalore was selected as member technical and posted to the bench. He was the most erudite member I had come across in my service. In his company I found peace, solace and comfort. We together commenced an era of high disposal of appeals. We did not have a single difference of opinion. He wrote fine judgments in good language.

The President made his official visits. He made a thorough enquiry with regard to the CRs and about the pending court cases. He was satisfied that the remarks were totally unjustified and regretted very much. He later informed me that he had sent a report to the government along with his CR that the previous CRs, were motivated and incorrect. He told me that he gave me outstanding reviews and recorded about my sincere and hard work. Thus, my work and honour were recognized by the subsequent Presidents.

Silver Jubilee Celebration of CESTAT (1982-2007)

Under the leadership of Justice Abhi Chandani, the President, the Ahmadabad bench came into existence. He brought in discipline, cleaned up the administration and identified the corrupt. Many innovative measures were introduced. He did his best to root out maladministration and corruption in the staff and registry. He suspended and initiated domestic enquiries against officials. The Silver Jubilee celebration of the setting up of the CESTAT was done with much fanfare in Delhi. I could not participate in the function but all the members from all the centres did. A sitting Supreme Court Judge inaugurated the function. A brochure was brought out which carried my article. Later, the Bangalore Bar Association held a separate function at Bangalore in the special function hall at the cricket stadium. The Chief Justice, along with three high court judges, inaugurated the function I also delivered a speech. We were presented with mementos. The first batch of Bangalore bench members were also felicitated as special invitees.

Sudden Transfer to Mumbai Bench and My Opting for VRS

The Bangalore bench achieved success with the full cooperation of the Bar and the DRs. There was absolute cooperation, coordination and harmony among the members and the registry. As these things were going on happily, without any warning or any inkling, I got a telephone call on 30 October 2008 from the Editor of *ELT* that I have been transferred to Mumbai bench with immediate effect. This was confirmed by the Registrar on my enquiry, the same night. The news was unexpected and sudden. Although, I had apprehended such an event to transpire on my completion of five years tenure, yet I did not expect it to come so early. The reason was made clearer to me by the Editor of the *ELT*. He had long set of grievances against both the VPs and the judicial member of the Mumbai bench. He had carried a series of articles bringing allegations against them. The incumbent was a retired Chief Justice of Patna high court. He was inducted as a Chairman of State Human Right's Commission. The Editor of the *ELT* brought pressure on the government. The Secretary Revenue and the President then decided to shift the VP to Calcutta Bench and the lady VP from Mumbai bench to the Chennai bench. The judicial member from the Mumbai bench was to replace me. I spoke to the President over the phone the next morning and mentioned my difficulties in moving to Mumbai bench due to my failing health. He disclosed to me that the Mumbai bench was to be presided by a VP and he wanted to rectify the wrong done to me by placing me in charge of it which had four benches. Although it was flattering yet I had to appeal to him to reconsider my case. Promptly my representation was rejected on the same day. Likewise, the representations of VPs and other members were also rejected.

The President laid down his office immediately thereafter. My appeal to the government also did not find favour. I did not

move to Mumbai bench but applied for leave, which fortunately was sanctioned, as it was on health grounds. I gave my three months' notice for voluntary retirement on completion of 20 years on 24 April 2009 and I retired on that date with still four years of service left to my credit. I was to retire on 3 March 2013.

The Sixth Pay Commission had recommended for grant of full pension on retirement on completion of 20 years of service. Thus I got full pension benefits after retirement. Some of my well wishers pointed out to me that my non-elevation as high court judge was a blessing in disguise from the pecuniary point of view, as otherwise I would not have got full pension and medical benefits. Everything happens for the good and there is purpose in the design of the Divine. At every stage of my life there has been Divine intervention and help, and my faith in the Divine has been unflinching and unwavering.

Literary Activities

For a judicial or a quasi-judicial person, mingling with society is restricted. He is also hard-pressed for time, as he is confined within the four corners of his office and residence. He needs to devote all his time to his work, always concerned with writing judgments, and to accomplish this task, he needs to keep reading enormous contents of the files, evidence on record and case law. I kept myself busy in office and during weekends; I had no recreation as I did not possess a radio or TV. I did not have much interest in watching films or listening to music. I had only fascination for poetry both in English and Urdu language and for Sufi studies. I meditated every day in the morning and in the evening; devotedly reading scriptures, making comparative study of religions, and studying philosophic work and work of general interest. In Delhi I would borrow books from the library for my general reading and would also purchase literary and Sufi books,

as and when I could save some amount. In course of time, I had a modest collection of books besides my collection of law books.

I penned my first book *Essence of Islam & Sufism and Its Impact on India*, and it was published in 1998 in Delhi. I drew inspiration from Sufi saints on my regular visits to their mausoleums, and their influence inspired me to pen poems in Urdu from 1996 onwards. Later they were corrected and polished by stalwarts and my selected Urdu Sufi poems were published from Bangalore by International Sufi Centre in June 2008, titled *Sooz o Suroor*.

I took up to penning my spiritual experiences and my observation on life, men and matters in English. On my transfer to Chennai, I could become a member of Chennai Poetry Circle. I started contributing my poems in English to various poetry journals in Chennai, Bangalore, Vizag, Calcutta and various other places. My first selected poetry collection *In Golden Times* was released on 4 March 2001 at a function to honour an octogenarian Indo-English poet and Editor of *Poet*, an English poetry journal, Dr. Krishna Srinivas. Till date I have published 12 collections of poems in English.

My poetry collection got favourable reviews and it was acclaimed by academicians, poets and reviewers. The President of Chennai Writers Union, Mr. Justice S. Mohan, (Retired) Judge of Supreme Court and the Secretary recommended to the International University of Comparative Religion, Washington, USA, for conferring on me a Doctorate in Literature which was conferred on me on March 2004. The 'Poets International' conferred the best poet 2003 award on me. The 'International Poets Academy' headed by Mr. Justice S. Mohan and Indo English Poet of fame, Dr. Syed Ameeruddin, conferred 'Excellence in World Poetry Award' in April 2009.

I penned a prose work *Islam and Sufism: Are They Same?* which was published by International Sufi Centre Bangalore. A

book on *Indian English Poetry on the Move* is awaiting publication from Viking, Jaipur. One student of M Phil from Indian School of Mines University, Dhanbad, has done a dissertation on my poetry and the work has been published and titled *Spiritual Consciousness in the Poetry of S.L.Peeran*. My lectures, talks, interviews and articles on Sufism have been uploaded on the web site www.Internationalsuficentre.org. I have been editing *Sufi World*, a journal on Sufi Culture, Philosophy and Literature since 2005.

Thus, my past time is being fruitfully spent in meditation, composing poems and in Sufistic activities. My son has created a website in my name www.slpeeran.wikidot.com. All my works have been uploaded on the site.

Part II
Sufi Articles

World Religions

The Hindu civilization is the oldest civilization on Earth. All its parallels, Roman, Greek, Egyptian and Mesopotamian have ceased to exist. The people across the river Sind were referred to as Hindus. The Aryans settled down near the river Sind after their migration, generations before the commencement of Vedic period, which is a millennium ago, i.e., more than 3500 years ago. The Rishis, who led the life of a recluse, did immense meditation and what was heard by them was Shrutis¹ or *Vedas* and it was recorded as *Smritis*. The Vedic words were the *Upanishads Vedas: Rigveda, Yajurveda, Atharvaveda, Samaveda, Ayurveda* and *Shastras*. The *Upanishads*² speak of a universal spirit (Brahman³) and of an individual soul (Atman) and at times assert the identity of both. The All Existing Lord was Eshwara and the followers were referred to as brahmins. The language of the times was Prakrit, later it became Sanskrit.

The common feature of the people of Vedic period was in the belief of the existence of the All Powerful God known as Eshwara, The Omnipotent and Omnipresent, the Ever-Existing and Everlasting Lord, the Creator, Destructor and Nourisher or Sustainer. Later, the philosophy developed and the belief of Eshwara taking the form of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva came into existence along with its attendant mythology. The belief in the Creator Shiva and his consort Parvathi and their sons Ganapathi

and Subramaniam and its attendant mythology also came into existence. Vishnu was the destroyer of Evil and he took birth whenever evil took an upper hand. Thus, Vishnu has taken births as avatars. Lord Rama and Lord Krishna are believed to be the avatars of Vishnu. The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* record the legend of Lord Rama and Lord Krishna and the war of the Pandavas and Kauravas, The speech and utterances of Lord Krishna on the battlefield to Arjuna is considered as divine utterances and it is in the *Bhagavad Gita*. Brahma does not have any form and He is Formless.

Later, down the centuries, the religion became dogmatic with Manu, the sage, writing down the law for the people, who were referred to as Hindus. Thus, came into existence *Manu Shastra*. This *Manu Shastra* recognized the existence of caste system based on the vocation practised by the people.⁴ The people of God were the brahmins, who were the custodians of scriptures living a most austere life of worship, learning and prayers. The rulers were kshatriyas, the business communities were the Vaishya, and the service providers and artisans were the shudras.

Those who did other menial jobs were outside the pale of these four castes and they were the downtrodden and outcastes. The shudras and the outcastes did not have many rights and privileges of the society. The punishment for offences to be meted out to these four castes and the outcastes were equally different. In any case, the main substance of these teachings of Hinduism was to live a dharmic life of goodness and to shun evil. Those who continued to do the acts of evil would not get "Moksha" or merger with the Lord, but would be reborn on earth as animals in the form of a dog, a cat or any other form. They can be reborn again in other castes based on the life led by them in the previous birth. The concept of rebirth is the essential belief of Hinduism. The rebirth in the animal form or other forms was referred to as

transmigration of souls. There is also the concept of award for good deeds and punishment or divine retribution in this world itself, and also in the hereafter as “Surag and Narag”, heaven and hell.

Hinduism took a turn after the advent of Islam and the consequent rule of Muslims in India. A movement known as Bhakti Movement was started to bring a communal harmony between two religions of Hinduism and Islam based on the common belief of dharma, love for the Lord Almighty and final merger with the Lord. Various means were adopted to reach this goal, like divine singing, music, poetry, hymns, community feeding and social work for the poor and downtrodden. Great souls like Kabir, Meera Bai, Moinuddin Chisti, and Amir Khusroo to quote a few names revived the religions.

The second important movement was commenced during the British period by Raja Rammohan Roy starting the Brahma Samaj, Swami Dayananda Saraswati starting the Arya Samaj to abolish the evil system of caste, sati and to bring reformation by widow remarriage, abolishing child marriage and such other evil customs and practices which had crept into the Hindu ethos and culture.

Mughal Emperor Akbar attempted to synthesize both the religions based on the common beliefs, and invented the religion “Din-e-Ilahi,” religion of God, but it did not have any takers but his attempts did not go in vain. It could bridge the gap between the two major religions, Hinduism and Islam, based on the belief in the existence of the Almighty and All Powerful God, who controls the destiny of people and the universe. Many reformers like Shankaracharya, Madhavacharya, Ramanujam and Basweshwara enlightened the people about the different philosophies in Hinduism.

The third most successful and important movement was started by Mahatma Gandhi along with his freedom struggle to win freedom from the British rule. Mahatma Gandhi (Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi) believed in the existence of Eternal Truth. He commenced his life by experimenting with truth. He proposed that all were children of God, and the casteless and downtrodden were to be given full dignity. He called them children of God "Harijana". Baba Saheb Ambedkar, the founding father of our Indian Constitution, fought and won legal rights for the harijans. Thus, the freedom of India brought drastic changes in the religion of Hinduism by which all Hindus mingled together and prayed together in all the temples throughout the length and breadth of the country.

Along with the freedom struggle and the ushering in of democracy and socialism, cultural and spiritual renaissance was also in the resurgence. Great saints took birth among Hindus and Muslims, and they tried to unite the people on the spiritual beliefs. Thus an important part was played by yogis, seers, saints and sufis to bring in unification among the people of India. Foremost among them was Shirdi Sai Baba, who is considered as a Hindu by the Hindus and as a Muslim fakir by Muslims.

Next in greatness, who took social reforms along with spiritual transformation is Satya Sai Babaji. who did not live the life of a fakir or as a recluse as in the case of Shirdi Sai Baba, but took the lead to alleviate the burden of poverty. He undertook the enormous social work along with the elevation of the souls through education, and has become a Messiah by opening high specialty hospitals for the poor and sick, who are left uncared by the cruel society. He is one of the greatest spiritual forces for the resurgence of Hinduism in the light of the materialistic living and agnostic thinking.

We are not to forget the role played by Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa who started the Ramakrishna Mission and his beloved disciple, Swami Vivekananda, who revived the Vedic teaching of the Vedanta, i.e., belief and worship in one Lord Almighty. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi revived yoga and became a universal yoga teacher. Yoga today has become a healer to the tension-ridden world. Presently, his work is carried out by a number of his disciples. One such is Sri Sri Ravishankar. Baba Ramdev is known for popularizing yoga to the masses.⁵

Hundreds and thousands of saints, seers, yogis and reformers have been working for the resurgence of faith in the people in the religion of Hinduism by making them faithful, compassionate and kind.

The influence of Islam in India was the birth of Sikhism. Sikh means a seeker of God. Guru Nanak along with his Muslim disciple Mardana walked all over India. He visited Mecca as a Muslim fakir. It is believed that he led the prayers there as an Imam for a year. He was proficient in Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit and Gurmukhi. He adopted the belief of unity of godhead, i.e., Tauheed of Islam and belief of rebirth and *moksha* of Hinduism. He taught the belief of Sufis 'Zikr'—recitation of Lord's name as 'Japji'. He wrote hundreds of hymns for 'Japa' in Gurmukhi. He advised his followers to earn their bread with the sweat of the brow and to feed the poor and needy. Thus, in all Gurudwaras free feeding or *langar* is done to all, as was the practice among the Sufis in their 'Khankas'. The divine music was a media to sing the celestial songs written by him. The learning by brahmins, the valour of the kshatriyas, the entrepreneurship of the Vaishyas, the hard work of the shudras were the ethics of Sikhism. Begging was totally discouraged and we don't find begging among the Sikhs.

Let us now see the position of the other two religions of our ancient land: Jainism and Buddhism. Lord Mahavira was the 24th Tirthankara of the religion of Jainism. Jainism is older than Buddhism. It is based on non-violence and *ahimsa*. Today, most of the traders' business communities and industrialists, like the Birlas, Marwaris, are Jains. They believe in truthful living and *ahimsa*, and non-violence.

Although Buddhism took its birth in India, Siddhartha the Prince of Pataliputra in Bihar, was much afflicted with suffering, agony and pain of the people. Buddhism was founded by him. He was a Prince of Kapilavastu and he took *sanyas* to find out its cause. He received enlightenment and became Gautama Buddha. He found that attachment to worldly pleasures and sensual feelings resulted in disappointment and frustrations, thus leading to sorrows and suffering. He propounded the eightfold path, which teaches the need to develop and practice the right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. It recommended the list of virtues or *paramitas* for daily practice like generosity, discipline or morality, patience, diligence or effort, concentration and insight, skilful means, aspiration, spiritual power and wisdom.

After the Kalinga war, King Ashoka embraced Buddhism and spread its teaching throughout the length and breadth of India. Later, Lord Shankaracharya, in eighth century before Christ revived Hinduism by starting four Mathas in North, South, East and West of India. Both Jainism and Buddhism have become totally minor religions in India. The followers of Buddhism are few in India. However, it spread to Burma, the Far East countries like Thailand, to Sri Lanka, Japan, the Philippines and China. The influence of both these religions to contain violence in society cannot be discounted. Compassion and kindness to men and

animals are the main features of both the religions. They are very soft-spoken, kind and very compassionate people practising both these religions.

Now let us turn towards the three Abrahamic religions, which took birth in Palestine, Jerusalem and in Mecca based on the common foundation and beliefs, which I shall elaborate and narrate to you.

Creation of Man

The religions in the Abrahamic three-sister religions is based on the belief that God is Single and Unitary and has no partners, nor there is any division of His work to be carried by any of His lieutenants. He is the Whole and Sole Creator, Destructor, Sustainer, Ever-Living Creator of the entire universe, sun, stars, moon, anything and everything. Everything in this universe works on His commands and He has full knowledge and control over it.

God assembled all His angles that were in ever submission and obedience to Him and announced about the creation of man, Adam, in His own image. He created Adam out of clay and commanded all the angles to bow down before man. But the Chief of Angels disobeyed on the plea that he was more superior having been created with fire and he would burn the man of clay. God banished him who became Satan or Devil. The devil got permission from God to waylay man and distract him. At the same time, he admitted that he would not be able to distract or go near the most humble and obedient men.

God created Eve from the rib of man to give Adam company and commanded both of them not to eat the fruit from the tree of life. However, Satan instigated Eve to taste the fruit to attain immortality. Eve in turn instigated and influenced Adam to break the oath taken by them. They ate the fruit thus breaking

the promise given to Lord to avoid the fruit and shun the company of the devil. Both were thrown out of Paradise to the Earth. The Lord taught Adam words to seek pardon and Adam and Eve met again and their first sin was pardoned. They were commanded to live a virtuous, sinless life and were promised heaven after their death and hell for damnation, if they failed in their duties and committed wrongs and sins.

Adam and Eve bore sons who quarrelled and shed blood, thus man became a disobedient and thankless being. The progeny of Adam and Eve grew into races and spread across the length and breadth of the earth. All nations were formed and civilizations developed. There was a need for guidance for man to follow the righteous path and hence God sent prophets with messages to the people, with commandments that those who committed sin would enter eternal fire and damnation, and those who prayed and submitted to the Lord's commands and followed the righteous path would be awarded heaven. Again and again, God warned that Satan would waylay man and mislead them and He warned man to shun the company of evil, to always follow goodness and be ever meek and humble, not to be arrogant, boastful and not to commit theft, murder, hurt another person, not to commit fornication or covet another's wife. Thus, a law was given to man to show what was right and what was wrong. Yet men committed wrongs and forgot the righteous path, despite God sending prophet after prophet to guide the humanity.

Man left the worship of the Singular Unseen Lord of the universe and at the instance and instigation of the devil started creating idols for worship. Man chose the sun, moon, stars, rivers, animals for worship and committed many untold sins and put weaker men to hardship and slavery. He became unjust, cruel and wicked. Despite warnings from Him, man disobeyed the prophets. Therefore, God sent punishment in the form of a deluge, like in

the case of Noah's time. Those who followed Noah were saved, the rest were all drowned. God punished erring humanity by fire, earthquakes and by other means.

Abraham

The humanity had become corrupt and had taken up to idol worship and forgotten the promise to worship One Single Unitary God. Abraham broke their idols and therefore idol worshippers dug a deep pit, lit a huge fire in it and threw Abraham into the fire. However, miraculously he came out of the fire unharmed

When the king, Namrud, heard of Abraham's safe exit from the fire he became very angry. He feared that the status of godhead he had proclaimed for himself was now challenged by an ordinary human being. He summoned Abraham to the palace and held a dialogue with him. When Abraham said (to him), "My Lord (Allah) is He Who gives life and causes death," he said: "I give life and cause death." Abraham said: "Verily! Allah causes the sun to rise from the east; then causes to set in the west." So the disbeliever was utterly defeated.

By various ways God tested Abraham and chose him as a prophet. Abraham succeeded in his love to the Lord Almighty. He bore Isaac or Ishaq from his first wife Sara.

Ishaq's son Jacob later came to be known as Israel. His son Yusuf or Joseph succeeded in carrying on Jacob's prophetic work. As a boy, his 11 brothers conspired and sold him to a caravan. The caravan went to Egypt where the governor purchased him. The Governor's wife Zulaika fell in love with him and the governor noticed her action of chasing Joseph. Zulaika accused Joseph of attempting to molest her.

Joseph was imprisoned where he chose to do God's work. He prayed intensely. God chose him as a prophet and blessed

him with the gift to interpret dreams. He correctly interpreted the dreams of two prisoners out of whom one became the king's personal cook. The king had a dream and sought its interpretation; and none was able to interpret it. The cook remembers about Joseph and he recommended the king to take his services and Joseph interpreted the dream. Later, the dream came true and Joseph was made a governor. His brothers came to Egypt due to drought, for taking grains, and Joseph recognized them. After a chain of events, the father and sons united. In Egypt, these people of Jerusalem or Palestine came to be known as Bani Israel.

From the descendants of Joseph, after several centuries, was born Moses. The Pharaoh king was warned about the birth of a child who would end his religion and his rule. He orders for killing of all the young ones. The mother of Moses put the child in a cradle and left it on a riverside. The cradle reached the place where Queen Asiya was taking bath. She took care of the child and Moses, sister and mother went to the palace and requested the Queen to give the child in their custody, so that they could bring him up in healthy surroundings. Moses later grew up in the lap of the Pharaoh. As a young man he revolted against the tyranny of the Pharaoh and left for Palestine. He received enlightenment and power of doing miracles.

Moses returned to Egypt and faced severe tests from the Pharaoh. He refused to follow the gods of Pharaoh. He instigated his people to rise in revolt and to follow him. This, he did after God appeared before him in the form of a light from a bush and bestowed the miracles on him to defeat the Pharaoh. Later, God bestowed the Ten Commandments to Moses. This is how the Old Testament as a Gospel has come into existence. Moses took his 12 tribes of Bani Israel to Palestine; his followers were now called as Jews, and their religion as Judaism.

From among Moses's descendants came David (whose gospel is known as Zaboor), Solomon and a host of prophets, one giving charge to the other. Prophet Zachariah had a niece Mary, who gave birth to a child miraculously through God's Command. The child spoke about his mother's innocence from the cradle. The child is Eisa as mentioned in the *Holy Quran*, called Jesus now. His Gospel was Injeel as per the *Holy Quran* or *Bible* or *Old Testament*.

The people of Palestine or Jews refused to accept him as a prophet on the plea that he claimed to be the Son of God. In the religion of Judaism, there cannot be worship to anyone other than a Singular God, who cannot be begotten or multiplied nor have a partner. Jesus was accused of blasphemy and he was crucified.

While he was taken to crucifixion, his followers asked him who would be the next prophet. Jesus said that no more prophets would come from Jews and a great prophet would come from the Gentiles, referring to Prophet Mohammed.

After the birth of Mohammed, who was the descendant of Abraham through his second son Ismail, his followers are referred to as Muslims. The holy book of Prophet Mohammed is *Holy Quran*.

Birth of Prophet Mohammad, *Holy Quran* and Muslims

Prophet Mohammad was born posthumously in the month of April 571 after Christ on Monday. His father died just before his birth and his mother died when he was six years. His grandfather died when he was eight years old. His uncle, Abu Talib, brought him up. He belonged to a noble family of the tribe of Quraish in Mecca. As a child, he exhibited many wonderful miracles and he was unique. His family was the custodian of the Holy Ka'ba wherein had been placed 360 idols, and all the tribes of Arabia

would come annually to pay homage to the idols, but as a child he developed faith in the One Almighty God, the Creator, Sustainer, Cherisher, Merciful and Compassionate. As he grew up his truthfulness, simplicity, helping nature to the poor old, and infirm was noticed. His generosity, kindness and his good qualities came to be noticed and he was referred to as "Al Ameen", the Trustworthy, and "Al Sadiq," the Truthful. He accompanied the caravan of his uncle as a child to various surrounding places of Arabia. The Christian priest, Buhaira, recognized him as a future foretold prophet. His virtues attracted the attention of a rich widow, Khadija, who asked him to deal with her business by accompanying the caravan on trade. His scrupulous honesty, integrity and truthfulness made Khadija offer herself in marriage to him, although she was senior in age. Mohammad accepted her as his wife and he begot four daughters.

Mohammed was very godly and divine. He would distribute large sums of his wealth to poor people and would sit in a cave in a nearby hillock near Mecca in deep meditation. When he was 40 years old, Angel Gabriel appeared before him and asked him to read. Muhammad expressed his inability, as he was unlettered. Angel Gabriel hugged him and made him read Allah, God's verses. From then on, Muhammad kept getting the divine inspiration and verses from Allah. All such utterances have been collected in the *Holy Quran*, which has 30 chapters and 114 suras. All the Suras start with the name of Lord Allah, the Merciful and Compassionate.

Allah the Merciful and Compassionate

Prophet Mohammed kept reciting the suras of the Holy Book Quran as and when it was revealed to him. Initially very few people accepted his prophet-hood. He preached his people to bow down and pray only to the Single God Allah the Universal Lord, who is Creator, Sustainer, Cherisher, Tremendous, Merciful

and Compassionate. Allah has 99 attributes. The most important is the attribute, Ever Living and Ever Sustaining, having knowledge of all the things, acts, and deeds of every living and non-living being created by Him at His command of 'kun fa ya kun' and it came into existence. Allah commanded humanity not to be misled by Satan, the accursed enemy of mankind, but to follow the straight path of those who are virtuous, truthful, doers of good deeds and who lay down their lives in sacrifice in the cause of Allah, as obedient and subservants of Allah. The follower of prophet Muhammad, who believed him as the last of Prophets so far sent by Allah and submitted in total submission and obedience to Allah, were referred to as Muslims. Muslims are faithful and the religion which was practised by all the prophets from the first creation of Adam, was known as Islam, thereby, meaning submission to the will of Allah or God and Peace.

Prophet Muhammad lived in abject poverty and shunned richness, wealth, prosperity and overlordship. He renounced the worldly living, yet, he was a trustworthy and honest tradesman. A perfect man, a perfect teacher, a perfect leader of men, a perfect being (Insan-e-kamil). He was a perfect example of pure and perfect living and Allah made him a perfect person with a sterling character and conduct, and commanded humanity to follow his example in every walk of daily life. Muhammad was pure and practised cleanliness of body, mind, heart and soul. All the commands of Allah on the virtuous conduct for man were followed by him scrupulously. He was sincere and most humble to the core. A truly surrendered soul to the Supreme Will of Almighty God. Prophet Mohammed was blessed with 99 good and noble qualities.

Allah is most merciful and compassionate. He commanded man not to create fiction, mythology, and all such false gods in the form of idol worship but bow down and follow Him alone

who is the Single Owner of the universe without any partner or sharing his work. He created heaven and hell. He pardons the sins of all those who seek his mercy and benediction. He loves those who pray five times a day, keep fast for 30 days in the month of Ramzan, give charity from their wealth and perform pilgrimage of Holy Ka'ba built in Allah's memory by Prophet Abraham and Prophet Ismail.

To Keep up the Promise

Allah commands humanity to be truthful, keep up their promises, and fulfil their contracts. Make good the loss that would be caused to others. Men should not indulge in cheating, misrepresentations and fraudulent acts.

All are Creatures of Allah

Allah commands that all are His creatures. All humanity of whatever race or colours, man or woman, master or slave are all equal and are all brothers and sisters. The religion Islam, created world brotherhood of man to enable them to share the joys and griefs. They should respect their kith and kin, parents, old people, the infirm and sick, neighbours, travellers, salute and wish good to one and all, to known and unknown persons.

Maintain Their duty to Allah and His Prophet Mohammad

All should submit to God and God alone in total obedience, sincerity and truthfulness. All should obey Allah's laws and whatever Prophet Mohammed has said and spoken. Everyone should give up anger, ego lust, jealousy, hatred, covetousness and ill feeling but cultivate love for all, generosity, hospitality, sincerity and all good qualities.

Patience, Tolerance, Thankfulness and Contentment

Allah commands humanity not to commit wrongs, but always and ever be righteous, and follow the right and straight path of every

lasting goodness. Be always just and render justice always and ever. Do good to one and all. Do not speak lies, betray friends and relatives, but stand by all the relatives and friends in all adverse circumstances. Allah commands man to be ever patient, thankful and be content and tolerant to the people of all faiths, speak in soft words, walk on the earth softly, not be boastful, exhibit wealth, pomp and show, Not be proud, haughty but be ever kind, compassionate, simple in manners and living, be ever pure in body, mind, heart and soul, not bear rancour, hatred, prejudice, ill feelings for anyone, not to cast their evil eye on women. Women should be virtuous, true to their faith, faithful to their husbands and be in purdah.

Eat Only what is sacrificed in Allah's Name

Alcohol, drinking wine, gambling are totally prohibited and so also collecting interest on loans and usury totally prohibited. God commands Muslims to relieve the burdens of the loans of the faithful and help them with free loans without any expectations, and help them for the sake of Allah and his Prophet.

Allah commands mankind to do and die only for Allah's sake and be ever pure. Eat only those animals which have hoof cleft but not pork, and the animals should have been sacrificed in God's name and it becomes 'Halal'. All carnivorous animals, pork, preying birds and blood of animals are totally prohibited.

Silk Dress (for Men) and Gold Jewellery (for Men) is Prohibited

Men should not wear silk and expensive dresses but be simple. They should not wear women's dress. They should not wear gold jewellery nor eat food in silver and gold plates. They should control their animal desires, passions, anger, ego, ill feelings, adopt correct posture and live with dignity, poise and grace.

Brotherhood of Man

The most important commandment is equality of man and woman. They should their share all the wealth and everything else with each other. All should join in the times of happiness and sorrow. All should share the grief of their kith and him and relieve them of their affliction. They should join the bier taken for burial and conduct prayers for the dead, be together at the time of burial, and pray for the forgiveness of the dead person. No faithful should carry even a grain of pride and ill feelings in his heart. If he does so, all his good deeds will not be accepted and he will be sent to hell for eternal damnation.

Prophet Mohammed is Mercy to Mankind and Light of the Universe

Allah refers to Prophet Mohammed as mercy for mankind who would relieve all the sinners from hell by seeking pardon, mercy and forgiveness from the Lord Almighty. The *Holy Quran* refers to Prophet Mohammed as the light of the universe. He opens the mind of each of his followers to enlightenment and learning. The *Holy Quran* says that Prophet Mohammad has been sent as a warner and giver of good tidings. It also directs humanity to adopt eternal goodness, justice, equality, kindness, love for everyone and be ever forgiving.

Allah and Prophet Mohammad commanded humankind to do ever good until their last breath; not hurt anyone by hand, tongue or even ill feelings to anyone but live and serve Allah and His Prophet, be always just and practise equality, kindness and love, ever love all the creatures of the world. Allah has commanded humankind to shun wrong acts, evil deeds, cruel and wicked acts, not indulge in lying, theft, forgery, prostitution, shameful acts, adultery and fornication, but be always truthful and deal justly one and all be; forgiving to the wrongs done by others and not keep enmity and grudge in their hearts.

Commonality between the Religions of the World

Now the, world over universal brotherhood is recognized and slavery of humankind has been totally abolished. All the laws of equality, freedom of man Constitution of India and justice have been recognized as fundamental rights of man, and performing all good deeds has been recognized as a fundamental duty to be performed by the citizens in the.

The Hindu, Christian and Mohammadan laws on contracts, crime, special contracts, law of partnership, sale of goods and all laws of common nature have now been merged and parliamentary laws have been passed for all citizens to follow the same.

Every human being has realized that the destiny is controlled by the Super Being. You call it subconscious mind, God, Eshwara or Allah or by whatever name it might be. All have realized that goodness shall prevail and evil shunned in order to achieve eternal peace, harmony and happiness. Whatever religion you may belong to and in whatever manner you may worship and pray, it is universally recognized that mankind is singular and that people should live and let live, live in peace and harmony, in brotherhood, in kindness, be ever forgiving and show large-heartedness. Everyone has realized that man should help man when he is afflicted by calamity, floods, earthquake or suffering due to deadly diseases, war or destruction.

Sufism and Vedanta

Sufism or Tasawwuf or Irfan (Marifat e Elahi) teaches humanism, love, brotherhood and oneness, and believes in creating a world citizenship through "Tauheed" (monotheism). Sufism or Irfan is a way of life to achieve perfection of manners, cultivate and culture the mind and heart with purity of thought and good behaviour through possession of all virtues and negation of all

vices by a process of self-annihilation, self-realization, self-sacrifice and self-surrender of will before the Supreme Will of Almighty Allah. Sufism is an absolutely peaceful and totally non-violent movement to awaken the soul to greater grandeur through simple living and practising lofty ideals through meditations 'Zikr' (incantation) 'Sama' (singing of holy hymns) and other Sufi practices by accepting the prophethood (risalat) of holy Prophet Mohammed; by strengthening of faith, servitude (certainty) by practising the precepts of the Holy Prophet, performance of daily namaaz (prayers); acts and deeds of righteousness; seeking and observing "Taqwa" (awe or fear of God Allah); "Taubaah" (repentance), "Tawakal" (Full surrender and trust in Allah); 'Iqlaas' (sincerity), 'Sidq' (truthfulness), contentment (tawakkul), 'Haya' (shame) 'Sabr' (patience), 'Shukr' (gratitude and thankfulness), 'Zikr' (remembrance of Lord's Names) 'Zohad' (renunciation), 'Khauful' (fear) 'Rida' (hope), 'Khushu' (fearfulness, humility), 'Istiqamat' (uprightness, a state in which Allah's grace comes perpetual for it implies the perfect performance of Allah's Service), 'Firasa' (insight) as Prophet Mohammed said, "Beware of the believers insight for he sees with the Sight of Allah", "Wara" (abstaining, that is from all unnecessary and unseemly occupations) and 'Simt' (silence). The Prophet Mohammed is quoted as having said, "Whosoever believes in Allah and his last day, let him speak good or else let him be silent".

Silence is interpreted both literally as meaning that the man should learn to govern his tongue and metaphorically refers to a heart that silently accepts whatever Allah may decree, 'Adab' (decent manners, as Prophet said, "Allah mannered me and taught me good manners", live in righteous conduct; 'Dua' (prayer seeking constantly supplicant to Allah, for Allah says, "Pray for me and I will answer you)." 'Faqr' (poverty), for the Prophet said, "The poor shall enter paradise five hundred years before the rich", 'Tafakkur' (meditation), 'Muraqaba' (contemplation), 'Muhasabah'

(self-examination), 'Tauheed' (belief in one God), 'Mohabba' (love), 'Shauq' (yearning), 'Uns' (intimacy), 'Rida' (satisfaction).

Truth is realized by daily submission to the rule of law laid down by Allah for achieving the perfection of human self by 'Mujahida', a collateral form of jihad, meaning "earnest striving after the mystical life. As the *Holy Quran* says, "And they that strive earnestly in our cause, we surely guide them upon our path" (*Quran* 29:69). The Prophet says that the greater warfare (Al Jihad e Akbar) is against the earnest striving with the carnal soul (*mujahat al nufs*). It is by seeking refuge in Allah and seeking his protection from the animal and satanic forces working in man, by observing 'Saum' (fasting) for the purpose of purification of the inner and outer actions of man, by 'Qurbani' (sacrifice) so as to enable man to break away from the indulgence of pleasure-seeking, materialism, ritualism, taboos and superstitions so as to achieve perpetual peace and 'As Sakina' (eternal peace) through deeds of everlasting goodness (*baquiyat us salihat*), thus to achieve God realization

Sufism enlightens the minds, sharpens the wit, broadens the outlook and purifies the heart and thinking. Above all, Sufism or Irfan makes a person humane and a perfect gentleman in every sense of the term. Sufism is a branch of Islamic spiritualism, and its study and practice is known as 'Tasawuff' (Gnosis). The study is divided into four branches: 'Shariat' (Common Law) 'Tariqat' (Spiritual path) 'Ubudiat' (Servant Lord-unity with Allah) and 'Marifat' (God-realization). Sufism begins with acceptance of 'Tawheed' (monotheism) and 'Risalat' of Prophet Mohammed by observance of personal hygiene, a strict, disciplined life, doing charity and earning one's living through the sweat of one's brow.

Sufism recognizes the presence of a living Master "Peer" and the disciple is the 'Mureed'. The disciple has to take an oath of allegiance on the hand of the Master, who belongs to any one

school of Sufism like Qadria, started by Abdul Qadar Gilani of Baghdad, Chistya School belonging to Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti of Ajmer, Suharwardia School started by Shaikh Shahabuddin Suharwadi, Naqshbandia, a school of Shaikh Bahauddin Naqshbandi and other schools of Sufis and their brotherhood. All Sufis aim at inner purification through intense prayers, self-denial of pleasure and sensual seeking, meditation, contemplation and self-sacrifice.

The concept of Vedantic teaching is also imparted through a teacher, master or a guru to the pupil. There is 'Gurukala' system of 'Guru-Chela' relationship, and the aim is to seek self enlightenment and merge with the Lord Almighty as in the case of Sufis.

Vedas and Quran

The *Vedas* are the most ancient on the earth today and it can be noticed that it contains verses which have the same meaning of holy verses mentioned in the *Quran* about Allahu Taala.

All the praise is to the Creator of this world.

Rig Veda 1-81-5

All Praise to Allah! Lord Creator of all the worlds.

Quran 1:2

He is Bestower and Merciful.

Rig Veda 1-34-3

The Most Kind – the Ever Merciful.

Quran 1:3

Put us on the straight path for our benefit.

Yejer Veda 16-40

Guide us in the straight path.

Quran 1:6

He is the Greatest Owner of the earth and heavens; He the Eshwar shall help us.

Rig Veda 1-100-1

Know you not that to Allah belongs the Kingdom of heavens and the earth and that beside Allah you have not any friend or helper?

Quran 2:107

Parmatma creates all the Parja.

Atharva Veda 1-19-7

And He has created everything.

Quran 6:101

Parmatma never eats, but makes arrangement to feed others.

Rig Veda 20-164-1

Who nourishes all and not nourished Himself.

Quran 6:14

His Murti (replica) cannot be made.

Yejer Veda 3-32

There is nothing like Him.

Quran 42:11

All the directions are His.

Rig Veda 4-121-10

And to Allah belongs the East and the West.

Quran 2:115

Creator of World, He is in the East, West, Above and Below everywhere.

Rig Veda 14-36-10

The Eyes of God are Everywhere, His Face is Everywhere.

Rig Veda 3-81-10

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So in whichever direction you turn your face there is the presence of Allah. Verily Allah is Embracing (in His Mercy) and All Knowing. *Quran 2:115*

No one let the earth or sky can imagine about His knowledge. He controls rain and skies and no other than God controls His creation. *Rig Veda 14-52-1*

And they can grasp nothing of His knowledge except that which He may will. His throne encompasses the heavens and earth.

Quran 2:255

He sends down rain
Quran 31:34

He knows about the boats in the sea.
Rig Veda 7-25-1

Don't you see that the boat sails in the sea merely by His Grace.
Quran 31:30

God is He Who controls all the living beings. Has set the day and night. *Rig Veda 2-190-10*

Don't you see Allah merges the night into day, and merges the day into night, and He has set to work the sun and the moon, each running its course for an appointed term and surely Allah is Aware of what you do. *Quran 31:29*

O Parmeshwar! You reward the pious person, this is Your quality

Rig Veda 6-1-1

This was a special favor from Us, thus We recompense them who is thankful. *Quran 54:35*

It is required that man should be truthful and practice piety.
Rig Veda 2-31-10

Verily Allah does not love one who is haughty and boastful.
Quran 4:36

That Eshwar knows well about whole world.
Rig Veda 4-187-10

Where as Allah knows everything that is in the heavens and that is in the earth. And Allah is the Best Knower of everything.

Quran 49:16

Eshwar knows every thing, who is standing, walking, deceiving, hiding, troubling others and the secrets between two of them.

Uther Veda 2-16-4

He knows your secrets and your open things.

Quran 6:3

And He is with you wherever you may be. And Allah is Seer of what you do.

Quran 57:4

He is Dominant over all living beings.

Rig Veda 2-190-10

And He is Dominant over all His servants.

Quran 6:18

Eshwar sees whatever is in or above the earth and sky.

Atharva Ved 5-16-4

He knows that which goes into the earth and that which comes out of it.

Quran 57

He knows the route of the pleasant winds and all the things, which they support.

Rig Veda 9-25-1

And it is He Who sends the winds as glad tidings before His Mercy (rain).

Quran 25:48

Made day and night.

Rig Veda 2-190-10

And He it is, Who has made the night and the day to follow each other.

Quran 25:62

The Creator has made the sun and moon like His other creatures.

Rig Veda 3-190-10

And He has made the night for rest and the sun and the moon for reckoning.

Quran 6:96

Lift your hands and supplicate in humility to Parameshwar who puts the earth and sky on the straight path, Who is worth worshipping.

Rig Veda 42-16-6

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Listen! His is the Creation and His is the Command. Blessed is Allah, the Lord and Cherisher of all the Worlds! *Quran 7:54*

Call on your Lord in all humility and surely Allah loves not those trespass limits. *Quran 7:55*

In fact, God is very big. *Atharva Veda 3-58-20*

The Most High, the Supreme. *Quran 13:9*

The Law of God does not change. *Rig Veda 10-24-1*

There is no altering the Words of Allah. *Quran 10:64*

O God the earth and the sky shiver due to your greatness. O God You punish the wrongdoers and reward the pious with spiritual status. *Rig Veda 11-8-1*

And to Allah belongs whatever is in the heaven and whatever is in the earth, that He may requite the evil doers for their misdoings and reward with good the pious for their works. *Quran 53:31*

O Parameshwar, You are the First before any one and You are the All Knower. *Rig Veda 2-31-1*

He is the First, He is the Last, He is the Manifest, He is the Hidden, He is the Best Knower of everything. *Quran 57:3*

Knowing good and evil, God has separated evil from good and ordered people; submit yourself to truth and not to falsehood.

Yajur Veda 77-19

Surely now guidance now stands clear from error. So he who rejects the Devil and believes in Allah alone has indeed grasped the most firm hand that is never to break. *Quran 2:256*

The senseless people do not see even though they see the book and do not listen in spite of listening. *Rig Veda 4-71-10*

And yet you read the book! Have you no sense to understand!

Quran 2:44

O Everlasting All Powerful God, You are so precious to me that I shall not leave you at any cost neither hundreds, thousands, millions nor hundreds of worldly benefits.

Rig Veda 5-1-8

And barter not My Revelations for a paltry price, and fear but Me alone. *Quran 2:41*

You do and you only shall earn its benefit. *Yajar Veda 15-23*

And no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of others.

Quran 6:164

O Absolute Powerful High Esteemed God Bless us, as we go astray by our own ignorance. *Rig Veda 3-89-7*

Verily Allah does not wrong mankind a bit but it is they who wrong their own souls. *Quran 10:44*

Whoever eats alone through his own earnings is in fact eating sins.

Rig Veda 6-117-10

By no means shall you ever attain true virtue unless you spend (in the way of Allah) of those things that you hold dear.

Quran 3:92

Whoever spends for the sake of poor and needy is generous and he shall reap its virtues and even his enemies shall become his friends. *Rig Veda 3-117-10*

Those who spend in the way of Allah alike in the prosperity and adversity and who restrain their anger and who pardon their fellow men. And verily Allah loves those who are charitable. *Quran 3:134*

One who does not have mercy on the orphans, who are in need of food and eats himself stiffening his heart, shall not be relieved, when inflicted with sufferings. *Rig Ved 2-117-10*

So he is the wretched one who pushes away the orphan from his door. So woe is to those worshippers Who are neglectful of offering their prayers. *Quran 107:2,3,4*

Mysticism of Christianity is also to seek enlightenment. Monks of various Christian orders have a strict path to seek the ultimate aim of God Realization through self-sacrifice, celibacy, love, and submission to the will of Almighty God.

In sum, today all religions teach humanism, brotherhood of man and to live in peace and harmony. Man can eliminate his suffering by only serving mankind and save the world by acts of good deeds, by shunning evil and protecting the nature and nature's gifts and surroundings.

Notes

1. Shruti ("what is heard") refers to a canon of Hindu religious scripture; all of which have existed (in written form) since, at least, 500 BC. There are four sub-categories of *Shruti*: the *Aranyakas*, *Brahmanas*, *Vedas*, and the *Upanishads*. *Shruti* is said to have no author; but rather, are the divine recordings of "cosmic sounds of truth", heard by rishis.
2. The Sanskrit term upanishad derives from *upa-* (nearby), *ni-* (at the proper place, down) and *sat*, that is "sitting down near" a teacher in order to receive instruction - "laying siege" to the teacher, as Schayer puts it. Monier-Williams adds that "according to native authorities upanishad means 'setting to rest ignorance by revealing the knowledge of the supreme spirit';..." A glossary of the term upanishad based on Shankara's commentary on the Kamkhya and Brhadaranyaka *Upanishads* equates it with *Atmavidya*, that is "knowledge of the Self", or *Brahmavidyā* "knowledge of Brahma". [citation needed] Other dictionary meanings include "esoteric doctrine" and "secret doctrine". The *Upanishads* speak of a universal spirit (Brahman) and of an individual soul (Atman), and at times assert the identity of both. Brahman is the ultimate, both transcendent and immanent, the absolute infinite existence, the sum total of all that ever is, was, or shall be.
3. The complexion of Lord Brahma is red. He is clad in red clothes. He is traditionally depicted with four heads, four faces, and four arms. With each head, He continually recites one of the four *Vedas*. Lord Brahma and Brahman are different.
4. According to the ancient Hindu scriptures, there are four "varnas." The *Bhagavad Gita* says varnas are decided based on *Guna* and *Karma*. *Manusmriti* and some other shastras mention four varnas: the brahmins (teachers, scholars and priests), the kshatriyas (kings and warriors), the vaishyas (agriculturists and traders), and shudras (service providers and artisans).
5. No connection between Swami Ramdev and Mahesh Yogi. Baba Ramdev is a renowned yoga teacher. Through the medium of television, he has taken the art of yoga to each and every household far and wide.

He is the host of a programme named 'Divya Yog' that airs on Aastha TV every day, at 5 am in the morning. People from different parts of the country watch this programme and have started doing yoga from the comforts of their home.

6. Siddhartha, said to have been destined to a luxurious life as a prince, had three palaces (for seasonal occupation) especially built for him. His father, King Suddhodana, wishing for Siddhartha to be a great king, shielded his son from religious teachings or knowledge of human suffering. Siddhartha was brought up by his mother's younger sister, Maha Pajapati.

As the boy reached the age of 16, his father arranged his marriage to Yauodhara (Pali: Yasodhara), a cousin of the same age. According to the traditional account, in time, she gave birth to a son, Rahula. Siddhartha spent 29 years as a prince in Kapilavastu. Although his father ensured that Siddhartha was provided with everything he could want or need, Siddhartha felt that material wealth was not the ultimate goal in life.

Talk on Sufism in Islam and Their Presence in India

Introduction

I have been invited to address the elders and senior citizens. I have neither the expertise nor experience nor knowledge or standing to speak to such an illustrious and august assembly. I have never been a public figure either. My only credentials are that of an Indian writing in English poetry. I have a background of Sufism for I belong to an illustrious family practicing the values of Sufism since centuries. I was initially imbibed in that culture. However much I claim my association with Sufis and Sufism, I am not an adept or expert despite the fact that I have been editing a journal on Sufism, i.e., *Sufi World* since the last five years.

I have crossed my sixtieth year and with these credentials, I can say that I am retired from public and civil life and that I can dare share my experience of my entering old age and the problems associated with it. I had the good fortune to do postgraduation in Social Service Administration four decades ago. As part of our curriculum, we were to present a dissertation on a social problem. I chose to study the life of old people over 60 years in an old-age home. As it was felt by my Professor, guide, that in few decades from their due to the change of lifestyles, breakdown of the joint family system and immigration of young

people to foreign countries, aged people were bound to face many social challenges. My studies did disclose this stark reality and the future for aged people was not rosy due to the social changes anticipated, and it has been proved right. Now, after 40 years when I have reached the sixtieth year of my life, I am faced with that reality in as much as, I am no longer a head of the large growing family, but a lone person watching walls, counting and telling beads of rosary, day in and day out as my children have left for foreign countries in search of greener pastures. Fortunately, I am blessed with good pension and secured by medical aid from the government, being a retired government servant. However I have no more joys to share with my growing generations. I have no role to play in passing the ancient culture. I am a mere witness to the cultural decay and degeneration. I can empathize with you all faced with a situation like mine.

Those of you who are in old traditions surrounded by children and grandchildren, you are blessed and more fortunate and most favoured persons from the Lord. Count your blessings; says the Holy Scriptures and this one is the best blessing showered by the Lord Almighty. Nothing can bring more fortune than this lucky phase of your life. Each day is the day of blessing and every moment is a moment of joy and happiness. But, for those who are in my bandwagon, I can only share my thoughts of a Sufi way of life, which counts on being in merger with the Lord Almighty, who feels His presence always and such a presence of Mighty Grace is greater blessing of bliss, ecstasy and joy. You can share your love and happiness with those who are not fortunate in life in many, many ways. Like a lamp you can spread the light around and with the torch which the Lord has blessed you with, you can find new ways to brighten the pathways of the less fortunate. I would like to share my feelings on reaching my sixtieth year with my poem.

Eternal Peace

For sixty long years
I had to climb the
Steep cliff, slipping
Falling, struggle
After struggle, at last
Conquered the summit.
The point that touches the sky
And where I hoisted my flag
I could take a deep
Breath to view the
Pleasant scenery from
The top of the mountain
Ah! What a wonderful
Light! Exquisite and
Marvelous beyond my
Imagination, breathless.
Beauty in its entire splendour,
Glorious and wonderful.
Now my climb down.
Would be in a moment.
No more aspirations
No more struggles
No more adventures
No more hopes
No more dreams
A deep silence
A deep quietude
A great merge
For eternal peace

Sufism is all about silence and to attempt with all humility at one's command to reach and merge with the Lord, the Most gracious and loving.

More about Sufism

Sufism is all about shattering of faith and belief in all the myths, mythologies and fictions of imaginations created by a fertile,

ghostly mind. It seeks to reach the Divine of Unitary and Solitary Master, who has Himself no master no guide, no partner, no associates, nor does He come in any form of avatar, son or any other form in the world. But His presence is found in the signs of creation of the world and universe and the world around us, i.e., He is Omnipresent, Omnipotent closer than the jugular vein. He has created man in His own image. He is a hidden treasure and wants to reveal himself. He bestowed on man His Divine Qualities in the soul and heart of man. Man needs only to discover and know his own self to realize the uniqueness of his Lord and the Master full of Compassion, mercy and beneficence.

The Master loves man and expects to give his undivided and total unwavering devotion to Him. Man needs to submit like a slave or a child to his mother or a patient to the nurse, to the Supreme Master's will and commands pronounced through His perfect beings, His messengers or prophets. But the prophets are devoid of any power of the Master except to communicate the experiences felt by them during the course of the journey to reach the Lord and experience truth during their perfect living. They are illustrious personalities and are examples to the humanity to emulate.

Sufism is all about the purification of the soul, from all the animal tendencies of anger, lust, jealousy, capriciousness, lying, fraud, deception, greed, covetousness and other despicable and pervert tendencies. To become morally sound with the courage of conviction and adopt truth with humility, simplicity and sincerity is a way of life. This is the basic teaching of Sufism. It further teaches one to earn one's bread with one's own efforts, to be charitable, gracious, forgiving, loving, and become a perfect gentleman; to evolve and elevate the soul to divine consciousness by consciously realizing and practising the qualities of the Lord; to colour oneself in the colour of the Lord Almighty of mercy

and compassion by total reliance on the Lord and practise patience and fortitude; to be thankful and be satisfied at all times; and to be grateful for all the gifts received from nature created by the Lord, the merciful and loving.

Sufism is about silence of tongue, heart and mind. There is an old adage that “talk is silver and silence is golden”. Silence requires that the heart and mind be stilled and not meander nor be full of worries. A silent mind is possible only through meditation and regular practice. Life’s rigmarole is such that the soul is caught in the web of worries and thoughts. Since Sufism is all about love for and devotion to the Master, the mind should be put to conditioning of single- minded devotion to Him alone. This is possible when the mind does not get fixed to the worldly desires, passions and pleasures. All disappointments and frustrations lead to mental strain, tensions and pressures. Therefore, a Sufi keeps aloof from the worldly affairs to achieve silence of mind, heart and the tongue.

Sufism is about peace ‘As Salaam’. Salaam is one of the attributes of the Master. Master is all love and affection. To achieve total surrender and love for Him, a Sufi has to cultivate peace with all. He has to have no quarrels, no grievances, or grouse or pain, no desires, no demands from anyone, for it is the Master who has arranged all the affairs of the world. A Sufi feels that every situation in his life is a test of love and he has to maintain his peace, for which he has to have absolute control over his passions, anger and all the despicable and undesirable qualities. Peace cannot be achieved unless the inner self is at peace with one and all. Only then the Master bestows “As Sakina” (supreme joy) to the heart and the Sufi achieves total bliss, joy, ecstasy and happiness.

Sufism is about *imaan* (faith) *yaqeen* (certainty) and *ihsaan* (gratitude).

'Imaan' is faith in the existence of only One Singular Lord of universe, who has no partner, or an avatar nor does He personify in the form of a son. He has neither wife nor an advisor, neither is He begotten nor begets a son. Faith in the existence of Allah should be complete and full inasmuch as that the Master is fully aware and conscious of the needs of the faithful. He provides all the sustenance and takes care minutely of all the affairs of His creatures. This is the 'Yaqeen' or certainty in the existence of the Master, who is caring, loving, beneficent and merciful. The certainty is by recognizing the signs of the Lord the Beneficent in Nature. A Sufi develops certainty by realizing the truth and shunning all the doubts, false images, falsehoods, myths, superstitions and mythologies. His certainty and faith are unwavering and strong. Nothing can shake his faith in Master. The faith and certainty brings forth 'Ihsaan', a gratitude for all the blessings showered on him by the Master. He sees the Master's works in all the affairs of the world and recognizes that He is keeping a careful watch on His beloved creatures, who are fully dependent and have full and complete reliance on him. A Sufi is totally convinced that he is a spark of divinity and by shunning the gross and various impurities in him, he will be able to achieve and see the light of divinity in him.

A Sufi realizes the Attributes of his Master Allah, and His Prophets. He colours himself in the attributes of his Master of love, compassion, mercy, godliness and goodness. He achieves everlasting goodness by performing good deeds in every moment of his life. He shuns all that is despicable, detestable, unwarranted and considered as undesirable and bad. He achieves sobriety, calmness, peace and silence by acquiring and realizing the qualities of the Lord and His Prophet.

A Sufi is always in 'Zikr' (incantation) by recollecting and repeating the incantation of the Lord's favoured name of 'Haq'

(truth) and 'Hu'. He negates the existence of any other god but Allah by unceasingly repeating in measured tones the incantation of "La Ilaha Illallah", there is no god but Allah. He keeps repeating Allah as many times as he breathes.

A Sufi accepts a peer or *murshid* for his guidance and follows the teaching of his guide, the peer, until a Sufi perfects himself.

A Sufi emulates the examples of the divine saints by carefully studying their life and being in the company of attained adepts and purified Sufis.

Sufis, Sufism in Islam and Their Presence in India

What Sufism can and gives to those who have reached the twilight zone and are in the evening of their lives after having felt the mirth and pleasure, the humdrum of life? To quote a famous Sufi poet, Omar Khayyam:

Ah! My beloved fill the cup that clears
Today of past regrets and future fears
Unborn tomorrow and dead yesterday
Why fret about them when today be sweet

For a Sufi each and every moment is precious. He lives moment by moment. He has no past, no future, no regrets, no pain. The past and future are painful and full of regrets and fears. If you live for this moment and for now you are thinking not of yourself but you are filling the consciousness with the love of the Divine Beloved whom you have realized by shunning your ego, your inner 'I', your 'ahankara' and merged your soul in the Supreme 'I', the Super Consciousness. Your presence in Lord is your merger and the merger has brought pleasure immensely and deeply, an enlightenment and opening of your inner eye. You have acquired self-knowledge and power of realization. Your every moment in the presence of your beloved is worth million hours

of the worldly existence. You do not wish to lose His Divine Presence of bliss and eternal happiness, like a lover being in the embrace of the beloved finding eternal divine love and fulfilment in the inner consciousness. When lovers mingle, time has lost its meaning. Neither there is beginning nor an end, thus it is expressed in one of the passages of *Holy Quran*, Chapter 97:

We have indeed revealed this (Message) in the Night of Power:

The Night of Power is better than a thousand months.
Therein come down the angels
and the Spirit by Allah's permission, on every errand;
Peace! This until the rise of morn!

That moment of being in the Divine Presence is the most joyous moment. It is the merger and union. This is what the Sufi yearns for. He wishes to be always in the company of his Beloved in that eternal bliss and supreme love, which fills the consciousness with divinity, with supreme satisfaction and enlightenment. He loses his personal identity and attains *moksha* in his own life by breaking the law of *karma* or rebirth. When a light dawns there is enlightenment, and the darkness disappears. The light eats away the darkness. There is glory and the fragrance spreads all over. Hence, the joy of the union and merger destroys the past regrets and future fears. A Sufi feels that he is like a faithful dog.

In ancient Egyptian civilization, a dog was akin to god. Why so? Because, a dog loses his identity with his master. He is at the master's beck and call forever without grouse or complaints. If he is chained, he remains in that position as long as the master wishes, day in and day out. If food is offered he wags his tail, if denied he does not bite the master nor does he abandon the master. A dog identifies the friends and foes of him. His loyalty

is unquestionable. A Sufi yearns to be like a dog to the master, always at the Master's service, at the beck and call without any complaint or grouse, always in joy bliss and happiness, always in cheerful mood, feeling fully secure without any fears, as he is in the Master's presence.

A Sufi's love is eternal and his moments are ecstatic and joyful. His mind is doubtless and his soul serene. With the Master beside him, life for him is a trifle. The rudder of faith in his Master cuts off the turbulence of life. He realizes that there is no meanderings, no confusion. The mind is at total peace. The shackles of iron or walls of bricks cannot curb or prevent his pure and sublime love for his Master. He realizes that his Master's grace grants him His effulgence, which leaves him in a trance. His face radiates his Master's glory, His beneficence, His might and mercy. He feels that his being is enveloped with his Lord's compassion. He feels that each particle of his body is his Lord's creation. He feels that his consciousness is merged with his Master's and the Master's consciousness dwells in him serenely and life glows in him sweetly and calmly. Songs flow from his lips in the pleasure of his Master's love, which the Master showers on him eternally. A Sufi is a totally surrendered being.

Total Surrender

I love Him, respect Him and honour Him;
Each breath of mine is spent in His service
Day and night, merge and I slave forever
Out of dedication and love of labour
Neither vagaries of weather, ill health
Nor desires, nor slumber can deter me
With deep devotion, I burn the candle
Of my life at His feet in total, surrender
I have no complaints, demands, compulsions
No grievances, grief or pain
Undoubtedly, I am captured by Him;

I am now left with no will of my own.
My Master's service is my main motto
I wish I were a dog to befriend him.

A few love poems in praise of my beloved Master from the collection "A Search from Within and Glittering Love" are given below:

Let My Soul Gleam

Let me circumambulate Thee
Sing paeans in love of Thee
Like a moth, burn my wings
In my mad love for ever
My eyes have wept and wept
Slept little sung Thy praise
Glorified heaven and cursed Satan
Quenched longings, temporary desires
My every breath is charged
My every throb is grief
Open Thy doors to the yearning soul
Embrace my spirit with both Thy arms
O Heaven! Shelter this being
With light and glory for the soul to gleam

I Grieve for Thee

The silvery dome, the glass chandeliers
The marble green and woollen carpets
The Muezzin's call and faithful zeal
The echoing sounds of prayers around
My grieving spirit and bleeding heart
My shattered being and longings apart
My quivering lips and flowing tears
Pangs of separation soul can't bear
My torn condition, betrays me
My mourning is deep, none can see
Men in perfumed dress detest me

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I am pushed and pulled with all the glee
My poor heart is broken to pieces
Now I grieve and sing praises for thee

Praiseworthy

I have roamed and roamed
In all the quarters of globe
And found to my dismay and grief
That all the beauties are to wane
Take away all my treasures and wealth
My glories and achievements
My eminence name and fame
Leave me alone with my soul's yearnings
My grieves are many and sorrows aplenty
With simple dwelling and humble living
But my soul's yearnings have never waned
My beloved's name is always on my lips
Let me sing paeans for Thee
Send glories and praise for Thee

My Last Wish

When my time comes to shed this mortal coil
To close my eyes forever and to breathe the last
To straighten the body, hands and legs
Then let me sigh with Thy name on my lips
I yearn for thy glance and a glimpse
For the reflection of Thy effulgence
For your sweet fragrance and sweetness
Let me place my soul at Thy Holy feet
O Praised One, the deliverer of all souls
Let my tears of love be my humble gift
Let me present thee, with my stricken heart
With its wounds and pangs of separation
O my Beloved! I yearn for Thee all my life
Now I am immersed deep in Your thoughts

Purify Ourselves

Come, come let us fill our vacuums
In heart, in mind and our souls

With love, affection and warmth
Illumine with millions light of knowledge
Let us enliven our sagging spirits
With rhyme and rhythm, with melodies
With cheers and allow them to soar
Higher and higher like a skylark
Let us dwell deeper and deeper
In the realms of the heart
And bring out treasures to gleam
Our eyes and to enlighten ourselves
Let us purify ourselves afresh
With the cool streams of love

Zeroes Gain Value

We are all the million zeroes
But, all of us living together
Besides the Great Only One
Have gained a great value
That Great One is all alone
But we millions of zeroes
By praising and singing paeans
For That One have gained glory
Many petals are held by a Single
Stalk to form a beautiful flower
For nectar and fragrance
To delight every one with its beauty
Love emits sweet scent
For everyone to enjoy its bliss

Self-Expression

The beauty of my Beloved Lord
Which wants to express itself
In million ways and methods
In nature there is brilliance
What uniqueness on this Mother Earth?
The living and the non-living
The precious stones and the jewelry
The fruits, flowers, bees and insects

O Lord! Grant me the inner eye
That lights to see through all things
To enlighten my mind and soul
To refresh my inner self every day
Let my faith in Thee be steadfast
Not lose my foothold to get lost forever

Sufis are 'Faqeers'

The word "faqr" signifies fasting in the name and sake of Lord, contentment, persisting and perseverance with fortitude and patience, subjugation of despicable elements, total faith in the will of Supreme Being Allah to practise pure thoughts and to lead a life of truth to achieve a blissful life. One who practises regularly these qualities and lead a pious and virtuous life of dedication and total surrender to Allah is a Sufi and a 'Faqeer'. A 'Faqeer' is a totally surrendered soul with deep piety humility and sincere to the core with absolute love for Allah and His prophets, peace be on all of them and for the humanity. They reflect on the inner aspects of man and every quality and feeling is analyzed and achieves self-realization leading to Allah's realization, i.e., 'Marifat e Ilahi'. The lower self is conquered, the self becomes purified, and God imposed. Sufis and 'Faqeers' achieve enlightenment and pure "Wilayat" or sainthood and come to be recognized as "Wali Allah" (friend of Allah), "Peers, or Peerans". These saints become true personifications of all virtues and saviours of humanity. They (Sufi masters) teach their disciples the ways to conquer their lower animal self and lead them to pure love of the Lord for the final merger. To discover one's own self through self enquiry under the strict guidance of the Master, the peer, will lead to the knowledge of the greater self, the Lord Almighty to self-realization. The Lord's grace is bestowed on the inner self-consciousness, and enlightenment dawns to make the Sufi a true beloved of the Lord.

Sufism is all about the love for the Beloved and His Prophet [peace be upon him]. It is the deep love and test of love which brings Lord nearer than jugular vein. "Love is God, God is Love" is a famous adage and idiom. Love emits from the heart and mind and is not propelled by a brute mechanical force but by a feeling of willingness, which brings joy and happiness rather than pain and suffering. Pain and suffering accepted voluntarily due to a strong feeling of likeness to a person to whom it is directed in the form of "Love", does not cause destruction but it propels a person towards a "Life Force" or magnetic force, which is everlasting. Love should be for love's sake. It is a silent, cool stream and its water is pure and sweet. It should neither be poisonous nor be bitter. Love should remove the feeling of bitterness, moroseness, self-possessiveness, hatred and jealousy. Love should bring in us magnanimity and generosity of the sun, truthfulness, simplicity, beauty and the grace of the moon, contentment, the tranquillity of an Ocean. Love should make us forgiving, merciful and compromising in all seasons, purity and shine of white snow of the Himalayas, vastness of desert and enormous goodwill and everlasting goodness.

Love

Doubtless mind
Soul serene
With Thee (God Allah) beside me
Life is a trifle
Rudder of faith
Cuts off turbulence
Meandering thoughts
Dampens the spirit
Shackles of Iron
Or wall of bricks
Cannot curb or
Prevent Love
Pure and sublime

Love's Many Facets

As a seed seeks a safe place to hide
Till it gains strength and sprout to grow
Hearts that are weak or marred by frailties
Need Love to make them strong and pure
Loves lives in souls lofty and true
And shuns the mighty and haughty
Love can never find a place
In hearts that are hard and strong
Loves shines and sparkles in speech
Never adapting a harsh tone
In songs sung with a melodious voice
It reflects itself and is shown
Though love spells special passion for truth
Its magic hold entranced, in its spell,
People of all ages—young and old,
Neither age nor customs their glories dim
In love sympathy flows like a stream
Gushing and flowing with ecstasy
Springs of charm bring out milk and honey
Love cheers up a lonely heart
Though sad and painful the pangs of love
We are told that sweet they are
And that not to have loved at all
To love and lose, it's better far

(In Golden Times 3)

Sharing Love

Love is a divine spark, hidden in depths of heart
For man to cherish until death doth him apart
To give meaning to life and life after
A binder and a coagulator
Love is sacrifice and sacrifice is to die
A sincere attempt to give up every lie
The inner being gets effaced for the Beloved
Immersed in thought and, drunk in His breath
Where love lets lovely springs to flow
In its bottom lies dormant sorrow

To creep up and let streams of tears
On sad thoughts for love to share
A bleeding heart bears gems within
To emit rays of hopes to wash of sin
(In Silent Moments 41)

Sufis and Truth

Sufis march on the path of the truth to achieve and practise truth to its perfection and they shun falsehood to the core. They envelope their being with the shining light of the truth.

Woing Truth

Truth being crystal clear
Needs no enology or praise
Its effulgence and brightness its showers
On loving and compassionate souls
Truth pursued with sincerity and humility
Showers its special grace and bliss
Truth is complete only with love
Compassion, mercy, charity and justice
Truth is eternal and surpasses
All barriers and is beyond nothingness
Truth is infinite and dwells in hearts
Pure and simple, humble and kind
(In Golden Times 5)

To experience truth one needs to appeal to it to dawn on the mind, heart and soul.

O Truth

O, Long awaited truth! Descend from heaven above
And shower on me thy mercy and love
My failings have stamped on me their black mark
Please light up my conscience, gloomy and dark
Whenever my anger roars and thunders
It makes me commit all sorts of blunders

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It crumbles my will to do good deeds
Makes me look small and to shame it leads
O Truth pure and ever sublime
To drive away my passions and guilt, tell "time"
Cool my senses and light up my mind
So that a home in my heart, LOVE may find
(In Golden Times 6)

To achieve 'inner peace' one needs to shun selfishness, self-centeredness, attachments to wealth, women and property.

Inner Peace

Look to the inner Voice
Its light is eternal its joys are multiple
Its grace is divine
It is soothing and pleasing
Its voice is melodious
It has motherly concern and care
It knows your anguish and pain
Listen to it
Sit in silence
In meditation
In calm stillness
Close your eyes
In your heart recite
La Ilaha Illallah
Mohammadur Rasool Allah
Allah Hu Allah Hu
Allah Hu Allah Hu
Hu Hu Hu
(In Silent Moments 38)

An illumined soul is an enlightened one to guide the humanity.

An Illumined Soul

Every moment is becoming past
Mingling with times and history

Bygones be bygones, past is past
Words slipping from lips can't come back
Deep down in yourself, a feeling
Of remorse, repulsions regrets
Of acts disapproved and shunned
A beginning of change in you
A new experience of fresh breath
A new life, a new lease
A change of mind, a change of heart
A new discovery for better living
A new learning, a new growing
An expansion of vision, a new light
A glow within, a new consciousness
Ever forgiving and illumined soul
(A Search from Within 49)

Sincerity

Sincerity touches the heart
Touches every one indeed
Touches infinity surely
Sincerity is pure and simple
It has no choice
It showers no undue favor
It has no prejudice
It has no hate
Sincerity is for all
Sincerity is every thing
Good and sublime
Sincerity is rare in its kind
It has no beginning
It has no end
It flows and flows
Like a crystal clear stream
(A Search from Within 38)

Simplicity

Isn't simplicity Divinity profound?
In it is sincerity found
Shining truth radiates its glory

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Its lustrous light tells its own story
It admits not an iota of lie
It lets not calmness ever die
It gives tranquillity its due
And patience is its main virtue
Profound it is in goodness
And quick in its forgiveness
Steady and straight is its path
Its thoughts, impurity takes a bath
All promises made, it keeps up
With knowledge it fills its cup
Simplicity is humble and modest
But never bows to pride's behest
It always remains without fear
To everyone it is always dear
(In Golden Times 9)

The whole aim in the life of a Sufi, a 'Darwesh', a 'Faqeer', is to realize the Lord and His Prophet, peace be on Him. A poem on Lord's ninety-nine names.

Ninety-Nine Names

Realize the ninety-nine names
Ninety-nine themes, units and qualities
Of the Lord surrounding you
Of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) within you
The light upon lights, lights all
Enlighten your being within it
Repeat all the names on your lips
Inhale him to surcharge you
Let the streams of Love
Flow within to cleanse the being
Let the cream of charity
Flow through the hands of goodness
Purify the mind with crystal thoughts
With honeyed tongue glory Thy Lord
With His guidance tread your path
With melodious songs thrill your heart
(In Silent Moments 17)

'Darwesh', Sufis and 'Faqeers' walk on the path of eternal goodness to reach peace, tranquillity and ecstasy.

Ecstasy

Every moment of bliss, ecstasy
Is a golden moment, a monument
Surpassing Himalayan heights of glory
And million years of chanting and praying!
A moth circumbulates, burns in flames
A supreme sacrifice on the altar of Love
Lightening reducing to ashes Mount Sinai
Moses (a.s) merging in splendor of Supreme
Mohammad's (pbuh) ascension to the throne
On 'Lailat ul qadr' in a flash
A glorious and a golden moment
A Midas touch turns dust to gold
A sigh of a dancing Darwesh
With a heart glittering with Love
With tattered clothes, dishevelled hair
Soul purified for final merger O Lord!

(In Silent Moments 36)

Allah wants man to turn the heart to "Qalb e Saleem", a purified heart.

A Purified Human Heart

Eyes get blinded on seeing blazing sun
On entering house, everything appears dark
Prejudiced mind cannot enjoy any fun
On seeing full moon, a jealous dog barks
Crystal-clear water cleans all dirt
A pure heart reflects love sublime
Beauty mesmerizes lovers to flirt
Blissful joys dazzle soul from golden times
A beast can be turn to a pet
Man can scale mountains and moon
The grief and sorrows are all to forget about
But a stricken heart suffers immensely

(In Golden Moments 31)

A Sacred Human Heart

The wilderness and arid desert
With life scarce and dryness all around
The deadly silence and burning sun
Leaves a parching tongue with looks wild
The dangers are grave indeed
The deadly snakes with fangs sharp and deep
A threat to man sans protective
When exposed to nature base
A sacred heart is a pleasure to keep
In it dwells light to illuminate the mind
Filled with faith and hope in Almighty
And seeks Grace and Mercy from dangers many
The gushing springs with endless fountains
Makes the land fertile and enriches it
Man with love and kind heart
Creates fruits of good deeds for all to enjoy

(In Golden Moments 13)

On purification of heart and soul, a Sufi, a 'Darwesh', a 'Faqeer'
reaches enlightenment.

Enlightenment

Dread of supernatural lurks at bottom of heart
Bringing forth fear and horror
But courage and bravery overcomes them all
Man should not succumb and fall
Evil eye casts a mighty spell
Which can crush stones to pieces
Heart with sound faith, purifies the mind
To withstand the fiendish force
Peace and contentment are divine gifts
To a tortured mind and soul
Being sustained in submission
Will fetch peace in humility
A mind that glimmers with enlightened thought
From its ignorance and fear, take flight

Knowledge and learning are powers
To strengthen the soul, to make beings bright
(In Golden Moments 16)

The lives of Sufis are beyond their own selves. Sufis charitable in nature and their charity is beyond all barriers of cast, creed and race. This is reflected in the poem on charity.

Charity

Isn't charity beyond filial relationships?
To cut across the barriers of colour and race
Beyond self out with warm and cheer
Isn't it like a diamond reflecting glorious colors?
The stillness of night bring eerie silence
Shrouded in mystery and fears abound
Life's ramblings draw in its bosom dark cloud
But, charity shines like a silver lining
Does not divinity sparkle in charity?
It brilliance surrounds saintly beings
Permeating every aspect of their lives
Gushing forth from their bosom as love
Charity purifies mind, enlightens the soul
And lightens the burden of craving
The burning greed vanishes from the heart
Raising goodness to a Divine path

(In Golden Moments, 9)

This poem on prayer for tranquillity shows the dawning of Supreme light in our minds and souls.

Prayer for Tranquillity

O the praised One, the chosen One
The purified and the sublime soul
The cherished one, the protected one
The privileged one, the gracious one
How shall I please thee, O Loved one?
With my weary condition and wretchedness

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With my chill penury and hollowed nature
With my empty head and dark soul
O the enlightened soul, the guided one
Show me the path of enlightenment
Illumine my mind with million lights
Bring me ecstasy and supreme bliss
O my deliverer, O my redeemer
Protect me on all sides and be with me
Let thy glimmer of hope, cherish me
Let peace prevail and tranquility descend

(A Search from Within 35)

Lead Me to Light

Lead me to the light O Lord
For deep darkness surrounds me
Blinded with none to show me the way
That leads me to safety and your gardens
With thorny paths, marshy lands, shallow pits
With bitterness, cruel way of tricky world
O Lord! I seek Thy beaming light
For I am desolate and I yearn for Thee
Storms and tempests, cyclones and lightening
Thunder, tornadoes with grave situations
Fears abounding with enemies surrounding
Without any protection from any one
O Lord! The Most Merciful and Most Beneficent
Show clemency, protect me and Love Me

(A Ray of Light 56)

More about Sufis

Sufis are not fundamentalists, dogmatic or worldly. They are withdrawn from the rigmarole and humdrum life of the world. They are ascetics. There are few among them who take up the work of reformation and spiritual elevation of the masses. The Masses would flock to them over the exhibition of miraculous powers of curing the sick, warding off the evils, praying for rains during draught season. They are gifted with the power of speech,

i.e., the gift of the gab, and their discourses would turn the heart of the evil-minded masses to goodness and spiritual living. An example is that of Hazrat Syed Abdul Qader Jeelani (r.a), a saint among saints of Baghdad, Iraq, and Khawja Moinuddin Chishti of Ajmer, India. Sufis have always kept away from political development and never entertained kings, nawabs and their such people. Even in modern times they are averse to politicians and public men. They are not narrow and petty minded but very broad in their vision and actions. They entertain people of all religions in their circles to bless and help them to overcome their difficulties in lives. They pray for one and all, and they always rely on prayers as an efficacious remedy to ward off evil. They affirm that only through the prayers can they cure people afflicted with incurable diseases and possessed with evil and negative forces.

Khanqas

A Sufi master would have a “khanqah”, a Monastery for his disciples who are given teachings on finer aspect of spiritualism. Every monastery, ‘astana’ or ‘khanqah’, as it is called, would have a “Langar”, a common kitchen for preparing the food for the poor. The langar of Ajmer e shareef is still famous. Every day hundreds are being fed free from the langar. A Sufi master who succeeds to a ‘khanqah’ is referred to as “Sajjada-Nisheen”, i.e., one who sits on a prayer mat. They would have a circle of disciples and followers, who would receive a regular and daily training on inner spiritual development.

Sufis and ‘Sama’

Audition of music set to divine songs are regular features of Sufi gatherings or *majlis*. That is how ‘Qawwalis’ have come in vogue. The ‘Qawwals’ are specially trained singers. The Hindustani music, musical instruments like the sitar and ‘sarod’, tabla and

tambourine are the invention of Sufis, like Amir Khusroo, a disciple of Saint Khawja Nizamuddin Awliya of Delhi.

Sufis and Literature

The Sufis pen their thoughts in ecstatic poems. The 'Dohas' of Saint Kabir Das, the famous Matnawi of Maulana Rumi, the poetry of Hafiz of Sheeraz, Sheikh Saadi, Maulana Abdul Rahman Jami, Fariduddin Attar and scores of them are still famous, though centuries old. They are read and re-read in Sufi circles and by all people.

Urdu Language

Urdu language came into limelight with poetry penned in Urdu by Sufis like Ali Dakhani, Khawja Band e Nawaz, Meer Dard, Mirza Ghalib, Allama Iqbal and many more of them.

Sufi Art and Literature

The Naqshbandi orders of Sufis were, and even today are famous calligraphers. They have brought out works of art, miniature paintings and works of architecture, which are wonders today.

Influence of Sufism in India

Great Sufis like Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti of Ajmer, Baba Fariduddin of Pak Patan, Bakhtiar Kaki, Nizamuddin Awliya and Chirag Dilli of Delhi influenced greatly the minds of the masses with their miraculous powers and magnetic personality. Thus started the Bhakti Movement in India. Saints like Sant Kabir Das, Mira Bai, Ramanuja, Madhavachar and hundreds of saints and yogis were able to bridge the gap between the Hindus and the Muslims.

Advent of Sikhism

Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, was deeply influenced by Sufi masters. He took up to an ascetic life and wandered all over

India and the Middle East with his Muslim disciple, Mardana, who sang divine songs composed by him. Guru Nanak founded the religion of Sikhism on the belief of One Single Unitary God and on the basis of brotherhood of man. The Guru Grant Sahib, the holy book of the Sikhs, comprises poems composed by Guru Nanak and of many Sufi saints like Baba Farid, Sant Kabir Das. Sufi poetry decried and condemned mere ritualism but encouraged true love for the Divine Master. The Sufi poetry dwelt on divine love, compassion, mercy, charity and on brotherhood of man.

Urs of Sufi Saints

The Sufi Saints who attained in all respects and have merged with the Lord are revered. Their tombs are venerated. Their disciples and followers flock to their tombs to seek redemption from their problems both worldly and divine. They are considered as divine interceders. In India, in every nook and corner are the tombs of Sufi masters. Their descendents and followers carry on their work to keep alive their teachings. They celebrate a festival known as "Urs," annually 'Urs' means the union of the saint with the Lord, the final merger. Their day of demise is remembered as 'Urs'. The 'Urs' of Ajmer Saint Khawja Moinuddin Chishti is being celebrated since centuries. People from every nook and corner assemble on the stipulated dates at Ajmer. Lakhs gather and the saint is venerated on that days. There are 'qawaalis' and 'langars'. Sufis consider that on Urs days divine blessings dawn on them. That is known as Baraka or 'Barakat' through the intercession of the saint. Special blessings and benediction are granted on that day. Sufis feel that with their participation on Urs days, they get spiritual elevation and blessings. It is the understanding of the common man that their vows are fulfilled and their worldly problems are solved with their participation in the Urs. The sick get cured, unmarried girls find their matches, the unemployed find their jobs, and so on and so forth.

Islam and Sufis

If you ask Sufis which religion they follow they would answer that their religion is Islam and their Master is Prophet Mohammad, peace be on him, the last Prophet and his nephew Ali (r.a), the fourth caliph, leader of saints. They relate a chain of Sufi masters reaching Hazrat Ali (r.a), the fourth caliph, and Prophet Mohammad, peace be on him.

But the present sect of Muslims ruling Saudi Arabia are called Wahabis or Salafi, named after their spiritual leader, Mohammad ibn Abdul Wahab. They are puritans and strictly adhere to the canonical aspects of Sharia of Islam. They condemn Sufis in the strictest terms and call them heretics, 'bidaties' or innovators, the corrupt ones. They look down upon them and have gone to the extent of calling them "Kafirs" or Un-Believers or idol worshippers. Sufis deny this charge and claim to be the true followers of Prophet. The word 'Sufi' means to purify, the inner self, to polish the mirror of the heart. Sufis believe that the purpose of life is to shed the animal consciousness, then perfect the moral consciousness to the stage of divinity by elevating the soul to the divine Self or merger with the Almighty. This way of life is condemned by the Wahabis and their ilks, like Tableeghi Jamaat and Jamat e Islami. Sufis are being persecuted in Middle East, Iran, Turkey and in all the countries where Wahabism and fundamentalism are gaining ground. In India also the majority of the common Muslims have come under the strong influence of Wahabism, Tableeghi Jamat, Jamat e Islami and Ahl e Hadeeth. However, the soil of India is very rich and Sufism will flourish forever in Hindustan.

Contribution of Sufis to the Development of Science and Law

Sufis dedicated their lives in seeking the knowledge and for attaining divinity. They were pioneers in setting the foundation

for the study of science, medicine, astronomy, mathematics, numerology, physics, alchemy and many subjects. They laid the foundation for Islamic jurisprudence and logic. To name a few personages Averos, Ibn-e-sina. Ibn-e-Rushd, Ibn-e-Batuta, Omar Khayyam, Imam Hanifa, Hambal, Shafi, Maliki, Imam Ghazali and scores of personalities. The contribution of Sufis for building up literature, like poetry, works in prose, is immense and it has influenced all the countries of the world.

Sufi Imitators and Frauds

It is in the nature of humanity to imitate the real gems and pearls among the famous identities and personalities. It is so with the Sufis. Sufis acquired a prominent position in society. It created jealousy among the incompetent and the corrupt. A large number of fraud, imposters and imitators have brought a bad name to the real Sufis. A group of astrologers, numerologists, exorcists, 'amilis' and 'kamils' passed off as Sufis to trick humanity for making quick money. Such persons are now abounding all over the country. Because of their ill-reputed activities, the adversaries of Sufis, especially the Wahabis, have been persecuting the Sufis all over the world. Almost all the terrorist activities are carried out by them, who have taken up to arms and underground activities. Sufis shun violence and are a peace loving people, and their message is of love and affection and to spread the message of brotherhood of man.

Sufis by their practices and contributions of their mind and heart to the oneness of Being, bring about a transformation in their inner consciousness. They put all their efforts to transform the inner ego, and the 'ahankara' (pride, ego) to a divine Self by self-meditation and self-attainment. In my poem Dawn of Enlightenment, I have brought out the aspect of transformation in the inner self on a Sufi being guided by his master.

Dawn of Enlightenment

“Forty”, said my master when I was in my teens
You should cross forty summers of life
And undergo its vicissitudes
You should cross bridges, rivers and storms
The senses should fail and the eyes glitter
The ears should sharpen and tongue lose its taste
The swiftiness should slow down
Calmness should descend upon you like dusk dawning
The mirth and pleasures should wane
The burning sun should descend
The heavy monsoon downpour should end
The rashness of your youth should decline
Then the tranquil moon will shine
The cool breeze from the sea would blow
To soothe the senses and calm the wounds
The inner light will spread around
The being will burn with brightness
Mind canvas will be filled with beauty of nature

As stated earlier Sufis are ‘darveshes’ and ‘faqeers’.

Faqeers

Chill penury begets pain and shame to them
But their minds are crystal clear like diamond
Profound thoughts overflowing and oozing out
Like fountain and mighty water falls
Creating gardens to bear fragrant flowers
Their wingless souls are sans pangs of suffering
Glittering gold and currency though enriching
But to ennoble the mind, it seldom helps
When soul and mind dampens and meanders
Poverty pinches and living does become hard.
Faceless, nameless and homeless, they ever be.
As “Fakirs” and “dervishes”, they move about free.

A Kind Word is Better than Alms Giving

The holy book, Al Quran, reminds man of his various obligations and duties, which he has to fulfil in his lifetime. His first and foremost duty and obligation is towards the Creator – Allah. And the next is toward mankind. Among them is man's duty towards himself inasmuch as to purify his own thoughts, mind, and behaviour, and refine himself in all aspects of his living. His talk towards one and all should be respectful, affectionate and loving. It is mentioned in the *Holy Quran* about 'Luqman' who, while reminding his sons of their various duties, points out that one's voice should not be raised while speaking with others and the worst of the voice is of the ass and the donkeys. When they bray, they bray so loudly that it is unpleasant to the ears.

Charity is one of the obligations in Islam - to openly and secretly help those in distress and in need, to feed the poor and to clothe the needful, to give alms from the wealth in a proportionate manner as laid down in the holy book. All this is very fine, but to speak a kind word to a wounded heart, to relieve pain of a heavily burdened mind and soul is far better than alms-giving. When one cultures the mind and heart to refinement, one becomes kindly and good-hearted. It is the goodness, and that to the eternal goodness, which is important for a society, which aims at bringing an Islamic way of living. Soft and smooth buttered words are honeyed words that instil love and affection

in the minds of the people, while harsh words breed cruelty and hard-heartedness. Allah desires the Mussalmans to live in peace, love and orderliness. This is possible only when every individual adopts a sweet language and shows kindness in every action, more particularly in speech and behaviour. A harsh behaviour is due to mental aberrations and out of anger, jealousy and hatred. When these qualities are subdued then springs of love and affection burst forth from the heart. The speech of a person becomes soft, kind and loving. This spreads good culture and the society becomes well mannered and godly.

It so happens that some needy persons approach one for help when one is either not having means to help or is so busy in work that the needy person's appearance is a great distraction. It is at this time that a person is faced with a testing time. It is at this hour that one should show restraint and speak to the needy person in a kind and affectionate tone and not show anger or shout at him. Such behaviour is not appreciated by Allah. Humanity is good breeding, good culture and the same is expressed by kindness and affection in speech and in one's behaviour being refined and smooth.

Anger and Jealousy, the Twin Sisters of Inner Tsunami

It is human instinct to show likes and dislikes and to be happy when all things happen as per our desires and wishes. So long as our pleasure principle works, we are satisfied and are joyous. Only when we face the difficulties in life that sorrows binds us. At the changing attitudes of our adversaries, we get upset and angry, and when our competitors succeed, we are thrown in fits of jealousy or ill feelings. Anger is a sudden gush of emotions when our rational feelings get submerged in disquiet and unhealthy feelings. Our blood boils and during this moment all the good feelings disappear, and momentarily, the gush of emotions and feelings would throw us into temper-tantrums. So long as we calm down soon and rationalize our feelings and bring back normalcy in a humorous way, no harm appears. Only when the dissatisfied feelings are carried to a longer length and we give up our normal sensible actions and proceed to do harm to others and when such feelings are misdirected to bring in disharmony in the relationship between the fellow beings, it is then that the sufferings begins to take birth.

Anger and jealousy are twin sisters; when aroused from the depth of our inner consciousness, they act as a tsunami to destroy the shores of the beautiful life. The harm that emanates would not only bring discomfort to ourselves but would also lay down

a foundation for destruction of all that has been built for a long time. The gardens of love and affection tended and cared, emitting a sweet fragrance, would be washed away to nothingness.

When individuals are unable to harm others through their twin emotional imbalances and at the same time are not in a position to wean out the same with the defence mechanism of forgiveness or rationalization, then both these twin feelings will take a toll on the mental and physical health of the individuals.

A well-balanced personality maintains all the inner feelings and it is well blended without letting out or disturbing the love and affection in us which are the most beautiful flowers in the garden of our life.

Human beings are blessed with innate goodness. In order to retain this goodness and make it to bloom and to bear sweet honeyed fruits, the level of these two sisters have to be tempered and kept in absolute control.

Satan (Shaitan) was the 'moulvi-e-malkut', the Chief of Angels, and is believed to have attained the highest degree of knowledge and worship. But when the Lord Almighty directed him to bow down before Adam, he refused and lost the highest status held by him. He was banished from the presence of our Lord, the Rub. It is these two twin sisters – anger and jealousy (the ill feelings generated on account of Satan feeling superior)—brought down on him the wrath of Allah. Thus, jealousy is the First Sin in the eyes of Allah. It destroys the love, compassion and mercy in the human being and makes them hard-hearted. It is to the hard-hearted beings that Allah warns of hell fire. Hatred is the bitter fruit of anger and jealousy emitting from the hard-hearted and black soul. There may be countless reasons for one to become angry and jealous. But one needs to develop self-control and forgiveness. One needs to seek the blessings of Allah by being ever devoted to Him. Only through humility and

devotion can these twin sisters – anger and jealousy— be subdued, and love and affection, compassion and mercy cherished, to help us to reach the highest echelons of spirituality.

A sinless person would have cultivated all good feelings to the highest degree and would have reduced the evil feelings to negligibility.

Friendship

A friend in need is a friend indeed.

This is an old adage about friendship. Friendship is not mere casual contact or relationship. It is a deep relationship and a bond thickened through true feelings of give and take which brings joy and happiness in the relationship of two or more persons. Among friends there are no grudges or complain and nods they carry such heavy feelings or baggage. Their hearts open up to each other and genuine feelings of concern and well-being are carried by friends. The relationship is gentle, light-hearted and between them there is laughter and true concern for each other. Truth prevails between them. There is no cover-up, camouflage or trickery. There is plenty of give and take and friends do not stand upon formalities. The relationship is more for gain than any loss between them. They mutually respect each other's feelings. The relationship is more than brotherly.

Friends share their deep secrets. They do not betray the trust and confidence in each other. They rescue each other in troubled times and help each other to cross the barriers and bridges. Friendship is blessed and the proverbial friendship is of our Holy Prophet (PBUH) with his companions, particularly with his foremost companions, those of Hazrath Abubakar Siddique (RAA), Hazrath Omar Farooq (RAA), Hazrath Usman (RAA) and Hazrath Ali Karam allahu wajhu (RAA).

Friendship is like a white lily; its fragrance is sweet like honey, lasting till times. Flowing smoothly like a river, without asking for any monetary gain and wealth in return.

Companions have in their bosom love aplenty and the sun's generosity, shining on them, the tranquility of moon, vastness of an ocean for clarity. Friendship enriches the mind and the soul.

You look for friends under light and shade. To share joys, mirth and gaiety. To seek comfort, solace and happiness. To share woes and enrich hopes. To stir the ship of hope and happiness to safe shores.

Friendship renews bonds to sinew warmth, which is hidden in nature's breast. It instils in one's mind the strength of iron, unfolds thrill, provides sweet dreams, to reach the zenith of inner peace. Divinity sparkles in friendship. One of the attributes of Allah is 'Wali' and 'Naseer'. Allah is the friend of sincere persons, who surrender to Him with all humility and put all their trust in Him. Thus friendship purifies the mind, and enlightens the soul and lightens the burden of craving. The burning greed vanishes from the heart, raising goodness to a Divine Path.

Patience is the Mother of Virtue

Now, we are living in an advanced age of our civilization, with advancement in every field. The door of communication has opened up to new vistas of knowledge and learning. The march of time has quickened its pace, so much so that the vitals of the modern life are being devoured by new viruses, which are threatening to end the very existence of man on this beautiful planet. From the time a child is born, he is being prepared to face the fast life. From the age of two or even less, he is admitted to a playschool. No longer do the nannies and grannies, aunts and uncles play with the child. There is a cultural breakdown and due to shortage of space of living, cramped living, living in concrete jungles, children are bereft of the beauty of nature the pleasantness of the fauna and flora which provide thrill to the senses and the opportunities nature provides for observation and learning.

The masses and so also the privileged class are no longer in a position to spare time to learn the nuances of music, language and various other aspects of culture. They are content watching films on the screen and with entertainment provided to appease the cheap senses of mind and heart. Today more importance is given to that type of entertainment which satisfies the baser elements in man. This has been the major cause for the breakdown of one's personality and a person to become

'egocentric', 'selfish', 'self-centred'; 'spend-thrift', 'greedy', 'jealous' and such other weaknesses that rob a person of peace and solace.

Mankind has realized now that the advancement achieved with scientific and medical inventions besides great progress in the art of living has at the same time robbed man of the happiness of the joint family system and age-old traditions. Every age has found this loss around it in its time and tenure. The *Holy Quran* in Sura C-III has referred to man being in a state of loss and points out that only those who are believers (in Almighty God, and in eternal goodness) and do good works and encourage one another towards truth and endurance (patience) are saved from loss. Loss means loss of every good aspect of living, culture and civilization. Thus, patience has been considered as a mother of virtue. Every human being has to have endurance and develop patience in every walk of life, so that the baser elements in him do not strike him like a poisonous snake to death. The disturbing elements in mind and heart are required to be curbed. The multiple desires erupting like a fountain constantly require controlling and checking, and one has to set limits of tolerance. A seed takes its own time to sprout into a sapling and to a tree, then reach the flowering stage before it can bear sweet fruits for us to relish. So also all good deeds need and require time, patience and endurance to bear sweet fruits.

Loss of patience is a sure way to defeat and it ruins all the good that is likely to happen in our life. Self-control can be cultivated only through patience. Just as a mother exhibits enormous patience in the upbringing of a child, so also virtues and good deeds require at its root level patience.

God praises those who adopt patience, as mentioned several times in the *Holy Quran*. He has most good deeds and merits linked with patience. God Says:

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When they kept patience, I created leaders from amongst them who showed guidance according to my instructions.

Sura 32.V.24.

God says:

I will reward those for their good works and who are patient.
They will be given double rewards for their patience.
The patient will be given rewards fully without accounts.
Fasting is only for Me and I will give its rewards.

He keeps connection with those having patience with Him and promises that He is with the patient.

Take to patience, God is with the patient. *Sura 2: V 249.*

If you keep patience and fear God... your Lord will help you with five thousand well armed angels.

These are blessings and mercy upon them from their Lord and they are those who are guided. *Sura 2 V 58.*

The Prophet (SAS) said, patience is half of faith. He said: The lowest measure of what you have been given is sure faith and firm determination of patience. He who has been given a portion of those two qualities has no fear even if he prays little at night and fasts little during daytime. If you can stand with firm a foot with patience just as you are now and do not turn away from this way, it is dear to me. If anybody does divine service equal to all of you after turning away from patience, it will not be dear to me. I fear the world will be opened to you after me. You will then cherish hatred for one another and the dwellers of heaven will then be dissatisfied with you. He, who keeps patience and expects rewards, will get full reward. Then he recited this verse:

What is near you will come to an end and what is near God will only remain. I will give full rewards to those who being patient do good works. *Sura 16 V 96*

The Prophet (SAS) once said that patience is a jewel among the jewels of paradise. He was once asked: "What is faith?" He said: "Patience. The Prophet said: To say what patience dictates is the best act."

Prophet Jesus Christ (PBUH) said: "You cannot earn what you love till you keep patience at what you do not love."

The Prophet (SAS) said: "Had patience been given the form of a man, it would have been kind. God loves the patient."

Honesty is the Best Policy

Life is a mixture of adjustments and compromises. While during the course of our daily living, we look for shortcuts to achieve our objectives. We give up patience to wait for our turn, to reach our goal and target. Somehow we want to achieve our objectives through all means - fair or unfair, clear or unclear, clean or unclean or by foul means, undeterred of the consequences one may have to face in the end. Sometimes the demands of life are such that one is prepared to give up the moral values one just for the exchange of small value one may gain in the matter. Honesty in all dealings of life appears in this modern mundane of life to be something unachievable, in view of the fact, that there are too many people competing to achieve the same objective one is trying to reach. One is exasperated when people with short sights break a long waiting queue and get away with what they want by foul or fair means. When honest, dignified and cultured people are cheated everyday it is then that the modern values of life start breaking, resulting in dire consequences of social upheaval and breakdown of society, even leading to crime and punishment. The consequence of a social breakdown is sometimes so grave that it may take ages for carrying out its repair. It may cost much for the society to put back the things in its normal place.

Now, how do you define honesty, and how do you maintain it in the course of your living? Honesty is a term which is closely associated with truth and clean dealings in all the businesses and official affairs of the world. Honesty is, plainly speaking, simple and sublime, clear like crystal, and smooth flowing like a stream. There are no contrivances, contraptions, skewed way of thinking. The thinking is plain, clear and never deceptive, cunning and shortsighted. The broad-mindedness of mind and thinking will be palpable. There would be no narrow mindedness or shortsightedness. A person practising honesty always thinks of goodness and doing good to others and never adopts a foul and unfair means to achieve his objective. He may suffer and may lose something in terms of money and time but the end result and consequences are always good.

Persons acting with honesty always bear good intentions, and the fruits achieved by their actions are always sweet like honey and never bitter or sour. One has always to look for the results, which are more important than the means. Adopting dubious means results in dubious results. The whole world keeps a watch on a person's conduct. Good conduct, honest and fair means are always appreciated and such are the men of faith. Their prayers are answered and the light of wisdom always gets lit in their hearts and mind. Their living is laudable and appreciative, and an example to emulate. Honesty and simplicity are divinity profound and in them is sincerity found. It is always truthful, godly and divine. Honest people are gentle in manners, soft and sweet in speech. Life sits lightly on their shoulders and they do not carry any baggage of negativity. Their souls glitter and their passage of life is smooth, sans hurdles, turmoil, turbulence and storms. Honest people always choose direct and straight paths, and they do not fall into error.

“Nafs-e-ammara” or Carnal Soul of Man or Low Desires / Passion

The lower self or carnal soul akin to baser feelings in man teaches him to commit folly and to repent in leisure. The *Holy Quran* refers to this lower self or ego as 'Nafs-e-ammara' in the following way:

Verse 53 Sura Yusuf

I do not exculpate myself. Lo! The Nafs e ammara (carnal, human) soul enjoins (teaches) unto evil. Save that whereon my Lord hath mercy. Lo! My Lord is Forgiving, Merciful.

Verse 26 Sura 38

Do not follow your low desires because they will lead you astray from the path of Allah.

As we are born, our senses and gratification of pleasures are linked to our food requirements and the pleasures derived therefrom. When these desires and requirements of a child's daily needs are not fulfilled then the child cries and calls for its gratification. Thus, the first basic instinct is in appeasing the hunger. The second most important requirement of a growingup child is the protection and safety from all fears and dangers. The parents provide these by securing them warmth, comfort and protection from all harms, ill effects and injuries.

These two needs of human beings, inasmuch as requirements of food, shelter and seeking protection from every harm and fear are basic for the growth of a child till he grows into a full human being. During this period of growth are associated several feelings which are inherent in the human being; like anger, jealousy, greed, likes, dislikes, hatred and laziness. While protecting oneself, the harmful elements or those which portend to be of danger are required to be subdued constantly. That is how the dangerous elements are recognized as deleterious to the healthy growth of human child, be it some malaise or any other such harmful feelings or elements in him.

The need for constant protection of a child by parents is through the feelings of love and attachment. There is reciprocation and this grows constantly over the periods of growth and development. Any disruption or deprivation of love and attachment would be a cause for depression or ill feelings with many side effects. The negative feelings arising due to lack of love and affection are all associated with ‘Nafs-e-ammara’ or the lower self of man.

A weaning from frustration, greed, sloth and slumber, anger and jealousy caused due to non-gratification of senses or otherwise are fundamental to the healthy growth of an individual. This is where the culture, education and light acquired through several ages of learning process helps in the normal healthy growth of an individual.

The ‘Nafs-e-ammara’ or lower self remains raw in the early stages of growth and development in the inner personality of man. Childish pranks, tantrums, adamancy, stubbornness, laziness, petty jealousies, quarrels, lack of understanding are all part of it. There will hardly be any understanding or good feelings, higher knowledge or realization of higher consciousness or presence of the Almighty Allah. ‘Nafs-e-ammara’ is the rudimentary stage of

inner self or ego or carnal soul. It keeps demanding for satisfaction of its low desires, passions and for its constant gratification. Thus, it is selfish and self-centred. In it the intelligence is at its lowest ebb and has no part to play. Therefore there is the need in canon law, the 'Sharait', to regulate it to higher levels of consciousness, so that it is brought within the bounds of Allah (Hoodadullah). The carnal soul is required to be bridled to enable man to live in peace and happiness and to be a good citizen. For achieving goodness, for acquiring moral fear, for good behaviour and for self realization, 'Nafs-e-ammara' is required to be kept under constant watch and control and subjected to the laws and commands of Allah. This is referred to as 'Nafs-e-lawamma' or 'moral self'. All good feelings, compassion and mercy are associated with it. When it is totally annihilated, the soul becomes a God-imposed soul or 'Nafs-e-mutmaenna'. It is at this stage that higher intelligence assumes the importance for Allah's realization.

As for such men as entertained the fear of standing before their Lord and controlled their soul from low desires, their abode will be paradise. (Q79:41)

Have you seen one who takes his passions as his deity? They are like beasts. (Q25:44)

He who purifies the soul is successful, and he who ruins it, is ruined. (Q91:2)

“Nafs-e-Lawwamma” – The Moral Self

When ‘Nafs-e-ammara’, the carnal soul of man, is bridled with moral and ethical teachings and is cultured with the light and experience of ages, the ‘nafs’ or the soul or the inner self turns to ‘Nafs-e-lawwamma’ or the moral self. This moral self teaches man to be within the bounds of ‘Hoodadullah’ or the accepted norms, traditions and fundamental rules laid down by the ‘Sharait’. The moral code of conduct refines and chisels the ‘Nafs-e-ammara’ and grinds it to remove its chaff, namely, the raw or rudimentary behaviour more akin to carnal desires, passions, id and animal tendencies in man. The rough and tough behaviour of the mind, body and soul is cultured with refined. The rough feelings and outburst of temper-tantrums, hatred, jealousy, and a strong impulsive behaviour are cultured and the inner self is made to listen to the commands of consciousness and intelligence. The moral self looks for uprightness and walks on the path of goodness. It looks for beneficial tendencies and does not act in a harmful way to self and others.

It walks on the path of learning and knowledge. ‘Nafs-e-lawwamma’ is the inner good conscience which keeps alerting the mind and soul, whenever it turns unruly and misconducts itself.

And I do call witness the self reproaching spirit (Nafs e lawamma) *Sura 75:2*

It is the moral self of man and it is a conscience keeper to make man tread on the path of goodness and be a law-abiding person. The 'Nafs-e-ammara' is the passionate self, influenced by prejudices, anger, and ego and driven by animal tendencies. The cultural training and fear of Allah keeps the actions of 'Nafs-e-ammara' under check, and the inner self develops a voice; that is the voice of 'Nafs-e-lawamma'. Thus we find the consciousness being a three-layered: (1) 'Nafs-e-ammara' – the raw passionate self, (2) 'Nafs-e-lawamma' – the moral self and (3) 'Nafs-e-mutmaenna' – the surrendered and subjugated self to the commands of Allah and to the love of Prophet (PBUH). Whenever the inner consciousness is disturbed and gets awakened, it alerts the mind and reminds us of its responsibilities and duties for fulfilment. 'Nafs' is the soul and 'lawamma' is the questioning self. Thus in every human self, the upper most part of the consciousness is unbridled self, which is self-centred and is carried away by self-interest and emotions of anger, jealousy, self-preservation and selfishness. The trained and educated self is the moral consciousness of man or 'Nafs-e-lawamma', which is the most important conscious. Its voice is alive and should not be deliberately stifled or made to wither away. The process of purification of heart and mind is helped through the questioning self, i.e., 'Nafs-e-lawamma'. Deliberately closing the doors of 'Nafs-e-lawamma' makes a person hard-hearted, stony, quarrelsome, egoistic and dictatorial. A lively person in his silent moments listens to his questioning self for his own correction and for guidance. 'Allah Subhanetallah' guides the soul towards the path of guidance, for which the consciousness should be made alive, and its voice should be heard forever.

“Nafs-e-Mutmaenna” – The Surrendered Blissful Soul

‘Nafs-e-mutmaenna’ is the truly surrendered soul to the commands of Allah and His Prophet (SAS), and ‘Nafs-e-mutmaenna’ has reached the stage of sublimity and tranquillity. The storms of the mind have died down; the passions of the heart have been totally subdued and the heat of the body has cooled down. The mind and the heart are totally turned to the ways of the Lord and is at complete peace with Him. There is no wavering and fickle-mindedness in the mind. The supreme light of the Lord has dawned on the mind and heart. There is glow of light on the face and a halo around the head.

The ‘nafs-e-ammara’, the carnal soul, is subdued and humbled. The ‘nafs-e-lawamma’ gives guidance to the heart and mind with moral precepts and ‘Nafs-e-mutmaenna’ is in total peace with the Lord by following the commands of Him and His Prophet (SAS). When the ‘nafs’ or soul is surrendered to the Lord, then the Lord bestows his secrets in the heart and such persons become humble devotees of Him. The Lord answers the prayers of the persons whose ‘nafs’ has reached the stage of the surrender and humbled itself to His service. Such persons are awe-inspiring and Allah refers to such persons as his friends, i.e., ‘Walies’. They are always in Allah’s service-seeking his help and guidance and pursuing His qualities all the time. Such persons are fit to receive

His grace and bounties. They are godly and heavenly. They live in total awe and fear of the Lord, and are referred to as 'Mutaqeens.' Those with righteous living are 'Zahedeens'. They exercise patience during adverse periods and are always thankful to the Lord for the bounties showered on them. Hence they are also called 'Sabereens' and 'Shakereens'. They are in Lord's service and serve His creatures, and also called 'Saliheens'. As they humble themselves in prayers and carry out the 'ibadaat', they are also referred to as 'Abideens' and 'Sajjideens'. Allah refers to ever-humbled persons by various names. As they are always reciting the prayers for Allah, they are also referred to as 'Zakireens'. When their end comes, Allah commands such a soul to return to its heavenly abode, the final abode of peace.

Sura 89 Al Faqr

- 27 But ah! Your soul at Peace!
- 28 Return unto your Lord content in His good pleasure!
- 29 Enter you among My bondmen!
- 30 Enter you My Garden!

To Err is Human but to Forgive is Divine

Man from the time of his creation has been a bundle of contradictions and born weak. Had Hz. Adam, the First Man, created from Allah's Own Hands not sinned by breaking the commandment of the Lord, he would not have been removed from the Lord's presence and from paradise. He had to undergo severe trials and tribulations. The Lord Almighty showed mercy and Adam was pardoned. Adam was to live an earthly living to procreate, create food and live as per Allah's commandment. His sons quarrelled and first blood was shed in the form of man-slaughter. Likewise, the future generations of Hz. Adam were quick in committing wrongs and sins.

God in His mercy has been sending great souls to redeem humanity from the consequences of the wrongs and sins committed by the whole society. Thus, we find in history, thousands of prophets, saints and good law-abiding people, who have shown through their examples and exemplary lives a way out for the erring souls to fight back the battles of life and to gain victory, solace and peace. Peace is not a cheap commodity available on the desk of a store. It is a precious metal like gold, diamond and platinum to gain from virtuous living; by being dogmatically steadfast in our correct daily living. Only then can we spiritually elevate ourselves to win our most daring open enemy, i.e., our own erring soul and the devil, Satan.

The present modern, civilized society is a result of many million sacrifices done by our ancestors, prophets, saints, political leaders, scientists, social workers, farmers, businessmen and workers.

Rome was not built in a day. It took a millennium to reach this stage of a scientific era. Even in the present times, millions and trillions of good hands are working for the good of the humanity by daily sacrifices. Many times, millions lose out and find themselves ever in loss due to their own shortcomings and doings, than the social system or due to any adverse situation created by own wrong friends, adversaries and dogmatic people around us. Many losing battles have been won by being virtuous, exerting and excelling in patience during troubled times and by avoiding pleasing our cheap senses or indulging in unwanted, mirth and pleasures. Lot of injustice is perpetuated in this world. In umpteen situations in life, we are victims of such quagmire happenings. It is in such a situation that we are required to exert patience, remain silent and forgive our adversaries. We have to remain steadfast on the commands of Allah rather than enter into bickering, ending in quarrels, fights which may ultimately result in our losing our face, name, fame and even our wealth. The adversaries would pounce on a weak move on our part to gain control over us and blast us forever. A little patience and observing silence and forgiving our erring adversary would save us from ruination. It is our ego and erring self that is our stark enemy rather than our real adversary. Satan would wait for such moments when our equilibrium is lost and when we lose our self-control to mislead us into the quicksand, so as to destroy us fully without any scope of any redemption to even save our face; so that we could one day again redeem ourselves. It is so easy to err and become a victim to our passions, sentiments and emotions, but it is ever so difficult to regain our composure, maintain our dignity, poise, manners, courtesy and never failing

virtue of patience in all our troubled times. To forget and forgive an ugly moment is a divine service to our own ugly soul. This would elevate our status and not push us down before our stark enemy.

A study of the lives of great men would disclose how they were browbeaten a million times by their opponents. There are none who have not faced opposition in life. We triumph when we remain cool like a cucumber, maintain our poise, manners and virtue of patience and silence. And never let our erring soul and real adversary, the devil, have a better say in all the affairs of our life. Momentarily, we may feel grave injustices have been done to us or entering into a controversy, to establish our rights. We may ultimately fail, never to regain our lost prestige. We will be left with lots of time for regret, if not continue the battle with ever grave situations for ourselves, for our descendents and all our friends. Our ever best friends would be left helpless and would not be of any help. This would again alarm us more and we may feel let down more and more. We would never gain a situation to have a plus point except to lose forever and never to win. Sometimes, we may win an argument but in the result may lose thousands of friends and admirers. It may look easy to win an argument and a point but ultimately we may not win friends, and most importantly the love of humanity.

Our troubled mind should be put to peace. We need to buy peace quickly by compromises and adjustments, than rather open our mouth widely giving out only bad breath. If we can find a situation for a dialogue, we shouldn't miss it, so also a situation to shake hands and make amends. This is far more advantageous and puts us in a comfortable situation. It is like saving for a rainy day. It is the experience of generations that none are given comforts for joys and exhilaration forever. Nature has designed its plan such that we are required to face many seasons. For every

season, one should prepare to face it or else be prepared to lose ground and let yourselves be defeated and let down. Many a crime on humanity is when we lose a ground in an ugly moment and situation, to allow our erring soul to gain over our self to commit a wrong or a sin only to be punished by law. Thus, to err is human but to forgive is divine.

Our Lord! Forgive us therefore our faults, and cover our evil deeds and make us die with the righteous. (*The Quran* 3: 193).

Suspicion is the Root Cause of All Evils

Every individual is in pursuit of peace and happiness in life. There is no individual who does not seek it as a goal. Peace, solace and happiness have been the attempt of the present era through all the democratic institutions and educational processes. The individual upbringing, family background and training that a person undergoes at various levels has to be within the framework of customs, traditions, mores and the laws governing the society, be it for an educated or an ordinary mundane person. All aim at civilizing the man and to make him a fit member of society, so that he lives in peace and harmony. In order to achieve this purpose, it is necessary to keep the mind and heart open to good thoughts, deeds and actions.

One of the factors which play a major role in the destruction of a good relationship between individuals and persons is to bear suspicion and rancour against one another. Suspicion and rancour are poison for a sound relationship between individuals. It destroys the sincerity one gains in the upbringing. An individual becomes a hypocrite with double standards bearing rancour, spite, anger in the mind and heart.

A person becomes a doubting Thomas and starts disbelieving others. Although it is necessary to take precautions from being cheated by thugs, charlatans and frauds, this can be achieved by testing others by sound principles. Once a faith has

been reposed in an individual, it should be sustained. Sound relationships are built on confidence and faith. The aim of any religion is to make individuals faithful and so is the aim of society in turning its citizens as good individuals, so that all daily activities are carried out with good intention and good faith. If individuals start doubting the society and faith of others, it brings in disorder in the society. Either the society itself is totally corrupt that no one can be believed, or falsity and cheating have become the order of the day. Faith and good intentions have to be pure and a necessary ingredient in daily actions. Only on these two foundations, the pillars of good governance and healthy relationships are built. All precautions should be taken to build good faith and healthy personalities in the society for achieving healthy relationships, peace and happiness. If the foundations of the daily living, which is based on good faith, is shaken by suspicion and rancour than the wheels of society gets rusty. The personal individual relationships would be shattered and the consequences would be grave. Hence suspicion should not be allowed to gain ground in healthy relationships between individuals in the society.

Simplicity is Divinity Profound

Simplicity is a spark of divinity. In it is found humility, and persons with these characteristics are god-fearing and gentle in their manners, and courteous to the core. They are kind in their behaviour and sweet-tongued in their speech. Simple people shun ostentations, show, pomp and pride. They walk on earth with humbleness and do not boast of their lineage, knowledge or achievement. Simple people do not attempt to stand tall, and do not show off any of their talents or possessions. They are unassuming, but in no way are they weak in their bearing or personality. They are strong-minded with a will of iron and the strength of steel. The most magnetic personality of the world is our Holy Prophet (SAS). He was most simple in manners, living, talk, speech and behaviour. His most staunch enemy would acknowledge his greatness, his simplicity and humbleness. Allah says that the most humble and meek shall rule the world.

Satan, the accursed, who is a staunch enemy of man, promised Allah that he would not be able to disturb and mislead the humble people, who are devoted to Allah, fear Him and are quick in obedience and also in repentance, when a wrong occurs. Simple persons have no airs about themselves and do not carry any class and caste feelings. They mingle with one and all. They are lovable and their faces glow with joy and happiness which it is contagious. Simple people are helpful for persons in need and

always give a helping hand to whoever seeks their help. They are selfless in their service, without any expectation of any reward in return. They bow to the severe winds like a tree or grass without being uprooted and adjust to any circumstance. They are highly elastic in nature. They are sincere in all their attempts and in all their endeavours. They take success and failure in their stride. They do not show their disappointment and failures by their changed behaviour. Their behaviour is constant and does not change according to the circumstances. Simple people are good people who believe in all good things of life.

All Muslims are required to cultivate simplicity as second nature in their personality, and should follow the command of Allah and His Prophet (SAS). Simple people are devoted to their duties and they serve Allah and His Prophet (SAS) with single-minded devotion. They do not suffer from duality of thoughts and action. They are neither double-tongued nor colourful in their temperament.

The Virtues of Prayers (Namaz)

Man has to believe and consider himself as a viceregent on this beautiful mysterious planet Earth, viceregent of an omnipotent, omnipresent, ever-living, everlasting Lord, the most perfect Being, who is always and constantly beneficial, merciful, kind, loving, forgiving, sustainer, a tremendous Being with umpteen matchless qualities. Man has to humble himself in total submission and surrender before that the everlasting, ever-living Lord who is neither begotten nor begets any "being" as a like one in the form of a wife, mother, father or a son. The Lord as a Being is totally perfect and alone stands without a Guide and anyone giving Him council. He is self-sustaining, All Alone (*wahid*) and (*samad*) without any partner to share His business and His command.

Man as a viceregent has to merely submit himself virtuously forever with full devotion and submission, without challenging the authority of the Supreme Being. He has to ever praise the Lord of all creations and all beings in the universe. The universe itself is created by a word of command (*kun*) and it has come into being (*fayakuun*). None has the power to change a word of command except He. There is no interceptor other than He save those permitted and accepted by Him.

For the erring soul of man, the Great Being Allah has been true Guide, a Master, a Friend, a 'Moula' and 'Naseer'. Everyone has to submit to Him unquestionably without challenging His

Greatness (Allah hu Akbar). Allah has been guiding His prophets and messengers, to pass on the message to mankind so as to prevent him becoming niggardly, disobedient, mischievous, and misguided by man's eternal enemy Satan, the *Iblis*, the *Shaitan*.

It is the foremost command of Allah to man to surrender and submit before the full eminence and greatness of His Supreme Existence and obey His commands sent through His last prophet, Hazreth Mohammad Mustaffa (SAS). Allah has commanded to ever be obedient and loving to His last prophet, Mohammad (SAS) as he is the light (*noor*) of the universe (*noorullah*) and has brought the book (*Holy Quran*) as an eternal guide to the niggardly error-filled slippery man.

The most fundamental principle and command of Allah is to declare His 'Wahdaniyat' (Allah's sovereignty and unity of Godhood) and 'Risalat' (prophethood) of Prophet Mohammad (SAS).

The second command is to praise Allah all the time and more so to cleanse oneself and be in a state of inner and outer purity (*tuhar*), and submit at an appointed hour in daily prayers of five times as taught by Prophet Mohammad (SAS).

Man should submit and surrender in prayers and extol the virtues and greatness of the Superior Being in the manner and fashion as dictated by Allah Himself through His Gabreal to Hazrath Mohammad Mustaffa (SAS). The prayers are referred to as "Salat" or Namaz. They are performed to praise the Lord and to recall all His bounties, mercy and compassion and His ever-forgiving quality and nature. The prayers are to break the violence and niggardliness of man, and to make him submit in peace to achieve both inner and outer solace, bliss and comfort for the soul. Namaz, the daily appointed prayers, is to check the passions, carnal desires and the evil in man (*Nafs-e-ammara*) and to bring

the 'nafs', the soul to obedience and order (*nafs-e-luwwamma*), and to make the soul peaceful and a surrendered soul, 'Nafs-e-mutmaena'. Prayers are to help the soul to enlighten and purify itself and create a link with the Supreme Being. Namaz is therefore 'Meeraj e Muslimeen and momineen'. It is through prayers alone that the link with the Supreme Being is established.

The troubled and ever turbulent mind is put to peace and solace, and the heart is purified. The impurities of the soul are cleansed and Namaz becomes 'Shifa ul momineen' (purifier for the *momineens*). Prayers enable man to establish peace, order and tranquillity in him, both inwardly and outwardly. Namaz brings humility, in man and man achieves sublimity and solace. It is through Namaz, prayers, that the process of purification of soul begins and man becomes a true viceregent of the Lord Almighty. Through Namaz, prayer, that he achieves 'ubudiyat' (servanthood) and becomes an obedient servant of the Lord Almighty Allah.

Charity, the Cream of Compassion, Mercy and Kindness

Allah and His Prophet (SAS) extol in the *Holy Quran* and Hadis the virtues of charity to be carried out not only for the amelioration, well-being of needy persons, friends, relatives, orphans, widows, infirm and of sick persons, but also to carry out acts of charity to all persons who are in dire need but are unable to ask for help from anyone due to their status and position. Travellers, wayfarers and those in debt are required to be helped.

Charity is an article of faith and has been made mandatory to be paid as *zakat*, which is the fourth pillar of Islam. Allah and His Prophet have reiterated many times that the easiest path to heaven is not just affirmation of faith (*kalima*) and prayers (*namaz*) but it is through acts of charity. All social activities of helping the members of society or even doing acts for the welfare of mankind, plants and animals have been brought under the ambit of charity. To feed animals, water the plants, clear the pathways of thorns and weeds are all acts of charity. To speak a kind word is held to be a better form of charity. It is also an act of charity to bring a compromise between warring groups, individuals and communities.

The governing groups in those early days of Islam like caliphs, imams and governors were directed to create 'Baithul

maal', public trust and wakfs for carrying out various acts of charity such as feeding of the poor, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless and caring for the infirm, old, sick and needy persons.

Charity is a redeemer from evil, and brings multifold goodness to the persons performing it. It is the cream of compassion, mercy and kindness. To lend an ear to a hurt soul, and to give solace and good council to the people in distress are also other forms of charity. Charity encompasses everything which results in goodness, and prevents the spread of evil, diseases and wrongdoings in the society.

We find today that the main activity of the government is to perform social welfare activities for the benefit of the society at large. There are a large number of non-governmental institutions who take up various kinds of social work for the amelioration and welfare of persons, who are in need of help, both for monetary and correctional purposes. The United Nations have various bodies carrying out large-scale social work, social welfare activities for the amelioration and well-being of mankind and have taken up major works for the prevention of war and to bring peace to mankind.

All acts of charities which are beneficial to mankind are rewarded suitably not only in this world but also in the life hereafter. To pray for the dead, to respect the dead by a decent burial is another form of charity. To join in grief of people, and offer condolences and give comfort are also acts of mercy and compassion.

Charity humanizes man and makes them virtuous and godly. The heart should melt on seeing of individuals and persons suffering from various ailments, deadly diseases, and placed in positions of hardship and misery. All our efforts in our daily

activities from morning till night should be for the welfare of family members, community, society, nation and for the well-being of mankind. Only then can peace and comfort be restored to mankind.

It is recommended that one perform charitable acts openly by declaring it, so as to entice others also to join in the acts of charity, and also quietly when required. Charitable acts are all godly actions, and all those who make charitable actions as part and parcel of their daily living are peerless in nature and they acquire saintliness. They are kind-hearted and good people of mankind. To enlighten the world with knowledge and learning is the highest form of charity as the pen is mightier than the sword.

Honesty as a Challenge

We are aware of the following idioms:

Honesty is a way of life.
Honesty is the best policy.
Honesty is a liability.
Honesty is a challenge.

I experienced within a couple of days on my joining CESTAT, then CEGAT, at the age of 39 years that honesty is not a way of life there. A few officers of the Tribunal approached us and stated, "Nobody is honest here, Sir, and nobody works on his salary. Please use our services; we will do everything for you."

I had been led to believe, that honesty should be the fundamental principle of life; this from the age of four years, four months, four days when as a child we undergo a simple religious ceremony to put us to tutelage and made to learn the letters of the alphabet. The ceremony is known as "Bismilla Khani" (To begin in the name of the Lord.)

I had the rare privilege to be born in a family of Sufis deeply imbibed in its culture for centuries. I stepped in the world where honesty, integrity and hard work were its hallmarks. But the culture of our capital city shocked me. I was scared away. I packed myself and my family back home. But for one of the outstanding then Sr. Vice President of the Tribunal, Sri G. Sankaran, I would

not have continued in the service. Incidentally, he also took premature retirement after his elevation as President. Later in his retired life he translated the Bhagvatham in three volumes from Sanskrit to English.

I understand that honesty cannot be the best policy as it is a pacifist stand to allow the stream to flow in whatever direction and even spoil the garden but you save yourself, a selfish proposition. But I had to learn, practise and take honesty as a challenge.

Some consider honesty as a liability as it forestalls all your progress and you are required to drink the hemlock like Socrates, carry the cross like Jesus or to be stoned and stripped as it happened to Prophet Mohammed. No one is prepared for these hardships as they are fruitless and a thankless jobs.

I was prepared to face the toughest test but was not prepared to let down the scales of justice, honesty and integrity.

You are probably now aware what of all were recorded in my confidential reports. But my honesty, integrity and hard work were never questioned, but it was recorded in my CR along with extraneous unfounded, false, vexations and damaging remarks. All the courts from CAT, high court and the apex court set aside such remarks with strictures and my adversaries were exposed. It was a vindicating point for honesty, integrity, hard work and for justice.

You are also now aware to the extent of false propaganda carried out in SBR Chennai and now here in Bangalore. But we have stood our ground. Some among you have refused to belief in what we have practised. They say it is a gimmick. Only one who practises and suffers knows best. We have refused to bow down to the such storms, tempests and tsunamis. I have received anonymous letters decreeing my judgments as a Judicial Member

but the highest body, the apex court, has approved of more than 98 per cent of our orders. The departmental representatives, board members, were annoyed with us; so also the Special Councils and Solicitor General appearing for the department. They filed affidavits against me but my sound grinding in law, justice and scruples had hardened me and my colleague, Sri T. K. Jayaraman. We stood our ground and justice was on our side.

I could not accept honesty as a mere way of life as in the present times, culture has changed. I could not accept it the best policy as it is practised for self-protection and self-aggrandizement. I did not give up honesty as a liability for my self-protection but I took it as a challenge to enforce it all through my life.

Someone sent me a packet with copies of 70 pages out of 400 pages of the Cabinet Secretariat's file pertaining to my promotion obtained under RTI Act. Now, the cat is out of the bag. In 1999 my name was recommended for the post of Vice-President. Reminders after reminders were sent to the ACC for its clearance to the Ministry of Finance and Cabinet Secretary. Ultimately, it was cleared but a powerful lobby managed to get the file misplaced for about two years. The Cabinet Secretariat again called for fresh proposal. Again my name was sent. But the story was repeated. Later, that powerful lobby got the post made into a selection post. My adversary had by then recorded adverse CRs and despite the CAT's order in my favour, I was overruled for the post in 2004. I am happy that this thing happened as I had to pass through the final test of honesty and integrity. These happenings did not dampen my spirit, but I was emboldened to put in more hard work with more zeal and enthusiasm. I had to finally demonstrate that honesty cannot be practised as a mere policy for self-aggrandizement by pleasing the powers that be as justice would otherwise suffer.

When honesty is taken as a challenge, justice will come out in glorious colours, although like the late Justice H. R. Khanna, you may be superseded but democracy will survive and be saved.

Now is the time when honesty is no longer a way of life nor is it practised as the best policy, i.e., to live and allow the corrupt to live. Today, honesty is considered as a liability. Hence we all have to take it up as a challenge to restore the pristine glory of justice, equality before law, equal protection of law, and equal treatment of all in the eyes of the law and to enforce justice with even hands without fear and favour. Great lawyers like Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru won us the freedom. It is now for the lawyer's community to take honesty as a challenge, and free our country from the clutches of corruption and dishonesty.

Permit me to read out my poems. One poem has been written by my elder sister who happens to be Justice of Peace in Birmingham Magistrate Court, UK.

Enjoy the Saccharine Sweetness

I have found new joys, yesteryear
Deep scars are healed, I need to keep
My flag flying hold my head high
My legs are no longer in deep shallow waters
I found firm ground. The sky is clear
The light around me is pleasant
The breeze brings me sweet fragrances
The horses of carriages have found freedom
I don't need any more voyages, journeys
What lies ahead is an abode of temptress
A dancing daffodil, a seductress
What lies ahead is a slippery path
A path to rinse away the saccharine sweetness
A place with deep hidden gloom,
With a cup of hemlock and misery

My heart is no longer of a lion
My head is no longer with youthful brashness
Now, I anchor my ship in this land of legends
Where wounded soldiers get healed for joys
Let's enjoy the sweetness of this day.
(On my not moving to Mumbai on transfer)

I break my journey

Now it is time for me to say goodbye!
The halting caravan moves
To find new pastures, new shores
But I leave it to proceed, I now stay put
My journey has ended. I have found
Candles, 'diyas' to light my humble dwelling
I have near me a small well
A spring with fresh flowing water
Nearby is a mountain with herbs
And roots to drive away the fret and fever
The day breaks with pleasant odors
Night fall brings the moon's light
The stars throw their bright spears
The ship that sails has found a shore
No more the back breaking journeys
The hounding dogs and the fear of their bites
No more fears of unborn tomorrows
Or unhealing wounds of yesteryear
Today for me is with perfumes of roses
The fragrance to last till I go to deep sleep!
(On my talking VRS from government service)

Retirement

By Shakira Pasha
I rushed around not a moment to spare
Riding on the waves up and down in my life
Leaving the errands to my best half
Now ashore without a rudder or an oar
Deep in Sufi thoughts
Am I here am I there!
I gave judgement all day long

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Now I am waiting for my judgement day
Time seems to have to stood still
Without the hussel / busseel of the court
In the silence of day and night
My own heart beats sound loud
I take solace from my pen
Which transform my inner turmoil to tranquillity
In the rhythm of my breath
I say thank God for peace

Forgiveness is a Jewel among the Virtues of Mankind

“To err is human but to forgive is divine,” is an old adage. If men start taking revenge for each and every small mistake and wrong done by others to them, then peace, love and affection and harmony in the world would be lost forever. It is in the nature of man to commit mistakes but to repent at leisure is also second nature to man. Since it is human to err and commit a folly therefore it becomes incumbent on every individual to forgive by overlooking the mistakes and wrongs of others. Patience and fortitude should be exercised to a great extent to achieve the desired goal of peace of mind and happiness in life. If we keep harbouring grudges against our fellowmen for wrongs committed by them against us, then it is a sure way to lose out peace of mind and happiness forever. Instead we need to develop magnanimity and large-heartedness to forgive all and silly mistakes and wrongs of others.

A question posed is, whether serious crimes committed against individuals or against the society should also be forgiven. It is not so, it would lead to lawlessness and breakdown of law and order, and also disturb the peace and tranquillity of the society. In such circumstances, therefore law takes its own course. Society has laid down rules and regulations for punishing suitably the wrongdoers. One should also do introspection before

prosecuting any individual by seeking justice against a law breaker and wrong doer. Such a person maybe your own kith and kin. In such circumstances, it may break the family bonds and filial relationship. Compromise and compounding of offences are provided in law. There would be umpteen instances, when a wrongdoer in a fit of anger and in passion would commit a wrong, a sin or a crime but would definitely not have any intention to harm the injured person. Intention plays an important part in such circumstances to determine the gravity of such offences. It is in such circumstances that law requires for pardoning the wrongdoer or giving less punitive punishment than incarnation or corporal punishment. If the wrongdoer comes forward to compensate the wrong committed by adequate and full monetary compensation or undertakes to do good and charitable works to atone for his sin then she may be pardoned by exercising magnanimity and large-heartedness.

All wrongs, like jeers, taunts, criticism and insults are not punishable. It may cause deep hurt and this would be a cause to bear a grudge and rancour. This is an occasion to exercise restraint and to pardon such foolish and silly persons, for they have committed wrongs without knowing their ramifications. To ignore such vain talks of others and exercise silence is a better proposition for maintaining a healthy relationship.

Allah and His Prophet (SAS) have again and again assured of forgiveness and clemency to sinners and wrongdoers on their seeking pardon and forgiveness. Holy Prophet (SAS) was troubled by his enemies throughout his Prophethood, but he kept forgiving his enemies, including his staunchest enemy, Abu Sufian. "Forgive them for they know not what wrong they do," he would advise his followers.

Self-realization may dawn on the wrongdoers, and they would realize their mistakes and seek to amend for their wrongs,

they would patch up the relationships by seeking friendship and by strengthening it by good deeds. Therefore, every individual needs to do introspection and should develop large-heartedness, broad-mindedness, love and affection to forget and forgive the wrongs of fellowmen, kith and kin so as to achieve 'As-Sakina' in their hearts, i.e., eternal peace, solace and bliss in this life and in the life hereafter.

Taqwa—Awe of the Lord

When we begin to believe in the existence of the everlasting Being, about His ever powerful nature, then our being gets subdued. A wonder is struck and our being gets humbled. A fear dawns in our self. The *Holy Quran* refers to it as 'Taqwa'. One needs to cultivate this awe, this wonder in the mind and heart in order to enable one to be always humble, simple and cultured. The mirror of the heart should get polished. You should feel enlightened and love should ooze out from every particle of your being, be always light-hearted with a smile on you face. To achieve the awe and wonder, you should submit and surrender to the Lord forever and subjugate your inner being to His commands, His rules and His regulations, to shun animal instincts of anger, jealousy, hatred, lust, covetousness, greed, selfishness and self-centredness, to establish morals and develop moral courage, right action, right speech, right conduct and adopt right manners, to look beyond the horizons of life and keep high ideals to achieve bliss, happiness and higher learning as your life goal; to submit your body and soul in prayers, fasting and do acts of charity, and serve the suffering humanity and mankind.

Unite man in bonds of love, kindness, compassion and brotherhood. The awe and wonder of the Lord should open the heart and mind to the marvels of nature, so as to enable the mind and heart to probe into the secrets of nature, enlighten the mind

and heart with higher wisdom, knowledge and learning. The more your personality grows, the more humble and simple you would become, as the wonder of the Lord is beautiful and full of mystery and marvellous. You would begin to feel being always in the presence of that Beautiful, Compassionate and merciful Being, and your heart would always radiate love, affection and compassion.

Repent in Leisure

A thousand times we wish that we could go back to erase from our records the wrong actions, mistakes committed by us and redo the things again. But times have changed, so also circumstances, and history is already written. It is so impossible to change the past. A little mistake, a little wrong has changed the course of life. What is lost is lost forever. We regret in leisure. It is so difficult to undo the wrong done as we have allowed time to lapse and pass by. Wisdom dawns too late on the occurrence of the consequences. The only remedy available is perhaps to compensate by doing good deeds and turn a new leaf.

In certain cases penance is suggested by scriptures and intense prayers and retreat are the suggested remedy. We look up to God to show His mercy, clemency and to wash our guilt away. There are certain wrongs which call for punitive actions. But a large number of wrong decisions has only changed the course of events. We only yearn and wish that better decisions could have been taken to avoid certain courses of events. At certain times, the hurt caused by us by our wrong actions can be mended by doing good to the person to whom we have caused the hurt. We can be profusely apologetic and be sincerely and truly good to him. This can offset the wrong done by us.

Where our wrong action has resulted in torturous crime, we need to face the civil and Criminal consequences. To wash the

guilt away, we need to truly repent and seek pardon from the person wronged and from the Almighty, so that such actions are not repeated. We need to seek the Lord's mercy always and forever, for His protection and clemency, so as to avoid falling in error and committing any further wrongs. There are ever so many silly actions committed by us day in and day out some of which are reprehensible. To avoid such actions, which bring us shame, we need to develop self-control and self-restraint for which we need to adopt correct speech, right action and right conduct. This perfection is achieved by long practice and self-correction consciously practised every day. For this we need to practice showering love and affection on all and this should become the motto of our life. To maintain correct mental posture and balance we need to forgive others who wrong us and also seek forgiveness from those whom we wrong.

Good Neighbours

'Think thy neighbour as thyself' is the scriptural saying. Our holy Prophet (pbuh) has again and again emphasized on good relations being maintained with neighbours; to take them as your own kith and kin. This is possible only when we are friendly, forgiving and compromising in nature. It seldom happens and one is placed in a very difficult situation particularly in congested localities and tenements, where the neighbours are required to share the common facilities. The acute shortage of water supply to tenements would be a bone of contention. Likewise, one's privacy is invaded by neighbours and much of one's private affairs come to their knowledge. Their affairs also come to our knowledge. Hence these private affairs should not be disclosed to anyone. One should not pry into the affairs of one's neighbours but keep one's eyes and ears shut to any untoward happenings. It is only then good neighbourly relations can be maintained. Creating noise pollution by switching on the TV and radio loudly talking loudly ruins good neighbourly relations. Rearing pets should also not cause annoyance and nuisance to neighbours. When you enter a neighbour's house, alert them by ringing the bell and greeting them.

Neighbours can become the best of friends or the worst of enemies. Maintaining good relationship with humility, tolerance and goodness is a great strength. Many would pick up quarrels,

dissent on very petty and minor issues escalating into fights and long standing misunderstanding ruining relationship and many more neighbours joining issues. Sometimes the matter becomes a law and order situation leading to police and courts stepping in. This can add up to the mounting tension in one's personal life, thus ruining one's health, happiness and joy in life.

Neighbours have certain rights that is the right of way, the right of air, water, parking facility besides having the right of privacy. These are fundamental rules and their observation is a must for maintaining a good and healthy relationship in the neighbourhood. Only when good neighbourly relationships are maintained, can brotherhood and peace be cultivated and nurtured; this is the aim of Islam.

Gratitude, Thankfulness and Patience

Millions of graces are being bestowed and granted on the humanity from the time of the creation of the earth by the Lord Almighty. From the stage of a simple cartwheel to the present nano-technology and space age, man has been creative and the Lord has bestowed on him innumerable and umpteen Graces and benefits. Man has to be ever and eternally grateful and thankful for all the benefits he is reaping in multiple fields. More and more comforts and joys are in store for him. At the same time he faces turmoils, sufferings, troubles and pain. For this mankind has to show forbearance and patience. Many millions suffer while millions enjoy all the pleasures and joys.

The life of man on this planet appears to be a paradox, a game of chance and chess, dice and of snakes and ladders. A feeling of injustice creeps in the mind and man feels desolate, dejected and unhappy. It is during this period of agony, that he is commanded by the Lord Almighty to exert patience and be steadfast in his worship to Him without grouse, grievance and complaint forever and ever, to be submissive and totally surrender to Him than to complain of his woes, pain and suffering. The Almighty Lord has laid a duty on well-to-do and fortunate people to show mercy and always be in service of the unfortunates and sufferers. Life for both well to do people and for those who are in suffering and are in pain are a test and examination. The

agnostics and atheists find many reasons to complain of injustices but those who surrender to the Lord's will show their patience and work for everlasting goodness. Their primary concern is faith (*iman*). 'Ihsan' (gratitude and thankfulness) and 'Yakeen' (certitude). It is the strong reliance (*tawakul*) on the Lord, the engine for the ship to sail through the turbulent sea of life, coupled by strong faith (*iman*) and 'Yakeen' (certitude) and a feeling that God provides the subsistence at all times and always. We should totally rely on the Lord with gratitude and without any complaints, woes or grievance totally submissive to Him with gratitude (*ihsan*) always and forever. This is the way to achieve "As-Sakina", peace and tranquillity for the soul.

Fines and Penalties in Life

Life is not always a bed of roses. It is complex, perplexing, complicated and full of riddles. From birth to death one is faced with umpteen rules and regulations, customs, traditions, etiquettes and manners. We are what we are, as we are brought up by our family traditions, environment, schooling and our cultural background. Ofte we are not aware of how to conduct in a particular situation or in a new surrounding or in a new place, unaware of the mores, rules and traditions of that place. Each day calls for caution, care and presence of mind from morning till evening. A little forgetfulness or negligence may cause harm, annoyance or hurt to another and we may have to face its consequences and pay the fine and penalty.

Fines and penalties have been fixed by societal norms to remind us of our duties, obligations and care to be taken by us in our actions. Failure brings us to the doorstep of fines and penalties. There are so many religious rules and laws calling for strict observance. Failure to comply with them will call for penal action. Forgetfulness and unconsciously not performing or the plea of good intention are no excuses. If you forget to perform 'wazu' for namaz and then perform the namaz, it is not accepted; you need to repeat it again by performing 'wazu'. If you fail to keep the obligatory 'roza' – (fasting), you need to keep it after the month of Ramzan or feed the poor. For every non-

performance of regular mandatory duties, penal provisions have been carved out, be it forgetting to take your daily bus pass, identity card, tickets or simply not tying up your ferocious dog, which has bitten a stranger. In order to avoid facing severe penal actions due to negligence, forgetfulness, absentmindedness, there are several remedies suggested by either law itself or by mantras created by modern management techniques. All and Every law-enacting agency cautions due care to be taken before performing any action. Sometimes forgetting to wish elders, passersby, and men in authority brings displeasure and you are sure to be called discourteous and rude. To avoid penalties to enter into your daily life or even once, you need to practise being a stickler with observation of rules and to acquire knowledge. You need to be meditative and conscious all the time. You need to regulate your inner urges, temper, manners and conduct by regular practice and regimentation. Despite taking every care in our lives, yet we pay heavily for our wrong actions performed innocently, unintentionally or by any innocuous action. We need to control our emotions and adopt a posture of forgiveness, compassion and be kind to others in our daily life than be 'Shylock-like' to seek "the pound of flesh", for we may face another Shylock round the corner who demands from us "his pound of flesh". Both religious and parliamentary laws call for compounding and compromising disputes in some circumstances but in many cases punishments, fines and penalties are severely imposed upon for wrong action committed intentionally or not.

A True Worshipper

When you truly and sincerely turn towards the Almighty Allah after repenting for all your past sins and wrong actions, Allah truly pardons your sins. This, Allah assures 'Mumineens' and 'Muslemeens' in the *Holy Quran* again and again. The 'Kalima', 'Laillaha illah' – "there is no god but Allah", when recited, should be with single-minded devotion and certainty of faith; that you have turned away truly and sincerely from all that is other than Allah, from the idol worship of every kind and nature, false deities in mind, heart and spirit. It is turning away not only from myths and mythologies but also from the sins of the heart like worshipping the pleasures of the world, of aggrandisement of wealth, covetousness, lust, greed, jealousy, hatred, suspicion and all other negative feelings, and that you have adopted the true worship of Allah with deep devotion by total surrender and submission to His commands and laws.

The love of the Lord Almighty for achieving 'As-Sakina' of the heart and 'Qalb-e-Saleem', pure heart, should be with certainty of faith. You should feel that the Lord's mercy, clemency and compassion have surrounded you and that you have truly become humble, simple and sublime, that you have reached the truth and shunned falsehood. Only then, the *Holy Quran* assures the faithful, Islam has entered your heart and soul. A true Mussalman is a gifted person with enormous large-heartedness, always kind,

compassionate, loving and forgiving. A true Mussalman is truly peaceful in all his behaviour, actions and deeds. He does not indulge in bickering, backstabbing, slander, mud-slinging, having jealousy, hatred and suspicion instead adopts a posture of patience, fortitude and total surrender to the Almighty Allah. He believes that he is guided by Him, by His commands, and therefore acquires the knowledge of 'Sunna' and perfects himself in terms of the precepts of Holy Prophet (PBUH), his companions and saints. He follows in the footsteps of the 'Saliheens', 'Sadiqueens' and 'Shuheda', those who are doing good deeds, are truthful and those who bear witness to the unity of God-hood. The life of a true follower is indeed a blessed one, as he joins the ranks of 'Mutaqueens', the awe-inspired ones, 'Shakireens' and 'Sabireens', the contented and the patient.

Human Grit and Determination

In Chile, Southern America, 33 miners were trapped 2,000 feet in the bowels of the earth for about 60 days. Through bored tubes, food and oxygen was supplied, in the poorly-lit dark bowels of the earth, the miners faced untold hardships, hunger and fear which kept them in the jaws of death. But they did not lose hope and looked for Divine help.

The entire nation prayed for them, so also the entire humanity. Every moment was a moment of trial and test for the near and dear ones. The human ingenuity worked overtime. The wonders of science and technology were put to best use. A capsule was designed at jet speed, a separate bore was drilled and the capsule, to enclose one single individual, was slowly and steadily lowered to the spot where the miners were trapped. One by one, the trapped miners were steadily lifted to face the light of day. The whole nation erupted in joy and thanksgiving to the Lord. This rescue operation and the miners' prayers and struggle for survival were possible by sheer grit and determination. This grit and determination to overcome the toughest trials and ordeals are ingrained not only in humans, but in the entire living world. Nature places the toughest tests to the living beings for survival and the living beings overcome the same with grit and determination.

When the fish and birds migrate from the coldest Arctic regions during the toughest winter seasons to warmer regions, they swim and fly continuously over a range of thousands of miles without food and water. It is their grit and determination to survive that make their migration possible.

Human beings from antiquity have been migrating from place to place on of the earth in search of pastures, food and to make better homes.

Farmers survive the toughest weather conditions and face nature's wrath now and then, but they do not lose hope; they build again their lives on lost edifice. Natural calamities like floods, tsunami, drought and earthquakes bring untold hardships and sufferings to humanity, but they are ingrained with the capacity to survive and fight all the odds of nature and man-made calamities. Extremes of poverty make man live in sub-human conditions. Workers of various hues spend hours and hours to carry out various chores of life. They face enormous heat before burning furnaces, melting ovens, iron and other metals, facing risks in their daily lives. Even a humble coolie lifts heavy weights for hours together for a morsel of food.

Several semi-skilled and skilled workers likewise dedicate their lives to help humanity to survive and keeps the wheels of economy moving further and further. Astronauts go on space odyssey all alone for days and months fearlessly. Divers go to the depth of oceans for research. It is all in all, the will of man not only for adventure, but to seek knowledge and increase the vistas of learning. Scholars burn the midnight oil to master their subjects. So also engineers, doctors and men of learning in umpteen fields.

Growth is the order of Nature and so also to overcome its ordeals, tests and trials. For all these to conquer, grit, determination, hope, strong will power, abundance of patience

and a spirit of camaraderie are required. One can be sure of victory when everlasting goodness is the goal of man. Nature has created all several situations for man, giving the strength to overcome the same and achieve success in all their endeavours.

Spare the Rod, Spoil the Child

This is a good old idiom, which is recognized as a social norm, to use the rod to correct the child's behaviour by parents and teachers. But generations of human experience disclosed about the ill effect of thrashing and beating a child without any reason, rhyme or cause. It would have a deleterious effect on the behaviour of the growing child besides effecting his normal physical and psychological growth. It will create personality disorders besides causing many illness and allergy problems. The child in order to avoid being beaten, scolded and abused will adopt many defensive mechanisms. He may also become more stubborn, naughty and mischievous.

In modern times, child rights have been fully recognized. In Western and advanced countries child abuse is taken very seriously by law authorities. Several childcare commissions have been set up under enactments. Modern psychologists and experts recommend counselling, childcare and various therapies. But the best golden therapy is abundant showering of love and affection without making the child spoiled by excessive concern, love and fulfilling excessive desires at the drop of a hat. The child has to be properly weaned as he grows, from temptations, desires and stubbornness to seek more pleasures. Today, the expectations of parents are high. They create dreams for themselves and for the child, by procuring admission for him in renowned montessori

and elite schools. They goad and pamper him with expensive toys. When he shows some indiscipline, the frustrated parents start abusing the child. A normal, healthy atmosphere is required to be created in the home, playschool and outside environment for the child to grow normally. This would enable to acquire healthy habits. Temper tantrums and mischief are required to be carefully dealt with. In olden times, grannies and aunts and uncles would be a source of great joy and happiness for the children. But in the present times, both parents being employed, and lack of time to spare for the children, have become a bane. In order to avoid social problems and child abuse, it is necessary to help develop a healthy environment for children. 'A child is the father of man' and tomorrow's future of a nation is in the healthy growth of a child.

The Pen is Mightier than the Sword

The first message to an unlettered Prophet (Pbuh) was "Iqra."

Read in the name of the Lord and Cherisher
Who Created man, out of a leech like clot.
Proclaim! And Thy Lord is Most Bountiful
He Who taught the use of Pen

(Surah 96: 1-4)

Thus the Prophet (Pbuh) proclaimed that the "ink of the scholar is holier than the blood of the martyr."

When this is the beginning of the word of the Lord Almighty and His light, to "Noorulla", the Messenger of Peace, it follows that education, law and justice precede anything and everything in life. Reason shall rule and prevail over emotions. There shall be no attachment to honour, wealth, self and splendour. But loyalty and dedication should be towards the dictates of Allah and His word, His law and the Prophet's message.

For living a virtuous, peaceful and tranquil life, acquisition of knowledge is paramount and of utmost importance in Islam.

"Ignorance of law is no excuse" to escape from penal and penalty provisions. At every breath of life, intricate rules have been framed. Scholars shall interpret and make it known to the

populace. The loyalty and integrity of the learned and the scholars shall at all times be for the law of the Universal King and His peaceful, trustworthy and truthful messenger. The rule of law and sense of justice shall precede each and every ruling. There has to be a clear and just balance in the ruling. Good conscience and equity shall prevail. All are equal in the eyes of the law. Scholars shall not proclaim and give rulings to please the powers that be, or for cheap popularity or to gain wealth and recognition. The path of the Scholar is strewn with thorns and a Damocles' sword always hangs on his head, to speak the truth and to lay down his all, including, if time gives a call, his life to help prevail just laws and justice.

Some scholars are known to betray people to help the autocratic, powerful monarchs and for fear of life. This is an unholy and most cruel thing. Cruelty is not just lack of compassion, mercy and benevolence, but it is also tilts the balance in favour of the unjust and wicked, bringing chaos and lawlessness and destroying eternal peace, happiness, tranquillity and "As-Sakina".

Learning by each and every individual to know his rights, duties and to perform his legal obligations towards a just living and society is the primary and fundamental aim of Islam.

Every scholar, both religious and secular, shall help in the maintenance of cosmic harmony, right living, right conduct, right speech and conducive living to bring in peace, justice, mercy and compassion in each and every individual's life.

Purposeful prayers, equitable distribution of wealth, charity and correct performance of "salat," good actions and deeds are by acquisition of knowledge. The scholars, teachers and 'men of letters' and pen, the learned, the wise, the poets, the philosophers, the judges and lawyers, the legislators and parliamentarians play

a pivotal role in ushering in fair play, justice, equality, brotherhood and freedom from darkness between all the races of humanity.

There is a great responsibility on them to maintain equanimity, sense of justice, fair-play and honesty in applying the rule of law equally among all sections of the people.

With their mighty pen, the scholars should fight tyrannical rulers, state terrorism, trampling of human rights and suppression of the oppressed and depressed.

Self- illumination and enlightenment of mind and heart are by acquisition and correct application of knowledge alone.

Spiritual Enlightenment of Hazrath Abbas (RA)

Hazrath Abbas (RA) became one of the closest confidant and companion of the Holy Prophet (Pbuh)

Hazrath Abbas (RA), son of Abdul Muttalib and Prophet's (Pbuh) uncle, took part in the battle of Badr, along with his brother Abu Sufian as unbelievers. He was captured and brought as captive to Madina along with the other unbelievers, and his hands were tied and he was put in fetters.

The story of his conversion to Islam and spiritual enlightenment is well documented in history. Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi (RA) in his book, *Fihi Ma Fihi* (Signs of the Unseen-the Discourses of Jalaluddin Rumi), recounts the confession of faith by Hazrath Abbas as follows:

"It occurs to me to interpret a verse of the *Quran*, even if it is not pertinent to this discussion. Anyway, since it occurs to me now, I may as well say it out".

God said, "O Prophet, say unto the captives who are in your hands, if God hath known any good to be in your hearts, He will give you better than what hath been taken from you, and He will forgive you, for God is Gracious and Merciful".

(*Surah 8, Ayat 70*)

The reason for the revelation of this verse is as follows: The blessed Prophet had defeated the infidels. He took many prisoners and had them bound hand and foot. Among these prisoners was his uncle Abbas. All night long, the prisoners wailed in their fetters and bemoaned their miserable, wretched condition. Having given up all hope, they were waiting for the sword to end their lives, when the Prophet saw them and laughed.

“You see,” they said, “he does have humanity in him. The claim that he is not human is untrue, for here, seeing us in these bonds and fetters as his prisoners, he rejoices exactly as a carnal man would rejoice in glee if he had conquered his enemy and seen him vanquished.”

The Prophet, however read their thoughts and said, “Oh, no, I am not laughing because I see my enemies vanquished or because I am rejoicing at seeing you at a loss. I am laughing because with my inner eye, I see myself forced to drag with chains and fetters a group of people out of hell’s fiery furnace and black smoke into the eternal garden of heavenly paradise. They are bewailing and lamenting, saying, ‘Why are you taking us away from this place of perdition into that asylum and rose-bower?’ That is why I am laughing. Since you still do not have the power of vision, to comprehend and see clearly what I am saying, God commands me to say this to you: ‘First you gathered many hosts and much might and relying totally upon your own strength, valour and might, you told yourselves that you would do this, and so would utterly vanquish the Muslims. You thought no one was stronger than you. You could not imagine anyone mightier than yourselves. Now that all you had planned has turned out otherwise, and now that you lie trembling in fear, you have not repented for your malady and are in desperate straits. You still cannot conceive that anyone could be more powerful than you are. It is therefore necessary for you to see me in my might and

power, and yourselves as subject to my wrath in order that things may be made easy for you. Do not despair of me in your fear, for I am able to deliver you from this fear and lead you to safety. He who can bring forth a black cow from a white one can bring forth a white cow from a black one.”

He causeth the night to succeed the day, and He causeth the day to succeed the night. (Surah 35, Ayat 13).

He bringeth forth the living out of the dead, and bringeth forth the dead out of the living. (Surah 30, Ayat 19).

Now in your present state as prisoners, despair not of my presence in order that I may take you by the hand, for *“none despaireth of God’s mercy, except the unbelieving people. (Surah 12, Ayat 87).*

Then the Prophet continued “Now God says, ‘O prisoners, if you turn away from your former belief and perceive Me in both states of fear and hope and realize that you are subject to My Will in all conditions, I shall release you from this state of fear. I shall restore to you all your property that has been plundered and lost, nay, I shall restore it to you many times more. I shall pardon you and to your wealth in this world, I shall join the wealth of the next world also.’”

“I repent,” said Abbas. “I have turned away from what I was.”

“God requires a token of this claim you make,” said the Prophet.

It is easy to lay claim to love.

But the proof of it remains otherwise.

“In God’s name,” asked Abbas, “what token do you require?”

“Give to the armies of Islam all the wealth you have left. If you have truly become a Muslim and wish well to the religion and community of Islam, give in order that the army of Islam may be strengthened,” said the Prophet.

“O Apostle of God,” said Abbas, “what have I left? Everything has been plundered. I have not so much as an old straw mat left to my name.”

“See,” said the Prophet, “you still have not become righteous. You have not turned away from what you were. Let me tell you how much wealth you have, where you have hidden it, to whom you have entrusted it and in what spot you have buried it.”

“Oh no,” cried Abbas.

“Did you not entrust a certain amount to your mother? Did you not bury it under a wall and stipulate that if you came back, she was to give it to you and if you did not return alive, she was to spend it on a certain thing, give so much to a certain person and keep a certain amount for herself,” said the Prophet.

Abbas raised his finger and professed the faith sincerely, saying, “O Prophet, in truth I used to think that you had good luck through the machinations of fortune, as did many ancient kings like Haman, Shaddad and Nimrod. However, when you told me what you said, I knew for certain that this good fortune is mysterious and divine in origin.”

“You speak the truth,” said the Prophet. “This time, I heard that girdle of doubt you wore inwardly, snap. The sound of its breaking reached that ear of mine that is hidden in the depths of my soul. Whenever anyone’s girdle of doubt, polytheism or infidelity snaps, I can hear the sound of it breaking with my inner ear, my soul’s ear. Now you have truly become righteous and professed the faith.”

Hazrath Abbas (RA) became one of the closest confidants and companions of the holy Prophet (Pbuh). His descendants established the Abbassid dynasty which ushered in a period of great prosperity, learning and expansion of Islam for over five centuries.

Bursting Anger, Stress and Strain

There are as many recommendations as there are ways of life and living to tackle anger, stress and strain in daily living. The holistic approach is to train the inner self to always remain calm and not to develop attachments to worldly things.

The management 'gurus' have their list of 'do's' and 'don'ts', and have suggested remedies from deep breathing exercises to management of daily stress and strain in daily living. The psychologists have their way of dealing with this problem. They link this daily problem to personality disorder or inability to develop a proper defence mechanism.

"Bursting anger, stress and strain" in daily living is not as easy as the suggested remedies. A majority deal with this problem in their own individualistic way. Anger is an angst and reaction against something unpleasant to the self of man. It gets built up slowly and steadily or it is an immediate outburst of emotions. The outburst would be in the form of strong reaction against the person towards whom the anger is directed either by shouting or by use of abusive language or violence or by a simple stare. In most of the cases, where there is no outburst of emotion, the anger builds up inside causing severe stress and strain. It may lead to emotional disorder or blood pressure or even diabetes and other related diseases. Most of the migraines, heart ailments are a result of continuous building up of anger, stress and strain.

As children, the temper tantrums and outbursts are short-lived, and children tend to forget and forgive. They continue to play, sing, shout and make merry. This process of joy and happiness found in childhood slowly gets lost as the growing process takes place. The holistic approach is to recall the same attitude in adult and growing years to let out the built-up emotions and to play games, take interest in music, extra-curricular activities, make pilgrimages, visit tourist jaunts, go for holidays and such things. But all cannot afford it. The life situation may not warrant such a luxury. The problems besetting a person may be such that it may not call for 'quick fix' solutions. It may be a long-standing family feud, grave legal entanglements, indebtedness, loss in business and many such problems. Each individual may require different solutions to get rid of stress, strain and anger, built up due to several wrongs done to an individual over a period of time.

Prayers, meditation, patience, tolerance not losing hope being always optimistic of good events to happen are positive approaches to remove stress, strain and anger and ill-feelings developing in one's self.

The spiritualists would like to leave the matter to destiny and take each moment as one of joy and bliss. This is a very difficult approach and one needs constant strengthening of spiritual beliefs. This is by aligning oneself to some spiritual systems or 'gurus' who guide a person to deal with life situations.

There are yoga specialists, peers, bishops, saints and umpteen spiritualists who show the way to tackle the problems of life.

Whatever may be the methods and ways chosen by one to tackle the problems of life, one thing is quite clear: that stress, strain, anger and ill-feelings should not be left unaddressed. It requires to be handled by an individual person by healthy means, and wean it out to make life joyful, happy and blissful.

Character and Conduct are the Key and Glory of Life

Character and good conduct are the key and glory of life. It is not enough in merely asserting faith in Islam. Besides an expression of certainty of faith in Allah and his Prophet (PBUH), every Muslim and every citizen is required to build up a good character and develop a good conduct in social, civil and public life. Every person should follow and walk straight path, adopt righteousness and shun all the despicable behaviours and bad manners by adopting the correct stance. Good behaviour, excellent character and good conduct are required to be cultivated from childhood. A great responsibility rests on the shoulders of parents, relatives and teachers in moulding the character and conduct of a child. Thus, education and knowledge therefore refine a person. "Tell me who your friends are, I will tell you what you are" is an old adage.

Company makes or mars a man. One should draw a line between good and improper behaviour. One needs to caution oneself every now and then by self-examination and self-inquiry. Politeness and gentle behaviour have to be practised day in and day out. For this patience and fortitude are necessary. All these things can be achieved by developing compassion and kindness in one's self. Remembrance of Allah, of His bounties and filling the heart with His awe, wonder and fear will help in cultivating good manners and in developing good character and conduct.

The life of the Prophet (PBUH) is an excellent model for us to emulate. The *Holy Quran* vouches for the excellence of the Prophet's life and commands every Mussalman to follow in the footsteps of our Prophet (PBUH). Then we have the lives of the Prophet's Companions and Saints to guide us forever to live a virtuous and good life.

For one to develop a sterling character, one needs to have before one a great personality like our Holy Prophet (PBUH) and saints for guidance. The need to purify oneself every day, every moment and every breath is necessary. To develop remorse and repent for past sins, mistakes and bad behaviour and every moment think of improving oneself for better and better perfection of one's own self are paramount in life. You have to be your own policeman to check the evil tendencies in your mind, heart and soul and for its purification. Therefore, love, and love alone, can bring a change in the character and conduct of man.

How to Ruin Good Relationship

A relationship built assiduously with care and caution over a large period of time with friends, relatives and companions can be ruined forever within moments; when self-control is lost; a rude and impolite behaviour overrides you; anger and jealousy overpower you and your tongue lashes out acerbic words, profanity and uncalled, for unpleasant comments; coupled with jeers, criticism and taunts. When you throw all cautions ego assumes importance. When humility is overcome by pride and self-esteem and when false prestige overrides you, while trying to cut someone's tail, you may cause your utter ruination. After the events pass and when realization dawns on you, it is too late to mend matters. You have to work very hard to undo the wrong done by you with genuine apologies, calm and balm the ruffled feelings, with goodness to the wronged person, and by good deeds, actions, genuine love, affection and repentances.

But, in the most of the circumstances, what is lost is lost forever and the wronged person cannot assume the fine sentiments and positivity held so far for you. He grows suspicious and his wounds keep reminding him of the hurt caused by you, and they also would be looking for a chance and an opportunity to pay you back in the same coin with more rigour and cause your ruination with multiple injuries. There is a good adage, that to maintain a calm posture and to hold your tongue and remain

silent is golden rather than utter and burst out your momentary hurt feelings and emotions. Hence, patience is considered as the mother of virtue. If you bear with an awkward situation in a tight place; when emotions are raging and ruling and reasons have failed; you would come out victorious. You are supposed to have controlled the situation superbly and would be considered as a gentleman, a person of chivalry and fine manners. You need to develop magnanimity with a calm exterior and soft interior, with a genuine golden heart, showing compassion, kindness and tolerance. You need to avoid the ruffling of feathers and stirring of a muddy pond to avoid ruining healthy, good and sustained relationships. Therefore, silence and sobriety are hallmarks to maintain good relationships.

Animal Soul and Spiritual Soul

Imam Al-Ghazali says on this topic in his monumental work, *The Alchemy of Happiness* as follows: The effect of death on the composite nature of man is as follows: Man has two souls, an animal soul and a spiritual soul, the latter of which is of angelic nature. The seat of the animal soul is the heart, from which this soul issues like a subtle vapour and pervades all the members of the body, giving the power of sight to the eye, the power of hearing to the ear and to every member, the faculty of performing its own appropriate functions. It may be compared to a lamp carried about within a cottage, the light of which falls upon the walls wherever it goes. The heart is the wick of this lamp and when the supply of oil is cut off for any reason, the lamp dies. Such is the death of the animal soul.

With the spiritual or human soul, the case is different. It is indivisible and by it, man knows God. It is so to speak, the rider of the animal soul and when that perishes, it still remains, but is like a horseman who has been dismounted or like a hunter who has lost his weapons. That steed and those weapons were granted to the human soul, so that by means of them, it might pursue and capture the phoenix of the love and knowledge of God. If it has affected that capture, it is not a grief, but rather a relief to be able to lay those weapons aside and to dismount from that weary steed. Therefore, the Prophet said, "Death is a welcome gift from God to the believer." But alas, for that soul which loses its steed and hunting weapons before it has captured the prize, its misery and regret will be un-describable.

Knowledge of the Unseen

Imam Al-Ghazali says in his monumental work, *The Alchemy of Happiness*:

“As regards the joys of heaven and the pains of hell which will follow this life, all believers in the *Quran* and the Traditions are sufficiently informed. But it often escapes them that there is also a spiritual heaven and hell. ‘Concerning the former, of which God said to His Prophet, ‘Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which are prepared for the righteous.’

“In the heart of the enlightened man, there is a window, opening on to the realities of the spiritual world, so that he knows not by hearsay or traditional belief, but by actual experience, what produces wretchedness or happiness in the soul, just as clearly and decidedly as the physician knows what produces sickness or health in the body. He recognizes that knowledge of God and worship are medicinal, and that ignorance and sin are deadly poisons for the soul. Many even so-called ‘learned’ men, from blindly following others’ opinions have no real certainty in their beliefs regarding the happiness or misery of souls in the next world, but he who will attend to the matter with a mind and heart unbiased by prejudice will arrive at clear convictions on this matter.”

Dispel Darkness, Enlighten Yourself

Darkness is always associated with evil, bad, unhappiness and something which is not right but wrong, outlandish, out of way and not giving joy, ecstasy and mental serenity. One gropes in the darkness to find a way but gets misled like in a maze. Those who are misled and who do not follow the right path, well-known, well-trodden pathways get disturbed and enter into the arena of sorrows, grief, pathos and unending life of troubles. This has been the story of humanity.

The intellectual bearing of man and his collective experience has opened the floodgates of knowledge and enlightenment. The knowledge is recorded in books, memorized, crystallized in lore's, folk-songs, and pithy epigrammatic sayings. Time and again, learned scholars, priests, saints and prophets have been a source of enlightenment, to guide humanity to correct behaviour, conduct, conducive and successful living, joy and happiness.

Human psychology has revealed that internal emotional imbalances resulting in unweaned, irrational anger, jealousy, hatred, covetousness, greed, lust have resulted in disruptions, crime and destruction resulting in untold misery and troubles for the family, community and mankind at large. For the purpose of enlightenment, one needs to be cultured from childhood by good upbringing, cultivating good manners, good language, a loving bearing, an attitude of forget and forgive, compassion, kindness,

softness in speech and walk. One needs to give up roughness, slothful, behaviour and conduct that breaks the heart and ruins the relationships.

In order to discipline the mind from its meanderings and monkey behaviour, one needs to contemplate, observe silence for which meditation and prayers are essential. To bring in enlightenment, one needs to give up selfishness, egotism, worshipping false idols and deities created by selfish self like excessive wealth, foolhardiness, excessive seeking of pleasures, mirth and sexuality. One who needs and desires to reach the path of glory and unending joys, happiness, solace and tranquillity; needs to dispel with herculean efforts the darkness and open up the mind to the floodgates of light. Light eats up and drives away darkness. One reaches the Lord, who is Eternal Malik, who has been enlightening mankind with His prophets, saints and scholars by self-knowledge and enlightenment. Certainty of faith and practice in extreme goodness, truth and justice leads to enlightenment.

Happiness and Sorrows in Life

Happiness is a state of mind, being satisfied with the happenings around you and joys brought by the environment and people you live with and the work you perform. There is no mental or emotional disturbance, no pain, anguish or turmoil in the mind. A mental state of satisfaction result in calmness and serenity. There is no extra burden on the mind or on the purse or drain in the finances. Your daily chores are fully to attended. People with whom you are concerned are not troubling you. You are in a position to maintain cordiality and avoid any sharp edges and pin-pricks. You are not unduly criticised, condemned, pulled up or troubled for any slip or mistake or wrong committed by you. You are maintaining the decorum and rules of decent living, etiquette and manners. You are not overstepping the limits, being always cordial and smiling, doing your best to help your surroundings, friends, relatives and people around you. You are doing your best as you are required to do or perform, to satisfy the needs of your dependants, especially your wife and children. You are maintaining your health and getting a sound sleep. Thus life for you is charming, full of roses and perfumes.

As against this, there are people who are always complaining of one thing or another, being dissatisfied with their own self, picking up quarrels with people around them, fighting for one thing or another, thereby neglecting their daily chores and works

and being irresponsible. Due to this they land themselves in umpteen problems of one kind or another resulting in emotional disturbances, outbursts of anger, being jealous, carrying ill feelings for others, always carrying a feeling of being wronged by others, always carrying a feeling of dissatisfaction, unhappiness, sorrow and pain.

One can turn a new leaf and change one's course of life by accepting the reality of one's faults. One needs to put an end to the feeling of being wronged by others. A mood of well-being is required to be prepared to meet the situations of life. Put on a smile on seeing an adversary rather than showing disrespect and anger. One needs to change the tone of talk to sweetness, softness and kindness than being rough, haughty and proud. One needs to tackle emotional disturbances like anger, ill feelings, jealousy by rationalization or by taking advice from elders, wise people. The blame game needs to be stopped and put an end to. One needs to help oneself rather than expect others to help one, that is, one needs to become self-reliant and self-satisfied. Happiness is not something which comes from above. One needs to create an environment, situation and prepare an atmosphere for conducive things to happen, to bring joys. One needs to give up being a cynical, critical person. You should not cause hurt, annoyance, harm and give pinpricks to others. This would prevent others from harming and troubling you. One needs to meet the challenges of life stoically, methodically, scientifically, systematically with inner strength, grit and determination. One needs to be patient in life. One needs to give up wickedness and cruelty of mind, and adopt mercy and compassion to achieve success in life.

One needs to look into oneself to achieve happiness, solace and peace.

**Freedom from Myths, Mythologies and
Evils of Man**

Islam means surrender to the Supreme Will of the Master of the universe, the "Rub", the "Malik", the King. Only by such surrender, man achieves peace and freedom from creation of mental fiction, figment of imagination, myths and mythologies. The artificial man-made barriers between man and man on the basis of caste, creed, colour, nationality, language are all removed and all are made equal before the Supreme Master who has no equal or partner or an *avatar* or representative. There is no parallel to the Lord Almighty. Hence the crescendo "La illaha illallah," that there is no god, but God, the Allah. By reciting this, "kalima", you are at once released from the tyranny of man, man-made gods, tyranny of mind and heart, taboos and superstitions. You achieve freedom of mind and heart, and it opens to higher vistas of knowledge and learning. You become logical, rational, sensible and at once spiritual.

Thousands of great enlightened men in the form of messengers have brought home the message to mankind that the entire love should be only, and be alone, for the great Master, the *Rub*, the Lord, which brings freedom from falsehood, lies, stories, myths and mythologies, idol worship, which are all man-created, far away from reality and Truth.

The strong have been devouring the weak. The superior ruling class and the rich people have exploited the poor and weak. Several superstitions have ruled the day. Astrology, numerology, witchcraft, black magic and umpteen inhuman practices were the order of the day. Humanity did not have the blessings of freedom, truth, peace, justice, equality, brotherhood and the feeling of oneness and to think of the neighbour as thyself. Ego, anger, jealousy, covetousness and several human weaknesses were unbridled and uncontrolled. There was lack of culture, courtesy, manners, cleanliness and good living. Goodness was absent. Crime, cruelty, hatred, division between man and man was common. The women, the aged and the infirm had no place in society. Inequity, mayhem and tyranny of the selfish, self-centred kings was the rule of the day.

It is the Mercy, Compassion and Beneficence of the Lord of the Universe that He kept sending messengers to reform man.

Finally, Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) emerged as the Seal of the Prophets to complete the message of peace, harmony, brotherhood, freedom, honesty, love, equality, justice, truth and self-sacrifice to one and all.

The Lord's message is ingrained in the *Holy Quran* and sayings of Prophet Muhammad. The moment you recite the 'kalima', the crescendo of Islam "La illaha illallah," you at once give up idol worship both outwardly and inwardly and submit to the Will of the Lord Almighty and begin to accept His command as a humble servant. The Lord's awe and wonder make you at once knowledgeable and pure. You become humble, soft, clean, righteous, gentle, sweet-tongued, virtuous-dedicated, sincere to the core, truthful, honest, modest and a person of great integrity, and full of love, compassion, friendship, mercy, charity, hospitality and generosity.

You will become a gifted person; recognize the right of others and respect those rights. You will become dutiful and your goal will be to attain eternal goodness, and you will wish to create a society of love, peace and brotherhood, freedom, good work and goodness and cleanliness.

You shun back-biting, undue criticism, arguments, anger, pride, jealousy and hatred. All frivolous, useless, irrational, inhuman, illogical customs and traditions are done away with. You become your own policeman for self-control and self-purification.

With you looking up to Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) for guidance and the *Holy Quran* to follow the principles laid down by it, to live a virtuous and pure life, you shun satanic and diabolic ways besides all sexual perversions. You give up stubbornness, heedlessness, arrogance, power, pomp and show.

You take care of the entire environment and shun pollution, disease, mayhem, chaos, confusion, crime and a wayward life. You observe silence and are always patient, and full of gratitude and thankfulness

Your earnings become lawful and so also your spending. You eat only permitted clean food by giving up *haram*, unlawful and unhealthy food, including blood, carrion, pork, drinking alcohol, drugs and such substances. Your inner purification begins and the heart glitters with love and compassion. You become a pure person... a Muslim.

Humility is the First Lesson of Wisdom

If “patience is the mother of virtue” and if it is a jewel among the jewels of paradise, then humility on the other hand is considered as the ‘first lesson of wisdom’.

One can be knowledgeable, rich, surrounded by power and pelf but such a person is not necessarily a wise one. Wisdom rarely dawns on a proud and haughty person. They are puffed up with pride and keep their noses high. They would be blind with power and rarely keep their eyes on the ground. Humility is the virtue of the pious. Surely such persons are filled with patience and tolerance. One can reach any Himalayan heights of glory; achieve and even win the ‘Nobel Prize’ but it is very difficult to scale the heights of humility. One needs to grind the inner ego and all its related weaknesses to reach the point of humility. It is our self-assumed importance and pride in having achieved any position, in life that makes us always egoistic and puffed up with pride losing sight of the very many milestones still to be reached and heights of glory still to be attained.

When power and position enter the mind, one goes blind to reality and every little of wisdom withdraws from one’s sight. Such persons ultimately make more enemies and seldom have good and sincere friends around them. A humble person is sincere to the core. Sincerity and truth ooze out from a humble being. His intentions are always pure and he never gives room for false pretensions and for assumed importance. A humble person does not give importance to ostentatious living but is satisfied with a

meagre one and humble dwelling. He is neat and clean. He is fully aware and conscious that cleanliness is next to godliness. He never utters any word that would cause annoyance or hurt to anyone. He is gentle to the core and he puts his foot on the earth softy and is upright in his daily conduct. A humble person is also meek and for this reason the Holy Scriptures speak of the 'meek ruling the world' and humble persons being much loved by the Lord Almighty.

Satan promised the Lord that he will not trouble or go near the humble. (Verse 83 of Surah 'saad' 38). A humble person, totally surrenders to the will of the Almighty Lord as a single-minded slave. He has no desire of his own. His main aim of life is to please the Lord and live a life of righteousness, truth and be just at all times. He doesn't curse time or adverse circumstance, but accepts all good and bad events as a test from the Lord, and excels in patience and tolerance. When Prophet Jesus (PBUH) advised good and virtuous people to turn the other cheek, when someone slapped, it meant that one should express one's humility at all times and not be quick to react and take revenge. When our Prophet (PBUH) said about himself as 'Fukr ul fakri' he meant to say that he was not ashamed of poverty but took pride in that as he was a totally surrendered person and a person of utmost humility and patience. All seers, saints and prophets are deeply humble and virtuous beings. Humility is not a weakness but a virtue as a necessity for the poor people. Every individual who believes in civilized living practises humility though at times human weakness may overpower him but he is quick in seeking repentance and forgiveness. He is filled with remorse and quickly mends himself.

Verse 55: (O Mankind) call upon your Lord humbly and in secret. Lo! He loveth not aggressors.

Verse 199: Keep to forgiveness (O Muhammad), and enjoin kindness and turn away from the ignorant.

(Sura 7 - The Heights)

**Purity in Actions Done for the Sake of
Allah's and His Prophet's Pleasure (*Fi Sabhi
Lilallah*)**

Man is a selfish being and he needs to gratify his senses every now and then. His motivation is thus self-gratification, self-protection and self-preservation. Islam's main teaching is to surrender fully in total obedience to the will of Allah and to achieve 'As- Sakina', peace and tranquillity. Allah has purchased the life and property of the believers, in exchange for heaven. Therefore the act of surrender implies total submission and every action of a Mussalman is to please the Lord Almighty and His Holy Prophet, Hazreth Mohammad Mustafa (SAS). Every action is performed with purity of mind and heart, the sublime soul doesn't feel satisfied till it rests in the feeling that the Lord Almighty has been pleased with his actions and has accepted the same. Thus, the motivation of the Mussalman is not selfish interest but to perform his duties at the instance and will of Almighty Allah and His Prophet (SAS). He is prepared to accept any worldly loss or injury while performing his actions willingly and pleasingly.

Mussalman does not grudge his worldly or heavenly action as there is no motive or self-gratification involved in his actions. A person who has fallen in love does all that is required to be

done to please his beloved, and any hardship or pain is accepted joyfully, willingly and in good humour.

Lovers are two personalities with a single soul. The fragrance of love is so enormous and pleasing that every act of a lover to the other is solely for each other's pleasure. They share their joys and grieve and do all that is required to be done to keep each other happy and pleasing. So also a Mussalman, who is in total surrender and submission is not at all bothered about any hardship he encounters while performing his duties to his Lord Almighty in terms of the Holy Scriptures and the pleasure of Allah's Prophet (SAS). The aspect of fear and its consequences are all eliminated in a Mussalman's actions as it is the pleasure of Allah and His Prophet (SAS). A Mussalman has no grievances, grouse or complaint for anything of that which he is not in possession of, for his needs and pleasure are in Allah's blessings and acceptance.

A Mussalman had adopted the virtues of simplicity and humility. He therefore places full reliance (*Tawakal*) on Allah and His Prophet (SAS). He praises the Lord Almighty by reciting His Greatness and praises Allah a million times by repeating constantly Allah's name and virtues. A Mussalman constantly sends every moment his salutation (*Darood e shareff*) to Allah's prophet (SAS) and his (SAS) descendents. Thereby a Mussalman wins the confidence and love of Allah and His Prophet (SAS). A Mussalman's pleasure is solely to please the Lord and His Prophet (SAS) and succeeds in placing all his actions to the pleasure of the Lord Almighty and His prophet (SAS). A Mussalman is ever patient with his 'Sabr'(patience) and always expresses his thanks (Sukar) to Allah and His prophet (SAS) for all the bounties received by him through the various means provided by nature. The sun, the moon and the planets have all been made subservient to man and particularly to a surrendered and obedient

soul, i.e., the Mussalman. A Mussalman accepts the position of viceregent (Khalifa and agent) of the Lord Almighty and fully discharges the trust placed in him by the Lord Almighty and His Prophet (SAS) while discharging his duties 'Fisabillillah', that is, for the pleasure of Allah and His prophet. (SAS).

**Gain for Those Who do Good Deeds, are
Virtuous, Truthful and Patient**

Asar Sura 103

1. By (the token of) times (through the ages)
2. Verily man is in loss
3. Except such as have faith and do righteous deeds, and (join together in the mutual teaching of truth, and of patience and constancy

Every moment a part of the energy gained is lost. Age withers and the law of diminishing returns works. The glorious sun is burning its gases and energy is being lost every moment. When human growth occurs there is ageing, and slowly and steadily the ageing process overpowers, and the charming youth and beauty starts withering away forever. 'Allah Subhanethalla' assures mankind by taking an oath on "Asar", the evening, which is the declining period of sunset, that mankind is in ever a state of loss except those who do good deeds, are virtuous, truthful and patient. The law of diminishing returns does not apply to those who are always focused on doing well and are ever vigilant to perform their duties, walk on the straight path of eternal truth, bear difficulties with fortitude and patience, and hold in their bosom certainty of faith.

Everyone works and puts to actions his thoughts on the basis of inner urges that keep erupting like storms and cyclones.

So also impulses and desires which push the mind to action. The fruits of such impulsive actions need not necessarily be sweet. Many a time such fruits are bitter and sour. When urges arise from deep-felt thoughts and are put to action after due deliberations of all pros and cons and after taking into consideration of all the laws governing such work and actions, then the chosen path is well laid out. The actions are all guided actions and such actions seldom fail. They bear sweet fruits. For success in any venture the actions are to be deliberated at each and every step. Every precaution and care has to be exercised well in advance. The dangers on the path are to be carefully studied to overcome it. Meticulous planning and study has to be carried out with patience and truth as the guidelines and aim should be to achieve everlasting goodness alone. When one is unmindful of all the threats and mischiefs that lie ahead and one proceeds carelessly without any good aims and are directionless then one has to face the bitter consequences. Hence patience, well experienced lessons of wisdom and truth should always be the lighthouse for guidance, and it should never be shunned. Only when goodness, truth and patience are practised at every moment of our lives only then 'Allah Subhanethalla' assures mankind of success and fruitful results.

Cleanliness is Next to Godliness

Islam teaches man to shun impurity of body, mind and soul and to walk on the straight path which leads them to heavenly bliss, solace and peace. Cleanliness of all the eternal body by bath to reach the stage of purity (*tuhar*) in the prescribed method is mandatory for all Muslim men and women. Before every prayer one has to perform ablution with water (*wadhu*) by washing one's face, hands and feet, to gargle and to clean the nose with water to remove the impurities and brush one's teeth with 'Miswaak'. It is not enough to clean the body alone but the living rooms, kitchen, toilets and clothes have to be cleaned and kept in good wearable condition.

Clothes for prayer should be free from stains of blood, semen, urine, filth and vomit, although ostentation and show are decreed and discouraged but use of perfumes is recommended. One cannot stand in prayers (namaz) nor recite 'Quran e Sharief' unless one is in a state of 'Tuhar'- purity and 'wadhu'. One has to repeat the 'wadhu', if one breaks the wind or on vomiting or on loss of blood due to injury or for any other reason. One has to trim one's beard and hair locks, and is also required to remove hair from armpits, and pubic regions regularly. This is to keep a person always clean and neat. "Taharat" is the term used for explaining the regular use of water for cleaning the body parts after bowel movement and urination.

The most important aspect of cleanliness besides personal and physical hygiene is the cleanliness of heart and mind. The heart should not bear malice, hatred, anger, covetousness, jealousy, pride, lust, greed, ego and all such negative feelings but should be with pure qualities of love, affection, goodness, gratitude, generosity, sincerely, humility, thankfulness and large-heartedness. The mind should be free from ill feelings, prejudice, narrow-mindedness, and most importantly "Kufr" and duality. The mind should stand up against tyranny, dictatorship, egocentricity, and all evils. A person has to be morally upright. The soul has to be purified with "Tauheed" and acceptance of Allah's predominance, and our feeling of total submission to Allah and love for our Holy Prophet. Allah promises to befriend those who have achieved eternal goodness by cleansing body, mind, heart, soul and those who achieve "Qalb e Saleem", pure and golden heart.

Fulfilment of Words, Agreements and Contracts are Part of Iman

The entire relationship in this world between its citizens lies and depends on the faith reposed by each other and on reliance on the words, agreements entered into and the contractual obligations between them. Agreements between the parties to perform certain duties ie the obligations or to restrain from doing certain acts and deeds are contracts. Where there is breach of contract, then the sufferer is entitled to sue the person breaking the contract for damages or for specific performances of the same. Where the contracts are in the nature of full faith and confidence and there is a breach as a result of bad intention to play fraud, undue influence coercion, and trick or to cause serious loss and damages to the sufferer, then it becomes a crime. The society has laid down detailed rules for the manner of entering into legal obligations, agreements and contracts. Rules have been laid as to when the contracts can be annulled, enforced by specific performance, for recovery of damages for its breach. Further rules have been framed for the prosecution of the person breaching the contract and when it results in a crime, proceedings can be initiated for imprisonments, fines and penalties against such breaches.

Today the society is functioning on the basis of contracts and its obligations in every walk of life from birth to death.

Performance of contracts, agreements and words of honour are articles of faith in Islam. Our Holy Prophet (SAS) is 'Al Ameen', the trustworthy and 'Al Sadiq', the truthful.

Holy Quran has laid commands and meticulous rules have been framed in 'fiqh' or Shariat law with regard to the agreements and contracts. Breach of contracts is loss of faith and one who breaks his solemn word, assurances given and fails deliberately to perform it resulting in loss then a Mussalman is deemed to have lost his faith in Islam. The foundation of Islam is based on the pillars of contracts and agreement. The Islamic society is not of status but of contract. The maintenance and fulfillment of the words of assurance is a matter of honour, faith and prestige. One may be prepared to lose anything but not give up the words of assurances given and the honour of agreements and fulfilments. A Mussalman takes an oath to fulfil the obligations in Islam and that is to be always truthful, trustworthy, to be a man of words, mercy, compassion and kindness and to fulfil the oath of allegiance (*baith*) taken on the hands of Prophet (*Yadullah*) to perform each and every rule of Islam.

Our society functions in a democratic way, i.e., every citizen takes an oath to abide by the Constitution of India. The Constitution of India has laid down fundamental duties to be performed by a citizen so as to enable him to secure the fundamental rights guaranteed in it with regard to freedom, liberty, fraternity, equality, justice and sovereignty and to lead the life in a democratic way. The Constitution guarantees the Principles of Natural Justice, i.e., to deal with every citizen as per the due process of law. Every citizen is bound by laws, rules and regulation. Non-performance of any of the rules and regulations would lead to legal consequences. The state can take up such steps as are required in due process of law for its enforcement.

Therefore, a Mussalman has to be conscious and be aware of the rights and duties both in Islam as well as a citizen. To flaunt the laws of 'Shariat' brings in serious consequences both as a Muslim in Islam as well as a citizen under laws promulgated under the Constitution of India. A law-abiding Muslim in India is a very good citizen. He is assured of peace, happiness, solace, tranquillity both in Islam as well as a citizen of the country. A Mussalman is assured of heaven after this life, but he has to strictly follow the contracts, obligations, agreements and word of honour. Only then is he a purified soul to enable him to seek Mercy and Compassion from the Lord Almighty and His Holy Prophet (SAS).

Part III
Sufi Poems

A Saviour

He feels sad, with people
Surrounding, craving for favours
Relating tales of woes, of pathos
And grief. He is adulated as being
A Saviour, a Saint, a Redeemer.
He is aware of the weaknesses of a being.
The fear of wrath of the Divine drives him
To be in the midst of his creatures,
Who look up to miracles.
From purified souls. He radiates
The effulgence of the sun, the
Brilliance of the moon, the calmness
And depth of the ocean, the fragrance
of a rose. The ecstasy of
Communion with the Divine,
Has released him from human
Bondage & sufferings of the soul.
From the depth of his heart, he
Calls out, "Allah Malik,
Have mercy on your beings".

Bless Me

Oh! If only I could dream of Thee
And see Thy beauty and effulgence,
Thy charm, Thy benign look, Thy smile,
To relieve me of my pain and anguish,
My despondency and perplexity,
That has left my life so shattered!
O Sweet One; O Thou Deliverer
From all miseries and calamities!
O Thou most compassionate One,
O haven of peace and tranquility!
Bless me, enlighten my dark soul,
Redeem me from all vicissitudes,
Guide me to a life of bliss,
Of solace and contentment.
I have heard, O Eternal Lord,
Thou shower's Thy choicest blessings
Upon all Thy chosen ones.
Let me, then, be one of them.

His Grace

With His Grace I could have a glance
At His effulgence, which left me in a trance!
His face radiates His divine glory,
His beneficence, His might and mercy.
My being is enveloped with His compassion,
Every particle in me is His creation.
He dwells in me serenely,
Life glows in me sweetly and calmly.
Songs flow from my lips in praise of His love,
Which He showers on us from heaven above.

Priceless Present

O my dear soul – mate!
I wished I could give you
A lasting, lovely present
Which is precious and priceless.
Not available even
In the grandest of treasuries
Of mighty kings and nawabs.

I looked and looked around,
Searched and searched all places.
At last I found it just
Within my own heart.
It is my lasting love.

Kaaba

Kaaba is a symbol
Of love and brotherhood,
Of sacrifice and submission,
Of forgiving and forgetting,
Of oneness and unity,
Of friendship, of bond
With Almighty Allah
The Beloved, the Loved,
The Merciful, the Beneficent,
The Gracious, the Forgiving.

A Human Heart

The wilderness and arid desert,
With life scarce and dryness all around.
The deadly silence and burning sun,
Leave a parching tongue with looks wild.

The dangers are grave indeed,
Deadly snakes with fangs sharp.
A threat to man sans protectives
When exposed to nature, bare.

A sacred heart is a pleasure to keep,
In it dwells light to illumine the mind.
Filled with faith and hope on the Almighty
And seeks grace and mercy from dangers many.

The gushing springs with endless fountains,
Make the land fertile and enrich it.
Man with love and kind heart,
Creates fruits of good deeds, for all to enjoy.

God Who?

People say merge yourself with God
See God, realize God, follow the path of God!

Who is this God?
Is it possible to see the effulgence?
The Brilliance, the everlasting, overpowering
Beauty, the mighty and tremendous, colossal power?

Is it possible to bear the tumult, the
Everlasting strength and greatness of the Being,
Who has the power of creation and destruction?
God realization simply means.

A path chosen by good people, practising –
Virtues and everlasting goodness.
Who are peace-loving, brotherly and affectionate
Who think of the well-being of others?
Who have concern and love for others
Who place others' needs above their own.
Who feel humble, kind and humane.
Who speak softly, forbear and are chaste.

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Who have abundance of patience and are forgiving.
Who remain calm, cool and collected.
Who are not cunning, wicked and cruel.
Who have compassion for the poor.
Unfortunate, sick and hungry.
Who respect one and all.
Who have the strength to bear the loss.
Who are just, truthful and straightforward.
Who keep their promises and words.
Who are charitable, generous and hospitable.
Who bear in their heart and mind.
Thousand lights of joy and happiness
And feel one with Nature.
Who attain self-realization.

A Ray of Light — Haj Kaaba — (House of God)

Oh! What a marvellous symbol it is!
Attracting millions and trillions of people
Of all hues, from all parts of the globe
Whirling around, circumambulating, and cringing.

In a mere white, clear, unswan garb;
With open head, bare feet, with freshness around
Oblivious of all the worldly states attained.
Mind fixed on only ONE the GREAT ONE.

Hearts outpourings, relentless streams of tears
Dishevelled hair, in total surrender
To burn the soul in deep piety
In ever submission to seek HIS Grace.

Love's crystalline purity, in a ray of light
Showering beauty, illumining the soul bright.

"HAJ": Annual pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, by Muslim pilgrims.

Spread Light

Say, what you want to say—
In a loud and clear way.
Let it be audible to one and all
Let it be a clarion's call.

Let your message be relished.
Let it be for a lasting bliss.
To shift focus of their fixed minds
From dullness to illumination.

Your life's experiences –
Bitter, sour and tense,
Or sweet, like honey
In rain, sun and shade.

Has taught you wisdom
Shown you God's kingdom –
To illumine your soul and mind
Lit candles, to spread light around.

Love has No Cause

Love has no cause, rhyme or reason
A spring emerges from pure hearts
To flow through twinkling eyes.
And minds meet in a glimpse,
And yearn for coupling together.
To merge and be one in solitude
Without any noise and disturbance
Without any dispute and turbulence
Without any pollution and pangs.
Without any mundane urges and demands.
With ever and ever sweet feelings
With longings to be one at all times.

Saint Worship

It is true that the saint is dead
Buried, mingled and has become
One with the soil, dust unto dust
He was one like us to pass by.

It is also true, that person
Faced all the human weakness
Body aches, pains, diseases,
Squalour, poverty, hunger, privation.

But the saint was a person
Par excellence, brilliant spiritually
Great in thoughts, deeds and virtues
He was the personification of all kindness.

Nature bestowed on him rare gifts
He sparkled like a fine-cut diamond
We pay respects to his purified soul,
And sing paeans to the Lord, the Benefactor.

Magnetic Attraction

I know You have a charming face,
A beautiful and a beaming one.
An attractive and a captivating one,
A magnetic and a loving one.
I know that, I don't remember
Your name, my memory fails me.
But the very thought of Your
Brings a million-fold of joy in me.
I know You are faceless, nameless
Formless, unfathomable, inconceivable
Yet, I know You, yet I know You.
Yet I feel Your love, Your Grace.
Look! How the bliss and ecstasy
Erupt in me, thrill me, and make me jump
Yearnings, hopes and longings to meet You
To see You, to mingle with You, forever.
Oh! A tinkling in me, a twinkling in eyes.
And million cells in me, get pulled towards Your Love.

Hallmarks for Civilisation

Is the entire cosmos and universe
Encapsulated in a huge eggshell?
Hindus refer it as "Brahma incarnate"
While Christians say it is "Holy Trinity"
While Muslims refer to it as "Light of Mohammad"
And universe is a creation through' His Light ('Noor')
A Creator, isn't He far higher and above all?
Unfathomable, unknown, incomprehensible!
Man has realized His distinct nature
Attributes through, His self's understanding;
Through' the unique harmony seen in nature.
Through' cosmic balance, realization of Time.
Can the Hand that creates, makes
Become one with its own creation?
Or does it fill itself in this universe
With His will, design and a system
Social norms, laws, manners, customs,
Differentiation of right and wrong, just, unjust,
Morals, immoral, good and bad works
Aren't all creations of mind, for harmony?
Songs sung with rhyme, rhythm and music
Are more pleasing for the soul for elevation
Refinement in living, higher thinking
Simple living is the hallmark of culture.

Lord Ever Merciful, Beneficent

A command received by Adam and Eve,
Directly from the Lord Almighty
In the presence of archangels
Who protested creation of man from clay.
For they felt, they were part of the light
And fire, that could destroy man.
Lord Almighty taught Adam, His Names
And tested him, in the presence of angels,
Who were ever in obedient attendance.
Dumbfounded, they prostrated, seeking pardon.
Lo, their leader, Archangel, protested,
Defiant, out of jealousy, pride and self.
Refused to yield, cringe, cower before Adam.
On the pretext of his superiority and knowledge
On the premise that Adam's race would create
Dissensions, destructions, bloodshed and sins.
An angel is pure, in total submission to the Lord
Should he bow before impure men of clay?
Thus Satan was banished from the Lord's Grace.
To ever remain as an arch enemy of man.
To tempt, lure, lead him to commit sin,
To indulge in sinful mirth, joy and pleasure.
To make man hate man for destruction.

To cover the neighbour's wife and to steal.
To commit heinous acts, to be shunned.
Neither pity nor mercy shall befall such men.
Thunder, lightning, storms and pestilence
Should ever pester them to shameless death.
To hell, they would be thrown by the Lord's wrath
This to punish, for befriending the Lord's adversary, the villain
Who is a confirmed enemy of man.
The Lord, the Merciful and the Beneficent
Though has granted a decree and licence
To Satan, to destroy His creation.
To mislead humanity and lead them to crossroads.
But save those who are in submission
In humility, serving humanity with sacrifice,
With love, devotion, serve their brethren
To save men from disarray and wrong paths,
Such shall receive Lord's Grace, Mercy,
Forever His door is open to receive them.

Who Am I?

Is there a world beyond the five senses?
Beyond perception, thoughts, ideas
Beyond imaginations and fantasies
Beyond your own consciousness?
What is it you ought to know by this –
“Who am I – discover your own self”
Is your self, a complex inner psyche
Of conglomeration of composite cultures?
Learning to meet situations of life
Learning to live a successful life.
Are you to discover your inner strength
Inner weakness, inner potential
Your mirth, pleasures and joys
Your sorrows, platitudes and grieves?
Is it to raise yourself by deep meditation
Seeking release from attachments
A composed mind sans sensations
Transcending frontiers of time and space
And see universe in a grain of sand
And raise yourself above your selfish self?

A Glimmer of Hope

The darkness grows and grows into an eerie silence
Without the cold silent moon in the blue sky
Twinkling stars are covered with a blanket of dark clouds
Even an owl cannot hoot nor a vampire move.

There is not a glimmer of light
Not even a candle or a smoke in chimney
The hearths are all choked with ashes
The electricity has failed, it is so dark.

The fauna, forest, beast and man in deep slumber
The stillness in the air is scary and sombre
Even a ghost in the night is scared to walk
The batteries of the earth cannot throw light.

The sun, the golden sun, that round one
With its might and power, burning and churning
Slowly and steadily peeps, but before heralds
Its trumpet to end the gloom of darkness.

Wakes up the crow, the dark one, the dirty one
The owl, the koel, the cuckoo, to siren
That the king and mighty is on his way
Up, up, you sloth and gluttons.

The muezzin in his shrill voice
Raises, alarm, awake, awake, oh faithful ones
For the Great One's arrival has ended the darkness
The world is aglow with the Light of Mercy.

Kindness, compassion, glory and warmth
Light begets light, candle lights candle
A mighty soul, a Prophet of Light
Trumpets for all the uniqueness.

To be up and sing in chorus and harmony
Rejoice, in the Light of Wisdom
In the learning, in the elevation of mind and soul
The dark one, accursed devil vanishes in thin air.

Daily Supplication

Enthralled was I, by Thy soft melodious voice
In the early dawn, when birds were chirping
Beauty spread on the vast sky's canvas
Reflecting splendours and spectacular colours.

Your benign presence was realised by me
On the bud's spreading petals emitting fragrance
Bees collecting nectars, birds nestling and singing
Thou art seen everywhere, O Faceless One!

Day in and day out, I yearn for Thee
My worship shall be eternal for Thee
I adore Thee, I am captivated and captured
I begin my daily supplication in Thy name.

Now my goals are set, my mind is clear
My sails are ready to take me forever
Beyond the horizons, to touch the zenith
To take me to the rainbows of love.

My burning love, my zeal, my hopes
My dreams, my yearnings will not fail me
Thou shall guide me forever and ever
To reach the shores of ecstasy and bliss.

Yearnings of a Soul

Today, I fed my soul with pathos and grief
With desolation; pangs of separation
From my beloved is nerve-shattering
A mighty blow, effacing my self.

The wonders around me are distractions
They create more pains and sufferings
For my beloved's absence is biting
These sensations cause graveness.

As dusk falls and darkness descends
The chirping of birds and cawing of crows
The dullness in surroundings all around
And slowness of life, cause oppression.

O, my beloved, open up yourself
Let my love reach you manifold
Do you know, how I yearn for thee?
Seek thy loving eyes for a glimpse?

To the Praised One

O my beloved! Look how your thoughts
Make me crouch and cringe
My lips quiver, when I utter thy name
I salute you million times, peace on thee.

Like a bright Venus in the dark sky
Full moon throws brilliance on us
Sun's effulgence brightens all beings
My beloved's glory has enlightened all souls.

O my beloved! you are praised by all
Millions have shed tears of love for thee.
You are our succour, our benefactor
Our redeemer, reliever and deliverer.

Let the Lord shower His choicest blessings
On our Beloved, our protector
Our friend, our guide, our savior
My salutations, my deep love to thee.

O Chosen One

O chosen one! I place my loving heart
At thy holy feet, my fierce loyalty
My burning faith, my zeal, my sincerity
My enthusiasm, my sound mind.

O chosen one! I shall not waver
In my duty's call, in my devotion
In my supplication from the commands
Of the Holy Book; in thy pleasure.

O chosen one! The springs of love
Have purified me; the burning
Spirits have cleansed me
Now, I am ready to soar, to fly.

O the perfect one! Thou shall forsake
Me not, on the day of the judgment!
Thou shall grant me thy grace
May Heavenly blessings shower on thee.

(Ameen)

Seek and You Shall Find

There was furore everywhere
About my finding a cup-bearer
In the town's dingy tavern
To pour love in my empty cup.

His drinks intoxicate me
Dances and sets tunes for me
There is none of his kind
Anywhere around the globe.

Tears of repentance flow unabated
Heart throbs a million times
Seek, for you shall find
Doors of love are always open!

Piercing glances of my beloved
Has opened the floodgates
Of love and enlightenment
Heart thrills with sweet melodies.

Beloved's Presence

O beloved, your presence and love
Have thrilled the heart a million times
Your dazzling beauty has created warmth
And fragrant flowers have bloomed.

Oceanic love has flowed from heart
Waves and waves of affection touching the shores
Unbounded happiness and joys multiplied
Melodies sung to gladden the soul.

Twinkling stars far beyond the longing heart
Luminous moon shedding eternal light
Lightens the journey towards the goal
All is reflecting the grandeur of the Divine.

My heart is a sweetened honeycomb
For my love has now taken wings to soar
My conscience is now crystal-clear
For many a hopeful ship to sail smoothly.

I Grieve for Thee

The silvery dome, the glass chandeliers
The marble green and woollen carpets
The muezzin's call and faithful's zeal
The echoing sounds of prayers around.

My grieving spirit and bleeding heart
My shattered being and longings apart
My quivering lips and flowing tears
Pangs of separation, soul can't bear.

My torn condition betrays me
My mourning is deep, none can see
Men in perfumed dress detest me
I am pushed and pulled with all the glee.

My poor heart is broken to pieces
Now I grieve and sing praises for thee.

Beauty of the Praised One

The life's clock is ticking fast
The age of my life is wearing out
The light of the day is being spent
The gloom of darkness is about to dawn.

The birds and butterflies are returning home
Cattle and herds have stopped grazing
Crickets and grasshoppers are now silent
Stars in the sky have begun to twinkle.

My heart's yearnings have grown heavier
Longings and sighs are deeper and deeper
Flow of tears is unabated and clear
My love's treasures are pure and simple.

My praised one's grace is about to gleam
Beauty and effulgence to shine forever.

Burnt My Candle

I dug and dug in parching deserts
Till I reached the streams below
I filled my bucket of love
With cool waters to quench my beloved's thirst.

I cultivated dry and parching lands
Irrigated them with my sweat and tears
I picked the choicest fragrant roses
The sweetest fruits for my beloved to taste.

I wove and wove the finest cloth,
With designs and decorations of various hues.
Bedecked with jewels and precious stones
To present as gifts for my beloved to wear.

I yearned and yearned with hopes and longings.
Burnt my candle of life for my beloved's grace.

A Devilish Self

The devil, our shadow, our mischievous slave
An ingenious one, an innovator, creative.
Our own inverted selfish egoistic self
Always arguing within, with show and pelf.
Controverting, stubborn, digging heels, hot-headed
A glutton, careless and ruthless, to be dreaded
Deep in learning with a scurrilous pen
Long, fiery tongue, a common kind among men
Merciless with a heart of stone and polluted mind
Creating dissension, confusion of every kind
Disobedient, forgetful, unholy and irreligious
Changing sides, a turncoat, liar and ambiguous
Unmindful of others' concerns, always hurting
Like a chameleon changing colours, deceptive and sinning

Breath in and Breathe out

Go deep down in your self
Close your eyes, sit erect
Take a deep breath in and out
Fix the focus of your mind's eyes.
In between your brows
Inhale and exhale deeply
Your thoughts shouldn't waver
But remain still, on breath,
Slowly and steadily calmness descends
A freshness appears, with deep inhales.
Let the fierce sun of the mind set
Let peace dawn and soul soar higher.

My Religion

Yes, I do have a religion
I do practise it
Say my 'Namaz'
Turn towards 'Kaaba'
Recite 'Kalima',
Do 'Zikr'
Observe 'fasting'
Give 'Fitra', 'zakat'
Yearn for circumambulation
Around the Holy 'Kaaba'
But my rites, my symbols,
Are acts of love
To foster oneness
To increase my yearnings
To look upon mankind,
As children of Adam and Eve
Not for creating apathy
Discernment and distraction
For cataclysmic schism
For disharmony and strife

Light upon Light—Noor

Lord the Magnificent, the Brilliant
The light of the universe and the world
Profusely oozing out all through
Luminously brightening all around
From chandeliers, lamps, bulbs
From sun, moon, stars, meteorites
Cosmos lit with His munificence
Utter His name, enlighten thy soul
Mind, eyes, sparkle! Lo behold!
Light upon light, for final merger.

The Day of Judgment

In the beginning was His name
The Holy of the Holiest name
To remain for Eternity as ONE
The Sole Ruler, Creator, the Destructor
To withdraw with a command
When the mothers would throw away their suckling
When one will not care for the other
When the sun would come down
When the stars would be thrown asunder
When the mountains would melt and scatter
When a shrill cry will end humanity
When all would be called for judgment
When the Great Book would be opened
When all the actions recorded are read
When the scales are weighed and justice done
When everyone would get his due share
When the virtuous would cross the bridge
When the bridge would be thinner than a hair
And sharper than the shining sword.
When the God-fearing would pass like lightning
When the evildoers would fall in the abyss.
When they would be given hot, boiling water to drink
When the hell fire will engulf the corrupt.
When surely the day of reckoning would dawn.

Peace Within

One has to undergo severe
Mental and physical sufferings
Agony and turmoils in life
Before arriving at the Truth
A testing time, a period
Of severe anguish and pain.

On arriving at the Truth
You reach the stream
Of fresh, soothing waters
To quench the thirst
To gain moments of
Ecstasy, joy and Supreme –
Bliss, to bring peace within
And enlighten the dark soul.

Inner Voice

I felt shattered, broken
Friendless, a destitute
Crippled with torn sails
With contemptuous smiles
And scornful looks
Teasing and tearing me.

I looked all around for help
My distress call ignored
Left in storms and tempests
My frail body shivering in cold
When I lost hopes from all
A divine voice gave strength and guided me.

Alas! Woman!

Cuddled lovingly in mother's arm
Wistfully playing with sisters
In the care of grandmother's
Aunts, cousins and ayahs, galore.

Nursed affectionately, kisses aplenty
Taught letters, numbers, words
Manners, culture and of God, the Holy
Oh mother, sisters, aunts, grannies
Thou were my cradle of love.

Shying away in school from girlfriends
Not casting eyes on sprouting beauties
Nor prying into their deep secrets,
In their world of woes and miseries.

The soothing lullabies, the 'bhajans',
Love songs of Latha, Asha and Suraiya
The exquisite beauty of actresses
Bridal dresses, silks, jewellery and bangles.

Tasteful gourmets, 'biryanis', 'jullabis'
The art, dance, music and fun
Beauty in their eyes, eyebrow, plait
All created versions of marvellous nobility.

Reality dawned one day on my unexposed
Young mind, ever protected like Siddhartha.
On exposed to truth, I felt repulsed
The face of widowhood covered within a sea of torment.

Shockwaves shattered me on watching woman
In purdah, they hide their shame, misery
Despondencies grip their mute lives
Vultures around to peel their bodies

Like bullocks, bitches, goats, heifers,
Beaten, sloughed, robbed and ravished
Degraded, weather-beaten and distraught
Oh woman! Thou, a mother, now ploughed.

Men are devil incarnates though,
To fill fire in the belly of women
Cowdung, broomsticks, sickles in their hands
Iron shackles in legs and cudgels around their neck.

Oh Adam! You blame her for your sin!
Degrade her to hell, eat her flesh
Swim in her blood, make fire of her bones
Bury a baby girl and hang a pretty housewife!

O Love!

O love! Are thou a commodity
To be bargained for sale or purchase
Or brought to attention by command?
Can you be demanded as a blessing?

Can you be booked for indiscretion
Charged for overstepping limits
Beheaded like Mansur Hallaj or Sarmad
Or crucified like Jesus for loving?

O love! Can you be sweet, yet sour?
Can love bear malice or ill repute?
Does it have a thousand frailties
To be burnt like a pretty housewife?

O love! Why do you call for proof
For severe test and 'agni pariksha'?
Aren't you boisterous like the turbulent sea?
You have created these turmoils, for what?

God, Where?

Where is the god you speak about?
In ashramas, in temples, in gurudwaras
In synagogues, churchs, in mosques
In the 'bhajans', 'homas', 'shanthi poojas'?

Where is the God you speak about?
In jihad, in passing strictures, in purdah,
In talisman, in omens, in superstitions
In wearing white cap, long cloak, kurta, pyjama
In 'Namaz', in 'Zikr', in 'Zakat', in 'Haj'?

Where is the god you speak about?
In setting up schools, colleges, institutions
In hospitals, old-age homes, orphanages
In leprosarium, in remand homes, in prisons?

Where is the god you speak about?
In slums, squalour, poverty, disease
In sanyasies, 'devadasis', fakirs, sadhus,
In riches, in games, in dancing hall, in night clubs?

Reach, Clear Conscience

Deep within a desire
Caught in its web
To free itself and to fly
Takes a shape of beauty
In the lovely dream.

Lures you, to hunt for it
In reality, it takes shape
To captivate and enslave
To lead you to quicksand
And finally to grave.

Question the desire
Quickly subside the eruptions.
See the inner light, enrich yourselves
With illuminations and wisdom
To drive away the witches of darkness.

The fresh streams, lovely pearls
Fragrances floating in the air
With clear paths, a thrill
To a conscience clear,
On reaching enlightenment, soul gets enthralled.

A Distant Call

A distant call from the unknown
Emanating from deep within
To lift you from mire and mirth
And inspire you to deep meditation.

Expanding moments stretching themselves
Beyond the boundaries of space and time
Touching the horizon and infinity
Mind with lightning speed illuminating.

Consciousness awakened, soul enlightened
Spreading colourful wings of all hues
Like a peacock to dance and charm
And to sing like a nightingale.

You float like a lovely butterfly
Like pleasant lotus unfolding petals
Like a rose to spread fragrance
And like a banyan tree to spread its branches.

Adieu Love

When the time comes
To shed the colours
The uniform
And the cap

When the time comes
To lay aside all
The prejudices' and bias
Hate and enmity

When the time comes
To say sorry
To shun the mortal coil
To enshroud it
In the coffin.

The only companion
To sing songs to memory
To say adieu
Will only be love and only love.

A Man of Truth

You need to accept a man of truth
Of ahimsa, free from 'Kama'
From the mad rush and the glitter
Of the world and its mirth.
Who is at peace with himself
With his surroundings and life
Who can read the times, its complexities
Its rigmaroles, its deceptions and tricks
Who can sincerely without ostentations,
Be able to see through your problems,
And give a sane, wise counsel
To relieve you from mirth and girth.
And show you the path and gift a torch,
And grant a boon to walk with success.

The Devil Speaks

In my anger and frustration
I bawled out again and again
"Am I a Satan, a devil
To be stoned, to be driven away?"

Lo! I heard the Satan speak—
"I am never driven away
By men or women; friend or foe.
I am welcomed with folded hands.
By men in white and black.
In saffron, in green.
In yellow, in orange.
To learn from me.
Every trick from my bag.
I grant my grace to them.
On their assurances to follow me.
To cheat them by showing
Heaven in my palms."

Fill Your Soul with Perfumes

In the mirror of divine heart reflects love,
Shining like a sparking, dazzling diamond.
Men of straw make false promises,
Of stealing the thunder and lightning.
Shedding crocodile tears, exhibiting false love.
Slippery, vanishing at testing times.
Greed makes them totally blind.
They turn green on seeing our wealth,
The truthful illumined minds
Shed light to glorious paths
They shower roses and jasmines all over
To fill the empty souls with the fragrance of peace.

Lament of a Shady Tree

When the woodcutter struck his axe
On the huge umbrella-shaded tree
I felt the pain in my desolate heart
And it bled with severe pain.
The wounded tree's sorrow-filled tears
Flowed through my grief-filled eyes
The tree spoke through me its tale
To the heartless woodcutter.
O you tyrant! Stop your merciless strikes
Stop hitting and wounding me with your axe
Don't cut me and maul me.
For my Lord has breathed life in me,
With love and pitiful care
I am made up of every element
The glorious sun sheds its light on me
The clouds hover in the sky with soft winds
To shower the pearls of water on me
My roots deep find the streams below
To nourish and nurture me
I glow and grow in light and shade.
My beloved Lord has protected me
From evil men and dangerous animals.
Oh! Now you heartless woodcutter
Look how mercilessly I am being cut down

O tyrant! Know, I am loved by my Lord
Do realize what would pass on my beloved.
My growth with flush full branches, many
With my greenery and blooming flowers
My swinging and fluttering
Creating currents of sweet flowing air
My ever flourishing branched umbrella
My evergreen and golden leaves
My fragrant and blossoming flowers
My ever exuberant barked branches
Is a source of joy and ecstasy!
For the entire teeming humanity
I bear the parching and fierce Sun
Thunder and lightning cannot destroy me
I stand pray fully in ever bliss and love
Steadfast, firmly and deeply rooted in the soil
The twinkling stars throw their glow on me
The moon flashes its luminous light on me
I bear severe droughts and famine
For I am blessed with my Lord's grace
O you heartless woodcutter! Know you
The birds of various hues sing songs for me
My sighs and tears from dark sombre clouds
Thunder, lightning strike and it rains
My branches shelter squirrels, birds, crows
Peacocks, insects, worms aplenty.
All are joyful and play mirthful tunes
That pleases the lonesome lover
O you tyrant! Strike not with force at me
I bleed and shed tears at your treachery.
You know how much love and music
Fragrance and scent I bear within
To delight the entire world.
We trees create an environment.

I feed the hungry animals with my leaves.
My shade protects a tired traveller
Poets compose poems and eulogize me.
I am friend of all, all embrace me.
My fruits are food for one and all.
Birds, insects, worms, men and animals.
All depend on my leaves, flowers and fruits.
I am unconcerned with the stones thrown at me.
I feel happy to bear the brunt of the schoolboys.
O heartless tyrant! Know you and understand.
My love has enlightened dear souls.
My every being and every cell bear love.
My leaves have magical remedies.
To cure, enliven, cherish sick bodies.
My dried leaves bear elixir for diseases.
My bark, my gum, my resins.
All are beneficial to mankind.
Scientists and 'Vaid's' do research on me.
My varied colourful ever fragrant flowers.
Join you all in every occasion.
My nectar is for honey and scents.
And to please the soreful eyes forever.
Sans me there is no wedding function.
My flowers join in ever celebration, festivity.
In joy and grief, I am your friend.
My flowers bring you succour and solace.
I am a companion of dead ones.
Men of all hues in grief hug me tight.
I am the bier and rest with you in the grave.
I remind you of the ever lasting love.
I am a friend of ascetics and lovers.
I am with the living as well as with the dead.
My twigs and branches create lilting music.
All the musical instruments, I create for you.

I bear within the fire and the flames.
My charged breath cleanses the elements.
My trunk and branches are useful for making.
Furniture, boats, ships and carts.
You make several instruments out of me.
I am useful as a pen, a stand, a stool.
I am that table and table for your judge.
I am the gallows for your criminals.
I am a cudgel, a rod to spoil the child.
I am a companion for the old and the infirm.
They walk holding my stick.
I bear rubber for your tyres and tubes.
My multiple bearing emerges from my love.
My Lord's compassion flows through me.
O! Pitiless, heartless woodcutter!
I am for paper for pen, for stand.
For students for writing and reading.
O! You fool! I support you from awe too!
You cut me to pieces mercilessly.
O! Murderer, you are sans pity for children.
For their innocence, for their sweetness.
They put swings on my strong branches.
They play hide and seek, jump with joy.
You make ornamental boxes out of me.
You store your treasure and grains in it.
Look what; my Lord's love has turned me.
My every being is for benefit of all.
O You fool! Know that turned me coal.
I get decayed to form mineral oil.
You get petrol, diesel, plastic, tar.
I am the giver of all the benefits.
My sweet love turns to cotton fibre.
I turn into wheel to spin cloth for you.
I hide your shame and beautify you.

I protect your body, I serve you.
O you betrayer! I am grace of your Lord.
His Mercy is bestowed through me.
Know well that you are a disgrace.
You by destroying me is harming yourself.
You are destroying your culture, music.
You are your own stark enemy.
O you fool! Listen and bear my words.
For great sages, ascetics and saints.
All have sat under me to meditate.
To reach to the pinnacle of peace.
Now by cutting me down.
You are destroying universal peace.

Glittering Love

The threshold of love
Glimmers like a twilight.
Separating the light and darkness.
A horizon where the sky meets an ocean.
A shore between land and sea.
Like a stream passing through a parching land.
Let me bow and place my brow
On the altar, where love oozes.
My thousand supplications on pulpit melts
And passes into oblivion sans acceptance.
But a single glance and glimpse
Of love surpasses the dreary moments.

Cool Streams

There was a time when I found him
Calm and serene sans tension.
I took it to be his weakness,
His inability to be zestful.

Today, when I look back.
I do feel that I was wrong.
He was always cool
To the turbulent surroundings.

He knew one thing, perhaps, that
To strive for something unusual
For hopes, to touch the zenith,
Are mere mirages and clouds to melt.

My son tells me what I spoke
To my loving dad, in my teens.
My ranting, hooting, shouting
Hardly stirred the silent flowing streams.

Mastani Ma—The Green One

On a fine summer day, a high-profile friend,
A devotee of an centurion lady saint,
Took me in his car, to the town of Chittoor,
Passing through a forest and hilly track.

It was past noon when we reached the place.
A mausoleum of white stone, with chambers.
Masons, stonecutters were dressing and chipping stones.
Giving finishing touches and laying the floor.

In a corner sat the holy one in green kurta-pajamas.
We fell at her lotus feet to seek her blessings.
She opened her tiffen carrier and served us
With sumptuous rice, sambar, vegetables, pickles.

To all low and high present, she greeted,
Offered them food with a sweet smile.
Child-like innocence radiated from her being.
Though she has been fasting over half a century.

She spoke softly to say about herself.
Of her penance on three hundred and sixty hills.
Showed us a room with pebbles of various colours,
Collected from each hill, where she sat in prayers.

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She examined my pulse and said, I suffer
From illnesses, which were unknown to me.
Of evil effects of foes and black magic.
Of my inner sorrows, pangs and bitterness.

In a low tone, she blessed me with sagely advice.
To be true to Lord and recite His Names.
To love all His creatures with compassion.
To shun being enemy of my own soul.

Dive Down

My deep subconscious mind,
Drenched with millennium
Thoughts of my forebearers,
Of their desultory living in parched lands.
Unmindful of the blistering fiery sun.
Of pangs of hunger, bare-bodied.
The deep, hidden hood strikes,
Whenever heavenly pleasures surrounds
To make me oblivious of the pussy wounds;
Of the marshy, thorny paths.
The soaring skylark dives down
To be hunted and encaged.
The short-lived freedom, mirth and joys,
Get drowned in mire.

Fountains of Hope

Oh! If only could I sow stars,
Moons on the galaxies, where
Now is littered with blood.
Bring in silence to the turbulent floods.
To the love-starved generations.
Only if I could sow rainbows, roses.
Create founts in the flaming deserts.
Bring fragrance to the decaying souls.
Where now the scintillating music?
The cheers, charms, the lullabies.
For sweet dreams, hopes to linger,
The dazzling sun has burnt the gardens.
Let's find shores bereft of saline waters.
A place where brimstones don't rain.

Together We Bloomed

We boarded for a long, arduous journey.
Waltzing through starry space, crossing
Fiery seas, deep oceans, flowing rivers,
Barren hills, snowy, peaked mountains.
Passing flaming over trackless deserts.
Landed to stay in an ancient city.
Where sturdy warriors met with shining swords.
Where bloody battles were fought and kingdoms lost.
Where lengthy debates held and poetry flowed.
Where saints, sages met for inner growth.
Sooner and later the throbbing metropolis,
Engulfed us, took us in its mighty arms.
Put us on a high pedestal, where men
With learned length and thundering sound.
Unarmed us with lightning speed, the flowing wisdom.
Showered their shiny pearls gathered from fathomless seas.
Spread the fragrance, scent from chosen perfumes.
To draw from our bosoms just rulings.
Helped us to hold even, the pans of justice
To cast a dazzling light on dark souls.
You reached the garden city at last.
To rest, rejuvenate, to dream afresh.
Let memories remain green forever and ever.

A Ray of Hope

Oh! The times have passed
Age has withered.
The dreams are shattered.
I look up now to Thee,
My Lord, my Succour.
My candle is now to burn out.
Yet I hope, I look up
To the horizons beyond.
To gaze at the twilight
Where darkness fades,
And light flashes its rays
Beckons me to reach out.
Oh! I have witnessed times,
When the twinkle of love,
Has faded in the bloody wars.
When the blooming gardens
Have turned into flaming deserts.
When youth lost its shame.
I look up now for fresh dreams
To pass on the legacy for a new era.

Recorded Moments

I turned the pages of my life, my diaries
The recorded events, old albums, collections.
There were moments of exhilarations in darkness and light.
Enchantment with fragrances, melting mirages, hopes.

Hysteric laments on passing away of dear ones.
Haunting dreams of forlorn love, lost promises.
Glimmering unions, passionless splendours,
Erotic songs, secrets massages to weave hearts with love.

Childhood fantasies withering away like a rose.
Life passing through a checkered board, a snakes and ladders,
A game played with dice, hide and seek, eye- spies,
Colourful marbles, kites flown in gusty winds.

Heartbeats rhythmically, unmindful of changing times.
But mind records all and all, to yearn and recall.

Transformation

My heart is enveloped with a blanket of pathos
Blood-curdling life experiences mingled with pain
Has choked my voice, clouded my thinking
Hidden in my bosom are bleeding dreams.

Universal lamentations on freezing of Jews
In gas chambers; nations splintered
Every day somewhere Godhra enacted
Fires burning children; chained insane persons.

Temples of peace shattered in earth-rattling quakes
Gandhis. Luther King. Kennedy assassinated.
Can fires be doused, to raise gardens of love?
Bring twinkle in tiny eyes; a smiling Teresa.

Let's weave hearts with virtues of love
Transform rivers of blood to milk of human kindness.

Cold Waves

When someone dear departs
The mood of mourners flashes not
Eclectic joys but splashes chill
Cold, icy waves of tears and cries.
Hiccups, fainting, uncontrolled, unabated
Out bursts of deep affectional traumas.
The blue sky, the white clouds,
The multicoloured roses turn themselves
Grisly and sombre, reminding
Of the ONE who has set
This wheel of life to churn
Grease, not cream, to oil itself.
Oh! Look how all assemble, cuddle,
Shake, furtively, forgetting
Bitterness, coming closer, hugging.
Seeking each other to console.
To lift the sagging spirits
And offer to the departed soul
Handful of soil, as blanket of love,
To cover the womb of silence.

Illumination

You need to know the benefits of the light,
And moroseness of being in the darkness.
Unless illumination dawns on the mind
And lights up the dark pathways;
The soul keeps lamenting and languishes.
Unknown wretchedness gripping the self!

You need an enlightened man like Buddha.
A Prophet of immense light, "Noor".
To take you out of ages of decay
And make you stand before the Great Effulgence.

You need million of suns to lighten our nation.
To drive away the darkness of the ages.

Man Arafanaf Sahu

“Man Arafa Naf Sahu”, “Know your
Own self” is the slogan
Of “Tassawuff” (Sufism). The huge
Cosmos and the intricate design of nature is stupendous and
Marvellous. This is of the outside.
The inner being is equally harmonious
And meticulously designed.
Despite our mental confusion, lack of
Proper understanding and clear logic,
The internal system works in perfect
Harmony and precision. Million thanks
And praises to the Great Creator,
Whose bounty is vast and unlimited.
First is to see the signs or signature
Of Allah in Nature, in oneself and
His total command over us and our
Helplessness and despondency. The
More we reflect on oneself and on
Allah the more praise is uttered
By the tongue and breath.

Allah's Bounty

Allah's bounty is limitless. It is His Mercy and Benevolence that such a Great Being should bestow His Grace on such Insignificant creatures like us. Are we not thankless souls? Why? Because We lack the inner light, vision and knowledge. It is Hazreth Al Ameen through whom The light both inner and outer, can be Achieved with the "Wasila" Of our Great "Peeran O Peer" We need to achieve inner and outer Silence (*simt*). The mind should stand still And be free from doubts and we should have Certainty of faith (Huqul Yaqeen), strong will-Power and concentration and total submission To our 'Peers', our Holy Prophet and Allah ta alla. "Wasila': Intercession "Peeran O Peer": Saint of Baghdad.

How to Reach the Truth?

Please tell me as to why is it difficult to
Reach the Truth and so easy to lie?
Truth is a steep mountain, slippery
And difficult to climb. It requires courage
Of conviction. Faith is its foundation
And certainty is its wheels. Love is
Its engine and prayers is its petrol.
It has to confront obstacles, rough
Weather. It requires sacrifice. It has
To face hunger and thirst. Sometimes
It loses face and has to face humiliation,
Insults Truth is let down by one and all.
It has to stand above like a scare crow
In a rice field. Truth is always simple
And most humble. It fulfils all its promises
And oaths. It is open-minded and open-
Hearted, never secretive or suspicious. It is
Generous and hospitable and charitable.
It is quick in forgiveness and in repentance.
It is fearless and crystal-clear. It sheds tears for
Sufferers. One who is truthful reaches
Eternal light and Lord, i.e., Reality.

Duality

Tell me, why is there duality in our minds
Why this plurality? This mind playing
Hide and seek? This confusion between
Right and wrong, black and white, light
And darkness? Why do we need a peg
To hang our coat? A shoulder to weep on,
And always someone on whom you want
To unburden your soul? Is it because
Man is always at daggers drawn? Bitter,
Cold, sarcastic, angry. His various traits
Challenge each other, each trait
Trying to claim ascendancy.
The light of wisdom rarely dawns on minds,
Unless the mind is stilled to Oneness
And purified. On the confused mind polytheism
Sets in as milk turning sour unless boiled.
A momin is one who controls his mind
And heart to Allah and His Prophet's path.
So for which you need to practically
Surrender before a purified soul in this life.

Where does Allah Reside?

Tell me, where does Allah reside?
In Kaaba, in mosque, in temple, in church,
In dargas, in maqbeeras? Where? Where?
Does He come to you when you wear
Green, black, white, saffron turban
With 'Qurkha? With long beards, long
'Jhubbas' Does He like you moving
About with 'Tasbee' in hand? With
Tattoo mark on your brow and all over
Your body bare? How does He come?
Where does He reside? Have you
Discovered Him?
Have you found Him?
How long have searched for Him?
Please give me His address.
Know now my dear, loving brother that
He is in the mind with crystalline purity!
He is in the heart with absolute compassion
And total Mercy! He is on the Truthful
Tongue. He is in the eyes with shame.
He is on the hands of charity.
He is in every cell of the body where resides the love of

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Prophet Muhammad. Every one should
Become Muhammadi in 'True Spirit'

"Qurkha": cloak

"Tasbee": Rosary

Master Where?

Days have past, nights have passed
Million breaths have come in and gone out
Waves and of wavering thoughts
Pass like waves of stormy, ugly sea.

Measured the delights of the multiple senses.
Tasted the manna, honey, milk and "halwa"
Dipped in sorrows, pains and sufferings
Seen the heat, cold and every season.

Tongue has not stopped the praise of Him
Every throb is charged, every pulse glorifies.
Eyes have slept little, wept and wept for Him
The icy breeze cools the heat of the love.

O unseen Master! Your Grace is around.
Open the inner eye of my mind and heart.
Let Your vision illumine my dark soul.
Let purity dawn and brighten my being.

Masters's Glory

My Master's glance is an intoxicating wine
Taking me to oblivion and heavenly abode
Mirth and pleasures waning away.
My soul soaring up above the world

O Love! My Dearest of the dear!
You are the purest gem of ray serene
Glimmering thoughts to purify my mind
To reflect Thy multiple colours in my soul.

Where else can I find paradise?
Your presence itself is a source of wealth
To lift me from the abyss of fire
Which is burning me from within.

Let the sun shine on me forever.
Let the glory and effulgence never dim.

O! My Lord

“Strip off from worldly attachments and stand bare before Me”
My Lord! Give me that strength to love you.
To be true to my conscience and my soul.
Let me turn my inner self to you alone.

Let not my desires for self drown me.
Let not pride and anger tease me.
Let not the glitter of the world distract me.
Let my love be full and complete for you.

O! My Lord! Bless my parents, my teachers.
Let my progeny walk on straight paths.

In Sacred Moments

Like a child cuddling in the arms of the mother,
Oblivious of the mischief done the whole day,
To make the mother run a round and round.
To make her made with frenzy and to weep.

I, lost in my thoughts, turn to my Creator.
Oblivious of the umpteen sins committed by me.
I had broken the "Lakshman Rekha"; like Adam.
Shown jealousy and arrogance like Satan.

Yet, when I am in submission in prayers.
I am like a child in the arms of my mother.
O Lord! Forgive my erring soul and mind.
Let my sacred moments be dear to me.
Let Thy Effulgence shine forever on me.

(Ameen)

Enlightened Soul

Have captured the sun in my heart.
And the moon in my mind.
Now the love for my Master
Will never wane and get lost.

The stars in my eyes twinkle.
The cool breeze from all sides
Adds to my hopes and dreams.
The skyline is lit with twilight.

Life which was measureless and dull
Has now enlivened and found pace.
The shadows are waning away.
Love is now a perfumed garden.

O Master! Can I have a glimpse of you
To lift my sagging spirits, enlighten soul.

Zenith of Inner Peace

While trying to retrace the old
Ancient path of wisdom.
You find on the way, deadly,
Venomous creatures, snakes.
To obstruct your path
To distract your mind
To disturb your peace
To destroy your tranquillity.
To disable your efforts
To discourage your lively spirits.
You need to concentrate on your
Goals with single-minded devotion.
When you overcome all your hurdles,
You reach the zenith of inner peace.

Saints and Rishis

“Chased by celestial beings
The sun hid in my heart.
The moon in my mind
And stars in my eyes.

Nor tsunamis, nor quakes
Nor tornados, nor storms
Could now shake me.
I am planted firm in cosmos.

Beauty and lustre flow through my eyes.
Million lights beam through my self.
Fire from my tongue can burn my enemies.
Nothing is hidden from my gaze.”

Such were the claims of the saints and rishis.
Can we hope to have their glimpse now?

My Guru

Yes, I have my Guru.
Who is blessed
Who is innocent
Although unlettered.

But my Lord
Has opened His
Knowledge and His
World on my Guru.

My Guru is a kindred spirit.
He has no peer
To equal his excellence.
He is matchless.

My Guru does not
Show tricks and magic.
Does not call himself as an avatar,
But is a simple, humble person.

Adoring Saints

By visiting the graves
Mausoleums of saints
We draw inspiration
From their lives and works.
Their humanity, generosity
Their culture, gentleness.
Their humility, sincerity.
Their godliness, simplicity.
Their silence, benevolence.
Their calmness, sweetness.
Their love and affection.
Their kindness, compassion.
Their charity, benevolence.
Their broadmindedness, vision.
Their learning and wisdom.

A Master!

Wherever Your Name is uttered.
I am there, sans malice
In my heart and mind

In whatever Form
You are worshipped
I adore and love You

O! My Master, do not
Forsake and shun me.
My heart is a honeyed-combed love

Let me bow my head
Before You forever and ever.

Zest for Life

Those were the times, people
With unperturbed, pure minds;
And hearts of gold, with sweetness
On their tongue and pleasant manners.

With umpteen children of ten or more.
Joint households with a large kitchen.
Generous, hospitable to the core.
Welcoming one and all in their fold.

They would pledge their ornaments
To buy ration to feed their guests.
Ungrudging live a jolly life.
Simple they were without strife.

My father in those days retired
After a long stint in a humble job.
Satisfied, happy though none to support him
But with a paltry sum as pension.

He would cycle leisurely to his favourite places.
Spend cheerfully his free time with friends.
Oblivious of the changing times,
Oozing out the kindred spirits from heart.

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One fine day, after quitting cigarettes
For over a decade and more,
He developed, sore throat and choked voice.
It was deadly carcinoma of throat.

He wouldn't give up the lively spirit
Nor his enthusiasm to live sportingly.
Welcoming smilingly all his clan'
Entertaining them joyfully, heartily.

Slowly the crippling enemy overpowered him.
Though gasping for breath in oxygen tent.
But his eyes would twinkle every moment.
He won't give up being courteous to a fault.

As the time grew closer to choke his life
He would mutter that he was prepared
To met his Maker with a clear conscience.
Blessing everyone in a lighter vein.

Carcinoma could put an end to him,
But it couldn't overpower his zest for life.

Token of Love and Affection

Mourning was indeed deep
For my uncle, a judge in
The high court suddenly died,
Without any sign of illness.

We were all partying, enjoying
With his wife and children
On his elevation and becoming a 'Justice'.
When the cruel hand of fate snatched him from us.

We wept all through the night.
Read Holy Scriptures, counted the rosary.
Carried his bier to the mosque,
Where hundreds gathered for his prayers.

Mourners carried his bier on shoulders
To his resting place and offered
Fistful of earth, when placed in grave,
As a token of love and affection.

Shrill Whistles

My moustached uncle, a colonel
From Indian Army would come
On an annual holiday, every year.
Spend his time leisurely all through.

Finding us sleeping till late hours
Of the day, he would create a racket.
On one such occasion, I hurried up
And went to the civil court.

Fully dressed in uniform of
Coat, black tie, white pant and shirt.
Of course, with out any files for work.
Those were my days of juniorship.

As I entered the court premises,
I found to my dismay, it was deserted.
Seeing me, street urchins sent in a
Roar of laughter and shrill whistles.

It was a second Saturday
And courts were on a holiday.

Umpteen Sacrifices

My parents kept talking about
The sacrifices done by them.
To bring up seven daughters,
Three sons and umpteen grandchildren.

They had to forego their pleasures,
Cut the corners here and there.
Ration us, put us to labour,
To make both ends meet.

Year after year, my mother
Bore five daughters, hoping for a son.
Then me, then my younger brother.
They didn't stop till two more daughters followed.

My mother by then had become anaemic.
My father was down with paralysis.
And they spoke of umpteen
Sacrifices and hardships they underwent.

My Life

The Jan.-Feb. of my life faced
Many a teething problem.
March-April saw the rise
Of sun with bright sunshine.
May-June, the mid-summers
Of life, I had to sweat and fume,
July-Aug. were growth of
Inner potentialities.
Real battles were fought
With all my inner strength,
Ingenuity and I took all
Failures and success in my stride.
I am now seeing the declining sun
Throwing weak beams of light.
Sept.-Oct. were for gathering of fruits.
Roses in Nov.-Dec. will bear seeds
For next generation to sprout and grow.
Let the sun set, allow the moon
To throw its luminous and cool light
To ever shine in my eternal darkness.

Safe Shores

I need to open widely the closed doors
Of my heart, eyes and ears
To see the effulgence of my Master.
How and when plagues my mind?

Shall I be in the company of saints,
Rishes, yogies, sants and sufis.
Can I hope to get that light
Which enlightens the dark being?

Can I be able to get a candle?
A matchstick to light it?
Can it glow forever in storms, tempests?
I need a soul with fragrance and perfumes.

Oh! The times don't auger good tides.
To set the ship to sail for safe shores.

Free from All

When saints, yogis and sufis shun life
They in fact are giving up ownership, over lordship
Over chattel and property, over persons, things.
They give up the angry and belligerent attitude.

They have nothing to take, nothing to give.
They are above all material pleasures.
Freed themselves of worldly wants and desires
So that their heart sparkles bright.

They have unburdened their baggage
Without savings or bank accounts, purse.
Neither they need to give nor take anything.
Their relationship is platonic with the world.

Their heart and mind are free from the world
So that they concentrate on that Being.

O Solitude

O Solitude! You reside in the hearts
Of saints, rishis, Yogis and prophets.
In the empty hearts of poets, musicians,
Whose tiny fingers write great works of art.

O Solitude! You seek company
In the lonely hearts of the lovers,
Whose grace, music, romance and love
Have woven stories, legends to sigh.

Sorrows reside in the temples of silence.
In the towers of excellence and beauty.
To sparkle and glow like Venus
Like full-moon to shed pure light.

Sorrows walk and trample thorns
To enable joys to walk on roses.

Refresh Your Soul

Come, come, let's open our hearts to heaven.
To the light to flood our hearts and system.
To enlighten our soul with higher spirits,
With love and affection, to change our fate.

Let's not be afraid of our strongest critics
Who make target of our condition.
Who are not afraid to speak ill of us.
Who attack us day in and day out.

Let's hear the music of purest love.
Let's sing song to delight our beloved.
Let's repeat His Name a million times.
Let the fragrance of love spread all over.

Let each morning bring us fresh tidings.
Let each night refresh our soul.

Glory to Thee

Ah! Thy Glory is much praised.
Much more is for Thy beauty to pine.
Time is fleeting, so also my age,
Withering my youth let Your love be

The fire that is kindled in my heart,
Burns my eyes, my body, self,
Pining for Thee all the time.
Yearning for illumination of every part.

My bones are creaking and shaky.
My eyes have now become blurred.
My voice has become choked.
Your signs around are amazing.

My spirit yearns to join Thee.
To shed this mortal coil for Thee.

Panacea for Ills

A mind with crystalline purity
Sharpness of a shining sword
With soaring imagination
And capacity to pierce the dark veils.

Such a mind filled with knowledge
Having a panoramic view of the world
Of affairs of men and matters
And capacity to perceive trends.

Such a colossal mind with insight, depth
With foresight, wisdom and intelligence
A rare gift and a boon to mankind
To salvage men from the abyss of misery.

A mind without fear, bias and prejudice
Just, with compassion, with strength of steel
A born leader of men, a genius
A cosmic scientist, a panacea for ill.

The Ultimate Refuge

When the swords are out
And you are required
To pass through the untrodden path
Without help from friends and well wishers.

When the bugles have been blown
And your enemies are out
To skin you up without mercy.
You without any armoury.

When the dark clouds hover
Without any silver lining
With gathering storms and tempests
Lightning, thunder and tornadoes.

When your heart has melted
And courage has given in
It is time for fortitude
To seek mercy, grace and divine help.

Sharing Love

Love a divine spark, hidden in the depths of heart
For man to cherish, till death doth him apart
To give meaning to life, life-after
A binder and a coagulator.

Love is sacrifice and sacrifice is to die
A sincere attempt to give up every lie
The inner being gets effaced for the Beloved
Immersed in thoughts, drunk in His breath.

Where love lets lovely springs to flow
In its bottom lies dormant sorrow
To creep up and let streams of tears
On sad thoughts, for love to share.

A bleeding heart bears gems within
To emit rays of hopes, to wash off sin.

Thy Inscrutable Ways

The voice is eternal, ever living
Spoken umpteen times
In melody and sung in unison
Though apparent chaos and confusion!

Each Babel, to lisp Thy numbers
Thou teaches us different programme
To play a variety of melodies
With unique harmony, to sustain a system

What terror, what thunder and lightning?
What bloodshed, what screams, what cries?
What miseries and woes and pains?
What sufferings in elusions and storms?

Ah, the One who gives joys and ecstasies?
Happiness and pleasures, mirth and laughter
Wealth and show, glamour and glitter
Fills our soul, with pangs of separation.

O Master! Enough is enough
Seen have I Thy game, found Thy ways
In the hidden mirror through my inner eye

Liberate me now, to freedom, to fly
And merge in You forever.

The Soul's Pangs

Is crises a panacea for sins?
To open up the heaven's door
To receive the soul's pangs
To broaden and enlighten the mind.

Burn, burn, let flame engulf all
Take within Arjuna's pangs
Buddha's lofty heart.

Abraham's sacrifices,
Joseph's patience,
Moses righteousness,
Mohammad's blessings.

O soul! Yearn for the beloved's glance
Let your tears be your sacred gift
Let your wounds speak your love
Silently bear the thorns in your path.

A lover's million throbs and sighs
Outshines the sparkle of gems
Sandalwood burns to emit fragrance
And leaves its sweetness for all.

Puppetry

Thou playest puppetry with us!
Holding strings in Thy fingers
And making us dance to Thy tunes
O Dear! How strange are Thy doings?

Who holds these strings and why?
O Stranger! Stranger! Strange are Thy ways.
Show us Thy effulgence and face
Let us, slaves, know our Master.

What a trick Thou playest on us!
We play our role and game
Unaware though, that the strings are held by Thee
And simply utter, what is scripted.

Ah! What a gamble, what a show!
For all to think that I played the part
That I did this and did that
Did I do myself, when Thy hands held the control?

Ingrained in all is Thy genetic code
A programme, a system fed in us
Remotely unknown the scenes get enacted,
While the Master devices His own ways!

Soulful Melodies

O beloved, come come.
Let us mingle together,
And engage in divine talk
In exuberance and ecstasy.

Your beauty and grace.
Delicacy, courtesy, sweetness.
Friendliness and cheer,
Have opened my heart to love.

Let us together sing songs.
To welcome the spring,
With flowers scattering fragrance.
To enliven the spirit with thoughts divine.

Let us cry music,
Of the sublime soul;
Which lifts us from mere mirth
And lead us to the Far Beyond.

Ecstasy

Every moment of bliss, ecstasy,
Is a golden moment, a monument.
Surpassing Himalayan heights of glory.
Million years of chanting and praying!

A moth circumambulates, burns in flames.
A supreme sacrifice on the altar of love.
Lightning reducing to ashes Mount Sinai.
Moses merging in splendour of the Supreme.

Mohammad's ascension to the Throne
On 'Lailathul Qadar' in a flash—
A glorious and a golden moment.
A 'Midas touch' turns dust to gold..

A sigh of a dancing dervish!
With a heart glittering with love
With tattered clothes, dishevelled hair
Soul purified for final merger. O Lord!

A Kind Lady

The lotus of her heart opened up
Emitting a sweet-smelling scent
And fragrance floating in the air
The twinkling eyes sparkling light.

Her gait was lovely and charming
Pleasantness surrounding her
With motherly concerns, heavenly.
Disarming smiles and honeyed tongue.

With open arms receiving one and all
With deep understanding sharing sorrows
Sharing her meals, with loving manners
A divine lady, a rose among thorns.

A picture of peace, with the milk of kindness.
Everyone yearns for her affection.

Ever Cheer for Us

O My Chand Apa! My full moon
Sister throwing luminous light,
On all your younger siblings.
Caring us like a mother, a matron.

Forgoing your young joys and cheers.
Changing nappy of the youngest,
Washing clothes of all the ones.
Keeping the hearth warm and clean.

Taking tiffin carriers to the school.
Gathering all of us during meal-time.
Sometimes you would be late to school.
Only to receive scolding from teachers.

Now you are away in another land.
But O Chand Apa, you are ever the cheer for us.

Remembering an Elder Sister

She left us forlorn and desolate forever
To join her new groom
To forget her youthful joys and pranks
And laughter and days of mirth.

She nursed us, acted as a ringmaster.
Like a lovely maiden, cared and caressed us
We would fight, defy her haughtiness.
Feel envious on prying eyes stealing her grace.

I was twelve and she was in her twenties,
But for us, as kids, she was grown up.
We would climb on her back and pull her plait.
She would carry us to school and bring us back.

Now, she is a part of our memory like a pearl
Hidden in an oyster, a diamond in the stolen crown
She sparkles within us and comes in our dreams.
She has left amber in us.

Her love casting in us as sweet memory.
To charm and enthrall us for ever.
Although separated from us and far beyond seas.
Her love engulfing the tiny island of ourselves.

Love Forever and Ever

When Eve found the elixir
And Adam fell in love
Lord, You were angry. To
Banish him from Your presence

But Your Mercy saved Adam.
Eve too was forgiven. Yet was
To carry the stigma and
Humiliation forever and ever.

O My Lord! Save me from
The temptations of this world.
From its guilt and glamour.
From its slippery path.

O My Lord! Bless me
With love forever and ever.

Agony of Separation

O my Beloved! Give me the cup of honeyed drink
That shall put me to eternal deep sleep.
Neither the sounds of trumpets on the day of reckoning
Nor the genie of the ring and lamp of Aladdin
Shall be able to wake me up from the slumber.
I have no deeds to plead for heaven
Nor I played with evil to walk into abyss
I have moved all through in straight lines
While my adversaries have paced parallels.
Never to meet, to shake hands or for bear hugs
Like Brutus, I have been stabbed several times.
My lips quiver, my heart bleeds, now I look up
To Thee, to relieve me from pangs of separation.
O Beloved! Merge in me now, here, here!

Our Children

Our children are our blood, our bones
Our lifeline, our cream and butter.
If they are happy, it makes us happier.
If they are sad, it makes us sadder.

Every breath, we look for their joys.
They are like green leaves on a tree;
Feathers to a bird, a rose in a vase.
A lamp in the darkness to set aglow.

Our children are like cool streams
To parching lands and gardens.
Warm sunshine on a wintry day.
Full moon and shining stars on a dark night.

They are the light for our yearning eyes.
Fragrance and love to our deserted hearts.

Hallmarks of Passing Time

Every day a part of our self is lost.
The lavish burning sun sucking part of life.
Deepening in the soul melancholy.
Unseen griefs stepping in place of joys.

The childish pranks, youthful, gaudy jokes
Make way for serious manhood.
Devil hoodwinking the slippery man,
Leading him to the pathways of abyss.

The multicolour twilight greying the hairs.
Beauty of dancing damsels simply wanes.
Bow and arrow of bewitching girls loosening its strings.
Sphinx, Taj, Konark mutely watching passing time.

Indian sparrow extinct, tiger reserves diminishing.
Ozone layer shrinking, global warming—hallmarks of time.

Eternal Hope

In this earthly world, there is morning,
And twilight if evening.
Dusk and dawn.
Twinkling of the stars.
Crescent and full-moon.
Dust, storm, rain.
Changing of the seasons,
Whirling of the wind.
Fluttering of the birds.
Sweet songs of the nightingale.
Fauna and flora
Desert, jungles
Snowy mountains, gushing rivers
Angry sea, calm oceans
All this is a gift to man
To retain it or flounder it
To flourish with goodness
Or destroy it with evil
The cosmos, the universe
With millions of shining suns
With their own revolving planets
Somewhere in some universe
Maybe a kindred spirit
Hoping like us to meet the Creator!

How to Reach Thee?

I love, I weep, and my heart is deserted
The fragrance of my love fails to reach my Beloved.
Even the wind has deserted me!
It fails to carry my tale of woes, solitariness.

My counsellors advice me to raise
My lamentations, to tear and shear my coverings.
To beat the drums, to raise a hue and cry.
But my adversaries are ready to shred me to pieces.

My time is not yet up. My journey is long
The way is weary with prickly thorns.
My thirst is unquenchable. I need
My love to increase, to surmount the troubles.

My maddening inner waves run riot
Night clouded with fears, how shall I reach Thee?

Whither Solace?

My counsellor, my doctor, my panacea
Knows the cure for my illnesses.
But He is deaf, dumb and mute.
He wants my lamentations to reach its peak

So that it can break, all the hopes, desires,
For this deceptive and foolish worldly hordes,
Which cast a heavier burden on my shoulders,
Which have become weak due to weariness, age.

My eyes are tired, though without heaviness of sleep.
My heart pangs have increased manifold.
My Beloved's absence makes it more fonder.
I have lost my way, I am in a crisis.

O Love! Come, merge in my every cell.
Enlighten my being for solace, calmness within.

Charismatic Personality

My doctor, my curer, my guide,
My friend, my philosopher
Advices me to soften the desires.
While putting the steps in the slippery paths.

'Make hay while the sun shines'
Keep within your bosoms, the love as a secret.
Bid for your time, secure the locks of treasury.
Then abandon the desire for life, cast world aside.

Let not the troublesome, fickle seasons,
Droughts, storms and tempests wash
Away every leaf and grain of your garden
Leaving you askance, with a begging bowl.

Let love be full in a purified heart.
Shining with a magnetic soul.

How to Reach Inner Peace

The inner light that cherishes the soul
Is a celestial gift for a fortunate few.
It flickers to give daily strength
To face the onslaught of storms/tempests.
Faith in the divine beings, good persons
Brings succour and lights up the way.
Sorrows, despondency, disappointments wane,
And magnetic pull of beyond raises hopes.
The inner conflicts and duality in mind
Should end, to reach the inner core of peace.
Millions yearn for self-effacement
And to see the face of the Lord.
Only a fortunate blessed in an era
Reach the heavenly fruit of sainthood.

Transference

Saintly persons transfer their goodness
God's blessings and well-being
To seekers and humble ones.
Goodness diffuses in the being like light.

Pathos and grief can likewise make way
In the soft hearts of tender ones
When they are exposed to tragic
Scenes, happenings and occurrences.

All good and bad, positive and negative
Waves are subject to transference.
Expose yourself to good and positive
Waves for your own betterment and good.

Magnetic fields emanating from saintly beings
Have a cleansing effect on other beings.

How to Meet Him

Let us cleanse ourselves
Of all the impurities
The muck, slurry, slush
From the inner soul.

Let us embellish ourselves
Of that, which is adorable to Him.
Love, affection, silence and charity
Compassion and magnanimity

Let us be constant in this service.
Work again and again to
Gain His favour and
Cherish Him in the realms of the heart.

Let there be no let-up or shortcomings
In our service, till we meet Him.

On Reaching Peace

We will speak about primordial times.
Of the man living in caves, forests, plains
Facing nature's wrath, its plays with light and shade.
Its idiosyncrasies, its fickleness, its snares.
About darkness and fears surrounding it.
About eclipse about stars and their influences.
Of being possessed by evil spirits.
Of myth, mythologies, fictions of imaginations.
Of the strong devouring the weak, of subjugation.
Of exploitation, of lies, blunders, shams.
Humbugs, loots, plunders, rapes, killings.
Of all those men seeking peace.
For release from pain, sorrows, desires.
From lust, anger, jealousy, foolishness.

We will speak of enlightenment
Of freedom from evil, of goodness,
Of virtue, of straight paths.
Of truth, ahimsa, release from bonds.
From attachments, of 'Moksha'
Of peace, serenity and tranquillity.

My God

My God is different. He isn't with a long trunk,
Or with a long tail born to wind goddess.

My God is different. He doesn't call for killing
Those who don't accept His authority.

My God is different. He isn't the one
Who abandons wife, for being abducted.

My God is different. He is not dancing
With thousand lovers, copulating in Brindavan.

My God is different. He doesn't ask me
Not to befriend another one of my species.

My God is different. He doesn't want me
To throw my spouse with triple "Talak"

My God is good very much sane
Always here and there helping everyone.

In His Arms

I wondered and wondered and my wonder grew
As to what must have crossed his stilled mind,
When it was announced about cancer,
This would slowly and steadily engulf him.

I noticed calmness slowly besetting him.
Peace and solace enveloping him.
His movements were measured.
His love and grace increasing day by day.

As time passed the recuperating pain,
The breathlessness, weakness gripping him
He was put in an oxygen tent.
Yet he didn't lose those sweet smiles.

As the end came nearer and nearer,
My father lay surrendered in His Arms.

A Genuine Prayer

O Lord ! Lead me to light and straight paths.
Don't leave me in the grip of traitors,
Hypocrites, enemies and despots
And those on whom Your anger befalls.

O Lord! Befriend me; take me in Your fold.
Enwrap me in your bosom and love,
Cover me with Graces and Your Mercy.
Enrich my mind with a thousand lights.

O Lord! I seek those glittering eyes
From which I can perceive You.
Those ears from which I hear You.
That tongue from which I praise You.

O Lord! Let my best half serve You
Let my progeny follow right and justice.

Bless Me! Bless Me!

Every individual lovely soul
In any corner of the world
Due to vagaries of weather
Beaten black and blue again and again.

Swollen, injured, grievously hurt
Submits, kneels down before You
O Lord! don't shun them
For You are gracious and kind.

O Lord! Show Your clemency
To all Your humble creatures
Irrespective of their merit
You soothe the wounded hearts.

O Lord! Let me place my stricken heart
At Your threshold, for blessing
For I have reached the end of the world.
O Lord! Enlighten me guide me.

Now my heart is a sacred honeycomb.
My love is single-minded, bless me, bless me.

Multiple Graces

O Lord! There were times when
Fate had decreed severe tests.
A childhood of hardship and pain.
Schooling in a most modest way.
With meagre clothing and food
We found the simplest of daily joys
In playing with sand, stones, kites,
"Gilli Danda", marbles, hide and seek.
Being satisfied with mere "anna-sambar"
Home-made pickles and "samosas"
Gruel from broken rice and pudding.
The simplest of food gave us joys.

As we grew, O Lord! You snatched
From our midst our most loving
Grandparents, uncles and aunts.
We were left with a bare tree,
Without shade, leaves and fruits.

O Lord! You consoled us always.
You created hopes and not illusions
With kind, affectionate, loving,
Silent parents, playful siblings.
Surrounded by syncretic culture.

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O Lord! You guided us through
Most difficult moments of life.
When we had to pass through
Every trial and tribulation.

Your multiple Graces saved our souls.
You have satisfied all our needs
To fill in our bosom thankfulness.
Gratitude, peace, solace and richness.

I Seek Your Mercy on My Fellowmen

I had a premonition in my dream.
I woke up with a violent jerk,
With dried-out tongue and a severe headache.
I applied balm, tied a cloth on my forehead.
I swallowed medicine. I prayed.
O Lord! Forgive us our sins.
Grant us Your Mercy and Grace
On all Your erring humanity.
Let not the poverty-ridden men,
Already stinking in dirt and filth
Suffer further misery, on account
Of Your wrath unleashed through
Various means of drought, storms,
Tsunamis, diseases and ultimate
Death horrible seizing the innocent
Victims and already weather-beaten
People cringing and crawling for mercy,
Seeking Your Grace and Benevolence.

O Lord! Show Your clemency
Let Your Mercy and Grace
Shower on all people of all sections.
Let the erring humanity
Be straightened in their affairs.

O Lord! Send down Your Guidance
In all the hearts of my fellowmen.

Ever Gracious

O Lord! It is my own mistakes
Which have brought me troubles,
And others have wronged me,
And driven me to despair!

O Lord! You have shown me
During these most trying periods,
Your utmost compassion and kindness,
You have helped me overcome the tests.

O Lord! You have helped me
Sail through the most difficult
Moments of my life.
You have helped me again and again.

O Lord! I can't ask for more.
Your graciousness has always surrounded me.

Fulfilment of Vows and Prayers

In whatever form one prays
To whomever one wishes
To whichever direction one turns
One who prays to images, stone,
Or to graves of saints
Or to photographs of gods, goddesses
Or to godmen or holy men
Or prays in temples, mosques, gurudwaras
And submits oneself to holy men
Or meditates deeply every day
Or chants mantras or does 'Zikr'
Makes vows and sacrifices
Visits holy places, churches
Goes on pilgrimages
All find peace of mind
And get their wishes fulfilled.

Enlighten Dark Pathways

When one becomes ever good with compassion
And mercy oozing out for humanity
With forgiveness and blessedness.
He becomes a boon to humanity.

Such a marvellous person
Of illustrious nature with magnanimity
Is mercy personified, a lord,
A saint, a good man, a panacea.

While a tyrant, a criminal
A wayward, a wretched rich fellow
Is a satan, genie to create havocs
To destroy, ruin the gardens of love.

Love cherished is a candle of hope.
To enlighten the dark pathways.

Godly Behaviour

When mercy, compassion
Charity, tremendousness
Of the Lord transcends
Into the divine consciousness
A person of purity of mind
And heart becomes divine.
He displays the Lord's qualities
And humanity gets benefited.
The tongue of such a person
Utters profound truths.
The eye watches beauty,
The heart sparkles with love.
The gait changes to innocence.
Christ-like behaviour becomes explicit.
A Midas touch turns sand to gold.
A healer, a teacher, a Buddha.

Humility and Submission

Only those who submit with humility to the Lord
Will free themselves from pride, anger and ego.
The Satan has promised not to trouble the humble.
What are the characteristics of a humble man?
He is truthful, simple in manners, talks and dress.
He is gentle to the core in his speech and gait.
He is never harsh to the less fortunate ones.
He is courteous to his parents, relatives, friends.
He walks with softness, with eyes on the ground.
He never complains of his misfortunes and woes.
He is always thankful for the bounties received.
He is pleasing to all to whom he addresses.
He is full of self-control with a twinkle in his eyes.
He is patient and exerts himself to maintain it.
He recognizes the good done to him by one and all.
He performs his duties cheerfully without complaints.

Quatrains

1. Life is a bloody battlefield.
Fight when you should with all force.
Broker peace when you must.
Lie low when the tides are high.

2. Quran is crystal-clear reasonableness.
Not magic, chicanery to win hearts.
With darkness, deaf ears, blind eyes.
Knowledge is a prism to throw rainbow colours.

3. Hundreds die during pilgrimages
In most holy places
At Makka or Sabrimalai
By stampede or fire, what wisdom lies?

4. Roses in December bring hopes
For fresh stream of life anew.
To spread fragrance in air afresh.
Life is a mixture of shade and light

5. A drop separated yearns to join the ocean
To mingle and drown in nothingness.
Multitudes spring in myriad rainbowed colours.
Alas all merge to make a silvery screen.

6. Every fragrant rose to delight.
Has a thorn to prick to bleed.
From marshy waters springs a lotus.
All that glitters is not precious stones.

7. Yesterday is dead, today is alive.
Make most of it in a good way.
To allow tomorrow to arrive anyway
In a bright and a surer way.

8. Yesterdays were full of pains and sorrows.
You resisted evil, walked in straight way.
Today has come to you in a better way.
Keep your goodness, let tomorrow be gay.

9. Sow not evils in the sand of time.
For it sprouts into a thorny plant.
To give fruits of bitter taste.
You reap what you sow today.

10. Remember not yesterday's battles
About gory bloodshed and injuries.
Smoothen today with love and affection
So that tomorrow doesn't bring affliction

11. Unmindful of the cruel ways of fate
I put in heart and soul in my way.
Days, months and years passed by.
Bearing honeyed sweet fruits for me.

12. I worked hard all my way.
With love and affection in my heart.
Unmindful of sorrows binding me.
My cheerful today is thanksgiving for me.

13. Unmindful of my enemies' mechanizations.
I dedicated every day for my work.
To make it perfect in every way.
Today, I look back with satisfaction.

14. Sincere to the core, honest and true,
I flowered my way all along.
Though the path was strewn with weeds and thorns
Today, I retired without having any blues.

15. With tears of repentance relive your life
Make way for tomorrow to arrive.
Work hard all way long with sweetness.
Let your future come without sadness.

16. Don't go to the battlefield unarmed.
Your bitterest enemy will slice you.
Be ever prepared and ready.
Work hard with truth and honesty.

17. "Fools built houses for wise men to live in."
Let not your adversary destroy you.
When you are deep in mire.
Win people's heart with love and be true.

18. The pangs of separation from beloved.
Is expressed with flow of streams of love.
It shows the tenderness of the heart.
Love is a beautiful flower of life.

19. Forgiveness is a shining sword
To slash the boastfulness of the enemy.
Love, affection alone can win their hearts.
Dawn of truth is a defining moment.

20. Don't idolize the faults in your heart.
Cleanse the same with purity of light.
Let the inner and outer life
Be for worship of the Great One.

21. Journey to the 'Kaaba' of your heart
The centre, the point of love,
From where emits the light
That encapsulates the being.

22. Forgiveness is a great virtue
To unite the hearts in a bond
From which flows the milk of human kindness
To nurture humanity in peace.

23. Only the fearless can weather the storms
The stricken humanity succumb and fall
Like Adam and Eve than to seek His pardon.
O Lord! Your Grace can save humanity.

24. Before the wrath of the Lord
Visit our threshold with its 'namaste.'
Let us submit and seek His pardon
Seek forgiveness for the erring humanity.

25. The godmen, 'sadhus', 'swamis' and 'fakirs'
Instead of becoming saviours for humanity
Have become messengers of death
Like 'Yama', to carry their booty every day.

Haiku

O! My Beloved
Show me Thy sweet Effulgence
I am in anguish!

I shall die, when called
Summon me, O sweet One
My life is for you

I burn in Thy love
Leaving my ashes for you
Holy Communion.

Burn, burn, O my love
My heart is ready to burst
To receive Thy Grace.

Love or be ever damned
Burn yourself in ever Love
Don't forsake Me.

Shake, shake, shake yourself
Of all the worldly desires
And turn to deep love

My praise for You
Thou shall always give me love
I seek Your blessings.

Show mercy, always
So that mercy shows its face
That is God's way

Come, come, my lover
Do sing-songs of harmony
To thrill my still heart

Walking on the sands
Leaving a mark on time
Life glows on and on.

Deep meditation
It is purification
Self-realization

Peace and harmony
Love and affection in man
Flow of lovely streams.

A saintly person
But speaks in many voices
Multifaceted man.

Birds chirping on trees
During seasons round the year
To spread love to all.

Tender leaf, flowers
Home for so many insects
Harmonious living.

Lily-white roses
Seek purity in friendship
Mother's love to child.

Champak's sweet fragrance
Reminder of eternal love
Mother Teresa.

Burning sweet agar
Reminder of divine love
Celestial beings.

Love is sacrifice
Thousand trips of honeybees.
To collect nectar.

Watch changing seasons
Clock of life moves on and on
Mind turns magnetic.

Ever humble yourself
To seek fortunes from the Lord
Shine like a diamond.

Florence Nightingale
Sweet-honeyed silvery tongue
Queen of hearts for poor.

Farmers, sons of soil
Sail smoothly in all seasons
Eternally green.

Songs of Nightingale
Ring love in hearts of lovers
For eternal life.

Mahatma Gandhi
Harbinger of love and peace
Father of Nation.

Wisdom rarely dawns
On a mind full of pleasure
Eternal sinner.

Science and holy books
Reap the harvest of wisdom
Shine like moon and stars.

Calm light of wisdom
Descends on minds purified
To shine forever.

Listen to soul's call
Sing songs of joy, ecstasy
Light up your knowledge.

Fill your consciousness
Heights of spiritual wisdom
For merger with love.

Awake your being
Rising sun dispels darkness.
Light purifies soul.

Earthly desires gleam
Beckons you to mirth pleasure.
Soul gets caught in thorns.

Sins nailed on the cross
Lord Jesus resurrected
Live eternally.

Love yearns good beings
Creates a Kaaba in your heart
For joys to emerge.

Company of saints
A touch of rare purity
Cleans heart and mind.

O devotee, fly
Bird of life sings Holy names
To reach ecstasy.

A guilty conscience
Is a sure sign of success
Now, turn a new leaf.
