



Hindu festivals and the politics of sectarian nationalism

RSS Combine's agenda of Hindu Rashtra has been built upon the narratives through multiple mechanisms. The festivals have been the occasion for promoting its agenda. Also highlighting some deities for 'social political messaging' has been in the political arena in a major way. The recently held Kumbh was a mega spectacle, which became more of a National event rather than a religious gathering. One major change for this year's Kumbh is its heavy marketing as a cultural and developmental showcase. It was labeled as "The Greatest Show on Earth" for Hinduism.

On such occasions organizing the stay, cleanliness, and transport for the devotees is a mandatory function of the state. This time what was witnessed that state got fully involved in the process of organizing the event itself and the associates of ruling party, like VHP, Dharma Sansads (Religious Parliaments) and individual Sants/sadhus took the lead and initiatives in propagating the components of Hindu nationalist agenda and 'Hate for Muslims' at this congregation.

While the religious spiritual significance of the event is highly appreciated by the devotees, giving it a political color was very significant this time around in the Kumbh. It is not the first time that Kumbh was organized. This time the occasion became the ground for enhancing Hindu agenda. The State Government, while was inadequate in the management of the crowds, it had advertised and invited the devotees in large numbers for quite some time. Crores must have been invested for inviting the devotees.

The event was marked by a boycott of Muslim traders from setting up their shops, and stalls. The reasons given were multiple, one fake one being stated by Swami Avimukteshwaranand that Muslims spit in the food, so were kept away. Many such misleading videos are doing rounds in the social media also. It is another matter that Muslims opened their Masjids and organized food for the desperate victims of stampede. One recalls that during the Mughal period, to make the Kumbh more comfortable for devotees, many Ghats (River banks for bathing) and toilets were built by them. According to historian Heramb Chaturvedi, Akbar had appointed two of his officers to look after the arrangements of the Kumbh.

The whole area was full of hoardings of Narendra Modi and Yogi Adityanath. This time around a large area was reserved for VIPs, leading to stampedes in which a large number of deaths occurred. The arrangement for transport was poor and this got reflected in the death due to stampede at New Delhi Railway station.

One upstart Swami, Dharendra Shastri, whom Mr. Narendra Modi calls his younger brother, merrily said that those who died due to

stampede are the recipients of Moksha. The water quality reached abysmal low level with E. coli and high excreta content. To all the criticism about water quality and deaths the Chief Minister commented that pigs are seeing the dirt, and vultures are counting the dead!

VHP used it as a golden occasion with its Margdarshak Mandal meetings. Their speeches were full of venom for Muslims. The usual propaganda about Muslims relating to population increase, infiltrators from Bangladesh, Cow protection was repeated at various meetings ad nauseam. The Hate spreaders like Sadhvi Ritambhara, Praveen Togadia, and Yati Narsingnanand Sarswati were having a field day with their speeches laced with Hate. They were having large audiences. BJP has successfully made use of Sadhus for its political agenda and got publicity at state expense.

One such saffron clad reiterated the demand for Kashi and Mathura and claimed that such 1860 temples have been 'researched', which need to be restored. Demand for closure of Madrassas and converting English schools to Gurukuls to create a Hindu World was also articulated.

In a book Published in 2024, Irfan Engineer and Neha Dabhade draw our attention to the use of religious festivals as occasions to instigate violence. Our festivals have been pleasant social occasions, cutting across religious lines. Now the trend is to take out a process during Hindu festivals, pass-through Muslims areas, change the green flag on the mosque to saffron flag, and dance with sword in hand. At the same time hateful slogans against Muslims in the air. In this book the author duo points out Ram Navami festival in particular in 2022-2023. The violence covered in the book related to Howrah and Hooghly (2023), Sambahji Nagar (2023), Vadodara (2023), Biharsharif and Sasaram 2023, Khargone (2022), Himmat Nagar and Khambat (2022) and Lohardagga (2022).

Engineer concludes "Even a small Group of Hindu nationalists masquerading as 'religious procession' could insist on passing through minority inhabited areas and provoke some youth using political and abusive slogans and playing violent songs and music, hoping that in reaction, a stone would be thrown at them. The state would do the rest by arresting a large number of members of a minority and demolishing their homes and properties within days without any judicial procedure."

At another level this rightwing politics has also brought up and promoted a goddess Shabri and Lord Hanuman in Adivasi areas. As anti Christian violence picked the adivasi areas during the last three decades, these areas saw an intense (**Continue on Page 7**)

Sura al-Ma'idah

108. And, (O Muslims,) do not abuse these (false gods) that these (polytheists) worship besides Allah, lest these people should (also, in retaliation,) revile against Allah's Glory wrongfully due to ignorance. Thus have We made the conduct of every sect (and faction) seem attractive to (their own eyes and they regard only that as truth). Then all have to return to their Lord, and He will inform them of (the results of) their deeds which they used to do.

109. They swear their most solemn oaths by Allah that if there comes to them some (manifest) sign, they shall certainly believe in that. Say (to them): 'Signs are but with Allah alone. And, (O Muslims,) you are not aware that when the sign comes, they will (still) not believe.'

110. And (due to their own malice) We shall turn their hearts and their eyes away from (accepting the truth the same way) as they have disbelieved (in the Messenger [blessings and peace be upon him]) the first time. (So, they will not believe even on seeing the sign). And We shall leave them to wander astray in their rebellion and defiance.

111. And if We sent down to them angels, and the dead started talking to them, and We gathered everything in clusters

The delegates of 'Abdul Qais came to Allah's Apostle and said, "The pagans of the tribe of Mudar intervene between you and us therefore we cannot come to you except in the Holy months. So please order us to do something good (Religious deeds) by which we may enter Paradise (by acting on them) and we may inform our people whom we have left behind to observe it." The Prophet said, "I order you to do four things and forbid you from four things: I order you to believe in Allah. Do you know what is meant by belief in Allah? It is to testify that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah, to offer prayers perfectly, to give Zakat, and to give Al-Khumus (one-fifth of the war booty) (in Allah's Cause). And I forbid you four things, (i.e., Do not drink alcoholic drinks) Ad-Dubba, An-Naqir, (pitched water skins), Az-Zuruf, Al-Muzaffat and Al--Hantam (names of utensils used for the preparation of alcoholic drinks)." (See Hadith No. 50, Vol. 1)

Allah's Apostle said, "The painter of these pictures will be punished on the Day of Resurrection, and it will be said to them, Make alive what you have created. "

The Prophet said, "The painters of these pictures will be punished on the Day of Resurrection, and it will be said to them, 'Make alive what you have created.'"

The Muslim is in the shadow of his charity

Once upon a time, there was a man named Ibn Gud'aan. He related his story: 'I once went out during the spring and I saw my camels healthy and with big udders that were filled with milk. I looked at my favorite she-camel and told myself that I would offer it as charity for my poor neighbor, who had seven daughters. I took it and knocked on my poor neighbor's door. When he opened the door, I said to him: 'Please accept this she-camel as a gift from me.' He was thrilled and speechless. He benefited a great deal from that she-camel; he used to drink from its milk and carry the firewood that he gathered on its back. "

Later on, spring was over and summer came with its high temperatures and drought. The Bedouins began moving from one place to another in their pursuit of water and pasture. Ibn Gud'aan added: "We set off seeking underground water, in this wide desert. I entered one of these holes to bring some water, while my three sons waited for me above. I lost my way in those underground tunnels and could not come out!"

The three sons waited three days for their father to come out of the hole, but he never showed up. They thought that he had lost his way and died from hunger. In fact, they wanted him dead so as to get hold of his fortune. They hastened to their house and divided his money between them! Then, they remembered that their father had given their poor neighbor a she-camel; so, they went to him asking him to give it back: 'Either you give the she-camel back to us and take this he-camel in exchange or we will take it by force and you will not get anything in return.' The poor neighbor said: 'I will inform your father of what you are doing.' They said: 'He is already dead' The poor neighbor exclaimed: 'Dead! What? How did that happen? Where did he die?' They answered: 'He went into an underground hole and never came out.' The neighbor said: 'Take the she-camel and I do not want your camel, just guide me to that hole.'

The three sons took the neighbor to the hole and left. The neighbor took a rope, tied it to a rock next to the hole, took a flame and crawled down into the hole.

He kept crawling and creeping inside that hole until he smelled water. Suddenly, he heard moaning and groaning; he kept moving forward, probing in the mud until he touched a body of a man. He placed his hands over his nose so as to make sure that he was still breathing; he pulled him out of that hole after blindfolding him so as to protect his eyes from the strong light of the sun outside. The neighbor rescued Ibn Gud'aan; fed him with some dates, then carried him on his back and took him to his house. Ibn Gud'aan was returned to life. The poor neighbor inquired: ' Ibn Gud'aan, tell me how could you survive a whole week under the ground?'

Ibn Gud'aan answered: 'When I lost my way inside the hole and could not come out, I sat by a spring of water so as not to die out of thirst. Yet, water alone would not keep me alive; after three days I was extremely hungry and did not know what to do. I lay on my back, putting all my trust in Allah The Exalted, believing that He Would Save me from that calamity. Suddenly, I felt drops of milk falling into my mouth; I sat down, but could not see anything, for it was black darkness down there. I felt a pot of milk near my mouth and I used to drink from that pot until I was full, then the pot would disappear.

This happened three times a day, but two days ago the pot did not appear to me and I do not know why?' The neighbor said to Ibn Gud'aan: 'I can tell you why. Your sons thought that you were dead, so, two days ago they came to me and took the she-camel, that you had given me, and this was the she-camel that produced the milk that you were drinking from all those days inside the hole. Indeed, Muslims are in the shadow of their charities.' [Each one is in the shadow of his Charity] Anas ibn Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that the Prophet sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam (may Allah exalt his mention) said: "Good deeds shield one against a bad and ill-fated death, mishaps, diseases and doom; indeed, the people of goodness in this life are the people of goodness in the Hereafter." [Al-Albani: Saheeh]



Black-Palestinian solidarity: We need to talk about what happened

More than a month into his second term, President Donald Trump has already made good on many of his dreadful campaign promises. He has ordered mass deportation of migrants and asylum seekers; cancelled federal Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) programmes; cut funding to underprivileged Black and Latino communities; and pledged to expel foreigners with legal residency who have participated in pro-Palestinian protests.

It is clear that if we are to survive the next four years, minorities and oppressed people of all stripes must build solidarity networks to stand together and resist. To do so effectively, we must address any outstanding issues that could undermine cross-community solidarity. One cannot say they care about women's rights, public health, racial equality, education or any number of things that liberals claim to care about and then allow a genocide to go on.

The 2024 election took place in the shadow of Israel's genocidal campaign against the people of Palestine. Despite the efforts of the Democratic Party to obfuscate and manipulate the issue, they could not simply wish away the horrifying images coming out of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

They faced a mass mobilisation of people in the streets, in the primaries and on college campuses calling for urgent action to stop Israel. In a desperate attempt to distract from the rightful criticism they were receiving for facilitating genocide, the Democratic Party took aim at the cross-sectional coalition that formed to support Gaza. In particular, the Democrats sought to break up Black-Palestinian solidarity. One way they hoped to do so was to frame pro-Palestinian protesters as

single-issue voters. They claimed that the Palestinian and Arab communities and their allies were invested only in the Palestinian struggle for freedom and did not care about the struggles of minority groups here in the US.

Democrats emphasised that what was happening in Gaza was an external issue that concerned only that specific group of voters. The idea was to convince Black people – as well as women, LGBTQ and other disadvantaged groups – that their solidarity with Palestine was pointless and that their interests lay with the Democratic Party, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris. When confronted with the particularly callous "single issue" talking point, typically I would ask: What "single issue" is genocide? One cannot say they care about women's rights, public health, racial equality, education or any number of things that liberals claim to care about and then allow a genocide to go on.

If someone is OK with the extermination of one group, why would they not be willing to approve the extermination of others when the time comes?

We got a glimpse of just how unserious the commitment of the Democratic Party and its liberal supporters to the rights of disadvantaged groups can be when they rushed to blame trans people for Harris's defeat and some prominent members suggested dropping the "trans issue".

The "single-issue voter" talking point was not the only one weaponised to undermine Black-Palestinian solidarity. The historic mobilisation on college and university campuses across the country was also attacked. Liberal media sought to portray pro-Palestinian activism not only as "anti-Semitic" but also as a pet project of the bourgeoisie, something only rich unaffected kids at Ivy League universities had time to care about. What the media decided to leave out from this narrative was that mobilisations also took place at public universities and state schools, which Black and brown students overwhelmingly joined. The fact that students of colour faced the brunt of police violence and criminal prosecution was also conveniently omitted from public conversation.

In parallel, the Democratic Party also made some of its members of colour become the face of its unacceptable stance on Gaza. Biden's UN Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield was instructed to vote down ceasefire resolution after ceasefire resolution and repeat the mantra about Israel's "right to self-defence". White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre had to avoid any and all questions about the Palestinians during pressers. Vice President Harris, herself, was tasked with "acknowledging" the humanity and suffering of the Palestinian people, while the Biden administration continued to approve weapons sales to Israel.

The Democratic Party used Blackness as a shield against any criticism and they did it under the guise of diversity. Unsurprisingly, the guise was dropped whenever Black or brown members of the party spoke out. In such cases, Democrats did everything possible to demonise and sideline them. When Member of Congress Cori Bush faced an unprecedented mass spending campaign by AIPAC to oust her in the primaries, none of the Democratic leadership came to her defence.

Nevertheless, the talking points worked and managed to penetrate even otherwise progressive spaces. A good example was an online conversation between content creator Tori Grier and TikTok Maya Abdallah that took place in August.

Tori as a Black woman argued for voting for Harris, outlining her very real fears of a second Trump presidency, while Maya rightfully pointed out the Democratic candidate was refusing to stop facilitating a genocide. The fallout of the heated debate between the two spread online, with some social media users renouncing their solidarity. This is exactly where the political elite wanted us to be.

As the Democratic Party courted the Black community, it made no effort whatsoever to talk to the Arab Americans and other pro-Palestinian groups. And even in "courting" Black people, the Democrats still managed to be as condescending as possible, pulling out the tired and racist trope of "Black men becoming more conservative". It is this strategy and the party's disingenuous framing of genocide and minority rights that I believe led us to the fascist fever dream that is the Trump presidency.

Halqae Zikre Ilahi, Islamic Education and Instructiveness Assesions

SUNDAY

2 to 3pm : Halqae Zikr,
Darse Hadees,
Khutbaat-e-Ghouse al Azam
RA, Fiqahi Masail,
Tazkiratul Auwliya.

TUESDAY

Maghrib to Isha: Darse
Tasswuff, Question
Answers. At: Qanqahe
Shujaiya

EVERYDAY

After Maghrib Zikre Jahri.
At: Khanqahe Shujaiya

UNDER GUARDIANSHIP

Hazrat Maulana Syed
Shah Obaiullah Qadri
Sahab Qibla

UNDER ORGANISE

Anjuman-e-Khadimeen
Shujaiya, Hyderabad.
Ph: 040-66171244.
www.shujaiya.com

THURSDAY

After Asar to Maghrib:
Halqae Zikre Jahri and
Waaz. At: Dargah Hazrat
Syedna Mir Shujauddin
Hussain Qibla RA, Eidi
Bazar Hyderabad.

FRIDAY

2 to 3 pm : (Khitab) Speech
of Hazrat Maulana Syed
Shah Obaidullah Qadri Asif
Pasha Sahab Qibla At:
Jama Masjid Shujaiya
Charminar Hyd. Namaze
Juma at:3-15 pm. After
Namaz Majlis Darood wa
Zikr, Salaam Ba Huzoor
Sallalaho Alaihi Wa Sallam

SATURDAY

Deeni Tarbiyati Camp: After
Maghrib to Sunday Isha
(Zikr, Wazif, Basic Education
of Islam, Tazkiratul Awliya,
Muraqiba, Prays Namaze
Thajjud and Ishraq. At:
Khanqahe Shujaiya
Backside Jama Masjid
Shujaiya Charminar,
Hyderabad.

Seeking Allah's Blessings In Ramdhan

PRAISE and thanks to Allah who has made us reach the blessed month of Ramadan yet again this year. He made it a month of mercy, forgiveness, du'a and multiplied rewards.

Every night of this blessed month, He invites the fortunate ones who witness it, to race and compete with each other in doing righteous deeds. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said "On the first night of the month of Ramadan, the devils are chained, the jinn are restrained, and the gates of Hellfire are closed and none of its gates are opened. The gates of Paradise are opened and none of its gates are closed. A caller announces: 'O seeker of good, come near! O seeker of evil, stop short! Allah will save them from the Hellfire and that is during every night of Ramadan'." (At-Tirmidhi, 682)

Ramadan is a golden opportunity for all of us who hope to be saved from the Hell fire and yearn to dwell in Paradise. This is not a month of socializing and feasting even though it is common to see this around us. This is a month of competing with each other in improving our relationship with our Creator, a month where we ignore all distractions and race to Him by doing lots of good deeds. Allah says, "And vie one with another for forgiveness from your Lord, and for a Paradise as wide as are the heavens and the earth, prepared for those who ward off (evil)." (Qur'an, 3:133)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "There has come to you the month of Ramadan, a month of blessing, in which Allah covers you with grace, sending down mercy, forgiving sins and answering supplication. Allah looks at your competition in doing good therein, and boasts of you before His angels. So show Allah goodness from yourselves, for truly the wretched person is the one who is deprived of the Mercy of Allah during this month." (At Tabarani)

The Messenger (peace be upon him) and his companions would pray, fast, spend time with the Qur'an and be obedient to Allah all year round but in Ramadan, they would maximize their efforts to excel in various good deeds. Nothing can be better for us than following their footsteps in this world and then being rewarded by having their company in the Hereafter. The Messenger (peace be upon him) mentioned many actions which, if

performed sincerely, grant us great rewards.

The best of such actions in Ramadan is fasting, which has been made obligatory by the Almighty. The exact reward for fasting has not been specified but it is expected to be tremendous because of the way this hadith describes it: "Every deed of the son of Adam will be multiplied between ten and seven hundred times. Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, said: Except fasting. It is for Me and I shall reward for it. He gives up his desires and his food for My sake." (Muslim, 1151)

We need to perfect our fast by not just avoiding food and drink but also false and hateful speech and deeds so the rewards can be maximized. According to another Hadith, there is a gate to Paradise that is called Ar-Rayyan. On the Day of Resurrection it will say: 'Where are those who fasted?' When the last (one who fasted) has passed through the gate, it will be locked. (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

The blessed month of Ramadan is a celebration of the Qur'an as the blessed Book was revealed in it. Striving hard to spend the month in reading, reciting and listening to the Qur'an carries huge rewards. Regarding reciting it, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Whoever reads a letter from the Book of Allah, he will have a reward, and this reward will be multiplied by 10. I am not saying that 'Alif, Laam, Meem' is a letter, rather I am saying that 'Alif' is a letter, 'Laam' is a letter and 'Meem' is a letter." (Tirmidhi, 2910)

For those who listen to the Qur'an attentively, it was said that mercy does not come quicker to anyone than the one who listens to the Qur'an according to the words of Allah: "So when the Qur'an is recited, then listen to it and pay attention that you may receive mercy." (Qur'an, 7:204) The words "you may" make it mandatory for Allah! (Tafsir Al-Qurtubi)

There is a narration by Ibn Abbas that emphasizes the need to be generous in giving all kinds of charity in Ramadan: "Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) was the most generous of people and he was the most generous in the month of Ramadan, when Jibreel would meet him. Jibreel used to meet him every night of Ramadan to teach him the Qur'an." (Bukhari,

1716, Muslim, 4268)

Speaking of charity, you can also easily get the reward of fasting not just 30 days in the blessed month, but 60, 90 and so on! The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Whoever gives a fasting person (food or drink to break their fast), they will have similar to the reward of the one who fasted, without any decrease for the one who fasted." (At-Tirmidhi, authenticated by Al-Albani) Buy some dates and hand them over at a masjid, for the worshippers at the time of breaking the fast or hand over bottles of cold water and small packets of dates on the road sides at the time of Maghrib. If you are unable to do any of that, then just helping out in the kitchen and setting up Iftar with dates and cold water for your family will bring a similar reward insha Allah.

Making extra voluntary prayer along with the 5 obligatory ones is another way to race to Paradise according to the narration of Rabi'a bin Kaab who said: "I was with Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) one night and I brought him water and what he required. He said to me: 'Ask (for anything you like)'. I said: I ask for your company in Paradise. He (peace be upon him) said: 'Or anything else other than it?' I said: That is all (what I require). He said: 'Then help me to achieve this for you by devoting yourself to frequent sujood (prostrations)'." (Muslim)

According to a Hadith, performing an Umrah in Ramadan is like accompanying the Prophet (peace be upon him) on Haj. (Bukhari) But as for those who live far away from the blessed land of Makkah and feel sad for not being able to perform Umrah in this blessed month, they can still get the rewards of Haj and Umrah.

"Race to (all that is) good." says Allah in the Qur'an (2:148) and one can think of no better time to do this except in the blessed season that we find ourselves in.

According to a Hadith, whoever prays Fajr prayer in congregation, and then sits and remembers Allah until the sun rises, and then prays 2 units of voluntary prayer (Al-Ishraq), he will gain a reward equal to that of performing a perfect, perfect, perfect Haj and Umrah. (Al-Albani, Saheeh Al-Jaami-6346)

HARDNESS OF THE HEARTS

Very often we hear the words, "I feel hardness in my heart," "I do not find any joy in worship," "I feel that my faith has hit rock bottom," "Reading Qur'aan does not move me," "I fall into sin so easily." The effects of this affliction can be seen in many people, and this problem is the cause of every disaster and adversity. The issue of people's hearts is an important and sensitive issue. The heart is called qalb in Arabic because it changes so quickly and frequently (taqallub – alteration, variation, ups and downs). The Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wa Sallam) said:

"The heart (qalb) takes its name from its constant changes (taqallub). The likeness of the heart is that of a feather at the root of a tree, being turned over and over by the wind." [Reported by Ahmad,]

Allaah is the One Who turns hearts around and controls them. 'Abd-Allaah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'Aas reported that he heard the Messenger of Allaah (Sallallahu Alayhi Wa Sallam) say: "The hearts of the children of Adam are as one between the fingers of the Most Merciful, and He turns them in whatever way He wills." Then he said: "O Allaah, Controller of the hearts, direct our hearts to obey You." [Reported by Muslim].

There are a number of symptoms of the sickness of weak faith, including the following: **1) Falling into sin and committing haraam deeds:** there are some sinners who commit a sin and persist in it, and some who commit many kinds of sin. When a person commits many sins, sin becomes a habit which he gets used to, and then he no longer feels that it is abhorrent. He gradually reaches a stage where he commits the sin openly.

2) Due to excessiveness and squandering: This happens by giving ones soul whatever it desires of food, speech, sleep and other such matters which the soul makes its owner aspire for, what it cannot do without and what it loves.

3) Being ignorant and heedless of Allâh's remembrance: Shaytan exhausts himself in gaining mastery over the soul so that he can prevent it from Allah's remembrance. The one who remembers Allah is in a strong fortress, protected from Shaytan as long as he does not forget or become heedless. Whoever becomes heedless, he will open up a small gap for the enemy by which he can get to him and then penetrate into his soul and whisper to it. This is why there is a strong encouragement and recommendation for making the various supplications and reciting portions of the Qur'aan during every moment and in every place until they become a sanctuary and a preventive measure for the one who uses them.

4) Running away from some acts of worship: The soul runs away often from some acts of worship because they are amongst the things it does not desire. This continues because certain causes prevent a person from desiring these acts of worship. Amongst them are laziness in performing acts of worship (such as prayer) and the love of sleep. As a result, the opportunity to perform much worship passes him by. It can also occur due to miserliness. A person will not give the obligatory charity or other things which are required of him so that they become endeared to the soul and the soul begins to aspire for them after it had been fleeing from them.

IT'S CURE: It's cure is patience by denying our souls its need and desire in its entirety. We should not be extravagant and excessive in giving it food, sleep and other such delights and pleasures. When we shut this door

against our own souls and against Shaytân we will acquire peace and security. We may achieve this by doing the followings:

1) REMEMBRANCE OF ALLAH: With the abundant remembrance of Allâh a preventive barrier is set up against every destructive lust or transgressing desire.

2) ADHKAAR: Supplications for the evening, the morning, for entering into the house and leaving it, for sleeping and awakening and so on.

3) REFRAINING FROM ALLAH'S DISOBEDIENCE: This means that a person holds his soul to account in order to make himself distant from falling into disobedience.

4) BEING PATIENT IN ALLAH'S OBEDIENCE: Turning to Allah, making continuous du'a (supplication) to Allâh and requesting His help in this act of obedience to Him, this matter will be made easy for us and Allah will lighten our burden for us until these acts (of worship) are beloved to the soul.

5) SPEAK GOOD OR REMAIN SILENT: It is also, from the wisdom of Islâm that urges the Muslim to be silent unless he has something beneficial to say. The Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alayhi Wa Sallam) said:

"Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak good or remain silent." Perhaps, due to excessive speaking and shouting one will not be on guard against the danger of falling into backbiting, lying, slandering and other such matters.

6) FASTING: The door of fasting has been opened and we have been urged to fast. Even voluntary fasting has been strongly encouraged. Fasting puts an end to desires and excessive eating. Thus Islam has encouraged fasting and made it beloved to its adherents.

7) TAHAJJUD PRAYER: Attachment to the night prayer prevents a person from excessive sleep. A person will strive against his soul and wage war against it in order to pray during the night and fast during the day. He will continue in this until his soul submits and humbles itself to these acts of worship. All of this cannot occur except after fighting and struggling against the soul. We will find ourselves in many trials and intense battles along with our capability of avoiding indecisive actions. This means that even though we are in need and capable of fasting, will not fast due to following our whims and even though we are capable we will not pray and as a result please our desires and our souls which commands the evil.

However, we find that another person fasts voluntarily, although he is not in need of fasting voluntarily (to curb his desires) and neither does his soul aspire towards fasting. Yet he still declares war upon his soul and fights against it (with fasting and prayer) so that he makes it do what he desires and not let it make him do what it commands and desires.

Therefore, patience when accompanied with performing those actions upon which the soul perseveres is considered the greatest and most perfect form of patience as Ibn Taymiyyah (rahimahullah) has explained. And Ibn al-Qayyim (rahimahullah) said: "Verily, having patience in obedience (to Allah) occurs by performing an act of obedience, then guarding it and being persistent in (performing) it." "May Allah make us amongst those who are patient in being continuous in performing righteous actions and may He grant us the highest of positions and everlasting happiness in the gardens of delight." Ameen!!!

The Importance of Zakaat

Zakaat is one of the greatest obligations and important fundamentals of Islam and has been mentioned along with the ritual prayer (Salaah) thirty-two times in the Holy Qur'an. Allah Ta'ala has called His slaves to this obligation in various ways and declared clearly that whatever one pays as Zakaat does not decrease one's wealth but rather, one's wealth is increased due to it.

Allah Ta'ala says, "Allah Ta'ala destroys the interest (Riba) and increases the charity." [Surah 2, Verse 276]. Harmful growths affect some trees and hinder their blooming. The foolish will not prune them because they think that so much will be taken from the plant, but a wise person knows that pruning them will help a tree to bloom.

The same is the case with Zakaat wealth as Hazrat Aisha Siddiqah (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anha) has narrated that Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has said, "Zakaat money will not destroy wealth but it will be added to it". [Baihaqi]

Consider how an unwise villager who has no wheat seed, gets it with many difficulties through debt and then sows it in the earth.

At that time he mixes it into the dust with his hands but he hopes that In Sha Allah this loss will be turned into much grain. Do we not have the same sense as that villager? We rely only on outward means, and do not believe in Allah Ta'ala's saying. We do not sow the seed of Zakaat to increase our wealth and to turn every grain of ours into a tree. Allah Ta'ala says that if you pay Zakaat, your wealth will be increased. If one does not completely believe this, then this is definite infidelity. Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has said, "The completion of your Islam is that you pay Zakaat on your wealth."

Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has stated, "He who has gold or silver and does not pay Zakaat, will be punished in such a manner that on the Day of Judgement this gold and silver, shaped into plates, will be heated in the fire of Hell and his forehead, side and back will be branded with them and when those plates become cold they will be heated again and he will be branded with them, and this will go on the whole day until the account of every creature is taken. (Note that the Day of Judgement is equal to fifty thousand years of this world)." [Bukhari Shareef; Muslim Shareef]

And do not think that this branding will be merely a touch of the fire or will only be enough to make the forehead, back or side sweat, and no more. Listen to its description in the Hadith and fear the punishment of Allah Ta'ala. Hazrat Abu Zarr (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) has narrated that the hot stone of Hell will be kept on their nipples and will burst their chest and come out from their side, then it will be held to their side bones and it will break their bones and come out from their chest". [Bukhari Shareef; Muslim Shareef] He further reported that Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "The stone will break their back and will emerge from their side and will break the nape of their neck and will emerge from their forehead." [Muslim Shareef]

Hazrat Abdullah bin Masood (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) has narrated that neither will any penny rest on another nor any gold coin touch another but rather the body of the person who did not pay Zakaat will swell so much that even if there were millions of pennies, every penny would brand him separately. [Tibraani]

Do we consider the Commandments of Allah Ta'ala and His Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) merely a joke and fun or think that the suffering of such pains for fifty thousand years will be easy? For a while just keep a heated coin on your body and compare this little heat with that fire

of anger, and this one minute's pain, with thousands of years of calamity, and this light touch with that anger which breaks bones!

Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has said, "The wealth whose Zakaat will not be paid will be shaped into a bold dragon and fall onto the neck of the person who has not paid Zakaat. [Ibn Majah; Nisaii] Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) confirmed it with the Holy Qur'an where Allah Ta'ala says, "Soon, that with which they were mean, will be their necklace on the Day of Resurrection." [Surah 3, Verse 180]. Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) further said, "When the dragon will run after him, he will ask, "Who are you?"

It will say, "I am your unpaid Zakaat which you left after your death." When he sees that it goes on following him, he will put his hand in its mouth and it will chew his hand and then his whole body." [Tibraani]

Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) saw some people who were wearing dirty rags on their front and back and were eating like animals, the hot fire of Hell, stone, cactus and hard, sour, burning and foul smelling grass. He asked Hazrat Jibra'eel (Alaihis Salaam) who they were and Hazrat Jibra'eel (Alaihis Salaam) replied,

"They are the ones who did not give Zakaat and Allah Ta'ala has not been unjust to them. Allah Ta'ala does not oppress His slaves."

Some people do not pay their Zakaat which is Fardh (obligatory) upon them yet they give Nafil (optional) charity in abundance.

A person who fails to pay Zakaat should expect to be involved in these painful torments for thousands of years. If these were inflicted on mountains, they would be turned into fine powder and dust! Then who is more foolish than he who uses his wealth in all sorts of charity yet he lets Allah Ta'ala's due remain unpaid? This is a great deception of Shaitaan who destroys a man under the guise of virtue. The fool thinks that he is doing good deeds but does not understand that the Nafil without Fardh is merely a false pretence.

Huzoor Ghaus-e-Azam Sayyiduna Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) illustrates this point about people who give up Fardh actions and perform Nafil, with an example from Ameerul Mu'mineen Hazrat Sayyiduna Ali (Karramallahu Ta'ala Wajhahul Kareem) who states,

"The condition of such a person is like that woman who is pregnant but at the time of delivery, has an abortion. Now she is neither pregnant nor the mother of the child due to the abortion on the day it was due. She suffered all the pain but the result was zero. Had she borne the child, it itself would be the result. If the pregnancy had remained, there would be a hope.

Now there is neither the pregnancy, nor the child, nor hope, but all she has is all the pain." Similarly, the money which was spent by the performer of the charity is unacceptable as Nafil since he gave up the Fardh. He spent his wealth but gained nothing. Hazrat Ali (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) also said, "Those who abandon the Fardh and do the Sunnat and the Nafil will be humiliated and these deeds will not be accepted." [Futuh Al Ghaib]

Hazrat Sayyiduna Abdullah bin Masood (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) narrates a Sahih Hadith in which it is stated, "We have been ordered to perform Salaah and to pay Zakaat and he who does not pay Zakaat, his Salaah is not acceptable." [Tibraani]

When Salaah, Fasting and Hajj are not acceptable from someone who fails to pay Zakaat then what good in this life can be expected from giving Nafil (optional) charity? May Allah Ta'ala grant us the Taufeeq to understand the importance of Zakaat and to be steadfast in duly paying our Zakaat for the Pleasure of Allah Ta'ala, Ameen. [Compiled from A'izzul Iktinaah Fi Raddi Sadaqati Maani'uz Zakaat by A'la Hazrat Imam Ahle Sunnat Imam Ahmad Raza Khan Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh]

Ramdhan Brings Us Closer To Allah

Marcos, now Ahmed Moamen, a Filipino, has his new spiritual experience with Ramadan. Here is his story:

I USED to make fun of Ramadan and the notion of Islamic fasting. I used to ridicule those Muslims who torture their bodies by fasting.

I lived in the UAE for nine years as a traditional Christian who irregularly goes to Church. For me and my colleagues, Ramadan was a nightmare. It was a month in which we were all confined to our homes as all bars remain shut.

This was not the only thing I detested about the Ramadan fast, but also this tough treatment of both body and soul. I used to believe the body has desires that should be met. Therefore, I only perceived of fasting as an unjustifiable and illogical torture.

Five months ago, the Almighty Allah guided me to Islam. I had a long time roommate, who once converted to Islam, tried hard to lure me into it. He used to discuss Islam and gave me some translated books about the faith until the Almighty finally opened up my heart. And here I am having my very first fasting experience in Ramadan.

After Allah guided me to Islam and after having fasted several days of Ramadan, I found out that all my previous ideas about the rights of one's body were not true and that straightening our bodies once a year is of great wisdom. That is why Allah ordered us to fast one month of the year and not the whole year.

It (fasting) brings the Muslim closer to Allah. I do not exaggerate if I say that I feel a serenity I have never before felt in my entire life.

Abdul-Rahman Yousef, A Lebanese, formerly Tony, experiencing his first Ramadan. He is delighted about the new fasting experience:

I AM overwhelmed by joy and that fasting helped me feel the serenity that only fasters enjoy.

Ever since Allah guided me to Islam, I've become used to the habit of fasting every Monday and Thursday (following in the footsteps of Prophet Muhammad, Allah's peace and mercy be upon him) to make up for my sins which I committed before Islam.

But, fasting in Ramadan is totally different because the holy month has its own sense of spirituality and serenity that is absent from other days and months. Even prayers in Ramadan are different from the usual prayers. Allah magnifies the good deeds of Muslims in Ramadan and spares them from Jahannam (hell).

Yousef lamented having wronged Islam and Muslims in the past, especially during the civil war in Lebanon, and prayed to Allah the Almighty to forgive his previous bad deeds.

Carol Anoi was brought up in a Protestant Scottish family. She spent her childhood in the countryside, which gave her a chance for contemplation and

meditation. After she finished school in London, she got a job in a UAE hotel and spent several years there until she got involved with an Arab Muslim. She became Fatma Al-Zahra after embracing Islam when she came in contact with a Muslim boy. HE started talking to me about Islam. I began with him a journey for the search for truth. We read most of the books on Islam in English.

I realized that Islam is the right faith that dignified the human being and catered for the rights of man, woman and child. I found it a religion in harmony with human nature.

When I read the holy Qur'an, I found answers to all questions haunting my mind and soul. Eventually, I converted to Islam and we (she and her Arab Muslim friend) got married. I cannot describe to you how delighted I am to fast in Ramadan this year.

Ramadan's atmosphere makes us feel closer to Allah. And since it is a month of worship, we are keen on getting closer to the Almighty through prayers. I cannot describe my happiness while performing Taraweeh prayers with many other Muslim women," she said, lamenting that in ordinary days one would not find so many worshippers in prayers.

Amnah Jordon, formerly Caroline Jordon, from South Africa, said it was that unique peace reflected in the body movements during prayers that attracted her to Islam in the first place.

Fasting is a fine way of spiritual and psychological elevation and these were the things that guided my way into Islam.

Fasting and Ramadan are the most joyful religious rituals and the closest to my heart.

I spent years of my life searching for a way for spiritual satiety. I adored contemplation sessions and read a lot in oriental philosophy but never reached satisfaction. I completed my study in the UAE and happened to live by some Muslim neighbors who always performed their prayers by the book.

I used to sit and watch their Ruku (kneeling) and Sujood (the position when a Muslim worshipper's head touches the ground during prayers) and it was very touching because Ruku and Sujood are magnificent body and spiritual sport. She recalled performing prayers and practicing Ruku and Sujood even before converting to Islam.

I felt a kind of serenity I have never experienced before, and since that very moment I began a quest to explore Islam until Allah guided me into becoming a Muslim and I was overwhelmed by spiritual peace.

(Continue by Page 1) attempt by Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram and

Vishwa Hindu Prishad (RSS progeny) to promote Shabri.

Shabri Kumbh was held near Dangs in Gujarat. A Shabri Temple has been erected in these areas. That time Swami Aseemanand of VHP was working in this area. He was the one; who later was accused by Maharashtra ATS for being the part of conspiracy of bomb blasts in Malegaon, Ajmer and Mecca Masjid.

Why were Shabri and Hanuman picked up to be promoted in these areas? Shabri was the poor woman who did not have enough food to offer to her Lord (Ram). So she offered berries after first taking the taste of these before offering. Contrast is clear in city areas we have Durga, Laxmi and Sarswati to worship, while for Adivasi areas it is Shabri. Similarly Lord Hanuman (Devotee of Lord Ram) has been popularized In Adivasi areas. Quite interesting!

Hindutva politics' impact on our festivals reflects a lot about their politics. The way some of these are being weaponized, or the way Kumbh has been made a ground for anti Muslim rhetoric or the way Shabri and Hanuman are popularized in Adivasi areas is worth pondering over.

Friday Prayers timings in Lucknow and Sambhal changed due to Holi celebrations

With Holi falling on Friday, the prayer timings in Lucknow including Lucknow Eidgah are extended upto 2PM instead of 12 noon. The notice was released by the chairman of the Islamic Centre of India and a member of All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) Maulana Khalid Rasheed Farangi Mahali who stated that since Holi celebrations will continue around 1PM, it's better if we Muslims offer prayers after 2PM instead of 12:45. The decision was taken during peace committee discussions after one of the cops from Sambhal in his controversial statement said that Muslims should stay indoors during Holi. However, in Sambhal it was decided that since Hindus in the area will celebrate Holi until 2:30 PM, Muslims will offer Jumah prayers after that. Senior police officials said that in order to maintain law and order, seven companies of the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) will be deployed. Prayer timings for Muslim dominated areas remain unchanged. Maulana Mufti Shahbuddin Razvi Bareilvi also urged local mosques to comply with the decision and urged Muslims to avoid going out during Holi.

Muslim Men can wear tarpaulin Hijab like women: BJP leader's Holi remark triggers outrage

In a recent controversial statement, BJP leader Raghuraj Singh suggested that Muslim men should wear hijabs made of tarpaulin to avoid inconvenience during the Holi celebrations on March 14, which coincides with the second Friday of the month of Ramzan. Singh, who holds the position of chairman of the high-power advisory committee of the Labour and Employment Ministry in Uttar Pradesh, also enjoys a rank equivalent to that of a minister of state. His comments sparked significant attention and debate.

Singh argued that the administration has been on alert due to the simultaneous celebration of Holi and the observance of Juma namaz (Friday prayers). However, he acknowledged that some people might have objections to participating in the celebrations.

In his statement, Singh addressed the Muslim community, suggesting that, like women who wear the hijab and mosques that are covered with tarpaulin during religious observances, Muslim men could also wear a tarpaulin hijab to avoid getting wet during Holi. He reasoned that this would allow them to move about without facing any inconvenience and still be able to offer namaz without disruption.

Singh's remarks were framed in a larger context of the significance of Holi, which he described as a matter of faith for Hindus. He emphasized that Holi has been celebrated for thousands of years, since the era of Satya Yuga, and is a once-a-year occasion.

He implied that Hindus should not be inconvenienced during the festival and that the wearing of tarpaulin hijabs by Muslim men would ensure that no one's religious observances, including Holi and Juma namaz, would be disturbed.

These comments come on the heels of another controversial remark made by a police officer in Sambhal, Uttar Pradesh. The officer had suggested that those who were uncomfortable with Holi colors should stay indoors, given that Holi comes only once a year, while Juma namaz occurs 52 times annually.

The statement by the police officer received backing from Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who defended the remarks, saying that the officer had spoken from the perspective of a "pehelwan" (wrestler) and that his statement was correct.

In response to the concerns raised by the simultaneous occurrence of Holi and Juma namaz, many mosques in Uttar Pradesh have adjusted the timing of the Friday prayers. For instance, the imam of the Lucknow Eidgah has suggested shifting the Juma namaz to 2 pm on Holi. He also recommended that Muslims pray at nearby mosques instead of traveling to distant ones. Similarly, in Sambhal, the local police decided that Hindus would play Holi until 2:30 pm on March 14, after which Muslims could offer namaz.

Amid these debates, the Chief Mufti of Aligarh, Khalid Hameed, called for a peaceful and harmonious atmosphere during the Holi celebrations. He advised Muslims to adopt a flexible approach, suggesting they avoid areas where Holi colors were being thrown while heading to Friday prayers.

He also encouraged the imams of mosques to delay prayer times by an hour to avoid

any clashes. Mufti Hameed emphasized that minor adjustments could ensure peaceful and cordial celebrations for everyone.

In another development, Raghuraj Singh also expressed his support for a proposal by BJP leader Ruby Asif Khan to build a Ram temple on the campus of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU). Singh stated that he was fully behind the proposal and was ready to make a significant financial contribution to the cause. This statement further fueled the ongoing discourse surrounding religious matters in Uttar Pradesh.

Two Muslim brothers assaulted in UP's Varanasi during Holi donation drive

In Uttar Pradesh's Varanasi district, two Muslim brothers, Niyaz Ahmed and Khurshid Ahmed, were brutally assaulted by a group of about a dozen individuals who had come to their village to collect donations for the Holi festival. The attack, which took place in Dindyalpur village, was accompanied by religious slurs and forced chanting of the Hindu slogan "Jai Shri Ram." The brothers were beaten with sharp weapons and sticks, leaving them with severe injuries.

Niyaz Ahmed, the elder of the two, was away at a nearby mosque offering Taraweeh prayers when the group arrived at his house to ask for donations. Upon returning, Niyaz was attacked from behind after a brief argument. The group allegedly hurled abuses and religious slurs at him. He was struck on his head, shoulder, and back, causing him to fall unconscious. In a viral video shared on social media, Niyaz is seen with a bandage on his head, and his shirt is stained with blood.

In the same video, Niyaz mentions that he knows the attackers but has no personal conflict with them. He also emphasized that he keeps to himself and doesn't interact with others in the area unless necessary.

As the attack continued, his younger brother, Khurshid Ahmed, intervened in an attempt to stop the assault. However, Khurshid was also beaten severely, suffering injuries to his head and shoulder. He recounts that he and Niyaz were both forced to chant "Jai Shri Ram" and were beaten with sticks when they refused. The attackers, initially around a dozen, were later joined by others in the assault. The incident has sparked outrage on social media, with users tagging the Varanasi police and district magistrate, demanding swift action. In response, the Deputy Commissioner of Police for the Varuna Zone confirmed that an FIR had been filed at Sarnath Police Station, and legal proceedings were underway.

The case has raised concerns about the safety and security of minorities in the region, with some social media users criticizing the state government. One user pointed out the contradictory statements from the Yogi Adityanath government, referring to an incident where a local official had advised Muslims to stay indoors during Holi, yet the brothers were not even safe within their own home.