

FOOD AND FAITH

Ethics and Food Security

by AZM Obaidullah Khan

Exchange in the market place, however, must be tempered by fairness both for the producer and the consumer. All the faiths of humankind have urged for just transactions and cautioned against monopoly and restricting food-grains sale or holding them back for sheer avarice or as a means of political pressure.

Introduction

"Give us this day, our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses..." the Christian prayer says, a plea echoing down the ages in humanity's discourse with the Creator. Sagas in ancient India chanted a hymn from the holy text of the Upanishads, "From food human beings come to be; By food they grow; into food they pass."

The Body and the Spirit

Human kind's quest for food and yearning for life with meaning are intertwined as the root deep in the earth and flowers high in the sky grow together before the face of the sun. Survival, no doubt, takes precedence over all other imperatives.

Ecology and Equity

"God destined the earth and all it contains for all men and all peoples, so that all created things would be shared fairly by all mankind under the guidance of justice tempered by charity."

gratitude of the observant soul. Human trusteeship of the earth is both subdued and exalted by reverence and the spirit of caring and sharing. What is "natural" is never merely so; it is a trust with divine mercy for ensuring the inalienable right of each individual to food, both now and in the future.

The covenantal relationship between the divinity and nature is articulated in Genesis: "So long as the earth endures, seed time and harvest, summer and winter, shall never cease."

On the other hand, if the divine trust is violated, the Quran proclaims the following: "The life in the present world is like the water. We send down from heaven, mantling the earth with vegetation as food for man and the beast. But then, when the earth is gay with splendour and the people imagine that they own and rule it, Our command goes over it, and whether by night or by day, We turn all to stubbles as though yesterday's fertility had never been."

Empowerment and Moderation

Ecological penury and human deprivation are inextricably bound together. "Every man being must have ready access to all that is necessary for living a genuinely human life."

"Access to available resources must be guaranteed," the Pope says. To achieve this, it is more necessary than ever for the concept of economic relations to be founded on genuine solidarity as well as on the sharing of resources. It is also

important for population bearing the brunt of malnutrition and hunger to be able to access knowledge-resources to produce and procure a healthy and adequate diet without outside intervention. Maimonides or Brother Moses presents the ladder of Tzedakah, a ranking of how to help the poor and the needy. The minimum level of intervention is to give the poor what they need for survival.

Food and Peace

Human kind stands, thus, in two-fold solidarity: first, with earth and water and all creatures therein and second, with fellow human beings to share equally the fruits of creation. Unity and peace and food-security for all are preconditions of each other. The oracles of Isaiah cry out for peace: "And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."

Deuteronomic legislation, "the fruit-yielding trees of a city under siege may not be destroyed," Prophet Mohammed (SM) reminds his followers, "If you offer people food, establish peace among them, and pray at night when all others are asleep you will surely go to paradise."

Human solidarity that promotes justice among all peoples is reflected in the obligatory principle of beneficence. The Old Testament lays down, "When you gather the harvest of your land, you are not to harvest to the very end of the field, you are not to gather the gleanings of your harvest. You are neither to strip your vine bare, nor to collect the fruit that has fallen into your vineyard. You must leave them for the poor and the stranger."

Food Exchange: Beneficence and Obligation

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ing may be yours and not your inheritors." (Gibran). Prudence for Lean Years Obligation of giving goes hand in hand with prudence to meet the demand for food in difficult years. Prophet Joseph, in the course of interpreting the King's dream told the Egyptians: "For seven years shall Ye diligently sow, as is your wont; and the harvest that Ye reap, Ye shall leave them in the ear - except a little of which Ye shall eat. Then will come - seven dreadful (years), which will devour what Ye shall have laid by in advance for them - (all except a little which Ye shall have specially guarded)."

"Then will come", Joseph concluded, "a year in which the people will have abundant water, and in which they will press (wine and oil)." Clearly the above is a profound teaching for sagacity in conserving food for the people during the time of drought.

Food and the Market Place

Beneficence and prudence apart, if a person has to eat his/her own food or buy it or a combination of both. No food is better than that obtained through labour or with money earned through work. Prophet David worked to earn the money with which he bought food. Exchange in the market place, however, must be tempered by fairness both for the producer and the consumer.

Women who are increasingly impoverished and the disadvantaged men must have access to affordable food. Reduction in the costs of marketing, distributing and processing of food are needed. Most important, however, is the inclusion of the food-insecure countries and people into the market-place, both domestic and global. Exchanging the gifts of the earth must be tempered with justice and must not lead some to greed and others to hunger.

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master spirit of the earth shall not sleep peacefully upon the winds till the needs of the least of you are satisfied." Jesus Christ proclaims, "So the last shall be first and the first last."

Talisman for Food for All

Indeed the right to food of every man, woman and child concerns essentially the last and the least. One recalls the talisman offered by Mahatma Gandhi: "Whenever you are in doubt, or the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test: Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you have seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control of his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to self-reliance for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and yourself melting away."

Right to Food

Mahatma Gandhi's talisman has been codified as a basic human right with the adoption by 131 Nation-States of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights by the United Nations General Assembly in 1966. Article 11 of the Covenant stipulates inter alia:

"The States Parties to the present Covenant, recognizing the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger, shall take, individually and through international cooperation, the measures, including specific programmes, which are needed:

(a) To improve methods of production, conservation and distribution of food by making full use of technical and scientific knowledge, by disseminating knowledge of the principles of nutrition, and by developing or reforming agrarian systems in such a way as to achieve the most efficient development and utilization of natural resources;

Conclusion

There can be no more sacred duty, therefore, than for a man or woman to feed the family and the kindred. There can be no more sacred duty for communities or nation-states than that of ensuring for every member of society an adequate and wholesome diet. There can be no more sacred duty for the international community than that of solidarity with justice so that the scandalous paradox of hunger amidst affluence becomes a nightmare of the past. That is what all the faith of mankind and secular ideological principles enjoy and that "message will gain credibility more immediately from the witness of actions. Let us not forget that 'at the end of the day, we shall be called before the Lord to account for our action on behalf of our brothers and sisters."

No EXCUSE... There's no excuse for over-pricing food. It deprives many people essential nutrition. Governments must ensure food accessibility and availability. DEPTHnews

The Daily Star Entertainment Guide

Tuesday 6th May (All programmes are in local time. There may be changes in the programmes) BTV 3:00 Opening Announcement Al-Quran Programme Summary 3:10 Recitation from the Geeta 3:15 Re-tecast of Drama Serial 4:00 News in Bangla 4:15 Cartoon film: Top Cat 4:45 Geetiban: Programme on Tagore Song 5:25 Supalsikha 7:00 News in English 7:05 Open University 7:25 Programme on Classical Dance 8:00 News in Bangla 8:45 Package: Drama 10:00 News in English 10:30 Programme on Health 10:35 Aparantha: A Programme for elderly citizens 11:30 News in Bangla 11:35 Thursday's programme summary 11:45 Close down

BBC 6:00am BBC World News 6:30 Time Out: Tomorrow's World 7:00 BBC World News inc. World Business Report/Asia Today/24 Hours 10:00 BBC World News 10:30 World Focus: Window On Europe 11:00 BBC Newsdesk 12:30 Hard Talk 1:00 BBC World News 1:30 World Focus: Window On Europe 2:00 BBC World News 2:30 Time Out: Top Gear 3:00 BBC World News 3:30 Hard Talk 4:00 BBC World News 4:30 Time Out: Tomorrow's World 5:00 BBC Newsdesk 6:00pm BBC Newsdesk 6:30 World Focus: Window On Europe 7:00 BBC World News 7:15 World Business Report 7:30 BBC Newshour Asia & Pacific 8:30 Time Out: Cities Of The Future 9:00 BBC World News 9:30 Hard Talk 10:00 BBC World News 10:30 Time Out: Film '97 11:00 The World Today 12:00am The World Today 12:30 Hard Talk 1:00 BBC World News 1:30 World Focus: Britain In View 2:00 BBC World News 2:30 Time Out: The Clothes Show 3:00 BBC Newsdesk inc. World Business Report/24 Hours 4:00 BBC Newsdesk inc. Asia Today & Pacific World Business Report 5:00 BBC World News 5:05 Newshour

6:00am BBC World News 6:30 Time Out: Tomorrow's World 7:00 BBC World News inc. World Business Report/Asia Today/24 Hours 10:00 BBC World News 10:30 World Focus: Window On Europe 11:00 BBC Newsdesk 12:30 Hard Talk 1:00 BBC World News 1:30 World Focus: Window On Europe 2:00 BBC World News 2:30 Time Out: Top Gear 3:00 BBC World News 3:30 Hard Talk 4:00 BBC World News 4:30 Time Out: Tomorrow's World 5:00 BBC Newsdesk 6:00pm BBC Newsdesk 6:30 World Focus: Window On Europe 7:00 BBC World News 7:15 World Business Report 7:30 BBC Newshour Asia & Pacific 8:30 Time Out: Cities Of The Future 9:00 BBC World News 9:30 Hard Talk 10:00 BBC World News 10:30 Time Out: Film '97 11:00 The World Today 12:00am The World Today 12:30 Hard Talk 1:00 BBC World News 1:30 World Focus: Britain In View 2:00 BBC World News 2:30 Time Out: The Clothes Show 3:00 BBC Newsdesk inc. World Business Report/24 Hours 4:00 BBC Newsdesk inc. Asia Today & Pacific World Business Report 5:00 BBC World News 5:05 Newshour

CHANNEL V 7:00am Rewind VJ Sophia 8:00 Frame by Frame 11:00 The Vibe VJ Luke 12:00noon Rewind VJ Sophia 1:00 By Demand VJ Trey 2:00 Frame by Frame 2:30 Liberty First Day First Show 3:00 The Indian Top 10 4:00 Sou Curry 4:30 Big Bang VJ Alessandra 6:00pm Rewind VJ Sophia 7:00 By Demand VJ Trey 8:00 Planet Ruby 9:00 The Vibe 9:30 Simply Show 10:00 Liberty First Day First Show 10:30 Sou Curry 11:00 Over The Edge 12:00am Rewind VJ Sophia 1:00 Haysah 2:00 By Demand VJ Trey 3:00 Big Bang VJ Alessandra 4:30 First Day First Show 5:30 Malibu Jammin VJ Sophia

STAR PLUS 6:30 Ninaad 7:30 Good Morning India 9:30 Nine to Five 10:00 Van Cools 10:30 Holiday Special Children Hour G J Joe 11:00



Film '97 on Star Movies, Tonight at 9:30

Eek The Cat 11:30 The Oprah Winfrey Show 12:30 The X File 1:30 Santa Barbara 2:30 The Bold & The Beautiful 3:00 Imhlan 3:30 Sunburst 4:00 Tu Tu Main Man 4:30 Lost In Space 5:30 Adventures of Black Beauty 6:00 Charles In Charge 6:30pm Yan Can Cooks 7:00 Janata Ki Adalat 7:30 Star News (Hindi) 8:00 Small Wonder 8:30 Kya Baat Hai 9:00 Meri Awaz Suno 9:30 Star News 10:00 Some Mothers Do 10:30 Space Above And Beyond 11:30 The Bold & The Beautiful 12:00am Santa Barbara 1:30 Star News 1:30 Baywatch 2:00 Dynasty 3:30 Vega 4:00 The Oprah Winfrey Show 5:00 Bam-bay Jones

STAR SPORTS 6:30am Nike CBA All Stars Games 8:00 Superbike World Championships British Grand Prix Fm Donington, GB 10:00 English Cricket Benson and Hedges Cup

STAR MOVIES 7:30am Family: Munchie Strikes Back 12 (Hindi Subtitles) 9:30 Classic: White Zombie 12 (Arabic Subtitles) 11:30 Film Club: Widow's Peak 12 (Hindi Subtitles) 1:30 Action: Fearless Hyena II 15 (English Subtitles) 3:30 Family: Tommy Tricker And The Stamp Traveler PG (Hindi Subtitles) 5:30 Romance: Romantic Undertaking 15 (Hindi Subtitles) 7:30 Classic: Dinner At The Ritz PG 9:30 Film 97 10:00 Action: Nightstick 15 12:00 Adventure: Clan of the Cave Bear 18 2:00 Action: Mad Dog Morgan 18 4:00 Action: The Big Sleep 18 (Arabic Subtitles) 5:30 Action: Golden Needles 15

ZEE TV 6:00 Jagran 6:30 A to Z Computer the Management Course 7:30 Zee Business Show 8:00 Zee News & Business 8:30 Special Report 9:00 Disney Hour 10:00 Gaane Anand 10:30 Khab-soorat 11:00 Chutki Baja Ke 11:30 Close Up Anilashari 12:00 Chankay 1:00 Mere Ghar Ana Jindagi 1:30 Silsila 2:00 Hum Panch 2:30 Kruksheera 3:00 Raahat 3:30 Zaika Ke Safar 4:00 Aashiana 4:30 Jhatpat

Khal 12:55 Quran-e-Hakeem 1:02 Bismillah 1:15 Gichan (Drama Serial) 2:00 Inteha (Drama Serial) 2:50 The Earth Revealed 3:20 Aarshi Pudy 3:40 Natural World 4:35 How Things Work 5:00 Yeh Munk In Hae 5:25 Hamara Sehat 5:55 Kitab Quriz 6:25 Aloo Courses 7:00 Tarun 7:05 Felix The Cat 7:30 Such Cup 7:45 English News 8:00 Morven Gold Raceway 8:25 Jawan Rang 8:55 PTV Gold 9:00 Break For The Hearing News 9:20 Aap Ki Anwar Maqsood 10:00 Khabnama & Commercial

DD 7 10:30 Janmadin 10:35 Classical Music 11:00 Play/Ghare Baire 11:30 Parliament Hour 12:30 Nabajanna 1:00 Janmabhumi (Serial) 1:30 Trishna (Serial) 2:00 Kushi Zakhin 2:30 Man-taz/Bakul Katha (Serial) 3:00 Aaleya (Serial) 3:30 Basanti Bahar (Serial) 5:05 Science Program Prasanga 5:20 News 5:30 Employment News/Lalitkala

EL TV 7:00 Yeaddon Ki Bara 7:30 Stand By 7:40 Amilabh Specials 8:20 Haseen Pal 8:30 V3 Plus 9:00 Chehr 9:30 V3 Plus 10:00 HFF: Juddai 1:00 Jagur-Its My Choice 1:30 Siyarams Kamal Kombination 2:00 Gujrali: Surj-mukhi 3:00 No Problem 3:30 Anurag 4:00 Tanav 4:30 ZED 5:00 HFF: Mujhe Kasam Hai 7:50 Haseen Pal 8:00HFF: Lawaries 10:30 Stand-By 10:45 HFF: Amar Akbar Antani 1:30 Teri V Chup 2:00 The Real Countdown 3:00 Purushkhetra 4:00 HFF (B/W): Bandook Dehe; Ki Sinepye

News 11:00 Tes Aasmaan 12:00 NYPD Blue 12:45 Khas Khabrain /Close down

SONY ET 8:30 Khoya Khoya Chaand 9:00 The Three Stooges 9:30 Dennis The Menace 10:00 I Dream Of Jeannie 10:30 Bewitched 8:00 Surf-Wheel Of Fortune 8:30 Cine Prime-Hindi Film 11:30 The Young And The Restless

8:00 Pali Katha 8:30 Gaan Niya 7:00 Serial 7:30 Bangla Sambad 7:45 Dinand 8:00 Bakul Katha 8:30 Anushandhan 9:00 Janmabhumi (Serial) 9:30 Sil-pakata/Parichay (Serial) 10:00 Bengali Movie Club Film Show 1:00 Closed

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8:00 Pali Katha 8:30 Gaan Niya 7:00 Serial 7:30 Bangla Sambad 7:45 Dinand 8:00 Bakul Katha 8:30 Anushandhan 9:00 Janmabhumi (Serial) 9:30 Sil-pakata/Parichay (Serial) 10:00 Bengali Movie Club Film Show 1:00 Closed

ZEE CINEMA 7:30 Ranga Mera Naam 9:30 Khamma Mara Veera 12:15 Taraana 12:30 Rajput (Dharendra, Rajesh Kanna) 3:15 First Take 3:45 Taraana 4:00 Ustad Vinod Khanna, Jaya Prada) 5:45 Khatian Like Pe Ikka 7:15 Gehrai (Horror Film) 10:00 Bajaj Lehara 10:00 Insaan (Vinod Khanna, Jeendendra, Reena Roy) 1:15 Film 1:45 Patta (Raj Kiran, Shoma Anand) 4:30 Filler 4:45 Zorro (Rekha, Navin Nischol)

Garfield by Jim Davis. SLEEP PEACEFULLY, O DIE. DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT VAMPIRES... IAN FLEMING'S James Bond. AND SEE IF Q BRANCH CAN FIND A WAY TO DEACTIVATE THAT UNDER-WATER ALARM SYSTEM! I HEAR THEM COMING!