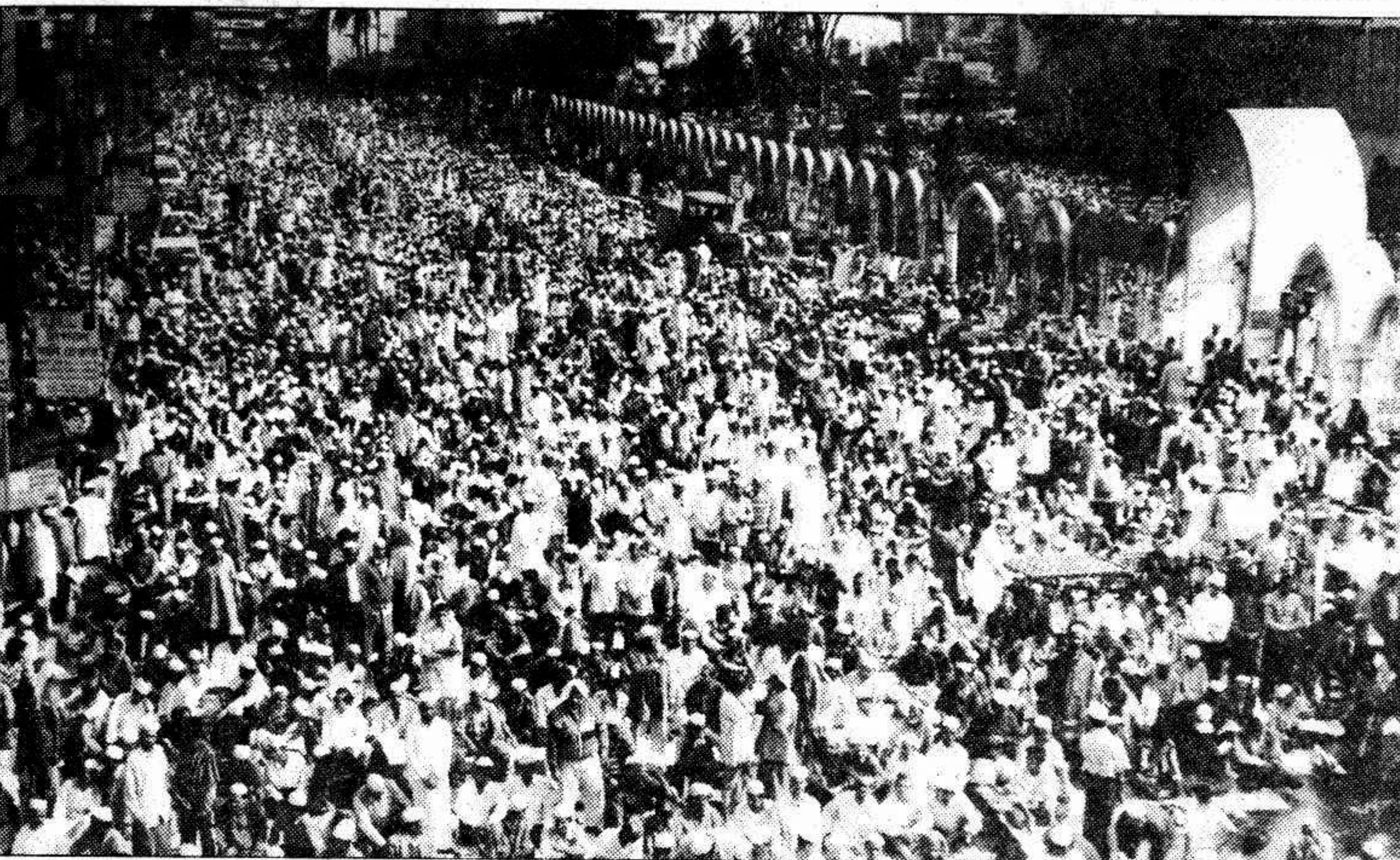


Jumatul-Wida congregation this year at Baitul Mukarram.
—Star photo by Amran Hossain



Eid Mubarak

'Zakat' and 'Sadaqa' Their Right on Our Wealth

by Prof. Ahmad S. Islam

Those, who among us are wealthy, may think that it is up to us to oblige the poor, the needy, the destitute or our hard up relatives, or a stranded traveler... If we have the means, it's incumbent on us to help them.

WE all know that it's obligatory for well-to-do persons to give 'zakat' at the rate 2 per cent on his savings for a period of 12 months. Many among the rich pay their 'zakat' but they do so on a rough estimate of their accumulated wealth, property and other assets.

Calculation of the amount of 'zakat': But the above is not the right way of giving away one's 'zakat'. The amount to be given away in 'zakat' must be calculated on various items: 1) amount of gold (if in excess of 7 tola or 82 gm), amount of silver (in excess of 52 tola or 577 gm), shares, fixed deposits, cash in bank, cash in shops, earnings from the renting of property, house(s) provided the above items are in possession of the person for one year.

'Zakat' on agricultural crops: The 'zakat' on the produce of non-irrigated land is 10 per cent and on that of irrigated land 5 per cent. On farm animals also 'zakat' is due. Only a few calculate the amount and give it when it is due. Muslims select the month of 'Ramadan' to give 'zakat' because in the eyes of Allah any charity given in this month is rewarded 70 times over compared to 10 times when it is given during the remaining period of the year.

What is 'sadaqa'? In addition to 'zakat', wealthy persons of the community are enjoined to give away a part of their accumulated wealth to one's parents, poor relatives, the needy, the destitute. Such a charity is 'sadaqa' which also includes 'zakat'. 'Zakat' is compulsory whereas charity is optional. So, if a person can contribute to the needy, in addition to what is due on him on account of 'zakat', it will be ideal because there are certain rules guiding the distribution of 'zakat' ('zakat' money cannot be given to a needy individual on a month to month basis nor to repairing his house or construction of any building even if the latter may be used for a worthy or noble cause), whereas charity could be used for any worthy purpose.

Who are eligible for your 'sadaqa'? 'Sadaqa' is meant to help your parents, your poor relatives, those who suffer from extreme financial crisis such as Muslim children who have no means to finance their study in schools, colleges, or a university, or a widow or an orphan, or a neo-Muslim abandoned by his/her community for accepting Islam, or to help people heavily in debt or for construction of a charitable institution or for its renovation etc.

In verse 273 of the Baqarah, Allah enjoins us to help those who do not come out in the open for help because of their modesty. Such a situation arises when all of a sudden the husband of a family dies leaving practically nothing for his widow and minor children. The widow will never ask for charity because of her modesty. The author knows an instance when a young lawyer was murdered in broad day light in Dhaka and there was not enough savings for the widow to meet both ends. Hardly anybody came forward to help her. In such circumstances, it will be the duty of the wealthy to find them out and help their rehabilitation.

Squandering money is prohibited in Islam: Many of us spend money lavishly on occasions like marriage, anniversary, birthday party. Allah warns those who waste money and says that those who squander money are the brothers of Satan (Isra: 27). Instead, a part of this money should be spent in charity to champion the cause of needy, the destitute, poor students who cannot defray their educational expenses.

The wealthy are enjoined to give 'sadaqa' and the reward of such a charity: Allah enjoins the believers to spend out from their wealth before it is too late: "when the Day comes no bargaining, no pleading nor any friendship" will help such person to gain Allah's Mercy (cf. Baqarah: 254). On the other hand, if we spend money in charity, Allah will reward us profusely. In this connection let us analyze the verse 261 of 'Baqarah'. In this verse, the

fruits of charity are compared to a grain or a seed; when sown, it gives rise to a plant with seven tillers/branches and each branch in turn bears 100 grains.

No boasting for your charity: Allah does not want us to brag what we give in charity nor should we show off what we give away in charity (Baqarah: 264). However, disclosing what is given in charity is well received in the eyes of Allah but it's best if it could be given to those who are in desperate need and away from the public eye (Baqarah: 271).

Reminding of your charity is forbidden: Being a donor we have also no right to create difficulties of any kind to the beneficiaries, nor should we harass them and hurt their feelings by our behaviour such as reminding them again and again that they are indebted to us (Baqarah: 262).

Worship is linked with kindness: To us the worship to Allah is linked with kindness: to parents, kindred, those in want, a traveler (who may be a total stranger). Those, who among us are wealthy, may think that it is up to us to oblige the poor, the needy, the destitute or our hard up relatives, or a stranded traveler, but our notion is wrong. If we have the means, it's incumbent on us to help them. As a practicing Muslim, we cannot dismiss this obligation. They have certain rights which must be fulfilled (Isra: 26). The verse clearly states that your parents, relations and even a stranger who may have lost his belongings during his travel have rights over your wealth and you cannot deny them.

Eid-ul-Fitr: Rejoicing after Self-searching

by Prof Abul Kalam Elias

The month of Ramadan produces an excitement in an otherwise dull and prosaic life of the people. Let us make a self assessment on Friday how far we have advanced in respect of Taqwa, human moral and spiritual values.

THE holy month of Ramadan had made its august presence amongst us and has now taken leave of us, the Muslims. Every Muttaki — devoted Muslim male or female — suffers an intense pang of separation and heaves a deep sigh. His or her mind is filled with a sort of regret and remorse. His or her outpourings and yearnings of heart makes him or her think over how much harvest (of Taqwa — beneficence and munificence) he or she has been able to reap during this season of bounty (Ramadan).

The very term 'fitr' comes from fitra — charity or fitrat (nature). As a matter of fact, Islam is a religion that is in conformity with nature and urges beneficence. It is said that once on the very day of Eid-ul-Fitr while every body was occupied with merry-making, fun and festivities, Hazrat Omar (R)

was not visible anywhere outside. After investigation he was found shedding tears in seclusion and silence, at home, for the reason that he was not pretty sure whether his prayer and fasting during Ramadan had been accepted by Almighty Allah, Sobhanahutala.

This event should act as an eye-opener to us all who claim to be Muslims. Let us take a stock of our attainments during the holy month of Ramadan. Have we been able to come off through the ordeal of this sacred month with flying colours?

Ramadan fasting is meant for the training to be utilized during the rest of the year. It is

also the month of jihad (waging war against evil forces) in the history of Muslim Ummah.

Ramadan is the month of Rahamat (mercy), Magferat (forgiveness) and Nazat (salvation). It is the month of Fazilat (benefits), Barkat (abundance), Mohabbat (love and fellow feeling).

This holy month brings in bounty and beneficence, blessings and benediction for the Momin (true Muslim).

Ramadan is the month of munificence and mercy. It is through the fasting that various health-hazards and ailments are healed and cured. Toxic waste and toxic acids are lessened by fasting. Thus fasting is congenial to human health and longevity.

Ramadan is the month of Sadaqa (making gift and charity). Because, as the body is purified by prayer and fasting, so also riches are purified by Sadaqa.

The term Sadaqa or beneficence appears with many meanings in the Quran-ul-Karim. It is one of the great pillars of the Message and a clear way to social righteousness. It may signify truthfulness, goodness and right-doing in the broadest sense as well as obedience to God. Doing good to others is Islam.

Beneficence means acting rightly by offering comfort to the poor, to the less fortunate, and to those of our brethren in the community who have fallen on evil days in the search for a decent living owing to such factors as natural handicaps, orphanhood, illness, misfortune or ignorance, among other causes.

Muslim annals abound in examples of beneficence to the less fortunate and to strangers,

and that kindness which was the pride of private homes, tribes, and nations was but an expression of the Muslim spirit to beneficence and right-doing.

Ramadan is the holy month in which the holy Quran was revealed on the night of Lailatul Qadr (better than a thousand nights). It is a luckless Muslim who failed to avail himself of such a golden opportunity of getting remission of his sins during the last part of every night and during Etakaf (meditation) in the last week of Ramadan.

Ramadan is the month of self-restraint (self purification), month of patience and penitence, tolerance and endurance.

It is the month of attaining Taqwa (God fearingness, sincerity, sensitivity, piety and purity). It is the month of self-improvement, self-reflection and self-realisation.

But how many of us availed ourselves of this opportunity? Let us ask ourselves, the Muslim fasters, have we kept fast of every organ i. e. tongue, eyes, ears, mouth, hands and legs? Have we protected our lives against evil design of Satan? Have we turned over a new leaf at the end of Ramadan? Have we been imbued with the ideals of sympathy, fellow feeling, unity, solidarity, fraternity and the universal brotherhood of Islam?

It is incumbent on us, every Muslim man and woman, on the festive day of Eid-ul-Fitr, to take stock of our achievements and failures by self-searching and self-criticism.

After frantic self-searching, it needs no telling, we will be disillusioned by the fact that most of us who claim to be Muslims have failed miserably to keep up the spirit of this holy

month.

The reason is not far to seek. Many of us did not repose our trust in the Almighty Allah. Many of us are rendering lip-service to Islam. We cater for ceremonies and celebrations, feast and festivities, unhealthy competition, fancy dresses and costumes, pomp and pageantry. We indulge in carnal pleasure and superfluous luxury, virtually at the cost of the have-nots, slum-dwellers and beggars. We do not know how to seek benediction and blessings from the Almighty Allah. Where is that 'ajiba' (ecstatic delight) of Iman and tenacious adherence to ideals and tenets of Islam?

To put in the words of rebel poet Kazi Nazrul Islam: "Having been Muslims, we did not repose our trust in the Almighty Allah. The breath of Satan has destroyed our Iman. We have indulged in feud and fratricidal killing of each other. We had never any regard for what is great and good."

This is why the Muslim nation that once reached the pinnacle of glory, by wonderful achievement in arts and science, has now fallen into the deep valley of decline and degradation by a strange irony of fate and misfortune. Science got out of Muslim hands, now that we have become fatalists and while away our time in frivolity. Ramadan brings a rhythm and harmony in the Muslim world. Muslims, the world over take Sehri and Iftar, perform Tarabi prayers. And they offer Eid-congregational prayer at the same time, playing the same tune. This is the symbol of cosmopolitanism and internationalism.

The month of Ramadan produces an excitement in an otherwise dull and prosaic life of the people. Let us make a self assessment on Friday how far we have advanced in respect of Taqwa, human moral and spiritual values.

The Eid Fest in India is a Gastronomic Delight

Continued from page 6

Karim's Asifuddin challenges that no recipe is complete with the Yakhni Pulao, also available on Eid day at his Jama Masjid hotel. In Yakhni Pulao, thick meat broth or yakhni is prepared adding whole spices not directly but wrapped and tied in a muslin cloth — potli — and dipped into the broth. After the aroma of the spices has been absorbed both in the Yakhni and the meat, the wrapped potli is thrown away and rice is cooked on a slow coal fire. Such perfection, says Aleemuddin, is achieved by a team of masalchis (spice experts) and bawarchis (professional cooks).

What is unfortunate is that bread is the most neglected aspect of the Mughlai cuisine and the gourmet experts seem to miss the umpteen varieties of rotis (bread). Simple bread is

rumali roti that is baked on a 'tawa' (iron pan) and if it's hot from the tawa, it makes great eating! Qeema Naan is for all connoisseurs of minced meat. Roghni Naan, most favoured on Eid is bread that has butter or pure ghee meshed over it. Paaner paratha is the one that is prepared in many homes. But the in-thing is the 'tandoori' roti that is baked in 'tandoor' (clay oven) and is prepared while eating Qorma.

Arun Kumar or Kutra Neel's Vishal Mawa Bhandar is of the view that the kind of enthusiasm for sweets that he witnesses on Eid is a unique spectacle. True, it's a great bonanza if one shares these delights of Eid in cities like Delhi, Lucknow, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Nagpur, Kanpur, Calcutta, Bhopal and Allahabad!

—India Abroad News Service

ইদ মোবারক

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উপলক্ষে আমাদের সম্মানিত
খাহক ও তদাকাশীদের জন্যই
ইদাদয় শুভেচ্ছা

ইতিহাস ঐতিহ্যের ধারাবাহিকতায়
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একমাত্র পরিবেশকঃ

ইলেকট্রো ইন্টারন্যাশনাল

ফোন : ৯৬৬৭১৫০, ৯৫৫০২০৭, ফ্যাক্স : ৮৮০-২-৯৫৬৬৫৮২

সরাসরি কোরিয়া থেকে আমদানীকৃত