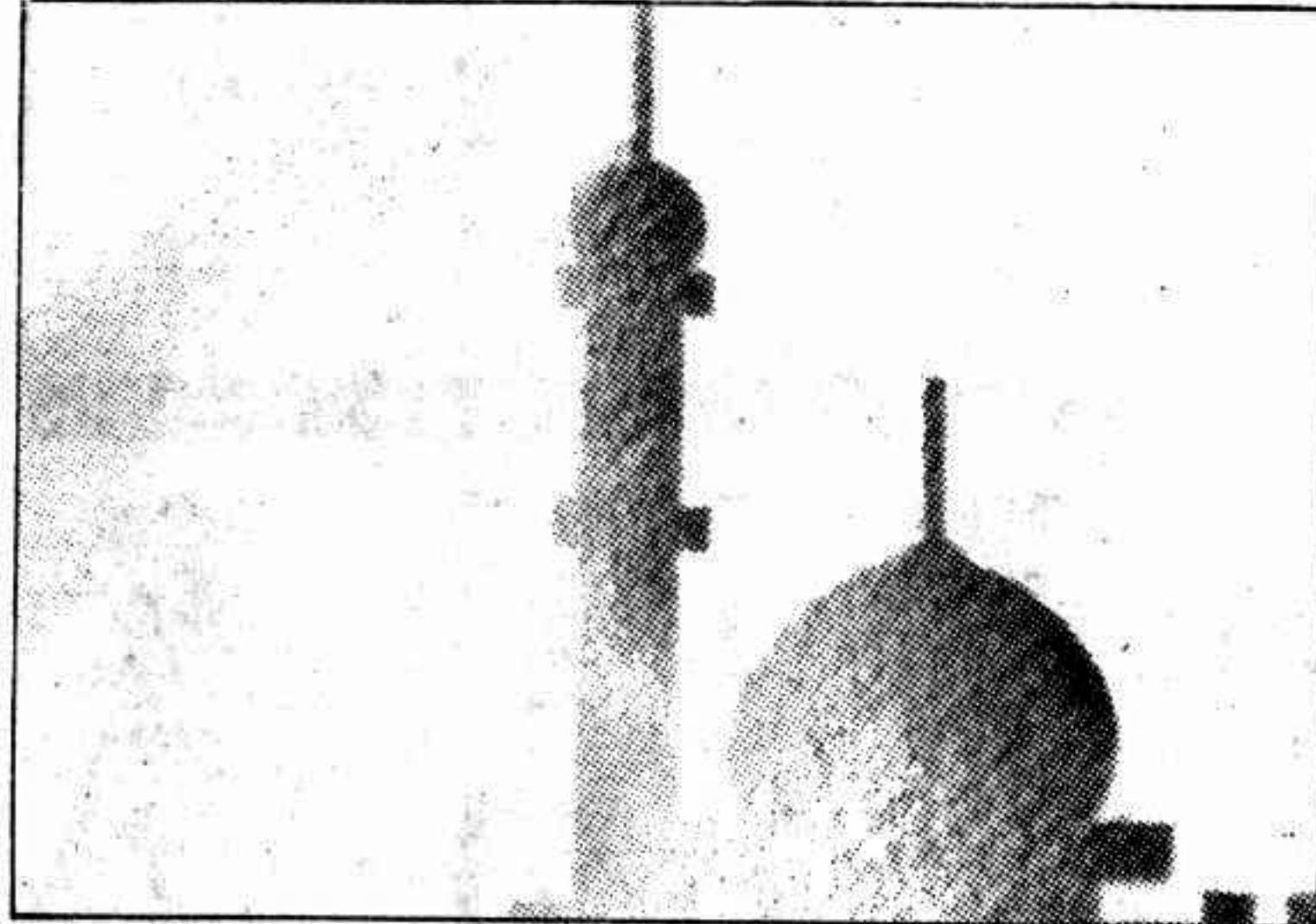
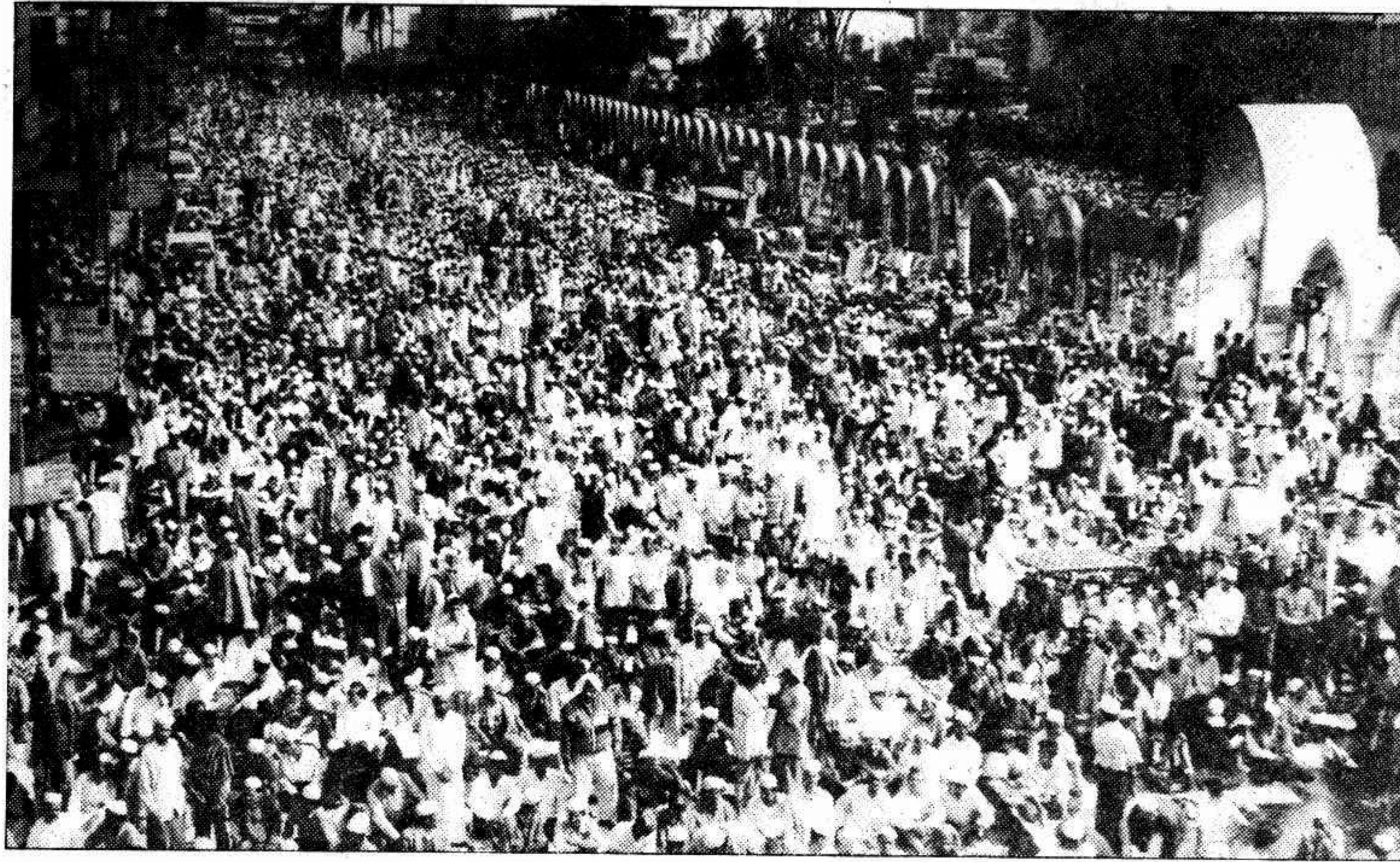


Eid Mubarak



Jumatul-Wida congregation this year at Baitul Mukarram.

— Star photo by Amran Hossain



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 Muttaqi — 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 (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, Subhanahutula.

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

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, orphandom, illness, misfortune or ignorance, among other causes.

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

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. Parnee 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 Katra Neel's Vishal Mawa Bhandar is of the view that the kind of enthusiasm for sweets that he witnesses in the community who have fallen on evil days in the search for a decent living owing to such factors as natural handicaps, orphandom, illness, misfortune or ignorance, among other causes.

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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-rectification 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

W e 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 lands 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 home 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.

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