CHAPTER V

PRACTICE OF ISLAM IN BRITAIN

The rules and regulations, the norms and ethos, the laws and injunctions and the teachings and instructions of Islam which pertain to all aspects of one's life - for observing prayers and fast, for paying Zakat (welfare due) and performing Haj, for obeying the dietary rules and the rules of Taharah (purity and cleanliness) and all other rules regulating the entire life of man have not been laid down simply as abstract ideas, rather they have been ordained for practice. It is therefore said that "Islam is not simply an abstract ideal conceived just for nominal adoration or a stagnant idol to be frequented by admirers every now and then. Islam is a code of life, a living force manifest in every aspect of human life."

The practicability of all the Islamic injunctions is one of the salient features of Islam. Islam and its teachings stand as a challenge for its practicability in every situation and every period of human history as against the other ideologies which either suffice themselves to an extent of some private life (like Hinduism) or have undergone a reformation (like Christianity which has been then branched into Catholicism and Protestantism). "The practicability of the Quranic teachings is established by the examples of Mohammed upon whom be peace and Muslims throughout the ages. The distinctive approach of
the Qur'an is that its injunctions are aimed at the general welfare of men and are based on the possibilities within his reach. 2

It can be thus pointed out that Islam has provided some or the other 'possibilities' within the reach of men so that a Muslim should follow the instructions of Islam in any situation or environment and should not surrender himself to the circumstances or difficulties, rather follow some possible injunction according to the situation or environment. It is this practical nature of the Islamic teachings which make them possible to follow them. Again, it is required to understand here that this practicability of the Islamic teachings is due to the framework of the 'Maker of the human nature-Almighty Allah', Who alone knows what is best for man. Hence it can be said that all "this is so because Islam is the universal religion of God, the Maker of human nature, Who knows what is best for human nature." 3

Now, let us see how far the Muslim community in Britain observes some of the basic Islamic injunctions, how does the community look at the problems and difficulties about practising Islam in Britain? Hence, this chapter is divided into two sections. In Section 'A', the observance of certain basic duties of the community are discussed. In Section 'B' the perception of the community on the practicability of the Islamic injunctions is explored.
A. Assessment of the Community's Observation of Basic Islamic Dictates:

An exact assessment of the practice of the Islamic injunctions of the community cannot be made, since the community is scattered in all the nook and corner of Britain and the Islamic injunctions are not limited but are wide and extensive. Hence it is extremely difficult to assess the performance of the community on the basic principles of Islam either through statistics or through graphs. However, an approximate result can be presented on the basis of the questionnaire, interviews and self-observation during the field-work. So, let us start with the tables obtained by the questionnaire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Prayer (Salat)</th>
<th>Sawn (Fasting)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Most easy</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most difficult</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
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</table>
A saying of the Prophet Muhammad upon whom be peace, on the obligation of a Muslim to pray is as follows:

"The covenant between us and them is prayer, so if any one abandons it, he has become an infidel."

The Hadith clearly indicates the importance of prayer for a Muslim. It is one of the five pillars of Islam. It is compulsory for a Muslim to offer prayer five times a day punctually.

The significance of prayer lies in the fact that it offers an opportunity to man to have a discourse with Almighty Allah and to ask for His forgiveness for the sins, mistakes and other carelessness he has shown in between the interval of two prayers and also ask His guidance for leading a successful and peaceful life here and in the Hereafter. Moreover, for the proper development of the personality of man and for his elevation to the lofty ideals, prayer is the best means. It can be therefore said that "the best way to cultivate in man a sound personality and actualize his aspirations in a nature course of development is the Islamic Prayer. To neglect prayer is to oppress the good qualities in human nature and unjustifiably deny it the right to adore and love, the right to aspire and ascend, the right to excel in goodness and achieve noble aims. Such oppression and denial constitute a very serious and destructive
offence. Here lies the significance and vitality of prayer in the life of man. It is the reason that prayer is laid down as one of the compulsory obligations for a Muslim.

The table indicates that the majority of the respondents feel that offering prayer is quite an easy work as against 62 respondents who find it most difficult and the rest 52 respondents skipped the answer.

It is required to make clear here that the direct question on the observance of daily prayers is intentionally avoided for it was thought that the respondents would not give the answer. Hence, it was found wiser to ask such a question as to find out whether they regard praying easier or harder and to ask one more question regarding taharah (purity and cleanliness) so as to assess their performance.

Though, more than 50% of the respondents find praying to be an easy work, yet it is observed that the regular observers of prayers are very scarce in number, both in the old and young generation which includes both men and women. During my talk with respondents, more than 50% respondents expressed their difficulties and problems for offering prayer in their offices, companies or factories or wherever they are working.

The most common reasons for skipping the prayer being
'office-timings; no proper-arrangement for the place to go and offer the prayer; environment against any kind of religious practice; people either mock or look at with surprise and several other reasons.

By giving such reasons they expressed their helplessness for offering their prayers. What can be predicted from their responses in the questionnaire and their reasons for not praying during their talk that even though they can somehow manage to offer their prayers, they do not take this obligation too seriously as required and without reflecting on their compulsory duty surrender themselves to the circumstances and environment.

A respondent of researcher, Syra Rasheed said: "The children don't say their prayers very often because what with school and home work and everything, it is just not possible. I am not very strict about it because there is just not enough time to supervise all their activities." It clearly shows how easy-going tenacity both the parents and the children have acquired towards one of the compulsory duties of a Muslim. It is obvious from her talk, that she prefers the home-work of the children to their performance of prayers. For herself, she prefers to supervise other works over her supervision to see whether their children are offering prayers regularly. Such a tendency is found in the majority of the respondents.
As for those who offer their prayers regularly, it is found that whether they are workers or students, they have somehow made some sort of arrangement to offer their prayers. Two such cases of the workers, who offer their prayers punctually have been described in the earlier Chapter IV and V. A similar case of a student may be given here:

When asked about her prayers in the College she told my wife:

"During the time of prayer, I go to a room and offer my prayer. Sometimes two or three more girls join me and sometimes I am the only one who offers prayer."

As far as the prayers in the mosque is concerned, it has been dealt with in the chapter V. However, it may be mentioned that the attendance in the mosques also is quite less, though there are a few who do attend the mosques regularly.

Regular observers of prayers in Britain soon attract the attention of the people in the West, since in the materialistic society it looks ridiculous to worship God instead of wealth. It has been commented on such people that "sometimes, without more, they pray on the spot, prostrating themselves as if they did not exist. Minutes later they return to the conversation as if this had been the most natural behaviour in the world. After a time, it seems as though it is."
A number of mosques running throughout Britain, the big congregations on Fridays and during Ramadan and the offering of the prayers at any spot and place by the regular observers of prayers, made Louis Peter call Britain 'Moslem Britain' as against 'Christian Britain'. He says "like the Gule Archipelago, Moslem Britain is an invisible country unless you know where to search for it ... It is a country which you enter by taking your shoes off but keeping your hat on. Most unusual of all, it is a country where the duty to worship God five times a day is a sufficient reason for interrupting any activity - even making money. Muslims have one eye on the clock; it seems always to be nearly time for prayers."

All this shows that in general the Muslims do regard the observance of prayers is obligatory on them and they do offer their prayers not regularly, but often. They have not taken this obligation as seriously as required which shows, that they do not have adequate knowledge of this compulsory duty of a Muslim and are to a great extent ignorant of the possibilities offered by Islam to offer their prayer in time instead of praying it later or totally neglecting it.

Let us move to the second half of the table (1) which is concerned with fasting. Fasting is another pillar of Islam which has its own importance and significance. All Muslims who have attained the age of puberty are commanded to observe fasting
during the month of Ramadhan. It is an obligatory form of worship which can be deferred only by a person who is ill, a traveller, women in menstruation or post-natal period or nursing a baby etc.

"Literally defined, fasting means to abstain "completely" from foods, drinks, sexual intercourse and smoking, before the break of the dawn till sunset, during the entire month of Ramadhan, the ninth month of the Islamic year." But, virtually, fasting is much more than what its literal meaning conveys.

It is a training of one month for a Muslim for the whole year. It trains in patience, unselfishness, stability, honesty and also imparts a sense of dedication to God. Thus "it indoctrinates in man patience, and unselfishness; because when he fasts he feels the pains of deprivation but endures patiently. Truly this deprivation may be only temporary, yet there is no doubt that the experience makes him realize the severe effects of such pains on others, who might be deprived of essential commodities for days or weeks or probably months altogether. The meaning of this experience in a social and humanitarian sense is that such a person is much quicker than any body else in sympathizing with his fellowmen and responding to their needs. And that is an eloquent expression of unselfishness and genuine sympathy." It is for these reasons that a Muslim is
trained for one month to develop all these virtues in him.

The table 1, indicates that the majority of the respondents (192) find fasting quite easy in Britain as opposed to the 42 respondents who find it most difficult and the rest 66 respondents did not express their opinion on this matter.

However, as in the case with the prayer, the response in the paper (questionnaire) go against the verbal response (interviews) and self-observation. No direct question on their observance is asked in this connection as with the prayer. But during the informal interviews, a number of questions were put before the respondents and their free and frank answers show that they do not take fasting seriously as it demands.

Generally, the reasons given for not observing all the facts of Ramadan can be put like this: 'feel reluctant to rise early to do Suhur (eating before the scheduled time of fast) feel tiresome during office-hours; the Ramadan which falls in Summer is very much tiring since the days are too long and the time between the opening of the fast (iftar) and (Suhur) is too short; no patience to offer the taraveh prayer (night prayer of Ramadan); ill-health, hard to fast and manage the house and children all alone and several others.

It is needless to go here in analysing their reasons for
their exemption from fasting according to the Islamic laws. But, this much can be stated that nearly the 70% of the respondents during interviews have expressed their eligibility for observing fasts give one or the other above mentioned reasons. It shows, that they are too careless, regarding this compulsory obligation of a Muslim. However, when compared with the observation of daily five times prayer which has been described in the beginning of this chapter the observance of fasting in Ramadhan is better. People who hardly pray during the whole year, have been fasting and offering their prayers.

Apart from this, there are found some cases, where they are fasting almost regularly, but not minding their prayers to that extent for one or the other reason. Besides, there are some who do fast, but do not offer taraveh prayer.

What follows from it is that they do have a high regard for Ramadhan and fasting, yet they tend to be more careless in keeping all the fasts of the Ramadhan, while offering prayers including the taraveh prayer. Similarly another researcher found that the majority of his respondents said that it was not difficult to fast and they found it easy to fast inspite of certain seasonal peculiarities. There were some who indicated that they found it difficult to fast. The types of difficulties which his respondents described varied from the lack of sleep
due to unusual hours, stomach upset, others about physical
inconveniences, to the lack of understanding from their non-Muslim
contacts.  

Stephen too remarked that "with regard to the observance
of fasting it may reasonably be assumed that the hundred or so
who pray in the mosque each night of Ramadan do keep the fast."  

Whether it is the offering of prayers or the observance
of fasts, both depend on the observance of the rules of Taharah
(purity and cleanliness), since Taharah is essential for offering
prayers and keeping fasts. The following (Table-2) indicates how
much concerned the respondents are regarding the rules of Taharah:

\begin{table}
\centering
\begin{tabular}{lrr}
\hline
Do you observe the rules of Taharah without facing any difficulty ? & \\
Yes & 174 \\
No & 110 \\
No answer & 16 \\
\hline
300 & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Table-2}
\end{table}

Cleanliness and taharah are the essential ingredients
of Islam. A Muslim is enjoined to be always clean and tidy.
Moreover, "before any prayer a Muslim will need to ablute with
running water and he will require water to clean himself after
urination and defecation. Further, a full bath is necessary after seminal discharge or menstruation. If a bath or ablution for prayer endangers the patient’s health or is impractical in prevailing circumstances, the patient can take recourse to the concession of tayammum - a symbolic act of purification.\textsuperscript{13} So much importance has been attached to the tahara and cleanliness in Islam.

The table-2 shows, that 176 respondents say, that they observe the rules of Taharah without facing any difficulty as opposed to the 110 respondents who say that they do face some difficulty, though 16 respondents skipped the answer.

It is required to analyse here the point that the (table 1) shows that 186 respondents find praying easy and 192 respondents see fasting quite easy, then how does 110 respondents in the table-2 say that they face difficulties for observing the rules of Taharah? It is mentioned earlier that without observing the rules of Taharah, both prayers and fast cannot be observed. It seems that most of the respondents do not know the rules of Taharah itself. Moreover, it is observed that the Westerners and those who are Westernized look at with a disfavour gesture to those who clean their nose, hand and feet in the wash basins for ablution. Moreover, the English styled toilets do not suit the Muslims who are asked to save their body and clothes even from a single drop of impure water. Hence, a Muslim is required
to be very much careful while in toilet, specially in the Western style toilet. Apart, the use of 'tissue-paper' has further extended the problem of purity and cleanliness for a Muslim, since most of the toilets are provided only with the 'tissue-paper'. The problem often becomes complicated when temporarily the tissue-paper is used in the toilet due to lack of water and time of prayer is near to end. Hence in all these circumstances, a Muslim is required to have complete and thorough knowledge of the rules and regulations of taharah and cleanliness which pertain to all sorts of situations. But, it is found, that most of the people do not know even the fundamental rules of Taharah and for this reason, they easily skip the prayers and fasts. Further due to lack of adequate knowledge, they hardly care the rules of Taharah and remain impure and unclean (according to the Islamic laws). For this reason, most of them assume the easy-taking tendency in connection with Taharah and embrace the Western ideas of cleanliness—using tissue-paper even if there is water facility, bathing in communal showers and the children in the schools taking part in mixed bathing.

Besides Salat (prayer) and Sawm (fasting) there is yet another pillar of Islam which is also as important as the previous ones, which is called Zakaath (Welfare due). The following table-3 and 4 are designed in this connection.
Is there any institution which administers Zakah in the city/town where you live?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you know rules concerning Zakah?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
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The word Zakah literally means purity. There is no equivalent word for the Quranic word Zakah. "It is not just a form of charity or alms-giving or tax or tithe. It includes charity, alms, tithe, kindness, official tax, voluntary contributions etc., but it also combines with all these God-mindedness and spiritual as well as moral motives."14

The central idea behind the institution of Zakah is that Muslims believe that everything they possess has been given to them by God in trust; they are not the owners but merely
the trustees. In Islam, all Muslims with sufficient means are
obliged to give two-and-a-half per cent of the value of their
total wealth each year to the needy and for community projects.
This is not a wealth-tax; for the poor it is a right to
assistance; for the better-off Muslims it is a means of purifica-
tion and spiritual enrichment; and for the Islamic community,
it is a form of redistribution of income.¹⁵ It is thus found
that Zakah occupies a unique place in Islam and it "is a vivid
manifestation of the spiritual and humanitarian spirit of
responsive interactions between the individual and society."¹⁶

To find out how far the community is thoughtful about
the institution of Zakah and also whether it understands the
rules concerning Zakah, the above two (table 3 and 4) are
put forth:

The (table-3) shows that there is none of the other
institution or society where the 86 respondents are staying in
the city or town as against 201 respondents who claim that there
is no such institution at all whereas 13 respondents give no
answer to this question.

But, contrary to the (table-3), table-4 shows, that the
majority of 230 respondents claim that they know the rules
concerning the Zakah, as opposed to the 46 respondents who say
that they do not know the rules while 14 respondents say
nothing on the question.
The situation to understand their perception of the institution of Zakah is again complex. The point is, if the majority claim that they know the rules of Zakah, why then less than 50% respondents say that there is any institution of Zakah in their locality and the majority say there is no such institution to administer Zakah. What is confusing is, if the majority knows the rules concerning Zakah, as the table indicates, how come the majority sit without making some sort of arrangement to administer Zakah in their city or town? The rules in Islam are not simply laid down to read and push them aside, but to put them into practice. Another possibility is that the majority who claim that it knows the rules of Zakah and yet make no arrangement in their places, may be giving Zakah individually. However all these puzzles can be resolved only through the observations and the findings of other researchers.

Hence, during my informal talk I found three things: firstly, more than 90% (20 respondents out of 25) pay their Zakah not to any institution which administers Zakah, but they pay on their own planning—either to their poor relatives back home or to some needy and poverty-stricken people etc. Secondly, the amount they pay as Zakah is not aptly calculated on the Islamic law, rather it is being paid what they themselves consider right and enough. Thirdly, from listening to their talk and observing their practice, it is found that they know very little about Zakah, yet they think that they do understand it well and over and above,
they seem satisfied and also feel justified about their understanding as well as practice.

The first point is quite clear. Since the people do not find the poor and destitute here, who really deserve Zakat, they prefer to send it back home. Moreover, in the places, where there is a sort of arrangement for Zakah, the respondents contribute their Zakah to those institutions and societies. As what Akram has pointed out that ‘over the years, the Liverpool Muslim society has arranged to send a collection to areas of ‘disaster’ for example in Bangladesh, or Turkey or wherever an obvious need has arisen. Some Muslims from Merseyside had made their regular contributions towards some local based charities, like Age Concern; Old people's Home; Child Poverty Action Group; others chose Oxfam and other recognised international charities.'

What Stephen has observed in this matter is ‘some Bengalis who know to pay Zakah are of the opinion that their obligation is discharged by financial contributions to the mosque. Others are aware that Zakah is to be given to the poor, but state that they do not know how such gifts are to be made in this country. There is no system for the collection of Zakah within the community.’

The point which creates confusion is the second one concerning (the amount of Zakah) and also concerning the contribution made to the mosque as pointed out by Stephen. As
mentioned earlier, the amount of Zakah is required to be paid according to the Islamic law not on the will and wish of Muslims, hence this tendency of over looking the correct calculation of the Zakah goes against the Islamic injunction. Apart the Imam of Bradford has pointed out that there are some who believe that in a country like Britain where there is a system of taxation and social security, Zakah is not obligatory.19

What emerges from the above findings is that there is no clear-cut and complete perception of the institution of Zakah of the community and it feels satisfied in whatever it is doing in this connection, without carefully reflecting on the issue, in the light of the commandment of Quran:

"And He hath made me
Blessed wheresoever I be
And hath enjoined on me
Prayer and Charity as long
As I live."20

The last but the equally important pillar of Islam is the institution of Hajj. It is obligatory on every Muslim, male or female, who can afford it and is physically fit to travel to Mecca, to make the Hajj at least once in his life-time.21

"Pilgrimage to the House is a duty mankind owes to God; for anyone who can find a way to do so,"22 says the Quran.
Haj is "a wholesome demonstration of the universality of Islam and the brotherhood and equality of the Muslims." Over two million Muslims make the pilgrimage to Mecca each year and this great assembly of Muslims fervently demonstrates Islamic unity and solidarity, brotherhood and equality. Men or women, black or white, Arab or non-Arab, rich or poor, literate or illiterate, powerful or weak, ruler or ruled; together, en masse, wearing the same simple robe of unstain white cloth, perform the same religious rites, standing and bowing in one voice declaring - Labbaik, Allama Labbaik (Doubly at your service). It is therefore to perform their obligation to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and to join in the demonstration of brotherhood and equality, it is found out that a large number of Muslims make their way to Mecca from all over Britain.

It is deemed necessary to point out here that no question on Haj has been asked in the questionnaire, since it was felt that there is no need to get any theoretical response on this subject and that a simple talk with respondents on this matter would throw sufficient light on the issue.

Hence, it was found from a general talk that in general Muslims have a high regard for Haj and almost all the respondents expressed their earnest desire to perform Haj. As about those who can afford it, have already performed Haj and yet they showed their inner desire to perform it again and again and they even
pray for those who do not perform it, that 'may God give every Muslim an opportunity to perform Haj.'

It is also observed, that since in Britain most of the people live separately because other family members either stay in their native place or if they are in Britain mostly they stay in separate houses; hence those who decide to go to Haj, either leave their small children to their relatives in Britain, or with those who do not have relatives in Britain, the husband makes Haj and the wife stays with children.

It is also found that some of the respondents who are surrounded with some of the other circumstances which do not allow them to perform Haj, feel extremely sad and depressed at the thought of non-performance of Haj. One of the respondents got tears in eyes when the obligation of Haj was discussed. However, (Haj-e-badal) can be a resource if anybody cannot go for Haj personally for some unavoidable reasons. But, the point is, such a resource of Haj-e-badal can be taken to fulfil the obligation, but a personal experience of Haj cannot be realised which comforts an earnest heart to make pilgrimage to Makkah, and it is the reason that mostly people get tears in their eyes, when only the name of Haj is mentioned before them. It is thus found, that almost all my respondents (23 out of 29) during my talk to them, heartily wished to perform Haj (who have not yet performed) and those who have already performed,
...strongly wish to perform it every year. However, two respondents did not show that much interest in the topic. Nevertheless, it is required to point out here that though the majority look at Hajj with a strong desire and due respect, yet they do not know the significance behind it as required. The maximum they say concerning it is, that the places Mecca and Medina are sacred to Muslims and so they must be visited and that one gets peace and comfort after reaching Ka'bah and that one's prayers get fulfilled there. All these points which are often mentioned do have due importance, yet they are not all in all, but only part of the whole. It is a virtual commitment of Muslims to God, that their inner and outer being is duly surrendered to Him alone and that he would ever remain a Muslim both in name and action before the ever-vigilant eyes of Almighty Allah. "It also commemorates the Divine rituals observed by Abraham and Ishmael, (Ibrahim and Isma'il) who are known to have been the first pilgrims to the first house of God on earth, i.e. the Ka'bah at Mecca." Over and above it is "a reminder of the Grand Assembly on the Day of Judgement when people will stand equal before God, waiting for their Final Destiny." Most of the respondents show that they do not have full and complete vision of the obligation of Hajj, yet they all wish to perform it.

B. Concluding upon the observance of the five pillars of Islam:

It is needless to go in the study of the first pillar
of Islam (Faith, Iman) since the community on which this study is based is the Muslim community. As for the four pillars of Islam (Prayer, Fast, Zakah and Haj), it is found out from the above study, that the community is no doubt aware of its obligations as a Muslim community but this awareness is neither complete nor concrete. It does not have full vision of these obligations and is also more or less blind to each of its significance and basic philosophy underlying it.

Besides a study on the observance of the compulsory obligations of Islam by the community, it is also required to see in this chapter how far the community is mindful about the dietary rules of Islam. The following (table-5) throws a cursory light on the issue.

**TABLE-5**

Do you feel any difficulty in observing the rule of halal food?

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<td>Yes</td>
<td>46</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>26</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>300</strong></td>
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It has been already mentioned, that no aspect of life stands outside the scope of Islam. Islam has enshrined some rules and regulations for the diet of its followers. It is
“as uncompromising on the quality of the organic nourishment of man as it is on his spiritual soundness and intellectual growth.”

Islam has forbidden certain foods and drinks ‘like meat of dead animals and birds, the flesh of swine and that of anything slaughtered with the invocation of any name other than that of God.’

Apart from these “pig in all forms and carnivorous animals, whether slaughtered ritually or not, are specifically forbidden. It is likewise unlawful to eat even the fat or bones of the pig and carnivorous animals. Thus any food which contains lard will be unlawful, whether it be bread or ice-cream. Moreover, an animal whose meat is otherwise lawful becomes unlawful if it is not slaughtered ritually. Therefore, all animals that have died by natural causes or have been slaughtered contrary to Islamic law, e.g. killed by electric shock or sacrificed in a name other than that of God, or without taking the name of God, are unlawful.”

Moreover, Islam has prescribed its Law for slaughtering the animals whose meat is lawful to eat. “The animal should be slaughtered in such a way that blood flows out, by a very sharp knife penetrating the inner part of the animal’s neck, and the name of God should be invoked upon it while it is being slaughtered. Such meat is called halal.” If the animal is not slaughtered according to this prescribed rule, it is called haram, which means that such meat is forbidden for a Muslim.

As far as drinks are concerned, all alcoholic drinks are
forbidden for Muslims. The reason is quite obvious, 'Islam is a faith which appeals to reason and conscience. Since alcohol is injurious to reason and diminishes man's intelligence, moral sense, logical powers and spiritual sensitiveness, any drop of it is strictly forbidden to any Muslim.'

The Quran strictly forbids intoxication: "Intoxicants... excite enmity and hatred amongst you and hinder you from the remembrance of God and from fulfilment of His Commands and Statutes, and slavery to them diverts you from the sole road of happiness and leads to excess and abomination."  

We have to see how far the community is observing all these dietary rules of foods and drinks in a society where eating pork and drinking alcohol are common features.

The table-5 suggests, that 46 respondents find difficulty in observing the rule of halal food and 226 respondents do not find any difficulty while 28 respondents say nothing in this connection. No direct question has been asked as to whether they observe the rules or not, keeping the psychology of the respondents in consideration. However, the table-5 indicates that the majority of the respondents do not find any sort of difficulty in observing the rule, which suggests, that the majority observes the dietary rules, framed by Islamic Law.

It is found, that almost in every locality, there is a
meat shop owned by Muslims and the Muslims staying near the locality buy the halal meat from the shop and the shop keeps a board over his shop saying - halal meat available or halal meat shop etc. These shops solve the problem of halal meat for Muslims. But there are some places, where the Muslims do not find any halal meat shop and in such situations, they buy halal meat in advance from the far-off localities and store it in the freezers.

How concerned the Muslims are for the halal meat can be also seen in the light of frequent meetings held in this connection, which some of the responsible persons of the community attend and draw the attention of the persons incharge of the Market Department on the Islamic law of slaughter of animals. Moreover, the correspondence of the responsible members of the community with the authorities of the market is also to ensure the practice of Islamic law for the slaughtering of the animals. These letters also explain the Islamic system of slaughtering and point out the fact that the ritual slaughter causes far less pain to the animal than by the electric current.

It is always argued by the Muslim scholars that it is now even scientifically proved that the ritual slaughter which consists of a cut with a sharp knife in the neck as far back as to include the carotid arteries and jugular veins, causes no pain. Whereas, the scientists have also proved that the animal gets more pain by the electric current since, it is found that "the
animal is merely paralysed by the electric current and so prevented from making a sound or a movement, while fully conscious and experiences great pain as the current passes through its body.

All these above mentioned facts, show that the major section of the community is very much concerned about the halal meat and that they observe this rule strictly.

Apart from the problem of the halal meat, it is found that there are a number of items of food and other wares in the market in which either little quantity of alcohol if used or one or the other (haram) forbidden ingredient is mixed like game soup, sherry trifle, plum pudding and Christmas or wedding cakes and a number of varieties of biscuits. All these items cause confusion and tension between the Muslim parents and their children, since the children get very much attracted towards them for they appear quite beautiful and are also arranged in a very attractive manner. The Muslim children argue that why these things should not be consumed by them, when their English friends do enjoy them a lot? A respondent said that it is very hard to make small children understand, that such things are forbidden in Islam. The same respondent further expressed the view that the children ask too many questions on every kind of restriction (don'ts) and it becomes very much difficult to make them understand. Further, a number of respondents reported, that these days in every item of food, a list of its ingredients has been given, hence they first go through the items in the ingredients before
buying anything. This has solved the problem to a great extent, they said.

Sometimes, it is also found that there would not be any variety of halal biscuits for Muslim children in the market. The parents would not get so much time to search for the halal biscuits for their children. In such cases it is observed, that most of the parents tend to be more strict and somehow satisfy their children with some other item, but do not get tempted to buy the haram biscuits, ice-cream or cakes. It was my personal experience, that I went for some urgent shopping with my family at late evening. After buying the required things, we searched for a packet of halal biscuits for our child, but we could not find any. On this the shop-keeper said that from next time he would definitely keep some stock of the halal biscuits in his shop, since he found that a few more Muslim customers in the area asked for the same. It is thus found that the majority of the respondents are very much concerned about the dietary rules of Islam.

However, there are a few, who do not care about the rules and eat and drink whatever they like. They argue that in a society where the majority consume all kinds of haram stuff and enjoy alcoholic liquors, they cannot set themselves aloof from the society. Since to mix in the Western society, one should make some kind of compromises for diet, dress and every thing, lest the society may mock at them. Further, the drink shops are found in
every nook and corner of the street of Britain which attract the attention of people. Hence, those who do not adhere to the Islamic injunctions seriously, get easily swayed seeing the shops of drinks at every step and are easily tempted to consume them. I personally visited some such shops to get some ideas about the community regarding the drinks and observed a number of Muslim customers in the shops. Further, it is also found that the children of such parents (who do not follow the dietary rules of Islam) quite unhesitatingly enjoy meat and fish and other haram eatables which the school provides them. They are not restricted by their parents not to eat the haram meat or any such thing as against some parents who strictly instruct their children to eat vegetables instead of meat. It follows from the above findings regarding the observance of the dietary rules of Islam, that the majority observes the rules, though there are some who do not show any concern on the issue and do not observe the rules.

SECTION 'B'

C. Remention of The Problems That Arise While Practising Islam:

From the Section 'A', it is seen that the community faces a number of difficulties and problems while observing the four compulsory obligations of Islam and also while observing the Islamic rules of diet. It is also found in Section 'A' that those Muslims whose perception of Islamic injunctions is clear to some extent, they do observe the rules of Islam in every matter as against those whose understanding is not clear and deep and
consequently they do not observe the Islamic injunctions, whether they are in connection with the four pillars of Islam or the Islamic dietary rules.

Hence, what remains to be explored is the perception of the community on the problems and difficulties which arise in following the Islamic injunctions, particularly in the Western society. In Section 'B', the same issue is discussed. In this connection, an informal interview and a (table-6) of the questionnaire are presented.

The basic point to find out whether the community perceives these problems and difficulties (mentioned in Section A) to be their real problems or that the problems which arise due to the conflict of two opposite ideologies.

Keeping this in view the main question asked during the informal interview with the (25) respondents is:

Do you think whether the problems and difficulties which arise while practising some of the Islamic injunctions are the root-problems of the community or do you think that the problems lie somewhere else?

The gist of the answers of (23) respondents which have been quite similar to each other can be given as under:

"Of course, the problem for doing ablution (Wudu) for
prayers, and other difficulties that arise for keeping fasts and
praying Jānik are the big and real problems. The other problems
which arise in observing the rules of diet and dress are also not
far less complicated. Apart, there are various other problems
like wearing hijab, swimming, co-education, sex-education,
permissive society, a number of theatres and clubs and such places
where there is full opportunity given for juvenile delinquency,
pre-marriage sex and sex outside marriage and such other problems.
Mentioning such problems, they have sought their solutions in:
formighetto (staying amidst the Muslim houses, cutting
themselves away from the English neighbours); sending their female
children to Pakistan after they attain the age of puberty and
controlling maximum the male children and pushing them forward
for obtaining some technical education or taking them in some
business line.'

D. An Analysis on the above view of the problem:

The respondents are truly concerned about the number of
problems in which they are surrounded by all sides. But they do
not tend to penetrate into these problems to find out where
actually the real problem lies and what they should do for either
avoiding these problems or to root-out these problems together.
They do not understand the fact, that the basic problem lies in
the conflict of the two opposite ideologies and hence the problems
which they are facing in day-to-day life are the ideological
problems and not the ordinary problems in any sense. Hence, the
solutions which they have brought forth hardly solve this conflict, since the solution lies in two-fold project - firstly in its complete and concrete understanding of the Islamic teachings, its practicability and universality comparing it with other ideologies and secondly in the presentation of the Islamic principles before the alien society in a scientific, intellectual as well as in a simple and practical way.

Thus, an analysis into their (majority) responses show, that their perception of their problems is not deep, and consequently the solutions which they have worked-out are the most superficial ones.

2. Responses of the Non-Respondents:

However, there were two respondents who during their talk pointed out that the problems concerning dress, diet, obligations of prayer, fasting, Zakah and of permissiveness of the society and others are the apparent problems, while the real problem lies at the root of the Western ideology, Western theories and 'isms', its ethos, mode of living and other things which go contrary to Islamic ideology, its ethos and mode of life'. For this reason they said that the Muslims should strongly stand on the Islamic principles and should not fall under any sort of temptation of Un-Islamic ideas, thoughts and practice. Further, they said that 'their children should also be trained in Islamic morale, etiquette and discipline.'
It follows from it that those who have more or less the complete vision of the problem are very few in the community.

However, there remains one more test which is taken in the form of the following table-6.

**TABLE - 6**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>300</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of 228 respondents as the table-6 suggests, believe that a Muslim can practice Islam without any difficulty no matter wherever he stays as opposed to the 73 respondents who feel, that it is difficult for a Muslim to practice Islam in any place. 19 respondents skipped the answer.

The same sort of complex situation arises in this table-6 as in the tables (1,2,3, & 4) wherein, the respondents do say that they face no difficulty for observing the compulsory obligations of prayer, fasting, and Zakah and also observing the rules of diet. But, what has been found out from their talk, personal observation and through the findings of other researchers,
that they have simply expressed this view on paper, but actually, they keep a number of reasons, circumstances and such things through which they like to convey the point to the researcher, that in surrounding circumstances, they are helpless to observe the Islamic injunctions. Hence, the (table-6) should also be understood in the light of the above findings, since, the majority of the respondents expressed such an opinion which however go contrary to their practice, as the Section 'A' of this chapter suggests.

Nevertheless, one point is to be clearly understood here: The 'opinion' on certain subject is something different from the actual practice of a man concerning the same subject. It is possible that the majority is aware of the fact, that Islamic ideology is universal in nature and dynamic in spirit and practical in its application to any problem of life of an individual as well as society, yet the majority may not tend to submit itself completely to the Islamic injunctions. Obviously it is due to an incomplete vision of the Islamic teachings. Had their opinions rooted in the concrete and real understanding of the Islamic teachings, they would have stood firmly while practicing them.

It is the reason, that if they have to give the simple answers in the questionnaire, their response is quite clear and complete, while in the interviews and talk, they got confused with a number of direct and indirect questions. Moreover, during the informal interviews and personal frequent visits to some of the respondents, they feel quite free in expressing their views and ideas, as has
been pointed out in Chapter I. This again shows that if their opinions are formed on the complete knowledge and understanding of Islamic injunctions, they would not have shown the instability which they have exhibited.

What follows from all these findings is that the major section of the community has simply formed its opinions and ideas on the basis of the cursory knowledge of Islamic ideology and has a very superficial understanding of the Islamic injunctions. But, "Islam demands sound convictions and opposes blind imitation." If the opinions and ideas are not established on the unshakable convictions on the Islamic principles, there is every possibility that such opinions would be influenced by the alien environment. Hence, it is pointed out, that "the true Muslim believes that faith is not complete when it is followed blindly or accepted unquestioningly unless the believer is reasonably satisfied. If faith is to inspire action, and if faith and action are to lead to salvation, then faith must be founded on unshakable convictions without any deception or compulsion." Naturally, if one does not have the complete and deep understanding of the Islamic principles, it means that he is not reasonably satisfied with the principles, since he has not followed the principles. The same is the case with the practice of the Muslim community here. Since their faith in the Islamic injunctions is not founded reasonably on the unshakable convictions, rather established
blindly, they do express that a Muslim can practise Islamic injunctions without any difficulty (as the table-8 suggests, yet they put forward some of the other reason, when they come in the practical field (as what the interviews and observation) suggest. The main point which emerges after carefully analysing the issue is that the perception of the community on the practicability of the Islamic injunctions is extremely limited and short-sighted. It does not understand the significant characteristic of the Quran (which) is its practicability. Nor does it understand the fact that the teachings of the Quran do not demand the impossible and unattainable ideals. "The Quran accepts man for what he is and exhorts him to become what he can be. It does not brand man as a helpless or hopeless creature, condemned from birth to death, and drowned in sin from womb to tomb, but it portrays him as a noble, honourable and dignified being."36