CHAPTER - V

ISLAMIC ETHICS AND OBSCURANTISM AMONG LOCAL MUSLIMS

In Hindu religion there is social hierarchy, birth alone determines an individual's status within the hierarchy. While Mohammdanism propagates a straight, natural law for the people to follow. There is no perplexity and ambiguity in it. The obscurantism found among the different castes of Muslim in District Aligarh is due to the impact of Hinduism upon Muslims, where a large section of Muslims are the descendent of the converted Hindus.

The teachings of Prophet of Islam, contrary to Hindu Philosophy, invites all men to follow a straight way, that they may not be corrupted consciously or unconsciously by their fellow men. Free people having natural bent, unbiased mind, inspired by the Prophet, could themselves judge between Good and Evil. The 'Shariat' (holy law) is built upon the sacred teachings of Prophet Mohammad. These teachings are conspired exclusively of the knowledge and commands revealed to the Prophet by God, and are preserved to this day in the Holy Koran and the Traditions.

Prior I discussed regarding the misbelieves and obscurantism prevailed among the local Muslims, it is essential here to cast light upon the fundamentals of Islam, without which one cannot easily deduct right and wrong done by the
local Muslims. The basic principles of Islam are summarised in the second chapter of Holy Koran. God revealed in His Holy Book, "no doubt Koran is for the guidance of pious people, who believe in the existence of God, observes prayers and distribute alms out of what the God has bewtowed upon them, bear firm faith upon His verdicts which He revealed upon people before them as well as treat correct all those words which has been forecasted by Him for onward life."

I am not here concerned to explain the philosophy of Islam, I am concerned to explain broadly the tenets of Islam, the observance of which is a must for its adherents. The tenets of Islam can be divided into two parts, Believe and Practice.

Said the Prophet of Islam, "God does not accept belief, if it is not expressed in deed, and does not accept deed, if it does not conform to belief."

The belief consists of Truth and we cannot understand it independently. To believe upon those truths is an essential condition of faith. These truths are doctrinal part of Islam, their importance is fundamental. The second part 'Practice' which is consisted of practical instructions regarding human life and behaviours. It deals with the does


and does not of individuals and their social existence. The practical part is further divided into number of subdivisions like worship, morality, social conduct, right and duties, culture and civilization, defence, support and propagation of religion, and politics and government. Islam is a complete code of life, it covers the different aspects of human life.

In the terminology of Islam 'Belief' means to believe upon Prophet Mohammad, acknowledge him as God's Messenger, who explained to us the commands of God, which was beyond the range of our intelligence and understanding. In addition to this, to affirm what was communicated by Prophet were the verdicts of God, as well as accept Islam as Divine Religion. Thus it become essential for all the true believers of Islam that they treat all things true which explained Prophet to them. By rejecting even one of them he will cease to be a true Muslim. For instance, having believe in Prophet Mohammad, in the oneness of God, His revelations in the Koran and the Traditions, if one by his reasons do not agree with the Last Day, Heaven and Hell as told by Prophet, he cannot be regarded as a true Muslim.

1. BELIEF.

A. EXISTENCE OF GOD:

Belief in the existence of God as the creator, Protector and Preserver of the Universe is the axis around which the entire world of faith revolves. The scriptures and other religious documents all over the world denote that faith in God has existed in all the corners of the world from its earliest days. This is an accepted fact that the
world was brought into being by some power which was above all. Towards this end the Prophet of Islam explained that the existence of God was related to inner consciousness of man, to his reasons and not to his weakness or his credulities. The Koran too, has adopted, more or less the same attitude in this respect. In brief it can be asserted that the existence of God is not a matter of opinion. Belief in God is grounded in the nature of man. It is rooted deep in his soul. If all over the world there would not be the majority of believers, the atheism would have dominated the heart and mind of the common people. People visualise in their hearts that God alone is the creator, the Preserver and the Sustainer. He alone grants children and deals with the life and death, health and sickness, poverty and riches. In short things which happens in this world is at His bindings and His doing. All are dependant to Him. He is dependant to no one. Muslims naturally neither worship anyone besides One God nor turn their faces from His in the hour of trial.

Koran indicates the above, "There is no God except He, The Living, The Self-Subsisting, Eternal." (His life alone is His, the other are alive by His grace, their lives are

Koran : Ayat-ul-Kursi.
transient, His eternal-Self is sustaining and preserving the Universe).

The most repugnant to God is to ascribe plurality to Him. The true Muslims must have faith in his Unity, Oneness and Uniqueness. This is the very life-breath of the religion of Islam.

B. THE CONCEPT OF HEREAFTER:

Out of the transcended truths, necessary to believe by the Muslims is the concept of 'Hereafter'. It is essential to have firm faith upon it. The idea of 'Hereafter'. It is essential to have firm faith upon it. The idea of 'Hereafter' implies that at the end of this mortal life, there is to come another life and another world in which people will be required for the decision of Good and Evil done by them during their earthly life. Apart from all instructions given by Prophet Mohammad as well as revelation in Koran, people give less attention to their future life. Generally this has been noted, people bear no knowledge regarding the life after the death. They pay no attention to the calls of the people who remind them regarding the existence on the other side of death, and they will reap the consequences of their doings in material life. We find around us crazy people, in spite of all their cruelty and wickedness, spent their days in utmost happiness and comforts. Throughout their lives they
commit great sins, make loot and plunder and deprive others from their material livings. They oppress the weak and put them into troubles. Apart from this they face no calamity and pass their days peacefully in luxury till the end of their days in this world. On the other side there are men who are pious and virtuous, they neither deceive nor swindle nor do any cruelty or injustice, they are loyal to God and His creatures, but their lives are full of pain and poverty. Some time they suffer from diseases, some time suffer from other troubles, till they reach to their graves. We mark that God has created this world, He observes the sufferings of all. We also observe that neither the virtuous are re­warded for their virtues nor the wicked are punished for their sins. This makes clear that the reward and the punishments on the part of God is meted in other world. The justice of God is with all, He makes distinction between the right and wrong and treats the wrong doers and the righteous people in the same manner.

Says He, "Shall we, then, treat (alike) the people of faith with the people of sin?"

This is a matter of common sense that every thing in the world is full of some properties as well as action and reaction. People who perform the physical acts, there happens reciprocal or responsive effect within his self. When some thing he eats, it gives him in natural way appe­titive effect, the water quenches his thirst, over-eating
causes indigestion and poison kills him. Similar is the case of normal and spiritual acts. It is impossible that the same may not react upon him one way or the other, produces either good or evil effect upon him.

Man by nature is greedy. He seeks the result of his good deeds immediately. It is his folly. The great wisdom behind the result of his deeds has not been portioned by God, some for this world and some for the other world. It would cease the trial of God which has been professed by Prophet Mohammad, that those who will deny His commands and shall lead immoral life, they will be rewarded in the world to come with such and such punishments and the pious shall be blessed by such and such rewards. The account of all the good and evil deeds shall be handed over at once, the trial will take place in the light of the same. It is better for the people to avoid sin as fearfully as they avoid to plunge into fire, and practice virtue as a matter of habit like eating and drinking. God bestows His favours upon his loyal servants, which is not possible in this material world. Similar is the case of the wrong-doers, their terrible punishment is in store. The punishment against chastity is very severe. The chaste in other world shall be burn down in the Hell. This world is perishable and its resources are very limited. In this world joys and sorrows are closely woven into each other. The rewards and the punishments of God in other world are separated with each other. The faithfuls
and pious shall receive cloudless bliss and unmitigating sufferings.

The world 'Hereafter' is divided into two parts, 'Heaven' and 'Hell'. In the heaven there will be the display of God's special Grace and Benevolence. Against this in the hell, there will be the Severity and Wrath, its display will be also in its highest form. God's verdict regarding the life 'Hereafter' is meant to keep people on their proper path in this world. Men of knowledge and thing, history shows, could not develop an idea equal to it, instead of this accepted that no man made law and order can succeed in discouraging people more effectively from evil-doing than the belief in the life 'Hereafter'. This has been noted that the corporal punishments by the governments, cultural advancements, moral consciousness and other preventive methods has helped in the suppression of crime and immorality, but they are not much effective in comparison to the faith in the reward and punishment after death. The prophecy regarding the life Hereafter has not only been made by prophet Mohammad but almost all the Prophets before him said the same. During their life time they imparted to their people about God's final judgement and about heaven and hell, but their followers did not pay enough attention, their teaching with the passage of time either lost

or driven out. For the faithfuls of God, the permanent source of enlightenment is Koran and the preachings of Prophet Mohammad. It is needless to say people depending upon God and having faith in 'Hereafter' hate indisciplined life of animals and devote themselves earnestly to a life of submission and beg to Him to avert His wrath and award peaceful abode in Paradise.

C. PROPHECY AND APOSTLESHIP:

God does not communicate His Will to every one. The limited wisdom granted to us is quite insufficient to understand what the God requires from us. In view of the incapabilities of the human-beings God founded the institution of Prophethood. As He brought into the existence the Sun and Moon to provide us heat and light, in the same manner founded the Prophetic order to send His commands and instructions through them. The arrangement of Prophethood and the provision of Divine Laws (Shariat) God made for the assistance of His creatures. Those who treat it as burdensome and treat Divine Laws as commands of a despot, they are under misconceptions, both are the great blessings of God and through them one can achieve its destiny and can attain fulfillment in his life.

Some people feel that Prophets belong to the category of angels and they are celestial, direct belongs to God. They forget, it was necessary for them to be able
to appreciate the disposition. There is need of aspiration as they were deputed for their guidance in this world. If they belonged to the category of angels, they could never think and feel like men. They could never mix up with the human beings. Koran in clear terms lays down, "Say: Had there been in the earth angels alone, walking as settlers, we would certainly have sent down to them from the heaven an angel as an Apostle." By this God means, if on the earth angels were living, God would certainly have sent down Angel - Apostles for their instruction, but on the earth there lived human beings, a man Apostle was deputed to understand the needs and inclinations of man.

In Islamic theory, a Prophet is defined as a man raises up to reveal and impart His message and guidance to His servants and entrusts him the responsibilities of an Apostle." Prophets were deputed since man started his career on this earth. God the Universal Cherisher and Sustainer has been regulating on human spiritual needs, as He found necessary for their physical needs. He sent His Commands through the special messengers to all countries and communities. Koran lays down, "To Every People (was sent) an Apostle." The names of some Prophets and their description occur at different places in Koran, while the rest have

Koran: Safat : 5.
Koran: Bani-Israel : 11.
been left out. It is necessary for the believers of 'Allah' that they regard and honour all the sacred Apostles of God and hold them in equal respect. Without it, it is not possible to be a true Muslim. Koran instruct towards this end as:

"We make no distinction between me and another His Apostles."

In all times and in all ages God send His Apostles. The Prophets are not the makers of Holy Laws, they are only its revealers and interpreters. They cannot enact laws of their own accord, they only communicate without the slightest alteration in the Divine Message. The Prophet of Islam at one place says, "It is not for me, of my own accord, to change it. I follow not but what is revealed unto me."

Some time supernatural things make themselves manifest through the agency of Prophets. These miracles are outside the power of ordinary man. A miracle is not the act of the Prophet, but through whom it appears, it is an act of God who causes it to happen through the medium of His Messenger to demonstrate the truth of His mission. People who are less intelligent and under spiritual miscomprehension failed to be convinced of a Prophet's inspiration unless he performs some supernatural deeds before him. God under such circumstances confer miracle upon His Apostles. Prophets are helpless in this matter. It is essential for the faithful people to distinguish and understand such Apostles.
The Apostles are not like common leaders, they are not poets or physicians. It is our duty not to accept anyone as a Prophet, but with our utmost deliberation and care follow him with all our mind, body and soul. A person to whom we believe as Devine Apostle, whole heartedly we should pay to him our allegiance, and whatever he communicates should be listen to and carried out as the command of God. A person when accepted as a Prophet of God, it is also accepted that he is not lier and imposter or he suffer from psychic order. In modern days a number of educated persons, who pose themselves as rationalist, do not treat Prophetic words as true and discard 'SUNNA'. It is sheer their folly and misapprehension to reject the Prophet's position. The words of God Koran contains as: "He instructs them in scripture and wisdom and sanctifies them," and, "That thou mayest explain clearly to them what is sent to them."

It is thus essential for the Muslims, wherever they are living, they must have faith in the doctrines of Monotheism, Prophecy and the Last Day. These three constitute the prime sanctions of God for the believers of 'Allah'. Besides these, this group includes belief in Koran as the Words of Almighty, belief in Heaven and Hell and in the Hereafter, in Angels and God sent Divine Apostles before the Holy Prophet Mohammad.


Koran: Yunus : 5 ; 2.
Koran: Baqar : 40.
2. SHARIAT

The religious teachings of Prophet Mohammad is divided into two categories, the first related to belief and ideology and the other to morality and action. The teachings regarding the belief, I have already discussed, now I shall deal below with the teachings regarding morality and human actions which is called 'Shariat'. The term 'Shariat' can be further divided into number of sections like worship, morality, social conduct, religious endeavour etc. Just as faith is given highest preference, similar is 'Shariat'. The worship is the supermost important. The act of worship develops relationship between God and his creatures. It is most easy and intimate way of human expression regarding love and affection for the creator. It plays vital role in the uplift and reformation of other human faculties of existence.

Worship in Islam means paying humble homage to Glory and Magnificence of God and acknowledging before Him helplessness, humility, submissiveness and devotion and gaining His pleasure and adopting nearness to Him. Worship includes 'Namaz' (Prayer), Roza (Fasting), Haj (Pilgrimage), Zakat-o-Sadaqat (poor tax and other propitiary offerings), Zikr-o-Tilawat (repeating the names, attributes and praises of God and other recitation of the Koran), Kubani (animal sacrifice) and all other deeds of devotion carried out exclusively to pay reverent service to the Almighty as well as for individual spiritual benefits.
A. THE INSTITUTION OF PRAYER (NAMAZ):

The Prophet of Islam explained that we worship God for our own good and the fulfilment of our spiritual destiny. We have been commanded by God for it, so that we may strengthen our awareness of Him and make ourselves worth of His special grace. No doubt there is no likeness or comparison between God and man. One is the mighty Creator and the Supreme Owner of Heaven and Earth, the other helpless creature. Worship is the only source through which man can attain access to God and wins His favour and love. The man by nature is helpless towards his eternal life. In his conscious the man had the concept from its earliest days regarding the Supreme and all-pervading authority of God. He had the sense of doing good deeds towards all. He had the sense, if one will do good to others, equally he will receive the same from others. These accumulated ideas led him to express the voice of his heart in words of gratitude and love as well as his sorrows and obligations before a supreme authority who is kind and merciful upon others. This is found in every religion that there is some system of prayer, to which its adherents exhibits in some shape. Generally the Devine miraculous action of prayer dominates upon the moral of the man. In some religions such superior are wanting.

In 17th century the Prophet of Arabia began to preach a reformed religion. Prophet Mohammad recognised the institution of Prayer. He confirmed that, that the soul of the man can pour out its love and gratitude to God through a fixed way of Prayer. There is need to practice it regularly at its appointed time with full devotion. He stressed upon a disciplinary character at the time of prayer that the wandering thoughts of the worshipper may not go towards the material life of the world. Prophet Mohammad explained to his disciples that prayer is means of moral devotion and the purification of the heart. The same the believers of God can identify from the Koran which lays down, "Rehears that which hath been revealed unto thee of the Book, and be constant at prayer, for prayer preserveth from crimes and from that which is blameable, and the remembering of God is surely a most sacred duty."

The religion of Islam preached by Prophet Mohammad recognises no caste of priesthood. No caste among Mohammads have monopoly of spiritual knowledge or hold any special holiness. There is none in this world in between a worshipper and God. God the creator of each soul gave no authority to any priest to intervene in the prayer of his human beings.

Koran : XXIX : 45.
Each human being is his own priest. In the eye of Islam all are equal, no man is higher than the other. The Prophet of Islam made clear that the prayer without the presence of the heart was no avail. The God's word which the worshipper addresses at the time of prayer, is equally addressed by all mankind and not any one alone. These words should be studied with the heart and lips in absolute accord. The heart of the worshipper must pay obedience to the dictates of duty, this requires the devotional spirit. The Prophet of Islam explained that cleanliness is a preliminary rule for the worshipper and adoration of God. He clearly laid down, one can only approach to Almighty in purity and humility of spirit. This means the worshipper's heart must be clean from all blameworthy frailties and his mind from all vicious ideas and from all thoughts which can distract the attention from God. The Prophet told to his people that at the time of prayer the Muslim should turn their faces towards Macca, either the worshipper reside in Arabia or other part of the world, their faces should be towards the 'Ka-aba'. Before the prayer Koran stress upon the ablution, in case the water is not available it can be performed by any available cleaning substitute. The ablution (Wazu), Muslims performs on the pattern of Prophet Mohammad but some sect do not act accordingly.
B. THE INSTITUTION OF FASTING:

The institution of fasting from its ancient days existed among all the nations of the world. The idea behind it may be said was to repentence in connection to the avoidance from some indulgence. The aim and object of fasting in Islam is quite different from the Christianity and other religions of the world. The fasting in Islam, on the contrary, has the legitimate object of restraining the passion during a definite period. It puts a check upon all animals spirits of man and leads him towards a healthy path. Islam condemns unnecessary self penance and destruction of mind and body. Fasting is prescribed for healthy and strong persons. To keep his body well balanced, it is a sort of check as well as a source to lead a spiritual life. Fast is not binding upon weak, sick, travellers, students (who is engaged in pursuit of knowledge - The Jihadul Akbar) the soldier and the women in their ailments. The intelligent and foresighted people realise how Islam by imposing fast has restrained people from their excess pleasure of life and vices. Specially those who belonged to uncivilised races. The Holy Koran expresses, "O ye that have believed, a fast is ordained to you ... that ye may practice piety, a fast of a computed number of days. But he among you who shall be ailing, or on a journey, (shall fast) on equal number of other days, and they are able to keep it (and do not) shall make atonement
by maintaining a poor man ... But if you fast, it will be
better for you, if ye comprehend, .. God willeth that which
is easy for you," Muslims generally fulfil the command of
God and keep 'Roza' (fast) of Ramzan upto whole month. They
are fully aware their lawgiver wants due performance of Roza
as it is only acceptable services to Him, their creator. The
faithful Muslims who bear knowledge keep fast diligently. As
All the fasting Muslims are actuated more or less by the same
verdict of 'Koran'. The warmth and spirit, the Muslims
show towards this end can easily be understood. Under fast
they are motivated by the strict rules of Holy Koran. During
the hottest days and longest month, they whole-heartedly
observe 'Ramzan', and do not turn their faces towards food
and water. They do not even swallow their spittle all days.
The boys of twelve and thirteen years eagerly keep fast
during the whole month. Ovington remarks that the Muslims,
"complete their fast, according to the strictest rules
of the most rigid ascetics, by mixing prayers and watching
with their abstinence."

The Ramzan starts from the first streak of light
bordering the easter horizon and continues until the stars
are clearly discerned on the sky. During this period not the
slightest particle of food, and no single drop of water or
any other liquid passes in their lips. The true Muslims,
under fast passes their Ramzan days in prayer, besides the usual 'Namazs', read Koran or the life of Prophet Mohammad. They utilised their Ramzan days in 'Ibadat' which brings blessings of Almighty upon their soul and body both. The practice of keeping fast makes men more humble, more obedient to the God as well as in social life. Their hearts become neat and clean from all vices and all discensions. Muslim ladies keep also fast with great zeal and rigidness. Women who cannot read Koran, her husband or father render this service for her. The fast is first broken by a cooling draught called, 'Thandhai' a certain type of paste diluted with cold water, rose-water, sugar, syrup of pomegranet. Some of the aged and more delicate people break their fast with the juice of spinach, other with tea or date. The common Muslims usually break their fast by date. Those who are unable to keep fast they feel themselves bound to offer food in place of their opening fast to some poor men 'Rozadari'. Often there happens the death of some member in a family, the fast of the deceased left to be observed, the pious person in the family engage some devout person to perform the one month Ramzan fast, which is believed to be accepted by God

Ovington, J: A voyage to Suratt in the year 1689. London. 1696. P-242-244.
against the deceased person. Some devout Muslims extend the fast of thirty days to forty days. For example Prophet Mohammad and his family members, leaving one day of Id, kept fast upto the whole year. Some rigid Muslims keep fast in the month preceding and following the month of Ramzan. Young children in each family try to keep fast, they generally try one or two days in the month.

C. THE INSTITUTION OF ZAKAT:

The concept of charity 'Zakat' is found in the religions other than the Islam. In earliest days the aim behind charity was limited to the assistance of widows, orphans and the helpless poors. The tradition of charity among the early christians depended upon the will. There was no law for it. It was unsystematic and irregular. After some time, in old traditions there came certain changes. There started feast of charity and the same gradually became irregular and later suspended.

Islam alone made the provision of charity, framed law that every individual is bound to contribute a certain value, and has been in his possession for one whole year. This charitable amount do not become due upon cattle employed

Terry, Edward : A voyage to East India. London, 1777. P-271-72
Hughes : Dictionar of Islam.
in agriculture or in carrying the burden. Apart from the property and valuables, one has to offer 'Zakat' (charity) about his own person as well as his each of the members of his family, together with the guests who kept fast with him during the Ramzan. This 'Zakat' he has to clear at the end of the month of Ramzan, before going to 'Id-gah' for prayer of Idul-Fitir. The charity is not necessary to be paid in amount, it can be given in kind of grain like, barley, dates, raisins, rice etc.

The 'Zakat' should be given to right persons. Persons liable to receive the 'Zakat' from the point of view of Prophet are as: (a) the poor and the needy, (b) those who helped in collection and distribution of alms, (c) slaves who wishes to get themselves free and have no means to get freedom, (d) debtors who cannot return due amount, (e) travellers. Besides this Koran in clear terms lays down regarding the general charity. It demands to its believers that each day from their earnings they offer to eat to their poor neighbours. If there comes a needy or hungry man to his door, he must assist him in the name of God. The Almighty shall never demand from him the account.

Hughes : Dictionary of Islam (Article on Zakat) •
for the same, instead of that add more in his earnings. The Prophet of Islam, were in the habit of taking late food in the night, as he used to wait on for the strangers, guests or needy persons at his door. Similar was the case of other caliphs after him.

The tradition of 'Zakat' among Muslims by and by has become an essential ritual in comparison to other religions. This has been noted when any person escapes from the threaten danger or accident, their friends and blood relations send to him corn or money, this is touched by the hands of the person in question and then distributed among the poors and needy persons. If any member of the family becomes ill, a tray full of grains and some money kept under the bed of the sick person for the whole night, in the morning the same is distributed among the poors. Some people cook bread and place it under the bed of the sick person and next day in the morning, it is distributed among the poors. Some people sacrifice goat and other animals and distribute the flesh among the poors. The alms distribution in this manner is called 'Sadaqa'.


The well-to-do Muslims, Zamindars or traders make the arrangement of Mosque, Muslim Musafirkhana (inn), tanks, wells and the supply of drinking water on the roads, by these deeds they perform the act of public charity. On the occasion of death anniversary of saints or some well to do Muslim make the arrangement of 'Fateha', distribute food among the poor and needy persons. In villages and some towns, the well to do Muslims make the arrangement of 'Madarsas' for educating Arabic to children. All these charitable acts are liked by God, its doer receives the reward in his eternal life. Apart from this the charity doer receives inspiration and blessings of all those people who derive benefits from them.

D. THE INSTITUTION OF PILGRIMAGE (HAJ):

Muslims from all over the world go on pilgrimage to Mecca. For Muslims pilgrimage is an important annual event. For this there is found common eager among them. Each wants to become 'Haji'. The aim behind this pilgrimage is to visit Mecca and the shrine of 'Ka aba' as well as to develop among Mohammedans the faith of common brotherhood in spite of sectarian division. A Muslim, citizen of whatever country he may be, he bears a zeal and a spark of celestial fire for Mecca. In his bosom, his eyes remain fixed on this central spot because he knows that the sentiments of Muslims remain attached to this particular place from the age of darkness.
God the benefactor and lawgiver inspired the wisdom of His believers by the rule and regulation of this obligatory pilgrimage. There is no restriction or compulsory for all to go to pilgrimage at Mecca. God the lawgiver developed the sense for understanding the necessary conditions regarding the pilgrimage. He expressed in clear terms that:
(a) those who are free and allowed to go on pilgrimage, (b) those who are intelligent and can evaluate the value of pilgrimage, (c) those who possess sufficient means and can easily afford all the expenses as well as their subsistence on journey, (d) those who are in a position to afford their dependants in their absence during the journey, (e) those who are at liberty and there are no hindrances which may become barrier in their pilgrimage.

People who ascribe worldly gain by performing 'Haj', they are grossly mistaken. I again repeat the real function behind the 'Haj'. It is meant to win the God's will and pleasure and securing of means unto Him, self purification and the development of celestial element in his person. 'Haj' is a true symbol of Love's frenzy: the strange dress, the curious rituals, the waling round the House of 'Ka aba' with some though delightfully, embeded in the heart and the kissing of a slab of stone, fixed in a corner of that beloved building, the wandering and staying there for three days and nights. All these functions of the individuals reflects the
real spirit of this unique pilgrimage. In fact the 'Haj' constitutes, both in its forms and essence, the symbolisation of the latter's supreme devoutness and matchless submission to the Will of God. Every Muslim who can afford to undertake the pilgrimage should at least once in his life visits this place, where the most glorious episode of Hazrat Ibrahim's life and his dedication towards his creator had taken place. The place itself gives its impression upon the pilgrims to know the practical proof of his attachment to the path of that true friend, slave and devotee of the Divine.

3. MORAL VIRTUES.

In Islam morality like worship forms an important branch of religion. If due consideration is given to morality, it reflects man's basic characteristics in the society, that is why it is regarded more important than the other practices in Islam. Morality presents the individuals love towards his creator. The good moral of an individual is God's ordain attribute. Towards this end the Prophet of Islam says, "let the virtues of God be your virtues."

The good virtues of a man are liked by God and it is advantageous for him equally because through it he earns God's pleasure, for the same God rewards him. Man's morality can be categorised into four groups. (a) The acts of man during the expression and affirmation of tribute to the glory
of God and worshipfulness of God. During this time his expression regarding his own helplessness and submission to Him. All the acts of worship comes under this category. (b) All those activities of the man which he performs being a human being towards his material wants for the existence in this world. If he fulfils his wants according to the wishes of God, he becomes worthy of all His sanctions and rewards. Take for example a man is engaged in certain profession, and shoulders the responsibilities of his family. Towards this end God has laid down certain rules. While discharging family duties, if he devotes himself towards Divine ordinances, all his activities shall be counted as religious and he will be entitled to receive the rewards of God. Man's this simultaneous double activities are divided into further two groups, the (Maumalat) monetry affairs and (Muasharat) social conduct. (c) The activities of man towards the propagation of faith, religious preaching and giving instructions to others, giving assistance in sacred matters, accepting all trials and sufferings in holy causes, forbiding of evils and ordering for good deeds. People who attend the above jobs, they are regarded as the agent of Divine Apostles, the chosen servants of God, referred above activities of man are very pleasing to the Almighty, and it is full of rewards. (d) This group includes mercy, the forebearance of man. This is most distinguishing moral feature of the man because mercy is one of the Divine attributes. Because of this virtue God is glorified as the
most benvolent, the most compassionate, He derives the same from His servants. God also forgiving, hides the faults and sins of the others. Human being should also cultivate the same habit among themselves. Besides this God expect from His servants to produce among themselves moral qualities modesty, temperateness, beneficencies, charity, generosity, justice, firmmindedness and develop the quality of admiring the good of the others and neglect the weaknesses.

In the field of morality God expect from His lovers to carry out His wishes properly. Towards this end the Prophet of Islam informed people, "God made him His Apostle to evolve the moral virtues to its highest perfection, "Muslims who profess better morals are the most perfect in faith," "On the Day of Judgement the moral virtues of a Muslim will (prove to be) the heaviest item in the scale of deeds." In Koran there came instructions on several places that excessive love for wealth, contemptuous upbreading, double dealing, scandal mongering and malicious back-biting shall take the man into the hell. For all moral vices Prophet also told that more people can get escape from the punishment of hell due to their moral virtues. He stated that certain moral vices disqualify the man from being a Muslim. He instructed his followers

on different occasions as:

(1) "A man cannot be a true believer of Allah unless he attains the state of desiring for his brother what he desires for himself."

(2) "The ill-fated man, is that from whose mischief his neighbours are not safe."

(3) "That callous, unfeeling person is not a Muslim who eats to his satisfaction while his neighbour, by his side goes without meal."

(4) "It is the setting right of mutual relations of one's conduct where the monetary factor is involved. Faultiness of 'Maumalat' and 'Muashrat' is a razor that shaves from the roots (not the hair but faith)."

(5) "If a person buys a cloth for ten Dinars, and out of the same one is tainted (i.e. it has been acquired by unfair means), none of his Namaz will be accepted to God so long as he wears the cloth."

(6) "A body that has been reared on unlawful substance shall not gain entry into the heaven. "The Prophet of Islam expressed his strong resentment against those who indulged in unfair practices in business transactions."

(7) "Whoever deceive in business is not mine."

(8) "Who is not respectful to his elders, He says, and affectionate to those who are younger to him is not one of His."
Morality in Islam is regarded as important as other groups of worship. An individual can only attain perfection in his life by giving due considerations upon the above sayings of Prophet as well as traditions.

OBSCURANTISM AMONG LOCAL MOHAMMADANS.

**

I. CASTE AND SOCIAL DISCRIMINATIONS:

Islam does not recognise any social distinction or discrimination based upon lineage or occupation. The caste among Muslims of Aligarh District insist upon social segregation of one group to another. The Prophet of Islam preached in clear words that every Muslim irrespective of his rank or his birth is equal in the eye of God and there can be no distinctions or discriminations among Muslims except in regard to degrees of devoutness. This conception of life seems altogether alien for the Muslims populated in district Aligarh. They are divided into various castes and discriminates each and other on the basis of their caste and creeds. Most of them are endogamous and the rest lower castes of Muslims are exogamous while Koran give emphasis upon universal Muslim brotherhood.

The caste pride and prejudice found in district Aligarh is due to the influence of 'Prusha' Hyman of the Rig Veda, which describe the creation of the different major castes groups, 'Varnas' from the different part of the body of the Primeval Being - Brahma, from mouth born Brahman, from arms Khatriyas, from the thighs Vaisya and from the feet

Koran : IX : II.
Rig Veda : X. 90. 12.
Sudras. The ethics of Islam sticks around two basic principles in contrast to the above, (a) Oneness of God (Wahdahu-La-Sharik) and the other (b) Brotherhood among all the believers of 'Allah'. The direct link between man and his creator secures greatest equality, every person is equal to every other in the eye of God, the creator. On the Day of Resurrection 'Yawm-ul-Qiyam) every one will be judged by Allah according to his deeds. The Prophet of Islam himself in clear terms declared the conception of Muslim brotherhood in his noble sermon at the 'Farewel Pilgrimage' in Mecca: O Ye Man! Harken Unto My Words and Take Ye then to heart! Know Ye that every Muslim is a Brother to every other Muslim, and that Ye are now one Brotherhood." Thus the idea of equality and brotherhood was brought into practice during the early days of Islam.

The Muslims of Aligarh though embraced Islam but they remain in their own social segregations. The 12th century Muslim conquerors of India intentionally kept them aloof from the general people of this country. Their priests, nobility, soldiers, merchants and artisans etc. who came along with them adopted the policy of maintaining their pure colour and creed. Muslim Priesthood in India in

Risely, : People of India, and Ley, : Sociology of Islam P- 105 used the term 'Ajlaf' for the clean occupational castes and 'Arzal' for unclean castes.
its early stages was not hereditary while the rule of succession of the new priests from the noble classes, father to son became prevalent in India. Muslim Priesthood acquired the rule of hereditary succession. Son began to succeed his father, thereafter 'ASTANA' and 'TAKYADARS' (seats of preachings and spiritual guidances) became the family monopoly. In every cities of India there are found 'Takyadars' and 'Astana Holders'. Similar is the case with the District Aligarh. There are several 'Dargahs' whose hereditary occupants possess themselves to be the most superior castes people among tother Muslims of the city. The foreign Muslim races in contrast to the indigenous converted Muslims maintain two fold divisions: (1) those of foreign extraction (2) those of Indian origin. In case of marriages these ethnic groups never lost their identities. The foreign Muslims claim a superior status and descents because of their direct relationship to the conquerors. The local converts to Islam although exempted from 'Jazia' (pol tax) could not hope to rank equal with the rulers and their descendents. Thus caste segregation started among Muslims first based on racial differences. The foreigners 'Ashraf' or 'Shurfa' never accepted to cultivate family relationship with the 'Ajlafs' and 'Arzals' among native Muslims. With this racial segregation in India, the Muslim social system gradually began to split on the lines
of already established Hindu caste system. In District Aligarh it has been noted that Muslim society is divided into four major groups (i) the 'Ashraf' - who traces their origin to foreign lands such as Arabia, Persia, Turkistan or Afghanistan. (ii) The Hindus of high birth who were converted to Islam. (iii) The clean occupational castes (iv) The converts from untouchable castes like 'Bhangi', 'Chamar' etc. The division of Muslim community possess a serious problem towards propagating the idea of Muslim Brotherhood among the Natives of this 'Duab'. Besides this, among Muslims the caste structure resembles to their Hindu brethren. For example they practice among them (a) Endogamy, (b) Exogamy, (c) Hypergamy etc.

A. ENDOGAMY AND SUBCASTE : Among the native Hindus, the high castes as well as low castes are subject to the rule of caste endogamy. Among them marriages outside the caste is socially disapproved and the offender is liable to a social boycott. Outside the caste, if there takes place any marriage, the offshoots from such marriages are not granted full status within the social unit. If some one marries a woman of a low caste, a severe social boycott is imposed upon them. Similar is the case among the Muslims in District Aligarh. The two religious sects 'Shia' and 'Sunni' do not marry with each other, apart from this there are other several castes which do not intermarry with each other. The
'Ashraf' branch do not enter into marriage relationship with the 'Ajlaf' and 'Arjal' castes. There has developed big gap between the faiths of the two. Muslim marriages take place on family affairs like Hindus. The families of the bridegroom and bride negotiate first. The only difference takes place between the procedure. Among the Muslims generally the family of the bridegroom takes lead. The rest matters are decided quite like Hindu manners, specially the question of the dowery.

In district Aligarh the prominent sect among the Muslims are 'Sunnis', they follow the Hindu school of theology. This school specify the features in regard to the equality of the two families entering into marriage negotiations, although the doctrine of Islam does not recognise any inequality between the two families, entering into the marriage negotiations. The 'Hanafi' school recognise following factors which should be considered at the time of marriage contract. (i) Family 'Nasab'. (ii) Islam. (iii) Profession. (iv) Freedom. (v) Means for the support of the wife. The 'Hanafi' school recognised the above points for the marriages outside the Arabia. Even, it does not much discriminate, it maintains the law of equality and brotherhood. The same is practice in India gone under further interpretation and

changes. The 'Ashraf' class as well as many clean occupational classes are again divided into 'Biradari' - the brotherhood or the association of kinsmen. There are several examples, especially among 'Ashraf' class that they are subdivided into various marriage relationships, which is called 'Bihadharis'.

This forms a restricted circle for the selection of wife. This endogamous circle is very narrow, it only includes parents ego groups. This limited kins group is called 'Kuf'. In this restricted group marriage generally takes place on the will of the individuals. Thus among 'Ashraf' class 'Biradari' is a broader circle, while 'Bihadhari' (marriage relation group) is very restricted and limited. For example, some time 'Sharwani' Pathans of Aligarh do not give their daughters in their 'Biradari', instead of prefer to marry in father's 'Kuf', the smallest circle. The cause behind it is this that 'Biradari' is a wider circle, in this circle there are family members who have lost their purity of ancestry marrying in a family of lower caste. In view of the above, it has become customery that a. Syed prefers to marry in a Syed family, a. Shaikh in Shaikh and so on. Every possible efforts they make before actual marriage to ascertain whether the negotiating party actually has the same caste status as that of the interested party. Thus among Shaikhas, the

Blunt, E.A. H. : The caste system of North India. P-201.
Shaikh Siddiqui will not marry into its other branch, Usmani or Qurreshy etc. He will prefer the Shaikh Siddiqui branch. Similar is the case of high castes Hindus.

Muslim Rajputs of Aligarh, to this day still are completely endogamous, they preserve and practice the Hindu rule of hypergamy. A Rajpur family whether Hindu or Muslim prefer to marry within its own circle.

Some of the occupational castes, such as 'Qassabs' (butcher) Kabaryas (green grocers) Bhand (Jesters) Manihar (bracelet makers) are strictly endogamous, they commonly do not marry outside their castes. The rest of the occupational castes practice Isogamy (marrying in equals) may be put into the categories as: (a) Julaha (Weaver), Nai (Barber) Mirasi (musician) Halwai (confectioner) (b) Kumhar (potter), Dhunya (cotton carder) (c) Faqir (beggar), Teli (oil presser), Dhobi (washer man), Gaddi or Ghosi (grazer). They all do not seek marriage relationship outside the categories referred above. The Muslim Bangi (scavenger) caste is confined to its own circle for the marriage purposes. Members of the clean castes do not like to develop marriage relationship with them. All the above class divisions and sectarianism is anti Islamic laws. This harms the views of the Muslim Brotherhood.

B. EXOGAMY: Koran in clear terms lays down: "Marry
not women who your father has married: for this is a shame, hateful, and an evil way : though what is past may be allowed . . . Forbidden to you are your mothers, and your daughters and your sisters, and your aunts, both on the father and mother's side, and your foster mother and your foster sisters, and the mother of your wives, and your step-daughters who are your wards, born of your wives to whom Ye have gone in: (but if you have not gone in unto them, it shall be no sin in you to marry them) and the wives of your sons who proceed out of your lions: and Ye may not have two sisters, except where it is already done . . . Forbidden to you also are married women, except those who are in your hands as slave."

Muslims are not allowed to marry all those women referred in the holy passage of Koran. One commits the mistake, means violates the rules of Islam and he is sheer in ignorance and darkness of his religion. The exogamous castes among Muslims usually comes into the range of the above noted marriage circles and they frequently marry the above women. The Muslim Kabarya (greengrocer), Bhishti (watermen) Bhangi (scavengers) however do not fully abide by the

Koran : IV : 26, 27, 28.
above rules of Koran. They marry according to their old traditions. Some times they marry with the two real sisters at a time. The Muslim Rajputs as I have already discussed about them, still abide by the pre-Islamic rules of exogamy and do not marry even, with the first cousin both parallel and cross. Similar is the case with the other branches of the Muslim Rajputs. Other lower castes among Muslims frequently violates the Islamic marriage rules.

C. HYPERGAMY: Among Muslims specially the high castes which are called 'Ashraf' practice the rule of hypergamy like their Hindu brothern. As among Hindus there is wide practice to take wife from the lower groups within the caste, while refusing at the same time to give their own daughters in marriage to a man of a lower group within the caste. The 'Ashraf' section among the Muslims give first preference for the selection of a suitable wife within the exogamous circle. If a suitable match they do not find, they select the girl to those groups which have an equal caste status. When they fail to find out a suitable girl in this circle, again they trace in lower class. But the cases in which an 'Ashraf' girl is given in marriage to a low caste person are extremely rare. There are cases of Syeds, Shaikhs or Pathans marrying pseudo 'Ashraf' girls but the instances are very rare. A Syed may take the wife

from the Shaikh but he would hesitate to give his daughter in marriage to Shaikh. The same is true with the Shaikh and Pathans. The Muslim Rajputs according to Blunt, "preserve their Hindu rule of hypogamy." They usually give their daughters to high class Muslims and take wife from the lower strata.

D. SOCIAL DIFFERENCES: Apart from the above sectetrain policy, there are found other social differences between the high and the lower classes among the Muslims. Muslim Zamindars (landlords) of Aligarh maintain their superiority upon their cultivators and the serving castes derived from the lower castes. The 'Ashraf' class (Shaikh, Syed, and Pathans) being the feudal class among Muslims, treat the lower classes as 'Parja' (subjects). As it is prevalent among the native castes that birth alone determines the individual's social status, similar is the case among Muslims. If a person of low caste, takes for example 'Nai' or 'Hajjam' (barber), if acquires some property and maintains his economic position, he would never rank equal with those born in 'Ashraf' class, no matter how poor this 'Ashraf' may be. Towards this end famous proverb is known in villages as, "A Teli (oil-Parcher) will remain a Teli, no matter how much his wealth is increased, even if his economic resources have become equal to those of Raja (ruler)". The same tradition is found all over the villages
of District of Aligarh, one can easily find out that there remains clashes in between 'Ashraf' and the lower classes, due to their economic developments and the ownership of a large fortune. The low borne Muslim can hardly claim an equal socio-caste-status with those of higher birth Muslims. Apart from all wealth and material statuses the lower borne Muslim have to remain within his class and caste limits. In rural areas of District Aligarh, the caste impact is still greater, the 'Ashraf' (Syed, Shaikh and Pathans) are clearly distinguishable from the other serving castes (Julaha, Dhuna, Mewati, Nai or Qassab) and others.

The position of social differences is almost same in urban areas. In proper Aligarh 'Ashraf' class distinguish themselves from all the occupational castes. The high class Muslims called them usually 'Shawala' (dwellers of the town) and they do not establish free social and ceremonial intercourse with them. The respectable middle class is engaged in the district generally in the professions, clerical, teaching, lawyer, doctor, businessmen. Their occupation is clearly distinguishable from other occupational castes such as Halwai, Fruitsellers, Telis, Atishbajs and Nanbais. Thus there is found a sort of rivalry between the low borne and high borne Muslims. The low borne Muslims who have raised

Ghaus Ansari: Muslim Caste in Upper Pradesh. Lucknow, 1960 P-59-60
their social status by developing their economic positions, they have adopted the title of 'Ashraf' and claim to be an 'Ashraf' descendant. The 'Bisatis' (general merchants), Halwais (sweetsellers), and Qassabs (butchers) mostly have added in their names the prefix of Shaikh Siddiqui and comes in direct contrast to the high born Shaikhas. The newly formed socio-economic classes among Muslims, in order raise their caste status, generally identify themselves with the higher castes of Muslims. It is the product of economic competition developed in proper Aligarh as well as in other districts of India.

II. PROHIBITED SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES:

Islam prohibits the use of intoxication of every kind. It restricts Muslims not to indulge in sexual pleasure, gambling. The Muslim in the company of their native colleagues have adopted various evils of the society. The atrocities like theft, arson and dacoity they are committing like other community members. Usury has become a common trade among the different castes of the Muslims now-a-days. This practice perhaps persisting on among them before the time of their conversion to Islam. Adultery which is strictly prohibited in Islam, day by day becoming common in Muslim society. The

act of slandering in the eye of God is the worst activity, Muslims are not afraid of it.

The greatest tragedy with the Muslims of the District Aligarh is that, they are the admirer of traditional enemy of Paganism. They have become habituated of different social evils and take part into it whole-heartedly. The basic cause of the addiction of Muslims of different vices is their relationship with the native castes, among whom there is no religious restriction in this present age. Muslims, specially residing in rural areas of District Aligarh are totally in darkness, they have lost faith in himself. Their whole natural attitude is being moulded by the prevalent tendencies of that area. They exhibit the same materialistic tendencies which is found among their colleagues. Instead of discarding the earthly longings, they are day by day devoting towards the achievements of their desires. The longing for 'After-life' is declining from them. In some respect the lower castes of Muslims are actually surpassing the western races in the glorification of earthly desires. The basic cause as I have assessed, the passage of time has disconnected them with their spiritual views, and taking them back towards their original spiritual inspirations. Their present ideals are opposed to the Muslim religious life.
A. **DRINKING AND GAMBLING TOGETHER WITH OTHER VICES:**

The Muslim 'Badguars' who embraced Islam during the time of Ala-ud-Din Khilji, still retains among them their Hindu religious practices. On the occasion of Dewali, they drink and gamble frequently with their kinsmen. There is a caste among Mohammadans known as 'Bediya', they resemble to other vagarent castes like 'Haburas' or 'Kanjars'. Some of the 'Bediyas' are still Hindu and some who say themselves Muslim do not differ in practices to their Hindu brethren. Both worship 'Kali Devi'. Among them all the caste disputes are decided by the tribal council. Those who are punished by the council, deposit fine. The money thus realised against the punishments is spent on liquor. The kinsmen gather on appointed time drink together. They swear by the name of Ganges. Their married women say each other 'Salam' and the unmarried 'Ram, Ram'. When a person falls ill, they call Wizard (a man who can caste magic). He smokes some intoxicated herbs and utter some words, waves a broom upon the patient and thus drag out the ghost. On the occasion of Holi and Dewali, they take part in gambling and drinking.


frequently. They equally take part in all Muslim festivals. In real sense these castes are under great obscurantism.

The Muslim 'Bhands' (jesters) retain among them numerous Hindu usages. Though they are divided into two 'Suni' and 'Shia' sects of Islam but attend all Hindu festivals. On the occasion of Holi and Dewali they also drink and sing songs door to door. Similar is the case of Muslim 'Bharbhunjas' (grain Parchers). They practice ordinary rule of exogamy. On the occasion of marriages, according to their old traditions, serve liquor to the guests. The Moham­madan 'Bhats' (a sept of Rajputs) who embraced Islam during the reign of Shahab-ud-Din Ghori, practice a curious mixture of Hindu and Mohammadan rites. Marriage rites among them are performed both through the 'Pandit' as well as 'Kazi', there takes place 'Nikah' as well as 'circumambulation'. On this occasion wine is served to all kinsmen. Apart from this they gamble with their Hindu kinsmen on the occasion of Dewali. The Muslim 'Bhatt' (a sept of converted Rajputs) who became Mohammadan in the time of Qutub-ud-Din and Ala­ud-Din, retain among them their old traditions. They are settled in District Aligarh beside Kali Nadi in Etah District. They are turbulent and in the habit of drinking and gambling. The caste of Churiharas' (bangle makers) is

endogamous and practice ordinary Mohammedan rules. They worship various tribal deities, gamble and use wine among them. The Muslim Dhobis (washerwomen) of District Aligarh, who are treated as unclean caste, on the occasion of marriages among them liquor is served to all the participants of the marriage. It is regarded among them as some auspicious thing which soliminish the marriage functions. Besides this, customarily they serve wine to all their kinsmen on this occasion. They have strong tribal council, when the members gather to consider some dispute they are entertained by the wine. Among Muslim 'Gujars' (a lower caste of Rajputs) in District Aligarh, the marriage date is settled by the 'pandit' and both the fathers of bride and bridegroom exchange the cup of liquor on this occasion. This is done by them in confirmation of marriage date. They propitiate the family gods, observe Holi and 'Nagpanchami' festivals and gamble frequently. The Muslim 'Jadon' (a sept of Rajputs in Bulandshahar who are known as 'Chonkarzada'), hold Ganges water in particular veneration. Almost all are in the habit of taking wine and gambling. This practice among them persisting on from generation to generation.

---


prior embracing Islam. Similar is the case with the Muslim 'Jats' (a lower sept of Rajputs). According to their old family traditions they still worship village gods and goddesses and take part in various social evils. The Muslim 'Kumhars' (potters) in this district are divided into several endogamous subcastes. In the company of their family members takes wine and gamble on the occasion of Holi and Dewali. The Meo or Mewati (a caste of fruitsellers) who take part wholeheartedly in all Muslim festivals and religious observances, but according to their old family traditions, participates in all Hindu religious rites and do not hesitate to drink on this occasion. Gambling is common among them. Almost all lower converted castes of Muslims, like 'Qalandars', 'Qassabs' 'Rangrez', Teli, 'Dhobi', 'Nai' etc. have been noted accustomed of wine and enjoying upon gamble.

It is very difficult to comment about any Muslim group which condemn the use of wine frequently. Women, tutor of children, religious people, have been noted habitual wine. The soldiers and military men generally use wine passionately. Besides palm-wine (toni) opium and 'Bhang', also consume liquor in large quantities. The Muslims had become so addicted to the intoxicants that they use to take not for the sake of pleasure but it has become a part of their diet and treat the same more important than the food and other drinks. While
Koran condemns as, "They question thee about intoxicants and game of chance. Say: in both of them is great sin, and same advantage also for men, but the sin of them is greater than their advantages."

B. SEX-RELATIONS:

Fornication, debauchry, developing illicit love connections with either of the sex is strictly prohibited in Islam. In Koran on several places there are directions for strict punishment for the wrong-doers. Apart from this when we study about different castes among Muslims in District Aligarh, we mark, consciously or unconsciously people are found indulged in adultery, sex-relations and slandering. The women of Muslim 'Bediyas' (a vagrant caste among Muslims) of Aligarh are mostly the victim of above crime. Their girls from their early ages becomes prostitutes. Among their subcastes like 'Birigbari', 'Dhaanuk', 'Gandhare', 'Jangali' and 'Tawaif', women are generally spoils and debased. Most of the 'Bediyas' are pillerers and petty thieves. They lead the vagrent's life in camps. They pitch their camps in the villages where some landlord resides. There women start to


cultivate illicit relations with them. By this trick they assist their men to commit theft in the village.

Mohammadan 'Bhatyaras' (cooks) during Mughal rule in India were serving as innkeepers. At that time beside the Grand Trunk Road there were arrangement of inns at convenient distances for the travellers. The service to the travellers usually were rendered by the women of 'Bhatyaras'. Mohammadan travellers used to pay double than the Hindu travellers, as they used to take most of the other duties from them. The old practice still persist among them on different tourist centres, who serve as prostitutes for the entertainments of visitors. Almost all the lower classes among Mohammadans 'Ajalaf', like Dafali, Darzi, Dhobi, sex intrigues are common among them. Their men and women both are often expelled and punished by the tribal council. In villages where they reside, there remains hew and cry each day against all the criminal acts of their women. Among Muslim Jats usually unmarried girls develops intrigues with the men of lower castes, and when the case is registered with the tribal council, they are expelled. If the lover of the girl belongs to some higher caste, she is pardoned on a fine to provide feast to all the members of the council. The basic causes of corruption among them is due to the practice of infanticide since the old days. They were in the habit of conducting intrigues with the women of lower castes. The same practice still persists among them since the old age. The poor Jats who cannot afford to
purchase the bride they enter into intrigues with the women in their neighbourhood.

From the time immemorial the Muslim community, particularly the upper class, have been accustomed of sexual pleasure. The vice of sex pleasure as we find today in our society is the legacy of past. Sex-pleasure among Moham-madans was encouraged by the abundant booty of captive beauty in wars or through easy purchases of the slaves in markets. Women in India, either due to poverty or having no proper means of subsistence of being widow adopted the profession of public women and prostitution. In the District of Aligarh as well as other parts of this country, the women of lower castes e.g. Domins, Patras, Kumachins, Pari-Shars, and Lulis usually carry out the profession of prostitutes. . .

No doubt, some Muslim Emperors made their best efforts to eradicate the above social vices from the community, but it appears, the profession as find to-day was encouraged by the rich and well to do people out of the Muslim masses. Instead of abolishing this social vice from the country, they ever tried to protect the corrupted women, Not only the Muslim nobles and rich persons patronised the public women, but also the Hindu Rajas and other well to do

sections of the society equally gave them full encouragements. Muslim who takes part in this social evil and encourage prostitutes, feel themselves relaxed, they under gross misconception of Islamic rules. They are guilty. Koran in clear terms expresses, "And Whose of you is not able to afford to marry free, believing women, (let him marry) born among the believing maids whom your right hands possess. Allah knoweth best your faith. Ye are sprung one from another, so wed them by permission of their masters, and give unto them their fair dowry, they being chaste, not debauched nor entertaining paramours."

C. THEFT, ARSON AND DACOITY:

The teaching of Islam prohibits theft, arson and dacoity; the wrong doer shall be severely punished. Being aware of this profane social evil, there are certain Muslim castes in this District Aligarh which commit theft frequently and some time commit arson and loot. There is a caste of Muslim 'Bediyas' who are notorious thieves in the District. There is a tribe of 'Baloch' in this District, they are turbulent, reckless and daring men. They never acknowledge the superiority of any one. They are

professional thieves of dangerous character. They tour in
the guise of 'Faqirs', physicians and teachers of Koran.
Most of them have acquired landed properties, and several
of them have no proper means of livelihood. Such 'Balochs'
commit robbery not by violence but by picking locks with
needles. One of the party men make entries into the house,
and other stand on guard. After committing theft the original
culprit receives two third of the property as his share while
his confederates who remained on watch, receive one third.

The Muslim 'Jogis' who practice chiefly long
continued suppression of respiration, inhaling and exhalting
the breath in a peculiar manner by sitting in 84 different
attitudes, by fixing the eyes on the top of the nose. They
bear different reputations. They wander here and there and
get themselves acquainted with the history and accidents of
many rich families. Thereafter manage access into those
families. After committing plunder and loot, they disappear.
One some places they go and pretend to change the copper into
gold. Some of them are professional prisoners. Other pretend
to deal in mile-stone and disappear by stealing cattles.

Similar is the case of 'Meos' or 'Mewatis' or
'Mina Meos'. They are the great plunderers, at the time

Ila Majumdar : Social status of Northern Indian women. Agra.
P-142.
Koran : V : 5, II : 221, IV : 22-25
Vol. III. P-485-93
of dacoity, they forget themselves either Hindu or Musalman and do not hesitate to attack upon even the religious places like temples and mosques. Though they say themselves Muslim but do not know 'Kalema'.

Koran in clear terms lays down, "As for the thief, whether man or woman, cut Ye their hands in recompense for their doings, an exemplary punishment from Allah, An Allah is Mighty, Wise."

D. USURY:

God dislike such people who increase their wealth by receiving usury. These people are misguided who maintain that usury is equalant to trade and business. God has allowed business but not usury. In District Aligarh there are some castes among Muslims who invest their money in usury and thus increase their wealth. Muslim 'Kalwars' (the distillers) of Aligarh have left their original trade and have started now lending their money. Some of them keep petty shops pipe and tobacco, some are engaged in trade of hide and skin of animals. The 'Rangrezs' (dyers) of Aligarh, after facing hard competition in their profession due to the foreign trade have left their original profession. Most of them are agriculturalists and petty shop-keepers. Some of them have started lending money. Similar is the

Koran: V: 38, 39, 40.
case of Muslim 'Sailgarh' (caste of armourers and polishers). From the time of Britishers their trade gone down, some of them are the sharpener of knife, a pair of scissors or razors. Some started the trade of money lending. Besides this almost all the 'Nau Muslims' like 'Badgijars, Raiputs, Bhats, Bisatis, Ghosis, Gujars, Jadon, Jats lend money freely among the villagers. When the crop becomes ripe, they purchase grain from the borrowers on cheap rates against their due money upon the. Most of the villagers still, from generation to generation are coming on in debt and could not repay the due amount upon them. Those who charges extra amount against the money on loan, they are guilty, they will be severely punished according to Koran, "And what Ye put out at usury to increase it with the substance of others shall have no increase with Allah, but that, which you give in charity, seeking Allah's pleasure, hath increased manyfold."

III. SUPERSTITION AND SYNCRETIC BELIEVES:

In the District of Aligarh, the uneducated masses of Muslims, since birth to the end of their lives believe in folk-belief, superstition, and syncretism. This has been noted mostly 'Sufis' are the basic source of this superstitions.

______________________________________________________________
Aziz Ahmad : An Intellectual History of Islam in India.
Edinburgh. 1969. P. 44-45
In District Aligarh there is a caste of 'Qalandars'. They are the wandering mendicants. They earn their livelihood by showing the tricks of bear and monkey. Some time, instead of showing the game of Bear and monkey, start begging. These indigenous 'Qalandars' some time represents old vulgarised orthodox order. Most of the Qalandars pose themselves as 'Makzoob' (devoted each time in the memory of God). These Qalandariyas exercised great influence upon the masses of Aligarh and use intoxicants frequently. Most of the Qalandariyas shaved their heads and all hairs from their faces and went about wrapped in blankets. Other roam on the street like 'Hindu Sanyasi' and occasionally went about naked.

The most widespread order is of 'Madaris', in District Aligarh. Originally the order was founded by a Syrian Jew, known as 'Shah Madar'. He migrated to India during 15th century. The 'Madaris' show their affinity with the 'Chishtiya' order. In this order there is found most of the Hindu traits of Yogis as well as from Christianity Judaism, such as use of 'Hashish'. They neither keep fast not perform 'Namaz'. They rub ash on their person and go about naked. This order got influence during the 19th century.

The 'Dafalis' (Jesters) of Aligarh are the followers of this order.

There are other several practices among Moham-

madans which is regarded as heterodoxy, some of them are remarkably found among the orthodox Molvis in this District. Take for example the use of Amulets (Tawiz). It contains the verses of Koran or the pious formulae. The learned Muslim Uleamas like Shah Wall-Allah and Shah Abdul Aziz in their writings treated amulets as unholy believes. The use of amulets are still very much common among Aligarh Muslims. There are several varieties of it, which is used on the occasion of different misfortunes and calamities. In rural areas, the cultivators places amulets in their crop fields against the protection of all diseases of crops.

Animism to which each and every Muslim in his daily life condemns is found attached with his daily prac-
tices. Muslims, specially in Aligarh area to a great extent are influenced by Hinduism. They regard that the water of certain well is connected mystically with the water-saint 'Khidr' and with the 'Jin'. The orthodox Muslims use it on the occasion of certain illness. Some orthodox 'Sufis' still among the masses are believed as powerful supernatural men. For example 'Baba Farid-ud-Din Ganj Shakar, people here believe about him that he had possessed 'dast-e-Ghaib' (hidden hand). What he desired,
he always took out from his bag. Similar is the case of Abu Ali Qalandar, who had the supernatural power to ride on a wall. In almost all towns of this district Aligarh there are found graves of saints, about whom it is said that they were beheaded during the fighting with Hindus for the propagation of Islam, and they continued on fighting without the head with them.

In District Aligarh there are several tombs of orthodox 'Sufis', which is held in veneration by the mystics as well as common Muslims. On the occasion of anniversary of these saints, there takes place celebration on their mausoleums. On the grave of some saints, there takes place huge fair and musical assemblies (Qawwali). People gather on this occasion and take the earth from the grave and rub it on their faces. Some take it away for the diseased persons as a remedy. At the mausoleum of Salar Masud Ghazi, who died bachelor, there is celebrated each year the ceremony of his marriage. There takes place a huge gathering of Aligarh people on that occasion at Bahraich. Most of the Muslims of Aligarh worship 'Bhairon'. In villages Muslims hang rags on trees to ward off diseases. This practice is common all over the District among both the Hindu and Muslim community. Most of the 'Molvis' and common Muslims do the 'Sifli Amal' (earthly and vicious magic).

This correspond to the popular Hindu magical practices, who used to do the same for gaining power over their enemies.

Besides the above there are certain obscurant believes among Muslims of Aligarh. The pregnant women, according to old faith cancel themselves from the effect of eclips of the Sun or Moon both. They bear firm faith, during the eclips if they will move from their places, there will born to them deformed child. Accordingly during the hours of eclips they lie quietly. There are certain days, specially, Wednesday, which is regarded most unfortunate for the birth of a child. On the sixth day of the birth of the child, when the mother takes bath of purification, the rite is celebrated on the pattern of Hindu traditions, as they maintain that the mother gave the birth of the child safely by the good wishes of their goddesses. Almost all the Muslims of lower castes believe in evil eye. They in their own language as 'Nazar'. Generally old women do not give any thing to eat the children in the presence of sweepress, Domins, beggar maids etc. They hesitate to expose their child in front of deformed or mutilated persons. The prosperous Muslims fear the evil eye of indignets. To eliminate the effect of the evil eye they take several auspicious names at that moment. In villages of Aligarh when the child becomes ill, the old women take them to the mosque for the breathings of 'Molvi'. On Tuesday or Sunday they caste upon the head of the child dry chillies and
other ingredients and throw the same into the oven. It is regarded as an antidote of the same. Some Muslim believe in 'Sweeping & Blessing' (Jhar-Phunk or waving certain grain over the head of the diseased person or suffering from the evil spirits. Such people call some expert 'Molvi', who wave the branches of certain tree upon the head of the sufferer and blows upon him certain verses of Koran. Most of the Muslims on this occasion sacrifices goat or chickens and distribute the meat among the poors or needy persons. This act is called 'Sadaqa' on the part of the sufferer.

Most of the Muslims in Aligarh area believe upon 'Panchon Pir'. This is a group of five syncretic saints. Almost all lower castes among the Muslims in this District worship 'Panchon Pir'. The group includes two Hindu saints, Bhaieron, the old earth godling and Amina, a Muslim woman identified by Hindus as Kalika, a 'satti' woman. The others are Ajab Salar, Hatli Pir, and Rajab Salar. Some of the Muslims worship Ghazi Mian. There is a Muslim saint, Zahir Pir (the poisonous saint). About him some say that he was a snake godling, some say that he was a martyr, who died fighting with the Rajput's hero Pirthivi Raj in 1192. He still maintains the characteristics of snake godling. The Hindu as well as Muslim beggers visit the shrine during the rainy season when fearful snakes comes out near his shrine.
There is a saint, probably out of Muslim origin, known as Muhyi-ud-Din or Shaikh Saddo. Generally women of lower castes worship him. During 13th century a mosque at Amroha was converted into Shaikh Saddo's house. It is said, in the same house there was practiced all sorts of superstitions and misbelieves. Depression and hysteria among the women generally caused by him. That is why the saint is specially propiated by women. Goats and kids are slaughtered in his name to invite his blessings upon the women and children. Women also maintain that he is the source of fertility for them. Barren women from all over this district usually visit his shrine to receive the blessings. In Aligarh District Muslims worship 'Sitla Mata' (the goddess of small pox). It is she who causes small pox, and epidemic diseases. The villagers in this District maintain that the disease is in the charge of her twin sons, who were Muslims, known as Syed Kaka (Lord Paternal Uncle) that is why the 'Womins' (Julahas) specially worship 'Sitla Mata'. People here in Aligarh feel afraid by the name of 'Hawwa'. This legendary syncretic figure is famous all over the district. According to Hindu mythology there was a malignant spirit known as 'Humma' in the 16th century. That spirit was identified associated with Mughal Emperor Humayun. The spirit generally causes harm and produces different types of atrocities upon the person involved in his charm. Thus people, specially women in dark night do not come out from their houses.
Among all castes of Muslims in this area there is a concept of 'Bhut' & 'Paret'. The 'Bhut' or the malignant souls of those whose death took place in uncleanliness or took place due to self-immolation and could not be buried with all religious rites. The souls of such people wander here and there. Some time attack upon the women and children, and bring torturous effect upon them. Similarly when the death of a woman takes place in the above manner or in pregnancy, she converts into 'Churel'. She also brings her atrocities upon the women and children. People who observe such women 'Churel', say their feet are turned behind and she eats up the heart of her victim.

The referred above superstitions and syncretic activities among the Muslims help us to understand, either enlighten or ignorant both types of Muslims are under obscurantism. Consciously or unconsciously Muslims are totally acting against the norms and values of Islam. Against above all obscurantism, the Fundamentalists, Orthodox and Modernists movements took start in 19th century and 20th century. Though not completely but to some extent the above prohibited practices ceased among the Westernised Upper Classes of Muslims and similarly among the lower middle orthodox classes, but it still persists among all uneducated and lower occupational castes among the Muslims. In the predominant Muslim area, either in proper District Aligarh or in its
Tehsils, the hold of above movements are not very strong. So far the lower occupational castes, residing in remote villages could not be properly approached by the movements. They are still under darkness. There are mosques, but there is no devout. The 'Tabligi Jamat' and 'Jamat-i-Islami' who are professing the doctrines of Islam and making efforts to reach to such areas, still failing to contact the people of these areas. The Muslim masses habituated specially in those remote villages are yielding to popular common obscurantism, largely through folk-beliefs and through participation in Hindu festivals.

********
*****
****
***
* 