

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Take as your place of worship – the place
where Ibrahim stood. (al-Qur'an 2:125)



SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF AFFINITY

English Version of the Urdu treatise
(Nisbaton Ki Baharain)

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Mas'ud Ahmed
M. A., Ph. D., Gold Medalist

International Series

4

Idara-e-Mas'udia, Karachi
(Islamic Republic of Pakistan)

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

گوئی پند

(1)

The word '*NISBA*' is commonly used in Urdu and Persian to show inter-relationship between two or more persons, places and things. Here our emphasis is on attributory link, attachment, relationship or affinity between two or more persons affecting or being affected by one another, especially in religious and spiritual phenomena. We would use the word '*Nisba*' to express our view-point which in itself will illustrate what we have in mind.

'*Nisba*' is a great reality, it elevates an ordinary and lowly thing and enhances its value and worth, as the '*Nisba*' becomes firm and lasting. We are in a sense the product or outcome of '*Nisba*' and the embellishment attached to or found round about us is on account of that '*Nisba*'. It preserves our identity and if for once this '*Nisba*' is taken away or we lose it through our fault we are reduced to nothingness — a worthless entity. Our society owes its existence to inter-related cooperation and attachment amidst the individuals inhabiting and constituting it or in other words, the *Nisba* between the corporate body of citizens as a unit and the society it self, is the very source or foundation of the human society. Nations and communities are recognized through the '*Nisba*' of the countries or religions they belong to, while the individuals are identified with the '*Nisba*' of their country and religion. It is on account of these '*Nisbas*' that respect and honour are accorded to them. Nations, communities, dynasties, families and houses draw their recognition on the score of this very *Nisba*. Islamic society and its institution has its roots and origin in the establishment and recognition of the '*Nisba*' between Muslims who join hands for the cause of Islam and

Almighty Allah. It is for this reason that Allah the Almighty through Revelations has stressed the sacred regard for apostles,¹ prophets,² Aulia Allah³ and elders⁴ who are the emblems of human dignity. Without this the establishment of society on firm foundation is unthinkable. Allah the Almighty has taken the Oath in the name of Holy city of Makka to which Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) belonged⁵ and in the names of War steeds⁶ who carried the Ghazis of Islam on their backs. These instances should be enough to open our eyes!

When we look to the world, we shall come across a host of things which should be better termed as wonders or curiosities belonging to distant age of the past preserved in the national archives as memorials to remind people of the patterns of things as they were in use in the past. For example a broken chair of any king which incidentally is of no worth in the material sense, suddenly becomes an object of wonder or curiosity and of great value when a historian or an archaeologist starts narrating special features of the concerned period of the past. Every interested person appreciates the management of museum where the chair is kept as an memorial. The value of the historical chair (*kursi*) at its base is the '*Nisba*' the chair had with the king as well as the age to which he belonged and left his marks on the pages of the history! Similarly we will also see other objects of historical or cultural significance — kept in the show cases of the Museums such as ancient books, coins, weapons, specimens of art and culture, broken pieces of

¹ Surah al-Ma'ida: 12 ; 92 ; al-Anfal: 20

² Surah al-Nur, 54,56 ; al-Fath: 9, al-Mujadila: 13 al-A'raf:157 al-Taghabun:12

³ Surah Fatiha: 5-6; Yunus: 62

⁴ Surah Bani Israel: 24

⁵ Surah al-Balad : 1-3.

⁶ Surah al-A'adiyat : 1-5.

stones, torn and worn out robes etc etc in the Museum which will arouse and enhance our curiosity in respect of these things. What has given these seemingly worn out objects dignity and memorial worth. The plain answer is *Nisba* and *Nisba* alone — the relationship of these objects with the age of their inception or usage; the *Nisba* with the ancient countries, the *Nisba* with the ancient kings (or other royal or court personalities), the *Nisba* with ancient culture and ancient dignitaries! If this *Nisba* was not there, then the valuable wonders of the past would not have found mention in the pages of the history and as such, being of no worth at all!

If we turn our eyes towards the relics and antiquities of the past, we would find that even persons endowed with intellectual wisdom and lively sense of decorum wondering about crazy like from place to place in different countries noted for historical past but since rendered waste and desolate, in search of some barren and bizarre spots in order to discover some relics by way of broken mutilated statues, rusted utensils or stone of some strange colour or shape, and after enriching their own knowledge thereby, they embellish the pages of their travelogue and stern the people with the marvels of their historical expeditions. The reward of their discovery would be that contingents of explorers and tourists would come from far and near corners and shell pages of their records with the pros & cons of these discoveries. Why do people become crazy for such expeditions? Because the same historical or monumental *Nisba* drives them out of their cosy and comfortable home, after bearing the hazards of distant travels, to reach the anticipated spots of ancient treasures, not necessarily of wealth & coins, but anything and everything looking out of shape etc, so that it may be branded as a relics of the past and the particular nation or community start taking interest and pride in these monumental relics etc which attract enlightened travelers

and intellectuals from difference nooks and corners! This apparent display of courage cum crazy is nothing but the marvel of 'Nisba' working at the base of instinctive emotions! These relics add to the historical grandeur of the concerned people who would cling to them as articles of national faith and would not part with it at any cost.

This very emotional attachment or 'Nisba' instills the sense of regard and honour of the people who have rendered services and sacrifices for the betterment of their people, and whose monumental record or relics become the symbols of national pride. There is not a single race or nation in the world which would tolerate desecration of their religious or national relics and memorials.

It was probably on account of the sanctimonious preservation of their relics of national heritage that the Govt. of Saudi Arabia, established the Institute for the preservation of the relics through a *farman* (Royal Decree) No. 46 in 1396/1976 and constituted a high power committee under the resolution of the cabinet ministers, bearing No. 235 in the month of safar 1396/1977. This is indeed a praiseworthy step in the right direction. It is presumed that under the same scheme of preservation of historical movements that the relics of Jewish Era in Khyber (Saudia) have been preserved and protected from destruction or theft etc. Similarly the relics of people of Samood have also been safeguarded and kept in contact in *Al-'Ula*.⁷ These relics pertain to the people of the past who suffered the wrath of Allah, yet their memorials have been protected. We as Muslims might say that more than the relics of accursed nations, those of Blessed nation should be given preference and priority, which happily the Saudi Arabian Government has maintained as a state policy —

⁷ Appeal from al-Shaykh Muhammad Ibrahim Misiri to King Fahad bin Abdul Aziz, Ref. Fayz al-Rasul, Baraon, India, March/April 1994, p. 25.

Haramain Sharifain (The twin sacred cities of Makka and Madina).

Here lie buried at every step of the land
Rare and unmatched priceless gems!

The sanctity and historical /national importance of relics in the sacred land of Arabs calls for the well managed safeguard and protection of sacred monuments which lie scattered at different places in the kingdom; at the same time efforts should be made to explore or excavate relics/monuments which lie buried under the debris of mounds of clay, because the nation/community as an compact unity demands its own preserrvatory safeguard and vigilant preservation:

The great philosopher Iqbal has said:

“Record in proper order the annals of
history, and become immortal, Regain your
life afresh out of the breath already past”.

The Holy Prophet (Allah’s grace and peace be upon him) has ordered and encouraged the visits⁸ of the deceased ones in order that the *Nisba* (emotional attachment) with them may be revived after times and maintained. This close association even after demise induces and inspires the visitors to pray for their souls, for heavenly comforts and the forgiveness of their omissions & commissions in the world. The Holy Prophet (Allah’s grace and peace be upon him) himself often visited the graves,⁹ prayed for forgiveness of sins of the deceased and conveyed blessings for their souls. Allah the Almighty commanded the Holy Prophet (Allah’s Grace and Peace be upon him) to pray for the companions as his prayers gave

⁸ Sahih al- Bihari, Vol. II, p.958.

⁹ Surah al-Tawba : 84

them solace and consolation.¹⁰ To pray for someone is indicative of mental and sentimental association (*Nisba*) with him and is a source of blessings for both. It seems the mediation (*wasilah*) of the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) was not necessary, for Allah the Almighty hears and answers the prayers as the pleases and whatever any companion prayed for, could be fulfilled, but the intention was (and still is) that companions and followers should feel that attachment and devotion to the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) may be emphasized practically so that the mutual '*Nisba*' on both sides may be affirmed. This was in a sense, to demonstrate how beloved and endearing his august personality was. This apparently calls for more and sincere reflection to enliven and refresh one's soul.

The Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) has asked the pilgrims to visit his Holy grave¹¹ as the Holy grave has a *Nisba* with the Holy body buried therein. It is for this reason that there is many a Qur'anic reference to the grave¹² in general as a trustee bears *Nisba* towards the person whose body she bears in her bosom as a trust. The holy shrines of the saints have been great centres for the preaching and propagation of Islamic teachings even in unfavorable circumstances. In Russia where there was strictest and most repressive prohibition to preach and practice Islam, the holy shrines of saints who laid down their lives in the early history of Islam proved centres of spiritual attachment (*Ruhani Nisba*) and kept the remembrance of Islam ever fresh and alive in the hearts of the devotees who cherish it in their hearts as a living force. Thus the *Nisba* of the Islam by these people ever remained

¹⁰ Surah al-Tawba: 103.

¹¹ Abu Dawood Ref. Sahih al-Bihari Vol. 2, pp.955-57

¹² Surah al-Hajj: 7, al-Fatir: 22; al-Mumtahina: 13, al-Infiter: 4; al-Takathur: 2

pulsating within their hearts though outwardly they were forbidden to practise it. Decades later when the communism as an ideology was shattered like the gossamer of cobweb, the Muslim in that fallen regime re-emerged with their spirit redoubled in the same generative up-surge as it was suppressed in the dark prohibitive period some years before. The resurgent impulse working behind this phenomenon was none other than the ever-alive '*Nisba*' of the Muslim Masses with the ideology of Islam which was inborn with them - inseparable and re-emerging when the pressure on it slackened. This has set the so-called western idealist in mental confusion and intellectual disarray. They are bewildered with no seeming chance of their regaining consciousness unless they acquiesce with the matter of fact situation in front of them.

(2)

The Holy Qur'an has prohibited worship of any person or object other than Almighty Allah¹³ but at the same time it did not negate other kinds of '*Nisba*'. It has commanded loyalty and obedience to Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him).¹⁴

The *Nisba* between the Angels as a species on one hand and the mankind on the other hand, symbolically represented by Prophet Adam as its First and FOREMOST PROGENITOR and the vice-regent of Allah the Almighty is that the angels were asked to bow in prostration before Hazrat Adam.¹⁵ The Divine command for the son is to lower the wings of humility before the parents (i.e. abstain from behaving arrogantly) when they reached the old age

¹³ Surah al-Nisa: 36, al-In'am: 151

¹⁴ Surah al-i-Imran : 31

¹⁵ Surah al-Baqarah: 34

and become decrepit;¹⁶ for the subjects to obey their rulers.¹⁷ These are mere relative instances between two sets of creations in respect of obedience and the authority on which norms and purpose of creation are based and which guarantee harmonious relation in the affairs of life in this world and inwards to the Hereafter. The Qur'an has clearly said while describing the disparity between sects of mankind: "It is We (Allah the Almighty) Who portion out between them their livelihood in the life of this world and we raise some of them above other in ranks so that some may command work from others."¹⁸

This is not the question of Shirk or kufr. The *Nisba* between two groups making one obedient and subservient to other is not between the creator (*khaaliq*) and the created (*makhloq*). This should be clearly borne in mind as a slight misconception or error in interpretation is likely (God forbid) to cost heavily in respect of *Iman*.

Allah the Almighty to the Righteous soul has himself said;

"O soul in complete Rest and satisfaction, come back to thy Lord well pleased (thyself) and well blessing unto Him enter thou then among the Devotees! (yes) enter thou My Heaven".¹⁹

Allah the Almighty has addressed these relishing and cherishing Words to the soul (of the *Momin*) which has passed through great troubles and turmoils, tests and trial of happiness, sorrow; opulence and poverty, spaciousness & constriction, Grand success and miserable failures — though ephemeral and transient they were and called it to

¹⁶ Surah Bani Israel : 24

¹⁷ Surah al-Nisa: 59

¹⁸ Surah Zukhruf : Verses 32)

¹⁹ Surah : Al-Fajr Verses 27-30

enter into (and identify itself with) the group of his Devotees and enter into His Heavens. All are His servants, all the Heavens belong to Him, but the One whom the Lord creator personally calls His own and invites in to enter among (the group of) His Devotees, his rank and status among the celestial beings can not be assessed and defined: and the Heaven to which he is fondly and affectionately called to enter must be THE HEAVEN above all the heavens.

These are the blooming lustres of the springs of *Nisba*. When we open the Holy Qur'an its very First chapter also named 'the Opening' open vistas of Grandeur before our eyes and we are asked to pray to enable us to follow the footsteps of those who have been specially graced by Divine pleasures and favours. Their path has been designated as '*Siraat-i-Mustaqim*' or the straight path (of Guidance) which we are commanded to follow and join their exalted company, or , in other words establishing our '*Nisba*' (identity) with the most BELOVED & CHOSEN SERVANTS OF ALLAH.

We have been told by Divine persuasion to realize the significance of '*Nisba*'.

(i) One of the special feature of the Holy month of Ramazan is the Holy Qur'an was first revealed in this month²⁰ and as such the month of Ramazan has a *Nisba* or co-relation with the Holy Qur'an. The Holy prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) has also co-related Ramazan with the Divine Fertility in shapes of blessing that emanate from the Holy Qur'an,²¹ and thus emphasised the significance of every month to be remembered again and again in relation (*Nisba*) with any particular gift/blessing revealed or sent down

²⁰ Surah al-Baqarah : 185

²¹ Mou'atta Imam Malik, Lahore, p-120

during that month (like the month of Ramazan being & remembered as the month of Qur'an).

(ii) The special feature of the Holy Qur'an with reference (*Nisba*) of Ramazan is that it was first revealed in the Night of Qadr²² (Divine measure) which is the special blessing of that month; this is to say that the Holy Qur'an has a relationship (*Nisba*) with *Shab-e-Qadr*.

(iii) The significance of *Siraat-e-Mustaqeem* (Straight path of guidance) is that on it the righteous servants have traversed, and as such bears the holy foot prints²³ of the chosen servants of Allah, like the well of *Zam Zam* which sprang up as a divine marvel in honour and recognition of the Holy foot-marks of Hazrat Ismail when he repeatedly struck his tiny feet on the ground on account of severe thirst fell by him (Hazrat Ismail). This *Nisba* has given the water of *Zam Zam* the holy character and blissful significance to such an extent that every pilgrim who passes by and encamps near it longs and drink as much water as he can as it carries a sort of holiness and sanctity which no other water in the world bears, even though as water it is only water, but its *Nisba* with holy personages has endeared and raised its reverence to unlimited measure: people not only use it for their use during Hajj but they also carry it in jars and cans as a sacred gift when they return home, and distribute it among their relatives/friends etc. Hundreds of years have elapsed when this sacred water of *Zam Zam* first sprang up from the sandy desert by itself the Miracle from Almighty Allah. It has never ceased to flow nor have people been satiated with it, the demand for its on the

²² Surah al-Qadr : 3.

²³ Surah al-Fatiha : 5-6

spot use and carrying it home is only on the increase as the years go by and number of pilgrims swells in thousands every year. It is the *Nisba* which has raised the reverence of water to immeasurable heights.

(iv) The consorts of the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him), though from among the women-folk in common parlance, have been elevated to be reverentially addressed as *Azwaaj-i-Muth'haraat* (The Holy consorts) and *Ummahaat-al-Mo'minin* (Mothers of the Believers) because of the *Nisba* (relationship) which they bear with the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him). The Holy Qur'an also distinguishes the consorts of the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) from the rest of the woman kind. It says "O consorts of the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him)! you are not like other (common) women²⁴. The wives of the Mujahideen (warriors of Islam) have also been given respectful mention because of their *Nisba* (relationship) with those crusaders of Islam.²⁵

(v) The Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) has taught respect of those (geographical directions, which bear *Nisba* with the *Baitullah*, having been situated in the line of the Holy Ka'ba, and has forbidden spitting in that direction²⁶. Once a companion negligently spat toward Ka'ba Sharif,. The Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) was displeased at this and he ordered that the companion should not act as Imam and lead the prayers.²⁷ It should be realized that great significance

²⁴ Surah al-Ahzab: 22

²⁵ Abi Dawood; Vol. 2 p.274

²⁶ Mishkat, p-69; Mu'atta Imam Malik, p-187

²⁷ Mishkat, p.71

has attached even to the place which bear *Nisba* with the Holy Ka'ba as being situated in the same direction.

(3)

On account of *Nisba*, the commonplace object assume significance of high esteem and they are recognised as such: In this connection, some examples from the Holy Qur'an and Traditions are given below:

Examples from Holy Quran

(1) The clay ordinarily has no significance, but when it gets a touch with the hoofs of the horse of Angel Gabrail it assumes miraculous properties. It puts life into a lifeless object.²⁸

(2) The serviceable articles of Hazrat Moosa and Haroon were preserved in a wooden Box which the angles used to bear²⁹ and the significance of this Box was that the Bani-Israel to whom this Box came as a legacy, carried with them as a vanguard whenever they went on expedition or war, and it is said that as a blissful omen this Box brought them victory

(3) The significance of the Shirt (*Qamis*) used by Hazrat Yousuf was that its touch with his Holy Body carried the blissful action which was instrumental in restoring the eyesight of Hazrat Yaqoob who had become sightless on account of constant weeping in grief of his son Hazrat Yousuf, as soon as it was put on his face.³⁰

(4) The she-camel of Hazrat Sawlih, which was sacredly called the she-camel of Allah (*Naqatullah*) in the

²⁸ (i) Surah Taha; 96, 88 (ii) Safwa al-Tafasir, Beirut, Vol.8, p-69

²⁹ Surah al-Baqarah: 248

³⁰ Surah Yousuf: 93

Holy Qur'an³¹ brought destruction³² to the recalcitrant people of Hazrat Sawlih because they hamstrung her inspite of the clear warning that if they teased the Miracle animal, a devastating punishment would overtake and destroy them.³³ It was plainly told that if they even touched the she-camel with evil intentions they will suffer the punishment, but the transgressing Samood did not heed the warning and paid the penalty.³⁴

From these examples it can be inferred that every thing which bears Divine '*Nisba*' becomes sacred and any attempt to desecrate it invites the Wrath of Allah. Any willful and deliberate disrespect or sacrilege in this behalf amounts to challenging the Divine authority, which is unpardonable at all events. It is also worth consideration that when a she-camel of the Prophet Sawlih is regarded so sacrosanct, then to what height of sanctity and veneration will the personality of the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him)³⁵ (Allah's grace and peace be upon him), *Baytullah*³⁶ (the Holy Ka'ba), *Kitabullah*³⁷ (the Holy Qur'an) should be placed, is beyond description. Other things which Allah the Almighty has decreed sacred and hallowed run in large numbers. Here only a few of them are enumerated for just reference and reflection. *Ayyam-allah*³⁸ (The Days of Allah) *Sha'ari-Allah*³⁹ (signs of Allah) *Aala'l Allah*⁴⁰ (The benefits from Allah) *Aayat*

31 Surah al-A'raf : 73

32 Surah al-Shu'ara : 152-54; al-Araf: 87; Hud: 64-65. al-shams: 12

33 Surah al-A'raf : 73

34 Surah Hud: 64

35 Surah al-Shams : 13

36 Surah al-Ma'ida : 97

37 Surah al-i-Imran : 23

38 Surah Ibrahim : 5

39 Surah Baqarah : 158, al-Ma'ida : 2 ; al-Hajj : 32-36

40 Surah al-A'raf : 73

*Allah*⁴¹ (signs of Allah), *Hurmat-illah*⁴² (sacred Rites of Allah), *Auliya-Allah*⁴³ (the chosen Friends of Allah) etc:

(5) Just one thing must be carefully borne in mind that the most sacred personality of Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) has been declared to bear *Nisba* with Allah the Almighty to such an excellent and dignified status that Allah has chosen him as his Apostle and as person of love and Affection, such that even to speak in his presence in loud voice renders the whole life's achievement in goodness as of no worth⁴⁴ in the Sight of Allah the Almighty, to whisper and conspire by sitting also from the Assembly of the Holy prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) after slipping away without permission invites threat of Divine punishment⁴⁵ and one who dares to disrespect is disgraced beyond redemption.⁴⁶ The Holy person, the Holy Book, the Holy Home, The Holy Day and the Holy sign and the thing reckoned sacred. In short each and everything, person, place etc having *Nisba* with Allah the Almighty, must as a matter of decorum and obligation, be respected in high esteem. That is the demand of the '*Nisba*' which must be recognized and adhered to in proportion to the status of the one to whom the '*Nisba*' is alluded. We must pay due regard to all these things; this is the command of Allah, the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet, (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) the follow up in obedience by the companions. To deviate and divert attention from these holy objects is tantamount to lead oneself astray, deliberately and unabashedly.

41 Surah al-i-Imran : 98.

42 Surah al-Hajj: 30

43 Surah Yunus : 62

44 Surah al-Hujrat : 2-3

45 Surah al-Nur : 62

46 Surah al-Qalam : 13

(6) Earlier we were discussing the relationship (*Nisba*) of animals and men, how the latter received recognition of their humility, faithfulness and service to man and became superior to other animals in their own breed. We have spoken of the She-camel of Hazrat Swaalih and bearing its genetic appearance as a result of the Prophet's request for miracle. She was brought in existence out of stone rock and got the title of She-camel of Allah (*Naqatullah*) which no other animal of any breed was ever given, such a '*Nisba*' which became her point of recognition and distinction.

Stretching this point further we find that even a dog received Divine Affection when he faithfully served his masters. We refer to the Dog of *Ashab-i-Kahf* who stood by them, for years on end, in times of their trials and tribulations when they moved from place to place in search of place of safety not only of their person but also of their true religion, which was in conflict with the religion of state rulers who teased and tortured people belonging to "banned and prohibited" religion. It was the reward of his faithful service to *Ashab-i-Kahf* that he got a long life of 309 years and more. (it is said that even in the Hereafter, this dog will be allowed to keep company of *Ashab-i-Kahf*). Even dogs when they become the faithful guardians and companions of the chosen servants of Allah, they become worth affection. The above incident of the Dog of the *Ashab-i-kahf* is an illustration in this behalf who have been mentioned in the Holy Qur'an as the "wonders among Our signs";⁴⁷ while the posture of the dog who was guarding his masters who were fast asleep inside the cave, in expression of soft kindness couched in words of approbation. It is said "their dog stretching forth his two forelegs on the threshold of the cave".⁴⁸ The same 'dog' has also been mentioned by men who wanted to build a

⁴⁷ Surah al-Kahf : 18

⁴⁸ Surah al-Kahf : 18

place of worship or monument nearby as a memorial. They were arguing as to the exact number of the *Ashab-i-kahf* with their dog as their companion.⁴⁹ The construction of the place of worship (*masjid*) at the site was to commemorate the stay of the *Ashab-i-Kahf* (Dwellers of the cave) and perpetuate its sanctity because it carried special significance (*Nisba*) with Allah and his chosen servants.

One who devotes himself and sacrifices his all in the name and for the sake of Allah becomes the sign of Allah (to be remembered with affection and love) and one who attaches himself to these pious personages (referred here on signs of Allah) becomes such that his name is mentioned by Allah. The Dog of *Ashab-i-Kahf* by his devotion and faithful service, presented a model of service and loyalty which many human beings sadly lack. This shows that Allah the Almighty, by His Grace, enabled the animals to teach moral lessons to unwary human beings. This reminds the story of Qabil and Habil who were the sons of Hazrat Adam. When as a result of personal feuds involving jealousy the two brothers, the former (Qabil) killed the latter (which was incidentally the first murder/assassination on earth) he was at a loss not knowing how to dispose of dead body of his brother, a crow which flew there by chance (or instructional plan by the providence) taught him how to bury the dead Habil.⁵⁰ This puts Qabil in remorse and shame and he exclaimed in sheer helplessness and regret: "Woe to me! was I not even like this crow to hide the corps of my brother."⁵¹ The story of *Ashab-i-Kahf's* dog also shows the way of selfless devotion to the beloveds of Allah, as a moraliser for most of us Muslims.

⁴⁹ Surah al-Kahf : 22

⁵⁰ Surah al-Ma'ida : 31

⁵¹ Surah al-Ma'ida : 31

(7) On account of this 'Nisba' days too become worth remembrance and reverence. The Holy Qur'an specifically mentions the Day of Birth and the Day of death (*wisal* or *wafat*)⁵² as they are of extra significance. Likewise Hazrat Eisa sprang an incredible surprise when he spoke of the Day of his birth and the Day he would leave the world, when he was still a suckling infant.⁵³

(8) 'Days' get a kind of veneration in association (*Nisba*) with some memorable events. If some good and memorable things is given by Allah the Almighty on a particular day, then the Day and the thing also become memorable on account of inter-related association of *Nisba*, both contributing to happiness and satiation. Hazrat Eisa prayed for the Table Set with heavenly viands (*Ma'ida*), so that the Day be celebrated as a Day of Rejoicing, for the people before and after them.⁵⁴ To celebrate days of rejoicing and mourning is ingrained in human nature. There is no formality and abnormality in this, because it is the outcome of human emotions and sentiments with such events. This is not exclusive to any particular community or sect; it is rather universal — and inescapable — and days as such are observed with solemnity or rejoicing as the case may be. Before the advent of Islam, people (the hithens) after performing hajj rites, used to mention deeds/feats of their ancestors and celebrate them as memorable days. The Holy Qur'an exhorted the Muslims to remember Allah, more intensely and with greater devotion.⁵⁵

(9) Just imagine by way of remembrance of Divine Blessings that Khana-e-ka'ba (*Baitullah*) was first built by Hazrat Adam and later it was re-constructed (retaining the

⁵² Surah Maryam : 15

⁵³ Surah Maryam : 33

⁵⁴ Surah al-Ma'ida : 114

⁵⁵ Surah al-Baqarah : 200

site and design unaltered), by Hazrat Ibrahim and it was called the House (*Bayt*) of Allah.⁵⁶ Even today it is known as his (commemorative) sign, a place worth of respect⁵⁷ signifying how the place rose higher and higher in veneration at each stage.

(10) The stone on which Hazrat Ibrahim stood and built the *Baitullah*, the said stone on account of the touch of his sacred feet, was venerated to such an extent that it was placed right in front of the *Khana-i-Ka'ba* (and named *Muqam-i-Ibrahim*) and declared a sacred site for offering prayers.⁵⁸ It is recognised as a 'Sign' among other signs of Allah.⁵⁹ Look! to what a great state of veneration a stone has been raised in sequence of the '*Nisba*' that it bears with the chosen servants of Allah.

(11) The tract of land between the hills of *Safa* and *Marwa* on which Hazrat Hajira (mother of Hazrat Ismail) ran to and fro in search of water for the thirsty infant Ismail, has been eternally venerated as a site of *sa'i*⁶⁰ for every pilgrim who comes to Makka to perform hajj or Umra. On account of this *Nisba* (spiritual Association) the two hills of *Safa* and *Marwa* have been declared as signs of Allah,⁶¹ although, factually speaking, these are the signs of Hazrat Hajirah. It is thus evident that even those pathways on/through which the chosen servants of Allah traverse assume sanctity and state of memorials.

(12) At Mina, Hazrat Ibrahim threw pebbles at Jamarat and later performed sacrifice⁶² at this place. Both these act of Hazrat Ibrahim were given Divine approbation

⁵⁶ Surah al-Baqarah: 127

⁵⁷ Surah al-Ma'ida : 97

⁵⁸ Surah al-Baqarah : 125

⁵⁹ Surah al-e-Imram : 97

⁶⁰ Surah al-Baqarah : 158

⁶¹ Surah al-Baqarah: 158

⁶² Surah al-Saffat : 103

and commemorated as Hajj rituals — to be observed compulsorily by every pilgrim visiting the sacred land of Makka.

(13) In the fixation of the site for *Qiblah* also the same significance of ‘*Nisba*’ is evident. When Hazrat Ibrahim was raising the foundations of Ka’ba, he was in a way exemplifying the universal significance of ‘*Nisba*’.⁶³ — Allah the Almighty is absolutely free from the bondage or confinements of time and space. It is said, “East and west belong to Allah.”⁶⁴ — “Allah is neither at the West nor at the East”.⁶⁵ — “For every one is the ‘direction’ (*simt*) at which he turns his face”.⁶⁶ — “At whatever site you turn your face, Allah is there”.⁶⁷

In spite of this non fixation of direction for remembering Allah, has been said that the first House built on earth for offering prayers is at Makka.⁶⁸ and that very site has been declared as the pivot⁶⁹ where people turn again and again for prayer, and related rituals.

Why was it that Ka’ba was earmarked as the focal and pivotal point of attention for all the Muslims that were to swell in number and deeper in faith towards it as the years rolled by and the Din of Allah went from strength to strength. It looks as if *Baitullah* itself was eagerly awaiting the august arrival of some supremely honoured personality among the humankind. As the history bears out, *Baitullah* has always received the graceful attention of some Messenger of Allah for its inception, construction, restructuring, raising foundation, and cleaning and

⁶³ Surah al-Baqarah: 127, 128, 129

⁶⁴ Surah al-Baqarah : 115

⁶⁵ Surah al-Hajj 26

⁶⁶ Surah al-Baqarah : 148

⁶⁷ Surah al-Baqarah : 115

⁶⁸ Surah al-e-Imram : 96

⁶⁹ Surah al-Baqarah : 25

purifying it from the grossness of idolatry and other forms of infidelity. Obviously the Divine plan was to accord befitting, through gradual, accomplishment to it in all respects, so that when the auspicious moment arrives nothing is left wanting in its presentation as the most sacred and most Honoured House of Allah. The obvious Divine choice of that greatest honoured and revered personality was that of the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa, (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) whose Prophetic Mission was in the process of initiation and fulfillment. Baytullah was the pivot of the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him). It wonderfully became the Qibla of the cave Hira. Later it was declared the Qibla of Muslim Ummah. But in the first year of Hijra, the Qibla was changed and Bayt al-Maqdis was declared as the Qibla of Muslim Ummah.⁷⁰ But it was the yearning desire of Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) that Baytullah should be the Qibla of Muslim Ummah. After some seventeen years one day during the prayer of Zuhur the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) turned his eyes skyward in prayers for the declaration of *Baitullah* as *Qiblah*. In no time came the Revelation; addressing the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) it said: 'We see the turning of your face to the havens. Now shall we turn you to a *Qiblah* that shall please you. Turn then your face in the direction of Sacred Mosque (*Masjid-e-Haram* or *Ka'batullah*). Whenever you are, O Muslims, turn your faces in that direction'.⁷¹

The Historical and spiritual Truth must always remain fresh in our mind that it was the solicitous sight of the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) that with the Divine Approbation, the *Ka'batullah* has been made the *Qiblah* for all corners of the World, North, South, East and

⁷⁰ (i) *Sira al-Nabi*, Vol. I, p.300, (ii) *Sura al-Baqara*: 142-143

⁷¹ *Surah al-Baqarah* ; 144)

West. This *Qiblah* has, therefore a very special *Nisba* with the sight of the Holy Prophet (*Nigah-e-Mustafa*) — (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him)

The change of *Qiblah* from *Baitul Maqdis* to *Baitullah* also provided a test case of the faith of the Muslims at large among whom, many had infiltrated consisting of the Muslims of weak faith as well as those of dubious *Eimaan*, the latter group is known as that of *Munafiqin* or hypocrites: The Holy Qur'an says: "And We appointed the *Qiblah* to which you were looking earlier, only to test those who followed the prophet from those who would turn on their heels (from the faith)".⁷²

It clearly means that change in Qibla was only made to know who follow the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) and who follow the Qibla. Longing of the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) should be of fundamental importance for every Muslim. This shows the significance of *Nisba*.

The Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) has permitted⁷³ and encouraged travel to *Masjid-i-Haram*, (Makka), *Masjid-i-Aqsa* (Jerusalem - Palestine) and *Masjid-i-Nabawi* (Madina) with a view that a traveler or a visitor to these Holy Places of repute must acquire and familiarise himself with the *Nisba* of these sacred places and be pleased by them. The blessings of '*Nisba*' underneath journey and remembrance to the above mentioned three Mosques, situated at three Most reputed places of the Islamic world are obvious to need a detailed delineation here. Yet some thing of their spiritual benevolence must be said to refresh and rejuvenate the memory.

The Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) has said:

⁷² Surah al-Baqarah : 143

⁷³ Sahih al-Bihari Vol. II, p.312 Ref. al-Bukhari

The entire (stretch of the) Earth is Mosque (i.e. pure by nature and blissful in efficacy).⁷⁴ We can offer prayer where ever we desire. Why then the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) has stressed especially to acquire and be blessed with the *Nisba* of these three Holy places of worship. (*Masajid*). The reason is that these three mosques have special *Nisba* respectively with the beloved Prophets of Allah viz. Hazrat Ibrahim, Hazrat Sulayman and Hazrat Muhammad (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon them). All these mosques have kissed the foot-marks⁷⁵ of the chosen prophets of Allah. The reverence and dignity assigned to these places is because of the *Nisba* which they bear to spiritual dignitaries who are having eternal sleep (buried) here.

It is also a historical fact that the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) while on his expedition from Makka and Tabuk to Madina built mosque at every place of his stay and at the place or places where he stayed for encampment he managed to have a mosque built in commemoration of his expedition and en-route stoppages to Tabuk and back.⁷⁶

Adjacent to Masjid Nabawi itself were '*Hujrahs*' (chosets or private rooms) of Revered consorts of the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him). The holy place (*Hujrahs*) have now been included in the main structure of the Masjid-e-Nabawi. On the western and south western side of the Masjid-e-Nabawi where the houses of Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique, Hazrat Umar Farooq, Hazrat Usman Ghani, Hazrat Ali and Hazrat Bilal Habshi (May Allah be pleased with them) were situated, at each of there place mosque have been constructed.

⁷⁴ Bukhari Sharif, vol. 2 page 314

⁷⁵ (i) Surah Bani Israel : 1 (ii) Sahih al-Bukhari, vol.2. p.314

⁷⁶ Madarij-al-Nabuwah, vol. II p.595

If we go deep and probe into the philosophy of prayer, we find even the actions of prayer i.e. *Qayam*, *Ruku'*, *Sajud* bear *Nisba* with the angles. The five prayers too, have particular *Nisba* with the apostles of Allah: the prayer of *Fajr* (morning) has *Nisba* with Hazrat Adam (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) — the prayer of *Zuhr* (noon) has *Nisba* with Hazrat Ismaeel (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) — the prayer of *Asr* (after noon) has *Nisba* with Hazrat 'Uzair (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) — the prayer of *Maghrab* (Evening) has a *Nisba* with Hazrat Da'ud (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) — and the prayer of *Isha* has a *Nisba* with Hazrat Muhammad (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him).⁷⁷

(4)

Examples From Holy Traditions

(14) The esteemed companions were conversant with the Qur'anic annunciations as well as they also recognised, and adored the sanctity of the personality of the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him). Let us see how the *Nisba*-related propositions manifested in this behalf

Hazrat Umar, whenever he kissed the *Hajar-i-Aswad* in *Baitullah Sharif* used to say: Had I not seen the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) kissing you, I would have never done so.⁷⁸ It is for this *Nisba* alone that, if for any reasons the *Hajar-e-Aswad* can not be kissed directly, then it would be enough to raise the open palms of both the hands and pointing them to the *Hajar-i-*

⁷⁷ Mirqat Sharah-i-Mishkat.

⁷⁸ Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol.1, pp.631-34

Aswad, the palms should be kissed and passed over the eyes and the face. In this way the '*Nisba*' with sanctity will be maintained.

(15) When Hazrat Urwah bin Mas'ud Saqafi (companion) went to visit and pay respect to the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) for the first time he was surprised to see quite a good number of companions struggling and endeavouring to receive even a few drops of water dripping from the ablution (*wuzu*) performed by the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) to rub over his hands & face. If any companion could not get the water himself, he would touch the fingers, hands of the lucky companion who had drenched his hands/fingers and rub over his face as others in the crowd were doing in venerative *Nisba* with the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him).⁷⁹ There was an amazing spectacle of reverence.

(16) One day Hazrat Bilal Habashi came out of the *Hujra* of the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) carrying in an open vessel the water of ablution (*wuzu*) performed by the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him). The companions were eagerly waiting outside, when they saw Hazrat Bilal carrying the vessel they all ran to get some water which had become sacred by having the *Nisba* with the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him), to rub over face,⁸⁰ hands etc. Others who could not get the water were content and satisfied by the touch of those hands which had become wet with the Holy water; and then rub their fingers/palm. Can there be any more touching sight than this how the companions venerated and honoured their '*Nisba*' with the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him).

⁷⁹ Shibli; *Sira al-Nabi*, Vol.1, p.415.

⁸⁰ *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Muslim, *Mishkat*. p.74

(17) The Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) once had his head shaven, at Mina. Half quantity of the hair were gifted to Hazrat Abu Talha Ansari (companion) and the other half were distributed among the Holy consorts and the companions of the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him). Each one got one or two hairs (known as *Mu-i-Mubarak*). Hazrat Khalid bin Waleed requested and received the hairs of the fore-head of the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him). these holy hairs, he tucked in his cap as a token of auspicious omen. With the blessings of these Holy hairs he got success in every expedition undertaken by him for the cause of Islam.⁸¹ Of the Holy hairs (*Mu-i-Mubarak*) distributed among the revered consorts of the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him), those which came in the share of *Umm al-Mo'minin* Hazrat Ummi Salma are still preserved as holy relics in a grand monument building at Rohri (Sindh - Pakistan). The history of the *Mu-i-Mubarak* is written on the wall of the buildings which is visited by thousands of people as a mark of homage by way of *Nisba* for the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him).

(18) Hazrat Anas (companion) reports: Once a companion was shaving the head of the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him). Other companions were sitting around to pluck any falling or flying hair lest it should fall on the ground. The devoted companions did not brook that even the shaven hair should fall on the earth. (Muslim, Vol. II, p.256) It was an honour for them to pluck it and keep it as a relic or monument for blessing among them and for the posterity. Such is the charm of *Nisba* even in respect of hair of the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him).

⁸¹ (i) Hujja Allah A'la al-'Alamin, Vol. 3 , p.686 Ref. al-Mustadrak.
(ii) Ma'arif al-Nabuwwah, Lahore, 1991, Vol.3 p. 470

(19) Hazrat -Ubaidah (companion) is reported to have said:

“For me the possession of one *Moo-i-Mubarak* (Holy Hair) of the Holy Prophet (Allah’s grace and peace be upon him) which is my pride to have, is greater than the entire riches⁸² of the world and all that it has.

(20) Hazrat Mu‘awiyah (companion) made a will (to be fulfilled after his death) that the *Moo-i-Mubarak* and the clipped nail of the Holy Prophet (Allah’s grace and peace be upon him) be place at the places of throat, mouth and fore-head (symbol of *sajdah* in prayer) in the coffin before burial in the grave.⁸³ It was done.

(21) Once the Holy Prophet (Allah’s grace and peace be upon him) kissed the forelock (the bunch of hair over the fore-head) of Hazrat Abu Mahdhura (companion) out of affection. Paying due regard and reverence to the touch of the Holy Prophet (Allah’s Grace and Peace be upon him) the companion did not clip the said hair for the rest of his life, the hair grew so long that whenever he untied the bunch, the hair touched the⁸⁴ ground.

(22) Hazrat Anas (companion) had a wooden cup in which he offered water to the Holy Prophet (Allah’s grace and peace be upon him). It had an iron-ring for holding. When the said iron-ring become very old needing replacement, Hazrat Anas wanted to replace it, but Hazrat Talha (companion) asked him not to remove the ring as it had the touch of the hand of the Holy Prophet (Allah’s grace and peace be upon him).⁸⁵

(23) Hazrat Sahal (companion) often gave water, to the Holy Prophet (Allah’s grace and peace be upon him)

⁸² Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 1, p29

⁸³ Mirqat Sharh-e-Mishkat, Vol. V, p-638

⁸⁴ al-Shifa, Vol. II, p.44

⁸⁵ al-Bukhari, Vol. II, p.842

in a cup and as such the cup was given due respect and the companion at times drank water from that cup as a sign of good omen and blessing. This spiritual '*Nisba*' the cup thus carried, in reference to the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) so much so that caliph Hazrat Umar bin Abdul Aziz, to bought and kept it with himself as a mark of reverence to the *Nisba* the cup had with it.⁸⁶

(24) A companion of the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) begged for the covering sheet (*chadar*) of the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) so that when he died, he may be buried duly covered y the sacred sheet. His will was complied with.⁸⁷

(25) The wooden cot (bed) on which the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) breathed his last, was also used for carrying Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq and Hazrat 'Umar (May Allah be pleased woth them) for burial. The wooden cot was then placed as a monument. When it became worn out, its decaying pieces, because of the *Nisba* these rotten wooden pieces had with the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him), were sold out for four thousand dirhams.⁸⁸ Hazrat Mu'awiyah bought the used covering sheet (*chadar*) of the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) for twenty thousand dirhams.⁸⁹ This very covering sheet became his coffin.

(26) Hazrat Bilal Habashi once came from Syria to Madina. On seeing the Holy grave of the holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) he was overtaken by the grief and embracing the Holy Grave he wept and wept and rubbed his face again and again so much that his face

⁸⁶ Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. II, p.842

⁸⁷ al-Bukhari, Vol. II, p.865

⁸⁸ Ibni-Imad, Vol. III; p.382

⁸⁹ Sirat-i-Rasool-i-Arabi, p.68

was covered with the clay⁹⁰. As dust is dust, it has none the less come as cosmetic for the restless devotee whose wounds of separation had become green on seeing the grave of the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him).

(27) It was the habit of Hazrat Ibn-e-Umar that whenever he used to rub his hand over the seating place and touched his face, because the pulpit had the *Nisba* with the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) as it was the same pulpit on which he sat and delivered the sermons.⁹¹

(28) Hazrat Imam Malik never rode on animal's back in Madina. He said, I feel ashamed that I should desecrate by the hoof of the animal the soil on which the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) traversed on foot⁹² so deep and intense was the sense of regard, by way *Nisba* which the companions and their followers had with the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him)

(5)

'*Nisbas*' in a sense are anchors with which the ships and boats are tied so that these may not drift away due to rushing waves. The anchors we are concerned with at the moment (*spiritual Nisbas*) are provided by the Providence. These have strengthened and consolidated our *Iman*. We the sinners and the wayward rifting luke warm Muslims, can still salvage of our ship of *Iman* by linking our obedience and love with the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) and demonstrate our faithful regard to the '*Nisba*' by placing our heads at the alter⁹³ of

⁹⁰ Sahih al-Bihari, Vol. II, p.958 Ref. Ibn-e- 'Asakir

⁹¹ al-Shifa, Vol. II, p.44

⁹² al-Shifa, Vol. II, p.44

⁹³ Surah al-Nisa: 64

that august personality (Allah's grace and peace be upon him). Allah the Almighty out of His grace and Mercy showed us the way to secure His pleasure by attaching ourselves with the righteous and the truthful, as long as we live,⁹⁴ follow their footsteps and give no room to suspicious and temptations; follow the right path⁹⁵ so that we may not deviate from it. This is the word of Allah and who is more True in words than Allah?⁹⁶ If one has '*Nisba*' with the beloveds of Allah, then he would also love and hold dear every thing and every deed that are liked by the true servants of Allah.

When the Ansars of Madina presented wealth and riches which they had amassed, as a token of their help for the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him), The Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) returned the sums saying 'I do not ask you any (worldly) help (for transmitting my mission) but the love and affinity with my next of kin⁹⁷ or in other words the love of those who bear *Nisba* with the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him). We must search our hearts and realise how greatly we are indebted to the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) for his affectionate benevolent disposition towards us in guiding us to the right path which leads to the pleasure of Allah, and warned us of those pitfalls which lead to destruction, if they are not checked and repented in time. Should we not then love him and all those things which bear '*Nisba*' with him. We have seen that great devotion and reverence his great companions had demonstrated towards him and thus confirmed their *Nisba* with him in words and in deeds beyond a shadow of doubt.

⁹⁴ Surah al-Tawba : 119

⁹⁵ Surah al-Fatiha:6

⁹⁶ Surah al-Nisa : 87,118

⁹⁷ Surah al-Shura : 23

Let us pray that Allah the Almighty protects us from the insinuations, and mischievous designs of our enemies, He grants us the Discerning Eye so that we may follow the path of his pleasure. O Allah; the most Beneficent and the Most Gracious, grant us the power and vision so that the Lamp of righteousness may not grow dim, through our vigilance and foresight, and the *Nisba* that we bear to the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) and the Great *Din* of Islam may grow stronger and stronger every day. (Amin).



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