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AYODHYA AND HINDU MUSLIM RELATIONS

The foundation of enmity and hatred was sown amongst the Hindus and the Muslims in 1949 when an idol was surreptitiously placed in the Babri mosque in Ayodhya. K.K. Nayar, the then district Magistrate of Faizabad who later joined the Hindu Mahasabaha, led a coterie of administrative and police officers who facilitated some local hard-core sadhus to vandalise the sanctity of the mosque. Muslims who sought administrative and judicial help in restoring the original status of the mosque raised a storm. Even Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru expressed his anger and anguish and asked the state government to get the idols removed. The Deputy Prime Minister Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel wrote a hard-hitting letter to the state Chief Minister Govind Ballabh Pant to intervene in the matter and restore the sanctity of the mosque. Pandit Pant was shrewd politician and an old Congressite but except making some superfluous noise like ordering the suspension of the district magistrate he could not do much. The mosque, a 500-year-old monument of Sharqi architecture, was declared a 'disputed' site. Ram Bhakts adopted violent means to take over the mosque but the issue reached the courts because the Muslims knocked at the doors of the judiciary. In 1986 Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi influenced by his two ministerial colleagues Arun Nehru and Arun Singh (both now in the Bharitya Janata Party) to allow Hindus to worship in the mosque. A range of reshufflings at both political and administrative levels soon followed: Narayan Dutt Tewari, the sober and upright Chief Minister of Uttar Pardesh, was soon replaced by a submissive Veer Bhadur Singh. The Police department lost its upright and strict Chief, J.N. Chaturvedi to a malleable IPS officer D.K. Agarwal. Even though the new Chief Minister had no past history of communal bias he fell into the hands of Hindu hard-core Hindutva elements. State functionaries like the District Judge, District Magistrate and the Faizabad Superintendent of Police were ordered to follow the dictat from the centre. Thus in February 1986 in a dramatic way, the district judge vacated the stay on entry into the mosque and the entrance door to the mosque was unlocked. Hindus were

allowed to carry on their rituals whereas Muslims were prohibited to cause any disruption. The unlocking of the doors made the advocates of Hindutva bold and arrogant. The political encouragement emboldened them and they started collecting contributions from all over the world for the construction of a Ram temple at the disputed site. The intensified arrogance of the VHP was matched by the weakening of the secular forces all over the country. The most glaring and injurious shift took place within the Congress party itself where the leadership of PV Narsimha Rao provided an umbrella shield for the right-wingers to call the shots. It was in this period of rising communal passions that the BJP leader L.K. Advani ventured perform Rath Yatra from Somnath to Ayodhya. The route of the Yatra soon converted into a map of communal strife. Within 2-3 years from 1990-92 the whole country was thrown into the hearth of hatred and enmity. The demolition of the Babri mosque on 6th December 1992 marked the culmination of this hatred. Since a decade after the demolition of the mosque the hearings at the Lieberhan's commission and the Allahabad High Court are going on endlessly. Everyday startling revelations are being made. At the time when BJP and VHP leaders control the reins of power in Delhi it is doubtful if any efforts towards and ou of court settlement between the two estranged communities is possible. The recent initiative to resolve the conflict by His Holiness Shankaracharya of Kanchi Peeth was a welcome step in the right direction. However, the contents of the correspondence exchanged between him and the Chairman of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB), Maulana S.M.Rabey Hasani Nadwi, show that the Seer finally succumbed to the external pressure. His second letter reflects views consonant with those who demolished the mosque. The talks failed because a negotiated settlement is possible only if the parties concerned are unbiased, fair and judicious in their commitments. It is indeed reassuring that the majority of Hindus still adhere to the secular values of peace and tolerance despite the vicious propaganda and unleashing of violence against the Muslims by extremists in their community. This is best evident in the editorials of a number of national dailies soon after the failure of the negotiated settlement. Samples of such editorials have been reproduced in this issue of the journal for the benefit of our readers.

S.A.

RAISING THE POSITION OF WOMEN AND RESTORATION OF THEIR RIGHTS

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Women before Islam

A few introductory remarks would be necessary for appreciating the measures taken by Islam for ameliorating the condition of women. I would better give a few extracts from *Al-Mar'ato Fil-Quran* by the learned Arab scholar "Abbas Mahaum al-Aqqad who has made an in-depth study of the subject.

Describing the position of women under-pre-Islamic religions and societies, he writes:

"The Laws of Manu¹ accorded no personality to women save that as a dependent of her father or husband and in the event of the death of both, as a client of her son. On the death of all the three she had to content herself as a hanger-on of one of the near relations of her husband. She could never become self-dependent. The injustice, to which she was subject, even more than in her economic affairs was in the case of her separation from her husband; for, she was required to die with her dead husband on the funeral pyre. This was an age-old custom to the seventeenth century when it was given up owing to rising public opinion against it.

"The code of Hammurabi² treated woman as a pet. The status of woman under this code is illustrated by one of its provi-

1-Manu is regarded as the framer of the code of Hindu religious and social Law. He appears to have been a primitive mythological personage, whose time and character cannot be determined with any certainty. In the Vedas he is described as a god, but the writings attributed to him present him as the ancestor and legislator of human race. This position is, however, claimed for certain other characters as well in the ancient scriptures.

Manu Smriti expounds the ancient code of religious and social legislation, although it is attributed also to Go Mahraj, taken as the spiritual successor of Manu. Nevertheless, it is the oldest tract of Hindu religious and social laws, dating in its present form from about the third century A.D. (Extracted from the writings of Ganga Nath Jha and Dr. Jaiswal who are considered authorities on the history of Hindu Law).

2-The Babylonian King, author of famous code of laws, and unifier of the Babylonian Empire (c.2360 B.C.)

sions which said that if a man killed the daughter of another man, he had to hand over his own daughter to the aggrieved person, who might kill her in retribution, keep her as a slave-girl or re-prieve the punishment, but she was more often slain to meet the demand of the law.

“ In ancient Greece woman neither enjoyed any freedom nor had any right. She was made to live in big houses away from the main thoroughfares, having few windows and a guard posted at the door. With little attention paid to the housewives and mistresses, soirees with dancing-girls and women of easy virtue had become a common pastime. Women were not allowed to join men in social gatherings: Harlots, divorced women and courtesan slave-girls enjoyed a greater title to fame and respect than the married women.

“ Aristotle censured Spartans for being kind to their women folk and giving them right of inheritance, divorce and self-dependence and considered these as the reasons for the downfall of Sparta.

“The Romans of the old treated woman much like the same as the ancient Hindus for she to remain under the wardship of her father, husband or the son. During the bloom of their cultural glory they held the view that neither a woman could be unshackled nor her neck could be freed as the saying by Cato¹ goes: “Nanguam exvitur servitus mulie Brio”. The roman woman got freedom from the restrictions imposed on her only after the Roman slaves wrested their freedom through insurrection”.

After describing the status of women in the ancient Egypt Mahaud Aqqad says:

“ Egyptian civilization, and its social laws, had already run its course before the advent of Islam. With the downfall of Roman civilization in the Middle East and as reaction to its luxuriating and dissipation a strong trend disdaining the worldly life had set in Egypt. The life itself and the association with one's kith and kin had lost attraction while a general inclination towards monasticism had made the flesh and women appear as sinful.

“ This tenor of the Middle ages had so undermined the position of women that the ecclesiastics continued to discuss the

1-Marcus Porcius Cato (234-149 B.C.) became in succession censor, aedile, praetor and consul, subjugated Spain, and disliked and denounced all innovations.

nature of women in all seriousness upto the fifteenth century. The questions whether woman had a soul or was a body without soul and whether she was eligible to salvation or doomed to damnation were vigorously debated in the synod of Macon.¹ The majority view was that she did not possess the soul fit for salvation. The only exception being the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus Christ.

“ This tendency of the later Roman period was responsible for the degradation of woman in the subsequent phase of Egyptian civilization. Actually, the barbarism of the Romans was responsible for giving rise to monasticism and other-worldliness in Egyptian society. A large number of people came to regard the secluded life under religious vows dedicated to prayers, contemplation and development of spiritual faculties as a means to attaining nearness to God and saving themselves from the machinations of the Devil (of which women was the greatest inducement).

“ A number of western orientalists contend that the Islamic Shari’ah is based on the Hebrew Law but this view is confuted by a comparison between the status enjoyed by the women under the Pentateuch and the Quran. A daughter had no right to inheritance, under the Pentateuch, from her father if the deceased had a male child.

“ It was an obligation regulating the gifts that the property owned by any one should not pass on to another family on his death.

“The Jewish Laws relating to inheritance provided that so long as there was a male child of a deceased person, his daughter would not be entitled to inheritance, and the daughter inheriting from the deceased father would not be allowed to marry into another tribe. Similarly, she could not transfer the inherited property to another tribe. This law has been repeated at several places in the Torah.

“ Now we turn to the country where the Quranic teachings first came to be preached. One should not expect that the women were treated more favourably in the ancient Arabia. In fact, the treatment meted out to her in the Arabian Peninsula was worse than in any other country of the world. If she enjoyed any respect in a particular case, it was because she happened to be the

1-A town of France on the Saone.

daughter of the chief of a powerful tribe or the mother of an illustrious son. She was thus not entitled to any respect or honour by virtue of belonging to the fair sex. She was no doubt protected by the father, husband, brother or son but like any other material possession of a man. It was against the tribal sentiment of honour that anybody should lay his hands on anything under the protection of another man and this included one's horses, herds, wells and pastures. The women were likewise inherited by the heirs of the deceased person like his property. Woman in Arabia enjoyed no social status, rather, the shame attached to her made the father bury alive his own daughter. The money spent on the upkeep of the daughter was deemed as a burden although a Bedouin was not miser in spending on his goods and chattels or a slave-girl. Even those who allowed their daughters to remain alive considered her no more than an exchangeable good which could be inherited by the deceased's heir or sold or pawned for payment of a loan or interest. She was spared these humiliations only if she belonged to a powerful tribe prepared to extend its protection to her."¹

Buddhism

Nor did Buddhism, inspite of its universalism, place women on an equal level with men. Its highest morality demanded entire abstinence from them. Dörner quotes *chullagvagga*² to illustrate the position of women in Buddhism in these words:

“Inscrutable as the way of fish in water is the nature of women, those thieves of many devices, with whom truth is hard to find.”³

Hinduism

The position of women in Hindustan as described by the same writer reads”

“In Brahmanism, again, marriage is made much of: every one ought to marry, still according to the Laws of Manu, the husband is the head of the wife; she must do nothing to displease

1-Abbas Mahmud Al-Aqqad *Al-Mar'ato Fil Qur'an*, Darul-ul-Hilal Egypt, n.d., pp. 51-57.

2-c.f. Oldenburg, *Buddha*, 1906, pp. 169f. and 355f.

3-*Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Edinburg, 1921, Vol. V, p. 271.

him, even if he give himself to other loves; and, should he die, she must never utter the name of another man. If she marry again, she is excluded from the heaven where her first husband dwells. Unfaithfulness on the wife's part is punished with the utmost rigour, a woman is never independent; she cannot inherit, and after her husband's death she is subject to their eldest son. The husband may even chastise her with the bamboorod."¹

Ray Strachey writing about the Women: Her status and its influence on History' paints a similar picture of women's condition under Hinduism.

"She Says: The Rig-Veda, which includes the collected legends of Manu, the ancestor of mankind, assigns to women as they have had no 'status' at all. For it came to be thought that they were spiritually negligible, all but soulless, unable to survive after death without the virtue of man. With their faith to kill their hopes, and with all the imprisoning customs, which gradually sprang from it, it was impossible that eastern women should produce any great outstanding figure.

"When creating them, Manu allotted to women a love of their bed, of their seat and of ornament, impure desires, wrath, dishonesty and bad conduct... women are as impure as falsehood itself, that is the fixed rule..... It is the nature of women to reduce men in this world, and for that reason the wise are never unguarded in the company of female..... a woman is never fit for independence.

"This with much more to the same effect in the teaching of the Hindu, women have had to build their lives.

"The custom of child marriage, of widow hatred, of 'sati' and of the 'purdah' seem almost natural in a society in which women's only importance lay in the bearing of sons. Perhaps the exposure of the female infants was after all, a kindness in a world where women were believed to be 'a great whirlpool of suspicion, a dwelling place of vices, full of deceits, a hindrance in the way of heaven, and the gate of hell.'"²

1-Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Edinburg, 1921, Vol. V, p. 271.

2-Universal History of World, (ed.) J.A. Hammerton (London) n.d.. Vol. 1. p. 378.

China

The same writer describes the position of women in China in these words.

“Further east, in China, things were no better, and the custom of crippling the feet of little girls, which was intended to keep them helpless and ladylike, reveals the attitude of the Chinese. It applied, of course, only to the high born and wealthy, but it was true symbol of the condition of all the women in the Celestial Empire.”¹

Christendom

The attitude of the Christian world towards women was until recently determined by the teachings of the Bible: “Unto the women he said,..... And thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee’ (Ge. 3:16) ‘Wives’ submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church, and he is saviour of the body. Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.’ (Eph.5: 22-24). The woman was condemned by the Church fathers as the most potent source of sin and temptation. It was Eve who allegedly tempted Adam, according to the creation story of Genesis, to eat the forbidden fruit and thus laid the burden of Original Sin upon man. Thus some Greek orthodox monasteries to this day do not only prohibit any animals.¹ Women’s rights to inheritance, obtaining divorce, acquiring property, succession and remarriage were beyond laws of the West until recently.

England

In regard to the status of women in England. Which could be true of other countries in the West. Ray Strachey says:

“..... this favourite was denied every civil right, was shut out from education and from all but the lowest forms of wage earnings, and surrendered her whole property on marriage.”²

Woman in Islam

Now let us compare the teachings of Islam, the status and

1-Ibid.

2-Maryam Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahe al-Kitab*, Past and Present Luknow, 1983, p 298.

rights it gives to woman, with her position under other religions. It will be seen how Islam has restored her rights as well as her dignity, assigned her a proper place in the society and protected her against not only the conceit of men but also from irrational and cruel customs. Even a cursory glance over the Qur'an is enough to disclose the difference between the attitudes of Islam and the pagan past in regard to women, which, in the course of things, regulate all dealings with her, both at individual and social levels.

The Quranic verses referring to the fair sex, comprising half of humanity, create a sense of self-confidence in woman. They assign her a place in the society as well as in the sight of God and encourage her to make efforts for the service of religion and knowledge, cooperate in spreading goodness and virtue and build healthy society. Wherever the Qur'an refers to God's acceptance of good deeds, attainment of salvation and success in the hereafter, it refers to men as well as women.

“And whosoever does deeds of righteousness, be it male or female, believing they shall enter paradise, and not be wronged a single date-spot.”¹

“And then Lord answers them: I waste not the labours of any that labours among you be male or female the one of you is as the other,”²

the Qur'an promised 'goodly life' to men and women alike in an equal measure. This 'goodly life' means a life of peace and contentment and honour in this very world.

“Whosoever works righteously, male or female, and is a believer, we shall assuredly give him to live in a goodly life; and surely recompense them their wage for the best of what they have been doing.”³

The Qur'an elaborate style of mentioning both men and women as equally fit for attaining every individual virtue and being equally recompensed for their good deeds, righteousness and the religious duties performed by them is designed not merely to emphasise absence of any actual difference between the two, but also meant to drive home the capability of women to attain

1-Q.4:124

2-Q.3:195

3.Q.16:97

through their goodness a grace even higher than men for the latter were perceptive to their own superiority, even religious philosophies and modes of thought. Now, read the following verses of the Qur'an keeping in mind the reason behind adopting a deliberately diffused strain.

“ Lo! Men who surrender unto Allah, and women who surrender, and men who believe and women who believe, and men who obey and women who obey, and men who speak the truth and women who speak the truth, and men who persevere (in righteousness) and women who persevere, and men who are humble and women who are humble, and men who give alms and women who give alms, and men who fast and women who fast, and men who guard their modesty and women who guard their modesty, and men who remember Allah and women who remember, Allah hath prepared for them forgiveness and vast reward.”¹

The Qur'an does not speak of women in regard to their goodness and devotions only, but also mentions them with men who attain knowledge and excellence and undergo hardship in bidding the good and forbidding the wrong. It wants men and women to unite their efforts in restoring goodness and righteousness.

“ And the believers, the men and the women, are friends one of the other, they enjoin the right and forbid the wrong, they establish worship and they pay the poordue, and they obey Allah and His messenger. Those upon them Allah will have mercy; Allah is Mighty, Wise”.²

The Qur'an promulgates a new order of nobility, it depends not on colour or race, sex but on piety.

“ O mankind, we have created you male and female, and appointed you races and tribes, that you may know one another. Surely the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the most pious of you. Verily Allah is knowing, Wise.”³

These verses were meant to inspire self-reliance, self-respect and courage among woman or what our psychologists will regard as intended to shed her inferiority complex.

1-Q.33:35

2-Q.9:71

3.Q.49:13

The result of these teachings was that in every age from the time of the prophet of Islam to this day we find numerous illustrious women who achieved eminence, as teachers, guides, fighters in the way of God nurses in the battle-field, litterateurs, memorisers of the Qur'an narrators of Traditions, pious and righteous, who have been held in the highest esteem by the Muslims.¹

Islam gave woman the right to ratify or annul marriage, the right of inheritance and to own and dispose of her property. And several other rights besides the right to participate in congregational prayers. These can be found in any treatise on Islamic jurisprudence.

Opinions of Western Scholars

Several western scholars and experts of sociology have acknowledged that the Quranic teachings in regard to women place them on an equal legal position with men and raise their social position in the society. We shall give here the opinions of only a few scholars of whom Mrs. Annie Besant is the first. An Irish woman, she was the founder of a reformatory movement in India, headed the Theosophical Society of South India and was an active worker in the struggle for freedom of India. The opinion expressed by her is significant as a woman concerning women's rights.

She Says"

" You can find others stating that the religion (Islam) is evil because it sanctions a limited polygamy. But you do not hear as a rule the criticism which I spoke out one day in a London Hall where I knew that the audience was entirely uninstructed. I pointed out to them that monogamy with a blended mass of prostitution was a hypocrisy and more degrading than a limited polygamy. Naturally a statement that gives offence, but has to be made, because it must be remembered that the law of Islam in relation to women was until lately, when parts of it have been imitated in England, the most just law as far as women are concerned, to be found in the world. Dealing with property, dealing with right of succession and so on, dealing with cases of divorce, it was far

¹-Several compilations listing illustrious Muslim women of different times exist which can be consulted.

beyond the law of the West, in the respect which was paid to the rights of women. These things are forgotten while people are hypnotised by the words monogamy and polygamy and do not look at what lies behind it in the West the frightful degradation of women who are thrown into the streets when their first protectors, weary of them, no longer give them any assistance.”¹

Another scholar, N.J.Coulson, writes in *A History of Islamic Law*:

“With out doubt it is the general subject of the position of women, married women in particular, which occupies pride of place in the Quranic laws. Rules on marriage and divorce are numerous and varied and, with their general objective of improvement of women’s status, represent some of the most radical reforms of the Arabian customary law effected in the Quran..... She is now endowed with a legal competence, she did not possess before. In the introduction of the “waiting period” (idda.)”²

Describing the process of emancipation of women Dorner writes in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*.

“Certainly the Prophet raised the status of women above that assigned to them in ancient Arabia; in particular, the woman was no longer a mere heritable chattel of her deceased husband’s estate, but was capable of herself inheriting; while, again a free women could not now be forced into marriage, and in case of divorce, the husband was required to let the wife retain what he gave her at marriage. Moreover, women of upper classes might occupy themselves with poetry and science, and even act as teacher, while those of lower rank not seldom shared the joys and sorrows of their husbands, as mistresses of their household. The mother likewise must be treated with respect.”³

Revolutionary Concept

The new concept of women’s equality with men enunciated in the Quranic verses and the teaching of the Prophet was so revolutionary that it virtually meant her rebirth in a new society. In the pre-Islamic world she was everywhere regarded as a dumb and

1-Annie Besant, *The Life and Teachings of Muhammad*, Madras,1932, p.3

2-N.J.Coulson, *Islamic Surveys: A History Of Islamic Law*, Edinburg,1971,p.14.

3-Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Edinburg,1912,Vol,V.p.271.

pet animal of lifeless object of inheritance: she was either buried alive or kept as an article of decoration. It was at this time that she was accorded her rightful place in the society and family life by a clean sweep brought about by Islam. The change was welcomed all over the world, particularly, in the countries where Islam made a debut triumphantly and took over the reins of government. It also played a vital role as a reformative agent in those societies where woman had no right to live by herself and was forced, to immolate herself in the event of her husband's death.

The Muslim rulers of India did all that was possible to reform, the Indian society and to discourage such customs as sati, but they always ensured that they did not interfere with the religion, customs and tradition of others. The French physician, Dr. Francois Bernier who visited India during the reign of Shahjahan has described the efforts made by Muslim rulers to discourage the custom of self-immolation among Hindu women.

“ The number of victims is less now than formerly; the Mahometans, by whom country is governed, doing all in their power to suppress the barbarous custom. They do not, indeed, forbid it by positive law, because it is a part of their policy to leave the idolatrous population, which is so much more numerous than their own, in the free exercise of its religion; but the practice is checked by indirect means. No woman can sacrifice herself without permission from the governor of the province in which she resides, and he never grants it until he shall have ascertained that she is not to be turned aside from her purpose: to accomplish this desirable end the governor reasons with the widow and makes her enticing promises; after which, if these methods fail, he sometimes sends her among his women, that the effect of their remonstrance may be tried. Notwithstanding these obstacles, the number of self-immolation is still very considerable, particularly in the territories of the Rajas, where no Mahometan governors are appointed.”¹

Women in the Modern West

Feminist movement has been flaunted with such a fanfare by the modern West that one is led to believe that Europe

1-Travels of the Moghul Empire by Francois Bernier (A.D.1656-1668), (ed.) Archibald Constable Westminster, Vol.I,pp.306-307.

and America should be a heaven for women where they should be leading a contented life with complete independence and self-respect. However, the reports appearing in the press and observations of Western intellectuals are sufficient to reveal that all that glitters is not gold.

Industrially developed countries of the west are currently facing a new threat a wave of misogamy that has been termed as 'Domestic Violence' by the 'United Nations' Centre for Social Development and Human Affairs. The Centre based at Vienna has conducted two surveys which reveal its deep concern over the fast growing rate of divorce in the West. These reports also highlight increasing domestic violence which has been described as the most unhappy and agonising development to which the Centre wants serious attention to be paid by all well-meaning persons. These reports say that it is no longer possible to overlook this new phenomenon. Concern has also been expressed over the rapid erosion of traditional values with maintenance of the weaker members of the family as well as care and guidance to the children. The entire family structure in these countries is now breaking up, the couples' personal life is devoid of any spark of affection and none among the spouses has the least desire to accept any responsibility of the other. An international symposium organised by the United Nations Organization the previous year spotlighted the growing trend of violence to the wives in the developed countries, use of physical force the satisfaction of sex and callousness shown in maintenance and guidance of the children. All these emanate from the disintegrating family life in the West.

Another colloquay on 'Violence in Society' was organised by the Ministry of Justice in Canada during October 1985. There was as consensus among the participants in it that domestic violence had assumed the shape of a heinous offence which could no longer be ignored by the mass media. Mr. King, the public Prosecutor of Canada, expressed the view that factors chiefly responsible for increase in this trend were alcoholism and addiction to drugs. He pleaded that the police should take the notice of these offences, which destroyed peace of the home, much in the same way as bank robberies and that they should be made cognizable offence. The debate showed a general consensus about the fact that the situation in the United States of America was

still worse where, on an average, 16 percent couples were afflicted by this menace. According to American social scientists, 3,76,000 minors were subjected to criminal assault and rape in a year while domestic violence often took the shape of physical assault of the wives, tying their hands and feet and hanging them upside down, strangulating the assaulted women and using violent means for sexual satisfaction. The situation in the Soviet Russia is no better where, too, the divorce is common and family structure is fast disintegrating. ● ● ●

LET'S BE CORDIAL TO NON-MUSLIMS

Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

After the Gujrat pogrom, both Hindus and Muslims there are reluctant to live together. Hindu house owners do not let out their houses to Muslims and so is the case with Muslim house owners. This is an unfortunate situation in which people of different faiths born and brought up in the same locality and neighbourhood are afraid of each other. Mr. Narendra Modi has no doubt succeeded in forming his Government by arousing religious passions, but has buried the love, affection and amity deep under the corpses of the innocent. Now is the time to rebuild the bridges through the message of Allah. Addressing the last Prophet, He said "O Muhammad say to the unbelievers that "To you your religion and to me mine." In fact, faith is a matter of personal conviction, and does not depend on worldly motives. Worship should depend on pure and sincere faith. God has openly declared that in the matter of religion, man is free. The holy Quran says, "There is no compulsion in religion." (2:256). To this I would like to add that the Prophet had always a large number of non-Muslims among his allies and followers. If we study the life of Hazrat Muhammad we find his treatment with non-Muslims very cordial. The Prophet says, "He who hurts a zimmi" (non-believer living in an Islamic state) hurts me and he who hurts me annoys God." (Tibrani). He further says, "On the day of Resurrection I shall denounce him who oppressed a "zimmi" or violates his right or puts a responsibility on him which is beyond his strength or takes something away from him." Islam, therefore, strictly prohibits Muslims to insult other religions.

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Islam and the Muslim Minority Predicament: Reflections on the Contributions of Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi.

Yoginder Sikand

Introduction:

The late Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi was one of the leading Indian Ulama of modern times, recognized in Muslim circles worldwide for his scholarship and his dedication to the cause of Islamic revival. He was born in 1913 at *Takiya Kalan*, also known as *Daira-i-Shah "Ilmullah"*, a village near the town of *Raibareli* in the present-day Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. His family, which claimed descent from the Prophet Muhammad, had produced numerous illustrious scholars and Sufis. The first of his family to settle in India was one Sayyed Qutbuddin Muhammad al-Hasani (d.677 A.H.), originally from Medina, who came to India in the reign of Sultan Iltutmish in 1211 C.E. Among the several leading Islamic scholars and activists that the family had produced, and in whom Nadwi took great pride were Sayyed Ahmad and Shah Ismail the eighteenth century charismatic leaders who had launched a failed Jihad against the Sikhs in the Punjab.¹

As a child, Nadwi was sent to the village mosque school, where he studied the Qur'an and learnt Arabic and Urdu. His father, Syyed Abdul Hai Hasani, an accomplished Islamic scholar in his own right² and the rector of the famous Nadwatul Ulama madrasa³ in Lucknow for many years, died when he was nine, and so he was brought up by his mother, a pious woman who had

1-Muhammad Hasan Ansari, Hazrat Maulana Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi: Hayat Aur Karnamey Aur Unke Malfuzat-Ek Ajma'ali Khaka, Maktaba-e-Jamia'at-ul Mu'minat, Lucknow 1999, pp.18-20.

2-He was the author of the *Nuzhat-al Khawatir*, an eight-volume encyclopaedia containing details of over five thousand Indian "Ulama", and the "*As-Saqafat-ul Islamiya Fil Hind*", a history of Arabic learning in India. He headed the Nadwat-ul Ulama from 1915 till his death in 1923.

3-Established in 1898, The Nadwa sought to provide a harmonious blend of traditional Islamic and modern education.

memorised the entire Quran by heart, and a poet as well as a writer, a rare distinction for a woman of her times. A particularly important influence on him at this stage was his elder brother, Sayyid Abdul Ali who later went on to train as a medical doctor at King George's Medical College, Lucknow, and then assumed the post of director of the Nadwat-ul-Ulama. From his brother Nadwi learnt Arabic and studied books on the life of the Prophet. By this time he had developed a deep commitment to the cause of Islam. This was accompanied by a growing antagonism to the west, which he began to see as responsible for much of the misery of the Muslims the world over. As one of his biographers notes, he was now fired by a "hatred of the West" not of individual westerners as such but of "western oppression".⁴ This was to have a lasting impact on his subsequent life and in his championing of Islam as an alternative to western decadence.

In order to train as an "alim" he was sent to the Nadwat-ul-Ulama for higher Islamic studies. Established in 1898, the Nadwa saw itself as a leading centre for the training of reformist "Ulama". At Nadwa, the young Abul Hasan was exposed to new trends in Islamic thought in other Muslim countries, gaining in the years that he spent there a mastery of the Arabic language. He also travelled to Lahore, where he studied the Qur'an for a while under Maulana Ahmad Ali (d.1962). In 1931, he went to Azamgarh to study with the noted Islamic scholar, Sayyid Sulaiman Nadwi at the Darul Musannifin, established by the renowned Maulana Shibli Nu'mani (d.1914). The next year he was sent to Deoband, where he studied Qur'anic commentaries (Tafasir) under the noted Deobandi "Alim" Maulana Sayyid Hussain Ahmad Madani. He also met Sir Muhammad Iqbal on two occasions, and had the opportunity of studying under the well-known Islamic reformist Mulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi. Alongside his study of the Qur'an and Islamic law, he began taking an interest in Sufism as well. In 1931 he gave the bai'at or oath of allegiance to Mulana Ghulam Muhammad Dinpuri, the spiritual preceptor of his teacher, Maulana Ahmad Ali who had already initiated him into the Qadri order. Some years later, under his instructions, he took the bai'at in the Chishti, Suhrawardi and Naqshbandi orders from Maulana

4-Abdullah Abbas Nadwi, *Mir-e-Karavan*, Majlis-e-Ilmi, New Delhi, 1999, P.31-38.

Abdul Qadir Raipuri.⁵

A major turning point in Nadwi's life came in 1934, when he was appointed to teach Arabic and Qur'anic commentry at the Nadwatul-Ulama. The Nadwa was to remain central to his life thereafter, just as he was to remain central to the life of the madrasa, tuning it into a widely recognised centre for Islamic research. As Hasan writes. One of his principal concerns as head of the madrasa was to promote suitable changes in the educational system in accordance with the demands of the modern age.⁶ He carried on with teaching at the madrasa even after he was appointed its rector in 1961 after the death of his brother, a post that he occupied till his death in 1999.

It was at the Nadwa that Nadwi's great skills as a writer and orator were able to develop and flourish. He is credited with having written almost 180 books, mostly in Arabic and some in Urdu. Many of these books have since been translated into various other languages. Nadwi's particular interest lay in Islamic movements, and it is thus no mere coincidence that his first full-length study was on the jihad movement of his ancestor Sayyed Ahmad Shaheed, begun in 1936 and completed three years later. Another of his major literary achievements was his five-volume *Tarikh-e-Da'awat-o-Azimat*, a history of revivalist movements among Muslims in India. Nadwi wrote extensively on the poet-philosopher Iqbal and his quest for a normative Islamic social order and polity, on the life and works of Maulana Muhammad Ilyas, the founder of the *Tablighi Jama'at*, on the contributions of Muslims and Islam to world culture, and a series of books on Islam in the contemporary Arab world, where he had widely travelled, stressing the glory of the Islamic roots, while at the same time bitterly castigating dictatorial Arab regimes for their secularism, their cultural and political enslavement to the West and their often brutal suppression of Islamist movements. He was also critical of such ideologies as nationalism, communism, pan-Arabism, which he saw having taken the rightful place of Islam as the guiding light of the Arabs and as having caused their downfall. Having travelled extensively in the United States and Europe,

5-Ibid, pp.26-34.

6-Muhammad Nafis Hasan, Meri Tamam Sarguzasht: Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, Published by the author, Delhi, 2000, p.32.

Nadwi also penned several books and tracts on contemporary Western civilization, condemning it for what he regarded as its crass materialism, for what he saw as its immorality and godlessness, but at the same time insisting that Muslims should not hesitate to benefit from its scientific achievements.

Nadwi's writings were concerned to present Islam as a comprehensive worldview, as laying down guidelines and laws governing all aspects of personal as well as collective life. As such, therefore, he passionately echoed the argument of the Islamists that an Islamic state was essential for the laws for the Shari'ah to be implemented in their entirety. However, he was, at the same time, a realist, aware that this was out of the realm of human possibility in the contemporary Indian context. In contrast to Muslim liberals, and echoing the views of the Islamists, he insisted on the need for an Islamic order in order to implement the laws of God. However, he stood apart from most Islamists by arguing that the Islamic political order could come about in India only in some remotely distant future. Rather than directly struggling for it at present, he believed that the Muslims of the country should focus their energies in trying to build what he saw as a truly Islamic society, on the basis of which alone could an ideal Islamic political order come into being. As such, as Ansari, one of his principal biographers, observes, his writings were all suffused with a passionate zeal for the cause of this vision of Islam, pioneering, he says, a new genre of Arabic writing he calls *Adab al-da'wat* or "missionary literature".⁷

Beside his voluminous scholarly output that won for him accolades from leading Islamic and Arabic scholars, Nadwi was occupied with several Indian as well as international Islamic organisations, a mark of the high respect that he was accorded among Muslims all over the world. In recognition of his outstanding contribution to Islamic studies and to the cause of Islam, he was awarded Shah Faisal Award in 1980. In addition to serving as the rector of Nadwatul Ulama, he was the head of the Dini Ta'limi Council (The Religious Education Council), Uttar Pradesh, member of the standing committee of the Darul-Musannifin, Azamgarh, member of the Consultative Committee of the Dar-ul-Ulum madrasa, Deoband, chairman of the Oxford

7-Abdullah Abbas Nadwi, *op.cit.* p.48.

Centre of Islamic studies, director of the foundation for studies and Research Luxembourg, member of the Organising Committee of the Islamic Centre, Geneva, member of the Board of Directors of the Rabita Al-Adab-al-Islami (The world committee for Islamic literature), Amman, member of the standing committee of the Rabita-al-Islami (The World Muslim Council), Macca, member of the Consultative Committee of the Jami's al- Islamiya (Islamic University), Madina, as well as visiting professor at the universities of Damascus, Medina and Marrakesh. His involvement with these organisations and institutions enabled him to travel widely, both in India as well as abroad, which, in turn, exercised a major influence on his own writings as well as work among the Muslims of India, to which we now turn.

Muslims as Minority: between Faith and Citizenship

Nadwi's views on Muslims living as a minority in India and how this predicament could be reconciled with an understanding of Islam as going beyond personal piety to embrace collective affairs as well as the polity must be seen the context of his understanding of the historical role of Islam in India. Nadwi portrays a romantically ideal picture of much of the history of the Muslim presence in India. Thus he says, the first Muslims came to India supremely unconcerned with worldly aims and ambitions, guided only by the lofty sentiment of religious service. The message of equality and social justice that the early Sufis preached struck a powerful chord among the people, especially the oppressed "low" castes, and scores of them embraced Islam at their hands. For their part, successive Muslim kings of India are said to have been men of courage and ambition, who carried the country to glorious heights of progress and prosperity. They considered themselves as the " Divinely-appointed trustees of God's land and servants of His people". The Muslims who came to India from abroad settled down in the country for good, thus making it their home, unlike for instance, the British. As such, their contributions to Indian culture have been immense, Nadwi says. Thus it was under Muslim rule that most of India was unified into one administrative unit and the country was brought into contact with the outside world. Muslims helped develop new and rich styles of architecture, art, dress, language and literature, as well as pro-

moting trade, agriculture and industry. More importantly, Islam provided the Indians with the concept of Divine Unity, bitterly critiquing polytheism, priesthood, idolatry and various superstitious beliefs and practices. Its message of social equality and women's rights, too, had a profound impact, and many Hindu reformist sects owed their inspiration to Islamic influence. In more recent times, Muslims also played leading role in the struggle against British imperialism and for the cause of Indian freedom.⁸

Because of the great contributions that Muslims have made to Indian history and culture, Nadwi argued, they have as much right to live in India as equal citizens as do people of other faiths. As he put it, "The Muslims are not only citizens of an equal status with anybody in India, they are also among its chief builders and architects, and hold a position second to none among the people of the world for selfless service to the motherland".⁹ This argument appears to have been directed both at Hindu chauvinists, who insisted that Muslims must either migrate en-masse to Pakistan or else give up their separate religious identity, as it was the Muslim supporters of the "two-nation" theory who did not see any possibility for peaceful co-existence between Hindus and Muslims living in the same country.

Muslims leaders in post-1947 India have had to deal with the question of Pakistan squarely. Lingerin g mistrust among Hindus about the alleged role of the Muslims who stayed behind in India on the partition of the country, as well as accusations of Muslims being Pakistani fifth columnists forced Nadwi to come out strongly in favour of a united India though his patriotism was not tainted with anti-Pakistan sentiment.¹⁰ Although, as we have seen, Nadwi had studied under such protagonists of Pakistan

8-Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Muslims in India* (Translated by Muhammad Asif Kidwai) Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, Lucknow, 1980, pp.8-21. It is interesting to note that Nadwi here sees Muslims as outsiders who have settled in India, while ignoring the vast majority of Indian Muslims who are actually descendants of indigenous converts. It is remarkable how here he echoes the views of anti-Muslim Hindu ideologues.

9-Ibid, pp.8-21.

10-In his comments on the role of the Muslims in the Indian freedom struggle he writes of the participation of Muslims in the Congress, but consciously ignores their role in the Pakistan movement. He glosses over this by alleging that the partition was largely a result of communal tendencies within the Congress, the role of Hindus in instigating anti-Muslims violence, social discrimination, communal suspicion and the political immaturity of the Indians in general (Ibid, pp.120-21).

movements as Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi, he was opposed to the demand for creation of a separate state for the Muslims of India even at the height of the Pakistan movement under the Muslim league in the 1940s.¹¹ In this regard he was influenced by the Leading "Ulama" of Deoband seminary, most notably Maulana Sayyed Hussain Ahmad Madani, whom he had studied with, and who was known for his fierce opposition to the "two nation" theory, which Nadwi considered to be a "folly".¹² Opposed to the demand for partition, principally because he felt that only in a united India would Muslims be able to carry on with their religious duty of missionary work. Nadwi insisted that Muslims could live along with others in a common homeland in peace and harmony and yet remain true to their religious commitments.¹³

Distancing himself from the Muslim League, Nadwi moved closer to other Muslim organisations. In 1940, he came under the influence of Maulana Sayyed Abul Ala Maududi, the founder of the Jama'at-e-Islami, a fierce critic of the Muslim communalism of the League and a passionate advocate of an Islamic state. Impressed with Maududi's bold rebuttal of the attacks and conspiracy of Western writers, Jews and Christians, against Islam, he joined the Jama'at¹⁴ being put in charge of its activities in Lucknow. This relationship proved short-lived, however, and he left the Jama'at in 1943.¹⁵ He is said to have been disillusioned by the perception that many members of the Jama'at were going to extremes (ghulu)¹⁶ in adoring and glorifying Maududi as almost infallible, this being seen as bordering on "personality worship" (shakhshiyat parasti). At the same time. He felt that many of them believed that they had nothing at all to learn from any other scholars of Islam. He was also concerned with what he saw as a lack of personal piety in Maududi and leading Jama'at activists and with their criticism of other Muslim groups.¹⁷

It is likely that the Jama'at's own understanding of the

11-Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Karvan-e-Zindagi* (Vol.1) Maktaba al-Islam, Lucknow, 2000, p.250.

12-Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Muslims in India*, op.cit, p.121.

13.Hasan op.cit.p.113.

14-Abdullah Abbas Nadwi, op.cit, p.61.

15-Rizwan Ahmad Nadwi, "Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi: Shakhshiyat-o-Kirdar" in *Rabita {Mufakkir-e-Islam Hazrat Sayyed Hasan Ali Nadwi Number}*, Delhi, 2000, p.44.

16.Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Karvan-e-Zindagi* (Vol.1) op.cit.p.242.

17-Hasan, op.cit.p.33.

Islamic missions in the Indian context, based as it was on the primacy of the political struggle to establish Islamic state, was also a crucial factor for Nadwi's parting of ways with Maududi. It appears that while Nadwi shared much the same understanding of Islam as an all comprehensive way of life, with the Islamic political order a necessary and indispensable pillar, he differed from the Jama'at on the crucial question strategy, seeing the Jama'at's approach as unrealistic in the Indian context, where Muslims were a relatively small minority. This opposition to the Jama'at's approach continued even after 1947, although Nadwi maintained cordial relations with Maududi, and never failed to meet him whenever he visited Pakistan.¹⁸

Nadwi's opposition to the Jama'at comes out clearly in his book "*Asr-e- Hazir Mai Din Ki Tafhim-o-Tashrih*" (Understanding and Explaining Religion in the Contemporary Age) which he penned in 1978, which won him, so he says in his introduction to its second edition published in 1980, fierce condemnation from leading members of the Jama'at. Here, Nadwi takes Maududi to task for having allegedly misinterpreted central Islamic beliefs in order to suit his own political agenda, presenting Islam, he says, as little more than a political programme. Thus, he accuses Maududi of equating the Islamic duty of "establishing religion" (iqamat-e-din) with the setting up of an Islamic state with God as Sovereign and Law Maker. At Maududi's hands, he says "God (Ilah), " The Sustainer" (Rabb), "Religion" (Din) and "Worship" (Ibadat) have all been reduced to political concepts, suggesting that Islam is simply about political power and that the relationship between God and human beings is only that between an all-powerful king and His subjects. However, Nadwi says, this relationship is also one of "love" and "realization" of the Truth" which is far more comprehensive than what Maududi envisages.¹⁹

Linked to Nadwi's critique of Maududi for having allegedly reduced Islam to a mere political project, his concern that not only was such an approach a distortion of the actual import of the Qur'an but also that it was impractical, if not dangerous, in the Indian context. Thus, he argued, Maududi's insistence that to accept the commands of anyone other than God was tantamount to

18-Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, Karvan-e-Zindagi (Vol.1) op.cit.p.245. /

19-Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, "Asr-e-Hazir Mai Din Ki Tafhim-o-Tashrih" Dar-ul Arfat.Lucknow.

Shirk, the crime of associating others with God, as this was allegedly akin to “worship” (*ibadat*), was not in keeping with the teaching of Islam. God, Nadwi wrote, had, in His wisdom, left several areas of life free for people to decide how they could govern them, within the broad limits set by the *Shari’ah*, and guided by a concern for social welfare. Further, Nadwi wrote that Maududi’s argument that God had sent prophets to the world charged with the mission of establishing an Islamic state was a misreading of the Islamic concept of Prophethood. The principal work of the prophets, Nadwi argued, was to preach the worship of the one God and to exhort others to do good deeds. Not all prophets were rulers. In fact, only a few them were granted that status. Nadwi faulted Maududi for “debasing” the “lofty” Islamic understanding of worship to mean simply “training”. He wrote, prayer (*namaz*) and remembrance of God (*zikr*) are seen as simply the means to an end, the establishment of an Islamic state, whereas, Nadwi argued, the converse is true. The goal of the Islamic State is to ensure worship of God, and not the other way round. If at all worship can be said to be a means, it is a means for scuring the “will of God” (*raza-e-Ilahi*) and “closeness to Him (*Qurb-e-Khudawandi*).²⁰

If the Islamic state is then simply a means for the “establishment of religion” and not the “total religion” (*kul din*) or the primary objective (*maqsad-e-avvalin*) of Islam, it opens up the possibility of pursuing the same goals through other means in a contexts where setting up of an Islamic state is not an immediate possibility, as is the case in contemporary India. Nadwi refers to this when he says that the objective of *iqamat-e-din* needs to be pursued along with *hikmat-e-din* (wisdom of the faith), using constructive as opposed to destructive, means. Eschewing “total opposition” (*kulli mukhalifat*) Muslims striving for the “establishment of the faith” should, he wrote, unhesitatingly adopt peaceful means such as understanding and reform (*tafhim-o-islah*), consultation (*mashwara*) and “wisdom” (*hikmat*). Critiquing the use of uncalled for violence by groups calling themselves Islamic, Nadwi stressed the need for “obedience”, “love” and “faith” and struggle against the “base self” (*nafs*). Muslims should he wrote, make use of all available legitimate spaces to pursue the cause of

20-Ibid.PP.66-98.

the "establishment of religion" such as propagating their message through literature, public personality and establishing contacts with governments, exhorting them to abide by the shari'ah, seeking to convince them of the superiority of the solutions to worldly problems that Islam provides. It is clear that such spaces are available even in Muslim minority context, and Nadwi suggests that Muslims in India, too, should seek to take advantage of these to carry on with the mission of the "establishment of the faith", even in the absence of realistic possibilities for the immediate setting up of an Islamic political order in the country.

Although Nadwi agreed with Maududi in arguing for the necessity of an Islamic state, he insisted that "wisdom" demanded that the strategies for attaining the goal be formulated in accordance with existing social conditions. Thus he noted, it was not necessary for a political party to directly launch a movement for the cause, especially if the odds were heavily weighed against it. A more realistic approach would be, he said, to "prepare people's minds" for Islamic government through a "silent revolution" (*khamosh inqilab*). Although these remarks seem to have been directed at Islamic groups working in majority countries, Nadwi clearly saw this pragmatic approach as the only feasible way to carry on with the mission of establishing the faith in the Indian majority context.²¹ To Nadwi's multifarious public activities and missionary efforts in post-1947 India, all of which were directed towards this one overarching goal, we now turn.

Muslims in post-1947 India: Tasks before the Community

With the partition of India reducing Muslims to an even more insecure community, Muslim leaders were forced come to terms with the grave threats that the community was now confronted with. The Muslim League, which had headed the movement for the partition, went into complete hibernation, except for in small pockets in the south, with most of its leaders either migrating to Pakistan or else opportunistically joining the Congress Party. Even the Jama'at-e-Islami was forced to reconsider its strategies on more realistic lines. It abandoned "the rule of God" (*hukumat-e-ilahiya*) as its immediate goal, substituting it by the

21-Ibid. pp.109-123.

establishment of the faith (iqamat-e din). It even went so far as to insist that in the given circumstances it saw democracy and secularism, which Maududi viewed as the twin evils of modern western political thought as indispensable, for the only alternative would be Hindu fascism. In a context of lingering anti Muslim prejudice, repeated anti-Muslim violence, and growing Hindu aggression, which he saw as bent on the "cultural genocide" of the Muslims and as aimed at turning India into "another Spain" by driving Islam out of the country, Nadwi, too, insisted that Muslims adopt a pragmatic strategy that would enable them to reconcile, however precariously, their commitments to their faith, on the one hand, and their responsibilities toward their country, on the other.²²

Clearly, Nadwi seems to have felt, the Islamic imperative of struggling for the "establishment of the faith" need not necessarily take the form of political activism alone. There were other, perhaps more efficacious, means to the same goal, focussing on the individual believer, instilling in him or her a passionate commitment to the faith. Gradually, as the number of such individuals grew, and others, influenced by the moral virtues that they witnessed in them, began to take an interest in Islam, if not actually converting to the faith, an Islamic society could be created, Nadwi believed, on the basis of which an Islamic political order could emerge. Nadwi was pragmatic enough to realise that efforts to establish an Islamic state in India without building up an Islamic society that would encompass a majority of the people of the country was utopian. Hence his insistent appeal to the Muslims to focus their energies on strengthening their commitment up from below, Nadwi hoped the field would be prepared for what he saw as the complete "establishment of the faith".

An indication of this growing pragmatism was Nadwi's wholehearted participation in the work of the Tablighi Jama'at, which he first came in touch with in 1943. In contrast to the Muslim league, the Tablighi Jama'at consciously eschewed political activity, refraining from communal controversy and conflict.²³

22-Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Karvan-e-Zindagi* (Vol.3), Maktaba al-Islam, Lucknow, 1998, p.82.

23-For a detailed study of this movement, see my *The Origins and Development of the Tablighi Jama'at (1920s-2000): A Cross-Country Comparative Study*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 2002.

Unlike the Jama'at-e-Islami, the Tablighi Jama'at rooted itself among poor and lower-middle class Muslims, emerging as a truly mass movement. With its simple message of faith in God, knowledge and performance of basic Islamic rituals and the abandoning of "Un-Islamic" customs, silently working to spread Islamic commitment while staying completely aloof from political involvement and communal controversy, the Tablighi Jama'at probably suggested itself to Nadwi the most pragmatic strategy for Muslims in India living as a marginalised and threatened minority, to adopt. Nadwi remained deeply appreciative of the Tablighi Jama'at till the end, exhorting the students and teachers of the Nadwa to take part in its work and going so far as to publish a biography of its founder.

If Nadwi saw the Tablighi Jama'at, with its vast network of activists all over the country and abroad, as playing a central role in preserving Muslim identity and spreading awareness and consciousness of Islam among the masses, he was equally appreciative of the role of the traditional Islamic madrasas or seminaries on promoting Islamic knowledge and awareness, for he saw the Ulama as the rightful leader of the masses in the absence of Muslim political authority. Nadwi considered madrasas as "the centre of his hope and expectations" because, he believed they were the fort guaranteeing the existence of the Muslims and their community identity.²⁴ He clearly saw that in post 1947 India the centuries old tradition of Islamic learning as well as the very Islamic identity of the Muslims were under grave threat, both from the state as well as from Hindu chauvinists, and hence insisted that one of the principal tasks before the community was the preservation and promotion of Islamic knowledge and awareness through the madrasa system. Nadwi played a key role in the setting up of the Dini Ta'limi Council (The Religious Education Council) in 1959, which aimed at providing religious education to Muslim children through a chain of mosque-schools. The Council which Nadwi headed for many years, also sought to expose and combat negative portrayals of Muslims and Islam in text books used in government schools.²⁵

24-Abdullah Abbas Nadwi, op.cit.p.163.

25-Hasan, op.cit.p.136.

Political Involvement

Faced as the Muslim community was with numerous problems that demanded a political solution, Nadwi was forced against his will to enter the field of politics. As Sayyid Hamid points out, Nadwi was a stranger to the world of politics, being forced into it when it "struck him" that Muslims "lacked any farsighted guide".²⁶ In his autobiography Nadwi wrote that prior to 1964 he had no interest in political affairs, being immersed in his scholarly pursuits. A sudden spurt in violent attacks against Muslims instigated by Hindu chauvinists, in which scores of Muslim lost their lives, as well as the continuing indifference of the government to Muslim problems, forced him to turn his attention to politics. At a time when the role of the state had extended into almost every sphere of personal and collective life, he wrote, the Muslims could not afford to remain aloof from politics. To do so would be tantamount to "collective suicide", for they would not be able to protect their identity, their personal laws, their religious traditions, and even their very lives in the face of the growing threat of Hindu aggression as well as the Hinduisation of the state apparatus.²⁷ Accordingly, in 1964 Nadwi, along with other leading Muslim social, political and religious figures, set up the All-India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat (The Muslim Consultative Assembly), an umbrella body of several Muslim organisations, to chalk out a coordinated political strategy for the Muslim community. Nadwi saw the Majlis as playing a central role in politically awakening, mobilising and uniting Muslim voters scattered all over the country in order to make them a powerful, consolidated political order to convince them of the need to pay attention to the problems and concerns of the Muslims, as well as to promote inter-communal amity in the country, which it saw as indispensable for Muslims as well as others to prosper.²⁸ It sought to actively promote communal harmony while at the same time promoting Muslim rights and interests, the two being seen as inseparable from, rather than antagonistic to, each other. By thereby seeking to politically integrate the Muslims into the mainstream of social and political life in India, the Majlis, as Nadwi saw it, was also intended to

26-Saiyid Hamid, "Maulana Ali Miyan" in Rabita {Muffakir-e-Islam Hazrat Maulana Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi Number}, Delhi, 2000, p.53.

27-Hasan, op.cit.p.85-86.

28-Hasan, op.cit.p.141.

enable Muslims to prove to others their Qur'anic status of *khair-ul-umam* (the best community). It was only in a climate of peace, Nadwi wrote, the non-Muslims would be willing to listen seriously to the Islamic "invitation".²⁹

The setting up of the Majlis was a sign that the Muslims were no longer willing to be treated as a passive vote-bank of the Congress Party. Incensed at the Congress indifference to Muslim problems, particularly to the growing wave of attacks on Muslims and the woeful economic conditions of the community, Majlis leaders argued the need for Muslims to seek to enter into alliances with other political parties, to bargain with them, promising Muslim votes in return for assurances of protection of Muslim interests. As Nadwi stressed, the Muslims "had not written out a letter of slavery" for any party, arguing that the Congress could no longer take the Muslim vote for granted. Rather, he said, Muslims, acting within the framework of the Indian constitution, would support political forces that could guarantee protection of their lives, property and religious freedom.³⁰ Contrary to Nadwi's expectations, however, the Majlis died a premature death not long after it was born. It split in the wake of the 1967 elections, one faction supporting the Congress and the other opposed to it.

Nadwi believed that as a minority, and an increasingly threatened one at that, Muslims needed to work along with existing political parties, rather than set up one of their own. The legacy of the Muslim league and its involvement in the partition of India had left behind too many scars to allow Nadwi to contemplate the possibility of a separate Muslim party. This did not mean, Nadwi insisted, that Muslims should not organise on their own as a separate bloc and on that basis seek to dialogue with other political forces to protect and promote their own interests. In fact, this is what, in addition to the Majlis, the Muslim Personal Law Board (MPLB) and the Babri Masjid Action Committee (BMAC), in both of which Nadwi played a leading role, actually intended to do. The MPLB was set up in 1972, and Nadwi headed it from 1983 till his death in 1999. Its primary purpose was to protect Muslim personal laws from interference by the state and Hindu

29-Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Karvan-e-Zindagi* (Vol.2), Maktaba al-Islam, Lucknow, 1998, p.102.

30-Ibid, pp.90-103.

chauvinist forces as well as to combat what were seen as “un-Islamic” practices among the Muslims, exhorting them to abide by the rulings of the Shari’ah in their personal lives. It played a central role in mobilising Muslim opinion against the 1984 verdict of the supreme court of India in the well-published Shah Bano case³¹, by organising mass rallies and meeting with political leaders, including the then Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, urging them to ensure that Muslim personal law was not tampered with.³² In a country where the Shari’ah was applicable only in the realm of personal affairs, specifically in matters of endowments, marriage, divorce and inheritance, Nadwi saw the threat of tampering with Muslim personal law by the state, under pressure from both secularists as well as Hindu chauvinists, as tantamount to a “conspiracy” against Islam as such. Thus, he asserted, “we cannot ever allow anyone to impose on us any other social and cultural system and personal law. We understand this as an invitation to apostasy (da’wat-e-irtidad), and so we must oppose it as we would oppose any invitation to renouncing our faith. This is our right as citizens of this country, and the Indian Constitution not only allows for this but positively supports us in our quest for the preservation of our democratic rights and freedoms.”³³ Although Nadwi envisioned the shari’ah as all-encompassing, extending even to collective affairs, by thus accepting its jurisdiction being restricted to personal affairs as the basic minimum acceptable to Muslims, he saw the possibility of the Indian Muslims coming to terms, at least for the present and the immediate future, with what, in theory at least, is a secular polity.

Nadwi saw secularism, understood both as state neutrality towards all religions as well as harmony between followers of different faiths, as indispensable for a plural society like India and for protecting Muslim interests. Even at the height of the Babri mosque controversy, in the early 1990s, when Hindu zealots, targetting a mosque in the town of Ayodhya which they alleged

31-In this case, the supreme Court had ordered the husband of a divorced Muslim woman to pay her an alimony beyond the “Iddat” period as specified in the Qur’an.

32-In 1989, under pressure from the MPLB and conservative Muslim opinion, the Congress government under Rajiv Gandhi passed the Muslim women’s protection Bill that overturned the ruling of the Supreme Court.

33-Muhammad “Abdur Rahim Quraishi” Muslim Personal Law Tehrik Hazrat Maulana Ali Miyan Ke Daur-e-Sdarat Mai”, in Rabita {Muffakir-e-Islam Hazrat Maulana Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi Number}, Delhi, 2000, p.112.

had been built on the ruins of a temple dedicated to the god-king Ram, unleashed a wave of attacks against Muslims, Nadwi counselled dialogue and restraint, rather than retaliation and conflict. Warning Muslims not to take to the path of violence in the face of militant Hindu attacks, he sought to present a solution to the dispute that might satisfy both sides.³⁴ He met with several Hindu religious leaders to help evolve a mutually acceptable solution, believing that the matter should not be left to professional politicians who had a vested interest in instigating and prolonging communal conflict. When Hindu militants began a mass, India-wide campaign to destroy the mosque, fanning anti-Muslim passion and violence, Nadwi reacted by issuing public statement calling for peace and tolerance, pleading that the matter be resolved through constitutional means. At a peace rally at Lucknow in 1990, he declared that in the face of mounting Hindu militancy, Muslims must respond by “turning to God, refraining from sin, inviting non-Muslims to Islam and adopting the path of steadfastness, tolerance and bravery”.

In the wake of the destruction of the Babri mosque in December 1992, Nadwi reacted by issuing yet another appeal for calm. He called for the reconstruction of the mosque on its original site, a ban on all organisations preaching communal hatred and stormlike movement for promoting inter-communal and patriotism. He bitterly criticised the action of some Muslims in Pakistan and Bangladesh who reacted to the destruction of the Babri mosque by attacking Hindu temples there. He condemned this as “a negation of the teachings of Islam”, adding that, in the present situation Muslims in these countries should protect their non-Muslim minorities and serve as a “model” for Hindus in India to emulate Vis-a-vis their own minorities.³⁵ Appealing to Muslims not to lose heart in the face of mounting attacks from Hindu chauvinist groups and to desist from counter-violence, Nadwi asserted that the Muslims must respond by seeking to protect their separate communal identity and by engaging in Islamic missionary

34-He suggested that the mosque be taken over by the Archaeological Survey of India as a protected monument. Muslims should be allowed to pray in the mosque, while in the courtyard a “historical and cultural” memorial to Ram could be built and where “historical information” on Ram could be disseminated (Sayyid Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Karvan-e-Zindagi*) {Vol.2} op.cit.p.152).

35-Hasan, op.cit.pp. 156-58.

work, and in this way try to “bring India to the right path”. They must, he said, turn to God for help, repent of their sins, abide by the commandments of God and recite the Qur’an regularly, particularly those verses of the holy book that talk about “peace” (aman) “security” (amaan), “victory” (fateh) and “divine assistance” (nusrat). At this juncture, he pointed out, Muslims must remember that particularly since they are a minority, they should strive for peaceful coexistence with people of other faiths, and work with them for social justice. They must not despair in this hour of trial, but, instead, should steadfastly endure tribulations in the path of God, not hesitating even to sacrifice their lives as martyrs for their faith.³⁶

Inter-Religious Dialogue

In the wake of mounting attacks against Muslims, instigated both by Hindu militants as well as by elements within the state apparatus, in which large number of Muslims lost their lives, inter-religious dialogue assumed a particular urgency for Nadwi. The need for Muslims to reach out to the wider society first suggested itself to him in the early 1950s in the course of his involvement with the work of the Tablighi Jama’at. While appreciating the work of the movement among the Muslim masses, he felt that it had tended to neglect the role of the Ulama in the affairs of the country as a whole. The “Ulama” he now came to believe, had a special role to play in promoting awareness among the Muslims of the changing social conditions in the country, in order to make them both “ideal citizens” as well as capable of “obtaining the leadership of the country”. As he put it:

If you make Muslims one hundred per cent mindful of their supererogatory prayers (*tahajjud guzar*), making them all very pious, but leave them cut off from the wider environment, ignorant of where the country is heading and of how hatred is being stirred up in the country against them, then, leave alone the supererogatory prayers, it will soon become impossible for Muslims to say even their five daily prayers. If you make Muslims strangers in their own land, blind them to social realities and cause them to remain indifferent to the radical changes taking place in

36-Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Karvan-e-Zindagi* (Vol.5) Maktaba al-Islam, Lucknow, 1994, pp.180.

the country and the new laws that are being imposed and the new ideas that are ruling people's hearts and minds, then let alone (*acquiring*) leadership (of the country), it will become difficult for Muslims to even ensure their own existence.³⁷

Accordingly, Nadwi began efforts to reach out to non-Muslims, seeking to establish better relations between Muslims and them, this being seen as necessary for missionary work among them. Such efforts at interaction took various forms. Thus, for instance, Nadwi began taking an interest in the efforts of the Dalits in their struggles against caste oppression, having as early as in 1935 met Dr. Ambedkar, the Dalit leader, inviting him to accept Islam along with his followers.³⁸ He established close ties with the Bangalore-based English fortnightly Dalit Voice, releasing its inaugural issue in 1980. Dalit Voice advocated an alliance between all marginalised communities in India, including Dalits, Backward Castes, Tribals, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists and Muslims, against "upper" caste Hindu oppression, and Nadwi was an enthusiastic supporter of the cause.³⁹ In order to reach out to well-meaning non-Muslims, as well as to highlight Muslim concerns and problems, Nadwi was instrumental in setting up the English-weekly one Nation Chronicle, which after it failed to take off, was replaced by the fortnightly Nation and the World. Both names were deliberately chosen to reflect an insistence that Muslims, too, considered themselves part of the Indian "nation" and, therefore, could not afford to be ignored.⁴⁰ Nadwi served as head of the trust under whose auspices the journal was published, Saiyid Hamid, editor of Journal writes that Nadwi saw the journal as promoting among its readers "balance and goodwill" among people of different communities.⁴¹

Nadwi called for inter-religious dialogue between Mus-

37-Quoted in Hasan, op.cit. p.35.

38-Ansari, op.cit. P.89.

39-Interview with V.T.Rajshekar, editor of Dalit Voice, Bangalore, 1 February, 2001.

40-In this Nadwi was in agreement with the view of Deobandi scholars like Maulana Haussain Ahmad Madani on composite nationalism, of the Hindus and Muslims of India being members of a common nation. He, however, made a crucial distinction between patriotism (*Watan dosti*) and national chauvinism (nation worship or *watan parasti*), asserting that while Islam positively enjoined the former, it was opposed to the latter, seeing it as *Shirk* (Associating any being with God) and as leading to bloody strife. See, for instance, Sayyid Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Calamity of Linguistic and Cultural Chauvinism*, Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, Lucknow, n.d...

41-Saiyid Hamid, op.cit, pp.49-50.

lims and others, particularly Hindus, envisaging this as going beyond mere theological exchange to take the form of joint efforts for building a more harmonious and just society. In his introduction to a general survey of Muslim contributions to Indian culture, he wrote that for people of different faiths to live together in peace and co-operation, it was necessary that they should understand each other's religions, culture, and traditions, regarding whatever they found good as "precious and worthy of encouragement and preservation".⁴² When two civilisations meet, he remarked, there is always a two-way process of interaction between them, both being influenced and moulded by each other. Such interaction must not be seen as necessarily negative, because "human existence is based on the noble principle of give and take". In this, he wrote, "lies its strength and glory".⁴³

It was because of such exchanges in the past, he commented, the numerous reformers, influenced by Islam, emerged among the Hindus, preaching the unity of God and the oneness of all humankind. On the other hand as a result of being open to indigenous cultural influences, the Muslims of India developed their own "individual national character" that sets them apart from Muslims elsewhere. Not all these influences may be wholesome, Nadwi remarked, pointing out to existence of caste, social discrimination and extravagant customs and ceremonies among the Indian Muslims as examples of the "baneful" impact of their encounter with Hindu society. However, he noted, by not hesitating to adopt positive features of the surrounding culture with which it had come into contact, Indian Muslim culture had developed "a beauty and richness which is characteristically its own".⁴⁴ Overall, he said, Muslims had actually "benefited immensely" from the "ancient cultural heritage" of India. In particular, it had, he wrote, enabled them to successfully meet the onslaught of western culture, preserving their cultural heritage largely intact, in contrast to Muslims living in "so-called Islamic countries". Further, he added, the depth and profundity of Indian thought, particularly Sufism, was a result of the interaction of Islam with "social, cultural and intellectual processes native to India".⁴⁵ This

42-Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, Muslims in India, op.cit.p.1.

43-Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, Muslims in India, op.cit.p.76.

44-Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, Muslims in India, op.cit.p.68.

45-Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, Muslims in India, op.cit.p.76.

cultural dialogue had endowed the Muslims with a rootedness in the Indian context so that they “operate not like an alien or a traveller but as a natural, permanent citizen who has built his home in the light of his peculiar needs, circumstances, past traditions and new impulses”. Nadwi insisted that it was thus “utterly futile” to expect Muslims to “lead a life” of complete immunity from local influences”.⁴⁶

While not advocating a from of inter-faith dialogue that might lead Muslims to compromise in any way on their faith, being convinced that Islam was indeed the only perfect religion, Nadwi advocated what could be called a “dialogue of life” appealing for people of different religions to work together for common purposes. He saw the struggle against violence as the single most urgent need of the times, and here Muslims could work together with others to establish a more peaceful and just society. He often spoke out against extremism of all sorts, insisting that what was required was a band of missionaries who could “douse the flames of hatred and enmity”. In this way, Hamid writes, Nadwi taught the Indian Muslims how they could “live in a religiously plural society in such a way that their beliefs could remain free from the stain of communal prejudices and conflict”, while “living together with others in harmony by respecting each other’s religious beliefs”. He insisted that rather than being a “barrier” in the path of Islamic missionary work, such a stance was actually a “facilitator”.⁴⁷

The *Payam-e- Insaniyat* (The Message of Humanity) was Nadwi’s principal vehicle for the promotion of better relations between Muslims and people of other faiths. The noted Indian Shi’a leader, Maulana Kalbe Sadiq, a close associate of Nadwi in the Muslims Personal Law Board, writes that the *Payam-e- Insaniyat* was Nadwi’s “favourite programme”, which he envisaged as a means to “bring peace to India”, through which alone the Muslims could “obtain their true stature”.⁴⁸ As its name suggests, it was intended to be a forum where people of different faiths could come together on the basis of their common humanity and

46-Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, Muslims in India, op.cit.p.68.

47-Sayyed Hamid, op.cit.p.51.

48-Sayyed Kalbe Sadiq, Maulana Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi: Ek Nazar-e-Aqidat, in Rabita {Muffakir-e-Islam Hazrat Maulana Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi Number}, Delhi, 2000, p.47.

belief in common values and principles of brotherhood, communal harmony, tolerance, mutual respect and love for the country. It aimed at promoting peaceful relations between Muslims and others and preventing moral decline. The Muslims had a special role to play in this regard for, as Nadwi saw it, it was they who had first gifted the message of humanism, love, tolerance, concern for social welfare to the people of the country".⁴⁹ Further, it was the religious duty of the Muslims to do so, for their status as the "best community" in the Qur'an bestowed upon them precisely because they "enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil".⁵⁰ As such, Hamid writes, it was also geared towards bringing Muslims to interact with others for addressing issues and problems of common concern, thus trying to reverse the trend towards "separatism" that had made them "indifferent" to these issues.⁵¹ Nadwi insisted that Muslim community could no longer "live in its own imaginary world {....} cut off from the mainstream of national life". Rather, they needed to join hands with others in building the country.⁵² For their lives were "inextricably linked to each other's. The *Payam-e-Insaniyat*, as he saw it, pointed to the most appropriate way in which Muslims could play a leading role in building a new India.⁵³

The origins of the *Payam-e-Insaniyat* go back to the early 1950s, when, in the wake of growing attacks on Muslims by Hindu chauvinist groups, Nadwi began addressing joint Hindu-Muslim public rallies, calling for communal harmony and peace.⁵⁴ In the course of his interaction with Hindus in various parts of India he discovered that many of them had doubts and misunderstandings about Islam, which, he recognized, not only further widened the distance between Hindus and Muslims but also stood in the way of the spread of Islam. This led him, in 1974, to formally launch the *Payam-e-Insaniyat* as an effort to promote better relations

49-Sayyed Hamid, op.cit. p.51.

50-Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi Reconstruction of Indian Society: What Muslims Can Do, Academy of Islamic Research and Publication, Lucknow, n.d. p.34.

51-Sayyed Hamid, op.cit. p.51.

52-Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi Reconstruction of Indian Society: What Muslims Can Do, op.cit. p.2.

53-Ibid, p.15.

54.S.M.Rabey Nadwi, The Philosopher of Islam: A Close-up in Shariq Alavi(ed) The Fragrance of the East {Special Issue on Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi}, January-June, 2000, p.23.

between Muslims and people of other faiths, particularly Hindus. Although Nadwi envisaged it as a popular movement, it failed to take such a form, revolving around himself as a charismatic personality. Because of this, after his death it witnessed a sudden decline. Although it did not have any registered office or members, it later gave birth to more organised bodies such as the society for Communal Harmony (CSH), consisting of a group of Hindu and Muslim intellectuals committed to the cause of communal harmony, and the forum for communal understanding and synthesis (FOCUS), with broadly the same objectives.⁵⁵

The activities of the *Payam-e-Insaniyat* consisted, largely, of organising public rallies addressed by Nadwi, his deputy Mulana Abdul Karim Parekh of Nagpur, as well as other Muslim and Hindu leaders, and publishing literature in various languages on speeches at *Payam-e-Insaniyat* rallies generally focussed on moral values that people of all religions generally hold in common, on communal hatred, violence and oppression of marginalised groups, on growing selfishness, materialism, immorality and corruption in public life and on other such issues of concern to Indians irrespective of religion, while at the same time claiming that Islam could offer an ideal antidote to all of these. While at the same time calling for closer co-operation between people of different faiths, Nadwi insisted that Muslims must steer clear from any moves towards a "unity of religions" (*wahdat-e-adyan*), as that, as he saw it, was a "great strife" (*Fitna*) which could threaten to undermine the notion of Islam's uniqueness and superiority.⁵⁶ He, however, maintained that India as a whole as well as each community individually could progress only in a climate of peace, free from inter-communal violence. For this people of all communities must learn to live together in harmony despite their differences. Islam, he stressed, actually enjoined upon Muslims the task of building friendly relations with others, rather than alienate them or turn them into enemies. "The prophets", he declared at a *Payam-e-Insaniyat* gathering at Moradabad in 1978, "always strove to make sure that the beads of humanity always remained

55-Hasan, op.cit.p.132-33.

56-Abdul Karim Parekh (ed.) *Murshid-e-Ruhani Ummat Hazrat Maulana Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi Urf "Ali Miyan Saheb" Ke Khutut Mufasssir-e-Quran Hazrat Abul Karim Parekh Sahib Ke Nam*, Farid Book Depot, Delhi, 1999, p.33.

57-Hasan, op.cit.p.123.

strung in one necklace". On the other hand, he said, "Satan always tries to break the necklace and cause the beads to collide against each other".⁵⁷ Inspired by his speeches, Nadwi claimed, some Hindu extremists were provoked to remark that "Muslims are more concerned than us to save this country".⁵⁸ The same enthusiastic response does not, however, seem to have been evoked when, in 1978, under Nadwi's instructions, his principal deputy in the *Payam-e-Insaniyat*, Maulana Abdul Karim Parekh, met the head of the Hindu chauvinist Rashtirya Swayamsevak Sangh, Balasaheb Deoras, and sought to convey the message of the movement to him, in an effort to convince him "how much concern the Muslims have for the country".⁵⁹

Insisting that Islam positively enjoined peace between people of different faiths, Nadwi argued that Muslims had a special role to play in the work of *Payam-e-Insaniyat*. Not only was this their religious duty, it was, he said, also indispensable if they were to live in security and peace and be able to progress as a minority. He likened the movement to the *half-e-fuzul*, a group headed by Muhammad in Macca before he was appointed as a prophet, and consisting entirely of non-Muslims, mainly pagan Arabs. Just as the *half-e-fuzul* aimed at helping the poor and the oppressed, irrespective of religion and enjoining the good, forbidding the evil, so too, Nadwi said, must Muslims in India today work along with people of other communities for spreading "true" religion, peace, love and justice, and crusading against oppression, strife and violation of human rights, for Muslims, he insisted, have been appointed by God for that very purpose. Further, it was in the vital interests of the Muslims themselves, he said, to see that India was spared the ravages of violence. At a public gathering at Hyderabad in 1998, Nadwi remarked that the welfare of each community living in the country was dependent on the welfare of all the other communities as well. Each Indian had two homes, his own little hut as well as a large mansion that is India. The interests of the mansion have to be placed before

58-Mulana Ayub Nadwi, "Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi Aur Tahrik-e-Payam-e-Insaniyat" in *Rabita* {Mufakir-e-Islam Hazrat Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi number}, Delhi, 2000, p.117. also Hasan, op.cit. P.125.

59-Parekh, op.cit. p.140.

60-Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Karvan-e-Zindagi* (Vol.4) Maktaba al-Islam, Lucknow, 1999, pp.55-57.

those of the hut, for if there was no peace and prosperity in the former then the inhabitants of the latter could never prosper.⁶⁰ "It is but natural", Nadwi noted at another *Payam-e-Insaniyat* rally, "that a passenger travelling in a boat would not allow someone else to make a hole in it", for in that case all the passenger would sink together. The only way the Muslims, as a minority, could live with respect in any country was by proving their usefulness to others. They could also, by their actions, show others that Islam had a viable, in fact, the "ideal" solution, to all the problems afflicting the country. In this way, by "saving" India and thereby "winning the love and confidence" of its people God would "provide an opportunity for Muslims to occupy the leadership of the country".⁶¹

Nadwi envisaged *Payam-e-Insaniyat* as a means for Muslims to establish friendly relations with those of other religions, so that in this way they could impress them with the teachings of Islam and clear their misunderstandings about the religion. By bringing Muslims and others to work together for solving common problems, the *Payam-e-Insaniyat*, Nadwi believed, would provide a means for Muslims to carry on with the Islamic duty of Tabligh or missionary work. Thus, at a speech delivered at a *Payam-e-Insaniyat* rally in the aftermath of the bloody riots at Bhiwandi in 1984, in which dozens of Muslims were killed, Nadwi remarked that although the Muslims had been living in the country for well over a thousand years they had failed in their duty of explaining the teachings of their faith and their moral virtues to the Hindus and impressing them with the same. Instead of befriending them, Muslims had alienated them, turning them into enemies. The time had now come, he said, that through efforts like that of the *Payam-e-Insaniyat*, Muslims must show others what "jewels they hide in their hearts", how deeply inspired they were by their religion to "show love and human concern" for others, and how "useful" they actually were for the country as a whole. Islam, he insisted, was actually a religion of peace (*aman*)

⁶¹ Sayyid Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Karvan-e-Zindagi* {Vol.2.} mop.cit.pp.114-25, Nadwi argued that it was only the Muslims who could save India because Islam alone could provide a solution to the problems of the country. Thus, at an address to the faculty and students of Darul Uloom madrasa at Deoband he asserted that Muslims have been born for the leadership and custodianship of the entire world. Only Muslims can save this country because they alone have faith in the Unity of God, in human equality and in a complete system of social justice and in the hereafter (*karvan-e-Zindagi* {vol.2.} op.cit.p.309).

and “security” (*salamati*), and its true followers had “love, not hatred, for all humanity”, for all human beings, irrespective of religion, were God’s creatures and, hence, brothers to each other, Muslims, he said, should seek to convince others of this through their actions, and one way to do this was to work along with them for a more peaceful and just Indian society. This he said, would be a great service that they could render to both India as well as Islam.⁶² Addressing the Muslims, Nadwi commented that God had chosen India to be their country, and this being their home they should exhibit “love” for it. Islam, he said, positively encouraged them to have love for their land (*hubb al-watan*) and the best way in which they could express their patriotism (*watan dosti*) was to work against oppression of all kind, joining hands with others for this cause, while also carrying on with the mission of spreading the message of Islam that God entrusted them with.⁶³

In advocating peace with others, Muslims, Nadwi insisted, would not be betraying their religion. Rather, he pointed out, Islam is clear that human beings, irrespective of religion, race, caste and class, are “the most precious” of God’s creation, and an expression of Divine mercy. This being the case, Muslims should strive for peace and must also raise their voices against all forms of oppression. In this way, they would show others that they are “indispensable” for the country, rather than a burden.⁶⁴ But peace, he pointed out, could not be had if one community sought to impose its beliefs or culture on the others. Religious freedom was a must in a religiously plural society, and for this, Nadwi argued, true secularism (*na mazhabiyat*) state neutrality vis-a-vis all religions and democracy were indispensable, or else nothing could save India from the grave threat of a fascist take-over.⁶⁵ His words are proving to be truly prophetic, as recent events so tragically illustrate. ● ●

62-Muhammad Ayub Nadwi, op.cit. pp.118-19.

63-Hasan, op.cit.p.132.

64-Hasan, op.cit.p.128.

65-Hasan, op.cit.p.129-30

HISTORICAL MOSQUE REOPENS IN CHINA

Chinese Muslims recently celebrated the re-opening of a historical mosque in Newjeeh in the south of Peking.

After being used for several decades as a cultural exhibition, the mosque has now begun to be used by Muslims for performing prayers. The first establishment of this mosque goes back to the era of Emperor Sun in the year 996. It had been reestablished and expanded several times ever since during the eras of Emperors Yowas. Muing and Tshing. Since the establishment of the popular Republic of China in 1949, it had been specially used as a cultural exhibition.

An Islamic school and a lecture hall have also been attached to this mosque.

After the allotment of about 20 million Yang, the authorities of the city of Peking started the renewal of this mosque. The plan of reconstructing the mosque included the expansion of hall which is going to be used by ladies for performing prayers, and some other facilities. The total area of the mosque exceeds 8,000 square metres.

Yung Fang, the Imam of this mosque reportedly said that Muslims in the district of Newjeeh perform prayers five times day in the mosque. The average number of people who perform their daily prayers in the mosque ranges from 100 to 150 On Fridays. Yung indicates, the number of worshippers in the mosque ranges between 500 to 800.

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DIVERSITY IN JURISPRUDENCE MUNIFICENCE & ENDOWMENT

S.M.Rabey Nadwi

The varying lines of jurisprudence as developed and preached mainly by the four important Imams viz: Shafei, Hanbali, (or its subsidiary line known as salafi), have their genesis in the holy book and elucidation by the holy prophet (phub). Yet it is a matter of common observation that the followers of these jurisprudence are almost at daggers drawn with each others, to the extent of dubbing those professing a line other than theirs as infidels. Things have come to a pass where a person following one jurisprudence would not join in prayers behind one of another jurisprudence. This is despite the fact that holy Quran is explicitly eloquent: *[Verily this Ummah of yours is a single Ummah and I am your Lord and Cherisher: therefore serve Me (and none else)....21:92/]*

About the prophets who propagated and preached the word of God through the ages, it is averred thus:

We make no difference between one and another of His messengers

.....2:285

Traditions of the holy Prophet (phub) are also explicit on the subject of oneness of religion with utmost emphasis on all believers remaining united. Variations in modalities and details between the teachings of prophets do exist and great researchers have derived differing conclusions. All these are to be given credence, having been the result of sincere and honest endeavour for truth. Minor errors of omission and commission are attributable to distinct individual perception, as was the wont of the earliest persons of wisdom and knowledge.

The great Caliph, Umar bin Abdul Aziz surmised: " I would not be too pleased had there been no differences (of opinion) among the venerable companions of the prophet (pbuh), since in that case any person, during subsequent era, coming up with a different opinion, would be treated as an errant. Leeway afforded by the option to go along an opinion of any of the companions of the prophet (pbuh) is a boon.

There are innumerable cases of wise and learned persons,

thorough in their knowledge of Islamic word and deed, having opined differently on particular issues, yet all amicable to one another, steadfast in the basic belief in Islam. The lives and actions of great experts in jurisprudence, like Imam Shafei, Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal and some others, are shining examples of unity in diversity.

A panoramic view of the Islamic message and tenets clearly brings out its innate wisdom, irrefutable evidence of its divine sources, its validity till eternity and being all pervading for the whole world. In order that the followers are not put to undue hardship, what with vastly different geographical conditions in various regions, the rules are convenient to follow. The holy prophet (pbuh) himself adopted varying methods under different circumstances and also for-bore differences in the methods of his followers. The attitude provides for suitable deviations, within the prescribed limits.

Emergence of different jurisprudences is attributable mainly to the fact that venerable contemporary persons, having the advantage of observing modified actions and imbibing precepts from the holy prophet (pbuh), commensurate with prevailing conditions, interpreted and expounded the teachings on slightly varying lines. However the origin of each jurisprudence is in the traditions of the prophet (pbuh). It would be a sacrilege to even think of the prophet (pbuh) as liable to any mistake.

An example of minor latitudes permissible is of utmost importance of water used for consumption or ablutions being absolutely pure, in areas of abundant supply, whereas for regions faced with scarcity, a considerable tolerance in degree of cleanliness is tolerable. Another is the freedom to consume seafood in coastal areas, a concession not essential for regions remote from the sea. All said and done, the conclusion would be:

All schools of jurisprudence originate from Quran and Traditions.

Every such jurisprudence is valid provided its development is the result of pure and honest research.

Variation in subsidiary modalities should not be the cause for disputes within Islam.

As a deterrent example, Quran has described the resembling case of Israelites (bani Israil), who went for each other's throats

for minor differences.

It is indeed a blessing and gift from the almighty that the message of Islam is for a practical, all-pervading and everlasting mode of life. It is for the believers to maintain it as such and eschew mutual discord, not indulge in internal mud-slinging, as its would be an affront of the highest degree for the sacred message and put to shame the entire Ummah. And thus have all researchers, exegesists and men of piety and wisdom, ever since the earliest days of Islam, preached and practised. ● ● ●

“ The Arabic word *Allah* is a shortened form of *al-ilah*, “The God’. He is God, the One and Only one. He is the Ceator, the Sustainer, the Destroyer and the Resurrector of the universe... This Arabic term *Allah*, denoting God is unique in many ways. It has no plutal like ‘gods’; it has no gender, like ‘goddess’; nor does this word generate a visual image of any kind.”

young Muslim Digest

ROLE OF ULEMA VIS-À-VIS IMPERIALISM

S.M. Wazeh Rasheed Nadwi

All praise to the Almighty, peace upon the holy prophet, upon his kin and venerable companions.

Basic concept of Islamic message, manifest in all walks of life of a believer, is freedom, entirely different from the one propounded by the western intelligentsia and practiced by their society, for whom freedom is equated mainly to liberty from religious and moral norms. The subtle distinction between "freedom" and "liberty" has been totally ignored by the so-called modern society. Islam conceives freedom as obeisance to one and the only God, liberating human kind from all other bondages. All worldly possessions, cravings, even the life itself, are endowments from the Almighty and instruments for acting upon his will. Sacrificing ones life for any noble cause like self-defence, defence of ones country, and above all for promulgation of His writ, bestow upon a person the rank of a martyr.

Saeed bin Zaid related, as having heard from the holy prophet (pbuh): Who dies in defence of his belongings, of his religion, of his kith and kin, his own life, is a martyr.

God delivers his creatures from subservience of their fellow beings and directs them to serve one and the only God; (delivers them) from excesses from multifarious religions towards Islamic justice.

Prior to emergence of Islam, religious and military despotism held sway. Islam ushered in era an religious, political, economic and social justice and stressed upon dignity and respect for fellow humans. A single unjustified murder is rated not only as a sin but as tantamount to murder of a whole community. Explicit, cogent regulations on the subject have been formulated.

Muslims, despite being a numerical minority, ruled in India over a long period, not facing any major revolt, the under lying reason being the promulgation of a dignified way of life, quality culture with healthy moral standards, and literacy. The frontiers of the country were adequately guarded and the dominions unified.

They rid the society of the lesion of mutual subservience. Poet Iqbal has deftly summed up the scenario in one of his couplets:

Mahmood and Ayaz fell in the same row

There remained no distinction of a master and servant

With the decline of Muslim rule, weakening of Islamic concept among masses, the phenomenon of mutual discord, exploitation of weak by the strong took hold, values of justice and fair play deteriorated. Internal and external threats led to the collapse of a system which had, by then, lost sight of its noble cause and had gone awry.

The conscientious Ulema (persons of great wisdom, experts, mainly on religious subjects) went all out to stem the rot and redeem system which had once been the guiding light for moral standards, culture, education and economic uplift, with justice and fair play forming the foundation. With masses from sections of the society falling in line, they took up cudgels against the ingress of alien ingress, sacrificing even their lives for the freedom of their country. Movement led by Hazrat Syed Ahmad Shaheed was the foremost in this struggle, as a result of which, they were the targets for brutalities inflicted by the new régime, which did ultimately over power the uprising. Historians, including the British, acknowledge these facts, the western writers going all out to distort the history, presenting Ulema and their followers as the worst enemies of their country.

The struggle for regaining freedom from foreign rule peaked in 1857 CE and once again it was Muslims to the forefront. Upon the uprising being ultimately crushed by the British, the brunt of oppression was borne, again, by the Muslims, mainly. Over a considerable period Muslims had to confine and devote themselves to bringing about educational and cultural renaissance rather than going after the lost political supremacy. Outcome is discernable in the from of educational institutions, which despite a not too favourable environment, brought home to the masses the balanced Islamic values, correct perceptions on mode of living, realities of life and death. An unshakable belief in all events being controlled by the one and only God, forms the foundation of entire life and the doorway towards supremacy over worldly powers.

Lives and deeds of Muslims present examples hardly

matched by other communities. A Muslim, ideally, is a conqueror, teacher, founder of a quality culture, pioneer in the field of investigations and quest for truth, with freedom of thought as the guide. The great Calip Hazrat Omar Farooq once reprimanded the son of Hazrat Amr bin al Aas, governor of Egypt, as to how he could even think of enslaving those whom God created free.

When the imperialistic powers of West attempted to dominate the world, specially Muslim countries, it was from India that the strongest opposition originated, which infact, proved to be the harbinger of similar endeavour else where also, and ultimately for our country's own struggle.

This day a finger of suspicion is directed towards Darul Uloom Deoband and its men of wisdom, whereas, it was really from there that most ardent prominent freedom fighters emerged. A majority of Ulema were active in the fight against foreign dominance, and were entirely oblivious of their personal gains. No rewards, even when offered by the authorities, could entice them. The two out standing examples are the personalities like Sheikh-ul- Islam Hazrat Maulana Syed Husain Ahmad Madani and philosopher of Islam Hazrat Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi. Refrain from British way of life and abhorrence to imperialism are still ingrained in the character of Ulema.

It is a glaring fact that the historians blatantly obscure the names and deeds of such noble persons also whom may not be in the category of Ulema yet as patriotic Muslims, sacrificed everything for the country and humanity. ● ● ●

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ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY

Legitimacy Derived From Consent Of the People

Saleem Kidwai

A European magazine recently published a political map of the Muslim world to illustrate, at one glance, the central theme of its cover story: are Islam and democracy compatible? The map depicts that 11 Muslim countries or countries with predominantly Muslim population are liberal democracies, 14 are partially democratic and 27 are under varying shades of authoritarian rule. These bland statistics, unless they are placed in perspective can only serve to demonise Islam and its adherents.

Way of life

Is liberal democracy basically compatible with Islam? Can democracy function in a society inspired by Islamic beliefs and principles and shaped by Islamic experience and traditions? Is Islam by its very nature antithetical to the development of democratic institutions? Is it possible for the Muslims to evolve a form of government that would be compatible with their own historical, cultural and religious traditions and yet will bring individual freedom and human rights to the governed as these terms are understood in the free societies of the world? What kind of political system does Islam legitimise?

The term democracy indicates both, set of ideas and principles and a political system, a mechanism for governance and a politico-legal culture. The philosophical roots of democracy lie in the concept of popular sovereignty. The real test for democracy is its legitimacy, laying down that the power is legitimate only when it is derived from the authority of the people and is based on their consent. The other dimensions of democracy relate to a variety of forms of self-government and popular participation in political decision-making. The substance of democracy seeks expression in the vision of a government that is chosen by the people. The democratic world is not monolithic. It contains several different forms of government-republics and monarchies, presidential and parliamentary secular states and established churches and

a wide range of electoral systems.

Islam is not a religion in the limited sense of the term. It is a complete code of conduct, and all embracing way of life. It covers all aspects of human existence, the Islamic political system is not something independent or self-contained. It is part of Islamic way of life and is inseparable from other aspects of religion. It provides a world view, a vision and a set of values and leaves enough room to work out details to meet all the emerging challenges of time. Most students of political Islam tend to classify an Islamic government as necessarily a theocratic government. The confusion in this respect results from another principle of Islamic governments, namely, that the laws of a Muslim land should always be derived from or at least conform to the principles of Islamic law (the Shariah).

Political scientists and constitutional lawyers should distinguish two separate issues: the basis of political power and authority on the one hand and the sources of the legal system on the other. The political system as envisaged by Islam has nothing to do with theocratic government.

Consensus

The Islamic State is characterised by the supremacy of the Shariah yet it is diametrically different from theocracy. The long western struggle between church and state is quite alien to Islamic thought, for Islam does not authorise any material form, human or institutional, that could claim to be representative of God. Prophethood ended with Prophet Mohammed (pbuh). Islam does not call for a government whose authority is based on a divine will. Nor does it call for a government of clerics. According to the consensus of Muslim Sunni jurists, the legitimacy of any government derives from the consent of the people.

Let us examine the form and nature of government in the early period of Islam. So long as the Prophet (pbuh) lived, he was the religious and political head of the government. He was not elected or selected by anyone but was chosen by God as messenger as well as the ruler of the state which he established at Madina, soon after his migration from Macca. Philip Hitti, the well-known historian in his celebrated work, the History of Arabs, beautifully summarises the manner in which the Islamic state functioned

under the Prophet: " This Islamic society of the commonwealth which the Prophet (or Islam) set up, was based on perfect equality and justice for all with divine sovereignty as its cardinal principle."

After the demise of the Prophet (pbuh), the first Caliph Abu Bekr was democratically elected by the people of Madina at a conclave. Interestingly most of the participants were Madinites while the Caliph elected was a migrant from Macca. The second Caliph Umar was nominated by the first Caliph as his successor. But his selection was not treated valid till approved by the congregation in a mosque. Umar set up a council of six persons charging them with the duty of electing one of themselves as the Caliph by appeal to the majority principle. The Last Caliph Ali was elected by the majority. The very fact that each Caliph was appointed with reference to different methods of selection was consistent with the principle that the right to choose Caliph belongs to the entire body of Ummah and it is entitled to do so by resort to any method it sees fit. The first four Caliphs, popularly known as a *Khulafa-e-Rashideen* or Pious Caliphs were elected by the community though the methods of selection and approval differed. The common principle was the consent and confidence of the community and accountability.

Authority or assignment to rule over the earth has been promised to the entire community of believers and not to any particular person, family, class or group. All are equal as members of the society and criteria for leadership is tied to their qualities of trustworthiness, competence, God consciousness, dutifulness and sense of accountability. Accountability is not only before God, it is also before the law and people. It has great significance in the political system of Islam. The process of consultation has been recommended in the Quran. It says: " And who respond to (the call of) their sustainer and are constant in prayer; and who rule (in all matters of common concern) in consultation among themselves." (42:38).

Democratic decisions

Significantly, the Prophet (pbuh) himself was asked to consult his companions in important matters. According to the Quran: "And take counsel with them in all matters of common

concern.” (3:159). The Quran makes it very clear that mutual consultation is highly desirable and requires no less a person than the Prophet himself to consult his companions. The Prophet on his part implemented the Quranic teachings meticulously. For instance, decision to release prisoners of war during the Battle of Badar was taken by the Prophet after consultation with his companions. It is worth recalling that during the period of Pious Caliphate, whenever a new law was to be enacted and enforced, it used to be done after careful deliberations and extensive consultations among the knowledgeable companions of the Prophet. The decision used to be taken democratically through consensus within the framework of basic principles of the Quran.

Separation of the judiciary from the executive and its total independence at all levels has been a cardinal feature of the Islamic polity. Rule of laws and access to justice for all remained inalienable aspects of Muslim society. The judiciary was vested in the Qazis so much that even the Caliph had no immunity from the judicial process. He could be summoned in a judicial forum to answer the charge should it be brought against him, at the instance of anybody who felt aggrieved by what he did or failed to do.

The principle of separation of powers, established as it was during the pious Caliphate, continued in later periods, despite certain degeneration in the system. The supremacy of the constitution, i.e., Islamic law, remained an integral part of the Muslim experience. The entire legal system developed outside the corridors of political power and once established, the rulers were as much subject to this law as were commoners. Needless to say this had worked as a great check on arbitrary power.

The Quran and the Hadith have made, on several occasions, references to the rights of different sections of society. These rights are also extended to the enjoyment of non-Muslims in an Islamic state. In others words, Islam granted a full fledged Bill of Rights which is to be accepted throughout the globe. The Quran lays down fundamental values which were applied to the then society by jurists. The value pronouncements of the Quran- religious justice, equality, first distribution of economic resources- are among the modern and it is these pronouncements which are fundamental to Islam. Each universally accepted human right finds

correspondence in Quranic pronouncements. The Quran unequivocally stipulates the protection of these rights in the most categorical manner.

Mixed up

Islam insists on the protection of human rights and its universal application. It rejects the selective application of the principles of human rights governed by political exigencies. Unfortunately, Islam is mixed up with Muslim societies in different Muslim countries. It is conveniently forgotten that Muslim societies are the outgrowth of their own historical and political background and are not true representatives of the Quranic value system.

Islam also accepts the principles of tolerance and pluralism. It gives to all human beings the rights to belief and profession. It accepts the multiplicity of cultures and community styles. Almost from the outset, the Islamic world demonstrated an astonishing diversity. Extending over three continents, it embraced a wide variety of races, creeds and cultures which lived side by side in reasonable harmony. Sectarian strife and religious persecutions are not unknown in Islamic history but they are rare, and never reached the level of intensity of the great religious wars and persecutions. Not only are Muslims advised to respect freedom of religion and conscience, they are even expected to be magnanimous to non-Muslims who do not fight against themselves in the cause of religion. The Prophet himself set an example in religious tolerance when he signed a treaty with Christians of Najran.

Another important feature of the Muslim experience relates to its acceptance of dissent and opposition, individual as well as collective, as something authentic and as part of the tradition and not something outside it. The Prophet (pbuh) once said: "If anyone sees an evil, he should get it right with his hand; if he is unable to do so, then with his tongue; and if he is unable to do even that, then let him denounce it in his heart. But this last is the weakest form of faith".

Islamic state

On another occasion Prophet observed “The best form of Jihad is to utter word to tyrannical ruler”, thus, right to criticise the governments has been recognised in an Islamic state. Of course, a distinction was made between *ikhtilaf* (differences) and *fitna* (rebellion) but it is significant that at least by certain major scholars of Islamic laws, opposition that involves even armed rebellion (*khruj*) is accepted as legitimate.”

The above features are illustrative of the Muslim tradition of governance and constitute significant pointers towards the development of a distinctly Islamic model of democratic governance. The picture that emerges from these guidelines is quite clear. This is a faith-based society. Its sheet anchor is loyalty to God. There is, however, no room for any privileged or priestly class. All have equal rights and allegations. All are equally responsible before the law. The rulers do not enjoy any arbitrary power. Freedom and equality are an integral part of this society. Consultation and participation in decision-making is the way.

The concept of an Islamic state reveals that most of the modern theories of constitutional government like social contract, separation of powers, checks and balances, rule of law, natural justice, equality before the law, government as a trust, welfare of the people were known to Muslims from the earliest times. It is, therefore, concluded that there can be no great difficulty in establishing an Islamic State within the framework of modern democracy based on political theories of the present day statecraft.

Not incompatible

To sum up, the ideals of freedom for all human beings, of human brotherhood, of equality of all men before the law, of democratic government by consultation and universal suffrages, the ideals that inspired the French Revolution and the Declaration of Human Rights, that guided the American Constitution find expression in the Quran. Democracy as conceived in the modern West is infinitely nearer to the Islamic concept, for Islam maintains that all human beings are socially equal and must, therefore, be given the same opportunities for development and self-expression. If we go by Quran and Hadith, Islam appears to be quite close to democracy to quote well known historian Bernard

Lewis: "Islam offers the best prospect for western style democracy".

There is no incompatibility between Islam and a truly democratic system based on people's participation and power-sharing. If democracy means rights of a people to self-determination and self-fulfillment, that is what Islam stands for; there is no contradiction between Islam and democracy. Whatever despotic or arbitrary rule exists in Muslim lands is part of alien and imposed traditions, against which forces of Islamic resurgence are fighting. Islam and democratisation are the two sides to the same coin. ● ●

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ISLAM AND TERRORISM

A.H. Nomani

The 9/11 attacks on World Trade Centre and Pentagon in U.S.A. have given birth to a new variety of terrorism. However, the unfortunate part of these events is that Muslims have now become the targets of American ire, instead of analyzing the causes of such a horrific act and looking deep into the roots of it a blind route has been adopted to tackle this menace.

Any Muslim who walks down a busy street in America or in land of its allies with a beard and scarf on his head, is looked upon as a terrorist. Muslim women who are veiled cannot go anywhere in the western world without being taunted as oppressed and mad (for covering up). However, are such beliefs and opinions about Islam really justified?

Exploding the myth

The west, is now judging Islam by the conduct of a handful of Muslim. Such behaviour is clearly not objective and seeks to distort the reality of Islam. How does one dispel the myths which have been created and spread so viciously? The only way to examine Islam are its original sources, the Qur'an and Sunna, and see what Islam says about terror, terrorism and terrorists. One who is sincerely searching for the truth, will do it no other way. The very name Islam comes from the Arabic root word "Salama" which means peace. Islam is a religion which is based upon achieving peace through the submission to the will of Allah. Thus, by this very simple linguistic definition, one can ascertain as to what the nature of this religion is. If such a religion is based on the notion of peace, then how is it that acts done by a few of its followers are contrary to peace? The answer is simple. Such action, if not sanctioned by the religion are un-Islamic.

Jihad

From early dawn of the history till now humanity has suffered a lot in this world by injustice, oppression, capricious, ambitious and arbitrary claims for exploitation of people and mankind. Often it becomes necessary to remove these evils and

restore peace and justice.

The term "Jihad" means "Strive or struggle for the cause of Allah". It refers to struggle on three levels: the individual, the community, and the international levels. The individual must struggle with himself to control unhealthy desires (i-e. for power, greed etc.); the community must struggle to promote a just and healthy society, and on the international level, the Muslim must struggle to end tyranny and oppression.

Islam is opposed to aggression from its own side. Muslims are commanded by Allah not to begin hostilities or to embark on any act of aggression or violate the rights of others.

Fighting in Islam is only to be used in self-defence or to restore justice. Otherwise, Muslims are not allowed to harm non Muslims. The prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said: "He who offends a non-Muslims under protection (dhimmi) offends me, and he who offends me, offends Allah."

Warfare in Islam is governed by strict code of ethics which prohibits the hurting or slaying of women, children, religious workers (of all faiths) and all persons who abstain from fighting. The Muslim army cannot steal food, enter places of worship, harm crops, uproot plants, trees or destroy structures. Use of weapons of mass destruction is prohibited.

The term jihad is often mistranslated into the term "Holy War". Yet there is no place in the Qur'an or teachings of prophet Muhammad (pbuh) where these two terms are used together. In fact, the term "Holy War" was a term used by Christians during the crusades. Islam never views war as something "holy". It is a necessity that is resorted to in extreme cases such as self-defence or to stop oppression.

There is no such thing as a "religious war" to force Islam on non-Muslims. The desire to be a Muslim must emerge in ones heart from deep inner conviction in order for ones deeds and acts of worship to be accepted by Allah.

Islam is against terrorism. In fact, severe punishment is prescribed for those who kill innocent people, hold innocent people prisoner or hostage, or generally wreak havoc in society.

Islam, like any other religion, cannot be held responsible for the actions of a misguided few. Those who commit terrorist

acts in the name of Islam are a disgrace and embarrassment to the Muslim community and cannot direct violation of the peaceful way of life that Islam prescribes for all people, Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

In the Qur'an, Allah likens the taking of one innocent life as if that person had destroyed the whole of humanity.

“ The best jihad is (by) the one who strives against his own self for Allah, the Mighty and Majestic”

In the Quran, Allah also says:

“ So obey not the disbelievers, but make a great jihad (effort) against them (by preaching) with it (Qur'an)

(Surah Al-Furqan 25:52)

By controlling and fighting against ones desires, Muslims can the also physically exert themselves on the path of Allah. It is this physical or combative jihad which receives so much criticism. Because of the sheer ignorance of this type of jihad Islam is regarded as terror, and Muslims re regarded as terrorists.

However, the very purpose of this physical jihad is to raise the word of Allah uppermost. By doing this, it liberates and emancipates all those who are crying out for freedom all over the world. If the likes of the pacifists of this world had their way, then world would indeed be full of anarchy and mischief. The combative jihad seeks to correct this as Allah says in the Qur'an”

“ And if Allah did not check one set of people by means of another, the Earth would be full of mischief. But Allah is full of bounty to the worlds”

(Surah Al-Baqrah 2:251)

Such would be the corruption on this Earth if there had never been a combative jihad that Allah says:

“For had it not been that Allah checks one set of people by means of another, monasteries, churches, synagogues and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is mentioned much, would surely have been pulled down. Indeed Allah will help those who help His (cause). Trully Allah is all strong, All mighty”

This combative jihad being both defensive and offensive, is something which is commanded by Allah upon Muslims. Through this command the oppressed and weak are rescued from

the tyranny of the world:

“And what is the matter with you that you do fight in the cause of Allah and for those weak, ill treated and oppressed among men, women and children whose only cry is: Our Lord, rescue us from this town whose people are oppressors and raise for us from you one who will protect and raise for us from you one who will help”

(Surah An-Nisa 4:75)

Anyone who knows the early history of Islam, will know that all those nation and empires which came under the fold of Islam were indeed previously oppressed. When the companions of the prophet Muhammad (pbuh) went out for the offensive jihad against the Egyptians, the Persians and the Romans, we find that the people did not resist them at all. Rather, they accepted Islam on such a scale, that is inconceivable that the jihad of Islam could be anything other than a liberation for these people; a liberation from centuries of tyranny. In fact with the Byzantine Egyptian and the people of Spain, the Muslims were even beckoned to come and liberate these lands from the oppression of their kings. This is the glorious track record of the Muslim jihad. Compare this with the brutal track record of warfare in the Western world over the centuries. From the crusades against the Muslims to the days of colonial warfare, the Western world has killed, destroyed and plundered everything which came its way. Even today this merciless killing goes on by the Western nations. While claiming to be the advocates of world peace and security, Western nations are ready to bomb innocent civilians at the drop of a hat, the classic example of this is the recent bombings of Sudan, Afghanistan and Iraq.

By looking at the rules and regulations of this combative jihad it will be clear to any sincere person that this is indeed the religion of truth. When fighting an unjust enemy, no matter how unjust they are, it is forbidden by Islam that their retreating forces are mutilated, tortured or slaughtered. The treacherous violation of treaties and carrying out assassinations after a cease fire, are also prohibited. Allah says in the Quran”

“And fight in the way of Allah those who fight you. But do not transgress the limits. Truly Allah loves not the transgressors”

(Surah Al-Mumtahinah 60:8)

After reading such passages from the Quran and knowing about what Islam commands and prohibits in jihad, the rules of warfare are given a new meaning; a meaning of justice. How sad it is then, that whilst Islam is condemned for striking terror into the hearts of the people, the likes of the Serbs and the Israeli soldiers in Palestine are left untarnished for the atrocities they have committed in the name of warfare.

What about suicide bombing; is this too a part of jihad in Allah's path? From what has already been stated above, it can be deduced that this is not from the religion. However, unfortunately many Muslims have taken suicide bombing as a reaction for about one hundred years of injustice, humiliation and every attempt to destroy the identity, culture, civilization and belief and force them to leave their homeland in Palestine, Chechenya and other parts of the world, by all means available at their command. This could not be supported as it is against the teachings of Islam. The prophet (pbuh) said: "Those who go to extremes are destroyed". Suicide bombing is undoubtedly and extremity which has reached the ranks of the Muslims. In the rules of warfare, we find no sanction for such an act from the behaviour and words of the prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his companions. Unfortunately today (some misguided) Muslims believe that such acts are paving the way for an Islamic revival and a return to the rule of Islam's glorious law. However, we fail to bear in mind what the prophet (pbuh) said:

"Do not be delighted by the action of anyone, until you see how he ends up"

So for example what is the end of a suicide bomber in Palestine? a leg here, an arm there. Massive retaliation by the Israeli's in the West Bank and Gaza. More Muslims killed and persecuted. How can we be delighted with such an end? What really hammers the final nail in the coffin of this act, is that it is suicide; something which is clearly forbidden in Islam. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: "He who kills himself with anything, Allah will forment him with that in fire of Hell".

"Some are under the misconception that by killing oneself for an Islamic cause, one commits an act which deserves Paradise. Once when a man killed himself, the Prophet (pbuh) said" "He is a dweller of the fire". When

the people were surprised at this, the Prophet (pbuh) said”
“ A person performs the deeds which to the people appears to be the deeds befitting the dweller of Paradise, but he is in fact one of the dwellers of the Fire”

The taking of ones life which Allah has given as a trust to the human, is a great sin. Likewise the taking of other lives (which is so often the case with suicide bombing) is also forbidden, as human life is in indeed precious:

“....If any one killed a person not in retaliation for murder or to spread mischief in the land, it would be as if he killed the whole of mankind. And (likewise) if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the whole of mankind (Surah Al-Maaida 5:32)

Thus, all other types of extremities such as hostage taking, hijacking and planting bombs in public places, are clearly forbidden in Islam. ● ●

SHANKERACHARYA'S EPISTLES AND AIMPLB'S REACTION

Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

In early June 2003 when Maulana S.M.Rabey Hasani Nadwi, Rector of Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow and Chairman All India Muslim Personal Law Board was recuperating from his illness His holiness Jayendra Saraswati of Kanchi expressed desire to visit lucknow to enquire about the health of Maulana Nadwi.

Kanchi seer was warmly received by Maulana on June 7, 2003. It was purely a such private visit as host and guest both kept it away from public glare. It was an informal meeting of the two religious heads, however, during the course of conversation Kanchi Seer brought in the Ayodhya issue and wished that this should be settled amicably by having a dialogue between the leaders of the two communities. Maulana Rabey while agreeing with the sentiments of the Seer requested him to send his proposal in writing for the consideration of the working committee of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board.

Following is the text of the first letter of the Kanchi Seer Jayendra Saraswati to the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) chairman Maulana Rabe Hasani Nadwi. The letter dated June 16.2003. reached the AIMPLB office on June 20, last.

Dear Nadwi Saheb.

Having come to know that your good-self is not keeping well, his holiness decided to make a private visit to Nadwa to see you and pray for your well-being. Accordingly, on the 7th June, he took a private trip from Delhi to Lucknow and visited you in the afternoon and was indeed happy to be with you in the pious ambience, I am indeed thankful to you as the president of All India Muslim Personal Law Board for the hospitality and courtesy extended His Holiness and to his followers. In the course of discussions we indeed reviewed the present situation arising out of the Ayodhya dispute which have been unfortunately exploited by some vested

interests. This is the main reason as to why his Holiness has been insisting that the issue should be amicably settled between the concerned religious top leaders keeping aside as far as possible the political approach to the problem, to avoid creation of feelings of apprehension, hatred and fear amongst the various communities. By doing so, we the religious heads of the two communities can find a solution which would be conducive to communal harmony and national integration.

Since the matter of Mandir and Masjid is currently under the judicial reference, we may have to wait (how long, I do not know). Therefore we should try to work out a formula of compromise. To initiate this compromise formula, His Holiness would request you to discuss in your Board the following:

- 1- Your Board, on our request, may consider giving a no-objection statement regarding construction of Mandir upon the undisputed/acquired area.

- 2- Disputed area also can be discussed after some time and an amicable settlement may be given to the court and verdict can be given by the court based on the settlement.

- 3- In order to protect the disputed area, a wall may be constructed separating it from undisputed acquired area.

- 4- If we reach a final negotiated settlement on the undisputed area, we shall both ensure support for the same from the various religious groups sub-groups on each side to ensure that no further demands would be raised on the undisputed area.

- 5- Once we arrive at a cordial understanding, we may together approach the Government of India for its effective and time bound implementation.

His Holiness is sure under your benign leadership, the above suggestions would be supported and reciprocated. I am sure this will lead the communities towards a peaceful co-existence and prosperity.

His Holiness further prays to almighty for your health,
peace and prosperity for our nation
Regards.

Your sincerely.
N Sundaresan
Trustee
Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam
Charitable Trust.

Following is the text of the clarifications sought by the All Indian Muslims Personal Law Board (AIMPLA) chairman from the Kanchi Seer after receiving the latter's first letter dated June 16, 2003 containing a five-point formula to resolve the Ayodhya issue. The letter is addressed to N. Sundaresan Ji Who is the trustee of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam charitable Trust of Jayendra Saraswati.

Dear Shri N Sundersan.

Maulana Syed Mohammad Rabey Nadwi, President, All India Muslim Personal Law Board, has directed me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated 16th June 2003 which was delivered on 20th June, 2003.

Maulana appreciated the personal courtesy extended to him by His Holiness Jagadguru Shankaracharya by his touching gesture of having taken the trouble of travelling from Delhi to Lucknow to enquire after his health. By the grace of Allah Maulana's health has improved considerably.

Love for motherland is the article of faith for every Muslim. Our beloved country is passing through delicate times.

To achieve prosperity and strength it is absolutely necessary that all the segments of Indian citizenry should march together and are bound in bonds of affection and good will.

Hindu-Muslim unity, which was the cornerstone of our struggle for freedom, still remains the bedrock of our nations progress towards prosperity with justice to all. His Holiness has made sincere efforts in this direction

and your letter under reference is looked upon as an endeavour in this area.

Maulana, as the president of All India Muslim Personal Law Board, has convened a meeting of its executive committee on 6th of July, 2003. But before Maulana puts the letter before executive committee, certain clarification are needed as detailed below to enable the executive committee to come to some final conclusions.

Firstly, may I request you to turn to the letter dated 8th March 2002 written on behalf of his holiness by Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peethadipati Jagadguru Sri Shankaracharya Samijii (Srimatam Sansthanam) addressed to the late Maulana Mujahid-ul-Islam Qasmi, the then President of the Board, containing similar proposals which contained categorical assurance.

Both Hindus and Muslims will abide by the court verdict..... The present proposal however, is silent on this assurance. The Maulana desires to know whether such assurance is still valid and binding and if it is so what practical/legal measures are conceived to implement such assurances.

Secondly, as you are well aware, the executive committee of the Board has passed the resolution dated 10th March 2002, expressing its inability to consider the proposals contained in the letter date 8th March 2002 with detailed reasons.

Please see our resolution dated 10th March 2002. The Maulana desires to know whether his holiness will be able to furnish the details as desired by the Board.

You will kindly appreciate that above clarification amongst others are extremely crucial and important and Maulana humbly requests His Holiness to respond to these positively well before the 6th of July 2003.

Such response will go a long way in establishing congeniality and confidence between our two great communities.

Your sincerely,
MAH Hasani
PS to President,
AIMPLB

Seer Response

Following is the text of the second letter of the Kanchi seer to the All Indian Muslim Personal Law Board Chairman Maulana Rabe Hasani Nadwi in response to the clarifications sought by the latter.

Dear Nadwi Saheb,

Your fax letter dated June 2003 seeking certain clarification was received and placed before His Holiness. His holiness is happy that you are improving in your health.

1. It was pointed out that if a no-objection certificate could be given for the undisputed area it will facilitate the vacation of court stay in this regard.

2. A suggestion was made that a compound wall be erected in between the disputed and undisputed areas to physically separate them.

3. The judgement of the court regarding the disputed area is likely to be delayed if we can settle the matter out of court by discussions, we may go before the court with that settlement agreement and pray for a consent judgement. As a whole this was considered keeping in view the necessity of maintaining communal harmony.

4. Supreme Court has ruled that the stay will not be vacated and ordered that the verdict of the Supreme Court be pronounced only after the Lucknow High Court gives its judgement on the disputed area case.

Status quo will have to be maintained till then. Therefore, even if a no-objection certificate is forthcoming and given it may not serve the desired purpose. Under these circumstances we offer the following explanation to our suggestion that the matter could be settled by mutual discussions.

The disputed area in Ayodhya is a place which is highly revered by the Hindus. It is a historical fact that Babar, the great, constructed a building at that place in commemoration of his victory. At present, due to some unavoidable reasons, there is no building in that place. The status quo position is that Rama is sitting over there,

it is almost certain that the court judgement will not come early and when it comes, it will not be satisfying any community.

(a) In the present circumstances, if the judgement goes in favour of one community or even in favour of both the communities, we cannot expect communal harmony. Both the sides are charged so much. Even though the disputed area may belong to the Wakf Board and is a place of faith to Muslims as well, since the place is of great faith and reverence to the Hindus, Muslims community and Wakf Board may think that they donate the said area to Hindus.

(b) Generally, if daily prayers are being offered in any mosque, asking for that place is not justifiable. In view of the fact that the present area is without any building (empty) and an idol of Rama is placed there, it will not be right or possible to remove Rama from that place and construct a mosque over for there communal harmony. Local Muslims are already offering prayers in their mosques, that the idol of Rama is being worshiped, that the area is a disputed one and keeping in view the larger interests of the nation and the communal harmony in particular, the Muslim community and Wakf Board can decide to donate that area which is a place of matter of faith and belief to the Hindus of the country. By doing so and presenting it before the court we may be able to obtain a court judgement faster and earlier.

His Holiness Shankaracharya appeals that the disputed area be donated to the Hindus and acceding to this request by the Muslim community will itself enhance the prestige of the Indian Muslims in the world.

History will record that the Indian Muslims stood for communal harmony by this generous act of theirs and their name and fame will get a permanent place in the history. Giving a no-objection certificate to the undisputed area or raising a wall between the disputed and undisputed area are only positive step in the direction. Even though we have been discussing the disputed and undisputed area separately, it is essential that both the

issues are discussed together comprehensively to ensure a lasting peaceful and early solution.

Donation of the disputed area will only by the permanent solution. All the above explanations clarifications have been given amplification of our proposal that the issue should be settled amicably by mutual discussion. A point was made that Kashi, mathura and Ayodhya all the three belong to the Hindus and keeping in mind the larger interest of the country and communal harmony, if not to day but at sometime or other, these places have to be given to the Hindus. Muslims have to mentally prepare themselves for this.

Even if this proposal is not accepted by all sections of the Muslims society or is opposed by the Muslims with political connection, history will record that the religious leaders of Hindus and Muslims have decided on such a bold step.

His Holiness also opines that in present circumstance this will only bring amity between the two communities. His Holiness will be at Kanchipuram between July 5th and October 4th and will not move out of Kanchipuram during this period.

Your sincerely
Sri Kanchi Kamakoti
Peetam Charitable Trust

The working committee of the All India Muslims Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) has met on July 6, 2003 and unanimously rejected the proposal of the Kanchi Shankaracharya Jayendra Saraswati for the solution of the vexed Ayodhya Dispute.

The Shankaracharya had given the proposal on June 16 to the AIMPLB and on July 1, sent an amended proposal on the clarification sought by the Muslims body. In the amended proposal, the Kanchi Seer had appealed the Muslims to donate the Babri Masjid site to Hindus and also give up the claim on the mosques at Kashi and Mathura.

The AIMPLB resolved that it would wait for the court verdict on the Ayodhya dispute and only the judicial settlement

would be acceptable to the Indian Muslims.

“ The AIMPLB puts on record, with due respect to the Shankaracharya, that it looks upon the proposal as contained in the letter dated July 1, as a thinly veiled threat to the Muslims to submit and surrender themselves unconditionally to all the unreasonable demands made by the “Sangh Parivar,” said the resolution adopted by the working committee of the Board which met at Lucknow on Sunday.

“ The Board therefore resolves, that such proposals are not just and reasonable and are totally inconsistent with the honour, dignity and self respect of the Indian Muslims and the same therefore cannot be accepted.” The resolution added.

Briefing newsmen on the deliberation of the working committee of the AIMPLB, its member Yusuf Hatim Muchala said, the committee came to the conclusion that the stand taken by the Shankaracharya in letter dated July 1, has left no scope for any further consideration.

“ The committee reiterates its repeated stand that under the Shariat, the site of the Babri Masjid is the property of Allah and cannot be alienated by sale, gift or otherwise.

Muchala, a Mumbai-based advocate said: “ The committee is of the view that the proposed gift will not promote communal harmony or national integration, because such a gift is under duress and not based on principals of fair play, justice and as per the norms of constitutional order.”

He said “ the proposal for settlement must be within the parameters of the basic values of the constitution, rule of law, secularism, equality of treatment to all without discrimination on the grounds of race or religion and religious settlements of the Muslims pertaining to their place of worship.” Muchala added that consistent with these values, the doors of negotiation were still open for the AIMPLB for the solution of the vexed Ayodhya dispute.

The resolution said, “ The Board feels distressed that the convoluted vision of history is used for divisive purposed and fait accompli achieved by the trespass into the religious place belonging to other denominations, and undermining that basic values of the constitutions, which is sought to be hallowed with religious sentiments, depicted as if the same is of the entire Hindu

community.

Narrating the sequence of events, Muchala said that in the original proposal of Shankaracharya, dated June 16, he had sought a no-objection statement from the Board regarding construction of temple upon undisputed acquired land. In order to protect the disputed area, a wall may be constructed separating it from the undisputed acquired land. The proposal also said, "The disputed area can also be discussed after sometime and on amicable settlement, may be given to the court and the court, based on the settlement can give verdict.

Muchala said the formula contained in the letter dated June 16, was lacking in material particulars and was silent on many major issues namely, whether Hindus will abide by the court seer, earlier in the meeting with the AIMPLB delegation on March 5, 2002, had assured that "both Hindus and Muslims will abide by the court verdict in case of the disputed site and further that the Muslims would be allowed to reconstruct the mosque at the same spot where it existed before the demolition, if they win the title suit in the court of law."

Muchala said in response to the clarification sought by the Board, the Kanchi Seer, far from sticking to the assurance held out in March 2002, totally resiled from the formula that he had conveyed in his letter dated June 16. On the contrary his letter dated July 1, contains an appeal to Indian Muslims to donate the Babri Masjid site and a veiled threat to Muslims to prepare themselves for giving up the mosque at Kashi and Mathura. This proposal would never be acceptable to Indian Muslims, he added.

Meanwhile the vice-president of the Board Maulana Kalbe Sadiq said a delegation of the AIMPLB would soon visit Kanchi mutt to meet the Shankaracharya and apprise him of the decisions of the working committee and about the sentiments of the Muslim community on the Ayodhya issue. ● ● ●

The Times of India

Tuesday July 8, 2003

Kanchi Seer's Ahodhya proposal fails the fairness test

In the event, the Kanchi Shankaracharya's compromise formula on Ahodhya turned out to be something of a misnomer, rather than upholding the spirit of genuine "give and take", it placed the burden of resolving Ayodhya squarely on the shoulders of the Muslim community. In asking the Muslim Personal law Board to give a unilateral "no-objection" on the construction of temple at the "undisputed" land in Ayodhya, without so much as a word on the location of the mosque, the sage's proposal came perilously close to replication the parivar's line on the issue. In his response to the clarifications sought by the board on the original proposal, he even advised the Muslims to "mentally prepare" to give away Kashi and Mathura. This was a far cry from earlier reports that the Acharya had extended a number of concessions and guarantees to the Muslims, including on the rebuilding of the mosque, in return for an out-of-court solution on Ayodhya. Given the terms of the entirely one-sided offer, it was inevitable that the board would reject the formula out right.

These columns had earlier supported the Acharya's initiative in the hope that the changed political mood in the country, following Atalji's fresh of talks with Pakistan, had opened a new window of opportunity on Ayodhya. And if the goodwill associated with the Shankaracharya's high spiritual office could help broker and honourable negotiated settlement, then so much the better than a bitter and protracted legal battle. Such optimism had, in hindsight, proved hugely misplaced. It is fair to assume that the high-voltage run-up to the board's meeting on Sunday, with the VHP and the RSS training their fire on the Kanchi Seer and openly questioning his locus standi, forced the Acharya to reconsider his earlier line of thinking. Whatever the reasons, the eventual fiasco does little credit either to the reputation of the Kanchi Seer for fairness or to the authority of the Prime Minister, who was widely seen to have blessed his attempt. As for the Parivar's reaction that the board's rejection was an "in sult" to

the seer, it is the proverbial case of the devil quoting the scriptures. From the time the Shankaracharya conveyed proposal to the board in writing, the parivar particularly the VHP spared no opportunity to target him for his involvement, often in a language that bordered on the abusive. Given its long history of interested doublespeak, however, that should come as no surprise. ● ● ●

Hindustan Times

Tuesday July 8, 2003

Seer hits a blind spot

The failure of the negotiations between the Kanchi Shankaracharya and the Muslim Personal Law Board on the Ayodhya disputed is regrettable for more reasons than one. First, it means that this particular route for solving the problem will have to be abandoned for the time being since it will be difficult for the two sides to resume talking till their present differences are narrowed down. Second, the failure has understandably generated a feeling of being let down on both sides. This, in itself, is a matter of concern since the setback can be cynically exploited to show one side or the other in poor light. Already, the Muslim institution is being blamed by the VHP for frustrating the Shankaracharya's efforts. However, true to its way of functioning, the VHP is conveniently ignoring its earlier observations casting doubts on the very process of negotiations.

A third reason for disquiet is the belief that the failure will embolden the hard-liners. Indeed the Shankaracharya's reference to the Varanasi and Mathura Shrines has led to a widening of the Ayodhya dispute to include these two sites. This is obviously a new complicating factor so far as future talks are concerned, for it will no be easy for future negotiators to delink Ayodhya from the two other Shrines. Although the BJP still insists that Varansasi and Mathura are not 'on its agenda', the RSS and the VHP are now bound to become even more aggressive in their demand for the acquisition of all the three sites.

The lesson to be drawn from the present failure is that no negotiations should be started unless there are signs of a convergence of views on at least one or two crucial points. Otherwise, a setback only vitiates the atmosphere. Obviously, good intentions alone are not enough, especially when the sense of mistrust is so high. It is so high. It is precisely for this reason that a judicial pronouncement has always been regarded as the best option. Although it is bound to disappoint one of the two parties to the dispute, the loser will have no alternative but to accept the verdict. Negotiations, on the other hand, can only succeed in an atmosphere of goodwill which, unfortunately, is conspicuous by its absence at present. ● ● ●

The Indian Express

Tuesday July 8, 2003

Dare we still hope?

(It we're serious about solving Ayodhya, we need to understand why seer's moves failed)

There are many who foretold the death of the Kanchi Shankaradharys' initiative in solving Ayodhya. There are also many who have taken treat delight in that failure, some of them because they have a political and personal stake in ensuring that a demolished mosque and n unbuilt temple continue to be an endless source of acrimony and political and religious dividends. This newspaper is not of that persuasion because it believed, and believes, that putting the contentious legacy of Ayodhya behind us not just a social value erge as a progressive and modernising nation with agendas far more ambitious than settling historical scores of one kind or the other. It is because of this that we had argued when it appeared that the Seer's initiative would go further than most interventions of this kind that the nation must seize the moment. To little avail, alas.

There were three broad reason why the initiative failed and if we are to gain from the positive and negative experiences of the last few weeks, we should be wise to recognise them. First, no serious negotiation can succeed on a maximalist agenda, the bottom-line is where the action has to begin. The Shankaracharya first letter to the All India Muslim Personal Law Board more or less conformed to this principle when it laid down five board parameters: That construction of a temple on the non-disputed be allowed; that discussion on the site where the mosque once stood be held later, that a wall around this site be constructed; that no further demands from either side on the undisputed area are allowed: that the government would then work out a time-bound plan for implementation. His second letter, however, was not in consonance with the spirit and intent of the earlier document. Not only were Muslims now encouraged to donate the said area to Hindus, there is the introduction of the issue of the Kashi and Mathura shrines in a process that had earlier focused only on Ayodhya. Nothing is promised to the Muslim community in re-

turn, apart from an observation that agreeing to it would “enhance” their prestige. While brings us to the second principle why the initiative failed: the missing spirit of give and take. Finally, the whole, initiative was shrouded in secrecy, ostensibly to protect it from the pre-emptive strikes of the militant Hindu lobby. In actual fact, it was this very lack of transparency that allowed the hawks to demolish it.

So is there anything from this peace attempt worth salvaging? Yes, there is. The desire, indeed impatience, of leaders, religious figures and ordinary people to rise above a controversy that refuses to go away, came through very clearly. It is on this impatience that any hope for a future solution must rest. ● ●

The Hindu
Tuesday July 8, 2003

Wait for the judicial verdict

An intelligent Alien reading the front pages of Indian newspapers over the past several days might from the impression that, for some bizarre or outlandish reason, politics in this strange land revolved round the question of whether a temple or a mosque would come up on some 'disputed' site in a place called Ayodhya. If the alien did some quick research on the Internet, he or she would learn that sixteenth century mosque known as the Babri Masjid had been demolished, on December 6, 2002, in a well-planned act of criminal vandalism involving some leading politicians; that criminal cases had been launched against the political vandals, but for some reason were not being effectively prosecuted; that there was some kind of 'tittle' suit, and related issue, in court; that governments had fallen and risen on this Ayodhya issue; that there was a whole constellation of political and social forces known as the 'Sangh Parivar' militantly on the march to build the temple on the very site where the Babri Masjid stood; and so on. The intelligent alien might then begin to worry over the future of this great and ancient civilisation.

The process of politically initiated 'conciliation' featuring the Sankaracharya of Kanchi and the All India Muslim Personal Law Board has come to a dead end for reasons that should have been perfectly clear from the start. For one thing, the background, character and agenda of the Sangh Parivar in prosecuting the Ramjanmabhoomi campaign are well known and have generated an impressive literature. Quite predictably, as general elections approach, the militant organisations belonging to the Sangh Parivar, guided by its 'brain', the Rashtiya Swayamsevak Sangh, are raising the temperature on the Ayodhya issue. Hardly a day passes without some Vishwa Hindu Parishad leader firing a fusillade at the Vajpayee Government in connection with Ramjanmabhoomi, or some other highly divisive agenda item. Secondly, the issue is eminently justifiable. Some twenty issues have been framed in the 'Ramjanmabhoomi' Babri Masjid dispute, which is currently before the second Bench of the Allahabad

High Court at Lucknow. Add to this the fact that, on March 31, 2003, the Supreme Court, in a splendid demonstration of judicial impartiality and commitment to the secular values enshrined in the constitution, prohibited the Central Government from handing over the 67.703 acres of land claimed to be “undisputed” to a trust or organisation for the purpose of constructing a Ram temple, and ordered that the “status quo” be maintained until the title suits were adjudicated by the Allahabad High Court. Thirdly, in an objective sense, the Sankaracharya’s proposals are such as to guarantee rejection not just by the Muslims Law Board but by the whole of secular and constitutional India. What are these proposals, around which there has been so much unnecessary secrecy? The answer has come in the three texts released in Lucknow by the Muslims Law Board on July 6. The Sankaracharya’s letter of June 16, 2003 was an exploratory exercise characterised by ambiguity. While it asked the Muslim Law Board to consider giving a “No objection” Statement for constructing a “Mandir upon the undisputed acquired area,” it did not demand a “donating” of the Babri Masjid site by the Muslim side. On the contrary, it proposed that the “disputed area can also be discussed after some time and an amicable settlement may be given to the court and verdict can be given the court on the settlement.” Nor did the June 16 letter say anything about Muslims having to give up “at some time or other” for the sake of “communal harmony” the mosques at Kashi and Mathura. The text of the July 1, 2003 letter of “explanation” reveals that these are indeed the Sankaracharya’s two core proposals. They happen, not coincidentally, to be two of the key agenda items of the RSS and the VHP. This is why it is sensible for all concerned to abandon this totally one-sided and futile exercise at out-of court ‘conciliation’ and wait for an objective and just judicial determination of the dispute, however long that takes. ● ● ●

The Statesman

July 8, 2003

The only Questions!

The letter exchanged between the Shankaracharya of Kanchi, who let me remind you, leans towards the RSS/BJP, and Maulana Syed Rabey Nadwi, respected President of the All India Muslims Personal Law Board, make painful reading. The Shankaracharya makes the first move, calling on the Maulana in Lucknow to inquire after his health and talks all around the point until toward the end of the 90-minute meeting, when he attempts to raise, the Babri Masjid issue. He is respectfully told to send his proposals in writing. They come in a letter of 16th June 2003. They cover five specific point-1) allow Hindus to build a temple on the undisputed land, 2) disputed area to be discussed later, 3) to protect the disputed area, a wall can be raised to separate it from the undisputed land, 4-a final negotiated settlement on the undisputed land and no further disputes on that land and 5) after achieving a cordial understanding both sides to ask government for speedy implementation. The Maulana was right to be cautious. The Shankaracharya had raised the same issue last year. Notice that no design on the actual site of the Babri Masjid are visible, on the contrary by suggesting a wall around it, hopes are raised of reconstruction of the mosque. And there is no reference whatever, to demands on the mosques in Varanasi and Mathura.

The Shankaracharya may have chosen to forget last year's initiative; the Maulana remembered. There had been a meeting between two sides 5th March 2002 and the Shankaracharya reduced his word to writing in a letter to Maulana Nadwi's predecessor on 8th June 2002. He said, " both Hindus and Muslims will abide by the court's verdict in case of the disputed site. Ramjanmabhoomi Nyas has confirmed its commitment to this effect in writing."

There is no reason to doubt that in his earlier meeting with Muslim on 5th March 2002, now recalled, the Shankaracharya had gone further and said that Muslims would be allowed to reconstruct the mosque in the same spot where it existed before the demolition, if they won the title suit in the court of law. To be

fair, the words in the confirmatory letter are limited to those in heavy type above but they are categorical enough. Probably irritate at being so thoroughly exposed, those around the Shankaracharya seem to have influenced him to take it all back. The clarifications dated 1st July 2003 say the Ram is sitting over there (on the exact spot) and cannot be disturbed; the Wakf Board may mentally think of handing over the disputed site to the Hindus it is not possible to think except mentally, but let that pass Muslims can ensure their place in history by taking the bold step of donating even the disputed site and also giving up the mosques in Varanasi and Mathura to Hindus. There is more than a veiled threat that this is the only way to ensure peace and harmonious relations between the communities. The volte face is complete, inexplicable, unprecedented unworthy.

The Shankaracharya is a man of God but it is possible that in these matters God has taken a back seat and mere politicians have come to the fore around him. Various leading lights of the VHP are reported to have seen the Shankaracharya in between. Perhaps His Holiness should reflect that his discomfiture is entirely due to a conspicuous failure to respect a Biblical injunction Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's. Failure to keep the two separate can result in an explosive cocktail.

The Prime Minister is clearly embarrassed. His official area scrambling to limit the damage. By his shifting stance, the Shankaracharya ridiculing himself. Muslims have eight mosques in Ayodhya, when the Prime Minister knows that there is an existing Ramjanmasthan Mandir north of the Babri Masjid site and that there are literally thousands of other temples in Ayodhya. It remains to consider the explicit threats handed out to the Muslims if they do not comply. It seem in vain to remind the Sangh Parivar that a specific law the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, prohibits any interference with the mosque in Varanasi and Mathura. The exception, for what it is worth, under section 5 of the Act is limited to Ayodhya and the Babri Masjid. But Togadia, Singhal, Giriraj Kishore and the rest will contend like Bush and Blair in another context that it is a matter of faith, or failing that of belief! Let me remind the government that VHP were reduced to a babbling blight on the landscape last year, when

they insisted on their sacred pillars being accepted for temple construction. It can be done again.

The time for indulgence of diabolical intent is past; the time for firm action has arrived and none too soon. Will government rise to the occasion? That is the only question. ● ● ●

C.R.Irani

SHIBLI NO'MANI'S ROLE IN THE PREPARATION OF THE CURRICULUM OF NADWATUL ULAMA

Ghazanfar Ali Khan

After Mughals the British came to power and started crushing and demoralising the Muslims in every aspect of life-social, political, economical, educational as well as religious. They on the one hand curtailed or cut down the auqaf (endowments) of Madaris-e-Islamiya and on the other they gave free hand to the missionaries. On 7th March 1835, William Bentinck, Governor General, passed a resolution in the favour of English language and western education. By this resolution all the funds for education would be appropriated for English alone.¹ Moreover many British officials were so out-spoken that it was the duty of every Christian to assist the missions.² This is the reason as W.W.Hunter remarks that there were about 30,000 scholars in missionary schools.³

Their hostile attitude got further accentuated after the mutiny of 1857. They believed that in the Mutiny, Muslims played a vital role, so it has turned the Muslims as the main accused in the eyes of the British. Consequently in the post 1857 period Muslims exclusively were persecuted. They were imprisoned, tortured, hanged and their properties were seized without any consideration of being a rebel or loyal, young or old. Not only this, they showed kind attitude towards Hindus and replaced Muslims by Hindus in Government and administrative services.

In this situation of gloom and pity Maulana Qasim Nanautvi with other Ulama established a madrasah at Deoband in 1866. Its curriculum was based purely on Islamic traditional learnings- Quran, Hadith, Tafsir, Fiqh, Arabic, Persian grammar, logic and kalam. He was not against the acquisition of English

1-Syed Mahmood, A History of English Education in India (1781-1893) , M. A. O. College, Aligarh, 1895,p.51

2-Syed Ghulam Mohiuddin, "Modern Education and the Educational Problem of the Indian Muslims". Muslim Education Quarterly, Vol.II. No.4, Islamic Academy Cambridge, U.K.1985,p.64.

3-W.W.Hunter, Report of the Indian Education Commission Calcutta 1982, pp.10-11.

education but simply wanted to avoid duplication of government efforts,¹ with this view he reduced the period of courses of studies from ten to six years.²

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, on the other hand, launched a movement which affected every aspect of Muslim life. He devoted his whole life for the upliftment of the Muslim community. He journeyed to many places in India as well as England for the cause of his community and tried to awaken them. After the failure of the Mutiny of 1857 Sir Syed wrote a pamphlet entitled "Asbab-e-Baghawat-e-Hind" in which he criticized British policies and tried to prove that the British Government itself was responsible for the Mutiny. Moreover he also washed the minds of the British that Muslims were not exclusively responsible for the Mutiny. Further he stressed that a section of Muslims remained loyal to the British and gave a long list of such loyal Muslims.³ During the time of the Mutiny, Sir Syed was posted at Bijnour. There he saved the lives of twenty families of Europeans. He assured the Collector and Magistrate of Bijnour, "as long as I am alive, you have no cause to worry."⁴ With this he earned the sympathy of the British and succeeded to some extent in lessening the hostile attitude towards Muslims.

Sir Syed was of the view that the true Islamic teachings and Islamic life were in perfect harmony with nature and go simultaneously with the need of the age. He not only tried to focus on the rationalistic approach of Islamic teachings but also wanted to change the antagonistic attitude of orthodox "Ulama" and general masses towards the English language and western learnings. He reiterated that there was no option for the subject nations but to learn the language of the rulers. He believed that after acquiring western learning it would be possible for the Muslims

1-Dar al-Ulum Deoband, Rudad-e-Salanah-1290 AH.Deoband,1873,P.16 He was of the view that after the completion of traditional Islamic learning students might acquire modern education. This idea was being realized and in 1903, in the meeting of Majlis-e-Shura, it was approved that scholarship would be given to those student who wanted to Join government schools after completing their education from the Dar al-Ulum. For detail see Syed Mahboob Rizvi, Tarikh-e-Deoband, Vol,I,Idarah Ihtimam,Dar al-Ulum, Deoband,1997,p.208.

2-Manazir Ahsan Gilani,Sawaneh Qasmi,Vol-II,Dar al-Ulum,Deoband,1975,P.286.

3-Sir Syed Ahmad Khan,Asbab-e-Baghawati-e-Hind,Karachi,1957 pp.110-113.

4-Altaf Husain Hali,Hayat-e-Javed,Eng.tr.K.H.Qadree and J.H. Mathew, Delhi. 1979 p.74.

to improve their social and political conditions.

In these circumstances Muslims in general were divided into two groups. One opposed the acquisition of modern education and advocated restoration and preservation of Islamic learnings. The other group advocated the acquisition of modern education to meet the needs of the hour as they considered it was the only means of enlightenment and modernisation for the Muslim community. In the following years, the gap between two conflicting groups further widened and blocked their way to progress.

This situation led to the emergence of a third group which was convinced of the necessity of adopting the middle way and of trying to reconcile between Islamic values and the modernistic view. They advocated for the acquisition of such modern education, which was not against Islamic teachings. The man who played the key role in this was Maulana Shibli No'mani. He observed minutely the ideological compulsions of the 'ulama and concluded that the out dated courses of studies was the main reason for the rejection of modern education. He was of the view that for Muslims it was equally necessary to acquire knowledge in both institutions-traditional madrasahs and modern schools. He envisaged such an educational institution where there ought to be a combination of traditional and modern education. He wished to produce such 'ulama who could add western researches to Islamic learnings and could explain Islamic faith and beliefs through the medium of English languages¹. He, on the one hand, tried to make Sir Syed realize that no real success is possible without the acquisition of knowledge in both institutions² and on the other hand he lectured among the 'ulama, that they need not worry about modern education for it is not against Islam nor does it possess any obstacle to Islamic faith.³

In this context the ideas and viwes took practical shape in the annual convocation programme of Madrasah-e-Faiz-e-Am,

1-Shibli No'mani Makalat-e-Shibli, Vol-III, ed. by Syed Sulaiman Nadwi, Dar al-Musannefin, Azamgarh. 1938, p. 163

2-Shibli No'mani Makatib Shibli, Vol-I, ed. by Syed Sulaiman Nadwi, Dar al-Musannefin, Azamgarh, 1971. p. 4

3-Shibli No'mani Khutbat-i-Shibli, Vol-I, ed. by Syed Sulaiman Nadwi, Dar al-Musannefin, Azamgarh. 1965, p. 10.

Kanpur, in 1892, when a decision had been taken by the 'ulema'¹ to form an organisation, known as Nadvat al-Ulama, for two main purposes: (1) reform in the prevalent educational system as the time required and (2) to eliminate the differences among Muslim groups on different religious issues.

In 1894 in the annual convocation of Madrasah-e-Faiz-e-Am four resolutions² were approved regarding the reformation of the curriculum and organisation of Madrasah-e-Islamiyah. Along with this a committee of twelve members,³ Shibli No'mani one of them, was formed to advise on necessary modification in the curriculum after examining the prevalent courses of studies and system of education. In the same meeting Allama Shibli supported the points highlighted regarding the out-dated syllabi of Madaris-e-Islamiyah by Maulana Shah Muhammad Husain of Allahabad. Shibli in his speech argumentatively replied to the following questions.

“What was the system of education in Islam? Why changes took place in the course from time to time? How and why Ma'qulat became a part of curriculum? What were the reasons behind the popularity of Dars-e-Nizami and demerits of the Madrasahs curriculum.”⁴

Allama Shibli realized the acquisition of English language and western sciences were necessary for the cause of Islam. He highlighted the western spirit in English interpretations of Islamic faith and ethics so it was the prime duty of the 'ulema that they;

1. Rectify the wrong interpretation of the Quranic injunction by orientalists,
2. Acquire a knowledge of western

1-To know the name of Ulama who were present in the annual convocation of Madrasah-e-Faiz-e-Am, Kanpur in 1892 see Muhammad Ishaq Jalis Nadwi, Tarikh-e-Nadwatul Ulama, Vol-I, Lucknow, 1983, p.96. Also in Syed Mohammad al-Hasani, Sirat Mulana Muhammad Ali Mongeri, Shahi Press, Lucknow, 1964, p.116.

2-Four resolution are as follows:- (1) The present system of education is out-dated and reformable, so efforts should be made in this regard. (2) The madrasahs' authorities will be persuaded that either the muhtamim or other representatives of Madaris-e-Islamiyah should participate in the annual meeting of Nadwatul Ulama. (3) For proper coordination among Madaris-e-Islamiyah two or three madrasahs would serve as a Dar al-Ulum and all other madrasahs be affiliated to them. (4) Fourth resolution appeals for the donation to Madrasah-e-Faiz-e-Am. for detail see Syed Sulaiman Nadwi, Hayat-e-Shibli, Dar al-Musannefin, Azamgarh 3rd ed. 1970, pp.307-309.

3-For the name of twelve members of the committee see Muhammad Ishaq Jalis Nadwi, op.cit. pp.106-107

4-Muhammad Ishaq Jalis Nadwi, op.cit. p.105.

sciences and literature to refute the westerners' attack
3. Check the unbridled interpretation of Islam by westernised Muslim Scholars, 4. Prepare an up-to date syllabus for Madaris-e-Islamiyah.¹

Moreover Shibli No'mani also focussed on the demerits of Dars-e-Nazami and wrote that more emphasis were put on the study of Maq'qulat rather to the study of Quran, Hadith, Tafsir and Fiqh. Not a single book is included on modern subjects and English has no place in the syllabi.² Consequently the products of the Madrashes did not have proficiency in arts and intellectual skills. Dars-e-Nizami hindered the way of progress of Muslim education and failed to keep pace with the changing modern world. The Muslims in general suffered from an inferiority complex and felt themselves helpless against the aggressive western thought. Shibli in his lectures, writings and by untiring efforts convinced that Islam was superior and our deterioration was due to the outdated syllabus of Madaris-e-Islamiyah. Shibli No'mani's firmness and determination can be seen when he read the annual reports of Nadwatul Ulama in 1895, in second annual meeting of Nadwatul Ulama that the syllabus, which was being taught in Madris-e-Islamiyah for the last two hundreds years, could not be changed within a year. However, it was our good fortune that most of the ulama realized the need of reform in the curriculum.³

In addition to this he stated that only two advisory notes had been sent regarding the reformation of courses of studies. One was from Maulana Shah Muhammad Husain Allahabadi who compiled a treatise of 175 pages entitled "al-Nazma al-Ta'llum wal Tal'lim". The other one was of Maulvi Abd al Ali Asi or Madras.

Maulana Muhammad Ali Mongeri, the first Nazim of Nadwatul Ulama, produced a draft of curriculum entitled "Musavvidah-e-Nisab-e-Arabi" in the Executive Council of Nadwatul Ulama on 25th July 1895 in which he proposed twenty disciplines and also prescribed the relevant books for each discipline. Among them fourteen disciplines were being taught

1-Shibli No'mani, Maqalat-e-Shibli Vol-III, op.cit p.142.

2-To know about the demerits and shortcomings of Dars-e-Nizami see Annual Report of Nadwatul Ulama 1910, Luknow, n.d.87-88. Also in Syed Sulaiman Nadwi, Hayat-e-Shibli, op.cit, pp.413-414.

3-Annual Report of Nadwatul Ulama 1985, Kanpur, n.d. pp.36-37.

already in Madrasahs and the rest six new disciplines were Tarikh, Usul-e-laughat, Tahvid' Aruz, Suluk wa Tahdhib-e-Nafs, and Asrar-e-Ahkam.¹ In his Masavvidah the study of Quran, Hadith, Tafsir, Fiqh was made compulsory with every discipline so that the students may have regular touch with these subjects.²

The proposed curriculum of Maulana Mongeri along with the other twenty copies (submitted by 'ulema') had been discussed in the meeting of Executive Council on 26th December 1895. After a long discussion, many additions and deletions were made but unfortunately it could not be finalised. Not with standing some similarity all the drafts were widely different from each other. This variety of syllabi led the members of Nadwa to frame some guiding principles for a final selection of subjects and books. These guiding principles³ had been laid down at Amritsar meeting of Nadwah in October 1902.⁴ But due to some reasons the new curriculum could not be finalised and introduced. Shibli showed his unhappiness in a letter to Maulana Habib al-Rahman Khan Sherwani on 2nd June 1903.

" You are the syllabi-incharge but, even then, it has not been introduced till now which is rather very sad".⁵

At Madras in January 1904, in the meeting of Nadwa al-Ulama Shibli talked rather decisively with Maulana Mongeri and Mulana Masih-al Zaman Khan (the then nazim),

" If you want at all to run Nadwah, then you administer it

1-Muhammad al-Hasani op.cit.p.153.

2-Ibid.p.159.

3-The guiding principles which had been laid down in 1902 at amritsari broadly covered in the curriculum the following areas and fields by the three committee members, viz Maulana Abdal-Qayyum of Hyderabad, Maulana Abd al-Hai and Allamah Shibli (i) More emphasis had been placed on rhetoric and literature. Along with Mukhatsar al-Ma'ani, Dalail al-Ajjaz, Aizaj al-Quran of Baqillani and Naqd al-Shir were also included. (ii) 15 Paragraphs of Tafsir-e-Baizawi and another book entitled Sirat al-Mustaqim were included. (iii) For the teaching of Aqaid the book Ma'alim fi Usul al-Din of Imam Razi were introduced in place of Ibn Rushd's Kashf al-Daulah and Imam Ghazali's al-Iqtisad. (iv) The book Hadiyah Sa'idiyah, Sharh Hikmat al-Ain and Sharh Hikmat al-Ishraq were prescribed for philosophical teaching. (v) For the teaching of Asrar-e-Sharia the book Hujjat-Allah al-Balighah was prescribed. (vi) Durus al-Awliyah was prescribed for the teaching falsafah-e-Jadidah. (vii) Teaching of English language was made compulsory, (See Annual Report of Nadwatul Ulama-1910, op. cit.p.89. also in Syed Sulaiman Nadwi, op.cit.pp.414-415.

4-Syed Sulaiman Nadwi, op.cit.p.329. (one such principle was that all those books which dealt with an admixture of subjects should be deleted from the curriculum).

5-Shibli No'mani Makatib Shibli, Vol,I, op.cit.p.149.

on the right line. Otherwise I would have no touch with it.”¹

At that time a decision had been taken that the curriculum would be given a final shape on the approved guiding principles. Syed Sulaiman Nadwi wrote that the major part of the curriculum had been prepared by “Allama Shibli.”² The new curriculum had been approved but its teaching was not started partially in the Dar al-Ulum. The implementation of the new curriculum practically took place in 1905 after the arrival of Shibli No’mani in Dar-al-Ulum Nadvat al-Ulama as the Dean.³

‘Allama Shibli never hesitated to borrow anything from Western arts and sciences if they were beneficial and advantageous for the regeneration of Islam.⁴ He in his educational planning combined the modern subjects and religious sciences. At one time he opined that the spread of modern education amongst the Muslims was largely dependent upon the support of ‘Ulama and, at the same time the religious movement needed the support of English educated Muslims for its success.⁵ Shibli reiterated that it was impossible to achieve the objectives of Nadwatul Ulama without the knowledge of English. In 1899 Shibli No’mani expressed his desire to Habib al-Rahman Khan Sherwani that inclusion of English in the course should be an item of discussion in the meeting of Executive Council of Nadwatul Ulama. But the latter did not take it seriously and ignored it.⁶ It was again proposed in the meeting of Executive Council of Nadwatul Ulama in February 1900 and it was approved, with some opposition, by the majority votes. But practically it was not included in course. Then Shibli showed his unhappiness and wrote a letter to Maulana Sherwani on 25th May, 1901 that after facing a lot of difficulties and obstacles we succeeded to win the vote of the people and you, I do not know why, did not implement it in Dar al-Ulum.⁷ However in the midst of this rift in June 1901 a teacher was appointed on a salary of 15 rupee and 5 students started to learn

1-Ibid,P.154.Also in Syed Sulaiman Nadwi,op.cit.p.398.

2-Syed Sulaiman Nadwi,op.cit.p.414.

3-Annual Report of Nadwatul Ulama-1910,op.cit.p.90. Also in Syed Sulaiman Nadwi op.cit.p.415.

4-Rafiq Zakariya, Rise of Muslims in Indian Politics, Bombay,1970,p.251.

5-Niyaz Ahmad Azmi, “Shibli on Muslim Education and Politics” Islam and the Modern Age, Vol,25, No.3 Agust, 1994 New Delhi,p.196.

6-For detail see Shibli No’mani Nakatib Shibli, Vol-I, letter No.21& 22, op.cit.1220123.

7-Ibid,p.126,Letter No.26.

alphabets of English.¹

But before the settlement of Shibli in Nadwah as a Dean in 1905, April, the teaching of English was only nominal. He paid attention towards its development and a resolution was approved by the Executive Council that the English language would be a compulsory subject for every student. Maulvi Syed Zahur Ahmad was appointed to look after the teaching of English language.² At that time it was difficult even to appoint a teacher for English due to want of money. But when the Government approved to grant rupee 500/-per month in 1908 for the education of modern subjects, four English teachers³ were appointed and the Nadwah started to impart English education upto the matriculation standard.⁴ Moreover Shibli's thirst for the education of English in Islamic institution did not come to an end. He had an idea that the education of English should be up to the level of Darjah-e-Takmil. So he, in the annual meetings of Nadwatul Ulama in 1907, 1908, 1909 expressed his desire that after completion of eight years of Arabic courses students must study English for two years⁵ so that they became well-versed in English also. He said.

“After studying exclusively English language for two years our students would be able to stand side by side with English School graduates.”⁶

But unfortunately the objective of Shibli was not fulfilled as yet.⁷

It was the efforts of Allamah Shibli that the teaching of Hindi and Sanskrit had also started in the Dar al-Ulum. The reason behind this was mainly the desire to defend Islam because at that time Aryans were openly attacking on Islam and were always ready to criticize it as and when they got opportunity to

1-Annual Report of Nadwatul Ulama 1910, op.cit.p.90.

2-Ibid p.91. Also in Syed Sulaiman Nadwi, op.cit.p.418.

3-Ibid p.91. Also in Al-Navah, Vol. VI, No.3, April, 1909, p.2. (Qazi Talmiz Husain and Syed Baqar Husain were appointed for higher classes. The other two teachers had been appointed for lower classes.

4-Al-Nadwah, Vol, V, No.8, September, 1908, pp.1-2.

5-Ibid.p.2. (Maulvi Mohi-al Din, Honorary Director of the Department of education, prepared an out-line of the curriculum for English teaching. It was approved unanimously in the meeting Executive Council of Nadwatul Ulama.

6-Syed Sulaiman Nadwi, op.cit.p.420.

7-For English education see, Annual Report of Nadwatul Ulama-1910, op.cit.pp.90-94. Also in Syed Sulaiman Nadwi, op.cit.pp.415-421.

defame Islam. Shibli advocated for the teaching of Hindi and Sanskrit in Dar al-Ulum in order to enable the Muslim ulama to understand the nature of Aryans attack on Islam and counter-pose the ideological weakness of Hinduism and also preaching Islam among Hindu communities.¹ As a result in 1908 a class of Hindi and Sanskrit education was opened. For creating interest among the students Shibli wrote letters to his friends by way of collecting some funds for scholarship to the students of Hindi and Sanskrit. He also appointed a Pandit for the teaching of Hindi and Sanskrit.² But unfortunately its teaching could not be continued after the resignation of Shibli from Dean ship of Dar al-Ulum. However after some years Hindi was again introduced in the curriculum. It is still being taught in the last three classes of primary stage and in class first of the secondary stage.

Shibli No'mani also desired that the students of Madaris-e-Islamiyah should be well aware of new words, terminologies, idioms and phrases of modern Arabic. He was of the view that without the knowledge of these new words and terminologies it was very difficult to understand today's Arabic newspapers, magazines and books. After his returning from Egypt and Syria, he compiled a glossary of these new words which he added at the end of his book "Safarnamah Rome wa Misr wa Sham".³ He used to distribute the newspapers and magazines of Egypt and Syria among the students so that they may come to know these new words and their usage. In 1908 he appointed Syed Sulaiman Nadwi on the Chair of Modern Arabic. Syed Sulaiman Nadwi himself wrote that this was the first Chair of its kind in the Madaris-e-Islamiyah.⁴ Shibli wanted to send him to Egypt for compiling new words and terminologies. But due to political disturbances in Egypt he could not go there. It was the result of Shibli's advice and guidance that two treatises in Arabic on new words and terminologies entitled "Durus al-Adab" were compiled by Syed Sulaiman Nadwi. These treatises were taught and still are being

1-Al-Nadvah, Vol, V, No. 6, July, 1908 p.4.

2-Al-Nadvah, Vol-V, No. 8, September, 1908, p.2. Also in Al-Nadvah, Vol-V, No. 9, October, 1908, p.1 (Shibli No'mani himself, Maulvi Nawab Ali, Professor Baroda college, Maulvi Manzar, Advocate-High Court-Calcutta were ready to pay Rs.5/ per month for Sanskrit teacher.)

3-Shibli No'mani, Safarnamah Rome wa Misr wa Sham. Matba Ma'rif Azamgarh, 1940, pp.232-242.

4-Syed Sulaiman Nadwi, op.cit.p.423.

taught in many Arabic Madrasahs. In 1910, in the meeting of Nadwatul Ulama it was decided to compile a dictionary of new words and Syed Sulaiman Nadwi was assigned this task. He compiled it under title of "Lughat-e-Jadidah" and presented it in the meeting of Nadwatul Ulama in 1912.¹

It was discussed and decided at the very beginning in the second annual meeting of Nadwatul Ulama in 1895 that the total duration of studies would be of ten years and last two years should be devoted to the study of specialised course. A continuous effort in this direction finally showed results and in 1909, it was decided by the Executive Council of Nadwatul Ulama to start Darjah-e-Takmil in Ilim-e-Kalam and Ilm-e-Adab.² Later in 1912 a decision was also endorsed in the meeting of Executive Council for starting Darjah-e-Takmil in Tafsir followed by Fiqh and Usul-e-Fiqh.³ In the preparation of the curriculum of Darjah-e-Takmil the role of Allamah Shibli No'mani was remarkable.

After going through the gradual steps in the preparation of the courses of studies of Nadwatul Ulama we can say that Shibli No'mani has played a very dominating and remarkable role. He used to deliver lectures, time and again, for updating the curriculum. The advocacy of Shibli for the inclusion of English, Hindi, Sanskrit and modern Arabic in the curriculum amply shows his farsightedness and practical wisdom. After analysing the syllabi of Nadwatul Ulama it can be said that the dreams of its founders have largely come true. The courses of studies of Nadwah have helped the Islamic learning to recover from gradual decay and to redeem the Muslim Community from the growing menace of irreligiousness, scepticism and even apostasy. It has proved a true guidance at the right time and contributed tremendously in preserving the integrity and character of Muslim community and the true picture of Islamic faith and practice.

(Constesy: Bulletin of the Institute of
Islamic Studies No.31 AMU, Aligarh)

1-Ibid.pp.418-437 (for details)

2-Al-Nadwah Vol, VI, No.3, April, 1909, p.2. Also in Annual Report of Nadwatul Ulama. 1910.op.cit.p.95.

3-For details about the subjects taught in Darjah-e-Takmil see Syed Sulaiman Nadwi, op.cit.pp.429-430. Also in Annual Report of Nadwatul Ulama. 1910 op.cit.p.95.

GRANADA MOSQUE HERALDS A NEW DAWAN

Granada, July 8. The muezzin's cry of "Allahu Akbar" (God is the greatest) will return this week to Granada after an absence of 500 years when the first mosque is opened since the Christian reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula.

The traditional calling of faithful to prayer will ring out on Thursday from the minaret of the Great Mosque of Granada, set atop the historic Moorish quarter of Albaicin. From here Arab dignitaries and envoys will enjoy an unrivalled vista of the Alhambra, the palace of the last caliph of al-Andalus and an architectural jewel that draws hundreds of thousand of tourists to the city every year.

Is was 511 years ago that King Boabdil of Granada and his court left the Alhambra and paused at the Pass of the Moor's Sigh, before leading the last remnants of Spanish Islam into exile across the Strait of Gibralter. According to legend, Boabdil's mother, Aisha rebuked her son by saying: "Weep like a woman for what you could not defend like a man!" So ended nearly 800 years of Muslim rule in Spain. Al-Jazeera television and other Arab satellite channels will broadcast the Dhuḥur prayers live at 2.30pm on Thursday. (July 10,2003)

Abdul Haqq Salaberria, a spokesman for the Islamic community in Spain said: " This will be a political act because it is the first mosque to be opened by Spanish Muslims in over 500 years." The site was bought 22 years ago, when it was still a small plot of farmland squeezed between a convent and a church o the crest of the Albaicim, the last Muslim quarter of Granada before the Catholic King Ferdinanad and Queen Isabel reneged on their treaty with Boabdil to guarantee religious freedom in Spain. The land was redefined for residential use only, blocking construction of a public or religious building. There followed a nine-year legal battle, which finally led to the erection of a life-sized model of the proposed minaret on the site.

The minaret prompted complaints from conservative Catholics nationwide and tensions grew in Granada, leading to further delays. Graffiti appeared, urging the city's estimated 15,000

Muslims to "go home" but defenders of Spain's new constitution came out in favour of the project. Roman ruins were then discovered at the site. After another two-year delay, the mosque was modified again to preserve the ruins. Building finally got under way in 1998, immediately after the Muslim fast of Ramadan. "The design went through 10 revisions," Aboul Haqq Said.

The mosque ignites unspoken passions among the people of Granada, but the mayor, a member of Spain's ruling centre right party, will attend the celebrations. Abdul Haqq said that the minaret had been tested already, "We hope that Spaniards will understand when we say that this will be a new centre for Islamic Europe, that we do not want to reconquer al-Andalus but we do want recognition. ● ● ●

(The Times)

“ O ye who believe! Let not some men Among you laugh at others: It may be that The (latter) are better Than the (former): Nor let some women Laugh at others: It may be that The (latter) are better Than the (former): Nor defame nor be Sarcastic to each other, Nor call each other By (offensive nicknames: III seeming is a name Connoting wickedness, (To be used of one) After he has believed: And those who Do not desist are (Indeed) doing wrong.

O ye who believe! Avoid suspicion as much (As possible): for supicion In some cases is a sin: And spy not on eash other, Nor speak ill of each other Behind their backs. Would any Of you like to eat The Flesh of his dead Brother? Nay, ye would Abhor it... But fear Allah: For Allah is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful.

O mankind! We created You from a single pair) Of a male and a female, And made you into Nations and tribes, that Ye know each other (Not that ye may despise (Each other). Verily The most honoured of you In the sight of Allah Is (he who is) the most Righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge And is well acquainted (With all things).

(Al-Qur'an-:49:11/13)