



# THE FRAGRANCE OF EAST

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# The Fragrance of East

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## Life is Ever Changing

**S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi**

Islam is the last message of God Almighty; it has been presented in a complete form before the world, which has been told that:

*"This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favour unto you, and have chosen for you as religion AL-ISLAM"* (Al-Ma'ida:3)

On the one hand God has been well-pleased to favour mankind with a perfect and final religion; on the other, the fact is that life is on the move, ever-changing and evolving as someone has aptly said:

Life is ever youthful,

Continuously on the move, zestful.

The religion bestowed by Omniscient God is grounded in a faith in eternal values and transcendental facts, yet, it is also zestful, perpetually -moving and sufficing for the transformations of life. God has endowed His religion with the capacity to turn over a new leaf with the changes ringing the world and thus provide human beings with an uninterrupted guidance in every phase of their life. It can help humanity to find its way at every turn and pass. It is not a culture of any particular age or the architecture of a particular place preserved in the shape of archaeological remains, but a living faith, a masterpiece of ingenuity and craftsmanship of the omniscient and Wise Creator :

*That is the measuring of the Mighty, the Wise.* (Ya Sin : 38)

*... the doing of Allah Who perfecteth all things. Lo! He is Informed of what ye do.* (An Namal : 88)

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### **Wisdom of Qur'an**

**“And of His Signs is your sleeping at night and your seeking His Bounty during the day. Indeed there are Signs in this for those who hearken.”**

*(Al Quran - 30-23)*

The expression “seeking His Bounty” signifies man’s efforts to seek his livelihood. The earning of one’s livelihood is yet another manifestation of the All-Wise Creator’s Providence. It not only shows His creative power but also His immense mercy and compassion for His creatures. It is evident that He cares for and is benevolently concerned with providing for man’s needs. After working for several hours man needs a few hours of rest and relaxation to refresh himself enabling him to resume work for a few more hours. “In order to make this possible, God has created in man the disposition to become fatigued and exhausted, which is followed by the urge to take rest. That is not all however. God has also ingrained in man’s being the powerful urge to sleep, an urge that involuntarily seizes him after he has remained awake and has exerted himself for a few hours.

Thus, the ability within man to seek his livelihood and the availability of livelihood outside him clearly point to the existence of God Who is Compassionate, Benevolent and Generous to His creatures. Unless a person is puerile it would be hard to consider all this to be merely the outcome of a fortuitous combination of circumstances, or the outcome of the will of a plurality of gods, or that these acts of bounteous generosity owe themselves to some blind, senseless, impersonal force. ■

### **Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)**

It is narrated on the authority of Caliph ‘Uthman that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be with him) said: **He who died knowing fully well that there is no God but Allah entered Paradise.** *(Sahih Muslim)*

Belief without action is almost tantamount to no belief as belief entails action in accordance with the belief. That is why some persons ask whether it is enough for a man that he should recite these words or what we know as kalimah in order to enter the paradise.

A close analysis of the words of the hadith would reveal that fact that mere expression of these words does not suffice. It implies that he who makes a sincere profession of the fact that there is no God but Allah deserves admittance to the Heaven. And this in turn entails heavy responsibilities; for assertion of a statement demands action in strict accordance with the assertion. It means that the man is declaring in unequivocal terms that he believes in one God, and does not associate any other deity with Him, whether those made of stone, clay or any other material for that matter or heavenly bodies or human beings. The man who negates the existence of all false gods and affirms the existence of One True God in fact makes a profession that he would submit to His command alone and nothing else except that which has been vouchsafed to him by the true Messenger of Allah. Thus the affirmation of this simple truth covers all the responsibilities, obligations and duties which fall upon the shoulders of a man after submitting his will to the Will of the Lord and accepting Him as the sole object of worship. ■ *(Radiance)*

## TERRORISM

Of late, terrorism has assumed a menacing way leading to mass destruction and loss of human lives. At a time when scientists and technologists have evolved marvelous ways and means to provide a comfortable life and allow one to reap the benefits bestowed by nature, a sense of insecurity and shagginess has overtaken the society.

The most ridiculous situation emerges when we analyse as to who is the perpetrator of terrorism and who bears the brunt of its effects. No doubt the attack on World Trade Centres in USA on September 11, 2001 was an act of barbarous terrorism but does it not provide a parallel to what happened in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 which was also an act of terrorism. Also why forget the recent happenings in Iraq in 1991 and again in 2003, Bosnia, Korea, Vietnam, Phillipines, Afghanistan, Cuba, Yugoslavia and in some Latin American countries. The invasions and the occupation of Iraq by the coalition forces without the United Nations Security Council's sanction, have led to intense and wide spread anger in the Arab and other parts of the world where people increasingly consider the United States to be the enemy of Islam. By blatantly supporting Israel against Palestine and keeping an eye over the mineral wealth, particularly oil of Arab nations USA has exposed itself as envious and partial. Though terrorism in different forms is showing its head in some non-Islamic countries also but it is ignored. Similarly there are countries where people are deprived of democratic rights but USA does not bother to help in getting the democracy restored. It is also oblivious of victimisation of minorities in certain countries. Now WMD (Weapons of mass destruction), so far invisible, are seen by the USA and its allies in all those countries which do not fall in line with them.

It is strange that those powers who cultivated and provided impetus to terrorism to establish their supremacy in the world have waged a war against it. Arundhati Roy writes in the Guardian (September 29, 2001) that United States of America's secret service, C.I.A. founded and recruited almost one lac radical 'mujahideen' from 40 countries as soldiers for US proxy war against the Russian forces in Afghanistan. Now USA and its allies have taken a vow to stamp out terrorism from the world. However, in this attempt they have identified the terrorism with particular religion.

Since the seeds of terrorism were sown in a Muslim dominated country, Afghanistan, it is now given to believe that Muslims are terrorists and Islam preaches terrorism. In this way a purely political issue is being given a religious colour. But the fact is that word terrorism is multifaceted and it could be tagged with any weak individual, body, organisation or nation by a strong one.

It is gratifying to note that each section of Muslims is trying to impress upon the world that Islam is the religion of peace. If a group of Muslims in particular circumstances has been used by someone with vested interest then the whole community should not be blamed or made answerable to such misdeeds. The encouraging aspect of the whole issue is that now most of the non-Muslims have also realised that it is a sinister campaign against Islam by those powers who are afraid of it and consider its extension as a threat to their existence.

In pre-Islamic Arab it was believed that blood- shedding was the only solution to over power the evil forces and to hold control over them. But with the advent of Islam this concept was changed. The Prophet deprecated these wild acts and persuaded his followers to maintain peace and spread feelings of love and amity. Islam is the religion which forbids killing anyone who is not in confrontation with you. It does not allow devastation of any residential area and destruction of forests (felling of trees) and agricultural land. At each step a Muslim is exhorted to remain within his limits.

The holy Quran has at one place described Islam as 'Sabeel-ul-salam' (Path of peace and tranquility) and at another place it says 'La-ikraha fiddeen' - there is no compulsion in religion. These are the clear indication that Islam considers peace and safety as the basic requirements of a civil society and abhor violence, horror and terrorism. Islam considers peace as the basic requirement for existence. The holy Quran says in clear terms that if anyone has killed someone not for taking revenge or for preventing riots on earth then he has killed the whole humanity. If he has saved one life then he is credited with saving the whole human race. ■

**S.A.**

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## True Followers of the Islamic Faith

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

***Among the believers are men who are true to their covenant with Allah. Of them some have fulfilled their obligations and some of them are still waiting, but they have never changed in the least.***

**(al-Ahzab 33:23)**

The above Qur'anic verse captures the essence of the believers' covenant with Allah. It signifies the Islamic movement, the call to truth and the believers' unwavering and single-minded commitment to Islam. Implicit in it is also the assertion that the believers are ever ready to sacrifice all that they have for this cause. Reading this one recalls the history of Islam, especially of the early days.

This verse stands out as a glowing tribute to the accomplishments of those who strove for the cause of Islam. For it makes a pointed reference to the believers' covenant and presents a role model for Muslims until the Last Day. It spells out the role of Muslims, their obligations to their Lord, and their assignments. One learns as to what entitles believers to receive divine bounties and what makes their deeds acceptable in His sight. The verse further offers a concise, definition of Islam to believers, as it reminds them of their covenant with Allah.

Among the many millions of

Muslims, some are specified in the above verse as being believers with firm resolve. This refers to such pious and noble souls who firmly believe in Allah's promise and who display their total commitment in His cause. Praise is heaped on them for their discharging their obligations to Allah. Then mention is made of those among them who have completed their appointed term and returned to Allah. They will be lavishly rewarded. Their reward in the Next Life will be unending. Those still alive look forward to divine rewards and are true to their covenant. They have not changed their commitment in any degree.

As already stated, the verse under study provides a concise definition of Islam. Early Muslims followed this standard. Accordingly it presents the role model valid until the Last Day. Allah sanctioned this example. Islam does not consist of the mere verbal uttering of its creedal statement. One reciting it will, no doubt, be taken as a Muslim. For no one can contest his faith. We are bound to love and respect everyone who recites Islam's creedal statement. Yet Islam goes far beyond this. A Muslim born as a Muslim must follow all the Islamic rituals. More important, however, is his commitment to his covenant with Allah. The pledge is that a Muslim will lead his whole life in accordance with Allah's commands. For

He is the Creator and Sustainer of all, able to benefit and harm' everyone. Only He can honour or disgrace someone. He does whatever He wills and is the Supreme Master.

Islam's creedal statement: "There is no god besides Allah" also represents a pledge. One uttering it testifies, both in word and deed, that Allah alone is the Creator and Regulator of the whole universe. All creation and commands are His. He has not abandoned the universe after having created it. Nor has He delegated authority to anyone. Man is asked to try his best and make the most of the opportunities available to him. He may utilise properly or abuse the resources put at his disposal. Allah is the Absolute Master of all that exists. Not a leaf falls without His leave. Nor can anyone move an inch unless He approves it. No change is admissible without His sanction. One's fate cannot be altered. Nor can the destiny of a people undergo any change unless He decides so.

Islam is essentially a covenant. Muslims are obliged to fulfill it. We must take Allah as the Creator and Regulator of this universe. We must recognise only Him as the Master of the universe. We must concede that our fate is decided by Him in that He alone can confer benefits or inflict loss upon us. We must vow not to surrender to anyone other than Him. Nor should we invoke anyone besides Him for meeting our needs.

As already indicated, Islam is synonymous with a pledge. It is to be seen how many of us are true to this pledge, for men are liable to forget their oaths. We must remind ourselves of the glorious examples of the Prophet's Companions. After professing Islam they cared little about their lives. Nor did they stick to false notions of honour and glory. They paid no heed to the praise or criticism of fellow human beings. Their only concern was their loyalty to Islam.

Muslims must appreciate this truth, especially in our turbulent times. Allah has blessed us with the bounty of Islam. He has done us an immense favour. Our verbal profession of Islam is meaningless. We may bear Muslim names and our way of life may contain some Islamic elements. We may occasionally visit the mosque. Our main duty as believers, nonetheless, is to be true to our pledge to Allah. As Muslims we should pose a challenge to our surroundings. In our beliefs, acts of worship, conduct, dealings, way of life, social relations, marital ties, family and neighbourhood relationships and in every human activity we must behave as Muslims. Our commitment must be to divine laws. In every respect we should be governed by Allah's commands, even if this entails the loss of all of our belongings, assets and earnings, reducing us to utter destitution. Islam has nothing in common with nationalism. Nor is it specific to any particular culture. Islam



does not recognise the nominal acceptance of some people of its faith. Regrettably this is the grim reality today.

Essentially, Islam is a covenant with Allah made publicly by believers. The only thing we find decisive and appealing is that which is endorsed by Allah and His Messenger. We are bound to the Prophet Muhammad's elucidation of faith. We are committed to the will of Allah and of His Messenger. By the same token, we must emulate the Prophet's role model. We should always be mentally prepared for the loss of our property and lives. At times our loyalty to Islam may land us in serious trouble. Conditions vary from one country to another. Yet Muslims should adhere fast and firm to their faith. We may be treated as disloyal citizens in a Godless country, with the doors to education and employment shut on us. Economic avenues may be denied to us. Yet even in the face of such persecution we must act only on the commands of Allah and His Messenger.

Allah brands as true believers among Muslims those who are true to their covenant. The Qur'an speaks highly of the truthful people. They draw accolade for their sincere and total commitment, free from any hypocrisy. Allah the Most Honourable bestows a high rank upon such. It is the highest honour imaginable for man. Overjoyed at this exaltation, these true believers had no hesitation in giving away their belongings and sacrificing their

lives for His sake. They displayed their sincerity to their covenant and did not budge by even an inch.

On studying the condition of today's Muslims let us ascertain how faithful they are to their covenant. Muslims today are concerned only about their petty, material interests, their worldly gains and losses, their political and economic pursuits, their pecuniary prospects, their safety and security and their status in public life. Such insubstantial things are dear to them. Allah attaches no importance to these. The Qur'an talks about true believers, some of whom have passed away. They attained martyrdom, shedding every drop of their blood in Allah's cause. Some true believers are alive amongst us today. Allah has not ordained their death. Notwithstanding their active participation in *Jihad* and conquest some were not martyred. Take the example of Khalid ibn Walid. He fought valiantly in numerous battles. He led the Muslim army to victory in many encounters. Yet Allah let him survive. Some no doubt, were killed in His way as their term had come to an end. Some attained martyrdom on the battleground while others breathed their last in their homes. Their devotion to *Da'wah* was total, as they preached Islam wherever they went, be it their home town or battleground. They spent their lives, looking forward to their return to Allah. There was not the slightest shift in their devotion to Allah and Islam.

The Qur'anic passage cited above

provides the role model for all of us. If I am asked, about a code of conduct and a way of life for, Muslims I will definitely prescribe the same role model which is outlined in this passage.

Islam does not stand for a token professing of faith. Leading one's life like a Muslim does not represent Islam either. Rather, Islam signifies our covenant with Allah Who is Omnipresent, All-Hearing, Who knows the Unseen and is the Creator of all the worlds. As Muslims we are obliged to prefer the *Shariah* to local customs. We must however exercise self-restraint in practising the *Shariah*. *Shariah* commands should guide us in every respect. Allah confers the title of "true believers" on the Companions and some

Muslims of the early days. Yet this designation is valid for all times. Whoever is true to the covenant and discharges his obligations towards Allah may be taken as a "true believer". This is the only way out for us. True believers should be our role models and our understanding of Islam must be: "There is no god besides 'Allah.'" We are bound to place a premium on all the teachings of the Qur'an and the Messenger, and we should turn to Him alone for any gain or loss.

Islam originated from Allah and His Messenger. It encompasses articles of faith, acts of worship, marriage and burial rituals, inheritance, marital ties and links with neighbours. It is an all-embracing faith. ■

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*(Continued from page 13)*

by the relatives for reconciliation and if these efforts fail then one Talaq (Divorce) may be pronounced at a time during the course of three months. In most of the schools of jurisprudence, in the event of unavoidable circumstance, the severance may be by the pronouncement of all Talaqs (Divorce) at a time, even then this method is not considered a good one. In the event of the intention to cut off the ties completely, it is suggested to leave each other in a sympathetic and good manner. Many Muslims ignore these instructions and create improper situations. The matter of distribution of inheritance, good treatment with the relatives and other issues related with the family are of the same nature.

A very important aspect is that of liquor and gambling. Shariat has forbidden gambling and consumption of liquor and has declared these as acts to be condemned strongly. It leads to the wastage of money and destruction of family life. Moreover, it causes the deep annoyance of Allah (Swt) and His Prophet (Pbuh).

Such kinds of evil deeds are overshadowing the life of Muslims and making severe adverse impacts upon their life. It is the responsibility of our preachers and those having the impressive qualities of oratory or writing to stand up and try their best to cure these defects of Muslim Society. ■

*(Translated by Farhan Habib)*

## Importance of Islamic Shariat and its Position

- S. M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi

### Adherence to Islamic Shariat

How important is it for the Muslims to follow their religion and to solve their family issues in accordance with the injunctions of Islamic Shariat can be easily understood by the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths. The Shariat of Muslims guides them in every sphere of their life, provides the solution to their worldly problems. Not paying any attention towards this Shariat is not only a loss in itself but is also a cause for attracting the wrath of the Almighty. It not only deprives the Muslims from the help and blessings of Allah (SWT) but also leads to the apprehension of His grievous grasp. Allah (SWT) has mentioned in very clear terms about this in His Holy book, The glorious Quran that He does not allow the violation of His religion and Shariat,:

“And one who goes in search of a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted from him and in the life after he will be among losers”.{ Al Imran:85}

“Do they desire to be ruled by the law of the period of ignorance? And for those having faith {over the commands of Allah (SWT)} whose command is better than (the command of Allah”.{ Al-Maidah: 50}

Allah (SWT) has bestowed upon

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\* Rector, Nadwatul-Ulama, Lucknow.

Muslims His religion and Shariat through His last prophet, Muhammad (pbuh) and made it necessary to follow the instructions and orders of His last prophet as no one could remain a Muslim without obeying these, Allah (SWT) says:

“By your lord, they shall not really believe until they have made you the judge of what is disputed among them, and then find no bar in their hearts against what you had decreed and give themselves up with full submission”.{Al-Nisa: 65}

But it is a matter of grave concern that practically the Muslims in general do not follow the orders of Allah (SWT) and Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh), rather they have started to follow the customs and usages of others, which on the one hand is the cause of the violation of the commands of Allah (SWT) and His prophet and their anger and on the other hand it has resulted in a situation where it has become very difficult for a Muslim to prove himself as a true Muslim. Instead of following the path of their natural religion Islam, the Muslims are accepting the path of ignorance, wastage and the customs of others.

This situation has arisen upto some extent due to the attitude of carelessness and selfishness and also due to being unaware about the Shariat.

While wise mentoring is required to remove the traits of carelessness and selfishness, unawareness may be cured by imparting the knowledge about necessary laws of Shariat.

For that very purpose, in a country where the Constitution is based on Secularism and Muslims are in minority, there is no hope of any assistance from the government. This should be taken care of by the followers of Islam because they are the ones responsible for the protection of their Community and for keeping it stable. By the grace of Allah, the authorities of Muslim Personal Law Board have performed their duties well by defending the Islamic Shariat and by removing the misunderstandings of the judicial and legislative bodies and have changed some of the provisions harming Islamic Shariat. And whenever a new complication arises, the Board takes care of it and makes efforts in that regard. By the grace of Allah, the efforts are being made as per the necessity.

Second front is to bring in the Muslims themselves inside the purview of being the followers of Islamic Shariat. This front is wider and the most important one. For this very purpose, the Board has worked with the help of other community institutions under the head of Islaah e Maashra (Improvement of Society). This task is wider and requires hard work. Public meetings should be conducted here and there. The Muslims

should be restricted from violating the commands of Islamic Shariat. They should be informed to keep themselves away from unIslamic customs leading to the violation of the wishes of Allah (SWT) and the teachings of His last Prophet (Pbuh) so that the danger of harm and destruction in this life and the life after may be meted out.

### **Extravagancy and Demonstration**

Unnecessary demonstrations and decorations, extravagant expenses and observance of rituals based over ignorance in the Marriage functions are such unwise acts, which not only attract the anger of Allah (SWT) and the Prophet (Pbuh) but also leads towards the wastage of the worthy resource which could be used for the betterment of the future requirements of husband and wife and also for the necessary requirements of the community as well. Furthermore these expenses cause hardships to the parents of the bride and bridegroom. The need of this hour is to make the people understand about the necessity of betterment from this situation that these are causing harm to their own future and are making them incapable of playing any positive role for the necessary requirements of the community and that for only such enjoyment and fame which is temporary in nature. Furthermore, by violating the commands of their God and His last prophet (Pbuh) they are getting them angry which as a result leads towards the loss in this life and the hereafter.

**Importance of Dower**

The provision of dower for marriage in Islamic Shariat and its payment or presence of serious intention about its payment is necessary. Dower is to be paid. That is why it should not be such high as its payment may become outside the capability of the husband, nor it is to be such low so as to lower the dignity of the wife.

The best example for the amount of dower is of the dower of the beloved daughter of our Prophet (Pbuh) which was fixed by the Prophet (Pbuh) at five hundred dirhams ,i.e.one hundred twenty one tola of silver. Marriage in Islam is to be such that it can be performed with ease. It should be as simple as it may be.

Even some of the companions of the Prophet (Pbuh) performed their marriages in such a manner that inspite of being ready to sacrifice their life and wealth for the Prophet (Pbuh), they did not consider it necessary to invite the Prophet (pbuh) for that occasion and the Prophet (Pbuh) did not show any sign of anger instead, on coming to know about the event he only asked to “do perform the (celebration of) Waleema even of a Goat”.

In Islam, it is not necessary for a bride to bring in the dowry because her husband has to bear the expenses for her necessities after the marriage. The wife has nothing to do for it; rather the

husband has to provide her a separate residence for accommodation as per his capability. And the wife is responsible to take care of his personal house only and not of the whole family.

It is a matter of pity that Muslims violate the commands of Allah (Swt) and Prophet (Pbuh) on the occasion of marriages in the same manner as they violate their commands in other matters. In India, Muslims demand dowry from wife. The irony does not stop here; they take the course of cruelty in this regard. On the other side, they do not even care about the payment of dower or not even show the intention to pay that because they fix such a dower, the payment of which is above their reach. Instead they keep on putting financial burden over their wives. All of this is against the Shariat.

**Marital Life**

Not paying any attention towards the balanced and useful way of Shariat in the matters related with marriage sometimes leads bitterness in relationship and to severance by cruelty, enmity and even to taking up of life between the couple to. It is true that sometimes even after following the correct path; there arises a necessity for severance between the couple. For that, the Shariat has provided for the provision of Divorce law but at the same time the Shariat has provided a sound scheme for that. At the first instance, there should be every endeavour made

*(Continued to page 10)*

## Ibn al-Haytham

- Irfan Shahid

Ibn al-Haytham was one of the greatest scientists of the world who made a remarkable contribution to physics, mathematics and astronomy. His Kitab al-manazir was the first comprehensive book on optics and light, and a masterpiece of physics. He was first to give a correct description of vision. He improved the planetary model with his theory of solid spheres against the ancient view of imaginary circles of orbits for planets and discovered the laws of reflection and refraction of light.

Abu Ali al-Hasan Ibn al-Haytham was born in Basrah, Iraq, in about 354 AH/956 AD completing his education at Basrah; he worked in a government office, but he was not satisfied with his job and continued his studies. He prepared a major project to construct three dams and reservoirs on the Nile at Cairo. This had three objectives to save Cairo from the annual flooding, to store water, and to increase the agricultural produce by using the stored water throughout the year. The project was shelved due to some reasons, may be high cost and the uncertainty about success. Sometimes ago, the United Nations revived the project and built the Aswan Dam on the Nile near Cairo at a huge cost. In his last years, al-Haytham took residence near the mosque and university of al-Azhar, and dedicated himself to scientific research, experiment and writing. He was a very pious person and lived a very modest life with his meagre earnings. He died in Cairo in 430 AH/1039 AD.

Ibn al-Haytham may be rated among the ten greatest scientists of Islam. He wrote more than 100 books on theology, poetry, metaphysics, politics, ethics, logic, music, physics, politics, astronomy and mathematics. More than fifty of his books are extant including Kitab al-manazir, Maqala fi al-alam and Maqala fi dhaw al-qamar

He was the first scientist to give a correct

description of vision. He refuted the 700-year old Greek view that eyes emit light making the object visible to the eye. He stated that it is the light from the object which reaches the eye to create the image of the object in the eye. Concerning light, object is self-luminous, illuminated by light from the object, opaque, translucent and refraction. He stated that light takes time to travel; its intensity gets reduced as it travels; it travels faster in the rarer medium than in denser one, etc. Mathematicians since Euclid have been struggling to prove his twelfth axiom (of straight lines). One of the important mathematical achievements of Ibn al-Haytham was the discovery of a simple substitute for the complicated Education method and two straight lines that intersect one another cannot be parallel to the same line. Interestingly this was attributed to the English mathematician John Playfair who came 800 years after Ibn al-Haytham.

In mathematics and physics his contribution is enormous. He developed a linkage between algebra and geometry. He studied the mechanics of motion of a body and was the first to maintain that a body move perpetually unless an external force stops it or changes its direction to the motion. It would seem equivalent to the first law of Newton.

His works have been translated into Latin, German, Italian, Spanish, Hebrew, Russian and English from the thirteenth century onwards. A large number of European scientists like Roger Bacon, Johannes Kepler, Newton, Fermat, Descartes, Witelo, Snell and others either adopted his ideas or were greatly influenced by him.

In a nutshell Ibn Haytham made a significant contribution in physics and optics science. He has been held in high esteem and in fact ushered in a new era in optical research both in theory and practice.■

*(Courtesy: Radiance)*



## **Salient Features of Maulana Azad's Commentary of Surah Al-Fatiha - Safia Muzzammil**

Though consisting of seven verses and hardly extending over half a page this sura expresses the quintessence of the Quran and covers all the important topics. Each word and verse, opens to us new vistas of valuable knowledge. The opening verse introduces us to the exquisitely planned, extensive Universe. It leads us to the belief in the Unity of God and blesses us with a clear beatific vision.

Mawlana has discussed all the essential problems in the commentary of this chapter which are directly or indirectly necessary for the elucidation of the Qur'an. To facilitate the right and proper understanding of the book, principles and other material, that are necessary for the purpose, references from the Qur'an, have been elucidated and incorporated in this chapter in easily understandable and rational manner, so that the subsequent chapters may be studied in their light. Mawlana's originality, scholarship and genius have been exquisitely reflected in his treatment of the subject.

This chapter is more or less in the form of a hymn addressed by man to God in the most appropriate language. It is an exposition of the concept of God, and an elucidation of the mysteries of human life, and furnishes a clear picture of the two important portions of life that

is, its beginning and end, and expresses a desire to be helped in worshipping Him, in doing the right, and ends with the request to be helped in the proper performance of the role prescribed by Him. The language and matter are so excellent that a believer in God to whichever religion or creed he may belong, can have the least objection in reciting it with a sincere heart.

### **1. Praise of God : Hamd**

#### **a. Praise is for Allah only-**

The chapter opens with the praise of God because that is the initial reaction of the observing man who looks at the universe and through it recognises the existence of the Supreme Being. The Qur'an has repeatedly enjoined man to study the Universe, the marvellous phenomenon around him and to decide for himself whether it is not the creation of the Master Planner? The vision of the expansive Universe woven into a deliberate, highly intricate and efficient system kindles firm belief in God, the Creator, and generates respect, love and admiration for Him. In everything that man perceives, he finds the manifestation of the Creator, His consummate skill and almighty control over everything therein. The deeper the look at this Universe the greater the

admiration for the Creator. The praise is instinctive and spontaneous. Thus the look at the Universe, and the admiration for the Creator are inter-related.

As soon as we conceive the idea of God we realise that He is the 'Rubb' (Sustainer and Nourisher) of the whole Universe. One cannot believe in the existence of God unless he discovers that there is a Creator and Nourisher of the Universe who sustains it. Therefore the belief in God and the conviction of His being Lord and Nourisher of all beings is indivisible .

It may be mentioned that, in this verse the word 'Rubb' has been used as an attribute of God. It is a word of great significance with no equivalent in any language. For convenience the word 'Lord' has been adopted in English translation. In order to be precise, it is safer to use the term 'Rubb' and its abstract noun Rububiyat. For Rububiyat, the nearest word may be 'Providence'. In the same way there are two attributes 'Al-Rahman' and 'Al-Rahim' used in the second verse and their abstract noun is 'Rahmat', which is nearly equivalent to 'Mercy'.

### **Divine Providence : Rububiyat**

#### **1. The Lord of All Being!**

Rububiyat (Providence) leads to 'Rahmat' (Compassion and Mercy) and 'Rahmat' to 'Justice'. Rububiyat covers Lordship, Providence, and Nourishment. It denotes the precise relation between the Creator and the

created. Rububiyat covers four aspects of every object. (1) Takhliq (creation or to bring into existence from non-existence), (2) Taswiyah, (giving it a suitable form or mould), (3) Taqdir (the prescription of a role to be played by every object) and (4) Hidayat (guidance). These have been described in the following lines

"Glorify the name of thy Lord, The Most High,

Who created (everything) and giveth a form

appropriate to each,

And who hath assigned talents appropriate to each

and then giveth them guidance." (Q. 87:1-3)

It has been repeatedly stressed in the Qur'an that a serious purpose underlies the creation and that every object has been created with a specific purpose. In Qur'anic terminology, this has been described as "Takhliq bil Haq" (creation with a specific purpose) in contradiction to "Takhliq bil Batil" (creation without a purpose).

"We have not created the heavens and the earth and all

that there is between them in sheer sport.

We have not created them, except for a high purpose;

but most people realise it not." (Q. 44:38-39).



**Benevolence : Rahmat**

2. The Benevolent, the Merciful!

The terms 'Al-Rahman' and 'Al-Rahim' have been derived from the word 'Rahmat' meaning 'Mercy'. It comprehends love, compassion, benevolence and generosity. Scholars have noted a minute difference between the two terms 'Al-Rahman' and 'Al-Rahim', There is an excess of mercy in the word 'Rahman' and commonly it is used only for God. But the expression 'Rahim' is applied to God as well as to human beings. The Qur'an claims that Divine Rahmat encompasseth everything.

"He hath made the exercise of Mercy incumbent on

Himself. (Q.6: 12)

"But My Mercy embraceth all things."  
(Q.7: 156)

We are so obsessed with our comforts that we do not find time to give a thought to Divine Bounties which are spread all over in nature, and we fail to appreciate the kindness of God to us. Divine action is sometimes slow and sometimes rapid. But generally the evolutionary process is observable in every action. If we fail to recognise this process we are bound to suffer. Divine Benevolence provides opportunities for the introspection over the commissions and omissions, and hence the need of timely rectification of the mistakes or repentance, as God has taken upon

Himself to be kind to His creatures. He extends His forgiveness to all of them.

Mawlana considers that Divine Benevolence is an argument for the revelation for the life hereafter and for the victory of 'Haqq' (Truth) over 'Batil' (Evil).

Mercy is the softest bond between the Creator and the created. It includes love and this love has to be reciprocated by man. According to the Qur'an the human love to God is best expressed in love to the fellow creatures.

"O ye who believe ! Should any of you turn away from

his faith, (they should not fancy they could hurt the

cause of God in any manner.) Nay! God will raise up

others, loved of God and loving Him." (Q. 5 : 54)

"And despite his love of it, gives of his wealth." (Q.2: 177)

"Who out of love for God, feed the indigent and the

orphan and the captive (saying to them),

"We feed you for the sake of God; we seek no

recompense nor any thanks from you." (Q. 76 : 8-9)

Rububiyat gives rise to compassion and mercy and their perfection is justice. Thus Compassion,

Mercy and Justice, become inseparable and are manifestations of Rububiyat.

### **Divine Justice : Adalat**

#### **3. Master on the Day of Recompense!**

The order of providence is an argument for the life hereafter. The creator of the universe who has created everything for a specific purpose will not throw away the best of His creation, viz . mankind, as a piece of no value or of little consequence.

“Deemed you then that We had created you in vain and

that you should not be brought back again to Us ?

So let God be exalted, the True King, there is no god

but He! Lord of the Gracely Throne!

Q.23: 115-6)

Rububiyat or Providence demands that man who is the highest specimen of creation should not degrade himself in estimation. His life and existence should not end with his death, and that he will have another life to lead. This life of his is a preparation for the next. He will reap in it what he has sown in this world.

The life after death is a part of the stupendous scheme of the creation of the Universe. Man the most superior living being has to pass through various stages of the perfection until he reaches

the highest stage of purification.

“From state to state (from one lower to one higher) shall ye move forward.” (Q.84:19)

### **Concept of God: Tawhid**

4. Thee only do we serve, and Thee only do we ask for help.

Providence, mercy and justice demand that God should arrange for the guidance of mankind. Consequently there is no part of the land and no section of the people amongst whom a Prophet has not been raised. As God is one, humankind is one community. The basic religion should also be one. Great stress has been laid on these three unities :-

1. Unity of God.
2. Unity of Religion.
- and 3. Unity of Mankind.

The idea of more than one god or multiplicity of gods is repugnant to the very idea of the great system and organisation which is to be found in the Universe. This is the basic idea of the chapter. Coming to the next verse of the chapter, Mawlana has pointed out that God is Merciful and He can be invoked by all the good names.

Mawlana has also substantiated by citing references from various religions texts and from the books of recognised authorities that all the religions of the world insist on belief in one God. The authorities quoted by him

are recognised scholars of Vedas, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and experts on ancient and primitive tribes, and leading philosophers and scientists.

The problem of divine attributes has always remained a burning controversy among dilecticians from time immemorial. The Hindu philosophers believed that God has no attributes the result was that they cannot have even a vague idea of God in their mind. Among the Muslims also there are several schools; for instance Jahmia believe that God has no attributes; the Mu'tazilla favoured the Jahmia viewpoint but did not admit it in clear terms; the Ash'ari and Matrudi are of the opinion that God has attributes but those attributes are much different from their counterparts of human attributes. It is not possible for a created object to have any idea of the attributes of Creator because He cannot be visualised by the eye of a mortal. Mawlana subscribes to Ash 'ari and Matrudi's views and adopts a via media, known as Tafviz, to get out of this dilemma. He suggests that we should suspend our judgement regarding this proposition. Mawlana admits that there are several passages in the Holy Quran which lend support to panthiestic theory, but there is nothing on record to establish that the close companions of the Prophet upheld this view.

Unity of God leads to other two unities, Unity of Religion and Unity of

Mankind. He upholds that the basic principles of all the religions as originally given to mankind are one and the same.

**Divine Guidance : Hidayat -**

5 Direct us to the Straight Path –

6 The path of those to whom Thou hast been gracious –

7 Not of those who have incurred Thy displeasure, nor of those who have gone astray. (Q. 1:6-7)

Just as Rububiyat demands for man a life after death so also it necessitates Revelation which is the highest form of guidance.

Hidayat (guidance) is of four types :-

- 1 Instinct
- 2 Senses
- 3 Reason
- 4 Revelation

They are according to Mawlana in an ascending order. The superior type rectifies the errors of the lower type. All living beings are endowed with first two types of guidance, instinct and senses. Humankind alone is endowed with reason, but revelation which is of the highest form is made available only to those selected by God for the guidance of humanity.

The animate and inanimate objects are given direction or guidance. In the inanimate objects Hidayat (guidance) may be imperceptable, but in animate objects we find that all

animals have been provided with instinct to acquire their nourishment and to fulfil their prescribed role. Even the young kids of an animal are provided with an inner sense (instinct) which helps them to discover the whereabouts of their nourishment. The ant discovers with the help of power of smell the presence of its food, at a considerable distance. Birds are endowed with the sense to build their nests skilfully, according to their requirements, making it difficult to be disturbed. Men for guidance, have been given reason and intuition which is an inner power, and among them a selected few experience illumination. Revelation is made to the Apostles for reminding mankind of their role in life and for their guidance. Thus

revelation through the messengers is a great boon to mankind and is one of the important manifestations of Rububiyat.

Man is the only living being who has been endowed with extensive power of reasoning, so much so, that he can probe deep into the mysteries of nature. He is so much accustomed to reason that sometimes he forgets that he too has been endowed with instinct and intuition.

A deep study of the Universe discloses its infinite mysteries. We observe that it has been most ably and perfectly planned. The Master Planner who is the Sustainer and Nourisher of everything in the universe has devised and executed it. ■

### **Religion as Guardian of Life**

**- S.Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi**

Time is a proportionate and balanced mixture of stability and change, stagnation and movement. If it loses either of these characteristics, it will lose its relevance. Islam as a religion accepts this fact and is ready to make necessary accommodations, but it holds the position that as religion it has to guide life, not simply follow it. Religion, as Islam pleads, does not have to passively approve all changes. It is not lifeless like the needle of a barometer which moves up or down mechanically to measure the pressure of the atmosphere, or a weather-cock fixed on the top of a building which moves to show the direction of the wind. The function of religion is not simply to acknowledge and show the changes which are occurring at a time. Its obligation is to check whether a change is healthy or unhealthy, constructive or destructive. It has to evaluate the effect of a change on mankind at large and on its promoters in particular. It judges all pros and cons of a change before it approves it. It, therefore, will discourage a change if it is destructive. It may even oppose the latter kind.

At this point we can see a clear difference between religion and morality. Religion feels obliged to oppose wrong inclinations, whereas morality simply identifies them. ■

## Human Values in World Religions\*

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

### Introduction

Today most of us have sunk into sins, vices, crimes, corruptions and anti-social activities. Humanity has touched its lowest ebb. The sanctity it carries has vanished. Existing laws have failed to infuse fear in nefarious elements. Law enforcing agencies have become ineffective. It is unfortunate that the whole world is in a state of turmoil. Materialism has over shadowed the finer aspects of life. Corruption of all kind has now become a way of life.

A noted scholar has rightly said: "As an outcome of the materialistic concept of life mankind today faces crisis, which perhaps has no parallel in history. This crisis, pervading all the spheres of human life, has taken the form of universal revolt against religion. A psychological analysis of this situation reveals that it is the end-product of a basic feeling of insecurity. The world today stands at the edge of destruction. The threat of atomic war hangs over our heads. This humanity, if it wants to survive, has no option but to break away from the concept of materialism and humbly look up to the Diving guidance for peace and prosperity in the world. Choice between destruction and survival must be made some day sooner the later."

It is heartening to note that today for want of human values and avidity of

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wealth we see carnage, pogrom, mayhem and genocide all over the world including Syria, Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan and Myanmar.

It is religion which instills into us fear of God and moral strength. It lays down for us the lines on which we have to conduct ourselves. Besides it teaches us human values and sublime norms. It also leads us towards the path of salvation, progress and prosperity. Human values are more characteristic of mankind. If we don't have them, we are not real human. It is, therefore, essential for every human being to develop the quality of considerateness, ethical values, kindness and compassion. Without these qualities we are only human animals, nara pasu, not more than that.

The sphere of human values is not only confined to human beings but it extends to all the things of the world created for the benefit of mankind. The rights of parents, the rights of children, the rights of husband and wife, the rights of relatives, the rights of neighbours, the rights of orphans, benevolent treatment with the widows, the rights of the poor, the rights of patients, the rights of slaves and servants, the rights of guests, the rights of a Muslim upon a Muslim, human relationship, the rights of animals and the like are under the human values.

In his book "True Knowledge" Dr.S. Radhakrishnan says: "It is a small dialogue in an Upanishad that a question is put: what constitutes the essence of the good

life? The teacher replies: "Didn't you hear the answer"? There was a thunderclap: da da da. Immediately the teacher explained that these were the essence of good life. - dama, dana, daya. They constitute the essentials of the good life. You must have dama or self control, restrain, which is the mark of human being".

Every religion lays great stress on education. For the basic aim of education is to understand the relation of man with Allah. In the pre-Islamic era scant attention was paid towards knowledge. It was Prophet Muhammad (SAW)) who used knowledge as an essential tool for understanding realities of life. The first Revelation to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was "Iqra Bismе Rabbi kallazi Khalaq "(Read in the name of thy Lord). Needless to say that the word Qur'an itself means recitation, lecture and discourse." So far as sayings of the Prophet Muhammad are concerned every volume of "Hadith" has a chapter called "The Book Knowledge", a treasure of learning and education. According to an estimate the word of "knowledge" has been used seven hundred fifty (750) times in the Holy Quran.

It should be noted the conversation of the Prophet Muhammad(SAW) with Hazrat Ali, the fourth Caliph of Islam. Ali asked the Prophet one day about the principles governing his general behavior, and he replied: "Knowledge is my capital, reason is the basis of my religion, love is my foundation, desire is my mount for riding, remembrance of God is my comrade, anxiety is my companion, science is my

arm, patience is my mantle, contentment is my booty, modesty is my pride, renunciation of pleasure is my profession, certitude is my food, truth is my intercessor, obedience is my sufficiency, struggle is my habitude and the delight of my heart is in the service of worship."

Jawaharlal Nehru says: "Religions have helped greatly in the development of humanity. They have laid down values and standards and have pointed out principles for the guidance of human life."(The Discovery of India, P.511)

He further says: "No man can live without religion," Gandhiji has written somewhere. "There are some who in the egotism of their reason declare that they have nothing to do with religion. But that is like a man saying that he breathes, but that he has no nose." Again he says: "My devotion to truth has drawn me into the field of politics; and I can say without the slightest hesitation, and yet in all humanity, that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means."(An Autobiography, p.379-380)

It should be noted that the essence of all religions is humanity which revolves around righteousness, action, creation, sustenance, happiness and ultimate self realization as to who am I and who is He. Human is called a social animal. But it forgets its purpose in life by its overcoming greed and other ills. Animals are more grateful than man. All of you know the story of "Alexandra' the slave and lion'. On being treated of his wound, lion though hungry of days has not eaten Alexandra. Religion everywhere serves the



purpose of supporting the moral & social principles which have made men civilized. (Enlightenment through Humanity and Spirituality, p.57)

Noted Islamic scholar Syed Sulaiman Nadwi says: "All human beings are brothers and sisters in humanity and the same obligations of kindness, fairness and consideration are due to them. Islam insists on fairness and good treatment to all human beings and prohibits Muslims from behaving with cruelty or malice toward the people on the basis of religion or any other criteria. It emphasizes neighborliness and regard for the non-Muslims following the injunctions of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) irrespective of their faith. (Sirat-un-Nabi-Vol-5, P, 272)

It is related by Anas that the Apostle of Allah said, "None of you can be a faithful believer until he desires for his brother what he desires for himself". (Bukhari and Muslim)

It is narrated by Abu Shuraih Khuzai that the Apostle of Allah once said: "By Allah, he is not a truthful believer! By Allah, he is not a truthful believer! By Allah, he is not a truthful believer". The Question was asked: "O Apostle of Allah, who is not a truthful believer? The Prophet replied, "Whose neighbor does not feel secure on his account." (Bukhari)

It is related by Abdullah bin Abbas that the Apostle of Allah said: "He is not a truthful believer who eats his fill and lets his neighbor go hungry." (Baihaqi) It is related by Abu Hurairah that the Apostle of Allah said: "Save yourselves from two things, which invite the curse of Allah.

What are those things? Enquired the companions. The Prophet replied: "One is that anyone defecated on the road (or any other path or tract used by people), and the other that he did so at a shady place". (Muslim) It is related by Anas that the Apostle of Allah said: "charity cools down the fire of Allah's wrath and wards off an evil death." (Trimidhi)

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah upon him) said: "Paradise lies beneath the feet of mother."

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah upon him) said: "The pleasure of Lord is the pleasure of the father and the displeasure of Lord is in the displeasure of the father."

Abu Huraira reported: Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "let him be humbled. Let him be humbled. It was said: Allah's Messenger who is he? He said: He who finds his parents in old age, either one or both of them, but he does not enter Paradise."

Once a person came to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said: "O Messenger of Allah, how many times should I forgive the slaves? He (The Prophet) remained silent. He again asked and the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not respond. He repeated the question for the third time. Thereupon he said: Seventy times daily."

Asma's mother, a polytheist, came to her to ask something from her daughter, but she was reluctant to express her desire out of fear that it might be rejected,

She was, therefore, in the grip of two different feelings of hope and fear, The Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) asked Asma to treat her mother even if she was a polytheist with kindness for as a mother she deserved her respect and benevolent treatment.

Prophet. Muhammad (PBUH) said: "Help your brother whether he is oppressed or oppressor. His companions asked, how could we help if he is oppressor? The Prophet replied: "Stop him from oppression".

It goes without saying that the aim of religion is the development of man. The man is visible, the man is also invisible. The body has a constitution. The soul too has a constitution. The development of each must be on the lines of its own constitution.

The two constitutions are radically different. For, body is extensive, free from the limitations of both. Body is finite, the soul is infinite. Body is only a glimpse of the man. The soul is the real man, the eternal, the mighty, whose growth knows no barriers, whose hostilities are vaster than the universe.

Yet, the two constitutions are not divergent, or they would not permit co-existence for any span of time. The development of the one can never come in conflict with the other. The nourishment of the one never presupposes the starvation of the other. Man has laboured under a hallucination, and has imagined a clash between the body and the soul. He only confounded the acquired with the natural, the foreign with the native.

Religion explains the constitution of the soul- the real man, and aims at his development. The development is apparently two -sided- the development of the individual and the evolution of the race. The former assists the latter, the latter hastens the former. Both are the means, both are the ends .. (Wisdom of Prophet Muhammad, P.118)

Accordingly the need of the hour is that we should amend our loose morality and life style and shun such acts that tend to create divergence amongst people, The Holy Prophet said: "A man with bad manners and a bad moral conduct shall not enter paradise," 'No sin is more detestable to Allah than bad manner,' Once a companion asked the Prophet, what is there that takes a Muslim to Paradise? Prophet replied, "Fear of Allah and good manners."

The Holy Prophet said: "Whoever amongst you sees an evil he should try to change it by his hands ( i.e. using force) and if he cannot do that he should use his tongue (to condemn it). And if he has not that much courage at least he should realize in his heart that it is bad and this is the lowest stage of Iman". (Muslim)

### **Religion Universal to Man**

Religion has close contact with life; and it is said that religion is life itself. Religion is the chief differentiating characteristic of man. In the history of mankind there never has been a tribe of men without some form of religion. Even the Bushmen of Central Australia and the Indians of Patagonia, who represent the lowest form existent human life, cherish some belief in the spirit world and engage



in some kind of worship. In the oldest monuments of civilized man, as shown in the pyramids of Egypt and the early Vedic scriptures of India, religious convictions, aspirations, and practices are in evidence.

Religion has been one of the most powerful factors in human history. Other aspects of human life have indeed been important, yet the pre-eminently noble characteristic of man throughout his entire history had been his religion. He is convinced that he stands in certain superhuman relations, and is satisfied that he had received needed superhuman help. The distinguishing function of religion, in contrast with that of philosophy or ethics, or any of the idealizing or cultural nativities, is to give to a human being the supreme satisfaction of his life through vital relationship with what he recognizes as the superhuman Power, or power, in the world. (The World's Living Religions p ,1-2).

Needless to add that all religions of the world teach us lesson of love, peace, and amity.

Jawaharlal Nehru says: "Even so, there is something else which we consider is of greater importance. That is peace. Without peace all our dreams vanish and are reduced to ashes." (India's Foreign Policy, P, 218)

### **Present Scenario**

Religion has evolved and changed throughout the centuries and across the world. It would be impossible to know exactly how many religions have ever existed, or for that matter, the number of religions that exist in the present. Several

religions have been born out of other religions and have grown to claim their own identity. Besides, several sects function even within a particular religion; like Islam consists of both Shia Muslims as well as Sunni Muslims, the Christians are divided into Catholics and Protestants, etc. At present, Christianity has the highest number of adherents placed at 33.39% of the world population, Islam has 22.74% of the population, Hindus consist of 13.8%, Buddhists amount to 6.77% while the Sikhs and the Jews amount for far lesser than even 0.5% of the population. Further, 9.66% of the population is non-religious and about 2% of the population are declared atheists. (Source: Internet)

### **Human Values are Main Phenomena of Mankind**

Human values are social and ethical norms common to all cultures and societies as well as religions. They represent a melding of social progress, justice and spiritual growth. The timeless values are:

- a deep caring for all life
- a responsible attitude toward the planet
- nonviolence
- compassion and love
- friendliness and compassion
- generosity and sharing
- integrity, honesty and sincerity
- moderation in' one's activity
- service
- commitment and responsibility
- peace, contentment, enthusiasm

Much of the misery that has come into the world in the name of religion can

be avoided by reintroducing these shared values. And it is not necessary to use guilt and fear to promote these values. You will find in the history of almost all the religious systems in the world that guilt and fear were used to control people, but such discipline is not needed today. At this time we need only to cultivate love and understanding. (. One God, One Truth. One World)

Through the Quran Allah exhorts His followers to abide by justice; be benevolent; show compassion to others. Similar is the stance of the Bible, the Old Testament, the New Testament, and most other religious documents of importance. Similar views about unity and peace have been presented throughout versions of the Bible including Peters, John, Matthew, etc. (Source: Internet).

As human beings great responsibility lies on us. If a person does not share other's sufferings and woes, he lacks human values. In this context Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (RAH)'s thought-provoking words are worth quoting. He says: "If man loses the ability of sharing other's suffering, he will become bankrupt. Even if a nation is blessed with the wealth of America, administration of Russia and petrol wells of Saudi Arabia, even if rivers of gold and silver flow in it, and even if wealth showers over its land like rain, it will still be truly pauper if its stream of love is dried. He further says: "The heart which does not feel pain of others is not a human heart; it is the heart of lion. The eye which does not become wet is not a human eye; it is the eye of a daffodil. The forehead which does not become wet with the perspiration of penitence is not a human

forehead; it is a piece of rock. The hand which does not move forward to serve humanity is virtually paralyzed and lifeless. The claw of a lion is better than that hand of a person which cuts the throat of another human being. "(Islam An Introduction, p.153).

### **The Dignity of Humanity**

Allah is the Lord the Heavens and of the earth and of all that between them. "To Allah belongs all that is in the Heavens and earth: to Allah do all matters return." But out of all creatures mankind has been endowed with highest rank, status and dignity. He Himself says: "We have honoured the sons of Adam, provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favours, above a great part of Our creation. (S.17, A 170)

We may easily comprehend the position of mankind through the following verse of the Holy Qur'an. "And when thy Lord said unto the angle! Lo! I am about to place a vice- regent in the earth, they said: "with Thou place therein the earth one who will do harm and will shed blood. We hymn Thy praise and sanctify Thee. He said: Surely I know that which ye know not". (S.2 A, 30)

The above mentioned two verses of the Holy Qur'an indicate that God bestowed upon human beings the highest position as compared to other creatures of Him.

The Prophet said: "O mankind, your God is one and you have but one father. You are all progeny of Adam and

Adam was made of clay. Lo! The noblest among you, in the sight of God, is the best in conduct. No Arab has any preference over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab over an Arab save by his piety." The Prophet further said: "The entire creation constitutes the family of God and he is dearest to Him who is the best in his dealing with God's family."

The dignity of mankind has been emphasized by Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in a hadith which runs: "Allah will ask on the Day of Judgment: "O Children of Adam, I fell ill but you did not come to see me? Man will say in reply, 'Allah! Thou art the Lord of the worlds! How could have I attended Thee? God will then say: did you not know one of my servants had fallen ill, but you did not come to attend him. Did you not know that if you had attended him, you would have found Me by his side?

"O Children of Adam,<sup>1</sup> asked for food from you, but you did not give it to me, God will ask. Man will answer, Allah! Thou art the Sustainer of the worlds how could have I fed Thee? God will then say, 'One of My servants asked you for food, but you refused it to him. Had you fed him, you would have found Me near him.

"O Children of Adam, I asked for water from you, but you refused It to Me, God will ask. Man will again say in reply, Allah! Thou art the Lord of the worlds, how could have I quenched Thy thirst? God will answer, one of My servants demanded water from you but you refused. Had you given him water would have found Me near him."

The Holy Qur'an which lays down

the rules for the peace, prosperity and progress of all peoples irrespective of colour, creed or country. The Holy Qur'an says: "O ye who believe! Let not some men among you laugh at others; it may be that the (latter) are better than the (former): not let some women laugh at others; it may be that the latter are better than the (former) not defame nor be sarcastic to each other, nor call each other by (offensive) wickedness, (to be used of one) after those who do not desist are (indeed) doing wrong.(5:49, A 11).

It again says: "O ye who believe! Avoid suspicion as much (as possible): for suspicion in some cases is a sin and spy not on each 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", (5 49, A. 12). It further says: "O mankind! We have created you from a single pair of male and female, constituted into diverse peoples and nations that you know and co-operate with one another. The best among you in the sight of God is the most pious, the most virtuous". (5.49. A.13)

God further lays great stress on human dignity by declaring that "If anyone slew a person unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land it would be as if he slew the entire nation; and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the entire nation," (5. 5. A 32)

### **Love is a dynamic force of all religions**

Infact, love is a dynamic force of any religion. "Love,not hate' is the essence of Gandhi's teaching. For Maulana

Jalaluddin Rumi, a force - a secret energy lies beneath the spiritual and material world, informing the invisible, progressive change in the universe (humanity included). This force is love, and it originates in God and moves towards God. According to Rumi, love is the positive energy that is responsible for interaction between particles, thus connecting everything with everything else in the universe. So everything in the universe is interdependent.

Furthermore, says Rumi, since love arouses every sense, it increases the power of intuition and leads to insight: love is superior to intellect in human life. In daily social life, for example, love has an important practical function. It solves disputes, eliminates selfishness, and egotism and draws aside all veils from the mind. Thus, not only is love basic and necessary for a religious and ethical life but also crucial for the sustainability of the cosmic order. In a nutshell, Rumi presents a deep and comprehensive understanding of the interdependence and interrelatedness of humanity and the natural world. In so doing, he affirms the reality of the world and dignity of all life, particularly of human life, which has become self-conscious and conscious of its divine origin and goal.

Humanity is the central figure in God's creation and therefore the vicegerent of God on earth, in the sense that it is up to human beings to take care of the whole system. The whole creation is a gift from God and a sign of His creative power. Since God creates and sustains all eco-systems, human beings must interact with the natural world wisely and

use its natural resources with care, nurturing a relationship with it founded on love and compassion, which is the essence of all reality. (Interreligious Insight, p, 64-65 V 4 N2 April 2006)

### **Conclusion**

It is imperative that we must keep away from inhuman and terroristic acts. No religion allows such sort of atrocities and offences. If anyone commits such kind of heinous crimes and wrong doings, he is not true follower of his faith. He is reprobate, malevolent and not loyal to his religion.

The need of the hour is that we should abide by the teachings of our respective religion in letter and spirit. Moreover, we must develop humanitarian attitude and come forward to render welfare and charitable services for the poor and down-trodden sections of the society irrespective of caste, creed, colour and region.

It was a Muslim mystic who said, "The lamps are different, but the Light is the same" some of the lamps have become obscure and give little light: other shine with varying radiance. But there is One True Light "which lighteth every man." (Asian Religions, P,136) To sum up the argument it will be apt to quote the Prophet "God shows His mercy on those who show mercy to others." Maulana Hali has beautifully and ably composed the above tradition of the Prophet in this couplet.

"Karo Mehrabani tum Ahle Zami par  
Khuda mehraban hoga Arshe-Barin par"  
(Be kind to man on earth God will be kind to you on the Empyrean) ■

## Recent Syrian Disaster

- Firasha Shaikh

Most of us have had our social media timelines filled with news report after news report, heart-breaking photos and videos coming from the Ghouta region of Syria where airstrikes killed nearly 628 civilians of which a large number were children.

What is the reason for the ongoing conflict in Syria and is there any solution in sight?

How and why did it all begin?

The start of the Syrian conflict, or 'civil war' as it is termed in the press, can be traced back to the pro-democracy protests that rocked Syria in 2011 during the height of the Arab Spring and the subsequent brutal crackdown on them by the Assad regime. However, there are several factors which contributed to the atmosphere of the uprising. In 1982, Hafez Al-Assad, then President of Syria (father of current President Bashar Al Assad), ordered a military crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood in Hama, killing tens of thousands of people and flattening much of the city. Severe drought plagued Syria from 2007-10, causing as many as 1.5 million people to migrate from the countryside into cities, exacerbating poverty and social unrest.

Bashar Al Assad came to power in 2000 and in the years that followed

various cultural and political forums of discussion began to shut down due to government pressure. In March 2011, peaceful protests erupted in Syria, after 15 boys were detained and tortured for writing graffiti in support of the Arab Spring. One of the boys, a 13-year-old, was killed after having been brutally tortured. The Syrian government, led by Assad, responded to the protests by killing hundreds of demonstrators and imprisoning many more. Although the 2011 protests were non-sectarian, the armed conflict exposed deep sectarian divisions. In his public statements, Assad sought to portray the opposition as Sunni Islamic extremists in the mould of al-Qaeda and as participants in foreign conspiracies against Syria.

The regime also produced propaganda stoking minorities' fears that the predominately Sunni opposition would carry out violent reprisals against non-Sunni communities. Therefore it was a combination of these events, a history of lack of political freedoms, unwarranted suppression of ordinary citizens, stoking of sectarian fears, economic woes and the straw that broke the camel's back – the brutal crackdown on the protestors and inhumane treatment of those detained, that ignited public anger. In July 2011, defectors from the military announced

the formation of the Free Syrian Army, a rebel group aiming to overthrow the government, and Syria began to slide into civil war.

### **ROLE OF FOREIGN INTERVENTION**

Foreign backing and open intervention have played a large role in Syria's civil war. Russia entered the conflict in 2015 and has been the Assad government's main ally ever since. The governments of majority-Shia Iran and Iraq, and Lebanon-based Hezbollah, have supported al-Assad, while Sunni-majority countries, including Turkey, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia supported anti-Assad rebels. Since 2016, Turkish troops have launched several operations against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as ISIS) near its borders, as well as against Kurdish groups armed by the United States. The US has armed anti-Assad rebel groups and led an international coalition bombing ISIL targets since 2014. The US has repeatedly stated its opposition to the Assad government backed by Russia but has not involved itself as deeply. At the UN Security Council, Russia and China have repeatedly vetoed Western-backed resolutions on Syria.

Peace negotiations have been ongoing between the Syrian government and the opposition in order to achieve a military ceasefire and political transition in Syria, but the main

sticking point has been the fate of al-Assad, but they have consistently been ineffective. In the latest round of talks at the UNSC last week, a 30-day ceasefire has been agreed upon unanimously after several delays. Fighting in Syria continues on two main fronts, Eastern Ghouta, where recently, Syrian government forces backed by Russian warplanes escalated bombing resulting in hundreds of civilian deaths, and Afrin, where Turkey and the Free Syrian Army (FSA) began in January 2018 a military operation against the YPG in north-western Syria. The fight has been joined by pro-government forces.

### **HUMANITARIAN COST OF SYRIA'S CIVIL WAR**

Since the beginning of the conflict, more than 465,000 Syrians have been killed in the fighting and over a million injured. Now having gone on longer than World War II, the war in Syria is causing profound effects beyond the country's borders, with many Syrians having left their homes to seek safety elsewhere in Syria or beyond. Over 12 million – half the country's pre-war population – have been displaced from their homes, which is, in other words, the Syrian refugee crisis.

Targeting civilians, indiscriminate attacks, use of incendiary weapons, cluster munitions, and chemical weapons, unlawful restrictions on humanitarian assistance, arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, torture, and deaths in custody are some



of the human rights violations that have taken place in Syria.

### **COULD ALL OF THIS HAVE BEEN AVOIDED?**

If the Assad-led government, (which claimed to be “very closely linked to the beliefs of the people,” (Assad in an interview), was truly interested in the welfare and betterment of their people, they should have solved the political and economic problems which were brought up by the people in 2011. Rather than holding any kind of negotiations or talks with the people, the Syrian government responded to their citizens’ plight with unjustified violence and suppression. The various terrorist groups, including Daesh, found a golden opportunity for fulfilling their interests and taking advantage of the public resentment, joined the conflict, essentially escalating the vicious cycle of violence.

As Guardian columnist Natalie Nougayrede pointed out, the story of Syria is a “moral defeat for Europeans”. She writes, “Historians may one day tell us to what degree the west wasted a chance to force Bashar al-Assad to the negotiating table, had sufficient and timely pressure been brought to bear on his forces, in particular through targeted strikes. That’s how Slobodan Milošević was forced to sign the 1995 Dayton agreement, which put an end to mass atrocities in Bosnia. In the summer of 2013, a window of opportunity was arguably lost as a result of American

hesitation. If archives are ever opened up, we may learn that it was the US failure to uphold red lines over chemical weapons use in Syria that emboldened Russia’s Vladimir Putin to launch his military intervention in support of a dictator whose army had been massacring civilians since 2011.”

USA’s hypocrisy also stands exposed. USA felt no qualms at all in carrying out a military invasion of Iraq in 2003 supposedly to “reinstate democracy for the Iranian people”. One wonders, what was stopping them from offering to be a negotiator during the start of the conflict? Perhaps Syria would not be suffering the way it is, if only, all the negotiations and talks had happened then, rather than later when terrorist organisations joined the game for their own interests and the scale of violence became too large to tackle.

Currently, on the international stage, there are mainly two proposed solutions for the Syrian conflict, namely the American one and the Russian one. Unfortunately, both these visions do not recognise the ground realities of Syria. What is needed for moving forward are measures – not grand plans – that seek strategic, targeted relief for civilian populations, while reducing armed hostilities and violence in the country. (Samer Abboud)

### **LESSONS FROM SYRIA**

First, the notion that we are completely helpless is not true. In a

democratic society, the government is formed by us, the common people, and therefore our foreign policies indirectly shaped by us. If we unite in large numbers and thus make a strong case for helping the cause of Syrian people, definitely we would, at least to some extent, effect tangible changes. And if this phenomenon was observed by every country, in Europe, in the USA and especially the GCC countries who, rather than fulfilling the role of “Ummat-e Wast”, have become puppets of USA and Israel, then we would surely observe the start of change.

Every single person, not just an Indian, who is pained by the humanitarian disaster in Syria, must ask themselves... “Am I really so helpless? Are we as a democratic nation, really so weak? From now, the people to whom we give our valuable votes, the people who wish to hold the reins of power, now we will demand that they take a serious stance on issues such as Syria, that they refuse to be mute spectators to this carnage. And we will hold them accountable.”

An-Nu'man ibn Basheer reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be to him, said, “The parable of the believers in their affection, mercy, and compassion for each other is that of a body. When any limb aches, the whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever.” (Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim)

Let us not give the excuse that, unfortunately our government is not exactly at the forefront of protecting human rights especially those of minorities. This is the ugly reality, yes, but for how much longer?

Just as we unite for Syria, Palestine, Muslim Personal Law, let us also unite for addressing both our internal problems as a community as well as strive to be a role model, helping hand and guide for others. In sha Allah, the least that will happen is that we will prevent another Syria. ■

*(Courtesy: Radiance)*

### **Towards Fine Arts**

Another feature of the Islamic culture is that it maintains a moderate, realistic, and careful attitude towards fine arts. It is fully appreciative of beauty, delicacy, tenderness and fineness, but it does reject some branches currently associated with fine arts in the West, such as dancing, painting of living beings, and carving of statues. In other areas, such as singing, it holds a moderate and careful position and allows them under necessary restrictions. In any case, excessive involvement in fine arts is against the purposeful lifestyle of a Muslim as it would tend to deprive him of piety, concern for the hereafter, and morality—qualities which he is expected to nourish in himself. ■



## **Zakat as Welfare System**

**- Syed Suhail Yaqoob**

Islam was born in the sandy deserts of Arabia with profound implications for the world. Its impact is still felt around the globe due to its contact with other religions and communities.

Today, however, Islam is almost associated with terrorism which is nothing but the “manufactured perception” by media and some interested groups to control the resources of the Muslim world. The tag of terrorism to any Islamic country gives them an excuse to invade the country and destroy its history, culture and society. Some big multinational companies are involved in this process as well, as for the world it is necessary to control the markets and provide a readymade supply of raw materials.

By any standards, Islam is nothing but peace and it has come to world to establish a well-balanced and fair system. It just takes a rational man, without prejudices, to understand the implications of this system. Even European intellectuals have realized this fact. It is disastrous for the honour of the Muslims that they have to resort to writing off European intellectuals to justify good in Islam rather than simply relying on its tenets and principles.

This has been even though there is a sense of ‘Political Islam’ emerging, which has totally overshadowed the other

sub-systems that are present in Islam – sub-systems which could relieve humanity from the burden of poverty, misery and destitution. The social welfare system of Islam, which is unique in all its manifestations, has almost completely receded into the background due to the political situation. Islamic social welfare should be provided a chance to remove poverty and destitution throughout the world.

Modern governments are based on the concept of welfare system. These take care of the health, education and other basic necessities and needs. The specific type of welfare system will be in keeping with the types of governments in each region – whether these be the capitalist, communist or the dictatorship type. There is some difference between these. However, all these systems aim at the promotion of peace and prosperity of their respective countries.

Having said that, we need to also consider the serious question as to whether, or not, these policies have worked. Globally, there are still more than one billion people who live in extreme conditions. There is this starvation limit beyond which people do not possess enough food to eat. Much of the world’s poverty, of this type, is concentrated in Asia and Africa.

To be sure, millions of dollars are spent on the welfare systems around the world; billions more are spent by NGOs towards the same purpose, but there is still no solution to the looming crisis that has engulfed humanity. The reason being that today's welfare systems are based on political necessities and Machiavellian policies. The governments have billions to spend on weapons and wars but not to feed the starving mouths around the world.

It will take just fifteen percent of global spending on wars to feed the billions that die of starvation and to provide education to the illiterate. There will be more left to spend on scientific knowledge and for the progress of humanity.

Nevertheless, it seems crazy to believe that after spending so much, the welfare system of the world is unsustainable. It becomes even more unsustainable when there is depression and recession in the economy. The recession of the 1930s, the recession of 2008 and the Greek debt-crisis saw deep cuts in welfare expenditure around the world. It forced many millions to resort to violence on the streets.

However, the economy is to be seen in light of the 'whole' system. Governments in recession resort to tricky measures to cool flaring tempers by resorting to borrowing from banks and other entities. Very few realise that borrowing will cost them dearly in future. They will have to pay back the money and

with due interest rates. It is no secret that millions of people are under debt even in developed countries. It is exactly what happened in Greece.

Similarly, in times of recession, the rich demand cuts in income taxes and other obligations to keep the economy afloat which, in turn, again impacts the welfare system. During recession, banks do not lend to the poor and to those who lost their jobs due to income credibility problems. If it lends, it lends these at higher charges. It ensnares them within the trap of the banking system which creates money out of nothing. The recession is the best opportunity for the banks to keep governments in check and to control economic resources. And when these institutions turn against these poor folks, they have no mercy.

The Islamic system of Zakah is significantly different from other welfare systems. The first principle of Zakah is that it is exclusively meant for the poor. This principle takes away the interference from political parties tampering with the welfare system. Irrespective of whether the fund generated is less or more, it has to be spent on the poor, and only on the poor. Granted this, since poverty is a relative term, the poverty-line can always be adjusted to keep spending on the poor in a country; and when everyone is wealthy enough, the same money can be given to other nations to feed their poor.

Islam does not make a difference

between the poor residing in different countries. However, the welfare systems of today's modern governments do make for this distinction. Zakah can be stored during prosperous times to meet basic necessities when the economy is in recession and when it is expected that the poverty ratio will increase.

Another important fact about the *Zakah* system is that it is provided to the poor free of interest and governments do not have to resort to borrowing it from the people. In Islam, it is a religious obligation on the rich to provide a certain amount of their wealth to the poor. This way, there will be no inter-generational debt problems.

The present consumption by the poor does not lead to an increase in income taxes for the next generation. In fact, this is what all economies strive for. But, since there is a bias against Muslim institutions, these wise injunctions of Islam are not taken seriously.

One misconception about the *Zakah* system is that it will breed poverty in society, as people will choose to be poor, because, then the society will take care of them – or so they assume. So there is no incentive for hard work. However, human nature is against being at the bottom. There is a lot of evidence in economics that suggests that men, or women, if given enough space, will try to achieve a good life for them and their children.

*Zakah* has profound implication on the evils in society like theft, kidnapping etc., since Zakah will take care of the basic needs of the poor, and they are unlikely to indulge in social evils. It has a positive manifestation in society, since, with its implementation, social evils will come down rapidly. It strikes at the root of class war which Marx, the false prophet, proposed.

However, the *Zakah* system has to be seen as a sub-system of the Islamic economic system. Since the society will make resources available for the poor, the creation of better relations is a necessary – and, indeed, a natural – implication of Zakah. In fact, Zakah is a guarantee for peace and development, inasmuch as it enables growth, equality and distributive justice.

It is necessary that the prejudices against Islamic economic system must be removed. Its fundamentals will remove the defects of the present economic systems throughout the world. With international welfare systems all but breaking down and with poverty and inequality rising, it is high time for economists to give serious thought to Islam's *Zakah* system so that poverty, hunger and destitution may be removed throughout the world. ♦

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(Courtesy: YMD)

## Mundane And Supramundane Significance of Arabic

- S. Habibul Haq Nadwi

Why should Arabic and not any other language be the lingua franca of the Muslim world? Because Arabic is one of the living languages of the world, capable of giving shape and direction to the political, cultural, intellectual and religious urges of human being. Its rich vocabulary can keep pace with the march of industrial and scientific discoveries as well as with the abstract ideas related to the mysteries of the Unknown, the Ultimate Reality or Truth. Making Arabic as the lingua franca of the Muslim world in particular is a religious necessity. To recognise the excellence of Arabic one has to turn back to the Holy - Book and see how God Himself has described its excellences. The Qur'an fountain-head of God's eternal and universal law, the source of all streams of knowledge, wisdom, spiritual salvation and the message of grace and mercy feeding human hearts and minds, is revealed in Arabic. Arabic is chosen by God as capable of being the vehicle of sublime Truth and for revealing the mysteries of the Ultimate Reality. The Quran being the Foundation of Revelation is the Preserved Tablet (Leuh-i- mehfuz, LXXXV: 22). The richness, intelligibility, eloquence and comprehension of Arabic to encompass any phase of human life has been guaranteed by God Himself. If Arabic can express the mysteries of the unknown, it can express very well the known, sciences or humanities.

The eloquent pagans, hostile to the Quran failed to bring one short verse matching that of Quran when challenged by God to do so. Modern hostility against Arabic in the non-Arab world was initiated by those who wanted to keep Muslims away

from the Qur'an and the Sunna in order to achieve their own colonial designs and also to reduce the non-Arab Muslim world to linguistic colonialism. The adjective used by God for Arabic is Mubin, a thing which explains and make things clear. The Prophet loved Arabic for three reasons: firstly, it was his own mother tongue; secondly, it was the language of the Quran; and thirdly, it was the language of the inhabitants of Paradise. God expressly mentions the excellence of Arabic at eleven places in the Quran which are worth pondering in regard to the revival and promotion of Arabic in non-Arab Muslim countries in particular and in the world in general. The verses are as follows:

1. 'These are the symbols (or verses) of the perspicuous Book. We have sent it down as an Arabic Quran in order that ye may learn wisdom.' (XII: 1-2)
2. "Thus have We revealed it to be a judgment of authority in Arabic. Wert thou to follow their (vain) desires after the knowledge which hath reached thee, then wouldst thou find neither protector nor defender against God." (XII I: 37).
3. 'This is Arabic pure and clear.' (XVI: 103)
4. 'Thus have We sent down an Arabic Quran and explained therein in detail some of the warnings, in order that they may fear God or that it may cause their remembrance of Him.' (XX: 113).
5. "Verily this is revelation of the Lord of the Worlds: With it came down the Spirit of Faith and Truth to heart and mind that thou mayest admonish in the perspicuous Arabic tongue." (XXVI: 192-195).
6. "We have put forth for men in this Qur'an every kind of parable in order that they may

receive admonition. (It is) Quran in Arabic without any crookedness (therein) in order that they may guard against (evil)." (XXXIX: 27-28).

7. "A Book, where the verses are explained in detail. A Quran in Arabic for people who understand". (XLI: 3)

8. Had We sent this Quran in a Language other than Arabic, they would have said: "Why are not its verses explained in detail? What! (a Book) not in Arabic and (a Messenger) an Arab" Say: "It is a guide and a healing to those who believe". (XLI: 44)

9. Thus have We sent by inspiration to thee an Arabic Quran that thou mayest warn the mother of cities (Mecca) and all around her ... "(XLII: 7)

10. "By the Book, that makes things clear, We have made it a Quran in Arabic that ye may be able to understand (and learn wisdom), and verily, it is in the Mother of the Book, in Our Presence, high (in dignity), full of wisdom." (XLII I: 2-4)

11. "And this Book confirms it (Moses' Book) in the Arabic Tongue to admonish the unjust and as glad tidings to those who do right". (XLVI: 12)

From a purely religious point of view Arabic enjoys a unique position which no other language in the world does. Since the Quran is the Covenant between man and God for ever, the language of the Covenant is to be eternal. It is because of this that non-Arabs have always cultivated Arabic, for the Quran served as a part of their religious education. A Christian can offer prayers or can recite the Bible in Latin, in Greek or in any other language, but the Quran cannot be recited or enchanted in prayers in any language other than the language of the Quran be the enchanter an Arab, a Turk, an Iranian, an Indian, a Pakistani, an American, an African or a

European. Similarly Buddhism has no sacred language. Buddha himself being the incarnation (avatar) did not leave behind any sacred language although Sanskrit was used for the early Buddhist texts but later these were translated into Pali, Tamil and Tibetan. Chinese and Japanese can be good Buddhists without having any knowledge of Sanskrit. They can offer their prayers in their own languages, Chinese or Japanese. In Islam Muhammad is a Messenger of Allah and not an incarnation.

Veda can be recited in any language, although the Brahmins being orthodox would like to chant it in Sanskrit. The role of Arabic in the world is quite different. No Muslim, an illiterate or a literate in any part of the world, can chant the Quran in any language other than Arabic, the language of God as said above. He cannot ignore Arabic in his canonical prayers, litanies or invocations. Prayers ought to be in sacred Arabic even in sound and in reverberation, which move the believer and transport him to the highest altitude of spiritualism.

The Muslim world has now awakened from political slumber as well as linguistic colonialism, pulsating with an urge to revive its own traditions, unifying itself in spheres of political, social, economic, scientific, technological and industrial co-operation.

The spirit of Islamic Renaissance and the idea of Pan-Islamism, first revived by Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani (1838-1897), seem now to have been accomplished. The marked enthusiasm for learning of Arabic is quite significant and encouraging. The European Renaissance was stimulated by the study of Greek and Latin languages and literature. But it was initiated and aroused by Arabic and Islamic learning which served both as inspirational and



aspiration sources for the European Renaissance, through Middle- East and Spain. The influence of Ibn-Arabi' on Dante, the pioneer of the Italian Renaissance, a prelude to European Renaissance, is well known.

Could Arabic play a similar role today? If so, how and in what way? The first condition is that Arabic must be acknowledged both as a mundane and the supramundane language, and all linguistic methods must be used in order to let it spread throughout the non- Arab Muslim world. The teaching-concept of Arabic has to be changed. It should not remain mediaeval in character, treating Arabic only as the handmaid of theology and using it merely for the translation of text books, religious or non-religious. Arabic must be treated as a world language for it is capable of expressing any phase of human life and idea, physical or metaphysical.

Arabic without a radical change in the philosophy of teaching cannot be made a world language. The twin significance of Arabic, the mundane and the supremundane must be acknowledged. Arabic enjoys a Divine status. From the mundane point of view it is a language, fully mature, capable of capturing and communicating any mood in human life. From the supramundane point of view it has an essence of Divinity in it, capable of expressing the Divine mysteries of metaphysics. It is due to the spark of Divinity in Arabic that the Quran is preserved in millions of human hearts, yearning towards their Creator. No other argument more than this is needed to prove Arabic as the Divine language, the language of God.

God Himself has taken responsibilities of protecting Arabic and has already preserved it in the Lauh-i-Mehfuz

(Preserved Tablet).

From the Mundane point of view objective linguistic treatment is necessary. All latest techniques for learning of a language must be employed. Since the psychology of merely translation - treatment has rendered Arabic in the non-Arab Muslim world as inactive; our men, even after having fifty years of orientation in Arabic, are incapable even of speaking or writing a word in Arabic. Language-teaching philosophy cannot be attained through lifeless translations. Intelligence and reason are also inspired by the language because it is creative, imaginative and emergent rather than a self-contained, symbolic organisation. It has rich, abstract and philosophical dimensions, and encompasses knowledge of all orders of reality. The Qur'an provides food for appetitive souls. It is prototype of creation and in its nature remains the archetypal blueprint of the universe.

#### **Methods of Promotion**

1. The anti-Arabic or anti-Islamic spirit created by linguistic Colonialists and their faithful and loyal native rulers in order to keep Muslims away from the Quran and the Sunna is to be removed first. This is possible mainly through congresses, and seminars, which will reconstruct the impaired vision and restore confidence in the excellence of Arabic and its hegemony as a Divine language.

2. The independent linguistic status of Arabic be accepted, and the Arabic language be treated no more as a handmaid of theology. The Quran and the Hadith, while being the fountainheads of Islamic ideology, are at the same time the best models of Arabic literature. No scholar can achieve excellence and competence in Islamic studies without a thorough command over Arabic its linguistics and

phonetics. Mere translation of Arabic texts in native languages cannot enable a man to reach celebrity of the original.

3. Non-Arab Muslim countries should accept Arabic only as second to their national languages, providing legal and constitutional protection. This is in case they cannot make it a national language.

4. Non-Arab Muslim countries should in co-operation with Arab countries establish an Arabic University fully devoted to cover all possible dimensions of scholarship and research in the field of Arabic language and literature as well as in Islamics. Big research institutes and centres of excellences in this university may provide syllabi for the native educational institutions as well as for refuting the charges levelled against Islam and its traditions by Orientalist and missionary scholars.

5. Arabic should be made compulsory at primary, secondary and higher schools as well as at colleges; otherwise neither will the universities have a good number of students for Arabic nor will Arabic scholars be available.

6. Knowledge of Arabic should be made compulsory for all services involving Middle Eastern affairs, like diplomatic relations, trade and business, banking, exchange of visitors and delegation in order to feel at home in Arabic countries.

7. Competent and qualified students should be sent to Arab countries for training in language and literature on condition that they have to return and serve the cause of Arabic in their own countries. This will be more helpful than inviting scholars from Arab countries without any knowledge of indigenous languages. They are bound to have communication problems with native students.

8. Present Syllabi in Arabic are to be

rejected and replaced by new ones, breathing life, force, energy, freshness and beauty. Easy Arabic grammar should be prepared since its complications and rote methods of learning have already created alarming apathy to Arabic.

9. Contemporary Arabic should receive equal attention along with classical Arabic in order to read and understand the Arabic newspapers, TV, Radio, official language of the government in addition to legal, judicial, political, diplomatic terminologies as well as formal diplomatic speeches, treatises, constitutional reports, which are not available in the classical language.

10. The ever-increasing tendency to teach Islamics without the knowledge of Arabic in non-Arab Muslim world is alarming. It will keep students twice removed from the original sources although no knowledge and scholarship is accepted today as valid without having direct access to original sources. The original cannot be replaced by native translation. The result of such tendencies, therefore, is that students of Islamics in Muslim universities generally know neither Arabic nor Islam.

11. Masterpieces of Arabic should definitely be translated into indigenous languages in order to create greater interest in Arabic and introduce native students to original sources. Scholars working in this field should be encouraged and their works should be published.

12. Scientific methods of teaching languages, linguistics and phonetics should be employed in order to accelerate the speed of teaching Arabic to non-Arab students in shortest possible time. These are some of the ways, among many others, to be adopted in order to disseminate Arabic in the non-Arab Muslim world and make it a lingua franca of the Islamic world.■

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