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Malice a Serious Evil

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

The thing that the Prophet of Allah, blessings and peace be on him, has denounced most after Shirk (ascribing partners to Allah) is malice. It is related in a Tradition that in the Night of Deliverance in which Allah generously forgives the sinful, three kinds of people are not granted forgiveness: persons disobedient to their parents, habitual drunkards, and those who nourish ill-will and malice for other Muslims. The Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, has specially instructed Muslims to remain mindful of the rights of relationship on one another. It comes in another Hadith that the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, said that Allah had ordered him to do nine things, one of which was "that I establish relationship with him who severs relationship with me, forgive him who offends me, and give him who withholds from me." It is not really a matter of credit that one should treat those courteously with whom he has good relationship. Islam urges upon its adherents that they treat even those with courtesy and goodwill who hurt them. ■

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Wisdom of Qur'an

And be not like those who forgot Allah, and He caused them to forget their own selves.

(al-Hashr 59:19)

Man is by nature self-centred. His own interests preoccupy him. His love for others is prompted by selfish ends. Therefore, he loves those who love him. He is not drawn to those who hate him, even though he may be a paragon of virtue. Self-love activates man to undertake numerous pursuits. All his actions are centred on this. Man may forget everything but his self-interests are always close to heart. He may disregard even his wife, children, family members and relatives at the expense of ensuring his own welfare. This is often observed in an hour of crisis. It is an everyday occurrence, for it is rooted deep in human nature. One who contends against this observation is most likely to be refuted by everyone. For it is quite an event, to find someone practising self-abnegation while working for the welfare of others. The one who disregards his own interests for the sake of others inevitably becomes the centre of attention. At times, he may risk his own life to rescue others. Let us therefore discuss this phenomenon at some length.

The Qur'an proclaims that those forgetful of Allah are liable to forget their own selves. Once man banishes God from his life, his orientation is disturbed. He is wholly given over to worldliness. He is seen hankering after material objects, oblivious to higher truths. Material things become an end in themselves. Lost in this maze, he forgets his own self. This obviously results in a crisis, bringing an end to such a person's feelings and emotions. No longer does regret the loss incurred by him. Rather the malaise is on account of a shift in focus, as man replaces God with his own self. The more he turns away from God, the greater is the risk of self-destruction. ■

Pearls From the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

It is related by Anas that [one of the favourite] prayers of the Apostle of God was : "O God ! Keep me alive in the state of indigence, and raise from the world in the state of indigence, and let me be in the company of those that are indigent."

—Tirmidhi and Baihaqi

Commentary: We have just seen that when the Lord asked the Prophet if the valley of Mecca be filled with gold for him, the Prophet replied, "No, my Lord ! What I like is that I may eat my fill on one day and go without a meal on the other."

The Prophet had purposely chosen a life of poverty for himself which was also the inclination of his enlightened inner self. It is indisputable that no other pattern of living could be more suited to the lofty position he occupied and the noble task he had to perform. Should the Lord grant contentment and submission to anyone, it is, generally, preferable for him, from the viewpoint of Faith and Futurity, to lead an existence of want and indigence instead of plenty and prosperity.

It is related by Abu Hurairah that the Prophet [often] used to pray : "O God ! Bestow upon the dependants of Mohammad only as much of provision as is necessary to sustain life."

— Bukhari and Muslim

Commentary: In the literal sense, the word Aal [used in the above Tradition] means 'household' which includes servants and dependants, but in the present Tradition it, apparently, denotes only the dependants. Hence, we have, here, translated it as such.

Both Quwat and Kafaf, occurring in the original Arabic text, signify that the provision should be only as much as was necessary to keep the business of living going. It should neither be so meagre as to make it difficult for the bondsman to attend to his duties due to hunger or mental distress or compel him to extend a begging hand before others nor so abundant that he may hoard and preserve it for future need. ■

Editor's Note 

Ignorance

Recently two very alarming incidences have got currency in the Media. Buqal Nawab an MLC of BJP party visited Hanuman Mandir, paid obedience to the idols offered Pooja. He declared that Hanumanji was a Muslim because pronunciation of his name synchronise with Rahman, Usman and other Muslim names. Another case from Rajasthan has come in the news that Sualeh Mohammed, a minister of the Congress government called at a Mandir and bowed before the idols and performed Puja. He also said that he has been visiting the Mandir regularly and seeking the blessings of the idols kept therein.

Persons with Muslim names and getting recognition in government and public as the representative of Muslim community and publicly performing Puja and bowing before the idol is not comprehensible. Either such leaders renounce Islam publicly and sever their relations with Community or observe true Islamic diktats.

Prophet Muhammad (PBH) was sent by the God to make us believe that there is no God except Him. The first act of the prophet

was to destroy all the idols kept in the 'kaba', a place of worship. Throughout his prophet-hood he preached the Unity of God. He proclaimed that the first lesson of entering Islam is firm belief in 'Tauhid' (unity of God). He laid down five pillars of Islam 1. Tauhid; 2. Salat (prayer); 3 Zakat (helping the poor); 4. Fasting; 5. Hajj (visit to Kaba if finances allow). Any breach of these conditions earn the displeasure of God.

The main foundation of Islam lies in 'Tauhid'. So if anyone goes before an idol or accept the faith of any other religion he is out of Islam. Morally he should not claim himself Muslim or take benefits of having Islamic name.

Our is a secular state and we are free to observe the obligations of our faith. Perhaps ignorance and lust of power make one go astray. Now it is the time that we may spread 'Dawa' (invitation) to people to strictly adhere to Islamic faith. ■

S.A.

We solicit articles for publication in The Fragrance of East. Suitable remuneration will be paid to writers. We prefer receipt of articles on:
e-mail: shariq_alavi@yahoo.com
along with a hard copy, duly signed, by post.

The Peace Treaty of Hudaibiyyah

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

The Messenger of Allah's dream

The Messenger of Allah dreamt that he entered Makkah and did tawaf around the Ka'bah. His Companions in Madinah were delighted when he told them about it. They all revered Makkah and the Ka'bah and they yearned to do tawaf there.

The Muhajirun had even greater affection for Makkah. They had been born there and had grown up in the city. They loved it deeply but had been driven away from it. When the Messenger of Allah told them of his dream, they started to prepare for the journey to Makkah. Hardly anyone wanted to stay behind.

Makkah visited at last

The Messenger of Allah left Madinah for al-Hudaibiyyah in Dhu'l-Qa'dah, 6 A.H. He intended to perform 'umrah in peace. He was accompanied by fifteen hundred Muslims dressed as pilgrims for 'umrah in order to show people that they had come to visit the Ka'bah out of respect for it. They took with them animals for the sacrifice.

The Messenger of Allah sent out a scout in advance to inform him about the reaction of the Quraysh. When he was near 'Usfan the scout returned and reported, 'I left Ka'b ibn Lu'ayy gathering an army against you to prevent you from reaching the Ka'bah.'

The Messenger of Allah continued to travel until he reached the furthest part of al-Hudaibiyyah. He pitched camp although there was little water. The people started

to complain to him of thirst. He took an arrow from his quiver and told them to put it in the waterhole. Immediately it began to gush with water and continued to flow until they had all quenched their thirst.

The Quraysh were extremely alarmed when they heard that the Muslims were at al-Hudaibiyyah. The Messenger of Allah decided to send one of his Companions to them and summoned 'Uthman ibn 'Affan. He was sent to inform the Quraysh that they had not come to fight but had come for 'umrah, and that he should call them to Islam. The Messenger of Allah instructed him to visit the believing men and women of Makkah, to give them the good news of victory and tell them that Allah, the Mighty and Exalted, would make His religion victorious in Makkah and it would no longer be necessary for them to conceal their belief.

'Uthman went to Makkah and conveyed the message to Abu Sufyan and the Quraysh noblemen.

When 'Uthman had finished delivering the message, they said, 'If you yourself wish to do tawaf of the House, go ahead.'

'I will not do it,' he said, 'until the Messenger of Allah has done tawaf.'

Bay'at-ar-Ridwan

'Uthman was in Makkah longer than the Muslims had expected and the rumor spread that he had been killed. Then the Messenger of Allah called for a pledge of

allegiance. He sat beneath a tree and the Muslims promised that they would fight with him to the last man. The Messenger of Allah took his own hand and said, 'This is for 'Uthman.' Later they heard that 'Uthman had not been murdered and he came back safely.

The Pledge took place under an acacia tree in al-Hudaybiyyah and is referred to in the Qur'an. Allah revealed, 'Allah was pleased with the believers when they were pledging their allegiance under the tree.' (48: 18)

The deadlock between the Quraysh and the Muslims continued until four envoys came to the Messenger of Allah who said to each one, 'We did not come to fight anyone. Rather we came to perform 'umrah.'

But the Quraysh remained stubborn and refused to allow them to proceed.

One of the envoys, 'Urwah ibn Mas'ud ath-Thaqafi, went back to his people and said, 'O people! By Allah, I have been in the presence of kings - from Chosroes, and Caesar to the Negus - and by Allah, I have never seen any king whose people respected him as much as the companions of Muhammad respect Muhammad.' He described to them what he had seen.

Treaty and truce; wisdom and forbearance

The Quraysh then sent Suhayl ibn 'Amr. When the Messenger of Allah saw him coming, he remarked, 'It is clear that they want peace since they have sent this man.' He told his Companions to prepare a draft agreement.

He called for 'Ali ibn Abi Talib and told him, 'Write: In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.'

'By Allah,' Suhayl said, 'we do not know who this "Merciful" is. Rather write, "In Your name, O Allah" as you used to write.'

The Muslims said, 'By Allah, we will only write, "In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate."', The Prophet said, 'Write, "In Your name, O Allah."'

Then he said, 'Write, "This is what Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah has agreed."'

'By Allah,' retorted Suhayl, 'if we accepted that you were the Messenger of Allah, we would not have prevented you from reaching the House of Allah nor fought you. Rather write, "Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah."'

The Prophet said, 'I am the Messenger of Allah even though you do not believe me. Write, "Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah."'

He asked 'Ali to erase what he had written but 'Ali said, 'By Allah no, I will not erase it.'

The Messenger of Allah said, 'Show me the place,' and he erased it himself. Then he said, 'This is what the Messenger of Allah agrees provided that you give us leave to perform tawaf of the Ka'bah.'

Suhayl said, 'By Allah, we will not allow the Arabs to say that we submitted to pressure. It will have to be next year.' It was also written: 'On the condition that if any of our men, even if he has your religion, comes to you, you will return him to us.'

The Muslims said, 'Glory be to Allah! How can we return someone to the idol worshippers after he has become a Muslim?'

While they were thus engaged, Abu Jandal ibn Suhayl came on the scene fettered by chains. He had escaped from Makkah, and threw himself down among the Muslims.

Suhayl looked at his son and commented, 'Muhammad, here is the first man that you have to return under this treaty.'

'We have not finished the document yet,' countered the prophet.

'Then, by Allah, I will never agree to anything.

'Let me keep him,' said the Messenger of Allah.

'I will not allow you to keep him.'

'Let him go for my sake.'

'I will not.'

'O Muslims!' said Abu Jandal, 'Am I to be returned to the idol worshippers when I have come to you as a Muslim? Do you not see what I have suffered?' He had been severely tortured for his beliefs. However, the Prophet returned him as his father had demanded.

The two parties agreed to abandon war for ten years. During that period everyone would live in peace. Both sides would be safe and would refrain from fighting one another. Whoever came to Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) from the Quraysh without obtaining the permission of his

guardian would be returned to them, but whoever came to the Quraysh from those with Muhammad need not be returned to him. Whoever wanted to enter into an alliance and agreement with Muhammad could do so and whoever wanted to enter into an alliance and agreement with the Quraysh would also be free to do so.

The Muslims' distress

When the Muslims saw the terms of the truce and what it meant to the Messenger of Allah, they were very distressed. The effect on them was so great that 'Umar ibn al-Khattab asked Abu Bakr angrily, 'Did not the Messenger of Allah say to us that we were going to go to the Ka'bah and perform tawaf?'

'Yes. But did he tell you that it was going to be this very year?'

'No.'

Abu Bakr assured him, 'You will go there and you will do tawaf.'

When the Messenger of Allah had finished drawing up the treaty, he sacrificed a camel and then shaved his head. This was a difficult time for the Muslims because all their hopes had been dashed. They had left Madinah with the firm intention of entering Makkah and doing 'umrah. Now they felt beaten and crushed. However, when they saw that the Messenger of Allah had made the sacrifice and shaved his head, they rushed to follow his example.

A humiliating peace or a clear victory?

Then the Messenger of Allah broke camp and returned to Madinah. On his journey back, Allah confirmed that the truce

of Hudaibiyyah was not a set-back but a victory:

Surely We have given you a clear victory, that Allah may forgive you your former and later sins and complete His blessing on you and guide you on a straight path and that Allah may help you with a mighty help. (48: 1-3)

‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said, ‘Is this a victory then, Messenger of Allah?’

He replied, ‘Yes.’

Outcome of the treaty

Not long after the Messenger of Allah had returned to Madinah, a man named Abu Basir ‘Utbah ibn Usayd came from Makkah to join the Muslims. The Quraysh sent emissaries to fetch him back. They said, ‘Under the terms of the treaty which you made with us you must hand him over.’ So the Messenger of Allah allowed them to take Abu Basir with them. But on the way back to Makkah, he escaped from them and fled to the coast. Abu Jandal ibn Suhayl also escaped and joined Abu Basir. Then everyone who had become a Muslim and who had suffered persecution from the Quraysh joined Abu Basir until they comprised a group numbering seventy. They set themselves up on a trade route. Whenever they heard that a caravan of the Quraysh had left for Syria, they waylaid it, killed the merchants and took the goods they were carrying.

The Hudaibiyyah treaty gave the idol worshippers and Muslims an opportunity to mix. The idol worshippers soon came to appreciate the good qualities of the Muslims. Before a year had passed, many

of them had become Muslims, and the Quraysh leaders were worried about their influence.

They sent to the Prophet, begging him by Allah and by kinship, not to return the men to Makkah but to keep them in Madinah. From then on whoever of them came to him from Makkah was safe.

These moves indicated that the Treaty of al- Hudaibiyyah in which the Messenger of Allah had accepted all the Quraysh conditions had been beneficial after all. The treaty had been a decisive step in gaining further victories for Islam and in spreading the faith throughout the Arabian peninsula with great speed. It led to the conquest of Makkah and the opportunity to invite the kings of the world - Caesar, Chosroes, Muqawqis and the Arabian princes - to accept Islam. Allah the Great revealed:

Yet it may happen that you will hate a thing which is better for you; and it may happen that you will love a thing which is worse for you. Allah knows, and you know not. (2: 216)

Khalid ibn al-Walid and ‘Amr ibn al-’ As accept Islam

Khalid ibn al-Walid, general of the Quraysh cavalry and the hero of great battles, was among those who accepted Islam. The Messenger of Allah called him the ‘Sword of Allah’. He fought bravely in the way of Allah and was the conqueror of Syria. ‘Amr ibn al-’As, another great commander and subsequently the conqueror of Egypt, also became a Muslim. Both of these strong leaders came to Madinah after the Treaty of al-Hudaibiyyah. ■

Deeni Ta'limi Council

- S. M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi*

India is a country where people of different faiths, colors, and backgrounds live. When India gained Independence in 1947, every citizen of the country was given full and equal right to benefit from independence. The Constitution of India explicitly recognized that every citizen will have full freedom to follow the religion and way of life of his choice and no one will be allowed to impose his values and traditions on others.

It thus became incumbent upon the government (regardless of its political affiliation) and its officials (regardless of which religion or class they belonged to) to run the country properly, maintain peace and order, protect rights of every citizen irrespective of their religion and race, and insure that every citizen got its democratic rights which had been granted by the constitution. But it is unfortunate that all of those who came to power, no matter which political party or religion they came from, failed to fully live up to these promises. Discrimination took place on the basis of religion and Muslims suffered most in this respect. As a result, Muslims faced difficulties in preserving their Islamic identity and that of their younger generation. Conscientious Muslims realized the severity of the problem and

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took initiatives at different levels to combat it. Qazi 'Adeel 'Abbasi of Basti, Uttar Pradesh, India, a respected freedom fighter and devoted Muslim leader, was one of those who spearheaded such efforts.

Qazi 'Abbasi started an after-school program for the Muslim children who were attending daytime government run primary schools so that basic Islamic education could be provided to them, In addition, he also came up with the idea of establishing a network of full-time independent schools which would be fully funded by Muslims, He presented this idea to the Muslim community and solicited support for it. Sheikh Mahmoodul Hassan 'Uthmani, a close relative of Qazi 'Abbasi, was among those who fervently supported this idea from the very beginning. Sheikh Syed Abul Hasan 'Ali Nadwi and Sheikh Muhammad Manzoor N'umani also endorsed and supported his idea.

In order to bring Qazi 'Abbasi's dream into reality, a conference was convened in Basti during 30-31 December 1959 and an organization known as Deeni T'alimi Council was founded. Sheikh Nadwi and Qazi 'Abbasi were appointed the founding president and the general secretary, respectively. Sheikh Nadwi remained its president until he passed away on 31

December 1999.

Prominent among the patrons of Deeni T'alimi Council were attorney Zafar Ahmad Siddiqui, Principal Riazuddin Ahmad, and Dr. Ishteyaq Hussain Quraishi. The Council worked in a very organized manner, opened schools in villages all over the State of Uttar Pradesh and provided basic religious education to hundreds of thousands of Muslim children. These schools proved essential for the religious and cultural survival of Muslims. In order to make educated and concerned Muslims aware of the need and importance of such schools, several conferences were held. More can be learned about the purpose and mission of council from the speeches of the Council's president and secretary.

As the time passed by, more people joined the Council's efforts. After Qazi 'Abbasi passed away, Dr. Ishteyaq Hussain Quraishi became the general secretary. Currently, Sheikh Sa'yidur Rahman 'Azami Nadwi (Vice-Chancellor of Nadwatul 'Ulama) is the president, Prof. Nafees Ahmad Siddiqui of Aligarh is the vice-president, and Dr. Mas'udul Hasan 'Uthmani is the general secretary. Over the years, the Council has expanded its work significantly.

Qazi 'Adeel 'Abbasi had actively fought for the freedom of India and had supported the secular form of political structure of the country. But he, as a

conscientious Muslim, was very concerned about the Islamic and religious identity of the Muslims of India. Thus when he saw political leaders discriminating against Muslims after Independence, his feelings were deeply hurt. As a result, he dedicated himself entirely to the cause of preserving and protecting the rights of Muslims and worked tirelessly for this cause.

Sheikh Nadwi also had become very apprehensive about this issue [of possible discrimination against Muslims] since the very beginning of India's Independence. To highlight this issue, he delivered several speeches at different places and wrote numerous letters to government officials. For this very reason, he fully supported Deeni T'alimi Council from its very inception. His presidential addresses fully reflect this concern.

Sheikh Nadwi was so distressed by the prevailing condition of Muslims in the country that he often recited with great pain the words which Prophet Yakoob (Jacob) had spoken to his children at the time of his death. As mentioned in Quran, Prophet Yakoob, while on his deathbed, asked his children: "Whom will you worship after me?" (AlBaqarah, 2:133). Reciting this verse, Sheikh Nadwi used to tell Muslims:

O Muslims. Protect iman (faith) and tawheed (belief in the oneness of

Allah) of your new generation. See how much effort Prophet Yakoob made to insure that his children (who, despite being believers, were living as a minority in Egypt which was ruled by Pharaoh) remained steadfast on iman and tawheed after him. See how concerned and restless Prophet Yakoob was for this at the end of his life. O Muslims! It is thus incumbent upon each one of you to make necessary arrangement before you die to insure that your children remain steadfast on iman and tawheed.

To help understand Sheikh Nadwi's vision of basic religious education, the following excerpt from the speech that he delivered in the regional conference of Deeni T'alimi Council held in Allahabad on 17 February 1985 is being presented here:

Religious education and basic awareness of deen (Islam) are as essentials to a Muslim as are air and water to a human being. In order for a Muslim to live like a Muslim, to be counted as a Muslim, to face Allah and His Prophet in the hereafter and to seek ultimate emancipation, he needs to have basic knowledge of deen in the same way as a human being needs to have air and water to survive. Muslim is not the name of a tribe, sect, nation, or culture; culture is in

fact a part of Islam and helps in fulfilling its demands. If a child is born in a Brahmin family, he always remains a Brahmin whether he accepts it or not and he does not need to do anything to remain so. Among Muslims also, there are many families who take pride in their lineage and they are considered respectable in society due to their pedigree. But the real pride lies in correct 'aqidah (faith) and submission to Allah which can be acquired only through knowledge. This is what Prophet Yakoob wanted to ascertain at the time of his departure from this world. That is why he at the time of his death gathered all of his children and grandchildren (who were large in number) and asked them: "Whom will you worship after me?" - Al-Baqarah, 2:133

If I am consulted by someone who wants to make a banner for the millat (Muslims) and the banner has space for only one sentence, I will tell him to write on it "Whom will you worship after me?" I will also tell him to write beneath it: Every Muslim should question his children before he dies, take account of himself and ask himself whether or not this matter is important to him; he should ask himself if he considers it necessary to prepare his children and future

generation to satisfactorily answer the question “Whom will you worship after me?”

We should search our hearts to see if this matter is important to us or not. We should check whether or not these questions are taken seriously at all levels individual, family, tribal, village, town, and community. In which direction will our future generation go after we die? Which group or trend will they follow? Whom will they worship? What will be their belief? Will they worship the one God or hundreds, thousands, millions and billions of deities and gods? Whom will they see as the controller and sustainer of this huge universe and their lives?”

Sheikh Nadwi’s feelings in this matter were very strong from the very beginning. Even before Deeni T’alimi Council was established, he had strongly opposed the campaign of Hindu-Pooruj according to which a person was not considered an Indian unless he recognized and revered Hindu saints of the ancient India as his guide and ancestor. When Sampurnanand (chief minister of Uttar Pradesh) and Purushottam Das Tandon (speaker of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly) wanted to impose Hindu-Pooruj in Uttar Pradesh, Sheikh Nadwi wrote strong letters to

condemn their actions. Those letters were later published in Hindi and English as booklets.

To protect Muslims from the influence of ideas such as Hindu-Pooruj, an organization known as Majlis-e-Isha’at was established in Lucknow and Sheikh Muhammad Ishaq Sandelvi was appointed its secretary. Sheikh Sandelvi was the Vice Chancellor and Shaikhul-hadith of Nadwatul ‘Ulama at that time. Majlis-e-Isha’at published a number of Sheikh Nadwi’s articles and booklets on this topic. These publications were sent to leaders of the majority community and it was conveyed to them that Muslims could not consider seers and saints of the Hindu religion as their guides and spiritual leaders. It was also emphasized that being an Indian did not mean that members of the minority communities would have to subscribe to the faith and traditions of the majority community. India is a secular country and everyone has full right to profess and practice his own faith and religion. Sheikh Nadwi continued reiterating this message from the platforms of Deeni T’alimi Council and Payam-e-Insaniyat as well.

The educational system which is generally available to the new generation in India tends to promote values and traditions of the majority community and portray its religious figures as the ideals to follow. It thus

conflicts with religious beliefs and traditions of Muslims and dampens their enthusiasm for Islam. As a consequence, Muslim children, because of not knowing their own elders and ideals, might become more inclined to follow non-Islamic values and leaders of other religions in their adult life. This poses a great danger as it may eventually change the religious direction of India's Muslim community which believes in the oneness of Allah.

Sheikh Nadwi took this matter very seriously and constantly fought for it. Thus when the Government of Uttar Pradesh made it mandatory for school children in government run schools to recite Vande Mataram (a hymn to praise the Hindu goddess Durga) and pay homage to the Hindu goddess Sarasvati, he vehemently opposed it. The government took note of it and retracted its position. This was considered a huge victory for Muslims. Muslims felt emboldened and started keeping a vigilant eye on the school curriculum — a task that Deeni T'alimi Council is currently carrying.

In response to Sheikh Nadwi's opposition to mandatory recitation of Vande Mataram in schools, some extremist factions of the Hindu community reacted very sharply. Not only did they harshly criticize him, but they also orchestrated a raid on his residence in Rae Bareilly in the night of 22 November 1998 and conducted a

house search. Perhaps, it was done to intimidate him so that he would stop his opposition to Vande Mataram. But it did not work and he remained steadfast in his opposition. Ultimately, they received condemnation from all corners for their action. The incident also created an awareness among Muslims that if they did not stand up to defend their values and traditions, they would be gradually cajoled to accept anti-Islamic practices and lifestyle which would prove disastrous to their religious and communal identity.

Sheikh Nadwi's stand [on the issue of Vande Mataram] was firm and clear. Extremist Hindu factions' action drew national and international condemnation. These were widely reported in national newspapers and media and served as a deterrent to the extremist Hindu factions. The government apologized for the raid and rescinded the order of Vande Mataram and Sarasvati Puja (worship of the Hindu goddess Sarasvati). The state's education minister was discharged from his duties. On the other hand, unprecedented level of Support poured in for Sheikh Nadwi.

How important was this issue to Sheikh Nadwi? To enable the reader understand it, the following excerpt from the speech that he delivered in a gathering of Deeni T'alimi Council in Moradabad, India, is being presented below.

Muslims will have to make necessary arrangements to fight against these challenges [like that of Vande Mataram] in the same way as they do in building mosques and places of worship to perform prayers and maintain relationship between their soul and body. They must not wait for any assistance from the government in this regard. They will have to arrange sermons and lectures in mosques, properly raise their children in homes and provide religious education in madaris and schools. They will have to establish in the entire country a network of before-school and after school learning places so that not even a single village or locality is left out.

In this regard, there are three things which are essential.

(1) Development of a curriculum that provides the children knowledge which they need for religious and basic needs of everyday life. It must be based upon sound pedagogical methods which are best suited for young children and must be acceptable to majority of Muslims.

(2) Preparation of a pool of teachers who are adequately trained to implement the curriculum and are willing to teach children with passion and devotion.

(3) Teaching Urdu as it is the easiest medium to impart Islamic knowledge to children (in India).

If a nation makes a collective decision with unity of mind, it can change the fate and destiny of that nation. Today what we need most to overcome all of our difficulties and sway the condition in our favor is our decision to give priority to religious education of our children over all other types of education. We will consider it a sin and betrayal against our religion if we give to our children worldly education before giving them the knowledge that enables them to recognize their Creator, Prophet, fundamental beliefs, and obligations. If this is our decision and we remain faithful to it, no power, persuasion or threat will take us away from the straight path and deprive our future generations from the wealth of Islam.

With regards to Sheikh Nadwi's services to Deeni T'alimi Council and basic religious education, Dr. Mas'udul Hasan 'Uthmani, general secretary of Deeni T'alimi Council, has prepared a valuable book Takbeer-e-Musalsal (Urdu) which includes Sheikh Nadwi's speeches and articles. It gives a comprehensive view of Sheikh Nadwi's vision of Deeni T'alimi Council and the basic religious education. ■

Too Weak to Cry: The Children of Yemen

- Jackie Fox

The starvation in Yemen has left children too weak to cry.

Ghazi Saleh, who is ten years old, can barely breathe and weighs only 8kg. He is in Al-Mudhaf Hospital in the southwestern Yemeni city of Taz receiving treatment for severe malnutrition.

Skin and bones, Ghazi is just one of 11.3 million children in need in Yemen as the war rages on.

Four hundred thousand children under the age of five suffer from severe acute malnutrition and are fighting to survive, according to UNICEF.

The number is the equivalent to every child in Ireland under the age of four. Some children have become too weak to swallow and have to be injected with nutrients.

Chief of Communications for UNICEF in the Middle East & North Africa, Juliette Touma, told RTÉ News that the situation in Yemen is like 'hell'. UNICEF also said just half of Yemen's health facilities are functional, and those that are left face severe shortages in medicine, equipment and staff.

As Ghazi continues to battle against the hunger, many have lost their fight. It is estimated that 85,000 children, all under-five, may have died from starvation in Yemen since 2015. The figures, from Save the Children, are a conservative estimate based on data from the United Nations.

Over fourteen million Yemenis are at risk of famine and more than half are children, according to the UN. The world turned its attention to Yemen last month, when the New York Times gave an insight into the scale of the devastation. The newspaper gave an account of how the war is affecting communities, in particular children, and

showed a striking image of a starving seven-year-old girl, Amal Hussain.

For those who are not dying of hunger, UNICEF said almost 3,000 boys have been recruited into fighting. Education of children is now rare, and makeshift schools are emerging around the country. More than 2,500 schools have been damaged or destroyed.

One in five schools in Yemen can no longer be used and teachers have not been paid in years.

Aid organizations suggest the deepening economic crisis and escalating violence could make an additional 3.5 million people food insecure, including 1.8 million children.

The war is rooted in the lack of political stability following the Arab Spring. In 2011, long-time President Ali Abdullah Saleh was forced to hand over power to President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi.

However, President Hadi found it difficult to make changes to a range of problems including corruption and threatening political movements.

The Houthi movement took advantage of Mr.Hadi's disadvantages and gained power in the northern Saada province – eventually forcing the President to flee. As the Houthi-controlled ground grew, Saudi Arabia and other states began an air campaign, worried that the movement was being backed by Iran. The fighting has continued since 2016 and has resulted in different factions emerging and getting involved.

Millions of people have been left in need of aid. The UN is hoping for peace talks to take place in Sweden by the end of this year. For Ghazi, and many more children suffering, they hope they can look forward to peace and a future in Yemen. ■

(Courtesy: YMD)

Lesson in Bigotry

- Faizan Mustafa

The Supreme Court of India in P N Kumar (1987) paid rich tributes to our high courts. It observed: "Our High Courts are High Courts. Each High Court has its own high traditions. They have judges of eminence who have initiative, necessary skills and enthusiasm." By 2010, the apex court itself changed its position: In Raja Khan, it said: "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark, said Shakespeare in Hamlet, and it can similarly be said that something is rotten in the Allahabad High Court." The 37-page judgment of Justice S R Sen of the Meghalaya High Court, and the clarification issued by him on December 14, have not enhanced the reputation of our high courts. Though, in the clarification, he does acknowledge secularism as part of the basic structure of the Constitution, he has not clarified his statement that India is a Hindu country or the exclusion of Muslims from the citizenship law he has proposed.

By calling Modi as "our beloved Prime Minister", to whom he directed his judgment be handed over within 24 hours and receipt received by the additional solicitor general, he has not only shown his political preferences but also undermined the independence of the judiciary. His clarification that he does not belong to any political party is unnecessary as no sitting judge can be a member of a political party. By saying that Indian citizenship should be given to any Hindu from anywhere in the world, he virtually declares India to be a Hindu rashtra. His judgment is contrary to the notion of

citizenship under Articles 5 to 11 of the Constitution and the Citizenship Act of 1955. But it is consistent with the Hindu right's position of India as a country of, and for, Hindus.

Justice Sen is a little considerate with Muslims living in India for generations and abiding by Indian laws, but he expects them to obey the "uniform law". If anyone opposes such a law, he is to be deprived of citizenship. By the way, by suggesting "religion" as the basis for the grant of citizenship, Justice Sen himself is opposing Article 15 of the Constitution that prohibits the state from discriminating "only on the basis of religion". By opposing the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and its cut-off date, he is also opposing the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 1986.

In his clarification, Justice Sen asserts that "his judgment makes references to history and one cannot change history". But he indeed made several disingenuous statements about Indian history: "It is wrong to say Indian independence is [won] by non-violence"; "post Partition, while Sikhs were rehabilitated, Hindus were not"; "India was a big country commanded by the Hindu kingdom and then the Mughals came and partitioned the country and at that time many conversions took place by force". Moreover, the Mughals were not the first Muslims who came to India. Muslims came to India as traders on the Malabar coast in the seventh century. Five Muslim dynasties had ruled Delhi from 1206 to 1526 before Babur captured power from

Ibrahim Lodhi.

There is no evidence of forceful mass conversion to Islam during the Mughal rule. The massive Hindu majority of India is a conclusive proof of it. In fact, the Rajput share in Mughal bureaucracy and nobility ranged between 18 to 41 per cent. Many Mughals had Hindu mothers and wives, who were not converted to Islam. The Mughal rule ended in 1857 and therefore, the Mughals cannot be blamed for the partition of the country. In fact, the first war of Independence was fought under the leadership of the last Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar. Similarly, the judge has excluded atrocities against Muslims from his narration of post-Partition violence.

By observing that Pakistan became an Islamic state and India should have been declared a Hindu country, Justice Sen overlooked the historical fact that the framers of the Constitution, in a conscious decision, decided to create a religion-neutral and progressive state. Why does he have to say that "I make it clear that nobody should try to make India another Islamic country, otherwise it will be a doomsday for India and the world". Yes, of course. But it will also be a doomsday if India becomes a Hindu country.

Justice Sen is quite critical of both the Hindus as well as India. "The history of persecution continued even after East Pakistan became Bangladesh in 1971 with the help of India and even with the help of the residual Hindu population there," he says. He says (Assam's) "habit of intolerance is age old and its people were responsible for virtually shoving Sylhet and

the Bengali Hindus to the acute kind of crises situation it is suffering from today". He also blames poor educationally backward Bengali Muslims for siding with the Assamese. He even says since rehabilitation programmes for Hindu Bengalis have been non-existent and the Indian state is using state apparatus to identify them as foreigners. Justice Sen suggests that any Bengali Hindu, as and when he decides to migrate to India, should be given citizenship without being asked to produce any document. It seems that he is not aware of atrocities and discriminations against Shias and Ahmadiyas in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

As an impartial judge, he cannot appeal to Hindus of Assam in these words: "I appeal to all Hindu people of Barak Valley and Assam Valley to come together and find an amicable solution because our culture, traditions and religion are same." He has also gone against his own oath under which he must adjudicate without favour, affection or ill-will. His affection for Hindus in general and Bengali Hindus in particular, is crystal clear.

There are also many statements in the judgment for which Justice Sen deserves commendation. For instance, his remarks on the persecution of minorities in Pakistan and Bangladesh, the opposition to March 24, 1971, as the cut-off date for NRC in Assam. In his clarification, Justice Sen has rightly said that most Indians live in villages and do not preserve documents and, therefore, their exclusion from NRC on the non-submission of documents will be unjust. ■

(Courtesy: The Indian Express)

Republic Day

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

26th January 1950 is a rememberable day in the history of India. It assumes great significance and importance for all of us. This day the constitution of India was enforced. Indian constitution is considered the best one as compared to other constitutions of the world. It is a written and comprehensive document with 395 Articles (Now 404) and 12 Schedules. R.C. Majumdar says: "The constitution guarantees to all citizens freedom of speech and expression, the right to assemble peacefully and freedom of conscience and worship, subject to general considerations of public security and morality. All citizens, irrespective of religion, race, caste, sex and place of birth, shall enjoy equality before the law and no disability shall be imposed on them in any respect. "Untouchability" is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. No person shall be deprived of his life, property or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law." (An Advanced History of India, p.992)

The Republic Day is celebrated with gaiety and enthusiasm all over the country and especially in the capital, New Delhi where the celebrations start with the presidential address to the nation.

On this occasion all government buildings and educational institutions are decorated attractively. Flag unfurling ceremony is held in every school. Children from several schools take part in the parade. They present various cultural programmes and showcase tableaux highlighting the rich cultural heritage of their state respectively.

India is the largest democracy in the world. India has been the cradle of a variety of civilizations, cultures and religions. It has a pluralistic society. It is known for values of peace, amity, brotherhood, fraternity, unity and integrity. It is the birth place of various icons like the Buddah, Mahavir, Guru Nanak, Mahatma Gandhi, Kabir, Jawaharlal Nehru, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar ' Chandra Vidya Sagar, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Rabindranath Tagore, Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani, Qazi Nazrul Islam, Swami Vivekananda, Netaji Subash Chandra Bose, Tipu Sultan, Maulana Hasrat Mohani, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Khan Abdul Gaffar khan, Maulana Muhammad Ali Jouhar, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Dr, Zakir Husain, Maulana S.Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi and the like. All these beacons taught lesson of brotherhood and fraternity in their respective period and time. They are no more today. But their instructions and messages still inspire us to lead a peaceful life on this land.

Being Indians, it is imperative for us to maintain its unity and integrity by fostering national integration and propagating the message of humanity throughout India. The constitution of the country teaches us the same message and it is the message of the Republic Day. ■

The Philosophy of Acquiring Communicative Competence in Foreign Languages

- S. Habibul Haq Nadwi

Language and Literature as media of self-expression and affirmation of identity

It is in language and literature that the intellectual, spiritual, cultural and religious energies of an age are discharged. Language and literature are epics of the human soul. They are the ordered versions of life. Since the content of language and literature is the content of life they grow out of life and are nourished and nurtured by life. The close relationship between a language and its people and their culture demands that the language and literature should be studied with seriousness and not merely as an aesthetic past-time.

If we desire to discern the cultural properties of a language as an instrument of national and international understanding, we have to learn, teach and understand a language from the human and philosophical point of view and not from a purely empirical point of view. Inter-cultural awareness is not possible without being a multilingual citizen. In this age of ever-rising multi-lingualism and internationalism one cannot afford to remain mono-lingual. A citizen who knows more than two or three languages is assumed to be more useful to both the state and to the national culture, and has a better chance of entry to the international scene than others. Linguistic proficiency and communicative competence (making

oneself understood in speech, writing and conversation), either in foreign language or in a second language (in a multi-lingual state where many languages and dialects are spoken), confers prestige both on the individual and on the country he lives in.

Language barriers separate nations more than political barriers do. We do not live today in a bi-lingual or multi-lingual age but in an inter-lingual communicational age, when the discipline of languages is being treated as an expression of Truth. Studies are also being conducted in the mechanism of bio-linguistics, psycho-linguistics, ethno-linguistics and semantics. Moreover, symbolic logic and mathematics are being applied to the linguistic problems. But these empirical endeavours signally lack and neglect the human and philosophical approach to the language — learning and teaching. Since multi-lingual countries cannot thrive well without intercultural awareness (for the understanding of other racial and ethnic groups living in the same country, but speaking different languages and dialects), they have to develop a human and philosophical approach towards the learning and teaching of the second or the foreign language, along with the use of empirical and technical aids available to man in the contemporary world.

The place of language-study in international education has been realised and confirmed. This realisation is true

today as never before. Internationalism has become the spirit of the age. "If you are not an international figure, you are nobody" has become a popular phrase. This is true. Moreover, the whole world is heavily present through Radio, T.V. and Press at the breakfast tables every morning in every house. The individuals have been planning to go abroad for summer vacations. "Where do we go?" is the major question. To Mexico or to the Middle East? To Japan or to China? To Europe or to America?

Can an individual enjoy a tour of the frontierless world today without knowing at least the major languages of the world, recognised by the United Nations? He cannot even enjoy an inland tour without knowing local languages. A happy balance between nationalism and internationalism is to be maintained.

It is true that the spirit of nationalism often demands exclusive loyalty to a given cultural pattern and the increasingly vocational emphasis of the school curricula binds the students to the prestige channel of his own culture, ignoring the inter-cultural understanding. This kind of nationalism is rising because of the loss of faith in the ideal of the so-called internationalism, which, through its organisations and political and diplomatic means in various countries, has been fostering new nationalism and separatism every now and then. The future of the peaceful world can be entrusted only to those who transcend the national and ethno-centric limitations. A balance between the two extremes has to be

maintained and the spirit of nationalism and internationalism is to be fostered amongst our children for the sake of world peace. The best time to sow the seeds of international awareness is in late adolescence when the student attains a reasonable degree of stability in his own culture and has a longing for intellectual exploration in the national scene.

The role of language and literature in the national and international reconstruction and in mutual understanding has universally been acknowledged. UNESCO has realised this Truth. Besides the Arab influence, the European Renaissance was inspired by the study of languages. Devoted and motivated humanists and scholars in Europe explored the Greek and Latin classics and invited their fellow men to acquire knowledge in the languages and literature of the above-mentioned sources of European culture. Men followed the instructions faithfully and, consequently, the intellectual awakening dawned on the horizons of England, Germany and France, both in the seventeenth and in the eighteenth centuries, through the study of Greek and Latin languages and literature. Poets, thinkers and philosophers achieved communicative competence without having used the audio-visual or modern technical assistance in the language labs. They were motivated by the human and the philosophical spirit to the classical heritage. They employed the languages and literature as media of self-expression and as affirmation of national identities.

Philosophical and Human Approach to the Teaching and Learning of a Language

Communicative competence in a foreign or in a second language (in a multi-lingual country) cannot be achieved without a human and philosophical approach to the target language and its people. The electronic eyes in a language lab cannot help the learner in the acquisition of a second language, if the eyes of his psyche (soul) are shut to the aesthetics of the target language. If a teacher or a learner looks down upon a language and its people or its culture, he cannot acquire the language, let alone achieving competence! The first questions which confront the learners or the teachers are — Learning for what purpose? or Teaching for what purpose?

It is here that a human and philosophical approach is required. It inculcates a spirit of reverence, respect and imaginative sympathy towards the target language. This can be achieved through motivation and not through machines. The learner should be exposed first to the human, cultural and philosophical values of the target language and then to its alphabet. This can facilitate the learning process without much linguistic effort. The motivation may vary in dimensions. They may be religious, spiritual, cultural, political and economic in nature.

Since language is human communication and co-operation and an integral part of culture, its attributes are

social unity and cultural cohesion. It reflects moral and social values. The competence in a language, therefore, means competence in the transmission of the same values. Experience shows that both Arabic and European languages were diffused to the non-Arab and non-European lands through strong religious, economic, cultural and political motivations. People first became aware of the value of the language and then were involved in its acquisition with competence.

Communicative Competence in Arabic Language: The Philosophical and Human Approach

Reading of the Holy Book (i.e. the Qur'ân) and writing its commentaries led the Arab humanists and philologists to formulate linguistic rules both at the Baya and the Küfa schools. The Phonetic studies in early Islam made a great impact on the promotion of grammar, which influenced almost all the languages of the world. Arabic linguistic traditions passed through various stages of development such as (i) the orthographic stage (ii) the grammatical stage (iii) the liturgical stage and (iv) the physiological stage. The set 'signs' for recording the sounds of the language were discussed and evolved under the first stage while the second stage helped the grammarians to develop the speech-sound as a part of the descriptive analysis of the Arabic language. The third stage, that is the proper cantillation of the scripture (i.e. the Qur'an), led humanists to the elaborate studies of linguistic phenomena. It was in

the fourth stage that the scientists stepped in and described the anatomy of the human body, the speech organs, whereby the sounds of the language were produced. Now the epigraphists, grammarians and theologians had to listen to the new discoveries in Arabic phonetics. Such a medieval treatise based on physiological analysis was written by Ibn Sina (d. 438 A.H./ 1037 A.D.), which has been translated into English by K.I. Semaan. A novel approach has been made to the phonetic research. It deals with the structure of human speech (vibratory approach). He says about the sound system:

“..... in my opinion, the immediate cause of sound is the wavelike motion of the air” The translator of the treatise (Risala fi-Asbab Huduth al-Huruf) remarks:

“The purely scientific way in which Ibn-Sina approaches his subject deserves the utmost credit and places its author among the first linguistic scientists of all times . He formulates his work very much the same way as a twentieth century scholar would formulate his investigation of a subject.”

The Basra and the Kufa schools which aimed at achieving communicative competence in Arabic without any interference in language acquisition produced illustrious scholars like al-Khalil b. Ahmad, the author of Kitab al ‘Ain, Sibawaih, the author of al-Kitab al-Mubarrad, the author of Kamil, az-Zamakhshari, the author of Mufassal, and others. These medieval Arabic writers on

linguistic sciences have every right to recognition and to occupy their place in the history of this discipline and in the phonetic studies in early Islam. Their contributions have always been denied by the Orientalists.

The Book of Sibawaih is still considered as the standard primary work for all grammarians. The intention of the author was to provide Principles and rules of the Arabic language to both foreigners and Muslims, who learnt it as a second language and wanted to achieve communicative competence in speech and in writing. The author treats the subject scientifically. He divides letters into parts, and deals with the articulation of basic letters and explains the points of articulation, its modality and degree of aperture. He has categorized them in details such as lateral, nasal, trill and velarized phonemes. These studies enabled the Arab humanists to achieve communicative competence without any technical or audio-visual assistance which is now accessible to any student or teacher of a language.

The following are nine theories developed during the last six decades in the same strain’:

- (i) Saussurean School, founded by Ferdinand de Saussure in 1916, puts forward the theory of “Semiology” by which is meant the science and study of signs in general, of which linguistics is only one subdivision.
- (ii) Copenhagen School, under the

guidance of Louis Hjelmslev, advances the hypothesis of "Glossematics," that is to say, content analysis must be independent of extra-linguistic existential criteria and expression analysis (phonology) must be independent of (assumed extra-linguistic) phonetic criteria.

- (iii) Bloomfieldian School, founded by Leonard Bloomfield in the 1930s, insists on the mechanistic approach to language study, concentrating on methodology and on formal analysis. His statement of all meanings is strictly mechanistic and consequently his attitude towards semantics is rather pessimistic.
- (iv) Structuralist School is the school of linguistics which developed primarily under the leadership of Leonard Bloomfield from the 1930s onwards. These linguists concentrated principally on observable and verifiable data in language analysis.
- (v) Tagmemic Approach is an approach to Grammar which attempts to combine form and function in basic grammatical units called tag memes. It also analyses units larger than the sentence. The theory of tag meme was also put forward first by Leonard Bloomfield who defined tagmeme as the smallest meaningful unit of grammatical form.
- (vi) The Prague School was constituted by a group of Czech and other scholars doctrinally centred round

Prince Nikolai Trubetzkoy who applied Saussurean theory to the elaboration of the phoneme concept. Speech sounds belonged to parole, the phonemic belonged to language. In studying languages as systems of internally related elements, Prague scholars did not treat the phoneme as a mere class of sounds or as a transcriptional device, but as a complex phonological unit realised by the sounds of speech.

- (vii) London School came into being under the guidance of J.R. Firth in 1948. Firth lays down that prosodic phonology is the most important aspect of linguistic analysis. Linguistic form was envisaged by him as sets of abstractions at the lexical, grammatical and phonological levels, referable to actual features and occurrences of phonic data serving as their several exponents.
- (viii) Stratificational School, whose father is Sydney M. Lamb, takes full cognizance of thought patterns and it views language as a series of layers, or stratal system, all closely related. For example, the phonological strata comprise not only phonemic but also hypophonemics; in the hypophonemic layer lie the physical characteristics of sound and the organ functions which go into the production of phonemes. At the upper strata, which include the semantic layer, are sememics and hypersememics; the hypersememic

layers comprise experiential elements – entity, event, process and other features of meaning. Between these sets of strata lie the morphemic layers which includes the syntactic layer. The term “experiential” suggests a memory bank like an electronic computer’s.

- (ix) Transformational School, the foundations of which were laid by Noam Chomsky in 1957, postulates that grammar generates sentences, assigns structural descriptions and relates their deep structures and meanings to the surface structures and sounds. It makes extensive use of tree diagrams and mathematical type of formalisation. This is currently the youngest and the most influential school.

The Arab scholars, at no stage of the phonetic development, scientific or otherwise, lost sight of its philosophical approach. Arabic was a Divine language and the Qur’an, (the word of God), was revealed in the Arabic language, the acquisition of which meant nearness to God. The learners in non-Arab lands accepted its religious value along with its mundane value. Being thus motivated the non-Arabs even excelled the Arabs in many ways. Persia is the best example. Persians learnt Arabic as a second language, but they excelled to a degree that the first standard book on Arabic Grammar entitled ‘al-Kitab’ was written by Sibawaih, a Persian, which is considered as a primary source and a reference work up to this day.

Modern Theories of Language: Neutral to Value Judgement and Devoid of Motivation

It is unfortunate that modern language theories are neutral to value judgment and are devoid of human and philosophical approach to the teaching of a foreign or a second language. Modern empirical methods of teaching and the explosion of the foreign language - Teaching techniques have confused the situation. The teacher and the learner both have become subservient to machines without any human feeling of the language and without any philosophical approach to its culture. Conflicting schools have increased the tension. The traditional grammatical approach and the eclectic approach are still in conflict. Some over-emphasise the rules of grammar, believing that language acquisition is based on the acquisition of grammar, while the rivals reject grammar completely. The dogma of linguistic emphasis on grammar and the dogma of communicative competence without too much stress on grammar have not yet been reconciled.

During the past sixty years a tremendous amount of work has been done on the nature of the language and on linguistic theorising. Theories have been evolved within the methodology of science in order to prove that linguistics is a science. The discussions of theories have been ordered in that framework. Often such linguistic theorising is divorced from the development both in time as well as in values, Historical treatment and comparison of theories are often conducted without regard to historical and

socio-cultural influence. The terms, now used for the interpretation of a language, are similar to those used in the definition of empirical sciences, such as, (1) data, (2) theory and (3) the 'accounting of the data'. For example, the curiosity about the sound and its meaning constitutes the data for a modern writer in linguistic sciences. The investigation begins with the assumption that linguistics is a science and that its purpose is to define the language and its nature without any human and philosophical approach to it.

The detailed study of these theories will reveal that they view language as a particular kind of human behaviour. Some of them consider language as human vocal behaviour. But none of these theories deals with the human and philosophical approach to the teaching of a language.

Communicative Competence in European Languages: Socio-Economic and Political Motivations. Historical Experience —The Asian Case

There can be no objection against the use of technical aids in the acquisition of the language, provided its human and philosophical values are not sacrificed. The human approach or the sense of respectability is created only through religious, cultural, economic or political motivation. The Asian case is a good example in this regard. During the early European colonial era when the Europeans captured the East and launched a drive to establish their languages and culture, they first motivated the Asians towards appreciating the political and economic value of their

languages. Good employment and prestigious positions in the society were reserved for those who knew their language. The result was that even the man in the street acquired competence in English, French and Dutch, as the case may be. The Indo-Pak subcontinent produced A-grade poets, orators and writers in the English language. There was no technical aid available at that time. They learnt the language in a short period and with a fast pace due to the strong socio-political and economic motivation. The same thing happened in the Middle East, and in the Far East. It was only after the second world war that rising nationalisms challenged the foreigners whose languages were replaced by native languages. Yet many countries are still using foreign languages as their official language.

Communicative Competence in the Arabic language. The Religio-Political and Socio-Economic Motivations: Historical Experience — The European Case

The index of motives will show that Europeans became interested in the Arabic language for reasons mentioned earlier. Scholars of scriptures in Europe realised that the knowledge of the Arabic language was essential for a better understanding of the Bible and Torah. Thus they felt the need for learning Arabic for the linguistic interpretation of the scriptures. Albert Schulton (1686 -1750) the first famous Dutch Orientalist wrote his thesis in 1707 entitled, "The use of Arabic in the Interpretation of Scripture".

This thesis changed the climate of thinking in Europe. All scholars were now religiously motivated to embark on learning Arabic. Edward Peacock and W. Robertson in England and J. Welhausen in Germany studied the scriptures in the same light and achieved competence in comprehension and in reading the Arabic Bible, (one of the earliest translations of the Bible in Arabic extant in the Vatican Library was studied and compared with other manuscripts and was examined critically with a Knowledge of the Arabic language). The urge to elucidate the Biblical cities, geographical areas and historical sites led the scholars to extensive excavations in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iraq, Palestine and other parts of the Middle East. Since most of the places of religious significance, referred to in the scriptures, were situated in the Middle East, the Western scholar, Niebuhr, visited Arabia in 1762 and published his findings in 1772. Europe now realised for the first time that Biblical studies would remain incomplete without knowing the historical, cultural and religious areas in ancient Yemen, in Arabia, in Egypt and in Palestine. This was not possible without learning Arabic.

Attempts to locate the names of places and of the tribes mentioned in the Bible had started in the Medieval and the Byzantine Period. But the awareness and motivation created in the eighteenth century accelerated the speed of scholarly researches in the nineteenth century. The area of Petra (Jordan) was explored in 1812. Excavation teams explored various areas in 1838, 1865, 1867, 1919 and in

1926-32. The excavations revealed the places referred to or mentioned in the Biblical stories, Expert teams from Harvard, Princeton and Chicago Universities as well as the British, German and American teams continued in exploration. They achieved competence in Arabic through the awareness and realisation of the value of the language and not through mechanical and technical language labs.

The fact was now established that no student or comparative religion could afford to ignore Arabic.

The significance of Arabic was further realised in recent decades. Professor George Sarton of Harvard University who wrote his three volumes on the history of sciences, (which are his monumental works), realised the significance of Arabic when he discovered that modern sciences started with the Arabs. He decided to go to Syria to learn Arabic before completing his works.

Socio-economic and political motivations were again as strong as the religious one. Oriental scholars were convinced that the study of the socio-economic and political conditions of the Middle East was not possible without learning Arabic and without achieving communicative competence in the language. The Petro-dollar economy, the oil-dependency, the trade and commercial and diplomatic links in the area, compelled the scholars to motivate Western people to embark on the acquisition of the Arabic language in their own best interests. ■

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad: India's First Education Minister

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

Maulana Azad an internationally well-known educationist was born in Macca, Saudi Arabia (KSA) on 11 November 1888 and passed away in New Delhi, India, on 22 February 1958. This multifaceted genius can be taken for discussion in various dimensions e.g. Azad as an educationist, Azad as a commentator of the Qur'an, Azad as a thinker, Azad as a theologian, Azad as an orator, Azad as an editor, Azad as a journalist, Azad as a politician, Azad as a debater, Azad as an author, Azad as a husband even Azad as a spokesman for the plight of poor etc.

The personality of Maulana Azad needs no introduction. Almighty Allah bestowed upon him extraordinary knowledge and wisdom. Right from his childhood, he was quite sharp-minded. He had exhibited his erudition and scholarship by rendering the address of Allama Syed Rashid Reza of Egypt in Urdu when he had come to address a meeting in Nadwatul Ulama, Lucnkow on the invitation of Allama Shibli Nomani in 1912.

A.B. Rajput describing the influence of Maulana Azad says: "Caesar was a man of the moment and Paul a man of the future for Caesar was the symbol of his age and Paul was the embodiment of those prophetic qualities

which create a future age. But Abul Kalam Azad happily combines in him the qualities of both Caesar and Paul, for his actions and achievement, though symbolical of the present age, required yet another age to be fully understood and recognize."(Khilafat to Partition)

According to Mahatma Gandhi: "Maulana Azad is the most forceful, truthful, and fearless satyagrahi and fighter against oppression and injustice that I have come across." Jawaharlal Nehru once said: "Though I am grateful to all my companions, I would like to mention especially Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, whose erudition has delighted me incredibly, and has sometimes overwhelmed me. In Azad along with the good qualities of the past, the graciousness, the deep learning and tolerance, there is a strange and unique mixture of the urges of today and the modern outlook."

In fact Maulana Azad wanted to make India an ideal country where all people may live with peace and amity by carrying out the principles and tenets of their respective religions. He never like slavery, servitude and serfdom. That is why he remained an ardent preacher of his religion also. Even when he became the first Education Minister of free India he adhered to his principles

and faith strictly. His monumental work Tarjumanul Quran is the best exposition of his religious thoughts and concepts.

“Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was one of those remarkable personalities who could not only stir the whole world, but when necessary could direct the current of human history in more useful and profitable grooves. His life was a stormy one full of sensational and epoch making events. The life of this great scholar who could make his own way in every walk of life requires to be divided into five broad divisions.

- a) His childhood upto the age of seven years (1895).
- b) His traditional education upto fifteen years (1902).
- c) His struggle for the discovery and realization of Truth (1902-1910).
- d) The crusade for the promotion of the appreciation of the Truth and its implementation upto 1947.
- e) The glorious last ten year upto 22nd February 1958.” (Abul Kalam Islam and Humanity,P,13).

Maulana Azad selfless contributions and arduous services in National Struggle for Freedom can never be overlooked. He fought alongside Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi to get India free from the British rule. In 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru appointed him as the first Education Minister in newly formed

Indian cabinet. He remained Union Minister of Education till his death in 1958.

It was Maulana Azad who gave the first call for Swaraj in 1912 when he launched Al-Hilal from Calcutta. In 1922 Maulana Azad claimed in his court statement that the job creating spiritual and religious spirit in the hearts of youths which Mahatma Gandhi has started, AL-Hilal had already fulfilled this obligation in 1914. Maulana Azad had right to this claim.

Dr. Najma Heptulla says: “His writing had such an electrifying effect in masses that British Govt. confiscated the ‘Al-HILAL’ Press and sent Maulana Azad in confinement at Ranchi. This confinement and many arrests that follow did not deter him from the path he had chosen for himself. Maulana was a devout Muslim and staunch Nationalist he believed that the country cannot be free from the foreign rule until and unless Muslims and Hindus jointly fight for it. His message on the eve of his arrest on December 1921 spells this out clearly: “The faithful should neither worry nor grieve. They should rest assured that if they have true faith they will be victorious over all. Our victory depends on four principles of truth “Hindu-Muslim Unity” peace, discipline and sustained sacrifice.”

Maulana Azad said in his presidential address delivered at the

Congress Session of 1923: "If an Angel were to decent from the clouds today, settle on Qutub Minar Delhi and proclaim from there that India can win Swaraj within twenty four hours provided that India renounces Hindu-Muslim unity., then I would renounce Swaraj and not Unity. Because if Swaraj is delayed that is the loss of India, but if Hindu-Muslim unity is lost it is a loss to humanity."

Maulana Azad's education plan had four objectives. First, the removal of illiteracy. This was to be achieved through the universalisation of elementary education upto the secondary level. The project reached out to women as well. Second, the provision for offering equal educational opportunities to all irrespective of caste and class. Third, the three language formula. This made Hindi and the state languages the medium of instruction. English was offered as an important second language. Fourth, the expansion of primary education throughout the country.

K.N. Nizami has precisely said: "The corner-store of Maulana Azad's educational policy was his conviction that democracy cannot function without eradication of illiteracy. This supplied the motive power to his efforts in the field of national education. He often approvingly quoted Disraeli who used to say that a democracy has no future

unless it educates its masses. Maulana Azad's educational conspectus covered all segments of Indian population and dealt alike with the villages and the towns. He gave his attention to every important problem whether it concerned medium of instruction, syllabi, future of graduates, linguistic tension, adult illiteracy, sports, festivals, roads, houses etc. The most important aspect of his endeavour in the field was to create an awareness of what India was in the past and how rich was its contribution to world thought. He emphasized again and again the need of developing an international perspective and rise above all petty considerations of languages and creed. All through his tenure of Ministership he was guided by the supreme motive that: "The essence of a secular and democratic State is freedom of opportunity for the individual without regard to race, religion, caste or community."

Apart from providing motive power and direction to the educational programmes of free India, Maulana Azad established/ strengthened/ or reoriented a number of scientific, literacy and cultural organizations. Particularly to be noted are the following:

1. Central Institute of Education.
2. Central Advisory Board of Education.
3. All India Educational Conference.

4. Museum Associations of India.
5. Indian Historical Records Commission.
6. Central Advisory Board of Archaeology.
7. All India Conference on Arts.
8. Indian Council for Cultural Relations.
9. All India Conference on Letters.
10. Indian Institute of Technology.
11. National Art Treasures Fund.
12. Central Road Research Institute.
13. Indian Academy of Dance, Drama and Music.
14. National Library, Alipore.
15. All India Council for Technology Education.
16. Central Building Research Institute, Roorkee.
17. The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research.
18. University Grants Commission.
19. Sahitya Academy.
20. Lalit Kala Academy.
21. University Education Commission.
22. Secondary Education Commission.
23. Kharagpur Institute of Higher Technology.
24. Indian Institute of Science.
25. Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore (development of Aeronautical Engineering, Internal Combustion Engineering Metallurgy and Chemical Engineering, establishment of Departments of Higher Voltage engineering, and Power Engineering).
26. Delhi Polytechnic.
27. Western Higher Technological Institute, Bombay.

The India of Maulana's dreams was a country proudly following its past traditions of enlightenment and culture but keeping itself abreast of all intellectual and scientific developments in the world". (Azad Academy Journal)

It goes without saying that the system of education which we have today largely built by Maulana Azad. On account of his selfless patriotism, indomitable courage, free and forceful tendencies and inclinations he is considered one of the builders of great India. Azad has been posthumously awarded India's highest civilian honour, "Bharat Ratna" in 1992. In 2008, November was designated as National Education Day to commemorate the birthday of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, independent India's First Education Minister. In short, Maulana Azad was a complete genius. He was, no doubt, India's Jewel and Bharat Ratna. He will remain immortal in Indian history. ■

Religious Pluralism

- S. Hamid Mohsin

The Quran's pragmatic and realistic approach to religious pluralism is really quite amazing. Far from adopting hostile attitude to the other religions, the Quran promotes acceptance of religious plurality and treats other religions with respect.

Believers of all faiths are urged to recognize that religious differences exist and will continue to exist. They are asked to put their differences aside and collaborate with each other: It emphasizes the common ground of 'doing good': values and morals that promote goodness, virtue and peace.

"Say People of the Book let us arrive at a statement that is common to us all." (Quran, 3:64)

To promote religious harmony in a world of religious plurality, the Quran provides a number of guidelines.

To begin with, the faith communities are urged not to take an extremist position:

"O People of the Book! Do not go to excess in your religion, and do not say anything about God except truth." (Quran, 4:171)

Secondly,

"They are urged to deal with each other in the best of all possible ways: when arguing about God they should argue in the 'most courteous way'. (Quran, 16: 125) and 'Say what is best.' (Quran, 17: 53)

Thirdly,

"They are advised not to abuse the beliefs of each other, "indeed even the beliefs of the polytheists." (Quran, 6:108)

Fourthly,

They are urged to avoid confrontation, or in the words of the Quran: "And the servants of All compassionate are those who walk humbly on earth, and when the ignorant speak to them, Say: "Peace be with you!" (Quran, 25: 63)

Of course, treating each other with respect, and speaking in a gentle and kind manner, is something just not enough, particularly when it concerns fundamental religious differences.

When the differences become truly conflicting, the Quran asks the Muslim believers to live and let live, declare a truce and move on:

Say: 'O unbeliever! I do not worship what you worship, nor do you worship what I worship; nor will I ever worship what you worship, nor will you ever worship what I worship, you have your religion, And I have mine.' (Quran, 109:1-6)

The most important guidance given by the Quran, however, is a riposte to people of all faiths; that God Alone knows all! ■

Defender of Islamic Identity

- Syed Shahabuddin

During the twentieth century, Muslim India has produced great Islamic theologians, interpreters of the Qur'an, scholars of Hadith, Islamic jurists, historians, propagators of the faith, social reformers and educationists, but one cannot name another Islamic scholar whose concerns covered the entire spectrum of the collective existence of the Muslim Indians as a living community in the national and international context, who, for decades, enjoyed universal respect, and who was accepted by the non-Muslims, at the highest level, as the legitimate spokesman for the concerns and aspirations of the entire community.

Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi was indisputably one of the greatest exponents of Islam in the second half of the twentieth century and because of his command over Arabic, through his writings and speeches, he had a wide area of influence extending far beyond the Sub-continent, particularly in the Arab World.

His exposition of Islam was marked by moderation. He was not a fanatic in any sense of the term but he believed in Islam as a blessing for mankind and as a positive and creative factor in human history. In a sense Islam was perceived by him as a civilizational force which retained its relevance in the modern age as a viable counterpoint to the Western civilisation with all its excesses.

The Maulana's forte was his extraordinary grasp of Islamic history. It is this historic sense of the rise and fall of Islam

in different ages and regions, which prompted him ever to take a long-term rather than a short-term, a broad rather than a narrow, view of the problems the contemporary community faced.

The Maulana was the very anti-thesis of the media image of the fire-eating, narrow minded Mullah. Orthodox as he was, he was far from being conservative in his approach. Umma-conscious as he was, his love of the motherland knew no bounds. He preached 'Jihad' to restore Muslim dominance; He stood for mutual respect, for peaceful co-existence, for human values, for establishing a social ambience based on tolerance and harmony in India and in the world at large.

The Maulana understood the spirit of age. He appreciated the role of Democracy and Nationalism. With his deep insight into the Qur'an and his understanding of the personality of the Holy Prophet, he understood the implications of a multi-religious world, a global village divided into multi-religious States.

Scion of an illustrious family which has produced scholars and spiritual preceptors like Shah Alamullah Naqshbandi and Syed Ahmad Shaheed, the Maulana's father, Hakim Syed Abdul Hai, was an eminent scholar of his time, immortalised by his encyclopaedic work, Nuzhatul Khawatir, (in eight volumes) containing about 5,000 biographical notes on Muslim scholars, theologians, jurists, etc. of India, apart from other notable works.

Syed Abul Hasan Ali was born in 1332

A.H. (1913 AD). Having lost his father at the age of nine, he was brought up by his elder brother, Dr. Syed Abdul Ali Hasani who practised medicine at Lucknow. He specialised in Arabic literature at Nadwatul Ulema, Lucknow, studied Hadith under Sheikh Husain Ahmed Madani at Darul Uloom, Deoband and Tafsir under Maulana Ahmad Ali of Lahore where he came in touch with Iqbal whose poetry left an abiding impression on him. Besides literary and theological studies, Maulana developed keen interest in Islamic history and also learnt English in order to keep himself abreast of contemporary thought. He taught Arabic literature and Tafsir at the Nadwatul Ulema for ten years.

After the demise of his elder brother, he became the Secretary of Nadwatul Ulema and subsequently as Rector he supervised both its academic and administrative management.

In 1947, the Maulana could have followed his mentor Syed Sulaiman Nadwi and migrated to Pakistan but he did not.

In his formative years, the Maulana was associated with the Jamat-e-Islami for a few years after its establishment by Maulana Abul Ala Maudoodi. Then he turned to the Tablighi Jamaat founded by Maulana Ilyas. But the Maulana's genius demanded wider horizon for its unfolding.

Spiritually a disciple of Maulana Abdur Qadir Raipuri, the Maulana belonged to the Sufi Silsila Qadiriya Naqshbandia.

Apart from his long association with Nadwa (as student, teacher, Secretary and Nazim), he served on the Shura of the Darul Uloom, Deoband, chaired the Managing

Committee of Darul Musannefin, Azamgarh and established the Academy of Islamic Research and Publications at Lucknow.

A prolific writer his works have been prescribed in the courses of study in a number of Arab Universities. His notable Arabic work Maza Khasera al-Alam b'inhitail-Muslimeen was not only widely acclaimed but also carved out a place for him in the literary circles of the Arab world. Several of his works have since been translated into Arabic, English, Turkish, Bhasha Indonesia, Persian, Tamil and some other languages.

Karavaan-e-Zindagi, his autobiography in 8 volumes, and Purane-Chiragh (life sketches of contemporary personalities), his biography of Syed Ahmad Shaheed, his biography of Hazrat Ali, (KW) and his Tarikhe-Dawat-o-Azimat are his prominent contribution to Urdu literature.

He was an Honorary Member of the Academy of Arts and Letters, Damascus and Academy of Arabic Language, Amman and served as Visiting Professor in a number of Arab Universities.

Internationally recognised, he was one of the Founder Members of the Rabita al-Alam-al-Islami, Makka, (1963), and served on the Higher Council of the Islamic University, Medina, the Executive Committee of the Federation of Islamic Universities, Rabat, and as the Chairman of the Board for the Centre of Islamic Studies of the Oxford University. The lectures he delivered at Indian, Arab and Western Universities have been highly appreciated as original contribution to the study of Islam and on Islam's relevance to the modern age.

In 1980, he received the Faisal International Award, followed by the Brunei Award and the UAE Award in 1999.

A great scholar, the Maulana was not confined to the cloister. Not involved in active politics, he never participated in party or electoral politics. He did not even join the All India Muslim Majlis, established by his protégé Dr. A.J. Faridi in 1967, as it took to electoral politics. The Maulana was one of the founders of the All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat (1964), the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (1972) and the All India Dini Talimi Council. He presided over the Milli Convention in 1979. He also extended his patronage to the Islamic Fiqah Academy and the All India Milli Council when they were established.

To promote communal harmony, the Maulana became one of the founders of FOCUS which was later transformed into Society for Communal Harmony. He also established a movement 'Payam-e-Insaniyat' to preach the gospel of universal love and brotherhood.

The Maulana valued the Constitution and the secular order as a guarantor of the Islamic identity of the Muslim community and on non-discrimination against them in various spheres of life. But he clearly saw the historic process of assimilation at work in India and the long-term objective of Hindu Nationalism to absorb the Muslim Indians into the Hindu fold. That explains his firm stand on the question of Muslim Personal Law against any interference through legislation or through judicial pronouncement and on introduction of Saraswati Vandana in Schools in UP.

The great political battles of Muslim

community during the last decades of the century were fought under his guidance. The A.I. Muslim Personal Law Board launched in 1985 the movement for legislative nullification of the Supreme Court judgement in the Shah Bano Case which the Muslim Indians saw as the thin end of the wedge for interference with the Shariat and for distorting the Islamic identity of the community. The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorcees) Act, 1986 was its fruit, though it had several in-built flaws which had landed the community subsequently in endless litigation.

With the Maulana's consent in 1986, the AIMMM and the AIMPLB took up the question of restoration of the Babri Masjid when the unlocking of its doors in January 1986 for regular darshan and puja converted it into a de-facto temple. Though he did not directly involve himself in the Babari Masjid Movement (whose Co-ordination Committee was later split to form the A.I. Babri Masjid Action Committees), he guided it at all critical points and participated in negotiations with the government as well as Hindu representatives. Subsequently to the demolition, the AIMPLB, under his president-ship took the question in its own hands including the direction of the proceedings in the title suit, the criminal case and the inquiry.

In the last decade of his life the Maulana served as the final arbiter, the last word, the Marja, the ultimate point of reference, on any intra-communal differences, even if he did not play any active role in resolving them. He counselled commitment with patience and wisdom, movement within the framework of

democracy and rule of law, and dignity and not rhetoric in utterances.

With his off-repeated commitment to the principles of Democracy, Secularism and Non-violence as the only viable foundation for the Indian polity, his constant endeavour for inter-religious dialogue and for reconciliation and harmony, he commanded universal respect for his moderation, learning and integrity, for his influence in the Muslim community and for his outreach in the Islamic world.

Assiduously sought by eminent political personalities from Indira Gandhi to Atal Behari Vajpayee, the Maulana acted as the bridge between the government and the national parties, on the one hand, and Muslim community, on the other.

The Maulana, it has been correctly observed stood for social reform, religious revival and political awakening but not for Islamic Revolution. He was realistic enough not to chase mirages or instant solutions. He saw clearly that the destiny of Muslim Indians was intertwined with that of the Indian people as a whole and that, in the age of democratic pluralism, an Islamic revolution or the restoration of Islamic power was out of the realm of possibility but it was possible for the Muslim Indians to lead an Islamic life and at the same time participate in managing the affairs of the country and contribute to its progress and development. This was the basis of his efforts to reduce the distance between the Muslims and Hindus, to demolish the wall of distrust between them and •to create bonds of understanding and co-operation in rebuilding relations on the terms of common values of the society which he saw

as being engulfed by dark forces of hatred and violence.

All his active life, with Lucknow as his base, he wandered ceaselessly, not only within the country but in' the Arab-Islamic world and the West, in a constant search, it seems to me, for reconciliation between Islam and the West, between rival ideologies in the Arab-Islamic world, between India and Pakistan and between the Hindu and Muslim Indians. Cautious in taking positions, he always looked beyond the turbulence of the time, through the flames of the current controversy. Even if he took part, his role was that of a mediator, of counseling patience, of avoiding confrontation, of appealing to reason.

A man who personified Islamic values, soft-spoken, cultured and courteous to the core, humility and modesty, patience and tolerance, moderation and balance, generosity and compassion - all Islamic values marked his personality. Neither a politician, nor a publicist, essentially a scholar a man of religion, a spiritual person, a modern Dervish, a Mard-e-Momin who combined in himself the highest values of the Shariat and the Tariqat, of orthodoxy and Sufism and who commanded respect for this transparent sincerity, for his simple living and for his selfless devotion to the common cause of the Community and the Nation, a man who lived for Allah alone and who wanted nothing but the good of all is no more.

His demise is the end of an era in the history of the Muslim India and has created a void impossible to fill in the foreseeable future. ■

AIMPLB Meets at Lucknow

- Mohd. Yosuf Alam*

AIMPL meeting was held at Darul-Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow on December 16, 2018. Maulana S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi President of the Board chaired the meeting.

Calling the triple talaq ordinance "anti-Shariyat and anti-Muslim women", the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) said it will move the Supreme Court if the ordinance is passed in Rajya Sabha during the ongoing Winter session.

On September 19, the Union Cabinet had passed the ordinance to amend provisions of the Triple Talaq Bill. It was later signed by President Ram Nath Kovind.

In August 2017, a five-judge constitution bench had set aside the centuries-old practice of instant triple talaq or talaq-e-biddat, through which Muslim men divorce their wives by uttering "talaq" three times in quick succession. The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights of Marriage) Ordinance 2018 states that instant triple talaq has been made illegal and void, and will attract a jail term of three years for the husband. To prevent any misuse of the law, the government had also included certain safeguards, such as a provision of bail for the accused before trial.

Speaking on the Ayodhya land dispute issue, Ilyas said that the AIMPLB executive committee's stand on the issue is clear. "The court's final verdict would be acceptable to us. The Supreme Court should put a restriction on speeches and comments made on the issue by influential

speakers from the other side. The government should also take notice of this..." he added.

Asked to comment on the recent 'Dharma Sabha' organised by the VHP in Ayodhya, Babri Masjid Action Committee convenor Zafaryab Jilani, who is also a member of the AIMPLB, said, "We have already said that we will obey what the Supreme Court decides. The whole country has to obey. About the Dharma Sabha, we have nothing to do with that. We have not voiced any reaction to that because it is not apt for us. However, we feel that the government should take action against those who are doing things like this. Even the Supreme Court should take note of it."

"The Supreme Court has already said that the Ramjanmabhoomi movement can be a party's movement, but it cannot be government's movement as any government here is bound by secularism, which is a basic feature of this country's constitution," he added.

Asma Zehra Sahiba, member of the AIMPLB and head of its women wing, said the board was organising seminars and conventions across the country to create awareness among Muslim women on several issues, including triple talaq.

"We have got an overwhelming response in these seminars. Muslim women have made it clear that they do not want any interference in personal laws of the Muslims," said Asma Zehra.

"We will also invite members of other communities to dispel misconceptions about Sharia," she added. ■

* Student, Department of Journalism and Languages, Nadwatul-Ulama, Lucknow-7

Appeal Regarding Construction of New Hostel

Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama is progressing well under the patronage of Hazrat Maulana S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi in disseminating knowledge of Islam. Because of heavy rush of students the institution is facing problem of the accommodation. Because of this Nadwa had to restrict the flow of students and many good students are deprived of admission. The Executive Committee of Nadwatul Ulama has since decided to build a new hostel. Foundation stone of which has already been laid by Hazrat Maulana S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi with the hope that heavenly aid will come.

New hostel will be a three-storey building with 36 rooms and two big halls so the students may live there and enjoy recreation.

A sum of rupees 3, 61,74,600 are estimated to cost this project. About four and half lakh rupees will be spent on one room.

We hope you will come forward to help Nadwatul Ulama in this project. We have firm belief that Allah will help us in achieving success in this project.

S.M. Wazeh Rasheed Nadwi

Motamid Taleem, Nadwatul Ulama

Athar Husain Khalidi

Motamid Ma'I, Nadwatul Ulama

Saeedur Rahman Azami Nadwi

Mohtamim Darul-Uloom, Nadwatul Ulama

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