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Post Box No. 93,
Nadwatul Ulama
Tagore Marg,
Lucknow – 226 007

Ph. No. : 0522-2740406

Fax : (0522) 2741221 E-mail: nadwa@bsnl.in

Rs. 25/-



The Fragrance of East

Founder:

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Asstt. Editor:

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Life is Ever Changing

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

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

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

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

Life is ever youthful,

Continuously on the move, zestful.

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

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

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

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Wisdom of Qur'an

Give to the near of kin his due, and also to the needy and the wayfarers. Do not squander your wealth wastefully; for those who squander wastefully are Satan's brothers, and Satan is ever ungrateful to his Lord. And when you must turn away from them – from the destitute, the near of kin, the needy, and the wayfarers – in pursuit of God's mercy which you expect to receive, then speak to them kindly.

(Al-Qur'an – 17:26-28)

Man should not consider his wealth his own only. Instead, after moderately meeting his own needs he should spend it on his relatives, neighbours, and other human beings who stand in need. Man's social life should also be permeated with a spirit of sympathy and recognition of the rights of others and a spirit of mutual cooperation. Relatives should be especially helpful towards each other. The 'haves' should extend to the 'have-nots' whatever they may be in a position to provide. The concept of the rights of others should be so pervasive that a person should consider those among whom he lives to have claims against him and his resources.

If a person helps others, he should do so with a feeling that he is merely discharging the obligations he owes them rather than burdening them with a debt of gratitude. And whenever a person is unable to be of any service to some needy, he should seek the latter's indulgence at his inability to do so, and should pray to God to bless him with the means that will enable him to serve others.■

Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

It is narrated by Rafa'h that the Holy Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) said: "Traders will be raised on the Day of Resurrection as wicked people, except those who had adopted the way of righteousness, goodness and truth."

(Tirmidhi)

Righteousness is the key to Ultimate Success. So the Holy Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) always encouraged his followers to adopt the way of righteousness in every walk of life. This hadith highlights the importance and significance of righteousness, goodness and truth in business.

While doing trade or business, people generally display purely materialistic mentality so much so that even the person regarded as 'religious' fail to deal justly and honestly as required by the religion. They neither care for what is permissible and what is not. Nor do they worry about honesty and truth. They are concerned only about earning money even at the cost of moral and religious bindings. But here the Holy Messenger has warned such traders that if they do not adopt the policy of honest-dealing and good moral conduct, they will have to face the fate of wicked people on the Day of Judgement. "In another hadith, the Holy Messenger said that the person who indulges in hoarding is a sinner. To hoard food grains and other commodities of daily necessity with a view to selling them at a higher price, when their scarcity in the market is causing great hardship to the people, is to take undue advantage of the people's difficulties. Islam considers this mentality criminal.■

SWEET TONGUE

How to make friends and influence people. Wise and learned persons have suggested many ways to achieve this art of living. Frankly speaking it is the tongue of a human being which plays a major role in this direction.

The psychologists are of the opinion that it is the human mind where ideas are generated and then come out of our mouth. So basically we have to train our mind in becoming a 'lovable' human being. To become an ideal person one has to speak truth and a good word. In this context let us see what Islam teaches us.

Abu Hurayrah relates that the Prophet (SAW), said:

"Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak a good word or remain silent."

The importance of this Hadith ...

This hadith discusses some of the ways a Muslim's faith should affect the way he relates to others. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani writes: "This hadith speaks about three matters, and in doing so it brings together everything that good manners entail with respect to both word and deed."

Whoever believes in God and the Last Day...

The first condition is to either speak a good word or remain silent.

Speaking a good word or remaining silent

This is an encouragement to speak what is good and beneficial; at the same time it is a warning, cautioning us to be careful in what we say, lest we say something that is harmful or false.

It is part of a Muslim's faith to speak the truth and to say things that bring about benefit to others. Allah SWT says:

"O you who believe! Fear Allah and speak a word that is right. He will set right for you your deeds and forgive you your sins. "(Quran 33:70-71)

"No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right, or bring reconciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking Allah's pleasure, then we shall grant him a great reward." (Quran 4:114)

When we have nothing beneficial to say, silence is golden. Once, Mu'adh ibn Jabal asked

the Prophet (SAW) to inform him of some good work that would admit him into Paradise and distance him from the Hellfire. The Prophet (SAW) mentioned to him the virtues of many good deeds, then said:

“Shall I inform you of the foundation of all of that?”

Muadh said: “Certainly.”

The Prophet took hold of his tongue and said: “Restrain yourself from this.” Muadh then asked: “O Prophet of Allah! Are we held to task for the things that we say?”

The Prophet replied: “May your mother be bereaved of you, O Mu’adh: Does anything topple people headlong into the Hellfire save the harvests of their tongues?”

We should avoid speaking ill of others. We should rather remain silent unless we are seeking justice for some wrong that has been perpetrated against us.

Our tongues are like double-edged swords. They can work for us and against us, both in this world and the Hereafter. We will be held accountable for what we say.

The Messenger of Allah (S) said: “The strong man is not the one who can overpower the people by his strength, but the one who controls himself while in anger.”

He (S) also said: “If any of you becomes angry, let him keep silent:”

The Messenger of Allah (S) said, “If any of you becomes angry and he is standing, let him sit down, so his anger will go away; if it does not go away, let him lie down.”

The Prophet said: “Indeed a servant will speak a word pleasing to God that he thinks to be insignificant, but because of it God raises him by many degrees. And indeed a servant will speak a word displeasing to God that he thinks to be insignificant, but because of it, He will consign him to the Hellfire.”

We must be vigilant not to speak falsehood. We must think about what we are saying and the possible consequences of our words before we go ahead and speak. This hadith encourages us to guard our tongues. A person who wants to speak should think upon what he is about to say before he utters it. If it then shows itself to have some benefit to it, he may speak it; otherwise he should refrain from doing so.” ■

S.A.

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e-mail: shariq_alavi@yahoo.com
along with a hard copy, duly signed, by post.

Ahmad Ibn Hanbal

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Metaphysics :

Muslims became conversant with the Greek intellectual patrimony in the beginning of the second century A. H. The philosophical thought of the Greeks was nothing more than an intellectual sophistry and a play upon words devoid of any content of reality. The concepts and ideas of man, limited as they are, find expression in his language which is wholly inadequate to delineate the nature and attributes of the Limitless Being. The nature of God, His attributes, His creativeness, and similar other questions do not admit of an analysis and experimentation similar to those of tangible objects nor yet of a rational explanation, if only, because man does not possess the rudimentary knowledge or the basic precepts and experiences in regard to these matters, while the entire structure of his thoughts, ideas and imagination rests on sensory perceptions. Divine revelation through His apostles is, in reality, the only means of acquiring knowledge with certitude in this respect, for it can alone provide mankind with the gnosis of Supreme Being and His attributes. Trust in the prophets, therefore, bespeaks of prudence and sound intellect. Muslims possessed the Quran and the Sunnah which provided an answer to all intellectual and spiritual questions and left no excuse for plunging into philosophical speculations. The companions of the Prophet, their successors, jurists and traditionists had all taken the same stand.

Also, Muslims were in the beginning too much occupied with the dissemination of their faith, the conquests that had brought to the fore numerous problems relating to affairs of private and social life which had to be patterned in accordance with the ethical norms of Islam, and the compilation of religious sciences. However, with the translation of Greek and Syriac works and a close contact with the scholastics, philosophers and scholars of other peoples, a section of the Muslims began to take interest in the so-called rational and intellectual interpretation of the revealed truth. These people, not content with a realistic and direct answer available in the Scriptures to the spiritual questions, which was in fact more satisfying to an intellect, deep and well-grounded, were attracted by the sophism of philosophical speculation. And the result of their endeavours was that futile controversies pertaining to the nature and attributes of God, eternal or accidental nature of His word, vision of God through corporeal eyes, predestination and free-will were started, although these were neither necessary for theological purposes nor had any utility for cultural or social advancement. These discussions had definitely a dissolving influence on the solidarity of the Ummah and were injurious to its grit and tenacity.

Mu'tazilism:

The Mu'tazilites, at the head of this group of religious philosophers, were

regarded as rationalists and dialecticians since they had made philosophical speculation a touchstone of faith and apostasy. They endeavoured, with all the wits at their command, to reconcile religion with philosophy, faith with the so-called reason; while jurists and traditionists, on the other hand, adhered to doctrinal tenets of their predecessors and considered these quibblings not only futile but harmful for the Ummah. 'Itizal did not take root till the reign of Harun al-Rashid but in the time of Mamun, who was very much impressed with the Greek thought and its rationalism owing to his upbringing and for certain other reasons, the star of the Mu'tazilites rose on the horizon. Ibn Abl Duwad an ardent propagator of Itizal and the Chief Justice of the 'Abbasid Empire, exerted his influence to make it a state religion. Mamun, who was himself a zealous exponent of the Mu'tazilite school, had the impatience of a youth and the obstinacy of an autocrat sovereign.' He made it possible for the Mu'tazilites to exercise undue influence over the whole empire.

The doctrine of the creation of the Quran was held as the basic tenet of the Mu'tazilite school which was sought to be enforced by invoking the power and influence of the state, and was made a criterion for determining one's apostasy or adherence to the true faith. This brought forth a vehement opposition from the traditionists with Ahmad ibn Hanbal spearheading the opposition movement.

Ahmad ibn Hanbal :

Ahmad ibn Hanbal was born at

Baghdad in the month of Rab'i ul-Awwal, 164 A. H. He came of an Arab tribe, 'Shaiban,' which was renowned for its courage and endurance, grit and vigour. His grandfather, Hanbal ibn Hilal had migrated from Basra to Khurasan and was appointed as Governor of Sarakhsh under the Umayyads but he was sympathetic to the 'Abbasid propaganda to supplant Bani Hashim, the descendants of the Prophet, in place of the Umayyads. After his father's death, his mother migrated to Baghdad where Ahmad was born. Although placed in straitened circumstances, his mother took pains to provide him with the best possible education. Ahmad too, being at the end of his tether, learnt to be industrious and patient, resolute and self-restrained. He committed the Qur'an to memory when still young, studied literature for some time and then enlisted in an office to gain proficiency in the penmanship.

Ahmad was virtuous and of clear conscience from his very childhood. His uncle held the post of an official reporter at Baghdad and used to send despatches to his superiors about the affairs of the city. Once he handed over a bundle of his despatches to Ahmad for being delivered to a courier, but Ahmad threw these away in the river as he thought that these would be containing secret reports about certain persons. While he was working as an apprentice in the correspondence-office, many house-wives whose husbands were out on military duty came to get their letters read out to them and replies written on their behalf. Ahmad would oblige them but he would never write anything which he

considered to be undignified or against the Shariah, It was on account of these distinctive qualities that a foreseeing individual (Haitham ibn Jamil) had predicted that if "the youngman remained alive, he would be a model for his compatriots."

In religious sciences, Ahmad paid special attention to the Traditions. In the beginning he took notes of the Traditions from Abu Yusuf and then studied for four years under a famous traditionist of Baghdad, Haitham ibn Bashir (d. 182 A. H.). During this period he also received education from 'Abdur Rahman ibn Mahdi, Abu Bakr ibn 'Ayyash and a few other reputed teachers of hadith. He was such an industrious and avid student that often he wanted to leave the home for his studies so early in the morning that his mother had to beg him to wait till the call for the morning prayer was heard and the darkness had at least faded away.

After completing his education at Baghdad he set out for Basra, Hijaz, Yaman, Syria and al-Jazirah for attending the lectures of the reputed doctors of Tradition in these places.

Ahmad ibn Hanbal met Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafe'i in 187 A. H. while on his first visit to Hijaz. He again met al-Shafe'i afterwards in Baghdad when the latter had elaborated the science of jurisprudence into a regular system and developed the doctrine of *ijm'a*. Ahmad had too acquired such a proficiency by then that al-Shafe'i used to depend on him in regard to the authenticity of the Traditions and often asked Ahmad to enlighten him

in this regard.

Ahmad wanted to set off for Ray in Iran for attending the lectures of a reputed traditionist, Jarir ibn 'Abdul Hamid but could not go because of the paucity of funds. He often regretted that if he had even ninety dirhams he would have left for Ray. Another incident indicating his high-spiritedness in acquiring the knowledge of Traditions has been related by the annalists. In 198 A.H. he decided to repair to Hijaz and then, after performing the Hajj, to Santa in Yaman for listening the Traditions from 'Abdul' Razzaq ibn Humam, One of his class-mates, Yahya ibn Ma'een, also promised to accompany him. However, when they were encompassing the Ka'bah, they happened to meet (Abdur Razzaq ibn Humam, Ibn Ma'een paid his respects to 'Abdul' Razzaq and introduced Ahmad to him. He also made a request to give them some time for learning the Traditions for him. When 'Abdul' Razzaq had left, Ahmad told Ibn Ma'een that it was not befitting for them to take advantage of the Sheikh's presence in Mecca to listen the Traditions from him. Although Ibn Ma'een pleaded that it was a boon from God that the Sheikh's presence in Mecca had saved them from a lengthy journey of two months and the attendant hardships and expenditure, Ahmad refused to listen the Traditions from 'Abdur Razzaq without having undertaken the journey to San'a. He said: "I would feel ashamed before God, if I break the journey undertaken with the intention of learning the Traditions. I would go to San'a and attend the Sheikh's lectures there". After the Hajj was over, he

repaired to San'a and listened the Traditions handed down through al-Zuhri and ibn al-Mussayyib from Abdur Razzaq. In due course of time he acquired a high reputation for his profound knowledge, particularly for his erudition with respect to the precepts, actions and sayings of the Prophet, of which he could repeat over a million. Despite his vast knowledge and prodigious memory, he had a high regard for al-Shafe'i's intelligence, grasp and deductive method of reasoning. He used to say of al-Shafe'i : "I have not seen anyone like him". Ahmad learn the-rules of jurisprudence from al-Shafe'i and later developed his own doctrine of uncompromising adherence to the text of the Traditions as a source of law. Ultimately he rose to be an eminent theologian and jurispudent, and the founder of one of the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence, which still has adherents in many parts of the Islamic world. Al-Shafe'i too held Ahmad ibn Hanbal in high esteem. While leaving Baghdad al-Shafe'i had remarked: "I am leaving Baghdad when there is none more pious and a greater jurist than Ahmad ibn Hanbal".

Ahmad ibn Hanbal began his discourses on Traditions in 204 A.H., at the age of forty. This was perhaps God ordained or a re-echo of the Prophet's call to Islam since he had been graced with the prophethood at that age. Quite a large number of persons used to attend his lectures. Annalists report that five thousand or more persons attended his lectures out of which about five hundred used to take down his discourses. People

listened to Ahmad ibn Hanbal in pin drop silence for no body could dare to talk or do anything unseemly of the respect of Traditions. The poor were given preference over the rich in his lectures. Al-Zahabi quotes Marwazi, a contemporary of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, as follows:

"I have not seen the poor and lowly being shown more deference anywhere than in the lectures of Ahmad, who used to be attentive to the poor and indifferent to the affluent. He was a man of towering dignity, of simple habits yet grave and never hasty; his countenance signified a weightiness and sublimity. He used to arrive for his lectures after Asr prayers, but remained quiet till he was requested to speak. "

Ahmad ibn Hanbal was extremely simple in his habits and led an almost ascetic life like the mentors of the old. He never accepted any gift or present offered by the Caliphs or the grandees. If his sons ever asked the reason for refusing these presents, he explained that the offerings were perfectly lawful and even Hajj could be performed from that money. He refused to accept these not because of it being prohibited but owing to the dictates of prudence. He managed to meet his expenses from the income of his ancestral fief or from his own earnings but despite his being financially hard-pressed he was very large-hearted and generous. He often said that if the entire world became a morsel in the hands of any Muslim who fed another Muslim with it, this would not be lavishness. He was not charitable in

respect of wealth alone but exhibited the same virtue even when his own- self was involved. Once a man abused and denounced him but soon came back to repent and offer his apology. Ahmad replied that he had already forgiven him before leaving the place where the incident had occurred. After enduring the tortures in connexion with his stand on the eternity of the Qur'an, he forgave all those who were involved in his sufferings including the Caliph under whose orders he had been severely scourged. He used to say: "I cannot pardon the innovator in religion but excepting him everyone who took part in my victimisation has been pardoned by me". Often he said, "What advantage would anyone derive if a Muslim was a scourged in Hell because of him?"

An incident illustrating the overflowing charity and kindly disposition of Ahmad ibn Hanbal has been related by Ahmad Qattan al-Baghdadi who says that long after the wounds inflicted by the flogging had been healed, Ahmad ibn Hanbal often had a shooting pain in his back which was caused by a growth developed as a result of the severe scourging. The physician who had treated Ahmad ibn Hanbal told al-Baghdadi that while examining Ahmad when he pressed the spot where the latter had pain, Ahmad simply said: "I seek the refuge of God from it". Similarly, when the physician opened the spot to remove the concussion, Ahmad continued to seek forgiveness for Mu'tasim till the operation was over. After dressing the wound the physician asked Ahmad ibn Hanbal: "Abu 'Abdullah, when people have to face a calamity on account

of someone else, they normally accurse him but you were invoking divine blessings for Mu'tasim?" "I too thought of it", replied Ahmad, "but Mu'tasim is a descendant of the Prophet's uncle and I do not want to cherish a feud with one of the relatives of the Prophet when I face him on the Day of Judgement. I, therefore, decided to forgo my claim against him".

Despite his high reputation and profound knowledge, never a word of self-praise was heard from him. One of his associate, Yahya ibn Ma'een says:

"I have not seen a man like Ahmad. I had been associated with him for fifty years but he never showed off his erudition".

Modest as he was, Ahmad never liked to mention his lineage although he descended from a celebrated Arab tribe, and that was considered to be a great honour in those days. Al-Zahabi has recorded an incident related by one of Ahmad's compatriots which throws light on his singular humility.

" 'Arim Abu-No'aman says: Ahmad ibn Hanbal had asked me to keep some funds in deposit out of which he used to draw amounts in accordance with his needs. Once I said: 'Abu 'Abdullah, I know you are an Arab.' To this he replied: 'What! we are destitutes.' I insisted on a reply but he evaded the answer".

After the persecution Ahmad ibn Hanbal had to undergo for his stand on the question of the creation of Qur'an, he obtained so high a reputation for his

sanctity that countless people offered prayers for divine blessings on him. Ahmad ibn Hanbal, however, felt terribly worried and uncertain. Once Marwazi, one of his disciples, told him: "A large number of people solemnly invoke the divine blessings on you."

"How do you say so ?", Ahmad exclaimed, "I actually fear punishment in the shape of divine benefits that are sometimes conferred on ungrateful sinners".

Marwazi replied, "A man has come from Tarsus who says that he was present on a battle-field in Rum when he heard suddenly cries raised from every nook and corner of the place imploring benediction in your favour. He further relates that the soldiers fired ballistas as if on your behalf and once it so happened that when a ballista was thus fired, the missile hit an enemy taking position behind a cover on the wall of the fort, cleanly blowing away both the cover and the head of the enemy".

Horried on hearing this, Ahmad exclaimed, "O God, let this not be a delusive favour from Thee".

Very often non-Muslims came to meet him from distant places. A Christian physician once visited him in connexion with his treatment. He said, "I wanted to meet you since a long time. You are a blessing not for the Muslims alone but for all the human beings. All of our friends and co-religionists have similar feelings for you".

When the physician had left, Marwazi said, "I hope that the entire

Muslim world would be beseeching divine blessings for you".

Ahmad, however, replied, "When a man happens to know his worth no adulation can deceive him."

Notwithstanding his profound humility, Ahmad ibn Hanbal had been endowed with a personality so solemn and overbearing that even the state officials, administrators and soldiers felt over-awed in his presence and could not help paying respect to him. An eye-witness reports that he had been to the Governor of Baghdad Is'haq ibn Ibrahim, and several other high-ranking officers but he did not find anyone so domineering as Ahmad ibn Hanbal. He says that he wanted to seek certain clarifications from Ahmad but he found himself in a flutter-the blood knocking in his temples, he was unable to speak in the presence of Ahmad. A reputed traditionist Ibrahim al-Harbi (d. 285A.H.) says:

"I have seen Ahmad ibn Hanbal. It seemed as if his heart was a repository of all the knowledge vouchsafed to human beings, past and present; he brought forth whatever he wanted and held back what he did not desire to divulge."

Ahmad ibn Hanbal led a life so simple and frugal that it was envied even by the ascetics. The reign of the first three 'Abbasid sovereigns of his time Mamun Mu'tasim and Wathiq, constituted a trial for Ahmad since each one of these was bent on putting him to harm. Wathiq was succeeded by Mutawakkil in 232 A.H. who

held Ahmad in high esteem, but Ahmad was far more afraid of him since he took the favours of the Caliph as a temptation to evil. Often he said that he was able to withstand the sufferings inflicted by the earlier Caliphs, but in his old age, he had to face another trial which was far more severe. The respect and deference, favours and gifts of Mutawakkil could not, however, make any inroad into the contentedness and resignation of Ahmad just as the threats and sufferings at the hands of earlier Caliphs had failed to deter him from the path enjoined by the Sunnah of the Prophet. Once Mutawakkil sent him a donkey-load of gold-pieces but he refused to accept the same. The man who had brought the present insisted on his accepting the money and implored that the Caliph would take ill if the present was refused. At last Ahmad consented to let the bag being placed in a corner. Ahmad, however, called on his uncle late in the night and asked him to advise as to what he should do with the money since he deeply regretted that he had accepted the present, and could not sleep on account of it .. His uncle advised him to wait at least till the day-break and then to dispose of it in the manner he liked best. Early next morning Ahmad collected his trusted disciples and associates and asked them to prepare a list of the poor and indigent persons. He distributed the entire amount and then gave away the bag to a destitute.

Ahmad ibn Hanbal remained a royal guest, on the insistence of Caliph Mutawakkil, for a few days. During this period he was served with sumptuous dishes, which were estimated to cost one

hundred and twenty dirhams per day. Ahmad, however, did not touch the food and kept fasting continuously for eight days. He became too weak, and, as it is reported, if the Caliph had not sent him back soon thereafter, he would have probably died. 'Abdullah, Ahmad's son, says that his father remained with the Caliph for sixteen days. During this period he took only a little parched grain reduced into paste. Mutawakkil had sanctioned stipends for the sons of Ahmad. One of his sons reports that prior to their being stipendiaries, Ahmad had no objection to accepting anything from them but he completely discontinued the practice thereafter. Once, when Ahmad was ill, a physician prescribed water extracted from parched pumpkin for him. Ahmad was advised by someone to get the pumpkin parched in the oven of his son Saleh which happened to be burning at the time, but Ahmad refused to do so. Although he was extremely cautious for his own self, he still felt uneasy in regard to the stipends received by his sons, and ultimately he told Saleh: "I want that you should foresake the allowance, for you are getting it on account of me".

Ahmad fell seriously ill at the age of 77. The number of people who daily came to see him was so large, according to the chroniclers of his time, that all the streets of the Bazar near his house were overcrowded and police had to be posted there to control the traffic. Ahmad was suffering from haematuria and the reason attributed to his illness by the physicians was that grief and anxiety had produced an ulcer in his stomach. Marwazi says that

Ahmad's condition deteriorated on Thursday. Although he had unbearable pain, Ahmad asked Marwazi to help him perform the ablution. He was so particular about it that he instructed Marwazi to pass his fingers between the toes. On Friday night Ahmad's malady grew still worse and he died the next day, on Friday, the 12th of Rab'j-ul-Awwal, 241 A. H.

Dispute regarding the Nature of the Qur'an :

Caliph al-Mamun applied himself vigorously to the task of spreading the doctrine of the Mu'tazilites about the nature of the Qur'an, who held it to be a creature rather than an eternal word of God. In Mamun's judgment, any deviation from this doctrine was worse than treason, and therefore, he issued a detailed mandate to the Governor of Baghdad in 218 A. H. severely criticising the dogmatism of the populace, particularly traditionists. He described them as noisy and turbulent sectarians lacking in true faith, unreliable witnesses and reactionaries of the Ummah. He ordered that all those officials who did not subscribe to the tenets expounded by him should be dismissed under intimation to him.

The royal edict was issued four months prior to the death of Mamun. Its copies were despatched to the governors of all dominions who were instructed to summon the leading doctors and jurists, under the employ of the State, and to test them in the fundamentals of the doctrine and to dismiss those who did not accept the Mu'tazilite viewpoint.

Thereafter Mamun issued another order to the Governor of Baghdad asking him to present before him seven reputed traditionists of the city who were opposed to the doctrine. When they came, Mamun questioned them about his dogma regarding the creation of the Qur'an. Each one of them, either from conviction or as a matter of expediency, expressed his agreement with the views of the Caliph and was allowed to go back. They were also asked to express their views in public meetings convened for the purpose but the masses remained unaffected, holding the orthodox view.

A few days before his death, Mamun issued a third rescript to Is'haq ibn Ibrahim, expounding the doctrine in still greater detail, and enlarging its scope to test all the doctors of religion along with the officials of the State. He made it compulsory for everyone to subscribe to the tenet. Is'haq convened a meeting of all the reputed doctors, asked their views about the royal dogma and reported back their answers to the Caliph. Maroun was in tantrums on reading the letter of Is'haq. He ordered that of the persons reported by Is'haq, Bishr ibn al-Walid and Ibrahim ibn al-Mahdi should be executed, and of the rest, those who still insisted on their views should be sent to him in chains. Now, four of the remaining thirty doctors, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Sajjadah, Qwariri and Muhammad ibn Nuh, remained adamant, and were thrown into prison. Sajjadah retracted from his stand the next day and Qwariri on the third. Only Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Muhammad ibn Nuh insisted upon their views and they were sent to be

presented before the Caliph in Tarsus. With these two were nineteen other savants who had refused to accept the Qur'an as created. By the time the prisoners reached Raqqa, Mamun died and they were sent back to the Governor of Baghdad. Muhammad ibn Nuh died in the way and Ahmad along with other prisoners were taken back to Baghdad.

A few days before his death Mamun nominated his brother Abu Muhammad, surnamed al-Mu'tasim b'illah, as his successor to the Caliphate with instructions to follow faithfully in the footsteps of his predecessor, especially in the controversy relating to the nature and creation of the Qur'an, and also to retain Ibn Abi Duwad as the Chief Justice and his principal adviser. Mu'tasim vigorously pursued the policy laid down for his guidance by his predecessor.

Calamity Befalls Ahmad:

Now, the responsibility to defend the conformist view and to oppose the heresy of Mu'fazilites in regard to their tenet about the Qur'an fell on Ahmad ibn Hanbal who was then held in high repute for his profound knowledge of Traditions and looked upon as a trustee of the orthodox faith as enjoined by the Quran and the Sunnah.

When Ahmad arrived at Baghdad from Raqqa, he wore four iron fastenings in his legs. He was cross-examined for four days but he did not recant his views. On the fourth day Ahmad was brought before the Governor who implored him to accept the doctrine of the Mu'tazilites. He

told Ahmad that the Caliph had taken a vow that he would not execute him but have him most severely scourged and confined in a dungeon where the Sun never arose. Ahmad, however, did not yield and ultimately he was brought before Mu'tasim. The Caliph ordered Ahmad to be given thirty four lashes. A fresh executioner was brought after every two strokes but Ahmad said after getting each whip: "I will accept if you can bring anything from the Qur'an or the Sunnah in your support".

Ahmad's Account of His Sufferings:

Ahmad ibn Hanbal has himself given an account of his sufferings in these words :

"When I reached the place known as Bab-ul- Bustan, a horse was brought before me and I was asked to get upon it. Nobody helped me in mounting the horseback and with heavy chains fastened to my legs, I had to make many attempts. I just managed somehow to save myself from falling down in these attempts. When I reached the castle of Mu'tasim, I was thrown in a small room which was then bolted. There was no lamp in the room and after midnight when I stretched my hands to touch the dust for purification before the prayers I intended to offer, I found a tumbler full of water and a basin. I performed ablution and offered the prayers. On the next day a page took me before the Caliph. The Chief Justice, Ibn Abi Duwad, and a number of his courtiers along with Abu 'Abdur Rahman al-Shafe'i were present there. Just before I was presented before

the Caliph, two persons had been beheaded. I asked Abu 'Abdur Rahman al-Shafe'i if he remembered what Imam al-Shafe'j had said about Masah. Ibn Abi Duwad remarked on this: 'Look here! This man is to be beheaded and he is making enquiries about the canons'. In the meantime Mu'tasim asked me to forward. I reached quite close to him but as I was too tired on account of the heavy chains on my body, I sat down. After I had taken rest for a while I enquired the Caliph if I had permission to ask something. The Caliph granted me permission to put the question and then I asked: 'I want to know what was it to which the Prophet of God summoned us?'

"The Caliph kept quiet for a few seconds and then replied: 'To bear witness that there is no God save Allah'.

'I do bear witness to it,' I said, and continued, 'Your great-grand father, Ibn 'Abbas, has handed down the Tradition that when the deputation of 'Abd al-Qais came to the Prophet, they enquired about the contents of the faith. The Prophet asked, 'Do ye know its reality? '. They replied, 'Verily, Allah and His Prophet know better'. Thereafter the Prophet explained, "It consists of bearing witness that there is no God' save Allah and that Muhammad is His Prophet, offering of prayers, giving of poor-due, and the remittance of one-fifth of the spoils of war to the State.'

'I would not have interfered with you, if my predecessor had not laid his hands on you', said the Caliph, and then turning to 'Abdur Rahman ibn Is'haq he remarked, 'Didn't I order you to give up

this affair ?'

I said, 'God is Great! It is a blessing unto the Muslims'.

"The Caliph then asked the doctors including 'Abdur Rahman to join in debate with me

"I answered the questions of all, one by one, until Mu'tasim exclaimed, 'Ahmad! God may have mercy on you. Think again of what you say,' To this I answered, 'O' Amir-ul-Muminin, show me something in the Qur'an, or the Sunnah and I will accept what you say,' Often he remarked, 'If he could simply say yes to me, I would set him free with my own hands and then call upon him with my nobles and army chiefs'. Once he intervened to say, 'Ahmad, I am too kind to you and love you as much as my own son, Haran. Therefore accept what I say'. My reply to all such entreaties was, 'I will accept, if you can bring forth something from the Book of God or the Traditions of the Prophet'. At last the Caliph got tired and called off the session. I was sent back to the room of my confinement.

"The next day the debate went on till late in the afternoon when the Caliph ordered to suspend the debate again.

"On the third day, I asked for a cord to fasten my chains for I had a premonition that something would happen on that day. I also fastened my trousers securely lest I should not become naked in the hour of crises. When I arrived at the court, I found the dignitaries of the empire ranged on the right and left of the Caliph's seat;

hundreds of men in splendid uniforms, some with drawn swords and others with whips standing round the Caliph; but, a number of religious doctors present on the previous two days were absent. When I reached near Mu'tasim, he ordered me to sit down and to contend with the doctors present there. I answered the questions they asked till it got late and I was taken aside. The Caliph said something to the doctors who left the court and I was again brought before Mu'tasim. He said, 'Ahmad, God may forgive you. Accept what I say and I will set you free with my own hands'. I gave the earlier answer on which he got angry and ordered, 'Take hold of his arms and stretch them till these are dislocated'. After this Mu'tasim sat down on a chair near me and called the executioners. Each man gave me two lashes while the Caliph exhorted them to give a harder stroke. After I had got nineteen lashes, Mu'tasim addressed me again and said, 'Ahmad, why do you want to get rid of your life. God knows that I have a great regard for you'.

One, Ujaif, stroked me with the handle of his sword and exclaimed: 'You want to carry all before you'. Another man remarked, 'Don't you see that the Amir-ul-Mominin is standing before you', while a third ejaculated, 'Oh, Amir-ul-Mominin, you are keeping fast and standing in the sun'. Mu'tasim repeatedly beseeched me to acknowledge his dogma but every time, I repeated my earlier reply at which he flared up and ordered to scourge me harder till I became unconscious. When I regained consciousness, I found that I

had been unchained. Someone present there told me that I had been pulled down on my face and then trampled upon. However, I do not know what they had done to me".

Firmness of Ahmad ibn Hanbal :

Ahmad ibn Hanbal was thereafter sent back to his house. He spent 28 months in imprisonment and got 34 lashes. Ibrahim ibn Mus'ab, one of the guards in whose custody Ahmad was kept, says that he had not seen anyone more courageous and brave than Ahmad, for he treated his guards no more than insects. Another person, Mohammad ibn Isma'il, says that he had heard from certain eye-witnesses who said that Ahmad ibn Hanbal was scourged so severely that one stroke was enough to make an elephant cry out. An eye-witness of Ahmad's scourging says that since the latter was keeping fast on the day, he said to him: "The Shari'ah permits you to acknowledge the tenet of the Caliph in order to save your life. But Ahmad did not pay any attention to me. When he became too thirsty, he asked for some water. A tumbler of ice-cooled water was brought which he took in his hand but returned."

One of the sons of Ahmad relates that his father had the marks of scourging on his body when he died. Abul 'Abbas ar-Raqi describes how certain people who wanted to save Ahmad of his sufferings, went to the prison where he was confined and recited the Tradition which allowed one placed in similar circumstances to save his life. Ahmad replied, "But what do you say of the Tradition handed down by

Khabbab which says that there were people of the old who were sawed into two but they did not renounce their faith". Those people got disappointed with the reply of Ahmad for they knew that, he would go through every trial and tribulation for the sake of his faith.

Achievements of Ahmad ibn Hanbal:

The undaunted courage and steadfastness of Ahmad ibn Hanbal gave a death-blow to a sacrilege which had exposed the faith to a great danger. All those who had expressed their agreement, either from fear or expediency, with the views of the Caliphate, were exposed. All such savants were despised and held in contempt despite their erudition and learning. On the other hand, Ahmad ibn Hanbal was received by the people with the most honourable marks of distinction, and affection for him became a mark and symbol of the orthodox school of Islam. One of his compatriots, Ibn Qutaibah says:

"When you find anybody setting his affections on Ahmad ibn Hanbal, you should know that he is a follower of the Sunnah."

Another doctor, Ahmad ibn Ibrahim ad-Dauraqi held that:

"Be suspicious of the Faith of one whom you find irreverent to Ahmad".

Ahmad ibn Hanbal was highly esteemed for his outstanding erudition in the science of Traditions. The compilation of Musnad by Ahmad is truly an achievement of his profound knowledge. Ahmad was also a theologian and an

eminent jurisprudent, the founder of one of the four orthodox schools of Islamic jurisprudence. He led the life of a pious recluse, but, notwithstanding all these qualities, the reason for the distinction, reputation and the affection with which he was received by the Ummah lay in his fearless championship of the true content of the faith against the most powerful empire of his time. And this achievement of Ahmad shall ever keep him endeared to the faithful, as a poet has said:

"Abraham was reputed not for raising the House of God;

For he was quite at ease in the flaming fire, was he famed."

All the contemporaries of Ahmad ibn Hanbal who had witnessed the calamity of the dispute when it ran highest, have handsomely acknowledged his unrivalled achievement. A contemporary of Ahmad and a reputed traditionist, 'Ali ibn al-Madaini' has acknowledged that:

"God Almighty had entrusted the defence of Islam to two persons whom no one can emulate: one was Abu Bakr Siddiq on the occasion of apostasy, while the other was Ahmad ibn Hanbal during the calamity of the creation of Qur'an".

Ahmad ibn Hanbal obtained so high a reputation for sanctity, that when he died in 241 A. H. the whole of Baghdad came out to pay homage to the departed teacher. The city had never witnessed such a surging crowd. His funeral was attended, according to the annalists, by a train of 800,000 men and 60,000 women. ■

Kind Treatment With the Enemies

- Syed Sulaiman Nadwi

There are many practical examples of the Prophet's kind and magnanimous treatment with his enemies. Here we give only a few examples of the world's greatest preacher of Islam.

The most suitable occasion for taking revenge on his enemies was the conquest of Makkah when he entered the city as a victor and not as a vanquished and his blood thirsty enemies were standing before him, but he granted them general amnesty.

On the day of migration, Surqaqah mounted a swift horse in pursuit of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) so that he could seize him and get the reward one hundred camels but repeated stumbling of his horse gave him a warning to desist from this evil design. He asked forgiveness and Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forgave him.

A Jewess put poison in the food of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He felt the effect of the poison and called the Jews who made the confession of guilt; but he did not say anything. He forgave the savage who had killed Hamza, his uncle.

He forgave Hinda, the wife of Abu Sufyan who tore out the heart and liver of his (the Holy Prophet's) loving uncle.

He forgave Habbar b. Al. Aswad who had inflicted severe injury to the Prophet's loving daughter Zainab (may Allah be pleased with her).

During the Treaty of Hudaibiya, a band of sixty men descended the mount of Tanim at dawn with an intention to kill the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). They were arrested; but the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) let them off.

A person intended to kill him. The companions of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) caught hold of him and brought him to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He trembled out of fear. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to him: Do not be afraid, even if you intended to kill me, you could not do so.

The people of Ta'if hooted him through the streets listening to the call of Islam and refused to give him shelter. They pelted him with stones and blood flowed down upon his legs. The angel said to him: If he desired we cause the

mountain to fall upon them. He said: No, perhaps any believer of Allah may be born from their progeny.

Once a person asked him to invoke curse, he said: I have not been sent to curse; but I have been sent as a mercy unto the worlds. Once he was returning from the battle. He passed by a plain. The sun was hot and the people were resting under the shades of the trees. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) went to sleep under the shade of a tree hanging his sword to a branch. A bedouin came there and took off his sword intending to kill him (the Holy prophet). The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was startled to see a bedouin standing on the side of his head with an unsheathed sword in his hand. He (the bedouin) said: Tell me, who can save you now from me? He said: (It is) Allah. This Impressive reply had its effect and he put the sword back into its sheath.

The Quraish confined him (the Holy Prophet) and his family in Shi'b Abi Talib so that wheat and corn could not reach them. The children cried of hunger but the callous Quraish did not listen to their cries. As against this what was the treatment which the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) accorded to the Quraish? Makkah used to receive corn from Yamama. Thumama b. Uthal the chief of Yamama had embraced Islam. He said to the

Quraish: By Allah, you will not get a single grain of wheat from Yamama until it is permitted by the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). At last the Quraish came to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and requested him to ask the chief to continue the supply. He (the Holy Prophet) sent a message and its supply was restored as usual.

It must be remembered that when there is a fight between the believers and disbelievers and the latter are bent upon striking at the very root of Islam, that alliance and friendship with the infidels is prohibited which might jeopardize the interests of the Muslims or by which Islam is humiliated or the Muslims have to suffer loss or their prestige is lowered; It has been stated in 'the Holy Qur'an:

Let not the believers take unto themselves the infidels as their friends beside the believers and whosoever does that Allah has nothing to do with him—except that you guard yourself fully against them. (3 : 28)

O ye who believe chose not your father's nor your brethren nor friends if they take pleasure in disbelief. Whoso taketh them for friends, such are wrong-doers. (9 : 23)

Love for Allah and Enmity for Allah

One may question here as to why the sentiments of hatred and enmity

could not be ended? But it is contrary to the laws of nature as love and hatred, accord and discord, pleasure and anger are ingrained in the very nature of man and all the activities, struggles and endeavours in this world are due to these two sentiments of opposite nature. If the people were deprived of these sentiments there would have no activities good or bad. It is a flame or fuel which motivates a man to action. All the hustle and bustle of this world depends upon them. It is, therefore, neither proper nor possible to curb or throw out these natural instincts and

sentiments. The only rational way which has been adopted by Islam is as to how and when these sentiments would be overcome or given vent to and that one's love and hatred, friendship and enmity, pleasure and anger should not be for any selfish cause or motive or personal benefit; but it should be to help and assist the cause of truth and to seek the pleasure of Allah. It has been said in the Holy Qur'an: Say (O Muhammad, to mankind) If you love Allah, follow me; Allah will love you and forgive your sins. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. ■

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Material World

- M. Manzoor Nomani

It is related by Shaddad that he heard the Apostle of God say: 'The likeness of this world as compared to the Hereafter is that someone of you took out his finger after dipping it into a river and then saw how much water it had brought with itself.' (Muslim)

Commentary.-It shows that the existing world is as insignificant before the world to come as the water on the finger is as compared to the river in which it is dipped. This is only a way of saying or else the present world does not bear ever as much resemblance to the Hereafter. The world and all that is in it is finite and ephemeral while the Hereafter is infinite and eternal and it is an accepted principle of mathematics that the finite and the ephemeral has nothing in common with the infinite and the everlasting. Such being the case, one who strives to the utmost for his worldly aims and interests but makes no preparation for life after death is a loser through and through.

Jabir related to us that the Apostle of God once passed by a dead and ear-cropt young goat whose earcase was lying on the road. He enquired from those who were with him at that time, "Will anyone of you like to buy this dead kid for a dirham?" We will not buy it at any price." they replied. The Prophet, thereupon, said, "I swear in the name of God that in His sight this world is as hateful and worthless as the dead kid is in your sight."

(Muslim)

Commentary.-The unbounded passion God had granted to the Prophet for the guidance -and upliftment of mankind can be imagined from the above report. The Prophet is going on the road when he comes across the dead body of a kid, and, instead of turning-his gaze away from it in revulsion and passing on quickly, he makes use of the incident to impart a valuable moral teaching to the Companions and tells them that the world is as valueless in the judgement of the Lord as the carcass of the young goat was in their judgement. They should, therefore, not make it the object of their desires and exertions but strive sincerely for the Hereafter.

It is related by Sahi bin S'aad that the Apostle of God said: "Had this world been to Allah equivalent to the value of the wing of a gnat; He would not have given a sip of water therefrom to the Infidel."

(Tirmidhi and Ibn-i-Maja)

Commentary.- Whatever the Infidels, the Unbelievers and the deniers of God and the Apostle are getting from the world [and it is a great deal, no doubt] is simply due to the fact that this world is altogether vain and valueless in the sight of God. Were it not so, He would not have given even a draught of water to the rebels and transgressors. Thus, in the Hereafter, which is of real worth and importance in the judgement of the Lord, not as much as a drop of fresh water will be given to them. ■

The Peace-Loving Attitude of the Muslims and Their Consent to Truce

- S. M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi*

This confused and convoluted situation was still persistent when Budail bin Warquaa el-Khuzai, accompanied by a group of Khuzaa'ah tribals arrived there. He wanted to have a discussion on these issues. He queried as to what was the purpose of his (SAW) visit.

The Prophet (SAW) stated that he and his companions had not come there for waging any war. We have come here, he said, only with the intention to perform U'mrah. The Quoraish are already smashed and crumbled by the battles. Should they be willing, I might enter into an agreement with them on some specific period during which they would not come in-between me and the people. Should they be willing, they might join the self-same group of people which the others have already joined. Otherwise, they would, in any case, have the opportunity to rest easy and comfortable for some time. But, in case no other alternative, but the war, is acceptable to them, then I swear by the One Who Has my life and soul in His possession, I must fight in the cause of this mission I carry (that is, the religion) till either my head is separated from my body or Allah makes His religion dominant.

When Budail, on his return, conveyed the message of Allah's Prophet to the Quoraish, Urwah bin Maswood eth-haquafi said: It is a very sound proposal that he (SAW) has proffered. My suggestion

is that you people must accept it and let me meet him. They said in unison. That is O.K. Go and have a word with him. Urwah bin Maswood came and met the Prophet (SAW). He (SAW) had the conversation started. Meanwhile, Urwah kept on casting furtive glances at the venerated companions. Such a remarkable state was which the venerated companions were in that he could not help doing that. He noticed that whenever he (SAW) spat, someone or other of companions would have the sputum received on his hands and have his face and body rubbed with it. In case he gave any orders, every one of them would rush to have it carried out. When he (SAW) performed ablution, they swooped down on the water used in ablution in such a devotional way as would arouse the fear of their getting into a fight. Whenever he (SAW) spoke; they would all be all ears. Owing to exuberance of reverence and respect, no one would dare look him (SAW) into his face. On his return, Urwah said to his comrades: O my people! I have been to the courts of the kings. I have also seen the grandeur and the glory of Caesar, Khosrau and Negus. But, I swear by God that I have seen no courtiers and comrades of any king paying him so much respect and holding him in so much reverence as do the Mohammad's companions. Telling them the details of whatever he had seen here, he said to them: It is a very good proposal that he has proffered and you people must accept it.

* Rector, Nadwatul-Ulama, Lucknow.

The Peace Treaty and Its Instrument:

In the meantime, another person from Bani Kinanah (whose name was Mikraz bin Hafs) had also arrived there. Both of them gave their eye-witness accounts to the Quoraish. Making Suhail bin. Amr their emissary, the Quoraish sent him to the Prophet (SAW). No sooner He (SAW) saw him than said: He being sent as the emissary indicates that they are willing to concile. He also said: Get the draft of the treaty prepared in black and white.

For having the draft of the treaty written down, He (SAW) summoned the scribe (who happened to be Hazrat Ali - KAW - at the moment) and said to him: 'Write down: Bismillah-er-Rahman- er-Rahim (In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Beneficent I begin ...)'. Thereupon, Suhail said: 'In so far as 'Rahman' is concerned, by God we are not conversant with it. So, in accordance with the ancient practice, do write 'Bismika Allahumma (In the name of Thee, Oh Allah, I begin ...)'. He (SAW) said: 'O.K. Do write: Bismeka Allahumma. The Muslims, thereupon, got to saying: 'No, We would write nothing but Bismillah-er-Rahman-e-Rahim:' He (SAW) said: ' No, do have Bismika Allahummah itself written down.'

Then, he (SAW) said: 'Now write: It is what the Allah's Prophet has agreed upon ... ' Hearing that, Suhail said: 'By God, had we believed that you were Allah's Prophet, should have we stopped you going to Bait-ullah? And, should have we fought with you?' The Prophet (SAW) then said: 'O.K. Then, write in its place: Mohammad bin Abdullah ...

The Prophet (SAW) said: 'Much as

you deny, (the fact remains that) I am Allah's Prophet. Do have 'Mohammad bin Abdullah' itself written down.' He (SAW) bade Hazrat Ali (RAA) to replace what was already written down. Hazrat Ali (RAA) said: 'By God, I cannot do that'- meaning to have the words "Allah's Prophet" that were already written down erase with his own hands. The Prophet (SAW) then said: 'Show me the place. Whereupon, he (SAW) himself had that erased.

The Unilateral Tough Stand Taken by the Quoraish in respect of the Truce:

The Prophet (SAW) dictated this clause to be written down in the treaty that: The Allah's Prophet hereby enters into an agreement with you on condition that you would not bar us from entering the Bait-ullah and let us have the circumambulation of it performed. Suhail said: If that happened, I am afraid the Arabs' tongues would start wagging that we have signed the treaty submissively or under duress. Hence, this clause should come into effect not this year but the next one. You may then have the circumambulation performed. The Prophet (SAW) conceded to this amendment, too.

Suhail said: This treaty should also have the provision that in case someone from our quarters comes to yours, you would turn him back to us, even if he were the follower of your religion. Hearing that the Muslims said: Subhan-Allah! What a preposterous proposition! How can we turn someone back to the pagans if he comes to us having embraced Islam?!

While this conversation was still in progress, Abu Jandal bin Suhail, son of

Suhail himself, suddenly arrived there, staggering and stumbling in fetters. He had come from the slope towards Makkah and had somehow gotten to the Muslims. On seeing his own son having come there in this way, Suhail said: O Mohammad (SAW)! Under this agreement, this is the very first person whose return I demand you to make. The Allah's Prophet said: We have yet not even completed writing down the agreement. He replied: If so, I am not prepared to come to terms on any of the points with you. The Prophet (SAW) said: Allow him just on my say-so (that is just on my personal request to you). He said: I cannot allow him even on your say-so. He (SAW) said: Then do whatever you wish to. He said: I have nothing else to do. Hearing that, Abu Jndal said: O Muslims! I have come to you after having embraced Islam. Even then I am being turned back to pagans! Don't you people see what is happening to me?! He had certainly undergone great distress in pursuing the path of Allah. Yet, considering the circumstances that prevailed, the Allah's Prophet had him returned owing to the demand made by the representative of the Quoraish.

Under this treaty, it was also agreed upon between the two parties that the both sides would refrain for next ten years from bloodshed and slaughter. That was in order to enable the people live in peace and equanimity; and, so that no one could lay hands on someone else. The other point agreed upon was that in case any one of the Quoraish gets to Mohammad (SAW), without the permission from his feudal master or the guardian, he (SAW) would have to turn him back to them. And, in case

anyone of the companions of the Prophet (SAW) gets to the Quoraish, they would not turn him back to him (SAW). In addition, it was also agreed upon that whoever wanted to get into a covenant with, and sought shelter from, Mohammad (SAW) can do so. Likewise, whoever wanted to get into a covenant with, and sought shelter from, the Quoraish would be allowed to do so. Consequently, the people of the Banu Bakr tribe became allies of the Quoraish and the people of Banu Khuzaah tribe became allies of the Muslims.

The Muslims on Trial:

On coming to know of the way the treaty was concluded and having to return, in accordance to that, without having performed Umrah and the way the Prophet (SAW) had to endure that, the Muslims got so agonized and heart-broken as it put their lives themselves in jeopardy. So much so that Hazrat Umar (RAA) came to Hazrat Abu Bakr (RAA) and got saying to him: 'Aren't we in the right and these infidels in the wrong?' 'Of course, it is so', said Hazrat Abu Bakr (RAA). 'Why, then', said Hazrat U'mar (RAA), 'we are having to swallow this humiliation in a matter that pertains to religion? And hadn't the Prophet (SAW) said to us that we would go to Bait-ullah and have its circumambulation performed?' He said: 'Yes. He (SAW) had said so. But, had he (SAW) said that you would go to Bait-ullah this very year and have its circumambulation performed? He is Allah's Prophet. Keep yourself tied to his apron strings.' Hazrat U'mar then had a similar word with the Prophet (SAW) and he, too, expostulated with him in the same way.

Later, Hazrat U'mar (RAA) used to lament this demeanour committed on his

part. He felt the angst that why did he say even that much on this occasion. Overwhelmed by this very angst, he performed many charitable deeds in order to have what he felt was a misdemeanor and misconduct on his part redeemed. He had, perhaps, in his mind that verse of the holy Quran whereby occurrence of vacillation in the heart even about the judgment made by the Prophet (SAW) has been proscribed:

(... and then find no vexation in their hearts with that which thou hast decreed, and they submit with full submission.)

(An-Nisaa : 65)

And, that was exactly the wont of all the venerated companions of the Prophet (SAW) including Hazrat Umar (RAA). No digression had ever occurred in it. They had full faith in that the Prophet's (SAW) word and deed were all Divinely guided, and that there was no scope of having any vacillation about them. And, that is the instruction imparted to all the Muslims forthcoming up to the Doomsday.

On having finished with the Peace treaty, he (SAW) said to the Muslims: Have the animals brought by you with you for being sacrificed in Mina sacrificed here itself. The Muslims were at their wit's end as to what was happening and why. Hence, they could not get exactly what was the purport of the Prophet's (SAW) diktat. Was it what they heard or was it something else? For, there had been no past precedence of having the animals meant for sacrificing in Mina sacrificed even before reaching Makkah. They did not, therefore, come forward to make the sacrifices. Getting the

impression that the Muslims were, perhaps, not obeying him, the Prophet (SAW) got very worried and anguished. Could it be that the Muslims were shirking from complying with the orders of their Prophet?, he wondered. With this impression and angst in heart he (SAW) entered his tent. It was the Prophet's (SAW) venerated wife, Hazrat Umm-e-Salemah, who had accompanied the Prophet (SAW) on this occasion. He (SAW) mentioned to her what was he (SAW) feeling at heart. She said: O Allah's Prophet! It is not the disobedience. It must be due to the impact of the severe shock their minds have had that they are not getting it right. Hence, you start yourself making the sacrifice. That would get their minds quickened. Hence, the Prophet (SAW) betook himself to the animals meant for the sacrifice and started slaying them. Thereafter, he (SAW) had his head shaven. For the Muslims, this incident was not less than a calamity. For, while leaving Madinah they did not have the slightest apprehension of their not having the opportunity of getting to Makkah and having the U'mrah performed. Instead, they would have to do, against their own will, something disgraceful and humiliating to them. That was something on account of which, they used to lay down, unscrupulously, in their pre-Islamic days, their own lives, as well as would take others, too. But, on seeing the Prophet (SAW) making the sacrifices and getting his hair shaved, they got up hurriedly and, following the Prophet's (SAW) suit, got busy with making the sacrifices and having themselves shaved. For, they knew at heart-strings that they cannot go against what the Prophet's practice was.■

A Forgotten And Misunderstood Hero

- Sirj Ur Rahman

Tipu Sultan was born on November 10, 1750 at Devanahalli, in the outskirts of Bengaluru and was the ruler of Mysore from 1782 till his death in 1799. Tipu Sultan, a great warrior and freedom fighter who was instrumental in mounting resistance against the mighty British, is being unnecessarily dragged into controversies in Karnataka by the BJP and other saffron outfits. Falsehood is being spread by the media outfits owing allegiance to the BJP and the saffron parivar to defame the personality and character of Tipu Sultan. The opposition to Tipu and his rule from Saffron fringe elements clearly indicates their level of ignorance of the real history of India in general and Mysore region in particular. The need of the hour is to understand the contribution and sacrifices of Tipu Sultan in the right perspective.

NEGATIVE ROLE OF WESTERN HISTORIANS

After the Battle of Plassey in 1757 the British established control over most parts of North India. They expected an easy control of the South by defeating the Mysore Ruler Tipu Sultan. But the resistance from his side was surprisingly great. To counter Tipu's morale the British launched misinformation campaign against him, his policies and especially the treatment with Hindus. They ignored most of his achievements and focused only on distorted facts to support their unfounded theories and ulterior motives.

Many of the Western writers and researchers who wrote history have heavily relied on the British version of the events of Tipu's Rule. The effects of that distortion of historical facts can be seen even today. RSS and its outfits that believe in their supremacy and practise marginalisation of Muslims and other minorities consider the British version of Tipu's Rule as gospel truth and form opinion and disseminate the false propaganda against Tipu and Muslims to malign and disempower them.

EMINENT HISTORIANS ON TIPU SULTAN

Contrary to the views of western historians, there are several other historians who have done an authentic investigation of historical facts and collected credible information about Tipu Sultan and his rule. Some such historians include Bhagwan S Gidwani, Prof. Abdul Moghni, Naseem Hijazi, Mahmood Khan Mahmood, Prof. B. Shaik Ali and Irfan Habib. They have put their blood and sweat in doing a thorough research to collect facts and authentic information to document and write the history of Tipu's regime. Unfortunately some of the present day Hindutva-influenced historians and writers have not even taken a note of these great authentic works.

Irfan Habib, who is a Professor (Emeritus) of Aligarh Muslim University and

also an eminent historian who has authored two books on Tipu Sultan, has said, "It would be unfair to dub Tipu Sultan as a tyrant. He was an important figure in India's resistance to British." With regard to the allegation which RSS and BJP are making against Tipu, Habib said, "That kind of attack on his character was not even made by the British." Even some of the present day historians commend Tipu's achievements. Rohit Wanchoo, who is the head of the Department of History at St Stephen's College, Delhi and Tasneem Suhrawardy, an Associate Professor of History in the college, described Tipu as an important figure in the resistance to British expansion in South India. Tasneem Suhrawardy has also expressed concern that there was a whole attempt of looking at history from a certain kind of perspective which is not historical. Everything is being looked at from a communal perspective.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF TIPU SULTAN

Tipu Sultan respected all religions. He did not discriminate against people on the basis of religion. Many Hindus had been given important portfolios in his rule. Former Vice Chancellor of Mangalore and Goa Universities Prof. B. Shaik Ali says, "Those disparaging Tipu Sultan for communal reasons should be aware that he made numerous gifts to temples, notably the Srikanteshwara temple at Nanjangud and Sri Ranganathaswamy temple at Srirangapatna, donated 10,000 gold coins to complete the temple at Kanchi, and settled the disputes between the two sects of priests at the Melukote

temple, while his several letters to Sringeri Shankaracharya speaks volumes of his respect to Hinduism.

INNOVATIONS IN TIPU'S RULE

Tipu was far ahead of his time. He came out with creative solutions to the problems. He was very progressive and development-oriented. He had an innovative mindset which enabled him to develop rocket technology to be used in warfare. In fact, he is credited with the development of rocket technology in warfare. Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, former President of India, during his visit to NASA, found a painting which depicted Tipu's rocket in action.

His Excellency Ram Nath Kovind, President of India, on October 25, 2017 speaking at a special joint session of the state legislature at Bangalore described Tipu Sultan as the innovator of the world's first war rocket. President Kovind said, "He was a pioneer in the development and use of Mysuru rockets in warfare. This technology was later adopted by the Europeans." He further emphasised that Tipu Sultan died a heroic death fighting the British.

ALLEGATION OF HINDUTVA BRIGADE

A few fringe outfits of Hindutva brigade level false allegations against Tipu and state that during his rule there were large scale religious conversions, destruction of temples and attacks on Hindus. All these allegations have not been proved. The fact that these temples still exist in good condition and Hindus are

still enjoying majority in the region, shows that the above allegations are false and are the figment of imagination of biased minds. Reacting to the false allegation by communal elements, Prof. Shaik Ali said, "The present prejudice against Tipu Sultan was a fallout of the bias of colonial historians because Tipu had challenged the British paramountcy in India."

With regard to opposition to Tipu and his rule by some vested interests, Prof. B. Shaik Ali, who is an authority on the subject, says such notions are rooted in ignorance of what Tipu really was and the need of the hour is a sober analysis to throw light on his persona and character to see him in different perspective. As a reformer, Tipu abolished liquor, promoted State enterprise, introduced silk and tried to abolish feudalism.

With regard to misperception about his treatment with Hindus, he said, "While Tipu Sultan's treatment of Hindus is perceived to be harsh, not many are aware that Tipu Sultan's treatment of Muslims was equally stern. The Mappillas of Malabar, Nawabs of Savanur, Cuddapah and Kurnool were inflicted severe treatment for their disloyalty and it was purely political in nature. One cannot ascribe communal or religious motives to it and Tipu Sultan was more hostile towards the Nizam than towards the Marathas."

Prof. Abdul Moghni (2015) feels that to defame and distort the personality of Tipu, British historians did not leave any stone unturned. They made all possible

allegations against Tipu to support their prejudiced minds.

Bhagwan S Gidwan (1976) describes and says Tipu was not just fighting a battle for Mysore but was fighting on behalf of the entire Country. Naseem Hizaji (1958) is of the opinion that before the arrival of Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan, Mysore was not a well-known place. Within a few years of their rule they dominated the history of India. The son of the soil who first rose and gave the slogan India is for Indians is none other than Tipu Sultan, asserts Mahmood Khan Mahmood (1939).

TIPU JAYANTHI IN KARNATAKA

The Government of Karnataka under the dynamic leadership of Siddaramaiah in 2015 decided to celebrate Tipu Jayanthi every year on November 10. Since then the government has been celebrating the event despite the opposition from some right wing activists. Tipu Jayanthi is not new in Karnataka. For hundreds of years it has been organised at Srirangapatnam in Mysore. Several NGOs and social welfare organisations have been conducting the ceremony for hundreds of years. Innumerable educational institutions are being run in the memory of the great ruler. Every day one can witness thousands of people belonging to different faiths visiting the mausoleum of Tipu Sultan at Srirangapatnam and paying their respects. All these things would not have been possible if Tipu lacked an impeccable character.

Communal elements run dedicated media cells to spread disinformation campaigns during Tipu Jayanthi. They use all forms of media, including social media to generate corrupt thoughts and malign the achievements of Tipu. Some BJP leaders last year defied their party line of thinking and openly took part in Tipu Jayanthi celebrations in Karnataka. The more the communal forces attempt to malign Tipu the more has been the zeal among the young people who love and admire to celebrate the Tipu Jayanthi.

PATRIOTISM NEEDED TO UNDERSTAND TIPU'S ROLE

Only a mind filled with patriotism can see the patriotic values and greatness in others. Hence to fully understand and appreciate the great contribution of Tipu Sultan, people who love freedom and demonstrate patriotism can only understand him. A mind which is full of prejudice and unsubstantiated, corrupt ideas and thoughts fail to see the reality. This is what the opponents of Tipu in the country are currently doing. Tipu has showed the world how to defend the motherland, with patriotic fervour.

A LEGEND FREEDOM FIGHTER

Communal forces must understand that Tipu's martyrdom cannot be erased from the memories of peace-loving people of India. His character was impeccable as has been acknowledged even by his enemies. His love is deeply entrenched in the hearts and minds of

secular and sighted people. Tipu continues to remain in the hearts and minds of all patriotic people in India who are aware of what patriotism really means. This is the reason why so many people take inspiration from Tipu. He truly deserves the honour of being the first Indian freedom fighter and the one to resist the British army. He fought with the British at a time when no other Indian king had the guts to challenge the might of the British Empire.

All other kings who were obsessed with protecting themselves, their wealth and their kingdoms, ultimately became agents of the enemies of India, the British. In these circumstances only Tipu single-handedly resisted the British. This indicates who was really patriotic – Tipu who fought till his last breath or other rulers who joined the British side, those who collaborated with the British or the one who fought till his last breathe to defend the nation.

Tipu's patriotism, contribution and struggle for defending the country gives him such a great honour and respect which is unparalleled in the history of Modern India. His life has inspired many freedom fighters and social activists. People who love Tipu and believe in his ideals must use their written and oral communication skills, social media and researches to remove misconceptions and misunderstandings among some sections of people so that every Indian respects Tipu for his great achievements.■

Indian Clerics Exodus*

- Seema Alavi*

SOON AFTER the mutiny-rebellion of 1857 that shook British rule in India, Haji Imdadullah Makki, the Muslim holy man from north India, took refuge in the house of his disciple Rai Abdullah Khan, a zamindar in the Ambala district. Wanted for his role in the 1857 unrest, he was on the run from the British police, who were hot on his trail with an arrest warrant. As he sat hiding in a small shed next to Rai Sahib's horse stable, the police zeroed in on him. On the pre- text of buying a horse, they ordered that they be let into the stable and the adjoining shed. Rai Sahib shuddered as he envisaged the penal consequences he would face if the holy man were discovered in his house. But when the door was unlocked, all that the police found there were a prayer mat spread out on the bed and a water pot with water for drinking and ablutions. There was no trace of Haji Imdadullah Makki. Rai Sahib was visibly moved by this supernatural deed of his revered guest. The police made some inquiries and left, apologizing for the inconvenience they had caused Rai Sahib. When a much-relieved Rai Sahib reentered the shed, he found Haji Imdadullah sitting on his prayer mat,

completing the last recitation of his prayers.

A few days after this incident, Imdadullah bid a tearful adieu to his disciples and fellow scholars and started on his journey to Mecca, where he wanted to seek permanent refuge. From the Punjab, via Pak Patan, Hyderabad, and Sindh, in western India, he reached the port of Karachi. Here he boarded a ship to escape to Mecca.

In the 1860s, his fellow scholar Maulana Jaffer Thanesri, also convicted of supplying money and men to the 1857 rebels, was not as lucky. He was convicted, arrested, and deported to the penal colony in the Andaman Islands. He described his journey to the Andamans as follows:

After two days we were made to board a pedal boat on the river Sindhu, 5 Kos from Multan. We sat in rows with our shackles and handcuffs ... and reached Kotarsi. From here we boarded a train to Karachi ... After a week in Karachi we got into a sailing boat called Baglah to go to Bombay. The first thing that struck us was the sea and a range of ships.

According to Thanesri, the port at Bombay was like a "jungle of ships." He noted:

* Excerpted from *Muslim Cosmopolitanism In the Age of Empire* (Harvard University Press)

** Professor (History) Delhi University, Delhi-7

The ship that carted us from Bombay to the Andamans was owned by the English ... its entire staff of orderlies and officers were white. And none of them understood Hindustani. The only interlocutor was one Anglophone convict called Motilal Babu. The English spoke only to him. I did not understand a word of English. There were separate diets for the Muslims, Hindus and Punjabis. There was dry fish, rice and lentil for the Muslims, gram for the Hindus, and wheat bread for the Punjabis.

His excitement on seeing the sea and myriad ships at the Bombay port became one of the most electrifying moments of his journey. Thanesri was surprised to find that the ship had Muslim orderlies. He was not at all surprised when in his words, "They showered us with utmost hospitality when they realized that we were religious scholars."

At about the same time, a very revered scholar, Maulana Rahmatullah Kairanwi, similarly hounded by the police for his 1857 anti-British activities, made a successful escape to Mecca. He, too, had an arrest warrant issued for him, and an award of RS.1,000 was offered for anyone who gave information about him. He disguised himself, changed his name, and left on foot from his home in Kairana, near

Meerut, for Delhi and then proceeded to Surat. From there he took a sailing boat to Jeddah. His huge estate in Kairana, where both his family and workers lived, was confiscated by the British and put up for auction.

The British clampdown on Muslim men of religion after the 1857 mutiny-rebellion saw many fugitives like Imdadullah Makki, Thanesri, and Kairanwi sail across the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal to escape the arm of British law. Since the 1830s, the port city of Bombay had become a popular gateway to Mecca, Cairo, and Istanbul for scores of Muslim notables and religious scholars. As these men fled India following the northwest frontier disturbances that had made the British suspicious of men of religion, ships from Bombay carted them across the Indian Ocean to Ottoman cities." In the decades that followed 1857, many fugitive scholars with arrest warrants avoided Bombay for fear of being caught and instead boarded ship from Surat. But those that did visit Bombay were mesmerized by its charm. Its sailing ships excited them, and the sheer scale and number of docked ships waiting to depart intimidated them, invoking the metaphor of the jungle. Additionally, they were worried about the direction of the wind, which determined whether these ships would even be able to sail across the Indian Ocean. On board, the Muslim orderlies of the

English ship owners introduced them to the new dynamics of the British-Indian relationship.

Crossing the seas was hazardous as well as enchanting. It transformed lives for good. The ships that carted these Muslim holy men and religious emigres offered them the material experience of travel in the Age of Empire. Sea journeys afforded them access to the long standing mercantile networks between the Ottoman and British Empires. These networks, though increasingly controlled by the diplomatic efforts of legal and political experts, intersected with the web of brokers, agents, entrepreneurs, pilgrims, and holy men, as well as the families of religious scholars. The journey across the Indian Ocean familiarized them also with imperial fault lines, particularly as enacted in anti – British protests in Jeddah and Cairo, and also with Islamic intellectual hubs in the Mediterranean world, all of which they tapped to further their agendas and widen their political vision.

The fact that the imperial networks that connected British India with Ottoman cities facilitated much of this port life made the ship itself the conduit to the new and exciting world that was being forged between empires. Its importance as a critical connector that lent a special agency to the individual was heightened by the conjunctural moment at the end of the century-a

moment that brought existing commercial links between the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean worlds in close correspondence with shared anti-British sentiments, and at the same time elicited a call for individual moral reform to meet the challenges of the age.

The easy mingling of the seafaring cultures and the religious, economic, and political networks that were specially visible at harbors and ports is an apt metaphor for the cosmopolitanism that each of the emigres that this book discusses embodies-each in his own specific way. Harbors and ports from where emigres departed (like Bombay, Surat, and Karachi on the western coast of India) and cities where they relocated (Mecca, Cairo, and Istanbul) are the obvious sites of this conjuncture. Within India, the penal colony at the Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal, where the arrested convict emigres were lodged, constituted the eastern, sea-facing site of their cosmopolis; and the rugged northwestern frontier bordering Afghanistan, where many of them collected to strategize, constituted its nonseafaring end. It is across these sites that scholar fugitives and unlucky convicts constructed a vast cosmopolis, both within India and in the interstices of the British and the Ottoman Empires. This book explores the specific kind of cosmopolitan sensibility that defined this new cosmopolis, which was itself

sustained by international trade and the economic networks that stretched across the Indian Ocean.

It details the making of this sensibility via the stories of five Indian Muslim men of religion who were on the proverbial “wrong side” of the 1857 mutiny-rebellion against British rule in India. These included a famous Moplah rebel of Arab origin and Sufi background in the Malabar region of south India accused of murder and rioting in the 1852 Moplah revolt; two clerics known for their provocative public debates with Christian missionaries on matters of religion; the nawab of the princely state of Bhopal, accused of writing seditious religious literature; and a rabble-rouser reformist activist from the Punjab. Condemned as “outlaws” or “fanatics” by the administration, they escaped from India and moved across the Indian Ocean world. Once outside the borders of British India, their stories fell off the pages of South Asian history. This book picks up where other stories end and shows how the 1857 experience moved across empires via refugees and emigres. It picks up their trail as they dispersed and networked across various imperial fault lines in the decades that followed 1857.

It analyzes their journeys as they traveled out of India, either literally or in their imagination, and paused at the Asian intersections of nineteenth-century empires. The constellation of

the British and Ottoman Empires is viewed as an “imperial assemblage,” and it provides the context within which to study Muslim interconnectedness as forged by these emigres. Bringing together their biographies, written reflections, journeys, images of the port city and of their lives on the ship, intellectual networks, and imperial politics, the book highlights the ways in which “runaways” carved out a Muslim cosmopolitanism at the cusp of the British and Ottoman Empires.

This cosmopolitanism was partly “traditional” in that it derived from the Koran’s precepts and from the prescriptions of the Hadith (Traditions of the Prophet), it invoked the Islamic principle of consensus to reconcile cultural differences among Muslims, and it positioned itself in the “Islamicate” centers of Cairo and Istanbul and in the Islamic heartland of Mecca. However, this cosmopolitanism was also “new” because it built on an Ottoman imperial vision as articulated in the global aspirations of Caliphs Abd-al Aziz (r. 1861-1876) and Abd-al Hamid II (r. 1876-1909), who were the patrons of many of these Indian emigres. And it use the printing press and Ottoman intellectual energy as deployed by the reformist bureaucrats and moderate ulema in response to the political and financial crisis faced by the empire. The reformists advocated political and moral reform in sync with contemporary ideas of science, reason, and rationality.

These men, ousted from the core of the empire by Abd-al Hamid II, who had little patience with them, located themselves in its Arab provinces, where most Indian emigres landed. At the same time, Muslim cosmopolitanism also remained dependent on British imperial webs, transportation systems, and modes of communication and information dissemination. This transimperial cosmopolitanism was articulated as a cultural and civilizational view: a universalist Muslim public conduct based on consensus in matters of belief, ritual, and forms of devotion.

This cosmopolitanism was unique because it conceptualized the Muslim cosmopolis as an intellectual and civilizational zone that transcended political borders, territorial confines, and cultural particularities. And yet its protagonists were very aware of its imperial framing. They sought to encompass the “imperial assemblage” within their capacious global cosmopolis. Self-driven and career oriented, its creators were individuals who were well aware of its specific socioeconomic dependence on imperial networks and the imperially framed commercial world that sustained them.

This cosmopolitanism was neither pan-Islamic in a caliph-centric way nor entirely anti-British. Its protagonists were as much a part of the Ottoman liberal reformist circles as they were aware of their dependence on imperial

networks. Indeed, it was the entanglement of the Muslim cosmopolis and world empires that made this cosmo-politanism attractive to Caliph Abd-al Hamid II, who used it as the bedrock of his pan-Islamism. It was neither inspired by Western Enlightenment, nor was it a component of secular, “colonial modernity.” This was a cosmopolitanism of the age of empires that had its own claim to a universalist ethics and even notions of hospitality (pace Kant), but based on Islamic scripture and a tanzimat-inspired notion of proper public conduct, and embedded in nineteenth-century imperial politics and economic frames of reference. It at once transcended imperial borders in unconventional ways and yet was derived from them. Indeed, it did not reject entirely the territorial borders that continued to define the identity of its protagonists. This is precisely why the twentieth-century nation-states that altered both international commerce networks and recast the imperial terrain in new avatars offered a space where elements of this cosmopolitanism could linger, waiting for the right moment to ignite. Indeed, it soon became the basis of a global Muslim sensibility that competed with the increasing power of the idea of the nation in the period of high nationalism. Hence we may think of it as the basis for or the prehistory of the idea of transnationalism in the twentieth century. ■

Needed : Real Democracy

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

India is a democratic country. Here parliamentary form of the government is based on democratic principles. It is one of the largest democracy in the world. The term democracy is derived from the two Greek words 'demos' and 'kratia'. These two together mean 'authority of the people'. Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president of USA, has precisely defined democracy. He held democracy as 'the government of the people, by the people and for the people'.

Being citizens of a democratic country our role becomes highly crucial. Moreover, we have a pluralistic society, people of different caste, creed, religion, language and culture live together as one nation. A vast country, India's main plank is its national integration: all initiatives in the country should, therefore, focus on this reality and be done irrespective of any parochial consideration.

In the wake of a rash of provocative remarks after the lynching of a man in Dadri over rumours of beef consumption, former President Pranab Mukherjee underlined that diversity, tolerance and plurality are core values that have kept India together and must never wither away. "We should not allow the core values of our civilisation to wither away. Over the years, our civilisation has celebrated diversity, plurality and promoted and advocated tolerance. These values have kept us together over the centuries,"

"Many ancient civilisations have collapsed but the Indian civilisation has survived because of its core civilisational values and adherence to them. If we keep them in mind, nothing can prevent our nation from forging ahead. Indian democracy is a marvel and we must celebrate, preserve and promote its strengths."

He further said: "The real dirt of India lies not in our streets but in our minds and in our unwillingness to let go of views that divide society into 'them' and 'us', 'pure' and 'impure'. We must make a success of the laudable and welcome Swachh Bharat Mission. However, this also must be seen as just the beginning of a much larger and intense effort to cleanse minds and fulfil Gandhiji's vision in all its aspects," Given the current raging debate over intolerance in India, Mukherjee cited Gandhiji's vision of India as "an inclusive nation where every section of our population live in equality and enjoy equal opportunity" and "the essence of being human is our trust of each other".

In his book "*India's Foreign Policy*" Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India writes: "The Preamble of our constitution states: we, the people of India, having solemn resolved to constitute India into a sovereign Democratic Republic and to secure to all its citizens: Justice, social, economic and political; liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship, equality them all fraternity

assuring the dignity of among them all fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation”.

Despite this fact minorities are confronted with a host of difficulties and problems regarding their religious issues and affairs. In a democratic country, if people’s feelings are hurt and they are deprived of their fundamental rights and basic amenities of life, it is nothing but a travesty of democracy.

Being Indians, it is imperative for us to maintain its unity, integrity, and democratic values and norms by fostering national integration and propagating the message of humanity throughout India. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad has rightly said: “I am proud of being an Indian. I am part of the indivisible unity that is Indian nationality. I am indispensable to this noble edifice and without me this splendid structure of India is incomplete. I am an essential element which has gone to build India. I never surrender this claim”. (Presidential Address, Indian National Congress. Fifty third Session, Ramgarh, March 1940) He further said: “If an angel were to descend from the high heavens and proclaim from their heights of the Qutub Minar, “Discard Hindu-Muslim unity and within 24 hours Swaraj is yours”, I will refuse proffered Swaraj but will not budge an inch from my stand, the refusal of Swaraj will affect only India while the end of our unity will be the loss of the entire human world”.

M.K. Gandhi says: “My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the

strongest. That can never happen except through non-violence”. (Harijan, 18-5-1940)

He further says: “True democracy cannot be worked by twenty men sitting at the centre. It has to be worked from below by the people of every village”. (Harijan, 18-1-48)

Needless to add that members of Parliament (MPs) are expected to play a leading role in bringing about democratic values in the country. They are representatives of their respective constituencies. They should be honest, straightforward, candid and bold.

Interestingly, politicians try to surpass each other as to how to reach the spot of incident to gain political mileage. Instead attention should be paid by them as to how combat terroristic and disruptive forces which threaten the country’s unity and integrity and try to rip the social fabric of the country to shread. Every party strives to strengthen its own vote bank instead of taking interest on national issues.

It should be kept in mind that India has far lagged behind due to corruption, scam and other so-called unfair and unscrupulous acts economically and financially. We know well who are responsible for it.

The most unfortunate part is that political parties exhibit disloyalty and dishonesty and show negligence and lethargy in country’s progress and prosperity. Arvind Kejriwal Chief Minister of Delhi has precisely stated: ‘Time has

come to question representative democracy and move towards direct or participatory democracy in some measure on critical issues, an MP should consult the people of his constituency through Gram Sabhas and Mohallah. He should present the voice of his people in parliament and not his High Command's wishes. People should be able to recall him if he did not do that. On many occasions, there is a serious conflict between the desires of the people and the wishes of the party High Command. Today, it is the wishes of the party High Command that prevail. In true democracy, it is the wishes of the people of India that would prevail".

No doubt, to a great extent the future of the country depends on our legislators and politicians. If they mend themselves and perform their duties with integrity, the country will make progress. No development will occur in the country sans their integrity and honesty.

We may recall here late Rafi Ahmad Kidwai. M.H. Kidwai writes: "Till the first general election of 1952 the country was facing the worst food problems. There was acute shortage of food-grains. The Food Portfolio was the most difficult one and had proved to be the graveyard of reputation of many stalwarts in the past. Rafi Ahmad was given this portfolio in May 1952 and he performed the miracle within a short time. Instead of shortage there was a plenty and abundance of food-grains, prices began to fall and control was withdrawn and the whole situation was

miraculously changed. The solving of the food problem of the country was the greatest achievement of Rafi". (*Muslims and India's Freedom Movement*, P.160)

Let us recall the pray of noted poet Rabindranath Tagore for building up India a true nation.

"Where the mind is without fear

And the head is held high

Where the world has not been broken
up

By narrow domestic walls;

Where words come out from the depth
of truth.

Where tireless striving stretches its
arms towards perfection.

Where the mind is led forward by Thee
into ever widening thought and action

Into that heaven of freedom my Father

Let my country awake."

It is unfortunate that India's democratic values and norms are fading day by day. Regionalism, castisms, favouritism and groupism raising their ugly heads to distort the social fabric of our beloved mother land. No doubt, these are negative tendencies that cause conflicts, clashes and communal riots in the country. Besides they diminish national feelings and damage our national cherished desires. In short, we can not achieve all this, until and unless we work together to make India a democratic country in true sense. ■

AIMPL's Session in Hyderabad

- Mahtab Alam*

A three-day plenary session of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board was held in Hyderabad from 9-2-2018 to 11-2-2018. Over 500 scholars and prominent leaders representing all Islamic schools of thoughts attended the event.

AIMPLB General Secretary Maulana Wali Rehmani, in his report at the 26th plenary of the Board, expressed concern over "the threat to the personal law with the instant triple talaq legislation being enacted" by the Central government. "It is against the fundamental rights guaranteed in the Indian Constitution and also against the previous court verdicts," he said.

Appreciating the stand taken by Opposition parties in the Rajya Sabha, where the bill was stalled, Rehmani requested the Personal Law Board to guide the Muslims in this regard. He also asked the plenary to evolve a strategy to stop the Centre from passing the bill.

Rehmani, without naming anybody, also said misleading rumours were being circulated about an out of court settlement of the Ayodhya dispute.

Reiterating the stand taken by the Board in the past — "Once a Masjid, always a Masjid." — Rehmani added, "That does not mean we are not against negotiations, but they should be based on fair justice and honour."

On the issue of social reforms, Rehmani said a lot of awareness was being created among Muslims with a movement called "Tahaffuz-e-shariat-wo-Ishalahai-Mushira"

(Protection of Sharia law, understanding Sharia law and social reforms).

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) rejected the possibility of any kind of settlement on the land "dedicated to the Babri Masjid" at Ayodhya, stating that such a move would violate the basic tenets of Islam.

"The resolutions passed by the Board in December 1990 and January 1993 remain unchanged. The land dedicated for the masjid at Ayodhya cannot be sold, gifted or — in any way — alienated. If once dedicated, it vests in Allah," the AIMPLB, which is the apex body of Indian Muslims, resolved at its executive committee meeting held as part of a three-day plenary that began in Hyderabad.

The executive committee of the AIMPLB said all past attempts to arrive at a settlement were infructuous, and there was no proposal that offers a settlement without sacrificing the basic tenets of Islam before the Board. AIMPLB secretary and spokesperson Zafaryab Jilani said: "There is no change in our stand. Only SC verdict in the case will be acceptable to the Board. We had made our position clear in April also soon after the SC suggested that attempts should be made at for a negotiated settlement. Our position remains the same."

The Supreme Court declared the Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi issue as a land dispute, stating that it does not intend to allow any third-party intervention at this stage. The next hearing on the matter was posted for March 14.

Board president Maulana S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi presided over the meeting. ■

* Mahtab Alam is a student of Department of Journalism and Languages, Nadwatul-Ulama, Lucknow.

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