



# THE FRAGRANCE OF EAST

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# The Fragrance of East

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## Life is Ever Changing

### S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

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

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

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

Life is ever youthful,

Continuously on the move, zestful.

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

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

*... the doing of Allah Who perfecteth all things. Lo! He is Informed of what ye do.*

(An Namal : 88)

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

***“They say: ‘If we were to follow this guidance with you, we should be snatched away from our land.’ Have We not established for them a secure sanctuary to which fruits of all kinds are brought as a provision from Us? But most of them do not know.”***

*(Al Qur'an – 28:57)*

This is what the Qurayshite unbelievers used to say as an excuse for not accepting Islam. When we reflect on this, we realise that this was indeed the main reason for their denial. In order to appreciate it fully, we should bear in mind the position of Quraysh in those times, a position which they felt would be undermined if they were to accept Islam. “What initially lent eminence to the Quraysh in Arabia was their descent from Ishmael. When, thanks to the sagacity of Qusayy ibn Kilab, the Quraysh became the custodians of the Ka'bah and settled down in Makkah, their importance grew.” “Here is God's first answer to the excuse the Quraysh offered. This response amounted to saying: “Is it not because of God's special favour that it is looked upon with respect and veneration by all, and every year thousands of people come to it as pilgrims? It is thanks to this favour that you have become the leaders of Arabia and the major beneficiaries of the flourishing international trade of your time. Do you think that by rebelling against God Who, in the first place, bestowed this favour on you, you will prosper, and that you will be instantly destroyed if you follow God's Religion?” ■

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

***“Abu Hurairah relates that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) said: “A person who calls people towards doing good deeds will get the same reward as those who follow him and do good; and nothing will be diminished from the requital of the latter. Similarly, those who call the people towards vice will have the same punishment as those who follow him without any diminution in the punishment of the perpetrators.”***

*(Muslim)*

*Our deeds are either good or bad as no deed can be both good and evil. And people, in given circumstances, are tempted to do either good or bad deed. This hadith gives good tidings to a person who not only does good deeds but invites others to do so. It also warns a person against inviting his/her fellow beings to vice. Calling people towards doing good deeds is in itself a virtuous act. It wins the pleasure of the Lord Almighty as well as provides an opportunity for the invitee for doing good deeds. Contrary to it, the act of inviting people to commit some evil is in itself a vicious act. It earns the Divine wrath as well as puts the invitee in a position that earns the Divine wrath. “God is All-Powerful. He can give reward and award punishment to whom He wills. He knows perfectly well the deeds done by His servants as well as the intention lurking behind the commission of the deed. Hence His judgement is based on human actions. He however can forgive whomsoever He wills.” ■*

## The Blessed Month of Ramazan

Ramadhan is the month of peace, tranquility, piety, righteousness, generosity and bestowal. Of the five tenets of Islam, fasting in the month of Ramadhan is a must every year. During fast one must abstain from eating, drinking and smoking including inoculation and injections from dawn to dusk. In this context the verses of the Holy Quran which ordain for fasting, as an obligatory duty for Muslims are as follows:

“O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you that ye may (learn) self restraint.” (Fasting) for a fixed number of days; but if any of you is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed number should be made up from later days. For those who can do it (with hardship), is a ransom, the feeding of one that indigent, but he that will give more, of his own free will, it is better for him, and it is better for ye that ye face, if ye only knew”. (S.2,A.183-184)

Ramadhan's significance can be gauged from the fact that “the Quran was revealed to prophet Muhammad(PBUH) in this month as a guide to mankind, also clear (signs) for guidance and judgment (between right and wrong). So every one of you who is present at his house during that month should spend it in fasting, but if anyone is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed period (should be made up) by days later. God intends every facility for you; He does not want to put you to difficulties. He wants you to complete the prescribed period, and to glorify Him in that He has guided you; and perchance ye shall be grateful. (S.2,A.185)

Needless to add that like Salat (Prayers), fasting has been an essential duty for the followers of earlier Prophets. The Bible says that Jesus Christ fasted for forty days (Matthew 4: 1-4, Mark 1:12-13 and Luke 4:1-4). In Peter 2:21 the followers of Christ are enjoined to fast as the Prophet did. Even the Vedas and the Puranas prescribe fasting. Thus earlier peoples fasted though with a difference in the number of days and the prescribed time of fasting.

It should be kept in mind that this particular month has been considered sacred even from pre-Islamic days too. Ibn-Hisham states that the Qurayesh in the days of ignorance spent one month a year on Mt. Hira, practicing penance (Tahannuth). Before instituting fasting of Ramadhan Muhammad (PBUH) evidently observed fast on the tenth of Moharram”. (History of the Arabs, p. 133)

During Ramadhan evil conceals itself while good comes to the fore and the whole atmosphere is filled with piety and purity. The holy prophet says: “The deed of son of Adam is' increased several times (in Ramadhan) and the reward is increased by ten times. But Allah says that fasting is exclusively for Him and He himself will deliver its reward (to His bondsmen) as he abstains from eating and controls his desires only for Him. There are (two instances) of happiness for the fasting Muslim, one is at the time of breaking his fast and the other at the time meeting his Lord. And verily to Allah, the smell of fasting person's breath is the best and cleanliest. “The prophet of Islam also says: There is a door of paradise

called Rayyan towards which only the fasting will be called. Only the fastings will be called. Only the fastings will enter it and those who enter it will never feel thirsty.

It is related by Abu Hurairah that the Apostle of Allah said: "when the month of Ramazan' comes, the Gates of Heaven are thrown open, and the Gates of Hell are shut, and the devils are put behind the bar." (In another report, the "Gates of Mercy" are mentioned in place of the "Gates of Heaven." (Bukhari and Muslim)

"Salman Farsi narrates that the Apostle of Allah delivered a sermon on the last day of Sha'ban in which he said:'

"O my people! You are on the threshold of a month of great solemnity and blessings. It is a month whose one night is better than a thousand months. God has prescribed fasting in this month and make Taraweeh prayers optional Whosoever willingly and with good intentions does one good act in this month will have the merit of having done an obligatory act in other months and one who does a prescribed act in this month it will be equal to seventy prescribed act of other months. This is the month of endurance and the reward of endurance is paradise and this the month of sympathy with and care of the needy men of the community". (Mishkat)

It is related by Abu Hurairah that the Apostle of Allah said: "Whoever omits even a single fast of Ramazan without the legal concession of a journey etc. or (a valid excuse like that of illness), amends cannot be made for the thing that is omitted even though he observes fasting throughout the life." (Tirmizi)

It is needless to add that fasting is a shield against sins, crimes, vices and other un-Islamic acts. The prophet says: "Fast is like a shield for protection from satan's attack. Therefore, when one observes fast he should use this shield and abstain from quarreling. If anybody abuses him or quarrels with him, he should simply say: Brother, I am fasting do not expect me to indulge in similar conduct (Bukhari & Muslim)

To restore real spirit of fast, it is incumbent to observe it with prescribed rules and regulations. The noble prophet said: "If one does not give up speaking a lie during fast, God does not require him to give up eating and drinking (Bukhari).

On another occasion, he said: "Many are the people who fast but who "gain nothing from their fasts except hunger and thirst: and many are those who stand praying all night but gain nothing except sleeplessness (Darimi)"

To sum up the fasting according to Islam, is a spiritual discipline and as a consequence it inculcates moral discipline. It imparts moral strength and leads to the promotion of" virtues of piety.■

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along with a hard copy, duly signed, by post.

## The Message of Ramazan

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

O Believers! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you. That you may become pious. (Al-Baqarah 2: 183)

The above Qur'anic verse lays down that fasting is a religious duty incumbent on all Muslims. Until the last Day the command embodied in this verse remains valid. Embedded in the verse is thus much food for thought.

First, the command is addressed to believers. For the command involves doing something which is difficult. It calls for courage and patience to fast. Accordingly, mention is made first of faith. The believers are asked to discharge this duty. For they have pledged their servitude to Him, affirming that He is the Master and Ruler-interest. For they are obliged to perform whatever He commands of them. This is because of their servitude to Him. Being His servants they are expected to behave thus. They are at His beck and call. Allah being All-Wise begins the command in the above fashion. Otherwise, secular laws are promulgated without any reference to one's gain or safety against some loss. Although Allah is the absolute Ruler, Creator of the heavens and earth who exercises total control over everyone's life, honour and property, He invokes the conviction of believers. Muslim are exhorted to act on the dictates of their

faith. They are expected to respond vigorously and positively to His call. Against this backdrop they are told that a month-long fasting is prescribed for them as a religious duty.

Allah is thoroughly conversant with human nature. For He is man's Creator. At the same time, He makes certain allowances for man out of His wisdom and mercy. Whenever He enacts a command, He prepares man mentally for it, enabling him to obey His command willingly. Man is instinctively repulsed by something new and odd. However, on realising that something is a standard practice, followed down the ages by many generations, man is drawn towards it and feels no hesitation in obeying such a command.

Believers are informed that fasting was a duty obligatory upon earlier generations as well. One learns from the history of world religions and nations that fasting has been a religious obligation in some form during all periods of time. Its details may be found in religious and historical works. One learns the exact form and duration of fasting among different religious communities. Finer points about the restrictions and the starting and concluding times of fasting may also be gleaned. Constraints of space prevent us from exploring this point any further.

The important truth home though

is that fasting helps man attain piety. The Qur'an employs the term taqwa in this context. Generally speaking, words are invested with different meanings with the passage of time. A pious person is taken to be one who is constantly engaged in worship, and who sleeps little. One who does not fall asleep at all is recognised as a perfectly pious person. He is expected to offer prayers all the time and is very cautious about each and every issue, be it religious or mundane. In the original Arabic, however, taqwa does not carry these shades of meaning. It does not imply that one blessed with taqwa is given wholly to worship, stays awake throughout the night and fasts round the year. Instead taqwa signifies in the original Arabic a state of mind and consciousness. It encompasses one's temperament and way of thinking, Ramadan helps man attain piety. Yet it does not mean that with the passage of Ramadan, piety comes to an end. Piety is not some temporary condition.

Piety represents a constant state of self-control and restraint. If a child is brought up well, he imbibes the value of respecting his elders. He does not indulge in any act in the presence of his elders which may be offensive to them. By the same token, he refrains from mocking or insulting them. Piety signifies such a training of the mind which guides one to practice moral values all the time. A pious person thinks carefully before taking any action whether his act is permitted by the

Shari'ah or not. This reference to the Shari'ah at every step is a pointer to one's piety. Take the illustrious examples of Abu Bakr and 'Umar, the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, holding exalted rank among the Prophet's Companions. They were witness to the revelation of the Qur'an. Furthermore, they possessed mastery over the Arabic language and idiom. They were born and brought up in Makkah and used the local language fluently. As true Companions they never felt shy of seeking clarification from the Prophet (PBUH). Once they asked 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud to define taqwa. To this he replied: "O Commander of the Faithful! Have you ever walked on a path with thorns on either side?" When 'Umar replied in the affirmative, he asked as to how he walked on that path. 'Umar replied: "I walk cautiously, ensuring that body and clothes are safe against thorns." 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud exclaimed: "This is the definition of taqwa - to lead life in a way with our doing anything which may displease Allah. One's deeds should not be discordant with the Shari'ah."

Those not familiar with Arabic idiom think that fasting is prescribed for making believers pious. It is not however the point that one who fasts for twenty-nine or thirty days in Ramadan will turn into a pious person at the end of the month. One who fasts, recites the Qur'an often and prays to Allah at night, including offering Tarawih Prayers, does not turn automatically into a pious person. This is not the end of his

test. It signifies, at most, that he did not eat or drink during the daytime in Ramadan even what is lawful and wholesome, and he did so at Allah's command. Even a drop of water was not consumed by him. Needless to add, water is one of the greatest divine bounties. Allah has created every living being out of water. A true believer does not eat food during the daytime of Ramadan, though he was provided with food by Allah. He had food items at home bought out of his lawful earnings. Yet he did not take food or water, though he needed these as a human being. Only in deference to Allah's command did he not touch these otherwise lawful and wholesome things from dawn to dusk. Not a drop of water should pass his lips. Since one does all this in accordance with Allah's command, one should make a point of living by His directives after Ramadan as well. One should discern between the lawful and the unlawful. We are very sensitive to any impurity. Let us bear in mind that disobedience to Allah is the most damaging impurity.

As we forego lawful and wholesome things during Ramadan in deference to Allah's command, we should not draw near any sin after the month of Ramadan is over. We should not do anything which may displease him. Nor should we ever tell a lie. By the same token, we should not give false testimony or hurt any fellow Muslim's feelings. We should

not deny anyone his due or indulge in slandering. We should refrain from stealing, injustice, violence, and hurting others. Piety consists in shunning all that is sinful, impure and immoral. A constant effort to keep away from evil constitutes piety.

There is some difference an act of worship and piety. The latter represents an outlook and temperament. One may perform acts of worship. However, in a state of anger and in mundane transactions one may disregard the spirit of one's worship. This underscores a lack of piety. One's mind should be permeated with piety. Fasting is prescribed for Muslims for instilling piety into their minds and hearts. One should think all along of one's ultimate return and accountability to Allah.

Piety signifies God-consciousness. One should weigh up before doing anything whether this act will please or enrage Allah. One should ascertain first whether such action is in accord with the Shari'ah or not, and whether it is lawful or not. One's action should follow the command of Allah and His Messenger. Becoming habitual about this constant checking infuses piety into one. This is the rationale behind declaring fasting in Ramadan as an obligatory duty. For it may bless one with piety. ■

*(Guidance from the Holy Quran by S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, Page 80-84)*

## The Message of Tauheed for the Entire Humanity

-S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi

It was about two and a half or three millennium years before Hazrat Muhammad (SAW) that the very great and important ancestor of his family itself and the favourite Prophet of Allah Almighty, Hazrat Ibrahim (AS), had, having made enormous sacrifices, laid the foundation of the universal movement of *Tauheed*. The innate, unaffected disposition of Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) had comprehended *Tauheed* from the very childhood and had, having discarded the 'shirk', started calling towards '*Tauheed*'. His anecdote has been described in the holy Quran itself:

(And assuredly We gave rectitude to Ibrahim aforetime, and him We had ever known. Recall when he said to his father and his people: what are these images which you are cleaving to? They said: we found our fathers their worshippers. He said: assuredly you, you and your fathers, have been in error manifest.)

(*Al-Anbiaa*: 51-54)

Thereafter such a benediction he had that plenty of Allah's Prophets kept being raised from amongst the descendants of his son, Hazrat Ishaque. They kept promoting and pushing this message forward. "Because of this very distinction Allah Almighty granted his line of descendants lofty position. But, later this line of descendants of Hazrat Ishaque (AS), which was used to be called 'Banu Israil', kept gradually deviating from the straight path.

Then, lastly, Allah Almighty had Muhammad (SAW), from amongst the

descendants of another son of Hazrat Ibrahim, Hazrat Ismail, raised as the universal Prophet. He told him categorically that the very path pursued by Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) was the path that was to be pursued by him. It was he amongst whose descendants Allah Almighty had raised Prophets and all of them had, in their respective times, called the people towards '*Tauheed*' and kept calling towards compliance with Allah Almighty's dictates as they were instructed and exhorted by Hazrat Ibrahim (AS). The holy Quran states:

(And Ibrahim enjoined the same to his sons and so did Yaqub also saying: O my sons: surely Allah has chosen for you the religion; so die not except you are Muslims.) (*Al-Baqra*: 132)

Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) had all his might and strength that he had at his disposal devoted to the propagation of this very message and to having that put into practice. He had, having suffered great hardships and making sacrifices, built anew the House of Allah on the preordained spot in Makkah Mokarramah in order to have the banner of *Tauheed* raised from there. There he got his first sucking babe, Hazrat Ismail, settled along with his mother. It was this very child of his, Hazrat Ismail, through whom the dissemination of '*Tauheed*' had taken place here. His descendants, getting cut off from each and every one, remained steadfast in worshipping the One Allah. They had taken the pledge that they would call the people towards '*Tauheed*' and tell them the truth.

This practice had consistently been pursued when a man from that place got

\* Rector, Nadwatul-Ulama, Lucknow.

impressed, during a journey he had made of Iraq and Syria, by what he saw there of the idol worshipping. He brought the idol here with him. As a result thereof, the practice of idolatry got introduced here. Ultimately, once again Allah Almighty selected a peerless individual of this very clan for the revival of the Ibrahimite message and getting the world back to the same ideology and creed. It was he on whom He had the Prophecy culminated. He had his followers entrusted with the task of promoting, generation after generation, this mission of making mankind bound to worshipping the One God and comprehending that their whimsical and their-own-hand-made gods were spurious. They should have this creed inculcated in minds that the functions and operations of all the worlds was only in the Hands of Allah, the One. It is He who has created each and everyone; and, after having created them, has not left them loose. Instead, He has commanded them to be duty-bound to worship and obey Him. The entire creation has to follow His commands. Whosoever would refuse to obey His commands would have to be accountable in the Hereafter and would get punished.

In the days preceding the manifestation of the Prophecy of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), the people of Makkah had gone far astray from their path in respect of '*Tauheed*'. It was direly needed to be rectified. This need was fulfilled by Allah by making Hazrat Muhammad (SAW) the Prophet. The primogenitor of the people of Makkah, Hazrat Ibrahim (AS), had already had this supplication made to Allah that the Prophet for the reform, edification and education of these people be sent from amongst these very people. Allah had already granted this supplication of his.

Then, having granted them a long term respite, He chose Muhammad (SAW) from amongst his descendants themselves. He also had this announcement made that after him there will be no other Prophet, nowhere and never at all. He, and he only, is the last Prophet and for all the people and for all times to come. Thus, the Prophecy conferred on Muhammad (SAW) was a sort of resumption of the self-same Prophecy that was conferred on his ancestral father, Hazrat Ibrahim (AS). And both of them were the followers of the same path.

In His Book that He sent down to His Prophet, Allah Almighty had the *Ayats* (verses) conveyed to him, gradually and as per the demands of the situations and requirements, through His angel. And, beside the guidance towards the Faith and deeds of righteousness, He had therein narrated, in very felicitous and impressive style, such events of the previous peoples and Prophets as would make it known in how many varied means and ways Allah Almighty's Wrath had descended on peoples because of their persistence on perpetrating acts of '*shirk*' and other sins.

Hence, if the similar conditions prevailed amidst the Arabs of Makkah and their accomplices from amongst the Arab tribes, Allah Almighty's Wrath, taking the form of Retribution, may descend on them, too. Hence, these people should learn their lessons from these events and remain mindful how much severe punishments were inflicted on previous peoples for their intransigence and irreligiousness. They should, therefore, comply with the Prophet's advice and get back to the right path, the path of truth. They should have their ways mended under the guidance of the Prophet, excellence of whose manners and morals are already well known to them. ■

## The Healing Privileges of Honey - Hothaifa Kharrat

The reputation of the honey bee and its ability to produce liquid honey, a substance endowed with many healing properties, is so significant that God Almighty has honored it by revealing a Surah in the Quran named the Surah of the Bees (Surah 16).

### **In this Surah God Almighty has said:**

"Then eat of all fruits and follow the ways of you Lord made easy for you.

There comes forth from their bellies a drink of varying colours where in is healing for men". Surah 16. Verse 69.

The books of the Sunnah contain many Hadiths that confirm the benefits of honey. For instance Imam Bukhari writes : "There are three kinds of healing; honey, cupping and cauterizing."

Also from the Hadith of Ibn Maajah: "He who consumes honey three times per month will not experience severe illnesses."

The privileges of honey have been known since ancient times. It is mentioned in the Old Testament. Evidence of its use has been found in the artifacts and runes of ancient civilizations such as the Egyptian, the Sumerian and Babylonian. Honey was valued by these people not only as a delicious food but also as a preservative of the body after death. The use of honey is also confirmed by the books of the Salaf and the Khalef. Its extraordinary properties are also described in the poetry and prose of traditional Arabic

literature.

### **The World of the Bee - its Behavior and the Characteristics of its Society**

The world of the bee, as we know it, is a world distinguished by selfless effort and constant activity demonstrating an abundance of energy, endurance and perseverance. There is no room for laziness or idleness. The bee lives its life in a never ending search for food, or construction and repair of the hive, or in a myriad other tasks and duties.

The bee lives in an extraordinarily marvelous social environment dominated by the queen bee that provides a source of continuity for the hive. She mates with the males of the hive. In this closed society the work is performed by the female bees known as 'worker bees'.

The most important function of the queen bee, which she performs with complete and perfect dedication, is laying eggs. This is her constant labor. She lays hundreds of eggs daily, Glory to God for the wonders of His creation.

The male bees are the stronger and more robust of the species however they lack the stinger possessed by the female worker bee. The male bee does not play an important role in the collection of food or harvesting of the nectar from flowers. His role is limited to fertilizing the queen bee of the hive.

The world of the bee is filled with many fascinating marvels, for instance

from time to time the queen bee decides to expel some of the male bees, especially when there is a shortage of food. Apparently the queen does this in order to preserve the survival hive by giving priority to her own needs and the needs of the worker bees.

The worker bee is smaller than the male bee. Her lifespan is no more than one month. She succumbs to the prodigious amount of work carried out for the hive. Daily she flies as far as 20 Kilometers from the hive, visiting thousands of blossoms in order to collect pollen, nectar and water.

When she returns to the hive she regurgitates the contents of her stomach into specially constructed wax containers. A complicated chemical reaction then occurs which transforms this mixture into a variety of honeys. There are approximately 50,000 worker bees in each hive.

In addition to producing honey the worker bee also transforms some of the nectar that she collects from the variety of flowering plants, into a waxy substance that is secreted from glands that are located below her belly. This wax is used to create cells in which she resides. It is also used to build containers to store the honey.

### **The Chemical Makeup of Honey**

The chemical makeup of honey consists of many ingredients the most important of which is water, then there are sugars, proteins, fats, vitamins, minerals, organic acids, and essential oils. Honey contains many kinds of sugar such as

glucose, fructose, and sucrose. Glucose is the most important ingredient in supplying of the energy needs for the many functions of organic tissues. Glucose has a simple chemical composition. It is easily digested and easily absorbed by the various organs of the body. It is easily stored in the liver where it is converted into a substance known as glycogen.

Honey also contains many amino acids. These are important proteins for the optimum health of the body and repair of damaged tissues. Honey also contains fats that supply the energy needs of the body.

Honey contains many vitamins such as Vitamins such as Vitamin C, Vitamin B complex. It is also rich in minerals such as calcium, potassium, phosphorus, sodium, iron, copper and sulfur. All these elements are important for the growth, health and good functioning of the body.

Honey also contains many enzymes such as yeast that assists in the digestion of starches and transforms them into simple sugars.

In particular it contains catalase, peroxidase and lipase. Catalase and peroxidase are extremely important in the oxidation of toxic elements in our body. Lipase breaks down dietary fats into smaller fatty acids such as glycerol.

### **A Summary of the Benefits of Honey**

Honey is not only a delicious fare in its liquid form. Hundreds of scientific studies on this wondrous substance have confirmed its significance to the health of

the body. Books and scientific articles have established that it is a mine rich innumerable regenerative benefits for our bodies.

First off let's mention that it contains many nutritious elements for a well-balanced meal. In particular honey is known to be a very rich source in energy. This energy is used during exercise equally by both the young and old. Honey provides the necessary energy which sustains the many muscles of the body, such as the heart. It also provides the many ingredients such as iron which alleviate and prevent many anemic conditions.

Clinical studies have also confirmed that regular consumption of honey helps to strengthen the immunity of the body. This helps in the prevention of cancer and other illnesses such as infections and the common cold.

Honey has been used by bum centers in the successful treatment of bums. It is used in the daily dressing to clean the burned tissues and stimulate gradual healing of the wounded area.

Honey ensures that the 2 affected areas remains clean and free from any microbes, and minimizes infection by tiny organisms. This reduces the incidence of skin infections.

Honey also plays a role in treating and lessening the symptoms of diabetic foot manifestations.

Honey is a powerful diuretic. It helps alleviate the conditions associated with excessive retention of urine and the

accompanying inflammations that afflict the urinary tract in general.

Honey has a definite benefit for maintaining the hygiene of the mouth. Eating honey regularly helps to keep the teeth in good condition. It prevents decay and the buildup of bacteria inside our mouths.

It is well-known that eating honey regularly helps in the treatment of respiratory inflammation and reduces the apparent symptoms. It is helpful in the alleviation of headache and is often used by ophthalmologist in the treatment of cornea of eyes diseases and conditions of the conjunctiva disorders.

Honey also has other benefits as well. It helps in reducing vomiting and morning sickness in pregnant women. It assists in the proper functioning of the liver. It is used to treat insomnia and reduces the level of bad cholesterol in the blood. Honey is a fundamental treatment for all these conditions. It is a remedy for acidic reflux, indigestion and stomach ulcers.

In conclusion we know that the text of the Noble Qur'an confirms all of the above. It confirms and anticipates the results of many recent scientific studies about the benefits of honey. The text of the Qur'an is clear and unambiguous about the function of the bee, and the many healing properties of the products of its metabolisms for human beings. For this reason it is incumbent upon us to give humble gratitude for this marvelous gift that the Holy Spirit may descend upon us at the mention of these wonders. ■

## The Dark Ages of Pre Islam

- Ahamad Wahaj Al-Siddiqui

The Dark Ages emphasises the demographic cultural, Intellectual darkness and economic deterioration in Europe. It is the time in history which, originated in A.D. 476 and continued till 10th and 11th centuries. It may be noted that Moses was born in 1393 BCE and his advent continued till 1273 BCE. He was given Torah but all his teachings were fabricated by Jews. Dawood (Prophet David) was given Psalms (Zabur), he lived about 1000 BCE that is about after 500 years of Moses. The Jews distorted Zabur. Jesus son of Mary was given the New Testament (Gospel). There was division among them on main beliefs given by God the Unique in the New Testament and described in the Holy Qur'an but they differed and coined their own beliefs and divided in two factions, namely Protestant and Catholics.

The history wrote about the Dark Ages running hundreds of years before and after Jesus and Moses. The Christians invented trinity and took Jesus God the Son, the Jews took Ezra son of God. According to Gospel writers Jesus could preach for a period of one to three years in his early thirties. All his efforts to reform people met with failure due to adverse enmity of the Jews against him and his followers. The people relinquished the worship of God the Unique who has no partners in his Godhead. Mostly the people adopted polytheism believing the idols help

and provide them sustenance.

The rulers words were laws. Their promulgation was unquestionable. The people were on bare mercy of them. Their will was enforced. They enjoyed fully the legal, executive and judicial powers. They were not guided by any constitution, if at all there was any legal frame work in any of the countries, their too the will of the ruler prevailed over his own rules.

The Europe took pride on the Greek rule, but it were they who made their enemy and the criminals the morsel of the lions or tigers or tied them behind the horses and dragged them till death or branded them blind with red hot iron bars or they put fetters

upon them and left them to beg for life. Justice was something unknown to East and west.

The women had no status except that of a slave girl. They held as many women as they liked and called them wives. She had no right whatsoever in the society, no right to ownership, no right to inheritance, no right of maintenance and no right to divorce. She was used to satisfy the sexual desire of the men.

To the Greek the women were not entitled to any benefit, liberty or power. She was to work as maid and she was infirm to make any decisions. The motto of the Romans not to unfasten the yoke from the

women and to keep her in permanent bondage. The baby male or female was not allowed to be a part of the family. But the babe after birth was placed under the feet of the father. If he picked him up, he was to become the part of the family; otherwise, he was placed in public courtyard. If male someone would took him up or would be left to die in the burning sand or in cold weather. The father had a right to sell his children.

They used to say 'the woman has no soul'. The punishment for causing any harm or damage was to pour hot oil on her body or to tie her with pier till death, the way they tortured the women.

The Chinese women were in the most wretched condition. The News Week (New York) under the caption preying on young girls wrote the Social Welfare Department of Taipei city deals with 60,000 thousand to 200,000 child prostitute. Their parents sold them to Betrothal Keepers. He sells them to rich old men, they pay for their virginity from \$3000 to \$4000 for a period of a week. Then their prices fall as they have to continue to work as prostitute.

The Indian women had gone under a dreadful fate under the bond of father and then husband. She had to burn herself with her dead husband on a funeral pyre. The custom took hundreds of lives till 15th century. When the Muslim kings stopped it.

Later the Hindu code bill brought many reforms and allowed the widow to marry. Though allowed under aforesaid

law to marry yet the widow had to keep herself in mourning to her life span. Among Hindu belief her life is considered as source of evil omen for everything.

Persians in considered women hateful thing they had devoid her from all rights even respect taking her an imperfect creation. They held man as her master to deal with in any way he liked. To some factions of the Jews the daughter was no more than maidservant. The father had a right to sell her while a minor. They took woman as curse because she dissuaded Adam from the right path. She could inherit only in the absence of the sons.

The Christians were very hard on women. They considered her a fountain of sins and source of calamity over the humanity. St: Cyprian thought woman is the instrument, which the devil uses to gain possession of our souls. St: Gregory said woman has the poison of an asp, the malice of a dragon. She was stopped to read the New Testament by the English parliament during the reign of Henry VIII. They considered her impure by creation. All these were the occurrences of Dark Age.

The English, American and western society allowed cohabitation between unmarried couples. The boyfriend is taken as a part of family. That gave birth to hundreds of thousand unmarried mothers. Urdu News Jeddah in its issue dated 2nd October 1999 wrote: The number of unmarried mothers is increasing in Britain day by day in 1997 ninety six thousand

minor girls were pregnant. The age of puberty to them is 18. Half of them gave birth to children. The present government of UK will spend sixty million pound to control the movement of girls below 12 years during the night. It is grievous news about women in this modern age. Is that the way of civilised people? Nay it is hateful filth and unbearable insult to woman and society. It is debauchery and those who are involved is caught by Aids and their number runs to millions.

### **Arabs In the Ignorance Age**

They had three main factions in Arab society, which consisted of tribes.

(a) Class purely related by blood in family tree. They kept attached soundly with their tribes even oppressed or tyrant. They were not allowed to by-pass its traditions of usage. If anyone involved in action causing bad name to the tribe he was expelled from it

#### **(b) Supporters Class.**

It consisted of the people who were expelled by their tribe for the crimes they had committed though condemned by their own tribe but getting allied to other tribes, they were known as supporters. This class also included liberated slaves. The system of alliance or confederation was well known among Arab tribes before Islam.

#### **c) Slave Class**

In the tribal society consisted of imprisoned in war and later sold as slaves. They were denied any right and were heavily burdened with duties by their

owners.

### **The End of Dark Ages Under the Banner of Islam**

The conquest of Spain was the beginning of a new era in the world history. It was the first interaction of Islamic civilisation with the West. For centuries, Muslim Spain was the beacon of knowledge to a European continent that was shrouded in the stupor of Dark Ages. The Islamic rule in Spain along with southern Italy that was destined to act as a conduit for learning to the west. It played a central role in the reawakening of Europe.

A Berber force of about 7000 soldiers under the command of General Tariq Ibn Ziyad crossed the strait of Gibraltar from the North African coast now known as Jabal Tariq entered Spain 711 A.D. He was loyal to Umayyad Emir of Damascus. King Roderick encountered him, but the King's force was defeated. Emir Umayyad sent a force of 18,000 led by Musa bin Nusair. Gradually entire Spain came under Muslim rule.

The Muslim rulers' main task was to spread Islam and educate the masses. For this purpose, they opened educational institutions. Soon Muslim ruled Spain became famous as a modern seat of learning when the Europe was in its dark ages. Muslim rule expanded to more than 700 years. There is unbroken succession of the ages of Muslim scientists Jabir, Khwarizmi, Razi, Masudi, Biruni Omer Khayyam Avicenna etc. The Muslims

achievements continued in the field of Mathematics, Algebra, Chemistry, physics astronomy and medicine etc. Muhammad bin Jabir Al-Battani famous for logarithm and its application in astronomy. Al-Battani made astronomical Al-Manac. He measured the time of orbital motion of the earth around the sun as 365 days five hours and 24 seconds. It is less than two minutes 24 seconds less than 19th century's measurement. See Kitab Al-Jee; Ai-Sabi.

Biruni ( 973-108) said the day and night are not caused by the sun but the earth rotates on its axis. This was said 500 hundred years before Copernicus. He pointed to the power of the gravitation between the celestial bodies and put forth the argument about the earth being spherical, its rotation on its axis and its orbiting round the sun. He derived this knowledge from the Heavenly Book the Qur'an. I found in Surat Al-Rad/2 Vo1.5 the Qur'an states power of gravitation in celestial bodies. Surah Al- Isra/12 Vo1.5 under caption 'The Earth is Spherical How day and night occur on it' It is the Qur'an, which guided Biruni to this knowledge. This Tafsir (commentary) proves that the Qur'an gives details of modern science when the word science was unknown in 7th century.

There are other various achievements by Muslim Scholars, However, Damascus, Baghdad and thereafter Muslim Spain or Cordoba were the seat of learnings for the European students who carried great knowledge to

their countries. Thus European Dark Ages got the light of Knowledge on various subjects like metaphysics, mathematics, Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, natural sciences, physics, chemistry, logarithm and biology etc.

The Muslim rule in India attained the master progress in architecture and woven cloth. Taj Mahal (Agra India) is considered among the eighth wonder of the world.

It is the irony of fate that Baghdad and Damascus was ruined by Tartar attacks, the Muslim rule of Spain and Portugal was over thrown. After the history recorded the great evastation of Abbasids, the Muslims could never revive the scientific progress that was destroyed by Tartars, Genghis and his grandson Halaqu Khan.

However, it had been the policy of British and European rulers not to mention the Muslims achievements in the field knowledge. They had their imperialistic or colonial rule.

The English in their rule on different countries refer as works of their scholars and never mention that they derived their knowledge from institutions of Muslim Spain.

However, the Dark Ages of not only Europe but of the World came to end by the advent of Muhammad (peace be upon him) who preached Islam and spread Justice and peace unknown to the then world. ■

## Martyrdom of Sayyid Ahmad\*

- Shah Ebadur Rahman

As facts were known later, Sayyid Ahmad attacked the Sikhs and reached the foot of the Mittikot hill where there was a canal and from where the Sikhs were trying to climb back to the hill. Lal Muhammad Jagdishpuri related, "Hazrat [Sayyid Ahmad] reached the canal where there was a heavy concentration of the Sikhs. The two sides started using guns and swords." Hafiz Wajeehuddin Baghpati related that he saw Sayyid Ahmad in the canal fighting against the Sikhs. When Sayyid Ahmad put his gun to his shoulder to fire, Hafiz Wajeehuddin saw a bloodstain in Sayyid Ahmad's finger and understood that he was wounded. Others reported that Sayyid Ahmad was also hit in his head with a stone. Baba Bahram Khan Tanowli related that he saw Sayyid Ahmad standing on a rock in the midst of his battalion in the outskirts of the hill. Then there came a volley of bullets from the Sikhs. When he looked around after it, Sayyid Ahmad was not on that rock. He added, "All of his associates were also martyred. I did not see him falling or lying dead, nor did any other Mujahid."

Because nobody saw Sayyid Ahmad falling in the battle (as those who

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\* *He was martyred in Balakot on May 6, 1831.*

were with him did not live to report the incident), the Mujahideen kept on looking for him restlessly without caring for their lives. Shah Ismail shared the same restlessness. Lal Muhammad Jagdishpuri reported that Shah Ismail came to him in the battlefield with a rifle hanging by his shoulder and a sword in his hand. He was injured; blood was streaming down his forehead. He inquired, "Where is Amirul Momineen?" Lal Mohammad pointed toward a place where a heavy fight was going on. Shah Ismail immediately headed toward the place. It is not known how he received martyrdom.

Suddenly news spread among the Mujahideen that Sayyid Ahmad had gotten injured and was taken out of the battlefield by some friendly tribesmen known as gojar. A caller, probably a gojar called the Mujahideen aloud and instructed them to move out of the battlefield as Sayyid Ahmad was wounded and was carried to the mountain. A large number of the Mujahideen, thus, moved to the mountain; a very small number of them continued fighting in the outskirts of Mittikot. This was a clear sign of defeat for the Mujahideen. Some influential leaders of the Mujahideen, such as

Sayyid Jafar Ali, Amanullah Khan Lakhnawi and Sheikh Wali Muhammad, made a quick consultation among themselves to review the situation. They decided to gather the Mujahideen and move them quickly to Balakot to form a defense line there. But before they could reach Balakot, a battalion of the Sikh army had already entered there. The Mujahideen then tried to assemble at a place across the canal of Satbanna, called so locally, but the Sikh army was present in that area too. It was at that time that the Sikhs set on fire the houses in Balakot. The Mujahideen had no choice except to move to safe directions thinking that Sayyid Ahmad must be somewhere around and that in his leadership there would be new opportunities, new battlefields, and new encounters.

After the battle was over and the Sikhs were in control of the situation, Sher Singh wanted to confirm the death of Sayyid Ahmad. He wanted to see his dead body. This was important for him because the survival of Sayyid Ahmad would not have given that battle the edge of a final victory. He ordered his men to find out the dead body of Sayyid Ahmad in the battlefield and identify it with the help of the Mujahideen who were taken prisoners. A dead body was found which several people identified to be that of Sayyid Ahmad. Gentlemanly,

Sher Singh paid homage to his martyred foe, covered his dead body with a sheet, and gave some money to the local Muslims and the Muslim soldiers of his own army to perform the final rites and bury the dead body of Sayyid Ahmad Islamically. He also asked an artist to sketch a picture of Sayyid Ahmad which he took to Lahore and showed to Ranjeet Singh. Ranjeet Singh said words of admiration and praise for Sayyid Ahmad upon seeing the picture. Deewan Amar Nath writes in his book Zafar Nama that he had seen that picture.

Thus came to an end the first phase of the struggle of Sayyid Ahmad. He died at Balakot, but the fire he had ignited in the hearts of his companions did not die out with his death. They loved him more than their lives, but they loved his mission more than they loved him. The Mujahideen united themselves again after his death and continued their struggle for more than a century with the same enthusiasm and valor - a history which requires treatment in a separate book. Instead of attempting to write the history of the struggle of the subsequent leaders, we shall try to assess the varied and wide ranging contributions of Sayyid Ahmad's Movement in the forthcoming chapters and study its depth and comprehensiveness.■

## Syria in Turmoil

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

More than fifty Syrians were choked to death after a suspected chemical attack struck the rebel-held suburb of Douma, east Of Damascus, and aid groups blamed President Bashar al- Assad's government for the assault.

The recent Ghauta massacre which claimed more than seven hundred Syrian civilians including a large number of children makes us realize that humanity has touched its lowest ebb. The sanctity it carries has vanished. The whole world is in a state of shock. Materialism has over shadowed the finer aspects of life.

Syria has its own glorious history and illustrious past. Eastern Ghouta is a suburb of Damascus, the capital of Syria. It is a sprawling oasis on the outskirts of Damascus. It is called the Garden of Eden. It has now become a 'hell on the earth' as described by the United Nations Secretary General. One has rightly said: "Words fail to describe the destruction of this ancient, beautiful land. Eastern Ghouta has been under rebel control, and under siege, since 2012.

A noted columnist has precisely stated the ongoing conflict in Syria, "The start of the Syrian conflict, or 'civil war' as it is termed in the press, can be

traced back to the prodemocracy protests that rocked Syria in 2011 during the height of the Arab Spring and the subsequent brutal crackdown on them by the Assad regime. However, there are several factors which contributed to the atmosphere of the uprising. In 1982, Hafez Al- Assad then President of Syria (father of current President Bashar Al Assad), ordered a military crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood in Hama, killing tens of thousands of people and flattening much of the city. Several drought plagued Syria from 2007-10 causing as many as 1.5 million people to migrate from the countryside into cities, exacerbating poverty and social unrest."

As human beings, it is imperative for us to feel the pain and suffering of our Syrian brethren. If a person does not share other's sufferings and woes, he lacks human values. In this context Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (RAH)'s thought-provoking words are worth quoting. He says: "If man loses the ability of sharing other's suffering, he will become bankrupt. Even if a nation is blessed with the wealth of America, administration of Russia and petrol wells of Saudi Arabia, even if rivers of gold and silver flow in it, and even if wealth showers over its land like rain, it will still be truly pauper if its stream of

love is dried. He further says: "The heart which does not feel pain of others is not a human heart; it is the heart of lion. The eye which does not become wet is not a human eye. It is the eye of a daffodil. The forehead which does not become wet with the perspiration of penitence is not a human forehead; it is a piece of rock. The hand which does not move forward to serve humanity is virtually paralyzed and lifeless. The claw of a lion is better than that hand of a person which cuts the throat of another human being." (Islam An Introduction, p.153).

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

It is time all Muslims countries and UNO must come forward and take

serious steps to extinguish the fire of unending civil war in Syria. Besides, we all pray to Allah for peace in Syria. In words of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru:" even so, there is something else which we consider is of greater importance. That is peace. Without peace our dreams vanish and are reduced to ashes". (India's Foreign Policy, P, 218).

To sum up the argument it will be apt to quote the Prophet "God shows His mercy on those who show mercy to others." Maulana Hali has beautifully and ably composed the above tradition of the Prophet in this couplet.

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

### Ask Allah for Forgiveness

**The Prophet (S) said: "If anyone continually asks forgiveness from Allah, Allah will appoint for him a way out of every distress, and a relief from every anxiety, and will provide for him from where he did not reckon." So seek Allah's forgiveness and mercy daily for He (SWT) is the Most Merciful and the Most Compassionate. ■**

## Shibli As An Educationist\*

- Javed Ali Khan

Muhammad Shibli Nomani's educational upbringing took place at a time when the Muslims had started becoming conscious to the need for reform and change. During the preceding decades the preaching of Shah Waliullah (1703-1762) and Shah Abdul Aziz Shah (1750-1824) had generated reformist zeal. In the succeeding years a section of the Muslim intelligentsia called upon the Muslims to develop a more homogenous and resilient outlook in order to admit such aspects of Western learning and thought which would not impair the basic belief of the Muslims. Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) carried the thought further and by his various writings and institutional activities endeavoured to temper Muslim thought with a sense of reason and enquiry.

Shibli received traditional Islamic education from teachers who were not conversant with the new learning of the West. His chief intellectual mentor, Mawlana Faruq Chiryakoti, was against the radical views of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Altaf Husain Hali. But Shibli's family was fairly enlightened and had realised the importance of Western Learning. No wonder Shibli's father had sent two of his other sons for education at Anglo-Mohammedan Oriental

\* *Extracted from "Mohd. Shibli Nomani".*

College, Aligarh. Even Shibli was an admirer of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan long before he had joined Anglo-Mohammedan Oriental College as a Professor.

At Aligarh Shibli was exposed to the radiance of new learning. His passion for learning and knowledge received a new platform. Hitherto like a voracious seeker of knowledge he had travelled far and wide to quench his thirst for knowledge. During his travels he had realised the inadequacy of Muslim learning and pitiable condition of the madaras throughout the Islamic world. Until then no attempt had been made to trace the history of Muslim learning, its pattern of education, the various schools of Islamic thought, and its contribution to the growth of science and technology and human progress in general.

Shibli observes that the advent of Islam released and channelised the latent energies of the Arabs towards understanding of the universe. The Holy Qur'an with its unique style of presentation is a miracle in itself. It challenges human being for a writing of similar kind and calls upon its followers and readers to know and unfold the secrets of the universe. To the Arabs and Muslims at large it became a guideline for opening new vistas of

knowledge and wisdom. Muslim scholars and travellers who visited distant lands opened a new era of exchange of intellectual thought and ideas. It opened the eyes of the Arabs to the knowledge of other races and communities whom they had hitherto considered insignificant and unworthy of cultural contact.

Shibli's contribution to Muslim education can be gauged at two planes. The first was his attempt to pen down briefly its past history. This resulted in his splendid work entitled *Musalmano Ki Guzashta Ta'alim*, the first of its kind, in which among other aspects, Shibli highlights the contributions of Medieval scientists and scholars for the conservation and dissemination of human knowledge. The second was his attempt to open new educational institutions and make necessary modification in the existing syllabus of the Indian madarasas.

In the aforesaid article Shibli chiefly pays attention to show how the Arabs acquired knowledge and wisdom of the preceding ages. This has been examined in two ways: the first relates to those sciences the originators of which were Muslims; and the second deals with those branches of knowledge which the Muslims borrowed from other communities and then improved and perfected them to such a degree that they are accredited as their originators.

During the early period of Islam for

a proper understanding of the Holy Qur'an and Arabic language, principles of syntax, rhetoric and morphology were evolved so that the non-Arab converts to Islam could easily understand the Quranic precepts. Fable writings of yonder days gave way to new themes embodying human manners and obedience, rights and duties, and proselytizing activities of Islam. In order to follow the foot-steps of prophet Muhammad (PBH) and to regulate Muslim social behaviour, different branches of Islamic sciences were initiated, such as hadis (tradition of Prophet Muhammad), fiqah (principles of Islamic jurisprudence), qasas (instructive histories), etc. That these studies were not beyond the pale of reason and enquiry, principles of *asma-al-rijal* (critical study of the character of the transmitters of hadis), *usul-i-isnad* (figuring out all the persons involved in transmitting the tradition of Prophet Muhammad and the study of their character) and *ilm-i-diroyat* (principles of investigation) were formulated. All this placed the Arabs in an advantageous position in religious scriptural controversies over their rivals - the Jews and Christians. Later when Islamic thought was confronted with Greek philosophy there emerged *ilm-kalam* or Islamic scholasticism. Metaphysics also received new attention. The subsequent history of Muslim education is marked for its vigour and passion. Baghdad became

a great seat of learning.

Muslims learned mathematics, music, geometry, medicine, logic and natural sciences on a new scale from other communities, mostly Christians. They were the first to pay attention to the opening of translation bureau. The Umayyad and Abbasid rulers who are known for their catholicity were great patrons of learning. A large number of books on science, medicine, Greek philosophy and other branches of knowledge were collected from Italy, Greece, Syria, Iran and other far off lands at rich price. These books, which were mostly in Latin, Syriac, and Sanskrit, were translated into Arabic and Persian. The translators were mostly Christians, but Jews, Zoroastrians and Indians also rendered great service. The Muslims improved these translated works to such a level that the original works were soon forgotten. In fact, some of the original works are extant only in its Arabic translation.

The several Sanskrit works which were translated into Arabic and Persian, included the works of Charak, Shushrat, Shanaq Hindi, Sali and Kankha Hindi. A Brahmin yogi, Bhujar, of Varanasi went to Akfut and presented his work Amritkund to Qazi Ruknuddin Samarqandi. In later times the great Indologist, Abu Raihan Biruni visited India and learned Sanskrit and Indian sciences. In return he acquainted the

Indians with Greek philosophy. Another Arab who visited India and learned astronomy was, Ismail Tanukhi.

The Muslims held the translators in high respect and gave utmost importance to Roman, Greek and Indian scientists, and scholars to a degree, which they had not received, in their own land. Many of these scholars are known to have served as head of educational institutions.

The Muslims were, however, not blind imitators. They strove and worked to remove some of the errors of Greek thinkers, generated a renewed interest in Greek philosophy, offered enthusiasm to the study of social sciences, invented new scientific equipment, devised mechanical and water clocks, calculated the speed of light, designed apparatus filtration and distillation, formulated methods to test and differentiate various acids, laid the foundation of the science of chemistry and by their numerous experiments on plants added valuable information to the study of Botany. The science of optics made great advancement. Harun bin Hakim Muwaffiq-al-Dawlah wrote a number of books on various diseases of the eye. In short, they carried forward the knowledge of ancient times, which would have otherwise perished, and by their intense spirit of enquiry and research raised human knowledge to a new pedestal. Scholars and thinkers such as Imam Razi and Imam Tusi

enjoyed greater reputation than the Greek thinkers. A number of early modern discoveries and invention, which are attributed to the Europeans, is actually the early works of the Arabs.

Madarsas, which functioned like modern colleges and universities with well-equipped libraries, were known for their excellence. Herein students were free to choose the subjects of their liking. Lectures were delivered and after a time bound period certificates were given to the students. The practice of imparting education on private basis by eminent teachers continued simultaneously. Like the ancient Greeks, Qur'anic education in its early phase was transmitted orally, in which hundreds of teachers were involved in teaching and training. With the discovery of paper technology writing of books became popular.

However, after a short spell of brilliance, Muslim education suffered a decline. Shibli keenly probes why the decline set in. According to him the practice of giving lectures gradually died. Rational sciences were not paid much attention to. Students were taught to strictly adhere to anyone of the four schools of Islamic thought. In course of time it gave birth to imitative method of education. The spirit of investigation and discovery lost force. Technical skill and study of crafts failed to meet new requirements. Little attention was paid to the study of logic and philosophy and

in some madarsas these subjects did not find a place in the curriculum of studies. The Abbasid Caliph, Mutazidbillah issued a royal order forbidding booksellers to sell books of philosophy. A mufti of the Ottoman Empire was asked to discontinue his lectures on philosophy. Ibn Rushd had to disown his own writing when he was made a captive by the Sultan of Morocco. Political Science was not taught. History was taught, but more for expression of literary talent.

In the Indian sub-continent the first noticeable change in the syllabus is to be seen in dars-i-Nizamryah of Firangi Mahal, a distinguished centre of Islamic learning. It became a model for Indian madarsas in the nineteenth century. For the first time books of Indian authors were introduced. The syllabus was prepared with a view to develop the mental faculty of the students. The books taught included philosophy and music. Jurisprudic texts, which unnecessarily gave birth to hair-splitting religious debates, were deleted. This largely explains why the Ulama of Firangi Mahal remained aloof from Shia-Sunni religious controversies.

Shibli did not lay the foundation of Anglo-Mohammedan Oriental College, Aligarh, but after having entered its service he actively and sincerely worked for the uplift of the college. His letters, written to Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan from Constantinople, Cairo and other places,

show his deep concern to procure rare manuscripts, printed books and transcripts of Islamic studies and other sciences for the college library. Later when efforts were made to upgrade the college to the status of University in 1911, he actively participated in various proceedings, meetings and delegations organised for the purpose. Apart from his contribution to the success of the Anglo-Mohammedan Oriental College, there are other aspects of Shibli's thought. He admitted the importance of Western learning but at the same time was not prepared to ignore the Oriental subjects or belittle the merit of Islamic science. At Aligarh he bravely withstood the radical Western impact, which was threatening to destroy the identity of the Muslims. By his writings, lectures and strict obedience to Islamic way of life he attracted a large number of Muslim students and thus saved the college from being drowned in the whirlpool of Western culture.

Shibli's educational thought further found expression in the preparation of syllabi of madarsas in the State of Bhopal. Sayyid Sulaiman Nadwi opines that in India this was the first attempt to reform the Arabic madarsas. The notable change made was that philosophy, logic, theology. Hadis and mathematics were introduced. This was similar to the syllabi of Anglo-Mohammedan Oriental College, Aligarh. Shibli was among those who

were called to give their opinion for educational reforms in Madarsa Alia (Calcutta), Osmania University (Hyderabad) and Dacca University. In 1913 the Sultan of Turkey intended to establish a University in Madina whereupon, Shibli, among others, was asked to prepare Arabic text-books. But Shibli was unable to undertake the responsibilities on account of his fast deteriorating health. Notably, through many of his writings he expounded the role of Muslim women in the history of early Islam and thereby emphasized the need for the education of women.

Meanwhile Shibli attended the Government Oriental Conference (1910) held at Shimla. In his address he proposed the study of Oriental subjects including the study of archaeology, cataloguing, promotion of vernacular languages and integration of Oriental and Occidental thought. He also called for providing incentive to students by grant of fellowship and scholarship and appointment of inspectors in madarsas. Though these suggestions were not implemented but they show the progressive attitude of Shibli. Herein emphasis was also laid on the collection on manuscripts, royal decree, paintings, calligraphic works and publication and display of Arabic and Persian literary works by holding annual exhibition.

Shibli was of the opinion that much of Muslim antipathy to Western learning

arose because of their ignorance to European languages. This was why he emphasized the learning of English and setting up of a committee known by the name of Majlis-i-Ilm-i-Kalam in order to select those of Western thought which are compatible with Islam. With similar objective he successfully persuaded Sayyid Hasan Bilgrami to undertake the translation of the holy Qur'an into English.

A corollary effort was Shibli's reinterpretation of Islamic scholasticism in the light of modern thinking. The motive of his thinking was to establish a synthesis between faith and reason. He maintains that conflict and tension between science and religion did not arise in Islam as it is to be seen in Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth century. In his *Al-Kalam* Shibli designates Islam as 'religion of nature' (*dinya-tabia*) in which reason is allotted a paramount role in judging the truth of religious beliefs. For instance, Shibli states, "except Islam no other religion in the world has claimed to be established by reason and that one has to accept religion on the basis of reason." This is the great difference that marks out Islam clearly from all other religions. Shibli forwards the views of medieval thinkers such as Al-Ghazali and Jalaluddin Rumi for the promotion of his rationalist modernism. He tries to explain prophethood, spirit, revelation, angels, and miracles. He believes that human reason as it is understood in the

sciences is still far from having grasped the fullness of this Universal Order and its laws adequately. It is in this context that Christian W. Troll writes that Shibli displays much greater awareness than Sayyid Ahmad Khan with regard to specific difference between rational and suprarational modes of knowing. In short, Shibli's understanding of the theological epistemology has its own importance .

Shibli was not satisfied with mere writing, lecturing, and attending conference, but also believed in action. For example, he actively worked for the protection and preservation of Urdu in the *nastaliq* script. In 1912 when Burn, the Chief Secretary of the government of Uttar Pradesh initiated a move for the introduction of Urdu in *devnagri* script, Shibli, as a member of the Vernacular Scheme Committee, vehemently opposed the move, and thus, Mr. Burn's scheme of introducing Urdu in *devnagri* was foiled. The period also witnessed a general policy of British historians and administrators to write Indian history in such a manner so as to create discord and animosity among the Indians and also to create a feeling of inferiority complex in them. The Indian Press would very often comment on this British policy, but it was in 1912 at Delhi that Shibli placed a resolution to this effect demanding withdrawal of objectionable books taught in schools and universities. Consequently, a number of objectionable books were withdrawn

from the courses of study and a general scrutiny of all historical books was ordered by the British government.

The academic potentiality of Shibli was recognised quite early and as already stated the British government awarded him the distinguished title of Shams-al-Ulama. Other organisations and institutions also honoured him. He was appointed Fellow of Allahabad University and a member of its Board of Studies in 1895. He was made a member of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and India, and the first Secretary of Anjuman Taraqqi Urdu in 1903. In 1908 he was made the President of Edinburgh Muslim Society. In 1912 he was appointed a member of the Allahabad Government Vernacular Scheme Committee. He was also a valued member of various other committees - the committee on the controversy of Urdu and Hindi and the Committee for Hindu-Muslim unity convened by the government.

To conclude, Shibli by his various writings endeavoured to highlight the past history of Muslim education and also to draw the Muslims out of obscurantism and educational backwardness. He was the driving force of several Muslim educational institutions wherein he tried to make education more meaningful and purposeful. He successfully expounded that Islamic sciences and learning

contributed immensely to the growth of human knowledge and if the Muslims had not devoted themselves to the study of arts and sciences of the preceding ages, much of Europe's achievements of which they are so proud, would have perished. He highly praises the investigative methodology of hadis and maghazi and says that Europe had no such method of cross-examination to determine the veracity of information till recent times. Although critical of an underlying anti-Islamic cross-current in Western Orientalism, he is among the earliest Muslim to pay tribute to Western scholarship for its painstaking investigation of the cultural and religious resources of Islam, its methodology and its effort to establish a historical and scientific perspective for the study of Islam. Guided by modern needs he strove to make Islamic doctrine compatible with modern philosophical and scientific thought. With this end in view he called upon the Muslims to pay attention to both religious and secular sciences, and cherished the desire to see the new generation open new horizon of learning and creative thinking. All this contributed to soften the attitude of the conservative Ulama of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. He was perhaps the earliest Indian in modern times to make a study of the Indo-Arab intellectual relations and the rich contribution made by ancient India to the growth of Arab knowledge and wisdom. ■

## Prophet's Sermon on Ramazan

Baihaqi reported on the authority of Salman Al-Farsi ® that Prophet (PBUH) delivered a sermon on the last day of the month of Sha'ban and said:

“O people! The month of Allah (Ramadhan) has come with its mercies, blessings and forgiveness. The days of this month are the best among the days and the nights are the best among the nights and the hours during Ramadhan are the best among the hours. This is a month in which you have been invited by Him (to fast and pray). Allah has honoured you in it. In every breath you take is a reward of Allah, your sleep is worship, your good deeds are accepted and your invocations are answered.

“Therefore, you most invoke your Lord in all earnestness with heart free from sin, evil, and pray that Allah may help you to keep fast, and to recite the Holy Qur'an. Indeed! Miserable is the one who is deprived of Allah's forgiveness in this great month. While fasting remember the hunger and thirst on the Day of Judgment. Give alms to the poor and needy. Pay respect to your elders, have sympathy for your youngsters and be in towards your relatives and kinsmen. Guard your tongue against unworthy words, and your eyes from scenes that are not worth seeing forbidden and your ears from sounds that should not be heard.

“Be kind to orphans so that if your children may become orphans they will also be treated with kindness. Do repent to Allah for your sins and supplicate with raised hands at the times of prayer as these are the best times, during which Allah Almighty looks at His servants with mercy. Allah answers if they supplicate, responds if they call, grants if He is asked and accepts if they entreat, a people! You have made your conscience the slave of your desires.

“Make it free by invoking Allah for forgiveness. Your back may break from the heavy load of your sins, so prostrate yourself before Allah for long intervals, and make this load lighter. Understand fully that Allah has promised in His

Honour and Majesty that, people who perform salat and sajda (prostration) will be guarded from Hell-fire on the Day of Judgment.

“O people! If anyone amongst for *iftar* (meal at sunset) for any believer, Allah will reward him as if he had freed a slave, and Allah will forgive him his sins. A Companion asked: 'but not all of us have the means to do so' The Prophet (PBUH) replied: 'Keep yourself away from Hell-fire though it may consist of half a date or even some water if you have nothing else.'”

“O people! Anyone who during this month cultivates good manners will walk over the Sirat (bridge) to Paradise on the day when feet will tend to slip. For anyone who during this month eases the workload of his servants, Allah will make easy his accounting, and for anyone who doesn't hurt others during this month, Allah will safeguard him from His Wrath on the Day of Judgment. Anyone who respects and treats an orphan with kindness during this month, Allah shall look at him with kindness on that Day. Anyone who treats these kinsmen well during this month, Allah will bestow Him on that Day, while anyone who mistreats his kinsmen during this month, Allah will keep away from His Mercy.

“Whoever offers the recommended prayers during this month, Allah will save him from Hell, and whoever observes his obligation during this month, his reward will be seventy times the reward during other months. Whoever repeatedly invokes Allah's blessings on me, Allah will keep his scale of good deeds heavy while the scales of others will be tending to lightness. Whoever recites during this month an ayat (verse) of the Holy Qur'an in other months.

“O people! The gates of Paradise remain open during this month. Pray to your Lord that they may not be closed for you. While the gates of Hell are closed, pray to your Lord that they never open for you. Satan has been chained, invoke your Lord not to let him dominate you.”■

(The Muslim World League Journal)

## **Ali Mian's Inclination to Islamic History And Culture\***

**- Ashfaque Zafar**

Maulana Syyid Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi was born in a family which was proud of its services and sacrifices for Islam, Indian Muslims community and the country. He was brought up under supervision of some eminent personalities who had great interest in history. Maulana inherited this love to history from his family and especially from his father. Although, he could not enjoy guardianship of his father but 7-8 years appear to be enough to have an impact of his personality. He was keen to collect materials related to Arab-Islamic history and present it in a way which creates emotions and feelings for religion and culture.

His father was a great historian of his age, and his book "Al-A'alam" has status of encyclopedia on eminent personalities of Indian subcontinent. This book is considered a great contribution to Islamic history and a milestone for the writing of biography in the subcontinent. It covers almost all important scholars whether men or women. He has also composed other important books on topics related to history. But his most famous book is

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\* *Extracted from "Syyid Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi and His Contribution to Arab-Islamic History Writing" Al-Noor Publications, New Delhi.*

"Nuzhatul Khwatir". As Maulana Syyid Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi points out:

"My father's main concentration was on writing books and articles. He could have managed some times for "Nuzhatul Khwatir" despite his engagements at Nadva and at his clinic.

Maulana was very much attached with the Islamic culture and had a strong view that there should not be any kind of compromise on this issue. He visited, Syria, Egypt and Sudan for this purpose, held high level meetings on the changing dynamics of culture and society, and especially addressed youths highlighting cultural challenges. There was very positive response from all sections of Arab society. The young generation was impressed by his thoughts, ideas and his positive approach to save Islam and Islamic culture from western influences.

He was also equally concerned over threats and conspiracies against the Islamic identity of Indian Muslims. The threat was looming large since a long period of time but it appeared strong after 1947. Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi felt this danger and wrote a detailed letter to Ms Indira Gandhi

highlighting dangers faced by the country and its harmony, and urged her to save India from these threats.

One of his major contributions to protect identity of Indian Muslims and their culture is his participation and support to the nation-wide movement against the Supreme Court interference in Muslim personal laws and Shria rules through Shah Bano case in which the Chief Justice had misinterpreted some verses of Quran having direct impact on identity of Muslims in India. At this juncture of time, Maulana Syyid Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi was heading the Personal Law Board. He started a movement for this cause. Muslims were mobilized and the government was compelled to present a bill in the parliament to amend the law.

He was committed and focused on preserving the Islamic identity of Muslims in India and in other countries. His works on biographies and autobiographies, presenting Muslim luminaries as role model for new generation, is part of his mission. He composed some books and articles to express glory of Islam and Muslims calling Muslim youths to revive their glory of past and to present Islam as system of governance and a system of peace and justice. ■

### **Maulana Abdul Wahab Khilji Passes Away**

Noted Islamic scholar, former President Markazi Jama-te-Ahle Hadith, an active member AIMPLB, Maulana Abdul Wahab Khilji passed away after a prolonged illness on April 13, 2018 in Delhi. He was 63.

He was born at Maler Kutla, Punjab in 1956. After his early education at his home village, he joined Madrasa Sabilus Salam and Jamia Rahmania Delhi thereafter he proceeded Islamic University Madina Manawwara (KSA) for higher studies from where he did his graduation.

He served from 1990 to 2001 as President of Markazi Jama-te-Ahle Hadith. During his tenure a good number of books have been published to disseminate the message of Islam throughout the world. He also started the contest of the Qur'an and Hadith at national level which is still continued. He attended world's important conferences. Under his President ship the Jama-te-Ahle Hadith made great progress. He is survived by two sons and four daughters. He was buried in Delhi Gate graveyard, Delhi. May Allah adorn his grave with luminosity and refulgence and grant peace to his soul. Ameen! ■

## **An Islamic Perspective on Media and Society**

**- Osman Abu Zaid**

THREE years ago, we observed 'the 100th year of the advent of a great scholar, His Eminence Sheikh Ahmad Sorkati, in the land of Indonesia.

Sorkati - my compatriot - traveled on foot from his remote, but a quiet and small, village in the northern region of Sudan to its eastern seaport of Sawakin port city lying on the Red Sea coast.

From there he headed for the holy city of Makkah and remained there for almost 15 years receiving education on religion and Islamic history and general knowledge.

Later, he went to Jakarta - a strikingly beautiful city - where he initiated a movement for guidance, reformation, education, and Dawah work all through the vast and scattered islands of Indonesia for the rest of his life.

I sincerely wish I also followed the footprint of the pious sheikh. I am fortunate that I came to Jakarta twice last year and now this year to participate in the 2nd International Islamic Conference on Islamic Media, which was organized last year by the Muslim World League in conjunction with the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the Republic of Indonesia.

This year I am here to participate in the deliberations of the 3rd Conference.

It is a great opportunity for me to meet you all at this prestigious Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University.

First of all, I am extremely glad to extend my profound gratitude to H.E. Prof. Dr. Ezi Amardi, dean of Postgraduate

Studies College, and to his dedicated staff for their kind invitation.

I am also indebted to my Sudanese community here in Jakarta for organizing this symposium.

While selecting the theme of this seminar that is 'Media & Islam-Problems & Solutions' I understand you wish to tackle relations between media and Islam from the only angle of problems and challenges.

This attitude is acceptable from a methodology point of view as it seems that you follow in your action the method adopted by Huzaifa (may Allah be pleased with him) - the illustrious Companion of the Prophet, who once said, "People used to ask the Holy Prophet about the good deeds but I used to ask him about the bad deeds or evil, fearing that I might commit them".

You are aware of the significance of media in this age and the opportunities and challenges.

This is exactly what we did two years back when we held the 2nd International Conference of Islamic Media on "Impact of New Media & Communication Technology on Islamic Media: Opportunities & Challenges".

We listened attentively to the inaugural but eloquent speech of H.E. Dr. Podeuono, Vice President of the Republic, in which he highlighted several positive aspects of the new media, the topmost of which was the empowerment of civil society, expansion of freedom of

expression, including freedom of giving advice and directing constructive criticism to governments.

Let me quote verbatim what His Excellency said, as this is important: "As you may be aware, Indonesians are avid users of social networking media. Indonesians now form the world's second largest users of Facebook and Twitter after the United States of America. Through Facebook status and chats, pithy tweets and blogs, more and more of our citizens now play increasingly active roles in fighting corruption, pushing for law enforcement, bureaucratic reforms, safeguarding the process of democracy and general elections as well as ensuring good governance. With new media, we are unmistakably moving towards the open government. Social networking media can any-where promote online business, enhance fundraising for the poor, and bring together donors of rare blood- types and so on. From the perspective of religions, social networking media provide room for the establishment of new religious authorities. The flip side is that it may create fragmentation in religious authority. Islamic scholars, thinkers, and Muslim parents need to pay attention to the possible negative impacts of social networking media, especially on our youth and children, the hopes of future generations".

The challenge that we confront today in the development of mass media is to explore, cultivate and upgrade individual capabilities.

Besides, we also need to create a congenial social environment if we have to achieve any space in the world of

information technology and knowledge community.

The changes that are taking place in media technology globally are set to produce negative results in the matters of culture, thoughts, and persuasions, and which will be reflected on the type of life and daily practice of each individual.

You may notice such a changing attitude in the youths today - their tastes in art, for instance, have turned to foreign singing and music.

When it comes to supporting a football team, we find that our youths are more interested in the performance of the players of the European football teams than their own local and national teams. The most significant change we find in their general behavior, their cultural views and in the values and norms.

There are certain dangers that can reach the level of social security threats such as the spread of drugs and alcohol, sexual promiscuity and dissemination of the thought of the terrorist groups and those who uphold the principle of charging people with disbelief.

The means of social networking have become a dominant feature of today's society.

Once I wrote on the subject and described in details people's preoccupation with such means.

I said: "When it is time for the meal at our modern houses, you can watch the members of the family taking their meal separately. You can see the 15-year-old boy holding tenaciously the stick that moves the board of visual plays while rapidly inaugurating a morsel between an

electronic flash and the other. Besides him sits the 20-year-old girl deeply and firmly cradling her laptop on her lap navigating the other worlds and sites that interest her most. Her little 4-year-old sister requests you to read for her the story of the girl, Barbi, that ornamented herself to go out with her friend to attend a birthday party after receiving a gift from him which was a small dog. You can also spot a small boy who is holding his cell phone and his hands never cease to play with it".

The remaining members of the family are in the living room. Despite the fact that they sit together, we find they never speak to each other, because they are attached to the TV screen.

Gone are the days of laying down the table or stretching on the ground a rough folding carpet that used to gather at least twice a day the members of the family at an intimate meeting to take their meal together. No longer are the chatting days we used to spend under the very bright light of the moon. To no return at all, have gone the fascinatingly attractive imaginative stories of grandmothers, which used to fill our soul as well as our mind with due warmth and emotion, such as the Arabic stories of the brave robust intelligent hero' Hassan and his terribly beautiful sister, Fatima, which we have replaced now with the images of (Mario), the hero of visual plays video which transmit a an astonishingly unique message that read "Kill your adversary, other he will kill you. You are alone in this world and depend upon no one except yourself".

We accept this bitter fact or not, but our old world is vanishing fast. Our homes

have virtually become hotels and that our roads lose their natural significance and have changed into mere sites for parking cars in symmetric rows.

This world, whose main strings are linked to optic fibers networks makes us near neighbors with people living on sites that are far from us a thousand miles away whereas the nearby neighbor is unknown to us and that we do not even speak to him.

Do our homes, streets and another thing we possess change alone, or does even a human himself change in terms of his thinking, perception, and culture?

The latest health theories that I have been following since a few days, discuss that if a child remains , for long hours in front of the TV, this will lead to the sluggishness of his ability to accept the others and to be in harmony with them. Other scientific theories indicate that children mind commence developing at the pre-kindergarten stage, at which begins the instigation of mind for assimilation of information. Furthermore, experts underline the significance of this stage, especially in relation to the development the child's social abilities and comprehension of ethical principles. If he lacks such matters, his thinking will be confined only to himself and not to others. Our children spend most part of this 'stage of age in exposure to foreign cartoon films and entertainment films.

No society is devoid of such impacts, which are attributed to the cultural dominance, imposition of advanced countries for their media control with a view to serving their interests and those of their

regimes. We are politically exposed to a type of neo-colonization. After we saw the colonizing countries exited the colonized ones from the main gate, we see them coming to us from the window via highly indispensable sophisticated equipment, which is represented in the mobiles (cell phones) and “remote control” systems.

The cultural challenge in international conflicts in term of new fashions, haircuts and food types may seem less dangerous when compared with the suspicions and ridiculing of religions and creeds which have now become common practice, as well as the alarming widespread wave of atheism and abandoning of people of the religions they brought up according to it.

In fact, it is a single battle, and that the cultural and ideological infiltration is seen as nothing but a preliminary effort for the direct military invasion.

The world has been exposed from time to time rapid and sudden fluctuations that are similar to cyclones that cover the whole parts of the world with a single rate because the means that carry them are the same; from birds influenza to swine influenza, to the international financial crisis etc.

Burhan Ghulyoun says, “ The western culture grows and prospers at the expense of the marginalized cultures that attempt to address this situation by becoming part of the movement of new history, and not to remain isolated from greater changes similar to the incidence of Arabic culture when it interacted with the western civilization at the beginning and consequent surrender to inability and

imitation of the conqueror colonizer in his motto, attire, customs and other conditions”.

Certain people explain this situation by saying, “Under the framework of the new media means, the cultural relations are no longer founded on hegemony and subjugation; and the vivid example is that UNESCO gives good tiding of promotion of “ cultural Dignity” in its project of cultural convergence. They may further think that the technological development in media is a neutral one which embodies no conspiracy for vacuuming the cultural currents of their contents and elements but it does not only intend to promote and complement these elements but to preserve them as well, provided that such elements are healthy and safe.”

Furthermore, it may be said that under these new media means the competition field is no longer confined only to advanced communities but it expands to comprise all communities which can now be able to play the game the superpower and may even overcome them if they better use effectively this equipment in this world.

Let us assume for the sake of argument that the new mass media is a force in the interest of all and serves to equally secure knowledge to all so that no one can be able to monopoly knowledge for himself. This indicates that we can all complement each other by free interaction and exchange of information and knowledge in order to enjoy the fruits of collective intelligence.

Irrespective of the great aura of glory that surrounds the contemporary technological advancement, announcing

its capabilities in improving the world dialogue and communication among people, we conspicuously remark the impact of interactive nature of these means. Additionally, we find that this nature gives the opportunity for the assimilation of the cultural and social diversity at a type of the collective meaning industry and consequent similarity of thinking methods. In fact, there is a noticeable change that largely affects the way of thinking and works in the fields of management, education, law, politics and even military activity. Furthermore, the world seeks to stereotype thoughts towards religion, customs, and traditions.

Many examples can be quoted in this regard. These include the prevalent spirit that is deeply rooted in our local culture in most Muslim countries and tends to occupy itself with problems that are not created from our own nature but from the problems that are imposed on society with the unavoidable drive of the dominant international culture. Likewise, groups may face disturbing obstacles in building their independent thought that can effectively solve such problems that are due to the unfortunate and acute dichotomy in the cultural values between those who want genuine solutions and those who want to follow suit of the west in politics, economy and thinking techniques.

Is there truth for what we say regarding such acute and political dichotomy we, unfortunately, witness inside our countries and in many neighboring ones (countries) ?

Thus, media and knowledge - a twin force to cultivate individual ability and a

mean for social advancement - may, however, turn harmful and become a means of destruction, exploitation, and monopoly, if not restrained or checked.

This is, in a nutshell, diagnosing the problems and challenges facing the Muslim community; and also what practical and viable solutions could there be.

The recommendations adopted by the 3rd International Conference for Islamic Media emphasized some significant aspects that offered a roadmap to the Muslim empowerment in world media.

It is worthwhile here to quote briefly from the resolutions that were unanimously passed in the Jakarta conference:

- To observe mutual relations between media and society, consider mass media as partner institutions in society and work in complementarity with other institutions and have a joined responsibility, which requires the coordination and integration of efforts.

- To reject simulation and imitation for media practice models at non-Islamic regimes as such models are considered unsuitable for neither the environments nor the countries that witness political change or suffer from internal or regional disputes; and call for the application of the peace press model which is considered appropriate for Muslim communities that witness religious, ethnic or political conflicts or at which happened tremendous changes as a result of the political movement at the recent period.

- To elevate the role of religious,

social and vocational values in media performance so as to contribute in the enhancement of the culture of dialogue and Shoura as well as the establishment of a political movement founded on transparency and disclosure of facts as well as standing to corruption and excessiveness, and exploitation of influence and power.

- To reaffirm the significance and promotion of Dawah institutions that continuously need improvement regarding content, style and reproduction of their materials; and require the organization of periodical meetings for meetings for those in charge at the level of countries, continents and world so as to achieve effective communication among them with a view to exchanging thoughts, experiments and experiences.

- Highlight the social role of the various mass media, which is represented in projecting the social schemes that are undertaken by civil society organizations, and encourage individuals in Muslim countries and communities to give greater attention to social schemes.

- To disseminate media education and awakening among society members; approve the teaching of media education subject or course at schools and universities and develop it according to study stage and age bracket, establish centers and support institutions for the provision of required training and assistance to the pioneering project as the media education is considered to have a substantial contribution to the formation education of a generation that observe its values and is aware of the problems of

electronic media, especially in regards to a security question, privacy and informatics crimes.

- To draw the attention to the numerous great challenges which the Muslim communities confront in media; and the Conference recommends the individuals of Muslim minorities to give due attention to their role in media so that they can have their influence in the countries in which they and communicate with their respective citizens for the presentation of the principles of the Islamic religion which was revealed by Allah Almighty for all mankind.

- To call upon the Islamic organizations to encourage communication among their members, promote the spirit of introduction and dialogue via utilization of the opportunities of (interlocking) and interaction, exchange of information via social networking, particularly among Muslim youth who are close, practically and effectively linked to these networks.

These practical and viable solutions have been presented in fact as a result of impregnation of thoughts among media students, specialists, experts and officials who met in the city of Jakarta to ponder over the problems of communication and media; and who called for further media cooperation and for the exchange of programs, experiences and studies as well as the conduct of joint symposiums and establishment of training centers as well as increase rendering financial support to these activities in a manner that serves media march in the Muslim world.■

*(Courtesy: MWLJ)*

## **Maulana Mohammad Salim Qasmi (1926-2018)**

Prominent Islamic scholar, Vice-President AIMPLB, Principal Darul Uloom Waqf Deoband Maulana Mohammad Salim Qasmi passed away on April 14, 2018 after a prolonged illness at the age of 94.

Born on January 8, 1926 in Deoband, he was grandson of Maulana Qasim Nanatvi, founder Darul Uloom Deoband and son of noted scholar Maulana Qari Mohammad Tayyib Qasmi, first President of All India Muslim Personal Law Board. He received basic education from renowned scholars of Deoband and graduated from Darul Uloom in 1948. He was one of the last disciple of Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi. He specialized in the field of Hadith. Fortunately he chanced to acquire science of Hadith from well-known Hadith scholars i.e. Hazrat Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani, Hazrat Maulana Ibrahim Balyavi and Hazrat Maulana Syed Fakhru Hasan etc.

He was appointed as teacher in Darul Uloom Deoband shortly after his passing out from Darul Uloom because of his deep and profound knowledge over Islamic theology. He discharged his duties with honesty and integrity. He was very punctual. He taught Hadith about seven decades in Darul Uloom Deoband.

A man of angelic qualities he always kept himself busy in purification of mind and purging his heart and soul. Hazrat Maulana Shah Abdul Qadir Raipuri was his spiritual mentor. He also took training for reformation and purification of heart from his father Qari Mohammad Tayyib Qasmi. He was an excellent example of Ulama-e-salaf (right guided Ulama of the past). Maulana was a celebrated orator. His reformatory addresses and scholarly speeches held audience spellbound. Reformation of society was his main mission. Enjoining good and forbidding

evil was the main task of his life.

He always remained aloof from provocation and investigation. He never liked to criticize others. He remained adamant before all sort of hardships and difficulties. He never liked enmity and hostility. Besides he was associated with a large number of social, religious and academic institutions of India. His outstanding contributions and achievements in the cause of Muslim Ummah will always be remembered.

In his condolence message Maulana S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi, Rector Nadwatul Ulama said, "The demise of Maulana Mohammad Salim Qasmi is a great loss to Muslim Ummah. He earned good reputation due to his vast erudition of Islamic knowledge in Sub-continent. He was a revered member of Executive Committee of Nadwatul Ulama. He also presided over its various sessions. From the very outset my acquaintance has been with him. As he was my classmate in Darul Uloom Deoband. I stayed there one year. No doubt he was a Scion of Qasmi family.

Dr. Saeedur Rahman Azami Nadwi, Principal Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama stated that he belonged to an educated and well-known family. He devoted his whole life to the cause of Islam. Under his Principalship Darul Uloom made great progress. He was a true representative of Islam. His life is ideal for all of us.

He is survived by four sons and two daughters. His eldest son Maulana Mohammad Sufyan Qasmi led the funeral prayer. He was buried in his ancestral Qasmi graveyard of Deoband. Thousands of his admirers from various parts of the country and abroad thronged to attend the last rites of the late Maulana. ■

*( Obaidur Rahman Nadwi)*

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