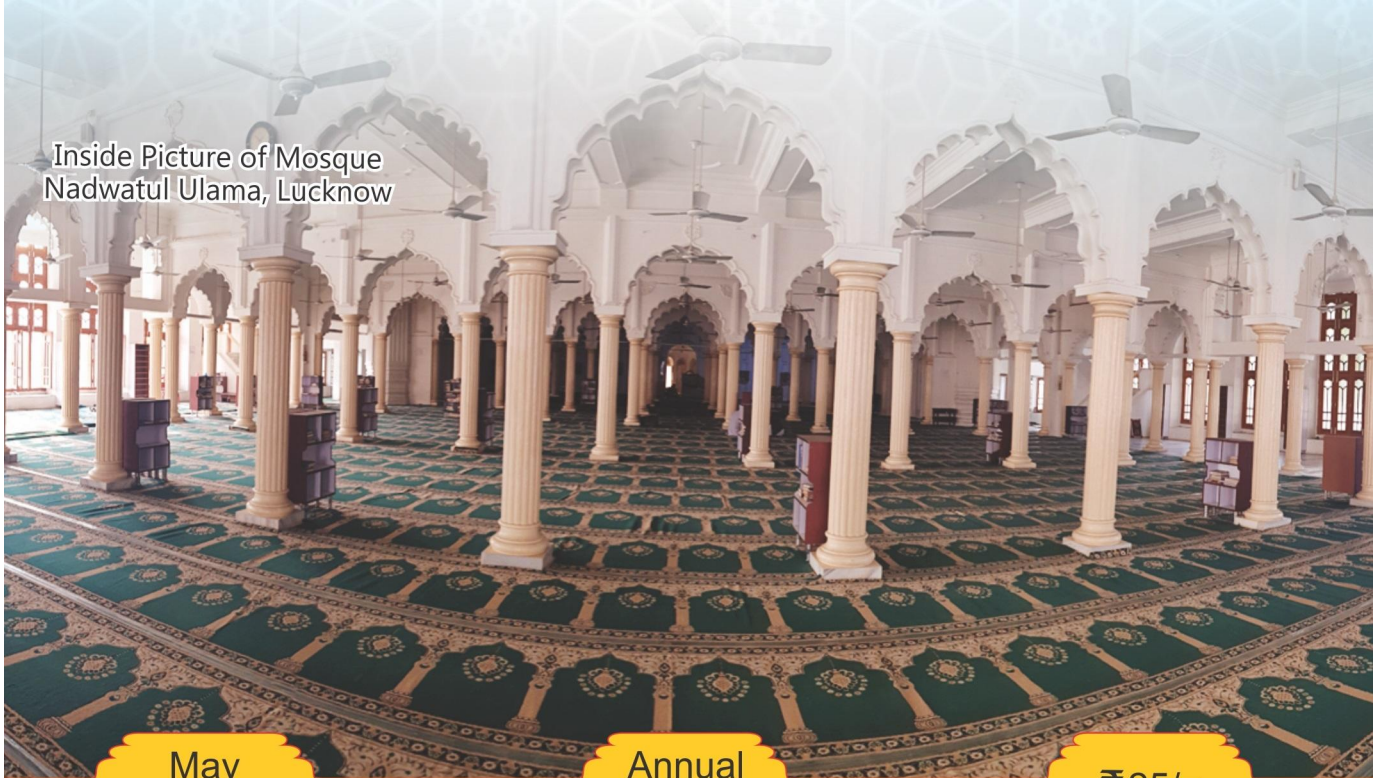


# The Fragrance of East

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Shariq Alavi

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# The Fragrance of East

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## **Establishment of Standard Primary Schools**

### **S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi**

Today Montessory, Nursery, Kindergarten Schools and the like have become necessary. Now digging wells and constructing Masjid in comparison of Masjid is not only a virtuous deed but it would be a great deal of an act that you save this present generation and establish such standard schools that their discipline, arrangement, teachers' qualification and experience are no less than other schools which have been set up by other communities. On the contrary they should be more excellent and magnificent. Muslims should strive to excel and take precedence over all branches of knowledge and their discipline, care, sanitation and arrangement may appear to be so excellence that the rich and the nobility may not hesitate to send their children there.

The need of the hour is that you must perceive the gravitation of the time and build well-furnished schools at every locality where rich and well-educated persons may send their siblings happily. Many people want that their children may become aware of basic tenets of Islam and thereafter they may acquire modern education without which neither they can find jobs nor can transact their business. The people who want that their children may become aware of religion and after that they get modern education, they do not misunderstand. The time has compelled them to think so. It is not a sin. It has become incumbent for them to set up such type of schools where they may get modern education along with religious knowledge so that they may lead their lives according to Islamic Shariah. Moreover, they may take pride in being Muslims. Besides their academic record should be more better than those children who study in non-Muslim Schools. In every way their performance should be well in comparison with other students. If you get success in doing so, remember, you will surely perform a great job. ■

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

*O Believers! Enter into Islam wholly and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Surely he is an open enemy to you.*

*(al-Baqarah 2:208)*

This verse, though brief, contains a broad message for man, especially the Muslim community. Contained in it is much food for thought, for here Allah asks believers to be imbued with Islam in full. Another significant directive is to shun Satan's footsteps in that he is man's open enemy.

Let us first explain what is meant by Islam. Many people who have not conducted a study of comparative religions fail to appreciate the fundamental truth that Islam is a set of beliefs and a complete way of life. Other religions are named after their founders or their ethnic origin. Take the example of Judaism, which is named after YeHuda, a member of the Prophet's family. Christianity owes its name to Jesus Christ. Parsis are named after Faris, the old name of Iran, which was the birthplace of their religion. None of these religions represents an extensive call to believe in God or a Way of life. Hinduism takes its name from Sindh, and Brahmanism after a particular class. Buddhism too owes its name to its founder, Gautama Buddha. So is the case with Jainism. In contrast to all these, Islam is the only faith that prescribed a way of life and derives its message from the Scripture and the Messenger. It is based solely on divine revelation. The Shariah stands for His commands. Islam is a set of beliefs and the Shariah. In this respect it is unique, distinct from all other religions. ■

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

It is related by Abu Hurairah that the Apostle of God said : "Do not be suspicious, for suspicion is the height of falsehood, nor bear a grudge or enmity against each other, nor be jealous of each other, nor indulge in back-biting, nor pry into the secrets of one another, nor try unreasonably to excel one another, nor turn your faces against each other, but O bondmen of God ! live like brothers as the Lord has commanded."

—*Bukhari and Muslim*

*Commentary:* The evils mentioned above are highly detrimental to the growth of good and friendly relations. They cause ill-will and produce bitterness in the hearts. The sacred Prophet has, first of all, spoken of suspicion which is a form of unfounded fear and misdoubt, and whoever has a suspecting nature sees viciousness in everything a man does with whom he has the least difference, and his attitude towards him is, naturally, influenced by it. The other person, too, reacts and an atmosphere of sullen malice and ill-will is created between them.

The same is the case with the other habits indicated in it. They breed hatred and enmity and leave no room for goodwill and fellowship to develop which the common religious tie demands.

Abu Hurairah relates that the Apostle of God said: "Guard yourselves against envy for envy eats up good deeds as fire eats up wood."

— *Abu Dawood*

*Commentary :* When the fire of envy burns in anyone's heart, he misses no opportunity to hurt or harm the person at the sight of whose excellence or success he feels discontented, and, if nothing else, he seeks satisfaction by slandering him and speaking ill of him behind his back, and, as we learn from other Traditions of the Prophet, the lowest penalty the envious are going to pay in future existence is that their good deeds will be allotted to those against whom they have sinned. It will, perhaps, explain what is meant by the eating up of good deeds by envy, as stated in the above narrative. ■

## Saum

Saum (fasting) is one of the five pillars of Islam. It is in complaint on every Muslim to keep fast for a month during Ramadan. Option are non-Muslim friends express surprise and wonder that how we observe nirjala brat (fast without water) even in the worse vagaries of weather.

In fact in almost all religion there is the practice of keeping fast but not with that intensity with which Muslims observe it. The holy Quran says:

O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you that ye may learn self-restraint. (ii :183)

Imam ghazali write in his book Ihya-ul-uloom :

“The object of fasting is that men should produce within him a semblance of the Divine Attributes of samadiyat (i.e. freedom from want), that he should as far as possible, take



after the angels and cost of the beastly propensities because the angels are free from desire and the place of man, too is above the animals and he has, further, been given the power of discrimination to resist the pressure of inordinate appetites. He is of course, inferior to angels in the sense that desire often overpowers him and he has to strive hard to subdue it. When he succumbs to sensual propensities he degenerates into the 'lowest of lowly' and joins the herds of cattle which when he conquers them attains the dizzy lights of the heavenly host and begins to dwell on the place of angels."

This year Ramadan begins in the first week of May a very hot month of the year but believers will definitely show their desire to keep fast and earn the gratitude of God. ■

**S.A.**

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## Reconstruction of Indian Society \*

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

### The Topic for the Day

I deem it an honour to address this gathering presided over by one of the foremost men of letters of our country and an eminent commentator of the Quran, Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi, whom I have always held as my mentor and drawn inspiration from his delightful compositions.

This meeting is being held under the auspices of Shibli Academy. It would have been more in keeping with its traditions if the topic for today's talk had been 'The contribution of Islam to the cultural heritage of India', but a number of learned dissertations already exist on the subject and Shibli Academy has itself brought out several publications which contain valuable material on this topic. This is an attractive topic of discourse for any student of Islamic history and I would have also been too glad to express my views on this subject. However, a lot has already been written on it both by Muslim and non-Muslim writers, such as, A Survey of Indian History by K. M. Pannikar, Discovery of India by Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, Influence of Islam on Indian Culture by Dr. Tara Chand and several valuable articles written by Sir Jadu Nath Sircar, N. C. Mehta and others besides the Glimpses of the Medieval India by Syed Sabah Uddin Abdur Rahman and the writings of other Muslim scholars.

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\* *Delivered at The Allama Latif Hall, Bombay on April 30, 1972.*

### Present or the Past

The present is undoubtedly more important than the past. The role that Islam can play in the reconstruction of Indian society is now much more significant for the Muslims as well as for the country. We ought to consider, in this select gathering of educated persons, the contribution that the Muslims of this country can make both as Indians and as the custodians of a revealed religion, in the reconstruction of the fast changing society and the evolving cultural pattern of India? Do we have anything in our religion to guide and save the country from the impending danger and to help it achieve an honourable place in the comity of nations? I have not raised these questions out of any chauvinistic boastfulness, nor on account of any superiority complex, which have been unfortunately one of our national weaknesses, but in all seriousness and from the practical viewpoint of the community to which I belong. My community, I would like to emphasise, is not an offshoot of any fortuitous circumstances, but that it has an ideal, a mission before it. The Muslim community cannot simply live in its own imaginary world : it is its bounden duty to be fully seized with the problems facing the country. It cannot remain unconcerned with its surroundings nor can it afford to cut itself adrift from the mainstream of national life. It has to realise that it is boarding one and the same boat along with all the other communities and peoples



living in this great country.

### **An Inspiring Illustration**

To consider oneself immune from a portending evil is really suicidal. The moral has been driven home by the Prophet of Islam in a very pithy and piquant allegory. He is reported to have said that:

“The parable of those who forbid others and the persons who indulge in the acts prohibited by God is like this : a few travellers on board a ship decided to cast dice for taking their places ; some of them got their place in the upper storey while others were accommodated in the lower one. Inconvenience was caused to those who had found a place in the upper storey, when people from the lower storey happened to pass by them to fetch water. At last, the people lodged in the lower storey said: Then the only way out is that we should bore a hole in the part occupied by us to get water (from the river) and save the “higher-ups” from inconvenience. Now, if the persons occupying the upper storey allow those in the lower part to carry out their resolve, all of them would perish; but if they prevent them from acting on their decision, all would be saved.”

I have intentionally used here the word “higher-ups”, to make it more relevant to our present-day experiences. I think this parable brings out an important fact of the social life instead of illustrating an experience of minor significance. There can really be no question of any class distinction when a collective

responsibility falls on any community; likewise, nobody can be allowed to act against the common interest of the whole community. This parable is also aptly suited to remind the Muslims of every country, of the collective responsibility they owe to their country and the nation.

The underlying idea of collective responsibility illustrated by the parable just mentioned has, in the past, inspired the Muslims to serve the country according to their lights. I can assert, on the basis of whatever limited knowledge of history I possess, that although there had been no pre-planned effort on the part of the Muslims, they have nevertheless ceaselessly worked to make this country great and prosperous. This idea of collective responsibility is still present there and can guide the Muslims to share the burden of reconstruction and development of the country in the present times.

### **Society and its Significance**

History bears an irrefutable evidence to the fact that the society at any given time is much more important than languages and literatures, cultural patterns and folk-lore of any country. The existence of a vigorous society having a flicker of life in its veins, endowed with a conscience that discriminates between virtue and wickedness and taking offence of all cruel acts is a great blessing from God. Total effacement of tyranny from the society is perhaps an extremely difficult task: it is an ideal of prophets and their companions, which is seldom achieved by others. This is, however, not an

impossibility, for had it been so, we would have never been able to speak of virtue and justice with confidence. It is, therefore, absolutely essential that the conscience of the society should at least prick on every injustice and tyranny, and it should never be willing to compromise with the base desires or sordid longings. It should ever be prepared to assert itself against all odds and difficulties. To check a tyrant from committing an act of tyranny is undoubtedly a deed of valour, but it is also praiseworthy to name the tyrant in his face. A society whose inner voice has not died out is the first pre-requisite for the existence of any country. Only such an upright society can maintain the stability of the country in the periods of crisis. Howsoever long-drawn-out may be these critical occasions, periods of political crisis or moral confusion, the country with a righteous society need have no fear. A country need not give up hope so long as there exists such a society whose inward monitor has not become dormant, which refuses to endorse evil and wickedness and which is prepared to resist the reign of terror. I do not mean that such a society should have eschewed every trace of evil and turned itself into an embodiment of virtue and righteousness: what it needs is a positive acceptance of the spiritual-ethical norms, belief in the existence of God and the final retribution. If these convictions have percolated into the fabric of any society, it can withstand the greatest onslaught on humanity and its moral order, the waywardness of the politicians and the capriciousness of its rulers.

But if any country has been deprived of such a conscientious society, no good can come out of a stable government, huge educational establishments, spectacular religious observances or even individual righteousness. Nothing in the world can take the place of an upright society while a virtuous society can make up for every other loss. It is the society alone that can bring forth a welfare state and a clean administration. The society possessing the moral sense can easily change the wicked rulers if they somehow come to wield the reins of its government.

### **Society is the Cynosure of History**

Every sagacious historian has his eyes on the society rather than on the ruler or the government of a country. The historical records of Greece and Rome as also of our own country bear out the fact that so long as the conscience of the societies in these countries had not become dormant, the governmental changes for the worse or the assumption of power by any selfish and incompetent person was no more than a temporary phase. The collective will of the people always reasserted itself relegating the usurper into the background, not long after he had donned the purple. The society always brought forward a just and capable ruler to replace the unjust suzerain. Every prudent and foresighted man, therefore, ought to pay more attention to the society than to the political set-up of the time; for, if the society is healthy and virtuous, it would not put up long with a tyrannical government. The wickedness of the rulers is a fleeting phenomenon like the indisposition of a healthy person. A

physician is never worried by such slight ailments because the inner vitality of a healthy man is sufficient enough to overcome a slight illness.

But if the society becomes corrupt ; loses the sense of discrimination between good and bad, virtue and vice, the oppressor and the oppressed; begins to follow the law of jungle; learns to bow down in submission before whosoever gets the better of it ; and begins to sing the praise of every rising sun ; then, of course, it is a matter of grave concern.

#### **Healthy Society of Muslim Era**

The history of our own country tells us that after the Muslims came into this land, the governments of the country successively passed into different hands ; no dynasty except that of the Moghuls has had the opportunity of undisturbed sway over the country for as much as a hundred years ; revolutions continuously rocked the ruling elite ; but strange though it was, the logical outcome of such revolutions as, for example, political instability, anarchy, social and moral confusion and cultural and intellectual decadence was almost absent. The common man who was concerned, by and large, with the earning of his bread, was never affected by these palace revolutions. Even the administrative set-up of the land hardly ever showed the signs of change in the ruling dynasty and continued to maintain the law and order undisturbed by these frequent changes. But, what was the reason for it? The kings were beheaded but the mundane affairs of the masses went on peacefully! The

only reason for this seeming complexity was that the then Muslim society, to whose care Providence had vouchsafed the governance of the country, was a healthy and upright society. For it was the only reservoir of strength and stability, it had been burdened with responsibility to maintain law and order, peace and tranquility within the country despite political upheavals. It had to bring forth men of redoubtable courage and conviction, poets and scholars, businessmen and administrators to sustain the social, economic and administrative order of the country. And never did this society failed to produce the requisite personnel at the appropriate time. It is not difficult to visualise the resulting chaos if this society of the mediaeval ages had even once failed to provide men of required calibre to maintain the administrative set-up of the country.

#### **Vitality of the Medieval Muslim Society**

A distinguishing feature of the medieval Muslim society was its capacity to produce the requisite personnel in abundance. It had always had plenty of men to fill in every vacant place, without any difficulty or time-lag, in all walks of life—from rulers to traders and from military generals to scholars. After Qutub-uddin Aibek's death, the Muslim administration of India got another capable, virtuous and just ruler in the person of Shams-uddin Altamash. Then, after Altamash, Ghayath-uddin Balban ascended the throne, although he was not a progeny of the outgoing ruler. Even the simplicity, piety and kindheartedness of Nasir-uddin Mahmood did not become a

source of weakness to the country's administration. When Balban's descendants rendered themselves incapable of maintaining the rule of law, they were replaced by the Khiljis—first by Jalal-uddin Khilji and then by his nephew Ala-uddin Khilji who bestowed on the country a stable, strong and clean administration. Although Qutub-uddin Mubarak was the true successor of his father, yet his murder by Khusro Shah, who wanted to take the country on a path altogether different from that it had been treading so far, constituted a teal crisis pregnant with perilous situation for the country. Then this vigorous society again came to the rescue of the country and provided another courageous, capable and virtuous ruler, Malik Ghazi Ghayath-uddin Tughlaq, who had been guarding the frontiers of the empire against the Mongol onslaughts at far-off Multan. This timely intervention by Malik Ghazi saved the country from internal strife and instability. Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq died at Tath in Sindh, faraway from Delhi, the centre of his Kingdom, at a time when the Tartar hordes were threatening the security of the country from across the river Sind, on the one hand, and internal revolt was about to shatter the Tughlaq kingdom into pieces, on the other. Under the guidance of Sheikh Chiragh-uddin, a mystic of Delhi, who happened to be present when the king died, another upright ruler, Firoz Tughlaq was invested with the purple. Under his rule the country witnessed unprecedented prosperity, peace and amity. The country travelled through its checkered course under different rulers, the Saiyids and the Lodhis, till it got a virtuous prince in the

person of Sher Shah Suri, whom it would be difficult to excel in just administration, common weal and far-reaching reforms.

Then came the Moghuls to the fore. They served the country not only for the longest period, but they could be rightly proud of their constructive and literary accomplishments too. Their rule ended with one of the greatest emperors the country has ever known. Aurangzeb ruled over the country with undisputed ability for half a century.

All this was owing to the inner vitality of the Muslim society and its capacity to produce men of character and ability. The then Muslim society drew inspiration from the pious mentors who were always keenly watchful the spiritual and moral well-being of the Muslim people of and their governments. These mystics led a life of contentment radiating the spirit of piety and ennobling conduct, away from the demands of the covetous desires and free from the influences of princes and rulers. Gradually, however, the Muslim society lost its moral vigour owing to the increasing affluence and comforts, and the grip of its spiritual guides too was loosened rendering it ethically barren and incapable of producing men of ability and competence. Eventually, the Muslim society became unable to provide a just and capable administrator who could hold the reigns of government at Delhi, and, then, all efforts to resuscitate the dying Moghul power came to naught in 1857.

### **The Key to the Power of Britain**

What was it that enabled Great Britain to wield the scepter for such a long

period over so extensive areas of the globe? Extensiveness of Britain's dominions gave currency to the proverb that the sun never sets in the British Empire! Great Britain was enabled to hold the reins of authority in such vast areas not on account of its administration, which was by no means the best in the world, but because of the inherent vitality of its conscientious masses and society. The British people never hesitated to call to account even their greatest but erring benefactors: Clive was one of the founders of the British Empire but he was made to stand in the dock; Warren Hastings was put on trial although he strengthened and extended the British rule in India. The speeches of Edmond Burke and the writings of Mecauley explicitly exhibit the democratic spirit of the British people who were ever keen to make a distinction between the right and the wrong. This constituted, in truth and reality, the reservoir of its inner strength which enabled Britain to come out successfully after the blood-baths of two world wars, and to emerge as a strong and prosperous country. Now, the British society no longer possesses the characteristics which were once considered to be its forte; moral and social confusion has now taken hold of it; and the country is swiftly nodding to its fall. Britain now occupies the fourth or the fifth position among the comity of powerful nations. Having lost its power and prestige, the country has now to face the increasing internal strife, demoralization and decadence.

#### **The First Task after Independence**

I have taken a lot of your time in what

could be regarded as an introduction to the topic of discussion. But I would like to emphasise again that it is the society which provides fresh blood into the veins of a country and infuses a new life into a nation. My introductory remarks, although a bit lengthy, were meant to explain the importance of society.

The country is at present passing through a critical period. The matter of supreme importance after attaining Independence in 1947 was not of putting an exemplary constitution on the statute book, reformation of the governmental set-up, formulation of developmental plans or establishment of educational institutions. I am firmly of opinion the question requiring our prior attention was, and still is, whether we have a healthy, conscientious and upright society or not, for on it depends the future of the nation and the country. In fact, our very existence depends on such a society. The government has no importance at all: it changes after every five years. What ultimately determines the position and prestige of the country in the comity of nations is a healthy society which can save the country from making grievous mistakes and inviting its doom. This is the danger looming large over our heads today. The strength of a country does not depend on its military power, huge budgets, the number of universities or even the peaceful conditions. None of these can, indeed, check the ultimate downfall of a nation.

#### **Culture, no Check to Downfall**

When the decline of the Roman empire set in, it had innumerable centres



of cultural refinement and academies for the promotion of sciences and learning. Nothing could, however, check its downfall. The students of history can testify that all those nations which have gone downhill, had a vigorous and living culture before they tumbled down. The Iranian culture had reached its zenith when the Arabs attacked that country. Durafsh-i-Kaviyani and the Resplendent Carpet known as 'Bahar' bear witness to the artistic achievements and the sophisticated taste of the Iranian royalty. No embodiment of cultural refinement could arrest the decadence of the Sasanian Empire, or, for that matter, the extinction of the once prosperous and powerful kingdoms of Syria, Egypt and Rome. The only reason for this was that their peoples had become corrupt: the moral sense of these peoples, which could distinguish right from wrong, virtue from wickedness and justice from inequity had been numbed. They never took notice of what they were told, they always looked up to see who was addressing them. The flattery of the people, servile in conduct and demeanour, besieged the powers that be to endorse and esteem their whims and phantasies. Unfortunate though it is, we find the same trend gaining ground in India today.

#### **A Society free from Prejudices**

The question that ought to have engaged our prior attention after Independence was how to bring about a healthy and upright society in this country. This was the supreme task for everyone who loved this country. No hard work, no exertion, no struggle and no strain should have been spared to lay the foundation of

a congenial society which would have never compromised with injustice and tyranny. The awe of God should have been implanted in the heart of this society, its inner voice nourished and strengthened, its moral courage emboldened and the sense of discrimination sharpened to distinguish between the oppressor and the oppressed. This is a matter of life and death for our nation. The broadminded leaders of public opinion owe their duty to the nation to create a society in which injustice and oppression would never flourish.

However, if our national leaders had been free from all prejudices and narrow-mindedness, they could have very well taken advantage of the teachings of Islam. A sizeable section of the Indian people already professes this religion, whose services could have been utilized in diffusing the concepts of unimpaired human equality and justice. Only this was the right approach to make the country strong and great.

#### **The Greatest Danger**

Now, let us first take cognizance of the danger spots and weaknesses that are making the Indian society feeble and incompetent and rendering its developmental efforts ineffective. It would, indeed, be a great mistake to overlook the dangers besetting the nation. I may, however, tell you that I am not a politician: I am a student of history, religion and ethics. No intentions need be imputed to me if I point out the mistakes committed in the past and the ways to rectify them.

The first and foremost danger facing



this country is the non-existence of a sense of human worth and dignity in our countrymen. I have reached this conclusion not by way of any intellectual postulate but as a practical proposition based on personal experience. I have decided to live and die in this country ; my fate is inextricably linked with my homeland. Being immersed in the cross-currents of national life, I am as much influenced by the national affairs as any other citizen of the country. One could have misunderstood me if I had expressed my views in this regard in a foreign country. But I want to tell my countrymen that the greatest danger for any society is disregard for human life and dignity. The underrating of human life by a society is the forerunner of ultimate ruin of its culture and civilization, nay, the humanity itself: Destroyer of nations it is, like Chenghez.

### **Fratricide is the Beginning of Impending Doom**

Nothing can save a country that allows fratricide unabated, from its inevitable doom, no matter howsoever developed it might be in agriculture, industry and education, or howsoever rich it may be in natural resources and extensive in area and population.

It is not only surprising but shameful too that a country which taught the lesson of love in the days of yore and later diffused it among its people through Sanskrit and Hindi and Persian and Urdu, whose mystics spread the message of love and humanity, where Mahatma Gandhi gave the call of truth and Ahimsa to the world at large and which still

possesses abundant literature on religion and humanitarianism in the scores of languages spoken there, should not be conversant with the true worth of human life and dignity of mankind.

### **Worth of Humanity**

Every citizen of this ancient land should have learnt by now that all the human problems—whether relating to languages, cultures or scripts—relate to man, are manmade and derive their importance with relation to man alone. If the life of man is not safe anywhere, then all these problems become meaningless. After all, who would care for language and culture, rivers and mountains, literature and poetry if one has to live under the shadow of death? Verily, nothing has any meaning or importance except man alone! I would not go into further details to elucidate the matter, but there is no denying the fact that we do not have the consciousness of human dignity which we ought to have imbibed. It is not for me to indicate its reasons or apportion the share of different causes like the divisive political game of our erstwhile foreign rulers or the revivalist movements or else the communalist forces responsible for the atrophy of this moral sense. Let the historians give their verdict on it.

### **Whirl-wind of butchery and destruction**

It is not unoften that hundreds of human beings are slaughtered in cold blood for a trifling object, a tree or a beast, or owing to the misguided sentiments of revivalism. We hang our heads in shame when these violent storms of death and destruction are let loose resulting in

despicable acts of cruelty to women and children and the aged and the infirm. Unspeakable horrors are perpetrated and human life becomes cheap ; the most exquisite creation of God for whom exists the world and all that it contains—the beauty of the lakes and mountains, the wisdom of philosophy and the charm of poetry—become valueless. Brother kills brother and friend takes the life of his lifelong partner! That man should not have learnt to tolerate the existence of another man is something extremely perilous for the country at large.

There is no dearth of intellectuals in our country which also abounds, fortunately, in universities and seats of higher learning as few countries can boast of. At the same time, we often find some people going out of their heads and taking delight in the maddening dance of senseless chaos and carnage. It is, therefore, absolutely essential, a sine qua non, that the sense of human dignity is implanted in the hearts of the people ; everyone is made to realise that whatever we see in the world has been created for man. And that man has not been created for the worldly objects.

#### **The Pithy Saying of a Philosopher**

I remember to have noted the pithy saying of a philosopher who said : Every newborn in this world declares that God has still not lost hope in man, but we go on announcing by our deeds that human beings do not deserve to walk the earth. The birth of every child means that he has to live and prosper. Why, then, should we not trust man whom God considers worthy

of His confidence?

#### **The Fundamental Right of Man**

We really need today hundreds of thousands of writers, poets, artists and intellectuals who could devote their energies to the task of educating every citizen of India that whatever may be the Directive Principles and the Fundamental Rights enshrined in the Constitution of the country, the first and foremost law of human existence to which we ought to adhere is that EVERY MAN HAS A RIGHT TO LIVE. We, indeed, witness the face of our society besmirched time and again but we are keeping mum!

#### **Worth of Humanity in Islam**

Now I shall tell you what help Islam can render in the solution of this urgent problem. One of the fundamental teachings of Islam, on which it raises its edifice, is that man is the best of creations, the prettiest flower of the garden known by the name of earth. Thus says the ‘Quran:

‘Surely We created man of the best stature.’

God crowned man with the most respectable marks of distinction.

“Verily We have honoured the Children of Adam.”

Man was elevated to the position of vicegerent of God on earth. There can be no greater honour to which man can aspire, nor a way more befitting to glorify him. Says God :

“Lo : I am about to place a viceroy in the earth.”

God commanded the angels to prostrate themselves before Adam. This signified that man need not bow in reverence to anyone save God.

The worth of humanity was still raised higher. In the words of the blessed Prophet of Islam men were described as the ‘ ‘Children of God.’’

In order to delineate the delicate nature of relationship between man and God, a Tradition of the holy Prophet employs a pithy parable expressing the truth in a graceful yet unaffected style. Thus says the Prophet of Islam :

“God will say unto man on the Doomsday: I was ill but thou didst not pay a visit to Me. Man would reply: My God, how didst Thou fall ill ? Thou art the Lord of the Worlds? Then God would say: One of My bondsmen (whom thou knew) was indisposed. Thou didst not go to see him. Hadst thou gone to see him, thou wouldst have found Me there. God will then again say: I asked thee for food but thou refused it to Me. Man would reply: How could have I fed Thee ? Thou art the Sustainer of all the Worlds ? God would reply: One of My bondsmen wanted thee to fill his belly, but thou refused him. Hadst thou given food to him, it would have verily reached Me. God would then again ask man: O progeny of Adam, I once asked thee for water, but thou refused it to Me. Man would again express his surprise and would get back the retort : One of My bondsmen asked thee for water but it was refused to him. Hadst thou

quenched his thirst, thou wouldn’t have seen it With Me.”

The value of human life has been raised by Islam to inconceivable heights. Says God:

“Whosoever killeth a human being for other than manslaughter or corruption in the earth, sit shall be as if he had killed all mankind, and whoso saveth the life of one, it shall be as if he had saved the life of all mankind.”

Where the life and dignity of man is at stake, no distinction can be made in the majority and minority, one and the hundred, individual and the community ; for, the life of every man, of every single individual is sacred and the most cherished possession of mankind. Verily, man could never have conceived that the murder of an individual is a crime against the whole society.

### **Responsibility of the Muslims**

What can the Muslims do to save country from this danger? They can, of course, spread the gospel of human dignity and strengthen the hands of all well-wishers of this land by acting on the precepts of the Quran and the teachings of their holy Prophet. Unfortunately our political leaders are too preoccupied in the party affairs, elections and matters relating to the governance of the country. They cannot spare their precious time for this matter of overriding importance. The responsibility thus devolves on the Muslims who should devote themselves to the task most earnestly with the spirit of service to their homeland. They should

never think for a moment that their efforts in this regard would be of any help to themselves: for this would be a selfish and shortsighted view to be given up once for all. I would never be prepared to stoop to this level, nor would I like to see my co-religionists to pursue their interests alone. This is a problem of vital importance facing the country: a question confronting all of us, in fact, the entire humanity. Human blood when spilt is never confined to any section of the people; it goes on extending its sphere to seek the victims of its vengeance. Who can deny that national, linguistic, racial and cultural differences have been a far greater scourge for mankind than religious disagreements? The problem, therefore, poses a lurking danger for the country as a whole; and if it is not tackled properly, it would be ruinous for the country whose entire philosophy of life and literature, values of life and religious norms of ethics, age-old endeavours to extol humanism and the sacrifice of Mahatma Gandhi for the same cause—all would be reduced to ashes. What is- happening these days? An insignificant annoyance or a trivial news item or else the foolish prank on the part a Muslim rogue lets loose the storm of fury and destruction in the surrounding area. Then, everything is lost. The age-long wisdom of the sages, culture and civilization, fair name of the country, in short, all that the country has and for which man has worked so long, goes down the drain in no time. It is no wonder that man then loses heart to work for the betterment of the country and the nation; his efforts which could have been directed towards the common weal are then diverted

towards his own self-defence and the safety of his own progeny and property.

### **The Second Danger**

Narrow - mindedness, parochialism and religious, linguistic and cultural prejudices seem to be too ancient, frequent and widespread a phenomena still hovering over the head of the nation. These very predilections strengthened the divisive forces in the past and gave courage to the foreigners to invade this country. The demon is very much in our midst, it has been lying low owing to certain internal factors and external situation, but it can come out any moment like the proverbial jinni of Aladin's lamp.

There are marked differences between the people living in the northern region and those in the southern part of the country: they suffer from estrangement and distrust of one another. These differences can flare up the feelings at any time. Then, unbridgeable gulfs divide different castes and communities. In fact, every caste and clan constitutes a world of its own and the people belonging to one social group are as much frigid and spiteful to the other as the nationals of one country are to another. Every partiality and injustice to help the people belonging to one's own caste is considered not only as fair and just, but also a meritorious act, a sacred duty incumbent on every member of that caste. If anyone belonging to a caste or community attains a position of responsibility, he deems it the sole object of his endeavours to appoint as many members of his own caste as possible, without the least regard to the efficiency and suitability of the persons pushed up

by him. This is another bane of our social life which has made the entire administrative set up weak and inefficient.

### **The Guidance provided by Islam**

Islam can again help the country in rooting out the religious, linguistic and racial prejudices, parochial predilections and narrow-minded sectarian ideas. It can help to inculcate broad-mindedness, large-heartedness, sense of justice and equality of mankind. If you are a patriot, your primary concern should be to see if there is anything which can be helpful in making the country united and strong. And, if you are convinced, then it should be of little importance to you as to who supplies the panacea or wherefrom has it been obtained. When a fire breaks out, nobody cares from where the water has been procured or whose bucket is being used to extinguish the fire. The destruction of the country is certainly more serious than the demolition of a house or the destruction of a town. Now, in order to save the country from the dangers threatening its existence and to make it united and strong, one need not reject the principles that can save it simply because these have been expounded by the Quran or taken from the teachings of the Prophet. Islam can undoubtedly protect the country against this second danger too.

Unity of mankind is the first principle of Islam. It has repeatedly emphasised the fact that the Creator of human beings is one, and so is their progenitor, and hence the entire humankind belongs to one family, has one father and one Lord. The Quran declares unequivocally that:

“O mankind! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another”

At another place it says:

“O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from them twain hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women.”

This very underlying principle of human oneness and equality was enunciated by the Prophet of Islam in his last Haj before a gathering exceeding a hundred thousand souls.

“O mankind: Your Lord is One and your ancestor too is one. Be careful that no Arab has any preference over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab over an Arab. No negro has a preference over a white man, nor a white man over a negroid. Preference, if any, is only on the basis of the fear of God.”

The Prophet was once heard saying to his Lord during a prayer he was offering alone in the dead of night.

“O Lord ! I bear witness that all of Thy bondsmen are brothers unto one another.”

Islam strongly condemns all chauvinistic ideas and national, linguistic and racial prejudices and the passions of hate and aggression engendered by these narrow sympathies. It calls these the heritage of the pagan past. The Prophet of Islam is reported to have said that:

“He is not one of us who gives a call for partisanship, he is not one of us who fights for partisanship and he is not one of us who dies for partisanship.”

The difference in human dialects is recognised by the Quran as a natural diversity and a blessing from God.

“And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of your languages and colours. Lo! herein indeed are portents for men of knowledge.”

The historians bear testimony to the invaluable service rendered by Islam in spreading the gospel of human equality. Whatever may have been the ministering of the Muslims to the country, one of their outstanding contributions was to break down the shackles of the rigid caste system, the man-made inequality of human beings which had dug its tentacles deep into the fabric of Indian society. You can find its ghastly details in the annals of the country or still witness its remnants in the social order obtaining in the country. Islam breathed the message of human dignity and equality in the past and it can still do a lot to create an egalitarian society in the country.

I do acknowledge the fact that the Muslims too were influenced by the caste system obtaining in the country. But they still cherish human equality more than any other people, and their sentiments in this regard can be pressed to the service of the country. It would surely ennoble the country, make it strong and raise the Indian people morally and socially.

The cramped ideas of provincialism and obsessions in regard to linguistic, class and caste loyalties are, to be sure, a great danger to the country. These can explode the cumulated resentment and feelings of hatred nurtured by different castes and communities against one another at any moment. It is our duteous obligation to take all measures necessary to protect the country against this danger before it is too late.

### **The Third Danger**

Everybody in the country appears to have gone mad after a get-rich-quickly craze. We can see its ramifications in the mal-adjustments of Indian economy. It is not bad to earn more or to get rich through one's toil and tears, but the desire to enrich oneself overnight is undoubtedly fraught with danger. But the fact is that the desire to roll in money has taken the whole country in its grip; it has swept over the land like wind and rain, turning every hearth and home into a temple of Mammon. The overbearing craze for money-making has become so conspicuous that one sometimes feels that the two living realities this country are the worship of the golden calf and the smouldering feelings of fanaticism and hatred—everything else is a mere notion, a bare supposition.

We daily witness the expressions of hate and fanaticism; sometimes its victim is a particular community, at others a culture, or a language, or a geographical entity or a political party. As for the obsession of money-making, one hardly needs to elaborate it. Take this city of Bombay. It seems to be flowing with a money-grubbing passion. This current of



covetousness appears to be even stronger than that of the sea we have here.

What for is everybody running about in this city? If someone were to come here from another planet, he would perhaps think that the city has met with some sudden calamity. Is all this mad craze for wealth simply to earn one's living? Certainly not. It is a real danger both for the individual as well as for the country. At all times we have had political differences and moral vices but such an acquisitiveness was never witnessed before. Filthy lucre is the root of all evil. How can these persons be expected to give preference to the interest of the country over their own selfish ends? This is really a matter of grave concern for the country and the nation.

It is no secret that the executing agencies of construction works like dams, bridges and buildings are mostly dishonest who use construction materials of poor quality in order to increase their profits. The contractors as well as the official supervisors, both of whom lack honesty, combine to put the country to incalculable loss. There is hardly any department of the government which can boast of integrity and honesty of its employees. Our rulers and leaders both are well aware of the fact that the obsession to make a fortune at any cost is a danger to the common weal of the people. They know that illegal gratification and tax evasion are widespread evils. It has become almost impossible to get things done without greasing the palms of petty officials. What good can come out of the social services provided by the

government if the citizens have to buy over the favours of officials for obtaining their rightful claims? It seems as if everybody has an eye on the pocket of the other and is bent upon taking advantage of the other man's difficulties. No sense of patriotism or human consideration can move them to sacrifice their petty selfish ends.

### **The Way Out**

The only way out of this despicable state of affairs, the only cure for this malady is the fear of God, the Omniscient Lord of the Day of Judgement, and a conviction in the final reckoning of whatever we do in this earthly life. Patriotism can also help us, but, only to a certain extent. To be honest and trustworthy. Those who have been to Europe might have seen the people there avoiding bribery and similar other temptations to obtain illegal favours at the cost of national interest or the public good. They are undoubtedly moved by the sense of patriotism but the correct remedy of this evil lies in the belief in after-life and the fear of God alone.

### **Place of Wealth in Islam**

The corrupt and unlawful devices resorted to to amass wealth have become a normal feature of the day. Nevertheless, the conviction in the All-Knowing Creator can go a long way in evolving a sound moral order of the society. I shall not take much of your time in enumerating the examples of stainless honesty and truthfulness from the Islamic history, but I would like to quote one example here. After the capital of Persia, Madyan, was taken by assault, a poor Arab soldier brought the

unique and priceless crown of the Persian sovereign to his Commander. When the Commander asked his name, he replied: 'He for whom I have brought it intact to you, knows my name'. I would not claim that we can bring back the time to repeat the instance again, but what I do say is that only the fear of God and the spiritual-moral view of life and society propounded by a living religion can establish a virtuous order capable of investing people with honesty, truthfulness, trustworthiness, self-restraint and similar other qualities.

Islam can, therefore, render yeoman's service to the country in solving this problem. Its teachings provide guidance for checking the concentration of wealth as well as for its equitable distribution. Islam puts man under restraints lest he should debase himself by servitude to his own avarice and greed. It has allotted it the position it deserves: Wealth is named by it both as a blessing from God as well as an ordeal and affliction.

"Your wealth and your children are only a temptation, whereas Allah ; with Him is an immense reward."  
(Ixiv : 15)

It asks man not to covet the riches of his more fortunate brother, for wealth is simply a temporary adornment.

"And strain not thine eyes toward that which We cause some wedded pairs among them to enjoy, the flower of the life of the world, that We may try them thereby. The provision of the Lord is better and more lasting". (xx: 131)

The Quran depicts one of the

wealthiest men of his time, Caren, who enjoyed an enviable place in the then society by virtue of his Aches and worldly success but who was also a moral wreck, as a complete failure worthy to be consigned to hell-fire. It has made him a proverbial figure denoting a detestable brute in the everyday conversation and writings of the Muslim peoples.

Islam looks down upon the unquenchable thirst to mint-money and to make one's pile as a terrible malady for the mankind.

"You are obsessed by greed more and more Until you go down to your graves. Nay but you will come to know!

Nay, but you will come to know!

Nay, if you but knew it with the knowledge of certainty,

You would indeed see the hell you are in.

In time, indeed, you shall see it with the eye of certainty:

And on that Day you will be asked what you have done with the boon of life". (cII: 18)

This reminds me of a recent convert to Islam. These very verses of the Quran led Mr. Muhammad Asad (formerly Leopold Weiss) to accept Islam, He writes in his autobiography:

"One Day—it was in September 1926—Elsa and I found ourselves travelling in the Berlin subway. It was an upper-class compartment. My eye fell casually on a well-dressed man opposite me, apparently a well-to-do

businessman, with a beautiful brief-case on his knees and a large diamond ring on his hand. I thought idly how well the portly figure of this man fitted into the picture of prosperity which one encountered everywhere in Central Europe in those days : a prosperity the more prominent as it had come after years of inflation, when all economic life had been topsy-turvy and a shabbiness of appearance the rule. Most of the people were now well dressed and well fed, and the man opposite me was therefore no exception. But when I looked at his face, I did not seem to be looking at a happy face. He appeared to be worried: and not merely worried but actually unhappy, with eyes staring vacantly ahead and the corners of his mouth drawn in as if in pain—but not in bodily pain. Not wanting to be rude, I turned my eyes away and saw next to him a lady of same elegance. She also had a strangely unhappy expression on her face, as if contemplating or experiencing something that caused her pain; nevertheless, her mouth was fixed in the stiff semblance of a smile which, I was certain, must have been habitual. And then I began to look around at all the other faces in the compartment—faces belonging without exception to well-dressed, well-fed people: and in almost every one of them I could discern an expression of hidden suffering, so hidden that the owner of the face seemed to be quite unaware of it.

“This was indeed strange. I had

never before seen so many unhappy faces around me: so was it perhaps that I had never before looked for what was now so loudly speaking in them? The impression was so strong that I mentioned it to Elsa; and she too began to look around her with the careful eyes of a painter accustomed to study human features. Then she turned to me, astonished, and said: ‘You are right. They all look as though they were suffering torments of hell.. I wonder, do they know themselves what is going on in them? ‘

“I knew that they did not—for otherwise they could not go on wasting their lives as they did, without any faith in binding truths, without any goal beyond the desire to raise their own ‘standard of living’, without any hopes other than having more material amenities, more gadgets, and perhaps more power.

“When we returned home, I happened to glance at my desk on which lay open a copy of the Koran I had been reading earlier. Mechanically, I picked the book up to put it away, but just as I was about to close it, my eye fell on the open page before me, and I read:

“You are obsessed by greed more and more untill you go down to your graves....

“For a moment I was speechless. I think the book shook in my hands. Then I handed it to Elsa; ‘Read this. Is it not an answer to what we saw in the subway? ‘

“It was an answer: an answer so decisive that all doubt was suddenly at an end. I knew how, beyond any doubt, that it was a God-inspired book I was holding in my hand: for although it had been placed before men over thirteen centuries ago, it clearly anticipated something that could have become true only in this complicated, mechanised, phantom-ridden age of ours.

“At all times people have known greed : but at no time before this had greed outgrown to a mere eagerness to acquire things and become an obsession that blurred the sight of everything else : an irresistible craving to get, to do, to contrive more and more—more today than yesterday, and more tomorrow than today : a demon riding on the necks of men and whipping their hearts forward toward goals that tauntingly glitter in the distance but dissolve into contemptible nothingness as soon as they are reached, always holding out the promise of new goals ahead—goals still more brilliant, more tempting as long as they lie on the horizon, and bound to wither into further nothingness as soon as they come within grasp : and that hunger, that insatiable hunger for ever new goals gnawing at man’s soul : Nay, if you but knew it you would see the hell you are in ....

“This, I saw, was not the mere human wisdom of a man of a distant past in distant Arabia. However wise he may have been, such a man could not by himself have foreseen the torment

so peculiar to this twentieth century. Out of the Koran spoke voice greater than the voice of Mohammad.. I sought out a Muslim friend of mine, an Indian who was at that time head of the small Muslim Community in Berlin, and told him that I wanted to embrace Islam.”

Such are the teachings of Islam which enable man to subdue his undue keenness to get rich as quickly as possible.

### **The Best Community**

Islam can, then, come to the aid of India in the reconstruction of a healthy, honest and egalitarian society. If we, the Muslims, are not working for it, we are doing justice neither to the country nor to our own teachings. There is nothing to be ashamed of, and least of all any reason for inferiority complex, which might inhibit certain persons to measure up to the formidable task of protecting the country from the hazards facing it. It is, in reality, our sacred duty by virtue of our love for the country as well as on account of our being the “best community” to take care of the country’s welfare.

“Ye are the best community that hath been raised up for mankind. Ye enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency ; and ye believe in Allah. (iii: 110)

### **India’s Message to the World**

Today India is in search of its Destiny: a message which it can diffuse to the world. But what should after all be the gospel of India—Socialism, Communism or its own civilization of

yore? Socialism has already had the opportunity to bloom outside the country. India can at best be a follower in this field but never a leader. As for the ancient culture of India, there is hardly any charm for the world in the relics of the past. Howsoever we may be proud of our ancient customs and traditions, culture and philosophy we cannot convince the world to adopt these simply because of the profundity of our philosophical thought or the past achievements of our deep-rooted culture. We cannot, in the same wise, hope that any nation could give up its own culture and traditions and change-over to our own. Similarly, Indian nationalism cannot be expected to have an attraction for any other people in the world, for the nationalism of every country has an equal claim on the patriotism of its own citizens. None of these has any attractiveness at all. But we can certainly catch the attention of the world if we have a message which can deliver the modern man from the servitude of his fellow beings, liberate his soul from the subjugation of evil desires and demoniacal spells, trappings of power and pelf, raise human beings in the scale of dignity, enjoin the service of humanity as a sacred duty of every man and enforce the equality of human beings as the creation of the one Omnipotent Master and Lord. This is indeed the underlying meaning and content of the worship offered to God.

“Surely pure religion is for Allah only.”  
(xxxix : 3) A message so sublime cannot suffer injustice nor can it give preference to a country, individual, language or culture over another land, man, dialect or social

tradition. This is a message befitting India and it can assure an honourable place to it in the comity of nations.

### **The Second-hand Islam of India**

It is really regrettable that no sincere effort was made during the last one thousand years to spread a true understanding of Islam in this country. The Islam that reached India was second-hand. It is our misfortune that the Arabs who were the torch-bearers of Islam and who had conserved its reanimating spirit, did not come to this country. There is no denying the fact that the Turks and the Moghuls gave a stable and powerful administration to this country and saved it from the onslaught of the Tartar hordes, never allowing them to advance beyond the frontier regions of the country, but they failed to present Islam before India in its original simplicity. Had the Arabs come to this country, they would have undoubtedly left permanent imprints of Islam in India as they did in Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Northern Africa. Wherever the Arabs went they set such ennobling examples of human equality, brotherhood and the dignity of mankind that the conquered nations began to esteem them as their scourers, friends and benefactors instead of conquerors and oppressors.

### **An Appeal to our non-Muslim Brethren**

I appeal to my non-Muslim friends, particularly to the educated and the intellectuals amongst them, that despite the past mistakes and failings, they should endeavour to understand Islam and should not identify it with the Muslims. They should not disown the sublime teachings of Islam

merely on account of the past or present failures of the Muslims. It is incumbent on them to save the country from dark ignorance, gloomy moral depression and frightful anarchy and chaos spreading fast over the country since Independence. If they had only understood the true impact of a really stable and morally self-reliant India the country would have by now become the undisputed leader of all the countries from Dacca to Djakarta and from Istanbul to Rabat—the leader of Asia and Africa.

This, however, is now past history. And what is past is past. Islam is still a living and energetic religion. Islam had nothing to do with the happenings in the recent past. It was really a game of politics which always makes its moves with the utmost dexterity shifting all the blame to its adversary. Islam was made out as an unsuccessful religion but the fact is that whatever happened was not the result of adhering to the teachings of Islam but, of a truth, because of its non-adherence. However, it is a duty enjoined also on the Muslims to come forward for the service of the country. They should realise the responsibilities devolving on them as citizens of the country, as the sons of this great land. They should give up their misconceptions if they have any that the responsibility for India's reconstruction and prosperity lies mainly on the shoulders of majority community or the political party holding the reins of country's administration. In fact, we, the Muslims of India, can play a pivotal role in bringing about a better and healthier social order in our homeland. Our tenets and teachings already provide guidance to us

in this matter. I am saying this in all humility and not on account of any superiority complex or jingoism that the Muslims are definitely more capable of saving the country from the dangers threatening its existence. You should turn a deaf ear to all those who doubt your integrity and faithfulness to the country or recurrently demand the proof of your fidelity to the country ; you need not also be discouraged by your poverty, educational backwardness and unemployment ; for God will help you despite all these difficulties and weaknesses. To my non-Muslim brethren I would again most earnestly appeal that they should be willing to accept and utilize whatever wisdom they are able to lay their hands upon, irrespective of its origin and the source from which it is obtained. This is also dictated by true patriotism. You have amongst your countrymen such luminaries of Islamic learning who are considered an authority on their subject and such institutions of research and higher education which have made immense contribution to the Islamic thought and literature. Indian Muslims are second to none; they are rather on the top so far as the Islamic learning is concerned, and their contribution to the Islamic subjects and Arabic language and literature is not a bit less than that of the Muslims of any other country including the Arabs. We can, even today, learn something from the Arabs but, at the same time, teach them as well. It is our bounden duty—the responsibility of every Indian to take full advantage of this precious treasure and employ it for the stability and prosperity of our homeland. ■



## The Day of Forgiveness and Mercy it is, Not the Day of Blood-shedding

- S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi\*

When Hazrat Sa'd bin U'badah, who was the commander of the Ansar regiment, passed by the vantage-point where Abu Sufyan was made to stand to watch the Islamic army, he caught sight of the infidels who had left no stone unturned in giving vent to their animosity towards Islam, those who had made the pious servants of Allah the target of their brutality and beastliness as a result of which they were compelled to relinquish their possessions and properties as well as their motherland and take refuge in Madinah. Today into that very central town of theirs, the self-safe hunted and hounded Muslims were making their entry hallowed with an aura of victory around them. It was in this context that Hazrat Sa'd had said then:

(Today is the day to make the massacre! Today no holds are barred in the Kaba! Today Allah has disgraced the Quoraish !)

When the Prophet (SAW), in the company of his regiment, passed by Abu Sufyan, the latter complained the same to the Prophet (SAW) saying: O Allah's Prophet! Did you hear what did Sa'd say just now?!' The Prophet (SAW)

enquired: 'What did he say?' Thereupon he repeated all that he had said. Replacing the sentence uttered by Sa'd with one of his own that was full of affection and compassion, he (SAW) said:

(No! Today is the day of compassion and forgiveness! Today Allah has made the Quoraish honoured! It is when Allah would have the Ka'ba enhanced in its glory!)

Then, the Prophet (SAW) had Hazrat sa'd (RAA) sent for. In order to make the Makkans have a good impression, taking the flag of his contingent from his hand, he (SAW) had it transferred to his son, Quais (RAA). Obviously, he (SAW) did so by way of an expedient to avert the possibility of getting the tribal sensitivity of the Quoraish stoked by the sentence uttered by Hazrat Sa'd. For, this sentence was uttered by the Ameer of a tribe of Madinah and the Arabs were prone to get instantaneously tendentious and infuriated by any derogatory remark. And, that would usually lead to fresh tensions; whereas, these Quoraishi people had yet not fully imbibed the spirit of Islam. Otherwise, there would not have been such an apprehension.

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\* Rector, Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow.

Nevertheless, having taken the flag from him, he (SAW) had it given to his son and, thus, in a way, it still retained with him and he would not have felt at all that the flag was taken away from him.

Thus, by replacing just one letter (by putting the word al-marhama (meaning: compassion) in place of al-malhama (meaning: fierce fighting) and replacing just one hand with the another (one out of the two being the father's, and the other one of the son's), he (SAW) had managed, prudently or, rather, miraculously, to appease Abu Sufyan who was the representative and chief of the tribe of the Quoraish, the tribe held in high esteem throughout Arabia, (and who needed to be conciliated and familiarized), without hurting in the least, the feelings of Hazrat Sa'd bin U'badah (whose Faith-inspired and valiant achievements need no mention). The way he (SAW) did it is unsurpassable. Any better way than that is hard to even think of. He (SAW) had, thus, on the one hand, saved the Quoraish from getting a bad impression as a corollary of the bad impression of their up-till-then chief. And, on the other hand, he successfully avoided making Hazrat Sa'd bin U'badah aggrieved who had rendered great services to Islam. By handing over the flag to his son, after having taken it from him, it remained as if with him only. At the same time, he was

also made to realize that it was the treatment of compassion and tolerance that he liked to be meted out to even the enemies.

Here, at this end, the Muslims were making their entry victoriously and, at other end, some recalcitrant and crooked sort of People from the Quoraish were getting mobilized in the district of Khandamah of Makkah in an attempt to make a display of their vigour. When one of them, Hamas bin Quais, went home to get armed for this purpose, his wife said to him: 'Today no one can hold his ground against Mohammad (SAW)'. He said: 'But, I do hope that, having captured some of them, I would have them brought to you to be your servants.' Hence, on their taking up arms against Muslims, they were faced by the soldiers of Hazrat Khalid's regiment at the place called Khandamah. As a result of their temerity to combat some of them got killed and some others took to their heels after getting routed. Hamas was one of the latter bunch. Getting to his wife, he said anxiously: 'Have the doors shut immediately.' She said: 'And what about the tall claims that you were making, that you would do this and this and this?' Hamas said: 'All our mates took to their heels. The swords of the Muslims worked so fast as had the heads rolling.'■

## Muslim Unity: An Ordained Duty For Muslims

- Ahmed Kamal El-Din Izzeddin

“And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves; and remember with gratitude Allah’s favour on you; for ye were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His Grace, ye became brethren; and ye were on the brink of the pit of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus doth Allah make His Signs clear to you: That ye may be guided”.

This verse of the Qur’an has been much quoted by Muslims of all walks of life, and all affiliations, every time, everywhere, yet the precious goal remains unachieved, if not unachievable. The Muslim Umma, or nation, is still by large falling apart.

Unity is a multifaceted concept with various connotations. But the most relevant in our context here is bipartite: Unity can mean the unity of ranks, or organizational unity. It can also mean the unity of words, or viewpoints. Full unity comprises both parts, so that a group would be organizationally united, but also carrying ideas that are basically similar.

Verse 103 of Surat Al-Imran, quoted at the beginning of this article, provides a focal point for unity, namely, God the Almighty, or Allah, in Arabic. Unity towards God entails subservience to God, with the intention to obey God unquestioningly. This is indeed different from obedience offered to any human or other mundane entity where advertent, willing and total

submission would be unthinkable. God is the creator of all beings, and deserves worship by all. Other entities do not qualify for such a place, since they are all created, not creators, among other reasons. And by talking of “God” one refers to all that God has ordained, which is embodied in His book, the Qur’an, sent to mankind through his messenger, the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. These two sources include all the ethos and directives needed for a full understanding of man’s relations with the universe and with God.

For Muslims to achieve and maintain unity, they must revolve around the word of God, which includes His instructions and guidance. People differ in their understanding of the text that resembles the word of God, due to different methods of thinking, but also possibly due to different spatial and temporal circumstances. The resultant different outlooks, however, should not be counted as real differences, since each version can be traced back to the same origin through logical and other means of thinking. In fact, even where such logical nexus is broken or mistaken, the process of reasoning that leads to the mistaken conclusion would be rewarded for by God provided the relevant individual has exerted his utmost honest mental efforts towards understanding the meaning of the word of God. Such reward would be doubled where the ultimate result of the

reasoning comes to be correct. This is because the correct reasoning involves two elements: the first is represented by the honest mental effort intended to understand the meaning of the divine text. The second element is success in reaching a correct conclusion, which can then be beneficial to other people who might be searching for the truth.

The importance of the aforesaid cannot be overstated. Muslims should not expect to be exact copies of one another. Each Muslim should endeavor to follow the righteous path, with good intentions and honest efforts, working hard for the attainment of a truthful result, but regardless of how different such result may turn out to be. It is the purity of intention that counts, rather than the image or content of the resulting outcome. Accordingly, Muslims with different practices should not use that fact as a reason for any clashes. They of course can conduct dialogue in order to explore the processes followed by every Muslim which was behind her or his current practices. Such dialogue would enrich their understanding of one another, but also their comprehension of their own religion. Differences would therefore become a means of education and harmony rather than a cause for conflict and hatred. But alas, that is not always the case.

In reality, Muslims have innumerable factors which would assist any efforts toward unification. For one thing, they are following the same basic tenets of the same religion, regardless of differences relating to peripheral issues that would by

no means affect the major principles. Secondly, they constitute a significantly sizeable portion of the global population. A study conducted by Pew Research Center in 2015 reveals that global Muslim population in that year amounted to 1.8 billion (out of 7.3 billion total world population). That makes up almost one quarter of global population. The number as well as the percentage is expected to increase. Even the percent change in population size is enormous, according to the same study.

Thanks to simple demographics, “Muslims will grow more than twice as fast as the overall world population between 2015 and 2060 and, in the second half of this century, will likely surpass Christians as the world’s largest religious group. While the world’s population is projected to grow 32% in the coming decades, the number of Muslims is expected to increase by 70% — from 1.8 billion in 2015 to nearly 3 billion in 2060. In 2015, Muslims made up 24.1% of the global population. Forty-five years later, they are expected to make up more than three-in-ten of the world’s people (31.1 %).”

There are a number of projects which reflect a measure of unity among Muslims and, most importantly, Muslim countries. These include the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Muslim World League (MWL), the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), and — more recently -the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition. At the level of peoples, however, much effort is yet to be exerted towards the establishment of deeper contacts between different Muslim

peoples, of various cultures and ethnic origins. As already hinted before, such diversity of affiliations should be a source of enrichment and creativity for Muslims. It also reflects the in-built tolerance of the Islamic religion which sets no barriers whatsoever before embracing the faith which is based on any racial, cultural or other natural, born or acquired affiliation of the human being. It should be admitted that nation state boundary barriers played a considerable role in keeping Muslim peoples apart, despite all existing facilities for the cross-border movement of people. While Islam does not recognize the maintenance of borders between Muslim nations, exigencies of political and historical realities determined controls on passage and residence of Muslims even in Muslim countries other than their homelands. Some aspects of regional cooperation, however, are serving the cause of the would be unity, such as the Gulf Cooperation Council in the Middle East, but the journey remains a long way before attaining the ultimate objective.

To conclude, unity is emphatically ordained in the Qur'an and by the Prophet Muhammad, may peace be upon him, which makes such a goal a sacrosanct purpose for Muslims. It is a duty that Muslims should work for unity, cooperate and exchange not only goods and services but also greetings and love. An isolated individual can indeed worship God, but group worship is favored in Islam, such as the difference between offering the prayers individually and performing the same in congregation. The difference for the purposes of reward is twenty seven

degrees, as mentioned by the Prophet, peace be upon him. The incentive is intended to assure cooperation and unity, even when it comes to acts of worship. The current aspects of cooperation among Muslims are quite meager, especially when compared with the huge human resources and even natural resources owned by Muslims and Muslim countries around the globe, including oil and other minerals, but also agricultural and animal resources. The OIC, as one example of a global structure intended to coordinate the efforts of Muslim countries and gear them towards unity, is expected to come out with innovative ideas that would tap on the said resources and bring the Umma closer to their supposed dreams in the path towards God the Almighty. However limited in scope, the Hajj (or pilgrimage to Makkah) experience speaks volumes on how Muslims do have the potential of coming together. It represents a miniature of Muslim unity, albeit within limited boundaries and timeframe. A broader scale unity can be achieved if Muslim leaders can manage to reconcile with the popular ambitions of Muslim peoples, facilitate their cross-border movements, encourage inter-Muslim trade and inter-Muslim marriages, and deepen the ties between Muslim countries in all other aspects. When the peoples are closer to one another, all other political, bureaucratic, diplomatic and administrative obstacles to unity can very easily be removed and the path opened to a unified global sphere for Muslims to enjoy. ■

Courtesy: Pew Research Center.

## **Muslim Civilization And Scientific Development: A Glimpse of its Past And Present**

**- Muhammad Dawood Sofi**

It is an established fact that science and technology and later on its advancement took place during the period of Abbasids, ruling the then Muslim World from Baghdad, and the Umayyad reign in Spain (Al-Andalus). This period, besides witnessing the cementing of Muslim Civilization, also experienced the unprecedented developments in the field of science and technology. The development in almost every known field was indubitably unmatched in its creativeness, originality, and universality in the entire world. The overall contribution of the Muslims in the field of science is, without any suspicion, countless. The same has been acknowledged and verified by George Sarton (Introduction to the History of Science, 1931) and a number of other writers as well. For instance, Sart on while highlighting the invaluable contributions of the Muslims to the field of science admits: It will suffice here to evoke a few glorious names without contemporary equivalents in the West: Jabir ibn Haiyan, Al-Kindi, Al-Khawarizmi... If anyone tells you that the middle ages were scientifically sterile, just quote these men to him, all of whom flourished within a short period, 750-1100 AD.

In the same vein, R. Briffault acknowledges the Muslim contribution as:

Science is the most momentous contribution of Arab civilization to the modern world . . . which constitutes the permanent distinctive force of the modern world, and supreme source of its victory, natural science and the scientific spirit.

This reveals the grandeur of the Muslim civilization marked by the intellectual, scientific, philosophical, and religious accomplishments of the medieval Muslim world. The contribution of Muslims to the various fields of learning like mathematics, geography, astronomy, medicine, physics, Fiqh, Hadith and the establishment of the institutions such as Bayt Al-Hikmah (The House of Wisdom) enlighten the prodigious achievements of the Muslim civilization. It will not be an exaggeration at all to claim that human history witnessed for the first time the intellectual, scientific, philosophical and cultural development at such a large scale. This era, therefore, could be considered as the period of rapid intellectual and scientific expansion to the new frontiers. Famously known as



the Golden Age in the history of Islam, the period according to Firas Al-Khateeb “not only served as a bridge between the knowledge of the ancients and Renaissance Europe but also laid the foundation for today’s modern scientific world.” Moreover, this period designates scientific and technological mastery of the Muslims.

The religious, intellectual, and economic development in the Muslim during the ninth century was considered to be at the pinnacle. However, it was followed by several turbulent episodes, marking historic upheaval in the Islamic history. From the tenth to thirteenth centuries, the Crusaders, the Mongols, and similar other disintegrating forces made constant and violent attacks and invasions upon the Muslim empire. The interaction, impact, and implications of these forces with the mainstream Muslim caliphate were tremendous that dented seriously the political, intellectual, and economic power and ambition of the Muslims.

Unfortunately, in the later period, Muslims the vanguard in the field of science and technology due to certain reasons (including those mentioned above) not only lost their way but also the long enchanted and cherished scientific supremacy, especially from the fifteenth century onwards. From then on, the status quo hitherto remains, by

and large, same in the whole Muslim world, representing, thus, mayhem like situation. On the one side, with the passing of days, weeks, months, years, and centuries the world witnessed the decadence of the scientific glory of the Muslims and on the other, the same world experienced the emergence of what is now called the ‘modern science’. The wholesome development did not take place all of a sudden; rather it was materialized exclusively via the shift and transfer of the intellectual and scientific legacy of the Muslims from the East (Muslim World) to the West (European World). From then on, the West never looked back rather made earnest and stupendous efforts for the refinement, progress, and development in the field of science and technology. N. Amir, O. Shuriye, and F. Ismail have highlighted the same facet in the following lines:

With the transfer of Islamic science to the west the secular world developed monumental feat in scientific work ignited the thriving of renaissance and the flourishing of scientific revolution and advancement in Europe. This modern progress of the west in science and technology was gained from the transfer of Islamic civilization [from the East] to the west where the scientific and technological [know how] based in the Muslim world has completely lost and defeated.

In the post-Renaissance period, the society at large witnessed the emergence of 'Science' not as the foundation stone Western or in other words modern civilization. The process of the advancement of the modern science that thus emerged had already started in the fourteenth century and the later, as well as the current period, represents the immense personification of the phenomenon. In the later period, it continued to evolve and progress at a colossal pace via Renaissance and Industrial Revolution. However, the basic fact about modern science is that it fundamentally plays much emphasis on the cause, reason, objectivity, and effect and also on the significance of systematic observations, experimentation and theory building.

In current times, it is making spectacular advancements each and every sphere of life in one way or the other way and as a consequence, has raised the living standard of the people hitherto to greater heights. Modern science, despite having an unrestricted but harmful ramification, continues to reverberate and the awe-inspire the entire world. However, at the same time, it also cannot be denied as is the fact that modern science and technology will form the very core of the future world developments.

All this suggests that the decline

of Muslim power and the emergence of the new power shaped the dependence of the Muslim world on the West politically, economically, and culturally and also formed one of the basic repercussions of the European colonial legacy. It compelled the Muslim intellectuals to delve deep into the malaise and come up with a new inspiring Islamic modus operandi that will answer the serious challenges currently faced by the Muslims. Moreover, the significant impact and the influence of the West affected the Muslim reforms so much so that it became inevitable to have its remedy 'now or never'. Subjects like Western politics, economics, social set-up etc. were the main themes discussed within the circle of Islamic groups and reformers.

The fact is that the encounter of Muslims with the West, especially in the last decades of the nineteenth century, resulted in the emergence of four very significant polarities among the Muslims: i. Rejection and opposition in toto; ii. The approach of indifference (that is neutral approach); iii. The approach that venerates the West fully and calls for its complete emulation and imitation and. The selective approach that is to take that ingredient from the West which is fruitful and beneficial and accordingly, reject and refrain from that which is detrimental and fruitless.

The world has witnessed unprecedented development in various fields of modern science that has, on the other hand, elevated tremendously the standard of living. Thus, sufficing the material need of man and bringing a lot of comfort in his life thereof. However, such an unrestricted and unqualified approach has contributed immensely to a wide variety of grave problems and crisis, say, ecological, economic, health, academic, etc. Global warming, capitalism, nuclear bombs, and serious side effects of modern health treatment are some examples, among abundance, with regard to all-pervading crisis besetting the humanity.

Consequently, there are both positive and negative dimensions of the modern science. Its *weltanschauung* is exclusively based on the materialistic, positivistic and rationalistic philosophy, denying and neglecting, thus, absolutely transcendentalism and multiple realities of the matter. It reduces the object under observation to the measurable form hence it is purely reductionist, quantitative and manipulable with enormous power. But, unfortunately, it is blind or ignores a big part of the reality and provides an inadequate picture of reality. Although, the modern science has massive power at the same time it exhibits massive blindness towards a bigger part of the reality of the object. Therefore, the modern science has an

exclusive character and the knowledge that ratio-empirical method generates is very narrow without any doubt because it fatally ignores supra-material level (s) of Reality.

On the other hand, traditional science is comprehensive, inclusive and qualitative in nature because it explains that physical or corporeal reality is not the sum total of reality. So, its method of observing the object is actually the conglomeration of corporeal-subtle-spiritual levels of Reality. The modern science which is unprecedentedly powerful has resulted in the exclusion of role of traditional science in the human life because it considers this science totally outdated and unrelated to the modern affairs and problems. Such a step is obviously unjustified and unfair because traditional science continues to be effective, applicable, and more importantly safe and holistic. In this regard, S. H. Nasr observes that the traditional science is still comprehensible for the contemporary mind because it has eminently succeeded in presenting the description of all levels of Reality. Therefore, the grave crisis that the Man is currently facing calls for or demands either the qualification or critique of modern science or to allow the space for the flowering of parallel science which is qualitative and holistic. ■

## The Blessed Month of Ramazan

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

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.■

## Allah is Merciful, He Understands Our Weaknesses

- Tabitha Ward

How did I come to Islam? Well, that's actually a very tricky question. I was 15 and enjoying the teenage life of your typical English girl. All I can say is that the path that I was heading towards was anything (in my own limited foresight) but the blessed path of Allah.

One thing I have learned for certain, no matter who you are or where you are from, if Allah wants you, then He will have you.

### Visiting Places of Worship

As a young adult, I would often debate with people on the falsehood of religion and the afterlife. Looking back I realise now how blind I was. I was convinced that this was the only life and that my actions would not face any form of recompense. I believed myself free, now I see I was imprisoned by the dunya!

A friend and I often joked about what it would be like to visit the places of worship. Both of us had previously been to church. However, neither of us had been to a masjid or a synagogue. Between ourselves we made a pact to investigate these strange places of worship.

My school was massively diverse, so it was surprising that before this time I had never truly made an effort to talk to the Asian girls in my class.

However, the following day to the discussions with my friend, I decided to approach a group of the Asian girls in my Health and Social Care class to see if they were Muslims. They told me that I was correct in my assertion. 'Here's my chance' I thought, so I asked them if they would be able to take myself and my friend to a mosque. They happily obliged to my request.

### Prophet Abraham and Prophet Muhammad

The next Health and Social Care lesson I was in for a surprise, one of the girls had brought me a selection of books about the basic beliefs of Islam, the last sermon of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) and the life of Prophet Ibrahim (peace and blessings of Allah be to him). Grudgingly, I accepted these books, thinking to myself, "What on earth are these? And why has she given them to me?"

The visit to the mosque inexplicably got postponed; however, one day, I picked up the books, chose the one about Prophet Ibrahim and began to read. I was drawn in almost instantly and before I knew it, I had finished the book.

The next one I chose was the last sermon of the Prophet Muhammad. I



was amazed about how Islam projects equality and threw down racism and how the words of the Prophet could touch my heart so deeply.

After I had learned a bit more about Islam, I reminded my new 'friends' in my class about going to the mosque. That weekend we went, my friend who originally wanted to come however, changed her mind.

The mosque we picked was for males only, however through the perseverance of my friends, we were able to meet the Imam, and arrange for me to take some Arabic classes.

Over the following months, I attended my classes and, improved by knowledge of Islam, slowly I was falling in love. Through my contacts at the mosque, I managed to get acquainted with other Islamic circles, in particular the Islamic societies at the two local universities.

The universities often do many Islamic talks, and annually partake in an "Islam Awareness Week". I am not sure if I arrived during their dawah session, but they certainly taught me a lot.

As I previously mentioned, I was 15, and very confused with the whole situation. I was in love with this religion, but also terrified of it. I did not know that it was possible to revert, nor did I know that there were others in my area who had also become Muslim.

At one of the university lectures, I

was introduced to a sister who told me that Sheffield (my home town) was the 'revert capital' and that there was a local organisation which assisted new Muslims and those looking into Islam. I was so excited because now I wasn't alone!

The sister gave me the number of the organisation and coincidentally it was on the same day as one of their sister socials. They invited me to come up and join them on their event.

Upon hearing this exciting news, I decided to head straight there, along with the Muslim girls from my school. When we got there, we were welcomed warmly. They taught me interesting words Masha Allah and also demonstrated how Muslims pray.

### **A Strange Dream Comes True**

My search for Islam was going so fast and I still wasn't sure what I was supposed to do. One night, I had a strange dream, at the time this dream did not have much significance to me; however, later it would show me a glimpse of the power of Allah.

I dreamed that I was sitting at a table with the Muslims from my school. In the background, there was singing in a beautiful voice.

I didn't understand this singing, until after Ramadan, when I went to a friend's house for Eid. They had an Islamic channel on and the Adhan began.

“What’s that?” I asked my friend.

“It’s the call to prayer” she replied.

Subhan Allah, this was the ‘singing’ in my dream. Subhan Allah, Allah was calling me to His beautiful religion. It was very soon after this that I told my friends that I was ready to be a Muslim!

The day I went to take my Shahadah (testimony of faith), I decided to tell my mum my plans. With hindsight I see that it was perhaps unceremonious; however, I wanted to just drop the metaphoric bombshell as easily (for myself) as possible.

Therefore, when I was about to leave my home, I merely said to my mum:

“Hey mum, I’m becoming a Muslim today. Would you like to come?”

My mum just looked at me as if I was joking. Obviously, she declined my invitation, and I proceeded to the mosque alone.

### **My Shahadah**

I was not alone however for long, because, as soon as I got to the mosque, many of my new friends were there waiting for me. My Shahadah was due to take place after a talk by the mosque’s Imam.

When I saw the amount of people there, I was well and truly horrified! What made it worse was that the Imam wanted me to say my Shahadah over

the microphone! I was absolutely terrified, but Allah helped me through it.

After I took my Shahadah, the ummah enveloped me. There were what seemed millions of people rushing forward to hug, kiss and congratulate me. Some sisters had prepared some food for me and my friends to have whilst celebrating my testimony. Also, the sisters from the organisation in Sheffield bought me some presents to congratulate me.

After my conversion, I did not really face any opposition from my family, Alhamdulillah. This is mainly because I was so young that by the time they realised that my reversion wasn’t a phase it was too late for them to say anything.

The only minor difficulty I faced is that my mother was embarrassed to walk with me for a while whilst I was wearing my hijab.

Allah is Merciful and He understands our weaknesses, as long as we try to strive in the cause of Allah, then surely no matter how long it takes us to get there, we will never fail.

On one final note, the friend I mentioned in the beginning of my story who initially wanted to come to the mosque with me but then cancelled also reverted Subhan Allah!

Surely truth stands clear from error! ■

*(Courtesy: Radiance)*

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