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Wisdom Vouchsafed to the Belivers

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Zul-Qarnain was a mighty emperor and the victor of nations, but his conquests never filled him with conceit. He never said: I have been given it only an account of knowledge / possess; on the contrary, he ascribed his achievements of God. He did not even brag of the impregnability of the barrier constructed by him. Like a true believer in God and the Hereafter he laid more stress on the help and grace of God.

"He said: This is a mercy from my Lord; but when the promises of my Lord cometh to pass. He will lay it low, for the promise of my Lord is true." (Al-Kahf: 99)

And this is the attitude of a true believer and a man of God. He never forgets his Lord- not even when he is crowned with the most brilliant, victories nor when he gains control over gigantic resources and the sinews of earthly power. He turns his attention to God in the hour of triumphant success and remembers the ultimate end, when he would crumble into dust and be raised again; he fearfully trembles with the awe of God; acknowledges his own weakness; offers solace and mercy to the suffering humanity; preserves truth and justice; and, directs his incessant endeavour to serve his fellow-beings, creates a just and virtuous social order, brings out the ignorant from the dark alley of godlessness and crass materialism to the sunshine of divine light and natural religion. This was the noble and virtuous path trodden by Solomon and Zul-Qarnain, by the right-guided Caliphs and impeccable leaders of Islam during their own times in different parts of the world. ■

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Wisdom of Qur'an

"Your Lord knows very well all those who are in the heavens and in the earth. And We preferred some Prophets over others. We gave Da'ud Zabur. (Surah Al-Isra, A. 55)

Commentary:

That is, explains Alusi, some of the Messengers were preferred over others in spiritual matters and not in material things (while the unbelievers think that material favor is all that matters: Au.).

Ibrahim (asws) was made a Khalil, Musa (asws) was directly spoken to, Da'ud (asws) was given a revelation that did not have any commandments, Sulayman (asws) was given a (kind of) kingdom that no one else was ever given, 'Isa (asws) was created out of the word kun, and our Prophet's earlier and later sins were forgiven. Further, he was sent to all the peoples of the world. Thus, every Prophet was singled out for a favor, and in that respect preferred over others (Qatada and Ibn Jurayj: Ibn Jarir).

"Say, 'Call those besides Him whom you fancy. They have neither the power to remove afflictions from you, nor to turn (them) away.' (Surah Al-Isra, A 56)

Commentary:

Referring to the textual word "za'ama", often translated as "to fancy, allege, maintain, claim" etc. Alusi demonstrates, with the help of several examples, some of which from the hadith, that "za'ama" need not necessarily be in the sense of "fancy, allege" etc. Quite often, especially in history works, it is commonly used in the sense of "belief, assertion or free of doubt." Thus Alusi precedes in answering the allegations of the Orientalists that since Ibn Ishaq often uses the term "za'ama" while narrating traditions concerning life of the Prophet, the reports have a question mark before them. For example, Alfred Auillaume writes in his foreword to the "Sirah": "A word that very frequently precedes a statement is za'ama or za'amu, 'he (they) alleged'. It carries with it more than a hint that the statement may not be true." (Life of Muhammad). This is how the Orientalists managed to plant doubts in the hearts of the Western educated Muslims. This also tells us that even translations of Islamic text by non-Muslims, especially Western scholars, may not be accorded acceptance without a proper review (Au.). ■

Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

It is related on the authority of Amr bin Murra that he told Muawiya that he heard the Apostle of God say: "The ruler who will shut his door to the weak and needy bondmen, God will shut the doors of the heavens at the time of his distress and privation, (Help will not reach him from God' in the hour of his need."

- Tirmizi.

Commentary:

The doors of the holy Prophet, and, after him, of Khulfa-i-Rashideen, always remained open for the suppliants and petitioners. They had a free access to them and could meet and place their difficulties before them without any trouble, but when the Kharijis took to terrorism and Usman was killed by them and an attempt, also, was, made on the life of Muawiya, the latter placed restrictions on visitors. It was, then, that Amr bin Murra related the above saying of the holy Prophet to him. It is, further, mentioned in the same report that, after it, Muawiya appointed an officer who used to listen to the needs and grievances of the people and pass them on to him.

It is related by Sa'eed Khudri that the Apostle of God said: "To say a just word before a tyrannical ruler is the best of Jihad."

-Tirmizi

Commentary:

Though in a war there is the danger of defeat and death, there is, also, the hope of victory. But one, positively, risks his life, or, at least, invites punishment if one dares speak out boldly before a cruel and unjust ruler. For this reason, perhaps, it has been called "the best of Jihad." ■

Surat-ul-fatiha

Salat (Namaz) is one of the important ingredient of Islam. A Muslim is required to offer Namaz five times a day. The prayer begins with Suratul-Fatiha. This surah consists of seven verses. It was revealed in Mecca. The verses are:

1. Praise is for Allah only. The Lord of all being
2. The benevolent, the merciful
3. Master on the day of recompense
4. The only we serve, and Thee only do we ask for help.
5. Direct us to the straight path.
6. The path of those to whom Thou has been gracious
7. Not of those who have incurred the displeasure, nor of those who have gone astray.

These verses in Arabic we recite in all the 'Namaz' we offer 5 times in a day. In those countries where Arabic is not read or spoken

we utter these verses mechanically without understanding their meanings. Alas! We could have known what we repeatedly utter.

The Suratul- Fatiha is the first chapter of the holy Quran and for this reason styled “Fatihatul kitab” or the opening of the book. Because of its intrinsic value, it has been assigned a place of honour in the Quran and allowed to appear on the very first page of it. Indeed the Quran endorses its importance in the following terms:

O’ Prophet! It is a fact that we have given thee seven oft repeated verses and the great Quran (15:87)

It is true that we recite these verses repeatedly but if from the very childhood our parents or teachers may make us aware of the meaning of these verses in their mother tongue it will certainly help to understand the religion and may instill in the heart the urge to learn much more of what has been ordained in the holy Quran.■

S.A.

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Indo-Islamic Culture

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Two Determining Factors

The cultural structure of Muslims everywhere is determined by two major factors: (i) Islamic belief, way of life and system of ethics, and (ii) the indigenous civilisation and local customs which are bound to make their influence felt as a result of living and mixing with the original elements of the population.

The first constituent—Islamic faith, way of life and code of ethics—is the common attribute of the cultural make-up of Muslims all over the world. Wherever they may be living, and whatever their language or dress, this attribute is shared by them universally, and by virtue of it they impress as members of a single brotherhood in spite of the so many things that differentiate them locally. The other component forms that part of their culture which distinguishes them from their co-religionists living in other parts of the world and imparts to them their individual national character.

The Indian Muslims are not exempt from this general principle. Their culture, which has taken centuries to evolve itself, is a combination of both Islamic and Indian influences. This two-fold aspect has, on the one hand, endowed it with a beauty and a richness which is characteristically its own and, on the other, it holds forth the assurance that this culture will operate here not like an alien or a traveller but as a natural, permanent citizen who has built his home in the light of his peculiar needs

and circumstances, past traditions and new impulses, and has also made a pleasant and enduring contribution to the native environment that surrounds him. To seek to deprive a person—or to make him revolt against—transcendental values and ethical ideals which are common between him and large portions of mankind spread over the globe will mean an attempt to freeze his spiritual fountain-heads and destroy the universality of his outlook. In the same way, it will be utterly futile and unjust to expect him to cut himself aloof from his environment and lead a life of complete immunity from the local influences.

Characteristics of Ibrahimi Civilization

From the point of view of Islamic belief, morality and way of life, Indian Muslims, along with Muslims of all other lands, possess a distinctive civilization for which there can be no more appropriate and comprehensive title than 'Ibrahimi' Civilization'. This Civilization has three essential attributes which have fixed their stamp on its entire spiritual, intellectual and social design and given it a flavour and a character that are manifestly its own. The three attributes are God-consciousness, Monotheism (which has been taught ceaselessly by all the Prophets belonging to the line of Hazrat Ibrahim and a complete elaboration of which is contained in the Quran), and a permanent, natural awareness of human dignity and equality that never deserts the mind of a Muslim. It

is these characteristics which lend a distinctive personality to the Ibrahimi civilization. As far as we can say, in no other system of civilization are these features so strikingly in evidence.

Place of God in the Life of a Muslim

Faith in the existence of God and a constant awareness of Him and a ready expression of this awareness is a fundamental and inalienable constituent of the life and culture of Muslims. Islamic Civilization can aptly be compared to a dress which is worn in different styles at different places according to the taste and climatic and other conditions prevailing there but its texture is the same everywhere and it is dyed in the same hue so deep that every tissue and fibre of it is totally impregnated with it. The name of God and His remembrance run like blood in the veins and arteries of Islamic Civilization. When a child is born in a Muslim home, the first ceremony it undergoes, within a few minutes of its birth, is that the Azan is spoken in its ears. Thus, the first name it becomes familiar with, even before he acquires his own name, is that of God. On the seventh day, the Aqiqa is performed, as approved by the Prophet, when an Islamic name is given to it, the choice generally falling on one which expresses the sentiment of loyalty to God or proclaims His absolute Unity and Oneness or is patterned after the names of that most exalted group of Monotheists—the Prophets—or their pupils or immediate disciples. When the time comes for the child to begin his education and go to the school, it is celebrated with the recitation of the name

of God and a few verses from the holy Quran. This ceremony is known among Indian Muslims as Tasmiya Khwani or Bismillah. At marriage, again, the name of God is invoked to unite together in a permanent bond two mature and responsible persons who also have to take the pledge to uphold the prestige of that name throughout their lives.

The wedding sermon is delivered in the manner sanctified by the Prophet's practice, gratitude to God for having created the race in pairs of men and women and exhorting the couple to live and die in state of faithfulness to Him. When the auspicious day of I'd-ul-Fitr arrives, a Muslim called upon to raise his voice in the affirmation of His Glory and Greatness (Allah-O-Akbar) and offer two rakats of prayers in thanksgiving, after he has bathed himself and put on a clean dress. At I'd-ul-Azha, he is desired to offer up animal sacrifice in God's name. Finally, when the ultimate stage of life's journey is reached, a Muslim is instructed to focus all his attention on that very name. Every Muslim, man or woman has the ambition of dying with the sacred name of God on his or her lips. When the news of his death circulates all educated (and even uneducated) Muslims who hear it spontaneously repeat the Quranic word, Inna Lillah-e-wa Inna Ilaih-e-Rajeoon (meaning, "To God we belong, and to Him do we return") The funeral prayers, which are the last act of service to him, reverberate with the name of God from beginning to the end. These prayers are a solemn request to the Almighty by the participants for the salvation of the soul of

the departed and for themselves that they may be granted a life of loyalty and devotion to Him in this world and of peace and felicity in the next. As the body is lowered in the grave it is to the accompaniment of these words: "In the name of God, and according to the way of His Apostle's religion and the Millet." In the grave, the face is turned towards that universal centre of Divine worship and Monotheism which goes by the name of Ka'aba (House of God). Wherever a Muslim may be buried his face will, without exception, be in line with that one place at Mecca in Arabia. After the burial, no Muslim passer-by will, usually, fail to offer the Fateha at his grave and pray for the remission of his sins and the deliverance of his soul. In fine, the name of God and its remembrance are a constant companion of a Muslim's life from the cradle to the grave.

But these were the more important landmarks of man's earthly sojourn. In his everyday existence, also, a Muslim is never destitute of God-remembrance. When a Muslim sits down to eat, he begins his meal with the name of God and ends it also in the same manner. Those who are particular about the observance of the Sunnah of the Prophet carry out the minutest details of life with the name of the Lord on their lips and His thought embedded in their hearts. Take such a trifling thing as a sneeze. A Muslim is required to remember God when he lets it out, and those who hear it, also, are instructed to send up a prayer for him. What is more, the daily conversation of a Muslim is interspersed with phrases like

Masha Allah (as God willed), Insha-Allah (If God willeth) and La Haul-a-Wa La Quwata Illa Billah (There is no power or virtue but in God). These phrases, apart from being ideal prayer-formulas, have gained currency as terms of everyday speech not only in Arabic, but in the languages of those countries too, where Muslims have been living for some time and which have received the impress of Islamic Civilization. In truth, these phrases are in the nature of convenient aids to God-remembrance. The culture, language and the daily life of no other people will be found to be so thoroughly soaked in faith in God-existence and an all-embracing consciousness of Him. The basic ingredient of the culture and civilization of Indian Muslims, transcending the frontiers of race, nationality and geography, is this very faith and consciousness which has become the mark and symbol of their daily existence.

Monotheism

The second main constituent of their culture is the creed of Monotheism. Belief in the Oneness of God is manifest in all their activities from spiritual conviction to practical conduct and from worship to festivals and ceremonies. Five times in a day, it is proclaimed from the minarets of their mosques that no one is worthy of worship except One God. Their homes and studios are expected to be free from every trace of idolatory and polytheism—photographs, statues and images having been prohibited to them by their religion. The same principle has to be followed even while making or buying toys for children. Be it a religious or a national celebration,

the birthday of a spiritual leader or a political hero, or the ceremony of national flag-hoisting, it is forbidden to Muslims, and repugnant to their Monotheistic civilization, to bow before a portrait or an image, to stand reverently before it or to pay it floral tributes in any form. Wherever Muslims will be honest in their loyalty to the Islamic civilization, they will remain strictly removed from such practices. The transgression of the limits of Monotheism, in imitation of the manners and customs of another people or from any other motive, even in such minor matters as the giving of a name, the observation of a function or ceremony, the showing of respect to elders or the expression of one's modesty and humility is an act prejudicial to the spirit and teachings of Islam.

Human Dignity and Equality

The notion of human dignity and equality has become a part of the essential nature of Muslims and a permanent attribute of Islamic character. Things like social exclusiveness or untouchability are completely foreign to Muslim society. A Muslim will have no hesitation in dining with another Muslim or any other person. Several Muslims will readily eat from the same vessel; one will freely partake of the other's left-over, or drink the water left behind in his tumbler. The master and the slave will fall in the same row and offer the Namaz standing shoulder to shoulder with each-other. Any learned person, however lowly he may be, socially or economically, can lead the prayers and the highest dignitaries and noblemen will follow him readily.

Lesser Attributes

Besides these fundamental characteristics there are some other distinguishing features of a lesser importance of the Ibrahimi Civilization which are common to Muslims everywhere. These include habits and customs, such as, the performing of all good deeds, like eating or drinking or the passing over of something to anyone with the right hand, dress-restrictions—for example, the dress must cover the body properly—the garment for the lower extremities should be long enough to conceal the knees and short enough to stop above the ankles—men are forbidden the use of silk—and stress on cleanliness. Adherence to these regulations will generally be the rule where Islamic Civilization is present in its true, unpolluted form, and where it is not so, it will be a sign of social and moral degeneration.

Fine Arts

Its simplicity and sobriety is another characteristic of the Islamic Civilization. In the matter of fine arts it adopts a balanced, temperate, attitude. It does appreciate beauty and refinement, yet, at the same time, it frowns severely upon certain forms of self-indulgence and sensuality to which the West has given the imposing label of 'Fine Arts'. Some of these are dancing, painting and photography (of living beings) and sculpture. Similarly, there are certain things in which Islam has advised caution and moderation. For instance, a Muslim is permitted to enjoy music, but within certain limits. Absorption in fine arts is, in any case, contrary to the spirit and social

destiny of Islamic Civilisation and inimical to the generation of that fear of God, solicitude for the Hereafter and the high ethical standard which are expected of a Muslim. Had the check and control of the Islamic Shariat and Civilization not been there, it would not have been possible for Indian Muslims to maintain the temperateness that is their distinction, to some extent or another, in this respect in a country which has been so strongly attached to fine arts from the ancient times that they have become a part of popular worship.

Islamic Morality

Among the moral attributes which have particularly influenced the Islamic culture are hospitality, liberality and open-handedness. These qualities, again, are a heritage from Hazrat Ibrahim about whose generous reception of guests there has occurred the following verse in the Quran:

Has the story reached thee of the honoured guest of Abraham ? (LI : 24)

Pilgrims and foreign chroniclers who had the occasion to live, for any length of time, among communities, tracing their descent from him either racially or spiritually, have recorded most pleasant memories of their stay in this respect. They have invariably been impressed by their warm hospitality and friendly feeling towards guests and strangers. One can still notice in the countries of the Middle East, which have not yet been swept off their feet by the mounting tide of Western Civilization, glimpses of the hospitality that had enabled globetrotters like Ibn-e-Batuta

and Ibn-e-Jubair to enjoy the comfort and warmth of home during travel. The Indian Muslims in spite of their being placed so far away from the natural seat of Islamic Civilisation and the fact that Islam had reached their country long after it had passed the peak of its glory, also are conspicuous for their cordial treatment of the guests. Hospitality is a part of the tradition of Muslim homes, and although modern economic conditions have put a curb on it, Muslims still feel happy on the arrival of a guest and consider it a source of good fortune and an Islamic virtue to entertain him open-heartedly.

Indian Influences

One of the most valuable fruits of Indo-Islamic fusion is the Urdu language. Refined and progressive to the very core, this language represents what is best in the Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Sanskrit languages. The dress of the upper and urbane sections of Indian Muslims is another noteworthy example of the intermingling of Indian and Islamic cultures. It reflects refinement of taste and polished living in good measure. Further, there is the graceful, easy and well-mannered mode of life which grew up in Delhi, Lucknow, Hyderabad and the other important centres of Muslim influence towards the end of the Mughal rule. Excessive respect of parents, including the display of a particular kind of humility and correctness of behaviour in their presence, and the exaggerated purdah of women along with certain other special regulations governing their conduct are features which are generally not found among Muslims belonging to other lands.

In their evolution the peculiar conditions of life in India, the needs and interests of Muslims as the ruling race and indigenous customs and traditions have obviously taken an active hand.

The practice so commonly observed among Indian Muslims of marrying only in the family or in their own particular group of families or in a family of an equal genealogical status with them is also typically Indian and influenced wholly by the caste and other permanent distinctions of birth obtaining in the country. Muslims living outside India look upon such customs with curiosity. They are not bound down by them and give thought only to social and economic considerations—apart from personal inclination, of course,—while contracting matrimony. Similarly, the custom of making too much fuss over occasions of joy or grief, of spending beyond means on them and going in for unnecessary ostentation, is a specialty of the Indian society which has made its way among Muslims, otherwise the Islamic mode of carrying out such ceremonies is one of simplicity and quiet dignity.

The disgraceful treatment meted out to servants by their masters, which is sometimes so outrageous as to reduce the servants to the level of ‘untouchables’, is, again, a product of the social impulses received from India together with the general degeneration that had set in among the Muslims during the declining years of their power.

All said and done, it is an incontrovertible fact that Muslims have benefited immensely from the ancient

cultural heritage of India. It has enriched them in a number of ways. The successful manner of their meeting the onslaught of the Western Civilization and preserving their cultural identity unnamed—a thing which has not been possible in the so-called Islamic countries—the depth and profundity evident in their thought, and mysticism (Tasawwuf) are due largely to the action exercised on them by the social, cultural and intellectual processes native to India. These processes have, in conjunction with the basic impulses of Islamic thought and way of life, given shape to a composite Indo-Islamic Culture representing at once the supranational Civilization of Islam and the local philosophy and social design of India.

With all this, Islamic values and ethical standards have also suffered a distinct transfiguration in India. Though it is much less as compared to what has been the experience of other peoples who, like Muslims, came from alien lands to make India their home, it is still profound enough to have moved a sensitive and well-meaning Muslim poet of the nineteenth century, Khwaja Altaf Husain Hali, to make a friendly complaint about it to the motherland. When two civilisations meet, the transmission of cultural effects and impulses between them is always a two-way process. It cannot be that one exercises its influence on the other without being simultaneously influenced by it. Such a thing would be both unnatural and incorrect. Human existence is based essentially on the noble principle of give-and-take. In it lies its strength and its glory.■

Career As A Prophet

- S. Sulaiman Nadwi

The Holy Prophet was born at a time when Makkah was the greatest centre of idol-worship. In the Ka'ba alone there were 360 idols. The family of the Prophet had a distinguished status, only because they had been the custodians and key-bearers of this temple. With all that the Holy Prophet had never bowed to any of the idols, nor taken part in pagan rites of any other kind. As a mark of distinction the Quraish claimed an exemption from the obligatory trip to 'Arafat during the Hajj. Again they insisted that the outsiders, performing the pilgrimage, should walk round the Ka'ba either dressed after the fashion of the Quraish or go naked. Consequently going round the Ka'ba in a state of nudity had become a common practice. The Holy Prophet never upheld this conduct of his people.

Story telling was another hobby of the Arabs. At night when they were free from daily business, groups of men used to assemble at some place; and one of them, well-versed in the art, would begin his story which others would listen to with rapt attention all through the night. Once in his boyhood, the Holy Prophet intended to attend one such assembly. But on the way he came across a marriage celebration. He stopped there, fell asleep and when he awoke it was daylight. Once again he thought of going to a similar assembly and was similarly prevented. Thus in the first forty-year life-time only twice had he a wish to enjoy a story, but each time divine help came to keep him

back. He was destined for a career far above such vulgarities.

This conduct was significant of a good and virtuous nature; but it was something far higher and much nobler that was required for the sublime office of founding a great church, of solidifying a flawless religious system, and of providing guidance to humanity at large. It was about this period that those in search of Truth (e.g., Waraqa, Zaid, 'Uthman ibn al-Huwairith and others) were realizing the folly of bowing down to stones that had no sense. They wandered about in search of the True Faith, only to find their hopes dashed to pieces. Waraqa and 'Uthman embraced Christianity while Zaid died saying, "O God, Had I known how to worship Thee, I should have worshipped Thee in that way."

The Holy Prophet had various worldly duties to attend to. He had to look to his business affairs, to take care of several children and to make journeys for trade. But Allah had ordained for him a work far above these duties. The world and its affairs seemed to him worthless; yet he had not been able to find out the object of his desire.

There was a cave at a distance of three miles from Makkah known as HIRA'. The Holy Prophet used to go and remain there for weeks, meditating. He used to take his food with him, come back when it was done, and go again and meditate. In the Sahih of al-Bukhari the words are that

the Prophet worshipped in the cave. How did he do it? In the commentary of al-'Aini on the Sahih of al-Bukhari, we find the answer: "It is asked what was the form of his worship. The answer is, meditating and contemplating over the lessons the world had to teach."

This was the same form of worship as his great-grandfather, Abraham, (peace be upon him) had been used to, before he was called to his ministerial duty. He looked at the stars—they shone, of course, with God's light—and came near to mistaking them for God. The moon rose and it was the more deceptive. Then came the sun, far more misleading than the moon. But when all these had disappeared in due course, the involuntary cry rang out: "I love not the setting ones... Verily I have set my countenance toward Him who hath created the heavens and the earth upright, and am not of the associaters."

A western historian has thus described the Prophet's mode of worship. "From of old, a thousand thoughts, in his pilgrimings and wanderings, had been in this man: What am I? What is this unfathomable thing I live in, which men name the Universe? What is life, what is death? What am I to believe? What am I to do? The grim rocks of Mount Hira, of Mount Sina'i, the stern sandy solitudes answered not. The great heaven rolling silent overhead, with its blue glancing stars, answered not. That was no answer."

As a prelude to prophet hood, future events came to be revealed to him in dreams, and these dreams always proved

to be true. One day when the Prophet was busy meditating as usual, an angel came to him and said, "Recite thou in the name of thy Lord Who hath created: Hath created man from a clot: Recite thou: And thy Lord is Most Bounteous, Who hath taught mankind by the pen—Hath taught man that which he knew not."

The Prophet returned home full of the awe of the majesty of Allah. Khadija took him to Waraqa ibn Naufal who knew Hebrew and was well-read in the Bible and the Torah. He heard from the prophet all that he had experienced and told him that the Angel was the same that Allah had sent to Moses. Another report says that the prophet was in a state of fear, but Khadija advised him not to be anxious as Allah would not leave him alone, and then she took him to Waraqa who testified to his prophet hood.

It is a fact that the Prophet uttered the words "I fear." This anxiety, this uneasiness and awe were natural to the intense realisation of Allah's magnificence and the sense of the heavy burdens that a prophet must shoulder. What the Prophet saw, what the Arch-angel said and what mysteries were revealed are too subtle for words.

In the chapter on Dreams, the Sahih of al-Bukhari records that the revelations stopped for a few days. During the interval, again and again, the Prophet went up the mountain with a feeling to throw himself down. All of a sudden the Arch-angel would appear and say, "Verily you are the apostle of God, O Muhammad," and he felt consoled. Again when the revelation

stopped he had the same feeling to throw himself down from the mountain; and again did the angel appear and console him.

Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar while discussing the first part of this report, refers to the critics who declare that a prophet could never entertain doubts about his Prophet hood, and if it was so, how could he be satisfied with the assurance given by a Christian (Waraqah ibn Naufal). He then quotes a reply by a famous traditionist: "Prophet-hood is a commission of enormous import; its responsibilities could not be shouldered without a preparatory disciplining. So the Holy Prophet was given a fore taste of it, first through dreams. Still when the Arch-angel made a sudden appearance, it was but human to have a feeling of fear. At first Kadija comforted him and later on, when Waraqah confirmed it, he felt assured." The actual words of the traditionist are: "When he heard the words of Waraqah, he felt assured and said he was convinced." The same traditionist says that the frequent intervals between the revelations were intended to get the Prophet gradually accustomed to the new experience.

Al-Tirmidhi records that in earlier life when the Prophet undertook a journey to Syria and sat under a tree in Busra, the branches of the tree bent to the ground, a phenomenon which led Bahira to the conclusion that he was going to be a prophet. In the Sahih of Muslim also we find a tradition which reports the Prophet to have said that he could tell the stone that used to greet him with a SALAM

(salutation) before he was made a prophet. In the Sihah (of al-Bukhari and Muslim) we find another report saying that early in life angels had opened the chest of the Prophet and removed all the bodily mass. How is it possible that those who record these reports should, at the same time, state that the appearance of the Arch-angel inspired so great a fear that, in spite of being comforted, he felt again and again uneasy, was taken with a wish to roll himself down the hill-side, and again and again the Arch-angel had to assure him? Did any other prophet ever entertain a doubt on receiving the first revelation? Moses heard Allah speak from behind a tree, but had Moses any misgivings? We need not follow Ibn Hajar and others. We should first of all see whether the chain of narrators has any link missing. In fact this report is one of those traditions that come down from al-Imam al-Zuhri as the last narrator; beyond him it is all void. This flaw has been exposed by the commentators of al-Bukhari themselves. It is obvious that, for a report concerning an event of so great an importance, a chain that breaks half-way up should never suffice.

When the Prophet thought of discharging his missionary duties, he foresaw great difficulties ahead. Had his duty been confined to mere sermonising like Christ, or like Moses to coming out of Egypt with his tribe, it would have been an easy affair. But the Last Messenger was commissioned for the task of filling the whole of Arabia, nay, the whole of the world with the light of Islam, and had at the same time to take care that he managed to live to accomplish his mission. Thus he had

to proceed cautiously and gradually. To whom was this hazardous secret first to be confided? To whom was this hazardous secret first to be confided? This was the first problem. Naturally those who had been his close friends and had enjoyed his company and seen every aspect of his manners and habits were the first to be selected. They were the people who, on account of their past experience, could testify to the truth of his message. They were Khadija, his wife, 'Ali, who had been brought up under his care, Zaid who had been his devoted slave and whom he had given his freedom, and lastly Abu Bakr who had long been enjoying his company. First of all the Prophet communicated his message to Khadija, and no sooner than it was delivered she was a Muslim. Then followed others. They all came forward with unqualified faith.

Abu Bakr was a rich man, a master of genealogies, possessed of wise judgement and a generous hand. There is a report recorded by Ibn Sa'd that he had 40,000 Dirhams when he embraced Islam. Gifted with these virtues, he had a great influence with the Makkans, and the grandees among the Quraish consulted him in every matter.

It is reported that among the elder Companions, 'Uthman, Zubair, 'Abd al-Rahman ibn 'Auf, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, Talha and others embraced Islam mainly through Abu Bakr's persuasion.' Through these converts Islam began to work its way up to other people in secret, and the number of its followers began to multiply. Foremost among the early Muslims were 'Ammar, Khabab ibn al-Aratt, 'Uthman,

'Abd al-Rahman ibn 'Auf, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, Talha, Arqam, Sa'id ibn Zaid, 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud, 'Uthman ibn Maz'un, 'Ubaida and Suhaib al-Rumi.

But all this went on screened from public notice. Every care was taken that none except the initiated should know anything. At the time of prayers the Holy Prophet would repair to a cave and there offer his prayers. Ibn al-Athir says that the Prophet offered the CHASHT (fore-noon) prayers in the Haram as this Prayer was permissible among the Quraish as well. Once Abu Talib came upon the Holy Prophet and 'Ali offering prayers in a mountain pass. He was surprised at this new form of worship, stopped there and watched intently. When the prayer was over he asked the Prophet what kind of worship it was. The Holy Prophet replied that it was the same as their great grandfather Abraham had practised. Abu Talib himself would not adopt the new practice; but allowed them to go on with it with an assurance that none would stand in their way.

The spread of Islam is a historical mystery. Its opponents claim that it was propagated by the sword. Here it would be advisable to consider one aspect of its progress. In its early days to embrace Islam was tantamount to staking one's life and property. Let us here see what type of men came over to it during this period.

The early converts to Islam exhibit a few common characteristics. Similarly those who opposed Islam possessed a few characteristics in common. Let us explain what we mean:

1. Those who embraced Islam were generally men who had already been seeking Truth and were by nature virtuous at heart and pure and chaste in morals, for instance, Abu Bakr had been well-known for his chastity, piety, truthfulness and integrity. 'Uthman ibn Maz'un was mystic-minded and had given up drinking long before the advent of Islam. After coming into the fold of Islam he wished to renounce the world, but the Prophet dissuaded him from doing that. Suhaib was another convert. He had been a disciple of 'Abd Allah ibn Jud'an, who died a teetotaler. Abu Dharr was the sixth or the seventh among the early Muslim converts. He had already given up idols and worshipped Allah, and said his prayers in any manner he could think of. When he heard of the Prophet he sent his brother to Makkah and met the Prophet who recited to him a few verses of the Qur'an. He returned home and told Abu Dharr that he had met a person whom the Makkans called an apostate, but he taught moral virtues, and what he recited was not poetry but something over and above that. He also told Abu Dharr that his mode of worship was much like that of Abu Dharr himself. Abu Dharr did not feel satisfied and he personally came to Makkah. A few words from the holy lips of the Prophet were enough to bring him to Islam. All his life he lived detached from worldly concerns. He believed that one who amassed wealth was not a Muslim. Hence 'Uthman sent him away from Madinah in the days of his caliphate.
2. Some of the early Muslims had received their ideas from the "AHNAF" who had given up idol worship and called themselves the followers of Abraham. Beyond that aphoristic confession, they had no clear conception of faith; they were still hankering after the light of Truth. One of them was Zaid already spoken of. Zaid died five years before Prophet proclaimed the Divine Mission, but his son Sa'id was living. Sa'id had known his father's sentiments. In the Prophet he found the long-awaited guide he was looking out for, the guide his father had sought and died seeking.
3. Another common characteristic found in all the early converts was that none of them held a position of honour in the hierarchy of the Quraish. Most of them, like, 'Ammar, Khabbab, Abu Fukaiha, Suhail and others were such as would hardly be tolerated in the company of the honoured and the wealthy. When these poor Muslims entered the Haram with the Prophet, the Makkans used to say: "Are these the persons whom God hath favoured in preference to us"?

The idol-worshippers thought these converts deserved to be despised for their poverty; but it was this poverty alone that helped them on to the wealth of True Faith. Riches had not deadened their conscience; pride or arrogance could not keep them back from the path of Truth, no fear of losing a place of honour among the custodians of the Ka'ba could deter them. Free from all worldly rust and dross, their hearts could immediately receive the light. That explains why the early followers of

all other prophets have always been the poor and the indigent. The first converts to Christianity were the fishermen, and the associates of Noah were stigmatized by the non-believers in these words: "And we behold not any follow thee except the meanest of us by an immature opinion nor we hold in you any excellence over us: nay! we deem you as liars.

We shall see later on what a staunch faith the early Muslims had. The severest atrocities, the most grievous tortures, the greatest allurements of wealth, in short nothing that the Quraish could inflict or offer could stagger them. In the long run the feeble hands of these very Muslims overthrew the thrones of the Byzantines and the Emperor of Iran.

For three years, all preaching went on strictly behind the curtain. But the sun having risen, the twilight was soon to turn into a full blaze; and forth came the divine command: "Promulgate thou that which thou art commanded". And again a message ordained: "And warn thou thy clan and nearest ones".

The Holy Prophet took his stand on the top of the hillock of Safa and called to the Quraish. They assembled, Then he said, "Would you believe me if I were to tell you that a large army was coming from the other side of the mountain"? "Yes", they all said, "You have never been known to have uttered an untruth". "If so", said the Prophet, "I tell you that unless you turn Muslims, there shall descend on you a grievous penalty". On hearing this, the whole crowd, including Abu Lahab, an uncle of the Prophet, got highly offended

and left.

A few days later the Holy Prophet asked 'Ali to arrange for a feast. This was in fact the first occasion when Islam was to be proclaimed. The whole family of 'Abd al Muttalib was invited—Hamza, Abu Talib, 'Abbas and all the rest. After the feast was over, the Prophet stood up and said that he had brought something that would provide for their welfare in this world as well as the hereafter. He further asked if there was any to help him shoulder this onerous duty. A hush fell on all the assembly. All at once, 'Ali stood up and said, "I am suffering from sore eyes, my legs are thin and feeble and I am the youngest of all; yet will I stand by you".

For the Quraish it was a wonderful scene. Two individuals of whom one was a mere boy of thirteen were taking a decision to change the history of the world. The audience burst into a laugh. But Time proved that all that was a serious determination and a firm resolve.

Now the number of Muslims was not negligible, they were more than forty. The Holy Prophet entered the Haram and openly proclaimed the Oneness of God. The unbelievers of Makkah took it to be the worst sacrilege for the Haram. A serious disturbance was the result. The Makkans fell upon the Prophet from all sides. Harith ibn Abi Hala, the guardian of the Prophet, who was inside his house hastened to save him.. Swords rose upon Harith and he was done to death. This was the first blood in the service of Islam that stained the earth. ■

General Amnesty Proclaimed

- S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi*

The Prophet (SAW) had the range of forgiveness and amnesty widened on that day to the extent that from among the people of Makkah only that person who himself was not willing to be pardoned and spared could have got perished. The Allah's Prophet (SAW) had the instructions issued to the army men that while entering Makkah they should not raise hands except on the one, and only one, who puts hurdles in their way and gets into a clash with them. He also had it instructed that circumspection should be exercised in respect of possessions and properties of the Makkans. Hands should not be laid on them.

It was a spectacle to watch! The victorious battalions of Muslims were seen advancing like tumultuous sea-waves. Various tribes of them, with their respective hordes, were marching past. Whenever some tribe would pass by, Abu Sufyan would enquire its name from Hazrat Abbas. On hearing the name he would say: 'What do I have to do with this tribe.'

Finally, the Prophet (SAW) himself, surrounded by the large contingent of his companions, appeared on the scene, Looking greenish owing to abundance of weapons, it was the iron-clad regiment of Muhajireen and Ansar which, having the Prophet (SAW) encircled was moving along, Looking at this spectacular sight,

Abu Sufyan said: 'Subhan-Allah! (Glory to God!) Tell me Abbas, who are these people?' 'It is the Allah's Prophet moving ahead in a procession of Muhajireen and Ansar.', he replied. Hearing that, he said: 'No one can overwhelm them with might and main. By God! Abul Fadhl! What a dominance it is that your nephew wields this morning today!' 'It is the miracle of the Prophecy!', he said.

On entering Makkah, Abu Sufyan loudly announced: 'O people of the Quoraish! Here it is Mohammad! He has come to you with such a force as would have never been experienced by you.' He referred to the announcement made by the Prophet (SAW) that whoever would now get into Abu Sufyan's house would be granted quarter. Hearing that, the people took to saying: 'You be damned! What worth does your house have that all of us could get shelter therein?!' Then he referred to this announcement also that whoever would have the doors of his house shut on him would also be granted quarter; and, the one who would get into the mosque (the Harem mosque, that is) would also be granted quarter. Thereupon, the people got dispersed. They had the refuge taken in their respective houses and the Harem mosque.

The Humble Attitude Adopted by the Prophet (SAW) While Entering Makkah:

The Allah's Prophet (SAW) made his

* Rector, Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow.

entry into Makkah in such a way as made again a great spectacle! Overwhelmed by the emotions of Abdiyat (sense of being Allah's servant) and humility, his auspicious head was totally bowed down; so much so that his chin was close to getting touched by the saddle. While entering Makkah it was the 'Surat Al-Fath' that he was reciting.

While entering Makkah, along with his huge army of Muslims, the Allah's Prophet (SAW) had the history of the past twenty years getting unfolded before his eyes. It was the period during which his Makkan compatriots had made his, as well as his companions' lives, miserable and had made it hard for him (SAW) and his companions to survive even. They had subjected them to all sorts of torments and tortures. They had already taken all the steps to even have him (SAW) and his companions finished off. It was as a result of such animosity that he (SAW), and before him his companions, had found themselves compelled on saying adieu to their homeland. They had made even their return to their homeland and visiting the sacred House of Allah and worshipping therein, too, impossible for them. That very worship which was freely permitted to be performed by the denizens of each and every region of the Arab world, by coming over to Makkah, had been made out of bounds for the Prophet (SAW) and his companions. Today was the day now when he (SAW), by virtue of being its conqueror, was entering that very city. And, all these Johnnies, the sanguinary

enemies of him (SAW) and his companions, were finding themselves compelled on having to helplessly put up with his entry that was gained by virtue of his being its conqueror.

Makkah was a place that was central to Arabian Peninsula. And a glorious one, at that! From the spiritual and political point of view, it was to the Arab world what the vitals are to the body. Considering that, one can imagine how much elated and full of pride one would feel having this Makkah under heel. What an air of grandeur he would enter it with! But, the deportment of the Prophet of Allah (SAW) was just opposite to that. No demeanour of equality and justice, humility and Abdiyat (the sense of being Allah's servant) was such as was not assumed by him on this occasion. It was not some very close relative or favoured companion but Hazrat Usamah, the son of his liege (the manumitted slave), Hazrat Zaid, whom he had made to sit behind him on his mount. None of the clan of Banu Hashim and the nobles of the Quoraish who were present there in a large number was conferred this honour by him (SAW)

Likewise, on this very day of victory over Makkah, when an individual, while talking to him (SAW) on some issue, started shivering overwhelmed by his grandeur, he (SAW) said to him: 'Don't get scared, Rest assured, I am no sort of king. I am merely the son of such a woman of the Quoraish as had only the pieces of jerked meat for her subsistence.' ■

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 nations 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 due to 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 religions. 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 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)

Islamic View on Education

-Saeedur Rahman Azami Nadwi

Education has always been an important mean to help human beings in achieving highest position in social milieu. Right from the beginning it has been a beacon in various spheres of human life. Scholars of Islam have shown their keen interest in this field so that a common man may be benefitted with this great asset of Islam. Besides they may get awarded of moral, ethical and social values and norms of this great faith. Moreover, they may mould their lives with religious hues and may lead peaceful life accomplishing their duties and responsibilities in a better way.

This is an admitted fact that every one gives ample importance to education. This we have inherited from the first prophet Adam. It is education that makes a benign society and moulds hearts with excellence and merits and purge human hearts with baseness and meanness. It inculcates in mankind moral values and sublime qualities and enhances human safety and its status and grandeur.

The edifice of Islamic way of life rests on the firm and sound principles of knowledge. The fountain head of morality and ethics is education in Islam. Education brings about such magnificent constitution of life of which the fragrance travels far and wide. It keeps humanity refresh and sound with its sweet and delicious spring, It never perishes and dries up. Its beneficence never causes paucity and scarcity. Islam lays great stress on acquiring all kinds of knowledge. It does not distinguish, be it religious or secular. Islam made it obligatory for its adherents. Islamic culture and civilization encompasses whole gamut of human life. It makes life purposeful with its extraordinary favours, courtesies and immense bounties and boons.

It should be kept in mind that Islam praises that knowledge which has some limits, demarcation and principles. Besides it has its own ideology. Its fountain sprouts with pure and fair faith and religious dogmas. Being imbibed with this clear and vivid spring "its followers exhibit radiant and shining gems of knowledge and they constitute their principles and laws in its light. Their main motto is to enjoin good and forbid evil so that one may lead a purposeful life and attain the pleasure of God.

Needless to add that Muslims distinguished themselves and made great strides in every walk of life because of certain system of education adopted by them. They set up universities and centres for culture and civilization to work systematically in their respective areas.

Islam encourages knowledge of science, technology and other subjects. Islam also motivates and urges people to ponder over the creation of the world. Both knowledge are incumbent to achieve success in life. Islamic way of life can prove its utility and usefulness if it maintains equal balance between religious and modern education respectively.

In short, Islam appreciates those who strive to attain profitable and advantageous knowledge and try to explore mysteries and wonders of the universe. Almighty God says: "Behold! In the creation of the heavens and the earth; and the alternation of night and day, there are indeed signs for men of understanding" (S.3.A. 1 90) He further says: "Soon will We show them Our signs in the furthest regions of the earth, and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the truth. Is it .not enough that thy Lord doth witness all things?" (S.41, A.53). ■

Spread of Islam: The Peace, Equality and Justice

- Sumaiya Ahmed

Islam is a monotheistic religion. Besides monotheism, it lays stress on social equality, universal brotherhood and tolerance. It emphasizes the importance of piety and devotion rather than birth or color as a criterion for greatness and nearness to Allah. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was born in Makkah of a leading Quraish tribe in 570 C.E. He opposed the superstitions and evil practices that were prevalent in Arabia. He preached Islamic religion- the religion of the past Prophets. The basic teachings of Islam is, Allah is one and He has no form. He is all Powerful and Merciful All are equal and there should be no difference amongst them. Everyone who is a follower of Islam has equal rights. Everyman who believed in Allah and followed the path of Islam, could not be classed as low. All Muslims are equal. Allah is the creator of all things, He is the one; the Almighty. Allah is the infinite Allah loved those who are good. The greatest message of Islam is the unity of Allah and fraternity of all human beings. It has caused the fusion of races and abolished distinctions of caste and color. It taught fraternity in its true sense. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) directed his attention towards the establishment of a new society of equals. Rank in this new society was to be determined not by aristocratic descent, but by the degree of faith and

piety. The most devout of the believers are the most worthy in the sight of Allah.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)

When Muhammad (peace be upon him) appeared in history, the world was characterized by social injustice and religious tyranny and oppression of the weak by the strong. These widespread and deeply-rooted systems were abolished by Muhammad (peace be upon him). His law was one for all. Equality, justice, and love for everyone. He created a set of international principles and systems previously unknown to the Arabs and spread them far and wide. Similar principles and systems were also established in the Western world but until many centuries later. For instance, he established a balanced economic system and a consultative political system. He created clear laws and principles based on human rights and international relations in times of peace and in time of war. He ensured freedom of religion and equal rights to all people (regardless of nationality, skin color, gender and religion).

Built a New United Society (Ummah):

The Muslim Ummah had come into being soon after the emergence of Islam at Makkah but its members were not allowed by the pagans and vested

interests to lead a peaceful and honorable life at Makkah and elsewhere. Muhammad (peace be upon him) was in search of a place where he and his followers could live in peace and devise ways and means for the spread of Islam. His visits to Al-Taif, Amir bin Sasa'ah and his approaches to the tribes outside Makkah including the tribes in Yathrib reveal the fact that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was in search of a place where he could practically implement the ideology of his message, because vision (ideology) can only be realized in space and time. It is to be noted that when Muhammad (peace be upon him) began to preach his mission, submission to it meant to listen and obey Allah and His Messenger. Islam was offered by Muhammad (peace be upon him) to each individual and his tribe and the latter surrendered his/its will to the will of Allah, Who in return, promised continuous guidance to mankind through His Messenger. The individual covenant became a base for the establishment of the civil society at Makkah which was quite distinct and apart from the already existing society based on blood, locality or linguistic affiliations. Once the moral and psychological foundations of the new community of Islam were laid down on the basis of such covenants, the next logical step in the development of the Ummah was the establishment of organized authority.

Established the Peaceful Society:

Al-Madinah consisted of various communities, principally Muslim Arabs from Makkah (the Muhajireen or Emigrants), Muslim Arabs from Yathrib (the Ansar or Supporters), the Jews from Yathrib (Madinah), and other people who were at that time still pagans. The Prophet (peace be upon him) set a precedent and promulgated for its plural society the "Constitution of Al-Madinah", the first written democratic constitution in the world, giving equal rights as well as equal responsibilities to citizens, and establishing the principle of consultation with the people as a method of government.

"So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in the matter. And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely [upon Him]." (Surat Al-Imran, verse 159)

The Concept of Constitution certainly brought about a revolutionary change to Arabia by providing the people with a public legal entity for seeking justice, in place of everyone seeking it with the power of his own hand or, at best, that of his family. It brought an end for all time to the chaos of tribalism and laid the basis for a wider institution, namely, a state. The Prophet set another precedent by

inviting the Jews to join this new society as an independent community within the Muslim state. The Jews accepted, and the agreement known as the Covenant of Al-Madinah (constitution Of Al-Madinah) was signed in 622 C.E. where they became equal citizens of the new society of Al- Madinah.

It was a giant leap for humanity that established the basis for treatment of non-Muslim minorities within the Muslim State, which was far superior to the norms of the time. The Constitution of Al-Madinah guaranteed for all the parties of the covenant equality and freedom of religion; emphasized the sanctity of Al-Madinah, life, and individual possessions; and prohibited crime. The Constitution of Al-Madinah stressed the importance of showing belonging and patriotism to the society. All residents of Al-Madinah, according to the articles of its Constitution, should cooperate in establishing justice, support one another in combating aggression, and help one another do righteous acts. The charter made it clear that this is a general duty shared by all, regardless of creeds, races, or complexions. The charter stipulated the following:

- They (those who sign the treaty) should support one another in combating the attacks waged against any of them.
- They, together, should back up the oppressed.
- They, together, should fight against

any enemy attacking Yathrib (Al-Madinah).

The early Muslim Community that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) built blossomed into a group of people who cooperated with people of other religious, with whom they lived in the same society of Al-Madinah, and fought with against whoever tried to destabilize their community.

Mutual cooperation in worldly affairs encompassed all citizens of Al-Madinah, who shared a common destiny neighborhood and sometimes kingship and extended to include economic and commercial fields, thus promoting tolerance, understanding, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence within their society.

“Except for those who take refuge with a people between yourselves and whom is a treaty or those who come to you, their hearts strained at [the prospect of] fighting you or fighting their own people. And if Allah had willed, He could have given them power over you, and they would have fought you. So if they remove themselves from you and do not fight you and offer you peace, then Allah has not made for you a cause [for fighting] against them.” (Surat Al-Nisa, verse 90)

Equality and Justice:

The Prophet and his followers, as dedicated men, sacrificed everything for the cause of truth and social equality: their lives, hearts and homes, wealth and possessions, families and tribes,

comforts and personal advantages. They migrated to places of safety and security from where they ceaselessly waged wars against the old orders to transform them into new orders of justice and equality, a paradise of truth, love and brotherhood on earth. In the words of the Qur'an

"Indeed, Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties [in exchange] for that they will have Paradise. They fight in the cause of Allah, so they kill and are killed. [It is] a true promise [binding] upon Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Qur'an. And who is truer to his covenant than Allah? So rejoice in your transaction which you have contracted. And it is that which is the great attainment." (Surat Al-Tawbah, Verse I II)

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) revolutionary combines two roles: the role of a Prophet, who is divinely inspired and guided by the divine truth, and the role of a revolutionary who brings radical changes in the old social order and transform modes and patterns of human behavior, thought, emotions and morals according to revelation truth. Thus, revelation is revolution and revolution is revelation. The revelation, in the first stage, transforms the Prophet-revolutionary and afterwards, this revealed truth morally and socially resurrects the corrupt and dead society, like the rain which brings life to a barren land.

The outcome of this principle of unity of man is the peace, equality, and justice of mankind which has abundant proofs in the Qur'an and Islamic tradition. This is the main explanation for Islamic universalism and internationalism which helped its spread.

Concluding Remarks:

In the area conquered by the Arabs or Muslims armies the conquered people did not find Muslim rule too oppressive. Islamic codes of law and administration were far less rigid and far reaching than the Roman. Islam was a simple faith which many peoples could understand and appreciate easily. So, in the course of time, many Byzantine and Persian Christians turned to Islam. The fact that the appearance of Islam was followed by a new burst of activities and an unexpected success of mass conversion instead of collapse shows that Islam was the answer to great political, social, moral cultural etc., needs. A vacuum of many aspects was felt by the followers of old religions, which was filled only with Islam, a gap which other religious and political and cultural system did not and could not fill. It is unanimously accepted by impartial scholars that in the rise of Islam and its spread there was a blinding example of revolutionary change which was facilitated by the corruption of both religious and political systems of the regions into which Islam penetrated and grew. ■

(The Muslim World League Journal)

Pages From Islamic History

Suffa and the Suffa Companions

Ashab al-Suffa is a well-known term in Islamic literature. Suffa means a "Shed", and it referred to a shed constructed adjoining the mosque on one side. Most of the Companions along with the performance of religious duties were carrying on a trade or had taken to cultivation. Some had, however, consecrated their lives exclusively to prayer, and spiritual discipline at the feet of the Prophet. These have neither wives nor children, and if any of them got himself married, he left this group. Some of them would repair to the jungle in the day and collect wood, which they sold off to feed themselves and their Companions. They passed their lives in attendance on the Prophet, listening to his words of wisdom in the day and retired to have a short sleep at night on the floor under the shed. Abu Huraira was one of these Companions. None of them had ever been able to afford, at one and the same time, two pieces of cloth to cover the lower and the upper body separately; a single sheet was so fastened round the neck as to reach a little above the knee. Some of the Ansar would fetch them a twig of a palm tree laden with fruit and stuck it into the ceiling. The dates dropped as they ripened, and the Companions of the Suffa would help themselves to a meal. Very often they had to go without food for two days in succession. When the Prophet came into the Mosque to lead the congregational

prayer they joined the others. Some dropped down in the middle of the prayers owing to weakness. Outsiders who saw them thought they were mad. Whenever the Prophet received food in charity he gave it to these people, and when food was offered to him as a present he invited them to share it with him. Often the Prophet asked some of the Muhajirs and Ansar that they should each take one or two of them for supper and entertains them as best as they could. Sa'd ibn 'Ubada, who combined in himself wealth with charity, sometimes entertained as many as eighty men. So great was the Prophet's regard for them that once, when Fatima asked him to let her have a maid servant, as she had got her hands bruised by the grinding of corn, the Prophet answered that it was not possible for him to make such provision for her while the men of the Suffa should be starving. These Companions passed their nights in worship and prayer; and read the Qur'an with a teacher appointed for them. For this reason most of them were called Qaris (those who recite the Qur'an with accurate pronunciation). They were sent out as preachers whenever required. After the battle of Ma'unah seventy of them were told off to proceed to instruct people in Islamic ways.

The number of these Companions varied from time to time, four hundred in all, they never came up to this figure at any one time, nor could the Suffa accommodate so many. A detailed

account of these people is given in a separate work by Ibn al-Arabi Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Basri (d. 304 H. i.e.), the teacher of Ibn Mindah. Salama has also left a separate book on these Companions.

Treaties with the Jews of Madinah

The historians hold that the Jews of Madinah had descended from the Jews whom Moses had sent against the 'Amaliquites. But this is not borne out by historical evidence. The Jews, though scattered far and wide, nowhere changed their names. Whatever the land of their domicile, they still stick to their Hebrew names. On the contrary, the Arab Jews used to be named Nadir, Quainqua' Marhab, Harith and such like; and these names are purely Arabic. The Jews were usually fainthearted and petty minded. When Moses had asked them to fight they had replied. "Go therefore, thou with thy Lord and fight you both, here we will sit down". On the other hand the Jews of Madinah were highly courageous and chivalrous. Apart from this circumstantial evidence, the reputed historian, Ya'qubi, clearly states that the tribes of Quraizah and Nadir, were Arabs who had turned Jews. His words are: "Then took place the battle with the Banu Nadir. This was a branch of the tribe of Judham who had turned Jews, and similar had been the case with the Quraizah". The historian Mas'udi too, in his Kitab al-Ashraf wal Tabniyuh, has recorded that the Jews of Madinah had belonged to the Judham tribe. Their dislike for the 'Amaliquites and for their idolatry led them to be converted to Judaism. Then they migrated from Syria

to Hijaz". There were three tribes: The Banu Nadir, the Quainqua', and the Quraizah, and they had settled round about Madinah and constructed for tresses.

The two tribes of the Ansar were the Aus and the Khazraj. The last war they had fought between themselves is known as the battle of Bu'ath, which had completely shattered their power. The one objective the Jews had constantly in view was not to allow the Ansar to get united. The first task of the Prophet on his arrival in Madinah was to get the relations between the Ansar and the Jews determined in clear-cut terms. He called the Ansar and the Jews together and had an alliance signed. The details are given in Ibn Hisham. Its terms may be summed up as below:

1. The System of blood money and ransom shall continue as of old.
2. The Jews shall have freedom of conscience without any interference in their religious affairs.
3. The Jews and the Muslims shall live on friendly terms with each other.
4. In case of war with a third party each shall help the other.
5. None of the parties shall give shelter to the Quraish.
6. If Madinah was attacked both shall help each other.
7. If one of the allies entered into a treaty with its enemy, the other should be a party to it. From this clause were excluded the religious wars. ■

Citizenship Amendment Act- Analyses, Anxieties and Possibilities

- Shamsul Haque Nadwi

On December 11, 2019 Citizenship Amendment Bill was passed and became an Act. The CAA grants citizenship to Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhist, Christians, Jains and Parsis who entered India from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan until December 31, 2014. The Muslims were omitted from this generosity. Act was dubbed as unconstitutional, discriminative and divisive by the opposition parties, some countries and various international organisations including UNO. Besides students of various colleges, Madaris and universities expressed concern and protested against the Act. Even today protests and demonstrations are going on against it not only in India but across the globe.

It appears that the spirit of secularism has been diminished and atmosphere of inequality has prevailed.

The government's plan to give citizenship to those non-Muslims who are being persecuted in neighbouring three countries may be a good motive. But there should not be religious discrimination. All victims of religious fanaticism should have been equally dealt with.

The forceful conversion in Muslim countries is regrettable and

condemnable. It is totally illegal to convert anyone by intimidating, extending avidity and even mounting moral pressure in Islam. The holy Quran vividly says, "There is no compulsion in religion."

The second reason in the justification of this act is projected that terrorists and violence-monger people intrude into the country from Muslim countries. The government reiterates that there is no fear for genuine citizens in this Act. It is only political propaganda of the opposition party. It is right that there is nothing about expulsion of legal citizens of the country. But it will be difficult for them to present the required proofs and documents to prove their Indian citizenship. That is why considerable number of people in the country are anxious. Non Muslims may get citizenship by the newly enacted Act. However, what will be their new possessions and property? Even they will be deprived of their franchise and other native amenities until their induction in NRC. Some intellectuals hold the view that through this act an attempt is being made to entrust the country with the particular section by snatching away secular status of the country. They also perceive that today number of Muslim community is less and tomorrow will be more. Muslims are

considerably troubled and disturbed despite being genuine citizens of the country. They think that they will be sent to detention camps where they will be deprived of all sorts of facilities of life. The ways of their education and development will also be dwindled. An opinion is also being projected to bury the hatchet that prior to it a lot of work on Voter Identity Card and Aadhar Card has been done regarding citizenship of the country. Significant amount of budget of the country and considerable amount of people's time have been invested in this regard. Majority of the people have both or at least one of

them. Hence, benefit should be derived from it regarding NRC. Thus time, labour and expenses will be saved and people will feel relief otherwise the country which is passing through extraordinary economic crisis, will fail to combat it for a long time, not to speak of taking step for development of the country.

We wish that Indian government may ponder over it and take such decision which may transcend religion and race and be satisfactory and pleasurable for the entire nation. ■

(English rendering by Obaidur Rahman Nadwi)

Human Dignity and Equality

The notion of human dignity and equality has become a part of the essential nature of Muslims and a permanent attribute of Islamic character. Things like social exclusiveness or untouchability are completely foreign to Muslim society. A Muslim will have no hesitation in dining with another Muslim or any other person. Several Muslims will readily eat from the same vessel; one will freely partake of the other's left-over, or drink the water left behind in his tumbler. The master and the slave will fall in the same row and offer the Namaz standing shoulder to shoulder with each other. Any learned person however lowly he may be, socially or economically, can lead the prayers and the highest dignitaries and noblemen will follow him readily.

Adieu Maulana Burhanuddin Sambhali (1938-2020)

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

Maulana Mohammad Burhanuddin Sambhali, an acclaimed Islamic scholar, jurist, Shaikhut Tafseer of Nadwatul Ulama, President Qazi Council Markazi Darul Qaza, Uttar Pradesh, President Majlis Tahqeeqat- Sharyyah Nadwatul Ulama passed away on January 17, 2020 after a prolonged illness. He was 83.

Born on February 5, 1938 at Sambhal district Moradabad, U.P., he got basic education from his father and completed higher education from Darul Uloom Deoband in 1957. His father Qari Hamiduddin, a well-known Islamic scholar.

A galaxy of prominent doyens of Islamic theology Shaikhul Islam Husain Ahmad Madani, Allama Anwar Shah Kashmiri, Maulana Syed Fakhruddin Ahmad, Allama Ibrahim Balyavi, Hakimul Islam Maulana Qari Muhammad Tayyib, Maulana Mirajul Haq, Maulana Habib Ahmad Israili Sambhali were Maulana Sambhali's mentors in Deoband.

After passing out from Darul Uloom Deoband, he was appointed teacher in Madrasa Alia Arabia Fatehpuri, Delhi. He served there for about 12 years. In 1970 on the invitation of Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, he came to Nadwa as teacher, here he taught for about five decades. He proved himself an able teacher. His way of teaching was admired. During lectures he pointed out such subtle points as students did not help without

being impressed with him. He left indelible mark in the domain of teaching profession. Because of his profound and deep knowledge of all branches of Uloom – e Shariah (Islamic learning) he satisfied students very well. Most of his students imbibed his way of teaching and are now teaching in and out of India.

An accomplished writer, he authored several books in Urdu and Arabic. His books are mostly on juristic issues and their solution. Some of these publications are as under:

1. Qazaya Fiqhiyya Muasirah (Arabic)
2. Uniform Civil Code aur Aurat ke Huqooq
3. Muashirati Masail
4. Ruyat-e-Hilal ka Masla
5. Chand Aham Deeni Mabahis
6. Jadeed Tibbi Masayil
7. Maujuda Zamane –ke- Masayil ka Sharee Hal
8. Nafqa- -Mutallaqa
9. Jaheez
10. Islahi Muashirah
11. Maujuda Daur me kaare Nabuwat Anjaam Dene Wale
12. Musalmanoo ki Pareshaniyoo ke Haqiqi Asbab aur Ilaj

13. Bank Insurance aur Sarkari Qarze
14. Dho Abdar Moti
15. Chand Aham Kutub-e- Tafseer aur Qur'an kareem ke Tarjume
16. Khawatin ke liye Islam ke Tohfe

The comprehensive knowledge and intellectual brilliance of Maulana Sambhali had been acknowledged by his contemporaries. He had been trusted with many important positions and was also conferred several prestigious awards including President Award.

Positions:

1. Member All India Muslim Personal Law Board
2. Member Deeni Taleem Council Uttar Pradesh
3. Vice President Islamic Fiqh Academy
4. President Qazi Council Markazi Darul Qaza Uttar Pradesh
5. President Majlis Tahkikat Sharyyah Nadwatul Ulama
6. Shaikus Tafseer Nadwatul Ulama
7. Member Islamic Calendar Malaysia Board
8. Member Islami Encyclopaedia (Malayalam)
9. Member Syllabus Committee of Darul Uloom Deoband

Maulana Sambhali participated in various national and international seminars. He visited Saudi Arabia,

America, England, Malaysia, South Africa etc. and exhibited his scholarly caliber there.

Condoling his demise Maulana S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi, Rector Nadwatul Ulama said that Maulana Sambhali's passing away is a great loss. He was a prominent Islamic scholar. He recalled his long association and acknowledged his erudition and scholarship. He prayed for peace to the departed soul.

Maulana Dr. Saeedur Rahman Azmi Nadwi, Principal Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama stated that Maulana Sambhali was compendium of knowledge and action. He led an exemplary life. His teaching was a mission and movement. He taught Hazrat Shah Waliullah's masterpiece Hujjatullahil Balighah for a long time. Till his last days he taught students of Tadrib-e-Ifta.

Maulana Dr. Taqiuddin Nadwi, Director of Education Nadwatul Ulama said that Sheikhut Tafseer Maulana Burhanuddin Sambhali was an example of Ulama-e-Salaf (right guided Ulama of the past). He was well versed in all branches of Islamic Shariah. Students derived benefits from his outstanding erudition for decades.

Decidedly, Maulana Sambhal's death caused a great vacuum. He is survived by two sons and three daughters. Maulana S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi led the funeral prayer. He was buried in Daliganj graveyard. Thousands of his admirers thronged to attend the last rite of the departed.■

Blessed Fruits of The Noble Qur'an

- Fatima Taneem Ruknudeen

The Noble Qur'an is the word of Allah, the Most Glorified the Most High, revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) more than 1400 years ago. It is a source of guidance and blessings for humankind. In it Allah has mentioned innumerable bounties, which He has created for His creations. Among these, fruits are perhaps the most repeated food mentioned as blessings of Almighty Allah for humans in both the worlds. Fruits providing wholesome nourishment as well as refreshing satisfaction have been a common natural staple food of humans since the earliest of times and are considered as heavenly gifts in many cultures of the world.

Verses about fruits in the Noble Qur'an

The Noble Qur'an has in several different verses emphasized the blessings of fruits for people in this world as well as referred to plentiful fruits being especially bestowed on the people of Jannah (Paradise) as tasty delights. These fruits in Jannah will resemble the earthy fruits but will be far superior and more perfect than them. A few selected Qur'anic verses mentioning the fruits in this world as well as those in the Jannah are cited below:

- 'And give glad tidings to those who believe and do righteous deed, that for them will be Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise). Every time they will be provided with a fruit therefrom, they will say

"this is what we were provided with before" and they will be given things in resemblance (i.e. in same form but different in taste)'. (Surat Al-Baqarah, Verse: 25)

- '..And sent down water (rain) from the sky and brought forth therewith fruits as a provision for you...' (Surat Al-Baqarah, Verse: 22)
- 'See you not that Allah sends down water (rain) from the sky and We produce therewith fruits of varying colors...' (Surat Fatir, Verse: 27)
- 'And the earth He has put for the creatures; Therein are fruits...' (Surat AL-Rahman, Verses: 10 and 11)
- 'This is Paradise which you have been made to inherit because of your deeds which you used to do (in the life of this world). Therein for you will be fruits in plenty, of which you will eat (as you desire).' (Surat AL-Zukhruf, Verses: 72 and 73)
- 'Verily, the Muttaqeen (the pious) shall be amidst shades and springs. And fruits, Such as they desire,' (Surat Al-Mursalaat, Verses: 41 and 42)

QUR'ANIC VERSES MENTIONING DIFFERENT FRUITS

The Noble Qur'an mentions a few different fruits by name in several of its verses. These are Dates, Grapes, Olives,

Pomegranates, Figs and Bananas. These fruits have been highlighted in many Surahs although the banana has been referenced indirectly only once. The fig too has also been mentioned only once. Below are cited a few Qur'anic verses mentioning these fruits:

- ' . . . And out of the date palm and its spathe come forth clusters of dates hanging low and near, and gardens of grapes, olives and pomegranates; each similar (in kind) yet different (in variety and taste). Look at their fruits when they begin to bear, and the ripeness thereof. Verily! In these things there are signs for people who believe.' (Surat Al-An'am, Verse: 99)
- 'And it is He Who produces gardens trellised and untrellised and date palms, and crops of different shape and taste (their fruits and their seeds) and olives, and pomegranates, similar (in kind) and different (in taste). Eat of their fruit when they ripen, but pay the due thereof (its Zakat) on the day of its harvest, and waste not by extravagance. Verily, He likes not those of waste by extravagance. (Surat Al-An'am, Verse: 141)
- 'And in the earth are neighboring tracts, and gardens of vines and green crops fields etc.), and date palms growing out two or three from a single stem root or otherwise (one stem root for every palm), watered with the same water, yet some of them We make more excellent than others to eat. Verily, in

these things, there are Ayat (proof, evidences, lessons, signs) for the people who understand.' (Surat AL-Ra'd, Verse: 4)

- 'With it He causes to grow for you the crops, the olives, the date palms, the grapes, and every kind of fruit. Verily! In this is indeed an evident proof and a manifest sign for people who give thought.' (Surat AL-Nahl, Verse: 11)
- 'Among Talh (banana trees) with fruits piled one above another.'

(Surat Al-Waqiah, Verse: 29)

- 'By the Fig and the Olive.' (Surat AL-Teen, Verse: 1)

Thus, these six fruits are deemed 'Blessed' by their mention in the Noble Qur'an and Muslims throughout the various ages and across several lands have included them in their diet as much as possible. Also, various hadiths mention the virtues and benefits of these fruits.

Apart from their nutritive value, these fruits are commonly prescribed under Homeopathic and Unani Tibb Medical Systems. Moreover, various scientific medical studies have also proven their benefits. Their importance is described below:

DATES

'And shake the trunk of the date palm towards you, it will let fall fresh ripe dates upon you.' (Surat Maryam, Verse: 25)

Dates are the staple fruits of the

Middle Eastern countries although they have been cultivated in many other countries including India, Pakistan, US and Australia. They are one of the sweetest ancient fruits which are available in many different local varieties. Dried dates are more popular globally as compared to the fresh dates.

Being the fruit of the desert, dates are mentioned extensively in both the Noble Qur'an and hadith. It is mentioned more than a dozen times in the Noble Qur'an with its tree, the date palm being the most repeated fruit bearing plant in the Noble Qur'an. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, 'A household that has dates does not feel hunger.' (Narrated by Muslim).

Health Benefits of Dates

- Dates are a rich source of proteins and dietary fiber.
- They contain natural sugars - glucose, sucrose and fructose.
- They are rich in potassium, iron and contain significant amount of minerals.
- Dates are rich in Vitamin A, Vitamin B1, Vitamin B2, Vitamin B3, Vitamin B5 and Vitamin C.
- They are great energy boosters due to their soluble sugars.
- They are used in the treatment of anemia and constipation.
- They help to regulate the nervous system and also improve the digestive system.

- They are considered as super-food for strengthening bones and fighting off painful and debilitating diseases like osteoporosis.

GRAPES

'Then We brought forth for you therewith gardens of date palms and grapes, wherein is much fruit for you, and whereof fruit you eat.' (Surat Al-Mu'minoon, Verse: 19)

Grapes are one of the most popular succulent fruits known to humans which have been cultivated in a wide geographical area since earliest of times. Countless varieties of it are made available in different shades of red, green and purple. Grapes are mentioned more than 10 times in the Noble Qur'an.

Health benefits of grapes

- Grapes are one of the best natural sources for glucose and sucrose constituting 20-25% of its content.
- They contain significant amount of minerals such as sodium, potassium, copper, iron and manganese.
- They are rich in vitamins and antioxidants such as lutein and zeaxanthin.
- They are used to treat asthma, bronchitis and coughing.
- They are used as a laxative food to overcome constipation.
- They are considered a natural medicine for liver, kidney and digestive system diseases.

- They are useful for counteracting physical and mental fatigue.
- They are used in the treatment of stomach ulcers, gastritis and joint inflammatory disorders.

OLIVES

‘And a tree (olive) that springs forth from Mount Sinai that grows oil, and (it is) relish for eaters.’ (Surat Al-Mu’minoan, Verse: 20)

Olives are ancient fruits cultivated in different regions although native to the Mediterranean region. This fruit is mentioned at least half a dozen times in the Noble Qur’an herein in one Surah Allah the Almighty has taken an oath by it and the fig which has increased its significance considerably.

Health benefits of Olives

- Olives and olive oil have high medical value.
- Olives contain significant amounts of plant-derived antioxidants, minerals, phytosterol and vitamins.
- They contain Mono-Unsaturated Fatty Acids (MUFA).
- They are a great source of Vitamin E and also rich in copper and iron.
- Olives help to reduce inflammation throughout the body and also defend against bacterial infections.
- Olives prevent bone loss and osteoporosis.
- Olives are linked to preventing heart

diseases.

POMEGRANATES

‘In them (both) will be fruits, and date palms and pomegranates.’ (Surat AL-Rahman, Verse: 68)

Pomegranate tree is native to South West Asia but is cultivated widely in tropical and sub-tropical areas. It is also an ancient delicious fruit which is considered sacred in many cultures of the world. It has been specifically mentioned thrice in different verse of the Noble Qur’an.

Health benefits of pomegranates

- Pomegranates are rich in potassium and many minerals such as phosphorus, calcium, iron and sodium.
- They contain Vitamins A, B2, B3 and C.
- They have high level of antioxidants called Flavonoids are known to fight against various cancer radicals.
- They are used in the treatment of diarrhea, earache, bad vision, fever and indigestion.
- They have anti-bacterial and anti-viral properties which help to reduce the effects of oral plaque and protect against various oral disorders.

FIGS

‘By the Fig and the Olive.’ (Surat AL-Teen, Verse: 1)

Figs are one of the earliest cultivations of humans. Though native to

Egypt and the Mediterranean regions, figs are naturalized in several parts of the world which have mild and semi-arid climate.

Although they are mentioned only once in the Noble Qur'an, they are considered of utmost significance as Allah the Almighty takes an oath by it and the olive in Surat At-Teen. Figs are sweet and juicy exotic fruits.

Health Benefits of Figs

- Fig is a highly nutritious fruit containing 60% of sugar with several inorganic salts, citric acid, and an enzyme ficin.
- It has a high concentration of soluble dietary fiber, which helps to promote healthy and regular bowel function and prevents constipation.
- Dried figs are an excellent source of minerals, vitamins and anti-oxidants.
- Figs are given as cure for piles and gout.
- They are effectively used in the treatment of small kidney and bladder stones.

BANANAS

'Among Talh (banana trees) with fruits piled one above another.'

(Surat Al-Waqi'ah, Verse: 29)

Bananas are extensively cultivated globally in many tropical and sub-tropical regions of the world with many different varieties available. It is mentioned only once (indirect reference) in the Noble Qur'an as a blessing for the people of Paradise.

Health Benefits of Bananas

- Banana is one of the most widely consumed fruits having a high nutritional content.
- It contains proteins, fats, carbohydrates, Vitamins B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B6 and C along with considerable amounts of potassium, magnesium and iron.
- It has significant amount of soluble dietary fiber and facilitates smooth bowel movement and also relieves constipation.
- It contains polyphenolic anti-oxidant, which stimulates proper functioning of the kidneys.
- Bananas are effective in the treatment of fever, digestive system disorders and cramps.
- They are also used to treat anemia and allergies.

Hence, it is concluded that these 'blessed fruits' mentioned in several verses of the Noble Qur'an are highly beneficial for our physical and spiritual well-being. These should be included in our daily diet regularly as much as possible in order to derive the divine blessings along with the medicinal benefits of them. The six fruits which are mentioned in the Noble Qur'an are truly a delight for the Muslims who thank Allah, the Most Glorified the Most High, for providing such treat in this world which will also be enjoyed more greatly and eternally in Paradise. ■

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