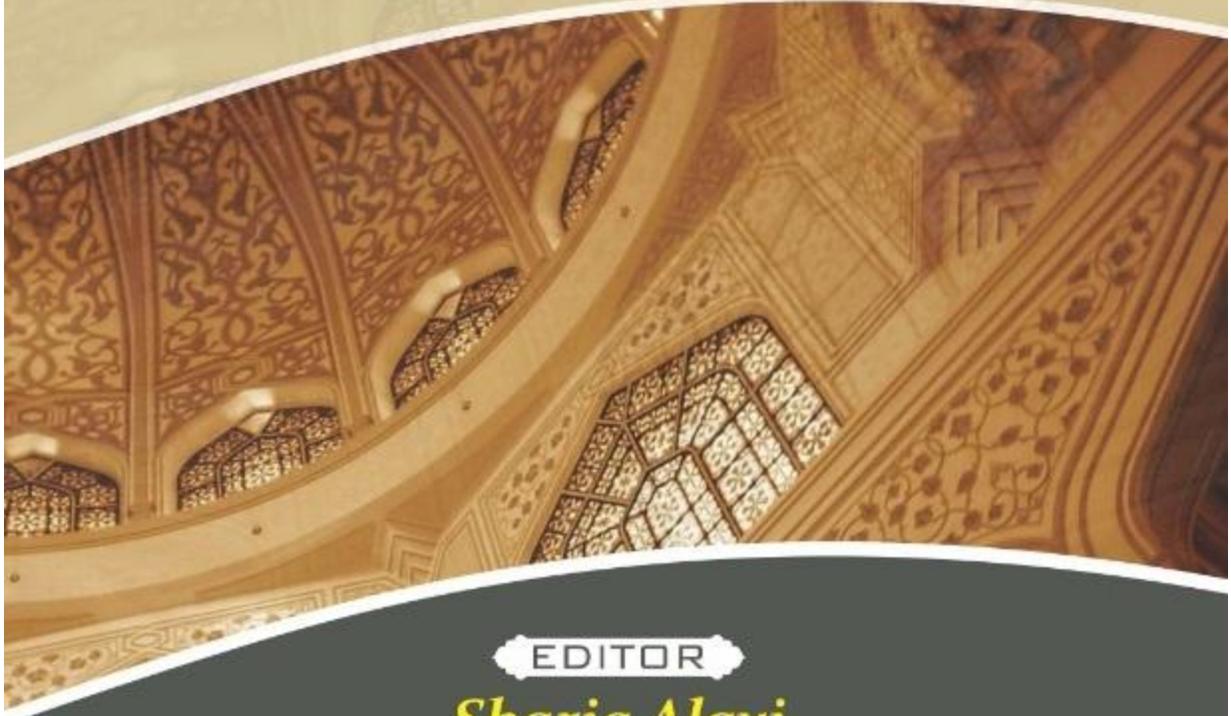


# THE FRAGRANCE OF EAST



EDITOR

*Shariq Alavi*

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## Prophethood: Its Nature And Necessity

**S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi**

A question arises here. If the tremendous space and innumerable creations contained therein are beyond human imagination, if all the trees and seven seas are inadequate to expound the wisdom and glory of God and if the infinite signs and commandments of the Lord are beyond the ken of human understanding, then how can man attain the knowledge of His excellence and His attributes, how can the mystery of life be solved and how is man to seek the path Divine guidance and righteousness? The prophets too are no more than mortals. We know that the knowledge of man is extremely limited and liable to commit mistakes. Then, how are we to place reliance on the teachings and wisdom of a prophet? The Surah reveals the answer to all these questions on behalf of the last Prophet of God.

“Say: I am only a mortal like you. My Lord inspireth in me that your God is only One God.”  
(Al-Kahf. 111)

This verse tells us that the only reliable source of God’s gnosis, the means to fathom the mystery of mysteries, as also the mark of honour and excellence of the prophets is the revelation vouchsafed to them. Man can never aspire to attain enduring success without placing reliance in the prophetic inspiration. This was the quintessence and central truth of prophethood expounded by the Prophet of Islam when he said: “I am only a mortal like you. My Lord inspireth in me that your God is only one God. ■

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

“Tell them: ‘Call upon those whom you fancy to be [your helpers] beside Him! They have no power to remove any affliction from you, nor can they shift it.’ Those whom they call upon are themselves seeking the means of access to their Lord, each trying to be nearer to Him. They crave for His mercy and dread His chastisement. Surely your Lord’s punishment is to be feared.”

***(Al-Qur'an-17:56-57)***

These verses throw a challenge to the unbelievers and polytheists to call upon their self-made deities whom they consider to be their helpers beside God to come to their rescue at times of affliction. They assert that these deities have no power to remove any affliction.

Not only prostrating oneself before someone other than God but also praying to and invoking anyone other than God amounts to associating others in His Divinity, i.e. to polytheism. Prayer and invocation are modes of worship and anyone who invokes someone other than God is as guilty of polytheism as an idol-worshipper.

Nor can anyone other than God avert a calamity or alter anyone’s plight. If someone entertains such beliefs about anyone other than God, then such beliefs are false and betray the fact that he associates others with God in His Divinity. How ironic that those whom the polytheists invoked and whom they sought to intercede with God on their behalf were themselves in need of God’s mercy, dreaded His punishment, and were constantly on the look-out for the means which would bring them close to Him. ■

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

It is reported on the authority of Ibn Abbas that Muadh said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) sent me (as governor of Yemen) and (at the time of departure) instructed me thus: you will soon find yourself in a community one among the People of the Book; so first call them to testify that there is no god but Allah, that I (Muhammad) am the messenger of Allah, and if they accept this, then tell them that Allah has enjoined upon them five prayers during the day and the night, and if they accept it, then tell them that Allah has made Zakat obligatory for them that it should be collected from the rich and distributed among the poor, and if they agree to it, don’t pick up (as a share of Zakat) the best of their wealth. Beware of the supplication of the oppressed for there is no barrier between him and Allah.

***(Sahih Muslim)***

The People of the Book never denied the existence of God. Their belief however was not correct as it was alloyed with wrong conceptions and mistaken notions. This shows that mere faith in God is not enough. Therefore, the Holy Messenger asked Muadh to call the People of the Book to testify God, first and foremost. Calling to the prophethood of Muhammad is indicative of the fact that belief in his prophethood is an integral part of the faith. This hadith highlights the practical wisdom with which Dawah should be imparted to the fellow beings. ■

*Editor's Note* 

## Beauty of Islam

The Creator of the universe laid down rules for its inhabitants for a peaceful and pious life. With the passage of time and increasing population God sent messengers (Prophets) to guide them and make them believe that they should not forget their Creator and follow the path which has been shown to them.

Moses came to guide the people on right path. After his demise his followers deviated from the path shown by him and made additions and deletions in book which he had left behind. Similarly Jesus Christ was born to make reforms as God wished. But when he was crucified his followers declared him as the son of God and forgot noble messages brought by him.

In the end God sent the last prophet Muhammad (PBH). He successfully spread the message of Creator and helped in establishing a pure and pious community. Since instructions of God sent through Muhammad (PBH) have been compiled in the Holy Quran no room was left for any omission or insertion in it and thus Islam was spread smoothly. There are beauties in this religion. They are beyond what pens can fully right and enough expressions cannot be found to describe the virtues of this religion; because it is the religion of Allah. Just as the eye cannot encompass the perception of Allah and man cannot encompass His Reality on Knowledge, so can the pen not encompass His law in description. Ibn Al-Qayyim said, "If you reflect on the dazzling wisdom in this Upright Religion, this pure faith and the Law enacted for mankind which no expression can perfectly describe, whose description cannot be perfected, the likeness of which wisdom of the wise cannot propose - even if all wise men are to be as perfectly

wise as the wisest one among them, who's beauty and virtues are perceived and attested to by the perfect and honourable intelligence, that the world had not known a law better and greater than it even if the messenger of Allah had not brought any proof in support of it, all that would have been enough an evidence that it is from Allah. Every aspect of this religion shows perfect knowledge, perfect wisdom, expensiveness of mercy, righteousness and kindness, absolute inclusion of all that is hidden and manifest and the knowledge about the beginnings and ends. It also shows that it is one of the greatest favours that Allah has bestowed on His slaves, for He bestows not on them a favour greater than the fact that He guided them to this religion, made them its adherents and chosen it for them. Hence reminds His slaves of the fact that He guided them to it. He says,

“Indeed, Allah conferred a great favour on the believers when He sent among them Messenger (Mohammad) from among themselves reciting unto them His Verse (the Quran), purifying them and instructing them in the Book and the wisdom (the Sunnah) while before that they had been in manifest error.”

He also says, making Himself known to His slaves and reminding them of His great favour on them, calling them to thank Him for making them among its adherents,

“This day I have perfected your religion for you.”

It is therefore part of showing gratitude to Allah on this religion. ■

**S.A.**

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e-mail: shariq\_alavi@yahoo.com  
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## Some Outstanding Muslim Personalities

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

### Intrinsic Strength

The appearance, from time to time, among a people of personalities that are endowed with exceptional abilities in the different branches of human endeavour is a proof of its intrinsic strength and creative vitality. It shows that the sources of its thought and action have not yet run dry, that its spirit is alive and it has not forfeited its right to existence with honour and dignity in the world. The Indian Muslims have reason to be proud of themselves in this respect. They have remained well-supplied with their share of outstanding men who have risen gloriously above the common level in their respective spheres of living and doing.

### Exodus of Muslims Following Tartar Invasion

As soon as the foundations of a strong and enlightened Muslim Kingdom were laid in India in the 12th Century, learned men and artists and skilled craftsmen had started to assemble under its benevolent shadow from all parts of the Islamic World. A tremendous impetus was given to this exodus by the Tartar invasion of the Muslim East. The Tartars had laid desolate the entire Islamic Empire, but their wrath had fallen most ferociously on its capital, Baghdad, and on its other important centres of learning and culture. The result was that the process of migration was greatly speeded up from the

cities that had fallen a victim to the ruthless barbarism of the Tartar and the Mongol hordes. Educated and aristocratic families fled from one country to another in search of peace and security against the uncivilised invaders.

At that time India was under the rule of monarchs belonging to what is known in history as the Slave Dynasty—a dynasty of Turkish slaves—and it stood out to be the only country that could finally hold at bay the savage attackers by repelling successfully their repeated inroads. Consequently, a large number of enlightened, high-class families of Iran and Afghanistan abandoned their homes and took refuge in India stretch of time. Innumerable noblemen who for generations had been distinguished for high respect, learning and cultural refinement and were holding positions of honour and trust in their countries came here to settle permanently, particularly during the reigns of Shamsuddin, Il-tutmish, Ghayasuddin Balban and Alauddin Khilji. Discussing this huge exodus, and its causes, the noted historian, Ziauddin Barni, writes, “All these families of respected noblemen, accomplished scholars and exalted spiritual leaders left their homes and wended their way towards India as a result of the invasions by the Mongols and by Chengiz Khan. Princes of the blood, experienced generals, celebrated teachers, learned

jurists and illustrious religious and spiritual masters were included among the migrants “.

From these families and the families of Indian origin which came into the fold of Islam through their efforts there sprang up a steady stream of spiritual and intellectual luminaries, administrators, statesmen, army generals and conquerors. Among them some were blessed with such uncommon greatness that they can legitimately be a source of pride and honour to the entire Muslim World.

### **Great Monarchs**

Take Sher Shah Suri. When one considers his gigantic undertakings for public welfare, the mighty development plans he put through successfully, his splendid administrative achievements, his revolutionary judicial reforms, and weighs them against the fact that his rule extended over a bare five years, one becomes convinced automatically of the unique versatility and brilliance of this genius among kings. Some of his attainments during that brief span of time were so strikingly marvelous that many a well-established government would find it hard to accomplish them during much longer periods of time. Sher Shah, indeed, was one of the greatest rulers the world has yet seen.

“Without a doubt “, says Marshman Clarke, “ Sher Shah was a most wise, kind-hearted and sagacious person. He was as accomplished an administrator as he is famous as a soldier. Though he got

little respite from the wars he reformed every branch of administration and made it perfect. The laws and regulations enacted by him continued to be in force even after his death till Akbar adopted them as models for his administrative reforms which later became known as Ain-i-Akbari.

Then there is Akbar. Whatever the difference between the teachings of Islam and his religious views and the Din-i-Ilahi which he founded, and however much may a Muslim historian grieve at the intemperate developments that took place during the later part of his reign, it goes without saying that judged by his high-mindedness, his legislative and administrative ability his conquests and annexations, and his natural knack for leadership and the splendid patronage he extended to arts and learning, he was a magnificent ruler and empire-builder.

Aurangzeb’s equal also will not be easily found in history. His excellent virtues of mind and character, his eventful life loaded with destiny, half-a-century of continuous warfare and incessant struggle, his enormous conquests and far-reaching reforms, his simple, ascetic life, his matchless courage, fortitude and determination, the strict regularity of his hours the management of a vast, sprawling empire, the direct personal command of armies in the battlefield, even in old age, the zealous observance of the obligatory as well as the supererogatory prayers, and his unceasing love for learning and study in spite of extreme occupation mark him out as a man and

an emperor of a class by himself. He was a man of steel who knew not what fear, indecision or despair was. He is sure to walk in his own right, into any list that may be prepared impartially and with a due sense of responsibility of great men of all times.

Similarly, what a sublime picture of saintliness and scholarship does the life of Sultan Muzaffar Halim of Gujerat (died, 1525) present! His faith and earnestness, his piety and moral excellence, integrity and self-denial, religious enthusiasm and high-mindedness and his prodigious scholarship can scarcely be found even in those who have nothing to do with kingship and statecraft and spend their lives exclusively in religious and literary pursuits. The following incident illustrating the loftiness of his character and his utter, over-whelming unselfishness will always be remembered in the annals of imperial exploits, wars and conquests.

“For a hundred years” says a historian of Gujerat, “the rulers of Malwa had tried in vain to make war on Gujerat. But when Mahmud Shah II of Malwa was deposed by his minister, Mandli Rai, and the rites of Islam there began to be wantonly outraged, the religious pride of Muzaffar Shah, the king of Gujerat, was stirred. Setting out with a powerful army, he covered the distance to Malwa with the utmost speed and besieged its fort. Realising that he was no match for the besieging force, Mandli Rai begged Rana Sanga to come to his aid. But before Rana Sanga could advance as far as Sarangpur,

Muzaffar Shah dispatched a detachment of his valiant army to deal with him. Soon the fort of Malwa fell.

“The sum and substance of the story is that when Muzaffar Shah entered the fort and the chiefs of his escort beheld the enormous wealth the rulers of Malwa had amassed in it and heard accounts of the richness of the land, they ventured to suggest in his presence that since 2,000 of their horsemen had been killed in the fighting, it would not be wise to restore the kingdom back to the ruler, who owing to his incompetence, had lost it to his minister. As soon as Muzaffar Shah had heard it, he cut short the round of inspection and came out of the fort, instructing Mahmud Shah not to allow any member of his party into the fort. The latter entreated him to stay on for a few days more, but he firmly declined. Explaining his action on a later occasion, Mahmud Shah said, ‘ I had waged that war simply for the sake of earning the pleasure of God. When I heard the conversation of the chiefs, I became apprehensive lest some unwholesome desire should crop up in my heart to ruin the sincerity of my act. I have not done any favour to Mahmud Shah. On the contrary I feel indebted to him for it was through him that I was given the opportunity of doing a noble deed”

As for his deep learning and passionate devotion to the theological sciences and the Traditions of the Prophet, it will suffice here to reproduce the following words from the ‘ public acknowledgement of boons conferred on

him by God,' he made a short while before his death.

"By the grace of God," he said, "in addition to knowing the Quran by heart, I have a full command over the points of law and precepts arising out of every verse of it, the occasion of its revelation and the method of its recitation. I remember by heart all the Traditions of the Prophet — their texts, references, the antecedents of their narrators and everything. I possess such knowledge of Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence) that I hope to bear testimony to the veracity of the Prophet's words that: 'For whom God makes a decision of virtue, He makes them the jurists of His faith'.

"I have now been engaged for some time in the purification of the self after the system of the Sufis and aspire for their blessings on the strength of the dictum that, 'he who makes himself resemble a people (ultimately) becomes one of them'. I have read the Tafseer Ma'alimul-Tanzeel once. I am now revising it and have finished about half of it. I hope to complete it in heaven".

As death approached, the following prayer of Prophet Yusuf was on his lips:

"O my Lord, Thou hast given me (something) of sovereignty and hath taught me (something) of the interpretation of events—Creator of the heavens and the earth, Thou art my Protecting Friend in the world and the Hereafter. Make me die submissive (unto Thee), and join me to the

righteous"

—(Quran : XII, 101)

### **Statesmen**

Cutting short the story of kings and emperors, we will take up now the lives and attainments or some unusually talented ministers and statesmen. The first name to command notice in this connection is that of Imaduddin Gilani alias Mahmud Gawan (died, 1481) who besides being an administrator and statesman of exceptional brilliance was also a man of profound learning and a noted writer of his time. It seems as if he combined in himself the goodness and greatness of both the worlds—temporal as well as the spiritual. His fame had spread to distant lands like Iran, Arabia and Turkestan. He was without a peer where devoutness and piety and administrative acumen were concerned.

The life of Abul Qasim Abdul Aziz Gujerati (died; 1515) , who is famous by the name of Asaf Khan, Minister of Gujerat, presents another astounding picture of composite excellence and versatility. Allama Shahabuddin Ibn-i-Hajar El-Makki, the most important Arabian scholar of that time, wrote a book on him in which he paid glowing tributes to his high learning and spiritual merit. In it he says, "A peculiar glow had come over Mecca during the period of Asaf Khan's stay over there. The wise and the learned considered it a privilege to converse with him. There was a great fostering of learning....."

Several panegyrics were written in his praise by the poets of Arabia. There is

also a mournful elegy by distinguished Arab poet on his death.

The renowned Mughal commander-in-chief, Abdul Rahim Khan-Khanan wrote exquisite poems in Persian, Arabic and Hindi, apart from being a literary critic of a high order. He was equally proficient with the pen and the sword and was also an excellent linguist. An unimpeachable historian says of him:

“His intelligence and sagacity, his magnanimity and high mindedness, his liberality and munificence were beyond words. He was excessively fond of poetry and literature, and was a voracious reader, particularly of historical books. He admired greatly the company of men of learning and excellence and shunned the society of those who were otherwise. His life was one of piety and rigid self-discipline. He loved to do magnanimous deeds and things that were outside the pale of pettiness. He was such a versatile person and in him there was an assemblage of such diverse virtues that the like of him cannot be found far and wide in the world and over long stretches of time in history”.

In the same way, Abdul Razzaq Khawafi has observed In Ma’asr-ul-Umara that “Abdul Rahim Khan stands unrivalled among his contemporaries for courage and generosity. He enjoyed mastery over Persian, Arabic and Hindi. He could converse freely and compose beautiful verses in all the three languages.”

Abdul Rahim Khan was a celebrated Hindi poet. He still commands a distinguished place in Hindi poetry. He was among the front-rank poets in Persian also but his wealth and the many-sided splendour of his genius cast a veil over the quality of his Persian poetry. Had he made it the vehicle of his fame or chosen it for the display of his talents, he would, surely, have risen to as high an eminence as any of the Iranian poets of his Court with whose songs the mansion of Persian poetry is still resounding majestically.

Abul Fazl and Fyzee were the choicest glories of the court of Akbar. Irrespective of their religious and spiritual views and conduct and the harm they did thereby to the cause of Islam in India, they were without a doubt among the most outstanding men of their time not only in India but the whole literary world. Both of them were gifted with exceptional mental faculties, with a rare love for learning and an extraordinary poetic and literary taste and aptitude. Fyzee deserves a place among the all-time masters of Iran for his Persian poetry, while Abul Fazl’s Ain-i-Akbari and Akbar Nama are marvels of knowledge and wisdom and observation and analysis. Says Carra de Vaux of Akbar Nama:

“Akbar Nama is an extraordinary literary work; it is overflowing with life, ideas and facts. A study of it reveals that all the fields of human existence have been thoroughly examined and the conclusions thus reached have been critically arranged and analysed. The

eyes are dazzled by the continuous evolution of ideas it contains. It is a literary document of which the entire oriental civilization can be proud. The persons whose mighty intellects have introduced through this voluminous book seem to be far ahead of their age in administration and state-craft, and not only in administration and state-craft but religious philosophy as well. Those poets and thinkers saw the material world with a highly penetrating eye. They were given to observe everything Very deeply and to preserve in their minds what they saw. They used to experience everything personally and to examine their own views and notions against the background of facts. On the one hand, their mode of expression was rich and eloquent, and, on the other, they supported and fortified their statements with facts and figures.”

### **Solitary Exception**

A sort of intellectual stagnation had come over the Muslim World after the Mongol invasion. Minds had become sterile and blindly imitative. Intellectual activity was brought almost to a standstill. The picture of degeneration became complete with the approach of the 14th century when lethargy and inertia crept also into the other branches of life. With a few exceptions, like Ibn-i-Khaldun, the Islamic World could not produce anyone during the period under review who was above the general level of mediocrity. But India, on account of its physical remoteness from the scene, managed

comparatively to escape from the ravages of the decay. The Tartars who had descended upon the World of Islam like a terrible curse, spelling ruin and destruction wherever they went, could not spread their tentacles fully over India because of its geographical isolation. Consequently, a major proportion of the finest brains of the Muslim World had sought safety by migrating to India and settling down here as permanent citizens. Because of them intellectual activity here was kept going for a considerable length of time, brisk endeavours continued to be in evidence in the literary field, and men of learning and wisdom did not cease to come forward as can rightfully be ranked among the foremost thinkers and scholars of Islam. One discovers, for example, in the writings of Sheikh Sharafuddin Yahya Maneri (died, 1370), Sheikh-ul-Islam Shah Waliullah Dehlavi (died, 1762), Shah Rafiuddin Dehlavi (died, 1817) and Shah Ismail Shaheed Dehlavi (died, 1830) new literary values and original modes of thinking that are generally absent from the works of their contemporaries in the other parts of the Muslim World.

### **Reform and Renovation**

Owing to various natural and historical factors, which we propose to discuss in the third volume of our ‘History of Religious Preaching and Endeavour’, India had come to be the nerve-centre of religious and spiritual correction and reform during the declining phase of Islamic supremacy. Proselytizing and reformationist activities made such an

advance in India that many other countries were also duly influenced by them. Religious preachers and renovators were born here who on the strength of their earnestness, learning and popularity, the effectiveness of their appeal and the great number of people who profited by their efforts and by their natural harmony with the real spirit of Islam and its call constituted the choicest examples of Islamic missionaries and reformers.

The most elevated among these religious guides and redeemers was Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi (died, 1624) upon whom men of vision and understanding have conferred the title of Mujaddid Alf-i-Sani (the Renovator of the Second Millennium). It was he who renewed and strengthened the bond of Indian Muslims with Islam and saved the Shariat from being corrupted by innovations and by the apostasy of the extremist Sufis, inclined openly as they were, towards the pantheistic doctrine of Wahdat-ul-Wajood (God is everything and everything is God). It was he, again, who rescued the Mughal Empire from the whirlpool of irreligiousness in which it had got caught, and put a check on the highly dangerous movement for the unity and amalgamation of faiths, as well as on the revival of Brahmanism; the great devotee of God and indefatigable crusader in His cause, Aurangzeb, himself being a product of his mighty struggle. The Sufistic Order founded by him still endures, besides India, in countries like Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Kurdistan and Syria. The popularity this Order acquired through the efforts of his

disciple, Allama Khalid Shahrazori Kurdi (died, 1826) in Arabia, Kurdistan, Syria and Turkey has not come the way of any other Sufi System.

Then there was Syed Ahmad Shaheed who so splendidly reawakened the spirit of Jihad among the Muslims. He aroused them to make heroic sacrifices for the victory of the faith and the establishment of a truly Islamic government on the lines of Khilafat-i-Rashida '. As a result of his struggle, a wave of true religiousness and righteous-living swept over the Muslims, or, in other words, a gust of wind belonging to the early decades of Islam blew in breathing a new life of faith and endeavour into the dead body of the Indian part of the Millet. He had endowed his followers with a rare religious devotion and enthusiasm. The religious steadfastness, scrupulous observance of the Shariat and the ardent zeal for Jihad they displayed were simply unique. Writes Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan of Syed Ahmad Shaheed and the splendid men he had collected around himself:

“..... the gist of the matter is that a man of his stature has not been heard of in the current age in any part of the world, nor has a fraction of what his haloed band has done for the Muslims been achieved by any of the contemporary religious teachers or divines”.

In the modern times, India has once again become the centre of Islamic propagation and reform. It began under the inspired leadership of Maulana

Mohammad Ilyas of Delhi (died, 1943) — and we must confess that throughout our travels in Muslim countries we have not had the experience of coming across a more staunch and fervent preacher of Islam than him. His special distinction lay in his absolute reliance in God and total dedication to the cause of Islamic revival and resurgence. The missionary movement founded by the Maulana is now actively at work in all parts of the Muslim World and parties of preachers are sent out regularly even to far-off lands like the United States, the European countries and Japan. This movement has succeeded in howsoever small a measure in warming up again the frozen furnaces of the hearts of Muslims by rekindling in them the sublime flame of faith.

These are but a handful of instances of men of endeavour, faith and learning that arose from among the Indian Muslims to leave an indelible mark on the ' Sands of Time '. The eight volumes of Nuzhat-ul-Khawahir contain an account of 5,000 Muslims of confirmed excellence in various walks of life who sprang from the Indian dust. It shows how inexhaustible, indeed, is the capacity of this land of ours to throw up sons of exceptional ability and calibre in all branches of human activity.

The sapling of Islam which the early Muslims had planted on the Indian soil with their hands and nourished with their life-blood is still in bloom. The Indian Muslims have during all the stages of their career produced such exalted personalities as have been the envy of the world. Even

under the British regime, where a deliberate policy was pursued to liquidate them intellectually and economically, they did not stop sending forth eminent legists, administrators, mathematicians and educationists and such brilliant masters of the English language whose proficiency and skill was acknowledged by the Englishmen themselves.

The Indian Muslims have produced world-class leaders, legislators, debaters and orators. The fame of their thinkers and poets has travelled to Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey and their works have been translated into a number of foreign languages, particularly of Muslim countries.

Throughout, they have also held dear, in their hearts the Arab culture and civilization and made their own contribution to it. Judging from the prevailing trends, it would seem that a new mode of thought and expression will soon get evolved in Arabic literature under the influence of Indian writers which will be richly representative of both literary and spiritual values.

The glorious past of Indian Muslims holds for them the guarantee for the future. Passing though they, at present, are through the most critical phase of their history, the Muslims of India do not lack the ability to live and they are also determined to ensure for themselves an honourable place in the Indian sun. Their personality is indestructible; it is touched with eternity.■

## Building Up The Islamic Society

- S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi\*

Owing to Madinah Munawwarah getting taken up as his abode by the Prophet (SAW), it was not only the Prophet's mosque that had assumed importance but the entire city of Madinah Munawwarah, too, had earned prominence for this very reason. Was here that the matters and affairs related to Muslims started getting conducted from. Settlement of all their issues related to their religious and social life would be made from here and the instructions in their respect would get issued from here. And, thus, the stage got set for the promulgation of Islamic practical order Divine instructions regarding religious, social and moral issues started being received. And, since, the Islamic Shariat was not culminated and climaxed with the arrival of the previous Prophets and that was now going to take place with the arrival of the Prophet Mohammad (SAW), instructions regarding the vast range of various and diverse situations in life started, gradually, coming in, in order to have it perfected and culminated and to make it comprehensive and all-encompassing. Issues such as specification of prayers to be offered, fasts to be observed, method and terms of Azan, proscription of gambling and drinking got finalized. Instructions

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\* Rector, Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow.

regarding various aspects of life, whether within the individual sphere of life or within the sphere of collectivity, also started coming in. Intended, on the one hand, to bring reform to these aspects, full consideration was had in these instructions of convenience and ease, also. In addition, instructions regarding friendship with the friends, compliance with the pacts made with allies, assent to combat the intruders, being considerate to the commonweal of the humanity, mutual relations amongst the believers themselves and whatever issues could there get cropped up, kept, gradually and as and when the situation demanded, being issued. These instructions would be received through the verses of the holy Quran as well as various other modes of Revelation made to him (SAW). Thus, all the instructions pertaining to life, in accordance with whatever the demands of the prevailing situations and circumstances were, would be received. Thanks to this manner of having the instructions received, their practical paradigms, too, used to be got demonstrated to them. These instructions were not thus given merely in their conceptual form. Instead, they were kept being expounded by means of practical illustrations as well. Muslims would put them into practice and have them inculcated into minds and

committed to their memories. They were later got preserved in tomes so that whenever and wherever situations similar to theirs would exist in future lives of Muslims they could be applied to them. And, thus, Islam qua religion-cum-Shariat par excellence and perfect, all-around and all-inclusive got preserved for fulfilling the future needs, too, of the Muslims.

**Suffah and the people of Suffah:**

Subsequent to diversion of Qibla, when the Prophet's mosque got diverted towards Baitullah, the wall of the mosque on the side of the first Qibla and the space adjacent to it, that was in the shape of a platform, got reserved for accommodating those members of the Muslim community who wanted to come over and reside there for getting acquainted with, and learning from the Prophet (SAW), matters regarding the religion. Hence, the people started staying there. The board for them was arranged by the Prophet (SAW) himself like he did for his family members. And the Prophet (SAW), magnanimous that he was and owing to the wont that he had of going all-out to help the poor, would get himself, off and on, into great distress. Situation would, sometimes, come to such a pass as would leave no recourse but to put up with hunger and starvation. But he (SAW) would endure all that. The number of these theology students would sometimes go up to as high as seventy. But, that was how a

team of people well-versed ill religion got prepared. This place where these people used to be put up was known by the name of Suffah. It is this Suffah which happened to be the first ever Madrasah in Islam. It proved to be the first ever Madrasah instituted not amongst the Muslims only but amongst the Arabs also. It was given the name of Suffah, that is: platform or podium. It is from this very place that the incessant trend of acquiring knowledge of religious affairs and Islamic injunctions imparted by the Prophet (SAW) had gotten initiated. Subsequently, the Islamic Madrasahs kept on coming up and getting established all over the world.

**Patience and Endurance in Serving the Cause of the Islamic Mission:**

The persecution that the Prophet (SAW) and his followers had suffered during the life in Makkah, was in fact inflicted upon them by their own kinsfolk and compatriots. Being, as they did, generally from the same stock of family the former were not inferior to the latter in valour, fervour and sense of honor. Had they wanted, they could have taken, to avenge themselves, such measures as would have robbed them of their rest and repose. Day and night, whenever they found an opportunity, they could have taken revenge from them. But, they were bound under the command that they should keep themselves confined

*(Continued on page 26)*

## Islam – The Banner Holder Of Peace And Security

-Saeedur Rahman Azami Nadwi\*

The primary importance man gives to things in his life, and priority over all his other needs, peace and security tops that list, because everyone desires to pass his life peacefully and safely, far from dangers. He desires to keep away from everything that disturbs the pleasures of life and plunge life in restlessness, anxiety, painfulness and sorrow. Allah, the Most Exalted, taking care of its importance in human life has given the glad tidings that whoever per severely adheres to the faith (Eiman) and obedience of Allah, and adopts the Shariah law as his code of conduct and seeks His pleasure, as his objective of life, then he will have neither fear nor grief. There is no doubt that peace and security, peace of the heart and tranquility are the greatest blessings of the world. Because of it, a man of faith, remains happy and satisfied in his worldly life; a wealthy man with his riches; a poor man in his poverty; a sick man in his sickness; and healthy man in his good health, thanks Allah.

The religion of Islam does not, only, give surety and glad tidings of the success in the Hereafter but guarantees

peace of mind and satisfaction of heart in the world. The virtue of Islam is self-evident from its name which is derived from the word 'peace'. So, it becomes the second virtue of Muslim to feel extremely disgusted against those who hold the banner of peace and harmony, but in fact, they are opposed to the meaning of peace and harmony. In fact, Allah has declared Islam only as the last and ultimate religion and made it a guarantee of peace and security, tranquility and satisfaction; and created in it a solution of all issues and problems. As Allah, the Most Exalted has declared that, if anyone professes any other religion, it will never be accepted. Therefore a Muslim will keep aloof from such adverse conditions which may destroy his peace and security and tend to disturb his peace and calm. This clarifies that it is necessary for every Muslim to adopt the religion, fully, to pass his life with peace and calm, and do not give up, even a trifling little thing, in any condition. Allah, the Most Exalted, repeatedly and in different ways, exhorts His servants to enter Islam completely, and to save themselves from carnal desires, following Satan and keeping away from him because he is the open enemy of

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humans. He is always desiring and striving, to make Muslims go astray, from the straight path, get inclined towards carnal desires, and go away from faith and a virtuous actions.

Allah, the most Exalted, says in the Qur'an: 'O believers! Enter into Islam completely and do not follow the footsteps of Shaitan, surely, he is your open enemy". (2:208)

Islam is the name of submitting entirely and surrendering to Allah and entering into the obedience of Allah and His Prophet. After this, a Muslim gets into safety and security of Allah and becomes entitled to His Love, Affection, Abundance and Mercies in this world and the Hereafter. And after establishing a strong and sincere connection with Him becomes prosperous, gets graciousness of being connected with this faith (Shariah) which Allah, the Most Exalted, has sent it down as permanent and applicable till the end of the world, as the way of life. Society's attachment with this divine law, individually and collectively, makes human life prosperous. A strong and powerful does not have the courage to commit oppression on a weak person nor dares the large fish to devour the small fish.

How much -Islam is anxious to cleanse the society of evils, can be

estimated from the saying of the Prophet of Allah (PBUH) that, "You cannot enter paradise until you become a true believer (Muslim) and you cannot become a true believer until you love one another. Shouldn't I tell you one thing, that when you practice it, you begin to love one another and it is, make Salaam common among yourselves" In another narrative, he said, "O people! Make salaam common, feed people, treat your relatives kindly and offer prayers at a time when other people are asleep, in order that you enter paradise safely. "

In short Islam is the name of safety, love and affection and social interaction. But a Muslim's entire life has departed from Islam. Then, can he have a life of peace, love and safety and how can he present the model of a body where entire body gets affected, if one organ becomes painful?

We should do reckoning of ourselves whether our actions conform to Islam or not? How different is our thinking with Islam? Is our society Islamic or un-Islamic; do the rituals popular in our society conform to Islam or not? And do we patiently think about it? Allah, the Most Exalted, is well aware of the deceitfulness in the eyes and the hidden secrets of the hearts! ■

## Education – The Key to Success

- Mohd. Hamza Hasani Nadwi\*

Muslims as a nation are victims of decline in every spheres of life due to lack of interest and inclination to education. Though some Muslims go ahead but they can be counted on fingers. In a big city or small one, towns or rural areas it is observed, that only 10 or 15 percent Muslims are educated. The condition of towns and rural areas are quite pathetic. If there are no Madaris or schools, situation is worse. In comparison to we find other communities are more advanced. If we pass by near rural areas, we find a good number of school going children but the ratio of Muslim children are meager. We can see them making animals grazing in the fields and meadows and we feel sorry. Under these circumstances to hope that Muslim community will make progress, is just living in fool's Paradise.

Our leaders whether religious or secular pay scant attention towards education. They do not regard it necessary to make arrangements for primary education. Their full attention is to set up higher seats of learning like

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medical and engineering colleges.

It is imperative to ponder over it that what is the benefit of Muslims by establishing such modern institutions. How many Muslim children can study there? After a huge amount of donation one can get admission in these institutions. No consideration is done with Muslims. In such a situation Muslims gain no benefit from their own established institutions. One may easily take admission by giving quite amount of donation in any institution of the country.

The second point is that if there are not primary and secondary seats of learning how Muslim children will access to the higher educational institutions.

The need of the hour is that trustees of these higher educational seats of learning should also set up such institutions for poor and downtrodden Muslim children where they may quench their thirst of knowledge free of cost. ■

“Take warning, then, o ye with eyes to see.”

*(English rendering by Obaidur  
Rahman Nadwi)*

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## Education And Culture

- S. Habibul Haque Nadwi

Education bears relation to the social system in which and for which it is carried out. It is only within a particular social system that a system of education has any meaning. Before considering how to educate, it is good to be clear as to the sort of result we wish to achieve. We must have some conception of the kind of person we wish to produce. Modern education is losing sight of the Divine purpose of education because we have vague ideas about the kind of society God wishes us to be.

If we have a clear idea of a society, then we have a right to evolve what is useful for the development and maintenance of that society and discourage what is obnoxious and destructive. For example, Russian Communism is an ideology or a society. The elite of this society educate their children in the tenets of their ideology, and propagate their social system through their educational institutions. Their educational policy aims at the propagation of communist system of life and culture.

“The Education we desire for our children,” says, Mr. Bertrand Russell in his book ‘On Education,’ must depend upon our ideals of human character, and our hopes as to the part they are to play in the community. A pacifist will never desire for his children the education which seems good to a militarist, the educational outlook

of a communist will not be the same as that of an individualist. To come to a more fundamental cleavage, there can be no agreement between those who regard education as a means of instilling certain definite beliefs and those who think that it should produce the power of independent judgement.”

Education is, no doubt, the process by which the community attempts to pass on all its members its culture. Culture is composed of various elements it runs from rudimentary knowledge to the interpretation of the universe, service to humanity, sense of moral discipline, tolerance and forbearance, equality of treatment and opportunities, patronage of learning, freedom of thought and action, universal brotherhood, and other benefits of religion constitute a sound and healthy culture.

### Religion and Culture

Culture consists of ideas and ideals. It is based on the attitude of the group or class of the society towards the philosophy of life, which may be either secular or religious. All historic cultures have deep relations and intimacy with religion. No great culture has spread or developed without religion.

The main culture tradition of Europe has been that of the Church of Rome. Western tradition is drawn from Latin which is the language of Rome. The

maintenance of English culture, therefore, is contingent upon the cultural state of Latin Europe. So, too, is the case with other great cultures of the world, i.e. Buddhism, Judaism and Islam. They have their own distinctive cultures. The state of these cultures also depends upon the state of their religions.

### **Definition of Culture**

Culture has been variously defined. In August 1955, the text of the draft covenant for the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) was published. The purpose of this organisation was stated in Article 1, and was defined as “to develop and maintain mutual, understanding and an appreciation of Life and Culture, the arts, the humanities, and the sciences of the people of the world, as a basis for collective international organisation and world peace.

Here, the words, “appreciation of life and culture” are significant. This appreciation may, of course, vary according to the variation of the philosophy or interpretation of life. There are only two hypotheses about life: the religious and the secular. According to religion, no sphere of life is beyond the control of moral values. Life and culture, arts, humanities and sciences all are appreciated in an ethical society, provided they fulfil the will of God. The theory of education is also governed by the same law. Thus the problem becomes a religious one. But it does not mean that education should be confined to the priesthood or to the higher

Strata of society. It simply means that the whole educational system should be suited to the genius of a particular culture, in which and for which education is carried out.

Islamic culture has a definite genius and a particular tendency. Thus the educational system of Islamic society should also be compatible to its own temperament. In a message to the “All Pakistan Educational Conference held in Karachi on November 27, 1947, Qaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah said:

“We must earnestly tackle this question (education) and bring our educational policy and programme on the lines suited to the genius of our Muslim people consonant with our history and culture.”

In an address at the Islamia College for women, he again said:

“Many impurities and un-Islamic things have crept into Islamic society and it is the task of the Muslim educational institutions to educate their children on right lines, with a view to enabling them to live the Islamic life.....”

These statements sufficiently elaborate on the whole educational policy of a Muslim society. But what this Muslim society essentially needs further clarification.

### **Islamic Culture:**

Culture, as aforesaid, permeates

the life of the individual as well as of society. It includes, on the one hand, the whole of man's material civilization, and on the other, his entire spiritual civilization. In this sense it includes not only food, clothes, houses, machines and means of communication and transport, but also religion, morality, Law, philosophy, arts, science, government and education.

Some critics have questioned the existence of Islamic culture, or regarded it as the manifestation of Greek and Roman cultures or their renovation. Islamic culture, no doubt; has been influenced in many ways by other cultures. But it does not mean that it has no distinctive basis. If culture consists of ideas and ideals, as mentioned above, then Islamic culture is original and it, owes its existence neither to Greco-Roman traditions, nor to the cultural heritage of Iran or India. The edifice of Islamic culture is raised on the concept of 'Taw'hid', that God alone can be the object of submission and worship. It lays stress on the fact that man has both body and soul which need proper care and guidance for their development. The task of Islamic culture, therefore is to harmonise the spiritual and material ideas of man. It does not emphasise only one at the cost of the other, as is happening with the contemporary culture.

"The culture of Islam, says Marmaduke- Pickthal "aimed not at beautifying and refining the accessories of human life. It aimed at beautifying and exalting human life itself ..."

Professor Gibb had to acknowledge:

"Islam is indeed much more than a system of theology. It is a complete civilization. It includes a whole of complex culture ... culture with distinctive features in political, social and economic structure, -in its conception of law, in ethical outlook intellectual tendencies, habits of thought and action ...."

Islamic culture, therefore, differs in spirit with other cultures of the world and this difference leads to a different educational system in an Islamic society or republic, a system consonant with the genius of Muslim people. Any other culture imposed on Muslim nation will result in utter social and political chaos, as is happening today in most of the Muslim countries, where alien cultures enjoy greater ascendancy than a culture of their own. Even in the past such cultural anarchy had enveloped the souls of Muslims in the Islamic lands under the colonialists.

A cursory glance at the whole cultural and educational policy of the British in India reveals the fact that their policy was never designed to elevate or sublimate the native culture. On the contrary, their policy was destined to raise the edifice of western culture on the ruins of the cultural traditions of the Muslims. The British had devised the system of education to suit their own ends and to create a class of bureaucrats to fit in the administrative hierarchy and to serve as the machinery of their regime.

The famous (1) “Educational Dispatch” (1854), (2) The Report of the Hunter Commission” (1882), (3) The University Act (1904), (4) The Establishment of the Department of Education (1910), (5) The Sadler Commission (1919), (6) The Advisory Board of Education (1920) and (7) the Inter-University Board of India (1925) - all were primarily designed to advocate the greater official control on education, so that the minds could be prepared for the acceptance of western culture.

Such efforts of the British Government gave rise to the suspicion that under the pretext of educational development and reform, the Government was handing over the control of Universities to European officials and missionaries with a view to obliterating oriental faith and culture.

This policy of the British Government created great unrest in India. Revivalist movements launched their activities in the country. Muslims, after the downfall of the Mughals, had suffered despair and frustration which had bred inactivity and demoralization. Shah Wali Allah (at Delhi 1703)—the reformer, tried to deepen the religious consciousness of Muslims. He gave stimulus to the religious and cultural reforms of the Muslims in India. ‘Allama ‘Iqbal, Hali and Akbar also endeavoured to make progress on an integral principle of Islamic life. They gave shape purpose and direction to the political and ideological urges of Muslims. They carried on the

torch, lighted in the eighteenth century by Shah Wali Allah, into the heart of the twentieth century and awoke the slumbering souls.

**Purpose and definition of Education:**

From Plato down to the present time, education has variously been interpreted and defined. There is, no doubt, that the entire structure of society depends on the type of education we impart to the younger generation. Education is not a means of recording information or getting high salaried jobs, but of promoting intellectual, aesthetic and moral welfare of the human beings. If education means the intellectual, aesthetic and moral nourishment of body and soul then education has to be a life-long process. Our family, our surroundings, our work and our hobbies, books, magazines, newspaper, broadcasting, in short all that we see and hear all that we feel and experience educate us continuously. These being the vital cultural elements, should be directed to the constructive purposes, aimed at developing an integral personality in a harmonious and balanced way. Development of a complete personality is impossible without the Development of the soul. The concept of morality must be based on Divine Light. Today we are suffering not so much because of mass illiteracy as much as the lack of faith and a sense of proper values, which cannot be catered for by academic and technical education alone.

Defining the aim of education Plato

says, in his Republic:

“The ultimate end of all education is insight into the harmonious order (Cosmos) of the whole world. This earliest stage ends here in the perception of those images of moral or spiritual excellences which when combined with bodily beauty in a living person are proper object of love (eros)”

In modern times, psychological interpretations have been placed on education. Dr. C.E.M. Joad thinks that education is:

- (1) to enable a boy or girl to earn his or her living;
- (2) to equip him to play his part as a citizen of democracy; and
- (3) to enable him to develop all latent powers and faculties of his nature and so enjoy a social life.

T.S. Eliot a modern critic of high repute says:

- (1) education makes people happier;
- (2) education is something that everyone wants; and
- (3) education should be organised so as to give equality of opportunity.

But all these definitions are entirely based on secular thoughts and, lack the most important aspect of education, that is the spiritual aspect that enlightens the soul.

Secularization of education always causes moral anarchy and social chaos.

It develops in man a selfish behaviour, the cause of all unrest. George Bernard Shaw had rightly complained against the modern educational system purely based on secularism. “The spread of education,” said Shaw, “is the spread of discontent.” Shaw the man of culture, felt that the technocracy or the rule of technique alone could not satisfy the genuine urges of human life. Mechanical and purely scientific education was, according to him, unable to cure the world’s diseases.

### **Culture and Science**

The advancement of Science has changed the patterns of culture. It is prompting the society to challenge the existence of God and lay down the foundation of contemporary civilization on secular lines. On the contrary, the scientific discoveries should have reinforced, and not weakened, faith in God. They are the indications of the inexhaustible richness and wonders of God’s, creation. Dr. Iqbal rightly says in his verse:

‘Sainthood, empire, and conquest of science what are these all? -these are but the education of the single- Faith, that is, religion.’

Bertrand Russel, the English philosopher, has aptly remarked on the modern scientific civilization. He says:

“If, therefore, a scientific civilization is to be a good civilization, it is necessary that increase in knowledge should be accompanied by increase of wisdom. I

mean by wisdom a right conception of the ends of life. This is something which science in itself does not provide. Increase of science by itself, therefore, is not enough to guarantee any genuine progress—though it provides one of the ingredients which progress requires.

Culture, as we know it, is a happy combination of material and spiritual civilization of a nation. The present culture is far from being a perfect and mature one. The entire emphasis is laid today on purely

scientific and technical education and no heed is paid to ethical knowledge without which a happy life is not possible. The crisis of conscience and the crisis of confidence are evident all around in our present civilization. Perhaps it is because of this that H.G. Wells, like so many right-minded thinkers, remarks that humanity is at the saturation point of fragmentation in the management of its affairs, fragmentation among unrestricted business organizations competing for profit. ■

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*(Continued from page 16)*

to quietly endure the sufferings, remain patient and be content with only predicatory expostulations and exhortations. The Command that they had was:

(Keep your hands withheld and establish the prayer).

For 13 long years this trend of events had persisted. And ultimately the homeland, too, had to be bidden adieu. Another place was, however, procured where an organism having substantial numerical strength got set up. Permission also got issued to the effect that going on putting up with iniquities on end was no more necessary. Force can be applied in order to defend themselves and resist the onslaughts of the enemy.

Consequent upon this permission, measures as were called for got started to be taken. Nevertheless, there were also instructions to the effect that, in the process of taking these measures, no such measures as were uncalled-for should be taken. In case of operations being necessary, consideration must be had of the human values. Women and children should be treated with due care and concern. Affability, commonweal and peace-making should be the norms. As a result thereof, the enmity of the enemy kept losing grounds while the message of Islam kept gaining them. The net result was that, in the Prophet's (SAW) life-time itself, the entire Arab Peninsula had become proponent of the Prophet's (SAW) teachings and had itself subjugated to his (SAW) dominion. Even the greatest of the great warriors of Makkah who had left no stones unturned to have him stalled, even to have him murdered, rather, had, ultimately, brought themselves under his subjugation. ■

## Concept Of Brotherhood

- K.K. Usman

Mankind was created as one nation but it differed subsequently. (10:19)

Verily this brotherhood of yours is a single brotherhood and I am your Lord... People divide themselves off from the bond of unity, rejoicing in their own sects. (23:52,53)

And among His Signs... the diversity of your languages and colours. Lo! Herein indeed are portents for men of knowledge. (30:22)

Another fundamental element in the value system of Islam is the value of human brotherhood. This value also is founded on the same principles which have been discussed in connection with freedom and equality. Besides those foregoing principles, human brotherhood in Islam is based on an unshakable belief in the Oneness and Universality of God the worshipped, the unity of mankind the worshippers, and the unity of religion the medium of worship. For the Muslim, God is One, Eternal and Universal. He is the Creator of all men, the Provider for all men, the Judge of all men, and the Lord over all men. To Him, social status, national supremacy, and racial origin are insignificant. Before Him, all men are equal and brothers of one another.

The Muslim believes in the unity of mankind with regard to the source of creation, the original parentage, and the final destiny. The source of creation is God Himself. The original common parentage

is that of Adam and Eve. To this first parentage, every human being belongs and of it he partakes. As for the final destiny, there is no doubt in the Muslim's mind that it will be to God, Creator, to Whom all men shall return.

The Muslim believes in the unity of God's religion. This means that God does not confine His religion any particular nation, race, or age. It further means that there can be no contradiction or fundamental differences in the Religion of God.

As mentioned in an earlier chapter, the perception of People of the Book' is usually confined to the Jews and Christians on account of their endowment with the Torah and the Evangel. However, the vital connotation here is of Divine religion, piety and the pursuit of moral value. As long as the adherents of any religion bear out this connotation, they are brothers of Muslims.

When this is interpreted properly, it will leave no ground for pretended supremacy or presumptuous exclusivity. And when it is imparted into the human mind, it will provide man with a clear concept and a solid basis of human brotherhood. Because the Muslim believes in the Oneness of God, the unity of mankind, and the unity of religion, he believes in all the Messengers and Revelations of God without discrimination.■

## The Manifesto Of Language And Identity

- Mahmoud Dhaouadi

My more than two decades exploration of the impact of French use on Arabic in North African societies (The Maghreb) has led me to make the following remarks which might be fit to constitute a Manifesto on language and identity:

1. The epistemological view of my long linguistic research findings stresses that what distinguishes humans from the other beings on this planet is what I call the Third Human Dimension/THD or Cultural Symbols/CS: spoken and written language, thought, religion, knowledge/science, cultural values, and norms.
2. The THD cannot exist without at least the spoken language. So, language is the Mother of all CS. This means that language is the first determinant of human identity and as such, it is the marking symbol of humanity in the identity of both men and women. Thus, it could be said with some modification to Descartes saying: "I think, therefore, I am" to become in my new conceptualization of language: "I use language, therefore, I am a human".
3. Languages are also the compelling determinants of individual and collective identities in various human societies over the long human history.
4. The impact of languages in determining the identities of peoples and societies can be shown in countries where there are two languages or more. English and French are the two official languages in Canada. Likewise, Flemish and French are Belgium's official languages. Arabic and Kurdish are the dominant languages in Iraq. Finally, Arabic and Berber are the two main languages in Morocco and Algeria. It is widely observed that the maternal used local languages in these bilingual societies do determine peoples' identities. The majority of the French speaking Québécois/Quebeckers define their identity in terms of their own language. The same thing is also true of Kurdish Iraqis. This should explain as well the call of both Quebeckers and Kurdish Iraqis for political separation from the bigger societies: Canada and Iraq.

5. Languages are not the only factors which determine the identities of individuals, groups, and societies. Religion, color, ethnic origin do also determine individual and collective identities. However, common languages play a crucial role in the creation of a collective identity in a society where individuals and groups belong to different religions, colors and ethnic origins.
6. The important link between languages and identities as outlined in the above examples shows that this link is valid in the case of native/local languages and not of foreign ones. That is, peoples most often link their identities with their native/local languages as the wide and long presence of French in North Africa indicates. Fluent French speaking Algerians, Tunisians, Moroccans and Mauritians hardly identify themselves with the French identity. Nonetheless, the negative impact of French on the relation citizens of the Maghreb have with their national languages (Arabic and Berber) is widely observed in these four countries. For instance, Arabic remains excluded from use in many various sectors after more than a half century of

independence from French colonialism. Consequently, Arabic is looked at with inferior outlook in the mainstream of those societies. This situation is bound to lead to manifestations of a confused and troubled Arab identity among many citizens of the Maghreb. The Tunisian society has recently witnessed an example of this after its 2011 revolution. A small group of Tunisian francophone intellectuals has questioned the credibility of the Tunisian people's belonging to the Arab Muslim identity.

**The clauses of normal relationship with one's language**

Peoples can have normal relationships with their own languages if they fully satisfy the following clauses:

- They speak only their own languages among themselves in their societies.
- They write only in their own languages in their own personal as well as in their social and institutional activities in their societies.
- They must have a full command of knowledge of the meaning of words and the grammatical and spelling rules of their own languages.

- They must have strong intimate relationships with their own languages: they must have a positive psychological attitude which defends, praises, feels proud and uses only their own languages as individuals and in their social interactions with their citizens and institutions in their own societies.

These four linguistic clauses can visibly and easily make equations that describe with transparency the state relationship that people might have with their own languages. Two equations express well that state relationship:

1. Normal relationship with the language/s = the full satisfaction of the four clauses:  $A+B+C+D$ .
2. Lack of normal relationship with the language/s missing the fulfillment of one or more of the four clauses (A, B, C, D). That is, the more citizens and societies miss a greater number of the four clauses the more their relationship with their own language/s becomes abnormal. Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia are a case in point. They hardly fulfill the four clauses with Arabic, their national language.

### **The ABC of intimacy with languages**

The Sociology of Knowledge

helps to understand the intimate relationships which tie people with languages if they only use them in speaking and writing ( $A+B$ ) in all individual and collective affairs in their societies from early infancy and if they master good knowledge of their languages. As such, the intimate relationship with languages is the outcome of the intense usage/ interaction process of the languages. This state of usages of languages creates and develops strong psychological relationships among the citizens and their societies toward the languages. In sociological terms, this intense language usage leads to primary relationships with languages. That is, tender relationships with language fully dozed with emotions, consciousness, and compassion in favor of languages. This is the result of natural/normal ( $A+B+C+D$ ) socio-linguistic socializations since early childhood. It is credible to express all these issues in two semi-mathematical equations: 1- full engagement of fulfilling all ( $A+B+C+D$ ) = normal /natural relationships with languages. 2- Partial engagement or no-engagement at all for the ( $A+B+C+D$ ) = great or medium or very weak abnormal relationship with the languages. This should be a sound guide that maps up today the status of Arabic in Arab societies. ■

## **Tolerance in Islam**

**- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi**

The Holy Quran vividly says: "To be your religion, and to me my religion"(Surah:109,6). It again says: "Let there be no compulsion in religion"(Surah 2: 256). These two verses of the Quran precisely make it clear that Islam accords freedom of the thoughts and equality of opportunity for all without any distinction of caste, creed, colour, region and treats them alike. That is why conversion to Islam at the point of sword is not seen anywhere. Strangely, despite gross misconceptions and bad notions against it Islam today is the fastest growing religion in the world.

The Holy Quran says: "You are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong". (S.3, A, 110 ) Again it says: "let there arise, out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. They are the ones to attain felicity."(S, 3, A.104). The crux of the matter is that Allah has conferred the title "Khaira Ummat" (the best nation) with followers of prophet Muhammad (PBUH) for the obvious reason of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. Hence, it is imperative for us to invite all people towards the right path regardless of caste, creed, race, colour and region. If we only perform Dawah job among Muslims, will not deserve the God-given honour "Khaira Ummat" (the best nation). The history bears witness that since its inception Islam has been the most tolerant and egalitarian of all religions. Muslims had ruled more than 800 years over Spain. But not a single incident of forceful conversion occurred. Such cases are also not seen in other countries under the sway of Muslim rulers including the longest period of Mughals rule in India. What to say for forceful conversion to Islam, the Holy Prophet strictly prohibited to harm or to hurt non-Muslim in any way. Prophet Muhammad says: "Whoever torments the Zimmis (non-Muslims) torments me."

It goes without saying that Islam first introduced Human Rights and stressed its importance. The last sermon of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is the first charter of Human Rights in Islam. In 632, C.E, Prophet Muhammad said in his farewell sermon at Arafat valley near Makkah, "O people verily your Lord is one and your father is one. All of you belong to Adam and Adam is (made) of earth. Behold, there is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab and for a non-Arab over an Arab; nor for a red-colored over a black colored and for a black-skinned except in piety, Verily the noblest among you is he who is the most pious."

It should be kept in mind that the term of Human Rights had been alien for a long time. After the French Revolution of 1789 and American Revolution of 1775, the concept of Human Rights fostered. Even after Second World War, United Nation Organization (UNO) has set up a Human Rights Commission. One has rightly said: "The West very vociferously claims that the basic concept of human rights became known to the world for the first time from the British Magna Carta. But they conveniently have forgotten that the Magna came into existence six hundred years after the advent of Islam.

Islam lays great stress on morality, ethics, tolerance, forbearance, sympathy, integrity, honesty, brotherhood, fraternity, kindness, generosity, cleanliness, sanitation, enlightenment, wisdom and the like. The beauty and elegance of Islam is that it puts each thing in its proper place. Islam's main plank is to set up such a friendly environment where in all people may live with peace and serenity regardless of caste, creed, colour and region. According to Islam all people are from the same origin and source and they were made into nations and tribes just to know each other, as confirmed by the following Quranic words: "O mankind We created you from a single male

and a female, made you into nations and tribes, and ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted with all things." (49:13)

That is why Islam enunciates that cooperation and help should be in matters of piety and virtues and not in evil and unholy acts and deeds. The holy Quran says: "Help ye one another in righteousness and piety, but help ye not one another in sin and rancour: fear Allah : for Allah is strict in punishment" (5:2)

The most striking aspect of Islam is to foster justice and equality amongst a variety of nations regardless of caste, creed, colour and region. A cursory look on the life of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) shows a lot of instances which manifest his judicious and fair treatment with Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) declares that "He is not of us who sides with his tribe in aggression, and he is not of us who calls others to help him in tyranny, and he is not of us who dies while assisting his tribe in injustice."

Once, a woman belonging to a noble family of Madina was caught while committing a theft. The case was put up before the prophet and it was pleaded that she may be spared. The Prophet replied "Nations that lived before you were destroyed by God because they punished the common men for their offences but let their dignitaries go unpunished for their crimes. I swear by God who holds my life in His hand that even if Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad, had committed this crime I would have got her hand amputated." The Prophet holds that: "Give equitable punishment to the remote and near and have no fear of reproach of people in enforcement of his limits set up by God.

The fact is that Islam is not only a metaphysical religion but also a complete code of life and the real emancipator of human beings. It presents remedy to all evils. Maulana

Abul Kalam Azad has rightly said: "Even in the modern context Islam alone could provide salvation to the world. What required was true adherence to Islam which provides most comprehensive and perfect law to mankind."

To illustrate the point following sayings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) are worth quoting.

Once the holy Prophet said: "Help your brother whether he is oppressed or oppressor". His companions asked, "How could we help if he is oppressor?" The Prophet replied: "Stop him from oppression." Narrated Abu Musa: Some people asked Allah's Apostle (S) "Whose Islam is the best ? i.e. (Who is a very good Muslim?) He replied, "One who avoids harming the Muslims with his tongue and hands." Narrated Anas : The Prophet (S) said, "None of you will have faith till he wishes for his brother what he likes for himself." The Prophet says: "He is not true Muslim who eath his fill, and leaveth his neighbours hungry." Again he said: "The Muhajir is he who denounces the evil, and then keeps aloof from it." He also said, "On the Day of Resurrection, I shall denounce him who oppresses a dhimmi or violates his right or puts a responsibility on him which is beyond his strength or takes something away from him."

These above Traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) indicate that the main mission of Islam is only for restoring dignity and upliftment of people and setting up an atmosphere of peace and amity throughout the world. It should also be kept in mind that it is Islam which first offered the concept of common citizenship and promoted a multi-religious and pluralistic society. When the Prophet settled down in Madina, he constituted a city-state, in which Muslims, Pagan Arabs, Jews and Christians, all entered into a stable organism by means of a social contract.

On account of these attributes, beauties and grandeurs, Islam had earned a good reputation within a short span of time as compared to other religions of the world.

Besides Islam made great strides in every field. In the words of late Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, "There is not a single sector of European revival which is not indebted to Islamic thought. Islam imparted a new glow of life to Europe." Noted scholar Asghar Ali Engineer has rightly said : "The early Islamic society was quite progressive and dynamic but since the early 13th century, it began to stagnate. Besides theology, early Muslims achieved great heights of knowledge in natural sciences and secular philosophies. Any one could be proud of these achievements. In fact Europe was passing through dark ages when Islamic society was thriving with knowledge. Europe learnt from Arabs. Most advanced universities of the world were located in Baghdad, Cairo and other Plaecs."

In this context we may recall what Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar says: "Islam is not a bundle of dogmas and doctrines that theologians plague humanity with. It is a complete scheme of life, a perfect code of right conduct and a comprehensive social polity as wide as human race and in fact as wide as the human creation." Similarly according to Swami Vivekananda : " My experience is that if ever any religion approached to this equality (egalitarianism) in an appreciable manner, it is Islam and Islam alone, I am firmly persuaded, therefore, that without the help of practical Islam, theories of veganism, however fine and wonderful they may be, are entirely valueless to the vast mass of mankind." (Letters of Swami Vivekananda, P. 463). The similar thoughts are also of G.B. Shah, he says: I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful Vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me possesses that assimilating capacity to the changing phase of existing which can make itself appeal to every age. I have studied him-the wonderful man and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the saviour of humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and

happiness. I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today." (G.B. Shah, The Genuine Islam, Singapore, Vol. 1, No, 8, 1936).

In a nutshell, Islam regards all human beings alike. Its main plank is to prevail equality, tolerance, and justice in order to create an atmosphere of peace and amity in the world. The holy Quran says.: "We verily sent our messengers with clear proofs and revealed with them the scripture and the Balance, that the mankind may observe right measure; and revealed Iron, wherein is mighty power and many uses for mankind... (57: 25) In the words of Sarojini Naidu: "sense of justice is one of the most wonderful ideals of Islam, because as I read in the Qur'an I find these dynamic principles of life, not mystic but practical ethics for the daily conducts of life suited to the whole world." (Speeches and Writings of Sarojini Naidu, Madras,1918, P. 167) H. A. R. Gibb writes- "But Islam has yet a further service to render to the cause of humanity..No other society has such a record of success in uniting in an equality of status, of opportunity and of endeavour so many and so various races of mankind. The great Muslim communities of Africa, India, and Indonesia, perhaps also the small Muslim community Japan, show that Islam has still the power to reconcile apparently irreconcilable elements of race and tradition. If ever the opposition of the great societies of the East and West is to be replaced by co-operation, the mediation of Islam is an indispensable condition." (H. A. R. Gibb: Whither Islam? London 1932, p. 379)

The need of the hour is that we may learn as how to live with peace and amity and share other's sufferings and woes regardless of caste, creed, colour, region and religion. The holy Quran says, "We have honored the sons of Adam; Provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favours, above a great part of Our creation.■

## Muslim Contribution to the Indian Independence Movement

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The famous writer, Mr. Kushwant Singh, once wrote: "Indian Freedom is written in Muslim blood, sine their participation in freedom struggle was much more, in proportion to their small percentage of the population."

The sacrifices of Muslims for the Indian freedom struggle were purposely hidden. Let's look into Indian History for knowing the truth. Every Indian should know the innumerable facts in this regard and teach our children the truth!

Please read fully and share with every Indian you know:

- The first freedom struggle against the British in eighteenth century India was by the Mysorean ruler, Hyder Ali and his son, Tipu Sultan, during the 1780s and 1790s. Mysorean rockets were the first iron-cased rockets, successfully deployed for military use. Hyder Ali and his son, Tipu Sultan, used rockets and cannons effectively against the British invaders during the 1780s and 1790s.
- Everyone knows that Rani of Jhansi fought to get the kingdom for her adopted child but how many of us know that Begum Hazrat Mahal was the unsung heroine of the first war of Independence, who shot the British ruler, Sir Henry Lawrence and defeated the British army in a decisive Battle at Chinhat on 30th June, 1857.
- Do you know that the organizer and leader of "First Indian freedom struggle" was Moulavi Ahamadullah Shah – many were killed, among them 90% were Muslims!
- Ashfaqulla Khan was the first to be hanged at the age of 27 years for conspiring against the British Raj.
- Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was an Indian scholar and the senior Muslim leader of the Indian National Congress during the Indian independence movement.
- In the picketing protest against 'liquor shops' by Mahatma Gandhi, ten participants were Muslims out of nineteen participant!
- The last Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar, was the first to strongly fight for Indian freedom which led to the 1857 independence struggle. Former Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi wrote at Bahadur Shah's grave thus: "Although you (Bahadur Shah) do not have land in India, you have it here; your name is alive... I pay homage to the memory of the symbol and rallying point of India's First War of Independence...."
- M.K.M. Ameer Hamza, donated multi-million rupees for Indian National Army (INA), and he headed the Azad library reading propaganda of INA. His family is now poor, living in a rented house at Ramanadhapuramin Tamil Nadu.
- Memon Abdul Habeeb Yusuf Marfani, donated almost his entire fortune of one crore rupees to the Indian National Army – a princely sum in those days by completely donating his entire

assets to Netaji's INA.

- Shah Nawaz Khan was a soldier, a politician, and a Chief Officer and Commander in the Indian National Army (INA).
- Netaji's ministry had nineteen ministers; out of these, five were Muslims.
- Mother Beevimma, a Muslim lady, donated over 30 lakhs rupees for the Indian freedom struggle.
- Abul Kalam Azad, Jinnah, Nawab of Bihar were the three who made the plans for total independence.
- Suraiya Taiyabji (a Muslim lady) designed the current Indian National Flag.
- Muslims used Masjids for the freedom struggle. When an Imam was addressing about Indian freedom in a Holy Masjid in Uttar Pradesh, British Army shot all the Muslims in that Masjid – you can still see the dried blood of the freedom fighters shed on the walls of that
- Muslims ruled India over 800 years and they didn't steal anything from India as the British, the Dutch and the French did.
- Muslims lived here, ruled here and died here. They developed India into a unified and civilized country by bringing in abundant knowledge in literature, architecture, judicial and political structure, Government body and management structure, which is still used in Indian management strategy!
- In Tamil Nadu, Ismael Shaheb and Maruda Nayagam fought against British

for seven continuous years. They made British fear like hell.

- We all know V. O. Chidambaram (Kappalotiya Tamizhan), popularly known as VOC – the pioneering founder of the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company which he set up to compete against the monopoly of the British India Steam Navigation Company as part and parcel of the Indian independence movement. But how many know that it was a Fakkir Muhammed Rawther who donated VOC his first ship?!
- When VOC was arrested, it was a certain Muhammad Yaseen who was shot dead by British police for his demonstration to release VOC.
- Tiruppur Kumaran (Kodi kata Kumaran) participated in the Indian independence movement. With Kumaran seven other participants were arrested – all were Muslims: Abdul Latheef, Akbar Ali, Mohideen Khan, Abdul Rahim, Vavu Shaheb, Abdul Latheef and Sheikh Baba Shaheb.

One can write thousands of pages as books, on the sacrifice of Muslims for the Freedom of India, but unfortunately, the domination of communal extremists who strive to hide these truths and misrepresent history in Indian history books. In fact, distorted history is rewritten to divide people for securing votes.

Patriotic Indians should be cautious not to fall a prey to those with vested interests and work towards uniting all citizens for a strong and progressive Nation. ■

## Pages From Islamic History

### The Story of Moses and Khidhr

Now we turn the story of Moses and Khidhr. It is in reality the story of our everyday life wherein we often come across paradoxical situations which draw our attention to the fact that there are still a number of inexplicable things beyond the sphere of our knowledge. These incidents tell us that howsoever learned a man may be, his decisions, estimates and opinions formed on the basis of his knowledge and experiences sometimes go astray. If the secrets of life were, somehow, made known to someone, we would undoubtedly find a visible change in his ideas, modes of thought and decisions. The episode in the story of Moses is also meant to illustrate the point that one can never be dead sure of the opinions formed or the impressions gained or else the stand taken on the basis of ephemeral knowledge. It demonstrates that it is rather impossible for human knowledge to comprehend and cover the totality of universal knowledge and, therefore, one should not be hasty in arriving at a conclusion nor should one insist on the acceptance of his opinions and impressions by others. Life is itself a parable secretive, variable and uncertain. The universe is too wide and incomprehensible, its secrets and complexities stand out clearly from the external and outer realities. These present us with paradoxes which cannot

be solved by man despite his constant quest for knowledge. In fact, there are numerous mysteries of nature which we might never be able to unravel with all the scientific inventions and discoveries at our command. Even in our mundane life, day-to-day affairs, we are confronted with many a complex situations created by our mistakes, half-backed ideas, hasty decisions and immature and emotional behaviours. Now, if man were to be entrusted with the governance of this vast and complex universe, with a free hand to do whatever he likes, he would soon make it brimming with strife and trouble, and take it to the brink of total destruction. This would be simply because of his limited knowledge and sphere of action, which are, unfortunately, also conditioned by his predisposition to hasty action.

In order to demonstrate the limitation of human knowledge, which also forms the basis faith in the unseen realities, God selected one of the greatest prophets, Moses who had been endowed with knowledge, virtue and piety. Moses once stood preaching to his people, when he was asked whether he knew of a man who was wiser than him. Moses answered in the negative. Not pleased by the reply of Moses, who ought to have ascribed his knowledge to God alone, he was directed to meet a man more knowing

than himself at a place where the two seas met.

### **Strange and Bewildering Events**

Moses set out on the journey with a companion to find out the man who had been endowed with a special knowledge not granted to ordinary mortal. We would presently see that the special knowledge granted to this Man of God did come into conflict with the human knowledge based on experiences and apparent situations.

Khidhr boards a boat whose owner does not charge the fare from him, but, on reaching his destination, Khidhr knock out a few of her planks, Moses, not understanding the import of Khidhr's rebukes and asks him to explain what he has done. Next, Khidhr kills an innocent youth who had not put him to any charm nor had his parents apparently been a source of anxiety to him. Then, again, Khidhr helps in the repair of a dilapidated wall although the inhabitants of the place had been inhospitable to him. These were undoubtedly strange and weird happenings which were raising a storm of curiosity in the heart of Moses. These inexplicable events, naturally, prompted him to ask Khidhr to explain why had he scuttled the boat which had taken them to the shores safely. It ought to have been protected and not broken. The owner of the boat, too, deserved thanks from Khidhr rather than his enmity. The innocent boy ought to have been

received with kindness and looked after instead of being put to death. Similarly, the inhabitants of the village who had been so unkind and unsocial were entitled to a stern behaviour. Khidhr, however, appears to be taking decisions neither commended by wisdom and know facts nor warranted by emotions and instinct. Moses, was, after all, a prophet of God, endowed with faith and a kind heart, and therefore he could not stand the flagrant acts of injustice committed by his comrade. He forget the promise made by him, at the start of the journey, to ask no question about anything until Khidhr himself explained it to him, and exclaimed:

"Verily thou hast done a horrid thing."  
(Al-Kahf: 74)

Khidhr gives no reply to the questions raised by Moses and goes on to complete the mission for which they had undertaken the journey. At last, having arrived at their destination, Khidhr uncovers the mysteries which Moses was finding inexplicable and bewildering. Anyone who goes through the Qur'an would see that Khidhr was right. Whatever he did was not only correct and logical in the given circumstance but it also unfolded practical wisdom. He did not take a wrong decision on any of the three occasions. He took out a plank or two from the boat to make it unseaworthy and thus saved it from seizure. The fact was that the unjust king of that land seized on every boat he could get in a

serviceable condition. The owner of the boat had not charged any fare from Khidhr and the latter repaid the courtesy of the boatman by saving his boat from seizure.

The boy slain by Khidhr was to become a source of grief and danger to the faith of his parents. He would have grown as an infidel and led his parents to renounce their faith out of their excessive fondness for him. Khidhr thought it preferable that the parents of the boy should better come to grief on account of the boy's death in this life rather than suffer eternal torments of the Hereafter. Another son could be had if one expired, but nothing but eternal fire could be had after renouncing one's faith and dying an infidel's death.

"And as for the lad, his parents were believers and we feared lest he should oppress them by rebellion and disbelief.

'And we intended that their Lord should change him for them fore one better in purity and nearer to mercy.'

(Al-Kahf: 81-82)

The wall was in a ruinous state; if it had fallen, the treasure concealed beneath it and owned by two orphan boys, would have been exposed. It would have than been despoiled by the selfish people of the town and the orphan boys would not have got anything of their rightful patrimony. This also illustrates that virtuous action

benefits a man after his death as much as during his life-time. Obviously, if God does not like to ignore the progeny of a righteous man after his death, He would certainly not forsake one who is upright and guiltless.

"Allah loseth not the wages of the kindly." (Yousuf: 90)

"And their Lord hath heard them (and He saith):

Lo! I suffer not the work of any worker, male or female, to be lost."

(Aal-i-Imran:195)

Verily, Allah gives a fair return of whatever we do.

"And as for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the city, and there was beneath it a treasure belonging to them, and their father had been righteous, and thy Lord intended that they should come to their full strength and should bring forth their treasure as a mercy from their Lord; and I did it not upon my own command. Such is the interpretation of that wherewith thou couldst not bear." (Al-Kahf: 83)

### **Limitations of Human Knowledge**

The realities of things are very often so different from what they appear to us according to our imperfect lights. And, how much the interior of a thing differs from its exterior; the outer from the inside reality; how incomprehensible and enigmatic are the mysteries of the

Universe; but man is hotheaded enough to claim that his knowledge compasses all, the secrets of man as well as of universe, down to their core and innermost realities.

At first sight Khidhr appeared to be away from apparent realities and his actions were the look of meaningless moves. But, to the end of the chapter, we find him more realistic and acting more wisely. The story illustrates that life is ever on the move, presenting us with situations and new realities in every age from its inexhaustible store of secrets and mysteries. The episode also elucidates that knowledge is limitless, beyond the scope of human comprehension.

“..... And over every word of knowledge there is one more knowing.” (Yusuf: 76)

### **A Challenge to Materialistic Outlook**

The story narrated here is a challenge to the materialistic way of thought. Materialism claims that life is not an iota more than what it explains; it possesses the secrets of the nature and universe; only that is to be believed which is tangible and capable of being comprehended by human perception; that which is perceptible is real and the rest is non-existent, visionary and baseless; and, finally, that man is the rightful owner and master of this world. Materialism elevates man to the position of lawgiver, claims perfection for human knowledge and assumes that

nothing in this vast and complex universe is beyond human comprehension.

These have always been the fundamental postulates of materialistic thought, and so it is today also. The Surat-ul-Kahf in general, and the episode of Moses in particular, strikes at the root of materialistic categories of thought. The story concludes with these words of Khidhr:

“Such is the interpretation of that wherewith thou couldst not bear”.

(Al-Kahf: 83)

Interpretation signifies, in the phraseology of the Qur’an, the explanation of a reality. Man is always predisposed to commit mistakes, take hasty decisions and rashly deny the existence of a reality; but when he is confronted with truth and stubborn facts, he has ultimately to accept the realities of the situation.

The fourth and the last story narrated in the Surat-ul-Kahf, relates to a man who had not only been favoured with a solemn faith but had also at his command power and glory, stupendous assets and natural resources. This man directed his energies to humble the cruel tyrants of his day for the benefit of suffering humanity and to establish a just, humane and civilized order of society. ■

*(Extracted from “Faith versus Materialism” by S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi)*

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