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Divine Judgement About Mankind

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Allah is the One Who sends down rain after men have given up all hope, and scatters His mercy far and wide. He is the Protector, Worthy of all praise.

(al-Shūra 42:28)

This Qur'anic verse embodies immeasurable guidance for everyone. The "rain" in the verse may also be taken to mean anything that rescue as one and provides one with help in a crisis. It is Allah alone Who comes to man's rescue as he faces problems. Again, it is He Who lends man a supporting hand. As a dying person is revived when a drop of elixir is given him. Allah provides solace to the scorching earth by blessing it with rainfall. Allah responds to man's petition. At a time when everyone, including the high and the mighty, had despaired of rain, Allah sends down rain which revives the dead land. Thus He showers His mercy. For He alone is man's protector deserves all praise.

The divine attributes mentioned in this context appear to very carefully chosen. All of His names are excellent. His is the best example. Reference is made, nonetheless, to two of His attributes — Protector and Worthy of all praise, for these are directly linked with rescuing humanity and with truth. Allah is the Protector of humanity. No owner would like to see his field as barren. As mankind's Protector, Allah ensures its revival. In equal measure, Allah is deserving of all praise. It does not befit His mercy and majesty to abandon humanity. ■

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Wisdom of Qur'an

“They are the ones who will be rewarded for their patience: lofty palaces will be granted to them, and they will be received with greeting and salutation. Therein they shall abide for ever: how good an abode, and how good a resting place!”

(Al-Qur’ân – 25:75-76)

These *ayaahs* deal with the rewards of patience. The word *cabr* (patience, fortitude) in the Arabic text is used in its most comprehensive sense. Various, it means to endure persecution at the hands of the enemies of Truth with courage and to bear whatever hardships come one’s way while striving for the establishment of the true Faith of God.

It also means to remain steadfast against all fears and to refuse to succumb to enticements; to resolutely fulfil one’s obligations in spite of Satan’s temptations and one’s own carnal self; to shun the unlawful and to remain within the bounds of the lawful set by God; to spurn all pleasures and benefits that might accrue from acts of sins, and to cheerfully put up with difficulties and losses in order to follow the Path of righteousness and virtue and to accept every trial and adversity that one might encounter.

In sum, this one word embraces a whole universe of meanings regarding true Faith, a truly religious approach to life, and good moral conduct inspired by religious Faith.

Ghufrah means a lofty building. It is generally translated as the ‘upper chamber’ which brings to mind a two-storey building. The loftiest buildings constructed here are mere caricatures of the palaces of Paradise. ■

Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

Tamim al-Dari relates that Allah’s Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) observed: “Al-Dîn is the name of sincerity and well-wishing.” Upon this we said: “For whom?” He replied: “For Allah, His Book, His Messenger and for the leader and the general Muslims.”

(Sahih Muslim)

Nasiha means sincerity and well-wishing. *Nasiha* for Allah implies that man’s heart is cleansed from all impurities with regard to belief in Allah, i.e. one should believe in Him as the Creator and Master with all His Attributes and with an earnest desire to obey all His commands.

Nasiha for Allah’s Book means that it should be sincerely believed as a revelation from the Lord and be read and understood with utmost zeal and enthusiasm.

Nasiha for the Messenger signifies that his Apostleship must be affirmed with perfect sincerity of heart, and whatever he has vouchsafed to humanity should be respected as the Will of God, and he should be respectfully followed in all his precepts and examples.

Nasiha for leaders implies that they should be respected, obeyed and given support in all those affairs which they conduct according to the Shari’ah. And if they deviate from the path of righteousness, they should be advised and admonished, and sincere efforts be made to bring them back to the right path.

Nasiha for general Muslims is that they should be advised in all matters concerning the good of this world as well as the hereafter.

Nasiha thus covers the whole gamut of religion as its scope is as wide as that of Islam. ■

Editor's Note 

False Allegation

The Corona virus pandemic showed its first sign in Kerala in January 2020 and by early March some cases in North India particularly in Delhi were noticed. It is just a coincident that an established, a political and purely religious organization, Tablighi Jamaat had convened its annual international congregation at that period as scheduled much earlier. After the conclusion of the session members of the Jamaat were asked to return to their home. Per chance some of them were found afflicted with Covid - 19. A section of Indians started blaming Tablighi Jamaat for spreading the pandemic.

Indian Express (December 17, 2020) in its editorial note has very nicely explained the whole story and exonerated the Jamaat. The Note is reproduced below:

In early April, when the COVID-19 pandemic had just begun to rage in India, an international Muslim missionary group, the Tablighi Jamaat, was charged of aggravating the health emergency. The government blacklisted over 950 foreign nationals, accusing them of contravening emergency rules by participating in a Jamaat congregation at its markaz (centre) in Delhi — the event was incriminated for being a super-spreader. More than 900 pleaded guilty as part of a “plea bargain” — by all accounts, because they did not want to stand trial in the country. Forty-four of the accused, however, intrepidly stood their ground. On August 24, about three weeks after the Supreme Court ruled that the trials be conducted in a time-bound manner, a Delhi magistrate’s court found “no prima facie evidence” against eight of the accused. Now, on Tuesday, a metropolitan court in the capital exonerated the other 36. The acquittals are indictment enough

of the government's handling of the episode. Even more sobering are the court's observations: "None of them were present at the markaz on the relevant period and they had been picked up from different places so as to maliciously prosecute them upon directions from the Ministry of Home Affairs".

The congregation took place on March 13-15. The lockdown in India was about 10 days away but the virus had given ample evidence of its notoriously contagious character. Yet, by all accounts, diligence does not seem to have been shown in screening the participants, many of whom had travelled from COVID-19 hotspots of that time, such as Malaysia and Indonesia. In the weeks after the meet, state governments launched desperate operations to identify the Tablighis, who had dispersed from Delhi. Some BJP leaders blamed the gathering for the country's worsening COVID situation — senior functionaries of the party and in the government likened the Tablighis to "terrorists", excoriated them "for moving around like a bomb" and described the meet as a "Talibani crime". All this fed into the country's worsening communal narrative, spawning a new wave of bigotry.

In August, the Aurangabad bench of the Bombay High Court criticised the "scapegoating" of Tablighis for the pandemic. "It is now time to repent this action and take positive steps to repair the damage," it said. After the verdict in the capital on Tuesday, the government must revisit this message. It must apologise to those it had wrongly accused and tainted. ■

S.A.

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The Obligation to Provide Moral Training

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

O Believers! Guard yourselves and your family members against the Fire, of which the fuel is mankind and stones. Over it are angels, stern and strong. They do not disobey Allah in what He commands them, and they do what they are commanded.

(al-Tahrim 66:6)

A dire warning is delivered through this verse. Since man is apt to forget things, it would be in the fitness of things, for the above verse to be displayed in bold letters in mosques and other public places to serve as a reminder.

The verse addressed the believers, those who have already professed faith. That it is not directed at those who designate Muslims themselves is not a matter of chance. Rather, the focus of attention is on those who embrace faith. Yet they too are asked to guard themselves, their family members and those under their care against the Hellfire, of which men and stones are fuel.

This verse was addressed to the Muslims, known as the Prophet's Companions. Apart from these immediate addressees, it is directed at all those who call themselves Muslims until the Last Day. Yet the immediate

addressees were those who had pledged faith at the Prophet's hand. They enjoyed the privilege of being his Companions. Some were the fortunate ones who had pledged their fealty to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) under a tree at the pledge of Ridwan during the Hudaibiyyah Treaty. Regarding them the Qur'an declares: "Allah was assuredly well pleased with the believers when they swore allegiance to you [O Prophet] under the tree. And He knew what was in their hearts. So, He sent down on them tranquility and rewarded them with the imminent victory." (al-Fath 48:18)

Among those immediate addressees were those who had been told that Allah is pleased with them. Yet even such high-ranking Companions are warned in the verse to guard themselves. Also included among them are the ten fortunate Companions who had been given the glad tiding during their lifetimes of their entry into Paradise. Also included among them were those noble souls who had participated in the battles of Badr and Uhud.

It is pointless asking whether one would throw one's own family members into the Fire. The very thought of it is out of the question. Yet Allah tells the

believers to save themselves from Hellfire. No Companion had ever thought of consigning his children to fire, nor could they be mute spectators should any of their children leap into a fire. Actually they could not reconcile themselves to any situation which posed a threat to their families. Nonetheless, the believers are clearly asked to guard themselves and their family. This, then, was not a real- life situation against which they had to be alert.

Rather, the thrust of the verse tells these believers to desist from any deed which could land them and their family members in Hellfire. They are unmistakably warned against Hell. It is natural for parents to defend their children. Accordingly, they are informed here of things which could drive them and their children into Hellfire. There are certain causes which lead to definite results. For example, inducing a poison or fatal substance into someone is bound to kill them, for the perpetrator opted for a method which definitely brings about death. Therefore, such an offender is treated as a killer, a murderer. Employing the same logic, this Qur'anic verse warns against such deeds which are destined to land man in Hellfire.

The situation prevailing today is one whereby we are guilty of driving our children to Hellfire. For there exist no arrangements for the religious education of our children. We have left

them to the mercy of the prevailing milieu, which is godless. The present educational system does not claim that it will impart such education as ensures their deliverance in the Hereafter. These schools do not prescribe the teachings of messengers. If our children are ignorant of divine guidance, their faith is in peril. They are destined to suffer in the Hereafter. Given this, it is hard to justify our attitude. How can we reconcile ourselves to the present situation? The present educational system, at least in India, is not secular; it has a particular goal of infusing Hindu mythology into the supple minds of children. In the British India, education was, no doubt, secular. The syllabus at that time contained inane stories of animals. Those who studied under that system will bear this out. The textbooks in British India did not however interfere with students' faith. They did not evoke holiness for certain creatures, nor did these ascribe divinity to anyone in particular. Children read stories about popular animals. In sum, the syllabus then did not have any bearing on faith.

Today it is an altogether different scenario. Present-day textbooks contain lessons and stories which tamper with children's faith. What is implicit in these is elaborated upon by teachers. Likewise, children participate in certain activities which run counter to the Islamic doctrine of pure, unadulterated monotheism.

If we enroll our children in a school and make no other arrangement for their religious education, we indirectly encourage our children to imbibe an un-Islamic worldview. If our children do not learn Urdu, cannot study religious texts and do not attend an Islamic educational institution in the evenings, we stand guilty of not guarding ourselves and our children against Hellfire. The verse in question here then is directly addressed to us all.

Man is apt to look for escape routes. However, we must realise that Allah is All-Knowing. Being man's Creator Allah is All-Aware. Man is also apt to suffer from the delusion that he does not need to make elaborate preparations for the Hereafter. For he may after all find some other way out. Or he may entertain some miraculous escape, or resort to bribery. Allah being All-Aware, especially of human nature, slams the door on all these, saying that His angels oversee Hell and that they are stern and strong. Thus, man has no chance to escape.

No one can defend themselves or their family members in view of the presence of stern and strong angels. The Qur'an employs very strong expressions to describe these angels. Moreover, they are dutiful in the extreme. They do not disobey Allah even in the slightest.

The important point, therefore, is

that we should arrange for the Islamic education and moral training of our children. They should be instructed in matters of faith so that they can be saved from Hellfire. Such arrangements will keep them away from Allah's wrath and will help them lead a life in accordance with divine guidance. They will thus enjoy an enviable life and earn deliverance and success in the Next.

Imparting education in Science and Technology

And We sent down iron in which is great violence and also advantages to mankind, and that Allah may find out who helps Allah, unseen and His Messengers. Certainly Allah is the Strongest, the Almighty.

(al-Hadid 57:25)

Many people, especially Western educated ones, think that the Qur'an makes no reference to science or industry. However, the Qur'an does speak of master architects who not only served mankind, but who also defended their co-religionists and community members. Such thoughts hardly cross people's mind insofar as their perception of the Qur'an is concerned.

While recounting His favours Allah makes particular mention of iron. The Qur'an pointedly says that Allah sent it down. It is not mentioned in passing as one of His numerous created things. Furthermore, attention is drawn to the

divine power and mercy in blessing mankind with this bounty. Architecture is part of technology. Iron plays an important role in architecture, warfare and activities related to defence and combat. Without iron no industry can flourish.

Of many minerals, the Qur'an picks upon iron, proclaiming that Allah sent it down. It is also stressed that iron contains numerous advantages. It represents a sign of Allah's Lordship. It has many constructive and beneficial uses, apart from its obvious use in manufacturing weapons. The Qur'an draws attention then to its very many benefits.

Furthermore, the Prophet David (peace and blessings be upon him) is specifically referred to as being taught by Allah how to make coats of mail to defend the human body. Iron was thus put at his disposal so that he could use

it constructively. Each expression of the above verse conveys a wealth of meaning.

Reference is also made to another of Allah's Messengers, namely the Prophet Solomon, son of the Prophet David (peace and blessings be upon them). He had a retinue of attendants, including jinn who acted on his orders. The latter accomplished much in the field of architecture and industry at Solomon's command. Significantly enough, all these activities were markedly constructive. Under the Prophet Solomon's leadership the jinn were engaged in beneficial acts. They did what he willed. He utilised them to spread his mission. Today natural resources are abused dor destruction. By contrast, men and jinn in the Prophet Solomon's day were not absolutely free to do what they liked. They did not invade, destroy and usurp others' belongings. ■

- "O my Lord! Increase Me in knowledge." (20:114) "Say: Are those who know equal to those who know not ? It is only men of understanding who will remember." (39:9.)
- Prophetic Injunction "Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave"
- "O Allah, I ask Thee for Beneficial Knowledge, acceptable action, and good provision"

Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi's Visit To Arab Countries

- S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi*

SHEIKH Syed Abul Hasan 'Ali Hasani Nadwi, from his study of the mission, d'awah, and struggles of Mujaddid Alf Thani (d.1624) and Hakimul Islam Shah Waliyullah Dehlavi (d. 1762), concluded that the downfall of Muslims was caused mainly by their political missteps and impious living. He also became aware of the horrible atrocities which the colonial powers had afflicted on Muslims in the Middle East and felt that the Muslim leaders had failed in assessing the damage and understanding the ramifications. All of these had created in him an earnest desire to remind Arabs that their dignity and progress depended solely on their true allegiance to the Prophet and in following the Prophet's ways with love and pride. Their success and honor lie only in uniting under the banner of the Prophet and in following the footsteps of the illustrious elders of the past.

Sheikh Nadwi's elder brother Sheikh Dr. Syed 'Abdul 'Ali Hasani had played a key role in ingraining this feeling and concern in Sheikh Nadwi. Dr. 'Ali used to take deep interest in the affairs of Muslims from all over the world and was always eager to improve their condition. Not only did he plant the seed of this concern in Sheikh Nadwi, but he also nourished it. As a result, Sheikh Nadwi became overwhelmed with this concern. Once

* Rector, Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow.

when he was visiting Mumbai (probably in 1935), he gathered employees of the Arab embassies and reminded them that they must come under the banner of Prophet Muhammad. That speech was later published as a booklet entitled *Ilai Rayatil Muhammadiyah Aiyohal 'Arab* (Arabic).

Consequently, Sheikh Nadwi chalked out a plan to work among Arabs by making d'awah and the life of the Prophet as the focal point of his strategy. Thus when he went for Hajj in 1947, he took stock of the situation and exchanged views with the learned people there. What he found useful in those discussions, he later added those to his renowned book *Ma Dha Khasar al-'Alam bi Inhitat-i-Muslimin*.

That trip to Hejaz was very fruitful in many respects. Abundance of wealth and modern advancements which appeared later had not surfaced yet and Hejaz was still living in its unique old traditions. 'Ulama were enjoying special status in the society and they were usually teaching in the premises of the Haram (the Grand Mosque of Makkah) which was like an independent university. Most prominent among those who were teaching there included Sheikh Hasanul Masat, Sheikh 'Abdur Razzaq Hamzah, Sheikh Muhammad 'Ali Al-Maghrabi, and Sheikh 'Alvi Maliki. Each of them was considered an expert in his

subject.

Since Sheikh Nadwi was quite fluent in Arabic, in both speaking and writing, and his study was very broad, he developed good rapport with those scholars and engaged in scholarly discussions with them. He became especially close to Sheikh Hamzah who was also the imam of Haram. Sheikh Hamzah was from Egypt and was a distinguished scholar with very broad study. Impressed by Sheikh Hamzah's eminence and caliber, Sheikh Nadwi presented a manuscript of his book *Ma Dha Khasar.....* to him. Sheikh Hamzah highly appreciated it and exchanged his views with Sheikh Nadwi on some topics. Sheikh Nadwi benefited so much from his conversations with Sheikh Hamzah that he felt that he had been to some extent compensated for not visiting Syria and other Arab countries in that trip.

Sheikh Nadwi stayed in Hejaz for about six months. He had taken his mother, wife, and a sister with him. He had also taken his nephew Sheikh Syed Muhammad Thani Hasani to assist him in taking care of the family members. Since Sheikh Syed Muhammad Thani Hasani was a graduate of Nadwatul 'Ulama and was well versed in Islamic knowledge, he was able to assist Sheikh Nadwi in his scholarly pursuits as well. Thus Sheikh Nadwi had the opportunity of benefitting from scholars of international repute without much distraction.

The observations and experiences in Hejaz benefitted Sheikh Nadwi greatly in d'awah, academic and research efforts, and enabled him to broaden and diversify the effort of d'awah after returning to India. That was also the time when India had just gained Independence and Indian Muslims were experiencing great difficulty and uncertainty with respect to their life and property — an issue that also played an important role in shaping Sheikh Nadwi's future strategy.

The other important aspect of that trip was that he was able to introduce the work of Jama'at Tabligh to the learned and educated people of Hejaz. It had been several years since the founder of Jama'at Tabligh, Sheikh Muhammad Ilyas Kandhlawi had passed away and his son Sheikh Muhammad Yusuf Kandhlawi was leading the effort now. Sheikh Yusuf was very anxious to introduce the work in Hejaz and had sent Sheikh 'Ubaidullah Balyawi there for that very purpose. Sheikh Balyawi was constantly writing to Sheikh Yusuf that someone who could effectively communicate with Arab scholars was needed to make any headway and Sheikh Nadwi would be very suitable for that purpose. Both Sheikh Yusuf and Sheikhul Hadith Muhammad Zakariya Kandhlawi agreed with Sheikh Balyawi's request and asked Sheikh Nadwi to lend his support to Sheikh Balyawi in his effort in Hejaz. In this way, the effort of Jama'at Tabligh which had initially started among common people started gaining ground among the learned

and influential people of Hejaz.

Sheikh Nadwi's second trip to Hejaz and other Arab countries came in 1950. The primary purpose of the trip was dawah and conveying message to the concerned people of the region. Sheikh 'Ubaidullah Balyawi and Sheikh Sa 'yeed Ahmad Khan Saharanpuri were already carrying on the work of Jama'at Tabligh in Hejaz with full dedication. On Sheikh Nadwi's recommendation, they were joined by two graduates of Nadwatul 'Ulama, Qazi Muhammad Moinullah Indori Nadwi and Sheikh 'Abdur Rasheed 'Azmi a year ago. Thus at the time Sheikh Nadwi reached Hejaz, an active group was already in place there.

The main purpose of sending Sheikh Indori and Sheikh 'Azmi was to reach the elite Arabs, especially of Hejaz, and provide them with literature that could wake them up from the state of apathy, enable them to understand prevailing condition, and make them realize the position and responsibility of the Muslim ummah. To approach them, some literature was produced in preparation of which Shiekh Nadwi had himself actively participated.

Sheikh Nadwi's book Ma Dha Khasar . . . (Islam and the World . . .) was not published yet. But a few articles had already been published. One of them was the article Ila Mumthili al- Bilad al-Islamiyah that he had prepared for the Muslim delegates who had come to Delhi to attend

a conference of Asian countries in 1947. In that article, leaders of the Muslim countries reminded of their obligations and how to fulfill them. The other article Baina Jibayah wal Hidayah was also prepared by Sheikh Nadwi; it was aimed at reminding rulers and leaders of the sacred region of Hejaz that their obligation of rendering proper Islamic leadership was more critical than that of providing political and material benefits.

Though Najd (central part of Saudi Arabia), due to having the capital (Riyadh) of the kingdom, is more important from the administrative point of view, Hejaz, due to being the heme of Harmain Sharifain (Makkah and Madinah), enjoys greater importance from the religious point of view. Thus Sheikh Nadwi wanted to make the leaders of Hejaz and other Arab countries understand the special responsibility that fell upon their shoulders because of the importance and sanctity of their countries. He felt that scholarly and inspiring literature could be very effective in this regard, especially if its language was eloquent.

Sheikh Nadwi had also taken four of his students — the author (Rabey Hasani), Sheikh 'Abdullah 'Abbas Nadwi (who was teaching Arabic at Nadwatul 'Ulama), Sheikh Syed Rizwan 'Ali Nadwi, and Sheikh Syed Muhammad Tahir Mansoorpuri Mazahari — with him in that trip. His intention was that they would continue working in Hejaz after he had left for other Arab countries.

One of the special features of that trip was that it was taking place in the blessed company of Sheikh Nadwi's spiritual mentor and guide Sheikh 'Abdul Qadir Raipuri. Sheikh Raipuri was not only leading the Hajj rituals, but was also giving inspiration and encouragement to Sheikh Nadwi in all of his d'awah efforts.

There was something very special that happened in that trip. Sheikh Shaibi, one of the high-ranking officials of Baitullah (cube-shaped structure in Makkah which is known as the House of Allah) himself made an offer to Sheikh Nadwi that he could go inside Baitullah and take with him whomever he wished. Sheikh Nadwi used to say that he got that opportunity only due to the auspicious company of Sheikh Raipuri because he did not get such an offer either before or after although he used to make frequent visits to Makkah. However, later in 1996, he was offered the key of Baitullah and had the privilege of opening its door.

That trip (to Hajj in 1950) had a very interesting background which Sheikh Nadwi himself used to recount. In 1949, two years after he performed his first hajj, an opportunity came by to go for hajj again. Based upon his experience of the first Hajj, he was very eager to avail that opportunity. But, from the very childhood, he had the habit of not doing anything without the consent and permission of his elders — his mother, elder brother Dr. 'Ali, and Sheikh 'Abdul Qadir Raipuri.

When Sheikh Nadwi approached Sheikh Raipuri to get permission for the trip, Sheikh Raipuri looked at him and asked, "How about if I say no to you?" Sheikh Nadwi replied, "Whatever you decide, I shall accept it wholeheartedly". At this, Sheikh Nadwi dropped the idea of undertaking that trip. That left a very good impression upon Sheikh Raipuri who greatly valued Sheikh Nadwi's sincerity and humility and rewarded him for the same by offering to go with him for Hajj the following year. Sheikh Raipuri told Sheikh Nadwi, "I am undertaking this journey just for you because you had forsaken the opportunity last year upon my saying".

The journey for Hajj by itself is very blessed and auspicious. But it becomes doubly blessed if it happens under the tutelage of an eminent sheikh (pious elder) and one can easily feel the special spiritual blessings of such a company. Thus that trip proved very fruitful in enriching Sheikh Nadwi's intellectual and scholarly capabilities and in widening his recognition in the Islamic world something which proved very useful later. There were many benefits and blessings of that trip which we saw right away. But there were many more the seeds of which were planted in that trip and their fruits continued appearing for years to come. Sheikh Nadwi did the work of d'awah in such a way that a solid foundation was laid down for future effort.

We traveled from Mumbai to Jeddah

by ship. The ship stoppeci on the port of Makalla, Hadramout, Yemen, for passengers to board from there. The sight of land after continuously sailing for four or five days on water gave special happiness to the passengers on board. The passengers who boarded the ship at Makalla included the son of the qazi (judge) of the town and several other learned 'ulama. When they came to know that the group from India also included 'ulama, they came to meet us and we developed good relationship with them. Three days later, the ship reached Jeddah and we met those who had arrived there earlier. Since we were very close to the days of hajj, we became very busy with the rites of Hajj.

After completing the rites of Hajj, Sheikh Nadwi started contacting 'ulama and learned people of Hejaz. There were two persons who proved very helpful in that respect. One of them was Sheikh Syed Mahmood Hafiz who was the director of the government press. Since Sheikh Hafiz's mother was from the Indian subcontinent, he was familiar with Urdu and had good relationship with people of the subcontinent. He also felt quite close to Sheikh Nadwi. So Sheikh Nadwi asked him if he could arrange a meeting with the journalists and intellectuals of Hejaz so that he could talk to them about how to make their (literary) expertise and talent useful for deen (Islam) and millat (Muslims). Sheikh Hafiz then introduced Sheikh Nadwi to Sheikh Ahmad 'Abdul

Ghafoor 'Attar who was very respectable figure in the literary circle of Hejaz and had very good connection with time intellectuals of Hejaz; he felt close to Sheikh Nadwi and became quite friendly with him.

Due to Sheikh 'Attar's efforts, a number of prominent journalists, poets, and intellectuals were invited to a dinner in a resort. Conversations took place between Sheikh Nadwi and the invitees before and after the dinner on topics ranging from literature to current issues. One of the invitees was Syed 'Ali Hasan Fad' aq. He was a man of progressive thinking and was very popular among his Peers, but his religious views were shaky and wobbly. He posed questions to Sheikh Nadwi as if he was probing Sheikh Nadwi's knowledge and acquaintance with the Western literature and thinking. But he and others were extremely impressed with how Sheikh Nadwi responded to his queries and Sheikh Nadwi's command of the Arabic language.

It was a big test for Sheikh Nadwi as he himself used to recount, but the final outcome was very positive and the meeting left a very positive impact on the hearts and minds of the progressive minded journalists, poets, and literary people of Hejaz. All of the invitees became life-long admirers of Sheikh Nadwi and in turn became deeply committed to Islam in their lives.

On that occasion, Sheikh Nadwi

proposed to them that they all should come out of their respective environments, spend some time together, and freely exchange their views. They all agreed to do so. Wadi Fatima, a village about 15km from Makkah, was chosen as the venue. It was decided to stay in a mosque so that a religious environment could be experienced.

So an entourage of learned individuals came out of Makkah and headed towards the village of Wadi Fatima to spend a day and night together. They got an opportunity to discuss and exchange their views about d'awah and related issues. Since they were new to this kind of environment and more geared towards amusement and fun, one of them had brought a radio with him. In those days, radio was considered a vice in religious circles, but Sheikh Nadwi tolerated it for the sake of d'awah.

The overall effect was very positive. They all got connected to Sheikh Nadwi and the effort of d'awah and remained so for life. In this way, a foundation was laid down for the effort of d'awah among the modern educated population of the holy land of Hejaz. Besides Syed 'Ali Hasan Fad'aq, there were a few other journalists who were very influential among youth groups. They became very close to Sheikh Nadwi. They were 'Abdul Quddus, Ansari, Muhammad Mohsin Baarom, Sa'yeedul 'Aamoodi, and Ahmad 'Abdul Ghafoor 'Attar.

Some of the above-mentioned journalists and poets had good connection with Sheikh Muhammad Suroor al-Sabban who was the second-most influential persons in the Saudi government and was also well respected in the literary circle. Their acquaintance with Sheikh al-Sabban became a means of introducing Sheikh Nadwi to him. Sheikh al-Sabban later arranged a five-day trip of Sheikh Nadwi to Taif where Sheikh Nadwi met local scholars and learned people and presented his views to them. Those who accompanied Sheikh Nadwi to Taif included me, Qazi Muhammad 'Moinullah Indori Nadwi, and Sheikh Ahmad 'Abdul Ghafoor 'Attar. Sheikh 'Attar was very helpful in reaching the educated people of Taif. After returning from Taif, meetings with local scholars continued in Makkah and Sheikh Nadwi's speeches were broadcast on Saudi Radio as well.

Education and journalism had not yet made any significant progress in Saudi Arabia. In the entire country, there were hardly three or four institutions up to high school level and most schools were up to the primary level only. Students, after finishing education in Saudi Arabia, used to go mostly to Egypt to complete their education.

In Makkah, there were two traditional institutions, namely Madrasah Saulatiyah and Madrasah al-Falah. Madrasah Saulatiyah was a private institution which was run on the pattern of madaris

(institutions of Islamic learning) of the Indian subcontinent. Madrasah al-Falah was a government institution which was run according to the old traditions of Hejaz.

In Madinah, there was an institution known as Madrasah Uloom Shari'ah which was established by Sheikh Syed Ahmad Faizabadi (older brother of Sheikh Syed Hussain Ahmad Madni) and run by his brother Sheikh Syed Mahmood Madni. It was run on the same pattern as that of Madrasah Saulatiah. In fact, both Madrasah Saulatiah (Makkah) and Madrasah Uloom Shari'ah (Madinah) were established on the behest of prominent scholars (such as Sheikh Rahmatullah Kairanawi) of the subcontinent to counter the influence of Christianity. In the past, these institutions had produced many distinguished scholars. But, after the modern educational system was introduced in Saudi Arabia, they started losing ground and their influence has significantly diminished. After having developed a circle of acquaintances in Hejaz, Sheikh Nadwi wanted to visit Egypt, Syria, and Sudan. These countries, especially Egypt, had made significant progress both educationally and intellectually and were influencing the entire Arab world. Egypt had in fact emerged as the educational and ideological leader of the Arab world. A serious effort was being made in Egypt to revive Islam under the leadership of Sheikh Hasan al-Banna. Young and common people were getting inspired and Islam was coming back into

their lives. But when Sheikh Hasan al-Banna was martyred, those who were eager to revive Islam were greatly hurt and needed to be consoled and comforted to continue their struggle. At that moment, Sheikh Nadwi's book *Ma Dha Khasar*..... played an important role in healing their wounds and everyone found in it a kind and caring companion.

Sheikh Nadwi had stayed in Hejaz for four months (September 1950 to January 1951) in that trip. During that stay, he felt that Egypt enjoyed central position in the Arab world, both educationally and intellectually. Though it was producing illicit, harmful, and immoral kind of literature, it was also producing healthy, robust, and stimulating literature. Sheikh Nadwi also felt that if an idea, change or revolution had to gain currency in the Arab world, it was more likely to succeed if it came from Egypt. He thus became fully convinced of the importance and benefit of visiting Egypt and finally made up his mind to go there.

His book *Ma Dha Khasar* . . . had already reached Egypt and gained widespread popularity. As a result, he felt at home as soon as he arrived there. In his meetings, discourses, and speeches, he explained to people that it would be best to adopt the strategy of Mujaddid Alf Thani in the situation that was prevailing in the Islamic world at the moment. Mujaddid Alf Thani, in order to counter ill effects of the anti-Islamic attitude of Emperor Akbar on the country and people

of India, had adopted the path of negotiation and persuasion (instead of confrontation) for his d'awah and his strategy had proven very successful in changing the attitude of future rulers.

The trip gave Sheikh Nadwi a good understanding of the condition of the Arab world — its complexity, dangers, potentials, and expectations. He also got opportunities to meet many leaders who were spearheading efforts of d'awah and jihad in the Arab world and Middle East. He met Sheikh Shamil of Qafqaz of Azerbaijan, Sheikh 'Abdul Karim Refi of Morocco, Ameer 'Abdul Qadir of Algeria, and Mufti Aminul Hussaini of Palestine. All of them were living in Egypt in exile. They were leading the efforts of d'awah and islah in their respective countries before being forced to take refuge in Cairo. He also met Sheikh Amin Siraj and other Turkish 'ulama living in exile in Cairo. Those encounters and experiences gave Sheikh Nadwi a better understanding of the intent, politics, and diplomacy of the imperialist powers.

He also got an opportunity to visit Syria and Sudan and met important personalities there. These experiences and exposures created in him a kind of restlessness, feeling, and pain which set him apart from other 'ulama of his time. It also gave him special understanding and insight of the dynamics of the ups and downs of the Islamic world.

After returning from that trip; Sheikh

Nadwi started focusing more on the Islamic world in his speeches, writings, and d'awah efforts. He also found that what he had written in his book *Ma Dha Khasar* . . . was quite appropriate to the need of time and accurately represented his viewpoint. The book continued making the same impact that it had made when it first came out.

For the next ten years, Sheikh Nadwi did not get any opportunity to visit Hejaz. However, after five years, he was invited in 1956 for a lecture series by the Shari'ah College of Damascus University. He stayed in Syria for two months on that occasion. During that stay, he got opportunities to meet many prominent scholars, intellectuals, and spiritual elders and benefit from them. He became very close to Sheikh Ahmad Haroon al-'Asal al-Hajjar who was a prominent sheikh of the al-Ghazaliyah tradition.

Those who attended Sheikh Nadwi's lectures regularly in Damascus included many distinguished scholars and academicians of Damascus such as Sheikh Mustafa al-Sabai, Dr. M'arouf al-Dawalibi, 'Allamah Bahjatul Bitar, Sheikh Mustafa Zarqa, and Muhammad al-Mubarak. Dr. al-Dawalibi later became the prime minister of Syria.

During the Stay in Syria, he made a side trip to Turkey and became intimately familiar with the conditions there. The visits to the Arab countries and Turkey allowed him to get a true understanding of the two

issues about which the 'ulama of India were either totally unaware of or fully relied upon hearsay and formed a misleading opinion. One of those issues was the military revolution of Egypt.

Col. Gamal Abdel Nasser had led the military coup and ended the monarchy in Egypt. Since the support of Ikhwanul Muslimeen, the strongest pro-Islamic group, had played an important role in making the coup successful, it was generally believed that the coup was a victory for the pro-Islamic forces and Col. Nasser was sympathetic to the cause of Islam. But, soon thereafter, he distanced himself from the pro-Islamic groups, consolidated his power and started pursuing his own agenda. As a result, a rift erupted between Col. Nasser and Ikhwanul Muslimeen.

Since Ikhwanul Muslimeen was very strong and popular movement in Egypt, it was not easy to wipe it out. So Gamal Nasser, in an attempt to dismantle Ikhwanul Muslimeen, adopted the slogan of Arab nationalism so that he could mute the Islamic sentiments of people. To accomplish this, he instituted very harsh policies, resorted to all kinds of brutalities and sought the assistance of foreign powers. Even the 'ulama of the country got carried away by the idea of Arab nationalism and started supporting Gamal Nasser instead of Ikhwanul Muslimeen. They failed to recognize that Arab nationalism, despite its outward pro-Islamic face, was in fact anti-Islamic and

deeply rooted in anti-religious sentiments.

Thus when Sheikh Nadwi, upon his return from Egypt to India, made statements explaining the noble mission of Ikhwan and anti-Islamic attitude of the secular government of Gamal Nasser, many Indian 'ulama strongly rebuffed him and rejected his assessment. Because of not knowing the facts, they adored Gamal Nasser as an Islamic hero and condemned Ikhwanul as a rebel group leader.

The other issue about which Sheikh Nadwi made statements after his return to India was the condition of Turkey which had witnessed demolition of the Islamic khilafah (caliphate) at the hands of Mustafa Kemal Ata Turk in the beginning of the last century.

Before Ata Turk started dismantling the khilafah, he had played a heroic role in defeating Greeks in the Greco-Turkish War (1919-22) and thus was hailed as a hero. but, soon after his spectacular success in the battleground, he embraced anti-Islamic ideas of secularism, decimated the khilafah, and banned all Islamic traditions and practices including the use of Arabic script, calling of azan (call for prayer) in Arabic and display of any Islamic identity.

All Islamic practices were banned and declared unpatriotic. Any Islamic act that was contrary to secularism was declared illegal and punishable by the Turkish constitution. Thus Turkey was

driven out of Islam and Ata Turk imposed his anti-Islamic ideology with full force. According to the new constitution, even the judiciary was banned from hearing complaints against anti-Islamic moves.

In other words, Mustafa Kemal Ata Turk took Turkey out of Islam and flung it back into the days of ignorance. After Ata Turk's death in 1938, his confidant Ismet Inonu continued his policies and kept Turkey on the same path of hostility towards Islam for more than a half century.

Sheikh Nadwi, after returning from Turkey, gave statements explaining in detail that Ata Turk was in fact an enemy of Islam and was the root cause of the destruction of Islam in Turkey. Many Indian 'ulama, based upon their knowledge of Ata Turk's early accomplishments, still considered him a hero and thus rejected Sheikh Nadwi's assessment. However, what transpired later confirmed Sheikh Nadwi's appraisal and views.

Sheikh Nadwi felt that the main culprits for the problems and hardships of the Islamic world were the Muslim leaders who were serving as puppets of the Western powers. While keeping their own public in dark, they were implementing policies which were aimed at continuing the political and ideological domination of the West over Muslim countries.

Thus whenever Sheikh Nadwi got an opportunity to meet leaders of the Islamic world, he advised them to pay attention to rectify the situation. To those whom he

could not meet personally. He wrote letters reminding them of the same. In his books and articles also, he highlighted reasons for the sad plight of the Islamic world and the destructive role that the Western politics and diplomacy had played in it.

The colonial powers have been constantly working to brainwash the bright and intelligent minds (potential future rulers) of the Islamic world. As a result, Muslim rulers have failed miserably in implementing policies which were appropriate for their own countries — main cause for the deplorable condition which they are in today.

In Sheikh Nadwi's travels to Muslim countries, Europe and America, I often had the opportunity to accompany him. In those trips, I always witnessed how concerned he was about the condition [of Muslims] in those countries and how anxious he was to make the intelligent and talented individuals concerned and motivated about Islam.

Given that Hejaz is the heart of the entire Islamic world, Sheikh Nadwi took great pains to impress upon the rulers and influential people of that land of the very special responsibility that falls on their shoulders. Since he was blessed with the ability to speak and write Arabic like a native, whenever he spoke, people listened to him very attentively.

After he visited Hejaz in 1950, he did not get an opportunity to go there again for the next ten years. But based upon what

he had observed and learned in the last two visits (1947 and 1950), he continued conveying his message to the people of Hejaz through his writings — letters and articles -until the time came in 1962 for the establishment of the Islamic University in Madinah. He was appointed to the Higher Council of the university and thereafter he went to Madinah every year to attend the annual meeting of the council.

Then came the founding of Muslim World League of which Sheikh Nadwi was appointed as one of the founding members. The main person responsible for that appointment was Sheikh Muhammad Suroor al-Sabban. In 1950, when Sheikh Nadwi was visiting Hejaz, Sheikh al-Sabban had become very close to him. He was the finance minister of Saudi Arabia at that time. He was also a respected poet and literary man and had participated in the event that was arranged in Taif during Sheikh Nadwi's trip.

When the Saudi Arabian government approved the formation of Muslim World League, Sheikh al-Sabban was given the responsibility of putting it together and he included Sheikh Nadwi as one of the founding members — a position of great distinction. Thereafter, Sheikh Nadwi started visiting Hejaz frequently to attend meetings of the Islamic University of Madinah and Muslim World League. During those visits, he always kept d'awah before him and whenever there was an opportunity, he did not hesitate in presenting his views. There were

occasions when he was presiding over meetings and had to deliver concluding remarks. He fully utilized those opportunities to remind the audience about the problems which Muslims were facing in the world and how to set them right. His talks and style of touching and penetrating that many in the audience would find tears in their eyes and leave the gathering with a genuine concern and message.

In connection with Muslim World League, Sheikh Nadwi got an opportunity to meet Shah Faisal, the ruler of Saudi Arabia. He reminded the king of his responsibilities as the ruler of his country, special position of Saudi Arabia in the Islamic world, and the need for Saudi Arab to be a role model for other Muslim countries. He also brought to the king's attention other administrative and social issues which deemed appropriate to him.

Sheikh Nadwi gave his impression about Shah Faisal that he was a very intelligent and experienced ruler. As soon as Sheikh Nadwi started talking about an issue, the king himself began explaining what was the intention and plan of the government in that regard. In other words, the king was very quick in sensing what Sheikh Nadwi wanted to know and genuinely replied to his queries.

In later years, Shah Faisal spearheaded the effort of bringing unity among Muslim countries although Europe and America were not willing to give any chance to such an effort. At that time, there were only two leaders — Ahmadu Bello of

Nigeria and Shah Faisal — who were bold enough to fully embrace that mission. Though the king could not fulfill this dream in his lifetime, he laid its foundation by establishing Muslim World League. The king also played a leading role in establishing Motamar al- Alam al-Islami (World Muslim Congress) which is still actively functional. The European powers could not tolerate Ahmadu Bello and ultimately got him martyred by the Masonic forces.

From his visits to Arab countries, Sheikh Nadwi had concluded that Hejaz and thus Saudi Arabia held special place in the Islamic world. If Hejaz truly assumed the mantle of leadership, it could serve as a catalyst for bringing positive changes in the entire Muslim world and in bringing Muslims out of the state of desperation, uncertainty, and disgrace.

Similar was his impression about Egypt. Due to the progress that Egypt had made in education and culture, it enjoyed a position of eminence among Arab countries. Its educational system was most advanced in the Arab world; its people were very spirited; it was the most populous country in the Arab world. Thus Egypt also had the potential of assuming the mantle of leadership of the entire Arab world and if a reform effort was launched from there, it would affect the entire region as was demonstrated by the movement of Ikhwanul Muslimeen. Ikhwanul Muslimeen under the leadership of Sheikh Hasan al-Banna had spread all over Egypt

and was significantly changing the lives of people and influencing other Arab countries as well.

He also got opportunities to address people - common as well as elite — of Syria, Jordan, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Yemen, and Morocco. In Yemen, he spoke to the army also. In every place and on every occasion, he reminded people of their Islamic and moral obligations. For that purpose, he had prepared a series of lectures which were published in the form of booklets known as the ism'ai series: Isma'i Ya Misr, Isma'i Ya Suriya, Isma'i Ya Zahratus Sihr, and Bayna al-Alam wal Jazirat al-'Arab.

People were impressed with Sheikh Nadwi's knowledge, vision, wisdom, farsightedness, and understanding of the problems of the Islamic world. They felt that he wanted to unshackle the message of Islam from the regional, linguistic, racial, and cultural constraints and revive it as a universal message that was beneficial for the entire mankind. Also, he was very particular and cautious in avoiding anything which could undermine the message of Islam. That is why he, during his travels to Arab countries, was extremely careful in protecting himself and his associates from being affected by the wealth and material riches of the Arab world. He resorted to zuhd (asceticism) and istighna (expecting nothing from anyone except Allah) on every occasion. Details of these travels can be found in his travelogues. ■

The Qur'an – A Book of Guidance

- Saeedur Rahman Azmi Nadwi*

The basic source of Islamic culture is the Qur'an. It is Allah's final revelation to human beings. No falsehood can touch it. It is the main foundation of Islamic culture and civilization. It encompasses all gamut of human life. It is an eternal message and a universal relevance. It is the only revealed Book whose text stands pure and uncorrupted even today.

The Qur'an and our responsibilities:

The first and foremost thing for us is to memorize the entire Qur'an. If it is impossible to learn the whole Qur'an by heart, some parts of it must be memorized so that we may take guidance from its light and blessings. In fact, it is a glorious fountain of life. Its fluency and sweetness never dry up.

The second thing is that due attention should be made towards its recitation, phonetics and accurate pronunciation. We also should try to comprehend its true meanings, teachings, secret facts, fineness, subtleties and elegances.

It is unfortunate that most of us are unaware of recitation rules of the Qur'an and often make blunders during its recitation and articulation.

Some characteristics of the Holy Quran:

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The first characteristic is that it is the Book of Allah. It is immune from all sort of human adulterations. Angel Jibreel was transmitter and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was its holder, receiver, explainer and annotator.

The second characteristic is its continuity. The Qur'an is the last divine Book. It is not revealed for any particular nation but for all mankind. It is a glorious beacon. Allah Himself took responsibility of its safety, integrity and protection. The Holy Qur'an says: "We have, without doubt, sent down the message; and We will assuredly guard it from corruption." (S. 15, A 9)

The third characteristic is its universality and comprehensiveness. Besides being an everlasting miracle of Allah, it is a complete code of Islam. It is a panacea for all diseases. It deals with a wide spectrum of issues regarding human life. As the Qur'an says, "Verily this no less than a message to all the worlds. (S. 81, A, 27)

The fourth characteristic is its literary form, miraculous aspects, wonderful eloquences and rhetorics. The Qur'an challenged unbeliever people of Mecca that if they had power, present Qur'an like any book. But despite they were most rhetoricians failed to present a single verse, let alone the entire Qur'an. On which Allah

candidly said, “if the whole of mankind and Jinns were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur’an, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they have backed up each other with help and support” (S.17, A, 88)

In short, it is up to us to follow The Qur’an and lead our lives according to its mainstream. ■

(English rendering by
Obaidur Rahman Nadwi)

The State Must Ensure Safe Mobility Options

Sixteen labourers died and five others were hurt after a truck in which they were travelling overturned in Maharashtra’s Jalgaon district on Sunday. On the same day, in another road mishap, 14 people were killed and four others injured after a minibus collided with a truck in Andhra Pradesh’s Kurnool district. These two accidents are a stark reminder that India’s roads have become death traps. Last week, Union transport minister Nitin Gadkari acknowledged the dire situation, and said that India’s road accident scenario is more “dangerous than the Covid-19 pandemic”.

According to a just-released World Bank report, *Traffic Crash Injuries And Disabilities: The Burden on Indian Society*, despite having only 1% of the world’s vehicles, India accounts for the highest number of road accidents globally, killing 150,000 people and leaving more than 450,000 with disabilities every year. The poor suffer the most. More than 75% of poor households reported a decline in their income due to a road mishap. Low-income households (LIH) reported twice the numbers of deaths post-crash vis-à-vis high-income households, while victims from LIH and rural areas are also twice more likely to suffer a disability after a crash than high-income households.

The State must provide safe mobility options and better roads; regularly conduct road safety audits; overhaul the accident response systems; scrutinise detailed project reports on road construction; conduct fitness checks of on-road vehicles; and push auto manufacturers to ensure better safety features. But first, India must accept that the accidents on its roads now constitute a serious public health crisis.

(Editorial Hindustan Times, 16-02-2021)

Jews And Christians in The Light of Qur'an And Hadith

- Maryam Jameelah

Those who believe in that which is revealed unto thee (Muhammad), and those who are Jews, and Christians, and Sabeans—whoever believeth in Allah and the Last Day and doeth right—surely their reward is with their Lord and there shall no fear come upon them; neither shall they grieve. 11: 62.

Oh Children of Israel! Remember My favour with which I favoured you and how I preferred you to all creation. And guard yourselves against a day when no soul in aught will avail another, nor will compensation be accepted from it, nor will intercession be of use to it, nor will they be helped. 11: 122-123

And they say: None entereth Paradise unless he be a Jew or a Christian. These are their own desires. Say: Bring forth your proof of what ye state if ye are truthful! 11: 111.

And the Jews will not be pleased with thee, nor will the Christians, till thou follow their creed. Say: the guidance of Allah is the Guidance. And if thou shouldst follow their desires after the knowledge which hath come to thee, then wouldst thou have from Allah no protecting friend nor helper. 11: 120.

And the Jews say the Christians follow nothing true, and the Christians say the Jews follow nothing true; yet both are readers of the Scriptures. Even

thus speak those who know not. Allah will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that wherein they differ. 11: 113.

And they say: Be Jews or Christians, then ye will be guided. Say unto them, (O Muhammad): Nay, but we follow the religion of Abraham the upright, and he was not of the idolators. Say (O Muslims): We believe in Allah and that which is revealed unto us and that which was revealed unto Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac and Jacob, and the tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus received, and that which all the prophets received from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and unto Him we have surrendered. 11: 135-136.

Have ye (Muslims) any hope that they (the Jews) will be true to you when a party of them used to listen to the Word of Allah, then used to change it, after they had understood it knowingly? 11: 75.

Woe be unto those who write the Scripture with their hands and then, say, 'This is from Allah,' that they may purchase a small gain therewith. Woe unto them for that their hands have Written, and woe unto them for that they earn thereby. 11: 79.

And because of their breaking the Covenant. We have cursed them (the

Jews) and made hard their hearts. They change words from their context and forget a part whereof they were admonished. Thou wilt not cease to discover treachery from all save a few of them. _ But. bear with them and pardon them—lo! Allah loveth the kindly. And with those who say: 'lo, we are Christians,' We made a Covenant, but they forgot a part of that whereof they were admonished. Therefore We have stirred up enmity and hatred among them (between the Jews and Christians) till the Day of Resurrection when Allah will inform them of their handiwork. V: 13-14.

The People of the Scripture ask of thee that thou shouldst cause an (actual) Book to descend upon them from Heaven. They asked a greater thing of Moses aforetime, for they said: Show us Allah plainly. The storm of lightning seized them for their wickedness. Then after that they chose the calf for worship after clear proofs of Allah's sovereignty had come to them. And We forgave them that! And We bestowed on Moses evident authority. And We caused the Mount (Sinai.) to tower above them that at the taking of their Covenant and We bade them. Transgress not the Sabbath and We took from them a firm Covenant. IV; 153-154.

And remember when ye (Children of Israel) said: O Moses, we are weary

of one kind of food; so call upon thy Lord for us that He bring forth for us of that which the earth grows—of its herbs, its cucumbers, its corn, lentils and onions. He said: Would you exchange that which is higher for that which is lower? Go down to settled country, thus ye shall get that which ye demand. And humiliation and wretchedness were stamped upon them (the Jews) and they were visited with wrath from Allah. That was because they disbelieved in Allah's revelations and slew the Prophets wrongfully. That was for their disobedience and transgression. 11: 61.

Because of the wrongdoing of the Jews, We forbade them good things which We (before) made lawful unto them and because of their much hindering from Allah's way, and of their taking usury when they were forbidden it, and of their devouring wealth by false pretences. We have prepared for those who disbelieve a shameful doom! But those of them who are firm in knowledge and the believers in that which is revealed unto thee (Muhammad), and that which was revealed before thee, especially the diligent in prayer and those who pay the poor-due, the believers in Allah and the Last Day, upon these We shall bestow an immense reward. IV : 160-162.

And thou wilt find them (the Jews) greediest of mankind for life and even greedier for it than the idolaters. Each of them would like to be allowed to live

a thousand years. And to live a thousand years would by no means remove them from the Doom. Allah is Seer of what they do. II: 96.

We made a Covenant of old with the Children of Israel and We sent unto them messengers. As often as a messenger came unto them with that which their souls desired not, they grew rebellious. Some of them they denied and some they slew. They thought no harm would come of it so they were willfully blind and deaf. And afterward Allah turned in mercy toward them. Now even after that many of them are willfully blind and deaf. Allah is Seer of what they do. V: 70-71.

O People of the Scripture! Why will ye argue about Abraham, when the Torah and the Gospel were not revealed until after him? Have ye then no sense? III: 65

Abraham was not a Jew, nor yet a Christian; but he was an upright man who had surrendered unto Allah, and he was not of the idolators. Lo! Those of mankind who have the best claim to Abraham are those who followed him, and this Prophet and those who believe with him; and Allah is the Protecting Friend of the believers. III: 67-68.

And lo! There is a party of them who distort the Scripture with their tongues, that ye may think what they say is from the Scripture, when it is not from the Scripture. And they say: It is from

Allah, when it is not from Allah ; and they speak a lie concerning Allah knowingly. III: 78.

They have indeed disbelieved who say: Lo, Allah is the Messiah. the son of Mary. Say; Who then can do aught against Allah, if He had willed to destroy the Messiah, son of Mary, and his mother and everyone on earth? Allah's is the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them He creates what He will, and Allah is Able to do all things. V: 17.

They surely disbelieve who say: Lo, Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary. The Messiah himself said: O Children of Israel! Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Lo! Whoso ascribeth partners unto Allah, forbidden for him is Paradise. His abode is the Fire. For evil-doers there will be no helpers. V: 72

Lo! The likeness of Jesus with Allah is as the likeness of Adam. He created him of dust, and then He said unto him: Be! And he is! III: 59.

And when the angels said: Oh Mary! Lo! Allah hath chosen thee and made thee pure, and hath preferred thee above all the women of creation. III: 42.

And remember when the angels said: Oh Mary! Lo! Allah giveth thee glad tidings of a son from Him, whose name is the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, illustrious in the world and the Hereafter, and one of those brought near unto

Allah. He will speak unto mankind in his cradle and in his manhood, he is of the righteous. She said: My Lord! how can I have a child when no mortal hath touched me? He said: So it will be. Allah createth what He will. If he decreeth a thing, He saith unto it only; Be! And it is! And He will teach him the Scripture and wisdom, and the Torah and the Gospel. And will make him a Messenger unto the Children of Israel saying: Lo! I come unto you with a sign from your Lord. Lo! I fashion for you out of clay the likeness of a bird, and I breathe into it and it is a bird by Allah's leave. I heal him who was born blind, and the leper, and I raise the dead, by Allah's permission. And I announce unto you what ye eat and what ye store up in your houses. Lo, verily it is a portent for you if ye are believers. And I come confirming that which was before me of the Torah, and to make lawful some of that which was forbidden unto you. I come unto you with a sign from your Lord, so keep your duty to Allah and obey me. Lo! Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. This is a straight path. III: 45-51.

And make mention of Mary in the Scripture when she had withdrawn from her, people to a chamber looking East and hath chosen seclusion from them. Then We sent unto her Our spirit and it assumed for her the likeness of a perfect man. She said: Lo! I seek refuge in the Beneficent One from thee, if thou art Godfearing, He said: I am only a

messenger of thy Lord that I may bestow on thee a faultless son. She said: How can I have a son when no mortal hath touched me, neither have I been unchaste? He said: So it will be. Thy Lord saith: It is easy for Me. And it will be that We may make of him a revelation for mankind and a mercy from Us, and it is a thing ordained. And she conceived and withdrew with him to a far place. And the pangs of childbirth drove her unto the trunk of a palm tree. She said: Oh, would have I died ere this and become a thing of naught— forgotten ! Then an angel cried out unto her from below her saying: Grieve not! Thy Lord hath placed a rivulet beneath thee and shake the trunk of the palm-tree and ripe dates will fall upon thee. So eat drink and be consoled. And if thou meetest any mortal say: Lo! I have vowed a fast unto the Beneficent and may not speak this day to any mortal. Then she brought him, carrying him to her own folk. They said: Oh Mary! Thou hast come with an amazing thing! Oh sister of Aaron, thy father was not a wicked man, nor was thy mother a harlot. Then she pointed to him. They said: How can we speak to one who is in the cradle, a young boy? He speaks Lo! I am the slave of Allah. He hath given me Scripture and hath appointed me a Prophet. And hath made me blessed wheresoever I may be, and hath enjoined upon me prayer and almsgiving so long as I remain alive. And hath

made me dutiful towards her who bore me, and hath not made me arrogant, unblest. Peace be on me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I shall be raised alive! Such was Jesus, son of Mary. This is a statement of the truth concerning which they doubt. It befiteth not the Majesty of Allah that He should take unto Himself a son. Glory be to Him! When He decreeth a thing, He saith unto it only: Be! and it is! And lo!, Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so serve Him. That is the right path. The sects among them (the Christians) differ; but woe unto the disbelievers on the meeting of an awful Day! XIX: 16-37.

(As for) their saying: We (the Jews) slew the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, Allah's Messenger—They slew him not nor crucified him. It so appeared unto them and lo! those who disagree concerning it are in doubt thereof; they have no knowledge save in pursuit of a conjecture. They slew him not for certain but Allah took him up unto Himself Allah is ever Mighty, Wise. There is not one of the Peoples of Scriptures but will believe in him (Jesus Christ) before his death, and on the Day of Resurrection he will be a witness against them. IV: 157-159.

Nawas bin Siman reported that the Apostle of Allah mentioned about the Dajjal (anti-Christ)...Allah will send the Messsiah, son of Mary...He (Christ) will then search for him (Dajjal) till he will

overtake him at the door of Lud (in Palestine) and then he will kill him... (Muslim, Tirmizi)

Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of Allah said: The son of Mary will certainly descend as Ruler. He shall break the Cross, kill swines, establish Jizya and leave the young she-camels without riding them, and mutual enmity, hatred and malice will certainly disappear. He shall call towards wealth but none will accept it... How will you be when the son of Mary will come down amongst you and your Imam (Mehdi) will come from among you? (Muslim)

Abdullah bin Amir reported that the Messenger of Allah said: Jesus, the son of Mary, will come down to the world (again). He will marry and there will be his issue and he will live for forty-five years and then die. He will be buried in my grave. Then I and Jesus, son of Mary, will stand up (on Resurrection Day) in one grave between Abu Bakr and Umar. (Ibn ul-Jauzi)

The Messiah, son of Mary, was no other than a Messenger, of the like of whom have passed away before him. And his mother (Mary) was a saintly woman. And they used to eat earthly food. See how We make the revelations clear for them and see how they are turned away! V: 73-75.

Thou wilt find the most vehement of mankind in hostility to those who believe to be the Jews and idolaters.

And thou wilt find the nearest of them in affection to those who believe to be those who say: Lo, we are Christians. That is because there are among them priests and monks, and because they are not proud. When they listen to that which hath been revealed unto the Messenger, thou seest their eyes overflow with tears because of their recognition of the Truth. They say: Our Lord, we believe. Inscribe us among the witnesses. V: 82-83.

Oh ye who believe! Choose not for friends such of those who received the Scripture before you, and of the disbelievers, who make a jest and sport of your faith, but keep your duty to Allah if ye are true believers. V: 57.

Oh ye who believe! Take not the Jews and Christians for friends. They are friends one to another. He among you who taketh them for friends is one of them. Lo, Allah guideth not wrongdoing folk. V: 51.

Jaber bin Abdullah reported: Umar Ibn Khattab informed me that he heard the Apostle of Allah say (during his last illness): I must expel the Jews and Christians from the peninsula of Arabia. If I live, God willing, I must expel the Jews and Christians from the peninsula of Arabia. (Muslim)

Jaber reported from the Holy Prophet when Umar came to him and said : Verily we hear traditions from the Jews which please us. 'Will you advise

us to write down some of these? He said: Do you wish to court destruction as the Jews and Christians have courted? I have certainly brought Quran to you like a fresh egg. Had Moses been alive, he would not have preferred but to follow me. (Musnad of Ahmad ibn Hanbal).

And thou seest many of them (Jews and Christians) vying one with another in sin and transgression and their devouring of illicit gain. Verily, evil is what they do. Why do not their rabbis and priests forbid their evil-speaking and their devouring of illicit gain? Verily evil is what they do. V : 62-63.

Um Habibah and Um Salmah spoke of a church they had seen in Ethiopia in which there were statues and pictures of Jesus and the saints and they mentioned this to the Prophet. He said: Behold, those people when a righteous man from among them dies and they build over his grave a church and set therein such-like images; on Resurrection Day, God will regard them as the most wicked of His creation. (Sahih-al-Bukhari)

It is not possible for any human being unto whom Allah had given the Scripture and wisdom and the Prophethood that he should afterwards have said to mankind: Be slaves of me instead of Allah but what he said was: Be ye faithful servants of the Lord by virtue of your constant teaching of the

Scripture and of your constant study thereof. III: 79.

Oh children of Israel! Remember My favour wherewith I favoured you, and fulfill your part of the Covenant. I shall fulfill My part of the Covenant, and fear Me! And believe in that which I reveal confirming that which ye possess already of the Scripture, and be not first to disbelieve therein, and part not with My revelations for a trifling and keep your duty to Me! II: 40-41.

Oh people of the Scripture! Why disbelieve ye in the revelations of Allah when ye yourselves bear witness to their truth? Oh People of the Scripture! Why confound ye truth with falsehood and knowingly conceal the truth? III: 70-71.

Say, O people of the Scripture, come to an agreement between us and you; that we shall worship none but Allah, and that we shall ascribe no partner unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for Lords beside Allah. And if they turn

away, then say: Bear witness that we are they who have surrendered unto Him. III: 64.

Say, O people of the Scripture! Why drive ye back believers from the way of Allah, seeking to make it crooked. when ye are witnesses to Allah's guidance? Allah is not unaware of what ye do. III: 99.

And whoso seeketh a way of life other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him, and he will be a loser in the Hereafter. III: 85.

If only the people of the Scripture would believe and ward off evil, surely We would remit their sins from them and surely bring them into Gardens of Delight. V: 65.

Seek they other than the faith of Allah when unto Him submitteth whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly, and unto Him they will be returned. III: 83. ■

“Muhammad was the most faithful protector of those he protected, the sweetest and most agreeable in conversation, Those who saw him were suddenly filled with reverence; those who came to hear him loved him; they who described him would say, ‘I have never his like either before or after’. He was of great taciturnity, but whenever he spoke it was with emphasis and deliberation. and no one could forget what he said.”

Stanley Lane Poole, THE SPEECHES AND TABLE OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD, London. 1882

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Scientific Proof of Revival of Life

- Mohammad Shihabuddin Nadwi

The man dies. He is buried. His body mixes with dust and turns into dust. His existence is completely eliminated. Can he then be resurrected? According to certain biological facts this is possible. In the light of these facts this phenomenon of the revival of life can be better explained in a rational way. The non-believers and the agnostics have all along been refusing to accept the concept of the resurrection itself. The atheists assert that there is no creator or administrator of this world and that the manifestations of the universe are appearing on their own and that anything that comes into being once and then culminates, can never be recreated. Hence when the body of the man undergoes decay and complete annihilation, once buried under dust, there is no possibility of his coming into being again. According to them no sane person can ever believe in such a concept. Contrary to this the religious beliefs claim that the resurrection is an event which will positively take place. In fact this belief is next in importance only to the concepts of the Unity of God and the Prophethood. The religion suggests that All-powerful Allah will revive life in all the dead persons using His inimitable supremacy and will either reward or punish all human beings according to their performances during their lifetime. Since the concept of the Doomsday is one of the fundamental beliefs of Islamic Faith its positive

occurrence has been presented in the Glorious Qur'an, the conclusive Word of God, through the administrative system of the universe. This is with the purpose of providing a scientific proof appealing to the rational instincts of man so that the revolting spirits have no room for refuting the occurrence of the Resurrection Day. The holy Word of God thus invites man repeatedly to reflect on the administrative system of the universe- particularly relating to the biological manifestations. One of the most relevant purposes is that through the majestically administered system man should recognise for and by himself the Unity of God and the occurrence of the Resurrection Day.

Testimony of the Plants

Two phenomena stand distinctly in the whole of the biological world which would provide irrefutable proofs of the Resurrection Day. One is the Testimony of the Plants and the other is the evidence provided by the development of the embryo in the womb of the mother. In the plant world it is very commonly observed that a giant tree or a huge plant grows out from a tiny seed which produces again seeds similar to the one from which it had appeared. Is it not a wonder that from out of a tiny seed has appeared a huge tree with all the characteristics of its species in fact? The leaves dry up and are shed during the season of autumn. Even the

grass and all other greenery are eliminated. The whole plant life seems to be dead. But as soon as the spring season starts, with a few showers on, the plant life takes a new turn. The life is revived. Green beds spread over the brown surface of the earth. The ground that appeared dead suddenly becomes alive and active. Thereby it enacts the drama of Resurrection and Revival of Life. It is as if the plants are reborn every year. The pity is the man never gives thought to this wonderful happening in the universe. If he were to reflect with an open mind on these wonderful happenings in the plant world, he would never doubt the occurrence of the Day of Resurrection and Judgement.

Testimony of the Embryo

The next testimony is the embryo that develops in the womb of the mother. Just like the appearance of trees from out of a very tiny seed, the embryo also comes into existence through a drop of a liquid or sperm (semen). The microscopic study of sperm indicates that in a single ejaculation of the seminal fluid by a man, there will be about 25 crores of bacteria that are having snake like bodies. Even if one of this huge number of bacteria unite with an egg from the female ejaculated liquid, the union becomes fruitful. And in this tiniest single cell are present all the hereditary characteristics of the male. So also is the case with the female egg. The newborn thus resembles either the father or the mother. From the 'hereditary form' preserved in this tiniest unit gradually the

developing embryo takes the shape of a human in about nine months.

Life as Unit

The study of the plants and embryo clearly indicates that in the biological world, the animals and plants start from a very minute entity and develop into giant size claiming the capacity of recreating their like which will again be tiny. These tiny things evolve further into giant size living bodies causing a Cycle which will be continuous. Among several common features of the animals and plants, one distinct feature is that their bodies are built up of tiny 'cells' that are visible under a microscope alone. The flesh, blood, bones, hair and other parts of the human body are all built up of these cells alone. So is the case with the parts of the plants. A dynamic viscous material from the main constituent present in the cells. It is called as 'Protoplasm' Each of these cells constitutes, in turn, a unit of life which functions like an organised factory. The embryo begins with two such cells one of which has the male chromosomes and the other female ones. These chromosomes preserve their individual characteristics. The similar preservation marks the seed of the plants also. The characteristics of the species are all preserved in the chains of chromosomes present in both the cases. Even if a single such cell is preserved somehow, the whole person can be recreated from it. This process is not an impossibility from the scientific point.

Dormant Bacteria

According to the modern researches it has been established that unicellular revive even after being buried for thousands of years. Innumerable instances have been recorded where bacteria have become alive after being in a static state for quite long periods.

There are seeds and spores in that remain, so far as is known, perfectly dormant and totally without metabolic activity at low temperatures for hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years but that can revive perfectly well upon being subjected to more clement condition.

Unraveling the Secrets of Life

It must be noted that unicellular bacteria have no sex. Every cell disintegrates after every twenty to thirty minutes and gets divided into two halves. This process continues and in every twenty minutes one cell gets multiplied into 16 such cells. A similar process takes place in the embryo inside the uterus of the mother. So also is the case of the seeds which through such processes as mentioned above undergo multiplication. Then will not a cell preserved from getting destructed not revive itself as soon as favourable conditions become available? Will it not produce quite the same person as the earlier one? Of course it can safely be argued that getting a huge tree from a seed or a man from a drop of semen fluid, is an obvious phenomenon. It is being

rehearsed every day for us. But how can a dead person be revived from a cell? No one has seen it happening anytime so far! Of course this delicately controversial point has been answered nearly 1400 years ago through the great Prophet Hazrath Muhammed Sallam itself. This has much significance even for the scientists. There are a number of Traditions in Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim wherein it is clearly mentioned that there is a special type of bone (resembling a mustard seed) at the end of the coccyx which will not decay even when the body lies buried for thousands of years. Then a special type of rain will come down from the heaven at the time of the Doomsday which will cause the life to be evolved in the original form.

By the moistening effect of this rain the tail piece will grow like a seed or a cell finally resulting in the recreation of the man. Since all the original characteristics of every individual would be preserved like "photocopy" much in the same way as the whole tree is preserved with all hereditary characteristics intact in the tiny seed, so when resurrected the man would appear in his Original shape, form and stature with all other inherent characteristics also intact. The one difference would be while the whole process of development of the embryo required a long period of nine months in the womb of the mother, on the resurrection day this whole process may take place very fast so fast that all men many arise instantaneously.

Qur'anic Proofs

Scientifically the revival of life or the Resurrection Day is not an obsolete concept. It is a rational belief. For this reason alone the holy Qur'an considers the resurrected life to be same as the first life i.e. the one in the developing stage as embryo.

And indeed you have already known the first form of creation.

Why, then, do you not remember?
(Waqiah: 62)

On this basis the manifestations in the plant world have been dwelt at several places in the holy Book and then the view that Resurrection is beyond happening has been questioned. This clearly indicates that Qur'an considers the refutation of the happening of the Resurrection Day as quite irrational and unreasonable conclusion even after studying the plant life.

And if you (O Muhammed !) feel curious then curious is their saying: 'When we are dust shall we indeed then be (raised) in a new creation?'. (Ra'd: 5)

Look then at effects (results) of Allah's Mercy, how He revives the earth after its death. Verily! that (Allah) will indeed raise the dead, and He is able to do all things. (Rum:50)

The happening of the Resurrection Day is a common belief of all divine religions and it will certainly take place. There is no wonder in it. When the dead

are raised from their graves, every person would feel that he has woken up from the sleep. Then would the man realize the truth of the sayings of the Prophets. The Qur'an asserts:

And the Trumpet will be blown, and behold! From the graves, they swill come out quickly to their Lord. They will say: 'Woe to us! Who has raised us up from our place of sleep?' (It will be said to them) "This is what the Most Beneficent (Allah) had promised, and the Apostles spoke truth. " (Yasin: 51-52)

The discussion must have proved quite convincingly that Islam is a religion which has inherently perennial truths at its roots which are being proved true even scientifically. Since it is a religion of the nature and the One Who has edited it is not a human being but that great Creator of the worlds and the everlasting Being Who has created this multifarious universe, there is complete coordination between the nature and Shariah. If Islam were to be a religion enunciated by a human being there would not have been any coherence between them because the views and philosophies of man are continuously undergoing changes. Let alone 1,400 years, even the ideologies and principles presented a hundred years ago have turned out to be obsolete and out-of-date. Under such circumstances the verifiable truths as defined by the Glorious Qur'an provide moments for thought to men!■

The Impact of Islamic Arts on The West

- Bilal Ahmad Kutty

The expression of spirituality and religion in relation to culture is often sought in the form of art and creativity. The aesthetic dimension undoubtedly has a profound significance for Muslim cultures, and it springs naturally from the celebration of divine creativity. As the prophet observed in a celebrated hadith, "God is beautiful and loves beauty". Islamic art as such is hard to define. As two prominent art historians have pointed out, "It is easier to say what Islamic art is not what it is Islamic art refers neither to art of a specific era nor to that of a particular place or people Islamic art is neither a style nor a movement, and the people who made it were not necessarily Muslims.... Whereas some Islamic art was undoubtedly made by Christian and Jews for Muslim art was undoubtedly made by Christian and Jews for Muslim patrons, some Islamic art made by Muslims was intended for Christians or Jews".

The idea of a traditional Islamic art and architecture that began in 7th - century Syria and grew to encompass the art and architecture of the lands from the Atlantic to the Indian Oceans is a creation of late 19th and 20th century Western thought. According to Blair and Bloom, there is no evidence that early Muslim artists ever thought their work as Islamic. Nor can it be said that there is a dominant style or influence that defines Islamic art. The

Moorish Alhambra and the Indian Taj Mahal show that Islamic art and architecture has definite regional variations. However, scholars have devoted much effort to the identification of unifying principles in Islamic art - geometric design and arabesque, for example. It can however be said, that the art and architecture of Islamic countries has long influenced the west. Painting such as *The Reception of a Venetian Embassy in Damascus*, attributed to the school of Bellini in the early 16th century, was undoubtedly the work of an artist familiar with the topography and monuments of Damascus. And the 17th century Dutch painter Rembrandt owned a collection of several dozen Mughal and Deccani painting which he copied.

The influential Viennese publication of John Bernhard Fischer Von Erlachs general history of architecture in 1721 included Arab, Turkish and Persian architectural representations. The book led to the design of several European structures in a quasio—o—riental manner. According to Bloom and Blair, "Although Fischer von Erlachs sources were such public monuments as mosques, the resulting designs were almost exclusively for such civil structures as Kiosks, pavilions, palaces, and theaters, all pertaining to an architecture of leisure with which the Orient was

invariably associated”.

In 1750, Frederick, the Prince of Wales, commissioned the English architect William Chambers (1723-1796) to design an “Alhambra” for the gardens at Kew. The resulting design had little in common with the original Alhambra in Spain except for the paired slender columns used for support. Chambers followed this design with an octagonal pavilion in the form of a mosque. It was based on a free improvisation on the domed Ottoman mosques flanked by minarets illustrated by Fisher von Erlach.

As European visitors to Turkey became familiar with the Kiosks in the public gardens where coffee and other beverages were served, the visitors brought home their interest in the structures. And the new Kiosks built in Europe not only served their original function as garden pavilions but also developed into band – stands and news-stands.

British artists and architects also found inspiration in the monuments of Muslim India. One of the first British artists to visit Agra, William Hodges (1746-1797), drew and painted the beauties of the Taj Mahal. And English landscape painter Thomas Daniell (1749-1840) published *Oriental Scenery* in six folio - sized parts between 1795 and 1808. Blair and Bloom write that each part had 24 hand - colored aquatint plates that brought Indian scenes to a wide audience. The popularity of the prints led Daniell to publish a separate

volume dedicated exclusively to the Taj Mahal. Daniell later was hired as a consultant to help design a British residence with such features as bulbous dome with corner chatris and overhanging eaves, cusped arches and pinnacles.

George IV commissioned architect John Nash (1752-1835) to remodel an unfinished structure at the Royal Pavilion. With inspiration from Daniell's publications, Nash designed a pavilion with a large central ogival dome offset by four subsidiary domes. The *Oriental Fantasy*, write Blair and Bloom, ‘extended as far as the kitchens, where iron palm trees with copper fronds support the roof, but Nash used the latest technology, such as cast-iron ceiling frames and columns. In addition to giving the royal nod to the Oriental mode, the building set the style for glazed conservatories with bulbous domes’.

Alhambra also drew attention of the visitors from Europe and America. After visiting the site, British architect Owen Jones designed two palatial houses in Kensington Palace Gardens in the Moorish style. And in 1854, he created an Alhambra Court, following the Court of the Lions, for the reconstructed Crystal Palace in Sydenham. Some of the earliest and finest examples of Orientalism in Western painting were produced by French artist Eugene Delacroix (1798-1863) who had been to Morocco in 1832. Delacroix's opportunity to visit a harem, resulted in a picture such as his *Femmes d'Alger*,

painted two years later in 1834.

After touring Syria, Palestine and Europe, American landscape painter Fredric Church (1826-1900) did a series of Mediterranean compositions that included scenes from Jerusalem and Petra. Church also returned from his trip with an enthusiasm for Islamic architecture. And after 1870, he devoted most of his efforts to the design and construction of his estate at Greendale-On-Hudson, New York. The mansion was called Olana, from the Arabic word for 'our place on high. The house combined Alhambra motifs, simplified Hindu detail and Persian tilework says Blair and Bloom.

A number of 19th century international exhibitions further introduced the West to Islamic arts. The great Exhibition of 1851 at London's Crystal Palace included Persian exhibits of carpets and carpet design that held influence over William Morris (1834-1896), the poet, designer and theorist of the Arts and Crafts movement. Morris did not imitate the Persian designs but found inspiration in their geometric patterns. Morris' own carpet design - with their rich colors, coherent patterns and planar surfaces - show the impact Persian Vase carpets had on the English artist.

Discerning European collectors were drawn to ceramics from the Islamic world. British collectors amassed collections of Ottoman ceramics known as Damascus or Rhodian wares, as well as Persian

luster tiles and vessels and, according to Blair and Bloom, this interest led to a revival of luster techniques in Europe. The designs of ceramicist-artist William De Morgan (1839-1917) says Blair and Bloom, exemplify the Islamic mood that began to appear in the 1880s, partly as an expression of the Near Eastern romanticism and partly because of the affinity of the arabesque with the sinuous forms favoured by the Art Nouveau movement.

According to Blair and Bloom, the French painter Henri Matisse (1869-1954) may be the greatest Western artist to integrate his own work with the influences of Islamic art. Matisse not only attended a number of exhibitions of Islamic art, but he also traveled to southern Spain, Morocco, and Algeria. Matisse's predecessors had added Oriental motifs to give their works an exotic flavor, Matisse actually incorporated the lessons he learned from viewing Islamic art into his paintings. In *The Painter's Family*, for example, Matisse's tripartite composition and the flattened perspective are devices common to Persian manuscript paintings, as are figures that seem to float in space. However, it should be noted that while the arts in 19th-20th century European and American countries were feeling the influence of Islamic arts and architecture, the reverse was occurring as well. Islamic arts and architecture began to experience the influence of Western artistry - and technology. ■

Zakat

Zakat or poor-due is the second important observance or a pillar of the edifice of Islam. The Quran has spoken of it over thirty times, along with the prayer which ranks topmost among the obligatory religious observances and described it as an insignia of submission to God.

The zakat is payable by every Muslim, major and of sound mental condition, provided he owns estate or effects exceeding a certain minimum value called nisab which varies for different items. In other words, the zakat is payable by a believer if he owns in addition to his own requirements, various categories of possessions exceeding the nisab. For example, the nisab fixed for gold is seven and a half tolas and fifty-two and a half tolas for silver. If someone has remained in possession of these metals for one complete year i. e. these have been with the owner in excess of his requirements, he would be liable to pay one-fortieth (two and a half percent) of it by way of poor-due. Merchandise of the same value is liable to be taxed similarly. For the fruits of the soil (agricultural produce) one-tenth of the annual harvest is payable, but a twentieth part only is to be paid if the cultivation requires costly means of irrigation. The number and kind of the cattle composing the flocks and herds determine the varying rates of zakat for each category. The zakat is to be paid only once a year and is spent on the poor and the needy and the tax-collectors. ■

The Tablighi Jamaat: A Movement For Religious Revivalism in The Twentieth Century

- Nighat Rasheed

Social and Religious Conditions: In the nineteenth century Islam in India had become almost moribund, decadent sinking to the lowest ebb of its decrepitude. The Mosques stood as it were only as symbols of the glories of Islam. The majority just listened to Fakirs and went on pilgrimage to the tombs of holy men, superstitions and corruptions engulfed them.

Beliefs in the efficacy of prayers to saints had also become universal among the Muslims of India. The living pir was applied to for the aid of his prayer and amulets were sought from him as security against dangers. The list of Indian saints whose tombs had become objects of worship or pilgrimage is rather voluminous. Besides these saints of all India fame each province and sometimes even each district had its own patron saint.

The devotee believes that the spirit of the saint is actually present in the tomb and he hears the petitioner and will intercede with God. On the other hand, the victorious power, the British had launched upon a vigorous campaign to spread a new culture and civilization in India, and the Christian missionaries were scattered all over India bent upon active proselytisation. The new generations of Muslims, which had not been thoroughly

grounded in Islam, were their main target. Such deplorable situation, which became still graver due to the missionary propaganda called for immediate action against pressing dangers.

Thus there developed a trend towards shunning local religious accretions and return to the pristine and simple form of Islam, which consisted of mainly obeying the Word of God as embodied in the Quran and of following the Sunnah of Prophet Mohammad.

Back to the period of the Prophet 'Back to the early Khilafat' was the call of the revivalism which occurred and summarized the reformist trends.

Early in the nineteenth century Haji Shariatullah preached a return to the pristine purity of Islam and discouraged contrary etiquette and customs. He felt that India under the British rule had ceased to be dar-ul Islam or the land of Islam and had become dar-ul-harb. His son Dudhu Miyan proclaimed the equality of man, energetically espoused the cause of the poor and the distressed, upheld puritanism and forbade un-Islamic practices.

Sayyid Ahmad of Rae Bareli founded the Tariqa-i Muhammadiyah or the return to the ways of the Prophet and this he emphasized on holy war.

The Ahl-i-Hadith movement founded at about the same time, proclaimed afresh the Unity of God, the exclusive supremacy of the Holy Quran and Hadith, denounced polytheism the worship of the saints and all those customs which prevailed among the Muslims in contradiction to the true Islam.

The twentieth century witnessed the emergence of a number of movements for religious revival and reform among Muslims all over the world. One of the largest Islamic movement in the world today is Tablighi Jama'at.

Introduction

Tabligh means 'to convey' or 'to communicate' a message. The word Jama'at is best translated as 'party' or 'organized' group. The term 'Tablighi Jama'at' then simply means preaching party.

Maulana Muhammad Ilyas (1885-1944) the founder of the movement, does not appear to have himself referred to it by that name, however the reason for this seems to be that the term Jama'at can be understood in a very different sense from 'party' as 'community for instance as in the phrase6 ahl al- Sunnah Wa'l Jama'at.

Maulana Ilyas stressed that the one true Jama'at the Jama'at of the Prophet Mohammad had already been founded by the Prophet and no one after the seal of the prophets could lay claim to establishing a new Jama'at.

However despite Maulana Ilyas's insistence that he was not forming a Jama'at of his own the label 'Tablighi Jama'at' has got so closely associated with this movement.

The Tablighi Jama'at of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent, also variously called the Jama'at (party) Tahrik (movement), Nizam (system), Tanzim (organization) and Tahrik-i-Iman (Faith movement) is one of the most important grassroots Islamic movements in the contemporary Muslim world.

From a modest beginning with dawah (missionary) work in Mewat near Delhi under the leadership of the sufi scholar Maulana Mohammad Ilyas, the Jama'at today has followers all over the Muslim world and the west.

The emergence of the Tablighi Jama'at as a movement for the reawakening of faith and reaffirmation of Muslim religio-cultural identity can be seen as a continuation of a broader trend of Islamic revival in North India in the wake of the collapse of Muslim political power and consolidation of British rule in India in the mid nineteenth century.

The piestic and devotional aspects of the Tablighi Jama'at owe their origin to the Sufi teachings and practices of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi, Shah Waliullah and the founder of his Mujahidin movement Sayyid Ahmad Shahid.

The emergence of the Tablighi

Jama'at was also a direct response to the rise of such aggressive Hindu proselytizing movements as the Shuddh (purification), and Sangathan (consolidation), which launched massive efforts in the early twentieth century to "reclaim" those 'fallen away' Hindus who had converted to Islam in the past. The special target of these revivalist movements were the so-called "border line" Muslims who had retained most of the religious Practices and social customs of their Hindu ancestors.

Maulana Ilyas the founder of Tablighi Jama'at believed that only a grassroots Islamic religious movement could counter the efforts of the Shuddhi and Sangathan, Purify the borderline Muslims from their Hindu accretions and educate them about their beliefs and rituals in order to save them from becoming easy prey to Hindu proselytizers.

Life: Maulana Muhammad Ilyas, (1885-1944) Akhtar Ilyas, was born at his maternal grandfather's home at Kandhela.¹⁰ He came from a family widely known for its scholarly pursuits in the field of Islamic learning, religious piety and devotion to Shah Waliullah's tradition.

Ilyas memorized the Quran at an early age. He received his primary education from his father Maulana Mohammad Ismail and at the age of 11 or 12 went to Gangoh, then an important centre of Deoband influence. There he stayed for nine long years studying various

Islamic disciplines from Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (1829-1905) a leading Deobandi alim. Thereafter in 1908 he proceeded to Deoband itself to study the traditions of the Prophet under the renowned scholar Shaykh-ul-Hind Maulana Mahmud al Hasan (1851-1920). While at Deoband he also came into contact with such other renowned Deobandi ulama as Ashraf Ali Thanawi and Shah Abdul Rahim Raipuri. From Deoband Maulana Ilyas proceeded to Saharanpur to study under Maulana Khalil Ahmad at the Mazahir ul-Ulum.

He was the son of Maulana Mohammed Ismail who lived in Hazrat Nizamuddin in Delhi. He founded the Madrasa in the Bangle-wali-Masjid by inviting on a certain day a few Meos who were out in search of some casual labour. He told them that they would be paid daily the same amount, which they expected to earn if they sat with him and learnt the Quran.

This was the first contact with the Meos. Maulana Mohammad Ismail was a Sufi who lived a very simple life and possessed a spiritual status recognized by all of his contemporaries particularly by Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, disciple of Haji Imdadullah Muhajir Makki (1817-99) Maulana Muhammad Yahya succeeded Maulana Mohammad Ismail both in matters of Madrasah as well as Bangle Wali Masjid.

Maulana Mohammad Yahya had studied Hadith from Maulana Gangohi and

was one of the distinguished spiritual disciples. When he died in 1915 his younger brother Maulana Muhammad Ilyas started teaching in the Madrasah.

Beliefs: The Maulana had realized that the Muslims were drifting away from elementary teachings of the faith. The Maulana also felt that theological sciences were becoming unproductive and in fact a burden on the pupil, owing to the predominance of worldly interests. He said these sciences becoming valueless because the aims and objectives for one acquired them have gone out of them and the ends and advantages for which these were studied are gained no longer.

The primary need therefore was to revive the ardour and enthusiasm among the Muslims. It should be brought home to them that there was not other way to acquire the faith than to learn it, and the learning of faith was more important than learning of material arts and sciences. Once this realization was produced, the rest would be easy, the general ailment of the Muslims was lethargy and listlessness.

Like Shah Waliullah (1703-61) Ilyas came to the conclusion that the Muslims of his time were ignorant of their faith. After making a careful study of the moral degeneration of the Indian Muslims, Maulana Mohammad Ilyas came to believe strongly that Muslim society needs a new type of reform movement and it should be organized on the same pattern as in his opinion, the Prophet and his

Companions adopted in the early days of Islam.

Besides the Sunnah, there were several verses in the Quran which made it binding upon the Muslims to engage themselves in the tabligh work. He said:

“I do not say that all Muslim institutions should suspend their activities in their own field. But I do believe that this work (tabligh) alone will put real life into those activities. It is therefore essential that all the groups working for Islam should consider this work indispensable for their mission.

To teach them true Islam, to revive the Islamic way of life prescribed by God and practiced by the Prophet and his Companions was his simple goal.

The ‘Faith movement’ was based its aims on two Verses of the Quran.

“You are the best community sent forth into mankind you command that what is reputable and you prevent that which is disreputable and you believe in Allah and let there be of you a community calling others to do good and commanding that which is reputable 20 and prohibiting that which is disreputable”.

Maulana Ilyas realized that among his fellow Muslims faith is fundamental, as the belief in the Unity of God and the Prophet-hood of Muhammad was weakening. The dignity of the of the Prophet and respect for religion and

Shariah were becoming less important and the desire for divine reward and salvation was decreasing in their hearts.

There was no depth in their religious observances. It became essential to strengthen the foundation. In a letter to the Dean of Deoband institution, Maulana Husayn Ahmad Madani, Ilyas describe the aims of his movement as follows.

“To take the name of namaz (prayer) fast and the Quran and to mention obedience to religion and submission to Sunnah in the Islamic world nothing short of making these a laughing stock, object of ridicule and disdain. This (preaching) movement rests upon inviting (people) towards the (realization of the) sacredness and greatness of the above mentioned matters and the very foundation of movement is to endeavour to revolutionize the environment from scorn to exhaltation.

Deploring the state of religion among Muslims, Ilyas listed in detail the aims and objectives of his movement as follows:

- (i) Muslims are ignorant of even the basic articles of faith so the first preaching should be of that article which asserts the divinity of God, after correcting the words of the article of faith, one must turn to correcting matters, which concern prayer.
- (ii) Namaz (prayer) what has been professed in the Kalimah (of faith) is to be proved by employment of one's

self and 'resources' in the service of Allah, by offering prayer the appointed hours of the day and night as an obligatory duty.

- (iii) One should engage in remembrance of God (Dhikr) and acquiring knowledge of religion three times morning, evening, and a part of the night, according to one's ability.
- (iv) Ikram-i-Muslim (kindness and respect for the Muslims) in the beginning it was Ikramun — Nas (kindness and respects for all humanity). But as the movement was launched to reform the Muslim society, it was emphasized that special kindness was to be shown to the Muslims and deep respect was to be accorded to those who were nearer to Allah. The idea was to bring back the various factions and different classes in the Muslim society to the fold of the real Islamic brotherhood.
- (v) Ikhlas-i-Niyat (Sincerity of intention). It aims at beautifying one's action by performing them in accordance with the commands of Allah and with the sincere intention that his efforts would be rewarded here or in the world hereafter.
- (v) Tafrigh-i-Waqt (sparing the time): holding the above as the basic duty of a Muslim, one should set out to spread the same everywhere, the Muslims are required to spare their time for traveling in groups from house

to house, street to street, village to village and town to town, exhorting the people to lead their life according to the principles mentioned above.

In these tours everyone should resolve to practice politeness, courtesy and earnestness in fulfilling one's duties because every person will be questioned about his own acts.

Maulana Muhammad Ilyas believed that Muslims had strayed far from the teachings of Islam. Hence he felt the urgent need for Muslims to go back to the basic principles of their faith, and to strictly observe the commandments of Islam in their own personal lives and in their dealings with Others. Ilyas himself wrote nothing about his own project of reformed Shariah centered Sufism stressing that practical work for the sake of Islam was more important than merely writing about it. Maulana Ilyas malfuzat and maktubat are concerned with the fate of the Muslim community in both its worldly conditions as well as its digression from the Prophetic model. Ilyas was convinced that community fortunes depended on strict observance of Shariah. As he believed that the plight of the Muslims was due to their straying from the path of God and adopting the ways of the disbelievers. Equally distressing to Ilyas was the widespread practice among many Muslims, Hinduistic and polytheistic customs. He regarded the need for the reform of popular traditions.

Equally condemnable were a range

of beliefs and associated practices relating to the authority of the Sufis, whether living or dead. The belief that a buried sufi was still alive and could intercede with God to grant one request was fiercely condemned as un-Islamic. Likewise the idea that one could attain Unity with God was branded as heresy.

Ilyas reformed Sufism by attacking popular custom and challenged the authority of the custodians of the sufi shrines who were seen as having a vested interest in preserving popular custom for their own claims to authority rested on these.

Ilyas insisted on the gradual process of Islamization and in this he only followed in the footsteps of his sufi forebears.

The Movement:

Maulana Muhammad Ilyas began his work among the Mewatis. The territory South of Delhi inhabited by the Meos is known as Mewat.

The origin of the word 'Meo' is not very clear some say that it just means 'hillmen' and that the tribe consist of four Rajput stocks, Tunwars from Delhi, Jaduns from Mathura, Kachwahas from Jaipur and Chauhans from Ajmer.

Very little is known about the early history of the Mewatis especially their conversion to Islam. There are no historical accounts except conflicting reports.

The various references to the conversion of the Meos to Islam, the

presence of Amina Meos, the prevalence of Hindu manners, customs and traditions among them and the worship of Hindu Gods and Godlings in their homes even up the time of Ilyas suggest that there must have been a series of conversions to Islam and reconversion to Hinduism whenever Muslims influence declined or weakened. The converts were Muslim in name only.

Major Powlett the settlement officer of Alwar state writes in the Alwar Gazetteer published in 1878.

The Meos are now all Musalmans in name but their village duties are the same as those of the Hindus, they keep several Hindu festivals. Holi is the occasion of special rejoicing among the Mewatis and they consider it as important as Muharram, Id and Shab-i-barat. The same is the case with Janam Ashtami, Dussehra, and Diwali. The Meos engages the services of the Brahmins to fix the dates of marriages. They call themselves by Hindu names with the exception of Ram and their last name is often 'Singh', though not so common as Khan. As regards their own religion, the Meos are very ignorant. Few know the Kalima and offer up Namaz and an attachment for the Madrasas also is found among them. At another place Major Powlett writes.

"The Meos are half Hindu by their habits. Mosques are rarely to be seen in their villages. There are only eight Mosques in the fifty villages of the Tahsil of Tajarah, leaving aside the Temples, the

places of worship of the Meos are very much similar to those of Hindu neighbours".

Maulana Mohammad Ilyas felt that the only way to the religious reform and correction of the Mewatis was Promotion of religious knowledge and familiarization with the rules and principles of the Shariat.

Maulana Mohammad Ismail and after him Maulana Mohammad Ilyas had adopted the same method. They used to keep the Mewati children with them and educate them in their Madrasa and then send them back to Mewat to carry on the work of reform and guidance. Maulana Ilyas went a step ahead and decided to establish Maktabs and Madrasas in Mewat so that the influence of faith could spread to wider areas and the pace of change was accelerated. At Hazrat Nizamuddin he worked hard and soon started attracting a considerable number. of students to the Madrasa. Though financially in a strained position the Madrasa flourished and the seeker of knowledge gathered around him. His reputation as a teacher and a Shaykh spread far and wide particularly in Mewat. Where there were a good number of people who had known his father and brothers as their benefactors. They once again started visiting Nizamuddin and requested him to turn his attention towards Mewat. He then visited Mewat and exhorted the people to start Maktabs and Madrasas. In the beginning there was some resistance as the Meos who were

generally peasants were not prepared to spare their sons from day to day agricultural work and engage them in studying religion.

With the passage of time Maulana Mohammad Ilyas became dissatisfied with the progress that was being made through the Maktabas. He found that the Madrasa too were not free from the effects of the general environment of ignorance and irreligiousness. There was no genuine attachment to faith nor did they know the worth and value of religious knowledge. Moreover, necessary religious instructions could not in any case be imparted to the whole of the community in the Maktabas.

Maulana Muhammad Ilyas left for the second Hajj in 1925. On coming back from the Hajj Maulana Ilyas began the Tablighi tours and called upon others also to come forward and propagate the fundamental tenets of Islam like Kalima, and Namaz directly among the masses. People on the whole were unfamiliar with such a thing. They had never heard of it before and were reluctant to respond to the call. With great difficulty a few persons were persuaded to join the movement.

At a public meeting in Nooh a Meo village the Maulana explained his call and urged the people to organize themselves in Jama'ats and go out in the countryside to spread the teaching of Islam.

For few years the work continued in this manner in Mewat but after performing

his third Hajj in 1933. Maulana Ilyas not only increased the tempo of work but also began sending groups of the Mewatis for short period of time to various centres of religious learning in the United Provinces.

Ultimately a Jama'at of ten persons were sent to Kandhela, his hometown, and another to Raipur. Thereafter, Maulana Ilyas laid out various routes for the Jama'at. To travel all over the district of Gurgaon and the work began to spread in an organized manner all over Mewat.

After the death of Ilyas in 1944, his son Muhammad Yusuf 1917-65 took over the commands of the movement. He refused to transfer the central head quarter the organization from Nizamuddin, New Delhi to Pakistan after partition.

He transformed the activities of Tablighi Jama'at into a world wide movement. Under the amirship of Yusuf the movement expanded to all parts of India and Pakistan and beyond to countries like Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Turkey, England, Japan and the USA. It was during Maulana Yusuf time that large conventions began to be held regularly in various parts of the Subcontinent. Maulana Yusuf also made it a point to address non-Muslims and from his times onwards Jama'at began moving out over the whole world. After the death of Muhammad Yusuf his cousin Inam alHasan succeeded him as chief of Tablighi Jama'at. He started regular annual Iztema meetings in India, Pakistan,

Bangladesh. It is said that the three day annual Iztema in Pakistan had drawn one of the largest assemblies of Muslims after Hajj in Mecca. After the death of Inam ul-Hasan, his two sons Izhar al-Hasan and Zubayr al-Hasan along with one of the grand sons of Yusuf collectively led the movement. Tablighi Jama'at ideology does not have any explicit and elaborate social and economic agenda and had so far remained confined to the six point programme discussed above.

The rapid expansions of Tablighi Jama'at needs to be understood with reference to its organizational structure that is inextricably tied with the ideology of the movement. The Jamaat is popular in South Asia and has many adherents internationally —Nizamuddin New Delhi, Europe main Markas is in Dewsbury, England East Asian main markas is in Jakarta, Indonesia main African markas is in Derbun South Africa.

Literature:

Some of the texts that appeared before Ilyas death in 1944 and which were commissioned by him were the Payam-i Amal message of the practice and Musalmano Ki Maujuda Pasti Ka Wahid Ilaj (The Only Remedy for the Present Degeneration of the Muslims) by his cousin and brother-in law Ehtisham ul Hasan Kandhalawi, and several tracts on the Fazail of ritual observances.

After Ilyas death, the influence of Muhammad Zakariyya as one of the chief

ideologues of the movement grew considerably, over time the Tablighi Jama'at came to develop an elaborate set of texts of Fazail compiled by Maulana Zakariyya. This was published in two volumes, the Fazail-i-Amal (The Blessings of Pious Acts) also known as Tablighi Nisab or the Tablighi Syllabus.

The first volume of this text is divided into six sections -the Hikayat-i-Sahabah or stories about the Companions of the Prophet and five sections dealing with the rewards of recruiting the Quran, offering prayers, remembering God, participating in tabligh and observing the Ramadhan fast, respectively.

The second volume contains various stories relating to the reward of charity. Later the Fazail-i-Amal was supplemented with another set of texts, the Hayat-us Sahabah Lives of the Companions compiled by Maulana Yusuf. Like the Fazail-i-Amal it was read out in Tablighi circles and was to serve as a guide for instruction. Tablighi activists were discouraged Tablighi Jama'at leaders from reading any literature besides these two set of texts.

The Fazail-i-Amal, which today plays such a central role in Tablighi Jama'at, has come in for critical scrutiny in the writings of number of scholars claiming is replete with weak and fabricated Hadith a point that several Muslim scholars have written out extensively. Several activists are critical of the great importance that is placed in

the Tablighi Jama'at on narration of stories from the Fazail-i Amal, claiming that the book has assumed greater practical importance for many involved in the Tablighi Jama'at than the Quran itself, with little concern even for the recitation of the holy scriptures in Tablighi talim sessions. The Fazail-i Amal is now assuming the status that rightfully belongs to the Quran and traditions of the Prophet that for many of those who are involved in the Tablighi Jama'at.

The general import of the Fazail-i Amal that threatens to take over the Quran as a source of authority for many Tablighis in practice, if not in theory is distaste and hatred for this world.

Practices Members of Tablighi Jama'at usually hail from varied backgrounds. Each Jama'at is constituted in a village or town Mosque. They decided upon a route and time, period of the journey by Mashwara or group counseling. Each Jama'at has five to twenty members with one leader or Amir who is usually chosen by the members themselves before the actual journey. They usually camp in Mosque along the way and preach the people who attend the Mosque. During the day, members of the Jama'at visit Muslims houses door to door and roam the market of the town or village they have camped in and exhort Muslims to lead a pure and religious life and invite them to attend the sermon in nearby Mosque after certain prayers. Usually after the sermon, they encourage the attendees to come

forward and join them on spiritual journey.

Preachers during these meetings, urge the people to go in Jama'at for as many days as their conditions permits. The recommended period is four months once in a lifetime, a periodic planned tours schedule of forty days in year and three days in a month.

Conclusions : It appears from the above facts that institutions of Tabligh had begun to blow a wind of change in the hitherto tranquil and uniquely synthetic culture of the Meos. Its effects were to be felt not only in the religious aspect but social, cultural, economic and political aspect of their life also.

The Tabligh Jama'at is said to be the largest Islamic movement in the world today, in terms both of number of activist as well as geographic spread. The movement is active in also every country where significant number of Muslims lives. The bedrock of the effort is based purely on the participant utilizing their own health, wealth, and time in the pursuit of moral and spiritual developments. The Tablighi Jama'at neither has formal organizational structure nor does it publish any details about the scope of its activities, its membership, or its finances. The Jama'at is like an itinerant bond of disciples or followers of a great man in which there may be at different times some rich and some poor, some educated and others illiterate but all having a feeling that they share something. ■

Sayyid Ahmad's Influence in The Present Time

- Shah Ebadur Rahman

In fact, Sayyid Ahmad's Movement never died out for Indian Muslims. In many ways it continues to mould the aspiration's and dreams of the Muslim community up to this day. Nadwi mentions that a large number of religious, social, and educational organizations emerging in India and abroad derived inspiration from Sayyid Ahmad's teachings. He names the Reformative Movement of Nisar Ali (Titu Mian) in East Bengal, the Ahle Hadith Movement having its centers all over the country, Sadiqpur's recruitment and training center for Jihad, the missionary endeavors of the Ghaznawi Family of Amritsar, the two Darul Uloom of Saharanpur and Deoband with a network of institutions for religious education, and, finally, the Nadwatul Ulema's center of higher education, and mentions that these and many other institutions can be cited here as examples of the continuing influence of Sayyid Ahmad. To this list we can add the Reshmi Roonzal Tahreek led by Maulana Mahmoodul Hasan Deobandi, a staunch freedom fighter, who had established links with the leaders of Turkey, Afghanistan and some other countries to help India achieve freedom. Also, the intellectual efforts with which Maulana Rahmatullah Kairanwi and Dr. Wazeeruddeen discredited the

missionaries' propagation of Christianity and the open war that Maulana Rahmatullah, Dr Wazeeruddeen and their associates fought against the British in the area of Thana Bhawan, Kayrana and Shamli must have roots in their attachment to Sayyid Ahmad. Incidentally, Maulana Rahmatullah had earlier visited Delhi in 1857 to assess the situation.

Even today the call and message of Sayyid Ahmad is dear to the hearts of Indian Muslims and his influence continues to set directions for the Muslim individuals as well as organizations. The establishment of the Sayyid Ahmad Shaheed Academy in Lahore, Pakistan, that of a Madrasa called Madrasa Imam Sayyid Ahmad bin Irfan at his home village at Daera Shah Alamullah, Rae Bareli in India, Sayyid Ahmad Shaheed Academy, Dare Arafat. Takiya Kalam Rae Bareli, Jamia Sayyid Ahmad Shaheed at Maleehabad, the conference held on the influence of the Movement at Daera Shah Alamullah, Rae Bareli in the recent past, books and articles continuously appearing on his life and mission, tributary poetic compositions written in appreciation of his piety and godliness, frequent mention of his exemplary character and contributions in Islamic literature and in private and public

discourses, and continuation of the spiritual order of Tariqae Muhammadiya for moral and spiritual purification - all speak that he was and continues to remain a great source of inspiration for the Muslims even today. Maulana Ilyas Kandhalwi rightly acknowledged the influence of Sayyid Ahmad when he said, "We are still living under the influence of the renovatory work of Sayyid Saheb [Sayyid Ahmad].

Nawwab Siddique Hasan Khan's

homage paid to Sayyid Ahmad Shaheed aptly underscores the magnificent personality and contributions of Sayyid Ahmad in the following words:

In short, there was none so godly and perfect of spirit in the whole world in those days, nor was there any mystic or religious scholar who exerted such a strong influence over even one-tenth of the people as he did. ■

"His companions named him Al' Amin, The Faithful. A man of truth and fidelity; true in what he did, in what he spake and thought. They noted that he always meant something. A man rather taciturn in speech; silent when there was nothing to be said; but pertinent, wise, sincere, when he did speak; always throwing light on the matter. This is the only sort of speech worth speaking!"

*Thomas Carlyle, ON HEROES, HERO-WORSHIP
AND THE HEROIC IN HISTORY, London. 1904*

Character-Building as The Ultimate Aim of the Qur'anic Education

- Mahar Abdul Haq

There is a saying coming down from ages that if wealth is lost, nothing is lost; if health is lost, something is lost; but if character is lost, everything is lost. Very few people contest the truth of this statement, but there are fewer still know exactly what character means. Western philosophers have evolved a science of 'Ethics' or 'Moral philosophy' to answer this question but this science, too, has failed to give a final verdict. Ethics is derived from a Greek word which means custom. The Latin word 'mores' from which morality gets its origin also means custom. Custom is no more than a usual practice or the sum-total of habits of certain community or nation. It is no more than the animal behaviour called herd-instinct. Now, if the same path is followed by the same group for centuries without a purpose or motive or an urge except the following of a practice just for the sake of following it and no more, then this mechanical action cannot explain any goodness or moral sanction behind it; nor can it form the foundation on which to build the theories of a moral philosophy.

Animals below the level of man are not supposed to possess character even though some of them do have some traits which we classify as 'virtues'. Character, or the sum total of both negative and positive habits, (as

the psychologists define it) is, then, the specialty of man or rather the so-called civilized man only.

Our claim to have evolved a high character during our 2-million-year's stay on this earth, would have been right if today our vices were at the animal level or below and our virtues were at the civilized level or above. Unfortunately, this is not so; we have advanced in our animality more than we have advanced in our spirituality.

There are many people even in the present days of intellectual enlightenment who assert that because history, sociology and anthropology reveal great variations in moral beliefs among various peoples and cultures, therefore, no absolute judgment can be made between what is wrong and what is right. In support of their view, they quote the oft - repeated line, 'There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so,' from Shakespeare. What is considered right by certain societies is thought wrong by others. From this, they conclude that there is no way to determine what is universally good or bad. So, character is a matter of relativity or an expression of one's individual preference or personal taste and it cannot have objectivity.

This individualistic approach is

misleading because it ignores the undeniable fact that it is always the objective standards of artistic excellence that enable us to exercise sound critical judgments. Having good taste consists in preferring that which is objectively more excellent. Thus, one who insists that the beauty in the works of art is entirely a matter of personal taste, really admits in other words that some people have better taste than others. And it must not be forgotten that what holds for beauty holds for right and wrong also.

Two things must be borne in mind in this connection. First, that social customs or individual preferences cannot change this imperative and, second, that it is not our human nature that determines for us what is good or what is bad. Our nature is imperfect and it simply cannot do it. The “natural law” which is at work in both the human and non-human realms is inviolable in material things as well as in animals, but man has the choice to disobey it. His limited free-will is an asset to him in as much as it is a liability. It is an asset if it is used in conformity with the true guidance of Allah and it is a liability if it is let loose to pursue the way of individualistic motives.

The reasons of vast disparities today in our words and actions are, then, not far seek. The class-ridden Western countries have different codes of for their different classes and these codes

are followed by each class in varying degrees and half-heartedly. Not only that. Even within the same community and under the same government, law and justice are conceived and administered according to colour racial prejudices and class distinctions. Obviously, loyalties cannot remain harmonized where moral convictions are either mutually conflicting or they lose uniformity. Such a state of affairs as this is disastrous because” national character cannot be built without common traditions, common hopes, common aspirations, common pursuits, common thoughts and common actions. Unfortunately, too much emphasis on “individuality” by the Western thinkers of the past and present ages has put a major part of humanity on the wrong track. People have forgotten the things that contribute to real happiness are honour, love, friendship, civic security, justice, understanding of values, knowledge and wisdom in addition to good health and availability of material necessities. Material wealth is necessary only to minister to the minimum needs of the body and, as such, it must always remain subordinate to spiritual values.

Although ‘character’ has not adequately been defined by any of the philosophers, yet modern psychology has tried to analyses various factors that constitute it. It distinguishes between two main aspects of the mental life of a

particular person, the intellectual and the emotional. The intellectual qualities guide or direct man's activities towards his conscious or unconscious goals whereas the emotional ones are supposed to supply the energy or driving force for his actual behaviour. Some psychologists define character as the sum-total of these various traits i.e. the directional, the motivational, the inborn and the acquired—integrated into one unique and distinctive whole. The fact is that the empirical study of the genetic components of character is still in its early stages and the theories of 'instinctive tendencies in man are merely speculative inferences from animal behaviour.

Those who take 'character' as synonymous with ethical conduct or moral behaviour consider wisdom, courage, temperance and justice together with faiths hope and love as the most important constituents of goodness. These are the virtues which have a universal sanction of moralists reformers, educationists and even religious leaders, but to what extent and in what context these cardinal virtues are to be acquired or developed under various circumstances has been a question of much dispute. Those who do not believe in the universal brotherhood of mankind or in permanent values of life, insist that moral concepts must always remain closely related to the structure of a particular society. For

them, morality is relative in the sense that as the ends of each society vary, so do the standards of right and wrong.

As we have seen above, instinctive and emotional propensities tend, as a result of individual experience, to get organized round certain specific ideas or dominant thoughts. If these thoughts are given right guidance from the very early age of childhood without the least possible chance of waywardness in them, even individual likes and dislikes or fears and hopes can also be channelized easily towards realization of universal aims and values. As the child grows up, he develops interests for abstract concepts leaving behind the concrete things. All education is abstraction; therefore, Keeping the child attached with material things for too long a time is not helpful for the development of a sound, well-disciplined personality. Let all educators join hands universally to impress upon the young and formative mind of the child through both example and precept (1) that they must always appreciate and strive constantly for that which is good and honest and beautiful; (2) that courage, endurance and a sense of humour make life happy and worth living; (3) that tolerance, capacity to love unstintingly, to serve, to give, to accept, are qualities which never decay; (4) that sharing the simple pleasures and griefs of common men and entering into the thoughts and feelings of others are real

sources of happiness; (5) that delight in creating beauty in word and action. is the necessary outcome of the awareness of our dependance upon the soil and upon the work of man and beast; (6) that sensitiveness to the beauty of wondrous things around us contributes immensely to our own purification; (7) that a right evaluation of the past and the present and looking forward hopefully to the future make our life's journey smooth and easy and enjoyable; (8) that a right use of intellectual energies can be attained by actual participation in the game of life and not by contemplative or critical bystander, (9) that a sense of duty well-done, a conscience pure taints of guilt, an appreciation of the true perspective of the things around us and an emphatic rejection of the base the mean and the vulgar are qualities of a truly praiseworthy character; (10) that it is more blessed to give than to receive; (11) that in service to others, in service to one's country, in service to humanity and finally in service to Allah lies the secret of service to one's own self; and (12) that a social conduct which is based on truth, honesty, charity, self-control, resolution, courtesy and tolerance is the only conduct that can bring an abiding peace and prosperity to the woe begotten humanity at large.

The teacher is charged with the highest responsibility when he is asked to "train the will" of a human-being.

Impulses and drives are the streams of man's energy. They rise somewhere in the unconscious but come out into consciousness as pursuits and purposes. Hence, they rather form the very foundation on which character and personality are to be built. By their very nature they have a tendency to change, to clash with one another, to pass away or remain firm and develop, to take wrong direction or flow into directed channels, to grow into new habits, to take on new modes of thought, to follow ideals, to strive for objectives and to form a new type of personality or a social order. If they are suppressed, they are likely to cause maladjustments in individuals and in societies. They need, therefore, a proper guidance of reason from the earliest stage of childhood and even before the period when speech, conceptual thinking and self-consciousness begin to show up. This guidance is the beginning of character building. Man has to profit by all urges, but in subordination to his own as well as society's well-being, in accordance with the Will of Allah.

Character gets strength only when we are confronted with a situation in which we have to choose between higher and, lower values and we voluntarily sacrifice the lower value of "immediate gain" for a more solid and higher value of seeking the ' Face of Allah.' Choosing the higher value is an act of "Faith"—yes, faith which carries

forth every object of the Universe, step by step, to its self-fulfillment and self-realization.

People ask, "What is the criterion for judging between right and wrong, between good and bad, or between virtue and vice?" The answer is, "It is the last Revelation, sent for the guidance of the entire humanity by the Most Gracious Nourisher-Sustainer-Evolver of the whole of the Universe and nothing apart from it. Those who do not believe in God or His Revelation do so on peril of death to their own souls.

The word "faith" stands for reliance, trust and belief founded on authority. Its more comprehensive equivalent in the Arabic language is "intan" derived from the root-word 'Amn' which means freedom from fear, security, peace, satisfaction, trust, affirmation acceptance of correctness and submission or resignation to truth. According to the Holy Quran a 'Believer' i.e. a Momin must have faith in (1) Allah, (2) The Hereafter, (3) The Unseen Celestial powers called Malaika (roughly translated as Angels), (4) The Book and (5) The holy prophets. Faith in Allah means belief in His absolute existence, trust in His Word, confidence in the infallibility of His Laws, submission to His Will and full obedience to His Commandments. Faith in the Hereafter means belief in the inevitability of His Law of just Requital and in the continuation of "life" beyond the death

of the body. Faith in the Invisible Powers means that there are psychic forces at work in the Universe which control, regulate and systematize the laws of Nature. Faith in Allah's Messengers means belief in the fact that intellect by itself cannot enable man to tread the paths of life successfully unless it is assisted, by Allah's guidance. The last of these Messengers is Mohammad the Holy prophet of Allah (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who brought the final, true and sure guidance for all the peoples of the world and for all times to come. Faith in the Books means that the ways of life prescribed therein are Revealed guidelines and by following these ways unswervingly and exclusively, man is sure to reach his destination.

It must, however, be emphasized here that belief unaccompanied by action is no belief at all in the eye of the Holy Qur'an. If, for example, a man says that he believes in the unity of Allah, he will have to prove his faith by a show of real concord in word, thought and action and by working incessantly for establishing unity among all the peoples of the world. The believer in unity must drive away from his mind the love of all those concrete or abstract false gods which give him hopes for some benefits or make him afraid of a loss. Choosing the best course of action in conformity with the dictates of the Holy Qur'an and rejecting emphatically everything else

which is against Allah's Will is the right "character" and praiseworthy conduct.

The Holy Qur'an is the Book of Divine Commandments with not the least doubt, discrepancy, lacuna or hiatus in it. It gives right and sure guidance to those who, on the one hand, very cautiously remain on guard against all possible attacks of the destructive forces of evil and, on the other hand, stick fast to Truth and Goodness and carefully follow the right course of action in all eventualities.

As belief without action and action without belief are meaningless, therefore, Iman (i.e. Faith), Islam (i.e. submission and obedience) and Taqwa (i.e. fear and restraint) all the three virtues get blended into one indivisible integrity and the words Momin, Muslim and Muttaqee are to be taken synonymously for one who possesses the highest 'character' as conceived by the Holy Qur'an.

From the educational point of view, these characteristics are to be considered not merely as desired traits of morality or the contents of a course of formal instruction in moral education or some important aspects of religious teaching, but as compulsory idealistic values which every child must possess and cherish. Anything falling short of these values is not acceptable to Islam, therefore, the educators cannot be permitted to select a few and leave out

others according to their personal likings or dislikings or the exigencies of times or social circumstance or political or environmental pressures. Their curricula, educational activities, programmes, textbooks, methods of teaching, evaluation processes etc., must all remain subservient to the achievement of these standards even if the whole world Opposes them or accuses them of ' regimentation or indoctrination. This is because we are commanded that "for each is a goal to which Allah turns him; So strive together (as in a race) towards all that is good."(2:148) This common goal of goodness or quest for perfection of the individual in conjunction with the perfection of the whole Ummah, and not from its ' the first and the last aim of Qur'anic Education. This objective cannot be realized in its fullness the whole of the educational system is based on the permanent values which have been set by the Holy Qur'an as the ultimate aims of education.

All educational planning is, therefore, to centre round this special purpose of the life of a Muslim whose duty it is to enjoin righteousness and forbid evil for all times to come and for all places of the world.

Patience and perseverance bring firmness of character. Firmness is the sure road to success and prosperity. who patiently persevere, on them there is no fear; nor do they grieve. "To bring

ourselves up to the expectations of a really strong Ummah, we will have to consolidate all our assets share our liabilities, pool our resources and readily take stock of our potentialities. Islam is not only a 'religion' of the Muslims in the usual sense of the word; it is their whole life. It encompasses all aspects of human life: social, cultural, economic, educational, spiritual, material, political, in fact, all. A cult of universal brotherhood must, of necessity, be highly organised. So, a re-organization of the existing institutions on inter-continental lines necessarily means having common art, common culture, common language, common trade, common defence, common court of justice, common economy etc.,—all that a big Nation, an Ummah should have. This is a must-step because, in the words of the Holy Qur'an: "you are the best of peoples evolved for mankind; enjoining what is right; forbidding to what is wrong and believing in Allah." (3:110)

This brings us to our next responsibility of reaffirming Faith and Discipline in all our ranks and files. It is on the terra-firma of Faith alone that an invincible stronghold of the world-Ummah can be built. Faith makes man look forward to the future that is yet unborn with a great deal of courage and hope. In fact, Faith is the only propelling force that can steer through troubled waters and -rocky streams to shores of safety and abiding peace. Aided by

Discipline, 'Faith' can work miracles.

Enjoining right and forbidding wrong is yet another big responsibility that our young people have to shoulder. In the empirical sense, an Ummah is just an abstraction. What is concrete to the form of the Ummah is only the individual. To the extent to which the individual proves to be unworthy for the due exercise of, and judgment for, the gift of human freedom he is degraded to the lowest plane of animal life. The principle of intelligence in man, then, begins to abuse those natural impulses with which he has been endowed as an animal, and the ultimate result is that man degrades himself lower and lower and becomes worse than a beast. On the other hand, to the extent to which a man duly qualifies himself to deserve this gift of freedom he is enabled to rise steadily higher and higher, as if in a celestial dimension and thus becomes the recipient of greater and greater power.

The happy hopeful sign is that the Muslim youth, in spite of the fascinating glamour of the Western Civilization that dazzles him day and night from all angles, has not gone too far in his aimless wanderings. He will still answer to the call of true religion, provided the call comes from friendly and sympathetic quarters. He requires a right understanding, a helpful solution to his problems and an appreciation of his sincere desire to 'be ' some-thing, to 'do' something in an extra-ordinary way

or to assert himself effectively. The educationists must, therefore, come to his help, recognize his individuality, widen his intellectual horizon, give him a true insight into the permanent values of life as explained by the Holy Qur'an and give him the health-restoring food that his sickly intellect wants so urgently. We have to re-interpret the Qur'anic universals at a higher plane of thinking to satisfy the modern searching mind and to develop the discriminative intuitive faculty of the inquisitive young man towards right and wrong behaviour.

Belief in Allah is not believing in His existence somewhere in the heavens far, far away from the human world. It is realizing His existence, His vitality, His Omnipotence, His whole Self, within every breath of ours, within every drop of blood that runs in the very essence of our being. It is submitting our whole spirit to the Supreme Will of Allah, advancing His cause through our right behaviour and by leading a pure, chaste life, by working together in unison with Him. We have to follow His guidance strenuously advancing His most beautiful, Harmonious perfect and proportionate schemes of universal evolution. This belief gets new strength, new vitality and new impetus the moment we examine our ideals, aspirations and activities critically. Self-correction, thus, provides us with checks and balances that are so necessary for a smooth going in the

world.

Maintaining right proportion in all affairs means not only a strong character, but a resolute and firm behaviour also. Justice can be done only when negation of all external pressures, influences and authorities etc., takes root within one's inner self and only Allah's fear rules supreme. A deep knowledge of the Qur'anic injunctions regarding right and wrong behaviour and a clear notion of human rights, as given in the Holy Qur'an, is necessary for administering justice. Allah commands us to do justice to all on equal footing, without the least possible hesitation, fear or favour.

If we have deviated from the right path inadvertently, we have to readjust our angle of vision and correct our direction even under pressures of adverse circumstances, or unfavourable conditions. If our gaze remains fixed on the ultimate objectives of our life, always and at all places, nothing in the world can overpower us or lead us astray. With this aim in view and by fixing our full attention on it, we can meet all situations daringly. So, let us adjust and readjust our direction as and when times demand. "Say, Truly my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death, are (all) for Allah, the Cherisher of the worlds: No partners has He. This am I commanded and to this of His Will I am the first to bow." (6:162,163) ■

Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi on The Rise And Fall of Islamic Societies

- M.I.H. Farooqi

Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi was one of the most prominent Muslim personalities in India during twentieth century and one of the most noted personalities of the World of Islam during the period. He ranked very high amongst scholars in the Islamic world. His eloquent exposition of basic concepts made the comprehension of Islam intelligible to western-educated people. He was one of the most prolific writers and original thinkers of recent times.

Maulana was an enlightened *alim*, an eloquent preacher and a wise reformer. Common man's love and respect for him has been unequalled in recent decades. This was because of his composure and avoidance of fanatic posturing. It pained him to note that at a time when the western technological progress was adulated in academic circles. Muslims lagged behind after remaining leader in the field of Science and Technology for more than eight hundred years. In his famous Book on the conflict between Islam and the West, Maulana observed.

"Humanity has greatly suffered (in recent past) because of severing the ties of Knowledge (Science) with religion and this separation has caused great harm to Islamic Society.

Some of the other important utterances and writings on the subject of Decline of Islamic societies are as follows:

"Science (Ilm) progressed very fast in the West (last century) and Religion (Iman) got the boost in the East. Today Iman needs the company of the Knowledge and Knowledge needs the patronage (Sarparasti) of Iman (Belief)".

"After sixteenth century Muslims lost the interest in Enquiry and Physical Sciences and engaged themselves more in Metaphysical Sciences with the result they could not produce great men of knowledge (genius)."

"Muslims forgot their own scientific thinking and followed only traditional knowledge. They therefore lagged behind in Science and Technology and thus became slaves of the West".

"Muslims lost to feel value of TIME and they wasted centuries in unnecessary activities whereas European nations felt the true value of TIME and traveled (made progress) in years that could be done in centuries."

"The period of Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries is highly important because it was during this time Europe got up from its LONG Sleep and started making progress with great vigour and emotions in order to compensate the lost period of their Jihalat (ignorance) and Ghaflat (indifference, negligence). They made fantastic progress and left no field of physical activity untouched. Made discoveries and inventions. Produced

many genius as inventors and Mujtahids.”

“For Muslims this was the period of Total Fall from grace and not only in the field of knowledge and industry.”

“The defeat of Muslims in the conflict with the West during eighteenth and nineteenth centuries could be predicted well in advance in sixteenth century which was the period of Tannanzul (Decline) and Jamud (Inaction) for them.”

“If the Islamic world wishes to renew it’s active life and get away from domination and exploitation, then it is incumbent for them to make new inroads in the field of modern knowledge under the leadership of Sarbrah Asri Uloom (modern scholars). For this purpose new Organizations and Institutes have to be established with the help and cooperation of those who are well versed in all the modern subjects.”

“It is indeed the need of the hour that Muslims restart their investigative activities and make progress in scientific development and encourage scientific knowledge.”

“At the time when the West was making great scientific development, a section of Ulema was unaware of the fast changing time and opposed new initiatives. They were ignorant of the threats of the west and opposed those steps by the Turkish administration which were necessary to face the Western challenges.”

“The first message of Allah to our

Prophet started with the word ‘Iqra (Read) and that means that the Ummah was joined with knowledge from the very beginning. This clearly implies that the Ummah cannot survive without Knowledge.”

“History teaches us that whenever there is a conflict between religion and knowledge or the religion feared knowledge, there appeared darkness all-round.”

“Historian Gibbon has stated that during Middle Ages in Europe, Church considered Knowledge as the danger for religion and this view resulted in slowing the process of progress by several centuries. However, Islam never considered Knowledge as it’s enemy and therefore made great strides in the field of science and technology (during Middle Ages).”

“It would be case of shortsightedness on the part of Muslims to ignore the scientific advancement of the West and consider it as Shajar - e-Mamnua (Prohibited Tree). Such attitude will cause great harm and Ummah will be isolated from rest of the world”.

“If any country prefer to be indifferent with the changing times, it cannot remain peaceful for long. People will revolt. Conflicts and disobediences will rise. After all it is just natural that people wish to look forward and desires new Manzil (Destinations).”(The above excerpts are mainly from his writings like ISLAMNIAT Aur Magrabiati (Islam and West) and Speeches at Urdu Scientific Society) ■

Concept of Morality

- K.K.Usman

Lo! Men and women who submit unto God, and
men and women who believe, and
men and women who are devout, and
men and women who are truthful, and
men and women who are patient and constant
men and women who are humble, and
men and women who give in charity, and
men and women who fast, and
men and women who guard their chastity, and
men and women who remember God much,
to them God has promised forgiveness
and a great reward. (33:35)

These will be given their reward twice over, because they are steadfast and repel evil with good, and spend of that wherewith We have provided them. (28:54)

The concept of morality in Islam centers around certain basic beliefs and principles. Among these are the following: (1) God is the Creator and Source of all goodness, truth, and

beauty. (2) Man is a responsible, dignified, and honourable agent of his Creator. (3) God has put everything in the heavens and the earth in the service of mankind. (4) By His Mercy and Wisdom, God does not expect the impossible from man or hold him accountable for anything beyond his power. Nor does God forbid man to enjoy the good things of life. (5) Moderation, practicality, and balance are the guarantees of high integrity and sound morality. (6) All things are permissible in principle except what is singled out as obligatory, which must be observed, and what is singled out as forbidden, must be avoided. (7) Man's ultimate responsibility is to God and his highest goal is the pleasure of his Creator.

The dimensions of morality in Islam are numerous, far-reaching, and comprehensive. The Islamic morals deal with the relationship between man and God, and his fellow men, man and the other elements and creatures of the universe; and his external behaviour and his Innermost self. The Muslim has to guard his external behaviour and his manifest deeds, his words and his thought, his feelings and intentions. In a general sense, his role is to champion what is right and fight what is wrong, seek what is true and abandon what is

false, cherish what is beautiful and wholesome and avoid what is indecent. Truth and virtue are his goal. Humbleness and simplicity, courtesy and compassion, are his second nature. To him, arrogance and vanity, harshness and indifference are distasteful, offensive, and displeasing to God.

More specifically, the Muslim's relationship with God is one of love and obedience, complete trust and thoughtfulness, peace and appreciation, steadfastness and active service. This high-level morality will, undoubtedly, nourish and reinforce morality at the human level. For in his relationship with his fellow men, the Muslim must show kindness to the kin and concern for the neighbor, respect for the elderly and compassion for the young, care for the sick and support for the needy, sympathy for the grieved and cheer for the depressed, joy with the blessed and patience with the misguided, tolerance toward the ignorant and forgiveness of the helpless, disapproval of the wrong and rise above the trivial. Moreover, he must respect the legitimate rights of others as much as he does his own. His mind must be occupied with constructive ideas and serious pursuits; his heart must beat with compassionate feelings and good will; his soul must radiate with peace and serenity; his counsel must be sincere and courteous.

It is the moral obligation of the

Muslim to be in the forefront of activities involving the material, cultural and spiritual development of the society that he lives in. Preservation of the basic integrity and harmony of social fabric is among his priorities. However, this concern need not prevent him fighting social evils, malpractices, injustices and prejudices. As a matter of fact, striving for social justice and other noble causes is a divinely ordained responsibility of Muslims.

The Muslim's moral obligation is to be a vivid example of honesty and perfection, fulfill his commitments and perform his tasks well, seek knowledge and virtue by all possible means, correct his mistakes and repent his sins, develop a good sense of social consciousness and nourish a feeling of human response, provide for his dependents generously without extravagance and meet their legitimate needs. Nature and the world are the field of exploration and the object of enjoyment for the Muslim. He must utilize their elements and ponder their marvels, read them as Signs of God's greatness and preserve their beauty, explore their wonders and discover their secrets. But whether he uses them for utility or for sheer enjoyment, he must avoid waste and excess. As a responsible agent of God and a conscientious trustee, he must always be mindful of others who share the world with him and who will succeed him in the future.■

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad And His Tafsir Tarjuman-ul Qur'an

- Abdud Dayyan Mohammad Younus

Abul Kalam Azad, a prominent Islamic scholar, Mufassir, Muhaddith, Mufakkkhir, Journalist, Poet, and writer was born in Kidwah village in Makkah in September, 1888 and died on the 2nd of February 1958 in Delhi. He was known as Muhiuddin Azad. He was ten years old when his father came to Calcutta from Makkah in 1898. Within one year of his arrival in Calcutta his mother died, followed by his father a few years after.

Azad's education began in his residence under the supervision of his father who believed that outside influence might turn his son away from traditional ideas. Therefore, he appointed teachers to teach him at home and assisted him to memorize short books by heart following the method of teaching of Shah Waliullah Muhaddith Dehlavi. After finishing his formal education successfully he studied various disciplines of knowledge of his own accord. In about 1900 he came into contact with the writings of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan. Talking about this period, Azad says:

At the time when I came in contact with the writing of Sir Sayyid Ahmad, a completely new world was opened to me.... in six months. I went through all the writings of Sir Sayyid and felt that I

had suddenly landed in a strange, higher and loftier world... I was so proud of it that I looked down upon all my previous ideas and belief.

Azad was also influenced by Maulana Shibli Nomani who gave him the responsibility for editing the An Nadwa. He continued with this duty from October, 1905 until March, 1906. He was the Editor of Wakil of Omritosar for some time and he published a weekly paper, 'Al-Hilal' from the 13th of July, 1912. His intention was to publish a thoughtful Urdu paper. Al-Hilal quickly became a popular paper because of its thoughtful writing and the standard maintained but on the conviction of publishing some articles relating to the First World War the paper was closed down. On the 13th of November, 1915 Al Hilal was renamed Al Balag and a trust was set up called Darul Irshad. The main motto of that organization was to teach The Noble Qur'an and to spread Islam.

On the 18th March, 1916 Azad was given four days to leave the country in accordance with the defense act and after being ordered as such, went to Karachi. As a result, Al-Balag and Dar al-Irshad were ceased. This was the desire of the British government, and within five months of arriving in Karachi,

Azad's government privileges were revoked. At that time, the Independence (Khilafah) Movement was going on all over the country. In February 1920, as the President of the Bengal Provincial Khilafate conference, he gave a thoughtful speech on the Khilafate. Through that speech he inspired many Muslims towards this movement. He published a weekly news letter, 'Paigam' for the benefit of the movement. Upon the request of the people, Azad then started taking the oaths of obedience from people as a leader as follows: (1) Doing good tasks, forbiddance from bad things, and being patient (2) Love for Allah. (3) Ignorance of all kinds of people's sayings in obeying the order of Allah, and showing bold. Contribution to all the people who gone astray (4) Following the Shariah (5) Obedience in truth. Thousands of people took the oath.

After his direct involvement in politics, he was elected as the president of the All India Congress twice. After the Independence of India in 1947, he was selected as the government's Education Minister and held the post for a long time. Though he was involved in politics, he did not stop his research and wrote many books. Azad rejected taqlid in his writings and promoted a rationalistic approach departing from traditional beliefs and family practices. Azad faced challenges by traditionalists. Once Azad became interested in Mutazilah as he

started reading their writings. This was because of bitter opposition of anti-Mutazilah forces and Asharities. Hence, Azad wanted to write a book on the rationalism of Mutazilah, however, he gave up this project later. During that time he became confused about the religious realities and practices. At this state of his atheism, Azad gave up the obligatory prayers. He writes about this situation:

This is the situation in which I remained from the age of 14 'till the age of twenty two. My external form was that of a person who wanted to combine reason and traditional religion, but inside me, in my beliefs, there was complete atheism and in practice also I failed to follow religious injunctions.

In 1908, Azad visited Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and Turkey and he met the disciples of Jamal al-Din Afghani and Sheikh Muhammad Abduh. He was aware of the Pan- Islamic political, revivalist, nationalist and reformist movements in the Muslim world, and the reformist ideas of Afghani and Abduh. About the influence of Abduh and al-Manar, Azad says:

Al-Manar, because of its literary beauty as well as the subjects it discussed, was a completely new thing for me. I was not much impressed by its discussion on theological subjects as I was at that time, under the spell of the Sir Sayyid School. But its language,

style and literary expression tremendously impressed me and later proved to be very useful in cultivating a real taste in me for Arabic language and literature. Al-Manar undoubtedly has claims on me.

After returning to India, Azad wrote articles admiring Rashid Ridha and Abduh in relation to the social and religious awakening of the Muslim world. Abduh believed that the main cause for the backwardness present in the Muslim world was the giving up of the guidance of The Noble Qur'an and Sunnah. Azad found himself in agreement with Abduh and it was seen in his article on the problem of regeneration and reform of the Ummah. Azad echoed the ideology of al-Manar in his al-Hilal.

Tafsir Tarjuman al-Qur'an

The Tafsir Tarjuman al-Qur'an is the product of Azad's thoughts on The Noble Qur'an. Azad gives his understanding of The Noble Qur'an in this tafsir, which is popular among the Muslim intelligentsia. Azad claims to have studied The Noble Qur'an for 27 years with serious consideration and great endeavor to unravel the meanings of every verse and every word of it. According to him, the real and fundamental teachings of The Noble Qur'an remained concealed and the scholars emphasized things other than the true The Noble Qur'anic message.

Azad states his own method of interpreting The Noble Qur'an as follows:

Now, if we want to understand Noble Qur'an in its real and original form it will be necessary for us first to remove all the veils which have been drawn over its faces because of the external influences from time to time and also from various corners, and then we should venture to find out The Noble Qur'an in the pages of The Noble Qur'an itself.

Azad realized the need for presenting The Noble Qur'an in its real perspective at the time of editing Al-Hilal (1912-1914). Therefore, he made an announcement in Al-Balag in 1916 about the Tarjuman al-Qur'an and its explanatory translation of The Noble Qur'an which could be sufficient to present the original teaching of The Noble Qur'an, while the tafsir intended to be a detailed study of The Noble Qur'an. It was started in 1916 and completed up to Surah An-Noor in 1930. The first part of the tafsir was from Surah Al-Fatiha to Surah Al-Anam and was published in Delhi in 1931. The Second part was written from Surah Al-Aaraf to Surah Al-Muminun and was published in 1936. Golam Rasul published the third part of the tafsir and this was the collection of Tarjuman al-Qur'an.

It should be noted that once in

1921, the manuscript of this tafsir was destroyed when he got attested. After that, he became disheartened and lost inspiration for writing it again. However, considering the need of such a tafsir, in 1927, once again he took the initiative for writing the tafsir afresh. At the beginning of the tafsir, while discussing some basic principles of exegesis and translation, he remarked that the closer to the era of the Prophet Muhammad we are, the more we are able to understand The Noble Qur'an. He mentioned that to ensure peace and prosperity, there is a need to abide by the guidelines of The Noble Qur'an, which is solely applicable to all in respect of time, caste, reason, and country. The tafsir of Azad is an example of an uncompleted one.

Characteristics of the Tarjuman al-Qur'an

Azad's Tarjuman al-Qur'an closely resembles tafsir al-Manar written by Abduh and his disciple Rashid Ridha. The tafsir al-Manar and tafsir Tarjuman al-Qur'an were written by two minds cast in one, but expressed themselves in two different languages. Besides similarities between these two tafsir, in respect to certain concepts, there are different interpretations from other ancient and modern interpreters. Azad and Abduh both mentioned in their tafsir that a true understanding of the teaching of The Noble Qur'an is necessary to

achieve success both here and hereafter. The Basic characteristics of this tafsir are given below:

1 . The unique characteristic of Azad's interpretation is that he builds his ideas up based on the foundation of The Noble Qur'anic verses from various places in The Noble Qur'an. The idea of the unity of the religion has been discussed in surah al-Fatiha. He rejects all religious 'groupism' on The Noble Qur'anic authority and offers a sympathetic attitude towards other religions, although this approach shocked some of his contemporary commentators. According to him, there is one religion revealed to all mankind irrespective of their race, culture and creed. Azad made a comprehensive approach in his interpretation and another remarkable feature of his understanding is his comprehensive approach towards the three principal attributes of God, which He mentioned in surah al-Fatiha and again throughout The Noble Qur'an. These three main attributes are: Rububiya (Divine Providence), rahma (Divine Benevolence), and adala (Divine Justice). Another concept which The Noble Qur'an has mentioned in many places is the principals of wisdom and truth. Azad discussed elaborately these concepts in his tafsir.

2. This tafsir represents a reflection of Azad's intelligence as regards to literature that made his work acceptable

to all persons at all stages. In his tafsir he indicates many things using only a few words. He was a linguist, so it was possible to explain each line of his tafsir condensed into a few pages.

3. Azad was accepted by readers for the exceptional style of his presentation. He translated The Noble Qur'an in such a manner that its main themes were clear to readers. With this, he gives notes through which the horizon of The Noble Qur'an is opened and readers are able to think clearly and research using Azad's tafsir. In spite of the fact that there are similarities between Azad and Abduh's interpretations, Azad never took notice of linguistic aspects of The Noble Qur'anic message as Abduh did. Moreover, the tafsir al-Manar raises a number of issues that cover various aspects of the subject. On the other hand the tafsir Tarjuman al-Qur'an is brief and concise. Azad tried to remain close to the direct meaning of The Noble Qur'anic text.

4. Azad succeeds in conquering the hearts of his readers through his use of thoughtful expression. Azad considered the invitation of The Noble Qur'an to be for all of mankind and that only the teachings of The Noble Qur'an are congruent with the nature of human beings. Through the proper utilization of words, sentences, and presentation, the standards of The Noble Qur'an are

enriched. Azad did not explain anything which contradicted with the method of self-e Salehin. He emphasized the verses of The Noble Qur'an and Hadith with regards to tafsir. He was conscious enough not to make his tafsir unmanageable due to excessive hadiths, but in some places he quoted extra Hadith to resolve some questions.

5. Although Azad and Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan were different in many aspects of interpretation it can be said that Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan helped Azad not to be attached to any single opinion when he discussed fiqhi issues. He considered taqlid to be the main barrier to social change for the Muslims. He tried to solve the problems of society in the light of The Noble Qur'an and Sunnah. Azad's emphasis on a rejection of taqlid is in favor of using the faculty of reason in understanding The Noble Qur'anic message. However, according to Azad reason was not the sole judge to arbitrate between truth and falsehood. Azad had a special position as an Islamic thinker which is clearly reflected in his tafsir and was more concerned about the modern knowledge of science and technology. For example, in his tafsir of Surah Al-Muminun, he explained the different stages of humans according to the theories of science and the angels of The Noble Qur'an. He mentioned how scientific analysis and The Noble Qur'an were similar and how it contradicts with

regards to the scientific explanations of creatures of the sky, and geography. Azad believed that the basics of the development of modern science and technology were based on The Noble Qur'an. He thought that it was not possible to find out the exact truth through knowledge itself, and undoubted knowledge was found only in The Noble Qur'an. Mentioning the situation of the Arabs before The Noble Qur'anic revelation arrived, he said that the social situation of the days of darkness and its problems could not be eliminated by human intelligence alone.

6. Azad explained complex matters beautifully. For example, after narrating the history of Dhul-Qarnain in Surahh Kahaf, he correlated all other matters relevant to this, exhibiting his deep knowledge of history, geography, science and other subjects. He explained historical occurrences thousands of years before the Surah was revealed, eliminating misconceptions. Azad and Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan had both used historical material and had applied the principle of reasonable conjecture for explaining the Dhul-Qarnain.

7. The methods of solving the various problems of the present time that it offers have given this tafsir a special acceptability. Azad tried to understand The Noble Qur'an in its original form. His attempt to discover the

real meaning of The Noble Qur'an is remarkable. According to Azad, the strength of The Noble Qur'anic meaning lies in the manner of its presentation, which is the key to the correct understanding of The Noble Qur'an, without which, the true picture of it is lost to sight. Azad completed his tafsir in a new style and gave solutions to the different problems of everyday life. He mentioned the real spirit of obedience and indicated the real history behind different matters. His linguistic knowledge and standard of literacy was of a very high standard. So, to understand the tafsir properly, readers have to carefully ponder its themes.

8. Azad emphasized The Noble Qur'anic appeal to the use of reason to arrive at the truth of its message. According to him, there is no single chapter in The Noble Qur'an wherein it has not made an earnest appeal to man to reflect upon everything, therefore, the people should reflect and should use their reason and insight to grasp the reality of the message of The Noble Qur'an.

9. Azad concludes his tafsir with his views of social change, particularly the natural law of gradual change. According to him, this law is operating, not only in the physical world, but it is also effective in the social world.■

The Illustrious Contribution of the Islamic World to Medicine and Medical Care

- Aftab Husain Kola

The global annual health spending touched US\$7.077 trillion in 2015, and this metric is expected to go up to US \$8.734 trillion by 2020-2021. Little wonder then that across the world, cities, towns and villages are mushrooming with hospitals and clinics. Like many inventions and discoveries, the contribution of the Islamic world to medicine and medical care is humongous, reflecting the glory of the Islamic civilisation.

The setting up of hospitals was one of the great achievements of the medieval Islamic society, and an examination of the history of the development of medical care will throw ample light on the contribution of the Islamic world towards one of the primary needs of human beings.

Mobile dispensaries during Prophet's time

Probably the earliest hospitals in Islam were the mobile dispensaries that accompanied the Muslim armies and trade caravans during Prophet Muhammad's time. The earliest known Islamic care centre was set up in a tent by Rufaydah Al-Aslamiyah during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). During Ghazwah Khandaq (Battle of the Trench), she treated the wounded in a separate tent erected for the purpose on the western edge of the Sela mountain in Madinah.

Subsequent rulers developed these

pioneering units into true travelling dispensaries that were armed with trained staff, medicines, food, drink and clothes. Such mobile clinics catered to the needs of the outlying communities who had little or no access to healthcare facilities.

Setting up of hospitals

The hospital built in Damascus (Syria) in 706 CE by Al Walid, the Umayyad caliph, was considered as a prototype for the hospitals that came up later. This hospital, equipped with instruments and trained staff, served the needs of all patients, including the blind and the lepers. Many medical procedures were pioneered thereafter. Subsequently, Baghdad in Iraq was home to hospitals established by caliphs Harun Al-Rashid and Al-Mansur. However, it was the hospital built in the south-western quarter of the present-day Cairo in Egypt that became the talk of the world.

Established by Ibn Tulun, the governor of that city in 872 CE, it was the first modern hospital with nurses and a training centre. Ibn Tulun, when he built his world-famous mosque in Egypt, constructed as annexes on its one end a dispensary as well as a place for ablutions. The dispensary was well equipped with medicines and had attendants. On Fridays, there used to be a doctor on duty at this dispensary to attend to emergency

needs of the huge gathering at the mosque. Later, it was developed into a full-fledged institution, the Ahmed ibn Tulun hospital (named after the founder of the Tulunid dynasty), where all patients were treated free of cost — a Muslim policy that was institutionalized with the advent of the hospital. Here, following the tenets of the Waqf document, no one was turned away and there was no limit to how long a patient could stay. This hospital was to serve as the template for hospitals across the world. In Kairouan, present-day Tunisia, a hospital was built in the ninth century, and two others were established at Makkah and Madinah. Persia had several; the one in the city of Rayy was headed for some time by its Baghdad-educated native son, Muhammad ibn Zakariya al-Razi.

Two in Cairo

By the end of the century, two hospitals were also said to have been built in Old Cairo (Fustat). In the 12th century, Saladin founded the Nasiri hospital in Cairo; it was surpassed in size and importance by the Mansuri hospital, completed in 1284 (638 H) after eleven months of construction. The Mansuri hospital remained the primary medical centre in Cairo through the 15th century. It had four entrances, each with a fountain in the centre.

The king appointed male and female attendants to serve male and female patients, respectively, and they were housed in separate wards. In one part of the building, the physician-in-chief was provided a room for teaching and training.

The Nuri hospital in Damascus, entrusted with the physician, Al-Bahili, was a major institution from the time it was established in the middle of the 12th century well into the 15th century, by which time the city had five additional hospitals. There was a medical school in Al Nuri hospital. Early in the 13th century, a physician by name Al-Dakhwar served here for a while; later he opened his own medical school in Damascus.

In Marrakech in Morocco, the Almohad ruler, Al-Mansur Ya'qub ibn Yusuf, built a hospital in 1190 in a spacious area surrounded by fruit trees, flowers, herbs and vegetables.

The concept of Bimaristan

In the days of yore, a hospital was called Bimaristan, or its shortened version maristan (from the Persian words *bimar*, meaning an ill person, and *Stan*, meaning a place). Bimaristan, or asylum of the sick, was the true forerunner of the modern hospital, and was indistinguishable from the modern multi-service healthcare and medical education centre. Not only did a bimaristan serve variously as a centre for treatment, it was also a convalescent home for those recovering from illness or accident, a psychological asylum and a retirement home that offered rudimentary care to the aged and the infirm who lacked a family to care for them.

In the late ninth century, leading physician and polymath Muhammad ibn Zakariya Al-Razi helped establish a bimaristan in Baghdad staffed with 25

doctors, optometrists, surgeons and bone-setters. Bimaristans were open to everyone on a 24-hour basis. Some only treated men while others, staffed by women physicians, treated only women; there were still others, which cared for both men and women in separate wings that had all facilities and resources. To treat less serious cases, there were outpatient clinics where doctors prescribed medicines to be taken at home.

A policy statement of the bimaristan of al-Mansur Qalawun in Cairo, circa 1284 CE reads thus: "The hospital shall keep all patients, men and women, until they are completely recovered. All costs are to be borne by the hospital whether the people come from afar or near, whether they are residents or foreigners, strong or weak, low or high, rich or poor, employed or unemployed, blind or signed, physically or mentally ill, learned or illiterate. There are no conditions of consideration and payment; none is objected to or even indirectly hinted at for non-payment. The entire service is through the magnificence of God, the generous one."

Infections were treated with special care. A system was in place by which inpatients were provided hospital wear from a central supply area while their own clothes were kept in the hospital store. The hospital wards were well maintained and had clean sheets and special stuffed mattresses. The hospital rooms were neat and tidy with abundant running water and sunlight.

The rulers of the day were strict

about the upkeep of the hospitals and would make surprise visits. A patient was attended to immediately after arrival and was put on a diet depending on his/her condition and disease. The food served was of superior quality and included chicken and other poultry, beef and lamb, fresh fruits and vegetables. This was to ensure that patients would not feel further sick on account of malnutrition.

These early hospitals were seen all over the Muslim world, and even in Andalusia in Spain, Sicily and North Africa. These hospitals were admired for their services by the local people as well as the travelling traders, who later built similar systems in their own countries. Being competent administrators, Muslims managed hospitals very efficiently. In Europe, people took the help of Muslim physicians and administrators to set up hospitals there.

Speaking about the Al-Nuri hospital, Ibn Jubayr, a famous 12th century traveller, wrote, "The new one is the most frequented and the largest of the two, and its daily budget is about 15 dinars. It has an overseer in whose hands is the maintenance of the registers that have the names of the patients and the expenditures for the required medicaments, foodstuff and similar things."

The 13th-century doctor and traveller Abd al-Latif al-Baghdadi, who also taught at Damascus, has narrated an amusing story of a clever Persian youth who was so tempted by the excellent food

and service at the Nuri hospital that he feigned illness. The doctor who examined him figured out what the young man was up to, but admitted him nevertheless, providing the youth fine food for three days. On the fourth day, the doctor told him with a rueful smile, "Traditional Arab hospitality lasts for three days: Please go home now!"

Patients who were ready to be discharged but too weak to leave the hospital were transferred to the convalescent ward and remained there until they were strong enough to leave. Generosity was such that needy patients were provided new clothes besides a token sum to support them in re-establishing their livelihood.

Bimaristan Al-Arghuni

Soon more countries in the Islamic world began setting up hospitals. Besides the Nuri hospital in Damascus, which was the leading bimaristan from the time of its establishment, in 1354 CE there came up a large full-fledged hospital, Bimaristan Al-Arghuni, in Bab Qinnisrin quarter, built by Arghun Al-Kamili, who represented the Mamluk Sultanate in Aleppo. Considered one of the most important traditional hospitals in the Islamic world, it was used as Aleppo's main healthcare institution with the Mamluk sultanate generously patronizing it for medicine, equipment, training and research. With its airy, high-ceiling rooms, Bimaristan Arghuni functioned as a hospital until the early 20th century. Later, it was converted into a museum.

The Nur al-Din Bimaristan, a hospital

and medical school in Damascus, which was founded in the 12th century, is today the Museum of Medicine and Science. The great Syro- Egyptian hospitals of the 12th and 13th centuries were built on a cruciform plan with four central iwans or vaulted halls, with many adjacent rooms including kitchens, storage areas, pharmacy, living quarters for the staff, and sometimes a library.

Funding

These hospitals were funded mainly through Islamic religious endowments called Wakfs. Wealthy men, especially the rulers, gifted property as endowments, whose revenue went towards building and maintaining the institution. The property could consist of shops, mills, caravanserais or even entire villages. The income from an endowment would pay for the maintenance and for meeting the running cost of the hospital. Part of the state budget also went towards maintenance of the hospital. The services of the hospital were to be free, though some individual physicians charged a nominal fee.

The end of the 15th century saw many of these hospitals either ceasing to exist or paling in significance, even as new hospitals began mushrooming all over the civilized world, especially in many countries in Europe and Asia. However, here what is most significant is the glorious role the Muslim community played in the development of medical care in the medieval world and the illustrious legacy it left behind. ■

History of Plagues Over Centuries

- Muhammad Salim

Plague is an infectious disease caused by the bacterium *Yersinia Pestis*. Symptoms are fever, weakness and headache. Such symptoms begin one to seven days after exposure. There are three forms of plague. The bubonic form is when the infected person develops swelling in lymph nodes. In the Septicemic form, tissues may turn black and die. However, the pneumonic form occurs when the patient develops shortness of breath, cough, and chest pain.

Bubonic and septicemic plague usually spread by flea bites or handling an infected animal. While the pneumonitis plague is raged among people through the air via infectious droplets, the plague case is diagnosed by finding the bacterium in fluid from a lymph node, blood or sputum.

Patients at high risk may be vaccinated. People exposed to a pneumonic case of plague may be treated with preventive medication. Such treatment is represented in antibiotic and supportive care. Antibiotics include a combination of gentamicin and fluoroquinolone. The death risk with treatment is about 10% while without treatment is about 70%.

There were 600 cases reported annually on the global level. In 2017, most cases are reported to be in countries such the Democratic Republic

of Congo, Madagascar, and Peru. In the United States, infections are found in rural areas, where the bacteria are believed to circulate among rodents. Historically, plagues occur in large outbreaks, with the most famous one being the Black Death in the 14th century which claimed souls of more than 50 million people. Following is a numeration of the plagues that occurred throughout centuries.

The Antonine Plague

This is known as the plague of Galen (a Greek physician who lived in the Roman Empire), which broke out in 165 AD. It was an ancient plague brought to the Roman Empire by the troops returning from campaigns in the Near East. However, Scholars suspected it to have been either a smallpox or measles. It might be the cause of the death of the Roman Emperor, Lucius Verus who was the co-regent of Marcus Antoninus after whom the plague was named.

The Plague of Emmaus

Also known as the plague of Amwas, the plague of Emmaus occurred in 639 in the town of Emmaus (Amwas) in Palestine (under Bilad al-Sham during the Islamic Caliphate Age). The town had been struck with the plague after its conquest by the forces of the Caliph Omer Ibn Al-Khattab (may

Allah be pleased with him), and upon setting a military camp there. It is a very famous plague in the early Islamic era, because of the death of many prominent companions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This outbreak claimed the souls of 25 ,000 people.

Justinian Pandemic

This one was focused in the city of Constantinople. There were 5,000 deaths per day in the spring of 542 CE. The death toll was over a third of the city population. The victims were too numerous to be buried. Corps were stacked high in church as the Christian doctrine prevents disposal of these corps by cremation. Three years later, the plague raged through Italy, South France, Rhine Valley and Iberia. Then, it spread as far as Denmark, Ireland, Africa, Middle East and Asia Minor, killing 100 million people in Asia, Africa and Europe. There were major outbreaks of the plague in Europe and Middle East over the next 200 years. It reoccurred in Constantinople, Ireland, England and also raged in Iraq, Egypt and Syria as well as Mesopotamia.

The Black Death of Europe

The term “black death” was not used until later, however, in 1347, it was known as the “Pestilence or Pestilentia”. It is derived from the Latin term “atra mors” which means dreadful death, translated later into Black Death.

It is a great plague that occurred in Europe and was brought to Crimea

of Asia Minor by the Tartar (or Tatar) armies of Khan Janibeg, who had sieged the town of Kaffa (now Feodosya) in Ukraine on the shores of the Black Sea. The plague of the Black Death reached Marseille, Paris and Germany including Spain. England and Norway. It also hit Eastern Europe and was carried away by the Tartar armies to reach Russia and India. Black Death was symptomized in tumors in groin and armpits in size of an apple or an egg. Then it changed into black spots on the arms or the thighs with both men and women alike.

In Florence, Italy, half of the city population died where the Italians called the epidemic “Mortalega Grande” i.e. Great Mortality. Corpses were thrown into large pits. People died with rapidity that no proper burial or cremation could be done. There were putrefying bodies in their homes and in the streets. There were no clergy to perform burial rites.

There are no remedies for this pandemic disease except for inhaling aromatic vapors from flowers plus herbs. There was shortage of doctors, therefore, quacks appeared to sell useless cures and amulets as being claimed to offer magical protection.

The Black Death killed a quarter of the population of Europe that was more than 25 million and another 25 million in Asia and Africa. Mortality rates were higher in the cities of Florence, Venice and Paris. There were virulent infection epidemic diseases such as

smallpox, infantile diarrhea and dysentery.

Quarantines:

In 1374, on re-emergence of another epidemic of the Black Death in Europe and for taking precautionary measures, Venice established various public health controls, such as isolating victims from healthy people; preventing ships with disease from landing at port. In Venice, suspected travelers from the Levant and Eastern Mediterranean had to spend forty days in a quarantine to make sure if they were well. This period of 40 days was related to biblical and historical references, such as the Christian Observance of Lent (the period for which Christ fasted in the desert) or the ancient Greek doctrine of "critical days" which held that contagious disease would develop within 40 days of exposure. Most countries in Europe established quarantines in the 14th and 15th centuries. Habsburg established a cordon sanitaire, i.e. a line between infected and clean parts of Europe which ran from the Danube to the Balkans. It was manned by local peasants with checkpoints and quarantine stations to prevent infected people from crossing from Eastern to Western Europe. Doctors who attended infected patients wore peculiar leather costumes to protect them from the plague. They wore a protective garb head to feet with leather or oil cloth robes, leggings, gloves and hood, a

beak like mask with glass eyes and two breathing nostrils which were filled with aromatic herbs and flowers to ward off the miasma (bad scent).

London Great Plague

A pneumatic plague occurred in Europe and England in 1665. It reached its peak in September of that year when 7,000 people per week died in London alone. A fifth of London population (around 100,000) died. Rebuilding timber and hatch houses of London with brick and tile reduced the number of rats' normal habitat and contributed in the end of the epidemic.

The Third Pandemic

A plague re-emerged in the remote province of China, Yunnan in 1855. It reached Hong Kong and spread to Bombay. By 1900, it reached all parts on every continent carried by infected rats travelling by international trade routes on the new steamships. The first major outbreak occurred in Sydney, Australia and spread through to the other cities of the continent. It was confirmed that rats were the source of the epidemic and their fleas were the vectors of the epidemic. The third pandemic raged throughout the world for the next five decades and it ended only in 1959, causing 15 million deaths. Also, there had been outbreaks of plague in China, Tanzania, Zaire, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

The Spanish Flu

The Spanish flu, also known as the

1918 flu pandemic, was an unusually deadly influenza pandemic. Lasting from January 1918 to December 1920, it infected 500 million people about a quarter of the world's population at the time. The death toll is estimated to have been anywhere from 17 million to 50 million, and possibly as high as 100 million, making it one of the deadliest pandemics in human history.

Actually, there have been innumerable epidemic of plagues throughout history; however, the pandemic of the 6th, 14th, 20th and 21st centuries have had the most impact on human society, not only in terms of great mortalities, but also on the social, economic and cultural life of people.

The 21st Century Epidemic Diseases:

H5NI: This is a bird flu, an avian influenza of a viral infection not only infected birds, but also humans. It first appeared in geese in China, in 1996, then it was caught by people during a poultry outbreak in Hong Kong. It infected wild birds in more than 50 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.

- An Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) that occurred between 2002 to 2004, caused by SARS-Cov. It first appeared in Foshan, Guangdong, China, and it killed over 8,000 people worldwide.

NIH 1: This is swine flu. It is an influenza, a virus which contains unique

combination of flue not previously identified in animals or people. It is so called because people who caught it had direct contact with pigs. It appeared first in Mexico in 2009. It is associated with the outbreak of the Spanish Flu in 1918.

- Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). This disease was firstly identified in Saudi Arabia in 2012. It is caused by MERS-Cov. It is also known as camel-flu.

- Covid-19 Pandemic: This is the current Coronavirus which firstly appeared in the city of Wuhan, China in December 2019. It is a pandemic ongoing disease caused by acute respiratory syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-Cov2). It is declared to be a globally public health emergency on 30th January 2020 and recognized as a pandemic on 11 March 2020. As of 11 April 2020, there are more than 1.69 million cases reported in 210 countries resulting in 102,000 deaths and more than 376,000 people recovered.

Although the course of development of communities and nations was changed several times in terms of preventing the recurrence of pandemic plague, such as the development of the Germ Theory and the science of Bacteriology as well as public health measures, such as quarantine, and antibiotic such as streptomycin, yet, plague today is still an important and serious threat to the health of both people and animals. ■

Abdullah Quilliam, First Converted British Muslim in The UK

- M. Minhaj Niloy

Religious conversion is a complex sensation. Conversion experiences can happen in different situations. Religious conversion is alteration from one religion to another. According to Islam, "No baby is born but upon Fitra (As a Muslim). It is his parents who made him a Jew or Christian or a Polytheist." (Sahih Muslim, Book 033, Number 6426) Here I will describe about the first Victorian in the United Kingdom (UK) who converted into Islam.

Abdullah Quilliam was first -in the United Kingdom to convert into Muslim from Christianity. Abdullah Quilliam's conversion led to a notable history of the growth of Islam in the Victorian Britain. In 1887, he was the first Christian person to convert into Islam in England. His original name was William Henry Quilliam. He was born on 10th April 1856 at 22 Eliot Street, Liverpool, UK. Henry Quilliam was raised in Liverpool city. Very astonishingly, Quilliam's father was a Methodist preacher. He spent his childhood on the Isle of Man, and he was brought up as a Methodist. He studied law at King William's College. In his professional life, Quilliam worked in the legal profession as a solicitor for several decades. He was specialized in criminal law and practiced in Liverpool. Quilliam was known as a defense lawyer as he defended several high-profile

murder cases. During that time, he became connected with the temperance movement. The temperance movement is a social movement. It related against the theory of consumption of alcoholic beverages. Members in the movement normally criticize alcohol intoxication or support complete abstinence from alcohol. They also highlighted the alcohol's negative effects on people's health and family lives. The movement encourages alcohol education. It also demands the path of new laws against the alcohol sale, either-regulations on the alcohol's availability, or the total prohibition of it. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, the temperance movement became noticeable in several countries. It is also said that one of the causes he was involved in Islam was that alcohol is prohibited for Muslims.

However, in 1887 Quilliam fell ill. In the Victorian era, he was practically well-to-do. For this purpose, he visited Morocco to change climate to recover his illness. In 1887, Abdullah Quilliam converted into Muslim religion. He was fascinated to Islamic culture while visiting Morocco to recover from an ill physical condition. He felt interest to be a Muslim after seeing Moroccans pray on a ferry when a Mediterranean break took place in 1887. Quilliam said, "They

were not at all troubled by the force of the strong wind or by the swaying of the ship. I was deeply touched by the look on their faces and their expressions, which displayed complete trust and sincerity". Then he inquired about this religion. Finally, at the age of 31 age accepted Islam as his religion. He described his new faith as "reasonable and logical, and personally I felt it did not contradict my beliefs)". Though it is not obligatory in Islam to change names after conversion, but still he adopted the name of Abdullah. He changed his name of Abdullah, converting to Muslim. Later, he was also known as Henri Marcel Leon or Haroun Mustapha Leon.

When Quilliam returned to Liverpool from Morocco, he devoted himself into the faith, studying determinedly, presenting Islamic lectures and writing books on the religion. After his conversion Quilliam made first converts in his own family, with his mother and his three sons. In 1887, he became a Muslim preacher. He published many booklets and after publishing he became a famous figure in the Muslim world.

At that time, he purchased several properties at Brougham Terrace, Liverpool. The Crown Prince of Afghanistan, Nasrullah Khan also donated to purchase those properties. Later, one of his properties, 8 Brougham Terrace renovated as the mosque. It was named as the Liverpool Muslim

Institute in 1889. Thus, he founded one of the Britain's first mosque in Liverpool. Besides, he established a boarding school for boys and a day school for girls. Moreover, the Institute operated educational classes covering different subjects, which were attended by both Muslims and non-Muslims. There was also a museum and science laboratory. Quilliam started social work for spreading Islam in the UK. He inspired non-Muslim parents who were unable to look after their children to become Muslim. For this purpose, Abdullah Quilliam also founded an orphanage called Medina House. It was a home for more than 20 orphans, they were brought up as Muslims. And child's mothers were required to sign a clause that they would be brought up as Muslims.

Over the next few decades, many well-known Muslims across the world visited the Liverpool mosque. Abdullah Quilliam was given various prominent titles. In 1894, Abdul Hamid 11 the 26th Ottoman Caliph, gave Quilliam the title of Sheikh al-Islam of the British Isles. The Emir of Afghanistan also called him as the Sheikh of Muslims in Britain. Quilliam built up as well as developed his international Islamic contacts. And he was also selected as the Persian Vice Counsel to Liverpool by the Shah of Persia.

At Victorian era, Quilliam had a noteworthy contribution to the Islamic

Literary Works in the UK. He wrote the leaflet titled Faith of Islam, regarding Dawah in Islam and its key principles. In the first edition, 2000 copies were published. Later in 1890, a further 3000 copies were published. He also edited 'The Crescent' a weekly record of Islam in Britain. It represented Muslims in England between 1893 and 1908. Abdullah Quilliam also published a monthly international journal. It had internationally circulated. These exclusive documents are an ancient record of a rising converted community in the British colonial times and situation of Islam. Quilliam travelled from place to place in UK and lectured on Islam. Abdullah Quilliam might not be the famous name, but undoubtedly, he played a great role in promoting Islam in the UK. Quilliam always followed a suitable policy in his missionary activity. Each time he kept in mind the person's background, who he was addressing. And tend to create possibly converts feel to Islam. Many well-known personalities, scientists, teachers, and wealthy landowner accepted Muslim religion due to Abdullah Quilliam's influence. Among them Professor Nasrullah Warren, Professor Haschem Wilde and Resched P. Stanley the former Mayor of Staley bridge converted to Muslim for his preaching. In the UK, Quilliam's proliferation of Islam led to around 600 people to accept Islam. Significantly, many educated and prominent persons

in British Society, along with ordinary men and women converted to Islam. Quilliam's efforts also managed to the first Japanese man converted into Islam.

But many Liverpool local converts were abused over their faith and faced resentment. They were also assaulted with bricks, offal and horse manure. Quilliam believed that the attackers had been "brainwashed and led to believe that we were bad people". Even Quilliam's mosque was once attacked with snowballs by a Sunday school teacher.

He also criticized British foreign policy in Sudan. Quilliam was encouraging Muslim soldiers in the British army to abstain from attacking the Muslims of Sudan. This was one of the vital reasons that forced to Quilliam to leave the UK. Quilliam's extended activities, massive number of converts started to attract antagonism as well as pressure from both the local community and from the media.

Sadly, Quilliam had to leave the UK after facing many challenges like hostility and persecution. Quilliam worked with the underprivileged including advocating trade unionism and divorce law reform. But his legal profession ruined when tried to help a female client seeking divorce. Actually, it was a honey trap set up for that woman's alleged adulterous husband. However, that practice was not unusual

for that period. But the attempt was unsuccessful and Quilliam was struck off. In 1908, he left England, his professional work in Liverpool stopped. It is claimed that he left Liverpool to reduce the scandal's effect on the Muslim community. After that his son Bilal, sold of the property registered in Quilliam's name, used as a mosque and Islamic Centre.

Finally, Quilliam returned to the UK. In addition, he adopted the new name Haroun Mustapha Leon. In 1932, he took his last breath. He was buried in Brookfield Cemetery near Woking. His grave was unmarked. Some prominent Anglo-Muslims were also buried in Brookfield Cemetery like Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall (who each translated the Qur'an). His profile is diminished, but still Liverpool mosque

bears his name to this day. Also, he was involved with the UK's one of the oldest mosques 'Shahjahan mosque', built in Woking, Surrey in 1889.

However, in 1932, after Quilliam's death, the Brougham terrace was purchased by the council then used as a register office for records of births, deaths, and civil weddings. Eventually, the building fell into disuse in spite of the strength of Quilliam's legacy. But in 2009, the newly founded Quilliam Foundation, set about renovating the original mosque with money raised by donations. In 2014, it reopened. It is a valuable symbol of the Muslim community as well as the British history. He died about near a century ago, Abdullah Quilliam's legacy still lives on. To remember the effort of Abdullah Quilliam and the mosque, a plaque was positioned on 8 Brougham Terrace in 1997. ■

It is not the propagation but the permanency of his religion deserves our wonder; the same pure and perfect impression which he engraved at Mecca and Medina is preserved, after the revolutions of twelve centuries by the Indian, the African and the Turkish proselytes of the Koran... The Mohometans have uniformly withstood the temptation of reducing the object of their faith and devotion to a level with the senses and imagination of man. "I believe in One God and Mahomet the Apostle of God" is the simple and invariable profession of Islam. The intellectual image of the Deity has never been degraded by any visible idol; the honours of the Prophet have never transgressed the measure of human virtue, and his living precepts have restrained the gratitude of his disciples within the bounds of reason and religion.

Edward Gibbon and Simon Ockley, HISTORY OF THE SARACEN EMPIRE, London. 1870

Metaphysics of Miraj: The Religio-Political Dimensions

- S. Habibul Haq Nadwi

The territory of the spiritual realm begins where the territory of the temporal world ends. Since the metaphysical dimensions are beyond the comprehension of man, whose knowledge and experience are limited, the experience of the terrestrial realm is indescribable in human language because it can describe only the experience of the three dimensional continuum. The scientists and the rationalists reject the unseen because it is not verifiable by sense data and overrides the limitations of logic and common sense.

A Challenge to the Empiricists

The celestial journey of Muhammad (S.A.W.), the last Prophet of Islam, by night from Mecca to Jerusalem, known as 'Isra' and his bodily ascension across the seven heavens up to the throne of Authority (Arsh), known as 'Mi'raj, and then his return to Mecca in an incredibly short time was and is the greatest challenge ever posed by God to the empiricists and the rationalists. The unbelievers of Mecca who were pressing upon the Prophet to perform miracles as a proof of his Prophethood and were not satisfied with the greatest living miracle of the Qur'an, the Word of God, inimitable by all the scholars either of the human race or the race of the jinn, even if they joined forces to do so they would be unable to produce anything like a chapter or even a verse of

the Qur'an, were astonished to hear the news of 'Mi'raj' and the 'Isra' and refused to believe in them, for they were beyond their comprehension.

The chapter entitled Bani-Israil (XVII), deals with the events of 'Mi'raj'. Unity of God (Taw'hid) and the unseen (Ghaib) such as the Paradise, the Hell, reward and punishment in the life Hereafter form the central theme of this chapter. At the end of the chapter God reveals to His Prophet that the Quraish of Mecca were determined to banish him from Mecca. A warning was also served to the infidels that if the Prophet was harmed or expelled from Mecca, the Meccans would face a calamity similar to what befell other nations before them when they drove the Prophets of God out of their mother cities. The chapter (XVII) makes it clear that the Qur'an was the final revelation and Divine authority. It commences and concludes with the praise (hamd) of the Almighty. The controversy regarding the Mi'raj caused great storm of tension among the Quraishites, who belied the Holy Prophet. The storm is not yet over. Syed Qutb, a great thinker of Islam, makes it quite clear that God Almighty was Omnipotent and all-powerful to lift his servant bodily, as He did in the case of Prophet Jesus. The denial of physical Mi'raj is tantamount to imposing limits on the infinitude of God. Both 'Isra' and the Mi'raj were the final phases in the spiritual development of the

Prophet. They encompassed the knowledge of the whole of creation, the seen and the Unseen, such as the earth, the moon, the stars, interstellar space, the Paradise and the Hell as well as the process of reward and the punishment. They were in fact audiovisual Divine Orientation of the Prophet in the mysteries of the Unseen and the completion of faith in the Unseen.

Iman bil Ghaib

“This (The Qur’an) is the Book, in it is the guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allah; who believe in the unseen, are steadfast in prayer, and spend out of what we have provided for them.” (11:2-3).

The events of ‘Mi’raj’ proved that God’s Knowledge comprehends the finite and the infinite without any curtain of time or any separation of space. He can see and hear all things. They prove the Power and Authority of God which were again a challenge to the rationalists (such as the Greeks), who believed that God’s Knowledge was confined to His own Being and He Knew nothing beyond His own Self.

Events of the Mi’raj

The Prophet, while resting one night at Hatim of the Ka’ba at Mecca, was informed by the Angel (Jibrail) that God Almighty wanted him in His Audience. His chest was opened and purified so that it could receive the realities of Hadirat-al Quds (The Holy Fold) and given Audience to the Almighty without any difficulties. The

Burraq, (derived from barq, meaning electricity) took him from the Masjid-al-Haram (the Ka’ba) to the Masjid-al-Aqsa in Jerusalem, with a velocity of light or even more. It was at this Masjid that he led the congregation of all Prophets of the past. This journey of the Prophet from Mecca to Jerusalem is called ‘Isra’ (The Night journey). From Jerusalem he was taken bodily to the seven heavens across the interstellar space and then all the way to the Sidrat-al-Muntaha (Lote Tree), which typified the perfection of faith and wisdom (Iman wa Hikma), beyond which none had access before him. The garden of Abode (‘Janna’), where the Prophet heard the stroke of the pen, writing the destiny of the universe, was situated here. It was here that the Prophet had the first glimpse of God Almighty in His Full Glory, conversed with Him, obtained the highest wisdom (Hikma) and received the three major gifts of the ‘Mi’raj’, namely:

- (i) the last verses of the chapter ‘Baqara’ which were the Divine Mandate for the Hijra of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina;
- (ii) the Salat, (five times daily prayers), which were regarded as the ‘Mi’raj of the Mo’min’, for he had a direct communion with God in the salat without any intermediary, and
- (iii) the general amnesty awarded by God to the monotheists.

A Test of Faith

The ‘Mi’raj’ has been described by

the Qur'an as a test of faith (Fitnatan lin-Nas) for both the believers and the non-believers for all times to come. The scientists refused to accept them, as mentioned before, because human intellect was unable to comprehend such mysteries.

The Mu'tazilite-infected Muslim apologists until today, regarded them as dream, vision, mystical experience allegorical, symbolical and above all a 'historical fiction'. They refused to accept any breach in the Laws of the Nature (Kharq-i-Adat). They, therefore, scoffed at the idea of miracles (Mu'jizat) of the Prophets, be they the promised devastation of the followers of Noah by the flood and the survival of the Prophet along with his faithful followers, or the safety of Abraham in the huge fire in which he was put by Nimrod. Be it the direct conversation of Moses with God or the changing of his staff ('Asa) into a snake and its swallowing up the magic snakes of the magicians, or the crossing of the Red Sea by Moses and the drowning of the Pharaoh, or the curing of the lepers and the blind or making the earthen-bird fly by Prophet Jesus or the splitting of the moon by Muhammad (S.A.W.) and the coming back above the horizon of the sun and above all the second coming of the Prophet Jesus. All such miracles were meaningless to the Mu'tazilites and their Muslim clients.

The Muslim apologists of our time, suffering from the guilt-psychology, also feel ashamed to believe in prophetic

miracles. Some of them, however, try to define the 'Isra' and 'Mi'raj' in scientific terminology or compare them with modern space travel of man to the moon and other planets. Their minds are not convinced or satisfied with the Divine statements of the Qur'an and the Hadith which were evidences positive enough for the believers.

One cannot question the attitude of the empiricists because they do not believe in the metaphysical order or in life after death and in the doctrine of reward and punishment. They, therefore hold that travelling of the Prophet bodily from Mecca to Jerusalem and crossing the whole of the starry universe extending to million of light years was unacceptable. How could the speed of the travel, they question, be even far beyond the speed of the light, the velocity of which was the limit of the highest speed in the four dimensional continuum. How could a man travel through an electromagnetic carrier (Burraq) in the four dimensional continuum or in the space-time continuum? How could the resistance of the material environment not produce any adverse effect as it does on a meteor with a much lower velocity of even about twenty miles per second? How could the Prophet free himself from the shackles of gravitation or of space-time continuum or could travel in higher dimensional continuum beyond the obstructing matter? It was not in conformity with the laws of nature which were immutable. Since it was beyond the limits of the observable data of senses and

above the standard of logic and common sense it was to be rejected in its entirety!

The Qur’anic Defence of the Prophet

After the experience of the ‘Isra’ and the ‘Mi’raj’, the Prophet narrated the events to Umme Hani who prevented the Prophet from making it public. She said:

“O Prophet of God do not talk to the people about it for they will give you the lie and insult you.”

The Prophet replied:

“By God, I certainly will tell them.” And when the Prophet told the people about his ‘Mi’raj’, they were astounded and asked him evidence of Truth. The Prophet narrated the story of the caravan of the Banu so-and-so on the way to Syria. He described the details of Jerusalem and narrated the events which had happened with the caravan on one particular night. The statement of the Prophet was confirmed later on by the members of the caravan on their return.”

It is astonishing to note that the infidels who repeatedly had asked the Prophet to show some of his miracles as a proof of his prophethood, belied him. When the movement of denial (Takdhib) became violent and offending, God, defended His Prophet in ‘Sura an-Najm (LIII). The infidels declared the ‘Mi’raj’ as imaginary and dream and not as real. It clearly indicates that they were told about the physical ‘Mi’raj’ namely bodily ascension in a state of wakefulness. Had it been otherwise they would have never

belied the Prophet or challenged his claim. Moreover the Qur’an would have not even bothered to respond to the accusations of the infidels of Mecca, who were already hostile to Islam.

The Qur’ân made it clear that the ‘Mi’raj’ was neither an illusion nor a dream. It was real and the Prophet qualified himself to have a close vision of God and to reach the Throne of Authority, closer than two bows or twice the distance where the arrow would fall from the bow or at a distance as fixed by two bows placed side by side or like a circle by placing the two arches opposite each other with their strings. Some scholars do hold that the statement of the Qur’an refers to the seeing of Jibril by the Prophet from such a close proximity and not to the audience of God. But the Qur’anic statement makes it quite clear that the Prophet had the vision of God in His Full Glory and not of Jibril because he had seen Jibril many times before during the course of the transmission of the Revelation (Wahi). The following verses, according to the major scholars, refer to the vision of God Almighty:

“By the star when it goes down, your companion is neither astray nor being misled, nor does he say of his own desire. It is no less than revelation sent down to him. He was taught by one Mighty in Power, endued with Wisdom for he appeared (in stately form) when he was in the highest part of the horizon. Then he approached and came closer, and was at

a distance of but two bow-lengths or (even) nearer; so did Allah convey the revelation to his servant, (conveyed) what he meant to convey. The Prophet's (mind and) heart in no way falsified that which he saw. Will ye then dispute with him concerning what he saw? For indeed he saw Him at a second descent near the Lote-Tree, beyond which none may pass: near it is the Garden of Abode. Behold, the Lote-Tree was shrouded (in mystery unspeakable). His sight never swerved nor did it go wrong! For Truly did he see of the Signs of his Lord, the Greatest.' (Lill: 1-18).

Physical or Spiritual: The Origins of the Controversy

The majority of the Islamic theologians firmly believe in the physical ascension of the Prophet. One of the Attributes of God, as defined by the Qur'an is 'Kun-Fa-Yakun', (be and it is done). The 'Isra' and the 'Mi'raj' were not beyond the jurisdiction of this attribute. The author belongs to the same school of Jamhur.

All the companions (Sahaba) of the Prophet who heard the Prophet relating the events of the 'Mi'raj', believed in the physical ascension, namely, he was lifted bodily in a state of wakefulness and not in dream. Imam Zarqani mentions forty five companions, name by name, who have reported the details of the 'Mi'raj'.

The controversy arose only when the traditions of 'Aisha, the wife of the Prophet, and that of Mu'awiya, the companion of the Prophet, were

circulated. The exegetist and the traditionist both have declared the traditions, mentioned above, as discontinuous, incoherent and broken (Munqata') for none of them have been mentioned either by any traditionist or recorded by any standard anthology of the traditions. They have first appeared in the sira books and lack the authenticity of the chain of narrators (Asnad), sine-qua-non for a mentioned genuine Hadith. Ibn Ishaq the famous biographer, without having mentioned the name and position of the traditionist writes:

“One of Abu Bakr's family told me that 'Aisha, the Prophet's wife used to say 'The apostle's body remained where it was, but God removed his spirit at night.'”

Since the name of the Rawi (narrator) and his position is not mentioned, the Hadith has been rejected. Moreover, 'Aisha was not married to the Prophet in Mecca where the 'Mi'raj' took place. She was married in Medina. The Hadith of Mu'awiya has also been reported by Ibn Ishaq, through Ya'qub b. 'Atba who according to the unanimous verdict of the traditionists, was not the contemporary of Mu'awiya. Since the Hadith is not incessant (Ghair-Munqata'), it is not acceptable.

The Ahadith, recorded in the authentic books (like sihah) clearly indicate that the 'Mi'raj' was a physical ascension. The Hadith of Bukhari indicates that the 'Mi'raj' was physical in a state of wakefulness. Ibn Hajar in his Fath al-Bari,

Qadi Iyaz in *Shifa* and Khifaji in *Nasim-ar-Riyad*, have supported the doctrine of physical ascension. The great majority of companions such as 'Umar, Anas and 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud, who were present in the assembly of the Prophet, when he revealed the events of the 'Mi'raj', and where neither Aisha nor Mu'awiya were present, believed in the bodily ascension as well as in the vision of God by the Prophet with eyes of certainty.

The verses in chapter an-Najm (LIII), cited above, emphatically illustrate that the Prophet was not stray and he saw the signs of his Lord with eyes of certainty. The 'Mi'raj' was neither an illusion, nor a dream nor a mystical experience. There is no doubt that Angel Jibrail has been introduced in the chapter for the simple reason that the unbelievers denied the existence of Jibrail.

Shah Wali Allah, the renowned Islamic scholar of the Indo-Pak subcontinent has taken strenuous pains to prove that 'Mi'raj' was physical and not spiritual. Exposing the semantic feature of Arabic word 'Abd' (slave), as used in the Qur'an, he argues that it applies to the body with the soul, that is, body and soul. An 'Abd' cannot be conceived as a body (jism) minus the soul (ruh), that is, (+ body soul) or (+ soul - body). Since God has Absolute Power (Qadir-al-Mutlaq) and as such he lifted the body of Muhammad (S.A.W.) as he lifted Prophet Jesus (Peace be upon him). To deny the physical ascension of the Prophet, according to

Shah Wali-Allah, is tantamount to imposing limitations on the freedom and infinite power of God Almighty. With regard to the dream-theory he says that since dream was a common experience of every man, it would have never stirred such a violent storm of opposition by the non-believers. Had it been a dream, no one would have even bothered to contradict or even question the statement of the Prophet and there would have been no need for the Qur'an to defend the Prophet as mentioned above. Since it was an actuality and not a dream, the Book defended the Prophet (XVII: 1). Justifying the opening of the chest of the Prophet, Shah Wali Allâh further says that since God wanted to attune the nature of the heart to the changing conditions of the metaphysical world, He instructed the Angel Jibrâil to purify and strengthen it.

Hadith Literature on Mi'raj

In addition to the two chapters of the Qur'an (XVII and LIII), the most authentic sources on Mi'raj are the Hadith Literatures. Imam Bukhari reports his Hadith from Anas b. Malik, and mentions five Ahadith on 'Mi'raj' in his chapter on salat (*Kitab-as-salat*), which has been commenced with the Hadith reported by Anas. The details of the 'Mi'raj' have been narrated verbatim as revealed by the Prophet in regard to the arrival of Jibrail, opening of his chest and its purification with the water of zam-zam and its filling up with faith and wisdom. The details of the visit to various heavens and of the

meeting of the Prophet with previous Prophets such as Adam, Idris, Moses, Jesus and Ibrahim, who greeted him with love and affection, as well as his onward journey to the higher celestial regions, where he heard the stroke of the pen, have been described in full detail, giving vivid portrayal of the various spheres of the Heavens. The gift of salat has also been mentioned. Other details such as the journey of the Prophet to the Sidrat al-Muntaha or his visit to paradise have also been mentioned.

Since Jerusalem was the first qibla of Islam and since it was the foundation stone of 'Mi'raj', the Muslim scholars have spared no pains to write exhaustive history of Jerusalem in order to explain the significance of 'Mi'raj' and its inseparable ties with the formative history of Islam. The description of Bait-al-Maqdis, its destruction by Titus in 70 C.E. and its veneration by the pre-Islamic Arabia have been emphatically explained.

The Mishkat al-Masabih, another standard anthology of Ahadith, has also recorded traditions on 'Mi'raj' from Bukhari and Muslim (the sahihain). The vision of God for several times at the night of 'Mi'raj', the details of the conducted tour of the paradise, the revelation of the last verses of the 'Baqara and the general amnesty given to the monotheists, have been described by the Ahadith in full details. The Hadith reported by Abu Huraira, describes the details of the confrontation of the Quraish with the Prophet. All Ahadith bear

more or less the same details.

Since eschatology (Ma'ad) or the life after death and reward and Punishment forms a cardinal pillar of Islamic faith, the Holy Qur'an and the Ahadith both have described the life after death in a picturesque way. Since the human beings can comprehend the intensity of pleasure and the severity of punishment in human language, the Ahadith of Mi'raj have explained them in human language and experience. Hadith literature such as the Mishkat or the Tirmidhi, portray the intensity of pleasure in Paradise and the severity of punishment in the Hell in human terms. The audio-visual tour of the Prophet of the celestial regions and their physical description by him made people of all classes to understand the semantics of the Hell and the Paradise as well as the mysteries of the Unseen (Ghaib), which form one of the articles of faith in Islam.

The Spiritual Dimension of Mi'raj

Since the spiritual future of man has been one of the major concerns of the Qur'an, its verses from the beginning to the end lay stress on the same theme. The 'Mi'raj' was a part of the same scheme. The first seven chapters (suras) of the Qur'an deal with the spiritual growth of the individual human soul, which collectively constitutes a community (Umma). From chapter eight to sixteen, the Qur'an stresses on the spiritual development of the community and its consolidation. The theme of the seventeen chapter reaches its climax because it deals with the Isra

and the 'Mi'raj of the Prophet, which was an acme of the perfection of the individual soul, the 'insan-i-Kamil' (Perfect man). The same theme continues up to chapter twenty one. The stories of old prophets have been narrated from this point of view. The problems of man's individual spiritual growth have been resumed once again from chapter twenty two to twenty five. Significance of pilgrimage and daily prayers has been highlighted for they were the means of approaching God directly without intermediary. And prayers (salat) were regarded as the 'Mi'raj' of the Mo'min. From chapter twenty six to thirty (the last chapter), the stories of the old Prophets and of the past nations have been narrated in order to illustrate the growth of the individual soul in relation to the lives of the communities and vice-versa. All these arrangements suited nicely to the dynamic growth of Islam.

Syed Sulaiman Nadw(in his magnum opus, the Sirat-an-Nabi (volume three) conveys the experience of the spiritual world, and explains the philosophy of the Prophetic Miracles (Mu'jizat) in the light of the Qur'an. His analysis of the old school of philosophy and scholasticism is very revealing. He exposes the dialectics which continued between the Mu'tazila and the Ashaira for centuries. Modern philosophy has been compared with those of the early Islamic philosophy. After having re-evaluated the theory of causality, the notion of the violation of natural laws, the views of Rūmft Ibn Taymiya, al-Ghazali and Razi, the author has revealed the

religious dimensions of Isra and the Mi'raj and has delineated the Qur'anic spirit on the subject along with a novel explanation of the opening of the chest of the Prophet and its sanctification and sublimation. The laws of nature and the principle of causality are temporarily set aside by God, when He wished to bestow miracles on His chosen prophets, who are presented for audience with the Almighty. The prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) due to his sublime spiritual attainment and God's special Favours could reach the Throne of Authority ((Arsh) where no one had reached before. The author, holds that the Mi'raj' could be interpreted either in physical or spiritual terms.

The difference of opinion with regard to the exact date, month and the year of the Mi'raj, is quite natural. Since the Islamic calendar year was not fixed before the Hijra and since the Arabs did not follow strictly any particular calendar, it is difficult to pinpoint the exact date. Biographers of the Prophet are unanimous that the event took place before the Hijra. But there is no unanimity in regard to the exact month or the year of the Mi'raj. Scholars have suggested five months as possible occasions, namely Rabi' I, Rabi' II, Rajab, Ramadan and Shawwal. Ibn Sa'd suggests both Ramadan and Rab'i I while Ibn-Qutaiba Dinawari (d. 267 A.H.) and Ibn 'Abd al-Bar (d. 463 A.H.) prefer the month of Rajab which is supported by many, such as Imam Rafi'i, Imam Nawawi, Zarqani and Abd al-Ghani Maqdi'si, the traditionist. The latter dates the event on

the seventeenth of Rajab. With regard to the year of the Mi'raj, there are eleven variant statements. Ibn-Hajar in his *Fath al-Bari* (vol. 7), and the commentators of *Sahih Muslim*, such as Qadi Iyaz, Imam Qartabi and Imam Nawawi hold that the event took place five years before the Hijra, while Ibn-Ishaq and Ibn-Kathir hold that the Mi'raj happened three years before the Hijra. But these dates are speculative. Majority of the early historians believe that the ascension took place one or one and a half years before the Hijra. Imam Bukhari has mentioned no date or calendar year, yet he has fixed it chronologically immediately before the Hijra. Ibn-Sa'd has maintained the order in his *Sira*.

Political Dimensions

Mi'raj was a culminating point in the formative history of Islam and was a prelude to the rise of Islamic culture and civilization not at a national level but at the international level. Since Islam was neither a religion of rituals nor a creed of passivism, it had to develop its own political system and a way of life in accordance with its own positive legal system and sociological norms and values. Hijra brought a radical change in the life of the Muslims who had been suffering for thirteen years at Mecca at the hands of the oppressors.

They had to endure the inconceivable tortures and social boycotts of the persecutors. Hijra provided a point of departure in the life of Muslims, who were now granted permission by God to

fight in self-defence and to wage war against the polytheists and emancipate Muslims from humiliation and sufferings. Armed confrontation of the Muslims with the transgressors of Mecca was not possible before the Hijra because the Meccans were a physical and military force in the country. Passive resistance was the only wise policy for survival. But passivism at Medina was repealed because the Muslims, after the Hijra, had obtained political and military authority in the newly-established commonwealth of Islam. The first Pledge of Aqaba is often referred to as a 'Pledge of women' because it did not include the item of armed confrontation.

The situation at the second Pledge was changed. One of the conditions of the second 'Aqaba Pledge' was to accept Muhammad the Prophet of Islam, as the uncontested authority both as a Messenger of God and as a jaw-giver. It was on this occasion that paradise was made the reward for those who fulfilled the pledge and were faithful to the Prophet.

The Orientalists have attempted purposely to create suspicion against the Hijra and have interpreted it either as a flight or withdrawal, escape or resignation from the ideological war which was going on at Mecca. Some of them even hold that the Prophet was invited by the Yathribites in order to act as an arbiter in the unending conflict which had ensued between Aws and Khazraj at Medina. But these theories have been invented in order to minimise

the religiopolitical significance of both the 'Mi'raj' and the Hijra. Ibn-Ishaq and others are unanimous that the second Pledge took place only when God had given permission to the Prophet to wage war and fight in defence of truth.

Hijra or the sacrifice in the path of God, namely, to break off relation with the near and dear ones for the sake of Truth, to emigrate from the mother city to alien lands and nations, has been the legacy of all Prophets before Muhammad. Hijra has always proved to be a prelude to renaissance.

The Qur'an, after having described the Mi'raj, mentions fourteen points as the future political manifesto of Islam wherein the socioeconomic as well as, the religio-political directives have been given to the Muslims for legislation. The political expansion of Islam was already prophesised by the scriptures, which had mentioned clearly that the last prophet had to rise from Mecca with perfect legal and spiritual system of man's life and Mecca was destined to become the centre of the Islamic World.

It would receive men and wealth from all over the world and her gates shall remain open day and night, where human beings whether Kings or paupers shall come to pay homage to the House of God, the Ka'ba, which was built by Abraham centuries ago and will become the centre of global congregation for all mankind with faith in Islam, be they black or white, yellow or red. This was the prayer of Abraham

made to his Lord which was granted. The prayer (Salat) became the 'Mi'raj' of every Mo'min because it was a direct liason between man and his Creator. The 'Salat' opened the door of Divine aid and made men infinitely more self-reliant and Godconscious, and directed them towards universalism, collectivism and political solidarity as well as towards individual sublimation and ascension. Hijra was in fact, the fruit of 'Mi'raj'.

Mi'raj A Mandate For Hijra

The last verses of Sura Baqara, although revealed in Medina, were conveyed to the Prophet on the Night of the Mi'raj as a grand gift. The exegetes and traditionists have interpreted the verses as a Divine Mandate for the Hijra of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina, where Islam had to reach its sublimity and spiritual glory of unprecedented dimensions. The verses (284-86), regarded as a permit for the migration merit special attention:

“On no soul doth God place a burden greater than it can bear. It gets every good that it earns and it suffers every ill that it earns. (Pray), ‘Our Lord! condemn us not if we forget or fall into error; Our Lord! Lay not on us a burden like that which Thou didst lay on those before us; Our Lord ! Lay not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear. Blot out our sins, and grant us forgiveness. Have mercy on us. Thou art our Protector; Help us against those who are infidels.’(1 1 :286).■

Contribution of Muslims in The Field of Science

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

The Surah-i-Iqra, the first verse of the Qur'an, opens with an injunction addressed to the Prophet to 'read'. The place assigned to education in Islam can be best appreciated in the light of the importance attached to ink, pen and paper, the three indispensable instruments of acquiring and extending knowledge. The same Surah is also part devoted to the part of writing and its indispensability as a means to education. The teaching of Islam are meant for all human beings. Mohammad said education is meritorious in the eyes of Almighty. He asked everyone to acquire it. He stressed acquisition of learning and made it compulsory for all men and women of the faith. All through the times of Khilafat-i-Rashida, the days of the first four Caliphs after Muhammad, education continued to make rapid progress. The readers of the Qur'an were mainly responsible for the spread of Qur'anic teaching and Prophet's traditions among the Arab and the non-Arab Muslims. For the first time Muslims started formalising their education system. Elementary education seems to have been established in the early Umayyad period, and developed in the newly conquered countries such as Iraq, Syria and Persia.

People in search of knowledge went to the mosque, which, besides being a place of worship, also served as an educational center. Under the Abbasids, education made tremendous progress because Muslims came under the influence of Greek literature and philosophy. It was during this period that the Arabs became acquainted with Indian science, particularly medicine, mathematics and astronomy. The contact of the Arabs with the outside world revolutionized their outlook on different spheres of life. This period witnessed the intensification of efforts were also made for development of higher education. Children of the upper class and the nobility did not attend the mosque and maktab, which catered to the educational needs of the Muslim masses. The elite had private tutors who imparted education, which enabled them to become true gentlemen.

There are many versions of the saying of the Holy Prophet emphasizing the importance of imparting knowledge as a religious duty. The followers of Islam have always held learning and erudition in such regard as verging on veneration. This attitude towards learning has made the Muslims contribute to the progress of science for the benefit of mankind. Universities such

as Qartaba(Cordova) in Spain, Al-Azhar at Cairo and Madrasa Nizamiya at Baghdad have turned out scholars as Ibn-i-Khaldun, Ibn Asir, Imam-al-Ghazzali, Imam Fakhrud-din Razi, Abu Ali Ibn Sena(Avicenna), Nizam-ul-Mulk Tusi, Umar Khayyam, Saadi and Hafiz among many others.(Madrssa Education in India by Kuldip Kaur page 4-5)

It should be noted that Islam has never been a barrier in progress and development. History can not cite any instance from other religions of the world that has played a leading role in the field of science and technology as Islam did. In the words of noted Islamic Scholar 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".

In his book, "Islam at the Crossroads" Muhammad Asad has rightly said: "History proves beyond any possibility of doubt that no religion has ever given a stimulus to scientific progress similar to that of Islam. The encouragement which learning and scientific research received from Islamic theology resulted in the splendid cultural achievements in the days of the Umayyads and Abbassides and the Arab rule in Spain. Europe should know this well, for its own culture owes to Islam nothing less than the

Renaissance ("re-birth") after centuries of darkness. I do not mention this in order that we might pride our selves in those glorious memories at a time when the Islamic world has forsaken its own tradition and reverted into blindness and intellectual poverty. We have no right, in our present misery, to boast of past glories. But we must realize that it was the negligence of Muslim and not any deficiency in the Islamic teaching which caused our present decay.

Similar thoughts have been expressed by Maulana S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi, Rector Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow and President All India Muslim Personal Law Board: "When Europe was passing through darkness and ignorance of the Middle Ages, Muslim world was producing scholars, thinkers, educationists and eminent masters of physical and social sciences. European writers have quite often acknowledged that for six hundred years Europe learnt and benefited from the researches of Muslims before commencing their march to progress." In the words of Marquis of Duffering: "It is the Musalman science, Musalman art, and the Musalman literature that Europe has been in large measure indebted for its extrication from- the darkness of Middle ages".

Dr. Robert Briffault has rightly stated that science arose in Europe as a result of new spirit of enquiry, of new

methods of investigation, of the method of experiment, observation, measurement, of the development of mathematics in a form unknown to the Greeks, and that spirit and those methods were introduced into the European world by the Arabs (Muslims).

It goes without saying that the Muslim scientists not only made original contribution to science but also to technology. In other words, they made practical use of their scientific discoveries. They observed the stars, and prepared star maps for navigational purposes. Ibn Yunus made use of pendulum for the measurement of time. Ibn Sina used air temperature. Paper, compass, gun, gunpowder, inorganic examples of scientific and technological developments of Muslim scientists, which brought about an unprecedented revolution in the human civilization, (Islam and Evolution of Science, P,15).

It would not be out of place to refer some important books penned by prominent Muslim writers on different branches of science. "Ihsa al Ulum (Enumeration of Sciences) by al Farabi (Abu Nasr Muhammad ibn Muhammad. d. 339 AH.); Rasa il Ikhwan al Safa wa Khillan al Wafa (The Epistles of the Brethren of Purity and the Companions of Fedelity), (mid-fourth century AH.); Mafatih al Ulum (Keys to sciences) by

al Khawarizmi (Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Yusuf, d. 387 A.H.); al Fihrist (the Book of Indices) by Ibn al Nadim (Muhammad ibn Ishaq, d. 438 AH.); Aqsam al Ulum al 'Aqliyah (Divisions of Rational Sciences) by Ibn Sina (Avicenna), (d. 428 AH.); Maratib al 'Ulum (Ranks of Sciences) by Ibn Hazm (d. 456 AH.); Tabaqat al 'Ulum (Levels of sciences) by al Abyuri (Abu al Muzaffar Muhammad ibn Muhammad, d. 507 AH.); al Muqaddimah (The Introduction) by Ibn Khaldun (d. 808AH.); Miftah al Sa'adah wa Misbah al Siyadahfi Mawdu 'at al 'Ulum (Key to Happiness and Lantern to Sovereignty in the Fields of Science) by Tash Kubra Zadah (d. 968 AH.); Kashf al Zunun 'an Asma' al Kutub wa al Funun (the Unravelling of Intents in the Titles of Books and Arts) by Hajji Khalifah (d. 1067 A.H.); Kashshaf Istilahat al 'Ulum (Index of Scientific Terms) by al Tahanawi (Muhammad ibn 'Ali, d. after 1158 A.B.); and Abjad al 'Ulum (the Alphabet of Sciences) by Siddiq ibn Hasan al Qunuji (d. 1307 A.H.)" (Classification of Sciences in Islam Thought: Between Imitation and Originality, Page-8-9)

"Some scientific works of Muslims were thoroughly studied in Western academic institutions, which exerted a great influence on scientific development in Europe. Kitab al Qanun by Ibn Sina, Kitab al-Manazir by Ibn al-

Haitham and Kitab al –Tasrif by al-Zahrawi are mentionable as an example. Kitab al- Qanun, which is a comprehensive medical work and is called Canon in the West, was translated into Hebrew in 1270. It was also translated into Latin by the two Gerards of Toledo, and about thirty editions of this work were published in Europe. Many commentaries on it were written in the 15th century. A beautiful Arabic edition of this work was published in Rome in 1593. It formed half the medical curriculum of the European universities in the latter part of the 15th century, and continued as a text-book up to about 1950 in the universities of Montpellier and Louvain. The translation of the first volume of the book, with the exception of the anatomical part, was made into English in 1930.

Kitab al-Manazir (book of optics) was translated into Latin under the title *Opticae Thesaurus Alhazeni*. Ibn al-Haitham, the author of this book was called Alhazen, -a name by which he is remembered in Europe to this day. According to George Sarton, this book exerted a great influence on European scientists (from Roger Bacon to Kepler, i.e. for about 600 years).

Kitab .al-Tasrif is an encyclopedic work comprising medicine and surgery. In the 12th century Kitab ‘al-Tasrif was translated into Latin by Gerard of

Cremona, and various editions of it were published at Venice in 1497, and at Basel in 1541. It was published in 1778 at Oxford along with the original Arabic text. One copy of this edition is present in the British Museum, and one in the Bodleian Library. Its English translation was published in 1961, and a French translation appeared in 1880. This masterpiece of al-Zahrawi held its importance for centuries as the manual of surgery at Salerno, Montpellier and other early schools of medicine in Europe. The great European historians admit that Europe owes her primary advancement in surgery to al-Zahrawi. Dr. Joseph Heres has recognized Abu'l Qasim al- Zahrawi as an eminent surgeon. Dr. Arnold Campbell, in his book. *Arabian Medicine* has written a large treatise on al-Zahrawi, which reveals the importance of this name in the West. He has disclosed that the Western scholars like Roger Bacon (1214-49) gained the knowledge of medicine and surgery from the books of al-Zahrawi and ibn Rushd.

The numerous Arabic words and scientific terms currently being used in European languages are living monuments of Muslims’ contribution to modern sciences. Besides, the large number of books in the libraries of Asia and Europe, the scientific instruments preserved in the museums of many countries, the mosques and palaces

built centuries ago also bear an eloquent testimony to this important phenomenon of world history.

It will be interesting to note a few Arabic words and terms which are currently being used in some European languages. The terms ciphra, cypher and chiffre in Latin, English and French respectively have been derived from the Arabic word Sifr (meaning empty or nil). Sifr is a numeral written at the right of another numeral to increase its value ten times. Until the end of the 17th century, the word chiffre in French was used in the same sense, but gradually it became the name of the whole subject dealing with numbers i.e. arithmetic. The English word cypher is used for some particular type of zero.”(Islam And Evolution of Science, p. 17-19)

Manzoor Ahmed writes, “The Islamic influence on European culture reached its peak in the 10th Century (4th Century Hijri) in Spain when, according to R.W. Southern, in his book, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962 — Page 21) talented young Christians were reading books in Arabic and were reported to “despise the Christian literature as unworthy of attention.” They also ignored the study of Latin and took to Arabic. Arabic books were also translated in Latin in large number between the 11th Century and 13th Century. M. Nakosteen in his

book *A History of Islamic Origin of Western Education AD 800-1350* (Published by University Colorado Press, 1964) has said that Universities were founded in Europe during the period to assimilate the flood of Muslim sciences and technologies inundating Europe. Incidentally, the highest point of the Muslim sciences and technologies in the West is also the lowest and the most destructive part of our history during the Mongol invasion. While the Islamic sciences stopped growing by the 14th Century, their influence lasted in Europe till 17th Century.

It was the Muslim influence on Europe which brought about the Renaissance. For four centuries there was not a single advance in the field of science or technology which was not made by the Muslims. Moritz Cantor fails to explain this phenomenon in material terms when he says. “That a people who for centuries together were closed to all the cultural influence from their neighbours, who themselves did not influence others during all this time, who then all of a sudden imposed their faith, their laws and their language, on other nations to an extent which has no parallel in history — all this is such an extra-ordinary phenomenon that it is worthwhile to investigate its causes. At the same time, we can be sure that this sudden outburst of intellectual maturity could not have originated of itself.

It will require a long study to pinpoint the reasons for decline in the Islamic learning. However, the debilitating battles of the Crusades. Taimoor's invasion from Delhi to Angora and the Turkish political ascendancy of the Muslim world who could not pay attention to arts and culture on account of their constant warfare, were some of the important reasons for the down-hill journey of Muslim sciences. The defeat and disintegration of the Muslim world at the hands of the nascent industrial powers of Europe completed this job in eighteenth and nineteenth centuries."

(Islamic Education Redefinition of Aims and Methodology, Page - 8-9).

Strangely despite this genuine fact when we hear the word science our attention is surely be drawn to the west. There are two reasons behind it. One is that biased historians ignored most names of Muslim scientists. Even if they mentioned some of them, that too in distorted form. What to speak of non-Muslims even educated Muslims do not know that Avesina, Razes and Jaber were from Muslim community.

Some such names are quoted below :-

	Arabic Name	Latin name
1.	Abu' I Qasim al-Zahrawi	Albucasis
2.	Muhammad Ibn Jabir Ibn Sinan al-Battani	Albetinius

3.	Abu 'Ali Ibn Sina	Avicenna
4.	Muhammad Ibn Zakariyya al-Razi	Rhazes
5.	Ibn Rushd	Averroes
6.	Abu Yusuf Ya'qub Ibn Ishaq al-Kindi	Alkindus
7.	Abu 'Ali Ibn al-Husain Ibn al-Haitham	Alhazen
8.	'Abd al-'Aziz Ibn 'Uthman Ibn 'Al i al-Qabisi	Alcabitius
9.	'Abd al-Malik Ibn Abi'l-'Ala Zuhr	Avenzoar

It is time we must bring contributions and achievements of Muslim scientists in focus so that our new generation may learn of their achievements and derive benefit out of the works of these doyens of science. It is unfortunate that today scant attention is being paid to education by Muslims. While other people are being benefited by our ancestors scientific achievements and contributions. The need of the hour is that we must impart our children good education and adorn them with good qualities and sublime norms only then our past glory may again come back. Besides we may act on the first revelation which Allah sent to His last Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) for creating a new civilization. ■

The Hereafter

The belief in resurrection after death and in the Day of Judgement is another essential ingredient of the Islamic creed. All the earlier prophets have demanded a belief in the Hereafter, for its denial means rejection of God as the Lord of the Day of Judgement. Nay, its denial renders the belief in God and prophethood meaningless. God is Beneficent and Merciful, no doubt, but He is also just. He has full and unfettered authority to pardon or punish anybody He pleases. Still, justice demands that the virtuous and the sinner should not be placed on the same plane. In fact, the world with all its vices and virtues is too limited a place to requite the virtuous and evil-doers in full measure. There must, therefore, be another existence to dispense justice to both these categories. The Hereafter is thus of basic importance to a religion like Islam which demands the belief in the existence of God and His attributes, the principle of prophethood and revelation through it. Islamic creed, accordingly not only demands belief in the world to come and resurrection of the dead on the Day of Judgement, but also warns the wrongdoers of a dreadful penalty and promises blissful joys and pleasures to the pious and virtuous. The Qur'an says that God has not created man for nothing: nor were the heavens and earth, and all that is between them created playfully. Man should never think that he is to be left aimless. It poses the question whether God shall treat those who believe and do good work in the same way as those who spread corruption on earth. It then emphatically declares that Allah has created the heavens and the earth with Truth, and that every soul shall be repaid what it has earned? And it shall not be wronged in that. ■

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