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# The Fragrance of East

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## A Global Community

### S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

A very important characteristic of Muslims, which should be appreciated in its realistic context is that Muslims consider themselves an international community and their religion an international religion joining coreligionists beyond the limitations of race, language and nationality. They take interest in the common international Islamic problems are influenced by the problems of Muslim nations, and extend sympathy and moral to each other to the possible extent and within the provisions of the laws of their countries. They do not consider it against their love and faithfulness for their country of residence. They always have sincere love for their motherland and wish to contribute in the best possible way to its prosperity and progress. They consider their attachment for the other parts of the world as an outcome of their faith in religion, justice, and noble human nature and take it to be a source of benefit and stability for their country as well. The Indian Muslims have always been in the forefront in this regard. The enthusiasm with which they sided with the Turks in the famous Khilafat Movement, the zeal with which they formed Khilafat Committees, the sincerity due to which they won the support of the whole India and most notably that of the greatest leader of India Gandhiji and the way in which the Khilafat leaders—the Ali brothers, Maulana Azad and Maulana Abdul Bari—raised up the whole country on this issue are events of the recent past. This is a distinctive characteristic of the Muslim community and natural result of its educational and historical backgrounds. It is necessary to take into consideration this fact before any decision relating to Muslims is taken. ■

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### Wisdom of Qur'an

*This day I have perfected your religion for you. I have completed My favour upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.*

(al-Ma'idah 5:3)

It emerges from studying the Qur'an that two points are crucial to faith. First the spread of faith and second measures to protect faith. As regards the former, the Qur'an contains clear guidance: It is Allah Who has sent His Messenger [the Prophet Muhammad] with guidance and the religion of truth, to make it superior over all religions even though the polytheists hate it. (al-Tawbah 9:33) Elsewhere too, it is said that Allah will accomplish the above, much to the chagrin of the unbelievers.

(al-Tawbah 9:32)

It is clear from the Qur'anic statement given in Surah al - Ma'idah that Islam will establish its superiority over all religions. This will occur not only in the political domain, but also in terms of its impact on the human mind. The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) was given the glad tidings: When there comes the help of Allah to you [O Prophet] and the victory, and you see the people enter Allah's religion in crowds, glorify the praise of your Lord, and ask His forgiveness. He is the One Who always accepts repentance and Who forgives. (al-Nasr 110:1-3)

The divine promise that people would embrace Islam in large numbers came true during the Prophet's life time. The Qur'an asserts:

*Allah has promised those among you who believe and do righteous deeds that He will certainly grant them succession in the land, as He granted it to those before them, and that He will grant the authority to practise their religion which He has chosen for them. And He will surely give them in exchange security after their fear.*

(al-Nür 24:55)

This naturally facilitated the spread of Islam. The Qur'an also states:

*Those who, if We give them power in the land, enjoin the establishing of prayer, the payment of zakah and exhorting people to do good and forbid evil. (al-Hajj 22:41) ■*

### Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

*It is related by Abu Hurairah that the Apostle of God said : "No adulterer commits adultery and remains a Muslim during the time he commits the adultery, and no thief commits theft and remains a Muslim during the time he commits the theft, and no drinker drinks wine and remains a Muslim during the time he drinks the wine, and no robber commits robbery, in full view of men, and remains a Muslim during the time he commits the robbery, and no embezzler commits embezzlement and remains a Muslim during the time he commits the embezzlement. Thus, O ye who believe ! Save yourselves from these [Faith-destroying] actss. Save [yourselves]."*

—Bukhari and Muslim

*Commentary.*—Adultery, theft, wine-drinking, murder and robbery and embezzlement are antithetical to Islam and during the time a person performs any of these evil acts the light of Faith deserts him. It does not, however, mean that he altogether goes out of the fold and becomes an Infidel. While commenting on this saying, Imam Bukhari himself has remarked that "the perpetrator of these sins ceases to be a full Believer at the time at which he perpetrates them and the light of Faith does not remain in him."

To put it differently, if the peculiar inner feeling which is known as Faith is alive and the heart is illumined with it, a person will never be guilty of these wicked acts. Such sins are committed only when the flame of Faith has died out in the heart and the special spiritual consciousness which protects a man against evil-doing has disappeared or grown feeble due to some reason or the other. ■

*Editor's Note* 

## Pious Months

The last four months of Islamic calendar are marked with much significance. With the advent of 'Shaban' doors are open for seeking forgiveness and praying for salvation. The God Almighty becomes liberal in bestowing His favours. The night of the 15th day of 'Shaban' is observed as "Shab-e-barat". The night in which God listens to your prayers, forgives you of your misdeeds and bless you. Devotees keep fast in the day and spend the whole day and night in prayers. Asking favours from the God Almighty. This occasion also provides opportunity to help poors by offering them 'Sadqa'. It provides sufficient succour to needy persons. There is no limit or fixation in giving "Sadqa". It depends on the capacity of the donor.

The month of Shaban is followed by the month of Ramzan, the most pious month of Islamic Calendar. Muslims are required to keep fast in the day and in early part of night listen the recitation of the holy Quran in "Taraveeh". The whole month of Ramzan provides opportunity to come closer to God and follow His dictates. Seek His blessings and request for forgiveness. The patience and perseverance is finally rewarded by the end of the month when 'Eid-ul-fitra' is celebrated. Here also those Muslims who can afford offer "fitra" a small amount to the poor so that they too can enjoy the festivities. In the month of Ramzan Muslims are enjoined to part with a certain amount of 'Zakat' that is a certain percentage

of money which they have saved throughout the year. Apart from 'Salat', 'fasting', the 'Zakat' is one of the basic requirements for a Muslim.

Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, a great Islamic scholar defining the relation between God and man says:

“We have seen how singular and unexampled the bond is between a Merciful and Benevolent, Rich and Magnanimous Master and a poor and destitute, weak and helpless slave and the infinite Love and kindness and Power and Sublimity of the Compassionate and Beneficent Lord and Protector demands that the slave should surrender himself implicitly to His Will and sacrifice willingly not only his material possessions but all that he has, including the heart and soul, for His sake.”

The month of Eid-ul-fitr is followed by the month of “Zil Hijj”. In this month those who can afford go to Mecca and perform “Hajj” and also offer ‘Qurbani’ the sacrifice of animals like goat, camel and other animals whose flesh is permissible to Muslims.

May God Almighty accept the prayers of His devotees and grant them higher status in the life Hereafter. ■

**S.A.**

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## At The Door - Step of The Prophet

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Love for the Prophet and yearning for Medina were the ruling passions of Iqbal's life. His poems are full of glowing references to them. During the last phase of his life this tender yet all encompassing devotion had become so intense that he was moved to tears at the very mention of the name of Medina. As things would have it, he could not make the pilgrimage to the blessed city with his frail frame but spiritually he was there all the time.

Iqbal speaks of the holy Prophet in a thousand ways in his verses. Over and over again, he pays to him the tribute of love and while beseeching him draws a poignant picture of the Muslim Millet. On such occasions his poetic genius attains the finest state of development and fountains of thought and emotion spring into life. The truths he had discreetly held back begin to unfold themselves freely and without constraint.

In a word could the world of desire be told, but

To stay in his presence I prolonged the story.

Some of Iqbal's most stirring poems have been written on the theme of love for the Prophet, displaying a rare beauty of diction and richness of illustration. In every line the poet makes us feel that he has something to say which is not only worth saying, but is also

fitted to give us pleasure.

In the verses we are going to reproduce the poet undertakes an imaginary journey to Arabia, to the twin cities of Mecca and Medina. In eager expectation he presses on. The sand under his feet appears to him to be softer than silk ; every particle of it seems to have turned into a heart, beating, throbbing and pulsating. To the camel-driver he tells to be mindful of those tiny hearts and move slowly.

Blessed be the desert whose evenings cheerful as the dawn,

Whose nights are short and days exalted ; Tread softly, O traveller ! Softly still,

Each particle here is afflicted like us.

The song of the Hadi-Khwan intensifies his restlessness, the wounds of his heart re-open and verses of breath-taking elegance begin to take shape spontaneously.

In the same mood of elevation Iqbal betakes himself to the Mowajaha of the holy Prophet and sends respectful Durood (benediction) and Salam (salutation) to him. The tongue of love becomes the spokesman of the heart and taking advantage of the precious moments the poet unburdens himself of his feelings and relieves his mind by speaking of the woes and worries of the Muslims. He complains of the utter helplessness of the Islamic World, its

shameful capitulation to the Western Civilization and the utter disregard of his message by his own people.

Iqbal has given the title of Armughan-I-Hejaz (The Gift of Arabia) to the collection of these verses, and, to be sure, it is a most valuable offering for the entire World of Islam, an incense-breathing draft of the morning breeze from Hejaz.

Musk-laden is the zephyr today,  
Beloved's tresses, haply, are loosened  
in wind's direction.

Iqbal made this spiritual journey when he was more than sixty years old and broken down in health. At that age people, generally, like to retire from active life. But if the poet still embarked upon the arduous undertaking it was only in response to the call of love and in fulfilment of the high aim of his life.

Despite old age I took the way to yathrib  
Singing with the ecstasy of love ;  
Like the bird which in the evening,  
Spreads its wings eagerly for the nest.

He asks if in the evening of life he decided to go to Medina, which was the true dwelling-place of the soul and the real abode of the Momin, what was strange in it ? Just as the birds at sunset fly back to their nests , his spirit, too, was restless to return to the place to which it actually belonged.

As Iqbal's camel gathers speed he tells it to go slow as the rider is weak and infirm but it pays no heed and continues to trot joyously as if it is not

the desert but a silken carpet has been spread for it.

At morn I told the camel to take it easy,  
For the rider is old and sick;  
But it goes on merrily as if,  
The sand under its hooves is silk.

The caravan presses on with its offerings of Durood and Salam and, in that entrancing atmosphere, Iqbal wishes to perform the genuflection of love on the burning sands that would leave a permanent mark on his forehead and exhorts his companions to do the same.

Blessed is the desert in which the caravans,

Recite the Durood as they press forward ;

Carry out on its hot sands the prostration,

That burns the forehead and leaves its mark.

Iqbal begins to sing verses from Iraqi and jami and it sets the people wondering in what language the lines were which were filling their hearts with agony and making them forget hunger and thirst even though they did not understand their meaning.

Tell, caravan-leader, who the non-Arab is ?

His song is not of Arabia ;

But the tune is refreshing to the heart,  
So that one could live in the desert without water.

Iqbal rejoices in the hardships of

the journey, and exhaustion and loss of sleep are a source of comfort to him. The way is not long and tiring for him and he has no desire to reach his destination quickly. On the contrary, he begs the camel-driver to take an even longer route so that the period of waiting is extended.

Let the traveler's suffering be more delightful,  
And his lamentation even more frenzied;  
Take a longer route thou camel-driver,  
And make the fire of separation burn stronger.

The poet, thus, completes the journey and arrives at Medina. To his travelling companion he says, "We both are the prisoners of the same ringlet. The opportunity has, at last, come to us to fulfil our heart's desire and spread our eyelashes at the feet of the beloved. Let us lift restrictions from our eyes and allow the storm that is brewing in them to have a full play."

Come, O friend, let us weep together,  
We both are victims of beauty's aureole;  
Give a free rein to what lies buried in the heart,

And rub our eyes at Master's feet.

Iqbal marvels at his fate that such a boon has been conferred upon him and a worthless beggar like him favoured presence in the magnificent durbar to which kings and savants fail to gain admission.

The worth of the wise men was rated

low,

And to simpleton a rapturous glimpse was granted ,

How blessed, indeed, and how fortunate,

The sovereign's door for the beggar was opened ;

Even in that hour of supreme bliss Iqbal does not forget the Muslims, specially of India. He relates their pitiful state with the full force of his eloquence.

The Muslim, that beggar with the air of kings,

Smoke of the sigh from his bosom has fled ;

He weeps, but why ? He does not know,

A glance at him, O Apostle of Allah.

He feels that the tragedy with the Muslims is that they have fallen from a great height and the higher the place from where one falls the more is one hurt.

Of the afflicted beggar what to tell,

The Muslim of noble descent ;

God bless the brave, hardy man,

From a high terrace he has fallen !

The Muslims are disunited and leaderless. This is the main cause of their misery. They are a collection of individuals with no unanimity of action or attitude.

The blue sky is still unkind,

Aimlessly the caravan wends its way;

Of their disunity what to speak,

You know the Muslims are without a leader.

The blood of the Muslims has run cold and they have ceased to throw up men of outstanding stature which was once their speciality. Since long their scabbard has been lying empty and the 'withered garden' of the Muslim community has lost the capacity to send forth new blossoms.

His blood that heat possesses no more,  
In his garden the tulips have ceased to grow ;

His scabbard as empty as his purse,  
The Book laid on the shelf in his desolate home.

Iqbal grieves at the metamorphosis that has come over the Muslims. The joy of seeking has deserted their hearts and they have become slothful and ease-loving. Their ears have got accustomed to soft music and the call of the men of freedom makes no impression on them.

His heart he made a captive of hue and scent,

And emptied it of desire and yearning ;  
The loud cry of the falcon they seldom hear,

Whose ears get used to mosquito's humming sound.

In the eyes of the Muslim there is neither the light of faith nor the intoxication of love. His heart does not beat any longer for 'someone' , nor is his bosom tenanted by 'anyone's' remembrance. He is far removed from the state of 'nearness' and very much away from the 'desired goal'.

In his eye neither light nor joy,  
Nor the heart in his bosom restless;  
God help the Millet whose death,  
Is from soul devoid of presence.

Iqbal compares the present condition of the Muslims with their glorious past and complains reverentially to God that those whom He had brought up on fruit and honey are now going from door to door and seeking sustenance in arid lands.

Ask me not his condition,  
The earth is as mean to him as the sky;  
The bird Thou bast brought up on fruit,  
For it the quest of grain in the desert is unbearable.

The poet then speaks of the storm of atheism that is moving fast towards the World of Islam. As a scholar of philosophy and economics he knows that godlessness is making its way into the Muslim World through materialism, spiritual vacuum and frigidity of the heart. The extravagant ways of living are adding fuel to the fire. Iqbal believes that the mounting challenge of atheism can be met with love and righteousness. If anything can beat back the threat, it is the pattern of life Abu Bakr Siddiq had set. He desires for Muslims the design of living that is comprehensive of all the aspects of existence. The whole world will then be obliged to treat them with respect.

Irreligiousness has shaken the world,  
From the attributes of body they deduce about soul;

Out of the Faqr Thou bestowed on  
Siddiq,  
Produce restlessness for this lover of  
ease.

The real cause of the degradation  
of Muslims is not poverty but the  
extinction of the flame of love that once  
used to burn in their hearts. When these  
beggars used to bow before nobody  
except God the collar of the kings was  
in their hands, but as the inner fire died  
out in them they took refuge in shrines  
and monasteries.

The beggars till they mustered in the  
mosque,

They tore the collar of the kings ;

But when the fire within them died,

The Muslims sought shelter in the  
shrines.

Iqbal looks carefully into the record  
of the Muslims, and discovers enough  
in it to fill him with shame. Their conduct  
has nothing to do with the teachings of  
the Prophet and the precepts of Islam.  
Such glaring instances of polytheistic  
deportment, worship of non-God and  
insincere praise of tyrannical rulers  
meet the eye that no self-respecting  
man can remain without being  
overcome with a sense of guilt.  
Sorrowfully, he admits that with these  
limits of debasement the Muslims are  
clearly unworthy of God and have no  
right to be associated with Him.

No one but ourselves I have to blame,

We proved not worthy of Thy Grace.

The World of Islam has grown

sterile and bankrupt. The ewers of Sufi-  
lodges are empty and the seminaries  
have become hollow and imitative. They  
simply are following the beaten track.  
Poetry and literature show no signs of  
life.

Ewers of Sufi-lodges contain no wine,  
The seminary follows the beaten track ;  
From the assembly of poets I rose  
dejected,

Melody from the reed comes out dead.

The poet says that he went round  
the Islamic World but nowhere did he  
find the fearless, undaunted Muslim of  
whom death itself was afraid.

I flew with the wings you gave me,

And burnt myself with the fire of my song;

The Muslim that made death tremble  
with fear,

I searched in the world but did not find.

Analysing the causes of the  
frustration and waywardness of the  
Muslims Iqbal remarks that be it an  
individual or a community, if it  
possesses the heart but does not have  
the loved one it, is bound to be devoid  
of peace; its energies are wasted and  
its endeavours lack cohesion.

One night before God I wailed,

Down in the world why Muslims are ?

Came the reply : "Don't you know,

This community possesses the heart but  
not the beloved?

All the dreary circumstances  
notwithstanding Iqbal is not despondent.  
He has neither lost hope in the Muslims

nor despaired of the mercy of God. On the other hand, he is severely critical of the prophets of doom and of those who rely thoughtlessly upon others and look at everything through their eyes. With profound anguish he observes that, the custodians of the Harem have become the keepers of the idol-temple, their faith has lost its vitality and their vision is not their own.

Custodian of the Harem is idol-hall's architect,

His faith is dead and eyes not his own ;  
From his look it is plain,

He has lost all hope in the possibility of good.

Though the Muslims are weak and helpless they are more high minded than the kings. If their due place is given to them for a time their world-illuminating charm can turn into all conquering strength.

Though the Muslim is without corps and battalions,

His soul is the soul of a king ;

If he gets his rightful place again,

His charm is overwhelming.

Grieving over the injustice and callousness of the times Iqbal says :

Occasionally I go and occasionally rise,

What blood do I shed without a sword !

Cast a loving glance from the terrace,

I am up in arms against my Age.

His whole life was spent in struggle against the modern times. He exposed the brutish materialism of the

Western Civilisation and rejected it out of hand. He was a real benefactor of the growing generations. He was a rebel as well as a reformer, a revolutionary as well as redeemer.

Like Rumi I gave my Azan in the Harem,  
From him I learnt mysteries of the Self ;  
He during the mischief of the bygone days was born,

And I during the mischief of the present times.

The poet speaks with pride of his revolt against the modern educational system and tells how he managed to preserve his faith and individuality in the midst of trials and temptations. In the fire of Western thought he claims to have displayed the supreme indifference of Hazrat Ibrahim (Abraham).

The spell of modern education I broke,  
I picked the grain and left the net alone;  
God knows how in the manner of Ibrahim,

I sat in its fire easy in mind.

Iqbal regards his stay in Europe to have been, on the whole, barren and unproductive. Dry books, vain philosophical disputations, alluring beauty and pleasing sights were all that there was to remember. If he gained anything from it it was self-abandonment that nearly deprived him of Self-hood.

I gave my heart to Frankish idols,

In the heat of temple-dwellers I melted ;

Such a stranger I became in my own eyes,

That when I saw myself I could not

recognise.

Even now when he recalls the dull and dreary time he spent in the West he feels sad and frustrated. He bemoans that the tavern of Europe gave him nothing but headache. He never had a more depressing experience than what he under-vent in the company of intellectuals.

I imbibed wine in the alehouse of the West,

And with my life I purchased headache;

I sat in the company of wise men of Europe,

And never had spent a more unprofitable time.

Iqbal, then, humbly addresses these words to the Prophet: "I have been brought up on thy loving glance. The fine arguments and weighty discussions of men of learning make me sick. I am a petitioner at your door, a beggar of your street. Why should I dash my head against the doorstep of anyone else?"

I am a beggar and from you I ask what I do,

In my wretched body I want a mountain-hewing heart ;

Philosophical discourses give me pain in the head,

For I have been brought up on your loving glance.

The poet turns his attention to Muslim theological doctors, the Ulema, who are supposed to be the custodians of religious knowledge and expresses disgust at their intellectual sterility,

pedantic affectation and fondness for hackneyed expressions. Their Arabian desert possesses neither the spring of Zam Zam nor the House of Ka'aba while the real worth of the desert of Arabia lies in the two Landmarks of Allah. Without them, who would care for its blistering sands and mute hills ? How empty-handed the theologians are who command a large fund of knowledge and a fluent tongue but whose eye does not contain a tear of love and heart is devoid of a throb and who have received only heat and hardness from the sacred land and not coolness and moisture !

The heart of Mulla is innocent of grief,

His eye is seeing, but not moist ;

I rose from the seminary because,

In his Arabian desert no Zam Zam gushes.

Iqbal confesses that once he relied upon the non-God and in punishment was flung down from his place two hundred times. This is the state where neither the strength of arm avails nor the resourcefulness of mind. Only the Divine Will prevails and even a minor aberration can be one's undoing.

I placed my heart in nobody's hand, Myself the knots I unravelled ;

Upon other than God I once relied,

And fell down from my station two hundred times.

In these heartless, hypocritical times which recognise only the law of gain and expediency and in which man has become a cog in the wheel what

can Iqbal do except eating his heart out  
and brooding over the gloomy turn of  
events ?

My eye is indifferent to what I see,  
The heart is melting in inner fire ;  
Me, and the soulless, unfeeling times,  
What an enigma it really is ? Tell me !

Iqbal is oppressed by a feeling of  
loneliness. In the wide world he is without  
a friend and sympathiser. He is his own  
consoler and comforter.

In the East and the West I am a stranger,  
Friendless and forlorn, no confidant  
have I ;

I relate my sorrow to my own heart,  
How innocently loneliness do I cheat.

No one listens to him nor cares to  
taste the fruits of his knowledge. His  
verses in which he strikes the chords of  
the unknown fall on deaf ears. They  
regard him to be a reciter of love lyrics  
and not a revealer of reality.

They understand not the secret I reveal,  
Nor eat the fruit of my tree ;

O leader of nations ! I seek justice from  
you,

They look upon me as a reciter of  
Ghazal.

The command of the holy Prophet  
is that he should carry the message of  
life and eternity to mankind but the  
unknowing friends want him to  
compose chronograms like an ordinary  
rhymester.

You command me to sing of eternity,  
And impart to dead the message of life;

But these unknowing men demand,  
That I record in verses the dates of the  
death of this man and that.

Iqbal complains of the indifference  
of his people to the knowledge and  
message which is the essence of his  
poetry. He displayed all of his goods in  
the market place but there were no  
buyers. He wanted to make the offering  
of his heart but no one was willing to  
accept it.

I've placed my heart on the palm but  
there were no takers,

I possess the merchandise but where's  
the plunderer ?

Come and make my bosom your home,  
Because no Muslim is lonelier than me.

In the end, Iqbal speaks to Ibn-i-  
Saud of Arabia but what he tells him is  
really meant for all the rulers of the  
Muslim World. He warns King Saud  
against placing reliance on the  
foreigners and advises him not to trust  
anyone except God and himself. "If the  
rope is yours," says he, "you can pitch  
the tent wherever you like. But you will  
have no freedom of movement if it is a  
borrowed one. Try to know yourself. You  
occupy such a privileged position on the  
earth that your evening is more lustrous  
than the morning of others."

Your station in the arid desert is such,  
That like the moon your evening shines  
as mirror ;

Pitch your tent wherever you want,  
To borrow rope from others is  
forbidden. ■

## Fasting

- S. Sulaiman Nadwi

Definition: Fasting is one of the obligatory duties which every Muslim is required to perform in the month of Ramadan. The Arabic word *sawm* which has been used in the Holy Qur'an and the Ahadith for fasting means "to abstain", "to keep silence". In the Technical language *sawm* signifies fasting or abstaining from food and drink and sexual intercourse etc. from the end of the Sahri till sunset. Fasting has been ordained as a religious duty for the Muslims for subduing their lust and keeping their appetites and temptations within reasonable limits so that man may not become their slave and lose control over himself. But Islamic fasting trains a person for cheerful and willing renunciation of eating, drinking and sexual end of the fast. This shows that Islam does not look down upon the appetites of flesh as something profane and ignoble. According to Islam both soul and body are sacred and worthy of respect.

Fasting in Islam not only imposes check upon eating, drinking, sexual intercourse but also exhorts its servants to refrain from other foul acts such as speaking ill of others, backbiting, slandering, telling lies, using foul language, discussion of disreputable matters and wrong behaviour of any sort. Abu Huraira (Allah be pleased with

him) reported Allah's Messenger (PBUH) as saying: If one does not abandon falsehood and other actions like it, God has no need that one should abandon one's food and drink. Fasting in Islam is thus an excellent institution for spiritual discipline and self-control. The exact date of commencement of fasting is not known. The famous English writer Herbert Spencer in the book *Principles of Sociology*, writes basing his argument on conjecture that the food they did not become popular as an institution because purification of the soul is common to all Divine religions. The writer of the article on "Fasting" in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* states that it would be difficult to name any religious system of any description in which fasting was wholly unrecognized. It was well-established among the Jews and the Christians.

The record of the Ahadith bears testimony to the fact that fasting was a common religious practice among the pre-Islamic Arabs, and they used to observe fast on the tenth of Muharram as on this day Allah saved Moses (peace be upon him) from the clutches of Pharaoh (Fir'awn). The Arabs and other people too were familiar with fast as an act of penitence of propitiation or a preparatory rite before some act of sacrament.

However, whatsoever be the reasons of fasting in the polytheistic religion, the date, the significance and the aims and objects of fasting as explained in the Holy Qur'an are:

O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you even as it was prescribed for those before you that you may ward off evil..... The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for mankind, and clear proofs of the guidance, and the Criterion (of right and wrong). And whosoever of you is present, let him fast the month, and whosoever of you is sick or on journey, (let him fast the same) number of other days. Allah desireth for you ease; He desireth not hardship for you; and He (desireth) that ye should complete the period, and that you should magnify Allah for having guided you, and that peradventure ye may be thankful. (2:183-185)

### **Reality behind Fasting**

One of the aspects of individual perfection or moral and spiritual elevation is the subordination of animal nature to reason and spirit. Nothing is as efficacious for this purpose as hunger, the heart (mind) and other organs. If one commits sin, penitence and repentance through fasting, brings solace and purifies his soul, even as it fortifies the will so as not to indulge again in sins and vice. To be a true servant of Allah, it is essential that man should

conform his behaviour to the moral and spiritual discipline embodied in the Shari'ah. One cannot achieve this end finds himself helpless before untamed and turbulent desires. The underlying idea behind fasting is to teach moderation and spiritual so that human temptations may not become so uncontrollable as to flout the commands of Allah. But as we have already said, Islamic fasting does not aim at complete renunciation of the lawful appetites and all those lawful things e.g. eating, drinking, sexual intercourse etc. become permissible after the fast.

During the month of fasting the whole atmosphere is permeated with religious piety and devotion to Allah. There is one extra prayer, Tarawih, which is performed each night either individually or in congregation in which the Qur'an is recited and the Muslim is reminded that it was in the month of Ramadan that the revelation of the Qur'an commenced. It is, moreover, a sunnah (practice) of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) to complete the recitation of the entire Qur'an during Ramadan. The last ten days and nights are marked by especially intensive devotions including the night during which the first revelation of the Qur'an came, known as Lailat-ul-Qadr. Sadaqat are also given with greater zeal. Abu Huraira (Allah be pleased with him) as saying: When Ramadan begins the gates of Heaven are opened, the gates of Hell are locked,

and devils are chained.

The purpose of fasting in the month of Ramadan is two-fold. One has to abstain from food and drink in order to feel in one's body what the poor and the hungry feel and thus social responsibility is hammered into one's consciousness and secondly, the purpose of fasting during Ramadan is self-discipline (as for instance, in the total prohibition of all intoxicants.)

It is be remembered that one should not forget one's obligatory duty of prayer and fasting in the midst of material and mundane occupations. We know what there is a great difference in the rising and setting of the sun between normal (equatorial-tropical) countries and the regions situated beyond and extending to the two poles. Al-Barony had observed that at the poles the sun remains set for six months continually, and then rises to shine continuously for six months (excepting the two days of equinox). The jurists-theologians of Islam affirm in general that the hours at 45 parallel remain valid up to 90 parallel i.e., one is to follow the movement of the clock and not that of the sun. This applies to prayer as well as fasts etc.

During the period of fasting from dawn to dusk we eat not a grain of food nor drink a drop of water, no matter how delicious the dish or hungry or thirsty we feel. This process of incessant fasting for full month and experiencing hunger, thirst and sexual abstinence etc. Make

us conscious that are the true and loyal servants of Allah. It inculcates the spirit of patience and strengthens our faith.

However, the fast must be broken at sunset each day and it is also recommended to have a sahri (pre-dawn meal) before resuming the fast next day. While fasting may sound difficult to those who are not used to it, in practice, it is generally tolerable.

### **The Basic Rules of Fasting and Exceptions**

The rules of fasting are quite simple. First of all, every day of Ramadan is a day of fasting. And fasting is obligatory on all Muslims past puberty, with the following exceptions: Sick persons to whom fasting is likely to be injurious, persons who are travelling and up to forty days following child-birth, pregnant women and nursing mothers, if fasting is likely to harm the mother or infant, the very old and the insane. The latter two categories are permanently exempt from fasting, while the others are exempt only for the duration of their conditions and must make up the missed fasts at any time before the beginning of the next Ramadan if possible. If one has a permanent condition which make fasting impossible or dangerous to health, he or she is permitted instead to give to a needy person a sum equivalent to one meal for each day he did not fast. If a Muslim is not fasting on any day of Ramadan for any of the above reasons,

he is not to eat or drink in front of others who are fasting, out of courtesy.

The period of fasting begins each morning of Ramadan before the first light of dawn becomes visible and lasts until sunset. A declaration of intention to fast a silent statement in any words or language that one intends to fast today for the sake of Allah must be made. It is sunnah to break the fast immediately after the sun has set, and have a meal before (sahri) at which the next day fast begins.

The keynote to all the observances of Ramadan is self-discipline and self-control. Although in some Muslim countries the work schedule is modified during the month, in many places Muslims carry on their work and other activities even though they may be hungry, thirsty and tired. Fasting is in no sense an excuse for neglect of work or obligation, idleness, in irritability or outbursts of temper, but, on the contrary, should be a total inner state leading to patience and self-control.

It should be noted that because Islam uses a lunar month rather than a solar month, any given date falls twelve days earlier each year than in the preceding one consequently Ramadan (and all other dates) rotates throughout the seasons, completing the cycle of twelve months in about thirty three years. Hence Ramadan sometimes falls in summer and sometimes in winter and

sometimes in between in the various parts of the world; people living in every clime therefore, experience it during all the seasons. Fasting is naturally quite easy during short days of winter but it can be difficult in the heat of tropical summer. Under such conditions the fasting Muslim learns that food and drinks are indeed precious gifts from his Lord, to be accepted with thankfulness.

### **Reforms Introduced by Islam in Fasting**

The measures taken by Islam to create facilities and reduce the rigour in fasting are given below:

Before the advent of Islam in all the religions of the world, revealed or unrevealed, fasting was obligatory on some special group of the followers of the religions, for instance, among the Hindus, only Brahmans kept the fast. It was not obligatory for the non Brahmans. Among the Zoroastrians, their leaders and guides used to observe fasts. Among the Greeks only women kept fast, but fasting, as a means of spiritual purification, should have been an obligatory duty for all the followers of the religions.

Islam ordains fasting for all the Muslims without making any distinction between the leader and the follower and man or woman.

As we have already said Islam uses a lunar month rather than the solar

month as a result of which Ramadan rotates throughout the seasons. Sometimes it falls in summer, sometimes in winter, and sometimes in between them, therefore, experience it during all the seasons i.e. the facility of the short days of winter and the hardship of the heat of tropical summer, unlike the fasts under solar system which know no change in the seasons.

Jain's (a religious sect of Hindus) fast extended to weeks. The Christian monks of Arabia kept fast for days together. The Jews fast was for the duration of full twenty-four hours while Islam ordained the fast from the dawn to the evening.

The fast of the Jews that when they had taken something once at the time of breaking the fast, they did not take anything afterward, that is, there next fast began there and then. It was a custom with the Arabs that they ate what they desired before going to sleep; after having a sleep it was forbidden to take anything. In the beginning this practice of fasting was also in vogue in Islam. Once in the month of Ramadan, the wife of a companion was still preparing the supper. Her husband kept waiting for the meal and then went to sleep. When the meal was ready and she brought it he could not take it as he had fallen asleep. He was with fast on the next day too. Therefore, he swooned. Thereupon the following verse of the Holy Qur'an was revealed: And eat and drink till the

white streak of the dawn become distinct for you from the blackness of night (2: 187)

The general impression amongst the Muslims before the revelation of the verse of the Holy Qur'an (2:187) was that during the month of fasting sexual intercourse was to be completely avoided even at night. It was unbearable hardship for the people, especially the young couples, to refrain from sexual intercourse for full one month. They, therefore, at time, under the serious stress of sexual urge copulated but there always remained a ranking in their minds that they had done something sinful. The All-Knowing Allah told them in clear words that they are permitted to copulated during the night in the month of Ramadan and there is nothing sinful in it. Abu Huraira (Allah be pleased with him) reported: If anyone for gates that the he is fasting and eats and drinks, he would complete his fast for it is only Allah who has fed him and given him drink.

The fast is not broken by the actions not committed deliberately for instance, in vomiting or in the state of Junub because of sexual dream. According to Imam Abu Hanifa in some cases of vomiting fast is broken.

The fasting among the Jews was a sign of distress and sorrow. Therefore, they did not observe it cheerfully and looked sad and dejected. 'Isa (PBUH) said to them: When you are fasting do

not put on sad and ugly looks like hypocrites in order to show to the people that you are fasting. In fact, they have been awarded (punished) (for their hypocrisy). So when you are fasting, apply oil to your hair, wash your face, so that you may look as fasting.

In Islam applying oil to hair and surma (collyrium) to the eyelids, use of fragrance, during fasting is permitted and it has been stressed to observe the rules of purification, to wash the face, to clean the teeth etc., properly. Besides physical purification, the underlying idea in it is that the man who is fasting should not be involved in the pretension and hypocrisy of wearing sad and dejected looks and the fasting should not be an unpleasant and distressing act for him but an act of cheerful and willing submission to the command of Allah like that of a loyal and obedient servant to his master.

There were some persons who acted with exaggeration in the matter of fasting and other acts of devotion. They observed sawm wisal, the fast which is observed uninterruptedly without meal at the daybreak or at the sunset. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) disapproved the observing of such a fast by the Muslims, since one cannot stand its unbearable rigour and it undermines the strength and vitality of a man beyond measure.

Ibn 'Umar (Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) observed fasts in

Ramadan uninterruptedly and the people (in his wake) did this. But he forbade them to do so. It was said to him: You yourself observe fast interrupted (but you forbid us to do so). Upon this he said: I am not like you: I am fed and supplied drink (by Allah).

The commentators are of the view that observance of sawm wisal is the special prerogative of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and other people should not follow him as he was especially favoured by Allah in this devotion.

Anas (Allah be pleased with him) reported: Allah's Messenger (PBUH) as saying; Take meal a little before dawn (sahri), for there is a blessing in taking meal at that time.

Sahri has so many blessings in it. Firstly, it equips the person with enough strength to undergo cheerfully the rigour of the fast. Secondly, it provides him an opportunity to thank his Lord for the food provided to him. Since it is after taking sahri that a Muslim commences the fast, he feels highly obliged to Allah for His immense favours to him. Thirdly, if the practice of eating before the daybreak is observed as a religious duty in a Muslim society, it would provide opportunities to the well-to-do persons to invite their brothers to the dining table. Fourthly, this practice of taking sahri is the distinguishing mark of Islamic society as the followers of Christianity and Judaism do not observe this practice. They unnecessarily put

themselves to unbearable hardship.

Abu Huraira reported: Allah's Messenger (PBUH) as saying: Allah, the Majestic and the Exalted, said: Every act of the son of Adam is for him except fasting. It is done for My sake, and I shall give a reward for it.

Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (Allah pleased with him) as saying: He who observes fast in the way of Allah, Allah would remove his face from the Hell to the extent of seventy year's distance.

Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) observed i'tikaf (confined himself to devotion and prayer) in the first ten (days) of Ramadan; he then observed i'tikaf in the middle ten days in order to seek that night (lailat-ul-Qadr). Then (an angel) was sent to me and I was told that this night (lailat-ul-Qadr) is among the last ten nights of Ramadan, and he (the Holy Prophet) said: That (lailat-ul-Qadr) was shown to me on an odd night but I forgot it.

He was made to forget it or forgot the exact night when he saw lailat-ul-Qadr so that the persons may not become slack in the acts of devotion and confine it to one single night.

When we are fasting we are not only following the example of the Prophet (PBUH) but giving thanks to Allah for His grace and mercy that he had sent

to us His true messengers and guides to put us on the right path and bring us from the profound darkness of ignorance into the light of knowledge and consciousness of Allah, awakening in us the sense of realization of our responsibility we owe to Him and to the humanity at large. He revealed to us, through the Last of His Prophets, the Holy Qur'an a complete and perfect code of life containing all that we require for our guidance in all spheres of our life acting upon which one can reach the highest apex of humanity and can bring about a revolutionary change in the lives of the nations turning bitterness into love and affection, savageness and bitterness into tenderness, callousness into softness, ignorance into knowledge superstitions and erroneous notions into rational and wise thinking and evil thought and fancies into sublime and noble thoughts. Islamic teachings helped to establish peace and security and gave immense satisfaction to the hearts and minds. It taught patience and perseverance in hardships. It is in fact an inevitable blessing and reward of Allah for the whole mankind. The Holy Qur'an alludes to this fact in the following verse:

And that you glorify Allah for his having guided you (aright) so that you may be grateful (to Him). (12: 185)

*(Sirat-un-Nabi by S. Sulaiman Nadwi, V-5 Page 107-115) ■*

## The sanctity of Makkah and Madinah

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

*Whosoever will seek profanity therein [the Sacred Mosque] wrongfully, We shall make him taste afflictive torment.*

(al-Haj 22:25)

This verse testifies to the miracle of the Sacred House and to Allah's absolute and perfect knowledge. By the sixth and seventh centuries the civilised world including the Arabian peninsula was aware only of land battles, fought in the open. The Makkans had experienced this first hand as Abrahah's army, reinforced by elephants, had invaded Makkah in the sixth century. Allah however inflicted a humiliating defeat upon the invading army and repulsed it ignominiously. The Qur'anic Surah al-Fil contains its account. However, the Makkans had by then no inkling, about the conspiracies and dangerous plans which were to be hatched in the future. The All-Knowing, All-Aware Allah Who has sent down the final Scripture forewarned the Makkan believers against this covert form of attack. The Qur'an also spells out the divine punishment meted out to those guilty on this count.

Allah speaks of His House in Makkah in such terms which have deep and wide-ranging meaning. So much so that it is rather hard to translate these. What is nonetheless certain is that world peace is contingent on the sanctity maintained at Allah's House. As long as the Sacred Mosque is safe and secure, man's spiritual interests are protected. Whoever violates its sanctity and abuses the Ka'bah for political ends will be severely punished by Allah.

It is worth recalling that (Abd al-Muttalib, the Quraysh chief and the Prophet Muhammad's ancestor, had clearly told Abraha that the Ka'bah would be protected by its Master. This truth prevailed then and will be in force until the end of time.

Respect for the House of Allah is a living sign of one's commitment to Islam and faith. It serves as a barometer of the Muslims' attachment to their religious sanctities. As long as Muslims are loyal to Makkah and Madinah and repulse all moves which betray any disrespect to these two holy places, Muslims' ties with Islam will remain firm enough to sustain their faith. Muslims must however display solidarity and unity in this important domain. ■

## The Need For A Most Magnificent Reformer (Prophet)

- S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi\*

In accordance with the Divine Wisdom and calculation, the phase that the world of humanity was now going to enter was one of getting the four corners of the world closer and proximate to each other and of making as best and maximum use of scientific practical experiments as possible. Hence, Allah Almighty had this last Prophet assigned the office of Prophecy with the solution of those problems and plights. The Divine Book that He gave him was made the all-inclusive guide covering all those aspects. He Himself undertook the responsibility of keeping this Book preserved and intact so that the vicious ones of the mankind would not be able to tamper with it; and like the continuation of the Prophet's Prophecy till the Doomsday, the truthful guidance by means of this Book should also continue till the Doomsday. Under the supervision of these two great luminous lights, the path to Guidance, any alteration or amendment made into it, should remain illumined before the Muslim *Ummah*. Thus, whoever would really be desirous of getting the guidance to the right path could be guided and whoever would himself like to go astray would rally get lost and be dammed.

In accordance with the fore-ordained Divine arrangement and His knowledge, for the new era of the world that was to come up, too, it was ordained by Allah Almighty that it should get staffed

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\* Rector, Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow.

by means of this very Prophet, the one endowed with the last, universal and perpetuated-till-the-Doomsday Prophecy and that his *Ummat* should promulgate it all over the world. Hence, through the Book given to this Prophet and the injunctions given by this Prophet and through his own practices in life, the world took to that trend on the basis of which the knowledge gained currency in the earthly life and it could assume a global order. This global order is not the one given the name of global order by the selfish and egoistic powers for the purpose of aggrandizement of their hegemony and control. Instead, this order was Islamic global order and a Prophetic one. It comprises a global system for making the goodness wide spread for making the equal facilities, amenities and means of livelihood available to everyone, big and/or small, rich and/or poor, strong and/or weak, powerful and/or helpless, for bringing each and everyone uniformly within the fold of obedience to only the One and the Only God. This is the global order conferred by the Lord of the worlds on all of His servants through His last Prophet which is the exposition of this Quranic verse:

(And We have not sent thee except as a mercy to the worlds.) (Al-Anbiaa: 107)

And:

(Verily this community of yours is a single community, and I am your Lord; so worship me.) ■

*(Cont. from page 38)*

everywhere promoted urban life and luxury. This was, perhaps, inevitable when religion required the congregation of the faithful in the mosque preferably five times a day but at least once in a week. Muslims have to live together, a mosque has to be the central feature of every Muslim settlement. In India, specially during the first two or three centuries, the Muslims could maintain themselves as a community only in the cities. Their ruling classes had to strike the imagination of the people. And so we have both a multiplication and a rapid development of cities, and of the glamorous products of craft and industry. From this flow the other changes—the demand for many and excellent products of all kinds, even to the extent of having a pair of slippers costing Rs. 50,000, the cultivation of elaborate manners, and so on.

I have already indicated how the evolution of an elaborate and extravagant city life can be traced back to some features of Islam. Hinduism is not congregational. There were large cities in the Mauryan and Gupta periods : there have, indeed, to be cities, if there is to be any civilisation. But the Hindu ideal—and my own, if it comes to that—is life away from the city, away from noise and dust and worldliness, where one can live in peace and think. I remember reading somewhere that the Vedas should not be studied and recited in cities. There is, therefore, according to Hindu standards, advantage but no religious merit in city life.

And now I come to the intriguing question of the use of tailored clothing. There is a Sanskrit word for tailor, but I have not found evidence of tailors having been generally busy at any time previous to the settlement of the Muslims. Men and women draped cloth around themselves, or tied it where just draping could not be depended upon. The tailor may have existed, but he could be dispensed with. The Muslim, on the other hand, cannot say his five daily prayers without the help of the tailor and his craft, and the Muslim woman would lose all rights and status if the tailor did not enable her to clothe herself completely up to the wrists, the neck and the ankles. Rulers set the standard of respectability, and non-Muslim women had to pay the price of respectability by employing tailors and wearing a minimum of tailored clothing.

Finally, though it is not my business to discuss the influence of Hinduism on the Muslims, I must say that if I were an eighteenth or early nineteenth century Muslim, I could easily have become that public nuisance called a reformer. I could have said, 'Islam is buried deep beneath Hindu influences; let us dig it out, clean it and see what it really looks like !' ■

## No Propaganda, Sincerity Needed

- Saeedur Rahman Azmi Nadwi\*

Today, propaganda gained momentum everywhere. Ordinary articles are easily projected as good ones through publicity and propaganda. In the past this method was served in commercial activities and materialistic commodities. But in this progressive and developed time, propaganda reached its zenith and its influence percolated in every walk of life. The most striking aspect of human beings viz "secret" is also affected by it. The menace started penetrating in covertly practiced worships and inner virtues. This widely and mushrooming phenomena of publicity drew the attention of the entire world.

Acute need of propaganda has been felt in the whole atmosphere of human beings. In the bygone days individually a few persons enjoyed it. But now it has its personal companies which perform every sort of propaganda. Now, it is impossible to earn name and fame for any person even in his limited source and scope sans these companies and its employees.

Gradually, it has been the second nature of the people that the things

which are circulated through publicity are to be regarded reliable, praiseworthy and likeable whether how much the other things are precious, profitable and useful in comparison to them.

The hue of propaganda has infiltrated even in genuine religious movements and divine acts. No doubt, it prevailed entire gamut of human life. Why they publicly mention their certain worship, devotion and donation. Why they advertise their charitable deeds and secret virtues. What is the reason behind it?

Ironically, the works which are aired through propaganda, are deemed as remarkable and admirable. If these devices are not used, they can achieve no such position and status in society. That is why every person desires to present his products and manufacturers by adopting the modes of publicity. Only doing this, they become satisfied and thought that they attained the desired goals.

Even God-fearing persons also began to choose this menace for their popularity and publicity. They wish to see their popularity everywhere. It seems that "Propaganda" has taken the status of "Niyat" intention whose sincerity causes acceptance in the eyes of Allah.

Today, all activities, efforts and

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\* *Principal, Darul-Uloom, Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow.*

endeavors of our life are prone to show ostensibility and exhibition rather than reality. Even quantity of any event and its size is presented in exaggerating way. It is often observed that some people project baseless and concocted things as real ones. The matter does not end here. They enjoy such confidence and belief on this reality that perhaps they have such trust on any other truth and reality.

It is not suitable for pious and God-fearing persons who are distinguished prominent from others on account of their morality, honesty, integrity and piety to adopt such devices of propaganda for their personal endeavors and sincere deeds whose values lie in keeping them covert and secret.

If propaganda is necessary we will have to determine its limit and not cross it. As long as it is possible we should

avoid ostensibility and publicity in religious acts and Dawah activities. It is also imperative for us to give up the habit of confidence on materialistic resources in pure religious acts. Only then the spirit of sincerity may come up in individual and collective life. In short, Islam lays enormous stress on sincerity. No act of ours is acceptable without it. We may easily guess the significance of sincerity through the following verse of the Holy Qur'an.

“It is not their meat nor their blood, that reaches Allah: it is your piety that reaches Him: He has thus made them subject to you, that he may glorify Allah for His guidance to you: and proclaim the good news to all who do good.” (S:22, A.37) ■

(English rendering by Obaidur Rahman Nadwi)

“O ye who believe! fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may learn self-restraint”

(S.2 A.183)

“Ramadhan is the month in which was sent down the Quran, as a guide to mankind, also clear signs for guidance and Judgement”

(S.2 A.185)

## The Concept of Waqf

- Tasnuva Jahan

The concept of waqf has been recognized in the early period of the Islamic legal system. The waqf is an important instrument in Islamic financial as well as social culture. It is a voluntary religious endowment. The objective of waqf contains the religious through distributions of wealth for socioeconomic relief among the unfortunates and other purposes.

At present world, waqf institution has limitless potential. It can play a key role to cut the scarcity and support society. Unfortunately, this huge potential of the waqf institution has not been realized by many Muslim countries around the world. This paper aims to discuss the historical context and development of the waqf institution. As a history of a waqf institution, reveals the position of this Islamic financial institution to strengthen societal construction. The paper also attempts to shed light on the importance of waqf to eliminate the poverty problem for social-economic development.

### Introduction:

The waqf is an important instrument in Islamic financial as well as social culture. It is a voluntary religious, charitable endowment. In Islam, there are different types of social instruments and structures to fulfill the basic needs of society. From ancient times, the institution of waqf has been accepted as one of the most commonly known Islamic endowments. Awqaf (plural form of waqf) has played a

vital role to improve the economic growth in early Muslim societies. It aims to create a charitable scheme for improving the condition of underprivileged sections such as the poor, needy, insolvent, orphans, widows and others (Cizakca, 2002). The waqf institution is a non-profit oriented as well as a redistribution institution. Its core objective is to support the private or public concern for the well-being of society (Hasan & Abdullah, 2008). Awqaf help to strengthen business and build infrastructure. The welfare purpose of waqf may be related to the societal, spiritual, cultural and economic grounds. However, many modern Islamic economists opine that the waqf is a significant scheme of the Muslim society's socioeconomic development. Definition of Waqf:

The Arabic term 'Waqf' literally means cause to stop, detention, contain, or preserve. Juristically waqf means detention or dedication of a property for religious or charitable purposes. In Islam, waqf is one of the continuous charities. It means the waqif gets reward either alive or after death. According to Syed Ameer Ali (1976), waqf is the dedication of a certain property to the Almighty. Its devotion for a spiritual or a charitable cause to secure the benefit of human beings. Different Muslim jurists defined the meaning of waqf within their personal considerations.

The institution of waqf is a revenue-generating asset. Customarily, the profits

or revenues are used for well-being purpose. However, in other Islamic charity, donations or money received can be spent directly. The benefits of a waqf property can be distributed among the unfortunates, hospitals, schools, graveyards, roads, religious establishments, and so on. The list of beneficiaries is not limited. It depends on the donor's decisions, but must not be contradictory to the Shari'ah.

The person creating waqf is called waqif or donor. At the time of donation, waqif must own the property. Waqf founder must specify the Mawquf 'alaih or beneficiaries. If beneficiaries are not specified, then waqf will be allocated to the charitable purposes. The donated assets may be detained by a charitable trust, without any plan of reclaiming the assets. It is essential to appoint a mutawalli or a manager of waqf property as legal custodianship. The waqf property manager is responsible for maintenance and management of waqf property. In the Islamic legal system, there is no fixed formula for waqf institution. It may be made in oral or written. In the present world, only declaration is not sufficient. A written contract is vital for waqf institutions. Previously, fixed assets as lands and buildings were the common forms of waqf. Currently, cash waqf has become a trend. Cash waqf can act as a pool of donation. It can be utilized to construct different establishments, for instance, schools, hospitals and so on. Cash waqf can ensure more contribution of individual donors (Sadeq 2002, Aziz and others 2013).

### **Characteristics of Waqf: Contemporary Muslim**

Jurists agree about the characteristics of waqf, such as religious purpose, perpetuity, irrevocability, and inalienability. According to the Islamic teachings, the purpose of waqf must be religious and generous. Thus, a waqf is not valid without any spiritual or charitable goal. Perpetuity is one of the essential features of wakf. A waqf institution must be permanent. It can be created for any particular period. Some opined that in irrevocability nature, a waqif cannot revoke a waqf property after the declaration. Inalienability is another important structure of waqf. As the waqf assets are dedicated to the Almighty, so they belongs to the Almighty. As a result, no one would be able to alienate the waqf property. It cannot be a matter of sale, gift, inheritance, or any division. Waqf institution becomes a 'frozen asset'. The main purposes of waqf are not confined to one's future generations. Waqf aims to serve the benefits to unfortunates and can be spent on the mosques. It also extends to cover schools, libraries, orphanages, marriage, repatriation of foreigners to their native country, building hospitals, digging water wells, protection of the environment, caring for animals, and other actions related to social development.

### **Waqf in the Noble Qur'an:**

The term waqf does not directly appear in the Noble Qur'an. But many Qur'anic focus on charity and helping others generously. Waqf is an act of virtue that is extremely encouraged in Islam.

Muslim religion places highest emphasis on charities in human life. Thus, Surat Al-Imran, verse 92, declares that 'Never will you attain the good [reward] until you spend [in the way of Allah] from that which you love. And whatever you spend - indeed, Allah is Knowing of it.' According to Surat Adh-Dhariyat, verse 19 'And from their (rich persons) properties was [given] the right of the [needy] petitioner and the deprived.' The above verses clarify the distribution of wealth among the underprivileged.

According to Surat Al-Baqarah, verse 177, 'Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves; [and who] establishes prayer and gives zakah; [those who] fulfill their promise when they promise; and [those who] are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle. Those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous.' This verse implies that faith is related to doing good to others.

Surat Al-Baqarah, verse 267, also ensures that 'O you who have believed, spend from the good things which you have earned and from that which We have produced for you from the earth. And do not aim toward the defective therefrom, spending [from that] while you would not take it [yourself] except with closed eyes. And know that Allah is Free of need and Praiseworthy.' Surat Al-Baqarah, verse

272, particularly affirms that, '.... And whatever you spend of good - it will be fully repaid to you, and you will not be wronged.' Islam attaches so much importance to awards the righteous deeds of person. The Noble Qur'an repeatedly states, ' But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers' Surat Saba, verse 39.

One of the Hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) further complements these Quranic verses. It also traced the origin of waqf. Abu Hurairah narrated, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: 'When a man dies all his good deeds come to an end except three: Ongoing charity (Sadaqah Jariyah), beneficial knowledge and a righteous child who prays for him' (Narrated by Muslim).

From the above verses of the Noble Qur'an and the Hadith, it is apparent that charitable purposes such as Awqaf are highly encouraged in the Islamic tradition. Hence, Islam is a religion that cares about the benefits of all humankind.

#### **Historical Context of Waqf:**

In the Islamic history, first waqf was created by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). He bought a land in Madinah and built a mosque. It is known as Prophet's Mosque or Quba Mosque (Ahmed, 2004). At present, the mosque is located in the same place with a new, enlarged structure. Another example of waqf is donation of the Ruma Well. At that time, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) visited Madinah and noticed that

Ruma Well was one of the very few sources of drinking water in the town (Abdel hady, 2013). Even water price was so high. Then, he asked his companions to buy the well and render it for public service. Consequently, Othman, one of his companions, purchased the well, made it free for every person.

Omar bin Khattab, the second Caliph, got some valuable land in Khaibar, during the partition of Khaibar. He went to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to consult about the land. Omar asked the Prophet about what he would do with the land as he never had it. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) replied, 'If you like you can give the land as endowment and give its fruits in charity.' Accordingly, Omar gave it to charity. Additionally, the land should neither be sold, nor given to anybody as a gift or inheritance. But its yield reserved for charity to the poor people, needy kith and kin, freeing slaves, guests, travelers, and for Allah 's Cause. The administrator or manager of the endowment is allowed to reasonably consume its crop. But the administrator is not allowed to store it for the future to become richer (Sahih Al-Bukhari)

In historical context, the Prophet Muhammad's advice to the Ruma Well and Omar's property provides solid proof of waqf. It also encouraged other companions to establish different types of waqf institutions.

**Development of Waqf:**

The institution of waqf has developed

over the period and across different nations. Waqf institutions played significant roles in developing societal welfare throughout Islamic societies. Rich Muslims, particularly rulers, donated properties or even entire villages for waqf institution. Awqaf has developed with the spread of Islam. However, the developmental trends include significant growth, lack of progress and even periods of downturn (Aun, 1975).

In the healthcare sector, Awqaf has been recognized from the earliest period. In Islamic countries, most hospitals were financed by the waqf revenues (Abattouy and Al-Hassani, 2013). Many famous hospitals, including Al-Mustansiri in Makkah, hospitals of Madinah also administered by the waqf. In 1145 AD, Al Noori Hospital was established on a waqf land in Damascus. It is an ancient hospital in the Muslim world. Later, it developed as a medical school. Many prominent physicians were trained in that medical school. It was the first hospital to adopt patients medical record (Ahmed, 2004). Throughout the Islamic culture, every city had a reputation to build at least one waqf hospital. In 261 H, Ahmad ibn Tulun, constructed the first hospital in Egypt. Also, he endowed it with several waqfs to bear expenses (Abattouy and Al-Hassani, 2013). Some suggest that early Umayyad caliph Al-Walid bin Abd Al-Malik [ruled from 705 to 715 (86-96 H)], was first to establish a bimaristan and appoint doctors. He also arranged expenses of doctors and for quarantine of the lepers. Previously, an Islamic hospital was known as bimaristan. The Persian word bimaristan means hospital. Bimar means sick person and

place. In the earliest history, hospitals and medicine sectors were the most well-known sub-sectors of awqaf (Ahmed,2007).

In the education sector, the Muslims established different types of awqaf institutions. It supported scientific research in religious as well as non-religious fields, for example astronomy, physiology, pharmacology and so on (Ahmed, 2007). Al Azhar University, in Cairo, Egypt, Al-Qarawiyyin in Morocco and Al-Zaytura in Tunisia were Awqaf institutions (Ahmed, 2004).

Even business places and shopping centers have been built by waqf fund. In Bangladesh, Dhaka Baitul Mukarram shopping complex is a good example for waqf financed establishment. The reason behind waqf financed business center is to make some revenue for supporting any target projects. Target projects may be related to education, orphans, health services, and so on.

Surprisingly, the utilization and contributions of waqf extend outside the main Islamic finance jurisdictions, namely in Canada, South Africa, United States. The National Awqaf Foundation of Canada (Awqaf Canada) was founded in 2014 to provide a positive contribution to the Muslim students both in Canada and throughout the world. Awqaf Canada also dedicated to the communities of immigrants and minorities in Canada to develop through the development of social enterprises and endowment projects.

Overall, through the waqf

development process, it will support and develop the socioeconomic conditions of Muslims.

#### **Importance of Waqf:**

Today's world poverty is a complex and multidimensional problem. Globally, more than 767 million people are living in extreme poverty conditions. Nearly 385 million children are among them. Extremely poor people are surviving on less than \$1.90 per day (The World Bank report, 2016). Tremendously poor people spend the lion's share of their income to get staple foods. Many poor are suffering from hunger problems at certain times of the year. The poverty problem is linked with poor economies, poor human resources, poor guidelines to tackle the challenges and socioeconomic development. Over the years, poverty alleviation has become a global concern since the United Nations declared the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in 2000. To remove extreme poverty, the World Bank has also set a new target around the world by 2030. There are many ways to reduce poverty problems. Sometimes it requires a long-term commitment to improving the living conditions of people. But poverty eradication policy measures vary from one country to another. Our focus is only on Islamic teachings and traditions to reduce the poverty problem. As most of the African and Asian Muslim-majority countries are normally poorer than other countries on average. These countries are not able to spend enough on education and health services due to poverty,

population burden, etc. Even their formal financial sector is small and weak. They do not have enough revenue collection. Governments are also fragile in effective governance, let alone initiate any long-term development plans.

A potential way to overcome these difficulties in the Islamic finance framework is through waqf. The waqf institution's ancient role highly recommends that this social institution can again play an effective role to promote sustainable development goals (Khan and Jareen, 2015). Historically, the waqf has been widely used by Muslim countries to support public objectives, such as better health care, clean water, roads, education, as well as eradication of poverty (Ahmed, 2004). The waqf provides a suitable tool to fill the gap in societal intercession. Due to its permanent nature or perpetuity character, it can contribute in an effective way to the targeted social sectors for better socioeconomic advancement of society. Traditionally, it has been a key source of support for socioeconomic development.

Waqf resources are not limited to Muslim communities and religious activities. Non-Muslims are able to enjoy waqf welfare services. It encompasses a wider scope of activities to strengthen the social and economic environments of a society (Cajee 2007, Monzer Kahf 1998). Finally, the ancient waqf institutions reveal their importance to society.

**Conclusion:**

Nowadays, waqf can play a significant role in the Muslim community.

As the needs of society are multifaceted and increasing day by day. Societal challenges like poverty, unemployment problem, and inequality are major challenges to socioeconomic development in many countries. In this situation, a waqf institution has myriad potential. It can support the government in numerous state-responsibilities. Islamic theory and approaches can lead to reducing the poverty problem, inequality and so on. Islam has its own established economic principles. Unfortunately, the significance of Islamic economic systems has not totally been realized by the Muslims and their governments throughout the world. In many countries, the waqf management system is mostly unclear. Some consider waqf as a problematic institution as it requires immovable property for donation. Most of the Muslim countries have failed to identify the gaps existed in waqf institution. The waqf is not an obligatory practice to Muslims. It is executed to seek Allah's blessing. Muslims are required to share their wealth with the destitute to develop society's economy as a whole. Nevertheless, everyone should be very careful about the societal and spiritual purpose of waqf. But one should never view the prospects of waqf as a social thing because the waqf property belongs to the Almighty. It is hoped that with proper management, waqf institutions can repair the economic systems of society. Islam indeed provides the modern economic policy to ensure equality and justice for human beings. ■

## Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi and His Movement “The Message of Humanity”

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

In this world persons come and go. But history remembers those who made extraordinary contributions to any field of life and thereby serve the country. Such a person was Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi aka Ali Miyan. He was a highly revered personage, the most radiant beacon of the contemporary Islamic scholarship and an intrepid preacher of human values. Born on December 5, 1913 at Takiya Kalan Raibareli, U.P (India) and passed away on December 31, 1999 there. Maulana Nadwi's father Syed Abdul Hai Hasani died when he was only nine years old. Ali Miyan was brought up by his mother Khairunnisa who had memorized the Holy Qur'an and elder brother, Dr. Abdul Ali. He pursued his studies at Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, Darul Uloom Deoband, Qasimul Uloom Lahore and also at University of Lucknow. He specialized in three branches- Tafseer of Qur'an, Hadith, Arabic language and literature. Sheikh Haider Hasan Khan Tonki, Sheikh Ahmad Lahori, Sheikh Syed Hussain Ahmed Madani, Sheikh Khalil and Sheikh Taquiuddin Hilali were his teachers. He was a great thinker, historian and an expert in interpretation of Qur'an and Hadeeth including several other Islamic subjects. He had full command over Arabic language. His proficiency in Arabic language was like that of a native Arab. There were occasions when he even excelled native Arab scholars. His book "Ma Dha khasiar rul Alam ba Inhetatul

Muslimeen " is considered as one of the best books of twentieth century Arabic literature. He inherited a penchant for study of history from his father Maulana Hakeem Syed Abdul Hai Hasani. His father was a well-known physician as well as a noted Islamic scholar. His book titled Nuzhat-ul-Khawahir an eight- volume literary encyclopedia in Arabic containing biographical notes of some 5,000 scholars, theologians and Jurists of India.

Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi was one of the well-known revivalists and thinkers of the twentieth century. He will always be remembered because of his extraordinary service to Islam. His literary and reformative contribution to the cause of Islam ranks him high in the galaxy of Mujaddedin-e-Islam (Revivalists of Islam) especially in the subcontinent of Asia like Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi known as Mujaddid Al-fe Sani, Shah Waliullah Dehlawi, Syed Ahmad Shaheed and Syyid Abul A'la Maududi.

"A prominent scholar and former judge of the Supreme Court of Syria was asked in a radio interview, "Which is your most beloved city?" He replied, "My home city of Damascus and then Lucknow, the city of my friend Sheikh Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi". Similarly, a prominent scholar of Iraq once remarked to an Indian official, "We know India due to Lucknow and we know Lucknow due to Sheikh Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi". These and similar compliments, which were heard in the

Arab world, speak about the international stature of Sheikh Nadwi.”

Syed Habibul Haq Nadwi has rightly said, “Ali Miyan ‘s pen is espoused with his heart and follows the heart more than his mind. Being at home with the Arabic language, he has written his major works in it in order to awaken the slumbering Arabs, the initial pioneers of the Islamic mission. His magnum opus is ‘Islam and the World’ originally written in Arabic (Madha Khasira-al-Alam-bi-inhitat al-Muslimin) in 1945 when his age was not more than 32 years. It may be regarded as one of the greatest challenges to the agnostic material culture of the scientific West which had hit hard at the roots of all religions and spiritual civilizations either in the West or in the East. Many Orientalists were alarmed by reading the book. Professor R.B. Serjeant, the director of the Middle Eastern Centre at the University of Cambridge (U.K.), regarded the work as a potential threat to western culture. He remarked; “Had there been an approved custom of banning books in Britain, I would have recommended first for banning of this book” (The Dynamics of Islam P ,60-61).

Syed Shahabuddin says, “Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi was indisputably one of the greatest exponents of Islam in the second half of the twentieth century and because of his command over Arabic, through his writings and speeches, he had a wide area of influence extending far beyond the sub continent, particularly in the Arab World. His exposition of Islam was marked by moderation. He was not a fanatic in any sense of the term but he believed in Islam

as a blessing for mankind and as a positive and creative factor in human history. In a sense Islam was perceived by him as a civilizational force which retained its relevance in the modern age as a viable counterpoint to the western civilization with all its excesses. “(The Fragrance of East Special Issue on Ali Miyan)

Mr. M.A. Qureshi, an ICS officer was Indian ambassador in Saudi Arabia. After his tenure was over he called on the king. As a parting gift he was presented by the king two pieces of the cover of Kaba with the instruction that one piece be delivered to Sheikh Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi with his greetings. (An Epoch Making Scholar Ali (Ali Miyan) P,9)

Having been impressed with diabolical juncture of the country and deprivation of human qualities and norms late Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi’s restless soul felt an urgent need to launch a movement in the name of ‘ ‘Payam-e-Insaniyat (Message of Humanity) to foster love and amity between different sections of the society. The idea of Payam-e-Insaniyat originated at Siwan (Bihar), where Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi had gone to address a large congregation, subsequent to a holocaust which took heavy toll of Muslims lives. An abominable image of Muslims aggravated by the media had been formed in the minds of the majority. Maulana’s speech elicited following comments from a Hindu senior citizen in the audience: “Maulana, I have listened to only two speeches, one by CR Das (Deshbandhu) and the other is yours. Muslims and non-Muslims alike have a right over you. I urge you to visit this city

once again.”

The initiation of this auspicious and noble mission known as Payam-e-Insaniyat (The Message of Humanity) was set in Allahabad in 1974. The reason of which in Maulana’s own words: “We have started this humble work from Allahabad because the city is associated with “Allah”

Maulana Bilal Hasani Nadwi under the patronship of Maulana S. M. Rabey Hasani ‘Nadwi, Rector Nadwatul Ulama and President All India Muslim Personal Law Board is still closely associated with the movement to steer the message all through.

**AIMS & OBJECTS**

1. To create mutual good-will and an atmosphere of affection and kindness purely on human and national levels founded on BROTHERHOOD and WELL-BEING of MANKIND generally; to put an end to violence, lawlessness, anarchy, moral degradation and create FELLOW-FEELING towards each other; and to hold Public meetings and Seminars for promoting and spreading the sense of sharing sorrows and sufferings of human beings.
2. Publication of useful cultural/moral literature in various National, Regional and widely spoken languages; to bring together through service and sacrifice, people belonging to different classes and communities; to restore confidence amongst people who have become sick of life ; and restore and revive love for life in spiritually sick souls and to give them a virtuous aim of life.
3. To weed-out from the society and human race:

- (i) Bribery and illegal gratification;
- (ii) Nepotism and favouritism;
- (iii) Misconceptions arising out of hatred;
- (iv) Hoarding, profiteering and black-marketing;
- (v) Sectarianism;
- (vi) Disparity in economic and living standards and
- (vii) Full-fledged crusade against sub-standard behavioural inclinations and obscenity.

4. To eradicate ill-founded rites, rituals and cruel conventions.

5. To uplift irrespective of caste, creed, colour and sex the poor, the backward, the neglected, the down-trodden, and the agonised people.

6. To create a sense of sobriety, social service, submissiveness, self-respect, self-restraint, self-confidence, self-vigilance, and to raise cultural and intellectual levels of the STUDENT COMMUNITY and the upcoming GENERATION thereby helping them to grow into better and useful citizens.

7. To extend all possible help in personal sphere and on the levels of a locality, village and town and finally, in the country for creating, FEELINGS OF LOVE, AFFECTION and BROTHERHOOD.

Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (RAH) says, “Sharing others’ suffering is man’s highest virtue. If man loses the ability of sharing others’ sufferings, he will become bankrupt. Even if a nation is blessed with the wealth of America, administration of Russia, and petrol wells of Saudi Arabia, even if rivers of gold and silver flow in it,

and even if wealth showers over its land like rain, it will still pauper if its stream of love is dried. The blessings of Allah will not descend on it. It is a matter of satisfaction that man's eyes can still shed tears and that his heart can still suffer with the pain of others. The heart which loses this quality is not a heart. It is just a piece of stone. Such a heart has no value in the sight of Allah, no matter whether it is the heart of a Muslim, or a Hindu or a Christian. The value of the human heart, in fact, lies in its quality to long, shiver, cry, and love. The human heart should be greener than the land, broader than the universe, more affluent than the waterfall, and more bountiful than the heavy clouds ready to stream down. The eye which does not become wet is not a human eye: It is the eye of a daffodil. The heart which does not feel pain of others is not a human heart, it is a heart of a lion. The forehead which does not become wet with the perspiration of penitence is not a human forehead; it is a piece of rock. The hand which does not move forward to serve humanity is virtually paralysed and lifeless. The claw of a lion is better than that hand of a person which cuts the throat of another human-being."

Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee condoling the demise of Ali Miyan had said. "Ali Miyan, as he was respectfully known, was also a great humanitarian. In his last message he strongly condemned the hijacking of the Indian Airlines Plane, stating, "Nobody, having respect and love for human beings can ever approve of such action."

Needless to add that for the fulfilment of his mission, Maulana did not dither from

speaking the truth on the face; be it Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, V.P. Singh, Narsimha Rao or Atal Bihari Vajpayee. His sole purpose was to convey what, in his opinion, was good for all classes and is good for the country as a whole.

Besides, Allamah Nadwi was a true Patriot and had deep love for Indian culture and civilisation. His devotion to the country was transparent and beyond doubt. It would not be a misnomer to say that Allamah Nadwi was the best representative of the Indian culture. His life story is a gospel of luminous works. There is no measuring rod with which one can measure and understand the depth of the contribution by him to the nation.

Today, Muslims are passing through a tough time. India is by law a secular democracy where all people from all religions have equal rights and religious freedom. Despite this fact Muslims are confronted with a variety of issues and problems. They are falsely implicated by the police and concocted and fabricated stories made by media in various criminal cases. Consequently, a large number of innocent Muslims are languishing in different jails of the country. It is nothing but a travesty of justice, freedom and democracy.

In a democratic country like India such odds should not take place. The need of the hour is that late Allamah Nadwi's Movement The Message of Humanity must be revived and rejuvenated so that misconceptions regarding Islam and its followers may be dispelled and an atmosphere of peace and amity may prevail in the country. ■

## Islamic Influence On Indian Society

- M. Mujeeb

I believe there would be much less misunderstanding among the representatives of the different cultures of the world if we examined more closely the nature of what we call influence. Influence is not imposition, or a free gift of ideas and goods to those supposed to need them, or a borrowing and lending or imitation of the ways of one people by another. It is something really indefinable and can take the most devious ways. We look for it in obvious and concrete forms, in architecture, music, painting, literature, where it is least genuine and seldom enduring, and we generally come to the wrong conclusions. For instance, would it be accounted an influence of Islam, which is rightly taken to be a democratic religion, that the caste system should become more deeply rooted than ever before among the Hindus? But that is what did happen. The Muslim Sufis in Iran and Khurasan initiated in the 10th century a movement of taking Islam from the classes to the masses. Muslim sufis in India continued this movement. Goswami Tulsi Das, through his Ramayana, made the veneration of Rama the religion of the masses in north India, and as an indirect consequence strengthened the faith of the masses in the caste system as an unalterable;

divine dispensation. Would this be considered an influence of Islam? We would say yes, if we regarded the idea of taking religion to the masses as the essential element, and say no, very emphatically, if we valued the democratic tendencies of Islam. Or again, take the case of the poet saint Kabir. He attacked both Muslims and Hindus for making religion exclusive. We cannot be sure whether he himself was a Muslim or a Hindu; to what influence, then, can we trace his determination to attack and ridicule exclusiveness? Islam, as a missionary faith, enjoins the eradication of false belief, and I would say that Kabir's attitude is an instance of Islamic influence. But, then, Kabir accused the Muslims of holding false beliefs, although they professed Islam. A third instance is even more illuminating. I have often heard it said that in north India Muslims have been the most outstanding masters of vocal and instrumental music. But music is, according to Muslim religious law, one of the frivolities, and for this reason, addiction to it has been condemned. The only explanation I have been able to think of is that the Muslim who took up music would have been one of the

damned, both in this world and the next, unless he achieved the highest excellence. That would give him a status in this world, and he would have the confidence to expect forgiveness in the next. But would we call this the influence of Islam.

So let us not try to simplify matters where the reality is complex and, for that reason, all the more fascinating. Let us assume—what was most probably also true—that the Muslims wanted to keep Islam and the Muslim way of life to themselves, and that the Hindus had no desire whatever to be influenced by the Muslims. Then let us see what changes took place.

One I have already mentioned. Religion became the religion of the people. Then, the spoken languages of the people became literary languages. We have the beginnings of Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Punjabi and Sindhi literature. Further, the city became the centre of culture, tailored clothing came into general use, simplicity was discarded in favour of a life enriched and complicated by a vast increase in the articles of daily use, manners became elaborate and were, so to say, codified in the form of a recognised etiquette. None of these changes, except perhaps the first, can be regarded as due to the influence of Islam, but the changes would not have

taken place when they did if Islam had not become one of the religions of India,

Spoken languages benefited because Muslim rulers, while not exclusive in their patronage, had no reverence for Sanskrit and no reason to venerate the Brahmins, who were generally the only people who learnt and could speak it. On the other hand, the Muslim Sufis wished to propagate their ideas, and they could do this only in the language of the people. They were not interested in the Hindus but in the Muslims of the lower classes. The Muslims thus made a wide breach in the ramparts behind which the linguistic prestige of Sanskrit—and also, let us remember of Arabic and to some extent Persian—was entrenched. As early as the first decades of the 15th century, a Muslim sufi was asked why he was so favourable to Hindi. And about a hundred years earlier people had seen that when Persian verses failed to produce a mood of exaltation in Shaikh Nizamuddin of Delhi, the singers took up some Hindi folk song, and the Shaikh was soon in rapture.

Islam is averse to luxury of any kind, and the life of the good Muslim should perhaps be more simple and austere than that of the Hindu. But the cultural expression of Islam has been the exact opposite, and Islam has almost

*(Cont. to page 24)*

## Around the World

### **French Air Strike in Mali Killed 19 Civilians in Jan: UN**

**Bamako:** A French air strike killed as many as 19 civilians in Mali in January, a report said, prompting a strong denial from France. The French air force struck near the remote village of Bounti on January 3, in circumstances that sparked controversy in the war-torn Sahel state. Residents of the village said the strike hit a wedding party and killed civilians.

### **Samia Suluhu Hassan Becomes Tanzania's First Woman President**

**Dar es Salaam:** Samia Suluhu Hassan, 61, made history on Friday 19 March 2021 when she was sworn in as Tanzania's first female president at the government offices of State House in Dar es Salaam. Dressed in a hijab and holding up a Qur'an with her right hand, Ms Hassan took the oath of office, vowing to uphold the constitution of the country. She assumed the Presidency of Tanzania two days after the death of president John Magufuli.

### **Taliban Remind U.S. to pull its troops out of Afghanistan by May 1 Deadline**

**Moscow:** The Taliban warned the U.S. against keeping troops in Afghanistan beyond their agreed withdrawal date, and pushed back against major regional players at a conference in Moscow who said Afghanistan should not return to begin an Islamic emirate.

At a summit in Moscow, six weeks ahead of a deadline set last year for the withdrawal of US troops, the United States, Russia, China and Pakistan called on the warring Afghan sides to agree on an immediate ceasefire.

In a joint statement, they added that they "did not support the restoration of the Islamic emirate". But Taliban political spokesman Mohammad Naeem, speaking to media in Moscow said that it was up to the Afghan sides to decide their system of governance and that it should be an Islamic system. A member of the Taliban's political office, Suhail Shaheen, said Washington should not keep troops in the country beyond their agreed withdrawal date. "After that, it will be a violation of the agreement... So in that case... there will be reaction," he said. Washington agreed last year

with the Taliban to withdraw its troops by May 1.

### **Trump Starts Website to Reach out to His Fans**

**Washington:** Former US president Donald Trump has launched an official website, a platform for his supporters to stay in touch with him and to showcase his time in office. The 45office.com website's home page displays multiple pictures of Trump with various figures, including world leaders, which were taken at events during his time as US president. The website's "About" section contains a glowing 850-word synopsis of his time in office, highlighting what he has often cited as his achievements, including energy and border security, stretching NATO and other international alliances, and his response to the pandemic. It made no mention of the scandals, corruption investigations, or his impeachments trials.

Earlier this month, a spokesman for Trump's 2020 campaign said he will launch his own social media platform in two to three months. Trump was banned from Twitter, Facebook and other social media sites after the January attack on the US Capital.

### **Suu Kyi Faces Another Charge**

**Yangon:** Police in Myanmar filed a new charge against ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi, her lawyer said, in a move that may allow her to be held indefinitely without trial as part of an intensifying crack down by Authorities who seized power in a coup.

Suu Kyi already faced a charge of illegally possessing walkietalkie - an apparent attempt to provide a legal veneer for her house arrest. The new charge with for breaking a law that has been used to prosecute people who have violated coronavirus restrictions.

Lawyer Khin Maung Zaw told reporters after meeting with a judge in a court in the capital, Naypyitaw.

It carries a maximum punishment of three years in prison. But because of change to the penal code instituted by the junta last week, it could allow her to be detained indefinitely without court permission.

At its first news conference since overthrowing Suu Kyi's government, the junta promised that it would hold an election and hand over power. ■

**OUR REPRESENTATIVES ABROAD**

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