

THE FRAGRANCE OF EAST

Vol. XXIV No. 3

March 2022

Annual Subscription:

Rs. 250 (per copy Rs. 25) in India
\$ 75 (USA, UK, Asian, African and European Countries)

Cheques and Drafts may please be sent to:

The Fragrance of East

Nadwatul Ulama, P.O. Box 93,
Tagore Marg. Lucknow-226007, U.P. (India)

Out-station cheques will not be accepted.

A/C 10 863 759 664

IFSC Code No. SBIN 0000 125
State Bank of India, Main Branch, Lucknow

Phone. No. : 0522 - 2740406

E-mail: fragranceofeast1998@gmail.com

Rs. 25/-

The Fragrance of East

Founder:

Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (RAH)

Patron:

S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi

Advisory Board :

S. Bilal Abdul Hai Hasani Nadwi

Mohammad Aslam Siddiqui

Shamsul Haque Nadwi

Editor:

Shariq Alavi

Asstt. Editor:

Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

The Basic Ingredient

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Islamic culture is dominated by its intense faith in God whose attributes serve as the ideal to be imbibed in the individual as well as social and cultural life of the Muslims. It is a culture hued in the colour of Allah which makes it difficult to conceive its institutions and organisation, nature and characteristics without its prime constituent. Whenever it has been contaminated by foreign influences like national or racial chauvinism, material greed, moral decadence or social anarchy such a deviation has proved to temporary phase resulting from its negligence of the teachings of the Qur'an and the sunnah. Nevertheless, it always tries to maintain its universalism against external and internal challenges in order to return to its original source of power as well as to realise the widest possible measure of religious social and cultural unity throughout the Islamic world. It is for this reason that the revivalist endeavour in Islam shows a remarkable continuity throughout its long history. These movements have also been very often successful in their efforts to get the community back to its moorings.

CONTENTS

1- Philosophy	- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi	7
2- Importance of Islamic Shariat and Its Position	- S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi	11
3- The Path-Breaking Western Book On Sirah	- Abdur Raheem Kidwai	15
4- Distinction of A Muslim In The World	- S.Bilal Abdul Hai Hasani Nadwi	23
5- Islam And Science	- Mohammad Aslam Siddiqui	25
6- Development Of Chemistry And Medicine In The Medieval Islamic World	- M.I.H.Farooqi	28
7- Hijab Only Covers Heads, Not Minds	- Rajeev Mullick	31
8- Minorities Are In Majority In Jails, But Far Behind In Every Sphere	- Mohammad Naushad Khan	32
9- India's Ties With The Central Asian States	- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi	35
10- Around The World	-	39

Wisdom of Qur'an

And remember with gratitude Islam and jahiliyyah upon you. For you were enemies and He joined your hearts in love so that by His grace you became brethren. You were on the brink of the pit of Fire, and He saved you from it.

(Al Imran 3:103)

Commentary: Contained in the above pithy passage is the contrast between Islam and jahiliyyah. The two stand poles apart, as is reiterated in the following passage as well: "To one who was dead We gave life and a light with which he can walk among men." (al-An'am 6:122) This portrays a graphic picture of both Islam and jahiliyyah, capturing their respective features and points of departure. The entire history of both Islam and jahiliyyah represents the elaboration of the truth enunciated in the above verse. Jahiliyyah refers to the state of enmity which drives men to the brink of the pit of Fire. In contrast to it, Islam signifies fraternity which helps men avoid the pit of Fire. Even in the most advanced period jahiliyyah produces men who, in Qur'anic parlance, are like dead bodies. In comparison, Islam grants men new life and such guidance which helps them lead their lives properly and purposefully.

Allah states this truth in simple, plain language. He stresses that one given to disbelief is like he who is dead. On receiving divine guidance however he finds life in the real sense. More importantly, faith like light guides him at every step in life. Such a person on guidance is certainly different from he who is wretched, lost in darkness and unable to find his way out. ■

Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

It is related by Abu Huraira that the Apostle of God said: "Occasionally, Satan comes to you and asks, 'Who created this thing [and] who created that thing,' It goes on like that till about God Himself he sows the doubt in your hearts [that when everything has been created by someone] who is His creator? So when this stage is reached the bondsman should seek the refuge of the Lord and stop."

—Bukhari and Muslim

Commentary: It shows that such ideas and misgivings are the handiwork of Satan and when he causes a doubt concerning the very existence of the Lord to crop up in anyone's heart the best course for him is to beg the protection of God against the mischief of the Devil and divert his mind from it. When the existence of Allah is an Attribute of His Being and He is the Creator of all things a question like this does not arise about Him in the least degree.

It is related by Abu Hurairah that the Apostle of God said: "Vain questions and aimless arguments will go on among the people till the foolish question will also be asked that when God created all things, by whom was He created? So, anyone who is confronted with it should put an end to the discussion by declaring, 'I believe in God and His Apostles.'"

—Bukhari and Muslim

*Commentary—*The attitude of a faithful Believer to such ideas and inquiries should be that he plainly told the questioner, the doubt-instilling Satan and his own inmost self that the light of faith in God and His Apostle had reached him, and, therefore, the afore-mentioned question was not worthy of his consideration just as it was senseless for a clear-eyed person to think or discuss logically whether the sun was bright or not. ■

TRUTH

Truth prevails is an old saying and there is no doubt of its being proved true. It is said that man is a social animal. He acquires habits and practices with which he is surround. In this fast moving life morality has taken a back seat and all those habits which provide instant benefits and pleasure have been adopted for temporary gains.

Whenever humanity has distracted from an honest and rightful path Almighty has sent His messengers for reform. These messengers have come from time to time in different periods and by their preaching helped the society to adopt rightful and truthful way in their lives. The last prophet, as we believe, was Muhammad (Peace be on him) who tried his best to reform the society and make the people God fearing, truthful, honest and loyal. His contributors to the humanity is ever praiseworthy and laudable. By his own practices in life he tried to convey and convince his followers that a truthful life is the only way which may lead them to heaven and by that they can earn the pleasure of God.

Falsehood and breach of trust are inimical to faith. The Apostle of God said: "There is no place for any habit in the nature of a true Believer except falsehood and breach of faith." It denotes that Faith and the shameless habit of lying cannot coexist. A true Muslim may have any other weakness, but he can never be a habitual liar and a false-hearted and untrustworthy person. Should,

however, it will show that the reality of Islam has not yet dawned, upon him and he must care himself of the vicious habit if he is not to rest content with the state of imperfection in faith.

The prophet has said: "When a bondsman talks a lie, the Angel goes a mile away (from him) owing to the stench." He on another occasion said: "A most serious form of betrayal of faith is that you talk a lie to a brother while he believes that you are truthful in what you say."

Our Judicial System is so defective that often on the basis of affidavits, relying on their truthfulness, cases are decided. The affidavits are sworn generally on false facts. Islam warns of such practice. To hear false witness in a court of law and take a false oath are among the worst kinds of falsehood and stern warnings of punishment in the life to come have been given on them.

The holy Quran and many Hadiths (saying of the Prophet) have warned of the punishment to liars, back-biters, imposters and others so let us be cautious on this count and try to abide by the diktats of Quran and Hadiths. ■

S.A.

We solicit articles for publication in The Fragrance of East. Suitable remuneration will be paid to writers. We prefer receipt of articles on:
e-mail: shariq_alavi@yahoo.com
along with a hard copy, duly signed, by post.

Philosophy

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Common sense is astounded to discover that during the past two and a half thousand years philosophy has, although basing its claim, as it does, on intellect, reason and logic, been discussing problems of which it did not possess even an elementary knowledge. The flower of human race, the best of intellect amongst them, has literally been engaged in a wild goose chase. The philosophers have not been content to discuss God, His attributes, His omnipotence, the co-relation between man and his Creator, the means of His comprehension, the beginning and the end of the Cosmos, life after death and other theosophico-metaphysical issues but have gone ahead to furnish some detailed description with such exactness as befits only chemist experimenting with tangible objects in a laboratory.

It is also not less surprising that despite free thought and criticism to which the philosophers have always remained wedded, extremely few of them could detect the fundamental mistake in their approach to the problem. We thus find only a few names in the lengthy record of philosophers who raised their voice against this basic mistake. But these objections often raised only once in centuries, were hardly paid any heed and philosophy

continued its journey unabated on the same path.

Incompetence of philosophy

Al- Ghazali (1059-1111) was fully aware of the limitation of intellect and, in fact, this very incompetence of philosophy made him turn towards mysticism and to launch upon the quest for the beatific vision of reality. He has often repented in his books that unlike physical and mathematical sciences the metaphysical premise of philosophy is only a concept without any firm foundation. In *Tahafatul-Falasifa* he says that philosophers expound their theories on the basis of ideas and imagination without enquiry and credence, but it is surprising that in a book designed to refute the metaphysical views of the philosophers he does not attack them on the basis of this very incompetence of philosophy but opposes them because of their contradictory deductions and arguments,

Another Arab philosopher who clearly understood the intellectual inadequacies of philosophy was Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406). He was not, strictly speaking, a philosopher but a scholar who had an analytical mind and could not accept anything uncertain or doubtful. In his famous 'Introduction to World History' he has criticised

philosophy at several places. He is fully aware of the limitations of intellect. In it he says:

“..... Do not trust the claims of thought to be able to comprehend beings and their causes and to follow out the ramifications of existence this is sheer nonsense.

For every percipient imagines the world to be restricted to his range of perceptions, which is far from being true. Notice the deaf, for whom the world is confined to the four senses and reflection, and for whom no sounds exist. In the same way the blind lack knowledge of visible things. It is only the traditions they take over from their parents, teachers, and acquaintances that make them admit the existence of what they do not perceive. In other words their belief is founded on the general opinion around them, not on their instincts or sense perceptions. Similarly animals, if they could answer our questions, would be found to deny the possibility of intellectual, reflective acts of the mind.

This point being established, it is probable that there is a kind of perception superior to our own; for our perceptions are created and cannot comprehend the vast range of beings. God's creation, being vaster than man's, is outside man's range of comprehension. He alone comprehends all

This does not impugn the validity

of the mind or its apprehensions. The mind is an accurate scale, whose recordings are certain and reliable; but to use it to weigh questions relating to the Unity of God, or the afterlife, or the nature of prophecy, or the divine qualities, or other such subjects falling outside its range, is like trying to use a goldsmith's scale to weight mountains. This does not mean that the scale is in itself inaccurate.

The truth of the matter is that mind has limits within which it is rigidly confined; it cannot therefore hope to comprehend God and His qualities, itself being only one of the many atoms created by God.”

Among the Muslim Ulama Ibn Taimiyah (1263-1328) has made out this point on various occasions in his writings on dialectics. He has refuted the mistakes of dialecticians with great insight and courage.

The philosopher who, however, completely demolished the snare of intellect's self-deception is the German critic, Emmanuel Kant (1729-1804), whose “Critique of Pure Reason” elucidated the limitations of reason, and, which, in the words of Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbal, ‘rendered the whole work of rationalists to a heap of ruins’.

DIALECTICS

It would be in the fitness of things to mention here the branch of philosophy which was evolved for the

defence of religion. It was not in itself a philosophy yet it discussed the same issues, employed the same methodology, and considered itself competent to meet philosophy on its own ground; it claimed to prove the existence of God, His attributes and other theologico-metaphysical problems through reason. Both were thus basically one in their approach and method although they claimed to be rivals of each other. The dialecticians, as the religious philosophers were called (Scholastics in Europe), entered into detailed discussions of eschatological and metaphysical problems like the philosophers although their aims was diametrically different and they wanted to disapprove the conclusions of the philosophers.

It would be interesting to know that when the dialectics entered the field to combat philosophy and attacked the latter with its adversary's weapons, which were perhaps the only effective weapons to be employed in such a combat, it forgot the limitations of sensory perceptions and intellect. It is amusing that the dialecticians could not realise their mistake even after the limitations of perception and intellect were pointed out to them by the combating philosophers, and they continued to wrestle with the details and incidental issues of metaphysical problems for hundreds of years. Nevertheless, the belated discovery of the limitations of human senses and

intellect, thus made by the philosophers themselves, was an achievement.

After having his fill of philosophy and getting disenchanted with it, Al-Ghazali wrote, "Tahafut-al Falasafa: Incoherence of Philosophers", which raised a storm of protest and indignation in the circle of philosophers. Ibn Rushd (d. 1198), who was a great votary of Greek philosophy in general and of Aristotle in particular, wrote Tahafatut-Tahafut: Incoherence of Incoherence' in reply to Al-Ghazali's book. In it he says that:

"The entire discussion by Al-Ghazali exceeds the limits of Shariah for it seeks to examine issues not permitted by it and also because human faculties are unable to comprehend them. It is not necessary to examine the issues about which the Shariah is silent.. Nor, is it desirable to claim the conclusions drawn through reason or contemplation as a part of the religious faith. It leads to conflict and a great evil. Thus, where the Shariah is silent, one should remain silent and tell the people that human intellect is ill-equipped to comprehend these matters."

In another book 'Al-Khashf-An-Manahij-il-Addillah-fi Akaid-il-Millah: Explanation of Faith', Ibn Rushd very ably expounds the superiority of Quranic arguments over those employed by dialecticians. In this book which furnishes a fine example of his deep understanding of the issues involved, he

reiterates the inability of men to comprehend metaphysical problems through the help of reason alone.

We entirely agree with Ibn Rushd that sensory organs and intellectual faculties endowed to human beings cannot comprehend metaphysical reality. But philosophers can be intelligible to men only and Aristotle, Plato, Farabi, Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and Ibn Rushd were all human beings.

Mutazila

Among the dialecticians, the group known as Mutazila were the most enlightened followers of intellect who conceived God on the pattern of man and the Hereafter on the basis of the existing world, and freely discussed the transcendental ethics and moral laws completely regarding the limitations of human senses and intellect. Perhaps this is a weakness to which every school of speculative thought succumbs in its infancy. A contemporary scholar, critic and historian who appreciates the scholastic achievements of Mutazila points out their mistake in these words:

“Perhaps their weakest point was their undue emphasis on concretizing the unseen on the basis of perceptible realities. They conceived God completely in accordance with the concept of man and made Him to sub serve the laws of Cosmos. They made justice incumbent on God in the same way as man conceives it for himself and

his world. They ignored the fact that justice is itself relative and changes with the time. What was considered as just in the Middle Ages might be considered unjust today. If this is so in the time-perspective of this world, what can we say when we switch over to the Cosmic-time. Similarly, we see that we have limited and varying concepts of good, bad, desirable and better. We find that a man holds one view of anything with a limited outlook but his decision changes when he takes a broader view.

Similarly, the discussion whether attributes of God are part of His Being or not, created or eternal, and similar other arguments arise from conceiving the un-observable on the pattern of observable, but, the fact is, that nothing is common between the two. They supposed that perceptibility, dimension, time, space, cause and effect were ingredients essential for every existence. In my opinion this is wrong because these pertain to human laws, or, we can say, to the laws of our world. We cannot say that the laws of our world will be applicable or inapplicable to a world other than our own. Thus subjecting God to human laws on the ground that these laws govern the man, can hardly be acceptable to an intellect which knows its own limitations and does not overstep the range of its operation. This was not a mistake committed by M'utazi/a alone for the dialecticians too after them slipped into the same error.”■

Importance of Islamic Shariat and Its Position

- S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi*

Adherence to Islamic Shariat

How important is it for the Muslims to follow their religion and to solve their family issues in accordance with the injunctions of Islamic Shariat can be easily understood by the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths. The Shariat of Muslims guides them in every sphere of their life, provides the solution to their worldly problems. Not paying any attention towards this Shariat is not only a loss in itself but is also a cause for attracting the wrath of the Almighty. It not only deprives the Muslims from the help and blessings of Allah (SWT) but also leads to the apprehension of His grievous grasp. Allah (SWT) has mentioned in very clear terms about this in His Holy Book, The Glorious Quran that He does not allow the violation of His religion and Shariat,:

“And one who goes in search of a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted from him and in the life after he will be among losers”.{ Al Imran:85}

“Do they desire to be ruled by the law of the period of ignorance? And for those having faith {over the commands of Allah (SWT)} whose command is better than (the command of Allah”.{ Al-Maidah: 50}

Allah (SWT) has bestowed upon Muslims His religion and Shariat

* Rector, Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow.

through His last prophet, Muhammad (pbuh) and made it necessary to follow the instructions and orders of His last prophet as no one could remain a Muslim without obeying these, Allah (SWT) says:

“By your lord, they shall not really believe until they have made you the judge of what is disputed among them, and then find no bar in their hearts against what you had decreed and give themselves up with full submission”.{Al-Nisa: 65}

But it is a matter of grave concern that practically the Muslims in general do not follow the orders of Allah (SWT) and Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh), rather they have started to follow the customs and usages of others, which on the one hand is the cause of the violation of the commands of Allah (SWT) and His prophet and their anger and on the other hand it has resulted in a situation where it has become very difficult for a Muslim to prove himself as a true Muslim. Instead of following the path of their natural religion Islam, the Muslims are accepting the path of ignorance, wastage and the customs of others.

This situation has arisen upto some extent due to the attitude of carelessness and selfishness and also due to being unaware about the Shariat. While wise mentoring is required to

remove the traits of carelessness and selfishness, unawareness may be cured by imparting the knowledge about necessary laws of Shariat.

For that very purpose, in a country where the Constitution is based on Secularism and Muslims are in minority, there is no hope of any assistance from the government. This should be taken care of by the followers of Islam because they are the ones responsible for the protection of their Community and for keeping it stable. By the grace of Allah, the authorities of Muslim Personal Law Board have performed their duties well by defending the Islamic Shariat and by removing the misunderstandings of the judicial and legislative bodies and have changed some of the provisions harming Islamic Shariat. And whenever a new complication arises, the Board takes care of it and makes efforts in that regard. By the grace of Allah, the efforts are being made as per the necessity.

Second front is to bring in the Muslims themselves inside the purview of being the followers of Islamic Shariat. This front is wider and the most important one. For this very purpose, the Board has worked with the help of other community institutions under the head of Islaah e Maashra (Improvement of Society). This task is wider and requires hard work. Public meetings should be conducted here and there. The Muslims should be restricted from violating the

commands of Islamic Shariat. They should be informed to keep themselves away from unIslamic customs leading to the violation of the wishes of Allah (SWT) and the teachings of His last Prophet (Pbuh) so that the danger of harm and destruction in this life and the life after may be meted out.

Extravagancy and Demonstration

Unnecessary demonstrations and decorations, extravagant expenses and observance of rituals based over ignorance in the Marriage functions are such unwise acts, which not only attract the anger of Allah (SWT) and the Prophet (Pbuh) but also leads towards the wastage of the worthy resource which could be used for the betterment of the future requirements of husband and wife and also for the necessary requirements of the community as well. Furthermore these expenses cause hardships to the parents of the bride and bridegroom. The need of this hour is to make the people understand about the necessity of betterment from this situation that these are causing harm to their own future and are making them incapable of playing any positive role for the necessary requirements of the community and that for only such enjoyment and fame which is temporary in nature. Furthermore, by violating the commands of their God and His last prophet (Pbuh) they are getting them angry which as a result leads towards the loss in this life and the hereafter.

Importance of Dower

The provision of dower for marriage in Islamic Shariat and its payment or presence of serious intention about its payment is necessary. Dower is to be paid. That is why it should not be such high as its payment may become outside the capability of the husband, nor it is to be such low so as to lower the dignity of the wife.

The best example for the amount of dower is of the dower of the beloved daughter of our Prophet (Pbuh) which was fixed by the Prophet (Pbuh) at five hundred dirhams ,i.e. one hundred twenty one tola of silver. Marriage in Islam is to be such that it can be performed with ease. It should be as simple as it may be.

Even some of the companions of the Prophet (Pbuh) performed their marriages in such a manner that inspite of being ready to sacrifice their life and wealth for the Prophet (Pbuh), they did not consider it necessary to invite the Prophet (pbuh) for that occasion and the Prophet (Pbuh) did not show any sign of anger instead, on coming to know about the event he only asked to “do perform the (celebration of) Waleema even of a Goat”.

In Islam, it is not necessary for a bride to bring in the dowry because her husband has to bear the expenses for her necessities after the marriage. The wife has nothing to do for it; rather the

husband has to provide her a separate residence for accommodation as per his capability. And the wife is responsible to take care of his personal house only and not of the whole family.

It is a matter of pity that Muslims violate the commands of Allah (Swt) and Prophet (Pbuh) on the occasion of marriages in the same manner as they violate their commands in other matters. In India, Muslims demand dowry from wife. The irony does not stop here; they take the course of cruelty in this regard. On the other side, they do not even care about the payment of dower or not even show the intention to pay that because they fix such a dower, the payment of which is above their reach. Instead they keep on putting financial burden over their wives. All of this is against the Shariat.

Marital Life

Not paying any attention towards the balanced and useful way of Shariat in the matters related with marriage sometimes leads bitterness in relationship and to severance by cruelty, enmity and even to taking up of life between the couple to. It is true that sometimes even after following the correct path; there arises a necessity for severance between the couple. For that, the Shariat has provided for the provision of Divorce law but at the same time the Shariat has provided a sound scheme for that. At the first instance, there should be every endeavour made by the relatives for reconciliation and if

these efforts fail then one Talaq (Divorce) may be pronounced at a time during the course of three months. In most of the schools of jurisprudence, in the event of unavoidable circumstance, the severance may be by the pronouncement of all Talaqs (Divorce) at a time, even then this method is not considered a good one. In the event of the intention to cut off the ties completely, it is suggested to leave each other in a sympathetic and good manner. Many Muslims ignore these instructions and create improper situations. The matter of distribution of inheritance, good treatment with the relatives and other issues related with the family are of the same nature.

A very important aspect is that of liquor and gambling. Shariat has forbidden gambling and consumption of liquor and has declared these as acts to be condemned strongly. It leads to the wastage of money and destruction of family life. Moreover, it causes the deep annoyance of Allah (Swt) and His Prophet (Pbuh).

Such kinds of evil deeds are overshadowing the life of Muslims and making severe adverse impacts upon their life. It is the responsibility of our preachers and those having the impressive qualities of oratory or writing to stand up and try their best to cure these defects of Muslim Society. ■

More Proof Of India's Deep Learning Crisis

The absence of in-person classes for almost two years due to Covid-19 left many children in West Bengal with deep learning losses, says Annual Status of Education Report (Aser-Bengal) — released on Wednesday. According to the Survey, carried out in December 2021, the percentage of children in Class 2 who can read words dropped from 66.2% in 2018 to 53% in 2021 — even below the 2014 levels of 54.8%. The percentage of children in Class 1 who could recognise single-digit numbers reduced from 77.8% in 2018 to 68.5% in 2021, again lower than the 2014 levels of 74%.

The results are not surprising. Several reports, including Aser's Karnataka and Chhattisgarh reports, painted a similar picture. A recent five-part series in this newspaper also showed the drastic and varied impact of the pandemic on schools and children across states. There needs to be more nationwide reports — the Economic Survey, too, acknowledged a gaping lacuna in government data — to understand the real depth of the crisis and devise state-specific plans. The first step has been made by reopening schools across the country, but more steps are required to ensure any future infection spikes don't harm learning levels the same way.

During the Aser-Bengal launch, Nobel Laureate Abhijit Banerjee said teachers should begin from where the students are stuck. There are other ways of bridging the gap: Targeted interventions and bridge courses, tracking down children who dropped out, and strengthening the digital reach. Policymakers need to come up with a robust plan that responds to this crisis. Education must be at the front and centre of a national conversation.

(Editorial Hindustan Times, 11-02-2022)

The Path-Breaking Western Book On Sirah

- Abdur Raheem Kidwai

A mid the plethora of the Western writings on Sirah (Prophet Muhammad's illustrious life and career), the book *The Humanity of Muhammad: A Christian View* by Craig Considine. Clifton, N J, USA, Blue Dome Press, 2020. Pp. 165. ISBN: 978-1-68206-529-7, stands out on several counts. Although authored by Craig Considine, Professor at the Department of Sociology at Rice University, Texas, USA, who is an American Catholic of Irish and Italian descent, this book brings out cogently the Prophet Muhammad's greatness, his pioneering role in forging religious pluralism, his concern for equal rights and opportunities for all, his anti-racism, his emphasis on seeking knowledge for the benefit of mankind, his emancipation of women then reeling under injustice and oppression, his reinforcing the Prophet Jesus's essential teachings and his unflinching commitment to truth.

So doing, Considine surpasses some of the finest tributes paid to the Prophet earlier by few Western writers down the ages, ranging from Henry Stubbe (1622-1676) to Goethe, Thomas Carlyle, and in our times by Rainer M. Rilke, R. V. C. Bodley, Michale Hart, Annemarie Schimmell, Karen Armstrong, Fred M. Donner, John Adair, John L. Esposito, Frederick

Quinn and Matthew Dimmock. In our times when Islamophobia is rife and Islam/Muslims are demonized, this book which seeks to build bridges between the two major faith communities, Christians and Muslims, is highly welcome.

Instead of harping incessantly, like the Western media and majority of Western writers on the clash of civilizations, it marks the doors wide open for "the dialogue of civilizations." Considine deserves accolades for this noble, life-enriching initiative.

The significance of Considine's study consists in it being a trend-setting, rather trend-reversing work. For this is a sordid historical fact that since the West learnt about Islam in eighth century, the Prophet Muhammad has been a hate figure on whom the most despicable calumnies have been heaped. His depiction in the oral literature, romances and in both ecclesiastical and popular literature has been in terms of his being an archfiend or a son of Satan, heresiarch, anti Christ, false idol, and god of the villains, murderer, morally degenerate person and impostor. This repulsive image was deliberately fabricated in the West in order to discredit Islam/the Prophet and to arrest the spread of Islam, particularly the Western Europe. For Islam had established itself firmly by the tenth

century in Spain and up to Central Europe.

According to Matthew Dimmock, Professor, Sussex University, U.K., the image of the Prophet in the West regrettably reflects “the history of misrepresentation or the misrepresentation of history” (*Mythologies of the Prophet Muhammad in Modern English Culture*, Cambridge University Press, 2013). Norman Daniel’s two tomes, *Islam and the West: The Making of An Image*, (Edinburgh University Press, 1958) and *Heroes and Saracens: A Reinterpretation of Chansons de Geste* (Edinburgh University Press, 1984), John V. Tolan’s *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (Columbia University Press, 2002) and *Faces of Muhammad: Western Perceptions of the Prophet of Islam from the Middle Ages to Today* (Princeton University Press, 2019) and Abdur Raheem Kidwai’s *Images of the Prophet Muhammad in English Literature* (Peter Lang, New York, 2018) document the unpalatable history of the Prophet’s vilification in the West. Among those influential Western writers who have distorted Sirah in varying degrees down the centuries are: Dante, Peter the Venerable, Thomas Aquinas, Raymon Llull, John Mandeville, Martin Luther, Humphrey Prideaux, Voltaire, John Lydgate, and most of the Western biographers of the Prophet. Against this regrettable backdrop one realises what

an epoch-making step towards affirming fairness and truth is the present book! For it demonstrates “how Prophet Muhammad embraced religious pluralism, envisioned a civic nation, stood for antiracism, advocated for seeking knowledge, initiated women’s rights and followed the Golden Rule.” (Considine, on the flap of the book).

His “Introduction” (pp. 17- 27), interlaced with his biographical anecdotes, is very instructive: how as a 16 year old student in a purely Christian setting of a small town, Needham in Massachusetts, US, he learnt first about Islam/Muslims through the traumatic and deplorable 9/11 tragedy. It was no doubt a perfect recipe for sowing Islamophobia into his very young heart and mind. However, God has His own ways of turning one to guidance. At 19 he was fortunate enough to join a course on Islam taught by the distinguished Muslim scholar, Akbar S. Ahmad. The opening lecture unravelled before him an entirely new, different spectacle: the pivotal place of knowledge in Islam, the concept of a loving, forgiving God of the entire humanity, not of Muslims alone, Prophet Muhammad’s sagacity, and the vast common ground between the Judaeo-Christian and Islamic religious traditions. All this struck him, changing as it did his perception about Islam/Muslims.

Although his formative years coincided with the furore flared up by Huntington’s “clash of civilizations,” the

Western media's consistent vituperation of things Islamic, US's imperialistic, arrogant aggression against several Muslim countries, the emergence of devilish misdeeds by Daesh/IS while invoking Islamic sacred symbols, and the Prophet's character assassination through cartoons, he stood his ground and pursued objectively his study of Islam.

Remarkably alive to the Islamophobia raging today, his book opens with this perceptive observation: "In the 'Western World' today much remains unknown about Islam ... some think of Islam as a political ideology bent upon world domination, and some consider it an oppressive and/or violent doctrine contrary to the freedoms and values we cherish in the 21st century." (p. 11).

Equally gratifying are the noble objectives behind his writing this book: "to build stronger bridges of understanding and peace between Christians and Muslims, to uplift our common humanity, and to defend the honour of Prophet Muhammad, who has been depicted by many Christians throughout history as the anti-thesis of Jesus. (p.13 Emphasis mine).

Divided into 6 chapters and conclusion, this study focusses on the life and legacy of the Prophet Muhammad for pressing home certain truths which have gone unnoticed, what to speak of their recognition. In Chapter

1 he identifies several incidents related to Sirah, which underscore the Prophet's unflinching commitment to tolerance and peaceful coexistence, with a pointed reference to his meeting with the Christian delegation from Najran, his pact with the Christian monks of Mount Sinai and the early Muslims' hijrah under his instructions to the Christian state of Abyssinia (pp. 29-48). Chapter 2 demonstrates how sagaciously the Prophet forged the ummah in the nascent Islamic state of Madinah, with the local Jews as equal stakeholders. Insightfully, Considine establishes the affinity between Prophet's vision and of the US Founding Fathers, and between the Islamic and American values (49-58).

Chapter 3 illustrates the Prophet's anti-racism and nonracism and his preference for inclusiveness and diversity, much ahead of his times (pp. 59-63).

Chapter 4 brings into sharper light the premium Islam/the Prophet place on seeking and disseminating knowledge and on reflecting on and harnessing the signs of Allah and Nature. This training went a long way in the Muslims' contribution to an array of disciplines in the heyday of their civilization from 9th to 13th centuries (pp. 65- 87).

Chapter 5 points to the Prophet's relationship with women and his egalitarian steps for ensuring respect, equality and fairness for them. Needless

to add, in the pre-Islamic world, especially Arabia, woman was no more than a commodity abused by men at every level. (pp. 89-95).

Chapter 6 brings out vividly some distinctive features of the Prophet's conduct: his kindness, mercy and humility. The commonalities in the teachings of Prophet Jesus and Muhammad (peace be to them) are also affirmed, with a view to familiarising Christians with the true teachings of Islam (pp. 97-112).

His "Conclusion" marks a strong plea for cordial relations between Christians and Muslims in the spirit of pluralism and peaceful coexistence (pp. 113-118).

The 5 Appendices in the work reinforce the Prophet Muhammad's striving for the cause of Inter Faith understanding and cooperation and his tolerance and catholicity of mind in treating with respect the adherents of other religious, particularly Jews and Christians. Appended to the work are the following historical documents: 1) The Constitution of Madina, 2) The Prophet's Farewell Sermon, 3) The Covenant with the Monks of Mount Sinai, 4) The Treaty of Peace and Friendship between the Bey of Tripoli of Barbary and the USA on 3 Ramadan 1211H/4 November 1796, and 5) Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together, the document signed by Pope Francis and the Imam of AlAzhar, Egypt, Ahmad Al-Tayyeb on 3

February 2019.

What initially attracted Considine most to Islam was the Prophet's exhortations for seeking knowledge. While he was an undergraduate student he realised that although Judaism, Christianity and Islam "share many similarities including belief in the oneness of God, the divine revelation of Prophets, the angels," he was puzzled as to why the Islamic faith was not considered part of the "Judeo-Christian tradition." (p. 20) Even in the face of his first-hand observation of the banning of certain elements of Shariah by several state and local governments in the US during Obama's reign, the atrocities perpetrated by Daesh in the name of Islam, the Muslim Ban in the US, and the anti-Islam rhetoric across the world he champions "the dialogue of civilizations" as the only way out for world peace and happiness. It is gratifying to note that the Pope Francis has been actively pursuing Inter Faith dialogue, as is evident from his recent engagements in Abu Dhabi in 2019.

Considine reports with much delight and as a worthy example, the Prophet Muhammad's reception of the Christians of Najran in 631. How he set the first laudable instance of building the bridge between Christians and Muslims comes out from this report. When these visiting Christians expressed their desire to perform their prayer, the Prophet told them: "You are followers of the one True God, please come, pray

inside my mosque. We are all brothers in humanity.” (p. 24. Emphasis mine). On the basis of the Prophet’s treaties with the Christians of the day, which granted them freedoms of religion and conscience in the Islamic state, Considine exclaims: “Going beyond religious tolerance, the Prophet in fact advocated for religious pluralism... As a Christian, I do not simply respect these kinds of teachings. I love them.” (p. 25).

Notwithstanding the explicit Qur’ānic exhortation and the Prophet’s noble example, non-Muslim minorities in some of the Muslim countries are regrettably not treated fairly. Moreover, Muslims being a minority community in so many countries should be all the more sensitive to this issue. While extolling the tradition of religious pluralism in the teachings of the Qur’ān and the Prophet, Considine justifiably draws attention to the reprehensible instances of the injustice meted out to the non-Muslims, especially in the Middle East, Pakistan and Bangladesh. In this context he aptly invokes several Qur’ānic passages which accord a special status to the People of the Book i.e. Jews, Christians and other monotheistic faith communities.

Equally pertinent is his reference to the enviable practice of religious freedom and pluralism in the early history of the Muslim world. This is illustrated at its sharpest by the following observation by the Israeli author and

former member of Knesset, Uri Avnery: “The Muslim Spain was a paradise for the Jews ... there has never been a Jewish Holocaust in the Muslim world.” (p.31)

Considine adjudges the Prophet’s practice of religious pluralism in the light of eminent sociologist, Diana Eck’s criteria of religious pluralism (2006) premised on these four basic elements: 1) Robust social interaction and authentic relationship with members of other faith communities, 2) Actively seeking and understanding the beliefs and practices of others, 3) Fulfilling commitments to others notwithstanding holding our deepest differences with them, and 4) Inter Faith dialogue and selfcriticism. (pp. 32-33)

Apart from citing the Prophet’s worth-emulating example of having received a Najran Christians’ delegation with warmth and respect, and the early Muslims’ first hijrah to the Christian country, Abyssinia and the spirit of goodwill and understanding among the Christians and Muslims there, Considine draws attention to the little known but highly significant 2nd century Hijri, document “resting in the library of the monastery of Saint Catherine’s at Mount Sinai in Egypt, authorized by Prophet Muhammad that guarantees protection and other human rights to the Christians of this ancient community.” (pp 38 and 127-130).

Likewise, he records with delight and admiration how like the Arab

Muslims, the Turkish Ottoman empire too, provided the Jewish and Christian minorities with legal autonomy and authority. He buttresses his stance with the comments by other Western scholars, Karn Barkey and George Gavrilis, which speak highly of the millet system in the Ottoman empire, which ensured freedom and justice to Jews and Christians in the best spirit of tolerance and religious pluralism. (pp.42-43).

Considine showers praise upon the Prophet for his unprecedented accomplishment of the civic nation state building in Madinah in an amazingly short period of time. On the authority of Ignatieff, he defines a civic nation as “a community of equal rightsbearing citizens, united in patriotic attachment to a shared set of political practices and values.” (p. 49). For him, the Constitution of Madinah epitomises the idea of a civic nation. Discerningly enough, he quotes John Andrew Morrow (2013) on the excellence of the Islamic state of Madinah carved out by the Prophet : “A unique system which had never existed before and which has never been since despite honest efforts to emulate it.” (p. 52). He traces out the influence which the Prophet’s model state exercised: “Muhammad’s ideas in terms of incorporating religious, ethnic and racial minorities is similar to the words used in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizens, a document passed in 1789 by National

Constituent Assembly of the French republic.” (p. 53).

In a similar vein, he draws attention to the common characteristics between the Prophet’s vision and of the US Founding Fathers. (pp. 54-58) As to anti-racism, in his estimation, the Prophet was the world’s first anti-racist: “As I frequently touch upon in my invited talks around the US and the word, Muhammad was much more than merely a nonracist. He was an anti-racist.” (p. 60).

Regarding the emphasis on seeking and expanding the domain of knowledge by the Islamic and Prophetic teachings, he makes this telling observation about the Muslim Spain: “Between the 8th and 15th centuries, alAndalus was one of the world’s centres of learning. Universities such as those in Cordoba, Granda [Granada] and Seville enrolled Jewish, Christian and Muslim students who learned about a range of subjects largely from Muslim teachers. Women were also encouraged to study in alAndalus.” (p. 67).

Considine grows lyrical about the Prophet’s another great achievement, according women freedom, rights and respect. For substantiating this, apart from citing several Qur’ānic passages and the Prophet’s directives, he quotes the distinguished scholar of comparative religion, Karen Armstrong: [The Qur’ān] “gave women rights of inheritance and divorce centuries before

Western women were accorded this status.” (p. 90).

Considine condemns France and other Western countries which have banned hijab, branding it as an assault on the basic human rights of women to control their own bodies and minds.” (p. 93).

Of a similar courageous import is his denunciation of “the so-called Christian West” [that has] invaded countless number of Muslim-majority countries ... and their near destruction” in the 20th and 21st centuries (pp. 97-98).

He demolishes another negative stereotype against Islam/Muslims – of Jihad which is carried out occasionally for self-defence (pp.101-102). According to him, forgiveness, love for humanity and humility are some of the distinctive features common to both Prophets Jesus and Muhammad (peace be to them).

His brilliant “Conclusion” testifies to the Prophet Muhammad’s Messengership: “I am by no means the first Christian or “non-Muslim” to recognise Muhammad as a prophet... He cared deeply for – loved – his fellow human being... The life and legacy of the Prophet remind us about the possibilities for human beings, especially Jews and Christians, to live side-by-side in peace and harmony.” (p. 117- 118). What a befitting tribute to the Prophet Muhammad whom the Qur’ān

brands as “mercy unto the world. (AlAnbiya 21: 107)!

The scholarly apparatus of the book is impressive: “Glossary” perceptively and accurately explains a range of things Islamic, particularly Jihad, dhimmi and Caliph (pp. 144-146). It is heartening to note his references to several recent Muslim writings in his “Bibliography” (pp. 147-151). Readers will benefit also from Considine’s two other major books, Muslims in America and Islam in America. In the present depressing period of Islamophobia witnessing the churning out of numerous Islam-bashing writings in the West, Considine’s book is all the more valuable for promoting Inter Faith understanding and peaceful co-existence and for recognising the genius of the Prophet Muhammad. ■

[The writer is Professor of English, with two Ph.D.s in English, one from Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh and the other from the University of Leicester, UK. He has a special interest in Literary Orientalism, English Translations of the Qur’ān, Inter-Faith Dialogue and Islam in the West. Author of 40 books, Professor Kidwai has overseen the organisation of hundreds of Faculty Development programmes as Director/Project Coordinator of the UGCHRD/Union Ministry of Education’s Centre for Academic Leadership and Educational Management (CALEM). sulaim_05@yahoo.co.in]

On Gifts

- A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

I have mentioned this episode often so I will give it briefly. My father, Janab Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen, taught me a great lesson when I was a young boy. It was just after India won Independence in 1947. Panchayat were held on Rameswaram Island and my father was elected president of the village council. He was elected not because he belonged to a particular religion or caste or because of his economic status. He was elected only on the basis of his nobility of mind and for being a good human being.

On the day my father was elected as president, a man came to our home. I was still a schoolboy and was reading aloud my lessons when I heard a knock at the door. In those days in Rameswaram, we never locked the doors. A man entered and asked me where my father was. I told him that father had gone for the evening namaz. He then said that he had brought something for my father and asked if he leave it for him. I told him he could leave the item on the cot and I continued with my studies.

When my father returned, he saw a silver plate with gifts on the cot. He asked me who had given them and I told him that someone had come by and left them for him. He opened the gifts and found expensive clothes, a few silver cups, some fruits and some sweets. He was upset and angry at the sight of the gifts. I was the youngest child and my father really loved me and I also loved him a lot. That was the first time I saw him so angry and also the first time I received a good beating from him. I was frightened and started weeping. Later, my father explained his reaction and advised me never to receive any gift without his permission. He quoted a Hadith which says, 'When the Almighty appoints a person to a position. He takes care of his provision. If a person takes anything beyond that, it is an illegal gain.'

Then he told me that accepting gifts is not a good habit. A gift is always accompanied by some purpose and therefore it is a dangerous thing. It is like touching a snake and getting its poison in return. This lesson stands out in my mind even now when I am in my eighties. The incident remains deeply embedded in my mind and has shaped my value system. Even now, when any person appears before me with a gift, my body and mind shudder.

Later in life, I studied the Manu Smriti, or the Laws of Manu regarded as a foundational work of Hindu thought, which states that by accepting gifts, the divine light in a person gets extinguished. Manu warns every individual against accepting gifts for the reason that it places the acceptor under an obligation to the giver and ultimately results in making a person commit immoral or illegal acts. ■

Distinction Of A Muslim In The World

- S. Bilal Abdul Hai Hasani Nadwi

Religion, in fact, is meant for leading an advantageous and purposeful life. Today, a variety of religions and faiths are found in the world. A section of people claims to be secular. Communism is based on secularism. Their concept of life is only eating, drinking and being merry. Communism propounded a theory against capitalism. As it couldn't perpetuate on moderation and temperance and revolted against the nature of human beings and so it did not succeed in its desired goals. Adherents of any religion which exists in the globe in any shape have their own peculiar thoughts and beliefs. They regard religion just as a concept and an abstract notion. That is why they practice it on certain occasions. No imprint of their religions appears in their lives. Only a few outward images which they regard enough. The followers of Divine faiths totally ignored the real facts. No major difference is visible between them and their religions. To them the matter of the Hereafter, reward and punishment is only a fantasy. With the result that their sole aim of life is merely achieving worldly gains. The main plank of their discussion about Allah, messenger and Hereafter is only to strengthen unity.

It is only Islam which appreciates each moment of human life and exhorts its adherents to keep engaged their every breath in remembrance of Allah.

According to Islamic view point no moment of human life is purposeless.

Now, it is the onus of mankind as how far they make their life and every moment useful and valuable. Islam makes no difference between religious issues and worldly ones. According to Islam this world and its all things are integral part of the religion. It shows right directions to everyone and apprises of real values of life so that one may lead a peaceful life here. Islam abhors negligence, carelessness and lethargy. It demands its followers to carry out the teachings of Islam in letter and spirit.

It should be noted that Muslims can not be free merely by observing outward Islamic phenomena, worship and adoration. On the contrary Islam urges them to fulfill their obligations and accord due attention to others rights' and spend their valuable time in proper way and not to become frustrated. Islam teaches that if someone came to know that he was about to die after a while nevertheless he might not be inactive. Islamic teaching is that if anyone plants a sapling and his days are numbered in this world, he shouldn't stop his work in its waiting. He should always be engaged in his business and make his every moment useful. He should also keep himself busy in pleasing Allah and shaping his Hereafter. A host of people may derive benefits from this act of him. And this act will be a perennial and enduring charity for him. The Holy Prophet says, "The best of you is who proves himself more profitable to others." The

most striking aspect of a Muslim is that he always strives to spend every second with sagacity and wisdom and doesn't indulge in silly talks, frivolity and anti-social activities. The Holy Prophet says, "These are the virtues of Islam that its followers don't go near obscenity and mischievousness".

Despite these real teachings of Islam unemployment and joblessness appear in bulk in Muslim community. The religion which always exhorts its adherents to become aim oriented, they seem oblivious in achieving purposeful and fruitful life. Today, Muslims are far lagged behind on every front. Especially, the youth upon whom Almighty Allah bestowed extraordinary powers and calibers, they

also show criminal negligence in every spheres of life. In a Hadith it is warned that every Muslim should be covetous of profit. And he should always think of the profits. Obviously, the genuine profits are the profits of the Hereafter. This world was definitely created for the cause of the Hereafter.

Ironically, the nations which have no such Divine messages and have no sweetness of faith and belief, they are rapidly progressing in every domains of life by targeting this mundane world as their main aim. But we despite having everything, have nothing. Had we felt our power and strength, we presented the world which it needed the most. ■

(English Rendering: O.R. Nadwi)

**DECLARATION OF OWNERSHIP AND
OTHER DETAILS FORM 4 RULE 8**

Name of Paper	:	The Fragrance of East
Place of Publication	:	Lucknow
Periodicity of Publication	:	Monthly
Chief Editor	:	Shariq Alavi
Nationality	:	Indian
Address	:	C - 8 Vigyanpuri, Mahanagar Lucknow. (U.P.)
Printer & Publisher	:	Shahid Husain
Nationality	:	Indian
Address	:	Nadwa College, Staff Quarter Tagore Marg, Lucknow. (U.P.)
Ownership	:	Majlis Sahafat Wa-Nashriyat Lucknow. (U.P.)

I Shahid Husain Printer/Publisher, declare that the above information is correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Islam And Science

- Mohammad Aslam Siddiqui*

As earlier said that the Holy Qur'an is not a book of science, but it is consistent with science. In contemporary Arab society and the academic world, Science has been frequently, rather unexceptionally, translated as ilm which happens to be a very significant term from the point of view of philosophical and intellectual dimensions of the Qur'an. Seen in the social context of modern science, its equivalence to ilm may not be so intellectually and spiritually satisfying and convincing, however one wonders to note that the Qur'an on several occasions refers ilm as a product of seeing, hearing and thinking-the sources which play domineering role in creating scientific knowledge. Among many others the following verse appears corroborating this view. "And pursue not that of which thou hast no knowledge (ilm), for every act of hearing or a seeing or of (feeling in) the heart will be enquired into." (S.XVII:A.36)

Unless an information is supported by hearing or seeing, and the heart or the mind signals satisfaction on the conclusions drawn, man has been advised not to pursue it for carving out his/her thoughts and the modes of

action. In other words an information or a point of view acquires the status of ilm only when it is drawn with the help of these three faculties. In other words every such information which these faculties authenticate constitutes ilm of the Qur'an. Quite significantly this assertion brings modern science quite close to ilm in the realm of method and source of knowledge. It should, however, be noted that through the Qur'an equates ilm with science but it is not exclusive and quite often knowledge obtained through sources other than sense perception has been assigned this status. Thus ilm in the Qur'an is a comprehensive term which encompasses knowledge obtained through sensory organs, empirical observations and also through the sources beyond man's senses. Consequently it can safely be said that the Qur'anic view of science and its common features is significantly at variance with its present dominant form. (The Qur'an and Future of Science, pp, 23-24)

The origin of the universe:

It should be noted that Almighty Allah has created everything from water. As He said, "We made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe? (S.21,A.30) "To Him belongs the domain of the heavens and the earth: It

* Director of Finance, Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow and Former Principal Amiruddaula Islamia Degree College, Lucknow.

is He Who gives life and death; and He has power over everything. "He is the First and the Last, the Evident and the Hidden: And He has full knowledge of all things." It is He Who created the heavens and the earth in six days then He established Himself on the throne. He knows what enters within the earth and what comes forth out of it, what comes down from heaven and what mounts up to it. And He is with you wheresoever ye may be. And Allah sees well all that ye do. To Him belongs the domain of heavens and the earth: and all affairs go back to Allah." (S.57, A.2-5)

He further stated, "And We set on the earth mountains standing firm, lest it should shake with them, and We have made therein broad highways (between mountains) for them to pass through: that they may find their way. And We have the heavens as a canopy well guarded: yet do they turn away from the signs which these things point to. It is He Who created the night and day and the sun and the moon: all (the celestial bodies) swim along, each in its rounded course" (S.21, A.31-33)

The Big Bang Theory. The theory of the origin of the universe is one of the most noteworthy scientific things mentioned in the Qur'an.

The science of modern cosmology, observational and theoretical, clearly indicates that, at one

point in time, the whole universe was nothing but a cloud of 'smoke' (i.e. an opaque highly dense and hot gaseous composition). This is one of the undisputed principles of standard modern cosmology. Scientists now can observe new stars forming out of the remnants of that 'smoke'. The illuminating stars we see at night were, just as was the whole universe, in that 'smoke' material. God has said in the Quran: "Then He turned to the heaven when it was smoke" (Quran, 41:11)

Because the earth and the heavens (the sun, the moon, stars, planets, galaxies, etc.) have been formed from this same 'smoke' we conclude that the earth and the heavens were one connected entity. Then out of this homogeneous 'smoke', they formed and separated from each other. (A Brief Illustrated Guide To Understanding Islam, p,14)

The Qur'an explained the formation of the universe in the following statement: "Are they who are bent on denying the earth not aware that the heavens and the earth were (once) one single entity which We then parted asunder?" (S.21, A.30)

This statement indicates the following:

1. The material which formed the universe was a single entity.
2. The entire universe was joined as one piece.

3. The separation occurred systematically to produce the physical laws and ordering of matter. Not only is there order to our solar system and to the stars within our galaxy. But the galaxies are part of a higher ordering. Instead of being randomly scattered across the universe, galaxies are grouped in clusters. Within the cluster the galaxies orbit about their common center of mass.

According to contemporary scientific theory the Big Bang did occur from a single cataclysmic event at single moment of time and at extraordinarily high temperature. At the moment of the Big Bang the entire universe was condensed to a single piece at a single point from which the "parting" occurred. However, in modern scientific thought the physical laws were not "produced" by the Big Bang. Most scientists feel that the physical laws have been deduced from the behavior of matter, and that except for the mysteries of the first fraction of a second of the event, the physical world fits these laws. For that first moment, however, theory is silent.

"And it is We Who have built the universe with Our creative power, and Verily, it is We Who are steadily expanding it" (S.51, A.47) Among the interpreters of the Qur'an, Ibn Qayd said, "This means that God is still expanding it."

"And the heavens have He (God) raised high, and has set up the balance" S.55, A.7)

According to present scientific theory, all the elements were created after that first hundredth of a second of the Big Bang, as the blast cooled down. Perhaps three minutes later, the atomic nuclei of hydrogen, helium and the other light elements formed. Still later, perhaps after one hundred thousand years, it became cool enough for the light element nuclei to assemble into atoms. Then began the condensation into galaxies and the stars within them. And the stars, heated by gravitational collapse, ignited and became thermonuclear furnaces within which the heavier elements were cooked up by a process known as "nucleosynthesis".

Some of the initial stars were massive, energy-profligate stars, that soon ended their lives as brilliant supernovas as they hurled portions of their total mass into space as the nuclear ash from which later came other stars and planets. Surrounding large numbers of stars, astronomers believe, flattened nebulae formed. Within the nebulae planets, comets, meteors and interplanetary dust particles took shape. After about a billion years the universe began to look somewhat as it does now perhaps 15 billion years after the Big Bang. (Scientific Signs In The Holy Book, pp, 21-22) ■

(To be continued)

Development Of Chemistry And Medicine In The Medieval Islamic World

- M.I.H. Farooqi

(Which led to the advancement of Modern Medicine)

Western Scientists consider: Jabir Bin Hayyan (Geber) as the Father of chemistry and Zakaria Razi (Rhazes) as the Father of Medicine

- Jabir ibn Hayyan (Geber), the “father of chemistry”, invented the alembic still and isolated many chemicals, including distilled Ethanol, Lead carbonate Acetic acid from vinegar, Citric acid from lemons and other unripe fruits. Nitric acid, sulfuric acid, and hydrochloric acid Tartaric acid from wine-making residues. Arsenic, Antimony: salts of mercury, of antimony and bismuth. Chemically analyzed innumerable substances, composed lapidaries, distinguished alkalis and acids, and investigated their affinities.
- Muslims Developed several different variations of distillation (such as dry distillation, destructive distillation and steam distillation) and introduced new distillation apparatus (such as the alembic, still, and retort), and invented a variety of new chemical processes and over 9,000 chemical substances and manufactured hundreds of drugs.
- Muslim chemists discovered 2,000 medicinal substances.
- Distillation of sea-water for drinking was done for the first time.
- Quartz glass and Silica glass from stone (including quartz) and sand were manufactured in large scale.
- Kerosene was invented by Muhammad ibn Zakariya Razi.
- Oil field, petroleum industry, naphtha, and tar were invented by Muslims. Streets of Baghdad were paved with tar, derived from petroleum through destructive distillation.
- In the 9th century, oil fields were first exploited in the area around modern Baku, Azerbaijan, to produce naphtha.
- Muslim chemists were the first to produce petrol from crude oil.
- The first kerosene lamp was invented by Muhammad ibn Zakanya Razi
- Muslims made several improvements to papermaking the use of hydropower rather than manual labour to produce paper, and they built the first paper mills in Baghdad Iraq as early as 794. Papermaking was transformed from an art into a major industry as a result.
- The first sugar refineries were built by Muslim engineers.
- A number of hygienic cosmetics were invented by Muslim chemists, cosmetologists and physicians.
- Abul Qasim described methods for strengthening the gums and introduced the method of tooth bleaching using tooth whiteners.
- The soap now used in modern times is made of (such as olive oil) and aromatics (such as thyme oil). The present formula of soap making (treating

vegetable oils with sodium hydroxide) was invented by Muslim chemists.

- Bimaristan medical schools were founded in the medieval Islamic world, where medical degrees and diplomas were issued to students who were qualified to be a practicing Doctor of Medicine. Bimaristans were the first free public hospitals, and replaced the healing temples and sleep temples found in ancient times.
 - The first drugstores and pharmacies were opened by Muslim pharmacists in Baghdad while the first apothecary shops were also founded by Muslim practitioners at the time.
 - The first psychiatric hospitals were built in the medieval Islamic world.
 - The discovery of the contagious nature of infectious diseases and the use of quarantine to limit the spread of contagious diseases was introduced by Avicenna in The Canon of Medicine.
 - Muslims were the first to write books on geriatric medicine.
 - Muslim physicians pioneered a number of drugs and medications for use in medicine, including: Alcohol as an antiseptic. The application of pure alcohol to wounds as an antiseptic agent, and the use of alcohol as a solvent and antiseptic, was introduced by Muslim physicians and surgeons in the 10th century.
 - Avicenna attempted the earliest known treatments for cancer. One method he discovered was the herbal drug Hindiba (Persian, Urdu-Shikoria, Kasni; *Cichorium intybus*) which could also treat other tumors and neoplastic disorders.
- Avicenna wrote a separate supplement treatise dedicated to the pharmacotherapy of Hindiba, he then giving details on the drug's properties and uses, and he then gives instructions on its preparation as and medication.
- Muhammad ibn Zakariya Razi (Rhazes), introduced the use of chemical substances such as vitriol, copper, mercuric and arsenic salts, sal ammoniac, gold scoria, chalk, clay, coral, pearl, tar, bitumen and alcohol for medical purposes.
 - The origins of clinical pharmacology date back to Avicenna's The Canon of Medicine in 1025.
 - The use of syrups for treating coughs originates from medieval Arabic physicians.
 - Dioscorides listed about 500 plants in the 1st century. Muslim botanists, chemists and pharmacists discovered many more during the Middle Ages. For example, Al-Dinawari described more than 637 plant drugs in the 9th century, and Ibn al-Baitar described at least 1,400 different plants, foods and drugs, 300 of which were his own original discoveries, in total, at least 2,000 medicinal substances were discovered by Muslim botanists, chemists and pharmacists.
 - Abul Qasim, invented medications for the treatment of epilepsy and seizure.
 - Parasites were first discovered by Ibn Zuhri (Avenzoar), when he discovered the cause of scabies. He recommended specific substances to destroy microbes, and the application of sulfur topically specifically to kill the scabies mite.

- The first pharmacopoeia books were written by Muslim physicians. These included Avicenna's The Canon of Medicine and other pharmacopoeia books by Abu-Rayhan Biruni in the early 11th century, [153] Ibn Zuhr (Avenzoar) in the 12th and Ibn al-Baitar in the 14th century.
- Avicenna's The Canon of Medicine introduced the medicinal use of *Taxus baccata* L. He named this herbal drug "Zarnab" and used it as a cardiac remedy. This was the first known use of a calcium channel blocker drug, which were not used in the Western world until the 1960s.
- For the relief and treatment of common colds, Abulcasis invented Muthallaathat, which was prepared from camphor, musk and honey, similar to the modern Vicks Vapour Rub.
- A wide variety of surgical instruments and techniques were invented in the Muslim world, as well as the refinement of earlier instruments and techniques. In particular, over 200 surgical instruments were listed by Abu al-Qasim al-Zahrawi (Abulcasis) in the Al-Tasrif (1000), many of which were never used before by any previous surgeons. Hamidan, for example, listed at least twenty six innovative surgical instruments that Abulcasis introduced.
- Adhesive bandage and plaster: Introduced by Abulcasis.
- Bone saw: Invented by Abulcasis.
- Another method for treating cancer first described by Avicenna's The Canon of Medicine was a surgical treatment. He stated that the excision should be radical and that all diseased tissue should be removed, which included the use of amputation or the removal of veins running in the direction of the tumor. He also recommended the use of cauterization for the area being treated if necessary.
- Cataract extraction by hypodermic needle, injection syringe, and suction was carried out for the first time.
- Muslim ophthalmologist Ammar ibn Ali of Mosul was the first to successfully extract cataracts. He invented a hollow metallic syringe hypodermic needle, which he applied through the sclerotic and successfully extracted the cataracts through suction.
- The earliest known use of cotton (derived from the Arabic word qutn) as a dressing for controlling hemorrhage, was described by Abulcasis.
- Curette, retractor, sound, surgical spoon, surgical hook, and surgical rod: Invented by Abulcasis in his Al-Tasrif
- Abulcasis, in his Al-Tasrif (1000), first described the surgical procedure of extracting a dead fetus using forceps.
- Surgeries under inhalant anesthesia with the use of narcotic soaked sponges which were placed over the face, were introduced by the Muslim anesthesiologists, Abu al-Qasim (Abulcasis) and Ibn Zuhr, in Islamic Spain.
- The art of using the anesthetic sponge is a pure Muslim technique, which was not known before. The sponge used to be dipped and left in a mixture prepared from cannabis, opium and hyoscyamus. ■

Hijab Only Covers Heads, Not Minds

- Rajeev Mullick

Nashat Hayatullah (29), a city woman who pursued Masters in social work at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai has worn hijab throughout her educational or working years. According to her, hijab is not only a piece of cloth for giving an identity but also something which makes one feel at ease while going out.

There are hundreds of Muslims girl and women who grew up sporting hijab since their childhood days. Needless to state, the recent Karnataka hijab controversy has left them livid because they see a deliberate attempt to tinker the with country's social fabric for polarization in the five poll-bound states.

"In a progressive society like ours, where we are talking about women conquering various fields, it is surprising that the basic rights of individuals like clothing are questioned. Asking a person to remove hijab is an infringement upon the right of an individual. India is a very diverse country with numerous cultures and practices, therefore rather than berate someone's culture we should support each other," said Nashat who also went to Lucknow's Loreto Convent for her schooling and Isabella Thoburn College for graduation.

Sana Mishkaat, a teacher, said she had been wearing hijab since she was in class 9. The teacher as well as the students respected that.

"Once in BEd examination, the external examiner told me to remove my hijab. The head of the department told the examiner that he had been seeing me wearing hijab from day one and he allowed it," she

recalled.

She said, "Hijab is our right. It is for us to choose what to wear. Leaving aside the religious prospective, it has many benefits as well. It follows the dress code for corona protection plus protection from pollution. The ghoonghat (veil) and hijab is imbibed in the Indian cultural ethos." Muslim women said wearing a hijab or dupatta was a right guaranteed by the Constitution of India and the practice had been culturally and traditionally followed in the country for centuries.

Anam Haseeb, 27 who organized World Hijab Day in Lucknow for three years on February 1, said, "We (a team of young people from different religions) introduced Lucknow to World Hijab Day in 2018. Since then, thrice (till 2020), we had 75% of people from other cultures and religions supporting and celebrating the day because they were well informed about hijab as a choice and not an oppression."

"With these protests against hijab, we can only see India stepping 30 years back from now, to the time our forefathers fought to bring an end to it. We have lost a lot. In school and college we always lived in harmony with friends and mates. Never thought we will see such an era of attitude and illiteracy. We need healthy minds and not filthy protest," she said.

"I believe that suddenly raising a hue and cry about it is unnecessary. Indians are a very supporting secular community," Begum Shehnaz Sidrat, president-Bazm-e-Khwateen.

(Hindustan Times, 11-02-2022)

Minorities Are In Majority In Jails, But Far Behind In Every Sphere

- Mohammad Naushad Khan

Most of the findings, surveys and reports on minorities reflect very gloomy pictures and narrate a story of their marginalisation and discrimination. Even after the passage of seven decades of Independence, they are vulnerable and subjected to atrocities. They have been made an object of hate for one reason or another. Muslims are lagging behind others in every sphere but they are in the majority in jails.

Are they not law-abiding citizens? Or, have they become prey to the prejudiced culture prevailing in our system since ages? Gone are the days when minorities considered an important element for nation building but today they have been reduced to merely second class citizens who are hated the most and perceived as troublemakers and impediment to growth and development. They are presented as a symbol of hate and despair, violators and law-breaking citizens.

When will the perception towards minorities really change? When will rational thinking overshadow hatemongering derived out of narrow-mindedness? Will Indians ever be considered a single unit? Will they ever be treated equally as per the law of the land by the government?

According to Raja Bagga, senior researcher at Police Reform Programme, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative,

“Over-representation of minorities in Indian prisons is not new – it is a perennial and systemic problem. While the NCRB’s annual prison data quantifies this, the absence of religion and caste-segregated data – on the arrests made, chargesheets filed and cases closed, bails granted and denied, acquittals and convictions ordered – makes it difficult to identify what stages of the criminal justice system act as the greatest impediment for the liberty of minority communities.”

As per 2013 Census, there were 4.2 lakh people in Indian prisons and about 20 per cent of them were Muslims while as per the Census 2001 percentage the share of Muslims in India’s population was 13 per cent. According to 2011 Census, Dalits constitute 22 per cent of all prisoners although they were 17 per cent of India’s total population. According to the data released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) on Prison Statistics, India for the year 2013 percentage of inmates from three minority communities in India – Dalits, Muslims and the Adivasis – was more than half the prison population in the country. Muslims, Dalits and tribals made up 53 per cent of all prisoners in India.

In 2011, as per report published by Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), it was found that more than 25 per cent Muslim prisoners in Maharashtra do not have lawyers to represent their cases.

After four years, the government has taken notice of the findings and has assured to address the issue. During the process of study it was found that there were 3,086 Muslim prisoners in jails in Maharashtra of which 69.7 per cent were under-trials and 30.2 per cent were found guilty.

“At least 25.4 per cent of the respondents did not have a lawyer to represent them in their case. Among 148 respondents, 70.2 per cent had financial support from their families. This indicates that most respondents are receiving support from their families as far as legal fees are concerned. This reinforces the finding that most respondents are not connected to criminal gangs; otherwise they would most likely have had lawyers financed by these gangs,” the survey said.

“It is a no-brainer that the underprivileged, downtrodden, and marginalised end up in jail more often than their brothers from the majority and better-off communities. Often enough in absolute numbers, but always in comparison to their presence in the country’s population. It is true in the US for Blacks and Hispanics, and for men from the Caribbean in the United Kingdom. In independent India, historically, it is the Dalits, Adivasis and Muslims.”

“The first is a victim of the ancient caste system which seemingly is more firmly entrenched and weaponised now than it may have been at the time of whoever ensconced it into the social fabric. The second are victims of a rapacious development thrust that robs

them of their forests, their water and their mineral wealth at the behest of crony capitalists irrespective of the political colour of the regime,” said John Dayal, a noted social and human rights activist.

“The Muslim, specially the young male, is the victim of a conspiracy between the politician and his communal ideology, the police and the criminal justice system. Nothing else will explain why more Muslims are in jail under laws invoked by the government at the centre, and in states which have a Hindu majority. The data released, late as always, by the National Crime Records Bureau shows this absolutely,” said Dayal.

“Apart from the bigotry and the xenophobia which first marks the complaint by government or neighbours, the investigations itself compounds this direct or inadvertent situation. Scientific forensic investigation of crimes – from small time thefts to the sort of conspiracy spoken about in the Koregaon case – depend on plants, fabrication of ‘evidence’ and the use of third degree methods. The ‘human error’, therefore, is overwhelming. And downstream, lower courts acting on such evidence in the charge-sheets and with little or no objection from the poor defence lawyers have little option, even with the best of hearts and intentions, than to consign the undertrial to a term in prison. All too often, the man has been in jail longer than the sentence prescribed for the offence for which he was arrested, but that is a different argument,” he said.

“The bigotry in the criminal justice

system cannot be rooted out without first outlawing from society, much like the lasting impress of caste vitiates every facet of life in the nation, and everywhere the NRI goes. At the centre, in two general elections, and in some states, for four or so assembly polls, the people have been led to vote on an argument of the majority Hindu being in danger, and that Muslims, or Christians, are foreign agents sabotaging Mother India. The RSS chief, and ministers who mouth 'Goli Maro Salon Ko', or making India 'Father and Chadar Free', dare sound their dog whistles in public, with an admiring local media acting as a force multiplier," said Dayal.

Christophe Jaffrelot, French political scientist and Indologist specialising in South Asia, particularly India and Pakistan, and some others have analysed, in the Manmohan Singh's second UPA government, Muslims represented 21 to 22.5 per cent of the "undertrials", and 19 to 21 per cent under Narendra Modi's NDA II first term from 2014 to 2019. Law and order being a state subject, Muslims have been over-represented in jail in almost all the Hindu-majority states, Jefferlot has noted.

In Assam, Muslims, according to the 2011 census, are 34 per cent of the population but represent 43 to 47.5 per cent of the "undertrials"; in Gujarat, at 10 per cent of the population they have been about 25 to 27 per cent of the "undertrials". In Karnataka, which is now enacting a law against conversions, Muslims are 13 per cent of the population but 19 to 22 per cent of the "undertrials" since 2018.

Kerala has Muslim political parties in power irrespective of whether the Marxist-led or the Congress-led alliances are in government. They are 26.5 per cent of the population and 28 to 30 per cent of the "undertrials".

Contrast this with Madhya Pradesh, where Muslims are 6.5 per cent in the population, but 12 to 15 per cent of the "undertrials". In Maharashtra, where Muslims are 11.5 per cent of the population, their percentage among the "undertrials" peaked at 36.5 per cent in 2012, coming down to 30 per cent, in 2015).

In Uttar Pradesh, Muslims are 19 per cent of the population, and 26 to 29 per cent of the "undertrials" since 2012. This figure will surely go up with recent drives under anti-conversion laws featuring love jihad and the Covid restrictions. It will take a year or two for the NCRB to document this.

Bihar is the only major state where Muslims have been under-represented among the "undertrials". They are 17 per cent in the population and 15 per cent in jail.

For the record, in Rajasthan, Muslims at 9 per cent in the population represent 18 to 23 per cent of the "undertrials", in Tamil Nadu, Muslims are 6 per cent in the population, and 11 per cent of the undertrials. West Bengal has among the highest component of Muslims in the population at 27 per cent, and more than 36 per cent of the "undertrials" since 2017. ■ *(Courtesy: Radiance)*

India's Ties With The Central Asian States

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

The recent virtual summit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the Presidents of the five Central Asian countries-Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan held on January 27, 2022 assumes tremendous significance especially in the light of the developments in Afghanistan. The reason of the said virtual meeting was that the heads of five Central Asian states were invited as chief guests at the Republic Day parade but they couldn't physically attend the event due to Covid travel restrictions. Consequently, Prime Minister Modi conducted a virtual meeting with them on January 27.

India's ties with the Central Asian countries had been since time immemorial. It can also be traced back to the ancient Silk Route.

The Prime Minister highlighted the summit's three main objectives-to make it clear that mutual cooperation between India and Central Asia is essential for regional security and prosperity, to create an effective structure for cooperation, and to create an ambitious roadmap for the future collaboration. Reportedly, during the meeting all the leaders agreed on creating a joint working group on Afghanistan and on putting in place an institutionalized framework for collaboration and regular

interactions, including the holding of the summit every two years. There was also talk of jointly working on connectivity initiatives centered around India's presence at Iran's Chabahar port and creating a road map that builds on the past 30 years of ties. Mr Modi made it clear that Central Asia is key to India's vision of an "integrated and stable extended neighborhood" and the decision to hold regular meetings of top security officials reflected the strong focus on security issues for all the countries. These plans for the future are a welcome development, but now India will have to walk the talk. Trade between India and the Central Asian States was worth \$3 billion in 2020, with Kazakhstan accounting for more than 80% of it. In contrast, China's trade with the region was worth almost 10 times as much, and Beijing has stepped up supplies of military equipment to the Central Asian states. It will not be enough for the six countries to talk of long-standing ties between places such as Samarkand and Agra and connectivity initiatives. India must do more to wean the Central Asian states off China's largesse, and that clearly comes at a cost. There are also differences in the approach towards Afghanistan, with some Central Asian states showing a greater willingness to work with the Taliban set-up. However, the building blocks are

now in place and India has the wherewithal to take ties to a qualitatively higher level while working for greater regional stability.

Sanjaya Baru, former Media Adviser to ex-Prime Minister Manmohan Singh says, "Historian Scott Levi has documented in his study of the old 'Silk Route'-linking South and Central Asia-the mutually beneficial relations between 'Hindu traders'and 'Muslim kings'. Levi's Caravans: Indian Merchants on the Silk Road, documents how Central Asia's Islamic rulers offered protection to Hindu traders, mainly from the Punjab, who financed and managed much of the trade between Delhi and St Petersburg, Russia, that travelled through Central Asia.

If commodities, spices, sugar and a range of goods went from the Indian subcontinental through Central Asia to North European markets, horses were bought in exchange and brought to India. For over 300 years, from early 13th century to mid-16th, this trans-Asian land- based trade was as bountiful as the maritime trade through the Indian Ocean. Since much of this trade was managed and financed by Hindus, various Islamic kingdoms along the route allowed homes and temples to be built for Hindus within gated communities. Maintaining communal harmony and ensuring security for all, irrespective of race or religion, was regarded as key to sustaining this

lucrative trade across this vast region.

At a recent meeting with Central Asian foreign ministers, India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar proposed '4 Cs' that would define India's new engagement with the region: commerce, connectivity, capacity enhancement and contacts. The fourth C would of course be a prerequisite and corollary for the other three Cs. The first three Cs were precisely the elements that defined the old relationship. The old 'Silk Route' was about commerce, connectivity and capacity enhancement in which Central Asian rulers played a productive role, as Levi "study records." (The Times of India, 26-01-2022)

Now, let me give brief account of the five Central Asian states.

Kazakhstan, its capital is Astana, Government: Republic, Area: 2,724,900, sq. km., language: Kazak and Russian, Religion: Islam 47%, Russian orthodox 44%, Protestant 2%, other 7%, Currency: Tenge.

Geography: The Republic of Kazakhstan is bounded by the Caspian sea and Russia (W), Russia(N), China (E), and Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan (S). It has a fairly dry climate. Winters are cold but spring comes earlier in the south than in the north.

In 1924 the Soveits of the Turkestan, Bokhara and Khiva Republics decided to distribute the

territories on a nationality basis. The districts of Turkestan inhabited by Kazakhs were united under the banner of Kazakhstan and became a constituent Autonomous Soviet Republic in 1936. However, on 16 December, 1991 Kazakhstan was declared independent and joined by referendum in August 1995.

Kyrgyzstan, its capital is Bishkek, Government: Constitutional Republic: Area: 199, 951sq. km. Language: Kyrgyz, Religion: Islam 75%, Russian Orthodox 20%, other 5%, Currency: Som.

Geography: The Republic of Kyrgyzstan is bordered by China (E), Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan (W), Kazakhstan (N) and Tajikistan (S).

Kyrgyzstan became a Soviet Socialist Republic of the USSR in 1936 and it became a member of CIS in Dec. 1991. On May, 1993 a new constitution was adopted. In an October, 2007 referendum, voters once again approved a new constitution and election laws proposed by President Bakiyev, said the changes increased the power of Parliament and created a balance of power.

The oppositions, however, claimed they further strengthened the presidency. The U.S. and Kyrgyzstan reached an agreement in June 2009 that permits American troops to continue using the Manas air base to support

military operations in Afghanistan. The deal was finalized after the U.S. agreed to pay \$60 million each year in rent, more than triple the current fee. Incumbent Kurmanbek Bakiyev won 76.1% of the vote in July 2009 presidential elections.

Tajikistan, its capital is Dushanbe, Government: Republic, Area: 143, 100 sq. km., Language: Tajik, Religion: Sunni 85%, Shia 5%, other 10%. Currency: Tajik Ruble.

Geography: The Republic of Tajikistan is bounded by Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan (N and W), China (E), and Afghanistan (S).

In December, 1999, Tajikistan became a member of the CIS. A state of emergency was imposed to quell the civil war in Jan, 1993. And finally the seven year bloody civil war came to an end in June 1997 when the opposition leaders and the government signed the peace treaty. In November, 1994 a new constitution was approved by enhancing power of the president.

Turkmenistan, its capital is Ashgabat, Government:

One-party Republic, Area: 488, 100 sq. km., Language: Turkmen, Russian, Uzbek, Religion: Islam 89%, Eastern Orthodox 9%, Unknown 2%, Currency: Manat.

Geography: The Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic borders Afghanistan and Iran (S), the Uzbek and Kazakhstan

Republics (E,NE) and the Caspian Sea (W). The Karakum desert occupies 90% of the Republic.

The Mongols of Ghenghis Khan conquered the land in the 13th century and dominated the area for the next two centuries until they were deposed in the late 15th century by invading Uzbeks. Under Russian rule Turkmenistan became a part of the USSR from 1881-1920 and constituent republic in 1925. It adopted independent in October, 1991. In April 2008, Turkmenistan reverted to its old calendar with Turkic and Russian names when President Berdymukhamadov abolished the names of days and months introduced by the previous president.

On September 26,2008, after two decades of isolation under autocratic leader Saparmurat Niyazov, Turkmenistan adopted a new constitution that abolishes the existing People's Council and calls for a new Parliament (the Mejlis, or Assembly) almost double in size, prompting multi-party politics and a market economy. Parliamentary elections were held in December, 2008, resulting in the representation of the Mejlis being increased from 65 to 125.

Uzbekistan, its capital is Tashkent, Government: Republic under authoritarian presidential rule, Area: 447,400 sq. km., Language: Uzbek, Russian, Religion: Islam 88%.

others 12%, Currency: Uzbekistani sum.

Geography: The Republic of Uzbekistan is bounded by Kazakhstan (N), Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (E), Afghanistan (S), and Turkmenistan (W).

The Mongols under Ghengis Khan took over the region from the Seljuk Turks in the 13th century, and it later became part of Tamerlane the Great's empire and that of his successors until the 16th century. Their empire broke up into separate Uzbek principalities, the Khanates of Khiva, Bokhara and Kokand. These city-states were conquered by the Russian force. On 27 October, 1924 the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic was formed and in 1963, 40,000 sq. km. area was transferred from Kazakhstan. In August, 1991 the Supreme Soviet declared independence as the Republic of Uzbekistan. In December, 1991, it became a member of the CIS and changed the spelling to 'Uzbekiston'. A new constitution was adopted in December, 1992. (Chronicle Year Book, 2011)

In short, the recent summit will provide impetus to exploring various dimensions of new areas for promoting trade investments and finding new ways of different domains which will definitely strengthen ties between India and five Central Asian states including Afghanistan. ■

Around the World

Report: 'Queen Camilla' to Wear Crown With Kohinoor

London: Prince Charles' Wife Camilla will wear the Queen Mother's 1937 crown containing the coveted Kohinoor diamond when he is made King of the UK and she is crowned Queen Consort, Daily Mail newspaper in Britain has revealed. In a statement on Saturday night, on the eve of the 70th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the throne, the 95-year-old announced that it was her "sincere wish", that when in the fullness of time Charles becomes king, that the Duchess of Cornwall will be known as queen consort "as she continues her own loyal service". But Buckingham Palace refused to confirm to TOI that Camilla will wear this crown, saying: "The detailed planning for a coronation begins at the point of accession. So there are no plans of this nature at this stage."

The crown, last seen in public when laid on the Queen Mother's coffin in 2002, was made in 1937 for Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, consort of King George VI, for her coronation as queen consort. It is part of the Crown Jewels stored in the Tower of London. The diamond had passed between various factions in Asia before allegedly being ceded to Queen Victoria as a spoil of war following the British annexation of Punjab in 1849.

N Korea Stealing Millions in Cyber Attacks: UN Report

North Korea is continuing to steal hundreds of millions of dollars from financial institutions and crypto-currency firms and exchanges, illicit money that is an important source of funding for its nuclear and missile programmes, UN experts said in a report quoting cyber specialists. The panel, in a report to the UNSC, said that as per an unnamed government, North

Korean "cyber-actors stole more than \$50 million between 2020 and mid-2021 from at least three crypto-currency exchanges in North America, Europe and Asia, probably reflecting a shift to diversify its cybercrime operations".

ISRO Successfully Launches PSLV-C52

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launched its EOS-04 (earth observation satellite) with two smaller co-passenger satellites on board the PSLV-C52 (polar satellite launch vehicle) from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh, the space agency said. This was ISRO's first launch mission of 2022, Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted, "Congratulations to our space scientists on the successful launch of PSLV-C52 mission. EOS-04 satellite will provide high resolution images under all weather conditions for agriculture, forestry and plantations, soil moisture and hydrology as well as flood mapping." The launch comes six months after India's geosynchronous satellite launch vehicle (GSLV) failed to put the EOS-03 into orbit because of a "technical anomaly."

EU Watchdog Calls For Ban on Pegasus

The European Union's data protection watchdog called for a ban on the controversial spyware tool Pegasus, developed by Israeli-based NSO Group. The EDPS said use of Pegasus might lead to an "unprecedented level of intrusiveness, able to interfere with the most intimate aspects of our daily lives." Israel has come under global pressure over allegations that Pegasus has been abused by some foreign client governments to spy on activists, journalists and politicians. "A ban I would be the most effective option to protect our fundamental rights and freedom," the EDPS said. ■

OUR REPRESENTATIVES ABROAD

Britain	:	Mr. Akram Nadwi O.C.I.S.St. Cross College Oxford Ox 1 3 TU (UK)
Dubai	:	Mohammad Khalid Kanpuri P.O. Box No. 12772 Dubai U.A.E.
Pakistan	:	Mr. Ataullah Sector A-50, Near SAU Qrs. Karachi 31 (Pakistan)
Qatar	:	Dr. Aftab Alam Nadwi P.O. Box No. 1513 Doha, Qatar
Saudi Arabia	:	Mr. Zia Abdullah Nadwi Director Al Waha International School P.B.No. 12491 Jeddah, Pin-21473 (K.S.A.)
South Africa	:	Mr. M. Yahaya Sallo Nadwi P.O. Box No. 388 Vereninging, (South Africa)
U.S.A.	:	Dr. A. M. Siddiqui 98-Conklin Ave. Woodmere, New York 11598