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THE FRAGRANCE OF EAST

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Bouquet of Humanity

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

The Islamic concept of God as the Creator, Nourisher and Sustainer of all people and nations and the universal scope of the ministry of Prophet Muhammad had demolished all barriers of blood, colour and geography between man and man and welded mankind into one family. In Islam all men formed, as it were, a single bouquet of humanity. They were the members of the same family, being the children of the same father, Adam. An Arab had no superiority over a non-Arab and he that was not an Arab had no superiority over an Arab. The most honoured one was he who was the most righteous.

The Prophet emphatically said, "O people, Verily God has removed from you the blemish of ignorance and the pride of birth. There are but two classes of men: those who are wicked and sinful and dishonourable in His eyes." ●

(Islam and the World, p. 63)

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Wisdom of Qur'an

Veriely, squanderers are brothers of the Satans; and Satan is ever ungrateful to his Lord." (Surah al-Isra -27)

Commentary:

That is, to spend on wrong causes, or excessively on right causes when there is no need is to be ungrateful to the Lord (Thanwi). ●

"And even if you have to turn away from them, seeking your Lord's mercy which you expect (to come by), then say to them gentle words." (-Al-Isra-28)

Commentary:

Such as, to say, "I am hoping for something to come my way. When that happens maybe I will be able to help you" (Ibn Jarir).

A commentator of the Holy Qur'an elaborates on the spirit behind the injunction to spend: "The contents of (verses 26 and 27) above require that man should not consider his wealth to be exclusively meant for himself. Instead, after moderately meeting with his own needs he must spend it on his relatives, neighbours, and other human beings who are in need of it. Man's social life should also be permeated with a spirit of sympathy and recognition of the rights of others and a spirit of mutual co-operation. Relatives should be especially helpful towards each other. The 'haves' should extend to the 'have-nots' whatever aid they may be in a position to provide. If a traveler arrives in a city, town or village, he should find himself in the midst of hospitable people who are ready to act as his host and entertain him, the concept of the rights of others should be so pervasive that a person should consider those among whom he lives to have claims "If a person helps others, he should do so with a feeling that he is merely discharging the obligations he owes them rather than burdening them with a debt of gratitude. And whenever a person is unable to be of any service to someone who is in need of it, he should seek the latter's indulgence at his inability to do so, and should pray to God to bless him with the means that will enable him to serve him." ●

Pearls From the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

It is related by Abu Moosa Ash'ari that the Apostle of God said: "The connection between one Muslim and another is like that of a strong building, one part of which strengthens the other." The Prophet, then, showed, by interlocking the fingers of one hand with those of the other (that the Muslims should combine and coalesce with one another like it).

-Bukhari and Muslim

Commentary:

It shows that just as the bricks of a building become a strong fortress by uniting with one another, the Ummat, too, is a fortress of which every Muslim is a brick and there should be the same closeness and coherence among the Muslims as was found in the bricks of a building. The holy Prophet, further, demonstrated by interlocking the fingers of both hands that the Muslims ought to stick together and blend into a single body like that. ●

It is related by Noman bin Bashir that the Apostle of God said: "All Muslims are like (the limbs of) a man. If the eye hurts, the whole body feels the pain, and in the same way, if anyone has a headache, the whole body joins in the suffering."

-Muslim

Commentary:

What it seeks to emphasise is the organic unity of the Muslim Millet, "All for one, and one for all" should be the motto of the Muslims. They should be ready to share the sorrow and suffering of each other. ●



With the passing time we admire the foresightedness and sensibility of the situation perceived by late Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (RAH). It was in mid 1990's he desired that an effective weapon is required to blunt the false accusations and misrepresentation with which Islam is so often attacked. So with his blessings the Fragrance of East was brought out as a quarterly magazine. However, sensing its effectiveness and popularity it has now become a monthly tool to deal with the situation. Our message is to observe nothing more than adherence to the minimum obligation of our faith, a way of life reflecting a deep love of God as well as observing the tenets of a system established for worshipping the Almighty. With His blessings we hope to march ahead and be productive.

Even though we are in the field for the last more than a decade, writers and intellectuals have yet to show an interest to help us in fulfilling the task. The cold shouldering by the intelligentsia of the community is depressing. We do not want to be reduced to mere copy-holder of other magazines and journals by lifting articles from there, we wish to be pioneer in publishing and propagating the ideals of a pious, evil free society in context of the present day developments. It is, therefore, earnestly requested that intellectuals and writers should favour us in building up a regular source of publication material. Howsoever, efficient and aesthetic an architect may be but he can give only attractive structural designs, the execution of his plan depends on skilled masons and good material. We also seek cooperation from those who can help us in translating the existing Urdu, Persian and Arabic

material into English.

A biased media always remains watchful to pick up issues through which it can malign those ideologies which are not palatable to it. For instance, the enforcement of Shariah in certain Muslim countries is a burning issue these days. Sometime frolicsome elements themselves engineer such incidents and attribute them to their dissentients. Similarly fallacious interpretation of 'Hudud' is put forward to create doubts about their implementation, violation of human rights is attributed to the punishment of guilty. In absence of the proper projection of the positive aspects of the 'Shariah Laws' reprehensible stories get currency, we, therefore, invite articles on Shriah Laws and their implementation to counter misgivings and present the correct picture in proper perspective. ●

AIMPLB Session

The 21st session of AIMPLB successfully concluded on March 21, 2010 at Lucknow with a massive public meeting at I'dgah Maidan. Maulana S. M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi presided over the meeting. The estimated crowd of lakhs of audience reflect the untiring efforts of Maulana Khalid Rasheed Firangi Mahali who toured whole of the State and persuaded 'faithfuls' to converge at Lucknow. Details of the events are given in the following pages. ●

S. A.

O mankind! Worship your Lord Who hath created you and those before you.

(Al-Qur'an, 2: 21)

Say: O people of the Scripture! Come to an agreement between us and you: that we shall worship none but Allah.

(Al-Qur'an, 3: 64)

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

alongwith a hard copy, duly signed, by post.



Islam the Only Way*

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

It is the first occasion on which I have the privilege of addressing the mighty German nation to convey to them the message of Islam in this great city of Berlin. I am fully conscious of the heavy responsibility that rests on my shoulders and the delicacy of the task that faces me.

For centuries the German nation has enjoyed the reputation of being remarkable for courage, spirit of adventure, sobriety of thought, pragmatism, and capacity to work untiringly. It was because of these inherent qualities that the nation has produced a number of outstanding personalities, eminent in stature, both moral and intellectual, whose achievements left deep imprints on Western society, its philosophy and way of life.

To illustrate the above, I will mention only three out of the galaxy of these eminent men, who in their spheres, have very profoundly influenced the head and heart of Europe, and each of whom is, in his own right, the founder of a distinctive school of thought. Out of these I will mention Martin Luther first. He directed his attention towards and applied his energies to the Holy Book with a view to bringing about a reformation in the Church as it existed then. He passionately preached for the containment of the unbounded rights of, and the curtailment of the unfettered powers enjoyed by the Pope and the

priests. He left an indelible mark on Christianity and is rightly known as the founder of a religion: Protestantism. The next personality I wish to advert to is Kant, a profound thinker, whose 'Critique of Pure Reason' revealed the limitations of human reason and reduced the whole work of Rationalists to a heap of ruins. And justly has he been described as God's greatest gift to his country. The third in my list is Nietzsche, an absolutely unorthodox and original thinker, who raised the banner of revolt against the prevalent ethical concepts and values, social system and Christianity. He waged a life-long war against beliefs, fundamentals and philosophies current in his time. Everyone of these schools of thought or movements, whatever you prefer to call them, was remarkable for its courageous, revolutionizing and original way of thinking.

Dissatisfaction, restlessness and a desire for change are the basic ingredients in the make-up of the German nation. The personality of Karl Marx embodied in itself revolutionary outlook and psychological restlessness at their highest level. Hence he was able to infuse restlessness in a very large part of the world, a restlessness which is considered the greatest rebellion against the existing but archaic systems of the present age.

All the above-mentioned movements were revolutionary in the real sense of the word, it may be that at times

* A speech delivered by Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (RAH) at the Engineering University of Berlin (Germany) on Saturday, the 24th October 1964.)

their spheres were limited, but often their fields of influence were extensive and far-flung, so was the case with their repercussions quite definite and deep at times, if light at others, Germans have always been distinguished for their bravery and boldness, their courage and progressive outlook, their intense urge to attain a leading place among the nations of the world, and for their self-confidence. Even the last two World Wars were, in their essence, two revolutionary adventures in the sphere of world politics and domination. These adventures became necessary because of the sudden effervescence of enthusiasm and ambition which occurred in this Great Nation, bringing to the surface its capabilities and latent powers and thus created in it stout-heartedness and self-confidence. Even today this nation is fired with optimistic attitude towards life and its happiness and is fully conscious of her immense capacity for creative work, development and extraction of joy from life. But for these natural gifts, Germany could not have survived the catastrophes which have befallen her during the last fifty years and of which there are few parallels in history. It could not have withstood the two disasters each of which was enough to paralyse and overwhelm any other nation, and to sink it in the trough of despondency. Nor could it have arisen, Phoenix-like, from the ashes and debris created by World War II, to resume the struggle with renewed efforts and vigour, to reconstruct its social, industrial and aesthetic life.

Neither the adventures and experiences of this mighty nation, nor the revolutionary movements initiated by it could bring notable changes except within limited circles. This nation has undeniably played an important part in

the orientation of European way of thinking and the evolution of Western society and has thus earned deserved greatness and fame. It could not, however, totally transform the basic religious trends in Europe, nor could it repair the common man's way of thinking or renovate his mode of life. It failed to set up a new and healthy society or to create a new and better world. The two World Wars were fought for mundane objectives and not for the sake of purification of Christianity nor for evolution of high moral values, nor for the establishment of principles of humanism, neither their objective was the wresting of leadership from the tyrant and unrighteous and to vest it in the just and merciful. They were not waged to stamp out sin, vice, lewdness and inhumanity. I may be excused, if I say, that they were in fact fought for the sole purpose of wresting power and supremacy. Both the contestants seemed to agree that injustice, tyranny, aggression, and spoliation may continue undisturbed but exclusively under its own supervision and guidance. With their high position and greatness in the comity of nations, the Germans could bring about a world revolution, more extensive and more far-reaching in its effect than that which has been achieved by all the past turmoils, a revolution which would have benefited not only Germany or Europe but the entire mankind, giving to the world genuine peace and contentment, a revolution more valuable because of its character, originality of concept, capacity to bring about a healthy change and creativeness. Such a revolution would have been far more valuable than any other brought about in the distant or near past by the distinguished and stout-hearted leaders of Germany.

Germany in spite of its setbacks is fully abreast with the rest of Europe, nay it often appears to be ahead of it, in industries, craftsmanship and productivity. With its resources, inventions, productions and amenities of life, it is constantly forging ahead of most nations. But in the present order of things her role is limited to these fields only a role in which it has exhibited to a remarkable degree its intelligence and genius, its technical skill and perfection, its sense of discipline and perseverance. In these fields it has out-distance many of her neighbours and occupies a leading place in the centres of international trade and commerce.

It was expected of this country which has always been imbued with a spirit of restlessness and which has ever been a cradle of revolutions and home of revolutionaries, that it would rebel against a civilization which has converted man into a mighty but wayward and destructive being, a civilization which has transformed man into a machine, deaf and blind, possessing neither soul nor heart, neither belief nor conscience. In this civilization the entire world has become a gambling den and an abattoir for souls. It recognizes nothing as its objective except trade and commerce and has thus rendered life void of its real joy, variety, depth and warmth. German nation was expected to rebel against the civilization in which life is nothing but an endless journey bristling with insoluble problems, an unending race, a fruitless effort and an aimless activity. Man today is no better than a blindfolded bullock, tethered to an indigenous oil press moving endlessly round the axis of the machine. He has been deprived of his most precious asset, his noblest attributes faith, conviction and sincerity

and purity of thought and warmth of feeling.

It was no idle expectation that some European nation or other would rise in revolt against these base ideologies and artificial values, which, in spite of being man-made, are deeply cherished and which have imposed upon mankind certain standards of life and modes of living without any rhyme or reason, but are so taxing in their demands as to overwhelm a peace-loving man, depriving him of his real freedom. German nation, the true worth of which had never been rightly appreciated by Europe, was particularly expected to bring about a change in the course of affairs, not only in its own land but throughout the whole world, and thus to open a new chapter in world history.

On the other hand this consistently steadfast member of the family of European nations, though always envied, distrusted and unequally treated by them, continued to tread the same ideologies, and to co-operate with them for the achievement of the same goal materialism with all its kaleidoscopic genius and phenomenal efficiency. It made no attempt to overstep the limits it had set for itself, nor did it take the great leap forward which could at once change its destiny as well as that of the rest of the world; and in addition could secure for it world leadership, an immortal and elevated place in the ranks of nations of the world and an added respect for itself among her neighbours. No other nation but Germans could take this bold step: a step which no other nation of Europe was capable of taking and one which would have broken the artificial and narrow boundaries within which Europe had been living for centuries, and after obliterating the old as well as the new, the

oriental as well as the occidental ways of life or thinking, would have rescued the world from the tragic results of materialism and tyranny science has brought so close to humanity. As compared to this, the achievements of all the revolutionaries and leaders in the field of Economics, Sociology, and Politics in the different parts of the world would have paled into insignificance.

It is a strange and incomprehensible paradox that Europe which is vigorously pulsating with life and replete with its good things, which leads the bulk of the civilized world, which has unmasked the Universe, harnessed matter and energy to its service and is literally a stranger to a static and inactive life guided by a religious system, which, though it preaches humanism, believes in the existence of an intermediary between man and his Creator, and according to which, in the Crucifixion of Christ lay the salvation of the entire human race, and thus subscribes to the principle of Vicarious Atonement, a dogma which by belittling the values of action and effort and their necessity ultimately leads man to depend upon others and whittles down his will and activity, initiative and capability. To cap it all, the representatives of this religion acted for a long time as barriers between the inquisitive, ambitious, dynamic people of Europe and the realms of knowledge and reason. Deviations from the theories advanced by the commentators of the Bible and from the teachings of the clergy, were considered heretical. Persons who in the light of their own commonsense, observations and experience gave vent to their opinion in any way different from those of the said commentators or the clergy were persecuted so cruelly as to remain unparalleled in the history of any

other religion.

In course of time Europe rose against the begottery, narrow-mindedness and folly of, and the uncalled-for persecutions by the Church and broke all chains and shackles which had made it a captive and thus advanced materialistically to an extent unknown in history. Great strides were made in the field of civilization, literature and social sciences. These efforts, unnecessary in quite a few cases exhausted Europe mentally and physically. She lost that balance which is the main-spring of the genuine wellbeing of man, and imposed upon her that extremism in attitude and materialism in outlook which, with the passage of time has become her ethos and second nature. The Church has even today a sway over many a Western country and by and large a European's attitude towards religion is divorced from all reason and commonsense, yet in matters relating to civilization and culture he acts quite independently of it. This contradiction between belief and action is the essential feature of every step which he takes towards progress and of every facet of his way of living.

Apart from this contradiction, the fact that Europe remained a stranger to Islam, a religion with unadulterated monotheism as its basis and having clear-cut beliefs, distinguished for its limpidity, practicability, dynamism, self-confidence and respect for human endeavour, has been an event of tragic significance, the poignancy of which, history can never forget. In the scale of values of this religious system, individual's effort and action occupy a very high place, so much so, that according to its cardinal articles of Faith, they are the basis of reward or retribution, both in this life and the Hereafter.

According to it life is but a bridge to cross over to the next world; thus inducing a man to develop the qualities of manliness, high-thinking and noble-mindedness. Europe remained oblivious to the Apostle of this divine message about whom the Quran in its inimitable and majestic style, has said that he is "the Prophet who can neither read nor write, whom they will find described in 'Torah and the Gospel' (which are) with them. He will enjoin on them that which is right and forbid them that which is wrong. He will make lawful for them all the good things and prohibit for them only the foul, and he will relieve them of their burden and the fetters that they used to wear."

Crusades and in their wake the clergy and the missionaries and those European authors who neither had a bent for research nor possessed religious values, were mainly responsible for keeping Europe estranged from and antagonistic to Islam and its Prophet. They have presented both the Prophet and his Message in shockingly heinous colours as a result of which astonishingly false and baseless talks have gained currency about them. The dark hallow created round them by such stories, proverbs and sayings, assiduously propagated for generations, prevented Europe from paying her tribute of love for them and acknowledging their greatness. Instances of such malignation can be easily picked out from any book written on them or cognate subjects during the Middle Ages or even long afterwards. Even today many a zealous Western author refers to and repeats these accusations, though with novel techniques and from new angles.

There has been yet another important reason for this antagonism. Europe saw Islam mainly through the

Turks. Whenever there was occasion for Europe to ponder over Islam, the Ottomans were before her as its accredited and sole representatives on the continent. She did not look at Islam from a detached, independent and objective point of view. To her it was the religion professed by the Ottoman Turks who often attacked the Continent and occupied large slices of her land. They undoubtedly committed some mistakes and on occasions behaved unjustly and violently. All these blurred the vision and acted as hindrances in the way of the making of a balanced and sane appraisal of Islam. Such an appraisal, needless to say, could only be made by direct and unbiased study of the subject.

Europe's estrangement from Islam has had a very deep and far-reaching effect on the pace of history and civilization and on the development of human society. Had Europe or any of her important nations accepted Islam and sponsored its message, not only the Continent but the entire world would have been quite different from what it is today; life would not have been so utterly meaningless, nor would have religion and morality been so helpless and ineffective as they are today. Civilization would not have been speeding headlong towards destruction, and the East would not have been, as it is today, a free field for extermination, exploitation, extortion and oppression.

The world suffers from a void which has remained unfilled for centuries, a void caused by the absence of a nation strong in every respect faith, morals and dealings, believing in and propagating the true and final divine message and thus facing the problems of

the world boldly, leading humanity to its rightful destiny. Such a nation is required to be outstanding in current culture, genius, creative capacity, to be replete with energy and happiness, and to be a personification of action and effort. A nation with these qualities alone can divert the world from evil to virtue, from destructiveness to construction and from chaos to order.

The Turks led by the House of Ottomans could fill up this void in world leadership. Indeed, they performed this function in the East in the 15th century. They led th then Islamic world infusing into it a new life, impulse and energy. They could not, however, play this role in Europe mainly because of their backwardness in the spheres of modern sciences, organization, invention and genuine progress, as well as their continuous pre-occupation with the task of repelling invasions of European nations involving them in an endless series of wars. They could not lead Europe during Renaissance which gave birth to a new order. As a result of the above-mentioned factors, the Turks were outstripped by other nations of Europe and the vacuum is still waiting to be filled up by a nation, Oriental or Occidental, which may combine in itself faith and knowledge, insight into the potentialities of soul force and matter and integrate the eternal heavenly message, its all-pervading truth, with reason, knowledge and progressive outlook, the plethora of modern resources with holy objectives and thus attain the results vouched by the heavenly religions of which Islam is the last and the most perfect representative. Only such a nation can be the real leader and guide of the world, and fill up the

vacuum; it alone can change the course of history, command the world to move in a new channel and forge a new path by bestowing upon the despondent humanity, bent upon committing 'hara-kiri', a new lease of life, and thus pull it away from the very brink of the abyss of death towards which it is inexorably heading fast with rocket-like speed.

This would call for a daring revolution, a revolution before which all others brought about by the great revolutionaries and leaders of freedom and progress in the world turn insignificant. It calls for a revolutionary change in the attitude of the entire nation, a perilous leap involving tremendous sacrifice, from one way of life to another, from one order of things to a new order and from one faith to another. This vital step can bring to you, people of Germany, a leadership and a greatness, a respect and an influence, an importance and might, a sense of satisfaction and peace, spiritual solace and joy not even dreamt of by your intrepid, bold and war-loving leaders who plunged you into the fires of two horrible wars.

This leap alone can, by giving the right direction to your material power and political supremacy, make you the real leader of and the example for humanity as promised by Allah in the following verses of the Holy Qur'an:

And we wished to be Gracious to those who were being depressed in the land, to make them leaders (in Faith) and make them heirs. ((XXVIII: 5)

And we appointed from among them leaders, giving Guidance under Our Command, so long as they persevered with patience and continued to have faith in our signs. (XXXII: 24) ●

Importance of Educational Resources

S. M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi

A man has to take care of three sides of his life as compared to other living creatures. On side concerns with the essential needs of the physical health and life i.e. eating, drinking, dressing and living conditions. The second side of his life consists of his honour and reputation which gives him a show of higher rank from other creatures. Third side concerns with the peculiarity in character and morals which everyone has to maintain as better as one can, as a human specialty, as it is suitable to mankind. Knowledge is very helpful and the best means to act according to high conduct and capability.

As far as the first of the mentioned sides of human life is concerned, other creatures also have almost similar necessities, but being devoid of means of knowledge they cater to their requirements in a superficial and only natural way. And where the second and third of the mentioned sides is concerned, which relates to his superiority over other creation and to his being the most eminent of the created beings, then instructions clearly given by Allah under the title of Islam includes high standards of human conduct suitable to honour human beings; and in reality, it has been connected with the will and pleasures of his Creator and Sustainer, because a higher and better standard of these two specialties can be created according to the instructions given by Him; as He is the

Sustainer and Creator of human beings, He knows best, what is best standard for human being; and that is what He wants to see in them. So, Allah has sent Prophets and Apostles in every period of time; and then He sent the last Prophet and apostle, Muhammad (PBUH) and instructed him the best description of the higher and better standard of human character and told him that this will be the means of success for human beings and gave him the necessary knowledge for it.

A number of people who are named as Muslims had shown practically how to work on it, but a larger number of people kept attachment with only their physical and sensual desires and also limited their knowledge accordingly, although the incontrovertible Prophet (PBUH) delivered the message he had received clearly, which was guarantee for the progress and reformation of the human being. Due to negligence of this knowledge and deviation from the guidance, the society got entrapped in filthiness, and such characters and morals received popularity which caused displeasure and wrath of the Cherisher, and which is against the high standards of the human being and acquiring it could descend them to the standards of animals, i.e. that character which is against the standard characteristics of human beings. Some where he becomes a wolf and panther, and tries to suppress and crush others and eat them. And some where he adopts the peculiarities of dogs

and cats, and eyes on his individual and limited interest. And some where he adopts the ways of self-interestedness, external charm and beauty for his internal satisfaction, but he suffers carelessness towards the merits of character and morals which is the essence of human and humanity and is a matter of sorrow that he has connected his carelessness to knowledge and education. The knowledge which has been bestowed by Allah, to reach Him and to fit to a dignified high position, he has subjected it to the attainment of his superficial requirements. As a consequence, the entire educational set up of developed and advanced countries is being run only by making demands of their own conscience as their objective. It gives no help to humanity. Instead it provides material for the destruction of high human value. He keeps eye sight at one side only i.e. to get such material by which he can get the energy and grandeur to subjugate and suppress others and secure his benefit. He could get such knowledge and ability with which he could invent and use such objects for his selfish motives.

By this method of western education, the world is divided into two parts; one is that of weak nations who possess less resources of power; and the other is that of those who impose their hegemony and superiority over others by way of their willful use of their newly acquired latest developed resources; consequently, there appear group of crying and sobbing people on one side; and on the other side there is might, and this is all a result of limiting themselves to the godless education and teaching, and the sorrowful thing is that this trend tend to increase and the human group are

getting into their camps. In these conditions, the responsibility devolves on Muslims that they stand up against these trends with the help of teachings of the Prophet (PBUH). They are the nations of "Call and Guidance" and the responsibility lies on them squarely. To combat this trend and to stop the wrong direction, the educational and training systems are the main sources of building of human character. It is essential to provide resources for creating fear of Allah, building morals, creating moderation and realistically in order to counter the propoganda of giving extraordinary importance to human needs, and will have to give it a suitable place in our educational syllabuses. If the importance of the human needs is not given suitable proportion then the human society can reach the extreme limits of confusion and corruption. The innumerable incidences of sexual corruption which are coming to light in the advance countries and miserable incidents of the forcefulness over the weak by the powerful, is making this field of life a horrific jungle; in which no one has any attention of the high human values and characteristics; and everyone is seen living a life of self-will. Our East is safe from these things to an extent, but it has also put itself on the Godless way of the West, and made the wet its hero in the characteristic, moralistic and social life.

This is a dangerous situation. An Indian philosopher has said to an intellectual of Europe, when he expressed his great progresses in the field of materialism: "Yes! You have become capable to dive under the sea and fly in the air but did not learn to walk on the earth like a human being." ●

Human Rights: The Qur'anic View

Riffat Hassan

To Muslims the Qur'an is the Divine Document of human rights and a large part of its concern is to free human beings from the bondage of traditionalism, authoritarianism (religious, political, economic, or any other), tribalism, racism, sexism, slavery or anything else that prohibits or inhibits human beings from actualizing the Qur'anic vision of human destiny embodied in the classic proclamation: "Towards Allah is thy limit."

In the section entitled "General Rights" which follows, an account is given of the Qur'an's affirmation of fundamental rights which all human beings ought to possess because they are so deeply rooted in our humanness that their denial or violation is tantamount to a negation or degradation of that which makes us human. From the perspective of the Qur'an, these rights came into existence when we did; they were created, as we were, by God in order that our human potential could be actualized. Rights created or given by God cannot be abolished by any temporal ruler or human agency. Eternal and immutable, they ought to be exercised since everything that God does is for "a just purpose".

General Rights

A. Right to Life

The Qur'an upholds the sanctity and absolute value of human life and points out that, in essence, the life of each individual is comparable to that of an entire community and, therefore, should be treated with the utmost care.

B. Right to Respect

The Qur'an deems all human beings to be worthy of respect because of all creation they alone chose to accept the "trust" of freedom of the will. Human beings can exercise freedom of the will because they possess the rational faculty, which is what distinguishes them from all other creatures. Though human beings can become "the lowest of the lowest", the Qur'an declares that they have been made "in the best of moulds" having the ability to think to have knowledge of right and wrong, to do the good and to avoid the evil. Thus, on account of the promise which is contained in being human, namely, the potential to be God's vicegerent on earth, the humanness of all human beings is to be respected and considered to be an end in itself.

C. Right to Justice

The Qur'an puts great emphasis

on the right to seek justice and the duty to do justice. In the context of justice, the Qur'an uses two concepts: "adl" and "ihsan". Both are enjoined and both are related to the idea of "balance", but they are not identical in meaning.

"Adl" is defined by A. A. A. Fyzee, a well-known scholar of Islam, as "to be equal, neither more nor less." Explaining this concept, Fyzee wrote: "...in a Court of Justice the claims of the two parties must be considered evenly, without undue stress being laid upon one side or the other. Justice introduces the balance in the form of scales that are evenly balanced." "Adl" was described in similar terms by Abul Kalam Azad, a famous translator of the Qur'an and a noted writer, who stated: "What is justice but the avoiding of excess? There should be neither too much nor too little; hence the use of scales as the emblems of justice." Lest anyone try to do too much or too little, the Qur'an points out that no human being can carry another's burden or attain anything without striving for it.

Recognizing individual merit is a part of "adl", The Qur'an teaches that merit is not determined by lineage, sex, wealth, worldly success or religion, but by righteousness, which consists of both right "belief" ("iman") and just "action" ("amal"). Further, the Qur'an distinguishes between passive believers and those who strive in the cause of God pointing out that though all believers are promised good by God,

the latter will be exalted above the former.

Just as it is in the spirit of "adl" that special merit be considered in the matter of rewards, so also special circumstances are to be considered in the matter of punishments. For instance, for crimes of unchastity the Qur'an prescribes identical punishments for a man or a woman who is proved guilty, but it differentiates between different classes of women: for the same crime, a slave woman would receive half, and the Prophet's consort double, the punishment given to a "free" Muslim woman. In making such a distinction, the Qur'an while upholding high moral standards, particularly in the case of the Prophet's wives whose actions have a normative significance for the community, reflects God's compassion for women slaves who were socially disadvantaged.

While constantly enjoining "adl", the Qur'an goes beyond this concept to "ihsan", which literally means, "restoring the balance by making up a loss or deficiency". In order to understand this concept, it is necessary to understand the nature of the ideal society or community ("ummah") envisaged by the Qur'an. The word "ummah" comes from the root "umm", or "mother". The symbols of a mother and motherly love and compassion are also linked with the two attributes most characteristic of God, namely, "Rahim" and "Rahman", both of which are derived

from the root "rahm", meaning "womb". The ideal "ummah" cares about all its members just as an ideal mother cares about all her children, knowing that all are not equal and that each has different needs. While showing undue favour to any child would be unjust, a mother who gives to a "handicapped" child more than she does to her other child or children, is not acting unjustly but exemplifying the spirit of "ihsan" by helping to make up the deficiency of a child who need special assistance in meeting the requirements of life. "Ihsan", thus, shows God's sympathy for the disadvantaged segments of human society (such as women, orphans, slaves, the poor, the infirm, and the minorities).

D. Right to Freedom

As stated earlier, the Qur'an is deeply concerned about liberating human beings from every kind of bondage. Recognizing the human tendency toward dictatorship and despotism, the Qur'an says with clarity and emphasis in Surah 3: Al-Imran.

It is not (possible)- That a man, to whom- Is given the Book, -and Wisdom, -And the Prophetic Office,- Should say to people:- "Be ye my worshippers- Rather than Allah's" On the contrary- (He would say): -"Be ye worshippers- Of Him Who is truly- The Cherisher of all."

The institution of human slavery is, of course, extremely important in the context of human freedom. Slavery was widely prevalent in Arabia at the time of

the advent of Islam, and the Arab economy was based on it. Not only did the Qur'an insist that slaves be treated in a just and humane way, but it continually urged the freeing of slaves. By laying down, in Surah 47: Muhammad: 4, that prisoners of war were to be set free, "either by an act of grace or against ransom", the Qur'an virtually abolished slavery since "The major source of slaves men and women was prisoners of war". Because the Qur'an does not state explicitly that slavery is abolished, it does not follow that it is to be continued, particularly in view of the numerous ways in which the Qur'an seeks to eliminate this absolute evil. A Book which does not give a king or a prophet the right to command absolute obedience from another human being could not possibly sanction slavery in any sense of the word.

The greatest guarantee of personal freedom for a Muslim lies in the Qur'anic decree that no one other than God can limit human freedom and in the statement that "Judgment (as to what is right and what is wrong) rests with God alone." As pointed out by Khalid M. Ishaque, an eminent Pakistani jurist:

The Qur'an gives to responsible dissent the status of a fundamental right. In exercise of their powers, therefore, neither the legislature nor the executive can demand unquestioning obedience... The Prophet, even though

he was the recipient of Divine revelation, was required to consult the Muslims in public affairs. Allah addressing the prophet says: "...and consult with them upon the conduct of affairs. And....when thou art resolved, then put thy trust in Allah."

Since the principle of mutual consultation ("shura") is mandatory, it is a Muslim's fundamental right, as well as responsibility, to participate in as many aspects of the community's life as possible. The Qur'anic proclamation in Surah 2: Al-Baqarah: 256, "There shall be no coercion in matters of faith" guarantees freedom of religion and worship. This means that, according to Qur'anic teaching, non-Muslims living in Muslim territories should have the freedom to follow their own faith-traditions without fear or harassment. A number of Qur'anic passages state clearly that the responsibility of the Prophet Muhammad is to communicate the message of God and not to compel anyone to believe. The right to exercise free choice in matter of belief is unambiguously endorsed by the Qur'an which also states clearly that God will judge human beings not on the basis of what they profess but on the basis of their belief and righteous conduct, as indicated by Surah 2: Al-Baqarah: 62 which says:

Those who believe (in the Qur'an) And those who follow the Jewish (scriptures), -And the Christians and the Sabians, -Any who believe in

God- And the Last Day, - And work righteousness, - Shall have their reward With the Lord: on them Shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.

The Qur'an recognizes the right to religious freedom not only in the case of other believers in God, but also in the case of not-believers in God (if they are not aggressing upon Muslims)

In the context of the human right to exercise religious freedom, it is important to mention that the Qur'anic dictum, "Let there be no compulsion in religion" applies not only to non-Muslims but also to Muslims. While those who renounced Islam after professing it and then engaged in "acts of war" against Muslims were to be treated as enemies and aggressors, the Qur'an does not prescribe any punishment for non-profession or renunciation of faith. The decision regarding a person's ultimate destiny in the hereafter rests with God.

The right to freedom includes the right to be free to tell the truth. The Qur'anic term for truth is "Haqq" Which is also one of God's most important attributes. Standing up for the truth is a right and a responsibility which a Muslim may not disclaim even in the face of the greatest danger or difficulty. While the Qur'an commands believers to testify to the truth, it also instructs society not to harm persons so testifying.

E. Right to Acquire Knowledge

The Qur'an puts the highest

emphasis on the importance of acquiring knowledge. That knowledge has been at the core of the Islamic world-view from the very beginning is attested to by Surah 96: Al-Alaq: 1-5, which Muslims believe to be the first revelation received by the Prophet Muhammad.

Asking rhetorically if those without knowledge can be equal to those with knowledge, the Qur'an exhorts believers to pray for advancement in knowledge. The famous prayer of the Prophet Muhammad was "Allah grant me Knowledge of the ultimate nature of things" and one of the best known of all traditions ("ahadith") is "Seek knowledge even though it be in China."

According to Qur'anic perspective, knowledge is a prerequisite for the creation of a just world in which authentic peace can prevail. The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of the pursuit of learning even at the time, and in the midst, of war.

F. Right to sustenance

As pointed out by Surah 11: Hud: 6, every living creature depends for its sustenance upon God. A cardinal concept in the Qur'an which underlies the socio-economic-political system of Islam - is that the ownership of everything belongs, not to any person, but to God. Since God is the universal creator, every creature has the right to

partake of what belongs to God. This means that every human being has the right to a means of living and that those who hold economic or political power do not have the right to deprive others of the basic necessities of life by misappropriating or misusing resources which have been created by God for the benefit of humanity in general.

G. Right to Work

According to Qur'anic teaching every man and woman has the right to work, whether the work consists of gainful employment or voluntary service. The fruits of labour belong to the one who has worked for them regardless of whether it is a man or a woman. As Surah 4: An-Nisa: 32 states: ...to men is allotted what they earn, - And to women what they earn.

H. Right to Privacy

The Qur'an recognizes the need for privacy as a human right and lays down rules for protecting an individual's life in the home from undue intrusion from within or without.

I. Right to Protection from Slander, Backbiting, and Ridicule

The Qur'an recognizes the right of human beings to be protected from defamation, sarcasm, offensive nicknames, and backbiting. It also states that no person is to be maligned on grounds of assumed guilt and that those who engage in malicious scandal mongering will be grievously punished

both in this world and the next.

J. Right to Develop One's Aesthetic Sensibilities and Enjoy the Bounties Created by God

As pointed out Muhammad Asad, "By declaring that all good and beautiful things to the believers, the Qur'an condemns, by implication, all forms of life-denying asceticism, world renunciation and self-mortification. In fact, it can be stated that the right to develop one's aesthetic sensibilities so that one can appreciate beauty in all its forms, and the right to enjoy what God has provided for the nurture of humankind, are rooted in the life-affirming vision of the Qur'an.

K. Right to Leave One's Homeland Under Oppressive Conditions

According to Qur'anic teaching, a Muslim's ultimate loyalty must be to God and not to any territory. To fulfill his Prophetic mission, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) decided to leave his place of birth, Mecca, and emigrated to Medina. This event ("Hijrah") has great historical and spiritual significance for Muslims who are called upon to move away from their place of origin if it becomes an abode of evil and oppression where they cannot fulfill their obligations to God or establish justice.

L. Right to "The Good Life"

The Qur'an upholds the right of the human being only to life but to "the good life". This good life, made up of many

elements, becomes possible when a human beings is living in a just environment. According to Qur'anic teaching, justice is a prerequisite for peace, and peace is a prerequisite for human development. In a just society, all the earlier-mentioned human rights may be exercised without difficulty. In such a society other basic rights such as the right to a secure place of residence, the right to the protection of ones' personal possessions, the right to protection of one's covenants, the right to move freely, the right to social and judicial autonomy for minorities, the right to the protection of one's holy places and the right to return to one's spiritual center, also exist. ●

Visiting of the Sick

It is related by Abu Musa As'ari that the Apostle of God said: "Feed the hungry, visit the sick, and seek th release of those who have been made captives unjustly."

-Bukhari

It is related by Soban that the Apostle of God said: "When a truthful Believer visits a (sick) believing bondsman, he is, so to speak, in the Garden of Paradise until he returns."

-Muslim

Long Search for True Religion

Ibrahim Long

I have not always been a Muslim. There have been times in my life that I have been the very opposite of what that means; yet, in some way, I feel like my whole life has led me to it.

I had been raised to hold a Christian faith in a home of mixed denominations. Before my mother, a devout Roman-Catholic, would accept my father's proposal for marriage, she made him promise before a priest that they would raise their children Catholic. Though my father comes from a very devoted Moron family, he accepted. The result for us their children was still a mix between the two. My uncle once joked that this is why I became a Muslim. My uncle did not know the long search I ventured upon before I was finally guided to Islam. My mother had always been very vocal about her faith.

My father was more reserved in speaking about his faith, though deeply committed to following its moral obligations. I did not realize how much of an effect their practice had upon me until I graduated from high school.

It was during those last few years at Folsom High School that God chose to put my family through its greatest trial. My mother, who had previously battled severe tumors while I was in school, had been diagnosed with a rare form of stomach cancer. The doctors could not promise her much help or time. With firmness, she attended her chemotherapy sessions.

She was determined to see her children grow up. I was 17 years old and did not know how to help. When a hospital bed was finally brought in, I knew then that I would not have that much time to spend

with her.

One evening when I felt that I would have an opportunity to speak with her alone, I went downstairs and stood by her bedside.

She had lost an incredible amount of weight and had an oxygen tank to help her breathe, but when she saw me she smiled so big, it was as if none of that mattered.

I told her then that I loved her, and her smile grew even wider. Sensing why I had elected that time to say so, she leaned forward as much as she could and said that I had nothing to worry about, that everything was going to be OK.

I felt in her a warm trust in whatever God had planned for her, and her words left an impression upon my heart.

Only a few weeks later, my sister knocked on my bedroom door to let me know that our mother had passed away.

While giving the eulogy, the priest asked each one of us to think of one characteristic my mother had which we treasured, and to place that character trait into ourselves.

"That," he said, "would be her legacy."

I knew right then that I treasured most her inner strength, which allowed her to be so optimistic and loving even through her greatest trial. I knew as well that this strength came from her firm faith in God.

I became determined to find that same strength, but it would only come with a search for a faith I could find certainty in.

I can't remember a time in my life that I did not believe in God, though there were times that I wrongfully criticized Him.

I soon picked up a new copy of the Bible and started reading it. With an open heart I tried to find in the Bible a clear direction in life. I believed in the prophets of God, but believing Jesus (Peace be upon him) as God was still the most difficult concept for me to accept.

I then began my search for faith in other religions. Into the works of Hinduism and Buddhism I dove. They offered beautiful sayings and stories describing the struggles of moral people, but I could not find within their works anything to provide me with any certainty.

I was fortunate enough to have a friend who invited me to live with him in Santa Barbara, California. Both he and I treasured the idea of being away from old friends who only seemed to criticize our efforts to find God and our true selves.

Living away from friends and family also gave me a great opportunity for personal growth and to meet people with similar interests, but I did not come across anything new which offered me something I could truly believe in.

I moved back home to Sacramento and, with my 23rd birthday a few months away, I began to feel lost and utterly depressed. The most important promise I have ever made did not seem likely to be fulfilled.

Disappointed, I then stopped reading any spiritual works, and took to learning about current events.

I was very interested in knowing more about conflicts in the Middle East, especially the Holy Land. I went to my local bookstore and bought a book about the conflict in Israel and Palestine that kept referring to a religion that taught people violence and hatred. The author made clear that this religion was the problem in the Middle East and, not knowing any more about this religion than what he told me, I took the author at his word.

In conversations, I would reference the work, and speak out against this religion of intolerance, this "Islam."

I did this until a sincere friend asked me if I realized I was being prejudiced. He was right, I actually only knew about Islam through the text I had read. I decided I would ask my store manager, Danyelle, who was a convert to Islam. She very gladly gave me a copy of the Qur'an, and her husband, Jabari, suggested that I visit them at their house for further discussion.

For a month-and-a-half, I visited them every Friday night and spoke with them about religion. They were very generous, serving me dinner every time I came, and answered my questions without pushing me to believe.

I had read part of the Qur'an before, but now, having someone to answer my questions, my heart opened, and I really tried to understand its meaning.

The Qur'an stood out from any other scripture that I had ever read. It was far from being intolerant, rather it was uniquely balanced.

Its simultaneous emphasis upon both societal laws and mercy made sense, and its passages revealed a deep knowledge of human character. Concepts I found true in other scripture were also present in the Qur'an, and if they differed, I found the Qur'an to actually make more sense.

After six weeks of discussions and reading, I was convinced that the Qur'an was divinely inspired.

On Friday, February 25, I made the announcement that I was going to convert and that Sunday I said with full conviction that, "I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except God, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God." In Arabic this is called the Shahadah. ●

Forgiveness is a Jewel among the Virtues

S. L. Peeran

“To err is human but to forgive is divine”, is an old adage. If men start taking revenge for each and every small mistakes and wrongs done by others to them, then peace, love and affection and harmony of the world would be lost forever. It is in the nature of man to commit mistakes but to repent in leisure is also second nature of man. Since it is human to fall in error and commit a folly, therefore it becomes incumbent on every individual to forgive by overlooking the mistakes and wrongs of others. Patience and fortitude should be exercised to a great extent to achieve the desired goal of peace of mind and happiness in life. If we keep harboring grudge against our fellowmen for wrongs committed by them against us, then it is sure way to lose peace of mind and happiness forever. Instead we need to develop magnanimity and large heartedness to forgive all and silly mistakes and wrongs of others.

A question posed is as to whether serious crimes committed against individuals or against the society should also be forgiven? It is not so, it would led to lawlessness and breakdown of law and order and also disturb the peace and tranquility of the society. In such circumstances,

therefore law takes its own course. Society has laid down rules and regulations for punishing suitably the wrong doers. One should also do introspection before prosecuting any individual by seeking justice against a law breaker and wrong doer. Such a person may be your own kith and kin. In such circumstances, it may break the family bonds and filial relationship. Compromise and compounding of offences are provided in law. There would be umpteen instances when a wrong doer in a fit of emotion, anger and in passion would commit a wrong, a sin or a crime but would definitely not have any intention to harm the injured person. Intention plays an important part in such circumstances to determine the gravity of such offences. It is in such circumstances, law requires for pardoning the wrong doer or giving less punitive punishment than incarnation or corporal punishment. If the wrong doer comes forward to compensate the wrong committed by adequate and full monetary compensation or undertakes to do good and charitable works to atone his sin then such wrong doers are required to be pardoned by exercising magnanimity and large heartedness.

All wrongs are not punishable

like jeers, taunts, criticism and insults. It may cause deep hurt and this would be a cause to bear a grudge and rancor. This is an occasion to exercise restraint and to pardon such foolish and silly persons, for they have committed wrongs without knowing its ramifications. To ignore such vain talks of others and exercise silence is a better proposition for maintaining healthy relationship.

Allah and His Prophet (PBUH) have again and again assured of forgiveness and clemency to sinners and wrongdoers on their seeking pardon and forgiveness. The holy Prophet (PBUH) was troubled by his enemies throughout his Prophethood, but he kept forgiving his enemies including his staunchest enemy Abu Sufian. "Forgive them for they know not what wrong they do," he would advice his followers.

Self realization may dawn on the wrong doers and they would realize their mistakes and seek to amend for their wrongs and would patch up the relationships by seeking friendship and by strengthening it by good deeds. Therefore every individual needs to do introspection and should develop large heartedness, broad mindedness, love and affection to forget and forgive the wrongs of fellowmen, kith and kin so as to achieve 'As-sakina' in their hearts i.e. eternal peace, solace and bliss in this life and the life hereafter. ●

First Muslim College in USA

Zaytuna College in California is coming up as America's first ever Muslim college. It is a brainchild of Sheikh Hamza Yusuf, Imam Shakir and Professor Hetem Bazian. With the application process coming to a close, a committee is readying to study the applications and admit between 20-25 students as incoming freshmen. And although the college is seeking Muslim students, it is not exclusive to Muslims. Currently only two majors are being offered: Arabic language and Islamic law and theology. As the class size increases and more educators are hire, other majors will be offered, Imam Shakir said. Zaytuna College is in the rigorous process of seeking accreditation from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, a process that will take a number of years and one that Imam Shakir hopes will be completed by the time the freshman class graduates. The goals of the college are to produce scholars of Islam who are a product of an American education system. ●

21st General Session of AIMPLB

A three-day session of All India Muslim Personal Law Board was held from March 19 to March 21, 2010 in Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow. More than four hundred delegates from various parts of the country participated in it.

AIMPLB President S. M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi in his presidential address at the opening ceremony of annual conference of the Board said: "the Board is not ready to accept any sort of interference in Madrasas. Whether it comes from the government or from any other level. Since they (Madrasas) have played a pivotal role in protecting Islam in this secular country and making its members aware of the Islamic way of life."

Deliberating on the purpose and role being played by the AIMPLB, the Maulana said that safe guarding Shariah and maintaining Muslims' identity had always been at the heart of the Board. "Removing misconceptions in the minds of the non-Muslim brethren about the Shariah and Islam is also an objective of the Board and it has taken several steps in this direction to set right the wrongly perceived notions", he said.

Expressing anguish over several social maladies which are now afflicting the Muslim society, he has exhorted Muslims to live like a conscientious and self-respecting community and should work towards a better status using the mainstream trends and the freedom allowed by the country's laws and the Constitution.

"Vulgarity, shamelessness, interest on money, selfishness, extravagance in wedding celebrations, dowry and female foeticide are ills that spring out of greed and pose a grave danger to the society and the country", the Maulana said.

The AIMPLB president said that keeping the protection of shariat and removing social evils from the Muslim families in focus, the Board has set up separate committees like 'Darul Qaza' (family courts, 'Islah muashara committee' (Reforms committee) and legal committee.

Briefing media-persons on the agenda of the meeting, AIMPLB assistant secretary Abdur Raheem Qureshi said that the proposed Communal Violence Bill was likely to dominate the meeting as it was the most harmful for the community because it did not fix responsibility on police and administration. "Muslims have been the sufferers- be it riots in Bhiwandi, Meerut or anywhere", he said, adding that the proposed legislation will be discussed at the meeting in detail.

On the second day of the Board meeting Maulana Rabey Hasani Nadwi was unanimously reelected chairman of the Board for the third term. The Board increased the representation of women from one to five in its executive. Spokesmen Zafaryab Jilani, Qasim Rasool Ilyas and Khalid Rashid Farangi Mahli said that to reach out to the Muslim community all over the country, the board has nominated members from Ladakh, Tripura and Meghalaya also. The Board has also elected Justice (Retd) Shah Mohammad Qadri (Hyderabad) and Deputy Chairman Rajya Sabha K. Rahman Khan as life members for their contribution to the Muslim Personal Law. One MP from Ladakh and one MLA from Badarpur (Assam) has also been taken into the Board.

Addressing a mammoth gathering of Muslims during an 'open house' session to wrap up the three-day AIMPLB convention at the Aishbagh Eidgah,

Maulana Kalbe Sadiq, Vice President of the Board said, "There is more representation for women in the AIMPLB now. We feel our women don't need security. They need education."

On this occasion Maulana Dr. Saeedur Rahman al-Azami Al-Nadwi, Principal Darul Uloom Nadwtul Ulama, described various methods of Dawah and exhorted Muslims to follow the Path shown by Prophet Muhammed (PBUH).

Highlighting needs of Muslim Personal Law Maulana Salman Husaini Nadwi called upon Muslims to adhere Islam wholeheartedly. He further said the need of the hour is that all Muslims must come to one platform and prove themselves an ideal community.

Maulana Jalauddin Umri, Amir Jamat-e-Islami Hind urged Muslims to do deep study of Islam and stick to it accordingly.

Shedding light on Islamic Laws Maulana Kaka Saeed Ahmad Umri, Vice President of AIMPLB urged Muslims to stick Islamic Shariah in letter and spirit.

Maulana Wali Rahmani Secretary of AIMPLB delivered a thought-provoking speech on 'Reformation in Society'. He stated, "By the grace of Allah, *Islahe Muashara* Committees are functioning in whole country under the auspices of AIMPLB. We should take care of our own family only then a healthy and sound society may come up."

Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani asserted that system of Darul Qaza is very necessary for Muslim community. Muslims should solve their religious issues in their respective Darul Qaza.

Maulana Abdul Wahab Khilji former Nazim Jamat-e-Ahle Hadith called upon Muslims to disseminate the true message of Islam throughout the world.

Maulana Idrees Bastavi Nazim Jamia Ashrafia Mubarakpur Azamgarh delivered speech on "System of Inheritance in Islam." He asserted that if

Islam's legacy is followed well, many drawbacks of Muslim community will come to and end.

Maulana Bilal Abdul Hai Hasani Nadwi, Editor, Arafat Voice, said, "Muslim Personal Law Board is a united platform of Muslims in India. Accordingly Muslims should save it from all sort of nefarious designs. He further said, "Islam is a complete code of life. In order to perpetuate Islamic identity, it is imperative to follow Islamic Shariah completely."

Dr. M. Saud Alam Qasmi, Dean faculty of theology Aligarh Muslim University, apprised of perils and hazards which Muslims will face if Uniform Civil Code is enforced.

Maulana Fazl-ur-Rahman Hilal Usmani said, "Muslims should shun the practice of demanding dowry as it is un-Islamic."

Maulana Kalbe Jawad said that the "practice of female foeticide" was as big a sin as killing girls and women."

Zafaryab Jilani, lawyer and senior AIMPLB member, said, "No Muslim worth the salt would ever do anything that is against the tenets of Islam."

Maulana Khalid Rasheed Farangi Mahali, naib imam, Eidgah, said, "The UP government has accepted our demand for giving women equal rights in ancestral property. We feel unmarried women, too, should be given this right."

Maulana Yasin Ali Usmani, vice president of All India Milli Council, said, "The party which has brought the Women's Reservation Bill feels that by making a woman the country's President and another the Lok Sabha Speaker, women have been given their due. This is not the case. The reality is vastly different. First, do something to make them come up, then talk of fancy things like reservation."

The session concluded with prayer. ●

Report prepared by:
Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

Lucknow Session of AIMPLB

The 21st Session of All India Muslim Personal Law Board was held at Lucknow from March 19, 2010 to March 21, 2010. We have observed in the past that national media particularly English Press hardly take any notice of Board's meetings. But strangely its Lucknow session got good coverage and also without any pepper and salt. We reproduce in the following pages news items appearing in prominent English dailies for information of our out-station readers and also preserving the same as an archival record. [Editor]

AIMPLB 'no' to interference in religious academic institutions

The All-India Muslim Personal Law Board on Friday said it was not ready to accept any sort of interference in its religious academic institutions.

"The religious educational institutions have played a pivotal role in protecting Islam in this secular country and making its members aware of the Islamic way of life and we therefore are not ready to accept any interference in them whether it comes from the government or from any other level," board president Mohammad Rabey Hasani Nadwi said in his inaugural address to the three-day annual conference of the Board on Friday evening.

"It is because of the crucial role played by the Islamic educational institutions in educating people about Islam, the board has also opposed the proposal of the Central Madrasa Board," Nadwi said and added "we are not ready for any alteration in our present Islamic educational system."

He said that since the state was

secular no assistance was possible from it and Muslims had on their own decided to constitute the All-India Muslim Personal Law Board with representation from all sects some four decades ago when voices emerged from certain quarters for a change in the Shariat.

Muslims were one-fifth of the total population of the country and capable of dealing with the problems they face, Nadwi said.

He also stressed on the need to create more resources and awareness to deal with issues of social reforms.

(The Pioneer 20-03-10)

AIMPLB to oppose Women Reservation Bill in present form, wants separate quota

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) has said that it will oppose the Women's Reservation Bill in its present form. The board will, however, extend its support to the Bill if a separate quota for Muslim women is provided within the proposed 33 per cent quota for women.

"Officially, the AIMPLB will not adopt any resolution about the Women Reservation Bill as the issue is beyond the jurisdiction of the board. Our agenda is confined to family laws and enforcement of the Shariat," said Mohammed Abdur Rahim Qureshi, assistant general secretary of the board, on Friday.

"The Bill may not be on our agenda, but various Muslim organizations closely associated with the AIMPLB, like Jamat-e-Islami Hind, Jamait-ul-Ulama, All India Milli Council, and Muslim Reservation Movement, are spearheading the demand for a separate quota for Muslim women in the Bill," added Qureshi.

He said the issue would be debated upon during the meeting of the executive committee of the board on Saturday. The issue is also likely to be discussed during the open session of the board on March 21 at Eidgah.

The AIMPLB is holding its 21st national convention, which began here on Friday. The convention is a three-day-long programme.

Expressing serious reservations over the provisions made in the proposed Communal Violence Bill, Qureshi said: "The Bill is patently anti-Muslim and most harmful to the overall interests of the minority community."

The Centre had announced to bring the Communal Violence Bill in the Action Taken Report (ATR) on the Liberhan Commission Report tabled in the Parliament in July 2009.

"The Communal Violence Bill would be ineffective since there is no provision for fixing the responsibility of the police and the civil administration. Moreover, the Bill is silent on the issue of relief and rehabilitation for victims of communal violence, who are mostly Muslims," said Qureshi.

Giving details of the agenda to be taken up for discussions in the three day meet, the AIMPLB spokesperson said issue like expansion of Darul-qaza, (Shariat court) registration of marriage and educational status of the Muslims.

Qureshi added that the board will oppose any move by the government to make marriage registration compulsory.

"Presently, all Muslim marriages are registered either with the Qazi or the Imam, but making it compulsory will create problems for the community," said Qureshi adding, "The board will soon submit a proposal to the Centre to recognize all the Quazis as marriage magistrates so that all marriages get legal sanctity."

The AIMPLB will on Saturday

elected its new executive body and office bearers and is expected to approve the budget for the coming year. The board is currently headed by Maulana Rabey Hasan Nadwi, rector of Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, while prominent Shia cleric Maulana Kalbe Sadiq is the vice-president.

(Indian Express 20-03-2010)

Govt Accused of going soft on Babri Criminal cases

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board has accused the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance government of not being serious on the Babri demolition-related criminal cases.

AIMPLB assistant secretary general Mohammad Abdur Rahim Quereshi said on Friday at a press meet before the board's three-day conference that the slow progress in the cases handled by the Central Bureau of Investigation in Rae Bareilly and Lucknow courts indicated the government's attitude.

He said the board would specially discuss the report of the Liberhan Commission, which probed the demolition of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya on December 6, 1992, and the communal violence Bill during the deliberations.

Quereshi said although the commission had proved conspiracy behind the demolition, the Centre was yet to include the charge. He said the Centre's role during the demolition should also be probed. Accepting the main findings of the commission, Quereshi said the CBI had so far not effectively taken up the criminal cases.

Addressing the opening session of the conference, board chairman Maulana Mohammad Rabe Hasani Nadwi said the government's interference in Madarsa education would not be tolerated.

He said the proposal for setting up a central Madarsa board, despite the board

having taken various measures to improve the education system, was against the interests of the community.

Quereshi said although the Women's Reservation Bill was important for the Community, the board would not discuss it at the meeting. "The board has always restricted itself to issues connected to Muslim Personal Law", Quereshi said.

"The platform of the board would not be used for this purpose," he said and added the controversial triple Talaq issue was also not on the agenda.

Expressing concern over "misinterpretation" of Personal Law by various courts in the country, Quereshi said the board would chalk out an action plan to deal with the situation. He said courts could not misinterpret the religious texts. Quereshi also said that the Communal violence Bill was also against the community as it has provided unfettered powers to the police. He said the bill should be redrafted.

(Hindustan Times 20-03-2010)

**AIMPLB convention not to touch reservation issue
'Board Confined Only To Shariat Matters, Family Laws'**

Having faced stiff opposition from within the community after ulema aired their criticism over the Women Reservation Bill, All India Muslim Personal Law Board, the prime body of clerics, academicians and scholars has taken a decision to give a wide berth to the contentious issue.

The strategy to play safe during the three-day long annual convention of the Board which began in Lucknow on Friday was apparent with the general secretary Abdul Rahim Qureshi's frank admission that the Bill was certainly not a part of the "Ijlas" (session's) agenda. The reason for the omission, according to him, is purely technical. The Board, he reasoned, was confined totally to shariat matters and

family laws and stepping outside will be an avoidable breach.

The statement hardly came as a surprise despite principal of Nadwa, Maulana Saidur Rehman Nadwi having hinted last week at the possibility of the Bill's inclusion in the Board's agenda in its 21st convention. Though Qureshi conceded that the issue was not to be treated lightly and held considerable significance for the Muslim community, other tanzims (organization), he emphasized, had already taken up the matter and were working on it, therefore the Board proposed to maintain its distance.

The obvious reluctance to discuss the Bill which has generated much debate within the community could have much to do with the furore raised over reservations of a section of ulema and their interpretation of traditional role assigned to women as per the Islamic laws.

Even Muslim organizations including the All India Women Personal Law Board, All India Shia Personal Law Board, Bhartiya Muslim Mahila Andolan and All India Ulama and Mashaikh Board have come out openly against what they termed a rank male chauvinistic approach.

Reactions have been guarded thereafter. The more seasoned clerics have preferred to remain silent or have worded their thoughts cautiously.

Yet a clear majority among them is already committed not to endorse what they think is a calculated step to bring down minorities representation in the electoral bodies.

And the technical snag of the Board's mandate could be the most dignified escape route to get out of the simmering controversy, said a member.

Qureshi was at pains to elaborate upon the pro-women face of Islam that did not believe in sexist discrimination and treated male and females as partners. Yet

downplaying of the Bill coupled with a summary dismissal to a query about the possibility of touching upon the 'triple talaq', could come as a big dampener to liberal minds.

This could well amount to negating the existence of fifty per cent of the populace by the most respected body of ulema, as one of them said on Friday.

(Times of India 20-03-2010)

'Interference from Govt. in Madrassas not acceptable'

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) said that it was not ready to accept any sort of interference in madrassas. Since they (madrassas) have played a pivotal role in protecting Islam in this secular country and making its members aware of the Islamic way of life, "we, therefore, are not ready to accept any interference in them, whether it comes from the government or from any other level", said AIMPLB president Maulana Mohd Rabey Hasani Nadwi in his presidential address at the opening ceremony of the 3-day annual conference of the Board held at Nadwa College here on Friday.

Deliberating on the purpose and role being played by the AIMPLB, the Maulana said that safeguarding shariat and maintaining Muslims' identity had always been at the heart of the Board. "Removing misconceptions in the minds of the non-Muslim brethren about the shariat and Islam is also an objective of the Board and it has taken several steps in this direction to set right the wrongly perceived notions", he said.

Expressing anguish over several social maladies which are now afflicting the Muslim society, he has exhorted the Muslims to live like a conscientious and self-respecting community and should work towards a better status using the mainstream trends and the freedom allowed by the country's laws and the

Constitution.

"Vulgarity, shamelessness, interest on money, selfishness, extravagance in wedding celebrations, dowry and female foeticide are ills that spring out of greed and pose a grave danger to the society and the country", the Maulana said.

The AIMPLB president said that keeping the protection of shariat and removing social evils from the Muslim families in focus, the Board has set up separate committees like 'Darul qaza' (family courts 'Islah muashara committee' (Reforms committee) and legal committee.

Meanwhile, briefing media persons on the agenda of the meeting, AIMPLB assistant secretary Abdur Raheem Qureshi said that the proposed Communal Violence Bill was likely to dominate the meeting as it was the most harmful for the community because it did not fix responsibility on police and administration. "Muslims have been the sufferers-be it riots in Bhiwandi, Meerut or anywhere", he said, adding that the proposed legislation will be discussed at the meeting in detail. However, the meeting will not discuss the Women's Reservation Bill recently passed in the Rajya Sabha, he said.

The Board would confine itself to the personal laws of the community and Women's Reservation did not come under its jurisdiction though the issue was very important for the community, Qureshi said.

(Times of India 20-03-2010)

Four more Women on Muslim Law Board

Now the total number of women in the 51-member executive committee is five

The All-India Muslim Personal Law Board has ventured to give adequate representation to women with four new female members elected to the 51-member executive committee of the top representative body of the Muslims in the country. This brings the total number of women members in the executive panel to

five.

The elections were conducted on Saturday, the second day of the 21st general session of the Muslim Law Board here.

The four new female members are Rukhsana Lari, Safia Naseem (both from Lucknow), Noorjehan Shakeel (Kolkata) and Asma Zehra (Hydrabad). Naseem Iqtidar Ali Khan was so far the sole woman member in the executive committee. She continues to be on the panel.

Maulana Rabey Hasani Nadwi was unanimously elected president of the Law Board for the third successive term. He was first elected chairman at the Hyderabad session of the Board, followed by his reelection at the Chennai session. Maulana Nadwi's name was proposed by vice-chairman Maulana Syed Kalbe Sadiq. Since there were no other names for the post, the Maulana was elected unanimously.

Another significant feature was the Board's attempt to expand its representation in the North-Eastern States and Ladakh. The representatives from these regions were elected term members. While Maulana Bilal was elected from Meghalaya and Syed Ahmed from Tripura, the Independent MP from Ladakh (J&K), Ghulam Hussain, and Maulana Ata-ur-Rehman (Assam United Democratic Front), MLA from Badarpur in Assam, were elected term members from Ladakh and Assam. Board spokesperson Zafaryab Jilani said the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, K. Rahman Khan, and retired justice Mohammad Qadri were made life members of the board.

(The Hindu, 21-03-2010)

Historic First: Five women on board MPLB

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) seems to have turned a little more gender-friendly. For the first time in the the past 37 years of its existence, the representative body of ulema,

academicians, scholars and members of the civil society, has nominated the highest numbers of women members in the executive council.

The tally of five female out of the 51 committee could still indicate a pronounced male bias of the outfit but the decision goes to prove that an additional opening for women has been created this time.

So far, the lone woman member among 41 committees (ten extra members have been included only on Saturday) happened to be Begum Naseem Iqtedar Ali, who has been a founder member since the very inception of the body way back in 1973.

Two out of the five members in the group- Dr Rukhsana Lari and Dr Safia Nasim hail from Lucknow apart from the Begum. Then Kolkata sends Noor Jehan Shakil while the fifth nominee Dr Asma Zohra belongs to Hyderabad.

The move is being interpreted as a result of pressure on the board from the liberal bodies and also its desire from the liberal bodies and also its desire to maintain its supremacy when the rival female bodies like All India Muslim Women Personal Law Board, Akhil Bhartiya Muslim Mahila Andolan etc have openly turned defiant at the overt male-centric approach to all matters pertaining to their tribe, taken up by the body.

A better strength would certainly lead to a little more weightage and importance to the female cause, sources claimed. The lone female voice so far was hardly heard and easily ignored but the changed situation could result in a welcome change in the scenario.

Another first this time is inclusion of members from far off states Like Meghalaya, Tripura, Assam and even Ladhakh two of them MLA and MP- in the committee. Retired supreme court judge Shah Mohammad Qadri and deputy chairperson of the Rajya Sabha Rahman

Khan have also been accommodated.
(Times of India 21-03-2010)

Maulana Rabey Nadwi re-elected as AIMPLB prez

Maulana Rabey Hasani Nadwi, rector of Nadwatul Ulama was re-elected unopposed as president of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) for the third consecutive term of the Board's on the second day of its 21st session held here on Saturday. Those elected to other important posts in the board are: Salim Qasmi, Kalbe Sadiq, Syed Fakhruddin Ashraf and Kaka Saeed Ahmad Umri as vice-presidents, Syed Nizamuddin as general secretary, Mohd Wali Rahmani, Abdus Sattar Yousuf Sheikh, as secretaries and Mohd Abdur Rahim Qureshi as assistant general secretary.

Meanwhile, the board's spokesperson Qasim Rasool Ilyas said that an amendment had also been made in the constitution of the Board increasing the number of executives to 51 from 40. Forty of these executive committee members would be elected and ten would be nominated by the president, he said.

When asked about the criterion behind inclusion of MPs and MLAs, Ilyas said that there were no political considerations.

Only those who have faith in the policies and programmes of the board had been welcomed and included, he clarified.

(Times of India 21-03-2010)

Against Women's Bill, Muslim Law Board changes rule to induct more women

Even as the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) claimed the Women's Reservation Bill was not on the agenda of its national meet, it quietly amended its Constitution to increase the representation of women in its executive committee at its general body meeting on Saturday. Till now there was only one

woman in the Board's executive committee.

Confirming the Board's move to increase the representation of women in its executive committee, AIMPLB member Maulana Khalid Rashid said there was no demand from any quarter to amend the constitution. "The Board felt the need to give adequate representation to women in its decision-making body, so the constitution has been amended to increase the representation of women in the executive committee of the board," he said.

Earlier, the 41, member executive committee had just one woman. This has now been increased to five. In fact, five women representatives were elected to the executive committee on Saturday.

The new women members of the executive committee of the Board are Dr. Rukhsana Lari (Lucknow), Dr Samiya Nasim (Lucknow), Noorjahan Shakeel (Kolkata) and Dr Asma Zehra (Hydrabad).

The constitution of the board has been amended for increasing the strength of the executive committee of the board from 41 to 51. The general body of the AIMPLB which met here approved the proposal," said Board member Jafaryaab Jilani. The three-day 21st national convention of the Board will conclude on Sunday.

The 10 new members will be nominated by the president of the board, while the 40 members of the executive committee will be elected. "The representation of women in the executive committee could increase further as half of the nominated members are likely to be women," said Maulana Rashid.

Shaista Amber, chairperson of the All India Muslim Women Personal Law Board, welcomed the move. "It is a vindication of the long struggle for the emancipation of Muslim women. Had the AIMPLB paid heed to our agitation earlier there would have been no need to set up

separate law board for women," she said. The separate law board for Muslim women was set up in February 2005.

In the election of office-bearers, Maulana Rabey Hasan Nadwi, rector of the Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow was elected president of the board for the third time in a row.

On Friday, the spokesperson of AIMPLB, Mohammed Adbur Rahim Qureshi, had said that the Board will oppose the Women's Reservation Bill in the present form. The Board will, however, extend its support if separate quota for Muslim women is provided in the proposed legislation.

(Indian Express 21-03-2010)

Women's Quota up in AIMPLB executive

Amid continuous debate on the Women's Reservation Bill, the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) on Saturday increased the representation of women from one to five in its executive. The board also unanimously reelected chairman Maulana Mohd Rabey Hasani Nadwi for the third term. He is also rector of the world renowned religious institution-Nadwatul Ulama Lucknow.

Addressing journalists here on the second day of the board meeting on Saturday, spokesmen Zafaryab Jilani, Qasim Rasool Ilyas and Maulana Khalid Rashid Farangi Mahli said that to reach out to the Muslim community all over the country, the board has nominated members from Ladakh, Tripura and Meghalaya also.

Jilani said earlier the 251-member general body had 41 members in its executive committee who had now been increased to 51, including the chairman. He said 40 members were elected and 10 would be nominated later by the chairman. The chairman would also nominated other

office-bearers after consulting the executive members. Jilani said five elected women members were Nasim Iqtidar, Rukhsana Lari, Safia Nasim (all from Lucknow) Noor Jahan Shakil (Kolkata) and Dr Azma Zahra (Hyderabad). Nasim Iqtidar was executive member in the past also. There are total 30 members in the board.

The board has also elected Justice (Retd) Shah Mohammad Qadri (Hyderabad) and Deputy Chairman Rajya Sabha K Rahman Khan as life members for their contribution to the Muslim Personal Law.

Ilyas said one MP from Ladakh and one MLA from Badarpur (Assam) had also been taken into the board. He said the board's consideration in inducting the elected representative was not political but for their commitment to programmes and policies of the AIMPLB.

(Hindustan Times 21-03-2010)

Nadwi elected AIMPLB's chief

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB), in its 21st annual convention at Nadwatul Ulama, unanimously re-elected Maulana Rabey Hasani Nadwi as its president in the state capital on Saturday.

The Board also directly elected Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman K Rehman Khan and Justice (retd) Shah Mohammad Qadri as its founder members on Saturday.

Earlier, the outgoing Vice President (VP) and Shia cleric Maulana Kalbe Sadiq conducted the election proceedings and declared Maulana Rabey Hasani as president as no other name was proposed for the post. It will his third term as AIMPLB president.

Briefing the results, Zafaryab Jilani stated that K Rehman Khan was associated with Board as special invitee while Supreme Court's retired Judge

Justice Qadri was presently engaged in translation of Board's book in English.

"Due to their association and service for the Board they have been elected founder members," he said.

The Board has 102 founder members including members who founded the Board in April 1972. Resignation or death of any of the founder members result in vacancies in the Board.

There were eight such vacancies under the founder member category. The Board, besides the founder members, also has 149 term members including 30 females elected for a tenure of three years. A 50-member Executive Committee (EC), headed by the Board president, is also elected.

The Board increased the number of women representatives besides including members from unrepresented areas of the country. Earlier, there was only one female member in the EC. Their strength has been increased to five including Begum Naseem Iqtedar Ali, Dr Rukhsana Lari, Dr Safia Naseem (all Lucknow), Noorjahan Shakeel (Kolkata), and Asma Zehra (Hyderabad).

The notable male EC members included Delhi Minorities Commission chief Kamal Farooqui, SQR Ilyas, Khalid Saifullah (Hyderabad), Atiqur Rehman (Mumbai) an important cleric of Bareilly sect.

For the first time, the Board gave representation to persons from unrepresented areas. Ladakh MP Chulam Hussain, Maulana Bilal from Meghalaya and Syed Ahmed from Tripura were also included as Board members. It also has increased its representation from Kashmir by inducting three more members. Maulana Atiqur Rehman MLA was accommodated from Assam.

Meanwhile, the Social Reforms Committee of the Board also met in the morning at Nadwatul Ulama. The

committee took up issues as expensive marriages, rising trend of dowry and other social issues. The Board was scheduled to meet again in the evening where the general secretary Maulana Wali Rahmani had to present his report.

Refusing to comment on any issue, Board's spokesperson, SQR Ilyas remarked: "All the issues including terrorism, Shariah, social reforms etc, will be discussed during next sitting on Sunday. The Board will come out with its resolution on Sunday evening," he said.

(The Pioneer 21-03-2010)

Many high and mighty likely to attend Jalsa-e-aam

Several Muslim leaders from the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) are expected to attend the Jalsa-e-aam (Open house) of All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) at Aishbah Eidgah on Sunday. The move is aimed at sending positive signals among the community members as the function is expected to be attended by lakhs of Muslims.

However, there chance of addressing the function may not be fulfilled. Organising Secretary Maulana Khalid Rasheed Farangi Mahli remarked: "Already we have prepared a list of 34 speakers all eminent Ulama. They have arrived from far and wide and no politician will be given mike." He, however, welcomed the politicians stating that it was an open house function and being Muslims they were welcomed to it.

Meanwhile, some workers at the conference admitted that senior Cabinet Minister Naseemuddin Siddiqui, ministers including Abdul Mannan, Anees Ahmad Khan Phool Babu, Shazil Islam and several MLAs such as Irshad Ahmed, Dawood Ahmed, Jasmeer Ansari and many other Muslim leaders were expected to attend the function.

Several hoardings have already been put up in the state capital mentioning the names of Dawood Ahmed, MLA Intezar Ahmed Bobby (state minister) welcoming the All India Muslim Personal Law Board members to the state capital for the function. On his part, AIMPLB spokesperson SQR Ilyas stated that Board did not accord any importance to the political status of any person. "Several of our members are MPs, MLAs and other leading names in politics but they have earned their position in Board owing to their commitment towards community and not by being a politician," he said. The function is expected to deliberate upon the resolutions passed in the Board meeting at Islamic seminary. Several social issues ranging from dowry, expensive marriages, lack of awareness towards Islamic Shariah among Muslims are expected to figure during the function.

(The Pioneer 21-03-2010)

Muslim Law Board opposes Communal Violence Bill Also urges centre to review its ties with Israel

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) has demanded the withdrawal of the prevention of Communal Violence Bill and has urged the Government of India to review its ties with Israel. In fact, the Board felt that instead of serving the interests of the United States of America and Israel, the Central Government should safeguard the country's interest.

Releasing the 'Lucknow Declaration' at the end of the three-day 21st general session of the AIMPLB here on Sunday, the Assistant Secretary General and spokesman, Maulana Abdur Rahim Qureshi, said either the Communal Violence Bill should be withdrawn, or redrafted as the proposed legislation in its present form created apprehensions in the

minds of the Muslims. "The board felt that it would prove harmful to the Muslims", the Maulana told reporters here.

About the apprehensions, the board office-bearer said it stemmed from the fact that arbitrary powers are proposed to be given to the police and magistracy in the Bill. The Maulana said the various commissions of inquiry have pointed towards the biased and prejudiced role of the police towards the minority community in their findings on the communal riots. For building opinion against the Bill, the board proposes to discuss the matter with secular parties and motivate the Members of Parliament of these parties.

In this context, a meeting of Muslim MPs and those of the secular parties is likely to be held in New Delhi before April 12, Maulana Qureshi said.

He said an amendment proposal would be sent to the Centre, and added that the Muslim organizations in the country have been asked to oppose the Bill if it is either withdrawn or amended.

On Israel, the board spokesman said there should be no closer cooperation with Israel.

He said the board has not taken kindly to the Israeli government's move to dismantle the 'Masjid-i-Aqsa' in Jerusalem in a bid to establish a Jewish settlement. Stating that the Al Aqsa Mosque was a revered place of worship for the Muslims, the Maulana lamented that trenches were being dug and the area was being bulldozed by the Israel Government. Stating that India had established close ties with Israel, he said the present policy of the Centre was divorced from the line taken by Mahatma Gandhi, who was opposed to relations with Israel.

This was followed by former Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, who favoured the Palestinian cause, he added. The Maulana said instead of serving the interests of the USA and Israel, the Centre

should promote the country's interest. The board assailed the Arab nation on the Masjid-i-Aqsa issue.

Regarding terrorism, the board's declaration condemned the practice Muslims and assailed the arrest of "innocent" Muslim youths. The Maulana said the AIMPLB was of the firm view that the Muslims were being targeted with the alleged motive of creating hatred against the minority community.

On the Babri Masjid issue, a day-to-day hearing was sought with the board further demanding that the names of those mentioned in the Liberhan Commission report should be included in the FIR.

(The Hindu 22-03-2010)

AIMPLB concerned over growing Indo-Israel ties

The Executive Committee (EC) of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) in its 21st Annual Convention on Sunday expressed concern over growing Indo-Israel relations.

"For Israel we should stick to Nehruvian era and follow the same approach. Following Gandhi's views, India should oppose the atrocities on Palestinian people," said Board's assistant general secretary Maulana Abdul Raheem Qureshi while interacting with reporters on the concluding day of the Board's convention in Nadwaul Ulama on Sunday.

Qureshi also urged the Gulf countries to rise above their differences and stand united against Israel's onslaught. "They should strive to end the increasing influence of US in the region and Israel's occupation of Palestinian lands besides liberating Masjid-e-Aqsa in Jerusalem," said Qureshi.

He stated that presently Israel's intelligence agency Mosaad was working

along with its Indian counterpart with access to border areas. He opposed country's alleged close co-operation with Israel under the US influence.

The Board also announced to launch a struggle for redrafting the proposed Communal Violence Bill. "We will take the matters to roads, a meeting of life-minded groups will be soon held in Delhi to discuss the strategy," he said. MPs Mohd Adeb and Shafeequr Rehman Barq were assigned the task to garner support against the proposed Bill. "The government should include our suggestions regarding fixing accountability of police and executive, proper relief and rehabilitation of the victims of communal strife besides booking the perpetrators or withdraw the Bill," said Qureshi.

The Board also decried the branding of Muslims as terrorists, fake encounters and putting them behind the bars. "Only Muslims are at the receiving end. This degrades their morale which is not good for the country," he said. Board member Zafaryab Jilani presented his report on the progress of Babri Masjid case in the meeting and the Board reiterated its demand for including the names of those indicated by Liberhan Commission report in the case. For the social reforms of Muslims, the Board urged them to shun expensive marriages, abolish dowry and follow Darul Qaza thus reducing the unnecessary talaq issues among the community.

(The Pioneer 22-03-2010)

Ulema give unity call at Jalsa-e-aam

Expressing his strong opposition to tabling of Central Madrasa Bill in Parliament, Congress' member of Rajya Sabha Mohammad Adeb said that any interference in the internal issues of Muslims could not be allowed.

He was addressing Jalsa-e-aam organized by the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) at Aishbagh Eidgah grounds in the state capital on Sunday.

The function was organized as part of the three-day 21st annual convention of the Board.

"We have thwarted government's move to table the Madarsa Bill in Parliament. Any such move will be opposed tooth and nail in future also we cannot allow any interference in our internal matters as Shariah," he said.

Adeeb, a Rajya Sabha member from UP, is also a member of the AIMPLB besides running his own organization All India Muslim Co-ordination Board.

The Function, which witnessed huge gathering of the members of minority community, was also attended by Shia clerics, including Maulana Kalbe Sadiq and Maulana Kalbe Jawwad besides AIMPLB president Maulana Rabey Hasani Nadwi.

The Ulemas urged the Muslims to remain united and committed towards the Shariah. "We should strengthen the Board so that any interference in Islamic Shariah is thwarted. We should adhere to our traditions and practice it in our daily routine," said Maulana Idrees Bastawi.

Organising secretary Maulana Khalid Rasheed Farangi Mahli highlighted the role of Ulemas for keeping the Islamic laws alive. He urged the Muslims to remain united and adhere to the religion.

The function was addressed by a number of Muslim clerics, including Maulana Wali Rehmani, Maulana Abdul Raheem Qureshi, Maulana Ateequr Rehman.

(The Pioneer 22-03-2010)

'Stop courts' interference in personal law'

Clerics and members of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB)

urged the Union government to check the courts from 'interfering' in the Muslim Personal Law.

They raised the demand while addressing a mammoth gathering of Muslims during an 'open house' session to wrap up the three-day AIMPLB convention at the Aishbagh Eidgah, Lucknow.

They also called upon Muslims to shun dowry, abjure female foeticide, provide equal rights to women in ancestral property and called upon the government to first provide basic rights to Muslim women before talking of reservation. The gathering also demanded introduction of the Islamic banking system.

AIMPLB chairman Maulana Rabey Hasani Nadwi echoed the popular view by calling upon the government to ensure that "no one" was allowed to interfere in Muslim Personal Law.

The AIMPLB members said, "We will not tolerate any infringement of our personal law," and added, "We oppose the Women's Reservation Bill, too, in its present format. If allowed to go through in its present form, the bill will do more harm than good to our women."

Without naming the Congress, some of the speakers like Maulana Yasin Ali Usmani, vice president of All India Milli Council, said, "The party which has brought the Women's Reservation Bill feels that by making a woman the country's President and another the Lok Sabha Speaker, women have been given their due. This is not the case. The reality is vastly different. First, do something to make them come up, then talk of fancy things like reservation."

In a welcome move, most of the speakers talked about improving the lot of Muslim women. Maulana Khalid Rasheed Farangi Mahali, naib imam, Eidgah, said, "The UP government has accepted our demand for giving women equal rights in

ancestral property. We feel unmarried women, too, should be given this right."

Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman Hilal Usmani said, "Muslims should shun the practice of demanding dowry as it is un-Islamic."

Maulana Kalbe Sadiq said, "There is more representation for women in the AIMPLB now. We feel our women don't need security. They need education."

Maulana Kalbe Jawad said that the "practice of female foeticide" was as big a sin as killing girls and women.

Zafaryab Jilani, lawyer and senior AIMPLB member, said, "No Muslim worth his salt would ever do anything that is against the tenets of Islam."

(Hindustan Times 22-03-2010)

Scrap Communal Violence Bill: AIMPLB Lucknow Declaration Board against India's closer ties with Israel

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) on Sunday demanded scrapping of the controversial Prevention of Communal Violence Bill and reversing of the process of strengthening Indo-Israel relations.

Releasing the Lucknow Declaration after three-day deliberations here on Sunday, board assistant secretary general Abdur Raheem Quaraishi said the Congress-led UPA government should either scrap the communal violence bill or make amendments to protect the interests of the Muslim community. He said the board had made suggestions in this connection.

"The bill, in its present form, is extremely harmful to the community," Quaraishi said and added that the board had called upon organizations to launch a movement for its withdrawal.

He said a delegation of the board would soon be meeting the Central Government to apprise it of its stand on the

issue. The board has also invited all secular parties to join hands to oppose the bill. Quaraishi said strengthening the police in dealing with communal violence was dangerous and would further complicate the situation.

The board also expressed concern over the strengthening of Indo-Israel relations. Quaraishi said Israel had targeted the holy mosque Al Aqsa in Jerusalem. The board has thus called upon the Indian government to take up the issue to stop further damage to the mosque. The board also expressed concern over the Arab countries not taking up the issue strongly. However, the board refused to name the Arab countries.

"The US has been pulling India towards Israel, which is against the Nehruvian policy," Quaraishi said and added the UPA government should go back to Nehru's policy of supporting the Palestinian cause.

"The board doesn't want a closer Indo-Israel relationship," he quipped. Reiterating its stand on terrorism, the board said innocent Muslim youths were being framed in false cases and there had been a large number of fake encounters in the country. Quaraishi said the police had also failed to prove charges in cases against these youths.

On the Liberhan Commission report, the board has asked for inclusion of names, identified in the report, in CBI FIRs.

(Hindustan Times 22-03-2010)

Bill may curtail civic rights: AIMPLB

All India Muslim Personal Law Board has demanded recall of the communal Violence (Prevention and Rehabilitation of Victims) bill 2009.

The basic objection pertained to an unbridled authority granted to the police and administrative officers under the Bill,

board general secretary Abdul Rahim Qureshi said. "Conferring such power on law-enforcing agencies would only amount to the curtailment of the civic rights. It'll also result in untold misery to the Muslim community which has always suffered worst during any riot or communal skirmish," he said quoting the resolution.

The board, he said, has convened a meeting of its select delegates including its MP and MLA members in Delhi in mid-April to have further discussions on the issue. Later, a memorandum will be sent to the Centre for desired action, he said.

The apex body of Muslim outfits also berated the "harassment and witch-hunting of Muslim youth in the name of counter-terrorism measures." Number of fake cases implicating this class are growing, said Qureshi. There are umpteen reported instances in our knowledge where young men from minority community were arrested, tortured and put behind the bars though later released by the courts as the charges couldn't be substantiated. "This

must stop," he said, adding that the same abominable trend being observed globally was also a matter of grave concern.

Significantly, AIMPLB which mulled everything touching the minorities within and beyond the national boundaries, failed to address the concern of 50% of the populace.

The long-standing deadlock on the triple talaq has been allowed to persist with the body's stout refusal to entertain any debate on it.

Similarly, any mention of the women's reservation bill was also skirted under the plea of jurisdictional lacuna. Qureshi retreated the AIMPLB's limitations of stepping beyond its mandate which confined it to Shariat and family matters alone and recounted instead inclusion of greater number of women in the board's executive bodies as a gender-friendly act to allay the female fears. ●

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