



# THE FRAGRANCE OF EAST

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Nadwatul Ulema  
Post Box No. 93, Tagore Marg,  
Lucknow-226007

Ph. No.: 0522-2740406

Fax: 0522-2741221

E-mail: [nadwa@sancharnet.in](mailto:nadwa@sancharnet.in)

Rs. 10/-



# THE FRAGRANCE OF EAST

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## Islamic Culture

### S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

The Prophets of Allah do not only call people to the religion of Islam by presenting tenets of the Islamic Faith and its codes of law; they also pioneer a new culture, a new civilization, and a new way of life. Such a culture can aptly be called "Ibrahimi Culture". This culture has certain fundamental principles and characteristics which distinguish it from other cultures based on ignorance. This distinction may be seen in its spirit and principles as well as in its outward manifestations and details.

The first distinctive characteristic of the Islamic culture is the authentic religious beliefs, social ethics, and moral values on which it is based. This factor is commonly shared by Muslims all over the world, irrespective of their nationality, language, and dressing style. Due to this common feature of a family, easily identifiable as representatives of the same culture. Thus, the Muslims of the world have a specific culture of their own which could be best called the "Ibrahimi Culture". ●

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## Wisdom of Qur' an

*Remaining therein forever. And to warn those who say, 'God has taken an offspring. They have to knowledge of it (whatsoever), nor had their fathers; a monstrous word issuing forth of their mouths. They utter not but a lie.(18:3)*

### Commentary:

All three classes of people contemporary to the Prophet had attributed progenies to their Lord: Jews, who said, God had taken Ezra as His son; Christians, who declared Jesus as His son; and pagans, who said angels were Allah's daughters (Razi, Qurtubi).

Majid adds: "The reference is especially to the adoptionists, ' who held that Christ was a mere man miraculously conceived indeed, but adopted as the Son of God only by the supreme degree in which he had been filled with the divine wisdom and power' (EMK, IV,p.1998) ●

*Perhaps you will, (O Muhammad), destroy yourself in grief over them if they do not believe in this (new) discourse.(18:4)*

### Commentary:

The textual word "bakhi" has, according to the experts such as Akhfash and Farra, the sense of doing one's utmost for a task. Hence 'A'ishi's words about "Umar: "He did his utmost to wrest control of the lands (from the former rulers)" -Razi.

This refers of the Prophet's inner condition at the time of the revelation. He was fearful that the Makkan rejection would cause Divine wrath to descend on them (Au.).

Asad expounds: "The rhetorical question is addressed, in the first instance, to the Prophet, who was deeply distressed by the hostility which his message aroused among the pagan Meccans, and suffered agonies of apprehension regarding their spiritual fate. Beyond that, however, it applies to everyone who, having become convinced of the truth of an ethical proposition, is dismayed at the indifference with which his social environment reacts to it." ●

## Pearls From the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

*It is related by Anas that the Apōstle of God said: "It also happens (sometimes) that the parents of a person, or one of them, die and he has been disobedient to them in their lifetime and incurred their displeasure but after their death, he prays to God (with a sincere heart) to have mercy on them and forgive his impudence), and the Lord, thereupon, declares the disobedient child obedient (and, thus, he is saved from punishment for being rude to his parents)."*

-Baihaqi

### Commentary:

Just as to obey one's parents and treat them with respect and affection in a virtue of the highest order and becomes an atonement even for major sins, to beseech the Lord earnestly, after their death, to show mercy to them also is an act which, on the one hand, brings comfort to them in their graves and, on the other, serves as an expiation for the wrongs the children may have committed in that respect, and they become worthy of Divine mercy and beneficence in the Hereafter. In the Qur'an, the Muslims have been exhorted particularly to pray for the salvation of their parents. It says: "And say: "May Lord! Have mercy on them both as they did care for me when I was little' (XVII: 24). ●



## Madrasas in India

The madrasa, which literally means a school for the Ulema, has often been in the news in the Indian media. There are allegations that many of these institutions have foreign funding and have become the den of activities not conducive to nation's well being. So far no substantial evidence has been provided for any such charges. Yet, the concerted aspersions cast on their status and role in Indian society has indeed brought unnecessary bad publicity. This has no doubt caused as much concern to the community as to the government. As the state and community scrutinise madrasas, it is evident that the basis of much of the negative propaganda has been ignorance about their role in society. It is therefore imperative that we understand the historical process of the emergence of the madrasas and their objectives in India.

It is interesting that the arrival of Muslim rule in India in the 13th century did not see a sudden mushrooming of madrasas in India. In Mughal India for instance education was informal. A student who wanted a religious career would learn Persian and Arabic from the learned and pious in his family and neighbourhood. Both the Qur'an and Hadis knowledge (manqulat) and the rational sciences (ma'qulat) he acquired in this informal way. It is to be noted that the emphasis even in a religious career was always on rational sciences as well. In fact the Mughal Ulema were famous for this branch of knowledge. Mughal Delhi was regarded as an important centre for ma'qulat. It was thus not

surprising that religious career did not cripple a student in the material world. Indeed those who completed scholarly training sought out official positions or grants and endowments offered by kings and aristocrats.

The tradition of combining religious and secular learning continued after the collapse of the Mughal Empire. Its best examples can be traced in Awadh (part of modern day Uttar Pradesh). Here, the Firangi Mahall madrasa combined effectively the ma'qulat and manqulat in instructions. The Shia Nawab of Lucknow patronised the madrasa precisely because it did not produce merely Sunni Ulema but also offered training for bureaucrats. Preparing qazis and muftis, the legal officials required by the court, was the speciality of Farangi Mahall. Indeed this madrasah systematised the informal curriculum followed for training Ulema in Mughal India. The syllabus was called Dars-e-Nazamiya. The name was taken after Mullah Nizamuddin, who was the son of the madrasah's founding member Mulla Qutbuddin. This syllabus that combines religious and secular learning has dominated religious teaching in south Asia to the present. In other words it means that the madrasas that follow this syllabus lay stress on both religious and rational sciences learning. It is therefore not surprising that the madrasas that were setup under British rule also adopted this syllabus. For instance, the Madrasa-i-Aliyah in Calcutta established under British patronage in

1780, had the Dars-e-Nizamiya as its curriculum.

After the 1857 revolts as the British state clamped down heavily on all sections of Indian society, the focus of activity for the Ulema shifted from the big cities like Delhi and Lucknow and localised in qasbahs. It was in the qasbahs of Awadh that many new Madrasas sprung up in the late 19th century. Some of these followed the traditions of Muslims learning set-up in the big cities and others followed more revivalist or reformist agendas. These centres were clearly responding to the challenges posed by the British government to both the community and the nation. It is here that one can see the emergence of Deoband madrasa in 1867. Maulana Rashid Ahmad, Maulana Muhammad Qasim and others set up this madrasa and used it as the base of their activity to take up the formidable challenge the British posed to nation. They modelled their institution on patterns of the British educational institutions with which they were familiar. The goal of the madrasa was to train well educated Ulema that would be dedicated to reform Islam. Such Ulema would have many roles: prayer leaders, writers, preachers and teachers. The medium of instruction was Urdu. In its teaching style and open minded approach to learning it was broadly very much on the lines of the westernised Aligarh college and the Delhi college. Thus the madrasa had a popular appeal because it was in tune with the times. And this appeal and use of modern instrumentation was use to pursue the goal of training Muslims in religious classics so as to spread Islamic norms and beliefs that would connect them to the changed times.

These madrasas have produced

eminent writers, historians and social reformers who have brought glory to the nation. Syed Sulaiman Nadwi, Maulana Abdul Hai Hasani and Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi are some of these Madrasa products who have made a place for themselves in their respective fields.

The greatest achievement of these establishments is that they help poor and backward class of students to study and mould themselves as an asset to the society. Many a students of Madrasas later joined Mahatma Gandhi, Dr Rajendra Prasad, Jawaharlal Nehru and others in getting India liberated.

This brief trajectory of madrasa education in India reveals their very positive and outward looking attitude. It is quite clear that through history madrasas have endeavoured to make Muslims understand better the changed times through rigorous learning and accept the challenges of western modernity. Indeed it is in this role of negotiating western modernity that the madrasa could never remain isolated from the nationalist leadership of the country that had similar agendas. Thus they have been a critical bridgehead between state and society. This critical role of mediation is something that they should ideally continue to play in independent modern India as well. Most of them are already sensitive to this responsibility. It is in recognition of this responsibility that the government of India funds a wide range of madrasas every year. We hope that they continue their constructive role in society and provide no reason for a misplaced campaign against them. ●

**(S. A.)**



# Intellectual Pursuit In Religious Matters

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

## Earlier Religions

We are not aware of any religion or scripture, claiming its origin to revelation or inspiration, which has urged its followers, in the way the Qur'an does, to make use of their faculties of knowing and reasoning, take lessons from past experiences, observe the multiplicity of phenomena in order to reflect over them, and called them to account for their mindlessness in ignoring harmony between the laws of nature and working of the universe or for paying little heed to episodes of the past.

## Seeing and understanding

Among and senses possessed by man the Qur'an very often appeals to the sense of seeing so that he may observe carefully in order to understand the nature of things. Here are a few examples.

"Have they not seen how We drive the water to the dry land and bring forth crops therewith, whereof their cattle and themselves eat? What, will they not see?"

"But blind they were, and deaf. Then God turned towards them; then again blind they were, many of them, and deaf; and Allah is beholder of what they do."

"Say: Are the blind and the seeing equal? Will you then not reflect?"

"The likeness of the two parties is as the blind and the deaf, and the

seeing and the hearing. Are the two equal in likeness? Are you not admonished then?"

"Say: Are these, the blind and the seeing alike, or are darkness and light alike?"

"Not equal are the blind and the seeing, neither darkness and light."

The Qur'an warns man for being headless and unreflecting on the natural phenomena which are but signs of God.

"How many a sign there is in the heavens and in the earth that they pass by turning away from it."

"Therefore take heed, you who have eyes!"

In order to emphasise the need for applying one's mind, the Qur'an very often uses such expressions 'happily you will reflect', 'Do you not understand' and 'if you will reflect'. Such phrases have been employed at and many as 23 places.

"So Allah makes clear His signs for you: happily you will understand."

"Verily We have expounded you the signs, if you will reflect."

"Abode of the hereafter is better for those who are God-fearing. Do you not then understand?"

"And assuredly We have sent down to you a Book in which is a admonition for you; will you then not reflect."

"And you pass by them in the morning and in the night; will you not

understand?"

Those who are doomed to hell are particularly reproached for not using their intellect.

"They (also) say: If we had only listed or had understood, we would not have been of the dwellers of the Blaze."

At more than twenty places the Qur'an speaks well of those who use their brains.

The Qur'an repeatedly calls attention to the need of giving thought; praised those who are thoughtful and condemns those who are unreflecting. On eleven occasions it points out the virtue of collecting one's thoughts and contemplating on the signs of God.

"Who remember Allah standing and sitting and lying on their sides and reflect on the creation of heavens and the earth."

"So related the story, haply they will reflect."

"Surely in that signs for the people who reflect."

Raking one's brain and contemplation are the means, according to the Qur'an, through which man can perceive the reality.

"Our Lord! Thou hast not created this in vain."

### **Great influence on Human Race**

The Quranic teachings gave birth to a rationalist trend in the widest sense of the term taken etymologically and historically. It made a deep impact on arts and literature and human civilization all over the world in such a way as if a new window had been opened to let in light and fresh air. Islam broke open the lock with which human intellect had been fastened for ages by

the enemies of reason, masquerading as representatives of religion. It was then that the humanity woke up after its long sleep of several centuries, removed the hurdles placed in its way and set its foot on the road to enlightenment and progress.

A French scholar Jolivet Castelot has described this astounding achievement of Islam in his *La loi de l'histoire* (The Law of History). He writes:

"Arabs rapidly made strides after the death of the Prophet since the time was also very congenial for the spread of Islam. Simultaneously, the Islamic civilization saw a phenomenal advancement and spread in the wake of Arab victories. Sciences, arts, poetry and literature reflected its influence and thus the Arabs remained the torch-bearers of intellectualism in the succeeding centuries. They were the spokesmen of all the sciences like philosophy, astronomy, chemistry, medicine and spiritual disciplines. They were not leaders of thought, discoverers and inventors only in name but truly deserve to be so called for they applied their mind with wisdom and intelligence. The span of Arab civilization was short, yet its influence was far-reaching. We can only regret its downfall."

He also says:

"Although they were feudalistic by temperament yet their accomplishments were far beyond their capacity. They gave birth to an admirable civilization. Europe is indebted to Arab civilization which held away from the tenth to the fourteenth century. Europe imbibed its



philosophical and intellectual thought which imperceptibly influenced the Medieval Ages. Compared to Arab civilization, Arab sciences and Arab literature it (Europe) appears to us sunk in ignorance and darkness—it benefited from the health-giving thoughts propagated by the Arabs.

"No Civilization was there during these four centuries. Intellectuals of the West are today holding aloft the banner of this very civilization."

Gustave Le Bon writes about Arab contribution to modern civilization.

"Observation, experimentation and inductive logic which form the fundamentals of modern knowledge are attributed to Roger Bacon but it needs to be acknowledged that this process of reasoning was entirely an Arab discovery."

Robert Briffault has also reached the same conclusion for he says:

"There is not a single aspect of European growth in which the decisive influence of Islamic civilization is not traceable."

He further writes:

"It was not science only which brought Europe back to life. Other and manifold influences from the civilization of Islam communicated its first glow to European life."

It is sometimes claimed that the renaissance of Europe owes everything to the revival of Greek thought. The renowned historian H. G. Wells, however, asserts that the modern world received the gifts of light and power from Islam.

".....From a new angle and with a fresh vigour it (the Arab mind) took up that systematic development of positive

knowledge which the Greek was the father, then the Arab was foster-father of the scientific method of dealing with reality, that is to say, by absolute frankness, the utmost simplicity of statement and explanation, exact record and exhaustive criticism. Through the Arab it was and not by the Latin route that the modern world received that gift of light and power." ●

**On the authority of Abu Hurayrah from the Prophet (PBUH), who said: Allah the Almighty has said:**

**The son of Adam denied Me and he had no right to do so. And he reviled Me and he had no right to do so. As for his denying Me, it is saying: He will not remake me as He made me at first and the initial creation [of him] is no easier for Me than remaking him. As for his reviling Me, it is his saying: Allah has taken to Himself a son, while I am the One, the Everlasting Refuge. I begot not nor was I begotten, and there is none comparable to Me. ●**

**It was related by al-Bukhari (also by an - Nsa-i)**

## **What is Islam?**

**Al-Islam, the name of the Muslim's religion, literally means resignation to the will of God. This name of the religion was announced in Surah 5, verse 3, of the Holy Qur'an. This verse was revealed to Prophet (PBUH) during his last pilgrimage to Mecca. A part of the verse reads: " This day have I perfected your religion for you, and completed My favour unto you, and have chosen for you as religion 'al-Islam'." It is wrong to call Islam Muhammadanism.**

**Islam preaches humanitarianism, universal love, universal benevolence, aims at universal fraternity, and rejects all concepts of racialism and sectarianism.**

**The Qur'an enjoins preaching and persuasion, and strictly forbids compulsion and violence in the conversion of people to Islam. This precept is set forth with the utmost precision in the Qur'an. "Let there be no compulsion in religion. The right direction is henceforth made distinct from the erroneous one" 92:256). The charge that it was the sword that brought about the rapid spread of Islam now no more stands. It has been refuted by a large number of eminent non-Muslim writers. Carlyle has exploded it. Sir Edwin Arnold in his work "*The Preaching of Islam*" has proved convincingly that the spread of Islam was due to its simplicity and rationality. Mr Gandhi has affirmed the same view". ●**

(An Epitome of The Teachings of Islam).

## Moderation And Tolerance

**S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi\***

Almighty Allah made Islam a compendious, moderate and simple religion. It has all virtues of other divine faiths. Apart from it Islam encompasses all events taking place right from the time of prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and covers the period thereafter. The present day situation is no doubt different from the one prevailing earlier. It may become more varying and different in days to come. Present day developments, spreading of education, scientific inventions and harnessing of natural resources have assumed significance. With the result that Globalization has come into existence. Phenomenal expansion of means of communications has helped in bringing the far off nations closer. The sense of distance has vanished and neighbourly feelings have surfaced.

Accordingly, if anything takes place in any part of the world, its news spreads like wild fire as if this event occurred in any town or city of our own country. This trend of international interaction has created some uniformity in manners and ways of life.

Every part of the world, retain its own distinctive features. It is obvious that the climate of a place influences its inhabitants. If some facilities and amenities of life are available in one corner of the world, same may not be found in other part of the universe.

Somewhere paucity of potable water is felt but somewhere it is in abundance. Somewhere vast land for cultivation is seen but at another place barren land stretches. Somewhere dehydrated mountain and somewhere green mountain are observed. Somewhere there are coastal and aquatic areas. Somewhere fish and other things living in water are available. Somewhere even water is hardly found. Somewhere animals are main source of livelihood. People live at some places where scorching heat reaches its zenith. Somewhere rotation of day and night takes place in the same time and some where differently. Nevertheless people have to bear such odds in their day to day life.

When we cast a glance at Islamic Shariah, which is to remain enforced till eternity and covers whole of the universe we get ample proof of its being a divine ordained.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has described religion very easy and said: "Addin -u- usrun" (The religion is easiest). He further added that if some one presents it as a hard one he will fail in his efforts. This is the reason that it may be easy to practice the religion. If it was not so then act some places it would have been followed in as easy way and at other in a hard

\*Rector Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow

way. This would have cast doubt on its being a universal religion.

Whatever the Prophet ordained about the religion he has kept due consideration possible relaxations according to the situation and prevailing conditions. Prophet himself practiced a particular action in different ways. He also often approved actions of Shariah Companions practiced in different ways. Thus he allowed to follow Shariah in a moral congenial and relaxed way according to the prevailing conditions.

The true reason of differences is that companions observed various methods of practices of the Prophet at different times. Companions narrated them in those ways after the demise of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It resulted in coming up of various schools of thoughts. But main stream of all is the same i.e. traditions of the prophet.

No doubt, different in Islamic Shariah are divine gift and mercy for all and sundry. Variations in practice and following of Shariah instructions should not be taken as a result of separation and parochialism. These are indeed a boon from Almighty God. Any School of thought should not regard itself as the true follower of Islam and others deviator of Shariah.

It should be kept in mind that such sort of differences in Bani-Israil and their oppression on others are mentioned in the holy Qur'an as an act of repugnance. Islam lays great emphasis on Muslims to unite and foster pan-Islamic brotherhood and fraternity.

Unfortunately, despite these facts some schools of thoughts try to intensify in religious issues because of prejudice and bias. They present points of difference in such a way as it is an issue between Islam and infidelity. It seems that they are only on the right path any others are astray. Often it is also seen that follower of one sect do not offer (Salat) behind the other.

It is obvious that under these circumstances we appear to be a fractured community. The holy Qur'an says: "Verily, this ummah of yours is a single ummah and I am your Lord and Cherisher therefore. Serve me (and no other). (S-21.A.92) The holy Qur'an also mentioned the doctrine of prophets: "We make no distinction (they say) between one any another of His messengers (S.2.A.285). The holy Qur'an explicitly warns us not to divide among themselves.

In such a scenario Muslims should live amicably with each other as brothers and do not isolate themselves from each other.

It should be noted that authoritative interpretations of those who service the cause of Islam, according to the Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) should be taken as genuine. Whether any interpretative difference exists our forefather acted upon it. A host of instances are found in this regard. Omar bin Abdul Aziz said: "I would not have been pleased hearing that differences did not occur in the lives of companions of the Prophet. For if they agreed on an issue. Next

someone comes and does not act on the words of the Prophet then he becomes astray. But when differences occurred amongst the companions, one is free to choose the one he likes. No doubt, there is an ample room in Islamic Shariah.

On the basis of it Ulema of Shawafe said about "Amr bil-Maruf Wannahi-Anil Munkar" (Enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong). "Interpretation of law point should not be denied by dint of power. If one argues with scholarly proof and fair reasons then out of two things follow one which appears correct."

Imam Ibn Taymia has mentioned such issues in detail in his collection of Fatawas. We also see Imam Shafai, Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal and other traditionists and Jurists as to how they maintained tolerance and moderation among themselves despite these differences on issues.

The need of hour is that we must keep their practices alive and imitate them otherwise every school of thought will regard itself the follower of right path and disagree with others.

In any way it is not appropriate for the followers of the last Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to create a gulf among themselves on the ground of practices and performances of religious rituals in different ways. It is time we must unite and be an emblem of this verse of the holy Qur'an. "And thus we have made you a community Justly-balanced, that you might be witnesses to mankind, and that the messenger might be a witness to you." (S.2,A.143) ●

(Transliteration by Obaidur Rahman Nadwi)

**On the authority of Abu Hurayrah, who said that the Messenger of Allah said:**

**The first of his actions for which a servant of Allah will be held accountable on the Day of Resurrection will be his prayers. If they are in order, then he will have prospered and succeeded; and if they are wanting, then he will have failed and lost. If there is something defective in his obligatory prayers, the Lord (glorified and exalted be He) will say: See if My servant has any supererogatory prayers with which may be completed that which was defective in his obligatory prayers. Then the rest of his actions will be judged in like fashion.**

**It was related by at-Tirmidhi (also by Abu Dawud, an-Nasai, Ibn Majah and Ahmad).**

## **The Seven Who will be under Allah's Shelter of Mercy**

**Abu-Hurayrah related that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said:**

**"Seven types of people will be under the shelter of Mercy on the Day when there will be no shade other than that of Allah's Mercy: 1) a just ruler, 2) a young person who kept busy in Allah's worship, 3) a person whose heart was attached to the mosque, 4) two persons who loved each other for Allah's sake, they met for His sake and partook for His sake and left each other for His sake, 5) a man who was invited by a beautiful and charming woman but declined her offer saying, I fear Allah, 6) a person who gave charity so secretly that his left hand did not know what was given by his right hand and 7) a person who remembered Allah private, so that his eyes brimmed over with tears."**

**(Bukhari and Muslim)**

## Health In Islam: A Holistic Approach

**Ayesha Stacey**

Islam comes from the root word "Sa-la-ma", as do the words Muslim (one who follows the message of Islam) and "salaam" (peace). The root word "Sa - la - ma" denotes peace, security, safety as it does submission and surrender to Almighty God. This security is inherent in the submission to the One God. When a person submits to the will of God he will experience an innate sense of security and peacefulness. He must also understand that God is the Creator of all that exists or will come to exist, and has power over all things. With this surrender and understanding comes peace – real, easily attainable, and everlasting peace.

From the beginning of time, God has revealed Himself through Prophets and Messengers, who have come with one message: Worship God, without partners, without offspring, and without intermediaries. The rules and laws were sometimes different, because they were applicable for the people of a particular time or place, but the creed of each Messenger was the same: "Worship Me (i.e., God), and your reward will be contentment in this life and in the hereafter." When Prophet Muhammad came, in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, BCE, his message was slightly different. He called to the worship of the One God, but his call was for all of humankind. The message was now complete and revealed for all places, and in all times.

Islam was completed for the benefit of all who will exist, until the final

day of Judgement. It is not a religion belonging to the Arabs, although Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, was an Arab, nor is it a religion for the Asian countries or the third world. Muslims exist in all continents and come from all races and ethnicities. There are Muslims in New York, Sydney, Cape Town and Berlin as well as Cairo, Kuala Lumpur and Dubai. Muslims are as diverse as this magnificent planet. Islam is also not a religion that accepts part time or halfhearted commitment. Islam is a way of life; Islam is a holistic way of life.

When God created the world He did not abandon it to instability and insecurity; quite the contrary, He sent guidance. He sent a rope, firm and steady, and by holding tightly to this rope an insignificant human being can achieve greatness and eternal peace. A Muslim strives to obey God's commandments and does so by following God's guide to life – the Qur'an, and the authentic teachings and traditions of Prophet Muhammad.

The Qur'an is a book of guidance and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad explain and in some cases expand on that guidance. Islam, as a complete way of life, stresses the importance of maintaining good health and offers the ways and the means to cope with ill health. The Qur'an is a book of wisdom. It is a book full of the wonder and glory of God, and a

testament to His mercy and justice.

Through His infinite mercy, God has provided us with a holistic approach to life, one that covers all aspects, spiritual, emotional and physical. When God created humankind, He did so for one purpose – to worship Him.

"And I (God) created not the jinn and humankind, except to worship Me (Alone)". (Qur'an 51:56)

The comprehensiveness of Islam allows every aspect of life, from sleeping and washing, to praying and working, to be an act of worship. One who is truly submitted to God is grateful for the countless blessing in his or her life and wants to thank and praise God for His generosity, kindness and mercy. Prophet Muhammad explained that we should be thankful to God in every situation, whether we perceive it to be good or bad. The reality is that God is just, therefore, whatever situation a believer finds himself in, he knows there is goodness and wisdom embedded in it.

"Indeed amazing are the affairs of a believer! They are all for his benefit. If he is granted ease then he is thankful, and this is good for him. And if he is afflicted with a hardship, he perseveres, and this is good for him."(Muslim)

The life of this world is not stable. Every person goes through stages and phases; happiness is followed by sadness and then relief of joy, ones faith is strong and unconquerable, and seemingly, for no reason it plummets, next, by the will of God it slowly rises again. Periods of great fitness and health are followed by injury or, sickness, but with each twinge of pain or suffering a true believer feels some of

his sins fall away.

"Whenever a Muslim is affected by harm from sickness or other matters, God will expiate his sins, like leaves drop from a tree." (Bukhari and Muslim)

Islam teaches us to be concerned, about the whole person. Following the guidance and commandments of God allows us to face illness and injury with patience. Complaining and bemoaning our situation will achieve nothing but more pain and suffering. Our bodies and minds have been given to us as a trust, and we are responsible for them. The guidance of God covers every aspect of life and there are specific ways of dealing with health issues, which we will begin to explore here.

### **Qur'an is a Healing**

Islam takes a holistic approach to health. Just as religious life is inseparable from secular life, physical, emotional and spiritual health cannot be separated; they are three parts that make a completely healthy person. When one part is injured or unhealthy, the other parts suffer. If a person is physically ill or injured it may be difficult to concentrate on anything but the pain. If a person is emotionally unwell, he or she may not be able to take care of him or herself properly or find their minds distracted from the realities of life.

When speaking to his followers Prophet Muhammad spoke of the strong believer being better than a weak believer, in the eyes of God. The word strong here can mean strength in faith or in character, but it can equally mean health. Our bodies are a trust from God and we are accountable for how we look after our health. Although



physical and emotional health is important, spiritual health needs to be the first priority in our lives. If a person is in spiritual health needs to be the first priority in our lives. If a person is in spiritual difficulty then life can begin to unravel and problems may occur in all areas.

Injury and illness can happen for many reasons, however it is important to acknowledge and accept that nothing happens in this world except with the permission of God.

"And with Him are the keys of the unseen; no one knows them except Him. And He knows what is on the land and in the sea. Not a leaf falls but that He knows it. And no grain is there within the darkneses of the earth and no moist or dry [thing] But that is [written] in a clear record." (Qur'an 6:59)

This world is but a transient place, beautified for us by the things we covet, spouses, children, wealth and luxury. Yet these are just passing pleasures and temporary joys compared to the contentment and extreme beauty that is Paradise. To help us secure a place in Paradise God places trials and obstacles in our way. He tests our patience and gratitude and provides us with ways and means of overcoming the obstacles. God is also merciful and just, so we can be sure that whatever trials we face God designed them to help us secure a place of eternal bliss. Injury and ill health are trials and tests that we must face with patience, forbearance and above all acceptance.

Accepting a trial does not mean that we do nothing, of course we try to overcome it and learn from it. Accepting means facing the trial patiently armed

with the weapons God has provided for us. The greatest of these weapons is the Qur'an is not a textbook or book of medicine, but it does contain guidance that promotes good health and healing.

"O mankind! There has come to you a good advice from your Lord (i.e. the Qur'an) and a healing for that which is in your hearts." (Qur'an 10:82)

"And We send down from the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe..." (Qur'an 17:82)

There is no doubt that the words and verses of Qur'an contain a healing for humankind's woes and ills. It was narrated in the traditions of Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, that certain verses and chapters by God's will could bring about healing from disease and distress. Slowly over more on medicines and physical remedies rather than the spiritual remedies prescribed by Islam. If faith is strong and unwavering, the effect of spiritual remedies may be fast and efficient.

From the traditions of Prophet Muhammad comes the story of the man whom the Prophet sent on a mission. He camped close by to some people who did not show him any hospitality. When the leader of the nearby camp was bitten by a snake, they went to Prophet Muhammad's companion for help. He recited the opening chapter of the Qur'an over the afflicted man and he arose "as if released from a chain".

It is important to seek a cure from the Qur'an, in the manner prescribed by the Prophet Muhammad, but it is equally important to understand that it is permissible and at times

obligatory, to seek help from medical practitioners. Our bodies are ours, only in trust; we are obligated to treat them with respect and to maintain them in the best way. In accordance with the holistic approach Islam takes to health, there is no contradiction in seeking a cure from both medical science and permissible spiritual means.

The Prophet said; "There is no disease that God Almighty has created, except that He also has created, its treatment."

He also said: "There is a remedy for every malady, and when the remedy is applied to the disease it is cured with the permission of Almighty God."

Qur'an is a healing for the body and the soul. Whenever life becomes too difficult or we are beset by injury, illness or unhappiness Qur'an will light our way and lighten our burdens. It is a source of solace and ease. In the world today many people have untold wealth and luxury but little contentment. Those of us in the West have access to doctors and medicine, to traditional healing, medical breakthroughs and alternative cures but many lives are full of emotional pain and listlessness. What is missing is belief, faith in God.

In the past several decades, it has become widely accepted that religious belief and practices have significant impact on both physical and emotional health. Medical and scientific research has demonstrated that religious commitment aids in the prevention and treatment of emotional disorders, disease and injury and enhances recovery. Belief in and submission to the will of God is the most essential part of good health care. The

words and recitation of Qur'an can cure hearts and minds, as well as overcome illness and injury, however complete trust in God does not negate the healing effects of medical science provided we use them only in lawful ways. Indeed, God has power over all things, therefore we need to put our trust in Him, develop a lasting relationship with His book of guidance—the Qur'an, follow the authentic teachings of Prophet Muhammad and seek a cure, wherever it may be.

### **Diet and Nutrition**

Islam is code of life. Muslims do not practice only during the weekends or festive seasons; rather religion is an ongoing part of daily life. Islam is organised in a spiritual and moral way, taking into account humankind's innate needs and desires. The tenets of Islam are derived from the Qur'an and the authentic traditions of Prophet Muhammad, known as the Sunnah. These two sources of revelation are a guide, or a manual for life.

Although, it may, at first, seem like a rather strange analogy; let us compare Islam's life instructions with the manual that comes with a computer. Imagine buying a new laptop without ever having seen any of the technological advances of the last several decades. Would you know where the on/off button was? If you managed to turn the computer on would you know how to look after it, do a system restore, run an anti-virus scan, or generally maintain it? Without a manual, the computer would be not much more than a useless piece of technology.

The computer's designers also

designed a manual or guide, knowing that without specific instructions the computer would not be put to the best possible use or do what it was designed to do. Technology usually comes with guarantees and warranties that become useless, unless you follow the manufacturer's instructions. Therefore because we want to get the best possible use from our expensive technology we read the manuals and follow the guidelines.

Islam also offers a specific set of instructions that come with a guarantee, a promise of eternal Paradise. There is no 'use by' date on this guarantee and it allows unlimited extensions. If you make a mistake or 'click' the wrong button the instructions clearly advise you how to make amends and restore normality. God designed and created humankind for the specific purpose of worshipping Him and sent Prophets and Messengers with specific guidance to make our task easy. However, without God's guide to life, humankind can become lost and adrift in a world that does not make a lot of sense or offer any real security and contentment. Lives are lived without purpose or meaning and many people eke out an existence that provides little or no real sense of having a life worth living.

The traditions of Prophet Muhammad teach us to cherish good health and realize its true value as one of God's countless bounties.

"And when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you give thanks, I will give you more; but if you are thankless, lo! My punishment is dire.'" (Qur'an 14:7)

Islam's holistic approach to health includes treating our bodies with

respect and nourishing them with, not only faith, but also with lawful, nutritious food. A major part of living life according to the Creator's instructions is implementing a suitable diet, Choosing wholesome food and avoiding the unwholesome is essential to good health. God says in the Qur'an,

"Eat of the good things which We have provided for you." (Qur'an 2:168)

The Qur'an contains many verses of advice about healthy eating that relate to the interconnectedness of physical and spiritual health. Encouragement to eat only good and pure food is often combined with warnings to remember God and avoid Satan. Healthy eating not only satisfies hunger but also has an effect on how well we worship.

"O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy." (Qur'an 2:168)

If one becomes obsessed with food or indulges in too much unwholesome or junk food he or she may become physically weak or distracted from his primary purpose of serving God. On the other hand, if one concentrated exclusively on spiritual endeavours and neglected their health and nutrition, weakness injury or illness would also result in failure to carry out obligatory worship. The guidance found in the Qur'an and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad advise humankind to maintain a balance between these two extremes.

A healthy diet is balanced with a mixture of all the foods God has

provided for His creation. The variety satisfies all the body's needs for carbohydrates, minerals, vitamins, proteins, fats and amino acids. Numerous verses of Quran mention the foods God has provided for us to nourish and maintain our bodies. It is not an exhaustive list of dietary requirements but rather a general idea of the types of food that maintain a healthy body and prevent illness.

"He created cattle that give you warmth, benefits and food to eat." (Qur'an 16:5)

"It is He who subdued the seas, from which you eat fresh fish." (Qur'an 16:14)

"It is He who sends down water from the sky with which He bring up corn, olives, dates and grapes and other fruit." (Qur'an 16:11)

"In cattle too you have a worthy lesson. We give you to drink of that which is in their bellies, between the undigested food and blood: pure milk, a pleasant beverage for those who drink it." (Qur'an 16:66)

"There emerges from their bellies a drink, varying in colors, in which there is healing for people. Indeed in that is a sign for a people who give thought." (Qur'an 16:69)

"And it is He Who produces gardens trellised and untrellised, and date palms, and crops of different shape and taste (its fruits and its seeds) and olives, and pomegranates, similar (in kind) and different (in taste). Eat of their fruit when they ripen..." (Qur'an 3:141)

"...and from it (the earth) we produced grain for their sustenance." (Qur'an 36:33)

God has also provided us with a list of foods that are forbidden and apart from these everything else is considered lawful.

"Forbidden to you (for food) are: dead animals – cattle-beast not slaughtered, blood, the flesh of swine, and the meat of that which has been slaughtered as a sacrifice for other than God..." (Qur'an 5:3) "...and intoxicants." (Qur'an 5:91-92)

While sweets and junk food are not forbidden they must be eaten sparingly as part of a balanced diet, designed to maintain optimum health. Many of the most common chronic illnesses today derive from unhealthy eating habits. Coronary heart diseases, hypertension, diabetes, obesity and depression have all been linked to inadequate diets. The traditions of Prophet Muhammad praise moderation as a way of maintaining good health and the Qur'an stresses the need to strike a balance between any extremes.

True believers need healthy bodies and minds in order to worship God in the correct way. To maintain a sound mind, a pure heart and a healthy body special attention must be paid to health. The heart and the mind are nourished by remembrance of God, and worship performed in a lawful way, and the body is nourished by partaking of the good and lawful food God has provided. Attention to diet and nutrition is a part of the holistic health system inherent in Islam.

### **Fitness and Exercise**

Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, said a strong believer was better

than a weak believer. He was talking in terms of faith and character but also indicating that physical strength i.e. optimum health and fitness were desirable, providing God gave us the ways and means of attaining such strength. Islam's holistic approach to life and thus health offers us the ability to remain strong and healthy. If God decrees that illness or injury are to be part of our lives then Islam provides us with the ways and means of accepting and even being grateful for the tests and trials that envelope us.

We will examine here what Islam, Prophet Muhammad, and the scholars of Islam have mentioned about fitness and exercise. Believers in Islam must take care of their spiritual, emotional and physical health. Our bodies, the most complex of machines, are given to us by God as a trust. They should not be abused or neglected but maintained in good order. As previously discussed, diet and nutrition play a big part in maintaining the best possible health, so does a lifestyle incorporating exercise. Islam lays emphasis on a simple diet combined with physical exercise.

Fulfilling the obligations of three of the five pillars of Islam requires that Muslims be of sound health and fitness. The daily performance of five prayers is in itself a form of exercise, its prescribed movements involve all the muscles and joints of the body, and concentration in prayer relieves mental stress. Good health is necessary if one intends to fast the month of Ramadan and the performance of the Hajj (or pilgrimage to Mecca) is an arduous task that requires many days of hard

physical effort.

Prophet Muhammad advised his followers, to work, to be energetic, and to start their day early, all of which are conditions for a healthy body. He said "O God, make the early morning hours blessed for my nation." Obesity or an inadequate diet, laziness and weakness are all afflictions for which we will be called to account. Even though preventing illness or injury is often out of our control, there are many conditions brought on or made worse by our own lack of attention to diet and fitness. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "Any action without the remembrance of God is either a diversion or heedlessness excepting four acts: Walking from target to target [during archery practice], training a horse, playing with one's family, and learning to swim".

The prophet Muhammad and his Companions were naturally physically fit. Life was tougher, long distances were covered on foot, men hunted and farmed their food to survive, and there were no useless recreations to produced laziness and waste many hours of otherwise constructive time. The 21<sup>st</sup> century contains many distractions and forms of entertainment that encourage laziness and induce ill-health.

Although advanced technology has many benefits, it is important that time is not wasted in front of the television screen or game console to the detriment of our health. It has been conclusively proven that obesity in children increases the more hours they watch television. Other studies have indicated that this is equally true for

adults. Exercise on the other hand has many benefits.

Exercise increases muscle tone, improves flexibility, enhances endurance strengthens the heart and fights depression. Exercise also helps achieve significant weight loss. Aerobic exercise fights heart disease and high blood pressure, and reduced the risk of diabetes, while weight training increased muscle strength and reduces fat, increased bone density, fights back pain and arthritis, and improves overall mental health.

Respected Islamic scholar Imam Ibn-ul-Qayyim stated that movement helped the body get rid of waste food in a very normal way and strengthened the body's immune system. He also stated that each bodily organ has its own sport (or movement) that suited it and that horse riding, archery, wrestling and racing, were sports that benefitted whole body.

Exercise and fitness play an integral part in the life of a Muslim, however it should not come at the expense of religious obligations, nor should it infringe upon the time spent with the holistic approach to life, which in Islam, every thing must be done in moderation. There is no allowance for extreme or fanatical behavior. Letting an exercise regime or a sport take over our life is against the teachings of Islam that call for a middle path and a balanced approach. Exercise and fitness should also not involve unnecessary mixing of the sexes or wearing clothing that exposes the parts of the body that should be kept hidden.

Islam encourages anything that promotes refreshing the mind or

revitalizing the body provided it does not lead to or involve sin, cause harm, or hamper or delay religious obligation. The traditions of Prophet Muhammad undoubtedly encourage involvement in sporting activities as a way to promote a healthy lifestyle and encourage brotherly love and family togetherness.

In a narration recorded by Imam Bukhari (a scholar who compiled Prophetic Traditions) it states that "The Prophet passed by some people from the tribe of Aslam while they were competing in archery (in the market). He said to them, 'Shoot children of Ishmael (Prophet) your father was a skilled marksman. Shoot and I am with so and so.' One of the two teams therein stopped shooting. The Prophet asked, 'why do not you shoot?' They answered, 'How could we shoot while you are with them (the other team). He then said, 'Shoot and I am with you all.'" In another tradition Prophet Muhammad's beloved wife Aisha mentions their love of games and sports. She said, "I raced with the Prophet and I beat him. Later, we raced again and he won. Then he said, 'this cancels that (referring to the previous race)."

A true believer recognizes the wonder of the human body and is grateful to the Creator. This gratitude is shown in the care and attention given to maintaining optimum health. Islam's holistic approach to health covers all aspects of the mind, body and soul. A truly health-conscious person blends diet, nutrition and exercise with the remembrance of God and an intention to fulfil all their religious obligations. ●

(Courtesy: Young Muslim Digest)

## About Education

**Muhammad Asad**

So long as Muslims continue looking towards Western civilization as the only that could regenerate their own stagnant civilization, they destroy their self-confidence and, indirectly, support the Western assertion that Islam is a "spent force".

In the previous chapters some reasons have been given for the opinion that Islam and Western civilization, being built on diametrically opposed conceptions of life, are not compatible in spirit. This being so, how could we expect that the education of Muslim youth on Western lines, an education based entirely on European cultural experiences and values, would remain free from anti-Islamic influences?

We are not-justified to expect this. Except in rare cases, where a particularly brilliant mind may triumph over the educational matter, Western education of Muslim youth is bound to undermine their will, believe in the message of the Prophet, their will to regard themselves as representatives of the peculiar theocratic civilization of Islam. There can be no doubt whatever that religious belief is rapidly losing ground among the "intelligentsia" educated on Western lines. This, of course, does not imply that Islam has preserved its integrity as a practical religion among the non-educated classes; but there, anyhow, we generally find a far greater sentimental response to the call of Islam—in the

primitive way they understand it—than among the Westernized "intelligentsia". The explanation of this estrangement is not that the Western science with which they have been fed has furnished any reasonable argument against the truth of our religious teachings, but that the intellectual atmosphere of modern Western civilization is so intensely anti-religious that it imposes itself as a dead weight upon the religious potentialities of the young Muslim generation.

Religious belief and unbelief are very rarely a matter of argument alone. In some cases the one or the other is gained by way of intuition or, let us say, insight. But mostly it is communicated to man by his cultural surroundings. Think of a child who from his earliest days is systematically trained to hear perfectly rendered musical tunes. His ear grows accustomed to discern tone, rhythm and harmony; and in his later age he will be able, if not to produce and to render, at least to understand the most difficult music. But a child, who during the whole of his early life never heard anything resembling music, would afterwards find it hard to appreciate even its elements. It is the same with religious associations. As there possibly are some individuals to whom nature has completely denied an "ear" for music, so—possibly but not probably—there are individuals who are perfectly "deaf" to the voice of religion. But for the over whelming

number of normal human beings the alternative between religious belief and unbelief is decided by the atmosphere in which they are brought up. Therefore the Prophet said: "Every child is born in natural purity it is his parents who make him a Jew, a Christian, or an idol-worshipper" (Sahih ul-Bukhari).

The term "parents" used in the above Hadith can logically be extended to the general environment—family life, school, society, etc.—by which the early development of the child is determined. It cannot be denied that in the present state of decadence the religious atmosphere in many Muslim countries is of such a low and intellectually degraded type that it may produce in the growing youth the first incentive to turn his back on religion. This surely may be so; but in the case of the education of young Muslims on Western lines the effect not only may be, but most probably will be, an anti-religious attitude in later life.

But here comes the great question: what should be our attitude towards modern learning?

A protest against Western education of Muslims does not in the East mean that Islam could be opposed to education as such. This allegation of our opponents has neither a theological or an historical foundation. The Holy Qur'an is full of expressions like: "that you may become wise", "that you may think", "and that you may know". It is laid at the beginning of the Holy Book

"And He (God) taught Adam all the names" (Baqarah: 31)—and the subsequent verses show that owing to his knowledge of those "names" man is, in a certain respect, superior even to the

angels. The "names" are a symbolic expression for the power of defining terms, the power of articulated thinking which is peculiar to the human being, and which enables them, in the words of the Qur'an, to be God's vicegerent on earth. And in order to make a systematic use of his thinking, man must learn and therefore the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"If anybody goes on his way in search of knowledge, God will make easy for him the way to Paradise"

"The superiority of the learned man over a (mere) worshipper is like the superiority of the moon on a night when it is full over all other stars" (*Musnad Ibn Hanbal, Jami at – Tirmidhi, Sunan Abu Da'ud, Sunan Ibn Majad, Sunan ad-Darimi*).

But it is not even necessary to quote verses of the Qur'an or sayings of the Prophet in defense of the Islamic attitude towards learning. History proves beyond any possibility of doubt that no religion has ever given a stimulus to scientific progress similar to that of Islam. The encouragement which learning and scientific research received from Islamic theology resulted in the splendid cultural achievements in the days of the Umayyads and Abbassides and the Arab rule in Spain. Europe should know this well, for its own culture owes to Islam nothing less than the Renaissance ("re-birth") after centuries of darkness. I do not mention this in order that we might pride ourselves in those glorious memories at a time when the Islamic world has forsaken its own tradition and reverted into blindness and intellectual poverty. We have no right, in our present misery,



to boast of past glories. But we must realize that it was the negligence of Muslim and not any deficiency in the Islamic teaching which caused our present decay.

Islam was never a barrier to progress and science. It appreciates the intellectual activities of man to such a degree as to place him above the angels. No other religion went over so far in asserting the dominance of reason and, consequently, of learning, above all other manifestations of life. If we conform ourselves to the principles of religion we cannot wish to eliminate modern learning from our life. We must have the wish to learn and to progress and to become scientifically and economically as efficient as the Western nations are. But the one thing Muslims must not wish to see with Western eyes, think in desire to remain Muslim, to exchange the spiritual civilization of Islam for the materialistic experiments of the West.

Knowledge itself is neither Western nor Eastern; it is universal-just as natural facts are universal. But the angle of vision from which facts can be regarded and presented varies with the cultural temperaments of the nations. Biology as such, or physics, or botany, are neither materialistic nor spiritual in their' scope and purpose; they are concerned with the observation, collection and definition and facts and the derivation from them of general rules. But the inductive, philosophical conclusion we derive from these sciences- are not based on facts and observations alone but are influenced, to very large extent, by our pre existing temperamental or intuitive attitude

towards life and its problems. The great German life and its problems. The great German philosopher Kant, remarks;" It seems surprising at first, but is nonetheless certain, that our reason does not draw its conclusions from Nature, but prescribes them to it." In short, it is only the subjective angle of vision that matters here; for it may change entirely our interpretation of the object. Thus science, which is neither materialistic nor spiritual in itself, may lead us to highly divergent interpretations of the Universe; interpretations that is, which may be spiritual or materialistic according to our own predisposition. The West, notwithstanding its conception and fundamental presumption; and so must be the Western educational system as a whole. In other words, not the study of modern, empiric sciences is detrimental to the cultural reality of Islam, but the spirit of Western civilization through which Muslims approach those sciences.

It is very unfortunate that our own age-long indifference and negligence, so far as scientific research is concerned, have made us entirely dependent on Occidental sources of learning. If we had always followed that principle of Islam which imposes the duty of learning and knowledge on every Muslim, we would not have to look today for modern sciences towards the Occidental in the same way as a man dying of thirst in the desert looks towards the mirage of water on the horizon. But as the Muslims had neglected their own possibilities for a long time, they have fallen into ignorance and poverty, while

Europe took a mighty step forward. It will take long to bridge this difference. Until then we naturally will be obliged to accept modern sciences through the educational media of the West. But this only means that we are bound to accept the scientific matter and method, and nothing else. In other words, we should not hesitate to study not concede to their philosophy any part in the education of Muslim youth. Of course, one could say that at present many of the exact sciences, for example, atomic physics have gone beyond purely empirical investigation and have entered philosophical domains; and that it is in many cases extremely difficult to draw any distinct line between empirical science and speculative philosophy. This is true. But, on the other hand, this exactly is the point where Islamic culture will have exactly is the point where Islamic culture will have to reassert itself. It will be the duty and the opportunity of Muslim scientists, when once they reach those border-lines of scientific investigation, to apply their powers of speculative reasoning independently of Western philosophical they probably will arrive at conclusions different from those of the majority of the modern Western scientists.

But whatever future may bring, it is decidedly possible, even today, to study and to teach science without a slavish submission to the intellectual attitude to the West. The thing the world of Islam urgently needs today is not a new philosophical outlook, but only an up-to-date scientific and technical equipment.

If I were to make proposals to

an ideal Educational Board governed by Islamic considerations alone, I would urge that of all intellectual achievements of the West only natural sciences (in the above-mentioned, reserved attitude) and mathematics should be taught in Muslims schools, while the tuition of European philosophy, literature and history should lose the position of primacy which today it holds in the curriculum. Our attitude towards European philosophy should be clear from the foregoing. And as to European literature, it certainly should not be overlooked – but it should be relegated to its proper, philological position. The way it is at present taught in Muslim countries is frankly biased. The boundless exaggeration of its values naturally induces young and unripe minds to imbibe whole-heartedly the spirit of Western civilization before its negative aspects can be sufficiently appreciated. And so the ground is prepared not for a Platonic adoration but also for a practical imitation of Western civilization – which can never go together with the spirit of Islam. The present role of European literature in Muslim schools should be taken over by a reasonable, discriminating tuition of Islamic literature with a view to impress the student with the depth and richness of Islamic culture, and thus to infuse into him a new hope for its future.

If the tuition of European literature, in the form it is prevalent today in many Muslim institutions, contributes to the estrangement of young Muslims from Islam, the same,

in a far larger measure, is true of the European interpretation of world-history. In it the old attitude "Roman versus presentation of history aims – without admitting the aim – at proving the Western races and their civilization are superior to anything that has or could be produces in this world; and so it gives a sort of moral justification to the Western quest of domination over the rest of the world. From the time of the Romans, the European nations are accustomed to regard all differences between East and West from the standpoint of a presumed European "norm". Their reasoning works on the presumption that the development of humanity can be judged only on the basis of European cultural experiences. Such a narrowed angle of vision necessarily produces a distorted perspective, and the farther the lines of observation recede from the habitual basis of the European outlook, the more difficult it becomes for Europeans to grasp the real appearance and the structure of the historical objects under consideration.

Owing to this ego-centric attitude of the Europeans, their descriptive history of the world was, until very recently at least, in reality nothing but an enlarged history of the West. The non European nations were taken into account only in so far as their existence and development had any direct influence on the destinies of Europe. But if you depict the history of European nations in great detail and in vivid colours and allow only here and there side-glimpses at the remaining parts of the world, the reader is prone to succumb to the illusion that the

greatness of the European achievement in social and intellectual respects is out of all proportion to that of the rest of the world. Thus it almost appears as if the world had been created for the sake of Europe and its civilizations alone, while all other civilization were meant only to form an appropriate setting for all that Western glory. The only effect such historical training can have upon the minds of young non-European peoples is a feeling of inferiority in so far as their own culture, their own historic past and their own future possibilities are concerned. They are systematically trained to disdain their own future unless it be a future surrender to Western ideals.

In order to counteract these evil effects, the responsible leaders of Islamic thought should do their utmost to revise the tuition of history in Muslim institutions. This is a difficult task, no doubt, and it will require a thorough overhaul of our historical training before a new history of the world, as seen with Muslim eyes, is produced. But if the task is difficult it is none the less possible and, moreover, imperative. Otherwise our younger generation will continue to be fed with undercurrents of contempt for Islam; and the result will be a deepening of its inferiority complex. This inferiority complex could no doubt be overcome if the Muslims were prepared to assimilate Western culture in its entirety and to banish Islam from their life. But are they prepared to do that?

We believe, and the recent development of the West reaffirms

this belief, that the ethics of Islam, its concepts of social and personal morality of justice, of liberty, are infinitely higher, infinitely more perfect than the corresponding concepts and ideas within Western civilization. Islam has abolished racial hatred and opened the way for human brotherhood and equality; but Western horizon of racial and national antagonisms. Islam has never known classes and classes and class warfare within its society; but the whole of European history, from the days of Greece and Rome down to our time, is full of class struggle and social hatred. Again and again it must be repeated that there is one thing only which a Muslim can profitably learn from the West, namely, the exact sciences in their pure and applied forms. This necessity for a quest of science from outside should not induce a Muslim to consider Western civilization as superior to his own – or else he does not understand what Islam stands for. The superiority of one culture or civilization over another does not consist in the possession of a greater amount of material knowledge (although the latter is most desirable), but in its ethical energy, in its greater possibility to explain and to co-ordinate all aspects of human life. And in this respect Islam surpasses every other culture. We have only to follow its rules in order to achieving. But we cannot and must not imitate Western civilization if we wish to preserve and to revive the values of Islam. The evil which the intellectual influence of that civilization causes in the body of Islam is far greater than the material profit it

possible could confer.

If Muslims were negligent, in the past, of scientific research, they cannot hope to repair that mistake today by an unrestricted acceptance of Western learning. All our scientific backwardness and our poverty stand no comparison whatever with the deadly effect which our blind following of the Western educational structure would have on the religious possibilities of the Muslim world. If we wish to preserve the reality of Islam as a cultural factor, we must guard against the intellectual atmosphere of Western civilization which is about to conquer our society and our inclinations. By imitating the manners and the mode of life of the West, the Muslims are being gradually forced to adopt the Western outlook: for the imitation of outward appearance leads, by degrees, to a corresponding assimilation of the world-view responsible for that appearance. ●

**On the authority of Abu Hurayrah, who said that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: "Allah (glorified and exalted be He) said: I am so self-sufficient that I am in no need of having an associate. Thus he who does an action for someone else's sake as well as Mine will have that action renounced by Me to him whom he associated with Me. ● (Muslim)**

# Islam For Salvation of Mankind

**Habibur Rahman Khan**

History of mankind makes a tragic reading. The brightest handiwork of mankind and the greatest of civilizations have seen rise, growth, decline and fall beyond redemption. The splendour and brilliance of the contemporary civilization with its unmistakable Western orientation is indeed dazzling. The glittering façade of modern times is hardly a century old; but unfortunately, as in the past, the portents of its collapse and ruin are already visible. It is clear that human reason and its prize products, namely, science and technology, cannot help us to solve these questions.

The Allah that has created all the objects in the Universe has also undertaken, to make them aware of their goal and guide them towards it. "(Qur'an 20:50)

God, our Creator, knows that unless man learns to use his knowledge and will power to take decisions in accordance with the Divine guidance, he will not be able to solve all the problems faced by him in his individual or collective capacity, God's Religion is the same in essence, whether given, for example to Noah, Abraham, Moses, or Jesus, or to our Noble prophet Muhammad (peace be on him). The source of Unity is the revelation from God.

Fundamental principles of devotion or duty to God and duty to fellow beings remaining the same, suitable laws, according to the

conditions prevailing at that time, were made so as to facilitate people to practice relies religion properly. This is why God sent His Messengers as spiritual teachers from time to time.

"Say ye: "We believe in Allah, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes... and that given to (all) prophets from their Lord: We make no difference between one and another of them."

We believe in all religious scriptures and make no difference in their Message (in essentials).

As an outcome of the materialistic concept of life mankind today faces a crisis, which perhaps has no parallel in history. This crisis, pervading all the spheres of human life, has taken the form of universal revolt against religion. A psychological analysis of this situation reveals that it is the end product of a basic feeling of insecurity. The world today stands at the edge of destruction. The threat of atomic war hangs over our heads. This humanity, if it wants to survive, has no option but to break away from the concept of materialism and humbly look up to the Divine guidance for peace and prosperity in the world. Choice between destruction and survival must be made some day sooner the better.

Out of the religions only the religion can give peace and security which is universal, which cares for all mankind, irrespective of their race

colour, language, religion or geographical boundaries, that religion which is based on a simple ideology and practical methods, that which does not differentiate between man and man in so far as it concerns their humanity, that which brings justice and peace to all mankind, which does not differentiate between black and white, does not differentiate between people on the basis of caste and creed, which does not permit oppressions. These qualities are found in the last Divine guidance, that is the Qur'an.

"Let there be no compulsion in religion." (2:256) "And say that, truth is from your Lord. So let him who pleases believe and let him who pleases disbelieve." (18:29)

The Holy Qur'an declares: "There have been no people in the world but God has raised among them a Prophet for their guidance." (16:36)

"Do not abuse those whom they call upon besides Allah, lest exceeding the limits they should abuse Allah out of ignorance." (6:109)

The Holy Qur'an says: "Who is more unjust than one who prohibits the name of God (Allah) from being glorified in Allah's temples and seeks to destroy them." The first man who put this golden principle into practice was the Noble Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) who allowed the Christians of Najran to hold their services in the mosque at Medina. (2:114)

The Holy Qur'an says: "O mankind, we have created you of opposite sexes and divided into tribes and races only that you may recognize one another." (49:13) There is no virtue only in being a member of a tribe.

It is the pursuit of knowledge and piety in conduct, which can provide superiority in the eyes of Allah.

The Noble Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) of Islam has said: "An Arab has no right to consider himself superior to a non-Arab nor can a non-Arab consider himself better than an Arab. All of you are the progeny of Adam and he was created from dust."

Muslim prayers, fasting and pilgrimage to Makkah al-Mukarramah many present a wonderful manifestation of equality among various nations speaking diverse language and hailing from different countries.

According to the teachings of Islam, the division of human beings into different tribes was not in order that they may govern one another, but it was in order that they may form friendly relations with one another and benefit from one another's qualities and virtues. Thus peace in the world is to be established automatically and permanently.

**Muslim United Nations.** For the settlement of international disputes and wars. Islam lays down rules, which contemplate a body like the United Nations, but which is founded upon the principle that as soon as there are indications of disagreement between two nations, the other nations, instead taking sides with one or the other, should at once call upon them to submit their differences to the central authority for settlement. But if one of them refuses to submit or having submitted refuses to accept the award and prepares for

hostilities, the other nations should fight the denying State or nations and when, as a result of this, it submits, then make peace between them and deal with justice for God love the just. (13:49,1.)

**UNO.** There is disorder because we always talk regarding rights and neglect our duties. U.N. is a declaration of rights without any duty. This organization is doing some useful services to humanity but is largely ineffective. It has become a tool of super-powers who consider themselves as the sole masters of mankind. The super-powers commit inhuman crimes and the U.N. is merely a spectator. It is a secular organization and there is no mention of Religion. Therefore super-powers do not consider themselves responsible to the Supreme authority of God.

The essence of the social order, that has been prescribed by the Qur'an, is: The forces of nature should be subdued and the gains or victory should be utilized for the development and progress of mankind at large in accordance with the eternal values enshrined in the Revealed Book of Allah: for only that way of life can survive which is beneficial for the whole mankind. (13.17)

Human intellect is slowly and painfully advancing towards the comprehensions of permanent values as set forth in the Qur'an. Notwithstanding this the forces working for the supremacy of the eternal truth are ultimately bound to prevail for the emancipation of mankind and establishment of peace in the world will prevail. ●

**Continued from page no 38**

member of the audience retorted: "By God Almighty if we had found any crookedness in you we would have put you right with our swords. "This man expressed such a harsh viewpoint to the ruler publicly without being afraid of any kind of punishment.

One beduin roughly asked Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to give him some alms. The Prophet (PBUH) gave him what he wanted and prevented his companions from punishing this man for the impolite language with which he addressed the Noble Prophet (PBUH). Every person in Islam can enjoy the freedom of speech unless his statements are obscene or defamatory, or blasphemous.

#### **Conclusion**

In Islam man's duty to God embraces both his duty to society and to every other individual, and consequently the rights of each are protected by the obligations of all under the divine law. As the state itself is equally subject to this same law, it is compelled to protect the rights of the individual.

By stressing the equality of all men before God, by emphasizing his dignity and freedom from submission to all save God alone, by mankind the State answerable before God, and thus protecting the individual from oppression, Islam set a high standard in human rights to which the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 can be seen as a basic corollary or extension of the programme laid down in the Qur'an.

There is a disparity between words and deeds in the behavior of the so-called advanced nations regarding human rights. They are silent about rights violations in the Arab lands occupied by the Zionist entity and in other pro-Western countries, and are crying because the Islamic Hudud punishments in some Islamic countries are being enforced. ●

## Viewing of the inside

One has rightly said that the glory of Islam is as clear as the noted poet Al-Mutanabbi has said in his couplet : "If the daylight needs proofs of its existence, then there is nothing that can be understood."

To present the realities and true spirit of Islam before others we must be fully equipped with our store of knowledge. The message conveyed to the Prophet and his Traditions need to be adhered strictly. They should be followed and presented to others in a pleasant manner.

It is unfortunate that due to our own shortcomings we lag behind in disseminating the universal message of Islam to others in a more effective way.

The holy Prophet said : "The excellence of Islam is that a man gives up every frivolity." Once he said: "No body can be a Muslim unless his heart and tongue have also submitted and he can not be a believer unless his neighbour is not secured from his misdemenour." Abdullah b. Mas'ud who relates it, asked the Prophet, "What is meant by misdemeanour?" the Prophet replied, "Excess and oppression" The Prophet further said: "A Muslim is one from whose hands and tongue other Muslims feel secure and a believer is one from whom the life and Property of others remain unthreatened." "None of you can be a believer unless he is desirous of that for his brother which he wants for himself." Narrated Abu Musa: "Some people

### Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

asked Allah's Apostle, "Whose Islam is the best ? i.e. (Who is a very good Muslim?)" He replied, "one who avoids harming Muslims with his tongue and hands." Narrated Abdullah bin Amr : "A man asked the Prophet, "Whose Islam is good?" The Prophet replied, "One who feeds others and greets those whom he knows and those whom he does not know." "He who hurts a "Dhimmi" (non-believers living in Islamic state) hurts me and he who hurts me annoys God." "One the day of Resurrection I shall denounce him who oppresses a dhimmi or violates his strength or takes something away from him." The fourth Caliph of Islam Hazrat Ali said : "The blood of the dhimmis is like the blood of Muslims."

On account of these attributes, beauties and grandeurs, Islam had earned a good reputation within a short span of time as compared to other religions of the world. Besides Islam made great strides in every field. In the words of Late Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, "There is not a single sector of European revival which is not indebted to Islamic thought. Islam imparted a new glow of life to Europe." Noted columnist Asghar Ali Engineer has rightly said : "The early Islamic society was quite progressive and dynamic but since the early 13th century, it began to stagnate. Besides theology, early Muslims achieved great heights of knowledge in natural sciences and secular philosophies. Any one could



be proud of these achievements. In fact Europe was passing through dark ages when Islamic society was thriving with knowledge. Europe learnt from Arabs. Most advanced universities of the world were located in Baghdad, Cairo and other places."

We are the followers of the same religion i.e. Islam. But find ourselves humiliated and disgraced today. Where we fall short of compared to other faiths? The reason is that we are not perfect in our deeds and do not make teachings of Islam our beacon.

Look at the life of the Prophet, the most striking aspect of the holy Prophet's life is its Practicability. He always practised what he preached. He abominated people who told lies and did not keep their promises. He said, "The signs of hypocrite are three:

1. Whenever he speaks, he tells a lie.
2. Whenever he promises, he always breaks it (his promise)
3. If you trust him, he proves to be dishonest."

The holy Quran warns those who do not keep their words. It says: "O ye who believe! Why say ye that which ye do not? Grievously hateful is it in the sight of Allah that ye say that which ye do not". (S.61, A, 2-3)

Anas narrated that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: "I saw several men in the night of meraj (Ascension) whose lips were being clipped by scissors of fire. I asked Gabriel, "Who are these people ?" He said, "These are the sermonizers of your Ummah who asked other people to do good but did not follow it themselves" (Mishkat)

It is time we should introspect and amend our habits and conduct. We should lead an exemplary life which should be pathbreaking for others and allure them towards Islam.

The honesty, integrity, sincerity and selflessness projected to other are sure to bring waywards closer to Islam.

"Lo! Allah is with those who keep their duty unto Him and those who are doers of good." (11:123) ●

On the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said:

The gates of Paradise will be opened on Mondays and on Thursdays, and every servant [of Allah] who associates nothing with Allah will be forgiven, except for the man who has a grudge against his brother. [About them] it will be said: Delay these two until they are reconciled; delay these two until they are reconciled; delay these two until they are reconciled.

It was related by Muslim (also by Malik and Abu Dawud). ●

## Human Rights in Islam

**Siddiq Ali Abdallah**

A propaganda campaign is being launched against Islam by the new crusaders in the global mass media and international forums as well. Amnesty international, posing as a custodian of human rights worldwide, referred to the Islamic Hudud punishments as cruel, inhuman and degrading.

The UN Commission of Human Rights called for the specifically those of Hudud (fixed punishments). They insist on the universality of human rights based on Western standards.

Therefore, as true Muslims we have to shed light on the perfect and eternal concept of human rights, evolved by Islam 14 centuries ago, and challenges the false allegations by the Western colonialists that they are the founders and advocates of human rights.

In the first place, the severity of penalties (Hudud) prescribed in Islamic law for crimes are acting as a deterrent to the potential offenders who may intend to encroach upon the rights of other members of the society. The Hadd punishment for theft, for instance, is to preserve the right of the owner to enjoy the ownership of his property.

The penalty for qadhaf (false accusations of unchastity) is a deterrent to those who may go beyond the limits of exercising the freedom of speech. The attribution of Qisas, which is the punishment for homicide and injury, is a deterrent to the murderer or assailant, who deny the victims the right to lead their lives in peace and security.

It is to be mentioned that Islam took into consideration various mitigating factors to all the punishments it has

prescribed. The accused may enjoy the benefit of doubt and get acquittal. Omar bin al-Khattab, the second caliph, did not carry out the punishment prescribed for theft during the year of famine, when there was some doubt that people might be compelled to commit theft by hunger.

Islam seeks remedial measures to prevent the commission of the offences beforehand. In order to prevent adultery, it advocates early marriage and provides aid from Public Treasury for those, who wish to get married, yet cannot afford to pay the dower. On the other hand, the moral discipline purifies the society from temptations, which excite the passions of both unless he committed his crime so openly that he could be seen by four eye witnesses. If a sexual offence is committed in private, it is not punishable unless the accused admits his guilt voluntarily.

The fact that the punishment for the has been executed only six times over a period of 400 years is a clear evidence, that such Hudud punishments were primarily meant to be a deterrent to prevent crime. In the succeeding paragraphs, I would like to highlight the freedoms and rights guaranteed by Islam to all members of the society, irrespective of their religion, race, sex or social status.

### **Equal Rights for All**

In his famous oration, which he delivered on the occasion of his Farewell pilgrimage, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) reaffirmed the principle of equality and brotherhood of man Islam. He is quoted as saying, 'All men are equal in Islam. The Arabs has no superiority over the non-Arab, nor does the non-Arab has superiority over the Arab, save in piety

(fear of God).

On the other hand, the social rank or high office did not bestow upon the bearer special privileges before law and certainly not entitle him to till-treat others. Jabbala, the king of the Ghassanides, embraced Islam and it happened that he ill-treated a poor man. The man complained to Caliph Omar bin al-Khattab. Omar sent for Jabbala and asked him why he had so ill-treated a brother Muslim. When Jabbala refused to do as he was bidden, because he was a king and the other person only a common man. Omar replied, 'King or no king, both of you are Muslims and both of you are equal in the eye of law.

When Abu Dharr, the companion of the Prophet (PBUH), referred to Bilal, the Absynian ex-slave, as the son of a black woman, the Prophet (PBUH) severely rebuked Abu Dharr for this racist remark and Abu Dharr hurried to apologize to Bilal, under Islam, the black slave, Salman, the Persian, and Suhaib, the Roman all were highly were believing that the Semite Hebrews are the selected People of God.

When Islam came slavery was prevalent throughout the Roman, Persian and Indian Empires as well as in Arabia, and it was acknowledge as a fact of socio-economic existence. Therefore, its total abolition required a gradual process. The advent of Islam heralded the restoration of human dignity to the slaves. The holy Qur'an commanded the Muslims: "And be good to the parents and the near of kin and those whom your right hands possess (Slaves); surely Allah loves not him who is proud and boastful." (Sura 4:verse 36).

Islam proceeded further to bring about the actual freedom of slaves by urging the Muslims to voluntarily set their slaves at liberty. Moreover, Islam prescribed the freeing of slaves as an atonement for some of the sins that one might commit. The Islamic government used to advance financial aid to the slaves to ransom their freedom. The Qur'anic

verse, describing the uses of alms (Zakah). Says: "Alms are only for the poor and the needy... And the ransoming of captives." (Sura 9:verse 60)

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) established brotherhood between some Arab chiefs and some freed slaves. Thus, he joined as brothers Bilal and Khalid Alkhas'ami, Zaid, the freed slave of the Prophet (PBUH) and Hamza the uncle of the Prophet (PBUH). This relationship of brotherhood was a real bond akin to the blood-relationship, so much so that these two brothers in Islam inherited from each other.

Furthermore, the Prophet (PBUH) married his cousin, Zainab, the daughter of Jahsh, to his freed slave Zaid. The Prophet (PBUH) also appointed Osama, the son of his ex-slave Zaid, as the commander of the army consisting of such illustrious men, as Abu Bakr and Umar. Thus, even a slave could aspire to the highest office in the Islamic state.

Rousseau has quoted Omar bin al-Khattab in his celebrated maxim "Man is born-free; yet everywhere he is in chains." When food and clothing had to be rationed in Medina, Omar received his share just as any other ordinary citizen and all the caliphs did not claim any special privileges.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) once emphatically said that if his daughter Fatima committed theft, he would have even her hand cut off. No offender of noble origin was allowed to go free without punishment for his offence.

The Prophet (PBUH) applied the rules of justice and equality even to himself and to his family where necessary, demonstrating the truth of the concept that there is no distinction of class or status in Islam and thus he set a lofty example to be followed by all the Muslims.

#### **Equal Rights of Men & Women**

According to the Holy Qur'an, men and women are quite equal to each other in

their origin, their abode as well as in their place of return and were as such entitled to similar and equal rights. "O people! Be careful of your duty to your Lord, Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same kind and spread from these too many men and women". (Sura 4: verse 1)

Another Qur'anic verse reads: "O ye who believe! Let not some men among you laugh at others: it may be that the latter are better than the former: nor let some women laugh at others ... " (Sura 49: verse 11) this verse includes a list of moral duties and rights enjoyed by both men and women.

The reward for both sexes for their good deeds is also similar: "And their Lord has heard them and He says: 'I will deny no man or woman among you the reward of their labours.'" (Sura 3: verse 195) Men and women are also equal in their rights to realize their material needs, including similar men a fortune from that which they have earned, and unto woman a fortune from that which they have earned," (Sura 4: verse 32)

Islam granted women these rights, which the woman in Europe was deprived of them for more than 1,100 years. Islam recognized an independent economic status of women without any pressure of some economic circumstances any inter-class conflict going on.

No woman could be given in marriage without her consent. The Noble Prophet (PBUH) says: "No widow should be married without consulting her, and no virgin be married without her consent and her consent is her silence," (Bukhari & Muslim) The Muslim woman has the right to propose her marriage to any man she liked to marry. The European woman obtained this right only in the eighteenth century.

Scientific research proved that a difference exists in the mechanism of the brain of each sex and, therefore, each sex

has to discharge the duty for which he is biologically well equipped. The emotional character of a woman is suitable for motherhood, whereas the physical and intellectual disposition of a man helps him in planning his practical life.

Thus, Islam effects equality between the two sexes, where there is a natural ground for it, and differentiates between these where such differentiation is but natural. Islam gives to the man the equivalent of the portion of two females in inheritance, because the man alone is charged with shouldering all the financial obligations of the whole family. The woman gets one third of the inherited property of her own, her husband cannot take it away from her, and even then he has to bear her financial burden as if she had nothing in her possession to support herself with.

The man is under a legal obligation for the maintenance of his family. The Qur'an says: "Men are maintainers of women with the bounties which God has bestowed more abundantly on some of them than on others, and with what they may spend out of their possessions." (Sura 4: verse 34)

Therefore, as the man is equipped with rational qualities and has strong physical body he is fit to shoulder the responsibility of headship of the family. It is scientifically proved that women in the premenstrual days are suffering from severe mood disturbances, and tend to take irrational decisions. This may be the reason why Islam makes the evidence of two women equivalent to that of one man.

The woman is by her very nature very impressionable and liable to digress from the real facts of the case in hand. Therefore, it is wise to have another woman along with her "So if the one errs, the other will remember."

Kind treatment of wives is a part of the religion on Islam. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has said: "The best among you are those who are kindest to their wives." Islam

requires the same high standard of moral conduct from both sexes and has imposed the same legal penalties her husband and can no longer live with him, she has the right to get and can no longer live with him, she has the right to get separated provided that the court is convinced of the grounds for separation. Non-Muslims women do not enjoy this right, as their marriage is a perpetual bond.

Polygamy is permissible in Islam as a solution to many social problems and it is subject to strict restrictions: "Marry of the women, who seem good to you, two or three or four; and if you fear that you cannot do justice (to so many) then one (only)." The Qur'an (4:3) if a large number of men are killed in wars, then polygamy becomes a social necessity to save the society from the sexual anarchy. On the other hand, some men may have greater sexual urge or sexually overactive and cannot be content with one wife. They should be permitted to have a second wife.

Polygamy also offers the solution to the problem of having a sterile wife or a wife suffering from a chronic disease and she does not want to deprive her husband of children of his own. Islam does not deprive the woman of the right to work outside her home when there is a genuine need for her to work, but not at the cost of her primary functions at home.

The woman has the right to travel when escorted by her husband or close relatives (Mahram). The woman in Islam keeps her independent identity and her family name cannot be changed in the identity card even after she gets married. The non-Muslim women do not enjoy this right and have to change their names.

The women enjoy the freedom of speech and many women argued with Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Omar bin al-Khattab and other caliphs over different issues and their viewpoints were upheld. Aisha, the wife of Prophet Muhammad

(PBUH), was a teacher to both men and women, which proves women are not deprived of the right to be educated in Islam.

### **Right to Private Ownership**

Islam does not rate human nature so low as to take it for granted that private ownership will always inevitably lead to injustice and oppression as believed by the Communists. As for refining and educating human nature Islam achieved an unmatched success. Some Muslims owned property yet "they entertained no desire in their hearts for that which has been given them but gave preference to others over themselves shared their own property with others.

Islam took the necessary precautions by enacting economic and social legislations, which precluded feudalism and capitalism and ensured a respectful standard of living even for those who did not own any land or factories.

It has not abolished private ownership but made the necessary guarantees for a fair distribution on wealth. Such guarantees bridge the gap between the classes, prohibiting luxury and ending deprivation. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) urged all Muslims to work for a living, even going to jungle to cut wood so as to earn a decent living, and asked the employers to give their employees wages proportionate to their work immediately.

In Islam, the public resources, e.g., water, food and sources of energy should not be monopolized because they are public property to be shared by all the community. The Noble Prophet (PBUH) is quoted as saying: "Your lives and property are sacred and inviolable amongst one another until ye appear before the Lord (Allah)..." Therefore, it is not lawful in Islam to confiscate the personal property of any person without lawful excuse, as done by the Communists.

Thus Islam combines the merits o

oth capitalism and Communism. It permits  
rivation ownership in principle but subjects  
to reasonable restrictions. It vests the  
ommunity with the power to organize  
wnership, rather than abolish it.

### **Freedom of Religion**

Religious tolerance is provided for in  
e Qur'anic texts and thereby no one is  
ompelled to embrace Islam. "Let there be  
o compulsion in religion; Truth stands out  
lear from Error." (Sura 11: verse 256) The  
ssence of the attitude of Islam towards  
dherents of other faiths is to be found in the  
rarter, which was granted to the Jews by  
rophet Muhammad (PBUH) after his arrival  
Madina and to the Christian of Najran, a  
wn in Southern Arabia after Islam had fully  
stablished itself in the Arabian Peninsula.

It was the first charter of freedom of  
onscience given to all individuals of all  
ligions, offering them equal rights. Sir. T.W.  
rnold in his book "The Preaching of Islam"  
quoted as saying "Muhammad (PBUH)  
ad entered into treaty and guaranteeing  
em the free exercise of their religion and to  
eir clergy undisturbed enjoyment of their  
d rights and authority. Arabs by the  
ctorious Muslims of the first century of  
ijrah and continued by succeeding  
nerations."

The Jizyah (tributes imposed on  
on-Muslims) was levied on the able-bodied  
ales in lieu of military service they would  
ve been called upon to perform had they  
en Muslims." This is unbiased evidence  
ven by a Christian scholar to the credit of  
am.

When Spain was re-conquered by  
ng Ferdinand, innumerable Jews left their  
untry for Muslim lands, preferring a life in  
ile under Muslim rule to life in their  
omeland. The Holy Qur'an also  
mphasized the need to establish inter-  
igious dialogue, "Say: 'O People of the  
ok! Come to common terms as between  
and you that we worship none but Allah;  
at we associate no partners with Him; that  
e erect not from among ourselves lords

and patrons other than Allah. If then they  
turn back, say ye; 'Bear witness that we (at  
least) are Muslims bowing to Allah's Will."  
(Sura 3: verse 65)

Furthermore, the Holy Qur'an asked  
the Muslims to give protection even to the  
non-Muslim enemies, who defect and seek  
asylum in the Islamic State. "If one amongst  
the pagans asks you for asylum, grant it to  
him, so that he may bear the Word of Allah:  
and then escort him to where he can be  
secure. That is because they are men  
without knowledge." (Sura 9: verse 6)

### **Freedom of Thought & Expression**

True science is not in conflict with  
the Islamic faith and no scientist has been  
tortured for discovering or announcing a  
scientific fact in Islam, as did the church,  
Islam calls on people to study space, earth  
and all creations of Allah. A Muslim has the  
right to question the Muslim ruler on any  
matter touching the affairs of the State and  
he must appear, as did Caliphs Omar and  
Ali, before a subordinate judge appointed  
by them to answer charges against them.

All Muslims are entitled to voice  
their opposition against the ruler and  
express their viewpoints without being  
censored. Bilal, son of Rabah, argued with  
Caliph Omar bin al-Khattab over the  
problem of fay (conquered lands) and  
Omar could not silence his opposition,  
Likewise, a woman argued with Omar  
concerning the dower and Omar reversed  
his decision in her favour.

The ruler has to take into  
consideration the public opinion before  
taking any decision. Consultation is one of  
the main characteristics of true Muslims in  
the Holy Qur'an "who conduct their affairs  
by mutual consultation." (Sura 42: verse  
38)

Caliph Omar addressed the  
Muslims saying: "Put me right if you  
discover any crookedness in me." A

**Continued on page no 31**

## Around the World

### **Muslims are main victims of terror: Forum**

A scientific forum concluded recently in Riyadh to caution the public against possible abuse of the Internet to promote terrorism and extremism. Speaking at the forum, the president of the university, said Muslims were the largest victims of terrorism in the world. He emphasized that Islam had nothing to do with terrorism. The forum discussed different aspects of the subject, such as the use of the Internet for terrorism and how to prevent recruitment of terrorists and the spread of terrorist and the spread of terrorist ideologies through the Internet. ●

### **Shariah the only path for Arabs**

A popular Saudi author and religious scholar says the current ferment in the Arab world can be traced to the denial of power to Islamists in the past. Only Saudi Arabia and some other Gulf states have been the exception where Shariah or Islamic law became the constitution. Writing in Asharq al-Awsat newspaper, he said that in Egypt a revolution for change took place in 1952, championing reform and an adherence to post monarchical values, whereas the Egyptian people actually wanted

Islam as their means of reform. When the Free Officers assumed power in 1952, they cast Islam aside, denounced the Shariah and ruled according to a constitution derived from French and English law. Regarding revolutions in the Middle East, he said no one has adhered to Islam, its rule, doctrine and approach, except King Abdul Aziz when he led the revolution in the Arabian Peninsula. He was revolting against delusion, heresy, division, dispute, looting and robbery. His first announcement was that Saudi Arabia was an Islamic state, which would be governed according to the Qur'an and Sunnah. ●

### **MWL takes interfaith dialogue to Taipei**

An international conference on the role of interfaith dialogue in strengthening human relations and boosting global peace and stability opened in the Taiwanese capital of Taipei. Organized by the Makkah based Muslim World League (MWL) and the Chinese Islamic Association in Taiwan, the three day conference aims to promote a culture of dialogue tolerance of different religious faiths. The MWL has already organized three international interfaith conference in Madrid, Geneva and Vienna. ●

## Our Representatives Abroad

**Britain :**

**Mr. Akram Nadwi**  
O.C.I.S.St. Cross College  
Oxford Ox 1 3 TU (UK)

**Dubai:**

**Qari Abdul Hameed Nadwi**  
P.O. Box No. 12525  
Dubai U.A.E.

**Pakistan:**

**Mr. Ataullah**  
Sector A-50, Near SAU Qrs.  
Karachi 31 (Pakistan)

**Qatar:**

**Dr. Aftab Alam Nadwi**  
P.O. Box No. 1513  
Doha, Qatar

**Saudi Arabia:**

**Mr. Tariq Hassan Askari**  
P.O. Box No. 842  
Madina-Munawwara  
(K.S.A.)

**South Africa:**

**Mr. M. Yahaya Sallo Nadwi**  
P.O. Box No. 388  
Vereninging, (South Africa)

**U.S.A.:**

**Dr. A. M. Siddiqui**  
98-Conklin Ave. Woodmere,  
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