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The Quranic Dictum

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

The Qur'an lays stress on following the way of the prophets and asks the believers, time and again, to pattern their lives and conduct after the example set by the messengers of God.

"Verily in the messenger of Allah ye have a good example for him who looketh unto Allah and the Last Day, and remembereth Allah much."

It directs the Muslims to beseech God always to show them the right path.

"Show us the right path, The path of those whom Thou hast favoured;

Not (the Path) of those who earn Thine anger nor of those who go astray."

This prayer which forms part of the service repeated several times a day, teaches man to seek the companionship of the prophets, their leaders and guides and God-loved souls. Whoever shall live up to this supplication by coming close to the appearance and behaviour of these pious souls shall undoubtedly be sanctified and redeemed by divine grace. ■

CONTENTS

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------|----|
| 1- The Role of Muslims in India | - S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi | 7 |
| 2- Khulafa-e-Rashideen
(The Righteous Caliphs) | - S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi | 9 |
| 3- Women in Islamic Family System | - Firasha Shaikh | 13 |
| 4- Nursi And Iqbal's Approaches to
Prophethood And The Prophet | - Mahsheed Ansari | 16 |
| 5- Muslim Personal Law A Boon
to Society | - Arshad Shaikh | 25 |
| 6- Methodology Of Da'wah in
Prisons: A Case Study Of Nursi
Model | - S. Mohammed Muhsin | 27 |
| 7- The Treasure of Human Being | - Obaidur Rahman Nadwi | 38 |

Wisdom of Qur'an

“Tell My servants [O Muhammad], to always say that which is best. Verily it is Satan who sows discord among men. Satan indeed is an open enemy to man. Your Lord knows you best, He will have mercy on you if He wills and chastise you if He wills. We have not charged you, [O Muhammad], to be an overseer over them.”

(Al-Qur'an – 17:53-54)

Muslims should refrain from losing their temper. They should not resort to exaggerated statements. Even in the face of provocation from their opponents, Muslims should not utter even a word that is contrary to the truth; nor should they lose their temper at the vulgarities which are being flung at them by their opponents, nor should they be provoked to pay back their opponents in the latter's own coins.

The Qur'an tells believers that whenever they feel overly provoked with rage, they should immediately realise that such reactions are instigated by Satan who is keen to hurt the cause of their faith. Satan will certainly try to prompt the believers to give up all efforts of reform, and to become entangled in futile wrangling and strife. For it is Satan's aim that all mankind remain perpetually enmeshed in such controversies.

The believers should also never go about bragging that they are going to enter Paradise, or cockily name other persons or groups as the ones destined to enter Hell. For it is God alone Who has the authority to decide such matters. It is He alone Who fully knows about all human beings, about all things both apparent and hidden. ■

Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

Abu Malik Ashari relates that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) said: “Cleanliness is half of faith and al-Hamdu Lillah (Praise be to Allah) fills the scale, and Subhan Allah (Glory be to Allah) and al-Hamdu Lillah (Praise be to Allah) fill up what is between the heavens and the earth, and prayer is a light, and charity is proof (of one's faith) and endurance is a brightness and the Holy Qur'an is a proof on your behalf or against you. All men go out early in the morning and sell themselves, thereby setting themselves free or destroying themselves.”

(Sahih Muslim)

Cleanliness is half of faith because one cannot have full devotion to Allah unless the purification of heart is complete. Thus half of faith is purification of the soul and the rest half is devotion to Allah to the exclusion of devotion to any other deity. Adoration of Allah is the sum and substance of faith; it is, therefore, weighty enough to fill the scale of his destiny with virtuous deeds and secure salvation for him.

The whole universe provides a living testimony to the Glory of the Lord right from the insignificant to the huge and massive animals, and from the tiny atom to the mighty constellations gliding in the heavens – all represent but a very small aspect of His Infinite Might and Glory and they all hymn His Praises.

Prayer is called Light. It has the same blessings as the moonlight as it guides people on to the right path. ■

Communal Harmony

In the world there are countries which are ruled by monarch or Political leaders of particular community. Their advantage is that subjects of these nations belong to the same stream. With the political enlightenment monarchy is on its way out. Now democratic way of governance is taking its place. Economic revolution has given birth to different ideologies also. Our country India is a multi-religious nation. Here Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and others live together following their own faith and practices. Our democracy is, therefore, known as secular democracy. Our constitution which was enforced after independence guarantees freedom of religious commitment and thus there is no conflict between followers of different faiths. The most worth mentioning fact is that in our Constituent Assembly there were 80 percent Hindus but they were so magnanimous that they helped in framing the Indian Constitution in such a way that it covers the interest of all religious bodies.

It is unfortunate that with the passing away of old guards their successors are not so committed to our Constitution as their elders were. Now contradictory issues are raised and often assume dangerous turns. In a secular democracy there should have been no place of dispute on the basis of religious, social and cultural issues. It is unfortunate that demon of communalism, castism and regional attachments has started

raising its head. Its threatening is so wild that often it appears that it would consume the whole good-will and brotherly feelings amongst Indians. Before things go out of hand concerted efforts should be made to ward off evil forces to save the democracy and secularism. Realising the gravity of the situation in 1974 a great Reformer of his time Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi (RAH) laid down the foundation of a very constructive mission by the name of 'Payam-e-Insaniyat' (Message of Humanity). He was quite perturbed of communal riots which were occurring in different parts of the country and creating hatred and animosity between different classes of citizens. He consistently reminded his fellow countrymen to live by high moral standards and whenever he noticed a failing in the society, he made a concerted effort to eradicate it. In large public meetings in major cities of India he reminded people about moral values which were universally espoused by all religions and societies.

Presently we are passing through very crucial stage of our life. It is unfortunate that threat is staring at our door. We must create an atmosphere of good will. The Mission of Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi should be strengthened and given a push to restore peace, harmony and brotherhood. ■

S.A.

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The Role of Muslims in India

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

And do not cause corruption in the land after it has been set right.

(al-A 'raf 7:85)

The above directive was delivered by the Prophet Shu'ayb (peace and blessings be upon him) to his community. This represents the teaching of all Allah's Messengers. All along they instructed men not to cause corruption. This directive is very wide in its coverage and reflects a genuine-concern for human society. It goes beyond a general instruction forbidding mischief, stressing that there is no room for disorder in society.

Once the land is marked with faith, which in turn permeates social life and culture, and there exist links between the Creator and men, chaos cannot be tolerated. For men are instructed in mutual relations and obligations. They are clearly told about the sanctity of life and property. They know how important cordial relations are in society. Once people follow these directives in their territory, the peace should not be disturbed, for such a society is only established after much striving. Many lay down their lives to protect their honor and sacrifice their self-interests to construct this society. Men should therefore learn to lead their lives as servants of Allah. They should maintain fraternity. For Islam teaches that all men are Adam's progeny and Adam was created from clay. In view of all these considerations men are urged not to cause corruption.

The Prophet Shu'ayb's directive above is expressive of his genuine concern.

Allah's messengers imparted such lessons to mankind down the ages. They taught man how to imbibe moral values. They did not impart any technical skills. Nor did they encourage bloodshed or violence. On the contrary, they clarified that man's glory consists in leading life as a humble servant of Allah. Given all this, there is no room for rebellion and disorder.

It is significant that the above verse stresses that there should not be any corruption in the land after it has been set right. Reform involves the efforts of pious people. Then there is striving for this cause which may meet with success by Allah's leave. This is the history of all messengers. It is they who reformed society, rescued humanity and made life full of happiness and peace. As a result of their powerful teachings, men learnt to lay down their lives for their fellow human beings. They transformed the sinners into the pious. Their message prompted their followers to accomplish incredible examples of self-sacrifice and altruism.

It is not out of place here to recount the following incident in the days of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs. In a battle Muslim warrior was in the throes of death. Someone offered him water. However, he pointed to another injured Muslim lying beside him, saying that water be provided first to the latter. When he was approached, he, in turn, said that another wounded Muslim be attended first. All of them attained martyrdom without taking water, while insisting that a fellow Muslim be helped first.

In Allah's sight, and also according to the messengers, it is a very serious crime to cause disorder in society. For, by definition, a society represents a network of many individuals. Likewise, one should not turn a blind eye to the moral disorder in one's midst, thinking that it will not affect one. Nor should one take lightly the incidence of violence in some part of the country. One should not suffer the delusion that such violence will not reach one's own locality. History testifies that such degeneration engulfs the whole of society sooner or later.

The above point is illustrated best by the following *hadith*. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) remarked: "If some people are aboard a boat and they belong to two classes, some on the upper deck and others on the lower level, corresponding to the rich utilising the former and the poor the latter, then it is the rich who enjoy the greater comfort. (This incidentally underscores the Prophet's miraculous foreknowledge of the shipping industry, for such technology was barely latent in his day.) In this scenario, the poor are forced to go to the upper deck for their water supply. It thus goes without saying that water is spilled, no matter how carefully it is carried. As water splashes, it disturbs the occupants of the upper deck. Once this had occurred a few times, the rich refused the poor access to the water supply, saying that it caused them much inconvenience. In this way, the poor were required to fend for themselves. Since water is a basic necessity and the poor could not survive without it, they decided to make holes in the boat and draw water directly through these, for this would save them the trouble of going upstairs." The Prophet (peace and

blessings be upon him) aptly pointed out that in such an eventuality, the rich would petition the poor not to make any such holes, for it would be suicidal. Rather, they would press the poor to draw their water from upstairs, otherwise the boat would sink, "killing all of them, rich and poor alike.

Since we have to lead our lives in this country, India, and since we belong to the same society and country, we should not act selfishly. If we think only of our own interests, this amounts to causing disorder in society. Today we are swayed by such selfishness, having no regard for others, and wholly neglecting collective interests. This malaise afflicts not only India, but the entire world.

It is the duty of Muslims to rise to the occasion and salvage the country which is on the brink of destruction. The government alone is not responsible for our safety. It has its own compulsions and constraints. The Qur'anic directive is that we should not undo the invaluable contribution of our noble predecessors who were true adherents of faith, well-wishers of mankind and sincere builders of community and country. We should ensure that there is no corruption, for Allah will take us to task as to why, in our presence, our country faced destruction. We should present such excellent character and conduct whereby material pursuits, worldly positions and other labels of honor and glory are disregarded. What really matters is God-consciousness. We should have love and sympathy for everyone.

I must assure you that such conduct from Muslims would endear them to everyone. They would regain the leadership of the country thereby. ■

Khulafa-e-Rashideen (The Righteous Caliphs)

- S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi*

Among the Ashra-e-Mubashsharah, the first four ones were held to be more outstanding than the others. They were conferred upon the actual vicegerency of the Prophet (SAW) after his death in the form of the Khilafat-e-Rashidah. They were given the title of Khulafa-e-Rashideen. There was a statement by the Prophet (SAW) also containing this phrase implying them:

(Stick to the practice I pursued and the practice of my righteous, guided Caliph.)

These four venerated souls kept, one after another, the affairs of the state, running, after the death of the Prophet (SAW), with absolute integrity and probity, the way they were run by the Prophet (SAW). Thus, the prediction made by the Prophet (SAW) about the future after him to the effect that the vicegerency of the Prophecy would last for 30 years, too, came true. The first Caliph was Hazrat Abu Bakr (RAA); second was Hazrat U'mar (RAA); third was Hazrat Uthman (RAA); and the fourth was Hazrat Ali (RAA). After Hazrat Ali's (RAA) demise Hazrat Hassan (RAA) managed the affairs for six months. At the end of that, the thirty years came to end. And, so the era up to the end of his Caliphate got determined as the era of Khilafat-e-Rashidah. That was when the forty years of the Hijrah calendar were completed. The first ten years of

establishment and formulation of the Islamic Order during the sojourn of the Prophet (SAW) himself in Madinah followed by the thirty years passed in pursuit and representation of the same Islamic Order. During this period of thirty years, the circle of Islam, getting exceeded beyond the Arab region, kept expanding in the adjacent and neighbouring states and getting wider and wider day in day out. Immediately after the demise of the Prophet (SAW), some Arab tribes, considering that they were no more bound to be loyal after the death of the Prophet (SAW), made an attempt to revolt. They were, then, brought back to the creed and the Islamic Order of life. This vice of revolt that had erupted was put to end by means of military enterprise undertaken on instructions from the first Caliph, Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique (RAA). Hence, the ideal Islamic Order remained in force in its excellent form and manner. During this thirty years period of Khilafat-e-Rashidah, the circle of Islam got expanded from Middle East to farthest borders of Africa.

This thirty years epoch of the Khilafat-e-Rashidah is that ideal epoch which is to serve as the model and precept for the correct Islamic Order in every era and times. Every (so-called) Islamic order can be testified as being the Islamic Order only if it has taken the guidance from it. (Beginning from Rabee'-el-Awwal, 11 AH, this thirty years epoch got completed in Rabee'-el-Awwal, 41 AH.)

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Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique (RAA):

He is the first Caliph. He was the first Companion among the people outside the Prophet's family to have professed Islam. He is the extremely reliable and absolutely devoted Companion. It was he whom the Prophet (SAW) had selected for his company when he (SAW) had taken decision to get migrated to Madianah Munawwarah. He was most distinguished in comprehending the Prophet's intention and temperament. Before breathing his last, the Prophet (SAW) made him lead the Muslims in prayer. He kept the company of the Prophet (SAW) throughout his life and took part in each and every matter. It is for this reason that he is deemed to be the numero uno, the one holding the position at number one, among the Companions of the Prophet. After the Prophet's (SAW) demise he became his successor and Caliph and became the source of the future strength of Islam. The Prophet (SAW) had one of his daughters, Hazrat A'ishah (RAA), entered into wedlock with him. That way, he (SAW) expressed his appreciation of his companionship and cooperation. Since she had joined him as his soulmate in very tender age, her upbringing, too, took place under his (SAW) tutelage. Being his wife, she happened to be in the know of the matters that belong to the realm of privacy. Later, the people gained great benefice out of this particular knowledge of her.

The tenure of the Caliphate of the first Caliph lasted for two years. During this period, he had the social Order and

Government's obligations firmly established and strengthened, in accordance with the exact proclivity and guidelines set by the Prophet (SAW). Thus, this Islamic Order kept on running and progressing on absolutely right track. When the symptoms of his departure from this world started appearing, he had, after having the matter thoroughly deliberated and thought over, Hazrat U'mar (RAA) appointed as Caliph to succeed him. His being really number two in the hierarchy of the Companions got fully verified by the later events. He, too, had this Islamic Order continued and running full steam on the same track with additional magnificent achievements made. The credit of these achievements and the continuation and smooth sailing of the Islamic Order after him, too, goes to the very selection made by him (of U'mar -RAA as his successor to the Caliphate).

Hazrat U'mar (RAA):

After Hazrat Abub Bakr (RAA), comes the name of Hazrat U'mar (RAA) at No.2. He was, in the beginning, till he had not been able to comprehend Islam, bitterly hostile to it. After having comprehended it, he became a staunch follower of it and took to absolute compliance and cooperation with the Prophet (SAW). He remained persistently devoted, like a brave and loyal soldier, to Islam till it became evident as a matter of fact that after Abu Bakr, it is he who ranks supreme. Hence, he became the Caliph after Hazrat Abu Bakr and rendered, for ten years, the service of representing Islam and disseminating the Islamic Order. It

was in his time that several most important countries of the adjacent and neighbouring regions became the followers of the Islamic Order and the flag of Islam got hoisted in many neighbouring states. The people of such a sacred city as Jerusalem who had till then not accepted the allegiance to Islam surrendered themselves before him. They gladly became loyal to Islam and handed over the charge of the city to the Muslim. One of his daughters, too, was taken by the Prophet (SAW) into wedlock with him. That was how he (SAW) gave expression to his appreciation of his services. His conformity with the correct temperament of Islam got vividly evident in several matter on many occasion.

During the reign of Hazrat U'mar (RAA), most magnificent victories took place. The administration and order of the supreme order got established. As and when new situations cropped up, they were resolved by him in accordance with the principles that were already laid down by the Prophet (SAW). So, no situation of any turmoil did ever occur. Thus, he, too, had been the source of getting the writ of Islam and the order set by the Prophet (SAW) buttressed and boosted.

Hazrat U'thman (RAA):

The third Caliph was Hazrat U'thman bin A'ffan (RAA). He was, to some extent, a rich man. After having embraced Islam, he took to spending his wealth in as many avenues of Islam as he could. He had himself devoted to the service and reinforcement of Islam with his body, soul

and wealth. The Prophet (SAW) had one of his daughters, Hazrat Ruqayyah (RAA), given to him in wedlock with him and after she died, he (SAW) gave him his other daughter. Hazrat Umm-e-Kulthoom (RAA), too, into wedlock with him. He had thus his family bondage with him (SAW) doubled and was given the sobriquet of 'Zun-Noorain' that is one who is in possession of two sources of light. He was a descendant of a paternal stock of the Prophet (SAW). Ummayyah bin A'bd-e-Shams and was held in high esteem in his clan. Islam had got a shot in its arm by his confession of Islam. But the people of his clan harassed and harrowed him on his having professed Islam. They harassed him so much that twice he had to migrate to Ethiopia and leave Makkah. It was only when Islam got stronger that he returned from Ethiopia.

Allah, Almighty had endowed him with great peculiarities and capabilities. On occasion of Ghazwa-e- Tabuk, he made a contribution of a huge sum for expenditures on the Ghazwa. Among his qualities and virtues, bashfulness was, in particular, of very high level which was particularly appreciated by the Prophet (SAW). He was subjected, during his period of Caliphate, to great distress by some of his critics. Ultimately, his opponents, having made a raid on him, had him martyred. This heinous crime took place in the year 35AH. He was then 82 years of age. He is the second Caliph to have been made a martyr. The incident of his martyrdom causes a great upheaval in the Islamic empire which led further to

various sorts of perturbations. In definition of his particular characteristic, the Prophet (SAW) had said;

(Every Prophet has a comrade; and my comrade is U'thman.)

Hazrat A'li (RAA):

Hazrat U'thman (RAA) was succeeded by Hazrat A'li bin Abu talib (RAA) to the Caliphate. Being the son of Abu Talib, he happened to be the cousin (uncle's son) of the Prophet (SAW). That apart, even before getting assigned the Prophecy, the Prophet (SAW) had, having taken over his custody from his uncle, made him stay with him. Thus he had been in the company of the Prophet (SAW) since the very childhood. His age was thirty years less than that of the Prophet (SAW). Age-wise, therefore, he was like a son to him (SAW). On his coming of age, he got her daughter entered into wedlock with him. This daughter of his, Hazrat Fatimah Zahraa, was the most beloved daughter of the Prophet (SAW). She had lived with, and been very close to, him, throughout her life. The Prophet's (SAW) progeny, represented by his grand-sons and grand-daughters (sons and daughters of his daughter) issued from her only. Hazrat Hassan and Hazrat Hussain were her sons. As the two houses (Hazrat A'li's and the Pophet's -SAW) were adjacent to each other, they lived like sons and grandsons of the Prophet. And, thus, they had the good fortune of enjoying lot of Prophet's affection. Since Hazrat A'li had lived, all through his life, with the Prophet (SAW) since his childhood, he learnt a great deal,

rather, most of all, from the Prophet (SAW) and had been under direct tutelage of him. Because of that he had been a great source of beneficence for others.

Because of his being closest to the Prophet (SAW) and the exclusive tutelage that was enjoyed by him, it occurred to some people after the death of the Prophet (SAW) that it was he who would be Khalifah (the successor) after him. But, being 28 years younger in age to another closest Companion, Hazrat Abu Bakr (RAA), the later had preference over him. He was also more in concord with the Prophet's temperament because of exclusive companionship he had with him. So, he got elected for the first Caliphate. The second Caliph happened to be Hazrat U'mar (RAA). He, too, was 17 years older than Hazrat A'li. The third Caliph of Islam was Hazrat Uthman (RAA). He, too, was older in age than Hazrat A'li. After his martyrdom, Hazrat A'li (RAA) got elected for the office of the Caliph. Because of having lived his life in close proximity with the Prophet (SAW), he was very prominent in knowledge, wisdom, valor and religious virtues. He always tried to be in the forefront on occasions of Jihad. On many occasions, he gave a demonstration of his exceptional valor. The turbulent conditions that happened in the Islamic realm in the wake of Hazrat Uthman's martyrdom had to be stiffly faced by him, he being then the Caliph. At long last, he, too, like his predecessor Caliph, was made a martyr. This gory incident took place in Ramadan, 40AH. ■

Women in Islamic Family System

- Firasha Shaikh

Amidst all the clamour regarding the validity of triple talaq and thereby questioning the relevance of Muslim Personal Law in modern times, it is appropriate to examine what exactly does Islam say regarding a woman's status and her role in the family system.

STATUS OF WOMEN IN GENERAL

History bears witness to the fact that there have always been two opposite extremes in society with regards to a woman's status.

On the one hand, as in the case of pre-Islamic Arabia and early Christian Europe, the woman was regarded as an embodiment of sin and misfortune. Female infants were buried alive in Arabia while in Europe women were described as 'the devil's gateway'! She was deprived of her basic rights, her share of inheritance, her rights as a wife; even her consent was not sought during the time of her marriage. She was reduced to being a maid, rather bondswoman and she was regarded as nothing more than the property of her husband, to do with as he pleased.

On the other hand, in the modern Western world, the same woman has been given such unlimited economic and social freedom that she no longer considers the rearing of a family to be her responsibility. Under the guise of 'liberation', her feminism and rights have actually been suppressed, all of which has dealt a fatal blow to the family system in those countries.

One of the merits of Islam is that it always adopts the middle path, or in other words, a moderate attitude towards everything. With regards to women, Islam

focuses on justice rather than equality. The Holy Qur'an says,

"O Mankind, keep your duty to your Lord who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate (of same kind) and from them twain has spread a multitude of men and women..." [4:1]

A scholar who pondered upon this verse states: "It is believed that there is no text, old or new, that deals with the humanity of the woman from all aspects with such amazing brevity, eloquence, depth, and originality as this divine decree."

The Qur'an also states,

"...So their Lord accepted their prayers, (saying): I will not suffer to be lost the work of any of you whether male or female. You proceed one from another..." [3:195]

Among the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) in this regard are the following:

"Whosoever has a daughter and he does not bury her alive, does not insult her, and does not favour his son over her, God will enter him into Paradise." [Ibn Hanbal]

"Whosoever supports two daughters till they mature, he and I will come in the Day of Judgment as this (and he pointed with his two fingers held together).

IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY

All the machinery that is required to run the great factory of civilization is produced in the small workshop of family. Family is the single most important influence in a child's life. Parents form the child's first relationships. Each child is looked after with unusual care and sincerity

and provided with an atmosphere of love, protection and care. It is only parents who desire that their offspring should excel them in all possible friends. So they make unintentional, unconscious efforts to shape the next generation better than their own and thus pave the way for human progress. In fact, the future of a nation depends on the nature of its citizens which in turn, depends on the type of upbringing they receive in childhood. Indeed there is no more important nor exalted institution for humanity than family.

ROLE OF A WOMAN IN FAMILY SYSTEM

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) said:

“The woman is the ruler over the house of her husband and she is answerable for the conduct of her duties.”
[Al-Bukhari]

In Islam, the woman has been made the queen of the home. Earning a living for the family is In Islam, the woman has been made the queen of the home. Earning a living for the family is the responsibility of the husband, while her duty is to keep the house running with his earnings. A woman's sphere of activity is ideally limited to her home. It is her responsibility to look after the members of the household she resides in and to ensure the physical, mental, and moral development of her children. If she raises her children to be good human beings, she is contributing to the welfare of the society. On her shoulders rests inevitably, the future of the nation.

Islamic history shines with examples of great mothers. Maryam, the mother of Prophet Eesa; Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad, from whose home came forth the leaders of the youth of Paradise – Hasan and Hussain)! The stories of Asma and Safiya, the aunt of the

Prophet, whose sons Abdullah bin Zubair and Zubair became known as some of the bravest and noblest companions of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) – are well known!

One of the most famous incidents of the pious predecessors is that of a young boy travelling to the city of Baghdad for higher education. In those days, highways were frequented by bandits and dacoits. So his mother sewed 40 dinars inside the boy's coat and advised him that no matter what happened he should always speak the truth. The boy started on his journey with his caravan and it so happened that it was attacked and looted by a band of dacoits. One of them accosted the boy and asked him if he had anything with him. The boy replied in the affirmative. The dacoit thought he was joking and asked him again to which the boy gave the same answer. When the head dacoit came to know of this he himself asked the boy what he had. The boy said that he had 40 dinars sewn inside his coat. The dacoits tore open his coat and found the money. Very surprised, their leader asked him why he had chosen to speak the truth when he could very easily have saved his wealth by telling a lie. The boy replied that he had promised his mother to always speak the truth. Hearing this, the leader of the dacoit felt amazed and ashamed. That they had forgotten their covenant with Allah while here was a child who kept his promise to his mother in a threatening situation. He and his gang of thugs repented and gave up robbery thereafter. Years later, this child came to be known as Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jeelani, one of the most outstanding scholars of Islam of his time, who was responsible for removing many misconceptions regarding the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) and his Noble Companions.

Another famous incident is that of the mother of Imam Rabi'y'a. His father had gone to war while his wife was pregnant. Before he left, he gave his wife 30,000 Ashrafis (gold coins). This noble lady spent every last bit of this money in the virtuous upbringing of her child till he gained proficiency in Deen. Twenty-seven years later the father returned home. When he went to the mosque he found that his own son was lecturing from the pulpit and a number of people including older scholars were all listening attentively. His joy knew no bounds and he praised Allah. His wife told him that she had spent all of those 30,000 Ashrafis on the education of his son, Imam Rabi'y'a!

Such were the mothers of those days! Who took their responsibilities seriously for the sake of Allah the Almighty. From whose houses came forth some of the greatest scholars, jurists, reformers and builders of the Ummah! They set a marvellous example for all women.

PRESENT SCENARIO AND MISCONCEPTIONS

Today unfortunately due to the onslaught of the Western way of life in our society, the sanctity of womanhood is a thing of the past. Today women are expected to stand shoulder to shoulder with men and excel in all fields. The care of the home is no longer her responsibility. To disagree with this point of view is labelled 'regressive and sexist'. The West has played its role in spreading of misconceptions against Islam, insinuating that Islam oppresses women by keeping them locked up in their houses, not allowing them to be educated, beating and abusing them.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) has told women:

"Allah has permitted you to go out of your houses for genuine needs." [Al-Bukhari]

This hadīth clearly shows that in the event of insufficient income in the family or for serving the interests of society such as being teachers, doctors, etc., it is permitted for women to earn a living for themselves. Also the famous hadīth stating that education is compulsory for every Muslim is well known. This shows that women are encouraged to educate themselves and impart education to others. Islam therefore appreciates the importance of educated women because if a woman is educated, she educates the society.

Further the Holy Qur'ān states:

"Treat your women kindly." (4:19)

And the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) said:

"The best among you are those who are good to their wives and kind to their people."

The husband has been instructed to use the authority granted to him over the wife with discretion, in a magnanimous manner.

The primary responsibility of a woman, not just according to Islam, but also according to nature, is the care-taking of her family. Islam has honoured women by giving them rights to inheritance, divorce (Khula) and remarriage; something which women in the Western world achieved only in the last century.

In spite of this, we still see so many instances in society where Muslim women are not given their rights. It is our responsibility to create awareness about the true message of Islam regarding woman's exalted status in the family system, among Muslims and Non-Muslims alike. ■

(Courtesy: Radiance)

Nursi And Iqbal's Approaches to Prophethood And The Prophet

- Mahsheed Ansari

Said Nursi (CE 1877-1960) and Muhammad Iqbal (CE 1877-1938) revisited role and function of prophet hood in the last century. In fact, it was in the agenda of the reform movement of their contemporaries Muhammad Abduh (CE 1849- 1905) and Rashid Ridda (CE 1838-1897). In a rapid world of change and emergence of modernity, ideologies of secularism, materialist thought and the essential nature and role of religion in society were in question. At the heart of any 'change' lies a great leader or champion of change - prophets of God. Therefore, after the Qur'an and God's Oneness (tawhid) prophet hood (nubuwwa) was sought to be re-affirmed by Muslim theologians as 'agents of change' or 'role models' that would be the 'agency' for change or the 'pillar' of continuity in society. To this effect the various aspects of prophet hood and the Prophet Muhammad became important in the 21st century, in particular, the prophet ology of Nursi and Iqbal. For this reason the two great thinkers of South Asia and Western Asia/ Anatolia warrant a comparative study of their views of prophethood, due to their subjective relatedness of prophet hood as an important concept at the heart of theological reform in the 20th century, as well as the primacy each gave in their respective works, addresses, sermons, articles and personal letters.

The comparison needs no justification due to the significant place of Nursi in the religious and social makeup of the Turkish Republic, post the Ottoman era, and due

to his recognised place as a mujadid with his Qur'anic exegesis, positions him as a significant Islamic scholar that is yet to be considered seriously in academics. Nursi's influence in Turkey and the Muslim world is extensive, and thus, it makes it paramount that due attention is given to his 'prophetology', which after the defence of the Qur'an and Oneness and existence of God, took second place in his exegetical writings.

1.1 Historical context and scholastics on prophethood

The construction of the concept of nubuwwa (prophethood) in Islamic theology occurred in response to historical developments; such as contact with other cultures and faith traditions. Islamic prophetology placed emphasis beyond the eschatological associations of prophecy, and dealt with detailed definitions of key terms such as rasul and nabi, which signified the role and duty of prophets and messengers as God's chosen representatives who were bestowed upon every human tribe as a favour from 'His Mercy'. This became the dominant view in the Islamic discourse on the nature, purpose and role of prophecy. In Nursi's theological expositions on prophet hood, he focuses more on the role and function of prophets as guides, and uses reason and logic as the basis for God's 'sending of prophets'. At the core of his argument is that there are ample examples from the natural and created world that depict the need of communities on rightful leaders and guides, thus prophets too played this

vital role in among the community of humans and believers. Further, the key attributes and characteristics of prophets that were outlined by the early mutakallimun shaped the particularity of Islam on this branch of its theology. The characteristics further became a demarcation from previous notions of prophet hood in particular with the attribute of isma or sinlessness. Nursi more than Iqbal focuses on the personal characteristics of the Prophet, particularly for Nursi the attribute of truthfulness or sidaqat is at the core of his prophet ology. This is in line with his reasoning that since prophets are sent as moral agents and guides for humanity, they must necessarily bear righteous qualities and morality in order to fulfil their key function of being 'guides' to humanity.

Moreover, Islamic prophetology has been subject to the synonymous development of intellectual fervour, with the introduction of rationalist thought as well as philosophers. The discussions were often wedged between the traditionalists' and rationalists' camps on the nuances in the degrees of prophet hood as an 'institution', the notion of wahy and particularly the topic of miracles. Regardless of the dominance of theologians or popularly accepted 'Sunni' position, which was championed by al-Ashari's and al-Matarudi's positions, the inclusion and great impact of the rational thought and philosophy even upon the orthodox views of prophetology were inseparable. Arguably, since its introduction until the modern period, rational argumentation has been included in all dialectics in all areas of kalam and in particular on prophetology. The evidence of this impact on modern scholars will be outlined, which will also address how Nursi

and Iqbal grappled and responded with reason or 'aql' in their argument for prophet ology in Islam.

The idea of 'finality of prophet hood' (khatim al anbiya) and revelation was re-emphasised as early as Abu Bakr's caliphate (7th century) due to his struggle with the issue of 'false prophets' in early Islam. The concept of finality of prophet hood resurfaced in the last two centuries, in particular in the near East (Persia and India), which have a geographical and contextual proximity to both Nursi and Iqbal. Iqbal in particular addressed this aspect of prophethood in his writings. The mystical position and construction of nubuwwa also became significant; therefore, this paper will assess how far Nursi and Iqbal continued this position. Lastly, the issue of reason and tradition/revelation, or the aql and naql/wahy, emerged in two important phases of the Islamic history: in the 12th century and then in the 20th century, respectively. In the 12th century, the influence of Hellenistic thought and the rise of 'falsafa' philosophy in medieval Islam was the first phase. The use of aql in the discourse of the mutakallimun ensured a 'sure space' was created for 'reason' in orthodoxy.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, the influence of the enlightenment and positivist thought gave way to the re-emergence of rational thought, which pushed reform scholars to re-evaluate or re-construct prophet hood once again. The pre-eminence of aql, in the hermeneutics of nubuwwa, became the central theme of the reform movement of two Sunni reformers Abduh and Ridda. Thus, the discussion regained ascendancy in the modern period once again. The modern aggression against religion in general, and

Islam in particular, was due primarily to the issue of aql. Like the Sunni reformers, Nursi and Iqbal addressed this contention against Islam by incorporating logical argumentation, reason and philosophy in their theological works, or literary expressions in the case of Iqbal. Therefore, Nursi and Iqbal used aql to dispel criticism against prophet hood. The nuances of their ideas on prophethood, as well as the methodologies they employed, will be discussed. Their use of reason, logic, metaphor and analogy to explain theological concepts will be assessed.

A critical analysis of Nursi and Iqbal on their method of conceptualising prophethood, which is an integral part of Islamic theology, and an assessment of their success in effectively relaying this to the modern reader will also be made. Thus, since this paper argues that Nursi and Iqbal use aql more than naql in their theological arguments regarding prophethood, in doing so it will also outline their hermeneutics of prophethood against this backdrop and consider how consistent or inconsistent they were with their predecessors and contemporaries.

2.1 Nursi's prophetology

Scholastic discourses on the topic of nubuwwa provide many illustrious works from various fields, such as biographical and historical outlines of the Prophet's life with the perspectives of Ibn Ishaq and Ibn Hisham and Al Tabari's epistles to theological discussions like those of Taftazani's 'Creed of Islam' and Ibn Taymiyya's Nubuwwa; the mystical and devotional epistles such as those of Jalaludin Rumi's Mathnawi and Ibn Arabi's various works to more philosophical approaches like those of Ibn Sina and Ibn

Rushd. In the centuries closer to Nursi the writings of Ahmad Sirhindi and Shah Wali Allah provided glimpses of a new theosophical approach to nubuwwa. Even in Nursi's contemporaries we see either theological exegeses on nubuwwa, like those of Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Ridda, separate to the poetical expressions like that of Iqbal (the other main thinker of this comparison). Nursi, however, offers a unique blend of these various approaches to nubuwwa in his esoteric Epistles of Light, the Risale-i Nur, he provides a culmination of all the above stated categories in order to discuss prophet ology and the Prophet.

2.2 Main objective of Nursi's prophetology

Nursi's method and approach may be contextualised by the understanding of his overall objective and aim in writing his treatise of the Risale-i Nur. In Nursi's words, his main objective is to 'defend the truths of the Qur'an and iman [belief/faith in God]'. In fact, Nursi begins writing about prophethood and the prophet while explaining the verse:

And if you are in doubt as to what We have revealed, step by step, to Our servant, then produce a Sura like thereunto; and call your witnesses [and helpers if there are any] besides Allah, if what you say is true. But if you cannot, and of a surety you cannot, then fear the Fire whose fuel is men and stones, which is prepared for those who reject faith.

Thus, while defending the Qur'an, Nursi begins his discussion of nubuwwa. Thus, due to the centrality of the Qur'an to prophethood, Nursi's discussions of nubuwwa are the second most central theme in his writing - due to its correlation

with the divine, books (Qur'an) and its place in Islamic theology as second only to God.

2.3 Nursi's method and argumentation

Nursi employs almost all sciences to defend his arguments on nubuwwah; this unique approach was arguably unprecedented. Nursi's aim is not to detail the historical aspects of the Prophet's life nor to go into detailed theological discussions on prophethood, rather he chooses to focus on and address areas that he thinks require a new explanation. Nursi's prophetology is built on the existing discourse in Islamic kalam, his unique contribution lies in his address of the challenges of modernity and doubts put forward by the Orientalists (mustashriqeen). Therefore, his prophetology is 'reconstructed' with the use of reason, metaphors and combined methodology to appeal to the mind, heart and spirit.

2.4 Essentialness of prophethood according to Nursi

Nursi uses logical arguments and teleological reasoning to state the 'essentiality' of prophet hood for mankind. In the 734th Gleam, in the Words, he adopts the method of analogy of the ant to highlight that prophets are 'essential'. He states that just as divine power 'does not leave the ant without a leader, or bees without a queen, it surely would not leave mankind without a prophet or code of laws'. In doing so, Nursi demonstrates the 'essential need' for prophet hood and prophets, and also the key function of the need being a 'guide' or leader.

Nursi's appeal to reason is further evidenced in the Isharat-al I'jaz (the Signs of Miraculousness) and in the Rays. In the

Isharat al I'jaz, to the question of the reason for the various outlooks of the prophets and their different ways, he equates the 'change of seasons' to the differences in prophetic laws and prescriptions. Nursi thus demonstratively 'simplifies' complex theological issues; his aim is not to enter into 'systematic logic' in his argumentation, but rather to employ what he calls the 'Qur'anic method' of simple 'analogies' that address the rational mind and are easily grasped due to the nature of the example. Nursi adopts this approach throughout the Risale-i Nur in order to put forward his theological understanding of the nature of prophethood and Prophet Muhammad.

2.5 Nursi's defence of two key aspects of nubuwwa

Furthermore, without particularising, Nursi defends two key aspects of nubuwwa that were contested or scrutinised by Orientalists and even Muslim scholars (who were affected by the rationalisation of religion put forward by the enlightenment ethos): the authenticity of hadiths and the validity of prophetic miracles. In his response Nursi does not employ the conventional scholarly discussions, but rather uses a culminated approach of all Islamic disciplines, and particularly uses reason (aql) to defend these two branches of nubuwwa. Due to word limitations, this paper will focus only on his defence of miracles.

2.6 Prophethood and miracles

In the post-enlightenment period, an increase in philosophical and theological rationalisation of religious beliefs encouraged even modernist Muslim scholars to under emphasise (or not emphasise) the miracles attributed to the prophets and rationalise these instances

mentioned in the Qur'an. Rashid Ridda and Muhammad Abduh, Islamic revivalist movement, were key figures in the modern period from Egypt who attempted to provide rational explanations for instances of miracles mentioned in the Qur'an. Theirs is a somewhat unique position among the majority of Muslim scholarship and theology of prophetic miracles. The post-Orientalist discourse is focused on miracles, and hence can be classified as neo-Orientalist. These included examining the 'supernatural archetypal' depictions of Muhammad by early exegetists.

For example in the chapter Elephant (Fil), there is an out-right rejection of the incident of the 'birds flock threw stones that stopped the army of Abraha', which is the accepted position that is deemed 'miraculous', instead the explanation of a widespread epidemic that destroyed the army, is found in their commentaries of this Qur'anic chapter.

While Iqbal is mostly silent on the aspect of miracles, Nursi used 'logic' in addition to the Qur'an and hadith in order to argue for the essentiality of miracles as part of nubuwwa. Nursi's position on miracles is unique as he explains not only the need, he also discusses that these incidents took place and the various instances of wisdom underlying the miracles attributed to prophets. In the Twentieth Word, Nursi details selective key prophetic miracles outlined in the Qur'an including Abraham's escapade whilst being in the pit of fire and Solomon's flight through the air covering many kilometres distance in short periods. Here Nursi's theological and ontological explanations are unique; his sophisticated explanation does not negate the possibility of the

occurrence of these 'miraculous events', rather it history. However, Nursi still upholds the importance of the human aspects of the Prophet as he was sent as a 'role model' and 'guide' to human beings, as follows:

For God Almighty sent him in the form of a human being so that he might be a guide and leader to human beings in their social affairs, and in the acts and deeds by means of which they attain happiness in both worlds; and so that he might disclose to human beings the wonders of Divine art and His dispositive power *Jhat* underlie all occurrences and are in appearance customary, but in reality are miracles of Divine power... For, in accordance with the purpose of the examinations and trials that man is to undergo, the way must be shown to him without depriving him of his free will: the door of the intelligence must remain open, and its freedom must not be snatched from its hand. But if miracles had occurred in so apparent a way, intelligence would have had no choice.

Khalil maintains that 'although some qualities and aspects of the Most Noble Messenger, have been described in books of history and biography, most of those qualities relate to his humanity'. The spiritual personality and the sacred nature of the prophet are not covered adequately. Thus, Nursi is more interested in the universal aspect of prophethood and the prophet Muhammad. It is this 'universal manifestation' of his prophethood in 'meaning' and 'essence' that emanates from his messengership. It is through this lens that Nursi puts forward his prophethology.

In order not to proceed in error, one should raise his head beyond the ordinary qualities of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that pertain to his participation in the

human state, and behold instead his true nature and luminous stature that pertain to the rank of messenger-ship. Otherwise, one will either show him irreverence, or instill doubts in oneself.

This is significant for Nursi was again addressing another emerging criticism - an over emphasis on the historical personality of the Prophet (there was a similar trend in Christian prophethood and wrote extensively on the 'finality of prophet hood' in his letters, addresses and speeches, against the then newly established Ahmadiya movement.

3.2 Main objective of Iqbal's prophetology

Iqbal's main aim in his poetical writings, as well as his prose works like the Reconstruction and his various letters, essays and speeches, was the subject of the 'survival of Islam' and the Muslim ummah amidst the intellectual, cultural and political dominion of the Western world. Iqbal, like his predecessor Jamal ad- Din al- Afghani (CE 1838-1897) whom he looked to admiringly, sought a different ideal for what he perceived to be the only solution for the shameful 'enslavement' of Muslims everywhere. For Iqbal the solution was social action and social change, and in many ways, political equity and unanimity with other powers of the world. He therefore sought to dedicate his key writings on this aspect in his Reconstruction of Islam in the modern world. To this effect his prophetology was uncovered by social and political developments in India. He therefore developed his prophetology in his prose and literary works to inspire not only the Indian Muslims, but also to a wider South Asian audience since he wrote in Persian. The objective was therefore to evoke

passion and instill socio-political change by inspiring the masses with prophetic examples, stories, images and parables that he used in his great literary works. Iqbal's main pejorative was against the Ahmadiya, who theologically challenged the orthodox position on the notion of finality of prophethood. To this he put a fierce defence.

3.3 Iqbal's method and argumentation

For Iqbal, prophet hood and the prophet represented the dominant devotional figure of his heart (qalb) and the domination of his imagination as beautifully illustrated in various parts of his literary work dedicated to the person of the Prophet. Early on Iqbal was influenced by his predecessors' veneration and love of the Prophet, so much so that he too adopted their theosophical approaches to the Prophet. One such influence was India's scholars in the decline of the Mughal and rise of the British Raj, Shah Wali Allah. It was Shah Wali Allah's theosophical method, the combination of theology and philosophy, that appealed to the philosophy orientated Iqbal. For Iqbal believed that 'an art that does not revive the vitality of the people is more dangerous than forces of Genghis Han and Attila'. Therefore, although he liked the Persian poet Hafiz, he though he was too beautiful and utopic to be true. He adopted the theosophic approach, especially in his poetry dedicated to the Prophet and other prophets, in order to instill and evoke change in his people.

3.4 Iqbal's mystical and devotional depictions of the Prophet

The role and function of prophethood depicted through Prophet Muhammad exists in almost all of Iqbal's poetry from the Asrar to the Armaghan.

Iqbal's mystical depictions of the Prophet were aroused upon the study of law and jurisprudence as well as a visit to Afghanistan, where he was inspired to write the finest Persian poem upon seeing the khirqah-i sharef (cloak of the Prophet) at Qandahar.

I saw it in the light of "I have two cloaks", His religion and his ritual are the effect of the All, In his forehead is write the destination of everything.

Iqbal, as a devotee, demonstrates a 'perfect trust' in the character and essence of the prophet. In him is our trust on the Day of Judgement, and in this world too he is our protector.

Schimmel claims that role of as shafi or the prophet as the intercessor was not pronounced as much by Iqbal. This is questionable and Schimmel's German background as well her Orientalist context is very much in the neo-Orientalist discourse, thus her critiques or appraisals of Iqbal need to be contextualised from this perspective. Nevertheless, even Schimmel admits Iqbal's total and absolute confidence in the Prophet as a guide for every human affair, including his own illness. In fact Iqbal composed a long poem, Pas chee khwada kard, in which, after describing the miserable situation of the Muslims, he asks the Prophet to help him in his illness - just as seven centuries ago the Egyptian al-Busri (d. 1296 CE) composed his famous Qasidat al Burdah in honour of Muhammad and was cured.

Interior medicine for me is only that I recite blessing (durud) on your ancestor (Muhammad).

Furthermore, according to Schimmel, Iqbal assumes the prophet to be the 'visible' tide

of God's activity as in the poetical lines:

God is my Hidden One, Thou art my Open One! With God I talk in veils, with Thee openly!

Iqbal therefore turns to the Prophet in his poetry not only for praise but also for help. The extent and greatness of the Prophet in Iqbal's thought is exemplified in another verse, where Iqbal refers to the prophet as the 'Preserved Tablet' and 'the Pen'. These are both mystical depictions of theology: the 'Preserved Tablet' of God's determining (qadar), and the pen symbolises divine knowledge and will manifesting through His power.

3.5 Iqbal's intense longing and love for the prophet in his poems

Iqbal, like Nursi, never had a chance to physically perform the pilgrimage or visit the Prophet in Medina. In his later poems this became a dominant theme that expressed his fervent longing for the resting place of the Prophet. This theme remained in his poetry until his final days, when he still expressed his ardent wish to visit the Prophet. Moreover, in Armaghani Hijaz , a whole chapter is dedicated to the prophet - 'in the presence of the Prophet'.

Iqbal expressed and felt that loyalty and faithfulness to Muhammad was the answer (Jawab). In the poem Jawab wa Shikwa in 1913, prior to his writing of Armaghani Hijaz , Iqbal outlines seven aspects of the Prophet and details his sublime characteristics as: 'Mustafa, The Chosen One'; the source of everything good and useful in human life; the king of both poverty and sovereignty - belonging to his manifestation; he is the model for every Muslim; the visible and witness of God's beauty and power; His way only way to choose; Muslims this century are

strangers to his beauty.

In *Asrare Khudhi* (the Secrets of the Self), the 'self' is strengthened by the love only and Iqbal depicts and seeks this love in the person of the Prophet.

There is a beloved hidden within thine heart ... By love of him the heart is made strong in the Muslim heart is the home of Muhammad All our glory is from the name of Muhammad.

Iqbal may be easily placed among the array of mystical and literary traditions of longing and love for the Prophet as espoused in metres like Rumi, Bedil and Hafiz. Iqbal is considered to be one of the final poets in Persian literature to write in this metre. In *Bal e Jibreel* (Gabriel's Wing), the Prophet becomes the epitome and 'perfect manifestation of Love'. This theme of perfection echoes the common theme of *Insane i Kamil* - perfected human selfhood that manifests most exclusively in the Prophet Muhammad among all the other perfected souls of the other prophets - is a central theme in both Iqbal's and Nursi's works.

In *Javid Nama*, Iqbal is taught the secrets of prophethood by the mystic 'Hallaj', this affirms that Iqbal's respect and one of his key sources of inspiration, has been the mystical and Sufi teachings (such as Rumi and Hallaj) more than philosophical teachings. Thus, various passages in the *Javid Nama*, honour the prophet and express his mystical personality. Moreover, Iqbal echoes the mystical tradition and his Sufi predecessors in the *Rumuz* - considered to be the 'treasure house' of his prophetology, where Muhammad is depicted as the 'lamp in the darkness of being'. Lastly, the relationship of the prophet being a 'slave' of God and

also 'the mercy sent to all the worlds' (*Rahmat-al alimin*) demonstrates Ghalib's influence upon Iqbal. Ghalib was an Urdu poet and is referred to by Iqbal directly in *Javid Nama*, where Iqbal maintains the finality of Mercy and thereby of prophet hood.

Where even a tumult of the world arises, There is also a Mercy for the worlds.

Thus, according to Iqbal, the mercy of the entire world is a single manifestation of Muhammadan reality and mercy.

3.6 Iqbal sought unity through the prophetic figure

Iqbal saw the answer for Muslim unity through the personality and figure of Prophet Muhammad. In 1929 he expressed happiness at the birthday celebration of the Prophet (Mawlid) in South India.

In order to bind together the Islamic nations of India the most holy personality of the honoured Prophet can constitute as our greatest most efficient power. In the poem *Jawab e shikwah*, Iqbal questions the state of the Muslim ummah (community); in his complaint (*Shikwah*) and the answer (*Jawab*) to it, Iqbal complains of their state. This is, however, the answer to the complaint and it is in this answer that references are made to prophetic examples and remedies, including Musa, Ibrahim, Yusuf .

Iqbal's main theological position echoes the Sunni orthodoxy and the influences of Ahmad Sirhindi, Ibn Khaldun and Mawlana Rumi are evident. Besides his main theosophical expressions that were depicted in literary works that were previously mentioned (such as the Prophet as the Mercy of all the worlds, the embodiment of mercy, the saviour, the

embodiment of seen beauty with God being the unseen, his pre-Adamic creation, his perfect human self-hood insan e kamil) , Iqbal's theosophical ideas outside of his poetry are mainly on the finality of prophet hood and smaller inferences to prophetic miracles and prophetic intelligence.

As for the issue of miracles, Iqbal may be quoted directly as follows:

The question is not whether miracles did or did not happen. This is only a question of evidence, which may be interpreted in various ways. The real question is whether belief in miracles is useful to a community. I say it is; since such a belief intensifies the sense of the supernatural, which holds together primitive societies as well as those societies (e.g. Islam) whose nationality is ideal and not territorial. Looked at from the standpoint of social evolution, then, belief in miracles appears to be almost a necessity.

Prophetic intelligence may be comparable to human intelligence; however, prophetic intelligence is always greater and higher. Iqbal, in line with orthodoxy like his Indian predecessors Sirhindi and Shah Wali Allah, is critical to an extent of the mystical tradition and the mystic. He posits that prophetic intelligence is more than that of the mystics and higher and distinct to ordinary human intellect/reason; therefore, only through this prophetic guidance and access to revelation can humans in general and Muslims in particular regain unity and ascendancy in the world.

Nursi appeals more to reason and the heart as well as the mind, and uses a combined method, including the use of analogies, parables, science and literary tools, in order to illustrate the 'necessity' of prophethood as essential guides and role

models for humanity.

Nursi at times simplifies complex theological debacles of medieval times (such as the issue of the need for prophets), whereas Iqbal expects his audience to ascend to the miraj as he converses theosophically to address prophethood. It is not to say that Nursi is less sophisticated in his discourse, for he wrote (prior to the Risale-i Nur) the Isharat al ijaz - which is quite extraordinary and not for a common reader; nevertheless, it is clear through the changed language he employs in the Risale-i Nur that he intended a wider readership therefore used simpler language and analogies relevant to his students and time so all could relate and comprehend.

5.1 Conclusion

The two great thinkers of the 20th century from the Muslim world Nursi and Iqbal use prophet hood as the basis of their ideological teachings and activism. This paper assessed the similarities and highlighted some differences in their thought on their ideas of prophet hood and the Prophet. Notably, Nursi was more inclined to discuss the theological challenges put forward by the rise of rationalism in the last century. Iqbal, while well aware of these challenges, chose to express his ideas through his poetry, in which he used the image of the Prophet to motivate and call his particular community to social action and change. At the heart of both their prophetologies lies the essential nature and role of prophet hood and prophetic function being that of a guide and insan e kamil (perfect human model), an example for contemporary Muslims in which to find a role model and resolution to their myriad problems. ■

Muslim Personal Law a Boon to Society

- Arshad Shaikh

Muslim Personal Law consists of the Islamic injunctions laid down by the Holy Qur'an, the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) and derived by experts of Islamic law called "Fuqaha" (Muslim jurists). There are some laws that are absolutely unchangeable while some subject to interpretation and modification. The body of knowledge regarding matters of jurisprudence pertaining Muslim Personal Law is quite exhaustive and requires a thorough study and extensive scholarship. cursory reading and shallow understanding may sometimes lead to misinterpretation and subjective opinion.

Status of a woman in Islamic System is at the heart of the dispute between (a) those who believe that Islam is a divine religion that provides *complete and perfect* guidance for mankind for all problems including the question of gender justice and (b) those who believe that the teachings of Islam are patriarchal and misogynistic.

"Nikah", the Muslim marriage, is a sacred contract. It not only unites

two bodies but two souls along with their families, bringing love, peace and tranquillity between the two partners. It lays down the foundation of a stable society where sexual crimes are unheard of and women are deeply respected.

The best part of "Nikah", the Muslim marriage, is its simplicity. The entire ceremony completely religious and spiritual in nature merely entails a proposal, acceptance, presence of the bride's guardian, two witnesses and "Mahr" (dowry to be given to bride). All the pomp, show, glamour and expensive, grandiose events are not mandatory at all.

Since polygyny is looked down upon in certain cultures and religious communities, the provision in Islam to have up to four wives is a major issue for some who see it as something antagonistic to gender justice. People fail to appreciate that a major benefit of polygyny is that it offers a legitimate marital zone of comfort and sustenance to widows, divorcees and others, thus shutting down evil avenues of adultery and promiscuity.

Happy matrimonial relationship obviously rests on understanding, patience, tolerance, give and take, appreciation, mutual respect and cooperation, physical intimacy and genuine friendship. But in addition to all of these Islam takes it to a different plane where the matrimonial bond is also deeply spiritual where both partners help each other in seeking the pleasure of God. Thus they become partners not only in this temporal world but for eternity.

Divorce in Islam is another huge bone of contention for those who take it as a religious sanction for the perpetuation of male hegemony. They oppose the permissibility for a husband to divorce his wife unilaterally and irrevocably. However, one must appreciate that there is a strictly recommended methodology for "talaq" (Muslim divorce) that includes efforts for arbitration and reconciliation. Divorce is the absolute last option and "the" most abominable of all permissible things by God. An aspect conveniently forgotten by many is that "divorce" is also a blessing in disguise for many who are in a situation where separation will give a new lease of marital life to one and sometimes both partners. Closing this gateway can be very unpleasant and ill advised.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) said, "The best of you is he who is best to his family, and I am the best among you to my family." (Hadith from Sahih Bukhari) Contrast this teaching with domestic violence which has reached unprecedented proportions in the very societies and communities whose representatives have been very vocal in their criticism of Islam as a religion that advocates gender inequality and oppresses women. Islam teaches us to be tender even to plants and animals, so the question of giving sanctity to what is termed as domestic violence is completely unthinkable.

Islam is a complete code of conduct. A divinely guided way of life. Islam provides guidance in all and for all. The question of inheritance is very delicate and it is difficult for someone to divide the bequest in a just and equitable manner. So it is a great blessing by God to give detailed instructions in the Qur'an itself and further elaborated by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) on how to distribute the inheritance. An objective study of this domain of Islam can easily convince anybody on how Islam is truly divine and free from any errors and inconsistencies. ■

Methodology Of Da'wah in Prisons: A Case Study Of Nursi Model

- Mohammed Muhsin

The purpose of this paper is to make a scrutinized analysis of the radiant accounts of initiatives and activities undertaken by Badiuzzaman during his most intolerable years of melancholic life in a number of various prisons and exiles. This paper attempts to fashion a comprehensive work-load, for a contemporary Muslim who frequently complain his pathetic circumstances, from the years of captivity spent by Said Nursi in Kosturma (North Western Russia), eight and half years in the extremely isolated exile in BurJa, Eskisehir prison, Denizli Prison, exile in Kastamonu, Emirdag prison and Afyon prison and so on and so forth. Here it is noteworthy that though the largest segment of Badiuzzaman's life was literally limited to prisons, he dealt with this pitiful fate with his unwavering faith in order to transform pitiful wards of prison to the incredibly packed venues of Da'wah activities. He demonstrated his extra-ordinary personal qualities and strove for Islam in the time of captivity by ensuring the prisoners' freedom to practice their religious duties, especially to perform the five daily prayers which he led and secured a room for use as a mosque, generous donation for fellow prisoners and masjid in prison, giving dars (religious instruction) and worked as Head of Religious affairs in prison by teaching his commentaries of Qur'an, moreover, to write and distribute his magnum opus

Risale-i Nur (Epistles of Light) as part of fulfilling his responsibilities of trust (Ahzab 72-73) and vicegerent on the Earth (Baqara 30). Here, this study of Badiuzzaman's wide variety of activities in the years of imprisonment and exiles offers the holistic directions for reviving religious knowledge in modern times in a peaceful and harmonious way, which will be beneficial for each single contemporary Muslim.

Said Nursi is one of the very phenomenal figures, world has ever seen, who have fired up the light of civilization and millions keep walking in the flame of that fire ceaselessly. As far as a human being is concerned, Allah has sent down him to earth with two intense responsibilities; 1) vicegerency or Khilafah (I am going to appoint a vicegerent on the Earth." Al-Baqarah: 30) and 2) servitude or 'ubudiyah ("I have not created the jinn and the men except for this that they should worship Me". Al-Dharyath: 56). The entire life with all its concomitant ups and downs is believed as a part of test about Allah's trust upon human beings to check whether they carry out their responsibilities or not. Almighty Allah says about the immensity of his trust (amanah) "We offered this trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains but they refused to bear it and were afraid of it, but man undertook to bear it. Indeed, he is unjust and ignorant (Ahzab: 72-73).

Majority of people fail to fulfil the enormous duties of this trust ("You will not find most of them to be grateful". Al-Aaraf: 17) and minority succeeds to sustain the sanctity of trust. Nursi is rare model in the winning minority. According to prophetic tradition, a Muslim's worldly life is supposed to be like of a prisoner: because of the limitations and restrictions he has to encounter throughout his life. Coincidentally, Nursi spent a large segment of his life literally in war-camps, prisons and exiled provinces by betrayals of different types of enemies. Nevertheless, the enemies could not restrain his Islamic spirit and faith in Allah. Rather it boosted his strength and he managed to strive for good and justice in jails in such a way, the majority of people are unable to do so, exterior of prisons. Moreover, he defended the humanity from the onslaught of atheistic materialism and destructive communism, triumphing over all problems.

This paper will revise Badiuzzaman's wide variety of activities and Da'wah initiatives in the years of imprisonment and exiles, which will offer the holistic directions for reviving religious knowledge and Islamic civilization in modern times in a peaceful and harmonious way, which will be beneficial for each single contemporary Muslim.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It is nature of people to stick with the complaints and ignore the reachable remedies. The radiant accounts of initiatives and activities undertaken by Badiuzzaman, during his most intolerable

years of melancholic life in a number of various prisons and exiles, will rouse some significant thoughts in each individual in this regard. His life, of the years of captivity spent in Kosturma (North Western Russia), eight and half years in the extremely isolated exile in Burla, Eskisehir prison, exile in Kastamonu, Emirdag prison and Afyon prison and so on and so forth, draws a comprehensive workload for a contemporary Muslim who frequently complain his pathetic circumstances. He approached this deplorable fate as a golden opportunity to transform pitiful wards of prison to the incredibly packed venues of Da'wah activities. He left a message for all coming generations that if one does his best Almighty Allah will do the rest.

In between the deliberations about the incredible Da'wah activities of Badiuzzaman, it has been undervalued that majority of his contributions were furnished in the period of intolerable and in-supportable days in various war camps, prisons and exiles. Said Nursi silently provides a message by his life and precise picture of work area for contemporary Muslim who fully compromised with all challenges and lives on various excuses even without using proper and supportable channels.

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS

What makes Badiuzzaman different from others is the feature of none/ nothing can hinder him from doing the trust of responsibilities of Khilafah (vicegerency) and Ubudiyah (servitude) at

any cost. Wherever Nursi visited he started teaching the truths and serving the Qur'an which resulted in attraction of hundreds of disciples and spreading of light. This attitude literally distressed the authorities. The government officials kept changing his places of imprisonment and exiles; but could not stop him to come up with his mission. Moreover, he painstakingly endeavoured to find time for thinking, writing, contemplation and prayers, thus to write an undying treasure of timely presentation of Qur'an in the name of Risale-i Nur. Furthermore, he with the help of his disciples Risale-i Nur from village to village, and by a time, town to town, and throughout Turkey. It is note-worthy Badiuzzaman took initiative for all these Da'wah activities from the very depressed situation and very bad health during captivity. Meanwhile, he enlightened his fellow prisoners, fought nail and tooth to preserve the freedom of prayers, amplified the group of self sacrificing disciples and devoted himself for the cause of Islam.

The methods used to fulfil the purpose of this paper are analysis, comparison and description. After having an analytical approach to major written biographies of Said Nursi 's and selected portions of Risale-i Nur, the writer comparatively checked with modern trends and contemporary needs from Islamic perspective. Finally, it comes up with the findings and relevance of practical follow ups with his role model in order to enhance truth and justice positively.

SPIRIT CANNOT BE IMPRISONED

Badiuzzaman's life proves that nobody can imprison one's zealous spirit

but only the physical body. Said Nursi devoted his full life for the cause of Islam and humanity at large, with unique pace in both inside the prisons and outside. He was always aware of his responsibilities as a Khalifa of Almighty Allah and strove to fulfil his missions, meet the needs of time and, moreover, to solve the crisis despite everything. The decades of captivity could not repress his spirit and confidence, but it offered him an opportunity to find another exiting avenues of efforts in which he came out successful. His detailed account of activities behind the bars and isolated provinces could create a wonderful work plan for the contemporary Muslim who always bothered about his pathetic condition and pitiful fate.

Said Nursi life of exile was a sort of very cruel and brutal. In one of his letter from the Barla, a very remote and isolated village, he described the ferocious five levels of his exile. First one was due to his old age and strangeness in Barla, because of having departed from his friends, relations, and those close to him. The second level was due to sad sense of separation and exile at most of the beings to which he was attached, like last spring, having left him and departed. The third level was since of his departure from native land and relations which amplified his feeling of separation. The fourth level which made pitiable exile was created by the lonesomeness of the night and the mountains. The final one was related to his overwhelming spirit which had been prepared to journey to eternity both from

this exile and from the transitory guest-house of this world.

But it is amazing that so far it is hardly available any comparable works to what Nursi contributed from his incredible hard background. People who are leading tranquil life are too far to achieve what Badiuzzaman had already accomplished in extremely pitiful life. Here the writer would like to enlist some of his major initiatives in the prisons and exiles. There are many other contributions too of Nursi which are excluded from the list due to lack of space.

- Efforts to ensure the prisoners' freedom to practice their religious duties and fardh Avn.
- Generous donation for the coprisoners and mosque in prison.
- Dissemination of knowledge, giving Darse, and working as Head of religious affairs in prisons and war camps.
- Constant reading of books, reading loud to benefit co-prisoners.
- Writing books, articles and Risale-i Nur, very august commentary of Qur'an.
- Opposing cruelties of authorities with prisoners and fighting for their rights
- Leading prayers in prisons.
- Performing night prayers (Tahajjud).
- Convincing the importance of education and promoting co-prisoners to ensure their children's study.
- Extraordinary positive change in fellow prisoners.

It is really worth mentioning that while he was able to unleash some sort

of radical revolutions using his disciples and supporters against the decisions of government, he chose the path of silent revolution; that was accepting whatever the enemies want to do and transform those troubles to golden opportunities and embark some everlasting beneficial contributions. Said Nursi was so concerned of peace and security of people and prosperity and development of nation, to which he devoted his whole life. His obedient approach to laws of Ataturk regime needs high attention while his contemporaries sought refuge in revolutionary change. He clearly cautioned his readers to avoid any sort of action or behaviour that would lead to social discord, discrimination among people or anything affect public order and security.

EFFORTS FOR THE FREEDOM OF PRAYERS

Badiuzzaman's life of captivity started in the province of Kosturma in north- Western Russia, where he spent two years. Many fellow prisoners had recalled their experiences with Nursi in Kosturma with detailed accounts. At the early time of Kosturma life, there was no any facility to perform the five times prayers. Nursi struggled to ensure the all prisoners' right and freedom to practice their five times prayers and other religious duties. He won the right for them to perform prayers which he led and secured a room for use as mosque. When he led the prayers Russian officers intervned in the earlier days and did not let them perform prayer. Then Nursi convinced them the

importance of their rights and they became compelled to allow them a bit more freedom.

He also endeavoured to perform the prayers at any cost. When government officials were exiling him from Isparta to Barla he asked the officials to turn boat to Kibla and performed the after-noon prayers from the boat itself. In Kosturma even the time was too critical and winters long and dark and extremely cold, Nursi used to give dars or religious instruction for the group of ninety or so officers. He was accompanied by his disciple Iznikli Osman who carried a trunk which was filled by his books.

This is a quite important aspect which should be reflected in contemporary Muslims who rely hastily upon various excuses and try to cooperate with whatever he come to encounter. It is clear that Islam is easily practiced religion and provides concessions as per need. But, it became common practice of Muslims to deal with even five times prayers with heedlessness. At this juncture, the life message of Badiuzzaman is very special who prayed and struggled for the right of fellow prisoners not only to perform the prayers but also to teach the Qur'an and recitation. The thoroughness which a believer displays towards his religious observance makes his faith evident. "Recite what has been revealed to you of the Book and establish salat. Salat precludes indecency and wrongdoing. And remembrance of Allah is greater still. Allah knows what you do." (al-'Ankabut: 45)

SLEEPLESS NIGHTS OF NURSI BEHIND BARS

It is incredibly astonishing to read Nursi 's nights in prisons and war-camps where he enlightened the dark, long and melancholic conditions with his Islamic spirit and efforts to the state of dazzling light. Nursi was not idle at chilly nights of captivity; he used to go to other camps and read to them, although it was not allowed. Moreover, engaged in the prayers with long prostration. Mustafa Yalcin says 'I never knew him sleep at night there. He always always read and took notes" it is also his habit to eat only just sufficient to keep body and soul together, generally a small bowl of soup and a small piece of bread. This had always been his practice and had often noted by those who knew him. Necemeddin Sahiner reported that Badiuzzaman's food in Eskisehir Prison was too little, just a glass of tea and a few olives each day.

Badiuzzaman and his students spent twelve days in the Esksehir Prison without food and sleep, later he named that prison Medrese-i Yusufiye, relating to Prophet Yusuf, the patron of prisoners.

Qur'an frequently reminds the followers about the importance of prayer at night. "Establish prayer at the decline of the sun [from its meridian] until the darkness of the night and [also] the Qur'an of dawn. Indeed, the recitation of dawn is ever witnessed. And from [part of] the night, pray with it as additional [worship] for you; it is expected that your Lord will resurrect you to a praised station." (Isra: 78-79). Abu Hurairah reports that the Messenger of

Allah (peace be upon him) said: "Our Lord Descends to the lowest heaven during the last third of the night, inquiring: Who will call on Me so that I may respond to him? Who is asking something of Me So I may give it to him? Who is asking for My forgiveness so I may forgive him?" [Bukhari and Muslim.]. Badiuzzaman was very concerned of night prayers and spent much time in various kinds of Ibadats even in the duration of captivity. Contemporary Muslims also should go back to this lost legacy of our forefathers who enriched their nights too with wide variety of useful affairs and Ibadat.

HEAD OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS IN PRISON

Mustafa Yalcin recalls Nursi's days at war-camps "we used to call Badiuzzaman "Head of Religious affairs". He tried to teach the instructions of Islam not only for his fellow prisoners but also the Russian guards even. Dissemination of knowledge was one his significant purposes he sustained wherever he visited whether it is supportable situation or not.

Amid his life of captivity, when he reached Burdur from Ankara he used to give dars every day in the mosque after noon prayers, and this dars attracted many people. The material used for these darses was later entitled 'The First Door of the Risale-i Nur. This was collection of thirteen short sections, called darses, which he wrote while in Burdur and had put together secretly into book form.

Because of his teaching and attending of hundreds of attracted people,

government officials kept changing his place of exile. First they brought him to Antalya, then small town of Burdur, then Centre of Isparta and then to Barla. Finally, the authority determined to send Badiuzzaman away to some tiny and remote place where he would not attract attention, and where deprived of all company and civilization, he would just fade away and be forgotten. The place was the village of Barla, a tiny hamlet in the mountains near the north-western shore of Lake Egridir.

Prison or Mosque?

Since of plenty of activities undertaken by Nursi, wards of prisons looked like active mosques. Necemeddin Sahiner reported in 1985 about the events occurred in Eskeshir Prison by the arrival of Badiuzzaman: Nursi became imam for prayers, led the Tadkira sessions (religious advices) and recitation of Qur'an. "that dark prison ward shone with the lights of the Qur'an. Everyone would rise early for the prayers, and take their sections (a thirtieth part) of the Qur'an, then the recitations of the whole Qur'an would begin. After the Morning Prayer, the prayers for a complete recitation of the Qur'an would be said. From time to time one of the hocas with fine voice (Mehmed Gulirmak) would sing a 'Kaside'. He used to send us into raptures. Then they would start reciting Qur'an again. The whole Qur'an was recited several times each day. Those innocent people were saved by the readings of the Qur'an and the prayers, and prison became like a mosque.

This unique aspect of Badiuzzaman's life also must motivate modern Muslim who perceives that modern education (eg: study of natural sciences and so on) is only what needed and undervalue religious knowledge to do two things; 1) teaching the truth and 2) comprehend the value of learning of Qur'an. 'Abdullah ibn 'Arm (peace be upon him) reported that Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said, "Knowledge consists of three things: the decisive verses (Qur'an), authentic Ahadith and prescriptions rightly deduced from the two. What is beside them is superfluous." Islam motivates intensively learning and teaching. Each individual is accountable whatever he can offer in this regard. The ever first instruction of Qur'an is to read, "Read! In the Name of your Lord Who has created (all that exists). He has created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood). Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous. Who has taught (the writing) by the pen. He has taught man that which he knew not" [al-Alaq: 1-5]. Unfortunately, current Muslims are lagging far behind in the avenues of learning, teaching, reflection, contemplation and writing and publishing the books, if we compare to western world. Badiuzzaman made him busy in the aforementioned affairs in the totally insupportable situations and returned triumphant.

NURTURING DISCIPLES

It is amazing Badiuzzaman nourished a large bunch of self sacrificing and bravest students in his period of pitiful, grievous and distressing captivity.

Students and disciples were devoted for the cause of Islam and knowledge and sacrificed to attain the contentment of their Hoca i.e. teacher. All of his students were seemed to him as his spiritual sons. After the fifty years of his demise, still the chain of his disciples is enduring through the channel of Risale-i Nur, with the name of Ullab-Nur.

Unlike many of his contemporaries, He never sought political power but fought for "the harmonious and healthy society through the renewal of personal faith." He emphasized the "formation of an individual consciousness as a precondition for a just society" and tried to succeed this vision through his students. Nursi reminded his students even in the ending of his life to maintain the positive actions and make patience the tools to respond to tribulations within positive service to belief, which preserves public order.

Said Nursi's relation with his disciples were quite exceptional and unlike the usual formal, distant relations between teacher and students. He considered himself to be a student of the Risale-i Nur the same as them. Besides having close personal relations with them, he consulted them concerning all matters to do with the writing and dissemination of Risale-i Nur Moreover, Badiuzzaman was unusually humble with his students and courteous, and personally would accept no superior position, or praise or adulation. When he became compelled to depart his beloved students in the duration of captivity, he tried to overcome this issue by possible way of

constant and unceasing letters which passed between them. These thousands of letters were gathered together and form a substantial part of Risale-iNur. Nursi addressed his students as fellow students, assistants and consultants. He asked his students to correct him wherever and whenever they see fault or mistake in his life!

It is another significant model from Badiuzzaman to contemporary Muslim to nourish and nurture the intellectuals of tomorrow. Nursi has accomplished his maximum in this regard. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said "The most generous man among them after me will be a man who will acquire learning and disseminate it." [Baihaqi]. In the modern world, students lack role models in their teachers and teachers became sheer material to read some texts. In case of Nursi, he was a living example of true Islam before all students; they benefitted from his life more than from his classes and texts.. This aspect needs to be well taken by each individual of ummah.

UNDYING CONTRIBUTION FROM DYING ISOLATION

Barla was very remote spot selected by government officials to remove Nursi from easy contact with outside world. This small village could only be reached on foot, or by horse or donkey; there was no motor road, electricity and telephone. The exiling to the Barla was intended to extirpate him forever.

But Badiuzzaman used this deplorable state to transform into a Divine Mercy to receive the effulgence of Qur'an

and write Risale-i Nur. Badiuzzaman spent in Barla about eight and half years, and during this period he completed writing of the greater part of the one hundred and thirty parts of Risale-i Nur. He took responsibility to defend Qur'an answering the threat of post-modernism and European culture. "Barla became the centre from which irradiated the lights of the truths of belief at a time when the darkness of absolute unbelief was gathering force to completely stifle the Islamic faith of people of Anatolia." Within a month or two of arriving in Barla, Badiuzzaman wrote a treatise proving the resurrection of the dead and existence of the hereafter; it was the first part of the Risale-i Nur. He spent eight years there in thinking, writing, contemplation and prayer in a two roomed house at the middle of ferocious isolated Barla; which he called "first Nur Madrasa". "His students and the people of Barla reported that he would remain in front of his home in Barla all night, neither rising nor sleeping, and at dawn the birds would fly round the tree as though drawn by the sound of his supplications and join their songs to his prayers."

Nursi used to write at least two hours per day and often he described orally and his students also wrote for him. Copies of original writings were copied and passed to others who would write its further copies. This was the way of the dissemination of knowledge which passed from village to village, and by a time, town to town, and throughout Turkey. It is noteworthy Badiuzzaman initiated for all these Da'wah activities from the very

depressed situation and very bad health.

This kind of contribution is one of the major needs of hour. Pen is a strongest sword which is supposed to use for Islam and to defend it as well. Muslim used to boast about the marvelous past and while neither they have current actions nor future plans. Al mighty Allah reminds in Surah Iqra' in verse [96:4], thus He who taught by the pen, which indicates that pen is one of the major source of dissemination' of knowledge. Contemporary Muslim scholars and student should come forward to learn from the life of Badiuzzaman made a model through writing the Risale-i Nur.

EXTRAORDINARY CHANGE OF FELLOW PRISONERS

Another important aspect of the events accompanied Badiuzzaman in the prisons was the extraordinary change which happened in the majority of the other prisoners as an effect of Nursi 's influence along with his students. It also frightened the Government officials and they kept changing his prisons from one to another. These incidents were very conspicuous in Eskisehir and Denizili Prisons. In Denizili prison the most hardened criminals even learned how to perform prayers and recite Quran, and some to assist Badiuzzaman's students in writing out copies of the Risale-i Nur.

He tried to convince the fellow prisoners about the importance of education and promoting co-prisoners to ensure their children's study. Nursi precisely says "unity cannot occur through

ignorance. Unity is the fusion of ideas, and the fusion of ideas occurs through the electric rays knowledge". Moreover he planned during his days of captivity to establish a university in order to overcome the widespread ignorance and to solve the social and political chaos and crisis of region.

These footprints have also should get a space in the life of contemporary Muslim, since a Muslim is a light wherever he visit, the darkness of that place will be automatically pushed out. The secret of successful Da'wah activities in Islam is the model lives of many noble personalities. They never preached nor wrote about Islam but lived Islam and executed Qur'an through their lives.

FINDINGS

The major findings of this study are as following: -Badiuzzaman was strongly concerned about two intense responsibilities; 1) vicegerency or Khilafah of Allah 2) servitude of Allah or ubudiyah, and he dedicated his entire life the purpose of fulfilling it.

-He dealt with the deplorable fate of captivity as a golden opportunity to transform pitiful wards of prison to the incredibly packed venues of Da'wah activities. He left a message for all coming generations that if one does his best Almighty Allah will do the rest.

■ Said Nursi made him busy to teach the truths and serve the Qur'an wherever he go which resulted in attraction of hundreds of disciples and spreading of light.

- The style of Badiuzzaman was not to set free some sort of radical revolutions against the decisions of government. Rather he relied upon the silent revolution; that was accepting whatever the enemies want to do and transform those troubles to golden opportunities and embark some everlasting beneficial contributions.
- Nursi fought nail and tooth to ensure the all prisoners' right and freedom to practice their five times prayers and other religious duties. He won the right for them to perform prayers which he led and secured a room for use as mosque.
- Nursi's nights in the prisons were packed with wide variety of activities, especially to perform thahajjud prayer, teaching Qur'an and writing.
- Badiuzzaman put himself amid the learning, thinking, contemplation, writing, teaching and dissemination of knowledge; yet he became known Head of religious affairs in Prisons.
- Badiuzzaman nourished and nurtured a large bunch of self-sacrificing and bravest students in his period of pitiful, grievous and distressing captivity.
- Said Nursi's relation with his disciples was quite unique and he addressed his students as fellow students, assistants and consultants. He asked his students to correct him wherever and whenever they see fault or mistake in his life!
- Nursi used pen as a strongest sword for good and justice and to defend it as well. Moreover he contributed an invaluable book his magnum opus, Risale-i Nur, which was prepared during his days

of captivity.

■ Badiuzzaman 's presence brought an extraordinary change in the majority of the fellow prisoners through his influence along with his students.

■ Denizili prison the most hardened criminals even learned how to perform prayers and recite Qur'an, and some to assist Badiuzzaman's students in writing out copies of the Risale-i Nur.

CONCLUSION

The message 'of Badiuzzman is his life itself which packed with incredible noble activities and Da'wah initiatives regardless of the tribulations he came to encounter. It is clear that his road was not of roses but full of thrones; notwithstanding he struggled in totally insupportable conditions and tried his best and relied upon Almighty Allah, so it culminated with unbelievable results. Badiuzzaman left here two invaluable legacies, 1) Risale-i Nur and 2) Tullab Nur. Both are exchanging his life and works from one generation to another and from one country to another. In between it should not be missed to note that the formation of both ceaseless contributions was accelerated in the duration of captivity. The duty of reviving religious knowledge in modern times and sustain the faith and religious beliefs in the contemporary world has been imposed on each individual Muslim since his birth. The way before him will not be easy and comfortable; here Badiuzzaman's accounts of activities in the real prisons should beam a guide light for each Muslim of contemporary world.

AIMPLB: Declaring Triple Talaq Illegal, Akin to Rewriting Quran

- Dhananjay Mahapatra

Taking a hardline religious stand, the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) told the Supreme Court on Monday that if triple talaq mode of divorce was declared illegal, it would amount to disregarding Allah's directions and rewriting of the Holy Quran to force Muslims into committing sin.

Stressing that personal law provisions enjoyed sanctity under the Constitution's Article 25 (right to profess and practice a religion of choice), the AIMPLB said, "If such casual denunciation of the verses of the holy book is permitted, then soon Islam would cease to exist. Though triple talaq in one sitting is an unusual mode of divorce in Islam, it cannot be declared to be invalid in the light of the direct verses of Holy Quran and categorical command of the Messenger of Allah."

Explaining that triple talaq was mandated by the Holy Quran, AIMPLB in its written submission three days before the final hearing on the matter, said the holy book ordained that "once three pronouncements of talaq are made, the wife becomes unlawful or 'haram' to her former husband, unless the process of 'halala' takes place in its natural course".

"The pronouncement of the third talaq and its irrevocability is explicitly given in Quran. In such circumstances, it is forbidden for the former husband to take the wife back in marriage again, unless she marries another person of her choice and such marriage comes to an end owing to death or by divorce... The objective is to enable a divorcee woman to remarry out of her own free will and choice," the AIMPLB said through advocate Ejaz Maqbool.

Telling the SC that it had no power to scrutinise the legality of personal law

provisions, the board said, "Any deviation from such Quranic injunction (validity of triple talaq) would go against the mandate of the Almighty himself and such an act would be going against the very integral practice of Islam and would be disregarding the precise directions of Allah and also his Messenger, which is nothing but a sin and as per the Holy Quran, such an action would show that the believer has strayed away from the religion in manifest error.

"Furthermore, as ordained by the Holy Quran, all Muslims are bound to accept the command of the Messenger and are bound to avoid whatever the Messenger forbids and when the Prophet has categorically directed separation of parties after triple talaq in one go and has ruled that if the former husband takes the woman back into marriage, he will be committing a sin, then no believer has a choice to take the woman back into marriage after pronouncing triple talaq and such an act is nothing but a sin."

Warning of serious consequences of disobeying the Quran, the AIMPLB said, "The consequences of committing such a sin would be far more adverse as children born out of such relationship would be illegitimate and their rights of inheritance in their putative father's estate would be questionable."

"In view of this, if the Supreme Court holds that triple talaq in one sitting is not a valid form of effecting divorce, then that would amount to rewriting of the Holy Quran itself, which is nothing but the *ipissima verba* (the precise words) of the Almighty himself and is the entire genesis of Islam. Such an alteration of the specific verses of the Holy Quran would actually amount to altering the very essence of the religion of Islam."■

(Courtesy: The Times of India, 28-3-2017)

The Treasure of Human Being

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

In the pre-Islamic era scant attention was paid towards knowledge. It was Prophet Muhammad (SAW) who used knowledge as an essential tool for understanding realities of life. The first Revelation to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was "Iqra Bismе Rabbi Kallazi Khalaq" (Read in the name of thy Lord). Needless to say that the word Quran itself means recitation, lecture and discourse. So far as sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) are concerned every volume of "Hadith" has a chapter called "The Book of Knowledge", a treasure of learning and education. According to an estimate the word of "knowledge" has been used seven hundred fifty (750) times in the Holy Quran.

According to Qur'an God is the source of all knowledge and He has given knowledge to man. Some of the knowledge is revealed by God to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) through the Qur'an which comprises essentials of morals and faith etc. and some knowledge is given to man through his own effort. This includes knowledge related to the natural phenomena.

Classification of knowledge to Muslim philosophers. According to Ibn Bajja, human knowledge is of two kinds:

Knowledge based on proof 2. Knowledge based on direct experience through religious devotion and revelation. The knowledge obtained by the sufis is obtained by religious devotion while the knowledge of the prophet is revealed by God.

Al-Farabi has classified knowledge into practical and theoretical. The latter knowledge helps the soul to achieve perfection and the former is related to conduct.

According to Al Ghazzali, there are two types of knowledge viz, the intuitive knowledge and the knowledge acquired by rational effort.

The intuitive knowledge leads to perfection of the soul and the knowledge acquired through experience, observation and rational effort leads to development of sciences.

Fakhruddin Razi classifies and defines various Muslim sciences in his book Jami'al-Ulum. Among the religious science he mention theology, jurisprudence, dialectics, Qur'an and Hadith. Then he deals the linguistic sciences such as grammar, syntax, etymology, prosody and poetry. He calls these sciences Naqli or traditional sciences. The other branch of knowledge are the 'Aqli (based on intellect); these sciences include natural philosophy, physics, astronomy, alchemy, optics and music.

Ibn Khaldun classifies knowledge into two kinds viz. Ulum Tabai'yya or 'Aqliyya and 'Ulum Naqliyya. The former are based observation and deduction and the later depend on revelation. 'Ulum 'Aqliyya comprise Logic, Arithmetic, Astronomy, Physical and Biological Sciences etc. and 'Ulum Naqliyya include Qur'an Hadith, Fiqh, Kalam, Theology etc.

The noblest knowledge according to Islam: The knowledge given by God through revelation i.e. the Qur'an is the noblest of knowledge. The Qur'an is complete and final revelation from God so it is a complete guide for man in worldly affairs as well as for as for his salvation. Hence there is no other knowledge except that which is based on the Qur'an that can guide man. The Qur'an is the knowledge par excellence. The life and teachings of prophet Muhammad (PBUH) on whom the Qur'an was revealed is the most perfect interpretation of the Qur'an. So the prophet's life and sayings (Hadith) are true guide for Muslims. So, the Qur'an, the Hadith, the Shariyah (God's Laws) are the essential elements of knowledge worth acquiring for a Muslim. Devotion to God through worship is

the practical aspect of the knowledge acquired through the Qur'an and the Hadith.

The second kind of knowledge which is knowledge of sciences should also be acquired by the Muslims. However, the first kind of knowledge which reveals the true relationship between man and God should form the basis and foundation for the second. If the knowledge of the second kind is obtained with out reference to the first then it will lead to confusion and will create doubt and skepticism. It is because of this fact that Muslim philosophers made the knowledge based on the Qur'an and Hadith obligatory for all Muslims and the knowledge of Sciences obligatory for some people who can do justice to it. (Muslim Educational Thought in the Middle Ages, P, 15-17).

The holy Prophet says: "Seeking knowledge is Incumbent upon every Muslim man and woman." "Seek knowledge from cradle to the grave," "Seek knowledge even if one has to go to China". "The person who brought up three daughters, embellished them, gave education to them and took care of them even after their marriage, his entry to paradise is ensured by God." He further says: "Acquire knowledge, because he who acquires it in the way of the Lord performs an act of piety, who speaks of it, praise the Lord, who seeks it adores God, who dispenses instruction in it, bestows alms, and who imparts it to its fitting objects, performs an act of devotion to God. Knowledge enables its possessor to distinguish what is forbidden from what is not; it lights the way to Heaven; it is our friend in the desert our society in solitude, our companion when bereft of friends; it guides us to happiness; it sustains us in misery; it is our ornament in the company of friends; it serves as an armour against enemies. With knowledge the servant of God rises to the height of goodness and to a noble position, associates with sovereigns in this world and attains to the perfection of happiness in the hereafter.

Imam Bukhari in his monumental work attributes a tradition to the Prophet which says

that disappearance of knowledge and absence of scholars from society would spell the demise of human civilization. Philip K. Hitti defines ilm. (Islamic knowledge) in the following words: "The Arabic word for science (ilm) in English corresponds, "Knowledge" or "learning". It may be used in the broad sense to mean knowledge systematized with reference to general truths and laws, or more specifically, to refer to knowledge as it relates to Physical world in which case it is known as physical or natural science." Ibn Khaldun : the doyen of Muslim scholars says : "Knowledge is essential for three basic reasons. Firstly, it facilitates cooperation among human beings. Sociability of man is an unquestioned reality. Nothing in life can be accomplished in isolation. Knowledge alone helps them to understand the nature and purpose of such cooperation for various occasions. Secondly, the pathways of life are strewn with many ghoulish objects. Man is in dire need of knowledge to differentiate between good and evil so that he can avoid the latter and perpetuate the former. And lastly, knowledge economizes time and Increases human energies to resolve the numerous imponderable problems of life."

It is unfortunate that little attention is being paid by us towards this great asset. If we take stock of the prevailing condition regarding education in our society particularly amongst Muslims we will find a criminal negligence on the part of parents in upbringing of their off springs so far as education is concerned. It should be a bounden duty of a parent to impart education to children from their early childhood. In fact, it is such a gem that creates awareness, helps in development of mental faculties. It provides ability to distinguish between good and bad.

To have a refined, well-mannered and suave child who may later become an asset to the family and society In general is really nice. Parents must, therefore, assert on proper and good education of their progeny. ■

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