

THE FRAGRANCE

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The Fragrance of East

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Editor's Note:

Terrorism

Of late, terrorism has assumed a menacing way leading to mass destruction and loss of human lives. At a time when scientists and technologists have evolved marvellous ways and means to provide a comfortable life and allow one to reap the benefits bestowed by nature, a sense of insecurity and shagginess has overtaken the society.

The most ridiculous situation emerges when we analyse as to who is the perpetrator of terrorism and who bears the brunt of its effects. No doubt the attack on World Trade Centres in USA on September 11, 2001 was an act of barbarous terrorism but does it not provide a parallel to what happened in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 which was also an act of terrorism. Also why forget the recent happenings in Iraq in 1991 and again in 2003, Bosnia, Korea, Vietnam, Phillipines, Afghanistan, Cuba, Yugoslavia and in some Latin American countries. The invasions and the occupation of Iraq by the coalition forces without the United Nations Security Council's sanction, have led to intense and wide spread anger in the Arab and other parts of the world where people increasingly consider the United States to be the enemy of Islam. By blatantly supporting Israel against Palestine and keeping an eye over the mineral wealth, particularly oil of Arab nations USA has exposed itself as envious and partial. Though terrorism in different forms is showing its head in some non-Islamic countries also but it is ignored. Similarly there are countries where people are deprived of democratic rights but USA does not bother to help in getting the democracy restored. It is also oblivious of victimisation of minorities in certain

countries. Now WMD (Weapons of mass destruction), so far invisible, are seen by the USA and its allies in all those countries which do not fall in line with them.

It is strange that those powers who cultivated and provided impetus to terrorism to establish their supremacy in the world have waged a war against it. Arundhati Roy writes in the Guardian (September 29, 2001) that United States of America's secret service, C.I.A. founded and recruited almost one lac radical 'mujahideen' from 40 countries as soldiers for US proxy war against the Russian forces in Afghanistan. Now USA and its allies have taken a vow to stamp out terrorism from the world. However, in this attempt they have identified the terrorism with particular religion. Since the seeds of terrorism were sown in a Muslim dominated country, Afghanistan, it is now given to believe that Muslims are terrorists and Islam preaches terrorism. In this way a purely political issue is being given a religious colour. But the fact is that word terrorism is multifaceted and it could be tagged with any weak individual, body, organisation or nation by a strong one.

It is gratifying to note that each section of Muslims is trying to impress upon the world that Islam is the religion of peace. If a group of Muslims in particular circumstances has been used by some one with vested interest then the whole community should not be blamed or made answerable to such misdeeds. The encouraging aspect of the whole issue is that now most of the non-Muslims have also realised that it is a sinister campaign against Islam by those powers who are afraid of it and consider its extension as a threat to their existence.

In pre-Islamic Arab it was believed that blood-shedding was the only solution to over power the evil forces

and to hold control over them. But with the advent of Islam this concept was changed. The Prophet deprecated these wild acts and persuaded his followers to maintain peace and spread feelings of love and amity. Islam is the religion which forbids killing anyone who is not in confrontation with you. It does not allow devastation of any residential area and destruction of forests (felling of trees) and agricultural land. At each step a Muslim is extorted to remain within his limits.

The holy Quran has at one place described Islam as 'Sabeel-ul-salam' (Path of peace and tranquility) and at another place it says 'La-ikraha fiddeen' - there is no compulsion in religion. These are the clear indication that Islam considers peace and safety as the basic requirements of a civil society and abhor violence, horror and terrorism. Islam considers peace as the basic requirement for existence. The holy Quran says in clear terms that if anyone has killed someone not for taking revenge or for preventing riots on earth then he has killed the whole humanity. If he has saved one life then he is credited with saving the whole human race. ■

SA

**The Views expressed in this magazine
are those of authors.**

Editor

*Do not be faint of
heart in pursuing these people:
if you happen to suffer harm
they too are suffering just as you are,
while you may hope from Allah
what they cannot hope for.
Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.*

(Al-Qur'an - 4:104)

TERRORISM HAS NO PLACE IN ISLAM

S. M. Rabey Nadwi*

Muslim Personal Law Board (MPLB) chairman Maulana Syed Mohammad Rabe Hasani Nadwi has called upon to look into the causes generating terrorist activities the world over rather than fighting it with all force at one's command. Terrorism has no place in Islam and it does not promote violence, he added.

Maulana Rabe was in Bhopal in connection with the 19th annual seminar of the Oriental & sub-Continental chapter of the Rabita Adab-e-Islami (Universal League of Islamic Literature), was talking to some reporters informally here today. He is the vice-president of this organisation.

"The causes of such violent acts of a diseased mind should be probed into and researched in order to establish a peaceful and just civilised society, he emphasised.

Criticising the ever-growing trend of terrorism, Maulana Rabe said in the Indian society it is spreading its tentacles in various forms. The terrorist acts of majority community over minorities is being overlooked while when a minority community indulges in such inhuman activities, it is immediately linked with religion.

He emphatically stressed, "I want to declare in very clear terms that Islam never had any links with terrorism in the past, whatsoever, nor it has today.

"One apparent remedy of this malaise is the development of a just order because, sometimes, violent outburst by weaker sections was due to injustice being meted out to them by the society at large", he added.

He said that in this 21st century also the unjust principle of 'might is right' is being propagated. The barbaric onslaught of Iraq by the combined forces of America and United Kingdom is the latest example in this respect. He said freedom is the birth right of human beings and no power on this earth has any right, whatsoever, to curb it.

*Chairman, AIMPLB

He told a questioner that the ruling class in the Arab countries is not able to take a firm stand on the Iraq war, except indulging in a war of words, as they are afraid of losing power. For different reasons in international politics some of the Arab countries have invited American forces on their land and they remain indebted to them, he added. Replying to a question he said MPLB had opposed excavations at Babri Masjid site in Ayodhya, as it would not throw any light in the pending dispute. However, when the High Court issued orders in this respect we have honoured it by maintaining silence and are cooperating with the whole process. Later, Maulana Rabe presided over the valedictory function of the two-day seminar. The topic of the seminar was "The Contribution of Islamic & Moral Literature in Building Human Character".

In his presidential address he said 'Adab' (literature) affects one's life and vice versa life also affects 'Adab'. The society at large does not remain unaffected by 'Adab'. So literature should be developed for the good cause of a peaceful and just society and not to destroy it, he added. He said Rabita Adab-e-Islami highlights those issues in society, which generally remain ignored or unattended and need a better perspective to be looked upon.

Earlier, three resolutions were passed unanimously at the conclusion of the seminar. One of the resolutions called for immediate halt to naked aggression of American-United Kingdom forces over Iraq. Dr. Arif Junaid Nadwi, secretary Majlis Adab-e-Islami, Bhopal, presented his report on the occasion.

The second day's proceedings of the seminar were held in the Sulaiman Hall in the Taj-ul-Masajid complex in Arabic, Urdu, English and Hindi. Scholars from all over the country participated in the seminar.

The conveners of the seminar - Maulana Saeed Mujaddidi, Ameer Dar-ul-Uloom Taj-ul-Masajid, and Dr Hassan Khan, Head of the Arabic Department, Barkatullah University, propose the vote of thanks.

During the morning session, Maulana Rabe released a book of 'Na'at' collections penned by Zafar Janakpuri.

The Hindustan Times (31-3-2003)

ISLAM'S STANCE ON EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM AND ITS APPLICATIONS IN THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

Suleiman Bin Abdul Rahman*

The entire world, from north to south and east to west, is suffering from waves of extremism and terrorism which has thrown humanity into a blazing oven of problems and catastrophes. Everyday there are reports of terrorist operations resulting from extremism whose echoes are heard throughout the various news media. As a consequence, terrorist organisations have come to play a critical role in determining the direction of many political parties, having become one of the hidden forces influencing the world.

It is regrettable that such movements of extremism, violence and terrorism are associated with Islam when Islam is innocent of such associations. In this chapter, I intend to present the true position taken by Islam on extremism, devoting a separate section to a discussion of Islam's stance on terrorism. In addition, I will clarify the position taken by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on extremism and terrorism in the light of teachings of Islam.

First : Islam's stance on extremism

Extremism is an international phenomenon which appears on the level of thought or action. There is hardly any modern society which is entirely free of extremism, which takes various forms: political, moral, intellectual, and religious. As for religious extremism, it is not restricted to the followers of any particular religion or sect.

Complaints of terrorism are not limited solely to developing countries, but are found in developed nations in Europe and America. In fact, some researchers state that the modern phenomena of extremism and terrorism came into existence and developed originally in Western societies.

**Professor, IMBSI University (KSA)*

In America, researchers are engaged in studies and analyses of the ideas of numerous extremist religious factions known as "cults". One such cult, known by the name of its leader, Jim Jones - who promoted extremist religious ideas - was involved in an incident of mass suicide in Guyana a number of years ago when Jones' disciples committed mass suicide in obedience to his instructions.

We may conclude from the foregoing that extremism is not simply an Arab Islamic phenomenon, as some in the Western media claim, but rather, it is a worldwide phenomenon from which no society is free. Not only so, but it is a phenomenon which is entirely unacceptable and which must be opposed. All possible means should be used to do away with it, since it poses danger to all. Moreover, if resistance to religious extremism in particular is required in other parts of the world, then it is more needed in Moslem societies, because Islam rejects extremism of all types and in all forms, and it works to dry up its sources by uprooting the causes and motivations which lead people to fall into the deviation of terrorism with its deadly perils.

In order to make clear how Islam rejects extremism, I shall devote the following discussion to the definition of religious extremism and the Islamic ruling on it, the wisdom in Islam's prohibition of extremism, the harm it can cause and the dangers which it poses, as well as those texts from the Qur'an and the Sunnah which call for adherence to "the straight path". In addition, I shall clarify the criterion and measure on the basis of which actions should be judged to be extremist or moderate. And finally, I shall describe the Islamic approach to combating extremism.

1. The definition of terrorism

The Arabic word **al-tatarruf**, or "extremism," is a new addition to the vocabulary of Islamic legal terms, since this word is not found either in the Qur'an or the Sunnah. However, Islamic legal texts refer to the same concept by means of the Arabic word **ghuluw**, or "excess." Excess in religion is an exceeding of limits, for example, by praising

or condemning something to a degree that goes beyond what it actually deserves. As for "extremist," it is used to describe someone who has exceeded the limits of moderation in some way.

Through a close examination of the terms **al-tatarruf**, "extremism" and **al-ghuluw**, "excess," we find that they are so close in meaning as to be nearly synonymous, that is extremism refers to taking something to its limit and end, and at the same time, the term "extremism" refers to the use which is restricted in large part to a religious context. It goes without saying that what truly matters is the realities and contents being named, not the names themselves; hence, I will use the term "extremism" alongside "excess," because the former term is the one used by the Western media which draws an association between extremism (excess) and Islam.

2. Texts from the Qur'an and the Sunnah calling for adherence to "the straight path," and Islam's prohibitions and warnings against extremism and excess

Allah calls in the Holy Book for adherence to "the straight path," and for abstention from excess in religion. Allah Almighty says, *"Therefore stand firm (in the straight path) as thou are commanded, thou and those who with thee turn (unto Allah); and transgress not (from the path), for He seeth well as that ye do."* The command here to "stand firm in the straight path" means to remain committed to this path at all times, and not to transgress the limits which Allah has set for people in this regard. As Allah Almighty warns, *"If any do transgress the limits ordained by Allah, such persons wrong (themselves as well as others)."* The "limits" referred to here are the outer boundaries of those actions which are allowed, be they commanded or not commanded while transgressing the limits means going beyond them in some way.

Allah Almighty warns Jews and Christians in particular against excess, saying, *"O People of the Book! Commit*

no excesses in your religion, nor say of Allah aught but the truth."

These, then, are some of the verses in the Holy Qur'an which calls upon us to adhere to the straight path, while warning against and even prohibiting extremism. Moreover, in addition to the numerous Qur'anic verses which forbid extremism and excess, there are also a number of Prophetic traditions which prohibit them as well. Such traditions include the following: Ibn Mas'ud, (*may Allah be pleased with him*) reports that the Messenger of Allah, (*may peace and blessings be upon him*) said, "Those who speak in an affected, pompous manner will perish." He then repeated this statement two more times. He also said, "This religion [which I bring] is one of ease, not of hardship. And one who goes to excess in its practice will find that it has crushed him. Rather, guide each other's steps aright, draw near to one another, and be of good cheer, seeking aid [along the spiritual path] through worship in the morning and evening hours, and occasional night vigils." In explanation of this tradition, al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar states, "The meaning of these words is that one should not delve so deeply into acts of piety that he leaves gentleness behind; otherwise, he will find himself insulated, isolated and defeated."

Such prophetic traditions, which warn against and forbid religious extremism - or, as it is described in Islamic Sharee'ah (Law) texts, "excess in religion" - provide evidence that such excess is a departure from "the middle way" which Allah has chosen for the Moslem nation. The Messenger of Allah, (*may peace and blessings be upon him*), condemned "every trend which leads to excess in religion," and he rebuked those of his companions who went to such extremes in pious devotion that they abandoned the moderation taught by Islam. By virtue of the teachings of Islam, the Prophet, (*may peace and blessings be upon him*), struck a balance between the spiritual and material dimensions of life, between the requirements of religion and requirements of the world, and between the individual's right to live his or her life on earth and the right of his or her Lord

to receive the worship for which human beings were created.

Islam established forms of worship which help to purify the individual, raising him to a higher level both spiritually and materially. At the same time, such worship elevates the entire community, setting it on a foundation of brotherhood and solidarity without negating human beings' task of being Allah's vicegerents on earth. Prayer, the payment of Zakat, fasting and the pilgrimage to Mecca are all forms of worship which do not isolate the Moslem from life or from society; on the contrary, they strengthen his bond to other members of society on the level of both emotions and action. It is for this reason that Islam did not allow monoasticism, which imposes on those who enter it a state of isolation from life and its legitimate pleasures and from activity aimed at developing and improving life on earth. Islam views the entire earth as the believer's own special place and it views work on earth as a kind of worship and spiritual striving provided that one undertakes such pursuits with pure intentions and abides by the limits established by Allah. Unlike some other religions and philosophies, Islam does not want us to neglect material life for the sake of spiritual life, to subject our bodies to deprivation and torment in order for our spirits to be purified and elevated. Rather, it brings balance to all of these matters.

3. The wisdom in Islam's prohibition of extremism

In His holy revelation delivered through His Messenger, (*may peace and blessings be upon him*) Allah Almighty forbids religious extremism, referred to in Islamic legal terms as "excess." The wisdom in Islam's prohibition of extremism, excess in religion may be seen in the following:

- a) Allah completed His religion and the bestowing of His grace on the believers through the revelation of the Holy Qur'an to the last prophet. Moreover, the Holy Qur'an is the basis and origin of the Islamic religion, since Allah neglected nothing in His book. He says, "*We must have sent down to*

thee the Book explaining things...." The Messenger of Allah, (may peace and blessings be upon him) is the one who communicates and explains what Allah wills for us through that which has been revealed. As Allah declares, *"And We have sent down unto thee the Message, that thou mayest explain clearly to men what is sent for them..."* The Apostle, (may peace and blessings be upon him) was protected from error in all things which he communicated about Allah Almighty, and in all matters of people's religion which he explained and clarified. Hence, since excess means adding to what has been delivered by the Messenger of Allah, may peace and blessings be upon him, such an addition amounts to a departure from the rule of moderation in Islam to one of two extremes, excess or neglect, both of which are unacceptable in Islam.

b) Allah Almighty has made Islam the straight path by means of which humanity can be fully fulfilled in both the spiritual and material spheres; as such, it is the means by which they can achieve happiness both in this life and the hereafter. Moreover, given the fact that Islam's doctrines and forms of worship, remain unchanged regardless of time and place, since Allah has brought them to perfection and completion both in terms of their roots (fundamental principles) and branches (derivative teachings) and caused them to be recorded in the sacred texts which we now possess, no human being has the right to add to them or subtract from them in any way.

c) Islam is a religion based on affirmation of the oneness of Allah, and Allah Almighty has forbidden us to allow ourselves to fall into divisions and disputes, as religious extremism is considered to be one cause. Allah says, *"As for those who divide their religion and break up into sects, thou hast no part in them in the least..."*

d) Excess in religion involves hardship for those who become subject to it, which is inconsistent with the teachings of Islam calls for ease and the removal of undue hardship or difficulty which are distinctive features of Islam which distinguish from other religions.

In sum, Islam has forbidden extremism and excess in religion because it represents a big challenge to the guidance brought by Islam and a rejection of the path of moderation, mercy, ease and gentleness. Religious extremism (excess) is a kind of injustice and cruelty which people commit against themselves; in addition, it turns people away from the path of Allah because it distorts the truth and alienates people from it.

The warning against extremism and excess is also given because they involve fundamental flaws. These include:

One: Excess tends to alienate people, and it is not tolerated by ordinary human nature. This is why Prophet, (*may peace and blessings be upon him*), got angry with his companion Mu^{adh} Ibn Jabal when, while he was leading others in prayer on one occasion, went on for such a long time that one of those praying complained of it to the Prophet. The Prophet then came to Mu^{adh} and said, "Do you consider yourself so fascinating, Mu^{adh}?"

Two: Excess tends to be short-lived, since people easily become bored and tired, leaving even the smallest amount of work undone. Or they take the opposite path from the one they have been on; that is, they go from excess to neglect, from zeal to indifference.

Three: Excess leads to the violation of other rights and duties which must be fulfilled.

From what I have said thus far can see clearly Islam's position on excess and extremism and the wisdom in its prohibition of them. At this point an important question arises: if extremism and excess are this dangerous, then by what criterion or measure can we judge whether a particular action is extreme and excessive or moderate? In order to answer this question one must observe the following:

Judging actions to be extremist, excessive or moderate is the sole right of scholars of Islamic Sharee'ah. Declaring an action or a person to be excessive is a serious matter, and the only people qualified to do so are those scholars who possess an understanding of the limits of a

given action and who know the fundamental principles and branches of Islamic doctrine. After all, the judgement issued on a given matter depends on one's conception or understanding of it.

"The only acceptable criterion for describing actions as extremist or moderate is that of Islamic Sharee'ah (law), which is based primarily upon the authority of the Qur'an and the Sunnah and their interpretations in accordance with recognized rules and principles." Ideally, then, judging an action to be extremist or moderate is a task given to jurisprudents with knowledge of Islamic Sharee'ah, since distinguishing between that which is self-evident and that which is ambiguous, requires the knowledge of the opinions recognized as valid in light of Islamic Sharee'ah. These matters are tasks which require a competent understanding of Islamic Sharee'ah, and which must be referred to those qualified to deal with them.

Thus, it is clear that those who are qualified to decide that this or that act is excessive or moderate, are scholars of Islamic Sharee'ah whose knowledge and understanding are recognized and trustworthy; if the matter of defining "excess in religion" was left to ordinary people's opinions and whims, we could be drawn in several directions at once.

4. Islam's approach to combating extremism and excess

One of the distinctive features of Islam is that it has blocked all paths which might lead to extremism and excess. In doing so, Islam has taken a variety of paths and employed a number of different approaches to detecting and combating extremism (excess) and freeing the lives of Moslems from its dangers. In the interests of time and space, I shall discuss any two of Islam's approaches to combating extremism and excess. These are: (a) encouraging people to adopt a moderate, balanced approach in all of life's affairs, and (b) basing the Islamic religion on ease, and the removal of undue hardship.

a. Encouraging people to adopt a moderate, balanced approach in all of life's affairs. Moderation is one of Islam's distinctive features; it is a badge of honor worn by the Islamic nation which bestows the unique right to be a witness over other nations. As Allah Almighty says, *"Thus We have made of you an 'ummah' justly balanced, that ye might be witness over the nations..."* If someone's testimony concerning an ordinary matter, is only valid if the witness is a just person characterised by sound reasoning, integrity and good morals, then imagine if he or she were going to be a witness "over the nations"?

Given the fact that those who offer this testimony have been shown the prudent middle road between the ignorance of excess on one hand and the ignorance of neglect on the other, then they will rescue all of humanity. After all, human beings cannot remain neutral in the face of the perversions which surround them on all sides; they have been chosen to be witnesses to those around them, and there is no doubt that the neglect of this duty means the loss of this "middle way," the right to give this testimony, as a unique characteristic by virtue of which Allah has distinguished the nation of Islam and set them apart from others in all affairs of their lives.

If we have a proper, thorough understanding of moderation in Islam, and if we then make a careful examination of its components, we will find that it includes all facets of life, and that it leaves its mark on all aspects of the mindset of the true Moslem. Such a person has a constant sense of self-respect and confidence in Allah, as well as humility before Allah and other people. Hence, moderation leaves its marks on the entire Moslem nation - in the form of gentleness, benevolence, moderation and balance, thus making it possible for their civilization to spread and prosper on earth.

b. Basing the Islamic religion on ease, and the removal of undue hardship. The ease and facility which characterize Islam are a feature by virtue of which it differs

from other religions. Hardship is not among the aims of the divine law, as may be seen from the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Among the texts which clarify this point are the following: In speaking of the grace He has bestowed on the nation of Islam, Allah Almighty declares, *"He has chosen you, and has imposed no difficulties on you..."* He also says, *"Allah intends every facility on you; He does not want to put you to difficulties."* Also, Prophetic traditions affirm the ease which characterize the Islamic religion and the fact that the Islamic Sharee'ah (law) is intended to remove undue hardship. The following traditions affirm the ease which marks Islam and its distance from extremism and excess: (1) "Allah desires ease for this nation, not hardship." (2) When the Messenger of Allah was sending Mu'adh Ibn Jabal and Abu Musa al-Ash'ari to Yemen to invite its people to Islam, he said to them, "Facilitate rather than impose difficulties; announce glad tidings rather than alienating." (3) The Prophet (*may peace and blessings be upon him*) said, "This religion [which I bring] is one of ease, not of hardship. Anyone who goes to excess in its practice will find that it has crushed him. Rather, guide each other's steps aright, draw near to one another, and be of good cheer, seeking aid [along the spiritual path] through worship in the morning and evening hours, and occasional night vigils." These, then, are some of the Prophetic traditions which reveal the moderation of the Islamic Sharee'ah and its intent not to impose hardship, but rather to provide ease.

The preceding discussion illustrates that Islam has established a clear, sound approach to combating extremism and excess, an approach which is represented by moderation, ease, and the removal of hardship.

Second: Islam's stance on terrorism

Introduction

International terrorism has become an inseparable part of daily life for people in the modern world. Hardly a day goes by without the occurrence of some terrorist operation somewhere in the world, its intent being to create

a state of threat which will get people into problems and calamities. It is a cause for regret that these terrorist acts are associated with Islam when Islam is innocent of any such association. There is no legal ruling in Islam which commands the Moslem to engage in acts of extremism, violence and terrorism, since such acts are highly dangerous, with devastating effects. Islam commands only what has been commanded by Allah Almighty in the Holy Qur'an and what has been commanded by His Messenger in his Sunnah. Moreover, neither the Holy Qur'an nor the Sunnah contains anything indicating a call to extremism and violence. On the contrary, they call for the removal of hatred and hostility. Yet despite this clear truth, Islam is subjected to campaigns of slander and misrepresentation launched by some of the Western news media. Such campaigns have become fierce since the fall of the Soviet Union and the breakup of its republics and the end of "the Cold War" between East and West. The aim is to present Islam as an enemy of Western civilization. It is also regrettable that a number of Arab and Moslem journalists have taken part in this campaigns, with or without knowledge of the bad effects which such campaigns could have on their countries and societies.

According to the views expressed by those carrying out these unjust campaigns, extremism is by nature "Islamic," as are violence and terrorism. As for violence and terrorism which come from non-Moslems, they receive hardly any mention, as the Western media either pass over them lightly, or ignore them altogether. Constant mention is made of "Islamic terrorism," whereas all other terrorism is neglected. This alleged Islamic practice has become an excuse casting doubt on Islam itself and defaming the reputation of both the religion and its adherents. Forces hostile to Islam have associated Islam with terrorism in order to do everything possible to harm Moslems' reputation.

Hence, in order to present the true Islamic stance on terrorism, to make clear that far from being a partner to terrorism, Islam wages war on it, and to explain the Islamic

approach to combating terrorism, I shall take up the following points: (1) a brief historical overview of terrorism with aim of demonstrating that terrorism is not restricted to a particular place or time; (2) the definition of terrorism; (3) terrorism in the balance of Islam; and (4) Islam's preventive and curative program for doing battle with terrorism.

One: a brief historical overview of terrorism: It behoves us here to give a brief overview of the history of terrorism in order to show that terrorism has not been limited to any particular time or place and to make it clear to every fair minded reader that terrorism is not a product of Islam. As an act which produces a state of terror, fear, panic, anxiety or threat on the part of the public, terrorism is as old as history itself, and it has been practiced by groups belonging to the Jewish and Christian religions.

The term "terrorism" was used for the first time to refer to "Robespierre" and his comrades in his committee connected with the "Court of Terror." It appears that the Jacobins sometimes used the term "terrorist" when speaking or writing about themselves, but with a positive connotation; however, the term "terrorist" later came to be used haphazardly, and with criminal connotations.

Nevertheless, acts whose intent is to terrorize people have existed ever since history began to be recorded; one of the oldest known examples of terrorist movements is that of the "Sycarriot," a highly organized Jewish religious sect whose members employed unorthodox, non-traditional tactics to attack their foes in broad daylight. They preferred to engage in their acts of terrorism on feast days when the city of Jerusalem was full of cowards. They did not merely kill innocent people who did not share their beliefs, but also used to demolish rulers' palaces and burn stored goods and public records. They were keen to destroy debenture bonds, thereby preventing creditors from being paid back. The assassination campaigns carried out by the "Zuslotiyun" were so brutal since their victims were not only employees of the occupation government, but other Jews

as well.

Terrorist activities were tolerated and even blessed by the higher classes of the Christian clergy. Ford mentions a striking account of the assassinations which took under Christian auspices when he speaks of Ebius X and Gregory XIII, who together nearly brought about a historical catastrophe due to the church's link with political murders.

These are two examples of terrorist organisations belonging to the Jewish and Christian religions; nevertheless, no historian has put forward a theory of "Christian terrorism" or "Jewish terrorism" due to the actions carried out by these terrorist groups. With regard to the history of Islam, there are a number of terrorist groups which have belonged in name to Islam, but which in reality had rebelled against the teachings of Islam and took a non-Islamic path by engaging in terrorism. Perhaps the most salient example of such a group is the sect referred to as the Karmathians. The Karmathians were followers of Karmath, who sent a man by the name of Abdullah Ibn Maymun to teach his ideas in Iraq. Karmath declared his followers to be no longer accountable for the required acts of worship and piety in Islam and he gave the license to commit wanton folly, commanding them to abandon prayer and fasting. Teaching his disciples that they were bound by no religious duties whatsoever, Karmath told them that it was permissible for them to seize the wealth of their opponents and to spill their blood. The Karmathians thus turned into a gang of murderers who killed their opponents and declared their money and possessions free game, spreading destruction and terror among everyone around them until they finally reached Mecca. There they stormed the Holy Kabah and removed the kiswa, or covering of the Kabah. They also removed the black stone from its place, which remained in their possession for over twenty years.

The Karmathians are an example of a terrorist group which belonged nominally to Islam, but which violated its teachings. Hence, the terrorist acts committed by groups such as this must not be taken as evidence that Islam

supports terrorism. Moreover, if historians have not developed the theory of Christian and Jewish terrorism despite the existence of terrorist groups belonging to these two religions, it is not only fair then that no impartial scholar should develop a theory of Islamic terrorism, describing the Islamic religion as "the religion of terrorism." The reason for this is that Islam grants no legitimacy to terrorism nor does it even sympathize with it. On the contrary, it wages war against it and prohibits it, and it has established legal limits with the aim of combating it.

In order to shed more light on the fact that terrorism has not been restricted to a particular time or place and that it is not associated specifically with Islam, I quote the following statement by a researcher who, studied extremism and terrorism; he writes:

Extremists and rebels against societal consensus have emerged from Europe in all spheres. They began with "black magic" groups, heretics, and so forth; then the black river swelled until, in the 19th Century, there emerged anarchist and communist movements in politics, and barbarism in literature and art. Then in present century, the Fascist, Nazi, leftist and religious terrorist movements came to occupy a significant place.

Since the end of the 19th Century and the beginning of the 20th Century, there have been international groups, "Black Science," "Children of Nature," "The Workers' Avant-guard," "Whatever," "Hard Labor," "The Disgusted Ones," "The Bankrupt," "Dynamite," "Hearts of Iron," "The Hungry Peasant," and "Those Without Family." Twelve organizations, each of them with its own workers and members, plans, headquarters, and methods of spreading its message. None were reformist or charitable organizations aiming to feed the "hungry peasant." Rather, they were extremist organizations whose members had studied nothing but Chemistry. When the French extremists' leader was asked, "Why Chemistry in particular?" he

replied, "So that the anarchist will know how to make his own bombs."

Teams of terrorist anarchists began spreading from France into most parts of the world, including Russia, some Asian countries, and a number of European capitals. The last two decades of the 19th Century witnessed a state of fright and panic which affected not only the general public, but high-ranking figures including kings, princes, and high ranking leaders.

After security forces began pursuing the anarchists with increasing energy, they announced the principle of "doing away with the security forces in the name of freedom." Hence, when policemen would go out to arrest them saying, "We are arresting you in the name of law," the anarchists would reply, "You arrest us in the name of law, and we will kill you in the name of freedom."

These, then, are twelve terrorist, anarchist, extremist organizations, none of which belonged to Islam. Is it reasonable, then, to say that Islam has exported terrorism as is claimed by some of the Western media? The association drawn by the media between Islam and terrorism is both surprising and bewildering, since terrorism involves injuring, murdering, oppressing and intimidating the innocent, whereas Islam does not approve of terrorism at all. On the contrary, it forbids it; Islam declares terrorism to be prohibited by Allah, while those who adopt it as a profession will face severe punishment.

Two: The definition of terrorism. There is no established definition for terrorism at the present time (the year 2000G.), whether in international law or among international and religious organizations. Hence, I have adopted the definition proposed by the Council of Arab Ministers of Interior and Justice in the Arab agreement on combating terrorism which was issued in Cairo in 1998. The Arab Interior and Justice Ministers defined terrorism in this agreement as follows:

Terrorism is an act involving violence or aggression, whatever its motives or aims, which is committed in order to carry out a criminal enterprise, be it individual or communal, and which aims to cause terror or alarm among people by harming them or endangering their lives, their freedom or their security, by doing damage to the environment, facilities or public or private property, by stealing or seizing such property, or by endangering some national resource.

Three: terrorism in the balance of Islam. Terrorism - which is in reality an attack directed against innocent men, women, and children, the threat of engaging in such an attack, or any other means of harassing people, disturbing their peace or robbing them of their sense of security and tranquillity - is completely unacceptable in Islam. Hence, it is impermissible for anyone to make such an attack, to participate in it, to plan it, or to cover it whether it has been committed by governments, individuals, institutions or other organizations, regardless of their identity or capacity. The reason for this is that terrorism causes property to be lost or wasted, and it prevents the progress and development needed to guarantee the interests of both individuals and groups. Terrorism is a grave crime because it involves a direct assault on society. Islam looks at its effects and punishes those who commit it in a manner equal to the panic and fear it has caused to innocent people.

There are numerous falsehoods and calumnies which the Western media has spread about Islam, one of which is the claim that Islam advocates violence and extremism and opposes the call to peace, despite the awareness that Islam is itself a religion of peace. Islam denounces violence and terrorism in all of its forms, urging Moslems to stay away from violence, terrorism, or the use of force. In fact, Islam even prohibits committing violence against oneself, and on this basis it forbids suicide. Allah Almighty says, "*And make not your own hands contribute to (your) destruction.*" Hence, if Islam warns against a person destroying himself,

then it must warn more against destroying others as well.

Islam has censured terrorism and warned of its dangers even if it is carried out in jest. As we read in the following Prophetic tradition, "Once a man took another man's sandal and hid it from him as a practical joke. When he mentioned this later to the Messenger of Allah, (*may peace and blessings be upon him*) he said, 'Do not alarm another Moslem, for to do so is to commit a great injustice.'"

According to another tradition, the Messenger of Allah, (*may peace and blessings be upon him*) said, "No Moslem is permitted to alarm another Moslem."

In a third tradition we read, "If anyone looks at a Moslem in such a way as to frighten him for no rightful cause, Allah will frighten him on the Day of Resurrection.

In a fourth tradition, we read, "If anyone waves an iron instrument at his brother, he will be crushed by the angels until he stops, even if he happens to be his full brother (born of the same mother and father)."

Such traditions demonstrate the great care taken by Islam in both its doctrine and its law to ensure that people's social relations are based on love, affection, mercy, compassion, and cooperation in performing righteous actions and the fear of Allah.

Islam affirms the sanctity of human life and forbids the unjustified shedding of anyone's blood. As Allah Almighty states, "*Take not life, which Allah hath made sacred, except by way of justice and law.*" Islam places great stress on the sanctity of human life, and on the heavy burden of guilt by who violates this sanctity, considering all human souls to be essentially one. Consequently, if anyone commits aggression against someone else, it is as if he had committed aggression against all people because in so doing, he has violated the right to life; conversely, if anyone is charitable toward another, it is as if he had done it for all of humanity. Allah Almighty says, "*We ordained... that if anyone slew a person - unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land - it would be as if he slew the whole people, and if anyone saved a life, it would be*

as if he saved the life of the whole people."

In sum, Islam wages war against terrorism in all forms and of all types, since Islam is itself the religion of peace. Hence, peace in Islam is such a strong desire which it urges people to fulfill in life. Rather, it is a fundamental element of its doctrine and its program for spiritual training and nurture; in addition, it is a goal whose awareness Islam instills deeply in the individual Moslem, in society, and in the Moslem nation as a whole.

Islam conceives of life as a human unity whose purpose is mutual understanding among people and cooperation toward doing good and growing in the consciousness of Allah. It does not conceive of it as struggles among various classes of society, nor as a war among different people or among the various races. As Allah Almighty says, "*O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily, the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you.*"

Peace is a principle which is deeply-rooted in Moslems' souls that it has become a part of their being and a doctrine in which they firmly believe. From the dawn of Islam, it has raised its voice in a call for peace throughout the world, laying out the well-guided plan which is capable of helping humanity to achieve such peace. Islam loves life and instills this love in people; hence, it frees them from fear and sets forth the ideal way of life for human beings, directing them toward the goals of upward movement and progress under the protective shields of security and peace.

Four: Islam's program for combating terrorism. Great efforts have been made on the international level to combat terrorism through the United Nations, as well as on the part of numerous actions outside the UN which have held seminars and conferences and issued numerous resolutions and recommendations with regard to the fight against terrorism. However, despite the international efforts which

have been made and which continue to be made towards this end, they have failed to deal with terrorism in a way that eradicates this serious disease which spreads further in the body of humanity with every passing day.

The failure of these efforts is due to the fact that they have sought to deal with the phenomenon of terrorism through secular systems and laws which overlook important facts, thereby hindering rather than fostering awareness of the true nature of terrorism. Hence, if the world wishes to deal effectively with terrorism, it needs to adopt the Islamic program for combating crime in general, and terrorism in particular. Islam offers a distinctive program for fighting crime, of which terrorism is viewed as one type; this consists of two approaches: (a) the preventive approach, which seeks to stop crime before it is committed, and (b) the curative approach, which deals with crime after it has been committed.

A. The Islamic Preventive Program for Combating Terrorism

Islam is a divinely religion characterized by justice, moderation and high-mindedness which, its doctrine and its law, set out to treat the willfulness and base desires in the human soul; as such, it eradicated the innate propensities for hostility, destruction and violence in those individuals who came to believe in its message and instilled in them principles and ideals which made them into benevolent souls, knowledgeable of the rights they possessed. When Islam established this creative, dynamic balance between rights and duties in the lives of Moslems, it did away with all remaining violent tendencies in the human soul. Consequently, there was no terrorism and no violence to speak of, since the causes which might lead to it had been dealt with efficiently by the Islamic principles, and values. In other words, Islam blocked off all means, paths, causes, motives which might drive someone to commit an act of terrorism, guaranteeing the individual rights for his spiritual, physical, intellectual, social, and emotional needs.

In order to clarify this fact, I shall present some examples as evidence in support of what I am saying. If, for example,, there are motives and causes for terrorism which are based on nationalist, separatist aspirations given that nationalist organizations engage in terrorist activities as a means of exerting pressure, achieving separate-nation status or crystallizing an independent political or religious identity, then it should be noted that the principles of Islam and the political practices associated with them in Islam's "golden age" guaranteed everyone - both minorities and majority, Arabs and non-Arabs, white and black - a high degree of equality in all dimensions and aspects.

If the causes behind terrorism are economic in nature, then it must be remembered that Islam has guaranteed economic equality as well. After all, the opportunity to work is available to all, while the invitation to work treats human labor with such appreciation and respect that it is raised to the status of worship. Social solidarity in the finest sense of the word may be seen in the institution of zakat based on which the rich offer assistance to poor and needy Moslems voluntarily, as well as in charitable donations and the just distributions of any material benefits with which Allah has blessed the Moslems in one way or another. In this manner, a remarkable spirit of love for others comes to exist among Moslems, and the Moslem community came to be like a single family in which older members cared for the younger ones and the stronger ones cared for the weak, and each person's life was valued equally. Moreover, if the causes behind terrorism are political in nature, it should be recalled that within the context of specific legal guidelines, Islam has guaranteed equal political rights for all. Every Moslem, for example, has the right to express his views so long as this takes place within the framework of the noble teachings of Islam.

Islamic political practice guarantees everyone an ideal degree of freedom in all its dimensions, including the freedom of worship; no one would be forced to abandon his religion and enter Islam; all who enter Islam do so

voluntarily and by choice. Under the banner of Islam, Christians and Jews have enjoyed all their rights, with Islam guaranteeing them security and stability and urging Moslems to deal kindly with them. Accordingly, Moslems have demonstrated keen concern to provide an atmosphere of tranquility and safety for non-Moslems so long as they are committed to the security of Islamic society and the Islamic State.

Islamic society has been characterized by the freedom to work and to express one's personal opinion, rights which are enjoyed by all without exception. Another characteristic of Islamic society is an ideal degree of justice, since everyone is treated equally before courts of law, with no distinction made between leaders and followers, or even between the ruler himself and the ordinary citizen. Hence, it may be said that Islam has refined people's souls giving them a sound, moral upbringing by doing away with people's hostile tendencies. In this manner, Islam has removed the causes which tend to lead to the commission of crimes of terror.

In addition to this means of protecting people from falling into the error of selfishness and the resulting tendency toward aggression and violence, the Islamic Sharee'ah has established strict rules and penalties capable of deterring weak souls from committing aggression against others, such as attacks on people's lives, their wealth, society's public morals and values, or refusal to obey those in authority. In this regard, there are two types of crimes which are committed against the society as a whole and to which Islamic Sharee'ah has set limits to restrain people before they think seriously about committing them.

The first type of crime committed against society as a whole is what is known as **hirabah**, while the second type is known as **baghi**. These two types of crime represent a pattern of violence directed against society, although the second type is closer to the modern concept of terrorist crimes, since crimes of terror tend to be driven by political motives, specifically, the desire to take over political power.

Now that I have discussed the path of prevention set forth by the lofty principles of Islam, let me move on to a presentation of the path of treatment set forth by Islamic Sharee'ah once crime against society have already been committed.

B. The Islamic Curative Program for Combating Terrorism

In my discussion of the Islamic preventive program for combating terrorism, we noted that Islam has granted a number of human rights and established guarantees to protect these rights, which are capable of meeting all of people's spiritual, physical, intellectual and emotional needs. Similarly I noted that in this manner, Islam has invalidated all claims, both direct and indirect, which could be used as excuses for committing a terrorist act in order to secure a right or to resist something which the terrorist sees as an injustice.

In addition to this preventive approach to protecting people from falling into the error of selfishness and the resulting tendency toward aggression and violence, the Islamic Sharee'ah has established stiff penalties to deter weak souls from committing aggression against others, against human life, religion, reason, material wealth, society's public morals or values, or refusal to obey those in authority. And here we find ourselves before two types of terrorist crime committed against society as a whole, and for which Islam has instituted just deterrent penalties represented by the Islamically set limits. As we have mentioned, the two types of crimes being referred to here are: (a) crimes of **hirabah**, and (b) crimes of **baghi**.

Third: The stance taken by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on extremism and terrorism

The stance taken on extremism and terrorism by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is, in fact, the same stance as that taken by Islam itself and which I have discussed previously. This is due to the fact that the Kingdom of Saudi

Arabia is an Islamic state which applies Islamic Sharee'ah: What Islamic Sharee'ah requires, the Saudi government carries out, what this law allows, the Saudi government adopts, and what it forbids, the Saudi government avoids and opposes. In order to demonstrate this fact, I shall quote here from Resolution No. 148 on 12/1/1419H. issued by Saudi Arabia's Council of Senior Scholars in response to the occurrence of acts of sabotage in numerous countries of the world, acts which had victimized large numbers of innocent people and led to the destruction of huge amounts of money and property. The following excerpt is taken from this resolution:

In its 32nd session, held in the city of Ta'if beginning on 8/1/1409H., based on the evidence which it possesses of the occurrence of a number of incidents of sabotage which have victimized many innocent people and caused the destruction of large amounts of money, property and installations in many Islamic nations and others, committed by certain unbalanced, bitter individuals whose faith is either weak or nonexistent - including the blowing up of dwellings, setting fire to public and private property, blowing up bridges and tunnels and blowing up or highjacking airplanes, and since it has been observed that these crimes are being committed in countries which are both near and distant neighbours, and given that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, like other countries, is vulnerable to the occurrence of such acts of sabotage:

The Council of Senior Scholars thought it is necessary to look into the possibility of approving a deterrent penalty for those who commit acts of sabotage, directed against public installations, government interests, or other locations, with the intention of causing destruction and disturbance of security.

The Council is aware of the fact that according to

those knowledgeable in matters of Islamic Sharee'ah, the provisions of this law revolve in their entirety around the indispensability of protecting five necessities ensuring the means of their survival for preserving them from harm, namely: religion, the soul (human life), honor, the mind, and money.

The Council has given consideration to the great dangers which arise from crimes involving attacks on that which Moslems hold sacred, including their lives, their honor and their wealth, and the degree to which such acts of sabotage undermine public security, bring about states of chaos and unrest and cause Moslems to fear for their lives and their property -- recognizing that Allah, has preserved for people their religions, their bodies, their spirits, their honor, their minds, and their wealth through the establishment of limits and penalties which make it possible to achieve public and private security.

The Council of Senior Scholars then concluded their resolution with the approval of a deterrent penalty for such acts of sabotage:

First: If someone is proven to have engaged in an act of sabotage and destruction which upsets security by an attack on people's lives and private or public property, such as the blowing up of residences, mosques, schools, hospitals, factories, bridges, water reservoirs, or public resources under the control of the House of Finance such as oil pipelines, the blowing up or hijacking of airplanes, and the like, his penalty shall be execution. The basis for this is the evidence found in the Qur'anic verses quoted above, according to which such destruction on earth requires that its doer be subject to the death penalty, as well as the fact that the danger and harm caused by those who engage in acts of sabotage are graver than those caused by someone who, for example, engages in highway robbery by attacking an individual and killing him for his money. The judgement concerning saboteurs is

found in the Qur'anic verse pertaining to hirabah.

Second: Before the punishment referred to in the above paragraph may be carried out, it is essential that all necessary verification measures be completed on the part of Islamic Sharee'ah (Law) courts, courts of cassation, and the Supreme Judiciary Council. In so doing, they ensure that the authorities have fulfilled all their moral and legal obligations to spare innocent life and offer testimony to this country's commitment to carry out all measures necessary to verify that a crime has actually been committed and, in the case of a guilty verdict, to carry out the required penalty.

Third: The Council deems it advisable that the approval of this penalty be announced through the news media.

This, then, is the penalty for terrorist acts as endorsed by the Saudi Council of Senior Scholars.

2. The political and diplomatic efforts made by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to combat extremism and terrorism

Represented by its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has exerted major efforts on the external level to combat terrorism, denouncing it on both the regional and international levels. What follows are some examples of the political and diplomatic efforts which have been made by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to oppose extremism and terrorism.

On the regional level, one may recognize the Kingdom's stance on extremism and terrorism by examining the role which it plays in two spheres, the first represented by the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council, and the second, by the Arab League.

The Saudi policy on combating terrorism is based on the principle that regional security is an indivisible whole, and that it is the sole responsibility of the region's native inhabitants. Consequently, the Kingdom first sought to bring forth a single Gulf stance on important international issues,

including the issue of terrorism. Thus, it put into practice the principle of cooperation and good neighborliness which is itself one of the noble principles of Islam. When this goal was achieved, the way was made easier for another achievement on the level of the Arab world, namely, the Arab Agreement on Combating Terrorism. This agreement represented a qualitative leap in the realm of cooperation among Arab states, whose final outcome will be in the best interests of both Islam and Moslems. This agreement was commended by the entire world, which recognized it as a distinctive achievement which demonstrated to the entire world that the Arabs and Moslems are even more concerned than others to combat terrorism. The Arab Agreement on Combating Terrorism was the first of its kind internationally to draw a clear distinction between terrorism and the principle of legitimate armed struggle for the liberation of lands under foreign occupation; in addition, it placed Saudi Arabia and other Arab states in a better position internationally to work towards an international treaty which distinguishes between terrorism and legitimate armed struggle. At the close of their meeting held in Algeria on 31/1/2000, the Arab Ministers of Interior called for the convening of an international conference on combating terrorism, in which given a detailed, agreed-upon definition [of terrorism] should be drawn up to distinguish between terrorism and legitimate armed struggle. In an interview conducted by the **Al-Riyad** newspaper with some of the Arab interior ministers on 28/12/1418H., His Highness Nayif Ibn °Abd al-°Aziz,, Saudi minister of the Interior, explained that this agreement might be expanded to include all Islamic states.

On the international level, Saudi Arabia carries out its role in combating terrorism as an effective member of the United Nations and the international community. In this capacity, the Kingdom seeks to highlight an Arab and Islamic policy on terrorism in all its forms, and in particular, terrorism which is carried out by states against religious and ethnic minorities, or by colonialist states against peoples whose lands are under occupation.

In the address which he delivered on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations, His Royal Highness Prince Sultan Ibn [°]Abd al-[°]Aziz, Second Deputy Premier Minister of Defence and Aviation, and Inspector General clarified Saudi Arabia's stance on terrorism, saying,

My country represents the heart of the Islamic world, since it is the birthplace of Islam which places peace at the forefront of its noble principles. It denounces violence and terrorism, and for this reason, King Fahd devotes all his efforts to ensuring that the Kingdom continues to fulfill its mission with regard to the causes of peace.

Similarly, in the address which he delivered before the 52nd session of the UN General Assembly held on 8/10/1997, His Royal Highness Prince Sa[°]ud al-Faysal, Minister of Foreign Affairs, clarified the Kingdom's official position on terrorism saying,

On all possible occasions and in all international forums, the government of Saudi Arabia has tirelessly condemned the terrorism which has spread so fast throughout the modern world, voicing its support for all the international efforts exerted in opposition to this dangerous phenomenon. The position that has been manifested through the statements issued by the Arab Gulf States Cooperation Council, which include a frank, clear condemnation of terrorism in all its forms due to its dangerous effects on the security of individuals and the interests of peoples of societies. These statements stress that extremism, violence and terrorism are worldwide phenomena which are not restricted to any particular people, ethnic group or religious sect. Moreover, in view of the international nature and of this phenomenon, the matter of opposing and combating it, calls for joint international efforts which focus on the motives and causes behind it and the results it leads to.

In an address delivered before the 54th session of the

UN General Assembly convened on 2/6/1420H. (30/8/1999), Dr. Nizar Ibn °Ubayd Madani, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs, spoke to the extent to which the phenomenon of terrorism has spread and the stance taken on it by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, saying, "Terrorism, which strikes everywhere in the world relentlessly and indiscriminately, has become at present a worldwide phenomenon of great seriousness; it requires organized international efforts if we are going to contain and combat it. The Saudi Arabian government has tirelessly condemned terrorism in all its forms, joining its efforts with those being exerted internationally to forestall this perilous phenomenon."

From what has preceded, one can clearly recognize Saudi Arabia's definitive stance on extremism and terrorism on both the internal and external levels, a stance which has expressed itself through condemnation of and opposition to both these evils. Yet despite this fact, some of the media have interpreted the material assistance and relief provided by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as the funding of terrorism and extremists; the same interpretation is placed on Saudi Arabia's aid to Moslem minorities in non-Moslem countries. In order to state the facts concerning these false accusations, I will explain the objectives of the aid provided to others by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in general, and the true nature of the aid it provides for Moslem minorities in particular.

3. The true nature of the assistance and relief provided to others by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

a. The basis, nature and aims of such assistance and relief

Due to this religious and humanitarian orientation, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia offers assistance and humanitarian relief to others. One of the most salient features of such aid is the moral drive for giving it which is the principle of helping the victims of disasters, wars and

floods, as well as displaced persons and refugees in numerous different countries. The same goes for Saudi Arabia's support for the needy and victimized and its backing of causes of truth, justice and peace throughout the world. Yet despite the noble aim behind such aid, some of the news media interpret it as the funding of terrorism.

To accuse the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia of funding terrorism is to commit an offence against reality and history, and in reply to this baseless charge I say: The aid provided by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia reaches those who need it in more than 100 countries; in other words, Saudi aid and relief cover more than 70% of all countries in the world. This aid and relief are provided for purely religious and humanitarian reasons, their purpose is to alleviate the sufferings of human beings wherever they happen to be on the basis of clearly defined legal parameters. The humanitarian practices of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are based on values and morals. Hence, the humanitarian stances taken by the Kingdom are established goals guided by the teachings of Islamic faith. Saudi Arabia's historic role and its position as a principle leader and a center from which guidance have radiated outwards all indicate the universality of the Islamic religion.

The areas in which Saudi Arabia provides support for the needy in trouble included all human sectors throughout the world which have encountered in the forward movement, or those which suffer from backward conditions due to a lack of resources or the absence of assistance to rescue them from their predicament, so that they can cope with life's burdens.

With a profound Islamic sensitivity, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia seeks out life situations through initiatives which take a number of forms based on the nature of the case at hand and the needs which it presents. As a consequence, the unique humanitarian aid provided by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has become a kind of protective umbrella which, rather than waiting for those in need to come running to it for shelter, seeks them out in an active way,

then gladly showers them with its bounty, all of this being by the Islamic approach based on solidarity, cooperation, and the unity of all humanity.

Hence, lending a helping hand to others to relieve their suffering is a well established Saudi custom. For a better appreciation of the significance of this custom, let us refer to an item mentioned 70 years ago (11/10/1929) in the **Umm al-Qura** newspaper, according to which His majesty King °Abd al-°Aziz - may he rest in peace - donated 500 pounds to the disaster-stricken in Palestine. Then, not content to let this contribution be limited to the government itself and concerned to see such a practice be adopted by the general public, he sought to establish solidarity in people's minds and hearts by giving everyone an opportunity to engage in voluntary charitable work. To this end he ordered the formation of national fund-raising committees in the year 1348H. (1929G.); then the contributions were sent to the people of Palestine to reduce the effects of the catastrophe which had befallen them that year. The fund-raising campaign was launched by the king himself - may Allah have mercy on him - thereby establishing a solid foundation for charitable work which his descendants have adhered to.

King Fahd Ibn °Abd al-°Aziz states, "In Saudi Arabia's clear determination to provide humanitarian aid to friendly nations, and peoples in need, it is acting on the basis of awareness, depth and a solid conviction of the importance of its role in serving human causes thanks to its Allah-given spiritual values, glorious cultural heritage, and abundant material resources."

The presentation above clarifies to every impartial thinker that the aid and relief provided for others by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are to be viewed as honorable humanitarian aid whose purpose is to alleviate human suffering. This being the case, it would be impossible to employ such aid in any manner whatsoever to finance terrorism, which Saudi Arabia condemns and combats on all levels and by all means. Terrorism involves injustice, aggression and destruction on earth, while the constitution

of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, namely, the Holy Qur'an, is the only constitution of the world which has laid down a deterrent penalty for terrorism, a penalty represented by the legal limits which were explained in our discussion of Islam's program for combating terrorism.

b. The true nature of Saudi Arabia's support for Moslem minorities in non-Islamic countries

The leadership role which Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has assumed in the Islamic world has placed additional burdens on its shoulders. Spreading the Islamic message and supporting Moslem minorities in non-Islamic countries has been misunderstood by various parties who see it as Saudi support for terrorists and extremists and interference in the domestic affairs of countries in which such Moslem minorities reside. In reality, however, Saudi Arabia's stance on this issue is clear and unambiguous, for the principles of international law and the UN Charter stipulate that these minorities possess the right to practice their own forms of worship and religious rites. The Saudi support for them comes within this framework, and is offered in the open and is recognized as legitimate in the context of international relations. Such aid poses no threat or harm to the security of other states. Those who exploit these situations as a basis for criticizing Islam and Moslems are themselves who support major campaigns under a variety of pretexts, such as "human rights" or "the right to self-determination" when the parties concerned are non-Moslem minorities in an Islamic country. The most salient example of this is what happened in Eastern Timor, which was forced against its will to withdraw from an Islamic state. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia supports and helps Moslem minorities in non-Islamic States based on religious and humanitarian considerations, and as a means of inviting others to embrace Allah's faith through wisdom and prudent advice. However, it does not interfere in other countries' internal affairs because it would not wish others to interfere in its affairs. ■

EXCAVATION UNNECESSARY, SAYS MUSLIM LAW BOARD MEMBER

Even as the excavation of the Ayodhya disputed site enters its fifth day, All India Muslim Personal Law Board secretary Muhammed Abdur Raheem Quraishi said it was "unnecessary."

Addressing a public meeting here on Sunday, Quraishi said: "We will take the court decision on the disputed site at Ayodhya as final. There was no need for this excavation as it has no connection with the case. But if the court wants it, we will not say against it."

Regretting the image being painted of the Muslim madrassas as centres which harbour terrorists, Quraishi said none of the terrorists who had been captured from madrasas had any connection to them. "We should bring non-Muslims to the functions we hold in our madrasas, so that they understand what we actually do there," he said. Personal Law Board president Moulana Syed Rabey Hasani Nadvi said India should take a leaf out of the US's book and permit all communities to work together for the country's development. "Prior to the Independence, we had a sense of brotherhood among all communities in India. We should go back to that, instead of setting up walls among brothers," he maintained.

The Moulana, however, said there was no question of changing the Muslim Personal Law to accommodate anyone. "The law is based on the Shariat, which is God-given. No man can tamper with it or change it," he declared.

He rued that the minority community was being "troubled" for no reason, whatsoever. "Still, they may be able to trouble us, but they will never be able to wipe us out of this country," he added.

AN ICS OFFICER INTERPRETER OF THE QUR'AN

M.A. Sherif

(Abdullah Yusuf Ali's scholarship on the Qur'an was published in instalments between 1934 and 1937. Though he continued to write articles and reviews on a variety of topics for at least seven more years, this was to be his best known work. It has made his name instantly recognisable in the English-speaking Muslim world.)

The winter of 1953 was a harsh one in Britain. On Wednesday 9 December, a confused old man was found out of doors, sitting on the steps of a house in Westminster. The police took him to Westminster Hospital. He was discharged the following day and a London County Council home for the elderly in Dovehouse Street, Chelsea, took him in. He suffered a heart attack on 10 December and was rushed to St. Stephen's Hospital in Fulham. Three hours after admission he died. Unusually, there were no relatives to claim the body and arrange for the funeral. However, the deceased was known to the Pakistan High Commission and as soon as the Coroner for the County of London had completed the inquest, an Islamic burial was arranged in the Muslim section of Brookwood cemetery, Surrey. So in these enigmatic circumstances, ended the remarkable life of Abdullah Yusuf Ali, at the age of 81.

Yusuf Ali is best known for his monumental English translation of and commentary on the Qur'an, first published in 1934 and subsequently printed for sale and free distribution on an unprecedented scale. The voluminous 'Yusuf Ali' is a standard reference in mosques and homes in the English-speaking Muslim world, perhaps the most widely circulated work of twentieth-century Islamic scholarship. The reputation of the work appears to have been enhanced by the passage of time, a tribute to the author's accurate rendering of the Qur'anic Arabic, command of English expression and erudition.

The need for a biography of Yusuf Ali has been keenly

felt, particularly by readers of his work on the Qur'an curious to know what sort of man was behind such a *tuor de force*. Entries on him are to be found in a few biographical directories, but these are not commonly available for their contents possess a hagiographic quality. When Yusuf Ali died the obituary notices in the Muslim press contained far less factual detail than those in *The Times* or *The Daily Telegraph* of London. The Muslim world seems to have settled for an image of quiet scholar with mystical leanings and left it as that, a gross injustice to a life of political involvement, prolific literary output and public service.

Yusuf Ali was born on 4 April 1872 in Surat and belonged to a brilliant generation of Muslims of the Indian subcontinent, all born in the 1870s, who acquired an Oxbridge education or underwent training for the Bar in London or, as in the case of Yusuf Ali, both. This was a generation which included Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Muhammad Ali Jauhar and Muhammad Iqbal, and lesser known but influential personalities like Fazli Husain and Shaikh Abdul Qader. Yusuf Ali did not possess the genius of a Jinnah or Iqbal, the dash of a Jauhar, or the political acuity of a Fazli Husain. These contemporaries were to take the star roles in the making of the modern Muslim history, but it is a tribute to Yusuf Ali's versatility that he was never far from the centre stage and while the casts changed and the prima donnas burnt themselves out, he continued as a minor but persistent player. Yusuf Ali participated in a startling number of key events, from the 1919 Paris Peace Conference to the Unionist-Muslim League cold war prior to partition. He presided over numerous educational conferences and was an acknowledged expert on Indian education. He served on the 1932 Punjab University enquiry committee, was a member of its senate and played a role in the Unionist government's far-reaching educational programme for Punjab. Yusuf Ali was not only acquainted with the leadership of his generation, but had met and was influenced by the great Muslim personalities who made their

mark in the nineteenth century - men like Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan of Aligarh fame; Justice Badruddin Tayebji, one of the early leaders of the Indian National Congress; and Sayyid Ameer Ali, jurist and author of *The Spirit of Islam*.

Yusuf Ali was a man of extraordinary industry and deep emotion. His personal turmoil and triumphs are of interest in their own right, but his life possessed a richness of experience which can be used to obtain a better understanding of momentous period of modern Muslim history. By delving into his life, it is possible to relive some of these moments and appreciate the pressures of the time.

The second half of the twentieth century has witnessed a struggle for the reassertion of 'spiritual' and 'political' Islam as an integrated whole in Pakistan and elsewhere. Yusuf Ali's intellectual attitudes demonstrate how the truncated version of Islam was a consequence of colonisation. It was an approach to become well entrenched in the consciousness of Muslims. In recounting the circumstances in which such an attitude took root in the Muslim psyche in the first place there is perhaps an opportunity to better understand the condition and exorcise it.

Yusuf Ali joined Indian Civil Service (ICS) in 1894 and his first appointment commenced on 23 January 1896, as Assistant Magistrate and Collector in Saharanpur in the United Provinces. A newly arrived ICS man was both judge and jury in the area under his control: 'He had power to inflict up to six months' imprisonment; within two years he could jail an offender for 24 months, decree whipping, and jail even a European for three months. From the start, with an Indian assistant at his elbow, he began adjudicating the amount of tax due on this or that crop from village headmen, with power to remit if a crop failed.' All quite daunting for a twenty-three-year-old, and this was only the bottom tier of an elaborate pecking order through which the British regime operated. There was much touring and land surveying involved, at a time when the main mode of transport was on horseback. It was not without reason that riding was an

examinable subject in the ICS entry examination. It was said of the ICS class that they regarded India with a mixture of paternalism, exasperation and pride.

After two years in Saharanpur, Yusuf Ali received a transfer to Bareilly. It was not far from Aligarh, where the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College, better known as MAO, was located. This provided him an opportunity to come in contact with Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan: 'I had the honour of knowing Sir Sayyid in the latter years of his life. I remember some conversations I had with him - alas too few - on the subject of Muslim regeneration. I was then the threshold of my career as a public servant, and I placed my educational ideals with the zeal and assurance of youth before this educational veteran whose life measured the span between the Indian Mutiny and the close of the Victorian epoch. Sir Sayyid died in March 1898, much concerned that the community had few men of calibre. Yusuf Ali was rapidly climbing up the rungs of the ICS ladder and in March 1899 was given charge of the Karwi sub-division of the UP. For the next decade his superior in the service would be James Meston, Financial Secretary of the UP and later its Governor. An Aberdeenshire Scotsman, he affected an empathy for Muslims but the velvet glove concealed an iron fist.

The first expression of Yusuf Ali's literary abilities came with the publication in 1900 of *A Monograph on Slik Fabrics Produced in the North Western Provinces and Oudh*. The work contained cultural, technical and industrial information. It included a justification of the Islamic position: 'A man in a warrior race has no business with effeminate luxuries such as silk or gold.' A section on *ahadith* (sayings and doings of the Prophet) on the subject provided separate sub-headings for those derived from *Sunni* and *Shi'i* sources, an early example of his determination to transcend a sectarian outlook in the spirit of the Bombay Anjuman. Yusuf Ali's interest in the topic may have been promoted by his *Dawudi Bohra* roots - Surat was a traditional centre of the silk industry -perhaps with encouragement from George

Birdwood, who was active in promoting an Indian exhibition in London at the turn of the century.

ICS officers normally only returned to Britain on 'furlough', a type of extended leave that was one-fourth of the period of active service, to a maximum of six years. Yusuf Ali's formal furlough, according to the ICS service records, commenced in May 1905. However he also visited Britain in 1900 and wed Teresa Mary Shalders. The marriage took place on 18 September in Bournemouth, following Church of England rites. Teresa was twenty-seven, a year younger than the groom. The marriage was solemnised by Canon Henry Slater in St Peter's Church, which had a claim to fame because the poet Shelley's heart was buried in its cemetery. Yusuf Ali signed himself in style as 'Abdullah ibn Yusuf Ali' on the marriage document, perhaps to show he was no commonplace native.

The exclusion of Indians from the social circle of English ICS officers led to very few knowing of the marriage, though the shrewd Meston might well have been aware. It was a bold and uninhibited act by the young couple, who may have looked at the dawn of the new century and thought everything possible - including the harmony of races, religions and continents. Teresa joined Yusuf Ali in the UP and their first child, Edris, was born in November 1901. She gave birth to a second son, Asghar Bloy, in October of the following year. By this time Yusuf Ali was the Assistant Sessions judge for Saharanpur. Teresa and the boys soon left India, settling down in a house on Lemsford Road, St Albans. Their home was named 'Kirwee', after the sub-division in the UP of which Yusuf Ali had once been in charge.

By the time his first official furlough commenced Yusuf Ali had just turned thirty-three, already a Deputy Commissioner and in the elite circle of Indians reaching high office in the ICS. Yusuf Ali arrived in Britain determined to utilise his two-year leave as effectively as possible. Amongst the tasks he completed soon after arrival was to belatedly record his call to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn, which

he did in May 1905. There were also family matters to attend to in St Albans as another son, Alban Hyder, had been born in September 1904 and Teresa undoubtedly required support in coping with three boys, all under four years old.

It was in 1905 as well that Muhammad Iqbal arrived for the first time in Britain on a Government scholarship. Iqbal sought admission in Lincoln's Inn, following the path of Cambridge studies and Bar entrance favoured by Indian students. Also studying for the Bar was Abdul Qader, editor of the famous Urdu literary magazine *Makhzan* and later a close associate of Yusuf Ali. Iqbal already knew Abdul Qader very well and would stay with him in London when visiting from Cambridge. If Yusuf Ali, Iqbal and Abdul Qader represented the new generation, there were already two senior Indian Muslim figures also in London. Justice Ameer Ali had recently retired with his English wife to a country house in Berkshire - they married in 1880 - but forayed regularly to the Reform Club in London to pen robust letters to newspapers in defence of Indian and Muslim causes. The other distinguished Indian personality was the venerable Badruddin Tayebji, visiting London for medical treatment. It was a charmed circle with numerous social and family interconnections. Even Iqbal became doubly drawn to it through his editorial work indexing Ameer Ali's books and a friendship with Attiya Fyzee of the Tayebji clan. Badruddin's death in September 1905 brought the small Muslim community together for the *janaza* (funeral) prayer. Mourners included the Turkish Consul General in London, Hamid Baig. Called on to speak, Yusuf Ali reflected on Tayebji's happy family life: 'To see him in his family life was to see a perfect picture of devotion, domesticity and perfect union. It is such a picture which makes us realise what a power it is in our home life. To us of the younger generation his example is a most inspiring one to follow. He had cause to dwell on family matters because of the marital problems soon to rock his world.

He tried hard to devote himself to domestic pursuit

but the pull to the public stage was great. India was very much in the news, partly due to the visit there by the Prince and Princess of Wales - the future George V and his consort - and also because there was an air of expectation that the newly elected Liberal government would bring political reform: Australia after all had been a self-governing dominion since 1900. Yusuf Ali was brimming with ideas on what needed to be done in India. The twentieth century beckoned great social changes and it fell on the young generation of Western-educated Indians like himself to ensure their homeland kept pace. The ideas on religion and politics and Hindu-Muslim cooperation which Yusuf Ali first expressed in speeches and writings in the 1906-7 period were to form the cornerstone of much of his thinking in later life.

Yusuf Ali presented a lecture at the influential Royal Society of Arts on *The Indian Muhammedans: their past, present and future*, possibly at the suggestion of his mentor Sir George Birdwood, treasurer and trustee of the Society. The event was duly announced in the Society's weekly journal and took place in December 1906. It was a brilliant success for Yusuf Ali, who had lantern slides at hand depicting prominent Muslim personalities and examples of Mughal architecture.

Lord Ampthill, a former governor of Madras and an acting Viceroy of India in 1904, chaired the meeting. In the best of imperial style Ampthill hoped the audience realised 'what an amount of character, energy and enterprise it meant for a young man of India to come over this country, pursue his studies here and enter into the Indian Civil Service.' He welcomed an Indian who 'should come to England and of his own free will endeavour to give information about his fellow subjects'. This suggests Yusuf Ali volunteered to speak at the Society.

Yusuf Ali responded to Ampthill's remarks with a display of loyalty. 'There is nothing,' he asserted, 'either in the religion or in the history of the Indian Muslims to prevent

them from taking an honourable place as citizens in a free and progressive Empire.' He attacked the Indian *Wahabi* movement, at the time a much criticised bogey in British circles, in much the same way attempted by Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan thirty years earlier: their call for *jihad* (struggle in the defence of Muslims) against the British was not to be taken seriously. He felt the movement was bringing Indian Muslims into 'disrepute' by acts such as 'the miserable assassination in 1871 of the English Chief Justice of Bengal'. He condemned it for preaching in a spirit of 'hostility and an uncompromising attack on the existing order of things'. He believed 'the majority of Indian Muhammedans have always rejected it.' Yusuf Ali wished to allay British suspicions of Muslim militancy.

Yusuf Ali's flush of admiration for the European way of life prompted some hasty proposals for Indian Muslims. 'The different Anjumans which they already possess are excellent institutions,' he observed, 'but the Muslims require a healthy organisation of their Church on a purely religious, though broad and non-sectarian, basis. Their social system requires organisation on progressive lines, with more valuable benefits of women's cooperation. I have an idea that the women in Turkey, Syria, Egypt and Algeria (especially the last) are far more advanced than the Muslim women of India.' The campaign of the British suffragettes was in its heyday and may have prompted this apologia.

In the discussion that followed Amphill congratulated Yusuf Ali on his excellent command of English. Whether Amphill understood the witticisms the speaker had made in German in the course of the lecture is not known. The meeting also saw an interesting little altercation between Yusuf Ali and Justice Ameer Ali. In the course of his speech Yusuf Ali selected the example of *waqf* (endowment) as a Muslim institution needing reorganisation. 'Could not Mr. Ameer Ali,' he asked, 'give us a detailed and reasoned exposition of the subject, dealing not only with abstract generalities, but with concrete specific instances?' The problem of Muslim endowments had been exercising the

Justice's mind since 1892, so he made short shrift of what must have seemed to him a rather precocious young man. Ameer Ali replied during question time that he himself had no problem with the law on *waqf* - four hundred pages of his work on Muhammadan law were devoted to its elucidation. Ameer Ali added that he had been under the impression that it was only the English judges that had not quite appreciated this branch of Muslim law, so he was sorry to find 'the learned reader of the paper felt a similar difficulty. If Mr Yusuf Ali would be good enough to explain to him the exact nature of his difficulty he should be very happy to offer such explanations as he could.' Another disgruntled Muslim member in the audience was a Dr Sayyid Abdul Majeed, who complained that the speaker had made the Muslims of India sound so antiquated.

When the Royal Society's Council held its next annual general meeting in June 1907, the Society's Silver Medal was awarded to Yusuf Ali for his talk. This was a significant public recognition because the Society fulfilled 'a most useful role in providing an opportunity for the discussion of Indian problems - often of the highest Imperial interest - before interested and influential audiences.'

Yusuf Ali was invited to deliver a series of six lectures at the Passmore Edwards Institute, London. These were transferred to larger rooms because of the growing size of the audience. A book emerged from the series, published by John Murray of London in 1907, *Life and Labour of the People of India*, which contained an effusive dedication to George Birdwood. Yusuf Ali's analysis in *Life and Labour* was consistent with the views expressed at the Royal Society of Arts. He painted a picture of an ancient 'immemorial' society now afflicted with decay and corrupt social and religious practices: 'One of the most marked tendencies of Indian social life is that all forms of institutions making for order and joint action are getting disintegrated or undermined.' Indian Islam had become an abstract term 'with no visible organisation and no persons or bodies in whom authority is vested and recognised.' Muslim practice

was often no more than 'paroxysms of *tazia* [effigy of the tomb of Imam Husain] worship in the month of *Muharram*, and the aggressive slaughter of kine at one of their festivals, especially if it clashes with a Hindu festival.' Yusuf Ali called for a process of social reform, but one which could only work if certain other forces were kept at bay. The ground must be prepared for social reform 'by eliminating the factors which blind our vision and warp our judgement.' Foremost of these was political activity which exploited religious differences. 'It is in the hands of such as these that religious animosities are aroused among His Majesty's loyal and law-abiding subjects,' he said. Yusuf Ali's Empire-Loyalism was leading him towards an 'apolitical notion of religion.

The other unavoidable issue for Indian Muslims was their encounter with the Hindu majority community. The Bombay Muslim intelligentsia, for reasons to do with their prosperity and level of education, did not feel threatened and actively supported political cooperation. In *Life and Labour* Yusuf Ali questioned the need for any special concessions for Muslims because of their minority status and asked: 'Why should Muslim appeals to Government be couched in terms, not of fair field, but of special favour?'

In a speech given to the British Constitutional Association in the Whitehall Rooms and reported in *The Times* in late January 1907, Yusuf Ali hoped that majorities would eschew arrogance towards minorities and declared support for 'secular education'. It was not a particularly tactful remark to make at a time when the Muslims were campaigning for university status for Aligarh. Theodore Morison, MAO's recently retired principal, had remonstrated against him a month earlier for failing to raise the issue at the Royal Society of Arts. Yusuf Ali's attitude towards the Aligarh campaign reflected the reserve of a Bombay man for denominational institutions, best expressed by his contemporary Akbar Hydari: the idea of a Muhammadan University filled me with fear that the already too great emphasis on caste and creed that has been the bane of

our land might thereby be further accentuated.' Jinnah too regarded proposals for a separate Muslim electoral roll with 'special creed' privileges as anathema. It is perhaps not surprising that when the Muslim League was founded in December 1906 to represent Muslim interests as a separate community, this was not to be in Bombay with its highly educated Muslim elite, but in Dacca.

Edwardian England was sure of itself and its destiny. The spirit of the times inspired Yusuf Ali to chart out his own future. His life work would now be to express in more detail proposals for India's role in the Empire and the type of politics appropriate for Indian Muslims. He was confident in his mission: 'Mrs Humphrey Ward, presiding at one of the (Passmore) lectures was kind enough to mention three qualifications in the present writer for dealing with Indian life. In the first place, being born and bred in India, he is of the people. In the second place, his association with the Government of the country enables him to view - viz: as a whole, and with special reference to social organisation and cohesion. In the third place, a Cambridge education and a lengthened study of European life and methods should enable him to present facts in a form which appeal to European readers and be not acceptable to Eastern traditions.'

He might have added a further qualification for serving as a bridge between India and the West, which was marriage to an English woman. The self-commendation hinted at a showman's streak lurking somewhere in this industrious and brilliant young man's personality.

Yusuf Ali's life so far had been one of smooth progress and unqualified success, from one public distinction to another. In British circles Yusuf Ali was 'a very talented member of the Indian Civil Service and a representative of the great Muhammedan community', the description used in *The Times* in its January 1907 report of the meeting in the Whitehall Rooms. This was no mean compliment, made at a time when Britain was conscious that it had more

'Muhammedans' in the boundaries of its Empire than could be claimed by the Ottoman Caliph. The report itself took up six column inches in the leading page, an indication of Yusuf Ali's meteoric rise though it had not yet been a decade since he had left Cambridge. He was elected to the Royal Society of Arts and the Royal Society of Literature and had friends in the highest of places. He met Lord Morley, the Secretary of State for India, on several occasions to discuss issues of political reform. Yusuf Ali put to him the case for the introduction of parliamentary government but, for all his Liberal policies, Morley could not concede this. 'My arguments for some qualification of that position did not appeal to him,' Yusuf Ali noted ruefully. Yusuf Ali even resided for a while at Cromer House in Norfolk, indicating some connection with the aristocratic Baring family, best known of whom at the time was the Earl of Cromer. The famous pro-Consul of Egypt and his kinsman Baron Revelstoke were confidants of Royalty, one becoming Lord Chamberlain and the other personal financial adviser to George V.

The furlough came to an end, and after the glitter and zest of London life Yusuf Ali must have dreaded returning to the humdrum chores awaiting him in the UP. Yusuf Ali had slipped into the Indian Civil Service's cherished image of itself, the enlightened public servant, administrator-cum-scholar, under whose paternalistic and patronising gaze India would gradually emerge from its slumbers. Unfortunately the realities of the ICS included its colour prejudice and while an Indian of his calibre could be feted in London, the doors of the white man's clubs and gymkhanas in India were closed to natives, however much Europeanised. Yusuf Ali made the journey back to India alone, leaving Teresa Mary with the boys and a baby daughter, Leila Teresa, born in December 1906. The gymkhana clique would only close ranks against such brazen violation of a sexual taboo.

By March 1907 Yusuf Ali had resumed duties as Deputy Commissioner of Sultanpur. When Meston moved

from the UP provincial government to the finance department of the Government of India as Finance Secretary, his Muslim protege also made a similar transfer. Yusuf Ali was for a time acting under-secretary and the deputy secretary in the Department of Finance, in effect one of the most senior civil servants to India's 'Chancellor of the Exchequer'. Meston, hard-working and shrewd, cultivated bright young Muslim administrators; his proteges included Ameer Ali's public school-educated son, Waris.

The first signs of Yusuf Ali's domestic crisis appeared in 1908, when he took nine months of medical leave, from February to October 1908." The event which so devastated him was news of Teresa's infidelity. The marriage had been bizarre from the outset. There was no record of Yusuf Ali taking official furlough in 1900 for the wedding in Bournemouth, while the church ceremony too seemed out of character. Perhaps the union was an impulsive affair, in which basic incompatibilities were overlooked in the headiness of the hour. A rapid succession of children did not strengthen a faltering marriage and it is possible that Yusuf Ali, engrossed in his life of public activity, was oblivious to Teresa's dissatisfaction. In 1907 he returned to India with noteworthy achievements in public life and cause for happiness in the birth of a daughter after three sons, but then this world crashed around him on the news of Teresa's affair.

While Teresa may have been acting within the mores of Edwardian society - everyone knew of the *amour* between the reigning monarch and Lillie Langtry - her actions were inexplicable and deeply humiliating for an Indian Muslim. Yusuf Ali came from a respectable if humble Gujrati Muslim background in which the values of family life were unquestioned. There is no reason to imagine that he would have been anything but a decent and conscientious husband and father, though the circumstances of his childhood had made him a trifle egoistical. The hurt caused by Teresa was deep and still in evidence when he wrote the preface to the Qur'anic commentary in 1934: 'A man's life

is subject to inner storms far more devastating than those in the physical world around him... such a storm, in the bitter anguish of personal sorrow which nearly unseated my reason and made life seem meaningless.' When the marriage disintegrated he did not just experience outrage and hurt pride. The trauma was all the more intense because the partnership perhaps also represented many of his hopes of shared trust and confidence between East and West. She turned her back on him for another man and in a way this meant that the Empire too had signalled a rejection. If Teresa lacked integrity, could it be that the society and culture he idealised were also flawed? No wonder Yusuf Ali felt tormented to the extreme and experienced a nervous breakdown. He applied for medical leave and did not work for most of the year in 1908.

Divorce on the grounds of adultery required all the unsavoury details to be presented before a court, creating even greater anguish. However when the news came that Teresa was actually expecting her lover's child, Yusuf Ali was left with no choice. Nevertheless he regained his composure in these wretched months, presiding for example at the UP Industrial Conference in 1909, and the following year performing a similar role at the All India Muslim Educational Conference held at Nagpur.

Teresa's illegitimate child was born in September 1910, and Yusuf Ali came to London to file for divorce. This was done in April 1911, citing one Obed Thorne as co-respondent. He did not stay at the family home in St Albans, even though Teresa was no longer living there, and instead lodged at the Ivy Hotel in Kew Green. The divorce petition was heard at the High Court's Family Division in June and made a decree absolute in January 1912.

The ages of the four children ranged from barely five years old to ten and Yusuf Ali asked for custody. He won this battle but then promptly left them in the care of an English governess and departed for India. As the years passed the children grew estranged and resentful of their father. Yusuf Ali was to disclaim all of them in the will he drew up in 1940:

'In spite of all I have done for them, [they] have to my sorrow persistently maintained an attitude of ill-will and hostility towards me, and have insulted and annoyed me and spoken to others against me,' he wrote in evident anguish and bitterness. Teresa was to marry again, though not becoming Mrs Thorne but a Mrs Astell. Yusuf Ali was fortunate the case was not reported in the press. It was to be a closely guarded secret, not known even to Meston or India Office staff in London till several years later.

By 1912 the worst was over for Yusuf Ali and he took up duties as the Magistrate and Collector for the UP district of Fatehpur in the month of March in that year. James Meston was now Lieutenant Governor of the Province and his handling of Muslims in general and Yusuf Ali in particular revealed the darker, more manipulative side of his character. The unfortunate Yusuf Ali had to work in a UP in serious political turmoil, not helped by Meston's schemings. In 1913 the situation came to a head in Kanpur, a town only fifty miles from Fatehpur.

The Kanpur Mosque incident arose because Meston backed a municipal decision to demolish the *wadu* (ablution) area and toilets of a *Shi'i* mosque in the Machli Bazaar quarter of the town to make way for a road. The demolition took place on 1 July 1913, during the month of *Ramadhan*. It immediately became a *cause celebre* for Muslims throughout India, of all religious schools. Muhammad Ali Jauhar rallied the Muslim community through the columns of his *Comrade* newspaper and the efforts of the *Khuddam-e-Ka'ba* (Servants of Ka'ba) Society. On the evening of August 3 about twelve thousand muslims assembled at the *'idgah* (prayer ground) for a demonstration and proceeded to a mosque. the police opened fire, killing sixteen, several inside the mosque. Meston invoked a criminal law to make Jauhar and another Indian Muslim leader, the fiercely intellectual Abul Kalam Azad, liable to arrest if found in Kanpur again. When court proceedings started against arrested activists like Shibli Numani, Muhammad Iqbal came from Lahore to act in their defence. The Muslims sent Jauhar

to Britain to protest to the Secretary of State directly.

The UP Government refused to accept any blame and instead interpreted the Muslim grievance as a plot against the Empire. Jauhar's support for Ottoman Turkey in the *Comrade* during the Tripolitan and Balkan conflicts of 1911-12 was used by Meston to raise the bogey of pan-Islamism: 'The true nature of the agitation is not, in my opinion, far to seek. The troubles of Turkey have, among other unfortunate consequences, brought to the front a type of young Muhammadan in India who will always be a problem to us...side by side with this type, we have the unforgiving religious bigot, who draws from the Turkish defeats a revival of his smouldering dislike of Christian and British ascendancy in India.' Such attention only ensured Jauhar's popularity. Yusuf Ali's position must have been most awkward: a high ranking Muslim in a provincial administration reviled for its high-handedness and brutality and, perhaps most damning, a confidant of the hated Meston. The Kanpur mosque incident was an important landmark which drew the battle lines between Muslims prepared to stand their corner and those preferring to remain quiet. The first World War would sharpen the divide and place Jauhar, the disappointed ICS applicant and Yusuf Ali, the Service's high-flier, on opposing sides. The dispute itself was eventually resolved by the Viceroy Lord Hardinge, responding to a compromise suggested by the diplomatic Raja of Mahmudabad. Meston was unrepentant and continued to control Muslim activity of UP through a network of informants for the rest of his tenure as Governor till 1918. A few years later, in an article *The Nineteenth Century & After*, Yusuf Ali made a passing reference to 'the Kanpur Mosque difficulty with the Muhammadans', a choice of words that marks his estrangement from populist Muslim opinion in this period of his life.

In February 1914 Yusuf Ali decided to leave the ICS, but because the rules required twenty years' service before a proportionate pension could be permitted, he sought Meston's help. It is an indication of how centralised British

rule was in India that the matter had to be referred to the Viceroy in Delhi and the Secretary of State for India in London. Meston, for his own duplicitous reasons, was happy to oblige, and wrote a revealing letter to the Viceroy's Council member responsible for Home affairs:

I am sorry indeed for Yusuf Ali. He is a man of the most brilliant ability and the best intentions; and his literary work is of very high quality. He is however extremely touchy and sensitive; he has a bad manner with Indians, who regard him as tyrannical and unsympathetic; and he often runs up against Europeans as well without in the least intending to do so.

Although I used to regard him as terribly academic in his views, I must confess that he has made a very good district officer in a small district; but I am afraid to try him in a big district, especially where there is a military society; and not to put too fine a point on it, his future career is a decided anxiety to us all.

The reasons why he wishes to retire are very strong; he has told me privately with much distress. He married an English woman by whom he had, I think, four children. Things went wrong and he had to divorce her, I believe; the children were left in his custody. Realising as he does the difficulties attending children of this character in India, he very wisely is having them educated in England; and the lady in whose custody they were has recently died. He has not a relation or friend in Britain to whom he can entrust them, and he is genuinely anxious to be able to settle down in England and supervise their education himself. He would also try to get a practice at the Bar and I have no doubt that he will succeed, while he can make an income by writing.

In these circumstances, converging from public (early retirement to relieve the block in promotions) and private interests alike, you will see how strong a case there is for letting him have his way. It is a case which I cannot very well put on official record, but I should be glad if you could allow what I have now told you to influence the

decision.

Though Meston's note was not a matter of official record, news of Yusuf Ali's troubled marriage got round the India Office circles in London. Sir Malcolm Seton, an assistant under-secretary, for example, wrote to his superior, 'I have heard Mr Yusuf Ali lecture, and Sir Charles Lyall has told me a good deal about him. He is a man of exceptional literary gifts, and, I should say, very attractive personality. Perhaps you know him? I had not heard of his domestic troubles.'

Apart from the information it contains about Yusuf Ali's reasons for resignation, Meston's letter sheds light on the discomfiture with which Indian officers in the Indian Civil Service were regarded by their English colleagues. Meston was only too happy to remove Yusuf Ali from the hierarchy, 'to relieve the block on promotions' and to avoid loss of face if a native could pull rank over an Englishman. Meston's line of reasoning was typical of official thinking. The Viceroy Curzon himself had minuted to the India Office in London in 1900, 'Wedderburn [Member of Parliament and Indian National Congress president, 1889] wrote to me the other day, very civilly, and asked me why we do not employ more natives in the very highest ranks of the Service. I told him plainly in my reply, because they are not competent, and because it is our constant experience that when placed in authority, if an emergency occurs, they lose their heads or abdicate altogether. The Indians of Yusuf Ali's generation had extolled the superiority of Western education, but once this was attained, found the jobs commensurate to their training only grudgingly given.

After submitting his application for resignation but without awaiting a decision on the matter of the proportionate pension, Yusuf Ali left India for Britain to look after his children. On August 4 1914 Britain declared war on Germany. He was in Sevenoaks, Kent, and on 8 August wrote to the India Office: 'I am prepared and shall be pleased to volunteer for temporary service, in any capacity in which I can be useful on account of the War.' He also signed up in

the local territorial force, the West Kent Fencibles. Like many Indians of his era, Yusuf Ali cherished Empire and Sovereign. It was an unrequited relationship, as the Empire was foremost concerned with protecting its own interests. There was something about the British style in India and the self-confidence of men like Lely, the Collector of Surat who had befriended his family, or Meston, Governor of UP for whom he worked, that commanded unquestioning belief. Even though treated with condescension, Yusuf Ali could not abandon the loyalties that bound him to the 'Mother Country'. At this juncture 'Mahatma' Mohandas Gandhi was also in London and, seeking to be both saint and politician, was no less loyal in urging all Indians residing in Britain to fall into line and show support.

by September Yusuf Ali was running short of funds. His early retirement had not yet come into effect and no pension payments has been received. He wrote to India Office for help with these financial difficulties, requesting some interim payment while the exact amount was still being finalised. However, the India Office soon made a decision on his entitlement and accepted Meston's recommendation to grant a proportionate pension, which amounted to about £800 per year. This was a comfortable income to live on and assured Yusuf Ali's financial future. He was now forty-one with an opportunity to take stock and chart out a new course for himself.

Ottoman Turkey, under the inept leadership of the Young Turks, found itself dragged into the conflict on the side of the Central Powers led by Germany. During the Tripolitan and Balkan wars of 1911-1912, Indian Muslims sent delegations with medical aid and women contributed their jewellery. Iqbal first recited his famous *Jawab-e-shikwa* at a meeting to raise funds for the Bulgarian campaign. He also brought a meeting to tears in Badshahi Mosque by his verses on the *shuhada* (martyrs) of Tripoli. Jauhar's own feelings at the Ottoman debacles of the time were so deep-felt that the thought of suicide crossed his mind. Indian Muslims were emotionally committed to their Ottoman

'Caliph of Islam', and this was a deep-rooted loyalty also to be found amongst those considered Europeanised like Justice Ameer Ali. When Britain declared war on Turkey in November 1914 Yusuf Ali, a 'representative of the great Muhammedan community', was a most valuable asset in the propaganda battle for Indian Muslim public opinion. ■

HOME COMING: A JOURNEY TO ISLAM*

Ishtiaque Danish**

Journey to Islam, as the author says, is a dialogue with himself. It is a unique soliloquy that unfolds not only the inner side of the protagonist, Murad Wilfried Hofmann, but also what has happened around him in the outside world from 1951 to 2000. But mainly it is a story of Hofmann's journey to Islam. He rightly says that "this book mirrors specific stages of a mental process toward embracing Islam that was nourished by a limited number of key experiences. It was a process in which deeply rooted personal affinities for aesthetic and cultural components of Islam, its civilization and philosophy, played a major role" (P.I.).

During his journey to Islam Hofmann has come across a lot of things and people. Endowed with such facilities as deep insight and keen observation, he has largely been able to explore and penetrate into the inner meanings of things he saw or into the soul of men he met. He, then, has the great ability to write succinctly, clearly and meaningfully. He has the rare capability of putting across his point in brevity; he has explained even some difficult subjects with clarity and precision that keeps readers focussed on the points he wishes to convey.

A diary can not be expected to be a coherent record of compact ideas and themes, for it is not an organised academic exercise; and yet a few thematic trends are easily discernable in Hofmann's work. The first theme is the author himself, his inner soul or the internal part of his personality. He appears to possess an inquisitive and questioning mind since his student days. He had the knack for interrogating ideas before accepting them. Even in his late 20s or early 30s, he seemed to be dissatisfied with the then educational pattern; he questioned the basic philosophy of sociology as taught in the US universities of 1950s (pp. 3-4).

**Review of "Islam and Promotion of Knowledge" by A.R. Momin I.O.S., New Delhi - 25 p273 Price Rs. 250*

***Teaches at Hamdard University, New Delhi - 69*

Hofmann seems to have developed a religious bent of mind quite early in his life. His interest in philosophy and ethics also helped him to better understand the role of religion in human life and society. The ubiquitous and powerful presence of materialism in every walk of Western life faded to impress upon him; he rejected it, specially its vulgar exhibition which has disturbed so many souls on both sides of the Atlantic. His interest in religion is neither superficial nor irrational. For him, rationalism alone can not solve all the problems of life. "Without revelation we are blind," he says. (P. 28). His reasoning is that philosophical questioning of metaphysical world or existence leads us to nowhere; ultimately we have to believe in the existence of God rather than to try to find Him through a futile mental exercise.

Naturally his interest in religion would first lead him to a deep and thorough study of Christianity. He seems to have browsed through all the relevant literature on the subject. He, as many others have also, found that the Western Christianity would not stand the test of historical criticism; it is, at best, St. Paul's Christianity which contains the elements of Gnosticism and Neo Platonism more than Jeusus's real teachings (P. 37). Th theme of Christianity has fascinated him even after his conversion to Islam. He happily notes that a Protestant Professor of theology, Dr. Paul Schwarzenan, in his pioneering work, "Quranic Guide for Christians" has upheld "the truth of the Quran, even where it is in conflict with the Bible" (P. 89).

Dissatisfied with Christianity, he moved to Islam whose simple faith won his heart and mind. His diplomatic postings in Algeria at a time when it was fighting against the mighty French imperialism led him to reading the Holy Quran. He seems to have become Muslim much before he formally recited the *Kalimah*: there is no God but Allah, Muhamrnad is the messenger of Allah (P. 48). Perhaps this is the reason that his conversion appears as a homecoming.

The good thing about Hofmann is that he has studied and understood the Quran thoroughly. The Holy Book is his

permanent companion; he judges every thing, even Muslim rituals and practices, on this scale and then accepts or rejects them as Islamic or unIslamic. He always casts a critical look on Muslim practices and also tries to explore or delve deep into their inner meanings. He even employs latest Western pioneering works of all fields to explain one or another aspect of Islam. Through his wide study of Western and Islamic literature on a variety of subjects, he has come to the conclusion that Islam is a rational, natural and above all, divine religion.

Hofmann is critical of Western bias against Islam which is so patently present both in print and electronic media. But, for him it is the Western materialism that may ultimately harm Islam. This has already afflicted Turkey with which Hofmann specially seems to be fascinated. The de-Islamization of Turkey, especially of its elites, hurts him; he feels that Turkey's mindless secularization or Westernization has deprived it of its real identity and, as a result, the Turks of today are groping blindly in the wilderness of an identity crisis (PP. 52-53). Religion, for Hofmann, is the foundation of a civilization; by banning religion from their lives, the Turks have rendered their civilization rudderless. What disturbs Hofmann the most is that the Turks have abandoned religion and adopted superstition which is a bad bargain indeed.

Hofmann's *Journey to Islam* is surely more than a diary, though not a well-organized scholarly treatise. However, his brief expositions of some aspects of Islam such as women's place in Islam (P. 111), Islamic pluralism (P. 97), human rights in Islam (PP.162-164) and his spiritual experiences during the Haj, pilgrimage to Makkah, are exceptionally brilliant, and a joy to read. There are many more things to enjoy and appreciate in the book. His observation that Islam "represents a zenith of human intellectual and moral achievement" (P. 136) is especially pleasing. However, there are also things in the book which are not appealing or convincing. His comment on the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran is perhaps one such thing (PP. 62-64). Also he censors Maurice Bucaille's

attempt to justify Islam scientifically; his comment is that the Quran is not... a compendium of physics, biology and chemistry (P. 138). But, then, he commits a similar mistake when he explains Islam as an exercise or recipe for attaining physical health (P. 139-140). Barring such few passages, Hofmann's work, full of insight and wisdom, is a joy to read; one must read and appreciate it. ■

Courtesy: Journal of Objective Studies

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR MUSLIMS IN INDIA

Maqbool Ahmed Siraj

The Problem

The dilemma faced by Indian Muslims in the sphere of education is evident in an instance, quoted by Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi (in his newsletter *Sidq e Jadeed* Lucknow, 1977) when an agonized Muslim father of Lucknow received a letter written in Hindi medium of instruction in post-Independence India. The letter began with "pujgayvar pithaji". The Hindi term, essentially a part of Hindi letter composition style, when translated would mean "a father worthy of worship". Though a highly respectful term for a Hindu, it amounts to divine derogation among Muslims, hence outrageous. The Muslim father's indignation was, of course, only in earnest Islamic spirit.

Here lies the dilemma. Alienation from cultural and religious heritage, is apparent on a number of fronts. For over four decades Muslims in India have been groping in darkness to find a way out of the maze of such dilemmas. Sudden departure of Urdu language from the educational scene in northern states threw two inconvenient options before the vast body of Muslims inhabiting atleast seven states: opt for either secular educational curriculum or go over to theological schools. Neither system was attuned to the needs of a different community emerging from the trauma of partition and communal violence. Secular education without Urdu led to the steady dilution of Muslim identity. Theological education without science and mathematics made it irrelevant for the contemporary world. However, the two systems came to entrench themselves. The split between the secular and religious education proceeded longitudinally over the decades and carried the two segments further apart with collaboration efforts sorrowfully missing. The divisions among the educated class deepened the

dilemma. If Indian Muslims continue to suffer from dearth of visioned leadership, the blame, to a certain extent goes to the educational system. Individuals from secular educational system do not carry the religious authority and those from the theological institutions lack vision to guide the community in the socio-economic field. The community still awaits an educational system which integrates the two and which could be made available to every Muslim child in India.

The Causes and Consequences

The problems which Muslim community faced following the removal of Urdu language as a medium of instruction in schools, were exacerbated by the mass exodus of Muslim middle class from Urdu hinterland to Pakistan and the fury of communal riots that followed. Urdu became the vehicle of discrimination against Muslims.

Division of states on linguistic basis did not leave any sizable geographic area with Urdu speaking population, which could constitute a state on its numerical strength. As economic competition increased the younger generation switched over to local languages and particularly to the official link languages, Hindi and English. Abandoned by its patrons Urdu became alien in its own homeland.

It was during 1970 that Muslims began to seriously examine their decline in education and relate to the elimination of Urdu in the North. Thus began a political struggle to secure recognition for Urdu at the official level. It bore fruits. The state of Bihar accorded it the status of second official language. Till then only Kashmir had opted it as the medium of instruction. Now Bihar has started offering Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and Indian Police Service (IPS) examinations in Urdu medium. Uttar Pradesh Muslims awakened late and the government announced similar status for Urdu only in October 1989, while the country was poised for the eighth general elections.

Not All States are Equal

While replacement of Urdu in the North preoccupied the concerns of Muslim educationists, the South witnessed

Muslims making strides in education. Muslim educational society of Kerala, Muslim Educational Association of South India, Madras, and Al-Ameen Educational Society of Karnataka stirred awareness in their respective areas, often overlapping territorial jurisdictions. A series of conferences brought into bold relief the diverse dilemmas the Muslim education was caught in. In Kerala a rigid orthodox lobby was denying education to Muslim women resulting in the irony that women's literacy hovered around 50 per cent in the most literate state of India. In Tamil Nadu, the Muslims belatedly realised the haphazard planning and misplaced priorities in education. Lest they be outplaced, they had set up more colleges than their actual needs, while deficient attention towards the primary education sector deprived the colleges of the feeder institutions. This led to a situation where infrastructural facilities for higher education created out of huge investment by Muslims were benefitting others. In the 13 colleges which Muslims managed in the state, only a single college in Madras had around 51 per cent Muslim students and the others had 15 to 30 per cent Muslims.

While majority of the colleges had 15 per cent or less Muslim students, there seems to be an increasing awareness followed by efforts to widen the base of primary education and secondary education and thereby to set tight the inverted pyramid. In Karnataka, according to a study by the Gokhale Institute of Pune, a large proportion of Muslim children remained unschooled while a massive drop out rate marred the secondary education statistics, thus aborting the education drive. Of the drop-outs, 45 per cent walked off in so elementary stages of education, that they almost reverted to illiteracy, the study pointed out. Child labour was obviously the villain. Karnataka Muslims who predominantly speak Urdu also suffered on account of official apathy towards Urdu schools. Lax supervision by indifferent Urdu school inspectorate led to poor performance. Liberal evaluation of exam answer books by Muslim teachers from Urdu schools proved to be a disastrous bonus for incompetent students. A large number of Urdu schools in

three districts of Raichur, Gulbarga and Bidar, which once formed part of Hyderabad State of the Nizams, were receiving only 25 per cent aid from the government against 100 per cent in other districts. The anomaly persists even after 25 years of separation of these districts from Hyderabad and amalgamation into Karnataka. The financial constraints have resulted in fall in standards of schools of an area which in the past supplied the top brass to a former princely state.

Voluntary efforts in setting up Muslim education institutions in Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh was conspicuous by its absence till 1970s. This is borne out in a comparative study of madrassahs and schools. According to a study conducted by the Centre for Promotion of Science (CPS), functioning under the aegis of the Department of Physics in the Aligarh Muslim University, Bihar had 1,931 madrassahs against 45 high schools while Uttar Pradesh had 642 madrassahs against 167 high schools. Compare this with Maharashtra which has currently nearly 400 high schools registered and run by the Muslim minority, besides government run Urdu medium high schools which benefit only Muslims.

Muslims represented 50 per cent or less in professional courses in the Aligarh Muslim University and the Jamia Millia Islamia. The supply areas had no quality Muslim high schools to feed to two universities. Muslim students themselves fared poorly vis-a-vis their non Muslim classmates in Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) Senior Secondary Schools, with the result that those non-muslim students got admission in courses which carry a premium in the job market.

Professional Education and Employment Opportunities

An overriding concern for the Muslims everywhere in India relates to their dwindling share among graduates from professional educational institutions. Meagre or less than proportional representation in such institutions essentially

meant under representation in technical cadres and administrative channels of the government and the economy. This results in framing the laws that either discriminate against Muslims or ignore their cultural or economic interests. According to one estimate, Muslim students in professional educational institutions constituted only 3.5 per cent in 1977. Situation in South in this regard is better but is still far from satisfactory. Kerala Muslims constituting 20 per cent of population, enjoy 12 per cent reservation and occupy seats in professional colleges a little less than their share. A mixed effort of merit and Backward Class privilege available to certain sections among Muslims, enabled them to occupy seats in medicine and engineering more or less proportionate to their percentage in population in Tamil Nadu (5.1 per cent). However, the proportion gradually declines as one moves upwards, insofar as it declines to less than 2 per cent in states such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Bengal and Madhya Pradesh. In the prestigious Indian Institute of Management and Institute of Design at Ahmedabad, the share of Muslims was found to be less than one percent during a study in 1981. Similarly Muslim were under 2 per cent in the Indian Institute of Technology which produced the best Engineering graduates for the nation.

The steep decline in Muslim representation over the years in administrative services is quite symptomatic of the falling educational standards among them. Statistically speaking Muslims constituted just over 3 per cent of the officers in Indian administrative services (IAS) (105 among 3,378) - a drop from 4.3 per cent in 1972. Among Central Secretariat Services (CSS), out of 1,681 officers only six were Muslims, while among second grade's 2000 employees, Muslims were represented by merely a couple. Similarly, only 3 per cent officers (i.e., 53) were Muslims among Indian Police Service's 1,661 officers. The harsh conditions that Muslims suffer due to poor educational standards are evident by above mentioned statistics.

An Emerging Conciousness

A major resurgence is now evident in Muslim thinking.

Instead of squarely laying the blame at the doors of government or a "prejudiced administration", the Muslim intelligentsia now tends to look inwards and is more introspective. Proportional representation in government services, the Muslims now realise, could be achieved only through qualitative improvement and quantitative expansion of the literacy base. Steadily the Muslims have discovered that the lack of competitive spirit is a greater impeding factor than the hitherto much touted discrimination theory. If nothing else, the admission statistic for medicine and engineering and management faculties of the Aligarh Muslim University and the Bachelor of Engineering course at Jamiya Millia amply proves it. At the Aligarh Muslim University the two faculties have 100 and 350 seats, yet Muslim students have rarely exceeded 40 per cent of the total. In 1991 the Aligarh Muslim University M.B.B.S. course had, for the first time, 59 per cent Muslims. In Jamia's Engineering course, the Muslims represent only 30 per cent and the benefit of 25 per cent reservation is solely appropriated by them.

However, Muslim educationists feel no reason for any relaxation in demand for quota for Muslims in professional educational institutions or government jobs at par with the Harijans. (described as scheduled castes). As Dr. Bahauddin observed in the Al Ameen Educational Conference in Bangalore in 1985, Harijans in Kerala fare better in education beyond eighth standard in comparison to Muslims. Findings of a survey conducted at Ahmedabad, the industrial city of Gujarat, are similar. According to Prof. J.S. Bandukwala, at Baroda University, only 2.5 per cent Muslims were matriculates against 4.5 per cent Harijans, while among graduates the Muslim-Harijan ratio worked out to be 1:1.5. Certainly this amelioration in the condition of Harijans is the direct outcome of the special privileges through quotas, which are made available to them on sustained basis since independence of India in 1947. Conversely, it is perhaps the absence of it that caused the retrogression among Muslims. The only state at present that offers quotas to Muslims is Kerala, where all government

services and admissions in colleges guarantee 12 per cent reservation. In Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, Muslims have been identified as Backward class (BC) and get the benefit of quotas. However, in Karnataka they have been classified on the upper limits of Backward Classes and do not benefit adequately from the quota allotted for the category.

However, the psychological turn around in Muslim community with regard to educational strategy and planning, is yet to be completed. The futility of establishing institutions of higher learning without adequate qualitative feeder institutions at the base, is yet to be fully comprehended by all concerned. There still exists a vociferous segment which often raises the call for setting up of medical and engineering colleges or Urdu University, in order to enhance Muslim representation. But these are misplaced demands; for only through a network of better schools, Muslims can improve the chances of adequate representation in all higher educational institutions.

A Tower of Babel

Confusing and diverse array of language policies of the India's linguistically divided states, places Muslim children in disadvantage vis-a-vis their non Muslim classmates everywhere. An Urdu speaking Muslim child is subjected to learn at least one additional language in most states. Under the language policy, a Muslim student opts for Urdu, Hindi and English in Hindi states; Hindi, English, Urdu and the regional language in Karnataka, Orissa, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh; Hindi, English and the regional language in Kerala and Gujarat; English and the mother tongue in Tamil Nadu. But it appears that the three-language policy does not suit Muslims everywhere. In Hindi states, except Bihar and Haryana, Urdu is denied a place in the formula and the Muslims have to study Sanskrit in its place. In Tamil Nadu, Urdu speaking Muslims need to forgo either Urdu or Tamil, both being inconvenient options. In Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Gujarat, Muslims need a four-language policy, as under the 3-language formula they

will have to choose either Urdu or the regional language. However a better situation is obtained in Maharashtra where Hindi and the regional language have been combined into one paper. Similarly in Assam, a predominant majority of Muslims speak Bengali but cannot study it under the 3-language formula.

Medium is not the Message

A demand for English medium education which is available mainly in Christian missionary convent schools, has created other problems. Muslim students are required to learn the basics of Christianity and the mores and ethos of that region and culture. Coming as they do from affluent sections of Muslim community and generally from urban centers, these students carry the promise of representing Muslims in India's top bureaucratic cadres. It is a matter of conjecture as to how effective would be the case of Islam or Muslims pleaded by a section which itself has poor perception and vague conception of Islam.

The fact remains, however, that English education in India facilitates cross country mobility, while it helps to dilute the ethnic, regional, religious and linguistic identity of an individual in situations when such an identity is a cause of discrimination or disadvantage. English medium education also has the potential to bring overseas employment, and after Hindi, it is the next best suitable medium in India for intracommunity communication. Yet, Muslim community has not made efforts at setting up English medium schools in numbers adequate for meeting its needs and continues to depend on the institutions operated by other communities for the education of its future leadership. This problem needs to be addressed immediately.

An Agenda for Education of Indian Muslims

To improve the standard of education among Muslims of India, the following suggestions may be considered for adoption by Muslim educational societies in India:

1. Promote universal and compulsory education among Muslims through widening the network of schools.

2. Reduce the dropout rate among Muslims by providing:
 - a) free or low cost tuition, books, midday meals and uniforms in poor and slum area schools.
 - b) unisex schools for girls after the 7th, standard.
3. Provide informal education for Muslim children by arranging on-site coaching in places such as bidi factories, carpet making workshops, and in automobile-garages, where many school age children work as hired laborers.
4. Provide youth hostels in towns and cities and set up large number of endowments in order to help the students from rural areas to continue education.
5. In the field of professional education, work towards a fair representation in government colleges, and set up tutorial institutes and professional colleges in Muslim areas.
6. South India has a substantial number of professional educational institutions by and for Muslims. Efforts should be made to make these facilities available to increasing number of Muslim students. Endowments should be set up to finance education of North Indian as well as South Indian Muslim students in these colleges.
7. Muslim students should be encouraged towards employment oriented courses such as engineering, architecture, law, medicine, veterinary science, agricultural sciences, etc.
8. To enhance exposure to religion, history, and culture, prepare adequate Islamic enrichment literature such as story books, slide shows, documentaries, video programmes, and publish quality material in the vernacular languages.
9. Set up diploma courses for Muslim girls where Islamic and modern home science curricula are integrated.
10. Establish institutes for research on Muslim education, languages and literature, society and culture.
11. Start magazines and newsletters to encourage and

monitor Muslim progress in education.

12. Set up model schools in cities or hill resorts.

The following areas of Muslim concentration may be targetted for launching superior educational facilities with the specific objective of improving the currently prevalent adverse conditions in the field of education among Muslims in India: Malabar, or northern Kerala; Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh; Gulbarga in Karnataka; Aurangabad in Maharashtra; Tonk and Jaipur in Rajasthan; Kashmir Valley, Mewat in Haryana and Rajasthan; Okhla in Delhi; Aligarh, Muradabad, Meerut, Azamgarh, Rampur in Uttar Pradesh; Gaya, Purnea, Katihar, Araria, Kishanganj districts in Bihar; Malda, Murshidabad, Jangipura, Berhampura, in West Bengal; Cuttack in Orissa, Nalbari and Karimganj districts in Assam; Lilong in Manipur. ■

ALL INDIA MUSLIM PERSONAL LAW BOARD'S PUBLIC MEETING IN BANGALORE

Ahmed Husain

The President of All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB), Moulana Syed Mohammed Rabey Hasani Nadvi, in a large public meeting at Idgah Qudus Sahib adjacent to Miller's Road, Bangalore, criticized the central government for ignoring the 'hate-campaign' and 'anti-constitutional' statements which have been issued by a section of the political parties and leaders. The government's inaction in checking these elements is causing great damage to the country and it can invite clashes and vitiate the peaceful environment.

He said that the Sharia is the law of God, which has come to us through the Messenger of Allah, and even the entire community of Muslims has no power to change it. He said that in no way can Muslims tolerate intervention in the Sharia and that the number of Muslims in this country cannot be ignored; they can be damaged but destroying them is impossible.

Muslims want a peaceful atmosphere as much as they yearn for the development of the country. Hence, it is the responsibility of others to respect the sentiments of the Muslims and the Sharia. He said that the Muslims have always contributed to the good of the country and history spoke of their contributions to its development and progress. The Muslims wish to utilize their talent for nation-building but it is possible only when their sentiments are respected and the Sharia is safeguarded.

He said that the AIMPLB was formed in the wake of the attempts that were made to bind the minorities under a Uniform Civil Code and that there was no choice before the Indian Muslims but to come on to one platform to safeguard their Sharia.

Unfortunately incidents of communal riots in post-independent India have caused great damage to the entire nation, he said. The only way to restore the richness, prosperity and unity of a multilingual, multi-religious, and multi-cultural country like India is by creating an atmosphere of peace, love and brotherhood and by developing mutual respect for each other's beliefs. He urged the non-Muslims not to be swayed by the US-led anti-Islam propaganda which is meant to tarnish the image of Islam. Instead, they should seek to understand Islam which preaches peace and love. He said that for the misdeeds of a few persons the entire community cannot be blamed.

Abdus Sattar Yusuf Sheikh, the spokesman of the AIMPLB, said that all over the world an image has been given that Islam is a religion of terrorism and that it is the duty of the Muslims to prove it wrong. He said that the solution for the problems being faced by the Muslims is in their own hands provided that they stay united. 'As a minority Muslims have been given rights in this country and we can utilize those rights to solve our problems', he said.

The meeting passed resolutions that declared that the Muslims of Karnataka will give full co-operation to the AIMPLB, and that they would follow the Sharia, which is an integral part of Islam, in their individual as well as collective life. The resolutions also stated that: 'We, the Muslims, of Karnataka, express our deep sorrow over the common moral degradation, increasing violence and narrowmindedness in the country. This critical condition calls for a public movement to bring about harmony, peace and human love, and the Muslims of Karnataka are ready to promote it. The Muslims of Karnataka will abide by the court verdict on Babri Masjid and urge the other party to do likewise. The excavation of this site is unnecessary and it will not help solve the case. However, we support the stand of AIMPLB that the excavation should be fair and that the truth must prevail. Moulana Mufti Ashraf Ali, founder member of the AIMPLB, said that when Muslim leaders felt apprehensive with regard to the Uniform Civil Code, they

raised their voices against interference in Muslim Personal Law. Abdul Rahim Qureshi, secretary of the AIMPLB, Maulana Sulaiman Sikandar and Maulana Shah Syed Muhammad Al-Husaini of Gulbarga, addressed the gathering in which all the eminent Muslim leaders of Karnataka were present.

Later Abdul Rahim Qureshi, secretary of the AIMPLB, addressing a crowded Press Conference said that the Board will respect the court decision on the Ayodhya dispute. He said that the Archaeological Department of India had carried out excavation work on the same site in 1976 but no evidence regarding the birth of Ram was found there. He added that the Ram Mandir Nayas and ShankarAcharya had promised in a meeting with the members of AIMPLB that the Ram Temple will be built away from the disputed site but they deviated from their promise. He said that Madrasas have been branded as the hub of terrorism but so far no proof has been found that Madrasas have weapons. The allegation that funds keep coming from Islamic countries is unfounded as the Madrasas registered under the Foreign Contribution Reservation Act get aid and the amount is given to the Central Government. Children of poor families receive education in Madrasas and he said, that non-Muslims should be invited to attend the functions of Madrasas as this will give them knowledge about their activities. He said that India is a country of peace and of many religions and treats all its citizens equally. The AIMPLB calls the people of this country to work for mutual peace, harmony and brotherhood and to respect each other's feelings. Sulaiman Sikandar and Yusuf Sheikh were also present in the Press Conference. ■

Courtesy: Young Muslim Digest

UTTARANCHAL BID TO ROPE IN MADARSAS

While many states are opposed to the spread of madarsas, the Uttaranchal Government is making all efforts, including in the pilgrimage town of Haridwar, to bring these Muslim institutions into the mainstream in an attempt to increase the spread of education.

"The overall enrolment in the primary schools in the state is 97.6 per cent. However, we are not able to achieve cent per cent due to districts like Haridwar and Udham Singh Nagar, that have considerable Muslim population, the segment that is traditionally reluctant to send girls to school," the State Education Director, Mahesh Pant, said here.

"Since Muslims make up for nearly 30 per cent of the population in these districts, we feel it would be easier for us to impart education, especially to girls, through madarsas," he pointed out.

The strategy, which entails mobilising the community and building an environment for educational reform, will also include identifying women instructors from the community and imparting management training to religious heads, he said.

While the authorities are careful not to intervene in the religious teachings imparted by madrasas, they are insistent that students be taught from the prescribed textbooks as well, thus ensuring that they are "literate" by all standards.

"We have assured community leaders that while we will not interfere in their teaching methods, we will provide them with textbooks and train their teachers so that they can impart overall education to children," education officials said.

Uttaranchal has an overall literacy rate of 72.28 per cent, and a whopping 97.6 of its population in schooling age are currently in schools.

THE MUSLIMS AND THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

Shabbir Zafar*

The problems faced by Muslims in all the countries worldwide indicate a new beginning of Muslim era. After 9/11 tragedy Muslims have become a suspicious lot all over the world. They have been treated in a most uncordial manner. Although since quite a good time they are at the receiving end, they are held responsible for all the ills. This has not happened for the first time with this community. In past Muslims have passed through so many ordeals severe than the present. But every time the tide ultimately turned in their favor. The most devastating ordeal in the recent past was the upsurge of Genghiz Khan, which had shaken the Muslims to the core. It seemed that they would never appear on the stage of history anymore. But the Turk in taking over Muslims turned to Islamic faith and thus new blood was flown in the veins of the Muslim community of west Asia. Islam conquered the conquerors of Muslims. Although, in the present scenario, Muslims are looked at with suspicion, their religion has raised a great curiosity among non-Muslims. More and more people are trying to read Islamic literature and probably Koran is a best seller in the western world. In fact Islam was never a monopoly of a certain people or a certain race whatsoever. It adopts the people and human races, which are full of youth and vitality, in a manner a young man changes dresses. As the poet of east Iqbal has rightly said in one of his couplets, "Kafila ho na sakega kabhi veeran tera.." which means that Islam will never be deserted by the human race. It will conquer the hearts of the righteous and pious people and men of understanding in almost all the times of history. That is why one should consider that the shortcomings of Muslims are not the shortcomings of Islam. History bears ample testimony to this fact that some times Muslims are defeated and pushed

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back, but Islam never retreaded. It is always advancing with the time. Every other day brings justification and approval to the Islamic practices. The scientific advancement is ultimately bringing the world near to Islamic faith and the judicial process is providing proof to the ultimacy of Islamic law and its capacity to walk with the vicissitude of time. So it is high time that Muslims should take stock of the situation and revert to their faith and knowledge of their religion. Time and again it has been established that Koran is an inexhaustible treasure of knowledge and understanding. It is a divine source of spirituality. Its wonders will never come to an end. The text of Koran is maintaining its pristine purity for the last fourteen centuries. No scripture in the contemporary world can claim complete immunity against tampering as Koran does. Every word of Koran is protected against human touch and every punctuation is holding its place without a change from the times of the prophet Mohammed (pbuh). A great effort had been put from the times of the prophet to guard the meaning of Koranic text against misinterpretations. It is, thus, still a source of guidance to millions of human kind who try to understand their relation with this universe and to those who aspire to understand the creation, the creator and the very purpose of the cosmic existence. It is a mistake to treat Koran as a religious book of Muslims or of Islam exclusively. In fact it is a message of the creator to its creation. According to Islamic faith all the creation is the effect of a mastermind who is omniscient and omnipotent. Again Koran disapproves the theory of a cosmic accident. According to Koran this universe is created with a certain purpose. The flawless harmony of this universe, the boundless galaxies in the skies, the biological kingdom, the perfect human body and the invincible soul, all beckon us to the great mastermind, the Creator. When a man of limited power and limited creativity abstains from doing absurd things, how can a master mind, the God, can be expected to create this universe for nothing? Can we imagine this vast universe is created by accident and there is no object or purpose

behind it? What a false justification for the creation! Is it only to deny the very existence of the God!? If some scientist makes a lifeless model of universe, he is praised for his craftsmanship. Thus if a lifeless model requires a creator and he is praised for it, why should we doubt the existence of the creator of the real universe full of life and dynamism? Why should not we praise him for his master craftsmanship? Does it require a great intellect to understand this commonplace thing? In fact the negative approach to understand the universe and to abstain from the very obedience of the Almighty is lying behind His negation. In a given condition we observe that a man sheds his responsibilities and abstains from fulfilling his duties. He always tries to break laws and does not want to be interfered with his personal affairs. Over the years such scholars, viz. Darwin, Rousseau, Freud and Karl Marx interpreted the human history with utterly materialistic point of view. They had a total disregard to spiritual or any other influence on the development of humankind. To them all the struggle of mankind was between haves and have-nots. All the expressions made over the centuries of human existence was based on desire and self. Sex was the sole motivator to all human drives. All morality and spirituality was humbug. The base desires and basic instincts are the only thing to be considered. All else is nothing. This made the secular outlook popular among the European people. Also the Church played a very significant part in popularizing the secular outlook of life. The great struggle between the Church and the secular scientists in the 16th century decided the fate of the European peoples' outlook on religion. Had not the Church tampered with the divine text of Bible by adding in it the knowledge based on human experience, which is always progressive and never final, the pristine purity of Christianity could have been maintained and the struggle between secular scientists and the Church could be avoided. The Muslims did not commit such a mistake. And because of this very reason Islam did not lose its attraction and Koran remained a fountainhead of spirituality for its

followers forever. Unfortunately the European people developed a great aversion to Church and anything that belonged to the Church including the religion and the very existence of God. Thus they discarded all the religions and faith in God. Due to Crusades there was a remote chance for them to turn to Islam for the spiritual vacuum created eventually. Thus Europe became irreligious as a final outcome of the above discussed circumstances beyond any chance of reversal. This was a colossal loss for human race that it is not yet realized by the Western world. The abject materialism has inflicted a terrible wrong on the psyche of a great part of humanity to which providence has given the reins of world affairs in the present times. Only God knows how long the humanity will reap the poisonous crop of misdeeds committed by the people who have no regard to religion and devoid of any faith in God and hereafter and accountability to their creator.

The great institution of prophethood deals with the subject of creation and its purpose in a most convincing way. The noble lineage of the prophets bears an ample testimony to their selflessness and affinity towards humankind and its affairs of this life and hereafter. If we study the lifetime and the character of the prophets who were assigned the task of inviting the humanity towards God, we would find that they were the most selfless servants of mankind. Throughout their stay in this world they did their job against all odds and without any reservations. They were persecuted severely by their people for what they preached. But they did not compromise with their divine duty and did not make any amendment in what they had to preach the knowledge revealed by God. They were offered money, position and women to divest themselves from discharging their duties. But not a single prophet could be deviated from the right path. No human being other than the clan of prophethood can surpass their integrity and love and concern for the welfare and uplift of mankind. And that is why only their teaching could show the right path to salvation of man. The

prophets were divinely inspired, while the other leaders of mankind had offered what they acquired through their experience, which is always progressive and never ultimate. We see that every other day the theories and hypotheses produced by the philosophers and scientists are refuted by their successors. What is an established fact today becomes obsolete and outdated tomorrow. By contrast the teachings of the prophets could never be challenged by the vicissitudes of times. Every other day the importance and the validity of their teachings are established beyond doubt and satisfy the mind and exalt the senses. Also every succeeding prophet bore testimony to his predecessor and confirmed his teachings.

The most important aspect of the faith taught by the prophets is the life after death. The worldly sojourn of human existence is not complete in so many ways. Our all desires are not fulfilled here. A good number of questions the life poses to us, remain unanswered throughout our life. All human endeavours are constantly in search of perfection and a more refined life. But every time when some perfection is achieved, new loopholes are introduced. The cause of human bondage is yet to be discovered. Human soul experiences a deep sorrow. Somewhere something is greatly missing. Nothing in the world can fill the vacuum felt by man. The prophets solve this mystery by giving a glad tidings in the hereafter, where a man can fulfill all his desires and achieve the perfection of his existence. But the only condition for this reward is to obey the commands of the Almighty as long as he stays in this world. By this way only a man can sacrifice his base desires, filthy objects and short term gains. When the hereafter's success is the sole motto of life, it is not difficult to press all the resources at his command to achieve this goal. Also we see that when all the abilities are pinpointed towards a single task, either of this world or the hereafter, it becomes easy to accomplish. The prophet of Islam and his companions accomplished the task of spreading the word of God to a greater part of humanity within a short span of time and with minuscule

resources. It was due to devotion and unilateral approach they could do it. What did they aspire out of all their efforts? It was solely the pleasure of God and the reward in the hereafter.

Thus as discussed above the three guiding principles which can bring peace, justice and an all round happiness to mankind is the faith in Almighty, the institution of prophet hood and the life after death. Without these all human endeavors in achieving lasting peace and happiness, will prove to be a farce. Sooner we understand this fact, the better.

The Arab world can play a very significant role in Islamic affairs. They are situated in the centre of the populated world. Their oil fields can provide sufficient funds to spread the word of Allah to the mankind. Probably they are least corrupt and their youth is not spoiled by the recent western cultural onslaught. Their vitality is still intact and can sustain the shocks and tremors of the modern civilization. The Mecca and Madina that is the heart of Islamic world bless their land. As Quran says:

The very first house built for the mankind is in Mecca, where in there are bounties and guidance for the whole universe.

The whole world is waiting for Muslims to come forward and liberate it from the chaos and the suffering it is enduring since they have departed from the stage of the world and the reins are passed from their hands to the people who have scant regard for morality and righteousness. Time has come to rise and break the shackles of slavery of sensual desires and material well being. The world is weary of material advancement and the injury it has inflicted to human soul. The soul is tired and putrified due to abject materialism and unhappy due to the spiritual vacuum eventually created. The very source of spiritual well being is in the teachings of the prophets and scriptures revealed to them. The latest version of their work is in Koran and in the teachings of Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him). The world knows it by the name of Islam. Islam

is the fast word for the mankind to understand their relation with the universe and their God. Quran is the fast scripture, which is a fountainhead of spiritualism and morality. The teachings of the prophet are the commentary of the scripture. The life of the prophet and the goal achieved by him are the practical demonstration of what a true religion means for the mankind.

As discussed before, only Islarn can answer the puzzles and confusion posed by the contemporary times. Every sensible man wants to understand his destiny. But he cannot solve this mystery by himself. The most fundamental and burning question is.. Who am I? Where have I come from? Is there life after death? Whether I am responsible for the deeds I have committed during my life time? Is there any reward or punishment for my undertakings of today? Islam offers a convincing answer to all these questions. The central idea of Quran is HEREAFTER. Whatever is visible in this world is only a tip of the iceberg in comparison to the unseen world that is boundless and eternal in the vocabulary of Quran. All the affairs in this world are in a way tentative and inconclusive. It is required that at some point of the time all the accounts of human deeds should be closed for a final cheek. In the words of Quran, it is YOMUDDIN which mean the Day of Judgement. This is a point when all the human activity is stopped for checking the accounts of deeds committed during all the ages of human life on earth. The omniscient and omnipotent God would assess the cumulative effect of deeds committed by each and every human being. And His servants would be rewarded or punished after the trial accordingly. This world is utterly unable to assess the cumulative effect of human deeds. And therefore it cannot punish or reward a person accordingly. Neither it has resources and the devices to punish or reward a man fully and finally.

Suppose a man pushes the world in to a nuclear war and causes death and misery to a vast multitude of human beings. Thousands of innocent and defenseless people die

out of this irresponsible act. What is the ultimate punishment the world forum can award to this person? A capital punishment of Death? But death of a single person cannot be equal to the death of thousands of people? Notwithstanding, we cannot award him thousands of death penalties. This is not a full punishment. For his chastisement, it requires a day of judgement when all the effects of a nuclear holocaust will be judged in toto and the punishment commensurate with this irresponsible act will be awarded to him in the fire of hell where he would not die or escape till his punishment is over. Likewise, we cannot reward a person in this world fully who has accomplished a great task of saving humanity from pain and ailments or the vagaries of life. What reward a Noble forum can give to a person who rescues thousands of people from death? No reward would be sufficient enough and commensurate with the cumulative good achieved through this commendable act. Neither it is possible to assess the cumulative good brought by the same in this world. Only Good can reward this man in paradise where he will never die and would go on enjoying the reward of his virtuous deeds for ever and ever. ■

KNOWLEDGE AS A TOOL OF MUSLIM POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT

Muhatir Mohamad

What is the state of Muslim world today? I don't think would be wrong to state that the Muslim world is at its lowest ebb, and is probably continuing to decline and to fall. Ever since the Turkish Muslim Empire fell before the onslaught of the European nations, not only was the Muslim world broken up into small and ineffective nation-states but it has never been able to stage a recovery, much less to re-establish itself on the world stage. Individually the Muslim states have not been able to make any progress or impact.

In fact many of the peoples of the Turkish Empire, their cooperation with the Europeans in order to free themselves from Turkish rule, only resulted in a change of colonial masters from Turkish to British and French. It was only after a long time and with great difficulty that they managed to extricate themselves from European colonial rule.

Independence has not enabled them to develop and to regain the political clout of the old Muslim empires. Instead they have been faced with internal problems which prevent them from making any progress. Even when they are richly endowed they have not been able to make any real progress in terms of their influence in international affairs. Not a single Muslim country is to be found among the developed nations of the world.

When the Industrial Revolution took place the Muslim world was still relatively undivided. But Muslims as a whole were either unaware of the Revolution or rejected it. For a long time much of the results of the Industrial Revolution whether in terms of material gains or system were rejected by Muslims as un-Islamic.

Electricity for example was not used by the Muslims because for some unknown reason it was considered to be against Islam. Mosque could not be lighted with electricity. It was *haram* according to the Muslim learned

ones. Till about 30 years ago there was at least one Muslim country which insisted on using oil lamps instead of electricity.

Mechanized vehicles were also considered as *haram* and may not be used to carry the coffin of the dead. Paintings of human and animal figures were prohibited, as was the wearing of non-baggy trousers and peak-caps. The progress in weaponry in the West was not duplicated in the Muslim world. Instead when finally a change of weapons was allowed they had to be sourced basically from the enemy.

We may think that it is unrealistic if not silly to label industrial products as *haram*, but in those days they were fanatically serious in considering them as *haram*. Indeed the Turkish Yanisari revolted when Western-style uniforms were introduced. The ulema had condemned these Western things and governments must obey these injunctions or risk being labeled un-Islamic. And so we lost valuable time as the Industrial Revolution passed by us.

Not only did we miss the Industrial Revolution but we also missed the developments which followed which was also looked upon with suspicion. Not so very long ago in Malaysia television sets were thrown into the river because some religious teachers declared them to be *haram*. It sounds silly now but it is amazing how many people believed these ignorant teachers.

Today and rightly so we are even more concerned about what is *haram* and *halal* but unfortunately we often go overboard. Thus in Afghanistan so powerful is the belief that no part of a woman may be seen by strangers that the women themselves refuse to take off the burqa even when they are allowed to. Yet in other parts of the Muslim world it is permissible to leave the face and the hands uncovered.

Who decreed these dress codes which so occupy the minds of Muslims that they neglect those injunctions of Islam which are so important for their safety and security?

Injunctions of Islam on more important matters are ignored with impunity. Thus brotherhood of Muslims is

openly disregarded. Muslims who declare themselves as brothers in Islam often make it their duty to fight and kill other Muslims. They would in the name of Islam condemn these Muslims as infidels in order to justify their enmity toward them. If we go by their criteria for being a Muslim then there are probably no Muslims in the world. In any case Islam forbids the frivolous labelling of other Muslims as infidels. Similarly we are enjoined by Islam to seek knowledge. A well-known Hadith states that we must seek knowledge even from China. At the time of the Prophet what was the knowledge available in China? Certainly not about Islam. China had at that time already developed a good system of government, great scientific knowledge, a high level of agriculture. They had produced paper and ink and explosives and a variety of scientific instruments.

But Muslims ignore this important injunction to seek knowledge. At the beginning, yes, they did seek knowledge. And so there were great Muslim physicians, scientists, mathematicians, astronomers, geographers etc. during the great days of the Muslim empire and civilization was partly the result of these scholars, these seekers of knowledge. But later knowledge was interpreted as religious knowledge only and the study of other kinds of knowledge was regarded as either sinful or as lacking in merit, as not contributing to the afterlife. And so the pursuit of knowledge other than the specifically religious was neglected. To this day we neglect such knowledge and Muslim students studying these non-religious subjects feel guilty and try to make possible to various so-called Islamic activities in order to earn merit. Result is that Muslim students hardly ever achieve excellence in the sciences etc., including in the research so necessary in order to compete with the rest of the non-Muslim world. Later in life these graduates are not able to contribute to the recovery of the past glory of the Muslims. Worse still, they are not even motivated to do so.

One of the most important fundamental teachings of Islam is the need to be equipped with the weapons and defence capability in order to instill fear in the enemy and to

defend the *Ummah*. This teaching is obviously neglected for even a race with just 13 million people in the whole world can defeat the forces of 1.3 billion Muslims. In fact about anyone can oppress any Muslim country and there is nothing the Muslims can do beyond crying and appealing for justice. Because of all these and many more, the Muslim world of today is hopelessly weak and backward. Can knowledge empower the Muslims politically? It can of course. But one has to remember that there is no single cause for anything that happens in the world. Lack of knowledge alone is not the cause and acquiring knowledge alone will not empower the Muslims. Certainly knowledge that is not applied will not benefit the Muslims at all.

Together with the acquisition of knowledge there must be also a change in attitude, a change in the mindset and values which always hold us back whenever we seek to empower ourselves. The majority of the Muslims of today do not believe in worldly well being, including worldly security. They do not believe that Muslims can ever be as advanced as the developed countries. Instead they believe there is already a Muslim renaissance as evidenced by the obvious piety of more Muslims and their return to the dress codes which are considered Muslim.

I spoke about our attitude toward the Industrial Revolution. The suspicions for the products of Industrial Revolution is the result of wrong interpretations of the teachings of Islam. Thus when we are enjoined to seek knowledge we define it as knowledge about religion only. When we are asked to defend ourselves, we stress instead the weapons of the armies of the Prophet, considering riding skills and the use of bows and arrows as important and not the capacity to defend. Even when Islam enjoins upon us to be just, we ignore justice but uphold the procedures only. Clearly our teachings do not emphasize the real priority in Islam. We are taught to uphold the forms rather than the substance of the religion we believe in.

Before we can pursue knowledge we have to understand the teachings of Islam regarding the reasons

and the need to acquire knowledge. Frequently we are told that we must not seek knowledge for the sake of knowledge but we must know that at some stage the knowledge we acquire may come in useful. Why study the structure of an atom when it does not promise anything that can be useful to us? But we know now that our failure to study the structure and the forces contained in the atom has made us vulnerable to total destruction by the nuclear devices developed through the knowledge of the elements and basic structure of materials and their properties.

We must also banish this idea that the only knowledge that we need to acquire is about Islam. Neglect of other knowledge has led to our lack of industrial capacity, our capacity to invent and produce weapons to instill fear in the enemy and to defend ourselves. We must stop thinking that the acquisition of knowledge other than religious knowledge gives no merit in after life. Surely if the knowledge we pursue can contribute to the fulfillment of the Qur'anic injunction to defend ourselves such knowledge must give us merit in the afterlife. There is no need to feel guilty when we study these other subjects. We should indeed consider that it is an important *ibadat*, and Islamic injunction that is no less meritorious than the study of religion depends on our capacity to defend ourselves.

It is only if we succeed in changing our mindset regarding the acquisition of non-religious knowledge that we can seriously pursue knowledge to a level that has been achieved in the countries of our detractors. And when that is achieved and is followed by the application of the knowledge then it can be a tool for our empowerment; the correct interpretation of what is enjoined by Islam with regard to the acquisition of knowledge is therefore crucial. We must not allow ourselves to be again sidetracked by the skewed interpretations of Islam which had led us to miss the Industrial Revolution, to reject electricity and mechanical products, and to reduce our capacity to defend our faith and ourselves. We must accept the reality of life today. We cannot anymore reject those things which have come to be

used universally. Islam is not just a religion for the 7th century of the Christian era. It is a religion for all times. With times things change. After 1400 years of Islam we cannot expect to live in the same environment and under the same conditions as were found in the 7th century. Islam has provided for this change, if only we interpret Islam properly. Islam is not a rigid religion. there are many provisions in Islam to take care of all situations.

There is a story of a Malaysian lady who went to a European country. It was time for midday prayer and she was in a restaurant. She insisted on not missing prayer time and she prayed in the toilet of the restaurant. Apparently she had not been taught that when a Muslim is away from home he or she may pray ahead or after a particular prayer time, may shorten the prayer and pray for two prayer times together. Allah has given us this facility so as not burden us. It is we who chose not to avail ourselves of Allah's bounty. It is not Islam which obstructs our progress. It is the wrong and rigid interpretations which we are taught which hinder progress.

Similarly in education, in the search for knowledge, Islam is not to blame but the narrow interpretation of Islam that has resulted in Muslims being so backward many fields of knowledge crucial to their own well-being.

Of course knowledge can be a tool to empower us politically. But pure knowledge will get us nowhere unless we learn how to apply that knowledge to our own advantage and for the betterment of our life.

If knowledge is to be our empowerment then it must contribute toward our economic, social and security needs. Knowledge is not static. It is accumulating and expanding all the time. The quest for knowledge must therefore be continuous. There has to be specialists who are experts in particular fields. In the quest for knowledge to apply the knowledge will take a considerable period of time. We have to remember that knowledge is not static. It is moving all the time and today the speed of discovery and development of new knowledge is exponential. It will take time to acquire

knowledge. We have to accept the need to be patient. It may take a decade or even a century. Remember when we were at the peak during the great days of our Islamic civilization, it took the Europeans several hundred years to catch up, but catch up they did and then they passed us completely. We will have to accept the need to struggle for a considerable length of time. But fortunately knowledge is much less hidden now than it was before. Most of the knowledge there is, is well documented and easily available. Modern technology makes all knowledge, except a few which are concerned with defense applications, easily accessible.

There must be a division of labour. Some must master the sciences and the different branches of science, mathematics, medicine, etc. Within the Muslim community which number 1.3 billion in every field of knowledge there can be an adequate number who pursue religious knowledge. This division of labour within the *Ummah* will result not only in an empowered society but a balanced one.

The discovery of new knowledge must not be left to others. In the past it was knowledge pioneered by Muslims which was acquired by the Europeans to enable them to power their industrial development. To this day the knowledge pioneered by Muslims such as Algorithm developed by Al Khwarizmi is being used in the design of the circuits on the microchip. It is Algorithm which makes IT hardware and software possible. But Muslims themselves have not used the knowledge pioneered by the Muslims. In many cases we don't even learn them.

While we can learn to apply such knowledge there is no reason why we cannot pioneer new knowledge and the applications. If we are able to do this then once again we can gain an edge over the others as we once did when Muslims pioneered and dominated many fields of knowledge. Muslim migrants to other countries are pioneering new knowledge simply because their own countries provide them with no facilities or opportunities.

Clearly when we reach the stage of pioneers,

knowledge literally means power. But even before that the mastery of knowledge will enable us to compete on equal footing with others. We would certainly be empowered and we would be able to lift ourselves up out of the very inferior position that we are in .

The pursuit of knowledge and following that the acquisition of the skills. The next problem is the vastness of the field. We have to divide our manpower, within the country and between the countries in order to be able to cover the knowledge in all fields.

If we are prepared to overcome all the problems which can hamper our acquisition of knowledge and we are patient enough then God willing, knowledge can empower us. There is no quick fix. One particular people waited for 2000 years. We will not have to wait that long if we understand the need for knowledge and we learn the lessons of history.

It is easy to agree that knowledge is a tool for our political empowerment. But mere agreement is not going to lead us anywhere. We really do not need more seminars and conferences, which will end up with the obvious conclusions. We need to act and how we should act to implement the obvious is what should occupy our minds and our time now.■

DEFENDER OF FAITH

*Post-9/11, madrassas have come under scrutiny all over the world, but particularly in India. Critics see them as "factories of fundamentalism" rather than as centres of learning. **Maulana Marghoob-ur-Rehman**, the 90-year-old rector of Asia's oldest Islamic seminary, the Deoband-based Darul Uloom, defends the institution in an interview with **Firoz Bakht Ahmed**:*

Critics allege that madrassas have become breeding grounds for terrorism.

What training? We don't train people even for self-defence. In the 137 years of our existence, we've produced 76,000 graduates. We ought to get kudos for producing simple, educated and law-abiding people. Instead, our values are being questioned. The allegation that madrassas preach obscurantism smacks of ignorance. All madrasa students live as per the dictates of their religion, which teaches them to be happy in the little they have and not be covetous.

After the relentless attack on madrassas by the VHP, why haven't you defended them?

What's there to defend? We're like an open book. I, as the rector of Darul Uloom Deoband, cordially invite anyone from the VHP to visit without prior notice and attend all our classes, take rounds and inspect and assess if any terrorists are being sheltered here, if anyone is manufacturing weapons. I challenge the VHP to produce the name of any madrasa student from any police station who's been charged with rape, arson, loot, killing of innocent people, spying, or damaging any temple.

Many people allege that madrasa education is anti-national?

Perhaps they don't know about the contribution of madrassas and maulvis to India's freedom struggle. We were among the first to give the call for liberation of India from British rule. For reasons best known to them, historians

have ignored the fact that the first Indian government in exile was formed in Kabul with Maulana Mehmood-ul-Hasan as its President and Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh as its Prime Minister. English author Edward Timus wrote that more than 200,000 ulema sacrificed their lives in the 1857 mutiny while Tomson, the British army general, wrote that "maulvis were loyal patriots to their country". Darul Uloom's "Reshmi Rimal Tehreek" which included leaders like Maulana Mehmud-ul-Hasan, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, was a movement against the English.

What's the syllabus at Deoband?

The general curriculum followed in a madrassa is based on a theological system known as Dars-e-Nizami, which runs for about 15-17 years. The medium of instructions is Arabic, Urdu and Persian. Broadly, the curriculum includes jurisprudence, logic, philosophy of religion, trigonometry and geometry, linguistics, tafseer (interpretation of the Qur'an), Hadees (Prophet Mohammed's dictates) and Hikmat-e-Shariah (Personal Laws).

But why don't you modernise the madrasas with government aid?

We don't want government aid because that, as per the dictates of our founders, would be an undue interference in our system of working. Besides, we do teach English, Hindi, Science and Mathematics, so that a child at the primary level can join a community school. We teach theology and religious values, simple living and high thinking. Nothing is taught behind closed doors. The basic aim of a madrassa is freedom from slavery (internal and external), simplicity and love for labour.

But how can government aid harm you?

Despite the fact that we receive no government grant, New Delhi has in recent years virtually stopped giving visas to people to come and study at Darul Uloom. As a result, a seminary that attracted students from all over the world,

including Muslim countries like Saudi Arabia, now houses a small number of Burma and Bangladesh. It's very sad as those who studied here, would go back to their own countries and speak about India's greatness and diversity. Now they go to Pakistan. The government hasn't bothered to provide proper roads and other civic amenities in Deoband, a city symbolic to communal harmony.

Isn't it a fact that Pakistani madrassas are producing jihadis?

We've nothing to do with Pakistani madrassas. The fact is that neither Osama bin Laden nor Mullah Omar was a madrasa product. None of those blamed for September 11 were students of madrassas. They were all products of leading universities. But no one speaks of closing down these universities.

Why don't the ulema issue fatwas against Osama and those responsible for dastardly acts like 9/11, 12/13, Akshardham, and?

You are mistaking a fatwa with a press release. A fatwa is a religious decree and has nothing to do with terrorism in any part of the world. Islam literally means submission. We have been giving our point of view to the media but it has not been properly interpreted and presented. Whenever there is something like 9/11, they come running asking for our view but when we want to condemn violence at Godhra or Akshardham, they never bother. I have openly castigated the heinous act of Jaish-e-Mohammed, Lashkar-e-Toiba and other such terrorist platforms that have endangered the existence of Muslims in India because of their lopsided interpretation of jihad and killing, of innocent people. I am ashamed of those who use Islam to carry out acts of terror. ■

DARUL ULOOM, NADWATUL ULAMA

A number of eminent scholars and thinkers such as, Muhammad Ali Mongeri, Shibli Nomani, Muhammad Ali Jauhar and Hakeem Muhammad Ajmal Khan called for national conference at Kanpur in 1893. A resolution was passed in this momentous conference to narrow the distance between the modern and traditional methods of the Muslims education along with their moral, religious, and educational upliftment and progress. As a result of their sincere efforts a moderate educational institution was founded by Sheikh Muhammad Ali Mongeri in 1898 at Lucknow, the capital of the northern Indian State, and named *Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama*. The main aim of their centre was to impart both Islamic disciplines of learning and the modern subjects. This institution is now standing as a unique symbol of Islamic education in the Indian subcontinent, it acquired good fame and repute among the men of learning in the Muslim world for its distinguished curriculum. Within a short time, *Nadwatul Ulama* made a remarkable progress in achieving its objectives and goals. It succeeded in introducing suitable reforms in the syllabi of Islamic educational institutions with a view to bring it in line with the changing conditions of the modern age. It made great contributions in narrowing the different views of religious scholars and creating an atmosphere of unity and cooperation among them. The brightest period of *Nadwatul Ulama* is the period of Sheikh Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi, whose contributions to Arabic and Islamic Studies were appreciated by the Muslim world and his scholarship was largely accepted. In recognition to his services of Islam and Muslims, Nadwi was selected for the prestigious King Faisal Award in 1980. In brief, *Nadwatul Ulama* has tried to produce broad minded scholars who could effectively discharge the duty of the propagation of Islam in the modern world, in an attractive manner and simple language. ■

-Young Muslim Digest