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The Fragrance of East

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Editor's Note :

ISLAM AT CROSS ROAD

In the last issue of the Fragrance (July 2007) we had made a subtle effort to emphasise that there is no place of intolerance in Islam. Quoting from well known writers and intellectuals it was proved that there is room for difference of opinion but with respect and tolerance. The unity among Muslims is the focal point which needs serious attention. No doubt it can foil the conspiracies of anti-Muslim forces. We revert back to the same issue. The present day crisis in the Islamic world to some extent is the result of fractured society. It is unfortunate that Muslim who has the privilege of having a divine book for guidance, Traditions to explain the intricacies of warnings and assurances given in the holy book is going astray. Canon Taylor in his paper read before the church congress at Washington on October 7, 1887 says that "Islam replaced monkishness by manliness. It gives hope to the slave, brotherhood to mankind and recognition of the fundamental facts of human nature."

Another intellectual H.R.A. Gibb in his book 'Whither Islam,' London 1932 p 379 has made the following observations:

"But Islam has a still further service to render to the cause of humanity. It stands after all nearer to the real East than Europe does, and it possesses a magnificent tradition to inter-racial understanding and cooperation. No other society has such a record of success uniting in an equality of status, of opportunity, and of endeavors so many and so various races of mankind. .. Islam has still the power to reconcile apparently irreconcilable elements of race and tradition. If ever the opposition of the great societies of East and West is to be replaced by cooperation the mediation of Islam is an indispensable condition. In its hands lies very largely the solution of the problem with which Europe is faced is immeasurably enhanced. But if Europe, by rejecting the cooperation of Islam, throws it into the arms of its rivals the issue can only be disastrous for both."

Keeping in view the above observations we find the article of Maulana Syed Mohammad Rabey Hasani Nadwi, appearing in this issue, quite relevant in the present day situation. Mualana has shown the mirror to the community. Tracing back the history of Islam he has in a very simple way exhorted Muslims to eschew shrewdness

and reform themselves as true follower of Holy Quran and Traditions. A true Muslim will be an emblem of truthfulness, loyal to his nation, devoted to his family and society. A religion which forbids even killing a cat by cornering it in a room can never produce militants and terrorists, baying blood of innocent people.

Time has come when we should rise above the pity and selfish issues and first reform ourselves in the light of Quran and Traditions and then come out to spread the message of love and amity through peaceful means. ■ S.A.

TAKE SHARIAT ROUTE TO SEEK TALAQ

All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) Chairman Maulana Rabey Hasani Nadwi called upon the Muslim community to take the Shariat Route to seek talaq and for other related matters. Nadwi laid stress on educating the community so that litigation could be avoided in talaq and maintenance cases.

The Board, at its executive committee meeting in Delhi, discussed last month's Supreme Court judgement which had allowed maintenance to a divorced woman of Aligarh. Committee member and Naib Imam Eidgah Maulana Khalid Rashid Firangi Mahli told Hindustan Times over phone that the committee expressed concern over the recent "anti-Shariat decisions in various courts." Nadwi said instead of seeking revision of court decisions every time in talaq issues, the board should encourage people to approach Darul Qaza (Shariat Court) in such matters.

"We cannot stop the courts from giving anti-Shariat decisions but we could drum up people's support for Darul Qaza in Talaq cases," Khalid Rashid said.

General secretary Nizamuddin, however, mooted a proposal to take up the issue with the Central Government and inform it that the decisions were against the spirit of the Constitution.

The Board expressed concern over the June 5 verdict of the apex court that a divorced Muslim woman could claim maintenance from her husband under Section 125 of Cr PC. The apex court had also reversed the decision of the Allahabad High Court, which said that a Muslim woman could not claim Maintenance under the provisions of the Muslim woman (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986.

"The Shariat doesn't permit maintenance allowance after three months and 13 days of talaq," Rashid said. "Instead of discussing such decisions, the Board has decided to find some way to tackle the problem." Khalid Rashid said and added that "Islah-e-Moashra (reforms in society) that the Board has long been carrying out should be boosted.

"The Board felt an urgent need to give a boost to reforms", Rashid said. "People should go to Darul Qaza to solve their family matters within the ambit of Muslim Personal Law," he said. The Board has also decided to monitor the functioning of Shariat courts all over the country. It has also sought to intervene in the Central Government plan to amend the waqf Act, 1995. The Board would be writing to the Centre on the issue, Rashid said.

(Hindustan Times -15-07-07)

CALAMITY OF LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL CHAUVINISM

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

God has bestowed numerous bounties upon man and one of these is his capacity to learn from his past experience. If he strikes foot in the way, he tries to find out the cause of it; removes the stumbling block from his way or deflects his steps to avoid it. But if he finds his way impassable or littered with similar obstacles, he takes to some other even and straight path. Whenever he commits a mistake or fails in his venture, he tries to analyse and understand the cause of his failure. He tries to avoid the mistake once committed by him so that he may not take a wrong track again and come to grief for the second time. This capacity of man to analyse the cause and the effect, to understand the relationship between the antecedent and the result is undoubtedly a divine blessing bestowed upon him alone. Of a fact, it is this distinctive capacity enjoyed by man which distinguishes him from the cattle and beasts and has been the sole reason for all the progress made by him in arts and sciences, culture and civilization.

It is not that man never makes a mistake. On the contrary, to err is human. Man is prone to stumble in his way: it is a legacy of Adam inherited by him. But more praiseworthy it is to acknowledge one's mistake, repent and feel sorry for it and try to make amends. This is the way to retrieve the loss suffered by a man. Sometimes this erring but conscience-smitten man is so repentant, melted and touched that he attains, in a few seconds, those celestial heights of sublimity which can not be achieved by years of toil and tears. The angels are then envious of him. The progenitor of human race had too made a mistake, but he did not insist on it. He owned his mistake and fell down on his knees to beg for the mercy of the Most Merciful. In no time Adam rose to that lofty spiritual height of Divine propinquity which he had not enjoyed before committing that previous error. He cried to his Lord thus:

“Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If Thou forgive us not and have not mercy on us, surely we are of the lost!”

And what did Adam achieve by his repentance? Quran itself bears an elo-

quent testimony to his marvelous achievement.

“And Adam disobeyed his Lord, so went astray. Then his Lord chose him, and relented toward him, and guided him.”²

But, unlike Adam, Satan insisted on his disobedience and tried to justify his action thus:

“(Iblis) said : I am better than him. Thou createdst me of fire while him Thou didst create of mud.”

Mistakes or Blessings

The cultural advancement made by man as also the headway in many other fields of human activity owe their origin no less to the blunders committed by him than to the endeavours guided by his correct decisions. It would, of a fact, be no exaggeration to claim that certain epoch-making achievements were made possible only through mistakes. The history of mankind on this planet lists many such incidents; or, to say it conversely, it is as much a record of man's errors as of his faultless decisions and right actions. You can cite many such examples from the recorded history, which corroborates his assertion. Prophet Moses and the Children of Israel safely crossed over to the Sinai and Pharaoh was drowned with his legions in the Red Sea, because Moses had lost his way in the dark night. The American continent was discovered by Columbus as a result of his mistake in taking to a wrong seaway, since what he really wanted was to discover a navigable route to India.

Denial of One's Mistakes

It does not behove a sensible and prudent man to shut his eyes from the mistake once committed or not to analyse the causes of his failure. Only a fool would repeatedly commit the same blunder or be stung by the same reptile more than once. And it does not surely befit a believer who has been endowed with Divine guidance and wisdom and is called upon to make the most of his intellect and experience. Taking no lesson from the past experiences and happenings is, as the Quran says, a characteristic of the hypocrites. It is really they who never profit by their experience and are tested day in day out.

“See they not that they are tested once or twice in every year? Still they turn not in repentance, neither pay they heed.”

Placing reliance in the prudence of the believer, the Prophet once said.” A believer is never stung twice by the same reptile.”

Linguistic and Cultural Ignorance

It was only a few days back when in a country with a Muslim majority, having innumerable mosques and monasteries and famous for the abode of numer-

ous religious teachers and *sufi* saints, a storm of linguistic and cultural prejudices blew up with a tempestuous rage and swept away the centuries long endeavors of all the saints and men of God. One Muslim killed another Muslim without the least compunction. Human beings were put to death in a way as if they were snakes and scorpions. No mercy, no compassion was shown to them. There was no refuge for those who had once fled to that land to save their lives. Without a heart melted with compassion, without an eye on the edge of tears, man went hunting after man as one casts one's net for the fishes or goes hunting in pursuit of wild game. Neither the chastity of women was respected nor the weak and the old were spared nor yet innocent children were shown any compassion. Every torture, every suffering, be it hunger or thirst or a fiery ordeal, was inflicted by one brother on the other. The idol of language prevailed upon the faith in the Unity of God and brotherhood of man; national and racial zealotry smashed the brotherhood of Islam and the Ignorance of the pagan past overcame the unifying bonds of the Muslim faith so completely as it never had in any land and in any age since the advent of Islam. The Musalman had never been degraded by another Musalman in the way he was in this land not in the distant past.

Linguistic and Cultural Differences

Man has had numerous languages and cultures, rites and customs since the day he made his debut on this planet. These variations in languages and modes of living have helped man to evolve new patterns of culture and enrich and beautify his life; and, indeed, as the Quran reminds us, these are all Divine blessings conferred on mankind by the grace of the Lord.

“O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct.” And, again.

“And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the differences of your languages and colours. Lo! herein indeed are portents for the men of knowledge.”

The history of mankind is replete with tragic fights and forays, despicable incidents and happenings but we do not know of any war fought merely for language and culture. The Arabs were renowned for their graceful language as well as their linguistic prejudice; they had nicknamed all other people as the *ajmees* or the dumb, but history does not list a single war fought by them for the sake of their language. Islam denounced such predilections as unlawful and prohibited and nicknamed these as zealotry of ignorance. Islam denigrated and discredited this passion,

equated it with the remnants of the paganish ignorance, derogated it as the trappy snares of idol worship and denial of God, spoke of its votaries as adversaries of God and His Apostle, and declared that all those who fight for it and die for it shall go the way of apostates and non-believers. But we do not find even the ignorance fighting to uphold its ruling passion, its prejudice for linguistic superiority.

It is, in fact, the aggressive nationalism of Europe which has endued language and culture with a reverential regard. It has made it a deity on whose altar human blood is spilt and man is sacrificed. It has encouraged the nations to revive their olden cultures, resuscitate the defunct languages and even fight for their sake. This is the new paganism of the modern times, which has given rise to a new type of crusade so long unknown to the world. Europe propagated its ideology with due thought and rare foresight and gradually it caught the imagination of the Muslim peoples who were true believers and who despised all traces of the pagan past. It was expected that because of the guidance provided to them by Islam they would not fall a prey to the linguistic prejudices like other peoples. Verily, they ought to have known that his animus had neither the sanction of God nor worth a mustard seed in His eyes.

But, suddenly, this new menace made its appearance in the world of Islam. Like a volcano it burst out in the heart of a Muslim country bringing death and destruction in its train. To be sure, this did not aim at propitiation of God nor suppressing any evil or falsehood or the sneaking whispers of Satan: its objective was not to establish peace and amity or to spread the gospel of compassion and brotherhood. It all happened because great majority of this land had lent an ear to the artful dodgers of the West and their camp followers and was thus put on a false scent.

Irreparable Loss to Islam

Extremely lamentable is though this splitting of the Muslim blood, death and destruction, its most shameful aspect has been to arm the enemies of Islam with one more weapon against it. The conclusion drawn by them is that Islam is incapable of uniting different peoples with racial, cultural and linguistic differences, and that, as an ideology, it is not suited to provide a rallying force for the reconstruction of a society and the establishment of a State. These adversaries of Islam cite this incident as a proof of the inherent weakness of Islam to sustain and preserve the political entity of a people organised on its basis. This is the greatest harm done to Islam by this cultural and linguistic chauvinism. You are living here in one of the business centres of India and therefore you would be fully aware that the rise or fall in prices, temporary set back in the business and trade or a paltry loss or profit is never as

important as the loss of goodwill suffered by any commercial firm. The goodwill of a firm is the sign and symbol of the established popularity of its business; it is often regarded as one of its valuable assets, and has a marketable money value. It is even purchased and sold for lakhs of rupees depending on the popularity of the firm's trade. The incident to which I have referred just now has befallen as a great loss to Islam and created formidable difficulties for its savants and preachers who have been presenting their faith as a great unifying force. It has, be the same token, rendered doubtful the entire historical achievement of Islam. Now, who can assert the all-leveling characteristic of Islam, which had once effaced all distinctions between the whites and the blacks, between the Asiatics and the Africans, between the kings and the beggars and between the masters and the slaves? Of a fact, the historicity of Islam's past achievement is beyond a shadow of doubt: the world has always marveled at its accomplishment; but, how are we now to tell the world that sentiments of fellow-feeling and brotherhood produced by Islam transcend the differences of race, colour and language and unity the believers into one, inseparable spiritual community? This is the loss for which we have no words to express our grief: even the tears of blood would not suffice to lament the calamity that has befallen Islam.

The Illness and its Causes

Let us assume that whatever happened was a game of politics. A few political parties bent upon creating dissension and discord succeeded in misleading a simple-minded people. But the very fact that the entire nation could be duped so easily, that it was thrown off the scent so completely as to lose all discrimination between faith and apostasy. Islam and ignorance and harmony and discord was surely neither fortuitous nor owing to the witlessness of the whole people nor yet was it due to the artful duplicity and cleverness of its leaders. No political movement can succeed in any country unless the people are ready to accept the ideology preached by the leaders of that movement and it gets a whole-hearted support from the masses. Had the nation not been in a frame of mind to accept and own that ideology, this tempest of fire and fury would have passed over their heads without carrying everything before it as by a torrent. Howsoever breath-taking the tremor of excitement may be, it is never durable. But the deep-seated disquiet, its wide-spread nature and durability shows that the nation Islamic solidarity was surely not fully developed and it lacked the desired standard of instruction in Islamic beliefs and practices otherwise it would not have fallen on evil days so easily.

Lack of Religious Sense

To me the greatest cause of this mishap was the lack of correct religious sense. It is not enough that one should have a heart-felt love for Islam: one should also have a developed sense of looking at things from the Islamic view-point. A man should have not only emotional attachment to Islam: he should also hate all un-Islamic philosophies, thoughts and ideals. As a matter of fact, the Quran expresses at numerous places its hatred for the devil and the standard-bearers of falsehood and ignorance before giving a call to pin one's faith in God. It says:

"And he who rejecteth false deities and believeth in Allah had grasped a firm handhold which will never break."

Even the Muslim's affirmation of faith, the Kalama, begins with the denial of gods and goddesses. It first says that "there is no god" and then affirms the overlord-ship of the Lord with the words "except God" The Traditions of the prophet tell us that the faith of a believer is not perfected nor its true sense and meaning dawns on him until he learns to abhor apostasy and all its manifestations. A Tradition of the Holy Prophet related in Bukhari runs as follows:

"Whoever has these three qualities shall be informed with the beatitude of true faith. First, God and His Apostle are dearer to him than everything else; secondly, he loves a man only for the sake of God; and, thirdly, he shudders at the very idea of going back to apostasy after having been saved by God, as one fears being consigned to fire."

Awareness of ignorance

A Muslim should so much abhor acting against the interest of Islam or joining hands with its enemies that he should seek the forgiveness of God at the very mention of such a suggestion. He should never even dream of such a possibility. He should not only be sentimentally averse to ignorance but should also be fully conscious of its deceitful manifestations so that he may never be taken-in by its artifices. A Muslim should never allow himself to be duped by the pious fraud of ignorance even if it appears dressed in the covering of Kaaba and with the Quran in its hand. He should always seek refuge from God against it and should be able to make it out in whatever shape or form it is presented before him.

The Ruses of Satan

The tactics, or, better still, the strategy of Satan in fighting the Muslims is that he always attacks wherever he finds a weaker and vulnerable flank of the latter. He does not take recourse to the same device against every individual or every section of the Muslims. His sneaking whisper to the pious and elect in faith is never an allurement to indulge in pleasures of the flesh for he has no hope of success in

such an endeavour. He tries to mislead them by the spectacle of fame and glory, self-conceit and jealousy, self-rule and love for power and pelf. He tells them to strive for self-government, advancement of their culture and language and supremacy of their nation at all risks. These are some of the high-sounding objectives, which have often led astray even the learned and erudite as well as those strong in faith and spirit.

Indiscretion of the Arabs

And this was the song of Sirens sung by Satan to lure the Arabs. They were told that the Quran was revealed in their language, the last Apostle of God was sent to them, the House of God and the resting place of the Prophet were in their land and that no people could lay a greater claim to understand the teachings and tenets of Islam than they. It was, therefore, not at all fair that the world of Islam should look forward to Constantinople as its political centre, and, that a Turk, neither of Arab descent nor speaking the language of the Quran, should preside over the destiny of the Arabs. The argument was quite appealing to many of them who had been dreaming since long for an Arab Empire, for self-rule, for sharing the laurels of self-government; and, since they were also dissatisfied with the haughty behaviour of the Turks, they raised the banner of revolt against them. They became a tool in the hands of British imperialists. Sharif of Mecca sided with the Allies, the enemies of the Turks, in the metropolis of Islam and so did the Arabs of Iraq and Syria. The nefarious plans of the imperialist powers materialised, the Turks were defeated, the Uthmani Caliphate came to an end, and the solidarity of the Islamic world was torn to pieces. But this was not the end of it. With the downfall of the Caliphate the bulwark of Islam was also demolished. The European powers had now nothing to fear; no power to reckon with; and they got a free hand in the lands of Islam. A national home for the Jews was conceived, the State of Israel was carved out and strengthened and, finally, the Arabs were made to part with Bait-ul-Muqaddas, the Dome of Rock also. All this was the result of attachment to the pagan ideologies which had so powerfully captured the heart and soul of the Arabs.

Partisanship; Zealotry of Ignorance

Every student of the Quran and the Traditions of the holy Prophet of Islam knows that the blind partisanship of any faction merely for the sake of race, blood, colour, language or culture is a tradition of the pagan past repeatedly denounced and denigrated by the sacred scripture and the precept of the Prophet. The Writ of God declares in no uncertain words:

“When those who disbelieve had set up in their hearts zealotry, the zealotry

of the Age of ignorance.....

Similarly, a Tradition of the Prophet reads:

“He is not of the Muslims who gives a call for partisanship; he is not of the Muslims who fights, for partisanship; and he is not of the Muslims who dies for the sake of partisanship.”

Once a Mahajir and an Ansari had a scuffle and both of them cried for help to their people. The Mahajir gave the call of Ya lal-Mahajirin while the Ansar appealed with the slogan of Ya lal-Ansar. When the matter was reported to the Prophet, he admonished both of them and said, “Give up these battle-cries for they are filthy, odious.” The Prophet so hated the zealotry of the days of ignorance that he always discouraged those who raised this slogan or gave a call to the people to rally in its name. The Prophet never called names or used a harsh word even against his bitterest foe but he permitted to reprove the pagan zealotry as severely as possible without the least courtesy or consideration or taking resort to a figurative language.

Confusion of Tongues

The differences in the languages spoken by the human beings are but natural and, in fact, a blessing. The Quran calls these variations a Divine favour and a sign of the Lord’s craftsmanship.

“And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the differences of your languages and colours. Lo! herein indeed are portents for men of knowledge.”

But when the languages are extolled and magnified, they are consecrated and raised to the pedestal of divinity, they become a curse rather than a blessing: a vehicle of destruction instead of a means of good-will and amity. Then human beings are jettisoned at its altar like the living sacrifices offered to the deities. Languages are meant to unite rather than to divide; they are to communicate and not to separate; bring the people together, make them share each other’s cares and worries and act as befrienders and ministrants. But if their purpose were to drive a wedge between the people, create animosity and engender malice, spite and rancour, it would be better that man was born without a tongue and remained dumb for ever. There would indeed be less cruelty, less bloodshed, less torture, less anguish and pain if all the men were made to speak by sings and gestures. This would at least save the innocent women and children from unspeakable horrors and the whole lands from going to rack and ruin.

Man is Invaluable

Man has not been made for the language: the language has been made for man. The life of one man is in very truth much more valuable than the entire treasure of a language and literature, the whole collection of prose and poetry, all the elegant and ornate writings, all the coup de plume. Languages come into existence, expand, change and wither away but man has ever remained the same and shall always remain so.

Consciousness of Islam

There can be no denying the fact that our endeavours have not been directed as much to the development of Islamic consciousness as to the inculcation of religious sense and observance of religious duties. We find, in result, a disproportion between the general awareness of the overall objectives of Islam and the observance of its religious duties in most of the Muslim lands. You can find a man over-scrupulous in performing the prayers and pure in soul but he could at the same time have an undeveloped and childish sense of Islamic consciousness. He would meticulously follow the tenets and the dogmas but would be unaware of its fundamental postulates. He can commit a mistake unbecoming of any well-informed Muslim. He might even be completely blind to the difference between Islam and ignorance, and can easily become a victim of deception by any clever imposter. He can be made a tool for the destruction of Islam. And he might do all this in good faith, without felling the least contradiction between his action and his history and, perhaps, the recent events furnish the most appropriate example of it. Of all the Muslims of this subcontinent these people had always been known for their sincere faith, religious enthusiasm, warmth of heart and the loving regard for their religion: they always used to assemble in tens of thousands in the religious discourses and concourses; but, alas, they have fallen a prey to the manipulations of tricky politicians. These simple-minded Muslims were either lured to become a party in this tragic drama of blood and fire or they could not stand up resolutely with courage to face the zealotry of ignorance as they ought to have done by virtue of their being Muslims and members of a self-conscious Millat.

The Companions of the Prophet

But the matter was quite different with the Companions of the prophet. The training imparted to them by the Prophet was so perfect and complete and embracing the entire gamut of human behaviour that we search in vain the pages of history for similar specimens of sagacity and foresightedness. The prophetic guidance had produced a discernment in them, which could always distinguish between right and wrong, justice and injustice and Islam and ignorance. The inner recesses of their

head and heart had been so conditioned that nothing crooked or unjust could gain their acceptance.

Now I would present before you a manifest example of the Companions' sharpness of mind. You are aware of the Companions' affection and regard for the Prophet of Islam. Short of idolising a human being, which cuts across the concept of the Unity of Godhead, their attachment to the Prophet was second to none in the world. A Persian poet has aptly expressed their feeling of esteemed admiration for the Prophet in this verse:

"To cut short, most respected thou art after God."

The Companions also knew that the Prophet never uttered a word of his own accord: whatever he said was inspired by the higher sources of revelation. They had unflinching faith in the Divine writ, which proclaimed:

"Nor doth he speak of (his own desire). It is naught save an inspiration that is inspired."

Now, keep this adoring reverence of the Companions for the Prophet in your view you would understand better the incident I am going to tell you. Once the Holy Messenger of God said to his Companions, "Help your brother, whether he be oppressor or an oppressed one". The devotion of the Companions for their beloved mentor demanded that they should blindly accept what he had enjoined and act on his behest. The command was clear enough and left nothing to be elucidated further for those who fully understood the language in which the command was given. But the training imparted to them and the prophetic guidance they had earlier, the way they had been groomed to oppose oppression and the Prophet's earlier discourses against tyranny showed them at once the discordant note between the two utterances. They could not keep quiet and politely asked the Prophet, "O Prophet of God, the oppressed is to be helped no doubt, but how can one help the oppressor?" The Prophet neither admonished them nor showed his displeasure. Instead, he was pleased to explain further what he had said earlier." yes ", said he. "You can help the oppressor too by restraining him from the act of oppression." This elucidation made everything clear to his Companions.

Disobedience to God not Permissible

Here is another example of the same enlightened Islamic consciousness. The Prophet dispatched an expedition under the leadership of one of his Companions, Abdullah Ibn Mazafah. He instructed the troops to implicitly obey the orders of their leader. There was some delay in carrying out his orders by his comrades. He got enraged and ordered them to collect firewood. When these had been collected

he set them on fire and asked his followers to jump into it. They refused. "Did not the Prophet ask you," demanded Abdullah, "to obey my orders?" "Of course." They replied. "But he did not mean this. We embraced Islam to save ourselves from fire, then why should we get into it again?" When they returned to Madina, the matter was reported by the leader of the expedition to the Holy Prophet. The Prophet not only commended the decision of the comrades of Abdullah but also said, "Had they gone into that fire they would have never come out of it." The Prophet further said. "Obedience is permissible only in virtuous acts." This was the maxim, which has ever helped the Muslims to keep to the straight path of virtue and goodness in every age. It has held them back from yielding dutifully to the call of autocratic kings and rulers, as well as misguided leaders. The guiding principle for them, as expounded by the holy Prophet, was that: "No obedience to any creature involving disobedience of God is permissible." On many a critical occasion Muslims were able to maintain their balance of mind and steer their course safely without getting themselves embroiled in the emotional turmoils whipped up by the zealotry of ignorance. They produced innumerable reformers and savants of redoubtable courage who refused to swim with the emotional current of the time. They refused to be driven in the common groove and rejected the popular motto, which always exhorts people to keep in step with the order of the day. The story of their indomitable courage, which began, with the martyrdom of Karbala can still be seen continuing in one form or the other. It was all, in truth, owing to the golden principle of no defiance to their Creator and Lord, come what may.

The Fatal Wound

The wound is fatal, no doubt; but there is not an ailment, which has no cure. Only wisdom and determination are required to get along. If you want to regain the treasure you have lost, to bring back the prodigal son or to find out the lost sheep then you would have to work for it. If poison can be injected by word of mouth, its antidote too can be provided by you. This is, in fact, easier to do for the languages have been created by God for bringing the people closer to each other. A Persian poet has expressed the same idea in a short and sweet verse, which says:

"Thou hast come to unite;
And not to divide."

The Greatest Danger

Verily, it is fraught with danger to keep any language deprived of the Islamic thought and spirit, phraseology and the stock of words connected with the faith. Languages are closely in touch with the inner recesses of the heart and mind. If the

language of any people is stamped with unIslamic ideas; its way of thinking and mode of expression, its idioms and rhetoric's, its similes and metaphors are derived from a pagan tradition and world-view; it looks up to the pagan characters, poets and writers as its ideal personages worthy to be emulated: and it harbours a feeling of estrangement with the Islamic atmosphere, Muslim heroes and their thought; then, be careful, that nation is always susceptible to falling into the pitfall of intellectual and cultural apostasy, Its pagan impulses can always be aroused to addle its wits. Any slogan of racial or linguistic jingoism is enough to take leave of its senses. We have seen how it happened a few days back. Now it is your duty to plug the source of this evil. You must not only learn these languages but also feed their literatures with Islamic works and compositions in full measure, Islamise them in spirit and content, and infuse Islamic temper and outlook into them. You ought to rid them of that intellectual inferiority which is taking them away from Islam and pushing them closer to pagan modes of thought. You have to create that sense which can discriminate between Islam and Ignorance and instill into their hearts such a love of Islam and abhorrence of un-Islam that no zealotry of the pagan past, no paganish jingoism, no call to muster their forces for race or language, country or nation can drive a wedge between them and Islam in future.

Dawn of a new Era

If God enables you to accomplish this task then our past mistakes and the tragic losses we have suffered can usher us in the threshold of a greater and ennobling achievement. These brothers in Islam constitute an invaluable part of the Millat who have produced hundreds of pious saints and savants and they still carry in their hearts the flame of Islam. They are the people whose forefathers had accomplished such feats of valour under the flag of Hazrat Syed Ahmad Shaheed in the thirteenth century of Islamic era that one of the most inveterate critics of Islam like Dr. Hunter had to pay glowing compliments to their bravery and religious enthusiasm. If you can rise to the occasion, a new era of Islamic regeneration would undoubtedly dawn upon this unfortunate land.

“And in that day believers will rejoice in Allah’s help to victory. He helpeth to victory whom He will. He is the Mighty, the Merciful.” ■

CALIPH OMAR - EARLY LIFE AND TRAINING

Shibli Numani

The pedigree of Omar may be thus traced: 'Omar the son of Khattab, the son of Nufail, the son of 'Abd-ul-'Uzza, the son of Ribah the son of 'Abdullah, the son of Qurat, the son of Zurah, the son of 'Adl, the son of Ka' b the son of Luwayy, the son of Fihir, the son of Malik.

The people of Arabia are mostly the descendants of 'Adnan or of Qahtan, and the descent of the former may be traced to Isma'il. Removed to the eleventh degree from 'Adnan, Fihir, the son of Malik, was a personage of great influence and power, and the famous tribe of Quraish are his descendants. Ten individuals acquired great eminence among the Quraish on account of their strong capabilities and were the founders of a like number of separate clans, which were named after them. These were Hashim, Ummyyah, Naufal, 'Abdul-Dar, Asad, Taim, Makhzum, 'Adi, Jamah and Samah. 'Omar is descendant of Adi in the direct line. 'Adi had a brother named Marrah who is an ancestor of the Prophet. It may thus be seen that the respective lines of descent of 'Omar and the Prophet converge towards the eighth degree.

The Quraish were the keepers of the Ka 'bah and thus in addition to worldly grandeur and glory the halo of ecclesiastical superiority also encircled them. Their extensive relations and vast transactions resulted in growth of several departments of their business and the functions appertaining to each department were separately carried out. These functions consisted in the supervision of the Ka 'bah, the protection of pilgrims, the conduct of diplomacy, the nomination of patriarchs, the administration of justice, the convening of the Council of Elders etc. Omar's ancestor 'Adi was the head of the diplomatic department; that it, whenever the Quraish had to negotiate with any other clan on a political question be used to represent the interests of his tribe in the capacity of an ambassador. He was also appointed arbitrator in the contests of the Munafirah. It was a custom in Arabia to depute some fit and competent person to adjudicate between two contending chieftains of equal status who laid their

respective claims for priority over each other before him. These feuds were sometimes prolonged for months together. It was essential that arbitrators nominated to settle disputes should be men who, besides possessing tact and judgement, were powerful and eloquent speakers. Both these officers had become hereditary among the descendants of 'Adi.

OMAR'S GRANDFATHER

Naufil b. 'Abd-ul-'Uza, the grandfather of 'Omar, maintained the ancestral tradition in performing these duties with the utmost ability. Hence it was that the enviable task of pronouncing judgements in suits of litigants of the highest rank devolved upon him. When a feud arose between 'Abdul-Muttalib, the grandfather of the Prophet and Harab b. 'Umayyah over the leadership of the tribe both accepted Nufail as their arbitrator who pronounced his decision in favour of 'Abdul-Muttalib and addressed Harab in the following words:

"Why do you pick quarrel with a person who is taller than you in stature; more imposing than you in appearance, more refined than you in intellect, whose progeny outnumbers yours and whose generosity outshines yours in lustre? Do not, however, construe this into any disparagement of your good qualities, which I highly appreciate. You are as gentle as lamb, you are renowned throughout Arabia for the stentorian tones of your voice and you are hardy chip of the old block of-your tribe."

ZAID, COUSIN OF 'OMAR

Naufil had two sons: 'Amr and Khattab. 'Amr did not rise above the ordinary level of his age but his son Zaid, who was Naufil's grandson and Omar's cousin, was a man of parts and towered high above his countrymen in nobility of mind. He was a member of that distinguished band of men who, even before the advent of the Prophet, had given up idolatry out of their own conviction, and become unitarians. The names of others who belonged to this group beside Zaid, are Qis b. S'adah and Waraah L. Naufal.

Zaid openly anathematized idolatry and heaped reproaches on the customs then in vogue among his people to their very face. Moreover, he induced his countrymen to accept the faith of Abraham. These things turned the people against him and the most energetic and unrelenting of his enemies was Khattab, the father of 'Omar Khattab gave him so much trouble that at last he was compelled to escape from Makkah and take up his abode in the mountain cave Hira. Occasionally, however, he paid clandestine visits to the Ka 'bah from his solitary retreat. Poems

of Zaid are extent to the present day and throw light on the purity of his soul and conscientious search after Truth. The following two couplets are by him:

Shall I a single deity adore
Or sink in awe, a thousand gods, before?
The idols Lat and 'Uzza I ignore
A wise and cautious man can do no more.

OMAR'S FATHER KHATTAB

Khattab, the father of 'Omar, was among the prominent members of the Quraish tribe. The clans of 'Adi and Banu 'Abdul-Shams had, for many generations, been opposed to each other and the latter invariably had the better of the feud owing to its superior numbers. The entire clan of 'Adi, including Khattab, was forced as a last resort to seek refuge with the friendly Banu Sahm. When their opponents still threatened them with an attack, Khattab composed the following verses:

What! shall the vaunting Abu 'Amr
E'en now dare threaten me?
When other men of mettle true-
The pride of chivalry-
Espouse our cause. In halls of Sahm
A band of warriors sit,
Whose hospitable portals aye,
The refugees admit.

In his *History of Makkah*, the learned Al-Marzaqi gives the whole of this poem, which consists of eight couplets. The entire clan of 'Adi was residing at Safa Makkah, but on entering into relations with the Banu Sahm, they sold their dwelling to the latter. Khattab, however, still retained several houses in Safa of which one was ultimately inherited by 'Omar. This house was situated midway between Safa and Marwah. During his Caliphate, 'Omar had it dismantled and turned into a camping ground for pilgrims, but certain shops belonging to it were long retained by his descendants.

Khattab contracted several marriages with women of noble families and Omar's mother Khantamah was the daughter of Hisham b. al-Mughirah who was a personage of such a high rank that, when the Quraish declared war against any other clan, he was invariably trusted with the duty of marshalling the troops and leading them to battle. For this reason he was called the Sahib-ul-A' innah (Marsha). The

redoubtable Khalid was the grandson of the self-same Mughirah'. Mughirah's son Hisham, the maternal grandfather of 'Omar, was also a prominent person.

BIRTH OF 'OMAR

According to an authentic tradition, 'Omar was born forty years before the migration of the Prophet. The account of his birth and early age is not known. Hafiz b. 'Asakir in History of Damascus ascribes a tradition to 'Amr b. 'As, who relates that as he was enjoying the society of a few friends at a festival gathering they suddenly heard a noise and on inquiry it was ascertained that a son had been born to Khattab. It may be inferred from this that Omar's birth was the occasion of unprecedented rejoicings. We are in the dark as to the particulars of Omar's adolescence, which is not strange, for how could anybody foresee that the young man was one day to become 'Omar the "Great". However, after much investigation and research we have been able to glean something on the subject which we given below.

When 'Omar attained majority, his father Khattab set him to the task of grazing camels. This occupation bore no stigma in Arabia; on the contrary, it was the favourite national calling. But Khattab was unrelenting in his treatment of 'Omar. All day long he made his son graze camels and if the poor lad wanted to take a little rest, when tired, he was mercilessly belaboured by Khattab. The desert pain which formed the scene of the irksome labours of 'Omar is called Dajnan and is, situated at a distance of about ten miles from Qudaid near Makkah. In after days, when he was caliph, 'Omar once happened to pass this way. He was greatly moved and in a voice husky with emotions he said, "Gracious Heavens! There was a time when I used to roam about this desert as a camel herd, wearing a felt jacket, and whenever I sat down tired, my father would beat me. Now there is a time when I acknowledge none save Allah as my superior."

As a young man 'Omar betook himself to those noble pursuit the cultivation of which was generally in vogue among the patrician orders of Arabia. The arts in which instruction were given in Arabia at this period, and which were regarded as the indispensable appurtenance of the nobility, were genealogy', soldiering, athletic exercises and public speaking-matchless skill in tracing genealogical tables was the hereditary gift of the house of 'Omar Jahiz in his book, *Al-Bayan wal-Tabyin*, has dwelt at much length on the genealogical attainments of 'Omar, his father Khattab and his grandfather Nufal. This may presumably be attributed to the fact that, as

already pointed out by us, the dual office of undertaking embassies and pronouncing judgements in cases of *Munafirah* had become hereditary in the house of Umar, and in order that the holder of these offices should perform in befitting manner the duties connected therewith, it was absolutely necessary for him to be well versed in tracing the various ancestral lines. 'Omar acquired skill in tracing genealogy from his father and Jahiz writes to say that whenever 'Omar had occasion to trace the descent of any particular family he invariably quoted his father as an authority.

As an athlete, and a wrestler, 'Omar also bore the palm, and in the arena of 'Ukaz he used to enter into wrestling matches which redounded to his credit. 'Ukaz was in the vicinity of the 'Arafat hills where an annual fair was held so that the votaries of different arts might gather from all parts of Arabia and display their respective feats. Only those persons, therefore, could be admitted into the lists who claimed perfection in any art. Nabighah Zubyani, Hassan b Thabit, Qis b. S'adah and Khansa whose poetic genius and eloquence were unanimously acknowledge throughout Arabia, had been brought up in this very seminary. The learned Baladhuri, in his book *Kitab-ul-Ashraf*, narrates an authenticated tradition to the effect that Omar was accustomed to go to the arena of 'Ukaz for wrestling. This justifies the inference that 'Omar had attained perfection in the art of wrestling. His claim to equestrian skill is also well established Jahiz writes that 'Omar used literally to jump on to his horse's back and his seat was so firm that he appeared to be part and parcel of the horse he rode.

No direct evidence is forthcoming with regard to Omar's capacity as a public speaker, but all historians agree that, prior to his conversion to Islam, the Quraish had invested him with the ambassadorial office, and only that person could be so invested who possessed exception qualifications as an orator and who was also gifted with an uncommon degree of tact and judgement.

In the second part of this book we have expatiated on Omar's excellent taste for poetry which made his brain a repository of the choicest verses of all the famous poets. This points to the inference that he must have cultivated this taste in the lyceum of 'Ukaz, for, after embracing Islam, he was so much engrossed in religious matters that such pursuits had no more charms for him.

In the meantime 'Omar had learnt the art of reading and writing and this was a qualification which very few possessed in that age. The learned Baladhuri writes on positive authority that at the time of the advent of the Prophet there were only

seventeen persons in the whole clan of Quraish who could read and write, and 'Omar, the son of Khattab, was one of them.

After attaining perfection in the arts above mentioned, 'Omar betook upon himself to earn a livelihood. Trade afforded readiest means of meeting this end in Arabia at the period. He therefore, devoted his time and energies to this pursuit and to it may be attributed his great advancement. He travelled to distant lands with the object of trade and paid visits to distinguished and eminent personages. The virtues of self-respect, broad-mindedness, experience and tact which he had acquired even before his conversion to Islam, may, all of them, be attributed to these journeys. The accounts of his journey's must have been of absorbing interest and vital importance but it is a matter for regret that no historian showed sufficient curiosity to make these the subject of his researches. Then learned Mas'udi in his famous book. *Murji-udh-Dhahab*, makes only the following allusion:

“There are many incidents connected with the journeys to Persia and Syria undertaken by 'Omar, the son of Khattab, in pre-Islamic days during the course of which he paid visits to several Arabian and Persian princes. These incidents, I have narrated at full length in my books entitled *Akhbar-ul-Zaman* and *Kitab-ul-Ausat*.”

The books to which the learned author makes reference here were priceless gems in the treasure of history but the latter day Islamic peoples have long since lost them altogether. With a view to tracing this aspect of Omar's life we searched all the libraries at Constantinople but in vain. We have gone through certain volumes of *History of Damascus* written by the famous traditionist Ibn 'Asakir. He relates some events regarding the travels of 'Omar but no vein of interest runs through this book.

Thus it was that laurels won by 'Omar at 'Ukaz and the experience gained by him in the course of his trade travels brought him to the notice of the people of Arabia and, as time went on, his ability and skill advanced him more and more in the eyes of his countrymen till at last the Quraish invested him with the exalted office of their ambassador. On all critical occasions in their dealings with other clans, the person selected by the Quraish to bring the matter to a successful diplomatic issue was 'Omar. ■

WESTERN PROPAGANDA AGAINST ISLAM AND OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi

Efforts made to draw the attention of Muslims towards their religion, culture, civilization and to remind them of their radiant past resulted in all-round awakening since the middle of the last century. Its effects were felt to great extent. It began to augur well that somebody said the next century would be the century of Islam. Accordingly when new century of Islamic calendar commenced, a hue and cry was raised that this century is the century of Islam and Muslims would lead the world sooner or latter.

LO! There is a great national awakening in such and such places; hosts of people embraced Islam. Somewhere Islamic movements have gained momentum. Some body said 21th century is coming. It will be the era of elevation and rise of Islam.

Europe is going to be smashed. Now Muslims will take the leadership of the world. Some one looked at Turkey, some to Pakistan, some to Egypt, Libya, Saudi Arabia, and Iran. To visualize such a situation was not wrong as outward impressions and conditions appeared so. Some Islamic governments created a lot of expectations and hopes in their respective countries.

Islamic press raised voice in this regard and Islamic movements got activated. But unfortunately amongst Muslims tendency developed to earn name and fame instead of striving hard to spread their mission. It has been the second nature of Muslims to propagate the work rather than accomplishing it. They warn their enemies much before taking them on and inform them about their plans and mode of strategy. No doubt, it is a major shortcoming of Muslims.

But naturally a man publicizes his virtues and success, also expresses his

grief and woes. But leaders of the community can control this psyche and urge for fame and divert it to those conditions of Muslims in which they taught the world morality and humanity and extricated nations and generations from beastly life into human life. They took out oppressed ones from their atrocious condition. They bestowed upon slaves friendly and equal footing by extricating them from their pitiable condition. They provided women their rights and restored their dignity. They saved girls of their living burial. What to speak of human beings, lesson of good treatment with all living beings were imparted.

Lessons of equality were demonstrated in such a way that people were astonished and accepted virtues of this religion. Accordingly they flocked into Islam in a crowd.

Ponder over it, where such instances are found that Muslim youths conquered a territory. The inhabitants complained to the Caliph and asked that Muslims should not have attacked suddenly. First they could have extended their invitation to accept their creed. If opponents would not have dishonoured their invitation then they could have attacked. But Muslim army did not do so. It appealed to the caliph who ordered Muslim armies to withdraw from the occupied land and return. Caliph advised Muslims to invite their enemies towards Islam with sagacity and shrewdness and settle the issue amicably. Muslims quit the occupied country and obeyed the instructions. With the result that the whole country was so much impressed that they embraced Islam with pleasure.

Ponder over it, who taught that you have reward in treating well with every living being and gave glad tidings of heaven for offering water to a thirsty dog and gave the news of chastisement in the life Hereafter for killing a cat after cornering it in a room.

Ponder over it, where it is found that at the time of agonies of death advice is given to worship Allah and treat slaves well.

Ponder over it, where it is found that son of a Muslim Ruler of Egypt lashed an Egyptian due to lagging behind in a horse race. The Egyptian complained to

Caliph. The son of the king with his parents were summoned and Egyptian was asked to lash them. He said to the Ruler you have made human beings slaves while Almighty Allah has created them free. Ponder over it, that this event is of that time when slaves and prisoners were burnt for enjoyment of the guests in the developed countries of world and in the cradles of civilization and culture.

Where we can find such sort of example that Prophet Muhammad made the son of his ex-slave commander of a Muslim expedition. Prophet Muhammad passed away before the army set out. Prophet's successor Caliph Hazrat Abu Bakr was advised by some people that since a good number of Tribal Chiefs of Arab would participate in the expedition a senior person be asked to lead it instead of this youngman. The Caliph said the Prophet's wish would be honoured. This young man should lead the expedition. Accordingly it was accepted by all and nobody raised any objection.

Islamic history is replete with such hundreds and thousands incidents. But it is unfortunate that we are not aware of these occurrences. Its is imperative that we should mention such incidents before non-Muslims also so that they may comprehend that Muslims are not cruel as they think of them.

If any Muslim commits theft, it does not mean that Islam permits stealing. If any Muslim oppresses someone, it does not mean that Muslims have been allowed to commit atrocity.

Strangly both print and electronic media present Islam in a distorted form. That is why the opponents of Islam only know that Muslims always quarrel with each other. They are involved in unholy activities and in violating the law. They are not good citizens. They are untrustworthy and disloyal.

Today whole Islamic world is confronted with various trials, oppressions and atrocities. Muslims are being crushed every where. Whether it be Europe, Asia or America everywhere Muslims have to face scores of difficulties. Under these circumstances we must come forward to combat these menaces. For this we first amend our nature, build up strong character, cultivate sublime qualities and norms

and create closeness with Allah. Moreover they have to lead their lives according to Islamic Shariah. Almighty Allah says: So lose not heart. Nor fail into despair for ye must gain mastery if ye are true in faith." (3:139)

We will have to carry out importunities and requisites of faith only then we will be able to restore our lost glory and achieve eminence and exaltation. ■

(Translated by : O.R. Nadwi)

Who is a wise man?

Prophet said : "A wise person is one who keeps a watch over his bodily desires and passions, and which is harmful and strives for that which will benefit him after death, and a foolish person is one who subordinates himself to his cravings and desires and expects from Allah the fulfilment of his futile desires."

"Religion means well-meaning", (said the Prophet thrice). On being asked, "For whom?" he replied, "For Allah, and his Book, and His Prophet and the Muslim Imams and leaders and the masses." (Muslim)

HISTORY OF THE ADVENT AND SPREAD OF ISLAM IN MALABAR*

Zainuddin Makhdum

A party of Jews and Christians with their families arrived in a big ship in Kodungallur, the port city of Malabar. Kodungallur was then also the capital city of the King. They secured from the king grants of lands, plantations and houses and thus they settled there.

Some years later, there arrived at Kodungallur a party of Muslims, who were poor, with a *shaykh*. They were on their way to visit the footprint of our father Adam in Ceylon. When the king heard about their arrival, he sent for them, entertained them, and treated them hospitably. The leader of the group, the *shaykh*, informed the king about Prophet Muhammad (s) and the religion of Islam. They also talked about the miraculous incident of the splitting of the moon. Allah, glory be to Him and exalted be He, caused to enter in his mind the truth of the Prophet's mission. He heartily acknowledged him and his love for the Prophet took possession of his heart. He asked the *shaykh* and his companions to call on him on their return journey from their visit to the footprint of Adam for the reason he might go with them. He commanded the *shaykh* to keep this very confidential and not to let anyone in Malabar know about his secret intention.

Thus, on their return journey from Ceylon, they called on the king. The king asked the *shaykh* to arrange, without any one's knowledge, the ship and other things necessary for his journey with them.

There were laying in the port several ships belonging to foreign traders. The *shaykh* requested the owner of one of the ships to let him and a group of poor people travel on board his ship. The ship owner readily, and with pleasure, agreed.

As the day fixed for the voyage neared, the king gave orders to the effect that none of his family or ministers shall come to visit him for seven days. Then he set himself dividing his kingdom into several provinces and set clear boundaries for each of them; then appointing governors for each province and wrote out detailed instructions defining the limits of territories of each so that one might not encroach

* An extract from Tuhfat al-Mujahidin
written in Arabic in the 16th century A.D.- 29
Translated by S.M. Husayn Nainar

upon the limits specified for the other. This incident is quite well-known among the Hindus in Malabar. He was the sovereign monarch of the whole territory of Malabar with Kumhuri (Kanyakumari) as its boundary in the south and Kanjarakut (Kasaragod) in the north.

Then king embarked with the *shaykh* and his people during night-time and reached Pantalayani where they landed and stayed for a day and night. Thence they proceeded to Darmadam where they stayed three days. Then they set sail till they reached Shuhr (Shahar al-Mukalla), where the king stayed for several days with the *shaykh* and his people. There, another party of travelers joined them. It was a group bound for Malabar with the mission of preaching Islam and constructing mosques and establishing regular prayers there.

The King fell ill while staying in Shahar al-Mukalla. Realising that illness was getting worse and his recovery very remote, the king beckoned to his side Sharaf bin Malik, a member of the group bound for Malabar, and Malik bin Dinar, his half brother from his mother's side and others, and said: "Do not give up the idea of travelling to India even if I die of this illness."

"We do not know anything about your country, where it is and how vast it is. We had intended to come with you," was their reply to the king. Hearing this, the king thought for a while and then gave them a letter in Malayalam. The letter contained detailed information about his kingdom, its provinces, the members of his family, and the names and other details of the rest of the kings in Malabar. The king further advised them to go ashore anywhere off Kodungallur, Darmadam, Pantalayani or Kollam. He further instructed them, specifically, not to disclose to anybody in Malabar anything about his serious illness or about his death in case it so happens.

Before long, the king passed away. May the Almighty Allah shower on him His abundant blessings!

A few years later, the party consisting of Sharaf bin Malik, Malik bin Dinar, and Malik bin Habib, his wife Qamariyyah, their children and friends set out on their voyage to Malabar. They reached the coast of Kodungallur after several days of voyage. They handed the letter the king had given them to the then ruler of the place. They did not disclose the news of the king's death to them. Obliging the directions in the letter, the ruler of the place gave lands and estates for their use. Following this, they settled down and built a mosque there.

Malik bin Dinar decided to settle down in Kodungallur and assigned Malik

bin Habib, his nephew, to the rest of the regions of Malabar to build mosques and preach Islam. Thus Malik bin Habib, taking all his belongings, moved to Kollam with his wife and some of his children. He built a mosque in Kollam, and settled down his wife and children there. Leaving them behind there, he moved further to Ezhimala, and built a mosque there, too. Then he reached Barkur, Mangalore, and Kasaragod and built mosques in all these places. Having accomplished all these, he returned to Ezhimala and stayed there for three months. Then, he visited Sreekandapuram, Darmadam, Pantalayani, and Chaliyam and built mosques in all these places. He stayed in Chaliyam for five months. Then he went back to Kodungallur and stayed with his uncle Malik bin Dinar. In the meanwhile he made a second trip visiting all the mosques he had built in various parts of Malabar and performed prayers in all of them. Praising Allah and expressing deep gratitude to Him he returned overjoyed to find the divine light of Islam having taken over so much space in the abysmal darkness of disbelief.

Then Malik bin Dinar and Malik bin Habib with their friends and servants went to Kollam. From there, Malik bin Dinar and a few others set sail to Shahar al-Mukalla, and the rest of them settled in Kollam. In Shahar al-Mukalla, he visited the tomb of the deceased king, and then travelled to Khurasan, where he eventually died. Malik bin Habib, after making arrangements for some of his children to settle in Kollam, returned to Kodungallur with wife. It was while in Kodungallur that he and his wife breathed their last.

This is the history of the advent and spread of Islam in Malabar. We do not have any clear evidence to say for sure which year this happened. The majority opinion is that it happened in 200 AH. However, the general impression with the Muslims in Malabar is that the aforesaid king's conversion to Islam took place during the time of the Prophet (s). They believe that the king one night saw in person the splitting of the moon, following which he set out to meet the Prophet (s) and after meeting the Prophet (s), he died at Shahar al-Mukalla on his way back to Malabar with a group of Muslims. There is but little truth in this.

It is a widely accepted belief today that the king's grave is not in Shahar al-Mukalla, but at Zafar in Yemen and that this grave known as Samuri is looked upon as a holy place by the local people.

The story of the king's disappearance is well-known among all people in Malabar, Muslims and Hindus. The Hindus, however, say that the king ascended to

the sky and that he will come down one day. It is based on this belief that a pair of wooden sandals and a pitcher of water are kept ready, with lit lamps and decorations, at a particular location in Kodungallur on a certain night.

It is also well known among them that the king divided and distributed his territory and power, and it is said that the Zamorin, who later became the first king of Calicut, did not get any share as he was not present there at the time of the partition. When he turned up late, the king gave him his sword and said: "Grab power fighting with this." Thus that Zamorin fought and took possession of Calicut.

After some time, Muslims began to settle down there. Traders and craftsmen flocked there from various regions. Thus Calicut was transformed into a big city, where, with prospering trade and job opportunities, various kinds of people, Muslims as well as unbelievers, collected. The Zamorin, thus, became more influential and powerful than the rest of the rulers in Malabar.

All the rulers of Malabar are Hindus. There are some who are powerful and some comparatively weak. But the strong as a matter of fact, will not attack or occupy of the weak. This might be the result of the final advice of their king who embraced Islam and of his supplications to this effect to God. This was also because of the blessing of the Prophet (s) and the religion of Islam he founded.

There are in Malabar chieftains whose territories do not exceed one Parasang (about three and a half square miles or less than that), while others have powers over more extensive territories. Of these some have at their command one hundred soldiers or less, or two hundred to three hundred, thousand, five thousand, ten thousand, thirty thousand, hundred thousand and more, and so on. Some territories join in league and are governed by two or three persons together. And of them some have greater power and bigger army. Quarrels and skirmishes take place occasionally among them, but this does not affect their coalition rule.

Of all the kings in Malabar, Tiruwadi, the ruler of the territories between Kollam and Kanyakumari, has the largest number of troops. Next to him comes Kolattiri, the ruler of Ezhimala, Sreekandapuram, Kannur, Edakkad, Darmadam and other cities. But the Zamorin enjoyed greater power and reputation than the rest. He is quite influential among the rest of the kings. The Zamorin came to enjoy this distinction on account of the greatness of Islam. He treats the Muslims, especially the foreign Muslims, with great affection and respect. However, the Hindus

believe this to be on account of the greatness of the sword he got from the aforesaid king. They claim the sword, which is kept preserved in the Zamorin's palace, is the same sword. They have great adoration and respect towards that sword. When the Zamorin goes forth to battle or to a big assembly, a servant carrying this sword walks in front.

Whenever the Zamorin fights for one reason or other against a weak ruler and subdues him, the tradition is for that ruler to give the Zamorin an annual tribute or, at times, his kingdom altogether. "If the subdued king does not give, he would not be forced to do so though a long time may lapse in waiting. This is because people of Malabar honour and cherish the traditions and customs dearly. They do not violate it deliberately, except some unintentional violations, which take place rarely. But the kings other than the Zamorin do not follow this tradition. Only thing they can do is to fight to destroy the kingdom of the opponent during the war and kill people if they can. ■

Faisal Bhatkali Honoured

Faisal Ahmad Nadwi Bhatkali, a member of the teaching faculty of Darul-Uloom Nadwatul Ulema has won the first prize of 3 Lakh Saudi Riyal on his book "Biography of Prophet Mohammad (PBH)".

Rabtae Alam-e-Islami had invited articles relating to the life and work of the Prophet. It is said that 400 manuscripts were received by the Rabtae-Adab-e-Islami and Maulana Faisal Ahmad Nadwi Bhatkali's book was adjudged best.

Faisal Bhatkali, a product of Nadwatul Ulema is presently teaching in Darul-Uloom Nadwatul Ulema and is credited with authoring a number of valuable books. "Tahrike Azadi Mein Ulema Ka Hissa Qabl 1857" is his masterpiece book and reflects his intellectual and academic worth. Maulana Azad Memorial Academy has decided to give a handsome award to him on this book.

A LESSON TO LEARN

Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

The holy Quran says : "O ye who believe! Enter into Islam wholeheartedly and follow not the footsteps of Satan; verily he is your open foe". (2:208)

The above mentioned verse of the holy Quran stands for the believers to carry out the teachings of Islam strictly and not to follow the path of Satan. Almighty Allah does not like the person who acts on part of Islamic Shariah and abandons rest of it.

It is a tragedy that today we follow Islam by bits. Because of our shortcomings, slackness and scant attention towards Islamic Shariah we are humiliated everywhere. Dr. Iqbal has rightly said :"

*"Woh moazzaz the zamane me musalman hokar
Aur ham khwar huwey tarike Quran hokar"*

(They were reverend and respectable on embracing Islam and we have been ignoble and disgraced, by relinquishing the Quran)

Today we have forgotten the instruction of the Prophet. The holy Prophet said : "I am leaving two major things as inheritance; the book of Almighty and my Sunnah. You will never be astray till you firmly concern with them."

The Almighty Allah warns such people who accept something of Shariah and leave the other. The holy Quran asys: "And whoso opposeth the messenger after the guidance of Allah hath been manifested unto him and followth other than the believers way, we appoint for him that unto which he himself hath turned and expose him unto hell a hapless journey's end." (4:115)

It is unfortunate that we began to prefer this worldly life to the life of the Hereafter. While this worldly life is not everlasting, it is perishable. The real life of believers is the life of Hereafter. The Quran says: "What is the life of this world but amusement and play? Man's real home is the Hereafter, if only he knew" (29:64)

It should be noted that Islam does not encumber to anyone. It is a compendious, moderate, and simple religion. "Allah desireth for you ease. He desireth not hardship

of you (2:185) And again "Allah tasketh not a soul beyond its scope" (2:286)

The holy Prophet said "*Addin-u-usrun*" (The religion is easiest). Aishah (R) narrates: "If the Prophet (SAW) had an option between two courses of action, he would adopt the easier one, provided there was nothing objectionable in it."

Needless to add that most striking aspect of Islam is moderation and tolerance. There is no hardness and stiffness in Islam. Even in worship. If some one is unable to offer salat standing, one should offer it sitting and so on. The holy Quran says: "men who remember Allah standing, sitting and lying down on their sides, and contemplate the wonders of creation in the heavens and the earth, (with the saying) : "Our lord not for naught hast thou created all this! Glory to thee! Give us salvation from the chastisement of the fire" (S.3A. 191)

It is reiterated that Islam is such a religion in which exists solution of all hydra-headed problems of the world. Nobody can fall prey to inferiority complex after embracing it. Islam does not ask its followers to worship every time in mosque. On the contrary the holy Quran says: "And when the prayer is finished, then may ye disperse through the land an seek of the bounty of Allah: and remember Allah frequently that ye may prosper". (62 : 10)

That is why Islam does not like ascetic life. The holy Prophet said marriage is one of most sacred practice whoever dislikes my way of life is not of me.

In this context it would be apt to mention that we observe that a Muslim does not like to get a house built in a Mohalla predominant by Muslims. He prefers to live away from it. For he knows that most of his co-religionist do not take care of sanitation and cleanliness. Strangely, a Muslim has such notion about his own Muslim brother. What is the main reason behind it? The main thing is that we have forgotten the saying of the Prophet. The Prophet said : "Cleanliness is the part of faith." Does any religion of the world attach such importance to cleanliness and sanitation. The answer will be in negative. Not only sanitation. Take the example of knowledge. The first revelation of Islam begins with reading and learning. But scant attention is being paid towards education by Muslims.

The need of the hour is that we must disseminate the universal message of Islam. For this we should first cultivate good qualities and norms and mould ourselves with the teachings of Islam only then we may get success in this world and Hereafter. "Our Lord! Give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter and save us from the torment of the fire" (2:201) ■

HAMEEDUDDIN FARAHİ: A GENIUS SCHOLAR AND INTERPRETER OF QUR'AN

M. Zakir Azmi

Hameeduddin Farahi was born in Phariha, a small village in Azamgarh district (Uttar Pradesh, India) in the year 1862 CE (1280 H) to a religious middle class family known for its social magnificence and scholarly contributions in the region.

He memorized the Quran when he was only 10 years old. Then he studied Persian from Shaikh Mahdi. Within a short time, he attained admirable knowledge of Persian and was able to compose poems. From his cousin - Allama Shibli Nomani, the famous theologian-historian, he learnt Arabic. Shibli also inculcated in him going deep into the ocean of knowledge. He travelled to Lahore to study Arabic literature in depth from Maulana Faizul Hasan Saharaupuri. At the age of twenty, he took admission in Aligarh's Anglo Mohammadan College to study English and the modern disciplines of knowledge. In his letter of recommendation addressed to the principal of the college, an Englishman. Sir Syed wrote that he was sending someone who knew more Arabic and Persian than professors of the college. While studying in the college, Farahi translated parts of "*At-Tabaqat-ul-Kubraa*" of Abu Abdullah Ibn Saad Az-Zuhri (784-845 CE) into Persian. The translation was found to be so good that Sir Syed included it in the college syllabus. Farahi did his graduation from Allahbad University.

In Aligarh College, he studied modern philosophy under supervision of Thomas Arnold, a renowned orientalist who taught at the college for 10 years and was well known among the educated men for his celebrated book "*Preaching of Islam*". Even though this work was highly appreciated by the Muslim scholars, Farahi criticized it, because according to him, it basically aims to detach Muslim from the spirit of Jihad.

While at Aligarh, he learnt Hebrew from a German orientalist, Joseph Horovitz

(1874-1931 CE) Farahi accomplished "*Ima'an Fi Aqsamil Quran* – a study of methods and styles of oaths in Quran" and published tafsir of Surahs Al-Qiyama and Al-Lahab.

Academic and Administrative Assignments:

After completing the formal education, Farahi undertook various academic and administrative assignments. In 1324 H, he was appointed as lecturer of Arabic and Persian at Madrasatul Islam in Karachi. In 1326 H, he was appointed professor of Arabic at Allahabad University where he spent 6 years of full academic activities and published tafsir of Surah Al-Tahrim. Due to his distinguished knowledge, he was selected as one of the members of Arabic Committee for oriental sciences. It is worth mentioning that when in 1331 H foundation of International Islamic University in Madina Al-Munawarah was proposed, Farahi and Shibli were amongst the scholars who were selected to teach there. (*study paper presented by Dr. Ajmal Islahi in the conference held in Madina Al-Munawarah During October, 2001 on "Interests of Saudi Arabia in Quranic Sciences"*).

The government of Hyderabad State appointed him in 1332 H as dean of Darul Uloom (College of Oriental Sciences) where he also taught students of higher classes. During his stay at Hyderabad, Farahi conceived the idea of establishing a university where all religious and modern sciences would be taught in Urdu. His scheme materialized in 1919 EC in the form of Jamia Osmania, Hyderabad. Apart from teaching at the College, he delivered lectures on Quranic sciences that were attended by scholars. He accomplished "*Ar-raai-us-Saheeh Fee-Man-huwaz-zabeeh* -- Who Was Sacrificed?" and the preface of his Tafsir "*Nizamul Quran Wa Taweel-ul-Furqan Bil Furqan* – Coherence and Orders in Quran and Interpretation of Quran by Quran". He subsequently returned to Saraimaer in 1925 EC, a town near his home village in Azamgarh district and took charge of the Madrasatul Islah, which is the living expression of the dream of Shibli and Farahi, provides knowledge of traditional modern disciplines. It includes in its curriculum Arabic literature, English language and Literature, history of classical and modern philosophy almost up to the graduation level.

Besides managing the affairs of the Madrasah, Farahi devoted most of his time here in training a few students. Among them, was Amin Ahsan Islahi (1904 – 1997 CE), who was destined to become the exponent of his thought after him, whose Tadabbur-e-Quran is considered to be true expression of Nazm-e-Quran (coherence

in Quran) as envisaged by Farahi.

When Shibli died in 1332 H, his disciples got together in order to materialize the idea of their master to set up Darul Musannifeen (Shibli Academy) and Farahi was elected as the president and Allama Syed Sulaiman Nadwi as the director of the newly formed institute. This institute tremendously contributed to enrich the Islamic library by producing a large amount of literature on the Muslim history. It particularly focused on bringing out celebrated books on history of Muslim rulers in the Indian subcontinent. The most celebrated works of this prestigious academy included Siratun Nabi (Biography of the Prophet (PBUH) in 7 volumes) written jointly by Shibli and his noble disciple Sulaiman Nadwi and Al-Farooq (Biography of second caliph of Islam, Omar bin Khattab), which has been translated into Arabic, English, Turkish and many other languages.

Opinions of Contemporary Scholars:

Farahi was well known for his exceptional intellect and extraordinary brainpower. His act of renouncing worldly pleasure, his providence, detachment from fame, modesty and piety, are unquestionable amongst his contemporary scholars.

Shibli used to say: "Whoever sat with Hameeduddin, his heart would turn away from worldly life". Sulaiman Nadvi considers him as a symbol of learning and piety. Another noted scholar, Abdul Majid Daryabadi outlines: "My eyes never saw a person like him in terms of patience, gratitude, contentment, trust in Allah and self satisfaction. In Hyderabad, he received handsome salary and had close relations with the modern wealthy society, but his sincerity, modesty, style of dressing remained unchanged". It was his habit to spend a part of his income on buying books and major part was for deprived people, orphans and widows.

His Scholarships:

Despite diversification of his knowledge and command over different branches of sciences, the Quran remained his chief interest and the focal point of all his writings. His greatest contribution to its study is his discovery of coherence in the Quran. He has achieved the impossible', remarked Shibli while praising his student's grand discovery. It was, undoubtedly, a superhuman accomplishment. Farahi, demonstrated to all the western cities that with a sound understanding of the Arabic language one can appreciate coherence in the Quran which is certainly not a haphazard collection of injunctions. By taking into consideration, the three

constituents of nazm (coherence): order, proportion and unity he proved that a single interpretation of the Quran was possible. This alone was a far-reaching consequence of the newly founded principle of Nazm-e-Quran. Serious differences in the interpretation of the Quran which have given rise to the menace of religious sectarianism is actually the result of disregarding thematic and structural coherence in the arrangement and mutual relationship of various Quranic verses and paragraphs. Each sect has adopted its interpretation because isolating a verse from its context can associate multiple meanings to it. It is only the coherence of the Quran, which, if considered, leads to a definite and integrated understanding of the Divine Message. It is only then that the Quran can be truly regarded as a Meezaan (Balance of Justice) and a Furqaan (Distinguisher of Good and Evil). It is only then that the Quranic verse 'Hold fast to the Cable of Allah and be not divided among yourselves' (3:103), can become a manifest reality, and the unity in the Muslim Ummah be achieved. Farahi went on to enunciate certain principles necessary to understand and interpret the Quran. The foremost among them was the principle of coherence. He was able to show that unless the Quran is understood through a holistic approach, a lot of its treasure of wisdom remains hidden.

Most of Farahi's works are in the form of notes, scripts and unfinished books. He could only complete a few of them. Foremost among them is a collection of his interpretation of no more than fourteen Surahs of the Quran by the name "*Majmuaah-e-Tafaaseer-e-Farahi* – Collection of Interpretation of the Quran". His "*Mufradaat-ul-Quran* – Meaning of Some Complex Words in Quran" deals with some difficult words of the Quran and presents a new explanation. This book has recently been published by Dar Al-Gharb, Beirut, Lebanon with valuable preface and notes by Dr. Mohammad Ajmal Islahi which also includes biography of Farahi. He explained the nature of oaths and adjurations in the Quran in his book entitled "*Al-Im'aan fee Aqsaam-il-Quran* - a study of methods and styles of oaths in Quran". In his book "*Ar-raai-us- Saheeh Fee-Man-huwaz-zabeeh* - Who Was Sacrificed?", he elaborated upon the philosophy of sacrifice and by furnishing evidences from the Quran and the Torah conclusively refuted the claim of the Jews that it was Isaac Abraham had intended to sacrifice not Ismael. He relaid the principles of rhetoric needed to study the Quran in "*Jamhuratul Balaaghah* – Collection of Eloquence" and outlined some special Quranic styles and constructions in "*Asaaleeb-ul-Quran* – Style of Quran". The arguments he presented to verify the principle of coherence are soundly enlisted

in “*Dalaalil-un-Nizaam – Evidence of Coherence and Order in Quran*”. His complete mastery of Arabic and Persian can be seen from his poetical works in both these languages. Besides these scholarly dissertations, there are at least twenty other unfinished works, which need to be completed and developed further. Most of these writings have been published by Dairah-e-Hameediah in Saraimeer, India, an institution established to promote and propagate the thoughts and views of Farahi.

It is to be noted that Abul Kalam Azad and Abul A’la Maududi forcefully expressed the activist and revolutionary teachings of the Qur’an, whereas Farahi and Amin Ahsan Islahi brought the beauty of the internal coherence of the Qur’an to light.

With regards to the theory of Huroof-i-Muqatta’aat, Farahi is of the view that the letters of this parent alphabet as English and Hindi do not represent phonetic sounds only, but as the Chinese alphabet symbolize certain meanings and objects and usually assume the shape of the objects and meanings they convey. He goes on to assert that it was these letters which the early Egyptians adopted and after adapting them according to their own concepts founded the hieroglyphic script from them. The remnants of this script can be seen in the tables of the Egyptian Pyramids.

This article is too short to elaborate on all the theories and principles established and originated by Farahi to help understand the Quran in a direct method. In brief, with his scholarly work, Farahi, no doubt, has laid the foundations for the intellectual awakening of the Muslims. Farahi died on 11th November 1930 in Mathura, where he had gone for treatment. ■

For further readings :

- 1) Zikre Farahi (Biography of Farahi written by Dr. Sharfuddin Islahi)
- 2) Preface of Mufradatul Quran noted by Dr. Mohammad Ajmal Islahi.
- 3) Nuzhatul Khawatir by Sayed Abdul Haye Hasani (father of late Allama Syed Abdul Hasan Ali Nadwi)
- 4) Hayate Hameed by Dr. Ubaidullah Farahi (Ex-Head, Department of Arabic at University of Lucknow)