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THE FRAGRANCE OF EAST

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Fasting and the Month of Ramadhan

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (RAH)

God has prescribed fasting in the month of Ramadhan and declared the two to be inseparable. The joining together of these two blessings is an act of great significance primarily because it was in this month that the Quran was revealed and the joyful tidings of a new dawn were given to the ailing humanity. It was, therefore, appropriate that just as the rising of the sun was liked with commencement of the fast, the month of Ramadhan, too, in which the whole of mankind emerged from a long spell of darkness, should be marked out for fasting, more so when it was also superior to all other months in effulgence and propitiousness deserved that its days should be adorned with fasting and nights with prayer.

A most intimate association exists between fasting and the Quran. The holy Prophet used to pay the greatest attention to the recitation of the Quran in Ramadhan. It is related by Ibn-i-Abbas that the Prophet was the most generous of all men but in the month of Ramadhan, when the Archangel Gabriel used to come to him, his generosity knew no bounds. In Ramadhan Gabriel came to him every night and joined in the recitation of the Quran. During those days the Prophet appeared to be faster than the wind in acts of charity and benevolence. ●

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Wisdom of Qur' an

"Praise to Allah who sent down upon His slave the Book, and has not placed any crookedness therein."

(Surah al-Kahf: 1)

Commentary:

That this chapter is Makkan is the opinion of most of the commentators (Qurtubi), but not of all (Shawkani).

That is, there is neither any contradiction within it, nor anything that does not agree with what is sound and reasonable (Zamakhshari, Razi). In Asad's words, "The above phrase is meant to establish the direct, unambiguous character of the Qur'an and to stress its freedom from obscurities and internal contradictions."

Yusuf Ali has an improved comment: "Some people's idea of a Sacred Book is that it should be full of mysteries - dark corners, ambiguous expressions, words so far removed from human speech that they cover anything or nothing. Pagan oracles were couched in language which suggested one meaning to the hearer and claimed to have the very opposite meaning in the light of events which actually happened subsequently. They were distinctly crooked, not straight." ●

"Straightforward, that it may warn of a severe chastisement from Him, and give good tidings unto the faithful who work righteous deeds, that theirs will be a goodly reward." (Surah al-Kahf: 2)

Commentary:

That is, one that straightens up others; in other words, one that leads to the straight path of divine guidance (Razi). That it is a guardian over other revealed scriptures, is another possible connotation (Zamakhshari, Qurtubi). Thus, the lack of "iwaj" speaks of its internal perfection, while "qayyim" speaks of its quality of perfecting others, or straightening them up - Razi.

Ibn 'Abbas (Ibn Jarir) however gave the meaning as reflected in the present translation. ●

Pearls From the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

"It is related by Umamah that (once) a person asked the Apostle of God: "How much is the claim of parents on their children?" "They are your Heaven and Hell," the Apostle of God replied."

-Ibn Majah

Commentary:

It shows that if a person obeys his parents and attends to their needs and comforts and keeps them happy, he will attain Paradise. On the other hand, whoever is rude and disobedient to his parents and offends them by ignoring their feelings or causing them grief in any other way is destined to make his home in Hell.

"It is related by Abdullah b. Amr b. al-Aas that the Apostle of God said: "In the good pleasure of father lies the good pleasure of God, and, in his displeasure, the displeasure of God."

-Tirmizi

Commentary:

The purport of it is that anyone who seeks to please God should earn the good pleasure of his father. To keep the parents well-pleased is essential to the earning of the countenance of the Lord while the anger and displeasure of the father leads to His anger and displeasure. In it, the word Walid is used which means 'father,' while the equivalent for 'mother' in Arabic is Walidah. Thus, mother is not specifically mentioned in this Tradition, but it is distinctly stated in the Tradition we are now going to discuss, the position of mother is even higher than of father and, as such, her pleasure or displeasure will carry an equal significance. ●



Zakat

With the advent of Ramzan it is believed that the opportunity has come to get shortcomings and sins washed and earn the maximum favour of the creator, almighty God. A month of self purification offers an occasion to take account of what has been done in the preceding months. One expects the reward of goods done and prays for the forgiveness of wrongs committed knowingly or unknowingly.

In this pious month, apart from offering 'Salat' (prayer) and keeping fast, well to do Muslims are required to take care of poors. One of the important pillar of Islam is Zakat—that is offering certain percentage of savings to needy and suffering fellows of the society.

Holy Quran says :

"The alms are only for the poor and the needy, and those who collect them, and those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and to free the captives and the debtors, and for the cause of Allah. Allah is knower wise" (9:60)

Zakat is the pivot and hub of the Islamic finance. It covers moral, social and economic spheres. In the moral sphere, Zakat washes away greed and selfishness of the rich. In social sphere it acts as a unique measure to abolish poverty from the society by making the rich alive to the so-cial responsibilities they have.

In economic sphere Zakat prevents the accumulation of wealth in a few hands, and diffuses it before it assumes threatening proportions in the hands of its possessors. Al-lah enumerates countless blessings for the Muslims both in. this world and the Hereafter who pay Zakat, but for those people who do not pay Zakat, there are horrible torments of fire.

In most of the chapters of the Quran we read: "And observe the prayer and pay the Zakat."

"Surely those who believe and do good deeds and es-tablish Salat shall have their reward from their Rabb, and they shall have no fear, nor shall they have any grief, "(Al-Quran).

The word Zakat has been derived from the word zakat which means 'it grew 'or 'it purified' and the title is appropri-ate because Zakat not only protects one's wealth but also purifies those who own it. Just as a seed of paddy, if sown in a well cultivated field grows a number of sprouts where from hundreds of paddy seeds come forth. so a coin given in charity will bring hundreds of coins in return, and it is as the Holy Quran says:

"The likeness of those who opened their wealth in Allahs way is as the likeness of a grain which groweth seven ears, in every ear a hundred grains, Allah giveth increase manifold to whom He will. Allah is All-Embracing. All-Know ing. "Further:

"Those who spend their wealth for the cause of Allah and afterwards make not reproach and injury to follow that which they have spent; their reward is with their Lord, and there shall no fear come upon them, neither shall they grieve, "(2:261,262)

The Quran also tells us that it is not a man's wealth or position but his God

consciousness which determines his ultimate destiny in the Hereafter. "Lo the noblest of you in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. "(49: 13).

Islam does not absolve a wealthy Muslim from all other social responsibilities just by his act of paying two and a half percent Zakat on his wealth. It also stresses on voluntary contribution and donation called "Sadaqaat" to meet the multi farious requirements of the Islamic social organ-ism. The holy Qur'an has therefore, disapproved the practice social and religious purposes. "And for those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in the way of Allah (for helping the deserving ones) announce for them a pain-ful chastisement (Al-Taubah:33). of keeping more wealth than one needs. The holy Quran says:

"By no means shall you attain to righteousness until you spent out of what you love" (3"92) and the holy Prophet said that the miser shall never enter Paradise. the worst of what is in man is miserliness and cowardice, and there are two main traits of character which do not unite in a believer-miserliness and bad conduct. Still another class of voluntary charity is Sadqah-i-Jaria or the perennial charity which brings continuing rewards even after the death of the charitable person, as long as the charitable object subsists. .

The holy Qur'an has unreservedly condemned the hoarding and accumulation of wealth and with holding it from social and religious purposes. "And for those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in the way of Allah (for helping the deserving ones) announce for them a pain-ful chastisement (Al-Taubah:33).□

TV - A Curse

In Indonesia Muslims have been advised by the Islamic clerics to switch off gossip TV. It is unfortunate that electronic media instead of helping in the creation of a healthy society is polluting it.

The Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) issued the edict that some media programs were not meant to educate but went beyond the barriers of decency toward pornography, said the MUI's Ma'ruf Amin.

'The problem is not about infotainment but its content which contain slan-der, rumors.. also the shows lead to pornography;' Amin said.

He said the Organization had recommended the government follow up the edict through regulations to control such "infotainment" content.

The communications ministry, led by a minister from an Islam-based party, aims to pass a controversial regulation controlling internet content by the end of this year, which critics see as an effort to clamp down on freedom of expression. Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim country, is also planning to use a controversial anti-pornography law to restrict porn websites in the next few months. The moves come after anger from Islamic groups over home-made sex clips widely circulated on the internet that allegedly feature a pop star and his celebrity girlfriends. □

Moral Teachings and Self Purification

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Some Spiritual Ailments and Their Cures

We give here a few verses of the Qur'an and narrate the deeds and sayings of the holy Prophet which provide an insight into ethical norms and purification of the self, and guide us to save ourselves from the failings of our desires, ruses of the devil and impairment of the soul. The remedies prescribed therein are unfailing, most suitable and extremely effective to cure all the maladies of human mind and heart for they have been inspired by the Lord, All-knowing and All-powerful, from whom nothing is concealed. Does He not say in His revelation to the last Prophet?

"Shall He who has created all things not know them all?

He is Wise and All-knowing."
(67:14)

These are the directions revealed to an impeccable Messenger sent by God for purification of morals and the teaching of the Book and wisdom to the human beings. The holy Prophet has himself explained it thus.

"My Lord has guided me and instructed me well."

Whosoever will follow these instructions with sincerity and steadfastness will undoubtedly succeed in achieving his objective. If it be an individual he would become

pious and spiritually perfect; if a community adopts these as its norm, it would become an ideal society.

Sincerity:

"They were commanded only to serve God and to worship none but Him, to attend to their prayers and to pay the alms-tax. That surely is the true faith."(98:5)

"Surely pure religion is for Allah only." (39:3)

Repentance:

"O ye who believe! Turn unto Allah in sincere repentance!" (66:8)

Patience and Forgiveness:

"And verily whoso is patient and forgiveth surely that is true constancy." (42:43)

Living Awareness of God:

"And He is with you wheresoever ye may be". (57:4)

"He knows the treachery of the eyes and what the breasts conceal."
(40:19)

Fear of God:

"O believers, fear Allah as He should be feared." (3:102)

"Believers, fear Allah and speak the truth." (33:70)

Trust in God:

"In Allah let believers put their trust." (14:14)

"Put your trust in the Ever-living who never dies."(25:58)

Steadiness:

"So tread thou the right path as

thou are bidden." (11:112)

Lo! Those who say: our Lord is Allah, and thereafter work aright, there shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve. Such are the rightful owners of the garden, immortal therein, as a reward of what they used to do. (46:13-14)

Reliance on God and the Prophet:

"Should you disagree about anything refer it to Allah and the Apostle." (4:59)

"Whatever the Apostle gives you, accepts it, and whatever he forbids you, forbears from it." (59:7)

Love for God and the Prophet:

"But those who believe love Allah more ardently." (2:165)

"Say If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your clan, your possessions that you have gained, commerce you fear may slacken, dwellings you love if these are dearer to you than God and His Messenger, and to fight in His way, then wait till God brings His command." (9:24)

Cooperation in Righteous Deeds:

"Help one another to piety and God-fearing; do not help each other in sin and transgression. And fear God; surely God is terrible in retribution." (5:2)

Brotherhood of Believers:

"The believers indeed are brothers." (49:10)

Keeping the Trust:

"God commands you to deliver

trusts back to their owners." (4:58)

Good Counselling:

"There is no virtue in much of their counsels; save in his who enjoins charity, kindness and peace among men." (4:114)

"Therefore have fear of Allah and end your disputes." (8:1)

Kindness and Courtesy:

"And lower thy wings unto the believers." (15:88)

"And as for the orphan, do not oppress him, and as for the beggar, scold him not." (93:9-10)

Following the Prophet's Example:

"Say, (o Muhammad, to mankind: If ye love Allah, follow me: Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. Allah is forgiving, Merciful." (3:31).

Hope and Fear:

"And fear you Me." (2:40)

"Say, O my people who have been prodigal against yourselves, do not despair of Allah's mercy; surely Allah forgives sins altogether: surely He is the All-forgiving. The All-compassionate." (39:53)

"None feels secure against Allah except those who shall be lost." (7:99)

"Of God's comfort *no man* despairs, save the disbelieving folk." (12:87)

Contentment:

"Wealth and children are an ornament of life of the world. But the good deeds which endure are better in thy Lord's sight for reward, and better in respect of hope." (18:46)

"This life of the world is but a pastime and a game. Lo! The hours of the Hereafter that is life, if they but knew," (29:64)

Self-Sacrifice:

"Rather prize them (the refugees) above themselves thought they are in want." (59:9)

"They give food, for the love of Him, to the needy, the orphan, the poor." (76:8)

Evils of Vanity and Troublemaking:

"As for the Paradise to come, it shall be theirs who desire neither exorbitance in the earth, nor corruption. The issue ultimate to the God-fearing." (28:83)

Self-restraint:

"Those who control their wrath and are forgiving toward mankind; Allah loveth the good." (3:134)

"O ye who believe! Be careful of your duty to Allah, and be with the truthful." (9:119).

Mutual Rights of Muslims:

"O believers, let not any people scoff at another people who may be better than they: neither let women scoff at women who may be better than themselves. And find not fault with one another, neither revile one another by nicknames. An evil name is ungodliness after belief. And whoso repents not, those, they are the evildoers." (49:11)

"O believers eschew much suspicion; some suspicion is a sin. And do not spy, neither backbite one another; would any of you like to eat the flesh of his brother dead? You

would abominate it. And fear you Allah; assuredly Allah is Forgiving, Compassionate." (49:12)

"And those who malign believing men and believing women undeservedly, they bear the guilt of slander and manifest sin." (33:58)

"When you heard it, why did the faithful men and women, not think well of their own people, and say: This is an evident falsehood?" (24:12)

PRONOUNCEMENTS OF THE PROPHET

Deeds depend on Intentions:

1. "Deeds depends on intentions and everyman shall be recompensed in accordance with what induced him to act; thus one who has left his home for God and His messenger, his emigration would be deemed for them; and one who migrated for the world or to take a women in marriage his emigration would be counted for that purpose." (Sahihain)

2. "All the previous sins of those will be forgiven who fast during Ramadhan with complete reliance on God and the hope of a goodly return from Him; all the previous sins of those will be forgiven who spend *Lailatul Qadr* (the Night of Power) in prayers and vigils with complete on God and the hope of a goodly return from Him." (Bukhari)

Pre-requisites of Faith:

3. "None of you can be a believer unless his desires are subordinated to what I have brought

(to you)." (Tirmidhi)

4. "None of you can be a believer unless I am dearer to him than his own father, sons and all others." (Bukhari)

5. "None of you can be a believer unless I dearer to him than his own self." (Musand Ahmad)

6. "None of you can be a believer unless he is desirous of that for his brother which he wants for himself." (Sahihain)

7. "A Muslim is one from whose hands and tongue other Muslims feel secure and a believer is one from whom the life and property of others remain unthreatened." (Tirmidhi and Nassa'i)

8. "Nobody can be a Muslim unless his heart and tongue have also submitted and he cannot be a believer unless his neighbour is not secured from his misdemeanor." 'Abdullah b. Mas'ud, who relates it, asked the Prophet, "What is meant by misdemeanour?" The Prophet replied, "Excess and oppression." (Tirmidhi and Nassa'i)

9. "The excellence of Islam is that a man give up every frivolity." (Malik, Ahmad and Tirmidhi)

10. "Three things consequential to faith are: spending despite privation, making the salutation prevalent and being impartial even in respect of one's own self." (Bizar)

11. "One who lacks honesty has no faith; one who does not abide by one's promise has no religion. Only he shall taste the sweetness of faith who

has three qualities: that Allah and His Messenger are dearer to him than anything else; that he loves one for the sake of God; and that reversion to infidelity is as hard to him as being thrown into the fire. (Sahihain)

12. "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)

13. "There are three things that are indicative of a hypocrite: when he speaks, he tells lies; when he promises, he never fulfils it; and when he is charged with a trust, he misappropriates it." (Sahihain)

14. "Modesty comes out of faith." (Sahihain)

15. "Avoid what is impermissible and you would be the best in your devotion to God. Be content with what God has ordained for you, and you would be self-reliant. Be benevolent to your neighbours and you would be a believer. Desire the same for others, what you like for yourself and you would be a Muslim; and do not laugh much for it deadens the heart." (Tirmidhi)

Muslim Society based on Prophetic Teaching:

16. "Hark! Muslims are brothers unto one another, hence the treatment you deem right for yourself should be valid your brother-in-faith."

17. "Do not be envious of one another; never deal fraudulently in

sales and purchases; never be grudging nor indulge in back-biting; never try to steal a march over others in selling (your goods). O servants of God, be brothers unto one another; every Muslim is a brother of another Muslim; he is never oppressive, nor deserts him, nor looks down upon him, (Pointing to his breast, he said thrice) Awe of God resides here. It is enough for the vileness of a man that he holds a low opinion of his Muslim brother! (Shedding of the) blood, (usurpation of) property and attacking the honour of a Muslim is unlawful for another Muslim.”(Mulsim)

18.“It is not permissible for anyone to be estranged from his brother for more than three days or that they should meet and turn away from one other; and he is worthier who is first in saluting (the other).” (Bukhari)

19.“A believer is a mirror unto another; a believer is a bother unto other; he guards the field of the other and looks after it in his absence.” (Abu dawud)

20.“Should I tell you something even more virtuous than fasting and prayer and charity,?” asked the Prophet. “Why not, O Prophet of God,” replied the companions. The Prophet said, “It is to get on good terms with others. Estrangement destroys religion.” (Abu Dawud)

21.“Do not make little of the smallest good, even if it be a warm reception to your brother.” (Mulsim)

22.“You will find the believers like a body in love and compassion to

one another; pain in one limb is accompanied by fever and restlessness all over the body.” (Sahihain)

23.“The entire creation is the family of Allah and Allah loves him most who is good to His family.” (Baihaqi)

24.“Gabriel laid so much emphasis on the (rights of) neighbors that I thought they would also be made heirs.” (Sahihain, Abu Dawud, Tirmiddhi)

25.“The Compassionate blesses those who are kind to others, Be merciful to those who live on earth and the One in heaven will be merciful to you,” (Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud)

Acts destructive of Morality:

26.“One who breaks off relationships shall not enter paradise.” (Sahihain, Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi)

27.“The backbiter shall not enter paradise.” (Sahihain)

28.“Avoid envy, for it destroys virtues in the same way as fire burns the dry wood.” (Abu Dawud)

29.“You have also fallen a prey to jealousy and grudging, the ailments of the earlier nations. It shears (you) completely. I do not mean the hair but the religion.” (Tirmidhi; Ahmad)

30.“Wolves let loose on (a herd of) goats would not cause as much damage as the love of wealth and office damages religion.”

(Timidhi; Ahmad)

Virtuous Morals-A demand of Wisdom:

31. "My Lord has commanded me to observe (these) nine things:

"That I should stand in awe of Allah openly and in privy;

"That I should speak out justly whether it is agreeable to me or not;

"That I should keep the golden mean both in scarcity and sufficiency;

"That I should fasten the bond with him who falls out with me;

"That I should bestow on him who denies me;

"That I should forgive him who oppresses me:

"That I should keep silence for meditation and speak to praise the Lord;

"That I should direct my eyes to take a lesson; and

"That I should (always) counsel what is good." (Razin)

32. "Fastener of bonds is not one who reciprocates, but one who tries to repair it when it is being impaired." (Bukhari, Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi)

33. "He is a perfect believer who is best in morals and the best among you are those who are nice to their womenfolk. (Tirmidhi)

34. "Virtuous morals make a believer like unto one who constantly prays during his fast." (Abu Dawud)

35. "Leave what is doubtful and accept that which is beyond

doubt." (Ahmad, Darmi)

36. "Question your heart, for, only that is good which satisfies the heart and conscience; vice is that which pricks the heart and creates diffidence regardless of what the people say or you say ." (Ahmad, Darmi)

37. "Keep fearing God wherever you are and if you happen to commit a wrong, do something righteous which will efface the wrong." (Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Darmi)

38. "I promise paradise to him who pledges to safeguard what is in between his two legs and the jaws." (Bukhari, Tirmidhi)

39. "A fearful wayfarer keeps travelling during the night, and one who continues the journey during night reaches his destination. Hark ye that it is hard to bargain with God but dealing with God means (attainment of paradise." (Tirmidhi)

40. "God makes his heart self-sufficing whose centre of thought is hereafter; he is made sound and the world submits to him in servitude. And God makes him who fixes his thoughts upon the world to appear impoverished, split up while he gets only that much of the world as has been preordained for him." (Tirmidhi)

41. "He is prudent who is self-introspective and works for the life after death; and he is a stupid who runs after his desires but rests assured looking forward to God." (Tirmidhi) ●

Indo-Muslim Medicine: Unani in Pre-modern India

Seema Alavi*

In the period of the classical empires of Islam (Eighth to thirteenth centuries), an integrated Islamic world system flourished that was knitted together by trade, politics, and cultural contact. Scholars and traders moved with ease along trading and cultural contours that spanned the Middle East, Central Asia and China, and included the Indian Ocean area. India was thus very much part of this world. It did not fall under the political hegemony of the Islamic empires, but it was part of the trading and cultural ambit of what Muslims called the Dar al-Islam.

Dar al-Islam was important not only for trade of commodities but also for the trade in ideas. Knowledge of medicine, in particular, was of immense interest to the caliphs of the Islamic empires. Medical ideas were appropriated from the Graeco-Roman philosophical tradition represented by Hippocrates, Aristotle, and Galen. During their early contact with the Christian Byzantine Empire and the Iranian Sasanian Empire, Muslims found this intellectual system flourishing in conquered lands. They appropriated it and made it part of their intellectual legacy. In the

famous medical institution at Jundi Shapur, in south-west Persia, for example, Christian and Jewish upheld the humoral theory of health derived from Hippocrates and Aristotle. They also acknowledged their intellectual debt to Galen, the physician who practiced in Rome in the first century AD.

This Graeco-Roman medicine that politically expanding Islam adopted was represented largely as a form of Galenism. This meant a synthesis of the various Greek philosophical influences that had shaped Galen's notion of human procreation and the body. Galen's ideas derived from Greek culture and cosmology, which itself was rooted in the maintenance of a primarily agrarian political economy and territorial control by the ruler. Thus, Galen appropriated the idea of the world as divided between the 'spheres' or planets. These had perfect form and movement, but neither generation nor decay. According to Galen there was a sublunary half to the world in which form and matter were continuously in transformation. Like Hippocrates, he saw the earth as located in the sublunary sphere, where nature

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conditioned generation. He explained the functioning of nature's laws using Aristotle's understanding, which was structured around a series of oppositions and correspondences: hot and cold, wet and dry. In this Galen was influenced by the analogical reasoning of reed cosmology which treated the universe as a macrocosm perfectly reflected in the human microcosm. Thus he, like Aristotle and Hippocrates, believed that the human body itself had a hierarchy of oppositions and correspondences the humours that had to be kept in balance with the elements of nature so as to maintain good health. And for him the body was itself created out of the mixing of two opposites: hot semen and cold ovum. Health, as framed by Greek cosmology, was very much part of social well being, the human body being dependent on the maintenance of a balance within nature.

So, the Greek medical theory that Muslims came in contact with was structured on a philosophical understanding of the workings of nature as propounded by and associated with Aristotle. Primarily a political theorist, Aristotle's medical ideas mirrored the concerns of his political theory of governance. His spotlight on nature brought into salience the role of the king, who was meant to manage and administer the

bounties of nature so as to maintain social equilibrium. The kingdom was like the body and the king its main physician. Just as the humoral equilibrium of the body had to be maintained for good health, so social equilibrium in society was to be engineered by a just kind to maintain a stable polity. As the propagator of this theory Aristotle, the foremost political theorist, was revered in medical circles as well.

The Umayyads (661-750) and the Abbasids (750-1258) showed immense interest on Greek medical and political philosophical literature. It became part of the core of their intellectual heritage. The caliphs Al Mansur, Harun Rashid, and Al Mamun were instrumental in translating the corpus of Greek and Syriac medical literature into Arabic and integrating this Graeco-Roman intellectual legacy of philosophy and medicine into the Arab sciences. Special departments, the Bayt-al Hikmat, were set up in Baghdad to oversee the translation and compilation of Graeco-Roman texts. Here Arab Christian physicians like Hunayn ibn Ishaq (808-73), and his son Ishaq and nephew Hubaysh, translated from Greek into Arabic texts such as Hippocrate's Aphorisms and Galen's De Differentiis Februm and De Typis Februm, among others.

In this period, medical

knowledge came also to Damascus and Baghdad from India. Trade in Indian medicines between the Middle East and Hindustan had been in the hands of Arab traders much before the consolidation of the caliphate. But Indian medical texts also attracted the Persians and Arabs. In fact the physician Perzoes from the Sassanian Empire had been dispatched to India to procure medical literature which was then translated into Persian. But it was in the period of the Umayyad and the Abbasid caliphates that intellectual exchange of ideas in medicine and science between the two regions began in some earnest. Yahya bin Khalid, the Arab general who laid the foundation of the caliphate, not only invited Hindustani vaidas (medicine men) to Baghdad, but also sent a man there to collect information about Indian plants and herbs. Such emissaries interacted with certain Brahmins, who were the repositories of medicinal knowledge, which remained confined in family records. In the Abbasid caliphate, as early as in the reign of Caliph Mansur, an important intellectual from Hindustan is reported to have been in Baghdad and presented his medical book, Siddhanta, to the caliph. This kind of exchange increased in the time of his successor, Harun Rashid, who invited several vaidas from Hindustan to cure him of his illness.

Many of them were associated with the departments he set up to promote the collection of scholarly manuscripts of all disciplines the Bayt-al Hikmat. These included the famous Vaid ibn Saleh, Manka, Bazigar, Qalbarqal, Bahlah, Ibn Dhan, and Khatif Hindi. Two of these, Manka and Ibn Dhan, settled in Baghdad, Ibn Dhan was made the chief officer of the biggest hospital, or shifakhaana, in Baghdad, and he translated into Arabic the famous Sanskrit books on Ayurveda Sushruta on surgery and sameeka on the cures for poisons. Large-scale translations of Sanskrit medical literature into Arabic went on under the aegis of the Bayt-al Hikmat in Baghdad. Manka translated into Persian a Sanskrit book on poisons sarat, and sanjahl, another Indian, translated the work of Charaka into Persian: the latter had already been translated into Arabic.

The Abbasids also dispatched men of learning to Hindustan to explore both texts and material medica. Harun Rashid's prime minister sent an agent to Hindustan to collect and bring back medicines in use there. Many such agents learnt Sanskrit, which they saw as the key to Indian medical knowledge. One such scholar was Muhammad bin Ismael Tanoji, an expert on the ninth-century physician who lived in Baghdad, al Razi. He lived in Hindustan for years, learnt Sanskrit, and

gathered expertise in psychology (himyaat). And he was not alone. Since Indian courts in this period were also keen to hold discussions (munaazra) on culture and religion with foreigners, many scholars travelled to India with enthusiasm. They often ended up living in India and translating Sanskrit texts into Arabic and vice versa. Al Beruni's was an important case in point. Via such travellers a rich literature was generated in Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit, often under state patronage, which reflected this dialogue.

By the thirteenth century Unani medicine had acquired a truly global character that corresponded to the cultural, political, and trading contours of Dar al Islam. And because the contours of Dar al Islam embraced Christian, Jewish, Hindu, and a range of other civilizations, it could never be imprinted only with the seal of Islam. Indeed it took on the flavour of the different civilizations over which it expanded. In the Indian context, therefore, it can be safely called Indo-Muslim medicine. However, it is more generally known as Unani in the subcontinent. This is because the Muslims acknowledged its cultural heterogeneity and christened their medical tradition on the name of the country they had adopted it from Greece. And hence the name 'Yunani' or Unani, i.e. Greek. The truly global and trans-religious

character of Unani was best reflected in the names of medicines that Unani offered: Qist-i-Hindi (qist from Hindustan), Saazakh-i-Hindi, Aaloo Bukhaara (fruit from Bukhara), Ajwain-i-khurasani (ajwain from Khurasan), Salib-i-Misri (salih from Egypt), Namak-i-Lahori (salt from Lahore), Dar Cheeni (Herb from China), Gul-i-Armani (flower from Armani) Gul-i-Multani (flower from Multan), Gul-i-Dakhghastani, Afsanteen-i-Rumi (afsanteen from Rome), Gulnaar-i-Farsee (fruit from Persia), Asgand-i-Nagori (asgond from Nagor,) etc.

This variety of medical influences stimulated Islami authors to classify the borrowed Greek medical knowledge in large encyclopaedic medical works. This huge compendium of medical literature in Arabic included not just translations of Hippocrates and Galen but also many lesser works written later and attributed to them. The encyclopaedic compendiums borrowed freely from earlier works and did not always acknowledge their sources, a classic example being the enormously influential Canon of Medicine (al Qanun fi tibb) by Ibn Sina (Avicenna). The text stands at the end of a long tradition of Galenic scholarship that had formalized and idealized Galen's work, as Galen himself had done with Hippocrates.

Texts like Canon that were compiled as anthologies of information culled from a variety of

sources, and only occasionally containing references, became a characteristic feature of medieval Islamic manuscript production. They were comparable to the florilegia (literally 'nosegays of readings') genre of anthological literature in medieval Europe. And, as in medieval Europe, in the Islamic florilegia literature reverence for ancient authority coincided with extraordinary indifference to textual authenticity. Thus, the famous Abbasid translator Hunain Ibn Ishaq is said to have translated or supervised the translation of more than 129 works of Galen into Arabic and Syriac. Many of these then appeared as fragments in other medical encyclopedic texts of Arab authors like al Jurjani and Avicenna (Ibn Sina). But many texts attributed to Galen in this list were not authentic, and were in fact spurious. Medieval medical encyclopedic compendiums, often 'deauthorized' or attributed spurious authorship, 'decanonized', and 'detheorized' ancient authorities of knowledge even as they certified their own knowledge via the status of the knower or the source. Such texts in Arabic were stylistically austere. They offered nuggets of medical wisdom. And they delinked medicine from ideas about individual comportment.

Unani's medical rationality thus derived both from Graeco-

Roman philosophical traditions as well as Ayurvedic ideas. This wide range of influences resulted in the development of a medical writing style that was encyclopedic and which did not necessarily acknowledge or accurately record its sources. This was particularly true in the borrowings from Ayurveda, which was very much a part of Unani's intellectual legacy but remained unacknowledged. In fact after al Razi Arab medical writers seldom made any reference to Indian medical works excepting Charaka and Sushruta, to which some of them referred in connection with drugs and medicaments. For instance Ibn Sina, in his encyclopedic Canon, quotes Indian opinions only on the toxicity of leeches and only mentions the name of Charaka in connection with therapeutics. Al Razi is equally silent. Later medical encyclopedias, like the twelfth-century Zakhirah-i-Khwarzmshahi of al Jurjani, are equally silent on Ayurvedic influences, even though they are so clearly visible, especially in their sections on surgery.

Of course, not acknowledging sources can be explained as being part of the medieval Islamic literary style; yet it also had to do with the fact that Unani's core, which lay entrenched in pre-Islamic philosophical traditions, had made it evolve as a system of medicine that saw itself

separate from any distinct religio-cultural belief systems. In contrast, Ayurveda was entrenched in the Hindu idea that saw the physician the void as the incarnation of God. Thus, the most famous void, the physician Charaka, was seen as the incarnation of the Hindu serpent god with a hundred heads; and the surgeon Sushruta was seen to have divine powers as well because he was a student of the divine physician Dhanvantari who had been recovered from the ocean along with thirteen gems. Ayurveda had mixed notions of healing based on magic and superstition with psychosomatic cures of the Graeco-Roman type; but its links with Hindu spirituality remained. Unani therefore steered clear of the diagnostic theories of Ayurveda. It confined it self to benefiting form Ayurveda's surgical and pharmaceutical resources.

Unani medicine derived its cultural authority by combining ideas of Islamic cosmology and procreation with the Graeco-Roman and Sanskritic cosmological frameworks that framed the health of society. Thus the Islamic formulation about the essential unity of being (tauhid), the Quranic idea of seven earths and heavens, the Divine pedestal, and the Throne, and the sacred history and sacred geography that the Quran generated were integrated to Greek concepts of the universe, the latter being divided into a non-

generative sphere and a sublunary sphere of generation and transformation (which included the mineral, plant, and animal kingdoms). The essential unity of being (tauhid) so Aristotelian idea of the human body as a microcosm of the macrocosm represented by universe nature. In brief, Unani medicine took over Greek ideas of nature's functioning to understand the health of the human built itself on Greek cosmology and physiology and earned for itself a 'cosmopolitan' cask.

In the period of classical Islam, Unani remained very protective about its Graeco-Roman intellectual legacy and the humoral theory central to health. The four humours –red and black bile, blood, and phlegm-had to be balanced for good health. These had also to be in harmony with the four elements: earth, air, fire, and water. The idea of a porous body conditioned by its environment was the key to Unani diagnostics and therapeutics. To this basic idea was added the knowledge of Aristotle's rationality, which focused on the functioning of organs, and Galen's contribution to human anatomy.

The development of Unani as a mechanistic medicine separated from religion and deriving from pre-Islamic philosophical traditions caused a clash with theologians and those saw medicine as a cultural system of beliefs embedded in the Quran

and the Hadith (traditions of the Prophet). And theologians were not the only opponents. As Islamic mysticism-Sufism- grew in popularity and respectability in the later Abbasid caliphate, its thinkers attributed healing powers to saints and shrines and questioned the calims of medicine. For instance, the prominent Sufi thinker al Ghazali of the twelfth century was a staunch critic of medicine.

The rejection of Unani by the theocracy traditionalists was particularly strong towards the end of the Abbasid caliphate. This period saw in the hakim a serious lack of the period of the caliphates. As the debate picked up, a defence of medicine began by people who claimed religion for medicine. A certain Abd-al-Wadud son of Abd-al-Malik, who lived in this period, wrote an essay translatable as 'the blamelessness of making a living from the craft of ,medicine' (Fi Dhama at-takassub bi-sina at at tibt). Here, he argues that medicine cannot be seen as anti religion since its subject (maudu) is man-the noblest of God's creation. This, he argues, not only makes medicine fall within the framework of religion, but also renders it the noblest of crafts. And there were many others who defended medicine in this manner.

The most strident resistance to Unani came from a competitive movement based on indigenous Arab medical traditions. These

traditions were sanctified by being attributed to the Holy Prophet-who may have given medical advice occasionally. This medical tradition referred to the Quran and the Hadith as the highest referents of legitimacy and transformed tribal Bedouin medical lore into an intrinsic part of the holy legacy of the Prophet. This Islamically inspired medical system is referred to by anthropologists and historians as Prophetic medicine, and it competed with the Arabic-Persian or Galenic-driven Unani.

By the fourteenth century exclusive texts on Prophetic medicine began to be written as a genre of medical literature, separate from Unani. These derived from the Hadith compendium. As Prophetic medicine came into its own, it expanded on the Hadith works ran into innumerable volumes, each sometimes 400 pages. Its texts aimed to counter the authority of Galenic medicine via its appropriation of the Prophet's authority and to thus weaken the hold of physician. This literature was written by traditionalists who were attempting to spiritualize and Islamicize medicine, deploying the Quran and the Hadith. They steered clear of medical theory and instead offered advice and prescriptions on the prevention of disease. They also tried to make medicine comprehensible and accessible to the layman. They

defined health in the Islamic tradition to mean spiritual, psychological, physical, and moral well being. Medication was not rejected, but was seen as a part of this Islamic notion of well being. Thus the two fourteenth century authors, Ibn Qayyim al Jauziya and al Surramarri, were among the early contributors to the genre of Prophetic medicine. These authors in fact combined divinely ordained medicines associated with the Prophet with those offered by medical pharmacopeias.

Finally, the Greek and Indian imprint, rather than the Islamic influence, was most evident in the Unani theory of governance corresponding with a similarly structured political theory of governance. Such correspondence had been a feature of both Greek and Indian political culture. The correspondence of medical and political theories of governance had, as we saw, been a feature of both Greek and Indian of political culture. The correspondence of medical and political theories of governance had, as we saw, been a running theme in Greek philosophy whereby Aristotle made the king alert to the maintenance of the physical health of both his physical body and that of his body politic or kingdom. Unani found this idea replicated in Ayurveda, where, as we saw, medical texts and texts on politics—the Dharmashatras—were put together by the same Brahmanical castes to

consolidate the position of high-caste kings. This idea of medical theory aiding a political theory of governance found echoes in Islamic theories of political governance as well, penned by Muslim philosophers such as Nasir al-Din Tusi in the thirteenth century. Muzaffar Alam has shown that the akhlaaq genre of Persian literature, which discussed theories of governance in Islamic lands, discussed shariat in its non-judicial sense, and defined justice (adl) using the terminology of medical rationality derived from Greek philosophical traditions. Thus, a just society was a healthy society; justice was defined as a state of social harmony, co-ordination, and balance between different classes; as the maintenance of the equilibrium of a healthy body was the job of the physician, the role of the king lay in ensuring social balance.

This notion of medical theory underlying political governance was, as we will see below, used more and more in Mughal India, as Unani medicine tried to wedge itself in society under the court patronage of a minority Muslim ruling house within a predominantly Hindu country. Indeed, the role of the king for the Mughals had to strive to maintain power over a religiously diverse society. In fact, in Mughal India, the court's decision to offer *patronage* to Unani learning and practice extended the role of the king as one who was not just metaphorically responsible for the health of society, but as the personage who must quite literally ensure the physical health of his subjects. ●

A Commitment made by Allah

Sayyid Qutb

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Beneficent

Say: To whom do the heavens and the earth belong? Say: To Allah. He has committed Himself self to bestow grace and mercy. (Cattle, Al-Anaam:6-12

The surah begins here to give Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) certain instruction of a confrontation with the polytheists who were fully aware that Allah is the Creator of the whole universe, but they nevertheless, made certain beings, who have no power to create, equal to Him. They associate partners with Him whom they claim to have say in conducting their lives. The Prophet is instructed to confront them with a question about the ownership of everything that is in the heavens and on Earth, after these things have been created. as the question is put, it is meant to include every single position in the whole universe. It is followed by a statement of fact over which they did not argue. The Qur'an tells us elsewhere that they used to acknowledge it fully: "Say: To whom do the heavens and the earth belong? Say: To Allah."

Despite the depth of their ignorance which resulted in deviant concepts that devalued their quality of life, the Arabs in their pre-Islamic days were superior in this particular aspect to latter day "scientific" ignorance

which does not acknowledge this fact. This modern ignorance shuts its mind to this fact while Arab used to recognize and admit that Allah owned everything in the heavens and on Earth. However, they did not bring that recognition to its logical conclusion which would have required them to acknowledge Allah's total authority over what he owns and that the only proper way to use what Allah has created is to get His permission and to act according to His law. Because of that, the Arabs were considered polytheists and their style of life was described as ignorant. How should those who deny Allah's authority to legislate for human existence and, instead, exercise that authority themselves should then be described? They must be given a description other than that of polytheism. Allah describes them as unbelievers, wrongdoers and transgressors, no matter how strongly they claim to be Muslims and regardless of what religion is entered in their birth certificates.

The Qur'anic verse follows this statement of asserting Allah's ownership in the heavens and on Earth by stating that He "has committed Himself to bestow grace and mercy". He is the sole, undisputed owner of the whole universe. Out of His generosity and by

His own will, He has however, committed Himself to bestow grace and mercy. No one could suggest this exercise of bestowing grace to Him or require it of Him, apart from His absolutely free will and His compassionate lordship over the universe. Grace and mercy is the basic rule in His treatment of and judgment over his servants in this life and in the life to come. Believing in this rule is one of the constituents of the Islamic concept of life. Even when Allah tests His mercy takes precedence. Indeed, the test is meant to prepare a group of them for the fulfillment of the trust He assigns to them after they have proved their dedication to His cause and preparedness to sacrifice for it. He actually sorts out the good among them from the bad: keen to follow Allah's messenger distinguish themselves from those who turn back on their heels. The exercise of mercy and the bestowing of grace in all this are manifest.

If we were to try to make an exhaustive list of incident and occasions of the bestowing of Allah's mercy and how it is reflected in life, we need to devote our whole lives to that. Indeed generations can come and go, before this task can be accomplished. In every moment Allah's grace is showered over people. We have only pointed out mercy as reflected in hard tests, because often people do not see it as such. We have no inclination to attempt to make a full list of the occasions and the incidents where

Allah's mercy is brought into action. We will only make some brief references to that. However, we need to reflect a little on the way this Qur'anic statement is phrased. "He has committed Himself to bestow grace and mercy." The same statement is repeated again in this surah with a slight difference: "Your Lord has committed Himself to (bestow) grace and mercy." What immediately attracts our attention in this statement is the fact that Allah, the Creator, the Owner, the Almighty who has power over all His servants grants them the favor of making the exercise of His mercy and grace a commitment to which He has bound himself out of His own free will. This is a great fact which we can hardly contemplate and appreciate. There is however, yet another favor here which attracts our attention. This is manifested in the fact that He has also favored His servants with telling them of having servants with telling them of having committed Himself to bestow grace and exercise mercy.. Who are human beings to deserve the favor of being told of what Allah has willed, and for the communication to be given in Allah's own words through His own messenger? It is a great favor which can only be bestowed by Allah, the most graceful.

When we reflect in this way on this fact, we feel a mixture of surprise and happiness which no words can describe. Indeed, such facts and the effects they make on the human mind are indescribable by human

language. Humans, however, can appreciate though they cannot define them.

To appreciate this fact forms a part of our understanding of the nature of godhood and the relationship between Allah and His servants. It is a pleasant, comforting and reassuring understanding which makes you wonder at those perverted minds which level accusations at Islam because it rejects the very idea of Allah having a son. Islam has no time for such childish visions. At the same time, it describes the relationship of grace and mercy between Allah and His servants in a way in which no human language can express. Yet Allah's mercy is extended to all His servants throughout their lives. We can only refer to some of its main aspects. It is reflected in the very existence of mankind who originate from where they do not know and are given a noble position which we recognize in the qualities Allah bestow on many of His servants. It is also reflected in the forces and resources of the universe which Allah has made subservient to man. This is indeed the broader view of the meaning of the provisions Allah has given to man to enable him to live in comfort and affluence. It is further reflected in granting man the ability to learn and to make his talents and abilities responsive to the world around him. The result is the knowledge man achieves through Allah's existence. Again, this knowledge Allah has given to man is part of the grace He has bestowed on him.

It is further reflected in the role Allah has assigned to man as

vicegerent, and the care He takes of him by sending messengers to him to give him guidance. Nevertheless, Allah treats man with forbearance despite his stubborn refusal to listen to the warnings of Allah's grace oversteps his punishment. It is further reflected in the fact that Allah forgives in the fact that Allah forgives man his sins every time he repents of them. In the same vein, we can mention the fact that when Allah punishes man, His punishment is administered on the basis of what is exactly equivalent to his bad deeds. On the other hand, Allah rewards him for his good deeds at least ten times their value and he may increase that manifold for whomever He wills. Furthermore, a good deed erases an earlier bad one.

All that is part of Allah's grace because no human being can earn admission into heaven on the basis of his or her actions alone, unless Allah bestows His mercy on them. Allah's messenger states that this applies also to him, acknowledging man's shortcomings and Allah's grace.

It is only appropriate to acknowledge that it is impossible for us to attempt to make any exhaustive list of the aspects of Allah's mercy and grace. Suffice it to say that it is beyond human ability to reflect on and appreciate the full significance of one moment in which Allah opens the gates of His mercy to His servant to give him a feeling of security and reassurance. To the feelings it generates is a much harder task. ●

(Islamic Voice)

Maulana Ibrahim Nadwi Madani Passes Away

Maulana Ibrahim Nadwi Madani a senior member of the faculty of Darul-Uloom Nadwatul-Ulama, Lucknow passed away on 3 July 2010. His funeral Namaz was led by principal Darul Uloom Nadwatul-Ulama Dr. Saeedur Rahman Al-Azami Al-Nadwi on the premises of D.N.U. He was buried in Daliganj graveyard, Lucknow.

Born in 1956 at Rudauli, Faizabad, U.P. he learnt the holy Qur'an by heart in Nadwa. In 1979 he did his Masters in Arabic Literature from Darul-Uloom Nadwatul Ulama. Thereafter he went to Jamia Islamia Madina Munawwarah, Saudi Arabia. In 1983 he was deputed as *Mabus* (Representative for Dawa Activities) from Darul Ifta Ryad, K.S.A. After returning from K.S.A. he served as Dai as well as teacher in Darul Uloom Sabilur Rashad Bangalore and taught there for a few years. He was appointed as Lecturer in Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama and taught here till his demise. He was an embodiment of all sublime qualities and virtues, necessary for a good teacher and Dai. Maulana was a good writer of Arabic. He has written a good number of articles published in *Al-Raid* and *Al-Baas-el-Islami*. Both are Nadwa's Arabic organs. He was also warden of Mahdul-Qur'an hostel. He performed his duties with honesty and integrity. May Allah adorn his grave with luminosity and refulgence and grant peace to his soul. Ameen! ●

(Obaidur Rahman Nadwi)

The Relationship Between Ramdan and the Qur'an

Abdur Rashid Siddique

"O mankind. There has come to you an exhortation from your Lord, and a healing for what is in the breasts, and a guidance, and a mercy for believers." Say: "In the bounty of Allah and His Mercy – in that let them rejoice; it is better than that they amass. (Yunus 10: 57-8)

Glory and greatness is for Allah (swt) and His Book. The Qur'an is the greatest blessing bestowed on human beings. We are fortunate to be endowed with this blessing. This is the blessing of which there cannot be any comparison with any other blessing, as Allah, the Most Merciful has mentioned in the verses. The four qualities of the Qur'an enumerated in these verses are as follows:

First, the Qur'an is an exhortation (Maw'izah) from Allah. People are living in ignorance. They are blindfolded and are being led towards their doom. They are oblivious of their predicament. Thus, the Glorious Qur'an is an exhortation and an admonition to warn them of imminent danger. In other verses, Allah gives the additional qualities of the Qur'an.

Here is a plain statement to

people, a guidance and exhortation to those who fear Allah. (Al'Imran 3: 138)

O mankind! Verily there has come to you a convincing proof from your Lord: for We have sent unto you a light (that is) manifest. (al-Nisa' 4: 174)

Taking all these verses into account it is evident that the Glorious Qur'an is a clear statement, a declaration with convincing proofs regarding basic beliefs. Thus, it should guide humanity towards the Right Path that is neither dark nor shrouded in mystery. It is the Straight Path that is manifest and brightly lit. It is in the interest of all human beings to pay heed to these exhortations and admonitions.

Second, the Qur'an is a healing of hearts (shifa' li ma fis-sudur). The Qur'an is a healing for diseases of the heart. According to Qur'anic terminology the heart is not a pump which helps the circulation of blood, but rather it stands for the whole human personality- a person's emotions, motivations and his entire personality. This is well illustrated by many verses of the Qur'an and

ahadith.

In their hearts is a disease.
(al-Baqarah 2: 10)

Truly it is not their eyes that are blind, but their hearts which are in their breasts. (al-Hajj 22: 46)

But only he (will prosper) that brings to Allah a sound heart. (al-Shu'ara' 26: 89)

Narrated by 'Abdullah al-Nu'man ibn Bashir

Allah's messenger (peace be upon him) said: "Truly in the body there is a morsel of flesh which, if it be sound, the whole body is sound and which, if it be diseased, all of it is diseased. Truly it is the heart". (Bukhari and Muslim)

So what are diseases of the heart? Of course these are hypocrisy, envy, jealousy, pride, evil desires, corrupt motivations and the like. How does the Qur'an cure these diseases? By inculcating Taqwa (God Consciousness) and accountability on the Day of Judgement.

Third, the Qur'an is a Book of Guidance. It enlightens human beings and provides them with inner insight that leads them to the Right Path:

But to those who receive Guidance, He increases the (light of) Guidance, and bestows on them their Piety and Restraint (from evil). (Muhammad 47: 17)

Finally, one of the most

manifest qualities of Allah (swt) is Mercy. His Mercy engulfs everything. The Revelation of the Holy Qur'an is His act of Mercy:

(Allah) the Most Merciful! It is He Who has taught the Qur'an. (al-Rahman 55:1-2)

Thus, it is the Mercy of the Qur'an that is saving humanity from the abyss of ignorance and leading them to light from darkness.

As there is no greater blessing than al-Qur'an, Allah (swt) has decreed the month in which the Qur'an was revealed as the Month of Blessing. The night in which the revelation began as the Night of Power (Laylat al-Qadr) and the Night of Blessing (Laylah Mubarakah) and fasting is ordained in this month. Thus, when this Bounty and Mercy have come down it is incumbent upon mankind to be joyous and celebrate this event and honour His Guidance. In this way, the month of Ramadan is the celebration of the descent of Allah's Mercy and Guidance:

Ramadan is the month in which was sent down the Qur'an as a guide to mankind, also clear Signs for guidance and criterion (for judging right and wrong). So every one of you who is present during this month should fast. (al-Baqarah 2: 185)

Indeed We have revealed

this (al-Qur'an) in the Night of Power: (al-Qadr 97:1)

Indeed We sent it down during a Blessed Night for We wish to warn (against evil). (al-Dukhan 44:3)

Some may question the necessity of fasting in this blessed and joyous month. Let me explain. In order to receive the Guidance one needs preparation. As with a gardener, who wants to plant seeds, the soil has to be prepared before sowing. Similarly, hearts have to be prepared to receive this shower of Mercy. Only through this preparation will the soul germinate and prosper. This has been the practice of Allah throughout the ages. All Prophets have to spend time in fasting and seclusion before receiving Guidance from Allah. We know that our beloved Prophet (peace be upon him) spent many months in the Cave of Hira' before receiving Revelations from Allah.

The other reason is that fasting creates Taqwa (God-Consciousness) which makes hearts receptive to Guidance. And just as we know that there are seasons and specific times for cultivating and planting shrubs and trees in the natural world, if we disregard them the trees will

neither flourish nor bear fruit despite our utmost efforts. It is the same in the spiritual world. There are specific times and places, which are set aside, for cultivating souls and for concentrating on a specific day and time. Hajj is performed in a specific month on prescribed dates. Similarly, the month of Ramadan is ordained for Fasting. The Night of Qadr is decreed to be better than a thousand months in its blessedness.

The Blessed month of Ramadan is with us. Are we preparing ourselves to receive this Guidance and Blessing of Allah (swt)? How should we rejoice in the Mercy and Blessing of Allah (swt)? How can we seek the treasures which await us in the Holy Qur'an? Is this to be achieved by reading the Holy Qur'an endlessly, turning pages laboriously, reciting its words beautifully, studying it in a most scholarly way? We do all these regularly but fail to collect its priceless gems and come away empty handed – souls untouched, hearts unmoved and our lives unchanged. The Blessings of the Qur'an are limitless, but it depends on the capacity and suitability of our own receptacle which we bring to receive it.

We recite the Holy Qur'an, sadly, often without any real understanding. For us, recitation (tilawat) is mere reading without using the faculty of our hearts and minds. We have to enter the Qur'an in the appropriate manner. What then is the appropriate manner? The Majestic Qur'an explains it for us:

Those to whom We have given the Book, they recite it as it ought to be recited, it is they who believe in it. (al-Baqarah 2:121)

Tilawah is to follow, not just to read: to abide closely with and go in pursuit of, to take it as a guide and to accept its authority. So, when we read, we should try to understand, follow and act upon its Guidance. Thus, tilawah involves our whole personality – soul, heart, mind, tongue and body. This is graphically illustrated by the Glorious Qur'an:

For believers are those who, when Allah's name is mentioned, their hearts quake, and when His verses are recited to them their faith grows, and who put their trust in their Lord. (al-Anfal 8: 2)

Allah has revealed the best discourse in the form of a Book, consistent with itself oft-repeating whereat shiver the skin of those who fear their Lord; then their skins and hearts soften to the remembrance of Allah. (al-Zumar 39: 23)

The verse from surah Yunus quoted earlier is addressed to the whole of mankind, not just to Muslims. This clearly means that the Message needs to be transmitted to everyone, so that all human beings throughout all ages can benefit from it.

Two questions which emerge at

this stage are: What efforts are we making to understand the message to the Holy Qur'an? How are we preparing to extend the blessings of Allah (swt) to out fellow human beings?

These questions remind us of the true purpose of our lives: come, let us join hand and engage ourselves in bringing the Message of the Holy Qur'an. Let us remind the Muslim Ummat of its responsibility to present Islam to humanity at large. This is the means to gain the pleasure of Allah (swt) and the way to fulfil our purpose in life.

Let us pray that Allah, the Almighty may help us in disseminating the Message the Holy Qur'an. ● (Amin)

Night of Power

The pre-eminence of Lailatul qudr (The Night of Power) has been repeatedly stressed in the Quran and the Traditions.

The Quran says:

Lo! We revealed it on the Night of Power.

Ah, What will convey unto thee what the Night of power is!

The Night of Power is better than a thousand months.

The angels and the Holy Spirit (Gabriel) descend therein, by the permission of Their Lord, with all decrees.

(The night is) Peace until the rising of the dawn. ● (--xcvii)

The Blessed Month of Ramadhan

Ramadhan is the month of peace, tranquility, piety, righteousness, generosity and bestowal. Of the five tenets of Islam, fasting in the month of Ramadhan is a must every year. During fast one must abstain from eating, drinking and smoking including inoculation and injections from dawn to dusk. In this context the verses of the Holy Quran which ordain for fasting as an obligatory duty for Muslims are as follows:

"O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you that ye may (learn) self restraint." (Fasting) for a fixed number of days; but if any of you is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed number should be made up from later days. For those who can do it (with hardship), is a ransom, the feeding of one that indigent, but he that will give more, of his own free will, it is better for him, and it is better for ye that ye face, if ye only knew". (S.2,A.183-184)

Ramadhan's significance can be gauged from the fact that "the Quran was revealed to prophet Muhammad(PBUH) in this month as a guide to mankind, also clear (signs) for guidance and judgment (between right and wrong). So every one of you who is present at his house during that month should spend it in fasting, but if any one is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed period (should be made up) by days later. God intends every facility for you; He does not want to put you to

difficulties. He wants you to complete the prescribed period, and to glorify Him in that He has guided you; and perchance ye shall be grateful. (S.2,A.185)

Needless to add that like Salat (Prayers), fasting has been an essential duty for the followers of earlier Prophets. The Bible says that Jesus Christ fasted for forty days (Matthew 4: 1-4, Mark 1:12-13 and Luke 4:1-4). In Peter 2:21 the followers of Christ are enjoined to fast as the Prophet did. Even the Vedas and the Puranas prescribe fasting. Thus earlier peoples fasted though with a difference in the number of days and the prescribed time of fasting. (Radiance)

It should be kept in mind that this particular month has been considered sacred even from pre-Islamic days too. Ibn-Hisham states that the Qurayesh in the days of ignorance spent one month a year on Mt. Hira, practicing penance (Tahannuth). Before instituting fasting of Ramadhan Muhammad (PBUH) evidently observed fast on the tenth of Moharram". (History of the Arabs, p. 133)

During Ramadhan evil conceals itself while good comes to the fore and the whole atmosphere is filled with piety and purity. The holy prophet says: "The deed of son of Adam is increased several times (in Ramdhan) and the reward is increased by ten times. But Allah says that fasting is exclusively for Him and He himself will deliver its

reward (to His bondsmen) as he abstains from eating and controls his desires only for Him. There are (two instances) of happiness for the fasting Muslim, one is at the time of breaking his fast and the other at the time meeting his Lord. And verily to Allah, the smell of fasting person's breath is the best and cleanliest. "The prophet of Islam also says: There is a door of paradise called Rayyan towards which only the fasting will be called. Only the fastings will be called. Only the fastings will enter it and those who enter it will never feel thirsty.

It is related by Abu Hurairah that the Apostle of Allah said: "when the month of Ramzan' comes, the Gates of Heaven are thrown open, and the Gates of Hell are shut, and the devils are put behind the bar." (In another report, the "Gates of Mercy" are mentioned in place of the "Gates of Heaven." (Bukhari and Muslim)

"Salman Farsi narrates that the Apostle of Allah delivered a sermon on the last day of Sha'aban in which he said: "O my people! You are on the threshold of a month of great solemnity and blessings. It is a month whose one night is better than a thousand months. God has prescribed fasting in this month and make Taraweeh prayers optional Whosoever willingly and with good intentions does one good act in this month will have the merit of having done an obligatory act in other months and one who does a prescribed act in this month it will be equal to seventy prescribed act of other months. This is the month of endurance and the reward of endurance is paradise and this the month of sympathy with and care of the

needy men of the community". (Mishkat)

It is related by AbuHurairah that the Apostle of Allah said: "Whoever omits even a single fast of Ramazan without the legal concession of a journey etc. or (a valid excuse like that of illness), amends cannot be made for the thing that is omitted even though he observes fasting throughout the life." (Tirmizi)

It is needless to add that fasting is a shield against sins, crimes, vices and other un Islamic acts. The prophet says: "Fast is like a shield for protection from satan's attack. Therefore, when one observes fast he should use this shield and abstain from quarreling. If anybody abuses him or quarrels with him, he should simply say: Brother, I am fasting do not expect me to indulge in similar conduct (Bukhari & Muslim)

To restore real spirit of fast, it is incumbent to observe it with prescribed rules and regulations. The noble prophet said: "If one does not give up speaking a lie during fast, God does not require him to give up eating and drinking (Bukhari).

On another occasion, he said: "Many are the people who fast but who gain nothing from their fasts except hunger and thirst: and many are those who stand praying all night but gain nothing except sleeplessness (Darimi)"

To sum up the fasting according to Islam, is a spiritual discipline and as a consequence it inculcates moral discipline. It imparts moral strength and leads to the promotion of virtues of piety. ●

An Introduction to the Socio-Religious Reforms of Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi

Zarfishan Salees*

Hakim al-Ummat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi stands out a prominent figure in India in the 20th century. He was at once a Mujaddid, Muhaddith, Faqih, Imam of Tasawwuf and an out standing writer. He was one of the best amongst the prominent personalities of his age. He is referred to by many south Asian Muslims as Hakim-al-Ummah (Spiritual physician of Muslim Ummah) and Mujaddid-al-Millah (Reformer of the Nation). He stood out as a towering personality of Islamic revival and reawakening of South Asia in the twentieth century. He belonged to a period when Muslims were physically and intellectually under attack by the Western colonial powers and the Arya Samaj Hinduism.

He also played a vital role in the Muslim world as a jurist. He left some master pieces in Islamic theology like his Qur'anic commentary Bayan al-qur'an, Bahisthi Zewar and many more." Apart from the spiritual field he contributed in almost every field for the betterment of Muslim ideas, not only in his time but for the coming generations of Muslims too in all spheres of life may it be religious, political, social or economical. It is quite difficult to confine all his qualifications and virtues of his knowledge within a short article. In this article emphasis is made on the personality of Maulana Ashraf Ali

Thanvi as a prolific writer, reformist of the society and Mujaddid of Tariqah.

A great traditionalist and moralist Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi was born in Thana Bhawan (a village in the Muzaffar Nagar District of the U.P. Province of India) on the 5th Rabi al-Awwal, 1280 A.H./ 19th August 1863 A.D. From the earliest days his native place was much popular for its prosperity, power and education. This area was famous for Muslim scholarship and his ancestors figured amongst them.

His father Haji Abdul Haq was a rich man of this area belonging to an aristocratic family and also occupied a great seat of respect among the Indian Muslims. He was well versed in Persian language and also possessed extraordinary knowledge of the Holy Qur'an.

His Ancestors:

Approximately during the Ghaznavid period, Maulana's ancestors migrated to India. His great grandfather Sultan Shahab-al-Din "Farukhshah", king of Kabul, was the commander-in-chief in the Ghaznavid army and after the fall of Ghaznavids he migrated to "Thanesar" Distt. Karnal (India) and settled there. After some time he left the worldly affairs and started living aloof from the society and attached himself to Chishti Darveshes. To these personalities belong Hazrat

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Mujaddid Alf-Thani, Shaikh Jalal Uddin Thanesari and Shaikh Fareed Uddin Ganj-e-Shakar.

Among Maulana's forefathers, a famous personality Sadruddin Jahan took settlement in Thana Bhawan from Thanesar, during the reign of Babar or Humayun. Previously Thana Bhawan was known as Thana Bheem after the name of Raja Bheem. But later, after the arrival of Muslims, this name was changed to Thana Bhawan from Thana Bheem. Thana Bhawan became a seat of learning which produced great personalities such as the famous Haji Imdadullah Muhajir Makki.

Maulana Thanvi was Farooqi from his father's side and Alwi from his mother's side. He lost his mother at a tender age and as such the whole responsibility of bringing up and education of the child fell on the shoulders of his father, Haji Abdul Haq. He paid proper attention to his training and education.

He started his regular academic education in Meerut. He learnt primary Persian and memorized the Qur'an under the guidance of Hafiz Hussain Ali. Then he returned to Thana Bhawan and learnt more Persian and primary Arabic from Maulana Wajid Ali and his maternal uncle Fateh Muhammad.

After learning the basics of religion he proceeded to Darul-Uloom-Deoband (Deoband Seminary) and stayed there from 1295 to 1301 A.H., where he graduated in 1301 A.H. Amongst his teachers under whom he studied were Maulana Qasim Nanotwi and Shaikh al-Hind Maulana Mehmoodul Hasan. Maulana Tharwi's six years at Deoband were spent under

the tutorship and guidance of God fearing Saints and Gnostics, many of whom were the spiritual students of Haji Imdadullah Muhajir Makki. During these days his literary life also started and he wrote Mathnawi Zer-o-Bam in Persian.

After completing the Dars-e-Nizamiyah (graduation) in 1301 A.H. he became a well versed Persian and Arabic scholar at a tender age which was a great accomplishment. He became the master of Islamic knowledge containing Grammar, etymology, Syntax, Rhetoric, Logic, Philosophy, Mathematics, Astronomy, Tasawwuf, Theology, i.e. Fiqh, Usul, Hadith, Tafseer, Kalam etc.

From the early days of this educational life he was very much impressed by Maulana Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi who was among the greatest scholars of the time and a prominent figure of the Madarsa. Maulana Thanvi says "Among my teachers, I was spiritually attached to Maulana Gangohi more than anybody else with the exception of Haji Imdadullah Muhajir Makki. I had never witnessed such a unique personality like Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi, in whom external and internal goodness merged so cohesively.

Once when Maulana Gangohi came to Deoband, Maulana Thanvi asked him to accept him as his mureed but he did not like it during student life. When Maulana Gangohi went to Hajj in 1299 A.H. he sent a letter through him to Haji Imdadullah Muhajir Makki to recommend him to accept him as his Mureed. To this Haji Sahib replied, "I accept you as my mureed. Maulana Gangohi used to say to Maulana

Thanvi, "Brother, you have eaten of the ripe fruits of Haji Imdadullah, where as we ate his unripe fruits.

It was a great honour for him that Shaikh-al-Darain accepted him as his mureed at a tender age of 19 years only and also wrote a letter to his father to bring him along when he came for Hajj. At the age of 20 years he returned to India as a Haji and Mureed of Haji Sahib after taking "Bait".

After completing his education at Deoband and performing Hajj, he settled at Kanpur and started his missionary work in the old institution known as Faid-i-Am. But soon differences arose between him and the Madarsa authorities on the point of collecting funds for the organization but he refused and resigned and did not take back his resignation. The people of Kanpur soon realized that he was a necessity for the place that the Maulana must come back and they convinced him and he stayed in Kanpur and started to teach at Jame-al-Uloom which still exists.

In the 14 years of teaching at Kanpur he produced a number of scholars who spread the knowledge throughout India. Prominent amongst his pupils of this period were Molvi Ishaq Sahib Bardanvi who succeeded Maulana Thanvi in Kanpur and who founded the Madarsa Aalya in Calcutta, Molvi Ahmad Ali Sahib who specialized in Fiqh, Molvi Fazle Haq Sahib of Allahabad, Molvi Hakim Muhammad Mustafa Sahib Bijnauri an authority of Arabic literature and logic, who wrote an explanation of Maulana Thanvi's "Al-Intibahatul-Mufeedah", Molvi Sayyid Ishaq Ali Sahib Kanpuri who was Professor of Arabic at Allahabad

University and Molvi Zafar Ahmad Sahib Uthmani who was nephew of Maulana Thanvi. He wrote "Aylaassunan" in 11 volumes on fiqh and Hadith.

Fourteen years after graduation as a teacher of religious sciences he gained much popularity and position as a sound religious scholar. In the hope of reforming people he travelled to many villages and cities delivering lectures. His lectures attracted many people and his research and publications enhanced Islamic academia. His lectures and discourses were printed and widely circulated.

The review of Mujaddid's knowledge by Syed Sulaiman Nadvi is most appropriate when he writes that:

"A short review of his qualification and virtue of knowledge is not possible as he was at the same time a translator, reciter and commentator of the Qur'an who explained its rules and removed doubts. He was also a Muhaddith and Faqih and Mufti. He gave sermons and compiled Sunnah but above all he was a Sufi who explained the secret of Tariqah by removing the doubts about Shariah and Tariqah and brought them together. The sermons that he delivered in his daily majlis have been collected from his malfoozat. He was a great reformer who opposed innovation (bida) by propagating and writing against it. He was a prolific writer and wrote hundreds of books. In short, he was the doctor of the Ummah and thus was given the title of Hakim al-Ummah.

It is to be said that for the revivalism or reformation of society of every century there is born a Mujaddid

and Maulana Thanvi was the Mujaddid of 20th A.D, like Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi And Shah Waliullah, Before him few or no scholar paid attention towards the issues of daily life and to explain in detail every minor issue of family and society. He thus occupied a high respect amongst contemporary ulama. His works and table-talks are the landmarks of his reforms and to this day stand out as the guiding principles for the Muslims of today as well as for the coming generations.

As a prolific writer this was the period of his elevation. He wrote more than a thousand books on different subjects such as Tafseer, Hadith, Fiqh, Tasawwuf, Tibb, Mantiq etc. Some of the important among them are as follows:

(1) Tarjuma al-Qur'an:

This is a simple urdu translation of Holy Qur'an. No, doubt an excellent urdu translation of Qur'an was written by Maulana Sha Rafiuddin Dehlvi but as far as the Maulana's translation is concerned it is a very simple and easy to understand. Maulana used a comprehensive and correct language, so that the common man could easily understand it, due to this quality Maulana's translation became more famous in both India and Pakistan.

(2) Bayan al-Qur'an:

This is an outstanding and remarkable contribution of maulana Thanvi. Tafseer Bayan al-Qur'an, is in 12 volumes which was completed in two and half years. It is a simple urdu commentary for the ulama as well as the general public. Through his commentary he addressed the common people and so he uses very

apprehensive and simple language in this commentary. Maulana says: 'This commentary is written with an open heart. Its value will be recognized by those who read some twenty commentaries. At difficult places, where differences of opinion persist, the issues have been solved by adding a few words in parenthesis. This is a blessing of Allah.

Simplicity and accuracy is a known quality of this Tafseer. The Maulana interpreted the Qur'an verses in common and correct language. In this Tafseer Maulana used the letter "ف" under which he enumerated the advantages of the verses and removes the doubts.

For the Fiqh and grammar discussion Maulana quoted the classical commentary of Aaloosi Baghdadi's Tafseer "Ruh-al-Ma'ani" by name. Sufi points and interpretations are elaborated very carefully in this Tafseer. Sayed Sulaiman Nadvi says: "His commentary relies heavily on "Ruh -al-Ma'ani" of Allama Aaloosi -al-Baghdadi, and because it was written in the mid - thirteenth century A.H., it encompasses all previous explanations of the Qur'an.

(3) Islah-e-Tarjuma Dehlviya:

Maulana was a reformist and he wanted to obliterate all doubts therefore he wrote this booklet. Actually, this is the answer to Sir Syed and Deputy Nazir Ahmad's translation.

Although the translation of Shah Abdul Qadir and Shah Rafi Uddin were quite sufficient but later on Sir Syed Ahmad and Deputy Nazir Ahmad published translations in which they explained their rational ideas, that were

misleading and wrong and contrary to earlier commentaries. For the purpose of the correction of these works Maulana wrote "Islah-e-Tarjuma Dehviya". He says: "I have no knowledge, no virtue but belief of ignorance with which Allah helps me. I am full of mistakes, Allah has entrusted me with the mission of reforming the people.

(4)Islah-e-Tarjuma Hairat:

A great journalist Mirza Hairat of Delhi was amazed at the general publicity of the translation of Deputy Nazir Ahmad. At first he objected to Nazir Ahmad's translation. Later he published his own translation which was probably done by one 'Alim of Lucknow because Hairat himself knew no Arabic. Anyhow, Maulana wrote "Islah-e-Tarjuma Hairat", a booklet which was a correction of Mirza Hairat's translation.

(5)Ahkam al-Quran Li'l-Thanvi:

This is an Arabic work. Of Qur'anic jurisprudence in five volumes. In this book he collected legal rulings from the Qur'an in support of the Hanafi School. This work has been written by his three outstanding students and disciples who had noted down his explanations of legal rulings and their extractions from the Qur'an. These students were Mufti Mhod Shafi, Maulana Mhod Idris Kandhelavi and Maulana Zafar Ahmad Uthmani.

Maulana Abdul Bari Nadwi said: "When Maulana Thanvi extracted Hanafi legal matters from the Qur'an, we would be astonished that this point was always contained in this verse but our knowledge could not grasp it. His explanation would remove the clouds

(of confusion), allowing us to fully benefit from his brilliance (of knowledge).

(6)Al-Taqseer fi al-Tafseer:

Some people wrote margins of the Qur'an in which mostly the connection of Aayat are discussed along with their political ideas. Maulana corrected those ideas which are out of limit of modernization under the above title.

(7)Al-Hadi Lil Hairan fi Wadi Tafsiliil Bayan:

A person from Lahore wrote a Tafseer namely, "Tafseelil Bayan fi Maqasidil Qur'an, which comprises several volumes. After a request from him the Maulana corrected it and gave it the above title.

(8)'Amale Qur'ani:

'Amale Qur'ani, Khawas-e-Furqani and Aathar -e-Tibyani, related to the medical treatment by Qur'an and Hadith. By these books he wanted to stop illegal "Tawees-Gande".

(9)Sabaqul Ghayat fi Nasqil Aayat:

This is related to Qur'anic sciences and contains 156 pages. It deals with the connection between verses and chapters of the Qur'an from the beginning to the end of Qur'an. It is based on Imam Razi's "Tafseer al-Kabir" and took two and half years to write. Syed Sulaiman Nadvi says: "He not only memorized the words of Qur'an but also memorized the deeper significance of its words.

(10)Wujuh al-Mathani:

Maulana Thanvi was also an expert in the different forms recitations of the Qur'an. In this book he compiled the famous narrations of the different

recitations.

(11) Haqiqatul-Tariqa:

This was written in 1327 A.H. In this book 330 Ahadith are mentioned in Tasawwuf in 10 chapters: Morals, Ahwal, Ashghal, Teachings, signs, virtues, habits, customs, rules statements, reforms etc. He was the first who compiled the Hadith on Tasawwuf in detail.

(12) Ahya al-Sunan:

In 1938 A.H. he diverted his attention towards the Hadith which expressed the views of the Hanafi School of thought, therefore he wrote two treatises named "Jame al-Athar" and "Taba al-Athar" and discussed the Hadith up to the chapter on Salat (prayer). He wanted to combine all chapters under one heading, so he wrote "Ahya al-Sunan" till the chapter on Hajj (Pilgrimage). Due to unknown circumstances the book was not published.

(13) Al-Takashshuf un-Muhimat Tasawwuf:

The very title of book suggests that it is an exposition of the important subtleties and intricacies of the sufistic path which the way farer has to traverse to reach the object of his pursuit in spiritual realm.

The book has been divided in to five parts and deals separately and independently with the significance of tariqah, the method of its practice and attainment, the meaning of miracles and its performance and the method of its attainment.

(14) Tarbiyat al-Salik wa Tanjih al-Halik:

This is a voluminous work consisting of 1272 pages suggesting to

the way farer the various practices of training and spiritual development and the various courses that he was to adopt to save himself from destruction and embarrassments. It contains admonitions and advises the seeker against all apprehensions, doubts and delusions.

(15) Hayat al-Muslimin:

One day he was inspired about the effects of certain acts and thoughts that the Muslims practiced these acts and their calamities could be overcome. Therefore, he gathered 25 principles and had them printed in a booklet namely "Hayat al-Muslimin". Yet he had to say: "I never had any thought of my books being a means of salvation for me. However, with regard to Hayat-al-Muslim I have a strong feeling, it will be a means of my salvation of my entire life.

No doubt, the main purpose of Khanqah Imdadia was to rectify the people, both internally and externally, from superstitions, and the revival of the society. Thus Hayat al-Muslim is the best example of these efforts of the Khanqah.

(16) Biahisti Zewar:

This book is a complete encyclopaedia of the basics of religion, wherein he has summarized different ahkam (rules) in the Qur'an and Hadith. There is no other book which deals with the requirements for ladies in Urdu in such a nice way covering all aspects of their requirements of daily life. It deals with beliefs, faith, worship, dealings, way of life, morals as well as useful advices, household crafts prayers and "Taweez" for many diseases etc. It comprises of 10 volumes. The 11th vol.

"Bihisti Gawhar" for men, was added much later. In which he discussed the rules and regulations for Friday and Eid prayers and congregations and other important aspects of daily life. It has been frequently printed in India and Pakistan and is still in great demand.

(17) *Islah al-Rusum:*

This is a remarkable work of Maulana Thanvi on social reforms. Regarding the social stability of the Muslim community he paid special attention on different aspects e.g. according to him dancing of women in the marriage party is unlawful as unknown persons enjoy their appearances and thus it is a clear sin.

Other customs like kabutar bazi, murgh bazi and fireworks are prohibited by Maulana Thanvi as Muslims become careless towards religious obligations and it leads to social disturbances and to the wastage of wealth and also there is fear for human lives. Hence, these kinds of activities are prohibited by the Qur'an.

Shaving and dyeing of beard and wearing of trousers beneath the ankle and to adorn the walls with the photographs of living and keeping of pet dogs is not permitted it is a necessity, as the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said that, 'the angels do not enter the home where there is a dog or photographs.

It is prohibited for women to visit the graves and ask for help or to offer special things on the tombs like shawls or flowers etc.

(18) *Hifzul Imaan:*

This book contains the descriptions of evil and wrong beliefs and practices. He clearly explains the evils in acts such as grave worship,

beseeking other than Allah, believing in the omnipresence of the Prophet (SAW) and pious people and so on.

(19) *Aghlatul Awam:*

This work is an earnest effort to root out all un-islamic rituals prevalent among people. Innovations in belief, Maulana Thanvi's balanced approach places all religious injunctions in their proper place without excess (ifrat) as shortcoming (tafrif).

(20) *Al-Insidad Li fitnal-al-irtidad:*

He wrote the above treatise to prevent the spread of apostasy when the Arya Samaj started to preach Hinduism. Also using wisdom and tolerance, Maulana was able to take pledge from the people "that would not commit apostasy.

(21) *Jaza-ul-Amal:*

In this book he has very articulately explained about the reward of good deeds and the punishment of sinister acts and how it is displayed in this world as well as in the hereafter:

(22) *Islah-e-Inqilaab-e-Ummat:*

It is a magnificent book which deals with the contemporary abject conditions of Muslims and its remedies.

(23) *Ahkam-e-Islam Aqal-ki-Nazar mein:*

This book describes the intellectual basis for Islamic injunctions.

(24) *Dawat-o-Tabligh Key Usool-o-Akham Al-Ittifaq:*

This is a collection of his advices on the methodology to be followed in the propagation of Islam.

(25) *Munajat-e-Maqbook:*

This book contains different supplications collected from the Holy Qur'an and Hadith.

(26) Taleem al Deen:

This book contains the true basic beliefs and practices of Islam. It is based on the Ihya Ulum al-Din of Imam Ghazali.

(27) Bawaadir al Nawaadir:

An excellent treatise of Fiq-e-Hanafi

(28) Sal Bhar ke Masnoon Amaal:

In this book he describes the Islamic months and the prescribed acts to be performed during them.

(29) Islam aur Aqliyat:

It is a description of Islamic principles pertaining to the intellect and the approach of Muslim theologians.

(30) Allama Ibn al-Arabi aur Unka Maslak:

It is a detailed and comprehensive analysis of Allama Ibn al-Arabi's creed.

After studying his works we can say that he was a true believer of the Qur'anic verse "And thus have we made you a nation justly balanced, that you might be witness over mankind"

An astounding, comprehensive knowledge of all branches of Islamic learning was evident in his personality, explicated in his lectures, and recorded in his writings. The Indian jurist Qadi Mujahid al-Islam said, "It is hard to think of an area of Islamic sciences left untouched by his writings.

As a Reformist of Muslims:

During and before the time of Maulana Thanvi some revolutionary and innovatory religious ideas emerged amongst the Muslims. Consequently,

practices and beliefs of the Muslims did not reflect the true spirit of the Sunnah. Religion was confined to mere faith and worship. Innovations of Islam. People had no serious concern for obligatory prayers and lead a life of negligence and irresponsibility. Morality and social life came to be regarded out side the jurisdiction of Islam. They were regarded as worldly affairs. Modern educated Muslims used to mock at the Islamic laws and principles and regarded them as obstruction in their progress.

Steps or measures of Reformation:

No doubt, Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi was an outstanding personality of his time. He not only served as a prolific writer but used all possible means of teachings and preachings to awaken awareness amongst the Muslims about true Islam. Through his speeches and writings he rooted out the irreligious practices and started a mission to remove all innovations and accretions in religion and presented Islam in its purest form in the light of the Qur'an and Hadith.

When he analysed the society he founded two causes which led to the destruction of the Islamic society, one was the ignorance of Islamic knowledge and the other one was the (compliance) lack of courage amongst the Muslims. The pure Islamic teachings and the later one led them to avoid the implications of Islamic law.

Generally the Muslims regarded only two branches i.e. Aqaid and Ibadat as being as being integral parts of the Islamic law. Whereas the Qur'an mentioned other three branches i.e. Muamalat, Akhlaq and Husn-e-Muashrat as constitutional branches of Islam.

In this way Maulana Thanvi presented the true picture of the Islamic Sharia and showed the right path to the confused Muslims. According to him there are five branches of Islamic law.

1) Aqaid: (Beliefs)

Beliefs in oneness of Allah and Risalat of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and the Day of judgement (qayamah).

2) A'maal/Ibadat (Religious deeds):

According to him the world is an object of Allah's detestation and Namaz is dear and beloved to him. But carelessness found in Muslims is such that although one maintains some degree of remembrance of Allah during worship, there is no remembrance otherwise. This is necessary to understand that just as Zikr Lisani, verbal remembrance is necessary, remembrance in our heart is also essential.

"Deeds are based on Intentions" this does not prove that with a good intention Haram (Unlawful) acts are converted to Halal (lawful), it will always be Haram i.e. life insurance and Interest are declared as Haram (unlawful). So there must not arise any question among the Muslims that: why such things are Haram? What is the defect in this? It is sufficient for every Muslim that Allah's anger arises through such things and the pleasure and happiness of Allah is greater than every thing.

3) Muamlaat: (transactions, contacts, dealings)

Muamalat (e.g. trade and commerce personal as well as collective) is one more important pillar of Islamic law which is not given importance by the people in the present

age and also constantly ignored by the Muslims. In general people have accepted the belief that only by the utterance of "Lailaha illellaaha", we can enter the Jannah and they believe Sallat and Saum etc. as a Fardh.

However, they have discarded Muamlat. In their dealings affairs, they are not concerned with the injunctions of Islam regarding earning and dealings they are indifferent to the question of Halal and Haram (lawful and unlawful.)

Although earnings and expenses are also matters controlled and regulated by the deen. In this sphere too, there should be no contraventions of the Shariah. Income must not be derived by unlawful means, e.g. riba, dealing in unlawful items, usurping the rights of others, cheating, defrauding, with holding the inheritance of any one. Ibn Umar narrated that RasulAllah (SAW) said:

"Allah Tala loves Momin who engages himself in lawful means of earning of living.

Income should not be spent in ways which are condemned by deen i.e. extravagance, spending in customs which have no sanction of the Sharia, spending for namesake, spending in unnecessary luxuries etc. It should be spent in religious activities i.e. aiding the poor and needy, contributing to religious projects such as Masajid, Madaris, work of Tableegh etc. are wonderful channels in which to spend wealth and thereby build up one's capital in the Aakhirah.

Hadrat Abu Saeed Khudri narrated a Hadith that Rasulallah (SAW) said: "Wealth is an object of pleasure, wealth acquired in a rightful

way (in according with sharia) and spent in a rightful way will be an aid for its owner." (Bukhari, Muslim).

Thus according to him it is essential for every Muslim that their Muamlat must be in according with the Islamic law. Those who have not been cautious in their Muamlat strictly according to the Sharia, they will remain till the end a sinner.

4) Akhlaq: (Moral character)

Akhlaq means humility, generosity and is also included under the category of belief and regarded as the best quality of a Momin. In general even people who are careful in their dealings (Muamlat) are not careful towards their Akhlaq and they have no perception regarding their shortcomings. For example: they spend much of their time in trying to reform others while others are inconvenienced and annoyed by their uncaring behavior and attitude. On the other hand those few who are careful towards their moral character are remarkable.

Maulana Thanwi says in his Malfuzat:

"Deen is not the name of attribute, to the performance of a few outward actions like Namaz, Roza, Hajj, Zakat etc. In fact the ultimate, basis, the pivotal position belongs to Aqaid upon which salvation is based. Another level belongs to Akhlaq-e-Hamidah e.g. Ikhlas or sincerity, Sabr or Patience, Shukr or Gratitude, Tawadhu' or Humility etc. These aspects according to the Muhaqqiqin like Namaz and Roza are also Fardh. If any one acts upon or fulfils few outward actions but does not correct his beliefs nor does he improve, correct, and perfect his character, he

will not be deserving of being called a complete or perfect Muslim. Anfas-e-lsa

5) Husn-e-Muashrat: (Social Etiquette)

Maulana Thanvi regarded Husn-e-Muashrat as a fundamental branch of Islamic sharia which is being discarded by the people in general. Such persons believe that it is totally unrelated to Islam. In fact they have removed it from Islam barring a few among them.

The Qur'an, Ahadith and the statements of the wise men refute the claim that this branch has no relationship with Islam. Some of these statements are cited here in support.

Allah says:

"O' people of Iman! Do not enter houses of other until you have obtained consent and made Salam on the inmates of the house.....If you then do not find anyone therein, then do not enter the house until permission has been granted for you. And, if it is said to you "Return; then return. That is pure for you....."

The holy prophet (SAW) said that: "It is not lawful for a guest to stay for such a length of time so as to pose a difficulty for the host. In this prohibition, an act which causes in inconvenience to others has been prescribed".

These statements show that Islam strictly orders the Muslims to follow all such things in their daily life which are also essential parts of beliefs. But now a days Muslims are not careful and attentive towards their social etiquettes as ordained in the Qur'an and Hadith as important Ibadat and Faraidh. Its ignorance is the main cause of corruption and degradation of the Muslims. As a result of such corruption

resentment and dislike for one another have set in among the people.

Thus, Maulana says that all these are the proper branches of Islamic Sharia and being a good Muslim it is essential to every person to follow all five branches (pillars) of Sharia.

Maulana Thanvi was educated as well as associated with Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband, therefore he represented the Deobandi school of thought. Through out his life he fought against the views contrary to the Deobandi thought and similar groups merely on differences of religious matter. The most vital issue of differences with other groups in on the issue of Bid'a (innovation). Bid'a is defined by ulama as "Any thing new in the matter of religion." Maulana Thanvi declared the following issues which are conflicting matter among different groups, particularly the Barelvis (i.e. the followers of Maulana Ahmad Raza Khan) such as:

1. Hazir – Nazir:

According to Barelvis, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is Hazir – Nazir (Present and observing) and Alive every where and at all times. He can move, listen to our call, and can help the Muslims wherever and whenever he wants.

2. Ilm-e-Ghayb:

Barelvis say that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was Alim-e-Ghaib that means he knew every thing in advance. But Maulana Thanvi says that it is the exclusive attribute of Allah. No, human being including the Prophet (SAW) can acquire. All the predictions and forecasts which the Prophet (SAW) gave was due to the

knowledge given to him by Allah.

3. Bid'a:

Bid'a is the biggest source of conflict between them. According to Maulana Thanvi visitation of graves, asking favour from Awliya, dancing, music, urs, visiting Tombs, Fateha and all such practices are Bid'a and Bid'a is a sin. But the Barelvis strongly recommend such practices.

4. Wasila:

Barelvis believed that the great people known as Awliya are intercessors between God and man. It is better for the Momin to ask any thing God through the Medium of Awliya. They believed that Awliya can listen to the calls of the Muslim and convey it to God. On the contrary Maulana Thanvi believed that only God can listen to the voice of people and there is no intercession in Islam. Islam had come to eliminate the concept of intercession.

Hence it is clear from the above discussions that Maulana Thanvi played a vital role in the social reformation of the Muslims.

5. As a Sufi:

Apart from social reformation the desire to reform the masses intensified in his heart during his stay at Kanpur. Eventually in 1315 A.H. he retired from teaching and devoted himself to re-establishing the spiritual center (Khanqah) of his Shaykh in Thana Bhawan. Haji Imdadullah his spiritual teacher remarked, "It is good that you came to Thana Bhawan. It is hoped that the masses will benefit from you spiritually and physically. You should engage yourself in revitalizing our school (Madarsa) and spiritual centre (Khanqah) once more in Thana Bhawan. As for myself, I am always praying for you and attentive towards you"

Then he started his life as a sufi.

It is crystal clear that Sufi order, practices, propagation and all Islamic and un-Islamic practices in the form of Tasawwuf was the order of the day in Maulana's time. But maulana being the Hakim al-Ummat and Mujjaddid al-Millat neither supported blindly the Tasawwuf as followed in his days nor followed or criticized any particular sufi order. He made an-intermediate position of the Sufia and the Sharia for the sake of reformation of the Muslim society. So, we find him an outstanding intellectual having a broad vision and an influential personality.

On closely analyzing the society he found that innumerable innovations and un-Islamic practices were accepted under the banner of Tasawwuf e.g. the family of Sufis and their hereditary thrones. made a mockery of Allah's blessings and gifts. The khanqah only managed urs and Fateha and songs, dances and Qawwalis, on fixed dates same people used to do Fatiha and eat sweets and shout Hoo-Haq to a singer and Waddat ul-Wujood poems were recited and shouted at.

He presented a clear picture of Tasawwuf as was in harmony with the Sharia and worked all his life towards uprooting the innovations and un-Islamic practices as mentioned above. He also defined Tasawwuf as it ought to have been since he considered it as the soul of Islam. Its function to purify the heart from the lowly bestial attribute of lusts, calamities of the tongue, anger, malice, jealousy love of the world of faine, niggardliness, greed, abstentation, at the adornment of the heart vanity etc. At the same time it aims at the adornment to heart with the lofty attributes of representance, gratefulness, fear of

Allah, Trust, love sincerity truth etc. These views of his are clearly explained in his famous work Qasd al- Sabil.

Regarding Tasawwuf he followed strictly the Deobandis who conceived of Islam as having to focal points of Sharia (the law, based on scriptures and religious knowledge) and the Tariqa (path, derived from religious experience). Thus they accepted Sufism with its from of discipline and the role of the 'ulama' in interpreting the four schools of Islamic law, the Qur'an the hadith, qiyas (analogical reasoning) and ijma (consensus) provided the foundations of religious knowledge, but understanding them required the 'Ulama' as guides. Uneducated Muslims could not make judgements on belief or practice. The Deobandis, while accepting Sufism, rejected numerous ceremonies and the authority of pirs (spiritual guides) who claimed sanctity by their descent rather than by their learning and actions. Knowledge granted authority and not inheritance. Pilgramages to saints' Tombs, and the annual death rites of a particular saints (the urs) also lay outside acceptable Islamic practice. Among these types of behaviours were seen erroneous innovations in any social or religious practice that appeared to be the influence of Hindu cultures.

In the light of the above discussion we can say that pure, unadulterated Sufism is an important part of the Islamic faith and Darul-Uloom Deoband trained individuals to become ration scholars as well as sound practitioners of Tasawwuf and the scholars of Deoband purified Islamic mysticism in the Indian subcontinent from all un-Islamic elements and practices. Through the Deoband movement, Islamic history once more witnessed the combination of the jurists and the mystics in to well grounded Islamic scholars. ●

Around the World

European Council votes in favour of niqab

A decree has been passed by the Parliamentary Assembly of Europe's Human Rights, warring governments of forbidding Muslim women to don the niqab in public. MPS from 47 countries voted unanimously on June 25 that outlawing it would deny women "who genuinely and freely desire to do so" the right to cover their faces.

"There should be no general prohibition on wearing the burkha and the niqab or other religious clothing," quoted a council statement, as saying. It also added that a woman should not be "compelled to wear religious apparel by her community or family".

The resolution came as part of a statement on Islam, Islamism and Islamophobia, which also urged European governments to promote the education of Muslim women, their families and communities alerting them of their human rights and persuading them to take part in both public and professional life.

The Assembly however established that legal limitations may be necessary for safety measures in public or professional functions where identification is necessary.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy has faced much criticism by

the Muslim Council of Britain which described the measures as "patronizing and offensive". His comments claiming that the niqab is a sign of subservience rather than religion was slammed by the Muslim community.

In fact Belgium's lower house of parliament has collectively voted for such a ban. If not revoked the ban would be the first of its kind in Europe, introducing into Belgium's criminal code a prohibition on the wearing in public places of "clothing that hides the face". In addition to this a general ban would impede the rights of women freely wishing to cover up.

The resolution also called on Switzerland to revoke as soon as possible its general ban on the construction of minarets, which it described as discriminatory. ●

OIC calls for action against Israel

The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) called for setting up of a group of legal experts to bring to justice Israeli officials who were responsible for the attack on a Gaza bound aid flotilla last month in which nine peace activists were killed and several others wounded. Addressing a press conference after the meeting at the OIC headquarters in Jeddah, the OIC chief described Israel's action as a form of state terrorism and piracy, which warrants the prosecution of those who planned and executed it. ●

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