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# THE FRAGRANCE OF EAST

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## Islamic Culture

### S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

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

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

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## Wisdom of Qur' an

*Such was Isa son of Maryam, a word on truth wherein they are doubting".*

*(Surah Maryam:34)*

### Commentary:

"People have always been in grave doubts regarding 'Isa ibn Maryam and have, therefore, disputed between themselves. Some said, like the Jews, that he was a magician, a soothsayer, and an illegitimate child. The Talmud consigns him to Hell, along with dogs. Others said, he was a Son of God; yet others that he was God himself; a few that he was one of a Trinity of gods. It was only a handful who believed in Christ's own claim which can be found in today's Gospels also that he was no more than a Messenger of Allah (Ibn Jarir with some addition.).

Some scholars have noted however, syas Qurtubi, that it was only once that 'Isa ibn Maryam spoke in infancy. Once Maryam's chastity was established, he grew up as a normal child. Ibn Abbas has said that his mother and Yusuf the carpenter took him away to Egypt fearing attempt on his life. They brought him back after 12 years, (and, to be sure, he immediately started preaching and making evoking enmity: Au.)

Mawdudi's comment touches on another aspect, "The thrust of the argument so far clearly reveals that the Christian belief in Jesus is false. Although John was born in a miraculous manner, this birth did not make him God's son. Similarly, although Jesus too was born by means of another miracle, this to be God's son. Jesus' birth was no more miraculous than John's and there are no grounds for referring to John as God's son. Remember that according by Christians, both John and Jesus were born miraculously. ●

## Pearls From the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

*"It is related, on the authority of Qatadah (Tab'ee), (by way of a Mursal ), that the Apostle of God said: "When you go to anyone's house, make the salutation of the inmates, and when you leave, by making the salutation of farewell."*

*-Baihaqi*

### Commentary:

The term is applied pre-eminently to Muslim doctors who followed the immediate Ashab or Companions of the holy Prophet, and whose reports and narratives regarding the Prophet form a part of the Sunnah.

Sometimes a Tab'ee relates a Tradition, but does not mention the Sahabi, i.e. the holy Companion through whom it had reached him. Such a Tradition is called Mursal in the special usage of Islam. ●

*It is related by Abu Hurairah that the Apostle of God said: "Whoever is offered a sweet-smelling flower should accept it, and not reject it because it is a very ordinary thing. Its fragrance is a thing of joy."*

*-Muslim*

### Commentary:

If an ordinary thing like a flower was refused, the giver might feel that his gift had been refused because of its ordinariness, and it hurt his feeling. In another Tradition, quoted in Tirmizi, it is stated that "whoever is offered a sweet-smelling flower should not decline to accept it for a sweet-smelling flower is a gift of paradise". In Sahih Muslim, it is, further, mentioned, oil the authority of Hazrat Anas, that "the practice of the Apostle of God was that he never refused a perfume." ●

# 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.

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 Ramadhan) 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'ban 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 Abu Hurairah 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. ●

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# 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 unailing, 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 Cancelling:**

"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 misdemeanor?" 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, Tirmidhi)

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." (Tirmidhi; 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 traveling 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) ●

## Prophet's Sermon on Ramadhan

Baihaqi reported on the authority of Salman Al-Farsi @ that Prophet (PBUH) delivered a sermon on the last day of the month of Sha'ban and said:

"O people! The month of Allah (Ramadhan) has come with its mercies, blessings and forgiveness. The days of this month are the best among the days and the nights are the best among the nights and the hours during Ramadhan are the best among the hours. This is a month in which you have been invited by Him (to fast and pray). Allah has honoured you in it. In every breath you take is a reward of Allah, your sleep is worship, your good deeds are accepted and your invocations are answered.

"Therefore, you most invoke your Lord in all earnestness with heart free from sin evil, and pray that Allah may help you to keep fast, and to recite the Holy Qur'an. Indeed! Miserable is the one who is deprived of Allah's forgiveness in this great month. While fasting remember the hunger and thirst on the Day of Judgment. Give alms to the poor and needy. Pay respect to your elders, have sympathy for your youngsters and be in towards your relatives and kinsmen. Guard your tongue against unworthy words, and your eyes from scenes that are not worth seeing (forbidden and your ears from sounds that should not be heard.

"Be kind to orphans so that if your children may become orphans they will also be treated with kindness. Do repent to Allah for your sins and supplicate with raised hands at the times of prayer as these are the best times, during which Allah Almighty looks at His servants with mercy. Allah answers if they supplicate, responds if they call, grants if He is asked and accepts if they entreat, O people! You have made your conscience the slave of your desires.

"Make it free by invoking Allah for forgiveness. Your back may break from the heavy load of your sins, so prostrate yourself before Allah for long intervals, and make this load lighter. Understand fully that Allah has promised in His Honour and Majesty that, people who perform salat and sajda (prostration) will be guarded from Hell-fire on the Day of Judgment.

"O people! If anyone amongst for *iftar* (meal at sunset) for any believer, Allah will reward him as if he had freed a slave, and Allah will forgive him his sins. A Companion asked: 'but not all of us have the means to do so' The Prophet (PBUH) replied: 'Keep yourself away from Hell-fire though it may consist of half a date or even some water if you have nothing else.'

"O people! Anyone who during this month cultivates good manners will walk over the Sirat (bridge to Paradise on the day when feet will tend to slip. For anyone who during this month eases the workload of his servants, Allah will make easy his accounting, and for anyone who doesn't hurt others during this month, Allah will safeguard him from His Wrath on the Day of Judgment. Anyone who respects and treats an orphan with kindness during this month, Allah shall look at him with kindness on that Day. Anyone who treats these kinsmen well during this month, Allah will bestow Him on that Day, while anyone who mistreats his kinsmen during this month, Allah will keep away from His Mercy.

"Whoever offers the recommended prayers during this month, Allah will save him from Hell, and whoever observes his obligation during this month, his reward will be seventy times the reward during other months. Whoever repeatedly invokes Allah's blessings on me, Allah will keep his scale of good deeds heavy while the scales of others will be tending to lightness. Whoever recites during this month an ayat (verse of the Holy Qur'an in other months.

"O people! The gates of Paradise remain open during this month. Pray to your Lord that they may not be closed for you. While the gates of Hell are closed, pray to your Lord that they never open for you. Satan has been chained, invoke your Lord not to let him dominate you." ●

# Ramadhan In History

**Abdullah Hakim Quick**

In the first year after the Hijrah, the Prophet (PBUH) sent Hamza ibn Muttalib with thirty Muslim riders to Saif al Bahr to investigate three hundred riders from Quraish who had camped suspiciously in that area. The Muslims were about to engage the disbelievers, but they were separated by Majdy ibn umar al-Juhany. The hypocrites of Madinah, hoping to oppose the unity of the Muslims, built their own masjid (called Masjid ad-Dirar). The Prophet (PBUH) ordered this masjid to be destroyed in Ramadhan.

On 17<sup>th</sup> Ramadhan, 3 A.H., Almighty Allah separated Truth from falsehood at the Great Battle of Badr. The Prophet (PBUH) and 313 of these companions set out to intercept a caravan of their own goods that had been left in Makkah. It was led by Abu Sufyan himself, and estimated at 50,000 dinars. They were met, instead, by a well equipped army of the nobility of Quraish, intent on putting out the light of Islam. Despite being outnumbered three to one and appearing weak and unseasoned, the Muslims defended their faith with a burning desire to protect the Prophet and meet their Lord through martyrdom. Allah gave them a decisive victory on this day of Ramadhan that would never be forgotten.

In 6 A.H., Zaid ibn Haritha was sent to Wadi al-Qura at the head of a detachment to confront Fatimah bint Rabiah, the queen of that area. Fatimah had previously attacked a caravan led by Zaid and had succeeded in plundering its

wealth. She was known to be the most protected woman in Arabia, as she hung fifty swords of her close relatives in her home. Fatimah was equally renowned for showing open hostility to Islam. She was killed in a battle against these Muslims in the month of Ramadhan.

By Ramadhan of 8 A.H., the treaty of Hudaibiyah had been broken and the Muslim armies had engaged the Byzantines in the north. Muhammad (PBUH), felt the need to strike a fatal blow to disbelief in the Arabian Peninsula and conquer the city of Makkah. Allah has declared His Sanctuary a place of peace, security and religious sanctity. Now the time had come to purify the kabah of nakedness and abomination. The Prophet (PBUH) set out with an army having more armed men than al-Madinah had ever seen before. People were swelling the army's ranks as it moved toward Makkah. The determination of the believers, guided by the will of Allah, became so awesome that the city of Makkah was conquered without a battle, on 20 Ramadhan. This was one of the most important dates in Islamic history for after it, Islam was firmly entrenched in the Arabian Peninsula. During the same month and year, after smashing the idols of Makkah, detachments were sent to the other major centers of polytheism and al-Lat, Manat and Suwa, some of the greatest idols of Arabia, were destroyed.

Such was the month of Ramadhan in the time of the Prophet (PBUH). It was a time of purification,

enjoining the good, forbidding the evil, and striving hard with one's life and wealth. After the death of the Prophet (PBUH), Muslims carried on this tradition and Allah used the true believers to affect the course of history. Ramadhan continued to be a time of great trials and crucial events.

Ninety-two years after the Hijrah, Islam had spread across North Africa, Iran, Afghanistan, Yemen and Syria. Spain was under the tyrannical rule of King Roderic of the Visigoths. Roderic had forced this six millions serfs and persecuted Jews to seek the aid of the Muslims of North Africa in order to be delivered. Musa ibn Husair, the Umayyad governor of North Africa, responded by sending his courageous general Tariq ibn Ziyad at the head of 12,000 Berber and Arab troops. In Ramadhan of that year, they were confronted with a combined Visigoth army of 90,000 Christians led by Roderic himself, who was seated on a throne of ivory, silver, and precious gems and drawn by white mules. After burning his boats, Tariq preaches to the Muslims warning them that victory and Paradise lay ahead of them and defeat and the sea lay to the rear. They burst forth with great enthusiasm and Allah manifested a clear victory over the forces of disbelief. Not only was Roderic killed and his forces completely annihilated, but also Tariq and Musa succeeded in liberating the whole of Spain, Sicily and parts of France. This was the beginning of the Golden Age of Al-Andalus where Muslims ruled for over 700 years.

In the year 582 A.H., Salahuddin Al-Ayyubi, after battling with the Cursaders for years, finally drove them out of Syria and the whole of their occupied lands in the month of Ramadhan. The Muslim world was then

destined to meet one of its most frightening challenges.

In the seventh century A.H. the Mongols were sweeping across Asia destroying everything that lay in their path. Genghis khan called himself "the scourge of God sent to punish humanity for their sins". In 617 A.H., Samarkand, Ray and Hamdan were put to the sword causing more than 700,000 people to be killed or made captive. In 656 A.H., Hulagu, the grandson of Genghis khan, continued this destruction. Even Baghdad, the leading city of the Muslim world was sacked, Some estimates say that as many as 1,800,000 Muslims were killed in this awesome carnage. The Christians were asked to eat pork and drink wine openly while the surviving Muslims were forced to participate in drinking bouts. Wine was sprinkled in the masjids and no Azan (call to prayer) was allowed. In the wake of such a horrible disaster and with the threat of the whole Muslim world and then Europe being subjected to the same fate, Allah raised up from the Mamluks of Egypt, Saifuddin Outz, who united the Muslim army and met the Mongols at Ain Jalut on 25<sup>th</sup> of Ramadhan, 658, A.H. Although they were under great pressure, the Muslim with the help of Allah, cunning strategy and unflinching bravery crushed the Mongol army and reversed this tidal wave of horror. The whole of the civilized world sighed in relief and stood in awe at the remarkable achievement of these noble sons of Islam.

This was the spirit of Ramadhan that enabled our righteous forefathers to face seemingly impossible challenges. It was a time of intense activity, spending the day in the saddle and the night in prayer while calling upon Allah for His mercy and forgiveness.. ●

# Don't Burn The Quran

**Shabbir Ahmed\***

Islam and its adherents have been in the line of fire of the West for several centuries. The conflict between Islam and Christendom can be traced to the medieval times which peaked during and after the Crusades. The Venerable Bede (673-735) says that the Muslims were descended from Hagar, Prophet Abraham's concubine, while Christians were descended from Abrahams' lawful offspring Isaac (Quranic Ishaque). While all men traced their thought to be the lineal descendants of Cain (Qabil) who murdered his brother Abel (Habil). Abel and Cain were the two sons of Adam. This was the first murder in the history of mankind. The logic behind this specious argument is that there is a long tradition of hatred and hostility descendants of Adam (Christians). This line of reasoning is infantile.

After the 9/11 attacks on the twin towers of the World Trade Center, Muslims came to be viewed with suspicion and tarred with the brush of terrorism. Those who sported skullcaps and beards fared even worse. They were off-loaded from planes and interrogated. Shah Rukh Khan, the Bollywood actor, was detained for questioning at Newark airport, New Jersey. Even Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, former President of India and an internationally renowned scientist, was subjected to humiliating frisking at an American airport. Anything associated

with Islam or Muslims is frowned upon. Burqa is sought to be banned in some European countries. There is a ban on minarets in Switzerland. Samuel P Huntington, author of *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* rightly says: "The underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is Islam, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the inferiority of their power." A senior member of the Clinton administration described Islam as the global rival of the West. Terrorism or fundamentalism is not the monopoly of the Muslims. No one condemns Christianity when breakaway groups from Northern Ireland commit murder in the name of God. When a Jewish terrorist named Baruch Goldstein slaughters Muslims during prayers in Bebron, no one takes Judaism to task. Where were the champions of human rights when the Butcher of Bosnia, Ratko Mladic, ordered the mass killing of 8, 000 Muslim men and boys at Srebrenica in July 1995? But when a Muslim commits an act of terror, the entire community is condemned. Their holy book and their Prophet come under attack. Islam has become the whipping-boy of the West.

Now, the West has chosen to target the holy Quran. Novelist Sebastian Faulks has denounced it as "the rantings of a schizophrenic". Geert

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Wilders, a Dutch politician, is best known for his 2008 short film *Fitna* which spews venom of Islam and the Muslim holy book. He has been actively campaigning to stop the "Islamisation" of the Netherlands by banning the Quran, ending immigration from Muslim countries and banning the construction of new mosques. He says that the Quran is a "fascist book" like Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and needs to be outlawed. Wilders says: "I don't hate Muslims. I hate their book and their ideology."

Emboldened by Wilders's *Fitna* and his continuing tirade against the holy book, Terry Jones, the fundamentalist pastor of the small, non-denominational Christian Dove World Outreach Center in Gainesville, Florida which has no more than 50 followers, embarked upon the sacrilegious task of burning 200 copies of the Quran to mark the ninth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. He gave a clarion call to fellow Christians to join him in the burning at his church between 6 and 9 p.m. The day was dubbed international Burn a Quran Day. American Muslims suggested that the 9/11 anniversary be observed as Love Jesus Day, because Jesus was a messenger of God in Islam. Others suggested that 11 September be declared as Interfaith Solidarity Day. On 25 July, 2010 the controversial pastor a YouTube video which showed him holding up a copy of the Quran and declaring. "This is the book that is responsible for 9/11. To me, it looks like the religion of the devil." Jones is the author of *Islam is of the Devil*.

In view of international outrage and pleas from world leaders, including US President Barack Hussein Obama, the pastor cancelled the burning in early

September 2010 and pledged never to do so. But his mission was accomplished. The little known pastor became a celebrity overnight – an iconic Islamophobe who inspired the enemies of Islam around the world. In September 2010, Alex Stewart, who holds a non-academic position in the Queen-sland University of Technology in Australia, posted a video of himself burning the Muslim holy book. The 12-minute home-made video posted on YouTube shows Stewart smoking marijuana rolled in pages from the religious text. Stewart's video comes close on the heels of the Florida pastor threatening to burn the book to mark the 9/11 anniversary. Six men were arrested in Gateshead, United Kingdom on 15 September, 2010 for burning two copies of the book. A YouTube video shows six hooded hoodlums pouring petrol on Muslim holy books and cheering when they burst into flames. Sion Owens, a politician from South Wales was arrested for the same reason. Footage leaked to the media shows the Welsh politician setting fire to the Islamic scripture in his garden. In Strasbourg, a Frenchman is facing trial for burning and urinating on the Quran. He said he had done all this "in the name of freedom". Burning the holy book of any religion is an act of terrorism.

When the Florida pastor found to his dismay that his idea of Quran burning was being hijacked, he took a quasi-judicial route to regain lost ground. He denied breaking his earlier promise of not burning the holy book. He held a mock trial at his church with himself as the judge. The accusation against the holy book was that it



promoted violence. After a six-hour trial on 20 March, 2011, attended by about 30 followers, the self appointed judge found the holy Quran guilty and sentenced it to death by burning. The holy book was instantly burned. The burning was done by another pastor since the burning was done by another pastor since Terry Jones was serving as the learned judge. Jones probably forgot that he was violating the Biblical commandment of "Judge not, that ye be not judged". The Obama administration is yet to arrest him. The incident sparked violent protests in Afghanistan and elsewhere. At least 22 people, including seven UN foreign staff, were killed in Afghanistan. Jones showed no remorse for his crimes not only against humanity but also against divinity. He chose to add more fuel to the raging fire by holding Islam responsible for the killings. He called for immediate US and UN action against its perpetrators. The controversial pastor said: "Islam is not a religion of peace. Muslim-dominated countries can no longer be allowed to spread their hate against Christians and minorities."

What do people like Terry Jones hope to gain by copies of the holy Quran? Even after 14 centuries, it exists in original form. "It is a glorious Quran written on the preserved tablet (Lauhi Mahfooz)" (85:21-22). Moreover, the Quran is preserved in the bosoms of several thousands of Hafizs and can recite it with accuracy. Such Hafizs include children and even blind persons.

The Quran is not specifically addressed to Muslims. It sends a messenger to the entire human race irrespective of colour, caste, class or country. The universality of the message

is evident from several verses beginning with "O Mankind". Judaism and Christianity are given proper respect. "Those who believe (in the Quran), those who follow the Jewish (scriptures), and the Sabians and the Christians – who believe in God and the Last Day and work righteously – on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve" (5:69). Islam is the same in essence. "The same religion has He established for you as that which he enjoined on Noah, which we have sent by inspiration to thee – and that which we enjoined on Abraham, Moses and Jesus: namely what you should remain steadfast in religion, and make no divisions therein." (42:13)

The Quran is a confirmation of previous scriptures. All major prophets such as Abraham, Noah, Jonah (Younus), Joseph (Yusuf) have chapters devoted to them. John the Baptist (Ayub) are among others who find special mention in the sacred book of Islam. The chapter or surah on the Children of Israel (Bani Israel) begins and ends with references to Jews. Nativity is chronicled in greater details in the Quran than in the Bible or Gospels. The surah on the Family of Imran (Al-e-Imran) father of Virgin Mary (Maryam) describes the conception of the Virgin, birth, infancy of Jesus and his miracles. The Quranic chapter on Mary tells us how the new-born Jesus in the cradle testified to his mother's innocence.

Burning the Quran is a blasphemous act not only against Islam but also against Judaism and Christianity. It is an insult to the Judeo-Christian prophets descended from patriarch Abraham. ●

(The Statesman, 22-06-2011)

## The Quran On Fasting

"O you who believe! Observing al-sawm (the fasting) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you – that you may become pious." [2:183]

"And I (Allah) created not the jinns and humans except that they should worship Me (Alone)." [51:56]

"And that you fast, it is better for you, if only you knew." [al-Baqarah 2:184]

That you should magnify Allah for having guided you so that you may be grateful to Him." [2:185]

"(Fasting) for a fixed number of days, but if any of you is ill or on a journey, the same number (should be made up) from other days. And as for those who can fast with difficulty), (i.e. an old man, etc.), they have a choice either to fast or) to feed a poor person (for every day). But whoever does good of his own accord, it is better for him. And that you fast, it is better for you if only you know." (2: 183-84)

"Allah intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you. (He wants that you) must complete the same number (of days), and that you must magnify Allah for having guided you so that you may be grateful to Him". (2:185)

"It is made lawful for you to have sexual relations with your wives on the night of the fasts. They are garments for you and you are the same for them. Allah knows that you used to deceive yourselves, so He turned to you and forgave you. So now have sexual relations with them and seek that which Allah has ordained for you, and eat and drink until the with thread (light) of dawn appears to you distinct from the black thread (darkness of night), then complete your fast till the nightfall. And do not have sexual relations with them (your wives) while you are in Itekaf in the mosques. These are the limits (set) by Allah, so approach them not. Thus does Allah make clear His signs to mankind that they may become Al Muttaqun (the pious)." (2:187)

"Verily! We have sent it (this Quran) down in the night of Al-Qadr. And what will make you know what the night of Al-Qadr is!" (97:1-2)

"The night of Al-Qadr is better than a thousand months. Therein descend the angels and the Ruh (Gabriel) by Allah's Permission with all Decrees. (That night is peace! Until the appearance of dawn." (97: 1-2) ●

## The Quran: An Everlasting Miracle of Allah to Mankind

Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

A number of Prophets were sent by Allah for the guidance of human beings. The first one was Adam (AWS). Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was ordained to be the last. After him no prophet will come. He is the seal of the prophets.

Each Prophet had come for salvation and guidance of his nation sans the last prophet Muhammad (SAW). He was sent for the whole mankind. The Holy Quran says: "We sent thee not, but as a mercy for all creatures". (S.21, A, 107)

It may be noted that Allah has bestowed upon some Prophets Divine Books. Almighty God says: We verily sent our messengers with clean proofs and revealed to them the scriptures... (57:25). Four are quite prominent. Viz, (1) Zabur revealed on Hazrat Daud; (2) Taurat revealed on Hazrat Musa, (3) Injeel on Hazrat Isah Masih, and (4) The Quran was revealed on the last Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SAW). Unfortunately none of these books now exist in their original form except the Holy Quran. This is because Almighty God Himself is its Protector and Saviour. He says: Verily We! It is we who have revealed the Admonition and we are its guardians.

The recent incident of burning of Holy Qur'an by Pastor Wayne Sapp in a Florida church is not new thing. Earlier this desecration of the Quran was done by US Army men in Guantanamo Bay Cuba. Such incidents occurred in the past also. But Almighty Allah kept its values and norms intact. No doubt, despite all sort of

desecrations and sacrileges of the Holy Quran, it holds its own status in the world literary books. It is a clear evidence that the Quran is no ordinary book but it is the book of the Almighty Allah. In addition it is not for one person or one age but it offers guidance to all mankind in varied conditions of life. The scope of its moral teaching is as wide as humanity itself.

It goes without saying that at the time when the Prophet was born, the literary talent and eloquence of the Arabs was at its Zenith. Therefore Allah bestowed upon His Prophet the biggest miracle in the form of the Quran. Accordingly it is said that diamond cuts diamond. The Quran met all challenges of the Arabs and issued a universal proclamation. The Holy Quran says: "Were all mankind to come together and wish to produce the like of this the Quran, they would never succeed, however much they aided each other (17:88). In fact, the Arabs failed to present like the Quran. Now the Holy Quran modified the challenge and reduces its scope by saying, "Do people imagine that is not from us, and that you, O Prophet, are false attributing it to us? Tell them that if they are speaking truly, they should produce ten surahs resembling the Quran, and that they are free to call on the aid of anyone but God is so doing." (11:13) Arabs were not able to produce like the Quran. Now the holy Quran further challenges and reduces its scope saying produce only a single surah resembling the Quran. It says: O People if you doubt the heavenly origin of this book

which we have sent down to our servant, the Prophet, produce one surah like this" (2:23). But Arabs again could not meet the challenge of the Quran. Lastly Arabs accepted that it is nothing but the words of Allah, revealed on the last Prophet through Gibrael Ameen. This is how right from the beginning till now innumerable persons embraced Islam merely by getting impressed by the Quranic contents.

It is true that no other book in the world is so widely read and taught as the Quran. We may also observe there is a good number of institutions in the world wherein nothing is taught but only the Holy Quran. An Egyptian Mufti Shaikh Abduh and an Egyptian commentator Shaikh Tantawi Jauhari illustrated so many points that indicate towards the beauties of the Quran. A few of them as follows: (a) Literary beauty; (b) Magnificence of nature as showing forth God's handi work; (c) the relation of the study of physical science to true spiritual insight; (d) Unity of God's design in the widest diversity of nature; (e) The goodness of God in making nature subserve to man's needs; (f) His wisdom in making the various parts of nature subserve to each other's needs.

In this context it may be apt to make a reference of Shah Waliullah. He writes in his marvelous book. Alfauz Alkabir that the Holy Quran is covered by a set of five sciences:

1- The science of injunctions (Ahkam): This includes the incumbent, the recommended, the approved, the disapproved, and the forbidden, covering worships, social dealings, household economy, and state politics, its interpretation and the responsibility of jurists. 2- The science of disputation (Mukhasimah). This deals with the four misguided sects, the Jews, the Christians, the polytheists and the

hypocrites, and its discussion and analysis falls within the jurisdiction of dialecticians. 3- The science of Divine Favours covers explanations of the creation of the Heavens and the Earth, of the perfect attributes of God and the guidance which the people received about necessities of life. 4- Fourth is the science covering the important events which God caused to take place, favouring the obedient and punishing the disobedient. 5- The fifth is the science which reminds human beings of Death and that which will follow it, the Resurrection, the gathering, the Reckoning, the balance, the paradise, and the Hell.

In his book Abdullah Yusuf Ali says: 'The Beauties of the Holy Qur'an, that the Holy Qur'an is not only the supreme Book in the Arabic language but its place is high in world literature. It is deservedly classed among the world's hundred best books. It is one of the greatest books in all literature because it fearlessly tackles the biggest questions of life. It is so simple, so plain that any man can understand the ordinary meaning and yet so profound, so full of wisdom, that though thousands of books have been written about it no one has yet fully explored its depths:

In a nutshell, the Holy Qur'an is an everlasting miracle of God to all mankind as a whole. Smith writes in his book, "Muhammad and Islam", Thanks to the teaching of the Quran and its emphasis on the cultivation of knowledge, countless scholars made their appearance and wrote innumerable books. Different scientific disciplines were derived from the Quran and spread across the world by Muslim thinkers. The world was illuminated with the light of the Quran and culture of Islam." ●

# Islamic Law Of Inheritance

F.M. Kulay

Before touching upon the problem of inheritance, let us make sure the meaning of God's sovereignty in Islam. Allah is not only the Creator, and the Sustainer of all creation, He is also the Law-giver. His sovereignty is absolute. He has revealed to men through His prophets a complete code of life. The Quran is a Book of Guidance to men in all walks of life. The definite injunctions of the Quran and the explanations of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) by his words and deeds are binding on all Muslims. Most social laws are specified in the Quran and broad guidelines given in other matters. A Muslim is not free to accept one part of the Book and reject the other part because it suits his interests and purposes to do so. The general principles and the specific rules of inheritance are while claiming to be a Muslim. Following Quranic verses support the above:-

1. "His verily is all creation and commandment." (al-a'raf, 34)
2. "Unto Him belongeth sovereignty and unto Him belongeth praise." (at-taghut, 1)
3. "Follow that which is sent down unto you from your Lord, and follow no protecting friends beside Him....." (al-a'raf, 3)
4. "Believe ye in part of the Scripture and disbelieve ye in part thereof?" (al-baqarah, 85)
5. "And I come confirming that which was before me of the torah and to make lawful some of that which was forbidden unto you." (al-e-lmran, 50)
6. "So fear not mankind, but fear Me. And barter not My revelations for a little gain. Whoso judgeth not by that which Allah hath revealed, such are disbelievers." (al-maidah, 44)
7. "O ye who believe! Obey Allah and obey the messenger and those of you who are in authority; and if ye have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to Allah and the Messenger if ye are in (in truth) believers in Allah and the Last Day." (an-nisa, 59)
8. "But nay, by the Lord, they will not believe (in truth) until they make thee (i.e. the Prophet) judge of what is in dispute between them and find within themselves with full submission." (an-nisa, 65)
9. "And it becometh not a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided an affair (for them), that they should (after that) claim any

say in their affair." (al-ahzab, 36)

It is clear from these quotations that Islam prescribes a comprehensive code of life. The Quran also shows the way to know the complete code and to resolve disputes. A Muslim must obey the Quran and the Prophet (PBUH) and regard them as authorities in resolving disputes. In the lifetime of the Prophet (PBUH) one could consult him personally though not always even then. The only way for us to know the will of Allah today is to go to the Quran and the only way for us to consult the Prophet (PBUH) is to rely upon the rich stock of the Prophet's Traditions. The words and deeds of the Prophet, the decisions and practices of the Companions and the Four Caliphs, and the great works of the Islamic scholars provide clear and deep insight into the approvable and the reprehensible according to Allah's Shari'at. The rewarding study of the scope and methods of developing Islamic Law to suit modern times needs volumes. It must be stressed, however, that it is no secret of an unfounded claim of the Muslims that Islam does not divide human life into religious and secular, and that Islam prescribes comprehensively for all aspects of life. J.N.D. Anderson, in his book "Islamic Law in the Modern World" rightly distinguishes the Islamic Law from the Western Law by pointing out that the former is much wider in scope and regulates every aspect of man's life public, private, national and international – and extends over many aspects which are not conceived as part of Law by Western people. (See Chapter Conception of Law Islamic and Western). Anderson also points out that Law as West understands it is a secular matter whereas Islamic law is essentially

religious, and is therefore regarded immutable. A single instance of the peculiar comprehensive character of the Islamic Law would be the institution of Zakat, which is both a form of religious prayer and an instrument of regulating economic matters. Stagnation of wealth is deplored by Islam. Through Zakat, rules of inheritance etc. Islam checks stagnation of wealth, its concentration in the hands of a few people and widening of the gulf between the haves and the have-nots. Even with this economic insight, the rules of inheritance could not be so justly devised by man. Tyabji says, "The Muslim Law of inheritance has always been admired for its completeness as well as the success with which it has achieved of a single individual or the deceased should devolve by universal succession, but for adjusting the competitive claims of all the nearest relations". Tyabji quotes Sir William Jones, who says, "I am strongly disposed to believe that no possible question could occur on the Muhammadan law of succession which might not be rapidly and correctly answered." Fyzee also quotes Macnaghten, "In these provision we find ample attention paid to the interests of all those whom nature places in the first rank of our affections; and indeed it is difficult to conceive any system containing rules more strictly just and equitable."

About laws of inheritance. The great importance placed on these laws will be clear from the following Quranic verses.

1. "Unto the men (of a family) belongeth a share of that which parents and near kindred LEAVE, and unto the women a share of that which

- parents and near kindred LEAVE, whether it be little or muc – a legal share." (an-nisa,7)
2. "And when kinsfolk and orphans and the needy are present at the division (of the heritage), bestow on them therefrom and speak kindly unto them." (an-nisa,8)
  3. "And let those fear (in their behavior toward orphans) who if they left behind them weak offspring would be afraid for them. So let them mind their duty to Allah, and speak justly." (an-nisa,9)
  4. "Lo, those who devour the wealth of orphans wrongfully they do but swallow fire into their bellies, and they will be exposed to burning flame." (an-nisa,10)
  5. "Allah chargeth you concerning (the provision for) your children: to the male equivalent of the portion of two females, and if there be women more than two, then theirs is to-thirds of the inheritance, and if there be one (only) then the half. And to his parents a sixth of the inheritance, if he has a son; and if he has no son and his parents are his heirs, then to his mother appertaineth the third; and if he has brothers, then to his mother appertaineth the sixth, AF ER ANY LEGACY HE MAY HAVE BEQUEATHED, OR DEBT (hath been paid). Your parents or your children, ye know not which of them is nearer unto you in usefulness. It is an injunction from Allah. Lo! Allah is knower, wise." (an-nisa 11)
  6. "And unto you belongeth a half of that which your wives LEAVE, if they have no child; but if they have a child then unto you the fourth of that which they leave, after any legacy they may have bequeathed, or debt (they may have contracted, hath been paid). And unto them belongeth the fourth of that which ye LEAVE if ye have no child, but if ye have a child then the eighth of that which ye leave, after any legacy you may have bequeathed, or debt (you may have contracted, hath been paid). And if a man of a woman have a distant heir (having left neither parent nor child), and (he or she) have a brother or a sister (only on the mother's side) then to sharers in the third, after any legacy that may have been bequeathed, or debt (contracted), not injuring (the heirs by willing away more than a third of the heritage) hath been paid. A commandment from Allah. Allah is Knower, Indul-gnet." (an-nisa, 12)
  7. "These are limits (imposed by Allah..." (an-

nisa, 13)

8. "They ask thee for a pronouncement, say: Allah hath pronounced for you concerning distant kindreds. If a man dies childless and he has a sister, hers is half the heritage, and the would have inherited from her had she died childless. And if there be two sisters, then heirs are two-thirds of the heritage, and if they be brethren, men and women, unto the male is the equivalent of the share of two females. Allah expoundeth unto you, so that ye err not. Allah is knower of all things. (an-nisa, 177)

9. "... and those who are akin are nearer one to another is the ordinance of Allah ...." (al-anfal, 75)

A careful study of the foregoing reveals that the basic structure of the Inheritance Laws is specifically mentioned in the Quran. We get the following principles and rules about the division of inheritance.

1. The problem of dividing the heritage arises only when some one DIES leaving some assets.

In the Quran (an-nisa, 11-12) while laying down the laws of inheritance, the words "TARAKA", "TARAKTUM", and "TARAKNA" have been used making it clear that right of heirship arises for the living in the property of a DECEASED, i.e. one who has

LEFT BEHIND some assets.

2. Following rules are derivable from the general principle stated above.

a. There is no heirship for anyone BEFORE THE DEATH OF OWNER.

b. Only those ALIVE at the time of the owner's death may have of heirship.

c. There is no REPRESENTATION in inheritance Those who die in the life-time of the owner have no share in the latter's property on the latter's death. No one then can claim heirship on behalf of a predeceased person since such a predeceased person was never an heir to the property of the owner.

3. From the assets of the deceased, his funeral expenses are met, his debts paid, and his legacies executed in accordance with the provisions of the Islamic Law concerning Bequests, before dividing his property among the legal heirs. Mahmud says, "As is well-known, the Muslim Law which is often cited as science of things human and divine deals not only with matters of this world of the relation of man to man, but also with the relation of man to God. Human acts are legal results but also of their



corresponding ethical or religious values."

"Shafi' relates that the Prophet is related to have said. 'the spirit, NAFS, RUH, of a Believer remains in suspense until his debts are paid on his behalf.

Commenting upon Hidayah, the author of Kifayah says, "Thus we have supposed the deceased to be alive and owner of his property after his death, with respect to what he needs for the payments of his debts and the execution of his legacies.

4. The Quran tells us who are the "near relatives" and decides for us their shares. The following chart shows the Quranic scheme.

Father and Mother

(Right of Parenthood)

Brother or Sister

Wife or Husband

(Right of Filiality) <-  
DECEASED -> (Right of  
Marriage)

Sons and Daughters

(Right of Progeny).

5. A relative inherits by virtue of the degree of nearness of his relation with the deceased. In the presence of a near relative, none can inherit his share. Nor can any one claim another's share by representation. The system is based on the nearness of relation with the deceased and not on our sense of

compassion or sympathy or feeling of pity for anyone.

6. The right to will away one's property has been conditioned More than a third of the property cannot be bequeathed by will.

Hazrat Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas, during a severe sickness, said to the Prophet, "O messenger of God, I have much wealth and property and only one daughter. I, therefore wish to give two thirds of my assets in the way of Allah as sadqah." The Prophet said, "It is not proper." Hazrat Sa'd then said, "Shall I then give away one half," The Prophet did not permit this too. Hazrat Sa'd then asked, "All right, shall I then give away one third," The Prophet then said, "Yes, you can (give away) the one third and this too is more." The Prophet then said a very instructive and wise thing, "It is better to leave one's heirs well-to-do than to leave them paupers so that they extenu their palms before others (beg)."

Hazrat Ibn 'Abbas used to say, "It would have been better if people were to bequeath by will only one forth of the property rather than one third, since the Prophet, while permitting bequest upto one third has regarded it to be much"

The Prophet said, "Allah has given a rightful share to every legal heir, Bequests therefore should not be made in favour of legal heirs."

It is significant to note that legacies shall be executed only after meeting the funereal expenses and paying debts including MEHR, provided further that the legacies are not in favour of legal heirs (unless all the heirs agree) and that the legacies are not for disapproved purposes.

The right of bequest is recognized so that one would by bequest help those who would have inherited one's property but for the presence of some other nearer who exclude the former from heirship.

Let us now consider some salient features of the above scheme in order to consider the validity or otherwise of the criticism that denial of heirship to an orphan grandson in the presence of his uncles is a case of inconsistency and injustice.

A. **R I G H T O F PARENTHOOD:** This right belongs to the real mother and the real father of the deceased. In the absence of this right itself belongs by virtue of nearness, to the grandfather and so on upwards. In the absence, to the mother, the grandmother, likewise becomes the heir, and so on upwards. There is no representation in these cases. These are cases of legal heirship strictly in accordance with the principle of nearness of relation with the deceased.

B. **R I G H T O F PROGENY:** This right belongs to such sons and daughters as are born of the blood (nutfah) or womb of the deceased. In the absence of such sons and daughters, the right of progeny BELONGS to the grandchildren of the deceased. However, in the peculiar situation in which the deceased may be survive by some sons and some orphan grandsons, the right of progeny belongs to the sons only. This being so, grandsons do not inherit under the right of progeny. It has been said in criticism that besides being unjust it is inconsistent to deprive such orphan grandson of heirship, since the right of heirship is granted to the grandfather in the event of the father's being predeceased. The objection, in other words, is as follows: In the absence of the father of the deceased, the grandfather inherits by virtue of the right of parenthood. Consistency demands that in the absence of a given son, the right of progeny should belong to the grandchildren born of such a son. It is very easy to see the confusion that is at work here. This whole essay is an attempt at showing that when one properly understands the Islamic Law one sees that the

charge of injustice cannot be brought against it. Let us therefore examine the charge of inconsistency here. It must be noted that the charge is based on the analogy between the grandfather of the deceased (whose father has predeceased) and the grandson of the deceased (whose son has predeceased). If a man had several fathers and, in the event of one of them having predeceased, if the corresponding grandfather were to inherit by right of parenthood along with the living fathers of the deceased, the objection would have been valid because the analogy on which the argument depends would then have to be granted as sound. This certainly is not the case. It has been pointed out earlier that he deceased by virtue of his own heirship and not by representation. So long as the real father is alive, nobody replaces him under the right of parenthood. Similarly, so long as any son is alive, nobody replaces him under the right of progeny.

C. RIGHT OF MARRIAGE:

This right belongs to the one who is actually related to the deceased by marriage and to none else. This relation cannot be indirect or vicarious. In the case of a husband (or a wife) having died in the life-time of

the deceased, he (or she) had no heirship in such a case can inherit either by right of marriage (since it results only from direct marital tie) or by representation (since there is no representation in inheritance). The legal heirs of the predeceased husband (or wife) therefore do not inherit on his (or her) behalf. This right totally lapses.

D. RIGHT OF FILIALITY:

This right too is not exercised by representation. If a predeceased brother of the deceased has a living son, such a son cannot claim heirship on behalf of the late father. Such a son (the nephew of the deceased) may inherit in his own right according to the Quranic principles. For example, in the absence of what Fyzee calls quranic heirs (dhawul-furud) or if there is some remainder after giving the shares of the Quranic Heirs, such a nephew may inherit as permitted.

The Quran has specified the rights of the relatives under the four categories explained above and determined their shares for us. Two questions remain:

- (1) Who inherits the remainder assets after the Quranic injunctions have been carried out?  
And
- (2) Who inherits in the

absence of those relatives whose shares have been specified in the Quran?

The first question does not fall in the purview of this essay though Islam gives a scheme. About the second, a brief discussion is as follows:

As an unquestionable interpreter of the Quran, the Prophet (PBUH) has provided solutions for which there are clues to be found in the Quran. After giving the shares of the near relatives or in case of their absence, heirship belongs to the PATERNAL (jaddi) relatives, who are the natural backbones of a persons, who care for him, who feel a natural concern (t'assub) for him and are called "asabat"(Agnatic Heirs). In the absence of the 'asabat, the heirship belongs to the Uterine Heirs (dhawul-arham), for example maternal uncle, maternal grandfather, sister's or daughter's or granddaughter's children. In support of these rules, four Quranic principles can be cited:-

1. The shares will go to the nearer after the nearest; in the presence of a nearer relative, a more distant relative shall not inherit. Says the Qur'an: "What is left behind by parents and near kindred." – an-nisa,7.
2. In case of the heirs other than the Quranic heirs, it will be seen as to who are nearer the deceased from the point of view of the interest or benefit of the deceased. Quran: "Those who are nearer unto you in usefulness." An-nisa,11.
3. Men are more capable of being 'asabah than females.

For this reason, the Quran appoints the father as 'asabah'. 'Asabat primarily means "those who go to battle together and have a common blood-feud."The Prophet has therefore pronounced that the remainder of the assets (i.e. after the claims of heirships of the Quranic Heirs are fulfilled) should be given to the nearest male. (In some cases, women are included in the definition of 'asabat. If the deceased, for example, has only daughters and has no male 'asabah, then the remainder as specified above shall go to the sister).

4. The fourth principle is: "Those who are akin are nearer than other..." (al-anfal, 75). Any blood relation is, by this principle nearer than a outsider or stranger. An adopted son, for virtue of a bequest. The Prophet said, "When there are no heirs, maternal uncle is the heir."

A detailed study is needed to grasp the classification of heirs and the methods of calculating their shares in different situations. Most Muslims need to consult a Mufti or an 'alim with reference to a particular case. This should not surprise anyone. These being matters of religio-legal importance, only experts can be expected to help. The very ordinary matters of procedure pertaining to our courts of law are not understood even by highly educated no lawyers. ●

# Islamic Norms For Borrowing

**Mahmood Jameel**

Borrowing from others when in need is the usual means of tiding over financial crisis. Islam has laid down some norms for this transaction between people as it involves financial ties between two individuals or institutions.

Let us look at its religious side first. People seek loans when faced with situations in which their needs outgrow their means.

Usually normal household people do not borrow money unless some emergency crops up in the family. These may be occasions for marriage of girls, admissions in educational institutions, critical state of health of some member or some tragedy that was unforeseen. Such people need to be helped and the Hadith describes it a virtuous act to help people in need. The elementary principle for the needy is to have a firm commitment to return the money loaned to him or her. Similarly, the lender has been asked not to place such conditions that would seek some benefits for him in lieu of the money he lends out.

The verse no. 282 in Surah Baqara, incidentally the longest verse of the Holy Quran lays down a few conditions for the loan transaction. 1- The two parties should enter an agreement with regard to the loan, write down the same on a paper,

register the names of the borrower and the lender and the money being handed over as the sum of the loan. 2- They should decide the date by which the loaned money will be repaid, and 3- They should bring two witnesses to stand testimony to the deal (it necessarily means writing their names, their addresses and the dates on which they signed the document.)

The borrower is supposed to return the amount on or before the deadline. In case his condition does not allow him to keep up the promise he should seek further extension of the date repayment and should never have the intention of dillydallying when it comes to giving back the money to the lender. The people who show compassion towards borrowers and relax the schedule, if it is considered necessary, have been promised great rewards by Allah. But such borrowers who do not keep up their promises, overshoot their schedules and do not care for the deadlines, have been warned of dire consequences in the hereafter and have been declared almost like persona non grata for all social purposes. The Prophet himself refused to lead the funeral prayers of people who died with loans still outstanding against them. Some of these hadith are worth giving a

thought for all of us. The Holy Prophet said, the soul of a borrower remains suspended from entering the heavens, unless his debts are cleared. (Ibne Maja, Masnad Ahmad, Tirmizi). Once, the holy Prophet addressed the namazis gathered for the Namaz of Fajr. He said: One of your companions is held up at the doors of the heaven as he the certain amount of loan that remains unpaid. If you desire, you can repay his loan and allow him to proceed towards the heaven. Or else he would be heading toward the heel. At-Targheeb wat-Tarheeb).

Yet another hadith, from Sahih Muslim says: Allah pardons all the sins of the martyrs (those who lay down their lives for the sake of Allah), but does not absolve them of the debt. At another place the Allah's messenger is quoted as saying: If someone borrows an amount as loan from paying off the debt, Allah will make conditions conducive for him to come out of it. But if he intends to gobble up others resources through devious means, with no intention or ever paying back a loan, then all such property and assets would face ruination. (Sahih Bukhari).

The holy Prophet is also reported to have said that if a virtuous person died in debt, his debt is cleared off by slicing off his virtues (in favour of the lender). However, if someone takes upon himself to clear off his debts, there would be no scrutiny for him in this matter. (Ibne Maja).

Allah's Prophet said, if an individual borrows an amount with a secret intention of never paying it back, he would be presented in the

Divine court as a thief. (Ibne Maja). A Shahi Bukhari hadith terms it a *zulm* (excess) if loans are not paid on schedule by someone who dilly dallies in the matter despite being capable of paying off his debts.

Once the Prophet was asked to lead the funeral prayers of an individual. He asked if the dead man owed any debts. He was informed that he carries an outstanding amount of two dinars towards loans. The Prophet then refused to lead the prayers and asked others to go ahead with it if they wanted. At this, Abu Qatada, a holy companion, came forward and said he would pay off the loans. The Prophet then said, it is now upon you to pay off the debt, the departed soul has been freed from the burden. He then proceeded to lead the funeral prayer.

However, it must be noted that the Prophet has exhorted his followers to help the people with amounts in loan when asked for the same as lending someone an amount twice, fetches rewards equivalent to one-time sadaqa (charity).

The Prophet is reported to have asked a companion to recite this prayer in supplication if he finds himself in debt: *Allahumma auzu bika minal hamma wal huzne, wa auzu bika minal ajaz wal kasli, wa auzu bika minal jubni wal bukhlī, wa auzu bika minal ghalabataddaini wa qahrir rijal*. The Prophet is said to have suggested this dua to Abu Umamah who appeared extremely grief-stricken when he came to the Prophet. ● (Islamic Voice)

## Confidence is Not Misplaced

Syed Iqbal Zaheer

An unusual quality of the Qur'an is that most people who are not classified as Muslims, but have been exposed to it to some degree, hold the feeling that there must be some truth behind it. If they engage with it longer – and seriously – then, the feeling grows. It is accompanied by disenchantment with the beliefs of the inherited religion.

In fact, direct exposure to the Qur'an is not the absolute requirement. It extends to its message. That is, people who have been exposed to the Qur'anic message, or have witnessed convinced that there must be some reality behind it. They begin to suspect that it must be ideas revealed from on High. They learn to respect Islam, the messenger of Islam, and the message of the Qur'an.

Quite unexpectedly, this can be discovered in the pages of the famous Brill Encyclopedia of Islam, produced by Western Jews and Christians. In 12 volumes of about 10,000 pages, in miniature fonts, given shape over a century, this Encyclopedia has several articles where authors treat the Qur'an as a kind of criterion.

Thereafter, such persons have to choose their course. Whatever the inner conviction of a man, it is not necessary that this outward expressions should also match with it. Quite a few feel convinced of the Qur'an as a revelation, but decide to remain on the religion of their birth. Said the Qur'an (76:3), "Surely, We guided him to a

course: (to be) either grateful, or be an ingrate (who denies his true Lord)."

The above partly explains why people of other (or no religious) denominations criticize the Qur'an, or he who brought it, i.e. the Prophet. They point an error here, an error there. Why do they do it, seeing that this is not their attitude with other Holy Scriptures? For instance, other have such funny, incredible, irrational, horrific, and lewd stories that make a man's hair stand upright. They challenge his mind and morals, people decide to lay the Book down after a few pages. They never mention it to others. They do not meet a Christian, Jew, or others and say, "Excuse me, but I find this in your holy literature. How to you explain it? No, no, the allegory theory does not work. It is too explicit, and too often. Why should these not be expunged?"

A question: 'Why is it that a writing which carries the best parts of Jewish, Christina and many other Scriptures, without the smallest part of their funny, incredible, irrational, horrific, and Jewd contents, not be accepted as a Revelation by those who are exposed to it? Are they so stupid that they cannot compare, think, and understand? The answer is, 'No. They are not stupid. They are clever. In fact, they think they are cleverer than God.'

At all events, what we are trying to say is that when such people come across any of what they assume as

discrepancy in the Qur'an, or indigestible information about Prophet Muhammad, they react immediately. They must publish it, and question the Muslims about it. They do not say to themselves, "This is just another of the so-called holy Scriptures, perhaps once pure, but now full of improper stuff, not worthy of a gentleman's library."

A recent objection raised against the Qur'an – by a non-Muslim – is as follows: How come the Qur'an disallows consumption of blood, but the Muslims allow transfusion of blood? Isn't there a double-stand?

In answer we say that we do not presume to know all about Islam. The reason behind this or that Islamic injunction is best known by God alone. He commands as He wills. As His slaves, we are bound to obey Him. Whether we understand the wisdom behind a command or we do not is beside the point. Nor have we been asked to investigate. In fact, such objections are a test of faith. Do we believe in the Qur'an as a revelation, unconditionally, or do we not? If we assert, quite unhesitatingly that, 'yes we do,' then, why worry over objections raised by unbelievers? The Qur'an itself touched on this point, and right at the start. It said (2:26),

*Surely, Allah is not ashamed of striking the similitude of a gnat or what is above it. As for the believers, they know that it is the truth from their Lord, But, as for the unbelievers, they object: 'what did God mean by (striking) such a similitude?' Allah leads astray many thereby and guides many thereby. And He does not lead astray any thereby but the wrongdoers.*

So, God tests. And tests are necessary. No false man should get through into paradise; or into the company of the pious in this life. Aptly, the Qur'an also said (24:26),

*Evil (women) are for evil (men), and evil men are for evil (women); and pure (women) are for pure (men) and pure (men) are for pure (women).*

A gnat (mosquito) is not less a wonder than an elephant is, or a supernova, or a bacterium. So, there should be no wonder if Allah struck its example. But humans have a different perspective. They are a different perspective. They are a bit huffed up. They think too much of themselves. They tend to look down upon things smaller than them; and, in their hubris, and haste, forget to cast a good look at the Qur'anic words: "*Allah is not ashamed of striking the similitude of a gnat or what is above it.*" They fail to notice the words, "...what is above it!" If they did, they would discover what is above it, that is, above the mosquito. It is a biological organism, a parasite which lives above it, on its wings! So, God is not ashamed of striking the similitude of what is above a mosquito in littleness, as well as above it in space: a little insect on its back. This demonstrates how striking an example, although objected by its critics, can actually increase respect for the Qur'an.

The scholars of old have warned: "Every Qur'anic word is there on purpose. No word, no syllable of the Qur'anic texts is redundant." How true; although not every scholar will agree with the interpretation of the Qur'anic words (*famaa fawqaha*) of the text in



discussion in the sense of above-ness (i.e. in space). They would rather say that the words mean, "What is above it in insignificance)." But an outside chance remains for the modern spatial understanding.

Whatever, it must be admitted that it is impossible not to have doubts. Human mind is, at bottom, skeptic, unbelieving of facts (and, more so of truths). It likes the fabulous, fantastic, and the incredible. It can accept phantasmagoria but not facts as fast. So, an occasional doubt is within the limits. But if they multiply, then the person's faith is on the border. He could anytime slide into hypocrisy. The scholars have advised therefore, that if someone has many doubts about Islam, its Book, or its Prophet, he better attend to them and get them removed. Otherwise, he could die on disbelief.

On the topic of objections against the Qur'an, we could take another example. A Qur'anic verse says (33:4), "Allah has not placed in the breast of a man two hearts." A quick doubt is raised by the ever awake critic: a pregnant woman has two hearts: her own, and that of the fetus!" A quick answer comes from the Qur'anic scholars, "Look at the Arabic text. It says, 'a man,' and not 'a person,' or, 'a human.' So, do the medical annals have the history of a man who had two hearts?"

Interestingly, since the mosquito is here, it may be pointed out that it has three hearts. Each of its heart functions separately, and each has its own specific function to perform.

Another interesting aspect concerning the mosquito is that Man the conqueror of stars, (if not factually, then at least poetically) has not been able to

defeat his oldest enemy, the little flying machine, the malaria-carrying, blood-sucking, mosquito. Mosquitoes are like money-lenders: whether one-man shows or corporate engines called banks. They suck the blood and leave the victim to die. A recent work (Broke, USA by Gary Rivlin, pub. Harper Collins, USA) is written to explain how American economy's blood was sucked by tens of thousands of money elders; pawn brokers, payday lenders, and banks, leading it to the irrecoverable collapse of the 2007-8. Man has thousands of people die after its laboratory tells it that the blood is worthy of stealing. A scientist has used malaria as an example to prove how the Darwinian idea of evolution has as many holes as – so to say – a mosquito has eyes: a hundred (The Edge of Evolution by Michael Behe, pub, Free Press, USA). There are plenty of interesting things about mosquitoes, but mosquito is not exactly our topic just now; although we begin to suspect that the Qur'anic mention of the mosquito seems to have more meaning than what is apparent: "These are examples that We cite for the knowledgeable" (The Qur'an, 29: 43), Some thought for the critic.

Back to blood. This is an amazing product of the human body. Known as 'the river of life,' it is produced in the bone-marrow. It provides important nourishment to the cells and carries away waste products to the factories in the kidneys and lungs for filter and disposal. Of the various components of blood, the red blood cells play the key role. They are the only cells 'in the human body' that do not have a nucleus. So, no nucleus, no

DNA, no genes. Some biologists have found a god in the genes. They give the genes qualities. But, to their discomfort, their god is missing from the red blood cells of most mammalians. But of course, this is little discomfort, for after an involuntary 'OMG,' they quickly answer that this is a space-saving strategy. But we may ask, 'Is the red blood cell the only cell requiring space? Is there any jam-packed cell in the human body that does not cry for a little more space? Quick, name one. And, why are the red blood cells of invertebrates without this space-saving measure? Why do their red cells have the nucleus?'

Back to the objection, The difference between consumption of blood and its infusion into the human body is that the nutrients go into the digestive system. They are broken into molecules and then fed to the cells which need them for running their machineries. Thus, what goes of the nutrients into the stomach ends up inside the cells. On the other hand, blood sent into the body in transfusion, remains outside the stomach. It goes into the veins and arteries, is sent to the heart, pumped out from there, and goes into circulation throughout the body. The infused blood, just as the body's own blood, picks up oxygen, delivers to the cells, and, on the way back, picks up carbon, Kidneys and lungs – apart from performing a few other function. The infused blood remains 'out and out' of the system as against the consumed blood which becomes 'part of the system.'

Blood is not a cleaning agent. It is a carrier. Along with oxygen and other useful materials, it cranes germs, bacteria, microbes, several kinds of

pathogens, and toxin material such as urea and uric acid. These are taken by the blood to the kidney to separate out the harmful elements; this is the reason why blood is considered unclean in Islam. If blood is consumed, some of the pathogens and toxic waste could escape into the body-system and cause disorders i.e.g., hyper-uremia leading to renal failure leading to hepatic coma) But, if, (what we call body, it will have to pass through the kidney which will remove the harmful elements. The bacteria and germs that come along with the infused blood face extinction at the hands of the white blood cells whose function is to kill pathogens. It is not hundred percent safe, but, removed of pathogens and toxic material, blood transfusion does save some lives.

For students, we suggest an example. Blood which is donated to a person is like a factory bus, and the blood that is consumed by a man is a scrapped bus. The factory bus picks up passengers and delivers them to their places of work and residence. In comparison, the blood which is consumed by a person is like an old bus, placed into recycling. It is disassembled. Its steel, plastic, and other parts are sent into respective furnaces. There they are crushed, given new forms and shapes, and then, (delivered by the vehicles that run in the streets), supply to a variety of organizations, to be ultimately used as components for other machines.

So, after all, the confidence in the Qur'an is not misplaced: "Will they then believe in falsehood, and deny Allah's favors?" (The Qur'an, 27:72) ●

(YMD)

## Allama Shibli Nomani's Educational Reforms

After the great uprising of 1857 the state of Muslims in India was pathetic. As past rulers they needed a lesson from the new rulers of India. Therefore, the wrath of British forces on Muslims was predictable. As it often happens, a fire gets kindled from the smouldering ashes and so it was in the form of great reformer Sir Syed Ahmad Khan that the Muslims got their sheet anchor. Sir Syed had a vision and he knew the remedy for the ailing Muslims who were smarting under the severe punishments of the agents of British monarchy. As Francis Pitchard, an American who had her Ph.D. in Urdu, pointed out, "Sir Syed wanted to defeat the British by acquiring their skills."

Late Professor Abdus Salam describes the same point when he says, "Remember, almost three hundred years ago in about 1660 two great memorials of modern history were established. One in the west-London's Saint Paul Church, the other in the east-Agra's Taj Mahal. Needless to say, these two memorials are themselves an expression of the fact that as to which of these two civilizations in that period of history was at which level in terms of architecture, handicraft, etc. But almost around the same period a third memorial came into existence, the impact of which proved to be far greater and far reaching. This was the famous Newton's "Principia" in Physics. There was nothing parallel to this in Moghul's India. What happened when the wonderful technology which gave Taj Mahal got collided with the technology based on Newton's Principia. The first explosion of the collision was in 1757. Hundred years after the construction of Shah Jehan's Taj Mahal, the better performance of Robert Clive's light

Salman Sultan weaponry gave a humiliating defeat to heirs of Shah Jehan and after further hundred years the crown of Indian Emperor was at the feet of Queen Victoria. Ah! This was not only the end of a great empire but was the end of a civilization, a culture and a technology. After 1857 the language of Indian state became English in place of Persian. The sweet melody of east was thrown out of the syllabi of schools and in their place literature of Shakespeare and Milton was brought in. The treasures of eastern knowledge were wiped out from history and palace of Lancashire's cotton prints were constructed on the ashes of Dhaka's Muslin."

Sir Syed wished to make available the language and subsequently the technology of the victor to the vanquished. I will not dwell on the trial and tribulations he faced in this daunting task but there is no doubt that Sir Syed's pioneering efforts paved the way for establishment of the temples of modern learning in India.

It was in the same fateful year of 1857 that the soil of Azamgarh was blessed by the noble soul of Allama Shibli Nomani. Shibli's date of birth (3<sup>rd</sup> June) has been proved to be the day when Azamgarh Jail inmates broke the gates to be free. Allah wanted to take great work from Shibli and that's why he was providentially saved from the ignominy of courts. Unfortunately, this did not happen in the case of his extraordinary brilliant student Maulana Iqbal Suhail. Mirza Ehsan Ahmad describes this episode, "Nature has given him (Iqbal Suhail) an extraordinary brain and if he had used it rightly then there would have been no need to say that there is no heir apparent to

Allama Shibli in the right sense. What can be said of his fickle nature that for a long time he could not decide as how to spend the priceless knowledge obtained in the scholarly company of Allama Shibli and Maulana Hamiduddin Farahi. However, when he became a little stable and the time came to take a decision, the decision he took is a great tragedy for the scholarly and literary world”.

Shibli came in contact with great scholars and literature in Sir Syed's Aligarh and got enriched in knowledge and contributed a great deal to the Aligarh movement. Shibli realized the fear of being bowled over by the civilization and culture of English and, therefore, strived to inculcate the spirit of past glory and achievement of our own culture in the vanquished masses. English left no stone unturned in humiliating Muslims, of whose prowess they were afraid of, and the fictitious stories of the destruction of Alexandria Library is a figment of their imagination. Shibli encountered this by writing an article “Kutubkhana Iskandria” and adopted the methodology of documentary evidence as well as logic to prove that Muslims are not to be blamed for that shameful act. In my humble opinion it was this ideological difference between Sir Syed and Shibli which has been blown out of proportion and context. As Professor Shahryar rightly points out in the editorial of the special edition of “Fikr-o-Nazar” on Shibli, the people with vested interest had more to do in twisting the facts and getting benefited by playing up this difference in opinion of the great giants of their time, Sir Syed and Shibli.

Allama Shibli Nomani (Alai Rahma) was sensitive and extremely worried with the deteriorating state of affairs among Muslims. He had before him the clear picture of Muslim's achievement and great contribution to humanity but his feet were not just ensconced in past glory. He didn't waste his

time on either day-dreaming or venting out his frustration. In fact, he had a distinct vision and a well chalked out program for improving the lot of Muslim community. This is evident from the suggestions he made and the resolutions he moved in important meetings of Muslim intellectuals. Following are a few of his ideas for implementation of which he worked relentlessly:

1. Publication of old books which had become extinct.
2. Reformation of Madarsa syllabi which contained outdated or obsolete ideas. Importance of teaching languages like English, Hindi and even Sanskrit in Madarsas. He practically introduced the teaching of these languages in Darul Uloom Nadwat-ul-Ulama.
3. Authentic translation of Al-Quran
4. Establishment of Majlis 'Ilm-ul-Kalam'
5. Importance of Journalism for Muslims. In 1912 'Muslim Gazette' could only be started due to the efforts of Allama Shibli Nomani.
6. Compilation and teaching of Seerat-un-Nabi. (The monumental work on the life of our beloved Prophet (pbuh) in seven volumes was completed by his student Maulana Syed Sulaiman Nadwi. The world has yet to come across any other work on Prophet's (pbuh) life which may surpass Seerat-un-Nabi).
7. Published the plan of Darul Musannefin (House of Writers) in Al-Hilal, February 11, 1914.
8. Wrote extensive note for start of a literary journal by the name of Ma'arif. (Monthly journal Ma'arif is being published regularly since July 1916, from Darul Musannefin Shibli Academy, Azamgarh).

Once a Professor of Sociology (B.H.U.) was extolling the virtues of French revolution and laid emphasis on it being called the mother of all revolutions. Reminding him of a revolution which took place 1400 years ago, could only result in a fleeting acceptance "Yes there was Islam". In Seerat-un-Nabi, Shibli allegorically paints the impact of that revolution which emerging from an uncivilized and uncouth part of Arabia swept across the length and breadth of the world. Did not teachings of Prophet Muhammad(pbuh) burn to ashes the hollow claims of pagan civilization? Was not the satanic fires extinguished and still satanic forces dread revival of the teachings of Islam? The importance of Shibli's writing is evident in today's world when western world is bent upon attacking the personality of our beloved Prophet(pbuh). Those who try to ridicule our beloved Prophet(pbuh) believe in creating doubt about the integrity of messenger in order to nullify the impact of "The Message". Therefore, those who ridicule "Seerat-un-Nabi" as good literature only must realize the fact accepted by the West that in recorded history there is no personality which comes anywhere near to the historically most important personality of Muhammad(pbuh). Seerat-un-Nabi has been translated in many languages but needs to be translated in all languages of the world.

Shibli's idea of a synthesis of occidental and oriental learning culminated in the foundation of Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow, Darul Musannefin Shibli Academy, Azamgarh, Madarstul Islah, Saraimir (Azamgarh) and Shibli National College, Azamgarh. Shibli encouraged a spirit of enquiry and was responsible in preparing a dedicated team of scholars prominent among them were Maulana Hamiduddin Farahi, Maulana Syed Sulaiman Nadwi, Maulana Abdus Salam Nadwi, Maulana Abdul Bari Nadwi and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. He always encouraged and pushed forward his

students. Once a project for translation and commentary of Al-Quran was given to him but due to his preoccupation he expressed his inability and recommended Maulana Hamiduddin Farahi in these words "who can do it better than Hamid". He always praised Syed Sulaiman Nadwi and rewarded him in select gatherings. Ultimately, he handed over his life long earning in the form of "Seerat" to Maulana Syed Sulaiman Nadwi who fulfilled his teacher/mentor's wishes by completing "Seerat-un-Nabi".

A seminar on "Relevance of Allama Shibli Nomani in present era" was held in Shibli National College, Azamgarh, on 24-25 February 2007. A number of research papers were presented on various aspects of Shibli's writings and after thorough deliberation it was concluded that Allama Shibli Nomani's thoughts are more relevant today. The prophetic importance of "Shahr-e-Ashob Islam" is evident in these days of wanton destruction of citadels of Islam. After witnessing barbarism in Afghanistan and Iraq one cries out "How long??"

Seminars just like tournaments are meant to create stir but their purpose will only be served if faculty members and students get inspired to excel in their field of study. Are we ready to equip our libraries and laboratories with modern tools of learning? If we are really sincere in following the teachings of Allama Shibli Nomani we must first strive to strengthen basic science subjects through availability of latest literature and equipments in Science departments. Allama Shibli Nomani felt the need of establishing a School after a thorough survey of the educational status of regional Muslims. Muslim Educational Society, Azamgarh was formed primarily to provide education to the Muslims. Though we are empowered by the constitution of India (Article 30) to establish and administer institution of our choice, we have not exploited or rather we have not even taken notice of it. Are our minority institutions serving the purpose for which they were established? ●

## Around the World

### From Guantanamo to Makkah

The Grand Mosque in Makkah is a very sense of the word from Camp Delta, the infamous US Navy detention center at the base at Guantanamo Bay, but life has its ironies and this one involves the journey made by former Guantanamo prison guard Terry Holdbrooks, who performed Umrah recently. Terry, now known as Mustafa embraced Islam in 2003 while guarding terror suspects (who have never gone to trial) at Camp Delta and was dismissed shortly afterward. The conduct of the inmates, a Moroccan among them in particular, was a major factor behind his conversion. His interaction with the prisoners drove him to look into Islam and study it for himself, and it was in this journey of reading and insight that convinced him to embrace the faith, he says, "When I first saw the Kaaba, I was little taken aback, it is sort of hard to take it all in with just one day to do so, or two days. You need a few days to really take it all in." ●

### California Science Center

U. S. Secretary of State opened recently an award winning exhibition about the scientific achievements of Muslim Civilization at the California Science Center in Los Angeles. The "1001" Inventions exhibition in partnership with Abdul Latif Jameel Community Initiatives (ALJCI), has already attracted more than one million visitors during its global tour. The Muslim World has a proud history of innovators, said the secretary of state and highlighted the achievements of people like Fatima Al Fihri, who founded the world's first modern university and master engineer, Al-Jazari, who created the crank mechanisms that drive every

plane, train and automobile on the planet.

### ● Turkey PM: Israel must still apologize for last year's Gaza flotilla raid

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on 8 July that it was "unthinkable" to normalize ties with Israel unless Israel apologized for the killing of nine pro-Palestinian Turkish activists aboard the Mavi Marmara ship bound for the Gaza Strip last year. Erdogan also said in the text of a speech to parliament seen by Reuters that two other conditions for the normalization of ties were Israel lifting its blockade of Gaza and Israel paying compensation to the victims of the flotilla raid. On Thursday, an Israeli official said that a UN report on Israeli's interception of last year's flotilla would be published on July 27 after delays to enable talks between Israel and Turkey. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, declined to discuss the findings of the committee set up by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and chaired by former New Zealand premier Geoffrey Palmer, saying only they had been finalized. But Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz said earlier that previous drafts of the Palmer report indicated the panel would rule mostly in favor of Israel. "From what we understand, the report justifies the [Gaza] blockade. It says the blockade is legitimate, that Israel took legitimate steps," he told reporters. Steinitz said the Palmer report would include "minor" criticism of the interception of the converted cruise ship Mavi Marmara as it tried to run the Gaza blockade. ●

## An Appeal

Thanks God that Darul-Uloom-Nadwatul Ulama is engaged in its academic and religious pursuits under the patronage of Hazrat Maulana S.M.Rabey Hasani Nadwi. Because of the increasing number of students the paucity of residential accommodation is posing problem. To ease this situation, Management has decided to build a new Hostel, work has been initiated in this direction. This new Hostel will be a three storey structure with 60 rooms and three spacious Halls. Besides residential facility it will help in other literary and academic activities.

It is estimated that new construction will cost Rs. 2,35,00,000 (Two crores and thirty five lacs) and by the grace of God it will be met with the generous help of benevolent people. We hope you will come forward to help us in this direction and join hands with the Management of Nadwatul Ulama . It will help students to devote their time in studies without any distraction.

We trust that by the grace of God we will be successful in achieving our target.

**S.M.Wazeh Rasheed Nadwi**

Motamide Taleem, Nadwatul Ulama

**Athar Husain Khalidi**

Motamide Ma'l, Nadwatul Ulama

**Saeedur Rahman Azami Nadwi**

Mohtamim Darul -Uloom Nadwatul Ulama

**Mufti Mohd Zahoor**

Nazir Shobae Tameer wa Tarraqi  
Nadwatul Ulama

**S.M. Hamza Hasani Nadwi**

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