



THE FRAGRANCE OF EAST

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Value of Love

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

The excellence of man lies in his love and mercy for others: one person is pricked with a thorn but another person feels the pain. Man is gifted with tears which fall from his eyes when he sees a widow's head uncovered in helplessness, a poor man's kitchen unlit, and a sick man in distress. If such a drop of tear is put in a sea of transgression, it will cleanse it. If it falls on a forest of sins, it will burn it and fill the space again with the effulgence of virtue. The angels can bring forward anything, but they cannot present this drop of tear. The angels do not sleep due to their cognizance of Allah's being and attributes, but their vigil does not have the excellence of man's inability to sleep due to the sufferings of others.

The quality of love permeating through the human heart is a very precious gift of God. When something stirs it, it assumes a strange power. It rises above the considerations of religion, community, nation, and motherland. It then only sees another man's heart and feels its suffering and is drawn to it by nature as is pulled an iron chip toward a magnet. ■

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Wisdom of Qur'an

“Those who were unjustly expelled from their homes for no other reason than their saying: ‘Allah is Our Lord.’ If Allah were not to repel some men through others, monasteries and churches and synagogues and mosques, wherein the names of Allah is much mentioned, would certainly have been pulled down. Allah will most certainly help those who will help Him. Verily Allah is Immensely Strong, Overwhelmingly Mighty. (Allah will certainly help) those who, were We to bestow authority on them in the land, will establish Prayer, render Zakah, enjoin good, and forbid evil. The end of all matters rests with Allah.”

(Al-Qur'ān – 22:40-41)

When power is bestowed on the believers, they concern themselves with such noble tasks like establishing Prayer and giving out Zakah, and use their power to promote goodness and extirpate evil.

It is, in fact, God Who decides to whom governance of a territory should be entrusted. People who are intoxicated with power are prone to misunderstand that it is they who decide the fate of people. But God, Who has the power to transform a tiny seed into a huge tree, and Who conversely, can turn a huge tree into a pile of ashes, also has the power to strike a fatal blow and make an example of those who, by their acts of repression, struck terror into the hearts of people making themselves appear too well entrenched to be removed from power. On the other hand, He can also raise the down-trodden to heights of power that none can dream of. ■

Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

It has been narrated on the authority of Ibn Umar that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) said: “Beware, every one of you is a shepherd and everyone is answerable with regard to his flock. The Caliph is a shepherd over the people and shall be questioned about his subjects (as to how he conducted his affairs). A man is a guardian over the members of his family and questioned about them (as to how he looked after their physical and moral well-being). A woman is a guardian over the household of her husband and his children and shall be questioned about them (as to how she managed the household and brought up the children). A slave is a guardian over the property of his master and shall be questioned about it (as to how he safeguard his trust). Beware, every one of you is a guardian and every one of you shall be questioned with regard to his trust.”

(Sahih Muslim)

Here, the government's responsibility towards the citizens has been put on a par with parents' responsibility towards their children. Just as the father is bound to ensure the maintenance and well-being of his family, the government is bound to ensure the moral, spiritual, social and economic well-being of its citizens, whose affairs it has undertaken to administer.

Like a shepherd, a father serves his family with a spirit of deep love, affection and self-sacrifice. Similarly, the rulers should serve the people of the State with the same emotions of love and sacrifice. ■

Importance of Media

Late Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (RAH) was a man of vision. He had realized that modern age is subservient to media. It is such a powerful weapon which can make or mar the destiny of a nation. He desired that Muslim community should have a powerful press at its disposal. He worked hard in this direction but because of certain hurdles an English newspaper could not see the light of the day.

By the close of the last century we could take out a quarterly magazine "The Fragrance of East". It was well received and boosted us to make it a monthly magazine.

It is encouraging to note that our decision to take out "The Fragrance", an English quarterly magazine, was well received. Even before its formal publication hundreds of subscribers got themselves registered and a good number of suggestions were made to make the magazine more attractive, objective and effective. We planned to incorporate these ideas so as to satisfy our readers. Our message is to observe nothing more than adherence to the minimum obligations of our faith; a way of life reflecting a deep love of God as well as observing the tenets of a system established for worshipping the Almighty. With His blessings we hope to march ahead and be productive.

Even though it is now more than two decades that the Fragrance of East is in circulation, writers and intellectuals have yet to show an interest to help us in fulfilling the task. This cold shouldering by the intelligentsia of the community is depressing. We do not want to be reduced to mere copy-holder of other magazines and journals by lifting articles from there. We wish to be pioneer in publishing and propagating the ideals of a pious, evil-free society in context of the present day developments. It is, therefore, earnestly requested that intellectuals and writers should favour us in building up a regular source of publication material. Howsoever, efficient and aesthetic an architect may be but

he can give only attractive structural designs; the execution of his plan depends on skilled masons and good material. By the grace of God we have launched the magazine but its effectiveness rests on the active co-operation of our writers, scholars, intellectuals and academicians. We also seek co-operation from those who can help us in translating the existing Urdu, Persian and Arabic material into English. Nadwatul Ulema true to its traditions of effecting healthy reforms in educational and social behaviour of Muslims, has come out again to help reach the message of righteousness to all and sundry. Now it is our duty to carry out the mission further.

A biased media always remains watchful to pickup issues through which it can malign those ideologies which are not palatable to it. For instance, the enforcement of Shariah in certain Muslim countries is a burning issue these days. Sometime back a report from Karachi, in the Press says that a young woman, who went to a shopping complex wearing a sleeveless dress, was attacked in day light by two men. They brushed past her bare arm with a razor to get the message home. Similarly sometime back a strong acid was sprinkled on the body of a girl student, who was not properly dressed.

Sometimes frolicsome elements themselves engineer such incidents and attribute them to their dissentients. Similarly fallacious interpretation of "HUDUD" is put forward to create doubts about their implementation, violation of human rights is attributed to the punishment of guilty. In absence of the proper projection of the positive aspects of the Shariah Laws reprehensible stories get currency. We therefore invite articles on Shariah Laws and their implementation to counter misgivings and present the correct picture in proper perspective. ■

S.A.

We solicit articles for publication in The Fragrance of East. Suitable remuneration will be paid to writers. We prefer receipt of articles on:
e-mail: shariq_alavi@yahoo.com
along with a hard copy, duly signed, by post.

Role of Muslims in The Struggle for Freedom

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Muslims in the Forefront

Muslims have played a very significant role in the national struggle for freedom. They have been in the forefront of it. It was, after all, from their hands that the British had wrested power in India. When British Imperialism was spreading its tentacles over the country and devouring one Province after the other, the first man to realise the gravity of the danger was the lion-hearted Tipu Sultan of Mysore. He saw clearly that unless determined efforts were made in time to thwart the nefarious designs of the greedy aliens, the whole of India would ultimately be swallowed up by them. With this resolve, he unsheathed his sword and jumped into a fierce, life-and-death struggle against the British exploiters.

Tipu Sultan's Crusade

Tipu Sultan made a valiant bid to unite the Indian princes against the British usurpers. He even wrote to Sultan Salim III of Turkey to join hands with him for the expulsion of the British. His whole life was spent in the struggle. He came on the verge of success, the English were about to be swept out of the land, but they managed to achieve through diplomacy what they could not gain by arms. They cleverly obtained the support of some rulers of the South and by the use of other methods of treachery and deceit brought to naught the patriotic ambitions of that gallant son of Mysore. Tipu Sultan was finally killed in the thick of battle on May 4, 1799. He preferred death to a life of servitude under the British. His

famous, historic, words spoken a little before he met his death were: "To live for a day like a tiger is far more precious than to live for a hundred years like a jackal". It is reported that when the British Commander, General Horse, received the news of the Sultan's death and went to inspect his corps he cried out in exultation: "From today India is ours".

The history of India does not tell of a braver patriot and a more uncompromising enemy of foreign rule than him. In his lifetime he was the most hated man among the English. To give vent to their spite, Englishmen in India even went to the extent of giving to their dogs the name of Tipu. It continued to be like this with them for a long time.

War of Independence

The Indian sepoys in May 1857, rose in open revolt against the oppressive misdeeds of the British masters, against the contemptuous treatment meted out by them to their Indian subordinates, their insatiable lust for money and persistent violation of the religious sentiments of Hindus and Muslims. The sepoy uprising quickly developed into a national war with Hindus and Muslims fighting shoulder to shoulder for the emancipation of the motherland. The rebels marched towards Delhi, the seat of the last of the Mughal Emperors, Bahadur Shah Zafar, and proclaimed him to be the spear-head of their struggle and the symbol of national resistance. Battles were fought all over India under his flag. He was the unanimous

choice of the people and their rightful leader and ruler and Delhi, the nerve-centre of patriotic India.

Share of Muslims

Though the War of Independence was really and truly a national war in which Hindus and Muslims had participated freely and equally and India had not yet seen a more stirring spectacle of popular enthusiasm, unity and patriotism, its leadership was predominantly in the hands of Muslims. More often than not, the leaders of the movement, at various levels belonged to the Muslim community.

Vengeance of the British

After the failure of the movement, for reasons that are well known, the British took a savage revenge from the Indians and let loose a spate of fury which revived the memories of Chengiz Khan and Halaku. The rebels were ruthlessly pursued, caught and punished. There was ruin and desolation everywhere. The three young sons of the Emperor, whom the British themselves had given asylum, were killed by them so ruthlessly that it made even the Englishmen shudder. Thirty-three other members of the imperial family, including the old and the infirm, were also slain along with them. The aging Emperor himself was put to the severest indignity. He was tried for treason in excessively humiliating circumstances and would have certainly been put to death had high English army officer not guaranteed the security of his life. He was exiled to Burma to spend the rest of his days in utter poverty and indigence.

Death and Desolation

As the victorious British army entered the city of Delhi the terrible havoc it wrought

there provided eloquent commentary to the Quaranic verse that:

Kings when they enter a country despoil it, and make the noblest of its people the meanest: thus do they behave.

(-XXVII: 34)

The troops were given a free hand to plunder the city for three days and they made use of the opportunity with such enthusiasm that an English officer, Lord Lawrence, felt compelled to write to General Penny, who was the General-in-Command, in such strong words about the whole affair, "I believe we shall lastingly, and indeed, justly be abused for the way in which we have despoiled all classes without distinction".

For three days death and destruction reigned supreme in Delhi. People were slain indiscriminately, shops were looted, houses were burnt. Men, women and children fled the town in thousands. In the end, the city which, till yesterday, was the seat of Muslim splendour was reduced to shambles. A graphic account of the general ruin and spoliation is furnished in his memoirs by Lord Roberts who had led the English army from Kanpur to Delhi. This entry bears the date, September 24, 1857, which means that it was made soon after the Red Fort of Delhi had fallen to the British. Wrote Lord Roberts:

"That march through Delhi in the early morning light was a gruesome proceeding. Our way by the Lahore Gate from the Chandni Chowk led through a veritable city of the dead; not a sound was to be heard but the falling of our own footsteps; not a

living creature was to be seen. Dead bodies were strewn about in all directions, in every attitude that the death-struggle had caused them to assume, and in every stage of decomposition. We marched in silence or involuntarily spoke in whispers, as though fearing to disturb those ghastly remains of humanity. The sights we encountered were horrible and sickening to the last degree. Here a dog gnawed at an uncovered limb, there a vulture disturbed by our approach from its loathsome meal, but too completely gorged to fly, fluttered away to a safer distance. In many instances the positions of the dead bodies were appallingly life-like. Some with their arms uplifted as if beckoning, and indeed, the whole scene was weird and terrible beyond description. Our horses seemed to feel the horror of it as much as we did, for they shook and snorted in evident terror. The atmosphere was unimaginably disgusting, laden as it was with the most noxious and sickening odours".

Islamic Rebellion

It was, indeed, a general massacre, but the wrath seemed to be directed particularly against the Muslims, for many among the higher British authorities associated the uprising with an Islamic Jihad and believed that the moving spirit behind it were Muslims. To quote Henry Mead: "This rebellion, in its present phase, cannot be called a sepoy Mutiny. It did begin with the sepoys, but soon its true nature was revealed. It was an Islamic revolt".

Another narrator of the dreadful drama says: "An English officer had made it a principle to treat every Muslim as a rebel. He would enquire from everyone he saw if he was a Hindu or a Muslim, and would shoot him dead right there if he turned out to be a Muslim".

Mass Execution of Muslims

After Delhi had been subdued and the British control was firmly established over it, there began the public executions. Scaffolds were built on the thoroughfares and such places were treated as centres of entertainment by the Englishmen. They would collect there in groups to 'enjoy' the executions. Several localities of Muslims were totally wiped out. "Twenty-seven thousand Muslims were executed, to speak nothing of those killed in the general massacre. It seemed that the British were determined to blot out of existence the entire Muslim race. They killed the children and the way they treated the women simply belies description. It rends the heart to think of it".

Lord Roberts writing to his mother on June 21, 1857 remarked. "The death that seems to have the most effect is being blown from a gun. It is rather a horrible sight, but in these times we cannot be particular". The purpose of this "business" was to show "these rascally Musalmans that, with God's help, Englishmen will still be the masters of India".

Price of the Struggle for Freedom

The Muslims, thus, had to pay most heavily for waging the struggle for freedom. The British held them to be the major offenders and decided that their future generations should also be made to bear the burden of their guilt. The attitude of the

British bureaucracy can well be gauged from the following quotation from Henry arrington Thomas of the Bengal Civil Service in his pamphlet, 'Late Rebellion in India and Our future Policy' written in 1858, i.e. only a year after the rebellion:

"I have stated that the Hindus were not the contrivers or the primary movers of the 1857 rebellion and I now shall attempt to show that it was the result of a Mohammadan conspiracy. Left to their resources, the Hindus never would or could have compassed such an undertaking They (the Mohammadans) have been uniformly the same from the times of the first Caliphs to the present day, proud, intolerant, and cruel, ever aiming at Mohammadan supremacy by whatever means, and ever fostering a deep hatred of Christians. They cannot be good subjects of any government which professes another religion; the precepts of the Quran will not suffer it".

Exclusion of Muslims from Public Services

This attitude towards the Muslims continued to be the cornerstone of British policy in India for a long time. The Muslims were debarred from lucrative government jobs and were ejected from all other gainful occupations, their trade was ruined and the endowments from which their schools used to be maintained were seized. A system of education which ran counter to their cultural and intellectual ideals, and aspirations was introduced deliberately in the country.

It was, sometimes, openly stated in official notifications for government vacancies that only Hindus would be considered for appointment. Thus, Sir William Hunter has reproduced the following extract from a Calcutta Persian paper (*Durbin*), dated July 14, 1869.

"Recently when several vacancies occurred in the office of the Sunderbans Commissioner, that official in advertising them in the Government Gazette, stated that the appointments would be given to none but Hindus".

Commenting on the above complaint, the author goes on to say:

".....the Muslims have now sunk so low that, even when qualified for Government employment, they are studiously kept out of it by government notifications. Nobody takes any notice of their helpless condition, and the higher authorities do not deign even to acknowledge their existence".

Unconcealed Vindictiveness

The British made no attempt to conceal their ill-will against the Muslims. They caught hold of them at the slightest excuse and owed no mercy. They waged a fierce war against the small band of *Mujahids* (Crusaders) beleaguered in the tribal belt of the North-West. Whoever was suspected by them to be *in league with the Mujahids* or with the party of Syed Ahmed Shaheed was arrested and legal proceedings were started against him. Innumerable religious leaders, merchants and noblemen were tried on these grounds at Patna, Thanesar and Lahore, and sentenced to heavy terms of imprisonment.

Some of them were branded as Wahabis and punished on that account. Symptomatic of the boundless British malice and hatred towards the Muslims was the judgement delivered by an English judge while condemning the three alleged Wahabi leaders, Maulana Yahya Ali, Mohammad Jafar Thanasari and Mohammad Shafi Lahori to death. The learned Judge, in the course of his judgement remarked :

"You will be hanged till death, your properties will be confiscated and your corpses will not be handed over to your relatives. Instead, you will be buried contemptuously in the jail compound".

After the sentence of death had been passed, parties of English men and women visited the jail to see the condemned prisoners in their cells and to take delight in their sighs and groans. But when they found that the prisoners, instead of being sad and dejected, were actually exulting in their state and looking forward expectantly to the martyrdom that had so blissfully fallen to their lot, they felt cheated and urged upon the government for the revision of their sentence to one of life-imprisonment. Ultimately, it was announced by the Deputy Commissioner of Ambala to the unfortunate men that the Chief Court had altered the death penalty passed against them to transportation for life. He said :

"You rejoice over the sentence of death and look upon it as martyrdom. The Government, therefore, have decided not to award you the punishment you like so much. The death-sentence passed against you has been changed to that of transportation for life"

The three prisoners along with two others, Maulana Ahmadullah Azimabadi and Molvi Abdul Rahim Sadiqpuri were then deported to the Andamans in 1865 where Maulana Yahya Ali and Maulana Ahmadullah died. The entire property of the family of Sadiqpuri in Patna was seized by the Government, their houses were ploughed down and official buildings were constructed on their sites. The tombs of their ancestors were demolished. All this was done to quench the mad thirst for vengeance.

Several other noted Ulema were sent to the Andaman Islands to serve life-sentences in banishment. These included Maulana Fazl-i-Huq Khairabadi. Mufti Inayat Ahmad Kakorwi and Mufti Mazhar Karim Daryabadi, of whom Maulana Fazl-i-Huq met his death in exile while the other two returned home on completing their sentences.

This policy of unmitigated spite and revengefulness was responsible for the political and educational backwardness that came over the Muslims during the earlier stages of the British rule and from which they have not yet been able to recover.

The Formation of the Indian National Congress

The first session of the Indian National Congress was held in 1884. It was attended by some prominent Muslim representatives. The fourth session at Madras, in 1887, was presided over by a Muslim, Mr. Badruddin Tayyabji, and Muslim delegates drawn from different walks of life participated in it in sufficient strength. A donation of Rs. 5,000 - was announced in that session to the Congress by Mr. Humayun Jah.

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's Disagreement

Initially Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was a supporter of a common political platform, but he later changed his mind. His contention was that the political and educational backwardness of Muslims demanded that they should dissociate themselves from the national movement and avoid incurring the displeasure of the British Government by joining hands with the extremists of Bengal and other Hindu agitators. He felt that a separate non-political organization would serve the interests of Muslims' better, the other course, that of political collaboration with the Hindus in opposition to the British being fraught with the danger of reviving old wounds and creating fresh difficulties for them.

The Support of the Ulema to the Congress

Notwithstanding Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's opposition, a large number of independent Muslims, under the leadership of the Ulema, extended full support and cooperation to the nationalist activities and the Congress. They did not consider politics to be the 'forbidden fruit' for Muslims. In 1888, a whole set of religious decrees was published by Maulana Mohammad Saheb of Ludhiana urging upon Muslims to ally themselves with the Congress. These decrees were signed not only by prominent religious leaders of India like Maulana Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi and Maulana Lutfullah of Aligarh but of Medina and Baghdad as well.

The Balkan War and its Repercussions in India

A wave of repugnance and anger arose among Muslims against the

European Powers-particularly Britain which was then their spearhead-with the outbreak of the Balkan War in 1912. The Islamic political consciousness, gaining in strength as it had been steadily, reached its climax and burst in the East like a boil that had been suppurating for a long time. It was during these days that Maulana Abul Kalam Azad started publishing his fiery weekly paper, *El-Hilal*. It became popular immediately and acquired a readership among Muslims running into thousands and lakhs. Its bold and trenchant criticism of Britain and the West was followed eagerly throughout the country. In addition to it, Maulana Mohammad Ali's English weekly, *Comrade* (which made its appearance originally from Calcutta and was later shifted to Delhi) and Maulana Zafar Ali Khan's *Zamindar* (Lahore) and a host of other Muslim newspapers and periodicals helped to produce a vigorous anti-British feeling among the educated sections of the community. In the upshot, Maulana Mohammad Ali, Maulana Shaukat Ali, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Maulana Hasrat Mohani were arrested and put behind the bars."

Maulana Mahmud Hasan of Deoband

The Principal of the Muslim religious institution of Deoband, Maulana Mahmud Hasan (who later came to be known as Sheikhul Hind) was a sworn enemy of British Imperialism. No greater antagonist of the British had, indeed, been seen in India since the time of Tipu Sultan. A staunch ally of the Ottoman Empire-since it symbolised the power of Islam in the world and also held the Muslim Caliphate-and an indefatigable fighter in the path of India's freedom, he had dedicated his whole life

to work for the liquidation of the British Empire. He did not stop even at establishing secret contacts with the Afghan Government and with the revolutionary leaders of Turkey like Anwar Pasha. He was taken into custody in 1916 by Sharif Husain at Medina in Arabia who handed him over to the British. The Maulana and his associates Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani, Maulana Uzair Gul, Hakim Nusrat Husain and Molvi Waheed Ahmad, were deported to the Mediterranean island of Malta in 1917 where they remained till 1920.

Maulana Abdul Bari of Firangi Mahal

So was Maulana Abdul Bari of Firangi Mahal a tireless champion of India's freedom. He organised the Jami'at-i-Ulema-i-Hind to bring the religious leaders of Muslims on a united platform in the struggle for national independence and took a leading part in Khilafat agitation. During his lifetime the Firangi Mahal in Lucknow functioned as the key-centre of Muslim politics.

Rowlatt Report

Came the Rowlatt Report in 1918, which made the Muslims the main target of its attack and laid the blame for anti-British activities largely at their door. It further brought matters to a head.

Khilafat Agitation and Hindu-Muslim Unity

The Ali Brothers-Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali- were released a year later. A wonderful spectacle of Hindu-Muslim unity was seen thereafter everywhere in India. The two communities gloriously forgot their dissensions and linking their destinies with each-other marched forward like a single body to do or die for the attainment of

national freedom and the preservation of the Otta'man Empire. The country's atmosphere was altogether electrified with rare revolutionary feeling.

India had witnessed a stupendous political awakening. It was ablaze from end to end with resentment against the British masters. Such was the setting in which Gandhiji made his debut on the political stage of the nation. He undertook a countrywide tour in the company of Maulana Mohammad Ali and Maulana Shaukat Ali, addressing mammoth public gatherings from place to place and arousing the masses for the national struggle. Such a tremendous popular upsurge had never been seen in India before.

Non-Cooperation Movement

In 1920, Gandhiji and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad presented before the people the two-pronged programme of non-cooperation with the British Government at all levels and the boycott of foreign goods. The proposals found ready acceptance with the masses as the major weapons of their movement and they proved to be so very effective that the Government was compelled to take full note of them. The British were threatened in India with a complete breakdown of the administrative machinery and a general insurrection. The inherent weakness of foreign rule was thoroughly exposed.

British Atrocities on Moplas

During the struggle for freedom, the severest loss in terms of life and property was suffered by the Mopla Muslims of Malabar. Provoked by unmitigated tyranny and coercion, the Moplas rose in armed,

revolt against the British Government on August 21, 1921. The rebellion, which lasted for a little over six months, assumed such massive proportions that the Government had to call in even a warship to deal with it and fiftyone lakhs of rupees were spent by them on its suppression from August to December alone. Thousands of Moplas were killed. As an instance of the ghastly atrocities perpetrated by the British, Mopla prisoners were herded together like cattle in the compartments of a railway train which three doctors had unanimously declared unfit for human transport, with the result that a great many of them perished in the way. The British paid no heed to their loud cries of anguish and pathetic requests for water. The detenus were kept under strict vigilance and subjected to all kinds of humiliation after the rebellion had been quelled, and, for a long time, the Moplas, in general, were denied the enjoyment of ordinary civil liberties. The Committee of Inquiry appointed in 1922 by the Special Commissioner of Malabar reported that: "There are at least 35,000 Mopla women and children whose condition is extremely miserable and unless proper measures are taken for their relief, many of them are likely to die of disease and starvation".

The Last Resort

The British Government in their desperation took resort to the most favourite strategy of imperialists everywhere-that of 'Divide and Rule'. They sowed seeds of communal discord in the land. The then Viceroy took a prominent Hindu leader into confidence and impressed upon him the need for starting powerful missionary movement to bring back into the fold of Hinduism those who

had embraced Islam. The Viceroy also advised him how essential it was to organise his community on a militant basis after the Khilafat agitation had demonstrated beyond doubt the strength, religious fervour and organisational capacity of the Muslims-the Hindus having foolishly allowed the initiative to pass into the hands of Muslims by making common cause with them on the issue of Khilafat which was wholly a Muslim affair.

Shuddhi, Sanghatan and Tabligh Movements

This was the starting point of Hindu revivalist activities which under the twin names of *Shuddhi* and *Sanghatan* spread all over India. As a reaction to them the Muslims also came forward with the *Tabligh* movement. An unending series of religious discussions, debates and conferences ensued, culminating, not unexpectedly by any means, in violent communal disturbances. The country was caught in the grip of terrible Hindu-Muslim riots.

The Congress manfully stuck to its task in the midst of this fearsome madness. It continued to hold its annual sessions regularly. A special session to take stock of the tragic turn of events was summoned in 1922 under the Presidentship of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad while the regular annual session in the same year was held at Co-canada and presided over by Maulana Mohammad Ali.

Countrywide Communal Conflagration

The communal frenzy remained unchecked till the peak was reached in 1927, when as many as twenty-five riots were recorded within the space of a few months. The nationalist sections of both the

communities were profoundly distressed at this state of things but there seemed to be nothing they could do to restore communal peace and harmony. The gulf between Hindus and Muslims grew wider and wider. Ultimately, the malady began to cast its sinister shadow on the minds of the leaders of the two communities also till the parting of ways between Hindus and Muslims came up before the world as a reality from which there was no escape.

Parting of Ways

A general impression was created among the thinking classes of both Hindus and Muslims that the patriotic fervour of the leaders of the nationalist movement was cooling down quickly and they were getting divided more and more openly into separate communal camps. The basic impulses of their thought and ambitions being communal in essence, they could not be looked up to standing fast by the ideals of Indian nationalism in the hours of trial and opportunity. The Muslims felt in their hearts that the Hindu leaders (whose guiding spirit now was Gandhiji) had failed lamentably to take adequate steps for combating the communal menace. They had not brought forward that open mindedness, impartially and determination which was expected of them. By virtue of belonging to the majority community they wielded greater power and influence in the country, and could, therefore, have succeeded in putting down the riots had they shown greater courage and objectivity of out-look and denounced the communalists, whoever they were, openly and without fear or favour.

Maybe, this view was wrong or exaggerated but it was wrong or exaggerated but it did alienate the sympathies of many Muslim leaders, who had been in the vanguard of 'the nationalist movement, from the Congress. The Muslims, in general, were persuaded to believe that in order to safeguard effectively their rights and interests they would better rely on their own strength.

Separate Muslim Front and the Demand for Partition

In consequence, Maulana Mohammad Ali resigned from the Congress along with his friends and associates and, joined the Muslim political camp. The separatist instincts among Muslims became sharper and stronger with the passage of time. Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah revived the Muslim League in 1937, and, in a few years, it rose to be the most powerful representative organisation of Indian Muslims. After the League had consolidated its position, it raised the demand for Pakistan. Thanks to the anomalies of Indian social existence, the bitter experience of communal discrimination in official circles, political immaturity of the people, and inter-communal fear and suspicions, the country was eventually partitioned in 1947.

Maulana Husain Ahmad and Jami'at-ul-Ulema

Muslim religious leaders connected with the Jami'at-ul-Ulema stayed firm in their loyalty to the Congress till the end. They did not waver in the least from their traditional nationalist stand. In the forefront of them was Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani who by his uncompromising hostility towards the British and extraordinary

patriotic zeal and sincerity of purpose proved himself to be a worthy successor of his teacher and mentor, Maulana Mahmud Hasan Deobandi. These Ulema cheerfully bore the concentrated opposition and disfavour of their co-religionists, a large majority of whom had come to snare the views of the Muslim League. Maulana Madani strove to the best of his ability, during those fateful years, to make the Muslims realise the folly of the Pakistan demand. He undertook extensive tours of the country, preaching the gospel of unity from town to town and village to village. Morally and religiously, his conduct remained absolutely stainless and above suspicion throughout that period of trial and crisis, and friend and foe are unanimous in their praise of his integrity and sincerity. After the independence, too, when unlimited opportunities had opened up for personal gain, he sought no favours for himself, so much so that he politely declined to accept the title of Padma Vibhushan, which was conferred upon him by the President of India in 1954, saying that it was against the traditions of his precursors to receive honours from the Government. It is tragically true that the high hopes he had entertained from freedom remained largely unfulfilled and he felt frustrated and heart-broken, but during the struggle he remained firm like a rock, and even after the independence had been won there occurred no change in his political views and convictions.

Another leader of the Jami'at-ul-Ulema, whose services cannot be overlooked in the course of the present narrative, is its General Secretary, Maulana Hifzur Rahman. The courage, resoluteness and enthusiasm with which he strove for

the freedom of the motherland before 1947, and has since then been displaying in the safeguarding of the rights and interests of Muslims will not easily be matched by other contemporary Muslim leaders. His heroic services during the post-independence communal riots will always be remembered with gratitude and admiration. He has never hesitated to expose the bitter truth in connection with these outbreaks, in the Parliament and elsewhere, and in criticising the local administration where it was found to have conducted itself unjustly towards the Muslims during a communal disturbance.

Maulana Azad

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad had the distinction of serving as the President of the Congress for the largest number of years and at the most critical junctures of the nation's history. Two important British official missions -the Cripps' Mission and the Cabinet Mission-visited India during his ultimate term of office to negotiate with the Indian leaders. The Maulana, as the President of the Congress, took an active part in the negotiations. The delegates, including Sir Stafford Cripps, were deeply impressed by his keen political foresight and acumen.

It was during the Maulana's Presidentship of the Congress that India attained freedom. His memories, published shortly after his death, show that his sagacity was the role of a luminous mind in the machinery of the Congress. He commanded universal respect for his sagacity and political insight. His contribution to the cause of freedom has been as profound as that of anyone anywhere. ■

Begum Hazrat Mahal

- Abdul Rashid Agwan

Begum Hazrat Mahal's 136th death anniversary was observed on 7 April. Her great sacrifices for the First War of Independence are almost forgotten in India, and she was hardly remembered on that day, save some token events in Lucknow where she ruled, and Nepal, where she died. Begum of Awadh and the gallant wife of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, who was a heroin of freedom struggle of 1857, died on 7 April, 1879 during her refuge in Nepal. She took charge of Awadh state when her husband was exiled to Kolkata by the East India Company.

Laying a wreath on this occasion on her grave in the courtyard of Kathmandu's Begham Bazar Jama Masjid, India's Ambassador to Nepal Ranjit Rae recalled her contributions towards the freedom movement of India and said, "Begum Hazrat Mahal was an extraordinary freedom fighter of India, who played a vital role in India's First War of Independence and her contributions towards the freedom movement of India will always be remembered." The Begum fiercely fought the British East India Company during the Indian uprising of 1857-58, with the help of her commander Raja Jailal Singh. When her forces regained power in Lucknow for a brief stint, her son Birjis Qadr was declared ruler of Awadh. Then, she was forced to retreat. She worked with the Maratha rebellion leader Nana Sahib for some time and attacked the British army at Shahjahanpur in

collaboration with Maulvi Ahmadullah of Faiazabad. She was ultimately forced to leave the country and sought asylum in Nepal. The king of Nepal denied her any official protection, but allowed her to stay there. She died 135 years back, and was almost forgotten thereafter, but by a handful of people living around her mazar.

Her rebellion was ignited by the demolition of temples and mosques by the East India Company to make way for roads. On that occasion she refuted the British claim of religious freedom by retorting, "To eat pigs and drink liquor, to bite greased cartridges and to mix pig's fat with sweetmeats, to destroy Hindu and Mussalman temples on pretense of making roads, to build churches, to send clergymen into the streets to preach the Christian religion, to institute English schools, and pay people a monthly stipend for learning the English sciences, while the places of worship of Hindus and Mussalmans are to this day entirely neglected; with all this, how can people believe that religion will not be interfered with?"

Begum Hazrat Mahal's tomb is located in central part of Kathmandu near Jama Masjid, Ghantaghar, and looked after by the Jama Masjid Central Committee, without any assistance from the Government of India.

Her sacrifices were returned by the grateful nation by naming the erstwhile Victoria Park in Lucknow as Begum Hazrat

Mahal Park in 1962 and issuance of a stamp in her memory on 10 May, 1984. Later on, she was hardly recalled by successive governments, both at the Centre and in the state.

Begum Hazrat Mahal Memorial Society tries to keep her valour fresh in the mind of younger generations by holding some lacklustre programmes from time to time. On April 7, the society organised a seminar in the park named after her, in which UP's minister of social welfare Avdhesh Kumar said that Begum Hazrat Mahal was the great daughter of Faizabad who played an inspiring and memorable role in the freedom struggle in spite of her being a woman.

Hazrat Mahal was born in a poor family of Faizabad. She was destined to become the queen of Lucknow and then beburied in an alien land. When she recited a poem before an audience, Nawab Wajid Ali Shah was also there. He immediately became her admirer and married her.

It is shocking to note that no memorial of Hazrat Mahal has yet been established in Faizabad itself. To add to the tragedy, the state Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav was signing an award letter for 20 acres of land to the Central Karak Clan Society of Korea for establishing a memorial of the legendry queen of Korea Heo Hwang-ok in Faizabad the same day when the country was paying homage to the forgotten Begum from Faizabad. Queen Heo is supposed to have belonged to Ayodhya, married to a Korean king 2000 years back. She is not known to have done any thing for the people of her home country. Heo is a symbol of the Hindu connection with the far east.

When the country regularly remembers some select heroes of the freedom struggle, the high sacrifices of Begum Hazrat Mahal and her family hardly find space in them, although the entire family remained a staunch epitome of Hindu-Muslim unity, especially during trying times.

Wajid Ali Shah's Lucknow was a well developed city of the country before the Mutiny. William Russell, the London Times correspondent, who was in Lucknow during the time of Hazrat Mahal's expeditions against the Company (which had by that time become a government unto itself), said about the city thus, "No city in the world, not Rome, nor Athens, nor Constantinople, can be compared to its stunning beauty. A vision of palaces, minarets, azure and gold domes, cupolas, colonnades, long beautifully proportioned facades, rooftop terraces... Are we really in Awadh? Is this the capital of a semi-barbarian race? Is this the city built by a corrupt, decadent and vile dynasty?"

This is a revealing testimony to how much Awadh had developed under Wajid Ali Shah and his gallant queen who took the rein of power when her husband was exiled to Kolkata. But, today's democratic government in Lucknow has almost forgotten those contributions of the royal family in the development of local people in the past. The French author Kenizé Mourad rightly commented in her book, *In the City of Gold and Silver: The Story of Begum Hazrat Mahal*, "Little known, little remembered, this is the story of Begum Hazrat Mahal." ♦

(Courtesy: The Milli Gazette)

Taqwa (God-Consciousness)

- S. Sulaiman Nadwi

If we were to explain the sum and substance of all the Islamic teachings in one word, that proper word is *taqwa* (God-consciousness). Islam aims at infusing this spirit in every action of its followers. So in the very second surah of the Holy Qur'an it has been stated that only those who are *muttaqin* (those who possess *taqwa*) can benefit from the Holy Qur'an:

This is the book, wherein there is no doubt, a guidance to the God-conscious. (2: 2)

The word *muttaqin* (God-conscious) means one who endeavours to ward off evil. The true meaning of this word has been beautifully explained by an eminent companion of the Holy Prophet Ubayy b. K'ab (Allah be pleased with him). It is narrated that once Hadrat 'Umar (Allah be pleased with him) asked Hadrat Ubayy b. K'ab (Allah be pleased with him) to explain to him the true significance of *taqwa*. He said: Commander of the Faithful, have you ever had a chance to pass by a path surrounded by thorny bush? Hadrat 'Umar (Allah be pleased with him) said: Of course many a time. Whereupon he said: Then what care do you exercise while going along that path? I tuck up my clothes and walk carefully along the path, said: 'Umar (Allah be pleased with him), that no part of my clothes may be

entangled in these thorns. It was upon this that Ubayy b. K'ab (Allah be pleased with him) said: This is what the term *taqwa* implies. *Muttaqi* is in fact a person who has an earnest desire to avoid evil and do good and thus seek the pleasure of God.

The main purpose of Islamic *Ibadat* (acts of devotion) is to foster *taqwa*. It has been said in the Holy Qur'an:

O Mankind! Worship your Lord Who created you and those before you so that you might remain conscious of him. (2: 21)

And whoso magnifieth the offering consecrated to Allah, it surely is from devotions of the hearts. (22 : 32)

Their flesh and their blood reach not Allah, but the devotion from you reacheth Him. (22 : 37)

The foundation of the place wherein a Muslim bows his head and prostrate before Allah for worship should be on *taqwa*:

A place of worship which was founded upon duty (to Allah) from the first day is more worthy that you should stand (to pray) therein, wherein are men who love to purify themselves, Allah loveth the purifiers. (9 : 108)

Is he who founded his building upon duty to Allah and His good pleasure better; or he who founded his building on the brink of a crumbling, ever-changing precipice so that it toppled with him into the fire of hell? (9 : 109)

So make provision for the journey for verily the best provision is to ward off evil. Therefore keep your duty unto Me. O men of understanding.

(2:197)

O children of Adam, verily we sent down on you garment to conceal your shame and to serve as an adornment, and the garment of piety that is the best. That is one of the Signs of Allah, so that they may remember Allah.

(7 : 26)

The Qur'anic words are clearly indicative of the fact that modesty is ingrained in the human nature and nudity is a satanic feature.

The whole moral system of Islam is based on *Taqwa*. It has been stated in the Holy Qur'an:

To forgo is nearer to piety. (2: 237)

O ye who believe! Be steadfast witness for Allah, and not hatred of any people seduce you that ye deal not justly. Deal justly, that is nearer to piety. (5: 8)

Assuredly ye will be tried in your property and in your persons, and ye will hear much wrong from those who were given the Scripture before you, and from the idolaters. But if ye persevere and

ward off (evil) then that is of the steadfast heart of things. (3:186)

And make not Allah, by your oaths, a hindrance to your being righteous and observing your duty to Him and setting things right between people. (2 : 224)

And if you do good and are God-fearing, surely Allah is Aware of what you do. (4: 128)

Those possessing *taqwa* will be fully rewarded in the Hereafter:

The God-fearing will be in gardens and bliss. (52: 17)

Successful are Those who Possess Taqwa

Although in the beginning the *muttaqin* have to face difficulties and hardships and abstain from many forbidden and abominable apparently enticing and attractive things and have to adopt illegal and unfair means to obtain them. It does not at all mean that wealth or high status is not in store for the *Muttaqin*. What we want to say is that the avaricious and hasty hankers after wealth set aside all moral principles and resort to every fair or foul means to acquire wealth and popularity within the shortest possible time without any qualm of conscience and fear of Allah.

Those having wisdom and far-sightedness do not resort to dishonest means in order to derive immediate benefits therefrom in this transitory life at the cost of their eternal and enduring

life of the Hereafter. They are never forgetful of it and in their endeavours to make their life worthy for the future life. Allah, the Gracious makes them successful in this world also and bestows His favours and rewards upon them. There is a glad tiding for such people in the Holy Qur'an.

Lo! the sequel is for those who ward off (evil). (11: 49)

And the Hereafter with your Lord is for those who keep away from evil. (43: 35)

Those who Possess Taqwa are Nearer to Allah

It has been said in the Holy Qur'an:

Lo! Allah loveth those who keep their duty.

Acceptance of our action will depend upon *Taqwa*.

A deed is done for different motives, but Allah will accept only those deeds which are done with sincerity and devotion for the sake of Allah as has been said in the Holy Qur'an:

Allah accepteth only from those who ward off (evil). (5: 27)

So only those works or deeds are enduring and deserve approbation in this world and in the Hereafter which are done with sincerity and devotion to Allah and not for personal aggrandizement or selfish motive behind it. (9: 7)

The Definition of Muttaqin

Having understood the real signification of *Taqwa* that it is the essence of all Islamic teachings and that all the favours and blessings of Allah in this world and in the Hereafter are for those who possess this virtue, one may question: Who are these fortunate people? The answer to this question has also been given in the Holy Qur'an: It has been said in the *surah* Zumar:

And whoso bringeth the truth and believeth therein-such are the dutiful.

They shall have what they will of their Lord's bounty. This is the reward of the good. (39: 34,35)

In the following verse of the Holy Qur'an the characteristic virtues of the *muttaqin* have been explained in detail:

Virtue is not (this) that you turn your face to the east or west, but virtue is of him who believes in Allah, and the Last Day, and the angels and the Book and the prophets, and he spends wealth, in spite of love for it, for the kindred and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarers and the beggars, and for ransoming the slaves, and establish prayer and pay *Zakat* (and truly virtuous are) they who keep their promise, whenever they make a promise and are self-possessed in misfortune, hardship, and in hour of peril. It is they who are true (in faith) and it is they who are God-conscious.

(2 :177)

Taqwa is a vital attitude which a Muslim develops in time through constant endeavours and there grows within him an awareness of the fact that he is always before God (for, as the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: If you do not see Him, He sees you) and a profound sense of personal responsibility, the habit of doing all matters by Islamic criteria, and love and devotion for God and His guidance. The companions of the Holy Prophet despite the fact that they had the power to take revenge from their enemy did not do so and accepted the truce of Hudaibiya. Allah, the Exalted, praised this attitude of theirs and termed it as *Taqwa*:

He and those who disbelieve had set up on their heart zealotry, the zealotry of the age of ignorance, Allah sent down the peace of reassurance upon His Messenger and upon the believers and imposed on them the word of self-restraint, for they were worthy of it and meet for it. And Allah is Aware of All things.

(48: 26)

As a result of the importance which Islam attaches to *taqwa*, all the distinctions of caste, creed, colour race, nationality, high and low, rich and poor became meaningless and only one standard was fixed to judge the worth and superiority of a person. The Holy Qur'an has stated:

O mankind! Lo! We have created you as male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Lo! Allah is All-knowing, All-Aware. (49: 13)

The *muttaqin* are those who spend (in God's way) in ease as well as in straitness, who restrain their anger and pardon men, for God loves those who do good; those who, when they commit an indecency or do injustice to their own souls, remember God and ask for forgiveness for their sins-And who can forgive sins except Allah? And do not knowingly persist in what they have done. For these the reward will be forgiveness from their Lord and Gardens underneath where rivers flow, to abide therein, and (God's) favour, the reward of those who strive. (3: 134-146)

Verily, the believers are those whose hearts feel fear when God is mentioned, and when His signs (or revelations) are recited to them they increase their faith, and who put trust in their Lord. (8:2)

Verily, those who live in awe for fear of their Lord, who believe in their Lords, signs (or revelations), who do not ascribe partner to their Lord, who give what they give in charity with their hearts full of fear because they are to return to their Lord; it is these who hasten in all good acts and they are foremost in them. ■ (23 : 57-61)

Social Reform

-S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi

Sheikh Syed Abul Hasan' Ali Nadwi was a person of multiple dimensions and every aspect of his personality was visible in his life in practical form. Just as he rendered his services to Islam and Muslims, he also strove to fulfill the demands of humanity at large and left an indelible impact on the society. He was carrying so many different types of efforts at the same time that if someone could manage only one or two of them, he would be easily celebrated as a man of prominence.

His study of Islamic history was very deep and thorough. His study of the history of mankind and the rise and fall of nations was also very vast. His study included all facets of human life - political, religious, cultural, and ideological. In the light of those studies, he analyzed the condition and needs of his country - India - which is populated by followers of different religions and Muslims live there as a minority community. He then, as a concerned Muslim who feels obligated to guide people to the right path and improve their condition, dedicated all of his talents and abilities for the service of the *millat* (Muslims and mankind) and the country.

He was born in a family and environment which was well suited for

nurturing and strengthening this sense of responsibility. His environment also helped him develop skills of articulation, speaking, and writing which he utilized wisely as Quran has advised:

Invite (all) to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious. - *Al-Nahl*, 16: 125

Sheikh Nadwi applied this profound advice of Quran to all of his activities including teaching, mentoring, *d'awah*, preaching, character building, protecting *shari'ah* (Islamic code of conduct), internal purification, research, publication, presenting Islamic viewpoint [on various issues], working from the stage of Payam-e-Insaniyat [to convey the message of Islam to non-Muslims], and social reform of the *millat* and the country.

Out of all the above-mentioned activities, those related to Payam-e-Insaniyat and social reform were most sensitive because they involved interaction with the country's administration on one hand and the non-Muslim population on the other, and thus had the potential of being easily turned contentious and confrontational by political parties. That is why Sheikh Nadwi, following the example of Mujaddid Alf Thani (d. 1624), always

kept himself away from confrontational methods and presented himself as a non-political and independent leader.

Sheikh Nadwi considered Mujaddid Alf Thani's methodology to be fully derived from the *sunnah* (traditions) of Prophet Muhammad who had set the best example of kindness, good conduct, patience, and wisdom in inviting people towards the right path. Once, while in a journey, Prophet Muhammad was lying down under a tree in midday in a desert with his sword hanging from a branch of the tree and his companions were scattered at a distance taking rest under nearby trees. The Prophet was awakened by the presence of a stranger who was holding the Prophet's sword in his hand. The man asked the Prophet, "Who can now save you from me?" The Prophet said, "Allah" with full faith and conviction. It had such an effect on the man that the sword fell down from his hand. The Prophet immediately picked up the sword and retorted to him, "Now, who can save you?" The man felt subdued and begged the Prophet to pardon him and show mercy to him. The Prophet asked him, "Do you accept Islam?" He said, "I cannot do this. But I promise not do anything against you." The Prophet let him go. The Prophet neither forced him to accept Islam nor did he punish him. There are numerous instances in which people of Makkah rejected his invitation and treated him rudely, but he did not retaliate.

Keeping such examples [of the Prophet] before him, Sheikh Nadwi adopted the strategy of Mujaddid Alf Thani who had struggled in this very country (India) in the regime of the Mughal emperor Akbar (1556-1605). Akbar, after becoming disgruntled with the prevailing customs and practices of his time, had started promoting un-Islamic practices and had introduced a new religion (Deen-e Ilahi) in his vast empire and put the future of Islam and Muslims of the country in great peril.

Faced with such a dire situation, Mujaddid Alf Thani did not adopt confrontational methods. Instead he used means of counseling, communication, and wisdom. Also, instead of confronting Akbar directly, he approached Akbar's courtiers and advisers and encouraged them to give appropriate advice to Akbar whenever possible. He communicated with them through letters which were full of genuine concern and compassion. His strategy began showing its effect by the time Akbar's son Jehangir (1605-27) became the emperor. Jehangir's thinking was different from Akbar's. The transformation continued and Jehangir's son Shahjehan (1627-58) turned out to be even better than Jehangir. Finally, the transformation reached complete fruition when Shahjehan's son Sultan Mohiuddin Aurangzeb (1658-1707) became the emperor. Thus the final outcome of Mujaddid Alf Thani's efforts appeared

in the form of Aurangzeb who established justice and peace on the pattern of *Khulfa Ar Rashideen* (the first four caliphs of Islam) after a gap of about a thousand years.

Perhaps the Prophet's journey to Taif (a town at a short distance from Makkah) was also in front of Mujaddid Alf Thani. In Taif, when the residents responded harshly to the Prophet's call, drove him out of the town and set street urchins to throw stones on him he sat down in a lonely place and prayed to Allah. In response to his prayers, the divine help of Allah came down and he was given the choice of getting the people of Taif crushed between the mountains. The Prophet said, "If they don't listen, I hope and pray that their progeny will listen". The Prophet did not take revenge on them although he was badly tortured both physically and mentally.

Sheikh Nadwi adapted the strategy of Mujaddid Alf Thani for his own time and situation. He advised leaders, rulers, and government officials of India and Muslim countries through letters and personal meetings to take necessary steps for eradicating vices which had become widespread in their countries. He did it with wisdom and compassion. In case of India, he also reminded the authorities about the rights of minorities and the protection of Islamic *shari'ah*.

In 1975, when the then Indian Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi imposed the state of emergency in the country, no one dared to talk to her and tell her to stop the brutalities which the government officials were committing against the public. At that time, Sheikh Nadwi met her with courage and *istighna* (expecting nothing from anyone except Allah) and prudently advised her to change her course of action. Since there was a real danger that he might be detained and might not come out of the meeting, he had advised his associates about what to do if that happened.

In 1985, during the regime of Mrs. Gandhi's son Rajiv Gandhi, the Supreme Court of India, in a court case concerning the alimony of a divorced Muslim woman, gave a ruling which infringed upon the Islamic *shari'ah*. Sheikh Nadwi along with Sheikh Syed Minnatullah Rahmani met Rajiv Gandhi several times, explained the *shari'ah* perspective of the issue to him and convinced him to take necessary measures to rectify the situation. He also worked hard to win the support of non-Muslims and stayed away from confrontational and violent means. The result was that Rajiv Gandhi was able to get a legislation passed in the parliament which nullified the Supreme Court's ruling and upheld the Muslim Personal Law.

In 1991, when the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came to power in Uttar Pradesh, it issued an ordinance requiring every child [of government-run schools] to recite the polytheistic anthem *Vande Mataram*. Sheikh Nadwi opposed the ordinance with a firm voice and warned the government that if it was not rescinded, he would ask all the Muslims parents to withdraw their children from those schools. Ultimately, the government lifted the restriction and the minister who had issued the order was reprimanded and removed.

Whenever a new leader came to power, Sheikh Nadwi wrote a letter of advice to him and met him as well. Thus when Narasirnha Rao became the prime minister in 1991, he met Rao and reminded him about the need of improving social and moral condition of the country and emphasized that these issues were more important than political maneuvering.

When H.D. Deve Gowda became the prime minister in 1996, he came to Nadwatul 'Ulama to visit Sheikh Nadwi. Sheikh Nadwi gave him useful advice and urged him to improve the condition of the country and be fair to minorities. Deve Gowda pledged to do justice to the minority communities and weak sections of the society.

When Atal Behari Vajpayee became the prime minister in 1998, he came to Nadwatul' Ulama to visit Sheikh Nadwi who was sick at that time.

Sheikh Nadwi reminded him to work for the welfare of the country.

Sheikh Nadwi's advice used to be very effective and penetrating. It was due to the fact that his way of giving advice of sincerity and wisdom and he never allowed any blemish on his character either as a scholar or as *aada't* (*one who calls people towards Allah*). He always kept the interest and welfare of the Muslims, country, and humanity in the forefront and did not care about his personal benefit. This was the reason why everyone had a good opinion about him and considered him as a sincere well-wisher of the country and humanity.

He was firmly determined not to seek or demand any benefit for himself or any family member [in return of his services] or solicit anyone for the same and practiced it very strictly. He avoided accepting any favor due to which he had to feel obliged to anyone. This strictness made some of his relatives complain that so much precaution was unnecessary, but he did not change his practice and chose not to become obliged to government officials and authorities.

On the other hand, he always remained obliged to those officials and authorities who had done any favor to help the cause of *millat* (Muslims) and gave them due recognition. In his autobiography *Karwan-e-Zindagi*, he has mentioned a few of them such as Mulayam Singh Yadav (chief minister of

Uttar Pradesh) and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi who had played an important role in restoring the Muslim Personal Law in the lawsuit involving a Muslim divorcee; Sheikh Nadwi used to often mention it in his conversations.

No other Muslim leader or speaker attracted as many non-Muslim leaders to their speeches as Sheikh Nadwi and the government knew about it. That is why regardless of which political party came to power, it recognized his status and importance and did not ignore his viewpoint. This was true with BJP as well. Thus when BJP came to power in 1999 at the central government, it realized his influence and weight and gave him due recognition. BJP is a political party that is known to be generally unsympathetic to Muslims.

There is a large organization known as Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) which mainly espouses interests of Hindus. Some of its leaders, after listening to Sheikh Nadwi's speech, remarked that no other leader had as much love and concern for the country as him.

Sheikh Nadwi's commitment to *deen* (Islam) and *millat* was unwavering. He never compromised with those who were opposed to religious values. He avoided doing anything that could undermine *deen* or *millat*; he was so conscientious in this respect that he seldom accepted gifts from anyone.

With respect to political parties, he maintained absolute neutrality. Though he appreciated and acknowledged their *constructive* accomplishments and reminded them about the common good, he stayed away from their political differences and wrangling.

He used the same approach with respect to the leaders of Islamic countries as well. To the leaders of India, he talked about the problems of the country, people, and minorities. To the leaders of the Islamic countries, he talked about the problems of *deen* and *millat*. He sent letters to the Saudi kings (Shah Saud, Shah Faisal, Shah Khalid, and Shah Fahad) and met them personally. He reminded them about their obligation to preserve *deen*, maintain sanctity of the holy places (Makkah and Medinah) and fulfill the needs of Muslims all over the world. He met them with full *istighna* (selflessness) and sincerity.

He met Shah Hussein of Jordan, Shah 'Abdullah (grandfather of Shah Hussein of Jordan), Shah Hasan of Morocco, the presidents of Yemen and Pakistan, and other heads of state. He reminded them to improve the condition of their countries and give due importance to the Islamic needs and challenges. A review of the letters that he wrote to various leaders give an insight of his style of addressing, understanding of issues, and foresightedness.

In addition to being a distinguished scholar of Islam, he was also a highly skilled writer and effective speaker. His writings and speeches were very stirring, touching, and penetrating. He did not accept any gift from someone whom he intended to advise and correct. He used to say that if you accept a gift from someone, your advice would become ineffective for that person, but since advising is obligatory upon us, we must not neglect it. He used this strategy not only with rulers and authorities, but also with influential persons and leaders of the community.

There was a *seerah* (life of the Prophet) conference in Qatar in 1980 in which many top leaders, intellectuals, and crown princes from all over the Muslim world were present. Sheikh Nadwi had to deliver the inaugural speech there. In his speech, he told the audience with absolute clarity that if there was any theme of this conference, it must be about getting rid of the duplicity that had crept into the Islamic and Arab societies. He said:

Thanks to Allah that our disease is not *kufr* (rejection of faith) or *shirk* (polytheism). Our disease is *nifaq* (hypocrisy). We proclaim one thing and do something else. This duplicity has made us and our society untrustworthy. As a result, Islam has now become unattractive to others though our character was the main

reason for others to appreciate Islam in the past.

He also kept himself fully abreast of current issues, contemporary thinking and what was happening around the world. His book *As Sirau Bainal Fikratil Islamiyyate Wal Fikratil Gharabiyya* (published in English as *Western Civilization, Islam and Muslims*), speeches, writings, and travelogues bear ample testimony to this effect.

Sheikh Nadwi used the platform of public speaking to bring reform in the society at large. He addressed large public gatherings and delivered lectures at conferences to remind people about important issues and possible solutions. With that goal in mind, he used to convene gatherings of people of all religions in large cities [of India] from the platform of Payam-e-Insaniyat. He also used to convene gatherings of Muslims only from the stage of an outfit known as *Islah-e-Mo'asherah* (Reform of the Society) in which he drew attention of Muslims towards their religious and social problems and obligations.

Due to these efforts, Sheikh Nadwi had become well known among the educated Muslim population and leaders of the Asian and Muslim countries. He was seen as a sincere and selfless scholar and leader who wished well for all and was able to articulate his viewpoint in a pleasant and stimulating manner. His command

of the Arabic language was as if it was his mother tongue and he was able to present his viewpoint in Arabic without any difficulty. He also had the working knowledge of English and Persian.

In 1973, the Muslim World League sent a delegation to Afghanistan, Iran, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and Iraq under his stewardship for the purpose of introducing the League to Muslims of those countries and also to know their condition.

In Iran, he met prominent religious and political leaders and explained to them the essence of *deen* and how important it was for the survival and prosperity of the country. He also made it clear to them that Prophet Muhammad was the final prophet and a good can come only through this channel. His knowledge of Persian proved very useful there.

In Afghanistan, he met government officials, *'ulama*, and intellectuals. He impressed upon them the need of creating awareness about Islam among common people. He shared with them his own experiences and suggested to them how to guide people.

He also got opportunities to address intellectuals in Europe and America. He delivered lectures at several universities including Oxford, London and Cambridge in UK, and Columbia in USA. In those lectures, he enumerated high points of the

Western civilization and Christianity, highlighted the need of social reform and presented the teachings of Islam.

In a speech at an American university, he said,

Given the current temperament and lifestyle of the people living in Europe and America, Islam offers a better alternative to them because it professes to combine the good of both the material and spiritual aspects of life. Contrary to that, Christianity which they have adopted as their religion requires them to shun the world and thus does not fulfill all the necessities of the life. As a consequence, they have neglected the teachings of Christianity and have become overly engrossed in the worldly pursuits. They should have studied Islam and seen how beautifully it fulfills their spiritual needs without requiring them to abandon the world.

In a speech at Germany's Berlin University, he first acknowledged the extraordinary contributions of German philosophers and then invited the audience to adopt correct means to realize those ideas.

The lectures that he delivered in Europe and USA were in Arabic or Urdu. They have been translated into English and published in the form of books entitled *Speaking Plainly to the West* and *From the Depth of the Heart in America*.

Most of Sheikh Nadwi's travels to Europe and America had resulted from his annual visits to the Islamic Centre of Geneva, Switzerland, of which he was a member. This center was established in Geneva by the Egyptian scholar Dr. Sa'id Ramadan for the purpose of introducing Islam to the people living in the West.

Sheikh Nadwi used to present his viewpoint in a very pleasant way in his speeches and articles. He used to mention unique traits and needs of the nation or community which he was addressing. He also used to identify specific evils and immoralities which were prevalent in the society. When addressing Muslims, he used to remind them about what was expected of them if they claim to be the best nation. When addressing educational institutions, he used to draw their attention to the need of developing a curriculum which could meet both the religious and contemporary needs.

To the Muslims who had migrated to Europe and America and settled there, he emphasized that they should be aware that the Western countries are not like the Eastern countries because the Western educational system espouses and promotes values that are very different from those of Islam. He used to warn them that if they did not do what was needed to nullify the ill effects of the Western education on their children, the children would grow

opposite to their parents. He also urged them to appreciate the discipline and outward cleanliness that existed in the Western countries and not to carryover the bad habits which the people of the East had become accustomed to. Otherwise, they would leave a bad impression on the local inhabitants and make them apprehensive and uncomfortable about Islam and Muslims which would be a big loss.

Sheikh Nadwi's message was very broad and comprehensive and it covered all facets of human life. His method of *islah* could serve as a model for those who are in the positions of leadership, especially in the Muslim communities.

There were several aspects of Sheikh Nadwi's life which the readers of his biography should keep in front of them. His life was very clean, he was extremely conscientious, he practiced complete *istighna* (selflessness) in worldly matters and he completely avoided seeking any material benefit for himself. These qualities made his words very effective. Listeners saw him as a sincere and selfless person and took positive effect from his advice.

Sheikh Nadwi could have confined himself to writing and publishing. Or, he could have dedicated himself to academics and teaching. Or, he could have devoted himself to *tasawwuf* and *sulook* as Dr Iqbal, the Poet of the East, has mentioned in his couplet:

ya khaak ki aaghosh mein tasbeeh-o-manaiaat (Urdu)

Either isolate yourself in a corner of the earth to remember and glorify Him.

Instead, he chose to fulfill the needs and interests of the *millat* and mankind and dedicated himself to the effort of *d'awah* and *islah* although he was by nature more inclined towards writing and publishing. In other words, he chose:

ya wusat-e-aflaak mein takbeer-e-musalsal (Urdu)

Or, continue proclaiming His greatness in the vastness of the universe.

as Dr. Iqbal has advocated in the second part of his couplet and continued striving for this cause until the very end of his life.

Just one day before Sheikh Nadwi passed away, a delicate issue popped up. Some members of the Muslim community did something which gave the impression that it was permissible in Islam to do anything, right or wrong, to achieve an objective and it did not matter if it harmed other communities or fellow human beings. In order to correct that impression, he issued a statement explaining the correct Islamic perspective which was published in the newspapers the very next day - the day on which he departed from this World. ■

Islam Most Preferred

Chinese youngsters are increasingly taking to religion in the officially atheist communist nation, with Islam having the largest number of followers under 30 years of age, specially among minorities like Uyghurs and Hui communities.

The China Religion Survey 2015, released by the National Survey Research Centre (NSRC) at Renmin University here, found that among the five main religions in China - Buddhism, Taoism, Catholicism, Protestantism and Islam - the latter has the largest number of young believers. As many as 22.4 per cent of the believers of Islam are aged below 30.

Catholicism ranks second with 22 per cent Taoism, however, have the highest number of followers older than 60, with 54.

Six per cent and 53.8 per cent, respectively, state-run Global Times reported today. The survey included interviews from 4,382 religious sites across 31 regions between 2013 and 2015. "Islam tends to have a younger demographic. Most believers of Islam belong to ethnic minority groups and it is common for a woman to give birth to several children." ♦

(Courtesy: *TheStatesman*, 9.7.15)

The Pivot of Human Dignity

— Javed Jamil

I feel frustrated when I find Muslim intellectuals using Islam for justifying the current international terms or concepts, most of which are defective or deficient, and are advocated by the global forces for their own ends. 'Human Rights' is one such concept, which Muslim intellectuals lend their voice to without realising its hidden motives and implications and without suggesting the correctives.

Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) was, of course, the best champion of the rights of human beings the world has ever witnessed, but his aims and the methods to achieve those aims were entirely different from what the current international proponents of human rights have. In simple words, "human rights" to him was only a small part of a larger plan.

The Prophet gave importance to the lives of individuals as well as the lives of the larger humanity, and took steps to ensure that not only human beings as individuals have their personal rights but the society and the system ensure security to their lives. To him, the security of life was paramount, and human rights in violation of human security had no justification. Without the system safeguarding the individuals, human rights are often exploited by the

forces for their own interests. Rights without duties and prohibitions are an open invitation to exploitation. This is what differentiates Islam from the current ideologies where human rights are used less to safeguard the dignity of the people and more to exploit them.

Soon after Declaration of Risalat, and conveying the primary message of total submission to One God, Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) embarked upon his social agenda where every individual's dignity was to be secured through organized efforts. The plan to emancipate slaves in stages was initiated, the campaign to restore dignity of women was launched, the female infanticide was condemned in the strongest possible words, there were clear injunctions against forcing slave girls into prostitution, and the forces of hegemony in Makkah were challenged.

Even in wars, there were instructions not to kill the wounded and the captives, and there were clear instructions not to engage in war except in certain conditions, and if war has begun, to return to ceasefire as soon as possible.

"Human Rights" in the modern world have virtually been reduced to the rights of the murderers and rapists

against being executed, the rights of gays against being targeted for their highly dangerous habits and the rights of women for aborting their children in order to make things easy for the male-dominated socio-economic system. Even violence has been categorised to suit their own plans so that the powerful appear to be peace-loving and those who refuse to toe the line appear to be dangerous.

They will condemn "terrorism" and will ignore war; and if their own people indulge in "terrorism" they will call it "war of liberation" from the rulers. They have no concern for the lives lost in crimes and suicides within their own countries, the lives lost in wars against other countries and the rebellions masterminded by them. They are also not concerned about the tens of millions of lives lost annually due to social vices like alcohol, smoking and unhealthy and immoral sexual practices. They will talk for days about beheadings but will not talk of bombs that kill thousands of times the beheadings kill. Bombs become dangerous for them only if they are used by their enemies.

The modern concept of 'human rights', as most of other modern terminologies and concepts, originated from the West. Superficially, it looks an extremely fascinating slogan. But its hidden objectives are not that attractive. The West feared that the kind of economic fundamentalism and legal

system that it had decided to aggressively pursue could have some very serious adverse effects. It would engender barbarism in society in the form of steep rise in all forms of crimes including murder, rape, robbery and bribe. It would also enhance societal tensions as well as psychiatric illnesses. If these really happened, it would give a bad name to their ideology.

To counter this, the economic fundamentalists sought to impart a new meaning to 'human rights' so that the darker face of their civilisation could not come to the fore. They could use the brighter side to fusillade those systems that were unwilling to accept the economic hegemony of the West. The result of such re-orientation has been that the situation of human rights in a country is not assessed on the basis of crimes there, but on how the accused in various crimes are being treated by governmental institutions and agencies. Apparently, human rights organisations argue that they safeguard the people against excesses. But in reality, they only serve criminals and saboteurs of social peace. What happens to the victim of a crime and his relatives does not bother them; their function is only to follow the trial of the accused.

The economic fundamentalists have vested interests in the paralysed legal system, for criminals and crimes form an indispensable part of their operations. Criminals are supported in

more than one way. If they or their crimes have any political dimensions, the "champions" of human rights are quick to label their trial as 'political vendetta'. It is true that governments tend to be less kind towards their opponents, and often use the stick of law to punish them. But it is equally true that all political forces have some nexus with criminals who are used to create ugly situations for the ruling party or coalition. This side of the coin is however intentionally overlooked.

Human rights organisations never publish reports on the crime-situation in different countries, and never pressurise the governments to drastically reduce them, so that the common people can pass their lives without fear; for such reports would unveil their own faces and fingers will then be at the Western ideologies. The Law has become a big industry with trillions of dollars involved in it.

'Women's rights' is yet another extremely favourite subject with the Amnesties and the Human Rights Watches. And it is needless to repeat that the major aim behind all the ruckus that is regularly made is to assist merchants of sex and barons of consumer industry. Why is it that "purdah" (veil) annoys them, but prostitution doesn't? Why has Amnesty, the self-proclaimed champion of human rights, never bothered to tell the world that there cannot be a bigger crime against

womanhood than its sordid commercialisation? Why does it not shout that a civilisation cannot claim to be a true human civilisation if it creates a social environment in which women have to willingly or unwillingly sell their bodies?

Amnesties and Human Watch groups take extraordinary pains to highlight the cases of rapes in police custody or in prisons. But their eyes do not bleed at thousands of rapes that innocent women have to suffer daily all over the world. If they begin to unveil the nefarious strategies of the commercial exploitation of women, nothing else would be required to prove their credentials. But the truth is that amnesties are damnesties, which are only mouthpieces of the economic fundamentalists. Their goals are only to glorify Westernism and degrade every other system.

One of the issues that Amnesty and other organisations have continuously been raising at different platforms is that of child labour, an issue ostensibly inspired by humanist sentiments. There can hardly be anybody not moved by the concern shown for the innocent children who, instead of going to schools, have to earn their livelihood in fields and factories. They often have to work in wretched conditions. The situation needs prompt redress. But, is this concern for child labour the only – or the real – motive

behind the worldwide campaign? The actual motivating force, on the contrary, is the strategy of big industries to throttle the small sector, so that they can expand their own market.

They know that small-scale industries may be individually small, but combined they have a sizeable share in the economy of at least some countries. They reckon that these industries survive only because they can get relatively cheap labour in the form of young children; once this labour goes beyond their reach, they will not be able to compete with big industries, and will be left with no option but to wind up. Why should the circulation of money remain confined between owners of small-scale businesses and their clients, without the involvement of the big business?

The economic fundamentalists neglect the fact that these children are bread-earners for themselves and their extremely poor families, where each member has to financially contribute to survive. If child labour has to end, better ways should be found, so that small-scale industries do not face virtual extinction.

It is now high time the concept of human rights was re-examined. Human rights are nothing if they do not guarantee the security of the common people, including men, women and children, old, young and yet-to-be born. Islam has a larger plan, which aims at Human Security, "human rights" being

only one of the means to achieve that aim. To ensure human security, emphasis on prohibitions is equally essential. Human Security demands that lives of all human beings must be safeguarded against all kinds of external threats. None – individual, society, corporate sector or government, can be allowed to offer the choice of death to the people; freedom of choice must be limited to choice among the good. A choice between life and death cannot simply be given to the people. A child cannot be left on a highway hoping that it will take all the necessary precautions to save it from being crushed by fast moving vehicles. People are like children who more often than not are guided by baser instincts that suck them into all forms of life-threatening and peace-threatening habits.

Addiction has hardly any regard or fondness for knowledge and sanity. Who knows better, about the ill effects of alcohol, smoking and sexual perversions, than do doctors? Still they often succumb to the temptations. A smoker, a drinker, a drug addict and a promiscuous person understand that they face huge risks on account of their habits; but such is the effect of these on baser instincts that they find it hard to be governed by their knowledge.

Human security demands that all necessary measures must be taken to minimize

Murders (severe punishment to criminals)

All other crimes (punishments equal to crimes, and poverty alleviation)

Rapes and other crimes against women (Severe punishment to rapists, proper dress code, ban on nudity and sex in films and media)

Diseases caused by gambling, smoking, drinking and unhealthy sexual practices (ban on tobacco, alcohol, gambling and all forms of sex industries)

Suicides (apart from ban on all forms of addiction, endeavours to strengthen family system)

Abortions (total ban on abortions except for medical reasons, ban on premarital sex)

Commercial exploitation of women (total and effective ban on prostitution and pornography)

Commercial exploitation and sexual abuse of children (total and effective ban on commercialisation of sex, harshest legal measures against sexual abusers, social environment conducive for healthy family life)

Effective steps to minimise economic disparity (this will be discussed later) and poverty

Islamic organisations must popularise the slogan of Human Security at every possible level. Seminars must be conducted to

highlight concerns related to the security of all human beings. Regular surveys must be conducted to assess the position at the global level, as a whole as well as the situation in all the countries of the world. The governments of different countries must be sent missives demanding strengthening of legal system and multi-sectorial campaigns against all the crimes and evils. Governments of Muslim countries must be constantly pressurised to raise the issue of global security in the international organisations, including UN, WHO, European Union, NAM, etc.

Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) had the dignity of human life foremost in his mind. To safeguard life and the quality of life was the principle on which he built the Islamic system of governance and social system. If he prohibited alcohol, it was to safeguard human life; if he made sexual relations outside marriage a punishable offence, it was again aimed at safeguarding mankind from disastrous consequences; if he campaigned against abortions and female infanticide, it was again to ensure that even foetuses and infants enjoy their lives.

Let us learn the comprehensiveness of human dignity from the Last Ambassador of God who taught us that security is the prerequisite of dignity. ■

Medieval Medical Texts

-Nikhila Henry

A doctor, while examining a head injury, should look for dysfunctional speech, hearing and vision; the instructions that seem right out of an MBBS text book was written in Arabic in 925 AD by scholar Abu Bakr Al-Razi. All of Al Razi's medical work which runs into 24 volumes named Kutabu'l Hawi Fi't-Tibb will soon be translated into English and converted to e-books in Hyderabad.

The multicore, translation and digitisation project will be undertaken by Dairutul Maarifil Osmania, a centre that the VI Nizam, Mir Mahboob Ali Khan Siddiqui, established in 1888.

The centre has edited and compiled 240 manuscripts that runs into 800 volumes with two lakh pages.

The translation of the books will help to distinctly understand the contribution that Arab medicine had made to medical science.

"Al Razi could have been the first medical theorist to state that fever is not a disease but a symptom of some other illness. He lists out a 1,000 varieties of fever that are symptoms to a 1,000 varieties of diseases," said Md. Mubeen Iqbal, an Arabic scholar who has done translations of ancient texts.

Al Razi's medical textbooks details out symptom based diagnosis. Each of the 24 volumes look into one aspect of human

illness. For instance, the first volume is titled, diseases of the head and the second diseases of the eye. The third volume is on diseases of the throat, ear, nose and teeth.

As per the project, it is not just Al Razi's work but all the two lakh pages of Arabic scholarship on medicine, history and religion will be translated into English, centre officials said. "Among the books which are to be translated are Kitab-al-Umda which is on surgery. All our compilations are authentic as they are based on original manuscripts collected from countries including Turkey, Germany and Spain," said Prof Mustafa Shareef, Arabic scholar and director of the centre.

The oldest compilation that the centre has dates back to 9th century AD. "Musnad Abu Yala's Hadis or collection of Prophetic traditions was the first book that was compiled from manuscripts," the director said. The manuscripts are collected in microfilm format. The Nizam had established the centre to improve on Hyderabad state's wealth of knowledge.

The Union government which has in principle agreed to fund the project is expected to release Rs. 37.9 crore in the coming month. As per the calculation of Dairutul Maarifil Osmania, the translation work will alone cost Rs. 25 crore. ■

Post Ramazan Duties

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

The holy month of Ramazan has just concluded. It bestowed upon Muslims to mould themselves according to Islamic Shariah and spend rest eleven months of the year as such. The fasting in Ramzan has its own significance for the Muslim community. Islam has set a variety of strategies to steer its adherents to the path of peace, progress and prosperity. Besides it presents a well-defined system of "awamir" and "nawahi" (do's and do not's) which encompass the whole gamut of human life.

The main purpose of the fasting is to attain taqwa (piety). As the holy Qur'an said: "O believers! fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you. That you may become pious" (2:183). The real meaning of taqwa (piety) is fear of Allah and practice modesty and shun all kinds of obnoxious and forbidden objects. Noted Islamic scholar late Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi says: "The important truth home though is that fasting helps man attain piety. The Qur'an employs the term taqwa in this context. Generally speaking, words are invested with different meanings with the passage of time. A pious person is taken to be one who is constantly engaged in worship, and who sleeps little. One who does not fall asleep at all is recognised as a perfectly pious person. He is expected to offer prayers all the time

and is very cautious about each and every issue, be it religious or mundane. In the original Arabic, however, taqwa does not carry these shades of meaning. It does not imply that one blessed with taqwa is given wholly to worship, stays awake throughout the night and fasts round the year. Instead taqwa signifies in the original Arabic a state of mind and consciousness. It encompasses one's temperament and way of thinking, Ramadan helps man attain piety. Yet it does not mean that with the passage of Ramadan, piety comes to an end. Piety is not some temporary condition". He further says: "Piety represents a constant state of self-control and restraint. If a child is brought up well, he imbibes the value of respecting his elders. He does not indulge in any act in the presence of his elders which may be offensive to them. By the same token, he refrains from mocking or insulting them. Piety signifies such a training of the mind which guides one to practice moral values all the time. A pious person thinks carefully before taking any action whether his act is permitted by the Shari'ah or not. This reference to the Shari'ah at every step is a pointer to one's piety. Take the illustrious examples of Abu Bakr and 'Umar, the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, holding exalted rank among the Prophet's Companions. They were witness to the revelation of the

Qur'an. Furthermore, they possessed mastery over the Arabic language and idiom. They were born and brought up in Makkah and used the local language fluently. As true Companions they never felt shy of seeking clarification from the Prophet (PBUH). Once they asked 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud to define taqwa. To this he replied: "O Commander of the Faithful! Have you ever walked on a path with thorns on either side?" When 'Umar replied in the affirmative, he asked as to how he walked on that path. 'Umar replied: "I walk cautiously, ensuring that body and clothes are safe against thorns." 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud exclaimed: "This is the definitions of taqwa - to lead life in a way with our doing anything which may displease Allah. One's deeds should not be discordant with the Shari'ah."

It is noted that Mosques are normally packed with worshipers and devotees during the month of Ramazan. But as soon the crescent of Shawwal is sighted, number of devotees dwindles down and finally rows are shrunk.

It is imperative for us to pass the rest eleven months of the year like Ramazan, keeping ourselves away from all sorts of unholy activities and anti-social acts. If we did not do so, it meant that we did not attain taqwa (piety) in true sense. May Allah give us strength to make Ramazan like environment so that we may lead our life in peaceful way. ■

Value of Love

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

There is an exceptional glare of love in man's eyes which is not found in any other creature. His heart is characterised with a softness and melting quality inspired by love and quivers with the touch of pain and suffering for others. Such a heart is not in the treasures of the angels and surely man alone can present to his Lord a heart full of sincere love for others.

The excellence of man lies in his love and mercy for others one person is pricked with a thorn but another person feels the pain. Man is gifted with tears which fall from his eyes when he sees a widow's head uncovered in helplessness, a poor man's kitchen unlit, and a sick man in distress. If such a drop of tear is put in the sea of transgression, it will cleanse it. If it falls in a forest of sins, it will burn it and fill the space again with the effulgence of virtue. The angles can bring forward anything, but they cannot present this drop of tear. The angles do not sleep due to their cognisance of Allah's being and attributes, but their vigil does not have the excellence of man's inability to sleep due to the suffering of others.

The quality of love permeating through the human heart is a very precious gift of God. When something stirs it, it assumes a strange power. It rises above the consideration of religion, community, nation and motherland. It then only sees another man's heart and feels its suffering and is drawn to it by nature as is pulled an iron towards a magnet. ♦

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