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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

“The people of the pit were destroyed with fire abounding in fuel, while they sat around it, and were witnessing what they did to the believers. Against these they had no grudge except that they believed in Allah, the Most Mighty, the Most Praiseworthy, to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. Allah witnesses everything. Surely those who tormented the believing men and the believing women and then did not repent, theirs shall be the chastisement of Hell, and theirs shall be the chastisement of burning. As for those who believed and acted righteously, theirs shall be Gardens beneath which rivers flow. That is the great triumph. Stern indeed is your Lord's punishment.”

(Al Qur'an- 85:4-12)

Believers have been subjected to tyrannies many a time in history. Suhaib Rumi relates from the Holy Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) how a king, having come to know that a boy and later other people had believed in the Unity of God, he was filled with rage. Consequently, he got pits dug out along the roads, got them tilled with fire and ordered all those who refused to renounce the new faith to be thrown into the fire. The people who feel displeased at one's believing in Allah are wicked and unjust. They subject the believers to tyrannies of sort as they have no grudge except that the latter believed in Allah, the Most Mighty, the Most Praiseworthy. In the Day of Judgement they will be subjected to utmost humiliation in the form of the chastisement of Hell. ■

Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

Abu Hurairah relates that the Holy Messenger Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) said, “Allah, the Exalted, says: I declare war against one who bears enmity towards a friend of Mine. When a servant of Mine comes closer to Me, with a thing which I love, out of things which I have prescribed; and he seeks My favour through Optional Prayers (Nawafil), I start loving him and when I love him, I become his ear with which he hears and his eyes with which he sees and his hand with which he grasps and his foot with which he walks, and when he requests Me for anything, I grant him and when he seeks protection, I give him protection.”

(Bukhari)

This hadith under study brings into light the importance of Optional Prayers (Nawafil). Saying Prayers is one of the best means of man's coming closer to the Lord. The believer does not content with saying only obligatory prayers, which is a must for him. In view of the great blessings of Optional Prayers he loves to say Optional Prayers as well. The Holy Messenger says Allah loves Optional Prayers. That is why the believer says Optional Prayers besides Obligatory Prayers. He is not duty bound to say Optional Prayers. But just to seek the pleasure of Allah he spares at least some time from his schedule to remember Allah in Optional Prayers. When he does so, Allah begins to love him. When such a blessed person asks Allah for something, He grants him his prayer. ■

Women And Patriarchy

After half a century of independence Indians have woken up to take account of their achievements and failures. Keeping aside many vital issues suddenly it has dawned upon us that women constitute more the 50% of our population and yet they are devoid of social and political rights with which they can negotiate the patriarchal structures in which they live. It is more than evident that this abysmal situation has arisen because politico-religious hawks of all hues have been allowed to call the shots in every governmental move on gender issues. These power brokers in a bid to keep their own political positions intact have prevented any progressive legislation benefitting women to pass through. The devastating fall out of such a policy is more than obvious: Rapists get acquitted with ease. Dowry seekers stroll the street with impunity even as dowry deaths increase, and sexual harassment continues unabated with hapless women knocking the doors of justice in vain. From Maya Tyagi of Baghpat (Meerut) to Roopam Deol Bajaj, an IAS officer of Punjab, and Anjana Misra, the wife of an IFS officer in Orissa, there is an endless list of women cutting across classes, caste and community who have come to exemplify the pitiable state of affairs.

It is high time that the political class paid some attention to the entrenched societal attitudes towards women which shape the political handling of gender issues. This is more important than merely shedding crocodile tears on the plight of women and giving lip service to the idea of their being co-sharers of political power. There is a pressing political need to initiate a dialogue in society on the validity of the prescribed "role" for men and women. We adore women, use reverential language to address them, designate them as mothers, sisters or daughters. But we stoutly refuse to accept them in any other role. If women opt to make strides beyond the spheres prescribed for them by men then we see to it they are made vulnerable to male fury, lust and aggression.

The impunity with which violence against women is becoming a routine affair is best brought out in the accounts of partition. Mr. Andrew Whitehead, in his radio series "India: a people partitioned" broadcast on the BBC World Service has aptly observed that during the partition of the country when large scale migrations

of people took place across the border women migrants suffered the most. The extent of sexual violence against women has been concealed behind a veil of silence and shame. Figures available suggest that about one lakh women were abducted mainly in Punjab. How many more were raped and killed or casually cast aside God only knows. Whitehead further says that it is not hard to find veterans of the partition violence who admit sometimes with remorse, often with an obscene pride that they rioted and perhaps even killed. But no one admits to have participated in mass rape of women. Yet in 1947 there were tens and thousands of rapists exacting what they saw as communal vengeance or taking advantage of the breakdown of law and order to brutalise and humiliate women.

The situation is not different even now when communal riots flare up in any part of the country. Women bear the brunt of mob fury. The despicable carnage in Gujrat is the latest instance of brutality towards women. Thus it is imperative that we first create a social atmosphere where women can live without fear of sexual harassment. Without ensuring this basic security all talk of elevation and empowerment are meaningless for a large majority of women.

However, since crores of Muslims live in this country it is desirable that while framing laws and acts Islamic views may also be kept in mind. A world wide misconception spread by non-Muslims that Islamic shari'ah is quite harsh towards women must be removed. It is needless to say that as compared to other faiths Islam has restored to women her rights as well as her dignity, assigned her a proper place in the society and protected her against not only the conceit of men but also from irrational and cruel customs. The holy Quran does not distinguish between men and women. Wherever it refers to God's acceptance of good deeds, attainment of salvation and success in the hereafter, it refers to men as well as women. ■

S.A.

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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 life-time 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 uture 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 impulsions 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. ■

The Message of Qur'an

(Part I - Alif Lam Mim Surah 2 Al-Baqarah - The Cow)

- S. Athar Husain

This is the Scripture wherein there is no doubt, a guidance to the God-fearing who believe in the unseen, and perform the prayer and spend on the needy out of what We have given them who believe in this Book and in the Scriptures sent before and in the Hereafter. They are the guided ones and they shall prosper. As for the unbelievers, God has set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing and on their eyes is a covering and there awaits them a severe chastisement.

And some men say 'We believe in God and the Last Day' but in truth they believe not. They seek to deceive God and the believers but actually they are deceiving themselves. There is a disease in their hearts and they spread disorder in the land. When they are restrained they make out that they are reformers though they are promoters of disorder. When invited to the faith they say 'Shall we believe in the manner of fools.' Truly they are the fools but they realise not. When they meet the believers, they say 'we hold to the faith' but amongst themselves they say that they were only mocking at the believers. God will throw back at them their mockery and He is only giving them respite. They are like the man whose light has been taken away and who has been left in darkness. 'O you men, serve your Lord who created you and those before you, who has made the earth a dwelling place for you and the sky a covering, who sends down rain and brings forth all

varieties of fruits. Do not then set up peers for God.'

If you have any doubt in the Divine character of this Book, then bring forth a chapter like it and invite for your help whomsoever you will. Assuredly, you cannot do so. Then fear the Fire of Day of Judgment. Those who believe and do righteous deeds, give them glad tidings of Paradise where there shall be every kind of comfort. How can you deny the existence of God when you were lifeless and He gave you life, then He shall cause you to die and quicken you to life once again, and eventually shall you be brought back to Him. He it is who created for you all that is in the earth, then turned He to the heaven and fashioned it as seven heavens and He has knowledge of everything.

And when thy Lord addressed the angels, "Verily, I am about to place on earth a vicegerent;" they said, 'Wilt Thou place thereon one who will cause disorder and shed blood, while verily we hymn Thy praise and extol Thy holiness.' He said, 'Surely, I know that which ye know not.' God bestowed knowledge on Adam, the angels acknowledged his superiority and bowed down to him under God's command. Only Iblis demurred through pride and became a disbeliever. God directed Adam and his wife, Eve, to dwell in Paradise but Satan caused the twain to fall into a lapse. As a result, all of them were sent to earth. Adam

repented and was forgiven and told that there shall come guidance from the Lord and whosoever will follow it, no fear shall come on him, neither shall he grieve.

O children of Israel! believe in this Book which confirms your Scripture, do not part with revelations for a trifling price and do not confound truth with falsehood nor knowingly conceal the truth and establish worship and pay the poor due. "Will you enjoin righteousness upon others and neglect to practice it yourself? And yet ye profess to follow the Book. And seek help in patience and prayer—a hard task indeed it is, but not to the devout. O children of Israel! Call to mind the blessing with which I blessed ye and chose ye before all others. So beware of the Day when no soul shall avail another in anything nor shall any intercession profit. And call to mind the occasion when We rescued ye from the people of Pharaoh who used to slay your male children and let your females only live and in this lay for you a mighty trial from your Lord. We parted the sea and saved you and drowned Pharaoh's people."

The people of Israel were ungrateful and took to the worship of a calf when Moses had gone from their midst for prayers for forty nights. On return Moses remonstrated with them and on their repentance God relented towards them. Even so, they said, 'O Moses! We will not believe thee until we behold God openly.' Thereupon a thunderbolt seized them but God revived them and sent down 'manna and salva' to eat. When Moses asked water for his people, he was told to smite the rock with his staff from which

gushed forth twelve fountains. His people did not rest content with 'manna and salva' and asked for herbs, cucumbers, garlic, lentils and onions. They were told to get these things from any city. Ultimately they came to be afflicted with abasement and privation, and drew on themselves the displeasure of God because they disregarded the directions of God and slew the prophets for no reason and they disobeyed and indulged in excesses. Some of them committed excesses on Sabbath day and to them God had said, 'Ye be despised as apes' to serve as a warning to those of their time and also those who came after them and as a caution even to the righteous.

Moses told his people that God desireth them to sacrifice an oxen in His name. They repeatedly asked for detailed description and sacrificed it half-heartedly. They had slain a man and were foisting the deed on one another and God disclosed what they were trying to conceal by directing them to smite the dead with a part of the slaughtered animal. God revived the dead man and manifested His sign.

Yet their hearts hardened as a rock thereafter and they were impervious to guidance. When they met the believers they would say there were among them but when they would meet apart they would reveal their true character. Knew they not that God knoweth what they hide as well as what they speak out.

God had taken a promise from the Israelites that they would serve none but God and be good to parents and kindred and to orphans and to the needy, and to

to speak to others in a gentle manner and to observe prayer and pay the poor-due. Barring a few all backed out. They were directed not to shed the blood of people nor to expel them from their homes, yet they refrained not and would make people captives to secure ransom. They followed certain portions of the Book and neglected the other. What shall be the return of anyone who does this except disgrace in this world and a severe chastisement on the Day of Resurrection. These are they who have bartered away the life of this world at the cost of the life to follow. So their chastisement shall not be lightened, neither shall they be helped.

So oft as apostles came to them, they grew arrogant and some they called imposters and some they killed. They know it is a Divine Book but they would not acknowledge it. They feel aggrieved that God should send His grace not on themselves but on whomsoever He pleaseth. They say they would not believe in any other book except their own. Say 'If the abode of the Hereafter is meant by God exclusively for you and none else, yearn for death if you speak the truth.'

Say 'Whosoever is hostile to God and His angels and His apostles, and to Gabriel and Michael, God verily will prove hostile to the disbelievers. Assuredly, they alone deny these clear signs who are rebellious.'

There are some who learn the art of sorcery and that which was supposed to cause division between man and wife. Whoever cultivates such black art has no share in the comforts of life to come. Verily,

for a vile price they have sold themselves. Had they believed and acted righteously they would have received from God a good recompense. Neither the unbelievers among the people of the Book nor the polytheists like that anything good should come down to you from your Lord but God selecteth for His grace whomsoever He will, and unbounded is the grace of God. Knowest thou not that it is to God that the dominion of the heavens and of the earth belongeth and that for you there is no friend or helper save Him?

Many of the people of the Book desire you Muslims to return to unbelief after you have believed out of envy in their hearts. So forgive and forbear till God giveth His direction. Truly, God hath power over everything. And they say, 'None shall enter Paradise unless one is a Jew or a Christian.' Such is their wishful thinking. Say 'Cite your authority if you speak the truth.' Nay! He who sets his face Godward with resignation and does what is right-his reward is with his Lord; on such no fear shall come, neither shall they grieve.'

The Jews say, 'The Christians have not anything to lean on,' and 'on nothing lean the Jews,' say the Christians and yet both are readers of the Scripture. God will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection.

And who commits a greater wrong than he who hinders God's name from being taken in His places of worship and attempts to ruin them. Theirs is disgrace in this world and a severe chastisement in the next.

God's is the East and the West; therefore whichever side you turn, ye will face the countenance of God; Verily God is Omnipresent, Omniscient! And they say, 'God hath taken to Himself a Son.' Transcendent in purity is He! His is whatever is in the heavens and the earth. All submit to Him. The Bringer into being of the heavens and the earth! Whenever He intendeth a thing, He but sayeth, 'Be' and there it is.

And they say, "Why is it that God speaketh not (directly) to us, or why is it that no token (of His) cometh to us?" Even in like-manner, asked those who went before them. "Undoubtedly, we have sent thee Muhammed with the Truth, a bearer of good tidings and a warner." Never will the Jews or the Christians be pleased with thee until thou follow their creed. Say 'Verily, the guidance of God—that is the Guidance.'

And call to mind the occasion when his Lord tested Abraham and he stood the test. God said, 'Verily, I am going to make thee a guide for mankind.' And recall when God declared the Kaaba at Mecca to be a place of assemblage for mankind and a sanctuary, and commanded Abraham and his son Ishmael to keep the house clean for those who go the rounds, and those who sequester themselves for quiet devotion and those who bow down in prayer. Abraham prayed, 'Lord! make this a city of peace and provide its people with fruits

Also make us resigned to Thee and raise amongst our progeny a body of people truly devoted to Thee, and instruct us in the ways of devotion and turn

to us And raise up from their midst an apostle who may recite to them the Revelations, and instruct them in the Book, and the purpose underlying it and reform them.' God chose Abraham for distinction in this world and indeed he will be among the righteous in the world to come. Abraham chose Islam (the way of resignation) for himself and instructed his children to follow likewise and so did Jacob, 'O my children! Truly hath God chosen for you a way of life. So do not pass away ere ye be resigned to God.'

Say ye, "We believe in God and that which hath been sent down to us and that which was sent down to Abraham, Ishmael and Jacob and his progeny from their Lord and that which was given to Moses and Jesus and the Prophets, and we make no distinction between any of them, and to Him are we resigned! So if they believe even as ye believe, then surely are they rightly guided; but if they turn away, then they are clearly in schism. Say, 'We have adopted the colour (manner) of God and what colour is better than God's and it is Him alone do we serve.' Say, 'Dispute ye with us concerning God when He is our Lord even as He is your Lord? To us the result of our deeds and to you the result of your deeds; and we are sincerely His.' And who is more wicked than he who suppresseth the evidence that hath been received from God.' And note that God is not unaware of what ye do ! ■

The Significance of Good Conduct in Islam

- S. Sulaiman Nadwi

The importance which the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) gave to good morals and good manners can be judged from the fact that he recited in his prayers:

O Allah! Behold, I seek refuge in Thee from evil morals, deeds and desires.

O Allah! Guide me aright and make me straight forward.

O Allah! purify thou mine heart from hypocrisy, my conduct from dissimulation, my tongue from falsehood, and mine eyes from treachery. Thou knowest the treacherous glance of the eye and that which bosoms conceal.

O Allah! Behold I seek refuge in Thee from anxiety and grief, from inability and sloth, from faint heartedness, niggardliness, from the bum of indebtedness and the domination of men.

The integral part of the religion of Islam is *Iman* but it can be perfected only with the best conduct. Abu Huraira (Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

The most perfect of believers in faith is the best of them in moral excellence, and the best of you are the kindest of you to their wives.

Abu Huraira (Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: One who manages the affairs of the widow and poor man is like the one who exerts himself hard in the way of Allah, or the one who stands up for prayer in night and fasts in the day.

Abu Huraira (Allah be pleased with him) said: A man came to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said: O Messenger of Allah! Who has the greatest right that I should keep company with him with goodness? He said: Thy mother. He said: Who then? He said: Thy mother. He said: Who then? He said: Then thy father. Anas said: I heard the Messenger of Allah saying: Whomsoever it pleases that his sustenance should be made ample to him or that his life should be lengthened, let him be kind to his relatives.

Ibn 'Umar (Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be

upon him) said: A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim; he does him no injustice, nor does he leave him alone (to be victim of another's injustice); and whoever does the needful for his brother, Allah does the needful for him; and whoever removes the distress of a Muslim, Allah removes from him a distress out of the distresses of the day of Resurrection; and whoever covers (the faults of) a Muslim, Allah will cover his sins on the day of Resurrection.

Anas (Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: Help thy brother whether he is the doer of wrong or wrong is done to him.

They (his companions) said: O Messenger of Allah! We can help a man to whom wrong is done, but how can we help him. When he is the doer of wrong? He said: Take hold of his hands from doing wrong.

Abu Musa (Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: Believers are (parts of) a structure, one part of which strengthens the other. And he inserted his fingers of one hand amid those of the other (so as to conjoin his two hands).

Anas (Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah

(peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: Do not hate one another and do not boycott one another, and be servants of Allah (as) brethren; and it is not lawful for a Muslim that he should sever his relations with his brother for more than three days.

Jarir (Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: Allah has no mercy on him who is not merciful to men.

Al Bara' b. 'Azib (Allah be pleased with him) reported that a bedouin came to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said: Direct me to a deed which draws me near to Paradise and takes me away from the Fire (of Hell). Upon this the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: You worship Allah and never associate anything with him; emancipate a person from slavery freeing his neck from the burden of debt. Take hold the hand of the tyrant relative. If you cannot do this, then provide food to the hungry and drink and if you cannot do even this, then you should either speak good or better remain quiet.

Abu Huraira (Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: Anybody who believes in Allah and the Last Day should not harm his

neighbour, and anybody who believes in Allah and the Last Day should entertain his guest generously and anybody who believes in Allah and the Last Day should talk what is good or keep quiet (i.e. abstain from all kinds of evil and dirty talk).

Anas b. Malik (Allah be pleased with him) reported: A man asked the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): When will the Hour be established, O Allah's Messenger? The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: What have you prepared for it? The man said: I have not prepared for it much of prayers or fasting or alms, but I love Allah and His Messenger. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: You will be with those whom you love.

Jabir b. 'Abdullah (Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: enjoining all that is good is *Sadaqa* (charitable gift).

Abu Huraira (Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: A good, pleasant, friendly word is a *Sadaqa*.

Abu Huraira (Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: Whosoever does not give up

false statements, and evil deeds and speaking bad words to others, Allah is not in need of his (fasting) leaving his food and drink.

Abu Huraira (Allah be pleased with him) reported Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as saying: The worst among the people is double-faced one; he comes to some people with one face and to other with the other face.

Abu Huraira (Allah be pleased with him) reported Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) saying: Verily, Allah would say on the Day of Resurrection: Where are those who have mutual love for My Glory's sake. Today I shall shelter them in my shadow when there is no others shadow but the shadow of Mine.

Abu Huraira (Allah be pleased with him) reported Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) saying: Avoid suspicion, for suspicion is the worst of lie in talk and do not be inquisitive about one another and do not spy on one another and do not feel envy with the other and nurse no malice, and nurse no aversion and hostility against one another. And be fellow-brothers and servants of Allah. ■

(*Sahih Muslim, Kitab Al-Birr wa's Salat-i-wa'l A dab*)

Graciousness, Tolerance and Forbearance

-S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi

In his good manners, benevolence, magnanimity and modesty, the Prophet (SAW) was the precursor, torch-bearer and role-model for the entire humanity. This fact is affirmed by Allah Almighty Himself. He says:

(And verily thou art of a high and noble disposition.)

The Prophet (SAW) himself said as follows:

(My Lord Himself disciplined me and disciplined He me well.)

Hazrat Jabir (RAA) is quoted to have said: "the Prophet (SAW) said:

(Allah raised me for the culmination of moral virtues and righteous deeds.)

Once when Hazrat A'isha (RAA) was enquired about the character of the Prophet (SAW), she replied:

(His character was the Quran.)
(Or, in other words: he was just the Quran personified.)

In fact, the level of forbearance and forgiveness, patience and tolerance, graciousness and magnanimity that had been maintained by him (SAW) is hard to be perceived by the best of the acumen of the intelligent and is far beyond the reach of the imagination and phantasm of the poets and bards. A few more instances are given below:

A sample of the Prophet (SAW)'s kindness and graciousness towards even the greatest enemy was the treatment he meted out to the leader of the hypocrites, Abdullah bin Ubai bin Salool. He was the person who publicly used terms of flagrant animosity against the Prophet (SAW). He was always taking part in clandestine intrigues hatched against him (SAW). All the Muslims were fully aware of this misdemeanor of him. When, after his death, he was lowered down into the grave, his son, Abdullah bin Abdullah, who was a thorough believer and totally loyal to, and having love for, the Prophet (SAW), desired from the Prophet (SAW) to do some favour to his deceased father. Thereupon, in regard to his (Abdullah bin Abdullah's) being a perfect believer and in deference to him, he (SAW) condescended to the extent that he (SAW) came over there and ordered the body to be taken out. Then he placed it on his knees and dropped some saliva from his mouth on it and had it donned with his shirt.

Hazrat Anas bin Malik is reported to have said: "Once I was walking with the Prophet (SAW). He was then having a mantle made in Najran on. It had coarse fringes. On the way a nomadic Arab met him. Getting hold of his mantle, the nomad pulled it hard. Lifting my eyes I saw that the pull of the mantle had caused bruises on the Prophet's neck. The nomad was saying: 'O Mohammad! Have the orders

issued for some of the God' wealth that you have with you to be given to me'. The Prophet (SAW) turned his face towards him and laughed. He had the instructions issued that he be given (what he wanted)?

The Prophet (SAW) had once taken some loan, through the mediation of Hazrat Bilal (RAA), from a Jew, Zaid bin Saa'na. The Prophet (SAW) used to take such loans in order to extend aid to the destitute, when he himself did not have anything with him. This loan, too, was taken to help out an indigent person. A period had also been agreed upon for the return of the loan. But, that man, before the expiry of the stipulated term, came to him (SAW) and demanded the payment. Not only that holding by his fist the garment that the Prophet (SAW) had on, he pulled it hard off his shoulder and, addressed him rudely, saying: "You, the son of Abdul Muttalib, do much of dilly-dallying." He had, in this way, taunted not only the Prophet (SAW) but his grandfather, Abdul Muttahb, too. Not to speak of the Prophet himself as he was of course, adorned with very sublime qualities but his grandfather too, was distinguished, among his peers and equals, in good qualities. One can, therefore, imagine how much hurt he (SAW) must have felt on that remark by that Jew! So, Hazrat U'mar (RAA) rebuked him and, paying him in his own coin, talked to him in rude terms. But, the Prophet (SAW) kept smiling. He said to Hazrat U'mar: "U'mar! This man and I both deserved to be treated differently by you. To me, you ought to have given the counsel to make the payment at the

earliest; and to him you might have counseled to be polite in making the demand." Then, (addressing the Jew) he (SAW) said: "There are still three days left before the due date expires." Anyway, giving instructions to Hazrat U'mar to repay him the loan, he ordered him to give him twenty Saa's more than due to him. That excess payment was to compensate for the scare caused to him by the reprimanding words used by Hazrat U'mar against him. This attitude of the Prophet (SAW) impressed that Jew so much that he embraced Islam.

Clemency towards Animals:

The Prophet (SAW) commanded to be merciful to animals, too. Shaddad bin Aus reports the Prophet (SAW) as saying: "God has commanded us to be nice and gentle to each and everything. So, If you are to slaughter an animal, do it nicely. One who is about to slaughter must have his chopper ready in advance." (That is: must have the blade of the chopper sharpened in advance and should not flaunt it in front of its face lest the animal should get restless). The animal to be slaughtered must be given rest.

Hazrat Ibn-e-A'bbas (RAA) reports that a man had a goat laid on the ground to slaughter it and then started sharpening his knife. When the Prophet (SAW) saw this ,he said to him: "Do you want to kill it twice? Why did you not have your knife sharpened before having it laid on the ground?"

Hazrat Ibn-e-Masw'ood (RAA) narrates that: "we were, in company of the

Prophet (SAW), on a journey. He (SAW) went into isolation for a while for some of his personal need. In the meantime, we saw a small bird. It had its two chicks with it. We got the two chicks caught. Seeing that, the bird started fluttering its wings. The Prophet (SAW) came back and asked: 'Whoever has distressed it by having its chicks snatched away from it?' Then he commanded to have the chicks returned. There we saw a colony of ants. We got it burnt. He (SAW) did not like it and asked: 'Whoever has got it burnt?' 'It is we', we said. He said: 'The right to torture with fire is exclusively held by the Lord of the fire.'

The Prophet (SAW) commanded the venerated companions to keep the animals provided with fodder and water and forbade them to harass and overburden them. He declared that keeping the animals from what hurts them and putting them at ease were meritorious acts and brought those who performed them nearer to Allah. To elucidate how meritorious these acts are he (SAW) cited examples: "Hazrat Abu Hurairah reports that a man was on journey to somewhere. En route, he felt very thirsty. He caught sight of a well in front of him, He climbed down into it. When he came out of it, he saw a dog licking the mud because of the intensity of the thirst he felt. He said to himself: 'The condition that I was in because of the thirst, it is the same condition which this dog is in.' So, he climbed down into the well again, had his legging filled with water and clutching it with his teeth came up and out of the well.

Then he let the dog drink it. Allah Almighty graced this act by him with His Acceptance and granted him His Forgiveness," The people asked him (SAW): "Is there merit in respect of beasts and animals, too?" He (SAW) replied: "There is merit in respect of every creature that has a heart throbbing.

Hazrat A'bdullah bin U'mar (RAA) has reported the Prophet (SAW) to have said: "A woman was subjected to Retribution merely because she had denied her cat food and water; nor she set it free so as it could satisfy its hunger by taking worms and insects.

Suhail bin Amr reports that the Prophet (SAW) came across a camel so famished that its belly had shrunk to its back. Seeing it, he (SAW) said: Have the fear of Allah in regard to these dumb creatures. If you ride them, ride them gently. If you slaughter them to eat the meat from them, slaughter them when they are healthy.

Hazrat Abu Hurairah narrates that the Prophet (SAW) said: If you go to any verdant place, do not deny the camel their due over the ground. And in case you go to any arid land, had it crossed over fast. If you have to camp somewhere for the night, do not camp on the road, since it is frequented by animals and insects and worms take shelter there.

Graciousness towards Enemies:

When on occasion of conquest of Makkah, the place whose people had continuously for 13 year persecuted him

(SAW) and his companions to the utmost extent till ultimately he had to part with it and where he (SAW) was now entering as victor and conqueror, and came face-to-face with them, he asked them: "O people of Quoraish! What do you expect me to do with you now?" For the better we expect", they said, "You are noble of heart and a noble brother and also the son of a noble brother." He said: I say to you today what Yusuf (AS) had said to his brothers:

(No blame on you today. You are all set free)

When the victory operation was over a general amnesty was granted by him(SAW) to all the people barring nine extremist culprits who were permitted to be killed for their grave crimes even if they were found hidden under the curtains of Ka' ba. These included either someone who had, after having confessed Islam, turned apostate; or someone who had killed some Muslim by fraud; or someone who had made of insulting and slandering the Prophet (SAW) through his poetic compositions a means of his and others' enjoyment and had put them into circulation. Among them was A'bdullah bin Sa'd bin Abi Sarh also who had turned apostate. There was, among them, l'kramah bin Abu Jahl who had, because of his malice towards Islam and its dominance and because of his fear for his life, gone to Yemen leaving his homeland behind. But, after his flight, his wife sought quarter for him from the Prophet (SAW). The Prophet (SAW), knowing well that he was the son of his staunchest enemy on the face of earth, granted him the quarter.

And, on his arrival, he (SAW) rushed towards him to receive him and express his joy in such a way as made the mantle he was having on removed from his body.

Among them was also Wahshi (the vassal of Jubair bin Muti'im), the assassin of his beloved uncle, Hazrat Hamza. He had helped, by having him assassinated, in getting his liver chewed. He had been allowed by the Prophet (SAW) to be killed in Qasas (requital). But, when he professed Islam, the Prophet (SAW) accepted his conversion to Islam.

One of them was Hubaar bin Al-Aswad. He was the person who hit the Prophet's daughter, Hazrat Zainub (RAA), on her side with a spear as a result of which she fell off the camel she was riding on to a rock and suffered a miscarriage. He had thereafter fled away. Later, he got converted to Islam.

There were songstresses, Sara and one or two more, who used to keep singing the verses composed to lampoon the Prophet (SAW). Quarter was sought for them also from the Prophet (SAW). He (SAW) granted them also the quarter and both of them later converted to Islam also

Aman, U'mair bin Wahab by name, had come to Madinah under a conspiracy to assassinate the Prophet (SAW). Hazrat U'rnar (RAA) could read the airs on his face. He caught him by his throat and brought him, keeping him held the same way, to the Prophet (SAW). The Prophet (SAW)said: "U'mar, leave him alone. And, you Umair, come close to me." Then he (SAW) asked him: "What is the intent you

have come with?" He said: "To get my son released". The Prophet (SAW) asked: "Why are you then having the sword slung on your shoulders?" He said: "What purpose did th word serve, after all, in the battle of Badr? The Prophet (SAW) said: 'Is it not so that you and Safwan, while in Hajar, have hatched a conspiracy to assassinate me?' Hearing what the Prophet (SAW) said, U'mair was flabbergasted. He said spontaneously: "Mohammad, you are undoubtedly the Prophet. By Allah, except Safwan and me no one had any knowledge of this matter." Hence, he had Islam embraced. The Prophet (SAW) said to his companions: "Teach your brother the religion. Make him learn the Quran by heart. And, set his son free." The Quoraish who were eagerly waiting for the news of getting the Prophet (SAW) assassinated at the hands of U'mair heard the news, instead, of the latter having embraced Islam.

Safwan bin Umayyah had fled away, on occasion of conquest of Makkah, towards Jeddah in order to go from there, by boat, to Yemen. So, U'mair bin Wahab came to the Prophet (SAW) and made the submission that: 'O Allah's Prophet! Safwan bin Umayyah is the chief of his community. Out of fear from you, he has fled away towards the sea. Having learnt that, the Prophet (SAW) granted him, too, the quarter. Hazrat U'mair requested the Prophet (SAW) to furnish him with a written note to that effect for his (Safwan's) assurance. Thereupon, the Prophet (SAW) gave him his turban as a token and

sent him back after Safwan. He took Safwan over at the sea-coast and told him that the Prophet (SAW) had granted him the quarter. 'Now get your self rescued from (eternal) perdition', he added. Safwan said: 'I fear for my life: He said: 'The Prophet (SAW) is very tolerant and forbearing'. Hence Hazrat U'mair brought him along back to Makkah. Presenting himself before the Prophet (SAW). Safwan said: 'This man here thinks that you have granted me the quarter.' The Prophet (SAW) corroborated the statement made to him. Safwan sought two months respite from him (SAW). He (SAW) granted him four months respite.

'Who can save you now?':

When the Prophet (SAW) was on his way back from *Ghazwa-e-Zat-er-Riqua* a', he (SAW) made a halt at noon to take rest at a place where were lot of acacia trees. The people made for those trees and the Prophet himself, after having his sword hung on one of the acacia trees, got to taking rest under it.

Hazrat Jabir (RAA) states that: 'Meanwhile we fell asleep. But before long we felt that the Prophet (SAW) was calling us. We saw that a Nomadic Arab was sitting beside him. He (SAW) apprised us that he was sleeping when that Nomad picked up that sword. "When I opened my eye, he was having this sword drawn over my head and said to me: 'Who can save you now?' I said to him: 'Allah!' Behold! He is now sitting here", said the Prophet (SAW). Anyway, the Prophet (SAW) did not punish him at all."

The Quality of Being 'the Mercy for the Worlds':

The level of passion of love and sympathy with each and everyone that the Prophet (SAW) had was extra-ordinarily high. The impact that this passion made on the Muslims and the orientation it gave to the mind of Muslims was uninterruptedly perceptible in the Prophet's (SAW) time and also in the lives of the later Muslims. As its fall-out, regions after regions of whatever lands the Muslim empires got extended to and wherever the Muslims got settled, got entered, on their own. On having seen those Muslims' kindheartedness and favours, into the fold of Islam. They were not forced by anyone to do so because, as per the injunctions of Islam, it is forbidden to force anyone to convert to Islam. This interdiction is extended further to the extent that the non-Muslim citizens living under the Muslim rule would not be burdened with obligations that the Muslims are burdened with. They have always been allowed to practice their respective religions in accordance with their religion teachings even in matters which are prohibited for the Muslims. As a result thereof, whichever non-Muslim communities had the opportunity to observe these virtues of Islam had embraced Islam.

Having embraced Islam meant that Allah alone was to be believed to be one's lone and sole Providence and Master. His commands conveyed to him through His Apostle must be obeyed. The transgressions and moral and sexual waywardness that were being perpetrated

in pre-Islamic life must be stopped. Hence, the people who embraced Islam kept their practices mended accordingly. The human comity got thus reformed a lot. A lot of such virtues as were vividly demonstrative of sublime human traits and characters were instilled. It may be assessed and appreciated by having a look at the pre-Islamic society which was marked by the ethnical inequities and the bloody carnages perpetrated by those in power, the powers that be, and which make the man shiver when he reads them in the annals of history. In the regimes governed by Islam even 1 % of all that did not take place even in the event of war and battles. When the Romans captured Jerusalem after having fought for it, they shed so much blood of Muslim rulers and the Muslim people that their horses were knee-deep in blood. But, when the Muslims recaptured it later, they pardoned off the Christian rulers who were in occupation of it. It is what the English historian, Stanley Lane Pole, himself has confessed.

In each and every society of pre-Islamic days, whether it were under the Roman empire or the Persian one or the one of the Indian sub-continent or of the adjoining regions, the treatment meted out to womenfolk was so iniquitous as is hardly meted out to even the beasts. They had no right of inheritance. Nor were they equal in rights to their brothers. There was no safeguard for their honour and chastity. They were made to serve, in their own houses, like the servants and slaves are made to serve. And, if they became widow, they were deemed even ill-boding.

On their birth, the family members got struck with grief. Many a people had them killed even before their coming of age. Those who were not killed were meted out the treatment mentioned above.

It is Islam which, on its advent, proclaimed the womenfolk entitled to be treated with honour and respect. It made them entitled to a share in inheritance, in the legacy left by their parents on their death. Ill-treatment of women simply because of their being the women was declared totally unlawful. In the days of Ignorance, women while menstruating would be rendered untouchable by the society. No one would come close to them nor would sit close by. Islam had this practice totally abolished. Barring the cohabitation, coming close to women in their state of menstruation in all other matters was declared absolutely permissible. Prior to Islam, women were kept reduced to the status of show-pieces. Their job was to seduce others with their body and dresses, be the source of feasting the eyes with their adornments and ornaments and be the tools of entertainment for the men-folk. It is Islam which, on its advent, strictly prohibited this malpractice. It ordered that, if the womenfolk, out of necessity had to be amidst men not closely related, they must have themselves clad in loose apparels so that the lecherous glances are not directed towards them.

Likewise, women are mentioned, side by side the men, wherever instructions regarding matters of worship et cetera are enunciated. They, too, are

provided opportunity to attain highest levels of spirituality and religious merits. However, as much differentiation as is warranted by the physical and congenital difference between the two sexes and is necessary and inevitable has, of course, been maintained: The holy Quran has the following statement made:

(And the believing men and believing women are friends one unto another: they command that which is reputable and restrain from that which is disreputable, and establish prayer and give the poor-rate and obey Allah and His apostle. Those! Allah will surely show mercy to them; verily Allah is Mighty, Wise.)

And

(Whosoever worketh righteously, male or female, and is a believer, We will surely quicken him to a clean life. and will surely recompense them their hire for the best of that which they have been working.)

And also that:

(I let not the work of a worker amongst you to waste, man or woman, one of you from the other.)

On occasion of the *Hajjat-ul-Vida'a* (the Valedictory Haj), the Prophet (SAW) exhorted as follows:

(Take this exhortation from me in respect of women: be nice to them. you have had them under Allah's security and have made them legitimate for you by the Word of Allah.)

Thus, the woman, in her constitution, is a little different from that of

the man. It makes her weaker than the man. Keeping that in view, and, in order to have safeguards against the man making misuse of this disparity, some rules have also been formulated. For example: She should not travel all alone; she must be accompanied by her husband or some uterine kin. In return for obtaining right to use her by making her one's wife, it is made mandatory to give her, in cash or kind, a gift of alimony. He is not permitted to appropriate the wealth and property that she owns. Only she has the right over whatever she owns. The husband has no right over it Prior to her getting married, the onus of the expenditure on her is laid on her parents. In their absence, it is laid on her closest kin. After her getting married, this responsibility is to be borne by her husband. Thus, the wife herself has not been assigned the responsibility of meeting her own expenses. She would, however, in exchange, be the mistress of the house and assistant to her husband, She would bear the responsibility of the household affairs and looking after the children. The mandamus is:

(The woman is to bear the responsibility of looking after her husband's household.) On separation from her husband, in ease of divorce from him, she would revert back to the charge and responsibility of her parents.

The consequent effect of the values of mercy, compassion and humanitarianism enforced and promulgated by Islam was that wherever the Muslims adorned with these values

went, they brought about a world of change in those place . All the iniquities and aggressions perpetrated owing to the class disparity between man and man or the sexual disparity between man and woman or the disparity between the ruler and the ruled or those committed on occasion of military conflict or committed just for the sake of fun and enjoyment were all exterminated. Even the people who did not embrace Islam, too, got influenced in some way or other by these reforms. The non-Muslim societies, too, took to emulate, to some extent at least, the reformed practices of these places. There were some practices in the past adopted just for the sake of entertainment or by way of sport, wherein creatures other than the man were subjected to brutality. Making the man and the beast confined within a well-like enclosure they were set against each other and made to fight to the death to the amusement of a vast assembly of spectators. It was not felt at all necessary to be kind in any way to the animals. All these beastly acts underwent an exceptional change subsequent to the advent of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and as a result of his teachings and practical examples of morals set by him. And thus, 'his coming into the world happened to be the mercy not for the Muslims only, but, in addition to the mankind, for all the creatures on the earth. That is what the holy Quran has referred to when it said:

(And We have not sent thee except as a mercy unto the worlds.) ■

True Democracy in Turkey

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

15 July, 2016 is a memorable day in the history of Turkey. When a dissident faction of military attempted to seize power from President Recep Tayyip Erdogan with tanks and air support and shut down state broadcasters, the government limited internet access for social media sites as part of its measures to assert control, making it difficult for people to know what happened. But fortunately civilians loyal to Erdogan quashed the coup attempt by taking their lives at risk. They exhibited an extraordinary unity and power by breaking sinister attempt of throwing out a democratically elected government. The event took more than 265 lives, including 104 rebel soldiers. Authorities rounded up around 6,000 people from the armed forces and Judiciary.

No doubt, civilians proved themselves true citizens of Turkey and showed immense love to their President RecepTayyip Erdogan. They repeated the Motto "Do or Die" to save their motherland and restore democracy there.

It goes without saying that Coup revolt is not new in Turkey. Military coups unseated four elected Turkish governments in the past 50 years. Brief history of previous coups is as follows:

May 2, 1960: Officers and cadets led a coup. The commander of land forces, General Cemal Gursel, became head of committlee that sentenced Prime Minister Adnan Menderes to death.

March 12, 1971: The military delivered a memo to the government to restore order. Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel stepped down and a coalition of conservative

politicians and technocrats took over under military supervision.

Sept 12, 1980: The senior command of the army carried out a coup. Politicians were arrested, and parliament, political parties and trade unions were dissolved. A new constitution gave sweeping powers to the military.

June 18, 1997: Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan quit under pressure from the military, business judiciary and fellow politicians after being denounced as a danger to the secular order.

The authorities blamed the conspiracy on Erdogan's arch enemy, the US-based cleric Fethullah Guien. Erdogan has often accused the cleric and his supporters of attempting to overthrow the government.

Erdogan warned that Plotters will pay a heavy price for this treason. He further said that this uprising is a gift from God to us because this will be a reason to cleanse our army.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has now declared a three-month state of emergency, vowing to cleanse up the entire set up of the country after last week's attempted military coup.

In short the episode indeed is a lesson for the entire world in general and for the Islamic world in particular. Moreover, it showed the role of a true democratic country and its unity and unification to foil the rebellion and to defeat rebellions groups to a great extent. President Erdogan has a tough time ahead of him. He will have to craft a mild policy to save the democracy in the country as well. ■

Role of Literature in National Reconstruction and Intellectual Florescence

- S. Habibul Haq Nadwi

National consciousness and intellectual awakening have always been prime movers of national construction and of renaissance in the spiritual or material life of a people. The role of literature in awakening national consciousness has never been disputed either in the West or in the East. A scholar of belles lettres and of comparative literature is well aware of this fact. Modern Europe emerged triumphant in every field of life only after its renaissance was stimulated by a special interest and by deep studies of Greek and Latin classics which opened new vistas of ideas in every branch of human thinking, in humanities as well as in sciences. How Dante's sublime, Divine Comedy, stimulated Italian and later on the European Renaissance, is well known to us. The awakening in England in the seventeenth and in the eighteenth centuries was aroused by men of letters. The German and French Renaissance were also inspired by poets, thinkers and philosophers. Intellectual Renaissance in the East has also been inspired by men of letters. Reawakening of the soul is imperative for any progress. Since literature is rooted in the human soul it transcends the limitations of time and space. So as long as the human soul feelings and emotions are existing, literature is bound to be produced. A devotee of letters and an honest poet aim at reordering society in accord with the urges of the soul. Thus a dead nation is

reanimated through literature which rekindles faith and inspires hopes in sick nations. It has also a social and moral role to play. The mystics have a keen sensibility to perceive beauty and truth, on the one hand and the social thinkers are keen to rebuild society on the other, and this they can do by means of literature.

Violent assaults against literature

Scientifically orientated elite in the East as well as in the West gave a serious blow to literature by asserting that the secret of national progress lay in scientific and industrial progress of nations and not in belles lettres which leads a nation to loose imagination and to over emotionalism. Thus the study of literature, being a useless enterprise in their view meant to them an involvement in the pleasures of sensuousness, imaginative absorptions and abstruse sensations.

The assault against literature is not new. It started right after the dialectics between Plato and Aristotle in regard to the role and function of literature. Plato's theory of imitation was contradicted by Aristotle who asserted that the artist was a creator and not an imitator or a painter, making copies of the original, as Plato had thought. Plato argues that art appeals not to reason but to emotion and that poetry nourishes the passion instead of starving them and that it enfeebles the manly temper and evokes anarchy in the soul by

exalting the base passions and suppressing the sublime ones and by dethroning reason in favour of feelings. Aristotle vehemently refuted these arguments and seriously defended the Fine Arts. Aristotle advocated the cathartic value of Fine Arts. He asserted that emotion must have an outlet that is safe, convenient and at regular intervals, because the unpurged pent-up feelings might explode in violent irrational conduct. He pleaded that the emotional part of the soul should not be starved, and favoured regulated indulgence in feelings which served to maintain the balance of human nature. These disputes of the fourth century B.C. engaged the attention of the Western thinkers for a considerable period of time and discussions on Platonic didactic theory and Aristotelean aestheticism aroused the hitherto unresolved controversies regarding the nature and role of literature, namely, art for art's sake or art for life's sake, which dominated the course of literary criticism in the West as well as in the East.

In modern times the defence of poetry by Shelley (1792-1822), the English Romantic poet is worth mentioning. His famous treatise *A Defence of Poetry* (1840) changed the literary climate of Europe which was already polluted by Peacock's ironic and sceptical views on art and poetry who claimed in his *Four Ages of Poetry* that the poet resembled a savage. Shelley condemned Peacock's views and asserted that poetry "is a more direct representative of the actions and passions of our internal being and a poem is the very image of life expressed in its

eternal truth ... and poetry lifts the veil from hidden beauty of the world: He wrote that "poetry makes immortal all that is the best and most beautiful in the world and it adds beauty to that which is most deformed." Shelley concluded his defence with the following famous phrase: "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the World."

Despite all such controversies and assaults against belles-lettres modern Europe has evolved a favourable attitude towards literature. The latest theory that "no study of social phenomenon of any country can possibly be complete without some understanding of the literature produced and read in it ... " has become the guiding principle of Europe in this regard. We, therefore, find that great stress is being laid on the study of language and literature in contemporary times, the high noon of scientific civilisation.

This attitude towards literature is still alien to the East which has been imitating the scientific developments of the West. Literature in general and poetry in particular has been considered in the East as hyperbolic laudation of poets and over luxuriation of imagination by men of letters. Literature is supposed to be a jest, a pleasure, and a pastime luxury. Thus literature has become a laughing stock of the East, serving no purpose in national reconstruction.

The Muslim Orient, depending for its renaissance merely on scientific and industrial progress, cannot witness the real florescence unless national confidence in literature and Fine Arts is

restored, literature is redefined, its infinity reasserted and the theory of "no literature, no nation" is developed. Literature unifies a nation and asserts its immortality because it has been the barometer of the intellectual life of nations. Nations without literature have sunk into oblivion.

II

Gross Negligence of Studies in Arabic, Persian and Turkish in the Muslim East

If it is true that studies of hidden treasures of Greek and Latin classics helped Europe to rejuvenate itself and to inspire its Renaissance, it must be also true that the Muslim Orient can rise again if its literary treasures are explored and its spiritual beauties unveiled. It is unfortunate, however, that studies of literature are supposed to be a waste of time or a backward movement and a sign of retardation. The first requisite of research projects on the Islamic East is the sufficient knowledge of the under discussion languages and literature. It is, however, surprising that teachers of Islamic philosophy, Islamic history, Muslim political thought, teach the subjects without knowing the original languages involved. How could the standard of teaching and abilities to teach the original sources be developed in such a situation? It is, therefore, apparent that both the quality of teaching and results of researches in these areas are in general of the poorest quality. Such a behaviour creates a sense of dependence on Orientalists or, in other words, on secondary sources.

It is to be acknowledged that the Orientalists have hardly left any branch of

Islamic study unexplored and thus their services are commendable although their approach to the subject might be different from the Muslim point of view. Muslim scholars, whether they accept it or not, often base their knowledge on the researches and findings of the Orientalists.

Another misfortune in this regard has been that the teaching of previously mentioned literature in the Muslim East has been reduced to mere translations of a few classical or mediaeval texts, prose or poetry. The teaching of languages also suffered a set-back in the East because the present scholars in these languages have no relation with the march of time and ever-changing trends and new literary movements in the languages under discussion.

More unfortunate has been the case with our religious scholarship which has not only ignored but has considered literary discussion out of its jurisdiction. It is quite unusual to find any discussion about language and literature in books, written on Islam. The fact is that no media of expression have contaminated the climate of faith, especially in the modern times, more than imaginative or the plastic art. Marxism and all other apostate movements have invaded the Muslim lands through literary devices, namely, poetry, drama, fiction, novel and short stories. National reconstruction is not possible unless deserved attention is paid to language and literature in the Islamic world at the earliest possible time. ■

A New Generation of Struggle

-Mirwaiz Umar Farooq

Kashmiris on the boil, once again. In spite of the leadership being gagged and caged, the so-called "peace" in the valley has been shattered. So far 30 youngsters, most of them teenagers, have been killed in cold-blood; hundreds have been injured, many of them critically, by the Indian armed forces in Kashmir. Men, women and children have been beaten up mercilessly on the streets and in their homes across Kashmir. All this has been done to "contain" the angry population of the Valley, mourning and enraged at the killing of Burhan Muzaffar Wani and his two associates. Burhan, a 22-year-old Kashmiri militant commander, represented the fifth generation of Kashmiris, who have been fighting since 1931 for their basic human right: The right to determine their political will.

It is 85 years since July 13, 1931 when Kashmiris rose in rebellion against an oppressive occupation. Twenty four Kashmiris were killed in firing by the forces of the autocratic Dogra ruler. Since then, it has been a painful saga of subjugation, oppression and misery for the people of Jammu and Kashmir. But it also occasions a celebration of their courage, fortitude, resistance, resilience and repeated resurgence in the face of oppression. These 85 years have seen the triumph of the indomitable spirit of the people of Kashmir who have sought freedom and the right to determine their political and

everyday fate.

How ironical is it that on a day when Narendra Modi boarded the same train in South Africa, in which Gandhiji had once travelled and the experience inspired him to fight for India's freedom, his government mowed down scores of young civilian protesters in Kashmir. These civilians were demanding the same right to freedom against oppression that Gandhiji had been moved to demand after experiencing racism in that train. Aren't these double standards, we ask, by the world's largest democracy that it sought freedom from the British when it's land and people were subjugated and now it not only denies us in Kashmir that very freedom but even refuses to acknowledge our yearning for independence. All this because it is the subjugator this time.

Here, I want to address the people of India, directly. For the sake of humanity, justice, peace and progress in the region, the people of India need to know and understand the truth of Kashmir and play their role in ending our subjugation. The aggressive posturing and approach of the Indian government with regard to the Kashmiri people, and the disputed nature of Kashmir, has contributed greatly to the deteriorating situation and can lead to catastrophic consequences for the whole region. It is constantly propagating, through print and electronic media, that Jammu

and Kashmir is an integral part of India; that it is like any other state of India; that the people of Kashmir consider themselves Indian and there are few fringe elements creating “trouble” at the behest of a neighbouring country. That is a lie.

The Indian government substantiates its argument by saying that a certain percentage of people participate in electoral process: They vote and exercise their choice. While it is a fact that a certain percentage of Kashmiris vote, they do so only to put in place an administrative body that provides them basic infrastructural facilities and amenities. Their participation in the electoral process has no bearing on the disputed nature of the place. Even the pro-India parties here don't dispute this truth.

I want to remind the people of India that we have tried our best to resolve this dispute with the Indian state through dialogue. Recent history is testament to the fact that it was New Delhi, and not we, that thwarted such efforts. We were always ready — and shall always be ready — to come to the negotiating table if your government is seriously willing to talk about resolving the issue through principles of justice — and not by issuing demands of surrender. There isn't anybody more interested and willing than Kashmiris to end this conflict. But the Indian state's definition of peace in Kashmir isn't acceptable to us. It demands surrender. Instead of listening to our genuine political demands, its only response is to use

military force. It wants to change our demography.

The state of Jammu and Kashmir, as it existed on August 14, 1947, is a disputed territory, recognised as such by the UN. India and Pakistan are the two other parties to the dispute. The main stakeholders, however, are the people of this land. They have, as yet, not been granted their right to determine their political will. It is for this right that over one lakh Kashmiris have laid down their lives. The baton of freedom has passed on to the fifth generation. For us, it is a matter of great pride and great pain as we witness our next generation joining the journey of freedom and sacrificing their lives. Which nation wouldn't feel that way?

There are those who call these young idealists, “terrorists”. I want to ask them in which terrorist's funeral will you witness the participation of hundreds and thousands of men, women and children who have defied restrictions and risked losing their lives to bullets. What do you say about the sentiment that makes our youth so daring that they pelt stones even when they know that they will face bullets in retaliation; they know that they will be killed and yet they keep fighting. I ask the people of India to wake up to the reality of Kashmir and understand that the issue needs to be resolved. The longing for freedom in Kashmir will not die its own death, as some would want the people of India to believe. ■

(Courtesy: The Indian Express)

Growing Intolerance in a Tolerant Society

- Ram Puniyani

Towards the end of 2015 many writers and eminent citizens returned their national honors protesting against the growing atmosphere of intolerance. The list was long and this acted as a process where some introspection took place in society. Still the ruling dispensation and its associates in Hindu right wing politics, the RSS combine, began criticising those who returned their awards, accusing them of being politically motivated. They were also criticised for doing so to influence the forthcoming state assembly elections in Bihar.

Most of the awardees stood their ground as the perceptions about tolerance and freedom of expression had crossed the threshold and had undergone qualitative change. This gets confirmed in a 2015 report by US Commission for International Religious Freedom. The USCIRF is a bipartisan US federal government commission. This is the first of its kind in the world and is aiming at defending the universal right to freedom of religion in the world. The report is scathing and points out the state of religious freedom in India. As per the report, freedom in India is on a negative trajectory, religious tolerance deteriorated and religious freedom violations increased during 2015.

The report points out, "In 2015, religious tolerance deteriorated and

religious freedom violations increased in India... minority communities, especially Christians, Muslims and Sikhs, experienced numerous incidents of intimidation, harassment and violence, largely at the hands of Hindu nationalist groups." The report outlines the violations and points that USCRIF will continue to monitor the situation and may have to recommend to the State Department that India should be kept under "the country with particular concern" category. It is a significant report which goes on to say that the US government should keep this in mind while shaping the bilateral contacts with India and future of strategic dialogues should be determined according to that.

The report suggests that the Indian government publicly rebut officials and religious leaders who make derogatory statements about religious communities. This is the crux of the matter. Those understanding Indian politics know by now more clearly than before that the leaders making derogatory comments are either directly part of the ruling party, like Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti, Giriraj Singh (both ministers at the Centre) or leading members of Parliament like Yogi Adityanath or Sakshi Maharaj. Then there are others who belong to affiliate organisations like VHP, Bajrang Dal, which, like the ruling BJP, are part of the broader Sangh Privar, or more precisely, RSS combine.

When statements derogatory to religious minorities are made some from the ruling party come forward to say that this is not the official position of the party and stop at that. There is neither a reprimand nor demotion of the person concerned. Many have made these derogatory comments even before coming to power, like Giriraj Singh, but despite that they have been given positions of power. At these times Narendra Modi, who is presented as a powerful Prime Minister, keeps silent for weeks and later comes out with some lame, unconvincing statement, which does not take away from the impunity of those indulging in such hate speech.

As such, it seems to be a coordinated game. Someone makes the provocative statement, and some others from the RSS stable come to defend/justify him/her and some others say it is not official, while the PM maintains a deliberate silence. Interestingly, some statements need not sound derogatory to begin with. Hindutva's patriarch, RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat's statement about shouting Bharat Mata ki Jai (Hail mother India) is revealing. First, he said that we should teach the younger generation to say this. Then he took a step back saying it should not be compulsory. In response to this Asaduddin Owaisi of MIM gave an unwarranted statement that he would not say so even if a knife was put to his throat. To take the story further Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnavis said it was a must for all those who wanted to

stay in India. As a matter of fact, this is a subtle act of intimidation of Muslims who don't worship anybody but Allah. For them Bharat Mata ki Jai is like hailing mother Goddess, which they say is not permitted by Islam.

The RSS fellow traveler Yoga guru and entrepreneur Ramdev said that had the Constitution not been there by now lakhs would have been beheaded. These are comments from the top rungs of the political establishment these days. The writers of the report in their naivety may have given this suggestion, not knowing that currently the protection for such divisiveness is coming from the top echelons.

This is not an enviable situation for democracy in India. The quality of democracy is to be judged by the degree of safety and security of the religious minorities. True, even earlier also anti minority violence was part of the Indian political landscape, but now with the BJP government at Centre the intolerance and divisiveness has grown. What the reward-returns were feeling had lots of truth. The feeling of insecurity had been accompanied by a gag on freedom of expression, which went well with intolerance.

The report has come out at a time Modi is packing his bags for yet another trip to the US. Sadly, the report will probably be another document for the libraries. ■

(Courtesy: The Milli Gazette)

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and sent to, Nadwatul Ulama, P.O. Box 93, Tagore Marg. Lucknow-226007, U.P. India
Out-station cheques will not be accepted.