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THE FRAGRANCE OF EAST

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Great influence on Human Race

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

The Quranic teachings gave birth to a rationalist trend in the widest sense of the term taken etymologically and historically. It made a deep impact on arts and literature and human civilization all over the world in such a way as if a new window had been opened to let in light and fresh air. Islam broke open the lock with which human intellect had been fastened for ages by the enemies of reason, masquerading as representatives of religion. It was then that the humanity woke up after its long sleep of several centuries, removed the hurdles placed in its way and set its foot on the road to enlightenment and progress. ●

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Wisdom of Qur'an

"If We wished, We could take away that which We have revealed unto you; then you would find none there over to plead against Us."

(Surah al-Isra:86)

Commentary:

Ibn Mas'ud explained that a time will come when a wind will blow from the Syrian region after which nothing will be left of the Qur'an neither in print nor in the breasts. In support of his words, Ibn Mas'ud recite this verse (Ibn Jarir). This report is trustworthy (Qurtubi). The report is in Sa'id b. Mansur, Ibn Abi Shaybah, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Tabrani, Hakim, (who declared it sahih), Ibn Marduwayh and in Bayhaqi's "Sho'ab al-Iman". (Dhahabi agreed with Hamikm in ruling it as trustworthy: S. Ibrahim). The report has also come through Mu'adh b. Jabal, through Abu Hurayrah in Ibn Abi Hatim and Hakim who rated it Sahih, and through Hudhayfah b. al-Yaman in Abu al-Sheikh, Daylami and Ibn arduwayh (Shawkani).

The report of Hudhaifah says, "The Qur'an will get worn as the print on a cloth (gets worn) until a time will come when people will not know what is fasting, or Prayers, or Hajj, or charity. In that phase a time will come to pass on Allah's Book a night after which not a verse will remain on the earth. Thereafter, very old men and women will say, 'We found our forefathers saying these words: "there is no god save Allah." They wouldn't know what is Prayer, or fast, or Hajj, or charity." At that Sila (b. Zufar) asked. "Of what benefit will the words 'there is no god save Allah' be to them?" Hudhayfah ignored the question. He asked him three times. Hudhayfah finally turned to him and said, "O Sila. It will rescue them from the Fire." He said it three times. ●

Pearls From the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

"Abu Hurairah narrates that "the Apostle of God, once, happened to pass by a heap of corn (which belonged to a trader). The Apostle of God thrust his hand into it and his fingers felt damp. On being asked, the trader replied that rain had fallen upon it. (So, he had placed the wet corn that was on the top under the dry corn). The Apostle of God, thereupon, observed: 'Why did you not let the wet corn remain on the top so that the buyers could see it? (Listen), he who deceives is not of us."

-Muslim

Commentary:

Another version of the same incident quoted by Tabrani in Mo'jami-Kabeer-wa-sagheer, on the authority of Hazrat Ibn-e-Masud, has it that the Apostle of God, lastly, said: "The sequel of such deceitfulness is hell. ●

"Relates Wasila bin el-Arqam that "I myself heard the Apostle of God say; he was saying: 'Whoever sold a defective thing to anyone without disclosing the defect to the buyer would be caught, permanently, in the wrath of God.' (Or was it) (that) 'he would always be cursed by the Angels?"

-Ibn Majah

Commentary:

Sometimes, a narrator is not sure of the exact words spoken by the holy Prophet, and by way of caution, he indicates his lack of certainty while relating the event. In the above Tradition, too, Hazrat Wasila bin el-Arqam was caught in two minds and could not decide whether the Prophet had said about the deceitful seller that "he would be caught, permanently, in the wrath of God," or that "he would always be cursed by the Angels." ●

Remembering Ali Miyan (Rah)

Renowned Islamic scholar, historian and litterateur of eminence, Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi popularly known as Ali Miyan passed away on December 31, 1999 at his native village Takia Kalan, Dairae Shah Alamullah in Raibareli district.

It is now more than a decade that we have been deprived of his patronage but a treasure of his written work is still here for us to draw inspiration and guidance. The greatest contribution of Maulana during his last days was to strengthen the bonds of humanity. The Payam-e-Insaniyat (Message of Humanity) mission founded by him, is still engaged in

spreading the fragrance of Maulana's message.

India is a country inhabited by people of multifarious origin, professing different faiths and absence of a unifying force the clash between followers of different faiths is imminent. Though Ali Miyan like many eminent scholars and writers preferred a secluded life but the volcano of communalism that erupted in 1960s shook his conscience and he decided to come out in public and make them aware that any violence in the name of religion is in fact a slur in the name of that particular faith. As regards Islam he quoted chapters and verses of Islamic theology to prove that Holy

Prophet (the last messenger of God) was sent to establish peace and love on earth. The holocaust of pre and post independence era had by and large been controlled and nation under the guidance of freedom fighters was progressing well but a coteri of fundamentalists of the right wing were not happy with the professed ideology of secularism. The existence of Muslims in the country was pinching their eyes. Though in small numbers but their disruptive and violent activities were needed a check. Maulana with his broad vision and foresightedness realised that only lessons of love amity could cool down the passion. With a helping hand from many non-Muslim

visionaries of secular temperament he launched "Payam-e-Insaniyat." It had very soothing effect. Later on Maulana concentrated his efforts on "ittihad bainul Muslimeen" (unity between different sects of Muslims). His active role as President of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board helped achieving this target as well.

Though a staunch Muslim but he was a votary of secularism in India and advocate of democracy. Let us adhere to the path of amity and love shown by the Late Maulana and help in establishing a pious society as envisaged by him.

S. A.



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Influence of Muslims on Indian Civilization

Muslim Saints and Preachers

Muslims came to India, sometimes, supremely unconcerned with worldly aims and ambitions and guided solely by the lofty sentiment of religious service. They brought with them the Islamic message of equity and social justice in order to show to men thirsting for light and freedom in a dark and narrow world the way to break their shackles and avail themselves of the priceless bounties of nature that were lying scattered over God's wide earth. The best instances of these dedicated, high-souled preachers are whose benign shadow thousands of oppressed members of the Indian society not only found shelter but also began to live as their own, beloved kinsmen. The names of Hazrat Ali Hujwari, Khwaja Moinuddin Ajmeri and Syed Ali bin Shahab Hamadani Kashmiri are richly representative of this holy order of men.

Rulers and Conquerors

And, sometimes, they came as warriors and conquerors and deep-hearted rulers, such as, Mahmud Ghaznavi, Muhammad Ghori and Zahiruddin Babar. These men of courage and ambition laid the foundations of a magnificent empire that continued to prosper for hundreds of years and carried the country to

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

glorious heights of progress and prosperity.

Permanent Settlement and Spirit of Service

But, whatever the capacity they came in the Muslims always treated India as their home their belief was that the earth belonged to God and He gave it in the supervision and keeping of whom He pleased. They considered themselves to be the Divinely appointed trustees of His land and servants of His people. "Every country is our country for it is the country of our Lord; was their motto.

The Muslims, as such, unflinchingly regarded India as their own country of permanent abode from which they could never turn their eyes away, They ungrudgingly gave of their best mental, physical and spiritual resources, their choicest natural abilities and talents, in its service, thinking that the contribution they would make to its development and prosperity would ultimately be to their own advantage. For was not their future linked inseparably with it? the attitude of Muslim settlers towards India, thus, was radically different from that of the British and other foreign imperialistic powers that came to hold sway over the land, or parts of it, at a later stage of its history. The object of the Western

imperialists here was simply to make hay while the sun shone. They treated India like a cow which had come into their hands for a few days, and were eager to milk it as thoroughly as they could. The devotion with which the Muslims strove for the advancement and prosperity of India can be understood only in this context.

Cultural Isolation of India

When the Muslims had set their feet on the Indian soil, there were here the ancient sciences and philosophy and an abundance of food and raw materials. But, culturally, India had lapsed into isolation from the civilized world for a long time. The mighty mountains on the north and the sea on the other three sides had prevented it from having a regular intercourse with the world that lay beyond its frontiers. The last foreign invader to visit India before the Muslims was Alexander the Great. During the period intervening between the two events India had remained severely cut off from the outside world. There had been no exchange of knowledge with the foreign countries. No new idea no fresh cultural impetus had reached it from abroad, nor had it been able to send out anything from its own ancient fund of wisdom.

Contact with the Outside World

It was at a time like this that the Muslims made their debut on the Indian stage. They were, in those days, the most advanced community in the East. They brought with them to India a new, practical and highly

rationalistic religion, mature knowledge, a progressive a synthesis of the natural wholesomeness of the Arab disposition, the dainty refinement of the Iranians and the rugged simplicity of the Turks. Besides, they brought many other priceless gifts and virtues.

Concept of Divine Unity

The most valuable of these gifts was the sovereign and unalloyed Islamic concept of Divinity which, at one stroke, dispensed with all intermediaries between man and the Maker in respect of prayer and supplication. There is emphatically no place in the Islamic creed for beliefs like polytheism, incarnation of God and the merging of man in the Almighty and becoming one with Him. 'Islam declares, plainly and once for all. The Sovereignty and Absolute Oneness, of the Divine Being One and Everlasting_ who begetteth not nor is He begotten, and nor does He take partners in the discharge of the functions of Divinity_; the creation the sustenance, the management and the ownership of the universe lie in His hands alone. It was but natural for a belief like this to make a powerful impact on the Indian mind out of touch as it had been with pure monotheistic doctrine for hundreds of years, Says: Prof. K.M. Panikkar.

"One thing is clear. Islam had a profound effect on Hinduism during this period. Medieval theism is in some ways a reply to the attack of

Islam; and the doctrines of medieval teaches by whatever names their gods are known are essentially theistic. It is the one supreme God that is the object of the devotee's adoration and it is to His grace that we are asked to look for redemption."

Equality and Brotherhood

Socially, a most epoch-making change was brought about by the Islamic notion of human equality and brotherhood. There was no division of society into permanent classes and no such community as the untouchables among the Muslims. Their belief was that no one was born unclean into the world nor predeterminately ignorant and debarred by the very fact of his birth in a certain class from the acquirement of knowledge. No trade or occupation was reserved for a particular section of humanity. On the other hand, they fraternized freely with each other at all levels, the rich strove with the poor in the pursuit of learning and there was freedom of profession for all. The idea of brotherhood was for the Indian mind and the India society a novel experience and a call to renewed thinking which did a lot of good to the country. The bonds of the then existing class-ridden society were relaxed to a considerable extent and there was witnessed a widespread recoil from the excessive rigidity of the caste-system. The advent of Islam acted as a challenge to social reformers in other fields also. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has offered the following comments on the uplifting influence exerted by Islam

and Muslims on the Indian social structure:

"The impact of the invaders from the north-west and of Islam on India had been considerable. It had pointed out and shone up the abuses that had crept into Hindu society—the petrification of caste, untouch-ability, exclusiveness carried to fantastic lengths. The idea of the brotherhood of Islam and the theoretical equality of its adherents made a powerful appeal especially to those in the Hindu fold who were denied any semblance of equal treatment."

"Islam's democratic challenge," to quote another writer of repute, "has perhaps never been equaled by any other religious or social system. Its advent on the Indian scene was marked by a profound stirring of consciousness. It modified the basis of Hindu social structure throughout northern India."

Rights of Women and Other Social Reforms

Then there was the recognition of the dignity of women and of their rights as respectable members of the family and life-partners of men. The significance of the rights bestowed by Islam on the softer sex in a country where widows of noble families used to immolate themselves on the funeral pyres of their husbands since in the eyes of society, as well as in their own eyes, they forfeited the right to live with the death of their husbands, does not stand in need of an elaboration. We may, however, reproduce the under-mentioned lines

from Burnier's travel accounts to show what infinite pains did the Muslims take, for instance, for the suppression of the custom of Suti from the earliest days of their rule.

"..... the number of victims is less now than formerly; the Mahometans, by whom the country is governed, doing all in their power to suppress the barbarous custom. They do not, indeed, forbid it by a positive law, because it is a part of their policy to leave the idolatrous population which is so much more numerous than their own in the free exercise of its religion; but the practice is checked by indirect means. No woman can sacrifice herself without permission from the governor of the province in which she resides, and the never grants it until he shall have ascertained that she is not to be turned aside from her purpose; to accomplish this desirable end the governor reasons with the widow and makes her enticing promises; after which, if these methods fail, he sometimes sends her among his women, that the effect of their remonstrances may be tried. Notwithstanding these obstacles, the number of self-immolations is still very considerable, particularly in the territories of the Rajas, where no Mahmetan governors are appointed."

Writing of History

The Muslims also introduced several branches of learning, a most important of which was history. Till then the writing of history was almost an unknown art in India, there being

hardly anything to speak of in the line save religious treatises and a few epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharata. The Muslims produced a whole library of historical works that could compare favourably in authenticity and comprehensiveness with the endeavours made in this branch in any other country. A glance through Maulana Syed Abdul Hai's monumental book in Arabic, Es-Saqafat-ul-Islamia-Fil-Hind (Islamic Culture in India), will indicate what tremendous efforts were made by Muslims for the compilation of the history of India. To quote Dr. Gustave le Bon:

"There does not exist a history of ancient India. Their books contain no historical data whatever, except for a few religious books in which historical information is buried under a heap of parables and folk-lore, and their buildings and other monuments also do nothing to fill the void for the oldest among them do not go beyond the third century B.C. To discover facts about India of the ancient times is as difficult a task as the discovery of the island of Atlantis, which, according to Plato, was destroyed due to the changes of the earth."

The writer, after admitting that the epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata, do shed some light on the conditions obtaining during those days, goes on to add that "the historical phase of India began with the Muslim invasion. Muslims were India's first historians."

New Techniques

Liberality of the mind, originality of thought and new techniques of poetry and literature were taught to the Indians by Muslims. A new angle of vision and a new horizon of thought could not be possible without intellectual literary integration. To the credit of Muslims also goes the birth of a most beautiful living, growing and expanding language which became the medium of intercourse among people of the various parts of the country and an excellent vehicle of literary expression. By it, we mean Urdu whose richness and elegance beg no description.

Cultural Revolution

The impress of Muslims is most prominent in the sphere of culture, social manners and general mode of living. The Muslims revolutionized the pattern of life in the country and gave it a new form which was entirely different from what was known here formerly, just as the design of life in modern Europe is totally dissimilar to what prevailed there in the Middle Ages.

Babar's Account

In order to appreciate adequately the extent and value of Muslim influence on the Indian culture it is necessary to obtain some idea of the picture India presented before the arrival of Islam and the Muslims. Babar, fortunately, has left behind a vivid description of cultural decadence that was evident on all sides and this makes the task of judging the worth and merit of Muslim contribution easy. It may, however, be borne in mind that

Muslims had begun their development activities in India quite a long time before the coming of the Mughals. Writes Babar in his memoirs, Tuzuk-i-Babari:

"There are neither good horses in India, nor good flesh, nor grapes, nor melons, nor ice, nor cold water, nor baths, nor candle, nor candlestick, nor torch. In the place of the candle, they use the divat. It rests on three legs: a small iron piece resembling the snout of a lamp is fixed to the top end of one leg and weak wick to that of another; the hollowed rind of a gourd is held in the right hand from which a thin stream of oil is poured through a narrow hole. Even in case of Rajas and Maharajas, the attendants stand holding the clumsy divat in their hands when they are in need of a light in the night.

"There is no arrangement for running water in gardens and buildings. The buildings lack beauty, symmetry, ventilation and neatness. Commonly, the people walk barefooted with a narrow slip tied round the loins. Women wear a dress consisting of one piece of cloth, half of which is wrapped round the legs while the other half is thrown over the head."

Commenting on Babar's observations on the cultural insolvency and backwardness of India, Jawaharlal Nehru has said:

"..... his account tells us of the cultural poverty that had descended on North India. Partly this was due to Timur's destruction, partly due to the exodus of many learned men and

artists and noted craftsmen to the South. But this was due also to the drying up of the creative genius of the Indian people. Babar says that there was no lack of skilled workers and artisans, but there was no ingenuity or skill in mechanical invention."

Development of Fruit

In spite of the fertility of its soil, few fruits were found in India and those too were of a poor quality. Most of them were grown wild. People did not take enough interest in the development of horticulture. The Mughals, on the other hand, were possessed of a refined taste and there was a great abundance of fruit in their native land. Fruit-cultivation, accordingly, made rapid progress in India with their coming. Details of it can be found in the famous memories of Emperors Babar and Jahangir-Tuzui-i-Babari and Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri respectively. The Mughals developed several new and grafting. The mango is a well-known Indian fruit but, before the arrival of the Mughals, only one variety of it, the seed-variety (Tukhmi) was in existence. It was the Mughals who developed the beautiful, luscious grafted mangoes. This step, in course of time, led to the introduction of numerous varieties of the fruit.

Agriculture, Trade and Industry

The same was the case with textile. Dresses in India were generally made from rough, coarse, cloth. A number of textile factories were set up in Gujarat by Sultan Mahmud Shah, better known as Mahmud Baigrah (d. 1511), where

cloth weaving, dyeing, printing and design-laying were undertaken. He also established industrial centres for stone and ivory carving and paper-making. Gifted as he was with an advanced, constructive mind, the Sultan had succeeded in arousing a rare enthusiasm for progress in trade, industry and agriculture among his subjects. Maulana Syed Abdul Hai says:

"Among the outstanding works of the Sultan for the development of the country were included the construction of mosques and schools and the planting of fruit-bearing trees and orchards. He aroused the people magnificently for these tasks. He also built wells and canals for irrigation. Skilled artisans and craftsmen came to him from Iran and Turkestan and set up their crafts and industries in his kingdom. As a result, Gujarat had become a rich, fertile stretch of greenery with flourishing gardens, dense groves and delicious fruit as well as an important trading centre which exported cloth to foreign lands. This was due entirely to the ceaseless efforts of Sultan Mahmud and the keen interest he took in the welfare of his people."

Reforms of Akbar and Sher Shah

Cloth-weaving factories were, also, established during the reign of Akbar. That great Mughal emperor, further, introduced many valuable agrarian reforms appertaining to the measurement of land, and the assessment and collection of land revenue. The improvements made by

Sher Shah and Akbar in the field of finance, especially in coinage and currency, had not been heard of in India before. Sher Shah had a unique gift for legislation and administrative organization. In fact, it was his example which Akbar followed later.

Public Utility Works

Muslim rulers, also, achieved great success in the training of animals and the improvement of livestock. We can obtain an elaborate idea of the good done by them in these directions from historical records like Tuzuk-i-Jehangiri and Ain-i-Akbari. They built numerous hospitals, poor-houses, public parks, and gardens, ranks and canals. Maulana Syed Abdul Hai has furnished, in his unique work, Jannat-ul-Mashriq, a long list of hospitals and other benevolent and public welfare institutions set up and development projects undertaken in India during the so-called Muslim Period.

All the huge highways that connect the western parts of the sub-continent with its eastern parts were given to it by Muslim kings and emperors. The most important of them is the one built by Sher Shah. It is 3,000 miles (or 4,832 kilometers) long, and runs from Nilab in Sind to Sonargaon in what is now Bangla Desh. At every second mile of the road there was a caravanserai with separate charitable grub houses for Hindu and Muslim travelers and a mosque. The Muezzin, Imam and Hafiz for the mosque were appointed by the State. A pair of speedy horses were stationed at each caravanserai

to carry the mail so that letters and message could be sent regularly from Nilab to the distant borders of Bengal. Fruit-bearing trees were planted on either side of the road whose fruit and shade were a great boon to the travelers.

Cleaner and Better Mode of Living

Over and above all this, the Muslims acquainted the original inhabitants of India with a cleaner and better of living. They taught them the refinements and luxuries of taste and of food and drink. They taught them the principles of hygiene and sanitation, the advantage of building airy houses and the use of cups and other of food. Till then the Indians used to take their meals, even at large feasts, from leaves of trees, a custom which is still prevalent at some places. The Muslims, in brief, brought about a big change in Indian social customs, living habits domestic comforts and home decoration, They ushered in a new style in architecture which, in the delicacy of its design, grace, symmetry and dignity, was distinguished from what traditionally obtained here. The Taj offers a classical instance of the new Mohammaden architecture. In the words of Pandit Nehru:

"The coming of Islam and of a considerable number of people from outside with different ways of living foreign conquest, with all its evils, has one advantage: it widens the mental horizon of the people and compels them to look out of their shells. They realize that the world is a much bigger

and a more variegated place than they had imagined. So the Afghan conquest had affected India and many changes had taken place, Even more so the Moghals, who were far more cultured and advanced in the ways of living than the Afghans, brought changes to India. In particular, they introduced the refinements for which Iran was famous.. "The same view was expressed by Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya in his presidential Address to the fifty Session of the Congress held at Jaipur in 1948. He said that the Muslims had "enriched our culture, strengthened our administration, and brought near distant parts of the country it (the Muslim period) touched deeply the social life and the literature of the land."

Medicine

The Muslims, moreover, brought to India a new system of medicine-the Unani system-which, before the dawn of modern medicine, was universally recognized as the most advanced and scientific system for the treatment of diseases. At their hey-day the countries of Iraq, Iran and Turkestan were the most important centres of the Unani system of medicine in the world, and it was there that its greatest exponents and practitioners were born during the medieval age. After the establishment of Muslim power in India, and encouraged by the generous patronage the Muslim rulers extended to men of learning and ability, a steady stream of outstanding to men of learning and ability, a steady stream of

outstanding masters of the system poured into the country for a period stretching over five hundred years. Due to the priceless services rendered by these worthy men and their pupils-their spirit of dedication and high proficiency-the Unani system touched its peak in India. The indigenous system faded into insignificance before the progress it made. No city or town was left without a practitioner of the Unani school. This system was cheap, simple, and in harmony with the Indian climatic and temperamental conditions. So it spread in India climatic very quickly and did a wonderful service to the people, composed as they were mainly of the poorer classes. The Indian physicians, by their contribution, lent further glory to it. During the declining phase of Muslim rule, Delhi and Lucknow were its two major strongholds and now India remains the only country where this system is still in vogue.

Ten Gifts of Muslims

The noted historian, Sir Jadunath Sircar, has, in a paper entitled 'Islam in India', enumerated ten gifts, which, according to him, the Muslims conferred on India. Some of these we have already discussed in this chapter; the rest are as follows: (i) the establishment of contact with the outside world; (ii) political unity and uniformity of culture and dress specially in the upper classes; (iii) a common official language and an easy, simple style of prose in the evolution of which both the Hindus and Muslims have taken part; (iv) the

promotion of regional languages under the aegis of the Central Government so that there may ensue general peace and contentment and equal opportunities for literary and cultural advancement may be made available to all; (v) the revival of maritime trade which was originally in the hands of the people of South but had been lying suspended for a long time; and (vi) the formation of the Indian navy.

Material and Spiritual Achievements

Speaking of the material and spiritual achievements of Muslims in India, W. W. Hunter, a noted anti-Muslim writer, has observed that "the Musalmans led several of these great land reclamation colonies to the southward, and have left their names in the Eastern Bengal as the first dividers of the water from the land. The sportsman comes across their dykes, and metaled roads, and mosques, and tanks, and tombs in the liness recesses of the jungle; and wherever they went, they spread their faith, partly by the sword, but chiefly by a bold appeal to the two great instincts of the popular heart. The Hindus had never admitted the amphibious population of the Delta within the pale of their community. The Muhammadens offered the plenary privileges of Islam to Brahman and outcaste alike. 'Down on your knees, every one of you,' preached these fierce missionaries, 'before the Almighty in whose eyes all men are equal, all created beings as the dust of earth. There is no god but the one

God, and His Messenger is Muhammad.' The battle cry of the warrior became, as soon as the conquest was over, the text of the Divine."

Luminous Torch

And so does N.S. Mehta, a gifted Indian civil servant, say in course of an article entitled, 'Islam and the Indian Civilization':

"Islam had brought to India a luminous torch which rescued humanity from darkness at a time when old civilization were on the decline and lofty moral ideals had got reduced to empty intellectual concepts. As in other lands, so in India, too, the conquests of Islam were more widespread in the world of thought than in the world of politics. Today, also, the Islamic World is a spiritual brotherhood which is held together by community of faith in the Oneness of God and human equality. Unfortunately, the history of Islam in this country remained tied up for centuries with that of government with the result that a veil was cast over its true spirit, and its fruits and blessings were hidden from the popular eye."

In sum, as it would be evident from the facts we have stated in the foregoing pages, and the opinions we have examined, that the Muslims gave to India was much greater and far more lasting and valuable than what they took from it. The coming of Islam and Muslims marked the beginning of a new era in its history—an era of enlightenment, progress and prosperity—which it can never possibly forget. ●

The Seven Biggest Economic Lies

Robert Reich

The president's jobs bill doesn't have a chance in Congress and the occupiers on Wall Street and elsewhere can't become a national movement for a more equitable society - unless more Americans know the truth about the economy.

Here's a short (2 minute 30 second) effort to rebut the seven biggest whoppers now being told by those who want take America backwards. The major points:

- Tax cuts for the rich trickle down to everyone else. Baloney. Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush both sliced taxes on the rich and what happened? Most Americans' wages (measured by the real median wage) began flattening under Reagan and has dropped since George W. Bush. Trickle-down economics is a cruel joke.

- Higher taxes on the rich would hurt the economy and slow job growth. False. From the end of World War II until 1981, the richest Americans faced a top marginal tax rate of 70 percent or above. Under Dwight Eisenhower it was 91 percent. Even after all deductions and credits, the top taxes on the very rich were far higher than they've been since. Yet the economy grew faster during those years than it has since. (Don't believe small businesses would be hurt by a higher marginal tax; fewer than 2 percent of small business owners are in the highest tax bracket.)

- Shrinking government generates more jobs. Wrong again. It means fewer government workers - everyone from teachers, fire fighters, police officers, and social workers at the state and local levels to safety inspectors and military personnel at the federal. And fewer government contractors, who would employ fewer private-sector workers. According to Moody's economist Mark Zandi (a campaign advisor to John McCain), the \$61 billion in spending cuts proposed by the House GOP will cost the economy 700,000 jobs this year and next.

- Cutting the budget deficit now is more important than boosting the economy. Untrue. With so many Americans out of work, budget cuts now will shrink the economy. They'll increase unemployment and reduce tax revenues. That will worsen the ratio of the debt to the total economy. The first priority must be getting jobs and growth back by boosting the economy. Only then, when jobs and growth are returning vigorously, should we turn to cutting the deficit.

- Medicare and Medicaid are the major drivers of budget deficits. Wrong. Medicare and Medicaid spending is rising quickly, to be sure. But that's because the nation's health-care costs are rising so fast. One of the best ways of slowing these costs is to use Medicare and Medicaid's bargaining power over drug companies and hospitals to reduce costs, and to move from a fee-for-service system to a fee-for-healthy outcomes system. And since Medicare has far lower administrative costs than private health insurers, we should make Medicare available to everyone.

- Social Security is a Ponzi scheme. Don't believe it. Social Security is solvent for the next 26 years. It could be solvent for the next century if we raised the ceiling on income subjects to the Social Security payroll tax. That ceiling is now \$106,800.

- It's unfair that lower-income Americans don't pay income tax. Wrong. There's nothing unfair about it. Lower-income Americans pay out a larger share of their paychecks in payroll taxes, sales taxes, user fees, and tolls than everyone else.

Demagogues through history have known that big lies, repeated often enough, start being believed - unless they're rebutted. These seven economic whoppers are just plain wrong. Make sure you know the truth - and spread it on. (M.G.)

Faith And Practice

The original message of all the older religions was over lordship of the One and only God, but the subsequent generations went astray from the right path owing, chiefly, to three causes. The first of these was personification and portrayal of God; the second, deification of divine attributes into separate deities; and the third, the failure of man, so often, to comprehend the multiformity of divine acts and manifestations. Muhammad (SAW) unraveled all these mysteries and expounded the doctrine of the Unity of God so forcefully that man would never commit these errors again. Let us first take the personification of God and His attributes.

God and His attributes as well as the bond of love between Him and His creatures were delineated by earlier religions through imagery and exemplification. These always led to the personification of the Deity in images and figures. The similitudes employed to depict God invariably took the shape of concrete representations in images and idols. The mercy and love of God for His bondmen, at first illustrated through similitudes and symbols, were impersonated in the end. The Aryans regarded women as an emblem of the most tender feelings of affection and this led to the relationship between God and man to be expressed in terms of kinship

S. Sulaiman Nadwi
between a mother and her child. God was conceived by them as a loving mother of the human beings. To certain other people in the ancient India, the affectionate love of mother for her child was not sufficiently expressive of the stronger of love felt by them for God, and thus their concept of relationship between God and human beings took the shape of husband and wife. Even today one can find friars dressed in women's attires as a mark of their devotion to God. The Romans as well as the Greeks conceived the Supreme Deity in the shape of a female. The Semites, who considered it indecent to talk openly about their womenfolk, visualized God as a father. Archaeological remains unearthed from the ruins of the ancient cities of Babylon, Assyria and Syria show that these peoples had personified God as a man. Similarly, the ancient Hebrews had formed the mental picture of God as the father of human beings and angels. The Scriptures of the Jews even contemplate the relationship between God and Bani Israel as analogous to a husband and his wife. Accordingly, we find Jewish sacred writings describing Bani Israel and Jerusalem as the wives of God. Christians gave a literal interpretation to the description of God as a father. The Arabs also had, before the advent of Islam, concepts of a similar nature.

They imagined God as the father of angels who were supposed to be females. Islam, however, discarded all these similitudes and resemblances and forbade God. For the similitudes invariably tended to the anthropomorphisation of pronounced its judgement: "Naught is as His likeness." This shock has cleared all the misconceptions about the Supreme Being.

"Say, He is Allah, the One!

Allah, the eternally Besought of all!

He begotteth not nor was begotten.

And there is none comparable unto Him."

In this small but pithy chapter of the Qur'an, called "The Unity", the very essence of the Oneness of God has been enunciated in the clearest terms possible. It is like a beacon light pointing out the mistake of polytheistic concepts of God.

The message brought by Muhammad (SAW) did not rend asunder the bond of love between man and his Master. It strengthened the feeling of attachment of God but, at the same time, tried to cast off all anthropomorphic representations picked up due to fervour of love to God with which man has ever been smitten. Islam regards the human passions of heart as passing affections. The love between wife and husband or father and son is, after all, transitory and thus ill-suited to express the sublime and ever-abiding adoration of God by his devoted bondman. Another reason for discarding similitudes is that they very

often lead to paganish patterns of thought. Islam, therefore, strictly avoids parallelization as, for example, while commending recollection of God, the Qur'an says, "Remember Allah as ye remember your fathers or with a more lively remembrance." This verse, it would be seen, does not compare god to one's father, but approximates the love for one's father to that for God. Thus, the Qur'an avoids the human aspect of relationship between the father and the son but retains the emotion of attachment between the two. It goes on further to add "or with a more lively remembrance" in order to emphasise that even the love for one's comparison to the sublimated ardour for propinquity to God. Take another example. Asking the believers to evolve themselves spiritually, the Qur'an says, "Those who believe are stauncher in their love for Allah. It never employs the analogy of father and son by calling God the 'Father of the worlds'; on the contrary, it identifies Him as the 'Lord' or 'Sustainer of the worlds. It views God as a Being higher and more sublime than what can be expressed by the ephemeral relationship of the father and the son. The excellent names of God are many including Ar-Rabb, the Sustainer, who nourished everything from its cradle to grave; Al-wadud, The Loving; Ar- Rau'f, the Kind; Al-Hannan, the Affectionate; yet He is neither father nor mother nor bears any resemblance to the created beings.

The second major cause of

misunderstanding in regard to God has been the mistake so often committed by the earlier religions in comprehending the divine attributes. People have made a god of every divine attribute in the past. Hinduism impersonated every divine attribute and its conceivable similitude until the immense crowd of its deities reached the figure of three hundred and thirty millions. Even a cursory glance at this pantheon will be enough to convince anybody that the several hands of a god signify his great power while the multiplicity of heads expresses his super-human wisdom.

If one were to reflect over the different sects of the Hindus, one would find that personification of the different attributes of God has been the chief cause of differences between them. The three great qualities of God viz., creativeness, sustentation and destruction were portrayed as separate deities in the form of Brahma, the Creator, Vishnu, the Sustainer and Shiva, the Destroyer, but gradually the worshippers joined their faith exclusively to one of them. Similarly the Lingayats took to the phallic emblem as a token of the creativeness of the Supreme Deity.

The Christians, too, have made three out of One God by accepting the three attributes of God, viz., Life, Knowledge and Will as separate entities. Life was recognized as the Father, Knowledge as the Holy Ghost and Will as the only begotten Son of the Father. We find similar concepts of Trinity prevalent among the Roman and Greek philosophers and the

Egyptian neo-Platonists. The Prophet Muhammad (SWA), however, pricked the bubble of these false beliefs for he showed that only the stupid and ignorant are deceived by the multiformity of divine attributes. The Qur'an says: "Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds; to Him belongeth every quality, and Allah is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth." The Christians of Arabia emphasized only the compassion of God by calling Him Rahman or the Most Compassionate while the pagans knew Him by the name of Allah. The Qur'an corrected both when it said: "Say: Cry unto Allah, or cry unto the Rahman, unto whichever ye cry (it is the same). His are the most beautiful names." It told them further:

"But, Allah, He (alone) is the Protecting Friend. He quickeneth the dead, and He is Able to do all things.

"Lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

"And He is who in the heaven is God, and in the earth God. He is the Wise, the Knower."

Whether one believes it or not, there is no God save Him. He gives life and takes it away, He is the Lord of all those who are alive as also of their forefathers: he is the Brahma, the Shiva and the Vishnu, all in One, whose attributes are countless.

"Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Heavens, Lord of the earth, the Lord of the Worlds.

"And unto Him (alone) belongeth majesty in the heavens and the earth, and He is the Mighty, the Wise"

"He is Allah, than whom there is no other God, the invisible and the visible. He is beneficent, the Merciful.

"He is Allah, than whom there is no other, Sovereign Lord, the Holy One, peace, the Keeper of faith, the Guardian, the Majestic, the compeller, the Superb. Glorified be Allah from all that they ascribe as partner (unto Him).

"He is Allah, Creator, the Shaper out of naught, the Fashioner. His are the most beautiful names. All that is in the heavens and the earth glorifieth Him, and He is the Mighty, the Wise."

Such is the Islamic concept of the Oneness or, rather uniqueness of God: He is essentially a Unitary Being, indivisible and inseparable from His attributes. The religions of old had separated the attributes from the Divine Being, and, in doing so, they had created numerous gods. The Qur'anic verse, "Glorified be Allah from all that they ascribe as partners unto Him," refers to this very mistake inherent in the polytheistic concept of God. Thus the last message of All-Merciful God brought forth by Muhammad (SWA) told the wayward humanity that the Supreme Being is Allah, who alone is the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner, the King, the Holy, the Faithful, the Mighty the Repairer, the Merciful and the Compassionate. He is One, His attributes are countless.

Multifariousness of divine functions is yet another cause of polytheism. The primitive mind believed that are different celestial forces operating simultaneously—one kills, the

other gives life, the third sows the seeds of discord and yet another patches up the differences. They thought that the god of love was different from the god of enmity; if one gave knowledge, the other bestowed riches. The minds untrained in analytical thinking imagined of a thousand deities performing the tasks assigned to them but Islam told them that God is the author of whatsoever happens in the universe.

The interpretation of diverse and dissimilar acts of God into two broad categories of good and bad presented another difficulty to the ancients; they believed that both could not emanate from the same source. Zoroaster offered a solution by developing the principle of dualism. He made one god for everything good and righteous and another one for the bad and the evil. To these twin spirits, he gave the names of Ahura Mazda or Ormuzd and Angra Mainyu or Ahriman, whose age-long struggle went on perpetually in the world. Zoroaster was misled because he failed to understand the true nature of the good and the evil. The fact is that there is nothing good or bad by itself, nor is there any virtue or evil in anything: every act assumes the colour of goodness or wickedness by the intention or purpose behind it. Take fire, for instance. If you cook your food, or heat an engine, or allow the poor to get warmth from it, then it would be good and virtuous, but it would be vicious if you burn the hut of a destitute. Fire is thus neither good nor bad, but the use to which we put it

makes it virtuous or unvirtuous. The sword is, likewise, neither good nor bad by itself. So is darkness, for it will be iniquitous to steal by taking advantage of the night, but it would be a means to attaining saintliness if you worship the Lord and do good to the poor in the darkness of night away from the sight of others.

God has created this universe, the heavens and the earth and the matter and the properties embedded in different substance. He created man and also gave him head and heart, intellect and wisdom. Every man can see order and symmetry in the universe and its superb creation and working as well as in different substances and their qualities. All this is enough to take one's breath away who cries out in amazement "Glory be to Allah, the best of Creators." He bows his head in reverence like Abraham who had paid homage to God with the words, 'Lo! I have turned my face toward Him who created the heavens and the earth, as one by nature upright, and I am not of the idolaters.' But, there is another man who takes matter to be self-existent and essence of every creation, the cause of all cause, and does not hesitate in speaking out: "There is naught but our life of the world; we die and we live, and naught destroys us save time." The cosmic order is the same, as are its marvels and the working, but it leads one to acknowledge the Supreme Creator while the other is misled by it to deny God altogether. The manifestation of Nature is one and the same for both,

but in one case it shows the path of guidance; in the case of other it leaves him in sullen darkness. The truth is that the universe neither offers guidance nor it misleads anybody, for, it is the light of one's own intellect which edifies or misguides him. Conversely speaking, one can claim that the universe is both a guide and a deceiver. Same is the case with the scriptures brought by the prophets of God. We see some receiving guidance and light, consolation and faith by reading the Qur'an or the Gospels, while others begin to entertain doubts and end up as disbelievers. Verily, the message is one, but the hears are two. Both these hearts have been created by the One and the same God, not two, although the result is quite dissimilar. This goes to show that the duality of consequences or actions does not necessarily mean that the mover should also be more than one. All the multifariousness of natural phenomena, thus, emanates from the same source; good and evil are bound by the same law, and the master of everything is but one Lord, God of the whole universe.

"He misleadeth many thereby, and He guideth many thereby, and He misleadeth thereby only miscreants;

"Those who break the covenant of Allah after ratifying it, and sever that which Allah ordered to be joined, and (who) make mischief in the earth: Those are they who are the losers."

These verses of the Qur'an explicitly state that the prime mover of

everything, good and evil, is the ultimate Being, but in each case it is the upshot of one's own goodness or wickedness. Man disbelieves first, becomes perverted and wicked hereafter, and then goes astray. He never deviates from the right path unless he becomes depraved and corrupt.

God created man and showed him the right path as well as the ways which lead to viciousness and destruction. Says God in the Qur'an.

"Lo! We have shown him the way, whether he be grateful or unbelieving."

God is, beyond doubt, the creator of all that is nice and good as well as that which is evil and bad, for He Himself says:

"Such is Allah, your Lord, the creator of all things. There is no God save Him."

"Allah hath created you and what ye make."

But, let it also be remembered that-

"Our Lord is He who unto everything its nature, then guided it right."

It is thus man who chooses the path of virtue or wickedness of this world on free will: he causes himself to be misled or guided aright of his own accord. If he takes to the wrong path, he would obviously become depraved but if he selects the right one, he would surely be guided on the path of virtue. There is, thus, no vice or virtue except the consequences of one's own free will. It follows, therefore, that the good and the evil are not independent

forces which need be deified or should require separate deities. God is one and He is author of both.

"Is there any creator other than Allah who provideth for you from the sky and the earth? There is no God save Him! Whither then are ye turned?"

God has sent the guidance through his prophets. Man is at liberty to accept or reject it.

"Then We gave the Scripture as inheritance those whom We elected of Our bondmen. But of them are some who wrong themselves and of them are some who are lukewarm, and of them are some who outstrip (others) through good deeds, by Allah's leave."

"Whatever of misfortune striketh you, it is what your right hands have earned. And He forgiveth much."

"And (He) inspired it (with conscience of) what is wrong for it and (what is) right for it. He is indeed successful who causeth it to grow, and he is indeed a failure who stunteth it."

Worship was, and still is, a fundamental discipline of every religion. The older religions had, however, mistaken self-torture for veneration of God. They had somehow convinced themselves that the more one suffers agony and subjects one's body to suffering and pain, the more advanced spiritually towards piety and purity of soul. Yoga and monasticism of the ancient India were the results of these misconceived notions, for it was then

thought that self-mortification opened the doors to spiritual elevation. Among the Christians, too, atrocious and sordid routines of self-torture had spread in the medieval Europe in the wake of monastic movement. The anchorites of medieval Europe had taken to strange practices; some of them refrained from taking baths throughout their lives, some clad themselves in tatters or tunics made of coarse flax of hemp, some remained unclad even during freezing cold season, some had taken a vow to remain standing for the rest of their lives, some lived in the deserted dens of wild beasts, some always remained in the sun, some dwelt on bare rocks, some ate only leaves of the trees, some scrupulously avoided contact with women and some even hanged themselves upside down from the trees. These ways of worshipping God were deemed highly meritorious all over the West during the dark ages. Other countries or the world were no better, either. It was in this atmosphere, prevailing throughout the world, that Islam came to set right these strange concepts in regard to payment of homage to God. It delivered humanity from these fiendish practices by telling it that self-torture and bodily exertions were neither demanded by God nor they led to the union of the devotee's spirit with the Supreme Being. God appreciates, man was told by Islam, not physical exercised but the purity of heart and intentions. In fact, God never wants man to bear unnecessary hardships. The writ of the Lord is clear enough.

"Allah tasketh not a soul beyond its scope."

The discipline of religious devotion taught by Muhammad (SAW) discarded monasticism.

"But monasticism they invented- We ordained it not for them."

To those who take a vow to refrain from anything made permissible by God, the Qur'an puts the question:

"Say: Who hath forbidden the adornment that Allah hath produced for his bondmen."

Nobody, not even a pious man is allowed to forsake the world. Once, when the Prophet of Islam had decided not to take honey any more, he was warned by God.

"O Prophet! Why bannest thou that which Allah hath made lawful for thee?"

Islam told the world that worship essentially consisted of the acknowledgement of complete and unquestioned loyalty to the Lord and Master of the world and was a means to strengthen that bond.

"O mankind! Worship your Lord, Who hath created you and those before you, so that ye may ward off (evil)."

The message of Muhammad (SAW) was thus the first direction reaching humanity about the true nature and purpose of worship that man needed to offer up to God. He told the world that lifting up of one's heart to God in complete surrender to Him was all that God demanded of men.

"Lo! those who scorn My service, they will enter hell, disgraced."

The purpose of worship was thus explained by the Prophet.

"Fasting is prescribed for you, even as it was prescribed for those before you, that ye may ward off (evil).

The pilgrimage prescribed by Islam is also intended to promote remembrance of God.

"That they may witness things that are of benefit to them, and mention the name of Allah on appointed days over the beast of cattle that He hath bestowed upon them."

Payment of poor-due is another form of divine service enjoined by Islam. It is meant to cleanse the heart of the believers besides affording assistance to the weaker sections among them.

"Who giveth his wealth that he may grow (in goodness),

And none hath with him any avour for reward,

Except as seeking (to fulfil) the purpose of his Lord most High"

The Prophet of Islam expressly forbade celibacy and commanded his followers to enter into wedlock.

"Matrimony is my practice. Whoever abandons my custom does not belong to me."

Likewise, the Qur'an describes marriage and progeny as "comforts" to be longed for by man.

"And who say: Our Lord! Touchsafe us comfort of our wives and of our offspring."

Oblation is another form of worship recognized by almost every

religion. In the bygone ages people sometimes sacrificed themselves or immolated their children to propitiate their deities. The blood of the sacrificed man or his heart was sprinkled over the idols or was burnt before them. The Prophet of Islam was again the first founder of religion who explained the real purpose of offering sacrifices and forbade the killing of human beings as well as burnt offerings by way of oblation. The message brought by him opened the eyes of man to the underlying purpose of sacrifice. It declared:

"And the camels! We have appointed them among the ceremonies of Allah. Therein ye have much good. So mention the name of Allah over them when are drawn up in lines. Then when their flanks fall (dead), eat there of and feed the beggar and the suppliant. Thus have We made them subject unto you, that haply ye may give thanks.

"Their flesh and their blood reach not Allah, but the devotion from you reacheth Him. Thus have We made them subject unto you that ye may magnify Allah that He hath guided you. And give good tidings (O Muhammad) (SAW) to the good."

The perverted beliefs in regard to sacrifice entertained by the people, in the pre-Islamic era, had given rise to many more evils. Man considered himself master of his own life and the lives of his wife and children. Now, the sacrifices of human life being already considered meritorious, suicide, infanticide and sati or immolation of widows in the funereal pyre of

deceased husband had come into vogue all over the world. A number of these customs enjoyed even the sanction of different religions. Islam put an end to these malpractices by enunciating the principle that the life of man belonged to God who permitted it to be taken only lawfully. Islam allowed sacrifice of animals only; no man in any circumstances was permitted to offer his own or another man's life to propitiate God. It debarred the people committing suicide from entering the heaven for ever with the result that the incidence of suicide among the Muslims is to this day, much lower than that in the civilized nations of Europe and America. The laws enacted by the Western nations to check suicide have, in fact, proved ineffective since people still consider it to be the easiest method of getting rid of their worries and miseries. The people committing suicide either lack faith in God or consider that God would not question them why they had put an end to their lives. Islam, on the other hand, has been far more effective in checking suicides because it makes human life a divine trust. It tells the people that by taking their lives away they would only be exposing themselves to a heavier penalty in the hereafter of ending their worldly worries. Says the Qur'an:

"And that ye slay not the life which Allah hath made sacred, save in the courses of justice. This He hath commanded you in order that ye may discern."

"Lo! Those who disbelieve Our revelations, We shall expose them to

Fire."

Infanticide, particularly that of daughters, was prevalent among the Arabs, the Rajputs of India and several other peoples. Being more hardhearted than others, the Arabs even buried their daughters alive. The Qur'an threatened these people with dire punishment.

"And when the girl-child that was buried alive is asked: For what sin was she slain?"

Infanticide has, by no means, been a social evil limited only to the past. There may still be persons who would not like to have any children at all for fear of losing their prosperity. So was the case with the Arabs of the pagan past who approved of slaying the unwanted babies. The Greeks also did not lag behind others as they had devised the system of examining every new-born baby with a view to destroying the weaker ones by throwing them away from the hill-tops.

Islam disapproved all these practices, since, its view, nobody except God provided the means of sustenance. It proclaimed:

"And there is not a beast in the earth but the sustenance thereof dependeth on Allah."

"Slay not your children, fearing a fall to poverty. We shall provide for them and for you. Lo! the slaying of them is great sin."

Mankind was divided everywhere on the basis of colour and creed, caste and race. Ancient India regarded all other races and nations as unclean; it has even divided its own people into four classes, allowed all

the rights and privileges to the first three and condemned the fourth to the level of a sub-human species. Sudraas, as this fourth and the lowest class was known, were denied even the right to worship God like others. The Parthians, too, had effected a fourfold division of the society depending on vocations of the people. The Romans arrogated themselves as the masters of all other nations while the Jews assuming themselves to be "the children of God" looked down upon others as goyim or gentiles. But, even this chosen race of God was not free from internal social prejudices. The Europe of today still considers the white races as superior to the coloured ones. There are still countries where blacks cannot claim equality with the whites, nor can they even travel in the same coach or have their houses in the districts reserved for the whites. Many Americans would still not give negroes the right to live as free citizens in their country while South Africa denies, even now, equality to all the coloured races whether they be Africans, Indians or Asiatics. These distinctions are not confine to social or economic spheres alone, they extend even to the temples of God- Yet, the message brought by Muhammad (SAW) abolished every distinction and prejudice of colour and race fourteen hundred years ago. On the very day Mecca was conquered the Quarish, who exulted in their blue blood, were told by the Prophet in the House considered Holy of Holies by them:

"O Quraish, God has taken from you the haughtiness of paganism and

its veneration of ancestors. Man springs from Adam, and Adam sprang from dust."

Then, on the occasion of the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Prophet again taught the lesson of human equality and brotherhood to a hundred thousand persons assembled round him:

"The Arabs have no preference over the non-Arabs, nor have the non-Arabs over the Arabs; all of you are sons of Adam, and Adam was created of clay."

The Prophet also explained the reason for denouncing racial prejudices.

"Allah has abolished the pride and haughtiness of paganism. Man is either pious or a sinner. All men sprang from Adam and Adam sprang from clay."

The Qur'an also repeats the same message:

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

"And it is not your wealth nor your children that will bring you near unto Us, but he who believeth and doeth good (he draweth near). As for such, theirs will be twofold reward for what they did, and they will dwell secure in lofty halls."

The Prophet had bidden his followers, on the day of the Farewell Pilgrimage: "Know that every Muslim is a brother unto another Muslim, and that all the Muslims are brethren unto

one another." This brotherhood still transcend all the man-made barriers of countries and nations. The blacks and the whites, the Iranians and the Arabs, the Turks and the Mongols, the Nēgriods and the Europeans submerge their differences in the brotherhood of faith. This is a great blessing from the Lord Most High. All become equals in the kingdom of God; none is an untouchable or a noble; there are no sudras, no Brahmins; the distinctions of wealth and vocations fall down to the ground. All can read the Qur'an, anybody can lead the prayers; all are equals in the matter of acquiring and diffusing knowledge. All are equals in the eyes of the Law also- a life for life- becomes the governing principle whether one be a sovereign or serf.

There are many more aspects of Islamic canons of equity and equality; the rights it has conferred on women and slaves, to name only two, can convince any fair-minded person that the present-day Europe with all its claims to light and learning and liberalism, still lags behind Islam. The world can still learn a lot from Islam but the limited time at my disposal would not permit me to shed further light on this question.

The dichotomy of human affairs into spiritual and temporal has been the greatest mischief played with the world by what we know as modernism. This is the division fostered allegedly by a saying attributed to Jesus Christ render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. This has been the

greatest trap into which the world has been drawn in but Islam smashes this snare. It tells the world that every worldly affair undertaken with sincerity and in accordance with the code of morals is meritorious in the sight of God. Everything temporal is, to put it the other way, virtuous if it is backed by morality and faith. It is wrong to think that religion demands withdrawal from the world for remembrance of God or that the earning of one's livelihood, or looking after one's children, relations or countrymen falls in the sphere of mundane affairs. Islam does not accept this view of life; it tells that performance of one's duty with sincerity and fear of God is the highest religion.

Faith in God and good deeds are, thus, the two means of salvation according to Islam. Faith consists of belief in God, His prophets, His angels, His scriptures and retribution in the hereafter. For sincerity and truthfulness depend on faith, no good deed is possible unless it is informed by a heartfelt realization of God and acceptance of His commands. Action, in its turn, is divided into three parts. The first is the worship or glorification of God. Next come the dealings with fellow beings which cover all the individual and social transactions and on these depend the continuance of an orderly society as well as social and economic justice. Morals comprise the third category of human actions which cover all those obligations which, although not legally binding, must be discharged faithfully in order to develop spiritually binding,

must be discharged faithfully in order to develop spiritually and to raise the level of society. These four: faith, worship, dealings and morals constitute the pathway to salvation and success according to Islam.

It also needs to be made clear that quiescence or inaction has no place in Islam which enjoins action and enterprise. Islam is not death, but life, for it declares:

"And that man only that for which he maketh effort."

And, also

"Every soul is a pledge for its own deeds."

Islam teaches exertion and struggle, not merely in the recesses of one's heart, but also in the field of action. The life of the holy Prophet as well as the lives of his caliphs and companions are too well-known to all of us. They have shown the way of attaining salvation and success and advancement in this world and the world beyond. Muhammad's (SAW) message differs from that of Buddha inasmuch as the former teaches not the annihilation of desires but the disciplining of desires. It is also different from the teachings of Christ. Muhammad (SAW) does not scorn wealth and power, he teaches how to make a proper use of the both.

Thus, faith and virtuous action constitute the matrix of faith in Islam. It commands action, not indolence; acceptance of responsibility and doing one's duty instead of shrinking selfishly from these. The examples set by the Prophet of Islam and his successors show the way of correct behavior.

"Muhammad (SAW) is the messenger of Allah. And those with him are hard against the disbelievers and merciful among themselves. Thou seest them bowing down and falling prostrate (in worship) seeking bounty from Allah and (His) acceptance."

We find these noblest specimens of humanity, the companions of Muhammad (SAW), waging war at times; at others engaged in social service and doing good to their friends and companions: bowing down before God; praising Him very often and seeking their sustenance by hard labour on other occasions; yet, never unmindful of their Lord of His commandments. The Qur'an portrays their lives in these words.

"Men whom neither merchandise nor sale beguileth from remembrance of Allah."

They carry on their trades and professions as well as seek the pleasure of God. They do not give up one for the other, but apply themselves to both in the same breath. Here is an instance preserved by history which illustrates how they spent their lives. At a time when hostilities are going on between the Muslims and the Byzantines, a few enemy spies enter the Muslim camp to find out the moral of Muslim soldiers. They go back and report to their Commander that the Muslim battlers are "anchorites by the night and veterans by the day." This is the ideal way of life taught by Islam and the world needs to learn it afresh. ●

Knowledge sans Ethical values and Norms is Destructive

Islam attaches more importance to knowledge as compared to other religions. Besides it introduced knowledge in religious teachings and bestowed on learned persons a great status. Needless to add that Islam and knowledge both are inseparable. That is why Islam has made it obligatory to its adherents to acquire it. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) says: "Seeking knowledge is compulsory for both male and female." Islam divides knowledge into two parts i.e. profitable and non-profitable. These days both types of knowledge are gaining momentum. This modern age the age of knowledge, progress and prosperity. The ratio of knowledge as compared to other fields has increased. Today educational institutions have come up in urban as well as in remote rural areas on a large scale. The irony of the situation is that these institutions which are required to impart lessons of brotherhood, fraternity, love, equality, ethical values and train people of etiquette to live in peace and amity instead lead them towards the path of devastation, ruination and exploitation. Moreover, it makes one selfish and self-seeking. This is the main reason of people's deprivation and their bad luck. It has resulted in creating bad blood among themselves. One community is against the other and one state is against its neighbouring state. Its core

S.M. Wazeh Rasheed Nadwi*

cause is divergence in motives and insistence on one own's ideology and thought. Knowledge has become a source of seduction, gulf, estrangement, and misleading. Various acts of deception, delusion, craftiness and fraud are done in the garb of knowledge. Education centres have become centres of spreading terror and panic.

Ironically the countries which are prosperous and developed have destructive and ruinous weapons. It is strange that atrocities perpetrated by them are being hushed up and innocent people are branded terrorists. These are those states which are considered most developed in spheres of education, culture and civilization.

Israel is one of these developed countries which is far more advanced in the field of education as compared to other countries. But it has occupied the land of others and is now mounting atrocities on its original natives and forced them to run away from their own land. Nevertheless Israel is helped and reinforced by those countries which are superior in various ways to other states of the globe. Israel violates international laws still intelligentsia of his country as well as Noble laureates living in European countries and USA support

*Director of Education, Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow

nese scourges, atrocities and devilish acts of Israel.

Erst-while Soviet Union, a developed state invaded Afghanistan and killed thousands of people, exiled most of them as well as usurped their rights of citizenship. Further it pressed them for adoption of its ideology. It changed the laws and concocted false history and distorted regional civilization and culture. It tried to implement its own language, culture and ways of life on them. It created the issues of Palestine and Cyprus and divided the government on the basis of race. It placed them on the threshold of mayhem, carnage, pogrom, massacre, bloodshed and killing. The atrocities of British can be assessed from the freedom movement of India. A noted Indian journalist proved in his book that the British killed 11 million Indian people for the sake of remaining in power in India.

Germany is another developed country educationally and culturally. The oppressions perpetrated on Jews by Nazis is the worst holocaust of history. Developed countries waged two World Wars which claimed lives of 70 millions people. What to speak of denying the incident of burning Jews alive in Germany, is an unpardonable sin. But the question pops up here who committed this menace? Did Muslims on whom the allegations of terrorism are branded or western countries, considered developed and progressive? The answer is one that if the incident of burning is real, it is an open tyranny and atrocity of the inhabitants of Germany, representative

nation of Europe and if it is false then it is a vivid evidence of falsehood of Europe.

The most prominent and developed country is America which in 1945 dropped atom bombs on Japan and killed thousands of innocent Japanese. For years it shed blood in Vietnam and behaved with them like that of wolf's treatment with goats. Despite that, its thirst of blood did not quench. Accordingly it headed Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, and targeted them with atrocities and oppressions.

France too is considered in these developed states, it too killed one million people in Al-Jazair and got a rebellious group trained against religious and collective norms and set its network in the entire world. These are a few instances of these developed countries. If the bloody and sanguinary stories are penned and incidents of atrocities and cruelties are written in detail, many volumes will not be even sufficient. ●

(English Rendering: Obaidur Rahman Nadwi)

Obituary

Er. Mashhoon Ahmad passed away on November 10, 2011 after a prolonged illness. May God give peace to his soul.

Mr. Ahmad remained associated with this magazine for a long time and helped in English rendering of many articles.

Muhammad Hamidullah (1908-2002)

S.Faizanul Haq Irfan*

Professor Muhammad Hamidullah, widely known across the Islamic world, in the Indian subcontinent and in Europe and North America for his outstanding contributions to the advancement of Islamic learning and his research on the Qur'an, Ahadith, life of the Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) and Islamic History which are a valuable asset for the students of the history many universities of the Muslim world use his books as a reference.

Prof. Hamidullah, passed away on 17th December 2002. He was 94 (To Allah we belong and unto Him shall we return.) He was born in Hyderabad on 9th Feb, 1908. Youngest among the three brothers and five sisters, he received his early education at home, first from his sisters and later from his father Mufti Abu Muhammad Khalilullah, who was also a scholar of considerable accomplishments. He migrated from Madras to Hyderabad where he was appointed director of the revenue Department in the Nizam's government. He set up the first non-interest financial institution in Hyderabad.

Professor Hamidullah belonged to an illustrious family of scholars, jurists, writers and sufis. His ancestors migrated from Arabia a few centuries ago. The distinguished sufi scholar 'Ala al-Din 'Ali Ibn Ahmad Al-Maha' imi (d.1431), who is buried in Mumbai, Habibullah Bijapuri, an eminent sufi of

the Deccan, and Muhammad Husayn Shahid, were among his illustrious ancestors. Professor Hamidullah's great grandfather Mawlvi Muhammad Ghaws Sharfu's-Mulk (d. 1238/1822) was well versed in Arabic and Islamic studies. He wrote more than 30 books in Arabic, Persian and Urdu. One of his important works is a commentary on the Qur'an, Nathru'L-Marjan fi Rasm Nazmi'L-Qur'an, in seven volumes. Professor Hamidullah's maternal grandfather, Qadi Muhammad Sibghatullah (d.1263) was an accomplished scholar who wrote, among other books, a commentary on the Qur'an.

Early Education: Professor Hamidullah did his Mawlvi Kamil with distinction in 1924. His father had misgivings about Western education. Aware of his father's antipathy towards English education, he secretly appeared for the matriculation examination and topped the list of successful candidates.

Hamidullah got a pleasant surprise when, instead of scolding, his father expressed his whole-hearted appreciation and joy over his son's achievement and told him to carry on with his education. Professor Hamidullah took admission in Osmania University in 1924 and passed the B.A., LL.B., and M.A. examinations in first division. He was

*Vice President Maulana Azad Academy & Secretary Haq Foundation, Lucknow

warded a fellowship by the Osmania University to pursue doctoral studies in International Islamic Law. He traveled to several Islamic as well as European countries for the purpose of collecting information for his research. He was awarded D. Phil by the Bonn University in 1932. In recognition of his outstanding ability and his proficiency in several oriental languages, he was appointed a lecturer in Arabic and Urdu at Bonn University. Later he shifted to Paris and in a short period of 11 months, Sorbonne University conferred on him the degree of D. Litt.

Professor Hamidullah returned to Hyderabad in 1938 and was appointed a lecturer in Islamic Fiqh and later in International Islamic Law at the Osmania University. Following the amalgamation of the erstwhile Hyderabad state into the Indian Union in 1948, Professor Hamidullah migrated to Paris. Hamidullah was the last remaining citizen of the erstwhile state of Hyderabad and never took citizenship of any other country contrary to popular belief but was classified as a Refugee of Hyderabad by the French government.

In France he took up an assignment with Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique in 1954, which ended in 1978. During this period, he also lectured at several universities in Turkey. Some of his former students, such as Dr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Director-General, Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, Istanbul, and Professor Salih Tug, former Dean, Faculty of Theology, Marmara University, occupy important positions in universities and research

centers in Turkey and other Islamic countries.

Researches and Books.

In a scholarly career spanning seven decades, Professor Hamidullah wrote extensively across a wide spectrum of Islamic disciplines, including the translation of the Qur'an in French, and German, Hadith, biography of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Fiqh, Islamic International Law, Islamic History, and Arabic epigraphy. He wrote over a hundred books and over 1000 articles in seven languages, including French, German, English, Turkish, Persian and Urdu. No other contemporary Muslim scholar can match his exceptional proficiency in several languages. He knew 22 languages, including Thai, which he learnt at the age of 84.

Professor Hamidullah is the only in the world to have translated the Qur'an in three European languages: French, English and German. The French translation was first published in Paris in 1959. It has undergone over 30 reprints and the last edition was sold over two million copies. It remains the largest selling and the most widely read translation of the Holy Qur'an in any European language. Parts of the English translation of the Qur'an by Professor Hamiduallah were published from South Africa in 1960. The German translation, though complete, remains unpublished.

Professor Hamidullah's contribution to the literature on Sirah (Prophet Muhammad's (sws) biography is marked by a refreshing originality and acuity of insight. His first book on the subject, published in 1935,

deals with the diplomatic correspondence of the Prophet (sws) and his Companions (rta). His major Arabic book *Al-Watha'iq al-Siyasiyyah*, first published from Cairo in 1941, contains the texts, with critical notes and references, of more than 300 documents, including correspondence, treaties, proclamation and assurances, pertaining to the period of the Prophet (sws) and the four Caliphs. His French book *Six Originaux des lettres diplomatiques du Prophets e l' Islam*, contains a comprehensive and exhaustive discussion in the light of classical as well as contemporary sources, on six of the Prophet's letters whose original texts have been preserved. Professor Hamidullah's biography of the Prophet (sws) in French entitled *Le Prophet de l' Islam*, first published in two several languages. He wrote a biography of the Prophet (sws) in English entitled *Muhammad Rasulallah (sws) in English and Urdu*, combines information gleaned from the classical sources as well as from field work and topographical maps relating to the sites associated with the Prophet's military expeditions. Another significant work of Professor Hamidullah is *Muslim conduct of State*, first published in 1941, which deals with theory and practice of statecraft in the early Islamic period.

A highly significant and original contribution of Professor Hamidullah pertains to the discovery, editing and translations of some rare and invaluable manuscripts relating to Hadith, Sirah, Fiqh, Islamic history, biographical literature and medicine. These include the following:

1. *Sahifah Hamman Ibn Munabbih* by Hammam Ibn Munabbih (d. 101 A.H.), published from Damascus in 1953, Urdu and English translation were published from Hyderabad in 1955 and 1961.

2. *Kitabu'l-Mubtada wa'lMab'ath wal-Maghzi* by Ibn Ishaq (d. 151 AH) published from Rabat in 1976.

3. *Ansabu'l-Ashraf* by Baladhuri (d. 892 AH), published from Egypt in 1959.

4. *Kitabu'l-Riddah* by Qadi Rashid Ibn Zubayr (d.563 A.H.), published from Damascus in 1964.

5. *Al-Dhakah 'ir wa 'l-Tuhaf* by Qadi Rashid Ibn Zubayr (d.563 A.H.), published from Kuwait in 1959.

6. *Ma'danu'l-Jawahir fi tarikhi'l-Basrah wa 'l-Jaza 'ir*, by Shaykh Nu'man Ibn Muhammad, published from Islamabad, Pakistan in 1973.

7. *Kitabu'l-Nabat*, by Abu Hanifa al-Dinawari (d.882 A.H.), published from Cairo in 1973; the English translation of the book by Professor Hamidullah was published from Pakistan.

8. *Kitabu'l-Sard wal 'l-ifi' l-Akhbar*, by Isma'il al-Qazwini, the text, together with the English translation, was published from Islamabad, Pakistan in 1411A.H.

9. *Sunan Sa'id Ibn Mansur* (a rare manuscript of this invaluable collection of Hadith was discovered by Professor Hamidullah in Turkey. It was edited by Mawlana Habibu'l-rahman al-Azami, with an introduction by Professor Hamidullah, and published from Dabel, Gujarat in 1968)

Professor Hamidullah

translated Sarakhsi's celebrated work Sharhu'-Siyar al-Kabir in French. Parts of this translation, running into 3000 pages, were published from Ankara. Imam Bukhari's celebrated work Al-Sahih was rendered into French by some Western Orientalists.

He prepared a detailed and exhaustive index of Imam Bukhari's Al-Sahih in Arabic and French. Professor Hamidullah wrote books for the general reader as well. Mention should be made of Introduction to Islam, first published in 1957, which has been reprinted several times and has been translated into 22 languages.

Professor Hamidullah made an invaluable contribution to the dissemination and popularity of Islamic teachings and ideals in Europe in general and in France in particular through his writings, lectures among educated Muslims in the Western countries and the wave of conversion to Islam that is sweeping across Western Europe owes a great deal to his intellectual, moral and personal influence. Now there are more than a hundred mosques in Paris alone. The number of converts to the Islamic faith in Paris, most of whom are white Parisians, exceeds a hundred thousand. On an average, about ten French men and women embrace Islam every week in Paris. With his profound erudition, his exceptionally affable temperament, his unassuming ways and his persuasive discourses he inspired thousands of Muslim students, intellectuals, youths and activists who looked upon him as a model.

Professor Hamidullah belonged to that rare and rapidly dwindling breed

of Muslim scholars who carried on the tradition of their illustrious forebears with utmost sincerity, incredible selflessness and exemplary dedication. A highly self-respecting person, he did not accept any gifts from any one. His French translation of the Qur'an has sold millions of copies and the publisher has become a millionaire. Yet, he did not take a single franc by way of royalty. In 1987, the government of Pakistan presented him a cheque of US\$ 25000 as a token of appreciation for his outstanding services to his cause of Islam. He promptly donated the money to the Islamic Research Institute, Islamabad. He was nominated for the prestigious King Faisal Award, but he declined it.

Professor Hamidullah's selflessness and complete detachment from worldly allurements was reminiscent of the example set by the Muslim scholars and sages of earlier times.

Piety, humility and simplicity were conspicuous in Professor Hamidullah's personality and character. He chose to remain a bachelor and led an extremely simple and Spartan life. He lived on a frugal meal of milk, rice, curd and fruits. For nearly fifty years, he lived in a small apartment on the fourth floor of an old building in Paris, where he had to climb 180 steps to reach his house. He fell seriously ill in 1996 and had to be hospitalized. He was taken to the US by his elder brother's grand-daughter Sadida, who took good care of him and nursed him to recovery. His demise marks the passing of an illustrious and momentous era. ●

Kharijite School and Its Poetics under the Umayyad

Kharijite, Arabic "khawariji" those who went out.

Kharijites were also known historically as the ashurat literally meaning the "buyers" within the context of Islamic scripture and philosophy to mean "those traded the mortal life (al dunia) for the other life with God (al akherah) unlike the term "kharijit" was one that many kharijite used to describe themselves.

Thus there came into existence a sunni religious, political party better known as kharijite the Muslim society during the early Umayyad period as a fanatics, deviating from the main stream and regrouping themselves as a particular sect having their own religious contrary to the basic teaching of Islam.

In 657 A.H. Hazrat Ali's forces met Muawiya at the battle of Siffeen. Initially the battle went against Muawia, on the brink of defeat, Muawia directed his army to hoist Qur'an on their lances. This initiated discord among some of those who in desire as kharijite.

The point of differences' arose of the issue of the "Khalifa". When the claim of the authority as "ameerul mumin" was disputed among the Umayyad.

The kharijite raised their voice against the claim and asserted that there is no authority except almighty Allah, under whose dictates they will be governed. Reciting the verse of the Qur'an "the decision is only for Allah".

*Asst. Professor. Dept of Arabic, AMU, Aligarh.

Mohd, Yusuf Khan*

They rejected that the office of "Khalifa" can only be held by the Quraishides, saying that each and every true believer can be elected to the office of Khalifa.

They rebelled against established rule of the Umayyad and remained busy during the entire regime, defying the authority of the Umayyad administration and propagating their ideologies firmly. Thus their activities in the Muslim society assumed the shape of the particular movement as the kharijite moment.

The Kharijite thus deemed the arbitrators Abu Musa Al Ashari and Amr bin Aas the leaders who appointed these arbitrators. Ali and Muawia and all those who agreed upon arbitration of Ali and Muawia, as a "Kafir" (disbeliever) has breached the rule of the Quran. They believed that all the participants battle of "Jamal" including, Talha, Zubair, Associates of the Prophet Muhammad and Hazrat Aisha had committed a "Kabeerah" (major sin in Islam). The kharijite denounced all the above mentioned Associates (Sahaba) and even cursed them and used arrogant and abusive language against them. It was the thinking of Kharijite people that when an ordinary Muslim can be declared a sinner if he commits a mistake and he does so because lack of knowledge of Islam, then those who have the depth of knowledge in Qur'an,

Hadeeth and fiqh may not be counted in this category of sinners.

The Kharijite believed that obedience to the caliph is bounding as long as he manages the office with justice and consultation; but if he deviates, then it becomes obligatory to confront him, demote him and murder him.

The Kharijite considered Quran as main source of Islamic Jurisprudence; but they had their different concept from ordinary Muslim about "Hadith and Ijma".

Moreover, the kharijite refused to accept Hazrat Ali as the forth caliph after Hazrat Uthman and they proclaimed themselves the true and firm believers of Islam, announced their party led by Muawaia bin Sufyan. After decades this sect split up into different sub-sects.

However, the major sub-sects of the Kharijite are as follow:

- 1- Al Najdad
- 2- Al Azaariqah
- 3- Al Abaadiyyah
- 4- Al Safariyyah

Any movement needs propagation. The most powerful media of propagation those days, besides oratory, was poetry. Thus we find poets affinity with the kharijite and attachments with their ideologies', took the front propagating and defended the cause of the kharijite on religious, political and social level their verses.

There was a great number of the Kharijite poets, some of them got fame and acknowledged as the great poets of the time such as:

Al- Trimmah bin Al- Hakeem, Imran bin Hittan, Kumait, Qutri bin Fujatat, Obaidah bin Hilal, Al-Yushkri, Nafi' bin Al Azraq, Behlul bin Bishr and

Al-Zakha bin Qais, Abu bilal Ayyob bin Kholi, Habib bin Kudrah, Malik bin Mazmoom, Sabit Al-Karjit, Alminhal Al-Shaibain, Ziyad Al Aasam, Uinme-Hakeem.

The study of the Kharijite poetry is very interesting and worthwhile. The verses depict the political scene of the Umayyad period. The poets expressed their opinions, criticizing the individuals and as regards the social values the rulers alike of the time, fearlessly and without any prior prejudice. Thus the verses became a type of social criticism of the time.

Kharijite supposed themselves to be the perfect believers of Islam and thus their verses depict Islamic impact contrary to pre Islamic thinking.

The poets mostly belonged to the Bedouin class and passed their most of the time in remote Arabian Desert. This phenomenon helped them to retain the tribal and Bedouin characteristic; so far as their power of expressions is concerned. Thus we find utmost purity, chastity, simplicity and clarity of expression in their verses as compared to other poets of the time.

Moreover, they were the forerunner in introducing a new style setting aside the art of verification practiced by the pre- Islamic poets as far as the Qasaid (Odes and their frame work are concerned.

It was due to their fine poetic taste, critical sense of judgment and impartiality that of them were supposed to be best judges to evaluated the merits of the top ranking poets of the time. Considering the above mentioned poets, it becomes evident that for the better understanding of the Arabic Language and literature the

study of the Kharijite poets and their poetries is fruitful and useful.

The Kharijite new poets endeavored hard to highlight their poetic skills, they utilized their poetry as a main source for the propagation of their movements. They composed their verses on almost every kind of poetry. They touched the serious topic as it was the demand of the period. They composed odds, Sonnets, Eulogies and elegies for their nearer and dearer. The majority of the Kharijite poets were very spiritual and religious minded. They were the firm believers of the command and power of Almighty Allah.

See the beauty of the verses of Amr bin Al- Qana bin Umairah Al-anmbari he says:

There is no welfare being in this very world for a person who has no share near Allah on the Day of Judgement.

In this very world a safer place and a smart horse of good origin are sufficient for me.

I fight with my enemies when they follow me and if I am being called for to guide then I give a befitting reply.

With me every one is more sinner whose body has been weakened by exercise and whose body has become weak and meek.

As far as the natural phenomenon is concerned the Kharijite are not lag behind other poets of the Ummayyad period. Qutri bin Fujjat one of the reckoned poets of the Kharijite speaks for his beloved, Umme Hakeem, see the beauty of expression of thought of the poet.

By you I have become indifferent and upset, if I do not meet Umme Kakim.

She in one of the most beautiful

and modest woman like whom none is ever seen. She was the remedy for those who are sufferers.

By you from the very day, I slapped at her face (I am repenting) in spite of getting over many periods.

She was beating her beautiful checks weeping and wailing, mourning on the demise of a very dashing, promising young man who was the son of a very highly respectable and high profile mother.

In short, thus we can say safely that the contribution made by the Kharijite poets to the Arabic poetry is excellent, marvelous and fabulous.

Source

1. Al Sher al Khwarij: Ahsan Abbas (Professor of American University, Beirut. 1923.
2. Al Madhahib Al Islamia, Mohammad Ahmad Abu Zuhra. Published Maktaba Al Adab Cairo.
3. A Short History of the Saracens. 13 edition .ed. London, 1961. Macmillan and company.
4. Britannica online Encyclopedia. Al Muhallab bin Abi Sufra. ●

Darul-Ifta

Internet facilities are available in the department of Darul Qaza Wal ifta, a Unit of Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow. Aspirants may send their religious queries through E-mail:

daruliftanadwa@gmail.com

An American in Makkah

Michael Wolfe

I am a Muslim. I revere the same God as my Christian mother and my Jewish father. Allah is simply the Arabic word for the God of Abraham, Moses and Jesus. I find the absence of priests and rabbis attractive.

Islam means acknowledging the oneness of God, surrendering to it, cooperating with the way things are. Being a Muslim, God is as near as the veins in my neck.

During the Hajj each year, millions of faithful come to Makkah. The men and women wear simple lengths of unstitched cloth. The garments are a symbol. The person who wears them agrees not to harm plants and animals or fellow pilgrims. No arguments, no violence. We agree to keep the peace. The garments are a great leveler too. Who can tell rich from poor?

Millions Descend on Makkah, Here I join people from all over the earth, all these human beings drawn together by the call of an idea, by the oneness of God.

We have left daily life behind and come to a place hardly belonging to this world, a place filled by the almost tangible presence of God. To preserve its sanctity and protect pilgrims, the sacred territory around Makkah is forbidden to all but Muslims. It lies hidden in the mountains of Saudi Arabia 50 miles from the Red Sea, a modern city of 1.2 million people.

To walk around the block in Makkah is to walk around the world. I step out the door and for 15 yards, I'm in Indonesia. Down the street past a couple of stores and it's Africa. Pakistanis just around the corner and then I'm in

Bangladesh. A vast majority of the world's one billion Muslims-80 percent--now live outside the Middle East. There are more than five million in the United States.

Muslims perform Sacred Duties at the Hajj. The duties of the Hajj are symbolic of the story and obligations of Islam. Before prayer, Muslims wash, representing ritual purity. The walk around the Ka'ba--the black stone block in the great mosque--is an expression of our desire to put God at the center of our lives.

Pilgrims also make a journey to Mina and to the plain of Arafat, 13 miles outside of Makkah. Making our way on foot, we trade city streets and building for tents and carpets on the sand of the barren plain, giving up our usual comforts, getting back to basics. On the plain of Arafat, we perform the central obligation of the pilgrimage, to be here together from noon until sunset. There is no ceremony. We stroll, we pray, we mediate.

The Hajj goes on inside the hearts and thoughts of each of us. This is a rehearsal for that Day of Judgment. How will we account for our acts? Have I injured anyone? Have I been grateful enough for the simple gifts of life, water, food, friends, family and the air I breathe?

Before leaving Makkah, we visit the Ka'ba one last time. For most of us, this will be our last glimpse of the shrine.

There is an old proverb--'Before you visit Makkah, it beckons you. When you leave it behind, it calls you forever. ●

Around the World

Use modern technology to spread message of the Qur'an

Makkah Governor, who is honoray president of the Charitable Society for Memorization of the Holy Qur'an, has called for making use of modern technology to learn and disseminate the teachings of the holy book. We should work according to the teachings of the Qur'an and meditate and memorize its verses, the governor said and called for making use of modern means to teach the Qur'an. He urged everybody to abide by the teachings of the Qur'an in all walks of their lives and give proper educations to the younger generations to understand its teachings, he said. ●

Saudi girl among Siemens student award finalists

A Saudi girl has been named among 10 finalists for Siemens Student Award 2011, for her enduring quest to build sustainable cities in the desert using energy efficient technology. A student of King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) has been selected for her innovative concept entailed 'Transforming a Desert into a Heaven,' in which she has propounded a theory on how to utilize and apply energy technology for sustainable cities in the desert. Siemens was seeking the best

answers to one of the world's toughest questions: How to build sustainable cities in the desert? Ten finalists from the 630 ideas submitted have been selected from universities in Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Egypt, and Pakistan and their ideas will be evaluated by a high profile international jury panel. ●

Elections in Libya within eight months

Libyans should be allowed to vote within eight months to elect a national council that would draft a new constitution and form an interim government, Prime Minister Mahmoud Jibril said.

After the death of Muammar Qaddafi, the priority was to remove weapons from Libyan streets, restore stability and order and begin a process of national reconciliation, Jibril said at the World Economic Forum in Jordan.

"The first election should take place within a period of eight months, maximum, to constitute a national congress of Libya, some sort of parliamentary," he said.

"This national congress would have two tasks draft a constitution, on which we would have a referendum, and the second to form an interim government to last until the first presidential elections are held," said Jibril. ●

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