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Nadwatul Ulema
Post Box No. 93, Tagore Marg,
Lucknow -226007

Ph. No. : 0522-2740406

Fax : (0522) 2741221 E-mail: nadwa@sancharnet.in

Rs. 12/-



The Fragrance of East

Founder:

Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (RAH)

Patron:

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The Quranic Dictum

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

The Qur'an lays stress on following the way of the prophets and asks the believers, time and again, to pattern their lives and conduct after the example set by the messengers of God.

"Verily in the messenger of Allah ye have a good example for him who looketh unto Allah and the Last Day, and remembereth Allah much."

It directs the Muslims to beseech God always to show them the right path.

"Show us the right path, The path of those whom Thou hast favoured;

Not (the Path) of those who earn Thine anger nor of those who go astray."

This prayer which forms part of the service repeated several times a day, teaches man to seek the companionship of the prophets, their leaders and guides and God-loved souls. Whoever shall live up to this supplication by coming close to the appearance and behaviour of these pious souls shall undoubtedly be sanctified and redeemed by divine grace. ■

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Wisdom of Qur'an

To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth, what is between them, and what is beneath the wet soil. (Ta-Ha 6)

Commentary:

Linguistically, the word "thara" is used for wet soil (that one encounters as he digs). But many have accepted the meaning at this point as simply the soil. That is, Allah knows what is below the soil. Our translation is literal and exact. Muhammad b. Ka'b however said that it meant "the seven earths." That is, Allah knows what is below the seven earths (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

Majid's study of other religions yields fruit. He writes: "The under-world has been supposed by many polytheistic nations to be ruled by a God of its own. 'The divinity who reigns over the under-world is frequently a personification of the region itself, and this is more particularly the case where, e.g., the Earth and Under-earth are conceived as personified in one being. The earth-goddess is also the ruler of souls, with the under-earth people as her subjects' (ERE XII, p. 518)." The verse could also be considered as a prediction by the Qur'an that nobody will ever know what is below the wet soil. Centuries of research has yielded *some* results about what is below the surface of the earth. It is a world teeming with life forms. Yet details of which is impossible to determine. Bacteria has been found several kilometers deep. But, and significantly, the Qur'an is not speaking of the wet layer of soil. It is speaking of what is below the wet layer: as if to send across the hint that at best you will only know (at best *something*) about the wet layer, and not any further. On a diameter of 12,000 kilometer man has been able to drill through no more than a few kilometers and the rest remains a complete mystery. The division and description of several layers by the geologists, which ends with a hot liquid core, is, at best, sketchy, conjectural, and, of little information value. Only Allah knows what is beneath the wet soil (Au.). ■

Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

(1) *Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "The year is twelve months of which four are sacred, the three consecutive months of Dhu'l-Qa'dah, Dhu'l-Hijjah and Muharram, and Rajab Mudar which comes between Jumaada and Sha'baan.*

- Reported by al-Bukhari, 2958

Commentary: Muharram is so called because it is a sacred (Muharram) month and to confirm its sanctity. Allah's words (interpretation of the meaning): "so wrong not yourselves therein." mean do not wrong yourselves in these sacred months, because sin in these months is worse than in other months. It was reported that Ibn 'Abbas said that this phrase (so wrong not yourselves therein.) referred to all the months, then these four were singled out and made sacred, so that sin in these months is more serious and good deeds bring a greater reward. Qutaadah said concerning this phrase (so wrong not yourselves therein.) that wrongdoing during the sacred months is more serious and more sinful than wrongdoing at any other time. Wrongdoing at any time is a serious matter, but Allah gives more weight to whichever of His commands He will. Allah has chosen certain ones of His creation. He has chosen from among the angels Messengers and from among mankind Messengers. He chose from among speech the remembrance of Him (*dhikr*). He chose from among the earth the mosques, from among the months Ramadhan and the sacred months, from among the days Friday and from among the nights *Laylat al-Qadr*, so venerate that which Allah has told us to venerate. People of understanding and wisdom venerate the things that Allah has told us to venerate. (Summarized from the *Tafsir* of Ibn Katheer, may Allah have mercy on him. *Tafsir of Surat al-Tawbah, ayah 36*). ■

Rise And Fall Of Muslim Societies

An eminent Scholar, proficient in Islamic Studies, has very ably analysed the situation through which Muslim Community is passing through. He laments that there was a time when Islamic Civilization was considered to be the most advanced, tolerant progressive civilisation in the world. This was mainly because of their accomplishments in practically all the disciplines of knowledge. After 16th century AD the situation changed drastically. Learning and inquiry was no more the motto of the Muslims with the result that today they occupy the lowest position in the ladder of the world. They are educationally backward, scientifically marginal, politically insignificant and economically poor. This is the present status of the entire Ummah amongst the comity of nations.

Infact many Islamic Scholars and thinkers have echoed their views on this issue. Late S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (RAH) says that "After sixteenth century Muslims lost the interest in Enquiry and physical sciences and engaged themselves more in the metaphysical sciences with the result they could not produce great men of knowledge (genius)- Muslims forgot their own scientific thinking and followed only traditional knowledge. They, therefore, lagged behind science and technology and thus became Slaves of the West." Maulana who passed away on December 31st, 1999 was quite alive during the last years of his life about the phenomenal developments in the fields of Information Technology particularly computer science and internet system. Their use in media was quite baffling. It was in fulfillment of his desire that Nadwa

introduced computer faculty.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in his book "Ghuhar-e-khatir" exhorted the community in the following words:

"You have spent several nights of indifference (gaflat) and complacency (Sarshari). For God's sake, get up now and see how much the sun has risen and how far your co-travellers (non-Muslims) have gone ahead of you."

Of late, it has been noticed that some awakening has caught up the community and young generation of Muslims has realised that they must work hard and in the right direction to make up the shortcomings, to match the modern challenges. In this connection it will not be out of place if we reproduce here the inscription on the Main Gate of Cordova University:

"Quest for knowledge, advancement of Science and Technology, Religious Tolerance, Prosperity, Rationale and Reason, High Literacy. (Hundred percent in cities like Baghdad, Cordova, Granade etc.) Open intellectual environment, Military preparedness,- Taqwa (Piety), Taleem (knowledge), Taqat (Might). these were the reasons for the rise of Islam."

S.A.

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The Real Loss of Mankind Under Western Domination

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

We will not speak now of the grievous material losses the Eastern countries have suffered since the rise of the West. We will speak only of the real-the moral and spiritual-losses of mankind as a whole. In this regrettable development of history the greatest losers have been the followers of Islam. Their philosophy of life was radically opposed to the Western ideas and way of life. With the domination of the new barbarism, therefore, it was but natural that they should suffer the greatest loss.

Absence of Spiritual Sense

There has always been something deeply spiritual in the Oriental character. From time immemorial a thousand thoughts have been assailing the mind of the Easterner. What is the end of this world? Is there a future life after death? Where should one look for guidance regarding the life to come? What is the secret of eternal happiness? The Easterner never failed to take note of these questions, not even on occasions of his deepest absorption in secular needs and interests. He gave them an unqualified priority in the manifold occupations of his life. During the whole course of his intellectual and cultural endeavours he kept himself steadily engaged in finding satisfactory solutions to them. His asceticism, his penances, his philosophy, his metaphysics, his

mysticism were all directed towards it. Sometimes this quest took him along wrong paths. Sometimes he erred and stumbled. But he never shut his ears to the voice of his soul.

Questions pertaining to spiritual truths used to arise in Europe also before the Renaissance, but as the innate character of its civilization gradually unfolded itself and the West got lost in the adoration of its material achievements, they were disregarded. If one still hears of them there, it is only as problems of metaphysics. They do not occupy any place in practical life. The anxiety, the solicitude, the uneasiness which for thousands of years these questions evoked in the East is not at all felt there. And this is so, not because the soul of the West has become illumined with Divine truth or that peace has dawned upon it. The surroundings that the West has succeeded in creating for itself are not related to the Eternal and the Infinite; they have imprisoned man in the world of matter and the West has made him oblivious of his true self.

The fundamental psychological difference, therefore, between an Easterner of earlier times and a modern Westerner is that, while the former possessed a keen and quick spiritual instinct, the latter lost it in the process of his evolution. When a person loses

anyone of his senses, he loses the consciousness of all things the knowledge of which is dependent on it. One who loses the sense of hearing, for example, becomes insensitive to sound and the whole world of songs and sweet melodies is dead for him. Similarly, one who is devoid of the sense of religion is dead to all feelings and sensations that arise out of religious faith. Things like Futurity, Resurrection, Divine Pleasure and Salvation have no meaning for him.

Religious preachers have, in all ages, encountered the stiffest opposition from people who were devoid of religious feelings. Such people derided even the prophets of God. They listened to their soul-warming sermons and said:

“There is nothing except our life on this earth, and never shall we be raised up again.”

(Al-Qur’an, VI : 29)

In the modern age there has appeared a class of people in every community whose material cravings and worldly occupations have ejected religion from the domain of practical calculations. The hearts of such people are adamant and their minds sealed against truths transcendental. However hard a religious preacher may try, he does not find an opening through which to reach the inner depths of their souls. Those who have had the occasion to preach among them would have come to appreciate the real significance of many a verse of the Qur’an like: “God hath set a seal on their hearts and their hearing,

and over their eyes is a veil.” (Al-Qur’an, II : 7), and their difficulties in respect of them would have been removed. The Qur’anic truth “The parable of those who reject faith is as if one were to shout like a goat-herd, to things that listen to nothing except calls and cries; deaf, dumb and blind, they are devoid of wisdom” (Al-Qur’an, II : 171), would have presented itself before them in flesh and blood.

Most of the evils of the modern age come from this indifference to religion. The propagation of religion was easier by far in the olden days of open and violent opposition than in the current atmosphere of quiet disinterestedness. One may put one’s very heart into one’s preaching, but when the inner selves of the listeners have become paralysed, they cannot be moved to realise the beauties of Divine Revelation.

Dearth of the Spirit of God-seeking

We have already seen widespread longing for Truth during the days of Islamic ascendancy. It was customary then to undertake long and arduous journeys in the search for spiritual guides. These guides, who later on came to be known as “Masha’ikh’ and ‘Sufis’, kept the spirit of God-seeking alive even after the World of Islam had fallen on evil days. Their abodes functioned as islands of celestial bliss in an ever-widening ocean of materialism. The presence of such men in any society is the standard by which we can judge the strength of religious consciousness in it.

Among the Muslims, in particular, the way they turn towards the saints and 'sufis' in their midst is a sure indication of the extent of their moral and spiritual awareness.

In former times, in nearly all important towns in the Islamic world, there were found men who were actually the beacons of spiritual light; Muslims were drawn to them from every nook and corner like moths. Our Subcontinent situated on the fringe of the Islamic world, has itself been a great centre of religious endeavour. Independent seats of spiritual power existed here side by side with powerful kingdoms throughout the course of Muslim rule. The spiritual settlement of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya', Ghiyathpur, offers an admirable illustration of it. Situated right within the capital city of Delhi, it maintained its independence through the reigns of eight powerful kings, from Ghiyathuddin Balban to Ghiyathuddin Tughlaq (664—725 A. H.). Votaries of Truth from Sanjar to Oudh used to make their way to it to seek spiritual guidance.

If we were to give an account of the religious establishments of the saints of all the 'sufi' sects in India, and the manner in which people flocked to them from far and near, it would fill a whole volume. We will, therefore, confine our inquiry to the saints of only one sect, viz., The *Naqshbandi* sect.

To begin with, Shaikh Ahmad Sarhandi Mujaddid Alf-i-Thani (died 1034) had innumerable disciples. They

were drawn from all parts of India and Afghanistan. Several influential nobles of the court of Jahangir were included among them.

The daily average of votaries staying at the *Khanqah* of his venerable 'Khalifah', Saiyid Adam Bannuri (died 1053 A.H.) was about a thousand. They all took their meals at the *Khanqah*. A great throng followed Saiyid Adam Bannuri wherever he went. It is stated in the *Tazkira-i-Adamiyah* that ten thousand persons accompanied him when he went to Lahore in 1052 A. H. Seeing the boundless popularity of the saint, Emperor Shahjahan became so apprehensive that he thought of a plan to send him out of India. He sent to him a sum of money and then suggested to him that as the possession of money made the Hajj pilgrimage incumbent on a Muslim, he should now proceed to the Hijaz to perform the Hajj. The saint, thereupon, migrated from India.

Hazrat Mujaddid's eminent son, Hazrat Khwaja Mas'um (died 1079 A. H.) had nine lakh disciples, who repented at his hand. Of them, seven thousand had the honour of being his Khalifahs.

The Khwaja's son, Shaikh Saifuddin Sarhandi, also had an overwhelming following. According to the author of *Zail al-Rashhat* about 1,400 persons dined with him daily at his *Khanqah*, each of whom was served with food of his own choice.

The rich were as enthusiastic in their loyalty to the spiritual leaders as

the poor. It is said that noblemen used to cover the path with their scarfs and 'shawls' when Khwaja Muhammad Zubair Sarhandi went to the mosque to say his prayers so that his feet might not fall on the bare ground. When he went out to visit the sick or on any other business, it used to be in right royal style with the carriages and palanquins of the wealthy lords bringing up the rear of the procession.

This ardent devotion to the holy men was still very much in evidence among the Indian Muslims even during the suzerainty of the East India Company, till a little before the final overthrow of the Mughal Empire, in 1857. During the days of Shah Ghulam Ali (died 1240 A. H.), the 'Khalifa' of Mirza Mazhar Jan-i-Janan, the Mujaddidiya *Khanqah* of Dilhi, was a mighty centre of attraction for pious Muslims from all over the Islamic world. Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan says in the *Athar-us- Sanadid*: "I have seen with my own eyes votaries from Turkey, Syria, Baghdad, Egypt China and Ethiopia coming to the *Khanqah* and taking the *bai'at* at the Hazrat's hand, and considering it a rare good fortune to be of service to the establishment, not to mention the votaries from the adjoining areas of Hindustan, Punjab and Afghanistan who were continually swarming round the saint like bees. No less than five hundred destitute persons used to live in the *Khanqah* all of whom were fed and clothed by him.

Shah Ra'uf Ahmad Mujaddidi has

given the details of the places from which visitors to the *Khanqah* hailed on a single day-Jumada 1 28, 1231 A.H.-which includes places like Samarkand, Bukhara, Ghazni, Tashkand, Kandhar, Kabul, Kashmir, Peshawar, Multan, Lahore, Sarhand, Amroha, Sambhal, Rampur, Bareilly, Lucknow, Jais, Bahraich, Gorakhpur, Azimabad, Dacca, Hyderabad and Poona." All this happened at a time when there were neither railways nor the other modern facilities of travel!

Just on the eve of the establishment of the British rule the majestic call of 'Run back to Allah' was raised by Saiyid Ahmad Shahid (died 1246 A. H.) and his glorious lieutenants, Shah Isma'il Shahid (died 1246 A. H.) and Maulana Abdul Haiy Burhanvi (died 1242 A. H.). The spectacular manner in which the cream of Muslim society in India rallied round the leader of this group ultimately to be mingled with the dust at Balakot (May, 1831), was a shining proof of the high sense of religious enthusiasm and courage the Indian Muslims were still capable of manifesting even at this stage of their decadence.

Unprecedented scenes of religious ardour were witnessed during Saiyid Sahib's tour of the Doab and Oudh when he undertook to pull out the Muslims from the demoralization they had fallen into. In 1032 A. H., he set out for the Hajj, and a wave of great enthusiasm swept over the whole of Northern India. Religiously-minded Muslims came out in

hundreds and thousands to meet him as his caravan advanced from place to place. They invited his party (that finally came to consist of 750 persons when they reached Calcutta) to their towns and villages and entertained them for days. It is said that Shaikh Ghulam 'Ali, a ra'is of Allahabad, spent about twenty thousand rupees in entertaining the Saiyid Sahib and his companions for a fortnight-about a thousand rupees a day were spent by him on food alone. In many towns that fell along Saiyid Sahib's route, few persons were left who did not offer the *bai'at* at his hand. His disciples in Allahabad, Mirzapur, Benares, Ghazipur, 'Azimabad (Patna) and Calcutta must have run into lakhs. In Benares the indoor patients of the Sadr Hospital sent a petition to him saying that since they were unable to move out, he might take the trouble to grace them with a visit so that they could take the *bai't*. Saiyid Sahib went to the hospital and administered the vow to the patients.

About a thousand persons became his disciples every day during Saiyid Sahib's two-month stay in Calcutta. From morning till late at night a stream of men and women continued to pour in at the place where he was staying. When it became impossible for the *bai'at* to be administered individually, it was arranged for the aspirants to collect in a large house where Saiyid Sahib went and initiated them, into his fold. Seven or eight turbans were unrolled on the ground when he went there and the aspirants were told to hold

them at different places, while one end of them was held by Saiyid Sahib himself. He then taught them the fundamental principles of Islam and read out the vow in a loud voice like the *Azan* which they repeated and thus the ritual was completed. This was done seventeen or eighteen times every day.

For about twenty days, Saiyid Sahib delivered the sermons at Calcutta after the *Fajr* (morning) prayers. These sermons were attended by over two thousand doctors of theology, divines and noblemen and countless commoners. On Tuesdays and Fridays, Maulana 'Abdul Haiy also addressed the congregation after the *Zuhr* (midday) prayers, which lasted till the evening with a break for the 'Asr prayers. From ten to fifteen non-Muslims were converted daily to Islam.

An immediate effect of these reformatory endeavours was that the liquor business in that great city was suddenly brought to a standstill. The liquor merchants complained to the authorities that though they paid the taxes regularly, they had been forced to close down their business since the arrival in the city of a saint under whose influence more and more Muslims were being reformed daily and were taking the vow to abstain from the use of intoxicants. In fact they did not look the liquor shops now.

On their way back from the Hajj, Saiyid Sahib and his companions stopped for a few days at Murshidabad

with Diwan Ghulam Murtaza. The Diwan had it announced in the market that he would pay for any purchases made by his pilgrim guests and services rendered to them by the artisans. Saiyid Sahib protested that it was too much, but he replied. "It is a great honour for a Muslim that a 'Haji' should be his guest. I can never be proud enough of my good luck that so many 'Hajjis' have graced me with a visit."

Finally, when Saiyid Sahib launched the *Jihad*, it called forth a marvellous response from the rank and file of the Muslim population. The ploughman forsook his plough, the merchant his shop, the servant his master, the nobleman his castle and the theologian his pulpit and they all rose like one man in the defence of God's Word.

We have dealt with these facts at some length to bring home to the reader how very susceptible to religious emotion the Muslims were even at a time when they had entered upon the gloomiest phase of their existence as a free people, and before the thunderbolt of Western Imperialism had come down upon them to shatter the fabric of their society.

Some traces of this earnestness lingered on for sometime among the Muslims during the early stages of the British rule, but they were diminishing fast.

The joy of faith had not yet deserted the hearts of Muslims. Religion

was still valued by them as a vital factor in life. Apart from the educated and the enlightened, the common Muslims, too, had a share in their religious inheritance. There was hardly a Muslim hamlet that was without a moral teacher or a spiritual guide. If one cared to look at the India of thirty or forty years ago, one would find it illumined by a cluster of spiritual lights.

One by one these lights went out. The British Government, of course, never demanded that the *madrasahs* and *khanqahs* should be closed down. Yet the inner urge that used to drag along votaries from Samarkand and Bukhara to Delhi had died down and the higher values of the mind and the spirit had been discarded by the people, and the *madrasahs* and *khanqahs* were utterly abandoned.

The Epidemic of Worldliness

The new ideal of material advancement has completely taken hold of the modern mind.

In the present age of material progress there is great paucity of love for learning, nor is the love of religion much in evidence. The instinct of hunger has completely dominated human existence. Everywhere people now talk of problems concerning the flesh. Conversation on the problems relating to the spiritual or moral aspects of life is rarely to be heard in society.

Moral Degradation

Moral degradation had spread a great deal in India when the British

arrived here. The age-old ideals of the Eastern and the Islamic ways of life had fallen into oblivion. But certain domestic and social virtues were still valued beyond all things by the people of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent.

Family and social relations were based on extremely strong foundations. Filial love, parental affection, respect for the elders, affection for the young, marital fidelity, loyalty of servants, sincerity of friends,-under each of these headings authentic stories have been handed down to us which appear legendary when viewed in the context of the present-day conditions.

The Holy Prophet of Islam is reported to have said to a young man: "You and your possessions belong to your father". The dutifulness of the children to their parents was modelled after this command. It included respect for the friends and relatives of the parents as well. The love and regard for one's parents is to be continued even after their death as stressed by the Holy Prophet who is reported to have said, "The best of the good things to do is to do good to the friends of one's deceased father."

The parents on their side were living examples of loving care and self-sacrifice. They never hesitated to subordinate their own desires and interests to those of their children. Yet, when it was necessary to use the rod, they would turn their hearts into stones. It was below the dignity of a gentleman

to show partiality for his child who was chastised by the teacher. Even illiterate parents would support the teacher on such occasion, though the teacher himself might have been to blame for being too severe. "The claim of the teacher is greater than that of the father" was a common saying among the parents.

Between the old and the young the relations were determined by the old Islamic maxim, "He who is not affectionate to those who are younger to him and respectful to the elders of the community is not one of us".

Constancy is a virtue of great merit in the Oriental pattern of morality. Astonishing instances of it were available even during the period of decadence. In the daily routine of life, in dress, manners and customs, people generally were consistent and unvarying. If they struck a friendship, they remained true to it to the last.

Wealth was not the sole criterion of respectability in the family or clan, neither was it a dominant factor in friendship. It was inconceivable that at family gatherings discrimination should be made among members of a family on the basis of wealth and if it ever chanced to be so, the whole family united against the offender, and sometimes broke off relations with him. A poor young man of noble birth did not feel embarrassed at facing a more prosperous cousin and the latter took great care to ensure that the former's indigence was not made known to

anyone outside the family circle.

A gentleman used to hold his conscience above his life. He could not be persuaded to sell his honour at any price. During the official inquiry following the catastrophe of 1857, many a Muslim gentleman preferred mounting the gallows to bartering away his honour by feigning innocence while he had actually taken part in the uprising.

Honesty was highly valued both in private life and in cases where communal or national interests were at stake. Communal prejudice was unknown in India till then. The Muslims invariably acted upon the Qur'anic injunctions like the following:

“O ye who believe, stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to God, even as against yourselves, or (your) parents or (your) kin.”

(Al-Qur'an, IV : 135)

“And let not the hatred of any people make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice, be just; that is next to piety; and fear God”

(Al-Qur'an, V : 8)

“And when ye judge between mankind, (God doth command) that ye judge with justice.”

(Al-Qur'an, IV : 58)

“Whatever ye say, speak justly, even if near relative is concerned.”

(Al-Qur'an, VI : 152)

Once, during the early days of the British administration, there arose in Kandhla, in the Muzaffarnagar District, a dispute between the Hindus and the Muslims over a plot of land which both of them claimed as their place of worship. The English Collector of the district privately inquired from the Muslims if they could name a Hindu in whose honesty they had full confidence so that the case might be decided on the basis of his evidence. The Muslims said that they knew of no such Hindu. The Collector then asked the Hindus whether there was a Muslim upon whose word they would be willing to let the decision of the dispute be made. The Hindus said that, grave as the matter was, there was a Muslim divine who had never uttered a falsehood and it could be hoped that he would not compromise his integrity over the issue in hand. The divine came from the family of Mufti Ilahi Bakhsh, who was a pupil of Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz and a *Khalifa* of Saiyid Ahmad Shahid. The Collector, thereupon, summoned him to his court, but he declined saying that he had sworn never to look at the face of an Englishman. The Collector said that he need not look at his face if he did not want to, but come he must, because the matter in dispute was serious and its settlement hung on whether he came or not. At last, the Maulana agreed. He came with his face covered with a mask and stood in the court, his back turned towards the Collector so that there could be no possibility of his vow being broken. The

case was explained to him and he was asked to state whether he knew anything about the ownership of the plot. The Maulana declared that the plot in dispute belonged to the Hindus; the Muslims had nothing to do with it. The Collector decided accordingly. The Muslims lost the case, but Truth scored a magnificent victory. A number of Hindus embraced Islam on that very day at the hand of the Maulana.

Learning and wisdom were held sacrosanct in those days. Those who occupied a high place in the field of learning were not disposed to sell their intellectual wealth at any price because it was regarded by them as a precious gift and a sacred trust of God. To lend one's ability or knowledge, directly or indirectly, to serve the cause of injustice and unbelief was in their view tantamount to an open betrayal of religion.

Compare this intellectual loftiness with the prostitution of the intellect that is practised everywhere these days. The modern men of learning are ever open to be bought by the highest bidder. They have put themselves up for auction. If they are getting Rs. 100 per mensem in an Islamic institution and a Christian institution offers them Rs. 105 per mensem, they will at once go over to it. And if a Jewish State came forward and raised the bid by another Rs. 5, they would sell themselves to it with equal readiness. There is also no question of mental aptitude or preference. If the circumstances allow, a teacher will

cheerfully join the Police or the Air Force for a nominal consideration. A Doctor of Philosophy will any day join a military or a political department where his academic attainments will be of little or no avail to him. A writer sees no difference between writing the biography of a national hero or of a scoundrel.

In the past, the ties that bound persons to one another were free from the taint of selfishness. They were forged in the hearts, with the consequence that often they acquired an emotional significance that was far beyond the scope of material explanation. The bond of affection that endured, for example, between the teacher and the pupil was so strong that the existing relations between the father and the son or the lover and the beloved pale into insignificance before it. It will be difficult for a modern man to believe that when the news of the death of Mulla Nizamuddin of Lucknow was received (which later turned out to be false), one of his pupils, Saiyid Kamaluddin Azimabadi, died of the 'shock, while another, Saiyid Zarif Azimabadi, wept so much that his eyes were permanently damaged."

In the West today ethical questions are confined to the considerations of practical utility alone. It is just the other way round in Islam with which the real goal is the inner progress of man. Material utility came to dominate Western thought and morals in the 17th century when its social philosophers propagated the view that all ethical

principles that did not have a direct bearing on the material betterment of society were not deserving of serious attention. This view gradually gained in strength till it acquired a commanding hold on all fields of human activity. The virtues that had a purely ethical value were relegated to an obscure background of life and condemned to a mere theoretical existence, without the least power of influencing humanity.

In recent times, Western literature has exhibited a striking fondness for the word "nature". But the context in which it is used and the meanings that are sought to be conveyed through it show that it implies only animal nature. It stands for the world of flesh and shuts out the soul. Now, as the Western society is becoming more and more technological, even the animal warmth is vanishing from the nature of man and the individual is turning into a heap of inanimate matter.

"In the profound transformation the social life of the West is at present undergoing", says Muhammad Asad, a European Muslim, "that new, utilitarian morality becomes daily more and more visible. All virtues having a direct bearing upon the material welfare of society, as, for example, technical efficiency, patriotism, nationalist group-sense, are being exalted and sometimes absurdly exaggerated in their value, while virtues which, until now, have been valued from a purely ethical point of view, as, for example, filial love or sexual fidelity, rapidly lose their importance because

they do not confer a tangible, material benefit upon society. The age in which the insistence on strong family bonds was decisive for the well-being of the group or the clan is being superseded, in the modern West, by an age of collective organization under far wider headings. And in a society which is essentially technological and is being organized at a rapidly increasing pace, on purely mechanical lines, the behaviour of a son towards his father is of no great social importance, so long as those individuals behave within the limits of general decency imposed by the society on the intercourse of its members. Consequently, the European father daily loses more and more authority over his son, and the son loses respect for his father. Their mutual relations are being slowly overruled and-for all practical purposes-annihilated by the postulates of a mechanized society which has a tendency to abolish all privileges of one individual over another, and-in the logical development of this idea - also the privileges caused by family relationship; and the old relation between father and son is becoming obsolete."

Muslim Rulers of India

In the Islamic Orient the conception of human progress and perfection was so high that in order to come up to it one had to cultivate such diverse qualities and merits as would seem opposed and contradictory to the lethargy and shortsightedness of the modern age. To take from the world of

Islam only the Muslim rulers of India and their ministers and courtiers, one comes across among them such rare examples of human perfection as can scarcely be dreamt of today.

Shamsuddin Iltutmish

How extensive was the Empire of Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish is known to all students of Indian history. What, however, is not so generally known is that, despite the great responsibility of having to rule over such a vast Empire and to wage the numerous wars that he had to conduct, the Sultan was highly scrupulous in the discharge of his religious duties. When it was made known at the death of the august saint, Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, that he (the saint) had willed that his funeral prayers were to be led by him alone who had never in his life missed the 'sunnats of the 'Asr (afternoon) prayer and the first *takbir*' of any congregational prayer, the Sultan reluctantly stepped forward and conducted the service. In like manner, Sultans Ghiyathuddin Balban, Nasiruddin Mahmud and Firoz Tughlaq were all prominent for their piety and religiousness.

Sultans of Gujerat

The Sultans of Gujerat were particularly celebrated for the way they epitomized in themselves the splendid Islamic ideal of integrated material and spiritual progress. Maulvi Saiyid 'Abdul Haiy has thrown light on the life and character of one of them, viz., Sultan Muzaffar Shah Halim, in the following

words:

"After the death of Mahmud Shah, his son, Muzaffar Shah Halim, who was a worthy son of a worthy father, became the king. He had been a pupil of 'Allama Muhammad bin Muhammad el-Iji. The Science of Hadith he had studied with 'Allama Jamaluddin bin Muhammad' Umar Bahraq. He had learnt the Qur'an by heart in his youth, an age about which Shaikh Sa'di has rightly said, "You know what happens in youth."

"Side by side with these intellectual attainments, God had endowed him with great piety and strength of purpose. Throughout his life he strictly followed the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, remained always with *Wudu* and offered his prayers in congregation. He did not touch wine, was not unnecessarily hard on anyone, and never sullied his tongue with a foul word. Moreover, in this picture of piety there were gathered the highest qualities of a soldier and a statesman. When Mahmud Shah II of Malwa was deposed by his minister, Mandli Rae and the rites of Islam began to be wantonly outraged there, his religious pride was stirred. Setting out with a powerful army, he covered the distance to Malwa with the utmost speed and besieged its fort. Mandli Rae, realising that he was no match for the besieging force, begged Rana Sanga to come to his aid. But before Rana Sanga could advance as far as Sarangpur, Muzaffar Shah sent a detachment of his valiant army to deal with him. Soon the fort of Malwa fell.

“The sum and substance of the story is that when Muzaffar Shah entered the fort and the chiefs of his escort beheld the great treasure the rulers of Malwa had amassed there and heard accounts of the richness of the land, they ventured to suggest in his presence that since 2,000 of their horsemen had been killed in the fighting, it would not be wise to restore the kingdom to a ruler who, owing to his incompetence, had lost it to his minister. As soon as Muzaffar Shah heard it, he cut short the round of inspection and came out of the fort, instructing Mahmud Shah not to allow any member of his party into the fort. The latter entreated him to rest in the fort for a few days more, but he firmly declined. On a later occasion, explaining the implications of his action Muzaffar Shah said, “I had waged that war simply to earn Divine approbation. When I heard the talk of the chiefs, I became apprehensive lest some un-wholesome desire should crop up in my heart to ruin the sincerity of my act. I have not done any favour to Mahmud Shah. On the contrary, I am indebted to him, for it was through him that I got the opportunity of performing a noble deed.”

When the hour of his death drew near, Muzaffar Shah, by way of public acknowledgement of boons conferred upon him by God, related to the courtiers and the divines who were assembled round his bed, “By the grace of God, in addition to knowing the Qur’an by heart, I have a full command over the points of law and precepts arising out of every

verse of it, the occasion of its revelation and the method of its recitation. I remember by heart all the Traditions of the Prophet-their texts, references, the antecedents of their narrators and everything-about which I have received the certificate from my teacher, ‘Allama Jamaluddin Muhammad bin ‘Umar Bahraq. I possess such knowledge of Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence) that I hope to bear testimony to the veracity of the Prophet’s words that ‘Those for whom God makes a decision of virtue, are made by Him the jurists of His faith’. I have been engaged for some time in the purification of the soul after the system of the Sufis and aspire for their blessings on the strength of the principle that ‘who so makes himself resemble a people becomes one of them’. I have read the *Tafsir Ma’allim-ut-Tanzil* once. I am now revising it and have gone through it halfway. I hope to finish it in heaven.”

His condition deteriorated at the time of the Jumu’a (Friday) prayers. He sent away his attendants to attend the prayers, while he himself offered the Zuhr prayers. After the prayers, he observed, “I have offered the Zuhr prayers in your midst; I hope to offer the ‘Asr prayers in heaven.” Then reciting the following prayer of Joseph, which was truly in keeping with his own condition, this saintly king passed away: “O my Lord, Thou hast given me (something) of sovereignty and hath taught me (something) of the interpretation of events-Creator of the heavens and the earth, Thou art my

Protecting Friend in the world and the Hereafter. Make me die submissive (unto Thee), and join me to the righteous.”

(Al-Qur'an, XII : 101)

Sher Shah Suri

Likewise, the following account of the daily routine of Sher Shah Suri reveals an assiduousness for religion which an average man can hardly manage today, to speak nothing of an emperor of olden times who had set himself to complete the task of a century in five years:

“Sher Shah got up when two-thirds of the night had passed, had his bath and offered the *Nafil* prayers. He used to finish the supererogatory devotions before the *Fajr* prayers. Then he would look into the accounts of the various administrative departments and issue the necessary instructions so that he might not be disturbed by them during the day. After that, he would perform the *Wadu* for the *Fajr* prayers which he offered in congregation and remained at his devotions till the high functionaries of the Empire came to pay their respects to him. After the *Ishraq* prayers, the Emperor attended to the applications of the people and made to them grants of land, money and horses according to their needs. Then he heard the petitions and redressed grievances. Afterwards, he went out to inspect the troops and the arsenal and sanctioned the appointment of new recruits to the army after testing their ability. Then he

inspected the Treasury. On returning from there, he met the grandees of the Empire and foreign emissaries. Then the reports of the provincial governors were presented to him. He listened to them and dictated orders. Then he sat down to the midday meal at which a number of *'ulama* would be present. After the meal, he retired for two hours till the *Zuhri* prayers which he always offered in congregation. Then he recited the Qur'an. After it, he again occupied himself with the affairs of the Empire.

“The emperor adhered strictly to his routine, whether he was in the Capital or out on a journey. He used to say that a great man was he who spent his time wisely.”

Aurangzeb

The Empire of Aurangzeb stretched from Kabul and Kandhar to the Deccan and he used to look into everything connected with it personally. Yet, he was able to find time to offer the daily prayers at the earliest hour and in congregation and the Friday prayers in the *Jam* Masjid and to observe the *Sunnats* and the *nawafil* with scrupulous attention. He kept the fasts of Ramadan even in the hottest weather, and participated in the nightly *Tarawih* prayers and did the *l'tika* during the last ten days of the month. Apart from the Ramadan fasts, he fasted regularly on Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. He took care never to be without *Wudu* and recite the Holy Qur'an and the other traditional prayers every morning. Notwithstanding the vexations and worries with which h

was surrounded throughout his reign, he paid full attention to the spiritual lessons he took from Hazrat Khwaja Saifuddin (the grandson of Hazrat Mujaddid Alf Thani), and with such success that the latter used to remark upon the progress made by him in his letters to his father, Hazrat Khwaja Ma'sum: He listened, from day to day, to the *Fatawa-i-Alamgiri*, a Code of Laws, which theological doctors were compiling under his guidance and gave his own suggestions to them. He knew the Qur'an by heart and wrote the commentary of his own book *Arba'in* in which he had collected forty Traditions of the Holy Prophet.

Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan

Among the ministers and courtiers of the Mughal Court there were such versatile men as 'Abdur Rahim Bairam Khan-i-Khanan, Sa'adullah Khan 'Allami, Majduddin Muhammad bin Muhammad al-Ijl, Ikhtiyar Khan, Afzal Khan and Abdul 'Aziz Asaf Khan. Here we will give the life-sketches of only two of them.

Abdur Rahim Khan had read religious textbooks with Maulana Muhammad Amin Andjani and Qazi Izzamuddin Badakhshanl and the advanced books from 'Allama Fathullah Shirazi. Later, when he resided in Gujerat, he availed himself of the opportunity to sit at the feet of 'Allama Vajihuddin bin Nasrullah Gujerati. He also regularly held academic discussions with the scholars he always maintained in his retinue. The result was that he had become perfect in learning. On some

subjects he was recognized as an authority. He was an accomplished linguist. 'Abdur Razzaq Khawafi says in the *Ma'athir ul-Umara*, that he enjoyed complete mastery over Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Hindi and could compose excellent poems in all the four languages.

Abdur Rahim Khan's passion for learning was so strong that he was often seen reading a book on horseback in the battlefield. He would also read while in the bath room. At the same time he was second to none as a soldier. The conquests of Gujerat, Sind and the Deccan speak volumes for his military prowess.

His manners were sublime. He was benevolent, forbearing and generous. Azad Bilgrimi observes that if one were to put the riches given away by 'Abdur Rahim Khan in one pan of a balance and those by all the Safavid rulers (of Iran) in the other, the former would turn out to be the heavier.

So far as the religious and Spiritual side of his life was concerned, it is enough to know that he was one of the few favoured ones who enjoyed the confidence of Hazrat Mujaddid Alf Thani, and with whom the latter kept up a regular correspondence. The *Letters* of the great Mujaddid show in what high esteem he held 'Abdur Rahim Khan.

Asaf Khan

The story of Asaf Khan presents another conspicuous example of composite excellence and versatility. His

real name was 'Abdul 'Aziz. He received elementary education from his father, Hamid-ul-Mulk, and studied the 'Hadith and 'Fiqh' from Qazi Burhanuddin and ethics and philosophy from 'Abdul Fadhl Astrabadi. When his education was completed, he gained admission into the Imperial Court, rising to be a Minister in the reign of Bahadur Shah. When Mahmud Shah succeeded to the throne, he appointed Asaf Khan as the Prime Minister of the Empire. But neither position nor wealth could make any difference to his thirst for knowledge. He remained a scholar right up to the moment of his death.

Asaf Khan was once compelled, by political reasons, to migrate to Arabia where he lived for a number of years. The theological circles of Arabia were overwhelmed with wonder as they became aware of his intellectual and spiritual glory. Ibn Hajar Makki, the most distinguished Arab scholar of that time, was moved to write a book on him (which was perhaps the first to be written by a recognized Arab author in appreciation of an Indian Muslim). In it he paid glowing tributes to Asaf Khan's high learning and spiritual merit.

Asaf Khan's life in Arabia was genuinely that of an ascetic in spite of the pomp and splendour with which he was surrounded. It is worth mentioning that he recited ten Paras of the Qur'an every day in the *Tahajjud* prayers. We know from Ibn Hajar, "There was not a single occasion during the ten years he lived in Mecca on which he failed to offer

his prayers in congregation at the Holy Mosque. His lodgings being by the side of the *Mataf* his activities were constantly under full view of the people. One almost never saw him except when he was engaged in prayer or meditation or study or religious discussion. Books of the highest standard were discussed at all hours in his presence in which the '*Ulama* of the *Haram* participated eagerly."

Ibn Hajar goes on to say :

"A peculiar glow had come over Mecca during Asaf Khan's stay. The learned and the wise considered it a privilege to converse with him. There was a great fostering of learning.
 . . Students hurried to Mecca from all sides...They took great trouble to think out literary problems so as to make them the vehicles for getting nearer to him. This was because the liberality with which he patronized learning and bestowed favours upon students had not been witnessed in Mecca for a long time. His name was blessed in the streets of Mecca in the same way in which the cries of *Labbaik* are raised during the *Hajj* days."

Asaf Khan was invited to Constantinople by the Sultan of Turkey. It has been narrated by a friend who accompanied him that during this journey he did not even for once take advantage of the concessions granted by the *Shari'at* to travellers. While in Egypt, the Governor, Khusrau Pasha, sent him a robe of honour through a

special envoy. The envoy begged him to put on the robe if only for a minute, so that he could tell the Governor that Asaf Khan had worn it. The Governor would be very happy to know it. But Asaf Khan politely refused. The garment was made of silk and he could never prevail upon himself to wear it on.

We naturally do not mean to suggest that in former times every monarch was a Muzaffar Shah or an Aurangzeb or every minister or peer of the realm was an Abdur Rahim Khan or an Asaf Khan. What we want to impress is that the general quality of human material was much better in the past than it is now. Many of the things that were then considered essential for bringing the human personality to maturity have now been ruled out of existence under the devastating spell of Western ideals and inclinations.

Degeneration

Since religion was pursued in those days as a programme of life, worldly success was not allowed to thwart spiritual progress. With the levelling to the ground of the ethical ideals of Islam by Western convictions and aspirations, the human stuff has degenerated rapidly, mentally and morally, in the Muslim East. A few noteworthy exceptions like Mufti Sadruddin Khan, Nawab Qutbuddin Khan, Nawab Waziruddaula of Tonk, Nawab Kalb-i-Ali Khan of Rampur, Munshi Jamaluddin Khan, the Wazir of Bhopal, and Nawab Saiyid Siddiq Hasan Khan did, however, continue to appear

occasionally during the period of transition, in whom the severe self-discipline of an ascetic, the love for learning of a scholar and the alertness of a soldier were combined with princely power and wealth. But the process of social disintegration, having once started, proved irresistible. Dazzled by the power and progress of the Western nations, Muslims began to imitate Western social and economic institutions regardless of the consequences, although they were much inferior to their own and consisted of little more than the pursuit of material success with the ardour of an over-mastering urge. The prestige of religion was diminished. The teachings of the Prophet were forgotten. All those ideals of life, which truthfully displayed within themselves both the spiritual and the temporal aspects of life and did not subordinate the former to the latter, ceased to impress the minds of the great mass of Muslim society. Their place was taken by ideals far inferior to them. Life was assailed by frivolous desires and occupations to a degree that it had to eschew religious and spiritual cravings and activities. If one compared the daily occupations of the present-day Muslims with those of the aforementioned specimens of the old Islamic civilization, one would find it hard to believe that both professed the same ideology or that only a few generations actually separated one from the other. ■

The Philosopher in Political & Social Scenario

- S.M. Wazeh Rasheed Nadwi*

India is a country inhabited by people of multifarious origin, professing different faiths and extremely diverse cultural traditions and practices. Even among those following same religion, considerable variations in details exist, which depend on economic, linguistic and regional conditions, besides several other factors. There are instances of economic factor overriding all other considerations. Literacy, rather the lack of it, also comes into play. On attainment of freedom in 1947, those at the helm were seized of the aforementioned problems and formulated a Constitution based on secularism, democracy and equality, with sufficient provision for safeguarding interests of minorities and backward classes.

As the time wore on, the grip of the original mentors loosened, yielding ground to those with jaundiced views, who clamoured for declaring India as Hindu Rashtriya. This claim was motivated mainly by political considerations and its proponents, although not numerically in majority, gained access to positions of influence, in political as well as administrative set up. They were able

Director of Education, Nadwatul Ulema

to excite passions and communal violence, which after the holocaust of pre and post-independence era, had by and large been controlled. Indians, by and large are a peace loving lot, but the campaign, fanned by media also, had adverse effect upon the simple minds. Two of the main themes were the promulgation of a common civil code and attempts to rewrite history, obviously with perverse ulterior motives.

Need of the hour was a course of action, sans collision, a logical approach for drawing attention and convincing the authorities of their real duty and devotion to ground work. History bears out that adversity throws up a man for the crisis. At this juncture, the Almighty willed Hazrat Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, a paradigm of wisdom, insight, erudition, sense of proportion and a pragmatic outlook, to fill the role.

A glance through his own writings, particularly "*Karavan-i-Zindagi*" would best describe the foundation on which his lofty mental build up was based. He describes his upbringing in an environment which instilled in him an understanding of the maladies afflicting the Muslims, the

problems confronting them and be able to devise an effective remedial methodology. Appreciating the worthy services of those already working for the cause of Muslims, he cooperated with them whole heartedly, despite his main religious and literary predilection. His firm opinion was that the only way Muslims could carve a niche for themselves was to provide moral leadership, which had been almost extinct since long, and to prove useful citizens of the country as a whole, rising above parochial interests. Failing which they could be doomed.

Leaders and social workers already in the field were either too aloof and detached from intricacies, failing to take a real stand or, on the other extreme, resorted to confrontation, attracting violent reaction which culminated in rioting and oppression by the administration. Earlier efforts were in the form of political public meetings for campaigning against British rule or religious congregations, with discourses based mostly on legends. Added to these were heated debates between learned persons professing and advocating varying shades of faith and ideologies, which far from solving, made matters worse confounded.

Hazrat Maulana adopted a methodology based on Islamic teachings and lessons from history. He projected the true character and

message of the holy Prophet (pbuh), as the real mentor and guide for the entire humanity. The message comprised justice, welfare, cooperation forgiveness and respect for faith and rights of other communities.

This logical approach had a salubrious effect, clearing from the minds of non-Muslims, the cobwebs of serious misconceptions and negative notions about Islam. To the Muslims he conveyed the importance of amicability with all, irrespective of faith and culture and to play the role as integral part of the nation, without however, neglecting their own faith and culture. To these ends, his dextrous pen and penetrating oratory had a telling effect and touched the hearts of all.

He initiated a movement by the name of *Payam-i-Insaniyat* (message of humanity), for spreading the message of goodwill, equality and brotherhood. Another step was towards organising the Muslims. *Muslim Majlis-i-Mashwirat* (council for advice and counsel) was formed and proved considerably effective in restoration of confidence among the Muslims and in checking disruptive trend.

Maulana undertook extensive tours to appraise himself of ground realities, coordinated with other

organisations, inviting important and wise persons of majority community to one platform for emphasising the necessity of avoiding violence through better understanding of the interests of the whole nation. He drew attention of the ministers and administration towards specific cases for initiating corrective steps. In case of any inevitable flare up and riot, he would go to the root cause, establish links with persons who could prove effective for remedial measures and forestall future recurrence. His gift of penmanship and speech shook the very conscience of the ruling class and won over most of the clear headed non-Muslims.

The idea of *payam-i-insaniyat* originated at Siwan (Bihar), where Maulana addressed a large congregation, subsequent to a holocaust which took heavy toll of Muslim lives. An abominable image of Muslims aggravated by media had been formed in the minds of the majority. The address elicited following comments from a Hindu senior citizen in the audience: "Maulana, I have listened only to two speeches, one by CR Das (Deshbandhu) and the other is yours. Muslims and non-Muslims alike have a right over you. I intend to invite you to this city once again."

Both the organisations, *Payam-i-Insaniyat* and *Majlis-i-Mashavirat*,

under Maulana's guidance, went quite a way towards blaming the feelings and awakening the conscience of all communities, not to mention restoration of confidence among Muslims.

For the fulfillment of his mission, Maulana did not dither from speaking the truth on the face; be it Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, VP Singh, Narsimha Rao or Atal Behari Vajpayee, as Prime Minister. His sole purpose was to convey what, in his opinion, was good for all classes and the country as a whole.

His absolute aloofness from political affiliations or ambitions along with abstinence from personal gains and shunning of rewards, afforded him a position of impartiality as well as authority to his actions. His word carried weight and elicited attention at all levels and from all directions.

Some of the important subjects were the issue of vasectomy, Shah Bano case, and Babri Masjid. He was all for a sane logical solution to the latter and interacted not only with the government but also the Senior Shankaracharya.

Towards the end it pained him no end to find things coming to such a pass that people were now nostalgic about the days of British Raj. ■

Islam and Civilisation

- Muhammad Qutub

'Do you want us to go back to the age when people lived in tents—a thousand years ago? Islam was all right for those savage and uncouth of the desert, for it was simple enough to appeal to and attract them. But will a civilization based on the concept of God be of any use in the world of today, the age of supersonic planes, hydrogen bombs and movie cinemas. It cannot keep up pace with the advance civilization today, for it is static and, therefore, we have no other course but to the shake it off if we are to become truly civilized and advanced like the rest of the world.'

I was reminded of the doubts such as mentioned above when sometime back I came across an "educated" Englishman who had been for the last two years stationed in Egypt. He was a member of a group of UNO experts that had been sent to Egypt to help the Egyptian Government raise the standard of living of the Egyptian peasants. But as despite all their "love" for the people of this region, they not know or care to learn their language, the Egyptian Government assigned me the task to act as an interpreter between them and the local peasants. Thus I came across the "educated" Englishman.

At the very outset I told him frankly that we, Egyptians, hated them and would continue hating them so long as they continue committing aggression in any part of the East. I told him that we also hated their allies, the Americans and others, for their unjust attitude towards Egypt, Palestine etc. taken aback, he looked at me for a while and then said:

"Are you a communist?"

I told him that I was not a communist but a Muslim who believed that Islam had a far superior civilization to their capitalist civilization as well as the communist one and that the Islam was the most excellent system yet tried by mankind as embraced the whole of man's life and struck a reasonable balance different aspects of his existence.

Thus we continued talking together for about three hours at the end of which he said: "Maybe that what you tell me about Islam is correct but I for one would deprive myself of the fruits of the modern civilization. I like traveling in planes and enjoy listening to the charming music on the radio: I would not like to forgo all these pleasures."

Deeply surprised at this answer I said: "But who forbids you all these

pleasures?"

"Doesn't accepting Islam mean to go back to the age of barbarism and life in tents?"

It is strange indeed that doubts such as these are continually cast against Islam although there is no reasonable basis for their existence as those who have gone through the history of this region shall be a witness. Never even for a single moment did Islam stand in the way of civilization and progress.

Islam was revealed to a people composed mostly of Bedouins who were so rough and cruel-hearted that the Qur'an said of them: "The Bedouins are more hypocritical and Godless."

One of great miracles of Islam is that it succeeded in changing such rough and coarse Bedouins into a nation of human beings. Not only were they guided to the right path and elevated from animality to the loftier spheres of humanity, but they also became guides who directed humanity to the path of God. This is a clear illustration of Islam's miraculous ability to civilise people and refine souls.

There is no doubts that the refinement of the soul is in itself a noble end worthy of human aspiration and striving; it is one of the ultimate goals of civilization. But Islam was not contented with mere refinement. It always adopted all the manifestations

of civilization which capture popular interest nowadays and which are regarded by some as the core of life. Islam patronised and fostered the civilization of all the countries it conquered so long as such civilizations were not contrary to monotheism and did not divert people from doing good actions.

Islam also patronized and fostered the Greek scientific heritage including medicine, astrology, mathematics, physics, chemistry and philosophy. Islam continued to add new scientific achievements which bear witness that Muslims were deeply and seriously interested in scientific research. It was on the cream of the Islamic scientific achievements of Andalusia that the European Renaissance and its modern scientific inventions were based.

Now, when did Islam oppose a civilization which serve's humanity?

What is Islam's attitude towards the Western civilization of today?

The attitude of Islam towards the present Western civilization is the same as that it manifested towards every past civilization. Islam accepts all the goodness that such civilization can yield but at the same time it rejects their evils. Islam has never advocated any policy of scientific or materialistic isolationism. It does not fight against other civilization for personal and racial considerations because it believes in the unity of

humanity and the closeness of the relationship among people of different races and inclinations.

It should be known that the Islamic cause does not oppose modern inventions nor do Muslims require that the appliance and tools should bear the inscriptions: "In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful" before they agree to use such tools and appliances at their homes, farms etc. it is quite sufficient if such tools and appliances should be used in the name of God and for His sake. After all, tools and appliances do not have any religion or homeland, but the way of their use influences all the people on earth. A gun, for example, is an invention which has no religion, colour or homeland but you will not be Muslim if you use it in committing aggression against others. Islam requires that a gun shall only be used repulsing aggression or in spreading the Word of God throughout the world.

The motion picture is a modern invention too. You can be a good Muslim if you use it in portraying clean emotions, noble characters or depicting the conflict among people for the sake of goodness. But you will not be a Muslim when you use it in exhibiting pornography, unruly passions or corrupted people wallowing in all kinds of vice-moral, intellectual or spiritual. Such motion pictures are bad and trivial not only because they excite the lower

instincts of man but also because they also represent life as cheap and trivial existence restricted to trivial and cheap ends which can never be proper spiritual food for humanity.

The Islamic faith has never opposed the adoption of scientific inventions achieved by humanity at large. Muslims should make use of all good scientific achievements. The Prophet (saws) says, "The study of science is an ordinance." It is needless to say that the study of science, as used above, includes all kinds of knowledge. The Prophet called on people to study all branches of knowledge everywhere.

In conclusion, it will be said that Islam does not oppose civilization as long as it serves humanity. But if a civilization consists of alcoholic liquor-drinking, gambling, moral prostitution, colonialism and enslaving people under different names, Islam will fight against such so-called civilization and will do its best to protect humanity from succumbing to its temptations.

ISLAM AND REACTIONARISM

It is often alleged by some misguided people that some aspects of the Islamic way of life are no longer acceptable to people nor in line with the requirements of modern life. They add that some Islamic traditions were originally laid down for past generations and, therefore, have exhausted their ends and have become reactionary

restrictions which obstruct and delay progress.

They would frequently ask such questions:

“Do you still insist on prohibiting interest which is an indispensable economic necessity of modern times?”

“Do you still insist on collecting Az-Zakat and distributing it in the same town where it is collected? Az-Zakat is a primitive procedure which is incompatible with the modern system of government. Besides, Az-Zakat humiliates the poorer inhabitants of a town or village by making them feel that they are recipients of charity from the richer citizens.”

“Do you still insist on prohibiting liquor-drinking, gambling, free association of the sexes, dancing and having mistresses and lovers—all of which are indispensable social necessities which must be adopted as part of the general progress and development?”

It is true that Islam prohibits interest but it is not true that interest is an economic necessity. In modern times there have been two economic systems which do not permit interest. Both Islam and communism, however different they may be in other respects, prohibit interest. Communism managed to find the necessary power for enforcing its doctrines, but Islam has not yet mustered its forces. But the present

circumstances indicates that Islam is on the path to power and revival.

When the rule of Islam is established, the economic system will be based on foundations other than interest which will not be an economic necessity. Similarly, communist Russia laid down its economics on a basis which excludes interest.

There is no doubt that usury is not an indispensable economic necessity in modern times. It may be necessary for the capitalist world because capitalists cannot exist without it. Nevertheless, leading Western economists do not approve of interest and warn that it will inevitably lead to the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few people. The masses will be gradually deprived of wealth and consequently they will be enslaved by the richer people. Western capitalism could supply us with many examples which prove these facts. It is to be remembered that Islam prohibited interest and monopoly, the two pillars of capitalism about one thousand years before the existence of capitalism. Islam was revealed by God Almighty Who can review all generations at one time, and Who knows what evils, economic catastrophes and feuds will be brought about by interest.

Interest may be a humiliating necessity where economy is dependent on foreign aid. But when our Islamic economy is independent and

well-established, our foreign relations will be based on free mutual reciprocity but not on subjection. In such a case our economy will be guided by Islamic principles which prohibit interest. The rest of the world will then look to us as a developing and progressive force.

As for Az-Zakat, it was previously pointed out that it is not a charity donated to the poor but an ordinance prescribed by God as well as a right entrusted to the state.

In this chapter we shall deal with the accusation brought against Islam on account of the local character of Az-Zakat, i.e., its distribution in the same village where it is collected.

It is to be regretted that many intellectuals will greatly acclaim and welcome any Western imported system and treat it as the pinnacle of civilization but when the same system is advocated by Islam, it is regarded as a symbol of backwardness and reactionarism.

It may be useful to remind such "intellectuals" that the administrative system in U.S.A. is based on absolute decentralization. The village or town is an independent economic, political and social unit within the general framework of the state as well as the United States. Now, the municipal council of each independent unit imposes certain taxes which are collected from the people of the unit and expended on the educational, medical, transport, social services of the same town or vi lage. If

the revenues are more than the expenditure, the balance will be sent to the authorities of the city or to the state. On the other hand, if revenues are less than expenditure, the balance will be paid by the state. There is no doubt that this is an excellent administrative system which organizes the efforts and does not burden the central government with all the services. On the other hand, central authorities cannot understand the requirements of smaller units in the same way as the local authorities do.

Our intellectuals express their great admiration for such a system. They forget that this very system had been established by Islam fourteen hundred years ago. Taxes were collected by the local authorities of each village and were spent on the fulfillment of local needs. The balance between revenues and expenditure will be sent to or borrowed from the central Public Treasury.

As for the distribution of Az-Zakat, it was previously explained that nothing in Islam provides that it should be distributed among the recipients in cash or in kind only. It may be distributed to the poor in the form of educational, medical services or by direct support of those who cannot work owing to old age, weakness or infancy.

If we apply the rules of Islam to our present society, we shall have to do no more than to establish smaller units which look after their own local affairs

within the framework of the regional centers: the state, the Islamic world and all the world.

As for gambling, liquor and free association of the sexes-these are prohibited by Islam regardless of the silly attacks of the so called "progressive" pioneers. It might be significant to remember that even in France which is wholly addicted to liquor, a lady member of the National Assembly recently tabled a motion for the prohibition of liquor.

Addiction to liquor is symptom of social or individual malady. Liquor and other narcotics are needed only by delinquent societies where the difference among classes are so great that some people live in licentious luxury which deadens their senses while others live in utter deprivation which drives them to seek and escape from reality, and live in a world of their own invention. Narcotics and liquor may also spread in societies dominated by oppression, tyranny or in societies where freedom of thought is subjected to many restrictions, or where people are obsessed with the struggle for earning a living, or where people suffer from the hateful and monstrous noise of modern machinery.

But this does not imply that such social maladies justify addiction to liquor. Addiction to liquor is a symptom of the malady. It is only logical that the

social malady should be treated before prohibiting liquor. That is exactly what Islam did. It wiped out all the maladies and causes which drove people to liquor-addiction; then and only then it prohibited liquor drinking. Instead of criticising Islam, the modern Western civilization should rather learn how spiritual maladies are treated by economic, social, political, intellectual and physical reorientation.

As for gambling, we need not dwell at great length upon pointing out that only trivial-minded people would approve of it.

Now let us discuss the question of the association of the sexes, which has become the center of great arguments.

Many superficial-minded people accuse Islam of reactionarism on account of the restrictions it imposed on the association of the sexes. They express great admiration for the French civilization which permits a pair of lovers to hold each other in public places and forget all that is around when they are enraptured in a wonderful kiss. No one would trouble them, even the policeman would stand by to protect them from passersby. Woe to those who resent such a scene because they themselves will be despised!

Some others express great admiration for the American way of life. Their, they say, the people are quite

frank with themselves. They admit that sex is a biological necessity. There they recognized this and fostered such necessity. Every lad has a girlfriend and every lass has a boyfriend. They accompany one another most of the time and go out for picnics where they rid themselves of the persistent sexual burden and respond to the call of sex. They return from such picnics so relaxed that they can devote themselves to their studies and work in a way which will bring about an ever-increasing measure of prosperity and production. In this manner, the whole nation will be going ahead.

But those trivial and superficial-minded people who are so enthralled by the Western moral corruption do forget that France could not withstand the first German attack. It was "brought to its knees not only for lack of military training and equipment but also because it was a nation without any desire for national pride, a nation which used to wallow in corruption and was exhausted by sensual pleasures. The French people were afraid that the tall buildings of Paris and its houses of pleasure might be destroyed by bombs. Is this what the so-called intellectuals wants us to do?

As for America, it is sufficient to quote American statistics which show that 38% of secondary school girls are pregnant. The percentage of pregnancy among university undergraduates is

less than that because they are more experienced in using contraceptives.

There is no doubt that getting rid of the burden of sex is a worthy goal. Islam pays great attention to this question because it knows very well that the preoccupation with sex will decrease production and confine people to a world of sex from which they cannot depart. But a worthy goal should be realized through worthy means. It cannot be said that polluting society or permitting teenagers to rush out one another as animals are worthy means.

If some misguided people wrongly believe that the great American production is an outcome of sexual corruption, let them know that it is a purely materialistic production which may result in man's replacement by robots. As for intellectual and spiritual values, it should not be forgotten that America enslaves Negroes and subjects them to the worst treatment ever witnessed by humanity. America supports the cause of colonialism in all parts of the world. It is impossible to separate the spiritual decline represented by submission to animal passions and the spiritual decline manifested in colonialism and slavery—both are related to a kind of decline to which truly civilized nations would not descend.

There is no doubt that the majority of people in these days derive great

pleasure from associating with beautiful and elegant women. This is quite true because tasting a number of dishes is more desirable than having to repeat the same dish! But is pleasure the only goal in life? And has anyone denied that the wild passions have always been highly desirable? The pleasure of the flesh and the unruly passions are not discoveries of the western world of the twentieth century. The Greek, the Romans and the Persians had known such pleasures and were down to their ears in the pleasures of the flesh. But it was the addiction of the said nations to the sensual pleasures that distracted them from their serious pursuits and invariably brought about the end of their rule and supremacy.

Although the West has considerable materialistic potentialities (science, means production and the mad rush to work), yet its addiction to sensual passions is leading to its partial downfall. But if we do not possess the necessary power because the circumstances of the last two centuries were not in favour, what benefits do we hope to gain by giving in to our passions in the name of civilization and progress or for fear of being accused of reactionarism? If we submit to our unruly passions, our circumstances will never improve and we shall always be deteriorating. All those "free thinkers" who advocate the abandonment of traditions are but colonialist stooges.

Colonialism understands and encourages such writers and thinkers and knows how much they serve its evil objectives by corrupting the morals and ethics of people and diverting the interests of the youth to the pursuit of pleasures and passions.

We often hear many misguided people say: look at woman in the Western societies and behold how they have been elevated from mere females to full-fledged women. They have become human creatures playing a role in social life. There is no doubt that woman, after taking regular work and associating with the other sex, have had new experiences which could not have been available if they had confined their activities to looking after their homes and children. But let us ask this question: Did such experiences add anything to the capacities of woman as such? Or did these add some potentialities while curtailing others?

We ask again: Did such experiences add anything to human existence as a whole? Or did merely add something while curtailing other aspects?

The Western woman has become a good friend to man. She accepts his flirtation and to his sexual desire, and she even shares some of his problems but she is no longer a good wife or mother. This is supported by the fact that the rate of divorce in U.S.A. has reached a monstrous degree of 40%. In Europe,

the rate of divorce is a little lower but keeping mistresses and lovers is a common practice among married people. If the Western woman was a good wife and could settle in a family to which she would devote all her care, the rate of divorce in U.S.A. would not be so high, nor would the escape from home be a common practice in Europe. It should be pointed out that working woman do not have the experiences necessary for good mothers. They would not have the time nor the psychological aptitude to meet their obligations as mothers.

On the other hand, apart from pleasure and delight humanity as a whole has almost gained nothing from the free association of the sexes. There is no doubt that neither the few woman who have become deputies, ministers or heads of departments, nor the thousands or millions of them who work in factories, stores, public houses or brothels, could solve the problem of the world. Is it possible that a woman cannot play an effective part in the social life except by making speeches in parliament or signing directives in departments? No one can say that a woman does not play a prominent part in society when she brings up her children in the proper way and presents the world with good citizens. A woman may be intoxicated by ovation in parliament or admiration in salons and streets but all these are nothing when

compared to the danger of supplying the world with motherless generations who have not experienced the love which neutralizes the evil desire in their souls. Such love is only given by mothers who are completely devoted to such a sacred duty.

It is true that we should not be too hard on women by depriving them of the pleasures of life, or of asserting their personal existence. But life does not permit us-both men and women-to have our own ways or to assert our existence in the manner we like.

What would happen if we were selfish enough to enjoy ourselves without any limits?

We shall be succeeded by miserable generations whose misery would be the outcome of our selfishness and delinquency. It is not in the interest of women as a sex that future generations may be miserable simply because the women of a particular generation have had excessive pleasure.

Islam cannot be blamed for acting in the interest of all the generations without favouring anyone generation to others because it regards humanity as an endless chain of connected generations. But Islam might be blamed were it to prohibit all kinds of pleasures or fight against natural propensities or repress them. ■

Root Out Illiteracy

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

A recent report says there are 700 million illiterate people in the world and of these one third are in India. About 287 million people are illiterate in the country and two third of these are women alone. Such a scenario of illiteracy in the country is quite pathetic and alarming.

No doubt, education is an essential tool for understanding realities of life. It is backbone of the nation. No nation can progress sans this asset. All religions emphasize on acquiring knowledge. We find that in spite of its importance scant attention is paid in this direction.

Time has come when we should gird up the loins and come forward to work for spreading education and motivate others to achieve this precious essence without which our life is bleak and meaningless. The illiteracy is the greatest hindrance in our progress and prosperity. Needless to add that human beings are considered superior to other creatures of Allah by virtue of knowledge.

Emphasizing the importance and significance of education vice-President Mohammad Hamid Ansari has rightly said that to combat the ghost of communalism, people of the country would have to equip themselves with the weapon of education. If all get educated,

surely there will be communal harmony and peace in the nation. Education also plays a vital role in the development of the country. We will have to educate every person if we want to become a developed country. He further added that "The southern states of the country focus on education and have given a number of intellectuals and scientists but the northern India still lags behind in education. We need to focus on education in the coming times and should take steps to improve the situation".

Here, it is significant to note that Islam has made education mandatory for its adherents. Even the first revelation was sent to prophet Muhammad (PBUH) by Almighty God indicates towards knowledge.

The holy Quran says:

"Read in the name of thy Lord Who created man, out of a leech like clot: Read and thy Lord is most bountiful. He who taught the use of the pen, taught man that which he knew not". (S. 96A. 1-5)

The holy Qur'an further says: "God brought you out of the wombs of your mother knowing nothing, but gave you the faculties of hearing, sight and perception Would you not thank Him? (16:78) Is the man devoid of knowledge

the equal of the man in the know? Do you not think? (39:9) O my Lord! Advance me in knowledge.” (2:114)

If we think why God commenced the first (PBUH) revelation with reading, we find that the age in which prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was sent, was the age of ignorance. It is obvious that without knowledge ignorance and stagnation can not be dispelled. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has laid great emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge. The Prophet said: “Seeking knowledge is incumbent upon every Muslim man and woman”.

“Seek knowledge from cradle to the grave”. “Acquire knowledge even if one has to go to China.” Knowledge, says a Tradition of the sacred Prophet, is the lost property of a Muslim and he is the rightful owner. The Prophet further said: “Acquire knowledge, because he who acquires it in the way of the Lord performs an act of piety; who speaks of it, praises the Lord, who seeks it adores God, who dispenses instruction in it, bestows alms, and who imparts it to its fitting objects, performs an act of devotion to God, Knowledge enables its possessor to distinguish what is forbidden from what its not, it lights the way to Heaven; it is our friend in the desert, our society in solitude, our companion when bereft of friends; it guides us to happiness; it sustains us in misery; it is our ornament in the company of friends; it serves as an armour against enemies. With

knowledge the servant of God rises to the height of goodness and to a noble position, associates with sovereigns in this world and attains to the perfection of happiness in the next”.

Noted Scholar K.K. Usman has precisely said: “Prophet Muhammad for the first time in the history of Arabian peninsula made knowledge an essential tool for understanding realities of life. Under his inspiring guidance, learning acquired respect and reverence which remained the hallmark of Islamic civilization for centuries afterwards. The importance which the Quran attaches to knowledge can further be explained by the frequency with which it has used the ‘word ilm (knowledge). According to one estimate it has been used 750 times in the Quran. In the mind of a Muslim, knowledge should include everything which reason and Revelation can unearth for the betterment of mankind”. (This is Islam, p, 135)

It should be kept in mind that Islam always emphasizes on acquiring profitable and advantageous knowledge. Prophet Muhammad’s (PBUH) supplication is as follows: “O Allah, I seek your refuge from a knowledge that does not benefit, from a heart that does not fear, from a soul that is not satisfied, and from a prayer that is not granted.”

Swami Vivekananda says: “What is education? Is it book-learning? No. Is it diverse knowledge? Not even that. The training by which the current and

expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful is called education. Now consider, is that education as a result of which the will, being continuously choked by force through generations, is now well-nigh killed out; is that education under whose sway even the old ideas, Let alone the new ones, are that education which is slowly making man a machine? (Teachings of Swami Vivekananda, P,50)

Mahatma Gandhi held same views regarding education. He said: "Live as if you were to die tomorrow.

Learn as if you were to live for ever".

It should be a bounden duty of a parent to impart education to children from their early childhood. In fact, it is such a gem that creates awareness, and helps in development of mental faculties. It provides ability to distinguish between good and evil. To have a refined, well-mannered and suave child who may later become an asset to the family and society in general is really nice. Parents must, therefore, assert on proper and good education of their progeny.

Boycott Companies Violating Human Rights of Palestinians: UN Special Investigator

The UN Special Investigator on Human Rights in the Palestinian Territories, Richard Falk on October 24 made a call to boycott Caterpillar, Hewlett Packard, Motorola, Veolia Environment, G4S, Dexia, Volvo Group, Assa Abloy, Ahava, Elbit Systems, Mehadrin, Riwal Holding Group and Cemex. He called for a boycott of all companies that have dealings with Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem until they adhere to international rights standards and practices. These companies are violating international human rights and humanitarian laws by exploiting Palestinian resources and helping Israel construct illegal settlements and provide security for them.

In a report presented to the UN General assembly, Falk said a number of Israeli-owned and multinational corporations headquartered in the US, Europe and Mexico appear to be violating international human rights and humanitarian laws by exploiting Palestinian resources and helping Israel construct illegal settlements and provide security for them.

Falk said the call for a boycott is an effort to take infractions of international law seriously and "use what influence we have to change behaviour." He said the pace of Israeli settlement building has accelerated and Israel has ignored UN resolutions condemning the practice, so "there is a sense that what the U.N. says doesn't count."

Falk, a Professor Emeritus of International Law at Princeton University, has previously angered Israel by comparing the Jewish state to Nazi Germany and accusing it of crimes against humanity because of its treatment of Palestinians. Israel has barred Falk from visiting the Palestinian territories.

In the report, Falk reiterated his request that the Israeli government cooperate with his efforts, as he said it is required to do under the UN Charter.

Rabita Adab - e - Islami Aalami's 31st Annual Programme to be held in Kolkata

This is for general information that Aalami Rabita Adab Islami. The International League of Islamic Literature (Indian Sub continent) is going to organize its 31st Annual Conference in Kolkata, India on 14th to 16th December 2012 under the organization of Jibreel International School (A unit of Babul Uloom). The topic of the seminar is: Comparative study of the poetic works of the poets of the Arab world and the subcontinent”.

This literary and educational seminar will be presided by Hazrat Maulana Syed Rabey Hasani Nadwi, Qari Md. Ismail Zafar (Chief Administrator-Babul Uloom) will be the president of the reception committee and Mr. Sultan Ahmed (Ex - Minister of State for Tourism, Govt. of India.) will be the patron of the seminar.

Many scholars, authors, leaders and educators of national and International repute will attend this programme. Programme consists many sessions; the inaugural session will take place at Science City Conference Hall, while other programmes will be held at Hajj House (Park Circus). A token of appreciation will be given in Jibreel International School at Mahindra Roy land to those who contribute in making this seminar a success.

On this occasion when scholars from across the country and neighboring countries are coming to Kolkata, a grand public meeting on Islah - e - Moashra will be held on the Last day, the 16th December at Park Circus Ground where scholars and educators will give speeches on important Muslim issues. Rabita's Annual programme was held earlier also at Kolkata in 2005 under the banner of Babul Uloom, Dr.Sabah Ismail Nadwi (+91 9831058963) is the Convener of the seminar.

Around the World

LIBYA'S NEW PRIME MINISTER PROPOSES NEW CABINET

Libya's new prime minister says he has proposed a Cabinet representing the breadth of the country's political spectrum and including members of the main liberal and Islamist parties. Ali Zidan told the National General Congress that he tried to strike a geographic balance between different regions and cities, in order to avoid "past mistakes or provoke the street." Zidan, a former human rights lawyer elected on Oct. 14, is the second prime minister to be named by the 200-member parliament. His predecessor Mustafa Abushaqur was dismissed after legislators found his Cabinet proposals lacking in diversity and putting forward unknown individuals for key posts. The proposed 27-member Cabinet is now awaiting parliamentary approval, and faces a vote of confidence later in the day.

US UNDERMINING REVOLUTION: SNC

Syrian main exiled opposition group on November 2 accused Washington of undermining the country's revolution by seeking to overhaul how regime opponents are organised. Two days ahead of key opposition talks due in Qatar, the Syrian National Council lashed out at US criticism of the group for not being fully representative of Syria's diverse dissident groups. "Any discussions aimed at passing over the Syrian National Councilor at creating new bodies to replace it are an attempt to undermine the Syrian revolution by sowing the seeds of division," the SNC said in a statement.

Talk of an overhaul "is a sign of a lack of seriousness of the forces meant to support the Syrian people who are facing the murderous regime" of President Bashar

Assad, the SNC said. Reacting to accusations it is not inclusive, the group said it had grown from 280 to 420 members, that a third of its members are on-the-ground activists and that 15 per cent of its members are women. Syrian fighters have taken full control of a strategic crossroads in the northwest that further limits the government's ability to reinforce its troops in second city Aleppo.

TENSION BREWS IN VALLE OVER DESECRATION OF QUR'AN AND KA'BA

Communal tension developed in Kishtawada district of Jammu and Kashmir on October 30 after the publication of objectionable pictures of the Qur'an and Ka'ba on social networking site Facebook. People gathered in a large number to show their anger and pelted stones on police stations. They said that the Police Department did not take any action until it was too late and the objectionable matter spread like fire over the internet for a long time. The police took notice of it only when the people came out of their houses and protested.

Later the police arrested Kishori Sharma, Kirti Sharma and Bansilal on the charge of uploading blasphemous photos of the holy Qur'an and Ka'ba. The Imam of Kishtawara Jama Masjid, however, has called a bandh in the district as a protest. Two of the three accused, Bansilal and Kishori Sharma are working as teachers in Department of Education. The District Commissioner has dismissed them from their job. Earlier, more than 18 people had died in the state during a protest against release of a blasphemous movie in America.

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