



# THE FRAGRANCE OF EAST

Vol. XIII No.2

February , 2011

**Academy of Journalism and Publicity**

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# THE FRAGRANCE OF EAST

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## Islamic Culture

### S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

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

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

## CONTENTS

<b>1- Noble Qualities of the Prophet: A Comprehensive Description</b>	<b>S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2- The Messenger of Peace</b>	<b>S.M. Wazeh Rasheed Nadwi</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>3- Islam and Science</b>	<b>Rokhiya Jaferi Siddique</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>4- Italian Renaissance</b>	<b>S.M.H. Akbar</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>5- Growth of Science in Muslim Era</b>	<b>Muhammad Ilyas</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>6- The Concept of Taharah in Islam</b>	<b>H.A. Abdulsalam</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>7- Da'wah (Call to the truth) - An Inseparable Act of Mankind</b>	<b>Obaidur Rahman Nadwi</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>9- Around the World</b>		<b>39</b>

## Wisdom of Qur' an

*"As for the boat, it belonged to a poor humble people who worked at sea. I wished to damage it. Behind them was a king seizing away every boat by brute force."* (Surah al-Kahf-A, 79)

### Commentary:

Imam Shafe i has used this verse to arrive at the conclusion that a faqir is worse off than a miskin, since although the people of this instance owned a boat, Allah referred to them as masakin (Razi).

The word "aman" has the connotation both of behind as well as in front (Ibn Jarir).

That is, the king was confiscating every well-maintained boat but ignored this one because it was broken. ●

*As for the boy, his parents were believers. We feared that he would overburden them with rebellion and disbelief.* (Surah al-Kahf-A, 80)

### Commentary:

Ahmed has a report that Najdah Hirawi (a Haruri [Khariji sect: Au.]: Alusi) wrote ibn 'Abbas a letter asking him if he could kill some boys (captured after a battle). He wrote back, "If you are a Khadir, capable of differentiating between a believer and an unbeliever, then you might." According to another version in Ibn abi Shaybah, the reply also said, "... but you are not. Indeed, the Prophet has forbidden their killing, therefore, free them." And, according to a report in Muslim, Abu Da'ud and Tirmidhi, the Prophet said, "The boy that Khadir killed was created, the day he was created, an unbeliever. Had he reached his age of puberty, he would have only confronted his parents with rebellion and unbelief" (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Shawkani and others, under verse 74). ●

## Pearls From the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

*"It is related by Abdullah bin Aufa that the Apostle of God said: "God is with the judge, i.e., His help and guidance is reaching him as long he is just and fair, and when he (departs form the path of justice and fairness) and becomes unjust and tyrannical, the Lord leaves the man alone the Devil attaches himself to him."*

-Trimizi

### Commentary:

It tells that as long as a judge or ruler honestly desires to act justly and impartially, the help and guidance of the Lord is available to him, but when his intention is changed and he adopts the course of injustice and tyranny, the Lord withholds His help, and he becomes as plaything in the hands of the Devil. ●

*It is related by Abdullah bin Amr bin el-Aas and Abu Hurairah, they both relate, saying that the Apostle of God said: "When a ruler has to decide a case, and, (in order to decide justly and correctly), he exerts himself and applies his mind, and decides correctly, he will get a double reward: (one for the intention and effort to decide justly, and the other for giving a fair and correct decision), and when he tries sincerely to get to the truth of the matter and decide correctly, and, yet gives a wrong decision, he will get one reward (for endeavouring to arrive at a just and correct decision)."*

-Bukhari and Muslim

### Commentary:

Of primary importance, in this Tradition, is the principle that if a judge, legist or ruler tries his level best to find out where the truth of the matter lies and what is the correct legal position with regard to it, and even then fails to decide properly, he will still be deserving of reward in the judgement of God, for his intention was pure and he really wanted to decide with justice and it is this much that anyone can, after all, do. But, clearly, it appertains only to people who are worthy of it, and the permission of ijtehad can, evidently, not be given to everyone, irrespective of the qualifications. ●



## Affability Pays

Affability, civility, courteousness, benevolence, consideration, generosity, indulgence and kindness are the qualities of a good human being. Islam from the very beginning has been championing for these features. Our scriptures, lives of prophets and sufis teach us and persuade us to adhere to these virtues. Holy Quran and Traditions (Sayings of Prophet) guide us to lead a pious and peaceful life. In fact a perfect adherence to the guide-lines provided in Islam make a Muslim an absolute person.

Our history is full of instances in which we have shown graciousness and magnanimity and earned laurels. An exemplary character of prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his colleagues helped in the rapid expansion of Islam and in a short span of time it crossed the boundaries of Arab and reached far flung places.

Of late, in India a certain group has launched a campaign to denigrate Islam and present it in a foul and distorted way. They

believe that their communalism is in fact nationalism and if Muslims adhere to their religion and ask for their dues in a democratic and secular state then they are anti-national. Mosques, madrasas, burial grounds have always been their targets and in their eyes Muslims are "person-a non grate" here. In this back ground a very interesting news has appeared in a section of media. We reproduce below extract of it taken from the Indian Express (January 8, 2011)

"Investigators claimed that a curious change of heart led Swami Aseemanand (58), arrested for his involvement in the Mecca Masjid blast, to reveal details of the conspiracy behind five major blasts including the February 2007 attack on the Samjhauta Express.

Key to this, Senior officials said, was Aseemanand's interaction with a 21 year old he met in Chanchalaguda Jail, Hyderabad during his judicial custody in November-December 2010.

The man Sheikh Abdu Kaleem was among 15 arrested

earlier by the Hyderabad police investigating the Mecca Masjid blast. Kaleem, 19 then and worked as a Laboratory technician, was arrested soon after. Aseemanand was arrested in November 19, 2010 from Haridwar in Uttra Khand, after he changed location over 30 times in two years to evade arrest. According to Investigators he was not cooperating in the initial days after his arrest. He spent most of the period from November 20 to December 24 in Judicial custody in Chanchalaguda Jail where nearly 70 percent of the inmates were Muslim. It was here that Aseemanand came in contact with Kaleem.

Sources said Kaleem was very kind and helpful to Aseemanand. He would read loud newspaper reports about the Mecca Masjid blast case and would provide him with warm water to drink and share his home food with him. Throughout these interactions Kaleem introduced himself as an accused arrested in Mobile smuggling case. It was

the Jail warden who told Aseemanand that Kaleem had been earlier arrested in relation to the Mecca Masjid blast case.

In his confession statement Aseemanand said it was Kaleem's "good conduct" that moved his conscience. He found out during his time in custody that Kaleem had spent nearly a year and half in custody in the blast case the confession reads. It says "During my stay in the Jail, Kaleem helped me a lot and used to serve me in the jail by bringing water, food etc. for me. Due to good conduct of Kaleem I was very much moved and my conscience asked me to do "pryahchit" by making a confessional statement so that real culprits can be punished and no innocent (like Kaleem) had to suffer." (end)

Kaleem, an innocent young man proved true to his Islamic background that left an ever lasting impression on a man whose hands are soaked with blood of hundred sinless and blameless people. (S. A.)

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# **Noble Qualities of the Prophet: A Comprehensive Description**

**S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi**

We will present in this write-up testimonies about the moral excellence and superbness of the Prophet of Allah by two of his Companions, Hind bin Abi Hala (son of Ummul M'umineen Khadija and maternal uncle of Hasan and Hussain) and Ali ibn Abi Talib – may Allah be pleased with all of them. These two Companions observed the Prophet in the private and the public, knew very closely the individual, family, and social aspects of his life, and had a reputation for relating their observations authentically. Hind bin Abi Hala says:

"The Prophet of Allah, blessings and peace be on him, was always deeply engrossed in concern for life-after-death and in thoughts relating to matters of the hereafter. This mood continued to prevail on him in such a way that he could not get rest at any time. He often kept long silence and did not speak unless there was a need. When he talked, he spoke clearly until he finished. His talk was clear and straightforward; it was neither unnecessarily long nor unnecessarily short. He was mild in temper and soft in tongue, not rude or inconsiderate. He did not insult anybody nor did he like anybody to insult him. He deeply appreciated a gift of Allah, always considered it great even if it was small (to the extent that it might not easily be seen), and

never found fault with it. He neither showed dislike for a food item nor indulged in admiring it. If anything unpleasant happened to him relating to things of the world, he never got angry, but if a right of Allah was violated, nothing could withstand his wrath until he took revenge. When he moved his hand [during a conversation] to express himself, he moved it fully. When he expressed surprise, he turned his hand upside down, during a talk; he used to touch the palm of his right hand with the thumb of his left hand. If a thing displeased him, he turned his face against it, ignored it, and kept quiet. When he was happy, he lowered his gaze. His laughing was often a smile in which his teeth, which were as bright and clean as hailstones, became visible."

And Ali ibn Abi Talib, another prominent Companion and close associate of the Prophet, describes his qualities in the following words:

"By nature he was averse to aspersion, lewdness and indecency and never indulged in any such act even under pressure of a situation. He did not ever talk loudly in the market. He did not return evil with evil; instead, he preferred to forgive. He never raised his hand on anybody except in a Holy War. He never hit a slave or a woman. I did not see him taking revenge from anybody for a

personal offence, except when a person violated the limits established by Allah. If a commandment of Allah the Almighty was violated and put to disgrace, he became extremely angry at the offender. When he had a choice between two things, he always preferred the convenient one. When he came to his house, he lived like an ordinary person: he himself washed his clothes, milked his goats, and performed other household chores.

"He guarded his tongue and spoke only about things which concerned him. He was courteous with people and did not make them unhappy. If a respectable person of a tribe or community visited him, he showed respect to him and appointed him to a respectable post. He was careful in making comments about others and did not deprive them of pleasant and courteous treatment on his part. He remained informed about his Companions and inquired of their conditions from others.

"He highlighted the good aspect of a virtue and thus strengthened it and exposed the bad aspect of an evil and thus weakened it. His ways were moderate and consistent. He did not remain careless toward a thing lest others should also become careless toward it and lose interest in it. He was prepared for all situations. He neither lagged behind in attending to the just rights of others, nor overacted in this regard. The persons staying close to him were the best and the selected ones. The best person in his sight was the one whose sympathies and courtesies reached people in general. He held

him highest in esteem who was most sympathetic, most compassionate, most helpful.

"He stood from his seat with remembrance of Allah on his tongue and sat with remembrance of Allah on his tongue. When he came upon a gathering, he took a seat at the end of it and also instructed others to do the same. He gave full attention to each person attending his company. Each person present in his gathering thought that he was closest to him. If a person asked him to sit with him for some purpose or talked with him about a personal need, he listened to him with due attention and patience until he finished and departed. If a person asked him for help, he did not let him return without fulfilling his needs; at the least he talked to him in reply in a soft and courteous way. His courtesy was open for all and he had assumed a fatherly character for them.

"Everybody was equal in his sight in matters of justice. His gathering was a seat of knowledge and cognizance, modesty and bashfulness, patience and trust. In it neither voices were raised, nor blemishes mentioned, nor honour and prestige challenged, nor weaknesses publicized. All enjoyed equal status; the superiority of one to others was only on the basis of piety (Taqwa). His Companions treated elders with respect and youngers with kindness and affection. They preferred the needy to themselves, protected travelers and newcomers and took care of them."

Ali, may Allah be pleased with



him, further says:

"The Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, had a pleasant countenance and looked cheerful all the time. He was mild in manners and nature. He was not rude by nature, nor was he used to speak impolitely or shout at others. He did not indulge in cheap talk, nor aspersed others. He was not miser. If he did not like something, he ignored it (i.e. did not accuse a person for it); but he did not clearly reject it nor did he answer questions about it. He had saved himself fully from three things: quarreling, pride, and getting involved in unnecessary affairs. He had also protected others from three things: he did not speak ill of others, nor cast aspersions on them. Nor became talked, the person attending his gathering used to lower their heads in respect (to listen to him attentively in a motionless posture) as if birds were sitting on their heads. When he stopped talking, only then they conversed among themselves. They never entered into an argument with one another in his presence. When a person talked in his gathering, all others carefully listened until he finished. Everybody had an equal opportunity to speak in front of him (i.e. he could express himself to his satisfaction and others listened to him with due care and attention). If people laughed at a thing, he also laughed at it; if they expressed surprise at a thing, he also expressed surprise at it. He showed patience and forbearance in face of such people toward themselves (and thus changed the topic). He did not

talk while someone else was talking and never interrupted the talk of anyone. But if a person started crossing the limits of propriety in his talk, he either asked him to stop or left the gathering, thus obliging him to discontinue.

"He was the most generous, open-hearted, truthful, mild and kind in social matters and mutual dealings. When a person saw him for the first time, he was awed, but after living in his company for some time and knowing him closely, he began to adore him wholeheartedly. The person describing him says that he saw none like him before or after, may Allah's blessings and peace descend on him.

### **Moral Excellence of the Prophet**

Anas bin Malik reports about the moral qualities of the Prophet in these words:

"The Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, was the most open-hearted, mild-natured, and of the noblest descent. He did not keep himself aloof from his Companions: he mixed with them closely, talked to them, and greeted their children pleasantly. He lifted their children in arms, accepted invitation from everybody – slave or free, a maidservant, or any other poor or indigent person – visited the sick even if they lived at the outskirts of the city, and accepted apology."

He was not seen stretching his legs in the gathering of his Companions so as not to cause inconvenience to anybody. His Companions recited poetic verses to

one another and listened to such recitations from one another. Sometimes when they talked about matters and events of the past days of ignorance, he remained quiet or smiled. He was extremely kind, loving, and affectionate. He used to tell his daughter Fatima, may Allah be pleased with her, "Call my both sons (i.e. his grandsons Hasan and Hussain)". When they came running to him, he kissed them and hugged them close to his heart (Tirmidhi). One of his grandsons was laid in his lap in the condition that he was about to breathe his last. Tears started streaming down his eyes. S'ad, May Allah be pleased with him, inquired [about his tears], O Prophet of Allah! What is it? The Prophet replied, "This is mercy which Allah puts in the hearts of the bondsmen for whom He wishes so. And, indeed, Allah shows mercy to those of His bondsmen who are merciful to others" (Bukhari)

When the Prophet, blessings and peace be upon him, heard the groans of Abbas, his uncle who was tied with rope with other captives of the Battle of Badr, he could not sleep all night out of restlessness. On learning about it, his Companions from Madinah untied Abbas. They also expressed willingness to set him free without ransom, but the Prophet did not agree to it.

He was benign and benevolent and was very careful and considerate in dealing with people. He always took into consideration man's natural weakness of at times becoming dull, unenthusiastic and unaspiring. That is why, he delivered sermons with a

gap of time so that people did not get tired. If he heard a baby crying, he shortened congregational prayers and said, "I stand to perform prayers and wish to offer them long, but when I hear the cries of a baby I cut the prayers short so that the bay's mother (praying in congregation) may not suffer."

He used to say, "Do not speak against each other to me because I wish to meet you in the condition that my heart is clean". He was kind to Muslims like a father. He used to say, "If a person leaves behind a property after his death, it belongs to his descendants. But if he leaves behind a loan he owes to somebody, it is my responsibility to pay it off". He was free from all excesses and exaggerations. Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, bears witness that whenever the Prophet had a freedom to choose between two things, he always chose the one which was easier, provided there was no fear of any transgression in it. If there was any doubt that an act might be sinful, he stayed far away from it. He used to say that Allah liked to see that His bondsmen exhibited signs of His favours on them.

He lived at home like an ordinary person. Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, said, "He used to wash his clothes, milk his goats, and do other household chores. He used to stitch patches in his dress and mend his shoes." When once it was inquired of Aisha how the Prophet lived at home, she replied, "He took care of household affairs. When the time of prayer arrived, he went out."

She added, "He was the most kind and considerate person and always has a smiling countenance". Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "I did not know a person who was more kind to his family members than the Prophet of Allah, blessings and peace be on him." Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, reports the Prophet of Allah as saying, "The best among you is he who is the best for his family, and I am the best for my family". Abu Huraira, may Allah be pleased with him, says that the Prophet of Allah, blessings and peace be upon him, never found fault with a food item. If he liked it, he ate; if he did not like, he left it". Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, says, "I served the Prophet of Allah for ten years, but he never said to me a word expressing his displeasure, nor did he ever scold me for doing a thing or for not doing it". His Companions did not rise at his arrival to show respect to him as he did not like it. He used to tell with Isa ibn Maryam (Jesus, son of Mary). I am simply a bondsman of Allah; so call me Allah's bondsman and prophet." Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, says, "Any maidservant or slave woman of Madinah felt free to hold the Prophet by his hand and tell him whatever she had to say and ask him to accompany her as far as she needed."

When Adi bin Hatim visited the Prophet, he was called in. The maidservant brought a pillow for the Prophet to rest upon. He put it between Adi and himself and took a seat on the floor. Adi said that from this gesture he became sure that the

Prophet did not see himself as a king. Once when a person saw him, he trembled in awe. Upon this the Prophet told him, "Do not be afraid. I am not a king. I am son of a woman from the Quraish tribe who used to eat dried meat". He used to clean his house, tie the camels, feed them, eat even with the maidservant in the family, help her in kneading the flour, and buy things of daily use for the family from the market.

If he came to know about something unpleasant against a person, he did not denounce him by specifically identifying him. He rather said indirectly, "What has happened to people that they do or say such a thing". Thus he used to discourage a person from doing a bad without mentioning his name.

He was merciful to animals and instructed people to treat them with kindness. He said, "Allah has commanded to treat everything properly and kindly. Thus, if you have to behead a person, do it in a proper way. If you have to sacrifice an animal, do it in a proper way. He who wants to slaughter an animal should first sharpen his knife well and keep his animal which cannot speak. If you ride on them, do it in a proper way. If you slaughter them for meat, do it in a way that they are made comfortable as much as possible".

He also used to instruct people to treat their servants, attendants and slaves in the best possible human way and said, "Feed them what you yourselves eat. Dress them as you dress yourselves. Do not torture the creatures of Allah. Those whom Allah

has made your subordinates are your brothers, attendants and helpers. Thus, if a person's brothers are his subordinates, he should feed them what he eats and dress them as he dresses himself. Do not ask them to do a job which is beyond their powers. If it can not be avoided, help them by sharing their work. "Once a Bedouin came to him and asked how many times he should forgive his servant. He replied, "Seventy times". He then added, "Pay off a labourer before his sweat dries up."

### **Noble Manners of the Prophet**

It is human nature that man tries to emulate even such qualities and behaviours of his ideal in religion which are not legally binding on him to qualify for the faith. Out of true love and admiration he makes every effort to learn not only about his ideal's prominent qualities, habits, likes and dislikes, but also about minor details relating to his manners, disposition, dress and such other things. This is the reason which has led the Muslim scholars from the past to this day to write exhaustive and detailed descriptions of the Prophet's personality, as Muslims trust, adore and emulate the Prophet with utmost sincerity. The most popular among such books is the biographical work Imam Tirmidhi. A brief extract from this work describing the Prophet's qualities is given below.

"When the Prophet of Allah, blessings and peace be on him, walked, it looked as if he was descending down to a lower plain. When he became attentive to a

person, he turned his whole body toward him. He kept his gaze low; he looked at the ground more than he looked at the sky. He looked generally from the side of his eyes. While walking, he put his Companions ahead and himself remained behind them. He was first to say Salam (to greet) to whomever he met.

"His hair covered half of his ears: it was longer than the locks which are only up to the upper tips of the ears and shorter than the locks which fall on the shoulders. His hair was, thus, neither very long nor very short; it was of moderate size.

"He sometimes parted his hair in such a way that a line through the hair was created. He used to oil his hair very often and combed his beard frequently. When he began to make *Wudu* (ablution), or comb, or wear shoes, he preferred to start from the right. He had a kohl case from which he used to anoint his eyes three times each. He liked *Kurta* (long shirt) most among his clothes. When he put on a new dress, he mentioned its name (to express his happiness). For example, he said that Allah blessed him with a *Kurta* (long shirt) or turban or sheet. Then he recited the following supplication.

O Allah! You alone  
Deserve all praise  
And to You I  
Extend thanks for  
Providing this dress.  
O Allah! From You  
Alone I seek the  
Good of this dress  
And fulfillment of  
The virtuous purposes

For which it was  
Made. And I seek  
Refuge in You from  
its evil and the  
Evil purposes for which  
It was made.

"He used to say, 'Wear white dress. One should wear white while alive and should be clothed in white when put to grave. White is one of the best colours to wear'. Once Najjashi, the ruler of Ethiopia, sent him a pair of plain black socks. He put it on and also did *Masah* on it after performing *Wudu* (ablution). He also offered prayers in such shoes which had patches of another kind of leather. He said that nobody should walk with only one shoe on; he should either wear both shoes or put both shoes off. He forbade people from eating with the left hand or wearing only one shoe. He used to say that people should put on shoes with the right foot first and put them off with the left foot first. He sometimes wore a ring in his right hand. He also got a ring made for him which had three lines carved in it: *Muhammad* in the first line, *Rasul* in the second, and *Allah* in the third. When he went to the lavatory, he took the ring off.

"When he entered Makkah on the occasion of its conquest, he had a black turban on him. When he used to put on turban, he let one end of it fall behind in the middle of his shoulders. Ubaid bin Khalid al-Maharbi, may Allah be pleased with him, reports that once when he was walking in a street in Madinah al-Munawwara, he heard someone telling him from behind to raise his *lungi* (a dress in

place of trousers) above his ankles (as it was lowered down over his ankles in the fashion of the rich). When he turned to the person he saw that it was the Prophet of Allah, blessings and peace he saw that it was submitted to the Prophet that it was only an ordinary piece of cloth (and could not be taken as a mark of pride characterizing the arrogant rich). The Prophet said, 'Do you not have my ways for you to follow.' When he looked at the *lungi* of the Prophet, it was half way up to his shins.

"He did not eat in a reclining position and said, 'I do not eat while reclining'. After finishing his meals he licked his fingers three times. He did not eat in such a way that the food was put on a table (while he himself sat on the floor), nor did he eat in small dishes characterizing lavish and luxurious lifestyle), nor was thin bread ever cooked for him. Once it was inquired of Qatada, may Allah be pleased with him, as to on what the one piece of (processed) leather specified for this purpose. He liked bottle-gourd (*Kaddu*) and also sweets and honey. He liked the meat of the goat's front leg. Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, explains that, in fact, meat was rarely available to him and that he liked the meat of goat's front leg only because it took less time in tendering. This way he was able to finish eating quickly and then devoted himself to his virtuous engagements. He also liked the food leftover in the cooking pot and bowl.

"He used to say, 'If a person eats without glorifying Allah, the devil joins him'. He also said, 'If a person

forgets to say *Bismillah* ("with the name of Allah") before he starts eating, he should say these words:

With the name  
of Allah in the  
beginning and  
at the end.

He used to say the following supplication after finishing his meal:

All praise is  
For Allah Who  
Gave us food  
And drink and  
Raised us among  
Muslims.

After he had finished eating and the remaining food was removed, he used to say the following words:

Profuse, worthy, and  
Abundant praise  
Be to Allah of  
Whom we cannot  
Be independent, nor  
Can we forsake Him.  
He is our Cherisher.

He used to say, 'Allah is pleased with a person who glorifies Him when he eats or drinks.

"His favourite drink was cool and sweet water. He said, 'There is nothing like for food or drink'. He drank the *Zamzam* water standing. He used to drink water in three breaths.

"He had a perfume box from which he took out perfume to apply. (If anybody offered perfume as gift), he did not decline to accept. He used to say, 'Three things should not be turned down: pillow, perfume and milk'. He said that the perfume used by men should be strong in scent but unnoticeable in colour, whereas the

perfume for women should be dominant in colour but mild in scent.

"Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, said, 'The Prophet of Allah, blessings and peace be on him, did not talk hastily like you people'. His talk was clear and each point he made was so clearly distinguishable from other points that the listeners had no difficulty in understanding it. (Sometimes) he repeated his statement (out of need) three times so that his listeners could clearly understand him. He smiled instead of laughing aloud. Abdullah bin Harith says that he did not see anybody more smiling than the Prophet of Allah. Sometimes he laughed in such a way that his (front) teeth were visible. Jareer bin Abdullah says that the Prophet of Allah never stopped him from visiting him since his acceptance of Islam and he smiled when he saw him. Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, says, 'The Prophet of Allah frankly mixed with us and spoke with us in a witty and amusing way. I had a brother. The Prophet used to ask him, 'O Abu Umair, where did the chick go? Once his Companions submitted to him, 'You sometimes talk amusingly to us'. He replied, 'Yes, but I never say anything wrong. He sometimes recited a couplet of Abdullah bin Rawaha, a famous Arab poet, or of some other poet to make a point. He sometimes recited the following line composed by Turfa:

"Sometimes he brings news to  
You to whom you did not pay  
Any remuneration."

He used to say that of all poetic

saying the truest is the following statement of Labid bin Rabi'a:

"Know that all things in  
This world are mortal  
Except Allah."

Once one of his fingers was hit with a stone and started bleeding. On it he recited the following couplet:

"You are merely a finger which  
Did not receive any injury  
Except that you bled. (This,  
Too, did not go in vain

because)

This injury was met in  
Allah's way."

And in the Battle of Hunain he was reciting the following couplet:

"Indeed I am a Prophet  
And I am from the progeny  
Of Abdul Muttalib."

The Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, also permitted others to recite verses and even gave a prize on a poetic composition as a token of appreciation. Jabir bin Samura, may Allah be pleased with him, relates that he attended more than a hundred gatherings of the Prophet, blessing and peace be on him, in which his Companions recited verses and related stories and events to them quietly and even sometimes smiled with them. He ordered a pulpit to be put in the mosque for Hassan bin Thabit so that he could recite verses in his support from there (against the unjust criticism of the unbelievers). He also said that Allah helped Hassan through *Ruhul Quds* (the Archangel Jibrail) until he defended Islam or the Prophet through his poetic compositions.

When he prepared to rest, he put his right hand under his right check and said:

Lord! When you  
Raise Your bondsmen,  
Grant me protection  
From Your punishment.  
When he went to bed, he said:  
O Allah! With Your  
Name I die and  
(with it) I come to life.  
When he woke up, he prayed:  
All praise in for  
Allah Who brought us  
To life after having put  
Us to death and we  
Have to return to  
Him.

The bed in which he rested was made of leather and was filled with the bark of date tree. He visited the sick and attended the burial. He accepted the invitation even of salves. When he performed pilgrimage, he rode a camel which had an old Hawadh on it covered with an ordinary piece of cloth not worth even four dirhams (a meager amount). He used to say that if a gift as humble as a goat's leg was offered to him he would accept it, and that if he was invited by somebody he would surely go to his house. One of his noble manners was that if he did not like a thing he did not tell so directly to the person concerned. He accepted gifts and gave gifts in return. In modesty he excelled ever a maiden (guarding herself in cover). Whenever there was something unpleasant, its effect was immediately reflected in his face. ●

## **From a Swami to Kingpin of 'Hindutva Terror'**

Swami Aseemanand is the latest big name in the "Hindutva" terror web blamed for a series of blasts; starting with Samjhauta Express in 2007 to the ones at shrines in Hyderabad, Ajmer and Malegaon.

The 58-year-old, whose real name is Jatin Chaterjee, is best known for reconverting tribals in the remote Dangs area of Gujarat from Christianity to Hinduism.

But as the anti-terrorist squad and then the National Investigation Agency (NIA) dug deeper, they found that Aseemanand was more than just a preacher.

Investigators believe that the "bomb-for-bomb" policy of the extremist Hindu groups was formulated at Shabridham in the Dangs during the Shabri Kumbh held from February 11 to 13, 2006. The Shabri Kumbh, a mela was the brainchild of Aseemanand who came to the Dangs in 1995. In fact, the success of the fair helped BJP win the Dangs assembly seat for the first time in 2007. Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur, Sunil Joshi, Ramiji Kalsangra, Lokesh Sharma and Sandeep Dange were some of the saffron activists who participated in the 2006 Shabri Kumbh.

The investigators are now trying to put together the story of how the conspirators managed to not only create a terror network but also acquired skills to make sophisticated bombs within just a year.

Aseemanand's case cropped up soon after the arrest of Sadhvi Pragya Thakur in the Malegaon blast case. He was using a mobile phone registered in the name of his driver Sunil Dahod. Many calls were made from this phone to Sadhvi Pragya Thakur. The Maharashtra ATS questioned Dahod in November 2008 to track Aseemanand but he escaped. He was finally arrested by the CBI in Haridwar on November 19 last year.

The 80-page chargesheet filed by CBI said Aseemanand held a meeting within 10 days of the bomb explosion at Sankatmochan temple in Varanasi in March 2006 with his supporters.

On Monday, the NIA told the court that the Samjhauta blast was hatched in the Dangs district of Gujarat and at Chittaranjan in West Bengal.

Aseemanand first landed in the Dangs as a member of the Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram, an RSS front organisation. Before that, he was active in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

Born and brought up in West Bengal, Aseemanand completed his masters in physics from West Bengal's Burdwan University and joined the Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram in 1978.

Aseemanand's reconversion drive spread to the neighbouring tribal areas of Valsad, Navsari and Surat of Gujarat and Nandurbar of Maharashtra.

He started reconversion of Christian tribals to Hinduism with a bath at the hot water spring at Unai temple. He gained a fair amount of popularity during this time. After around two years of stay in the Dangs, Aseemanand managed to create strong feelings among Hindu tribals which led to anti-Christian riots in December 1998 in various parts of the backward area.

Then prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and leader of opposition Sonia Gandhi had then visited the Dangs. Following the riots, Aseemanand went underground for a year. ●

(The Times of India -06-01-2011)



## The Messenger of Peace

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was the precursor of all mankind in sublime character, love, affection, kindness, sympathy, compassion, generosity, mercy, encouragement and tolerance. Almighty Allah says: "And verily you are of a high and noble disposition" (Al-Qalam:4)

The elegant qualities which Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) demonstrated in tolerance, forbearance, endurance, patience, large-heartedness, magnanimity, generosity and stamina were beyond the range of perception of intelligentsia and conception and imagination of poets.

The books on the holy Prophet's biography are replete with hundreds of examples of his kindness, sympathy and forgiveness to the cruelest enemy of him.

The intellectuals of fair thinking who go through the life history of the Prophet Muhammad, regardless of any religious or regional prejudice and bigotry agree that distinctive and salient features of the Prophet are nothing but mercy for the world. His whole life is an embodiment of kindness, love affection, generosity, mercy and forgiveness. The mercy and sublimation reflected in his teaching, treatment and behavior with

**S. M. Wazeh Rasheed Nadwi\*** companions is worth emulating. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was not only forbearance for Muslims but all mankind. Almighty Allah says: "And We have not sent you except as a mercy to the worlds" (Al-Ambia: 107). This attribute of the Prophet (PBUH) apparently surfaces in all his deeds, acts and proceedings. However, difficult periods he confronted in his life and however tough time and severe trials he passed by but he never relinquished the motto of kindness, love, affection and mercy.

Needless to add that when he began preaching Islam, members of his own tribe afflicted him and tortured him, he was ostracized. Obstacles were put on his way but his passion of mercy prevailed all the time. Noble qualities of the Prophet did not confine to him alone. These accomplishments were also quite manifest in his companions because of influences and effects of his teaching and upbringing. The Holy Quran says: "Muhammad is the messenger of Allah; and those who are with him are strong against unbelievers; but compassionate amongst each other. Thou wilt see them they bow and prostrate themselves in prayer, seeking grace from Allah and His good pleasure. On their face are their marks, being the

\* Director of Education, Nadwatul-Ulama, Lucknow.

traces of their Prostration. This is their similitude in the Tourat; and their similitude in the Gospel" (Al-Fath; 29)

At another place Almighty Allah says: 'And the servants of the compassionate are those who walk upon the earth meekly, and when the ignorants address them, they say: "Peace' (Al-Furqan: 63)

On another occasions the holy Quran says: "Successful indeed are the believers, those who humble themselves in their prayer; Who avoid vain talk; Who are active in giving Zakat; Who guard their modesty; Except with those joined to them in the marriage bond, or the captives whom their right hands possess, for (in their case) they are free from blame; But those who desires exceed those limits are transgressors; Those who faithfully observe their trusts and their covenants; And who strictly guard their prayers; Those will be the heirs; Who will inherit paradise; They will dwell forever" (Al-Mu'minun: 1-11)

It is obvious from the above mentioned verses that mercy, kindness, love, affection, generosity and forgiveness are the basic and salient features of Muslims in carrying out Islamic teachings only. Mercy, Kindness, love and affection of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did not confine to human beings but to animals and insects as well.

Ibn Abbas narrated that one person laid a goat on the ground for laughing. Next he started sharpening his knife. Seeing it, the holy Prophet said: "Do you want to

kill it again? Why did you not make your knife sharp before laying it for slaughtering?"

Ibn Mas'ud narrated that we were with the Prophet on a trip. The Prophet reclused himself for a while. We saw a little bird. It had two fledglings. We caught hold both of them. Seeing it the bird began to flutter its wings. On return the Prophet (PBUH) asked who inflicted the bird by snatching its kids. The Prophet ordered to return its chicks. We saw here ants-hill and we burnt them. The Prophet said: "Who burnt them. We replied that we had done. The Prophet said: "The right of chastisement with fire is only for the Creator of fire."

The biggest phenomenon of excellence in human beings are the existence of Prophets and Prophets Muhammad is the most excellent and distinguished out of all Prophet. Almighty Allah attributed him vividly: "Now hath come unto you a messenger from amongst yourselves: it grieves him that ye should suffer, ardently anxious is he over you: to the believers he is most kind and merciful" (Al-Tawbah: 128) ●

(Translation: O.R. Nadwi)

"You will find the believers like a body in love and compassion to one another; pain in one limb is accompanied by fever and restlessness all over the body." (Sahihain)

## Islam and Science

**Rokhiya Jaferi Siddique**

For many Muslims it is often a matter of some concern and shock as to why there are so few great scientists among them practically none in Arab countries. They also wonder why Muslim contribution to advanced science and technology is so meager. This state of affairs has given ammunition to some non-Muslims to attack Islam as a non-scientific religion. They also propagate that Islam does not encourage the pursuit of knowledge acquisition of scientific disciplines.

The Qur'an encourages the acquisition of knowledge – all knowledge. And the Prophet (on whom is peace), whose life was the very embodiment of a living Islam stimulated the desire for knowledge. The Prophet (on whom is peace) turned the attention of his followers towards the study of nature and its laws, to understand them and appreciate the glory of God. The Qur'an says:

*"God did not create the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in play. He did not create them all but with truth. But most men do not know."*

The world is not an illusion, not without purpose. Verses in the Qur'an which stress on observation of nature are several times more than those that relate to prayer, fast, pilgrimage, etc., al put together. The Muslims under the influence of the Qur'an began to observe nature closely and this gave birth to the scientific spirit of observation

and experiments which was unknown to Greeks. While the Muslim botanist Ibn Baiter wrote on Botany after collecting plants from all parts of the world, described by Mayer is his *Gesch der Botanical* as a monument of industry, while Al-Biruni traveled for forty years to collect mineralogical specimens, and Muslim astronomers made some observations extending even over twelve years, Aristotle wrote on physics without performing a single experiment, wrote on natural history carelessly stating, without taking the trouble to ascertain the most easily verifiable fact, that men have more teeth than animals.

Galen, the greatest authority on classical anatomy, informed that the lower jaw consist of two bones, a statement which was accepted unchallenged for centuries till Abdul Latheef takes the trouble to examine a human skeleton. After enumerating several such instances, Robert Briffault concludes in his well known book, *The Making of Humanity*:

"The debt of our science to the Arabs not consists in startling discoveries or revolutionary theories. Science owes a great deal more to the Arabs culture: it owes its existence.

*"The Greeks systemized, generalized and theorized but the patient ways of investigation, the accumulation of positive knowledge, the minute methods of science, detailed and prolonged observation,*

*and experimental enquiries were altogether alien to Greek temperament. What we call science arose in Europe as result of new methods of investigation, of the method of experiment, observation, measurement, of the development of mathematics in a form unknown to the Greeks... That spirit and these methods were introduced into the European world by the Arabs."*

The Arabs of Spain were the chief source of the new learning and scientific spirit of the Europeans. There is also no doubt that the seeds from Arabic science first germinated in the seed beds of the schools of Lorraine in Latin Europe. From there, knowledge radiated to other parts of Europe and to the English Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. French and German Universities were also established on the pattern of the Muslim Universities of Spain and Baghdad.

The glory of Muslim science in all its aspects in the fields of geography, astronomy, astrology, physics, chemistry, mathematics, optics, history, medicine, natural history and many other fields of learning leaves its permanent mark on the sciences of modern Europe. And it is now fully documented in many texts and history books.

The Muslim scientists such as Al-Buruni, Ibn Rushd, Al-Battani, Abu-Ma'shar, Al-Razi, and literally hundreds of others have left their mark on history. Unfortunately, a great deal of Muslim literary and scientific treasures was deliberately and systematically destroyed. This happened first in Baghdad after the Mongol invasion in

the thirteenth century when practically all the libraries were burnt and the scholars slaughtered. In the fifteenth century, after the fall of Muslim Spain to the Catholics, a greater destruction of the Muslim heritage of science and literature was carried out. Many later scientists and thinkers deliberately denied any credit to Muslim scientific sources from where they borrowed. It is for this reason that we hear so little about Muslim contribution to science in the West.

The West owes much to Islam for the Muslims early contributions and development in the intellectual and scientific fields. All the important Greek scientific works surviving from ancient times were translated into Arabic and most of these, in turn, were translated in the medieval west from Arabic into Latin. Above all, the preservation and interpretation of the works of Aristotle was one of Islam's most enduring accomplishments. Not only was Aristotle first re-acquired in the West by means of the Arabic translations, but he was interpreted with Islamic help, above all that of Averroes, whose prestige was so great that he was simply called 'the Commentator' by medieval Western writers. Arabic numerals, too, rank as a tremendously important intellectual legacy from Islam.

It is a matter of regret that with such a rich legacy from the past, Muslims have presently fallen so far behind. One cannot even accuse western imperialism, a familiar catch phrase, since many Muslim countries have now been independent for nearly fifty years. Despite the growth of wealth, education, man power and

availability of abundant resources Muslim countries have not realized, encouraged or invested into advanced research areas both theoretical and applied. They have become totally dependent on outside technical and scientific aid and now it is hoped that with the renewal and revival of Islam richer Muslim countries will realize the importance of setting up advanced research and technological institutions, science parks and advanced manufacturing industries. If is not accomplished urgently neither their security nor their stability is guaranteed for the future. There is no substitute for indigenous knowledge. Scientific and technical knowledge and know-how should be of special interest to Islam and Muslims. This is because technical and scientific competence enables a nation to serve their won people their country. Knowledge and know-how in Islam are for the purpose of serving Allah's (SWT) creation; it is neither to dominate others nor threaten them. Knowledge and know-how give any country that as it a greater sense of security and well-being. The modern model of a truly civilized country and society is advanced knowledge and know-how combined with high standards of morality and piety. Islam encourages only this kind of model society.

A tiny country like Israel does not now feel at all threatened by anyone including the larger and numerous Arab states surrounding it. This is because it has both a free and representative government as well as scientific and technical know-how in al branches of science and technology at a very

advanced level. And this knowledge is totally indigenous. It rightly gives Israelis the feeling of overwhelming superiority over its neighbours, to such an extent that even their national leaders have made derogatory statements to the effect that Arabs are stupid. The achievements of the Jewish state in a period of less than fifty years is remarkable indeed even allowing for the fact they had certain intellectual and educational advantages. Much larger countries than Israel like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Pakistan are under constant security and stability threat because despite vast wealth (Saudi Arabia) and large populations (Egypt, Pakistan) they are in the backwoods of scientific and technical knowledge. They are perennially dependent on outsiders for technical and security support.

Muslim countries, particularly richer countries must realize and act as a matter of urgency to implement policies that advanced scientific technical and management research in their own countries. Individual Muslims in East or West must recognize its importance and exert themselves in acquiring the highest possible qualifications and academic and research excellence.

Muslims should feel pride in the fact that the Qur'an itself is a reservoir of basic scientific facts and scientific trends.

1. The earth was previously part of the Sun and only after separation, it became a habitable place for mankind (21: 30)
2. All life originated from water (21: 30)

3. The Universe was in the shape of a fiery gas (41: 11)
4. Matter is made up of minute particles (41: 11)
5. The oxygen content of air is low at higher altitude (6: 125)
6. Everything consists of complementary elements (equivalent to male and female); animals, man, plants and inorganic material (36: 36)
7. The embryo in the womb is enclosed by three coverings (39: 6)
8. The fertilization of certain plants is done by the wind (15: 22)
9. Microscopic organisms exist that are not visible to the naked eye (96:1).
10. Each human has permanent individual fingerprints (75:4).

The concept of 'Atom', 'birth', 'earth roundness', 'orbiting of sun and moon and the planets', 'birth of all living creatures in pairs' are mentioned in the Qur'an. Only recently many of these verses have been fully understood because to understand them fully, required scholarship of both classical Arabic language as well as scientific discoveries.

Anyone who suggests that acquisition of advanced scientific and technical knowledge by Muslims is non-Islamic belongs to the *Jahiliyyah* period. It is also foolish to suggest that the acquisition of such knowledge may affect one from being a good Muslim.

On the contrary the better and practicing Muslims in future are likely to be those who are well versed in religious knowledge as well as have advanced scientific and technical qualification. This is abundantly clear in the corridors of the citadels of learning and the research institutes where the new generations of Muslims learn and work. They are contributing to Islam and above all to the development and better understanding of Islam and above all to the development and welfare of their adopted countries in the West. Except two Muslim countries no serious research is being undertaken at advanced levels anywhere in the remaining fifty seven or so Muslim countries. ●

**"Soon will We show them our signs in the furthest regions of the earth, and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the truth. It is not enough that Thy Lord doth witness All things?"**

**(S 41,A,53)**

## Italian Renaissance

S.M.H. Akbar

There are half a million Muslims in Italy, making up 1 per cent of the total population, according to the United States Department of State figures. Most of the Muslims in Italy were born in Morocco, Albania, Tunisia, Senegal and Egypt. There are 9.5 million Muslims throughout Europe – 2.6 per cent of the population – with 3.5 million in France (5.9 per cent of the population) and 2.2 million in Germany.

For the first time in a thousand years there are new mosques in Italy, one of them even in Rome. Most of the 500,000 Muslims in Italy are in the south. The history of Islam in Italy can thus be said to be starting up again – after a long interregnum.

The spread of Islam to the north and west and potentially into the heart of Europe was to remain blocked until the fall of Constantinople in 1453. Yet there was another road open to early Islam: across the Africa to the island of Sicily and then up the Italian mainland.

The importance of Sicily was obvious to the rulers of the Byzantine Empire. They had recently liberated it from the Ostrogoths.

All during the eighth century there were skirmishes and hit and run attacks by Byzantine forces and Arabs back and forth against each other across the straits separating Sicily and North Africa. When the Arabs secured the African shores directly opposite the island their efforts began in earnest.

They landed in 827, and finally took over the island completely in 902.

Two centuries of Arab rule brought the vitality of Islamic arts and sciences to Sicily. Palermo became an international market, a cultural crossroads where traders from Christian Italian cities were as welcome as Muslim merchants from Africa and the East.

After Sicily was retaken by the Normans in 1091 the island remained a paragon of tolerance. Roger the Norman surrounded himself with ability. Some of the highest offices were held by Muslims. Roger's own fleet was built and commanded by Muslims. Arabic was the language of science in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Arabic commentaries on the works of Greek masters now influenced European thought, and treatises in medicine and science were translated from Arabic into Latin on their way northwards. The Arab language of the people took hold in Italian literature and even Dante was exposed to Arab works, which may have influenced *La Divina Commedia*.

Sicily was a conduit for the transmission of Arab knowledge up into Italy and it was this intercourse with Arab ideas that some say was the beginning of the Italian Renaissance.

The number of people accepting Islam in Italy is selling daily, according to Rosario Pasquini, who became a Muslim in 1974. Pasquini calls himself Abdurrahman, and leads the Friday

prayer at the Mosque of Il Misericordioso and is a teacher of Arabic and Islamic culture.

Pasquini, born in Fiume in 1934, graduated from the University of Milan in 1957. He was a lawyer in the busy northern city of Milan and still lives there, but he has traded his lawyer's briefcase for something that gives him more satisfaction. He is now editor of a newspaper called Il Messagero del Islam, (The Messenger of Islam) an eight-page tabloid written for the growing numbers of Italians who, like himself, decided to revert to Islam.

A growing number of Italians are turning to Islam for spiritual solace. "Every day, people come in to know more about Islam and the conversion process," said Abdurrahman, who edits his newspaper from an office at Milan's Islamic Centre. "Yesterday it was one, today there were two. They come from all over, form different classes and backgrounds, and they all have different reasons for doing it."

"Islam rises above cultural divisions," he said. "I am a Muslim, just as a Filipino or an Indonesian may be. There is absolutely no difference. The rhythm of my lifestyle is similar to theirs, and different from that of the society to which I once belonged. I pray five times a day, and in between those prayers I find I'm not angry or violent. I'm not competitive and I don't prevaricate. I think in the future there are going to be a great many more people who will make the same choice as I have," Abdurrahman was quoted as saying in The Islamic Bulletin of San Francisco, California.

Italians who have decided to

embrace Islam include engineers, artists, intellectuals, students and even a nun. Some have taken the step because they married a Muslim, while for others it is a purely intellectual or religious choice. But whatever the initial reason reverts say their final decision has almost always been preceded by a feeling of frustration with too much consumerism and stress, and a yearning for a spiritual dimension that has become lost in most of Western society.

"Some of the people who decide to become Muslims do so because, like me, they are going through a very difficult period in their life. Others have family problems. There are even some who are high school students and have converted in secret because they are scared to tell their parents." Said Abdurrahman, who himself received support and understanding from his own family.

"They took the view that I was old enough to make my mind up for myself, and let me get on with it. In fact, my mother, who is more than 80 years old and has remained a Catholic, recently said to me: 'I praise Allah, because if you had continued to live the way you did before you converted, you would be dead by now,'" he said.

"At the time I was prey to a terrible mental stress, brought on by the competitiveness that is so prevalent in our type of society. After a long period of searching, I finally arrived at Islam which says that no one except God has the right to judge and dominate other men. This is what I was looking for. For me it represented liberation from a society which believes itself to be free, but which



believes itself to be free, but which instead forces its members to bow under the yoke of many, many different demands," he added.

Abdurahman learned Arabic so he could read the Qur'an and participate in mosque's activities. His command of the language has become so good that he now teaches it.

As well as announcements of births, marriages and conversions, the former lawyer's newspaper carries advice on how Italian converts should behave. For example, he advises that a woman who intends to drive her own neighbourhood should make sure she is accompanied by a relative.

One of the factors that contributed to his conversion was a meeting that developed into a strong friendship with Jordanian born Ali Abu Shwaima, then a medical student, now the director of the Milan Islamic Centre. Shwaima's wife is also Italian. Like Pasquini, she decided to convert to Islam and changed her name from Paola Moretti to Khadija.

Today, she recalls with some amusement the first time she ventured out into the streets wearing a veil. "I felt everyone's eyes on me. It was rather embarrassing," she said.

"I could hear the other women in the supermarket whispering things like, 'who is she, a nun?' Or 'Maybe she belongs to some sect.' But that kind of attitude no longer bothers me, she said. I'm sure of the choice I made. It certainly wasn't easy at the beginning, when I made my conversion. But wearing the veil is a duty for women. I couldn't accept one part of the Qur'an and not the other," she added. ●

### **Muslims suffer from discrimination in the workplace**

Paris: A study by the French-American Foundation, New York and France's "Sciences-Po" (Institut d'etudes politiques de Paris) offers conclusive evidence that there is religious discrimination in the French labour market. Researchers led by David Laitin of Stanford University concluded that the study is "unambiguous in finding significant religious discrimination against Muslims in at least one job sector in France." The research was conducted by Stanford Professor, David D. Laitin, a member of Arts and Sciences, in collaboration with French research firm, ISM-CORUM.

The study surveyed than 500 second-generation Senegalese Muslims and Christians. The survey showed that the Muslims suffer a significant economic disadvantage. After controlling for other factors, such as education, the researchers concluded that the disadvantage could not be explained by any factor other than religious heritage.

The researchers next conducted a "correspondence test," creating employment CVs for three fictional job-seekers with differing religious and national signals, one an apparently French-indigenous individual, one a French-Senegalese with a Christian given name and a third one a French-Senegalese with a Muslim given name. The CVs were then sent in pairs, one from the "French" applicant and the other from either the "Christian" or "Muslim" applicant, in response to advertised positions at 300 French companies. The results showed clearly that the "Christian" job applicant was more than twice as likely to receive a call back as the "Muslim" applicant. ●

## **Circumcision Stops Cervical Cancer Virus**

**Washington:** Researchers have documented another health benefit for circumcision, which can protect men against the Aids virus, saying it can protect their wives and girlfriends from a virus that causes cervical cancer.

**Wives and girlfriends of circumcized men had a 28% lower rate of infection over two years with the human papilloma virus or HPV, which causes warts and cervical cancer, they reported in the Lancet medical journal.**

**"Our findings indicate that male circumcision should now be accepted as an efficacious intervention for reducing the prevalence and incidence of HPV infections in female partners. However, protection is only partial; the promotion of safe sex practices is also important," Maria Wawer and colleagues at Johns a Hopkins University in Baltimore wrote.**

**Wawer's team piggybacked the HPV study onto a larger study that has shown circumcised men are less likely to be infected with the human immunodeficiency virus that causes AIDS. "We enrolled HIV-negative men and their female partners between 2003 and 2006, in Rakai, Uganda," they wrote in their report in the Lancet medical journal.**

**They were able to get details on HPV infections for nearly 1,000 of the women, all identified by men as long-term sex partners such as wives. After two years, 27.8% of the steady partners of circumcised men had HPV infecton, compared to 38.7% of the partners of uncircumcised men. HPV infection is best known as the primary cause of cervical cancer, but it causes genital warts and can also lead to cancers of the anus, penis, head and neck.**

**There are dozens of strains of HPV, which are highly contagious. Circumcision removes the foreskin of the penis, which is rich in immune system cells targeted by HIV and perhaps other viruses. Taking off the foreskin likely makes the penis less likely to carry a range of microbes, Wawer's team said.**

**"Male circumcision has now been shown to decrease HIV, herpes simplex virus-2, and HPV infections and genital vaginosis and genital ulcer disease in their female partners," Wawer's team wrote. ●**

**(The Times of India, 08-01-2001)**

## Growth of Science in Muslim Era

Islam's contribution to international culture is obvious: we have to reinforce the influence of Islam in our institutions in Europe, the U.K. and the U.S. – Professor William Shea, University of Padua, Italy.

In Islam, 'nature' has been an arena of study rather than as an object of reverence and worship. Monotheism placed nature as a work of God and a subject open for study and exploration. This is besides numerous verses of the Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him), which emphasized that acquiring knowledge is of supreme importance.

In the very first Revelation, God has stated that it is He who created the pen; the earth or the universe was not important enough to find a place in the initial verses. The Prophet, himself illiterate, gave important encouragement by the edict that the ink of a scholar is holier than the blood of a martyr. The Prophet is further reported to have said that acquiring knowledge from cradle to grave was the bounden duty of every Muslim man and woman. There are other occasions urging Muslims to acquire knowledge and disseminate. Fakhruddin Ahmad (The rise and fall of Islamic science) highlights the importance of knowledge in Islam further:

The Eminent Caliphs (Khulafa-e-Rashideen) were brought up in an atmosphere in which even knowing the three Rs (Reading, wRiting, and

aRithmetic) was a great and rare achievement. At the advent of Islam, perhaps, less than a score of people in Makkah could read and rite and after the battle of Uhud, the Prophet offered to release those prisoners of war who could not pay ransom money provided they taught a few Muslims of Medina to read and write. Although the early Caliphs had imbibed the teachings of the Prophet well and thoroughly, and did insist on the younger generation acquiring these basics, the time had not yet come of higher learning and scientific research. But soon after the frontiers, were consolidated, the Caliphs started patronizing learning, Schools were opened all over the dominion for education, whereas mosques were used for free, universal, almost compulsory education the impact was immediate and perceptible.

Significantly, the Muslims, within no time embarked on to unravel the mysteries of nature, laying the foundations for a strong base for a sustained scientific enterprise, which would last for over thousand years.

Khalid bin Yazid bin Muawiya is reportedly the first scientist, who relinquished his princely order and devoted himself to philosophy and to experimental sciences as a chemist. He patronized and collected several scientists around him.

Prior to Islam, the Arabs of the Arabian Peninsula were divided into two distinct regions, namely the souther

part (Yemen) and the northern region (Hejaz and Najd). The southern region was well developed and had an effective political system, distinct culture and language, which for centuries helped it to be prominent in the region. The northern Arabia had mostly nomadic people, proud of their language but often subdued by the southern Arab. According to Qurashi (Development of S&T in Pakistan and Muslim Ummah), by CE600, Yemen was taken over by the Abyssinian kings and they lost their pride in learning. On the other hand, the northern Arabs had become so demoralized that for Abraha's invasion of Makkah (in the year of but prior to the birth of Prophet Muhammad), the Makkan Arabs offered no resistance at all; had it not been for the miraculous ruin of Abraha's elephants by the tiny birds, Ababeel, the history of northern Arabia would have been very different. But as we know, this situation was to change drastically and soon with the advent of Islam.

Muslims, motivated by the Prophetic guidance in their conquest and management of the conquered lands were also facilitated by the directive in Qur'an that people of the Book(s) were to be cared for if they submitted to the Islamic government and agreed to pay protection tax. Toynbee explains, "The Arabs left the collection of the taxes payable by their non-Muslim subjects in the hands of the existing native fiscal officers; but the hands of the existing native fiscal officers; but the native fiscal authorities, though now compelled to do their work in Arabic, were allowed to remain in office as they were not replaced by Arabs."

The high discipline of the Arab soldiers and their appropriate management by the central command assured minimal contact with the conquered people yet their impeccable life-style attracted the non-Arab settlers; coercion for conversion was strictly forbidden.

We may recognize the Muslims open mindedness in facing the new challenges with vision, and receptiveness to new knowledge. Although they had little experience in large scale warfare and the management of conquered lands, but quickly developed competitive war machinery, management of control and communication, use of geographical information, effective food supply, and civil administration, etc. They made indigenous inputs to these arts technologies. The leadership was skillful as explained by Qurashi: "Caliph Umar (CE640n660) is reported to have been the pioneer in some three dozen areas of civil management, international relations, and pertinent technologies for the benefit of the then society and the State.

These are reported to have included among others a broad spectrum of administration in judiciary, finance, standing army and defense, population census, jail administration, police and intelligence department, establishment of mosques; key scientific arenas and technologies in calendar, survey of land, irrigation, architecture and civil engineering, assessment of river resources, breeding of horses, and teaching institution.

Questions arise as to when the Muslim epoch for science and

technology started. G. Saliba says:

-First translation was carried out by Khalid b. Yazid in the Umayyad period and Diwan was translated in the Umayyad period.

-Search for the Greek literature was a formidable task, for it was not known that these even existed in the Byzantine lands of that period.

-Translation work was motivated in the Abbasid period by motives other than simple interest in Greek knowledge.

Thus, the Muslim epoch in science & technology seems to have started in the Umayyad period around CE650 and continued for over a thousand years. In contrast, the Western Orientalists account gives an erroneous impression that the Muslim scientific civilization began in Abbasid period on the base of Greek learning and lasted only 400 years.

It is also important to recognize that the founding of Islamic State in Madinah by the Prophet and the period of the first four Caliphs witnessed the centralization of both the spiritual and temporal authority vested in the Prophet and later in the Caliph and his Advisory Council respectively. The Caliphs would give judgments based on their own knowledge of the Qur'an and Prophetic practices as well as consultations from other Companions of the Prophet. Hence, the intellectual activity and the scientific activity were integrated in an institutional frame work.

Muawiyah's effort in organizing the navy is evidence to show Muslim's early interest in science and technology. Within the first century Hijrah, intellectual activity was initiated by individuals, and under government patronage. Qurashi

has stated that at the turn of the century, Caliph Umar bin Abdul Aziz (ruled AH99-101) directed the Governors to collect Ahadith in their areas and send them to him for compilation. Imam Malik initiated organized compilation of Ahadith followed by Imam Abu Hanifa and codification of jurisprudence (fiqh) was put the same time, agriculture, irrigation, manufacturing industries were dealt with along with philosophical activities.

In this context, Qurashi makes an interesting observation: "One must understand that Muslim scholasticism has been essentially different from Christian scholasticism." First Jesus Christ did not found Christian State. The handful of first followers of Christ had a hard time preserving their identity and the Book containing Divine message given by Jesus. The early Christian faith – Judeo Christianity – was on the verge of extinction when Saint Paul saved Christianity from settling down as a Jewish sect doomed to early extinction, and preached it as a world religion. When it grew and spread, it came in touch with Greek philosophy, and the chief work of the early Fathers of the Church lay in combining that philosophy with Christian doctrines.

According to W. Dampier (History of Science), First Origen (CE185-254) tried to establish conformity of ancient science with Christian faith. Origen's most fundamental tenet was the unchangeableness of God. Which involved the eternity both of the Logos and of the world; however, in his days the doctrine was fluid. The Church Council condemned Origen's theology in CE553. The history of the synthesis of knowledge, the Greek philosophy and

Christian faith, is a long one; Catholic doctrine was formulated by dispute, and show why our creeds are not only statements of belief, but paeans of triumph over defeated heretics and heathen.

It is further argued that the development of Canon Law to regulate the killings under the cover of inquisition was based on the Roman Law and many of the ideas of Greek philosophy even without empirical basis were adopted as a matter of faith in Christianity, such as, the geocentric theory of cosmos, or the nothing. It is a long story to know why and how many scientists were condemned and executed as heretics.

The Western civilization lauds about its world view of modern science, which according to T. Huff (The Rise of Early Modern Science), asserts that it is a metaphysical system, which accepts that man unaided by spiritual agencies or Divine guidance is single-handedly capable of understanding and grasping the laws that govern man and the universe. "This is an expression of the audacities of man: whether or not it be true that God made man in his own image, it is certain that man makes god in his," says A. J. Toynbee (Man and Mother Earth).

In view of the foregoing discussion, it is not surprising that within the first twenty years of Hijrah calendar, we see Muslim's interest in promoting learning and technologies, Muawiyah, the Governor of Syria during the days of Caliph Umar is reported to relax in books after his business of the day. R.A. Nicholson (The Literary History of Arabs) says: "He consecrated a third part of every night to the history of Arabs and

their famous battles; the history of foreign people, their kings, and their governments; the biography of monarchs, including their wars and strategies, and method of rule; and other matters connected with Ancient History."

It was Muawiyah who authorized Abnid b. Sharya to write The Book of Kings and the History of the Ancients. He also organized a Muslim navy for warfare as we noted; in CE669, he built a fleet and in 674-78, besieged Constantinople by both sea and land but it became a disaster for the Arabs according to Toynbee and could be accomplished some 800 years later, Further, M. Nakosteen (Islamic Origins of Western Education) says: "The old theory that the early Muslims were enemies of learning and sciences and that except in their own Qur'an and Tradition, they showed no toleration of the beliefs and intellectual treasure of other nations is without historical basis."

Brian Stock in his book, "Science, Technology, and Economic Process in Science in the Middle Ages," further explains the nature of collective Muslim scientific enterprise: "Islam extended into a new environment and a wider geographical framework, a principle well-known in the Roman Empire, namely the conferring of citizenship onto man from different backgrounds who shared a common single cultural and political allegiance. What they added was religious unity; in patronizing science, Baghdad, Cairo, Cordova, did nothing that Rome's Alexandria and Perganum had not done. They just did it under a new banner and on a bigger scale.' ●

(The Muslim World League Journal)

# The Concept of Taharah in Islam

**H. A. Abdulsalam**

Prior to the advent of Islam, the society human world witnessed degeneration of public health condition. Impurities overran the immediate environment – air, water, food, plants, even the soul was corrupted with impurities. This clearly manifested in the life of medieval Europe whereby swampy, marshy and heaps of garbage were commonplace in the society. The squalid conditions in the continental Africa bred numerous fatal diseases, making the primitive man to ignorantly and superstitiously attribute their causes to the wrath of unpropitiated gods.

However, Islam by virtue of its comprehensive legislation on purification saves man from the woes of shabby environmental conditions.

At-Taharah is technically defined as purification from impurities. In a broad sense, it means cleansing the physical parts of the body from filth, dirt and excreta, the bodily organs from perpetration of sins, the mind from ignoble motives and unclean thoughts sanctification of secrecy to Allah-peculiar to the noble prophets and virtuous saints.

By inference, taharah involves spiritual purification from kufr, shirk, malice, envy, undue hatred and others. It also involves physical purity. In integral part of the Muslim life.

## **Legal Status of Taharah in Islam**

At-taharah which means purification, in a narrow sense, is limited to the cleanliness of the body and mind, but also to be sanctified for the purpose of performing ritual exercise. Consequent upon this, it entails chastity of totality of the worshipper, his garment, food and body

before he could be properly regarded to be in a state of taharah. Among the earliest revelations to the Prophet (peace be upon him) are injunctions on taharah when he was divinely instructed to purify his garment.

The three basic duties that were first assigned to the Prophet (peace be upon him) centered on taharah. The first was to warn the people by explaining the divine directive. The divine command necessitates glorification of Allah, demonstrated through ritual prayer, invariably purification is observed.

Without any scholastic dispute, the jurists are unanimous on the fact that taharah is obligatory upon all those whom the ritual prayer is mandatory. This is based on the conditions that the person must be a Muslim and sane. As for the insane and fainted, it is obligatory on both of them when regaining their consciousness.

Maturity is another condition, which is manifested through seminal emission and maturity of age. Taharah is not mandatory upon a child, but should be enjoined at the age of seven and disciplined when reached ten. Cessations of menstrual and postpartum bleeding including approaching of the prayer time, absence of sleep, forgetfulness and coercion with the capacity to perform the purification exercise are other conditions.

## **Relevance of Islamic Principles of Hygiene and Sanitation to Human Environment**

Islam places a high premium on hygiene and sanitation in order to ensure congenial and healthy environment. It is a known fact that the Bedouin Arab, before

Islamic dispensation, gave scant regard to personal hygiene and cleanliness of their habitation. This may be attributed to the scarcity of water in the region. Some ahadith remark the bad habits which were common among them such as urinating in non-flowing water/river including defecation in shaded places and walk ways. In relation to this, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said. None of you should urinate in still water and then perform bath in it. None of you should urinate in stagnant water and then make ablution by it. None of you should urinate in a bathing place.

Also, the prevailing religions in the Arabian Peninsula and its vicinity did not attach great importance to cleanliness nor did they encourage their religious adherents to uphold cleanliness. A number of ahadith reveal the unhygienic attitude of the Jews. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said "clean your houses and do not follow in the footsteps of the Jews." The Christian Monks on the other hand, renounced personal hygiene and world pleasures – marriage, eating the best food, etc. Likewise, the other religions and philosophies formed the belief that the human body is an evil entity which must be denied of sensual pleasures, hygiene and beautification.

On the contrary, the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his approach demonstrates cleanliness and decency in his habit and in turn, enforces it on said "Cleanliness is the half of faith." He equally plays the role of interpreter and embodiment of Qur'anic injunction on personal hygiene. He enjoins teeth cleaning before each prayer to ensure dental health promote better taste and enhance appetite. Teeth cleaning according to the Prophet (peace be upon him) purifies the mouth and is a means of seeking divine pleasure.

Additionally, the Prophet is meticulous in his teaching on the manner of

discharging and cleaning the natural impurities. He forbids defecating or urinating in open place. This is not only for the purposes of avoiding health hazard, but also to instill decorum. He imposes strict control on place and manner of defecation and urination to protect public health and keep private parts from public glare to forestall the temptation to sensual feeling. He advised for choosing soft soil for urinating, lest it soils the dress.

Likewise, he forbids conversation while answering the nature's call since toileting is not for recreation. He actually recommends that a short prayer be said on entering lavatory as Statan haunts such areas. These prophetic injunctions and principles, in a large measure, play significant role in the preservation of body cleanliness and environment necessary for healthy living.

Furthermore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) pays great attention to physical cleanliness. He lays down rules on decency to ensure free mixing of a Muslim in society. He was reported to have scolded a man of disheveled hair and unkempt beard. It is also reported from the authority of Aisha (ra) that: the Prophet said" "Allah loves a man who adorns himself whenever he goes out to meet his brethren. In meeting other people, one ought to contribute to healthy and mutual interaction.

Although Muslims are enjoined to sustain Islamic brotherhood, filthy appearances and offensive odors are often taken in bad taste. It is for this reason that the Prophet forbids entering mosque for congregational prayer after eating garlic. However, the importance attached by the Prophet could be well appreciated in his usual praying for good health and of mind. The inter-relationship between good health and peace of mind explains his guidance on the acceptable feeding habit in Islam.



Similarly, it is entrenched in Islamic principle that for man to develop his natural instinct and faculties, he needs all kinds of food that are naturally endowed with nutrients for sustainability, as enjoined by Qur'anic guidance.

This is an indication that food and drink are parts of the principal cause of vice and virtue. It is in recognition of this that the Prophet (peace be upon him) enjoins that a Muslim should verify the lawfulness of the food he takes, wash his hand before and after taking the food, start eating with Allah's name, eating with right hand, proper chewing of the food to aid digestion, not blowing air into the food with his mouth to cool it, drinking water should be done in three breaths, not taking food in a laying posture to ensure convenience and finally to reserve a third of the belly for food the second of the thirds for drink and the rest for breathing.

The Prophet (peace be upon him), though not trained as a nutritionist shows his deep understanding of human physiology through his careful selection of food that are balanced in nutrients. He is reported to have used little food always. This could be clearly understood in his special liking for fruits, dates, milk and honey, etc. The contemporary scientists have established that they are highly nutritious and contributory of human health. For instance, honey apart from being a means of healing as affirmed in the Qur'an. It contains several nutrients useful for health such as; laevulose, dextrose, sucrose, dextrin's, minerals, water and undetermined elements.

#### **Substances of Pure Essence**

It has been a jurisprudential principle that purity is the basis of things unless evidence confirms their impurity. The jurists in different orthodox schools of thought build their opinions upon this principle. And as a result, opinions differ on

account of access to textual evidence and varying applied methodologies.

However, the four orthodox schools of Islamic law are unanimous on the purity of man, living or dead, due to the honor conferred on him by Allah. Even if he is a polytheist, since polytheism is not related to his essence. Allah says: 'We have honored the sons of Adam, provided them with transport on land and sea, given them for sustenance things good and pure, and conferred on them special favours above a great part of our creation.' (Qur'an, 17: 170)

Also, every inanimate, whether soulless or parted from a living creatures is considered pure. Inanimate are further classified into solid and liquid objects. The solid comprise all parts of land form and its mineral resources such as gold, silver, copper, iron lead, etc. including various plants even if they intoxicate, such as hashish opium, anesthetic, etc. All these forms of plants are pure irrespective of their harmfulness to the body, mind or senses, except that taking them for use is forbidden. Among the liquid are water in its various forms, oils, and honey content of sugarcane, flower water, perfume and vinegar. They are all pure provided nothing of impure element contaminates them. However, no intoxicant is allowed in Islam as contained in Qur'an. 'O ye who believe, intoxicants are an abomination.' (Qur'an, 5: 90)

Additionally, tears, sweat and mucus of every living thing are considered pure, to which Shafi: includes the poison of snakes and scorpion too. Maliki extends the meaning of saliva to connote the flowing from the mouth of a person who sleeps or awakes and that if it comes out yellowish from the stomach with smell, it becomes an impurity. Hambali does not differentiate whether they are from animals of lawful meat or not inasmuch as the animal is lesser or equal in size with the

cat and does not breed from impurity. Hanafi equates the position of their purity with that of leftover water. Unsaddled egg, human milk and milk of lawful animals are pure.

Phlegm and gall are pure. The bile of animals of lawful meat after the prescribed slaughtering is pure including the bile-sac.

Inclusively, the dead aquatic animal is pure. However, despite the divergent opinions on acetified wine which is collectively accepted to be pure, three of the orthodox schools are unanimous that if an impurity falls into the wine the wine before it turns to vinegar, the purity is void except the Hanafi who conditions the decomposition of the impurity.

#### **Observation on the Orthodox Opinions**

The cause for the divergence of opinions among the orthodox schools basically, has been rightly put by Ibn Rushd as their varying interpretation of the legal texts. For instance, the verse which forbids carrion, is agreed by the scholars to be general but with specific import. Some scholars take exception of dead aquatic animals of no running blood; others be pure, as specific from the general term of "Maytat." This invariably is based on analytical regarded to be pure.

It could also be observed that the orthodox schools including other schools of Islamic stand because to them, the blood is only forbidden to be consumed by the Qur'anic text. Among such scholars are, Sadiq Khan, Al-Albani, Ibn Uthaymin and others. They quote the incident of Umar Ibn Kattab who combined praying while struck with dagger and blood was flowing from his wounds.

Human semen is also considered pure by the schools of Islamic jurisprudence on certain conditions. Ibn Taymiyyah is of the opinion of its as based

on the majority view of Shafii and Hambali. The Prophet (peace be upon him) instructs anyone of his companions to wash the semen from his body or cloth. The Prophet only regards it as dirt, just like mucus spittle.

The modern scholars further argue that there is no evidence to support the impurity of vomit, upheld by orthodox scholars.

We are, at this juncture, to submit that human blood as regard its purity is amenable to reason provided it remains in the veins, while blood transfusion is allowed on exigency. To our knowledge, most modern scholars give support to this scientific trend. The same stand applies to the human semen; it is only to be considered impure when it is expelled from the body, though the Prophet (peace be upon him) does not hold strong impression on its impurity.

#### **Conclusion**

At-Taharah is an embedded legal principle in Islamic law which serves as an integral part of Muslim devotional activities. In other words, it strengthens the relationship between Allah and the Muslims since Allah would accept nothing except that which is pure. Also, constant and consistent observance of Taharah is an act of worship that is highly of promoting healthy social interaction and convenient environmental conditions.

More importantly, Muslims are enjoined under Shariah regulation to make use of the pure substances without contradicting the spirit of Islam such as incase of artificial insemination, plastic surgery, organ transplant, blood transfusion, etc. in which some of these modern methods of medical treatment are found to be highly unreliable and unethical in some cases. Also, mineral and natural substances are to be judiciously used for the benefit of biological nature. ●

## Da'wah (Call to the truth) - An Inseparable Act of Mankind

**Obaidur Rahman Nadwi**

To guide humanity in this world a number of Prophets came. The glorious chain of Apostleship came to an end with the last Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Being last Prophet's followers, it is incumbent on our part to communicate and disseminate his sacred message to others. This duty is called 'Da'wah'.

Today whole society is beset with ills of various kinds. Besides the cultural onslaught of the west, fascist forces and inroads of communism have completely dampened it. Under these circumstances, it should be our moral duty to call people towards right path and stop them from committing obnoxious and unholy acts. The holy Qur'an says: "And there any spring from you a nation who invite to goodness and enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency. Such are they who are successful". (3: 104) We may further comprehend the importance and significance of Da'wah that even Faith (Iman) was graded by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) through this holy duty. The Prophet said: "If one sees an evil, one should change it by one's hand; one dares not to do so, one should use tongue; if one has no courage to use tongue, one should realize in one's heart that it is bad and this is the lowest stage of Iman. No doubt, if we keep this saying of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in view and act accordingly, a host of evil practices may come to an end in the society. Apart from it by performing this virtuous task we may attain pleasure of Allah. Hence we should devote ourselves to it and preserve

a great deal of provisions for the Day of Judgement. The Prophet (PBUH) said: "Feet of children of Adam would not move on the Day of Judgement until they reply five questions:

- 1- In which work he has spent his precious life?
- 2- How he utilized his knowledge?
- 3- From where did he obtain his livelihood and in what ways and by what methods he spent it?
- 4- How he spent his physical and mental energies and finally:
- 5- What portion or percentage of that goes in favour of Allah?

He further said: Beware, everyone of you is a shepherd and every one of you is answerable with regard to his flock. The caliph is shepherd over the people and he shall be questioned about his subjects as to how he conducted their affair. A man is a guardian over the members of his family and shall be questioned about them as to how he looked after their physical and moral being. A woman is a guardian over the household of her husband and his children and shall be questioned about them as to how she managed the household and brought up the children. A slave is a guardian over the property of his master and shall be questioned about it as to how he safeguarded his trust. Beware, everyone of you is a guardian and everyone of you shall be questioned with regard to his trust." (Muslim) He further said: 'Allah created three things with His hand and He created Adam with His Hand. He wrote the Torah with His Hand.

He created Firdaus (Paradise with His Hand). He then said; "By my Glory, neither a drunkard nor a dayyooth will live in it". The companions asked: "O Messenger of Allah, we know the drunkard, but who is the dayyooth?" He replied: "One who consents to evil in his family."

It should be kept in mind that the very object of raising up Muslims Ummah has precisely been explained in the following verse of the holy Qur'an: It says: "You are the best community that hath been raised up for mankind. Ye enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency" (3: 110)

Commenting the above mentioned verse of the holy Book, Late Maulana Syed Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi says: "The Muslim community is the bearer of Allah's final message. Its members are obliged to convey this message to mankind by their work and deed. It is their assignment to lead and guide mankind and to monitor and reform all that happens around them. The Qur'an declares emphatically that Muslims are the best community. The Qur'anic expressions in the above passage make it plain that this community is not some weed, growing on its own. Rather, they have been raised for a particular purpose. Allah has evolved them to accomplish a certain mission. It is not within the discretion of Muslims to come out on the side of any particular cause. Rather, the All-Powerful, Supreme Lord has entrusted an assignment to them. Their mission consists in maintaining and defending moral values and in achieving Allah's plan. As vicegerent of Allah they are to execute the plan of the Creator of this universe. Since it was part of Allah's grand plan to bring messengership to an end with the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and to maintain Islam as the divine faith until the Last Day, He devised this

arrangement. Apart from sending down the final Messenger, Allah evolved a whole community. The Prophet's Companions recognized this truth and considered themselves as the bearers of the final message. When Rustum, the Persian unbeliever, asked Rub i ibn Amir as to why he had taken the Muslims along with him to Persia, abandoning their desert surroundings, he promptly replied: "Allah has directed us to approach you so that we may liberate you from servitude to fellow human beings to render you as servants of Allah alone." It was their job to free the Persians from the narrow confines of materialism and to expose them to the vast potentials of the universe. More importantly, this would save them from the injustice and exploitation perpetrated against them in the name of religion. They would then be free to enjoy Islam's perfect justice and equality. It was for this reason that Rub i ibn Amir said that Allah had sent the Muslims to the unbelieving Persians."

He further says: "The objective of raising up the Muslim community is to enjoin good and forbid evil. Enjoining good and forbidding evil is an important and universal dimension of Islamic faith. It concerns each and every aspect of life in this world. Muslims have been assigned this duty exclusively. This explains the superior position annexed by the Muslim community. Muslims are branded as the best community in view of the special mission they are to execute. Messengers prior to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) were sent down as individuals. However the Prophet's advent was unique in that it also marked with that of the Messengers. It must be clarified nonetheless that the community is not a Messenger unto itself. The Prophet Muhammad's messengership was

different from that of other Messengers. After the Prophet disappeared from the public scene, Muslims carried out Da'wah work. However, they would not and could not deliver what the Prophet had accomplished. A Messenger is a distinguished person selected by Allah to convey His message. However, a whole community can be assigned the job of calling people to the way of truth. The Prophet (peace be upon him) too, specified this role for Muslims, clarifying that they had and have a mission to accomplish. They have a distinct responsibility. They are there to facilitate, not to erect obstacles. The Muslim community has a particular mission to implement. It has to carry out Da'wah work for the whole of mankind. All of its pursuits, be those related to culture and civilization or to any other sphere of life should emanate from its belief system. All its activities should revolve around the same goal. For, the very purpose of its evolving is to enjoin good and forbid evil among mankind." (Guidance From the Holy Qur'an, P, 36-38)

Moreover to a great extent the responsibility for preaching and propagation of Faith lie upon shoulders of Ulama (Islamic scholars). Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) himself said: "Verily Ulama are heir of Prophets. To undertake this noble duty Ulama should first cultivate good qualities and sublime norms and develop sense of confidence and responsibility. Besides they should discharge their duties patiently, wisely and courageously. They should take into consideration the matchless example of courage of conviction of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). "O my uncle, I swear by Allah if they placed the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand to give

up this work, I will not renounce it."

It is reported that Suhayb Ar-Rumi, when he left Mecca to go to Medina, was confronted by the Quraish disbelievers. They said to him: "You came to us as a despicable pauper, then your wealth grew while you were with us and it reached this vast amount. Now you want to leave with yourself and your wealth. By that will not be." Suhayb said: "What do you say if I leave you my wealth, will you allow me to go?" They agreed and he handed over his wealth to them. When the news of this reached the prophet he said: "Suhayb has made a profit, Suhayb has made a profit."

Preachers of Islam should not fall prey to inferiority complex. They should be bold, fearless, courageous, optimistic, Patient, tolerant, receptive, considerate, broad-minded and positive minded. Whatever the condition may be, there is no need to panic and give way under pressure and nervousness. They should be kind-hearted, sympathetic, soft-hearted in their treatment. They should also be honest in their dealings. The very important thing in the realm of Da'wah is practicability. It is, therefore they should practice what they preach. The most striking aspect of the blessed Prophet's life is its practicability. He always practiced that he preached. They should emulate the excellent mode of Prophet Muhammad's preaching and propagation of Islamic Da'wah. To achieve this they will have to adopt techniques and strategies of Da'wah mentioned in the Quran and Sunnah. The holy Quran says: "Invite (Mankind) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair preaching". (16: 125) And again "And speak kindly to mankind" (2: 83) "Go both of you, unto Pharaoh. Lo! he hath transgressed (the bounds). And speak unto him a gentle word, that per-

adventure he may heed or fear" (20: 43-44) "Who is better in speech than one who calls (men) to Allah, works righteousness, and says, "I am of those who bow to Islam" (41: 33)

No doubt, if we get ourselves involved in this sacred task, we will definitely attain rich rewards in this world and the Hereafter too. The Qur'an says: "Those who believe, and have left their homes and striven with their wealth and lives in Allah's way are of much greater worth in Allah's right. These are they who are triumphant, their Lord giveth them good tidings of mercy from Him and acceptance, and Gardens where enduring Pleasure will be theirs; There they will abide for ever. Lo! with Allah there is immense reward"(9: 20-22). "O ye who believe! shall I lead you upon a bargain that will save you from a grievous penalty? That ye believe in Allah and His messenger that ye strive your at most in the cause of Allah with your property and your lives that will be best for you if ye but knew" (61: 10-11) The blessed Prophet says: "A man, who points out the good, is like one who does it" (Muslim). "By the Almighty, if only one man receives guidance through you, it is better for you than red camels". It will not be that a person whose feet are covered with dust in the path of Allah goes to hell." "A morning or evening expedition in the path of Allah is better than the world and all that it contains."

In this context it would be worthwhile to quote late Maulana Manzoor Nomani's observation. He says: 'The Qur'an has given the task of religious preaching reform and guidance the name of Jihad-i-Akbar, the great Jihad. If it is undertaken in the right spirit, with sincerity and selflessness, and solely for the sake of

winning Divine approbation, this work, definitely, is a very great Jihad in the sight of God. Many people suppose that Jihad means only a war which is waged in the path of Allah and according to the rules and instructions laid down for it in the Shariah. But it is not correct. The truth is that whatever endeavour that can be made at a particular time for the preaching and propagation of Islam and moral and spiritual correction and guidance of mankind is Jihad of that age. The holy Prophet remained in Mecca for about twelve years after the mantle of Apostleship had fallen upon him. During this period Jihad of the Prophet and his companions consisted altogether in adhering steadfastly to Faith in spite of the terrible persecution unleashed on them by the enemies of Islam, and in doing all that lay in their power, openly as well as secretly, to spread the Divine message of Islam and reform, morally and spiritually, those who lived around them. To devote oneself to the noble task of guiding the ignorant, the wayward and the thoughtless to the straight path of Islam and money on it, to sacrifice one's comfort, all this, in any case, is Jihad in Divine estimation. In fact, it is the Jihad of the present age." (What Islam Is, p, 80-81)

In short, keeping in view the present scenario of the society, enjoining good and forbidding evil is imperative for us. There should be no dereliction, lethargy and negligence in discharging this religious task on our part.

We should equip ourselves to carry out this noble cause effectively. Only then a healthy and sound society may come up. The Qur'an exhorts:

"And strive with your wealth and your lives in the way of Allah! That is best for you if ye but knew" (9: 41) ●

## Around the World

### Galileo's works published in Arabic

The works of noted mathematician-astronomer Galileo Galilei have been published in Arabic for the very first time. The book "Discoveries and Opinions of Galileo" was published by Kalima, the translation project of the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH).

Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) was an Italian physicist, mathematician, astronomer and philosopher. The published book consists of four works - The Starry Messenger, Letters on Sunspots, Letters to the Grand Duchesse Christina and The Assayer. The original work was translated into English by Stillman Drake, a professor at the University of Toronto.

Kamal Muhammad Sayed and Fathallah Sheikh have translated Drake's compilation into Arabic. Sayed is a professor of chemistry and the director of the Centre for Sohag University Open Education in Egypt. He studied in the University of Glasgow and is a member of the Royal Society of Chemistry in Britain. Sheikh is professor of physical chemistry at Sohag University and has translated many books published from Egypt. ●

### Planet finder Qatar over the moon

Qataris are jubilant as a new alien planet - a huge gas giant 20 percent larger than Jupiter that orbits a star 500 light years away - has been discovered by an international team led by a Qatari astronomer. The planet has been named Qatar-1b and its discovery is to be reported in the journal Monthly Notices

of the Royal Astronomical Society, the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development. Historically, Arabs are pioneers in astronomy, and the discovery of Qatar-1b is a great achievement - one that further demonstrates Qatar's commitment to becoming a leader in innovative science and research. ●

### Abdalati is NASA's New Chief Scientist

NASA Administrator Charles Bolden has named Waleed Abdalati the agency's chief scientist. Abdalati will serve as the principal adviser to the NASA administrator on agency science programs, strategic planning and evaluation of related investments. Abdalati is currently the director of the Earth Science and observation Center at the University of Colorado at Boulder. He is also an associate professor in the university's geography and 2008 Abdalati held various positions at NASA in the areas of scientific research, program management and scientific management. His research has focused on the study of polar ice cover using satellite and airborne instruments. He has led and participated in nine field and airborne campaigns in the Arctic and the Antarctic.

Abdalati earned his doctorate in 1996 from the Department of Geography at the University of Colorado. He has published more than 50 peer-reviewed papers, book chapters, and NASA-related technical reports, with approximately 1,500 citations in the peer-reviewed literature. ●

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