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THE FRAGRANCE OF EAST

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Great influence on Human Race

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

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

CONTENTS

1- Islam As a Divine Bounty	S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi	7
2- Characteristics, Virtues And Traits of The Prophet (SAW)	S.M.Rabey Hasani Nadwi	9
3- The Qur'an and The Concept Of Scarcity	Israrul Haque	15
4- Development and Promotion Of Islamic Science	P.A. Wahid	25
5- Spiritual Influence of Sarmad on Azad's Political Philosophy	S.Falzanul Haque Irfan	31
6- India Needs Real Democracy	Obaidur Rahman Nadwi	34
7-The Geographer of Islam	Ilyas Fernini	36
8- Around the World		39

Wisdom of Qur' an

("We said) 'O Yahya, hold the Book firmly. and We granted him judgment (although still) a boy.

(Surah Maryam12)

Commentary:

"So the supplication was granted and a new Prophet was raised. However, the Israelites did not treat him as a gift from Allah. The Gospels tell us that he was put to death by the Israeli ruler Herod. The story as told in Matthew is as follows: "...Herod had seized John and bound him and put him in prison, for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; because John said to him, 'It is not lawful for you to have her.' And though he wanted to put him to death, he feared the people, because they held him to be a prophet. But when Herod's birthday came; and pleased Herod, so that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask. Prompted by her mother, she said, 'Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter.' And the king was sorry; but because of his oath and his guests he commanded it to be given; he sent and had John beheaded in the prison, and his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. (Matthew 14: 3-11)" - Mawdudi.

That is, learn it well (Ibn Kathir).

The textual "hukm" could also be understood to mean knowledge. (or wisdom: Alusi). It is said that once some children invited Yahya to join them in their play. He spurned the idea, saying, "I have not been created for games" (Ibn Jarir), or, "We have not been created for games" (Zamakhshari, Razi). Abu Nu'aym, Ibn Marduwayh and Daylami have a report which says that he was given knowledge and understanding, and became a devout at the age of seven (Alusi). ●

Pearls From the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

"Relates Abu Umamah that "I heard the Apostle of God delivering a sermon during the year of the Farewell Hajj. In the course of it, he said: 'The Lord has, (in His only Book), determined the share of everyone having a lawful claim (among the heirs). So, it is not allowable, now, to make a Will in respect of an heir."

-Abu Dawood and Ibn-i-Maja

Commentary:

When, after the Migration, commandments relating to social and collective spheres of life began to be revealed, it was prescribed, in the first place, through the following verse of Sura-i-Baqara that whoever owned some property should bequeath it, before his death, to his parents and other relatives: It is prescribed for you, when one of you approacheth death, that he bequeath into parents and near relatives in kindness. (II: 18)). Sometime latter, complete law of inheritance was revealed in Sura-i-Nissa, which repealed the earlier command of Wasiyat (Will), at least in respect of legal heirs. Moreover, while the Apostle of God announced many other essential rules and principles, in the sermon of the Farewell Hajj, he, also declared that since by sending down the law of inheritance, the Lord had determined the share of all those who were legally entitled to inherit, not Will should, after it, be made in respect of an heir. It is this commandment that Hazrat Umamah has spoken of, and, in Mishkaatul Masabih, after quoting the above Tradition from Sunan-i-Abi Dawood and Ibn-i-Maja, it is added that "in Dar Qutni it is related that the Apostle of God said: 'Now , a Will is not (valid) and lawful in respect of an heir except that the other heirs wish it and are agreeable to it. ●



Women and Patriarchy

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

It is in this context that the present race amongst the political parties to corner credit of providing reservation for women in Parliament and state legislative assemblies appears to be a case of political hypocrisy. This is of course not to say that Women's

Reservation Bill need not be supported. Indeed not only the Women's Bill but also any bill which will provide much needed relief to the women should be whole heartedly supported. The delay in the passage of these bills and the absence of a political will to push through these pieces of legislation makes the protracted political discourse around these themes meaningless.

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

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

place across the border women migrants suffered the most. The extent of sexual violence against women has been concealed behind a veil of silence and shame. Figures available suggest that about one lakh women were abducted mainly in Punjab. How many more were raped and killed or casually cast aside God only knows. Whitehead further says that it is not hard to find veterans of the partition violence who admit sometimes in mass rape of women. Yet in 1947 there were tens and thousands of rapists exacting what they saw as communal vengeance or taking advantage of the breakdown of law and order to brutalise and humiliate women.

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

We do not think that any religion worth its name sanctions aimless killing, what to say of sexual brutalities. Yet, alas! It is the women who become the first targets during riots. The basic attitudes of the patriarchs towards first need to be reformed before the political take on the onus of debating the feasibility of "empowering" women. The need of the hour is the enactment of

powerful women friendly legislation which helps rather than intimidates victims of male brutality and aggression. Without that the political discourse on the Women Bill appears to be a farce.

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

"And whosoever does deeds of righteousness be it male or female, believing-they shall enter paradise, and not be wronged a single date spot" (Q.4: 124)

And then Lord answers them; "I waste not the labours of any that labours among you, be you male or female - the one of you is as the other." (Q3: 195)

The Holy Qur'an promises goodly life to men and women alike in an equal measure. This means a life of peace and contentment and honour in this very world.

S.A

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Islam As a Divine Bounty

And hold fast, all of you to the rope of Allah, and do not separate. And remember Allah's favour to you in that you were enemies, and He joined your hearts together, so you became brethren by His favour. And you were on the brink of a pit of fire and He rescued you from it. Thus Allah expounds to you His revelations that perhaps you may remain guided. (Al-Imran 3:103)

We should always remember in our minds the message the above verse imparts. For it speaks of the great divine bounty with which Allah has blessed Muslims.

Mankind was steeped in ignorance and error. We were ignorant of such life-enriching concepts as monotheism, messenger ship and the Hereafter. Nor had we any idea of moral values and religious teachings. We were engrossed in superstition. We were in the clutches of tyrants. Humanity was at its nadir. Mighty rulers and clergy had claimed divinity for themselves. The poor masses were forced to pay tribute to them. As is mention in the Qur'an: *They had taken their priests and their monks for their lords, besides Allah. (al-Tawbah 9:31)*

As Islam appeared on the

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi scene, it illuminated the whole world. Islam was meant for everyone. So to speak, it was like long-awaited rainfall that makes no distinction among its beneficiaries. Islam revived life and moral values everywhere. No blessing is greater than that of Islam. It is even more valuable than life itself. Without the life-giving message of Islam premised on absolute monotheism, life would have been utterly miserable. Man would have landed himself in Hellfire had he not been blessed with Islam. We must thank Allah profusely for having conferred this great blessing upon us. We are indebted to the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be open him), his mission, his call and his striving, which rescued us all.

Allah reminds us in the above passage of our condition. We were one another's enemies, like bloodthirsty beasts. At that point Allah infused into our hearts mutual love and made us, by His grace, brethren unto faith. As a result, all Muslims are equal, be they the rich or poor, of the elite or commoners. In the mosque one observes this perfect equality and brotherhood.

History contains only a partial record of the discords which vitiated our lives before the emergence of Islam. Men fought against one another on issues of race, colour, social class, language, culture and economic distinction. Bloodshed was rife. Islam, however, promoted mutual love and peace.

The Qur'an goes a step further in projecting mankind as on the brink of Hellfire in the pre-Islamic period. Allah, however, rescued mankind through Islam. Had Allah not sent down Islam and His Messenger, nothing could have stopped us from hurling headlong into Hellfire,

Even today leading philosophers, intellectuals, scholars and rulers are unable to appreciate Islam which is based wholly on common sense. However, Allah has conferred Islam on us. No other ideology, philosophy, movement or "ism" should deviate us from Islam. It is recorded in Hadith compiled by Imam Bukhari that one who combines in himself the following three aspects has perfected his faith – holding Allah and His Messenger as the dearest and having revulsion against disbelief. Such a believer even dreads the very thought of reverting to disbelief. This as much as he abhors the idea of being consigned to the Fire Even if he sees himself in a dream indulging in disbelief or any anti-Islamic act or in a conspiracy

against Allah and His Messenger, he cries out in utter pain and anguish, causing his other family members to wake up. This he takes as the worst possible nightmare, for disbelief is totally unacceptable to him.

Let us appreciate the immense bounty Allah has conferred upon us. Through Him we are fortunate enough to learn the creedal statement of Islam and to grasp the truth of monotheism. This is the greatest blessing, in comparison to which all worldly glory is worthless. For the sake of our faith in Islam we should sacrifice the most sprawling empire on earth. If a Muslim is offered a mighty empire in exchange for abandoning his faith, the very thought should unsettle him, for he can never reconcile losing his faith, at any price. To bargain with faith is nothing less than revulsion.

Islam is the only way out. All other paths represent blind alleys. Allah has been merciful to us in having guided us to His way through His Messenger, the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). The Qur'an proclaims that Islam is the faith in Allah's sight for mankind.

As long as Muslims realize this truth and they adhere to it, they cannot go astray. It will make them immune against all hardship and misery. ●

Characteristics, Virtues And Traits Of The Prophet (SAW)

S.M. Rabey Hasanai Nadwi

Whenever Allah Almighty sends down someone as a Prophet for the reform and edification of any people, He chooses for the purpose some such person from amongst the people as is distinguished within the entire community in perception and prudence, character and conduct, and valour and aspiration. This distinction is, in fact, conferred on him by Allah Almighty Himself in order to enable him to perform the assigned job of reform and guidance. To that end, celestial dictates are issued to him according to whom he invites them towards the righteousness and Guidance. During the period passed before getting assigned the offices of Prophecy by Allah Almighty, the human traits in him are vested by his Providence that are confined within the sphere of innate human nature and those are the loftiest traits. These traits are watched and liked his people, Living among them, as he does, he has the people made already conversant with his sublime and virtuous human traits.

Hence, when he gives them a call, on getting assigned the Prophecy, towards righteousness and Guidance, the obstinate and egoistic people of his community repudiate it saying only that 'this person is now starting saying such things as were not said by our elders. He has gone astray from the ways of our elders.' But, along with that, they do not find it possible for themselves to deny his virtuous and humanistic traits. They are unable to bring themselves round, just out of prejudice and stubbornness, to

listen to anything against their religious rituals and customs which are practiced by them since their birth, But, they do not deny, at the same time, the moral and humanistic qualities of the Prophet. The Prophet would say to them that: 'Dear brethren! You know me very well. You know how long it is since you are watching and observing me. You have tested and tried me. Yet, you do not pay attention to what I say. 'It is what the holy Quran has referred to in this verse:

(Of a surety I have tarried among you a lifetime before it).

Sincerity, nobility, resoluteness and courage, fortitude and steadiness, affability and amiability, compassion and politeness are those virtues of prophets which make whoever listens to their message even with a least bit of impartiality feel compelled to comply with him.

The case with the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was exactly the same. He had been loved and liked for forty years by the people among whom he had lived. But, when he took to preventing them from their wrong practices and distorted religion and started calling them towards good morals and correct religion, they got disaffected with him. But, despite getting extremely belligerent on his making the call, some of them would keep mulling over his message and finally have it accepted. For they were well aware of his humanitarianism, honesty, chastity and good character. Hence, whoever listened to him with an open mind would

get enamored of him. So much so that one coming to him with the intention of causing harm to him would suddenly get transmogrified after having witnessed his (PBUH) amiability. Never the less a large number of the people would not be willing to listen to his message. They would have their ears, as it were, stuffed with cotton, making sure that it does not get into their ears. And, then, in order to prevent him from giving this message, they would adopt violent ways and be cruel to him.

When he (PBUH) got entrusted with the responsibility of the Prophecy, he expressed his anxiety, owing to the load of its weight that he was feeling, to his revered wife, Hazrat Khadeejat-e-Kubra (RAA). Thereupon she consoled and comforted him with these words: 'You need not be upset. I swear by Allah, He would never let you be disgraced and humbled. For, you are the one who has regard for the uterine relations and kinship, take the load off the others, render assistance to the needy, extend hospitality to the guest and bring relief to those who sustain afflictions and distresses in the cause of the Truth.

Umm-ul-Momineen, Hazrat Khadeejat-ul-Kubra (RAA) had said what is quoted above on the basis of her common-sense, her unsophisticated nature as well as the experiences of her own personal life and the knowledge she had of the people. The Prophet (PBUH) had earned from the people the honorifics of 'As-sadique' and 'Al-Ameen' because of his good traits, honesty and probity. That was the testimony from them to the fact that he was really very honest and extremely trustworthy. Hence, despite being hostile to him, they relied on him for safe custody. He (PBUH), too, used to be

considerate to everyone on occasions where his cooperation and compassion was required. Even on occasion of renovation of ka'ba he joined all others in carrying stones. Whenever there would be helped by him. One instance of the same is as follows: There was a man whom Abu Jahl had bought camels from. But, in making payment of the price, Abu Jahl had adopted the course of inordinate dilly-dallying. Whenever he would come to him collect the price, he would put him off. In a gathering of youths from the Quoraish, that man brought up this issue. Some of the people in the gathering saw there a prospect of having some fun. As the case involved Abu Jahl who was extremely hostile to the Prophet (PBUH), they thought it would be great fun to watch when the two come to combat each other. They said to him (pointing towards the Prophet – SAW): 'Go to that gentleman sitting there and seek assistance from him.' He came up to him (PBUH) and, making a complaint of Abu Jahl's dishonesty, sought assistance from him. Even though it was something preposterous for him (PBUH) to go to Abu Jahl and make an appeal to, or request, him to make the payment of the price to that man. But, prompted by his urge to help him out, he (PBUH) paid no heed to the risk involved and said to him: 'Come on, I would try to help you out'. Reaching the Abu Jahl's house, he (PBUH) knocked at the door. When he came out, the Prophet (PBUH) asked him to have the payment made. Abu Jahl was so awed by the Prophet's boldness that he agreed to make the payment and having fetched the price-money from inside he had it paid to that man. When Abu Jahl joined his mates later, they

scoffed at him saying: 'Generally, you make a great show of your strength against Muhammad (PBUH); but, you got cowed down by him on this occasion'. He confesses that he had gotten really awed by him and found himself compelled on doing what he did. Such behavior of the Prophet (PBUH) would endure distress and would never think of taking any revenge from the aggressor. But, in case someone else needed his help, he would go all out to help him. He had a soft corner for each and everyone. It is what Allah Almighty Himself has defined him with:

(It was then of the mercy of Allah that thou hast been gentle with them; and wert thou rough, hardhearted, they had surely dispersed from around thee. So pardon them thou, and ask thou forgiveness for them and take thou counsel with them in the affair, and when thou hast resolved, put thy trust in Allah. Verily Allah love the trustful).

In case of someone having personal enmity with him (PBUH), he would not be revengeful to him at all. But, where the interest involved used to be religious or were a matter of principle, he would take a tough stand. The definition of his character in traditional annals is worded thus:

Describing the lofty morals of the prophet (PBUH), Hazrat Ali (RAA) says:

"I did not see him ever taking revenge from anyone for his cruelty and aggression, unless it were the matter pertaining to violation of restraints imposed by Allah Almighty and disregard for His dictates. In case dictate of Allah Almighty was trampled and His Honour was smeared, he (PBUH) would, of course, be angry with the culprit more than anybody else."

Hazrat Anas bin Malik states that

the Prophet of Allah (PBUH) was very kind-hearted. Whenever any indigent came to him, he (PBUH) would positively assure him of his assistance. In case he had something, he would immediately fulfill his need. Once, there came a Bedouin when the congregational prayer was already in progress and, getting hold of his (PBUH) mantle, got to saying: 'A small requirement of mine is still remains unfulfilled. I am afraid I might forget it'. He (PBUH) went with him. When he had his need fulfilled, the Prophet (PBUH) came back and had the prayer performed.

The incidents of his (PBUH) tolerance, fortitude, magnanimity, endurance and resoluteness are corroborated by the testimony given by his (PBUH) attendant, Hazrat Anas (RAA). It is about the time when he was very young. He says: I served the Prophet (PBUH) for ten years. He (PBUH) never objected to anything I did and never said why I did, or not did this or that.

Hazrat U'mar narrates that the Prophet (PBUH) said: "Do not exaggerate in commending and defining me like the Christians did with Hazrat Isa bin Maryam (AS). I am just a bond-man of Allah. Do call me just 'Bond-man of Allah and His Apostle'".

Hazrat Abdullah bin Abi Aufa narrates that the Prophet (PBUH) had no inhibition and did not feel ashamed at going in company of any slave or any widow till his or her need was fulfilled.

Hazrat Anas (RAA) says: 'Anyone of the bond-maids and slave-girls of Madinah would hold him (PBUH) by hand and have whatever she wanted to say said to him and would take him along with her as far as she wanted to.

When Adi bin Hatim et-Tai(RAA) called on him (RAA), he took him inside his house, The bond-maid offered the cushion to rest upon. He (PBUH) had it placed in between him and Hazrat Adi and made himself seated on the floor. Hazrat Adi says: "That made me realize that he (PBUH) was not a man of pomp and show.

Hazrat Anas (RAA) states that: "The Prophet (PBUH) would call on the sick, accompany the funeral procession and accept the invitation of the poor.

Hazrat Jabir (RAA) says: "Being considerate to the infirm, he (PBUH) would slow down his speed and pray to Allah for him.

Hazrat Anas (RAA) has been quoted to have said that the Prophet (PBUH) said: "I am bond-man of Allah, eat like a bond-man and sit like a bond-man.

The Prophet (PBUH) would have his house himself cleaned, his camels tethered, his cattle served with fodder, partake with his servant in having meal, assist him in kneading the flour and have the victuals brought from the market.

A Comprehensive Description of Sublime Morals and Noble Traits of the Prophet (PBUH):

The sublime morals, noble traits and great qualities of the Prophet (PBUH) have been mentioned in a very comprehensive and declamatory style by Hind Abi Hala (RAA) (who was the son of Umm-ulMomineen, Hazrat Khadeejah-RAA and the maternal uncle of Hazrat Hasan and Hazrat Hussain-RAA): To quote him verbatim:

"Ridden with anxiety of after-life, the Prophet (PBUH) would remain all the time engrossed in pondering over matters related to the Hereafter. That would usually go on, on end. It appeared

as if he was never at rest. Often, he (PBUH) would keep silent for long. He would never speak needlessly. When he would begin talking, he (PBUH) would utter each and every word well enunciated. Same way he would bring his speech to end. Whatever he said, it was always every distinct, articulate and to-the-point. It would be neither unnecessarily prolong, nor too much succinct. He (PBUH) was mild-tempered and soft-spoken. He (PBUH) was neither rude, nor discourteous. Neither he humiliated anyone, nor would he like being humiliated. A good thing given him would be highly appreciated by him. He would make much of it, howsoever little it might be (even if it were so little as could not be easily seen) and would not deprecate it. As to items of food and drink he (PBUH) would never get angry about anything mundane and whatever pertains to this world. But, whenever any obligation towards God was not duly met, such would be his indignation as could not be faced by anyone till he would have it made up for. For wrongs done to his own person, he would have never get angry, nor something, he did so with whole hand. When he (PBUH) pointed out amazed at something he had his hand turned over. While talking, he (PBUH) would have the palm of his right hand touched by the thumb of the left hand. Angry and displeased with something, he would have his resplendent face completely averted; pleased and joyful, he would look downwards. His laughter was mostly but a smile and that was when his auspicious teeth which were as neat and clean as hailstones would be visible."

A family-member and one of the persons closest to the Prophet (PBUH), Hazrat Ali (KAW) had best means and

opportunities of knowing all about him (SAW). He was also a keen observer of human psyche and mores and manners. In addition, he had the gift, most of all others, of defining, describing and portraying a thing or character in all its vividness. About the 'sublime morals' of Prophet (PBUH) he says:

"He was predisposed to refrain from unseemly language, reviling and deeds shameful. In no wise he said or did anything improper. He never raised his voice in a market place; nor did he return in his life he laid his hands on anyone save in a fight for the sake of Allah; nor did he strike ever any servant or a woman. I never saw him exacting retribution for any offence or excess excepting when the honour of God was concerned or the limits set by Him were transgressed. In the latter case, no doubt, he (PBUH) would be more enraged than anybody else. If he had the choice between the two courses, he would choose the easier one. When he came to his house, he behaved like a commoner, cleaned his garments, milked the sheep and performed the household chores.

"The Messenger of God was not given to idle talk and spoke only when it was a matter of concern to him. He comforted the people and did not make them disgusted. If a man of rank or nobility called on him from another tribe, he showed him due honour and had him appointed to some respectable post. He would be cautious in making comments on the people without having them deprived of his affability and courtesy. He kept his companions always posted with the events and happenings and used to keep enquiring about their welfare.

"He commended and supported what was good and denounced and depreciated what bad or vile;

strengthened the one and weakened the other. He was always moderated and uniform in his dealings without there being any shift or change in it. He never allowed anything to escape his attention least others should become negligent or get distracted. He took care to possess the means for meeting every contingency. In keeping the Truth upheld, he would neither lag behind nor would cross the limits. Those who used to be in his proximity were always the virtuous and the elite of the people. The best in his estimation was the one who was the most benignant and courteous to all. The most esteemed in his eyes was the one who excelled others in benevolence and kindness and doing favours to others. The Prophet (PBUH) would stand up with the name of God on his lips and so he would be when he sat down. Wherever he went, he sat down in the rear and instructed others to do the same. He paid full attention to all of his audience and those attending his meetings. So much so that everybody thought that none else attracted his notice more than he did. If anybody had him detained or kept talking to him about any of his affairs, he (PBUH) would listen to him patiently and gave heed to him until he himself had his talk finished and got departed. If anybody asked for something or wanted his help, he never allowed him to leave without disposing of his business or at least comforted him with words kind and sweet. Such was his grace and kindness to one and all that everybody took him as his father. In regard to what was right and proper he regarded all on the same plane. His were the gatherings of knowledge and edification, of seemliness and modesty, of earnestness and probity. Neither anybody talked in a loud voice nor

censured others, nor cast aspersions on anybody, nor found faults with others. All were equal on even ground and only those enjoyed a privilege who were more pious and God-fearing. In his meeting, the elders were held in reverence, the youngsters were treated kindly. Those in need were given preference by all. The wayfarers and strangers were afforded protection and looked after."

Hazrat Ali states further:

"Of cheerful disposition, the Apostle of Allah was always bright and radiant. He was tender-hearted and sweet-tempered, not stern by nature. He was never spoke harshly, nor was he accustomed to speaking loudly, nor to saying anything unseemly or lewd; nor he found fault with others. He was not stingy or miser. If he did not like something said to him, he simply ignored it and would not even respond to it. From the three things he had always kept himself entirely cut-off: one, quarreling; the other, hauteur; and the third, indulging in useless and futile pasties. And he had also kept the people always spared from three things: he never spoke ill of anyone, nor maligned anybody, nor pried into anyone's failings. He gave tongue only to the things that were decent. When he spoke, all those present listened to him attentively lowering their heads as if birds were sitting on their heads. Others spoke only when the Apostle had finished his talk. Nobody joined issue with others in his presence. When anybody said something others kept quiet until he had finished his talk. Every one was paid the same attention when he spoke as was paid to his predecessor (that is: he would be given full opportunity to present his case and would be heard with same equanimity and composure as his predecessor.) He (PBUH) laughed at

whatever would make others laugh; and would amazed at whatever made others amazed. He would put up with the rudeness of the wayfarer and stranger with patience and tolerance and listen to all sorts of his demands until his companions would have the attention of such a person diverted to themselves (in order to save him – SAW – from further strain). He (PBUH) used to say: 'Whenever you come across some one needy, do help him'. He lent ears only to such tributes as were moderate enough. He never interrupted nor cut in the talk of others; unless, of course, he got to exceeding the limits. In that case, he would bid him to stop or he himself would leave the place. And, his prattle would come to an end.

"He was the most generous, large-hearted, truthful, clement, lenient and amiable. One who saw him for the first time was overawed, but when one kept his company and came to know him intimately, he would get infatuated by him. The ultimate that anyone trying to define and describe him could say is that: 'I have never seen anyone like him, neither before seeing him nor thereafter.'

Sall-all Allah-o Ala Nabeeyina Wa Sallam

(May Allah have His Peace an Blessings on His Apostle).

The Almighty Allah had adorned His Prophet (PBUH) with all the vestments of beauty and perfection. He had made him (PBUH) the most beautiful and charming embodiment of love and charm, awe and splendor, elegance and grace, all blended into a single, harmonious whole of his personage. Says Hind Abi Hala; "He was very self-respecting, graceful and splendid – pleasing to the eyes set on him. His face has the brilliance of a full moon." ●

The Qur'an and the Concept of Scarcity*

Israrul Haque*

A fundamental fact of economic life is the reality of scarcity. Productive resources are apparently limited, yet have, thus, been scarce since time immemorial and will continue to be so for all eternity. From that simple, self-evident fact a corollary hypothesis has arisen: as population and economies grow, resource depletion accelerates until physical limits are reached and resource exhaustion occurs. After all, if resources are fundamentally scarce, it stands to reason that increased demand for them hastens the day when they will disappear from the planet. Do any of these people know that if there were no limited resources, if all needs were limited, if competition for an ever higher standard of living between countries, families, and individuals was imaginary, and if the problem of scarcity was non-existent, then the need for economics would disappear, and this subject could be dropped from the curriculum?

Warnings of impending catastrophe, which have been around for almost 200 years, have arisen with increasing frequency in the 20th century. The population explosion in the third world, coupled with the dramatic postwar growth of the global economy since 1950, has increased the volume, pitch, and urgency of

warnings that civilization is living on borrowed time. The gasoline lines and inflation of the 1970s brought warning voices from the intellectual wilderness squarely into the center of public debate. International best sellers such as Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb*, the Club of Rome's *Limits to Growth*, and the Carter administration's *Global 2000 Report* all helped convince millions of people that human civilization as they knew it, was on the verge of collapse.

Did Muslim scholars/economists recognize the problem of scarcity?

For mainstream economists, the problem of scarcity occurs, when limited resources are competed for by unlimited needs. The problem of scarcity in this sense was recognized by Muslim scholars, in terms of its essence, its manifestation, and its solution. Our scholarly forebears have indeed recognized the problem of scarcity in particular instances, as a general phenomenon and as a problem for solution. They did this when they treated questions of expenditure (on children), or charity to the poor, or dealing with competing demands on the state treasury, legal shares in inheritance, debts or bequests. Here is the evidence.

The Essence of the Problem of Scarcity for Muslim Scholars

*Extracted from *Economic Problems and the Teaching of the Qur'an*, Idarah Uloom Al-Qur'an, P. Box No. 99, Shibli Bagh, Aligarh -20200, Pages, 161, Price: Rs. 150/=

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If you take any old or modern book on Islamic jurisprudence, you will find in the chapters on analogy and public interest, and the problems they give rise to, the following saying: "Legal texts are limited, but the occurrences of life are unlimited."

Texts here are like resources, and occurrences are like needs. Mujtahids have to make the texts grow (by generating meanings from obsolete texts) and by using analogy and other tools of ijthad, in order to face the numerous, various and increasing occurrences of life, and find solutions for them. A dominant view of economists is that economics is a study related to scarcity of resources that have alternative uses. From Islamic viewpoint the notion that resources are scarce is not acceptable in the absolute sense because Allah, the Creator, has provided resources in just, if not abundant, quantities. The scarcity arises on account of the unrestricted claims on the resources and the failure of human beings in their equitable distribution. Islamic economics aims at this distribution of resources ensuring well-beings (falah) and good lives (hayt tayyiba) of human beings. In conventional economics it is said that human beings. In conventional economics it is said that human society produces on the bases of four factors of production namely land, labour, capital and entrepreneurship and these four factors are paid back in the form of rent, salary, interest and profit. Islamic economics, on the contrary, negates the justification of interest as a payment against capital. Provision of capital is the responsibility of the

entrepreneurship and so there is no justification of payment of any additional payment of interest over and above the profit. Profit, in Islamic system, takes care of all that the entrepreneur does, including arrangement of capital.

Manifestations of the Problem of Scarcity as Described by Muslim Scholars

Muslim scholars raised the problem of scarcity in many jurisprudential situations:

1. Al-'Izz Ibn Abd al-Salam (d. 660 A.H), Safi'i jurist demonstrated this problem when he said: "If two poor people meet and there is not enough to meet both their needs,....." In this case there are two needy people whose needs are greater than the resources available to a person who wants to help them both. The same jurist demonstrated the same problem when he said: "If someone had two sons and was only able to support one of them."
2. Al-Mawardi (d. 450 A.H), another Shafi'i jurist, demonstrated the problem when he said: "If two demands are made on the treasury, of which it is only able to meet one."
3. Our scholars also demonstrated this problem when they spoke about inheritance, especially when dealing with the subject of the rightful shares

due to family members and referring to the problem of 'awl. Linguistically, the 'awl is the excess, and, as an expression, it is the excess in the lawful shares of an inheritance. The simplest example of this is as follows. Assume we have three people inheriting; a husband and two sisters (whether full sisters or sisters from the same father). According to the Surat al-Nisa', the husband receives half and the sisters receive two third, one third each. If we add the sum of the shares due to the family members, it comes to more than one. ($1/2 + 1/3 + 1/3 = 3/6 + 4/6 = 7/6$). The total is $7/6$ (i.e. more than one), whereas the total inheritance is one (which equals $6/6$).

In ascertaining the shares, the problem of excess is solved by dividing the deficit proportionally among the inheritors that is in proportion to their shares. The estate is divided equally into the number of shares required, i.e. in this case seven. The husband is given $3/7$ and the sisters $2/7$ each. The overall total would then be $3/7 + 2/7 + 2/7 = 7/7$.

In fact, all inheritance is based on the fact that there is a limited resource, the total of the estate, and relations have competing claims on it. The estate is distributed among them on the basis of inheritance laws. Depending on the closeness of the relationship existing. The points of

competition, priority (of two types: precedence. Where one potential inheritor has a closer relationship to the deceased than another potential inheritor; and lack, where the inheritance is too small to be divided), disinheritance, burden of expenditure (between male and female), and the difference of shares.

4. We find the problem of scarcity demonstrated by our scholars when they speak about the subject of competing bequests. If someone made bequests to two people, to one a quarter of the estate, and to the other a third, a third of the estate is divided between them proportionately according to the size of their bequests. This is because total bequests should not exceed one third of the estate, unless the inheritors are willing to allow this provision to be waived. The solution for bequests here resembles that for the shares of family members. The same applies if bequests are made to one, or more than one, person, of sums which total more than a third, in cases where the inheritors do not allow the excess, or, where the inheritors do allow the excess, but total bequests amount to more than the total estate.

5. Scholars take a similar position when they speak

about debts in the chapter on inheritance and bankruptcy (compiling debts). Debts have priority over inheritance concerning the estate. If the sum of the debts exceeds that of the total estate, the estate is divided proportionally between the creditors according to the value of the monies owed to each. The same applies if a man goes bankrupt, and the net value of his wealth is less than the value of the monies he owes. His wealth will be divided between his creditors according to the value of the monies owed to each one.

The Solution for the Problem of Scarcity Given by Muslim Scholars

When needs compete for resources, or lawful shares for the estate, or bequests or debts compete for the wealth of the person being inherited from or the bankrupt, scholars, we have seen, the problem may be treated by giving proportions, or by observing priority, deservedness, or sufficiency, or by lot (regarded as the last resort when demands are equal, or when the inheritance is too small to be divided, or when it is impossible to divide it for some other reason.)

Al-'Izz Ibn Abd al-Salam says: "The imam must give preference to necessities over needs when dealing with people's rights, and treat them equitably by giving the poorer preference over the less poor, and the urgent need preference over the lesser

need." This shows how needs are arranged as they compete for resources, and how they are given priority according to importance and urgency.

He also says: "If someone has two sons and he can only support one of them, then he should divide what he has equally between them. If half a loaf satisfies one, and meets half the hunger of the other, how should he settle the matter? I say: He settles it in such a way as to satisfy each one's hunger to the same degree, for the main purpose of food is to provide enough for the stomach." This indicates that he satisfies a proportion of each one's need.

He also said: "If one of them is more worthy, such as a father or a mother, or a relative or a wife, or a saint, or a fair judge or a just ruler, the more deserving should have priority over the lesser."

See also how al-Mawardi treated the problem in al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyah that occurs when the expenses of the state treasury exceed resources. Sometimes debts can be rescheduled, and sometimes they may resort to borrowing.

The Problem of Scarcity is raised even in the Hadith of the Prophet

The man came to the Prophet (PBUH) and said, "I have a dinar," He said, "Spend it on yourself." The man said, "I have another." He said, "Spend it on your family." The man said, "I have another." He said, "Spend it on your servant." The man said, "I have another." He said, "You know best how to spend it."

In another hadith, he says, "Begin with yourself . . . , and if anything is left over, use it for your family, and if anything else is left use it for your relatives, and so on."

The point of these hadiths is that people's resources are limited, and their needs are unlimited, so they have to be arranged according to their importance. Perhaps, this hadith could also be used as a basis for research into consumer balancing in modern economics.

However, some Muslim economists believe that there would be no problem of scarcity if Islamic economics were applied. This is not correct because although there is no concept of absolute scarcity of unlimited resources in Islam as these resources available on earth may be sufficient to secure the basic needs (food, clothing, and shelter) of may be fifty billion human beings, however, you cannot live on them alone, in spite of their basic and critical importance in our lives, therefore resources are limited and as we are about to explain, while needs are unlimited, so the problem of scarcity is real but not the central.

But discussing any concept from Islamic or Qur'anic perspective we have to free ourselves from the western framework of thought and idea and base our opinion according to our own world view. To analyze the science of economics we have to build our own framework of analysis.

To me Islam uniquely considers distribution as the fundamental economic problem, and Muslims do not share the obsession of capitalists and

communists who consider scarcity to be the central problem because Islam differentiates between the basic needs and luxuries. It is the Islamic world view and framework together with its moral and spiritual dimensions which distinguishes the Islamic concept of limited resources with unlimited resources.

Unlimited resources like air and light of the sun, of which we can obtain sufficient for our needs without paying a price (free goods). They are part of God's mercies upon His servants. Limited resources (economic goods), like wheat, cotton, iron, foodstuffs, and textile, chemicals, medicines, cosmetic and capital products etc, the scarcity of these are clearer on the national, family, and individual level than on the world level. Ideally, and on the world level, these resources may not be limited, but on a national (familial and individual) and realistic level, it is impossible to deny the evidence that these resources are limited but as a result of greed, monopolization, injustice, misdistribution, and disasters, the scarcity problem is aggravated. As long as these resources are limited, they must be well administered.

The scarcity mindset encourages a decision making process founded on limitation, thereby allowing fear to override the logical mind. Scarcity can be abandoned only when it is exchanged for a mindset of innovation, which is the foundation of a mindset focused on maximizing the range and quality of proactive options available. Innovation defeats all forms of scarcity, personal and societal. In

seeking to abandon scarcity for innovation, we will achieve a new level of security and prosperity. So is it true, then, that civilization is teetering on the precipice of collapse due to resource exhaustion? No.

Qur'an says that ample provision on earth has been made for human life to survive, and that is the entire community's duty to exploit this generosity. Just how far down have we drawn earth's material abundance?

So how does one explain the unprecedented abundance of natural resources today, an explosion of plenty in the very midst of record demands for resources? There are three means by which to judge the extent of our resource base: proven reserves, price data, and ultimately recoverable stock.

Malthus's prediction about population and food supply was inaccurate: food production has exceeded population growth. For most of the last two centuries, the increase in food production was the result of binging more land under cultivation and farming existing land more intensively. The world today produces enough grain alone to provide every human being on the planet with 3,500 calories a day. That's enough to make most people fat! Looking more closely at some of the world's hunger-ravaged countries and regions confirms that scarcity is clearly not the cause of hunger.

The disturbing, ongoing pattern of famine and drought in Africa and Asia has added credibility to the argument that the earth is approaching a point at which it will not be able to continue to feed the "teeming masses" of the

planet. Yet by any analysis, this is a time of agricultural abundance unprecedented in the history of the world. Thomas De Gregory observes that "if there is hunger in the world—and so there is, in abundance, even in wealthy countries—it is because of maldistribution of food, not insufficient global production. "Ten time as many people died of famine in the last quarter of the 19th century as have died of famine in the third quarter of the 20th century, despite our much larger present population and the massive engineered famines in Cambodia during the 1970s.

Proven Reserves

Abundance, not scarcity, best describes the supply of food in the world today. Increases in food production during the past 35 years have outstripped the world's unprecedented population growth by about 16 percent. Indeed, mountains of unsold grain on world markets have pushed prices strongly downward over the past three and a half decades. Grain prices rose briefly during the early 1990s, as bad weather coincided with policies geared toward reducing overproduction, but still remained well below the highs observed in the early sixties and mid-seventies. All well and good for the global picture, you might be thinking, but doesn't such a broad stroke tell us little? Aren't most of the world's hungry living in countries with food shortages —countries in Latin America, in Asia, and especially in Africa?

Thus, even most "hungry countries" have enough food for all their people right now. This finding

turns out to be true using official statistics even though experts warn us that newly modernizing societies invariably underestimate farm production – just as a century ago at least a third of the U.S. wheat crop went uncounted. Moreover, many nations can't realize their full potential food production because of gross inefficiencies caused by inequitable ownership of resources. Finally, many of the countries in which hunger is rampant export much more in agricultural goods than they import.

Lessons from U.S.

Finally, in probing the connection between hunger and scarcity we should never overlook the lessons from the U.S. In the 1990s, over 30 million Americans could not afford a healthy diet, and 8.5 per cent of U.S. children are hungry and 20.1 per cent more are at risk of hunger. But who would argue that not enough food is produced? Surely not U.S. farmers who were responsible for overproduction and the U.S. government, which maintains huge storehouses of cheese, milk and butter, overproduction of food grain is their most persistent headache. In 1995, U.S. aid shipments abroad of surplus food included more than 3 million metric tons of cereals and cereal products, about two thirds consisting of wheat and flour. That's enough flour to bake about 600 loaves of bread per year for every hungry child in the U.S. We can learn to see that hunger is real; scarcity is not. Only when we free ourselves from the myth of scarcity can we begin to look for hunger's real causes.

Even if natural resource

commodities are becoming scarce, it may be possible to sustain economic production using lower levels of resource inputs to produce equivalent levels of goods and services. This may be achievable through technological progress or the substitution of other more plentiful inputs. The question of what mechanisms can sustain an economy dependent upon an essential nonrenewable resource was examined with highly stylized optimal growth models in the 1970s, and the results were an important theme in *Scarcity and Growth Reconsidered*.

If the economy is patient enough to give technological progress the time to increase the effective resource stock, then positive economic growth is sustained.

India ranks near the top among Third World agricultural exporters. In 1995, India exported \$625 million worth of wheat and flour, and \$1.3 billion worth of rice (5 million metric tons), the two staples of the Indian diet. While at least 200 million Indians go hungry.

Bangladesh. Beginning with its famine of the early 1970s, Bangladesh came to symbolize the frightening consequences of people overrunning food resources. Yet Bangladesh's official yearly rice output alone—which some experts say is seriously under-reported – could provide each person with about a pound of grain per day, or 2,000 calories. While Brazil exported more than \$13 billion worth of food in 1994 (second among developing countries), 70 million Brazilians cannot afford enough to eat.

Africa. It comes as a surprise

for many of us to learn that the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, home to some 213 million chronically malnourished people (about 25 percent of the total in developing countries), continue to export food. Throughout the 1980s exports from sub-Saharan Africa grew more rapidly than imports, and in 1994, 11 countries of the region remained net exporters of food.

Empirical evidence does not indicate a significant increase in the scarcity of natural resource commodities. Indeed, the historical evidence is that expansion into previously undeveloped lands and technological progress have enabled human economy to avoid the so-called Malthusian trap and to maintain adequate supplies of food, forest, and mineral products even as population and economic output increased substantially.

Population and economic growth into the next century will greatly increase the demand for natural resource commodities. Even though population growth has slowed, a population of six billion growing at 1 per cent adds the same number of people as three billion people growing at 2 per cent annum. The desire for a higher living standard in the developing world places additional demands of technological progress to prevent increasing scarcity of natural resource commodities.

However, the world's petroleum supply is finite and cannot last forever – some forecasts place the peak of world oil production within the next

decade or two. Coal is more abundant than petroleum, but the environmental evils of energy from coal are generally greater.

There are several possible renewable substitutes, including solar, thermal and voltaic, wind, geothermal, and biomass energy. Whether these energy sources will allow the same standard of living as fossil fuels depends upon technological advances yet to be made. One can be optimistic or pessimistic about future possibilities, but there doesn't appear to be a significant shortage on the near horizon.

The first step is to correct the institutional failures that result in under-valuation of these goods and services. This step is necessary whether one views sustainability as an efficiency or equity issue, and it is a tremendous task in itself. We are far from an understanding of how ecosystems makes it difficult to design simple remedies.

Price Data

An examination of 15 representative agricultural commodities (barley, broilers, carrots, cattle, corn, cotton, eggs, milk, oats, oranges, rice, sorghum, soybeans, wheat, and wool) reveals what real prices in the United States dropped by an average of 38 percent from 1980 to 1990. When indexed to wages, the price of those foodstuffs has declined 83 percent since 1950. Clearly, if the earth's agricultural productivity were being outpaced by voracious demand for food as a result of the population

explosion, agricultural prices should be rising sharply rather than falling dramatically as the data indicate.

Likewise, it is clear that the agricultural output of the planet has increased exponentially over the past several centuries. Since 1960 technological advances in farm equipment, pesticides, fertilizers, irrigation techniques, bioengineering, and soil management have led to a doubling of world food production and 30 percent increases in farmland productivity. Technological advances have more than kept pace with the explosion in global population. Since 1948, world food production has surpassed global population increases by about 1 percent a year. Although global population has doubled since World War II, world grain production has tripled.

The dramatic increase in the availability of foodstuffs occurred without any appreciable global increase in landmass committed to agricultural uses over the last 30 years. Since 1950, in fact, 200 million acres of U.S. farmland have been retired as a result of the unprecedented glut of agricultural commodities on the world market.

Agriculture has translated into improved health for even the poorest of the poor in the Third World. Whereas only 42 percent of all countries reported that average daily caloric consumption reached 100 percent of recommended levels in the mid-1960s, 66 percent of all nations reported caloric intake at those levels by the mid-1980s, a 56 percent

increase in less than 20 years. Fully 81 percent of the world's countries, including China and India, now report average caloric intake of at least 90 percent of recommended levels.

Moreover, there is good reason to believe that the planet can feed tens of billions of people for many generations to come. Suitable agricultural land makes up 24 percent of the total ice-free landmass of the globe, well over twice the amount cultivated in recent decades and more than triple the acreage cultivated in any given year. Moreover, a great deal of the world's cropland is underused or cultivated using low-yield technologies and practices similar to those used in 1910. Obviously, agricultural productivity will skyrocket as high-yield technologies continue to advance throughout the developing world.

While generating massive abundance and wealth of resources by eliminating all restrictions and oppressive systems that prevent production, Islam will safeguard against abuses of exploitation in acquiring wealth by limiting the way in which wealth is acquired. For instance, to the situation of "survival of the fittest". Such an unrestricted environment has led directly to the current the resources of the world like parasites unrestricted in their "freedom."

Recoverable Stock

By using labels like "Third World" and "First World," contemporary economic policy has worked behind a deceived populace

who fail to realize that the "Third World" countries are actually First World in terms of resources. While organizations like Mercy International and UNICEF keep the masses content under the act of "humanitarian aid," the capitalist machine works behind the stage to gobble up the resources of the world.

The current systems have created a club of institutions –such as the IMF (International Monetary Fund), World Bank, and NGO's (Non Governmental Organizations) – that employ tactics such as loans and structural deficit planning to siphon off the world's resources to the so-called developed nations, leaving behind a gross inequality in distribution of wealth. The world order has resulted in a bleak scenario in which most of the world chokes from the exploitation of a few elitist nations that continue, under the protection of laws elitist nations that continue, under the protection of laws and systems that are designed to serve their interests, to squander the wealth of the world and systematically tighten their control of societies around the globe.

Conclusion

Such a misunderstanding has concealed the reality that starvation, poverty, and economic backwardness, result from misdistribution exasperated by man-made laws and systems. Under the Islamic system, Nigeria alone could support the whole of Africa, as occurred in the past when, under the system of Islam, Africa sent food to

Gems of Wisdom

● When prayers do not seem to be producing the desired results, leave it to God to deliver your desires. He is best to decide what you deserve.

● Don't waste your time in praising others. Rather follow the virtues that make him praiseworthy.

● Don't do what you stop others from doing.

● Be humble, even if your dress does not reflect that humility.

● Rely upon God and struggle to fulfill your mission. Man gets what he struggles for.

● Don't show the harshness of your tongue to the mother who trained you in art and manner of speaking.

● Write your sorrows on soil while the joys of life must be inscribed on marble.

● It is rather strange that a patient abstains from eating things that are halaal (legitimate) out of concern for health but does not fear God while eating and consuming haraam (proscribed by religion).

● Try to keep the person happy whom you see in mirror everyday.

● Friendship is like a thread which can break but when it is rejoined, it acquires a knot that stays forever.

● Do not degrade yourself in the eyes of others as it will reduce you to the rubble of a house bricks are up for grab by everyone.

● One who thinks himself an perfection and others to be fool, is not a wise person.

● Those who eat less and speak less could indeed be candidates for salvation.

● Slip of tongue is more dangerous than slip of pen. ●

Development and Promotion of Islamic Science

P.A. Wahid*

The rivalry between religion and science is centuries old. The controversy, which started between the Christian Church and scientific community, reached its peak in 1859 following the publication of Darwin's book *Origin of Species*, which proposed a theory of chance-driven evolution of organic beings demolishing the need for Creator God. The fight still goes on unabated. A resolution passed by the National Academy of Sciences USA, in 1981 states: "Religion and science are separate and mutually exclusive realms of human thought whose presentation in the same context leads to misunderstanding of both scientific theory and religious belief". The stand of Britain's Royal Society is not different either: "creationism has no scientific basis and should not be part of the science curriculum." Several verbal battles and confrontations between the clergy and scientists had taken place in the past. Scopes case or 'monkey trial' of 1925 in the USA marked the beginning the teaching of human evolution remained in effect for more than 40 years. But teaching students about Darwin's general principle of evolution with reference to non-human organisms has never been illegal in the United States. In 1968,

U.S. Supreme Court overturned an Arkansas state law banning the teaching of evolution. And in 1987, it ruled against balancing evolution lessons by teaching creationism. Attack on evolution is however on the rise once again in the USA. School boards in Kansas, Pennsylvania and other states had either restrained the teaching of evolution in science classes or introduced alternative explanations that were essentially religious in character. Creationism took a different form under the new name "intelligent design" (ID). Teaching of ID in classrooms was legally challenged in 2005. Intelligent design lost the legal battle because the court ruled the idea was not scientifically sound.

It will not be too difficult to find there is deep-rooted conspiracy going on to promote atheism through science. It is possible to distinguish two broad domains in science. These are technology oriented domain and technology not-oriented (or non-tech) domain. Scientific knowledge in the technology-oriented domain is self-correcting and directional as otherwise the targeted technology will not result. This domain has there fore factual content. On the other hand, non-tech domain lacks mechanism for self-correction since

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this space does not contribute to the development of technologies, it does not attract much attention and remains not of immediate concern to the people. Obviously, this domain can be easily manipulated. It is this non-tech domain of science that nurtures theories against theism. Steady state cosmology, Darwin's theory of biological evolution, theories of origin of life, etc, are some of them despite their inherent inadequacies and weaknesses, these theories are retained as scientific theories by the powerful forumcontrolling atheist lobby with the sole intention of imparting credence to atheism and thereby labelling theism as irrational doctrine. Entry of such pseudoscientific theories in science not only takes science in the wrong direction but more importantly misleads people from the divine righteous path. As these theories are included in science curriculum, the children are exposed to atheistic theories at a young age in the schools and colleges, which can do serious damage to their religious outlook and theistic perception of the-universe and purpose of their life.

The Qur'an and Science

Muslim community cannot stand as mute witness to what is happening in science and in the name of science to demolish theistic doctrine and religion. It is the bounden duty of every believer to thwart satanic designs and sustain the divinity and veracity of knowledge. The Christian conflict is

limited to evolutionary theory only. However for the Qur'an standpoint, the issue is far more serious with wider implications and consequences.

The controversy has only helped to create the wrong impression that religion and science are mutually contradicting ideologies. The general notion about religion and science are man-made ideologies. Although Muslims believe that Islam divine religion consider science as man-made. The debate on Islam and modern science is now more than a hundred years old. Attempts to Islamize knowledge or to develop Islamic science have not been successful because the Muslim world is not a homogenous community with uniform religious rites and observances but a mixture of factions with varied concepts and ideologies. Nevertheless, the Quran unites them all and bring them under one umbrella. The Quran is from God (3:3, 12: and it is under His protection (15:9). Clearly therefore, Islamic science should be developed within the framework of the Qur'an. It is on that basis Islamization of knowledge is conceptualized here.

Conformity of Science with the Qur'an

Knowledge has no boundaries. Like the Quran, Science is also from Allah. It is Allah who gave us knowledge (96:5.2:255.2:31). Both the Qur'an and science originated from the same source –Allah. That is why we find the

Qur'an and science mutually compatible and complementary. The non-compatible portion of science must be of satanic origin. The Qur'an is not merely a text of religious information; it also contains revelations about the creation of the universe, its organization purpose of creating man and the universe. Fate of the universe, future of mankind, etc. Many Quranic revelations about the universe and man have been found to agree well with the scientific findings made during the past century. This indicates that Allah did intend to give evidences of the divinity of the Qur'an to the non-believers through science. This is quite evident from the verse 21:30, which addresses the non-believers: "Do not the unbelievers see that the skies and the earth were joined together before We clove them asunder? We made from water every organism. Will they not believe then?" (21:30). "With hands (power and skill) did we construct the sky: For it is We who create the vastness of space." (51:47) These two verses indicate that the components of the universe were together at some point of time in the past before they were separated and the universe has been expanding ever since. The people of prophet Muhammad's time had no scientific knowledge to understand the implication of these verses. Obviously the message was meant for future generation when the required scientific knowledge is made available by God. The Qur'an informs us that the

knowledge we get is what Allah releases to us (2:255). In 1924 American astronomer Edwin Hubble discovered that ours was not the only galaxy: there were some hundred thousand million galaxies spaced far between and they all have been moving away from us. This observation confirmed the expansion of the galaxies were together in the distant past as given in the Qur'an. It is these findings that provided sufficient proof to the big bang cosmology, which describes the origin of the universe and time.

There are several other verses in the Qur'an that have scientific significance. This does not mean that the Qur'an is full of science and whatever discoveries are to be made in the future are already there in the Qur'an. Maurice Bucaille and Keith Moore were the pioneers in bringing to light the agreement between the Quranic revelations and modern era of science and technology to strengthen their belief in Islam. To an unprejudiced unbiased non-believer it proves that the Qur'an is scientifically sound, rational and divine, though Islam bashers may refute the Quran-science compatibility. Effectively, the Qur'an science compatibility is proof of scientific veracity of the Quran based on Carl Popper's criterion of falsifiability. Much like a scientific theory can be proven by confirming its predictions, the Quran's divinity and credibility can be proven through scientific confirmation of its

revelations about the universe and man. A detailed discussion of these aspects has been made in my book *Scientific Foundation of Islam*. Scientific basis of the Quran has to be revealed to the world particularly in the context of atheists, organized move against theism.

Some of the revelations on the Qur'an have not yet been subjected to experimental verification. They can be treated as scientific theories. These include revelation of the organization of the cosmic space as seven skies one above the other (67:15-16), the creation of earth as the first component of the universe (41:9-12), etc. It is hoped that further advancement in science will throw light on these phenomena.

Scientific interpretation of the Qur'an

The Quran-science mutualism led to the development of a computer model of the universe by me. This concept was first published in my book *The Divine Expert System* in 1998. It explains the self-propelled and self-regulated functioning of the universe. The universe is information-laden system and the information carried by it is the divine command as Allah says: "So He completed them as seven skies...and inspired in each sky its duty and command... (41:12). In computer or instructions form the programs that drive the system, There are several other verses also in the Quran that suggest a computerized set-up of the universe. Accordingly, the universe was described as a

system designed, programmed and created by God. The subject was discussed in detail in my two recent books *The Computer Universe: A Scientific Rendering of the Holy Quran* (2006), and *An Introduction to Islamic Science* (2007). Now there are more than four books on this subject published mainly scientific angle. The basic change that the computer concept of the universe brings into our present knowledge of the universe and cosmology is that it is the patterns of divine information (instructions) rather than matter and energy per se that represent the fundamental units of reality. Although the knowledgebase created by science covers almost every aspect of the universe from subatomic level to galaxies and beyond, questions like how the various components of the universe acquired their characteristic properties and behavior have not yet been addressed in science. The computer model enables us to answer such fundamental questions about the universe in the light of the Quranic revelations.

Biologists consider life as a physical phenomenon assuming that the genetic program is constituted by DNA molecule (the molecular gene or the genome concept). This means an organism is molecules. The Quran on the other hand reveals that the phenomenon of life is non-physical. Life is created by non-material rooh. The non-physical nature of life can be explained

convincingly with the help of computer model of organism.

Atheism-based theories

It is high time that the Muslim world realized that there is an organized move by the powerful and influential atheistic lobby in the scientific community against theism. It is not particularly against any religion but its aim is to uproot the belief in God from the society. When the big bang model was proposed, there was a lot of hue and cry made by the only reason that it implied the need of Creator God for the universe. Consequently, the atheists wanted to replace the big bang model, Stephen Hawking wrote: Many people do not like the idea that time has a beginning, probably because it smacks of attempts to avoid the conclusion that there had been a big bang. The proposal that gained widest support was called the steady state theory... Another attempt to avoid the conclusion that there must have been a big bang, and therefore a beginning of time, was made by two Russian scientists, Evangenii Lifshitz and Isaac Khalatnikov, in 1963." The steady state model was proposed by Hermann Bondi and Thomas Gold (two Austrian scientists) along with the British astronomer Fred Hoyle in 1949. According to that theory, the universe did not have a beginning nor will it end. The theory held the centre stage for nearly two decades but could not be proved. It is almost ejected now in favor of the big bang theory, which upholds theism.

The failure of the steady state theory has, as expected, shifted the attention to theories in biology namely, molecular gene and genome concepts, evolutionary theory, and theories of origin of life. Today biology has become the breeding ground for atheism based pseudoscientific theories. What we find is the deliberate attempt of the atheist in the garb of science to suit their agenda. This is nothing but exploitation of the credibility and confidence reposed by the public in science and scientific community.

Pseudoscientific theories can be identified by evaluating the theories in the light of the Qur'an. Being the truth from Allah, the Qur'an unquestionably lends itself as the reference standard for assessing the veracity of information from other sources. This means that any information including scientific theories that is contradictory to the Quranic message will be false. In other words, by bringing science within the framework of the Quran, it will be possible to purify science. The Quran reiterates that falsehood will not last, it will disappear (17:81). Theories of origin of life from non-life, molecular gene (genome) theory, theory of evolution of species by chance, steady state cosmology, etc. are against the Qur'an and what we find is such theories either face problems or have become controversial. This is clear-cut evidence that any theory opposed to the Creator will fail as implied in the

Quranic verses 17:81. Any scientific theory that is against the Quran should be rejected by Muslims.

Development of Islamic Science

True science and the Qur'an can harmoniously blend with each other as they are compatible and mutually complementary knowledge systems. The product of fusion of science with the Qur'an constitutes the Revealed Knowledge about the universe and man' which Allah wants to convey. This holistic knowledge can be aptly called "Islamic Science" A beginning has been made by me in this field in my book. An Introduction to Islamic Science. It is an area requiring inputs from both Qur'anic scholars and scientists. The Qur'anic scholars and scientists in various fields have to work together to develop Islamic science.

It has become imperative that we separate the grain from chaff in science in the light of the Qur'an and exclude pseudoscience from the academic curricula and research agenda. Exclusion of these theories will not hamper advancement of science and progress of any country as these theories do not contribute to the development of any technology. Further they also do not offer any useful or factual information. Science curricula in schools and colleges have to be restructured' and revamped in the light of the Qur'an. This should receive top priority in Muslim countries. Scientific theories based on the Qur'an have also to be developed

to replace atheism-based theories now being taught in classed.

Modern science does not assign any purpose to the universe and human life. The Qur'an is the only source that reveals to us the purpose of creation and the divine mission with the human species and the universe. Which declares there is no purpose for the universe and man; one will be totally misled and misguided. This means that modern education is deficient in several important respects. This calls for the development of Islamic science' which alone can provide holistic view of the universe and human life in the light of divine purpose.

The false propaganda being made by the scientific community that the theistic doctrine is superstitious and unscientific has to be countered effectively by the Muslim community. This can be best done by explaining the Quranic revelations about the universe and human life scientifically and proving the compatibility between the Qur'an and science. Efforts should also be made to convince the people that both the Qur'an and science originate from God. Development of Islamic science and its inclusion in science curriculum in the educational institutions can bring the modern education system into theistic fold.

A detailed project can be prepared in this subject and submitted.

(The Muslim World League Journal, Makkah, K.S.A) ●

Spiritual Influence of Sarmad on Azad's Political Philosophy

S.Faizanul Haque

Maulana Abul kalam Azad, will not only be remembered for the role he played in the national liberation movement of the country, but will also be considered a Muslim leader who stood for a dialogue among Muslim and Hindus. His early career from 1906 to 1920 was influenced by his religious studies. Azad's enthusiasm and passion for the pan Islamism was influenced by Jamaluddin Afghani and Mohammad Abdu of Egypt. Azad firmly believed that Muslims were leaders of the world. If they submit to God .the whole universe will bend to their will.

In his early writings and speeches which appeared in his journal Al-Hilal he talked about the superiority of Muslims over followers of other religions and called for an Islamic Way to independence "India Wins Freedom ,the other side " published from Karachi-in 1961 Abdul Waheed khan quotes Maulana Azad on separation of Politics from Religion "We have developed our political thinking from religion....We believe that every thought which draws inspiration from any institutions- including politics other than QURAN is KUFR (Infidelity).

It is astonishing that the same revivalist Muslim and upholder of pure Islam in the last two decades of

his life ceased to be revivalist and embraced Indian secular nationalism as his political philosophy. This radical change appeared in the views of Maulana Azad after 1920 the evolution of Azad's outlook from pan-Islamic to secular nationalist / was apparently determined by his friendship and collaboration with Mahatma Gandhi and by the rise of the communal problems in the Indian liberation movement. But very few of us know that Maulana Azad was an ardent admirer of "SARMAD" the sufi saint beheaded by Aurangzeb. Samad's enlightening influence shaped Azad's wirkd view on the underlying unity of all world religions as evident in Azad's "Tarjuman-ul-Quran" and "Wahdet-e-Deen" Azad's faith in the essential unity of humanity and in the oneness of all religions stemmed essentially from the sufi concept of "existence-wahadat-ulwujud" Truth for Azad ,was one and the same everywhere. The mistake was to equate particular forms of Truth with Truth itself in his own words

"The misfortune is that the world worships mere terms and not their inner meaning" Therefore, though all may worship the same Truth, they will fight with each other

on account of differences of the terms they employ. If the veils of these external Terms can be lifted, so that the Truth and Reality come before all unveiled, then at once all quarrels of the world will end.

The foundation of Religious pluralism was that the Divine has many aspects but the human and Divine are united in an expression of love. Azad outlined the essence of his ideas on what he considered as the "God of Universal Compassion". His entire argument was to present Muslims with the fact that the fundamental teaching of the 'Holy Quran' is Mercy and Forgiveness (Rahmat). Maulana Azad's most important book Tarjuman-ul-Quran illustrates his firm beliefs in tolerance and dialogue

Dr. Zakir Hussain as quoted in Douglas, Ian Henderson, s book "Abul Kalam Azad "(published in 1988-Oxford university press Delhi says:

"In my opinion the greatest service which the Maulana did was to teach people of every religion that there are two aspects of religion. One separates and creates hatred. This is the false aspect. The other ,the true spirit of religion ,brings people together. It creates understanding. It lies in the spirit of service, in sacrificing self for others. it implies belief in unity, in the essential unity of things." Azad under the light of SARMAD,S philosophy wrote that the path of GOD in every corner of

the world was identical. The Holy Quran"tells us that prophets sent by God no matter at what time or in what part of the world, all gave the same lesson Alamgir Qanun-e-Sa'adat meaning God's universal Law of felicity. This law is the worship of ONE GOD through Aamal-e-Saaleh(Deeds of Piety)

Sarmad through his poetry comes out cleaner and more loyal and true to GOD than his persecutor:

Sarmad Gila ikhtesar
mibayad kard,

Yak kaar az ein do kaar mi
bayad kard,

Ya thb be raza-ai dost mi
bayad daad,

Ya jaan barahash nisaar mi
bayad kard .

(O Sarmad Shorten your
complaint,

Of two choices, take one;
Either surrender your body to
the will of your Friend,

Or offer to sacrifice your soul)

Sarmad in his state of ecstasy
cast off all worldly shackles including
clothes.

Azad himself wore old,
patched Shervanis. Once his
Secretary Ajmal khan pointed out
the patches when Azad was leaving
to inaugurate the Sahitya Academy
,but Azad shot back that nobody
would notice, they' d listen to his
speech instead.

When Gandhi and Nehru
called on Azad in Kolkata during the
freedom struggle, they found him in

a torn kurta. Gandhi said gently, "Maulana Sahab! Agar kuchh mali bohran hai to bina hijak bata dein." (If there is any economic crisis, kindly tell without hesitation). But Azad smiled and refused.

Sarmad's humanist voice speaks through Azad's writings: Although religion is meant to unite people and show them the path of righteous living, it is ironical that frequently violence is perpetrated against innocent men, women and children in its name. No religion approves of prejudices, hatred, extremism and violence. "

This is how Azad grew beyond the revivalism of Al-Hilal period to manifest the real relevance of spirituality as a moral imperative to politics. The awareness of other religions also encouraged him to formulate the idea of humanist co-existence of faiths. Azad's universal humanism led him on to fiercely oppose both Muslim as well as Hindu communalism that saw no place for a genuinely religiously plural and democratic independent India. His plea for religious humanism, however, communal harmony however, fell on deaf ears as India descended into a bloodbath in 1947 and from time to time after independence. But AZAD 'S message is not dead. He was a man ahead of his time and his lessons of religious pluralism are yet to be learnt not only Muslims but also followers of other religions. ●

Valentine's Day: Reality or Mirage

Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

Valentine's Day is celebrated on 14 February each year with elan. This is originally a Roman festival. As far as we Indians are concerned, it has no sense for us. One has rightly said, "It is a tragedy of our time that our youths are bent on accepting every glitter of the "Modern' era as fashion and symbol of progress."

It is unfortunate that we Indians are more susceptible in copying other without realizing the worth of the acts observed by others. It shows our imbecility, idiocy, impassivity, inanity, insanity and stupidity. Rabindranath Tagore describes of such mania in one of his poems with these words: "Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit."

In this context it may be said that Holi and Rakcha Bandhan both are sacred festivals in India. Both have their radiant and redolent backgrounds and significant importance. But Christians, Jews and the like never celebrate it in their respective countries.

As regards Valentine's Day, various legends narrated about it. But the most famous is that during the third century Roman Claudius wanted to have a big army. But most of the people did not like to leave their hearth and home. So the emperor banned the marriage of soldiers. Despite this mandate St. Valentine, the Bishop of the local church performed marriage secretly. When the emperor came to know about Valentine's breach of order. He ordered his soldiers to put him into Jail. One day the prison guard said to his daughter to visit Valentine in the cell. Accordingly St Valentine fell in love with the jailer's daughter. It is said due to this reason he was executed on 14 February 270 CE. Since then 14 February is observed as the day of "Feast of lovers" in Rome.

Now let us see to what extent celebration of this festival is justified. Was the sacrifice of Valentine for prevailing the truth or any other noble cause? We shall dispassionately ponder over the ins and outs of this legend.

It is an open secret that Valentine's Day leads on youths to the path of obscenity, immodesty and indecency. It has no any good aspect through which one may take advantage of.

It is time we must keep away from such absurdities and take pride in our own culture and civilization. Good deeds lead to good and evil deeds to evil. ●

India Needs Real Democracy

India is a democratic country. Here parliamentary form of the government is based on democratic principles. It is one of the largest democracy in the world. The term democracy is derived from the two Greek words 'demos' and 'kratia'. These two together mean 'authority of the people'. Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president of USA, has precisely defined democracy. He held democracy as 'the government of the people, by the people and for the people'.

Being citizens of a democratic country our role becomes highly crucial. Moreover, we have a pluralistic society, people of different caste, creed, religion, language and culture live together as one nation. A vast country, India's main plank is its national integration: all initiatives in the country should, therefore, focus on this reality and be done irrespective of any parochial consideration.

In his book "India's Foreign Policy" Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India writes: "The Preamble of our constitution states: we, the people of India, having solemn resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign Democratic Republic and to secure to all its citizens: Justice, social, economic and political; liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship, equality them all

Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

fraternity assuring the dignity of among them all fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation".

Despite this fact minorities are confronted with a host of difficulties and problems regarding their religious issues and affairs. In a democratic country, if people's feelings are hurt and they are deprived of their fundamental rights and basic amenities of life, it is nothing but a travesty of democracy.

Being Indians, it is imperative for us to maintain its unity, integrity, and democratic values and norms by fostering national integration and propagating the message of humanity throughout India. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad has rightly said: "I am proud of being an Indian. I am part of the indivisible unity that is Indian nationality. I am indispensable to this noble edifice and without me this splendid structure of India is incomplete. I am an essential element which has gone to build India. I never surrender this claim". (Presidential Address, Indian National Congress. Fifty 'third Session, Ramgarh, March 1940) He further said: "if an angel were to descend from the high heavens and proclaim from the heights of the Qutub Minar, "Discard Hindu-Muslim unity and within 24 hours Swaraj is yours", I will refuse

the proffered Swaraj but will not budge an inch from my stand, the refusal of Swaraj will affect only India while the end of our unity will be the loss of the entire human world”

Needless to add that members of Parliament (Mps) are expected to play a leading role in bringing about democratic values in the country. They are representatives of their respective constituencies. They should be honest, straightforward, candid and bold.

It should be kept in mind that India has far lagged behind due to corruption, scam and other so-called unfair and unscrupulous acts economically and financially. We know well who are responsible for it.

The most unfortunate part is that political parties exhibit disloyalty and dishonesty and show negligence and lethargy in country's progress and prosperity. Arvind Kejriwal, a prominent civil rights activist and member of India Against Corruption, has precisely stated:” Time has come to question representative democracy and move towards direct or participatory democracy in some measure on critical issues, an MP should consult the people of his constituency through Gram Sabhas and Mohallah Sabhas (General body meetings of voters in that village or Mohallah. He should present the voice of his people in parliament and not his High Command's wishes. People should be able to recall him if he did not do that. On many occasions, there is a serious conflict between the

desires of the people and the wishes of the party High Command. Today, it is the wishes of the party High Command that prevail. In true democracy, it is the wishes of the people of India that would prevail” (Times of India, 1-1-2012)

Let us recall the pray of noted poet Rabindranath Tagore for building up India a true nation.

Where the mind is without fear
And the head is held high
Where the world has not been
broken up

By narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from
the depth of truth.

Where tireless striving
stretches its arms towards perfection

Where the mind is led forward
by thee

Into ever widening thought and
action

Into that heaven of freedom my
Father

Let my country awake.

It is unfortunate that India's democratic values and norms are fading day by day. Regionalism, castism, favouritism and groupism raising their ugly heads to distort the social fabric of our beloved mother land. No doubt, these are negative tendencies that cause conflicts, clashes and communal riots in the country. Besides they diminish national feelings and damage our national cherished desires.

In short, we can not achieve all this, until and unless we work together to make India a democratic country in true sense. ●

The Geographer of Islam

Al-Muqddasi, or Al-Maqdisi, originally from Al-Quds, Jerusalem, hence his name, is by far one of the most instructive of all early Islamic writers on the society of Islam. His works, generally, can be found under the subject of geography.

Al-Muqaddasi, whose real name was Shams al-Din Abu Abdallah Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Ibn Abi Bakr al Banna al Shamsi al Maqadisi al Bashasari was born in Bayt al- Maqdis in 946 A.D. and died towards the end of the 10 century A.D.

Geographer, cartographer, Al-Muqaddasi spent most of his life in Al-Quds, then traveled throughout other Islamic lands, excepting only al-Andulus, Sindh, and Sijistan (Southern Afghanistan). He also visited Sicily. As a geographer, he was unsatisfied with the works of his predecessors. He, therefore, planned a work of wider scope, designed to meet the needs and requirements of a wider audience (other than specific rulers,) merchants, travelers and people of culture of geography, he wrote that, "it is a science in which kings and nobles take a keen interest, while the judges and the jurists seek it and the common people and the leaders love it."

Al- Muqaddasi's view of the subject, embraced a variety of topics, including various sects and schisms, trade and commerce, weights and measures, customs and traditions, coinage and monetary systems, and

Ilyas Fernini

languages and dialects, and to all these subjects he brought a critical mind and narrative and investigative skills.

Although al-Muqaddasi brought a new aim to geography, his method was that of Balkhi school of whom the chief adherents were al-Balkhi, al-Istikhari (who compile his geographical work in A.D.97). The Balkhi geographers limited their descriptive writing to the Islamic empire and attempted to align their geographical concepts with those of the Qur'an and the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad. His great geographical compendium, the *Kitaab Ahsan al Taqasim Ma'rifat Al-aqalim* (The Best Division for Knowledge of Regions), which he completed in Shiraz in A.D.985, would indicate, among other things, that he was knowledgeable in Islamic jurisprudence and was a follower was of the Hanafi school of Islamic law. Latin, English, French and Urdu editions of this compendium exist in Leiden (1906), Calcutta (1897-1910), Damascus (1963), and Delhi (1962), respectively.

Al-Muqaddasi began his *Kitab ahsan al taqasim* with general remarks on a number of subjects, among them seas and rivers, place names and their variants (including names common to more than one place); the special characteristics of various regions; the sects of Islam, the non-Muslim inhabitants of the Islamic world; personal travel narratives; and sections entitled places about which there are

differences of opinion, Epitome for the Jurists and World Aqalim and the position of the Qibla. These introductory passages embody some of Al-Muqaddasi's innovations; he was, for example, the first Arab geographer to determine and standardize the meanings and connotations of Arabic geographical terms, and the first to provide a list of towns and others features for quick reference. Al-Muqaddasi considered the Islamic world to be non-symmetrical, but rather irregular in shape. He divided this world into fourteen regions (aqalim), of which designated six-the 'Island of Arabia' namely Iraq (southern Mesopotamia), al-Sham (Syria), Misr (Egypt), and al-Maqhrib-as Arab. The remaining eight-al Mashriq (the kingdom of the Samanids), al-Daylam (Gilan and the mountainous regions east of the Caspian Sea), al-Rahab (Azerbaijan, Arran, and Armenia), al-Jibal (ancient Media), Khuzistan (the area south of Media and east of Mesopotamia), Faras (ancient Persia), Kirman (the region to the south of Faras), and al-Sindh-he called 'Ajam, Persian. Each of these districts, it may be noted, is demarcated by well-defined physical boundaries, which he took into account. In commenting upon them, he further divided his remarks on each region into sections, one further divided his remarks on each region into two sections, one of which was dedicated to physical features, toponymy and political subdivision, while the other contained a discussion of general features.

Al-Muqaddasi drew a map of each iqlim, indicating regional boundaries and trade routes in red,

sandy areas in yellow, salt seas in green, rivers in blue, and mountains in ochre. Although most of the maps have been lost, it is possible to reconstruct them to some degree by considering those made by other geographical scholars of the Balkhi school, the conventions of which al-Muqaddasi again followed (although his book suggests that he specifically disagreed with some of the maps drawn by al-Balkhi). The world maps of this school are round, showing the land mass enriched by an ocean flow, almost meeting at the Isthmus of Suez. The boundaries of various aqalim are then shown within the land mass. Because of this high degree of stylization, these maps are less accurate than the more detailed maps of specific regions, which conform more closely to the geographers' descriptions and since the maps that al-Muqaddasi drew for the Kitab Ahsan al-Taqasim were of the latter type, some fair amount of accuracy may be assumed, Al-Muqaddasi's book is also notable for its literary style. He wrote in an ornamental and varied manner, occasionally framing his comments in rhymed prose (saz). He used the local dialect of each region in describing it, or, when he did not do so, he explained using the Syrian dialect that section of al Mashriq is the most rhetorical not since the people of this area were perfect in Arabic, but because the language of the people of Egypt and al Maghrib was weak and unadorned, that of the inhabitants of al-Bata'ih (the swamps of Iraq) ugly, so, too, is the language in which al-Muqaddasi wrote of them. ●

AIMPLB'S Sticking Points

Batla House Encounter

It is a sensitive issue for the Muslim leadership close to the Board. Many of the bodies associated with Board are fighting the case in and outside the ground, regularly bringing up facts to show the encounter was a fake one. ●

Right to Education Act

A particular clause about mandatory registration for the seminaries is contentious. The Muslim bodies fear it would bring interference from the government in their exclusive domain. And seminaries which thrive on zakat and unaccounted donations would have to put their accounts up for audit. The Deoband school of thought has perennially been opposed to any government interference and modern education into seminaries. ●

Central Waqf Bill

Appointment of CEO and a clause that allows a common Muslim to report trust, which is unregistered, to the Waqf Commissioner who, if he finds the input dependable, could begin process of registration. This is tricky as scores of seminaries and trust haven't registered with the Waqf Boards for fear of audit of accounts. Also, their activities would be under government lens. ●

Direct Tax code

The finance ministry's proposal includes the seminaries, mosques, darghas, other Muslim institutions, under the ambit of direct tax code. It would mean their income will be taxable and auditable. ●

(The Hindustan Times, 02-02-2012)

Around the World

Give Arab Islamic Parties a Chance: German FM

Germany's foreign minister says the West must avoid the mistake of assuming that Islamic-oriented parties aren't compatible with freedom and modernisation as it encourages democracy in the Arab world. Recent ballots saw heavy votes in favour of Islamic movements in Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt.

Germany's Guido Westerwelle on Jan. 13 wrote in an article in the daily Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung that "political Islam is not the same as radical Islamism" and "we must learn to look carefully and differentiate." Westerwelle argues for dialogue on the relationship between the state and society, politics and religion with moderated forces such as the winners in Tunisia and Morocco. He writes: "I am convinced that the combination of Islamic orientation and democratic attitude, of Islam and democracy, is possible." ●

Chinese PM to Discuss Arab Spring with Gulf Leaders

China's premier will discuss the Arab Spring with leaders of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar during a visit to those countries later this month, a Chinese official said on Jan. 11. Wen Jiabao's visit from Jan. 14-19 will be the first by a Chinese premier to Saudi Arabia in 20 years and to the other two Gulf countries since diplomatic relations were established in the 1980s.

In addition to strengthening relations with the countries - Saudi Arabia is China's biggest oil supplier - Wen will talk about the recent upheavals as well, Vice Foreign Minister Zhai Jun told reporters. The Arab Spring protests appeared to

worry China's rulers, who used disappearances, house arrests, lengthy prison terms and other means to prevent Chinese activists from emulating the unrest in the Middle East. It was one of China's broadest campaigns of repression in years, with authorities rounding up dozens of bloggers, lawyers and intellectuals. Most have since been released. ●

Egypt Coptic Catholics Welcome Muslim Brotherhood

Bishop Yuhanna Qultah, Deputy Patriarch of Coptic Catholics in Egypt, welcomed the arrival of Muslim Brotherhood (MB) and the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) members to the first post-revolution parliament, pointing out that they are the men of clear vision, moderate mainstream views, who seek a balanced consensus parliament, and whose main concern is uphold the national interests and dignity of the country.

In an interview, in the program "Ahl Albalad" on satellite channel "Misr 25" ,on Dec. 29 last, Dr. Qultah expressed his sincere appreciation to Dr. Mohamed Morsi, EJP Chairman, for his reiteration in repeated responses to repeated questions and suggestion that he should send reassurance' messages to the Copts after the victory of EJP candidates in parliamentary elections, as he (Morsi) always says: 'How do I send messages to reassure them when they are partners in this one homeland?!' Bishop Yuhanna Qultah pointed out that the MB's comprehensive, all-inclusive, understanding is just what is required to achieve balance and advancement for the whole nation which needs cooperation and synergy for a total renaissance. ●

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