

THE FRAGRANCE OF EAST

Vol. X No. 01

January 2008

**Academy of Journalism and Publicity
Post Box No. 93
Lucknow-226007**

Ph. No. : 0522-2740406
Fax : (0522) 2741834

e-mail: nadwa@sancharnet.in
Rs. 10/-

The Fragrance of East

Founder : Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (RAH)
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Our Representatives Abroad

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Vereninging, (South Africa)
- U.S.A.** : **Dr. A.M. Siddiqui**
98-Conklin Ave. Woodmere,
New York 11598

Annual Subscription :
Rs. 100 (per copy Rs. 10) in India
\$ 25 (USA, UK, Asian Africa and European Countries)

Cheques and Drafts may please be marked to:
"The Fragrance of East"
and sent to, P.O. Box 93, Tagore Marg, Lucknow-226007 U.P. India
Out-station cheques will not be accepted.

Editor's Note:

THE BLAME GAME

On December 6, 2007 the 15th anniversary of the demolition of Babri Mosque in Ayodhya was observed by a section of Muslims as a Black Day whereas those responsible for this heinous crime celebrated it as a day of victory. A liberal Hindu columnist writing in a national English daily newspaper demanded an apology from the perpetrators of the crime. He warned them that for peaceful co-existence we must eschew violence for settling the presumed wrongs allegedly committed by past Muslim rulers. Reacting to it Mr. Praful Goardia, an RSS activist, demanded that Indian Muslims, in fact should apologise for all those actions which Muslim rulers took in hurting the Hindu sentiments.

It is absurd to ask present day Muslims to apologise on behalf of those who committed mistakes in the remote past. Moreover, if for actions of the past rulers coreligionists are now asked to apologise then on that analogy Buddhists and Jains too must come forward to take revenge from Sanatan dharmis for the mass scale destruction of their places of worship by their hands. The event of December 6, 1992 was an act of terrorism.

It engulfed a part of the nation in mass murders, arson and destruction. The carnage of 2002 in Gujrat was a corollary of that hooliganism. It is unfortunate that instead of repenting on such mass killings of Muslims and destruction of their property they are being asked to apologise for political actions of the past rulers. Is it not like the kettle calling the pot black? To accuse Muslims indulging in violence and their condemnation for any coercive action is not

justified. Violence as a creed is repugnant to Islam. The holy Quran proclaims very clearly: "If anyone slays a human being, unless it be in punishment for murder or for spreading corruption on earth-it shall be as though he has slain all mankind, whereas if anyone saves a life, it shall be as though he has saved all mankind"(al-Maidah:32) Probably, no religion on earth has given more importance to the protection of life than Islam. Muslims are forbidden to take law into their hands or to retaliate against other individuals under any circumstances except in legitimate self defence. ■

SA

**We solicit articles for publication in The Fragrance of East. Suitable remuneration will be paid to writers.
We prefer receipt of articles on e-mail :
shariq_alavi@yahoo.com**

THE PLACE OF KNOWLEDGE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THOSE WHO ACQUIRE IT*

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Knowledge, I believe, is one and indivisible, and to separate it into parts, into ancient and modern, eastern and western and ideological and practical is incorrect. As Iqbal has said :

Talk of modern and ancient is
The sign of narrowness of vision.

I regard knowledge a truth which is a gift of God and does not and should not belong to a particular race or community. I see unity even in its diversity. That unity is truth, the search for truth, the aptitude for it, and the joy of its realization. I am grateful to the Chancellor and other officials of the University that their choice for this high academic honour fell upon a person who is associated with the traditional system of education.

Whatever the branch of study, literature, philosophy or science, I do not conform to the view that he, alone, is a scholar and an intellectual who appears in its 'uniform' and whoever does not clothe him self with it is not worthy of recognition. The same, unfortunately, is the case even with poetry and literature, and it has come to be taken for granted that any one who does not display his wares in the shop-window or show himself off in the trappings of a poet or writer has no place in the realm of letters. The world has not forgiven, even born literatures who did not put on the uniform or were not lucky enough to obtain one from the store-house. I believe in the universality, vigour and freshness of learning that has always been favoured with Divine guidance. If earnestness is there and the urge is genuine, the grace of the Lord is never withheld. It is always reaching.

At this convocation of the University of Kashmir, situated as it is in a beautiful valley of the heaven-kissing Himalayas, I am reminded of the incident that had taken place, 1400 years ago, in the arid land of Arabia, and on a mountain which was neither high nor verdant. The tremendous impact it made on history, and the

* The speech delivered on receiving the Degree of D. Litt. (Honoris Causa) at the Seventh Convocation of the University of Kashmir held on October 29, 1981.

imperishable effect it produced is absolutely, unique in the annals of our race, and significantly enough, it too, was related to the 'tablet' and the 'pen' upon which rested the entire structure of knowledge and civilization, and without which neither the magnificent seats of learning would have come into existence nor the huge libraries. I mean the Divine Revelation that was sent down to the Prophet Mohammad (Peace and Blessings of the Lord be on him,) on or about February, 12, 611 A.D. in the Cave of Hira, near Mecca. It said :

Read (O Mohammad) ! In the Name of thy Lord who created –
Created man out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood,
Read! And Thy Lord is Most Bountiful,
He who taught (thé use of the) Pen –
Taught man that which he knew not.

Even in this initial installment of the Revelation, this first shower of the Rain of Mercy, the Lord and Cherisher of the Worlds did not put off the proclamation that the destiny of learning was bound up with pen. To be sure, it was in the solitude of Cave Hira where an Unlettered Apostle had gone to seek Message from Almighty God for the guidance and instruction of humanity and whose own state was that he could neither read nor write. Can the like or equal of it be found at any stage of history ? And to imagine the sublimity of it. The revolution is sent down, for the first time, to the Unlettered Prophet in an illiterate country where what to speak of educational institutions, even bare literacy was rare, and contact is established, after hundreds of years, between the sky and the earth, and it begins with Read. He who did not know how to read or write it being commanded to Read. It signified that the community that was to be given to him world and bearer of knowledge. It would promote learning among mankind. The era that had been granted to him would not be an era of darkness and ignorance, but of progress and enlightenment.

It declared : Read ! In the name of thy Lord who created -. The great misfortune was that the bond between knowledge and the Creator had been broken, and consequently, learning had lost the sense of purpose and direction, and gone out of the right way. The broken link was restored now when knowledge was glorified. Besides, the warning, was also given that knowledge should start with the Name of God for it was a Divine gift and could make a steady and balanced progress only under His guidance. It was the most revolutionary and epoch-making call the world had ever heard. No one, indeed, could have conceived of it at that time, and in those

circumstances. Had it been put to the thinkers and writers of the world to guess as to how would the revolution that was going to be received begin and what would take precedence in it, I am sure no one with an idea of the mental and cultural condition of the Arabs would have said that it would commence with Read.

The announcement that the voyage of knowledge should begin under the guidance of the Omniscient and All-knowing God was unprecedented. It marked a watershed in the world of learning. The journey was long, hard and perilous. It was full of pitfalls. Caravans were robbed in broad daylight. A perfect guide was essential and who could it be save The Supreme Being, The All-wise? It was not abstract knowledge that was aimed at. Not the knowledge that consisted of ornamenting with colours or playing with the dolls or was meant simply for entertainment or for fighting with one another or filling the belly. Not the knowledge that ought only the use of the tongue. But :

Read ! In the Name of thy Lord who created –
Created man out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood,
Read ! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful,
He who taught (the use of the) Pen,
Taught man that which he knew not.

The proclamation was clear, firm and positive. Read! Your Lord is Most Benevolent. How can He be unaware of your needs and weaknesses? Read! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful, - He who taught (the use of the) Pen. What could have elevated the pen in power and dignity more than that? Who could have given greater glory and honour to it? Remember, it was the first Revelation of Cave Hira and in a town where, perhaps, there was no pen in any home. If you needed one, you would have had to go to a Warqah bin Naufel or someone who had received education in Persia.

It, further, unfolded the great reality that knowledge was infinite. It was without end. He taught man that which he knew not. What is science? What is technology? Man is going to the moon. We have conquered space, and pulled the ropes of the earth. It is not a miracle?

Gentlemen !

I shall crave your indulgence, now, to offer a few suggestions as an ordinary wayfarer of the valley of learning.

The foremost task of the Universities is character building. Their endeavour

should be to produce men who, in the words of Iqbal, may not be willing to sell their conscience for "a handful of barley". Under the influence of modern ideologies and current order of things, it has been presumed that everyone carries a price. There is no one who cannot be bought in exchange for something or another.

The real success of a university lies in moulding the personality of its scholars in a way and giving such citizens to the society who do not put themselves up to auction nor can be lured away by a destructive ideology or misguided movement such worthy specimens of humanity as can say with Iqbal :

By thy grace, I am not without honour,
No Togahral's or Sanjar's slave I am;
Though world-seeing is my nature,
I am no jamshed's cup.

Secondly, our Universities ought to send forth men who may be ready to sacrifice their lives for the sake of truth, knowledge, reform and uplift, and derive the same satisfaction from going without food as people, generally, do from eating and drinking to their heart's content, and to whom loss appears to be more worth while than again.

The Universities should see to what extent they are being successful in producing men of real worth and merit. The greatness of a country does not depend on the number of the Universities it has. This criterion has, now, become out-dated. The real thing is how many of its citizens are endued with an awareness of their duties and obligations and can come forward to dedicate themselves to the attainment and promotion of knowledge, growth and development of moral of knowledge, growth and development of moral virtues, and suppression of evils like corruption, greed, cruelty and injustice. How many of them are able to rise above personal considerations and lift the country to higher cultural and spiritual level?

The fundamental aim and purpose of knowledge is to impart a new life and a new soul to the country and the nation. I shall read out to you a few verses from Iqbal which though not addressed directly to the poets or writers are applicable to all the branches of learning.

Valuable is the taste for Art, ye men of vision,
But vision that perceives not reality is futile.
The song of the poet or the minstrel's strain,
Worthless is the Zephyre which makes the garden depressed.

The goal of Art is the flame of immortal life,
 Not a spasm or two that vanish like sparks.

Before I conclude, let me say a few words to the fortunate brothers who have successfully completed their studies and obtained the degrees or are still under instruction here. I shall take recourse to relating a parable which may sound more agreeable to the ears after the exhortation I have just inflicted upon you.

Once, some students were enjoying a ride in a boat. The time was pleasant, the air was cool, and the young men were in high spirits. With the simple minded boatman, also being there to serve as a target of fun and entertainment, who could make the students sit quietly? One of them asked the boatman, "Uncle! What subjects have you read?" I have read nothing", the boatman replied. The young man sighed, and said, "Oh! Have you not read science?" "I have not even heard its name," replied the boatman. "But you must be knowing Geometry and Algebra," said another young man. "These names also, are altogether new for me," came the reply. It was now the turn of the third student History and Geography," he said. "Are these the names of men or towns?" asked the boatman in reply. At it, the boys burst into laughter, and enquired from the boatman what his age was. "Forty years or so," he said. "You have wasted half of your life and learnt nothing," remarked the young men. The poor boatman remained silent. Soon afterwards, a storm arose on unruly waves. Disaster seemed imminent, and the students who had no experience of journey by water felt extremely nervous. They were seized with the fear of their lives. The boatman, then asked the youngmen, with feigned seriousness, what they had learnt. Failing to grasp the real intent of the boatman, the students began to give a long list of subjects that were taught in the colleges. When they had finished, the boatman said with a smile, "You have read all these things. But, tell me, have you, also, learnt swimming? If, God-forbidding, the boat over-turns, how will you reach the coast?" "Uncle" the young men replied, "This is the one thing we do not know. We never thought of learning it." Upon it, the boatman laughed aloud and remarked, "I have wasted half of my life, but you have lost the whole of your lives. Your education is not going to help you in the storm. Only swimming can save you today, and you do not know it."

The so-called powerful and advanced countries of the present day world are confronted with a identical situation. The boat of humanity is in grave peril, the tides are moving menacingly towards it, and the shore is far away. The worthy

passengers of the boat know everything, but are wholly ignorant of the art of swimming or navigation. Or, in other words, all the intellectual and scientific achievements notwithstanding, the modern man does not know how to live like a civilised and God fearing human being. Iqbal has drawn pointed attention to the dismal state of affairs, the strange contradiction, which has set up the biggest question mark before the Twentieth Century world and brought it at the cross-roads of destiny.

He who enchained the sunbeams could not
Unfurl the dawn on life's dark night;
He sought the orbits of the stars, but failed
To travel his own thought's world;
Entangled in the labyrinth of his learning,
He lost count of good and evil.

The art of leading a good, useful and dignified life consists, basically, of God-fearingness, humanitarianism, self-restraint and willingness to subordinate one's own advantage to the common good. Unselfish interest in the welfare of others, respect for mankind, the urge to protect the life, property and honour of fellow-men, preference for duties over rights, defense of the weak and the down-trodden and the strength to stand up against the oppressors, firmness in opposition to those who have nothing to be proud of save power and wealth and refusal to be over-awed by them, the courage to speak the truth at all times and in respect of one's own country, belief in an all-knowing and all seeing power, and anxiety of being recreated after death and called upon to render a full account of one's doings on the earth, These are the essential conditions of a good and noble life, and the fundamental conditions of a good and noble life, and the fundamental requirements of a healthy society, and a strong and honourable nation. To arrange for training and instruction in these attributes and to create an environment that may be conducive to their development is the primary responsibility of educational institutions.

Occasions like the convocation we have the honour to be attending today offer an excellent opportunity to look into ourselves and see how successful our educational institutions are in the realization of these ends, and what is the worth and caliber, in the regard, of the scholars produced by them, and draw up plans for the future.

I thank you, once again, for the honour bestowed upon me, and the affection and trust you have been kind enough to express through it. ■

THANKFULNESS

S. Sulaiman Nadwi

In the literal sense the word shukr (thankfulness) means freshness of the animal which eats less and gives more milk. This also applies to men as well who express their feeling of gratitude in high words for the small work done by anyone. This appreciation or thankfulness can be given in three ways, firstly, through one's heart, secondly, acknowledgement by one's tongue, and thirdly through such action as speaking highly of his benefactor.

The antimony of the world Shukr is Kufr which literally means to deny, hide or cancel and it implies to hide or cancel the action or Ihsan (obligation, favour) done to him by anyone and not to acknowledge the same. The word kufran-I-neyamat (denial of the favour) is used in this sense.

There is no word more abominable than the word kufr in the dictionary of Islam. It is the worst of evils to forget and to be thankless of the favours, blessing and rewards of Allah which Allah has bestowed on man and to act and behave contrary to the will and commands of Allah.

It is evident that Kufr means denial of the favours and blessings of Allah while Shukr means thankfulness and gratitude for the favours and blessings given by Allah to man. It, therefore, becomes of a man that he should act and behave like a loyal and obedient servant of his Great Master. Allah, the Exalted, bears witness to the Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) :

Surely Abraham was a paragon, obedient to God, all devoted and none of the idolaters, thankful for His blessings: We chose him and guided him to a straight path. (16:21)

The word thankfulness to the bounties and rewards of Allah therefore, consist in treading the path of righteousness of Islam and obeying the commands of Allah, abstaining from all sorts of polytheism as a result of which Allah will relent towards us and guide us to the right path in our knowledge of din and actions.

It is obvious that Shukr (thankfulness) is the basis of Iman and din and it is the main spring from which the sentiments of love and devotion for the magnifi-

cence and glory of Allah arise. Phrases expressing Muslim's dependence on and praise of Allah form a vital part of his speech pattern, for example, subhan Allah (glory be to God) Alhamdulillah (praise be to God), Insha 'Allah (if God wills). Masha Allah (as Allah has willed). It has been said in the Holy Quran :

"What would God do with chastising you, if you show gratitude and believe? God accepts gratitude and knows." (4:147)

That is, Allah is pleased with two virtues of His human beings and these are thankfulness and Iman. We have already discussed the significance of Iman in detail.

As regards Shukr it may be stated that when the humble servant of Allah translates all that is in the Shariah into practical reality or action it is called Shukr or expressing his gratitude to Allah. All our Ibadat (acts of devotion), benevolent treatment with human beings, expanding a portion of wealth on the poor and the needy, and in the cause of Allah, benefiting the humanity through God-given knowledge, helping the weak and down-trodden, disabled persons-all these acts and deeds are an expression of gratitude to his Creator; but there are only some who give thanks to Allah, the devil said to Allah that most of his men would disobey Him and would be thankless :

"And thou wilt not find most of them thankful." (7:17)

Allah, the Exalted, said : His pious servants will have their reward with Him:

The following words the whole Islamic Shariah :

No, but thou must serve God, and be among the thankful. (39:66)

Among the characteristic qualities and Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) on thing stands out prominent that it included a large number of prayers and supplications to Allah, which he used to recite at every time and on every occasion. The aim of these prayers was to remember and give thanks to Allah for His so many favours and rewards. He used to pray as he ate, put on new dress, went to bed, woke up, ate a new fruit, prostrated, left the toilet etc. The Muslims are advised to follow the example of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) to express their gratitude to Allah for His immense favours and rewards from the core of their hearts.

The best way of giving thanks to Allah for your physical health is to exert our hands and feet in the cause of Allah and serve those who are disabled or crippled or deprived of any part of a limb of their body and help those who are less fortunate in

the matter of worldly provision and it is the bounden duty of the rich and wealthy persons to set apart a portion of their wealth to help the poor and the needy, to give drink to the thirsty, to feed the hungry, to dress the shabby and naked, and to provide the have nots. In fact this is thanks-giving to Allah in the true sense of the words. We must prove, by our actions and deeds, that we are the loyal and grateful servants of our Great Master.

In the various verses of the Holy Quran the believers have been exhorted not to forget to give thanks to Allah for each of his favours and blessings and their thanks giving should be befitting as to the nature of the favour bestowed upon him by Allah.

And it is He who has set the night and in him, and made for you ears, eyes, and hearts, little thanks you show. (32:9)

And it is God who brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers, you not knowing anything, and made for you ears, eyes and hearts, that you may be thoughtful. (16:78)

And the camels of sacrifice. We have appointed them God's way-marks for you; in them is good for you; so the day in succession-for who desires to pay heed, or desires to be thankful. (25:62)

Then he shaped him, and breathed His spirit mention God's name over them, standing in ranks, and when they fall down on flanks, eat of them, and feed the contented and the suppliant; like that We have subjected them to you that you may be thankful. (22:36)

Surely Abraham was a paragon, obedient to God, all-devoted, and none of the idolaters, and thankful for His blessings; We chose him and guided him to a straight path. (16:120:121)

A way of expressing gratitude to a person for an obligation done to you by him is to repay him by doing the same kind of kind treatment to him. Since we cannot repay Allah for His so many favours and blessing and he is neither in need of such things, the only way to repay Him is to help the poor and the needy and spend out of God given wealth for the benefit of the humanity in the cause of Allah, as has been said by Allah, the Exalted, in the Holy Quran :

Who is he who shall lend God a good loan? And He will multiply it for him manifold. (2:245)

Who is he that will give God a good loan, He will multiply it for him, and he

shall have an honourable wage. (57:11)

If you lend God a good loan, He shall multiply it for you, and forgive you :
God is thankful, element. (64:17)

This point of paying good dept to Allah has been elucidated in the following
Hadith:

Abu Huraira (Allah be pleased with him) reported Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as saying: Verily, Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, would say on the Day of Resurrection: O son of Adam, I was sick but you did not visit Me. He would say: O my Lord, how could I visit Thee whereas Thou art the Lord of the worlds? Thereupon He would say: Didn't you know that such and such servant of Mine was sick but you did not visit him and were you not aware of this that if you and visited him, you would have found Me by him? O son of Adam, I asked food from you but you did not feed Me. He would say: My Lord, how could I feed Thee whereas Thou art the Lord of the worlds? He said: Didn't you know that such and such servant of Mine asked food from you but you did not feed and were you not aware of this that if you had fed him you would have found him by My side? (The Lord would again say): O son of Adam, I asked drink from you but you did not provide Me. He would say: My Lord, how could I provide Thee whereas thou art the Lord of the world? Thereupon he would say: Such and such servant of Mine asked you for a drink but you did not provide him, and had you provided him drink you would have found him near Me.

Allah, the Exalted, has asked us again and again to give thanks for the rewards and blessing he has bestowed upon us so that we may not think that we have any ancestral and personal right over them or that we deserve them due to our capabilities or practical endeavours. As a matter of fact whatsoever there is in our possession or we are to get is due to the infinite grace and mercy of Allah. Man, in his sheer folly, as he casts a glance at the countless blessings of Allah begins to consider them as the common boons and bounties of Nature for which he needs not express his gratitude. But we must fully understand that this fallacious reasoning is the root-cause of unbelief and polytheism. Allah, the Exalted, has, therefore, made a mention of each of his favours and blessings separately and exhorted us to give thanks for each of them so that the Sovereignty of Allah should take its firm roots in our hearts.

Wealth and riches make a man somewhat proud and he begins to consider

himself superior to other human beings and He thinks that what he has got is his ancestral right and is the result of his personal knowledge, capability and skill. The Quran once said: It is pride that grows and takes the form of greed and tyranny. Allah has forbidden it:

That you may not grieve for what escapes, nor rejoice in what He gives you: God does not love any one, proud and boastful.

Who are niggardly and bid men to be niggardly: And whosoever turns away, then God is All-Sufficient, Praiseworthy. (57:24)

Allah does not need the wealth of Human beings. He is al-Ghani (The Self-sufficient). He also does need our praise and glorification. He Himself is Magnificent and Glorious.

All that is needed is that man should recognize his Great Benefactor and acknowledge His great and never ending blessings and rewards and His Majestic glory and should fulfil his duty to Him by expressing his gratitude for these blessings from the core of his heart:

And remember when you were few and oppressed in the land, and you feared that the people would snatch you away; then he gave you refuge, and strengthened you with His help and provided you with clean things, that you may give thanks. (8:26)

And it is He who subjected the sea, that you may eat of it fresh flesh, and you bring out of it ornaments that you wear; and thou seest the ship ploughing it that you may seek of His bounty and may be thankful. (16:14)

What will they think, those who forge falsehood against God, on the Day of Resurrection? God is bountiful to men; but most of them are not thankful. (10:60)

We established you in the earth, and appointed your livelihood in it, little thanks you show. (7:10)

Out of his mercy. He has appointed for you night and day, that you take rest in it and seek after His bounty, and you may show thanks. (28:73)

Allah, the Exalted, has expressed His wrath on the ingratitude of human beings :

Perish man; what makes him to disbelieve! (80:17)

There is a great misconception among the people about Shukr (thankfulness). They are of the view that by merely reciting the words Alhamdulillah through the tongue fulfills the purpose of thankfulness. But it is not true. As a matter of fact

Shukr is the name of that sublime and delicate feeling which inculcates love and devotion for his benefactor. We ought to acknowledge his favour on every occasion to please Him and act upon his will and commands. If we repeat the words of praise and our heart is not full of tender feeling of gratitude and our actions and deeds are not imbued with the spirit of love and devotion, all such expressions of thankfulness, being false, will not be acceptable to Allah:

He who possessed the knowledge of the Book said : I will bring it to thee before thy glance returns to thee. So when he saw it placed before him, he said : This is a bounty of my Lord that he may try me whether I am thankful or unthankful.

Whosoever thanks, thanks for himself, and if he is unthankful, they say Lord is All-Sufficient, Honourable. (27:40)

It is clear from the above verse that when a man strives hard in the cause of Allah he receives more and more favours and rewards of Allah. The Holy Quran says :

And your Lord proclaimed : If you are thankful, I will give you more, but if you disbelieve my chastisement is surely terrible. (14:7)

Thus We recompense him who gives thanks, (54:35)

If this sentiment of Shukr is awakened in the heart of man, and he would acknowledge the favours and rewards of Allah from the core of his heart and become his loyal and most obedient servant, he would give thanks and treat His human beings kindly and benevolently, in return for their good treatment. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has called this sentiment of thankfulness among mankind as the sign of thankful to Allah :

He who is not thankful to human beings is not thankful to Allah (Tirmidhi).

That is, a person who is ungrateful to people is also ungrateful to Allah. Another interpretation of this Hadith is that Allah will not accept the thank-giving of a person who does not express thank for the favour done to him by another person. ■

Believer

The Prophet said, "A believer does not taunt, curse, abuse or talk indecently."

Al-Tirmidhi Hadith 1740 Narrated by Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (r.a.)

RUMI- A COMPLETE HUMANIST

Abdus Subhan*

The year 2007 has been declared as international Rumi Year by Unesco in commemoration of the 800th birth anniversary of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi, one of the greatest humanists, philosopher-poets and mystics the world has ever seen. With a view to disseminating its charter, Unesco has also instituted a medal in the poet's honour to encourage scholarly investigation into Rumi's thoughts and ideals, conducive to international understanding and harmony.

Jalaluddin Muhammad Balkhi commonly known as "Rumi" because he lived in Rum, (ancient Anatolia, or Asian Turkey and a part of the former Roman Empire), was born at Balkh, in present day Afghanistan, on 30 September 1207 and died at Konya, Turkey, on 17 December, 1273. His life therefore, spans the entire 13th Century of the Christian era, corresponding to the 7th century Hijri. He belonged to a family of jurists and scholars who dominated the cultural science of Transoxiana in the Middle Ages.

In 1228, at the invitation of the Seljuq Sultan Alauddin Kaikobad, the family emigrated to Konya, the prosperous capital of the Seljuq Turks and a leading center of culture and learning. Rumi was educated by eminent Ulema at Damascus and Aleppo in Syria.

Where he also met the famous Spanish scholar and saint, Muhyuddin Ibn al Arabi, who taught Rumi the essentials of mystecism. On his return to Konya, Rumi began to lecture at the colleges of advanced learning.

The 25th of October, 1244 marked a turning point in Rumi's career. It was on this day that he happened to come in contact with the famed wandering Darvesh, Shamsuddin Muhammad Tabrizi, whose spiritual impact on Rumi was so sudden and pervasive that the cool, self-possessed professor of theology gave up his teaching career and became a humble devotee of mystic. Rumi's total devotion to his spiritual guide was resented by some fellow disciples.

On day Shams Tabriz quietly disappeared, leaving Rumi greatly disconcerted, till his son, Sultan Walad, searched out the saint in Damascus and brought him back to Konya.

* The author is Fellow of Asiatic Society,
Kolkata

The mentor's reappearance for the sake of his distracted disciple cost him his life. He was surreptitiously killed by the same evil people who had earlier forced him to leave Konya. The murder was kept concealed from Rumi's knowledge. The poet, in lamentation for his lost preceptor, poured out his heart through some fifty thousand verses which constitutes what is commonly known as Diwan-I-Shams Tabriz, a collection of spiritual odes which Rumi composed and dedicated to his Master, whose name he uses, instead of his own, as the nom de plume in most of his Ghazals.

After the death of Shams-I-tabriz, Rumi became a disciple of Salahuddin Zarkub, a gold smith by profession, who died in 1258 and was succeeded as Shaikh by Chelebihusamuddin Hasan whose inspiration and persuasion inspired Rumi to produce the magnum opus of Persian mysticism, the celebrated Masnavi, comprising over 26,000 couplets, divided into six volumes. Rumi's ecstatic worldly life came to an end on 17 December, 1237. He lies buried in Konya, where his mausoleum continues to be a place of pilgrimage for thousands of his devotees and admirers.

The Diwan and the Masnavi, containing nearly a hundred thousand verses, are as stupendous in magnitude as they are sublime in content. Together, they reveal the marvelous range of Rumi's poetical genius and philosophical outlook.

While comparing the two works, Professor RA Nicholson, the greatest Western researcher on Rumi and his art, says: "Sufi theosophy is the fountainhead of Rumi's inspiration. From this the Masnavi and the Diwan descend by separate channels. The one is a majestic river, calm and deep, meandering through many a rich and varied landscape to the immeasurable ocean, the other a foaming torrent that leaps and plunges in the ethereal solitude."

The Masnavi, in the words of Professor AJ Arberry, is "among the world's greatest masterpieces of religious literature."

Scholars are unanimous in acclaiming the Masnavi as the complete scripture of Islamic mysticism, a unique evaluation of esoteric truth. For ages it has served as a text book of Sufi thinkers from Africa to China. Abdur Rahman Jami, the last great classical poet of Persia, hailed the poem as "the Quran in Persian language," and said of Rumi: "Though he is not a prophet, he has a Book." Within the framework of delightful tales, culled from the Quran and the Apostolic Traditions (Hadith) and lives of the Prophets and saints, the poet sets the matter of his discourse, the central

part of which is love, which he describes as "the astrolabe of heavenly mysteries, "the eye salve which clears the spiritual eye and makes it clairvoyant".

Today, in this world full of misery and sorrow, pain and suffering, the spiritual influence of Rumi is being felt by people of diverse beliefs throughout the world. He is being recognized in the Western world, as he has been for the last seven centuries in the Middle East, Africa and Asia, as one of the greatest literary and spiritual figures of all time. Indeed, the world of today needs a Rumi to create an attitude of hope and to kindle the fire of enthusiasm for life.

Rumi believed passionately in the use of music, poetry and dancing as a path for reaching God. He founded the order of the Mevlevi, the "whirling dervishes" and created the Sama, the sacred dance. In the Mevlevi tradition, Sama represents mystical journey of spiritual ascent through mind and love to a state of Perfection. In this journey, the seeker symbolically turns towards the truth, and attains it so as to love and be of service to the whole of creation without discrimination against beliefs, races, classes and nations.

The world of Rumi is neither exclusively the world of a Sufi, nor of a Hindu, nor a Jew, nor a Christian; it is the highest state of a human being. A complete humanist is not bound by cultural limitation, he touches every one of us.

Today, Rumi's poems can be heard in churches, synagogues, Zen monasteries, as well as in downtown New York art and music scene. Rumi's life and contributions provide true testimony that people of all religions and backgrounds can live together in peace and harmony. Rumi's visions and words teach us how to reach inner solace and happiness and achieve true global peace and harmony. ■

On envy

Allah's Messenger said : "There is no envy except in two: A person whom Allah has given wealth and he spends it in the right way, and a person whom Allah has given wisdom (i.e. religious knowledge) and he gives his decisions accordingly, and teaches it to the others."

Sahil Al-Bukhari Hadith 2.490 Narrated by Ibn Masud

AIMPLB FOR STRENGTHENING QAZI SYSTEM

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) has decided to approach Union Law Minister Hansraj Bhardwaj to press for optional implementation of Supreme Court order on marriage data for the registration to official agency.

With the three-month deadline of the Supreme Court order fast approaching next month for the compulsory registration of all marriages irrespective of religion, the issue came up for through discussion at the executive committee of the Board in Delhi on November 25.

Legal Luminary in the Board Zafaryab Jilani said the Board was not opposed to the registration of marriages but the existing legal system of Qazis should be taken into consideration as those solemnizing marriages had full record and that data could be used for registration. These Qazis could in fact provide records from all over the country.

Jilani said and added that non-registration with the government agency should not lead to illegality of marriage. "Nikah performed under the Shariat law should not be declared null and void," he said.

There is a feeling in the Board that compulsory registration of marriages could create problem in rural areas. Thus the Board wanted strengthening of Qazi system for implementation of the apex court order.

While the clerical group of the Board wanted to oppose the court order, the moderates prevailed upon them saying in every matter the Board should not adopt hostility. "It would send wrong message," said a member. Senior vice-chairman of AIMPLB Dr Kalbe Sadiq has already welcomed the apex court decision. He said it would help in protecting women's right in the community.

However, Naib Imam Eidgah Maulana Khalid Rashid said the burden of registration should not be on the couples.

He said it should be optional. The Board has thus decided to approach the UPA government for taking Muslims' stand into consideration before filing affidavit in this connection in the court.

The apex court in its order on October 25 had directed all the states to implement the order within three months.

Two member bench of Justice Pasayat and Justice P Sathasivam had passed this order on a petition of a divorcee Seema seeking direction for compulsory registration of marriage. The court reiterated that marriages should be compulsorily registered "in respect of persons who are citizens of India even if they belonged to various religions."

The court said it would also help in controlling child marriage in the country.

(Hindustan Times- 3-12-2007)

ZAKAH: THE PURIFIER OF A MUSLIM'S WEALTH

S. Ghouse

The word Zakah in Arabic is more specific than the term Sadaqah, which is voluntary and implies alms-giving in general. The word Zakah means both 'purification' and 'growth'. Our possessions are purified by setting aside a proportion for those in need, and, like the pruning of plants, this cutting back balances and encourages new growth. In Islamic terminology, Zakah is the amount of money that every adult, mentally stable, free, and financially able Muslim, male and female, has to pay to support specific categories of people. This category of people is defined in Surah at-Tauba (9) verse 60.

"The alms are only for the poor and the needy, and those who collect them, and those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and to free the captives and the debtors, and for the cause of Allah, and (for) the wayfarers: a duty imposed by Allah. Allah is knower, Wise." (The Holy Qur'an 9:60).

The obligatory nature of Zakah is firmly established in the Qur'an, the Sunnah (or ahadith), and the consensus of the companions and the Muslim scholars. Allah states in Surah at-Taubah:

"O ye who believe! There are indeed many among the priests and anchorites, who in falsehood devour the substance of men and hinder (them) from the way of Allah. And there are those who bury gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah. Announce unto them a most grievous penalty."

"On the Day when heat will be produced out of that (wealth) in the fire of Hell, and with it will be branded their foreheads, their flanks, and their backs. This is the (treasure) which ye hoarded for yourselves: taste ye, then, the (treasures) ye hoarded!" (The Holy Qur'an 9:34-35).

The Prophet (pbuh) said: "Any owner of gold and silver who does not deliver from them their right, on the Day of Qiyamah (Day of Judgment), (the gold and silver) will be shaped as foils of fire. Then it will be heated in the fire of Hell (and) then with it he will be ironed on his side, his forehead, and his back." (Narrated by Muslim).

Muslims down the centuries have agreed upon the obligatory nature of paying Zakah for gold and silver, and for other kinds of currency, Zakah is an obligatory duty and is the third of the five pillars of Islam. Zakah becomes mandatory when two conditions are simultaneously satisfied; Nisab and / or due date.

Nisab is the quantity or limit of money of things in one's possession above which one needs to give Zakah. Zakah is obligatory when the Nisab has been attained to, or when one's possessions exceed the Nisab specified. Zakah is not obligatory if the amount owned is less than this Nisab. The Nisab (or minimum amount) of gold and golden currency is 20 mithqal: this is approximately 85 grams of pure gold. One mithqal is approximately 4.25 grams, The Nisab of silver and silver currency is 200 dirhams, which is approximately 595 grams of pure silver. The Nisab of other kinds of money and currency is to be scaled to that of gold, 85 grams of pure gold. This means that the Nisab of money is the price of 85 grams of 999-type (pure) gold, on the day when Zakah is paid.

When is Zakah Due?

1. Passage of One Lunar Year:

Zakah is due after one lunar (Hijri) year starting from either the first day one acquires the amount of Nisab or the arrival of the date when one paid Zakah the previous year. Zakah is obligatory after a time span of one lunar year passes with the money in control of its owner, Then the owner needs to pay 2.5% (or 1/40) of the money as Zakah. (A lunar year is approximately 355 days).

2. Deduction of Debts:

The owner should deduct any amount of money he or she borrowed from others : then check if the rest reaches the necessary Nisab, and then pays Zakah for it , if Zakah is due from him . If the owner had enough money to satisfy the Nisab at the beginning of the year ,after which his wealth further increased (by way of profits ,salaries ,inheritance ,grants...etc), the owner then needs to add the increase to the Nisab amount owned at the beginning of the year ; and then pay Zakah at 2.5% of the total at the end of the lunar year .(There are small differences in the Fiqh schools here).

Each Muslim should calculate his ,or her, own Zakah individually. For most purposes this involves the payment each year of to and a half percent of one's capital . A pious person may also give as much as he or she pleases as Sadaqah . and does so preferably in secret . Although this word can be translated as "voluntary

charity " it has a wider meaning. The prophet said "even meeting your brother with a cheerful face is charity (sadaqah).

The Prophet also said : "Charity is incumbent upon every Muslim." He was asked: What if a person has nothing?" The Prophet replied: 'He should work with his own hands for his benefit and then give something out of such earnings in charity.' The companions asked: "What if he is not able to work?" The Prophet said : "He should help poor and the needy persons." The Companions said, "What if he lacks that also?" The Prophet said 'He should check himself from doing evil. That is also charity.

Prescribed originally as a voluntary act of love and considered almost identical with piety. Zakat evolved into an obligatory tax on property, including money, cattle, corn, fruit and merchandise. In the Quran it is often associated with the Salah. The young Islamic state collected Zakah through regular officials and administered it from a central treasury to support the poor among the community, to build mosques and to defray government expenses.

Zakat al-Fitr

Zakat al-Fitr is different from the obligatory Zakat. It is due at the end of the month of Ramadan. It must be paid by every Muslim, according to what Abdullah b. Umar a noted companion of the Prophet, who said :

"The messenger of Allah imposed Zakat al-Fitr of Ramadan as a Saa of dates or a Saa of barley, on every Muslim, slave and free male or female, young or old." (Bukhari & Muslim)

Zakat-al-Fitr was made obligatory in the second year of the Hijrah. It is understood that Allah, the Exalted, has instituted Zakat al-Fitr to purify one's fast from the negative consequences of vain talk and of vain actions which one might have made during the fasting month of Ramadan. It was also institutionalized with the objective of helping the poor and the needy, and to thus, save them the embarrassment of asking for assistance on the Day of Eid. The poor may, thus celebrate the joy of Eid along with the rich.

Zakat al-Fitr is due on every Muslim who is possession of food over and above his family's needs for one day and night. Every free Muslim must pay Zakat al-Fit for himself, his wife, children and servants. It must be given before the Eid prayer. It is permissible, however, to give it out a day or two before the Eid day. If a person delays it until after the day of Eid for no valid reason, it would be considered

as Sadaqah and not as Zakat al-Fitr.

The recipients of Zakat al-Fitr are the same as the recipients of the obligatory zakat. The quantity of Zakat al-Fitr must be given out in kind, i.e. wheat, barley, dates, raisins, rice, maize and the like, the best of which is what benefits the poor most. Its quantity is approximately 2.4 Kg.

Nowadays, people consider obligatory Zakah as being merely a special act associated with Ramadan like Zakat al-Fitr and the fast. Indeed, many Muslims even equate the obligatory Zakah to the Zakat al-Fitr of Ramadan. Thus, they pay it only in this month. However, this is against Islamic teachings and the prophet's Sunnah. Zakah must be paid as, and when, one's wealth- in cash or in kind- reaches the threshold of Nisab. Thus, Zakah is an obligatory duty that must be fulfilled well in time like Salah and it is prohibited to delay its payment. May Muslims of this age be unconscious of this obligation and most of them refrain from paying Zakah in time even while knowing its importance and position in Islam. According to Islam such people should be fought against until they yield and pay. The Prophet said:

"I have been ordered to fight people until they say that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah, and that Muhammad is His Messenger, and they uphold the prayers, and pay the Zakah. If they do this, their lives and properties will be safe, except for what is due to Islam, and their accounts are with Allah."

Indeed, the first civil strife within the nascent Muslim community had occurred on account of the refusal of some tribes- who had newly embraced Islam to pay the Zakah to the seat of the Caliphate under Abu Bakr, the first successor of Muhammad (pbuh), in Madinah. Called the War of Apostasy, this internal struggle underlined the great importance that the Prophet attached to the cause of the economically poorer sections of the society through the message that he had brought into the world. ■ (YMD)

Keep reciting

The Prophet said, "Keep on reciting the Quran, for by Him in whose Hand may life is (Allah Subhannah), the Quran runs away (or is forgotten) faster than camels that are released from their tying ropes."

Sahil Al-Bukhari Hadith 6.552 Narrated by Abu Musa)

MUSLIM WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO GIRLS' MADRASAS IN INDIA.

Mohammad Shahid*

The importance of education in general and its role in the process of empowerment cannot be overlooked. Education is great stimulator for enhancing human capability and thereby enlarges the space for social opportunities. It provides key to a variety of economic, social, political, cultural and psychological benefits including increase in productivity, improvement in health and hygiene, reduces infant and child mortality rates, creates greater capacity to participate in the political process with greater self-confidence.

One of the widespread ailments affecting Muslims across the world is the low level of literacy and the endemic apathy towards education. Almost two thirds of Muslims in the world are illiterate, far below the world average. Nearly three-fourths of Muslim Women across the world are illiterate.

India has one of the largest Muslim population in the world next only to Indonesia. Muslims in India form the largest minority group. According to Census 2001, more than 12 per cent of population is Muslims of which roughly 64 percent stay in rural areas of India while 36 percent live in urban areas. After Jammu and Kashmir, the Muslim concentration is in the states of Assam, West Bengal, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Karnatka and Andhra Pradesh. Besides that Muslims are found in every province and union territory of India with varying percentages. In fact 78 per cent of Indian Muslims live in only seven major states, namely UP, West Bengal, Bihar, Assam, Maharashtra, Kerala and Karnataka.

Uttar Pradesh alone constitute about one fourth of total Muslim population in India being the largest province of India in terms of population size. In the case of Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh majority of Muslims live in urban areas. Various government and private study reports speak of backward posi-

tion Muslims occupy in the field of education.

The following table clearly shows the position of Muslims in selected states.

Table 1

Share of Population of Major Religions in India, 1991 (Selected states)

State	Hindus	Muslims	Muslims (Numbers)	State share of Muslims in Total Muslims in India
INDIA	82	12.2	101596959	
A.P.	89.14	8.91	5923954	5.83
Assam	67.13	28.43	6373204	6.27
Bihar	82.42	14.81	12787985	12.59
Karnataka	85.45	11.64	5234023	5.15
Kerala	57.28	23.33	6788364	6.68
Maharashtra	81.12	9.67	7628755	7.51
U.P.	81.74	17.33	24109684	23.73
West Bengal	74.72	23.61	16075836	15.82

Source : Census of India, 1991, prepared from Abusaleh Shariff and Mehtabul Azeem, *Economic Empowerment of Muslims in India*, IOS, New Delhi, 2004, pp. 18-19.

According to the Annual Report for 1998-99 of the National Commission for Minorities :

“ The enormous Muslim population of India is terribly under-represented in all public services both at the national and state levels. Their presence in general educational institutions of the country is also much below their population ratio – and often found to be nil. Educational backwardness is both the main cause and inevitable effect of under representation of the Muslims in public employment and resource generating bodies...”

It becomes clear that Muslims were unable to take the advantage of education facilities provide by private, local and government institutions. It is paradoxical

that even after more than 50 years of independence, there are social groups including Muslims among whom female literacy rate is negligible. Illiteracy and lack of basic education are the stumbling blocks in the process of empowerment.

It seems contradictory as to why Indian Muslims are lagging behind in reaping the benefits of education. Education and learning have been given prime importance in Islam. Unlike many Western reformers and philosophers who emphasize acquisition of knowledge for its own sake or for achieving worldly gains, Islam considers acquisition of knowledge as a medium of attaining success in this world and world hereafter. It does not recognize any division between religious and the material world and its concept of education encompasses all disciplines of secular as well as religious sciences. According to Al-Qardhawi –

“In the history of humankind no other religion has been found laying so much of stress on the significance and utility of education for human beings as has been done in Islam whose holy book of Quran records direct mention of the subject of knowledge for eighty times and indirect mention of knowledge related matters for several hundred times... There are more than 140 traditions which directly deal with the subject of education.”

It is born out by historical facts that Islam proved instrumental for the spread of knowledge. Arabs became synthesizers for old Greek and Indian knowledge. Even European renaissance was caused largely on account of preservation and transfer of Greek knowledge by the Arabs.

Throughout the Muslim history in India as well as in other parts of the world, state tried to fulfill its obligation of imparting knowledge to its people. *Madrasa* system was evolved where free education was imparted to students. It is beyond doubt that this system worked well in India. The *Madrasa* education system was complete enough in itself to serve the changing political and socio-economic needs of India for centuries together. Its curriculum was sufficiently liberal in that it covered the fields of traditional or religious sciences together with rational and social sciences and languages and literature. Until 1835 the very graduates of *Madrasas* established and run by the governments and private individuals were filling the vacancies of administration, judiciary and accounts departments. It is also a fact

that Hindus were in majority in accounts services during Mughal and later-Mughal periods which reflects that *Madrāsas* were common institutions of acquiring knowledge for Muslims and Hindus in India.

The Britishers for the preservation and stability of their own empire introduced English as an instrument to get entry into administration and judiciary in place of Persian. For Hindus English was as foreign as Persian. For Muslims it was with its initial results, against their culture and religion. It was, in their view, a deliberate effort to disempower them from government jobs. Gradually for various reasons *Madrāsa* system started declining. *Ulama* realized that through *Madrāsa* (particularly religious education), they can preserve and protect Islam in India. With the decline of Muslim rule in India, we find absence of patronage to *Madrāsa* by rulers and princes because of adverse economic and political policies of the imperialists. *Ulama* were instrumental to establish *Madrāsas* without seeking any financial support from British government. Initially English education was discarded by Muslims on account of the widespread fear of prosilytization by Christian missionaries. This also saw decline in the education of Muslim girls.

Later on the opposition of girls education in vernacular schools by Muslims was not due to their disbelief in girls' education as such, rather it was due to other socio-political reasons prevalent at that time which included a general opposition of the education system of the imperialists who had usurped political powers from Muslims by deceit and therefore, were looked at as enemies of the country and their education system was considered as one that would distance their children from their own culture and oriental values.

However, we see some positive efforts were made by some concerned groups for the spread of education among Indian Muslim females. Due to precarious circumstances of partition, this segment of Muslim society received a set back. There were various factors (and still are) for backwardness of Muslims in post-independent India. These include externally the campaign of vilification and demonisation carried on by communal organizations against Muslims, the partisan role of the police and para-military forces and the complicity of the local administration during communal riots, (Gujarat riots 2002 are case in point), discrimination against Muslims by government agencies and the biased role of the regional media. Some

are the internal factors, which are more powerful and dangerous such as Muslim community's apathetic attitude towards education, low achievement motivation, endemic disunity and dissension, lack of communitarian engagement and grass-roots mobilization, self complacency and lack of initiative for self improvement plus lack of dedicated leadership.

One of the reasons advanced by some writes for slow progress of Muslim girls in education is the lack of facilities for segregated female schools and colleges within a reasonable distance. If a section of Muslim parents for cultural reasons avoid sending their daughters to co-educational institutions and insists on provision of higher secondary and later education in secluded institutions, it should be fairly appreciated by the educational planners and administrators and this feeling of Muslim parents should not be misinterpreted as a general opposition to female education. This demand is not peculiar to Muslims only. Non-Muslim parents have also raised this demand. For example, in early 1990s, large number of non-Muslim parents of girl students studying in the government co-education secondary schools of Delhi appealed to the Government of Delhi to make separate arrangement for education of their daughters on account of some serious human relations and other problems that were faced by their daughters in the co-educational schools. The appeal being rational and convincing in the existing circumstances was acceded to and thereafter most of the Delhi Government run co-educational secondary schools were bifurcated into boys and girls schools by the Government of Delhi by converting the existing single shift co-educational secondary schools into double shift uni-verse schools.

Despite the backwardness of general Muslim masses in socio-economic fields, an encouraging aspect of the post-independence period developments in *Madrasa* education is that, slowly, more attention is now being paid to impart Islamic education to girls and gradually more *Madrasas* are being founded exclusively for their education. At present many *Madrasas* in A.P., Delhi, Gujarat, Karnatka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamilnadu, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar offer facilities for girls education in Islamic and secular subjects. Among these states highest number of girls' *Madrasas* are in Kerala, Maharashtra and U.P. These *Madrasas* offer religious education with basic courses in Hindi, English, History, Geography, Civics, Maths and Home Science and secondly they offer diploma courses in religious education for

the students who have acquired secular education at government or private schools and now are interested for acquiring religious education.

In all the courses meant for girls, their special needs and their future role in the Muslim society have been kept in view. In long term courses emphasis has been laid on including only more relevant parts of Islamic learning besides adding important modern subjects and matters relating to house-keeping, nursing, general medicine etc. in the curriculum.

In the light of independent surveys conducted by the Hamdard Educational Society, Hamdard Deemed University, New Delhi, and some individual efforts it is assumed that *Madrassa* education in post-independent India has seen a manifold increase. At the time of independence there were *Madrassas* numbering little than a thousand which are at present about 30,000. A concrete effort to streamline the *Madrassa* and their functioning is still lacking. According to a rough estimate the number of Girls' *Madrassas* is around 1000. There is, no doubt, some initial inhibition from a section of Indian *Ulama*, who are against girls' *Madrassas*. But majority of the Muslim masses is supporting the idea. Owing to the special circumstances of Muslim residential location gradually this need is being felt.

Majority of the *Madrassas* for boys are founded by the community. State patronage has also been recorded in the shape of *Madrassa* education Board in states of West Bengal, Bihar, U.P. etc. Educational standards of government founded *Madrassas* has noticed decline. The general consensus of the community is also against government funding in order to preserve standard of education as well as autonomy. The annual budget of big *Madrassas* like Darul Uloom at Deoband, Mazahirul Uloom (Saharanpur), Nadwatul Ulama (Lucknow) had surpassed Rs. 7 crores annually for each *Madrassa*. *Madrassas* have developed their own mechanism for fund generation and collection of donations and charities. Philanthropist, well off and the poor alike donate generously for the cause of education through *Madrassa*. *Madrassas* have, despite their shortcomings and various handicaps, established *Maktabs* (smaller full time or part time schools akin to primary level) catering to the needs of large portion of Muslim population in marginalized areas providing education upto 5th standard enabling the male/female students to get admission in 6th standard in vernacular schools. This system shows the resilience and courage of a

disadvantaged group. Masjids (mosques) / adjacent rooms or rented rooms are utilized for this purpose. These *Madrasas* and *Maktabs* fulfill the employment needs of a sizeable number of *Madrasa* graduates in a modest way.

After Independence many girls' *Madrasas* have been opened and bold steps have been taken out to make the women educated. Some of the prominent Girls' *Madrasas* are *Jamiatus Salihat*, Malegaon, *Jamiatus Salihat* Rampur; *Kulliya Aisha*, Malegaon, *Jamiatul Banaat*, Jianpur (Azamgarh), *Jamiatul Falah*, Bilariyaganj (Azamgarh); *Jamiatul Banaat*, Hyderabad, *Jamiatus Salihat* at Dabhel (Gujrat).

Jamiatus Salihat, Malegaon :

It was established in April 1968. *Jamia* believes that in the present age of evils there is moral degradation everywhere. The lack of Islamic education has proved poisonous for our society. In August 1983, the Government of Maharashtra accepted the certificate of the *Jamia* awarded to the girls, who are admitted after matriculation, equivalent to B.A. Today more than 2000 students are studying. There are 40 teaching staff and 33 non-teaching staff.

Jamiatus Salihat . Rampur :

This is one of the most organized and famous *Madrasas* for the girls in India established in 1952. It has been imparting Arabic and Islamic studies among women. There are many *madrasas* which follow this great institution either in their syllabi or teaching methodology. This *madrasa* is first among north Indian *madrasas*, which offered a curriculum combined with Islamic and modern education. Its alumni have a good knowledge of English and Home Science.

The space does not allow to elaborate the working arrangement of some major *madrasas*. However, they have tried to blend the Islamic education with modern one so that the pass outs from these *Madrasas* may opt either of the two available streams of religious education or secular one. Their degrees are also recognized by various Universities, state governments in India and famous Al-Azhar University at Cairo and King Abdul Aziz University (Saudi Arabia).

The role of girls' *madrasas* in transformation of the Muslim society in general and women's folk in particular from the grip of superstition, un-Islamic rituals and innovations, is highly appreciable. In north Indian *madrasa*, modern education

does not have its due share in religious curriculum, while in south Indian *madrastas* both type of education go simultaneously. In Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, the girls' *madrastas* have the system to manage both the education. Some of them have included English and Science in their curriculum, while others do manage to teach modern subjects in evening in the same building.

Like the boys' *Madrastas* majority of the Girls' *Madrastas* are run on the charities and donations collected from the Muslim community. Similarly majority of them are providing accommodation and food with nominal charges. Very few girls' *Madrastas* enjoy government support in the shape of funding. The girls' *Madrastas* in Maharashtra and Gujarat offer good salaries with annual increment. According to a rough estimate some 30,000 Muslim female teachers are engaged in girls' *Madrastas*. Some of the girls' *Madrastas* also offer graded salary structure with time bound promotion plus dearness and house rent allowances. One more aspect of girl *Madrasta* education has also been noticed in the large attraction of Muslim girls from far off places in India as well as abroad. Muslim parents of mostly Gujarati origin scattered in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Mauritius, Reunion (French colony), Zambia, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Tanzania and some Latin American countries have been sending their daughters in the girls' *Madrastas* of Gujarat and Maharashtra. The graduates of these *Madrastas* extend their services for establishment and running of girls' *Madrastas* in those countries. The need for cultural, ethnic and religious identities in plural societies is therefore catered and this has become a big stumbling block in the spread of Americanisation in the wake of Globalisation. In this context one must sift the propaganda and perpetual vilification of *Madrasta* system as breeding fundamentalism and obscurantism by powerful vested interests.

It can be deduced from the above statement that betterment of educational abilities of Muslim Girls in India is an asset. Government endeavours have not been successful to reach out for full literacy even after five decades of independence. The efforts made by *Madrastas* are bringing good results. They are working as NGOs with meager resources. They are not breeding ground for terrorism. There is need for attitudinal change. The assets, vast buildings, libraries, can be channelised by positive methods. Similarly with careful and helping dialogues the services of these institutions can be obtained for implementation of various welfare schemes

run by the Government of India and state governments. For example, the Pulse Polio drive, AIDS/HIV awareness, family planning programmes, *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (Total Literacy Mission) and a large number of socio-economic policies can be reached to most marginalized and deprived sections of society by applying motivational tools by these institutions.

These *Madrastas* are also checking various socio-economic ills spreading in Muslim society. The Muslim girls through *Madrasta* education have been found protected from falling in the trap of anti-social elements engaged in human trafficking. This scourge has increased after globalisation in various poor economies. Ministry of Human Resource Development had undertaken various projects for modernization and advancement of *Madrasta* education. The success rate is not sufficient due to structural and beurocratic hurdles. A greater feeling is developing in the community for their empowerment through their own resources. Some graduates from these girls' *madrastas* have managed to get entry into Bachelor of Unani Medicince & Surgery courses as well as in Pharmacy and Para-Medical courses offered by Hamdard Deemed University, New Delhi, Aligarh Muslim University, Tibbiya Colleges at Deoband , Muzaffar Nagar, Azamgarh and Ghazipur run by private management. Muslim girls becoming medical practitioners while retaining their religious education definitely would enhance the avenues of women's empowerment. Similarly some girls also appear in respective Boards secondary/higher secondary examination as private candidates opening up the way for entry to various university courses of degree and diploma standard enabling them to be eligible for being considered to be appointed as Urdu teachers or translators under various state governments.

When compared with other communities, the Indian Muslims have lagged behind in modern education ever since it started in India. But they are ahead of many Muslim countries as far as espousal of modern education is concerned. The 55th Round of the National Sample Survey (1999-2000) has recorded that the Christians have the highest rate of literacy (79.3 percent) followed by that of the Hindus (63.5 percent) and the Muslims (60.6 percent).

As Indian Muslims constitute 12 percent of population which in absolute terms is more than total population of any of the European countries, negligence in their development is not a positive sign for over all development of the country.

There is need for serious research by Government and Non Government Organisations to harness the available resources at the hands of Muslim community. As these Madrasas have greatly helped the literacy figures rise in Muslims and an interest increase in pursuit of higher education, there is need to provide some incentives to such institutions. Increase in literacy has been recorded for direct increase in reduction of infant mortality and fertility rates. Instead of marginalizing them in the great task of nation-building they need more encouragement and generous indirect funding to achieve the noble objective of empowerment. As of now Urdu is widely spoken by major concentration of Indian Muslims particularly in North Indian states, availability of standard reading material in Social Sciences and Natural Sciences would greatly facilitate their entry into higher education. ■

"O son of Adam, I fell ill and you visited Me not. He will say: O Lord, and how should I visit You when You are the Lord of the worlds? He will say: Did you not know that My servant So-and-so had fallen ill and you visited him not? Did you not know that had you visited him you would have found Me with him? O son of Adam, I asked you for food and you fed Me not. He will say: O Lord, and how should I feed You when You are the Lord of the worlds? He will say: Did you not know that My servant So-and-so asked you for food and you fed him not? Did you not know that had you fed him you would surely have found that with Me? O son of Adam, I asked you to give Me to drink and you gave Me not to drink. He will say: O Lord, how should I give you to drink when You are the Lord of the worlds? He will say: My servant So-and-so asked you to give him to drink and you gave him not to drink. Had you given him to drink you would have surely found that with Me."

Book Review

Bastions of the Believers: Madrasas and Islamic Education in India*

Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied**

There is no denying that the devastating attacks on the Twin Towers on 11 September 2001 have accentuated the demonisation of Islamic beliefs, adherents, and most importantly, institutions. Madrasas, as renowned pundits, journalists, scholars, and terrorist experts continuously allege, are the sites where militant and fanatical ideologies are imbibed.

It is such a rapidly evolving and tumultuous context that prompted Yoginder Sikand to embark on the writing of a data-laden, well-argued, and yet readable book; a book that is situated at the intersections of history, sociology, political science, and Islamic studies. As Yoginder has duly professed in his preface, "the polemics of the enemies of Islam have gone beyond the orientalist mould and pretensions of detachment and objectivity" (p. xvii). *Bastions of the Believers* is thus a noble attempt by an Indian scholar-activist to dispel the negative images of madrasas as "dens of terror". By utilising sources gathered from in-depth archival and field research, Yoginder presents us with a nuanced and non-homogenising portrayal of the madrasas.

The book begins with a discussion on the importance of knowledge (*ilm*) in Islam and the sacred role of the scholars (*ulama*) as the preservers of knowledge. Yoginder convincingly argues that the idea of a differentiation between secular and sacred knowledge was nonexistent in the early years of Islam. Rather, to Prophet Muhammad and his companions, knowledge of the religious (*dini*) and secular (*duniawi*) were of equal importance towards the achievement of success in the world and the Hereafter. Established several centuries after the Prophet's demise, madrasas manifested the prophetic approach to knowledge, retaining a high degree of dynamism by training students in both religious and rational sciences. Consequently, career options were fairly wide and graduates of madrasas took on important roles in state-based institutions.

It was different for the case of madrasas in India. In Chapter 2, Yoginder delves into the genesis and evolution of a shift from the original model of madrasas

*Author: Yoginder Sikand
New Delhi, India: Penguin Books
400 pp., Rs. 495 ISBN 9780144000203 (pbk)

**Department of History, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, UK.

in the Arabian peninsula to that of educational dualism. This had led to a *dini?duniavi* divide in the minds of Muslims in India as the Mughal Empire entered the modern phase of world history. Such a condition was made worse by the onslaught of British colonialism which saw the suppression of Muslim revolts and rebellions. Suspicions towards secular knowledge amongst the *ulama* heightened and, in consequence, diminished the unending attempts by Muslim reformers to harmonise modernity and Islam. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 of the book narrate the challenges faced, resistances to change, and further attempts at reforming the madrasas in post-partitioned India. It is pertinent to note that a considerable amount of established information and arguments in these three chapters is often repeated, which is revealing of Yoginder's endeavour to bring home the point that madrasas are essentially heterogeneous. Indeed, these institutions had been and are still differentiated along ideological lines between different Sunni schools of thought (*maslaks*) such as the Barelwis, Deobandis, *Jama'ati Islami*, and Ahle Hadith and sects, as seen from examples of the Shiites and Ahmadiyyas. The madrasas are also sharply divided on the issue of receiving aid from the state and on the establishment of networks with non-Muslim organisations. Whilst the author documents the dismal state of infrastructure, salary scales, syllabuses, and pedagogical methods of many madrasahs in post-independent India, he seeks to provide a balanced depiction by highlighting successful examples of reform and adaptation.

This brings us to the last and perhaps most important chapter of the *Bastions of Believers*. Yoginder is at his best as he deconstructs the spurious correlation between madrasas, radical politics, and militancy. On the claim that madrasas are centres of political radicalisation, Yoginder argues that the curriculum is "overwhelmingly conservative, literalist and legalist, but definitely not politically radical" (p. 225). In point of fact, promoters of radical ideologies such as Osama bin Laden are known to have received education in regular universities in the West rather than madrasas. Contrary to the notion that the *ulama* were unpatriotic to India, Yoginder cites numerous examples of known personalities who insisted that India, rather than Pakistan, is the place where their loyalty lies. The *ulama*, Yoginder maintains, has devised various ways to come to terms with the idea of a nation-state by arguing that they are residing in a "land of peace" (*dar ul-aman*) or a "land of agreement" (*dar ul-ahad*) rather than "the abode of war" (*dar ul-harb*) (p. 238). Although there are remnants of Pan-Islamic tendencies within the madrasas, Yoginder

contends that that "does not necessarily lead to militancy, although it does make for certain rigid insularity and cultural separatism" (p. 242). Going further, Yoginder illuminates on how the madrasas had in fact incorporated studies of other religions in their curriculum so as to promote inter-faith dialogue and provide training of skills for their students for missionary work. Militant madrasas, as the author forcefully poses, are not to be found in India but in war-ravaged countries. With the ever-increasing incidences of clashes between these radical groupings and state authorities, coupled by virulent propaganda of Hindu right-wing movements, the stage was set for madrasas in India to be reductively labelled as "militant".

It is certain that even if one were to disagree with many of its conclusions, this book will be an important and indispensable text for both students and scholars. ■

**Views expressed by writers are their own
and not necessarily of the editorial board.**

- Editor -

It is related by Jabir that the Apostle of God said : "The
key to Heaven is Namaz and the key of Namaz is ablution."

(Musnad-i-Ahmad)

DO NOT MALIGN ISLAM

Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

Efforts of fascist forces operating to malign Islam and its ideology seem to have dwindled. Even their theory 'Clash of Civilization' is also on the wane. Despite scores of allegations and accusations against Islam, its universal message is amply being felt to bring about peace and serenity throughout the world.

We may easily comprehend the present scenario of Islam and its efficacy through the following statement of a British scholar Rose Kendrick. She says : "Within the next 20 years the number of British converts will equal or overtake the immigrant Muslim community that brought the faith here." She further says: "Islam is as much a world faith as is Roman Catholicism."

In his book "Islam Under Siege" Akbar S Ahmad has offered some valuable insight into what the future holds for this faith. He says: "The 21th century will be the century of Islam."

It should be kept in mind that Islam is not only a metaphysical religion but it offers logical unity and it is the only remedy for all problems and sufferings of humanity. Above all, Islam recognizes no distinction of caste and creed. Prophet Muhammad (S) has vividly declared in his last sermon at Mecca, "No Arab has any superiority over a non-Arab. Nor does a white man have any superiority over a black man. You are all children of Adam and Adam was created from clay."

Prominent Islamic Scholar S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi has rightly said: "Islam can have nothing to do with egotism and self-conceit, individual or collective. Whether these sentiments take the form of family or sectarian pride, as in the Eastern and the Islamic countries, or of British imperialism, American capitalism or Russian communism as in the western world, they are patently un-Islamic. These systems may succeed in putting off their doom for sometime, but they are bound ultimately to go. The conscience of humanity cannot be cheated indefinitely. The nature of the world is inseparably linked with the social justice of Islam." (Islam and the world, p.195)

It may be reiterated that only Islam can bring about an atmosphere of peace and amity across the globe and solve the hydraheaded problems of the modern age. In the words of George Bernard Shaw : "Islam is the only religion which appears to me to possess that assimilating capacity to the changing phases of existence which can make itself appeal to every age." ■