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OF EAST**

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# The Fragrance of East

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## The Quranic Dictum

### S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## Wisdom of Qur'an

*"Your Lord knows very well all those who are in the heavens and in the earth. And We preferred some Prophets over others. We gave Da'ud Zabur. (Surah Al-Isra, A. 55)*

### Commentary:

That is, explains Alusi, some of the Messengers were preferred over others in spiritual matters and not in material things (while the unbelievers think that material favor is all that matters: Au.).

Ibrahim (asws) was made a Khalil, Musa (asws) was directly spoken to, Da'ud (asws) was given a revelation that did not have any commandments, Sulayman (asws) was given a (kind of) kingdom that no one else was ever given, 'Isa (asws) was created out of the word kun, and our Prophet's earlier and later sins were forgiven. Further, he was sent to all the peoples of the world. Thus, every Prophet was singled out for a favor, and in that respect preferred over others (Qatada and Ibn Jurayj: Ibn Jarir).

*"Say, 'Call those besides Him whom you fancy. They have neither the power to remove afflictions from you, nor to turn (them) away.'" (Surah Al-Isra, A 56)*

### Commentary:

Referring to the textual word "za'ama", often translated as "to fancy, allege, maintain, claim" etc. Alusi demonstrates, with the help of several examples, some of which from the hadith, that "za'ama" need not necessarily be in the sense of "fancy, allege" etc. Quite often, especially in history works, it is commonly used in the sense of "belief, assertion or free of doubt." Thus Alusi precedes in answering the allegations of the Orientalists that since Ibn Ishaq often uses the term "za'ama" while narrating traditions concerning life of the Prophet, the reports have a question mark before them. For example, Alfred Auillaume writes in his foreword to the "Sirah": "A word that very frequently precedes a statement is za'ama or za'amu, 'he (they) alleged'. It carries with it more than a hint that the statement may not be true." (Life of Muhammad). This is how the Orientalists managed to plant doubts in the hearts of the Western educated Muslims. This also tells us that even translations of Islamic text by non-Muslims, especially Western scholars, may not be accorded acceptance without a proper review (Au.).

## Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

It is related on the authority of Amr bin Murra that he told Muawiya that he heard the Apostle of God say: "The ruler who will shut his door to the weak and needy bondmen, God will shut the doors of the heavens at the time of his distress and privation, (Help will not reach him from God's in the hour of his need."

- Tirmizi.

### Commentary:

The doors of the holy Prophet, and, after him, of Khulfa-i-Rashideen, always remained open for the suppliants and petitioners. They had a free access to them and could meet and place their difficulties before them without any trouble, but when the Kharijis took to terrorism and Usman was killed by them and an attempt, also, was, made on the life of Muawiya, the latter placed restrictions on visitors. It was, then, that Amr bin Murra related the above saying of the holy Prophet to him. It is, further, mentioned in the same report that, after it, Muawiya appointed an officer who used to listen to the needs and grievances of the people and pass them on to him.

It is related by Sa'eed Khudri that the Apostle of God said: "To say a just word before a tyrannical ruler is the best of Jihad."

-Tirmizi

### Commentary:

Though in a war there is the danger of defeat and death, there is, also, the hope of victory. But one, positively, risks his life, or, at least, invites punishment if one dares speak out boldly before a cruel and unjust ruler. For this reason, perhaps, it has been called "the best of Jihad."

## **Crime Against Women**

In the morning you open pages of a newspaper about half a dozen cases of sexual offences are reported there. It is said that in India after every 20 minutes such a crime is committed. The problem is mind boggling. The statistical reports of sexual offences as often released by official agencies are deceptive. "Rape is a notoriously under reported crime, thanks to its social stigma and because the culprit, in most of the cases are known to the victim. Yet, of all the major crimes, the incidence of rape has registered the highest growth in the country in the last four decades." (TOI Dec. 27, 2012) Rape is highest growing crime in the country. One reason of this alarming situation is that culprits taking advantage of loop holes in our archaic Evidence Act, Indian Penal Code and Criminal Procedure Code escape the dragnet of punishment. A clumsy and time consuming process to prosecute the offender often go in his favour. According to a latest official release there are 13000 rape cases pending in courts in UP alone. During last 11 months 1,591 rape cases reported, among them till now only 59 have been convicted. Presently, the accused, if convicted at all, may get away with the maximum punishment of 10 years imprisonment that is prescribed in the law.

Apart from tackling this issue according to the law of land there is need of looking out other means also. The most important is to infuse the 'Sanctity' of the weaker sex in the mind of a man. This can be dealt with in two ways:- social and religious. We hope our experts in Sociology will ponder over it as far as religious mean is concerned Islam has dealt with this matter more than thousand years ago. The Holy Quran in its Chapter XVIII under Surat Noor has dealt with this issue quite explicitly:

"The environmental and social influences which most frequently wreck out moral deals have to do with Sex, and specially with its misuse, whether in the form of unregulated behaviour of false charges or scandals, or breach of the refined conventions of personal or domestic privacy. Our complete conquest of all pitfalls in such matters enables us to rise to the higher religious of Light and of God created nature. This subject is continued in the subsequent paras of the Scripture.

Sex offenders should be severely punished, but the strictest evidence should be required, and false damderers are also worthy of punishment. Light talk about women reprobated. Privacy should be respected and the utmost decorum should be observed in dress and manners. Problem of Light and Darkness order and obedience in Nature point to the religious duty of man. Domestic manners and manners in public or collective life all contribute to the higher virtues and are part of our spiritual duties leading up to Allah (Introduction to Surat Al-noor).

The procedure and quantam of punishment too have been laid down in the holy Scripture. There should be no laxity in awarding the prescribed punishment, the Holy Quran says. Unfortunately in this country the depth and spreads of gender insensitivity is more than just appealing. Only a religious way is open for its remedy.

S.A.

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## The Usefulness of Madrasahs

- S. Abul Hasan Nadwi

*And it is not for the believers to march forth all together. So why should not a group from each party of them march forth and the rest get instruction in religion, and to warn their people when they return to them? Maybe they will take heed.*

(al-Tawbah 9:122)

Were someone to ask me whether the Qur'an mentions *Madrasahs* (institutions of Islamic learning) and their role and responsibilities, the answer would be in the affirmative. For the above verse outlines their assignment. The Qur'an clarifies that since it is not practically possible for all Muslims to acquire religious 'education, there should be, at least, a group of dedicated Muslims who do take it up. They should move abroad, gaining a deeper understanding of faith at the feet of '*Ulama*' in various towns and cities and on their return they should prepare their fellow Muslims better to meet the challenges Islam presents. This is exactly the role of the *Madrasah*. It should train such graduates who are aware of contemporary issues and challenges and who are ready to take these on.

Although the verse does not pointedly employ the expression *Madrasah*, what it says is fully applicable to the *Madrasah*, its need and relevance and its duty. At the outset it is acknowledged that all Muslims cannot so go and study. For it is neither easy nor physically possible. It would amount to turning a blind eye to ground realities, if all Muslims were charged with this duty. It would be unnatural to assume that all Muslims could abandon their hearth and home to pursue religious studies. For it would spell an end to local industry and business. Rather such a move would paralyse life. Hence it is impossible to expect that everyone could join the *Madrasah* as a student. Furthermore, Allah does not demand of believers something which is impossible or impractical. Allah, being man's Creator, is fully conversant with his limitations. He has placed some shortcomings as innate in human nature. He knows well the human condition. Therefore, He does not oblige man to do what is beyond him. It is against this backdrop that the Qur'an states that all Muslims cannot enrol in the *Madrasah*. Allah has not charged each and every Muslim with this duty. This is also a pre-emptive

strike lest someone plead that he could not do so owing to his circumstances.

However, the Qur'an insists that some Muslims from each town should dedicate themselves to this task of gaining religious knowledge. Some members from each locality, each profession, each town and each country should make the pursuit of religious education their life-long mission. They should develop a broad and deep understanding of faith.

Gaining insight into faith is a huge task. Included in this is knowledge of divine commands, their rationale and their application in varying situations. The Qur'an uses an apt word, *tafaqquh*, in this context. Students are expected to learn faith in depth, have a broad view of faith and be able to relate faith to the changing times. They are also obliged to preach faith and warn fellow Muslims. They should not confine their knowledge to themselves. Rather, they should transmit it on a wide scale. More importantly, they should admonish their community, containing as it does people of all religions, nationalities and cultures. It is not intended that Arabs should address only Arabs. Rather, they should preach faith to everyone, of every family, locality, town and country.

The verse also lays down the objectives of this exercise. These dedicated persons should master

religious knowledge, gain insight into it and spread it far and wide. If Allah intends to do good to someone, He blesses him with insights into faith. Included in this are all religious commands and issues, their rationale, their application and exceptions. Such people should also first mend their own conduct which will ensure their deliverance.

It is the duty of these religious scholars to preach divine guidance in every locality. They should exhort people to take heed and warn them against the dangers and challenges to their faith. They should alert them against such beliefs and deeds which may place them outside the fold of faith. For men are apt to commit such deeds which may be injurious to their faith. They may even lose their faith altogether. The Qur'an therefore charges these religious scholars with the duty to admonish them. They should clarify for them the limits beyond which they should not go. Their role thus consists in advising and warning. For, Allah has clearly spelled out the way of guidance as distinct from the path of rebellion and wickedness. Whoever disbelieves or follows *taghut*, is accountable for the same. On the contrary, one who believes in Allah achieves His firm support that guides one all along. This fundamental truth is stated in verse 256 of *al-Baqarah*. These religious



scholars should identify what is evil and wicked and what constitutes Islam. People are of course free to act as they like, after being told so. Religious scholars are asked to admonish people so that they avoid self-destruction. This statement is based on the principle of cause and effect. Their instruction will help people lead a pious life, for by this they will recognise what is lawful and what is not. They will readily know what will help them attain divine forgiveness and salvation and what will land them in eternal punishment. This is the thrust of the verse.

Nonetheless, another point worth noting is that whereas faith is eternal, times are ever-changing. Notwithstanding the change in times and circumstances, the basic principles of faith being eternal do not undergo any alteration. Those equipped with sound religious knowledge gain the ability to provide a link between faith and the ever-changing needs and demands of the times. They perform this duty in addition to preaching faith and warning people.

They see to it that no alteration takes place with regard to the essence and basic duties of faith. They are very particular about the spirit and dictates of faith. Yet they make faith compatible with changing times. They thus guide and lead people notwithstanding the

phenomenal advances in knowledge technology, culture, transport and communication. They are equipped to demonstrate the relevance of faith. They can lead their society intellectually. They prove how faith can resolve the problems confronting them. So doing, they highlight the life-enriching role of faith. This, in turn, saves mankind from following the path of self-destruction. Faith never becomes outdated no matter what developments take place in various fields of human activity. For, by definition and in its effect faith is eternal. It is fallacious to regard faith as an out-of-date entity. Times, no doubt, change. This is something perfectly natural. It does not represent some sort of disaster. Time is not a fossil. Life changes and assumes numerous new visages with the passage of time. In contrast, faith is universal and eternal, unaffected by the vagaries of time.

The main role of the *Madrasah* is to maintain and deliver the above message. They should ensure that faith is preserved in its purity. Faith should be the same as it was professed and practised by the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), the Rightly-Guided Caliphs and the early Muslims. Faith has been followed consistently. Those actively associated with the *Madrasah* should not, however,

disregard changing times altogether. They should instead critically analyse needs and challenges. They should make the most of the new opportunities and make as much allowance as is possible for the new situation.

Faith should be maintained and at the same time it should provide intellectual leadership. Pious scholars should carefully evaluate new developments and appreciate new demands. They should meet these

demands while adhering to the spirit of faith and the *Shari'ah*. In this lies the meaning and scope of *tafaqquh*. The next stage in this direction is of *ijtihad* which calls for specialised qualifications.

In establishing, managing and orienting the *Madrasah* the above points should be taken into account. All praise be to Allah at the beginning and at the end, and both outwardly and inwardly. ■

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*Continued from page 37)*

is a Manifest Victory because it had been won without shedding a drop of blood! Did you remember this when you went around shooting innocents in South Mumbai, many of whom were Muslims?

Before you pick up a gun or fix an explosive device to kill people with a different view, suggest you look at the verses of Sura-i-Kafirun in the Quran which says - Let your faith be with you and let me be with mine. Is not this tolerant view acceptable to you?

Mohammad did not believe in conquering lands and its people. He believed in conquering hearts. It is his followers who used the banner of Islam to build empires that later they lorded over. Purely, for their personal gains. To achieve it, very conveniently, they called all their wars jihad and all those against them Kafirs.

Don't look too far away. Babur, who was known for his love for good wine, decided to call his war against Rana Sangha, a jihad. When told that Sangha's forces also included a warrior called Hasan Khan Mewati, Babur had him declared a kafir. I am sure he found a pliant cleric to affix his stamp of approval. Babur won against Sangha and went on to become the founder of the Mughal dynasty. Hasan Khan Mewati, his kafir of convenience, died fighting that battle.

You, Ajmal Kasab and the people who have guided you, have done the greatest disservice to a great religion called Islam.

I am told that you begged Allah for forgiveness before the noose was put around your neck. Allah in my Holy Book is referred to as Rabbul-Aalemeen (the Lord of the Universe) and not as Rabbul-Muslemeen (The Lord of the Muslims alone). As Rabbul-Aalemeen He certainly has love and kindness for all His creations. Perhaps He may forgive you because He is also the most Compassionate and Merciful. But as an Indian and as a Muslim I will never. ■

*(Hindustan Times, 29-11-12)*

## From Hazrat Adam (AS) to Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH)

- S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadw

### The primogenitor of man: Hazrat Adam (AS):

Allah, the Supreme Being, the Creator of this earth, the sky and the entire universe, created such creatures also as could inhabit them and make use of them. Amongst them was the man whom He made the most important and greatest of all. For having this human being created He had first of all a man made of clay. Then, for his company and for getting the family raised jointly by the two, He created, out of that man himself, his wife. And, then, the human race, getting originated, as it did, from them, got gradually disseminated all over the earth. He, then, assigned this human race the job of managing the affairs of this earth. He created on the earth all the paraphernalia that the man might need, so that the man, with the application of his intellect which the man is bestowed with by his Creator and Master, could explore them as per his need. He taught him the ways to manufacture the things he needed and told him that: all these things, along with the life, are given to you to benefit from, and make use of, them. But, you have to live on this earth a pious life, with righteousness and in accordance with the instructions from your

Providence. In case you go wrong you would get punished.

When He created the primogenitor of mankind, the first ever man, Hazrat Adam (AS), He had him initially lodged in the most comfortable place in the heavens, *Janna* (Paradise). Prior to creating him, Allah had already had another creature, the Jinn, brought into being. He had one of the Jinns, Iblees by name, who had ostensibly become a very devout servant, already lodged, by way of reward for his devotion, in the Paradise. But he had this idiocy committed that when Allah, having conferred upon Adam (AS) great dignity and honor had him lodged in the Paradise, Iblees got envious of him. He grudged that when he was already there why was this individual of a new race bestowed with so much honour and dignity? When Allah, the Providence, ordered everyone to bow down before Adam in reverence to him even such a celestial creature as the angels complied immediately with their Lord's orders. But Iblees refused to obey and behaved in a haughty manner. On this disobedience and haughtiness Allah Almighty expelled him out of the paradise and had him thrown on earth. He had His

Malediction imposed on him. In order to avenge himself for this disgrace, he enticed Adam and his wife, Hazrat Hawwa, and talked them into taking a bite from a tree which Allah Almighty had already forbidden Adam and Hawwa to eat from. Allah Almighty had told Adam in the very beginning to enjoy each and every plant and tree in the Paradise except that particular tree. The Shaitan, that Iblees, coaxed and sweet-talked them into having it eaten. He told them that there were great benefits in having it. He made them somehow convinced that there was nothing so particularly wrong with eating from this tree. There was, rather much advantage in it. And, thus he made him commit the disobedience. Allah Almighty got displeased with Hazrat Adam for having done so, that despite having forbidden by Him he committed this act. And, so, by way of punishment, He sent him, too, down to the earth taking him out of the environs of the Paradise. Iblees still remained adamant on his obedience. He did not even seek the forgiveness from Allah. Hence, he and his progeny were declared unworthy and damned forever.

Adam (AS), however, beseeched Allah for forgiveness with utmost bewailing and lamentation for his disobedience. Hence, Allah forgave him. Nevertheless, because of the trait of disobedience in his nature that had

gotten displayed, He decided to make him and his progeny undergo a test of their obedience, by making them stay for a while on earth. Here while living on earth, they were to furnish the proof, by refraining themselves from committing disobedience to their Lord, that they were really worthy of being taken back into Paradise. The same verdict was made applicable to the Jinn also. The procedure of conducting this test was decreed to continue and last up till the end of this world, that is, till the Doomsday. In this way the individuals from among the descendants of Adam and the Jinn who were not the progeny of Iblees and were not to follow in his footsteps could be tested as to whether they were going to be obedient to Him.

### **Religious Guidance in the Form of Prophecy:**

After the inception of the chain of human life on Earth, human races, one after another, inhabited the Earth. They have been obedient to the Divine Command. But, they started, gradually, giving preference to their earthly desires, self-gratification and self-indulgence, over their religious and moral rectitude. They started getting negligent in being grateful to, and worshipping, their Creator and Master and the Providence of the entire world. They started violating, at will, the commands of Allah Almighty, their Master and Creator. Hence, in

order to exhort them, Allah Almighty kept designating, time and again, someone righteous and sagacious, from among themselves as His Messenger to exhort them. Such a person used to be called the 'Prophet'. Thus, these Prophets kept being raised, as per the need, within the peoples. In each and every people, whenever malpractices got rampant, a Prophet was sent to them. Wherever there happened to be a population on the earth and the disobedience to Allah Almighty got on the increase, a Prophet was sent. Thus, every place had its Prophets. These Prophets kept admonishing their respective peoples solicitously and had all their lives and souls devoted to making them see the reason.

Among these Prophets (peace be on them), the first one designated as the Prophet to take care of, and strive for, keeping his descendents on the right path and making them stick to the devotion to God, was Hazrat Adam (AS) himself, the very primogenitor of the human race. Hence, his progeny kept, generation after generation, pursuing the path shown them by Hazrat Adam (AS). But, as and when, with the passage of time and generations, the putrefaction kept creeping in, the Prophets were kept being raised, as per the need, amidst them. Allah Almighty has said:

(And there is not a community but there has passed away among them of a Warner.) (*Al-Fatir*: 24)

Some of these Prophets have been mentioned, by way of instances, by Allah Almighty in the holy Quran. About the rest He merely stated that there were Prophets sent to each and every people. Among the Prophets described by Allah Almighty in His Book, the one described first of all is Hazrat Nooh (AS). He was assigned the Prophecy centuries after the primogenitor of man, Hazrat Adam (AS), in his progeny. His people had, in the course of venerating, as they did, the icons they had made of their pious and celebrated figures, moved on, gradually, to worshipping them. They had, thus, abandoning their Creator and Master, who is Single and Alone and has no equal, had started worshipping their celebrities, having them elevated to the status of God. Simultaneously, they had gotten on the other hand, involved in all sorts of sins and iniquitous acts. Having lived amidst them for nine centuries and a half, Hazrat Nooh (AS) performed his missionary and reformatory obligations. Even after so long a period of exhortation and reformatory efforts by him it were only a few individuals who could come round to worshipping the One and the Single God and having their moral and human condition mended. When there was no

hope anymore left about the maximum majority of the people of getting to the path of rectitude, their Prophet, Nooh (AS), made a supplication to Allah to have the punishment inflicted upon them. Thereupon, it was decreed by Allah Almighty about them to have them perished in a deluge. Before the infliction of the punishment, however, Hazrat Nooh (AS) was commanded to have an ark made so that by means of it Hazrat Nooh and his few followers could be rescued. For, it were the disobedient of the people who were decreed to be perished by the enormous, tumultuous deluge.

(And assuredly We sent Nuh to his people, then he stayed among them for a thousand years, less fifty years; and then the Deluge overtook them while they were wrong-doers. Then We delivered him and those with him in the ark, and made it a sign to the worlds.)\ (Ankabutl: 4-15)

Later, it were the descendants of these very rescued survivors who inhabited the earth. They have been described by Allah Almighty in His Book, the holy Quran. Details of the peoples of some other Prophets who came after Nooh (AS) have also been given in the holy Quran. Those were the Prophets who were raised amongst the peoples of Arab region and the regions surrounding it when they had started disobeying their Lord and

insisted on perpetration of sins. And, as and when they went too far in disobeying their Prophets and did not follow their advices, they were afflicted upon with retribution. Amongst them is the people of Aad, one of the generations of the people of Nooh (AS) themselves, who have been mentioned. They were inhabitants of the region lying East of Yemen. Amidst them also, the worship of idols and icons of their own liking, abandoning their actual Master and Creator, had gotten rampant. Along with that, acts of atrocities and aggressions against the poor and the weak, hauteur and conceit and other malpractices had become the order of the day. Amidst them, Hud (AS) was raised as the Prophet by Allah Almighty. His people also persisted in practicing the polytheism and perpetuation in their decadence and depravity. They kept ridiculing their Prophet, Hud (AS). Ultimately, Allah's wrath descended on them.

The narration of this people is followed by the narration of the people of Thamud. These people inhabited the mountainous region in the north of Hijaz area. Amidst them was designated Hazrat Saleh (AS) as the Prophet. These people also used to worship all sorts of gods, having them made up out of their fantasy. They indulged in oppressing the weak and many other obscenities. This Prophet,

too, was treated by his people with gross cussedness. All his efforts failed to make them mend their ways. In order to make them convinced of Hazrat Saleh's Prophecy and by way of a confirmation thereof, Allah Almighty had a she-camel brought to being and commanded them to refrain from causing any harm to it. But, they killed it and persisted in their obduracy. Hence they, too, were perished. Only the righteous survived. Those who survived and their descendants started leading a pious life. But with the change of generation and passage of time, malpractices and polytheism started creeping in. For their reform, Prophets from Among the peoples themselves were designated. After the people of Thamud, description of the people of Lut (AS) and the people of Madyan is made in the holy Quran. All these peoples harassed and harrowed their respective Prophets and did not mend their respective repugnant ways, their malpractices and misdeeds.

The people of Lut were inhabitants of a portion of Palestine. Their greatest malefaction, apart from the polytheism, was the bane of homosexuality which was rampant in them. In it, too, they had, started employing coercion and stark brazenness. Along with it, they were adamant and obstinate in committing other sins as well. Amongst them was raised Hazrat Lut (AS) who was Hazrat

Ibrahim's (AS) nephew. He tried his level best. But, his exhortations were not heeded to. Hence, a very severe volcanic tremor was inflicted upon them and they were all perished.

The people of Madyan were settled in the north of Hijaz region. Apart from the *Shirk* they indulged in committing defalcation and pertidy in trade and commercial transactions. They were involved in other sins as well. Amongst them was raised Hazrat Shoaib (AS) as the Prophet. (I) He, too, tried very hard to bring them around and make them see the reason. When they remained persistent in their misdeeds and malpractices and crossed all limits, the lacerating punishment took them over.

After the people of Madyan, it is the Egyptian people who have been described in the holy Quran. There in Egypt their king, Firaun (Pharaoh) and his folks had played great havoc. There the Israelites were in minority. Whenever any baby boy took birth among them, he would be killed; and, if the new-born were a girl she would be spared so that she could be forced later to serve in the households of Fira'un's folks. The people of the weaker races were meted out brutal treatment. Furthermore, alongside all that. Fira'un, having proclaimed himself the god made the people worship him. He would blatantly say: there is none else your god but me.

The Israelite Prophet, Hazrat Musa (AS), exhorted him a lot. When a long span of period had passed while he kept exhorting him without there being any break in Fira'aun's brutality and coercion, Allah's wrath descended and Fira'aun and his accomplices were drowned in the sea. Thereafter, these Israelites themselves, after the passage of some time, started getting recalcitrant and deviating from the path shown by their Prophets. They transgressed to the extent of even getting involved in polytheistic practices. They persisted in their moral depravities and took to swindling and skulduggery. Thereupon, Allah Almighty got them subjected to afflictions at the hands of others. Yet, they did not give up their misdeeds and transgressions. And the limit of their obduracy was that they harassed the prophets and had some of them even killed. Lastly, they had all the arrangements thoroughly made to have Hazrat Isa (AS) also crucified which were rendered by Allah Almighty non-fructuous and vain.

These are some instances which are specifically described in the holy Quran also. Otherwise, there had been thousands of peoples and each of them had Prophets sent to them. Whenever they went to the extremity of their disobedience and malpractices, they met their perdition imposed upon them by Almighty Allah.

The Israelites had their settlements in Egypt and Syria. It was, on the one hand, such a state of their decadence and depravity as has been mentioned above. On the other hand, the peoples who were settled in various other parts of the world, too, had, having abandoned Allah Almighty or in association with Him, made up a lot of other deities. Various kinds of vices, too, were rampant amidst them. When all these peoples got totally steeped in polytheism, atheism, tyranny and moral depravity, Allah Almighty got highly displeased and he discontinued, for a while, the chain of Prophets used to be designated earlier on a regular basis. He willed, perhaps, to watch as to what extent could the man go to, if left to himself, in adopting, on his own accord, the life of sensualism and bestiality. Hence, for six hundred long years after Hazrat Isa (AS), Allah Almighty did not send down any Prophet and let the peoples plummet down into the slough. During these six hundred years the entire humanity had acquired extremely vicious habits and had reached extremely obnoxious state. It had all but happened that the human race itself was totally wiped off the face of the earth by the Lord of Worlds in punishment of all that, as is apparent from a tradition narrated by Bukhari:

"Allah Almighty looked at an the dwellers on the earth and was



disgusted by them, whether Arabs or non-Arabs, except for some remnants of the *Ahl-e-Keetab* (the book-holders).”

Yet, the Mercy of the Lords of the worlds superseded His fury and He granted them one more chance to get exhorted. To that end, He raised a Prophet endowed with furthermore sublime characteristics and loftiest possible capabilities. That was no else but our own Prophet Mohammad, son of Abdullah, (SAW). An indication of his getting raised was already made in the Divine books revealed to previous Prophets, that is, Torah and the Gospel. It was stated therein that in the wake of all the nations of all the Prophets, when the vices would be extremely on the rise all over the world and the moral and religious level of the mankind would reach the nadir and be marked by sheer disobedience to God, there would be raised for the last time a Prophet adorned with furthermfectd qualities for the reform of the mankind. The intimation about this had also been already given by the name ‘Ahmad’ of the Prophet Mohammad (SAW). Accordingly, hence, Allah Almighty raised this highly magnificent Prophet from amongst the superior most race of Arabs, the unlettered and unsophisticated people of the Middle East, six hundred years after Hazrat Isa (AS) (Jesus Christ). These people were confined within the very

intractable land of the Arab peninsula and were, therefore, protected against the influences of other peoples and their civilizational evils. They were uncivilized but were in the state of their innate nature. Their heads and hearts were void of influences of other races and were, therefore, fully capable of shouldering greatest possible responsibilities. They were destined by Allah to be assigned the responsibility of guiding not only the Arabs but the entire world towards the path of righteousness.

The Prophet (SAW) carried out this responsibility with deliberation, perseverance and diligence. Consequently the conditions were tremendously improved. This resulted in enormous reform in the state of affairs. And, thus, the entire humanity which could have fallen prey to the Divine penalization, subsequent upon their earning the displeasure of their Creator and Master, the Almighty Allah, was saved. With that a new era of human history started. With that such a human society came up as was a paragon and had the capability to perform the service of guiding the humanity to righteousness. The world was, thus, saved from getting perished. Hazrat Mohammad (SAW), the Prophet, was endowed with such characteristics, capabilities and qualities as proved themselves to be the Mercy for all the worlds. He (SAW),

## The Simi Scare (Sham Probe Trials of Error)

- Muzamil Jaleel

**A children's magazine, newspaper, Urdu poetry- anything can land you in jail**

IN the story of men getting branded "SIMI activists" and charged under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), innocuous objects take the form of "incriminating material". The list of such "material", in which anything written in Urdu or Arabic comes right at the top, is by now predictable -and includes Urdu poetry, pamphlets issued by Hindu groups, newspaper articles about the Sangh Parivar, pictures and videos of the Gujarat riots, books on Islam, complaints against discrimination, as well as verses of the Quran.

IN HIS statement that was treated as FIR (No. 1106/06, dated August 11, 2006), Assistant Police Inspector Shripad Balkrishna Kale of the Greater Mumbai Police, currently DCB Unit 7, Ghatkopar, Mumbai, claimed that on August 1, 2006, he got information that Shabir Masiullah of Malegaon and Nafis Ahmad of Shivaji Nagar, Mumbai, were "preparing to commit some sabotage acts in the coming Ganesh festival". Though Shabir and Nafis were picked up immediately, police records show the date of their arrest as August 11, 2006. Kale claims that Shabir, who made and sold batteries and inverters in Malegaon, and Nafis, who worked as a DTP operator in Shivaji Nagar, were both "workers" of SIMI and had received arms

training in Pakistan.

Shabir's case takes a twist. While he was in police custody for his alleged plan to bomb the Ganesh festival from August 1, 2006, five weeks later, the ATS accused him of masterminding the Malegaon blasts of September 8, 2006. In January 2011, Malegaon blast accused Aseemanand confessed that a Hindu group was involved in the 2006 attack. On November 16 last year, Shabir was among the seven who were granted bail and walked free.

A day after Shabir and Nafis were arrested, DCB, CID Unit 7, Ghatkopar, had invited Pradip Pandurang Shirodhkar and Sunny Jogmohansingh Sidana as witnesses. According to the *panchnama*, Nafis was taken to his home where he "voluntarily" took out a "black rexine bag" and handed over "incriminating material". Here is what the police claim to have found: an Urdu-language children's monthly journal *Umang* published by Urdu Academy, Delhi. The police also claimed to have recovered a SIMI pamphlet, *SIMI Rudad-1998-2000* (The story of SIMI from 1998 to 2000).

These pamphlets had been printed before the ban on SIMI in September 2001 and were seized in bulk from various SIMI offices across the country.

**YOUNIS KHAN, JUNA RISALA, Indore**

FIR 135/08, dated April 10, 2008,

filed at the Sadar Bazar police station in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, says Mohammad Younis was arrested from Smrati Talkies for "propagating" SIMI and "inciting" the Muslim community against the arrests of SIMI members. In his affidavit before the UAPA tribunal in 2010, J D Bhonsle, Town Inspector, Depalpur Police Station, said that on April 10, 2008, "the accused was arrested and pamphlet seized from him in which there was statement about ; the status of Islam and Muslims in India and reference to the Pakistani organisation ISI, where it is insinuated that all Muslims are being equated with ISI. In this way, the disaffection of SIMI towards India and the sympathy with Pakistani organisation ISI is clearly evident". The inspector doesn't explain how a complaint that Indian Muslims are being wrongly ; suspected to be ISI agents ; can be interpreted as sympathy towards a Pakistani organisation.

Inspector Bhonsle also reveals that the police seized the previous day's newspaper, the Indore edition of *Dainik Jagran*, dated April 9, 2008, from the accused. According to Bhonsle, it was "incriminating" material because it had "news of the 13-hour-long narco test of SIMI activists Safdar Nagori, Kamruddin Nagori and Amil Parvez".

Bhonsle also says the accused "admitted" that he had joined Dars-e-Quran (learning of Quran) classes at Chhoti Gawi Toli mosque from 1999 to 2000. Dars-e-Quran is basic Quranic education and is not illegal.

### **FAISAL, IRFAN AND SHAKIR, Narsingharh, Madhya Pradesh**

IN HIS "affidavit before the UAPA tribunal in 2010, Inspector Vikram Singh Bhadoria (who was Station House Officer, Narsingharh, when the case was filed) alleges that Faisal, Irfan and Shakir had met SIMI leader Safdar Nagori during his visit to Narsingharh. Though the police claim that the three came to the police station after they were summoned, they were arrested and a case was lodged against them (FIR No. 142/08, date April 5, 2008).

During investigation, Inspector Bhadoria claimed, SIMI pamphlets with an aim to "propagate enmity between religions" were recovered from the accused. According to the final report, the police seized two papers from Faisal which had "*bhadkane wali aayaten* (provocative verses)" from the Quran against other religions.

The story of this document is interesting. The document, "*Quran ki kuch aayten jo Iman walon (Musalmanon) ko anya dharamvalambiyon se jhagda karne ka aadesh deti hain* (A few of the verses from the Quran that order Muslims to fight those belonging to other religions)", had been printed by the Hindu Writers' Forum, New Delhi, in which they had made derogatory remarks about the Quran. Another "incriminating" document is a one-page document in Urdu that talks about the basic tenets of Islam - *namaz* (prayers), fasting, *zakat* (charity), and Hajj.

**ABDUL RAZZAK, Nayapura, Indore**

IN HIS FIR (159/08), M G Road

Station House Officer Inspector Kailash Chandra Malviya says that the police arrested Abdul Razzak on March 30, 2008, for "doing propoganda against the government". Malviya says Razzak was standing on the street near Ghadi Wali Masjid in Nayapura, Indore, and the police team heard him say: 'What will happen if the government has banned SIMI? I am a member of SIMI and will remain a member of SIMI.'

Inspector Malviya says they arrested him and "found two books of Urdu language in the pocket of his *kurta*". One of them was on the essence of employment while the other was about Hindu religion and the concept of a single god. Malviya says that one of the books had "SIMI written on it by pen" while the other had a SIMI seal. The police also claim to have recovered 36 other "incriminating" books from him that include 'Life of Mohammad' published in New Delhi, Darse Quran (Teachings of Quran) and a self-help book, Herbert Fensterheim's *Don't Say Yes When You Want To Say No*. All "incriminating evidence".

**JAMIR AHMAD and ABDUL REHMAN alias PAPA BHAI, Seoni, Madhya Pradesh**

JAMIR Ahmad and Abdul Rehman had two FIRs filed against them - one on May 28, 2001, four months before the ban on SIMI, and then on September 28, 2001, a day after the ban. The FIR in the first case (FIR 250/2001), filed at the Seoni Police Station in MP, says that Jamir and

Papa Bhai were arrested after Raja Bhagel of Ganj, Seoni, complained that the duo had sold him a book that "contained material which was against the feelings of other communities and was a SIMI book". The police say that the two were arrested and were later bailed out.

On September 28, 2001, Seoni Police Station acted again and arrested Jamir and Papa Bhai "while they were standing near Choti masjid". The police registered an FIR (423/01) and charged them under the UAPA. The FIR claims that "they were discussing matters related to SIMI and proclaiming that if America or any other country attacked Taliban, then all Muslims and followers of Islam must be ready for  *Jihad* ".

In the *challan* filed by the police on May 31, 2003, the police accused them of participating in "Seerat Pak Jalsa" on June 10, 2001, which the police claimed to be unlawful. '*Pak*' means pure and is generally used in reverence while referring to the Quran or the Prophet's life and 'Seerat Pak Jalsa' was a gathering on the life of the Prophet. But the police *challan* translates 'Seerat Pak' as "goodness of Pakistan". Also part of the "evidence" was a letter that the police claimed had been written by Jamir to the Prime Minister seeking action against the VHP.

**KHALID MUCCHALE, Solapur, Maharashtra**

IN THE case against alleged SIMI activist Khalid Mucchale at Vijaypur Naka police station, Solapur (FIR 3036/2008, dated April 1, 2008), a couplet of Mirza

Ghalib, which was part of a one-page complaint against harassment of Muslims, was declared "incriminating". The police also claimed to have seized a document published by the Rashtriya Vichar Manch from the accused. This document talks about alleged "growth of Muslims and Christian population and its devastating effects" and seeks "effective anti-conversion laws".

**2 years, 5 cities, 6 cases - and 'proof everywhere is the same magazine**

ON APRIL 16, 2006, Khandwa in Madhya Pradesh was tense. There had been communal clashes a week ago during Eid-e- Milad. In the afternoon, policemen from the Kotwali police station arrested two women, 20-year-old Aasiya and 23-year-old Rafia, daughters of one Abdul Hafiz Qureshi. The police, in their seizure memo, claimed to have recovered "incriminating material" from Aasiya - three copies of an April 2004 issue of a Hindi magazine, *Tehrik-e-Millat*, and a SIMI donation receipt towards "office construction fund" (receipt no. 0033359, dated January 25, 2006) with the name "Kumari Aashiya Khan" in Hindi for an amount of Rs 500.

SIMI was banned in 2001. If an underground outfit issuing a donation receipt for a building on their old stationery seems unlikely, the story of the magazine is even more odd.

All the three copies of *Tehrik-e-Millat* allegedly recovered from Aasiya have her name written by hand in Hindi as 'Aashiya' on the cover. The police also claimed to have seized two copies of *Tehrik-e-Millat* with "Rafia" written by hand in Hindi on

the cover. *Tehrik-e-Millat* is a fortnightly published from Kota in Rajasthan. Though the Kotwali police station in Khandwa later booked the magazine's owner-editor M A Naiem, the magazine has never been proscribed.

This is not all. In the space of two years, these *same* copies of the April 2004 issue of *Tehrik-e-Millat* - with the names of the Khandwa sisters written by hand on the cover - travelled to at least two other states. Several cases later, the police even started referring to the magazine as "Tehrik Millat Aasiya" and "Tehrik Rafia" in their official records. However, other than their names on the magazines, the two sisters were never mentioned in police records.

**JULY 2006, Pune**

AFTER the July 11, 2006, bomb explosions on local trains in Mumbai, the magazine popped up in the chargesheet filed by the Anti-Terrorism Squad, Mumbai. Among the 13 people arrested was Sohail Mehmood Shaikh of Bhimpura, Lashkar, Camp Area Pune, who was held on July 25, 2006. The ATS claimed Sohail went to Pakistan via Iran in November 2002 for arms training with the Lashkar-e-Toiba. *They also said a search* of Sohail's house in Bhimpura on July 30, 2006, had led to the recovery of six books including the "April 2004 Tahrik-e-Millat Asia" that had "Aashiya" written by hand on the cover. Police claimed to have recovered the same magazine, with the same handwritten "Aashiya", during searches at the homes of the other 7/11 accused - Mohd Faisal Aatur Rehman Shaikh of

Bandra, Muzzamil Aatur Rehman Shaikh of Mira Road, Jameer Latifur Rehman Shaikh of Vallabhnbhai Patel Nagar and Dr Tanvir Ahmad Mohd Ibrahim Ansari of Agri-pada, all in Mumbai.

**JULY 2006, Mumbai**

IN AN affidavit filed before the UAPA (Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act) Tribunal in 2010, Assistant Police Inspector, ATS, Mumbai, Rahimatullah Inayat Sayyed, spoke of Danish Riyaz Shaukat Ali Shaikh, an "active member of SIMI", who was arrested on July 30, 2006. According to the affidavit, a raid on Shaikh's home led to the recovery of several Islamic books in Urdu such as *Jihad Fi Saabi Illah, Jihad Asghar and Jihadi Fishbilliah*, besides 'Tehrik Millat Aasiya', the same magazine.

**AUGUST 2006, Mumbai**

ACCORDING to an affidavit filed by Inspector, DCB, CID, Mumbai, Milind Bhikaji Khetle, a case was registered at Kandivali police station on August 13, 2006, against Mohd Najib Abdul Rashid Bakali and some of his "SIMI associates". The affidavit said that on August 14, 2006, police seized four SIMI booklets from Bakali's house. One of the alleged 'SIMI' booklets was a copy of the April 2004 issue of the *Tehrik-e-Millat magazine* with "Aashiya" written by hand in Hindi on its cover.

**SEPTEMBER 2006, Malegaon**

ON September 8, 2006, powerful blasts ripped through the Bada Kabaristan area of Malegaon after the Shab-e-Barat prayers, killing 37 people and injuring over 100. An FIR was registered at Azadi Nagar

Police Station, Malegaon, and Noor-ul-Huda Shamsudoha, a labourer, was arrested under "the UAPA for being a SIMI" member and for "popularising and publicising" SIMI. During a raid on Noor-ul-Huda's home at Jafarnagar, police claimed to have seized "objectionable books" that included the copy of the April 2004 issue of the *Tehrik-e-Millat magazine* with "Aashiya" written by hand in Hindi on its cover.

On September 19, 2006, the investigation was transferred to ATS, Mumbai. Within days, Noor-ul-Huda became one of the main accused in the Malegaon blast case. Eight more people were later arrested as the ATS, Mumbai, claimed to have solved the case. Noor-ul-Huda and the other accused had already spent six years in jail in Mumbai by the time the case took a new turn following Swami Aseemanand's confession in January last year. On November 16 last year, Noor-ul-Huda and the other eight were granted bail.

**SEPTEMBER 2008, Jibalpur, Madhya Pradesh**

ON September 19, 2008, the MP Police nabbed "SIMI activist" Mohd Ali, 29, of Jabalpur from the Misrod, railway station. Police officer T I Chandan Singh Surama recorded in the "FIR: "We searched his bag and found papers of SIMI which is an offence." The Misrod police station claimed that the papers seized from Mohd Ali's bag included "Tehrik Rafia" - that is how the police's seizure memo refers to the *Tehrik-e-Millat magazine* because it had "Rafia:" written by hand in Hindi on the cover, the same,

copy of the same magazine that the Kotwali police station had claimed to have seized on April 16, 2006, from Rafia in Khandwa.

Besides, the police claimed that a SIMI donation receipt towards office construction fund (Receipt No. 0033359) dated January 25, 2006, with the name Kumari Aashiya Khan in Hindi for an amount of Rs 500 was recovered from Mohd Ali. This donation receipt is also exactly the same as the one the Kotwali police had claimed to have recovered from Aasiya in Khandwa. It was on the basis of these two "incriminating" documents alone that Mohd Ali was booked under the UAPA.

Incidentally, in the initial Khandwa case in which Aasiya and Rafia were arrested, the police kept extending the list of accused, going on to arrest 12 youths, including their brother Inam-ur-Rehman. Later, Inam was also picked up after the Jaipur blasts of May 13, 2008, and taken to Rajasthan. All the 14 held in the case were initially accused of being SIMI members.

On December 9, 2011, a fast-track court acquitted 11 of the 14, including Inam.

### **Over a month, four 'terror' arrests on Indore for 'shouting slogans'**

IT'S just not Urdu writings or a magazine copy that can get you booked under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). In many cases - including five over the course of one month, April 2008, four of them in Indore alone - the script was the same: *a mukhbir*

or informer tipped off police about men "shouting anti-government slogans" outside mosques or in front of their homes, and the men were arrested and then left to battle it out in court.

### **SEPTEMBER 27, 2001, Sola pur**

THE case was filed on the day the Centre issued its first notification banning SIMI. Assistant Police Inspector Dattatray Bapurao Patil of Sadar Bazar police station noted in the FIR (3824/2001) that he and his team were patrolling when "we found one person Abdul Rehman Ahmad Ali Kalyani had gathered some people in front of Konchikozi *galli*... After enquiring about the same, we found that the said person was trying to bring together people who support the organisation (SIMI)". Kalyani, 19, was arrested under the UAPA. While police admitted that nothing incriminating had been found when they searched Kalyani's house, the Maharashtra government, giving sanction for his prosecution, accused him of carrying out SIMI activities aimed at "secession of Maharashtra territory".

In its affidavits before the UAPA Tribunal, the Maharashtra government has repeatedly said: "The ultimate aim and ideology of SIMI is pan-Islam movement i.e. Islam Education of entire India by adopting Nifaq (hatred), Saria (accruing money by adopting illegal means) and Jihad (holy war)." The claim itself is comical. While *nifaq* means disunity, the word *saria* has no such known meaning in either Urdu or Arabic.

Incidentally, Kalyani had a case registered against him earlier too, in 2000, for pasting a poster protesting against the

Babri Masjid demolition.

**SEPTEMBER 28, 2001, Yavatmal**

IN the FIR (3200/2001), Pusad City police station officer Prakash Laxmanrao Hingmire recorded that he and his team were on patrol when they found Nisar Ahmad Khan, 22; Wakil Ahmad, 29; and Sheikh R Rafique Farouqi, 21, shouting slogans in the Vasant Nagar area near Aqsa masjid. "They were shouting that Bajrang Dal is also a communal organisation and why the government had not imposed a ban on it." The youths were arrested and booked under the UAPA.

**APRIL 11, 2008, Indore**

JUNI police station SHO Mohan Singh Yadav noted in the FIR (200/2008) that a *mukhbir* informed him that Mohammad Shahid alias Billi and Iqbal of Nandanvan Colony, Indore, were standing near Shyam Nagar masjid and "instigating people and doing propaganda against the government". Yadav said that he, accompanied by a sub-inspector, four constables and a driver, reached the masjid. "We hid ourselves and found two persons standing near the masjid. They were talking in a secret manner with three-four more people... I asked my accompanying staff to encircle them. When they saw the police, they panicked and we arrested them."

Yadav claimed they only arrested Shahid and Iqbal, the two people who were talking. He said that during inquiry, the two said they were "preparing the people for jihad, that the government had not done well by arresting the leaders of SIMI and they would take revenge". The FIR also

noted that "Iqbal shouted a slogan as well", and that seven pamphlets were recovered from Shahid's pockets and six from Iqbal's. The two "Witnesses" the police named as having been present outside the mosque were "Sanjay" and "Sachin".

Shahid and Iqbal were booked under sections of the IPC and UAPA. A look at the seizure memo reveals that the pamphlets allegedly recovered from them were old SIMI documents and most of them were photocopies.

**APRIL 2, 2008, Indore**

SADAR Bazar police station SHOJD Bhonsale said in the FIR (129/2008) that a *mukhbir* had informed him that Mohammad Irfan Chheepa of Juna Risala, Indore, had gathered people in the compound of a community hall near his house for avenging the arrest of SIMI leaders. "He was also making statements against the government and talking provocative things against society and country which could raise communal passions," noted the FIR. Bhonsale said he and his team of a sub-inspector, ASI Bhadoriya, a head constable, and five constables arrived at the spot. "We took cover and saw a person with physical features as stated by the informer who had gathered people and had some papers and pamphlets in his hand. He was talking in an excited manner and was telling the people that 'you people should also join this organisation so that we all unite and establish government of Islam and you should contribute so that we defeat the Hindustan government'."

SHO Bhonsale said he asked his



force to encircle the people, but they could only arrest Chheepa. The seizure memo in the case showed an appeal in Hindi, ostensibly issued by the SIMI, but with 'Bismillah' misspelt.

**APRIL 2, 2008, Indore**

IN the FIR (35/2008), Inspector Prabha Singh Chouhan of Sarafa police station noted that a *mukhbir* informed her that senior SIMI worker Zakir Lala was "instigating people against the government" near Nihalpura masjid. She reached the spot with her team and found "Zakir Lala standing near the masjid and shouting loudly, saying 'What if the government has banned SIMI? I will not let any member of SIMI be arrested and I will give them my full support. We will join together to take revenge from the government for this.'" Chouhan said a large crowd had gathered but the police managed to arrest only Zakir Lala. The books the police claimed to have recovered from Lala were on teachings of the Prophet and other Islamic literature. Lala was arrested and charged under the UAPA.

**APRIL 2, 2008, Indore**

IN the FIR (101/2008), Chhoti Gwal Toli police station SHO Inspector B L Meena noted that a *mukhbir* had informed him that "an active member of SIMI, Amman S/O Mohammad Salim, was trying to energise SIMI through propaganda and for this purpose he is distributing anti-government pamphlets at Sarvate bus stand, Indore". Meena and his team reached the spot and allegedly found Amman "trying to paste a pamphlet on the pillar in the north direction and

saying that 'What if the government has banned SIMI, I am still associated with it and will get many more people to associate with it and help secure the release of SIMI leaders'." Amman was initially booked under the UAPA, and later also under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA).

Five months later, Amman was arrested again by the same police station. In this FIR filed on September 19, 2008, Meena again recorded that he "received information from a *mukhbir* that Amman was standing at the crossing in front of Ganesh Lodge and trying to increase the number of SIMI activists and help secure bail for the arrested SIMI activists, besides distributing antigovernment pamphlets". Meena and his team reached the spot. A large crowd was reportedly present, but again only Amman was arrested and charged under the UAPA.

**APRIL 7, 2008, Guna, MP**

IN the FIR (104/2008), Chachoda police station SHO L C Shrivastava recorded that on April 7, 2008, they received information that SIMI members were planning a meeting at the house of Rafeeq Moulana in Talheta Mohalla. "During the raid, five persons were apprehended." Incidentally, the arrested persons were Moulana's close neighbours. Among various things, the police seized cuttings of *Dainik Jagran* and *Nai Dunia* newspapers. Later, a copy of an old SIMI pamphlet protesting the Babri Masjid demolition too was allegedly found. For one of those arrested, Abdul Kadir, the seizure memo said they recovered "a letter written in Urdu (issued by) Darul Aloom

Rashidia of Mewat in Rajasthan". The DarulAloom is a lawful entity and the letter was a note of introduction for a certain Moulvi Mohammad Usman of Papda, Bharatpur, for collection of donations. The police recorded it as "incriminating material".

### **The posters that landed retired SIMI secy in jail**

CASES registered 12 years ago-before SIMI was even banned - on flimsy charges and an investigation that has been rapped for loopholes left Munir Deshmukh a wanted man for years and have kept him in jail for the past 21 months. Once the SIMI national secretary, Deshmukh retired from the organisation in February 2001, seven months before it was banned.

### **OCTOBER 22, 2000**

It was 11 months before the first ban on SIMI in September 2001 that Deshmukh had the first FIRs filed against him in two police stations in Bhopal the same day. Both FIRs related to exactly the same "incriminating" evidence - a SIMI poster.

The Taliyya police station registered an FIR that said a poster with "Students Islamic Movement of India (West) MP" written in English on it had been found pasted near Kulsum Bi's mosque, near Budhwara, Bhopal. No individual was named. Subsequently, police alleged that posters similar to the one pasted near the mosque had been seized from Deshmukh and five other accused: Sorab Ahmed, Maulana Arsad, Abdul Razzaq, Mohd Alim and Kashlid Naim.

The seizure memo stated that on October 25, three days after the FIR, police seized five posters and 10 pamphlets from "under the bed of Munir Deshmukh" at his house, A-47, Shahpur, Habibganj, Bhopal.

The poster had "*Pasbode na bano, salah ki darkhwasth na karo, tum hi Ghalib rahoge, Navede Sehar conference 10, 11, 12 November 2000 Mukam Wadi e sehar, Dragaah Maidan ke Pas, Khajra, Indore*", also written in English. The pamphlet had "*Indore Chalo, Indore Chalo* in bold letters", said the FIR.

The writing the police found incriminating is actually from Verse 35 of Surah Mohammad of the Quran. The conference was primarily a religious congregation. In fact, the poster had the address and phone number of the organisers on it.

The chargesheet was filed five years later, on July 13, 2005, against the six accused under various sections of the IPC and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

The second FIR against Deshmukh was registered at the Shahjahanabad police station in Bhopal. Deshmukh was again charged along with the same five other accused for a similar SIMI poster, this time near Murgi Wali Masjid in Shahjahanabad.

The police claimed to have raided Deshmukh's house on October 23, 2000, which was two days before the raid on his house in the earlier case. The seizure memo stated the police recovered 14 posters with the Quranic verse "*pasbode*

*na bano...*”, 20 pamphlets that had “Students Islamic Movement of India, MP” and “*Indore chalo*” written on them, and a June 2000 edition of *Tehreek* magazine.

The chargesheet against the six was filed on December 6 that year for “promoting communal disharmony and committing acts detrimental to national integration”.

It was never explained how the same set of posters seized on October 23, 2010, from Deshmukh’s house turned up again at his residence two days later. And not just at his house but at those of the five other accused too.

#### **SEPTEMBER 27, 2001**

The day SIMI was banned, a third FIR was registered against Deshmukh, at the Habibganj police station in Bhopal under the UAPA. Inspector Girish Bore stated that he was tipped off about “SIMI activist” Munir Deshmukh “running activities from his residence”. A team raided Deshmukh’s house in the presence of two witnesses, Akhilesh Jain and Naval Singh, but didn’t find him. The FIR said that he had absconded “with the document and the campaigning material”. The chargesheet was filed on December 24, 2002. Apart from the UAPA, Deshmukh was booked under IPC sections 153 B (committing acts detrimental to national integration) and 295 A (outraging the feelings of a religious group).

According to advocate Sajid Ali of Bhopal, yet another FIR was filed in Habibgunj in 2001 against Deshmukh under the Prevention of Corruption Act, accusing him of having assets

disproportionate to his sources of income. He said judge R P S Chouhan acquitted Deshmukh in that case earlier this week.

#### **DECEMBER 11, 2010**

In December 2010-10years after the police first filed an FIR against him and nine years after they said he was absconding - Deshmukh was arrested. After his arrest, Deshmukh, who had been living in Hyderabad where he ran an IT firm, had another case slapped against him in Andhra Pradesh, this time for impersonation, for having documents stating his name as “Munir Ahmad”.

#### **THE CASES IN COURT**

In the first case registered at Taliyya police station, first class judicial magistrate Rama Jayant Mittal acquitted Deshmukh and the other accused on July 10 this year.

In the second identical poster case, first class judicial magistrate Varsha Sharma sentenced Deshmukh and the others to three years of rigorous imprisonment on August 3, 2011, for creating “unpleasantness between Hindus and Muslim community” after eight years of trial.

During the trial, one of the witnesses said he “does not recognise the accused”, a second witness said the police made him sign documents but didn’t know whether the documents were “blank or filled up” and a third witness said he didn’t know anything about the incident. An appeal has been filed against the judgment.

Ruling in the third case on October 22, 2011, R P Sonkar, additional CJM and special judge, Bhopal, threw out the charges under the UAPA but convicted

Deshmukh and the others under Sections 153 Band 295 A of the IPC, holding them "guilty of committing acts detrimental to national integration and outraging the feelings of a religious group". They have gone into appeal against this order too.

Judge Sonkar's court held that there were evident gaps in the version of the prosecution - the original seizure memo and case diary had gone missing/were "misplaced" and most of the evidence that was filed before the judge was in the form of illegible photocopies. The prosecution had claimed that the written statements of key witnesses had been enclosed in the missing case diary. One of the witnesses, incidentally, turned hostile during the trial and denied the prosecution's version.

The order noted that the officer who granted sanction for prosecution in the case under the UAPA, Alok Ranjan, MP's secretary (home), had said during cross-examination that "he was not aware when he granted the sanction" and that "at the time of granting the sanction he had no knowledge about statements of which witnesses were enclosed".

The judge also remarked that Ranjan was junior in rank to that prescribed under the UAPA for clearing prosecution. Deshmukh was charged under Sections 10 & 13 of the UAPA, which needed sanction from the Centre.

Deshmukh's Bhopal-based lawyer Parvez Alam accuses the government and courts of ignoring rules. According to sections 45 and 42 of the UAPA, the state government does not have the power to

issue the sanction. Then again according to section 45 of the UAPA, the court cannot take cognisance of charges without the sanction of appropriate authorities. The home secretary is giving sanction for prosecution under all sections when he can do so only under sections 7 and 8. The courts accepted that," Alam said.

He said police are missing deadlines for filing chargesheets; on occasions they took five years. "In a case under section 153A and B of IPC (promoting communal disharmony and acts detrimental to national integration), if the chargesheet is filed after three years, the court cannot take cognisance."

About the loss of the case files, he said the court had asked the DGP to register a case within six months against those involved in misplacing the original file but police didn't do anything.

Deshmukh had four case in Indore and one in Ujjain against him, Alam said, adding he got bail in the Ujjain one last week.

#### **When ISI became a 'FRONT FOR SIMI'**

IN the circles of police's "SIMI investigations", the name Maulana Naseeruddin comes up often. Sometimes he has been charged, *sometimes his sons, sometimes his acquaintances*. In one such case against an "associate" of his son, the Hyderabad police filed an affidavit before the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal calling Pakistan's ISI a front of SIMI.

Asked by the tribunal to explain his

claim, P Devender, then inspector in Saidabad police station, reiterated that "it is correct that in my affidavit when I referred to Inter Service Intelligence, I am referring to Inter Service Intelligence of Pakistan" and that the nodal officer of Andhra Pradesh will be "filing a secret note on the basis of which this statement has been made".

### **MOUTASIM BILLA**

DEVENDER'S affidavit, filed on June 11, 2010, was part of the government's evidence to justify the continuance of the ban on SIMI. To substantiate his claim that SIMI was "functioning under various fronts like the ISI", Devender cited a case registered in March 2008 at the Saidabad police station when he was an inspector there.

It concerned Moutasim Billa, 22, of Jevan Yar Jung Colony, Saidabad, who had been arrested on March 5, 2008, from near his residence. Devender claimed that Billa was arrested because he had been booked in an FIR (198/2007) at the Gopalapurram police station.

Devender also called him a close associate of "the son of Maulana Naseeruddin", who is a "SIMI activist". Naseeruddin and Billa's father, Mohammad Aleem Islahi, are well-known clerics in Saidabad and their families used to be close then. Along with Naseeruddin's, Islahi's is the other address frequently at the centre of any terror investigation in Hyderabad.

At the time of Billa's arrest, the Hyderabad police had claimed that it was in connection with two "rioting" cases

registered against him, in 2004 (an incident involving the death of his brother) and in 2007 (for terror conspiracy and sedition, registered at the Gopalapurram police station). Hyderabad police had booked 21 Muslim youths including Billa for a terror conspiracy and subsequently linked them to the Mecca Masjid blasts. Billa and the other accused were acquitted on December 31, 2008. The Mecca Masjid blast case finally took a new turn after Swami Aseemanand's confession in December 2010, which implied that these Muslim men had all been wrongly blamed. Eighty-two Muslim men had been picked up, interrogated or booked and all were subsequently acquitted.

In May this year, Billa was again named, this time in four cases of rioting and disturbance of peace, and shown as an "absconding accused". "These recent cases were registered one after another in a single day," said Billa, who recently earned a B Tech degree. "They have shown me as absconding, which means, 'You can go on with your life till we want to take you away again'."

### **MAULANA NASEERUDDIN**

THE 2004 rioting case against Billa, in fact, provides the context to this entire story. That October 31, Naseeruddin had gone to the DGP's office along with his lawyer and a few other people to sign his weekly attendance, necessary because of an earlier case of communal violence. "Two months earlier, I had been arrested after police claimed I was going to plant bombs in a Ganesh temple. This absurd allegation came as a shock; I fell ill and was shifted to hospital. Our lawyer friends

secured bail; this weekly attendance was a condition," Naseeruddin said.

"That day, I reached the office late. My son-in-law Khalid, who is a lawyer, and a few others accompanied me. The CID officer who would take my signature asked me to wait, saying a senior officer wanted to talk to me." Naseeruddin said he was taken to the IG, who told him a warrant for his arrest had come from Gujarat. A contingent of Gujarat Police led by then ACP Narendra Amin (now in jail over the murder of Sohrabuddin and Kousar Bi in a fake encounter) were waiting for Naseeruddin, "accused of a role in (former Gujarat minister) Haren Pandya's murder".

"People from our neighbourhood collected outside the gate," Naseeruddin said. "They didn't allow the Gujarat police vehicle to leave and there was a scuffle. Narendra Amin opened fire." Mujahid Saleem, 26, Billa's elder brother, was killed, protests followed, and the Andhra government promised a magisterial inquiry besides filing a case against Gujarat police. Police registered a case of rioting against Billa, too.

The maulana was taken to Gujarat and was initially arrested on charges of instigating Pandya's killers, and subsequently booked in the Ahmedabad conspiracy case - an alleged conspiracy to avenge the Gujarat riots. On January 12, 2010, a designated POTA court acquitted the maulana along with others and he was released.

### **THE MAULANA'S SONS**

"A lot had happened during those

five years. My three sons had all been arrested," Naseeruddin said. He said the two elder sons were framed but added that the youngest, without the family's knowledge, had gone to Pakistan for arms training.

"When the Gujarat police shot Mujahid Saleem, my youngest son Raziuddin Nasir was there. He saw Saleem die. This affected him deeply. When I was in jail in Gujarat, my wife told me he had to be taken to a psychiatrist," Naseeruddin said. "After some time, he went for Umrah (pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia). He went missing for one-and-a-half years. During that time, he had gone to Pakistan for arms training. We had no clue," he said. "We heard about him only when the Bangalore police arrested him (in 2008)."

He said his two elder sons, Maqemuddin Yasir and Baleeguddin Jabir, were framed. "Yasir has three children and was the manager of our workshop while Jabir was a third year student at Deccan Engineering College. The police accused them of being involved in the Mecca Masjid and other blasts and arrested them, a year after the blasts," he said. "They couldn't show even a bit of evidence but didn't release them. They were shifted to Madhya Pradesh where their names had been included in a SIMI case in Dhar. They had never been to Dhar."

He said for the next few years, their case didn't move. "The case was shifted to Indore where the trial concluded earlier this month; both were acquitted... This

country is our home too. Why is there no justice for us?"

### **THE YOUNGEST SON**

ON JANUARY 30, 2008, according to Satyapaa Sambha Khote, then DSP, Special Enquiry Squad, Bangalore, a youth named Mohd Asif was stopped by an inspector of Gokul Road police station, Hubli, for speeding with his motorcycle. "It was found that he did not have documents of the motorcycle. Hence the PI (inspector) seized the vehicle and filed a case," Khote said.

Investigations allegedly revealed Asif's "involvement" with SIMI. The police made 18 more people accused on March.20, 2008, including Razyuddin Nasir. In the affidavit, Khote claimed that Asif, medical student at Hubli and two other accused had met in "Castle Rock, Haliyal Road farmhouse, and Soudatti Road Darga" in the last week of April 2008, "aimed *inter-alia* at Islamisation of the world by means of Jihad". According to Khote, the three held another "conspiracy meeting" at Castle Rock in November 2007 where they decided to "damage the sovereignty of the government of India and to ignite anti-national sentiments... ultimately changing the elected sovereign government and establishing Islamic government".

Khote went on to give a long list of their "targets" - Kaiga nuclear plant, Infosys in Bangalore, Dell, IBM etc. For this mammoth task, they were apparently armed with four country-made revolvers—three of these rusted and defunct — and homemade grenades with gelatin sticks.

Khote produced a "confessional statement" by Nasir to Karnataka police, admitting he had gone to Pakistan for arms training. In the statement, Nasir says he was disillusioned after his father's arrest and the death of "our family friend" Mujahid Saleem during the protest. Nasir was later booked in the 2008 Ahmedabad blasts case and is currently in Sabarmati jail in Gujarat.

### **THE WOMEN**

In his affidavit filed on June 11, 2010, inspector Devender said that after Billa's arrest on March 5, 2008, the women of Billa's family - whom Devender calls "SIMI support militant ladies" -led by Billa's sister Huma Islahi and Maulana Naseeruddin's wife Tasneem Fatima had "attacked" the police station. Thirty women and children were rounded up in March 2008, including one with her seven-year-old daughter. Seven of them were students, 15 aged 19. Nine of the women were sent by the court for age determination tests to check if they were minors.

While most of the women were from Billa's family or his neighbours and there was nothing to link them to SIMI, the affidavit called it a "rare case in entire India where SIMI militant activists organised their lady activists and... assaulted police". Devender admitted that investigation records do not show these women as SIMI members. "This is as per my knowledge while working in the department and as per intelligence sources," he said. ■

*(The Indian Express)*

## **Nimesh Report :**

**- Pervez Iqbal Siddiqui**

The Samajwadi Party government in Uttar Pradesh has landed in a catch-22 situation over the Nimesh Commission report about terror attacks in court premises in UP in 2007. The Commission is believed to have held the arrest of Hakeem Tariq of Azamgarh and Khalid Mujahid of Jaunpur by the anti-terrorism squad (ATS) in serial court blasts as invalid. The problem however lies in the second half of the report which apparently suggests criminal proceedings against the ATS for the arrests.

Justice RD Nimesh Commission was constituted in March 2008 by the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) government to probe the arrest of Tariq and Khalid in September 23, 2007 serial blasts at district courts in Lucknow, Varanasi and Faizabad. In all, at least 15 persons were killed and scores of others critically wounded in these terror attacks.

The probe findings state that on December 22, 2007 the then additional director general of police (ADG) (ATS) Brij Lal held a press conference in Lucknow claiming a breakthrough in serial blasts probe. The ADG said two members of the banned Harkat-ul-Jehad-e-Islami (HuJI) had been arrested from Barabanki by the ATS a day before (i.e. on December 22, 2007)

for their alleged involvement in the blasts.

During the course of the probe, the Commission received representations from the family members of the arrested accused claiming that Hakeem Tariq Quasmi was picked up by the ATS on December 12, 2007 from near Mahmoodpur police check-post in Azamgarh while Khalid Mujahid was rounded up four days later- on December 16, 2007 from Mariyahu Bazar in Jaunpur and not as claimed by the agency.

Tariq's family submitted a copy of the FIR that they had lodged with the local police station in Azamgarh on December 14, 2007 about his kidnapping. The case was however registered as that of a missing person. They also produced documents of petition filed before the chief judicial magistrate (CJM) Azamgarh court on December 19, 2007 seeking directions for the police to trace Tariq. Khalid's family members also deposed before the commission with similar claims. They submitted a copy of the reply to an RTI query from the Jaunpur police about the Khalid's mysterious disappearance. The police reply signed

*(Continued to page 19)*



## Book Review

### The convert: A Tale of exile and extremism\*

-S.Salman Nadwi

The book under review is a biography of Margaret Marcus who became Maryam Jameelah after converting from Judaism to Islam in 1962. It is written by an experienced author who has to her credit a number of books including *In Extremism: The Life of Laura Riding* and *A Blue Hand: The Beats in India*. The book is written in a lively style, recounting the astonishing and mind-gripping story of Margaret Marcus' conversion to Islam and then her emigration to Lahore, Pakistan, in pursuit of a life as a Muslim according to the teachings of Islam.

This biography is based on Maryam Jameelah's letters to her parents and Mawlana Abu'l-A'la Mawdudi (d. 1979), her personal diaries as well as on Deborah Baker's interviews with Maryam and other individuals who were involved with her directly or indirectly. Deborah Baker came across a cache of Maryam's letters and diaries accidentally in the archives of the New York Public Library. This reviewer wonders why the author felt compelled to use the term 'extremism' in the title of the book. It seems that in the author's view Maryam Jameelah's dislike of the Western way of life and of her parents' blind support of the state of Israel and her subsequent conversion to Islam amounts to an acceptance of an extremist's way of life.

Maryam explains in the letters to her parents and in the diaries that her interest in Arab culture predated the founding of the

state of Israel and by 1948 she began reading deeply in Arab history, poetry, and writings. (p. 17) It is at this stage that she came across Muhammad Asad's *The Road to Mecca*. Asad's Jewish background and his subsequent conversion to Islam touched Maryam's heart. She was impressed immensely with the writings of Asad, especially his *Road to Mecca* and *Islam at the Crossroads*. In one of her letters, Maryam Jameelah reminds her mother of the fact that she did not allow her to borrow Asad's *The Road to Mecca* from Larchmont Public Library. However, Maryam was able to borrow the book and read it dozens of times. (p. 17) Maryam's deep interest in Arab culture, poetry and history and her sympathy to the Palestinian cause and dislike of her parents' and US support for Israel made her compare the 'sacred texts of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam for their teachings on the Hereafter'. (p. 137) She eventually came to the conclusion that of all the faiths, only Islam provides a clear understanding and assurance that to 'live a pious life would be justly rewarded'. (p. 138) Thus, finally in 1959 she went to the Islamic Propagation Centre of America in Brooklyn Heights in New York and accepted Islam at the hands of Shaykh Daoud Ahmad Faisal who gave her the new name, Maryam. (p.138) Her conversion to Islam hurt her parents immensely but was grudgingly accepted.(p.138)

After accepting Islam, she was able to get in touch with the then jailed leader of the Muslim Brotherhood Sayyid Qutb (d.

\*By Deborah Baker. Minneapolis, USA: Graywolf Press, 2011. Pp. 246. ISBN: 9781555975821.

1966) in Cairo for further guidance. Qutb advised her to write to the *jama'at-i-Islami* leader Mawlana Abu'l Ala Mawdudi, in Lahore, Pakistan. Thus, she entered in a long correspondence with the Mawlana beginning from 1962. Eventually, she expressed her desire to sever her links with the US permanently and to migrate to Pakistan so that she could live as a Muslim under the guidance of the Mawlana. Although the Mawlana explained to her the kind of life she will have in Pakistan which will be totally different from life in the US, she still preferred to live in Pakistan. Eventually she left the US and after a long journey via Egypt she reached Pakistan and settled in the house of the Mawlana with his family as Mawlana's 'adopted daughter'.

MaryamJameelah's abandonment of her parents and moving from the US to Pakistan to a fundamentally different environment must have weighed heavily on her mind and affected her mentally. This may explain why after living with the Mawdudi's family for some time she became involved in an unpleasant incident with one of Mawdudi's family members. (pp. 192-195) As a result of this she became ill and had to be admitted to a mental hospital for a while. (p. 195) After her recovery she restored good relations with Mawdudi and his family members but then she began to live separately in a small house nearby. Muhammad Yusuf Khan, a staunch worker of the *jama'at* already married with several children, was appointed to look after her needs. Yusuf Khan later married MaryamJameelah as a second wife. (pp. 155 and 191-192) She bore to Yusuf Khan several children. Yusuf Khan supported his new wife in her academic pursuits and writing on various aspects of Islam and

especially in her critical writings against the Orientalists.

What is important to note here is that in spite of going through difficult time in Pakistan away from her parents and the US, MaryamJameelah did not waver and remained steadfast and faithful to the path she had chosen. This is quite remarkable and shows her character. She drew her immense strength from the Qur'an in facing difficulties and remained faithful to the Islamic way of life as illustrated in the Qur'an.

Deborah Baker refers to the late General Zia-ul-Haq as a member of the *jama'at-i-Islami* (p. 200) which is not correct. General Zia has never been a member of the *Jama'at-i-Islami* or any political or religious party. Pakistani law does not allow army officers, of any rank, to be members of any political or religious party.

The author remarks that Maryam 'did not ask to read the manuscript before publication' and trusted her judgment and faithfulness. (p. 226) The reviewer feels that had Maryam read the manuscript before publication she would have corrected many of the author's assumptions or at least would have put them in a proper perspective.

The reviewer found the book remarkably free from typographical errors. However, he came across one error on p. 62, line 8 where '*Ilm al-Hadith* has been transcribed wrongly as 'Ulam al-Hadith'.

Overall, this is a well-written book, a gripping and fascinating account of MaryamJameelah's life journey and conversion to Islam. ■

*(The Muslim World Book Review)*

## Kasab, Mentors Have Done Greatest Disservice to Islam

-Zahur H. Zaidi

Ajmal Kasab's hanging was the prime news on television on November 21. He and his inglorious buddies ravaged Mumbai in 2008, killing 166 of my countrymen, including Hemant Karkare. I had the privilege of knowing Karkare personally. He was my senior in service. I felt a profound sense of satisfaction at the justice meted out to his killer.

Later, that day I received a message from a friend and batch-mate. It was short but stung painfully. It read, "Heartfelt condolences. Your brother Kasab has been done to death." It was meant to be a nasty joke. I know this friend bears no malice towards me. He is notorious to do such things. But this little SMS certainly got me thinking.

Yes. I am a follower of Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam. My religion is a religion of peace. But many of my contemporaries do not seem to agree with this contention. They see my faith as one of mindless bloodletting – a faith that was spread by the sword and whose proponents will not stop till the world becomes Islamic. They seem convinced that there is no room for a different view in Islam.

\* *The writer is an IPS officer posted as counsellor in the in the Embassy of Indian Jakarta, Indonesia.*

People, who kill innocent fellow human beings, in the name of my religion have turned the ideals of Islam on its head. People like you Ajmal Kasab!

Did it ever occur to you before you went on your blood bath that the Prophet of Islam never waged a single war except for the defence of his people and self? He was attacked several times but did he ever reciprocate similarly? No. Never! He was harassed and humiliated by Meccans for 13 long years. But he and his followers bore all that with exemplary patience and perseverance.

Does that make you wonder why? Because Islam sees human life as a gift of the Almighty. And hence, taking away even you own life is the worst of sins. Islam on the contrary believes in celebrating life.

I shudder when I see images of people like you strapping bombs on young children and leading them to religious congregation in order to maximise killings. Can you really claim to profess the religion of Muhammad? Is this what he preached?

In spite of the Prophet's victories in many defensive battles, the Quran refers to the Peace treaty of Hudaibiya  
(Continued to page 10)

## **Republic Day**

**- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi**

26th January 1950 is a rememberable day in the history of India. It assumes great significance and importance for all of us. This day the constitution of India was enforced. Indian constitution is considered the best one as compared to other constitutions of the world. It is a written and comprehensive document with 395 Articles (Now 404) and 12 Schedules. R.C. Majumdar says: "The constitution guarantees to all citizens freedom of speech and expression, the right to assemble peacefully and freedom of conscience and worship, subject to general considerations of public security and morality. All citizens, irrespective of religion, race, caste, sex and place of birth, shall enjoy equality before the law and no disability shall be imposed on them in any respect. "Untouchability" is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. No person shall be deprived of his life, property or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law." (An Advanced History of India, p.992)

The Republic Day is celebrated with gaiety and enthusiasm all over the country and especially in the capital, New Delhi where the celebrations start with the presidential address to the nation.

On this occasion all government buildings and educational institutions are decorated attractively. Flag unfurling ceremony is held in every school. Children from several schools take part in the parade. They present various cultural

programmes and showcase tableaux highlighting the rich cultural heritage of their state respectively.

India is the largest democracy in the world. India has been the cradle of a variety of civilizations, cultures and religions. It has a pluralistic society. It is known for values of peace, amity, brotherhood, fraternity, unity and integrity. It is the birth place of various icons like the Buddah, Mahavir, Guru Nanak, Mahatma Gandhi, Kabir, Jawaharlal Nehru, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar ' Chandra Vidya Sagar, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Rabindranath Tagore, Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani, Qazi Nazrul Islam, Swami Vivekananda, Netaji Subash Chandra Bose, Tipu Sultan, Maulana Hasrat Mohani, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Khan Abdul Gaffar khan, Maulana Muhammad Ali Jouhar, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Dr, Zakir Husain, Maulana S.Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi and the like. All these beacons taught lesson of brotherhood and fraternity in their respective period and time. They are no more today. But their instructions and messages still inspire us to lead a peaceful life on this land.

Being Indians, it is imperative for us to maintain its unity and integrity by fostering national integration and propagating the message of humanity throughout India. The constitution of the country teaches us the same message and it is the message of the Republic Day.

## Around the World

### **“Brightest Cities were Makkah, Madinah,” say Russian Astronauts**

Riyadh: Three Russian astronauts who came to visit the Prince Salman Science Oasis (PSSO) told Saudi students that while taking a picture of some beautiful cities from outer space, the brightest and beautiful cities they saw were Makkah and Madinah, specifically the spots in the centers of the two holy cities. These astronauts came as part of the Association of Space Explorers (ASE) program during their 25th Assembly in Riyadh. “When we are in outer space, we take photos during the day for good visibility and shot, but at night it is difficult to take pictures because you have to use a special technique. In spite of this, I managed to take many pictures of various cities at night. I was amazed to find that the cities of Makkah and Madinah outshone other cities around the world,” observed astronaut Anatoly Ivanishin during an interaction with the students. The four Russian astronauts who visited the Oasis are Andrey Borisenko, Alexander Samokutyaev, Anton Shkaplerov and their interpreter Boris Meshcherykov. PSSO is a non-profit organization for developing an interactive science center and is affiliated to the Riyadh Philanthropic Society for Science. ■

### **IBT to publish first English Qur’anic Encyclopedia**

Kuala Lumpur: The Kuala Lumpur-based Islamic Book Trust (IBT) announced that it will print the Integrated Encyclopedia of the Qur’an in English and help spread the message of Islam around the world. Haji P.K. Koya Kutty, executive secretary of the non-profit publishing house told Arab News, “This is the first Qur’anic encyclopedia in English in the world and the scholarly work is prepared entirely by Muslims. The encyclopedia will be produced as a joint venture between the Center for Islam and Science in Canada and the Society for Qur’anic Studies in Pakistan. Kutty said the encyclopedia will have references to a wide range of traditional Muslim sources including lexicons, exegeses, Hadith collections, biographical dictionaries, universal histories, works of jurisprudence, Prophetic biographies, and moral psychology dissertations. The Malaysian publishing house, IBT, was established in 1991 for the promotion of Islamic books and literature. ■

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