



# THE FRAGRANCE OF EAST

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# The Fragrance of East

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## Malice a Serious Evil

### S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

The view of life arising from prophetic teachings has equity and moderation as its two immutable bases. Speaking of the right-guided persons, the Qur'an says:

"And those who, when they spend, are neither prodigal nor grudging; and there is ever a firm station between the two."

(*Al-Furqan* : 67)

Again, the dominant characteristic of the followers of the Qur'an is stated to be their remarkable moderation:

"Thus we have appointed you a middle nation, that ye may be a witness against mankind, and that the messenger may be a witness against you." (*Al-Baqarah*: 143)

The Prophet himself afforded an illustrious example of complete and ennobling moderation. The distinguishing feature of Islam too, described as "the straight path" and "a right religion", is natural temperance and moderation and refraining from the aberrations of excess and extremism. Addressing the Prophet of Islam, says. God Almighty :

"Say: Lo! As for me, my Lord hath guided me unto a straight path, a right religion, the community of Abraham, the upright, who was no idolater."

(*Al-Anam*: 162) ■

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## Wisdom of Qur'an

"They are the ones who will be rewarded for their patience: lofty palaces will be granted to them, and they will be received with greeting and salutation. Therein they shall abide for ever: how good an abode, and how good a resting place!"

(Al-Qur'ân – 25:75-76)

These *ayaahs* deal with the rewards of patience. The word *cabr* (patience, fortitude) in the Arabic text is used in its most comprehensive sense. Various, it means to endure persecution at the hands of the enemies of Truth with courage and to bear whatever hardships come one's way while striving for the establishment of the true Faith of God.

It also means to remain steadfast against all fears and to refuse to succumb to enticements; to resolutely fulfil one's obligations in spite of Satan's temptations and one's own carnal self; to shun the unlawful and to remain within the bounds of the lawful set by God; to spurn all pleasures and benefits that might accrue from acts of sins, and to cheerfully put up with difficulties and losses in order to follow the Path of righteousness and virtue and to accept every trial and adversity that one might encounter.

In sum, this one word embraces a whole universe of meanings regarding true Faith, a truly religious approach to life, and good moral conduct inspired by religious Faith.

*Ghufrah* means a lofty building. It is generally translated as the 'upper chamber' which brings to mind a two-storey building. The loftiest buildings constructed here are mere caricatures of the palaces of Paradise. ■

## Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

Tamim al-Dari relates that Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) observed: "Al-Din is the name of sincerity and well-wishing." Upon this we said: "For whom?" He replied: "For Allah, His Book, His Messenger and for the leader and the general Muslims."

(Sahih Muslim)

*Nasiha* means sincerity and well-wishing. *Nasiha* for Allah implies that man's heart is cleansed from all impurities with regard to belief in Allah, i.e. one should believe in Him as the Creator and Master with all His Attributes and with an earnest desire to obey all His commands.

*Nasiha* for Allah's Book means that it should be sincerely believed as a revelation from the Lord and be read and understood with utmost zeal and enthusiasm.

*Nasiha* for the Messenger signifies that his Apostleship must be affirmed with perfect sincerity of heart, and whatever he has vouchsafed to humanity should be respected as the Will of God, and he should be respectfully followed in all his precepts and examples.

*Nasiha* for leaders implies that they should be respected, obeyed and given support in all those affairs which they conduct according to the Shari'ah. And if they deviate from the path of righteousness, they should be advised and admonished, and sincere efforts be made to bring them back to the right path.

*Nasiha* for general Muslims is that they should be advised in all matters concerning the good of this world as well as the hereafter.

*Nasiha* thus covers the whole gamut of religion as its scope is as wide as that of Islam. ■

## **Ayodhya Episode**

It was about 23 years ago on December 6, 1992 a frenzy mob demolished a historical mosque, a unique structure of Mughal architecture. The incident shook the very base of a pluralistic concept. State government had assured the Supreme Court that no damage would be caused to the mosque but unfortunately it could not keep up its promise and surrendered before the rowdy elements who had come prepared to pull the structure down.

Again on the order of the apex court the ambitious plan of getting a Mandir constructed on the ruins of the mosque was stalled. Efforts to settle the issue amicably between the two communities viz Hindus and Muslims could not bear any fruit and final decision was left to the judiciary. After prolonged arguments before the Allahabad High Court a judgment came dividing the disputed land into three parts. It was not acceptable so an appeal was filed in Supreme Court where the

case is still pending.

That the Ramjanambhoomi movement of Vishwa Hindu Parishad was more political than religious in nature was evident from the very beginnings in communal frenzy and bigotry. The demand of a Ram temple at the site where the Babri Masjid stood becomes more vocal when Parliamentary or State Assembly elections are in sight. The ferrying of Pink stones from Rajasthan to Ayodhya adds a new element of provocative divisive politics in UP which goes to polls in a little over a year's time. The responsibility of the state government to thwart any attempt of disturbing the communal harmony increases. Rumour mongering and such acts of "Stone Pujan" may raise the passion so strict watch on the situation is called for. ■

S.A.

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## The Prophet's Affection Towards Mankind

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

*Surely there has come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Hard upon him is what bothers you, and who is concerned for you and is affectionate and merciful towards the believers. If then, they turn away, say: "Sufficient unto me is Allah. There is no god but He. In Him I put my trust, and He is the Lord of the mighty throne."*

(al-Tawbah 9:128-129)

The overarching concept of mercy pervades the above account of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). Mercy consists in taking pity on someone, helping him, sharing his sufferings and striving to alleviate his misery. These are the qualities which characterise the conduct of every decent person. Allah is the Most Merciful of all those who show mercy. Allah has infused the virtue of kindness into human beings in varying degrees. The kindest person has been the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), as is evident from the above Qur'anic passage. He is hurt by the slightest discomfort experienced by any fellow Muslim. He does not approve of anything which may prove hard for them. His concern for them is genuine and broad in range. All

along he is worried about their welfare: His kindness towards fellow believers knows no bounds.

It is common knowledge that parents are affectionate towards their children. A mother's love for her child is proverbial. If one claims that one loves someone more than their mother does, one's claim is dismissed outright. Such a claim is not entertained and is rejected in that it smacks of hypocrisy and falsehood. Allah has infused love between parents and children. This filial love has been there since the beginning of the world. It is part of the law of nature. By the same token, our spiritual training programme has always been taken care of by Allah's messengers. Their love for mankind is far greater than that of parents for their children. It is beyond one's capacity to relate the immeasurable love which messengers have for the believing members of their respective communities. They share their sorrows and sufferings. Every slight discomfort for their followers pains these messengers. They are disturbed if even a single member of their community is in trouble. We cannot measure their overflowing concern for their fellow human beings.

The Qur'anic passage quoted above should give us some idea of the Prophet's affection and concern for his fellow Muslims. The same was practically demonstrated throughout his distinguished career in that he was anxious about their ultimate end and displayed the utmost sincerity and affection to them. What made him more sensitive to their cause was his descent from the same tribal origin. He knew well their suffering and shared it with them. Had he been from another tribe, culture or country, he would not have readily sensed their plight. It goes without saying that those with a common bond of fraternity share mutual sorrow. The closer the ties, the keener the realisation of the pain suffered by them. Otherwise, people living in the same locality turn indifferently to the problems staring them in the face. We know well that provinces and countries are very broad in size. People living in the same village often fail to learn about one another's misery. This is not, however, true of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). Being one of them he recognised their problems and felt disturbed at whatever tormented them. Out of this affection and concern for them he was pained by their every discomfort. Their suffering made him restless. He was always keen to ensure their welfare. His main concern was that all those around him should turn into sincere servants of

Allah and accordingly enjoy His mercy and forgiveness. Their negligence in matters of faith hurt him. He was averse to their disbelief lest it land them in Hellfire. He tried his level best to keep them away from Satan's spell. Rather, he instructed them all along to draw closer to Allah which would help them win His mercy.

He was immensely kind and affectionate towards believers. It is hard to measure the depth of his concern for them. It was much more intense than filial love for an only child. An instance in point was the Prophet's anxiety over the suffering of the disbelieving Makkan prisoners of war who had come to Madinah as invaders during the Battle of Badr. He felt restless on their count even while he prayed. It is on record that he offered prayers with total devotion. He derived immense pleasure and satisfaction from performing prayers. He would often summon his Companion, Bilal to recite the *adhan* which brought him much joy and tranquillity. This he did while he was engaged in the work of Islam, deliberating on the ways and means to spread the message of Islam and to elucidate the Qur'an and *hadith*. His request to Bilal for *adhan* bears out his dedication to Prayer. At the same time he had an overflowing love and affection for his community members.



It is related on the Prophet's authority: "At times while I lead prayers, I hear a child crying. My fervent desire is to offer a prolonged prayer, immersing myself in the recitation of the Qur'an and turning wholly to Allah by way of invoking Him and crying for Him, yet I stop myself from prolonging my prayer, thinking of that crying child. For I realise that his mother, saying prayers behind me in congregation will be in distress." It is worth clarifying that at that time women visited mosques to offer prayers, for it was a time marked by social harmony and moral excellence. Since the level of behaviour was good, women were allowed to visit mosques along with their male relatives such as their father, husband or children. The Prophet, while engaged in prayer, originally planned to make extensive supplications to Allah but the cries of the child led him to shorten his prayer and supplication. For this would enable the mother of the crying child to give succour. Being restless she could not concentrate on her prayer, thinking of her child crying. In view of her condition the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) concluded the prayer at the earliest opportunity. Those who appreciate the spirit of prayer will readily recognise the great sacrifice so made by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). For during prayer he turned totally indifferent

to his surroundings. While offering prayer he profusely cried and earnestly invoked Allah. Yet he cut short his prayer in view of a crying child so that his mother would not be disturbed. This reflects his caring attitude towards his community. On another occasion the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) used the following parable to illustrate his relationship with the believing community: "The parable indicating the relationship between you and me is as if someone lit up a fire, visible at a distance which attracts people. On rainy nights moths crowd around light in large numbers and are soon consumed by fire. Your example is of moths that surround fire. You are on the brink of falling into Hellfire. O men! You draw too close to Hellfire. I drag you by your waist in order to keep you away from Hellfire." This brings into sharp relief the Prophet's role regarding his community. His concern for the Hereafter is recorded thus in the Qur'an: *You are, as if going to kill yourself over their footsteps out of sorrow, for they do not believe in this discourse.* (al-Kahf 18:6)

Essentially, the Prophet was very keen that no member of his community should ever be consigned to Hell. Rather, he wanted that each one of them be admitted to Paradise. ■

## Who is Muhammad (PBUH)

- Khurram Murad

### 1. The Prophet Muhammad Today

One in every five persons on this earth firmly believes that the Prophet Muhammad is the last Messenger of God. He was a Muslim and there are more than 1.3 billion such Muslims today.

Not only individuals but entire countries take pride in declaring their allegiance to him. There are 54 such Muslim states today, ranging from those as large as Indonesia and Bangladesh, with populations of 200 and 125 million respectively, to those as tiny as the Maldives or Brunei with populations of 230,000 and 260,000. Even in non-Muslim countries, large Muslim populations constitute significant minorities; as much as 120 million in India and 20 million in China. Indeed within the last half century, Islam, the religion brought by the Prophet Muhammad, has become the second largest religion in most European countries, as also in America and Canada.

Black and white, red and yellow, followers of the Prophet Muhammad come from all human races. Whether in Asia or Europe, Africa or America, in every nook and cranny of this globe, you are sure to find Muslims. They live in the most advanced sprawling megalopolis as well as in the most primitive nomadic tent, village, hamlet, and even in the bush.

As now so always, down the centuries, across the planet, from end to end, billions and billions of men and women have lived all their lives, loving the

Prophet and trying to follow in his footsteps, as no one else has been so loved and followed. They have lived and died, believed and acted, married and raised families, worshipped and ruled, made war and peace, even eaten and dressed, walked and slept, just as he did or taught them to do.

Indeed, never in history has a man influenced mankind, even beyond his death, so deeply and so pervasively as he has. He brings light and peace to countless hearts and lives. They love him more dearly than their own selves. In him they find their greatest source of inspiration and guidance. He is the ultimate norm and the perfect example for them. Faith in him is their mainstay, and he is their chief source of support and comfort in all personal vicissitudes and tribulations. To him they also look to lead them through social and political turmoil. He has always inspired them to greater and greater heights of spiritual and moral upliftment and civilizational achievements. And still does.

In short, they believe that through him, a human like themselves, God has spoken to them, and guided him to live amongst them, setting an example and a model for all times to come. Even today he motivates and induces whole populations to yearn and strive to shape their private lives, politics and policies according to his teachings.

Who, then, is this man Muhammad?

## **2. Early Life in Makkah**

It was in the year 570, after Jesus, that Muhammad was born in Makkah, in what is now Saudi Arabia. Arabia, by all accounts, is the cradle of the human race. All the oldest human remains so far found come from the area of its location.

Hemmed in by red, black and brown volcanic hills about 80 kilometres to the east of the Red Sea, stands the city of Makkah. It was then a small merchant town on the ancient 'incense' route through which passed the great trade caravans between the south and north.

However, Makkah was, and remains, important for an altogether different reason. For here lies the Ka'bah, the 'first House' ever set up for mankind to worship their only God. More than 1,000 years before the Prophet Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem, his ancestor, the Prophet Abraham, aided by his elder son the Prophet Ishmael, raised its walls on very ancient foundations.

Close by the Ka 'bah lies the well called Zam Zam. Its origin, too, goes back to the Prophet Abraham's time. It was this well which sprang up miraculously to save the life of the infant Ishmael. In the words of the Bible:

And God heard the voice of the boy; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her: 'What ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. Arise, lift up the boy, and hold him in your hand; for I will make him a great nation. And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle

with water, and gave the boy a drink. And God was with the boy; and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. (Genesis 21: 17-20)

Or, as the Psalmist sings:

As they pass through the dry Valley of Baca,  
it becomes a place of springs;  
the early rain fills it with pools.  
(Psalms 84: 6)

Makkah never had, nor does it have now, any worldly inducement to offer for settlement. It is a barren, desolate place, where even grass does not grow! There were springs and wells of abundant water nearby in Taif, and a short distance away in Madinah. But it was the first House of God, architecturally an unremarkable cube, but spiritually and civilizationally the most remarkable fountain and spring of life - which made it supremely important, a place of attraction for people from all over the world. Forever, therefore, Makkah has been a great centre of pilgrimage.

By the time Muhammad was born, the Ka 'bah's latest guardians, the tribe of Quraysh, had more than 300 idols installed in and around the Ka 'bah to be worshipped as lords, gods and intercessors besides the One God. Muhammad was a direct descendant of the Prophet Abraham through the Prophet Ishmael. He belonged to the financially poor but politically strong and noble clan of Banu Hashim from the tribe of Quraysh. As guardians of the Ka 'bah, the House of God and the centre of pilgrimage for all Arabia, the Quraysh ranked higher in dignity and power than any other tribe. Hashim held the high office of levying taxes

and providing the pilgrims with food and water.

Muhammad was born an orphan. His father, Abdullah, died before he was born. His mother, Aminah, too, passed away when he was only six years old. Doubly an orphan, his grandfather, Abd al-Muttalib, took him into his care. Only two years later, however, the orphaned boy was bereaved of his grandfather as well, leaving him in the care of his uncle, Abu Talib.

After his birth, the infant child was sent to the desert to be suckled and weaned and to spend part of his childhood among one of the Bedouin tribes, Bani Sad ibn Bakr, who live in the southeast of Makkah. This was the usual custom of all the great families in Makkah.

As Muhammad grew up, to earn his livelihood he pastured sheep and goats, as have done most prophets. His uncle and guardian, Abu Talib, also took him along with him on his travels with the trade caravans to greater Syria. He, thus, gained experience in trading. Because of his great honesty and diligence and the business acumen he showed in trading, he was soon being sought after to take charge of other people's merchandise, i.e. for those who could not travel themselves, and to trade on their behalf.

At the age of 25, Muhammad married a lady named Khadijah. A widow, Khadijah was 15 years older than Muhammad. She was a rich merchant of Makkah, and Muhammad had managed some of her trade affairs. It was she who proposed marriage. Khadijah remained Muhammad's wife and his closest friend

and companion all her life till her death 25 years later. She bore him six children, of whom four daughters survived.

Until he was 40, Muhammad led a very uneventful life, showing no signs of the Prophet in the making that he was suddenly to be. What set him apart from his compatriots was his absolute truthfulness, trustworthiness and integrity, his sense of justice and compassion for the poor, oppressed and downtrodden, as well as his total refusal to worship any idol or do anything immoral. He was popularly acclaimed for these qualities. *Al-Amin*, the Trustworthy, the Honest, *al-Sadiq*, the Truthful, were the titles on everybody's lips for Muhammad, which itself means the Praised One.

At a very young age, Muhammad enthusiastically joined a pact of chivalry for the establishment of justice and the protection of the weak and the oppressed made by certain chiefs of the Quraysh. He took part in the Oath when they all vowed 'that henceforth they would stand together as one man on the side of the oppressed against the oppressor until justice was done, whether the oppressed were a man of the Quraysh or one who had come from abroad.'

In later years, at Madinah, Muhammad used to say: 'I was present in the house of Abd Allah ibn Jud'an at so excellent a pact that I would not exchange my part in it for a herd of red camels, and if now, in Islam, I were summoned to a similar pact, I would gladly respond.'

A testimony to Muhammad's character was given by his wife Khadijah

as she comforted him at the time when the first Revelation came to him. He said later: 'I fear for my life.' She replied: 'By no means! I swear by God that God will never lose you. You join ties of relationship, you speak the truth, you bear people's burdens, you earn for the poor, you entertain guests, and you help against the vicissitudes which affect people's rights.' Muhammad's wisdom was also acknowledged by all. Once, while repairing the Ka 'bah, various clans of the Quraysh disputed violently as to who should have the honour of placing the Black Stone in its place. As they were about to unsheathe their swords and go to war, they made the Prophet their arbitrator and he brought them peace. He placed the Black Stone on his cloak and asked all the clan chiefs to hold its edges and raise it, and then he placed the Black Stone in its appointed spot with his own hands.

### **3. The Prophet at Makkah**

Muhammad was not only a wise, just, compassionate, honoured and respected man, but also a profoundly contemplative and spiritual person. As he approached the age of 40, increasingly he came to spend more and more of his time in retreat, in contemplation, worship, prayer, in the Cave of Hira in Jabal al-Nur, sometimes for several days at a time.

It was here that one night before dawn, in the last part of the month of Ramadan, the holy month of fasting for Muslims, the Angel Gabriel appeared before him in the form of a man, and said to him: 'Read', and the Prophet said: 'I am not a reader.' Thereupon, as he himself told it, 'the Angel Jibrail overwhelmed me

in his embrace until I reached the limit of my endurance. Then he returned me and said: 'Read.' Again I said: 'I am not a reader.' Thrice the same thing happened. The third time after releasing me from his embrace, the Angel finally said:

Read in the name of your Lord Who has created. He has created man from a clot of blood. Read, and your Lord is the Most Bountiful: He who has taught by the pen, taught man what he knew not. (al- 'Alaq 96: 1-5)

He recited these words after the Angel. And, then, the Angel said to him: 'You are the Messenger of God.'

Overawed by the unique experience of the Divine and overwhelmed by the huge burden of truth and message, he came out of the cave his body trembling and his heart quaking. The Prophet returned home. 'Cover me! Cover me!', he said to his wife Khadijah. She quickly covered him with a cloak. Wrapped in the cloak, he told her what had happened in the Cave of Hira, how he had come to be appointed as God's Messenger.

The event in Hira, as narrated by Muhammad, was the supreme and most crucial event of his life. All that happened later has been happening over the centuries, and all the positions that he enjoys in the eyes of his followers, or his detractors, hinges on the veracity, truthfulness, authenticity and nature of this event in Hira.

Yet the only thing to support his claim in this respect was and remains his own word. Was he truly a Messenger of

God? Was what he saw real and true? Or, was it an hallucination? Was he a man possessed? Did he just compose in words as poets do, the ideas he found in his heart?

These questions are raised today, as they were raised by his compatriots then. Of these his wife of 15 years was to be the first judge. She knew him too well to doubt even for a moment that he could say anything but the truth. She also knew his character. So, she believed in him without a moment's hesitation.

As with his wife Khadijah, so his closest friend Abu Bakr, his adopted son Zayd, his cousin Ali who lived with him, in short all who knew the Prophet most intimately, believed in his truthfulness most spontaneously.

Khadijah took the Prophet to her cousin Waraqah, who had converted to Christianity, and acquired great learning in Christian Scriptures. Both the Jews and Christians had been expecting the coming of the last Prophet as foretold in their Scriptures. Had not Moses just before he died, been told: 'I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren; and I will put my words in his mouth' (Deuteronomy 18: 18)? Who could be the brethren of the sons of Israel except the sons of Ishmael?

Who could be the mysterious Shiloh but the Prophet Muhammad, about whom Jacob prophesied immediately before his death, that to him would be transferred the Divine mission in 'the latter days': 'And Jacob called his sons and said, gather yourselves together, that I may tell

you that which shall befall you in the last days ... The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him the gathering of the people be.' (Genesis 49: 1, 10)

And, whom did Jesus mean other than Muhammad when he said: 'If I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you ... he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak' (John 16: 7-14)?

Waraqah therefore had no doubts that the last Prophet had come; so, he, too, believed in him.

But most of the people of Makkah who had acclaimed him as the Trustworthy (Al-Amin) and the Truthful (Al-Sadiq) could not bring themselves to believe in him. Nor could the Jews and Christians who had for so long been living in expectation of his arrival. Not that they doubted his truthfulness or integrity. But they were not prepared to turn their whole established way of life upside down by submitting to his simple but radical message:

When I recite the Qur'an, I find the following clear instructions: God is He who has created you, and the heavens and the earth, He is your only Lord and Master. Surrender your beings and your lives totally to Him alone, and worship and serve no one but Him. Let God be the only God.

The words I speak, He places in my mouth, I speak on His authority. Obey me and forsake all false claimants to human obedience. Everything in the heavens and on earth belongs to God; no

man has a right to be master of another man, to spread oppression and corruption on earth. An eternal life beyond awaits you; where you will meet God face to face, and your life will be judged; for that you must prepare.

This simple message shook the very foundations of the Makkah society as well as the seventh-century world. That world, as today, lived under the yoke of many false gods: kings and emperors, priests and monks, feudal lords and rich businessmen, soothsayers and spellbinders who claimed to know what others knew not - all lorded over man. Not only that: man-made gods of their own desires, their tribal loyalties, their ancestors, and the powers of nature, like the nations, cultures, science and technology today all lorded over man.

The Prophet's message challenged them all, exposed them all, threatened them all. His immediate opponents in Makkah could do no better than brand him unconvincingly as a liar, a poet, a soothsayer, a man possessed. But how could he who was illiterate, he who had never composed a single verse, he who had shown no inclination to lead men, suddenly, have words flowing from his lips, so full of wisdom and light, morally so uplifting, specifically so enlivening, so beautiful and powerful, that they began to change the hearts and minds and lives of the hearers? His detractors and opponents had no answer. When challenged to produce anything even remotely similar to the words Muhammad claimed he was receiving from God, they could not match God's words.

First privately, then publicly, the Prophet continued to proclaim his Message. He himself had an intense, living relationship with God, totally committed to the Message and mission entrusted to him. Slowly and gradually, people came forward and embraced Islam. They came from all walks of life - chiefs and slaves, businessmen and artisans, men and women - most of them young.

Some simply heard the Qur'an, and that was enough to transform them. Some saw the Prophet, and were immediately captivated by the light of mercy, generosity and humanity that was visible in his manners and morals, in his words and works, and in his face too.

So also the opposition continued to harden and sharpen. It grew furious and ferocious. Those who joined the Prophet as also the Prophet himself were tortured in innumerable ways: they were mocked, abused, beaten, flogged, imprisoned, and boycotted. Some were subjected to much more inhuman tortures: made to lie on burning coal fires until the melting body fat extinguished them, or were dragged over burning sand and rocks. Yet such was the strength of their faith that none of them gave it up in the face of such trials and tribulations.

However, as the persecutions became unbearable, the Prophet said to them: 'If you go to Abyssinia, you will find there a king, a Christian, under whom no one suffers wrong.' About 80 of his followers, therefore, forsook their homes and emigrated to Abyssinia, where the Christian king gave them full protection despite the pleadings and machinations

of the emissaries sent by the Quraysh chiefs. This was the first emigration of Islam.

All the while, the Prophet and his Companions continued to nourish their souls and intellects and strengthen their character and resolve for the great task that lay ahead. They met regularly, especially at a house near the Ka 'bah called Dar al-Arqam, to read and study the Qur'an, to worship and pray, and to forge the ties of brotherhood.

Ten years passed, but the people of Makkah would not give their allegiance to the Prophet's Message nor showed any signs of mitigating their persecution. At the same time, the Prophet lost his closest Companions and his wife Khadijah, as also his uncle Abu Talib, his chief protector in the tribal world of Makkah.

The Prophet now decided to carry his Message to the people of the nearby town of Taif, known for its wealth. In Taif, too, the tribal leaders mocked and ridiculed him and rejected his Message. They also stirred up their slaves and the street urchins to insult him, mock him, and throw stones at him. Thus he was stoned until he bled and was driven out of Taif. And yet when his Companion, Zayd, requested him to curse the people of Taif, and when God placed at his command the Angel of Mountains to crush the valley of Taif if he so wished, he only prayed for their being guided. Such was the mercy and compassion of the one who is the 'mercy for all the worlds'.

The Taif episode was the hardest moment in the Prophet's life. It signaled

the advent of a new era for him when his mission was to find a secure base, and was to ascend higher and higher in the coming days until the end of time.

To mark that, one night the Prophet was awakened and taken, in the company of the Angel Gabriel, first to Jerusalem. There he was met by all the Prophets, who gathered together behind him as he prayed on the rock in the centre of the site of the Temple, the spot where the Dome of the Rock stands today. From the rock, led by the Archangel, he ascended through the seven heavens and beyond. Thus he saw whatever God made him see, the heavenly worlds which no human eye can see, and which were the focus of his Message and mission.

During this journey, the five daily Prayers were ordained for his people. Furthermore, it was then that the Prophet was given the charter for the new society and state soon to be born, which, too, was prophesied and which is described in Surah al-Isra' (Chapter 17) of the Qur'an.

#### **4. The Prophet at Madinah**

The Message that Makkah and Taif rejected, found responsive hearts in Yathrib, a small oasis about 400 kilometres to the north of Makkah. Now known as Madinatun Nabi, the city of the Prophet, or Madinah Munawwara, the radiant city, it was destined to be the centre of the Divine light that was to spread to all parts of the world for all times to come.

In quick succession, the Prophet suffered the terrible loss of Khadijah, his intimate and beloved companion for 25 years, and of Abu Talib, his guardian and



protector against the bloodthirsty Makkan foes, and encountered the worst ever rejection, humiliation and persecution at nearby Taif. As the Prophet reached the lowest point in his vocation, God brought him comfort and solace. On the one hand, spiritually, He took him during the Night of the Ascension to the highest of highs, realities and divinities, face to face with the Unseen. And on the other, materially, he opened the hearts of the people of Yathrib to the Message and mission of Muhammad.

Soon after Muhammad's return from Taif and the Night Journey, at the time of the Pilgrimage, six men from Yathrib embraced Islam. They delivered the Message of Islam to as many as they could, and at the time of the next Pilgrimage in the year 621 CE, 12 persons came. They pledged themselves to the Prophet, that they would make no god beside God, that they would neither steal nor commit fornication, nor slay their infants, nor utter slanders, nor disobey him in that which is right. The Prophet said: 'If you fulfil this pledge, then Paradise is yours.' This time the Prophet sent Musab ibn 'Umayr with them to teach them the Qur'an and Islam and to spread the Message of Islam.

More and more people over the course of a year - tribal leaders, men and women - in Yathrib became Muslims. At the time of the next Pilgrimage, they decided to send a delegation to the Prophet, make a pledge to him, and invite him and all Muslims in Makkah to Yathrib as a sanctuary and as a base for spreading the Divine Message of Islam.

In all 73 men and two women came. They met the Prophet at 'Aqabah. They pledged to protect the Prophet as they would protect their own women and children, and to fight against all men, red and black, even if their nobles were killed and they suffered the loss of all their possessions. When asked what would be theirs if they fulfilled their pledge, the Prophet said: 'Paradise'. Thus, the beginning was made, the foundations of the Islamic society, state and civilization were set.

The road was now open for the persecuted and tortured followers of the Prophet to come to the House of Islam, that was to be Madinah. He, therefore, instructed them to emigrate, and gradually most of them found their way to Yathrib.

Their Makkan foes could not bear to see the Muslims living in peace. They knew the power of the Prophet's Message, they knew the strength of those dedicated believers who cared nothing for the age-old Arab customs and ties of kinship, and who if they had to would fight for their faith. The Makkans sensed the danger that the Muslims' presence in Madinah posed for their northern trade caravan routes. They saw no other way to stop all this but to kill the Prophet.

Hence they hatched a conspiracy: one strong and well-connected young man was to be nominated by each clan, and all of them were to pounce upon and kill the Prophet one morning as he came out of his house, so that his blood would be on all the clans' hands. Thus, the Prophet's clan would have to accept blood-money in place of revenge.

Informed of the plot by the Angel Gabriel, and instructed to leave Makkah for Madinah the Prophet went to Abu Bakr's house to finalize the travel arrangements. Abu Bakr was overjoyed at having been chosen for the honour and blessing of being the Prophet's Companion on this blessed and momentous, sacred and epoch-making journey. He offered his she-camel to the Prophet, but the Prophet insisted on paying its price.

On the fateful night, as darkness fell, the youths selected by the Quraysh leaders to kill the Prophet surrounded his house. They decided to pounce on him when he came out of his house for the dawn Prayers.

Meanwhile, the Prophet handed over all the money left by the Makkans with him for safe keeping to Ali. Ali offered to lie in the Prophet's bed. The Prophet slipped out of his house, threw a little dust in their direction, and walked past his enemies, whose eyes were still on the house.

He met Abu Bakr at his house, and they both travelled to a nearby cave, the Jabal Thur. When the Quraysh realized that the Prophet had evaded them, they were furious. They looked for him everywhere and on all roads; they also offered a reward of 100 she-camels for anybody who would bring them the Prophet, dead or alive.

A tribal chief, Suraqa, sighted the Prophet and followed him, hoping to earn the reward. The Prophet, with bloodthirsty foes in pursuit and an uncertain future ahead of him in Madinah, told Suraqa: 'A day will soon come when Kisra's golden

hand bracelet will be in Suraqa's hands.' Thereafter, Suraqa retreated, and the Prophet proceeded towards Madinah.

This was Hijrah, the emigration - a small distance in space, a mighty leap in history, an event that was to become a threshold in the shaping of the Islamic Ummah. This is why the Muslims date their calendar from Hijrah, and not from Hira or from the birth of the Prophet.

In Qubah, 10 kilometres outside Madinah, the Prophet made his first sojourn. Here he built the first mosque. Here he also made his first public address: 'Spread peace among yourselves, give away food to the needy, pray while people sleep and you enter Paradise, the house of peace.'

Three days later, the Prophet entered Madinah. Men, women, children, the entire populace came out on the streets and jubilantly welcomed him. Never was there a day of greater rejoicing and happiness. 'Come is the Prophet! Come is the Prophet!', sang the little children.

The first thing the Prophet did after arriving in Madinah was to weld the Emigrants (called Muhajirs) and the hosts, called the Helpers (or Ansar) into one brotherhood. Still today this brotherhood remains the hallmark of the Muslims. One person from the Emigrants was made the brother of one from amongst the Helpers. The Helpers offered to share equally all that they possessed with the Emigrants.

So the Muslims were forged into a close-knit community of faith and brotherhood, and the structure of their

society and polity was being built. The first structure was also raised. This was the Mosque, or Masjid, the building consecrated to the worship of One God called Masjid al-Nabawi, the Prophet's Mosque. Since then the Masjid has also remained the hallmark of the Muslims' collective and social life, the convenient space for the integration of the religious and political dimensions of Islam, a source of identification, a witness to Muslim existence.

At the same time, steps were taken and the required institutions built to integrate the entire social life around the centre and pivot of the worship of One God. For this purpose, five daily Prayers in congregation were established.

Ramadan, fasting every day from dawn to sunset for an entire month, was also prescribed. Similarly, to establish 'giving' as the way of life, zakat, a percentage of one's wealth to be given in the way of God, was made obligatory.

As long as there was no different instruction from God, the Muslims followed the practices observed by the Jews and Christians. Hence, they used to pray with their faces turned towards Jerusalem. But soon this direction to which the Muslims faced in Prayer was changed from Jerusalem to Makkah. This historic episode signaled the formation of a new Muslim community, charged with Divine trust and the mission of God's guidance, replacing the earlier Jews and Christians, and following the most ancient message of Abraham, turning towards the most ancient House of God, built by him.

## **5. Attacks by the Makkans**

The Prophet, after arriving in Madinah, first formed an alliance with the Jews. Next, he approached all the nearby tribes and tried to persuade them to make an alliance or at least enter into a no-war pact. Many did. Thus the small group evicted from Makkah assumed strategic importance.

The Makkans who had earlier planned to kill the Prophet, were now determined to annihilate this nascent community of Islam. Having failed in all other ways they decided on a military solution.

A heavily armed Makkan force marched towards Madinah in the second year after Hijrah, on the pretext of protecting their trade caravan. The Prophet, despite his community's small number and lack of arms, decided to face their threat boldly. On the 17th of Ramadan, at Badr, the two forces met and fought a battle in which 313 Muslims defeated the 1,000- strong Makkan army.

Seventy of the Makkan chiefs who had been most active and vehement in persecuting the Muslims were killed; many others were taken prisoner, later to be released for ransom. For the first time, prisoners of war were treated humanely and kindly; they were fed and housed in the same way as their captors ate and lived.

In the third year after Hijrah, a 3,000-strong Makkan force again marched on Madinah, both to avenge the defeat at Badr and to make another attempt to

defeat the Muslims; 700 of them were mailed and 200 mounted. The Muslims numbered only 700. The two sides met just outside Madinah near the Uhud Mountain. The initial Muslim victory was, however, reversed; the Muslim contingent posted to protect the rear, violated the Prophet's instructions and abandoned its position. The Quraysh attacked from behind, and victory was turned into defeat, resulting in the deaths of about 65 Muslims. The Makkans, however, failed to pursue their advantage and clinch victory.

The Makkans now planned to make a final assault on Madinah to settle the matter once and for all. All Bedouin tribes, Jews, and hypocrites within Madinah joined forces with them. In the fifth year after Hijrah, 24,000 of them advanced on Madinah. It was impossible to fight them on the open battlefield, or defend Madinah which was without walls. The Muslims therefore defended themselves by digging ditches all round Madinah. After laying siege to Madinah for 25 days, due to inner dissension, lack of supplies, cold weather and high winds, the Makkan army was forced to withdraw. This was the turning point in the history of confrontation with the Makkans. Madinah was never to be attacked again.

From the beginning, the Jews were given full rights of citizenship, yet they still committed acts of treason and treachery. Some had to be expelled; some were killed as a result of judgements given by an arbitrator appointed by them. However, subsequent generations of Jews were never held responsible for the misdeeds of the Jews of Madinah, as they were in

Christendom for 2,000 years, for the crucifixion of Jesus. Instead, the Muslims always treated them justly and kindly.

The next year, the sixth after Hijrah, the Prophet and 1,400 Companions journeyed to Makkah to perform umrah, the lesser Pilgrimage, in accordance with several traditions of the time. They were unarmed. The Quraysh chiefs, against all established and accepted traditions, refused them admission. However, the Quraysh were now so low in morale and strength that they had to sign a peace treaty with the Prophet, the Hdaybiyah Treaty.

Though the terms appeared highly unfavourable, even humiliating, for the Muslims, they made tremendous gains by virtue of this Treaty. They, who were driven out of Makkah and attacked thrice, were now recognized as an equal force, to be treated respectfully, taken seriously. Peace provided an opportunity for the wavering and the neutral, even the hostile, to witness Islam at first hand, and many sensed the imminent victory of Islam. The result was that many Makkans and Arab tribes either embraced Islam or made peace with the Prophet.

As soon as the Hdaybiyah Treaty was signed, the Prophet sent letters to various neighbouring Arab and non-Arab rulers, including Chosroes of Iran and Heraclitus of the Byzantine Empire. He invited them to Islam, and assured them that he did not covet their kingdoms or riches. They could retain both, but only if they surrendered themselves to serve and worship the One God.

The Quraysh, however, soon broke the Treaty of Hdaybiyah. It was, thus, time to deal with their continuing hostility. The Prophet marched to Makkah, and captured the town. The fall of Makkah witnessed unparalleled acts of mercy, forgiveness and generosity. Not a single drop of blood was shed. Everybody who remained indoors was granted security of life and property. The Prophet forgave all who had been his bitterest foes all his life, who had persecuted him and planned to kill him, who had driven him out of Makkah, and who had marched thrice to Madinah to defeat the Muslims.

The neighbouring Byzantine Empire now prepared to attack and destroy the Muslim community in Madinah. However, when the Prophet marched to Tabuk on the northern border, his determination, courage and timely response made the enemy lose heart and withdraw.

## **6. Society Building**

Throughout those years, when the Prophet was surrounded by hostile forces and ultimately triumphed over them, he continued to purify the souls and uplift the morals of his followers and lay the foundations of a just and compassionate family, society and state. His mission was now complete: he had created a new man, and changed the lives of multitudes of men and women by bringing them in total surrender to their Creator. He had created a new society: one based on justice. In his own life example, and in the Qur'an, mankind was given the light and way of a godly life.

It is remarkable that this entire epoch-making revolution which transformed not only Arabia but all of mankind for all time to come and which heralded the birth of the most brilliant civilization in the world cost no more than 750 lives, mostly opponents, in the various battles. Yet the Prophet is sometimes maligned as a man of violence by those who have exterminated thousands of people in pursuit of their civilizational ideals.

The Prophet performed his only Hajj in the tenth year after migration to Madinah. In the Plain of Arafat, he gave a sermon of un surpassable beauty and lasting value: 'No man has any right to lord over other men; all men are equal, whatever their origin, colour or nationality.'

A few months later, in the eleventh year after Hijrah, the Prophet Muhammad died. He was buried in the house in which he had lived in Madinah.

The Prophet possessed a character of exquisite beauty and charm. He was merciful, kind and compassionate. He loved children and taught kindness to animals. He spoke softly, never abused anyone, forgave even his worst enemies. He lived a very simple life. He repaired his own shoes and clothes. He lived frugally, sometimes for days no food was cooked in his household.

Such is Muhammad. According to every standard by which human greatness can be measured he was matchless; no man was ever greater! ■

## The Prophetic Way of Edification and Predication

- S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi

On getting assigned the office of Prophecy by the Lord of the worlds, the Prophet Mohammad (SAW) got, ipso facto conferred upon the status of being the greatest leader of the entire mankind in the widest sphere of life. Its tenure, too, got extended up to the Day of Resurrection. He (SAW) got thus placed on the most elevated pedestal in the history of mankind. But, that apart, what in effect took place was that the emancipation of man from the slough and the retrogression he had fallen in. That is what was direly needed then. At the time of his coming to the world, the entire Arab and non-Arab world had reached to such a state of moral depravity, cruelty and tyranny as had made the identity of man qua man all but non-existent. The man was then, as it were, on the verge of forfeiting itself the right of being identified as man. Such was the state of affairs when the Mercy of Allah Almighty had an ebullition and it got manifested in the form and persona of the Prophet (SAW). He was entrusted, by means of the Divine Revelation, with the responsibility of bringing the humanity back to its position of humanness which he (SAW) fulfilled to the peak of perfection. Besides being a great Prophet, he (SAW) was also a great instructor and mentor and his style of teaching and

training was in accordance with the following directives from Allah Almighty:

(Call them unto the way of thy Lord with Wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with them with that which is best.)

And:

(And who is better in speech than he who summoneth Unto Allah, and worketh righteously, and saith: verily I am one of the Muslims.)

It was, therefore, as an effect thereof that he had this particularity attained which is described by Allah thus:

(... then behold he between whom and thee there was enmity, will be as though he was a warm friend. And none attaineth that except those who are patient; and none attaineth that except the owner of mighty good fortune,)

And, so, as a result of his prudent way of conveying the message and sympathetic exhortation: the foes turned into friends. At the same time, however, the fortitude and endurance that he (SAW) had to employ, for having taken to this course of action, was also exceptional. That was something that only he (SAW) could do, owing to

exclusive Grace of Allah Almighty only. Thus it is that the incidents of reform and exhortation are found galore in books on Seerat. The spirit of love and endearment is found at work, out and out, in these incidents. One incident of this kind reported in books of Traditions is quoted here for instance: A Bedouin, finding the ground in the mosque unpaved, got to pass water therein. The Muslims, on seeing him doing so, rushed towards him to give him a dressing down. Seeing that, the Prophet (SAW) stopped them; and having called that Bedouin close to him, exhorted him politely saying that it was a place of worship and, so, passing water therein was improper. Neither he (SAW) got angry, nor he fretted and fumed. Instead, he simply exhorted him politely and quietly and said to the people around: "Having the place washed with water get it cleaned of the filth."

There is another incident of teaching and exhorting in the same manner: Someone sought some pecuniary help from him. He (SAW) had then nothing with him to give him. He (SAW) asked to be excused. But, that man did not refrain. He kept on asking for the help and, getting hold of the mantle that the Prophet (SAW) had on, he pulled it so hard as it left bruises on his neck. Still he kept pulling it on till he had it entangled in thorns. The Prophet (SAW) was then holding the position of the ruler of the community. He could

have awarded him punishment. But, he (SAW) kept on saying politely only that he was having nothing with him at the moment; or else he would have certainly given him what he wanted. Financially, at personal level, it was exactly the case with him. He had often nothing with him to fulfill the need; had to starve even, sometimes. Sometimes, he (SAW) had to be content with only a few pieces of dates.

On a similar occasion of this kind, a person seeking aid from him said to him (SAW): "You people are misers." He (SAW) replied in a polite tone: "I am not a miser. But, I have nothing to part with." He (SAW) did not get angry then and gave him a reply in a very soft tone. Generally, he (SAW) was so magnanimous that there would always be a stream of guests coming in. On the platform outside his house, there were always the Ashab-e-Suffah (the people of platform) swarmed. Arrangement for their board had to be made by him (SAW) only. It was not infrequent that the situation would come to a pass when there was no alternative but to starve.

Whenever he (SAW) delivered a sermon and someone had to be admonished for some misdemeanor, he (SAW) would not address him by name to admonish him. He would, instead, say:

(Why are there some people who act in such-and-such manner?)

Allah Almighty had chosen him (SAW) to be assigned the most important task of educating and edifying the people. Hence, He says:

(He it is Who hath raised amidst the unlettered ones an apostle from among themselves, rehearsing Unto them His revelations and purifying them and teaching them the Book and Wisdom, though they have been aforetime in error manifest.)

Among the characteristics of the Prophet (SAW), purification, that is bringing reform and improvement in the morals and manners of the people, was a special one. Regarding it, Allamah Syed Sulaiman Nadwi writes in "Seerat-un-Nabi" Vol. VI, (pp. 5-6) as follows:

"The holy Quran has, at various places, stated defining the Prophet (SAW) that:

(... purifying them and teaching them the Book and Wisdom).

In this verse, these two words are remarkable: One, Tazkiah (purification) and the other, Hikmat (wisdom).

1. Literally Tazkiah means: to purge, to purify, to cleanse, to have the dirt and filth removed from. The holy Quran has used this term in the sense of having the human soul cleansed and purged of all kinds of impurities and pollutions. That is to say that, having the rust that gets accumulated on the mirror, as it were, of the human soul removed,

to have it burnished and brightened. The Sura Ash-Shams contains the following:

(By the soul and Him Who proportioned it, And inspired it with the wickedness thereof and the piety thereof, And inspired it with the wickedness thereof and the piety thereof, And inspired it with the wickedness thereof and the piety thereof, And inspired it with the wickedness thereof and the piety thereof,)

2. The second term is 'Hikmat', This word in the holy Quran has been used to mean, on the one hand, that knowledge and enlightenment which is vested in the Prophet's heart in the form of Divine Refulgence whose symptoms and manifestations do appear sometimes in the form of expedients and mysteries and Sometimes in the form of rituals and directives coming out of the mouth of the Prophet (SAW). This word is applied, at the same time, to those practical impacts and outcomes of that knowledge and enlightenment, the major portion of which comprises moral teachings. At two places in Quran it is elucidated as to what are the things which are included in this second sense of the word 'Hikmat', In the Surah Bani Israil, after having mentioned Tauheed, obedience to parents, exhortation about rendering help to relatives and the destitute, interdiction of frugality, misery, infanticide, debauchery, killing the innocent and oppression of the orphans, strict orders are given to fulfill the promise, not to short weigh or short measure, and not to adopt a



swashbuckling gait while walking. At the end of the above, the declamation is:

(That is Part of that wisdom which thy Lord hath revealed unto thee.)

In the Surah Luqman, it is said:

(And assuredly We vouchsafed unto Luqman Wisdom, saying: give thanks unto Allah.)

Thereafter, further elucidation has been made of these matters of wisdom; namely: Do not hold anyone/anything partner to God. Comport yourselves with kindness while dealing with your parents. Do offer Namaz: Exhort the people to do what is good. Ask them to refrain from what is bad. Show your perseverance and steadfastness on occasions of adversities. Do not be conceited. Do not strut while walking on earth. Keep the volume low of your voice while speaking. These verses make it evident that according to Quranic terminology all those instinctive virtues which are acknowledged by all peoples and persuasions as being instinctively the virtues and which can be called, to use another terminology, morals are given the nomenclature of 'Wisdom'."

Hazrat Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Hasani Nadwi (RAA) writes as follows:

"The holy Quran has described three qualities that the Prophet (SAW) had. They were:

1. Reciting the verses;
2. Purification; and 3. Imparting education of the Book and the Wisdom.

Among these qualities of the Prophet (SAW), the main one is his quality of carrying out the job of 'purification'. It means that he (SAW) did not remain content with only having the verses recited and explained. But, he had the people tinted with the tint of that recitation and teaching; having this book and its teachings passed through their ears and brains and having their hearts and souls resplendent with them, he (SAW) gets them emanated from their limbs and organs. It is this very quality that makes him stand out among all the preachers and preceptors of the world. His distinction is that in addition to being a preacher and teacher, he was 'purifier' also. And, that is why he (SAW) was the most successful mentor and guide in the world. That was the secret behind the stupendous metamorphosis, spiritual, moral, mental and practical, of the Companions and the primary success achieved by Islam. Even today, it is most prominently perceived in every walk of the Islamic life."

The foes and friends are all unanimous in acknowledging the fact that his proximity had the effect of the philosopher's stone. Whoever was fortunate enough to have it did not only turn into pure gold; but he himself became the veritable philosopher's

stone. The beasts turned into humans and the humans into angels. Their doctrinal, moral and spiritual training was so sublime and so perfect as one better than that cannot be imagined even. Whoever came in contact with him got moulded in his mould, the mould set by the Shariat. He got to follow the rules of the Shariah involuntarily. The acts performed in compliance with the commands became easy and desirable to him by nature. The sins became repugnant and disgusting to his nature. The acme is that the entire Ummah has the conviction that the Companions were, one to all, upright and equitable and even the one belonging to lowest category of the Companions is superior to the greatest of the great Wali (saint) of Allah of the later times.

The books on Seerat are replete with instances of sudden metamorphosis and intrinsic effectuation also. Fuzalah bin U'mair says that the Prophet (SAW) was performing circumambulation of Ka'ba when I approached him with an evil intention. As I came Closer, he said: 'Well! Fudalah! What's up your sleeve?' I said: 'Nothing! I was just chanting Allah's name.' The Prophet (SAW) laughed and said: 'Fudalah! Seek Forgiveness from Allah.' He then put his hand on my chest. My heart was calmed then. By Allah, he had yet not taken his hand off my chest when I felt that nothing of the entire world of Allah's creatures

was dearer to me than him. I returned. On my way back, I came across that woman whom I used to have chats with. She accosted me saying: 'Come on, Fudalah, let us have a chat.' I said: 'No! After having professed Islam, it cannot happen.'

Hazrat A'mr bin A'as says: 'Before I had taken the oath of allegiance at the Prophet's hand, there was nothing more detestable in my eyes than him (SAW). Had I had the chance \_ God forbid-then, I would have certainly ruined my Afterlife. But, the moment I had taken the oath, there was no one more beloved and revered than him in my eyes on the face of this entire earth. So much so that I could not even look at him to my fill. Had someone enquired me about his visage, I would, by Allah, not be able to tell him his visage. For, I could not have courage to look at him to my fill.

On the basis of these very qualities and the obligations that he (SAW) was vested with by Allah Almighty, he imparted, on the one hand, these injunctions to the people and, on the other hand, performed the duty of having the dispositions and temperaments moulded in the mould of religion. He described the Signs of Allah through which the insight into the entity of Allah Almighty is attained. He purged the people of the vices and malpractices that had taken root in

them. He made their mode of life changed to a pious and virtuous one. He taught them the Book: that is told them what the Divine Commandments were. He exhorted them to acquire good morals, the upright way of leading life, the neat and clean conduct and unblemished character and morals. He had the deviations that had crept into their lives removed from them in the light of the teachings of the holy Quran. He taught them the lesson of the Oneness of the Providence, His Splendour and the Splendour of Him only. Simultaneously, he paid attention to their morals also.

By fulfilling the obligation of his Prophet-hood, he (SAW) proved to be the most successful teacher and excellent mentor in the sphere of bringing about reform within the mankind. He taught and trained the unlettered and unguided people so well that they themselves became the reformer and mentor of the entire world. Wherever the members of this community, trained and tutored by him (SAW), went, they brought about a revolution in character and morals of the peoples of those places. The way he (SAW) taught and trained the people was so fascinating and the style of his exhortation and expostulation was so impressive that the very first interaction itself would cause the revolution to take place. This phenomenon was, nevertheless, subject to the Will of Allah

Almighty. So it is stated by Allah Almighty:

(Verily thou shalt not guide whomsoever thou lovest, but Allah shall guide whomsoever He will. And He knoweth best who are the guided.) (Al-Qasas : 56)

So, whoever was destined from the day one to remain strayed and whose guidance was not within the powers of any teacher and any mentor, whosoever he may be, remained deprived. Barring these few ill-fated fellows, whoever he (SAW) had his attention diverted to, was not but influenced by him. This was also nothing but due to Allah's Will that He had such a stupendous task as was not possible to be performed by the greatest of the great pedagogues of the world performed by one who was unlettered, had never taken any lessons in teaching and pedagogy and was never told by anyone how to do it. The greatest reason behind that was that the foundation of knowledge that he (SAW) was endowed with was superb, even though the lessons in teaching were not essentially taken by him from anyone. It was on that foundation that the edifice of knowledge was celestially raised. The knowledge imparted to him was effected through celestial means. The capacity of moulding the lives vested in the celestial knowledge is extremely superb and effective than the capacity gained

through the earthly means. The capacity vested in him (SAW) through the celestial knowledge was such as had the lives of the people changed altogether. The beneficence that emanated from him was so vast that, having lifted the man from the category of lowest level, it had him raised to the level of the loftiest category. It had such a highway built for the life which has the capability to lead the man to the destination of utmost triumph, for as long as this world exists. It imparts the man such knowledge as is required by the man and is in keeping with the loftiest standard of humanity. The people of the Quoraish who were, by and large, illiterate, on being told these issues of loftiest level by the Prophet (SAW) approached the pontiffs and rabbis of Ahl-e-kitab (the people of the book). Getting the tips from them, they put up to him (SAW), in order to test him, some such queries as they thought could not be answered by the Prophet (SAW). For, the information about them could be had by the laity only through the customary way of getting the knowledge which the Prophet (SAW) had not gone through. But, it was the celestial Mentor from whom he (SAW) had obtained the knowledge. The people of the Quoraish enquired from him about the event of the cave and the episode of Zul-Quernain. The information required was conveyed to the Prophet (SAW) through the Revelation. He conveyed them,

accordingly, to the Quoraish. That made it patent for the Quoraish that whatever he (SAW) used to say were not the figments of his imagination and that they were derived from the knowledge that he had been receiving from God. And, this knowledge is nothing but the knowledge of the right course of action for building up the conduct and the character of the man and moulding them into the right shape. This is that course of action which gets the humanity rescued from perdition and leads it in the right direction.

Hence, the entire world was witness to the fact that within only half a century a global level revolution was brought about, under the guidance of this very knowledge and the lives of the people were totally reoriented and changed. The man was earlier headed towards outright perdition. Within half a century it was on the move on the highway leading to progress and prosperity. It was because of taking to this route that the magnificent powers of the world in those days were brought to their knees. So, their empires, too, underwent the revolution. It was all the effect of the teaching and training of the Allah's Prophet of the last phase who gave the guidance in every walk of life, set examples of, and led the people to, success and glory in every sphere of life.

The comprehensive, universal and ineffaceable impressions of the Allah's

Prophet's life, the guidance that these contain for the people of all classes, grades and professions in all the ages and circumstances in all the matters have been elucidated in very eloquent and impressive style by Allamah Syed Sulaiman Nadwi (RAA). He writes:

"A model which can serve for every class of the people acting under different circumstances and states of human emotions will be found in the life of Mohammad (SAW). If you are rich, there is the example of the tradesman of Makkah and the master of Bahrain's treasure. If you are poor, you can follow the internees of Sh'eb-e-Abi Talib and the emigree of Madinah. If you are a king, watch the actions of the ruler of Arabia. If you are a vassal, take a look at the man enduring hardships imposed by the Quoraish of Makkah. If you are a conqueror, lay your eyes on the victor of Badr and Hunain. If you have suffered a defeat, take a lesson from the one discomfited at Uhad. If you are a teacher, learn from the mentor of the school of Suffah. If you are a student, look at the learner who sat before Gibrail. If you are a sermoner, direct your eyes to the discourser delivering lectures in the mosque of Madinah. If you are charged to preach the gospel of truth and mercy to your persecutors, observe the helpless preacher explaining the message of God to the pagans of Makkah. If you have brought your enemies to his knees, look at the

conqueror of Makah. If you want to administer your lands and properties, discover how the lands and groves of Banu Nudhair, Khaiber and Fadak were managed. If you are an orphan, do not forget the child of Ameena and Abdullah left to the tender mercy of Haleemah. If you are young, see the character of Makkah's shepherd. If you have a travelling business, cast a glance at the leader of the caravan 'under way to Busra. If you are a judge or arbiter, look at the umpire entering the holy sanctuary before the peep of dawn and installing Hajar-e-Aswad in the Ka'ba, or the justice of peace in whose eyes the poor and the rich were alike. If you are a husband study the behaviour of the husband of Khadeeejah and A'ishah. If you are a father, go through the biography of Fatimah's father and the grandfather of Hasan and Hussain. In short, whoever and whatever you may be, you would find a shining example on the life of the prophet (SAW) to illuminate your behavior. If you have the life of the Prophet (SAW) before you, you can find the examples of all the prophets, Nooh and Abraham, John and Jonah and Moses and Jesus. If the life and character of each prophet of God were deemed to be a shop selling the wares of one commodity, that of the Prophet Mohamnad (SAW) would verily be a variety store where goods of every description can be had to suit the tastes and needs of all". ■

## Islam: The Faith Which Thrives in Adverse Situation

- Saroor Ahmad

Islam Zinda Hota Hai Har Karbala Ke Baad (Islam gets revived after every Karbala-like sacrifice). This is one of the immortal verses of Allama Iqbal, which carries enormous connotations. Today the land where Imam Husain got martyred is witnessing a great upheaval but it is to be seen whether this development would really breathe life into Islam.

However, if Iqbal talked of the revival of Islam after Karbala, he did not mean that it was dead after just half a century. What he wanted to suggest is that it is Karbala-like sacrifice against monarchy which keeps Islam alive.

So if the martyrdom of Imam Husain in Karbala went down as a symbolic struggle against the state-power, the destruction of neighbouring Baghdad six centuries later, precisely in 1258, by the Mongols ironically led to the resurgence of Islam. After having completely decimated the Abbasid Khilafat the Mongols went on to advance further west and almost reached Egypt where they finally got defeated. But a unique development took place. The same marauding Mongols soon embraced Islam. Where the empire as big as of Abbasids failed in front of the massive and brutal Mongol onslaught the ideology of Islam soon overwhelmed the victors.

A brief history of over 1400 years would reveal one thing: that Islam really prospered and spread much faster when Muslims, apparently, became disempowered. Call it an irony of history, or by any other name, it is the inherent quality of this faith to attract Mustad'afeen (the wretched and the most exploited lot). This in a way is different from many other religions. Some western writers are of the view that Islam spread very fast in Africa in the 19th century when Muslims, having lost all the powers to the European imperialist forces, were apparently down in the dump.

When Muslims got 'disempowered' in the 13th century at the hands of Mongols Islam grew much faster than even during the Khilafat. Thus it suggests that the empires became a hurdle in the way of Islam.

Closer in the history, we would observe that 18th, 19th and 20th centuries produced some real great Islamic scholars and movements. This was the period when Muslim rulers around the world started losing grip over their empires. Thus it is obvious that if the Muslim empire grew powerful the spread of Islam was bound to be hampered.

It may not be simply an accident of history that Shah Waliullah was born

in 1703, that is, just four years before the death of the last great Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. It may be that Shah Waliullah would not have emerged as a towering Islamic figure had the Muslim emperor been really powerful during that period. In Arabian Peninsula too Mohammad Bin Abdul Wahab was a product of that century.

By in the 19th and 20th centuries, as mentioned above, we saw the emergence of countless number of reputed Islamic personalities. Be it Jamaluddin Afghani, the champion of Pan Islamism in the 19th century or Syed Ahmad Shaheed who launched a fierce resistance in the north-western tip of the subcontinent or Imam Shamil who struggled in Chechnya in the same century or innumerable Islamic ideologues in the subcontinent, Arab world, Iran, Central and East Asia, etc. all have a common goal. They all earned support from the common 'disempowered' mass and not from the former royal family or elite. However, Ayatullah Khomeini before the 1979 Iranian Revolution used the expression 'Mustad'afeen to seek support to overthrow Reza Shah Pahlavi's tyranny.

The empowered Muslims or the empire-builders have let down Islam. Take the example of Ottomans. They ruled a large part of east Europe, Greece in particular, for centuries yet they failed to spread the true message of Islam to the people there. Similar was

the case in India during the age of empire-builders. Islam attracted much more people in the subcontinent in the 13th century when there was very little presence of the Muslim empire in India. One thing also needs to be noted: while earlier Sufism played a key role in the spread of Islam, in the modern era the nature of most Islamic movements is quite different. While in the past many Muslim emperors did promote Sufism to keep in check any real threat to their power in the recent centuries the Islamic leaders were always looked with hostility by the ruling class.

It would not be wrong to suggest that Islam suffered much during the time of Emperor Akbar when the Mughals were virtually the master of a large part of the subcontinent. He made enormous compromises and evolved a new faith Deen-e-Ilahi. He also tried to introduce his own secular calendar, Tarikh-e-Ilahi, in 1584 almost eight years before the completion of 1000 years of Hijri in 1592. Incidentally, he made 1556 as the zero-year for this new calendar as it was in this year that he ascended to the throne. However, he failed disastrously in this attempt. Hijri continues to remain the Islamic calendar even during his time.

The truth is that the 'disempowerment' of Muslims had at least one positive aspect. It facilitated the growth of Islam as a people's movement. True, there were several

benign monarchs in the past, who seldom behaved like a totalitarian tyrant and liberally supported the spread of Islam in its true spirit. But that was few and far between. Islam never believed in expansion through brute power. It always appeals to Ya Aiyoha Naas (the common people) and never relies on the kings or monarchs to help its growth. In fact, all the movements launched by prophets have this quality.

Caliph Ali's is the best example of how the Last Messenger's mission was not to acquire power by hook or crook. When he floored a man in the battle-field the latter spat on his face. Instead of slaying him he dismounted

from his body saying that killing now would amount to injustice and personal revenge.

Islam always believes in struggle from below. An Islamic state comes into being after a people's struggle. There may be hopelessness for Muslims throughout the world, but the past history confirms that Islam always flourished in the odd situation. It may sound as an overstatement to say that Islam is the fastest growing religion – many think that it is a Christian propaganda to keep Muslims confused – yet there is no denying the fact that even today it is winning a large number of converts. ■

*(Radiance)*

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*(Contd. from page 36)*

customs and usages which have been held sacred by various communities.

In a pluralistic society which recognises equal rights for followers of all religions, it will be a denial of social justice if under the guise of introducing a uniform civil code, religious beliefs of other communities are thrown over board.

Articles 371 A and 371 C have special provisions with respect to the states of Nagaland and Mizoram. The religious and social practices of the Nagas and the people of Mizoram and their customary laws and procedures will prevail over the laws of India including the administration of civil and criminal justice through these articles.

Uniform civil code is an attempt to destroy the religious and cultural practices of minorities and this will set in motion a very dangerous precedent. Article 44 is one of the Directive Principles while Article 25, which gives the right to profess, practise and propagate one's religion, is a Fundamental Right. The enforcement of article 44 will be against the basic structure of the Constitution and if this structure is destroyed, India will cease to be a State established for the purposes of achieving social justice and upholding the secular and democratic ideals which were so dear to the hearts of the framers of the Constitution. ■

*(The Milli Gazette)*



## Uniform Civil Code

- M. Hashim Kidwai\*

The question of a uniform civil code had sprung into prominence because of a judgement of the Supreme Court delivered by Justices Kuldip Singh and Sahni, and because of the demand of BJP leaders that there should be a uniform civil code for all Indians.

As pointed out by Justice H.M. Seervai, distinguished jurists had gratuitously raised the question of a uniform civil code on the specious ground that the absence of such a code induced Hindu husbands to convert to Islam so that they could marry another woman although their wives were alive and this was because Muslim law permitted a Muslim to have four wives at a time. Surely, it is a fraudulent practice but Muslim law should not be blamed for this. It is also to be noted that a Muslim was not a party in the case in which judgement had been delivered by the two judges of the Supreme Court.

Since article 44 under which the State is to endeavour for a uniform civil code is not justiciable, it cannot be enforced by the judiciary. The enforcement will be violative of Article 250 of the Constitution which guarantees religious freedom to all Indian citizens.

That only Muslims are opposed to the uniform civil code. The fact is that the majority community is also opposed to it, and this is evident from the fact that instead of following the [civil] Special Marriage Act, it follows the Hindu Marriage Act. According to Justice Seervai, the order of Justice Kuldip Singh concurred by Justice Sahani and his request to the Government of India through the Prime Minister to take a fresh look at Article 44 and endeavour to secure for Indian citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territories of the country is null and void and the Supreme Court cannot enforce the mandate of Article 44.

He rightly observed that a common civil code for Hindus and Muslims is an impossibility.

Seervai rightly observed that Section 7(1&2) of the Hindu Marriage Act clearly lays down that a Hindu marriage may be solemnised in accordance with the customary rites, and ceremonies of either party thereto, while Section 7(2) says that where such rites and ceremonies include the Satapadi (i.e., the taking of seven steps by the bridegroom and the bride jointly before the sacred fire) the marriage becomes complete and binding when the seventh step is taken. This clearly contradicts the observation of Justice Singh that marriage has nothing to do

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\* Ex-MP (Rajya Sabha)

with revisions while Sections 5(IV&V) of the said act lays down conditions subject to which marriage may be solemnised namely, "the parties are not within the degree of the prohibited relationship unless the custom or usage governing each of them permits of a marriage between the two". Justice Seervai concludes that there is no common civil code governing marriage among Hindus.

The argument that the enactment of a uniform civil code will promote a feeling of national unity among Indians loses its validity when the strong sentiments of minorities, especially of the Muslims, are taken into account. They are passionately attached to their personal law and are not prepared to change or replace it.

The enthusiasts for uniform civil code try to make capital out of the fact that the Indian Constitution under the Directive Principles of State Policy provides that "the State shall endeavour to secure to the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India". It is worth noting here that the Directive Principles are not binding on Central or state Governments. They are merely instructions for the governments as to what policies they ought to follow in order to realise the ultimate goal of establishing a welfare State. They have no legal force. On the other hand, the Constitution guarantees freedom of religion by including this freedom in Fundamental Rights. These rights are

sacrosanct and the Parliament has no right to abridge or scrap them because this will affect the basic structure of the Constitution.

Secular activity mentioned in Clause (2) of Article 25 does not mean marriage, divorce and succession. Secular activity on the contrary denotes strict impartiality to objectivity on the part of the Govt. It implies fair and equal treatment to all Indian citizens irrespective of caste, creed, religion and sex etc. The very essence of Indian secularism is recognition of different religions on equal footing. Thus it will be quite against the spirit of the Constitution if a uniform civil code is imposed upon the people.

The champions of uniform civil code contend that Muslim Personal Law has become outdated and needs to be modernised. But this contention is totally false as Muslim Personal Law has for centuries pioneered a number of progressive principles which even today are accepted.

1. The principle that marriage is a civil contract involving no change in the legal status of the woman.
2. The wife's retention of her full legal personality with preliminary capacity to contract and to acquire, hold and dispose of property without reference to her husband.
3. The wife's continuance in her father's as distinct from her husband's family, after marriage as

- before and her right to inherit from her parents.
4. The wife's right to demand from her husband, as an essential precondition of marriage, a marriage settlement or mahar (dower).
  5. The wife's right to hizanat (custody of young children in case of separation from her husband with the latter remaining liable for maintenance of the children).
  6. The women's right to re-marry after divorce or widowhood.
  7. The women's right to stipulate conditions in the marriage contract.
  8. The women's preemptory right of divorce in case of unchastity imputed to her, aside from other cases of cruelty.
  9. Divorce by mutual consent.

The Muslim Personal Law leaves the parties free to put in the marriage contract appropriate terms to secure the wife's right. Such terms may include a stipulation that the husband could not take a second wife and that the wife shall have the right to divorce herself if he did.

In view of this, any dispassionate observer will find that Muslim Personal Law is quite modern, flexible and adequate enough to suit any developing society. The words of George Bernard Shaw are worth recalling: "the laws of marriage and divorce given by Islam are

most suitable for our times."

If by a uniform civil code is meant a civil court for the purposes of civil court, there is already the civil procedure code which deals with this aspect.

When there are other important Directive Principles like improvement of educational standards, the duty to provide adequate means of livelihood, improvement of the level of nutrition and the standards of living of the people and the introduction of prohibition, it is meaningless to dwell solely upon article 44 without fulfilling the above mentioned requirements. Article 44 is not of such great importance that it should take precedence over other Articles of the Directive Principles.

Advocates of the uniform civil code forget that all Indian communities have personal laws and there are separate personal laws for Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Parsees.

If the idea is to promote a uniform personal law, there was no need after the promulgation of the Constitution to enact Hindu Succession Act and the Hindu Marriage Act. No criticism was levelled against the Hindu joint family system. There is nothing wrong in the Hindus following what they see necessary for the preservation of their identity, customs and usages.

If a uniform personal law has to be introduced, it will be to change the entire concept of various institutions,  
*(Contd. to page 33)*

## **The Philosophy of Medical Treatment in Islam**

**- S. Habibul Haq Nadwi**

Man has been created in the best of moulds (Ahsan -i- Taqwim). According to the Prophetic Tradition (Hadlth) Allah has created man in His own image (Khalaaqa-Allah Adama 'Ala Suratih). Thus, being the climax and the crown of the creation, man is an all-embracing theatre of Divine Hierophany and a source of ultimate effusion of Truth. Being the vicegerent of Allah (Khalifat-Allah) on earth and being a celestial archetype on earth he has to bear and discharge the Divine Trust (Amana). An ideal creature like man cannot discharge his Amana without perfect and sound health-both physical and spiritual.

The concept of Original Sin and the treatment of man as a primary sinner, neither existed in Islam nor was disease ever regarded as the result of Original Sin, unworthy of any medical treatment. The rapid disintegration of his personality, according to Islam, is the result of his forgetfulness of the mission assigned to him as the representative of Allah on earth and because of his total identification with the world of passion and greed. He then loses the Divine Form and his theomorphic nature and he falls from the position of his vicegerency.

This was the philosophy which dominated the thinking of the Muslims through the centuries in every walk of life and in every field of knowledge, including Medicine. Eminent Muslim doctors and physicians, also being great scholars of the Qur'an and the Sunna, regarded medical service as a religious duty, incumbent upon

them to sustain the health of the vicegerent of Allah in dynamic shape and function.

### **THE QUR'ANIC IMPERATIVES ON DIETETICS (al-Ghadhaiyat)**

The first Divine injunctions in respect to human diet are found in the Qur'an. Since the health of the soul is linked to the health of the body and since both are interdependant and interrelated, the Creator of man, Himself, cognisant of the biological needs of man, prescribed Halal and nourishing (Tayyab) food and prevented man from eating Hararn and unhealthy food. Since diet is instrumental in preserving the health of man and since food controls the biological phenomena of the human body Muslim doctors and medical experts pondered over the Qur'anic verses and the jurists, exegetics, biographers and historians explained the verses in the light of the Prophetic Traditions (Ahadith dealing with Tibb-an-Nabawi-Prophetic Medicine), which gave rise to the primary Arabic medical literature. The doctors, physicians, surgeons and experts in other fields of medicine were inspired by the same religious injunctions and followed the dietary laws of the Qur'an in their medical treatment in order to save mankind from illness and physical infirmity. There is neither space nor occasion to deal with such verses in detail, yet a cursory glance over the verse dealing directly with dietetics will assist us in understanding the philosophy of medical treatment in Islam. The Qur'an addresses both the believers and the non-believers in regard to their diet.

Addressing humans in general the Qur'an commands:

O, ye people! eat of what is on earth, lawful and good and do not follow the footsteps of the evil one, for he is to you an avowed enemy (11:168).

The believers have also been addressed in a similar tone:

O, ye who believe, eat of the good things that We have provided for you and be grateful to God, if it is Him ye worship (11:172)

From the Qur'anic verses it is evident that lawful (Halal) food is regarded as a prerequisite for the maintenance of sound health whilst the forbidden and unlawful (Haram) food has been described as injurious and impious to health, causing illness and physical ailments. The recurring theme of Halal food leads us to believe that prevention is better than cure. Haram food leads man to offensive and sinful deeds while Halal food leads him to licit deeds. The following verses merit our attention:

i) Eat of the good things what We have provided for you. (But they rebelled). To Us they did no harm, but they harmed their own souls (11:57).

ii) So eat and drink of the sustenance provided by God, and do not evil nor mischief on the (face of the) earth (11:60).

iii) O, ye who believe! Make not unlawful, the good things which God hath made lawful for you. But commit no excess for God loveth not those given to excess. Eat of the things which God hath provided for you, lawful and good (Halal and Tayyab); but fear God in whom ye believe (V:90-91).

iv) Eat what God hath provided for you, and follow not the footsteps of Satan, for he is to you an avowed enemy (VI:142).

v) Eat the good things We have provided for you, (But they rebelled). They did no harm, but they harmed their own souls (VII:160).

vi) But (now) enjoy what ye took in war, lawful and good: But fear God for God is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful (VIII:69).

vii) So eat of the sustenance which God hath provided for you, lawful and good (Halal and Tayyab). And be grateful for the favours of God, if it is He whom ye serve (XVI:114).

viii) Eat of the good things We have provided for your sustenance, but commit no excess therein, lest My Wrath should justly descend on you: and those on whom descends My Wrath do perish indeed! (XX:81)

In addition to its emphasis on Halal and Tayyab food, the Qur'an also lays stress on eating the meat of such animals which have been slaughtered in the name of Allah. Consuming of non-Halal meat has been described as sinful (Fisq) which leads to moral depravity and dissolute life:

i) So eat of (meats) on which God's name hath been pronounced, if ye have faith in His Signs. Why should ye not eat of (meats) on which God's name hath been pronounced, when He hath explained to you in detail what is forbidden to you except under compulsion of necessity? But many do mislead (men) by their appetites unchecked by knowledge. Thy Lord knoweth best those who transgress (VI:118-119).

ii) Eat not of (meats) on which God's name hath not been pronounced: that would be impiety (Fisq). But the evil ones ever inspire their friends to contend with you. If ye were to obey them, ye would indeed be Pagans. (VI: 121).

The overindulgence and wastage of food have been condemned by Allah in the following words:

O Children of Adam! Wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer: eat and drink: But waste not by excess for God loveth not the wasters. (VII: 31)

The Qur'anic verse clearly indicates that good and Halal (lawful) diet stimulates man for virtuous and pious deeds (A'mal-i-Saleh) and creates Godly character. Addressing His own Messengers, Allah guides them in the following words: .

O ye Apostles! Enjoy and eat all things good and pure, and work righteousness: for I am well acquainted with (all) that ye do. (XXIII: 51).

Eat and drink ye, with profit and health, because of your good deeds. (LII: 19).

Although the later verses are symbolical descriptions of life in heaven, they are down to earth. The bliss of righteousness is the result of the bliss of Halal and good sustenance which provides individual bliss as well as the social bliss together with individual satisfaction that one obtains through sound health and pious works. It is only those who do good works, which are products of good and pure diet, shall have the throne of dignity. The words 'eating' and 'drinking', if taken in the non-literal sense, generate enormous meanings. They also imply that one should

neither eat up the money of the orphans, widows or the weak, nor should one earn his livelihood through Haram means, that is, injustice, theft, forgery, exploitation etc. There is no bliss (Baraka) in life today since seldom do we eat the earnings of Halal money or Halal sources.

The Arabic imperatives (Kulu : eat) have been used throughout the Qur'an. They are very significant since the jurists interpret the imperatives as a collective duty (Fard al-Kifaya). Excessive eating or wastage (Israf) has been forbidden by the Qur'an. Contemporary medical science has been very much concerned with regulating food intake (dieting) and using normal healthy food for the nourishment and preservation of health.

In Islam the sanctity of human life can be evaluated in many verses in the Qur'an, which allow man to eat non-Halal food in emergencies, namely, if his life is in danger or medical necessities demand administering such food to the patient in order to save his life. The Qur'an first lists Haram foods and then relaxes the dietary laws only to save human life - a sacred trust (Amana) from God given to man.

He hath forbidden you dead meat, and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that on which any other name hath been invoked besides that of God. But if one is forced by necessity, without wilful disobedience, nor transgressing due limits, then he is guiltless. For God is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful. (11 : 173).

Thus the Holy Qur'an spells out the infallible Divine Wisdom and Infinite Mercies of the Creator to man who is but endowed with limited and fallible wisdom and finite vision. ♦

## Advent of New Year

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

New Year celebrations are not new. Reportedly this occasion is being celebrated since time immemorial. The first new year celebrations took place in Mesopotamia around 2000 B.C. It was celebrated at the time of Equinox in mid-March by the Egyptians, Persians and Phoenicians Greeks celebrated it on winter solstice. As per the ancient calendar, new year fell on March 1. Islamic calendar begins from 1st of Moharram that is the new year for Muslims. The Roman emperor Julius Caesar officially declared January 1 to be a new year in 46 B. C. Today new year celebrations in Christian world have become a global phenomenon. In this respect Islamic view is different. The holy Quran says: The number of months in the sight of Allah is twelve in a year-so ordained by Him the day He created the heavens and earth" (Surah-9-Verse-36) It further says: "It is He who made the sun to be shining glory and the moon to be a light beauty and measured out stages for it, that ye might know the number of years and the count of time. Nowise did Allah created this but in truth and righteousness. Thus doth He explains His signs in detail, for those who know." Verily, in the alternation of the night and the day, and in all that Allah hath created, in heavens and the earth, are signs for those who fear Him. "(Surah -10-V-5-6) Accordingly the new year night is the trust of Allah. For days, months, years change by Allah's order. One should thank Allah for providing opportunity to observe the new year

celebrations. We are slaves of Allah. We are Allah's vicegerents on the earth. Every act of ours should be according to Allah's will. Limits set by Allah should not be crossed in any way. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) says: "O people ! Beware! There is a piece of flesh in the body .If it becomes good (reformed) the whole body becomes good, but if it gets spoilt, the whole body gets spoilt and that is the heart." But it is unfortunate that most of us pass 31 December night in unholy acts and nasty deeds. Even some people involve in such acts of obscenity, immodesty and indecency that satan is ashamed. It is up to us to introspect and think to do more better and repent on past mistakes and faults. Besides we should pledge not to repeat such sort of obscene acts. Moreover 31 December night should be for all and sundry the night of introspections and thought . We should supplicate and pray to Allah so that He may give us strength to perform good acts and prosper in every aspects of life. There is no harm in celebrating new year but it should be observed keeping in view of Allah's limits .The holy Quran says: "Those are limits of Allah: Those who obey Allah and His messenger will be admitted to gardens with rivers flowing beneath, abide therein for ever and that will be the supreme achievements. "But those who disobey Allah and His messenger and transgress His limits will be admitted to a fire, to abide therein :and they shall have a humiliating punishment." (S.4-V-13-4) ♦

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