



# THE FRAGRANCE OF EAST

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# The Fragrance of East

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## Religion as Guardian of Life

### S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Time is a proportionate and balanced mixture of stability and change, stagnation and movement. If it loses either of these characteristics, it will lose its relevance. Islam as a religion accepts this fact and is ready to make necessary accommodations, but it holds the position that as religion it has to guide life, not simply follow it. Religion, as Islam pleads, does not have to passively approve all changes. It is not lifeless like the needle of a barometer which moves up or down mechanically to measure the pressure of the atmosphere, or a weather-cock fixed on the top of a building which moves to show the direction of the wind. The function of religion is not simply to acknowledge and show the changes which are occurring at a time. Its obligation is to check whether a change is healthy or unhealthy, constructive or destructive. It has to evaluate the effect of a change on mankind at large and on its promoters in particular. It judges all pros and cons of a change before it approves it. It, therefore, will discourage a change if it is destructive. It may even oppose the latter kind.

At this point we can see a clear difference between religion and morality. Religion feels obliged to oppose wrong inclinations, whereas morality simply identifies them. ■

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### **Wisdom of Qur'an**

**(O Prophet!): Propound to them the parable of the present life: it is like the vegetation of the earth which flourished luxuriantly when it mingled with water that We sent down from the sky, but after that the same vegetation turned into stubble which the winds blew about. Allah alone has the power over all things. Wealth and children are an adornment of the life of the world. But the deeds of lasting righteousness are the best in the sight of your Lord in reward, and far better a source of hope. Bear in mind the Day when We shall set the mountains in motion and you will find the earth void and bare. On that Day We shall muster all men together, leaving none of them behind.**

*(Al-Qur'an - 18:45-47)*

God grants life as well as death. He enables people to rise as well as causes them to fall. He causes the blossoming of the spring, and also ordains that it will be followed by autumn. Hence, if someone happens to flourish and enjoy prosperity, he ought not to be deluded into believing that this state would necessarily last for ever. It is God Who has granted man all bounties and he will be instantly deprived of them the moment God so wills. The expression 'Bear in mind the Day when We shall set the mountains in motion' refers to the time when the present order of things will be disrupted. The earth will lose its gravitational pull and the mountains will float about as clouds. ■

### **Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)**

Abdullah relates that he asked the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be to him): "Which sin is the gravest in the eye of Allah?" He (the Messenger) replied: "That you associate a partner with Allah (although) He has created you." He again asked: "What is the next?" The Messenger replied: "That you kill your child out of fear that he shall join you in food." He again asked: "What is the next?" The Messenger replied: "That you commit adultery with the wife of your neighbour."

*(Sahih Muslim)*

The hadith names three gravest sins. The most grievous sin is associating partner with Allah. The reason is that man is created by Allah and it is the height of ingratitude on his part that he associates other partners with his Creator. Moreover, this act also lowers his dignity and status. It is also *shirk* (polytheism) that man assumes the role of a nourisher and thinks that he is responsible for the nourishment of his children. The practice of killing children and other methods of population control are in fact denial of the Lord's attribute of nourishing. The modern craze of birth control is based on a false concept that the resources God has created to maintain humanity are far meagre as compared to the increasing population. While God is very Bountiful and the means He has provided are far more vast and richer than the growth of population. Also, a person has every right to expect security from his neighbour that his trust would not be betrayed. ■

## **CHANGING PATTERN OF SOCIETY**

We are aware that the fast development of science and technology has revolutionised the pattern of living in literate societies. Developments in the field of electronics have brought the world closer and TV, e-Mail and Internet systems have reduced the importance of the print media. Even though the communication revolution has created two classes of readers one who have an access to latest computer techniques and the other who still bank on books and periodicals, the latter constitutes a majority. The Fragrance is an humble attempt to cater to the needs of this class.

While we have made tremendous scientific strides ranging from nuclear explosions to cloning of living beings our moral and cultural values appear to be fast receding. Historians will agree that since the inception of this world it has always been the endeavour of man to establish his superiority over others. In this process humankind has often lost its balance. Whereas on the one hand it aims to habitate the moon on the other it craves for scientific progress towards assembling devices of mass destruction.

The qualities which distinguish man from other living beings are increasingly getting lost in this fast drive towards scientific oneness. Man forgets that he has been sent in the world to spread peace and tranquility and not to create chaos and unrest. Great men were born from time to time to help mankind regulate their lives and lead a pure and pious life. Their areas of operations may have been confined to certain parts of the world but the message they propagated knew no physical or geographical barriers. Judaism and Christianity in their unpolluted form are not far from Islam. Coming closer to our country founders of Jainism and Buddhism too spent their lives in search of 'Truth' and spread the message of peace, friendliness and brotherhood amongst mankind. Indeed religion is a vital factor which leads one to follow the Heavenly ordain 'Do good and refrain from evils'. Through this periodical our efforts will be to spread the message of peace through the dissemination of relevant literature. ■

S.A.

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## The Message of Ramadan

-S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

*O Believers! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you. that you may become pious.*

(al-Baqarah 2:183)

The above Qur'anic verse lays down that fasting is a religious duty incumbent on all Muslims. Until the Last Day the command embodied in this verse remains valid. Embedded in the verse is thus much food for thought.

First, the command is addressed to believers. For the command involves doing something which is difficult. It calls for courage and patience to fast. Accordingly, mention is made first of faith. The believers are asked to discharge this duty. For they have entered into a covenant with God to obey His commands. They have pledged their servitude to Him, affirming that He is the Master and Ruler. They are bound to abide by His commands, irrespective of their self-interest. For they are obliged to perform whatever He commands of them. This is because of their servitude to Him. Being His servants they are expected to behave thus. They are at His beck and call. Allah being All-Wise begins the command in the above fashion. Otherwise, secular laws are promulgated without any reference to one's gain or safety against some loss. Although Allah is the absolute Ruler,

Creator of the heavens and earth who exercises total control over everyone's life, honour and property, He invokes the conviction of believers. Muslim are exhorted to act on the dictates of their faith. They are expected to respond vigorously and positively to His call. Against this backdrop they are told that a month-long fasting is prescribed for them as a religious duty.

Allah is thoroughly conversant with human nature. For He is man's Creator. At the same time, He makes certain allowances for man out of His wisdom and mercy. Whenever He enacts a command, He prepares man mentally for it, enabling him to obey His command willingly. Man is instinctively repulsed by something new and odd. However, on realising that something is a standard practice, followed down the ages by many generations, man is drawn towards it and feels no hesitation in obeying such a command.

Believers are informed that fasting was a duty obligatory upon earlier generations as well. One learns from the history of world religions, and nations that fasting has been a religious obligation in some form during all periods of time. Its details may be found in religious and historical works. One learns the exact form and duration of fasting among different religious communities. Finer points about the restrictions and the

starting and concluding times of fasting may also be gleaned. Constraints of space prevent us from exploring this point any further.

The important truth brought home though is that fasting helps man attain piety. The Qur'an employs the term *taqwa* in this context. Generally speaking, words are invested with different meanings with the passage of time. A pious person is taken to be one who is constantly engaged in worship, and who sleeps little. One who does not fall asleep at all is recognised as a perfectly pious person. He is expected to offer prayers all the time and is very cautious about each and every issue, be it religious or mundane. In the original Arabic, however, *taqwa* does not carry these shades of meaning. It does not imply that one blessed with *taqwa* is given wholly to worship, stays awake throughout the night and fasts round the year. Instead *taqwa* signifies in the original Arabic a state of mind and consciousness. It encompasses one's temperament and way of thinking. Ramadan helps man attain piety. Yet it does not mean that with the passage of Ramadan, piety comes to an end. Piety is not some temporary condition.

Piety represents a constant state of self-control and restraint. If a child is brought up well, he imbibes the value of respecting his elders. He does not indulge in any act in the presence of his elders which may be offensive to them. By the same token, he refrains from mocking or insulting them. Piety signifies

such a training of the mind which guides one to practise moral values all the time. A pious person thinks carefully before taking any action whether his act is permitted by the *Shari'ah* or not: This reference to the *Shari'ah* at every step is a pointer to one's piety. Take the illustrious examples of Abu Bakr and Umar, the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, holding exalted rank among the Prophet's Companions. They were witness to the revelation of the Qur'an. Furthermore, they possessed mastery over the Arabic language and idiom. They were both born and brought up in Makkah and used the local language fluently. As true Companions they never felt shy of seeking clarification from the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). For their main preoccupation was to advance their knowledge. Once they asked (Abdullah ibn Masud to define *taqwa*. To this he replied: "O Commander of the Faithful! Have you ever walked on a path with thorns on either side?" When (Umar replied in the affirmative, he asked as to how he walked on that path. (Umar replied: "I walk cautiously, ensuring that body and clothes are safe against thorns." (Abdullah ibn Masud exclaimed: "This is the definition of *taqwa* - to lead life in a way without doing anything which may displease Allah. One's deeds should not be discordant with the *Shari'ah*."

Those not familiar with Arabic idiom think that fasting is prescribed for making believers pious. It is not however the point that one who fasts for twenty-nine or thirty days in Ramadan will turn into a pious person at the end of the



month. One who fasts, recites the Qur'an often and prays to Allah at night, including offering *Tarawih* Prayers, does not turn automatically into a pious person. This is not the end of his test. It signifies, at most, that he did not eat or drink during the daytime in Ramadan even what is lawful and wholesome, and he did so at Allah's command. Even a drop of water was not consumed by him. Needless to add, water is one of the greatest divine bounties. Allah has created every living being out of water. A true believer does not eat food during the daytime of Ramadan, though he was provided with food by Allah. He had food items at home bought out of his lawful earnings. Yet he did not take food or water, though he needed these as a human being. Only in deference to Allah's command did he not touch these. For Allah has promulgated that a believer should not take these otherwise lawful and wholesome things from dawn to dusk. Not a drop of water should pass his lips. Since one does all this in accordance with Allah's command, one should make a point of living by His directives after Ramadan as well. One should discern between the lawful and the unlawful. We are very sensitive to any impurity. Let us bear in mind that disobedience to Allah is the most damaging impurity.

As we forego lawful and wholesome things during Ramadan in deference to Allah's command, we should not draw near any sin after the month of Ramadan is over. We should not do

anything which may displease Him. Nor should we ever tell a lie. By the same token, we should not give any false testimony or hurt any fellow Muslim's feelings. We should not deny anyone his due or indulge in slandering. We should refrain from stealing, injustice, violence, and hurting others. Piety consists in shunning all that is sinful, impure and immoral. A constant effort to keep away from evil constitutes piety.

There is some difference between an act of worship and piety. The latter represents an outlook and temperament. One may perform acts of worship. However, in a state of anger and in mundane transactions one may disregard the spirit of one's worship. This underscores a lack of piety. One's mind should be permeated with piety. Fasting is prescribed for Muslims for instilling piety into their minds and hearts. One should think all along of one's ultimate return and accountability to Allah.

Piety signifies God-consciousness. One should weigh up before doing anything whether this act will please or enrage Allah. One should ascertain first whether such action is in accord with the *Shariah* or not, and whether it is lawful or not. One's action should follow the command of Allah and His Messenger. Becoming habitual about this constant checking infuses piety into one. This is the rationale behind declaring fasting in Ramadan as an obligatory duty. For it may bless one with piety. ■

## VIRTUES OF RAMADAN

Hazrat Abu Hurairah (R.A.) narrates that Rasulullah, Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam, said: "My Ummat (followers) has been bestowed five (distinguishing features) peculiarities about Ramdhan which previous Ummat didn't receive:

1. The smell emitted from their mouth is more admirable to Allah than the fragrance of musk.
2. The fish of the river seek forgiveness for them till Iftar (break of,fast)
3. The Paradise is adorned everyday for them, thereafter, Allah, His Majesty and the Honourable says: Shortly My pious slaves will advance towards you, casting away their worldly hardships.
4. The arrogant devils (Shayatin) are imprisoned, so they can not reach to those vices to which they could reach in months other than Ramdhan.
5. The fast- keepers are forgiven on the last night of Ramdhan. Sahaba (R.A.) (The Companions) asked: Is this night of forgiveness, night of Qadar? He said: No, however it is the rule that labour is given the compensation as soon as he finishes his work. And as per Ibn Habban's narration: The angels seek forgiveness instead of the fish".

Hazrat Jabir bin AbdAllah (R.A.) narrates that Rasulullah, Sallallahu alai hi wa sallam, said: My Ummat (followers) has been bestowed five peculiarities about Ramdhan, which previous Ummats didn't receive.

1. When it is the first night of Ramdhan, Allah casts Glance of Mercy upon His slaves and whom He has seen with Merciful-look, will not punish him.
2. Their mouth-smell by the time of evening is more admirable than the fragrance of musk.
3. The angels invoke for their forgiveness by day and night.
4. Allah, His Majesty and the Honourable commands the Paradise: Get ready and get adorned, shortly My slaves will relieve from the worldly hardships and tiredness and take rest comfortably in My House.
5. When it is the last night Allah, the High, forgives all the fast-keepers. "A companion (R.A.) asked: Is this night, the Night of Qadr ? He said: Have you not seen the labours. "When they finish their work, their wages are paid fully.

Hazrat Abu Saeed Khudri (R.A.) narrates that Rasulullah, Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam, said: (the month of) "Ramdhan is the month of my Ummat (followers). When a Muslim kept fast and he neither lied nor back-bited, and broke his fast by legal (Halal) sustenance; and walked for Fajr and Isha prayer in the darkness of night and kept discharging other obligations, then, he would emerge from his sins as the snake casts off its slough". ■

## Fasting in Different Religions

-Shahul Hameed

Voluntary abstinence from food has been a spiritual purification rite in many religions. Penitence purification, mourning, sacrifice and enhancement of knowledge and powers were some of the aims of fasting envisaged by these religions. Even philosophers, scientists and physicians of the past adopted fasting as a healing process needed to recreate health where there was sickness. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Galen, Paracelsus, and Hippocrates all believed in fasting as a form of therapy (Haas).

We find in scriptures such as the Bible, for example, prophets like Moses, Elijah, Daniel and Jesus resorting to fasting for the sake of spiritual purification as a means of communication with God. The Qur'an also indicates that fasting is a religious practice common to the religions of the past:

[O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, in order that you attain piety. ] (Al-Baqarah 2:183)

### Fasting in Judaism

The Jewish calendar contains comparatively few regular fast-days. Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement), is the only fast-day prescribed by the

Mosaic Law:

And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls and do no work at all. whether it be one of your own country or a stranger that sojourneth among you: For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord. It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever (Leviticus 16:29-31).

The Jews observe ten days of repentance starting with Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year) and ending with Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement). This is a time to consider the sins of the previous year and repent.

Yom Kippur is the day on which Jews believe that the fates of all Jews are to be sealed for the coming year. This day is held to be the most solemn and serious day in the Jewish calendar, which involves grieving for sins committed in the past year as well as praying for forgiveness.

On this day, Jews fast for 25 hours from sundown on the previous evening until sundown the next night. To the Jews, fasting is more than just

refraining from drinking and eating: working on fast days is not permitted. and having \*\* relations and bathing, as well as using ointments and leather shoes are prohibited.

The fast begins with a special evening service known as Kol Nidre (All Vows) and synagogue services last for the whole of the following day until the fast ends. It is also customary among many Jewish communities to fast on the eve of New Year's Day: Rosh Ha-shanah.

Besides Yom Kippur, there were four regular fast-days established by Jewish tradition to keep the memory of various sad events that affected the Jewish nation during their captivity. According to some scholars of the Talmud these fasts were obligatory only when the nation was under oppression, but not when there was peace for Israel.

The Synagogue is also empowered to impose fasting in case of a misfortune befalling the people, stich as pestilence famine or an evil decree enforced by the ruler of the day.

The Jewish fasts normally begin at sunrise and end with the appearance of the first stars of the evening, (with the exception of Yom Kippur, which lasts from sundown to sundown). The giving of charity on a fast-day, specially the distribution of food necessary for the evening meal, is encouraged (Jewish Encyclopedia).

## **Fasting in Christianity**

From the Sermon on the Mount we know that Jesus instructed his earliest disciples to fast:

When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen: and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you (Matthew 6:16).

It is obvious that the kind of fast prescribed by Jesus was already familiar to the Jewish community, as there is no record that he taught any change. Therefore, it must have been complete abstinence from food and drink, as the above verses indicate. That is why he spoke of putting oil on the head and washing the face so that the tiredness of fasting may not be obvious to others.

Today, many Christians following the guidelines of the Church do not practice this kind of fasting; they avoid eating meat for a few days: or in some cases eat only one meal a day during the fast. And there is no ban on drinks either. This may be because the New Testament does not give any details as to how to fast.

Lent, which is observed by Roman Catholic, Anglican, and certain other churches, is a forty-day period of fasting and penitence in emulation of Jesus Christ's example in his fast in the wilderness (deserts) of Judea.

The first main component of Lent is the obligation of abstinence which applies to all older than 14. For Roman Catholics, abstinence means not eating meat in any form, but not including fish. But there is also a concept of "partial abstinence", meaning eating meat only once per day.

On three occasions in the Bible, people fasted for forty days. The first occasion was when Moses received the Ten Commandments (Exodus 34:28). The next occasion was when Elijah encountered God before the anointing of Elisha (I Kings 19). The third occasion for such a fast was when Jesus was in the wilderness and tempted by Satan (Matthew 4:2).

There are many reasons given in the Bible for fasting. It is seen as an act of sacrifice that reminds Christians of God and through fasting, while the flesh is denied comfort, the spirit is strengthened.

### **Fasting in Hinduism**

On this day, Hindu devotees fast during the day and keep vigil during the night in prayer and meditation.

Fasting in Hinduism is the denial of the physical needs of the body for

the sake of spiritual gains. According to Hindu scriptures, fasting helps create an attunement with the Absolute by establishing a harmonious relationship between the body and the soul.

Hindus believe that this counters the tendency of people to be obsessed with worldly indulgences, and not allowing time for spiritual attainment. Worshippers are advised to impose restraints on themselves to get their mind properly focused. One form of this restraint is fasting.

Fasting is prescribed on all Ekadasi days. Ekadasi is a Sanskrit word that refers to the 11th day of the lunar fortnight, twice a month (Bowker. 173).

Vedic scriptures strongly recommend observing a complete fast on the day of Ekadasi (without drinking water). Everyone from the age of eight to eighty irrespective of caste, gender or any material consideration, is recommended to fast on this day to make spiritual progress.

Those who cannot perform the austerity of complete fasting, can follow Ekadasi by eating once a day at midday, or eating once a day in the evening. However, under no conditions should one eat grains in any form on this day.

On this day, devotees fast during the day and keep vigil during the night in prayer and meditation. Observing Ekadasi, it is believed, would destroy

all sins and purify the mind.

Fasting is seen not only as a part of worship: it is also a training of the mind and the body to endure all hardships and to persevere under difficulties and not give-up.

### **Fasting in Islam**

In Islam, fasting is an important act of worship done for Allah. whereby a Muslim draws closer to His Lord by abandoning food, drink, and intercourse from sunset to sundown. Because of this, the sincerity of faith and devotion to Allah should become all the more evident. The believer knows that Allah will love him when he or she is ready to abandon for Allah's sake the things he or she most desires.

Fasting the lunar month of Ramadan is obligatory upon every Muslim, male or female, who is adult (i.e., has reached puberty), sane, healthy, and not traveling, as the Qur'an points out:

[Ramadan is the (month) in which was sent down the Qur'an as a guide to mankind, also clear (Signs) for guidance and judgment (Between right and wrong). So everyone of you who is present (at his home) during that month should spend it in fasting, but if anyone is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed period (Should be made up) by days later. Allah intends every facility for you; He does not want to put to difficulties. (He wants you) to complete the

prescribed period and to glorify Him in that He has guided you; and perchance ye shall be grateful.] (Al-Baqarah 2: 185)

The Islamic fast involves a free decision on the part of the believer to renounce the temptations of all appetites and desires of the flesh during the day time for the whole month.

There are other kinds of voluntary fasting like fasting on Mondays and Thursdays of each week, fasting 3 days in the middle of the lunar month, and fasting on the day of 'Ashura' and the day of Arafah.

According to Muslims fasting means abstaining from food, drink and intercourse from dawn to sunset. Muslims are also supposed to abstain from lying, backbiting and arguing, as the Prophet Muhammad indicated: "Fasting is not merely abstaining from eating and drinking. Rather, it is also abstaining from ignorant and indecent speech. So if anyone abuses you or behaves ignorantly to you, then say: I am fasting. I am fasting" (Al-Hakim).

The chief objective of fasting in Islam is to develop Allah's consciousness, leading to the blossoming forth of goodness and virtue in life because the kind of self-restraint learnt from fasting is capable of strengthening the will to lead a better and purer life in this world, which in turn will lead to an eternal life of happiness in the next. ■

## The Holy Quran - A Miracle

-S. Sulaiman Nadwi

Say: Verily, though mankind and the *Jinn* should assemble to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof though they were helpers one of another.

(17: 88)

Among the signs (miracles) which were granted to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) from Allah, the greatest sign (miracle) was that of the Holy Qur'an. So when the disbelievers demanded miracles, it was said to them:

And they say: Why are not portents sent down upon him from his Lord? Say: Portents are with Allah only, and I am but a plain warner. Is it not enough for them that We have sent down unto them the Scripture which is read unto them?

(29: 50, 51)

And the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also said that as compared with the miracles of the other Prophets (peace be upon them), his Divine revelations stand as the greatest miracle of Allah. Explaining the above verse of the Holy Qur'an, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

There was sent no Prophet amongst the Prophets of Allah but he had been given such signs (miracles) as clever saw them affirmed his faith. And the sign (miracle) which was granted to me was the revelations which descended

upon me from Allah. Therefore, I hope that the number of my followers would be the largest on the Day of Resurrection. This *Hadith* elucidates the following points.

1. Every Prophet had been sent with some signs or miracles.
2. The miracles of the other Prophets were for the time being but the miracle of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) is extraordinary in the sense that it is abiding and lasting and it will remain till eternity.
3. The impact of this miracle i.e. the Holy Qur'an, is also eternal enduring, and it will continue to attract and enlighten the people for ever.

Among the signs (miracles) granted to him (the Holy Prophet) This is the only sign about which it has been Stressed by Allah, the Exalted. Himself declaring: Is there anyone who produces the like thereof? Then He says: And if ye to it not and ye can never *do it- then guard* against the fire prepared for disbelievers.

Say verily, though mankind and the *Jinn* should assemble to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof though they were helpers one of another.

(17:88)

In the *Surah* Hud, the disbelievers have been asked to produce only ten *Surahs* like the *Surahs* of the Holy Qur'an.

Or they say: He hath invented it. Say: Then bring ten Surahs: the like thereof, invented, and call on every one ye can besides Allah, if ye are truthful.

(11: 13)

This challenge is reduced further and they are asked to produce only one *Surah* like any *Surah* of the Holy Qur'an.

If ye are in doubt concerning that We reveal unto Our slave (Muhammad), then produce a *Surah* of the like thereof, and call your witnesses besides Allah if ye are truthful.

And if ye do it not and ye can never do it-then guard yourself against the fire prepared for disbelievers, whose fuel is of men and stones.

(2 :23, 24)

In the *Surah Tur*, the disbelievers are asked to produce a speech like the Holy Qur'an.

Or say they: He hath invented it? Nay, but they will not believe.

Then let them produce speech the like thereof, if they are truthful.

(52 : 33, 34)

There is consensus of opinion on the point that the Holy Qur'an is a miracle; but it needs to be considered in what sense and why it is called a miracle.

1. According to some *Mu'tazilites*, the style of the Holy Qur'an is not less than a miracle. Its style is quite distinct and different from the Arabian literature. It has a natural, extempore, plain and charming style which was not found among the Arabs. The style of their literature was mainly poetic. The ancient *Kahins* or Arabian oracle mongers' style of prose was difficult and ostentatious. The Holy

Qur'an adopted a novel and beautiful style between poetry and prose which the Arabs could not even think. The fluency in reciting the Holy Qur'an, the beautiful beginning and ending of rhymed verses—all these things are but a miracle.

2. As regards the beauty of its language and eloquence, right from *Mu'tazilites* to *Jahiziya* and the *Ash'ariya* all consider the Holy Qur'an as a great miracle.

3. The *Mu'tazilites* and Ibn Hazm Zahin also believe in the miraculous excellence of the Holy Qur'an and Imam Razi affirms this fact. The greatest wonder of the Holy Qur'an is that the Almighty Allah made the tongues of all the Arabs and Non-Arabs speechless and dumb before the Holy Qur'an. The Makkahns demanded of him a miracle, and with remarkable boldness and confidence, Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) appealed as supreme confirmation of his mission to the Qur'an itself. He said: Well then, if the Qur'an were his own composition, other men could rival it. Let them produce verses like it. If they could not then let them accept -the Qur'an.

4. According to some scholars, the wonder of the Holy Qur'an lies in unfolding the mysteries of the unseen and the prophecies which are not within the power of a common man.

5. Some '*Ulama*' are of the view that the miraculous power of the Holy Qur'an lies in the exposition of hidden realities which are beyond the perception of a human being.

6. In the opinion of some other persons, the main reason for its being a



miracle is that human literature can be divided into different categories i.e. superior, inferior, excellent, defective, right, wrong, good, bad, etc., but a study of the Holy Qur'an will reveal that it maintains its excellence and accuracy from the beginning to the end.

7. Some argue that the Holy Qur'an is a miracle as it was not expected that such eloquent words could be heard from the tongue of an unlettered person.

8. Another reason for its being a miracle is that its impressive language stirred and moved the hearts of even those who were least inclined to listen.

9. Some attribute it to the excellent teachings and commandments and instructions (regarding moral conduct and behaviour).

10. In short, the wonders of the Holy Qur'an are so many that it is not possible to explain them all in words. We quote here some verses of the Holy Qur'an in which Allah, the Exalted, has explained the virtues of the Holy Qur'an in His own words:

**Clarity and Eloquence**

And We know well that they say: Only a man teaches him. The speech of him at whom they falsely hint is outlandish, and this is clear Arabic speech.

(16:103)

In plain Arabic speech.

(26:195)

A lecture in Arabic, containing no crookedness, that haply they may ward off (evil).

(39 : 28)

**Uniform and Without Contradiction**

Will they not ponder on the Qur'an? If it had been from other than Allah

they would have found therein much incongruity.

(4 : 82)

**Heart-Moving and Effective**

And surely there hath come unto them news whereof the purport should deter.

Effective wisdom;

(54: 4, 5)

The disbelievers considered the Holy Qur'an as magic and witchcraft due to its deep impact on the heart and mind. The disbelievers asked their men to make a loud noise when the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) recited the Holy Qur'an so that the people could not listen to it.

Those who disbelieve say: Heed not this Qur'an, and drown the hearing to it; haply ye may conquer.

(41: 26)

**Instructions and Guidance**

This is the Scripture whereof there is no doubt, a guidance unto those who ward off (evil).

(2: 2)

Lo! this Qur'an guideth unto that which is straightest.

(17: 9)

Say (unto them, O Muhammad): Then bring a Scripture from the presence of Allah that giveth clearer guidance than these two (that) I may follow it, if ye are truthful.

(28:49)

Now hath come unto you light from Allah and a plain Scripture.

( 5:15)

Lo! those who disbelieve in the Reminder when it cometh unto them (are guilty), for lo! it is an unassailable Scripture.

Falsehood cannot come at it from before it or behind it. (It is) a revelation from the Wise the Owner of Praise.

Naught is said unto thee (Muhammad) save what was said unto messengers before thee. Lo! thy Lord is Owner of forgiveness, and Owner also of dire punishment.

And if We had appointed it a lecture in a foreign tongue they would assuredly have said: If only its verses were expounded (so that we might understand)?

What! A foreign language and an Arab? Say unto them (O Muhammad): For those who believe it is a guidance and a healing; and as for those who disbelieve it is a deafness in their ears and it is blindness for them

(41 : 41-44)

O mankind! There has come unto you an exhortation from your Lord. A balm for that which is in the breasts a guidance and mercy for believers.

(10: 58)

### **The Inimitability of the Holy Qur'an**

Say: Verily, though mankind and the *Jinn* should assemble to produce the like of this Qur'an they could not produce the like thereof.

(17: 88)

And if ye do it not-and ye can never do it.

(2: 24)

### **Recital of the Qur'an by an Unlettered Person**

And thou (O Muhammad) was not a reader of any scripture before it, nor

didst thou write it with thy right hand, for then might those have doubted, who follow falsehood.

But it is clear revelations in the hearts of those who have been given knowledge and none deny our revelations save wrong-doers.

And they say: Why are not portents sent down upon him from his Lord? Say: Portents are with Allah only, and I am but a plain warner.

Is it not enough for them that We have sent down unto thee the Scripture which is read unto them? Lo! herein verily is mercy, and a reminder for folk who believe.

(29 : 48 - 51)

### **The Promise of Allah for its Protection**

And lo! We verily are its guardian.

(15 : 9)

Unais was a poet of al-Ghifari tribe. He heard about the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He came to Makkah and listened to a few verses of the Holy Qur'an from him (the Holy Prophet) and came back. Abu Dharr said to him: What do the people say about him? He said: They say that he is a poet or a *Kahin* or a magician. Unais who was himself one of the poets said: I have heard the words of a *Kahin* but his words in no way resemble his (*Kahin's*) words. And I also compared his words to the verses of poets but such words cannot be uttered by any poet. By Allah, he is Truthful and they are liars. ■

## Islam and Justice

Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

The most striking aspect of Islam is to foster justice and equality amongst a variety of nations regardless of caste, creed, colour and region. A cursory look on the life of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) shows a lot of instances which manifest his judicious and fair treatment with Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) declares that "He is not of us who sides with his tribe in aggression, and he is not of us who calls others to help him in tyranny, and he is not of us who dies while assisting his tribe in injustice."

Once, a woman belonging to a noble family of Madina was caught while committing a theft. The case was put up before the prophet and it was pleaded that she may be spared. The Prophet replied "Nations that lived before you were destroyed by God because they punished the common men for their offences but let their dignitaries go unpunished for their crimes. I swear by God who holds my life in His hand that even if Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad, had committed this crime I would have got her hand amputated." The Prophet holds that: "Give equitable punishment to the remote and near and have no fear of reproach of people in enforcement of his limits setup by God.

In this context we may refer to the Prophet Muhammad's last sermon at Mecca". No Arab has any superiority over a non Arab nor does a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab nor does a white man any , superiority over black man, or the black man any superiority on the white man you are all children of Adam and Adam was created from clay" The Almighty Allah says: O ye believe! Be a staunch in justice, witness for Allah, even though it be against yourselves or your parents or your kindred, whenever the cause be of a rich man or poor man, for Allah is nearer unto both than ye are. So follow not passion lest ye lapse from truth and if ye lapse or fall away then lo! Allah is ever informed of what you do" (iv:138)

It goes without saying that "In the battle of Siffin Hazrat Ali lost his armour. After a few days he noticed a Christian wearing on that armour. He referred the case to Qazi Shurai and appeared before him along with the Christian who said that the armour was his own and argued that possession was proof of its ownship. Hazrat Ali could not produce any witness to support his claim. Qazi Shurai had some hesitation in announcing his judgement. The Caliph exhorted him to

*(Continued on page 28)*

## Introduction to Science in Islam

-Yusuf Al-Hajj Ahmad

In Islam, seeking knowledge is an act of worship. Worship means submission to Allah in all that He commands and prohibits. Linguistically, knowledge means knowing the reality of something. Submission to Allah, the Exalted, and worshiping Him necessitates knowledge about Allah, though knowing Him physically is impossible for He sees and He is not seen. He says about Himself:

"No vision can grasp Him, but He Grasps all vision. He is *Al-Latif* (the Most Subtle and Courteous), Well-Acquainted with all things." (*Soorah Al-An'am* 6: 1 03)

It is also impossible that He should have a like Him. He says about Himself:

"There is nothing like Him; and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer." (*Soorah Ash-Shoora* 42:11)

And He is far above having a partner. He says:

"He has no partner. And of this I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims." (*Soorah Al-An'am* 6:163)

Then, how can He be known so that He can be worshipped and obeyed? That is the obligation of man. Allah has endowed him with reason

and senses with which he can discover Him through reflection on manifestations of the universe and through His wonderful creations and great Signs. Those who are able to make this discovery are the intelligent ones.

The Glorious Qur'an has illustrated manifestations of this universe and invited human minds to reflect on its wonderful creation. It presents an illustration of the Earth, and the mountains that are fixed upon it and the seas that run beneath it. Allah says in the Qur'an:

"And He has affixed into the Earth mountains standing firm, lest it should shake with you, and rivers and roads, that you may guide yourselves." (*Soorah An-Nahl* 16: 15)

He also Says:

"Have We not made the Earth as a bed, and the mountains as pegs?" (*Soorah An-Naba'* 78:6-7)

The Qur'an presents an illustration of the sea and what benefits man is endowed with from it in the following sayings:

"And He it is Who has subjected the sea (to you), that you eat thereof fresh tender meat (fish), and that

you bring forth out of it ornaments to wear. And you see the ships plowing through it, that you may seek (thus) of His Bounty (by transporting the goods from place to place) and that you may be grateful." (*Soorah An-Nahl* 16:14)

"And the two seas (kinds of water) are not alike: this is fresh sweet and pleasant to drink, and that is salt and bitter. And from them both you eat fresh tender meat (fish), and derive the ornaments that you wear. And you see the ships cleaving (the seawater as they sail through it), that you may seek of His Bounty, and that you may give thanks: (*Soorah Fatir* 35: 12)

It also illustrates the miraculous phenomena of seas:

"And it is He Who has let free the two seas (kinds of water): one palatable and sweet, and the other salt and bitter; and He has set a barrier and a complete partition between them." (*Soorah Al-Furqan* 25:35)

And:

"He has let loose the two seas (the salty and fresh water) meeting *together*. Between them is a barrier which none of them can transgress. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinn and men) deny?" (*Soorah Ar-Rahman* 55:19-21)

It illustrates the natural phenomena of the heaven and its relationship with the Earth:

"And among His Signs is that He shows you the lightning, for fear and for hope, and He sends down water (rain) from the sky, and therewith revives the earth after its death. Verily, in that are indeed Signs for a people who understand: (*Soorah Ar-Rum* 30:24)

And:

"It is He who shows you the lightning, as a fear (for travelers) and as a hope (for those who wait for rain). And it is He Who brings up (or originates) the clouds. heavy (with water). And *Ar-Ra'd* (thunder) glorifies and praises Him, and so do the angels because of His Awe, He sends the thunderbolts, and therewith He strikes whom He wills, yet they (disbelievers) dispute about Allah. And He is Mighty in strength and Severe in punishment." (*Soorah Ar-Ra'd* 13:12-13)

Allah thereby established the foundations of the science of nature.

The Qur'an presents the picture of the heaven and what is in its space of planets and stars:

"And indeed, We have put the big stars in the heaven and We beautified it for the beholders." (*Soorah Al-Hijr* 15:16)

Allah made the stars a guide for humans. He says:

"It is He Who has set the stars *for* you, so that you may guide your course with their help through the darkness of the land and the sea. We have (indeed) explained in detail Our Ayat (proofs, evidences, Verses, lessons, Signs, Revelations, etc.) for people who know." (*Soorah Al-An' am* 6:97)

The Qura'n presents the picture of the sun and the moon and defines their relationship with the Earth and human life:

"And We have appointed the night and the day as two *Ayat* (Signs, etc.). Then, We have obliterated the sign of the night (with darkness) while We have made the sign of day illuminating, that you may seek bounty from your Lord, and that you may know the number of the years and the reckoning. And We have explained everything (in detail) with full explanation." (*Soorah Al-Isra* 17: 12)

"He merges the night into the day (i.e. the decrease in the hours of the night are added to the hours of the day), and He merges the day into the night (i.e. the decrease in the hours of the day are added to the hours of the night). And He has subjected the sun and the moon: each runs its course for a term appointed." (*Soorah Fatir* 35:13)

Allah thereby laid the foundation of astrology.

The Qur'an presents illustrations of water and plants and their relationship with human and animal life:

"Have they not seen how We drive water to the dry land that has no vegetation, and therewith bring forth crops providing food for their cattle and themselves? Will they not then see?" (*Soorah As-Sajdah* 32:27)

The Qur'an presents the pictures of botanical life and development:

"See you not that Allah sends down water (rain) from the sky, and causes it to penetrate the earth, (and then makes it to spring up) as water-springs, and afterward thereby produces crops of different colors, and afterward they wither and you see them turn yellow; then He makes them dry and broken pieces. Verily, in this is a Reminder for men of understanding." (*Soorah Az-Zumar* 39:21)

It then mentions the different kinds of fruits:

"And it is He Who produces gardens trellised and untrellised, and date-palms, and crops of different shape and taste (their fruits and their seeds) and olives, and pomegranates, similar (in kind) and different (in taste). Eat of their fruit

when they ripen, but pay the due thereof (its *Zakat*, according to Allah's Orders 1/10th or 1 /20th) on the day of its harvest, and waste not by extravagance. Verily, He likes not *Al-Musrifoon* (those who waste by extravagance)." (*Soorah Al-An'am* 6:141)

And:

"He it is Who sends down water (rain) from the sky; from it you drink and from it (grows) the vegetation on which you send your cattle to pastures. With it He causes to grow for you the crops, the olives, the date-palms, the grapes, and every kind of fruit. Verily! In this is indeed an evident proof and a manifest sign for people who give thought." (*Soorah An-Nahl*16:10-11)

And thereby was laid the foundation of botanical science.

After that, the Qur'an presents illustrations on the origin of animal life and different kinds of animals:

"Allah has created every moving (*living*) creature from water. Of them there are some that creep on their bellies, some that walk on two legs, and some that walk on four. Allah creates what He wills. Verily! Allah is Able to do all things," (*Soorah An-Noor* 24:45)

It then illustrates human life and its phases:

"And indeed We created man (Adam) out of an extract of clay (water and earth), Thereafter, We made him (the offspring of Adam) as a *Nutfah* (mixed drops of the male and female sexual discharge and lodged it) in a safe lodging (womb of the woman). Then We made the *Nutfah* into a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood), then We made the clot into a little lump of flesh, then We made out of that little lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, and then We brought it forth as another creation. So Blessed is Allah, the Best of creators." (*Soorah Al-Mu'minoon* 23:12-14)

And:

"O mankind! If you are in doubt about the Resurrection, then verily We have created you (i.e. Adam) from dust, then from a *Nutfah* (mixed drops of male and female sexual discharge i.e. offspring of Adam), then from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood) then from a little lump of flesh - some formed and some unformed (as in the case of miscarriage) - that We may make (it) clear to you (i.e. to show you Our Power and Ability to do what We will). And We cause whom We will to remain in the wombs for an appointed term, then We bring you out as infants, then (give you growth) that you may reach your

age of full strength. And among you there is he who dies (young), and among you there is he who is brought back to the miserable old age, so that he knows nothing after having known:' (Soorah Al-Hajj 22:5)

Allah thereby was laid the foundations of biology.

The Qur'an also presents an illustration of how to live a healthy life by prohibiting excessiveness in eating and drinking:

"And eat and drink but waste not by extravagance, certainly He (Allah) likes not *Al-Musrifoon* (those who waste by extravagance):' (Soorah Al-A'raf 7:31)

Maintaining moderation in eating and drinking leads to a healthy life while excessiveness in them leads to illness. The Verse thereby laid the foundation for the science of medicine.

The Qur'an then makes a comprehensive illustration of all the above:

"Verily! In the creation of the heavens and the Earth, and in the alternation of night and day, and the ships which sail through the sea with that which is of use to mankind, and the water (rain) which Allah sends down from the sky and makes the earth alive therewith after its death, and the moving (living) creatures of all kinds that He has scattered

therein, and in the veering of winds and clouds which are held between the sky and the Earth, are indeed *Ayat* (proofs, evidences and Signs, etc.) for people of understanding." (Soorah Al-Baqarah 2:164)

And:

"Verily, in the heavens and the Earth are signs for the Believers. And in your creation, and what He scattered (through the Earth) of moving (living) creatures are signs for people who have Faith with certainty. And in the alternation of night and day, and the provision (rain) that Allah sends down from the sky, and revives therewith the earth after its death, and in the turning about of the winds (i.e. sometimes toward the East or North, and sometimes toward the South or West sometimes bringing glad tidings of rain, etc., and sometimes bringing the torment), are signs for a people who understand." (Soorah Al-Jathiyah 45:3-5)

The Qur'an then invites man to travel through the Earth, examine its paths and discover its peoples and tribes:

"O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honorable of you with Allah is that (believer) who has



*At-Taḡwa* [i.e. he is one of the *Muttaḡoon* (the pious, See V. 2:2)].”  
(*Soorah Al-Hujurat* 49: 13)

It invites man to discover stories of past nations and peoples in order to learn lessons from what happened to them:

“Do they not travel in the land, and see what was the end of those before them?” (*Soorah Ar-Rum* 30:9)

“Many similar ways (and mishaps of life) were faced by nations (Believers and disbelievers) that have passed away before you (as you have faced in the Battle of Uhud), so travel through the Earth, and see what was the end of those who disbelieved (in the Oneness of Allah, and disobeyed Him and His Messengers),” (*Soorah Aal ‘Im ran* 3:137)

“Say: ‘Travel in the land and see how (Allah) originated creation, and then Allah will bring forth the creation of the Hereafter (i.e. resurrection after death). Verily, Allah is Able to do all things.’”  
(*Soorah Al-Ankabut* 29:20)

And thereby was laid the foundations of geography and history. This is the Noble Qur’ an, which is the source of knowledge about life in all its manifestations, and the source of knowledge of the universe in all its aspects. It contains regulatory

principles for the lives of individuals and groups. It also includes rules of a sound society, in which security and justice prevail, and that is dominated by prosperity and righteousness.

Verses of the Qur’an are clearly explained. The Qur’an has a miraculous melody that captivates ears and establishes itself in man’s conscience and leads to his guidance. When the mind seeks guidance through it, it becomes a light by which man discovers secrets of life and universe, leading him to discovering Allah by means of certain and sound knowledge that is based on sound faith.

It is in the light of this that it is incumbent upon a student, in order to become a scholar, to understand the Qur’an with its *Tafseer* (exegesis) while benefiting from the Arabic language and its syntax. He should endeavor to have accurate understanding of the Qur’an with the help of rhetoric, understand its ruling through *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), know the summaries of these rulings through principles of *Fiqh* and discover the celestial world and its planets through the science of astronomy and the world of Earth with its rivers, seas, animals and plants through science of nature. He should travel through the Earth and discover its paths and landmarks through geographical science. He should thoroughly study stories of the past nations and their events through

the science of history; and should endeavor to know facts about health, symptoms of illnesses and their cure through the science of medicine. Not only that, he should also seek the knowledge of related sciences or sub-sciences. With all this, the Qur'an is the power that spurs the search for knowledge.

Since all these sciences cannot be regarded as equal, as some are richer in details than others, a scholar should endeavor to have enough knowledge of each, in addition to the area in which he specializes.

Ya'qub Al-Kindi and Abu Bakr Ar-Razi were renowned physicians, yet they also had knowledge of philosophy, astronomy and musicology.

**Ibn Sina** was a philosopher, physician, jurist and poet.

**Al-Farabi**, known as a philosopher and musicologist, also had knowledge of medicine.

**Al-Bayruni** was a renowned astronomer, yet he had knowledge of philosophy, mathematics and geography.

**Abu Hanifah Ad-Daynuri** was an astronomer and a mathematician, yet, he had knowledge of botany.

**Ibn An-Nafis** (d. 687 A.H.) although famous for being a physician, also had knowledge of fundamentals of faith and *Hadith*.

**Al-Zamakhshari** (d. 538 A.H.) was a known scholar of *Tafseer*; and he also had knowledge of geography, linguistics and literature.

At Andalusia, **Abu As-Salt Al-Andalusi** (d. 529 A.H.) was a famous physician and philosopher; he also had knowledge of astronomy and mathematics, and he was a poet and musicologist.

**Ibn Bajah** (d. 533 A.H.) was a well-known physician. He also had knowledge of philosophy, mathematics; and he excelled in astronomy, poetry and musicology.

Though **Ibn Tufail** (d.581 AH.) was known as a philosopher, he was also an astronomer and a physician.

As for **Ibn Rushd Al-Hafidh** (d.595 AH.), he was renowned for his erudition in *Fiqh*, jurisprudence, medicine and philosophy.

Likewise, **Ibn Mada' Al-Qurtubi** was well-versed in medicine, mathematics, *Fiqh* and jurisprudence.

**Ibn Layyun At-Tujjibi** (d. 750 AH.) was a famous physician, and he was also well-versed in philosophy, poetry and Islamic law of inheritance.

**Ibn Zahr Al-Hafidh** (d. 596 AH.) was a renowned physician; yet he had knowledge of poetry.

**Ibn Ar-Rumiyyah** (637 AH.) was a famous botanist, yet, he was a scholar of *Hadith*.

Most scholars of that period were like the ones we have mentioned. If anyone of them was asked a question regarding a science and he did not know the answer, he would start studying that science until he had adequate knowledge of it. An example of this is what Ibn Khalikan narrated concerning what happened to Abu Mansur Al-Jawaliqi (d. 539 A.H.) who was a scholar of *Hadith*, linguistics, syntax and literature. A young man came to him while he was a teacher at Baghdad and requested him to explain the meaning of two verses of a poem relating to astronomy. Ibn Mansur replied: "My son, this is about astronomy. It has nothing to do with literature." The young man then went away. Ibn Mansur felt embarrassed to be asked about something without having an answer for it. He then swore that he would not sit down for teaching until he had studied astronomy and had knowledge of the movement of the sun and the moon. After he had learned this science, he resumed his classes and then explained the meaning of the two verses to his students.

Another example of this is what happened to the famous poet, Abu Bakr Al-Abyad Al-Qurtubi (d. 544 AH.). He was once asked a linguistic question in the presence of an audience. He could not find an answer for that question and felt embarrassed. He then vowed that he would keep his legs fettered in iron chains until he acquired

the requisite knowledge. He did so and did not remove the chains until after he had mastered the difficult aspects of the language.

Thus, we realize that knowledge, according to the Islamic perspective, is a unit that encompasses all kinds of sciences; and the noble Qur'an is the source from which every seeker of knowledge derives benefit.

"Here it would be important to mention the observation of two Muslim astronomers who were in the courtyard of a mosque reading the book, *Majesty*, authored by the Greek scholar Batlimous on what was then known as astronomy. Some of the religious scholars passed by them and asked about what they were reading and their response was: 'We are reading it in order to understand the meaning of the Verses:

"Do they not look at the camels, how they are created? And at the heaven, how it is raised And at the mountains, how they are rooted (and fixed firm)? And at the Earth, how it is outspread?" (Soorah Al-Ghashiyah 88:17-20)

This attests to the fact that the Noble Qur'an has opened doors of knowledge that lead to knowing Allah. Therefore, the knowledge that Islam regards as comprehensive is the one that has the impression of the Qur'an on it.

It would be extremely beautiful if students of *Shari'ah* (Islamic legislation) and memorizers of the Qur'an could pay attention to the science of the miracles of the Qur'an and *Sunnah* related to medicine, engineering, astronomy and atomic sciences, as well as any other useful science that could benefit Islam and the Muslims.

Today, we are in the third millennium, the age of revival and scientific progress. People are faced with dazzling scientific openness due to abundant availability of means of communication, such as satellite channels, computers and Internet connections that have turned the world

into a small global village, and have shrunk it into simple devices.

Therefore, preachers and *imams* should not restrict themselves to the knowledge of rulings on certain issues of *Fiqh* and *Tafseer* and be ignorant of what happens around them of other sciences that also have their origin in the Qur'an. Allah commanded us to seek knowledge. He says:

"And say: 'My Lord! Increase me in knowledge'." (*Soorah Ta Ha* 20:114)

We ask Allah to include us, our offspring and our brethren among scholars, who put their knowledge into practice and who sincerely call unto His way. He is the Excellent Protector and the Excellent Helper. ■

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*(Continued from page 19)*

have no regard for high office which he holds a few. The judgement was pronounced against him and he accepted it cheerfully. Islamic history is replete with such events.

The fact is that Islam is not only a metaphysical religion but also a complete code of life and the real emancipator of human beings. It presents remedy to all evils. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad has rightly said: "Even in the modern context Islam alone could provide salvation to the world. What required was true adherence to Islam which provides most comprehensive and perfect law to mankind."

No doubt, being a universal ideology Islam projects an international outlook and offers a sublime solution of all problems and sufferings of human beings. Shaikh Hasan Albanna and Maulana Maudoodi consider Islam as a religion which determines the relation between man and God as well as between man and man. No aspect of life is excluded from Islam and it is, therefore, a complete guide to life and conduct and needs no change or interference. In the words of Sarojini Naidu: "Sense of justice is one of the most wonderful ideals of Islam, because as I read in the Qur'an I find these dynamic but practical ethics for the daily conducts of life suited to the whole world". ■

## Malegaon 2006 Case:

- Sukanya shantha, Amita Nair &  
Rahul Tripathi

The NIA filed a chargesheet against four people — Lokesh Sharma, Dhan Singh, Rajender Chaudhary and Manohar Narwariya — suspected to be members of a right wing extremist group in the 2006 Malegaon bomb blasts case.

According to the chargesheet, which runs into six volumes and over 3,000 pages, the four men from Indore planned the blasts as a “revenge attack” following the attacks on the Raghunath temple in Jammu in 2002, Shramjeevi Express in 2005 and Sankat Mochan temple in Varanasi in 2006.

The four, who are all in custody, have been charged with conspiring and executing the four blasts in Malegaon on September 8, 2006 which claimed 37 lives. They have been booked under several sections of the IPC, MCOCA, Explosive Substances Act, Passport Act and Criminal Law Amendment Act for carrying out terror activities, conspiracy and murder.

The NIA has said investigations against Ramji Kalsangra, Sandeep Dange, Amit Chauhan and Swami Aseemanand are still underway and it will file a supplementary chargesheet later. While the first three are absconding, Aseemanand is in custody.

Interestingly, the NIA has not exonerated the 13 Muslim men named as accused in the case by the ATS and CBI

in 2006. NIA prosecutor Geeta Golambe told the court that today's chargesheet was filed against accused number 14-17. She, however, did not brief the court about the first 13 named in the case. No application was moved to discharge them either.

Nine of the 13 accused named earlier were arrested. While seven were granted bail in 2011 following Aseemanand's confessional statement that the Malegaon blasts were executed by a Hindu group, two remain in jail in connection with a different case.

In its chargesheet today, the NIA said the four bombs were made in Indore by Chauhan, Dange and Kalsangra, with slain RSS pracharak Sunil Joshi in charge of the logistics. The cycles for the blasts were reportedly purchased by Chaudhary and Narwariya. The duo, along with Kalsangra and Dhan Singh are reported to have planted the bombs.

The men were highly inspired by Joshi's “Hindutva ideology” and wanted to “help the cause of Hindu brothers who were suffering atrocities in Jammu and Kashmir”, said the NIA. The accused are alleged to have assembled at a Dewas camp at Bagli village, where a few Marathi-speaking men with Joshi and Kalsangra demonstrated how to make bombs. According to officials, it was Kalsangra who zeroed in on Malegaon,

and the first conspiracy meeting was held in August 2006, in the same Indore room where the bomb was later assembled.

While each of the four accused are reported to have confessed their roles in the recce and execution, it has emerged that Kalsangra identified the spots and gave the final instructions. The NIA has also claimed to have established links between the 2006 Malegaon blasts, 2007 Samjhauta train blasts, Ajmer Sharif and Mecca Masjid blasts.

### **THE OTHER SUSPECTS, ONCE CHARGED, FOREVER CHANGED**

*Years before NIA's chargesheet on the 2006 Malegaon blasts, Maharashtra ATS had charged an entirely different set of men, of whom 7 are out on bail and 2 remain in jail. Smita Nair reports, with Sukanya Shantha and Zeeshan Shaikh*

#### **Dr SALMAN FARSI, 41**

The unani practitioner is putting together resources and getting experts to support a legal aid NGO, Justice Legal Voice, to help prisoners wrongly booked.

In jail, he acquired a habit of eating his food hot. "You waited a while and chapatis would turn hard. We had to eat it hot. The vegetables were never peeled. All this is against the jail rule book, and for crimes many had never committed," he says.

"My wife and I were very busy doctors and had great plans for our three children. Today we have hardly any money to survive," he says. He has saved a print of an article on Dr Mohammed Haneef, compensated by the Australian government after being wrongly accused him of terrorism. "He got compensated

with several crores for 23 days of detention. We have lost five years, with no future," he says.

He was at his clinic in Govandi when the ATS picked him up on November 5, 2006, he says. He was shown as arrested on December 6.

The ATS managed seven confessions out of the nine accused. Farsi was one of the two who refused to sign. "I told them if I signed, I would be executed by the end of the trial. Why wait that long, I told them, kill me now," he says. "They would blindfold me and beat me till I fell unconscious."

Farsi, paternal uncle to Noor-ul-Huda, says that in 2001, he had got a call from Kurla police who said Abu Mokatil was his alias. "There was a poster with verses of the Quran pasted by a man named Abu Mokatil. I didn't know this man, nor were they my posters. I got branded that night. In police records, I became a fundamentalist."

He went on to study law in prison. He recalls preparing in 2010 a 300-page note on why he is not fit to be tried under MCOCA.

#### **NOOR UL-HUDA, 30**

In 2001, a probe into a murder set the Nashik police looking for an accused named Abid Noor. They settled for Noor ul-Huda, then 16, since the "name matched". The court discharged him since nothing else matched.

Put on the SIMI list, he has been under surveillance ever since. He is picked up in every preventive police exercise ahead of a festival or politician's visit. In August 2006, after one of his employers,

Shabbir Masiullah was picked up in connection with the July 11 train blasts, the Ghatkopar crime branch picked him and tried to force him to accept responsibility for 7/11, he alleges. On October 10, the police picked him up again. He went on to spend five years in jail.

"My life changed. I would be taken at night to the ATS's Kalachowkie office. They would beat me with a belt, a constable would sit on my tummy, my body would be held stiff with a rod," he says. "I still wake up at night, my skull aching. Doctors have given up and just tell me not to think about it," he says.

Noor was shown as involved in case relating to a fake bomb found at a shopping complex, but says police wanted him to confess he was involved in the 2006 Malegaon bombings. He says he was taken to Archana Tyagi, additional CP, Bandra. "I told her I am innocent. She asked me to sign the confession or face the wrath of the ATS," says Noor, who got bail in 2011.

"This February, I got a loan and started a shop, but can no longer work long hours," he says. "The ATS took away my dignity, my youth."

#### **SHABBIR MASIULLAH, 42**

He is today an acupressure therapist. What inspired him, he says, was frequent dislocation of joints he suffered because of the torture he allegedly suffered during his five years in jail.

Among the visitors to his battery shop in Melagaon are elderly women with aching knees and young men with dislocated joints.

Masiullah was booked as one of the main conspirators of the 2006 Malegaon blasts. A month earlier, he had been picked up for the 7/11 train blasts, and was made an accused in the Malegaon case while in jail. ATS officials alleged he had visited Pakistan, and accused him of bringing RDX and making the bombs for the Malegaon attack at his godown.

In jail, he met an alleged cheque forger who also practised acupressure. Masiullah approached him to teach him these skills. "He refused, saying it is necessary to know about the body's pressure points," Masiullah said. The other prisoner left a month later.

"With permission from the court and jail authorities, I got books on acupressure," Masiullah says. By the time he left, other prisoners had started calling him "the doctor."

Since his release on bail in 2011, acupressure has been a parallel trade alongside his battery business. He charges Rs 50 for a 45-minute session. "Today, even the man who was the main complainant in the blast case comes to me for treatment," he says.

#### **RAEES AHMED, 42**

Through the five years that he spent in custody and in jail, he says, he broke down only once. He was made to strip naked with Noor ul-Huda, his employee. "You earn a certain level of respect, an identity. Then, inside a dark room at the Kalachowkie ATS office, you are stripped of your rights, your dignity and your last piece of cloth," he says.

Till the police arrived on the night of October 23, 2006, Raees was a father, a husband and a battery trader in partnership with his brother-in-law Shabbir Masiullah. Raees was just back from Saudi Arabia after 10 years as a tailor.

"Shabbir had been picked up in August and the family was already in pain," he says. "I had just completed my prayers and was about to begin my Ramzan fast. They wanted me to go with them for some inquiry, so I did." In the morning, he was shown as arrested.

While in custody, he says, "the ATS men would keep beating me and ask me, 'Tell us why we have bought you here. What is it that you have done?'" He was eventually made to confess. "I kept rolling the word 'confess' in my tongue. I did not know English, till then it was just a word," says Raees, who learnt the meaning later.

Raees today runs a grocery store and is no longer in the battery trade. Shabbir and Raees, with Noor, had once dreamt of becoming the best battery traders in Malegaon.

#### **Dr FAROGH IQBAL MAKHDOOMI, 40**

On November 1, 2006, five days before he was picked up, the surgeon had bought medicine supplies. Over the years, the store wrote it off as a bad debt. He settled it in April 2012.

"It was a sum of Rs 679. It kept bothering me while I was in jail," says Makhdomi, who is very religious. Today, he spends much of his time making notes on all the policemen who "stole my life's peak period".

At his clinic is a red diary, with 2006 inscribed in golden letters. "It constantly

reminds me I have many years to catch up with," he says. The diary keeps records of patients and his accounts.

Medical stock worth Rs 15 lakh, bought in 2006, lies unusable in the clinic's loft. Over the years, the family's savings have gone into jail visits and trips between Malegaon and Mumbai. A six-acre farm is under dispute after some people allegedly duped the family in his absence, and a few other properties had to be sold off. "We are all doctors in the family. I had saved for two decades for a family clinic. It will remain a dream," he says.

In his bedroom are files with replies to 750 RTI applications that he filed from jail. Most are on law and crime. His latest application is on the upkeep of a garden in Malegaon. "I am using all my time on this now."

In 2003, he had started a socio-economic survey on zakat, or charity. "Police conveniently scribbled 'jihad' in place of 'zakat'. I have now taken detailed notes and used the RTI Act to prove everything," he says.

He has studied terror laws since his arrest. "I will clear my name. But I want the courts and society to understand that there are specific sections in our terror laws that give unnecessary powers to police," he says. "My story will not end with my discharge. I have a larger purpose now."

#### **MOHAMMED ZAHID ABDUL MAJEED, 32**

In 2006, the police picked up two brothers in separate terror cases, Zahid for the Malegaon blast and Javed, the younger, for the Aurangabad arms haul, both that year. Today, Zahid is out on bail



and Javed remains in jail. Long before that, their father had disowned the elder son.

Ansari Abdul Majeed, 58, recalls the night in December 1998 when a police officer asked him to take his elder son to the police station if he wanted his younger son released. "I knew that neither of my sons was guilty, but if I had to give the police one boy, I preferred Zahid as he roamed with SIMI boys."

Boys were being picked up for "communal posters" and the police were preparing a "SIMI list". "A boy took Javed's name instead of Zahid's," says the father, a teacher.

Zahid says his father thinks "anything religious" is SIMI. "I can't fault him. I was never part of SIMI, but he feels it is because of me that my brother was booked."

In the last five years, the family has met Javed regularly in jail. "I never saw them even once," Zahid says. "Our father doesn't know, but Javed would share everything that came from home — food, money. My father knows I was innocent in 1998, and even in this case. But he is angry, and I will have to wait," Zahid says.

The ATS charged Zahid with being a conspirator who knew of RDX being ferried to Malegaon. "By booking me in a wrong case, they took away a father's trust. But I believe I am out only because of his prayers." The father countered, "I never prayed for him. He can live in that illusion."

Zahid, who used to be a preacher, relies on odd jobs. He has tried welding and opening a food stall. "Nobody has a

job for me. Even if a mosque gives me the job of a preacher, the local cops make it difficult for them."

### **Abrar Ahmed, 39**

A long drawing book he keeps has sketches of places in Nashik, Ujjain, Deolali, Indore and Mumbai. The "forced approver" says these are "dubious places" he was made to visit, escorted by police, in the three months after the blasts.

Abrar was shown as an "approver who identified the rest of the accused". The evidence against him is a phone, which he says was given to him after the blast.

Abrar, then married, dealt in batteries. His wife has since divorced him and remarried. "People started calling me an informer and a man who had cheated those of his faith. Even my wife and brother-in-law turned against me," he says.

He says that on the day of the blasts, he had heard some people take four Hindu names as the perpetrators. With his wife and brother-in-law, he went to SP Rajvardhan. "I was given a phone and made to repeat some lines. These, I am told, were later shown as transcripts of a conversation between me and another accused, Zahid," he says.

At an Army camp in Deolali, he says, an officer named Colonel Prasad Purohit asked him to "cooperate". "It was a strange tour. Everywhere we were taken, I was photographed with strange people, always from the other community and always in religious attire," he recalls. At Ujjain, he says, he wasn't allowed to break his fast and was made to enter a

temple.

"They would take me around, bring me back to ATS and torture me, asking me to admit all the other photographs on the table were those of my co-conspirators. I didn't even know most of them," he says. "There were days when Muslim brothers wouldn't talk to me in jail. Now things are changing. They have learnt I was duped, and I was not an approver," he says.

**Still in jail, though not for Malegaon  
Asif Bashir Khan, 40**

Just 10 when his father, a civil engineer, was picked up from their house in Jalgaon, Sajjad was not clear why. Asif Bashir Khan, granted bail in the Malegaon 2006 charges, remains in jail for the 7/11 case. He was charged with storing, supplying and distributing the RDX used in 7/11; the ATS claims the residue was used in Malegaon.

"His son has just appeared for his Class X exams. I have seen the boy grow up with absolutely no enthusiasm," says Aziz, 38, Asif's brother, also an engineer, who works with a private firm in Jalgaon. Aziz has been supporting his elder brother's family since the arrest.

Asif, a SIMI member once, had left the organisation. Two past cases relating to SIMI activities in Jalgaon were cited while charging him under MCOCA in the Malegaon blast.

His brother visits him in court but his children have not seen him in years. "His two daughters are too young to understand," Aziz says.

With bail in the Malegaon case and the defence pointing out discrepancies in the 7/11 case, the family

is hopeful. "Even if it has taken six years, we are happy that the truth is finally coming out," Aziz said.

**Shaikh Mohammad Ali Alam Shaikh, 37**

His arrest led to his family being boycotted socially. His teenage daughter, eldest of four, then dropped out and is now struggling to complete her primary education.

"Ammi made Didi stay home," says Shaikh's son, now 18.

Of the nine accused, seven were released on bail in 2011. Shaikh, a salesman with a medicine company, remains in custody for 7/11.

The ATS's case was that Shaikh knew Dr Salman Farsi, who too lived in Govandi. The ATS chargesheet says it was at Shaikh's house that conspiracy meetings were held. In May 2006, Shaikh had accompanied Farsi to Malegaon to attend the wedding of his nephew, Noor ul-Huda.

Shaikh and his three brothers lived together in a small house. The brothers now support the family, which also depends on the benevolence of relatives and well-wishers. "My youngest son was three. We were hoping to give him the best education. Today his future is based on whatever help we can manage," his wife Saidunnisa said.

**THE MALEGAON 2006 PROBE  
MISMATCH**

**NIA spells it out: our evidence doesn't  
match that of ATS, CBI**

From suspects who alleged they had made their confessions under duress to witnesses who denied statements attributed to them, the National

investigation Agency has questioned the findings of the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad and the CBI on several counts in its chargesheet on the Malegaon blasts of 2006.

The chargesheet, a copy of which has been accessed by *The Indian Express*, says the evidence collected by the NIA in over two years is not in consonance with that of the ATS or the CBI. The NIA chargesheeted members of a Hindu terror network recently while the ATS, in findings later endorsed by the CBI, had already chargesheeted a group of men with alleged SIMI links, nine of whom it had arrested.

The ATS had cited confessional statements by the nine arrested; the NIA chargesheet notes that these men later told the agency that the statements had been made under duress.

The earlier investigations relied on soil samples supposedly recovered from the godown of Shabbir Masiullah alias Batterywala, and which supposedly contained RDX samples. The new chargesheet says two "Star witnesses", on whose statements the ATS case had been built, have told the NIA they had never been to the spot or testified to any recovery from there.

Zahid Majid Ansari, shown as one of the planters, had pleaded in court that when the blasts took place, he was not in Malegaon but at his home in Yavatmal, 400 kilometres away. The NIA spoke to 12 witnesses, who claimed to have seen Ansari in the village at the time of the blasts.

The NIA cites the case of a witness, who had been shown as present with inspector N P Tandle at a shopping complex from where a fake bomb was allegedly recovered, and who was also shown as a panch witness at the same time at another location, where inspector B M Joshi was examining a body.

Again, witness number 396 who, according to the ATS chargesheet, had claimed he was witness to the preparation of a bomb, and whom the CBI said it could not trace, as questioned by the NIA in 2011. On January 16, 2007, the witness had filed an affidavit before the Allahabad Diwani Adalat that his statement had been taken under duress.

The NIA suggests that Masiullah, chargesheeted by the ATS as one of the key conspirators, was already in custody when the blasts took place on September 8, 2006. It says investigations reveal that Masiullah was in judicial custody with the Ghatkopar crime branch office from August 3 to 11 (this appears to be a typo in place of September ) and was booked in a separate case.

In 2011, the nine arrested Muslim youths were granted bail after Swami Aseemanand stated in a confession that the blasts had been executed by a Hindu group. Two of the nine, however, remain in jail for charges relating to the 7/11 train blasts.

According to the NIA chargesheet, Lokesh Sharma, deceased Sunil Joshi, Shan Singh, Rajendra Chaudhary, Manohar Narwaria, and absconding accused Ramchandra Kalsangra and

Nanded resident Ramesh Venkat Mahalkar alias Amit Hakla had hatched the conspiracy leading to the blasts.

**The officers behind the original probe**

**RAJVARDHAN**, Then SP, Malegaon; Now Addl CP, Economic Offices Wing, Mumbai

The initial investigation was carried out under his supervision. According to Abrar Ahmed, whom the ATS showed as approver in the Malegaon 2006 blasts case, Rajvardhan tried to induce him to frame innocent Muslims but later implicated him too. In an affidavit on April 18, 2009, Abrar alleged that a conversation he had overheard about some Hindu people having executed the blasts, he was taken on September 13, 2006, to the office of Rajvardhan, who allegedly told him Hindus and Muslims were jointly behind the attack, offered him property and money, and told him he was a witness.

Abrar's affidavit describes a September 2006 trip with his wife, allegedly under Rajvardhan's instructions, to Nashik, Jhavra, Indore and some temples in Ujjain, during which he claims policemen photographed and videographed their meetings with a sadhu, a sadhvi and others. It says Rajvardhan had given him a mobile and told him in October to get people he trusted to call him on that number and read out some written statements, which Abrar was to record. It describes an October 2006 trip to Dhule, Indore, Nashik and Deolali, again with his wife. Rajvardhan allegedly met them in Nashik on October 25, told him Abrar's brother had filed a case accusing the officer of kidnapping the

couple, and asked them to deny this in court. Abrar, later taken into custody in Mumbai, alleges Rajvardhan then promised him money, bribed his brother-in-law and father-in-law in 2007, and tried in 2009 to get him to sign on some papers. Abrar's wife has since divorced him.

**K P Raghuvanshi** Then Joint CP, ATS, Maharashtra; Now CP, Thane

Raghuvanshi has been named by several of the nine arrested as having been aware that his junior officers were torturing them. ATS approver Abrar Ahmed has also alleged in interviews to the media that when he was taken from the ATS Kalachowkie unit to its Nagpada headquarters, he was offered Rs 5 lakh for helping the police. In his affidavit, Abrar has alleged that Raghuvanshi met him several times in jail and threatened him in an attempt to get him to sign some papers. Raghuvanshi, given charge of the Maharashtra ATS when it was formed on July 8, 2004, headed the probes into the 2006 Aurangabad arms haul, serial train blasts and the September 8 Malegaon blasts that year. Following ATS chief Hemant Karkare's death in the 26/11 attacks, Raghuvanshi was once again posted as ATS chief and probed the 2008 Malegaon blast case in which Karkare had unearthed the involvement of a Hindu terror network.

**P S PASRICHA**, Then DGP, Maharashtra; Now retired

ATS chief Raghuvanshi reported to Pasricha, who briefed the media on developments and arrests. At a press conference at state police headquarters on November 27, 2006, Pasricha

announced that the case had been solved, and blamed the terror attack on former SIMI members who wanted to create communal tension. Following his retirement, Pasricha served as a chairman of the Nanded Takht (Sri Hajur Sahib).

SUBODH KUMAR JAISWAL, Then addl CP, ATS; Now joint secretary, cabinet secretariat, Govt of India

He was then ATS chief Raghuvanshi's deputy. He has been named by Abrar Ahmed as one of the officers who offered him inducements to make him implicate innocent Muslims. Abrar has alleged Jaiswal met him in jail several times. Several accused have also alleged Jaiswal was aware of junior officers torturing them.

JAIJEET SINGH, Then addl CP, ATS; Now IG, NTRO

He was another of Raghuvanshi's deputies. On December 13, 2006, Singh instructed assistant inspector Sadashiv Raghunath Shelar of the ATS technical cell to retrieve records of a call from the mobile number 9823436809 (which approver Abrar Ahmed has alleged Malegaon SP Rajvardhan had given him). Shelar, who intercepted the call on October 7, 2006, has claimed he "found the call to be incriminating as the calling party was abusing the target and was also talking about removal of some objects". Abrar has alleged that it was on instructions from Rajvardhan that he had got a friend, Hamid Husain Javed Iqbal, to call him on that number and read out from a note given to him. Several accused have alleged that Singh, too, was aware of his junior officers torturing them.

BRIJESH SINGH, Then DCP, Zone 1 Mumbai; Now additional CP (traffic), Mumbai

Abrar Ahmed has alleged that on December 20, 2006, he was taken to Brijesh Singh who, he says, took his signatures on 10-12 sheets and told him they were his release papers. Abrar says he was not allowed to read the papers, which were in Marathi, Hindi and English, and was not allowed to call his brother to read them either. Abrar has alleged Singh told him to keep quiet about this, and offered him land in any part of the country except Kashmir. Singh allegedly assured Abrar he would be released soon.

KISAN SHENGAL, Then assistant CP, ATS; Now retired

He was the investigating officer of the 2006 Malegaon blasts case, and is the officer responsible for filing a chargesheet in the special MCOCA court. Recently, the Maharashtra ATS, in an affidavit submitted to the Bombay High Court, opposed an appeal filed by the accused in the 7/11 train blasts of 2006, seeking the examination of seven witnesses including Shengal who had filed a chargesheet stating the the RDX left over from the train blasts was used for the Malegaon blasts.

ARCHANA TYAGI, Then SP, Thane (Rural); Now special IGP (admin), Maharashtra Police HQ

She recorded the confessional statement of one of the Malegaon blasts accused, Mohammed Zahid Abdul Majid Ansari, under MCOCA. Zahid has since claimed that he could not have planted bombs (the charge against him) as he was at a mosque in Yavatmal district, miles

from Malegaon, when the explosions took place.

**AMITABH GUPTA**, Then DCP, Zone 9 Mumbai; Now special IGP (training), Maharashtra

He recorded the confessional statement of Shabbir Ahmed Masiullah, who has claimed he was in the custody of the Ghatkopar crime branch when the Malegaon blasts took place. Shabbir has alleged he was made to sign on a confession prepared in advance.

**DHANJAY KAMALAKAR**, Then DCP, Mumbai crime branch; Now SPL IGP, Nashik

He recorded the confessional statement of Farogh Maqhdoomi, who has alleged that the statement was prepared in advance and he was made to sign on it without being told what it was.

**NIKET KAUSHIK**, Then DCP, Zone 6 Mumbai; Now addl CP (crime), Mumbai

He recorded the confession of Raees Ahmed Rajab Ali Mansoori, who too has alleged he was made to sign documents prepared in advance.

**NAVAL BAJAJ**, Then DCP, ATS; Now addl CP, Special Branch, Maharashtra

One of the supervising officers in the 2006 Malegaon blasts probe.

**S D BAVISKAR**, Then DCP, ATS; Now SP (Anti-Corruption Bureau), Aurangabad

One of the senior officers in the 2006 Malegaon blasts probe. Appointed to the IPS from the Maharashtra Police Service on May 13, 2013.

**RAMAN TYAGI**, Then deputy SP, CBI Special Task Force; Now retired

The Maharashtra government transferred the blasts case to the CBI on December 21, 2006, even as the Maharashtra ATS filed a chargesheet against the nine arrested and a few others. Raman Tyagi led the probe by the CBI's STF. Its probe mirrored that of the ATS, and the CBI filed a supplementary chargesheet on February 11, 2010, attaching forensic reports and additional witness statements to build its case against those chargesheeted earlier by the ATS.

**SANJEEV DAYAL**, Then additional DG (law & order), Maharashtra; Now DGP, Maharashtra

Though not directly involved in the ATS probe into the blasts, Dayal, using the powers vested in his post, granted the sanction for prosecution of the accused under MCOCA on December 19, 2006. According to the sanction document signed by Dayal, he was satisfied that *prima-facie* there was sufficient evidence brought on record to prosecute the accused.

**A N ROY**, Then CP, Mumbai; Now retired

He played a lead role in the arrests of former SIMI members for the 2006 train blasts — for which the Mumbai crime branch has since blamed the Indian Mujahideen. The ATS has claimed that the RDX left over after the 7/11 blasts was used for the Malegaon blasts. Roy is today the chairman of an NGO, Vandana Foundation, that works with wives of debt-ridden cotton farmers in Yavatmal and Wardha, and provides skills training to youths in Mumbai slums. ■

(Courtesy: *The Indian Express*)

# Around the World

## **MEDIA BLAMED FOR PROMOTING ISLAMOPHOBIA**

The media plays a strong role in promoting Islamophobia in the world, according to Nathan Lean, editor-in-chief, Aslan Media and a researcher at Georgetown University. Lean made this remark while participating in a panel discussion at Arab Media Forum on "Islamophobia: Is the media doing enough to reverse perceptions?" The session discussed how to bridge the knowledge gap between the Middle East and the West. It also discussed the role of social media and its impact on the Arab Spring and solutions in Syria and other parts of the region. A person of Middle Eastern origin travelling to the West is perceived to be a 'terrorist,' unless proven otherwise, media experts pointed out. However, a lot of this is due mostly to ignorance in the West.

About 60 percent of the Americans had favourable views about Islam in around the time Sept.11 happened. "However, by 2011, 60 percent of the Americans had unfavourable views about Muslims and Islam. In 10 years, the media had changed this. So, media plays a strong role in reshaping public perception on Islam," Lean said. ■

## **WE WILL RESPOND TO BORDER BLASTS: ERDOGAN**

Prime Minister of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan on 13 May said Turkey would "not refrain" from responding to twin car bombings it has blamed on Syria but also said the government would be cautious and not be drawn into its neighbour's civil war. Saturday's powerful bombings at a border town that is a

main hub for Syrian refugees and rebels, was the bloodiest attack in Turkey in recent years. It escalated tensions between the two former allies and raised fears the conflict in Syria could engulf Turkey. The official death toll in the attacks stood at 46. Turkish authorities said they had detained nine Turkish citizens with links to the Syrian intelligence agency in connection with the attacks, including a suspected ringleader. Erdogan said Turkey had no doubt about Syria's involvement and called Syria's denial a lie.

Meanwhile, US President Barack Obama met Erdogan on 15 May as world leaders scramble to find a way to ease Bashar Assad from power and end Syria's bloody civil war. The talks came a day before another key player in the drama, Russian President Vladimir Putin, was to meet UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, and after UN members voted to condemn the "escalation" by Assad's forces. ■

## **US BUILDING MILITARY BASE IN AFGHANISTAN NEAR IRAN BORDER**

The United States is building a military base in Afghanistan near the border with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Reports confirm that the base is being built in an area known as Chahlang in Afghanistan's Farah Province. The site of the construction is three kilometres from the Iranian border. Afghanistan has rejected statements released by the US Embassy in Kabul, denying that Washington had requested to keep 9 military bases in the country. ■

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