

# THE FRAGRANCE

OF EAST

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# The Fragrance of East

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### Editor's Note:

The Western world accuses Islam of being ideologically rigid, inherently discouraging dissent and failing to keep pace with the modern world's advancements. Europe and the United States of America who consider themselves the flag bearers of the modern, scientific and technological achievements look down upon Muslim societies as backward and conservative. Such stereotypes about the Islamic civilization are indeed disconcerting. A glimpse of the past reveals that science and its application was a major preoccupation of men of the Islamic faith. Early Muslims were trendsetters of many important scientific inventions. From Atlantic to the borders of China, thousands of Muslim scientists pursued careers in diverse scientific disciplines. It is said that written contributions of Muslims, from various regions of the medieval Islamic world are scattered in libraries all over the world. It is an uncontested fact that until the rise of modern science, no other civilization engaged as many scientists, produced as many scientific books or provided as varied and substantial support for scientific activity as Islam.

It is unfortunate that despite the significant increase in the study of Islamic science, scientific treasures of the Islamic world have drawn relatively less attention. For instance, Al-Beruni (973-1048), a doyen of Muslim scientists of all times, wrote more than 150 works. Of these only about a third are now available. Other scientists are even less fortunate; their works are untraceable. The wealth of scientific knowledge generated by Muslims indicate the existence of a healthy intellectual culture, which buoyed them from one major discovery or another. Today their scientific manuscripts are an invaluable source of information to all.

The Ptolemaic astronomy that started in the 11th century continued till at least the 16th century. Significantly, it spanned most of the Islamic world. Similarly, Al Khwarizmi's (780-850) work '*Kitab al jabr wal-Muqabala* (The book of compulsion and comparison) introduced the term 'al-jabr'

(Algebra) which was the indispensable prerequisite for advanced future research in the field.

Science flourished in the heart of the Islamic urban centres as an important institution. The Arab historian Ibn-I-Khaldun (1332-1406) in his famous book '*Muqadimma*' (introduction to the science) eloquently summed up this universal conception of science and contribution of Muslims in this field.

The intellectual sciences are natural to man as he is a thinking being. They are not restricted to any particular religious group. They are studied by the people of all religious groups who are qualified to learn them and to research into them. They have existed and been known to the human species since the beginning of civilization in the world.

Astronomy was the oldest and considered the most esteemed science. Many of the mathematical sciences were originally developed to facilitate astronomical research. Before Islam, Arabs had no scientific astronomy. The empirical knowledge, which they had, was known as '*anwa*'. It attracted the attention of Arab astronomers after the rise of Islam, and its study gained much from the mathematical methods employed by these astronomers. The first extant original work of Arabic astronomy is Al-Khwarizmi's '*Zil-al-Sindhind*'.

Several arithmetic numeration systems are inherited and developed by Arabs. Abu Abdallah Muhammad Ibn-i-Isa -al Mohani (da 880) is the pioneer in formulations of a solid problem. Umar al- Khayyam (1048-1131) a Persian mathematician, evolved geometric figures to solve third degree equations, which are often wrongly attributed to the French mathematician Rene Descartes (1596-1650). Sharafal Din al-Tusi (1135-1213) also made a name in algebric geometry.

The Arabs also helped in the study of Hellenistic optical knowledg, which covered the physical as well as geometric study of vision. Yaqub Ibn Ishaq al-Kindi (801-866) is said to have produced the treatises in physiological optics. The knowledge of various scientific disciplines and studies on

geometrical statics particularly the laws of equilibrium, the concept of gravitational centre and principles of hydrostatics helped Muslim scientists and engineers to bring about technological developments.

The contribution made by Muslims in the field of medicine are far reaching. The subject needs much space and we will attempt to talk about it in detail in a later issue. Name a science faculty and Muslims will be found amongst their early promoters. It is this Islamic legacy which makes us proud and which we should not only remember but make all out efforts to do pioneering work in science and technology. It is heartening to note that at present when Information Technology has revolutionised the world, Muslims are not lagging behind in this field. In Europe and USA a good number of Muslims particularly from South Asian region form a bulk of Informaion Technology workers and their contribution is no less than others. The bug of computerisation has not left our Islamic Institutions of learning in India untouched. Some of them have included it in their prescribed courses. ■

## The People Whom Allah Likes

1. For Allah Loves those who turn to him constantly and He Loves those who keep themselves pure and clean.  
(S.2.A.222)
2. But fear Allah, and know that Allah is with those who restrain themselves.  
(S.2.A.194)
3. But do good; for Allah Loveth those who do good.  
(S.2.A.195)
4. Verity Allah Loves those who act aright.  
(S.3.A.76)
5. And Allah Loves those who are firm and steadfast.  
(S.3.A.146)
6. Put thy trust in Allah for Allah Loves those who put their trust (in Him).  
(S.3.A.159)
7. For Allah Loves those who are fair (and just)  
(S.49.A.9)



# REFORMATORY ENDEAVOURS OF SHAH WALIULLAH

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

It is a common experience that those having an intellectual and literary bent of bent of mind and with a penetrating intellect and discernment in academic matters usually limit their activities to studies, academic discussions, ex-plorations of intellectual issues, teaching and writing either because they are completely disinterested in the social and political conditions of the country or because of their inability to descend from their intellectual heights to the level of mundane affairs and problems faced by the commonality. Among the scholars of the past, we find only two exceptions. One of these were Abu Hamid al - Ghazzali (d. 505/1111) whose *magnum opus*, *the Ihya Uloomid - Din* is a critique of the different sections of Muslim society of his time. His work shows his acquaintance with modes and morals of the common people to the same extent as he was aware of the compartment of scholars, mystics, rulers and nobles, merchants and craftsmen. His work shows an awareness of the deceptions of self and devilish instincts of the different classes of peoples which lead them astray from the right path, transmute the spiritual ends and realities and create an attitude of callousness towards the supreme objective of winning the pleasure of God.

The same is true of the *Talbis-o Iblis* of Ibn al-Jawzi (d.597/ 1201) in which the vices found among different sections of the people have been dealt with showing the incisiveness the author's intellectual grasp. The author has, in his work, taken stock of every class and group of the Muslims from the stand-point of *shariah*. His critique does not spare either the scholars of *fiqh* and *hadith*, the literati, poets, administrators and the rulers, mystics or the people engaged in other walks of life and exposes their faults and self delusions. However, Ibn al-Jawzi is at places too severe

in his criticisms in the *Talbis -o-Iblis*, which, being negative in character and unaccompanied by positive suggestions for reform and improvement, lose their effectiveness. The reason perhaps is that the theme selected for the work did not allow him to deal with the remedial measures.

### **A word to each section of Muslims**

In comparison to the reformative endeavours of these two great scholars, the efforts made by Shah Waliullah appear to be more comprehensive and instructive. He has separately addressed the Muslim rulers, nobles, courtiers, men-at-arms, traders and craftsmen, descendants of the saints, impious scholars and sermonizers and those saintly men who had withdrawn from the world and has diagnosed their fallacies and errors. He also admonishes the Muslim community as a whole, indicates their faults and failings and suggests the measures necessary for regaining their lost vigour. These writings of the Shah reflect his zeal for religion in a diction so vigorous and effective as it would be difficult to find even in the compositions of the two reformers mentioned earlier. We are presenting here a few extracts from the first two volumes of the *Tafhimat-i Ilahiya* in which the Shah speaks to the influential and leading classes of his time. These passages reflect the Shah's awareness of the contemporary affairs, his insight and moral courage :

#### **To the Muslim rulers**

"O kings, , the celestial sphere demands that you should unsheathe your "words and do not put them back in the scabbards until Islam is separated from polytheism and the headstrong leaders of blasphemy and wickedness do not consider themselves weak and powerless, and they abandon the path of rebellion forever. *And fight them until persecution is no more and religion is all for Allah.* When the difference between kufr (infidelity) and Islam becomes marked and clear, then you ought to appoint commanders at a distance of three or four days' journey. The men to be appointed should be upright and just and strong who may

be able to restore justice to the weak and oppressed, enforce the divine commandments and, at the same time, are vigilant enough to curb any rebellion in future. They should not allow the contumacious elements to regroup themselves again for waging war, nor to apostatise, nor yet to commit any major sin. Islam's teachings should be preached openly and everybody should perform the prescribed observances faultlessly. The administrator of each city ought to have adequate power at his command to mend the ways of the people under him.

"At the same time, nobody should be allowed to become powerful enough to have designs for personal benefit and challenge the authority of the government.

"It is necessary for larger regions within the dominion that such governors should be appointed who have the experience of conducting warfare. Such governors should be allowed to have an army consisting of twelve thousand combatants, but those should be recruited who possess the zeal to fight for the cause of God, be not scared of being ridiculed for it, be willing to fight every person recalcitrant and stiff-necked and be also capable of it. -----O kings, the Di-vine will shall require you, after you have accomplished these tasks, to divert your attention to the social and family life of the people, to redress their mutual differences and to make such arrangements that no dispute arises that contravenes the *shari'ah*. Only then can people enjoy peace and amity."

### **To the Nobles and Grandees**

"Noblemen ! Do you have no fear for God that you are getting mesmer-ised by the pleasures of the finite world ? You have abandoned the people placed under your charge, so that some may destroy the other. Do you not indulge in drinking blatantly and are not even ashamed of it ? Do you not see the mansions built by some where fornication is committed, wine is drunk and gambling is the pastime ? But you neither intervene nor do anything to stop these vices. What about those major towns where the criminal law of

Islam has not been enforced for the last six years ? When you find a weak offender, you apprehend him, but the powerful one you leave alone. All of your brains are devoted to have the most delicious victuals and to enjoy the fair and lovely women - nothing catches your attention save the expensive clothes and large buildings. Have you ever bowed down to God ? You speak of God only in your table talks and prattle. It seems that in your parlance God simply means the march of time since you often say that God is potent to do this or that - the change brought by time seems to signify God for you."

### **To the Armymen**

"Soldiers and Fighters ! God had equipped you to fight for His cause. The intention was that the will of God would prevail, He would be rendered homage and you would root out all the vestiges of polytheism. But you have forsaken what you have been created for. Now for the purpose of your keeping the horses and collecting arms is simply to amass wealth; you are always forgetful of *Jihad*, sip wine, drain cups of hemp, shave your beards and keep moustaches; you harass the people and never give what is due for the goods received by you from others. By God you shall shortly be returned unto God and then He shall let you know what you have been doing. What God wants of you is that you should adopt the dress and manners of pious fighters for the cause of God, keep the beards and trim the moustaches, offer the five daily prayers, never swindle the goods of the people and remain firm in the field of battle. You ought to learn the concessions allowed in offering prayers while travelling or fighting, such as, reduction in the number of obligatory prayers to be offered, offering of different prayers at a time, foregoing *sunnat* prayers on such occasions, ritual ablution with sand and then offer the prayers regularly. You ought to be upright even in your intentions for it is then that God will bless you with prestige and honour and make you overcome your enemies."

## To The Artisans and Craftsmen

"Artisans and Craftsmen! You lack the sense of responsibility and trust and are completely forgetful of devotion you ought to pay your lord. You go on pilgrimage to *Madar* and *Salar*, and many amongst you indulge in charms and sorcery. Those who have taken up these practices as their means of livelihood, wear a particular dress and take a particular type of food. Those who have a meagre income, do not take care of their wives and children. Some of you are habitual drunkards and some even sell the honour of their women unworthy for their sustenance. What an evil fortune! These persons are bringing themselves to ruin both in this world and the next, although God has provided innumerable vocations for earning one's livelihood. These can adequately meet the needs of these persons and their dependants provided they exercise moderation and are contented with the earnings that are sufficient for virtuous living. But you have been ungrateful to God and taken to evil means for earning your livelihood. Do you not fear the chastisement of the Hell - the worst abode for anyone.

"Lo you ought to devote yourself to the recollection of God in the morning and evening and spend the day in pursuing your professions, keep the company of your own women during night, limit your expenses to your income and save something for helping the wayfarer and the poor and meeting your own emergent expenditures. If you do not adopt this course, then, surely you have taken a wrong path and what you are doing is not correct and you will never succeed."

## To the Descendants of Saints

'Lo ! You are unjustly sticking to the customs of your forefathers, O sons of the saints of the old ! I ask you why have you divided yourselves into groups and factions ? Your fraternities have each a different set of rituals. You have left the way taught by the Apostle of God, Mohammed, on whom be peace and blessings, and elevated yourselves to the

position of guides, calling the people to join your own orders. Each one of you considers himself to be on the right path, capable of directing others, although he himself has lost the way and is misguiding others. We do not approve of those who take others under their spiritual fraternity simply for financial benefit : they are misusing consecrated learning for earthly benefit. They adopt the bearings and habits of the pious because they cannot achieve wealth and position in its absence. Nor I admire those who ask the people to comply with their own whims and desires rather than the directives of God and his Prophet. These persons are robbers and cheats who have rather exposed themselves to a great peril.

"Beware ! Never follow anyone who does not call you to the Book of God and *sunnah* of the Prophet or asks you to follow his own teachings. The gatherings of the common people are no place for the prattle about esoteric practices of the mystics since the ultimate end of *tasawuf* (mysticism) is to attain the state of *ihsan*. Can't you see the warning in the following verse of the Qur'an ?

"This is My Straight path, so follow it. Follow not other ways, lest ye be parted from His way."

### **To the Religious Scholars**

"You deem yourselves scholars, O blockheads ! You are absorbed in Greek sciences and the grammar and syntax considering these as the only branches of learning to be specialised. Hark ye! knowledge is either an explicit verse of the Qur'an or an authentic and living *sunnah* of the holy Prophet.

"You ought to learn the Qur'an; master the grammatical and lexicographical principles; discover the occasion of revelation of each verse, and grasp the meanings of difficult passages. Similarly, you ought to abide by the *ahadith* which have already been authenticated. You ought to know how the Prophet (PBUH) used to offer prayers, how he performed ablution, what was his daily routine, how he performed the *hajj*, how he fought the enemies, how he

talked to others, what was the decorum he observed in conversation, what were his morals and also try to follow his example meticulously. You ought to follow his *sunnah*, but, mind it the *sunnah* should never be elevated to the status of obligatory injunctions. You have, likewise to grasp the obligatory observances like the essentials of ablution and prayer, estate or effects necessary (*nisab*) for the poor-due (*zakat*), and shares of property inherited by the kindred of a deceased person. Go through the biography of the Prophet, his companions and their followers so that you develop an attraction of the world to come. Of course, these matters are in addition to the knowledge of obligatory observances, but the things in which you are absorbed have nothing to do with the disciplines pertaining to the hereafter. These are all worldly branches of learning."

He writes further:

"Let the sciences (e.g., grammar and syntax) which are just the mean and instruments remain as they are and do not elevate them to the position of knowledge. Acquisition of knowledge is incumbent for diffusing the Islamic way of life among the Muslims but you never propagate the religious observances and practices. You simply apprise the people with unnecessary details.

'You have made the people think that the number of religious scholars is more than sufficient although there are large tracts where no scholar exists, and where they do exist Islamic observances are not established.

Shah Waliullah also goes on to censure the pietistic and self-righteous sermonisers who are ever willing to condemn anyone as non-Muslim for not conforming to their self-conceived version of Islam.

### **To the Pietistic and Sermonisers**

"I ask those who take Islam as extremely austere and rigid as well as those pietistic and self-righteous sermonisers cloistered in their monasteries, why they are so credulous, placing trust in all kinds of cock-and-bull stories. In your sermons you harangue on spurious and

apocryphal traditions making the life of the people difficult and burdensome. You were born (as a Muslim) to make the life of the people easy and not arduous. You tell them the stories of those who in the state of attraction had lost their senses. Entanglement in the love divine is not a matter to be discussed openly but you present it as affirmation of your own views. You yourself suffer from misgivings in this regard and hold the path of mystics to be preferable. You had simply to learn the essentials of creed and the deep-felt way of its application in religious observances. It was not at all necessary to mix up these matters with the perceptions and practices of those who had lost their consciousness in the ecstasy of mystical experience, nor was *kashf*, the Gnostic illumination of the mystics, to be mixed up with the prescribed observances and practices. You had only to ask the people to attain the stage of *ihсан*. You had to attain it yourself and then teach it to others. Do you not know that the greatest grace bestowed on you is the guidance you have received through the Apostle of God for that only constitutes the path of righteousness. Can you then avouch that whatever you are doing today conforms to the practices of the Messenger of God, on whom and his companions be the blessings and peace of God."

### **To the Muslim Masses**

"Now I turn to the generality of the Muslims and say : Lo ! children of Adam, your sense of morality has become dormant; greed and cupidity have carried you away; devil has captured your souls; women have become faddish and men violator of the rights of women; what is unlawful is delight to some of you and lawful has become distasteful. By God, the Lord never wants your life to become burdensome. You ought to satisfy your sexual appetite by contracting marriage even if you have to wed more than one woman. Do not become fastidious in your living and limit your expenses within your means. Always remember that nobody shares the burden of others and do not make your life too hard for it would ultimately lead you to wickedness. The Lord wants



that His bondsmen should make their lives unexacting within permissible limits and those who have the strength may comply with his commandments in a more meticulous manner. Satisfy your hunger with foods procured from your earnings instead of trying to become a burden on others. It is not possible that others will fulfil all your demands. Similarly do not become a parasite on kings and administrators for it is in your own interest to earn your living. God will suggest you the means to earn your livelihood that will suffice for you.

"O Sons of Adam, if God has blessed anyone with a house where he can live, water to quench his thirst, food sufficient to mitigate his hunger, cloth enough to cover the body and limbs and a wife chaste and helpful in maintaining his position in life, he should thank God for he has everything he needs in this world.

"Anyway, everybody should take up some profession for his sustenance and content himself with it. Moderation should be adopted as the rule of life and some of the spare time, particularly in the morning, evening and later part of night, should be devoted to the remembrance of God through *tasbih*, *tahlil* and recitation of the Qur'an. One should also listen to the Traditions of the Prophet, on whom be blessings and peace, and join the gatherings held for recollection of God.

"O Sons of Adam, you have adopted customs and usage which have deformed your religion. You hold gatherings on the *ashura* for things that are in-appropriate. Similarly you have amusements and rejoicing on the occasions of *shab-i bara'at* and consider it virtuous to have repast for your dead relations. Have you any argument to defend your behaviour ?

"Similarly, you have taken to numerous customs which have made your life harder, for example, you spend too much on your feasts. Another iniquitous convention among you is to regard divorce as illegal and remarriage of widows as immoral. You spend your time and money on indecorous conventions and rituals and have given up healthy practices.

"You have ruined your *salat* (ritual prayers). Some of you are so engrossed in their professions that they never find time to offer the prayer while others waste their time in the company of story tellers. Were these gatherings of story-tellers to be held near mosques the listeners would have at least missed their prayers.

You have ceased paying the *zakat* (poor-due) although there would be hardly one among the affluent whose kinsmen do not include the poor and needy. Were such opulent persons to help their poorer kin's or meet their expenses with the intention of paying the *zakat*, they would have thus discharged their obligations of poor-due.

"Some of you, particularly the soldiers do not keep the fasts of *Ramadhan*, on the pretext that the hardships they have to bear do not allow them to keep the fast. You should know that the path you have taken to is wrong : you have made yourselves a burden on the government. When the king is unable to pay your dues you harass the common people - what a bad creature you are ! There are others who keep the fasts but do not take the *sahri* (predawn meal), nor give up toilsome works with the result that they find the fasts too exacting."

The Shah concludes his disquisition to the masses with these words :

"Celestial regions indicate a wide-ranging reform, but can only get a

glimpse of these from a small opening; a sample is enough to form

an estimate of the pile ."

### **Social Thoughts of the Shah**

Besides criticizing particular classes of Muslim society, the Shah also condemned the sinful innovations and polytheistic practices borrowed by the Muslims from their non-Muslim neighbours; indifference of the scholars and the Muslim rulers to promote the knowledge of *hadith* and *sunnah* and their failure to oppose the superstitious beliefs and practices of the masses. The religious scholars of his

time who were normally pre-occupied with logic and philosophy ignored these un-Islamic practices either because they regarded these as of no consequence or did not want to antagonise the commonality. Shah Waliullah gave attention to the need of reforming the Muslim society after Sheikh Ahmad Mujaddid Alf Thani who had denounced, in his several letters, the heterodox beliefs and practices that crept into the Muslim society. Endeavours designed to reform the Muslim society for restoration of its moral health, initiated by the Shah were brought to completion by his sons and their disciples, particularly Syed Ahmad Shaheed and Shah Ismail Shaheed. The former was a disciple of the Shah Waliullah's son Shah Abdul Aziz, while the latter was the Shah's grandson.

Here we give a few examples from the *Tafhimat-ilahiya* and *Wasiyat Nama* by Shah Waliullah.

"One of the vicious customs prevalent among the Hindus is that when the husband of any woman dies, they do not allow her to re-marry. The Arabs were never given to such practice, either before or after the advent of the Messenger of God, on whom be peace and blessings. Allah may bestow His grace on the man who may succeed in eradicating this evil practice followed by the commonality. If one is not able to abolish this usage among the people at large, one should at least try to restore the practice followed by the Arabs in his own family and clan, and if this is also not possible, one ought to regard it as a wicked practice and hate it in one's heart, for this is the lowest stage of repudiating anything not approved by the *Shariah*.

"Another unseemly practice followed by us is to have an unusually large amount of dower. The Prophet of God, on whom be peace and blessings, (and by following whose practice we can succeed in this world and the next), used to fix a dower amounting to twelve and half *awqiyah* which was equivalent to five hundred dirhams for the members of his household (although they were the best amongst all the human beings.)

"Yet another improper practice adopted by us is to be

extravagant on joyous occasions and traditional celebrations. The Apostle of God, on whom be peace and blessings is reported to have approved of a repast on the occasions of marriage and *aqiqa* (on the birth of a baby). We ought to allow his example and desist from all other festivities and not be lavish in our celebrations.

"We have also the queer habit of squandering money on occasions of bereavement by way of observing *sayyum*, *chahallum*, *shashmahi*, *fatiha* and *salana* although none of these were present among the earliest Muslims in Arabia. It would be better if we do not observe these ceremonies and offer condolence to the bereaved family during the next three days and provide victuals to the family members of the deceased for a day and a night following the death of any person. After three days the women of the clan should apply itr to the clothes of the dead man's female relatives and if the widow is alive, all mourning should be terminated after the expiry of the period of *iddat*.

Syed Abul 'Ala Maududi has rightly observed in one of his articles on the significance of Shah Waliullah's reformative endeavour that :

"These passages (from the *Izalatul Khafa* and *Tafhimat-i-Ilahiya*) show how deeply the Shah had pondered over the social conditions of the Muslims of his day, compared these with the past usage, and pointed out the evils most extensively. Such a critique necessarily creates an anxiety for reform in those who are well-meaning as well as able to draw a distinction between the wholesome and harmful customs and usage. The more such persons are enlightened by Islamic consciousness, the more they come to hate the unIslamic influences in the society and develop an intense impulse to reform the society of all its abuses of ignorance. The next stage for this urge for reform and regeneration is to chart out a well-defined programme for the reconstruction of the society for giving it a correct direction. This is what we find the Shah doing with complete precision according to a comprehensive plan presented in his critique of the Muslim society." ■

## ISLAMIC LAW AND FAMILY

S. M. Rabey Nadwi

*An important seminar was organised by Muslim Personal Law Board on April 17, 2000 at Delhi. Syed Mohd. Rabey Nadwi in his address for the seminar, high-lighted the salient aspects of conjugal relationship and rights of women, eliciting thought and action from the learned gathering. An English rendering of the Address follows.*

All praise be to the Almighty and peace be upon the holy prophet and his associates.

Our country, like many of its neighbours, is inhabited by people with varying religious, linguistic, cultural and social hues, the way of life being markedly un-Islamic, under the penetrative action of contemporary cultures, aggravated by the by the two century alien domination. There has been a spate of questions and criticism, mostly from Muslim women, about the compatibility, rather the lack of it, between the exigencies of present day life and the Islamic tenets. The current seminar, convened with the co-operation of Muslim Personal Law Board is an appropriate forum for analysing the problems with a view to arriving at a rational and viable solution.

Notwithstanding the fact that man and woman are offshoots of a common root, the biological differences and natural characteristics, functions devolving there upon, cannot be overlooked. Islamic law (shariah) takes due care of these factors, while assigning and demarcating the rights and duties of each, emphasis all the while being on mutual trust and affection. Male of the species, physically more robust, has the burden of being the bread earner and protector of the family. The female, in turn, encumbered with the process of child bearing, feeding and care for the off-spring over a considerable length of time, besides being comparatively fragile, has to be spared, by and large, the tough manual chores and is to be guarded by the male partner.

The difference in mental build-up of the two is no less important than the physique. Man is inclined to be more down to earth and less sentimental whereas, the woman by nature is affectionate, over-bearing and prone to sentimentalism. This has been clearly spelt out in the Holy Book, assigning, as it were, positions of seniority and juniority, for efficient and smooth functioning, not only of the family but the entire worldly system. A case in point is provision of one male witness being equated to two women in matters requiring adjudication and judgement on important issues. In such cases sentimentalism has to be assigned a secondary status as compared to cold logic. This edict in no way degrades the woman nor is unjust to her but aims at ensuring a balanced work-load, commensurate with the faculties of each.

Islamic law (shariah) bases its stipulations in assigning specific roles and codes for men and women in their life together, upon the factors described in the preceding lines. It is the deviation from and non-compliance of these provisions that culminates in unsavoury situations, mainly as a consequence of personal avarice and conceit. The malady is aggravated by uninhibited aping of so-called modern life, bolstered by the well-orchestrated global propaganda network. This mechanism is avid in presenting the current un-Islamic practices, adopted by large sections of Muslim masses, influenced by local customs and Western culture, as if these were provided in Islamic Law.

Prior to marriage, shariah places the entire responsibility for maintenance of a female upon the parents and subsequently on the husband. Islam advocates greater rejoicing on the birth of a female child and also promises higher rewards for the parents who devote more towards good upbringing of their daughters, with utmost affection. At the time of marriage expenses are to be borne by the husband, absolving the would be wife of financial liability. Over and above, an endowment (mehr) is also to be compulsorily made by the husband to be paid to the wife. The amount and mode of payment (immediate or deferred) are to be

mutually agreed upon. The promise of payment in either case should be genuine and solemn, failing which maternity shall be deemed defective.

In case of a woman losing her parents and separated from her husband through divorce or demise, having none to fall back upon, the subsistence shall be the responsibility of an Islamic state.

The role ordained for the wife is to take complete charge of domestic domain, catering to the needs of her husband and family. If some constraints do necessitate the wife taking up some functions outside the household, there is nothing to restrain her, provided the limits under Islamic law are observed and she has the consent of her husband. History is strewn with examples of women performing outside functions within the ambit of religion. The husband has no claim over the independent income of the wife or endowments received from her parents, unless she willingly offers him a part.

The scenario in the so-called advanced world, presented as attractive packages by the media, is just the opposite. In the equal job opportunities for women, they are assigned jobs in lower categories, not to mention those downright degrading and even immodest. Exploitation for exhibitionism, besides subjugation and even wife-bashing are rampant. In USA out of 229 key posts, just 30 fell to the lot of women, according to one report.

Economic independence often leads to loss of mutual affection and cohesion, with husband and wife developing their own separate circle of associates, culminating not infrequently in undesirable liaison. Such liaison may or may not be illegal in most countries of the world, but are strictly unethical and taboo in Islam. It should be apparent even to the most naive that in ultimate analysis, the consequences of unbridled affairs are far from palatable and lead to a perverse social system.

Taken in by the paintings of propagandist media, a considerable number of Muslim women are under the delu-

sion that the provision of their rights in Islamic Law is not only inadequate but suffocating. The erroneous perception calls for corrective action and guidance, informing them of correct position.

The Islamic system of divorce is constantly berated by the antagonists without going into details, inadvertently or blatantly. In fact, divorce system in Islam is only a last resort for extreme cases of incompatibility. As a first step, some sensible persons from the clan should endeavour towards reconciliation. In case of utter failure only, should the divorce be resorted to. Pronouncement should be in three stages, each spaced by one month. During these gaps in time, all-out efforts at reconciliation should be kept up. However, if the circumstances are really compelling, all three pronouncements may be made simultaneously. This procedure is for the male. If the female so desires, she has the option of seeking separation through the Qazi.

Islamic system is made a target of condemnation and ridicule by the modern world, less out of ignorance and more with a blatant blind eye to ground realities, on the subject of permission to marry upto four women. A logical analysis clearly brings out the true picture. A man is allowed to have more than one wife under specific circumstances only. The intention is to maintain moral and social decorum and forestall any possibility of illicit acts. A survey reveals that cases of polygamy are more among non-Muslims than Muslims. This is besides the unbridled, unaccounted prevalence of illicit relationships, with hardly a finger being raised, taking cover under the pretext of mutual consent.

A cursory glance over the state of affairs in the culture titled as most emancipated, that is US of A, would be more than adequate to reveal the extent of hypocrisy. According to a probe based on the premise that only about ten per cent of the cases of outrage of modesty are reported, on an average one lakh thirty thousand cases each year are recorded. About twenty six percent men and fifty percent women indulge in extra marital affairs even after marriage, upto an age of forty. According to issue dated 17.10.1994



of Time magazine, twenty percent married men indulge with one other woman, twenty one percent with two to four, twenty three percent with five to ten, sixteen percent with eleven to twenty and twenty seven percent with more than twenty one. Frequent divorce and remarriage occur at the drop of a hat.

The ominous signs of depravity among western and "developed" culture need hardly be elucidated, being already adequately manifest.

The above narration should be enough to bring home the fact that Islam has bestowed full rights and a respectable status to women for a balanced conjugal life, commensurate with physical and social parameters, the like of which is non-existent in the Western, call it advanced culture. The key note for a decorous and uncorrupted amicable partnership is mutual trust and affection, all said and done.

The seminar has thrown up some pertinent questions about the lacunae in Muslim mode of family life, which are attributable more to cultural aberrations, influence of un-Islamic propaganda, rather than provisions in Islamic Law. Malady lies in implementation and not in stipulations. The need of the hour is for corrective measures at eradication of maladies infecting the present day Muslim masses due to ignorance and misinformation. It is for the experts to provide counselling for the masses, to enable them to call the bluff of Western media. Some new problems, emerging in the face of modern developments, not thus far covered by clarifications contained in jurisprudence and exegesis, should attract due attention of the experts and a solution worked out in the light of the Book and Traditions, the edict of which is, nevertheless, binding under all circumstances.

All in all, the seminar should prove to be a harbinger of healthy approach to the issues confronting the Muslim society, aided no doubt by the earnest and sincere attitude of our respected women participants; God willing. ■

## **People Whom Allah Doesn't Like**

1. Nor doth Allah give guidance to a people unjust.  
(S.2.A.258)
2. And Allah guideth not those who reject faith.  
(S.2.A.264)
3. For Allah guideth not a rebellious people.  
(S.5.A.108)
4. And that Allah will never guide the snare of the false ones.  
(S.12.A.52)
5. But Allah guides not such as are false and ungrateful.  
(S.39.A.3.)
6. Truly Allah guides not one who transgresses and lies.  
(S.40.A.28)
7. Allah guideth not people that do wrong.  
(S.9.A.109)

# SCIENCE REQUIRES A NEW EPISTEMOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

M. R. Kirmani\*

## Introduction

Epistemology is the theory of knowledge. In epistemological investigations we reflect on the standards to which genuine knowledge should conform. This study is an important part of the philosophy of science. Philosophers of science are interested in determining how far confidence should extend in a particular method of study. Philosophers and scientists want to find out whether or not there is any part of scientific knowledge that is certain and not liable to revision under any conceivable circumstances. How do new discoveries affect the status of what we already think we know? Can observations be made without a scientist having some theory in mind? Is all knowledge, in the final analysis, theoretical knowledge? These questions and many others of this type are epistemological questions. However the discipline of epistemology centres, in the main, around the reflections on the standards to which the knowledge should conform. Here we will discuss whether the history and philosophy of science leaves some message for the epistemologist with regard to the standards of genuine knowledge.

## The Changing Concept of Science

The study of philosophy of science reveals that while it influenced science to a great extent, it was itself fed by the achievements of science. Science began in order to investigate the truth. The philosophers of science, right from Descartes to Popper were found engaged in developing criteria for ascertaining the truth contents of theories. Positivists search for the criteria of verification inductivists arguments in favour of the principle of induction, logical empiricism, linguistic analysis and finally the principle of

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falsification present a series of arguments aimed at finding the truth value of scientific theories. Interestingly, all this activity aiming at certitude in scientific theories adds up to scepticism, quite implicit in Popper's discussions. Laudan explicitly says that problem solving is taking over truth in scientific discussion. This shift from the long standing view of science as a truth finding activity to the view of science as merely a problem solving activity is not purely a philosophical idea. Instead, it is an outcome of the study of the historical perspectives of methods employed by different scientists in support of their accepted theories. The historian-philosophers of science were also greatly influenced by the changing concepts of the world.

Before Copernicus, the age old theory of Ptolemy's geocentric world was considered true as a mental construct but actually based on concrete astronomical observations. Then, with the advent of Copernicus heliocentric theory of revolution in science began. Newtonian science, developed and established as truth, propelled the world into tremendous scientific and technological progress and so called industrial revolution. This was all based on the Cartesian-Newtonian mechanistic view of the world. The Ptolemaic concept of the world had been rejected as false in favour of new truth, the Copernican concept. Inductive methods provided the luxuriant growth of science and technology. Side by side the criteria of induction to arrive at true theories were framed one after the other until Popper set to develop the logic of scientific discovery and faced problems in connecting truth and verification. Popper concluded in his famous book *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* that a scientific theory can be accepted as long as it is not falsified and replaced by another one. The principle of induction which started with the verifiability criteria for the judgement of truth contents in scientific theories became problematic. Then the term verifiability was replaced by such words as testability, conformability, falsifiability and refutability. The problem of induction began with Hume and Collingwood, and Popper brought it to fruition in methodology. But for Popper, Hilary

Putnam and other Popperian thinkers the typical features of science was that the later theories must imply approximate truth of the theoretical laws of the earliest theories in certain circumstances. Again for Popper and Putnam, the concept of truth played an important role in their account of explanation.

*"Explanation consists of an argument whose premises are universal laws and initial conditions and whose conclusion is a statement describing the even to be explained. It is crucial that these universal laws be true or approximately true, or corroborated, or confirmed or at the very least not known to be false."*

However, there are three prominent problems in Popper's and Putnam's accounts.

1. Popper himself has said all along, "even if we hit upon the true theory, we can never know it."
2. If two theories are false, one cannot compare them with respect to their verisimilitude.
3. The contents of two theories that are logically incompatible cannot be compared.

Laudan regarded these consequences as showing the utopian character of the goal of seeking truth. He abandoned the concept of truth and explanation and replaced the two concepts of problem solving effectiveness. The aim of science then, is to solve problems and to come with a theory that solves more problems or not is independent of whether it is true or not. That is why the theme of his book - i.e. notion of truth, explanation, confirmation and corroboration etc. - is on the way out, and the problem solving approach is coming in.

On the one hand, Popper presented his principle of falsification as a criterion of judgement with respect to the validity of a statement and, on the other, he also proposed falsifiability criterion to judge the scientificity of a statement. A statement is scientific if it is falsifiable by the techniques available at that time, otherwise it is metaphysical. Popper calls this criterion as the criterion of demarcation between

science and metaphysics. It is noteworthy that scientists consider metaphysical statements irrational. Rationality, therefore, lies in testability, as early positivists would like to say, and in falsifiability as Popper tries to make us believe. For, Laudan, scientific rationality rests on the problem solving effectiveness. So the core objective of science, when seen through the mirror of science history, seems to divert from investigating the truth to keeping the theory rational in terms of testability or falsifiability.

Sarkar, however, differentiates between two views of rationality. One exemplified by Karl Popper, Hilary Putnam, Laury Laudan, Imre Lakatos, Paul Feyerabend and Thomas Kuha is *the classical view* according to Sarkar. Then he sketches an alternative view, the view of *multiple methods*. The main feature of classical view according to Sarkar is that, "While theories may proliferate in a single domain, the method by which the theories in any domain are measured in that scientific community should be the same." However, for Sarkar the primary subject of rationality in science ought to be the basic structure or form or the organisation of the scientific community whose members are engaged in the pursuit of shared goals. His view of multiple methods is as follows:

Engaged in a joint enterprise to pursue a set of shared (partially overlapping?) goals, there will be relatively few stable, competing and conflicting subgroups,  $G_1, G_2, G_3, \dots, G_n$  in a continuously shifting equilibrium, pursuing sciences under the rubric of different methods,  $M_1, M_2, M_3, \dots, M_n$ , respectively. Members of subgroups  $G_1$ , will use  $M_1$  to decide what scientific theories to accept and adopt and what theories to reject. The structure of such group is referred to as one exemplifying the pursuit of science through multiple methods, and the structure is rational.

To resume the above discussion we can say that every philosopher has given certain *heuristic* advice in his proposed method to decide which theory to accept for further

research. Sarkar has given a list of heuristic advice which, with the addition of Sarkar himself is given below:

1. Popperian heuristic advice: adopt the theory that is best corroborated.
2. Lakotosian heuristic advice: adopt the theory that exhibits an empirically progressive problem-shift.
3. Kuhnian heuristic advice: adopt the theory that is simple, consistent, fecund and responds best to the scientist's tutored and practised intuition.
4. Laudanian heuristic advice: adopt the theory that exhibits the highest rate of problem-solving effectiveness.
5. Feyerabendian heuristic advice: adopt the theory.
6. Sarkarian heuristic advice: adopt the theory which passes the judgement of the group of scientists working on the same problem.

To sum up these advice, corroboration, exhibition of empirically progressive problem-shift, simplicity, consistency, effectiveness, approval of a group of scientists etc. are some of the criteria of a genuine theory and the rationality of science. Whatever advice may be followed, it is always the scientists who decide as to what theory is to be pursued. This decision is influenced by a world view, conceptual framework of the society the scientists bring in, aesthetic sense, the moral and ethical judgement, all but not by the concept of truth which happened to be the most important epistemological constraint in the process of decision making about the genuinity of statement. Obviously science has become a game rather than a pursuit. Heisenberg's principle of uncertainty has worsened the situation further. Now, not only our beliefs but the course of nature itself is uncertain. This alarming situation obviously demands some genuine alternative thoughts. The search of these thoughts has already began as it is explicit in the works of Feyerabend, Schrodinger and Capra. In their search they have gone to the extent of consulting the eastern traditions and philosophies to solve the intellectual problems

of physics. Kuhn does not even hesitate to look back to the holy scriptures and obtain a suitable paradigm for a reputable solution of scientific problems.

We rightly look towards Islam for these alternatives because the Islamic culture in the past has successfully developed a genuine epistemological framework for the growth of knowledge. The following discourse is meant to initiate a discussion for developing a proper Islamic epistemological framework which may help us create a comprehensive theory of knowledge. The deliberations are not exhaustive nevertheless they provide a line of thought for future discussion on the topic. We hope that this will pave the way for a wider perspective of rationality and objectivity in which revelation and experience work together to solve the problem of truth which is slowly moving out of scene.

### **Islamic Epistemological Framework**

#### *Islamic Rationality*

Science is claimed to be a rational pursuit of understanding nature while metaphysics, philosophy and religion are considered as irrational ways of studying it. Principle of induction and testability or falsifiability criteria have been used to distinguish between rational and irrational religions. A Muslim scientist is expected to be rational while doing science. While scientific rationality keeps his thoughts within the narrow confines of testability or falsifiability criteria, Islamic rationality brings him to a wider perspective of knowledge. Therefore, what is irrational from the scientist's community in general, may be quite rational for a Muslim scientist's community. In Islam, 'aql (intellect) is never defined by the senses alone. The instrument of thought in Islam is not only 'aql but also qalb or fu'ad which equally participates in the process of knowing. Thus the objective and subjective modes of understanding interact with one another and give rise to a wider horizon of thought for a thinking mind. A Muslim always finds ideas of the physical domain interlaced with those of the metaphysical, so that they finally lead him to the Absolute.



For him there is nothing irrational in this interrelationship. Thus a metaphysical statement of the Qur'an, for instance, may be rational for a Muslim; the criteria of rationality being subjectively objective. A Western scientist may believe in God as the Creator, as Einstein and others believed but not as the Judge, as his criteria of rationality are objective. Contrary to this, a Muslim scientist whose criteria are subjectively objective believes in God as the Creator and the Judge. Therefore, the concept of the Day of Judgement, reward and punishment would be rational concepts for a Muslim. Islamic rationalism is not stunted by the dwarf senses, but it transcends them to get into the higher domains of intellection where sense data become united into a whole. Science, then becomes the knowledge of *Tawhid*, as nature provides us with many an *ayat* (signs) of *Tawhid* as one would like to investigate. A Muslim scientist also finds *ghayah* (purpose or plan) in every phenomenon. If he does not, he at least believes in it, and tries to find one.

### *Subjectivity and Objectivity*

Scientists claim that their pursuit of knowledge is objective. The claim seems true when we encounter a huge profile of crude data stacked in big libraries. But these particular data are without value if general statements are not derived from it. Derivation of general statements is the function of the subjective mind. Science as it is claimed, may seem objective on the face value but on a deeper level it is subjectively objective. The Muslim scientist interacts within two objective poles, there being two kinds of *ayat* before him - *ayat* of the Qur'an and the *ayat* scattered in nature. Therefore, his subjectivity is constrained by the concepts in the Qur'an and the data obtained through observation. Thus, Revelation and sense data are the two objective measures to test the rationality and validity of any statement. "Contradictions" within Revelation can be resolved by *tatbiq*, a method often used by the commentators of the Qur'an. *Tatbiq* may also may used to resolve the "contradiction" between Revelation and observation. As

far as the "contradictions" among the general statements of scholars are concerned, the inter-subjective comparison, argument and counter argument based on the Revealed and sense data may prove to be a true solution.

### *Revelation*

While admitting revelation as an objective source of knowledge, one will have to keep the different types of revelation in mind. For all these type the word *wahy* has ben used in the Qur'an. These types are: the Qur'an itself, the revealed contents in the sayings of the Prophet of Islam (pbuh), conscience, *ilham* and instincts. The Qur'an presents all of them as sources of knowledge. The author has discussed this subject at length elsewhere. The important point to note here is that the concept of innate knowledge has to be brought back to develop a genuine epistemology of science. However, objectivity can be assigned only to the Qur'an and the revealed contents of the Prophet's sayings. Other types of revelations cannot be presumed objective.

### *Knowledge and Purpose*

Knowledge is not without instruction (*hidayah*) and purpose. Quranic purpose of human knowledge is *hidayah* and *khilafah*. Knowledge cannot be dissociated from instruction (*hidayah*), and the knowledge dissociated from *khilafah* concept can never be holistic. The author has dealt with this aspect in his *Epistemological Foundations of Islam* where the details can be seen. The point of emphasis here is that the knowledge of phenomena always remains incomplete if the purpose of phenomena is left untraced. It is because our innate knowledge points to the teleological nature of the world. Moreover, knowledge remains static as long as guidance (*hidayah*) is not derived from it. Again, the knowledge becomes a menace if it itself is not directed. Knowledge, action, direction and purpose are inseparable in Islamic epistemological framework. Knowledge should have a purpose and seek the same. It should seek and

give direction, without which it is incomplete, stunted and static and can even be dreadful.

### *Classification of Knowledge*

Classification of knowledge has been an important occupation of Muslim thinkers. They gave due importance to both religion and experience and classified into *naqliyyah* and *'aqliyyah* sciences. European scientists relegated philosophies to confused ideologies. However, the old classification of *naqliyyah* and *'aqliyyah* sciences also requires rethinking.

The author proposes three types of knowledge - *'ulum al-Ilahiyyah*, *'ulum al-mashi'ah* and *'ulum al-mardiyyah* as interconnected, holistic and ontological classification of knowledge. The three types respectively mean the knowledge about the self of Allah i.e. His attributes, the knowledge about His will expressed in the created world and events occurring in space and time, and the knowledge about how He can be pleased. All the three types of knowledge have to be obtained through Revelation and experience either independently or in interaction, depending upon the problem at hand.

### *'Ilm and Ma'rifah*

The terms *'ilm* and *ma'rifah* are often used as synonyms. However, the two are different. Islamic thinkers have been differentiating them in three ways. The linguists say that *ma'rifah* is apparent, while the *'ilm* is deeper knowledge. Philosophers claim that *ma'rifah* is the knowledge in bits while *'ilm* is a whole, and comprehends the Divine. According to the philosophers, *ma'rifah* converts into a higher category, i.e. *'ilm* when it gets united into a whole and comprehends the principle of *Tawhid*. Contrary to this, the Sufis assert higher status for *ma'rifah* as they use the word especially for the knowledge about Allah. For them *'ilm* is general and *ma'rifah* is special. Philosophers view of *'ilm* as whole and comprehending *Tawhid* is more akin to the Qur'an according to which any knowledge

dissociated from the Omniscient is not worth calling 'ilm.

*Towards a Definition of Knowledge*

Rosenthal in his book *Knowledge Triumphant* has given 107 definitions of knowledge proposed by different Muslim thinkers. The definitions are so much contradictory that many people say that there is no way of defining knowledge verbally. It can be defined only through disjunction (*qismah*) and example (*mithal*), as stated by Imam al-Haramayn and al-Ghazali. Or in the words of Fakhruddin Razi, the knowledge of knowledge must be intuitive (*badihi*) or necessary (*daruri*), if it were neither, circular reasoning would result, since definition is possible only through knowledge.

With the brief note on the problematic of the definition of knowledge in Islam let us introduce the definition of Prof.. Naquib al-Attas formulated in his book *Islam and the Philosophy of Science*.

Since all knowledge comes from God, and is interpreted by the soul through its physical and spiritual or intelligential faculties, it follows that the epistemological definition would be that knowledge, with reference to God as being its source of origin, is the arrival of meaning in soul; and with reference to soul as being its active recipient and interpreter, knowledge is the arrival of the soul at meaning.

The above definition may also be problematic to those who put undue emphasis on the process of knowledge like intuition or induction to be an ingredient of knowledge. According to al-Attas's definition, meaning is the knowledge, weather it arrives at soul or soul arrives at it makes no difference. The process of arrival may either be physical, mental, spiritual or all together, Allah being the main source and the actual initiator. As far as the word 'soul' is concerned, one should not be oversensitive. Al-Attas considers the soul as the mediator between the object and man, while my definition, that will follow soon, suggests the

mind as the negotiator between the man and the object. However, I consider the soul as controlling entire human activity which includes the mind as well as knowledge.

The classical Platonic concept of knowledge as justified true belief is worth discussing here. According to this definition, a man can be considered knowing if his belief is true and he is also justified in having the true belief. This analysis of knowledge seems to be overemphasising the role of justification in gaining knowledge. This overemphasise has led the scientific revolutions into the unique disregard of truth that has restricted even justification to the narrow limits of problem solving effectiveness. The Islamic concept of revelation implies that truth expresses itself. This overwhelming expression often finds justification through the limited human mind. However, revealed truths are worth calling knowledge because the person who experiences them also believes them with certainty even if without justification. A true belief is knowledge irrespective of the way one comes to believe. Whether the truth arrives at the mind or the mind arrives at the truth, should make no difference to knowledge. ■

## How Muslims should settle their mutual disputes?

Allah commands justice the doing of good and liberality to kith and kin and He forbids all shameful deeds and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you that ye may receive admonition.

(S.16, A-90)

*Justice is a comprehensive term, and may include all the virtues of cold philosophy. But religion asks for something warmer and more human, the doing of good deeds even where perhaps they are not strictly demanded by justice, such as returning good for ill, or obliging those who in worldly language "have no claim" on you; and of course a fortiori the fulfilling of the claims of those whose claims are recognised in social life. Similarly the opposites are to be avoided; everything that is recognised as shameful, and everything that is really unjust, and any inward rebellion against Allah's Law or our own conscience in its most sensitive form.*

# DIALOGUE - EFFECTIVE FOR SOLVING PROBLEMS

S. M. Wazeh Rasheed Nadwi \*

One of the most effective means for solving any dispute is by mutual discussions, which would more often than not, lead to an amicable and possibly a viable solution. Several warring nations have accommodated each others view points and abandoned the posture of confrontation, in not too distant past. Exchange visits by heads of states and ensuring negotiations have not only resolved the disputes, ended the ongoing hostilities, but also ushered in a more or less uniform global culture, minor local ingrained variations notwithstanding. And this inspite of no power being prepared to compromise its position of superiority. A notable example is the thaw in rigid opposition between USA and China, despite a history of political and ideological diversities. One healthy outcome was the cessation of hostilities in Vietnam. Another case is that of a secret accord between Israel and Egypt .

The recourse to dialogue for resolving contentious issues at international level has brought a sea change in the field of tourism and trade and commerce, with most of the curbs existing hitherto having been lifted.

Thus far the picture is rosy yet most, if not all the big powers have turned a blind eye to one aspect and are adamant in their stand. It is the attitude of the Western, developed states towards Islam and Muslims. The vendetta goes back to the eleventh century when Europe, fortified by the blessings of Pope and clergy started the crusades, termed by them as holy wars. The offensive still is very much on, in different forms, though Islam has been, and still is, viewed as the greatest threat to Western dominance. Even the benevolent, charitable benign acts and the institutions organising these, are classified as either terrorism or signs of retrograde culture. An outstanding example is of viewing

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the zakat system, which aims at nothing but sharing of wealth of the affluent with the needy and poor, as a sign of backwardness. Since long here has been and still does rage an offensive, including physical violence and what is more penetrative, sophisticated means, publications, print and electronic media, with the ulterior motive of presenting to the world an abominable image of Islam and Muslims.

This state of affairs, though persisting over several centuries, ever becoming increasingly sophisticated, has hardly done any good to Europe, failing to diminish, much less extinguish, the glow of Islamic faith. On the contrary it has been catalytic for anti-West feelings, and more people are now inclined towards Islam, at least to the extent of trying to understand its message. A few European leaders who did proffer a hand towards rapprochement with Muslims, have thus far failed to make a discernable headway, what with the adamant attitude of the majority of their comrades. One of the first steps in a positive direction was by a French literateure in 1977, which though harmonious with contemporary environment did not elicit similar response from a majority in Europe, who just would, at no cost, demit the age old posture. The general European mind is made up by the contents in their libraries which brim over with anti-Islamic writings. Compared to this effort is the case of a debate by one European intellectual, organised for highlighting the cultural confrontation, which earned all accolades, conforming as it did to traditional European mind-set, targeting Islam with full force.

Juxtaposed to this is the attitude of right thinking persons, minuscule in number though, which till date has not cut much ice, yet not explicitly opposed. A group of priests who travelled through Muslim countries, expressed apologies, on behalf of their forerunners, for having inspired crusades. This act also did not meet mass approval from Europe. Prince of Wales, heir apparent to the British throne, has called for sincere efforts to understand the faith, as in his opinion, anti-Islamic writers have exceeded all limits of propriety. German leaders have recently evinced similar



feelings and advocated the need for negotiations and an amicable accord. Some other voices also sound to be on the same wavelength. However, the clarion is not yet widely heeded to, but does cast a ray of hope.

The need of the hour is to establish in European lands, centres of education, aimed at eradicating the ill effects of crusades and a study of Islamic faith, tenets and system with an open mind. Those who have delved deep, are convinced that Islam indeed is an embodiment of justice and benevolence, leading to ultimate salvation. ■

English rendering : Mashhoon Ahmad

## SIR MOHAMMAD IQBAL

O Reality, long awaited, come out in Thy physical form,  
A thousand homages lie abursting behind my humble brow.

Reveal Thyself in a joyous din, let Thy grace find a voice,  
Why should melody remain confined within the muted flute?

Don't try to save hold it, yours is such a mirror,  
Which, when broken, is doubly dear in its Maker's eye.

I roamed the earth to seek refuge, but to no avail,  
Lo, when I found your gracious feet, stilled was my soul.

Love has lost its former fervour, Beauty its winsome wiles,  
Ghaznavi has spent his fire, Ayaaz has shed his curls.

When at times I kneel to pray, a voice emerges from below,  
"O ye idolator at heart, what will you gain from prayer?"

*Kabhi ai haqiqat-e-muntazar nazar aa libas-e-majaaz mein,  
Ke hazaaron sajde tarap rahe hain meri jabin-e-nayaaz mein.*

*Tarab aashnaae khrosh ho tu nawa hai mahram-e-gosh ho,  
Woh sarud kya ke chhipa hua ho sakut-e-parda-e-saaz  
mein.*

*Tu bacha bacha ke na rakh ise tera aaina hai woh aaina,  
Ke shakasta ho to aziz tar hai nigah-e-aaina saaz mein.*

*Na kahin jahaan mein amaan mili, jo amaan mili to  
kahaan mili,  
Mere jurm-e-khaana kharaab ko tere afv-e banda nawaaz  
mein.*

*Na woh ishk mein rahi garmian, na woh husn mein rahi  
shokhian,  
Na woh Ghaznavi mein tarap rahi, na woh kham hai zulf-  
e-Ayaaz mein.*

*Main jo sar basajda hua kabhi to zamin se aane lagi sada,  
Tera dil to hai sanam aashna, tujhe kya milega namaaz  
mein.*

## THE HADITH OR TRADITIONS OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD

A. Rahman I. Doi

The prime sources of the religion of Islam are the Qur'an and the Hadith. The Qur'an is the word of Allah addressed to all Muslims. The Noble Prophet (peace be on him) did not have anything to do with its words; it was revealed to him as it is now read. Whilst the Qur'an gives the Muslim a primary code of life, there are many matters where guidance for practical living is necessary, but about which the Qur'an says nothing.

In such cases, the obvious thing was to follow the custom or usage of the Noble Prophet (peace be on him), i.e. *Sunnah*. There were ancient customs which could be accepted in some matters, but, on matters specific to the religion of Islam, there was the example of the earliest believers who had been the contemporaries and Companions of the Noble Prophet (peace be upon him) and who presumably would act in matters of religion in a manner the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself acted.

Eventually, there came into existence Traditions which gave formal statement of what the *Sunnah* (precedent) of the Noble Prophet was on a variety of matters. Literally, *Sunnah* means a way or rule or manner of acting or a mode of life. In consequence of this, there arose in Islam a class of scholars, who made it their business to investigate and hand down the minutest details concerning the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Before long, attention came to be centred on the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his manner of life became in their eyes the ideal Muslim way of life to be imitated by his followers. In other words, the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) became a standard of living which every Muslim should aspire to reach. Certainly, who else could be a better guide for Muslims than the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself. His words and deeds,

therefore, became a source of inspiration for all Muslims in all times to come.

After his death, reports of the Prophet's wonderful sayings and doings began to circulate. These sayings continued to increase from time to time as they were collected from the *Sahabah*, the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and became subject to standardization and selection. This represented the word of the Prophet (peace be upon him), as supplement to the word of Allah.

The *Hadith*, in other words, is the second pillar after the Qur'an upon which rests the foundation of every Muslim's faith. This body of Traditions circulated orally for some time, as indicated by the word *Hadith*, commonly used for Tradition and which literally means a saying conveyed to man either through hearing or through witnessing an event. It is also used to denote "conversation," i.e. the telling of something new. The records of the sayings, therefore, were called Hadith; the rest, as a whole, was called *Sunnah* (custom or usage). For its details the plural *Sunan*, meaning customs was used.

### **The Importance of Hadith**

As we have seen earlier, the Hadith has come to supplement the Qur'an as a source of the Islamic Shari'ah law. Muslims can always turn to both sources for answers to all problems, be they legal or religious. The importance of Hadith in this regard can be realized when one considers the zeal and enthusiasm with which every group of Muslims, every party, every movement equipped itself with a selection of Traditions which would give Prophetic authority for its particular point of view.

After the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him), every case that came up for decision had to be referred either to the Holy Qur'an or to some judgment or saying of the Noble Prophet (peace be upon him), which judgements or sayings, therefore obtained a wide reputation. There are numerous cases on record on which a right was claimed

on the basis of a judgement or saying of the noble Prophet (peace be upon him), and evidence was demanded as to the authenticity of that saying.

For instance, Fatimah, the Prophet's daughter, claimed that she was entitled to an inheritance from the Noble Prophet (peace be upon him). But according to Bukhari, Chapter 85, Tradition 2, the Noble Prophet is reported to have said: "We Prophets do not inherit nor leave an estate for an inheritance: Whatever we leave is charity." This saying was cited by Abu Bakr as against the claim of Fatimah. The truth of his Hadith was not questioned by any one and Fatimah's claim was rejected. Incidents of this type occurred daily and became the occasion of establishing the truth of many sayings of the Noble Prophet (peace be upon him).

Not only was the authenticity of the particular Hadith established beyond all doubt, but the Hadith also obtained a wide circulation, and from being the knowledge of one man only, passed on to that of many. The Hadith literature, as we now have it, provides us with Prophetic precept and examples covering the whole gamut of duties and obligations of man; it is the basis of that developed system of law, theology and custom which is Islam.

The Muslim law is so very comprehensive that all the minutest acts of a Muslim are guarded by it. A Muslim, in reality, is told by this code not only what is required under penalty, but also what is either recommended or disliked after giving illustrations of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his nearest Companions. This is done without involving any reward or penalty since a pious believer is interested to know the praiseworthiness or blameworthiness of an action and thus reforms his action to please Allah and His Prophet (peace be upon him).

In Shari'ah (Islamic legal code), therefore, actions are divided into five classes, as follows:

- 1) *Fard* or *Wajib*: A compulsory duty, the omission of which is punished.
- 2) *Mandoob* or *Mustahab*: An action that is rewarded, but

whose omission is not punished.

3) *Ja'iz* or *Mubah*: An action is permitted but is legally neutral.

4) *Makrooh*: An action which is disliked and disapproved of by the Shari'ah but it does not incur any penalty.

5) *Haram*: An action which is forbidden. It is punishable by law.

After understanding the above framework of Muslim Law, we may easily comprehend that it was essential to receive guidance from the life-history of the Prophet (peace be upon him). For this reason, all the records of the manners and practices of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and minute details of his life and conversation were collected diligently.

Thus the Traditions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) were important in the development of Islamic legal system and jurisprudence. The *Muwatta* of Imam Malik ibn Anas (d. 179 A.H.) shows, for example, how the law can be drawn from these usages and Traditions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). This book, the first of its kind, helped to build up a system of law based partly on Traditions. It was followed by the *Musnad* of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 241 A.h.). In short, after the Holy Qur'an, the Hadith is the primary source of Muslim Law.

### **Development of Science of Hadith**

Islam spread throughout the world with miraculous speed. Within a century, the names of Allah and His Prophet, Muhammad (peace be upon him) were proclaimed by the *Muezins* from the minarets of the mosques throughout the Muslim world. It is very interesting to note that Islam was preached by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) both as a religion and as a way of life. Therefore, the Holy Qur'an contains the revelations from Allah pertaining to all aspects of human beings both in the mundane existence and in the life hereafter. It contains a number of laws, as for example, rules in regard to marriage, inheritance and the care of

orphans, etc. etc.

But the Qur'an is not meant to be a book of law or a book of history or sociology. It is, as a matter of fact, a book of guidance where Allah speaks to His creatures to lead a decent and refined life. The Qur'an does not tackle the question arising from diverse categories, as systematic and moral theology, rituals, civil and military laws.

As far as the other Eastern religions are concerned, their followers built gorgeous temples for their deities, but the Muslims, on the contrary, wrote systematic sciences like *Asma' Al Rijal* or the science to verify the narrators of the Traditions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as to who reported and from whom and what was the character of the reporter both in his public and private life. This was a tremendous task, but the early Muslims devoted their lifetime to this study of the science of theology, the commentaries of the Qur'an, the Hadith and the like.

Bukhari, a notable traditionalist, whose compilation of the Hadith is known among the Muslims as the most authentic one, recalls a Hadith from Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as reported by 'Aballah Ibn Mas'ud "that the best Hadith is the book of God" (*Bab Al- Itisam*, ed. Krehl, 4, p. 420). Hadith is a noun derived from the word *Hadatha* which means, in a broad sense, a tale of verbal communication of any kind. The Holy Qur'an is, as it was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as it was heard from the tongue of the Prophet (peace be upon him), also a Hadith. The true interpretation of the Qur'an, therefore, can be found in the words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) since he led his life according to the teachings of the Qur'an and his whole life was inspired by Allah himself.

The Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) enshrines the "way of life" - the example and practice of the early Muslim community. The Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was invoked to prove that certain acts were performed by the prophet (peace be upon him) and, therefore, they were to be emulated by all faithful Muslims. It is

from this point of view that Hadith and Sunnah are names of the same thing.

During the life time of the prophet (peace be upon him), the Muslims did not need any other guide in matters of religious or secular nature. After his death, the early pious Muslims emulated him and strictly followed his examples. Therefore, they always referred to the words and deeds of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Their work of collection of the Traditions was a separate thing from the study of the Islamic law although it was eventually connected with it. They began to compile everything that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had said and done; what he had refrained from doing; to what he had given *quasi-* approval to something by silence.

Above all, a record was being gathered of all the cases he had judged and of his decisions; of all the answers which he gave to formal questions on religious life and faith.

At first, a particular Companion of the Prophet (peace be upon him) had his own collection in memory or in writing. Then these collections were passed on to others. This is how the chain ran on and in time a Tradition evolved which consisted formally of two essential parts - the text (*Mat'n*) so handed down, and the chain of transmitters (*Isnad*) over whose lips it had passed. As for example X said, "There narrated to me Y" saying, "There narrated to me Z," saying .... so far it is the *Isnad* until it came to the last link and then followed the *Matn*, 'The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "Acquisition of knowledge is compulsory for every Muslim." Thus the writing down of the Traditions aided the memory to hold that which was already learned.

**Asma' Al-Rijal.** In order to know the life and the career as well as the character of the various persons who constituted the various links in the chains of the different *Isnad*, there developed the science of *Asma' Al-Rijal* which literally means the names of the men. In fact, it is the biography and critical analysis of the narrators of the Hadith or any such aspect of their life as may be helpful in determining their identity, veracity and reliability.



The earliest formal collections of Traditions were generally in the form known as *Musnad*. In these, each Hadith or statement which gave the saying or described the action of the Prophet was preceded by *Isnad*, or chain of transmitters. This took it back to the Companion of the Prophet who had himself heard the statement or witnessed the event given in the *Mat'n* or text of the Hadith, as authority for the Sunnah of the Prophet. These were then listed under the name of the final link in the *Isnad*, as we have mentioned before. The following examples will show clearly how this was done.

According to Bukhari (Chapter 30, Tradition 26) Abdan related to us (saying) Yazid Ibn Zurai informed us saying: Hisham related to us saying: Ibn Sirin related to us from Abu Hurairah, from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he said: " If anyone forgets and eats or drinks, let him complete his fast, for it was Allah who caused him thus to eat or drink." Similarly one finds a chain of narrations in the recorded Traditions.

From these examples it will be observed that the narrations are generally done in direct speech thus " A told me, saying that B said C had informed him saying I mentioned that he heard relate, I heard F ask the Apostle of Allah so and so."

A more practical arrangement, however, was by subject matter. Since at an early period the working jurists needed collections of Traditions which they might use in arriving at decisions on practical cases, there grew up the practice of arranging collections under the rubrics suggested by the needs of the jurists - marriage, inheritance, debts, ritual acts etc. Thus, Al-Bukhari groups together a number of *Ahadith* concerning 'fasting'. Some of these include *Ahadith* "on the necessity of the fast of Ramadhan". "On the one who fasts yet eats and drinks out of forgetfulness, etc."

This latter development in the method of arranging collections took place about the middle of the third century, A.H. when Hadith had attained such importance as a means

of determining the practice and beliefs of the community. The primary aim of the reporters was to establish unerring authority for law and custom; thus though the collectors (or reporters) devoted scrupulous attention to the *Isnad*, so far as the arrangement of Traditions was concerned, the *Isnad* was subordinate to the *Matn* (i.e. the subject matter of the Tradition). Traditions were recorded according to their subject and the subject matter was arranged under the headings of law books. Such collections were "*Musannafaat*."

Gradually six of such collections, which were compiled in the latter part of the third century of Islam, succeeded in gaining such general approval that later generations tacitly accepted them as the Six Authentic Collections (*Sehah Sittah*). They are:

- 1) The *Sahih* of Al-Bukhari (d. 256 A.H. = 870 C.E.)
- 2) The *Sahih* of Muslim (d. 261A.H. = 875 C.E.)
- 3) The *Sunan* of Ibn Majah (d. 273 A.H. = 887 C.E.)
- 4) The *Sunan* of Abu- Da'ud (d. 275 A.H. = 888 C.E.)
- 5) The *Jami'* of Al-Tarmidhi (d. 279 A.H. = 892 C.E.)
- 6) The *Sunan* of Al-Nasa'i (d.303A.H. = 915 C.E.)

In preparing their collections, these Traditionalists obviously used a critical technique of selection to decide what they would include and what they would reject. Bukhari, for example, examined some 600,000 Traditions of which he accepted only 7,397. Their purpose was to assemble a body of Traditions which would serve as a code of life for practising Muslims, so their primary interest was in selecting such Traditions as would give clear guidance concerning what Muslims' belief and practice should be, what things were permissible and approved, and what were not permissible and disapproved.

In their attempt to set up criteria of authenticity, which would exclude unauthenticated material, these Traditionalists picked on the *Isnad* as the testing point and worked out an elaborate system for testing the trustworthiness of these

"chains" and of the individuals, who formed the links therein, so that an *Isnad* could be labelled "excellent", "good", "fair", "weak" etc., the Tradition itself rated accordingly.

To a Muslim, therefore, the *Isnad* is quite as important an element in a Hadith as the *Mat'n* itself. Since the Hadith consists of two parts - the *Isnad* and the *Mat'n* as we have already seen - there grew up the principles of the criticism of the Hadith, as the Traditionalists began to write their commentaries of the Hadith literature in general. Thus, there came into existence the criticism of the Hadith relating to the *Mat'n*. The following is a summary of the principles of criticism of the *Isnad*:

1) All the Traditions must be traced back to their original reporters through a chain of transmitters. These transmitters must be of excellent character, truthful and must have a good retentive memory and high qualities of head and heart.

2) Every Tradition which reported an event or happening that occurred frequently in the presence of a large number of people, must have originally been reported by several narrators.

On the basis of these strict principles, many a Tradition narrated by a single Companion (*Sahabi*) of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was rejected. As for example, a Hadith is said to have been reported by Abu Bakr alone in which he says that at the time of the call for prayers (*Adhan*), the the Muslims kissed their thumbs when the Holy Prophet's name was recited. Since this event took place in the presence of a large number of Muslims, five times a day without fail, it should have been reported by a number of narrators. Since it is reported by only one Companion, the hadith is rejected.

As far as the *Mat'n* is concerned, the following principles of criticism of the Hadith are laid down:

1) The Hadith should not be contrary to the text or the teachings of the Qur'an or the accepted basic

- principles of Islam.
- 2) The Hadith should not be against the dictates of reason or laws of nature and common experience.
  - 3) The Hadith should not be contrary to the Traditions which have been already accepted by the authorities as reliable and authentic by applying all criteria.
  - 4) The Hadith which sings the praises and excellence of any tribe, place or persons should generally be rejected.
  - 5) The Hadith that contains the dates and minute details of the future events should be rejected.
  - 6) The Hadith that contains some remarks of the Prophet (peace be upon him) which are not in keeping with the Islamic belief of the Prophethood and the position of the Noble Prophet (peace be upon him) or such expressions as may not be befitting to him, should also be rejected.

Such strict principles of criticisms of the Hadith are extremely necessary since the Traditions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) are of great legal importance, next only to the Qur'an. This is the reason why all the important Muslim jurists belonging to the first three generations of the Muslim era preferred the Tradition to the *Qiyas* (analogical deduction). In some cases, some of them refused to express their individual opinion on legal matters in cases in which the Hadith was known to them.

The jurists like Imam Malik also accepted the practices of the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as an important legal authority since the practices followed by the Companions were based on the practices of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) followed in the footsteps of their master meticulously.

The Holy Qur'an also advocates the acceptance of Hadith as a source of Islamic legal system. It says, "*Whatever the Messenger gives to you, take it, whatever he for-*

*bids you, abstain from it.*" (Qur'an, 59:7)

### **Qualifications of a Transmitter of Hadith**

It is agreed by all the scholars of the Hadith as well as the jurists of Islam that a transmitter of the Hadith should possess certain qualifications to be acceptable. He must be of firm faith, truthful, mature in age and a person of great integrity. He should also have a good memory. He must be well-acquainted with the method of learning, preserving and transmitting the Traditions. He must also be conversant with the names, careers and characters of the earlier reporters of the Traditions. In short, Imam Al-Shafi'i has summed up the qualifications of a transmitter in the following words in his *Risalah*.

"He must be of firm faith, well-known for his truthfulness in whatever he reported. He should understand its contents and should know well how the change in expression affects the ideas expressed therein. He should report verbatim what he learnt from his teacher, and not narrate in his own words the sense of what he had learnt. He must possess a retentive memory and if he has reported from a book, he should remember his book well. He should refrain from making a report on the authority of those, whom he met but from whom he did not learn anything. His report must be in agreement with what has been reported by those, who are recognized to have good memory, if they also have transmitted these reports."

### **Classification of Ahadith**

The scholars of the Hadith literature have divided the Traditions into three categories according to the degree of their reliability. This classification was based on:

- 1) The perfection or imperfection of the chain of their transmitters.
- 2) The freedom of the texts from any concealed defects.
- 3) Acceptance or rejection of any Hadith by the Companions (Ashab), their followers (*Tabi'un*) and

their successors (*Tab' Tabi'un*).

The three categories of the Hadith are:

- 1) The *Sahih*: These are the genuine Traditions so declared after applying all tests.
- 2) The *Hasan*: These are the fair Traditions although inferior in the matter of authenticity to the *Sahih*.
- 3) The *Dha'eef*: These are the weak Traditions, which are not so very reliable.

The *Dha'eef* or weak Traditions divided further as follows, taking into consideration the degree of their defects in their reporters (*Ruwat*) or in the text (*Matn*) of the report:

- a) The *Mu'allaq* Traditions: These are those Traditions in which one or two transmitters are omitted in the beginning of the *Isnad*.
- b) The *Maqtu'* Traditions: These are those traditions which are reported by a *Tabi'i*, a man of second category after the Prophet (peace be upon him).
- c) The *Munqati'* Traditions: These are the broken Traditions.
- d) The *Mursal* Traditions: These are the incomplete Traditions in the *Isnad* of which a Companion (*Sahabi*) is omitted, e.g. A *Tabi'i* says, "the Prophet said....
- e) The *Musahhaf* Traditions: These are the Traditions which have a mistake in the words or letters of the *Isnad* or the *Mat'n*, e.g. *Hasan* is written as *Hashan*.
- f) The *Shadh* Traditions: These are the Traditions with a reliable chain of reporters but their meanings are contrary to other similarly attested Traditions narrated by the majority of the contemporary transmitters.
- g) The *Maudu'* Traditions: These are the fabricated and untrue Traditions. ■

# MADRASSAS DO NOT REPRESENT MASLAK

Maqbool Ahmed Siraj

*Maulana Rabe Hasni Nadwi is the Rector of Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow having taken over after the death of its patriarch Maulana Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi on December 31, 2000. An excellent Arabic writer and author of over a dozen books, Rabe is nephew of Maulana Ali Miyan. A well-known figure in Arabic literature, he is founder-member of several literary bodies in the Arab world as well as the Oxford University Centre for Islamic Studies. He is currently the head of the Rabita Adab e Islami and a member of the Rabat based World League of Islamic Literature.*

*Maulana Rabe was recently in Bangalore. Maqbool Ahmed Siraj spoke to him on changes in madrassa curriculum.*

**Question:** What changes can be anticipated in Nadwatul Ulama while you are at the helms?

**Answer:** Nadwa had had a forward looking leadership from the beginning. When it was being set up in 19th century, the Muslim opinion was against the British, hence they intensely disliked English. Yet it was introduced in the Nadwa curriculum just because the founders saw in it the potential of being the language of future developments. Nadwa also creates awareness of civilizational issues among its students. Therefore its alumni were always ahead of all other madrassas. People like Syed Sulaiman Nadwi were invited by the government of Afghanistan to formulate a modern curriculum. Currently we have three concerns before us. We are urging the government to either maintain secular syllabus or allow all communities to introduce their own religious curriculum in the syllabus. Second we are concentrating on media. Media prepares the mind of the educated people. We would like to train mediemen who could uphold the values of objectivity. Third front where we need to work is political front. We would like Muslims above party based politics and contribute to the national development.

**Question:** The plea for modernisation of Madrassa syllabus

is almost a century old. Nadwa heralded this movement. But the pace of modernisation seems to be much slow. Even Nadwa graduates prefer not to think beyond being Arabic announcers, Arabic translators in foreign missions or taking up Unani Tibb Course. The gap seems to be very wide.

**Answer:** Nadwa has introduced Hindi as well as social sciences in its curriculum. Our graduates have ability in English upto plus two level. Nadwa has always a dearth of resources. Whatever we could do with economy we did. Nowadays education and employment have developed an inseparable bond. So we have few students who enroll in madrassas with the aim of being scholars. Most of them study to seek employment. Even the West is realizing the mistake of making the two integral to each other.

**Question:** The madrassas have not agreed upon formulating a common syllabus. They pursue narrow sectarian outlooks. Titles such as Nadwi, Salafi, Qasimi, Mazahiri and Umri are not only considered degrees but have also come to represent the sectarian divide in the Muslim society. Your comment.

**Answer:** We must seek a solution for sectarian divide in the millat. Tolerance of others' opinion is an essential condition for unity. The ulema should keep the community's interest above their own opinion. Titles such as Nadwi and Qasmi are merely for introduction and serve as index of one's alma mater. These do not represent maslak. Personally I would like the madrassa graduates to shed these titles.

**Question:** Arabic is an international language. But since madrassa curriculum has not ben modernized for long, even the Arabic language suffers from this handicap. Even geographical closeness with the Arab world and increasing economic ties have not been able to popularize Arabic in India. Madrassa curriculum in Arabic is still dominated with classicism while Arabic used in Arab media, research, communication and market has altogether changed.

**Answer:** Nadwa has done enough to keep pace with



Arabic as it is used in Arab world. This is why Nadwa receives a higher rating in the government of India jobs. Madrasas must do something to enhance the standard of Arabic to be at par with market needs of the Arab world too.

**Question:** The Muslim community in India had looked towards the Ulema for leadership for long. But they are no longer considered fit to lead now. As it is evident from Moon sighting controversies, it seems the lack of modern knowledge has rendered them unfit to lead the community. The very fact that a single individual leads the Muslim Personal Law Board as well as the Council, also shows that there are serious gaps between the demands of the age and the kinds of products madrassas produce?

**Answer:** We need to raise the educational and understanding level of the entire millat. It is very true that the leaders rise from the millat. Madrassas should also contribute to this.

**Question:** One expected that Dawah should be the concern of the madrassas. But current experiences shows that dawah workers such as Dr., Zakir Naik or Ahmed Deedat now come from modern educational institutions, and not from madrassas. Is it not necessary that we make the madrasa student more aware of the Hindu society, religion, history and Indian languages in order to make them better dawah workers?

**Answer:** Nadwa teaches subjects such as Hindi, Sanskrit, Indology etc. Other madrassas should also follow this curriculum. The dawah workers you have mentioned have gained name and fame because of their English background. However, several of our students are working silently in Hindi areas. ■

**Thousands of years ago an honest and pious man named Luqman gave some advices to his son which are particularly mentioned in the Qur'an. On reading, one feels that those advices are still relevant today as in the past.**

● Behold Luqman said to his son by way of instruction: "O my son! Join not in worship (others) with Allah: for false worship is indeed the highest wrong-doing." ● And We have enjoined on man (to be good) to his parents: in travail upon travail did his mother bear him and in years twain was his weaning: (hear the command) "Show gratitude to Me and to thy parents: to Me is (thy final) Goal. ●"But if they strive to make the join in worship with Me things of which thou hast no knowledge obey them not; Yet bear them company in this life with justice (and consideration) and follow the way of those who turn to Me (in love): in the End the return of you all is to Me and I will tell you the truth (and meaning) of all that ye did." ● "O my son!" (said Luqman) "If there be (but) the weight of a mustard-seed and it were (hidden) in a rock or (anywhere) in the heavens or on earth Allah will bring it forth: for Allah understands the finest mysteries (and) is well-acquainted (with them). ● "O my son! establish regular prayer enjoin what is just and forbid what is wrong: and bear with patient constancy whatever betide thee; for this is firmness (of purpose) in (the conduct of) affairs. ● "And swell not thy cheek (for pride) at men nor walk in insolence through the earth; for Allah loveth not thy arrogant boaster. ● "And be moderate in thy pace and lower thy voice; for the harshest of sounds without doubt is the braying of the ass." ● Do ye not see that Allah has subjected to your (use) all things in the heavens and on earth and has made His bounties flow to you in exceeding measure (both) seen and unseen? Yet there are among men those who dispute about Allah without knowledge and without guidance and without a Book to enlighten them!.

(S.31,A.13-20)

## ANOTHER ASSAULT ON SECULARISM

*On July 27, 2001 a mosque built during the time of Akbar the Great an emperor known for his secular views, was demolished in Asind in Bhilwara district of Rajasthan. This vandalism has been condemned by all sensible persons. We reproduce below some writings and editorial notes, published in important national magazines and newspapers for the benefit of our readers and also to preserve them as they may assume an archaical importance for our historians:*

Editor

### Ayodhya comes to Rajasthan

Vipul Mudgal

When a motivated mob demolished a 16th century mosque in Asind, in Bhilwara district last week, parallels were drawn with the Babri masjid demolition in Ayodhya. The decrepit mosque, comprising a wall about 14 feet wide and 12 feet long with two minarets built on a square *chabutara* or square, was pulled down on July 27. The roofless mosque, which coexisted with Asind's Bhoj temple complex for centuries, along with a bigger, neighbouring dargah, was called *kalandari* because regular *namaz* was not observed in it.

The demolition came across as a well-planned operation. It started with a mob setting fire to tent of a Muslim congregation. The Muslim youths immediately blockaded roads. As the administration tried to cool tempers, the mob retreated into the temple complex, only to pull down the mosque in the next few hours. The administration first denied the incident and then raised doubts about the very existence of the mosque.

Such was the state of the administration's collusion that even the chief minister's office was misinformed. The administration conceded the point only when *Hindustan Times* presented irrefutable evidence to prove that the

mosque indeed existed where a Hanuman statue was installed (HT procured a video recording of an earlier function where the small mosque was clearly in the backdrop. It also dug out a reference in the renowned folk historian Rani Laxmi DevChundawat's book describing the temple.)

True, the mosque in Asind did not have the symbolic value of the Babri masjid. But there are clear parallels between the two demolitions. The leaders of the local Hindu organisations, predominantly Gujjars belonging to both the BJP and the congress, insisted that the *chabutara* (square) where the minarets and the wall of the mosque once stood, had always been a Hanuman temple. Some VHP activists tried to convince visiting reporters that it was a 'structure' (a la Ayodhya) rather than a mosque. Some others bestowed the epithet of "*Pir Pachhad Hanuman*" (Hanuman who humbled the pir or Muslim saint) upon the statue by putting up a freshly painted signboard.

The situation threatened to turn ugly when some Gujjar youths gave a call for demolition of the neighbouring *dargah*, which is much bigger - both in size and importance - than the one pulled down. In the next 24 hours, truck and jeep loads of people from nearby villages started pouring in.

What goes to the Congress Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot's credit is that he instinctively went for a political remedy. He got the leaders of the Gujjar community and the members of the temple trust - rather than the police - to remove the signboard and the Hanuman idol.

Where the state government has failed is to give unequivocal signal to the police and bureaucracy that communal trouble has to be met with the most stringent action. Hardly any officer has been shifted in the aftermath of communal troubles in Beawar, Jaipur's Ramganj area and Nasirabad, despite questionable handling.

The trouble makers of Asind are still at it. A section of Gujjar youths have publicly vowed to target the *dargah*. HT has come to know that land records have been tampered to show the place of *dargah* as a clean expanse of irrigable land. Thankfully, older revenue records depict the *dargah*

where it should be.

With the Muslims demanding that the mosque be rebuilt, and many in the Gujjar community adamant on not giving a separate passage for the *dargah*, Asind's communal crisis is far from over. Rajasthan has had more than seven instances of communal violence in as many months this year. The writing, for Gehlot, is on the wall. □

Hindustan Times

## Preying at a Mosque

Soma Wadhwa

Ayodhya to Asind, Hindutva is on the rampage. But we Mussalmans will give Hindutva a fiercer fight than it expects! fulminates Rafiq Ahmed Sheikh. Head of Asind's Muslim community, Sheikh's battle-cry rings through this dusty small town in Rajasthan's Bhilwara district. To find echo in Laxmi Lal Gujjar's garbled Hindu pride. Head of Asind's Sawai Bhoj Temple Trust, and an influential voice in the area's Gujjar-community, Laxmi Lal is only raring for a confrontation. He sternly declares the rules of war: "Because we treat them like brothers, Muslims are getting carried away. Now they want to dictate terms. They have forgotten Hindus as their ancestors, Muslims are younger brothers at best. They have to listen to us, or else...."

Such threats of violence are rife in the air as an uneasy calm prevails in Asind (population: 18,500 approx). Communal animosity gripped the town when a mob of Hindu lumpensburnt doen tents erected as usual Urs celebrations in the Badai dargah near the town's Sawai Bhoj temple complex on July 27. As news reached the town's shanty Bazaar, angry Muslim men reacted by burning tyres, shutting shops and vowing revenge. Then, ugliness ran riot as the Hindu mob razed to ground a 16th century mosque (where no prayers were regularly offered), abutting the Sawai Bhoj temple. A marble platform was built and an idol of Hanuman was hurriedly installed at the site of the demolished mosque. And the freshly built temple was provocatively christened Mandir Peer Pachhar Hanumanji (Tem-

ple of Lord Hanuman who defeated a Peer-Muslim saint.)

A week later, Asind was inundated with policeman, district officials, human rights activists, politicians and journalists. Enough to unnerve this little-known town. Perhaps as some Hindu resident crib, it even hyped up the hostilities. The idol of Hanuman was duly shifted, but not very far. And the temple trust has taken to referring to the demolished mosque as "The Wall".

"Not surprising," says a caustic Mojuddin. "In BJP's India, mosques will either be called 'structures' or 'walls'. To be mauled and broken at whim." He belongs to the 20 member *samjhauta* (comptomise) committee that has been locally constituted to resolve the issue, comprising 10 people each from both communities. Having already met once without any significant result, the committee will meet this week again to iron out differences. Presently though, with positions hardening on both sides, it seems to have an impossible task at hand.

"Nothing short of Hindus rebuilding the mosque for us will do," proclaims 22-year old Ikramuddin Dyer. "We let them off in Babri, they did Asind. We let them off now, they'll break another masjid tomorrow." Samsher Gujjar, 18 is as inflexible: "We allowed them a dargah on our land, they want a road, next they'll ask us to carry them there like donkeys. Just 2,500 Muslims in Asind and they're holding 16,000 of us to ransom. Give it now, and they'll want to sit on our heads next!"

Meanwhile, elders in both communities dole out reams of photocopied documents to make the same points. Revenue records, old FIRS, anything to assert ownership of land in the complex. Some Muslims even supply the demolished mosque's photographs culled out of video recordings of an old Urs celebration - to counter the temple trust's denial of the mosque's existence. "This would never have happened if some haughty Muslims hadn't barged in on a jeep and provoked us," says Kalu Ram Gujjar, temple trust member and former Rajasthan BJP minister. This motley Muslim group, angry at not being allowed to drive through

the temple land to access the Urs celebration, is alleged to have "challenged" Hindus to come to their dargah territory to settle scores. "No Hindu will take insult like this sitting in his mandir, on his own land," reasons Kalu Ram. The burning of the tents, then, was for him 'valid' Hindu retaliation to Muslim arrogance. It was led by Mansukh Singh, local resident and self-styled international president of the Rajesh Pilot Brigade'. Owner of a gas agency, who locals barely know of or care to know much about, he is currently absconding. "Mansukh is a fanatic type of person. We are hor on his trail," assures Bhilwara SP H.C. Bhagat. "He'll be arrested any day now."

But the communal horror that played itself out in Asind betrays realities more complex than a lunatic Mansukh stormtrooping his way into a mosque and demolishing it on impulse. Politics power and pelf scripted this disturbing story of hatred that climaxed in the discretion of the town's mosque a symbol of communal harmony for over 400 years.

Legend has it that on their way back from battle in Chittorgarh in the 16th century, a battalion of Emperor Akbar's forces stopped and enjoyed hospitality at the Sawai Bhoj temple dedicated to Dev Narain, god of the Gujjars. Before leaving they built a Kalandari mosque there, a roofless wall with monarets where saints and travellers could pray. Later, as appreciation Akbar granted the temple 700 bighas of land. Till 20 years ago. Fakir Sakar Khanji would offer namaaz at the mosque and break bread with the adjoining temple's priest.

Communal amity reigned till money played usurper. A temple trust was constituted 1981, and it started filling up its coffers. By 1994, construction of a flamboyant temple, costing Rs 1 crore, had begun. It dwarfed the original temple and the mosque. This year, a brick wall was built around the complex, and in April, the new temple was inaugurated with fanfare. Thousands thronged the shrine, and a statue of Gujjar leader, the late Rajesh Pilot, was unveiled.

The wall forbade Muslims easy access into the dargah behind the temple. The temple's grand entrance too was

not open to the community. Squabbles over access ensued. The escalating ornateness of the temple over time and its increasingly elaborate rituals also had local Muslim competing in celebratory ostentation. Ceremonial processions, fairs and quwwali nights were added to the Urs festival with time. This made the temple trust suspicious, wary that the Muslims might encroach on more land than they had been given.

"Along with the rivalry between temple and dargah grew political antagonisms within the temple trust," says Jaiper based Kavita Srivastava, general-secretary of the Rajasthan unit of the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL). Kavita feels that a competition of sorts to aggressively uphold Gujjar interests is on amongst the trust's members. And each is outdoing the other on taking a hardline posture against the Muslims. "After Rajesh Pilot's death, the slot of a pan-Indian Gujjar leader is vacant, and what better opportunity than this to aim for the slot by Muslim-bashing," adds Kavita.

It's no coincidence either that communal bitterness has taken root in the temple complex at a time when two of the most prominent trust members are from the BJP, another an RSS pracharak. Chairperson Laxmi Lal is a former Congress MLA but is increasingly toeing the saffron line to retain his position in the trust.

"Sanskritisation is at work," says Kavita. "Unlike the original temple with idols only of Gujjar deities, the new temple has idols of mainstream Hindu gods like Ganesh and Shiva. The agenda is to kill plurality." This majoritarian agenda frightens Nasir Ali Naqvi, chairperson of the Rajasthan Waqf Board the most. Says he tersely: "The Asind demolition was preplanned. Marble platform built, idol placed within minutes. Leaving no trace of the masjid. "Only a trail that came from faraway Ayodhya."

#### OUTLOOK

### Demolition dynamics

Pit the words of two Lals - Hira Lal, a shopkeeper of



Asind, Rajasthan, which had on Friday witnessed the demolition of a mosque and the installation of a temple in its place, and Amrit Lal Khemka, district president of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad - against each other and the difference cannot be more stark. Talking to the Express, Hira Lal observed, "Even our walls meet each other. It's the custom here to live in co-existence." Amrit Lal Khemka, on his part, saw it this way: "The mosque was an illegal structure like the Babri Masjid and deserved to be knocked down." Between the world view of one and that of the other, lies all the difference between sanity and insanity, peace and insensate violence.

Fortunately, wiser counsel seems to have prevailed for the time being in Asind and an uneasy peace has now descended on the Sawai Bhoj complex, the scene on Friday's desecration. The hanuman idol which had been placed at the site where the ancient single-walled mosque had once stood has been removed by the community which had led the earlier attack. This seems to indicate that even perpetrators of communal violence are amenable to reason and require, most of all firm handling by the administrators. In several incidents of this kind in the past, it was the pusillanimous and delayed response from the local administrators and the state government which had led to isolated incidents assuming ugly proportions. But the situation in Asind is far from normal and there are many intemperate characters still waiting to wreak their mischief. While it may take years for the earlier ties that had once bound the people of both faiths in this region together, every attempt must be made to bring the situation as close to status quo as possible. This would include rebuilding the mosque, ensuring that the sources of tension between the worshippers at the temple and the mosque are eliminated as far as possible and the shaken minority community reassured. With an inspector-general of police personally camping there, the authorities should immediately get down to this.

There is a large point to be made here. Many of these regions that are now the site of new religious hysteria, have had a strong legacy of syncretic living. In Asind itself, local

dargahs have always attracted both Muslims and Hindu worshippers and the local business testify to the close links between the two communities. It is this reservoir of goodwill that must be protected and extended, and those who seek to pollute its waters be exposed as the vandals they are and duly punished. It also highlights, once again, the importance of processes like the Liberhan Commission hearings on the Babri Masjid demolition. They symbolise the nation's resolve never to countenance the ugly and unacceptable crime of defacing or destroying places of worship, no matter where they are or to which community they may belong. □

Indian Express

## Beware of the loony brigade

No one's surprise, the VHP has had no qualms in acknowledging its role in the demolition of a disused 500-year old Kalandari mosque at Asind near Bhilwara in Rajasthan and 'converting' it into a 'temple'. Reportedly, the RSS also made its contribution to keeping the flag of 'Hinduism' flying. This particular act is a crazy one even by VHP standards. In Ayodhya at least, the RSS and its affiliates could claim to have operated in pursuit of an indefinable religious sentiment since they said that Ram was born where the Babri mosque stood. But at Asind, there was no excuse at all for demolishing a place of worship, except that it belonged to non-Hindus.

This act of vandalism was calculated to injure and inflame Muslim sentiment. It is unlikely that a secret centre of the loony brigade of the Hindu Right guides activists of this kind. It is undeniable, however, that the VHP and other RSS affiliates have succeeded in spreading a venomous message, according to which it is perfectly legitimate to target the minority communities. There is an underlying political purpose behind such a thought process.

For quite sometime after Ayodhya, the Hindutva lobby seemed to abjure destructive activity, possibly because the courts were on their tail. Of course, there was no let-up in their trident-waving bravado. Nor were they completely in-

active, as the murder of Graham Staines and his two sons in Orissa and attacks against Christians in Gujrat and elsewhere showed. The most glaring aspect of these incidents has been the perceived reluctance on the part of the Centre to go for the criminals. There is also a worry that with the decline of the BJP's popularity graph, the extremists in the Hindutva ranks may become more active in abid to recover lost political ground before the UP elections. All governments have to be on guard, therefore, especially the one at the Centre. □

Hindustan Times

## The outrage in Rajasthan

The demolition of a mosque at Asind in Rajasthan by a lumpen crowd and the construction of a temple at the site soon after is indeed a reminder of the communal frenzy that has been at play across the country for over a decade now. It may be true that the savage act at Asind does not fall in the same bracket as that of the December 6, 1992, demolition at Ayodhya. The incident on July 27 in this Rajasthan village may not have been preceded by a high pitch nationwide campaign by any organised group. The perpetrators did not even make any effort to give the incident any publicity as was done by those who were behind the Babri Masjid demolition campaign. And those in the civil administration in the district seem to have taken pains to ensure that the act went without being noticed.

There may have been valid reasons for this and one may even concede that the motive behind such efforts to conceal it from public glare was only to prevent a communal backlash. But then, the officers on the spot and the political masters of the civil administration in Rajasthan are certainly guilty on another count. Reports that the policemen posted on the spot remained mute spectators when a 300-strong crowd went about demolishing the mosque - a sixteenth century structure - is indeed a matter for concern. And the crowd was even allowed to build a "temple" in the

same place. Yet, there are no indications of any arrests made by the Rajasthan police. The State Government and the Chief Minister, Mr. Ashok Gehlot, are indeed guilty of letting such lumpen elements, even if they belong to a marginal lunatic fringe, go scot free after having committed such an outrage. This certainly is a matter for concern.

There is a larger aspect to the Asind incident than just being an act of lum-penism in the name of religion. The sequence of events, as has been reported, was not any spontaneous act by a set of lumpens. Instead, the trouble began when the annual 'urs' began procession to the Dargah (adjacent to the mosque) was disrupted and the tents erected for the cultural show as part of the festival were burnt down. All these happened a day before the demolition. The fact that the 'urs' processionists were "ordered" to take a different route on that day (simply because the route they were taking all these years passed through a temple) was indeed a manifestation of the majoritarian agenda. The events thus fall into a definite strategy that the Hindutva proponents have been following and an idea that is storm-troopers have been thrusting on civil society - that the minority community shall "respect" the sentiments of the majority - in several parts of the country in the past. The developments in Asind, indeed, fall into this pattern; all those who visited the Dargah in Asind for the annual 'urs' festival were forced to take a different route this year on the ground that the "sentiments" of the majority community would be "hurt" if the processionists walked along the road that they were taking all these years.

It is this kind of intolerance and hate shown by the Hindutva force over a period of time that had led to communal clashes in several parts of the country in the past. And it is for this reason that the demolition of the mosque in Asind assumes significance. It may be true that the structure had remained unused for several years (since 1956 as has been reported) and the number of Muslims in and around the town is negligible. But then, the message from Asind (as it was from Ayodhya too on December 6, 1992) is certainly not in

the interests of the democratic and secular spirit that remains the basis of our Constitution. The signals are ominous and civil society and its institutions can ignore them only at the nation's peril. Meanwhile, the imperative for the State Government in Rajasthan is to take steps and deal sternly with all those perpetrated the act and also ensure that such acts are not repeated in other places. □

The Hindu

## Better way of Life

**The Qur'an gives guidance on living a contented and peaceful life. Those who read and practice them will be benefited from this divine guidance.**

● Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him and that ye be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in thy life say not to them a word of contempt nor repel them but address them in terms of honor. ● And out of kindness lower to them the wing of humility and say: "My Lord! bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood." ● Your Lord knoweth best what is in your hearts: if ye do deeds of righteousness verily He is Most Forgiving to those who turn to Him again and again (in true penitence). ● And render to the kindred their due rights as (also) to those in want and to the wayfarer: but squander not (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift. Verily spendthrifts are brothers of the Evil Ones; and the Evil One is to his Lord (Himself) ungrateful. ● And even if thou hast to turn away from them in pursuit of the Mercy from thy Lord which thou dost expect yet speak to them a word of easy kindness. ● Make not thy hand tied (like a niggard's) to thy neck nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach so that thou become blameworthy and destitute. Verily thy Lord doth provide sustenance in abundance for whom He pleaseth and He provideth in a just measure: for He doth know and regard all His servants. ● Kill not your children for fear of want: We shall provide sustenance for them as well as for you: verily the killing of them is a great sin. ● Nor come nigh to adultery: for it is a shameful (deed) and an evil opening the road (to other evils). ● Nor take life which Allah has made sacred except for just cause. And if anyone is slain wrongfully We have given his heir authority (to demand Qisas or to forgive): but let him not exceed bounds in the matter of taking life: for he is helped (by the Law). ● Come not nigh to the orphan's property except to improve it until he attains the age of full strength; and fulfil (every) engagement for (every) engagement will be enquired into (on the Day of Reckoning). ● Give full measure when ye measure and weigh with a balance that is straight: that is the most fitting and the most advantageous in the final determination. ● And pursue not that of which thou hast no knowledge; for every act of hearing or of seeing or of (feeling in) the heart will be enquired into (on the Day of Reckoning). ● Nor walk on the earth with insolence: for thou canst not rend the earth asunder nor reach the mountains in height. ● Of all such things the evil is hateful in the sight of thy Lord.

(S. 17, A-23-to-38)

# INHERITANCE, PROPERTY RIGHTS AND FINANCIAL SECURITY OF WOMEN

A. H. Nomani

Inheritance is the transfer of legal possession of deceased persons onto their descendants.

According to philosophy of Confucius like many other religions the eldest son enjoys the rights of possessing the total assets of the father (that is called the right of primogeniture). Other systems prevalent throughout the world, with little variation, are very much one eyed toward women and in other words unjustified.

In English Common Law all the real property held by a woman at the time of her marriage becomes the property of her husband. It was not until the late 1870's and onwards in Europe that married women achieved the right to enter contracts and own property. In France, this was recognised until 1938.

In the ancient world woman inherited nothing and, even when she inherited, she was treated like a minor. She had no independent legal personality. According to certain ancient legal systems, a daughter received an inheritance but her children did not. On the other hand, a son not only received an inheritance himself, but his children also inherited the property left by their grandfather. Certain other legal systems allowed woman to inherit but not in the form of a definitely prescribed share, or in the language of the Qur'an an appointed share'. They simply allowed a progenitor to make a bequest in her favour, if he so desired.

Historians and investigators have given detailed accounts of the various laws of inheritance found in the ancient world, but we need not go into all their details. For our purpose, the above given description is enough.

The main reason for the deprivation of woman of inheritance was the prevention of transfer of wealth from one family to another. According to the old belief, the women's role in procreation was insignificant. The mothers

served only as receptacles, where the seed of the father developed into a child. On this account, they believed that the children of a man's son were his own children and a part of his family, but the children of a man's daughter were not a part of his family, for they were a part of the family of their paternal grandfather. Thus, had a daughter received an inheritance, that would have meant the transfer of property to her children, who belonged to a family unconnected with that of the deceased.

Late Dr. Musa 'Ameed says that in the olden days religion, and not any natural relationship, was the basis for the formation of the family. The grandfather, besides being the social head of his children and grandchildren, used to be their religious head also. The execution of religious ceremonies and rituals was handed down to succeeding generations through the male descendants only. The ancients regard only men as the means of preserving progeny. The father of the family not only gave life to his son, but also passed to him his religious beliefs and rituals. According to the Hindu Vedas and the Greek and the roman laws, the power of procreation was confined to men only, and hence family religions were the monopoly of men, and women had no hand in religious affairs except through their fathers or husbands. As they could not take part in the execution of religious ceremonies, they were naturally deprived of all family privileges. Hence, when the system of inheritance came into being, they were excluded.

The exclusion of women from inheritance had other reasons also, one of them being that she was not fit to be a good soldier. In a society in which great value was attached to the heroic deeds and the power of fighting, and a warrior was regarded superior to a hundred thousand non-fighters, woman was deprived of inheritance, because she lacked the fighting capacity.

For this very reason, the pre-Islamic Arabs were opposed to inheritance by women, who could not inherit as long as a male member of the family, howsoever distant, existed. That is why they were greatly surprised, when the



Qur'an expressly said : "For men is a share of what the parents and near relatives leave, and for women is a share of what the parents and the near relatives leave, whether it be little or much - an appointed share," (Surah An-Nisa, 4:32)

It so happened that the brother of Hassan bin Thabit, the famous poet, died in those very days, leaving behind a wife and several daughters. His paternal cousins appropriated all his property and did not give anything to his widow or daughters. The widow complained to the Holy Prophet who called her deceased husband's cousins. They said that a woman is unable to carry arms and to fight the enemy. It was the men who defended themselves and the women. Hence, they alone had the right to inherit the property. Thereupon, the Holy Prophet conveyed to them the command of Allah, as revealed in the above quoted verse.

### **Woman's inheritance in Islam**

The Islamic law is free from all the short-comings and defects of the past. The only thing, which is objectionable in the eyes of the upholders of equality between man and woman, is that the share for woman is half that of man. According to the Islamic law, a son receives twice as much as a daughter, a brother twice as much as a sister and a husband twice as much as a wife. The case of father and mother is the only exception.

If a deceased has children and his parents are also alive, each of his parents will get one-sixth of the property left by him. It is because of woman's special position with regard to dower, maintenance, military service and some of the criminal laws, that her share has been fixed at half that of man.

For reasons mentioned earlier, Islam considers dower and maintenance essential and effective in the consolidation of a marriage. They ensure domestic harmony and coherence. The Abolition of these is likely to shake the family structure and to push woman to wrong path. The dower and maintenance being compulsory, naturally woman's

commitments have been reduced and man's burden has proportionately increased. To compensate man for his extra burden, his share in inheritance has been fixed at twice that of woman. It is dower and maintenance which have reduced woman's share.

### **Objection of the Westernized**

Some Westerners, while criticizing woman's lesser share in inheritance and using it as a propaganda weapon against Islam, assert that, after all, there is no necessity of lessening woman's share in inheritance and compensating her for the loss by allowing her dower and maintenance. Is there any need of going into bylanes and adopting out-of-the-way methods? Why should not woman's share, from the beginning, be equal to that of man so that we may not be compelled to compensate her by allowing her dower and maintenance?

Such persons, who happen to be more royal than the king, have mistaken the cause for the effect and the effect for the cause. They think that the dower and the maintenance are the effects of women's peculiar positions with regard to inheritance, whereas the real position is just the reverse. Further, they seem to be under the impression that the financial aspect is the only consideration. Had that been the only consideration, obviously there would neither be the need for the system of dower and maintenance nor of disparity between the shares of man and woman. As we have mentioned earlier, Islam has taken into consideration many aspects, some of them natural and other psychological. It has considered woman's special needs, arising out of her procreative function. Man naturally has no such needs. Besides, on the one hand, woman's earning capacity is less than that of man and, on the other, her consumption of wealth is more. In addition, there are several other finer aspects of their respective mental make-up. For example, man always wants to spend for the sake of the woman of his choice. Other psychological and social aspects, which help in the consolidation of the domestic relations have also been

considered. Taking all these points into consideration, Islam has made dower and maintenance obligatory. Thus, it is not simply a financial problem, confined to reducing woman's share at one place and compensating her at another.

### **Objections of the heretics of the early Islamic era**

We have said that the dower and the maintenance are a cause and the peculiar position of woman with regard to inheritance is its effect. This point is not a new discovery. It came up even in the early days of Islam.

In the second century of the Hijri era there lived a man named Ibn Abi al-'Awja, who did not believe in religion. Taking advantage of the religious freedom of that period, he openly gave vent to his atheistic ideas. Sometimes he even came to the Masjid al-Haram (in Mecca) or Masjid al-Nabi (in Medina) and engaged in arguments on the principles of Islam with the scholars of the time. One of his objections against Islam concerned inheritance. He used to say: "What is the fault of the poor woman that she gets one share whereas the man gets two". According to him, this was injustice to woman, Imam Ja'far as Sadiq (P), in reply to him, said that it was so, because woman was exempted from performing military service. Further, Islam had enjoined upon man to pay her dower and maintenance and, in certain criminal cases where the kinsmen of the offender had to contribute to the blood-money, she was exempted from such payment. These were the reasons why her share had been reduced. Thus Imam Sadiq expressly attributed woman's peculiar position, with regard to inheritance, to the existence of the law regarding dower and maintenance and her exemption from military service and the payment of blood-money.

The Biblical attitude has been succinctly described by Rabbi Epstein: *"The continuous and unbroken tradition since the Biblical days gives the female members of the household, wife and daughters, no right of succession to the family estate. In the more primitive scheme of*

*succession, the female members of the family were considered part of the estate and as remote from the legal personality of an heir as the slave. Whereas by Mosaic enactment the daughters were admitted to succession in the event of no male issue remained, the wife was not recognized as heir even in such conditions*". Why were the female members of the family considered part of the family estate? Rabbi Epstein has the answer: *"They are owned before marriage, by the father; after marriage by the husband."* The Biblical rules of inheritance are outlined in Numbers 27:1-11. A wife is given no share in her husband's estate, while he is her first heir, even before her sons. A daughter can inherit only if no male heirs exist. A mother is not an heir at all while the father is. Widows and daughters, in case male children remained, were at the mercy of the male heirs for provision. That is why widows and orphan girls were among the most destitute members of the Jewish society.

Christianity has followed suit for a long time. Both the ecclesiastical and civil laws of Christendom barred daughters from sharing with their brothers the father's patrimony. Besides, wives were deprived of any inheritance rights. These iniquitous laws survived till late in the last century.

During the time of Prophet (SAWS) women themselves were objects of inheritance and they were considered part of the possession a man. At such a critical juncture of history Islam brought about a revolution in the domain of human thoughts and outlook towards women to inherit at the same time distributing the inheritance in an upright manner. This determined that the share is calculated by Allah Himself and cannot be changed.

*"To everyone, we have appointed shares and heirs to property left by parents relatives...."* (Surah Nisa : 33)

The Islamic law is extremely detailed and is based on two most salient features:

**A** The extent of the share is dependent on the closeness of the heirs relationship to the deceased. *"Blood relations*

*among each other have closer ties, in the Book of Allah than (the brotherhood of) the believers and Muhajirs".*

*(Surah Ahzab 6)*

And in another verse-

*"From that is left by parents and those nearest related, there is a share for men and a share for women, whether the property be small or large-a determined share."(SurahNisa 7)*

**B** In most cases, man's share of the inheritance is twice that of woman's *"Allah (thus) directs you as regards your children's (inheritance) to the male, a portion equal to that of two females, if only daughter, two more, their share is two-thirds of the inheritance, if only her share is half." (Surah Nisa : 11)*

Actually this is due to the variant financial responsibilities of the male towards the family and relatives. Moreover it is astonishing that according to Qur'an twelve persons have been declared as Jawil Furuz (determined share holders) in respect of inheritance where only four persons are men and eight are women. This means that Islam has shown utmost seriousness about ensuring the portion of women as they have been the most deprived ones before the advent of Islam. Islam has determined the share of the daughter (as she has the status of Jawil Furuz) but did not determine the share of a son (as his status is one of Asaba)

Muslim mothers, wives, and sisters had received inheritance rights thirteen hundred years before Europe recognized that these rights even existed. The division of inheritance is a vast subject with an enormous amount of details (4:7, 11, 12, 176). The general rule is that the female share is half the male's except the cases in which the mother receives share equal to that of the father. This general rule if taken in isolation from other legislations concerning men and women may seem unfair. In order to understand the rationale behind this rule, one must take into account the fact that the financial obligations of men in Islam far exceed those of women A bridegroom must provide his bride with

a marriage gift. This gift becomes her exclusive property and remains so even if she is later divorced. The bride is under no obligation to present any gifts to her groom. Moreover, the Muslim husband is charged with the maintenance of his wife and children. The wife, on the other hand, is not obliged to help him in this regard, her property and earnings being for her use alone except what she may voluntarily offer her husband. Besides, one has to realize that Islam advocates family life. It strongly encourages youth to get married, discourages divorce, and does not regard celibacy as a virtue. Therefore, in a truly Islamic society, family life is the norm and single life is a rare exception. That is, almost all marriageable aged women and men must be married in an Islamic society. In the light of these facts, one should appreciate that Muslim men, in general, have greater financial burdens than Muslim women and inheritance rules are meant to offset this imbalance so that the society lives free of all gender or class disputes. After a simple comparison between the financial rights and duties of Muslim women, one British Muslim woman has concluded that Islam has treated women not only fairly but generously.

The three religions share an unshakeable belief in the importance of marriage and family life. They also agree on the leadership of the husband over the family. Nevertheless, differences do exist amongst the three religions with respect to the limits of this leadership. The Judaeo-Christian tradition, unlike Islam, virtually extends the leadership of the husband into ownership of his wife.

**The superiority of the Qur'an's commandment over the modern one with respect to the female inheritance**

The Qur'an decrees that the male shall receive the portion of two females (in inheritance).

The Qur'anic injunction of inheritance is perfectly just and a perfect mercy for women. It is because, in the majority of cases, and according to the Islamic Law, the husband provides both for the wife's and the children's livelihood, whereas the wife is not under any legal obligation to provide either for him or herself. Thus she is compensated for

receiving less share in inheritance than the man. It is a perfect mercy because she is delicate, vulnerable and held in great affection by her father who, thanks to the Quranic injunction, does not see her as a child who will cause him loss by carrying away to others half of his wealth. In addition, her brothers feel compassion for her and protect her without feeling envy of her, as they do not consider her as a rival in the division of the family possessions. Thus, the affection and compassion which the girl enjoys through her family compensate for her apparent loss in the inheritance.

It is for this reason that it is severe injustice, far from being kindness, to institute more for the girl than her due out of unrealistic feelings of compassion; unrealistic, because no one can be more compassionate than God. Rather, if the Qur'anic bounds are exceeded, women may become, for the reasons we have given, vulnerable to exploitation and tyranny in the family, especially in view of the barbaric selfishness of modern times which can be as bad as the tyranny of the jahiliyyā (the pre-Islamic age of ignorance) when infact girls were buried alive. As for the Qur'anic injunctions, all of them, like those pertaining to inheritance, prove the truth expressed in the verse: "We have not sent you (O Muhammad), save as a mercy unto all beings."

Modern civilization, which, in essence, is a system of savagery because it lacks real human values, wrongs mothers more than girls by depriving of their rights. Being the purest and finest reflection of Divine compassion, the affection of mothers is the most revered reality in the creation. A mother is so compassionate, self-sacrificing an intimate friend that she sacrifices all she has, including her life for her children. A timid hen, for instance, whose motherliness represents the lowest degree, has been observed to attack a dog in order to protect her chicks.

It is for this reason, plain to those who are really human, if not to those who appear human but are bestial in essence, what a great injustice and shameful disrespect, what a heart-rendering ingratitude and harmful poison for social life it is, to deprive such a respected, dear being of her

rightful share in the wealth of her son. Qur'anic injunction, gives the mother one sixth of her son's inheritance, as in the verse, "*And to his mother a sixth*", is in perfect accordance with justice and universal truth.

The Jewish tradition regarding the husband's role towards his wife stems from the conception that he owns her as he owns his slave. This conception has been the reason behind the double standard in the laws of adultery and behind the husband's ability to annul his wife's vows. This conception has also been responsible for denying the wife any control over her property or her earnings. As soon as a Jewish woman got married, she completely lost any control over her property and earnings to her husband. Jewish Rabbis asserted the husband's rights to his wife's property as a corollary of his possession of her: "Since one has come in to the possession of the woman does it not follow that he should come into the possession of her property too?", and "Since he has acquired the woman should he not acquire also her property?" Thus, marriage caused the richest woman to become practically penniless. The Talmud describes the financial situation of a wife as follows: "*How can a woman have anything; whatever is hers belongs to her husband? What is his is his and what is hers is also his..... Her earnings and what she may find in the streets are also his. The household articles; even the crumbs of bread on the table, are his. Should she invite a guest to her house and feed him, she would be stealing from her husband....*" (San. 71a, Git. 62a)

The fact of the matter is that the property of a Jewish female was meant to attract suitors. A Jewish family would assign their daughter a share of her father's estate to be used as a dowry in case of marriage. It was this dowry that made Jewish daughters an unwelcome burden to their fathers. The father had to raise his daughter for years and then prepare for her marriage by providing a large dowry. Thus, a girl in a Jewish family was a liability and not asset. This liability explains why the birth of a daughter was not celebrated with joy in the old Jewish society. Dowry was



the edding gift presented to the groom under terms of tenancy. The husband would act as the practical owner of the dowry but he could not sell it. Bride would loose any control over the dowry at the moment of marriage. Moreover, she was expected to work after marriage and all her earnings had to go to her husband in return for her maintenance which was his obligation. She could regain her property only in two cases: divorce or her husband's death. Should she die first, he would inherit her property. In case of husband's death, the wife could regain her premarital property but she was not entitled to inherit any share in her deceased husband's own property. It has to be added that the groom also had to present a marriage gift to his bride, yet again he was the practical owner of this gift as long as they remained married.

Christianity, until recently, has followed the same Jewish tradition. Both religious and civil authorities in the Christian Roman Empire (after Constantine) required a property agreement as a condition for recognizing the marriage. Families offered their daughters increasing dowries and, as a result, men tended to marry earlier while families postponed their daughters' marriages until later than had been customary. Under Canon law, a wife was entitled to restitution of her dowry if the marriage was annulled unless she was guilty of adultery. In this case, she forfeited her right to the dowry which remained in her husband's hands. Under Canon and civil law a married woman in Christian Europe and America lost her property rights until late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For example, women's rights under English law were compiled and published in 1632. These 'rights' included:  
*"That which the husband hath is his own. That which the wife hath is the husband's."*

The wife not only lost her property upon marriage, she lost her personality as well. No act of her was of legal value. Her husband could repudiate any sale or gift made by her as being of no binding legal value. The person with whom she had any contract was held as a criminal for participating

in a fraud. Moreover, she could not sue or be sued in her own name, not could she sue her own husband. A married woman was practically treated as an infant in the eyes of the law. The wife simply belonged to her husband and therefore she lost her property, her legal personality, and her family name.

Islam, since the seventh century C.E., has granted married women the independent personality which the Judaeo-Christian West had deprived them until very recently. In Islam, the bride and her family are under no obligation whatsoever to present a gift to the groom. The girl in a Muslim family is no liability. A woman is so dignified by Islam that she does not need to present gifts in order to attract potential husbands. It is the groom who must present the bride with a marriage gift. The gift remains her property and neither the groom nor the bride's family have any share in or control over it. In some Muslim societies today, a marriage gift of a hundred thousand dollars in diamonds is not unusual. The bride retains her marriage gifts even if she is later divorced. The husband is not allowed any share in his wife's property except what she offers him with her free consent. Qur'an has stated its position on this issue quite clearly:

*"And give the women (on marriage) their dower as a free gift; but if they, of their own good pleasure, remit any part of it to you, take it and enjoy it with right good cheer" (4:4)*

The wife's property and earnings are under her full control and for her use alone since her, and the children's, maintenance is her husband's responsibility. No matter how rich the wife might be, she is not obliged to act as a co-provider for the family unless she herself voluntarily chooses to do so. Spouses do inherit from one another. Moreover, a married woman in Islam retains her independent legal personality and her family name. An American judge once commented on the rights of Muslim women saying:

*"A Muslim girl may marry ten times, but her individuality is not absorbed by that of her various husbands. She is a solar planet with a name and legal personality of her own."*

The *Shari'ah* (Islamic law) recognizes the full property rights of women before and after marriage. They may buy, sell or lease any or all of their properties at will. For this reason, Muslim women may keep (and in fact they have traditionally kept) their maiden names after marriage, an indication of their independent property rights as legal entities.

Financial security is assured for women. They are entitled to receive marital gifts without limit and to keep present and future properties and income for their own security, even after marriage. No married woman is required to spend any amount at all from her property and income on the household. In special circumstances, however, such as when her husband is ill, disabled or jobless, she may find it necessary to spend from her earnings or savings to provide the necessities for her family. While this is not a legal obligation, it is consistent with the mutuality of care, love and cooperation among family members. The woman is entitled also to full financial support during marriage and during the waiting period (*'iddah*) in case of divorce or widowhood. Some jurists require, in addition, one year's support for divorce and widowhood (or until they remarry, if remarriage takes place before the year is over).

A woman who bears a child in marriage is entitled to child support from the child's father. Generally, a Muslim woman is guaranteed support at all stages of her life, as a daughter, wife or mother or sister. The financial advantage accorded to women and not to men in marriage and in family have a social counterpart in the provisions that the Qur'an lays down in the laws of inheritance, which afford the male, in most cases, twice the inheritance of a female. Males inherit more but ultimately they are financially responsible for their female relatives: their wives, daughters, mothers and sisters. Females inherit less but retain their share for investment and financial security, without any legal obligation to spend any part of it, even for their own sustenance (food, clothing, housing medication, etc).

It should be noted that in pre-Islamic society, women themselves were sometimes objects of inheritance. In some

Western countries, even after the advent of Islam, the whole estate of the deceased was given to his or her eldest son. The Qur'an however, made it clear that both men and women are entitled to a specified share of the estate of their deceased parents or close relations:

*"From what is left by parents and these nearest related, there is a share for men and a share for women, whether the property be small or large a determinate share (Qur'an 4:7)*

## **Employment**

With regard to the woman's right to seek employment, it should be stated first that Islam regards her role in society as a mother and a wife as her most sacred and essential one. Neither maids nor baby sitters can possibly take the mother's place as the educator of an upright, complexreared child. Such a noble and vital role, which largely shapes the future of nations, cannot be regarded as "idleness." This may explain why a married woman must secure her husband's consent if she wishes to work, unless her right to work was mutually agreed to as a condition at the time of marriage.

However there is no decree in Islam that forbids women from seeking employment whenever there is a necessity for it, especially in positions which fit her nature best and in which society needs her most. Examples of these professions are nursing, teaching (especially children), medicine, and social and charitable work. Some early jurists, such as Abu-Hanifah and Al-Tabari, uphold that a qualified Muslim woman may be appointed to the position of a judge. Other jurists hold different opinions.

Yet no jurist is able to point an explicit text in the Qur'an or Sunnah that categorically excludes women from any lawful employment except for headship of the state. Omar, the second Caliph after the Prophet (PBUH), appointed a woman (*Um Al-Shifaa' bint Abdullah*) as the marketplace supervisor, a position that is equivalent in our world to "director of the consumer protection department."

In countries where Muslims are a numerical minority, some Muslim women, while recognizing the importance of their role as mothers, may be forced to seek employment in order to survive. This is especially true in the case of divorcees and widows and in the absence of the Islamic financial security measures out-lined above.

I would like to emphasise in this introduction that my purpose for this study is not to degrade Judaism or Christianity. As Muslims, we believe in the divine origins of both. No one can be a Muslim without believing in Moses and Jesus as great prophets of God. My goal is to vindicate Islam and pay a tribute, long overdue in the West, to the final truthful Message from God to the human race. I would also like to emphasize that I concerned myself only with Doctrine. That is, my concern is, mainly, the position of women in the three religions as it appears in their original sources not as practised by their millions of followers in the world today. This interest in the sources relates to the fact that understanding a certain religion from the attitudes and the behaviour of some of its normal followers is misleading. Many people confuse culture with religion, many others do not know what there religious books are saying, and many others do not even care. Islam should be viewed as a religion that had immensely improved the status of women and had granted them many rights that the modern world has recognised only this century.

Islam has so much to offer for today's woman: dignity, respect, and protection in all aspects and all stages of her life from birth until death in addition to the recognition, the balance, and means for the fulfilment of all her spiritual, intellectual, physical, and emotional needs. ■

## HADITH

- The best person amongst you is the one who learns the Qur'an and teaches it to others.  
(Bukhari and Muslim)
- There are only two things you can cherish and be proud of. One is the person whom Allah has blessed with the knowledge of the Qur'an and who spends days and nights with it. The second one is the person whom Allah has blessed with riches and he passes his days and nights in spending it in the path of welfare.  
(Bukhari and Muslim)
- Read the Qur'an and follow it but do not make it a source of earn livelihood.  
(Sahee, Rawa Ahmed)
- Hazrat Omer Bin Al-Khattab r.a. narrated that, Prophet S.A.W. said that through this book (Qur'an) Allah will upgrade few and degrade few persons.  
(Bukhari and Muslim)
- That the reading and following the Qur'an will upgrade and carelessness about, it will lead to deagradation.  
(Muslim)
- Hazrat Abdullah Bin Masood r.a. said that, the Qur'an is like a platter, so as long as you are strong, come to this platter. Without any doubt the Qur'an is Allah's rope, a light to sweep the darkness, a curing and helpful medicine and those who hold this Book steadfastly, it is a protector and source of forgiveness for them. There is nothing crooked in the Qur'an, that needs to be straightened.

## CHOOSING A LIFE-PARTNER

Syed Iqbal Zaheer \*

It was a thousand and a half years ago that the Arabian Prophet spoke about the grounds on which people choose women for marriage. He said that a woman is chosen on the basis of one of the three things: her wealth, beauty and lineage. Today, the list is two elements shorter. Now they are sought for wealth.

To add vividness to the issue, what if a man has to choose between two ; a wealthy woman but not beautiful, and a beautiful woman but not wealthy? Which one does he go for? There is no hesitation. The former is the "dear mine," provided the woman, if not beautiful, is not ugly altogether.

In contrast, Islam is a value based religion and endeavours to bestow on its adherents lofty qualities. It judges people by their piety, a fruit of religiosity. It recommends, therefore that in every dealing, in every human interaction, the overwhelming consideration should be for religiosity. Other considerations might come next, and not at its cost. Further, the word religiosity itself is used to indicate that the person in question is endowed with good qualities and high morals. It is not the borderline people that are meant. Finally, although often said, it is little realised that qualities play the truly significant role in building or destruction of the individuals and families.

It is not harmony between the two partners that is intended by the advice, as some people assume. Harmony and disharmony are ruled by several other factors. But it is the moral qualities that play the central role in the success or failure of a married life. Nothing works through the long years of life, if qualities fail, and everything comes to a satisfactory end if good qualities prevail. No poetry this.

Therefore, the first and foremost quality to be looked for when choosing a girl for marriage is the fourth reason given by the prophet: her religiosity. The more religious a

person, the more preferable for marriage. However, it is much easier to state this requirement than to determine it. For the religiosity of a girl is only measurable from the religiosity of the family. That is, it is assumed that if the head of the family is religious, so will everyone be of the family. But one often come across a family given in all modern vices with least regard to religion, while the head of the family, the father, happens to be a devoted Muslim. (He is referred to as a "*miskeen*" by the honourable family). Many a men have been led to marrying a girl because they judged her from the father, only to discover after marriage that not only the girl, but the entire family is a bunch of rotten eggs.

How to determine the religiosity of a girl? The answer is, look for a "family" which is religious. Go not by a member or two of the social unit. (They are hardly a family in the Islamic sense). This is something that only the womenfolk of one's own family can assess. If they have known the other family for a considerable length of time, have socially interacted with them, and known from first hand experience, that the family as a whole is truly religious, and the concerned girl is also on the same lines, then, and then alone, can one hope that the girl would be somewhere near being described as religious.

Care to be observed in this regard is not to announce what kind of a girl one is looking for. One might first make some quiet observation. If it is announced that one is looking for a religious girl, then, the non-religious start pretending that they are a family of saints, merely in order to trap a man whom they consider an economically viable machine.

But action might be observed. Religiosity, in the sense understood today, is not a sufficient guarantee of a people's good qualities. Today, those who pray, fast and observe *hijab*, are thought to be religious. And, if one of the members of the family is attached to one or the other religious movements, then they are considered super-religious, the very models. But from Islamic point of view, that kind of outward behaviour is far from sufficient for someone to be declared religious. Some understanding of Islam is



essential. Some study of the Qur'an, a little bit of *hadith*, a cursory knowledge of the Prophet's life and of early Islam, are those elements without which one might be on a religion of his family, but not of his own. Once the religious surroundings are changed, the members of such a family are likely to shed away their religiosity, with little hesitation and less regret.

Therefore, some check might be made on the reading habits of the family. Do they subscribe to religious books and magazines? What kind of tapes they play at home? Attachment to Islamic literature is not only a measure of understanding of Islam, but also of active interest in it. On the other hand, if the family is religious, in the sense prevalent, but subscribe to fashion, film, and sports magazines, then its religiosity is shell-deep. It can crack any time under the smallest pressure.

It is also important to find out how much the family is given to modern vices. For example, are they fond of TV? If they are, then there is no religiosity in them, even if everyone prays five times a day and have been to Makkah several times. Their true religion is the religion of film stars, actors, sportsmen, models, beauty queens, and other men and women of the entertainment industry. If they pray five times, perhaps it is because of old habits. There is no depth in their religion, and certainly they have no understanding of Islam. By the next generation their religiosity will be dissolved in the hedonistic culture sweeping the world.

Another thing to look for is the decency of a family and its members: what we call as "*sharaafat*" in Urdu. A "*shareef*" family should be preferred over another, even if they are outwardly little less religious. A "*shareef*" family is difficult to define. They are certainly not those whose names end with a "*Shareef*". "*Sharaafat*" is a mark of decency on the face of a man or a family. If it is not visible, then some interaction, a little incursion into the mind will reveal it. It is not something to be revealed. It is something to be recognised. Nevertheless, one might say a "*shareef*" family is one in which there is no indecency, vulgarism, quarrel

someness, dishonesty in dealings, cheap behaviour, low language coarse manners, backbiting, loose tongue, slanderous talk, sowing of discord, a dirty unclean house, lack of self-respect, women exposing body parts, men donning strange clothes or putting on hippie-like appearance, showing off, indulging in porno, fond of fashion magazines, fondness for TV, ready to fight for the rights, haggling over prices with the vendors, cursing when cheated, hanging calendars bearing photos of film stars, displaying family photo in the reception room, young men staying out late at nights, women visiting cafeterias, ice-cream parlours, or loitering around the in the streets, etc.

*Sharaafat* is passed on from generation to generation. Allah said (7: 58), *"As for the good land, it brings forth its vegetation (in abundance) by the leave of its Lord. But that which is corrupt, it does not bring forth but scantily. Thus do We give many facets to Our messages for a people who give thanks."* When the Prophet said that men look for lineage in women, this was perhaps what he meant. *Sharaafat* does not immediately leave when religion is discarded. It lingers on for a while, in the individual, in the family. And, strangely, it does not return with the person's or family is return to religion. It takes time. It's like a mark of prostration on the forehead. It does not go away as soon as a man stops praying. It does not come on as soon as the man starts praying. It takes its own time to appear and disappear. In fact, it lingers on among the unbelievers too. Perhaps it has something to do with belief in and practice of Allah's good qualities even if not belief in Him as the only Deity worthy of worship. Christian nuns and priests especially eschew *sharafaat*. Obviously, one has to be of some good qualities and strong faith to take up priesthood, especially of the kind Christianity demands. Committed Muslims also carry the mark on their faces are respected everywhere. (Unfortunately, that cannot be said of religious men of some other disciplines. Their followers know why. Lots of philosophy. But where are the qualities?)

Another criterion is wealth. How wealthy is the girl

whom one proposes to marry? Or her parents? The wealthier, the less desirable. The rich are haughty, irreligious, and in everyday life given to parties and outings. In consequence of their pampered living, they place lots of demands on their husbands, pestering them for expensive clothes and jewellery, and gifts for friends on every silly occasion. Also, their visits to doctors are frequent, and medical bills high. In most matters, unlikes match: positive with negative. But, in economic affairs, likes match likes. The rich with the rich: they are in harmony, and have no complaints against each other at least in financial matters. Islam is the religion of the rich and the poor. The trouble surfaces when a man does not match a girl - he being financially on the lower side.

In comparison, and given all other things equal, those of the middle class are preferable for a variety of reasons. But, if other conditions are met, then, it is safer and more reasonable to marry a woman poorer than oneself. They are thankful that you married them, remain under control, are not very fussy about the quality of life, and are, therefore, not too demanding, quarrelsome or obstinate. They are also economic in managing the affairs of the family, releasing the husband from pressures. It is marriage of the equals that fails and ends in divorce: marriages in which one of them says, "I know", and the other says "I too know". When the *Fuqaha'* say "*kufu*", they deem the male higher than the female. The marriage of the unequals, where the female is higher, does not end in divorce because the Romeo swallows a lot. (He never had pride in himself, from the start, anyway). As for woman in such marriages, she had swallowed a lot of pride when she married a lower man. She has no more pride to swallow. She doesn't respect the man. But the man never expected to be respected. So the union lingers on, each, more or less on his or her own. She leaps out of bounds, once in a while, in anger and rebellion, the husband watches helplessly, until age cools her down to finally accept her lot. It is the marriage of the unequals in which the husband has the upper hand: in religion, morals,

qualities, wealth, education, etc., that is truly successful. Divorce is scarce among them. The *Fuqaha'* had lots of wisdom.

Facial features should come last. That is, religiosity, *sharaafat* and financial standing should be determined first. If the three reside in a beautiful face, well and good. If not, one might have to make a compromise. This is because facial features have no functional value. They play no role whatsoever in life. Beauty, as we all know, is only for the eyes. It has merely a "keep value." And the eyes get used to things that are for display. That is, once the eye has had its full, the thing of beauty loses its lustre. A bunch of flowers is beautiful at first sight. Once brought into the room, no one looks at them a second time with admiration. It is enough therefore, if the facial features are not irritating for the eye of the beholder: i.e., the husband. If that is so, then, unless the husband is a man of strong will, and brushes off such occurrence as a minor failure, irritations will surface often. However, since tastes differ, a face that is alright for one, can be irritable to another and vice versa. A mother might see nothing wrong while the son is bitter about the wrong choice on his behalf. Hence, the allowance in Islam for a man to see the woman's face before marriage. If that is done, then a single look is enough to determine if the face is irritable or not. A second look will hardly reveal anything new. Islam admires economy.

Going about with lots of "seeing" sessions, involving lots of girls, is highly deplorable. It betrays lechery. One might first check on the essential requirements. When satisfied with them, he might seek advice of his mother, sisters etc. If they are whole-heartedly in favour of the girl, one need not be fussy. But if they reject, while all the above requirements have been met, then, one should not act to his disadvantage. He should insist that it is he who will make the final decision, after seeing the girl himself. Maybe he will find nothing wrong in her.

Compromises can be made over facial beauty - without any loss. The wisest of human beings ever - peace

be upon him - said, in effect, "Every woman has what another woman has." When passions are high, eyes are shuttered. On the other hand, because the husband does'nt match, and so at a moment which affords supreme pleasure, if somebody goes cold and frigid, it can leave the other supremely frustrated. One will then learn with bitterness, that if one takes undue advantage of another, he will pay the price in dear time.

Making a choice can never be as simple as making a statement about it. In practise, if one finds one quality in a person, he may miss another. The test is in balancing them. If you loose on quality, you will have to balance it by gaining on another. And, conversely, if you insist on one quality to a certain degree, you must be ready to lower down the requirement of another. Then, there are qualities that you could do without, because they are procurable and obtainable. For example, if a girl is religious at heart, but poor in Islamic knowledge, the short-fall can be made up after marriage through home-education. If she is less cultured, she will learn from your cultured friends. (If they be so). Or, if she is not the prettiest on the earth, she will compensate by being obedient. On the other hand, if she is rich and beautiful, and begrudging on that score, you might quite often hear, as you arrive home late in the evening. "Your dinner is in the fridge."

Other requirements checked, a country girl is better than a city girl. Her lack of polished manners is compensated by sturdy children. If she laughs at the wrong time, she is likely to weep at the right time.

Start looking for the right girl, right in quarters close to you. Your cousins. When that was in vogue, women felt insured and families had far less worries. With the eyes searching far and wide, in search of someone resembling those on the silver screen (a kilogram of cosmetics, can convert a witch into a beauty queen), the nearest ones are running helter-skelter, chasing shadows, belittling themselves and sending off daughters to an unhappy start. The talk about genetic defects is non-sense. Allah is in charge.

It is very close inbreeding, generation after generation, by a fanatic tribe, that has some delusions about its superiority, which could cause abnormalities. Defective births in such families have, in a subtle way, moral reasons behind the obvious biological ones. Marriage of two individuals is a marriage of two families. When rocked by the waves, the boat is paddled by several oars on both the sides. Timely intervention by the elders of the two families helps float a sinking marriage. Both the partners in a row fear member of both the sides, since they are related, and answerable to both the families. But when the two families are unknown to each other, every one of the two partners disallows the other family any intervention. Break up can be faster. And rows are unavoidable. If there are'nt any the marriage could be artificial, that of convenience rather than a partnership in which each provides the other with joy and happiness.

Finally, good intentions will bear fruit in their time: when the season arrives. But if your intentions are rotten, then that's the kind of fruit you will get in the end. So make your choice. Allah said (17:18), "Whosoever coveted the immediate (reward), We hasten whatsoever of it We will, unto whomsoever We will, and then We appoint for him jahannum wherein he will rest, blamed and rejected. And whosoever coveted the Hereafter, and strived for it in the manner of its striving - and he is a believer - those, their striving is appreciated (by Allah)." □

Courtesy - Young Muslim Digest

# MUSLIM SCIENTISTS

Abdur Rahman Sharif

## Ibn Batuta

Ibn Batuta has been called the greatest traveller in history. He travelled across almost the whole world, from China to West Africa, Spain, and covered about 80,000 miles (1,20,000 kms). The account of his travels, known as *Rehla*, is the most famous travel book in the world. It is a remarkable document of the fourteenth century world providing valuable information on history, geography, natural history, sociology, anthropology, religion, culture, science, technology, politics, crops, crafts, economy, administration, transport, cities, people, etc.

**Life.** Abu Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Abd Allah al-Lawati al-Tanji Ibn Batuta was born at Tanjer in Morocco in 703 AH/ 1304 AD. He belonged to a family of *qadis* (judges) and had his early education in Tanjer. Occasionally, he served as a *qadi* in Delhi, Maldives and Fez in Morocco. In 725 AH / 1325 AD, at the age of twenty one years he left Morocco to perform the Haj (pilgrimage to Makkah, but extended his journey with the intention of seeing the entire Dar al-Islam, the Islamic world. He was inspired by the predictions of two saints. Shaikh Burhan al-Din al Araj of Alexandria predicted that he would see the world and would meet three of the saint's brothers in Sind, Hind and China. Abu Abd Allah al-Murshidi predicted that his life would be saved by one Dilshad in India. The predictions came true. He travelled for thirty years and finally returned home in 754 AH /1354 AD at the age of fifty-one years. On the orders of Sultan Abu Inan Fares, he dictated the account of his journey to a secretary, ibn Juzay. Ibn Batuta died in 770-777 AH / 1369-78 AD in Tanjer.

Ibn Batuta was a highly religious person who performed Haj seven times, the last during his return journey. During

his long journey he lost his parents and some children.

**Achievements.** Ibn Batuta's travelogue is called *Tuhfat al-nuzzar fi gharaib al-amsar wa ajaib al-asfar*, or simply the *Rehla*. It is an honest and accurate account of the fourteenth century world in general, and the Islamic world in particular in all its aspects. It covers the entire Dar al-Islam for which reason Ibn Juzay called him 'the great traveller of Islam'. Ibn Batuta also studied non-Islamic societies in Asia, Africa and parts of Europe.

The *Rehla* is the earliest and the only source of information on certain parts of the world. Some of its passages have never been surpassed by any other writer. It gives a highly admirable account of India, Maldives, the principalities of Asia Minor, Southern Russia and the land of Niger. It provides a lot of fresh information on Arabia, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, China and Central Africa. It is a very important source book on fourteenth century India as about one fifth of the 800-page book is devoted to that country where he stayed for thirteen years.

Ibn Batuta remarked that the torrid zone of East Africa was not torrid and that it was occupied by African people; that the climate along the Equator was less extreme than that in the temperate zone in North Africa; that the matrilineally system was found in the Niger region (Africa) and in Malabar (India). He described the cultivation and use of *pan* (betal leaf) and coconut in India, salt mines of Taghaza, pearl divers of Bahrain, extraction of 'honey' from wheat, tar-coal springs and hamams of Baghdad, and the various socio-religious waqfs (trusts) of Damascus. □

### **Ibn Sina**

Ibn Sina is one of the greatest scientist-philosophers of the world who exerted a great degree of influence on the study of medicine and philosophy in the Islamic as well as the Western world.

**Life** Abu Ali al-Husain. ibn Sina was born in 370 AH/980AD at Afshana, near Bukhara, in present day Uzbekistan. His



father Abdullah was Persian while his mother Sitara was Turkish. Ibn Sina was a precocious child with a spectacular memory, intelligence and thirst for knowledge. These qualities helped him master amongst all the existing knowledge before the age of eighteen. He studied the Quran and Arabic literature at ten and wrote his first book at seventeen. He wrote his first philosophical work at twenty-one. By then, he had also become a successful practising physician who was consulted by senior doctors. He cured the Samanid ruler Nun ibn Mansur of a serious illness as a result of which he was allowed the use of the rich royal library. He lost his father when he was twenty-two years old.

Ibn Sina led a restless life, moving from one city to another during a politically turbulent period. He enjoyed the patronage of the rulers as well as suffered their wrath. He had to flee for his life more than once and was even imprisoned for a while. He also worked as a vizier (minister). Yet, he found time to write so many books, mostly writing at night. He was a sincere Muslim. Whenever he faced a difficult problem he went to the mosque, offered namaz and earnestly prayed Allah to help him solve the problem. He wrote that on all such occasions he found the solution.

He lived at Bukhara, Jurjan, Tus, Ray, Hamadan and Isfahan. He died in 428 AH/ 1037 AD at Hamadan at the age of fifty-eight.

**Achievements** One of the best minds of Islam, Ibn Sina produced 276 books and articles on medicine, philosophy, metaphysics, logic, ethics, Quran, mysticism, physics, magnetism, music, psychology, zoology, optics, chemistry, geology, astronomy, lexicography, etc. He wrote mostly in Arabic with a few books in Persian. The two most famous of his books are : *al-Qanun fil tib* (Canon of medicine) and *al-Shifa - Healing of soul* (philosophy). Other important works are : *al-Nijat* (Deliverance) and *al-Ishrat wal tanbihat* (Directives and remarks)

The *Qanun* is an encyclopaedic work covering philosophical principles of medicine, anatomy, diseases,

treatment, diagnostics, prognostics, pathology, pharmacopoeia and pharmacology. It was translated 87 times in Europe during the Middle Ages, first into Latin by Gerard of Cremona (d. 1187). In 1593 an Arabic edition was printed in Rome. It was the leading text book of medicine in the European Universities for six centuries and its author the undisputed master of medicine, science and philosophy. His other works were also translated into European languages, where he was known as Avicenna.

Ibn Sina was an innovator in his philosophical and scientific systems working beyond Greek limitations. He pioneered 'tense logic' development by Arthur Prior in recent times; was aware of the functions of the brain in sensation; placed in power of memory in a particular part of brain; provided a new proof of God based on his innovative theory of essence and existence; advanced the theory of necessary being the possible being; established the immortality of the soul; invented an experimental method of inquiry consisting of agreement, difference and concomitant variations, now regarded as characteristic of modern science.

His influence may be noticed in a large number of European scientists and thinkers, such as Roger Bacon, Albert Magnus, Duns Scotus, Rene Descartes, Spinoza and Bergson. St. Thomas Aquinas quoted Ibn Sina 400 times in his Summa Theologica.

### **Ibn Rushd**

Ibn Rushd, the Islamic thinker who 'enlightened the west' and inspired the European current of thought called 'Averroism', was a great philosopher, theologian and medical scientist. He also wrote on Quranic sciences, astronomy, physics and biology.

**Life** Abul Walid Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Rushd was born in 520 AH/1126 AD in Cordova, Spain. He belonged to a family of scholars and judges. His grandfather had been qadi and imam of the great mosque of Cordova. He himself served as qadi of Seville and Cordova. One of his many sons was a royal physician, and

others became scholars and judges. Ibn Rushd had a slim body a slim body and an exceptional mind. He studied under his father, Abu Abd Allah Marzi, and Hafiz Abu Muhammad ibn Rizq. He also had a number of disciples, including Abu Abd Allah al-Drumi and Qasim Tailsan. He lived during the Muwahhideen rule (Almohades) who patronised philosophers and scientists.

At the age of eighteen, he went to Marrakush. The renowned philosopher Ibn Tufail played a major role in his career. First, he introduced him to Caliph Abu Yaqub Yusuf who made him the royal physician, and later, when the Caliph wanted a better explanation of Aristotle to be written, he recommended Ibn Rushd.

In his last years, Ibn Rushd fell into disgrace. Rival scholars held him guilty of un-Islamic views and he was humiliated and put under house arrest. However, the Caliph soon revoked his orders and restored Rushd in his former position of honour. He died in 595 AH/1198 AD at Marrakush. He was first burried in Marrakush and later his remains were shifted to his family graveyard at Cordova where Ibn al-Arabi participated in his funeral prayers.

**Achievements** Ibn Rushd wrote more than 78 books most of which are available, but a few of them in their Hebrew and Latin Versions. His important works are : *Fasl al-maqal wa taqrib ma bain al-sharia wal hikma min al-ittisal*, *Kashf al-manahij* (theology and philosophy); *Tahafut al-tahafut* (his response to Imam Ghazali's *Tahafut al-falasifa*); *Tafasir mabad al-tabiyat* (metaphysics); *Muqaddimat al-mumahhidat* (Maliki law); *al-Kulliyat* (medicine). He wrote the *Kulliyat* as a compliment to his friend Ibn Zuhr's *al-Taisir*, the two books forming a comprehensive text book on medicine. It deals with anatomy, health, diseases, symptoms, drugs, food, hygiene and therapeutics.

Ibn Rushd attempted to solve the problem of relation between philosophy and the Islamic society with the help of theology, law and philosophy. The divine law ensures the happiness of all and, therefore, all must have faith in it and perform the duties ordained by it. Those with higher faculties

are required to pursue philosophy which understands the divine law better. While according great respect for Aristotle's logic, Ibn Rushd held that logical reasoning cannot answer all questions that baffle man thereby upholding the validity of the Prophet and the revealed truth. He believed in a future life which he held was not against reasons even though reason did not prove its features.

He considered such issues as the connection between religion and sciences, relation between revelation and reason, immortality of the soul and creation. His writings were translated into European languages soon after his death. The Kulliyat was translated into Latin in Padua in 1255 AD and was printed in 1482 followed by several editions. His thoughts became highly influential in Europe where they generated a school of thought which came to be known as 'Averrohism' European scientists, like Tycho Brache, Copernicus and Galileo were inspired by him. ■