

# THE FRAGRANCE

OF EAST

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# The Fragrance of East

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Editor's Note:

## Sectarian Harmony

The foundation of Nadwatul Ulema was laid in early 20th century by bringing Ulema of almost all the sects of Muslims, in India: Deobandi, Barelvi, Ahle-Hadees and also followers of *Maslak- Jafferia* (Shia) on one platform. The aim was to strengthen the community against the onslaught of non-Muslim forces. The fear of a Christian take over was heightened because of political power being in the hands of the British empire. The non-Muslims in India were perceived as instrumental in stamping their imprint on Muslim culture. From all sides Muslim identity was under threat. Muslims had to come together for survival.

Education was a crucial issue which was thought to be a binding force between different sects of Muslims. It provided a common ground to unite and deal with the situation. Nadwatul Ulema thus played a critical role. It is unfortunate that the cohesiveness of the newly formed Muslim body could not be retained for long. Shias marched off to establish their separate institution. However, harbingers of Nadwatul Ulema movement did not lose heart. They did not spoil their relations with any sect nor took up cudgels against any of the components which parted ways. Nadwatul Ulema carried out its mission of '*taleem*' and '*tabligh*' (education and preaching) according to its laid out plan and bloomed with its fragrance in the desert of ignorance and illiteracy.

The breaking apart of some sects no doubt weakened the solidarity of the community. However, the Ulema associated with Nadwatul Ulema maintained cordial relations all along and did not come into conflict with each other. The demand for a separate home-land for Muslims and the passion aroused by the advocates of Pakistan could not influence or overshadow the mission of Nadwatul Ulema. The creation of Pakistan is the most ominous development in the contemporary history of Muslims. With

the partition of the country families were divided and a piquant situation developed in which Indian Muslims who had opposed the creation of Pakistan and decided to stay back in India found themselves at a cross road. Thanks God that at this stage also Nadwa continued to be a beacon for the community and tried to instil confidence in them.

At a time when the country was thrown into hearth of violence it was Nadwa which tried to bring peace and restore amity between different communities. It tried to make others believe that Islam is the religion of peace. It reminded people of the proclamation of the holy Quran : *"If anyone slays a human being, unless it be in punishment for murder or for spreading corruption on earth-it shall be as though he has slain all mankind,"*(al Maidah:332). Under the guidance of Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (rah) the '*Payame Insaniyat*' (Message of Humanity) and '*Islahe M'ashra*' (Reformation in society) movements were launched. Late Maulana and his colleagues established rapport with leaders of other communities and spread out in different parts of the country to restore peace and establish brotherhood. His concern for society's reformation also received due attention. He did his best to impress upon Muslims the importance of pure and pious life. He gave a balanced view about the adoption of good things both from the West and East.

More recently when attempts were made to tamper with Islamic Sharia in the wake of a Supreme Court Judgement late Maulana gave a call for the solidarity of all sects of the Islam. Under his guidance All India Muslim Personal Law Board stood behind him like a rock to face the situation. Because of the sectarian harmony Muslims could escape the onslaught of un-Islamic forces. The need of the time is, therefore, sectarian harmony and restoration of trust amongst communities. This will help not only in strengthening the cause for which Nadwa movement was launched but create a serene and peaceful atmosphere in the country. ■

# JIGAR MORADABADI

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

The era of Ghalib and Momin, based on traditional *ghazal*, in line with sublime ideas of Persian culture saw a renaissance and culmination with Jigar and Hasrat Mohani. In the final analysis it was Jigar who was crowned as *Malik-ush-Shoara* (monarch among poets) by the literary circles of Indo-Pak sub-continent. Any mushaira (poetic symposium) would be deemed incomplete without Jigar. Lucknow, a hub of Urdu language and literature resounded with his name and fame. Shaukat Thanvi, in his characteristic humour announced: *Ek duniya ki duniya Jigar ki mareez thee* (a whole world was afflicted in liver).

From Gonda (where he lived) Jigar's frequent visits to Lucknow, initially for participation in mushairas, subsequently included broadcasting of his recitation from the All India Radio on its opening of Lucknow Radio Station, with a host of connoisseurs of poetic excellence, he was extremely popular. In Lucknow he generally was a guest of Saif-ud-daulah Hisam-ul-Mulk Nawab Syed Ali Hasan Khan, the youngest son of Walajah Amir-ul-Mulk Nawab Syed Siddiq Hasan Khan (erstwhile doyen of Bhopal State), at Bhopal House Lalbagh. Hisam-ul-Mulk was not only a poet of sorts but possessed a deep insight into and grasp over the subject. One of his sons Nawabzada Syed Shams-ul-Hasan Khan Shams BALLB (Alig), was then a young poet with a sober, dignified style. His works were published in "Al-Maarif" (magazine from Azamgarh), which in itself is a mark of authenticity. The affection and efforts of these two noble persons was conducive to Jigar opting to stay at Bhopal House.

I come from a household abounding in literary persons not averse to participation in mushairas and in which a book titled *Tazkira-i-Gule Raana* was authored. Yet I could participate (as part of the audience) in just one symposium.

The reason was my natural inability to keep late nights, which deprived me of several interesting and devotional activities. That one mushaira in which I could be present, was at Murshidabad Palace Golaganj, presided over by Nawab Jafar Ali Khan Asar and graced by Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi. All said and done, I had no occasion to even see Jigar before partition of the country. One instance lingers in my memory: Maulana Syed Sulaiman Nadvi, along with Maulana Abdul Bari Nadvi, was staying in the guest house at Nadva when Nawab Shams-ul-Hasan Khan came visiting. Conversation turned to Jigar who at the time was at Bhopal House and had recently vowed to shun alcoholism. The Nawab narrated that Josh (Malihabadi) had taken Jigar from Bhopal House the previous day and given him company. Jigar could not help violating his vow, but upon return shut himself up and wept inconsolably. Maulana Abdul Bari, an expert in philosophy and mysticism besides a refined literary taste, remarked - *malum hota hai jigar kharab hai, dil acha hai* (seems it is a case of ailing liver but a healthy heart).

The above instance succinctly sums up the make up of Jigar's personality. He was endowed with a pure heart and it is not clear how he took to alcoholism, to begin with. This was a life-long tussle, abstinence against temptation and he would quote from poet Insha:

*Laga ke barf mein saqi surahi-i-mai la,  
Jigar ki aag bujhe jisse woh shae la.*

(A chilled goblet! I beseech the ganymede, to quench the inner conflagration)

The qualities of heart bolstered by his inheritance and benign disposition never did desert him. Another factor, not too well known apart from his close associates, was his spiritual allegiance to Qazi Abdul Ghani Manglori, embraced at the instance of his senior friend and mentor Asghar Gondvi. Qazi Abdul Ghani was the spiritual tutelage of Sheikh Mohammad Thanvi, who in his younger days had



vowed allegiance to Hazrat Syed Ahmac Shaheed, but in reality owed his spiritual development to Miyanjee Npor Mohammad Jhanjhanvi. Miyanjee was the mentor of Haji Imdad-ul-lah Mahajir Makki. The linkage still persists in Arab and Iranian domains. This spiritual heritage brought about a metamorphosis and guided Jigar from addiction towards abstinence. Soon he could address his erstwhile associates, particularly Josh Malihabadi thus:

*Tu jahan aaj se pehle tha vaheen aaj bhee hai,  
Dekh rindan-i-khush anfaas kahan tak pahunche.*

(You stagnate at the same spot; behold the progress of those of pure soul)

The common belief that abstinence from bubbly douses the flames of passion and dulls the poetic radiance, is given the lie in case of Jigar. At the same time his life and poetry are undeniable testimony to the metamorphosis. A juxtaposition of *Shola-i-Toor* and *Aatash-i-Gul* (the two compilations of his works of different eras), brings out the fact that earlier his inspiration was from intoxication while subsequently it sprang from the inexhaustible resources, that is purity of heart and soul. He could ultimately synchronise with Khwaja Mir Dard:

*Jaaiye kis vaste ai Dard maikhane ke beech,  
Kuchh ajab masti hai apne dil ke paimane ke beech.*

(Need one venture into pub when intoxication already saturates his innerself?)

Above narration may be a bit of a detour. I already had occasion to come in contact with some renowned poets. At Lahore were Iqbal, Zafar Ali Khan, Hafeez Jalandhari, Akhtar Sheerani. I met Khwaja Aziz-ul-Hasan Majzoob, but Jigar eluded me. He did once visit Raebareli, but I was at Lucknow. My maternal cousin, Maulvi Syed Abul Khair Barq<sup>1</sup> and some other young men, arranged his visit to our ancestral abode Daera Shah Ilmullah. This was probably in 1930 when Jigar was in business of spectacles and the visit was in that context.

Beginning of my association with Jigar almost coincides with country's freedom. The events culminating into partition and the ensuing turmoil, inevitably impinged upon the sensitivities of a poetic mind and heart. He had the moral courage to express his feelings unabashedly. The presence of government officials, in mushairas organised under govt. aegis, either at Safed Baradari Lucknow or on Independence Day, would not deter him. It was the force of his character or the spell of poetic excellence that his subtle yet unminced slant was tolerated, even eulogised.

*Chaman chaman he nahin jis ke goshe' goshe' mein,  
Kaheen bahar aye kaheen na aye.*

*Ye maikade kee saqigari kee hai tauheen,  
Koi jaam bakaf, koi sharmsaar aye.*

*Khuloos-o-himmat-i-ahle chaman pe mauquf hai,  
Ki shaakh-i-khushk mein bhi phir se barg-o-baar aye.*

(A patchy spring becomes not a garden; some emerging satiated some deprived, is a slur upon the tavern, the beneficent; it takes sincerity and stolidity for inmates to rejuvenate the withered bough.)

To my way of thinking, the following two couplets also underscore the same situation of yawning gap between proclamation and implementation.

*Bahama zauq-i-agahi, haai re past-i-bashar,  
Saare jahan ka jaeza apne Jahan se bekhbar.*

*Shorish-i-dard alaman gardish-i-dahr alhazar,  
Bahke huye qafile sahmi huee see rahguzar.*

(Alas, the decay of human despite full sense of wisdom, surveillance of the whole world, unaware of self. Beware the excruciating ache, the churning globe, caravans adrift, awestruck routes.)

A poet, overstepping the camouflage of sublimity, would become more of a preacher, a censor or politician. Jigar being all too well conversant with this cardinal principle would never attempt a trespass.

The partition of the country gave vent to his religious, Islamic, sense of respect. Several years had elapsed since

he abandoned his wayward style and developed propinquity to pious, learned society, though not to orthodox preachers or censors. He believed firmly that the service to Islam and Muslims should not be made a profession but performed with self-less devotion and that the person taking up the cause should be endowed with literary and poetic perception and awareness.

I was introduced to Jigar by Syed Masood Ali Azad<sup>2</sup> Fatehpuri whose character, more than his poetic accomplishment, was valued greatly by Jigar. Azad arranged a sitting and introduced Maulana Manzoor and me to Jigar, who extended utmost courtesy to us and also recited some of his poems. May be this impromptu gesture emanated from the fact that all of us owed spiritual allegiance to the same seers, Miyanji Noor Mohammad (*Chishtia*) and Hazrat Syed Ahmad Shaheed (*Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi*). This sitting proved a harbinger of not only a series of get togethers, where Jigar would regale us with his poems, but a lasting association. Jigar gave some of his works for publication in *Al-Furqan* (magazine published under the guidance of Maulana Manzoor Nomani).

At my behest a conference of erudite, learned men, belonging to various schools of thought and jurisprudence, was convened at Nadvatul-Ulema Lucknow. Jigar also joined in. The aim was to work out an action plan for the Muslims after deliberating upon the near-chaotic conditions obtaining in the country. I read out my essay presenting a realistic assessment of the situation and impending perils. Jigar was so influenced that he could not help voicing his sentiments and desired an encore. (The essay has since appeared in print, more than once, under the title *Nishan-i-Raah*.) An organisation for propagation of Islamic message and its implications was founded then and there, with an appeal for contributions. Jigar came forward with an unrevealed amount on the spot, proving that here was a poet who would not just solicit remunerations for reciting his poems but had the heart to dole out for a worthy cause.

(Maulvi Manzoor later revealed that Jigar had donated one thousand rupees.)

That day on, Jigar endeavoured to be with me at the earliest on his visit to Lucknow and came down to *Tablighi Markaz* (Centre for Preaching) or the guest house at Nadwa. At other places and among other people, a request for recitation would make him lose his cool and even some highly placed persons and officers had borne the brunt. However with me he was quite indulgent and condescending to a degree. By and large, a poet on being requested to recite a particular poem or poems of his, takes exception that the listener considers only these poems worthy of attention. But in my case Jigar made a concession, without as much as a demur and acceded to my request, the fact that for a poet with incessant in flow of rich, sublime ideas, this could have been a sacrifice and mentally taxing, notwithstanding.

One of the reasons for being enamoured of Jigar was that his poems depicted my own feelings, since a person like me, bereft of poetic acumen, had no means to scale the heights of eloquence and style. I have, earlier, written in the same vein about Iqbal. In fact it is a human trait which makes one to be obsessed of his own personality and pursue his own image wherever discernable.

I could sense some features in Jigar's art, which if not extinct, are rare in most other cases. An outstanding exception is Iqbal, of course. The features may be summed up as effulgent style, variety and novelty of thoughts, lofty ideas, self-respect, eschewing hackneyed traditions of literature and society. The approach may be classified as benign revolt, selflessness, elevation of status of humanbeing, forbidden hopes but search unabated. A poem recited on several occasions by Jigar still echos, consonant with the turmoil in his soul, besides incorporating his self-respect and nobility of character.

*Jab tak gham-i-insaan se Jigar, insan ka dil ma'moor*

*nahin,*

*Jannat sahi dunya lekin jahannam se door nahin.*

*Juz zauq-i-talab juz shauq-i-safar kuchh aur hamen  
manzoor nahin*

*Ai ishq bata ab kiya hoga kehte hain ki manzil door nahin*

*Waez ka har irshad baja taqreer bahut dilchasp magar,  
Ankhon mein suroor-i-ishq naheen chehre pe yaqeen ka  
noor naheen.*

*Main zakhm bhi khata jata hoon qatil se bhi kahta jata  
hoon,*

*Tauheen hai dast-o-bazoo ki woh vaar ke jo bharpoor  
nahin.*

*Is nafa-o-zarar ki dunya se main ne yeh liya hai dars-i-  
junoon,*

*Khud apna zian tasleem magar auron ka zian manzoor  
naheen.*

*Arbab-i-sitam ki khidmat mein itni see guzarish hai meri,  
Dunya se qayamat door sahi dunya ki qayamat door  
naheen*

(Human is he not who feels not for humans, Heaven this world may be yet not distant from hell; I crave nought but the pinning and journey, dreading the culminating of journey and nearing of destination; Every utterance of the preacher is true, oration entrancing, yet eyes sans euphoria of love visage sans radiance of faith; Bludgeoning blows I bear, yet chide the assassin, ineffective strike is an insult to his prowess; conclude I in this world of profit and loss, own loss I would bear but harm none; Beseech I before the marauders, world is far from doom, world's doom is nigh.)

Another poem which Jigar recited on my request begins with the following couplet:

*Allah agar taufeeq na de insaan ke bas ka kam nahin,*

*Faizan-i-mohabbat aam sahi irfan-i-mohabbat aam nahin.*

(Human is helpless but with God's will, dispensation of effection galore, discernment of effection rare).

For the complete *ghazal* (poem), compilation 'Atish-

i-Gul' can be referred to but two couplets in step with Hafiz and Roomi, moulded into characteristic delicacy of Urdu, are presented.

*Aana hai jo bazm-i-janan mein pindar-i-khudi ko chhor ke aa,  
Aye hosh-o-khirad ke deevane yan hosh-o-khirad ka kam nahin.*

*Peene ko to sab peete hain Jigar maikhan-i-fitrat mein lekin,  
Mahroom-i-nigah-i-saqi hai woh rind jo durd aasham naheen.*

(Shun ego venture then into beloved's precincts, O! thou stickler for intellect and senses, here they worth naught; All partake of the bounties in nature's tavern, he that imbibes not the last drop does not catch the eye of the beneficent.)

A third poem, in small couplets, enchants me perennially and is soul stirring.

*Koi keh de gulshan gulshan, lakh balaen ek nashaiman.  
Kamil rahbar qatil rahzan, dil sa dost na dil sa dushman.  
Ishq hai pyare khel nahin hai, Ishq hai kaare sheesha-o-aahan.*

(Accomplished leader, lethal dacoit, Peerless friend, unique foe, the heart; Love is no joke, A clang of steel and glass.)

The first couplet was quoted by me during several serious discussions to make my point.

A fourth *ghazal* brims over with facts which transcend the frontiers of poetry and foray into the realm of history and philosophy. An exposition of each verse could run into a volume. The opening couplet

*Woh sabza nang-i-chaman hai jo lahlaha na sake,  
Woh gul hai zakhm-i-baharan jo muskara na sake.*

(The greenery that fails to flourish is a slur to the pasture, Flower not blooming is a gaping wound on the spring.)

Another couplet of the same poem is a depiction of the decadence and ascent of a human being, depending

on ones own mental build up.

*Ghate agar to bus ek musht-e-khak hai insan,  
Badhe to was'at-i-kaunain mein sama na sake.*

(Lets fall, and shrinks to a fistful of dust, Endeavour and transcends the limits of universe and beyond)

I had addressed a congregation, comprising several educated persons, non-Muslims also at Gonda, on the subject of "*martaba-i-insaniyat aur insaan ka sharf-o-bulandi*" (status of human being and prestige of humanity). At the end of the function Jigar quoted his above mentioned couplet saying that it encompasses the complete topic of my speech.

My rapport with Jigar got thicker by the day and his overbearing demeanour often embarrassed me. The only reason I could figure out was our common spiritual linkage, mentioned in some preceding lines. It was probably January 1960 that I had to stay overnight at Gonda on a return journey from Basti. Jigar was ostensibly pleased and afforded me utmost comfort. I happened to step out of my room during the night and found Jigar bowing with folded hands right at the door, offering me something. His countenance clearly indicated that any trepidation on my part could disappoint, even offend his feelings. He seemed on the verge of breaking into tears. I had no go except accepting his offer and found that it was an amount between fifty and hundred rupees.

This was not the solitary instance when I had to go through such trials as Jigar would donate continually for Nadwa and once sent one thousand rupees through Maulana Manzoor. The attitude was an undeniable evidence that he derived more pleasure in giving than in receiving. I could never have an opportunity to reciprocate and waited only in vain.

One instance proved an object lesson and put me to shame no end, leading me to infer that he was heads and shoulders abover those self-proclaimed preachers who

hardly practice what they say. Jigar, accompanied by his better half, embarked upon a pilgrimage for Hajj in 1953, from Gonda. I had perchance joined him at Lucknow, to accompany an acquaintance-pupil, who was to perform Hajj as proxy for someone else. My programme was upto Bombay. Jigar and I were in second class while my pupil travelled third as his expenses were borne by the person on whose behalf he had undertaken the pilgrimage. During the journey the pupil had to come upto me for some purpose and Jigar could figure out that despite being with me, he had to travel in the lower class, which he felt, was not proper. Jigar forthwith got his ticket converted to second class. Realization that this should have been my duty, raised his stature higher and lowered mine, in my own estimation.

Jigar had developed a deep devotion to Maulana Abdul Qadir Raipuri of whom Azad, Maulana Manzoor and myself were avowed devotees. On Azad's initiative he visited Raipur and also Murree Hills (Pakistan) in my presence and recited some of his poems. Whenever Hazrat Raipuri happened to be at Lucknow, Jigar made it a point to meet him at *Markaz-i-Islah-o-Tableegh* (Centre for Reforms and Propagation) and also recite his *ghazals*. One couplet received special appreciation from Hazrat:

*Waez ka har irshad baja taqreer bahut dilchasp magar,  
Aankhon mein suroor-i-ishq naneen chehre pe yaqeen  
ka noor naheen.*

(Every utterance of the preacher is true, oration entrancing, yet,  
Eyes sans euphoria of love visage sans radiance of faith.)

While returning from one of my tours, I broke journey at Gonda and visited Jigar upon knowing of his indisposition and he immediately sent words inside his home to arrange for my comfort and treat. He expressed the desire of making me the trustee for all his composed and written works and of executing a will to this effect and even summoned an acquaintance of his, a retired Police officer. To my way of thinking, the person most capable of taking up the



responsibility could be Syed Siddiq Hasan ICS, a common friend, connoisseur of poetry and literature. I had to use all my persuasive faculties to beg off.

Jigar, at the time, had been unwell since quite sometime when he visited Lucknow and stayed with Meer Ahmad Husain at Akbarigate and received an offer from AIR to recite his poem at Lucknow Station. In a rather choked and emotion laden voice he recited a *ghazal*, one verse of which cast a shadow of the imminent inevitable.

*Jaan kar minjumla-i-khasan-i-maikhana mujhe,  
Muddaton roya kareng jaam-o-paimaha mujhe.*

(Remembering me as chosen one of the tavern,  
For ages shall the cup and goblet be in mourning)

The hour was not long in coming and the bard who lit up countless symposiums, illuminated the entire literary firmament, himself facing travails and taking it all in his stride, departed from the material world. That Lucknow, where his melody had reverberated and his dulcet voice enchanted one and all, could throw up just four persons to join him on his last journey, was nothing but a travesty of fate and fickleness of human nature. People at Gonda had been expecting a human torrent from Lucknow and had intentionally tarried over his funeral prayer postponing it from usual post-Friday congregational to evening (*As'r*) and ultimately to after *maghrib* (sunset) prayer. The four from Lucknow were Mufti Mohammad Raza Ansari Firangi Mahli, Farhat-ul-lah Ansari editor of official UP Urdu magazine, Maulvi Ateeq-ur-Rahman Sambhali and this writer. Prayer was led by Mufti Mohammad Raza Ansari. The gathering was largely of common Muslims, religious minded persons and some educated or literary persons.

It would not be out of place here to present a letter written by Jigar in reply to one of mine. Although undated, it has immense importance for me.

*Hazrat-ul-muhtaram zaad-allah ikramakum  
Waalaikum assalam va rahmatullah-i-va barakatahu*

(Respected Sir, may God enhance the bounties; may peace and bounties be showered upon you as well.)

Being a recipient of attention unlimited, from pious and exalted persons is an honour not without a pinch in the soul, though. The veracity and purity of association alluded to by you are not unknown to me, thank God. My devotion to persons of your ilk is beyond a lay person to comprehend.

I am not seized of the accuracy of my knowledge of self but not oblivious to introspection, which in itself is akin to an ailment. Having spent a long span of life in unhealthy acts, has addicted me to such ways of life. The will to disentangle seems paralysed; heart and soul mourn over the state of affairs. The whole being seems caught up in a quagmire, thwarting all effort towards piety or religion and imposing dereliction. Despite apparent vice-like grip, the faith in Almighty is unshaken, due to an inner voice or a message from the realm of unknown.

My soul is in torment and only the Almighty can have mercy. I owe spiritual allegiance to the saint at Mangalore Shareef and scenes of divine illumination there cannot be forgotten and this unrest is a legacy of His munificence. The Almighty showers His blessings on mosque and *maikhana* (tavern) in equal measure.

I carve your indulgence for affording me freedom of expression. I am convinced of the efficacy of drive launched by you and keep on drawing the attention of my acquaintances towards it, in the firm belief that this is the only means of ushering in a healthy social environment.

On return from Shahjahanpur I may drop in Lucknow and also would like to tour extensively for a noble cause. Do wish me success. Wishing you best of health and a long tenure in the service of Islam.

Humble - Jigar

1. Maulana Syed Abul Khair had his Arabic education at Nadvat-ul-Ulema and learnt Traditions under Maulana Abdur Rahman, a pupil of Miyan Syed Nazeer Husain of Delhi. His mentors in poetry were Shams Lucknawi and Syed Qizilbash. He became adept at classical Urdu, a critic, connoisseur and poet, earning several laurels. His style of writing reflected shades of Mohammad Husain Azad and Ratannath Sarshar. A victim of bitterness on some failures, he shunned name and fame. Expired in 1970, aged above seventy and lies buried at the ancestral cemetery Takia Shah Ilmullah, near the feet of his grandfather Shah Zain-un-Nabi. Has left behind a collection of Arabic writings, unpublished till date.

2. Syed Masood Ali Azad, was the son of Syed Mahmood Ali, hailing from Tehsil Fatehpur, Barabanki, UP, Azad was nurtured under the guidance of his father and his friend Maulana Masood Ali Mahvi (Alig), who worked in *Dar-ul-Tarjuma* (translation office) at Hyderabad. Both were well versed in contemporary sciences, Persian, Urdu and the latter was a poet too. Azad imbibed these qualities and with his innate tenderness, mellifluous voice, earned repute as a poet. Jigar came close to him and even kept him company on Hajj in 1953. Having spent his early years in some indulgence and pleasure, through contact with *Jamaat-i-Tablighi* in 1948 and devotion to Maulana Abdul Qadir Raipuri, became a reformed person, so much so that till the demise of his mentor stayed at Raipur. Shifted to Pakistan in 1970 where he breathed his last on May 25, 1974.

English rendering: Mashhoon Ahmad

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# Gahna Palace



**Haji Abdur Rauf Khan**  
**Haji M. Fahim Khan**  
**Mohd. Maroof Khan**

In Front of Ek Minara Masjid,  
Akbari Gate, Chowk, Lucknow.

## ISLAMIC JUDICATURE & DEMOCRACY ARE SYNONYMOUS

Akhtar-ul-Wasey\*

Normally a mention of democracy conjures up its image of the Western system, which in reality, is a misconception. The Western democracy and governance devolve upon the tussle for economic-financial supremacy, mainly among power-hungry politicians. The common man is misled into aligning with the ruling coterie and is consequently exploited for nefarious ends. On the contrary, true democracy has the common welfare as its principal aim, the ruler being elected by general consensus. In such a system the rule would not be despotic but the ruling group would be a guardian of the masses, accountable individually and collectively to the public; not a burden but servants of the subjects.

Over the past quite sometime, Islam has been accused and projected as incompatible with democracy and Muslims not amenable to such a system. The allegation may hold for some Muslim countries but is not universally applicable. In countries like Malaysia, Iran and to a large extent Turkey and Bangladesh also, of late, Indonesia, democracy is functioning with ostensible success. Even in states with an autocratic government, cultural, social mores and commercial system are absolutely democratic.

Islam, which literally means blessings and peace, descended upon the world as a liberator of all individuals and their conscience, so much so that it brooks no intermediary between Creator and the creatures. The working system propounded by Islam is based on counsel, in spirit and deed. The last prophet (pbuh) and through him the entire humanity, was ordained by the Almighty to liaise among themselves in all matters. This course of action adopted by the prophet (pbuh) and his pious Caliphs, formed the basis for governance and judicature.

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Essential ingredients being accountability and transparency, Islamic democracy, with innumerable examples in its history, is a role model. Right to express opinions different from the ruling power, with of course, sincere intentions and the rulers in turn, appreciating the approach, both sides having the welfare of humanity and reverence to God at heart was a normal phenomenon. Election of each of the great Caliphs was based upon public consensus. During their tenure they would make it clear that their only title to the position was adherence to the righteous path, failing which the citizens were at liberty to set them straight. The first sermon by Hazrat Abu-Bakr, on assumption of Caliphate, was unequivocal on this aspect. The second Caliph Hazrat Omar Faruq, on being confronted publicly, explained unhesitatingly, the reasons for his donning two cloth sheets out of the booty confiscated in a battle, as against one each received by others. Similar was his attitude when a decrepit old woman, not recognising him, exclaimed as to what right did Omar have to Caliphate if due protection and succor to a commoner was beyond him.

Examples of political and administrative functions would not suffice to bring home the inherent democratic spirit of Islam nor convince everyone. For the point to be brought home, a view of the methodology adopted for exegesis of Quranic text, selection of reliable Traditions of prophet (pbuh) and weeding out of the unconfirmed, interpretations thereof, resulted in emergence of more than one school of jurisprudence (*fiqah*). These studies were carried out by highly learned and erudite persons. Those entitled to be entrusted with such work of paramount importance are appointed not by a majority vote but on the basis of their capability, knowledge, wisdom and a sense of perception, much like judges with a devotion to fair-play and justice. Any inference and conquest rules formulated upon such studies agreed upon by all, become mandatory for all followers of Islam.

Translations of the Holy Quran into various languages

may not all be precisely similar. Each learned person may have perceived the original in a slightly different sense, differences in etymology and syntax in various languages notwithstanding. Even contemporary translations in the same language may differ to some extent, not to talk of translations carried out during different periods. Nevertheless, intention was always to present the Divine message in its most accurate and true form, for muslims the world over to follow.

Hence, as already mentioned in the preceding lines, all schools of jurisprudence are founded upon and derived from the same venerable source and hence each is accepted as reliable in its own way. This is a democratic approach in a most glorious form.

A person faced with a problem in daily life looks up to a Counsellor (*mufti*) or refers to an already compiled work on the subject. Even in the same region and under same ethos, differing opinions or edicts may be forthcoming. The reason may be the language and style of the query or the jurisprudence followed by the Counsellor or the person needing counsel, or both. It is of importance to note that each counsel ends with the admission: "*Wallah-u-Alamu bis-Swab*" (Real truth is known only to God). The bottom line is that the Counsellor has sincerely expressed his opinion, the Omnipresence of God dominating his mind and wisdom.

The above premise may pose an apparent paradox as to the reasons for most muslim countries being under imperialistic or dictatorial rule whereas, democracy being the basic principle of Islamic system, muslims conceptually and philosophically did never reconcile with autocracy. A manifestation of such belief occurs once a year when Muslims the world over eulogize the glorious deeds of Hazrat Imam Husain expressing in various ways, aversion to dynastic rule which had been imposed by an opposing clan. Western politicians and intellectuals, their ilk world wide, harp upon the non-existence of democracy in Muslim world. The obvious, incontrovertible reason is that the areas

were, for long periods, under the clutches of Western despotism who, for their selfish ends would not let democracy hold sway. Even if and where transfer of power or liberation did take place, the successors were puppet groups or individuals, who ruled virtually in proxy, for the West. Subsequent changes, if any, were also from imperialistic to dictatorial rule or one autocracy to another.

Worse are the cases of masses wresting power from a dictator but unable to disentangle themselves from the machinations of their West controlled predecessors. A case in point, rather pathetic is of Algeria.

In Malaysia, a Muslim majority country, democracy is currently successful. Iran, consequent upon 1979 revolution is another successful democracy. The internal debate, even confrontation, between conservatives and liberals is the time beaten saga of short-sighted, polemic, argumentations. In fact it is a manifestation of democratic philosophy, a healthy trend that allows for differences to be sorted out openly, for the good of all.

Try as we may to analyse and present before the world the democratic beliefs ingrained, ultimately formulation of a cogent, well-planned strategy is inevitable, aimed at restoration of the Divine order. Democracy is nothing but the original, eternal, universal and infinite doctrine, enshrined in the ultimate revelation from God to the prophet (pbuh). The call of the hour is to revert back to message emanating from *Hira* in *Koh-i-Noor* and the ultimate declaration from *Jabal-i-Rahmat* in *Arafat*. Embark upon the path and spread the sacred message to entire world!

[To quote the poet of east: *ilaj iska vohi aab-i-nishat angez hai saqi*. The panacea is the same ebullient invigorating elixir]■

Courtesy: Daily Rashtriya Sahara, Lucknow (25-01-2004)  
English Rendering: Mashhoon Ahmad



# GENDER EQUITY

## A Comparative Study

A.H. Nomani

The three religions agree on one basic fact: Both women and men are creation of one God, The Creator of the whole universe. However, disagreement starts soon after the coming of the first man, Adam, and the first woman, Eve. The Judaeo-Christian conception of the creation of Adam and Eve is narrated in detail in Genesis 2:4-3:24. God prohibited both of them from eating the fruits of the forbidden tree. The serpent seduced Eve to eat from it and Eve, in turn, seduced Adam to eat with her. When God rebuked Adam for what he did, he put all the blame on Eve, "The woman you put here with me --she gave me some fruit from the tree and I ate it." Consequently, God said to Eve:

*"I will greatly increase your pains in child bearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you."*

To Adam He said:

*"Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree .... Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil You will eat of it all the days of your life..."*

The Islamic conception of the first creation is found in several places in the Holy Quran, for example:

*"O Adam dwell with your wife in the Garden and enjoy as you wish but approach not this tree or you run into harm and transgression. Then Satan whispered to them in order to reveal to them their shame that was hidden from them and he said: 'Your Lord only forbade you this tree lest you become angels or such beings as live forever.' And he swore to them both that he was their sincere adviser. So by deceit he brought them to their fall: when they tasted the tree their shame became manifest to them and they began to sew together the leaves of the Garden over their bodies."*

*And their Lord called unto them: 'Did I not forbid you that tree and tell you that Satan was your avowed enemy?' They said: 'Our Lord we have wronged our own souls and if You forgive us not and bestow not upon us Your Mercy, we shall certainly be lost' " (7:19-23).*

A careful look into the two accounts of the story of the Creation reveals some essential differences. The Quran, contrary to the Bible, places equal blame on both Adam and Eve for their mistake. Nowhere in the Quran can one find even the slightest hint that Eve tempted Adam to eat from the tree or even that she had eaten before him. Eve in the Quran is no temptress, no seducer, and no deceiver. Moreover, Eve is not to be blamed for the pains of childbearing. God, according to the Quran, punishes no one for another's faults. Both Adam and Eve committed a sin and then asked God for forgiveness and He forgave them both.

The Image of Eve as temptress In the Bible has resulted in an extremely negative impact on women throughout the Judaeo-Christian tradition. All women were believed to have inherited from their mother, the Biblical Eve, both her guilt and her guile. Consequently, they were all untrustworthy, morally inferior, and wicked. Menstruation, pregnancy, and childbearing were considered the just punishment for the eternal guilt of the cursed female sex. In order to appreciate how negative the impact of the Biblical Eve was on all her female descendants we have to look at the writings of some of the most important Jews and Christians of all time. Let us start with the Old Testament and look at excerpts from what is called the Wisdom Literature in which we find:

*"I find more bitter than death the woman who is a snare, whose heart is a trap and whose hands are chains. The man who pleases God will escape her, but the sinner she will ensnare .... while I was still searching but not finding, I found one upright man among a thousand but not one upright woman among them all" (Ecclesiastes 7:26-28).*

In another part of the Hebrew literature which is found in the

Catholic Bible we read: *"No wickedness comes anywhere near the wickedness of a woman..... Sin began with a woman and thanks to her we all must die" (Ecclesiasticus 25:19,24).*

Jewish Rabbis listed nine curses inflicted on women as a result of the Fall: *"To the woman He gave nine curses and death: the burden of the blood of menstruation and the blood of virginity; the burden of pregnancy; the burden of childbirth; the burden of bringing up the children; her head is covered as one in mourning; she pierces her ear like a permanent slave or slave girl who serves her master; she is not to be believed as a witness; and after everything death."*<sup>2</sup>

To the present day, orthodox Jewish men in their daily morning prayer recite "Blessed be God King of the universe that Thou has not made me a woman." The women, on the other hand, thank God every morning for "making me according to Thy will."<sup>3</sup> Another prayer found in many Jewish prayer books: "Praised be God that he has not created me a gentile. Praised be God that he has not created me a woman. Praised be God that he has not created me an ignoramus."<sup>4</sup>

The Biblical Eve has played a far bigger role in Christianity than in Judaism. Her sin has been pivotal to the whole Christian faith because the Christian conception of the reason for the mission of Jesus Christ on Earth stems from Eve's disobedience to God. She had sinned and then seduced Adam to follow her suit. Consequently, God expelled both of them from Heaven to Earth, which had been cursed because of them. They bequeathed their sin, which had not been forgiven by God, to all their descendants and, thus, all humans are born in sin. In order to purify human beings from their 'original sin', God had to sacrifice Jesus, who is considered to be the Son of God, on the cross. Therefore, Eve is responsible for her own mistake, her husband's sin, the original sin of all humanity, and the death of the Son of God. In other words, one woman acting on her own caused the fall of humanity.<sup>5</sup> What about her daughters?

They are sinners like her and have to be treated as such. Listen to the severe tone of St. Paul in the New Testament:

*"A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I don't permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner" (1 Timothy 2:11-14).*

St. Tertullian was even more blunt than St. Paul, while he was talking to his 'best beloved sisters' in the faith, he said:<sup>6</sup>

*"Do you not know that you are each an Eve? The sentence of God on this sex of yours lives in this age: the guilt must of necessity live too. You are the Devil's gateway: You are the unsealer of the forbidden tree: You are the first deserter of the divine law: You are she who persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack. You destroyed so easily God's image, man. On account of your desert even the Son of God had to die."*

St. Augustine was faithful to the legacy of his predecessors, he wrote to a friend: *"What is the difference whether it is in a wife or a mother, it is still Eve the temptress that we must beware of in any woman..... I fail to see what use woman can be to man, if one excludes the function of bearing children."*

Centuries later, St. Thomas Aquinas still considered women as defective:

*"As regards the individual nature, woman is defective and misbegotten, for the active force in the male seed tends to the production of a perfect likeness in the masculine sex; while the production of woman comes from a defect in the active force or from some material indisposition, or even from some external influence."*

Finally, the renowned reformer Martin Luther could not see any benefit from a woman but bringing into the world

as many children as possible regardless of any side effects:

*"If they become tired or even die, that does not matter. Let them die in childbirth, that's why they are there"*

Again and again all women are denigrated because of the image of Eve the temptress, thanks to the Genesis account. To sum up, the Judaeo-Christian conception of women has been poisoned by the belief in the sinful nature of Eve and her female offspring.

If we now turn our attention to what the Quran has to say about women, we will soon realize that the Islamic conception of women is radically different from the Judaeo-Christian one. Let the Quran speak for itself:

*"For Muslim men and women, for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for men and women who are patient, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in charity, for men and women who fast, for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in Allah's praise-- For them all has Allah prepared forgiveness and great reward" (33:35). "The believers, men and women, are protectors, one of another: they enjoin what is just, and forbid what is evil, they observe regular prayers, practise regular charity, and obey Allah and His Messenger. On them will Allah pour His Mercy: for Allah is Exalted in power, Wise" (9:71).*

*"And their Lord answered them: Truly I will never cause to be lost the work of any of you, Be you a male or female, you are members one of another" (3:195).*

*"Whoever works evil will not be requited but by the like thereof, and whoever works a righteous deed -whether man or woman- and is a believer- such will enter the Garden of bliss" (40:40).*

*"Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has faith, verify to him/her we will give a new life that is good and pure, and we will bestow on such their reward according*

*to the best of their actions" (16:97).*

It is clear that the Quranic view of women is no different than that of men. They, both, are God's creatures whose sublime goal on earth is to worship their Lord, do righteous deeds, and avoid evil and they, both, will be assessed accordingly. The Quran never mentions that the woman is the devil's gateway or that she is a deceiver by nature. The Quran, also, never mentions that man is God's image; all men and all women are his creatures, that is all. According to the Quran, a woman's role on earth is not limited only to childbirth. She is required to do as many good deeds as any other man is required to do. The Quran never says that no upright women have ever existed. To the contrary, the Quran has instructed all the believers, women as well as men, to follow the example of those ideal women such as the Virgin Mary and the Pharaoh's wife:

*"And Allah sets forth, As an example to those who believe, the wife of Pharaoh: Behold she said: 'O my Lord build for me, in nearness to you, a mansion in the Garden, and save me from Pharaoh and his doings and save me from those who do wrong.' And Mary the daughter of Imran who guarded her chastity and We breathed into her body of Our spirit; and she testified to the truth of the words of her Lord and of His revelations and was one of the devout" (66:11-13).*

The following article written by Mr. Jamal Badawi explains the Gender Equity in Islam which is self explanatory

## **I. Introduction & Methodology**

When dealing with the Islamic perspective of any topic, there should be a clear distinction between the normative teachings of Islam and the diverse cultural practices among Muslims, which may or may not be consistent with them. The focus of this paper is the normative teachings of Islam as the criteria to judge Muslim practices and evaluate their compliance with Islam. In identifying what is "Islamic" it is necessary to make a distinction between the primary

sources of Islam (the Qur'an and the Sunnah) and legal opinions of scholars on specific issues, which may vary and be influenced by their times, circumstances, and cultures. Such opinions and verdicts do not enjoy the infallibility accorded to the primary and revelatory sources. Furthermore, interpretation of the primary sources should consider, among other things:

- (a) The context of any text in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. This includes the general context of Islam, its teachings, its worldview, and the context of the surah and section thereof.
- (b) The occasion of the revelation, which may shed light on its meanings.
- (c) The role of the Sunnah in explaining and defining the meaning of the Qur'anic text. This paper is a brief review of the position and role of woman in society from an Islamic perspective. The topic is divided into spiritual, economic, social, and political aspects.

## II. The Spiritual Aspect

1. According to the Qur'an, men and women have the same spiritual human nature: O mankind: Reverence your Guardian Lord Who created you from a single person created of like nature his mate and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women; reverence Allah through Whom you demand your mutual (rights) and (reverence) the wombs (that bore you): for Allah ever watches over you. (Qur'an 4:1)

It is He who created you from a single person and made his mate of like nature in order that he might dwell with her (in love). When they are united she bears a light burden and carries it about (unnoticed). When she grows heavy they both pray to Allah their Lord (saying). "If You give us a goodly child we vow we shall (ever) be grateful." (Qur'an 7:189)

(He is) the Creator of the heavens and the earth: He

has made for you pairs from among yourselves and pairs among cattle: by this means does He multiply you: there is nothing whatever like unto Him and Her is the One that hears and sees (all things.) (Qur'an 42: 11)

2. Both genders are recipients of the "divine breath" since they are created with the same human and spiritual nature (nafs-in-waahidah):

But He fashioned him in due proportion and breathed into him something of His spirit. And He gave you (the faculties of) hearing and sight and feeling (and understanding): little thanks do you give (Qur'an 15: 29)

3. Both genders are dignified and are trustees of Allah on earth.

We have honored the children of Adam, provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favours above a great part of Our Creation. (Qur'an 17.70)

Behold your Lord said to the angels: "I will create a vicegerent on earth." They said, "Will you place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood? Whilst we do celebrate Your praises and glorify Your holy (name)?" He said: "I know what you do not." (Qur'an 2:30)

4. According to the Qur'an, woman is not blamed for the "fall of man." Pregnancy and childbirth are not seen as punishments for "eating from the forbidden tree." On the contrary, the Qur'an considers them to be grounds for love and respect due to mothers. In narrating the story of Adam and Eve, the Qur'an frequently refers to both of them, never singling out Eve for the blame:

O Adam! Dwell you and your wife in the garden and enjoy (its good things) as you [both] wish: but approach not this tree or you [both] run into harm and transgression. Then



began Satan to whisper suggestions to them bringing openly before their minds all their shame that was hidden from them (before): he said "Your Lord only forbade you this tree lest you [both] should become angels or such beings as live for ever." And he swore to them both that he was their sincere adviser. So by deceit he brought about their fall: when they tasted of the tree their shame became manifest to them and they began to sew together the leaves of the garden over their bodies. And their Lord called unto them: "Did I not forbid you that tree and tell you that Satan was an avowed enemy unto you?" They said: "Our Lord! We have wronged our own souls: if you forgive us not and bestow not upon us Your mercy we shall certainly be lost," (Allah) said. "Get you [both] down with enmity between yourselves. On earth will be your dwelling place and your means of livelihood for a time." He said: "Therein shall you [both] live and ,therein shall you [both] die; and from it shall you [both] be taken out (at last)." O you children of Adam! We have bestowed raiment upon you to cover your shame as well as to be an adornment to you but the raiment of righteousness that is the best. Such are among the signs of Allah that they may receive admonition! O you children of Adam! Let not Satan seduce you in the same manner as he got your parents out of the garden stripping them of their raiment to expose their shame: for he and his tribe watch you from a position where you cannot see them: We made the evil ones friends (only) to those without faith. (Qur'an 7: 19 to 27)

On the question of pregnancy and childbirth, the Qur'an states:

And We have enjoined on the person (to be good) to his/her parents: in travail upon travail did his/her mother bear his/her and in years twain was his/her weaning: (hear the command) "Show gratitude to Me and to your parents: to Me is (your final) Goal. (Qur'an 31:14)

We have enjoined on the person kindness to his/her parents, in pain did his/her mother bear him/her and in pain

did she give him/her birth. The carrying of the (child) to his/her weaning is (a period of) thirty months. At length when he/she reaches the age of full strength and attains forty years he/she says "O my Lord! Grant me that I may be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon both my parents and that I may work righteousness such as You may approve; and be gracious to me in my issue. Truly have I turned to You and truly do I bow (to You) in Islam [submission]." (Qur'an 46:15)

5. Men and women have the same religious and moral duties and responsibilities. They both face the consequences of their deeds:

And their Lord has accepted of them and answered them: "Never will I suffer to be lost the work of any of you be it male or female: you are members of one another..." (Qur'an 3: 195)

If any do deeds of righteousness be they male or female and have faith they will enter paradise and not the least injustice will be done to them. (Qur'an 4:124)

For Muslim men and women and for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for men and women who are patient and constant, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in charity, for men and women who fast (and deny themselves), for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in Allah's praise, for them has Allah prepared forgiveness and great reward. (Qur'an 33:35)

One Day shall you see the believing men and the believing women how their Light runs forward before them and by their right hands: (their greeting will be): "Good news for you this Day! Gardens beneath which flow rivers! To dwell therein for ever! This is indeed the highest Achievement!" (Qur'an 57:12)

6. Nowhere does the Qur'an state that one gender is

superior to the other. Some mistakenly translate "qiwamah" or responsibility for the family as superiority. The Qur'an makes it clear that the sole basis for superiority of any person over another is piety and righteousness not gender, color, or nationality:

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know each other. Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (one who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things). (Qur'an 49:13)

7. The absence of women as prophets or "Messengers of Allah" in prophetic history is due to the demands and physical suffering associated with the role of messengers and prophets and not because of any spiritual inferiority.

### **III. The Economic Aspect**

1. The Islamic Shari'ah recognizes the full property rights of women before and after marriage. A married woman may keep her maiden name.
2. Greater financial security is assured for women. They are entitled to receive marital gifts, to keep present and future properties and income for their own security. No married woman is required to spend a penny from her property and income on the household. She is entitled to full financial support during marriage and during the waiting period ('iddah) in case of divorce. She is also entitled to child support. Generally, a Muslim woman is guaranteed support in all stages of her life, as a daughter, wife, mother, or sister. These additional advantages of women over men are somewhat balanced by the provisions of the inheritance which allow the male, in most cases, to inherit twice as much as the female. This means that the male inherits more but is responsible financially for other females: daughters, wives, mother, and sister, while the female

(i.e., a wife) inherits less but can keep it all for investment and financial security without any legal obligation so spend any part of it even for her own sustenance (food, clothing, housing, medication, etc.).

#### **IV. The Social Aspect**

##### **First: As a Daughter**

1. The Qur'an effectively ended the cruel pre-Islamic practice of female infanticide (wa'd): When the female (infant) buried alive is questioned for what crime she was killed. (Qur'an 81: 8-9)
2. The Qur'an went further to rebuke the unwelcoming attitudes among some parents upon hearing the news of the birth of a baby girl, instead of a baby boy:

When news is brought to one of them of (the birth of) a female (child) his face darkens and he is filled with inward grief! With shame does he hide himself from his people because of the bad news he has had! Shall he retain her on (sufferance and) contempt or bury her in the dust? Ah! What an evil (choice) they decide on! (Qur'an 16:58-59)

3. Parents are duty bound to support and show kindness and justice to their daughters. Prophet Muhammad said: "Whosoever has a daughter and he does not bury her alive, does not insult her, and does not favor his son over her, Allah will enter him into Paradise." [Ahmad]

"Whosoever supports two daughters till they mature, he and I will come in the Day of Judgement as this (and he pointed with his two fingers held together)." [Ahmad]

4. Education is not only a right but also a responsibility of all males and females. Prophet Muhammad said, "Seeking knowledge is mandatory for every Muslim ("Muslim" is used here in generic meaning which includes both males and females).

##### **Second. As a Wife**

1. Marriage in Islam is based on mutual peace, love, and

compassion, not just the satisfaction of man's needs:

And among His Signs is that He created for you mates from among yourselves that you may dwell in tranquility with them and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts); verily in that are signs for those who reflect. (Qur'an 30:21).

(He is) the Creator of the heavens and the earth: He has made for you pairs from among yourselves and pairs among cattle: by this means does He multiply you: there is nothing whatever like unto Him and He is the one that hears and sees (all things). (Qur'an 42: 11)

2. The female has the right to accept or reject marriage proposals. Her consent is prerequisite to the validity of the marital contract according to the Prophet's teaching. It follows that if by "arranged marriage" is meant marrying the girl without her consent, then such a marriage is nullifiable if she so wished.

"Ibn Abbas reported that a girl came to the Messenger of God, Muhammad, and she reported that her father had forced her to marry without her consent. The Messenger of God gave her the choice ... (between accepting the marriage or invalidating it)." (Ahmad, Hadeeth no. 2469). In another version, the girl said.. "Actually I accept this marriage but I wanted to let women know that parents have no right to force a husband on them." [Ibn Majah]

3. The husband is responsible for the maintenance, protection, and overall headship of the family (qiwamah) within the framework of consultation and kindness. The mutual dependency and complementary of the roles of males and females does not mean "subservience" by either party to the other. Prophet Muhammad helped in household chores in spite of his busy schedule.

The mothers shall give suck to their offspring for two whole years if the father desires to complete the term. But he shall bear the cost of their food and clothing on equitable terms. No soul shall have a burden laid on it greater than it can bear. No mother shall be treated unfairly on account of

her child nor father on account of his child. An heir shall be chargeable in the same way if they both decide on weaning by mutual consent and after due consultation there is no blame on them. If you decide on a foster mother for your offspring there is no blame on you provided you pay (the mother) what you offered on equitable terms. But fear Allah and know that Allah sees well what you do. (Qur'an 2:233)  
The Qur'an urges husbands to be kind and considerate to heir wives even if they do not like them.

O you who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will. Nor should you treat them with harshness that you may take away part of the marital gift you have given them except where they have been guilty of open lewdness; on the contrary live with them on a footing of kindness and equity. If you take a dislike to them it may be that you dislike a thing and Allah brings about thorough it a great deal of good. (Qur'an 4: 19)

Prophet Muhammad taught:

"I command you to be kind to women..."

"The best of you is the best to his family (wife)..."

Marital disputes are to be handled privately between the parties whenever possible, in steps (without excesses or cruelty). If disputes are not resolved then family mediation can be resorted to.

Divorce is seen as the last resort, which is permissible but not encouraged. Under no circumstances does the Qur'an encourage, allow or condone family violence or physical abuse and cruelty. The maximum allowed in extreme cases is a gentle tap that does not even leave a mark on the body while saving the marriage from collapsing.

5. Forms of marriage dissolution include mutual agreement, the husband's initiative, the wife's initiative if part of her marital contract court decision on the wife's initiative (for a cause), and the wife's initiative without a "Cause" provided that she returns the marital gift to her

husband (khul' [divestiture]).

6. Priority for custody of young children (up to the age of about seven) is given to the mother. A child later chooses between his mother and father (for custody purposes). Custody questions are to be settled in a manner that balances the interests of both parents and well being of the child.

### **Question of Polygyny (Polygamy)**

1. One of the common myths is to associate polygyny with Islam as if it were introduced by Islam or is the norm according to its teachings. While no text in the Qur'an or Sunnah states that either monogamy or polygamy is the norm, demographic data indicates that monogamy is the norm and polygamy is the exception. In almost all countries and on the global level the numbers of men and women are almost even, with women's numbers slightly more than men.

As such, it is a practical impossibility to regard polygamy as the norm since it assumes a demographic structure of at least two thirds females, and one third males (or 80 percent females and 20 percent males if four wives per male is the norm!). No Islamic "norm" is based on an impossible assumption.

2. Like many peoples and religions, however, Islam did not outlaw polygamy but regulated it and restricted it. It is neither required nor encouraged, but simply permitted and not outlawed. Edward Westermarck gives numerous examples of the sanctioning of polygyny among Jews, Christians, and others.

3. The only passage in the Qur'an (4:3) which explicitly mentioned polygamy and restricted its practice in terms of the number of wives permitted and the requirement of justice between them was revealed after the Battle of Uhud in which dozens of Muslims were martyred leaving behind widows and orphans. This seems to indicate that the intent of its continued permissibility is to deal with individual and collective contingencies that may arise from time to time

(i.e., imbalances between the number of males and females created by wars). This provides a moral, practical, and humane solution to the problems of widows and orphans who are likely to be more vulnerable in the absence of a husband/father figure to look after their needs: financial, companions, and other needs. If you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with the orphans marry women of your choice two or three or four; but if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly (with them) then only one... (Qur'an 4:3)

4. All parties involved have options: to reject marriage proposals as in the case of a proposed second wife or to seek divorce or khul' (divestiture) as in the case of a present wife who cannot accept to live with a polygamous husband.

While the Qur'an allowed polygamy, it did not allow polyandry (multiple husbands of the same woman). Anthropologically speaking, polyandry is quite rare. Its practice raises thorny problems related to the lineal identity of children, and incompatibility of polyandry with feminine nature.

### **Third: As a Mother**

1. Kindness to parents (especially mothers) is next to worship of Allah: Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him and that you be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in you life say not to them a word of contempt nor repel them but address them in terms of honor. (Qur'an 17:23)

And We have enjoined on the human (to be good) to his/her parents. in travail upon travail did his/her mother bear him/her and in years twain was his/her waning: (hear the command) "Show gratitude to Me and to your parents: to Me is (your final) destiny." (Qur'an 31:14)

2. Mothers are accorded a special place of honor in Hadeeth too: A man came to the Prophet Muhammad asking: O Messenger of Allah, who among the people is the most worthy of my good companionship? The Prophet said, your mother. The man said then who is next: the Prophet



said, Your mother. The man further asked, Then who is next? Only then did the Prophet say, Your father. (al Bukhari)

#### **Fourth: As a Sister in Faith (Generally)**

1. According to the Prophet Muhammad's saying: "Women are but sisters (or the other half) of men (shaqa'iq).
2. Prophet Muhammad taught kindness, care, and respect of women in general: "I commend you to be kind to women"

#### **Fifth: Issue of Modesty and Social Interaction**

1. There exists, among Muslims a big gap between the ideal of the real. Cultural practices on both extremes do exist. Some Muslims emulate non Islamic cultures and adopt the modes of dress, unrestricted mixing and behavior resulting in corrupting influences of Muslims and endangering the family's integrity and strength. On the other hand, in some Muslim cultures undue and excessive restrictions is not seclusion are believed to be the ideal. Both extremes seem to contradict the normative teachings of Islam and are not consistent with the virtuous yet participative nature of the society at the time of the Prophet Muhammad.

2. Parameters of proper modesty for males and females (dress and behavior) are based on revelatory sources (the Qur'an and authentic Sunnah) and as such are seen by believing men and women as divinely based guidelines with legitimate aims, and divine wisdom behind them. They are not male imposed or socially imposed restrictions.

3. The notion of near total seclusion of women is alien to the prophetic period. Interpretation problems in justifying seclusion reflect, in part, cultural influences and circumstances in different Muslim countries.

#### **V. The Legal/Political Aspect**

1. Both genders are entitled to equality before the law and courts of law. Justice is genderless.

Most references to testimony (witness) in the Qur'an

do not make any reference to gender. Some references fully equate the testimony of males and female.

And for those who launch a charge against their spouses and have (in support) no evidence but their own their solitary evidence (can be received) if they bear witness four times (with an oath) by Allah that they are solemnly telling the truth; And the fifth (oath) (should be) that they solemnly invoke the curse of Allah on themselves if they tell a lie. But it would avert the punishment from the wife if she bears witness four times (with an oath) by Allah that (her husband) is telling a lie; And the fifth (oath) should be that she solemnly invokes the wrath of Allah on herself if (her accuser) is telling the truth. (Qur'an 24:69)

One reference in the Qur'an distinguishes between the witness of a male and a female. It is useful to quote this reference and explain it in its own context and in the context of other references to testimony in the Qur'an.

O you who believe! When you deal with each other in transactions involving future obligations in a fixed period of time reduce them to writing. Let a scribe write down faithfully as between the parties: let not the scribe refuse to write as Allah has taught him so let him write. Let him who incurs the liability dictate but let him fear his Lord Allah and not diminish aught of what he owes. If the party liable is mentally deficient or weak or unable himself to dictate let his guardian dictate faithfully. And get two witnesses out of your own men and if there are not two men then a man and two women such as you choose for witnesses so that if one of them errs the other can remind her. The witnesses should not refuse when they are called on (for evidence). Disdain not to reduce to writing (your contract) for a future period whether it be small or big: it is just in the sight of Allah more suitable as evidence and more convenient to prevent doubts among yourselves; but if it be a transaction which you carry out on the spot among yourselves there is no blame on you if you reduce it not to writing. But take witnesses whenever you make a

commercial contract; and let neither scribe nor witness suffer harm. if you do (such harm) it would be wickedness in you. So fear Allah; for it is Allah that teaches you. And Allah is well acquainted with all things. (Qur'an 2:282)

A few comments on this text are essential in order to prevent common misinterpretations:

a) It cannot be used as an argument that there is a general rule in the Qur'an that the worth of a female's witness is only half the male's. This presumed "rule" is voided by the earlier reference (24:6 to 9) which explicitly equates the testimony of both genders in the issue at hand.

b) The context of this passage (ayah) relates to the testimony on financial transactions which are often complex and laden with business jargon. The passage does not make a blanket generalization which would otherwise contradict 24:6 to 9 cited earlier.

c) The reason for variations in the number of male and female witnesses required is given in the same passage. No reference was made to the inferiority or superiority of one gender's witness or the other's. The only reason given is to corroborate the female's witness and prevent unintended errors in the perception of the business deal. The Arabic term used in this passage (tadhilla) means literally "loses the way," "gets confused or errs." But are females the only gender that may err and need corroboration of their testimony? Definitely not, and this is why the general rule of testimony in Islamic law is to have two witnesses even if they are both males. This leaves us with only one reasonable interpretation that in an ideal Islamic society as envisioned by Islamic teachings the female members will give priority to their feminine functions as wives, mothers, and pioneers of charitable works. This emphasis, while making them more experienced in the inner function of the family and social life, may not give them enough exposure and experience to business transactions and terminology, as such a typical Muslim woman in a truly Islamic society

will not normally be present when business dealings are negotiated and if present may not fully understand the dealings. In such a case, corroboration by two women witnesses helps them remind one another and as such give an accurate account of what happened.

d) It is useful to remember that it is the duty of a fair judge, in a particular case, to evaluate the credibility, knowledge and experience of any witness and the specific circumstances of the case at hand.

2. The general rule in social and political life is participation and collaboration of males and female in public affairs:

The believers, men and women, are protectors one of another; they enjoy what is just and forbid what is evil: they observe regular prayers, practice regular charity, and obey Allah and His apostle. On them will Allah pour His mercy: for Allah is Exalted in power, Wise. (Qur'an 9:71)

3. Now there is sufficient historical evidence of participation by Muslim women in the choice of rulers, in public issues, in lawmaking, in administrative positions, in scholarship and teaching, and even in the battlefield. Such involvement in social and political affairs was done without losing sight of the complementary priorities of both genders and without violating Islamic guidelines of modesty and virtue.

4. There is no text in the Qur'an or the Sunnah that precludes women from any position of leadership, except in leading prayer due to the format of prayer as explained earlier and the headship of state (based on the common and reasonable interpretation of Hadeeth). The head of state in Islam is not a ceremonial head. He leads public prayers on some occasions, constantly travels and negotiates with officials of other states (who are mostly males). He may be involved in confidential meetings with them. Such heavy involvement and its necessary format may

not be consistent with Islamic guidelines related to the interaction between the genders and the priority of feminine functions and their value to society. Furthermore, the conceptual and philosophical background of the critics of this limited exclusion is that of individualism, ego satisfaction, and the rejection of the validity of divine guidance in favor of other man-made philosophies, values, or "ism." The ultimate objective of a Muslim man or woman is to selflessly serve Allah and the ummah in whatever appropriate capacity.

### **Conclusion:**

1. Textual injunctions on gender equity and the prophetic model are sometimes disregarded by some if not most Muslims individually and collectively. Revision of practices (not divine injunctions) is needed. It is not the revelatory Qur'an and the Sunnah that need any editing or revision. What needs to be re-examined are fallible human interpretations and practices.
2. Diverse practice in Muslim countries often reflect cultural influences (local or foreign), more so than the letter or spirit of the Shari'ah.
3. Fortunately, there is an emerging trend for the betterment of our understanding of gender equity, based on the Qur'an and Hadeeth, not on alien and imported un-Islamic or non-Islamic values and not on the basis of the existing oppressive and unjust status quo in many parts of the Muslim world.

### **Endnotes**

1. The term equity is used instead of the common expression "equality" which is sometimes mistakenly understood to mean absolute equality in each and every detailed item of comparison rather than the overall equality. Equity is used here to mean justice and overall equality of the totality of rights and responsibilities of both genders. It does allow for the

possibility of variations in specific items within the overall balance and equality. It is analogous to two persons possessing diverse currencies amounting, for each person to the equivalence of US\$1000. While each of the two persons may possess more of one currency than the other, the total value still comes to US\$1000 in each case. It should be added that from an Islamic perspective, the roles of men and women are complementary and cooperative rather than competitive.

2. The Sunnah refers to the words, actions, and confirmations (consent) of the Prophet Muhammad in matters pertaining to the meaning and practice of Islam. Another common term which some authorities consider to be equivalent to the Sunnah is the Hadeeth (plural: Ahadeeth) which literally means "sayings."
3. In both Qur'anic references, and the Arabic terms used are basharan and al Insan both mean a human being or a person. English translations do not usually convey this meaning and commonly use the term "man" or the pronoun "him" to refer to "person" without a particular gender identification.
4. The emphasis is ours. The explanatory "both" {was added whenever the Qur'anic Arabic text addresses Adam and Eve, like "lahoma, akala, akhrajahoma." This was done in order to avoid misinterpreting the English term "you" to mean an address to a singular person. For the Biblical version of the story and its implications, see The Holy Bible, RSV, American Bible Society, New York: 1952: Genesis, chapters 23, especially 3:6, 12, 17:17; Leviticus 12:17; 15:19 30; and Timothy 2:11 14.
5. A common question raised in the West is whether a Muslim woman can be ordained as a priest as more "liberal" churches do? It should be remembered that there is no "church" or "priesthood" in Islam. The question of "ordaining" does not arise. However, most of the common "priestly" functions such as religious

education, spiritual and social counselling are not forbidden to Muslim women in a proper Islamic context. A woman, however, may not lead prayers since Muslim prayers involve prostrations and body contact. Since the prayer leader is supposed to stand in front of the congregation and may move forward in the middle of crowded rows, it would be both inappropriate and uncomfortable for a female to be in such a position and prostrate, hands, knees and forehead on the ground with rows of men behind her. A Muslim woman may be an Islamic scholar, In the early days of Islam, there were several examples of female scholars who taught both genders.

6. This contrast with the legal provisions in Europe which did not recognize the right until nearly 13 centuries after Islam. "By a series of acts starting with the Married Women's Property Act in 1879, amended in 1882 and 1997, married women achieved the right to own property and to enter into contracts on a par with spinsters, widows, and divorcees." See Encyclopedia Britannica, 1968, vol.23, p.624.
7. This period is usually three months. If the wife is pregnant, it extends until childbirth.
8. Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (compiler), Musnad Ibn Hanbal, Dar al Ma'arif, Cairo: 1950 and 1955, vols. 3 and 4. Hadith nos. 1957 and 2104.
9. Narrated in Al Bayhaqi and Ibn Majâh, quoted in M.S. Aftfi, Al Martah wa Huququhafi al Islam (in Arabic), Maktabat al Nahdhah, Cairo: 1988, p. 71.
10. Ibn Majah (compiler), Sunan Ibn Majah, Dar Ihya' al Kutub al Arabiyah, Cairo: 1952, vol. 1, Hadith # 1873:
11. Matn al Bukhari, op. cit, vol. 3, p. 257.
12. Riyad al Saliheen, op. cit, pp. 140.
13. In the event of a family dispute, the Qur'an exhorts the husband to treat his wife kindly and not to overlook her positive aspects. If the problem relates the wife's

behavior, her husband may exhort her and appeal for reason. In most cases, this measure is likely to be sufficient. In cases where the problem continues, the husband may express his displeasure in another peaceful manner by sleeping in a separate bed from hers. There are cases, however, where a wife persists in deliberate mistreatment of her husband and disregard for her marital obligations. Instead of divorce, the husband may resort to another measure that may save the marriage, at least in some cases. Such measure is more accurately described as a gentle tap on the body, but never on the face, making it more of a symbolic measure than a punitive one. Following is the related Quranic text:

Men are the protectors and maintainers of women because Allah has given them more (strength) than the other and because they support them from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient and guard in (the husband's) absence what Allah would have them guard. As to those women on whose part you fear disloyalty and ill conduct, admonish them (first), (next) refuse to share their beds (and last) beat them (lightly); but if they return to obedience seek not against them means (of annoyance): for Allah is Most High, great (above you all). (Qur'an 4:34)

Even here, that maximum measure is limited by the following:

- a) It must be seen as a rare exception to the repeated exhortation of mutual respect, kindness and good treatment discussed earlier. Based on the Qur'an and Hadeeth, this measure may be used in the case of lewdness on the part of the wife or extreme refractoriness and rejection of the husband's reasonable requests on a consistent basis (nushuz). Even then other measures such as exhortation should be tried first.
- b) As defined by the Hadeeth, it is not permissible to strike anyone's face, cause any bodily harm or even be



harsh. What the Hadeeth qualified as *dharban ghayra mubarrih* or light beating was interpreted by early jurists as a (symbolical) use of the *miswak* (a small natural toothbrush).

They further qualified permissible "beating" as beating that leaves no mark on the body. It is interesting that this latter fourteen centuries old qualifier is the criterion used in contemporary American law to separate a light and harmless tap or strike from "abuse" in the legal sense. This makes it clear that even this extreme, last resort and "lesser of the two evils" measure that may save the marriage does not meet the definitions of "physical abuse," "family violence," or "wife battering" in the twentieth century laws in liberal democracies, where such extremes are commonplace that they are seen as national concerns.

c) Permissibility of such symbolical expression of the seriousness of continued refraction does not imply its desirability. In several Ahadeeth, Prophet Muhammad discouraged this measure. Among his sayings.. "Do not beat the female servants of Allah," "Some women visited my family complaining about their husbands (beating them). These (husbands) are not the best of you," "[Is it not a shame that], one of you beats his wife like [an unscrupulous person] beats a slave and may be he sleeps with her at the end of the day." See *Riyad Al Saliheen*, op cit., pp. 130 140. In another Hadeeth, the Prophet said: "How does anyone of you beat his wife as he beats the stallion camel and then he may embrace (sleep with) her?" *Shaheeh Al Bukhari*, op. cit., vol. 8, Hadeeth no. 68, pp. 42 43.

d) True following of the Sunnah is to follow the example of the Prophet Muhammad, who never resorted to that measure regardless of the circumstances.

e) Islamic teachings are universal in nature. They respond to the needs and circumstances of diverse times, cultures, and circumstances but unnecessary in others. Some measures may work in some cases, cultures, or with certain persons but may not be effective in others. By

definition a "permissible" it is neither required encouraged, or forbidden. In fact, it may be better to spell out the extent of permissibility such as in the issue at hand, than leaving it unrestricted and unqualified or ignoring it all together. In the absence of strict qualifiers, persons may interpret the matter in their own way lending to excesses and real abuse.

f) Any excess, cruelty, family violence, or abuse committed by any "Muslim" can never be traced, honestly, to any revelatory text (Qur'an and Hadeeth). Such excesses and violations are to be blamed on the person(s) himself as it shows that he is paying lip service to Islamic teachings and injunctions and is failing to follow the true sunnah of the Prophet.

14. For more details on marriage dissolution and custody of children, see A. Abd al Ati, *Family Structure in Islam*, Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1977, pp. 217-49.
15. For more details on the issue of polygamy, see Jamal A. Badawi, *Polygyny in Islamic Law*, Plainfield, IN: American Trust Publications, also *Islamic Teachings* (audio series), Islamic Information Foundation, 1982, album IV.
16. See for example, Edward A. Westermarck, *The History of Human Marriage*, 4th ed. (London: Mact-nillan, 1925), vol 3, pp. 42-43; also *Encyclopedia BibRca*, Rev. T. K. Cheyene and 3. 5. Black, eds.) (London: Macmillan, 1925), vol. 3, p 2946.
17. A. M. B. 1. Al Bukhari (compiler) *Matn al Bukhari*, Cairo: Dar Ihya a] Kutub al Arabiyah, n.d., vol. 3 *Kitab al Adab*, p. 47. Translated by the author. For a similar English translation of this Hadeeth, see *Sahih al Bukhari* translated by M. M. Khan *Maktabat al Riyadh al Hadeethah*, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 1982, colt 8, the *Book of ai Adab*, Hadeeth no. 2, p. 2.
18. Narrated by Aisha, collected by Ibn Asakir in *Silsilat Kunaz al Sunnah 1*, Al.Jami Al Sagheer, 1st ed. 1410 AH. A computer program.
19. *Riyadh al Saliheen*, op. cit., p. 139.

## THE TIDE CAN TURN

Wazeh Rasheed Nadvi\*

Almighty has not created the universe as an exercise in futility. On the contrary each and every particle is a repository of His erudition, howsoever unaware the humankind may be of reality. Human species by nature being impatient, is apt to lose sight of the fact that hardships befalling a person are actually expedients, known only to Him. The Holy Book clearly explains that in the event of a hardship, the man groans and bemoans that he has been forsaken by his Preserver, whereas upon receiving some bounty, declares that God has indeed elevated his status. At another palce, Quran lays down that all struggle is an integral part of life, unpleasant as it may seem, and has latent benefits and rewards. On the contrary, an apparently pleasant situation may in fact mislead one towards misdeeds. God only is omniscient.

The test of a true believer is his fortitude in adversity. Those who stand the test, proving as good as their word given to the Almighty (*ahd-i-alast*), are the blessed ones. They know that any calamity is a trial as promised by God and His messenger (pbuh). While some may have been tested, others stand and wait for their turn, steadfast in their faith.

History records incontrovertible testimony that at all times, two main categories of believers have existed. One, those who yield and succumb to the vagaries of nature and calamities land themselves in dire straits. The others, steafast in the face of all tribulations and torture, emerge unscathed, by virtue of their unwavering faith; like solid rocks they stand firm under the onslaught of raging tides. For them are the rewards and blessings from God.

The events, now termed permanently as it were, "September-11" are attributed, willy nilly, by all powers of the world, as a handiwork of Muslims, who have been

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targetted as the whipping boys and singled out as the greatest danger for the whole world. Islam has been made out as a synonym to terrorism. Even normal functions like promotion of literacy and education, dissemination of Islamic knowledge, establishment of charitable organisations, service to humankind, are categorized as subversive acts. Even a Western intellectual had defined such attitude as a deliberate attempt for thwarting Islamic renaissance, rather its very existence. In his opinion it is a ploy to protect the West from alleged Islamic 'threat', which to them is more potent than pre-World-War II upsurge from Germany and Japan and more difficult to counter. Consequent upon "11/9", the West has launched an all out offensive, armed with all resources, military, economy, print and electronic media, internet, aiming to curb even genuine philanthropic, educational, cultural activities of Muslims. Publication of literature, translation of Quran, aid for the decrepit and needy were not spared from being gagged.

Such concerted drive would normally be expected to block all roads leading to Islam and the trend of people being drawn towards Islam should have cooled off. However it is for all the world to see that case is just the opposite, with non-muslim intellectuals evincing increased interest in probing into the purity and real nature of Islamic message. Some who embarked upon a study into Islam only after it came under attack, woke up to the reality of this religion nowhere resembling the image projected by Europe. Western media had described Muslims as an unreliable, uneducated, callous lot. Some Western investigators who spent their time in the company of Muslims saw first hand that Muslims were far more cultured, compassionate and enlightened than those in the West who blew their own trumpets about high level education, enlightenment, culture.

Crusades of yore had evoked interaction between Islamic world and the West and acted as catalysts for an awakening in Europe. The current war, marketed by George Bush as Crusades, has shaken the Muslim world from

complacency. In the eighteenth century CE, post-Napolean turmoil, Arabs had stirred to life. Effect of Bush-implemented atrocities is not too different, launching the Muslims upon defence of their religion and culture with alacrity and self-confidence. These very Muslim countries had taken USA as their saviour, subsequent to relaxation of British and French grip. The aura of veneration has since started to evaporate, with USA losing support of several protagonists, who seem to realise the truth, so much so that even US citizens tend to decry the administration. This awakening is not due entirely to articles carried by media or sermons from mosques, which act only as adjuncts. Muslim feelings have flared up in retaliation to offensive by the West.

Some intellectuals from the Western countries took up a study of Islam with the motive of launching an offensive against Muslims after grasping the intricacies, but ended up in the fold of Islam. A vivid example is of Dr. Gary Miller. A professor of mathematics and a staunch Jesuit, he studied Quran with a view to finding lacunae but, perceiving the real message therein, realised the hollowness in Judaism and Christianity. This trend in Europe and Asia has resulted in a shortage of literature needed for the purpose, Quranic translations specially falling much short of demand.

Dr. Moullak, The German Envoy travelled in India, interacted with Muslim clergy and learned persons, to obtain first hand knowledge of the spirit of Islam and Muslim culture and to equip himself for rectifying the obnoxious impression created about Muslims and Islam by the West and also to counter the malicious propaganda. As for himself, Dr. Moullak is convinced of the fact that the Western world owes all its knowledge about medical and other sciences to the pioneering work originally carried out in Islamic world. He goes to the extent of challenging the self-proclaimed ambassadors of peace and fair-play to an introspection before pointing a finger towards Islam and Muslims.

Influenced by international vendatta, anti-muslim

elements in India also took up cudgels against Muslims. An eminent writer has stated, in a magazine, that muslims the world over are devoid of intelligence; tenderness and perception and they have no grasp over their self-professed faith though ever willing to sacrifice all in its name. The same magazine, Panch Janyah, in a subsequent issue carries the surmise of another writer to the effect that the vendetta against Islam is based on gross misconception and in ignorance of reality. In his opinion a proper scrutiny of facts was needed for taking a corrective action. The last mentioned writer is one of those who had previously crossed all limits in maligning Islam and the magazine is one which would hardly let go of any opportunity in this direction. However the hollowness of anti-Islamic thrust dawned upon them leading to a sense and expression of remorse.

The noted author and journalist, Khushwant Singh has been emphatic in categorising Muslims as faithful followers and firm believers of their religion, more than any other community.

The one positive effect of global anti-muslim offensive has been to stir the community to life and self-realization. To quote the Poet of the East:

*Musalman ko musalman kar diya toofan-i-maghrib ne,  
Jalatum-hai darya he se hai gauhar ki sairabi*

Western typhoon has instilled Islam into muslims, anew,  
A pearl is nurtured by the ferocity of raging seas.

The call of the day is for the Muslims, specially intellectuals and leaders to confront the present situation with insight and discretion and endeavour to rid the world of physical and moral chaos. It is only for God the Almighty to decide what is best for us, apparent pleasantness or harshness notwithstanding. ■

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## STANDARDISING MUSLIM SCHOLARSHIP: The Nadwat al-*ulama*'

Jan-Peter Hartung\*

It seems common sense that Muslim scholarship in India gained new momentum after the uprising of 1857. Whether or not the shock of the so-called 'Mutiny' was indeed the watershed, as, for instance, Francis Robinson has suggested, I do not dare to answer. However, what has to be acknowledged is, that almost all the so-called reformist scholarly movements in India rose just after 1857. Bearing that fact in mind, we nevertheless need to be aware that an understanding of political and social crisis by Muslim scholars goes back at least to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, the 'Mutiny' might have been only the necessary spark that caused the scholars to take action. Following this assumption, it seems meaningful to me to firstly outlining those tendencies of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, that proved preconditions for the reformist movements in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and, finally, for the attempt to standardise Muslim scholarship in the *Nadwat al-'ulama*'.

Muslim intellectual elites of the towns, especially in Delhi as the administrative centre, perceived the breaking apart of the once centralist Mughal empire as cultural and political crisis: The threat to political sovereignty of the Mughals found its expression on the one hand in the growing stronger of revivalist movements in other religious communities in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, namely the Sikhs in Punjab and the Hindus in Maharashtra. On the other hand, also separatist movements among Muslims, such as the Jats, drew attention to themselves, along with the military campaigns of Iranian and, later, Afghan rulers. All these developments were - although from the perspective of the centre - interpreted as cultural disintegration of a normatively understood Muslim community, that has to be counteracted.

Such tendencies we can trace back even to the 17<sup>th</sup>

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century, where the Sufi orders played a crucial role as social vehicle for reformist ambitions. The *Qadiri* 'Abd al-Haqq 'Muhaddith' Dihlawi (d 1642) is regarded the prime driving force in developing a systematic *hadith*-scholarship in India. His famous contemporary and theological opponent, the *Naqshbandi* Ahmad Faruqi Sirhindi (d 1624), stood up for a return to a Islamic religiosity that goes strictly conform with the *shari'a*, while protesting against syncretistic tendencies at the courts of Akbar and Jahangir.

Among the Sufi orders, the *Naqshbandiya* became the prime vehicle for a traditionalist renaissance in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Within its two dominant chains of transmission, the *Ahrariya* and the *Mujaddidiya*, it was attempted to counteract the process of cultural disintegration: Its major exponents in Delhi were Mirza Mazhar Jan-i Janan and Shah Wali-allah Dihlawi. Albeit they offered different approaches to solve the social and political crisis, they nevertheless emphasised the assertion of religious orthopraxy as precondition. According to Mirza Mazhar Jan-i Janan, the only way out of the crisis had to be the strict observance of the *shari'a* according to its codification in the Hanafi *fiqh* by each single individual. He himself believed to be able to realise that aim best by withdrawing as far as possible from all worldly affairs and by constant recollection [*dhikr*]. This rather a-political attitude was later elaborated into a core-teaching of the *Mujaddidiya* by Jan-i Janan's prime *khalifa* Ghulam 'Ali, who pleaded for avoiding every contact with the British colonial administration.

On the contrary, the traditionalist reformism that revolved around Shah Wali-allah was oriented rather towards a collective renewal that was to set out from the political superstructure: Firm political rule was, according to a canonical Prophetic tradition, the fundamental condition for a moral reform of each single member of the polity. Already Wali-allah's father, Shah 'Abd ar-Rahim Dihlawi (d 1719), reacted to the political decline of the Mughal empire with a turn towards the traditionalism that proceeded from



the already mentioned 'Abd al-Haqq 'Muhammadith' Dihlawi. His *Madrasa-yi Rahimiya* in Tughlaqabad became a centre for the studies of traditional sciences, the so-called *manqulat*, that proved a traditionalist pendant to the Lucknow-based *Farangi Mahall*, on which I shall elaborate a little later. In his major work, "*Hujjat allah al-baligha*", Shah Wali-allah gave reasons for an emphasis on *hadith*-studies and intuition-based Sufism, and against the dominance of the ratio as predominant mode of cognition. The ratio, so he argued, refers only to exoteric [*Zahir*] knowledge and is, thus, only an analytical tool. The aim is, however, a synthesis of all knowledge that finds its expression in the cognition of the fundamental unity of God [*tawhid*].

On the grounds of the Delhi-based traditionalist scholarship of the 18th century, the early 19th century brought forth three trends which all drew their legitimacy from a selective reception of the works of Shah Wali-allah: The first trend put a strong emphasis on *fiqh* as attempt to put the insights of the sciences of *hadith* into practice. The second opted for a rather militant activism to push through a 'reformed' Islamic society. The third trend, finally, emphasised the Sufi aspect and tried to combine the norms for action set in the Prophetic *sunna* with popular religious practices.

The legalist trend was prominently represented by the son of Shah Wali-allah and his successor as head of the *Madrasa-yi Rahimiya*, Shah 'Abd al-'Aziz Dihlawi. His Persian *fatwas*, compiled only between 1893 and 1896 and published as "*Fatawa-yi 'Azizi*", were - to quote Barbara Metcalf - "his major tool for disseminating instruction in shariat beyond the circle of his students and disciples". According to Metcalf, the media of the fatwa considerably widened its scope of influence during the 19th century: Having traditionally been point of reference of a *mufti* appointed from the court for concrete juridical decisions by the judge [*qadi*], it now became point of reference for each single Muslim in his efforts for a conduct that is in accordance with the religious norms. The authorisation to

issue *fatwas* by a worldly ruler was not required any longer; it rather needed the approval by the Muslim community. The revived emphasis on independent decision on the basis of a critical analysis of Koran and *hadith - iitihad -*, instead of following the opinions developed in one of the canonical schools of law [*taqleed*], altered the role of *fiqh* as well: Jurisprudence was no any longer only a means for decision within the frame of positive law, but became more and more knit to the ethical concept of *adab* - "shared norms of personal cultivations to quote Metcalf again. Shah 'Abd al-'Aziz argued in his *fatwas* as *mujtahid* in his father's tradition by emphasising the *hadith* as prime source of reference while using the opinions of the canonical schools of law only as secondary or even third-rate references. A whole chapter of his "*Fatqwa*" is devoted to the method of *hadith*-critique and its application in *fiqh*. For our purpose, however, his famous and momentous *fatwa* "*Mas'ala-yi dar al-harb shudan-i dar al- Islam*" is to be mentioned because it inheres the potential to a conformist as well as a non-conformist activism. While conformists have derived from this *fatwa* the strategy of a purist execution of religion as means to maintain and preserve cultural identity within an only hypothetical *dar al-Islam*, the non-conformists emphasised the actual belonging of British- India to the *dar al-harb*, against which even militant action is legitimate in order to return to the *dar al-Islam*, that provides the necessary condition for a pious Muslim lifestyle.

A pupil of a grandson of Shah 'Abd al-'Aziz Dihlawi revived the tradition of the *Madrasa-yi Rahimiya* in Delhi, after the school was razed by the British in the course of the 'Mutiny': Nadhir Husayn Dihlawi (d 1902).

He emerged, besides the Bhopal-based Yemenite *hadith*-scholars Husayn b. Muhsin and his brother Zayn al-'Abid-in, as the leading authority for *hadith* in post-'Mutiny'-India, and as on central figure in the formative phase of the traditionalist scholarly movement of the *Ahl-i hadith*. At the very same time, Nadhir Husayn became influenced by

representatives of the above mentioned activist trend, namely Shah Ismail Dihlawi (killed 1831), another grandson of Shah Wali-allah, and Sayyid Ahmad Bareilwi (killed 1831). Their interpretation of the intellectual heritage of Shah Wali-allah, again, became manifest in their so-called movement of the *tariqa-yi muhammadiya*, and their militant *jihād* against the Sikhs, beginning in 1826.

Another traditionalist reform movement which perceived itself in the direct spiritual descent from Shah Wali-allah and Shah 'Abd al-'Aziz came into being in the North-Indian Deoband in 1867. Muhammad Qasim Nanawtawi (d 1877) and Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (d 1905) set up a *madrassa* with a curriculum that - in regard to its *hadith*-centrism - showed quite some affinity to the *Ahl-i hadith*. In course of time, they set up a network of Deobandi seminaries all over the subcontinent and even beyond; of special importance for the history of Muslim reformist scholarship in India are the *Mazahir al-'ulam* in Saharanpur, from which the leading figures of the missionary movement *Tablighi Jama'at* emerged. The structurally new was in the case of Deoband that, after the massive intervention of the British in Delhi in the course of the 'Mutiny', the Muslim scholars turned away from the administrative centre and shifted their traditionalist activities to the *qasabas*. While the towns and cities became places of increasingly fast social, political, and economic changes, the *qasabas* remained relatively unaffected by the colonial presence. Moreover, here the traditional patterns of the establishment and consolidation of religious authority - such as the family, teacher-pupil bonds, and *piri-muridi*-relations - were of major importance. Thus, the *qasabas* became elevated as the ideal space for a pious religious lifestyle in accordance with the commandments of the normative sources.

This elevation of the *qasaba* has to be seen already as a feature of the emancipatory process of former vassal states from the Mughal centre in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. A prominent example, which has been given much ink by

Francis Robinson and Jamal Malik, was the *qasaba* Sihala in Awadh, from where a learned dynasty has sprung up to become most important for the establishment of Muslim scholarship in the new capital of the young, and more or less independent state of Awadh, in Lucknow.

I am talking of the tradition of Mulla Nizam ad-Din Sihalawi- (d 1749), who, after his father Qutb ad-Din was murdered in 1692, was given an estate for teaching and habitation by the Mughal ruler Awrangzeb in Lucknow's *Farangi Mahall*. Here, some factors came together that proved decisive for Nizam ad-Din's success as scholar: First, he managed to integrate into the learned setting in Lucknow by using the personal network of his regionally most influential Qadiriya-murshid Shah 'Abd ar-Razzaq Banswi- (d 1724). Secondly, the Nawwab required competent specialists to set up and effectively run an administration that took the socio-structural particularities of the state into account. In exchange, the Nawwab was generous in offering those scholars social prestige and, by way of fief [*madad-i maash*], economic independence. Thus, the education in the *Farangi Mahall* focussed on the crucial aim to sharpen the intellect of the students and to enable them in as little time as possible to critical-reflexive thinking. Nizam ad-Din set up a teaching canon, named *dars-i nizami*, that incorporated rather short texts on logic, mathematics, and *usul al-fiqh*, and less religious texts, that were taught at around the same time in Delhi. After all, the study was primarily designed to gain methodical skills, and only in a subordinated way to obtain knowledge of the traditional sciences. It seems as if the *dars-i nizami* proved quite practical at this time, when the Mughal empire broke apart and the former vassal states became emancipated, because it successfully carried through also outside Awadh. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, this emphasis on the practicability of the teaching got more and more lost. Colonial expansion weakened the princely states and the regent tried to better come to terms with the British instead

of having their own rule legitimated by religious scholars. It was mainly because of this, that centres of the rational sciences declined and the scholars drifted away into scholastic debates, a fact, that was heavily criticised especially by the *Naqshbandiya*-affiliated traditionalists that after 1857 made their massive entry into the *qasabas*.

As you all might have noticed, there remain two major reformist scholarly movements of the 19<sup>th</sup> century undiscussed. One of them took up the idea of a rather rationalist curriculum by incorporating Western thinking without much reservation, in order to enable Muslims to assert themselves against the Hindu majority. As you might guess, I am talking of the 'Aligarh-movement, substantially initiated by Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (d 1899). The other movement had its social base in the rural areas of Rohilkhand and combined Islamic legalism with the popular custom of the veneration of saints and their graves. The *Barelwiya* was centred around the Hanafite *mufti* Sayyid Ahmad Rida Khan (d 1921); in an interesting theology he made the veneration of the prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his grave at Medina a crucial issue and that is most probably why they call themselves 'people of the (Prophetic) Sunna and of the community'. I shall return to the *Barelwiya*, as I prefer to name them, a little later and would like to dwell a little more on a few particularities of the 'Aligarh-movement.

The adaptation of a Western style positivist rationalism within the reformist concept of the movement, as it was dominant in the European scientific landscape at the very same time, led not only to a reassessment of the importance of the ratio as mode of cognition, but produced a social strata of intellectuals that was distinct from the '*ulama*'. Their education did not aim at their integration into the traditional religious establishment, but rather at being able to act at the interfaces of traditional and colonial sectors. Their original background in traditional education was overlaid by ideas from the Western fund of knowledge imparted by the European colonial presence. In this sense, they

constituted hybrid personalities that inhered a socially quite integrative potential. At the very same time, however, they were a prime target of the polemics of Muslim scholarship: Now it was much more the rationalism of Western kind [*'aql parastī*] than the Islamic rationalism fostered by the *Farangi Mahallis*, that became more and more object of the fierce criticism of traditional and traditionalist scholars. This 'ideologization' marked a decisive turn in a learned discourse on the proper mode of cognition, because now the debate has been taken out of the store of an Islamic system of religious sciences. 'Rationality' in this new stage of argument became a topos for a modernism that set out from the West and that aimed only at the disintegration of the Muslims by infiltration of their intellectual culture; thus, the adversaries in this argument stood not any longer within the Muslim scholarship as the treasurer of Islamic knowledge, but outside of it.

It was in high demand to counteract the breaking apart of the Muslim communities under colonial conditions in general, and in particular in India, in an integrative way. That is why representatives of the modernist and the traditionalist camp alike agreed in the necessity to set up a platform for all the current streams of Indo-Muslim scholarship, in order to thrash out their differences and to finally work out a concept of reform that could harmonise diverse opinions. Since Muslim scholarship regarded itself upholder of religious identity, it seemed common sense to them that up-to-date Muslim identity could only be generated and maintained by a reform of the Muslim educational system. As Jamal Malik has put it: "Only a reform of the scholarship and the educational system related to it, that has transported the so far valid norms and values, could lead to a fundamental change, could mobilise the masses, and could integrate the polarised realms of society that were expression of a far-reaching split of the complex Islamic public." As such a platform, the Nadwat al-'ulama' was set up during a large gathering of representatives of most of

the brands of Indo-Muslim scholarship at the Madrasa *Faydiyyah* in Kanpur in April 1893.

It was a civil servant, a deputy collector named 'Abd al-Ghaffur, who first proposed a convention of the 'Anglo-Oriental Educational Conference', a body heavily dominated by the leaders of the 'Aligarh movement including Sayyid Ahmad Khan, in 1891 in Kanpur. After the agreement over the proposition to form a national body of Muslim scholars, the next two years were spent in mobilising traditionalist '*ulama*' for this project. This almost coincided with the travels of Shibi-i Nu'mani (d 1914), one of Sayyid Ahmad Khan's most important companions, to centres of Muslim religious education in the Ottoman Levant in 1892, the impressions of which he has published a year later in his travelogue "*Safarnama-yi Rome wa Misr wa Sham*". The assessment of the state of Muslim religious education in such renowned centres of learning, such as al-Azhar in Cairo, was quite sobering: Shibli was satisfied only with the teachings of *fiqh* and Arabic grammar, but complained on the teaching of other disciplines, the absence of the rational sciences, and, over and above all, the lack of a visible system of education that could set standards for achieving progress. This assessment just by the way was neither Shibli's alone, nor was it only a temporary impression. A similar criticism was pronounced as late as in 1917 by 'Ali Surur az-Zankaluni (d 1940), an Egyptian scholar who taught at al-Azhar, and for whom the system of religious education in India had set standards for the entire Muslim world. Shibi-i, however, after returning from the Middle East, became a major driving force in the endeavour for standardising Muslim scholarship in India for sake of enabling Muslims to cope with the conditions of Modern times without being forced to abandon their distinct religious identity. Thus, he emerged as one of the most important figures in what has been called the 'Nadwa movement'.

This movement, which had emerged from the 1891 convention of the 'Anglo-Oriental Educational Conference'

in Kanpur, attempted to gain a kind of mass support by approaching especially the religious elites in the *qasabas*, since, as already outlined above, they served as retreat for traditionalist scholarship especially after the 'Mutiny'. Using different kinds of networks, the initiators of the movement were able to gain the support from renowned North Indian Muslim scholars of different traditions already in the run-up to the convocation of the *Nadwa* in April 1893.

Only in March 1893, 'Abd al-Ghaffur had an epistle circulated among the '*ulama*' in North India to inform them on the proposal of an outline for the reformation of Indo-Muslim scholarship that was to be discussed at the Kanpur congregation a few weeks later. It seems meaningful to have a closer look at this epistle.

The letter opens with the statement that religion is absolutely necessary for the progress of a people, since it brings forth universal laws and, thus, determines a people's rise, as well as its fall. Muslims had deviated from that path, and this deviation finds its vivid expression in the manifold quarrels within the Muslim community. The letter continues by stressing the crucial role of the '*ulama*' in the guidance of the people. They wanted reforms, so the epistle says, but were not convinced which way to choose. But a thorough reformation of the people could only be brought forward by a religious community that is able to consensus, because success is only granted in mutual action. That's why, as 'Abd al-Ghaffur's epistle goes on, a common goal is needed to establish harmony among the '*ulama*'. The goals of all the current religious schools are, however, the same in its core, and that is why only the kind of education got to be reconsidered. The '*ulama*' have to learn the languages of other cultures, just as the scholars of the other religious groups have already done and were ahead of the Muslims only because of that. Now, 'Abd al-Ghaffur turned to the effective onslaught of missionaries of other religions on Indian Muslims; they would fall easy prey to Christian and Hindu missionary efforts for the lack of effective knowledge,



for which the '*ulama*' are to be held responsible.

It seems as if the epistle had its desired effect among the Muslim scholars. Renowned '*Ulama*', among them the influential Deobandi- Mahmud al-Hasan (d 1920) and two *Farangi Mahallis*, agreed with 'Abd al-Ghaffur's stock-taking and his urgent appeal to reconcile the differences within the various factions of Indo-Muslim scholarship. In the consequence, it was agreed upon calling in a convention of representatives of all the factions and setting up a 'National Council of Muslim Religious Scholars', the *Nadwat al-'ulama*'.

The initiators of the meeting have managed to bring together a large number of scholars and intellectuals alike, as well as merchants, entrepreneurs, and publishers, to secure a material base for the council in its initial phase. They have indeed succeeded in assembling 62 '*ulama*' of all the different branches of Muslim scholarship, even those who were opposing each other: Deobandis, *Barelwis*, Shi'ites, *Ahl-i hadith*, *Farangi Mahallis*, and 'Aligarhis. Among the latter was the above already mentioned Shibi-i Nu'mani.

The congregation at the Madrasa *Fayd-i 'amm* was presided by its own head: Sayyid Muhammad 'Ali Mongiri (d 1928), a regionally well known traditionalist and shaykh of the *Qddiriya-mujaddidiya* and *Naqshbandiya-mujaddidiya*. Moreover, already in the run-up to the gathering in Kanpur, it was decided to entrust him with the presidency of the to-be- founded *Nadwat al-'ulama*' for some strategic reasons. In order to reconcile the different, partly mutually conflicting views and interests of the various factions within the council, and to be able to represent the body to the outside, a personality was needed that could be acceptable by all groups because of its charisma. Due to a number of reasons, such charisma was awarded to Sayyid Muhammad 'Ali Mongiri; it, moreover, became consolidated in the times following by hagiographic texts

written by Nadwi scholars. The most well-known and widespread among them had been written by Sayyid Muhammad al-Hasani (d. 1979) and published in 1964 as "Sirat-i Mawlana Sayyid Muhammad 'Ali Mongiri", subtitled "Bani-yi Nadwat al-'ulama". It is in particular this subtitle that might be taken as a hint to the fact that the contribution of 'Abd al-Ghaffur to the establishment of the Nadwa became more and more marginalised in favour of Mongiri. Why in particular that had happened shall be our concern in the now following part of my presentation.

Already in its first general meeting of the council, only one year after its inauguration, it became obvious that the tension among the different factions was not easily to be overcome. When a senior member of the Nadwa proclaimed the leading role of the '*ulama*' for the guidance of mankind in accordance with the revelation, he was interrupted by the representative of the Shia communities. He stated the decay of most of the religious sciences, and rhetorically asked whether the Muslims could be saved from their downfall anyway, but he was retorted, that there was only a limited number of sciences necessary for the reform. The emphasis has to be laid on the unity of knowledge and action. This rhetorical exchange foreshadowed the formal exclusion of the Shia from the council soon after the second general meeting and reduced the initial aim of the Nadwa - to be a umbrella organisation for all brands of Indo-Muslim scholarship - to absurdity. The Shia, firmly established in Lucknow from *Nawwabi* times, have been perceived as a threat to the Sunni Muslim scholarship in town, prominently represented by the scholar of the *Farangi Mahall*. It seems as if the *Farangi Mahallis* played a vital role in driving out the Shiite scholarship from the Nadwa and establishing themselves more firmly within. The Shia religious establishment of Lucknow succeeded in working out their own strategies in dealing with the colonial situation: Under explicit support by the British colonial administration, in 1917 they opened the Shia College in the Chowk of Lucknow,

barely a few hundred metres away from the *Farangi Mahall*. The Nadwa, however, had now turned into a purely Sunni Muslim enterprise.

The next group that could not withstand the theological differences with other factions in the council, that had grown over the preceding decades, was the *Barelwiya*. Already the second general meeting of the Nadwat al-'ulama', that took place in Lucknow in January 1895, saw no representatives of the *Barelwis* among its delegates. The final row, however, sparked off the third general meeting in 1896 when almost 700 delegates gathered together in Barayli, only less than a third of them belonged to the 'ulama'. In this meeting, it became apparent that the *Naqshbandiya-mujaddidiya* related and strictly orthoprax oriented leadership of the council around its head, Sayyid Muhammad 'Ali Mongiri, was not willing to compromise with what they associated with superstitious popular beliefs and practices. To have such a large gathering held in the geographical core of the *Barelwiya* and, moreover, despite their repeated protests, to openly speak out against what constitutes the core of *Barelwi* belief, was considered too offensive to be tolerated any longer.

What commenced from here was a bitter argument between the urban, strictly orthoprax Nadwa, and the *Barelwiya*, that found its major clientele in a rural environment where the *Qadiriya* proved much more influential. This debate between the two groups was in the following years even transcended to a transnational debate: Both sides have sought the backing of eminent Muslim scholars in the *Hijaz* and have started a fierce battle of *fatwas* and counter-*fatwas* that rages on up to our days. I won't go further into detail at this matter, which I have already elaborated elsewhere. What should concern us here is, that by this factual exclusion of the *Barelwiya* from the council - even if this has never been formally announced - the Nadwat al-'ulama' had made a next step towards becoming a body that represents only a particular section of Indo-Muslim

scholarship. The third group that was effectively marginalised at the end of the first decade of the existence of the Nadwa, was the faction of the so-called 'Modernists', led by Shibli Nu'mani. The marginalisation of the Shibli-i-faction, which I would like to call the 'traditionalist turn' of the Nadwa, is considered the major turning point in the early history of the council. Jamal Malik, who has presented the so-far most thorough analysis on the matter, points out, that this clash had a number of implications, such as the different clientele of each faction, and their respective spatial point of reference: The '*ulama*' represented the traditionalism that was preserved within the *qasabas*, whereas the modern scholars, the intellectuals, or *mufakkirun*, referred rather to the towns and cities with all its inherent norms and institutions. The first group was represented by the head of the council, who was to symbolise the advocacy of traditionalist interests by the leadership of the Nadwa.

The charismatic Shibli, as the leading representative of the second group, lacked the backing of an office within the Nadwa, and, thus, he seems to have been in a much more unfavourable position, despite his much greater competence in questions of the reform of a religious educational system. Accordingly, the conflict of the diverse interests of the two major factions within the Nadwa became most apparent in the discussion on a reform-oriented curriculum.

Shibli used the insights he gained in his already mentioned travels to the Middle East as major arguments in the debate on the curriculum. To put it short, he emphatically stressed the necessity for the study of the English language, a new *kalam*, and, finally, a new historiography. It was especially the last subject that gained Shibli lasting fame: He was and is considered the first Modern Muslim historiographer in India who tried, as can be seen from the expansive preface in his biographical work "*al-Faruq*" on the Umayyad caliph 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz from 1898, to use Western historical methods in his

endeavour to create a new Muslim historiography. The quest for a new theology might have been influenced by Shibli's knowledge of similar considerations by the Egyptian Grand-mufti Muhammad 'Abduh (d 1905) and his companions at around the same time. The demands made by Shibli were perceived by the traditionalist wing of the Nadwa as questioning their self-understanding as well as their authority regarding religious learning. The opinion of the finally succeeding traditionalists on Shibli and his associates was expressed in a number of ways: The above mentioned official biography of Muhammad 'Ali Mongiri by Sayyid Muhammad al-Hasani, as a good example, accused Shibli of a hot temper, partly due to his origin from the vivacious Rajputs, partly due to his admiration for the rational sciences that lack a spiritual dimension. Shibli, so the text goes on, has improper intentions because of his socialisation: He did not see, as Mongiri did, the goal of education in establishing a spiritual relationship to God and, because of this, his ideas were not designed to make the Nadwa an integrative institution.

I would like to try to cut short the very intriguing developments of the next decade and jump to the year 1903, when Muhammad Ali Mongiri resigned from his office. What is depicted as a great surprise in the official historiography of the Nadwa, cannot have been as unexpected as the source would like us to believe, because already in 1895, three years after the inauguration of the council, Mongiri asked for his release from office due to his state of health and overworking. Although his request was not granted by the council, he was awarded an assistant: The that-time 26-years-old Sayyid 'Abd al-Hayy al-Hasan-i of Rae Barayli (d 1923). 'Abd al-Hayy, a fierce traditionalist, was related to Mongiri by adhering to the same Sufi- shaykh, the *Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi* Fadl ar-Rahman Ganj muradabadi (d 1895), and he received his education from eminent traditionalist scholars, among them the two already mentioned intellectual fountainheads of the *Ahl-i hadith*,

Nadhira Husayn Dihlawi and Husayn b. Muhsin al-Yamani. He had his aversion to a modernist rationalism openly expressed already in 1894 in a letter to Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, wherein he urged Sir Sayyid to orient the teaching at 'Aligarh much more by the study of Arabic and the traditional sciences.

When Muhammad 'Ali Mongiri resigned from office, the vacuum was first filled by splitting the office into three secretaries, two of which were held by Shibli and 'Abd al-Hayy. The argument between the two factions, however, exaggerated and, in the board meeting in 1913, 'Abd al-Hayy proposed the abolition of the secretary that was Shibli's office. In 1913, only one year before his death, Shibli disappointed resigned from the Nadwa and left for the nearby A'zamgarh, where he founded the *Dar al-musannifin* to realise his own ideas of reformist Muslim education. Two years later, in April 1915, Sayyid 'Abd al-Hayy was appointed head of the Nadwat al-'ulama'. His appointment can be regarded as the final triumph of the traditional faction in the council over the so-called 'modernists'. It, moreover, proved decisive for the future fate of the Nadwa which reached its peak so far in the presidency of 'Abd al-Hayy's second son, Sayyid Abul Hasan 'Ali al-Hasani Nadwi- (d. 1999), commonly known as Mawlana 'Ali Miyan.

Already during the presidency of Sayyid 'Abd al-Hayy, the 'traditionalist turn', marked by a strong emphasis on Arabic as means for religious instruction and a much more traditional historiography than the one advocated by Shibli, was reinforced by a specific personnel policy that heavily relied on different kinds of loyalties. Muhammad b. Husayn al-Yamani- (d. 1935), just for example, who was immediately appointed teacher for Arabic and for the sciences of *hadith* after 'Abd al-Hayy's election as head of the Nadwa, was the eldest son of 'Abd al-Hayy's own teacher in *hadith*, Husayn b. Muhsin al-Yamani. The *Dar al-'ulum* soon became the crucial institution of the Nadwa, where the impact of Deobandi- scholarship is clearly visible. The most

vivid expression of the 'traditionalist turn' of the Nadwa, however, was the manifold relation of the council with the missionary movement of the *Tablighi Jama'at*. It is, nevertheless, inevitable to say some words on that movement in connection with the *Nadwat al-'ulama'*.

Even though the contacts between the council and leading *Tablighis* can be traced back as far as Sayyid 'Abd al-Hayy's term of office, it reached its highdays during the presidency of Mawlana 'Ali Miyan. At least from the 1950s, when Sayyid 'Abd al-Hayy's eldest son Sayyid 'Abd al-'Ali al-Hasani (d. 1961) presided over the Nadwa, the council's estate in Lucknow became scene of the large annual gatherings of the *Tablighi Jam'at*. Also in later decades of 'Ali Miyan's presidency, these gatherings clearly reflected the tight relation between the Nadwa and the *Tablighi Jama'at*. This institutional affinity, expressed in a learned axis between the Dar al-'ulum of the Nadwa in Lucknow and the Mazahir al-'ulum in Saharanpur - the already mentioned intellectual centre of the *Tabligh* movement - was supported by personal networks between leading Nadwis and *Tablighis*, as the case of Mawlana 'Ali Miyan himself can serve as a good example.

'Ali Miyan came to know of the *Tabligh* movement during his own personal search for proper religious guidance by an article of Sayyid Abu l-'A'la Mawdudi (d. 1979) in the latter's journal "*Tarjuman al-Qur'an*". Connecting link, however, was the Deobandi-scholar Muhammad Manzur Nu'mani (d. 1997) from Lucknow, who was at that time already *murid* of one of the spiritual leaders of the *Tablighi Jama'at*, 'Abd al-Qadir Raepuri (d. 1962). When 'Abd al-Qadir came to Lucknow on a missionary tour in 1948, 'Ali Miyan took the *bay'a* and, thus, became part of a Sufi network that was very much instrumental in spreading the *Tabligh* movement all over India and even beyond. Leading Deobandi scholars, such as Husayn Ahmad Madani (d. 1957), who was also a teacher of 'Ali Miyan, belonged to this network and gave it additional weight. After the decease

of 'Abd al-Qadir Raepuri, 'Ali Miyan seems to have employed the very same strategy of using relations to spread the movement. His own reputation in the Arab speaking world, mainly gained from his famous work "Madha khasira l-'alam bi-inhitat al-Muslimin" from 1947, became the major vehicle in successfully spreading the movement in a number of Arab speaking countries. On the contrary, with the increase of his international reputation and, by this way, his self-confidence, 'Ali Miyan began to contest the leading role of the *Mazahir al-'ulum* at Saharanpur, as intellectual centre of the *Tablighi Jama'at* and, instead, attempted to have this position assigned to the Nadwat al-'ulama'. The vivid expression of this endeavour is the so-called Academy of Islamic Research and Publication'- *Majlis-i tahqiqat wa nashriyat-i islam* - founded in May 1959 on 'Ali Miyan's initiative within the institutional frame of the Nadwa.

Along with the establishment of the 'Academy of Islamic Research and Publication' and supporting its activities, Ali Miyan initiated the foundation of the fortnightly "Tamir-i hayat" as new Urdu-periodical of the Nadwa. Already its title - Establishment of the [pious] Life - points towards the aim of religious call [*da'wa*] in the way of the Tablighi Jam'at, and, in this program, it somehow constitutes a break with its predecessor "an-Nadwa". In the editorial of its first number the editor Sayyid Muhammad al-Hasani-Nadwi, son of 'Ali Miyan's elder brother Sayyid 'Abd al-'Ali al-Hasan-i, highlighted the connection between the journal and the new emphasis on religious *dawa* within the *Nadwat al-'ulama'*: Firstly, he explicitly stressed the relation with the *Majlis-i tahqiqat wa nashriyat-i Islam* in terms of its program as well as its institutional structure. Secondly, however, he pointed towards the ultimate goal of the periodical that consists of the presentation and propagation of the temporally and spatially invariable Islamic message. Consequently, the *da'wa*-activities of 'Ali Miyan and the *Tablighi Jama'at* occupied a central place in the first



volumes of "*Tamir-i hayat*". At the very same time, the editor of this journal emphasised the crucial importance of the *Nadwat al-'ulama'* as institutional support for pushing through these aims by awarding the council and his numerous bodies a special position in relation to a 'general Islamic reform'. That, again, relates to 'Ali Miyan's own idea of the central role of the '*ulama*' as the only legitimate administrators of religious knowledge, especially within the realms of the Islamic Law. Because the '*ulama*', so he imagined, had to bear an extraordinary responsibility in this regard, they have to be awarded an outstanding position. Here, we have come full circle with the historical outline I have presented at the first part of my presentation, and this should give me the opportunity to try to briefly sum up.

The establishment of a 'National Council of Muslim Religious Scholars' in India is already rooted in the ambivalent role Muslim scholarship played in relation to political rule in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century. The decline of the Mughal centralist state and, at the same time, the emancipation of its former vassal states to *de facto* autonomous territorial states found its vivid expression in the increasingly diverse perception of the political and religious situation in the Subcontinent.

Already in this time, Muslim scholars had developed different strategies of dealing with the situation, depending on their respective view which was, again, heavily determined by their perspective from the centre of the Mughal state, or its periphery. The colonial encounter of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century first provided a - more or less - common situation by levelling the differences between the administrative centre and periphery of the Mughal state.

The aftermath of the 'Mutiny' in 1857 seems to have provided a new impulse on the evaluation of the state of Muslim communities in India, and on the development of strategies for overcoming of what has been perceived as religious and political crisis. These strategies, however, distinguished themselves by a great variety, owing to

different religious traditions and addressing different social clientele. What had appeared, was a very heterogeneous picture of conflicting scholarly traditions, that seemed not to be able to provide a firm and, over and above, common base for Indian Muslims to orient their lives to the commandments of the normative sources of Islam, the Koran and the Sunna. As a final attempt to solve this problem of representation and to enable the intellectual elites to act as advocates of Muslim interest in their difficult social and political situation in India after the breakdown of the Mughal empire, a 'National Council of Muslim Religious Scholars' was invoked to settle internal differences and to work out strategies to deal with the present situation.

As we have seen, the *Nadwat al-'ulama'* became in fact rather a battleground for the different factions to push through their specific interests as the common interests of the Indian Muslims. The plurality of opinion, that was desired by the initiators of the council, in order to democratically come to a balance in an almost Habermasian discourse, was soon be undermined by either expelling certain factions from the council, or by mobbing them out, as seen in the case of the 'Modernist's' faction led by Shibli- Nu'mani-. What remained as 'National Council of - now - Sunni Muslim Religious Scholars', was a traditionalist institution heavily dominated by Deobandi and *Ahl-i hadith*-scholarship, even though it still claimed to represent a national consensus of scholarly opinion. In the course of the 'traditionalist turn' of the Nadwa, that officially set out from the election of Sayyid 'Abd al-Hayy al-Hasani as head of the council in 1913, it became more and more affiliated with the *Tablighi Jam'at*, an offspring of Deobandi scholarship and, up to our days, heavily interrelated with it. What remained, is a religious missionary institution contesting with other learned centres of the *Tablighi Jama'at* for religious leadership within the scope of religious *da'wa*, and an internationally acclaimed centre for the Study of the Arabic language and (religious) literature. ■

## ROLE OF ISLAM IN PROMOTING SCIENTIFIC TEMPER

Zaheerun Nabi

It is generally believed that science and religion are opposed to each other. Religion is obscurantist and science is the path to enlightenment and progress; religion is a hindrance to progress.

Western writers generally connect the modern period of advance of science with the Greek period of science and philosophy. They skip over the intervening 1500 years and simply pass on saying, "In the thirteenth century all Christendom was startled and stimulated by Arabic and Jewish translations of Aristotle, but the power of the Church was still adequate to secure, through Thomas Aquinas and others, the transmutation of Aristotle into a medieval theologian."

The Greek period of learning and science declined by the third century B.C. Suddenly Alexander died in 323 B.C. Aristotle died the same year and then Demosthenes. Within twelve months Greece had lost her greatest ruler, her greatest orator and her greatest philosopher. The glory that had been Greece faded now in the dawn of the Roman sun; and the grandeur that was Rome, was the pomp of power rather than the light of thought. Then that grandeur too decayed, that little light went almost out. For a thousand years darkness brooded over the face of Europe. The entire world awaited the resurrection of philosophy.

Will Durant has beautifully described the transition from the fall of the Roman Empire to the dawn of Modern age and science. He writes "Meanwhile the historical background was melting into newer scenes. The wealth of Rome passed into poverty. The organization into disintegration, the power and pride into decadence and apathy. Cities faded into undistinguished hinterland; the roads fell into disrepair and no longer hummed with trade;

the small families of educated Romans were out bred by the vigorous and untutored German stock that crept, year after year across the frontier; pagan culture yielded to oriental cults; and almost imperceptibly the empire passed into the Papacy.

The Church, supported in its earliest centuries by the emperors, whose power it gradually absorbed, grew rapidly in numbers wealth and range of influence. By the thirteenth century it owned one third of the soil of Europe, and its coffers bulged with donations of rich and poor. For a thousand years it united, with the magic of an unvarying creed, most of the peoples of the continent; never before or since was organization so widespread or so pacific. But this unity demanded, as the church thought, a common faith exalted by super natural sanctions beyond the changes and corrosions of time; therefore dogma, definite and defined, was cast like a shell over the adolescent mind of medieval Europe. It was within this shell that scholastic philosophy moved narrowly from faith to reason and back again, in a baffling circuit of un-criticized assumptions and pre-ordained conclusions.

In the thirteenth century all Christendom was startled and stimulated by Arab and Jewish translations of Aristotle; but the power of the Church was still adequate to secure, through Thomas Aquinas and others the transmogrification of Aristotle into a medieval theologian. The result was subtlety, but not wisdom. Sooner or later the intellect of Europe would burst out of this shell.

After a thousand years of tillage, the soil bloomed again; goods were multiplied into a surplus that compelled trade; and trade at its crossroads, built again great cities wherein men might cooperate to nourish culture and rebuild civilization. The Crusades opened the routes to the East and let in a stream of luxuries and heresies that doomed asceticism and dogma. Paper now came cheaply from Egypt, replacing the costly parchment that had made

learning the monopoly of priests; printing which had long waited an inexpensive medium, broke out like a liberated explosive and spread its influence everywhere. Brave mariners armed now with compasses ventured out into the wilderness of the sea and conquered man's ignorance of the earth; patient observers armed with telescopes, ventured out beyond the confines of dogma and conquered man's ignorance of the sky. Here and there in universities and monasteries and hidden retreats, men ceased to dispute and began to search; deviously, out of the effort to change baser metal into gold, alchemy was transmuted into chemistry; out of astrology men groped their way with timid boldness to astronomy; and out of the fables of speaking animals came the science of zoology.

The awakening began with Roger Bacon (d. 1294); it grew with the limitless Leonardo de Vinci (1452-1519); it reached its fullness in the astronomy of Copernicus (1473-1543) and Galileo (1564-1642), in the researches of Gilbert (1544-1603) in magnetism and electricity; of Visalium (1514-1564) in anatomy, and of Harvey (1578-1657) on the circulation of the blood. As knowledge grew, fear decreased; men thought less of worshipping the unknown and more of overcoming it.

It was an age of achievement, hope and vigor; of new beginnings and enterprises in every field.

Other countries like Egypt, Iraq, Iran, India and China had seen periods of glory of learning and science even before the Greek period, and had declined. Muslims collected the treasures of all the periods, enriched them with their own contributions and passed them on to Europe. This led to the dawn of the modern age of achievement, hope and vigor of new beginnings and enterprises in every field. However their treasures of learning and science, and spiritual and material glory of ancient civilizations had stagnated.

The elite who had the monopoly of learning and

scholarship kept on inventing ever new rituals to keep the common man busy in worship and devotion for keeping their grip over them and strengthened the rulers of the day and their coteries for making their own position safe and strong.

In this back ground if we look at the seventh century A.D. we find a continuity in the evolution of human mind.

In the seventh century A.D. Muhammad Mustafa (peace be upon him) preached the message of truth in Mecca, a city in Arabia. This message was simple, in simple language, intelligible to common man:

Look, ponder! You have been gifted with intelligence and the ability to discriminate between good and evil. Use your abilities. Live a life worth living. This wide universe is for you. Look at it and explore it. Praise Him who created the universe and act on His guidance so that you may prosper.

This message was addressed to the entire humanity and for the human race. It was not limited exclusively for any class or region. Since the direct addressees were Arabs it was in their language, Arabic. No special class or group was given a monopoly of learning and wisdom. There was no provision for intermediaries who may intercede for God's mercy and bounties. Stress was laid on righteous deeds and it was repeatedly mentioned that every one is responsible and answerable for his/her deeds. Each one shall be rewarded or punished for his/her deeds. God explains His message at length and gives the human beings the choice willingly to accept the message and act on it. There is no compulsion to accept it. The Quraan repeatedly asks men to look around and ponder over what they observe. There is no place for dogma. To be content with looking at things or to wonder at what one sees is childish or foolish. Observe and think over it as far as your mind can think. This universe and every thing in it is for you. Explore it and know its Creator and your creator. Light has been provided for all. Any one who likes it may accept the right path. We find verses of this import in the Quraan through out, from begin-

ning to end. It has been explained in many different contexts and by many examples from the phenomena and from history. Only a few verses are given here. There are many more verses like these in the Quraan.

- XIX 97. So have we made the (Qur'an) easy in thine own tongue, that with it thou mayest give glad tidings to the righteous and warning to people given to contention.
- LIV 17. And we have indeed made the Qur-an easy to understand and remember: then is there any that will receive admonition?
- XLI 3. A book, whereof the verses are explained in detail; a Qur-an in Arabic, for people who understand.
- LXXXI 27,28,29, Verily this is no less than a message to all the worlds : (with profit) to whoever among you wills to go straight : but ye shall not will except as God wills, the Cherisher of the worlds.
- XXX 8. Do they not reflect in their own minds? Not but for just ends and for a term appointed, did God create the heavens and the earth, and all between them; yet are there truly among men who deny the meeting with their Lord (at the resurrection)!
9. Do they not travel through the earth, and see what the end of those before them was? They were superior to them in strength: they tilled the soil and populated it in greater numbers than these have done: there came to them their apostles with clear (signs), which they rejected, to their own destruction: it was not God who wronged them, but they wronged their own souls.
- XXX 20. Among His signs is this, that he created you from dust; and then - behold, ye are men scattered (far and wide)!
21. And among His signs is this that he created for

- you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquility with them, and he has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are signs for those who reflect.
22. And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colours: verily in that are signs for those who know.
28. He does propound to you a similitude from your own (experience): Do ye have partners among those whom your right hands possess, to share as equals in the wealth we have bestowed on you? Do ye fear them as ye fear each other? Thus do we explain the signs in detail to a people that understand?
- XXXVI. 33. A sign for them is the earth that is dead: we do give it life, and produce grain there from, of which ye do eat.
34. And we do produce therein orchards with date-palms and vines, and we cause springs to gush forth therein:
35. That they may enjoy the fruits of this (artistry): it was not their hands that made this: will they not then give thanks?
- XXXVI 36. Glory to God, who created in pairs all things that the earth produces, as well as their own (human) kind and (other) things of which they have no knowledge.
37. And a sign for the night: we withdraw there from the day, and behold they are plunged in darkness;
38. And the sun runs his course for a period determined for him: that is the decree of (Him) the exalted in might, the all-knowing.
39. And the moon, - we have measured for her mansions (to traverse) till she returns like the old (and withered) lower part of a date-stalk.



40. It is not permitted to the Sun to catch up the Moon, nor can the Night outstrip the day: each (just) swims along in its own orbit (according to law).
41. And a Sign for them is that we bore their race (through the flood) in the loaded ark;
42. And we have created for them similar (vessels) on which they ride.
- II 134. That was a people that hath passed away. They shall reap the fruit of what they did, and ye of what ye do! Of their merits there is no question in your case.
- XIV 4. We sent not an apostle except (to teach) in the language of his (own) people, in order to make (things) clear to them. Now God leaves straying those whom He pleases and guides whom He pleases: and He is exalted in power, full of wisdom.
- XVI 12. He has made subject to you the night and the day; the sun and the moons and the stars are in subjection by His command: verily in this are signs for men who are wise.
65. And God sends rain from the skies, and gives therewith life to the earth after its death: verily in this is a sign for those who listen.
- XXIX 20. Say: "Travel through the earth and see how God did originate creation, so God will produce a later creation: for God has power over all things.
- III 190. Behold! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alteration of night and day, there are indeed Signs for men of understanding.
191. Men who celebrate the praises of God, standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides and contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth, (with the thought): "Our Lord! Not for naught hast thou created (all) this!

Glory to thee! Give us salvation from the penalty of the Fire.

- XXXI 20. Do ye not see that God 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?
29. Seest thou not that God merges night into day and He merges day into night; That He has subjected the sun and the moon (to His Law), each running its course for a term appointed; and that God is well-acquainted with all that ye do.
31. Seest thou not that the ships sail through the ocean by the grace of God? That He may show you of His signs? Verily in this are signs for all who constantly persevere and give thanks?
- LXXXIV 19. Ye shall surely travel from stage to stage. Abdullah Yusuf Ali's note no 6047: Man travels and ascends stage by stage ..... Man's spiritual life may similarly be compared to an ascent from one heaven to another. (I think this applies also very appropriately to the evolution of human mind from stage to stage Z. Nabi.)
- XLV 13. And he has subjected to you, as from Him, all that is in the heavens and on earth: behold, in that are signs indeed for those who reflect.

### Evolution of human mind:

The evolution of human mind has been referred to in the context of Hazrat Ibrahim in Quraan (VI: 76-79) as follows:

- (VI: 76) When the night covered him over, he saw a star: He said: "This is my Lord". But when it set, he said: "I love not those that set."
- (VI: 77) When he saw the moon rising in splendor, he said: "This is my Lord". But when moon set, he said: "Unless my Lord guides me, I shall surely be among those who go astray".
- (VI: 78) When he saw the sun rising in splendor, he said:

"This is my Lord; this is the greatest (of all)." But when the sun set, he said: "O my people I am indeed free from your (guilt) of giving partners to God.

(VI: 79) "For me, I have set my face, firmly and truly, towards Him who created the heavens and the earth and never shall I give partners to God."

The collective human mind also evolved and developed stage by stage on similar lines. Some people stopped at some intermediary stage and their succeeding generations remained stuck there, following what their ancestors believed.

The importance of learning and knowledge is clear from the fact that the first revelation of the Quraan relates to learning.

"Proclaim! (Or read!) In the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, who created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood.

Proclaim! And thy Lord is most bountiful, - He who taught (the use of) the pen, - taught man that which he knew not". (XCVI - 1 to 5)

The prophet's hadith, "learn, attain knowledge, even if you have to go to China for this purpose" is well known. Obviously there was no teaching of the Quraan and hadith in China. The prophet exhorted his followers to attain knowledge of all type. The prophet also practically made Muslims learn different languages. At his bidding Zaid-bin-thabit learned Hebrew. It came in handy in corresponding with the Jews. Many of the prophet's companions learned Persian.

Literacy was not common in those days. In every country only a few persons literate were found. Prophet Mohammad realized the importance of literacy. Some persons were taken prisoners of war in the battle of Badr. When the question came up for their return and fixing penalty for them the prophet said, let those who are literate among

the prisoners teach the Muslims reading and writing, one prisoner to teach ten Muslims; and this is enough as their penalty.

Such were the teachings of the Quraan and the Hadith (the Prophet's sayings) and the practical steps taken by the prophet through which a new society and polity were being established, a society which guaranteed stability and progress. It was simple and righteous; and the foundations were so strong that even after fourteen hundred years, during which it spread all over the world, passed through periods of glory and decay, it is ready again to assert itself.

When the Muslims spread outside the Arab peninsula and reached other countries they came into contact with other peoples, their faiths and beliefs, their thoughts, ways of life. New problems arose. They came to know of the treasures of human knowledge which had accumulated in those countries in the course of the centuries of evolution of human mind. Whatever mental treasures they imbibed from old Arab traditions, they enriched from the teachings of the Quraan and Hadith. Now they added to these treasures from the ancient treasures of other countries.

Muslims first became acquainted with Indian and Persian sources of astronomy and only later with Greek ones. In the 2nd AH/ 8thAD century Sassanid works had been translated into Arabic.

Among the Indian sources, such works as the Khandakhadyaka of Brahmagupta, the Aryabhatiya of Aryabhat and the Mahasiddhanta based mostly on Brahmasputasidhanta, most of them already noted for their role in the rise of mathematics among Muslims, were also fundamental for the spread of astronomy. As early as the 2nd AH/ 8th AD century Muslims became thoroughly acquainted with Indian astronomy, thanks to the translations of Ibrahim al-Farazi and Yaqub al-Tariq. Al-Farazi himself composed a work entitled Sindhind al-Kabir (the Great Sindhind) which was based on Indian parameters and means of calculation. The Sindhind tradition thus became

dominant for a few decades until the Translation of Ptolemy became known, but it continued to influence certain astronomers, as for example Andalusian al-Zarqali.

The appearance of works by Ptolemy in the 3rd AH/ 9th AD century added a basic new element and laid a solid foundation for Islamic astronomy as a distinct School.

The major astronomical opus of Ptolemy, the *Megalé Syntaxis Mathematike* was translated several times into Arabic by such masters as Hunayn ibn-Ishaq and Thabit ibn-Qurrah and known to this day in the West in its Arabic form as *Almagest*. Other works of Ptolemy were also rendered into Arabic. The writings of other Greek astronomers and scientists, Terabiblos, Hipparchus Aristarchus, Geminius, Antolycus, Theodosius, Hypicles, Theon, Archimedes, Hippocrates, Pythagoras, Euclid and many others also became known to Muslims.

Towards the end of the eight century A.D. Calif Harun-al Rasheed established a research institute called *Bait-al Hikmat* in Baghdad. Here he collected learned men for translating books from Sasanid, Sanskrit, Syriani and Qibti languages into Arabic. He patronized these learned men. His Minister Yahya Barmaki who was of the Majusi origin also worked for the promotion of learning and science. After Harun his successor Mamun developed it further. Mamun was greatly influenced by Aristotle's works. There is a long list of learned scholars who translated works of Sassanid, Sanskrit, Syrian and Greek writers and also did original work in the field of science, especially astronomy. The cosmic dimension of Islamic rites, specially the daily prayers, also brought into focus the practical importance of astronomy for the religious community - the times of daily prayers have to be determined throughout the year for every geographical latitude and longitude and the direction for the prayer facing Mecca to be determined for every locality. Al-biruni and Ibnal-haythan (the Latin Alhazem) and many unknown astronomers devised means for finding the direction (The Qibla) in Mecca.

As a result, by the 3rd AH/9th AD century Muslim became thoroughly acquainted with astronomical traditions of the Indians, Persians and Greeks and, of course through them, with those of ancient Babylonians and Egyptians. The ground was thus well prepared for the remarkably intense activity in the field of astronomy which Muslims undertook from the 3rd AH/9th AD century onwards and which they continued on a high level until the time of Tycho Brahe and Johannes Kepler and on a subdued level during the centuries that followed. Thus Europe got the treasures of knowledge and science of Greek and also Indian, Persian and other ancient civilizations .

In astronomy, as in other sciences, the main sources were Greek, Indian and Persian, except, that in this field some Arabic influence of pre-Islamic period is also to be observed.

The Arabs had divided the trajectory of the moon into twenty eight stations (*manazil al Qamar*), a system which was later adopted in both Muslim astronomy and astrology.

Islam also adopted the Arabic lunar calendar which determines the rhythm of religious life of Muslims to this day. Moreover some form of solar calendar has also been in use throughout Islamic history for agricultural and administrative matters. But the holy Quraan, forbade the intercalation of the lunar year into the solar one; postponement (of a sacred month) (*al nasi'*, meaning also intercalation) is only an excess of disbelief whereby those who disbelieve are misled" (IX, 37).

To this day the Arab world uses a form of the-Julian calendar with ancient Syriac names for the months which have survived into Arabic. Persians use the Jalali calendar with names of the months derived from Mazdaean angelology.

Concern with the calendar continued as a major pre-occupation of Muslim astronomers until, with the Jalali calendar, Seljuq scientists-including Omar Khayyam produced the most exact and perfect solar calendar to be used widely to this day. Muslim astronomers also devised

more popular calendars used by farmers of which the best known in the west is the calendar of Cordova. These calendars served as models for the Western farmers' almanac. In fact the word almanac itself, from the Arabic *al-munakh* (meaning climate) reveals the influence of Islamic works in this field in the West. Ephemerides of the sun and the moon as functions on annual dates were discovered by Muslims in the 7th AH/13th AD century and were the origin of almanacs used later for navigation across the ocean by Western sailors.

### **Islamic works on Astronomy**

The vast corpus of works in Arabic, Persian, Turkish and other Eastern languages consists of works of different types. Some are treatises devoted to a single facet of the science or a particular instrument; some are descriptive accounts of astronomy without mathematical treatment of the subject.

The *Tadhkirah* (Memorial of Astronomy) of *Nasir al-Din al-Tusi* is one of the major general works in the field of astronomy but without recourse to mathematics. There are astronomical compendia which try to embrace the whole of the field in encyclopaedic but at the same time in thoroughly analytical manner. To this class belong the *Qanun al-Masudi* (Masudi Canon) of al-Biruni and *Nihayat al-Ildrak* (the Limit of Comprehension) of Qutbal-Din al-Shirazi. The Masudi Canon is to astronomy what the canon of Ibn Sina is to medicine.

### **The Major figures of Islamic Astronomy**

Upon foundations laid in the 2nd AH/ 8th AD century major astronomical figures began to appear in the 3rd/9th century associated mostly with the city of Baghdad but also including Iranians, some of whom remained Sabaeans while others converted to Islam only later in life.

Habash al Hasib, whose figure dominates the early 3rd /9th century at the court of al Mamun, spent forty years observing various astronomical phenomena including lunar and solar eclipses. He wandered from place to place to

take maximum advantage of each site for observation.

In this he was followed by Banu Musa who also began their observation in Baghdad but travelled extensively.

Abu Ma'shar' al-Balkhi spread astronomy and astrology relying heavily upon Sasanid materials. He wrote the famous *Kitab al-Uluf* (The Book of Thousands), which had deep repercussions in certain circles in the Islamic world. It is of interest to note that the West first became acquainted with Aristotelian physics, not-through some peripatetic text, but with the help of introduction to Astrology of Abu Ma'shar' (Albumasar), which became very popular in Latin world in the 5th / 11th century.

Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi well known for his contributions to geography and mathematics, was also important in astronomy. He left behind two zijes (tables), the greater and the lesser. The greater Table is lost and survives only as part of the extant Hebrew and Latin versions of commentary of Ibn al-Muthanna upon it. The lesser Table was adopted by Masalamah al-Majriti for the meridian of Cordova. It was translated by Adelard of Bath into Latin and thus exercised much influence in both Muslim and Christian Spain.

Other astronomers of the period were also influential in the West. Al-Farghani (Latin Alfraganus) composed the *Kitab fil-harakat al-Samawiyah wa Jawami-ilm-al-Nujum* (Principles of Astronomy) which marked a new phase in the study of astronomy. Al-Nayrizi, his near contemporary, also known to the West as Aritius composed a commentary on *Almagest* showing special interest in the use of spherical trigonometry in the solution of astronomical problems.

The Iranian Thabit ibn Qurrah, who became a Muslim, is among the most outstanding scientists of his day, wrote several works on astronomy. He was specially concerned with the question of the movement of the solar perigee and the exact measurement of the precession of the equinox. Abu Abdullah al-Batani (Albategnius in Latin and Western languages) composed the *Zij al-Sabi* (The Sabaen Tables)



which mark the peak of both observational and mathematical astronomy in Islam. It was translated into Latin by C.A. Nailino in his *Zij al-Sabi*, 3vols in 1893. He made careful study of lunar and solar eclipses which was used in Europe till as late as the 18th century.

In the Islamic sciences there was no separate discipline corresponding to physics in its modern sense. There was natural philosophy (*Tabi'iyat*) which included the life and the earth sciences as well as physics; and there were certain sciences such as optics which although understood today as a branch of physics, were classified by Muslims among the mathematical sciences. It was a similar classification of disciplines of learning understood in Europe. Sir Isaac Newton referred to himself as a natural philosopher and in this sense shared the world view common with the Muslim scientists. The word physics as understood today is of relatively recent usage.

The principles or philosophy of physics and also the philosophy of nature were dealt with extensively by Muslim scientists and philosophers.

Nearly every major Muslim philosopher whether specifically interested in physics or not devoted a section of his writings to natural philosophy. In traditional doctrine physics is an application of metaphysics. Today a great deal of interest is being shown in their ideas.

### **Mechanics and dynamics**

Following the criticism by the Christian philosopher John Philoponos of Aristotle's theory of motion, Ibn Sina developed the concept of *mayl* (literally inclination, the Latin *inclinatio*) to explain projectile motion, this weakest link in Aristotelian physics. John Philoponos had asserted that the force which caused projectile motion imparts to the moving body a motive force which the Latins called *impetus*, a force which is gradually spent when a body moves in a void so that the movement comes to an end contrary to Aristotle's assertion that there would be no way to stop projectile mo-

tion in a void. Ibn Sina developed this idea for projectile motion encountering resistance such as air and is responsible for the inclination theory which was further elaborated by Abul Barakat al-Baghdadi and which also became known to the scholastics. In his Pisan Dialogue, Galileo makes use of the impetus theory which goes back to John Philoponos and which owes its development to several Muslim figures, specially those already mentioned.

A second important concept which was development by the Muslims is that of momentum, described by Ibn al-Haytham in his *Katib al Manazir* (*Optical Thesaurus* and called *quwwat al-harakah*.)

Yet another Muslim contribution of note is what has become known in the west as 'Avempacean dynamics' since it is associated with the name of the Andalusian philosopher Ibn Bajjah (the Latin Avempace).

The Muslims also made extensive studies of gravity and such men as Ibn Sina, Ibn al-Haytham, Abu'l- Barakat, Fakhr al-Din al-Razi and Ibn Bajjah presented ideas of great interest on the subject. The Muslims knew that the acceleration of a body falling under the force of gravity did not depend upon its mass and also qualitatively that the power of attraction between two bodies increased as their distance decreased and as their mass increased.

The science developed by these Muslim figures always remained bound within the hierarchy of knowledge. The greatest of Muslim physicists like al-Biruni, Ibnal-Haytham and Qutb al-Din al-Shirazi accepted willingly this hierarchy and never attempted to make a quantitative science of the universe central or relegate to the periphery the qualitative science of things which is the most essential precisely because at its highest level it alone can deal with the essence of things.

## Optics

One of the fields of physics to which Muslims made

important contribution is optics, and that mostly thanks to Ibn al-Haytham who in the 4th/10th century established this science upon new foundations and made of it an organized discipline, hence gaining the title of 'father of optics'.

He has been called the most important student of optics between Euclid and Kepler.

His major Opus on the subject, which is also the most important medieval work on optics, is the *Kitab al-Manazir* (*optical Thesaurus*). Not only did this work influence earlier authors such as Witelo, Roger Bacon and Peckham, but its effect is even to be seen in the optical works of Kepler and Newton. His Latin name, Alhazen, was as familiar to the students of optics in the West as that of Euclid.

Ibn al-Haytham was at once philosopher, mathematician and experimentalist. He devised a lathe with the help of which he made lenses for his experiments. He studied the camera mathematically for the first time and made an experiment.

Yet, even Ibn al-Haytham moved within the matrix of Islamic intellectual universe. While performing experiments on light, he never forgot that God is light of the heavens and the earth.

Muslims devoted a great deal of attention beyond everyday commercial needs to the development of the balance (*almizan*) as a scientific instrument to measure the specific weight of various metals, minerals and alloys.

From the time of al Ma'mun, the balance was developed to make use of it to measure specific weights. The most important treatise on the subject is the *mizan al-hikmah* (The Book of the Balance of Wisdom) of *Abd al-Rahman al-Khazini*. Al-Khazini made use of the works of Archimedes as well as his Muslim predecessors such as al-Nayrizi and especially al-Biruni to develop the balance as a refined instrument for the measurement of specific weights.

### **Simple Machines and Mechanical Gadgets:**

Many of the Muslim scientists also devoted themselves

to the study of the laws of simple machines, basing themselves on both the Archimedean and the pseudo-Aristotelian schools, the latter associated with the *Mechanica*. They also knew the *Mechanica* of Hero of Alexandria and the *Pneumatica* of Philo of Byzantium. These and other Greek and Alexandrian works served as the basis for their research in this domain.

As early as the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century Thabit ibn Qurrah wrote his famous work on the lever which has come to be known in the West as *Liber Karatonis* and in which he sought to derive the law of the lever from the principles of dynamics following the pseudo-Aristotelian tradition.

Some treatises described complicated machines which are most like what modern technology has developed during the past two centuries. But it was precisely this kind of technology which the Muslims never took seriously as a possible way of changing their economic life and means of production. The fruits of these treatises was the making of complicated clocks and gadgets as if the Muslims wanted to show that the only safe kind of complicated machine is a toy. For them these machines always recalled the strange inventions of the Alexandrians who made temple doors which opened when the light of the sun shone upon them and achieved other amazing feats that passed into Muslim folklore as well as science.

The Muslim physicists studied various phenomena with the exactness of a physicist in the modern sense but did not secularize the cosmos they were studying because they never lost sight of the totality in order to gain knowledge of the part. They knew that the higher can never be sacrificed for the lower except at the cost of intellectual and spiritual suicide, and they were aware that a certain amount - and *only* a certain amount - of science in the modern sense can be developed within the traditional cosmos provided this science knows its limit and does not expect to 'progress' indefinitely in a domain which is by nature finite.

The 9<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> century Persian Sufi poet 'Abdal-Rahman Jami seemed to have a pre-sentiment of the present day

predicament of man, who in his attempt to gain knowledge of the atom has lost sight of the spiritual empyrean. In one of his Quatrains, he says,

I lost my intellect, soul, religion and heart,

In order to know an atom in perfection.

But no one can know the essence of the atom completely.

How often must I repeat that no one shall know it; then farewell!

Knowledge of Greek philosophy also reached the Muslims with the knowledge of science. The Muslim theologians (Ulema) opposed Greek philosophy because it clashed with the Muslim view of God being the Creator of the universe and the supremacy of Divine will. Its basis and culmination of arguments was intellect. The limitations of human intellect are also admitted by the western scientists and thinkers of twentieth century.

However the theologians (Ulema) did not oppose science. In fact they adopted one branch of science, Medicine. Other branches they did not object to; according to them physics is an application of metaphysics. The things we discuss at intellectual level in metaphysics the scientists observe them in the phenomena of the universe and conduct experiments. The Muslim masses followed Ulema. They rejected Greek philosophy. They accepted Medical science. It had a direct bearing on their lives and was useful. It became popular as *Unani* (Greek medical system) and is popular with that name even today. The researches and discoveries of scientists in other branches did not affect the life of the masses because no technology and inventions appeared as a result of those researches and discoveries. How did it matter for the common man whether scientists found, through their research, that the earth is the centre of the universe or the sun is the centre of the solar system. Even today, when it is common knowledge that the sun does not orbit the earth, and it is the earth which, revolving on its axis, one portion of it comes in front of the sun and there is day in that portion. Then, in the process of revolution on its axis, that portion passes out of the front of the sun, there is

darkness of night in that portion. The other portion comes in front of the sun and it becomes day in that portion. Yet people, including scientists and learned men, talk of the time of sun rise and sun set. The speaker knows and the listener understands that he means the earth revolving on its axis has come to face the sun or has moved away from it. It hardly matters how this phenomenon is described; in simple, short words, sun rise and sunset or in complicated long sentence.

In short they were not interested in the scientific researches and discoveries. Even in the modern times the common man is interested more in the inventions and benefits of technology produced by scientific research than the mathematical equations and the laboratory experiments of the scientists.

The common man was busy, as he is today, in his daily chores. The teachings of the religions mixed with the superstitions he picked up from the society, the common man followed them. The religious teachers preached faith and worship (*Imān* and *Ibādāt*). They also preached righteous deeds (*Amal-e-saleh*) and honest conduct (*Ma'amlat*) with fellow men. The listeners heard the religious scholars with attention, respect and devotion. However, in action they followed the preaching relating to faith and worship as much as they could. But in the matter of righteous deeds and honest conduct with fellow men they chose to be guided by their passions and what appeared to them their interest which was often short sighted and wrong and then they repented when the results of such wrong deeds proved to be harmful.

The masses behave like this even today, both in the East and the West.

The treasures of knowledge and science of ancient civilizations which Europe got through the Muslims as detailed in the preceding pages opened a new chapter of knowledge and science. This time technology also followed scientific research which was not so in the case of researches of Muslim Scientists.

## **The scientists of twentieth century also admit limitation of human intellect**

Fritjof Capra writes: The human mind is capable of two kinds of knowledge or two modes of consciousness, which have often been associated with science and religion, respectively. In the west the intuitive religious type of knowledge is often devalued in favour of rational, scientific knowledge, whereas the traditional Eastern attitude is in general the opposite.

Rational knowledge is derived from the experience we have with objects and events in every day environment. It belongs, to the realm of intellect whose function it is to discriminate, divide, compare and categorise.

The natural world, on the other hand is one of infinite varieties and complexities', a multidimensional world which contains no straight lines or completely regular shapes, where things do not happen in sequence, but all together, a world where - as modern physics tells us - even empty space is curved. It is clear that our abstract system of conceptual thinking can never describe or understand this reality completely. In thinking about the world we are faced with the same kind of problem as the cartographer who tries to cover the curved face of the Earth with a sequence of plain maps. We can only expect an approximate representation of reality from such a procedure, and all rational knowledge is therefore necessarily limited. Because our representation of reality is so much easier to grasp than reality itself, we tend to confuse the two and to take our concepts and symbols for reality".

Stephen Hawking, distinguished scientist of today begins his book 'A Brief History of Time' with the narration of an event:

"A well-known scientist (some say it was Bertrand Russell) once gave a public lecture on astronomy. He described how the earth orbits around the sun and how the sun, in turn, orbits around the centre of a vast collection of stars called our galaxy. At the end of the lecture, a little old

lady at the back of the room got up and said: What you have told us is rubbish. The world is really a flat plate supported on the back of a giant tortoise. The scientist gave a superior smile before replying. What is the tortoise standing on? You're very clever, young man, very clever, said the old lady. But it's turtles all the way down.

Most people would find the picture of our universe as an infinite tower of tortoises rather ridiculous, but why do we think we know better? What do we know about the universe and how do we know it? Where did the universe come from, and where is it going? Did the universe have a beginning, and if so, what happened before then? What is the nature of time? Will it ever come to an end? Recent breakthroughs in physics, made possible in part by fantastic new technologies, suggest answers to some of these long standing questions. Someday these answers may seem as obvious to us as the earth orbiting the sun - or perhaps as ridiculous as a tower of tortoises. Only time (whatever that may be) will tell."

The old popular view that the earth was a flat plate and the centre of the universe was scientifically examined by Aristotle. He contended that the earth was a round sphere rather than a flat plate. However, he thought that the earth was stationary and that the sun, the moon, the planets and the stars moved in circular orbits about the earth. He believed this because he felt, for mystical reasons, that the earth was the centre of the universe, and that circular motion was the most perfect. This idea was elaborated by Ptolemy in the Second century A.D. into a complete cosmological model. It was generally, although not universally accepted. It was adopted by the Christian church as the picture of the universe that was in accordance with scriptures. In 1514 a simpler model was proposed by a Polish priest. (At first, perhaps for fear of being branded a heretic by his church, Copernicus circulated it anonymously.) His idea was that the sun was stationary at center and that the earth and the planets moved in circular, orbits around the sun. Nearly a century passed before this idea was taken seriously. Then



two astronomers, the German, Johannes Kepler, and the Italian Galileo Galeili started publicly to support the Copernican theory. The death blow to Aristotelian/Ptolemaic theory came in 1609. In that year Galileo started observing the night sky with a telescope, which had just been invented. Johannes Kepler also modified Copernicus's theory, suggesting that the planets moved not in circles but in ellipses (an ellipse is an elongated circle). He also thought that the planets moved to orbit the sun by magnetic forces. An explanation was provided in 1687 when Sir Isaac Newton published his 'Philosophia Naturalis Principia Mathematica'. Newton postulated a law of universal gravitation according to which each body in the universe was attracted towards every other body by a force that was stronger, the more massive the bodies and the closer they were to each other. It was this same force that caused objects to fall to the ground.

"The beginning of the universe had, of course been discussed long before this, according to a number of cosmologies and the Jewish/Christian/Muslim tradition, the universe started at a finite, and not very distant time in the past. St. Augustine accepted a date of about 5000 B.C for the creation of the universe according to the Book of Genesis. (It is interesting that this is not so far from the end of the last Ice Age, about 10,000 B.C) which is when archaeologists tell us that civilization really began.)"

Aristotle, and most of the other Greek Philosophers, on the other hand, did not like the idea of creation because it smacked too much of divine intervention. They believed, therefore, that the human race and the world around it existed, and would exist, for ever. The ancients had already considered the argument about the progress described above, and answered it by saying that there had been possibility of floods or other disasters that repeatedly set the human race right back to the beginning of civilization.

When most people believed in an essentially static or unchanging universe, the question whether or not it had a beginning was really one of metaphysics or theology. But in

1929, Edwin Hubble made the landmark observation that wherever you look, distant galaxies are moving rapidly away from us. In other words, the universe is expanding. This means that at earlier times objects would have been closer together. In fact, it seemed that there was a time about ten or twenty thousand million years ago, when they were all exactly the same place and when, therefore, the density of the universe was infinite. This discovery finally brought the question of the beginning of the universe into the realm of science.

An expanding universe does not preclude a creator, but it does place limits on when he might have carried out his job.

It turns out to be very difficult to devise a theory to describe the universe all in one go. Instead, we break the problem up into bits and invent a number of theories.

Today scientists describe the universe in terms of two basic partial theories the general theory of relativity and quantum mechanics. They are the great intellectual achievements of the first half of twentieth century. The general theory of relativity describes the force of gravity and the large scale structure of the universe, that is, the structure on scales from only a few miles to as large as a million million million (1 with twenty four zeros after it) miles of the observable universe. Quantum mechanics, on the other hand, deals with phenomena on extremely small scales, such as a million of a millionth of an inch. Unfortunately, however, these two theories are known to be inconsistent with each other—they cannot both be correct. One of the major endeavours in physics today, is the search for a unified theory that will incorporate them both, a quantum theory of gravity.

The Church had punished Galileo for his postulation or rather support of the views of Copernicus that the earth orbits the sun and not vice versa, as earlier held. The Church had forced Galileo to retract from his position (1609 A.D.) That was when dogmatic pronouncement of the Church was obeyed by the masses and the elite without any questions.

With the awakening and new period of science the hold of the Church was loosened. Even though the Church opposed the new theories but it could not punish the exponents of new theories like they had punished Galileo. Scientists, and also other thinkers dealing with subjects other than physical sciences, were now free to observe and say what they observed, to experiment and to record their experiments.

There were other people who put the result of these researches to the use of mankind. They ventured into practical field of producing machines and gadgets, give these researches forms of industry and commerce. These people were also men of vision. The scientists whose names shine in the book of science and knowledge did not establish any industry or commercial concern, which other people did to reap the fruits of the labours of the scientists. All the same, they made the fruits of labour of scientists of service to humanity at large and ushered in the era of progress and prosperity. These other people were also men of vision who were capable of grasping the significance of the scientists' works. Such people were not found in the Muslim period, nor indeed in the periods of glory of other eastern nations: The Chinese had discovered the gunpowder, but they did not make the gun. They had also invented the compass, but they did not use it for venturing into the vast ocean. They had also invented paper, but the large scale manufacture and use of it was made, centuries later, by Muslims who transmitted it to Europe. The same story is repeated in other ancient civilizations and in the case of Muslims. Their researches and discoveries were not accompanied or followed by inventions which could affect and improve the lives of the people.

Europeans now travelled to the eastern countries for trade. In search of a sea route to India, Columbus reached a new world across the Atlantic Ocean. Soon thereafter, Vasco de Gama of Portugal succeeded in reaching India (1498). Other countries of Europe followed. The East India Company of England joined the race in 1600 A.D. The

governments of the European Countries came forward to support their traders and for establishing empires. The European trading companies and European governments conquered vast areas in the Eastern countries. With their superior technology they overawed the people's mind. The new inventions which had a direct bearing on every body's life: the railway trains and gradually other means of transport, the printing press and means of communication and such other things of course they also brought new diplomacy and made full use of it.

Muslim rulers were defeated on the battlefield and in diplomacy. Society fell into disintegration. The Muslim religious leaders had a long tradition of standing up against tyranny, even against the tyranny of Muslim rulers. They fought against the western invaders too, and lost, with heavy casualties and losses.

The history of decay of the Roman Empire and the period of the Papacy following it in Europe as described in Will Durant's words above was now repeated across the Muslim world of the East. And Muslims, having passed on the light of knowledge and scientific achievements of ancient civilisations of India, China, Greece and their own, fell into darkness. They abdicated their own heritage in favour of Europe. They withdrew into a shell and confirmed the western view that getting free from religion (read dogma) is the way to progress and prosperity by asserting that keeping away from the progress and prosperity of this world is the way to rewards in the hereafter and the eternal bliss.

That shell is bursting now. Muslims are learning science, working technology and trying to catch up with the rest of the world. Of course, they are lagging behind, since they entered the race late. They will have to work harder. This realization has also dawned, hopefully, on the Muslims. A full length survey of the efforts in this direction will stretch this article beyond its limits. It would be better if such a survey is taken up in another article. ■