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OF EAST**

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# The Fragrance of East

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## Religion as Guardian of Life

### S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

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

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

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

**“And then the Record of their deeds shall be placed before them and you will see the guilty full of fear for what it contains, and will say: ‘Woe to us! What a Record is this! It leaves nothing, big or small, but encompasses it.’ They will find their deeds confronting them. Your Lord wrongs no one.”**

(Al-Qur'ān – 18:49)

This verse of the Holy Qur'ān presents a glimpse of the Day of Resurrection. When the Book of Record will be placed before those who used to reject the Truth and did not believe in the Day of Judgement, they will find that this Book of Record has left nothing: every big or small of his deeds has found place therein. The two exclamatory utterances of theirs: 'Woe to us!' and 'What a Record is this!' are enough to present to the world their extreme sense of astonishment and embarrassment. The verse says that they will stand before the Lord all full of fear for what the Book of Record contains.

The entire edifice of Islam is based on the concept of truth and justice. Allah has blessed us with a system of life that is based on truth and justice. Then how can He do wrong with His creatures? That is why the Holy Qur'ān declares that the Lord wrongs no one.

The judgements Allah will deliver in the Day of Judgement, blessing His believers with blissful seats in the Paradise or condemning unbelievers in the Fire of Hell, will all be based on truth and justice and nothing else. ■

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

**Anas ibn Malik reports that hardly did the Holy Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) address us without saying: “There is no Iman in him who cannot hold a trust and no religion for him who does not keep his promise.”**

(Baihaqi)

The Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) used to inculcate the very spirit of Islam in his Companions in a very effective manner. This hadith records one such Prophetic teaching. The hadith brings into light two salient features of Islamic faith – holding a trust and keeping a promise. A person who willingly and knowingly fails to hold a trust or keep a promise is a grave sinner rather a hypocrite in the eyes of Allah.

When a person is entrusted with some money, secret or power, he is expected to hold it fast. And, if he fails to do so, it is not that he is merely shattering someone's expectations; in fact, it is his lack of faith, at least to some degree, that manifests itself in his mis(deed). Similarly, when a person fails to keep a promise, it is a matter of his or her Iman.

What really lurks behind a breach of trust or promise is to cheat one's fellow beings. In doing so, one fails to keep in view the requirements of piety and sense of accountability. That is why the Blessed Messenger used to warn his Companions and by extension all his followers against the consequences of not holding these traits. ■

## STATUS OF WOMEN IN ISLAM

In a recent study it is found that of the thousands of white Britons embracing Islam every year, most are thought to be professionally successful, independent minded women. Islam appears to hold a strange fascination for white British women who are converting to it in large numbers. The study further reveals that of an estimated 50,000 or so white Britons who convert to Islam every year, some two-thirds are thought to be women. Most of them are independent career women-bankers, doctors, broadcasters- who know what they are doing, and often do so in the face of opposition from family and friends. Study further says that "High Profile" converts include Lauren Booth, sister in law of former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, well known journalist Yvonre Ridley and MTV presenter Kristiane Backer.

Of late Muslim women observing their prescribed rules and practices have been a target of ridicule. Ismail Adam Patel, a well known Islamic Scholar, in his book Islam The Choice of thinking women writes that there is no doubt that the issue of the status of women in Islam is among the most abused and most worn out propaganda tool in the hands of the Islamaphobe lobby world wide. Their beverage of abuse against Islam on this score has resulted in great confusion in the minds of people, including unfortunately some Muslims. The unreasonable and sometimes paranoiac extent to which they have stooped to hype up public opinion against Islamic Hijab, a symbol of modesty and dignity in Muslim female garb, can be understood from the caption of a photograph in one weekly journal of International circulation which carries the photograph of a Muslim women

donning a veil as 'The veiled threat of Islam'.

Prior to the advent of Islam, a cursory view of the past history shows that women were considered little more than commodities, object of desire to be bought and sold like livestock. Greek and Roman Civilization, Judaism, Hinduism, Christianity and others do not offer respectable place to women. Even Arabian in pre Islamic days treated women more shabbily. There it was customary for infant girls to be buried alive at birth. Arabs treated women with contempt.

In Islam both the sexes have human rights and duties to an equal degree, and the rewards of the Hereafter are available to men and women alike. Whereas women of other communities have struggled hard to win over some privileges Islam has granted them without asking: Holy Quran Says:

"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 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."

[al-Ahzab 33:35] ■

**S.A.**

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## True Followers of the Islamic Faith

-S.Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

*Among the believers are men who are true to their covenant with Allah. Of them some have fulfilled their obligations and some of them are still waiting, but they have never changed in the least.*

(al-Ahzab 33:23)

The above Qur'anic verse captures the essence of the believers' covenant with Allah. It signifies the Islamic movement, the call to truth and the believers' unwavering and single-minded commitment to Islam. Implicit in it is also the assertion that the believers are ever ready to sacrifice all that they have for this cause. Reading this one recalls the history of Islam, especially of the early days.

This verse stands out as a glowing tribute to the accomplishments of those who strove for the cause of Islam. For it makes a pointed reference to the believers' covenant and presents a role model for Muslims until the Last Day. It spells out the role of Muslims, their obligations to their Lord, and their assignments. One learns as to what entitles believers to receive divine bounties and what makes their deeds acceptable in His sight. The verse

further offers a concise definition of Islam to believers, as it reminds them of their covenant with Allah.

Among the many millions of Muslims, some are specified in the above verse as being believers with firm resolve. This refers to such pious and noble souls who firmly believe in Allah's promise and who display their total commitment in His cause. Praise is heaped on them for their discharging their obligations to Allah. Then mention is made of those among them who have completed their appointed term and returned to Allah. They will be lavishly rewarded. Their reward in the Next Life will be unending. Those still alive look forward to divine rewards and are true to their covenant. They have not changed their commitment in any degree.

As already stated, the verse under study provides a concise definition of Islam. Early Muslims followed this standard. Accordingly it presents the role model valid until the Last Day. Allah sanctioned this example. Islam does not consist of the mere verbal uttering of its credal statement. One reciting it will, no doubt, be taken as a Muslim. For no one can

contest his faith. We are bound to love and respect everyone who recites Islam's credal statement. Yet Islam goes far beyond this. A Muslim born as a Muslim must follow all the Islamic rituals. More important, however, is his commitment to his covenant with Allah. The pledge is that a Muslim will lead his whole life in accordance with Allah's commands. For He is the Creator and Sustainer of all, able to benefit and harm' everyone. Only He can honour or disgrace someone. He does whatever He wills and is the Supreme Master.

Islam's credal statement: "There is no god besides Allah" also represents a pledge. One uttering it testifies, both in word and deed, that Allah alone is the Creator and Regulator of the whole universe. All creation and commands are His. He has not abandoned the universe after having created it. Nor has He delegated authority to anyone. Man is asked to try his best and make the most of the opportunities available to him. He may utilise properly or abuse the resources put at his disposal. Allah is the Absolute Master of all that exists. Not a leaf falls without His leave. Nor can anyone move an inch unless He approves it. No change is admissible without His sanction. One's fate cannot be altered. Nor can the destiny of a

people undergo any change unless He decides so.

Islam is essentially a covenant. Muslims are obliged to fulfill it. We must take Allah as the Creator and Regulator of this universe. We must recognise only Him as the Master of the universe. We must concede that our fate is decided by Him in that He alone can confer benefits or inflict loss upon us. We must vow not to surrender to anyone other than Him. Nor should we invoke anyone besides Him for meeting our needs.

As already indicated, Islam is synonymous with a pledge. It is to be seen how many of us are true to this pledge, for men are liable to forget their oaths. We must remind ourselves of the glorious examples of the Prophet's Companions. After professing Islam they cared little about their lives. Nor did they stick to false notions of honour and glory. They paid no heed to the praise or criticism of fellow human beings. Their only concern was their loyalty to Islam.

Muslims must appreciate this truth, especially in our turbulent times. Allah has blessed us with the bounty of Islam. He has done us an immense favour. Our verbal profession of Islam is meaningless. We may bear Muslim names and our way of life may contain some Islamic elements. We may



occasionally visit the mosque. Our main duty as believers, nonetheless, is to be true to our pledge to Allah. As Muslims we should pose a challenge to our surroundings. In our beliefs, acts of worship, conduct, dealings, way of life, social relations, marital ties, family and neighbourhood relationships and in every human activity we must behave as Muslims. Our commitment must be to divine laws. In every respect we should be governed by Allah's commands, even if this entails the loss of all of our belongings, assets and earnings, reducing us to utter destitution. Islam has nothing in common with nationalism. Nor is it specific to any particular culture. Islam does not recognise the nominal acceptance of some people of its faith. Regrettably this is the grim reality today.

Essentially, Islam is a covenant with Allah made publicly by believers. The only thing we find decisive and appealing is that which is endorsed by Allah and His Messenger. We are bound to the Prophet Muhammad's elucidation of faith. We are committed to the will of Allah and of His Messenger. By the same token, we must emulate the Prophet's role model. We should always be mentally prepared for the loss of our property and lives. At times our loyalty to Islam

may land us in serious trouble. Conditions vary from one country to another. Yet Muslims should adhere fast and firm to their faith. We may be treated as disloyal citizens in a Godless country, with the doors to education and employment shut on us. Economic avenues may be denied to us. Yet even in the face of such persecution we must act only on the commands of Allah and His Messenger.

Allah brands as true believers among Muslims those who are true to their covenant. The Qur'an speaks highly of the truthful people. They draw accolade for their sincere and total commitment, free from any hypocrisy. Allah the Most Honourable bestows a high rank upon such. It is the highest honour imaginable for man. Overjoyed at this exaltation, these true believers had no hesitation in giving away their belongings and sacrificing their lives for His sake. They displayed their sincerity to their covenant and did not budge by even an inch.

On studying the condition of today's Muslims let us ascertain how faithful they are to their covenant. Muslims today are concerned only about their petty, material interests, their worldly gains and losses, their political and economic pursuits, their pecuniary prospects, their safety and

security and their status in public life. Such insubstantial things are dear to them. Allah attaches no importance to these. The Qur'an talks about true believers, some of whom have passed away. They attained martyrdom, shedding every drop of their blood in Allah's cause. Some true believers are alive amongst us today. Allah has not ordained their death. Notwithstanding their active participation in *Jihad* and conquest some were not martyred. Take the example of Khalid ibn Walid. He fought valiantly in numerous battles. He led the Muslim army to victory in many encounters. Yet Allah let him survive. Some no doubt, were killed in His way as their term had come to an end. Some attained martyrdom on the battleground while others breathed their last in their homes. Their devotion to *Da'wah* was total, as they preached Islam wherever they went, be it their home town or battleground. They spent their lives, looking forward to their return to Allah. There was not the slightest shift in their devotion to Allah and Islam.

The Qur'anic passage cited above provides the role model for all of us. If I am asked, about a code of conduct and a way of life for, Muslims I will definitely prescribe the same role model which is outlined in this passage.

Islam does not stand for a token professing of faith. Leading one's life like a Muslim does not represent Islam either. Rather, Islam signifies our covenant with Allah Who is Omnipresent, All Hearing, Who knows the Unseen and is the Creator of all the worlds. As Muslims we are obliged to prefer the *Shari'ah* to local customs. We must however exercise self-restraint in practising the *Shari'ah*. *Shari'ah* commands should guide us in every respect. Allah confers the title of "true believers" on the Companions and some Muslims of the early days. Yet this designation is valid for all times. Whoever is true to the covenant and discharges his obligations towards Allah may be taken as a "true believer". This is the only way out for us. True believers should be our role models and our understanding of Islam must be: "There is no god besides Allah." We are bound to place a premium on all the teachings of the Qur'an and the Messenger, and we should turn to Him alone for any gain or loss.

Islam originated from Allah and His Messenger. It encompasses articles of faith, acts of worship, marriage and burial rituals, inheritance, marital ties and links with neighbours. It is an all-embracing faith. ■

## Prophet's Mission and Message

-S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi

All the Prophets who were raised, right from Hazrat Adam (AS) up to Hazrat Mohammad (SAW), strictly enjoined the renunciation of *Shirk* and adoption of *Tauheed*, because, it is Allah Almighty who is the Creator of the entire universe. It is He who has furnished the universe with all kinds of goods that might be needed. It is He who has made these goods fully usable by, and easily available to, man as a result of which every one draws mamum benefits from them throughout all his or her life and fulfils his/her needs. In fact the life of man itself is sustained by these very goods and their usability and availability. How is it, then, if the man forgets His Magnanimity and, abandoning Him, adopts some odd objects lying hither thither which he fancies can benefit him or pose a threat of causing some harm to him and starts saying: we are helped by so-and-so, our needs are fulfilled by so-and-so and such and such object is magnanimous to us? How is it then that the man attributes the Magnanimity conferred exclusively by his Creator and Master, Allah Almighty, on him to others and asks them for fulfillment of his requirements and, abandoning his real Benefactor who is the greatest of all the benefactors and grants all kinds of beneficence, calls other petty objects his benefactor and master? How will, quite obviously, Allah Almighty, who has created each and everything and bestowed man with each and everything and continues to do so incessantly, allow all that to be perpetrated and be not angry? Hence it is the *Shirk* which Allah Almighty gets extremely displeased with. And that is something absolutely realistic, sensible and just.

That is why all the Prophets and reformers interdicted, first of all and most of all, the *Shirk*. Thereafter and along with it, they kept calling for the removal of the rot, whatever and wherever it could have got generated in the human character and morals. For example, if there was in some populace, along with the *Shirk*, some sexual depravity, as was the case with the people of Lut (AS), or some other kind of malpractices were there in vogue amidst the peoples, their Prophets prohibited them from them. In some populace, along with the *Shirk*, the practice of making pilferage while measuring and weighing was rampant as was the case with the people of Madiyan. Their Prophet prohibited his people from doing that. In some populace, along with the *Shirk*, the hauteur and the habit of harrowing the weaker sections was in vogue as was the case with Fira'un's folks of Egypt. There Hazrat Musa (AS) was made the Prophet. He tried hard to make Firaun see the reason and put the fright of retribution from Allah in him and forbade him to indulge in *Shirk* and tyranny. In some habitations, a fondness, along with *Shirk*, for persecuting the weak and usurping the rights of others had taken root. The Prophet there prevented them from doing that, too. Likewise, whatever other vices, along with the *Shirk*, were there in the peoples, their respective Prophets restrained them from all these vices, too, along-with giving the call to adopt *Tauheed* (the Faith in Unity and Oneness of Allah) in its unassimilated form: that is to worship Allah Almighty alone who is sole Sustainer of the entire universe and all the creatures therein. ■

## Holy Qur'an and the Botanical World

-Mohammed Shihabuddin Nadwi

### Confirmation of Unity of God, Prophethood and Resurrection Day by Plants

The plants occupy a very special position among all the creations of the Almighty, because without them neither men nor animals can survive. Not only our food but many other requirements of life are met by them. To cite a few, cereals, daals, vegetables, fruits, dry fruits and spices are all obtained from the plants. Various medicines are extracted from a vast number of herbs. In addition trees constitute a source for fuel, coal, furniture, ropes, baskets and wood for construction purposes. Thus the whole life appears to depend on the plant world alone. A large number of creations are spread all around us and men pass by them casting only a cursory glance never caring to learn anything from them.

### Review of Human Food

Almighty God has created this material world in a specific way so that man can learn to reflect on the various natural phenomena and recognise the Master Creator and shun the path of rebellion. Thus man has been repeatedly urged to look at and study the various food articles that are provided to him by surprisingly novel and miraculous methods.

*Then let man look at his food, That  
We pour forth water in abundance..  
And We split the earth in clefts, And  
produce therein corn, And grapes*

*(Barsion) clover plants (i.e. green fodder for the cattle), And olives and dates, And gardens dense with many trees, And fruits and herbage,-For enjoyment and convenience to you and your cattle.*

(Abas:24-32)

In these verses man has been directed to reflect on the scheme of the production of grains and fruits and to study the role and the effect of the earth, water (and the sun) in their growth. Also to observe how a dry seed on being sowed into the earth turns into cereals and fruits through the combined effort of 'all powers' of the earth and the sky and serves as food for man and animals alike. Even if one of these factors fail to perform its action, then all men and animals will go starving.

The holy Qur' an has urged man at several places to study the various aspects of the plant life with respect to the effective factors that help their growth. Such of these factors that lead to establish the unity of the eternal creator and the happening of the Doomsday, as well as certain concealed facts about the plants, are described in detail. These facts attain invaluable significance in this scientific era.

### Similarities between Animals and Plants

Scientifically the plants are living beings. They resemble the animals in many ways. For example:

1. Both animals and plants are composed of agglomerations of tiny cells, which contain dynamic matter called Protoplasm.
2. The process of growth continually takes place in both of them. It continues till a certain period and thereafter deterioration starts.
3. Respiration is another common feature. The plants also breathe as do the animals. But there is one basic difference. The animals breathe in oxygen and breathe out carbon dioxide, while the plants absorb carbon dioxide and expel oxygen. This accounts for the balancing of oxygen content in nature. Otherwise all animals inclusive of human beings would cease to exist. This is a laudable characteristic of the providence of God.
4. Both of them are endowed with feelings and perception. They do perceive happiness and sorrow. The famous Indian scientist Sir Jagdish Chandra Bose had baffled the world in this regard by performing certain experiments.
5. The plants also consume food as do the animals. However the food of the plants is quite simple. They take in water and some simple minerals. On the other hand animals generally go in for the ripe or cooked food.
6. Like animals, the plants also reproduce. The difference is while the animals marry directly, the plants resort to an indirect procedure. This is a very interesting chapter of the plant life. Their children are the seeds, grains or fruits, which are given rise

to by the plants. If this process were not to be practised by the plants, then there was a possibility of the end of human and animal life. That is why the Qur'an asserts:

*Behold, what is in the heavens and on earth.*

(Yunus: 101)

### ***Order and Discipline in the World of Plants***

All the above characteristics have been checked and proved through observation and experiments. About four lakh species of plants, herbs etc. exist in this world which differ in their individual characteristics. A high order prevails in them. Every species has retained these characteristics for thousands of the years of their existence. This kind of highly developed discipline is not possible if there were no one to manage and look after it. Logically the presence of an omniscient and omnipotent being with extraordinary powers of creation has to be accepted and acknowledged. He is the power who is controlling and managing this whole system. But the materialists have coined the theory of 'evolution' to represent such a nice and unblemished management. This concept fails to justify the providential expression and also fails to solve many mysteries of the world rationally. So it becomes imminent to accept the presence of a God. The call for inferring just and right conclusions from the study of the plants is thus given in the Book for this purpose alone.

### ***Divine Manifestations through Nature***

Certain verses describing the beauty, freshness and splendour of the world of plants are taken as convincing

arguments to prove the existence of the God:

*And the earth! We have spread (it) out (in circular shape) and set thereon mountains standing firm, and produced therein (colourful) pairs (of buds, flowers and fruits) of beautiful growth. An insight and a Reminder for every slave turning to Allah.*

(Qaf: 7-8)

The exquisite beauty and attraction that are found in various species of trees, plants and shrubs testify to the excellent craftsmanship of highly innovative and perfect creator. The incomparable blend of colours visible in the petals, leaves and buds will simply enthrall and enthuse human mind and herald the existence of a creator par excellence. Were there no such master craftsman, there could have not been any such planned splash of colours and beauty in the plant world. Even if one views with a critical eye, one can never find any disparity or defect.

#### **Display of Matrimony among Plants**

The most stupendous phenomenon in the plants is the display of matrimony among them. The male and female classification also exists much in the same way as it does among the animals. There is ample reference to this aspect in the holy Qur'an, e.g:

*... and (We) have sent down water from the sky. And We have brought forth with it (from the earth) braces of vegetation.*

(Taha: 53)

*Glory be to Him Who has created all the pairs of that what the earth produces as well as of their own*

*(human) kind (male and female) and of that which they know not.*

(Yasin: 36)

This divine revelation proves the existence of male and female among the plants as seen in the case of human beings. It further asserts that similar phenomenon is exhibited among many other systems, which are not known to man as such.

#### **Presence of Omniscient God**

The verse from chapter Yasin quoted above indicates two significant facts: firstly the Creator Who has framed the all-pervading laws is supreme and all powerful. Secondly, He is omniscient i.e. He has full knowledge of all the secrets of all His creations. On this account alone He has already revealed information about the creations and their functioning. It is obvious that the presence of male and female parts in the plants is a recent discovery. The early man had no knowledge of it. And now when one comes to know of this fact from Qur'anic text that was revealed centuries ago, one has to believe that there is an omniscient being who possesses complete knowledge of the intricacies and the general principles of everything found in this universe. And that this being is the God.

#### **Scientific Corroboration of Monotheism, Prophethood and Doomsday**

Two other realities are to be recognised. That the holy Qur'an is such an authentic and superior revelation that it attains the status of being the guardian of the manifestations of nature. Secondly, the holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH), through whom this word of God

has been revealed, was the most true and trustworthy personality. These universal truths prove the validity of monotheism, prophet hood and the resurrection day.

**Testimony of the Qur'an and the Worlds**

A review of the divine manifestations confirms the presence of an omnipotent being while the study of the holy Qur'an points out to an omniscient being. When both these are collaborated it affirms that He who has created this colorful universe has also revealed this unquestionable Book. These two thus will comprise the source for faith and knowledge. The Qur'an says:

*Allah created the heavens and the earth with truth. Verily! Therein is surely a Sign for the believers!*

(Ankabut: 44)

Both Qur'an and universe thus testify each other. Even the man is continually confirming the claims of the Qur'an through his experimentation and research. Thus far not a single claim of this book of wisdom has been proved wrong or baseless and no one can do so till last. This is the word of God Who is the cherisher of the worlds. Not a single fallacy can ever find a place in it.

**Sex in Plants**

*Today more than 1.25 million different species, two thirds animal and one third plant, are known.*

The methods of sexual intercourse among the animals and plants are varied. However in every species the female has been endowed with beauty so as to attract the male of the species. Among plants this function is carried through the flowers. Hence the flowers are so attractive and

fascinating. There are even male and female flowers among them. The process of fertilisation does not take place directly. Various types of insects, birds, moths, butterflies and bees act as the agents. Although they reach the flowers in search of the nectar they will be unknowingly performing a great job. As they alight on the flowers, the pollen grains stick to their legs. And when they move from flower to flower, these pollen grains are transferred on to the stigma of the flowers, reach the ovaries and fertilisation takes place. This is the marvelous way in which the providence is helping the process of feeding the creatures.

*Approximately 250,000 species of angiosperms (flowering plants) are known to biologists.*

Fruits result in them through various processes. Thus men and animals get their food by the marital intercourse among the plants. If this sexual process does not take place in the plants, men have to go starving! How wonderful is the system of providing food for men! Instead of being grateful to the Almighty for this, man is practising either heresy or pantheism and thus denying His power of looking after all His creations.

*O mankind! Remember the grace of Allah to you! Is there any creator other than Allah who provides for You from the sky and the earth?*

(Fatir: 3)

**Manifestations of the Creator**

Two more facts must be kept in mind that go to prove the existence of God. First of these refers to the exclusive discipline that has been formulated by the Creator for each of the approximately

twelve lakhs of the living species. And according to which each of the species has been provided with such of the sexual organs that fit into each pair. Obviously these specific parts and rules are not the outcome of the 'evolutionary' process but are the functions set definitely to each of them by Him to exhibit the powers of creativity and sustenance. Naturally it is humanly impossible to think of creating and providing or even evolving such appropriate parts in the case of millions of the living creatures. On this count alone the variety of species as well as the prevalent marital phenomenon among them speaks of the One Creator and His unparallel and unique Powers. This phenomenon itself leads to knowing and reaching the Almighty.

*Glory be to Him Who has created all the pairs of that what the earth produces.*

(Yasin: 36)

*And of everything We have created pairs that you may remember (the grace of Allah). So flee to Allah. Verily I am a plain warner to you from Him.*

(Zariyat: 49-50)

All this is such a unique manifestation that its acknowledgment directly leads to the recognition and acceptance of the Creator God. Any refutation may lead to doubting the sanity and sagacity.

### **Expression of Chastity by Plants**

More unique is the other fact. It is actually the last nail in the coffin of materialism. In spite of the very large number of species and a universal system guiding the marital functioning among the plants, there does not exist any disorder,

laxity or free-lancing among them. Mating does not take place between two different species at all. Only the pollens of the particular species fertilise together. This evidently proves that an expert hand or a being is controlling, guiding and supervising the destiny and life of the millions of plants. Otherwise if one species were to be fertilised by an entirely different species, what a havoc would have been created! Guava would have grown on mango trees, oranges on pomegranate, bananas on papaya or jasmine on roses!! The absence of such illegitimate seedlings in the plant world clearly indicates that the plant families are quite chaste. Even if the pollen grains of alien species were to reach the ovaries, they will be rejected outright and there will be no chance of fertilisation whatsoever.

For understanding this aspect, let us turn to botany. The process of fructification in plants takes place through their flowers. And this is not a direct process. It is indirectly carried through the medium of insects, bees, butterflies, moths, wind etc. While sucking the nectar from the flowers, the pollens attach themselves to the legs or wings of these tiny insects. And when they move to other flowers, the pollens are deposited on the stigma of other flowers and reach the ovaries. This process is termed as 'Pollination'. Just imagine a park. All around are flowers blooming colourfully and scattering sweet fragrances. As the pollinating agents move freely sucking the sweet nectar from flower to flower, they freely deposit the sticking pollens on various stigmas. Very likely pollens of different species are also deposited along



with those of the same species. However when they reach the ovaries only the pollens of the same species are allowed to enter in and fertilise. Those of different species are outright rejected. No flower worth the species ever commits the blunder of permitting these to enter in. Can any material theory offer a convincing proof for this happening? Can this mystery be solved without accepting the presence of an absolute administrative power? If there were no such power what would have prevented a guava fruit from appearing on a mango tree? This is a question to be solved by the scientists of the world! The holy Qur'an not only describes the facts but also awards a direction for solving such problems so that man can arrive at facts.

#### **A Qur'anic Revelation**

The study of this aspect of the plant life indicates that their sexual urges are primarily chaste. They do not succumb to orgy or promiscuity. That is why the Qur'an has awarded them with a certificate of 'chastity' and this has been confirmed by the recent researches.

*... And We send down rain from the sky and We cause growth of various kinds of chaste male and female (flowers and plants) therein.*

(Luqman: 10)

*Do they not observe the earth, how much of every kind of chaste male and female (flowers and plants) We cause to grow therein.*

(Shoara: 7)

Mark that the Qur'an has used the terms *zoujun kareem* while referring to this aspect of plants. The word *zouj* refers to either a male or a female member of the

pair. When *zoujain* is used it refers to both the members of the pair who are bound by matrimonial bondage. This is the exact meaning of the term. Figuratively it may refer to 'a kind' of anything also. Thus the Qur'an declares:

*In them (both), will be every kind of fruit in pairs.*

(Rahman: 52)

Earlier only the metaphorical meaning of this word was banked upon. But in the present context, the recent researches have helped us to rely on the real meaning of this word. Thus in accordance with the above verses :the Almighty has considered this aspect as His Own manifestation.

#### **Qur'an as Guardian of Secrets of Nature**

There are innumerable secrets that have been described in the Book centuries ago so that men may be reminded of the divine manifestations at the proper time. This fact is said as under:

*Say: 'It (this Qur'an) has been sent down by Him Who knows the secrets of the heavens and the earth ...*

(Furqan: 6)

Not merely plants but each and every thing created by Him, living or non-living, is existing or growing or changing under his direct supervision and guidance. Nothing is free to act on his own except the man who enjoys the right of discriminating between good and evil through exercising the freedom of reflection and action under *Shariah* and moral restrictions.

*Allah is the Creator of all things and He is the Guardian over all things.*

(Zumar: 62)

*... Nay, to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth and all surrender to him.*

(Baqara: 116)

### ***Providential Proofs and Divine Planning***

The description of the features of the plant life is present in the holy Qur'an in a unique way. Man has been advised to reflect scientifically over these features and to arrive at the principles behind them. It has also been pointed out that for those who do observe keenly there are several signs of His powers of providing sustenance and growth opportunities to them.

*Look at their fruits (of each tree) when they begin to bear fruits, and the ripeness thereof. Verily! In these things there are Signs for people who believe.*

(An' am: 99)

Obviously such a call for reflection could come forth from one who has a full control over the universe planned so meticulously by Him alone. This is the reason why definite facts are being unfolded in accordance with a plan, and as recorded in the holy Qur'an. And man is continuously confirming them through his researches and findings. Hence this is not any insignificant event. From philosophical point of view this is a unique and great event that demands the attention of the whole humanity, particularly because there is nothing comparable to it in the whole of literary world. This aspect becomes more significant because written proofs from the scientific world are certifying the claims every time. And there is no single instance where the claims have either turned

fallacious or in contravention to the established facts.

In conclusion it can be said that the holy Qur'an is that last divine revelation which is the most true and incontrovertible word of God. Not only has it stood the tests of most modern scientific developments but also been guiding the human thought and experimentation to newer paths of knowledge and philosophy.

### ***Great and Eternal Scripture***

Undoubtedly a deep study and exploration of the botanical world will lead to confirming the presence of a dynamic being of transcendental powers. Otherwise there could not have been such exemplary discipline, planning, elegance and deep thought in the botanical world. This survey will strengthen our Faith. In fact a genuine scientist can be a *truemominand* theist. This is possible when knowledge and faith or religion and science are coordinated. Any bifurcation between them may play havoc. The society that demarcates the two will never prosper and progress.

The holy Qur'an has guided the mankind all through the times in providing a middle course which is well balanced and which directs mankind to explore the universe reflecting on the curious phenomena that has been administering it so efficiently. The greatest marvel of the Book is that its guidance is eternal and it meets the demands of all times till the Doomsday quite convincingly and in confirmation with the psyche of the times. A holy Tradition declares:

*The marvels of the Qur'an will never end.* ■

## Education and Culture

-S. Habibul Haq Nadwi

Education bears relation to the social system in which and for which it is carried out. It is only within a particular social system that a system of education has any meaning. Before considering how to educate, it is good to be clear as to the sort of result we wish to achieve. We must have some conception of the kind of person we wish to produce. Modern education is losing sight of the Divine purpose of education because we have vague ideas about the kind of society God wishes us to be.

If we have a clear idea of a society, then we have a right to evolve what is useful for the development and maintenance of that society and discourage what is obnoxious and destructive. For example, Russian Communism is an ideology or a society. The elite of this society educate their children in the tenets of their ideology, and propagate their social system through their educational institutions. Their educational policy aims at the propagation of communist system of life and culture.

'The Education we desire for our children:' says, Mr. Bertrand Russell in his book 'On Education: must depend upon our ideals of human character, and our hopes as to the part

they are to play in the community. A pacifist will never desire for his children the education which seems good to a militarist, the educational outlook of a communist will not be the same as that of an individualist. To come to a more fundamental cleavage, there can be no agreement between those who regard education as a means of instilling certain definite beliefs and those who think that it should produce the power of independent judgement."

Education is, no doubt the process by which the community attempts to pass on all its members its culture. Culture is composed of various elements. It runs from rudimentary knowledge to the interpretation of the universe, service to humanity, sense of moral discipline, tolerance and forbearance, equality of treatment and opportunities, patronage of learning, freedom of thought and action, universal brotherhood, and other benefits of religion constitute a sound and healthy culture.

### Religion and Culture

Culture consists of ideas and ideals. It is based on the attitude of the group or class of the society towards the philosophy of life, which may be either secular or religious. All historic

cultures have deep relations and intimacy with religion. No great culture has spread or developed without religion.

The main cultural tradition of Europe has been that of the church of Rome. Western tradition is drawn from Latin which is the language of Rome. The maintenance of English culture, therefore, is contingent upon the cultural state of Latin Europe. So, too, is the case with other great cultures of the world, i.e. Buddhism, Judaism and Islam. They have their own distinctive cultures. The state of these cultures also depends upon the state of their religions.

### **Definition of Culture**

Culture has been variously defined. In August 1955, the text of the draft covenant for the UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation) was published. The purpose of this organisation was stated in Article 1, and was defined as "to develop and maintain mutual, understanding and an appreciation of Life and Culture, the arts, the humanities, and the sciences of the people of the world, as a basis for collective international organisation and world peace."

Here, the words, "appreciation of life and culture" are significant. This appreciation may, of course, vary according to the variation of the

philosophy or interpretation of life. There are only two hypotheses about life: the religious and the secular. According to religion, no sphere of life is beyond the control of moral values. Life and culture, arts, humanities and sciences all are appreciated in an ethical society, provided they fulfil the will of God. The theory of education is also governed by the same law. Thus the problem becomes a religious one. But it does not mean that education should be confined to the priesthood or to the higher strata of society. It simply means that the whole educational system should be suited to the genius of a particular culture, in which and for which education is carried out.

Islamic culture has a definite genius and a particular tendency. Thus the educational system of Islamic society should also be compatible to its own temperament. In a message to the "All Pakistan Educational Conference held in Karachi on November 27, 1947, Qaid-i-A'zam Muhammad 'Ali Jinnah said:

"We must earnestly tackle this question (education) and bring our educational policy and programme on the lines suited to the genius of our Muslim people consonant with our history and culture."

In an address at the Islamia College for women, he again said:

“Many impurities and un-Islamic things have crept into Islamic society and it is the task of the Muslim educational institutions to educate their children on right lines, with a view to enabling them to live the Islamic life...

These statements sufficiently elaborate on the whole educational policy of a Muslim society. But what this Muslim society essentially is needs further clarification.

### **Islamic Culture:**

Culture, as aforesaid, permeates the life of the individual as well as of society. It includes, on the one hand, the whole of man's material civilization, and on the other, his entire spiritual civilization. In this sense it includes not only food, clothes, houses, machines and means of communication and transport, but also religion, morality, law, philosophy, arts, science, government and education.

Some critics have questioned the existence of Islamic culture, or regarded it as the manifestation of Greek and Roman cultures or their renovation. Islamic culture, no doubt, has been influenced in many ways by other cultures. But it does not mean that it has no distinctive basis. If culture consists of ideas and ideals, as mentioned above, then Islamic culture is original and it owes its existence

neither to Greco-Roman traditions, nor to the cultural heritage of Iran or India. The edifice of Islamic culture is raised on the concept of 'Taw'hid', that God alone can be the object of submission and worship. It lays stress on the fact that man has both body and soul which need proper care and guidance for their development. The task of Islamic culture, therefore, is to harmonise the spiritual and material ideas of man. It does not emphasise only one at the cost of the other, as is happening with the contemporary culture.

“The culture of Islam, says Marmaduke Pickthal “aimed not at beautifying and refining the accessories of human life. It aimed at beautifying and exalting human life itself...”

Professor Gibb had to acknowledge:

“Islam is indeed much more than a system of theology. It is a complete civilization. It includes a whole of complex culture... a culture with distinctive features in political, social and economic structure, in its conception of law, in ethical outlook, intellectual tendencies, habits of thought and action...”

Islamic culture, therefore, differs in spirit with other cultures of the world and this difference leads to

a different educational system in an Islamic society or republic, a system consonant with the genius of Muslim people. Any other culture imposed on Muslim nation will result in utter social and political chaos, as is happening today in most of the Muslim countries, where alien cultures enjoy greater ascendancy than a culture of their own. Even in the past such cultural anarchy had enveloped the souls of Muslims in the Islamic lands under the colonialists.

A cursory glance at the whole cultural and educational policy of the British in India reveals the fact that their policy was never designed to elevate or sublimate the native culture. On the contrary, their policy was destined to raise the edifice of western culture on the ruins of the cultural traditions of the Muslims. The British had devised the system of education to suit their own ends and to create a class of bureaucrats to fit in the administrative hierarchy and to serve as the machinery of their regime.

The famous (1) "Educational Dispatch" (1854), (2) The Report of the Hunter Commission" (1882). (3) The University Act (1904), (4) The Establishment of the Department of Education (1910), (5) The Sadler Commission (1919), (6) The Advisory Board of Education (1920) and (7) the Inter-University Board of India (1925)

- all were primarily designed to advocate the greater official control on education, so that the minds could be prepared for the acceptance of Western culture.

Such efforts of the British Government gave rise to the suspicion that under the pretext of educational development and reform, the Government was handing over the control of Universities to European officials and missionaries with a view to obliterating oriental faith and culture.

This policy of the British Government created great unrest in India. Revivalist movements launched their activities in the country. Muslims, after the downfall of the Mughals, had suffered despair and frustration which had bred inactivity and demoralization. Shah Wali Allah (at Delhi 1703), the reformer, tried to deepen the religious consciousness of Muslims. He gave stimulus to the religious and cultural reforms of the Muslims in India. 'Allama Iqbal, Hali and Akbar, also endeavoured to make progress on an integral principle of Islamic life. They gave shape, purpose and direction to the political and ideological urges of the Muslims. They carried on the torch, lighted in the eighteenth century by Shah Wali Allah, into the heart of the twentieth century, and awoke the slumbering souls.

**Purpose and definition of Education**

From Plato down to the present time, education has variously been interpreted and defined. There is, no doubt, that the entire structure of society depends on the type of education we impart to the younger generation. Education is not a means of recording information or getting high salaried jobs, but of promoting intellectual, aesthetic and moral welfare of the human beings. If education means the intellectual, aesthetic and moral nourishment of body and soul then education has to be a life-long process. Our family, our surroundings, our work and our hobbies, books, magazines, newspaper, broadcasting, in short all that we see and hear all that we feel and experience educate us continuously. These being the vital cultural elements, should be directed to the constructive purposes, aimed at developing an integral personality in a harmonious and balanced way. Development of a complete personality is impossible without the Development of the soul. The concept of morality must be based on Divine Light. Today we are suffering not so much because of mass illiteracy as much as the lack of faith and a sense of proper values, which cannot be catered for by academic and technical education alone.

Defining the aim of education Plato says, in his Republic:

'The ultimate end of all education is insight into the harmonious order (Cosmos) of the whole world. This earliest stage ends here in the perception of those images of moral or spiritual excellences which, when combined with bodily beauty in a living person, are proper object of love (eros)".

In modern times, psychological interpretations have been placed on education. Dr. C.E.M. Joad thinks that education is:

- (1) to enable a boy or girl to earn his or her living;
- (2) to equip him to play his part as a citizen of democracy; and
- (3) to enable him to develop all latent powers and faculties of his nature and so enjoy a social life.

T.S. Eliot, a modern critic of high repute, says:

- (1) education makes people happier;
- (2) education is something that everyone wants;
- (3) and education should be organised so as to give equality of opportunity.

But all these definitions are entirely based on secular thoughts and lack the most important aspect of education, that is, the spiritual aspect that enlightens the soul.

Secularization of education always causes moral anarchy and social chaos. It develops in man a selfish behaviour, the cause of all unrest. George Bernard Shaw had rightly complained against the modern educational system purely based on secularism. 'The spread of education,' said Shaw, "is the spread of discontent." Shaw, the man of culture, felt that the technocracy or the rule of technique alone could not satisfy the genuine urges of human life. Mechanical and purely scientific education was, according to him, unable to cure the world's diseases.

### **Culture and Science**

The advancement of Science has changed the patterns of culture. It is prompting the society to challenge the existence of God and lay down the foundation of contemporary civilization on secular lines. On the contrary, the scientific discoveries should have reinforced, and not weakened, faith in God. They are the indications of the inexhaustible richness and wonders of God's creation. Dr. Iqbal rightly says in his verse:

"Sainthood, empire, and conquest of science - what are these all? - these are but the education of the single - Faith, that is, religion."

Bertrand Russel, the English philosopher, has aptly remarked on the

modern scientific civilization. He says:

"If, therefore, a scientific civilization is to be a good civilization, it is necessary that increase in knowledge should be accompanied by increase of wisdom. I mean by wisdom a right conception of the ends of life. This is something which science in itself does not provide. Increase of science by itself, therefore, is not enough to guarantee any genuine progress, though it provides one of the ingredients which progress requires..."

Culture, as we know it, is a happy combination of material and spiritual civilization of a nation. The present culture is far from being a perfect and mature one. The entire emphasis is laid today on purely scientific and technical education and no heed is paid to ethical knowledge without which a happy life is not possible. The crisis of conscience and the crisis of confidence are evident all around in our present civilization. Perhaps it is because of this that H.G. Wells, like so many right-minded thinkers, remarks that humanity is at the saturation point of fragmentation in the management of its affairs, fragmentation among unrestricted business organizations competing for profit. ■



## The Role of the Muslim Community

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

The Muslim Community is the bearer of Allah's final message. Being adherents of the last prophet Muhammad (PBUH), a great responsibility lies on us. The Quran has emphatically proclaimed: "Ye are the best community that hath been raised up for mankind. Ye enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency and ye believe in Allah". (111:110) and, again: "Thus we have appointed you a middle nation, that ye may be witness against mankind". (II: 143 )

Enjoining good and forbidding evil are a wide-ranging assignment allotted to the Muslim community by Almighty Allah. Accordingly we should gird up loins to discharge this duty. If we fail to perform this, we are liable to suffer huge losses. The prophet says: "If one sees an evil, one should change it by one's hands one dares not to do so, one should use tongue, if one has no courage to use tongue; one should realize in one's heart that it is bad and this is the lowest stage of Iman".

No doubt, if we keep this saying of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in view and act accordingly, a host of evil practices may come to an end. Unlike other religions, we have a definite purpose in life. Our main aim is to preserve a great deal of provisions for the Day of Judgment. Our stay in this

world is transitory. The holy Prophet says: "My relation with this world is only this much that my likeness is of a rider who sat under the shade of a tree for a while and then got up and went away". It should be kept in mind that our real life will commence in the Hereafter. We have full trust that what we sow and cultivate here, would be rewarded in the Hereafter. We should take it into consideration that this world is the firming of the Hereafter. As the Prophet said: "The world hath been created for thee and thou hath been created for the Hereafter".

With this object in view Islam does not regard the present world to be the highest goal of human beings and the pinnacle of their advancements.

The holly Quran vividly says: "The comfort of the life of the world is but little as against the Hereafter". (ix:38). This life of the world is but a pastime and a game. The home of the hereafter - that is life, if they but knew". (xxix:64). Know that the life of this world (as compared with the hereafter) is only play, and idle talk, and pageantry and boosting among you, and rivalry in respect of wealth and children; as the likeness of vegetation after rein, whereof the growth is pleasing to the husbandman, but afterward it drieth up and thou seest it turning yellow, then it

become the straw. And in the hereafter there is grievous punishment, and (also) forgiveness from Allah and His good pleasure; where as the life of the world is but a matter of illusion". (vii:20) The hereafter is a better and more long-lasting reality. Naught is the life of the world save a pastime and a sport. Better for is the abode of the hereafter for those who keep their duty (to Allah). Have ye then no sense?". (vi:32) And whatsoever ye have been given is a comfort of the life of the world and an ornament thereof; and more lasting. Have ye they no sense?

Noted Islamic scholar late S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi has rightly stated that "The Quran condemns those who prefer this perishable, transitory, and imperfect world to the eternal and everlasting, unbounded and faultless Hereafter which is free from every kind of evil and meanness, grief and distress, fear and loss and disease and ill-health".

Now let us see the following verses of the Quran. "Lo! Those who expect not the meeting Us but desire the life of the world and feel secure therein, and those who are neglectful of our revelations, their home will be the fire because of what they used to earn". (x:8-9) "Whose (only) desireth the life of the world and its pomp, We shall repay them their deeds herein, and there in they will not be wronged. "Those are they for whom there is naught in the hereafter save fire. (All) that they contrive here is vain and (all) that they are want to do is fruitless." (xi:15-16)

And was unto the disbelievers from an awful doom; those who love the life of the world more than the hereafter, and (debar) men from the way of Allah and would have it crooked: such are for astray". (xiv:2-3)

They know only some appearance of the life of the world, and are heedless of the Hereafter." (xxx:7)

"Then withdraw (O Muhammad) from him who fleeth from' Our remembrance and desireth only the life of the world. Such is their sum of knowledge. Lo! Thy Lord is best aware of him who strayeth and He is best aware of him who goesth right." (L iii:29-30)

"Lo! These love fleeting life, and put behind them (the remembrance of) a grievous day". (Lxxvi:27) .

"Then as for him who rebelled, and close the life of the world, Lo! Hell will be his home." (Lxxix:37-39)

The above mentioned verses of the Quran precisely make it clear that our permanent abode will be in the Hereafter. Hence, we should devote ourselves to do good deeds and motivate others to do the same. Besides we should hoard more and more provisions for the Last Day instead of involving in obnoxious and unholy acts. Moreover we should mould our behaviour and conduct and carry ourselves in the hue of ethical values and moral virtues. Our deeds and actions may indicate that we are followers of Islam. Abu Hurairah reported that the

holy Prophet (PBUH) said: Anybody who believes in Allah and the Last Day should not harm his neighbor, and anybody who believes in Allah and the Last Day should entertain his guest generously and anybody who believes in Allah and the Last Day should talk what is good or keep quiet i.e. abstain from all kinds of evil and dirty talk”.

Jabir bin Abdullah relates that the holy messenger said: “Avoid cruelty and injustice, for on the Day of Judgment, the same will turn into several darkness; and guard yourselves against miserliness; for this has ruined nations

that lived before you. Miserliness led them to bloodshed and to treat the unlawful as lawful”.

In short, being last Prophet’s followers, it is incumbent on our part to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. Besides we should communicate and disseminate his sacred message to others and abide by the path shown by him only then we may lead a successful life both in this world and the Hereafter. “Our Lord I give unto us in the world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and guard us from the doom of fire.” (ii:201) ... ■

### Muslims Pose no ‘threat’ to Switzerland

**Bern:** Following the controversial debate on integration and assimilation of Islam in Switzerland, which led to the legal passing of a right-wing initiative of the populist SVP party against the construction of minarets in the country in 2009, three postulates requested obtaining further information upon the state of affair of the Muslim community in Switzerland.

The Swiss Federal Council subsequently charged the Ministry of Federal Justice and Police to write a report on the community, which was released last fortnight. The report qualifies the diverse Swiss Muslim community as posing no ‘threat’ to the country, whose integration is slowed down rather by ‘linguistic and sociocultural barriers than questions of religious order’. No ‘specific measures’ are to be taken to ‘better integrate’ the Muslim communities of the country, the Ministry concluded.

The report indicates that the Muslim population of the country has remained demographically stable in the last 10 years. Whereas in 2000, 3.6% of the Swiss population identified as Muslim, in 2010 it was 4.5.%. Amongst the Swiss Muslim population, those who are practicing are numbered as a small minority (only 15%). Accordingly, the Federal Council underlines that ‘severe problems’ of the religious groups and its members only occur in exceptional circumstances and are often dependant on the individual rather than the group or a Muslim organisation. In only few rare cases imams have attempted to impose extremist ideas in mosques, whereas only a dozen of mosques in the country are believed to be subject to extremist interpretations of Islam.

What the government report, however, also reveals is the existence and prevalence of an intersection of discrimination faced by the country’s Muslim population. Being both ‘foreign’ and Muslim puts members of the 3,50,000-4,00,000 strong community in positions of increased vulnerability to discrimination, harassment and hate crimes on the basis of racism and xenophobia. ■

## CM visits Nadwa, voices concern

Showing concern over the recent incident in which a crude bomb was hurled at Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulema, Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav and Minister for Health and Family Welfare Ahmad Hasan visited the seminary on Sunday.

A crude bomb was hurled at the gate of famous Islamic seminary Darul Uloom Nadwatui Ulema on Friday night. Though there was no injury reported, it created panic in Nadwa. The police later recovered a crude bomb from the site.

The Chief Minister met president, All India Muslim Personal Law Board and Rector of the seminary, S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi and expressed his concern over the incident.

The Chief Minister assured Nadwi that CCTV cameras would be installed at the gate and a control room would be set up inside the seminary.

To keep anti-social elements away from the seminary, a direction was issued to repair defunct streetlights on the stretch and, if needed, new ones would be installed. "In the wake of the incident and security concern, a police booth will be established near the seminary," said sources.

Nadwi was informed that police were conducting investigations to catch the culprits. When asked about suspects, Nadwi said it was an educational institution and they had no enmity with anyone. He added that it could be a conspiracy to disturb peace in the city.

Nadwi also demanded that no permissions be given to hold protests or public meetings in Jhulelal Park as it was disturbing studies in the seminary as well as the Lucknow University. District Magistrate Anurag Yadav and SSP J Ravindra Goud Gaud were also present in the meeting.

*(Courtesy: The Pioneer, 6-5-2013)*

## MYANMAR COMMUNAL VIOLENCE

### A Setback to Democratic Process

—Ram Puniyani

Most of the countries of South Asia have faced the barbaric problem of violence targeted against religious minorities. This may have been different, but the outcome has been similar: the brutality against religious minorities, violence against innocent human beings. While Gautama Buddha is surely a major apostle of peace, one has seen violence by Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka, Thailand and now overtly in Myanmar.

Troops are keeping a vigil, martial law has been declared to stop the communal rage which has lasted for three days in Meikhatila in Myanmar. This violence has involved the Buddhists and Muslims. Here the official toll stands at 31 dead, while the unofficial figures are higher. A state of emergency has been declared in this state. As usual a trivial incident involving the argument between the Buddhist couple and a Muslim owner of gold shop resulted in the triggering of simmering dislikes and discord between these two communities resulting in violence. While one Buddhist monk has also been killed the major victims of the violence are Muslims. This bring to our memory the communal clash of June - July (2012) in Rakhine State in western Myanmar. In that violence officially 110 people were killed and it left 120,000 people homeless. Those killed and left homeless were mostly stateless Rohingya Muslims.

Interestingly the communal strife was under the wraps during the preceding dictatorial regime. With the efforts to bring in democracy in some form these strife's are coming to surface due to the diverse and plural nature of Myanmar society, which is majority Buddhist but has substantial number of Muslim minorities. Rohingya Muslims are probably the most persecuted minority in the world. Being a substantial number in Myanmar, they are from Indo-Aryan group, who settled in this part over a period of last couple of centuries, during the British rule, primarily. While the majority Buddhists are of Sino-Tibetan stock. Muslims live in the Western state of Rakhine state on country's Western border. They have been adversely affected by the 1982 citizenship law, which has deprived them of the citizenship; there is a total violation of their human rights due to this unjust law. They are subjected to forced labour and have to work for the Government without any pay. The UNHCR has noted that since 1991 their freedom of movement is restricted. They are treated like second class citizens. Facing this adverse situation of gross violation of their rights many of them are trying to flee to Thailand, Malaysia and other places amongst others.

In 2012, June-July the violence between Rakhine Buddhists and

Rohingya Muslims was triggered by the rumour of rape of a Buddhist girl. As such it was a case of Muslim boy and Buddhist girl falling in love and eloping to get married. The boy was murdered and two of his friends who helped him to elope are facing death sentence.

Overall this reflects the unsolved problem of secularization and democracy in the region. The common factor in whole of South Asia is the migration of people for economic reasons, and with independence coming many of the dominating communities wanted to associate citizenship rights based on religion. Due to this some communities got deprived of citizenship formally or informally. Some were relegated to second class citizenship in practice. In Sri Lanka, the large number of Tamils who had gone there as plantation labour was denied equal rights and denied equality leading the extreme reaction in the form of formation of Liberation Tiger of Tamil Elam (LTTE).

In Myanmar 5% of the people are Muslims. Many of them had been the residents of this region from centuries. Denying them full citizenship defies all the logic of a modern democratic state. During the regime of military junta, which ruled the country for decades, a wrong precedent has been set, that of linking citizenship with religion. It requires deeper investigation as to why many a monks have an anti- Islam attitude. One knows similarly many a monks had played anti-Tamil role in Sri Lanka. There must be deeper societal processes which

are at work and are usurping the democratic norms of equality of religions. One knows that democracy is coming up in Myanmar after long decades after long battles, but still the remnants of the communal divide are dogging this nascent democracy. In a way this is also the colonial legacy which subtly promoted the divisiveness in the society.

With this violence in Myanmar coming to the fore the whole South Asia has to wake up and come to the grips of the legacy of the colonial past, a legacy perpetuated due to economic and political policies of rulers, rulers who have in a short-sighted manner resorted to abuse of religious identity for their political goals. Some political tendencies have thrived on the identity of religions and spread the 'Hate' about 'other' community. It is retarding the process of development in each of South Asian countries and also putting strong brakes on the same.

South Asia should have been striving towards the process of formation of South Asian Federation, which can expedite the processes leading to peace in the sub continent. Regional peace in turn is a prerequisite for development of the regions. We need to look beyond the narrow religious identities and promote the freedom of religion, equality of religions and dignity and honour for people of all the faiths for a better environment in those countries and a more congenial atmosphere for enhancement of human rights of weaker sections of society. ■

*(Courtesy: Radiance)*

## ALLAH

### The Explanation Of The Perfect Names Of Allah Ta'ala

- Hatijah Hashim \*

The Names of Allah mentioned in the Qur'an and Sunnah number over one hundred, as several scholars have agreed. Among these names are 99 that will lead to paradise, insha' Allah. The fact that there are 99 Names leading to paradise, is authenticated in the following hadith, although it does not list which Names those are:

Sahih Muslim and Bukhari 8:419, Narrated Abu Huraira RA : Allah has ninety-nine Names, i.e., one hundred minus one, and whoever 'ahsaha' [enumerates them, believes in them, ponders their meanings, worships Allah by them and supplicates with them, and acts by them according to one's belief in them] will enter Paradise; and Allah is Witr ("Odd", i.e. He is one, and it is an odd number) and loves 'the Witr' (i.e., odd numbers).

The Noble Qur'an Ta-Ha 20:8  
*"Allah! La ilahla illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He)! To Him belong the Best Names. "*

The Noble Qur'an Al-A'raf 7:180  
*"And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allah, so call on Him by them, and leave the company of those who belie or deny (or utter impious speech against) His Names. They will be*

*required for what they used to do. "*

"Shall I not inform you of the best of your deeds, the most sanctified in the sight of your Lord, that raises your ranks and that is better for you than spending in gold and money and better for you than meeting your enemy, striking their necks and them striking your necks?" They said, "Certainly [tell us]." He said, "It is dhikr (the remembrance of Allah)." (Al-Tirmidhi)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) made the following supplication, "[O Allah], I ask you of you by every name that You have named yourself or that You have revealed in Your book or that You have taught any of Your creation or that You have kept hidden, in the unseen knowledge, with Yourself" (Ahmad)

#### Emulating the attributes of Allah

If a person loves an attribute of Allah, then this will help him to reach Him. Allah is as-Sabur, patient, and there is none that is more patient and forbearing than Him. It was reported that Allah revealed to Dawood (AS), " Have my attributes, as one of My attributes is that I am Sabur (patient)." Allah loves His attributes and characteristics, and He loves to see the effects of His

attributes on His slaves. As He is beautiful, so He loves beauty; as He is all-forgiving, He loves forgiveness; as He is generous, He loves generosity; as He is all-knowing, he loves people of knowledge; as He is strong and powerful, so a strong believer is more beloved to Him than a weaker one; as He is Sabur (patient), so he loves those who have patience; as He is shakur (grateful), so He loves those who give thanks. As He loves those who have His characteristics, so He is with them, and this is a special and unique type of companionship.

The Names of Allah swt should be memorized, understood, acted upon, and called upon.

**Al-^Adl The Just;** the One Who is entitled to do what He does.

**Al-^Afuww** The Pardoner; the One with wide forgiveness. Surah An-Nisa 4: 149

**Al-Ahad The Only One.** Surah Ikhlas 112: 1

**Al-' Akhir The Last;** the One whose Existence is without an end. Surah Hadid 57:3

**Allah The One Who has the Godhood** and the power to create the entities. Surah.Taha 20:14

**Al-Akram The Most Bounteous.** Surah 'Alq :3

**Al-A'la The Most High.** Surah A'la 87:7

**Al-Allam The Omniscient.** (All Knower) Surah Ma'ida 5:116

**Al-Ali. The Sublime and the Lofty;** the One Who is clear of the attributes of

the creatures Surah Ash-Shu' ara 26:12  
**Al-^Alim The Knower and the Knowledgeable;** the One for Whom nothing is hidden from His knowledge Surah Al Baqra: 112

**Al-^Azim The Mighty;** the One deserving the attributes of Exaltment, Glory, Extolment, and Purity from all imperfection. Surah Baqara 2:255

**Al-^Aziz The Mighty;** the Defeater Who is not defeated. Surah Hashr 59:23

**Al-' Awwal The First;** the One whose Existence is without a beginning. Surah Hadid 57:3

**Al-Badi^** The Enduring; the One Who created the creation and formed it without an preceding example. Surah Baqarah 2: 117

**Al-Ba^ith The Resurrector;** the One Who resurrects His slaves after death for reward and/or punishment. Surah Hajj 22:7

**Al-Bari' The Maker;** the Creator Who has the Power to turn the entities from one state to another. Surah Hashr 59:24

**Al-Barr The Benefactor;** the One Who is kind to His creatures, Who covered them with His sustenance and specified whomever He willed among them by His support, protection, and special mercy. Surah Tur 52:28

**Al-Basir The Seer,** the One Who Sees all things that are seen by His eternal Sight without a pupil or any other instrument. Surah Imran 3: 15

**Al-Basit The Expander;** the One Who constricts the sustenance by His



Wisdom and expands and widens it with His Generosity and Mercy.

**Al-Batin The Hidden;** the One above Whom nothing exists and underneath Whom nothing exists; hence He exists without a place. His Existence is obvious by proofs. He is clear of the delusions of bodily attributes. Surah Hadid 57:3

**Al-Baqi The Everlasting;** the One for Whom the state of non-existence is impossible. Surah Rahman 55:27

**Ad-Darr The Distresser**

**Dhul-Jalal Wal-'Ikram** {Lord of Generosity and Majesty; the One Who deserves to be Exalted and not denied.}

**Al-Fatir The Creator.** Surah Shura 42:11

**Al-Fattah The Opener;** the One Who opens for His slaves the closed worldly and religious matters. S'urah Saba 34:26

**Al-Ghaffar** The One Who forgives the sins of His slaves time and time again. Surah Nub 71: 10

**Al-Ghafir The Forgiver.** Surah Mu'mininun 23:3

**Al-Ghalib The Predominant.** Surah Yusuf 12:21

**Al-Ghafur**The Forgiving; the One Who forgives a lot. Surah Mala'ikah :28

**Al-Ghaniyy The Self-Sufficient;** the One Who does not need the creation. Surah Mala'ikah : 15

**Al-Hadi The Guide;** the One with Whose Guidance His believers were

guided, and with Whose Guidance the living beings have been guided to what is beneficial for them and protected from what is harmful to them. Surah Furqan 25:31

**Al-Hakim The Wise;** the One Who is correct in His doings. Surah Baqara 2:129.

**Al-Hamid The Praiseworthy;** the praised One Who deserves to be praised. Surah Hajj 22:64

**Al-Hasib The Reckoner;** the One Who gives the satisfaction. Surah An-Nisa 4:6

**Al-Hafiz The Guardian and the Preserver;** the One who protects whatever and whomever He willed to protect. Surah Yusuf .64 and Surah Hud 11:57

**Al-Hafiyy The Gracious.** Surah Maryam 19:47

**Al-Hakam**The Judge; He is the Ruler, and His judgment is His Word.

**Al-Halim The Gentle;** the One Who delays the punishment for those who deserve it and then He might forgive them. Surah Bani Isra'il 17:44

**Al-Haqq The Truth;** the One Who truly exists, i.e., the One Whose Existence is confined. Surah Hajj 22:6

**Al-Hayy The Living;** the One Who is attributed with a life that is unlike our life and is not that of a combination of soul, flesh, and blood. Surah Imran 3:2

**Al-Ilah God.** Surah Anbiyaa 21: 108

**Al-Jabbar The Compeller;** the One for

Whom nothing happens in His dominion except what He willed. Surah Hashr 59:23

**Al-Jalil The Majestic;** the One Who is attributed with greatness of Power and Glory of status. Surah Rahman 55:78

**Al-Jami<sup>^</sup> The Gatherer;** the One Who gathers the creatures on a day there is no doubt about, that is, the Day of Judgment. Surah Imran 3:9

**Al-Kabir The Great;** the One Who is greater in status than everything. Surah Saba 34:23

**Al-Kafi The Sufficient One.** Surah Zumar 39:36

**Al-Kafil The Surety.** Surah Nahl 16:91

**Al-Karim The Generous;** the One Who is clear of abjectness.

**Al-Khabir The Aware;** the One Who knows the truth of things. Surah Saba 34: 1

**Al-Khafid The Humbler.**

**Al-Khallaq The Creator.** Surah Hijr 15:86

**Al-Khaliq The Creator;** the One Who brings everything from non-existence to existence. Surah Hashr 59:24

**Al-Latif The Subtle;** the One Who is kind to His slaves and endows upon them. Surah An'am 6:104

**Al-Majid The Glorious and the Noble;** the One Who is with perfect Power, High Status, Compassion, Generosity, and Kindness. Surah Hud 11:73

**Al-Malik The King;** the One with absolute Dominion, and the One Whose

Dominion is clear of imperfection. Surah Taha 20:114 Surah Qamar 54:55

**Al-Mannan The Gracious.** Surah Imran 3:164

**Al-Mani<sup>^</sup> The Preventer;** the Supporter Who protects and gives victory to His pious believers.

**Al-Matin The Firm;** the One with extreme Power which is un-interrupted, and Who does not get tired. Surah Zariyat 51 :58

**Al-Mawla The Patron.** Surah Anfal 8:40

**Al-Mu'akhhir The Deferrer;** the One Who puts things in their right places. He makes ahead whatever He wills and delays whatever He wills.

**Al-Mubdi<sup>'</sup>The Originator;** the One Who started the human being, that is, He created him.

**Al-Mubin The Manifest.** Surah Nur 24:25

**Al-Mudhill The Abaser;** the One Who gives esteem to whomever He willed; hence there is no one to degrade him. The One Who degrades whomever He willed; hence there is no one to give him esteem.

**Al-Mughni The Enricher.**

**Al-Muhaymin The Protector;** the One Who witnesses the saying and deeds of His creatures. Surah 59:2:

**Al-Muhit The All-Pervading.** Surah Fussilat :54

**Al-Muhsi The Counter;** the One Who knows the count of things.

**Al-Muhyi The Life-Giver;** the One Who took out a living human from seminal fluid that does not have a soul. He quickens the dead by giving the souls back to the decayed bodies on the Resurrection Day and He makes the hearts alive by the light of knowledge. Surah Rum 30:50

**Al-Mu<sup>^</sup>id The Restorer;** the One Who brings back the creatures after death.

**Al-Mu<sup>^</sup>izz The Honorer.**

**Al-Mujib The Responder;** the One Who answers the one in need if he asks Him and rescues the yearner if he calls upon Him. Surah Hud 11: 61

**Al-Mu<sup>^</sup>min The One with Faith;** the One Who witnessed *for* Himself that no one is God but Him; and Who witnessed *for* His believers that they are truthful in their belief that no one is God but Him. Surah Hashr 59:23

**Al-Mumit The Death-Giver;** the One Who renders the living dead. Surah 'A'raf7:28

**Al-Muntaqim The Avenger;** the One Who victoriously prevails over His enemies and punishes them *for* their sins. It may mean the One Who destroys them.

**Al-Musawwir The Fashioner;** the One Who forms His creatures in different pictures. Surah Hashr 59:24

**Al-Musta'an One who is called upon for help.** Surah Anbiya 21: 112

**Al-Muta<sup>^</sup>ali The Exalted;** the One Who is clear of the attributes of the creation. Surah Ra'ad 13:11

**Malikul-Mulk The Ruler of Kingdom;** the One Who controls the dominion and gives dominion to whomever He willed.

**Al-Mutakabbir The Imperious;** the One Who is clear of the attributes of the creatures and of resembling them. Surah Hashr 59:23

**Al-Muqaddim The Expediter.**

**Al-Muqtadir The Powerful;** the One with the perfect Power from Whom nothing is withheld. Surah Qamar 54:42

**Al-Muqit The Nourisher;** the One Who has the Power. Surah An-Nisa 4:85

**An-Nafi<sup>^</sup> The Benefactor;** the One Who makes harm reach to whomever He willed and benefit to whomever He willed.

**Al-Nasir The Helper.** Surah An-Nisa 4:45

**An-Nur The Light;** the One Who guides. Surah Nur 24:35

**Al-Qabid The Contractor.**

**Al-Qadir The Able;** the One Who is attributed with Power. Surah An'nam 6:65

**Al-Qadilr The Mighty.** Surah Nahl16:70

**Al-Qahhar The Forgiver and the Dominant;** the Subduer Who has the perfect Power and is not powerless over anything. Surah Ra'ad 13:16

**Al-Qahir The Omnipotent.** Surah Anam 6: 18

**Al-Qarib The Nigh (Near).** Surah Hud 11:61

**Al-Qawliyy The Strong;** the One with the complete Power. Surah Hajj 22:74

**Al-Qayyum The Self-Subsistent;** the One Who remains and does not end. Surah Imran 2:2

**Al-Quddus The Holy;** the One Who is pure from any imperfection and clear of children and adversaries. Surah Hashr 59:23

**Ar-Rabb The Sustainer.** Surah Imran 3:51

**Ar-Rafi^ The Exalter and the Sublime,** the One Who lowers whomever He willed by His Destruction and raises whomever He willed by His Endowment. Surah Mu'mininun 23:15

**Ar-Rahman The Compassionate;** the One Who has an abundance of mercy for the believers and the blasphemers in this world and exclusively for the believers in the Hereafter. Surah Baqara 2: 163

**Ar-Rahim The Merciful;** the One Who has an abundance of mercy for the believers. Surah Fatiha 1:1-2

**Ar-Rashid The Rightly Guided;** the One Who guides.

**Ar-Raqib The Watcher;** the One from Whom nothing is absent. Hence its meaning is related to the attribute of Knowledge. Surah An-Nisa 4:7

**Ar-Razzaq The Provider;** the One Who makes the Sustenance reach His slaves. Sustenance is everything that benefits, whether halal or haram. Surah Zariyat 51:58

**Ar-Ra'uf The Pardoner;** the One with extreme Mercy. The Mercy of Allah is His Will to endow upon whomever He

willed among His creatures. Surah Nur 24:20 ;

**As-Sabur The Patient;** the One Who does not quickly punish the Sinners.

**As-Salam The Peace;** the One Who is clear of every imperfection. Surah Hashr 59:23

**As-Samad The Eternal;** the Master Who is relied upon in matters and is resorted to in one's needs. Surah Ikhlas 112:2

**As-Sami^ The Hearer;** the One Who Hears all things that are heard by His Eternal Hearing without an ear, instrument, or organ. Surah Imran 3:38

**Ash-Shahid. The Witness;** the One from Whom nothing is absent. Surah An-Nisa 4:79

**Ash-Shaakir The Appreciative.** Surah Baqara 2:158

**Ash-Shakur The Grateful;** the One Who gives ample reward for a little obedience. Surah Mala'ikah :34

**At-Tawwab The Acceptor of Repentance;** the One Who grants repentance to whomever He willed among His creatures and accepts his repentance. Surah Mu'mininun 23:3

**Al- Wadud The Loving;** the One Who loves His believing slaves and His believing slaves love Him. His love to His slaves is His Will to be merciful to them and praise them: Hence its meaning is related to the attributes of the Will and Kalam (His attribute with which He orders and forbids and with which He spoke to Muhammad and

Musa (Alaihimus Salam). It is not a sound, nor a language, nor a letter.) Surah Hud 11 :90

**Al-Wahhab The Bestower;** the One Who is Generous in giving plenty without any return. Surah Imran 3:18

**Al-Wahid The One;** the One without a partner. Surah Mu'minin 23:16

**Al-Wajid The Finder;** the Rich Who is never poor. AlWajid is Richness.

**Al-Wakil The Trustee;** the One Who gives the satisfaction and is relied upon. Surah An- Nisa 4:81

**Al-Wali The Governor;** the One Who owns things and manages them. Surah Baqarah 2:257

**Al-Waali The Governor.** Surah Ra'ad 13:11

**Al-WaliyyThe Supporter;** the Friend. Surah Baqara 2:257

**Al- Warith The Inheritor;** the One Whose Existence remains. Surah Hijr 15:23

**Al- Wasi^ The All-Embracing.** Surah Baqara 2:247

**Az-Zahir The Manifest.** Surah Hadid 57:3

The *Muttaqun* should Memorize the Names/Attributes of Allah, subhana watala

and Do dhikr (remembrance of Allah) For example, say "ya" ("Oh") before any of the above Names of Allah, swt, i.e. say "Ya-Rahman" or "Ya-Raheem", etc. It is recommended to repeat names an odd number of times such as eleven

times. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: There are two qualities or characteristics which will not be returned by any Muslim without his entering Paradise. While they are easy, those who act upon them are few. One should say: "Subhan Allah" (Glory be to Allah) ten times after every prayer, "Alhamdulillah" (Praise be to Allah) ten times and "Allahu Akbar" (Allah is Most Great) ten times. That is a hundred and fifty on the tongue, but one thousand and five hundred on the scale. When he goes to bed, he should say: "Allahu Akbar" (Allah is Most Great) thirty-four times, "Alhamdulillah" (Praise be to Allah) thirty-three times, and "SubhanAllah" (Glory be to Allah) thirty-three times, for that is a hundred on the tongue and a thousand on the scale.

The people asked: "Apostle of Allah! How is it that while they are easy, those who act upon them are few?" He replied: "The Devil comes to one of you when he goes to bed and he makes him sleep before he utters them and he comes to him while he is engaged in prayer and calls a need to his mind before he utters them". [Dawud 5047]

Dhikr is a very integral part of a Muslim! Muslimah's life. So call upon Allah's intervention in your life in regard to that attribute (name). Remember... Allah, subhana watala, sees everything we do! ■

## Duties of a Woman in Islam

- Syed Hamid Mohsin

Islam is a fair and balanced system of life. While it specifies the rights of women, it also lays down duties. A Muslim woman is expected to observe the following:

1. Belief in One God (*Tawhid*) and the practice of Islam should be her foremost duty. A Muslim woman must perform her Prayer (*Namaz*), observe Fasting (*Sawm*) during Ramadan, pay Almsgiving (*Zakah*) on her own wealth (if it is applicable) and go to Pilgrimage (*Haji*) if she can afford it.
2. She is required to maintain her chastity at all times. She must not have any extra-marital relationship.
3. She should dress modestly and should put on Hijab, (Hijab means a long outer garment or head scarf) while going out and meeting adult males beyond her close relatives (see Quran, 33:59, 24:30-31).
4. It is her duty to bring up children with the best character, according to the rules of Islam. She has to look after the family and has almost absolute control over domestic affairs, although the family is run by mutual consultation and cooperation. She is the Queen of the family.
5. She is her husband's helpmate. A faithful wife is like a garment, a source of peace, love, happiness and contentment for her husband. (See Quran, 30:21, 2:187)
6. If she is asked to go against the command of Allah, she must defy even her husband, father or brother. (See Quran, 9:23)
7. Islam considers a husband and a wife as complementary to one another. Neither dominates the other. Each has his or her own individual rights and duties - together they form a peaceful and happy family which is at the core of a sound, stable and peaceful society. ■

## Around the World

### **SYRIA BROTHERHOOD CALLS FOR ARAB AND IT'L ACTION AGAINST ASSAD MASSACRES**

In a press statement, the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria on 7 May asserted that Bashar Al-Assad's brutal regime is in fact accelerating the pace of vengeful massacres against the Syrian people who rose in their revolution against injustice and oppression. Assad's forces are committing more unthinkable crimes and inhuman massacres of civilians, women and children and old people, burning their bodies before moving on to fresh grounds, to break the will of the people whose sons and daughters have pledged to sacrifice their blood and souls for the sake of freedom and dignity.

"The massacres of Assad's gangs have become too numerous to list, after losing credibility completely. Massacres are carried out around the clock, focusing on remote and isolated villages, which are in fact far from the revolutionaries and protesters, indicating Assad's intention to take revenge on the people at large.... The Muslim Brotherhood in Syria calls on the Arab League, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the international community to assume their historical, moral and humanitarian obligations towards the people being subjected to organized and systematic genocide...." ■

### **ISRAELI GOVT OFFICIALLY STARTS DIVIDING AL-AQSA MOSQUE**

Najeh Bakirat, director of Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, said the Israeli government has officially adopted the project to divide Al-Aqsa Mosque, and started discussing legislations to increase number of Jews who visit Al-Aqsa Mosque. The Hebrew radio revealed that the Knesset on 8 May began to discuss the adoption of a law that allows increasing the number of Jewish settlers who visit Al-Aqsa Mosque. Bakirat pointed, in remarks to Quds Press agency, to the seriousness of this development.

Tel Aviv maintains a defiant stand on the issue of its illegal settlements on Palestinian land as it refuses to freeze settlement expansion. Tel Aviv has come under repeated and widespread international condemnation over the issue. The Israeli regime has approved the construction of 296 new illegal settler units in the so-called Beit El settlement in the occupied West Bank, despite international condemnation. An Israeli official said that Tel Aviv had given the green light for the settler units, but this was only the first stage of a process before actual construction could begin. ■

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