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The Fragrance of East

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Wisdom of Qur' an

Those who went before them also plot So Allah came to their buildings from the foundations, the roof fell down on them from above them and the punishment came from a quarter they did not perceive. (Surah-Al-Nahal-26)

Commentary:

That is, the past nations also tried similar plots to thwart the entry and growth of truth in the hearts of the people. But Allah (swt) failed them and destroyed them by striking at their foundations (Au.)

In the Arabic language the idiom, "He came to their buildings from the foundations" refers to a total destruction (Ibn Jarir).

When a roof falls, it falls from above. Why then did Allah (swt) say, "and the roof fell down on them from above them?" That is because, Razi and Qurtubi explain, in Arabic they say, "The roof fell upon us" whether the speakers were under it. Then they will say "the roof fell down on us from above us."

Asad comments: "This is obviously a metaphor (Razi) describing the utter collapse of all endeavors-both individual and social rooted in godlessness and false pride."

Then, on the Day of Judgement He shall humiliate them, and ask them, 'where are those that you associated with Me, concerning whom you used to vehemently dispute (with the believers)? Those who were given knowledge will speak out, 'Assuredly, this day humiliation and the (accompanying)evil is upon the unbelievers.'

(Surah-Al-Nahal-27)

Pearls From the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Abu Sa'id Khudri narrates that the Prophet of Allah -blessings and peace be upon him-said that Allah the Magnificent and the Most High had said, "Those not finding time for My remembrance, or for asking of Me [for their needs] due to their being engrossed in the Quran will receive from me [a share] better than what I grant to the ones who ask. And the superiority of the Quran to other words (Kalam) is the same as the superiority of Allah to His creatures". (Tirmidhi, Darimi, Baihaqi)

Commentary:

This is a Sacred Tradition (Hadith-Qudsi) one in which the Prophet reports a saying of Allah. Two things have been mentioned in this Tradition. First, a person engrossed in the Quran day and night-reciting, memorizing, pondering upon, learning, or teaching it with sincerity and thus finding no time for any other form of God-remembrance or for supplication, is not a loser in comparison to those who remain engaged in God-remembrance and supplication. Allah will grant him more than those engaged in some other form of God-remembrance or supplication. Second, the Quran enjoys the same type of superiority to all other words (kalam) that Allah has over His own creatures. This is so because the Quran is Allah's Word and Attribute.

Sectarian Harmony

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

Education was a crucial issue which was thought to be a binding force between different sects of Muslims. It provided a common ground to unite and deal with the situation. Nadwatul Ulema thus played a critical role. The scheme of education in Nadwa was formulated in such a way that students may get acquainted with modern studies along with religious education. It was thought necessary to produce pupil who could face persons coming out of other streams of education. The knowledge of languages other than Arabic particularly English was considered necessary to help in extending the Islamic ideology to others and impress upon them the virtues of our religion. Nadwa did not spoil their relations with any sect nor took up cudgels against any of the components which parted ways. Nadwatul Ulema carried out its mission of 'taleem' and 'tabligh' (education and preaching) according to its laid out plan and bloomed with its fragrance in the desert of ignorance and illiteracy.

The breaking apart of some sects no doubt weakened the solidarity of the community. However, Ulema associated with Nadwa maintained cordial relations all along and did not come into conflict with each other. The demand for a separate home-land for Muslims and the passion aroused by the advocates of Pakistan could not influence or overshadow the mission of Nadwatul Ulema. The creation of Pakistan is the most ominous development in the contemporary history of Muslims. With the partition of the country families were divided and a piquant situation developed in which Indian Muslims who had opposed the creation of Pakistan and decided to stay back in India found themselves at a cross road. Thanks God that at this stage also Nadwa continued to be a beacon for the community and tried to instill confidence in them.

At a time when the country was thrown into hearth of violence it was Nadwa which tried to bring peace and restore amity between different communities. It tried to make others believe that Islam is the religion of peace.

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

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

SA

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Islam And The West *

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

First of all, let me express my earnest gratitude to you for inviting me to this meeting which has been organized to discuss such a thought-provoking subject as "ISLAM AND THE WEST" at this great Oxford University known and respected all over the world as a premier seat of higher education.

I am especially grateful to Dr. D. G. Browning and his colleagues who have afforded me an opportunity to address this distinguished gathering and to meet a number of scholars and students of Islam.

Britain was the first country of the West to come in contact with the Islamic world during the closing decades of eighteenth century. As a pioneer of western culture, education, science and technology as well as a representative of western political power, this country spent a considerable period of time in several Muslim lands, particularly in the Indian sub-continent and Egypt. Leaving aside such issues as the moral right and legitimacy of its imperialistic presence in those regions, it was expected of it, even from purely intellectual and psychological view-points, to have taken a sincere interest in trying to understand the spirit of the most effective and energetic religion of its colonies, if only because that religion had acted as the greatest source and spring-head of revolutionary change during the past centuries over a large portion of the world. It had left a deep and durable mark on human civilization. It can, of course, be said that it was Islam which had saved humanity and its nobler values from destruction and given them a new lease of life. It had given rise to a new force-a new Ummat-which drew its strength from truth and virtue and fought against the forces of darkness and ignorance since it considered this to be the very end and goal of its existence. It had changed the course of history not by marking a total break from the past like certain militant and despotic powers before it, but by showing a new way of life to the world. It was because of its labours that human civilization was not only enabled to proceed ahead on the road to progress but the task was also made easier by

* This paper was read in the seminar held in the Oxford University on 22, July, 1983, to discuss 'Islam and the West'.

it. Its call in the seventh century A.D. propagated monotheism with such vigour and determination as was never witnessed before, restored human dignity, fostered equality and universal brotherhood through practical examples, gave rights to women, created a deep and living relationship between man and his Creator by inculcating love and sincere devotion to Him in a way unparalleled in the history of religions. Social service with a view to win the good pleasure of God was raised to the level of divine worship by it. This religion also created an eagerness among the masses for the cultivation of knowledge and produced not a few encyclopedic writers whose creation are still regarded as the most valuable treasures of learning. All these achievements of it are undeniable facts supported by reliable historical evidence.

Institutions for the study of Islam, the Quran and the life of the Prophet with adequate financial and other resources should have been set up, as a natural consequence, in every part of Britain. Encouragement should have been given to an objective study of Islam, free from all prejudices arising out of the Crusades, religious bigotry, and political aims and ambitions which very often do not allow one to look dispassionately at the intellectual legacy, faith and culture of subjugated peoples. I do not mean to under-rate either the importance or utility of the departments of Islamic Studies and West Asian culture in the British Universities, but what I seek to emphasis is that a deeper study with greater sincerity, breadth of vision and large heartedness was required than mere schooling for the attainment of certain economic and material benefits.

Unfortunately, however, there has been only a one-way traffic between Britain and its colonies, or rather between the East and the West, during the last hundred years and more. The western countries have used education in the East largely as an instrument for producing men who could think and act like them, and serve their imperialistic needs and purpose; they never felt the need of taking or learning anything from the East. Undoubtedly, this attitude can partly be attributed to the political weakness of the East, and resultant feelings of frustration and inferiority complex. The East had also lost even a semblance of the courage of conviction which had inspired a poor man blessed with prophethood in a far-off Arabian town called yathrib, now Mediana, to send envoys to the

emperors of the most powerful kingdoms of the day ruling over almost the entire civilized world of his time. He wrote to the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius (A.D. 610-641) and the Iranian monarch Chosroes II (A.D. 590-628), inviting them to the faith of monotheism. In his letter to Heraclius, he cited the following verse of the Quran:

"O people of the Scripture; come to an agreement between us and you: that we shall worship none but Allah, and that none of us shall take others for lords beside Allah. And, if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are they who have surrendered (unto Him)." (Q.111:64)

It is possible that the day he dictated these letters, he might have gone without a meal or had no oil to light the earthen lamp in his house for this was the way he normally lived throughout his life while the slaves of those to whom he addressed them might have been taken sick on that very day because of overindulgence.

When the followers of this man met the warlords and other dignitaries of these empires and were asked the reason for the visit, they replied: "We have been sent by God to take out his bondmen from the overlordship of fellowmen to His own overlordship, from the narrow confines of this world to its boundlessness and from the oppressiveness of other religions to the fairness and justice of Islam."

Frankly, I am not surprised at the reply they gave for they had really gone forth to emancipate mankind from the bondage of fellow beings in order to make them true servants of God and considered themselves to be the harbingers of human freedom and preachers and upholders of true monotheism. But I do marvel at the other part of the reply given by those half-clad and ill-fed dwellers of the desert. They were claiming to lead the rulers of vast and populous countries from the narrowness of earthly life to the limitlessness of God's universe. Their reply shows that they were convinced of the fact that all those who were merely after material benefits and thoughtless appeasement of the senses were, in fact, the prisoners of their own desires and man-made conventions, and no better than serfs and slaves. Such persons could be compared to birds with beautiful plumage and sweet voice that were shut in a golden cage.

Had they young men of the erstwhile British colonies and protectorates coming to the universities of this country for higher education possessed self-confidence and a firm conviction in God, they would have been able to convince at least their friends and class-mates, if not their teachers, of the need to undertake a study of Islam in depth instead of getting overawed themselves by the glitter of European civilization.

I would be guilty of injustice, if I did not mention here some of the Muslim young men who received western education, which had been, introduced also in India and who used English as the medium of expressing their thoughts. A few of them earned the recognition of English-speaking people and some were even praised by the scholars of this country for their contribution to literature and providing food for thought to others. One of these was Rt. Hon. Syed Ameer Ali about whose Spirit of Islam a noted orientalist. Mr. Osborn said that the book was certainly commendable for its author had a masterly command over the English language. Mr. Osborn further remarked that there were few Englishmen who could emulate his inimitable style which was free from the defects common in the writings of Indian writers in English language. He congratulated Indian writers in English language. He congratulated Indian Muslims for having such a writer among them.

Another luminary was Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbal (Cantab) whose depth of thought and poetic genius have been recognized by the top-most intellectuals of the West. Prof. Nicholson of London University rendered Dr. Iqbal's Asrar-I-Khudi (Secrets of the self) and Rumuz-I-Bekhudi (Mysteries of selflessness) into English. In the centenary celebrations held to commemorate the memory of Dr. Iqbal at Lahore in December, 1977, under the auspices of the Government of Pakistan, it was revealed that the number of books and journals published by that time in different languages about Dr. Iqbal numbered about two thousand and quite a number of these were in English language.

I can not help looking back to another great fighter for Indian freedom who really brought the freedom movement into active public life. A zealous Muslim as well as a noted writer and speaker, he was a graduate of Oxford University and used to write Oxon with his name. This was

Maulana Mohammad Ali of the khilafat movement's fame. But these are just few individuals from among the thousands of promising youngmen who came to England for higher education from its dominions. They returned to their countries armed with academic degrees from British universities. But as I have said earlier, it was only a one-way-traffic from here which was hardly of any benefit to the East or the West so far as Islam was concerned. It never received the attention it deserved. England attracted thousands of Muslim youngmen from its vast empire spread all over Asia while France used to have large number of students from its dependencies in North Africa but no serious attention was ever paid to Islam because these young men lacked the self-assurance, religious fervour and missionary zeal which had been the distinguishing feature of the seventh century illiterate or semi-literate Arabs. This was despite the fact that the difference in the cultural level of seventh century Arabia and its Byzantine and Iranian neighbours was much greater than that obtaining between the West and India, Egypt or North African countries. Muslim students coming to the West from these countries used to acquaint themselves with western culture and civilization in their own lands and, at any rate, none of these countries was as backward as the seventh century Arabia.

Both the parties were equally responsible for this lamentable state of affairs although it is always imperative for every vigorous, developing and pragmatic society to devote itself to such intellectual endeavour. When physical sciences and technology took the command of human thought and knowledge in the middle of the nineteenth century, they had a golden opportunity to utilize religion (of which Islam was a living and forceful representative) for pressing the fruits of knowledge and power into right channels for the betterment of humanity. It was the time to inculcate self-restraint, to raise the people above the barriers of countries and nations, to propagate human dignity and equality of all the peoples and to discourage the highly dangerous and senseless rivalry in the acquisition and display of strength among the different nations of the world which have, by now, been pushed to the edge of the precipice. Had it been done the world leadership would have been willing to-day to lend its ears to the divine call.

And for that Abode of the hereafter, we assign it unto those who seek not exaltation in the earth, nor yet corruption. The sequel is for those who are God-fearing.

The world to-day would have been altogether different if the progress in science and technology had been accompanied by the fear of God and respect for human values. Then its powerful and unlimited resources would have been guided by loftier aims and ideals, and it would have promoted cooperative endeavour between different nations instead of generating the spirit of contest, collision and conflict. Then we would have found ourselves living as members of a civilized and enlightened family instead of being divided into the present power blocks of East and West whose rivalry is threatening the very existence of human civilization or rather the human race itself. But development of ephemeral knowledge science, and technology yoked to unbridled politics and physical gratification has brought humanity on the verge of self-destruction. Iqbal had correctly predicted that:-

The insolent thought that
Had laid bare the nature's secrets,
Had put its own hearth in danger
By its lambent flame.

Ladies and Gentlemen; we cannot deny that modern civilization and contemporary intellectual leadership have failed in the sphere of character building and giving to the world conscientious individuals, guided by a living sense of social responsibility. It can 'enchain the sunbeams,' seek the orbits of the atars', send men to the planets,' and put the atomic energy to a great purpose. It can remove poverty and make everyone literate. No one can deny its achievements. But its helplessness is self evident where the raising up of good and virtuous individuals, of men of faith and moral rectitude is concerned. That is why the work of centuries is being wasted, and an overpowering feeling of frustration and non-fulfillment is creeping over the world. What is more man is losing faith even in science and learning which can set off a powerful reaction against knowledge and civilization and mark the beginning of a revolt against the traditional values and accepted norms of society. Misguided men have perverted even the sound and harmless means and implements and turned them into tools of corruption and destruction. A strong boat cannot be made with rotten boards. It is a fallacy to believe that

the boards may be weak and decayed, piece by piece, but when they are out together, they become good and strong. Thieves may be thieves individually, but if they form a group, they get transformed into watchmen and begin to act as responsible citizens. The individuals whom modern intellectual leadership is producing are devoid of faith and earnestness. They are ignorant of the true station and dignity of mankind. It is only the logic of strength and the doctrine of pleasure that they understand. Or they swear by nationalism. Whether such men are the leaders of a capitalist or socialist system, they cannot set up a healthy and God fearing society, not an environment of peace and well being. They can never be trusted with the destiny of mankind.

We are passing through a critical time when the fate of not one country but of the entire humanity is at stake: it is facing the danger of total destruction. Efforts of a few moderate and discreet reformers and educationists, howsoever well-meaning, will be of no avail. I do not mean to deny their utility in normal conditions, but at a time so crucial as to-day, when humanity is standing at the crossroad of life and death, large hearted men possessing moral courage, boldness of spirit and the zeal of martyrs are needed for these are the type of man who have saved humanity from death and destruction at such times.

Friends; excuse me, if I say that the West which had produced in the past such giants in the field of social and physical sciences as well as in politics who acknowledged map of the world, whose brilliance was acknowledged and whose discoveries were utilized with advantage by all, is now passing through a phase of intellectual stagnation. The West now needs a new and revolutionary leadership possessing prophetic courage in order to alter radically the end and purpose of science and technology from destruction to re-construction, to infuse a sense of equanimity and self-control and to bring about a readjustment between the rival political camps for saving human society from impending decay and death. West has been lacking in such a leadership for a long time. Iqbal had foreseen this danger about three quarters of a century ago and drawn attention to it in these lines, in which he describes the western civilization as:

Without a kaleem whose splendour is
without a Khalil whose fire;

Reckless intellect is the enemy of love's fortune.
Its atmosphere is devoid of heat of
And its patrons, without the stumble of an
intoxicated soul.

What Iqbal wants to convey in these couplets is that the West abounds in the sings of God as well as the sensibleness to acquire God's cognition through them, but the tragedy is that man who can summon the people to God like Moses and show them the path of virtue and goodness with the help of revelatory guidance is nonexistent. Iqbal says that in this welter of materialism many are to be seen with the arrogant claim: 'I give life and cause death' but no Abraham to disclaim them and proclaim: 'My Lord is he who gives life and causes death'. And face the consequences with courage and determination. The West's atmosphere seems to be charged with the hectic bustle of machines and economic endeavour but really it is frigid because there is no warmth of feeling and fervidness of heart. Its intellect annihilates love and worthiness of soul. It is so mindful of loss and gain that even the risks taken are always well-calculated and pre-meditated. Daring and instantaneous impulses have led the sages and savants of the old to take revolutionary steps for arousing the slumbering humanity. Such impulsive decisions make even the intellectuals to revise their thought and stand, for it is only through such decisions that the world takes a revolutionary turn.

A revolutionary leadership is now required to save human civilization, especially in the West (of which Britain forms a part and also has a glorious history). Such leadership needs to be realistic, noble-minded, courageous and self-denying for being successful in instilling a new life into the dying frame of modern civilization and even humanity. The educational and intellectual centers, literatures and writers of this country can play a leading role in this noble endeavour and I hope that the proposed Islamic Centre which is being set up by you here at the most appropriate time, will prove to be the first step in that direction. This is the hope and desire that has brought me here despite ill-health and heavy engagements.

I, once again, thank you all the honour, and pray to the Almighty that your endeavours may succeed and prosper and fulfill the expectations of the Center's will-wishers. •

The Tide can Turn

S.M.Wazeh Rasheed Nadwi*

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

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

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

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

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

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

Crusades of yore had evoked interaction between Islamic world and the West and acted as catalysts for an awakening in

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

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

Dr. Moullak, the German Envoy travelled in India, interacted with Muslim clergy and learned persons, to obtain first hand knowledge of spirit of Islam and Muslim culture and to equip himself for rectifying the obnoxious impression created about Muslims and Islam by the West and also to counter the malicious propaganda. As for himself, Dr. Moullak is convinced of the fact that the Western world owes all its knowledge about medical and other sciences to the pioneering work originally carried out in

Islamic world. He goes to the extent of challenging the self-proclaimed ambassadors of peace and fair-play to an introspection before pointing a finger towards Islam and Muslims.

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

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

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

Musalman ko musalaman kar diya toofan-i-maghribne,
jalatum-hai darya he se hai gauhar ki sairabi.

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

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

Islam- The Only Alternative

Maryam Jameelah

How can we be certain that Islam is the infallible truth?

Islam means submission to the will of God through unquestioning obedience to His law in the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Judaism is named after the tribe of Judah and Christianity after Jesus Christ (peace be upon him). Thus even the names of these faiths illustrate their restrictive character. The name of Islam proves its universality. What a contrast to the views expressed during a recently held interfaith conference in Washington D.C. where Dr. Isaac Franck, Executive Vice-President of the Jewish community council of Whashington said that Judaism considers itself as valid only for Jews and does not attempt to impose its views upon non-Jews. He declared: "The validity of non-Jewish theological beliefs is not subject to our evaluation or judgment," To me this is conclusive proof that Judaism must be false because an omnipotent God would never restrict His truth to a single people. Truth by its very nature must be universal!

Islam is unique among all other religions in that it alone possesses an authentic scripture. The Holy Quran informs us that the Jews and Christians have corrupted their scriptures by mixing the original revelation with human interpolations and interpretation until the former could not be distinguished from the latter. Under the devastating impact of "Higher Criticism" very few, if any, Jewish or Christian scholars today accept their *Holy Books* as infallible Divine revelation. Jews and Christians themselves admit that they do not possess their original Texts but only translation that have been undergoing numerous alterations for many centuries and are still being changed. The Holy Quran exists exactly as it was revealed to the Holy Prophet. It has been preserved in its original text forever. The languages of the former revelations to the Jews and Christians have long been dead. Today nobody can speak those languages and only a few scholars claim to be able to decipher them. Even if these scriptures had been preserved to this day in their original and unadulterated form nobody

could correctly understand them and interpret their injunctions, much less translate them into actual practice. In contrast, the language of the Holy Quran is a living language, spoken and understood by millions throughout the world. Even those who have no time to study Arabic, can easily find others who know it sufficiently to existing sacred books has been addressed to a particular people and contains commandments which seem to have been intended only for a restricted time and place, while the Holy Quran is explicitly addressed to the whole human race with an eternal code embracing life in its totality. The teachings of Judaism are restricted by their nationalist, racist emphasis while the acceptance of secularism on principle virtually negates Christianity's claim to universality.

Concerning the earlier prophets and religious teacher, very little of their life-histories have come down to us. Thus we know less about Moses (peace be upon him) than Socrates and nothing at all concerning Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) before he began his brief three-year career of preaching.

A cursory glance though any Hadith collection will give an idea how accurately and carefully the minutest details of the Prophet's life and teachings have been recorded. There one finds astonishing details of his features, limbs of body, his gait, the manner of his conversation and speech, his smile, dress, food, sleep, his elegance, catholicity of his taste, his fondness for riding, his zest for worship, his mode of salutation, his facial expression, his behaviour in joy and sorrow, his wars, his way of offering condolence, his mode of offering prayers and observing fasts, his pilgrimages, his intense devotion to God, his noble feelings and sentiments, his perseverance, his dealings with his fellow beings, his honesty, his hospitality, his deep rooted sympathy for his won kith and kin, his dealings with strangers, with enemies, his hatred for back-biting and vanity, his simplicity, his bravery, his determination, his truthfulness, his adherence to his promises, his forgiveness, his behaviour towards his equals, towards his elders and younger, his treatment of women, kindness to mankind and animals, his means of livelihood, his experiences as a traveller, as a warrior, as a law-giver, as a father, as a general, ruler, as a saint, as a pious hermit, as an arbitrator; in fact, all phases and aspects of his life have been carefully recorded. One is amazed at the boldness and

courage with which he laid open before the people not only his public but also *his private life*. Who can stand the ordeal of voluntarily offering himself as an object of observation for all the twenty-four hours throughout his life? Only a person of unusual integrity and honesty, possessing a high degree of self-confidence, self-control and self-determination could do it. It was, he alone who can stand this test. He not only permitted people to peep into the innermost chambers of his sacred life but also exhorted them to broadcast its details to others because even these fact were as divinely illuminated as his public career. A Muslim is therefore enjoined to follow the Prophet's example in his private life with the same sincerity and faithfulness as he is commanded in respect of the sphere of his public life. Every word that he uttered and every action that he performed are the public trust, faithfully handed over to humanity from generation to generation as Divinely inspired.

Islam alone constitutes a complete, all-embracing, comprehensive way of life where the individual versus his society and material versus the spiritual are balanced into a perfect harmony. The laws of Islam are called the Shariah that provides an infallible Guidance of all aspects of individual and collective life. The Shariah embraces religious ritual, personal character, morals, intimate habits, family relationships, social and economic affairs, administration, rights and duties of citizens, judicial system, laws of war and peace and international relations. These injunctions enable the faithful to distinguish between what is good and evil, what is beneficial and harmful, what is useful or injurious, what we must avoid; the sphere of our personal freedom and its limitations and what methods we must adopt to establish a genuine Islamic community. Islam teaches that unaided intellect and personal experience alone are unreliable and defective guides which can never discover sound ethical values. The purpose of ethical endeavour in Islam, is to seek the pleasure of God. In Islam, morality is absolute and unchanging because its laws are instituted by God and not by men. The true Muslims does not change with the changing times but forces the times to conform to his standards.

Islam abhors the doctrine of secularism. The Muslim can thrive only in an Islamic environment which is his duty to establish:

Those who imagine that the morality of Islam makes of it a heavy burden for humanity derive this belief from the tribulations undergone by the individual Muslims living in a society which is not governed by Islam. Under such circumstances the morality of Islam is a heavy burden; it almost crushes the individuals who live with their pure Islam in the polluted society of ignorance. A specific environment is indispensable for the life of this concept, an environment with its own specific values. Islam is a realistic system and it therefore supposes that the people who live according to its path will be living in an Islamically-governed society. Without this environment, the life of the individual become impossible or at least extremely difficult. Therefore whoever wishes to be a Muslim should know that he can not devote himself to his practice of Islam except in a Muslim environment dominated by Islam. He is mistaken if imagines that he can realize his Islam in the midst of a society ignorant of Divine guidance.

Alone among all the religions of the world, Islam created a state dominated by religious and moral motives, thereby demonstrating that political power can and ought to be subordinated to ethical ends and that religion must not be allowed to serve the ends of any political system devoid of moral ideals.

Islam teaches us that one must attain spiritual progress through active participation in normal everyday life and for his reason condemns the practice of monasticism, asceticism, or celibacy. The doctrines of Islam are characterized by their simplicity, explicitness and highly realistic attitude towards human problems indulging neither in excessive optimism nor pessimism, and enjoining moderation in all things. Islam is free from incomprehensible theology or burdensome rituals. Religious creeds shrouded in philosophical complexities may give intellectual pleasure to the few but can never inspire ordinary men and women to be steadfast in virtue.

The racism and nationalism of Judaism makes a mockery of its ethical teaching while Christianity's propagation of the doctrine of the Trinity and the vicarious atonement of mankind's sins by Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) nullifies all its moral values. In Islam there are no such loopholes.

The correct course of life for man is to live in complete obedience to God. Being his master, has raised from time to time prophets for the guidance of humanity and revealed His books through time. It is the duty of man to take the code of his life from these sources of divine guidance. Man is answerable to God for all his actions in life. The time for rendering an account will be in the life-hereafter and not in this world. The short span of worldly life is really an opportunity to prepare for that great test. In this life, all efforts of man should be centred on the object of soliciting the blessings of God in the Hereafter. He, with all his faculties and potentialities, is on trial. There will be an impartial assessment of his conduct in life by a Being Who keeps a complete and correct record not merely of his movements and actions and their influence on all that is in the world, but also a full record of his innermost ideas, feelings and intentions. (PP.38-39). According to Islam, God has appointed the human soul as His vicegerent in the universe. The body has been created with the sole object that the soul should make use of it in the exercise of its authority and the fulfillment of its duties and responsibilities. Hence the body is not a prison house for the soul but its workshop or factory and if there is any possibility for the growth and development of the soul, it is only through the use of the powers, machines and instruments provided by this workshop. Consequently, this world is a field in which God has sent us to work and do our duty towards Him. The spiritual development which is possible in this world should not take the form of man turning his face away from this workshop and retreating to some uninhabited corner. Rather, the only form it should take is that man should live and work in it and give the best account of himself. It is in the nature of an examination center for him. Every aspect and sphere of life is, as it were, like a question paper in this test; home, the family, the neighborhood, the society, the market place, the office, the factory, the school, the law courts, the police station, the parliament, the peace conference and the battlefield, all represent question papers on different subjects which man has been called upon to answer. If he does not take any question paper or leaves most of the answers blank he is bound to fail in the examination. The only possibility of success would be in a man's spending his whole time and

giving his whole attention to this examination and to attempt as far as possible to answer all the question papers handed over to him.

Islam is the only religion which preaches a pure and unadulterated monotheism that tolerates no compromises with nationalism, racism, utilitarianism, saint-worship, veneration of images or priesthood. Whole-hearted acceptance of the doctrine to Tauhid or the Unity of God makes the believer broadminded and sympathetic to all his fellow beings made by the same Creator. Produces an unsurpassed dignity and self-respect, makes him indifferent to and independent and fearless of all powers other than those of God, at the same time generating in him humility and modesty. The believer in Tauhid is a righteous man because he is convinced that unless he acts justly, he cannot succeed. The believer does not despair and lose hope regardless of adversity. His faith that God is the Master of all universe, whose powers and mercy are infinite, gives him immense consolation in trouble so that he never yields to pessimism and despondency. Suicide is unthinkable. The true believer will persevere in his work with patience and implicit trust in God to the end. Faith in Islam fills the believer with unrivalled courage. Since he is convinced that his life and property belong exclusively to God, he is ready to sacrifice them at any moment of His pleasure. Since God alone can bestow life or death, no weapon, no man or animal has the power to inflict any harm upon him unless it be God's will. The true believer believes that God has set his span of life in advance so that all the forces of the world combined are powerless to take away his life a moment before the appointed decree. Belief in Islam blesses the faithful with complete serenity and contentment. The believer knows that wealth belongs to God and He gives to whom He pleases, Power, honour, reputation and authority are all bestowed according to His will and it is man's duty only to strive according to His law. Success or failure depend entirely upon the will of God; if He wills to succeed, no power in the world can prevent Him from doing so and if He does not will it, no power can force Him while atheists and polytheists think that success and failure depend upon their own unaided efforts of the help or opposition of worldly forces. Consequently, they become enslaved to jealousy and frequently resort to sordid practices to try to gain what they want. Thus it can be seen that Islam is not only the sole effective

prescription for righteousness but also the most potent medicine for mental health as well.

Alone among the religions of the world, Islam made a practical reality of international brotherhood based upon a commonly shared outlook on life, common practices and ideals of conduct. Islam views life as an organic whole not to be shattered into fragments. Islam follows the Muslim in every act of life social, political and economic. A Muslim cannot be a Muslim in the mosque and a nationalist or socialist in politics. He is a Muslim everywhere. Islam is no mere accessory to life but life itself!

Why does not Islam regard the non-Muslim as equal to the Muslims? If Muslims cannot regard Judaism or Christianity on a plane of equality with Islam, the non-Muslim will wonder what kind of treatment Hindus, Buddhists, pagans, agnostics and atheists can expect to receive under Muslim rule.

Islam is a universal faith open to everyone without distinction of race, nationality, cultural or intellectual attainment, social status, age or sex. Because only God can give His faith to whom He will, the Muslim regards every non-Muslim as a potential Muslim. For this reason, he is commanded to a fair and just even to those non-Muslims who are his confirmed enemies and compassionate to non-Muslims who have never committed any overt, hostile act. Islam commands the Muslim to be kind and just to non-Muslims because if we do not set an example of virtue, how can we expect others to follow us? The conviction that Islam is the only Truth and that all divergent ways are false and evil, does not make the pious Muslim an arrogant fanatic. The Holy Quran forbids spying, backbiting and heretic hunting. Nobody is compelled to accept Islam under Muslim rule by force. The Muslim always stands before God in the utmost humility.

Indeed you ought to realize that the pious man is he who is good in God's sight in the mansion of eternity and that is something unknown to man, postponed to the End. Therefore you ought not to look at anyone without considering that he is superior to you. Thus, if you see a child you say, 'This person has never sinned against God but I have sinned and so he is better than I' and if you see an older person, you say, 'This man was a servant of God before me and is certainly better than I' and if he is a scholar you say, 'This man has been given what I am ignorant of; then how

shall I be like him?' and I do not know what end He will give to me and what end to him, and if he is an infidel, you say, 'I do not know; perhaps he will become a Muslim and his life will end in doing good and because of his acceptance of Islam, his sins will be forgiven but as for me God is our refuge perhaps God will lead me astray so that I become an infidel and my life ends in doing evil and then tomorrow he will be among those brought near to God and I shall be among the condemned'. So let fear of the End occupy our and keep you from making yourself, despite the doubt about your death, to be above the servants of God most high. Your certitude and faith at present do not exclude the possibility of your changing in the future for God is disposer of hearts: He guides whom He will and leads astray whom He will.

The opposition of Islam to divergent faiths, philosophies and ideologies is not directed towards any hatred of individuals but rather the system that has produced them. It is not persons which Islam opposes but perverted values and evil ways of life which lead only to ruin and disaster, but because all non-Islamic ways are wrong, the leaders who personify these values and are fighting with all sorts of cruel and treacherous means day and night to obliterate the truth to Islam from the world, become hateful and therefore must be hated and opposed with every resource we possess. Hatred of evil and falsehood is not a sin but the highest virtue. Hate is the natural reaction of love. We cannot love a thing without hating what is the opposite to it and our hatred is in proportion hating what is the opposite to it and our hatred is in proportion to our love. The purpose of hate is to clear the path of love, to approach near to the beloved ideal and to love it more ardently. War, when fought in the service of truth, justice and virtue is a positive good. Pacifism is tantamount to non-resistance to evil and leads to apathy, indifference and all kinds of moral corruption.

Islam teaches that a common faith is the only bond which can unite the human race. A man should be judged only on the criterion of whether he is believer and or a non-believer and how effectively he implements his faith in his practical daily life. Such distinctions as race, nationality or social status are mere accidents of birth over which the individual has no control.

Any discrimination on these grounds is rank injustice. The individual is responsible for what he believes and what he does. He is always at liberty to determine his faith and control his behaviour.

Conflicting ideologies, where the interest of one group cannot be attained except at the expense of its rivals, can never be united or even peacefully co-exist simply by proclaiming the fact that all are human beings. The utter failure of such world organizations as the League of Nations and the United Nations is proof of this fallacy. Universal peace and brotherhood can only be attained when the majority of mankind embrace common ideals. Suppose a husband and wife had nothing in common. Everything he considered good, she considered evil; whatever he thought was beautiful, she regarded as ugly; everything he thought important, she considered trivial; everything he believed was true, she rejected as false they would be quarreling continuously and could not live together for a single day! They could not reconcile their differences and save their marriage simply by the assertion that both are human beings possess common qualities, in the ideological battle, the human tie alone is not enough!

On what foundation can a lasting reconciliation between Muslims, Jews and Christians be based? We must realize that under the existing circumstances, no friendship is possible. Jewry and Christendom have joined hands to destroy us and all we cherish. Zionism, freemasonry, Christian missionary activity and Orientalism have combined to annihilate us religiously, culturally and even physically. It would be sheer folly to kiss the hands that are beating us!

Peaceful relations and mutual respect among us can only be achieved through strength. We must cease indulging in apologetics and present the Islamic message to the world honestly and forthrightly. Before we can hope to succeed with Tabligh on a large scale, we must first convert the nominal Muslims into true believers. We must establish a full-blooded Islamic state where the world will witness our precepts translated into action. Finally, we must crush the conspiracies of Zionism, free-masonry, Orientalism and foreign missions both with the pen and with the sword. We cannot afford peace and reconciliation with the Ahl al-Kitab until we can humble them and gain the upper hand. •

Islam and Terrorism

Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

Terrorist attacks are on an increase, rocking and shocking our lives. Recent attack in Mumbai is an horrific attempt. Such a wild behaviour and beastly act can not be ascribed to have sanction of any religion. Terrorists have no faith. They are demons, spalpeens and ruffians. Religion leads people to the path of salvation, Progress and prosperity. It teaches them the ethical values and good norms and keep them aloof from mischievous and unscrupulous deeds. Above all, it infuses fear of God in them. No religion allow terrorism, corruption, rancour, envy and hatred.

Islam suggests ways to combat terrorism and corruption on earth. The holy Quran says: "The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and his apostle and strive with might and main for mischief through the land: is execution, or crucifixion, or the cutting off hands and feet from opposite sides, or exile from the land. That is their disgrace in this world and heavy punishment is theirs in the hereafter" (5:33).

Islamic concept of war is based upon respect for life. Commenting upon the first murder in the world when Adam's son Cain killed his brother Abel, the Quran declares: "For this we made it obligatory for the children of Israil that whoever kills one person without any person having been killed or for creating disturbances on the earth, he kills the whole human race and who saves a life, he saves the whole human race" (Al-Maida:32). The Almighty Allah has bestowed upon human beings supreme status and dignity saying, "We have honoured the sons of Adam; provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favours, above a great part of our creation" (17: 70).

It is also to be noted that according to the Quran death can be caused only to a person who has killed someone or to one who is guilty of spreading disorder (fitna) in a society. No other person can be punished with death save the two mentioned above.

Islam does not permit wars that are instigated by racial fanaticism, because there is no place for it in this religion. According to Islam all people are from the same origin and source and they were made into nations and tribes just to know each other, as confirmed by the following Quranic words: "O mankind we created you from a pair of a single male and a female, made you into nations and tribes, that you might know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you" (49:13).

Moreover, Islam does not permit war for material benefits and greed, such as wars of imperialism, exploitation and for subjugation of one nation by the other.

It should be kept in mind that wars fought during the life time of the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) were in defence or resisting severe oppression not for material gain. We may easily comprehend the true sense of war as follows: "And fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress limits; for Allah loveth not transgressors. And slay them wherever ye catch them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out; for persecution is worse than slaughter; but fight them not at the sacred mosque, unless they (first) fight you there; but if they fight you slay them. Such is the reward of those who reject faith. But if they cease, Allah is oft-forgiving, most merciful" (2:190-193).

Noted Islamic scholar S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi says: "The number of battles fought by the holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was twenty - seven or twenty - eight while he is reported to have sent out sixty forays and expeditions. In all these battles and expeditions only 1018 persons, Muslims as well as non-Muslims, lost their lives. The purpose of these fightings was to restore law and order and protect human life and property from its senseless destruction. A civilized code of conduct was prescribed for the warfare which changed the character of war from persecution to disciplinary action" (Islam and Civilization, P. 32).

It is reiterated that Islam forbids injustice, corruptions and any kind of terrorist acts. However, descriptions often branding Muslims as

terrorists and militants indicate at best the ignorance of Islamic ideology.

Strangely, events of 9/11 in USA; of 7/7 and 21/7 in UK; of 5/7 in Ayodhya and of 26/11 in Mumbai are being linked with Islam to distort its image and spirit.

Apparently, deliberate conspiracy is being designed that though actual perpetrators of crime have either been shot dead on the spot or killed in the process and later they are being identified as members of a particular community. Besides it has become a fashion these days to quote Islamic scriptures out of context. This is nothing but prevailing international conspiracy against Islam.

Interestingly, politicians try to surpass each other as to how to reach the spot of incident to gain political mileage. Instead attention should be paid by them as to how combat terroristic and disruptive forces which threaten the country's unity and integrity and try to rip the social fabric of the country to shread. Every party strives to strengthen its own vote bank instead of taking interest on national issues.

Keeping in new the current spate of country wide blasts we must raise our voice against it regardless of caste, creed, colour and region. Besides we must put a concerted effort to eliminate from the society those elements who are acting against the law and religious dictates.

According to Sir Mohammad Iqbal: "Mazhab Nahin sikhata apas mein bair rakhna". (Religion does not teach mutual hatred). •

**It is related by Abu Hurairah that the Apostle of Allah said:
"To speak gently is a kind of charity" (Bukhari)**

The Invaluable Contribution of the Mother

Shaykh Muhammad Saleem Dhorat

The maternal role in the history of Islam has been a vital one. Great 'Ulama and Masha'ikh have had their first schooling in the laps of their mothers. The direction they took in life was a result of the piety of their mothers and the way they were brought up.

Many are the great scholars who lost their fathers at a young age and owed their success to the nurturing and du'as of their mothers:

Imam Shafi'i and his Mother

Imam Shafi'i was brought up by his mother alone. When, as a child, he would express his desire to leave Makkah to go and study, his mother would start crying. When he asked her whether she was sad at the prospect of her only son moving away, she explained that no, that was not the reason; she was extremely happy that he wanted to go out in search of 'ilm, but what made her cry was the fact that she was too poor to be able to provide for the expenses and necessities of his journey. When eventually the young Imam Shafi 'i did reach Madinah, he proved a very able and keen student. He acquired knowledge from Imam Malik while in Madinah Munawwarah. Thereafter, he traveled far and wide to benefit from other well known imams of the time, before returning to Imam Malik in Madinah again.

When Imam Shafi 'i decided to return to Makkah, his teacher Imam Malik, who had been blessed by Allah with wealth too, gave him much wealth to return with. Because Imam Shafi 'i had become a faqih in his own right and achieved widespread recognition and fame, the people of Makkah came out to greet him. On seeing the Imam's entourage it looked as if it was a merchant rather than a scholar entering the city. There was great happiness all round as the people met Imam Shafi 'i, but he realized there was no sign of happiness on his mother's face. He asked her why she was sad instead of being happy upon the return of her son. She replied that she had sent him to become an 'alim, not to acquire worldly possessions. Encouraged by her behaviour, Imam

Shafi 'i gave all the gifts he had returned with to the poor, and thereafter his mother welcomed him home.

Imam Bukhari and his Mother

The great muhaddith Imam Bukhari had his mother to thank for his physical and religious upbringing, for he had lost his father while he was still very young. She was responsible for his childhood tarbiyah and moulded his character in the best of manners. Her remarkable piety and closeness to Allah can be gauged by an unusual incident that took place in her son's childhood. The young Imam Bukhari lost his eyesight all of a sudden, causing much grief and anxiety to his mother. She prayed to Allah incessantly, asking Him for the well being of her child. Finally, Allah accepted her prayers. One night, she saw Ibrahim in a dream with glad tidings that Allah had restored her child's sight due to the blessings and abundance of her prayers. Upon waking, she found that her child had indeed recovered his eyesight.

Shaykh Abul-Hasan Ali al-Nadwi and his Mother

The internationally renowned scholar Shaykh Abul-Hasan 'Ali al-Nadwi was deprived of his father at a young age, and his mother played a prominent role in nurturing the excellent qualities which he later excelled. She was a very learned and pious woman, strongly, inclined towards worship, especially du'a. It was her great desire that Islam be strengthened and spread through her only son. She once wrote in a letter: "If I had a hundred children, I would give them Dini education. I only have you have you though. May Allah grant me the fruits of my good intentions by blessing you with the qualities of a hundred people."

After the death of her husband, she did not allow her love and affection for her son to interfere with his correct upbringing. Shaykh Abul-Hasan 'Ali al-Nadwi, after explaining once how affectionate his mother was towards him, writes: "However, she was very strict regarding two matters: one was salah; she would not tolerate laziness. I ever went to sleep without performing 'Isha Salah, she would wake me up and make me perform it, no matter how deeply asleep I may have been. Similarly, she would awaken me for Fajr Salah and send me to the masjid and then sit me down to recite the Qur'an. The second matter in

which she would not compromise, and in which her affection for me would not be a barrier, was how dealt with the servants' children. If I ever committed any excesses against them or acted proud and looked down on them, she would not only make me apologies but make me beg them for forgiveness. No matter how demeaning it felt to me, she would not relent. That benefited me enormously in my life, and I began to fear the act of being oppressive and arrogant, and regarded hurting the feelings of others as a major sin. And through this training, it became easy for me to admit my mistakes." (Dhikr Khayr)

So, as a result of his mother's du'as and tarbiyah, Allah destined Shaykh Abul-Hasan 'Ali al-Nadwi to become one of the most prominent Islamic scholars of modern times. His qualities and accomplishments equaled those of not a hundred men, but a thousand , and Allah kept him engaged in the service of Din up to his last moment , when he breathed his last while reciting Surah Yasin on the day of Friday before the Jumu'ah Salah. •

It is related by Abu Hurairah that the Apostle of Allah said: The world is the prison-house of the Believer and Paradise, of the Infidel" (Muslim)

Gujarat-Reality Today

Cedric Prakash S.J

It is January 14th 2009.... Makarsakranti, the only feast of the Indian calendar which is not observed on a particular day of the Lunar month. It is generally believed that on this day, the sun enters the constellation of Makar (crocodile) and begins to move towards the north. In Gujarat, it is known as Uttarayan, the day on which thousands of kites dot the skies in order to propitiate the Sun-God. The newspapers today (as those of yesterday) are filled with stories of 'Vibrant Gujarat'... of how the biggest industrialists of the country have "promised" to invest thousands of crores (millions of dollars!) in Gujarat. Overnight, the problems of the State seem to have been solved !! Some have decided that Gujarat can now take on China and a couple of industrialists have even anointed the CM of the State as the next Prime Minister of India! Visitors and dignitaries who came to Ahmedabad were welcomed by posters and banners, by floodlights and illuminations, with newly paved roads and a city which was cosmetically spruced up for the "mother of all events" to flaunt what is termed in Government propaganda, as "Vibrant Gujarat". The local (and some national) media went "gaga"..... showcasing how Gujarat is more than India, how the "whole world" had come to invest in this one State during the two-day affair known as 'Vibrant Gujarat Investors Summit. The Government and their cronies flag-waved all over..... it's the Number One State in the Country! The hype put forward by the well oiled propaganda machinery was so compelling that even the most diehard critics of Gujarat fell into the trap, and joined the chorus that "all is well". Very few dare ask uncomfortable questions. Everybody knows the truth about who is doing the "flag-waving!". There are voices who say that 'the "emperor" has no clothes on!', but at this moment, there are not too many listening. The plain truth is that the cosmetic has stifled the reality. If one scratches the surface a little, the bubble of euphoria will surely burst. Let's look into how "Vibrant", is Gujarat.

Violent: For a State that should have had 'Ahimsa' as its cornerstone, violence has in fact become institutionalized. The State presided over the killing of hundreds of Muslims during the Carnage of 2002. Trigger-happy policemen have eliminated several Muslim youth in 'encounters, (One high-ranking police officer is now in jail for such an 'encounter'.) Innocent boys

are killed in an ashram of a well known Guru, and, no one can do anything about it! Young girls studying to be teachers are raped in government hostels by their teachers for the sake of better grades. Female foeticide is rampant. One only has to skim through the daily newspapers to realize how violence has become a perfected art in the state.

Intolerant: There is a sophistication in the way intolerance has been mainstreamed. One can experience it in the chaotic traffic on the roads. If one is a Muslim, one is denied the right to buy a house or a shop in the up market areas of Ahmedabad, Surat and other cities. One is forced to live on the periphery of many villages. The Freedom of Religion Law prevents any one from embracing another religion, without permission from the civil authority. Couples in love, are forcibly prevented from marrying if the partner belongs to a different religion or caste. Movies like "Parzania" and "Fanaa" are not allowed to be screened in the State-one, because it exposes the Truth, and the other, because the lead actor asks that the tribals who were dispossessed because of the Narmada Dam, to be justly rehabilitated.

Bluffing: The art of lying seems to have taken a new meaning in Gujarat. This is obvious when even a sheer Memorandum of Understanding (Mou) is regarded as "Mission accomplished!" This bluff was called, when recently, under an RTI query, the Government of Gujarat admitted that just about 25% of the MoUs of the last three years were actually in the pipeline!! The waters of the Narmada Dam is being utilized by the rich and powerful of Ahmedabad. The parched lands of North Gujarat, Saurashtra and Kutch still harbour illusions of the water reaching them! State Government advertisements highlight projects and programmes which are in fact undertaken and executed by the Central Government, like the expressway, the airport, the railway system and the 108 ambulance service.

Revengeful: In Gujarat today, anyone standing up for Truth and Justice is at the receiving end. The government pulls out all stops (to stop School grants, to impound Passports) to ensure that voices of dissent are silenced. A few months ago, when the Times of India did an expose on the Police Commissioner of Ahmedabad, sedition charges were filed against some of those who ran the newspaper. Honest and objective police officials and bureaucrats are transferred to insignificant postings; Government agencies like the Collectorate, the Police, the Charity Commissioner are used to intimidate and harass individuals and groups that work for the betterment of

the poor, the vulnerable and marginalized. Prominent citizens are kept under constant surveillance and many live under the veil of fear.

Arrogant: A sense of arrogance seems to have puffed up the chests of a few who try to control the lives and destinies of others. Such arrogance was very visible in the hey day of Nazism when Hitler brutally trampled on those who were "not like him". Key people in the State roam about with immunity and impunity and are also elected to positions of power. The underlying message that is conveyed is that "no one can touch them". One needs to look at the judgments that are given from the Lower Courts and the High Court of Gujarat, in order to experience the subjectivity and partiality that has permeated the system.

Negligent: Large sections of society in Gujarat are totally neglected. Systematic efforts are made to snatch the forests from the hands of the adivasis. A recent study says that more than thirty-five thousand families will be displaced from the banks of the River Sabarmati because of the Sabarmati River Front Development Project. Development-induced displacement is also the lot of several poor and marginalized farmers and others. Fisher-folk among Gujarat 's vast coastline, continue to be marginalized. Dalits are at the receiving end and many of them continue to live in inhuman conditions. The status of women in Gujarat is way down in comparison to several other States of the country. Children are denied their rights: a large percentage of them constitute the labour force; the textbooks dished out by the Gujarat State Secondary School Board is a clear violation of the rights of children -full of errors, inaccuracies, myths and distortions; only about 59% of the rural children of Gujarat can read Std. I text as against the All-India average of 66.6%.

The Constitutional rights and freedoms of an ordinary citizen are not safeguarded. In fact, in several cases, when a victim approaches the system for help, he/ she is made the perpetrator of the crime! The diversity which has been characteristic of this State, has been totally decimated as communities are forced in ghettoization. There is palpable fear all over. What "Vibrant Gujarat "then, does one talk about? The truth is that Gujarat as a State is "Violent", "Intolerant", "Bluffing", "Revengeful", "Arrogant", "Negligent", and "Terror-filled". Let's not live in lies, half-truths and illusions. Gujarat, wake up, before it is too late. • (Islamic Voice)

Workshop On Dawah

A three-day workshop was organized under the aegies of Dawat-wa-Irshad, a unit of Darul-Uloom Nadwatul-Ulama, from February 14-16, 2009.

In his inaugural speech Maulana S.M.Rabey Hasani Nadwi President All India Muslim Personal Law Board said that a deliberate conspiracy is being hatched to malign Islam and its adherents. Muslims are confronted with various crucial issues. He called upon Muslims to unite and abide by teachings of Islam in letter and spirit. Besides they should pay attention toward education and create excellence and proficiency in it. So long Muslims remained adhered to education, they made great strides in different field . But on showing lethargy and indifference they fell into oblivion and so lagged behind others. Education is an asset which push us forward and lead us to the threshold of progress and prosperity.

Speaking on this occasion Dr.Saeedur Rahman Al-Azami Al-Nadwi, Principal Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama exhorted audience to adhere Islam wholeheartedly. He further added that we should motivate others to perform social and humanitarian work and keep them aloof from apostasy, seduction and other anti-social activities either.

Maulana Abdul Alim Farooqi stated that Islam consisted of two parts. One is doctrine and other is commandment. So we should have firm belief in tenets of Islam and act on Allah's commandment in all circumstances. He commented that often people create innovation, act on heresy, practice schism, create rift, split and cleft in religion. He said prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is our ideal. We should follow the way shown by him. Allah has sent him as His last messenger to the entire world. It is unfortunate that Qadianis do not accept him as such.

Mufti Atiq Ahmad Bastavi assured that time is the greatest asset in our life so we should know its importance. He said Quran and Ahadith are main source of Islam. All issues relating jurisdiction are derived from the aforesaid two streams. The basis of interpretation ,

deduction and inference of four Imams rests on Quran and Sunnah. Hence Jurists should be well-versed in the both sources. Apart from it they should also learn English in order to keep themselves aware of latest developments in the world.

Maulana Abdullah Hasani Nadwi elaborated that the holy Quran imparts teachings of humanity and Islam is indeed the message of humanity. The holy Quran is an absolute miracle. The greatest thing is that Scripture is preserved in its pristine purity. He laid stress on disseminating the message of holy Book throughout the world. He ensured that the message of the Quran may play a constructive role in redressing obscenity, anarchy, immorality, rudeness, injustice and other unholy acts which dampen the society. It is imperative that we first generate the sentiments of love, sympathy, brotherhood and fraternity only then peace may prevail in the milieu.

Prof Anis Chisti in his address said that no dearth of Hajjis, worshippers, givers of Zakat but no Islamic mark is found in their dealings. When Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) migrated from Mecca to Madina and the number of his followers increased, the first thing on which the prophet paid more attention was fair dealings. He further shed light on it by quoting the following verse of the holy Quran "Give full measure when ye measure and weigh with a balance that is straight: that is better and fairer in the final determination". He averred when justice and equity prevail, peace and harmony will automatically develop.

Addressing the gathering Maulana Khalid Nadwi Ghazipuri said the need of the hour is that we should develop and strengthen Dawah activities by fostering moral and ethical values of Islam. Besides we should share with other's woes and sufferings. Whenever we extend our hands to help, co-operate all. No matter to which caste does he or she belong.

In the concluding session of the workshop Maulana Syed Salman Husaini Nadwi expressed his concern over ongoing atrocities and oppressions perpetrated on Palestinians by Israel. He said it is time we must unite and raise our voice against injustice and oppression so that an atmosphere of peace and amity may come up all over the Universe. •

(O.R.Nadwi)

O.R. Nadwi visits UK

Assistant Editor of The Fragrance of East Obaidur Rahman Nadwi, a fellow of Darul-Uloom Nadwatul-Ulama, Lucknow attended a training programme on "Diversity and Dialogue" organized by Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and Markfield Institute for Higher Education (MIHE) from January 19 to February 6, 2009 in Britain.

Nadwi participated in a good number of academic programmes and debates held in different parts of United Kingdom (UK) such as London, Birmingham, Walsall, Leicester etc.

Besides he visited Oxford University, Birmingham University, Leicester University, BBC Radio, Muslim Council of Britain, British Library, SOAS Library, Islamic Foundation Library, British Museum, Leicester County Council, Leicester Police Head Quarter, St Philips Center, Sikh Gurdwara in Leicester, Hindu Temple in Leicester, Darul Uloom Leicester, Islamic Dawah Academy, Leicester General Hospital, Westminster Abbey, Lambeth Palace (A historic London residence of Archbishops of Canterbury since the 13th century), Leo Baeck college (A Unique center for training Rabbis, leaders and teachers to develop Progressive Jewish congregations and communities throughout the UK for the 21st century) and held talks with its trustees, administrators, sponsors and responsables on a variety of subjects.

Nadwi got opportunity to elaborate Islamic view points during his discussions with leaders of other faiths. Apart from it he introduced Daurul-Uloom Nadwatul-Ulama as an international seat of learning as well as apprised of its activities and selfless service to the community at different levels.

On conclusion of his study tour he was conferred with a certificate by the Director of Markfield Institute for Higher Education (MIHE) at a function attended by academicians, intellectuals, scholars and other elites.

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