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# THE FRAGRANCE OF EAST

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## Islamic Culture

### S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

The Prophets of Allah do not only call people to the religion of Islam by presenting tenets of the Islamic Faith and its codes of law; they also pioneer a new culture, a new civilization, and a new way of life. Such a culture can aptly be called "Ibrahimi Culture". This culture has certain fundamental principles and characteristics which distinguish it from other cultures based on ignorance. This distinction may be seen in its spirit and principles as well as in its outward manifestations and details.

The first distinctive characteristic of the Islamic culture is the authentic religious beliefs, social ethics, and moral values on which it is based. This factor is commonly shared by Muslims all over the world, irrespective of their nationality, language, and dressing style. Due to this common feature of a family, easily identifiable as representatives of the same culture. Thus, the Muslims of the world have a specific culture of their own which could be best called the "Ibrahimi Culture". ●

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## Wisdom of Qur'an

"So he followed a course. Until, when he reached the setting of the sun, he found it setting in a muddy spring. And he found a people there. 'O Dhu al-Qarnayn, either you punish them or adopt towards them a graceful' (attitude)."(Surah al-Kahf-A, 85)

### Commentary:

"Muddy(pool)" is the commonly accepted meaning. But a second opinion about "hami'ah" of original coming down from Ibn' Abbas and Hasan, is that means warm (waters). "Both could be right, one and at the same time (Ibn jarir). As for what place it was, ibn jarir has no report, But Ibn Kathir points out that anyone who travelled to the edge of a land will find the sun setting in a pool of water. Ibn Kathir also points out that the hadith as in Ahmed and other books that when the sun sets it dips into waters, is an untrustworthy one(Au.).

Asad adds: "...Razi and ibn Kathir, both .. point that we have here a metaphor based on the common optical illusion of the sun's "disappearing into the sea;" and Razi explains this correctly, by the fact, that the earth is spherical. (It is interesting to note that, according to him, this explanation was already advanced in the – now lost – Qur'an commentary of Abu 'Ali jiba 'I, the famous Mu' tazili scholar who died in 303 A.H., which corresponds to 916 of the Christian era)."

In other words, ancient Muslim scholars believed in the sphericity of the earth, although controversy remained to Razi's days (d. 604 AH) who himself seemed to have been a believer in its sphericity (Au.). ●

## Pearls From the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

"It is related by Abu Hurairah that the Apostle of God said: "Whoever was appointed a judge to decide the disputes between men was slaughtered without a knife."

-Musnad-i-Ahmad, Tirmizi, Abu Dawood and Ibn-i-Maja

### Commentary:

A person who is slaughtered with a knife will die in a few minutes while if an attempt is made to slaughter anyone without a knife, it will naturally, prolong the agony. The substance of this Tradition is that to function as a judge is to put oneself to a severe trial, and whoever accepts the office should know that he wears a crown of thorns. ●

It is related by Anas that the Apostle of God said: "Whoever will be desirous of the office of a judge and obtain it through solicitation will be handed over to himself. (He will be left to discharge his responsibilities on his own which is most difficult and dangerous). And whoever will be persuaded to accept the office, (against his desire), God will appoint a special Angel for his guidance".

-Tirmizi, Abu Dawood and Ibn Majah

### Commentary:

The sum and substance of both the Traditions is that one should not covet public offices and positions. Anyone who will do so, will not be favoured with divine help and guidance in the discharge of his functions. On the contrary, a person who is entrusted with power or responsibility without a request or effort on his part, and accepts it, putting his trust in God, it is the promise of the Lord that His support and guidance will be made available to him. ●



## A Samaritan

Our media is so biased that it excels in high-lighting events which may show the Muslim community a violent, malevolent and unscrupulous evil doer. There are many reasons for this attitude. To some extent Muslims too lag behind in scrapping such an impression. However, sometime the conduct of a particular Muslim force the media to show him in bright light and help the community in holding its head high.

Recently the state police organized a Seminar in Lucknow on "Traffic Problems and its Solution". On this occasion Mohammad Israr aka Bhura of Jyotiba Phule Nagar was honoured for his selfless performance in serving the humanity. Israr according to news paper reports, has become the white knight of his area, over the last six years, he has saved over 600 lives- all road accident victims.

This 40 year old, all alone, with a single ambulance keeps criss-crossing the city highways

and other roads to help accident victims. He rushes them to hospital for treatment mostly in time. He has even disposed of numerous mostly unclaimed bodies of accident victims as per their religious identity. Bhura says that helping the injured gives him a lot of satisfaction. He started this work after seeing a road accident victim dying in the absence of medical treatment in 2005. It was then that he took a pledge to help injured persons. It is said that Bhura has saved 600 families from getting devastated by saving lives of as many people. Seeing him doing the yeoman service, a local doctor provided him an ambulance to rush victims to Hospital. Bhura also takes care of unclaimed dead bodies and perform the last rites.

In Muslim community there are hundreds of Bhura who serve the humanity in various ways but shun publicity. However, such public service do help in cementing the bonds of friendship and strengthening the mutual relations between different

communities, In fact four decades ago Late Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi had launched a campaign in the name of "Payame Insaniat" (Message of Humanity). That envisaged the establishment of cordial relations in the society. To open the channels of dialogue so that misunderstanding among them may be washed of and a peace loving atmosphere engulf the whole nation. Maulana Ali Mian (RAH) has rightly said: "Sharing others suffering are man's highest virtue. If man loses the ability of sharing other's sufferings, he will become bankrupt. Even if a nation is blessed with the wealth of America, administration of Russia, and petrol wells of Saudi Arabia, even if rivers of gold and silver flow in it, and even if wealth showers over its land like rain, it will still remain pauper if its stream of love is dried. The blessings of Allah will not descend on it. It is a matter of satisfaction that man's eyes can still shed tears and that his heart can still suffer with the

pain of others. The heart which loses this quality is not a heart. It is just a piece of stone. Such a heart has no value in the sight of Allah, no matter whether it is the heart of a Muslim, or a Hindu or a Christian. The value of the human heart, in fact, lies in its quality to long, shiver, cry, and love. The human heart should be greener than the land, broader than universe, more affluent than the waterfall, and more bountiful than the heavy clouds ready to stream down. The eye which does not become wet is not a human eye: It is the eye of a daffodil. The heart which does not feel pain of others is not a human heart, it is a heart of lion. The forehead which does not become wet with the perspiration of penitence is not a human forehead; it is a piece of rock. The hand which does not move forward to serve humanity is virtually paralysed and lifeless. The claw of a lion is better than that hand of a person which cuts the throat of another human-being." (S. A.)

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# The Arabs Must Win

## Inconceivable Success

It is undoubtedly true that the international Zionism has been successful in achieving many of its objectives beyond its wildest dreams. Most of these aims of the Zionists would have earlier appeared to be simply airy hopes and day-dreams even to the Jews themselves, much less to the Arabs or, for that matter, to any other people, but these have since been attained quite easily and are now accomplished facts.

## Establishment of Israel

The State of Israel was first established in the centre of the Arab world, near its sacred places, and then it was strengthened and abetted by the Zionists to inflict a grievous blow to the most powerful nation of the Arabs. It was enabled to destroy not only the Air Force Egypt in a few hours but also to capture Jerusalem along with the western bank of Jordan and Sinai peninsula within a couple of days. But what is even more dangerous for the Arabs is the loss of self-confidence and shattering of their will and determination to fight their foe. Almost all the cities of Egypt are now within the striking range of Israel which has also wrested several hill positions of strategic importance from Syria and has the audacity to strafe the aerodromes and military targets in the surrounding Arab countries at its sweet will. It is now thinking of enslaving the

## S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

entire Arab world and taking possession of even the holy places in Saudi Arabia.

## Aims of Zionism

Several leaders of Israel have not even deemed it worth while to keep a secret of their despicable aim to recapture all those towns of the pre-Islamic Arabia which had, at one time or the other, been subjugated by them. Zionism is now looking forward to the day when it shall become the greatest power on earth as promised in the Talmud and the Protocols of the learned elders of Zion, and when all the heads of national states of the world shall deem it an honour to serve *Pax Judaeica*.

## The Fundamental Question

It is really a matter of grave concern requiring our immediate attention whether the happenings in the past are also a portent of the grim future when Zionism shall be able to achieve its terrible objectives that are yet to be accomplished? Will all the Muslims and the Arabs be left to the tender mercies of a handful scheming and ambitious Jews? Will the Jews continue to achieve these astounding victories one after another till they manage to dominate the entire world? Will they be able to attain all these sinister aims to propagate the intolerably arrogant view of racial superiority of the Jews, and enforce the supposedly promised ascendancy of the Children of Israel

with the might of their arms? Will they be enabled to wield the scepter of authority over the nations of the world so as to dictated, guide and enforce obedience over them in the way certain nations and religious and ideological communities had been allowed by Providence, in the own hey-day of supremacy, to enjoy the privilege in the past?

We cannot, of course, give any conclusive or final answer to this question unless we cast a glance over this wondrous and limitless Universe and direct our thoughts to its Superb Creator, His nature and attributes, the laws promulgated by Him form conducting the affairs of the world as well as the historical process and experience gained by man during his terrestrial sojourn on this planet.

### **Divine Will**

Now, are we to assume that the Lord and creator of the Universe has created our planet simply for unfolding an uncanny drama of senseless destruction and devastation, devilish violence and turmoil, cleverly-concealed espionage and cloak-and-dagger tactics? Has this vast panorama of nature-the superb mechanism of the Universe exhibiting order and design, beauty and grace, utility and purpose-been created merely to suffer the domination of a race which is allegedly supposed to be the progeny of certain prophets of pre-historic times? Was the Divine guidance vouchsafed to mankind, the Divine revelation brought by the prophets of God and the path of truth and piety walked by the illustrious sons of Adam merely to pass on the scepter of authority to a certain people

who claimed to be the "chosen race" and the "Children of God" by virtue of their inheriting a few particles of blood form the prophets of old-a claim which can neither be verified even by the most powerful microscope nor established by any valid scientific definition.

### **Vicious Assumptions**

Now, If we agree to the claim of the Jews that they are the only people endowed with the endless capabilities of the head and heart, that intelligence and wisdom are their exclusive domain and that all the other nations of the world are no better then the worthless chaff, devoid of brains and intellect, talent and prudence; then, one should have no difficulty in acknowledging the other claim too that these "holy people unto the Lord" have been chosen "above al nations that are upon the earth to rule over them. The Jews would then be justified in their claim that the goyim a flock of sheep-should be entrusted to the care of their wolves that is the Jaws. It should then indeed be the birthright of the Jews to use the non-Jews as pawns in their game of power politics.

Similarly, we shall have to assume that human nature is essentially vicious and meritless and that "men with bad instincts are more in number that the good" people prize anarchy and destruction, more than order and reconstruction. Human nature is assailed with doubt and distrust; its wistful dubiousness brands everything with suspicion; and being dissatisfied with its past and future both, it is eternally consumed in the fire of its own caprice and hatred, revolt and revenge. The heart of man is an abode



of senseless and vicious enmity against everything existing under the sun: man is prone to find fault with everything and to take delight in whatever is shady and dark in his heritage; being himself burdened with inferiority complex, he is not prepared to concede equality to man is prone to find fault with everything and to take delight in whatever is prone to find fault with in his heritage: being himself burdened with inferiority complex, he is not prepared to concede equality to others. Indifferent to all the values of nobility, virtue and charity, man has no other ideal than the satisfaction of his carnal desires, has no other view of life than crass materialism. As a conqueror, he is a merciless avenging brute but turns into a miserable coward when vanquished. Nothing is bad enough for him if it serves his purpose: deceit, injustice, cruelty, hypocrisy or no other nadir of depravity is ill beseeming so long as it can be helpful in achieving his end.

It shall have to be assumed, then, that the main prop of human actions and the driving force behind the history of mankind, civilization and culture, in short, the common urge of humanity is nothing else than espionage and treachery and that "the principal factor of success in the political is the secrecy of its undertaking. The social, in the last analysis, on breaking up of family bonds, crossing the limits of decency, fomenting the spirit of revolt and rebellion, popularizing intemperate drunkenness and luxurious living- the secret hands of the saboteurs and agent provocateurs are the only potent

instruments for bringing about any change in the existing order. Man has, thus, to repose confidence in deception and fraud, infidelity and treachery, meanness and viciousness; for, notwithstanding the detestable means to employed, egoism and conceitedness are the only qualities favoured by God and crowned with success.

Let us then also suppose that the besmirched face of humanity has ever been so; instead of having peace, amity, fraternity and kindness, it has always had to oscillate from one war to another, from one shocking tragedy to another, and from one misery to another; and it is ultimately doomed to fall in the raging inferno of hate and anger, wrath and rancor, jealousy and selfishness.

Then, we shall have also to assume that prophethood and divine revelation are meaningless; conscience and the moral sense do not exist; neither there is any Divine Law nor is the same at all necessary for the life of man. There is only one reality, one truth, and life of man. There is only one reality one truth, and that is the racial superiority, of blood. Noble descent, ancient traditions, hatred of others and an intense and haughty desire to regain the lost glory and possessions of the forefathers by hook or by crook.

In sum, if we are prepared to accept all these preposterous assumptions, then, undoubtedly, Jews have a right of "directing humanity towards that order which is defined by nature, namely, submission." We can also infer from it that the present state of affairs brought about by the conspiracy

of international Zionism will continue; the policy of extending its frontiers by ruthlessly grabbing the territories of its neighbours would be successful despite all impediments; and, the insidious plots hatched by the satanic minds of the Jews shall work out according to their plan. Such is the portrait of the Jews which emerges from the books of the old Testament, Talmud and the protocols, the speeches of their leaders, proceedings of their meetings and, above all, the actions of the Zionist leaders after the war in June, 1967.

But we should never forget that this is a picture tinged with caprice and hatred. This portrait vividly depicts the age-old vendetta nourished by the Jews against all the other nations of the world, on the one hand and veneration of their own blood to the point of immoral consecration, on the other, and which has given birth to their national characteristics of intrigue, crime and violence.

And this is not a portrait of the present-day Jew alone: he has been so down the ages. Intrigue and crime, violence and high-handed tactics have been the essential ingredients of the Jewish heritage, their inborn tendencies which could clearly be discerned at any time or place where they have happened to reside, like a pivot on which their entire intelligence and endeavours have always revolved for the satisfaction of their ulterior motives. There has been the master mind and the secret hand behind every insurrection and revolution, and every movement intrigue, lawlessness and anarchy, and every movement designed to foment social, political,

economic and moral disintegration of the non-Jewish people. An eminent Jew, Dr. Oscar Levy, exultingly summed up the characteristics of Jews when he claimed that in fact they are the rulers of the world; mischief mongers who foment every trouble and turmoil, wherever it might be.

### **The Jews have no Message for Humanity**

The Jews have never had any message of salvation for the humanity. The reason for this is that the ideas bound up with superiority of Jewish race, and its predetermined salvation simply by virtue of birth, no matter what one believes or what one does, are signally incompatible with the spirit of any universal message of brotherhood and equality of mankind. Conversely speaking, the denial of the equality of human beings is irreconcilably opposed to any transcendental call meant for the whole mankind. In fact, the very acceptance of the idea of superiority of a particular race which, in its view, is endowed with all the noble qualities of head and heart is to be uncharitable to all other nations. This view of life and the world is fundamentally opposed to any ideology which is meant for the entire world and which is willing to share its message, its teachings and benefits with every human being. Such an idea, naturally, delimits even the scope of divine guidance and salvation and places restriction of its dissemination beyond the closed circle of one's blood kins. And this is the reason why Judaism could never become a universal religion, and why the Jews were not required by their own scriptures to preach and convert other

people to their faith. On the contrary, the scriptures of the Jews expressly prohibit missionary endeavour. The logical result of such an attitude was that the Jews should discriminate against other nations and evolve such norms of virtue and vice, right and wrong which should make allowance for the superiority of one race over the other. And, then, nothing more is required to justify and persist in the cruelest injustice against the non-Jewish people. The holy Quran alludes to this very attitude of the Jews when it says: "That is because they say: We have no duty to the Gentiles."

It is thus crystal clear why all those nations which ever happen to fall under the domination of the Jews are subjected to flagrant injustice and barefaced tyranny. The Jews simply do not treat such people as human beings having certain fundamental rights: they regard them to be no more than beasts of burden or lifeless objects created to serve the beloved "Children of God."

### **Judgement of Reason**

The Light of reason endowed by God and the wisdom vouchsafed in the revelations, which undeniably lay stress on love and compassion, justice and equity of the Lord and Creator, refute the assumption that the purpose of the creation of this marvelous universe and the vicegerent of God on earth is to tolerate rapacious despotism of one race over all others. Similarly, the sequence of cause and effect, properties immanent in every object and substance, the laws governing the rise and fall of empires, nations and civilizations, unmistakably point out that the Master and Creator of our Universe

does not favour any particular race for tribe, nation or country. History of mankind too bears irrefutable testimony to the fact that the nations prosper and rise if their message, with the laws of nature, and hence more beneficial to humanity. The holy Quran expresses the same idea in these words:

"Then as for the foam, it passeth away as scum upon the banks, while as for that which is of use to mankind, it remaineth in the earth."

### **War with Nature**

These facts conclusively establish the truth that the Jews, challenging the law of nature and the Divine purpose for which this Universe and the master-piece of all creations, man, was created, and denying the inherent longing of man for peace and prosperity, welfare and happiness, shall not be allowed to enjoy the fruits of their dubious success achieved at the cost of flagrant violation of justice. The horrid dream of the Jews for world domination shall never materialize: their destructive and detestable plots against mankind shall never gain the day, no matter how many states lend their support or whatever destructive weapons are amassed by them.

### **Victory is Certain**

It is therefore as clear as day that only those will ultimately be victorious who treat the entire progeny of Adam as members of one family, whose compassion and benevolence are for every man, who uphold the banner of justice and truth.

### **Temporary Success of Destructive Forces**

Darkly treacherous and perfidious minds, destructive and

sanguine, conceited and gasping, as they usually are, (which are prone to deny human rights and norms of moral conduct) have often won splendid victories. Sometimes their sweep to smashing conquests have had such a demoralizing sweep to smashing conquests have had such a demoralizing effect that people had begun to lose their faith in the efficacy of truth and justice, godliness and piety. Annals of history contain records of several instances when the destruction wrought by the dark forces have made the bravest and most learned people lose all hope in the Divine succour. The Quran has graphically described these occasions in the following verses:

"Till, when the messengers despaired and thought that they were denied, then came unto them Our help, and whom We would was saved. And Our wrath cannot be warded from the guilty."

"When they came upon you from above you and from below you, and when eyes grew wild and hearts reached to the throats, and ye were imagining vain thoughts concerning Allah."

"There were the believers sorely tried, and Human mind has been so tempered that one gets deeply impressed by every victory, howsoever short-lived or insignificant it may be. Here is the Quranic remedy for this weakness of man:

"Let not the vicissitude (of the success) of those who disbelieve in the land, deceive thee (O Muhammad)."

"It is but a brief comfort. And afterward their habitation will be hell, an ill abode."

Again. The Quran says:

"None argue concerning the revelations of Allah save those who disbelieve, so let not their turn of fortune in the land deceive thee (O Muhammad)."

The Quran also warns that the apparent success achieved through deceitful means will soon turn into an ignoble defeat. The warning given by the Quran also serves as a timely cure for the inborn weakness of man to be deceived by the short-lived success of intrigue and conspiracy.

".....and to the frailest of all houses is the spider's house, if they but knew."

The Quran is emphatic that no good can ever come out of evil, for, like the tree which has no roots grounded deep into the earth, the evil is bound to come down crashing any moment.

"Is he who founded his building upon duty to Allah and His good pleasure better, or he who founded his building on the brink of a crumbling, over-hanging precipice so that it toppled with him into the fire of hell? Allah guideth not wrong-doing folk."

Again, it says:

"And the similitude of a bad saying is as a bad tree, uprooted from upon the earth, possessing no stability."

It alludes to the same fact by quoting what Moses said to the magicians of Pharaoh:

"Moses said: That which ye have brought is magic. Lo! Allah up-holdeth not the work of mischief-makers."

The Quran tells us that the final outcome of insidious plots is grievous failure. ".....and the evil plot encloseth but the men who make it. Then, can they

expect aught save the treatment of the folk of old? Thou wilt not find for Allah's way of neither treatment any substitute, nor wilt thou find for Allah's way of treatment aught of power to change."

'And again,

".....but those who plot iniquities, theirs will be an awful doom; and the plotting of such (folk) will come to naught."

The Quran proclaims a Universal Truth which transcends time and space, race and country, fleeting success and failure, transient victory and defeat; and, quite indifferent to those who are awe-stricken by the pretentious success of the ambitious kings and war-lords, it advises thus:

"Then have patience. Lo! The sequel is for those who ward off (evil)."

"And say: "Truth hath come and falsehood hath vanished away. Lo! Falsehood is ever bound to vanish."

### **Arabs-The Custodians of Divine Guidance**

Despite all their failing to which I have already referred to in several of my speeches and writings, the Arabs are, unlike Jews, the custodians of Divine message of universal fraternity, love and equality of mankind. They have had the privilege of being addressed by Allah and favoured with that Divine Guidance which is meant for the entire humanity, without any distinction of race and colour: No privilege, no prerogative, no immunity was granted as a birthright to the Arabs, or, to one of their tribes as claimed by *Bani Lavi* of the Jews or the Brahmins of India. The standard applied by this message of peace, that is Islam, to judge the nobility, prestige and higher

rank of a man did not go by race or blood. Righteousness and endeavour in the way of God were the only criteria admitted for rendering honour to any individual. Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal has narrated a Tradition of the holy Prophet of Islam wherein he is reported to have said:

"If knowledge were to be had even on Pleiades, some of the people of Persia would have acquired it."

### **Large-heartedness of the Arabs**

The Arabs have always been broad-minded enough to pay homage to all those non-Arabs who have ever achieved any distinction in the field of religious learning. They have acknowledged such persons as their religious leaders and very often paid such glowing tributes to them as one would fail to find even for the Arab scholars. Imam Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari (d.356/966) was awarded the title of Amir-ul-mominin." Of the science of Traditions while Imam Abul Ma'ali Abdul Malik al-Juwaini (d.478/1095) of Nishapur was known as "Imam-ul-Harmin." Al-Ghazali (d.505/1111) was recognized as *Hujjat-ul-Islam*." Several Persians and non-Arab mawalis had, in fact, been acknowledged as savants, saints and leaders of religious thought the wide and far-flung Islamic realm, by the close of the first century after Hijrah. The entire Islamic literature-history, translations. Biographies and several features of Islamic culture bear out the fact that the non-Arabs continued to dominate the religious, cultural and educational fields of the Arab civilization so completely that Ibn

Khaldun (d.808/1406) expressed his amazement over it. He writes: "It is rather strange that most of the Muslim savants and scholars-in the field of religious as well as secular sciences were non-Arabs. Despite the fact that this is an Arab civilization and the Prophet was also an Arab, the compiler of Arabic grammar was Saibuya, and after him came Abu Ali and Zajjaj, and all these were non-Arabs. Similar is the case in other branches of learning-among the scholars of Traditions, jurisprudence, dialectics and exegesis".

### **Dignity of Mankind**

The Arabs are instinctively more alive to the equality and dignity of human race than other nations of the world and they have also wholeheartedly translated it into practice. This had been the guiding principle of the Arabs during the era of their glorious victories, when the world learnt from them the new concepts of knowledge, culture, piety, dignity of man, and the like. It was only due to the Arab's sense of compassion, equality and dignity of mankind that instead of nourishing hatred for their conquerors, the vanquished people began to love and adore them. The inhabitants of Sind and Multan had installed an idol of Muhmmad Ibn Qasim, the conqueror of Sind, among the myriad gods they worshipped, as a mark of their respect and love for him. The extremely lenient and just treatment administered to the people of Samarkand by Umar ibn Abdul Aziz cleared the way for swift conversion of the inhabitants of surrounding areas to Islam. Most of the countries conquered by the Arabs

adopted their culture and religion and even the Arabic language in preference to their own way of living and local dialects. The stirring pronouncement of Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab, made to admonish one of his most brilliant generals, will ever shed lustre on the character of the Arabs. Caliph Umar had said to Amar ibn Al-Aas:

"Whence didst thou make slaves of these people who had been born free from the wombs of their mothers."

### **A Truthful and Sincere People**

The Arabs had never been deceitful, imposters, hypocrites or plotters, thanks to their natural inclination towards truthfulness, sincerity and straightforwardness, either during the age of *Jahiliyah* (Ignorance) or after the advent of Islam. They were either friends or foes: they first challenged the enemy before engaging in hostilities and openly entered into alliances of mutual help. The character of the Arabs as depicted by the historians shows that they were a rank and generous people-their folklore, their tribal feuds and forays, their language and literature-all these lead to one conclusion only, and it is that duplicity and deceit have been foreign to the Arab character. Almost all the commentators of the Quran hold the view that hypocrites were not to be found in Mecca mainly because the town was free from foreign influences. This is also the reason why the Meccan verses of the Quran do not make any mention of hypocrisy and all the verses dealing with this problem were revealed in Madina, Some of the commentators quote the following verse of the Quran in support of their contention:

"And among those around you of the wandering Arabs there are hypocrites, and among the townspeople of Al-Madinah (there are some who) persist in hypocrisy whom thou (O Muhammad) knowest not."

Therefore, in all those lands where the Arabs predominate or have a hand in the mankind of their culture and politics, there is no danger of any movement coming up to achieve its end through intrigue, conspiracy or any other secret device. The Arabs, owing to the peculiar traits of their character, are averse to double-dealing and defection, sedition and creating unnecessary distinctions of class or creed. Their nationalism has no place for the chauvinistic, cramped and parochial policies, blind to the demands of justice and fair-play, and discrimination against non-Arabs.

### **Aggressive Nationalism and Partisanship**

In so far as the menace of present-day aggressive nationalism and partisan spirit raising its head in certain Arab countries is concerned, it owes its existence to the blind imitation of the West by certain demoralized politicians. It is, in truth and reality, an extraneous tendency foreign to the truly Islamic and Arabs characteristics, and shall be overcome by the latter no sooner than the domination of the misguided Arab leadership comes to an end. Whenever this peace and solace in the lap of their enchanting faith which is entrenched deep down into the recesses of their hearts. The edict of Allah has already proclaimed that:

"O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have

made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! The noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct, Lo! Allah is knower, Aware."

"The entire human race is the progeny of Adam; and Adam was made of clay. No Arab has a precedence over a non-Arab save on account of his piety and awe of God."

### **Islam: The Eternal Message of God**

If Islam is the final and eternal edition of Divine Guidance for humanity, if God has undertaken to preserve it till the Day of Judgment and if God is the protector of His last word, the Quran, then, the Arabs are also assured of their continued existence as a distinct and dignified people. God has guaranteed the safe preservation of the holy Quran in no uncertain words:

"Lo! We, even We, reveal the Reminder, and lo! We verily are its Guardian."

The Quran cannot be preserved in its pristine purity without keeping alive the Arabic language and the language itself cannot last without the Arabs. This is bound to be so if the promise of God is to be fulfilled. It is unthinkable that the eternal and universal message of God should become an obscure riddle or unintelligible document of merely historical importance to be preserved in the archives and museums. Likewise, it is inconceivable that Arabs should become as extinct as the Phoenician and Hamitic languages of yore. Allah, the Most High and the Almighty, can cause to turn the course of events in favour of the Arabs, if only to re-emphasise His benevolent vouchsafed

the message of peace for the world. In the same way, it appears to be against Divine Wisdom that the Arabs should be condemned to slavery for any length of time; since, this is likely to rob them of their dignity, capability and courage-qualities so essential for the guidance of humanity. Nor can it be deemed to accord with the Divine Will that these areas should ever fall into the evil clutches of the Jews. These are the very lands from where the light of Islam once radiated and illuminated the whole world in no time. The history, culture and language of the Muslims and the development of Islam are so intimately linked with these regions that no parallel can be cited in the religious history of the world. Here is the land with the Holy of the Holies, the sacred House of God, which has been an object of the absorbing love of countless Muslims in every age. This is the place which has always been treated as a sanctuary of peace. Then there is also the city of the Prophet, the nursery of Islam and recipient of the greater part of Divine revelations. All these regions constitute the citadel of Islam and they have numerous places sacred to Muslims living all over the world. No other Islamic country, nay, not a thousand of them, howsoever strong and populous they might be, can preserve the honour of Islam if these areas are lost by the Arabs. Verily, it is absolutely correct. As the saying goes, that Islam would be degraded if the Arabs were to suffer indignity.

It is thus evident that the present state of affairs, unnatural and illogical as it is, cannot last long. Human nature and reason, the logic of things, natural

laws governing this Universe, religious teachings, predictions contained in the scriptures, geographical, the lesson taught by history, and even a realistic assessment of political situation (unless it is dangerously tainted by a partisan spirit to back the aggressor at any cost,) conclusively indicate that this tragic situation should soon be altered.

### **The War of 1967 and Islam**

The temporary success achieved by Zionism in the war of June, 1967, cannot be treated as a victory of one call or message, philosophy or religion, over another. The Jews have never had a message for the world, nor have they one today. The battle fought on the fifth of June, 1967, was also not a confrontation of Islam and Judaism, not even between the Jews and the Arab nations taken as a whole. The Muslims and the Arabs were in fact never allowed to participate in the struggle: they were kept at an arm's length, in accordance with a well-calculated plot, to deny them any effective role in this confrontation. The so-called victory of the Jews was, thus, at its best, the success gained by a realistic and intelligent leadership over a miscalculating and worthless dictatorship. There is no denying the fact that at least for once in their history after thousands of years, the Jews were fortunate enough to have such persons as their leaders who were able to raise them from ignominy and disgrace. They, undoubtedly, created history. And it is a misfortune of the Arabs that their leadership has been unable to do justice to them and to their history. Their leaders have pushed them between the devil and the deep sea, and now they



can neither retreat nor go ahead.

The fate of the Arabs is not doomed, however. Whatever mistakes the Arabs leadership might have committed and however serious these might have been there is still room to make amends and turn the corner.

### **Blind Imitation of Others**

It is the philosophy of life that makes or mars a nation; but no philosophy borrowed from others can revivify a sickly people.

The Arab-Islamic millat does not need a new call, religion or philosophy of life to fill itself with an ardent zeal, spirit and courage: there has in fact been no diminution of spirit and the millat is prepared, as ever, to undergo the greatest sacrifice for its faith. But, alas, its leadership is like a tidal-wave which often rises sky high only to make its presence felt by all. It sometimes encloses a ship to submerge it beneath the sea, and, then, loses its own identity in the surging ocean, which ever remains where it was, unchanged, unperturbed.

### **The Leadership of the Arabs**

We have come across several such leaders in the past who rose to towering heights only to go down in history unsung, unlamented, How many empires they founded which were shattered to pieces in the twinkling of an eye. Yet, Islam remained sparking and zestful as ever with the same call, the same Quran and the same faith in the eternal Truths.

### **The Change Must come**

Every nation, unless it is dead and gone, has to face the inevitable vicissitudes, ups and downs, in order to test its strength and purge the

unwholesome elements. These painful ordeals fortify a nation against being cast down by adversity or become yielding to flattering vanity in the hour of sweeping victory:

"That ye grieve not for the sake of that which has escaped you, nor yet exult because of that which hath been given."

A nation which can bravely endure all afflictions and adversities is like a healthy person who can stand against illness and the changes of weather. The Arabs have, by the same token, to breast the current of opposition for they have been the custodians of the noblest call for humanity; and, therefore, final victory is their destiny as promised by Almighty God and guaranteed by the holy Quran.

"Systems have passed away before you. Do but travel in the land and see the nature of the consequence for those who did deny (the messengers).

"This is a declaration for mankind, a guidance and admonition unto those who ward off (evil).

"Faint not nor grieve, for ye will overcome them if ye are (indeed) believers.

"If ye have received a blow the (disbelieving) people have received a blow the like thereof. These are (only) the vicissitudes which We cause to follow one another for mankind, to the end that Allah may know those who believe and may choose witnesses from among you; and Allah loveth not wrong-doers.

"And that Allah may prove those who believe and may blight the disbelievers." ●

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## Two Kinds of Knowledge

S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi

We need two types of knowledge in this world. Islam lays stress on acquisition of both. One refers to religious and divine knowledge. It leads us as to how we attain pleasure of Allah and achieve His propinquity. It exhorts us as to how we can pass a peaceful life and what is right and what is wrong. It also tells us what outcome will be of our deeds and acts in the hereafter. This divine knowledge brought and conveyed by Prophets and messengers. Their followers communicated and disseminated it in their respective periods.

Knowledge brought by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the last one. Adherents of Islam must acquire it and also motivate others to achieve this great asset. Islam emphasizes its followers to attain this essence. The first revelation of Islam begins with reading and recitation. The holy Qur'an says: "Read in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, Who created man, out of a leech-like clot: Read! and thy Lord is most bountiful, He who taught the use of pen. Taught man that which he knew not". (5,96 A, 1-5)

The blessed Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

"Seeking knowledge is incumbent upon every Muslim man and woman". "Seek knowledge from cradle to the grave". He further said: "when the human being dies, all his deeds come to an end except for three: Firstly, Sadqah (charity) that never ends, secondly, the knowledge that benefits, thirdly, the pious offering that prays for him."

The second Caliph Hazrat Umar (R) said: "The death of a thousand worshippers who spend their days in fasting and their nights in continual prayer is a lesser calamity than the passing away of one learned man who is aware what is lawful before God and what is unlawful."

The other kind of knowledge relates to mundane one. It is a parade ground of man's intellect and his experimental abilities and thoughts. The holy Prophet has said: "This is your worldly affairs". No doubt, man develops and enhances his mental horizon through this tool. The Qur'an and Sunnah both urge man to ponder over it and think of the secrets of the world. The Qur'an says: "Behold! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, there are indeed signs for

men of understanding". (5.3,A,190) It further says: "Soon will We show them our signs in the furthest regions of the earth, and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the truth. Is it not enough that thy Lord doth witness all things?" (S 41 A, 53)

Needless to add that man demarcates his life direction through this instrument. He can derive benefit as much as he aspire and serve humanity. But he should keep it in mind that this mundane knowledge does not oppose to divine and religious knowledge.

History bears witness that Muslims left no stone unturned in earning this type of knowledge in their developed era. They did not only develop it but widened its dimensions by their research and experiences. That is why when Europe was passing through darkness and ignorance of the Middle Ages, Muslim world was Producing scholars, thinkers, educationists and eminent masters of physical and social sciences. European writers have quite often acknowledged that for six hundred years Europe learnt and benefited from the researches and treasures of knowledge of Muslims before commencing their march to Progress. ●

(Translated by Obaidur Rahman Nadwi)

## **Ten Things we Waste**

- 1- Knowledge: Wasted when not taking action with it.
- 2- Actions: Wasted when we do anything without sincerity.
- 3- Wealth: Wasted, when used on things that will not bring us reward. We waste our money, our status, our authority, on things that have no benefit in this life or in the Hereafter.
- 4- Hearts: Wasted when empty from the love of Allah and devoid of peace and contentment.
- 5- Bodies: Wasted when we do not use them in worship and service of Allah and in serving humankind.
- 6- Love: Wasted when our emotional love is misdirected, not towards Allah, but towards something/someone else.
- 7- Time: Wasted when not used properly, by not doing what is righteous.
- 8- Intellect: Wasted on things that are detrimental to society and the individual, not in contemplation or reflection.
- 9- Service: Wasted when in service of someone who will not bring us closer to Allah.
- 10- Dhikr: Wasted when it does not affect our hearts. ●

## Environmental Ethics in Qur'an

Abdul Al

Verily, all things have We created in proportion and measures. (Qur'an. LIV:49)

Of the numerous challenges man faces today, the most crucial one is that the very stability of the human society is threatened by the stockpiles of nuclear weapons. Which are said to contain may times the destructive power needed to destroy all human life on earth. The irony is that both major powers and suppressed peoples are equally in trouble. Neither of them is safe from the torments of the excessive materialist civilization developed at the cost of the spiritual aspect of man's life.

Even if the nuclear buttons are not pressed, the modern man has already done enough harm to this planet through his excessive exploitation of its natural resources, creating thereby a grave environmental crisis. His behaviour in this respect may be likened to killing the very goose that lays the golden eggs. If this goes unchecked immediately, it is bound to render human life utterly miserably by heaping a wide range of problems and risks from the current global climate change like increase in global warming, sea level rise, crop productivity declines, and rise in the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere leading to depletion of the ozone layer which serves as a shield against ultraviolet radiation, known to cause skin cancer and several other diseases.

In short, the ongoing environmental crisis has become so alarming and catastrophic that some immediate, lasting solution has to be found to the present predicament. The Quran plays an important role in resolving the global environmental holocaust.

### Role of Religion in Conservation of Nature

It is gratifying to note the teachings of all the major religions are replete with exhortations and guidelines for the conservation of nature and wild life. It is not surprising to find that all of them point to the existence of some sort of cosmic order which binds together the entire universe by a Divine law. The main reason for this commonality is that the source of the teachings of them is the same the Almighty Creator.

This (the law of righteousness and godliness) is in the earliest scriptures also including those given to Abraham and Moses.

It is believed that all the animate and inanimate objects in nature reflect the glory and love of Allah. Thus the nature attains a sort of sacramental character whereby each of its inhabitants should be respected and taken care of by others. The application of religious wisdom therefore, is the only alternative, which has the potential of solving the environmental crisis.

It is heartening to note that in th

amidst of dark clouds hovering all around, some sure rays of hope have also started shining in the form of increased environmental consciousness among both scientists and scholars in recent times. For instance, the Declaration of Religion and Nature made at Assisi (Italy) in September 1986 was the first international attempt to bring all the religions closer in the contribution towards environmental conservation and interfaith cooperation while understanding and resolving this crisis. The recently concluded thirteenth Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held at Bali, Indonesia, further stressed the seriousness of this problem in a rather effective manner. Renowned scientist Albert Einstein has also said Religion without science is blind; while science without religion is lame.

### **Environment-friendly teachings of the Qur'an**

Since the Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in the full glare of history, it was designed not only to perpetuate the religious wisdom of earlier revelation, but also to appeal to reason and intellect of the modern inquisitive human being in a more elaborate and convincing manner. There are around 750 verses in the Qur'an, about one-eighth of the book that repeatedly draw the attention of man to reflect and meditate on different manifestations of nature described as *ayah* (signs and symbols) of the Almighty Allah. All created things, both animate and inanimate, are mentioned in the Qur'an as living

entities that are busy worshipping the Lord and glorifying His praises. They are also portrayed as having a definite purpose to serve as well as to function together as a whole in an integrated manner, thereby constituting the ecosystem designed to suit the existence of human life on earth. Thus, Islam enhanced man's knowledge of the intricacies of nature's ecology in a significant manner by pointing out that all natural phenomena are interconnected and inter-dependent, and that the entire cosmos is sustained by certain definite laws that are inherent in each object and are in harmony with each other.

Moreover, the very ecosystem from which man is deriving his sustenance could not have been possible but for the existence of other known and unknown objects of nature in a state of perfect harmony. Consider, for example, the following verses:

Behold in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day, there are indeed signs for men of understanding—men who celebrate the praises of God, standing, and lying down on their sides and contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth, (with the thought): Our Lord! Not for naught hast Thou created (all) this. Glory to Thee! Give us Salvation from the penalty of the Fire.

And We have given you (mankind) power in the earth, and appointed for you therein a livelihood, Little give ye thanks.

And the earth have We spread out, placed therein firm hills, and caused each seemingly thing to grow

therein. And We have given unto you livelihoods therein, and unto those for whom ye provide not.

If Allah were to take mankind to take for their wrongdoing, he would not leave hereon a living creature.

The Islamic view of the natural order and the environment is further reflected in the fact that the religion of Islam is defined in the Qur'an as *din al-fitrat* (religion of naturalness), which is a general invitation to mankind to go back to the life of nature with discipline.

Even paradise is depicted in the Qur'an in the form of gardens with rivers constantly flowing beneath: For those who believe and do righteous deeds will be in gardens, beneath which rivers flow: That is the great salvation (the fulfillment of all desires).

The Qur'an has drawn the attention of man to the inherent equilibrium and balance that pervades the entire universe, where everything is created in due balance and measured proportion. Even the vegetable kingdom providing varieties of crops, fruits, flowers, medicinal herbs, etc., is not only a source of sustenance to man and other living creatures, but also plays an important role in maintaining the ecological balance on earth to the advantage of mankind.

And the earth We have spread out) like a carpet); set thereon mountains firm and immovable; and produced therein all kinds of things in due balance.

Verily, all things have We created in proportion and measures.

Besides, Allah enlightens man on exact mathematical laws governing

different earthly and celestial creatures as well as maintaining perfect balance in the great astronomical universes along with clear-cut instructions not to damage the inherent equilibrium of nature in any manner.

The sun and the moon follow courses (exactly) computed; and the herbs and the tree-both alike bow in adoration. And the Firmament He has raised high, and He has set up the balance in order that ye may not transgress the balance.

It is interesting to note that of all the living creatures. Man alone is given the status of being *khalifat-Allah* (vicegerent of Allah) on earth. Hence he must show the care which Allah displays towards all His creatures, and that he must possess the love which runs through the arteries of the universe.

Besides, according to the Qur'an, man is empowered not only to correct himself and better his fortune but also to influence the state of nature by his observance of the environmental ethics as well as through his deeds and actions, while the rest of the creation is conditioned to respond as benefactors and malefactors to his constructive (justified and good) and destructive (unjustified and bad) deeds respectively.

In other words, if man remains faithful to the God's purpose of creation, he would not only improve his own life, but also become a key factor in affecting the global eco-system. The realization of this phenomenon is known in religious parlance as spiritual enlightenment. The observation of this point is based on the following Qur'anic

verses.

Mischief has appeared on land sea because of that the hands of men have earned, that (God) may give them a taste of some of their deeds in order that they may turn back (from Evil):

So eat and drink of the sustenance provided by Allah, and do no evil nor mischief on the face of the earth.

Eat and drink, but waste not by excess; for Allah loveth not the wasters.

What can God gain by your punishment, if ye are grateful and ye believe?

If the people of the towns had but believed and feared God, We would indeed have opened out to them (all kinds of) blessings from heaven and earth; but they rejected (the truth), and We brought them to book for their misdeeds.

Prophet Muhammad's Instructions to shun En-vironmental Pollution.

The Prophet (PBUH), regarded as the Qur'an in action, was conscious of the necessity to keep the environment neat and clean and hence his teachings included cleanliness of the body, hands, teeth, nails and hair; cleanliness of dress, eatables and drinkables; cleanliness roads, dwelling places and cities; and cleanliness of the sources of water, i.e., rivers, ponds and wells to check water pollution. Some of the measures he prescribed for fighting environmental pollution as well as epidemic and contagious diseases are mentioned below:

Cleanliness is one half of the

faith.

Cleansing the teeth purifies the mouth and pleases Allah.

Guard against the three practices, which invoke curses of Allah; urination in the watering places, in the shade and on the thoroughfares.

If you hear of an epidemic in any place, do not proceed to it; and when it breaks out in your place, do not flee from it, so that the disease is not communicated to other places.

Another important measure taken by the Prophet in this direction was that he emphasized upon his followers the importance of botanical and agricultural activity on as large a scale as possible, saying:

Whosoever possesses land; he should either cultivate in himself or give it to his brother gratis for the purpose of cultivation. He can keep it with him uncultivated only if the brother refuses to cultivate it.

The act of planting a tree or of sowing seeds by a Muslim, thereby providing sustenance to birds or mankind or animals is but regarded as a charitable gift from him.

The impact of these teachings and its implementation on the medieval Arab-Muslim society was tremendous. Even some European writers are full of praise for them on this count. Their cities like Makkah, Madinah, Damascus, Baghdad, Cordova and Constantinople, were kept quite neat and clean. That was the main reason why the Muslim world, so long as it implemented these sanitary measures, was saved from the onslaught of dangerous epidemic which occurred in different parts of the



world, killing large numbers of people. It is noteworthy that the great plague known as the Black Death, which swept through Europe in the middle of the fourteenth century, killing one-fourth of its population, stopped at the borders of the Muslim world because of the Islamic measures of cleanliness alone.

George Bernard Shaw has, in his book. *The Doctor's Dilemma*, highly applauded the importance and role of the Islamic care of cleanliness in building a healthy society by describing that when Britain conquered the Muslim Sandwich Islands (now the Hawaiian Islands), it compelled the population to renounce Islam by Christianity than this led to outbreak of epidemic diseases in the Islands, because the formulators of the superseded native religion, like Mahomet, had been enlightened enough to introduce as religious duties such sanitary measures as ablution and the most careful and reverent treatment of everything cast off by the human body, even to nail clippings and hairs; and our missionaries thoughtlessly discredited this godly doctrine without supplying its place, which was promptly taken up by laziness and neglect.

It was only in the above comprehensive sense of the Prophet's overall teachings and practices that he was described in the Qur'an as a source of mercy for the entire universe including plant kingdom, animal kingdom, planets, etc., "We sent you not except as a mercy for the entire universe. No wonder, all prescribed prayers of Muslims are concluded by

invoking the peace and mercy of Allah for the entire universe when they repeatedly say in both right and left direction Peace and Mercy of Allah be upon you.

### **Conclusion**

It is manifestly clear that the current environmental crisis caused by the false, negative desires of man by throwing to the winds all norms of environmental ethics symbolizes the triumph of Satanic forces over the common sense of man as elaborated in the Qur'an: "I (Satan) will mislead them (mankind), and I will create in them false desires; I will order them to slit the ears of cattle and to deface the (fair) nature created by God. Whoever forsaking God, takes Satan for a friend, hath of a surety suffered a loss: that is manifest".

This devilish pattern of human behavior is undoubtedly the biggest problem of the modern world which is not tackled and corrected on an urgent basis, is bound to render human life on earth more miserable. And the way it is being handled by the international community at the political level is not at all encouraging. As such religious intervention is the only hope in resolving the global environmental crisis. The issue of protection of the environment can be tackled more efficiently if it is highlighted by the major religions of the world as a religious duty incumbent upon their respective followers by sensitizing them on the seriousness of the matter as well on their indispensable responsibility towards Nature and future generations of mankind.) ●

## **Godhra Revisited**

### **Court verdict may not bring a sense of closure**

The special court's verdict on the 2002 Godhra tragedy, much as it was overdue, is unlikely to bring a sense of closure. Having triggered one of the largest ever communal conflagrations, the burning of a coach in the Sabarmati Express-leading to the killing of 59 passengers, including women and children-is widely acknowledged as an inflection point in India's recent history. Separate judicial inquiries conducted by former Supreme Court judges-at the instance of the Narendra Modi government and the UPA in its first stint at the Centre-yielded conflicting findings on whether Godhra was the result of a terror conspiracy or an accident in the course of a quarrel between kar sevaks and vendors at the railway station. Though the trial court verdict of February 22, running into 815 pages, is presumably based on a more rigorous examination of evidence, the truth behind this politically surcharged mystery is yet far from clear. This is because even as it upheld the charge of conspiracy, the trial court found evidence to convict less than a third of the 94 accused persons. Adding to the confusion is the fact that the 63 acquitted persons include the two "main conspirators", Maulana Umarji and the then president of the Godhra municipality Bilal Hussain Kalota, who were allegedly instrumental in mobilizing the mob on the railway platform to set fire to the S-6 coach. In the light of such acquittals, it would seem that the conspiracy charge upheld by the court is nowhere as sinister and far-reaching as the one spelt out in the chargesheets filed by two special investigation teams, first of the Gujarat police and then of the Supreme court-appointed panel under former CBI director RK Raghavan.

This is a further climb-down from the conclusions jumped to pay Modi and the then Union home minister LK Advani right on the first day, linking the Godhra episode to a conspiracy hatched across the border. The terror charges framed on the basis of those premature conclusions have already been withdrawn on the directions of the POTA review committee and superior courts.

If the judgment delivered by a so-called fast-track can come after nine years, it is largely because the Supreme Court had, regrettably, stayed the trial for over five years to decide whether the Godhra and some post-godhra riot cases should be entrusted to an independent investigative agency. The inordinate delay turned the process into a punishment as most of the 63 acquitted persons had to languish in jail for almost nine years. The positive side is that the first of the Supreme Court-stayed cases has been decided and the rest are close to being disposed of. ●

(The Times of India, 24-02-2011)

## Europe Comes to Grips With Islam

*The number of Muslims in Europe is likely to reach one in five in 40 years' time, according to a study.*

An American institute forecast recently that by 2050, Muslims will account for over 20 per cent of the European Union's population.

Currently Muslims make up around 4 per cent of Europe's population, but a combination of immigration and higher birth rates among Muslims mean that the Muslim population is growing at an the Muslim population is growing at an exponentially faster rate than other segments of the European population. So much that Muslims are likely to reach one in five in 40 years' time.

This raises a question as to how this will change the face of Europe.

According to Iman Kurdi, a journalist, a sense of perspective is needed. 'One in five is still a minority. Islam is hardly going to become the dominant religion in Europe,' she writes in an article in the local daily *Arab News*.

She explains that population forecasts rarely get it right. Migration ebbs and flows according to economic, political and social factors that are hard to predict. There is also the assumption that birth rates will continue to follow the same pattern, with Muslim women bearing more children than their non-Muslim co-citizens. "All of this may not happen," she adds.

Kurdi says if Muslims do end up

making up one fifth of Europe's population by 2050, this should be good news for Europe 'because it will have incorporated some of Islam's richness into its already rich cultural heritage.'

She says Muslims are a very diverse group. Globally, Muslims currently make up a little over 23 per cent of the world's population, a little like the projection for Europe in 2050.

Similarly, Muslims in Europe are a highly diverse group and tend to organize themselves along their countries of origin.

European Muslims also differ greatly in the extent of their integration into their new homelands.

"The key question is how much more will they integrate by 2050? Will European Muslims become fully fledged European citizens, and by that mean citizens who are second, third, fourth generation born and who no longer label themselves as children of immigrants? And will they be seen that way by those whose ancestry goes back centuries rather than decades?" she asks.

There are an estimated 2.1 million Germans of Turkish origin. They make up Germany's largest Muslim community. "If integration succeeds they will no longer see themselves as Turkish-born German citizens, but as German Muslims. Since integration is a two-way process, this new Muslim identity will bring with it German characteristics and enrich Islamic

density. Extrapolate that to the 27 countries that make up the European Union and you can see the opportunities that it could bring," writes kurdi.

Spain's Muslim population is around one million, roughly 2 per cent of the population. Quite a bit smaller than neighbouring France that has Europe's largest Muslim population. Spain, however, has recently seen a surge in immigration. In the space of a decade, the percentage of the population that is over 13 per cent.

Der Spiegel, the German news magazine, reported some years ago that the number of Germans converting to Islam has quadrupled in recent years. It said that between July 2004 and June 2005, some 4,000 Germans converted to Islam four times more cases than in the year before.

Citing a study on Islamic life in Germany financed by the Interior Ministry, it said that while in recent years mostly women who married Muslim men converted many people today deliberately and voluntarily converted.

It added that the current debate around the integration of immigrants in Europe has put Islam on the forefront of Europe's media scene, causing it to become more widely known as an alternative.

According to Kurdi, "the knee-jerk re-action to any news that relates immigration figures is one of alarm and panic."

She quotes a Pew survey which found that 65 per cent of Spaniards are somewhat or very concerned about rising extremism in their country.

"It is no coincidence that the

moment there is talk of a 'Muslim demographic time bomb' the image that is shown is of a woman in a niqab. The burqa, as the niqab is wrongly described, has become a flag issue," she says. Of the millions of Muslim women living in Europe, only a few thousand wear it and yet several countries – France, Spain and Belgium to name just three – are bringing in legislation to ban it, she says.

A recent study for the Spanish government concluded that for the majority of Muslims living in Spain, religion is important to their lives and they believe and practice tolerance.

In 2008, some 400 Muslims groups in Brussels signed the Charter for the Muslims of Europe, describing their rights and responsibilities within European society. It has been welcomed by representatives of the European Parliament (EP).

"The Charter amounts to a code of good conduct for Muslims them to taking part in building a united society," says parliament vice-president Mario Mauro of the conservative Forza Italia party.

"It pledged Muslims to helping create harmony and well-being in our societies and to fully playing the role of citizens in upholding justice, equal rights and respect for difference," says Mauro, who is responsible for relations between the parliament and religious groups.

"The Charter is a message to government and the rest of society, but also directed at Muslims within Europe," says Ibrahim Elzayat, a spokesperson for the Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe

(FIOE), the co-coordinator of the process that resulted in the historic document.

FIOE represents some 29 Muslim organizations and more than 1,000 local groups, including the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB), the Union des organisations Islamiques de France (UOIF) and the Islamische Gemeinschaft in Deutschland (IGD).

"It describes how we should act as positive citizens in the societies in which we live and not be a threat," Elzayat was quoted as saying by Euro Observer.

The document contains 26 separate points, with a number of clauses that undoubtedly are aimed at dispelling myths about links between Islam and violence, as well clarifying the meaning of such terms as jihad.

The role of Muslims in Europe and European attitudes towards Islam has moved up on the political agenda of the European Union.

Meanwhile, centre-right Euro-deputies discussed EU-Islam relations. Focusing on religions education in schools, EU culture commissioner Jan Figel said that in most European schools, students are taught separately and only about their own religion.

He says Brussels would try and encourage member states to review school curricula, as well as mobility in their educational systems.

Swedish Conservative MEP (Member of European Parliament) and vice chairman of the EPP-ED group, Gunnar Hokmark, tells Euro Observer that even in countries that are not very religious, such as his native Sweden, people should know more about

religion, if for no other reason than to be able to distinguish what is not religion. "People wrongly link violence and terrorism to Islam," he says.

While there is an effort at understanding and harmony, there is also resentment against Muslims in Europe. In France, Germany and across Western Europe, a vigorous public debate is under way over preservation of national identities, the assimilation of minorities and tolerance of different cultures.

It is felt that there is an urgent need for research among Europe's diverse Muslim communities.

A new book *Apart: Alienated and Engaged Muslims in the West* by Justin Gest, reviewed in a local daily *Saud Gazette*, makes an important contribution in this regard, and challenges some of the conventional approaches and assumptions. ●

(Haj & Umra)

## **King Faisal Prize Awardees 2011**

Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Ex PM, Malaysia.

(Service to Islam)

Khalil Ibrahim Inalcik, Turkey & Md. Adnan B.I-Sheyyab, Jordan.

(Islamic Studies)

James A. Thmeson, US & Shinya Yamanaka, Japan.

(Medicine)

George Whitesides & Richard Zare, both from US.

(Science)

## Man a Representative and Vicegerent of Allah On Earth

**Obaidur Rahman Nadwi**

Islam has bestowed upon man a unique position, irrespective of origin, gender, race and colour. Man is highest of all creations and is next only to the Creator.

Even angels are inferior to him in status. The holy Qur'an makes this idea clear in 2; 30-39, wherein the incident of God asking the angels to pay obeisance to man is mentioned. Needless to say that innumerable things in the universe have been created for the use and benefit of man. This fact has been made clear in the holy Qur'an in several places. Examples are, 2; 29, "He has created for you all that is in the earth", 16; 12," He has made subservient to you the night and the day as well as the sun and the moon"

It goes without saying that the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) has made his declaration for human rights in his farewell address during the last pilgrimage saying, "O people! All of us belong to one God, one father and one religion. You are all the sons of one father Adam and Adam was created from dust; you will all be buried under the earth soil. No Arab is superior to a non-Arab, nor is a non-Arab superior to an Arab, except by having a greater degree of God consciousness."

Late Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi has rightly said, "Man, according to the teachings of Islam, is the representative and vicegerent of Allah on earth. This world is a trust and man is its trustee. It is not a personal property of an individual or people, which could be used or misused to satisfy personal desires. It is

man's responsibility to manage the world according to Allah's instructions and promote divine guidance. This great world including animals, birds, trees, rivers, mountains, gold, silver and all it contains has been given to the care of man because he is more familiar than any one else with the world (as he is himself made of dust) and has also a genuine interest in it too essential conditions for a successful trustee he can be a good caretaker of the world".

It is needless to say that Islam is the first religion in the world that attached more importance to woman and allowed them a share in the property left by her parents and husband. In fact, in Islamic view, woman is a human being first, and a female second. Allah Almighty says: "And woman shall have right similar to the rights against them, according to what is equitable; but man have a degree (of advantage) over them (2:228).

At another place he says; "Among His signs is that He created for you mates from among yourselves".

In this respect Sheikh Mohammad Al-Ghazali says, "The most developed conception of woman dignity & man's respect achieved by humanity has been the most basic system of human rights in Islam".

Social reformer Swami Vivekananda too acknowledges the practice of equality and indiscrimination in Islam. He said: "My experience is that if ever any religion approached equality in an

(Continued on Page 38)

## Zakat: Economic Upliftment And Dignity to The Poor

**Farhat Ali**

We should be happy that we have completed 63 years of our Independence. During these crucial years we flourished economically, developed socially and of course advanced educationally. Estimates are being made that during the few coming days India will be among leading economies of the world. One dream of our forefathers, nevertheless, could not come true. Poverty still rules in our country. We do have billionaires but on the other hand it is also a fact that scores of our farmers commit suicide on daily basis owing to burden of debt, depression emanating from failure of crops and panicked by their inability to feed their families owing to the rising prices of essential commodities.

Every government, despite its claim of being pro-aam aadmi, turns out to be favouring corporate world in its schemes. Poor remain poor, rather they became poor. They protest daily against the anti-aam aadmi policies of the government but why should anyone pay any heed to them.

The government talks about reducing poverty, but practically it does very little. Equal distribution of the wealth among all citizens is impossible but at least the basic necessities of life have to be provided.

Muslims have achieved a lot after independence. They have grown in all spheres of life. The hopelessness and fear after partition has given way to honour, pride and dignity at present to

many from the community. This has been largely due to the effort by their individual selves. The Muslim does not expect any help from the government and this feeling of being entirely on his own brings out the best in him. This is one reason that the Muslims have been able to compete with the best and have excelled in many spheres of society. But yet a Muslim would say it is due to the grace of God.

The Muslim of today is more knowledgeable of Islam than the Muslim of say 50 years ago. There are more hajis every year, more people attending prayers in mosques, more grand mosques and yet when it comes to Zakat a Muslim is yet to learn to give. Zakat given by him will actually help him in the long run. A Muslim, unless he plans to change his religion or the religion of his children in the future, should realize that by giving zakat he is only strengthening his community, to which he belongs and has to interact with and eventually he and his family will benefit from the strong community he has helped build. The poor of the previous years have due to help of Zakat become businessmen, government officers in high posts and doctors etc., who in turn are helping members of the their community.

Just before the Independence, when because of the Second World War, prices of commodities had touched the sky, black marketing was the trend, the value of rupee was declining and

wealth had confined to some big corporate and businessmen, then finance minister of the Interim Government Liyaqat Ali Khan, had presented a budget which is known as "Budget of Poor". The budget had directly attacked the pockets of the corporate world and big businessmen who had accumulated wealth by avoiding taxes.

The budget was presented on February 29, 1947. Liyaqat Ali Khan, in the budget proposed the formation of a commission to investigate the wealth accumulated by avoiding tax. He also proposed that above the profit of one lakh at least 25% special income tax be taken. There were some other taxes which directly harmed the interest of rich people and some other schemes benefitting common man.

These proposals were strongly opposed by industrialists and corporate world. In the cabinet, Sardar Vallabhai Patel created havoc and said that the budget instead of being pro-poor Indians was meant to harm the Hindu industrialists who were the financial supporters of Congress. The budget was given a communal aspect. Consequently, those who had agreed upon the Interim Government that promised a United India were compelled to accept the two-nation theory.

Actually this budget was based on the theory that wealth is not to remain in some hands. Rather it should keep on changing hand. This is actually the concept of Zakat institution in Islam. It may be the right solution to the prevailing poverty all over the world. Commonly it is seen that the countries where Zakat is practiced have a less margin of poverty compared to other countries. Even that

little poverty can be reduced but sorrowfully all Muslims do not observe this institution as it should be done.

The association of this world to the religion Islam should not be taken in bad terms. This system of Zakat or other schemes formulated on this pattern will provide a solid solution to poverty.

Zakat-spending money for the cause of poor as an obligation-and Sadaqah-giving money voluntarily in charity-have been applauded by non-Muslims, too, as good characteristics of Islam. Muslims are emphasized to give more importance to considering their Last World instead of the world they have been staying in. Islamic scriptures have that this world should be taken as a means to prepare for the Eternal World. No one in the world is to stay forever, hence, adherents of Islam are taught to live a life of a stranger of a passerby in the world. Instead, of accumulating wealth, except for their needs, Muslims are time and again instructed to the Life After Death by giving the rest wealth to their other fellow human beings who cannot earn enough money to meet their expenses. Rich Muslims possessing a certain amount of wealth or more are duty bound to spend from their wealth as an obligation from Almighty the Sustainer to all. This obligation literally refers to Zakat.

In Islam, Zakat occupies a place next in importance only to Iman (belief) and Salaat (prayer). It is called the third pillar of the religion. Under this obligation, a Muslim possessing nisab or more has to separate once in a year one-fortieth of his/her wealth for the poor, the needy and for other objectives prescribed by Qur'an and explained by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).



"Alms (Zakat/Sadaqah) are for the poor, and the needy, and those employed to administer the (funds), for those whose hearts have been (recently) reconciled (to Iman), for those in debt, in the way of Allah, and for the wayfare." Quran(9:60). Since in Madaris many poor and needy students are imparted free education, permission has been granted to pay Zakat Muslims are instructed to be cautious as there are many inherited beggars who there are many inherited beggars who ask for Zakat while they do not deserve it because they are owners of nisab.

Muslims usually prefer the month of Ramazan for paying their in the month rewards for righteous deeds become manifold in this holy month. Ramazan is held by Muslims in great reverence. In the month, Muslims believe more opportunities for carrying out right deeds are made available as a special bounty from God."

With the arrival of Ramazan, therefore, Muslims abstain from sinful acts and they try to do as much righteous deeds as possible. Muslims have the belief that the reward for any righteous deed becomes 70+times more in Ramazan compared to the other normal days.

Through the obligation of Zakat, Muslims have been trained to help poor and needy of the society. There is a wide gap between poor and rich. Zakat helps bridge this gap. It creates and then strengthens a good relation between the two sections of the society. Rich are bound to help needy ones, and the poor lot helps rich ones fulfil their obligation by accepting alms from them.

It is so that the countries where

Zakat system is practiced have less poverty ratio compared to other countries where it does not exist. Zakat or financial policies on the pattern of Zakat may be a practical solution to poverty and starvation. No wonder rich people of the world instead of spending on their luxuries give the surplus wealth after fulfilling necessary requirements of life, to starving fellow humans that elimination of poverty not only from Africa but throughout the world will become much lesser.

Zakat also provides the moral and psychological satisfaction that the persons who pay get through their fine gesture. They feel that they are contributing to the building of the society they live in, and making its members happy and contented. By so doing they feel that they are freed from anxiety and confusion.

Islam enjoins on believers a duty of individualistic and collective nature. This is due to the fact that Islam considers individual as an integral part of the total society. Therefore, the individual Muslim happens to have rights and duties towards the society as it has towards him. Moreover duties of the individualistic nature also carry social dimensions. Zakat is a kind of social security/insurance from an individual to the indigents of the society.

Besides Zakat, other charities called Sadaqah, practiced by Muslim help build a balanced society economically. The places of Muslim gathering are often a market place for poor beggars. Especially on Fridays, long queue of beggars and needy persons, present almost at all mosques expect something in monetary help from every Muslim offering Jum'a. O

he occasion of Eid celebration rich Muslims are asked to help materially their poor brethren to enable them that they, too, enjoy on the day. Muslims' Sadaqah money has enabled Muslim community to arrange many academic institution.

According to the economic survey of India 2007-08, the Gross Domestic Savings for the year 2006-07 is: 34.8% of GDP. Even if we take Muslims to be constituting 15% of the population then around 5.22% of GDP is contributed by Muslims annually as savings. In the year 2006-07, 5.22% of the GDP at current prices comes out to be Rs. 216.4 thousand crore (where GDP at current prices is Rs. 4146 thousand crore in the year 2006-07). And now, if we calculate 2.5% of the annual savings of Muslims as Zakat, the resulting amount would be Rs. 5.41 thousand crore, but many people just neglect payment of Zakat. They simply do not pay it. There are some others who pay Zakat but do not bother to calculate the correct procedure is to assess the wealth and possessions and pay the 2 1/2% on it. If the Muslims honestly pay Zakat on whom Zakat is wajib (obligatory). It is the fact the Zakat will be enough to solve the problems of poor.

There has always been poor and rich in the society as the law of nature. A model society is the one where poor do not lead a life of peace and easily manage their needs. This will not be possible until the concentration of wealth reaches into the hands of poor. Zakat is one of the effective means in developing such a society. It keeps wealth changing hands.. ●

## **Under Terror Shadow, Muslims Speak Out**

New Delhi: "I am Jamil Masiullah from Malegaon, Maharashtra. I am the elder brother of Shabbir Masiullah. The police arrested my brother at 3.30am on August 3, 2006 from his house. He was given electric shocks on his private parts and acid was poured on his private parts, to make him confess that he was responsible for either the Malegaon or the Mumbai local train bomb blast."

"I am Abdul Kareem from Hyderabad. I used to drive an autorickshaw before arrest. On day, police barged into my house and took me away. I was tortured, hit on the soles and other body parts with a rubber belt. I was asked what I know about the Hyderabad bomb blasts. I answered that I did not know anything. But they were still forcing me either to admit to the crime or to speak about it."

"I am Aftab Alam from UP. I am working in the Electric Supply Corporation of Kolkata. On Dec 27, 2007, I was arrested by UP police and aired as a mastermind terrorist responsible for bomb blasts on the Sharanjevi Express and the Sankat Mochan temple of Varanasi. I was told that I was an area commander of HuJI and all the bomb blasts that took place in UP were conspired by me. I was beaten up whole night. I was constantly compelled to accept that my name was Mukhtar alias Raju from Bangladesh. I was allowed to wear jeans and T-shirt only in that cold weather and was beaten with a leather belt to give a confessional statement."

"I am Saleha Khaton from Gujarat, Zahid Sheikh's sister. He had been accused of 26 July 2008 bomb blasts. The police asked him to come for some inquiry regarding mobile SIM cards. He went on his motorcycle and has not returned since then. My parents went to see him. They saw that he was unable to walk. He was severely tortured. We were allowed to meet him for two minutes only."

These are some chilling real life stories of police brutality, compiled in a publication called "What It Means To Be A Muslim In India Today".

(The Times of India -29-1-11)

## The Significance of Daw'ah

**Muhammad Sami'ullah**

Dawah implies exerting oneself to the utmost to disseminate the Word of Allah and to make it supreme, and to remove all the impediments in the way of its observance, be that through the tongue, or the pen or moral persuasion. The purpose is to live a life of dedication to the cause of Allah and to sacrifice one's time, money and even life, if necessary, in the discharge of this mission. Allah commands in the Holy Qur'an:

"O ye who believe! Endure outdo all others in endurance, be ready and observe your duty to Allah, in order that ye may succeed". (3:200)

The Muslims have the proud privilege of being a model for the rest of humanity to follow. Almighty Allah while conferring this great honour upon the Muslims has said in the Holy Qur'an:

- (i) "Thus We have appointed you a middle nation, that ye be witnesses against mankind, and that the messenger may be a witness against you". (2:143).
- (ii) "And there may spring from you a nation who invite to goodness and enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency. Such are they who are successful". (3:104)
- (iii) "And the believers should not all go out to fight. Of every troop of them, a party only should go forth, that

they (who are left behind) may warn their folk when they return to them, so that they may beware". (9:122)

The call of Islam is not confined to one nation or group of men or for a particular time or place; it is a responsibility to be shared by every Muslim, each according to his capacity and potential.

Every Muslim by virtue of his Faith is a missionary of Islam. He should therefore, have piety, knowledge, and willingness to undergo hardships in the service of Islam and humanity. The very nature of this work of Daw'ah demands that Muslims, in this sphere should be inspired solely by the ideal of service to mankind by enabling all human beings to work out their salvation both in this world and the next. They should, as a first step set a high religious and moral standard before their non-Muslim friends, neighbours and visitors by their own example. The Holy Quran proclaims:

"successful indeed are the believers who are humble in their prayers and who shun vain conversation, and who are payers of the poor due; and who guard their modesty, and who pay heed to their prayers. They are the heirs who will inherit Paradise. There they will abide" (23:1-5-9-11)

Daw'ah has two aspects or branches:

- (i) To enjoin that which is the right and forbid that which is wrong in Muslim Society (Amr bil Maruf wa Nahy

- anil Munkar) and  
(ii) To convey the message of Islam to non-Muslims.

As far as the first aspect or branch concerned, there are to be found three groups today among the Muslims and all these urgently need the revival of the flame of faith in their hearts so that they may tread the path of success and everlasting bliss and glory.

**The first group** comprises of Islam-loving people who are well-acquainted with all aspects of Deen and are also punctual in the observance of prayers and fasting etc. but unfortunately are strongly influenced by the un-wholesome effects of the false values of the society in which they live in and as such they are deprived of the real colourings of true Muslim. In the words of the Qur'an:

"Our religion takes its colour from Allah, and who is better than Allah at colouring". (2:138)

And again

"O ye who believe! Enter into Islam wholeheartedly and follow not the footsteps of Satan; verily he is your open foe". (2:208)

It is a tragedy that because of our lackness we have fallen short of this standard and now-a-days we follow Islam by bits. Anything that is easy in Islam suits our interests or convenience, we readily accept and adopt it but leave such things which are hard and difficult to practice and then try to argue that even if we do not follow some injunctions of the Qur'an and ordained Sunnah of the prophet, there is nothing wrong because we have to march with the times! The Holy Qur'an warns such people;

"And whoso opposeth the messenger after the guidance (of Allah) hath been manifested unto him, and

followeth other than the believer's way, we appoint for him that unto which he himself hath turned and expose him unto hell- a hapless journey's end". (4:115)

**The second group** comprises of ruling elite and modern western educated youth who are callous and indifferent about the restrictions in regard to Halal and Haraam laid down by Islam.

Of this class of people, both men and women, they have got only to fashion themselves, their mind, their body and their whole life as dictated by Islam. Then only the divine guidance of Islam will solve all the problems and difficulties of life. Whenever a man or woman thinks of fashioning Islam according to his or her interests and desires he or she drowns himself in an endless sea of problems which shall never see the light of solution, because the conduct of such people is a negation of their faith in Allah, the Omniscient, in the finality of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and in the Holy Qur'an which contains everything.

"We have neglected nothing in the Book". (Al-Qur'an 6:38)

Let all of us fear Allah truly. For, this fear is the lone source of wisdom. Let us fashion our mind, body and dress according to the dictates of Islam. Then Allah shall turn other people of the world to fashion their minds on pattern of our faith. Study of the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and their practice are the only means that can lead us to the goal. Let us resolve once for all; never name or make use of Islam in order to follow our own whims, and pursue our self interest. Once we resort to such kind of 'faith', Allah will leave us at the mercy of non-believers as the Arabs and the rest of the Muslims are today. The verdict of the Qur'an is:

"Lo! Allah will cause those who believe and do good works to enter

Gardens underneath which rivers flow; while those who disbelieve take their comfort in this life and eat even as the cattle eat, and the Fire is their habitation." (47:12)

Every Muslim, therefore, must try his or her best to live in accordance with the fundamentals of the faith and stick to what is halal and avoid haraam in the daily life—from food to conduct. There is no undue rigidity in religion and Allah says in His Book that He does not wish to impose any hardship on His believer and this should help every Muslim in forming a resolve to adhere to the tenets of Islam under all circumstances. The Holy Qur'an says:

"Allah desireth for you ease; He desireth not hardship of you". (2:185)

And again: "Allah tasketh not a soul beyond its scope". (2:286)

There is reward for every act we do in the spirit of faith, in obedience to Allah's command and when we put our faith in the Divine presence and the thought that we are for Allah and are resigned only to His will permeates every one of our acts, every other consideration that is likely to obstruct our way will vanish in no time, and at the moment there will be no greater bliss than the satisfaction that we have obeyed Allah's command! In all our professions and practices it is also imperative to ensure that we do not deviate from the right path as commanded by our Holy Prophet (PBUH) and eschew all other sectarian or schismatic influences and also refrain from involving ourselves in controversies which may undermine our faith and kindle satanic desires.

Abu Hurairrah reported Allah's Messenger as saying, "Part of a man's good observance of Islam is that he leaves alone what does not concern him." (Ibn Majah)

**The third group** is composed of simple but illiterate masses who because of their ignorance and lack of knowledge have drifted away from the teachings of Islam. All the three groups mentioned above need reformation and the simple and easy to help them in this situation is to lead them to the right path with love and painstaking efforts so that they may be able to derive pleasure in worship and obedience to Allah. Once they experience the sweetness of faith, they will automatically become Muslims in the true sense of the word.

"O ye who believe" is the quite frequently used sentence in the Qur'an; it occurs 87 times. Eighty-six times, this sentence is used to convey a particular message for the believers. Once it enjoins upon the Muslims to believe. It sounds unusual to ask Muslims to become believers. But is it enough to have a Muslim name and Muslim parents to be a believer (Mumin)? If so, then there are 1000 million Muslims today in the world. If we believers then our position and status on earth should be as expressed in the following Qur'anic verses:

"Allah has promised to those of you who believe and do good (that He will) make them rulers in the earth as He made rulers before them, and that He will establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them, and that He will after their fear, give them security in exchange". (24:55)

"And be not infirm, and grieve not; you have the upper hand if you are believers." (3:139)

Are Muslims the rulers of the earth at present? Do Muslims have the upper hand in international affairs? Definitely not. On the contrary the position of Muslims in the world is very disappointing and disheartening. It is painful to discuss

our degraded situation. Muslims are divided, weak, backward in science and technology and are on the verge of spiritual bankruptcy. What are the reasons for our downfall? We should look into the following Qur'anic verses and analyse ourselves:

"O ye who believe! Believe in Allah and His Apostle, and Scripture which He hath sent to His Apostle and the Scripture which He sent to those before (him). And who denieth Allah, His angels, His books, His Apostle, and the day of judgment, hath gone far, far astray". (4:136)

"The dwellers of the desert say; 'We believe', Say; 'you believe not', but say 'we submit'; and faith has not yet entered into you hearts".

"So woe to the worshippers. Who are neglectful of their prayers, those who want but to be seen (of men) but refuse (to supply even) neighbourly needs." (107:4-7).

"It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces towards East or West; but it is righteousness to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfare, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and practice regular charity; to fulfil the contracts which ye have made; and to be firm and patient, in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the God-fearing." (2:177)

A Muslim is he who has formally accepted Islam but a believer (Muslim), is one who has reached a stage higher than a Muslim in spiritual life. One's faith in Islam should be reflected in acts of doing good to others, otherwise it is just lip service which is really a weak faith or perhaps no faith at all. At present, a large

number of Muslims belong to this group; who do not pray regularly, who do not care for the needy and the poor, who are only interested in their own welfare and well-being. "O ye who believe! Believe," is directed towards this type of Muslims.

May Allah show us the right path, the path of those who were blessed with insight, understanding and wisdom, divine love and affection and full sense to move in the right direction. Ameen!

"As for those who believe and work righteous deeds, they will have (for their entertainment) the Gardens of Paradise", (Al-Qur'an, 18:107) ●

(Continued from Page 30)

appreciable manner, it is Islam and Islam alone." (Letters of Vivekananda).

According to Arnold J Toynbee, "The extinction of race consciousness as between Muslims is one of the outstanding moral achievements of Islam and in the contemporary world there is, as it happens, a crying need for the propagation of this Islamic virtue.

The fact is that, above all, Islam is the religion of brotherhood and fraternity. It leads us how to live with love and amity and to show the path of guidance and prosperity. One of the distinctive features of Islam is that it has blocked all paths, which might lead to extremism, terrorism and excess. But it is unfortunate that now Islam is being considered as the religion of terrorism and extremism and being maligned by various ways.

In a nutshell Islam can lead people towards the path of salvation and protection and may create an atmosphere of peace and tranquility, which is a dire need at this juncture. ●

## Around the World

### **MWL approves Interfaith meet**

The Makkah based Muslim World League has approved a proposal to hold an international interfaith dialogue conference in the south Indian state of Kerala in the first half of this year. The organization has sent a letter to Indian Prime Minister for his consent. MWL's Secretary-General, emphasized his organization's efforts to promote and enhance constructive dialogue among adherents of different faiths and cultures. The MWL has previously held interfaith dialogue conferences in Makkah, Madrid and Geneva. The three-day conference is being organized by the International Interfaith Dialogue India (IIDDI) in Kochi, platform aimed at promoting peace, harmony and fraternity among various religious communities in India. ●

### **Emir grants USD4 billion free food**

Kuwait's Emir ordered the distribution of USD4 billion and free food for 14 months to citizens as the emirate prepares to mark national occasions. The state news agency KUNA reported that Sheikh has ordered the gifts for all the estimated 1 million Kuwaiti citizens, It even covers newborns until 1 February, But excluded are the more than 2 million foreigner workers, mostly

South Asians. The food program is expected to offer free staples such as rice, eggs, and milk until March 2012. The state provides a cradle-to-grave welfare system to its citizens who receive most public services and petrol at heavily subsidized prices and pay no income tax, Some 80 percent of Kuwait's 360,000 strong national workforce are employed in government jobs, where the average monthly wage is over USD3,500. ●

### **OIC played a vital role in bridging the gap**

The 57-member organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) has become the voice of the *Ummah* and an instrument for strengthening cooperation among Muslim countries, according to its Secretary-General, Speaking to Arab News, the OIC chief emphasized his organization's plan to foster a strategic relationship with China. He underscored the OIC's efforts to bring together the Sunni and Shi'ite leaders of Iraq to end sectarian violence there. He said that OIC is emerging as a key player in global politics. The Jeddah based top Muslim body is the largest organization in the Islamic world and the second largest after the United Nations. There are five Muslim countries in the Security Council and 17 in the UN Human Rights Commission.(YMD) ●

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