



# **THE FRAGRANCE OF EAST**

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# The Fragrance of East

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## The Quranic Dictum

**S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi**

If human beings subjugate themselves to the supremacy of material things and become slaves to their selfish desires, life on earth will become hellish and unbearable. Man has to remember that his place in the scheme of creation is that of God's vicegerent. As the Quran bears testimony, Allah ordered the angels to bow down in front of man as a mark of respect. This clearly establishes that it is highly humiliating for man, God's deputy on earth, to bow down in front of anybody except his Creator. Had there been any such scope, Allah should have allowed man to bow down in front of the angels as they carry on Allah's orders on the earth: they, for instance, bring rain and make the wind blow. By making the angels bow down in front of man Allah clearly revealed His will that the world has been given to the care of man as His vicegerent and that he himself is created for the worship of Allah the Almighty. Man must look at his present miserable lot and tell himself that he is supposed to do better. He must rise to his appointed position as Allah's vicegerent, take none else except Allah as his Lord, and save himself and the world from eternal suffering. ■

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## Wisdom of Qur'an

"Have you not seen that all those who are in the heavens and all those who are in the earth prostrate themselves before Allah; and so do the sun and the moon, and the stars and the mountains, and the trees, and the beasts, and so do many human beings, and even many of those who are condemned to chastisement. And he whom Allah humiliates, none can give him honour. Allah does whatever He wills."

(Al-Qur'ân – 22:18)

'All those who are in the heavens and all those who are in the earth' include angels, heavenly bodies and all the creatures that might exist in worlds other than the earth. These might include beings possessed of reason and free-will like human beings, or animals, plants, or solid matter, air and light that are devoid of reason and free-will.

The expression 'and so do many human beings' specifically refers to those who deliberately and wilfully, rather than involuntarily, prostrate themselves before God. Mention follows immediately thereafter of those who, in contrast wilfully refuse to prostrate themselves before God. This is so in spite of the fact that they are in the firm grip of natural laws and are among those who involuntarily prostrate themselves before God's Will.

The expression 'to humiliate' and 'confer honour upon someone' signify, respectively, the attitudes of rejecting the truth or following it. The former is bound to lead one to humiliation and the latter to achieving a position of honour. One who does not perceive the truths that are clear invites humiliation upon himself. ■

## Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

Iyaz bin Himar relates that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) said: "Allah, the Most Exalted, has revealed to me that you should show courtesy and be cordial with each other so that nobody should consider himself superior to another nor harm him."

(Muslim)

Cordiality is a great virtue. It helps run the cycle of social life smoothly. It is the single salient trait of human character which distinguishes a civilized man from an uncivilized one. Since Islam aims at making a man, man in the real sense of the term, it moulds the very inner traits of those who pledge to live by its teachings and thereby earn the pleasure of Allah.

Here the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) reveals the Divine wish that one should be humble towards another. A Muslim should be kind, gentle and considerate. He should never use his strength and power against others. His ability, influence, wealth, shrewdness and physical prowess should not be used for the purpose of either suppressing, persecuting or causing harm to others. One ought to be gentle, merciful, sympathetic and mild-tempered. By virtue of the intensity and firmness of his faith, the sincerity of character and insight and perspicacity, a Muslim should work for the welfare and well-being of the Ummah.

On many occasions, the Blessed Prophet asked his followers to be polite with one another. "A Muslim is he from whose tongue and hands, other Muslims are safe," the Prophet once said to his companions. ■

## **TAWHEED**

A study of religions shows that reformers and prophets in different times and at different places worked for the propagation of peace and tranquility in the society. It is said that first human being on this earth was Adam who was later joined by Eve. Thus the building up of society began. To make them live peacefully and establish a beneficial society a code of conduct was framed. With the passage of time evil forces created dissension amongst them. To restore normalcy Prophets and Reformers came forward. To make the hostile people and erring groups cool down they were made to believe that there is a supreme power which controls, the world and His directions be followed. This marked the commencement of the concept of God and the urge to follow His commands.

The existence of God and His supreme power was believed to be the right path. However, to reach that Power different routes were adopted and that led to the formation of different religion. Islam has a very clear conception about the oneness of Allah.

Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi writes:

Belief in Oneness of Allah is the first and foremost tenet of the Islamic faith. It does not leave any space for an intermediary between the worshipper and his Lord in matters of worship and supplication. It also does not allow any room for belief in the diversity of gods, or in the existence of a person as God's reflection, or in God merging with any of His creatures to become one with him. Instead, in Islam a believer clearly confesses that there is no god but Allah, the Almighty, the Independent. He has no father, no son, and no associate of any kind. He alone is the Creator of the universe, exercises complete administration of the world, and holds full control of the land and the sky. He does not need help from anybody.

Allah has always existed and shall exist for ever. His attributes are perfect, worthy of praise and glory. He is above all limitations and weaknesses, whatsoever. His knowledge encompasses all and everything. This whole universe came into existence at His will. He is the Living, the Hearing, the Seeing. There is none like Him. He alone deserves worship, the highest manifestation of reverence. It is He Who cures the sick, provides sustenance to creatures, and removes hardship from the suffering. To take anything except Allah as deity, to bow or prostrate in front of it in devotion, and to supplicate to it for favours which are only in Allah's power (for example, granting a baby, bringing luck, reaching a devotee for help anywhere, hearing everything from any distance, and knowing the secrets of heart) is called, in Islamic terminology, *Shirk* (polytheism). It is the most serious sin which is not forgiven unless the person committing it offers sincere repentance.

It is related in the Quran that Allah's power is such that when He intends to do a thing, He simply says "Be", and it becomes (Yassen: 82). He does not dwell in any specific place or direction. Whatever He wills comes to pass, for nothing can ever happen against His will. He is absolutely independent. Nobody can order Him for anything or question Him about any of his actions. Wisdom is His attribute and all His actions reflect wisdom, ultimately leading to good. None except Him is the true Lord.

Fate, good or bad, has been decreed by Allah. He knows in advance things that are to happen in the future and causes them to come to pass.

He has created the Angels, who are high in rank and close to Him in relationship. The Devils (*Shayateen*) are also His creatures who are a source of evil for mankind. He has also created the Jinns.

The Quran is a book revealed by Allah. Its words as well as their intended meaning are all from Allah. It is complete and safe from interpolation and change. A person who believes that an addition or deletion had taken place in it is not a Muslim.

It is true that the dead will be brought to life again on an appointed day. Accountability, reward, and punishment are true. The Heaven and the Hell exist in reality.

It is true that Allah sent prophets to mankind in the world. It is also true that Allah sent His commandments to inform and educate His bondsmen through the prophets. Muhammad, blessings and peace be on him, is the last of Allah's prophets. No prophet will be sent after him. The message brought by him is for the whole world. In this exceptional privilege and on some other points of preference, he excels all other prophets. The faith of a person in Islam is not valid and complete unless he affirms faith in the prophethood of Muhammad, blessings and peace be upon him. No other religion is acceptable to Allah and can ensure salvation in the hereafter. Nobody is exempted on account of his piety and godliness from following the injunctions of the Islamic Shari'a. The Companions of the Prophet are the leaders of the Muslims in religion. It is forbidden to mention them in a derogatory way. It is obligatory on Muslims to hold them in esteem and respect. ■

**S.A.**

We solicit articles for publication in The Fragrance of East. Suitable remuneration will be paid to writers. We prefer receipt of articles on:

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## The Position and Message of Muslims

-S.Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

*Do not become weak [against your enemy], nor be sad. You will be superior, if you are true believers.*

(Al 'Imran 3:139)

The above verse was revealed during the early days of Islam. Then the Islamic state was not in place. Islam was confined to the Arabian peninsula and the Arabs alone. The Arabs of the day led a life of extreme poverty. Their food usually consisted of dates, the flesh of camel and barley bread. Their dress was of coarse material and their houses of mud or bare tents. In the extreme cold they suffered badly from climatic rigours. The Qur'an speaks of their miserable lot in the following passage which identifies their lack of resources and destitution: *And remember when you were few and were reckoned weak in the land, and were afraid that men might kidnap you. (al-Anfal 8:26)*

In contrast to the Arabs, the Romans and Persians raked in luxury and affluence. They were the symbols of sophistication and refinement for the world and enjoyed a flourishing culture and Civilisation. Between them, they ruled over the world. The east was, under Persian hegemony and the west under Roman's. Their authority was massive. They had plenty of sustenance

and exercised control over much of the earth's natural resources. Indeed, major parts of the world lay under their control and influence.

Against this backdrop of all-round darkness in the domain of faith, the Qur'an threw out a challenge to both superpowers. It infused a new lease of life into the Arabs, assuring them: *Do not become weak [against your enemy] nor be sad. You will be superior, if you are true believers. (Al 'Imran 3:139)*

The Qur'an challenged both the Makkan Quraysh and the Persian and Roman Empires. By way of comfort and consolation for the leader of the Muslim community, the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), Surah Yusuf was sent down. The Surah opens thus: *"In Joseph and his brethren there are signs for those who ask;" (Yusuf 12:7)*. More important is the Surah's concluding note:

*When, the Messengers gave up hope and thought that they were denied [by their people], then there came to them Our help, ,and whoever We willed was rescued. And Our punishment cannot be warded off from the wrongdoers. Indeed in their stories there is a lesson for men of understanding.*

*The Qur'an is not some forged statement but the confirmation of [Allah's Books] which were before it and a detailed explanation of everything and a guide and mercy for the believing people.*

(Yusuf 12:110-111)

In the same vein is the following passage from *Surah al-Qasas*. It changed the scene, putting an end to injustice and oppression:

*Ta. Sin. Mim. These are the verses of the manifest Book. We recite to you some of the news of Moses and Pharaoh in truth, for a people who believe. Pharaoh exalted himself in the land and made its people sects, oppressing a group among them by killing their sons and sparing their daughters. He was one of the oppressors. And We wanted to do a favour to those who were weak in the land and to make them rulers and inheritors, and to establish them in the land. We let Pharaoh and Haman and their hosts receive from them that which they feared.*

(*al-Qasas* 28:1-6)

In the given conditions of the day, the nascent Muslim community did not have a chance. It was unthinkable that a handful of weak, resourceless and oppressed Muslims would ever emerge as a formidable community. Even the most insightful person could not predict such a turn of events. No one could

assure themselves that they would ever be superior.

Qur'anic assurance to the contrary, however, boosted the morale of Muslims, infusing into them such a spirit that they took on boldly the superpowers of the day. They were undaunted by the latter's glory and grandeur. The Qur'an projects the hollowness of these empires thus: *And when you look at them, their bodies please you; and when they speak, you listen to their words. They are blocks of wood propped up. (al-Munafiqun 63:4)*

Taking great pride in their new faith - Islam - these believing Arabs marched out, not in the least overawed by the mighty empires of Rome or Persia. Rather, they destroyed those superpowers of the day. The whole world was awestruck by their bravery, their commitment to Islam and their simplicity. They emerged not only as conquerors but also as the saviours of mankind. For their aim was to liberate mankind from the injustice, oppression and exploitation which had been perpetrated for centuries. As they invited people to serve and worship the One True God and freed them from the shackles of fellow human beings, they accomplished their mission. They asked men to move out from the narrow confines to the vastness of the Islamic order. They advised people to put an end to the abuse of religion committed



by the clergy. So doing, they were not afraid of anyone. Worldly power and glory did not dampen their spirit. They regarded contemporary rulers, who paraded themselves as mighty emperors, no more than puppets. They had no difficulty therefore in crushing them. They razed the skyscrapers of their time to the ground. Nor were they daunted by such a huge enemy army. For they knew that the unbelievers lacked essential faith and moral values. Without professing faith in Allah, man is no better than, an animal, rather he is a beast.

The Qur'an instructed the illiterate Arabs in culture and civilisation, emboldened and inspired them. They were conferred with a new message which boosted their self-confidence and pride, self-knowledge, higher ideals and purpose in life. They gained the ability of discernment. They were energised in a way that they conquered the entire World. Empire-building, however, was not their concern. Their objective was to guide humanity then lost in the darkness of error and to preach the Oneness of God to fellow human beings. They wanted everyone to enjoy peace, justice and equality as envisaged by Islam.

Today there are more than fifty Muslim countries. We must then enjoy greater pride and confidence than the Arabs of early Islam. However, we do need to remind ourselves of the

Qur'anic promise: *"Do not be weak [against your enemy], nor be sad. You will be superior, if you are true believers."* (Al 'Imran 3:139) When this verse was sent down, the Arabs did not have any state. They did not have any organised, life even within the Arabian peninsula. Islam had been present for about a decade and was in its infancy. Yet Allah addressed these Arabs in the above words, conferring upon them superiority. Are Muslims today not fit to receive the same Qur'anic honour? The flags of more than fifty Muslim countries are hoisted at UN headquarters. We are not of course a nuclear power. We lag behind in science and technology. Regrettably, on account of our lethargy, inaction, disunity and non-observance of Islamic teachings we are not of the requisite standard. We excel the early Arabs, nonetheless, in the sense that we have many more Muslim states whereas the Arabs did not have a state at all. Are we then not entitled to what the Qur'an promises: *"Do not be weak [against your enemy], nor be sad. You will be superior, if you are true believers."*

Faith is the main asset of believers. On the day of the Battle of Badr, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) made this comment: "O Allah! If You let this handful of believers perish, no one will worship You on the face of the earth until the Last Day." The

(Continued on page 17)

## Prophet's Mission and Message:

-S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi

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

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

## The Status of Woman in Islam

- Syed Athar Husain

Never in the history of the world, under other religions and constitutional systems, woman enjoyed the rights and privileges which Islam gave her. The status of woman in Islam is something unique, something novel, something that has no similarity under any other system. The Quran categorically stated that woman is as vital to life as man himself and granted a status to woman equal to that of man. The rights and responsibilities of a woman are equal to those of a man but they are not necessarily identical with them. Equality and identity are not the same thing. The difference lies in the very nature of the roles the two have to play and there is no ground to assume that she is in any way less important or inferior to man. Islam gives her due consideration and recognizes her independent personality, makes her directly accountable to God and confers rights on her equal with man though not identical.

In pre-Islamic world the plight of woman was abject and pathetic. Somewhere she was branded as the product of devil or the seed of evil. Some systems placed man as the dominant lord of woman who had to surrender to his dominance. There was a time when of woman it was said, "He for God and she for God in him". Somewhere questions were raised if

she at all possessed a soul. Never in the history of Islam any Muslim has ever doubted the dignity of woman, her possession of a soul and other fine spiritual qualities. Unlike beliefs of some other religions. Islam does not blame Eve alone for the First Sin. The Qur'an precisely states that both Adam and Eve were tempted, that they both sinned and that God's pardon was given to both after repentance.

The rights of woman of modern times were not granted voluntarily or out of kindness to the female. She had to struggle hard for centuries to get to where she is now-a-days. Even now her status in many parts of the world and under many systems is not enviable and she is not really in a happy position. She paid heavily to establish her status as a human being possessing a soul. She had to force her way and various circumstances arose to aid her. Shortage of manpower during wars, pressure of economic needs and requirements of industrial development forced her to get out of the home, to work and struggle for livelihood, to appear as an equal to man and to run side by side with man in the race of life. She has come to enjoy a kind of liberty which in some cases amounts to libertinism. Whether she is really happy, whether she can discharge the dual

responsibility of running her home, taking care of her children and labouring outside to earn her living and augment that of her husband, whether there are any miseries and set-backs that encircle the freedom and rights of modern woman are different matters which need not be elaborated here. They are quite well known. What is not known is the status of women in Islam. As Lady Cobbold says in her *Pilgrimage to Mecca*, "It was Islam that removed the bondage in which woman are held from the very dawn of history and gave them a social standing and legal rights such as were not granted to them in England till many centuries later." Islam did more than that. What it gave her "suits her nature, gives her full security and protects her against disgraceful circumstances and uncertain channels of life."

The Qur'an has honoured woman so much so that there is a whole chapter on her entitled 'Woman' and her status and dignity are explicitly stated therein as also in so many other verses of the Qur'an. Some of her rights and indications of her status are stated below.

(1) Islam recognized woman as a full and equal partner of man in the procreation and survival of mankind. Her role is no less vital than men's. As a consequence of this partnership she has an equal share in every aspect and is entitled to equal rights. She undertakes equal responsibilities and

possesses as many qualities and as much humanity as there are in her partner. About his equal partnership in the reproduction of humankind God says:

'O mankind! Verily. We have created you from a single (pair) of a male and female and made you into nations and tribes that ye may know each other.

(Q. 49: 13)

Again the Qur'an says:

"Women and men mutually form complements of one another,"

(Q. 2:18)

"He created for you help mates from yourselves that ye may find rest in them and He ordained between you love and mercy!"

(Q. 30:21)

(2) She is acknowledged as an independent personality, possessing all human qualities and worthy of spiritual aspirations. Her human nature is neither inferior to nor deviates from men. She is equal to man in bearing personal and common responsibilities and in receiving rewards for her deeds. God says:

"And their Lord has accepted (their prayers) and answered them (saying): Never will I cause to be lost the work of any of you, be he male or female; you are friends one to the other..."

(Q. 3: 195; 9:7 I; 33: 35-36; 66: 19- 1).

(3) Islam grants woman equal rights to contract to enterprise and to earn and possess independently. Her

life, her property, her honour are sacred as those of man. If she commits an offence she is no less or more guilty than a man in a similar case. If she is harmed or wronged, she is entitled to the same compensation as a man in her position would get.

(Q. 2:178; 4:45 & 92-93).

Not until 1922 in a civilized country like England, was a married woman entitled to own property. In exercise of legal powers and functions women have been placed by Islam on terms of perfect equality with men. Whether married or not, women is entitled to separate ownership of property with the authority to dispose it of in the manner she choses.

(4) To protect her honour from slander and calumny, the Qur'an decrees that if a person accuses a woman of immorality and does not produce four witnesses in support of his accusations, he is not only liable to the penalty for false accusation, but also to be declared, for perpetuity, as untrustworthy of giving evidence before any court and this is in addition to the punishment in the Hereafter. It says, "Those who defame virtuous women and do not produce four witnesses (in support of their accusation) flog them with four score stripes and never admit their testimony. And these are to be regarded as wicked people."(Q. 24:4)

(5) The Holy Prophet elevated the dignity and status of woman by saying:

"The liest among you is the one who is best towards his wife."

"The world is an ephemeral thing, of which one takes advantage and among the worldly things nothing is better than a good, pious wife."

"The perfect believer is one who has a perfect character and is kind to his wife."

"Even paradise lies underneath the feet of your mothers."

She has to be shown respect, care, regard, affection, obedience and to be helped and assisted. In short, she has to be served accordingly. When the Prophet was asked what should be done if one's mother has died. He answered, "Then serve her sister."

(6) Islam does not state the rights of a woman in dry statistical terms. It puts them into practice as integral articles of faith. It does not tolerate any prejudice against woman or any discrimination between man and woman. Time and again, the Qur'an reproaches those who used to believe woman to be inferior to men. It says:

"And when to anyone of them the tidings of the birth of a daughter is conveyed, dark shadows settle on his face; and he is filled with grief. He keepeth himself aloof because of this tidings and begins to think whether he shall keep it as a sign of disgrace or bury it in the earth: Mark! how vile is their line of thought."

(Q. 16:58-59)

"God's is the kingdom of the heavens and of the earth! He brings into being what He liketh and He giveth daughters to whom He will, and sons to whom He will; or He giveth them children of both sexes..."

(Q. 42:49-50)

"Indeed, for all of them-the men who submit themselves to God and the women who submit themselves, and believing men and the believing woman, and the devoted men and the devoted women, and the truthful men and the truthful women, and the men who bear patiently and the women who bear patiently, and the men endowed with humility and the women endowed with humility and the men who give alms and the women who give alms, and the men who observe the prescribed fasts and the women who observe the fasts and the men who preserve their chastity and the women who preserve their chastity and the men who oft remember God and the women who oft remember God-for all these, God holds out forgiveness and a great recompense."

(Q. 51:5)

This verse could have been worded by saying believing men and women of the various traits will receive forgiveness and great recompense. The obvious purpose of mentioning women and men of every trait is to emphasize the independent personality of women, her equality to man in reaching spiritual

heights, her recognition in every respect and the concern for her.

(7) Woman is equal to man in pursuit of education and knowledge. Over fourteen centuries back the Prophet declared that the pursuit of knowledge is incumbent on every Muslim male and female. This declaration has been followed by Muslims throughout history.

(8) She is entitled to freedom of expression as much as man is. Her sound opinions cannot be disregarded just because she belongs to the fair sex. The Qur'an and history of Islam bear testimony that women not only expressed their opinion but also argued and participated in serious discussions with the Prophet himself and with other Muslim leaders.

(Q. 58:1-4; 60:10-12).

Muslim women expressed their views in legislative matters of public interest in opposition to their English counterparts. In a discussion, Hazrat Umar the Great had to concede that the woman was right and he was wrong.

(9) Though the more pressing role of woman lies in the home, she has not been confined to the house. Even in the early days of Islam, women participated in public life, especially in times of emergencies. They used to accompany to Muslim armies engaged in battle to nurse the wounded, prepare supplies, to cook food and supply water and so on.

(10) In recognition of the fact that woman has independent personality and equal rights, she has been given share in inheritance. She is an heir to the deceased like the male heirs. Whether she is a wife or mother or sister or a daughter, she receives a certain share in the deceased's kins property, the share depending upon her degree of relationship and the number of heirs. The shares are mentioned in verses 11 to 14 and 176 of Surah Woman of the Qur'an. The law does not allow a man to deprive her by making a will to other relations or in favour of any other cause. In principle both man and woman are equally entitled to inherit the property of the deceased but the portions they get may vary. In some instances man receives two shares, whereas woman gets one only. If all factors are taken into consideration it will be apparent that this is not a discrimination against woman or preference to man. If the totality is seen, the daughter gets more than the son. The following discussion will establish it.

Firstly, man, under law, is solely responsible for complete maintenance of his wife, his family and other relations. He has to assume all financial responsibilities and maintain the dependants adequately. It is also his duty to contribute financially to all good causes in the society.

In contrast woman has no financial responsibilities whatever. She

is well-provided for and is financially secure. If she is wife, the husband is the provider, if she is mother, it is the son; if she is a daughter, it is the father; if she is a sister, it is the brother and so on. If she has no relations on whom she can depend, there is no question of inheritance and there is no one to bequeath any thing to her. Maintenance of such a woman is the responsibility of the society as a whole and the State.

Secondly, on the occasion of her marriage, she is provided by her father with ornaments, clothes and many necessities of life which together are called *Jahez*. Their value and number depends upon the financial status of the father. If the father had died and brothers arrange the marriage, they see to her requirements. Then she gets *Mehr* from the husband which can be prompt or deferred on her choice. In Middle-East countries, it is generally prompt while in India it is generally deferred but the practice has got in vogue due to financial weakness of Muslims.

Thirdly, whatever is inherited by an heir, whether male or female, is not something for which he or she might have struggled. It is a sort of aid, and any aid has to be distributed according to the urgent needs and responsibilities of the beneficiaries.

So on the one side we have a male heir, burdened with all kinds of financial responsibilities and liabilities. Besides his own family, he has to maintain his mother, young brothers and

sisters and to arrange their marriages. In addition, if he has means to do so, he has to support public causes. On the other side, there is a female heir with no financial responsibility and assured of her own maintenance. Would it have been fair to give equal shares to both. In Agricultural Law of the land no share at all has been given to daughters or to the widow. Their names are mentioned in the line of succession as a platitude but the possibility of their getting any share is so remote that it can be taken as non-existent. They can get something only in the event of deaths of all the sons.

(11) In some instances of being witness to certain civil contracts like a contract of debt two men are required but if both are not men, then one man and two women can witness it (Q. 2 : 282). This is not an indication of inferiority of woman but a measure of securing the rights of the contracting parties because woman, as a rule, is not so experienced in practical life as man. The objective is to guarantee honest transactions and proper dealings between people. If one woman forgets something, the other can remind her. If she commits any error the other can correct. Woman, as a rule, are not conversant with sleigh of hands or shady business or deceit. Giving testimony is a trying job for any person where the counsel for the opposite side tries to wear down the witness -and to exasperate him, by putting leading and

misleading questions in an attempt to prove that a truth is untruth or vice versa. Even the most highly educated woman finds it a very trying business and more often then not loses her equipoise in the battery of misleading questions and in desperation either says yes to every thing or resorts to silence.

It may be noted that in certain matters only a woman is exclusive witness and her expertise is conclusive. In such cases evidence of only one woman is required and that of man is not accepted.

(12) Woman enjoys certain privileges which are not granted to man. She is exempt from some religious duties like prayers and fasting in her periods and at times of confinement.

(13) Some people are inclined to think that it is derogatory that a Muslims woman is required to put on a veil! She is not required to put on a veil of any particular design or cut but to put on a veil of honour, dignity, purity and integrity. The Qur'an directs the believing women to lower their gaze before men and to keep their passions under restraint. (Q. 24 : 30). Likewise it directs men in the verse preceding this verse to lower their gaze before women and to keep their passions under restraint. In the case of woman it further directs them not to display their ornaments except which are external and throw veils over their bosoms and not to walk in a manner that the charms of their feet become noticeable. Islam



sets up a high standard of morality and takes steps to safeguard women's honour, dignity and chastity.

It should be apparent that Islam gives to woman unprecedentedly high status realistically suitable to her nature. Her rights and duties are equal to those of men but not necessarily or absolutely identical. If she gets half share in inheritance, it is more than compensated in other ways. Her rights are beautifully in consonance with her duties: The Qur'an sums up:-

"And women have rights over men, even as men have rights over women,

according to what is equitable, albeit men rank a degree above them."

(Q. 2: 228)

This degree is not a matter of supremacy or an authorisation of dominance over her. It is in accordance with the needs of the nature of the two of which God is the Maker and correspond with man's extra responsibilities as the head of the family. No sensible woman can grudge it and no sensible woman will like to become head of the family in the presence of her husband. ■

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*(Continued from page 9)*

Prophet realised the need for repentance. Allah had blessed him with special intelligence. He was bestowed with discerning abilities. Had power or large numbers been the deciding feature, the Muslims would have stood no chance of survival or success. At the Battle of Badr only three hundred and thirteen Muslims were pitted against a well-equipped one thousand strong army. By any standard such a numerically disadvantaged group could not overpower its adversary. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), however, turned with hope and fear to Allah and supplicated: "O Allah! If You let this handful of believers perish, no one will worship You until the Last Day".

If we take pride in Islam and pledge ourselves fully to faith, Allah will extend us help and support. He will protect us and take care of us. Allah has promised this. It goes without saying that He, never makes a false promise: "*If you help Allah, He will help you and make your feet firm.*" (Muhammad 47:7) On the contrary, if we are nominal Muslims, lacking the spirit of Islam, Amir Shakib Arsalan's remark on the League of Nations will be applicable to us in equal degree: "The League of Nations is only in name, without any substance." If we are devoid of faith, it will be our great loss and misfortune. We cannot expect any divine help or support in such a case. Allah only values true faith. He appreciates and rewards true believers, a point eloquently made in the above passage. ■

## **Muslim Population - The Future of the World**

**- Aisha Tayyaba**

The research on demographic changes of western countries in relation to the Muslim immigration and the Muslim fertility rate is very intriguing. The average fertility rate per family amongst the westerners is 1.65 as compared to the Muslims' 8.1. An interesting picture emerges when this is translated into demographic change.

According to studies, it is known that in order for a culture to maintain itself for over 25 years, it has to keep a fertility rate of 2.11 children per family. Anything less than that would mean a decline in the culture. At the rate of 1.9, the reversal becomes difficult and it takes 80-100 years to correct itself. At 1.3 or less, the reversal becomes impossible.

Keeping these figures in mind, let us study the culture growth rates of certain western countries.

The figures of 2007 show that in France, the fertility rate was 1.8; in England it was 1.6; in Greece 1.3; Germany 1.3; Italy 1.2; Spain 1.1; and in EU as a whole with 31 countries, it was only 1.38.

These figures are indicative of a change in the demography of Europe in a few years. In other words, the European culture as we know it will cease to exist in the coming decades.

Remember that we are talking of culture, not population, which has not declined because of immigration. Statistics show that since 1990 over 90% of immigration into western countries was from Muslim countries. As a result of this change, in France 30% of children aged 20 years and below are Muslims. In big cities such as Paris and Marseille, the ratio goes up to 45%. In southern France, there are more mosques than churches. The situation in UK

is not much different either. In the last 30 years, the Muslim population there has risen from 82,000 to 2.5 millions, which is a 30-fold increase. There are over 1,000 mosques, many of which were converted from churches. The situation remains identical in other major countries of Europe. For example, in the Netherlands, 5% newborns are Muslims and in next 15 years half of the population will be Muslim.

Keeping the demographic decline in view, the German government reported that, "The fall in the (German) population can no longer be stopped. Its downward spiral is no longer reversible." It further stated, "It will be a Muslim state by the year 2050".

In Belgium, 50% newborns are Muslim and reportedly its Muslim population is around 25%. Its government recently announced that one third of all European children will be born to Muslims families by 2025. As a result of the high growth rate, the present 52 million Muslims in Europe will reach to 104 millions in 20 years. It is the same story in Russia. There are 23 million Muslims living in that country with a ratio of 1:5. It is calculated that soon 40 % of Russian army will be Muslim.

We, Muslims, will outnumber all others in USA, Europe and in most of Africa and Far East in quantity. We must improve our qualitative strengths in order to reap the fruites of being in the majority.

Education, Education and Education with Skill Enhancement is our real challenge. But the right education which must bring a change in our character and behaviour while preparing ourselves to face future challenges of technology and economy. ■

## **Women's Rights: The Perspective of a Parallel History**

**- Amatul Hakeem**

It was a harsh Delhi winter's night in mid-December 2012, when a young woman, 23 years of age, accompanied by her male friend, boarded a mini-bus. There were already six people onboard: all of them men intoxicated with alcohol, including the driver. Little did the lone woman know that this would be her last journey.

As the bus moved along, the young girl was gang-raped and brutally assaulted by the five strangers in the bus. In trying to defend her, the woman's boyfriend, too, was violently beaten up. Later, both the girl and her friend were dumped on the highway, half-dead. The woman would die of her injuries a few weeks later.

As matters progressed, the perpetrators of this gruesome rape-and-murder case were caught and brought to trial months after the outrageous incident that generated nationwide street protests unprecedented since the time of Anna Hazare's anti-corruption movement around a year ago.

While one of the four captured hung himself in his under-trials prison cell at Tihar jail, another – a juvenile – was sentenced to a three year imprisonment term when his involvement was conclusively ascertained. The remaining four have only recently been sentenced to death.

### **The Malaise**

Although the death sentence delivered to these offenders is justified, it is certainly not sufficient to suitably address the crime itself, for merely treating a symptom is never the cure for defeating the illness. To be sure, every crime takes shape within the premises of a certain outlook, a philosophy of greed and selfishness, all of which prompts the criminal out of his inhibitions, and tenaciously grows on him, justifying itself in every possible way. Therefore, real change, or reform, must address the psychology, the thought-processes and attitudes of the people, as this has always been an important factor in the rise, or decline, of any society.

Indeed, for such correct attitudes to be in place among the masses, the prevailing system must be of a robust and time-honoured nature in itself. It must be a system that must necessarily abstain from the over indulgences of a consumerist culture that come off a purely materialistic outlook on life. For it is precisely such a consumerist ethos that generates social structures and systems that are bound to aggravate human wants well beyond the safe and sound requirements of a healthy, balanced society.

Patriarchy and feminism – by way of the dual and, oftentimes, contradicting traditionist and post-modernist positions *vis-à-vis* human progress – are powerful and important socio-cultural constructs that stimulate and direct the masses everywhere. Powerful, because they are found in the majority, and important, because they form the two opposite extremes of a balance which must ideally form the crux of man's society. This is, indeed, a delicate balance, which – even when slightly altered in either direction – could tilt society into immediate decline and eventual annihilation.

### **Women as a Trust**

One particular phase of human history – the seventh century after the disappearance of Christ – is remarkably instructive in this regard. It will be no exaggeration to state that it was during this period when, commencing from Arabia – the much ignored hinterland of the Byzantine and Sassanian powers of the time – a stunning transformation stole over the globe.

To be precise, it was during the time of the Prophet Muhammad, on whom be peace, and later, during the rule of his four immediate successor Caliphs, that this much sought after social equilibrium once again found its actualization and fulfillment. Not too surprisingly, it was a period when women played an important role in society. They participated in religious, social, educational, economic and political activities.

The Qur'an prescribed rights to women, as it did to men. The Prophet, in his last sermon, exhorted men to fear God in the matter of women because, as he said: "Women are a trust from God" to men. As a result, in early Muslim civilization, women were generally accorded special status: clearly a far cry from the bleak situation which women of other civilizations of the time wallowed in.

Muslim women played a complementary role with regards to men's, in the betterment of the Muslim society. They even helped in the war-effort. Since the Prophet's wives, daughters, aunts and other prominent ladies of the time demonstrated their potentials in various constructive activities, they are well-remembered in the books of history. For instance, in one biographical compilation on the Companions of Prophet Muhammad, there are over 1,200 female companions, i.e., about 10-15% of the total entries. Even later, too, during the Umayyad and early Abbasid periods, women continued to enjoy certain liberties which they had acquired during the Prophet's time.

After reading the histories of thousands of women in forty bibliographical collections dating from the ninth century, Ruth Rode, lecturer at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, did not find *any* evidence to support the view that Muslim women were marginal, secluded and restricted by the religion of Islam. In fact, she actually concluded with the following words:

"The role of women in traditional Islamic society has often been portrayed in extremely negative terms that are not justified by historic reality."

During the early Ottoman period, women established *Waqf* (charitable trusts) to support education and other social causes. While studying Ottoman history, Rode was astounded to discover that 41% of the charitable trusts were founded by women. During this period, women worked as farmers, merchants, artisans, land-ladies etc. Women owned property which her husband could not touch during her lifetime. Courts were actively defending women's property rights. This, then, was progressive Muslim society at its best.

### **Deviations**

With the advent of new dynasties, corrupt rulers came to power. They denied the people their very Islamic rights in standing up to their rulers when the latter went wayward, thus swaying away from the path of Islam, failing to follow the Qur'anic teachings and the traditions of the Prophet.

This denial of political rights led to the decline of Muslim society, the negative ripple effect of which was reflected in the status of women within later Muslim civilizations. Since no substantial sociological explanation has been offered so far regarding the deteriorating role of Muslim women in societal development, some scholars assume that the obvious insecurity of life and property that resulted

from political upheavals, combined with weak law and order situations – which existed for many centuries during the reign of later generations of Abbasid rulers, down through the Buwayhids (334-447 AH/945-1055) and Saljuqids (447-590 AH/1055-1194 AD) – as legitimate reasons for the distancing of Muslim women from the fields of outer development.

However, it may be pointed out that this seclusion was mainly to protect Muslim women from being subjected to notorious external environments, where kidnapping of women, molestation and other horrific crimes had gained ascendancy. Though these restrictions were temporary, and as a precaution to ward off the law-less situation, it continued further when the situation aggravated, with the advent of Mongol (656-756 AH/ 1258-1355 CE) and Timurid rulers (786-807 AH/ 1336-1405 CE). These restrictions kept women away from schools and educational centers. It deprived them of the rights which Islam had given them.

While Islam does see the protection and well-being of women as a duty and obligation upon men, harsh historical conditions rendered women incapable of fending for their families even when their male members were non-existent or incapacitated in one way or the other. Muslim civilization at that later stage was then on a downward trajectory, what with a major chunk of its population – its women – being restricted by historical circumstances from participating in socio-cultural development excepting, perhaps,

for the proper maintenance of the family atmosphere at home: in itself not a trivial achievement in periods of transition and crisis.

### **Influence of Globalization on Feminism**

Today, even as the countries of the Third World stumble out of centuries of stagnation and servitude, they are nevertheless exposed to the challenges of globalization or modernization. To be sure, globalization or modernization may be seen as the adoption of modern technology – clearly a necessity in development. This technology, however, is quite often the sum of contributions made by several civilizations like the Chinese, Indian, Western and, of course, the Islamic.

With the process of globalization well in place, there is bound to be some influx of foreign norms and attitudes which have to be filtered out before they can be adopted, depending on how they benefit each receiving society. External values, thus accumulated during the course of modernization, can be beneficial only if they boost our existing morals and culture in a positive and non-contradictory way. Unfortunately, however, this concept has been misunderstood by the majority. According to many, globalization or modernization is simply 'westernization'; they often tend to miss the thin margin between westernization and modernization. This is of concern, especially for women, because they are supposed to be the cradle on which every civilization is founded.

Misguided feminism justifies itself in the name of freedom. Free intermingling of men and women, late night partying, alcoholism, revealing outfits – all of which were once considered grave taboos in Indian tradition – are considered as representative of freedom now. This borrowed culture of the West has neither helped them nor will it help the people who adopt it as their own. People who promote this culture are Western apologists, if not outright propagandists. They have a preconceived notion of modesty. For instance, to them, all Muslim women in modest Muslim clothing (head scarf and long gowns) are 'oppressed women,' not on par with members of a modern society; whereas a Christian nun with similar attire is praised and honored for her outward appearance. So if this is not being prejudiced, even hypocritical, then what is?

Surely, it is tough to change these misconceptions, but it can certainly be done. Reform in public thought and attitude is a gradual process which requires as much patience as perseverance. The focus has to be on the future generation, so as to provide them with a proper upbringing and an effective education. In the final analysis, socio-economic and political reforms by the government, combined with the efforts of social-reform movements led by intellectuals from every cross-section of our society, should, hopefully, go a long way in preventing a worsening of the prevailing situation. ■

(YMD)

## **Prophet Muhammad (PBUH): Master of Tolerance**

**- Raya Shokatfard**

We, as the Prophet's followers, have the easy part which is to seek and adopt his gentle qualities and high moral standards into daily practice. God has always chosen prophets with the best of characters, morals and spirits. Since God is All-Knowing, All-Wise, and has ordained humans' destiny before their birth, it is feasible to think that He has already chosen His Prophets before even their entrance to the world.

Prophet Muhammad was not an exception. God bestowed on him the best of characters, one of which was his exceptional tolerance which is manifested in his life and teachings. The Qur'an testifies this in the following words, "And verily, you (O Muhammad) posses an exalted (standard of) character" (Al-Qalam 68:4). We will examine here some examples of his tolerance at the advent of Islam and during its expansion process.

In Makkah, during the first 13 years of his life as Prophet, he and his followers faced much persecution. Muslims were not allowed by God to fight back due to the fact that they had no military strength yet as the Prophet had a small following which gradually increased. It was only in Madinah, when his following and military power rapidly

grew, that fighting to defend themselves and the new religion was allowed.

When the Prophet's opponents greatly increased their persecution, his companions asked him to curse them. At this the Prophet replied, "I have not been sent to lay a curse upon people but to be a blessing unto them." (Muslim). His opponents continued to treat him and his companions unjustly and cruelly, but he always prayed for them.

He once decided to personally visit the town of Ta'if, to the east of Makkah, to invite its inhabitants to Islam. People there rejected him, stoned him, ejected him, and made him to bleed. Angel Gabriel came to him and said, "Allah has heard what your people say to you and how they rejected you. He has ordered the angels of the mountains to obey whatever you tell them to do." The angel of the mountains called him, greeted him and said, "Send me to do what you wish. If you wish, I will crush them between the two mountains of Makkah." The Prophet said: "Rather, I hope that Allah will bring forth from their loins those who will worship Allah alone and not associate anything with Him." (Al-Bukhari)

In the early Makkan period when the enemies of the new faith far exceeded the Prophet's companions in number, it often happened that when the Prophet would stand to pray in the House of God (the Ka'bah), his foes would approach him and whistle and clap in order to disturb him, but the Prophet would not even once show anger at such provocations. He always opted for tolerance and avoided confrontation.

In one instance when the Prophet was praying at the Ka'bah while his enemies were watching his movements and action, one of his adversaries threw on his back the intestine of a slaughtered camel while the Prophet was in the prostration position. He did not react and stayed in that position. His daughter, Fatimah, rushed to take the filth off his back and cleaned him up. Later, when Prophet Muhammad and many of his companions migrated to Madinah, again his great character in dealing with his companions and enemies was manifested.

In Madinah, Muslims were in the process of establishing the new Islamic state. Yet, their enemies in Makkah did not leave them at peace but decided to wage war against them and pursue them even in Madinah.

In the battle of Uhud, when his Makkan enemies attacked the Muslims,

Prophet Muhammad suffered a head injury and one of his front teeth got smashed. When blood started to seep from his head, he swabbed it saying, "If a drop of my blood fell on the earth, those infidels will be destroyed by Allah." Umar told him, "O Messenger of Allah, Curse them!" The prophet replied: "I wasn't sent (by Allah) to curse. I was sent as a mercy." Then he said: "O Allah, Guide my people!" (Hadith authenticated by Al-Albani) Allah confirmed his blessed character by saying, "And We have not sent you forth but as a mercy to mankind." (Al-Anbiya' 21:107)

The Prophet once said, "A true believer is one with whom others feel secure." (Al-Bukhari) He manifested these words with action and was not fast to take revenge or rebuke a wrong doer.

A bedouin once entered his mosque in Madinah and started to urinate inside it. Mosques at that time had no walls and carpeted floors and the ceilings were made of palm leaves held up by palm stems. People ran to (prevent and restrain) this man. The Prophet said, "Do not interrupt him (i.e. let him finish). Then the Prophet asked for a pitcher of water to be poured over the place of urine. (Al-Bukhari)

One of Jesus' famous saying is "Love your neighbour like you love yourself." Prophet Muhammad complimented this by saying, "By God,



he is not a believer, by God, he is not a believer, by God, he is not a believer, with whom his neighbours are not secure." (Al-Bukhari) This includes tolerance for actions people do that is not pleasing to some.

It is reported that one of the Prophet's neighbours was a Jewess who hated the Prophet so much that each day she would throw trash on him while he passed there. The prophet never rebuked her. One day, the Jewess did not show up. The Prophet asked about her, and was told that she was sick. So, he went to visit her and inquire about her health. Upon seeing this, the Jewess embraced Islam.

The enmity of his worst enemies toward his most beloved was also met with awesome goodness. Hamza was among the Prophet's most beloved uncle. During one of the battles, Hind, the wife of Abu Sufyan, the arch enemy of the Prophet in Makkah, had ordered her slave to find Hamza and killed him with his arrow. Upon seeing him dead, she rushed to his body and cut out his liver and started chewing it in a fit of rage. Years later, after the conquest of Makkah, the Prophet did not seek revenge on her and accepted her and her husband as new converts and gave them full protection and honour as one of the chieftains of Makkah.

Anas ibn Malik, who served the Prophet for ten years, said that the

Prophet never rebuked him: "When I did something, he never questioned my manner of doing it, and when I did not do something, he never questioned my failure to do it. He was the most good-natured of all men." (Al-Bukhari) Such tolerance gained him the respect even of his enemies, and his followers stood by him through all kinds of hardship and misfortunes. Despite all the concessions, Prophet Muhammad made to the Makkans, the latter violated the treaty they signed with him earlier.

Although his worse enemies were the Makkan Arabs at the beginning, but in Madinah, the Jews did not spare any effort to conspire against him despite signing treaties with him. However, he tried to be as fair with them as possible and only waged war against them when they broke treaties which caused much loss of life to Muslims.

Once, when the Prophet was sitting at a place in Madinah, along with his companions, a funeral procession passed by. On seeing this, the Prophet stood up. One of his companions remarked that the funeral was that of a Jew. The Prophet replied, "Was he not a human being?" (Muslim)

Since Prophet Muhammad wished to avoid conflict and war at all costs, he strove to conclude a peace agreement with the Makkans. After great efforts and concessions on his part, the non-Muslims of Makkah agreed to a ten-

year peace treaty, which was drafted and signed at Al-Hudaybiyyah, a place outside Makkah.

During this important meeting, the Makkans insisted on a number of extremely provocative demands. For instance, the agreement mentioned the Prophet's name as "The Messenger of Allah." They insisted to replace by "son of Abdullah." The Prophet accepted this peacefully and deleted the appellation. Similarly, they made the condition that if they could lay their hands on any Muslim they would keep him as a hostage, but if the Muslims succeeded in detaining any one from their side, they would have to return him. The Prophet consoled to even this point for the sake of establishing peace in the region. He was clearly setting examples of fairness and tolerance while facing injustice and intolerance.

Despite all the concessions Prophet Muhammad made to the Makkans, the latter soon violated the treaty. It was only then that the Prophet finally marched with his huge army to Makkah and without any resistance or shedding a single drop of blood, he conquered the city which was once the abode of his worst enemies.

As mentioned earlier, the Prophet and his followers had suffered a great deal during their 13 years of life in Makkah and even after their migration

to Madinah. His own clan and even family members continued to oppose him not only in Makkah but chose to fight him in Madinah for over 10 years. They did not spare any effort to inflict the worse possible hardship on the Prophet and his companions. In Makkah, it included torture, boycott, killing weak Muslims, confiscating their wealth and properties, separating family members and killing them where ever they could find them after migration from Makkah. With God's help and his companions' steadfastness in Madinah and upholding the message of Islam, Muslims finally conquered Makkah. Its leaders came to him fearing that he would kill them as all conquerors do. Instead, he told them, "Go! You are all free!" (Hadith authenticated by Al-Albani)

Prophet Muhammad's mercy and tolerance included his worst enemies. Such tolerance awed his enemies who converted to the new faith. The end result of his tolerance is registered to this day. The message of Islam spread across the world, to include one fifth of the global population today.

These are only a few among many examples of the Prophet's tolerance and noble character. Aisha, the wife of the Prophet was asked regarding his character. She said very simply:

Clearly, the Prophet moulded his life in accordance with the ideal pattern of life that he presented to others in the form of the Quran revealed to him by God. He never beat a servant, or a woman, or anyone else. He did, of course, fight for what was right. When he had to choose between two alternatives, he would opt for the easier course, provided it involved no sin. No one was more careful to avoid sin than him. He never sought revenge for himself for any wrong done to him personally. He was tolerant to the extreme with both his friends and enemies. Only if God's commandments were broken would he meet out retribution for the sake of God. It was such conduct which gained the Prophet universal respect.

Scholars had explained as follows how the Quran was the Prophet's character: What this means is that he followed the Qur'anic etiquette and adopted its attitude. Whatever was praised in the Quran, he was pleased with it, and whatever was condemned in the Quran he hated it. It says in one report that Aisha said: "His attitude was the Quran, whatever it was pleased with he was pleased with and whatever it hated he hated." (Ibn Rajab, Jaami' al-'Uloom wa'l-Hikam (1/148)).

One may say, since he was the last Prophet and messenger to

Mankind, no other can ever be quite like him. This is true because none shall ever have to shoulder a fraction of the responsibilities he had to bear. However, we, as his followers, have the easy part which is to seek and adopt his gentle qualities and high moral standards into daily practice; for the Prophet's life was divinely chosen to function as a practical manual of how one should live and behave.

Prophet Muhammad's character and qualities are not only for the Muslims to follow, but the sincere seekers who learn about him, praise his noble character and wish to follow it.

Goethe, a famous German writer, artist, and politician of the 1800s, marveled over the achievements and status of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) saying:

"We Europeans with all our concepts and ideas have not yet attained that which Muhammad attained, and no one will ever surpass him. I searched in history for the loftiest example for man to follow, and I found it in the Prophet Muhammad. The truth must prevail and become supreme, because Muhammad succeeded in subjugating the whole world by means of the message of Divine Oneness." ■

*(Courtesy: The Milli Gazette)*

## Prophetic Medicine—A Panacea For All Ailments

- MIH Farooqi

Practices and sayings (traditions) of Prophet Muhammad on hygiene, sanitation and treatment of diseases by medicine are called Prophetic Medicine (Urdu, Tibbe Nabvi). About fifty traditions (Arabic, Ahadith) on specific ailments and their remedies have been grouped together under the chapter called Kitab-al-Tibb (book of medicine) of well-known collections of Ahadith by Bukhari and others.

Another about three hundred traditions on aspects of cleanliness, habit of eating and drinking among others find mention in different collections of Prophetic Sayings.

In the opinion of D. Guthrie (History of Medicine -1945), great advances in medicine made by Muslims of Middle Ages were mainly due to the impact of the Prophetic sayings. Guthrie says, 'Had not the Prophet himself said, "O Servant of God, use medicine, because God hath not created a pain without a remedy for it." As a matter of fact there are several such sayings in which Prophet laid great stress on medicine and discouraged seeking help through amulets, relics, charms etc. The concept of incurable diseases is alien to Islam.

Prophet cautioned physicians to take extreme care in treating the

patients. Quackery is forbidden in Islamic medical ethics. Prophet advised patients not to feel guilty of being victim of the wrath of Allah.

'Disease' he said is not the wrath of Allah, because Prophets also suffered great pains, much greater than ordinary people.'

Imagine what a solace these sayings would have provided to his ailing followers. He used to advise people suffering from illness to resort to medicine first and then pray to God to get rid of the diseases. On several occasions he would himself suggest medicines. For instance, in case of loss of appetite he frequently advised to take Talbina, a preparation of Barley.

For constipation he used to recommend the use of Senna. He was also in favor of regular use of honey for keeping fit.

Similarly, for different ailments he would advise for taking herbal drugs like olive, black cumin, chicory, endive, fenugreek, ginger, marjoram, saffron, vinegar, water-cress among others. Sayings on these medicines show the concern of the Prophet for the welfare and good health of his followers. For keeping clean and tidy, he is reported to have said 'Cleanliness is half of faith (Iman)'.

Prophet condemned the act of a person who committed suicide because of his extreme sufferings. He refused to participate in the last rites (Namaz-Janaza) of the person.

Thus, hopelessness and despondency on account of serious disease and pain are against the spirit and tenets of Islamic medical ethics... On several occasions he exhorted his followers not to depend on supernatural methods of healing. He once said, 'charm is nothing but a work of Shaytan' (Satan)...

Prophetic medicine is message par excellence. It is an advice to keep healthy body and soul always and to have faith in both physical and spiritual treatment.

It is a command to us to strive hard to find newer medicines and newer remedies. It is a warning to those who consider diseases as the Will of God for which no remedy is needed. Great advances in medical science made during the medieval ages, is an important part of Islamic revolution, which has its origin in Prophetic medicine. ■

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## The Sunna And Its Place In Islamic Legislation

- M.Fethullah Gulen

The science of *hadith* deals with Prophet Muhammad's life, especially his words and actions, and the actions he approved of in others. In this section, we will restrict ourselves to his own words and actions. These words and their meanings are his alone, for they were not included in the Qur'an, the Recited Revelation and whose meaning and wording belong to God exclusively. His actions include those whose rule and authority we are obliged to follow as laws, and his personal affairs, which are a source of spiritual reward and blessing if followed.

The science of *fiqh* (Islamic law) does not concern itself with the Prophet's personal affairs. The *fuqaha'* (jurists) consider that if those affairs touch upon the voluntary and purposed acts, they should be dealt with under the relevant law. However, if they are matters of the Prophet's personal likes and dislikes, which are not a basis for legislation, they are of no concern to the jurists. According to the *muhaddithun* (scholars of Hadith, or Traditionists), everything related to the Messenger is included in the meaning of Hadith (Tradition) and concerns them.

The Sunna is the record of the Messenger's every act, word, and confirmation, as well as the second

source of Islamic legislation and life (the Qur'an is the first one). All scholars of religious sciences, and sometimes those of the natural scientists, use it to establish the principles of their disciplines and to solve difficulties. The Qur'an and authentic prophetic Traditions enjoin Muslims to follow the Sunna.

The Qur'an and the Sunna are inseparable. The Sunna clarifies the ambiguities in the Qur'an by expanding upon what is mentioned only briefly in it, specifies what is unconditional, enables generalizations from what is specifically stated, and particularizations from what is generally stated.

For example, how to pray, fast, give alms, and make pilgrimage was established and expounded in the Sunna. So were such principles or legislation that no one can inherit from the Prophet, killers cannot inherit from their victims, the meat of domestic donkeys and wild animals cannot be eaten, and men cannot marry a wife's female cousins if she is still living. Indeed, the Sunna is relevant to all aspects of Islam, and Muslims must design their lives according to it. For this reason, it has been studied and transmitted to each new generation with

almost the same care as the Qur'an.

The Messenger ordered his Companions to obey his Sunna absolutely. He spoke distinctly, so they could understand and memorize his words, and encouraged them to convey his every word to future generations. Sometimes he even urged them to write his words down, for: "Whatever I say is true." The Companions were fully attentive to the Prophet's words and deeds and showed a great desire to mould their lives to his, even in the smallest details. They regarded his every word and deed as a Divine trust to which they must adhere and follow as closely as possible. Viewing his words as Divine gifts, they internalized and preserved them and transmitted.

As truthfulness is the cornerstone of the Islamic character, the Companions did not lie. Just as they did not distort or alter the Qur'an, they did their best to preserve the Traditions and entrust them to future generations by either memorizing them or writing them down. Among the Hadith compilations made during the time of the Companions, three are very famous: *Al-Sahifa al-Sadiqa* by 'Abd Allah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'As, *Al-Sahifa al-Sahihah* by Hammam ibn Munabbih, and *Al-Majmu'* by Zayd ibn 'Ali ibn Husayn.

The Companions were extremely conscientious in relating the Traditions. For example, 'A'isha and 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar would relate them

word for word, not changing even one letter. Ibn Mas'ud and Abu al-Darda' would tremble, as if feverish, when asked to report a Tradition.

Caliph 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz (ruled 717-20 CE) ordered that the orally preserved and circulated individual Tradition compilations be written down. Such illustrious figures as Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib, Sha'bi, 'Alqama, Sufyan al-Thawri, and Zuhri pioneered this sacred task. They were followed by the greatest specialists, who were entirely focused on the Traditions' accurate transmittal, as well as studying their meaning and wording and their narrators' careful critiques.

Thanks to these Traditionists, we have the second source of Islam in its original purity. Only through studying the Prophet's life and then conforming our own to it can we gain God's good pleasure and travel the way leading to Paradise. The greatest saints receive their light from this "sun" of guidance, Prophet Muhammad, and send it to those in darkness so that they may find their way.

### **The Sunna and Its Role**

Sunna literally means "a conduct and a good or evil path to be followed." This is the meaning used in the following hadith:

"Those who establish a good path in Islam receive the reward of those who follow it, without any decrease in their reward. Those who establish

an evil path in Islam are burdened with the sins of those who follow it, without any decrease in their burden."

This term also has different terminological connotations according to each group of Traditionists, methodologists, and jurists. Traditionists view it as including everything connected to the religious commandments reported from the Messenger and categorized, according to the Hanafi legal school (followers of Abu Hanifa), as obligations, necessities, practices particular to or encouraged by the Prophet himself as recommended and desirable.

Methodologists consider it to be every word, deed, and approval of the Messenger as related by his Companions. Jurists, who approach it as the opposite of innovation in religion, consider it a synonym for *hadith*. They use it for the Prophet's words, deeds, and approvals, all of which provide a basis for legislation and categorizing people's actions.

Derived from the word *haddatha* (to inform), *hadith* literally means a tiding or information. Over time, it has assumed the meaning of every word, deed, and approval ascribed to the Messenger. Ibn Hajar says: "According to the Shari'a, the Hadith is everything related to the Messenger."

Another literal meaning is something that takes place within time.

This is why some scholars of fine discernment write that *hadith* is that which is not Divine, eternal, or without beginning in time. This fine line separates the Hadith from the Qur'an, as the latter is Divine, and eternal, and without beginning in time. The Messenger distinguished his words from the Qur'an: "It is two things only, nothing else: the Word and guidance. The best word is the Word of Allah, and the best guidance is the guidance of Muhammad.

## CATEGORIES OF THE SUNNA

The Sunna is divided into three categories: verbal, practical, and based on approval.

**1. The Verbal Sunna :** This category consists of the Messenger's words, which provide a basis for many religious commandments. To cite a few examples:

- "No bequest to the heir." In other words, people cannot bequeath any of their wealth to their heirs, since they will naturally inherit the bulk of the estate. A bequest can be made to the poor or some social service institutions.
- "Don't harm (others), and don't return harm for harm." That is, do not engage in any negative and damaging behavior toward others, and do not retaliate against them by returning bad for bad.
- "A tenth will be given (out of crops grown in fields) watered by rain or rivers; but a twentieth (out of those grown in



fields) watered by people (irrigation or watering)." The Qur'an enjoins charity, but goes into no detail about how to do so correctly. All such regulations were established by the Sunna.

- "A sea is that of which the water is clean and the dead animals are lawful to eat." He gave this response when someone asked him if wudu' could be done with sea-water. This has provided a basis for many other rulings.

**2. The Practical Sunna:** The Qur'an usually lays down only general rules and principles. For example, it enjoins prayer and pilgrimage but does not describe in detail how to perform them. The Messenger, taught by God through inspiration or through Gabriel, provided this information through his actions. His life was one long, unique example to be followed by all Muslims. For example, he led the daily prayers before his Companions five times a day and ordered them to pray as he prayed.

**3. The Sunna based on approval:** The Messenger corrected his Companions' mistakes usually by ascending the pulpit and asking: "Why has somebody done this?" When he saw something agreeable in them, he gave his approval either explicitly or by keeping silent. For example:

- Two Companions traveling in the desert could not find enough water for wudu' before praying, and so used sand (tayammum). When they found water later on before the prayer's time had

passed, one of them performed wudu' and repeated the prayer, and the other did not. When they asked The Messenger about it later, he told the one who had not repeated the prayer: "You acted in accordance with the Sunna." Then, he turned to the other one and said: "For you, there is double reward."

- The Messenger ordered a march upon the Banu Qurayza immediately after the Battle of the Trench. He said: "Hurry up! We'll perform the afternoon prayer there." Some Companions, concluding that they should hasten and pray over there started out without delay. Others understood that they were to hasten to the Banu Qurayza's territory only, and that they could pray before departing. The Messenger approved of both interpretations.

## **THE SUNNA IN THE QUR'AN**

The Sunna is the main source of our religious life. It is promoted and encouraged by the Qur'an: He "*Who raised among the unlettered ones a Messenger from them, reciting to them His revelations, purifies them and instructs them in the Book and the Wisdom* (62:2). According to most Qur'anic interpreters and Traditionists, *the Wisdom* signifies the Sunna. The Qur'an, being a miraculous exposition, contains nothing superfluous and does not exceed the proper terms. As *Wisdom* comes after *Book*, it must be something different. The *Book* is the Qur'an, and *the Wisdom* is the Sunna

showing how the Qur'an is to be applied to our daily lives.

The Qur'an commands absolute obedience to the Messengers, for they have been sent to guide people to truth in every sphere of their lives. Our loyalty is to Allah, Who sent His Messenger and told us to obey him: *We have not sent a Messenger save to be obeyed by Allah's leave (4:64), and: O you who believe! Obey Allah and His Messenger, and do not turn away from him (8:20).*

Obedience to Allah means unconditional obedience to what has been revealed in the Qur'an. Obedience to the Messenger means following his way of life as closely as possible by obeying what is enjoined and prohibited in the Qur'an and by the Messenger. The Sunna is a comprehensively detailed account of his life. He told his community: "Take care! I have been given the Book and its like together with it."

As stated in the Qur'an (8:20), Muslims must not turn away from the Messenger. Therefore, disobeying, belittling, or criticizing the Sunna amounts to heresy or even apostasy. Many other verses emphasize the necessity of following the Sunna, such as: *O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority from among you (4:59).* The verse stresses obedience to Allah and to the Messenger. The repetition of

obey in the imperative mood indicates that the Messenger is authorized to command or forbid, and that Muslims must do what he says. Besides, where obedience to those Muslims in authority is ordered, the Prophet has a far greater right to be obeyed.

Another verse states: *Obey Allah and His Messenger and do not dispute with one another, lest you should be dissolved (dispersed) and your strength fade away; and be steadfast (8:46).* Muslim strength and unity lie in submission to Allah and His Messenger. The Messenger established the Sunna by living the Qur'an, which means that it is the only way his community can follow. Based on this, we can say that the Sunna is both more comprehensive than the Qur'an and indispensable for leading an upright life in Islamic terms.

Muslims can obey Allah and show their love for Him only by obeying the Messenger or by following his Sunna: Say (O Muhammad ): *"If you love Allah, follow me so that Allah loves you" (3:31); Surely there is for you in the Messenger an excellent example for him who aspires to Allah and the Hereafter, and mentions Allah oft (33:21); and many other verses.* Those who claim to love Allah or that Allah loves them, despite their non-adherence to the Sunna, are seriously deluded and astray.

Muslims must cling to the Sunna if they want to remain on the Straight Path and avoid deviation. For example: One day a woman said to 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud, may Allah be pleased with him: "I have heard that you call down Allah's curse upon women who tattoo their bodies, pluck their facial hair, force their teeth apart in order to look more beautiful, and who change the creation of Allah." Ibn Mas'ud answered: "All of this is found in the Qur'an." The woman objected: "I swear by Allah that I have read the entire Qur'an, but I couldn't find anything related to this matter." Ibn Mas'ud told her: "Our Prophet called Allah's curse upon women who wear wigs, who join somebody's hair to theirs, and who have tattoos on their bodies. Haven't you read: *"Whatever the Messenger brings you, adopt it; whatever he forbids you, refrain from it (59:7)?"*

The Qur'an also declares:

Nay, by your Lord, they will never become believers until they choose you as judge to settle the matters in dispute between them. (4:65)

## **THE SUNNA IN THE TRADITIONS**

The way of the Prophet is the way of God. As the Sunna is the way of the Prophet, those who reject it are, in essence, rejecting (and disobeying) Allah. As the Prophet stated: "Whoever obeys me, obeys Allah; whoever disobeys me, disobeys Allah." Such disobedience is "rewarded" with Hell:

"My nation will enter Paradise, except those who rebel." When asked who these rebels were, the Prophet answered: "Whoever obeys me will enter Paradise; whoever disobeys me rebels."

The Sunna links all past, present, and future Muslims. It also enables Muslims to maintain their unity, as it forms a unique culture and system. Concerning this, the Messenger declared: "Those who survive me will witness many disputes and disagreements. Therefore, follow my way and the way of my rightly-guided and rightly-guiding successors. Hold firm to that way—cling to it with your teeth."

Following the Sunna, on both the individual and the collective level, becomes vital when Islam is attacked and Muslims lose their supremacy. The Messenger stated that "at a time when the Muslim community breaks with Islam and consequently disintegrates, the one who holds firm to his Sunna gains the reward of a martyr." Given this, those who criticize it should be asked, as the Qur'an asks unbelievers: *Where are you headed?*

## **THE SUNNA'S FUNCTIONS**

The Sunna has two main functions. First, it enjoins and prohibits, lays down the principles related to establishing all religious obligations and necessities, and determines what is lawful or unlawful. Second, it interprets

the Qur'an.

In each daily prescribed prayer, we recite: *Guide us to the Straight Path, to the path of those you have blessed, not of those who incurred (Your) wrath, nor of the misguided* (1:6-7). The verses mention, but do not specify, two groups of people. According to the Prophet, those who incurred Allah's wrath are Jews who have gone astray, and the misguided are Christians who have gone astray.

The Jews killed many of their Prophets and caused trouble in many places. Although they had once followed Divine guidance and guided others to the Straight Path (during the times of Moses, David, and Solomon, peace be upon them), over time many of them went astray and incurred both Allah's wrath and public ignominy. Those who follow this way also are included in *those who incurred (Your) wrath*. Such Jews are condemned harshly in the Bible as well. In fact, the Bible is much harsher toward them than the Qur'an. In many verses, the Qur'an reproaches such Jews and Christians very mildly and compassionately.

At first, the Christians obeyed Jesus, peace be upon him, and followed his way despite severe persecution. They heroically resisted all forms of hypocrisy and Roman oppression. But over time, many came under the influence of various Middle Eastern religions and philosophies as

well as Roman paganism. By the time Christianity became the Roman Empire's official religion, it already was divided into many sects and had more than 300 Gospels in circulation. Although many remained devoted to the original creed of Jesus, peace be upon him, many others contaminated these pure teachings with borrowed elements. The Qur'an therefore describes them as the misguided.

By making the above interpretation, the Prophet explained how people who had been blessed with Divine guidance could go astray and end up deserving Allah's wrath. Thus, he warned Muslims not to follow such Jews and Christians.

Out of many examples showing how the Sunna interprets the Qur'an, we also cite the following:

- When the verse: *Those who believed and did not mix their belief with wrongdoing: for them is security and they are those who are truly guided* (6: 82) was revealed, the Companions, well aware what wrongdoing meant, asked the Messenger fearfully: "Is there one among us who has never done wrong?" The Messenger explained: "It's not as you think. It's as Luqman said to his son: *Don't associate any partners with Allah; surely, associating partners with Allah is a grave wrongdoing*)" (31: 13).
- 'A'isha and Ibn Mas'ud are of the opinion that the mid-time prayer in: *Attend the prayers without any omission and the mid-time prayer*

(2:238) is the afternoon prayer. Once 'A'isha ordered her servant to write a copy of the Qur'an for her and reminded her: "When you come to the verse: *Attend the prayers without any omission, and the mid-time prayer, inform me.*" When this verse was to be copied out, 'A'isha dictated to her servant: 'attend the prayers without any omission, and the mid-time prayer, the afternoon prayer,' and added: "This is what I heard from the Messenger." Although there are some other interpretations, 'A'isha and Ibn Mas'ud were certain that it was the afternoon prayer.

In addition to interpreting the Qur'an's ambiguities, the Sunna fills in the details about those subjects that the Qur'an mentions only briefly. For example, the Qur'an orders Muslims to pray properly, but does not explain how they should pray. Although some leading interpreters deduce the prayer times from such verses such as: *Perform the prayer correctly at the two ends of the day and night; surely the good deeds remove the evil deeds* (11:114), the exact prayer time was established by the Prophet as follows:

On two occasions, Archangel Gabriel led me in the five daily prayers at the Ka'ba. On the first time, he prayed the noon prayer at noon, when an item's shadow was only as long as its base. When the shadow was as long as the actual item, he prayed the afternoon prayer.

He prayed the evening prayer when it was time for a person to break the fast. He prayed the late evening (or night) prayer when dusk disappeared, and the dawn (or morning) prayer when those who intend to fast can no longer eat or drink. The second time, he prayed the noon prayer when an item's shadow was as long as the actual item, and prayed the afternoon prayer when it was twice as long as the actual item. He prayed the evening prayer at the same time he had prayed it previously. He prayed the night prayer after one-third of the night had passed, and the dawn prayer when it was lighter and the sun had still not risen. Then he turned to me and said: "O Muhammad, each of the five daily prayers should be performed between these two periods of time, as the Prophets before you did it."

The Messenger also taught his community everything related to prayer: its conditions; all obligatory, necessary, and commendable acts that validate and ennoble it; and all acts that invalidate and damage it. He passed on, both through words and actions, all that they needed to know about worship. This all-inclusive term is not limited to the actual prayers, but also includes such areas as fasting, alms-giving, pilgrimage, and many more. Just as he told his followers to "pray as you see me pray," he told them to "learn from me the rites and

ceremonies of pilgrimage after he actually performed it with his Companions. If the Qur'an had gone into such exhaustive detail on such matters, it would have been many times its present size.

The Sunna also restricts general laws and commandments in the Qur'an. For example, it lays down general principles of inheritance. When the Prophet's daughter Fatima went to Abu Bakr, the first Caliph, and asked for her inheritance, Abu Bakr replied: "I heard the Messenger say: 'The community of the Prophets does not leave anything to be inherited. What we leave is for charity.'" This hadith excludes the Prophets and their children from the laws of inheritance. Likewise, the Messenger decreed that "the killer (of his testator) would be disinherited." In other words, if someone kills his or her parents, brother (sister), or uncle (aunt), they cannot inherit from them.

The Qur'an commands: *And the thief male and female, cut off the hands of both, as a recompense for what they have earned, and a punishment exemplary from Allah; Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise* (5:38). Whether this punishment is to be applied to every thief, or only to those who steal goods of a certain value, is not clear. Also, in: *O believers, when you stand up to pray wash your faces, and your hands up to elbows...* (5:6), the hand extends to the elbow. But the Qur'an does not mention specifically

what part of the hand should be cut, nor in what circumstances this punishment should be applied. For example, during 'Umar's caliphate there was a period of famine, and he did not apply this punishment.

The Qur'an decrees: *[O you who believe! Consume not your goods among yourselves in vanity [through theft, usury, bribery, hoarding, and so on], except it be trade by mutual agreement* (4:29). Islam encourages trade as a livelihood, as long as it is carried out according to Islamic law. One condition, as stated in the verse, is mutual agreement. However, the Messenger decreed: "Don't sell fruits until their amount is definite in the tree [so that the amount to be given as alms can be determined]" and: "Don't go to meet peasants outside the market to buy their goods [Let them earn the market value of their goods]."

In sum, the Qur'an contains general principles that are explained by the Messenger and then applied by him to daily life. Allah allowed His Messenger to issue rulings, as necessary, and ordered the believers: *Whatever the Messenger brings you adopt it; whatever he forbids you refrain from it* (59:7). ■

## Around the World

### **1,300 Cameras installed around Prophet's Mosque**

The Commander of the Prophet's Mosque's security force has said that security set up in the Mosque was a deterrent to any one who thinks of breaching security, with surveillance cameras scanning everything in a radius of seven kilometers. The Mosque's security was active round the clock and its cameras record everything around it. It has more than 1,300 cameras that work under all weather conditions. ■

### **King Faisal Award Winners**

Five distinguished scholars from various parts of the world, including a Saudi citizen, won the prestigious King Faisal Prize. The announcement was made at a glittering event in Riyadh recently. The King Faisal International Prize for Service to Islam was awarded to Dr. Ahmed Abou Bakr Lemu of Nigeria. ■

### **European Poll: Israel Biggest Threat To World Peace**

Results of a new poll commissioned by the European Commission show that Israel is believed by Europeans in fifteen countries to be the greatest threat to world peace, greater than North Korea, Iran or Afghanistan. The *International*

*Herald Tribune* reported that the 7,500 people polled living in the European Union (500 in each of the 15 E.U. member states) were presented with a list of fifteen countries and asked if these countries present a threat to world peace. Shockingly, Israel was rated first. The Simon Wiesenthal Center – a Jewish think-tank – is voicing its outrage directly to European Commission President Romano Prodi and asks you to do the same.

"These shocking results, that Israel is the greatest threat to world peace, bigger than North Korea, Iran and Afghanistan, defies logic and is a racist flight of fancy that only shows that anti-Semitism is deeply embedded within European society, more now than in any other period since the end of World War II," said Rabbi Marvin Hier, the Center's dean and founder. "If the results of this survey are as reported, then Israel should draw the only conclusion possible: that the European Union and its members should play no role in any future Middle East peace process," Hier concluded. Center officials are scheduled to meet with Javier Solana, Secretary General of the European Union, in November to discuss this and related issues. ■

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